

Mariana Kitsa

Lviv Polytechnic Nationality University
12, S. Bandery Str., Lviv
mariana.o.kitsa@lpnu.ua
ORCID: 0000-0002-0704-5012

THE ATTITUDE OF YOUNG AUDIENCES TO THE NATIONAL TELETHON DURING THE WAR

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The article deals with the peculiarities of demand and the justification of the functioning of the national telethon «The only news (Yedyni Novyny)» in the second year of the Russian-Ukrainian war through the prism of the preferences of the young audience. Attention is focused on the main arguments of criticism of the national telethon and compared with real threats and challenges. The main argument against preserving the single format of the telethon is the presentation of one-sided information and the low level of compliance with journalistic standards, in particular regarding the balanced presentation of information. Involvement of the same speakers, lack of variety of content presentation leads to the fact that the marathon becomes uninteresting for viewers. There is another, no less important argument against the preservation of a single telethon. According to some respondents, the telethon has turned into a PR platform for pro-government political forces and does not provide an opportunity for alternative politicians and experts to participate in the debate. Alternative politicians and experts are not allowed to participate. At the same time, journalists fear that the format of a single telethon may lead to the elimination of alternative sources of information.

Theoretical, empirical and sociological research methods were used to conduct this study. Among the theoretical ones are the analysis of documents that regulate media activities, the drafting of legislative acts that relate to the specifics of the functioning of various spheres during the war, a review of the works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers. Empirical methods include content analysis, which was applied to highlight the main topics covered in the National telethon «The only news» in the second year of the war. The content analysis was carried out by watching the broadcasts of TV channels every Friday from December 2023 to January 2024. The survey as a sociological method of information gathering was applied to study the attitude of the young audience to the national telethon «The only news» during the war.

Key words: national telethon; the only news; TV; broadcast; war; Ukraine.

Introduction. Russia's armed attack on Ukraine significantly changed the media landscape not only in Ukraine, but throughout the world. Their role in objectively informing citizens, countering information war and increasing media literacy has grown significantly. High-quality, authoritative press, which shapes the opinions of voters and politicians, has become an integral part of modern life [7, p. 66]. On February 24, 2022, Russia attacked Ukraine. This not only fundamentally changed the life of the Ukrainian people, led to numerous victims among the civilian population and the transformation of millions of Ukrainians into refugees, but also forced journalists to adapt their work to wartime conditions.

On the first day of the war, most Ukrainian TV channels («1+1», «Inter», «STB», «UA: First», «1+1», «Inter», «STB», «UA: First», «UA: Culture», ICTV, TRC «Rada», TRC «Kyiv», as well as several large radio stations) joined forces to create news and analytical materials on defense topics. The television marathon «Strong together» was launched, within the framework of which unified #UAtogether news was produced and broadcast in Ukrainian, English and Russian [1, p. 26]. By this time, the satellite signals of the channels had been decoded and were available to everyone for free – the networks «Megogo», «SweetTV» and many other broadcasters also provided free access to channels broadcasting important news. The national platform for digital access to documents for Ukrainians «Diya» provided all users with the *DiaTV* tool, which provides access to a free television signal on smartphone screens [3, p. 62].

The largest media groups issued a joint statement on broadcasting under martial law, in which they declared their priority to provide quality news to citizens, end any political conflict and ensure full synergy between the media until victory. But the creation of this type of news presentation has significantly shaken the freedom of speech of the Ukrainian mass media, because there is only one point of view on this or that situation. Many researchers and journalists who have dealt with this issue claim that half the time of a full-scale war is the best solution in order not to make large-scale public conflicts, and the mass media did not «play» with people's feelings and did not compete with each other, as it was in 2014.

Formulation of the problem. Due to the expert quantitative survey of journalists conducted by the ZMINA Center for Human Rights in cooperation with the Democratic Initiatives Foundation showed, 62 % of interviewed media persons consider the single telethon created at the beginning of a full-scale invasion to be a form of censorship, 18 % held the opposite opinion, and another 20 % of journalists did not were able to answer this question. 2/3 are also convinced that the single marathon should be stopped and all broadcasters can broadcast independently but 11 % are against it, and 23 % are undecided about their position on this issue [15]. At the beginning of the Russian invasion, a single telethon was needed and played an important role in the formation of the information space. But as of the beginning of 2023, everything is not so obvious. Most often, two main positions are distinguished. The first: the marathon should be preserved in the future, but the quality of information should improve, the content provided should include other information subjects. The second position: the marathon should be canceled or completely changed: it is impossible in its current form. The main argument against preserving the single format of the telethon is the presentation of one-sided information, or the low quality of the work. Also, the appearance of the same speakers, the lack of diversity in the presentation of content leads to the fact that the marathon has become uninteresting for the audience. There is another, less important argument against keeping a single telethon. According to some respondents, the telethon has turned into a PR platform for pro-government political forces and does not provide an opportunity for alternative politicians and experts to participate in the debate. Alternative politicians and experts are not allowed to participate. At the same time, journalists fear that the format of a single telethon may lead to the elimination of alternative sources of information.

Regarding the change in the format and content of the telethon, the main goal is to improve the quality of the content and increase the amount of emotional material that evokes sympathy. It is also worth reviewing the approaches of TV channels that prepare programs for marathons, and more carefully approach the invitation of experts. The idea is to be more thorough in the selection of experts. It is considered wrong when the number of invited experts and officials is small or the invited experts and officials comment too often, sometimes several times a week. Since the young audience belongs to an active part of Ukrainian society that quickly adapts to changes and new challenges, it is important to understand how popular the national telethon is for this age group of people.

Research methods. Theoretical, empirical and sociological research methods were used to conduct this study. Among the theoretical ones are the analysis of documents that regulate media activities, the drafting of legislative acts that relate to the specifics of the functioning of various spheres during the war, a

review of the works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers. Empirical methods include content analysis, which was applied to highlight the main topics covered in the National telethon «The Only news (Edyni Novyny)» [6] in the second year of the war. The content analysis was carried out by watching the broadcasts of TV channels every Friday from December 2023 to January 2024. The survey as a sociological method of information gathering was applied to study the attitude of the young audience to the national telethon «The Only news (Edyni Novyny)» during the war. This middle method can also be a useful tool for determining the balance of opinion. The survey covered mostly teenagers under 18 and young people from 18 to 25 years old. Survey participants were asked about the TV channels they usually watch, how often they watch, and what they would like to change. A total of 150 people took part in the survey, including 100 students from the 2nd to 4th year of the National University «Lviv Polytechnic», 25 – master’s students of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and 25 – random respondents who were interviewed by means of an oral blitz survey in the central part of Lviv. Students were sent a link to complete the survey in Google Forms. The method of information processing is combined. The results from Google Forms and from the blitz survey records were unified and recorded in the appropriate table. The data were then calculated, analyzed and presented in the form of charts.

Analysis of recent research and publications. During the war, television becomes a necessary and defining element of the information space [5, p.127]. Its role in shaping the image of military events and providing operational information becomes critical for public perception of events at the front and beyond. Thanks to television news, citizens get the opportunity to stay abreast of the latest events, providing themselves with real-time information updates. The promptness of messages provided by television determines society’s response to various war situations [11, p.103]. By providing quick and accurate communication, it influences the formation of public opinion and the perception of important government decisions.

However, it is important to consider that the objectivity and reliability of the information broadcast by television is key in wartime. The ability of television channels to avoid distortions and present a true picture of events is critical to ensuring informational transparency and public trust.

Thus, television turns out to be not only a mass source of information, but also a tool for forming public opinion and determining society’s attitude to military events, strengthening its role in the information infrastructure system during the war conflict.

During the war, television acquires a significant status as a powerful means of propaganda [4, p. 23]. The importance of its function lies in its ability to influence public opinion, shaping the perception of military events and legitimizing the political decisions of the authorities.

One of the key capabilities of television is its ability to shape images and ideas that reflect the political intentions of the authorities. Using emotionally charged reports, television programs can emphasize the importance of the decisions made, reveal the «hostility» of opponents and strengthen the patriotic mood in society [2, p. 3].

Additionally, television can demonize opponents, creating a perception of them as threatening or unjust. This is done by selecting information, emphasizing specific events, and using rhetoric that contributes to the formation of a negative attitude toward enemies.

A particularly important element is the ability of television to manipulate the emotions of viewers. Emotional influence becomes a key tool in creating a certain attitude to war events and justifying government decisions [14].

In general, television as a propaganda tool is a powerful mechanism of influence on society, helping the authorities to form beliefs, control the information space and influence public opinion during the war. In the context of military events, television plays an important role in shaping the emotional climate in the country, contributing to the emergence and modeling the psychological state of citizens [12, p. 46]. Its influence is based on what aspects of war are reflected in visual and audiovisual materials.

One of the key elements of psychological influence is the display of heroic deeds of the military. Showing willingness to fight for the country, devotion and patriotism can evoke a sense of pride and unity

in the audience. This positive emotional impact can mobilize citizens to support military actions and national goals. On the other hand, television can also convey the terrible and tragic consequences of war [13, p. 8]. Visualizing difficult moments, such as the harsh reality of combat, trauma, and the dire consequences of loss, can cause deep stress and traumatic emotions in viewers, creating a collective emotional state of sadness and loss [2, p. 4].

Depending on how events are covered, television can mobilize society to unite in response to a threat or, on the contrary, cause irritation and dissatisfaction with the development of events. This aspect of psychological influence can shape public opinion, determining the attitude towards government decisions and military operations.

In general, the psychological influence of television during war is a complex mechanism that can determine the emotional tone of society and influence the collective psychological state of citizens during difficult periods of military conflicts [10, p. 58]. Television plays a key role in supporting military operations by creating an image of heroic servicemen and celebrating their devotion to the country. In particular, the visualization of their actions and achievements, broadcast through television programs, creates an emotional connection with the audience. Demonstration of the forces of military equipment and effective military operations can contribute to the mobilization of citizens and the increase of patriotic mood, contributing to the support of government decisions and the establishment of national unity.

An important part of this process is creating a positive image of military operations and emphasizing the importance of their contribution to ensuring national security. Viewers can identify with heroic figures and feel part of a common cause [8].

Television becomes not only a source of information, but also an arena for information warfare in the context of international relations. Different parties to the conflict use television to gain informational advantage, shaping their narratives and influencing the perception of events.

The influence of television extends to the international level, defining the image of a country or a conflict on the world stage. Information campaigns through television channels can influence international diplomatic efforts, international support or condemnation of one or another side of the conflict. Thus, television plays an important role in determining world opinion about events and in the international perception of a military conflict.

Results. According to the results of the survey, which showed that only 18 % of respondents watch TV news every day, 13 % several times a week, 43 % rarely, and 26 % do not watch at all, it can be concluded that there is a different intensity of TV news viewing among the young population (Fig. 1). This may indicate that not all people have the same interest in receiving information from television news, and may also reflect the different lifestyles, work schedules, and news viewing habits of the respondents. To the results of a survey among TV news viewers, the vast majority prefer watching programs on the 1+1 TV channel. This shows that this TV channel is one of the most popular among viewers and has a significant influence on the formation of their news ideas and beliefs. In addition, these results indicate that the 1+1 channel has a high rating among news channels and is able to attract the attention of a wide audience.

To the clarifying question, whether the respondents watch the national telethon, the answers were as follows. The majority of respondents (57 %) do not watch «The only news»; 22 % watch it at least once a week; another 21 % watch it only occasionally (Fig. 2). Casual viewing involves a person not intentionally turning on a telethon to watch, but watching it casually while at other establishments, visiting, or being around those watching a national telethon.

Not only the content of the news is important, but also the tone and style of its presentation. Viewers believe that positive news should be presented with an emotionally uplifting tone, while negative news needs a more balanced and restrained approach. People are usually more sympathetic to presenters who behave professionally, have a well-formed voice, speak clearly and without unnecessary emotions, and adhere to established standards. Therefore, the tone and style of news anchors are important elements that help television channels attract and retain their audiences. To achieve this goal, presenters should not only

have appropriate professional skills, but also be able to adapt to the needs and tastes of their target audience. It was difficult for the majority to answer the question of what type of news the viewers see the most, but some respondents chose the answer of «negative nature» more than the answer of «positive».

Today's news often focuses on negative events, such as disasters, criminal cases and conflicts, because they are more «exciting» and «shocking» for viewers. However, it is important to remember that negative news is not the only option for television channels and, depending on the format of the channel and its audience, different approaches to the selection of news materials can be used. Yes, as the war is going on in Ukraine right now, it affects what news is broadcast the most. Such information is still the most relevant for the audience. However, it is important not to forget about other aspects of life. Regarding the audience's attitude to negative and positive news, it can be different depending on individual preferences and attitude to life. Some people believe that news should be mainly positive in order to maintain a positive mood and lift spirits, while others prefer a more realistic approach to news reporting and believe that negative news also has its place in the information space.

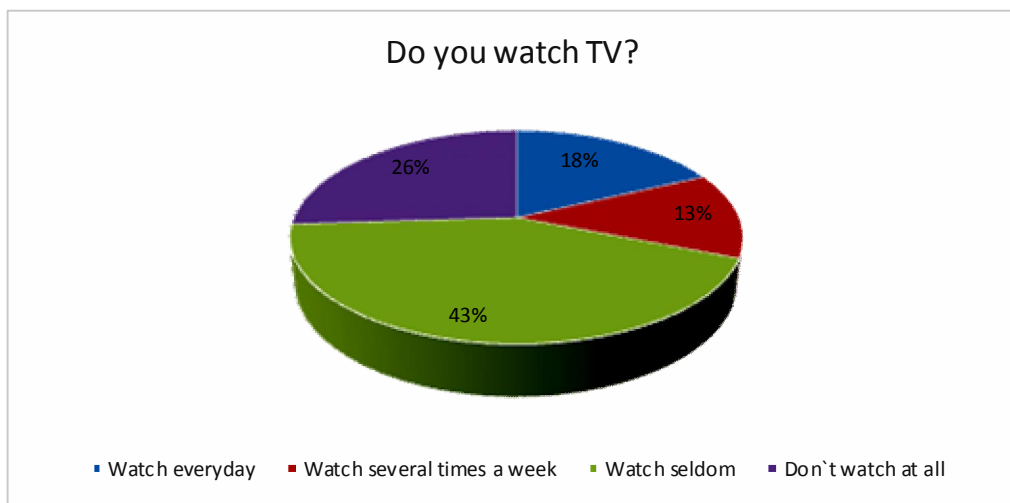


Fig. 1

Source: own processing

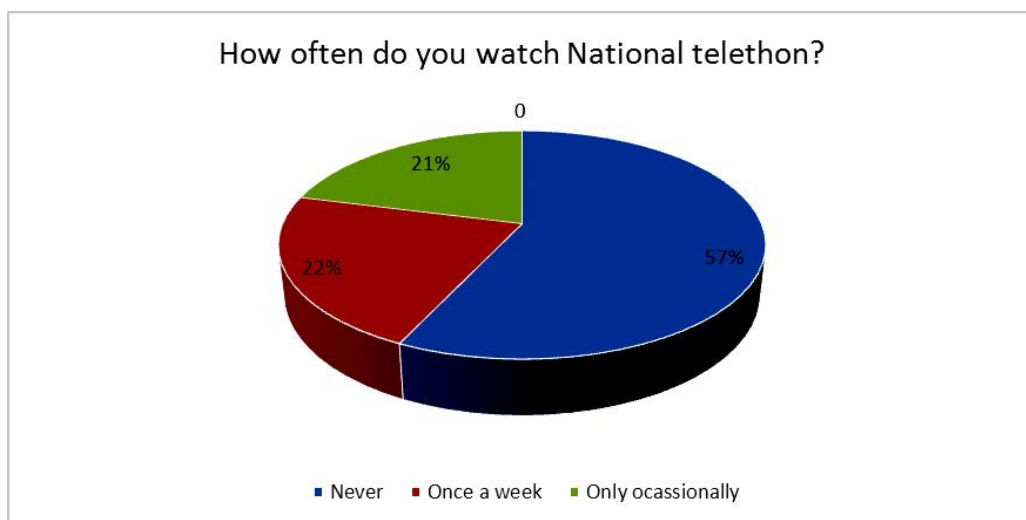


Fig. 2

Source: own processing

The attitude of young audiences to the national telethon during the war

When asked about the trustworthiness of information on TV channels, it was noticed that respondents did not fully evaluate this information positively, but also did not completely reject it as unreliable. Viewers' trust is an extremely important element of a channel's success, so it is important that the channel adheres to high standards of journalism and does not succumb to the temptation of exciting headlines and sensational news that may later turn out to be fake.

Fake news can undermine viewers' trust in the channel and even lead to a negative attitude towards news in general. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between positive and negative news and ensure credibility and objectivity in your message. This will contribute to increasing the level of viewers' trust in the channel and maintaining a positive attitude towards the news. About the influence of television news after watching it, the majority chose that the news does not affect them in any way. This may be due to the fact that most viewers watch the news to get information about world events, not to influence their mood or behavior. In addition, many people may be used to the news reporting various events, including positive and negative events, so they may not feel any particular impact on their lives after watching the news. However, it is important to note that news can affect the mood and attitudes of viewers, especially if the news contains a lot of negative information or if the information concerns the safety and health of the viewers. Therefore, it is important to choose news with understanding and critical thinking and to consider its possible impact on viewers. Also, a slightly smaller number of people answered that TV news affects them negatively.

To the next question, the majority of respondents noted that the news they receive from TV channels has an average level of objectivity and credibility. This may indicate that most people believe that news on TV channels is not always completely objective and reliable, but they also do not consider it completely unreliable or biased. This may be due to the fact that some TV channels can manipulate the news to attract the attention of viewers, or on the contrary, forget about some important news that is not interesting for the audience. However, most people still believe that television channels adhere to certain standards of objectivity and credibility, and that the news show, have a certain level of quality. To an open question about what changes viewers would like to see in the national telethon, the following answers were given: a decrease in the number of lies on all television channels and more evidence for the reliability of information, a decrease in unreliable information, a decrease in the amount of war news or its regulation, a reduction in the hours of the marathon and permission to independently create content for other TV channels, compliance with journalistic standards and refusal to be involved in the 1+1 TV channel, greater independence and diversity of views, attraction of new journalists to the 1+1 TV channel, and not only well-known media persons.

There is an opinion that television news can generate fear, negative mood and reduce trust in society as a whole. Both answers, which were chosen almost equally, indicate that television news can promote stereotypes and prejudices, and spread fake news and myths, which can lead to negative consequences for society, such as conflicts, inter-ethnic tensions, violations of public safety, etc. Therefore, it is important that TV news is reliable and objective, and also conveys a complete picture of events without feeling the influence of political and commercial interests. This is an important positive consequence of television news, as a well-informed society can be more active and conscious in its decisions, as well as more consciously perceive events in the state and the world. The information we get from television news can help us understand the problems and challenges our society faces and find ways to solve them. Only one of the respondents chose to increase the level of panic.

In general, most of the answers related to the desire for greater objectivity and reliability of information on the TV channel, less advertising, less unreliable information and the formation of stereotypes and prejudices. Also, some answers related to the desire to reduce the amount of negative news, or less news about the war. There is an answer about the desire to preserve the independence of the channel and adhere to journalistic standards. Several responses focused on shortening the length of the marathon and allowing channels to make their own content. These answers in the survey can be considered as a manifestation of indignation or dissatisfaction of the audience regarding certain aspects of the work of TV channels. For example, many people note the need to reduce the amount of unreliable information, fake news and myths spread by television channels. This shows that people want to receive reliable information that does not cause panic, but allows them to understand the events taking place in the world. The need to increase the amount of evidence provided by the TV channel is also noted, so that viewers can be sure of the reliability of the information.

In general, the responses of the young audience indicate that people expect greater objectivity and credibility from television channels, as well as the absence of a sense of manipulation of information. According to the results of the survey, most of the answers to the questions regarding the wishes for changes in the television channel concerned the 1+1 TV channel. The main claim was the desire for greater objectivity of the TV channel and less unreliable information. Specific suggestions included wanting more evidence for viewers to believe the news 100 %, avoiding bias, more independence of the channel and adherence to journalistic standards. These claims indicate that viewers want to receive objective and reliable information that does not contain unreliable and fake news. They also wanted to see more independence from the authorities and greater responsibility of TV channels to viewers.

Conclusions. According to the results of the survey, the following conclusions can be drawn: young people rarely watch news on TV, which may be related to the change of media platforms to more interactive ones (such as social networks, Internet portals, etc.).

Viewers' responses indicate that they prefer reliable and objective information without lies and involvement. Viewers also want more independence and diversity of views on the TV channel, as well as less advertising and negative news. Many of them also seek greater attention to journalism standards and attracting new talented journalists.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the most complaints in the survey were about the lack of trust and credibility from the national telethon, as well as the desire for more credibility and less involvement. This study showed that according to the majority of respondents, TV news has both types of influence – both positive and negative. On the one hand, they can provide people with information about important world events, which can make them more informed and able to make informed decisions. According to some interviewees, this increases the level of awareness and promotes the development of thinking. On the other hand, TV news can also have a negative effect on people. They can form stereotypes and prejudices, which leads to social inequality and negative social consequences. In addition, some interviewees pointed out that TV news can spread fake news and myths, which can cause harmful effects on society. According to the youth, it is important to keep a balance of opinions and avoid involvement, even in times of war. It is worth strengthening control over the quality of information, increasing the level of professionalism of journalists and reducing the influence of commerce on the editorial process.

News can influence our thinking, emotional state, beliefs, actions and behavior. Since we live in an information society, news has become an integral part of our lives. Journalists must adhere to journalistic standards and ethics, provide information without concealing or distorting facts. In addition, it is important that the news has context and is not presented in isolation. This will help to avoid the formation of negative stereotypes and prejudices. Another aspect that the interviewees drew attention to is the spread of fake news and myths in TV news. This is a very serious problem as it can lead to wrong thinking in the audience which can have a negative impact on their actions and decisions. This is especially true of political news, where fake news can be used as a means of influencing public opinion and electoral processes.

It is very important for the national telethon not only to convey information, but also to check its authenticity and provide relevant expert comments. It is also important to demonstrate their independence from political factors and commercial interests and focus on their mission of providing truthful and objective information, even (especially) in times of war.

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Мар'яна Кіца

СТАВЛЕННЯ МОЛОДОЇ АУДИТОРІЇ ДО НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО ТЕЛЕМАРАФОНУ ПІД ЧАС ВІЙНИ

У статті йдеться про особливості, затребуваність та виправданість функціонування національного телемарафону «Єдині новини» на другому році російсько-української війни крізь призму вподобань молоді аудиторії. Зосереджено увагу на головних аргументах критики національного телемарафону та зіставлено їх з реальними загрозами та викликами. Основним аргументом проти збереження єдиного формату телемарафону є подання односторонньої інформації та низький рівень дотримання журналістських стандартів, зокрема щодо збалансованості подачі інформації. Залучення одних і тих же спікерів, відсутність різноманісності подачі контенту призводить до того, що марафон стає нецікавим для глядачів. Існує й інший, не менш важливий аргумент проти збереження єдиного телемарафону. На думку деяких респондентів, телемарафон перетворився на піар-майданчик для провладних політичних сил і не дає можливості альтернативним політикам та експертам брати участь у дискусіях. Альтернативних політиків та експертів не допускають до участі. Водночас журналісти побоюються, що формат єдиного телемарафону може призвести до зачистки альтернативних джерел інформації.

Для проведення цього дослідження були використані теоритичні та емпіричні, а також соціологічні методи дослідження. Серед теоретичних – аналіз документів, які регулюють діяльність медіа, опрацювання законодавчих актів, які стосуються особливостей функціонування різних сфер під час війни, огляд праць українських та закордонних дослідників. До емпіричних методів належить контент-аналіз, який був застосований для виокремлення головних тем, які висвітлюють в Національному телемарафоні «Єдині новини» на другому році війни. Контент-аналіз проводили методом перегляду етеру телеканалів щоп'ятниці з грудня 2023 року по січень 2024 року. Опитування як соціологічний метод збору інформації був застосований для вивчення ставлення молоді аудиторії до національного телемарафону «Єдині новини» під час війни.

Ключові слова: національний телемарафон; єдина новина; телебачення; трансляція; війна; Україна.