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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2019: THE STUDY OF STUDENTS' SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

With the pending presidential elections in Ukraine scheduled for 2019, it is important to know where young people derive information about the elections and whether they are ready to make an informed choice.

Therefore, the purpose of our research is to find out what information sources young people use in everyday life, and which of them they consider to be reliable. Two objectives were pursued:

1. To determine the sources that young people study to learn political news, and to find out which ones they consider the most trustworthy.
2. To find out whether the respondents know who the owners of these media sources are.

The research was carried out in the form of a survey conducted by students of Political Science at Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, and supervised by S.V. Rudnytskyi, Doctor of Political Science, associate professor, and Kseniya Petrivna Gavrylovska, Candidate of Psychological Sciences, associate professor, who assisted the students at the final stage of analyzing and interpreting the survey results.

The respondents were asked three questions designed specifically for the purpose stated above. The first two questions were aimed at establishing the sources of information and their trustworthiness from the perspective of the respondents. The options listed the most common sources: internet, television, newspapers, radio and friends or relatives. The third question was a matching task: the respondents were asked to match the most popular mass media and their owners.

The respondents included 55 first- and second-year students (aged 17 to 20) at Zhytomyr National Agroecological University. The survey results are presented in the diagrams below. It was discovered that 38% of the interviewed derive most of the information about politics from the Internet, 42% of the respondents consider this source to be the most reliable. It is an obvious choice, since young people tend to spend almost 90% of their free time online. 33.5% of the respondents acquire information from TV, and 35.5% trust this media. 18% of students obtain information from friends, and 23% consider this the most reliable source. Only 7% stated that they read newspapers, and 11.6% trust them. A total of 4% of the respondents listen to the news in the radio, and 7.3% find this source reliable. This once again proves that the latter information sources are not relevant when it comes to young people.

As for the students' awareness of the owners of most influential mass media, none of the respondents succeeded in matching them to the sources they controlled. Some participants (14.5%) chose not to answer this question. Considering the importance of this data, namely the ability of the mass media owners to control public opinion, we find the results of this part of the survey extremely disturbing:

- 34% of students are aware that Rinat Akhmetov is the owner of "Today Multimedia", "Ukraine" TV channel, "Segodnya" website (segodnya.ua);
- 44% of students know that Ihor Kolomoyskyi is the owner of "1 + 1" and the "UNIAN" agency;
- 34% of students know that STB, ICTV, Novy Kanal are owned by Victor Pinchuk.

38.2% of the respondents believe that the media property of Rinat Akhmetov belongs to Serhiy Kurchenko.

Having analyzed and summarized the results of the research, we can state that young people obtain information about politics from the Internet and consider it the most reliable source. Few people know the names of the people in Ukraine who own or control the most influential Ukrainian media. Students rarely read newspapers or listen to the radio. Many of them trust friends and relatives, despite the fact that such information may be distorted or subjective.

The results of the survey demonstrate that young people are not thorough in collecting and analyzing the information they process to make an informed decision during the pending presidential elections.

Table 1. Sources of information

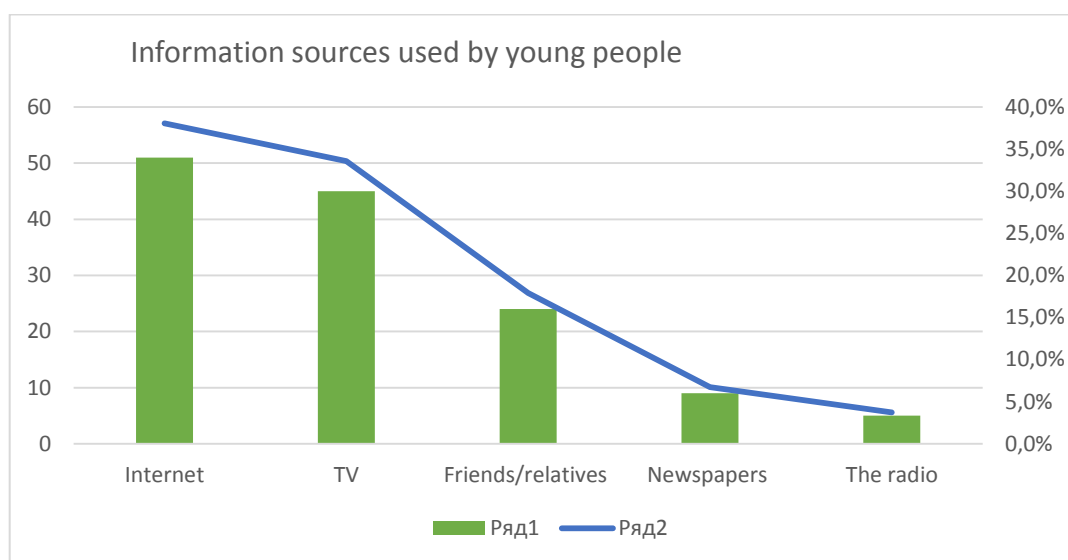


Diagram 1. Reliability of information sources (as viewed by the respondents).

