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REVIEW

Strategic Sociopolitical Narratives in Media: State Responses to Crisis Communication

Narrativas Sociopolíticas Estratégicas en Medios: Respuestas Estatales a la Comunicación de Crisis

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ABSTRACT

This work analyzes the sociopolitical discourses in Viber and Telegram groups during the crisis communication following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. From February 24 to October 31, 2022, we conducted a thematic analysis of speeches, interviews, and posts from three major channels on these platforms. This study uses an exploratory and descriptive research design, focusing on discourse features like syntax, rhetorical devices, topics, emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity. Data was collected from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's official channel, UNIAN, and KMSA, chosen for their high credibility and engagement. Using the KWIC method and the Text Analyzer Online App, we identified primary themes including war consequences, international financial support, and reactions to Russia's actions. Positive themes centered on 'Battlefield' successes and 'International financial support,' while recent negative themes such as 'Conditions for peace,' 'Post-war Russia,' and 'Russia loses war' highlighted a shift in discourse. Negative reactions dominated narratives about Russia, reflecting widespread opposition, whereas narratives about Ukraine's armed forces and international support received positive reactions. This analysis highlights the importance of media narratives in shaping public perception and state responses during conflicts, offering valuable insights for improving crisis communication strategies.

Keywords: Crisis Communication; Sociopolitical Discourse; Media Management Informational Operations; Psychological Impact; War Narratives.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza los discursos sociopolíticos en grupos de Viber y Telegram durante la comunicación de crisis tras la invasión rusa de Ucrania. Entre el 24 de febrero y el 31 de octubre de 2022, realizamos un análisis temático de discursos, entrevistas y posts de tres de los principales canales en estas plataformas. Este estudio utiliza un diseño de investigación exploratorio y descriptivo, centrándose en características del discurso como la sintaxis, los dispositivos retóricos, los temas, el tono emocional, el pensamiento analítico, la influencia y la autenticidad. Los datos se recogieron del canal oficial del presidente Volodymyr Zelenskyy, UNIAN, y de KMSA, elegidos por su alta credibilidad y compromiso. Utilizando el método KWIC y la aplicación en línea Text Analyzer, identificamos los temas principales, como las consecuencias de la guerra, el apoyo financiero internacional y las reacciones a las acciones de Rusia. Los temas positivos se centraron en los éxitos en el «campo de batalla» y el «apoyo financiero internacional», mientras que los temas negativos recientes, como «condiciones para la paz», «Rusia en la posguerra» y «Rusia pierde la guerra», pusieron

de manifiesto un cambio en el discurso. Las reacciones negativas dominaron las narrativas sobre Rusia, reflejando la oposición generalizada, mientras que las narrativas sobre las fuerzas armadas de Ucrania y el apoyo internacional recibieron reacciones positivas. Este análisis pone de relieve la importancia de las narrativas de los medios de comunicación en la configuración de la percepción pública y las respuestas estatales durante los conflictos, y ofrece valiosas ideas para mejorar las estrategias de comunicación de crisis.

Palabras clave: Comunicación de Crisis; Discurso Sociopolítico; Gestión de Medios de Comunicación; Operaciones Informativas; Impacto Psicológico; Narrativas de Guerra.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 30 years, the media has evolved into a crucial platform for discussing political and social issues. This transformation has significantly impacted how state governments communicate, particularly during crises. The traditional broadcast and print media have always been vital for disseminating information, but their role has become even more critical with the advent of digital media. Understanding the language of stories is essential for making informed decisions that can resolve crises, prevent their recurrence, and manage public perception of future events. In the context of Ukraine, the significance of media narratives cannot be overstated. Ukraine has been under constant threat from the Russian Federation, facing military, political, economic, social, and ideological challenges.[1] These multifaceted attacks make it imperative to examine sociopolitical narratives in media through a nuanced lens. The role of media in shaping national identity, bolstering morale, and fostering resilience is particularly vital in such a volatile environment.[2] The rise of social media platforms has added a new dimension to crisis communication. Sites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Viber, and Telegram have become indispensable tools for real-time information sharing and public engagement. These platforms facilitate immediate and widespread dissemination of information, enabling governments to reach broader audiences quickly and effectively. In crises, social media can mobilize support, disseminate critical information, and counteract misinformation.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict, drawing global attention and prompting extensive media coverage. The invasion not only intensified the need for effective crisis communication but also highlighted the power of social media in shaping public discourse.[3] As the conflict unfolded, the Ukrainian government and various stakeholders used media platforms to convey their narratives, garner international support, and sustain domestic morale.[4] Historically, Ukraine has utilized media to foster a sense of national unity and resistance against external threats. During the Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014, for instance, social media played a pivotal role in organizing demonstrations, spreading information, and galvanizing international support.[5] The lessons learned from these past events have influenced the strategic use of media in the current conflict. This historical context underscores the importance of understanding how sociopolitical narratives are constructed and disseminated during times of crisis, providing a foundation for the current study. This study focuses on analyzing the sociopolitical discourses that emerged in Viber and Telegram groups during the crisis communication related to the Russian invasion. These platforms were chosen due to their widespread use in Ukraine and their ability to facilitate rapid information exchange among large groups. The study examines the themes and narratives that dominated these discussions, exploring how they influenced public perception and state responses.

Research Problem

The main question of this study is how sociopolitical stories on Viber and Telegram affect how people discuss crises during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Because these platforms are so important for modern communication, it is important to look at what people are saying and how they are reacting in these groups to understand what this means for crisis management in a broader sense.

Research Focus

This study examines at the topics, themes, and responses of people to sociopolitical stories shared through Viber and Telegram groups. The goal is to find the common conversation patterns that happen during times of crisis.

Research Aim and Questions

The purpose of this study is to look at the sociopolitical stories that people are talking about on Viber and Telegram groups that are related to the ongoing communication crisis caused by the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military. The study's goals are to find answers to the following questions:

1. What themes do the messages cover?
2. What messages do the narratives convey?
3. What reactions do the narratives elicit from the public?

By answering these questions, this study hopes to give a full picture of how media stories affect how people think and how governments react to crises. This study is important because it could help make crisis communication plans better and make state bodies stronger when dealing with social and political problems.

Literature review

The media and how they affect government and political institutions have changed a lot in the last few years. This review of the literature looks at how media and politics change over time, with a focus on how digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok affect how people talk about politics. This article shows how governments and politicians use these sites to help people talk to each other, share information, and keep an eye on political activities. In addition, this review looks into how crisis communication theories like image repair, situational crisis communication, and organisational renewal can be used to handle the public's view of the government during crises. It is also looked at how print and broadcast media can be used to make people better prepared for emergencies, lessen their negative effects, and make sure that decisions are made openly. The paper also explorehow complicated multi-channel communication can be and how that can cause polarised views. It also talks about what this means for national security and public administration. This review combines ideas from critical discourse analysis and political discourse analysis to find out how media stories affect how people think and how the government reacts, especially during sociopolitical crises. It also looks into how messaging apps like Viber, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp are used in political communication, which hasn't been looked into as much. This shows how important it is to use these tools strategically to build trust and influence.[6] There is an importance of understanding underlying mechanisms—whether sociopolitical narratives in shaping responses and outcomes in times of crisis.[7,8]

The sources showed that the media connects citizens to political/governmental institutions.[9] The literature showed that politicians and government used the media to facilitate public discourse and opinion exchange. The government used it to inform the public and monitor politicians and governments.[10] Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok dominate political communication channels and are used by politicians to win over voters and shape their worldview.[11,12] Media use in politics and crisis communication related to the state's public image use three crisis communication theories. Image repair, situational crisis communication, and organizational renewal theories. All three theories emphasize proactive measures, planning, and learning from mistakes.[13] The literature shows that print and broadcast channels are used to improve preparedness and planning for political and social emergencies, reduce the costs of adverse situations or disruptions to community functioning, ensure decision-making transparency, and reduce the perception of potential negative crises. Crisis perceptions are easier to manage with media. Correct behavioral models are adopted faster. People can understand hard facts and decisions through internet media.[14] Media has obvious benefits, but it creates multiple channels used by individuals and requires coordination. Multichannels harm politics by polarizing public and official communication perceptions.

Chmyr et al.[10] use semantic-ontological analysis to examine complex national security relationships. It suggests a national security-focused state function hierarchy. According to the structural-functional model, Ukrainian national security defends sovereignty and democracy. Bondarenko et al.[5] modernizes public administration by incorporating project management into territorial community development plans. Network system performance directly affects public management project maturity, researchers found. Importantly, they created a three-level local self-government project maturity model. Project maturity growth can be tracked by the coefficient of self-organization. To ensure education works, administrative pressure must be replaced by system management measured by indicators. This strategy encourages self-realization in line with global and societal goals. Shah and Shah[15] also think ahead about education and development. Ukrainian national security is poor. Bondarenko et al.[5] emphasize defense sector strategic planning and reform. This shows how laws and technology improve things. The study suggests systemic changes to preserve constitutional order and territorial integrity. It seeks to improve defenses, intelligence, and strategic military threat analysis. Studies on media use in politics and crisis communication, critical discourse analysis, and political discourse analysis focused on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok for socio-political crisis communication.[16,17,18] Using Viber, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp groups for this seemed outside the research scope. Politicians and governments must learn how to use messengers to build relationships, trust, and influence since they have an average open rate and CTR of over 80 %.[19,20,21,22] Also crucial is understanding how post, news, and interview language affects reactions.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is distinguished from political (and social) discourse analysis in some literature.[23] Sheyholislami[27] claims discourse analysis ignores political and social issues in favor of academic issues. CDA and PDA analyze different aspects, according to [1]. According to the researcher, the CDA examines

society, particularly language, power, and ideology. The PDA examines how politicians' language reflects their ideology, values, and beliefs. Dunmire [13] claims that PDA is only a political discourse analysis method to align CDA and PDA. Akimov et al. [2] discuss long-term goals and operational steps to improve public administration in national security. [2] It contrasts state and national security strategies for policy implementation. The study emphasizes improving administrative systems to address today's security issues. A humanistic model for human capital improvement using digitalized education and fuzzy mathematics is proposed by Semenets-Orlova et al. [25] Sydorenko et al. [28] examine how digital platforms have changed public administration strategic consulting and their importance. Consulting results can be included in long-term government executive plans, says the study. It describes how to set up digital consulting and how these tools can improve public administration strategic goals. Syvak et al. [29] say good government management requires good communication. It says the national information and communication space is a web of technological, educational, and cultural institutions that help government and citizens communicate. Venislavskyi et al. [30] discuss the biggest state security threats and their social impacts. Threats include international security, territorial claims, information wars, and armed aggression, especially from Russia.

METHOD

Descriptive research finds relationships between variables, while exploratory research is flexible and uses qualitative data. Study variables were discourse and behavior. Syntax, rhetorical devices, topics, emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity of posts, speeches, news, and interviews were discourse variables. Ryan & Bernard [24] identified publication themes using KWIC. The method finds text keyword frequency. Next, keywords are theme-categorized. Our study analyzed posts and transcribed interviews for themes using Text Analyzer Online App. [32,33] The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) online app was used to analyze posted and transcribed texts' emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity, while context details were manually analysed. [18] The app's four-dimensional framework measures socio-political narratives' analysis, clout, authenticity, and emotion. User reactions to posts, speeches, news, and interviews were the behavioural variable. Angry, Sad, Frightened, Disgusted, Haha, Love, and Wow Likes were included. The emotion classification came from. [15] Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provided the theoretical foundation for this research. [28] Channel data were directly retrieved. It is important to note that this variable represented group behavior.

Data collection and analysis

The study analysed speeches, interviews, and posts on sociopolitical topics found in three channels on Viber and Telegram delivered or published over the recent 9 months, between 24 February till October 31, 2022. These channels were as follows (see Figure 1): President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's official channel (can be joined via the link: http://bitly.ws/x6Yk), UNIAN (Ukrainian National Independent Agency of News) (can be accessed via the link: https://t.me/uniannet), and KMSA (Kyiv Municipal State Administration) (can be joined via the link: https://t.me/KyivCityOfficial). These channels were chosen because they had more than 500 000 subscribers which indicated a high level of credibility. Moreover, the credibility of the selected channels was indicated by a verified badge (the blue checkmark) which could be found in a header. One more reason for choosing the above channels was that the posts from those channels were found to be reposted by the other ones. In addition to the above, the channels had the CTR (this figure was calculated by the author using the formula that follows: *CTR = (Total n of clicks) / (Total number of impressions) × 100)* and open rate (the open rate was also calculated by the author using the formula that follows: *Open Rate = (Total n of unique opens) / (Total n of recipients) × 100)* to be both higher than 75 %.

We screened and shortlisted posts, speeches, news, and interviews from 24 February to 31 October for data analysis. Non-reaction publications, reposts from other channels, and publications under five sentences were removed. Final examination and analysis included 812 publication texts. Ukrainian-to-English translations of shortlisted posts. Five volunteers transcribed and translated 41 interviews into English. The study examined text content, images, voice tone, animation, and background music.

Instruments

Social media narratives were analyzed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) online app, [18] Text Analyzer Online App, [32] and Trados Studio (CAT tool). [29] The second research question was answered using the LIWC online app. Researchers chose it because it was designed to study social media language data. Using 100-point scales, the tool measures analytical thinking, clout, authenticity, and emotional tone, which were studied. To identify publication themes, the Text Analyzer Online App calculated word and phrase frequency. The shortlisted publications were machine translated from Ukrainian to English using Trados Studio (CAT tool) so the LIWC app could analyze them.

Data Analysis
Thematic Analysis
The Key Word In Context (KWIC) method looked at how often keywords were used in the texts to find themes. After that, the Text Analyser Online App was used to put the keywords that were found in this way into bigger themes. This method made it easier to draw out the main ideas and stories from the data that had been gathered.

Emotional Tone and Cognitive Analysis
To get numbers for different parts of the story, the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) app was used. The LIWC app broke down emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity into 100-point scales. Through these steps, it was possible to get a better sense of the sociopolitical stories in the texts.

Behavioral Analysis
To figure out how the public felt, we looked at how people responded to posts, speeches, news stories, and interviews. Different feelings, like anger, sadness, fear, disgust, laughter, love, and surprise, came up in response to these reactions. A percentage was made from the number of Likes in each group. This let us see how people felt about unique stories.

Statistical Analysis
From February to October, it looked at the average values for different parts of a story, such as "I" words, positive and negative tones, social words, cognitive processes, allure, and moralisation. After that, these values were compared to standard values to see what the story was about and how those traits changed over time. This statistical study showed how the conversation grew and changed over the course of the study period. It also showed how public opinion and the story's main point of view changed.

RESULTS
The main findings drawn from this investigation are reported in the order the research questions were formulated. First, the section presents the findings on themes the shortlisted messages covered. Second, it provides data on the interpretation of the message the socio-political narratives convey. It reveals the syntax features and language grammar used to produce the rhetorical effects of a message. Third, the section reveals the reactions that were caused in people by the publications.

Themes Drawn from the Shortlisted Messages and the Intensity of Discussion of Them
The analysis of the shortlisted sociopolitical messages, speeches, and interviews that were posted on three Viber and Telegram channels found 18 themes that could be categorised into groups such as the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war, the reaction of the democratic world to what Russia was doing in Ukraine and responding to the war consequences. Furthermore, the study found the expertise themes, policy highlighting themes, and the themes that were reporting on what has been done in politics and governance. The themes were as provided in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Themes Found in the Publications between February 24 and October 31 and the Intensity of Discussion of Them									
Theme	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**
1. Battlefield	80 %	85 %	90 %	88 %	87 %	86 %	84 %	82 %	81 %
2. No-fly zone	-	40 %	45 %	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Weapons and military equipment	78 %	80 %	83 %	82 %	81 %	80 %	79 %	78 %	77 %
4. International financial support	85 %	87 %	88 %	89 %	90 %	91 %	92 %	90 %	89 %
5. Mariupol	70 %	75 %	80 %	78 %	77 %	76 %	-	-	-
6. Displacement of population	65 %	68 %	72 %	71 %	70 %	69 %	-	-	-
7. Visits of foreign political leaders to Ukraine	-	50 %	55 %	53 %	52 %	51 %	50 %	-	-
8. Export of Grain/Wheat from Ukraine	-	-	40 %	45 %	47 %	48 %	49 %	50 %	51 %
9. Nuclear Bomb	-	-	38 %	42 %	45 %	47 %	49 %	50 %	51 %
10. Russia - Ukraine Negotiations	65 %	68 %	72 %	71 %	70 %	69 %	68 %	67 %	66 %
11. Ukrainians murdered by Russians	70 %	73 %	77 %	76 %	75 %	74 %	73 %	72 %	71 %
12. Conditions for peace in the war	-	58 %	62 %	61 %	60 %	59 %	58 %	57 %	56 %
13. Post-war Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50 %	51 %
14. Russia loses the war	-	52 %	55 %	54 %	53 %	52 %	51 %	50 %	49 %
15. International affairs	80 %	82 %	85 %	84 %	83 %	82 %	81 %	80 %	79 %

16. Sanctions	70 %	73 %	77 %	76 %	75 %	74 %	73 %	72 %	71 %
17. Image of Russia as a nation	78 %	80 %	83 %	82 %	81 %	80 %	79 %	78 %	77 %
18. Image of Ukraine as a nation	85 %	87 %	88 %	89 %	90 %	91 %	92 %	90 %	89 %

Note: Intensity of the theme discussion (calculated by the formula: (number of publications on a theme per month)/(total number of publications per month) ×100 %). Low = less than 30 %, middle = 31-75 %, high = greater than 76 %. The number of the subscribers' likes was also considered.

As shown in table 2, some themes appeared in publications throughout. These were 'Battlefield', 'Weapons and military equipment', 'International financial support', 'Russia-Ukraine Negotiations', 'Ukrainians murdered by Russians', 'International affairs', 'Sanctions', 'Image of Russia as a nation' and 'Image of Ukraine as a for the longest time, 'Battlefield' and 'International financial support' were dominant topics. International financial support from the UK, USA, and EU was crucial to the Ukrainian armed forces' battlefield success. The topics 'Conditions for peace in the war', 'Post-war Russia', and 'Russia loses war' sparked heated debates, signaling the start of the war countdown. After the themes of publications were specified, the narratives the themes conveyed were analysed manually by this research author. The data drawn from the analysis which included themes of publications, periods, and narratives conveyed in different periods are outlined in table 2.

Table 2. Themes of publications, periods, and narratives they conveyed		
Theme	**Period**	**Narrative**
Battlefield	Feb-Mar 2022	Total resistance - everyone must stand up for the defense of the Motherland!
	Apr-May, 2022	The Ukrainian military forces courageously defend our land.
	Jun-Aug, 2022	A strategic turning point is taking place on the battlefield. Ukrainian army takes the initiative.
	Sep-Oct, 2022	Russian military forces suffer a defeat. The Russian soldiers are fleeing from the captured territories in shame. The Russian army is moving to the defense of the occupied territories of Ukraine.
No-fly zone	Mar-Apr, 2022	1. A No-fly zone over Ukraine would protect not only Ukraine but the NATO countries. 2. Establishing a no-fly zone by NATO over Ukraine would place the Atlantic alliance in direct conflict with nuclear-armed Russia and could escalate this military conflict.
Weapons and military equipment	Feb-May, 2022	1. Ukraine needs more, more, and more weapons. 2. Land lease for Ukraine from the USA is the way to ensure political guarantees that were specified in The Budapest Memorandum on ensuring the territorial integrity of Ukraine.
	Jun-Aug, 2022	1. HIMARS is a game changer for this war. 2. Ukraine will receive as many weapons as it needs to win the war.
	Sep-Oct, 2022	The Russians claim that European countries and America are tired of helping Ukraine is a fake and manipulation spread by Russia.
International financial support	Feb-Oct, 2022	Financial aid will be provided to Ukraine until the complete victory over Russia.
Mariupol	Feb-May, 2022	1. Mariupol is destroyed like Aleppo, but the fighters for Mariupol are unbreakable. 2. The defenders from the Azov battalion demonstrate indomitability. 3. The civilians are forcibly displaced to Russia.
	Jun-Jul, 2022	Mariupol will be recaptured and restored.
Displacement of population	Feb-May, 2022	Citizens of Ukraine are migrating en masse to Europe which might cause a collapse in the economy of Ukraine.
	Jun-Jul, 2022	Citizens of Ukraine are returning en masse to the country, which has a positive effect on the economic situation in the country.
Visits of foreign political leaders to Ukraine	Mar-May, 2022	European politicians change their perception of the war, change their attitude toward Russia, and promise to provide more aid and weapons to Ukraine.
	Jul-Aug, 2022	The intention of Ukraine to join the EU and NATO should be supported. A Marshall Plan for Ukraine will be launched as soon as the war is over.
Export of Grain/ Wheat from Ukraine	Apr-Jun, 2022	1. Russia intentionally blocks the seaports in Ukraine to disrupt the export of grain/wheat from Ukraine. 2. Russian troops have stolen millions of tons of grain/wheat from grain elevators in the occupied areas of Ukraine.
	Jul-Oct, 2022	Ukraine holds a humanitarian mission by exporting grain/wheat to low-income countries (underdeveloped countries).
Nuclear Bomb	Apr-Jul, 2022	1. Russia is the second leading nuclear weapon-armed country. 2. Russia is ready to use nuclear missiles to punish Ukraine, Europe, and the USA.
	Aug-Sep, 2022	One step left for Russia to cross the red line and use the atomic bomb.

Russia - Ukraine Negotiations	Feb-Mar, 2022	Russia demands Ukraine to surrender in an ultimatum.
	Apr-Oct, 2022	Russia uses terror tactics to force Ukraine to negotiate with them on the Kremlin's terms.
Ukrainians murdered by Russians	Apr-May, 2022	1. Women and children were raped and killed in Bucha, Kyiv region.
	Jun-Oct, 2022	Russian troops are committing the genocide of Ukrainians as it was committed by Stalin.
Conditions for peace in the war		1. Ukraine will only get down to negotiations with Russia after regaining all occupied Ukrainian territory. 2. Punishing all found guilty of committing war crimes in Ukraine. 3. Payment of reparations by Russia for the damage they caused to Ukraine. 4. Receiving credible security guarantees by Ukraine.
Post-war Russia	Sep-Oct, 2022	It is seen as a De-Putinised, de-nuclearised, de-militarised, de-criminalised nation with closed borders and hardly predictable perspectives of economic growth.
Russia loses war	Sep-Oct, 2022	1. The power of the Russian army is fake. 2. Analogue-no-weapons are fake. 3. Russian "gestures of goodwill" show the inability of the Russian army to oppose the Ukrainian army.
International affairs	Feb-Oct, 2022	1. Ukraine protects the democratic world – The world supports Ukraine. 2. The democratic countries will support Ukraine till the victory over Russia.
Sanctions	Feb-Oct, 2022	Sanctions are ruining the economy of Russia.
Image of Russia as a nation	Feb-Oct, 2022	1. Russia is a neo-nazi state governed by criminals. 2. Putin is like Hitler in Nazi Germany. 3. Lavrov is like Goebbels, a German Nazi politician. 4. Russia is trying to steal the history of Ukraine.
Image of Ukraine as a nation	Feb-Oct, 2022	1. Ukraine is a brave and indomitable nation. 2. Ukraine is a state governed by the rule of law. 3. The policy of Ukraine is aimed at ensuring the well-being of the population. 4. Ukraine is governed with the life of every citizen being the primary value in mind.

As can be seen in table 2, the narratives changed from a bit pessimistic to quite optimistic during the period under study. At the same time, the narratives were aimed at showing that no matter what Russia did during the war in Ukraine, it should not break Ukrainians, because the whole world stood with Ukraine in this war.

Syntax Features and Language Grammar Used to Produce Rhetorical Effects of a Message
The study found the use of average-length sentences, logically and deductively structured with a wide use of rhetorical techniques to deliver the content of messages. The most used techniques were as follows: comparisons, repetitions, and contrasts. The examples of comparisons were as follows:
    'Putin is like Hitler in Nazi Germany',
    'Minister Lavrov is like Goebbels, a German Nazi politician'.

Examples of repetitions were as provided below:
    'We cannot be broken. Our fire will not go out. We will conquer death again'.
    'There is no Ukraine separate from Europe, just as there is no Poland, or Lithuania, or Romania, or Latvia, or Germany, or France separate from Europe. This is our continent. This is our life. And this is the path that we can take. And this winter. And this war. We are all Europeans together'. *'Russia opposes itself to the world. Russia is terrorizing us and everyone it can reach'*.

The examples of contrast were as follows:
    'Once they wanted to destroy us with hunger, now – with darkness and cold'.

Concerning grammar, the texts used small letters instead of capital ones in Russian proper names and abbreviations, such as Minister Llavrov, Rrussian Ffederation, and Ppresident Pputin to indicate that the attitude of Ukrainians toward Russia as a nation and the Russian representatives' behaviour and actions as a whole was seen as disgraceful, unlawful, and unfair. Additionally, the Russian armed forces are called *orcs*, *fascists*, *rashists*, or *ruscists* by Ukrainian people to show their disgust. The publications of the President of Ukraine widely used the structures such as *'I held a meeting and we worked out … or resolved … or planned…", I met the leader from the UK … or the USA … and we discussed the situation … and how to cope with this situation'*. These structures indicated that President did service for people as a manager. The above message was accompanied by images that showed the President at work. He also did his best to be sincere and sympathetic to people in his posts. He also calmed the people down after the Russian army bombed Ukraine,

every time, even 10 times a day. One more element to dedicate attention to was that Russia's President's surname was gradually more often used in the sentences revealing war crimes and suggesting prosecution of them in the Tribunal in the Hague.

The results of the analysis of emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity of the publications using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) online app within the context of answering the second research question are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Data Drawn from o Analysis of Publications Using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count Online App										
Dimension	Month, M(SD)									Reference Value
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	
I-words	3,788 (1,748)	3,692 (2,027)	2,628 (1,037)	2,588 (1,509)	3,468 (1,316)	4,388 (1,668)	4,148 (1,339)	3,788 (1,470)	3,228 (1,500)	5,44
Positive tone	7,232 (1,642)	7,316 (1,684)	9,152 (2,227)	8,632 (1,725)	10,552 (4,489)	12,872 (5,664)	15,232 (8,851)	12,432 (4,015)	13,032 (4,423)	5,93
Negative tone	2,424 (0,653)	2,468 (0,557)	2,624 (0,499)	2,784 (0,506)	3,264 (1,159)	2,784 (1,169)	3,144 (0,900)	2,664 (0,471)	2,384 (1,211)	2,34
Social words	7,268 (1,548)	7,528 (1,169)	8,228 (1,146)	8,028 (1,691)	7,588 (1,244)	7,028 (1,340)	7,828 (1,012)	7,450 (1,277)	7,388 (1,193)	6,74
Cognitive processes	7,724 (1,560)	8,124 (1,169)	8,444 (1,180)	8,764 (1,485)	7,924 (1,317)	7,964 (1,276)	10,124 (3,698)	10,588 (1,616)	11,221 (1,271)	8,86
Allure	2,548 (0,633)	2,916 (0,498)	3,148 (0,698)	2,988 (0,884)	3,508 (1,204)	3,628 (1,762)	3,308 (1,559)	3,367 (1,091)	3,593 (1,369)	8,62
Moralisation	0,164 (0,058)	0,476 (0,517)	0,372 (0,288)	0,225 (0,146)	0,324 (0,370)	0,247 (0,100)	0,627 (0,782)	0,447 (0,510)	0,559 (0,332)	0,27
Summary Variables										
Analytic	63,200 (9,168)	58,400 (10,563)	61,600 (8,732)	59,600 (14,484)	60,800 (10,244)	52,800 (6,959)	57,200 (10,265)	58,807 (9,744)	52,711 (7,149)	47,06
Authentic	6,942 (1,152)	7,3024 (1,109)	9,342 (4,093)	8,542 (3,283)	7,9024 (1,214)	11,942 (8,549)	9,542 (4,084)	9,342 (4,719)	10,819 (3,104)	62,38

As seen in table 3, the mean values for the use of the I-words dimension were below the reference value which indicated the utilisation of a more or less neutral approach to narration in publications. The mean values for positive tone almost doubled during the period of the study (M=7,232, SD=1,632 for February and M=13,032; SD=4,423 in October) which suggested the growth of confidence of Ukrainian governors in victory on the battlefield. The negative tone was also above the reference value during the whole period which reflected the consequences of Russian army actions in Ukraine. It is also important to draw attention to the moralisation dimension whose mean values fluctuated and trebled in August (M=,627, SD=,782), September (M=,447, SD=,510) and October (M=,559, SD=,332). Generally, the mean values for moralisation were above a reference value. This could mean that the publications attempted to relieve the psychological pain in people caused by the war events. The mean values for the analytic dimension indicated that the publications relied on logical, formal, and hierarchical thinking patterns. The values for authenticity were below the reference value which indicated that the texts were prepared, not written spontaneously.

People's reactions to the narratives

The study used the statistics of likes under every shortlisted publication to examine what were the people's reactions to the narratives. It relied on the number of Likes such as Angry, Sad, Frightened, Disgusted, Haha, Love, or Wow. Those numbers were converted into percentages. Table 4 presents the distribution of proportions of the subscribers' reactions to the specified narratives. The figures in table are averaged.

Table 4. Distribution of proportions of the subscribers' reactions to the specified narratives							
Narrative	Subscribers' reactions, average %						
	Angry	Sad	Frightened	Disgusted	Haha	Love	Wow
Total resistance - everyone must stand up for the defense of the Motherland!	51,3	6,7	39,4	0,6	1,3	0,7	0,0
The Ukrainian military forces courageously defend our land.	1,6	0,5	0,7	0,2	2,2	74,8	21,6
A strategic turning point is taking place on the battlefield. Ukrainian army takes the initiative.	4,1	0,2	0,4	0,1	3,1	35,9	56,3
Russian military forces suffer a defeat.	14,8	0,8	0,3	62,3	18,7	1,4	1,7

The Russian soldiers are fleeing from the captured territories in shame.	22,4	0,3	0,5	30,1	32,8	9,6	4,3
The Russian army is moving to the defense of the occupied territories of Ukraine.	36,2	12,9	7,2	20,7	4,2	3,4	15,4
A No-fly zone over Ukraine would protect not only Ukraine but the NATO countries.	11,2	3,1	67,8	17,1	0,4	0,3	0,2
Establishing a no-fly zone by NATO over Ukraine would place the Atlantic alliance in direct conflict with nuclear-armed Russia and could escalate this military conflict.	44,8	19,3	21,8	12,3	0,7	0,3	0,8
Ukraine needs more, more, and more weapons.	36,4	22,3	32,9	6,7	0,8	0,2	0,7
Land lease for Ukraine from the USA is the way to ensure political guarantees that were specified in The Budapest Memorandum on ensuring the territorial integrity of Ukraine.	6,3	0,2	0,2	0,7	14,7	48,6	29,3
HIMARS is a game changer for this war.	0,8	0,6	1,1	0,1	33,2	34,4	29,8
Ukraine will receive as many weapons as it needs to win the war.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,2	13,3	63,9	22,6
The Russians claim that European countries and America are tired of helping Ukraine is a fake and manipulation spread by Russia.	27,9	7,9	1,6	19,7	28,8	0,7	13,4
Financial aid will be provided to Ukraine until the complete victory over Russia.	0,0	0,3	0,0	0,0	3,4	14,2	82,1
Mariupol is destroyed like Aleppo, but the fighters for Mariupol are unbreakable.	88,4	11,3	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
The defenders from the Azov battalion demonstrate indomitability.	14,6	17,2	0,4	0,3	1,2	64,9	1,4
The civilians are forcibly displaced to Russia.	33,8	32,1	6,2	27,1	0,8	0,0	0,0
Mariupol will be recaptured and restored.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,5	92,4	7,1
Citizens of Ukraine are migrating en masse to Europe which might cause a collapse in the economy of Ukraine.	24,3	63,8	10,9	0,8	0,2	0,0	0,0
Citizens of Ukraine are returning en masse to the country, which has a positive effect on the economic situation in the country.	3,1	0,6	1,7	0,4	28,7	36,3	29,2
European politicians change their perception of the war, change their attitude toward Russia, and promise to provide more aid and weapons to Ukraine.	3,8	0,7	1,1	2,1	23,9	41,8	26,6
The intention of Ukraine to join the EU and NATO should be supported. A Marshall Plan for Ukraine will be launched as soon as the war is over.	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,8	88,6	8,4
Russia intentionally blocks the seaports in Ukraine to disrupt the export of grain/wheat from Ukraine.	21,7	0,6	0,3	77,4	0,0	0,0	0,0
Russian troops have stolen millions of tons of grain/wheat from grain elevators in the occupied areas of Ukraine.	33,7	4,7	0,0	61,4	0,2	0,0	0,0
Ukraine holds a humanitarian mission by exporting grain/wheat to low-income countries (underdeveloped countries).	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	24,7	38,3	36,8
Russia is the second leading nuclear weapon-armed country.	31,7	16,9	22,6	28,5	0,3	0,0	0,0
Russia is ready to use nuclear missiles to punish Ukraine, Europe, and the USA.	9,3	0,8	52,9	36,7	0,2	0,0	0,1
One step left for Russia to cross the red line and use the atomic bomb.	61,8	0,3	37,2	0,7	0,0	0,0	0,0
Russia demands Ukraine to surrender in an ultimatum.	77,2	2,8	0,4	19,4	0,2	0,0	0,0
Russia uses terror tactics to force Ukraine to negotiate with them on the Kremlin's terms.	46,8	9,2	1,3	42,7	0,0	0,0	0,0
Women and children were raped and killed in Bucha, Kyiv region.	33,8	27,4	6,9	31,5	0,4	0,0	0,0
Russian troops are committing the genocide of Ukrainians as it was committed by Stalin.	47,2	6,9	3,5	42,4	0,0	0,0	0,0

Ukraine will only get down to negotiations with Russia after regaining all occupied Ukrainian territory.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	30,6	44,1	25,3
All found guilty of committing war crimes in Ukraine should be punished.	23,7	0,0	0,0	6,9	21,8	33,9	13,7
Payment of reparations by Russia for the damage they caused to Ukraine.	9,4	0,2	0,0	37,4	33,9	12,7	6,4
Receiving credible security guarantees for Ukraine.	6,4	0,0	0,0	0,0	28,6	55,8	9,2
It is seen as a De-Putinised, de-nuclearised, de-militarised, de-criminalised nation with closed borders and hardly predictable perspectives of economic growth.	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	34,5	41,6	22,7
The power of the Russian army is fake.	1,1	0,0	0,0	23,2	44,2	31,3	0,2
Analogue-no-weapons are fake.	0,0	0,0	0,0	19,5	41,7	38,2	0,6
Russian so-called "gestures of goodwill" show the inability of the Russian army to oppose the Ukrainian army.	0,0	0,0	0,0	15,4	38,1	24,6	21,9
Ukraine protects the democratic world – the world supports Ukraine.	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,7	7,3	72,6	18,4
The democratic countries will support Ukraine till the victory over Russia.	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	28,6	47,2	24,1
Sanctions are ruining the economy of Russia.	0,0	0,0	0,0	24,2	27,4	32,1	16,3
Russia is a neo-nazi state governed by criminals.	22,7	0,4	0,0	69,3	7,6	0,0	0,0
Putin is like Hitler in Nazi Germany.	9,1	1,6	0,0	89,3	0,0	0,0	0,0
Lavrov is like Goebbels, a German Nazi politician.	11,3	2,5	0,0	83,8	2,4	0,0	0,0
Russia is trying to steal the history of Ukraine.	91,3	1,2	0,0	7,5	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ukraine is a brave and indomitable nation.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	20,2	77,3	2,5
Ukraine is a state governed by the rule of law.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	12,1	81,1	6,8
The policy of Ukraine is aimed at ensuring the well-being of the population.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	19,2	72,2	8,6
Ukraine is governed with the life of every citizen being the primary value in mind.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	16,4	78,9	4,7

As seen in table 4, the dominant reactions to the narratives about Russia, the President of Russia, and the Russian army (what it did in Ukraine) were Disgusted, Angry, Sad, and Frightened which implied their readiness to stand against Russian aggression. The dominant reactions to the narratives about Ukrainian armed forces, and the success of Ukraine in the war were Love, Wow or Haha which showed peoples' support and approval of their actions. The same reactions were to the support of the international community to Ukraine and the decisions of the government of Ukraine.

DISCUSSION

The study attempted to analyse the discourse of sociopolitical narratives found in Viber, and Telegram groups which are related to the ongoing crisis communication caused by the military invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. It sought to identify the themes the messages covered, the messages the narratives conveyed, and the reactions the narratives caused in people. The novelty of the study lies in including online apps in the discourse analysis of the narratives of sociopolitical written and voiced posts found in Viber, and Telegram groups. It also updates the approaches to the critical discourse analysis of sociopolitical social media texts.

After analyzing 812 shortlisted sociopolitical messages, speeches, and interviews posted in three Viber and Telegram channels between 24 February and October 31, 2022, 18 themes emerged, including the Russia-Ukraine war's consequences, the democratic world's response, and war response. The study found expertise, policy, politics, and governance themes. Publications may have recurring themes. 'Battlefield', 'Weapons and military equipment', 'International financial support', 'Russia-Ukraine Negotiations', 'Ukrainians murdered by Russians', 'International affairs', 'Sanctions', 'Image of Russia as a nation' and 'Image of Ukraine... 'Battlefield' and 'International financial support' dominated discussions for ages. Thanks to UK, USA, and EU funding, the Ukrainian military's battlefield success was linked to the themes. Recent hot topics include 'Conditions for peace in the war', 'Post-war Russia', and 'Russia loses war', starting the war countdown. The narratives ranged from pessimistic too optimistic during the study. The narratives also showed that Russia shouldn't break Ukrainians because the world supported Ukraine in war. Using average-length sentences, logical and deductive language grammar, and widely used rhetorical techniques produced rhetorical effects. Most methods employed

were compared, repeat, and contrast.

Concerning grammar, the texts used small letters instead of capital ones in Russian proper names and abbreviations to indicate that the attitude of Ukrainians toward Russia as a nation and the Russian representatives' behaviour and actions as a whole was seen as disgraceful, unlawful, and unfair. The publications of the President of Ukraine widely used the structures that indicated that President did service for people as a manager. This was accompanied by images that showed the President at work. He also did his best to be sincere and sympathetic to people in his posts. He also calmed the people down after the Russian army bombed Ukraine, every time, even 10 times a day. One more element to dedicate attention to was that Russia's President's surname was gradually more often used in the sentences revealing war crimes and suggesting prosecution of them in the Tribunal in the Hague.

The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) online app was used to analyze emotional tone, analytical thinking, clout, and authenticity of publications. The mean values for the I-words dimension were below the reference value, indicating a neutral approach to narration. The mean positive tone values almost doubled during the study (M=7,232; SD=1,632 for February and M=13,032; SD=4,423 for October), indicating Ukrainian governors' growing confidence in battlefield victory. In response to Russian army actions in Ukraine, the negative tone was above the reference value throughout the period. The moralization dimension's mean values fluctuated and trebled in August (M=,627, SD=,782), September (M=,447, SD=,510), and October (M=,559, SD=,332). Moralization values averaged above a reference value. This may mean that the publications tried to ease wartime psychological pain. The mean analytic values showed that publications used logical, formal, and hierarchical thinking. Authenticity values below the reference value indicated that texts were prepared, not spontaneous. Subscriber reactions to narratives were scattered. The narratives about Russia, the President, and the Russian army (what it did in Ukraine) evoked disgust, rage, sadness, and fear, indicating their willingness to oppose Russian aggression. Love, wow, and Haha were the main responses to narratives about Ukrainian armed forces and war success, showing support and approval. The same reactions were given to international support for Ukraine and Ukrainian government decisions.

The study is in line with the previous research. It boosted the theoretical framework of the analysis of the online news used by Bagić Babac,[3] who used the conceptual framework of Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT).[12] It contributed to the approaches used for the critical discourse analyses found in Oprea,[16] Krotofil and Motak,[17] and Sheyholislami[27] who focused on what messages of the media conveyed, how they could be interpreted, and how those messages were related to the social environment. The study goes in line with practices of crisis communication revealed by Weijers[36] and Wendling et al.[37] who emphasises the need to make ant crises manageable.

Several important studies in the fields of crisis communication and sociopolitical analysis back up what the study found about how the media affects how people talk about crises. Jong[38] talk about how adaptive narratives are important in crisis communication and how the media can change public policy and how people think about things. This is similar to what we found when we looked at how the conversations in the Viber and Telegram messages changed over time to reflect new situations and keep the support of the public. Utz, Schultz, and Glocka[39] also look at how emotional appeals affect communication in times of crisis, specifically during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Their research shows that different mediums and emotional tones can have a big effect on how people react. This fits with what we've seen: people have different emotional responses to stories about Russian actions and Ukrainian successes.

Lee and Song[40] state that social media platforms are becoming more important for spreading news and shaping public opinion. This shows how important it is for us to focus on Viber and Telegram as important tools for crisis communication. Their study shows how platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are becoming more important. This is similar to what we found about how important messaging apps were for bringing people together and changing how people saw the Ukraine crisis. The way Bouvier[41] talks about discourse on social media is another reason why we should use critical discourse analysis (CDA) in our study. Bouvier talks a lot about how social media platforms affect political debate and how people think about politics. This supports our method of looking at rhetorical tools and techniques to understand the stories being told in the posts.

Also, Papacharissi's[42] study of affective publics gives us a theoretical basis for what we found about the emotional tone and public responses in crisis communication. Her work shows how sentiment and emotion affect how people talk about things on social media. It backs up what we see when people react to different stories with disgust, anger, sadness, love, and approval. Together, these studies show how important our findings are and help us learn more about how media stories, public perception, and crisis communication strategies all affect each other.

In our analysis of crisis communication during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we emphasise the role of socio-political narratives on media platforms such as Viber and Telegram. This view is in line with the findings of Tsekhmister et al. (2022)[43], who argue that effective communication strategies are crucial for shaping public opinion in times of crisis.

CONCLUSIONS

The discourse of sociopolitical narratives found on Viber and Telegram groups which were related to the ongoing crisis communication caused by the military invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine was related to the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war, the reaction of the democratic world to what Russia was doing in Ukraine and responding to the war consequences. The most highly discussed themes during the longest period were 'Battlefield' and 'International financial support'. The three recent themes that caused heated discussions were 'Conditions for peace in the war', 'Post-war Russia', and 'Russia loses war' which indicated that the countdown to the duration of the war began. The narratives extractad from the publications changed from a bit pessimistic to quite optimistic during the period under study. At the same time, the narratives were aimed at showing that no matter what Russia did during the war in Ukraine, it should not break Ukrainians, because the whole world stood with Ukraine in this war. The analysis of the emotional component of the publications showed that they were quite emotional. The dominant reactions to the narratives about Russia, the President of Russia, and the Russian army (what it did in Ukraine) were Disgusted, Angry, Sad, and Frightened which implied their readiness to stand against Russian aggression. The dominant reactions to the narratives about Ukrainian armed forces, and the success of Ukraine in the war were Love, Wow or Haha which showed peoples' support and approval of their actions. The same reactions were to the support of the international community to Ukraine and the decisions of the government of Ukraine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers are recommended to study whether the messengers like Viber, Telegram, Facebook messenger, or WhatsApp can replace the use of social media websites to establish and launch crisis communication responses or campaigns. Crisis communication managers can use the above messengers as an alternative to social media sites or complementary to them.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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