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TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIA CONTENT VALUE PARAMETERS: THE ROLE OF INTERACTIVITY IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The article explores the changing value orientations of media content in the digital age, focusing on the role of interactivity as an important parameter in forming content value for the audience. The research aims to identify key parameters of media product value and analyze the place of interactivity in this process. Using Uses and Gratification Theory and social psychology of value as a framework, the study analyzes scientific discourse for the period 2015–2025 using MAXQDA software for in-depth textual analysis.

This allowed for the identification of approaches to defining and measuring content value from the perspectives of various stakeholders: media producers, consumers, advertising market, society, state, and others. The paper identifies six main parameters of content value for the audience: informational, emotional, social, practical, aesthetic, and interactive. Moreover, interactivity can be considered both as an independent value parameter and as functionality that enhances other parameters. In particular, interactive features such as comments, voting, chats, and feedback opportunities promote active user participation, formation of social connections, and increased trust in media.

However, the analysis shows that the economic value of content does not always coincide with its social or cultural value. This creates challenges for the media industry, which must find a balance between professional journalism standards and audience expectations. For example, lower quality content (from the perspective of media standards) may receive greater engagement through interactive features, which calls into question traditional approaches to evaluating media product quality. Overall, the research findings confirm that interactivity is a significant tool for enhancing media competitiveness in the digital era and participates in shaping the value of media products.

Key words: *interactive content, media content value, digital audience engagement, media product quality, interactivity, audience participation metrics, quality in journalism.*

Statement of the problem. In the contemporary era, the value parameters of media content are undergoing a transformation under the influence of numerous factors, including shifts in media business models and alterations in consumer behaviour. Technological developments have been identified as a significant driving force in this process, contributing to the expansion of audience interaction with content and media, as well as between users, thereby fostering enduring connections [30]. This assertion is further supported by the observation that ‘audience engagement is becoming a key factor for journalism in the post-truth era’ [30]. While the impact of interactivity on the value of content has been touched upon by several researchers [10, 46, 38], a more systemic consideration of this issue is required.

Task statement. The objective of this study is to identify the key parameters of media content value and to summarise scientific approaches to assessing the place and role of interactivity in shaping the value of media products in modern times.

Research methodology. The present study sought to systematise the approaches to value formation of media products by drawing upon the ‘Uses and Gratification’ theory pioneered by Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz in 1974, in addition to economic theories of consumption and the social psychology of value.

The analysis of the extant scholarly discourse spanned the period 2015–2025, with the study highlighting the parameters that influence the determination of the value of content, especially in light of the significant changes that have occurred in the landscape of media consumption. The articles were selected through a search in scientometric databases of peer-reviewed publications for the keywords “value in media”, “interactivity in media”/“interactive functions in media”, and ‘quality in journalism’. The application of the first two criteria enabled the summarisation of scientific developments on the topic and approaches to the formation of the value parameter for different groups of stakeholders, namely media producers and consumers. The quality filter was used separately

since the analysis demonstrated that many concepts of value in media are based on the theory of quality. An in-depth textual analysis of the selected articles was carried out using MAXQDA software.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The value of a media product can be viewed from a variety of perspectives, including functional, emotional, social and economic [37], aesthetic, political, and from the perspectives of different parties, such as the media itself, its audience, the advertising market, society, and the state. According to R. Picard, the value of a media product can be formed at several levels at once: at the public level (civic awareness, informing) and at the individual level (functional benefits) [34]. The development of digital platforms acutely raises the issue of commercial value of media products is also given increased prominence [35]. Traditionally, media have considered the economic approach to value and utilised the model of a two-sided market [1; 18]. According to this approach, economic value is aimed on the one hand at the audience and on the other hand at selling the audience's attention to advertisers, and the concept of value is used in the sense of "cost". According to journalism theorists who view the journalist as a gatekeeper, the value of a media product is assessed from the perspective of its quality [3; 4; 36], the influence on the public [33], level of democratic function [5], public interest [29; 32]. The definition of value as a measure of effectiveness for newsrooms encompasses audience engagement and media consumption metrics (e.g. metrics, traffic, reach, likes, comments). However, as Tandoc et al. notes, using web analytics to understand audience preferences is incompatible with editorial autonomy and the public role of journalism [46]. Other approaches link the criteria of value to media credibility [27] or relevance to audience needs and desires [24].

At the same time, the value of a media product in terms of its role in shaping society's culture and its influence on social and political processes will be influenced by other variables. In this context, approaches to assessing the value of a media product often relate it to the social frame, introducing concepts such as "heritage media product" in relation to products of high cultural value [37].

In the context of the media industry, Oscar Wilde's renowned phrase, 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', can be interpreted as a value that is subject to variation among consumers. This implies that the entity capable of offering the most value to the consumer will accrue the greatest benefit. As Göran Bolin rightly points out, 'we attach value to something, we agree with value, we justify value, and sometimes we devalue things

in the process of evaluative activities' [6, p. 4]. Thus, value is the result of social activities carried out within social relations [Ibid]. A. Krüger and M. Reinhart's research confirms this statement, emphasising that values depend on the prevailing social values [22]. In the digital landscape, significant factors influencing value include the culture of connectivity [48; 20] and digital hyperconnectivity [8].

The increasing accessibility and openness of digital media has had the effect of bringing consumers together and encouraging interaction around topics of shared interests. Consequently, the manner in which individuals evaluate worth and their content requirements may be influenced by their participation in specific online communities or social circles. It can be reasonably inferred that, despite the variability in value judgments among individuals, individuals within the same group, sharing analogous experiences and communication patterns, will manifest common characteristics in their assessment of value.

Outline of the main material of the study. In order to further explore the correlation between interactivity and value in media, it is necessary to consider the various approaches mentioned above.

Value creation and value extraction. The economic value of interactive media content. In accordance with Adam Smith's economic theory, the economic value of a media product is determined by the amount of resources allocated to its production (including human capital and financial capital). Concurrently, content can possess economic value for both the media entity itself as a commercial entity and for the active audience (e.g. bloggers, opinion leaders) who utilise it (through reposts, distribution) to expand their own audience, which in turn can result in monetisation.

On the contrary, the alternative theory of 'public value' emphasises that there is a line between value creation and value extraction [28]. A newsroom that produces quality content may not be able to compete with, for example, an aggregator that offers content based on it. Let's take another example: a blogger with a reach of 300–400 thousand views is confronted with the emergence of 2–3 of his critics who do not invest even minimally in the video sequence (they use thematically unrelated stock videos of nature, landscapes) to make review comments on each of his publications. The audience of such channels is growing and often exceeds the indicators of the hero's channel. Unfair? Perhaps, but this is where we encounter the sub'ical value judgement of the audience.

If in the last century, according to Marcel Broersma and Chris Peters, journalism established itself as 'a

commodity that was not just valuable for the well-being of individual citizens but also necessary for a healthy society at large' [7, p. 4], today the situation has changed. Journalism, which gives people what it believes to be in the sphere of their needs, in reality is not. Media products have different value for their authors, consumers and producers.

Value and quality: correlation of concepts. The correlation between the value of content and quality for the audience and in professional journalists may not be the same. Traditionally, the quality of journalistic content has been determined by the standards developed by the journalistic community itself, with users lacking the necessary qualifications to assess the quality of media content [47]. However, in recent years there has been a shift towards a more audience-driven approach, with the audience influencing the value characteristics of the content. This phenomenon is primarily attributable to the mounting significance of the audience within the business model of commercial journalism [50], as evidenced by metrics such as click-through rates, time spent, reposts, and comments. Concurrently, the content that the editors deem worthy of attraction is not commensurate with the requirements of the audience, particularly in consideration of the possibilities inherent in the utilisation of such content [9].

The concept of quality, based on providing value for the resources or time spent by the audience, according to R. Picard is an important 'factor in developing consumer trust and in creating consumer loyalty by making creating a product or service deemed to have higher quality and thus more value' [36, p. 97].

However, the practice of content transition to social networks demonstrates that the quality criterion is subject to other factors. Consequently, content that is considered to lack quality (from a professional standpoint) can garner more engagement [43]. This indicates that the concept of quality may not always align with its actual evaluation by the audience.

The role of interactivity in enhancing the appeal of media. Digital technologies are becoming a priority for investment in media businesses [17] because they have the potential to create added value for users. The challenge for the media is to ascertain what is value-added for its audience. The active use of innovative technologies (platforms, AI, etc.) and approaches in media production is largely aimed at audience engagement and satisfaction. From a media business perspective, interactivity is also an important tool for increasing the economic value of content. According to James Patrick Gleason and Paul Murschetz, 'online interactivity adds value to media

firms by increasing audience engagement, hence reducing costs of interaction between media firms and audiences' [15]. Gleason et al. [15] identified six relationships between interactivity and increased media value. The authors noted that interactivity leads to an increase in media product choice and, as a result, greater audience satisfaction.

In the contemporary business environment, media entities are confronted with significant competition from various commercial enterprises. The development models employed by many businesses are predicated on the generation of content to attract audiences. This content is also characterised by the presence of the necessary parameters of value for the user, and in certain cases (for example, self-development, new experience) it has the capacity to substitute for content of media. After all, the four essential elements of the marketing framework (specifically: education, entertainment, enlightenment and/or attraction) are all equally powerful in bringing new audiences and clients to business enterprises. Thus, their strategies overlap.

Measuring value: monetisation and engagement metrics. The effectiveness of content is evaluated by the media through the analysis of the audience's propensity to pay for it, as well as the level of interaction with the media and content. This interaction is partly facilitated by interactive features, such as comments, feedback, and reactions.

Engagement metrics as effectiveness. Researchers have noted a discrepancy between the theoretical underpinnings of involved journalism and its practical implementation, as well as between user expectations and their consumption behaviour [42]. For instance, the criterion of time spent has been shown to be unrelated to the value of a particular content to the audience [11]. Conversely, the utilisation of interactive features by the audience is identified by numerous researchers as a pivotal indicator of material effectiveness. Thomas Ksiazek considers interactivity as a dialogue between media and audience through content [23]. User interaction with news articles, such as likes or comments, encourages greater engagement. It can therefore be argued that the parameter of engagement through reactions, feedback is directly related to the assessment of the value of the content for the audience, be it practical, emotional, etc.

Participation: explicit and implicit. In the context of interactivity, explicit and implicit participation are also important. Mikko Villi et al. [49] observes that while explicit participation usually refers to content production, i.e. co-writing with users, implicit participation can take many more forms,

including unconscious production or actions aimed at networking and community development. Actions such as sharing and liking content are cases in point of implicit participation, the importance of which is further underlined by the key role played by interactive functionality in enabling such participation [26]. It is for this reason that social networking platforms are constantly working to enhance these communication capabilities. A. Jönsson and H. Örnebring have even proposed a typology of platforms' functionality depending on the targeting of its audience with passive content consumption and requesters requiring a high level of participation [19].

Content value and monetisation. Trust is also a pivotal criterion for users evaluating content, and is formed through communication with the editorial staff (a function facilitated by interactive features). Suau et al. [44] further corroborate this finding, highlighting that audiences express a preference for interactive features that facilitate debate, such as comments or chats, and that offer connections with the editorial staff and authors of publications. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential drawbacks associated with interactive features, particularly the presence of comments. These implications include the increased possibility of misinformation being disseminated through comments, particularly when users perceive comments to be more credible than the journalistic material itself [21]. Moreover, research has demonstrated [39] that comments presented in an aggressively impolite manner negatively affect users' assessment of content quality and value [16].

How the audience views the 'value' category.

As Dan Gillmor [13] asserts, audiences do not merely consume media content, but rather utilise it for their own purposes. Consequently, valuable content is content that provides real and relevant value to the audience, meeting their demands, needs and expectations. Based on the analysed scientific results on this issue, we can distinguish the following criteria of value of digital content for the audience:

- *Relevance* – meeting the expectations of users. This is ensured by a high level of personalisation.
- *Reliability* is expressed through trust in the source of information.
- *Attractiveness* of content is represented through engaging format and other elements that draw the audience in. It can participate in the formation of emotional value.
- *Usefulness* is also revealed through interaction with the content, for example, the possibility of its distribution, use to establish social contacts in the network.

- *Interactivity* expands the possibilities of interaction with content. Although interactivity is highlighted as a separate criterion in the study, in reality other criteria will also be partially fulfilled through interactive features.

Research by Oliver Quiring indicates that *interactivity* is associated with what ordinary users are able to accomplish by using media in terms of *self-development, social influence and social relationships* [40].

A close analysis of the three proposed positions – *self-development, social influence and social relations* – reveals the potential for correlation with the categories of value. An attempt was made to summarise and identify six parameters of content value for the audience, which are related to the specified expectations of interactivity.

The concept of **information value** is defined as the extent to which content is deemed useful, relevant and reliable for the intended audience. The relevance of content is determined by the interests of the individual, facilitating self-development. **The concept of emotional value** can be defined as the ability of content to evoke emotions (e.g. anger, interest) and to stimulate feelings of involvement and community through various forms of interactivity. **The social value** of content as a means of communication and social interaction is also a contributing factor, correlating with the building of social relationships. It facilitates the effective dissemination of media content within one's social networks, thereby attracting new acquaintances, subscribers, and so forth, through engagement in discussion, debate, and dialogue. In essence, the value of content in this context lies in its capacity to initiate communication through the distribution of media content. Social influence is also exerted through the utilisation of media content, for instance, to substantiate one's own position, perspectives, and so on. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential consequences of content that has a positive impact on individuals, as it may also have a negative impact on the social level [25]. **Practical value** is defined as the extent to which the content can be used in everyday life, for example in the form of tips, instructions or life hacks. **Aesthetic value** of the content is related to the quality of content production, such as the visual and graphic effects, format, dynamic editing, and determines its attractiveness. **Interactive value** can be considered as the possibility for wide audience interaction with content, media and each other (comments, feedback, voting, chats, etc.). All the parameters described above can be present both separately and simultaneously.

Thus, for example, content of practical value in the form of a test can be distributed by the user among more people, including due to its interactive appeal to a wider audience. It is acknowledged that the medium, as posited by S. Rafaeli, has the capacity to impose limitations, eliminate barriers, or establish the prerequisites for interactivity levels [41]. However, as research has demonstrated, the digital form of content, supported by interactive possibilities, has a greater potential of value in comparison with traditional formats due to the expanded functions of interaction and use.

Conclusions. The results of the study indicate the necessity to reconsider approaches to creating value in media content, taking into account the growing role of interactivity and the audience's need for active interaction with the media. Interactivity is a significant parameter that determines the value of media content for a modern audience, playing a crucial role in shaping social connections and the cultural impact of media, and helping to create communities where users can discuss, share and criticise content, thereby increasing its social significance. Interactivity exerts a

significant influence on the economic, social, cultural and emotional value of content, thereby establishing novel interaction standards between media and its users. Furthermore, interactivity impacts the perception of content quality, and while professional standards of journalism retain their importance, audiences are progressively evaluating content based on its usefulness, relevance and interactivity. This necessitates that the media find a balance between professional standards and audience expectations.

Despite the fact that the economic value of content does not necessarily align with its social or cultural value, which poses certain challenges for the media industry, interactivity remains a significant tool for increasing audience engagement and ensuring media competitiveness in the digital age.

Prospects for further research. Further research in this area could contribute to the development of new strategies for the effective use of interactivity in media production and consumption, especially in the context of the development of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other innovations.

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Горська К. О. ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ЦІННІСНИХ ПАРАМЕТРІВ МЕДІАКОНТЕНТУ: РОЛЬ ІНТЕРАКТИВНОСТІ В ЦИФРОВОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ

Стаття досліджує зміну ціннісних орієнтирів медіаконтенту в умовах цифрової епохи, зосереджуючись на ролі інтерактивності як важливого параметра формування цінності контенту для аудиторії. Метою дослідження є визначення ключових параметрів цінності медіапродуктів та аналіз місця інтерактивності у цьому процесі. Використовуючи теорію використання та задоволення потреб (U&G Theory) та соціальну психологію цінності як рамку, дослідження аналізує науковий дискурс за період 2015–2025 років з використанням програмного забезпечення MAXQDA для глибинного текстового аналізу. Це дозволило виокремити підходи до визначення та вимірювання цінності контенту з позицій різних зацікавлених сторін: медіавиробників, споживачів, рекламного ринку, суспільства, держави та ін. У роботі виділено шість основних параметрів цінності контенту для аудиторії: інформаційний, емоційний, соціальний, практичний, естетичний та інтерактивний. При цьому інтерактивність може розглядатися і як самостійний параметр цінності, і як функціонал, що підсилює інші параметри. Зокрема, інтерактивні функції, такі як коментарі, голосування, чати та можливість зворотного зв’язку, сприяють активній участі користувачів, формуванню соціальних зв’язків та збільшенню довіри до медіа. Однак, як показує аналіз, економічна цінність контенту не завжди збігається з його соціальною чи культурною цінністю. Це створює виклики для медіаіндустрії, яка мусить знаходити баланс між професійними стандартами журналістики та очікуваннями аудиторії. Наприклад, менш якісний контент (з погляду медіастандартів) може отримувати більшу залученість завдяки інтерактивним функціям, що ставить під сумнів традиційні підходи до оцінки якості медіапродуктів. Загалом, результати дослідження підтверджують, що інтерактивність є вагомим інструментом для підвищення конкурентоспроможності медіа в умовах цифрової ери та бере участь у формуванні цінності медіапродукту.

Ключові слова: інтерактивність, якість медіапродукту, цінність медіаконтенту, параметри цінності контенту, інтерактивний контент, залучення цифрової аудиторії, критерії якості в журналістиці.