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Journalistic practices in creating and disseminating content in student socio-cultural media projects

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine the content and specifics of journalistic practices in student socio-cultural media projects, as well as to carry out an evaluation of their impact on the development of students' professional skills and cultural identity. The research methodology included content analysis to study the materials of student socio-cultural media projects "My thoughts are (not) quiet", "MediaHub", "Glier Fest", "Living City Kyiv" and "Slovopys", as well as an online survey of 30 teachers and 80 students to assess their attitudes towards project activities and the impact of projects on the development of cultural identity and professional skills. It was found that students actively used journalistic practices, in particular, conducting interviews, analysing information, creating reports, writing publications, and working with visual content – photo and video materials. These skills were combined with the active use of social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Telegram, which were analysed in the study as the main channels of communication, content distribution, and audience interaction. Importantly, teachers played a remarkable role in the development and support of these projects: 56% of the teachers surveyed said they provided a high level of support to students, helping with the conceptualisation of ideas, content editing, and the organisational part of project implementation. The findings showed that successful student socio-cultural media projects require comprehensive teacher support, flexible educational process organisation, modern formats for presenting results, and the close integration of such projects into educational programmes that develops students' professional skills and cultural self-awareness.

1. Introduction

The relevance of researching journalistic practices of content creation and dissemination in student socio-cultural media projects in Ukraine is determined by rapid changes in the media sphere, in particular the development of digital technologies and the spread of Internet platforms, which significantly transform traditional forms of journalism. In particular, changes in communication models and access to information through social networks and online media create new opportunities for student audiences who are actively involved in content creation processes. In the context of globalisation, there has been growth in the influence of international media corporations that shape information flows, as well as an intensive spread of cultural identities through digital platforms (Danylova & Hoian, 2021; Manchanda & Arora, 2026). In Ukraine, where higher education reform is ongoing

and opportunities for digital interaction are increasing significantly, student socio-cultural media projects are becoming important tools for developing media literacy, shaping new socio-cultural practices and increasing civic engagement (Khromchenkova, 2021). It is important to identify effective content creation strategies that respond to the challenges of the digital environment and promote the development of critical thinking and innovative forms of communication among young people.

The journalistic scene has changed due to the quick expansion of digital platforms, especially for students working on socio-cultural media projects. These initiatives frequently combine digital technologies that support imaginative and participatory forms of self-expression with journalistic techniques, including reporting, interviewing, and fact-checking. Central to this study is the exploration of student socio-cultural media projects as tools for fostering cultural identity, civic

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engagement, and digital literacy. This study focuses on how students use these projects to engage with their cultural heritage and build journalistic skills, as well as how these projects support learning objectives.

1.1. Media platforms in shaping student media and cultural identity

The influence of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, specifically YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Megogo, on the production and distribution of cultural content was emphasised by [Antonenko \(2024\)](#). These platforms enable students to combine classic journalistic genres with digital storytelling, blogging, and cultural self-identification by giving them the chance to try out new forms of journalistic expression, such as in-depth interviews and video reports. Social media's growth has given students new ways to engage with audiences and explore their cultural identities in a world growing more interconnected by the day.

[Condemayta Soto et al.'s \(2023\)](#) study of Bolivian students showed how young people utilise social media to portray their cultural identities while utilising journalistic techniques like factual reporting and interviews. Social media platforms facilitate cross-cultural communication by fusing journalistic credibility with personal storytelling ([Brait et al., 2025](#)). In a similar vein, [Dumchak et al. \(2024\)](#) highlighted that digital platforms serve as both instructional and communication tools, motivating students to work on socio-cultural media projects. To help students navigate the deluge of digital information, the authors emphasise the importance of fact-checking and analytical thinking in the development of responsible media habits.

1.2. Social media's impact on student journalism and civic engagement

[García-Avilés \(2021\)](#) noted how professional and student media projects have been impacted by the changes in journalism over the last 20 years. With the advent of new journalistic content formats on social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X, students may now produce multimedia stories that incorporate analysis, factual inserts, and interviews. These developments have sparked fresh perspectives on student journalism by fusing innovative, digital techniques with conventional journalistic procedures. According to [Mutsaers and Bebbawi \(2022\)](#), the Arab Spring changed the nature of journalism by presenting students as active reporters who were recording social change rather than only spectators. Through on-the-ground reporting, interviews, and social media content distribution, this change enables students to demonstrate their civic involvement. For student socio-cultural media projects, where young people use journalism as a forum for civic engagement, this concept is especially pertinent.

1.3. Student socio-cultural media projects and digital literacy

The incorporation of journalistic methods into Ukrainian education was highlighted by [Naumuk and Valko \(2024\)](#). They emphasised the ways in which student socio-cultural media projects, like reports, interviews, and analytical videos, support the growth of digital literacy and critical thinking. More and more students are assuming the job of journalists by performing their own independent research, confirming facts, interviewing people, and creating content that represents their individual experiences and societal impact. The convergence of personal identity and professional talents is reflected in this changing paradigm of digital journalism. [Ngoc \(2022\)](#) examined the evolution of journalism in the era of social media, pointing out that students are increasingly producing news material and practising media literacy. A new type of digital journalism has emerged as a result of this change, in which students are instrumental in forming and sharing information via various online channels ([Belova & Georgieva, 2025](#)). This study advances our knowledge of how student socio-cultural media projects might influence media education and foster the growth of professional skills in the media industry.

1.4. Research gap, aim of the study, and research questions

While international research on student socio-cultural media projects and journalism education has been extensive, previous studies have given little consideration to regional socio-cultural circumstances, particularly the Ukrainian situation. In post-war Ukraine, where journalistic practices are intimately associated with cultural identity, collective memory, and civic responsibility, there is a conspicuous dearth of empirical data regarding the functioning of student socio-cultural media projects. Research on how students simultaneously negotiate cultural meaning and professional skills in the face of social disturbance is scarce. In order to close this gap, this study examines student socio-cultural media projects in Ukrainian higher education, concentrating on the ways in which journalistic techniques are applied to promote professional development and cultural self-awareness in a particular post-war setting.

In this study, we aim to examine how student socio-cultural media projects in Ukrainian journalism programmes organise journalistic work and contribute to students' professional skills and cultural identity. The main research questions that the study aims to resolve are the following:

- 1) What are the characteristics of student socio-cultural media projects in terms of journalistic genres, content creation, and distribution strategies;
- 2) How do students and teachers perceive the impact of student socio-cultural media projects on the development of professional journalistic skills and cultural identity;
- 3) What are the key conditions and barriers for the successful implementation of student socio-cultural media projects within higher education institutions.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Research design

A two-stage mixed-method research design was used in the study. To answer Research Question 1, the first step involved a qualitative content study of five student socio-cultural media projects, looking at their journalistic genres, narrative techniques, and content distribution methods. To answer Research Questions 2 and 3, a quantitative online survey of teachers and students was used in the second stage. This survey was intended to find out how the projects were perceived to affect professional skills and cultural identity, as well as to identify institutional conditions and implementation barriers.

The study was conducted at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music in April-May 2025. These higher education institutions were selected because they are leading educational institutions in Kyiv that are actively involved in introducing innovative media and journalism practices into the educational process. They have a developed infrastructure for implementing student socio-cultural media projects, as well as significant experience in training specialists in the field of journalism and media communications, which makes them ideal platforms for studying the impact of modern media on the socio-cultural development of students.

[Fig. 1](#) provides a visual overview of the research methodology, illustrating the progression from the content analysis of five specific student socio-cultural media projects to the execution of parallel surveys and the final integration of findings into actionable recommendations.

2.2. Project selection and their content analysis

The analysis uses content analysis based on materials from student socio-cultural media projects, in particular the audio project "My thoughts are (not) quiet" (2025) in collaboration with Radio BG (Borys Grinchenko) – these are thoughts aloud about important issues: profession, opinion leaders, and Ukrainian culture; the project "MediaHub"

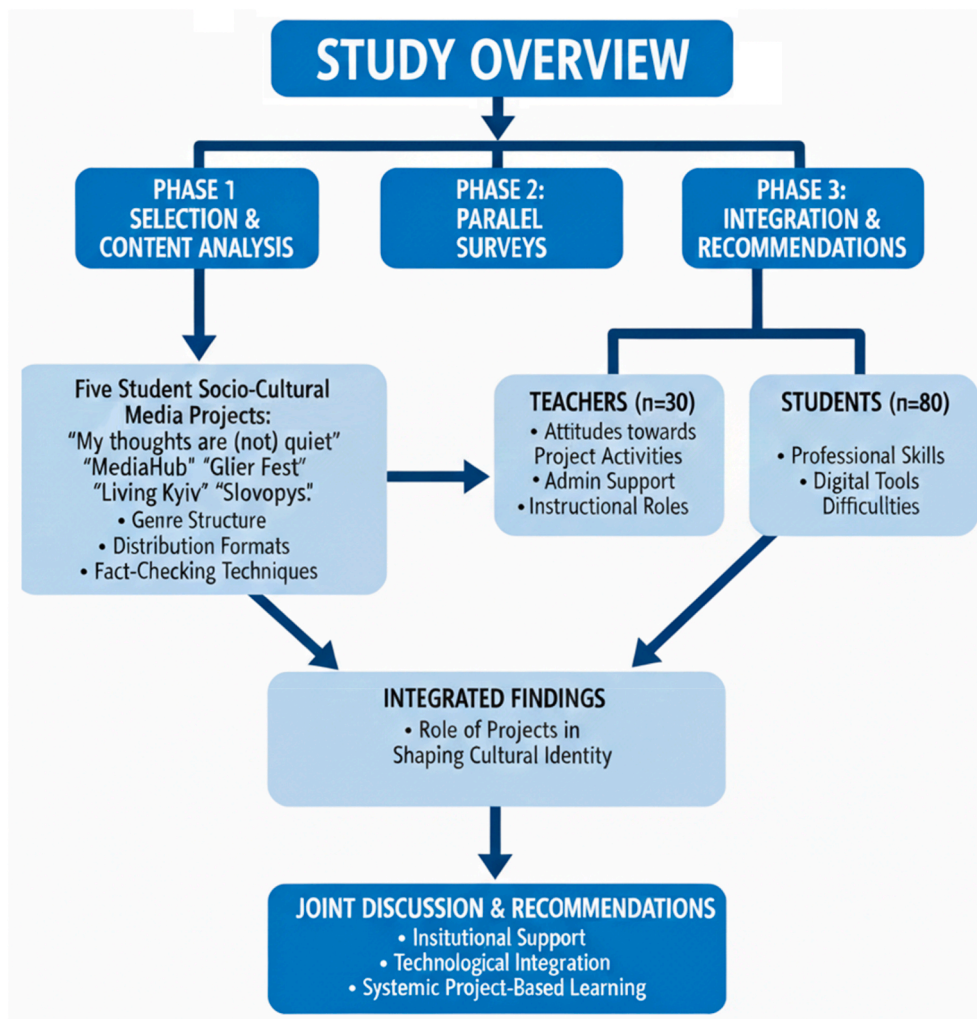


Fig. 1. Study overview: phases of content analysis, surveys, and integration in student socio-cultural media projects.

(2025) of the Faculty of Journalism, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University; and student initiatives within the discipline “Fundamentals of Journalism and Editing” at R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music, namely the media projects “Glier Fest” (2025), “[Living City Kyiv](#)” (2025), and “Slovopys” (2025).

The unit of analysis in the content analysis was an individual media product, including articles, social media posts, video reports, and podcast episodes. The corpus comprised 126 units drawn from the above student socio-cultural media projects, published between March and May 2025. The five student socio-cultural media projects were chosen using purposive sampling. They were comprehensive within this institutional framework, representing all ongoing socio-cultural media initiatives carried out at the two participating institutions during the 2024–2025 academic year. A clear socio-cultural focus, frequent public distribution of the information, and consistent student involvement throughout the semester were among the common criteria used to choose the projects.

The above projects were analysed according to criteria such as genre structure (interview, report, analysis, review), stylistic features of presentation, structure of materials (lead, main part, conclusion), distribution format (social networks, podcasts, videos), audience type, fact-checking techniques, and narrative approaches (storytelling, personalised coverage, event reporting). This made it possible to carry out the evaluation of the purpose of student socio-cultural media projects, in particular their focus on developing critical thinking and self-expression through the media, their significance in the context of developing

students' cultural identity, and the prospects for using these projects as tools for developing journalistic practices in the future.

Deductive and inductive methods were integrated in the content analysis coding process. Based on previous research on student journalism, socio-cultural media projects, and digital media practices, a preliminary set of analytical categories (such as journalistic genres, narrative strategies, verification methodologies, and distribution forms) was deductively established. During a pilot coding phase, these categories were then inductively improved to take into consideration project-specific aspects that surfaced from the data. Each category's definitions and coding guidelines were included in an organised codebook ([Appendix A](#)). One trained researcher with media analysis experience coded all of the materials; thorough cross-unit comparisons and iterative coding guaranteed consistency. In order to maintain internal coherence and analytical dependability, potential ambiguities were handled by repeatedly reviewing the codebook and recoding unclear scenarios because a single-coder design was used.

Since the content analysis was conducted by a single coder, inter-coder reliability coefficients were not calculated. This approach is recognised as a methodological restriction that may impact the generalisability of the coding results and was used because of the exploratory character of the study and the relatively small, well-defined corpus. However, to improve the coding's trustworthiness, iterative reviews were carried out to resolve any ambiguities and guarantee consistency all the way through. The coding was done by a single researcher, but to ensure analytical coherence and dependability, the codebook was

reviewed and improved upon several times.

In terms of data administration, all study materials were arranged methodically for convenient retrieval and analysis, including surveys, coded data, and project files. To protect participant identities, the survey responses were anonymised, and the data was stored in a secure location. In order to maintain transparency, thorough records of the data management procedure were maintained, guaranteeing that the data could be retrieved and examined later for purposes of verification.

The study analysed social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Telegram, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Vimeo, SoundCloud, and Medium as channels for disseminating projects. This allowed for the evaluation of the specifics of creating student journalistic cultural projects and their dissemination in the media space.

2.3. Participants' sampling

At Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music, an online survey was conducted among teachers and students involved in student socio-cultural media projects. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling via institutional e-mail invitations distributed by programme coordinators, and participation was voluntary; respondents who had not been involved in media project activities were excluded from the survey. The teacher sample included all teachers aged 30-65 who supervised or consulted student socio-cultural media projects during the 2024-2025 academic year, while the student sample comprised all students aged 17-23 who directly participated in these projects. The students were evenly represented from the humanities and arts faculties, of whom 48 were female and 32 were male. The humanities and arts were chosen because of the close connection between their educational programmes and the development of journalistic practices, creative competencies and skills in creating socio-cultural media content.

The survey was completed by 80 students and 30 teachers from the two institutions in total. Through institutional email, all teachers overseeing student socio-cultural media projects during the 2024-2025 academic year ($n = 38$) and all students participating in these projects ($n = 102$) were invited to take part. Response rates were 79.0% for professors and 78.4% for students in the final sample, which included 15 instructors and 40 students from Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and 15 instructors and 40 students from the R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music.

Missing data were addressed using listwise deletion, where incomplete responses were excluded from the final analysis. Only fully completed surveys were included in the statistical analysis to ensure accuracy and consistency. This approach was applied to both the teacher and student survey data, and no imputation was performed to maintain the integrity of the dataset.

The results of this study cannot be fully applied to the larger population of students and teachers in media-related programmes due to the limited sample size. The sample may not accurately reflect the variety of experiences or practices found in other colleges or media programmes because it is restricted to individuals working on socio-cultural media projects at two institutions. While the purposive sampling method ensured relevance to the study's objectives, the results should be interpreted with caution.

2.4. Surveys' description

The survey was designed as a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions and covered topics such as the importance of project work, its impact on professional development, the availability of support from teachers, and difficulties in implementing projects. Most items were measured using multiple-choice, enabling descriptive analysis. The questions for teachers are listed in [Appendix B](#) and those for students in [Appendix C](#).

The survey was conducted online between March and May of 2025

using the Google Forms platform, which allowed respondents (teachers and students) to answer questions anonymously at a time convenient for them. To guarantee that both research components referred to the same time of project activity, the content analysis encompassed media assets created within the same time window. The survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, with responses summarised through frequency counts and percentage distributions. This approach provided a clear overview of the teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the various aspects of the student socio-cultural media projects, including their involvement, the use of journalistic practices, and the perceived impact on professional and cultural development. During the study's interpretation phase, the qualitative and quantitative elements were combined. While the survey data recorded teachers' and students' opinions of these practices and their cultural and educational influence, the content analysis was utilised to describe the journalistic techniques, formats, and thematic focus of student socio-cultural media projects. Connecting these threads helped to link participants' assessments of professional learning, cultural identity formation, and institutional conditions to observable media practices.

2.5. Ethical statement

The research was conducted in accordance with the provisions of the [American Sociological Association's \(2018\) Code of Ethics](#). Possible ways and recommendations for the implementation of projects by students were formulated based on the results of this study.

3. Results

3.1. Media projects as a tool for the cultural and professional development of students and the impact of new media platforms on student socio-cultural media projects

Student socio-cultural media projects implemented at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music aimed to develop practical skills in media and journalism, as well as to shape students' cultural identity and self-expression through the latest media technologies. Projects such as "My thoughts are (not) quiet" in collaboration with Radio BG, "MediaHub", "Glier Fest", "Living City Kyiv", and "Slovopys" allow students to create multimedia content, explore socio-cultural topics, and develop skills in radio journalism, editing, and media communications. These initiatives not only provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge in practice but also promote critical thinking and patriotism through the creation of content that reflects important social processes and cultural values. The main goals of student socio-cultural media projects are to develop critical thinking, shape cultural identity, improve professional competencies in media communications, and promote student self-expression. The projects not only allow students to study media and journalism practices in depth but also give them the opportunity to participate in the real processes of media content creation, including editing, montage, writing, interviewing, and producing audiovisual materials.

Media projects such as "My thoughts are (not) quiet", in particular the audio project, are a platform for students to express their own thoughts on important socio-cultural issues, professions, opinion leaders and Ukrainian culture. This format helps develop public speaking, audience engagement, and discussion skills, which are important elements of journalism training. The "MediaHub" project, on the other hand, is a space for implementing collective ideas and creating multimedia products, where students can use the latest technologies to create content related to current social issues. In particular, initiatives such as "Glier Fest", "Living City Kyiv" and "Slovopys" demonstrate the wide range of formats in which students participate: from reportage and documentary filmmaking to podcasting, multimedia presentations, and digital exhibitions. These projects allow students to experiment with

genres and styles, combining interviews with visual stories and using visual archives and modern infographics. The use of digital tools (editing programmes, graphic editors, and content management systems) has become a key element of student practice. While working on projects, students also master storytelling techniques, prepare content for social networks, and interact with local communities and cultural figures, which contributes to the development of both technical and communication skills (Kyianytsia et al., 2022; Pérez-Ruff et al., 2025).

Another important aspect is the influence of cultural media projects on the formation of students' professional and civic identity. Participation in such initiatives stimulates personal growth and increases emotional intelligence and responsibility. Students were active participants in the cultural life of the country, forming their own position on events and phenomena in society, which is especially noticeable in initiatives such as "Glier Fest", where they organised media coverage of local music events, "Living City Kyiv", where they created documentary videos about the life of small communities, and "Slovopys", where they prepared materials on language culture and identity. By working with cultural heritage, local history, and socially significant topics within these projects, students deepen their understanding of their identity and the role of the media in preserving national memory. Interacting with real participants in cultural events, interviewing local residents and experts, and creating content based on field research contribute to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork (Rees, 2025). Participation in such initiatives not only provides applied learning but also develops the universal skills necessary for further professional activity in the media sphere.

The significance of these media projects lies in their ability to promote not only professional skills but also cultural awareness among students. Through participation in such initiatives, students have the opportunity to engage with current socio-cultural issues, which helps to develop critical thinking, understanding of cultural processes and national identity (Angelova et al., 2022; Goszczyński, 2024). Moreover, student socio-cultural media projects stimulate a creative approach to solving problems and implementing one's own ideas, which is important for the formation of innovative practices in the media sphere. The "MediaHub" project provides students with the opportunity to work in a team, learn to collaborate, develop project management skills, and coordinate between different participants in the content creation process. Such work is of great importance for the formation of leadership

qualities, managerial abilities, and the development of entrepreneurial thinking, which is important in the context of the modern media space.

It is also important that such media projects allow students to use the latest media and technologies, such as social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), podcasts (Spotify, Apple Podcasts), videos (YouTube, Vimeo) and multimedia platforms (SoundCloud, Medium). This allows not only the mastery of new formats but also the influence of the formation of public opinion by participating in the creation of socio-cultural content that is relevant to society and contributes to the development of media communications in various fields. The results of the content analysis of student socio-cultural media projects by key criteria are summarised in Table 1.

An analysis of student socio-cultural media projects suggests that these initiatives may play a role in shaping cultural identity and fostering innovative approaches to student self-expression. Particularly, initiatives like "My thoughts are (not) quiet" and "Glier Fest" use media formats like podcasts and videos to actively promote Ukrainian music, culture, and customs. Through activities like recording regional customs, speaking with cultural leaders, and investigating national topics, these projects give students the chance to interact directly with cultural heritage, strengthening their sense of national identification and cultural awareness. However, initiatives like "MediaHub" and "Slovopys" concentrate on incorporating the newest media technologies (text, video, infographics, and social networks), providing students with a variety of channels for self-expression while developing their professional media skills. These initiatives enable students to produce interactive content, such as multimedia reports and analytical articles, that develops critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills in addition to encouraging creative approaches to the construction of personal identities. Students gain practical skills and a better knowledge of the evolution of their cultural and professional identities by working cooperatively in teams and taking ownership of content production, project execution, and the use of contemporary digital tools (Özkan Sarigül & Göklen Yilmaz, 2025). Through these projects, students actively shape their own cultural and professional identities while gaining practical experience with cultural narratives and media production.

The organisation of such projects involves several stages, including ideation, planning, implementation, and presentation of results. At the planning stage, students and teachers formulate the project's objectives,

Table 1
Analysis of student socio-cultural media projects by key criteria.

Main learning outcomes	Development of storytelling, interview techniques, cultural self-awareness	Enhancing critical thinking, multimedia content creation, fact-checking	Event reporting, audience engagement, cultural documentation	Urban reporting, data analysis, community engagement	Analytical writing, linguistic research, cultural preservation
Socio-cultural focus	Cultural identity, personal expression	Social issues, student activism	Music, culture, local events	Urban culture, city development	Language culture, education
Narrative approaches	Storytelling, personalised coverage	Combined: storytelling, analytical blocks	Event report, visual storytelling	Personalised coverage, report	Storytelling, cultural commentary
Verification techniques	Verification through expert opinions, personal reflections	Fact checking, references to sources, interviews	Verification through authors, speakers, facts of events	Verification through statistics, expert interviews	References to linguistic sources, expert opinions
Audience type	Young people interested in culture and self-expression	Students, active young people	Wide audience – young people, artists	Civic activists, urbanists, city residents	Philology students, educators
Distribution format and platforms/Time period covered	Audio podcasts Spotify, Apple Podcasts), online platforms/March-May 2025	Videos, texts, social media Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, streams/March-May 2025	Videos, broadcasts YouTube, Vimeo, social media Facebook, Instagram, TikTok/March-May 2025	Photos, videos, blog, social media/March-May 2025	Infographics SoundCloud, Medium, text posts, social media/March-May 2025
Material structure	Lead – personal experience; detailed analysis; conclusion with a statement of position	Classic: lead – brief information; main part – in-depth analysis; conclusions with a call to action	Introduction – event announcement; main part – atmosphere of the event; conclusion – reflection	Lead – description of the situation; middle – analysis and examples; conclusion – generalisation	Introduction – motivation for the topic; analytical part; visualised conclusions
Stylistic features	Conversational, emotional style	Informative, journalistic	Emotional and cultural, inspirational style	Analytical and descriptive, urbanistic	Scientific and popular, creative
Genre structure	Interviews, analytics	Reporting, reviews, analytics	Reporting, reviews	Analytics, reporting	Analytics, reviews
Project name	"My thoughts are (not) quiet" (2025)	"MediaHub" (2025)	"Glier Fest" (2025)	"Living City Kyiv" (2025)	"Slovopys" (2025)

identify the target audience, and select methods for creating content. This could be, for example, creating interviews, articles, audio podcasts, video materials or multimedia presentations. The process of collective work is important, where students actively interact, exchange ideas and learn to work in a team (Salieva et al., 2025). During the project implementation stage, students collect materials, edit, assemble and prepare the final product for publication or broadcast. This stage involves working directly with media resources and tools used to create and distribute content. This allows students to master practical skills that they can use in their future professional activities. The final stage is the presentation of completed media projects, which can take place at university events, festivals, online platforms or even at professional conferences. Feedback from the audience allows for the evaluation of the project's effectiveness and the identification of areas for further development, while the projects themselves have the potential to develop innovative media forms and new formats of journalistic practices, contributing to the formation of the media space in Ukraine.

3.2. Assessment of the level of awareness and attitudes of teachers and students regarding the organisation and implementation of student socio-cultural media projects

Analysing the work of teachers and students within the framework of project activities is important for evaluating the effectiveness of the educational process and improving teaching methods. Such analysis makes it possible to understand how well students assimilate theoretical knowledge through practical activities, as well as to determine how effective the support provided by teachers is in the process of implementing projects. Comparing the opinions of teachers and students makes it possible to identify problems that arise during the implementation of projects, such as insufficient student motivation, lack of resources, or conflicts within teams. This allows for timely adjustments to teaching strategies and ensures a more effective project organisation. In addition, the analysis helps identify the most effective methods and forms of work that promote the development of critical thinking, creativity, and professional skills of students. It is also important to study the interaction between teachers and students. This provides an opportunity for evaluation of the extent to which teachers support students in the project implementation process, whether they provide useful recommendations, and whether their role in project development is effective (Table 2). Taking these factors into account helps improve the learning process and create favourable conditions for student development.

The results of the teacher survey showed a generally positive attitude towards student socio-cultural media projects as an effective educational method. The results of the updated teacher survey showed a generally positive attitude towards the introduction of journalistic genres, tools and digital technologies into student socio-cultural media projects. The survey results show that the active integration of media projects into the educational process is primarily driven by an awareness of their potential for developing students' critical thinking, practical skills and creativity. However, the effectiveness of such approaches often depends on the availability of appropriate technical equipment, digital resources, and administrative support, which is not always provided in educational institutions (Winston & Uppunda, 2024).

Across the examined situations, teachers' roles in carrying out project tasks differ considerably. While faculty members occasionally provided guidance or were mostly absent, in other cases they served as mentors or project leaders, directly assisting students with planning, content creation, genre selection, and verification procedures (Qiu et al., 2026). This difference points to the lack of a cohesive institutional strategy for assisting student media initiatives. According to survey results, persistent teacher engagement is hampered by a lack of funding, time constraints, and unequal administrative support, all of which have an impact on how often students acquire media competencies. More actively participating teachers stated that student learning results were stronger when they received specific coaching, especially in the areas of

Table 2
Results of the teacher survey.

No.	Questions	Answer options	Percentage (%)
1	Use of journalistic genres in educational projects	Yes	64
		Partially	28
		No	8
2	Frequency of digital technology use in projects	Constantly	36
		From time to time	48
		Very rarely	12
		Never	4
3	Role in organising student socio-cultural media projects	Manager	40
		Consultant	36
		Observer	16
		Not participating	8
4	Main difficulties in implementing projects	Insufficient student motivation	32
		Limited resources	28
		Lack of time	28
		Lack of administrative support	12
5	Institutional support for journalistic approaches	Yes	44
		Partially	40
		No	16
6	Impact of multimedia approaches on student development	Positive	48
		Moderate	40
		Minimal	12
		Negative	0
7	Most effective project dissemination format	Public defence	36
		Video presentation	28
		Poster session	20
		Online platforms	16
8	Training in media tools before project participation	Yes, definitely	40
		Sometimes	44
		No	16

journalistic norms, digital tool use, and editorial decision-making (Şahin, 2026). These results highlight the significance of more precise faculty roles, organised mentoring programmes, and institutional settings that allow educators to systematically assist students in developing their media competency.

The less active use of online resources and poster sessions may indicate a lack of the appropriate culture or technical conditions for their full implementation. The preparation of students for participation in projects is also not systematic: in some programmes it is a mandatory component, while in others it is optional or even random. All this points to the need for a comprehensive strategic approach to the development of student media initiatives, which would include methodological support, institutional integration and professional development for teachers. The survey results from students who were directly involved in media projects were also important (Table 3).

The results of the student survey show that most media projects used journalistic genres, predominantly interviews and, to a lesser extent, reports. When creating content, students most often referred to official sources, such as documents and press releases, and also used expert opinions, information from social networks, and news agencies. The main platforms for distributing content were Instagram, YouTube, websites and podcasts or radio, which indicates a focus on the digital environment and a young audience. The most common difficulties were finding reliable information, fact verification, organising interviews, and technical aspects of processing materials, which can be explained by the students' lack of experience in working professionally with sources and digital tools. At the same time, not all of them actively used digital tools: some limited themselves to basic functionality or did not use them at all, which could be due to low digital literacy or lack of access to technical resources. The vast majority of students noted the support of teachers, which contributed to more confident work on projects. Students considered text materials, videos and podcasts to be the most effective formats for presenting information, reflecting current trends in the media sphere and their perception of the accessibility and influence

Table 3
Results of the student survey.

No.	Questions	Answer options	Percentage (%)
1	Journalistic genres used in media projects	Interview	72
		Reportage	28
2	Main sources of information used	Official documents and press releases	34
		Interviews with experts	26
		Social media	24
		News agencies	16
3	Distribution channels used for materials	Instagram	38
		YouTube	22
		Websites	18
		Radio/podcasts	22
4	Main difficulties encountered in projects	Finding reliable information	40
		Fact verification	20
		Organising interviews or filming	24
		Editing and formatting materials	16
5	Use of digital tools in content creation	Yes, regularly	32
		Yes, occasionally	47
		No, I did not use them	21
6	Satisfaction with lecturer support in project creation	Fully satisfied	66
		Partly satisfied	28
		Not satisfied	6
7	Most effective formats for engaging the audience	Text articles	58
		Video	20
		Podcasts	22
8	Perceived impact of media projects on professional skills	Yes, remarkably	40
		Partly	20
		Hardly at all	28
		Not at all	12

of different formats. In terms of developing journalistic skills, there were different perceptions of their own progress: some students felt they had made remarkable progress, while others felt they had made only partial or minimal progress, which can be explained by individual differences in motivation, level of training and involvement in project activities.

Thus, the survey results suggest that students are actively engaged in media projects, employing a range of journalistic genres and content distribution channels, reflecting their interest in professional development. Despite this, students experience certain difficulties related to information challenges and technical support and do not always receive sufficient support from teachers. The survey comparison between students and teachers suggests that both groups view student socio-cultural media projects positively, recognising them as valuable tools for learning and development. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen organisational and methodological support for project activities, in particular through improved resource provision and the more systematic implementation of digital technologies. This will help to overcome the main difficulties and improve the quality of student content, which will contribute to the professional growth of future journalists. Overall, both groups – teachers and students – have a fairly high level of awareness of student socio-cultural media projects. However, there was a need to strengthen support from the administration and improve organisational conditions to ensure successful project implementation.

3.3. Analysis of possible ways and recommendations for students to implement projects

It was important to seek new ways to integrate innovative technologies into student socio-cultural media projects. The involvement of new technologies, as well as government agencies, sponsors, and active interaction between students, teachers, and universities, are essential components for ensuring the success of these initiatives. In this regard, specific approaches and recommendations have been developed for the

effective implementation of such projects. The first step towards improving journalistic skills is to reorient students towards working with a variety of formats: from classic reporting and analytics to the latest multimedia forms of video stories, podcasts, storytelling on TikTok, reels on Instagram and interactive materials using augmented reality. Formats should be chosen depending on the topic, target audience, and platform. For example, analytical materials are best placed on long-term blogging platforms (Medium, Substack), while dynamic news content is best placed on TikTok or Twitter/X, which can quickly reach a wide youth audience.

The second important area is developing a logic for choosing platforms for content distribution. Students need to study the features of social media algorithms, as well as the principles of SEO (search engine optimisation) and SMO (social media optimisation). This will allow not only the creation of content but also its effective promotion. For example, when publishing material on YouTube, it is important to consider keywords in the title, description and tags of the video, and for Instagram, to optimise the time of publication and use relevant hashtags and interactive elements (polls, questions, links). At the same time, students should study audience analytics (demographics, activity, and feedback) in order to adapt the format and topics of projects to the real needs of viewers or readers.

The editorial policy in student media also needs to be modernised. It is advisable to create editorial teams with a clear division of responsibilities: editor, content creator, designer, SMM manager (social media marketing), analyst. This will allow students not only to practise specific roles but also to experience the full cycle of media content production. Teachers should play the role not only of mentors but also of media editors or coordinators who help the team adhere to professional standards. Editorial ethics, fact verification, and combating misinformation are key competencies that should be the focus when creating any student product. It is important to implement innovative technologies as part of the learning process. Students should gain practical skills in working with tools such as Adobe Premiere, Canva, Final Cut, Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) Studio, Descript, as well as AI-based tools that automate transcription, image selection, or headline generation. Working with virtual reality/augmented reality (VR/AR) technologies can be particularly valuable for journalism departments that want to integrate experimental formats such as virtual reporting or 3D documentaries (Basha et al., 2025). This is especially relevant for media outlets working on topics such as ecology, urbanism, and cultural heritage, where visualisation of objects is important.

The involvement of government agencies deserves special attention. Joint platforms for interaction between student media and state institutions should be created at universities: these could be competitions for journalistic materials on socially important topics, information campaigns, or joint media literacy events. The creation of grant programmes at the ministerial level will allow the financing of the best student initiatives. In particular, the state can support student investigations, multimedia campaigns, or thematic projects that highlight local communities, youth issues, or education reform. The involvement of the private sector, in particular IT companies, PR agencies, and national television channels, will help ensure the sustainable project development. They can act as mentors, investors, or experts in training sessions. It is important to organise regular hackathons, creative laboratories, or creative workshops with the participation of professionals. Such cooperation will not only improve the quality of student socio-cultural media projects but also prepare students for the real media environment.

All of the above recommendations are based on observations of successful practices in Ukraine and abroad and analysis of educational and media trends, as well as the conclusions of teachers involved in student socio-cultural media projects. Their implementation will help build a new ecosystem of student media at universities – one that's dynamic, technically sound, interactive, and focused on quality. As a result, student socio-cultural media projects will become not only a

learning tool but also a full-fledged element of the country's information space.

4. Discussion

The study highlighted the potential of student socio-cultural media projects in supporting critical thinking, cultural identity, and professional development in journalism. The results of surveys and content analysis of student initiatives at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music revealed the advantages of a practice-orientated approach to media education based on the active involvement of students in creating own content. The high motivation of students to participate in projects (in particular, due to their interest in the topic and desire for personal development) corresponds with the conclusions of Mahamed (2022), who studied the motivation of young people in Malaysia to engage in citizen journalism. In both cases, participation in project activities was seen as a means of self-realisation and social activity. Similarly, studies by Pang (2020) and Tariq et al. (2022) found that active participation in the creation of media content contributed to cultural adaptation and academic integration, which correlates with the identified role of student socio-cultural media projects in shaping socio-cultural inclusion.

Student socio-cultural media projects, in particular, “My thoughts are (not) quiet” and “Slovopys”, showcased a combination of journalism, culture, and education, contributing to a multifaceted communication space. This is consistent with the approach proposed by Holskens et al. (2020), who emphasised the need to study journalism through the lens of experience and artistic practices. The content of the student socio-cultural media projects reflected a shift from informative to reflective, which was also observed in the study by Okoronkwo (2024) on viral journalism in the United Kingdom. This shift is exemplified in the work of Khan (2020), who explored the role of viral news in health communication during the coronavirus pandemic in the United Kingdom, highlighting how viral journalism contributes not only to the rapid dissemination of information but also to shaping public perceptions and fostering reflection on health-related issues. According to the current study, teachers are important facilitators of students' media activities. Most of the teachers surveyed (over 70%) participated in projects as leaders or consultants, which demonstrated a high level of academic support. These data are consistent with the findings of Kohnen et al. (2023), who emphasised the importance of teachers' media literacy in shaping students' digital skills. At the same time, the difficulties identified, related to a lack of resources and time constraints, echo the challenges described by Gioltzidou et al. (2024), who studied the implementation of digital innovations.

The study explored the role of project activities in the students' cultural identity development within the specific context of the two institutions studied. This aspect was confirmed both by the topics of the projects (Ukrainian culture, language, and urban studies) and by the self-reflection of the participants. Similar results were obtained by Gaitán-Aguilar et al. (2022), who demonstrated the influence of social networks on the intercultural adaptation of students. In their study, social media acted as a mediator between cultural self-identification and external cultural influence, which was also observed in the work “Living City Kyiv”, aimed at reflecting urban culture through the prism of youth experience. The content analysis of the student socio-cultural media projects indicated an increasing use of multimedia formats, including podcasts, video stories, and interactive text, which could reflect broader trends in journalism education. This trend is consistent with the findings of Das and Upadhyay (2024), who analysed the transformation of journalism in India under the influence of new digital forms. Similar interest in experimental formats was also noted in a study by Sanseverino and de Lima Santos (2021), who examined a user-orientated approach to journalism in the context of the pandemic.

The student socio-cultural media projects of the R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music revealed a desire to combine journalism,

art, and education, which also reflects the concept of art journalism developed by Wang and Diakopoulos (2021). This integration of journalism, art, and education aligns with the perspectives of Sharp and Vodanovic (2022), who emphasised how arts journalism not only serves as a platform for cultural expression but also navigates the complexities of professional identity, precarity, and discrimination within the global arts community. The use of social networks for disseminating student content reflects a trend towards hybridising journalistic formats, as seen in contemporary digital practices (de Moraes & Fittipaldi, 2024). Kiunga's (2023) work showed that social platforms are increasingly replacing traditional content distribution channels, which was also confirmed in the study – most student socio-cultural media projects were actively functioning on Instagram, YouTube, and Spotify. Smeenk et al. (2023) viewed journalists not only as authors but also as participants in a multi-voiced process. This approach contributed to the formation of ethical interaction and responsibility within creative teams. Teachers' assessments suggested that project activities contributed positively to students' professional development, though these observations may be subject to contextual limitations. This conclusion is consistent with the work of Pantic and Cvetkovic (2020), who noted that the digital environment allows for better modelling of real-life journalistic conditions, helping students develop practical skills.

At the same time, only some of the students surveyed indicated that they had received prior training for participation in projects, which points to the need for a systematic approach to project-based learning, as recommended in the work of Mulatsih et al. (2022) and Telkmann (2020). An important aspect of the study was the identification of barriers that hinder the effective implementation of projects, including limited time, insufficient administrative support, and lack of resources. These problems correlate with the challenges outlined by Alibayeva et al. (2022), who emphasised the importance of administrative and technological support in the implementation of dialogue-based educational technologies. The studies by Vázquez-Herrero et al. (2022) and Hoffhuis et al. (2023) also focused on the gap between students' expectations and the actual capabilities of media education, which has similarities with the concerns expressed by students regarding the practical significance of individual initiatives.

The findings from the two Kyiv universities appear to align with global trends in journalistic practices, including the shift towards multimedia formats, audience involvement in content creation, and a redefined role for journalists. However, these conclusions are context-specific and should be interpreted cautiously. These changes are well described in the works of de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita (2021), who analysed new tools for searching and verifying sources in modern digital journalism. The authors drew attention to the transformation of editorial practices in response to the challenges of information overload and the spread of misinformation. In particular, they explored how journalists use algorithmic systems, social networks, and crowdsourcing platforms to identify relevant topics and verify facts. This directly correlates with the practices observed in student socio-cultural media projects, especially in terms of searching for unique content, forming an independent narrative, and relying on the authority of verified information (Kumar & Nanda, 2024).

In turn, Zilberstein (2024) focused his research on constructing the cultural authority of journalists in the context of digital platforms, particularly Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. He demonstrated that in the new media environment, a journalist's authority is increasingly based not only on professional competence but also on the ability to build audience trust through personalised content, emotional connection, and transparent communication. This dynamic was also evident in the student socio-cultural media projects analysed, where authority was created through sincerity, local context and reflection on personal experience rather than through classic journalistic standards.

The results show trends that might be applicable to other higher education environments with similar media and journalism

programmes, even if they are based on the particular contexts of two Kyiv-based universities. Specifically, the observed blend of digital platforms, faculty mentoring, and project-based learning parallels broader trends in modern journalism education. The results are best interpreted as analytically transferable to comparable educational environments rather than statistically generalisable, as any generalisation beyond the universities under study should be done with caution due to potential differences in institutional resources, curricular structures, and sociocultural contexts.

Thus, the study highlighted the potential of student socio-cultural media projects as an educational practice and identified structural challenges that should be addressed in future initiatives. The prospects for the development of journalistic practices can be based on expanding student training for project work, introducing stable support mechanisms from educational institutions, and actively involving teachers in the process of curation and facilitation. In conclusion, the study suggested that student socio-cultural media projects can serve as both a form of creative expression and a tool for developing professional skills, cultural identity, and social engagement. The consistency of the results obtained with data from international studies indicates the universality of the identified trends, as well as the relevance of further interdisciplinary research in the field of journalism education and media innovation.

5. Conclusions

The main strength of this study is its empirical focus on student socio-cultural media projects in two Kyiv institutions, which offers insightful information about journalism education in a socio-political setting that isn't well represented in the global literature. The study's methodological approach is strengthened by the mixed-methods design, which combines surveys and content analysis to provide thorough knowledge of student participation and project outcomes. The study's focus on how student socio-cultural media projects support professional growth and the creation of cultural identities is one of its strongest points; this has important ramifications for media education and policymaking. These contributions highlight the findings' wider significance and show how they might be used to inform media policy and future curriculum.

Studying student socio-cultural media projects has given important insights into how these activities contribute to students' cultural and professional development. The results highlight the value of these initiatives as venues for promoting critical thinking, exploring cultural identity, and developing useful media skills. Students have shown a strong engagement with journalistic practices and content creation through the analysed projects. This has improved their professional competencies and given them the opportunity to express and consider their cultural identities. These programmes amply demonstrate how media education can foster students' creativity, communication abilities, and cultural awareness by fusing the newest digital tools with classic journalistic methods.

The study reveals a lack of institutional, financial, and time-related assistance that restricts project sustainability while also highlighting the critical role that teachers play in assisting student socio-cultural media projects, especially during conceptualisation and editing. Students highlighted the need for more robust media literacy and digital training by reporting difficulties with technological skills, information reliability, and source verification. The results also show that student socio-cultural media projects serve as forums for cultural contemplation and discussion rather than as tools that directly mould cultural identity, allowing for interaction with historical, linguistic, and urban topics through socio-cultural media practices.

Based on the empirical findings, the recommendations focus on addressing barriers identified in the surveys and content analysis. In particular, strengthening the methodological training of teachers is linked to evidence of uneven levels of pedagogical support, while expanding the resource base responds to reported constraints related to

time and technical capacity. The recommendation to introduce an interdisciplinary approach and platforms for inter-university exchange follows from the observed diversity of genres, formats, and collaborative practices across the analysed projects. Finally, the inclusion of media projects in educational programmes and the systematic evaluation of their effectiveness are grounded in survey results indicating their positive contribution to students' professional skill development and their role as socio-cultural spaces within the Ukrainian higher education context.

The study has several limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the results' generalisability is limited by the use of non-probabilistic and rather small samples. Furthermore, the data were self-reported at a particular point in time, which precludes long-term or causal inferences and may induce biases. The observed associations cannot be directly linked to cause-and-effect because the study used a descriptive design rather than a longitudinal or experimental method. Lastly, the analysis concentrated on a small number of student socio-cultural media projects from just two universities, which might not accurately reflect the variety of student experiences at other universities. There is also a potential selection bias, since the sample was restricted to instructors and students from two particular institutions. Because of that, it may not accurately reflect the larger population of instructors and students engaged in socio-cultural media initiatives. A broader and more varied sample of higher education institutions could be included in future studies to expand the analysis's scope and evaluate the findings' applicability outside of the two Kyiv-based cases. To investigate the long-term effects of involvement in student socio-cultural media projects on graduates' career paths and civic engagement, longitudinal studies would be especially beneficial. The ways in which student journalism operates as a type of sociocultural practice and identity work in various institutional, regional, and post-conflict contexts may also be thoroughly investigated in future studies.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Alina Lisnevskaya: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration. **Tetiana Polishchuk:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology. **Olena Danylina:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources. **Mariana Angelova:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Formal analysis. **Serhii Fruktov:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individuals included in this study.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Ethics approval

All procedures performed in the study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. Ethical approval of the study was obtained from the Ethics Commission of the Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University with No. RB-3658.

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The authors declare that generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were not used in any way to prepare, write, or complete this manuscript. The authors confirm that they are the sole authors of this article and take

full responsibility for the content therein, as outlined in COPE recommendations.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

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