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PANDEMIC EXPERTS. ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF VALUES AND EVALUATIONS IN THE PRACTICE OF SCIENCE AND ITS SCIENCE EDUCATIONAL DISSEMINATION IN THE MEDIA IN POLAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract. The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic has forced changes in many areas of human life activity, also in the field of science, educating students and popularization knowledge. These changes were avalanche-like. Sudden increase in the incidence and introduction due to the pandemic situation, regulations at both national and university levels caused impossibility to prepare for changes in the areas related to science. They had to be gradually introduced. The aim of this article is to show the changes in the area of values in the practice of science and its dissemination in the media. Tools that worked well during the pandemic are still being used despite cancellation of the epidemic threat, of course to a lesser extent. In the area of dissemination of expert knowledge, solutions adopted during successive waves of pandemics are still applied; experts are invited to the studio, but they often connect with editorial staff using various communicators to disseminate via the media knowledge of your discipline. With the transfer of the work of academics to the Internet, both related to conducting research, educating students, and disseminating knowledge in the media were associated with a number of problems, the most serious in the area of research, but also strongly felt in the area of education. In turn, in the area of popularization of science, dissemination of expert knowledge, these changes are strongly related to changes that have been introduced due to the pandemic situation in the media electronic, and have brought many benefits. The biggest of them seems to be expanding the group of media experts about dormitories from outside the town whose TV stations or radio stations have a professional studio. In a situation of great demand for information on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and ways to prevent the disease, medical experts and professionals shared their knowledge in the media and straightened it out via communicators, but fake content spread by disinformers.

Keywords: experts, media, dissemination of science, values, COVID-19 pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic has forced changes in many areas of human life activities¹, also in the field of science, student education and popularisation knowledge. The aim of the article is to

¹ 1 The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on changes in many areas of human activity have been extensively described in literature, including Polish, from the perspective of various fields and disciplines. Outside the field of medical science, in which, for obvious reasons, there are probably the most publications devoted to the pandemic, many works were created in the field of social sciences. It was described, among others, in the context of the phenomenon of infodemic and disinformation (Demczuk, 2021; Demczuk, 2023), or from the

show changes in the area of values in the practice of science and science dissemination in the media. As Wojciech Świątkiewicz notes: 'Values lie at the basis of various forms of macro- and micro-social structures, as well as forming a tissue social relations between individuals who are depositories of values. A human is value and social life is a value, they focus on the values that bind them together and they integrate. There is neither social life nor individual life outside the world of values' (2021). All changes in the area of science and its educational dissemination in the media are in progress of the COVID-19 pandemic were caused by the protection of the highest value: human life and health against the dangerous SARS-CoV-2 virus (Rembierz, 2021b).

The play on words in the title about pandemic experts is intentional. This article is devoted, on the one hand, to medical experts, disseminating knowledge about the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and the pandemic in the media COVID-19, on the other - experts representing various fields and disciplines, which it came to disseminate knowledge during the pandemic period.

2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. About changes

"Słownik Języka Polskiego" defines transformation as "becoming different than previously, the transformation of one form into another (...), transformation" (Szymczak, 1995, p. 940); in turn, change as "the fact that someone becomes different, something becomes other than so far" (Szymczak, 1995, p. 973).

The title transformation indicates, in this case, an avalanche of changes in area related to science and its dissemination in the media by researchers and scientists. A sudden increase in the number of cases and regulations introduced in connection with the pandemic situation both at the national and university level have led to changes in the areas related to science could not be prepared.

At the same time, the term transformation indicates an accomplished state. Despite returning to universities after remote teaching and continuation of stationary teaching, we still use tools such as Teams or Zoom to participate in conferences or special events cases, conduct classes.

The tools that worked in the first period of the pandemic are still used there, of course, to a lesser extent. Also in the area of dissemination according to expert knowledge, the solutions adopted during the first waves of the pandemic are still applied there. Experts are invited to the studio, but they also often connect through various communicators to disseminate knowledge in the field of their own through the media discipline.

2.2. Changes in science and teaching

The pre-pandemic period in science was conducive to direct, related contacts among others with the physical presence of speakers at conferences where a given topic or the results of the perspective of the sociology of everyday life (Gumuła, 2021). Because of the subject matter of the article, this text is limited to describing changes in the practice of science and its education dissemination in the media during the pandemic research could be discussed not only during official meetings, but also in during backstage talks. Those were direct contacts that often resulted in more than just that consulting the reported research results, but they were also the beginning of our acquaintance continued, e.g., during the work on joint publications or preparation of grant applications.

The use of physical libraries during scientific work was also a norm presence in them, despite the availability of many items in the online version, in open access.

With the beginning of the pandemic, by the decision of the state and the university authorities, the place of work of a researcher and didactics ceased to be a library and a university; the work was left transferred to the Internet. There were a number of problems of nature associated with this sudden and necessary change or related to difficulties, and sometimes even impossibility conducting scientific research. Those were the difficulties in conducting scientific research (especially social), due to limited

contacts and closed libraries. They were considered the serious problem in the area of science in the era of a pandemic (Kobylarek, 2020, pp. 8-10). Remote conferencing, previously rare, has become the norm. Despite problems mentioned above, as well as the notorious lack of direct contact with among others, the positive aspects of such a solution were also noticed: saving time (there was no need travel to the place of conference proceedings or work) and money (you didn't have to pay for travel).

Due to the protection of health and life, directness was no longer the overriding value contact, and it began to be virtual contact. In science, the focus was on the most important: publishing and presenting papers at online conferences and discussing them; other elements of the work ceased to be relevant.

The changes caused by the pandemic, of a total nature, were practically subject to every student and teacher of every educational level (Kobylarek, 2020, p. 8; Pauluk, 2021, pp. 39-48; Chrost & Chrost, 2021, pp. 573-592, Blyznyuk, Budnyk, & Kachak 2021, pp. 90-98; Jankowiak, Jaskulska, Marciniak, Klichowski, 2022, pp. 119-130; Building, 2023). These according to Aleksander Kobylarek, were the changes in the field of didactics that caused the most important type of problems at universities during the pandemic. As the reasons for the author indicates different knowledge of technological solutions in the field of online education or remote, difficulties in maintaining a healthy communication process with students, difficulties due to network congestion and delayed or conflicting decisions by authorities concerning education (Kobylarek, 2020, pp. 10-13).

2.3. Changes in the area of popularizing science

Changes in the area of science popularization caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were related very often to changes caused by the pandemic in electronic media. COVID-19 has led to the changes that can be divided into three groups: 1) for the first time on such a scale, the message was understood as a separate location and delocalised the sender and the interlocutor; 2) it is assumed that there is an implied (default) consent to worsen, lower quality of transmission; 3) the existing aesthetics were broken (Łukasik-Turecka, 2021, pp. 123-132).

Communicating from home, meaning the delocalization of the message, resulted in the unveiling of a private or business space for those who have not had access to it before. In the case of political communication, e.g., politicians, it gave new opportunities in the area political marketing, related to the creation of one's own image. Also in case other guests invited to the media, e.g., experts, it was related to expanding visual elements of the places where they live or stay. Online communication made it possible to extend the message with a lot of visual information about the lifestyle or tastes of the person with whom the journalist was connected.

The need to communicate at a distance affected the expansion of the circle experts about those from cities other than those which are the headquarters of a given TV or radio station, or cities where a radio or TV station has a studio off-road. Thus, new experts representing various disciplines appeared, commenting current events on the political scene, hitherto unknown to the wider community, and which presence on the air was made possible by various communicators. So the pandemic has led to changes in the area of an important criterion, which so far was the place of residence of the expert, has effectively downplayed the weight of this criterion. Connecting with the researcher, the scientist via Skype or Zoom, which in practice of the pandemic situation forced the journalists to do, meant that it didn't matter whether the invited guest was connecting from - a neighboring street or another city. The criteria that had previously been significant also remained important: competencies, time availability and the ability to talk about complex matters in a simple and understandable language.

During subsequent lockdowns, we also dealt with implied consent to poorer, lower quality of transmission. The digital revolution that took place several years ago in media, forced to care for the quality of what the recipient sees and hears. The most was taken care of the image and sound quality, hence the use of the best studio equipment and expensive broadcast trucks. In March 2020, and then through the next months, we could observe that the requirements receded into the background. It came to reevaluation of some priorities. It was the overriding value bringing about the transfer, the possibility

of communication, transfer of information, exchange views. So we were dealing with an implied consent to the lower quality of the transmission, which will always be the quality of the weakest element. The weakest element in the case of a person who connects to a given medium outside its premises. These may be a microphone, camera or internet connection.

The deteriorating quality of the transmission was accompanied by a re-evaluation of the area existing aesthetics. Communicating via home devices brought with it clear changes caused by making comments at home or work, instead of the studio. Even the best home light can never replace professional lighting, the resolution of home devices will not provide such clarity of the image like professional equipment, self-made make-up probably won't be as good as done by a beautician etc. The audience quickly accepted the changes related to the new aesthetics. Even a sudden breakup links, something that previously could not occur in the professional media, in the era pandemic and remote communication was considered acceptable; link breakage was not treated as a violation of a certain aesthetics.

2.4. Medical experts during a pandemic - shaping awareness

With the pandemic, a new dominant group of political actors - medical experts appeared in the space of political communication in Europe. An unknown virus wreaking so much havoc, created fear and demand for any information. Initially, the statements of medical experts concerned only the area medicine, they spoke on topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gradually however, the thematic range of their statements expanded, media appearances ceased concern only topics related to the virus and the health of Poles, increasingly more often, they concerned the actions of the authorities, and also included an assessment of these actions (See more: Łukasik-Turecka, 2021, pp. 123-132).

Medical experts, however, played a large role primarily in education dissemination of knowledge in the media during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visibly increased activity of medical experts in all areas of activity, distinguished for experts by Przemysław Nosal (2009, pp. 92-94). Medical experts reported what was happening in hospital wards and ER, explained how the virus spreads and how to prevent getting sick, interpreted and commented on the epidemic situation in the country and around the world, assessed the actions of the authorities in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, made predictions about development of the situation, and instructed on how to behave during the next waves.

The dissemination of knowledge by medical experts in the media was especially important for two reasons: firstly, the sudden appearance of a deadly virus has resulted in a huge demand for information regarding both the virus itself SARS-CoV-2, as well as ways to prevent the disease; secondly, it was an influx of reliable information in a deluge of misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Agnieszka Demczuk notes: "Almost from the beginning of disseminating information about a new threat due to the epidemiological situation related to the COVID-19 infection, the infosphere was almost 'flooded' with conspiracy theories, disinformation with fake news, stigmatization, rumors and other verbal manipulations about the SARS-CoV-2 virus itself, as well as respiratory disease caused by it" (Demczuk, 2021, p. 12). Among false content, rumors and unverified information included those about "vaccines with chips", vaccines allegedly launched without prior testing clinical trials, or Bill Gates' fabricated policy of annihilation of humanity (Demczuk, 2021, p. 13).

Activity of medical experts in the area of informing about the virus and the pandemic was rated higher than the activities of politicians who informed about the pandemic situation within the framework of their duties. This is evidenced by the results of one of the surveys, conducted by IBRIS, concerning the assessment of activity and trust towards Polish politicians and medical experts, published in January 2021 on the pages of the nationwide daily "Fact". Respondents were asked to answer and assess the activity and your level of trust in the ministers: Adam Niedzielski and Michał Dworczyk and medical experts - doctors: prof. Krzysztof Simon i dr. Paweł Grzesiowski. The results of the survey clearly indicated that Polish experts in the analyzed period enjoyed a relatively high and, at the same time, definitely higher level of trust among respondents than politicians who are the faces of the fight against pandemic. Trust in experts ranged between 50% and 65% depending on the assessed

expert, while politicians enjoyed only about 30% trust, with more than 50% distrust and 20% indifference. According to Ewa Marciniak, high the level of trust towards experts results from the fact that 'people consider them competent, appreciate the substantive, professional and the fact that long-term knowledge presented in the media professional experience' (Fakt, 2021).

However, the activity of medical experts was not always positively assessed, not once met with criticism. Marek Rembierz wrote: 'In this dangerous they also played a significant role in the media-mediated pathology of word formation: some epidemiologists, along with other scientists practicing 'blank talk' about new virus, and not having enough information about it and - worse – critical distance to the limited resources of one's own knowledge. Intellectual, cognitive and – which is no less important – the axiological inefficiency of the modern conglomerate of science subjected (among others by the system of grant dependencies and addictions) to utilitarian dictates technology needs. The inefficiency of the technoscience spreading around itself - masking up to now its multiple weaknesses - an aura of constant progress practically useful knowledge and its power manifested in various applications. Epidemic 'blank talk' in the opinion of experts with scientific titles, it contributes quite significantly to the intensification of the pandemic, because they also advised decision-makers and created new ones inappropriate solutions, which, according to declarations, are supposed to put a stop to threats. State pandemic painfully exposes various forms of 'blank talk' deeply embedded in many areas of human activity taking an institutionalized form in life social' (Rembierz, 2021a, p. 227).

3. CONCLUSIONS

Regardless of the assessment of the activity of experts, including medical experts, the fact is that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to changes in the area of values and evaluation in science practice and its educational dissemination in the media.

With the transfer of the work of academicians to the Internet, conducting research, educating students, and disseminating knowledge in the media was associated with a number of problems. The most serious of them was in the area of research and strongly felt in the field of education. In its turn, in the area of popularization of science and dissemination of expert knowledge, these changes were strongly related to those that have been introduced due to the pandemic situation in the media electronic. However, they brought many benefits. The most noticeable ones seem to have expanded the group media experts from outside the town whose TV or radio stations had a professional studio. In a situation of great demand for information on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and ways to prevent the disease, experts and medical professionals shared their knowledge in the media and straightened it out via communicators fake content spread by disinformers.

It is worth emphasizing once again that all changes caused in the area of science and its educational dissemination in the media during the COVID-19 pandemic were of the highest value: human life and health protection against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and respiratory disease caused by it.

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Агнешка Лукасік-Турецька. Експерти з пандемії. Про трансформацію цінностей і ціннісних орієнтирів у науковій практиці та її освітньому поширенні в медіа в Польщі під час пандемії COVID-19. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 10 (3) (2023), 32-38.

Пандемія коронавірусу SARS-CoV-2 спричинила зміни в багатьох сферах людської діяльності, зокрема в науковій практиці, навчанні студентів та поширенні знань. Ці зміни були експоненціальними; раптові

зростання захворюваності на хворобу та правила, запроваджені у зв'язку з пандемічною ситуацією як на національному, так і на університетському рівнях, означали, що зміни у сферах, пов'язаних з наукою, не можна було підготувати і їх довелося впроваджувати за одну ніч. Мета статті – показати зміни в царині цінностей у практиці науки та її поширенні в засобах масової інформації. Інструменти, які працювали під час пандемії, використовуються і зараз, попри скасування епідемічної загрози, звісно, меншою мірою. Також у сфері поширення експертизи продовжують використовувати рішення, прийняті під час наступних хвиль пандемії; експертів запрошують до студії, але вони також часто зв'язуються з редакцією за допомогою різних комунікаторів, щоб поширювати знання зі своєї дисципліни через медіа. Перенесення роботи науковців в Інтернет, як пов'язаної з проведенням досліджень, навчанням студентів, так і з поширенням знань у медіа, було пов'язане з низкою проблем, найбільш серйозних у сфері проведення досліджень, але також сильно відчутних у сфері освіти. З іншого боку, у сфері популяризації науки, поширення експертних знань ці зміни, тісно пов'язані зі змінами, які були запроваджені у зв'язку з пандемічною ситуацією в електронних ЗМІ, принесли багато користі. Найважливішим видається розширення кола медіа-експертів за рахунок залучення науковців з-поза меж населених пунктів, чий теле- чи радіостанції мають професійні студії. Зважаючи на величезний попит на інформацію про вірус SARS-CoV-2 та способи запобігання захворюванню, медичні експерти діляться своїми знаннями зі ЗМІ за допомогою миттєвих повідомлень і спростовують неправдивий контент, який поширюють дезінформатори.

Ключові слова: експерти, медіа, поширення науки, цінності, пандемія COVID-19.