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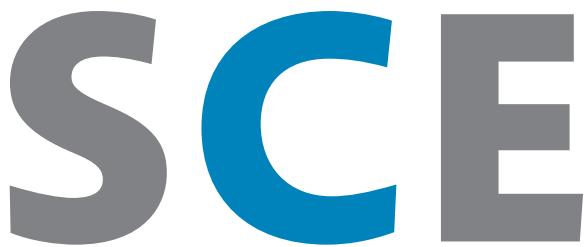
Social  
Communication  
Ethics

volume 1 · issue 2 · 2025



Faculty of Communication Sciences  
Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow





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Social **Communication** Ethics

Volume 1, Issue 2, 2025



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Faculty of Communication Sciences

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The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

## SOCIAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS

Journal of the Faculty of Communication Sciences  
The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

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REPORT

*Report from the 6th International Conference Media for Man*





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## Editorial

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The issues related to the ethical aspects of social communication are vast and multifaceted. Although this may seem self-evident, it nevertheless continues to surprise us repeatedly. We encountered this once more while compiling the articles for the new issue of our journal, which we now present to our readers.

Thus, in the first article “The Ethics of Social Communication in Performance ESG Reporting: A Multi-Dimensional Approach,” Adrienn Lajó analyses the ethical aspects of corporate communication in ESG reporting, treating it not as a legal obligation but as a strategic foundation for organisational accountability and transparency. The authors approach the topic from legal, sociological, psychological and technological perspectives. The text extensively discusses the dangers of greenwashing, selective disclosure, narrative manipulation and the exploitation of audience cognitive errors (such as the halo effect or accessibility heuristics). The article points out that such practices undermine trust, can lead to serious legal and reputational consequences (examples: the Volkswagen scandal and the Flint water crisis), and hinder the achievement of global sustainable development goals. The article makes it clear that ethical communication in ESG is not an option—it is a prerequisite for doing business in a sustainable, responsible and long-term effective manner. Negligence in this sphere carries real risks—both legal and reputational. At the same time, it represents an opportunity to build a competitive advantage and support global social and environmental goals. This topic is therefore fundamental to the future of responsible business and modern management.

War not only transforms the borders of states and the fate of nations but also shatters the foundations of ethics and truth. In the article “The ideology of racism as a basis for the transformation of ethical principles of journalism in the wartime,” Nataliya Hado analyses the dramatic challenges faced by journalists after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. She insightfully compares the ethical standards of Ukrainian and Russian media, showing how the ideology of racism, which is a mixture of imperialism, totalitarianism and propaganda, has led to a complete erosion of ethical norms in Russian journalism. The article raises questions about the limits of freedom of speech, the responsibility of the word in wartime, and the ethical obligation to provide the truth even despite death. It is a text that not only indicts but also reminds us that honest journalism in times of war is not a luxury but an act of courage.

Prepared by Emes Belényesi and Andrea Győrfyné Kukoda, the article “The Role of ChatGPT in Teaching Managerial Decision-making in Higher

Education. Lessons from an Experiment” makes a valuable contribution to the debate on the integration of AI in higher education. This shows that ChatGPT can enrich decision-making processes and support student development, as long as its use is done consciously and with respect for academic values.

The study conducted by the authors aimed to compare human and AI decision-making and to assess students’ satisfaction with the use of ChatGPT in decision-making. The study showed that ChatGPT is perceived as an objective and rational tool, supporting users to analyse problems systematically, but with some limitations regarding the lack of consideration of local political, economic or cultural contexts. The authors also note the need for further analysis, user education and the development of ethical and pedagogical standards for the use of AI in teaching and management.

The final article in the main section “Educational challenges of developing multiple communication competences in the era of convergence. The Case Study of the Transilvania Creative Camp” was prepared by Anne Miśkowiec. In her text, the author points out that contemporary education requires crossing geographical and competence boundaries. The article on the Transilvania Creative Camp shows how project-based learning in an intercultural environment can effectively develop students’ communicative, media and visual competences. Based on a case study and participant observation, the author shows how education in action—embedded in an authentic local context—becomes a response to global challenges: heritage conservation, sustainable tourism and the development of 21st century competences. This is a text about the power of experience, collaboration and creativity in shaping a global citizen.

The journal concludes with a Report from the 6th International Conference Media for Man, which occurred at our Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow on May 8, 2025. More than 20 speakers from eight countries presented their research findings during the conference. This year, Media for Man focused on the theme “Information Literacy Mindset.”





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## **The ethics of social communication in performance ESG reporting: A multi-dimensional approach**

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## Abstract

### *The ethics of social communication in performance ESG reporting: A multi-dimensional approach*

The ethics of social communication in performance reporting is a crucial element of modern organizational governance, particularly within the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. This paper explores the multifaceted dimensions of ethical communication, addressing the interplay of legal, sociological, technological, and psychological aspects. By examining national and international legal frameworks, such as the EU's Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and the U. S. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Green Guides highlights how regulations shape corporate behavior and promote accountability in ESG reporting. A key novelty of this research lies in its exploration of the dynamic relationship between corporate performance and legal frameworks, showcasing how organizational practices influence internal regulations and standards. The study delves into the ethical challenges that organizations face, such as greenwashing, selective disclosures, and the complexities of balancing transparency with competitiveness. It underscores the importance of values such as transparency, fairness, and accountability as the ethical foundation for corporate communication. Through case studies, including the Volkswagen emissions scandal and the Flint water crisis, the paper illustrates the consequences of unethical communication in both the competitive and public sectors, emphasizing the critical need for integrity and robust oversight mechanisms. The dynamic relationship between corporate performance and legal frameworks is examined, showcasing how organizational practices influence international regulations and standards. Feedback loops, such as stakeholder consultations and data-driven reporting, play a pivotal role in refining these frameworks, fostering enhanced accountability, global alignment, and innovation. The conclusion highlights the strategic importance of ethical communication as a driver of trust and long-term success. As organizations navigate increasing regulatory demands and stakeholder scrutiny, adopting proactive strategies that integrate ethical communication, standardized frameworks, and innovative technologies is essential. This paper argues that ethical communication is not merely a compliance obligation but a cornerstone of sustainable development, enabling organizations to align with societal expectations and contribute to a transparent and accountable global economy.

**Keywords:** ethical communication, ESG reporting, transparency, greenwashing, regulatory frameworks

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The ethics of corporate communication is an increasingly critical issue in a globalized, interconnected world where stakeholders demand transparency, accountability, and integrity from organizations. This paper explores the multifaceted dimensions of communication ethics, incorporating sociological, technological, and legal perspectives (Burchell & Rettie, 2015). In the context of performance reporting, particularly within Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks, organizations often walk a fine line between promoting achievements and ensuring truthful representation of their operations. Misleading practices, such as greenwashing, not only undermine stakeholder trust but also pose significant legal and reputational risks (Ferguson, 2024).

Through a detailed analysis, this study examines the ethical challenges associated with performance communication and their implications for sustainability and governance. A novel aspect of this research is its investigation into the interaction between regulatory evolution and corporate adaptation, demonstrating how companies navigate increasing regulatory complexity while shaping best practices. It highlights the role of international regulations, legal enforcement mechanisms, and best practices in addressing unethical communication practices (Ahmad et al., 2019). By integrating these considerations, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive framework for promoting integrity in corporate communication, ensuring that performance reporting aligns with broader societal goals of trust and transparency.

## **Research scope and approach**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, integrating a combination of legal analysis, case study evaluation, and theoretical framework development to examine the ethics of social communication in ESG reporting. The research focuses on assessing the alignment between corporate communication strategies and evolving regulatory frameworks, emphasizing ethical considerations in performance disclosure (Eccles et al., 2014; Friede et al., 2015).

The scope of the analysis covers both corporate and public sector communication practices, drawing on a diverse set of case studies, including the Volkswagen emissions scandal and the Flint water crisis, to illustrate how ethical breaches in communication impact stakeholder trust and regulatory developments (Eger & Schaefer, 2018; Hanna-Attisha, 2018). The research

also considers international ESG reporting standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and SEC disclosure proposals to contextualize corporate compliance behavior (European Commission, 2014).

## Research methodology

The methodology of the study relies on four pillars that are intended to link to each other to embrace the conclusion of the research.

- Legal and Policy Analysis: Reviewing international and national regulations to assess their influence on corporate communication practices (Macchiavello & Siri, 2022).
- Case Study Examination: Analyzing real-world instances of ethical breaches and best practices in ESG communication (Noori & Athota, 2024).
- Content Analysis: Examining corporate ESG reports, sustainability disclosures, and regulatory statements to identify patterns of ethical communication (Keilmann & Koch, 2023).
- Comparative Analysis: Evaluating the differences and similarities in ESG reporting requirements and corporate communication strategies across different jurisdictions (Vannieuwenhuyse, 2023).

## National and international legal implications in performance reporting

To consider the implications generated by national law as drivers of change management in the induction of a measurement system's processes, it is first necessary to clarify which indicators and factors are addressed in this study within the measurement system. Fundamentally, the measurement of the non-financial indicators of institutions and companies can be outlined within a qualitative or non-financial performance metric framework. This becomes tangible in international reports and disclosures due to the demands of compliance and accountability (Giese et al., 2019).

Performance measurement systems are central to the alignment of organizational activities with both regulatory frameworks and strategic

objectives (Carreno, 2024). Domokos and Weltherné Szolnoki (2020) proposed a comprehensive model for performance measurement that emphasizes the integration of financial and non-financial indicators. By focusing on qualitative dimensions, such as transparency and stakeholder accountability, these models support organizations in meeting both legal and ethical requirements in their reporting practices.

Over the years, the importance of corporate social responsibility and sustainability has grown, leading to the incorporation of ESG factors into international reporting. ESG refers to a set of criteria used by investors, regulators, and other stakeholders to evaluate a company's performance in areas such as environmental impact, social responsibility, and corporate governance (GRI, 2021). These criteria have become integral to assessing not only the financial health of organizations but also their broader contributions to society and the environment.

A notable shift toward mandatory ESG reporting has occurred in recent years, driven by governments and regulatory bodies worldwide. For example, the EU's Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) requires large companies to disclose their sustainability practices, including those related to environmental protection, social responsibility, and governance diversity (European Commission, 2014). This paper advances the existing literature by evaluating how the expansion of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) influences corporate compliance and strategic alignment, a relatively underexplored area in ESG research.

At a global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN member states in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for achieving human well-being, peace, and planet protection in the present and future. At its core are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for urgent action by all countries—both developed and developing—within a framework of global partnership. By identifying gaps in current disclosure mandates and examining how corporate responses contribute to the refinement of regulatory requirements, this research offers a unique perspective on the iterative nature of ESG governance. These goals encourage institutions and companies to align their operations with global sustainability objectives and to measure and report their impacts on environmental, social, and governance outcomes. For instance, the Paris Agreement highlights the need for transparent reporting on emission reductions, reflecting a broader trend of integrating sustainability goals into legally binding international frameworks.

At the national level, regulations such as the SEC's climate-related disclosure proposals in the United States aim to ensure that stakeholders have access to standardized and reliable ESG information. These laws emphasize the value of transparency in promoting organizational accountability and driving positive change. Friede et. al. (2015) further argued that integrating ESG factors into financial decision-making helps organizations align their performance measurement systems with sustainability objectives, fostering both compliance and resilience.

### **Role of legal implications as change drivers**

The integration of legal requirements into performance measurement systems often serves as a catalyst for broader organizational change. Regulatory frameworks do more than enforce compliance; they shape corporate priorities by defining acceptable benchmarks and encouraging innovation to meet evolving standards. For instance, organizations may adopt new technologies, such as AI-powered data analytics, to streamline ESG reporting and improve accuracy. Similarly, the adoption of standardized frameworks, like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) or the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), helps organizations navigate the complexities of legal and stakeholder demands.

Mandating disclosure fosters accountability while providing opportunities for organizations to position themselves as sustainability leaders. Transparent reporting builds trust, enhances reputational capital, and offers a competitive edge. The evolution of both international and national reporting frameworks reflects a growing awareness of the social and environmental impacts of business activities. These frameworks address legal compliance and align with broader expectations for corporate accountability, demonstrating the critical role of ethical communication in fostering trust and transparency. Moreover, high sustainability companies are more likely to exhibit higher measurement and disclosure of nonfinancial information (Eccles et al., 2014).

### **Integrity of corporate communication**

The integrity of corporate communication is not only an ethical obligation but also a financial imperative. ESG factors increasingly serve as key

determinants of financial health, influencing investor decisions and market valuations (Friede et al., 2015). Organizations that communicate transparently about their ESG performance are better positioned to attract sustainable investments (Giese et al., 2019), reinforcing the importance of aligning ethical communication with financial strategies. The integrity of corporate communication, especially concerning performance metrics, is central to building trust with stakeholders. Ethical communication mandates that organizations present their achievements and shortcomings transparently and accurately. In ESG reporting, selective disclosure, omission of critical data, or biased narrative framing can mislead stakeholders, undermining the credibility of sustainability efforts and potentially exposing organizations to reputational and legal risks (Keilmann & Koch, 2023).

### The ethical bedrock of communication

Values like accountability, fairness, and transparency form the ethical bedrock of performance communication. Upholding these values not only aligns corporate reporting with the principles of social justice and responsible governance (Burchell & Rettie, 2015) but also strengthens long-term stakeholder relationships. Organizations that adopt a values-driven approach to communication are better positioned to foster trust, maintain credibility, and demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainable practices.

### Psychological and sociological impacts

Corporate communication profoundly influences stakeholders' trust and decision-making processes. Misleading performance claims or greenwashing exploit psychological biases, such as the availability heuristic, where stakeholders overemphasize visible successes while ignoring unreported failures (Hanna-Attisha, 2018). Additionally, the halo effect can lead stakeholders to overgeneralize positive attributes, such as an organization's environmental initiative, while neglecting other areas where the company may underperform. This highlights the ethical imperative for corporations to provide a balanced and truthful representation of their operations.

From a sociological perspective, ethical lapses in communication can erode the social contract between corporations and their stakeholders, particularly in communities that are directly impacted by corporate activities. Misaligned

communication can intensify feelings of distrust, alienation, or cynicism among stakeholders, undermining collaborative efforts toward sustainability.

## Role of ESG reporting frameworks

Adopting widely recognized ESG reporting frameworks, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), helps ensure the integrity of corporate communication. These frameworks establish standardized guidelines for reporting material information, requiring companies to disclose both their positive impacts and areas where they need improvement. By fostering consistency and comparability across industries, these standards reduce the risks of selective reporting and enhance the credibility of disclosures.

Despite the availability of these frameworks, maintaining communication integrity remains challenging. The pressure to meet stakeholder expectations, combined with competitive pressures, can lead organizations to exaggerate achievements or downplay unfavorable metrics. Additionally, the complexity of global supply chains and reliance on AI-driven reporting tools can inadvertently introduce biases or inaccuracies.

Companies face a delicate balancing act between transparency and safeguarding competitive advantages. Stakeholders increasingly demand detailed performance insights, but over-disclosure can reveal proprietary strategies or expose vulnerabilities. Successfully navigating this tension requires a clear communication strategy that prioritizes honesty without compromising critical business interests.

## Implications for change management

Incorporating integrity into performance communication is particularly critical during periods of organizational change. Change management efforts that fail to communicate openly and truthfully risk alienating stakeholders and undermining their support. Ethical communication, on the other hand, fosters buy-in and resilience, enabling organizations to navigate transitions effectively while maintaining trust. Ultimately, the integrity of corporate communication is not just an ethical obligation but also a strategic necessity. Transparent and balanced performance disclosures build stakeholder confidence, reinforce organizational credibility, and contribute to a more

sustainable and accountable corporate ecosystem. As ESG reporting becomes increasingly integral to corporate strategy, ethical communication will remain a cornerstone of trust and long-term success.

It is also interesting to see that regulatory mandates may further intensify changes in investors' greenwashing perceptions. How? They magnify the positive and negative effects of quantitative ESG goals, which in turn can drive changes in investment willingness, as stated by Fanning et al. (2024).

## **Ethical challenges in communication**

Ethical communication, while essential, poses significant challenges for organizations, particularly in the context of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG). These challenges arise from the complexities of balancing transparency with strategic interests, navigating regulatory requirements, and addressing the diverse expectations of stakeholders (Fobbe & Hilletofth, 2021). This section explores the key ethical challenges and their implications for corporate communication.

At the heart of ethical communication are fundamental values such as transparency, accountability, and fairness. However, implementing these values often requires organizations to confront uncomfortable truths about their operations. For example, a company might face ethical dilemmas when reporting on sustainability metrics that reveal significant shortcomings, such as excessive carbon emissions or supply chain labor issues. Upholding these values demands a commitment to openness, even when it could lead to criticism or short-term reputational risks.

Ethical communication, while essential, poses significant challenges for organizations, particularly in the context of ESG reporting (Siew et al., 2024). Several studies highlight that one of the most significant obstacles is the tension between meeting stakeholder expectations and maintaining a truthful representation of performance. Organizations must navigate these challenges while ensuring that their change management efforts reinforce ethical communication practices.

Corporate communication operates within a web of psychological and sociological influences that shape how messages are received and interpreted by stakeholders.

- Psychological Biases: Miscommunication can occur when organizations unintentionally exploit cognitive biases. For instance, the framing effect can influence how stakeholders perceive performance metrics based on how information is presented. A report highlighting a 20% reduction in waste may seem impressive, but it might obscure the fact that overall waste levels remain unacceptably high. Such practices, whether intentional or not, challenge the integrity of communication.
- Sociological Context: Stakeholder perceptions of corporate communication are also shaped by broader social trends, such as the increasing emphasis on sustainability and corporate accountability. In communities where environmental or social issues are pressing, stakeholders may scrutinize ESG disclosures more rigorously. Organizations that fail to engage with these concerns risk alienating critical stakeholder groups, leading to reputational damage and loss of trust (Layzer & Rinfret, 2019).

**Table 1.** Examples of bias in corporate communication

Bias	Description	Example in the public sphere	Example in a competitive market
<b>Framing effect</b>	Information presented in a way that emphasizes certain aspects while obscuring others.	<i>Flint Water Crisis</i> : Highlighting cost savings while ignoring health impacts.	Coca-Cola: Promoting water replenishment efforts without addressing total water usage.
<b>Halo effect</b>	Overgeneralization of a positive attribute to other unrelated areas.	<i>United Nations</i> : Highlighting a single successful SDG initiative while neglecting broader progress.	Tesla: Focusing on electric vehicles while ignoring environmental concerns in battery production.
<b>Availability heuristic</b>	Overemphasis on easily remembered or recent information over comprehensive facts.	WHO: Focusing on recent vaccination successes while underreporting supply chain delays.	Apple: Emphasizing recent renewable energy milestones without addressing mining practices.

Bias	Description	Example in the public sphere	Example in a competitive market
<b>Selective disclosure</b>	Sharing only favorable information while withholding critical or unfavorable data.	<i>City of Flint</i> : Withholding contamination data during the water crisis.	HM: Highlighting sustainable clothing lines while omitting labor concerns.
<b>Anchoring bias</b>	Relying too heavily on the initial information provided as a reference point.	<i>UK Government</i> : Using outdated baselines to show progress in carbon reductions.	<i>BP</i> : Setting low initial targets for emission reductions to appear successful later.
<b>Confirmation bias</b>	Emphasizing information that supports a preconceived narrative while ignoring contradictory evidence.	<i>Public School Districts</i> : Focus on positive parent feedback while ignoring declining test scores.	<i>Volkswagen</i> : Using internal tests to dispute emissions cheating allegations initially.

Source: own editing.

The table above reveals that biases in corporate communication are widespread, cutting across both public institutions and competitive markets. In the public sector, examples like the Flint Water Crisis and outdated progress metrics highlight the consequences of incomplete or skewed reporting on public trust. Similarly, in the private sector, greenwashing and selective disclosures by companies like Coca-Cola, Tesla, and HM illustrate how biases can undermine credibility, even among organizations positioned as leaders in sustainability.

An industry-wide trend is the increased scrutiny from stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and independent watchdogs. Companies and institutions are under growing pressure to provide comprehensive, balanced, and unbiased reporting. Leveraging standardized frameworks, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and third-party audits, will be critical in ensuring accountability and maintaining trust in both sectors.

Organizations must navigate the often-conflicting expectations of diverse stakeholders, including investors, regulators, customers, employees, and communities. What satisfies one group may be perceived as inadequate or misleading by another. For instance:

- Investors may prioritize concise, financially material ESG metrics that demonstrate a return on investment.
- Local communities might demand detailed disclosures on specific impacts, such as water usage or pollution levels. Balancing these needs while maintaining ethical communication can be particularly challenging, especially when trade-offs between stakeholder priorities are required.

## Greenwashing and the ethical implications of misleading communication

Greenwashing remains one of the most pervasive ethical challenges in corporate communication. It involves presenting a false or exaggerated image of sustainability to gain stakeholder approval or a competitive advantage (Lew et al., 2024). Examples include vague claims of being “eco-friendly,” selective disclosure of positive metrics, or omitting critical context that could alter stakeholder perceptions.

The ethical implications of greenwashing are far-reaching:

- Erosion of Trust: Once exposed, greenwashing can severely damage an organization’s reputation and stakeholder trust.
- Legal Consequences: Regulatory bodies are increasingly penalizing misleading claims, as seen in high-profile cases against companies such as Volkswagen (Eger & Schaefer, 2018) and BP.
- Missed Opportunities: By focusing on superficial claims, organizations may neglect genuine efforts to improve sustainability and long-term performance.

The increasing use of technology in ESG reporting introduces new ethical dilemmas. For example:

- AI in Reporting: AI-generated reports can unintentionally introduce biases if the algorithms prioritize certain metrics over others. Without human oversight, these systems risk creating misleading or incomplete disclosures.
- Cross-Border Regulatory Variability: Differing global standards for ESG reporting can create ethical challenges. A disclosure deemed sufficient in one jurisdiction might be viewed as inadequate or misleading in another, complicating efforts to maintain consistent and ethical communication.

Organizations often face a tension between being fully transparent and protecting their competitive position. Detailed disclosures can reveal sensitive information such as cost structures or strategic initiatives that competitors could exploit. However, withholding or downplaying critical data risks accusations of dishonesty or greenwashing. Striking a balance requires careful consideration of ethical priorities and strategic imperatives.

## Examples of breaches in communication ethics

As stated in Sejal's (2024) study, Greenwashing refers to the practice of companies presenting themselves as more environmentally responsible than they are, misleading stakeholders and undermining genuine CSR efforts. The study also explores ethical frameworks, such as Max Weber's typology of ethics, to understand how current CSR practices may inadvertently promote greenwashing.

By providing examples from the competitive and public sectors to demonstrate how breaches in communication ethics can undermine trust, cause harm, and lead to severe consequences, the current paper highlights the universal need for integrity, transparency, and accountability across all sectors.

In 2015, Volkswagen (VW) was exposed for installing software in its diesel vehicles to manipulate emissions tests as explored by Ramsha et. al. (2024). While the company marketed its cars as environmentally friendly, the vehicles emitted pollutants far above the legal limits during normal operation. This misrepresentation directly violated ethical communication standards by deceiving regulators, customers, and the public. Noori and Athota (2024) also discuss Volkswagen's greenwashing practices and offer empirical insights into the inconsistencies in their marketing claims of producing sustainable and eco-friendly products.

VW's actions constituted greenwashing—a form of deceptive communication—by falsely promoting its commitment to sustainability (Keilmann & Koch, 2023). The scandal exploited psychological biases, as stakeholders trusted the brand's claims without scrutinizing the underlying data.

The fallout included over \$30 billion in fines and settlements, significant reputational damage, and loss of consumer trust. The incident highlighted the risks of prioritizing short-term competitive advantage over long-term ethical integrity. This breach underscored the importance of truthful communication

in maintaining trust and emphasized the need for robust oversight mechanisms, both internally and externally, to prevent similar incidents.

Within the public sector, a significant example of greenwashing was the Flint water crisis. This began in 2014 and involved the city of Flint, Michigan, switching its water source to save costs. Despite evidence that the new water source was contaminated with lead, public officials and agencies repeatedly assured residents that the water was safe. This assurance persisted even as complaints about the water quality and health issues mounted.

The breach lay in the deliberate withholding and misrepresentation of critical information about the water's safety (Hanna-Attisha, 2018). Public sector entities failed to act transparently, prioritize public health, or address stakeholders' concerns effectively. This miscommunication betrayed the public's trust and caused significant harm. The crisis led to widespread lead poisoning, particularly affecting children, along with numerous lawsuits and a federal emergency declaration. Several public officials faced criminal charges for their role in the cover-up.

The Flint crisis illustrated how unethical communication in the public sector can lead to severe societal harm, loss of public confidence, and long-term damage to institutional credibility. It highlighted the critical role of transparency and accountability in safeguarding public interests.

## **Legal frameworks and enforcement against misleading communication**

One challenge in enforcing ESG-related communication standards is the complexity of integrating financial and non-financial metrics. Several studies emphasize that robust financial decision-making frameworks, which incorporate ESG factors, can support organizations in navigating these complexities. By embedding ESG considerations in decision-making processes, companies can ensure that their disclosures are both accurate and aligned with regulatory expectations.

The legal frameworks addressing misleading communication have evolved to regulate and deter deceptive practices, ensuring that organizations uphold transparency (FTC, 2012) and accountability in their communications. These frameworks exist at both global and regional levels, targeting practices such

as greenwashing, selective disclosure, and exaggerated claims in corporate performance reporting, particularly in the context of ESG metrics.

## Overview of the global and regional legal mechanisms

Governments and regulatory bodies worldwide have implemented various legal measures to combat misleading communication. These mechanisms protect consumers, investors, and other stakeholders from deceptive practices while fostering fair competition and promoting ethical corporate communication. Here's a closer look at some key frameworks:

- European Union (EU): The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD) sets a legal standard across EU member states to prohibit misleading and aggressive marketing practices. It ensures that consumers are not deceived by unsubstantiated claims, such as vague or exaggerated environmental benefits, which are often associated with greenwashing. Under the UCPD, companies must provide clear, accurate, and substantiated information to avoid misleading consumers.
- United States (U.S.): The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Green Guides provide clear guidance to businesses on making truthful and non-deceptive environmental marketing claims. These guidelines emphasize the importance of substantiating claims with credible evidence and discourage the use of vague or broad terms like "eco-friendly" or "sustainable." Non-compliance with these principles can result in enforcement actions, including fines or mandated corrective measures.
- International Standards: In addition to national and regional regulations, international organizations have introduced standards and guidelines to promote consistency and ethical communication. For instance, the ISO 14021 standard provides principles for environmental labeling and declarations, ensuring that claims are accurate and verifiable.

Giese et al. (2019) note that investors and regulators increasingly demand that companies demonstrate compliance with human rights standards as part of their ESG commitments. These evolving expectations necessitate enhanced transparency in disclosures and create new challenges for enforcement mechanisms, particularly in sectors with complex global supply chains.

## Challenges in enforcement

While these legal frameworks provide a foundation for addressing misleading communication, enforcement presents several challenges:

- **Proving Intent:** Determining whether a misleading claim was intentional or the result of oversight can be complex. Organizations may argue that misrepresentation was unintentional or due to misinterpretation of data, making it difficult to hold them accountable.
- **Quantifying Harm:** Assessing the harm caused by misleading communication is another challenge. For example, in cases of greenwashing, the harm may not always be tangible or immediate, as it often involves reputational damage or erosion of trust rather than direct financial loss.
- **Global Value Chains:** With companies operating across multiple jurisdictions, inconsistent regulations can create loopholes. What is considered misleading in one country may be permissible in another, complicating enforcement in global markets.
- **Evolving Practices:** The rapid evolution of digital marketing and AI-generated content introduces new forms of potential deception. Regulators often lag behind technological advancements, creating gaps in enforcement.

## Broader implications and feedback loops

The relationship between legal frameworks, corporate behavior, and regulatory standards operates within a dynamic system of interaction and feedback. This section explores how these elements influence one another and the broader implications for sustainability, accountability, and governance in global markets.

Legal frameworks shape corporate behavior by establishing the boundaries within which organizations operate. Mandatory disclosure requirements, for instance, compel companies to report on their ESG performance, thereby encouraging transparency and accountability. These frameworks act as drivers for organizational change, often prompting companies to adopt more sustainable practices to comply with legal mandates and mitigate risks (GRI, 2021).

At the same time, corporate responses to these frameworks can influence their effectiveness. For example, companies that go beyond compliance by adopting proactive sustainability measures can set industry benchmarks, indirectly encouraging stricter regulatory standards. Conversely, organizations that seek loopholes or engage in performative compliance (e.g., greenwashing) can undermine the credibility of legal frameworks, necessitating regulatory revisions. What sets this research apart is its in-depth analysis of this bidirectional influence, demonstrating how corporate ESG communication does not merely react to regulatory frameworks but actively shapes them. This perspective highlights an often-overlooked aspect of ESG governance: the evolving and recursive nature of compliance, driven by both external mandates and internal strategic decisions.

Feedback mechanisms are vital for ensuring that legal frameworks remain relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving market conditions. Domokos and Weltherné Szolnoki (2020) highlight that well-structured performance measurement systems play a dual role: they not only guide internal decision-making but also provide valuable data that informs external regulatory bodies (Macchiavello & Siri, 2022). Such systems, when effectively designed, contribute to creating dynamic feedback loops that enhance accountability and support continuous improvement in governance practices. This research uniquely contributes by offering a systematic framework for understanding how organizations leverage ESG disclosures as strategic tools, influencing regulatory trends while simultaneously ensuring compliance.

These mechanisms can take various forms:

- Stakeholder Consultations: Regulators often engage with corporations, industry groups, and NGOs to gather input on the proposed laws and standards. This iterative process ensures that the frameworks are both practical and impactful.
- Data-Driven Feedback: Corporate ESG disclosures provide regulators with empirical evidence on the success and limitations of current regulations. Patterns in reporting can highlight gaps or inconsistencies, prompting revisions or new guidelines.
- Collaborative Platforms: Organizations such as the United Nations Global Compact and the World Economic Forum serve as intermediaries, facilitating dialog between corporations and regulators. These platforms enable the exchange of best practices and the co-creation of standards that address global challenges.

The interplay between legal frameworks, corporate behavior, and feedback mechanisms has far-reaching implications:

- Enhanced Accountability: Transparent reporting and regulatory oversight reduce the risk of unethical practices, fostering greater trust among stakeholders.
- Innovation and Leadership: Organizations that proactively adapt to regulatory trends can position themselves as industry leaders, driving innovation and setting new standards.
- Global Alignment: Feedback loops promote the harmonization of international standards, reducing disparities between jurisdictions and enabling more effective global governance.
- Resilience: A dynamic regulatory ecosystem that adapts to corporate feedback and market trends ensures long-term resilience, enabling businesses and regulators to collaboratively address emerging challenges.

Feedback mechanisms between regulatory frameworks and corporate behavior are increasingly influenced by integrating human rights considerations. Studies underscore the importance of aligning ESG reporting with international human rights standards, noting that doing so not only fosters greater accountability but also mitigates the risk of reputational damage. Similarly, Vannieuwenhuyse (2023) highlights how arbitration outcomes can provide valuable insights for refining ESG regulations, creating a feedback loop that strengthens both compliance and governance.

## Conclusions

Ethical communication is essential for effective ESG reporting, as it builds trust between organizations and their stakeholders. Despite increasing sustainability demands, transparency and accountability in performance reporting are more important than ever. Clear and honest communication not only ensures compliance with legal standards but also strengthens an organization's reputation and fosters long-term success.

The connection between legal requirements, corporate behavior, and stakeholder expectations highlights the dynamic nature of modern governance. Regulations like the EU's Non-Financial Reporting Directive and the U.S. FTC Green Guides set a framework for truthful communication, but their success depends on companies prioritizing integrity. Missteps such as greenwashing or withholding key information damage trust, harm reputations, and slow progress toward sustainability goals, making alignment between regulations and corporate practices essential.

Going forward, organizations must find a balance between being transparent, accountable, and competitive. As regulations tighten and stakeholder scrutiny grows, businesses need proactive strategies that combine ethical communication with innovation. Using technology, fostering collaboration, and following global reporting standards will help companies overcome challenges while staying competitive. A novel contribution of this research is its demonstration of how corporate ESG communication is not merely a reaction to regulatory requirements but a proactive driver of regulatory evolution. By examining the dynamic interplay between disclosure practices and legal frameworks, this study highlights the strategic role of ESG reporting in shaping governance norms and industry standards.

Ethical communication is more than just a requirement—it is a strategic tool that builds trust, strengthens resilience, and creates value. By committing to transparency and integrity, organizations can meet stakeholder expectations, contribute to a sustainable future, and succeed in an ever-changing global environment.

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# The ideology of rashism as a basis for the transformation of ethical principles of journalism during wartime

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A journalist cannot be required  
by an official order to write or do  
anything that contradicts his or her  
own beliefs or principles.

(Code of ethics of a Ukrainian journalist)

## **Abstract**

*The ideology of rashism as a basis for the transformation of ethical principles of journalism during wartime*

The article examines the main basis of ethical dilemmas facing journalists in the context of Russia's attack on Ukraine. A comparative analysis of the attitude to journalistic ethical principles of media workers in the two countries is made. The modern standards of Ukrainian journalists are highlighted, which are based on the Code of Ethics of a Ukrainian Journalist (2013 edition) and the regulatory recommendations of the Commission on Journalistic Ethics (2022). The systematic departure from the Code of Ethical Standards of Russian journalists and their involvement and service to the state propaganda machine are also analyzed. This article uses a combination of research methods, including comparative content analysis of Ukrainian and Russian journalistic practices, discourse analysis of selected media materials, and normative analysis of the codes of journalistic ethics in both countries, and documented case studies of media behavior since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This normative-comparative framework makes it possible to identify key ethical principles, examine their (non)application in practice, and highlight the ideological forces that shape wartime journalism in both countries. This should not only cause indignation in the world community of journalists and their complete exclusion from the media field and a ban on any participation in covering events abroad. A brief history and reasons for the ethical decline of Russian journalism are given. The main types of violations of journalistic ethics in the Russian media are listed. In addition to the strong pressure on freedom of speech, the weakening of ethical norms is caused by the involvement of journalists in imperial ideas. It is determined that society and journalists as a part of it largely agree with the ideas of the government. The main reason for the service of Russian journalism to the political regime today is the ideology of rashism, which gives the Russian people a "special civilizational mission," deprives the enemy of human features, and puts propaganda in the place of truth. It is concluded that Russian journalists not only violate ethical norms but also, in cooperation with the regime and the Russian Orthodox Church, become co-creators of a new type of propaganda based on the ideology of rashism. Ukrainian researchers emphasize the concept of "ethical man," which should be the first place for a journalist and every citizen during war. The behavior of Russian journalists in the conditions of Russia's attack on Ukraine is called the cultivation of anti-ethics at the cost of human lives. The author calls such activities genocide against the Ukrainians. The consequences of the main violations are incitement of hostility and the treatment of the Ukrainian military and civilian population as subhuman, the consequences of which are torture and brutal murders. Rashism is called the reason for the transformation of the ethical principles of journalists on both warring sides, the ideology

that leads to war, forces Ukrainian journalists to create principles of self-regulation for new circumstances based on the Code of Ethics, and for Russian journalists become the reason for the rejection of the ethical tenets.

**Keywords:** ethics, anti-ethics, propaganda, imperial ideology, rashism

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Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine poses a challenge for the world, particularly for journalists, to once again address the issue of media ethics during wartime. The media are crucial in shaping public opinion and unifying society during military conflicts. However, they have a special responsibility to adhere to professional standards and ethical norms, as any violations can have serious consequences for society and state security. The primary ethical challenge for the media in wartime is balancing professional standards with the national interests and the interests of each citizen. However, the view of the nature of war as a difficult test for collective and personal conscience raises the issue of journalistic ethics particularly acutely—as something that can save lives. Ukrainian researchers emphasize the concept of “ethical man” (Tolstov & Moskvín, 2023, p. 15), which should be the first place for a journalist and every citizen during war.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, although it forced the adaptation of traditional ethical standards of the media to the new situation, did not reject the observance of professional standards of journalistic ethics. Rashism as the state ideology of the Russian Federation, based on the ideas of the “special civilizational mission” of Russians and intolerance toward other peoples, created unprecedented challenges for the work of journalists around the world, especially for Ukrainian journalists in the combat zone. Issues of information security, protection of public interests, and preservation of professional standards when covering military events with an enemy that does not adhere to international law in waging war are of particular importance.

However, despite all the difficulties of the situation, Ukrainian journalism continues to adhere to ethical standards in reporting information in Ukraine and abroad, which cannot be said about Russian journalism. In both cases, the ideology of rashism is the main reason for the transformation of ethical standards. In the case of Ukrainian journalism, this transformation takes place in compliance with the Code of Ethics of Ukrainian Journalists, and in the case of Russian journalism, with complete disregard for the Code of

Ethical Standards of Russian Journalists. Although both codes define honesty and impartiality as the main ethical requirements in the work of journalists.

To better understand the ethical divergences in journalism under wartime conditions, this article is structured into three distinct parts. The first part focuses on Ukrainian journalism and its ethical self-regulation mechanisms amid the war. It examines how Ukrainian journalists navigate between national responsibility and professional integrity, and how media institutions enforce ethical standards even during martial law. The second part analyzes the ethical collapse of Russian journalism under the influence of rashist ideology—a blend of imperialism, totalitarianism, and religious fundamentalism. This part highlights how journalism in Russia has become an active instrument of state propaganda and moral disinformation.

Such a division helps clarify the contrasting logics of media practice in Ukraine and Russia and avoids conceptual overlap between two fundamentally different journalistic environments. It also allows for a more precise examination of how ethical commitments are either upheld or systematically undermined depending on the political and ideological frameworks in which journalists operate.

The third section is devoted to analyzing how rashism displaces truth and what role journalism plays in this process.

## **The dilemmas of Ukrainian journalists during Russia's attack on Ukraine: Ethical struggle with unethical rashism**

### **The ethical foundation**

Thus, traditional journalistic standards undergo significant changes during wartime. If earlier, even in modern journalism theory, the emphasis was on the balance of opinions as a mandatory element, now giving the aggressor a chance is equated with creating an artificial balance. This means giving a platform to terrorists, which is no longer ethical. At the same time, according to journalistic ethics, even during wartime, journalists must maintain honesty in reporting information. “Lying for the sake of victory, hiding the truth is just as harmful as misleading for the sake of any other goal, no matter how noble it may seem” (Kuz'menko et al., 2023, p. 4).

The a priori involvement of a journalist with some ideological, political, religious, commercial, or other doctrines can be tantamount to lying. An analysis of the activities of Russian journalists shows systematic involvement and service to the state propaganda machine. This should not only cause indignation in the world community of journalists and their complete exclusion from the media field and a ban on any participation in covering events abroad. However, at the same time, one cannot call the activities of journalists from the country that was attacked biased if their materials talk about the aggressor and the victim, and not about two warring parties or two participants in the conflict. Honesty precisely requires a journalist to call all parties to the conflict by their names. From this it follows that journalists (of Ukrainian and foreign publications) should avoid pseudo-involvement, that is, understand the situation well enough to provide reliable information to recipients.

Respect for the public's right to full and objective information about facts and events is the first duty of a journalist, as stated in the Code of Ethics of a Ukrainian Journalist. The reason why it is worth continuing to tell the truth even during the war is the deepening of problems through silence, according to the Commission on Journalistic Ethics of Ukraine, which bases its activities (2001) on the Code of Ethics of a Ukrainian Journalist (two editions—2002 and 2013). It even examines the features of self-regulation of Ukrainian media during the period of martial law in Ukraine in a collection dedicated to the activities of journalists and media in the period after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 (Kuz'menko et al., 2023). The collection examines specific examples and even issues warnings to journalists and their editorial offices for violating the Code (Kuz'menko et al., 2023).

### **Self-regulation and professional standards**

On the one hand, wartime conditions impose objective restrictions on freedom of speech: not to report operational details of the movement of troops, equipment, hits, and destruction after enemy strikes, not to show the faces of fighters, not to talk about planned, postponed or canceled operations, about military units, methods, and tactics of their actions. On the other hand, the problem that requires self-regulation is the attitude toward the enemy and “concern for the safety of the audience” (Kuz'menko et al., 2023, p. 3), especially those who are under occupation. The Commission on Journalistic Ethics

as truthful and timely information that saves lives (Kuz'menko et al., 2023) defines the essence of professional standards. Therefore, the Commission explains the terminology in detail, for example: the concept of "invasion" is narrower and is used to describe an attack by the Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine. The concept of "armed aggression" includes both invasion and actions not directly related to the crossing of the state border by armed forces. The Commission on Journalist Ethics emphasizes the inadmissibility of double standards, even regarding information about the enemy and prisoners of war, and encourages adherence to neutral vocabulary and the use of terms contained in Ukrainian legislation and international law.

Special attention is paid to the issue of human dignity:

Every person deserves respect and dignity even after death. ... A journalist always has an alternative, how to show a tragedy and remain within the limits of compliance with professional ethics standards (Kuz'menko et al., 2023, p. 15).

It is important to note that the current legislation does not contain separate norms regarding professional and ethical standards of journalists' activities in the war zone, which emphasizes the importance of the work of professional organizations and the expert community in establishing and monitoring such standards. In war conditions, the role of self-regulation of the media community increases, and "imposing certain restrictions contributes to the fulfillment of professional duties" (Kuz'menko et al., 2023, p. 2).

### Limits and responsibilities

The Commission on Journalistic Ethics emphasizes that in times of war, as in times of peace, compliance with journalistic ethics is a condition for high-quality professional journalism: it is unacceptable to justify violations of the Code of Ethics by wartime circumstances (Kuz'menko et al., 2023), and even vice versa, to adhere to journalistic ethics even more carefully during wartime:

- Use correct terminology when covering offenses; do not spread assumptions or unproven accusations under the guise of facts.
- In publications about offenses, do not mention signs that determine the identity of a person or group of people (race, nationality, region of

residence, disease, etc.). Crime has no nationality or “attachment” to a specific region.

- It is unacceptable to divide Ukrainians into “us” and “them,” especially in times of war. The media should refuse to rebroadcast stereotypes that incite interethnic, interregional, religious, and other enmity; and form a biased negative attitude toward a certain group of people.
- Comprehensively cover the lives of certain social groups, giving a voice to the representatives of these communities.
- Avoid simplified options, analyze facts and phenomena that concern the audience in more depth, and help them understand the real reasons for events.

## **Russian journalism during Russia’s war against Ukraine: ethical decline as complicity with the regime**

### **From censorship to total control**

The Russian constitution theoretically provides for freedom of speech and the press. However, the Russian government has introduced numerous laws that make it difficult for journalism to be independent. Although the history of Russian journalism over the past century has repeatedly experienced the oppression of freedom of speech and has chosen to serve as propaganda. The first legislative act of the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution in Russia was V. Lenin’s “Decree on the Press,” according to which newspapers were closed that “called for disobedience to the government,” “sowed unrest by slanderous distortion of facts,” “called for actions of a criminal nature.” That is, any objectionable media could be accused and closed. The basis of Soviet propaganda was the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, and the nature of propaganda changed with the historical development of the USSR.

Since the early 2000s, anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western propaganda in Russia has been carefully developed and implemented through journalism, film production, songs, humor and satire, and the printing of propaganda books. A telling example of this “democratic”—as international geopoliticians called it—period is the films “Brother” and “Brother-2,” which contain propaganda of Ukrainophobia, terrorism, and rashism.

Since 2012, at the beginning of Vladimir Putin's third presidential term, legislative measures have been introduced to ease censorship, which has led to a situation in which journalists must carefully navigate between professional ethics and potential legal consequences. Since 2014, Russian propaganda has become openly totalitarian. At the same time, a document regulating the professional activities of media workers in Russia exists. The Code of Professional Ethics of a Russian Journalist, approved by the Congress of Journalists of Russia on June 23, 1994, in Moscow, establishes clear requirements for professional standards. According to this document, as well as most codes in the world, a journalist is obliged to disseminate and comment only on information of which he is confident, making every effort to avoid causing harm due to incompleteness, inaccuracy, or deliberate concealment of socially significant information.

### State media and war propaganda

The systemic deterioration of professional standards and ethical norms reached its peak after the full-scale invasion of 2022. In modern conditions, propaganda in Russia is always openly used in tandem with censorship: censorship cuts off any dissent, and propaganda forces people to think about the interests and goals of the ruling elite. In particular, the status of "foreign agent" has been introduced, which can be applied to anyone who is under "foreign influence," and the definition of this influence is very vague in the law (Radio Svoboda, 2025). The control system has led to the development of a media environment where journalists either face significant pressure to align their coverage with state interests or serve the system at the expense of ethical journalistic principles. Even social media in Russia is under tight control. Roskomnadzor (Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media) requires owners of social media accounts with an audience of more than 1,000 people to provide identification data. Russian lawmakers are discussing a bill that would force owners of accounts with more than 10,000 followers to provide personal data to the federal censor, and failure to comply with the requirements will result in the channel being blocked (Ukrinform, 2024). These measures are part of the Kremlin's broader efforts to eradicate criticism and strengthen control over the Russian information space, where not only media outlets or individual journalists will be subject to censorship but also ordinary citizens.

With such activities, Russia dropped from 155th place to 164th in the Press Freedom Index in 2024 alone. In a record-short time, it created new media outlets designed to spread Kremlin propaganda in the occupied territories of Ukraine. In addition, after the start of the “special operation,” the Russian authorities “cracked down on the last independent media outlets” more severely than ever (Slovo i Dilo, 2024).

The main channels for spreading propaganda today are the largest television channels. Among them, the Rossiya-1 channel occupies a special place as it is a mandatory all-Russian state television channel and the main mouthpiece of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VDTRK). The second most influential is the NTV channel, which belongs to the media division of the state gas giant Gazprom. These channels are actively used to disseminate the official position of the authorities and shape public opinion, demonstrating examples of anti-ethics and complete involvement in pro-government politics not only in matters of Ukraine (Džanpoladova, 2016). However, after a full-scale invasion, they do this with particular systematicity. It can be said that since the Russian economy is put on military rails, the media are focused on propagandistic complicity in the war. In the Russian budget for the first year of a full-scale war, 114.8 billion rubles or 1.7 billion dollars were allocated for financing state media (“Russia-1,” “Russia Today,” TASS, the Ministry of Defense channel “Zvezda”), and for 2025, 1.4 billion dollars (Slovo i Dilo, 2024).

Significantly, at the same time, those Ukrainian journalists believe that the ethical principles of journalism in wartime require significant rethinking, by the new circumstances, but in no way abandoning basic professional standards. Russian journalists, under pressure or knowingly, abandon basic ethics in the service of propaganda.

### Ethical codes ignored

Russian journalists violate professional ethics by directly justifying and legitimizing the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, inciting hatred on ethnic, religious, racial, or other discriminatory grounds, blackmail, and threats. Calls to encroach on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine (and other European states, former Soviet republics) and to violate the borders and state borders of Ukraine, calls to forcibly change or

overthrow the constitutional order and seize state power (Mova i vijna, 2024) became particularly relevant during the war.

Other serious violations of journalistic ethics are as follows:

- deliberate distortion of facts and dissemination of false information, manipulation of content, reuse of old footage to create fake news, staging with actors instead of real people,
- disrespect for human dignity—publishing the names of the deceased before the relatives are officially notified, the consequences of violence, demonstrative mockery of interrogations of prisoners,
- neglect of the standard of separating facts from comments and value judgments,
- unfounded generalizations and conclusions, not supporting them with any evidence or results of sociological research, “pseudo-references” or materials without indicating the sources of information,
- incorrect terminology, assumptions, or unproven accusations,
- division according to the characteristics that determine the identity of a person or group of people (race, nationality, region of residence, disease);
- opposition of “us” and “them,” retransmissions of stereotypes that incite interethnic, interregional, religious, and other enmity,
- depersonalization of the victim by journalists—which can be considered the worst violation against humanity—according to the “logic”: since the Nazis are in power in Ukraine, they are guided by an inhuman ideology; therefore, they do not deserve human treatment, and therefore they cannot be treated as people, that is, they are inhuman.

Due to such violations, Russian journalists become accomplices in the crimes of Russian soldiers and those Russians who support the so-called “special operation,” which in reality is genocide against the Ukrainians.

Tragically, violations of professional standards of journalistic ethics in the Russian media are global, since until recently Russian propaganda was distributed in at least 40 languages of the world in 160 countries.

## **Ideology instead of truth in the Russian media: rashism as the basis of anti-ethics**

### **Historical and ideological roots**

Noting the systemic violations of journalistic ethics and understanding the historical reasons for the constant precarious position of the media in Russia, the question still arises, what can force a person who chose the mission to serve the truth and knows at least about the existence of a professional Code of Ethics to serve the anti-human policy of the government.

Monitoring of the Russian media shows that the Russian Federation uses the same mechanisms and interpretations and produces the same meanings as Nazi propaganda during World War II (Petrenko, 2023).

As we can see, the main problem of Russian journalism is not the lack of relevant codes of journalistic ethics, but “the complexity of their practical implementation and the problems of the quality of ethics in the media and its real impact on human actions” (Drożdż & Drąg, 2018, pp. 97–98). Considering the reasons for this situation, we can conclude that the main one that forces us to abandon the mission of journalism is the implementation of the ideology of rashism in Russian journalism in both the ideological and applied sense.

Since 2014, and especially after the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the political ideology and social practice of the Russian regime of the late 20th and early 21st centuries has increasingly been called “rashism” (from Russia, “Russia” and “fascism”) or Russian fascism. Indeed, all previous names—Russian imperialism, Russian chauvinism, Russian world—do not reflect the professed ideology and post-civilizational state of Russian society today. The ideology of rashism is built on the idea of a “special civilizational mission” of Russians, a single righteous “elder brother,” the liberation of “brotherly peoples,” intolerance to elements of the culture of other peoples, totalitarianism, and imperialism of the Soviet model, and the use of Russian Orthodoxy as a moral doctrine in geopolitical instruments of influence (Hado, 2022).

Since Russia’s imperial ambitions date back to its founding, society has been shaped for centuries by the ideology of the messianism of the Russians. Ignorance of history or deliberate distortion of facts leads to an unquestioning belief in the idea of the superiority of the Russian “older brother” over the Ukrainians. The Muscovite and later Russian tsars understood well that

without a great past, it was impossible to create a great empire, so they chose the strategy of rewriting their historical past and even appropriating someone else's.

Therefore, undoubtedly

the secret of media manipulation lies not in creating a new language of lies, but in appealing to previously cultivated beliefs. The dream of Russian imperialism, the revival of the great Church, and the fulfillment of a historical mission are enough to justify crimes, rape, aggression, and hatred (Zwoliński, 2024, p. 40).

### Media as tool of imperial manipulation

Russian consciousness loses its identity without the imperial component, which has been built up over centuries, and which is the essence of Russian patriotism (Zwoliński, 2024). The unifying factor for the national heterogeneity of Russia is an ideology built on myths and a complete distortion of the history of Rus-Ukraine. The very existence of Ukraine historically crosses out all the foundations of imperial ideology as an older brother, as the cradle of Christianity, and as the founder of the geopolitical order of Eastern Europe.

That is why “the main motive for the actions of the modern Russian state turned out to be the restoration of the empire, in the Soviet version or the times of Peter the Great” (Zwoliński, 2024, p. 40) with the addition of elements of fascism and Nazism, which Russian propaganda ardently condemns. Serving the imperial idea was the main driver of public life in Russia for centuries. For the sake of the desire to live in a new great empire, not only journalists but also religious leaders renounced the truth. Therefore, two significant social forces have long agreed to call what was beneficial to propaganda true (Hado, 2022).

In addition to the strong pressure on freedom of speech, ethical norms have weakened due to the involvement of journalists in imperial ideas. Society and journalists largely agree with the ideas of the government, “giving them a new, effective content—following traditional cultural codes” (Zwoliński, 2024, p. 40). The influence of the Russian government's propaganda on society and journalists is so strong that society and the same journalists themselves “add” the necessary stories to a specific idea. Propaganda simply applies to people's historical experience and allows them to express aggression, anger, and humiliate others, as Russian television hosts do. The ideology

of rashism has become a litmus test for contemporary journalistic ethics not only in Russia. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it was apparent that international media outlets were under the influence of the charm of Russian imperial ideology. Russia's imperial ambitions, promoted by the propaganda machine, made even supporters of democratic societies admire the great Russian culture and history. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that within the "empire" those who should have been impartial and served the truth as their calling lived by this idea.

## Conclusions

The lack of journalistic ethics in the Russian media is not just a professional problem, but a systemic phenomenon that has serious consequences for society and the international community. In the context of Russia's attack on Ukraine, the price of cultivating anti-ethics by Russian journalists is human lives. The consequences of the main violations are incitement to hatred and the treatment of the Ukrainian military and civilian population as subhuman, the consequences of which are torture and brutal murders.

Russian journalists, in cooperation with the regime and the Russian Orthodox Church, are becoming co-creators of a new type of propaganda based on the ideology of rashism. The goal of such propaganda is not to convince, as in classical propaganda, but to create a new information field where the government has a monopoly on the truth, so the truth and history can be rewritten under new political needs. In this case, neither journalists nor society knows which will be the "truth" tomorrow. This makes Russian propaganda especially dangerous and makes Russian journalists accomplices in crimes.

It can be concluded that rashism is the reason for the transformation of the ethical principles of journalists on both warring sides. It is this ideology that leads to war, forces Ukrainian journalists to create principles of self-regulation for new circumstances, and for Russian journalists becomes the reason for the rejection of ethical principles.

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# **The role of ChatGPT in teaching managerial decision-making in higher education lessons from an experiment**

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## Abstract

*The role of ChatGPT in teaching managerial decision-making in higher education lessons from an experiment*

The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly impacted higher education, influencing both learning and teaching processes. This study examined the effectiveness of applying the ChatGPT language model in higher education through a decision-making experiment, comparing the methods and outcomes employed by students and the students' approaches. The research aimed to evaluate students' satisfaction and the efficiency of AI support in decision-making. The findings revealed that the methods and decisions employed by ChatGPT often aligned with students' approaches, although notable differences were observed in some cases. Participants positively assessed ChatGPT's objectivity and rationality although its inability to account for special contexts emerged as a limitation. The results highlight the opportunities and challenges of AI-supported decision-making and emphasise the need for further research to ensure the effective integration of this technology.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, higher education, decision-making

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In recent years, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has presented new opportunities across various domains, including higher education and decision-making. ChatGPT, a GPT-based language model developed by OpenAI, is a notable example of this technology. Built on natural language processing (NLP), ChatGPT is increasingly used to address diverse challenges. Its capabilities include processing large volumes of textual data and quickly summarising complex information, making it a valuable tool in decision-making. The evolution of AI and ChatGPT has significantly impacted higher education, offering universities new possibilities that influence learning, teaching, and research.

This study examined the effectiveness of integrating ChatGPT into decision-making processes within the context of teaching decision-making in higher education. Using a group of students' experiences, the research explored the differences between the decision-making methods chosen by students and ChatGPT and the resulting decisions made by humans and AI. Additionally, it assessed students' satisfaction with ChatGPT's decision-making methods and outcomes. The findings aim to serve as a foundation for further

research on effective collaboration with language models, maximising their benefits while mitigating potential risks.

In the following sections, the use of ChatGPT in higher education is first reviewed based on the literature, focusing on its benefits and challenges for educators and students, as well as its pedagogical applications and limitations. Subsequently, an exploration is made into how ChatGPT and similar language models can support decision-making, discussing their advantages and risks in this domain.

## **ChatGPT in higher education**

The advent of generative artificial intelligence, particularly models such as ChatGPT, has sparked transformative discourse in higher education, raising diverse perspectives on its implications. This literature review highlights recent research exploring the benefits and risks of ChatGPT's integration into higher education, focusing on teaching, learning, student engagement, and institutional practices.

Among its advantages, several studies emphasise ChatGPT's potential to enhance learning experiences in higher education. Aristovnik (2024) explains that ChatGPT facilitates personalised learning by adapting to individual student needs, thereby promoting engagement and a deeper understanding of course materials. This capability enables a tailored educational approach where students interact with AI to clarify concepts and receive immediate feedback, simulating a more interactive learning environment.

Similarly, Li (2024) noted that integrating ChatGPT into teaching practices can significantly complement traditional pedagogical methods. ChatGPT functions as a supplementary educational tool that enhances critical thinking and analytical skills by providing students with access to a vast repository of information and resources. This support is particularly valuable in complex subjects requiring immediate clarification.

According to Shahzad et al. (2024), ChatGPT is also a valuable educational resource. They can utilise ChatGPT to streamline administrative tasks such as grading and feedback, allowing them to focus more on the strategic aspects of teaching. The efficiency gained through automation can improve the quality of education by enabling educators to dedicate more time to developing engaging and effective course materials. Furthermore, a systematic review

by Dikilitaş et al. (2024) highlights that educators can leverage ChatGPT for professional development. The model assists in designing course content, developing assessments, and exploring innovative teaching strategies, thereby enhancing the overall teaching effectiveness.

Jensen (2024) suggests that ChatGPT can bridge information gaps among students with diverse backgrounds. By providing equal access to information and resources, AI can help reduce disparities in educational opportunities. This “knowledge democratisation” fosters an inclusive learning environment where all students can engage with educational content, regardless of their prior experiences or academic backgrounds.

Despite its numerous benefits, several studies underscore the significant risks associated with ChatGPT’s use in higher education. Abulaiti et al. (2024) identified trust as a critical factor in the acceptance and adoption of ChatGPT in educational contexts. Reliance on AI for educational purposes can provoke scepticism among both students and instructors regarding the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content. Since trust is essential for effective interaction with AI tools, perceived unreliability may hinder the integration of ChatGPT in educational environments.

One of the primary concerns related to ChatGPT’s integration is its potential impact on academic integrity. As Nebieridze and Jaja (2024) emphasise, the ease of access to AI-generated content raises issues of plagiarism and the authenticity of student work. Students may be tempted to use AI to generate essays or complete assignments, undermining the core values of “academic trust.” Instructors face the challenge of developing frameworks and policies to effectively address these ethical dilemmas while leveraging the benefits of AI.

Song et al. (2024) offers a nuanced view of students’ experiences with ChatGPT. While some students reported positive interactions, others expressed concerns about the quality and relevance of AI-generated responses. This variability in perception underscores the need for further research to understand the factors influencing mixed experiences, such as familiarity with the technology, learning styles, and disciplinary differences.

Additionally, Dikilitaş et al. (2024) revealed that while some students welcome the integration of AI tools, others approach it with apprehension, fearing that AI might replace critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This dichotomy indicates a pressing need for educational institutions to address these concerns through targeted training and awareness campaigns.

The integration of ChatGPT into higher education thus entails both advantages and challenges. On the one hand, it offers enhanced learning experiences and support for educators and bridges informational gaps, potentially transforming the educational landscape. On the other hand, issues related to trust, ethical considerations, and diverse student experiences require careful attention. Future research should focus on establishing best practices for introducing AI tools such as ChatGPT in higher education, ensuring they enhance rather than undermine academic integrity and the overall educational experience. Continuous dialogue among stakeholders—students, educators, and policymakers—is essential for effectively managing AI integration in higher education.

## **ChatGPT in decision-making**

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, has spurred extensive research on its impact on decision-making across various sectors, including business, education, and engineering. This literature review synthesises recent studies that focus on the benefits and risks associated with integrating ChatGPT into decision-making processes, highlighting its transformative potential while addressing the challenges it poses.

One of ChatGPT's key advantages in decision-making lies in its ability to process large volumes of data and generate actionable insights. According to Chuma et al. (2024), ChatGPT facilitates data-driven decision-making by providing real-time analysis of extensive datasets. Its capability to quickly identify patterns and trends enables organisations to apply strategies effectively and respond rapidly to market dynamics, thereby enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, Jiang et al. (2024) emphasise that integrating ChatGPT with data visualisation tools further enhances its utility, particularly in higher education, allowing decision-makers to better interpret complex data and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and curriculum development.

The integration of ChatGPT with decision management systems, such as Pega's Adaptive Decision manager (ADM), illustrates another dimension of its utility in business environments. Kumar (2024) discusses how combining ChatGPT with ADM can facilitate more nuanced decision-making processes. By simulating human interactions, ChatGPT helps decision-makers pose contextual questions and suggest personalised solutions based on

algorithmic analyses. This synergy improves flexibility and responsiveness in business operations, making decision-making more adaptable to changing circumstances.

ChatGPT also contributes to improving logical analysis within decision-making frameworks. Aljaž (2024) explores ChatGPT's application in the Theory of Constraints (TOC) thinking process, highlighting its role in identifying bottlenecks and proposing logical solutions. Its ability to process complex logical frameworks and generate clear, actionable insights makes ChatGPT a valuable tool for managers engaged in strategic planning. ChatGPT enhances the decision-maker's ability to adapt quickly to evolving business conditions by providing immediate feedback and information.

In the context of business information systems, Diantoro et al. (2024) examined how ChatGPT can support strategic decision-making in medium-sized enterprises. Their study finds that such enterprises can leverage ChatGPT to understand market trends and operational efficiency without requiring extensive data analysis teams. ChatGPT enables smaller organisations to access advanced analytical capabilities, by democratising decision-making tools, levelling the playing field with larger competitors.

Despite these advantages, numerous studies highlight the risks associated with the use of ChatGPT in decision-making. Reliance on ChatGPT raises concerns about overdependence on AI systems, potentially reducing human oversight in critical decision-making processes. Nivetha and Prasanth (2024) argue that while ChatGPT provides valuable insights, it cannot replace human judgement, particularly in complex decision scenarios involving ethical considerations. They cautioned that excessive reliance on AI could undermine critical thinking and moral reasoning, especially in decisions with significant social or ethical implications.

An exploratory study by Xu et al. (2024) raised questions about the quality and reliability of ChatGPT's outputs, particularly in subjective decision-making contexts, such as engineering design. While the tool may generate creative solutions, its effectiveness diminishes when subjective preferences or ethical dilemmas arise. The study warns that AI-generated recommendations may reflect biases inherent in training data, necessitating thorough validation by human decision-makers to ensure alignment with organisational values and ethical norms.

Integrating ChatGPT into existing decision-making frameworks can also present challenges, particularly in aligning AI capabilities with organisational

goals and processes. Kumar (2024) notes that while ChatGPT facilitates decision-making through its interactive capabilities, organisations must consider how to effectively incorporate this technology into their existing systems. This requires comprehensive training and adaptation of existing decision-making protocols to fully exploit the benefits of AI tools.

In conclusion, the integration of ChatGPT into decision-making processes offers significant benefits, including enhanced data analysis, adaptive decision-making, and improved logical reasoning. However, it also poses critical risks, such as ethical concerns, AI dependency, and integration challenges. Future research should focus on developing frameworks that balance ChatGPT's strengths with the need for human oversight in decision-making. Addressing these challenges will enable organisations to harness the full potential of ChatGPT to improve decision-making outcomes while safeguarding against the inherent risks of AI technologies.

## Decision-making experiment—research design

The single group, i.e., self-controlled experiment, was conducted by the first author of this study within the framework of the *Managerial Decision-Making* course at *Collegium Humanum Warsaw Management University*, involving correspondence students from the *Management MA programme*. The student's task was to present and analyse an individual decision-making process based on the following criteria: (1) Clearly define the decision-making situation/problem. (2) Describe the decision-making process using an arbitrarily chosen method or tool. (3) Analyse your decision-making process: highlight the advantages and risks and how the latter can be managed. (4) Consult ChatGPT regarding the decision. (5) Compare your and ChatGPT's decision-making process and results and evaluate the differences. The decision-making methods students could apply during the experiment are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Decision-making methods used in the experiment

I. Decision tables	II. Decision charts
1. Pros and cons	4. Decision tree analysis
2. Paired ranking	5. Flow diagram
3. Grid analysis	6. Cause-and-effect diagram

Annexe 1 includes a brief description of these decision-making methods. These methods allow managers to make decisions systematically, ensuring that choices are well-informed, logical, and aligned with organisational objectives. A common feature of these two categories of methods is the calculation and maximisation of subjective expected utility. The need to ensure objectivity drove the selection of methods in the experiment.

The effectiveness of incorporating ChatGPT into individual decision-making was examined using the above decision-making methods. The *research questions* were as follows: (Q1) How do the *decision-making methods* chosen by students and ChatGPT differ for a given problem? (Q2) How do the *decisions* made by students and ChatGPT differ? (Q3) How satisfied are students with ChatGPT's *decision-making method and outcomes*?

The following *hypotheses* were formulated for the study: (H1) The decision-making methods chosen by students and ChatGPT differ for a given problem, depending on the nature of the decision-making situation. (H2) The decisions made by students and ChatGPT are not identical and depend on the alignment of their chosen methods. (H3) Students' satisfaction with ChatGPT's involvement varies based on the alignment of decision outcomes.

The research methodology involved *quantitative statistical analysis* for H1 and H2, focusing on the correlations between demographic characteristics, decision-making methods, and outcomes. For H3, a *qualitative content analysis* of opinions regarding satisfaction was performed.

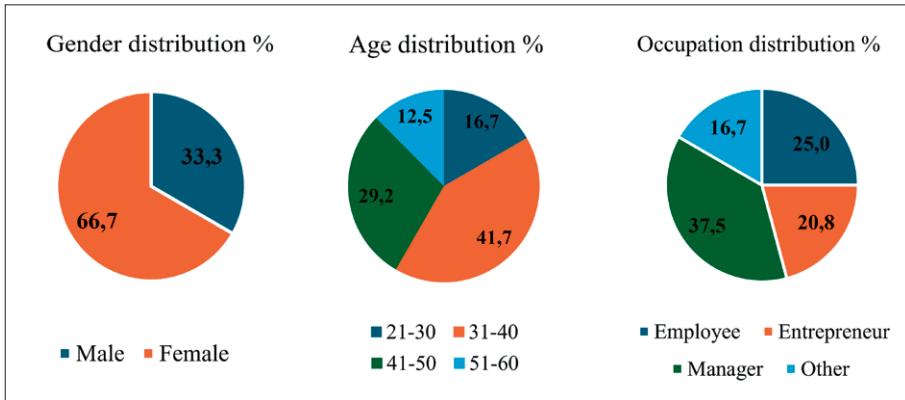
## Statistical analysis of the results

The study involved 24 participants, two-thirds of whom were women and one-third were men. Regarding age distribution, the majority were under 40 years old (58.4%), with the 31–40 age group being the most represented (41.7%, 10 participants), followed by the 41–50 age group (29.2%, 7 participants). Regarding occupation, 9 participants (37.5%) held managerial positions, one-quarter were employees, and the remainder identified as entrepreneurs or other professions. The characteristics of the sample are illustrated in figure 1.

Participants were free to select their decision-making problem, context, and the method used to solve it. Three-quarters of the group chose workplace-related decision-making situations, while the remainder opted for personal scenarios. The majority of participants (70.8%, 17 individuals) chose

the *Pros and cons* method to solve their problems, followed by 16.7% (4 participants) using *Grid analysis*, 8.3% (2 participants) choosing *Paired ranking*, and 4.2% (1 participant) applying the *Cause-and-effect diagram*.

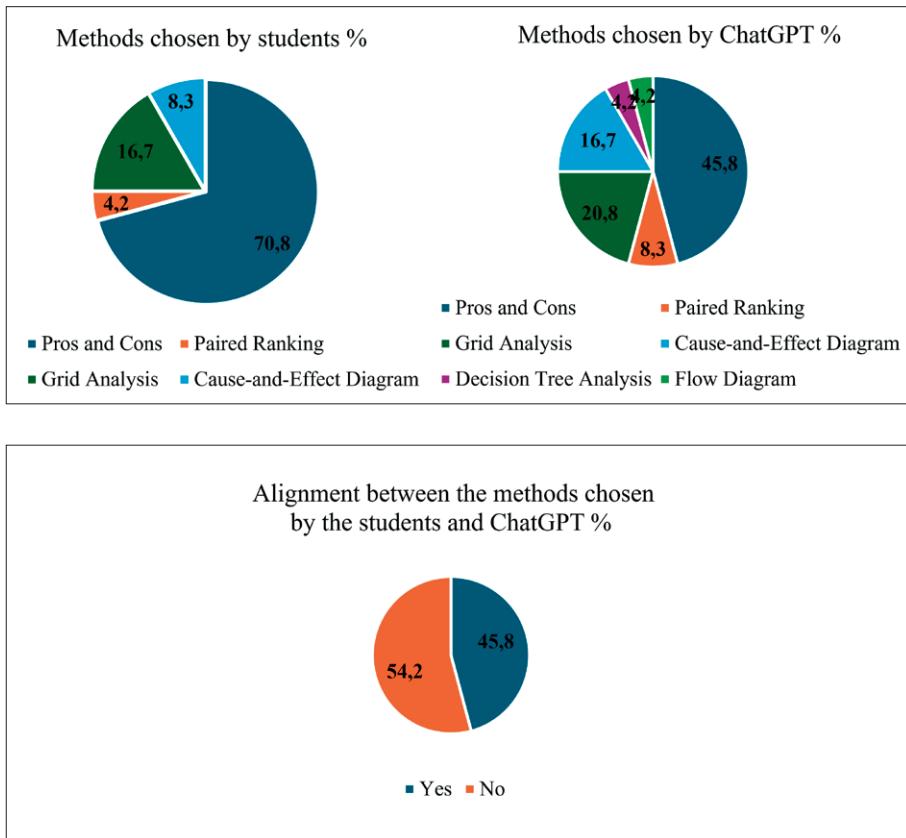
Figure 1. Characteristics of the sample by gender, age, and occupation



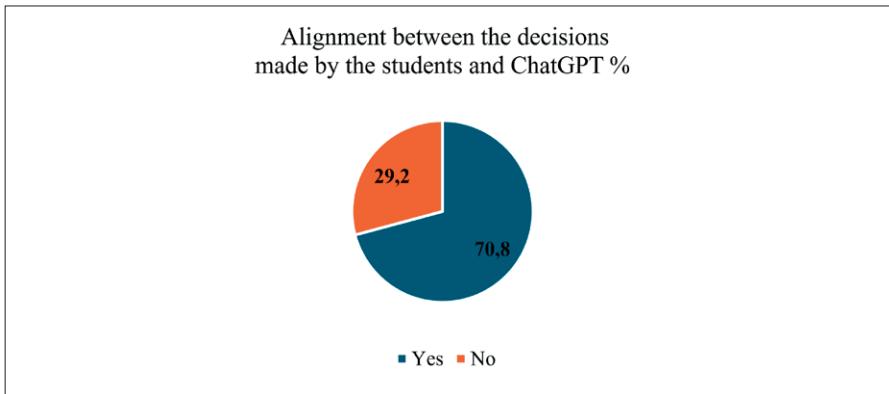
When consulting ChatGPT for decision-making, it was observed that the chatbot frequently used the *Pros and cons* method, similar to the students, in 45.8% of cases. The second most common method was *Grid analysis* (20.8%), followed by the *Cause-and-effect diagram* (16.7%). Additionally, ChatGPT employed two unique methods—decision tree analysis and flow diagram—*Decision tree analysis* and *Flow diagram*—each in one case. The comparison between the students' and ChatGPT's selected methods is shown in figure 2.

The first part of hypothesis H1—that the decision-making methods chosen by students and ChatGPT are not identical—was confirmed, albeit not significantly: in 54.2% of cases (13 instances), the chatbot used a different method than the students. However, the second part of H1, suggesting that the choice of methods correlates with the nature of the decision-making situation, was not statistically supported. No significant relationship was found between the decision context and the type of method selected (Pearson's chi-square test:  $\rho = 0.502$  for ChatGPT and  $\rho = 0.797$  for students).

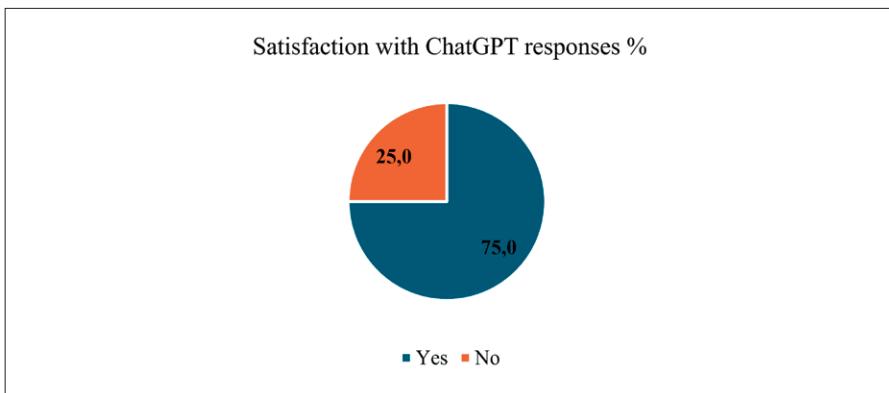
Figure 2. Comparison of the decision-making methods chosen by students and ChatGPT



Regarding the alignment of outcomes between students and ChatGPT, it was found that in nearly three-quarters of cases (70.8%), both arrived at the same decision. This partially confirmed hypothesis H2, as 29.2% of cases showed divergent results. However, the claim that outcome alignment depends on the alignment of methods was not supported statistically (cross-tabulation analysis:  $\rho = 0.851$ ). Figure 3 illustrates the alignment of the decisions made by the students and ChatGPT.

**Figure 3.** Alignment of decisions made by students and ChatGPT

A total of 75.0% of students were satisfied with the outcomes generated by ChatGPT, particularly those whose decisions aligned with the chatbot. Only 4 students rejected ChatGPT's suggestions and remained confident in their own decisions. Hypothesis H3, which posited that the alignment of decisions strongly influences satisfaction with ChatGPT, was strongly and statistically confirmed ( $\rho = 0.000$ ). Figure 4 illustrates students' satisfaction with ChatGPT's responses.

**Figure 4.** Students' satisfaction with the ChatGPT responses

The statistical analysis partially validated the hypotheses. For H1, while the claim that students and ChatGPT chose different decision-making methods was supported, no significant correlation was found between decision

contexts and method selection. For H<sub>2</sub>, the divergence in outcomes was confirmed, but it was independent of method alignment. H<sub>3</sub> was unequivocally validated, as the alignment of decisions between students and ChatGPT strongly determined satisfaction with ChatGPT's responses.

## Content analysis of opinions

The content analysis of opinions explored users' experiences with the use of AI, specifically ChatGPT, in decision-making processes. Several key themes and trends emerged, summarising ChatGPT's role and impact in these processes. The key themes include: (1) objectivity and rationality, (2) the importance of precision and question formulation, (3) limitations of AI and disregard for special contexts, (4) suggestions and alternatives, (5) comparisons between AI and user preferences, and (6) the effectiveness of AI in complex decision-making.

A recurring observation was that the responses provided by ChatGPT were often more rational and objective than the users' own decisions. Users noted that while they attempted to exclude emotional factors from their decision-making, AI-generated responses considered less emotion-driven elements, aiding in more objective decision-making. One user highlighted, "I received a well-structured response from the AI, including considerations that pointed towards a much more rational direction."

Several users emphasised that the quality of ChatGPT's responses greatly depended on how precisely and thoroughly the questions were developed. If the questions were insufficiently specific, the AI could not provide completely accurate or detailed responses, which could affect the decision-making process. One user commented, "If I had phrased my question in more detail, I would have received an even more comprehensive answer."

Another important point raised by several students was that ChatGPT did not always account for local or specific economic, political, and cultural factors that could be critical in certain decisions. One participant remarked, "In my opinion, the risk analysis did not consider economic, human, and political factors specific to a country."

Typically, AI does not provide a definitive answer but instead outlines multiple options or alternatives from which the user must select the most appropriate one. This characteristic was seen as particularly beneficial for

decision-makers, as it allowed for the consideration of multiple perspectives. One user noted, “ChatGPT does not provide a clear-cut answer but rather offers possibilities and suggestions.”

The document frequently referenced comparisons between user decisions and those suggested by ChatGPT. Analyses showed that, in many cases, users' own decisions and AI-recommended solutions were similar. One participant stated, “The AI's decision does not differ from mine; I positively evaluate the AI's decision because it supports the correct direction.”

In several instances, AI offered more detailed and comprehensive analyses, particularly when choosing among multiple alternatives or addressing complex situations. One user observed, “My original decision-making process was simple and quick, but the AI's proposed method allowed for a more detailed and thorough analysis.”

The advantages of incorporating ChatGPT into decision-making processes based on opinions, are summarised in the word cloud shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.** Advantages of integrating ChatGPT into decision-making

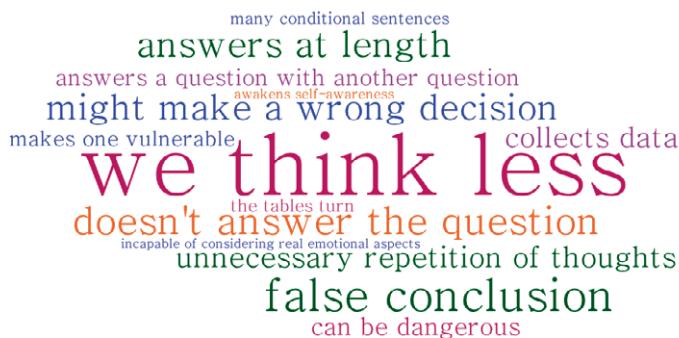


The risks associated with incorporating ChatGPT into decision-making processes, based on opinions, are summarised in the word cloud shown in Figure 6.

The analysis indicates that ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for supporting decision-making, particularly in situations requiring the rapid collection and synthesis of information. However, its limitations are also evident, especially regarding the neglect of local or specific circumstances and the importance of precise question formulation. Nonetheless, most participants positively

evaluated ChatGPT's responses and felt that the AI's assistance added value to their decision-making processes.

Figure 6. Risks of integrating ChatGPT into decision-making



## Conclusions and recommendations

This study examined the effectiveness of applying ChatGPT in higher education, with a particular focus on its role in managerial decision-making processes. Conducted at the Collegium Humanum Warsaw Management University, the experiment involved students comparing their decision-making methods with responses generated by ChatGPT. The objective was to understand the differences between human and AI-based decision-making methods and outcomes and to assess students' satisfaction with ChatGPT's decisions.

Although the experiment was conducted on a limited sample, and the findings cannot be generalised, they provide a foundation for broader research. However, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) The decision-making methods used by ChatGPT and the students were not always identical; however, in many cases, the outcomes were similar. This indicates that while ChatGPT uses different methods, they often lead to reliable results. (2) Most students were satisfied with ChatGPT's decisions, particularly when they aligned with their own. This suggests that AI-generated decisions can be relevant and valuable in decision-making. (3) ChatGPT's decisions were objective and rational, yet they sometimes overlooked specific local factors (e.g., economic and political conditions). This limitation highlights the importance

of considering local contexts in decision-making. (4) ChatGPT typically did not provide definitive answers but offered multiple alternatives, aiding decision-makers in analysing and choosing among options.

Further research is recommended to better understand how ChatGPT can be more effectively integrated into higher education and decision-making processes. Educators and students should receive more detailed training on the application of AI, with particular emphasis on the precision of prompting. It is essential to consider AI's limitations, including its neglect of local contexts and cultural factors, as well as ethical concerns that may hinder critical thinking and moral reasoning.

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## Annex 1.

Table. Brief description of the decision-making methods used in the experiment

Decision-making method	Description	Purpose	Example
<b>I. Decision tables</b> Decision tables organise and analyse decision-making scenarios in a tabular format. They consist of conditions (criteria or variables) and their corresponding actions or outcomes.		To handle complex, rule-based decisions by systematically evaluating all combinations of criteria.	Choosing a supplier based on price, quality, and delivery time.
<b>1. Pros and cons</b>	This method involves creating a list of advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons) for each option. The lists are compared to determine the best choice.	To weigh the options qualitatively and make straightforward comparisons.	Deciding whether to outsource a project by evaluating cost savings (pro) versus quality control risks (con).
<b>2. Paired ranking</b>	Options are compared in pairs, with preferences recorded for each comparison. Scores are totaled to rank the options.	To prioritise options based on subjective judgments or preferences.	Choosing the best candidate for a managerial role by comparing their qualifications pairwise.
<b>3. Grid analysis</b>	Also known as a decision matrix, grid analysis scores options against criteria that are weighted by importance. The scores are totaled to identify the best choice.	To make objective, data-driven decisions that account for multiple criteria.	Selecting a marketing strategy based on cost, reach, and effectiveness.

Decision-making method	Description	Purpose	Example
<b>II. Decision charts</b>	Decision charts visually represent choices, alternatives, and outcomes, often in a flowchart-like structure. They clarify the steps and consequences of decisions.	To simplify complex decision-making by mapping out potential paths.	Deciding whether to launch a new product based on market research results.
<b>4. Decision tree analysis</b>	A decision tree is a graphical tool that models decisions, potential outcomes, probabilities, and costs. Branches represent choices, and their consequences are mapped out.	To evaluate decisions involving uncertainty and multiple steps.	Assess whether to invest in a new technology based on projected returns and associated risks.
<b>5. Flow diagram</b>	Flow diagrams depict the sequence of decisions and their potential outcomes using symbols and arrows. They illustrate the process from start to finish.	To understand the decision-making process step by step and ensure that no aspect is overlooked.	Developing a process for resolving customer complaints
<b>6. Cause-and-effect diagram</b>	Also called a fishbone or Ishikawa diagram, it identifies the root causes of a problem by organising potential causes into categories.	To diagnose issues and focus on addressing root causes rather than symptoms.	Investigating the reasons for the declining product quality.

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## **Educational challenges of developing multiple communication competences in the era of convergence. Case study of the Transilvania Creative Camp**

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## Abstract

*Educational challenges of developing multiple communication competences in the era of convergence. Case study of the Transilvania Creative Camp*

The purpose of our article is to show, on the basis of theoretical analysis and empirical research, that participating in intercultural educational activities based on the project method can have a beneficial impact on the development of multiple communication competences. This paper combines participant observation with elements of content analysis and presents a case study of a summer school, the Transilvania Creative Camp. The participants' focus was to create a promotional strategy for the heritage of Lăpuş Land in Northern Transylvania (Romania). It can be noted that whilst implementing the main objectives of the project, specifically the development of marketing communication skills, the participants developed, among others, competences in the field of intercultural, visual and media literacy. This initiative fits perfectly into the needs of contemporary education—it is a response to globalisation processes, shapes awareness of intangible cultural heritage, and promotes sustainable tourism and intercultural understanding.

**Keywords:** media literacy, media literacy competences, intercultural competences, project-based learning, intangible heritage

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The Transilvania Creative Camp (TCC) is a project carried out cyclically as an initiative of the Transilvania University of Brasov (Romania) and Meisei University Tokyo (Japan) in cooperation with other academic centres. It was developed in the summer of 2014 (Nechita et al., 2018) and has been ongoing since, except the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The next edition of the project is planned for the summer of 2025. This summer school is organised as a project-based learning with very in-depth workshops and fieldwork, conducted by national and international experts and scholars. The participants are to be given a task to prepare a promotion of the heritage of Lăpuş Land in Northern Transylvania (Romania) in order to develop their marketing communication skills (Nechita et al., 2018).

The subject of this analysis is the third edition of the project (2023), in which I had the opportunity to participate. It took place from September 1st to September 7th and effectively was an immersive summer school focusing on the theme "Creative Destinations and Heritage Interpretation." The

blended programme combined in-person sessions from September 1st to 7th in Târgu Lăpuş and surrounding villages with online work preceding and evaluating on-site activities. It was organised by Transilvania University of Brasov, University Meisei Tokyo (Japan), University of Applied Sciences in Hannover (Germany), Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences (Germany), University of Dunaujvaros (Hungary), Polytechnic University of the Marche (Italy), School of Social Sciences Nova Gorica (Slovenia), The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow (Poland) and West University Timișoara (Romania). The project group consisted of German, Hungarian, Slovenian, Japanese, Romanian, and Italian students working under the supervision of faculty members, communication professionals, and representatives of the Tourism Information Centre in Târgu Lăpuş.

Târgu Lăpuş is a region in the northwestern part of Transylvania characterised by beautiful landscape, nature, cultivation of traditional customs and costumes, and architecture (especially wooden churches and typical gates carved in wood). As the authors of the article emphasise:

The majority of the inhabitants preserved the identity of their ancestors through traditional houses, traditional agriculture and old recipes for food and drinks [...]. The local people are still wearing their traditional clothes during the religious rituals or at traditional weddings (Nechita et al., 2018, pp. 66–67).

The region is religiously and ethnically diverse. Alongside the Romanian population, Hungarians and Roma people live here. The majority of the inhabitants belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The rest have ties to the Reformed Church or are affiliated with the Pentecostal, Greek Catholic, and Roman Catholic churches. The unique tourist attraction of the region is of course Wooden Churches of Maramureş listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Nevertheless, in Târgu Lăpuş among the historic buildings are also the Roman Catholic Church, the Calvinist Church, and the Orthodox Church. This illustrates the mosaic nature of the region.

Importantly, the effects of mass tourism development, especially the commercialisation of traditions and the degradation of forest areas, have not yet been felt in these areas. For students representing Generation Z, mostly coming from industrialised areas, this is a unique opportunity to get to know a unique area of traditional culture. It is also an opportunity to promote sustainable tourism and the protection of intangible heritage (Nechita et al., 2018).

As mentioned earlier, the activities in the Târgu Lăpuş region were preceded by online meetings, which allowed participants not only to introduce the aims, topics and history of the project but also to get to know each other. In this phase, students also underwent training in the effectiveness of video marketing and familiarised themselves with the topic of sustainable rural destinations. The core activities took place on site in the form of workshops, lectures, presentations, study visits, observations, and interviews with local residents and included, among others: a visit to Rogoz Wooden Church and the local museum, workshop on wooden sculpture (Rogoz), visiting traditional sheepfold (Ungureni), watching the buffalo herd (Rogoz), attending a traditional orthodox religious service and visiting nearby wooden churches (Cupşeni, Costeni), hay making workshop (Groşii Tibileşului village), and Hungarian evening (Dămăcuşeni village). It was an immersive experience that allowed students to become familiar with the natural, religious and ethnographic diversity of the region. The participatory nature of the activities was also significant: taking part in the harvest, milking sheep, dancing together, having a bonfire, and tasting local cuisine. There has certainly been an increase in awareness of the multiculturalism of this region and the presence of the Romanian, Hungarian and Roma communities. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that all students were accommodated in the boarding house of the local secondary school. As a result, they had an opportunity to get to know each other better and develop friendly relationships during shared meals and informal meetings. Such solutions support group integration and the development of various competences, especially communication and intercultural ones. The last phase, conducted online, allowed for evaluating the promotional video. In the beginning, students were divided into five multicultural groups. Their task was to prepare a promotional campaign for the region. During the camp, they collected various types of documentation, such as photos, short films and notes. The task required attentiveness and an analytical approach to the topic. It concerned such elements of local tradition as folklore and traditional costumes, wooden churches, cuisine, crafts and agriculture, and natural heritage.

The novelty and advantages of this educational practice have already been described and diagnosed several times, especially by its main initiator and organiser, Florin Nechita. However, all works so far have referred to the 2016 edition of the project. The educational dimension of the initiative was particularly emphasised, especially in the context of the participation of students

from Japan (Nechita et al., 2018; Nechita & Tanaka, 2021). The scientific reflection focused on topics such as: the concept of community-based tourism as a basis for the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage (Nechita et al. 2018), framing the project into three dimensions of the Hofstede's Model such as: individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence (Nechita & Tanaka, 2021). The publication "Creative Destinations & Heritage Interpretations. The story of the Transilvania Creative Camp 2016" issued after the aforementioned edition is also worth referencing. It includes a discussion of the genesis and concept of the summer school, participants' memories, essays and theoretical reflections, for example on: "a creative cultural tourism combined with heritage interpretation" (Candrea) or visual anthropology (Burlacu).

However, it is worth looking at this project from a different perspective and specifying its multidimensional impact on the professional and personal development of the participants. As some scholars claim, emphasising the complexity of the project-based learning concept, "sometimes, the projects enlarge the instructional curriculum without any predetermined expectations in advance, resulting in some surprisingly effective and novel pedagogical outcomes" (Ling, Liu, & Nechita, 2024, p. 757). What defines this method is a learner-centred approach, both in terms of knowledge and skills. It allows students to affect independent and self-directed learning, develop motivation, practice teamwork and problem solving. The special educational environment in which the students found themselves allowed them to develop competences that went beyond the previous assumptions of the project. By all means, they managed to achieve the main goal, i.e., prepare promotional materials. At the same time, however, it is worth pointing out other dimensions of this educational experience in the sphere of competences. Without a doubt, participation in the project contributed to the development of several competences such as intercultural, visual and media skills.

## **Methodology**

This study combines participant observation, elements of content analysis (an analysis of visual materials prepared by students) and case study elements. As Shin & Miller point out, participant observation refers to a data collection method "in which researchers take part in everyday activities related to an area of social life in order to study an aspect of that life through the

observation of events in their natural contexts" (Shin & Miller, 2022, p. 120, quoted after: McKechnie, 2008, p. 599). The case study is defined as "an intensive study of a single unit" (Shin & Miller, 2022, p. 119, quoted after: Gerring, 2004, p. 341) or a "research strategy which focused on understanding the dynamics within single settings" (Shin & Miller, 2022, p. 120, quoted after: Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). Furthermore, as Pawłowska claims, quoting Stake, "The defining criterion of a case study, as a certain way of conducting research, is not the methods used, but the interest in the individual characteristics of the case" (Pawłowska, 2011, p. 269, quoted after: Stake, 2008, p. 119).

In 2023, I had the opportunity to take part in TCC in the double role of a supporting teacher and an observer. Consequently, I was able to observe the students' activities during the implementation of the 2023 edition of the project—from the organisational phase to the evaluation phase. It gave me a unique opportunity to examine the situation from the inside during my participation in the project activities, as well as the informal ones. The collected data are the result of the virtual presence in online meetings, on-site workshops and training, as well as the accompanying presence during field-work. The collected materials include field notes such as observations of the actors (the students) and their interactions (between group members and their attitude towards members of the local communities), informal interviews, casual conversations, together with an analysis of the materials produced by the participants (films, photos, promotional videos, presentations). A combination of these methods allows us to recognise the impact of the participation in the Transilvania Creative Camp 2023 on the development of the youth's intercultural, visual and media literacies. The presented findings do not exhaust the topic. They are only a contribution to further research.

## **Developing intercultural, visual and media literacy in the context of the Transilvania Creative Camp 2023**

### **Intercultural competences**

As Liisa Salo-Lee pointed out 18 years ago:

Increasing multiculturalism in all societies is one of the consequences of globalization. People encounter, globally and locally, other people with different world views, values,

communication ways and habits on a more frequent base than ever before. These encounters are further facilitated by the development of technology. Multiculturalism and intercultural interactions are, at best, a possibility for dialogue and creativity. (Salo-Lee, 2007, p. 76)

These comments remain relevant today and take on even greater importance. There is no doubt that in recent years there has been a growing awareness of the importance of intercultural competences among policymakers and civil society. The issue of intercultural competence is raised by UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ministries of education, universities and non-governmental organisations. The intercultural competences prove to be essential for safe and conscious living in modern societies, effective communication, and cooperation with individuals with various cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, as authors of “Intercultural Competences. Conceptual and Operational Framework” published by UNESCO state:

the scope of intercultural competences is much wider than formal education. They have to reach out to a new generation of cyberspace citizens, notably young men and women who have unimaginable opportunities for global conversations (UNESCO, 2013, p. 5).

The complexity of the environment in which young people function requires them to develop a range of literacy and competencies. For the purposes of this paper, I refer to the concept of intercultural literacy as “all the knowledge and skills necessary to the practice of intercultural competences” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 17) and I am inclined here to the definition of intercultural competence recently proposed by Barrett and Borghetti. They see it as

a combination of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding which enable one to:

- understand and respect people whose cultural affiliations appear different from one's own
- respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people, and to establish positive and constructive relationships with them
- understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations by reflecting critically on one's encounters with cultural 'difference' (Barrett & Borghetti, 2025, p. 96)

This project is an unquestionable application of the theoretical concepts to real life. Intercultural competences were actively taught, promoted and implemented here. The situation the students found themselves in was undoubtedly a challenge. They developed communication skills in contact with international members of their groups, as well as in contact with the local community. The language of the project was naturally English, but when talking to local residents, the students used the support of their Romanian colleagues. In addition to the training provided by guides and specialists, the importance of informal conversations, reflective observation, and non-verbal communication cannot be underrated. Therefore, intercultural competence can be discussed in two ways: in the student-student relationship and in the student-representative of the local community relationship.

The complexity of this experience should also be underlined. It is worth showing them in relation to the components of intercultural competence identified and described by Barrett (2016) and Byram et al. (2022). In the case of this project, you can undoubtedly consider the presence of the consecutive components:

- on the level of values: “valuing cultural diversity”,
- on the level of attitudes: “openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices” and “respect”,
- on the level of skills: “analytical and critical thinking skills,” “skills of listening and observing,” and “empathy” (Barrett, 2016; Byram et al., 2022, quoted after Barrett & Borghetti, 2025, p. 106).

Some examples confirming the hypothesis about the effect of participation on the improvement of intercultural competences are worth mentioning. Because of the participant observation, it can be concluded that the students:

- Faced an ethnically and religiously diverse community, and their reactions showed respect and interest (e.g., during the service),
- had an opportunity to observe a different model of life: traditional farming, flock tending, which they observed with openness and commitment, often engaging spontaneously in these activities (e.g. involvement in harvest work, helping to milk sheep etc.),
- treated local people with respect (e.g., during workshops in the open-air museum, a ceremonial dinner after the Sunday service, or trying on regional costumes),
- responded in the vast majority with openness to local cuisine that differs from contemporary dietary trends.

Of course, the observations made are fragmentary and it is impossible to draw any decisive conclusions based on them. It would certainly be worthwhile to ask questions about young people's previous experiences in this matter and their influence on these specific reactions. However, the observations mentioned earlier emphasise the value of this individual experience. Attitudes of engagement and openness were observed among 90% of the participants. Attitudes towards distance, as one might assume, were not the result of prejudice, but rather of a lack of appropriate preparation and attachment to the lifestyle of large metropolises. It is significant that this observation does not apply to students from Tokyo, who, despite a different cultural background and sometimes a language barrier, participated in the project activities with remarkable enthusiasm and attentiveness.

### Media and visual competences

The burgeoning influence of the media in all spheres of our life is one of the global tendencies. It calls for the active implementation of various media education programmes. The second aim of this article is to present "Transilvania Creative Camp 2023" as an opportunity for developing various media literacy competences.

Over the years, many definitions and ideas of media literacy have been created to reflect different points of view, different approaches and goals, and to consider different audiences (Potter, 2022). The European Commission describes media literacy as "the ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content and to create communications in a variety of contexts" (Recommendation 2009/625/EC). It should also be underlined that media literacy is intrinsically interdisciplinary by virtue of using the tools and methods of such fields of studies as sociology, psychology, race studies, cultural studies, art, or aesthetics. Developing students' 21st-century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, or problem solving has been a leading effort in our globalised society. The objective of media literacy education is to provide citizens with the tools and skills needed to be confident and capable media consumers. The above-mentioned competences should be developed not only during the years of formal education but also in an informal context and without any age limitations. Because of its importance, media education is now required in many curricula across the world. A great number of educational institutions,

from kindergartens to universities, tend to incorporate it into their courses to improve students' media literacy skills. In accordance with the concept of lifelong learning, it is also integrated into professional courses and the third-age universities' curricula.

In this work, I draw on the often quoted research of Renee Hobbs, who sees the term "digital and media literacy" as

full range of cognitive, emotional and social competencies that includes the use of texts, tools and technologies; the skills of critical thinking and analysis; the practice of message composition and creativity; the ability to engage in reflection and ethical thinking; as well as active participation through teamwork and collaboration (Hobbs, 2010).

A media-literate citizen is supposed to follow a five-phase process that consists of: accessing (media and technologies), analysing (media messages) and evaluating (in a critical way), creating (media messages in a reflexive way), participating (through the publication and dissemination of their own media messages in order to reach the desired audience) (Thoman & Jolls, 2008).

In the case of students at the "Transilvania Creative Camp 2023," whilst working on the project, they all had an opportunity to develop essential competencies and skills of digital media literacy as they:

- Used media and technology tools smoothly to gain information about the region and shared suitable and relevant information with others (access).
- Perceived and analysed a variety of messages by using critical thinking, studied their quality, accuracy, authenticity and credibility whilst examining the potential effects or consequences of messages (analyse & evaluate).
- Primarily composed a content using their creativity with awareness of purpose, audience, and composition techniques (create).
- Seemingly followed ethical principles and felt responsible for the impact of their work (reflect)
- Worked individually and collaboratively, both online and in person, to attain the project goals (ACT) (Hobbs, 2010).

As mentioned before, the current article underlines the impact of the experience on the improvement of media literacy recognition. There is no doubt that thanks to the participation in the "Transilvania Creative Camp" students had an opportunity to develop several media literacy skills whilst

increasing their awareness of this concept. This project allowed the participants to learn through practice and study and create various products and, as a result, develop several media literacy skills. As you may conclude from the aforementioned paragraph, media literacy requires skills and knowledge. We define skills as “a cognitive ability that humans use to perform a particular task relevant to media use” (Potter, 2022). In a more detailed and complex presentation, the development of media literacy skills can be seen in several subcategories (Potter, 2022). While working on the campaign media products, students definitely advanced exposure skills (selection, searching and accessing) and information processing skills (analysis skills, meaning construction skills: creating alternative meanings, synthesising). Moreover, they certainly evolved a wide spectrum of production skills in conceptual as well as creative dimensions. First, they learned how to produce a media message, developed the ability to think about what to communicate, how to structure information within the message, how to make it precise, coherent, persuasive, how to produce innovative messages and be creative when producing messages. While presenting the project’s benefits, there is one more aspect that cannot be omitted, i.e., social skill advancement. The participants used media to develop relationships and collaborate with others to achieve the project goals (online collaboration, using social media as a tool of communication, group work). As a result of a variety of workshops, trips, meetings with local people, and partaking in local traditions, participants managed to become familiar with the unique character of the region and prepare an effective promotion strategy. Moreover, an additional result of the project was a significant advancement of digital and media literacy skills. Certainly, to conclude the task properly, students had to be aware of how to create persuasive messages.

Beyond media and digital literacy, there is another kind of literacy related to this experience that cannot be overlooked—visual literacy.

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyse the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture (The Association of College & Research Libraries).

Visual media competences are crucial in the context of students' future careers. There is no doubt that nowadays, visual media has an especially ample impact on consumers. This means there is both a strong necessity of critical reading of the images and a major demand of understanding how to use images to make people interested in a problem, draw their attention, make them think, tell stories, etc. By taking compelling pictures and working on the promotional videos, the students learned how to use the power of images. To tell a story, to make somebody interested in a picture, they needed certain skills. They needed to realise how to create a meaning, how to choose particular imagines, design and create meaningful images and, as a consequence, visual media.

The analysis can be based on materials posted on the LapusXplorers profile on the social networking site Facebook: photographs published between September 3rd and September 24th, 2023, constituting a visual chronicle of the project, and a 2-minute promotional video. The latter material deserves special attention. It brings the emotional characteristics of the region present in three layers: visual, verbal and sonic. The visual layer is a collage of elements that were considered distinctive for the region: handicrafts, traditional costumes, joint celebrations, nature, tradition, farm animals, farm work, wooden churches, shepherds, and joint dance. The verbal layer refers to very characteristic concepts and key words from such semiotic fields as nature, history, community, diversity, and tradition. The background of the utterances is the sound layer containing elements of traditional music, bleating, and the bells of a flock of sheep. The final creation has an idyllic and romanticising character.

Because of the project, the students learned how to create specific products. They noticeably developed their professional background and became more conscious about the commercial impact of their works; however, the immersion experience made them more sensitive and aware of product authenticity. This final result can be seen as absolutely significant from an ethical point of view.

Undoubtedly, a great number of internet narratives that appear as an effect of mass tourism, such as blogs, vlogs, social media storytelling, and commercial videos, tend to simplify an image of a presented region. Moreover, due to the globalisation process, territories lose their uniqueness. As Chen accentuates "Many studies have found that vlog productions have intensified misconceptions of certain cultures and societies due to the vloggers' insufficient

understanding of local culture" (Chen, 2022). The worldwide dissemination of such media products and their uncritical consumption can increase cultural stereotypes. In our case, a perfectly balanced and arranged programme allowed participants to avoid such simplifications and experience the cultural diversity of the area of Târgu Lăpuș. The camp experience resulted in a kind of autobiographical narrative ranging from pictures and videos to promotional campaign products. To conclude, it is worth noting that the participants' status cannot be recognised as 'tourists' as the mentioned output was inspired by a series of lectures, meetings, workshops, explorations, and conversations that develop cultural understanding.

Analysing the results of the project, we can observe how young people themselves visually articulated their perceptions of Targu Lapus. Exploring the environment should also be viewed as a key element of citizenship. Visual, digital and media literacy can be key facilitators of cultural awareness development and an arena for critical learning. For the main part of the group, exploring the Targu Lapus from the position of a global citizen was undoubtedly a formative practice. They had an opportunity to immerse themselves in a totally different environment to which they had been accustomed. It aided their socialisation, understanding of cultural differences and knowledge of local history or social issues. Moreover, it allowed them to become active observers and participants in the Transilvanian landscape and culture while also promoting the uniqueness of this region abroad.

The project can be defined as a pedagogic and research approach that helps students to reflect on the diversity of culture and historical complexity whilst documenting such issues through the use of digital media. As mentioned above, students were asked to produce a promotional campaign. However, we can assume that exploring the region resulted in the outreach of the commercial frames. In this case, we can talk about the reflective use of digital tools as students had a chance to reflect on heritage, intercultural diversity, and the like along with capturing these narratives or stories through the use of digital media.

The principal steps of this framework engaged the students in: visiting and exploring (confronting a totally different area in terms of culture, mentality, history, ethnography, landscape, language, cuisine, folk tradition, agriculture), collecting visual artefacts and/or producing some form of multimedia that capture the identity and the cultural landscape of the place and writing a reflective piece. The key concept of this task is that it links elements such as

youth attitude, the potentiality of media and the authenticity of the region. Moreover, the young participants appeared here in a double role—firstly as visitors—exploring and getting to know the region and, secondly, as ambassadors and creators of publicity. Not only were the students invited to use media as practical tools for capturing images or recording videos, which itself is a key to the development of media literacy skills. They were also inspired to reflect on more profound problems regarding the role of media in creating, communicating, for example through representation, framing, stereotypes, recreation, or advertising. There is no doubt that the project had a significant impact on its participants in developing digital, visual and media literacy skills and competences. Actually, one important factor needs to be mentioned here. The project idea was perfectly balanced. On the one hand, it drew from new technologies but, on the other hand, it was based on humanistic values such as cooperation, understanding, tolerance, and compassion.

## Conclusions

The *sui generis* nature and the unique experience of the Transilvania Creative Camp make it an example of good practice. It can be seen as a novel pedagogical model that aims at bridging creativity with cultural understanding, professional career and new media literacy skills. Furthermore, it promotes the acquisition of the targeted skills in the 21st century, such as creativity, problem solving and collaboration. Moreover, through this experience, students learn to value the aesthetic qualities of media while using their creativity for making promotional materials. The camp helps them develop the ability to think critically and media responsibility. They gain the understanding that their media products impact others and shape the way they think about the region. In this context, it is also possible to recognise that the project can offer an inspiring approach that can allow a link between the formal and the informal learning strategies. It can also be seen as an opportunity to participate in our digital society in an ethical, responsible and critical way.

As you can see, the project fits perfectly into the needs of modern education. As indicated above, such initiatives allow for the multidimensional development of competences. Importantly, they emphasise interdisciplinarity and convergence. They put young people in situations similar to those they will face in their professional lives. On the other hand, it should be

emphasised that this article is only a contribution to the research and that these comments are fragmentary. Of course, because the camp is a cyclical initiative, it would be advisable to continue research in the field of competence development. It is certainly worth continuing this initiative and conducting an in-depth analysis using various types of tools.

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# **Report from the 6th International Conference Media for Man**

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## Abstract

### *Report from the 6th International Conference Media for Man*

This article presents a report from the 6th International Conference Media for Man, held on May 8, 2025, in Krakow, Poland, organised by the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Pontifical University of John Paul II. The theme of this year's conference—Information Literacy Mindset—provided a platform for international scholars to reflect on the growing significance of information literacy in an era shaped by artificial intelligence, disinformation, and evolving media practices. The paper summarises the structure of the event, thematic sessions and key issues discussed. Particular attention is given to the interdisciplinary character of the debates, the ethical dimension of media use and the need for integrative approaches to media education. The conference highlighted the increasing relevance of information competencies as a foundation for responsible and participatory engagement in social life.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, communication education, digital society, disinformation, information literacy, interdisciplinary research, media ethics, media pedagogy, media responsibility, personalism

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On May 8, 2025, the 6th International Conference Media for Man occurred in Krakow. The conference was organised by the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Pontifical University of John Paul II. This cyclical conference is devoted to ethical issues in media and social communication. The aim of this article is to provide a synthetic account, analyse selected presentations, and summarise the discussions held during the event.

## Introduction and context

The history of the *Media for Man* conference is closely related to another long-standing initiative organised by the same faculty, the *Media Ethics Conference*. The 2025 edition marked the 19th meeting of the *Media Ethics* event, held under the theme *Safe Media – Security in the Media*.

This year, *Media for Man* focused on the theme *Information Literacy Mindset*. The central topics included the role of information in human life, the skills required to access and critically assess information, and the significance of

information within the context of emerging technological solutions. Participants sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of information literacy in human development?
- What is the significance of information in society?
- How is the information society being transformed by artificial intelligence?
- What are the latest research trends in this field?
- What ethical dilemmas emerge in the transmission and reception of information?
- How can we educate about this information?
- How can we communicate effectively and ethically in advertising, marketing, political communication, and image-building?

This topic is of particular relevance in the era of rapid technological development and its accompanying ethical challenges. The role of information literacy continues to grow during the expansion of AI, the proliferation of new media, and increasing societal information saturation. Academic debate on these issues contributes significantly to the development of media education, especially as today's media user is no longer a passive recipient but an active participant and engaged content creator.

## Organisers and participants

The conference was organised by the Faculty of Communication Sciences, the newest (seventh) faculty at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. The idea for its establishment was initiated by the late Rev. Prof. Michał Drożdż, founder and long-time director of the Institute of Journalism, Media, and Social Communication, and former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the same university. He also served for many years as the chair of the *Media for Man* conference.

This year's Organising Committee included dr Piotr Drąg and dr hab. Katarzyna Drąg, Prof. UPJPII. The Conference Secretaries were dr Urszula Dyrycz and dr Joanna Urbaś. A group of student volunteers also assisted with logistics and social media content creation.

Over 20 speakers participated in the conference, representing institutions from the USA, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, Finland, and Portugal. Institutions included: Miami Dade College, Transilvania University of Brașov,

University of Craiova, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, University North, European Ecocycles Society, Aalto University School of Business, University of Tokaj, University of the Algarve, Ludovika University of Public Service, Dallas University, and The State University of Applied Sciences in Jarosław. Many presenters were also participants in the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes. All sessions were conducted in English.

## **Opening and structure**

The conference was held entirely in person. Registration began at 8:40, followed by the welcome session at 9:00, featuring speeches by:

- dr hab. Katarzyna Drąg, Prof. UPJPII
- dr Piotr Drąg, Chair of the Conference Committee
- Rev. dr hab. Sławomir Soczyński, Prof. UPJPII, Dean of the Faculty of Communication Sciences
- Rev. prof. dr hab. Robert Tyrała, Rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

They officially welcomed the attendees and introduced the conference theme. The remainder of the event consisted of three thematic sessions, each chaired by a different academic: Dr. Piotr Drąg, Dr. Eric Belokon, and Prof. Dr. Sc. Ante Rončević. Each session concluded with a moderated discussion.

## **Thematic panels**

The central part of the conference programme consisted of three thematic panels, each addressing different dimensions of the evolving information landscape. The structure of the sessions reflected the interdisciplinary character of the event and enabled a multifaceted discussion on the challenges and responsibilities related to the acquisition, transmission, and ethical use of information. Moderated by recognised scholars from Poland, the United States, and Croatia, the panels gathered contributions from diverse research contexts, offering both theoretical insight and practical applications. The following section provides an overview of each panel and the key issues raised in the presentations and discussions.

### **Panel 1. Disinformation and organizational communication**

The first panel, chaired by dr Piotr Drăg, focused on disinformation and the challenges individuals face in navigating an environment inundated with false or misleading content. The presentations covered topics such as the interface between media and cognitive processes, disinformation among Slovak youth, mixed-method studies on fake news in Romania, and the impact of external pressures on internal organisational communication. This panel provided comparative insights into how different cultural and national contexts approach media literacy challenges.

### **Panel 2. Information literacy in education and practice**

The second panel, moderated by Dr Eric Belokon, explored the practical applications of information literacy across academic, business, and communicative spheres. Topics included the development of core research infrastructure, corporate responsibility through media, product communication (with a case study on non-alcoholic wines), meaningful communication tasks, and AI-driven decision-making in education. The session emphasised the need for applied media education—bridging theoretical understanding with real-world practice.

### **Panel 3. Ethics, truth, and personalism in communication**

The third panel, chaired by prof. dr s. Ante Rončević, addressed the philosophical and ethical dimensions of information. The presentations examined student collaboration in international educational projects, communication among minority language speakers, the role of truth in contemporary communication, and the “law of the gift” as a framework for understanding communication ethics. The final contribution offered a personal approach to media literacy and sparked a rich interdisciplinary dialogue.

## Summary and reflections

The *Media for Man* conference once again affirmed its role as an intellectually rigorous and socially relevant event in the field of communication and media studies. The 2025 edition, dedicated to the *Information Literacy Mindset*, served not only as a platform for sharing academic research but also as a reflective forum for considering the condition of the contemporary information society.

The presentations and discussions demonstrated that information literacy has evolved into a core competency—essential for responsible and ethical engagement in today's interconnected world. The rapid growth of artificial intelligence, increasing globalisation, and the changing media landscape all necessitate holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to information education. Collaboration among scholars, educators, media professionals, and civic institutions is critical.

The international and interdisciplinary nature of the conference encouraged the exchange of best practices and revealed a diversity of research methodologies and cultural perspectives. Particularly noteworthy was the event's grounding in media ethics—an area deeply rooted in the identity of the Faculty of Communication Sciences at UPJPII. In continuing the tradition of the *Media Ethics* conference, *Media for Man* reaffirmed that “media for man” is not only a motto but also an imperative rooted in scholarly and civic responsibility.



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