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## **Objectification of Subjectivity: International Experience in Selection of TV Stimuli in Mass Media Effect Research**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The **objective** of the study was to classify the existing methods of the TV news content selection, and to assess the advantages and shortcomings of each approach. To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been performed: 1) considering the existing approaches to the selection of the TV news content, applied in the media effects studies; 2) summarizing and classifying the approaches used for the selection of the TV news stories for experiments in the media effects studies; 3) analysing the advantages and disadvantages of each technique of the experimental selection of the TV news content.

The research was conducted through the use of scientific **methods** of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, transition from the abstract to the concrete, and document review. Several criteria were applied to the selection of the studies to be included in the review of methods of the TV news materials selection: 1) only those experimental articles and thesis were selected, in which the TV news was the independent variable, and the reaction of surveyed people was the dependent variable; 2) the articles and theses should include a clear description of the methods of the TV news selection.

**Results and Conclusions.** The TV news content was examined as a basic material for experiments in social communications. Based on the academic publications of the American and European scientists, we elaborated the classification of methods for the media content selection in the media effects studies. Different approaches to the selection of news material were proposed. According to the proposed classification, all methods of the media content selection were divided into the primary methods (pool method) and secondary methods (Self-Assessment Mannequin test; semantic differential method; R. Likert emotion assessment scale; J.B. Haskins scale for the good-bad news assessment). The validity and reliability of these techniques was proved by the studies in the TV news effects.

**KEYWORDS:** media effects; media stimuli; news story; selection method; experiment.

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## **Об'єктивізація суб'єктивності: світовий досвід відбору теленовинного матеріалу в дослідженнях медіаефектів**

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### **Резюме**

У дослідженні розглянуто новинний контент телебачення як базовий матеріал для експериментів у соціальних комунікаціях. За науковими працями американських та європейських учених запропоновано класифікацію методів відбору контенту засобів масової комунікації у контексті дослідницької парадигми медіаефектів. Пропонуються різні підходи до відбору новинного матеріалу. Згідно з наведеною класифікацією, всі методики відбору новинного контенту розділені на первинні (метод пулу) та вторинні (тест Self-Assessment Mannequin, метод семантичного диференціалу, шкала Р. Лікерта для позначення емоцій, шкала Дж. Хаскінса для оцінки позитивності / негативності новин). Валідність і надійність цих методик доведена їх успішним застосуванням у дослідженнях медіавпливів, зокрема у працях із ефектів телевізійних новин.

**Ключові слова:** медіаефект, медіастимул, новинний сюжет, методика відбору, експеримент.

**Гаврилец Ю.Д., Ризун В.В., Тукаев С.В., Хилько М.Н. Объективизация субъективности: мировой опыт выборки теленовостного материала в исследованиях медиаэффектов.**

**Резюме.** В исследовании рассмотрен новостной контент телевидения как базовый материал для экспериментов в социальных коммуникациях. На основании научных трудов американских и европейских ученых предложена классификация методов отбора контента средств массовой коммуникации в контексте исследовательской парадигмы медиаэффектов. Предлагаются разные подходы к отбору новостного материала. Согласно приведенной классификации, все методики отбора новостного контента разделены на первичные (метод пула) и вторичные (тест Self-Assessment Mannequin, метод семантического дифференциала, шкала Р. Ликерта для обозначения эмоций, шкала Дж. Хаскинса для оценки позитивности / негативности новостей). Валидность и надежность данных методик доказана успешным использованием в работах по исследованию медиавлияний, в частности, по исследованию эффектов телевизионных новостей.

**Ключевые слова:** медиаэффект, медиастимул, новостной сюжет, методика отбора, эксперимент.

## 1. Introduction

Several problems still remain not fully solved within the contemporary media effects studies. Often, the choice of the media content to study is determined by the media representatives themselves as the research clients. And it remains unclear how accurate the selected media stimuli reflect the content of media material and the methods of its presentation in mass media [1]. Another major problem is that the researchers usually pay more attention to the process of selection of human subjects for the study than to selection of media stimuli. While the research value of study depends on quality of both of these criteria, B. Reeves notes that over the past decades, the issue of media stimuli selection dropped off radar of the media effects studies, it lacks the researchers' attention and has been conducted just technically [1]. The lack of attention to the proper selection of the media content as an independent variable in the experiments is a common problem for the media effects studies.

In this study, we use the term "media stimulus" or "stimulus material" that means the material of experimental research within the paradigm of media effects to be demonstrated to the sample human subjects to verify the interrelation between the media content and further psycho-physiological state or behaviour of the human subjects. Within the TV news effects study, the newscasts and news stories are considered as media stimuli.

So far, any set of generally accepted criteria of material selection for the media influence studies does not exist, not to speak about the system of such selection. This opens up opportunities for its elaboration in order to overcome the subjectivity in media stimuli selection. Some scientists try to reduce subjectivity to the minimum, and clearly substantiate the selection procedure [2; 3], while in other studies [4; 5] only the types of TV news are indicated (positive, negative and neutral) without adequate detailing of the selection procedure.

Psycho-physiological studies in the mass media effects began relatively recently, about 30-40 years ago. These works are interdisciplinary by their nature, as they apply tools and theoretical foundations of various areas of science to generate the data of new quality. Contemporary media psychology has a wide range of methods for data collecting, processing and interpretation concerning the perception of heterogeneous mass media content, including the news, feature films, advertisements and reality shows. However, since the approaches to the media content selection have not been systemised yet, we devoted our study to this issue.

In mass media effects studies, the content selection procedure is described in the "stimulus" section. Therefore, each of the analyzed papers contains such a description. Psycho-emotional effects of the TV news (fear, anxiety and mood changes) were empirically studied by H. Brosius [6], J.P. Harrell [7], W.M. Johnston and G.C. Davey [8], M. Lombard [9], J.E. Newhagen [10], Z. Rojkova [4], A. Szabo and K. Hopkinson [11], D. Unz, F. Schwab and P. Winterhoff-Spurk [2]. W.B. Collins [12] showed the interrelationship between changes in the viewers' willingness to donate and the emotional stress of the video news. A. Lang's and M.E. Grabe's studies in cognitive effects of the media influence (the specifics of perception, processing and remembering of the newscasts' information by the people subject) are representative in terms of the news stories selection validity [13; 14; 15; 16; 17]. Over the last decade, it was quite popular within the media effects research to explore the impact on the audience of the sensational news layout – the so-called "sensational packaging" that applies video effects (slowing down and inserting the impressive frames) or audio effects (appropriate music in the background and haunting tone of the commentator). Among these works, we should mention K. Pinkerton and S. Zhou [18], R.L. Bailey et al. [19], M.E. Grabe et al. [13; 14].

The **aim** of this study is to classify the existing methods of selection of the television news content, to assess the advantages and shortcomings of each approach.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks should be performed:

1. To consider the existing approaches to the selection of television news content, which are applied in the media effects research.
2. To summarize and classify the approaches used for the selection of television news for experiments in media effects studies.
3. To analyse the advantages and disadvantages of each technique of the experimental selection of the television news content.

## 2. Research Methods

Typically, the methodology section in experimental media effect studies contain the subsection "Stimuli", which describes in detail the process of selection and the characteristics of the content in question.

We classified the TV news selection methods on the basis of experimental studies relevant to TV news effects, including studies in which the effect of the TV news is considered along with the effect of the other types of content (such as advertisements and movies). We did not cover content analysis and meta-analysis studies, as well as surveys, focus groups and observations.

Present study was conducted through the use of scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, transition from the abstract to the concrete, and document review.

The following criteria were applied to choose the studies for the inclusion to the review of methods of the TV news materials selection:

1. It should be the experimental articles and theses, in which television news consumption was an independent variable, and reaction of surveyed people on this news was a dependent variable.
2. The methods of news selection should be described in the articles and theses. Based on these descriptions, the classification of TV news material selection methods is to be proposed applying the following criteria: 1) the main thematic areas of the studies; 2) the nature of the selected research materials – the whole news releases or the individual TV stories; 3) the subject of selection procedure – was the selection made by the researcher or by other coders; 4) the selection method – was the material selected for a certain period and a certain channel from the large pool which included all the news stories, or not.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### **Classification of methods of the news materials selection for the media effects studies.**

The majority of the media effect studies report on the selection of media stimuli. But the validity and reasonability of applying a certain method of media stimuli selection remains a challenging issue. It is necessary to distinguish between random and arbitrary selections. The selection of materials for research can be considered random, when certain pieces of content are recorded at pre-set time, on a certain channel, with minimal interference of the researcher. The selection of materials is arbitrary, when the researcher selects scenes to be shown at her/his discretion. In this case, the grounded concerns arise about the representativeness of the selected TV news stories in terms of their real novelty – with time some TV stories lose their novelty and cannot be perceived as the new ones. Therefore, the selection should include only those topics, which may be considered as news under any circumstances.

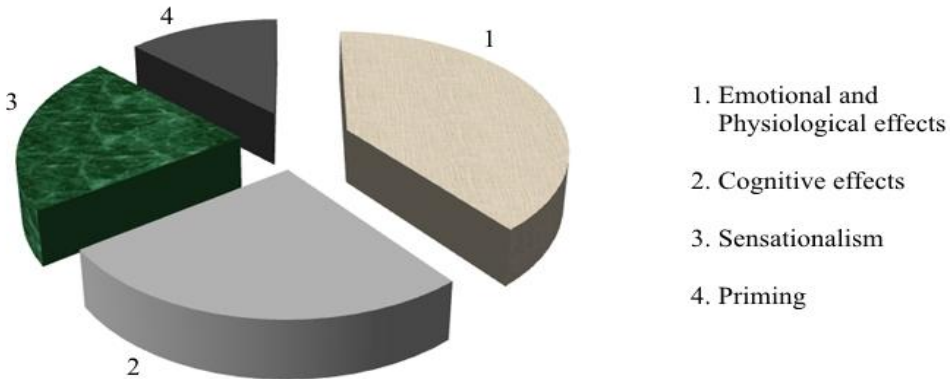
We analysed 23 empirical studies about the TV news media effects prepared by American and European scientists. Among these works there are 21 scientific articles and 2 dissertation theses. Geography of the analysed scientific research is the following: almost 70% of the studies (16 works) were written by American scientists, mainly based of the United States' information space. The rest of the works were written by German (2 studies) and the UK (2 studies) scien-

tists; one study was prepared in Poland and one more in Belgium. Researchers from Hungary and Japan were co-authors of their Britain and American colleagues.

These works appeared over the last quarter century (the first one in 1993 [6]), five papers were published in 1990s, 11 papers – in the first decade of the 2000s, and 7 papers – in the 2010s. By their thematic focus, the works on TV news media effects can be divided into the following segments:

- 1) emotional and physiological effects of the TV news (anxiety, fear, anger, physiological indicators of emotional experiences) – 9 papers;
- 2) cognitive effects (attention, processing and remembering of the information from the media) – 6 papers;
- 3) sensationalism (the influence of so-called "sensational news packaging" on the perception of the content) – 5 papers;
- 4) priming (imposing on viewer of the stereotypical attitudes that distort social reality) – 3 papers.

**Fig. 1. Thematic groups of the research papers on the TV news' media effects.**



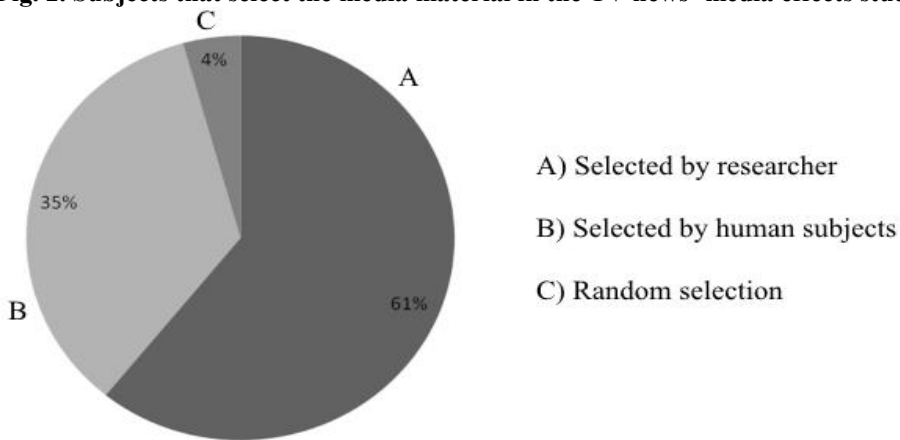
Overall, the selection procedure was described in all the analyzed research, though not always enough thoroughly. For example, M. Lombard [9] did not pay enough attention to the stimuli selection – he did not indicate the source of used media content, did not make initial selection of media materials and did not involve the independent coders. Z. Rojkova also did not properly consider the process of news content selection. She wrote: "For the research, we selected between-group experimental plan, when each group is exposed only one level of the independent variable – one specific type of video. 3 types of video: 1. Good news by TA3 (a "positive group"), 2. Television news by TV JOJ (a "negative group") and 3. A neutral documentary (a "neutral group")." [4, 127]. Only the sources of three selected types of videos are indicated, but there is no precise description of the content selection procedure. If only a source is indicated, but the timeframe of program release is not specified, one cannot know the margins of general population of the media impact independent variable.

Another important issue is the object of the studies, namely, whether the effects of the whole newscasts were studied or just of their certain fragments, TV news stories (and whether the original sequence of scenes was preserved or only certain video-fragments on various themes were shown). The majority (22) of analyzed works is dedicated to the study of effect of TV stories, while effect of a newscast is studied only in 1 study [11]. Moreover, even in the latter study, not the whole newscast is examined, but only its first 15 minutes.

It is also important to know, who carries out the selection of news content for experiments. If the selection is made only by the researcher, then the accuracy of the study results is at risk. It is

more reliable to make a pre-test – to let a group of coders make the final selection of incentives due to the several emotiogenic scales including the SAM technique and the semantic differential. We divided a set of analysed studies into 3 groups, by the subject of content selection: 1) in 14 papers the selection is made only by the researcher (often in these studies it is not mentioned who made the selection; it is usually written something like the following: "The three items were chosen because they showed varying kinds of emotional pictures" [6, 111]; although it is not indicated who made the selection, but one can assume that it was the researcher); 2) in 8 papers the selection is made by the coders group (if this group takes part in the initial selection of news videos and/or secondary selection through the evaluation techniques and various criteria); 3) in 1 study a random selection is made, without participation of any subject (one hour before the experiment a piece of news release was recorded to be shown to the study group – a work by A. Szabo and K. Hopkinson [11]).

**Fig. 2. Subjects that select the media material in the TV news' media effects studies.**



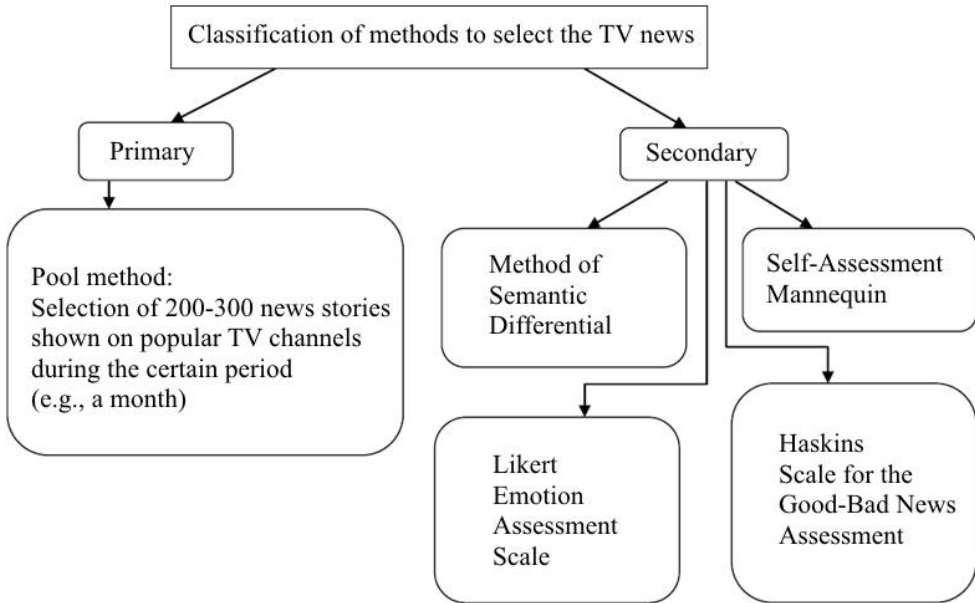
All the methods of TV news content selection can be divided into primary and secondary. The first ones focus on the very content, considering its representativeness for the type of programs or materials impact of which is to be investigated. The Pool Method can be considered as the primary one – it meets the criteria of the study and is limited by sources and time. Instead, the secondary methods focus primarily on the assessment of the initially selected content – to sample the most typical content examples to be shown to the sample audience. These include the Method of Semantic Differential (SD), the Self-Assessment Mannequin (SAM) and others. This division of methods is illustrated in Fig. 3.

**Primary techniques to select the TV news.** In terms of representativeness of the test content, it is optimal to select a set of news content for the base news stories pool from the limited number of TV broadcasters (usually the most popular ones) within the clear timeframes (from a month to a few months). This pool can include about 200–300 news stories that meet the criteria of the study. Sometimes the selection of the pool is made by the study group [7] relevantly instructed on how to do selection; although in the majority of the analysed studies this function is made by the researcher. If it is not indicated who makes the initial content selection, one can assume that it is a researcher. In cases when the pool is enough large, it does not matter who does the initial selection, if the secondary assessment methodologies are applied subsequently.

The pool method is used in works by J.P. Harrell [7], M.E. Grabe et al. [14], and by A. Lang et al. [16]. The last one pays maximum attention to the procedure of news stories selection. Relatively small pools are used by J.E. Newhagen [10], and by A. Miller and G. Leshner [20] (24 and

25 news stories respectively). This method is also applied by D. Unz et al. [2], and by W.M. Johnston and G.C. Davey [8]; however, in both works the numbers of pool sources are not specified. M.E. Grabe et al. [14] also does not specify the number of pieces in the pool, but in this article the timeframes of news stories' featured on air are clearly specified, while the studies of D. Unz et al. [2], W.M. Johnston and G.C. Davey [8] lack this. Thus, in our set of academic research on TV news media effects, the pool method of materials is used in 8 of 23 studies.

**Fig. 3. Classification of methods to select the TV news content.**



The pool method envisages the use of original news stories or partly original news stories in the same way as they have been shown on TV. The original versions of news stories are used in the majority of the analysed works (13); the partly original versions (all or some of the original television stories have been edited) are used in 8 studies; fully edited materials which have never been shown on TV are used in 2 studies. In several works it is studied how the various versions of the TV news story's packaging affect the audience's reaction. Mostly, these are the articles concerning the sensational and non-sensational packaging effects. It is not about the using of large initial pool here, but only about the screening out the inappropriate TV stories through the SD and SAM methods. The researches use the original news stories which have been shown on TV, but they edit the stories by adding sensational audio and video effects (haunting voice of the reporter, terrible background music, footage slow down, many close-up views to show bloody scenes, etc.). Such studies are those by M.E. Grabe [13], K. Pinkerton [18], and R.L. Bailey et al. [19].

The next stage, which requires the use of **secondary methods of news content selection**, is the process of decoding certain news stories or certain type of pictures by several coders – persons unrelated to researcher, mostly members of the study group, which carries out evaluation and further selection of the materials in accordance with criteria of the study. The term "secondary" in no way diminishes the importance of this stage – we name it "secondary" only because this selection happens after the primary one. Such secondary selection significantly reduces the experimental material to the most typical and meeting the criteria of the study, e.g. the studied

group chooses the most cruel and disturbing news stories from the entire sample.<sup>1</sup> The sense of the second stage of selection is to choose the required number of media stimuli needed by researcher to show it to the sample group of viewers.

An important caveat moment should be taken into account – those persons who perform as coders in media content selection process, whether primary or secondary, in no case should view these materials later, in the experimental process along with other members of the sample group, because these materials are not new for them anymore, unlike the other members of the studied sample group. This requirement allows avoiding the shift of emphasis in the experimental data.

The work of coders in the analysed works is presented in several variations: 1) there are three coders, two of which estimate their shares of the materials, and the third one has the decisive word, if their assessments are different [16; 17]; 2) there are several dozen of coders who review all the news pieces, and later their assessments are summed up or derived average for each news story [10]. Given the expensiveness in terms of time and cognitive resources of the second approach, the first one seems to be more practical.

Often, the secondary stage of selection by multiple coders can be performed through the several emotogenic stimuli tests with proven effectiveness not only in news effects studies, but in all types of media content studies.

**The method of semantic differential.** Emotional response can be measured in at least three different systems – affective reports, physiological reactivity, and overt behavioural acts [21]. In 1950s, in psychological studies, a semantic differential method became popular for qualitative and quantitative indexation of values, concepts and objects through the set of bipolar, antonymous graduated scales. The essence of this method is to provide the numerical values to the emotional words. Semantic differential helps to evaluate the object or concept that is being shaped in minds of the respondents and to structure the intensity/potentiality and subjectivity ratio of their perceptions [22]. Based on measuring human's emotional reactions, a set of 18 bipolar adjective pairs was proposed, each of which is rated at 9-point scale: (1) Unhappy-Happy; (2) Annoyed-Pleased; (3) Unsatisfied-Satisfied; (4) Melancholic-Contented; (5) Despairing-Hopeful; (6) Bored-Relaxed; (7) Relaxed-Stimulated; (8) Calm-Excited; (9) Sluggish-Frenzied; (10) Dull-Jittery; (11) Sleepy-Wide awake; (12) Unaroused-Aroused; (13) Controlled-Controlling; (14) Influenced-Influential; (15) Cared for-In control; (16) Awed-Important; (17) Submissive-Dominant; (18) Guided-Autonomous [21]. Introduction of new dichotomies to the original scales helps to specify the characteristics of stimulus perception. Thus, the analysis at basic scale "Pleasant-Unpleasant", along with additional scale "Cheerful-Sad" and with V. Boyko emotional burnout test helps to reveal the defining factor of stress that influence a distinct emotional response to the music [23].

Such value judgments within logical dichotomies help to choose the appropriate stimuli in accordance with the purpose of research and to better compare the media effects of emotionally accented news [24; 25; 26]. When comparing the perception of TV and newspaper news credibility, J. Newhagen and C. Nass [27] used the 5-point scale similar to the semantic differential. The SD (four 9-point scales to assess the degree of violence, terror, bloodshed and cruelty) is used as a pre-test to select 26 images from 3 news stories (two Pulitzer-Prize photo reports on the Iraq war and the Haiti situation, and one photo reportage from the New York Times on the famine in Somalia) to study the clarity of the information transmission [28]. M. Lee [29] evaluates the attitude toward comments on the news web sites at four 9-point semantic differential scales (from -4 to +4): "Bad-Good", "Harmful-Beneficial," "Foolish-Wise" And "Unfavorable-Favorable".

M.E. Grabe et al. [13] compare the information editing in the tabloid and standard TV news

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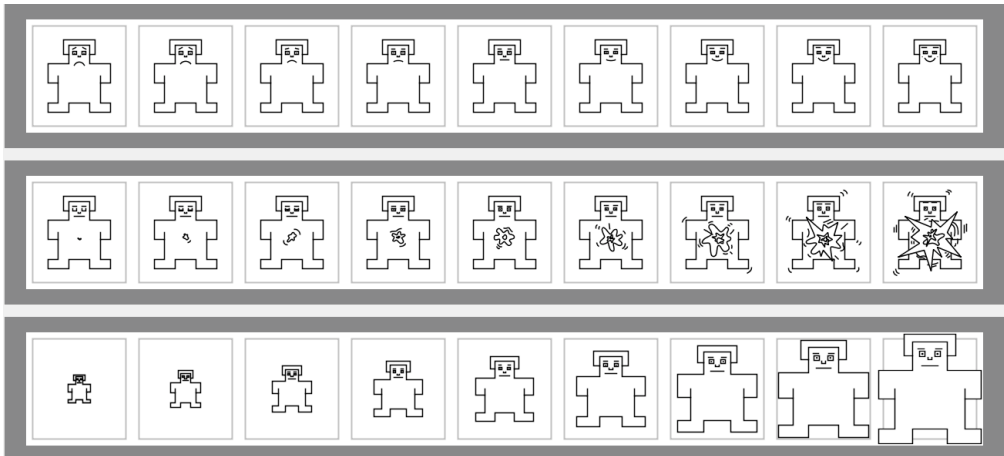
<sup>1</sup> In case of negative news stories, the selected events should be really threatening and impressive, and scenes of violence against humans and animals should include the most egregious footage depicting acts of violence.

programs. For this purpose, 8 TV news stories are used in two versions that differ in use/non-use of 5 special television effects – music, background, sound effects, slow motion and flash frames – to draw attention and haunting tone of journalist. The SD scales help to get the emotionally-estimated ratings of news stories, and the record of heart rates and skin conductance response during viewing of the programs help to fix the changes in attention and excitement. The TV news stories are evaluated in three 10-point SD scales (pleasure, informativeness, and probability): 1 – unpleasant, uninformative, unbelievable, prejudiced and biased story; 10 – very pleasant, informative, believable, impartial and objective story. The correlation analysis indicated a significant relationship between probability and informativeness of stories for the viewers ( $r = + .6$ ).

**A Self-Assessment Mannequin test.** In 1980, P.J. Lang [30] proposed the non-verbal, graphic scales of Self-Assessment Mannequin (SAM) to assess the emotions. He took as a basis the semantic differential scale developed by A. Mehrabian and J.A. Russell [31] – as a common tool for assessing the three-dimensional structure of emotional reactions (1. valence, 2. arousal, 3. dominance). Pictographic 9-point (0 to 9) SAM test has three iconographic scales, each of which is associated with the human emotional reaction to a significant number of stimuli or events and meet one of the three dimensions of emotional reactions. The SAM is a series of three figures: from smiling and happy – to sad and unhappy (the satisfaction scale); from excited because of positive emotions with wide open eyes – to relaxed and sleepy (the scale of excitation). The domination size reflects the changes in figure size (Fig. 4). According to the authors of this technique, the SAM can accurately track the emotiogenic response to stimuli in many contexts [21].

The SAM method allows to quickly assess emotional experience and response to a certain stimulus, especially when it comes to a large amount of content to be assessed. The judgements on fun and excitement levels obtained with the help of SAM method highly correlate with assessments obtained with the help of verbal scales and semantic differential, while the latter is more expensive in terms of time and efforts [21].

**Fig. 4. Pictographic scale of the Self-Assessment Mannequin test to assess pleasure, arousal and dominance, associated with response to an object or event [30; 21].**



P.T. Sowden and L. Dawson [34] use the pleasure, arousal and dominance SAM scales after watching each video to simulate the emotional state of sample before the experiment – one to three 4-7-minutes video-clips with corresponding emotional stress are used (positive comedy video, negative video on genocide, and neutral film that explains how to watch TV through the computer monitor).

A. Lang et al. [35] proposed to evaluate 8 negative videos with the help of nonverbal emotional evaluation SAM test. The participants of the study evaluated their feelings using three scales. According to the test results, negative video pictures increased negative emotional impact of the news story making it more exciting and more negative. Negative news video focuses attention and mental resources needed for processing messages, enhances ability to retrace some statements in memory, facilitates identification of information transmitted in a negative video, and simultaneously inhibits recognition and reproduction of information received before the negative video.

The SAM scale of "pleasure" is also used before the study in which young and elderly viewers assessed video-clips from two films with different emotional valence. The pre-test results indicated that the mood swings caused by happy and sad videos are significantly different, unlike the level of excitement [36], the value of which indicates no significant differences.

In the study of emotional valence (tone) effects of the TV videos, news stories with most negative values of valence are selected from the primary pool, as well as the TV advertising with the most positive emotional valence values. Preliminary selection was made by the group of 25 participants aged 16 to 17, with average age of 16.6 years, who rate the videos using SAM visual techniques (the scale of emotional valence and arousal) by selecting the image most appropriate to their emotional state after watching each video [37].

**Other secondary methods of news stories selection.** Though the next tool of assessing the media content is not as widespread as the SAM, but it also deserves attention of researchers. R. Likert scale of emotions (5- or 7-point) is used in 2 of the analysed 23 works on TV news media effects. J.E. Newhagen [10] uses three 7-point scales to assess the news content by degree of anger, fear and disgust. A. Miller [20] uses two 5-point scales to determine fear and disgust – in order to select the appropriate TV programs.

The main advantage of R. Likert scales is their powerful estimating focus instead of just "yes"/"no" alternative. R. Likert scales are direct by their nature, and the participant of the study is aware of what is being studied, and what can imperil the results [38; 39]. The disadvantages of this tool are the socially desirable or socially desirable answers – when a participant of a study wants to show herself/himself in the best light and answers not enough sincerely. Anonymity of participants can help preventing such distortions. This technique can also be used along with the others methods.

J.B. Haskins scale of news assessment is also an interesting tool to select news stories, divided into negative, neutral and positive. The practicability of this 7-step scale was confirmed by its author through the intercoder and intracoder reliability tests [40]. According to this method, each encoder evaluates every news story or piece of news as extremely negative – very negative – slightly negative – neutral – slightly positive – very positive – extremely positive; where each degree of the scale receives the appropriate numerical values from -3 to +3. The undeservedly little attention is paid to this technique of the TV news effects study – among the analysed works only J.P. Harrell [7] uses J.B. Haskins scale for the selection of typically negative TV news stories.

#### 4. Conclusions

Thus, selection of primary pool of the most popular TV news content with further selection by coders news stories through the SAM tests scales and / or other methods, should be considered as enough thorough methodology. Although this step is important, it is advisable to apply several additional attributes of the content representativeness, such as the exception from the experimental collection of materials reporting on certain historical events that go beyond the understanding of the nature of the everyday news. This requirement to the experimental material is mentioned by D. Unz et al. [2, 144]. The combination of these methods will allow to better

ascertain independent variable of the media effect, as well as the effects themselves, since each step of the stimuli selection procedure will be explained in-depth taking into account the considerations of the news content representativeness.

It is obvious that the experimental audio and video material must meet all the regular requirements to the survey sample. The examined material should reflect the sampled population as closely as possible – in this case it is about the certain kind of the TV news stories corresponding the purpose and objective of the particular study. Our classification of the methods of news stories selection in the analysed studies indicates that such accuracy is possible, and we defined the ways to resolve this problem.

To make the selection of material impersonal, the researcher should minimize her/his involvement in this process. During the primary selection of media stimuli, the function of scientist should be limited to recording of content on an information carrier.<sup>2</sup> The secondary selection by emotogenic criteria should be done by an external group. Such selection requires long preparation and application of the pertinent methods by researchers' team. The proper selection of the experimental material can significantly improve the results of the study making them more accurate, reliable and valid.

A special attention is needed to be paid to the application of the above described techniques within the specific research projects. We plan to describe in the next study the process of TV news content selection for the experiments on media effects within the framework of the Institute of Journalism's research field 16BF045-01 "The psycho physiological mechanisms of perception of the audiovisual media news content".

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<sup>2</sup> I.e., when the experiment requires 10 most typical news stories and the researcher has prepared a pool of 300 stories, the effect of researcher is negligible, because during the second stage of selection, the most relevant material will be selected without the researcher's interference. The problems arise, when the primary pool is too small.

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