

The image of unemployed in social media

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Traditional media perpetuate stereotypes about the unemployed and unemployment. In general, the news policy may be stressful for the population, reinforcing the fear of job loss. New electronic media can change the situation. There are a lot of stories in social networks, that demonstrate positive features of unemployed people, their abilities and will to begin a new life.

The diversity and personalization of content, combined with the technological capabilities of new media, make it possible to create a "new image of the unemployed". However, the analysis shows that this possibility is not fully realized. The current news and information policy of social media creates a negative context, narrowing the life chances of the unemployed, increasing stress and uncertainty in society. In addition, the analysis shows that the policy of social media can create "new points" of conflict. All this together determines the need to study the social construction of the image of the unemployed and unemployment in general in the space of social media.

The purpose of the study is to identify key characteristics of the unemployed in social media news, in memes, in news platforms and videos. Also we need to determine the image of the unemployed in social media today and compare the images in last years in Russia and in Germany. Our database consisted of 154 (in the Russian and German segment) Internet posts collected from various sites, as well as all Internet requests related to unemployment found through Wordstat for the period from 12/01/2019 to 11/30/2021.

News content about unemployment and unemployed people clearly has a limited number of topics, which is expressed in the monotony of words. Most of the news is meaningful either related to general information about the number of unemployed in the country, or touch on problems state registration and measures to support the unemployed.

The analysis of the collected content about the unemployed allows us to conclude that the predominance of visual (picture and video) content over text, which is natural/predictable and is due to the current popularity among Russian and German users of social networks with predominant visual content.

During the analysis of the selected samples depicted on the posts, the following main types were derived: real people, cartoon characters, abstract images, text.

The study analyzed the image of an unemployed person broadcast on social networks. During the development the following characteristics were identified: Lazy, depressed, unmotivated, happy, rich, alcohol, tired. useless education, lucky, sad, poor. Successful, stress.

Based on the data obtained, it can be argued that social networks in Russia and Germany reproduce a negative image of the unemployed, forming a negative social attitude towards the unemployed.

The analysis shows a higher polarization of opinions in the German content. In Russia, more than one third of the analyzed content is neutral (38,6%) (with no distinctly negative or positive connotations)

In Russia, most content about the unemployed is humorous (a joke) or informative. In Germany, much of the content is humorous too. However, the 2nd highest popularity is user stories (real talk). There is no informative content about the unemployed.

In the course of the study, we conducted the analysis of requests on the Runet for the period from December 2019 to November 2021 by using resources of site Wordstat. The data were supplemented with an analysis of state statistics, secondary research and analysis of the news portal Lenta.ru

So in the context of the pandemic, there was a sharp increase in the number of requests from Russian users compared to the pre-pandemic period.

It should be noted that the increase in user activity and within the pandemic. So, in 2021, the number of requests has almost doubled compared to 2020.

The increase in user activity is associated with the system of state measures introduced to support the unemployed in a pandemic, as well as the imposed special regimes of restrictions. A meaningful analysis of queries after deleting categories related to entertainment and educational activities made it possible to identify 4 main thematic groups of queries: 1) search for information about employment services; 2) search for vacancies from the employment service; 3) search for information on registration and receiving unemployment benefits 4) general information about unemployment and unemployed.