

Abstract

Informational warfare has become an integral part of the hostilities between countries in the global arena. Its employment requires effective responses that can mitigate negative implications. The 2022 Russian invasion in Ukraine has resulted in the intensive war in various forms between the countries, forcing both sides to apply new methods of propaganda to withstand on the informational front. The case of Ukraine demonstrates an interest from the perspective of applied measures against Russian propaganda. The prerequisites of the study are the increasing use of Telegram since the invasion and application of this social media in implementing preventive propaganda. Few studies on the use of Telegram in informational warfare and propaganda exist.

The research features the analysis of five Ukrainian-language and state-related channels and their use of preventive propaganda narratives on four topics to address the threats of Russian propaganda. The applied social media analysis, content analysis, and sentiment analysis discover the dynamics of the Telegram channels use and their effectiveness based on the awareness and engagement metrics. Given the limited number of methods to measure the effectiveness of propaganda, a brand new approach was suggested in this paper. Using the emoji reactions and metrics based on the views, reactions, and messages counts, engagement metrics were calculated.

Allowing followers to react to messages increases their engagement and helps to maintain the awareness rate. This study finds that the engagement and awareness metrics do not depend on the number of followers of a Telegram channel. The engagement is higher on separate topics with specified observed periods. Preventive propaganda may not be effective in covering each

of the topics within the public interest. The novelty of this approach to measuring propaganda effectiveness and study results would be beneficial for media practitioners, policy makers, and other researchers.