

Media activity of TOP Russian universities in the Internet space: global positioning trends

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МЕДИААКТИВНОСТЬ ТОПОВЫХ РОССИЙСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТОВ В ИНТЕРНЕТ-ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ: ГЛОБАЛЬНЫЕ ТРЕНДЫ ПОЗИЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ

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Аннотация: Авторами изучены глобальные тренды позиционирования современных университетов, их медиаактивность в интернет-пространстве. Для анализа были отобраны десять первых топовых российских университетов, которые входят в рейтинг QS World University Rankings 2021. Основными индикаторами его эффективной медиаактивности в интернет-пространстве выступают: присутствие университета в глобальных и национальных рейтингах; наличие сетевых программ и международной аккредитации образовательных программ; увеличение количества иностранных студентов, MOOC на платформах Coursera и edX и мн. др. Сделаны выводы о том, что существует прямая и/или косвенная связь между медийной активностью современного университета и укреплением позиций университета в глобальных и национальных рейтингах.

Ключевые слова: позиционирование, глобальные тренды позиционирования, интернет-пространство, медиасфера, медиаактивность, рейтинг медийной активности, социальная сеть, средства массовой коммуникации, сайт

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MEDIA ACTIVITY OF TOP RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE INTERNET SPACE: GLOBAL POSITIONING TRENDS

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Abstract: The goal of the study is to evaluate global trends in the positioning of modern universities, their media activity in the Internet space. For the study, the top ten Russian universities included in the 2021 QS World University Rankings were selected. The main indicators of effective positioning of a modern university and its media activity in the Internet space are the university's presence in global and national rankings, availability of network programs and international accreditation of educational programs, an increase in the number of international students, MOOCs on Coursera and edX platforms, etc. As a result of the study, it was concluded that there is a direct and/or indirect relationship between the media activity of a modern university and the strengthening of the university's position in global and national rankings.

Keywords: positioning, global positioning trends, internet space, media sphere, media activity, media activity rating, social network, mass media, website

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Introduction

A modern university today is a complex of educational, scientific and innovative activities that make the university competitive in the context of global digitalization, strengthen its position in national and global rankings, increase the university's brand and make it possible to achieve the most effective results. A modern university aims to expand the space of communication with potential applicants, students, teachers, researchers from different countries, this contributes to the development of the university not only in real space, but in the Internet space as well.

2021 was declared the Year of Science and Technology in Russia – this is a year of breakthroughs in technology, economy and social progress. All this is possible given the high demand for science among talented youth and the high involvement of the professional community in the implementation of the Strategy for scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation.

On August 26, 2021, within the framework of the International Festival «Creative Week in Russia», an independent rating of the media activity for educational institutions of higher education was presented. More than 30 universities, public organizations and media organizations, media experts and sociologists took part in the development of this rating. The rating analyzes 219 universities subordinate to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. For the first time, the media rating was presented in July 2021 at the Russian Creative Week international festival. Additionally, 2021 became not only the Year of Science and Technology, but also the year within which the most ambitious national program of strategic academic leadership «Priority-2030» was launched, aimed at the strategic development of more than 100 Russian universities. Modern innovations in Russia in the field of education and science keep pace with global trends and tendencies in the positioning of modern universities around the world in general and in Russia in particular.

The goal of the study is to evaluate global trends in the positioning of modern universities, their media activity in the Internet space. For modern universities, the Internet space is a competitive environment. Since July 2021, the presence of the university on the Internet, which is supervised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, began to be assessed at the state level in Russia. The overall rating of the media activity of universities (M-RATE) consists of the following ratings: the rating of the presence of universities in social networks (Social Index); rating of universities on work with mass media (Index Mass-Media); site development rating (Index Site). The ranking focuses on the popularization of science and higher education in the Internet space and the media sphere.

Literature review

The functioning and development of a modern university is more and more evaluated, the indicators of its effectiveness are statistically processed. The brand of the university ceases to be just a hypothetical characteristic,

now it is a combination of specific indicators reflecting involvement in various national programs, global and national rankings. The role of rankings as a part of PR strategy for a university is being explored by I.I. Tsorina and O.M. Kalieva, noting not only the importance of this mechanism for attracting foreign, but also domestic students [Tsorina, Kalieva, 2017]. As T.B. Brikota, T.A. Dzhum, N.B. Fedorova, and E.V. Shevchenko note, «ranking» as an indicator of the university's efficiency is, first of all, important at the level of the world market of educational services. But at the local or regional levels there is also a personal brand of a university associated with certain characteristics, for example, the university «as a supplier of personnel for the regional economy» [Brikota et al., 2020; Kovalev, 2016]. Researchers of media consumption also note that recently the problem of trust in media sources has become increasingly important; in this regard, universities, unlike news websites, do not strive to «fake» [Murzina, 2021].

In the context of global digitalization, universities have more and more indicators, which can be studied in the digital environment, since the environment itself allows for collecting a significant amount of statistical information (for example, the benefits of administering communities in social networks, thanks to which it is possible to receive weekly statistics of user visits, their social-demographic characteristics, etc.), including the implementation of contactless research [Kryshtanovskaya, 2018]. The advantage of assessing universities through media activity lies, first of all, in the transparency and openness of information, as opposed to the need for optimization and expert assessments of other parameters, for example, in national rankings [Petrosyants et al., 2015]. Thus, the national ranking by the MIL University «Interfax» contains complex parameters «Brand», «Selection of elites», «Communication with target audiences», «Perception of research by the international academic community», «Perception of research by the Russian-speaking academic community», «Index of scientific popularization of knowledge», etc. [Chaplygin, 2017]. The approach to assessing the activities of the university is changing, areas like media activity, strength of a particular university brand are beginning to be assessed. In this regard, it is important to refer to the work of L.A. Vasilenko, which points to the existing tools for analyzing media activity, for example, through the method of analyzing social networks, where mathematical methods are used to understand the models forming the information impact [Vasilenko, Meshcheryakova, 2021]. University administrations actively explore the Internet space, official groups and communities appear in various social networks and messengers. And, therefore, it is no longer required to conduct surveys to find out the strength of the university brand; it is enough to refer to the statistics of the university's media activity in social networks on the number of subscribers, likes and reposts that are provided by various Internet sites [Meshcheryakova, 2020].

Foreign researchers note the growing role of universities in the media space. A modern university becomes a source of information, carries out informational influence on an equal

basis with other media, and can participate in conflicting Internet interactions with polarized opinions when discussing especially important topics related to the development of modern society. As an example, there is an example of study of the Twitter platform with a hashtag on sex trade and the reaction of the Spanish academic community to this situation [Saiz-Echezarreta, Galletero-Campos, 2021]. Among Russian researchers, the emphasis has shifted to the online activity of student youth, to a greater extent than the university as a whole or its academic environment. For example, a Russian study of conflict interactions on the Internet, similar to foreign topics, draws attention to youth, which is considered in the context of «protest mobilization in the digital environment», that is, in the focus of young people's civic and political activity [Dobrovskaya et al., 2021]

If we turn to other works on media activity of student youth, there is a study by V.A. Ermakov, G.T. Zhuravleva and E.V. Kovalevskaya, where the attention is drawn to motivational strategies for communication in social networks. The researchers identified two main groups of students, the first being those who are looking to satisfy information needs and the second is focused on emotional experiences [Ermakov et al., 2021]. Students now are actively involved in Internet communication with the university, they are ready to act within the framework of «media creativity»: comment on messages and other people's posts, repost and retweet, as well as moderate groups on social networks (for example, the community of an academic group) and post photos. Although researchers note that young people are more involved in media consumption than media creativity [Atsuta, 2018].

Material and methods of research

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the study include a series of works devoted to the digitalization of universities [Guz, 2020], sociological methods of analyzing digital society [Meshcheryakova, 2020], media activity [Donina, Shaidorova, 2018] and the university brand as a basis of attractiveness in the educational services market as well as the development of partnerships [Brikota et al., 2020].

To understand the processes and analytics of digital communication, the authors used the methodology of the structural-functional approach, which makes it possible to evaluate the mechanisms, platforms and forms that universities use to expand the positioning and efforts of the university brand in the Internet space. In addition, the methodology of symbolic interactionism is usually applied when public expressions of support for universities in the form of likes, comments and other forms of expression (e.g., hashtags) are in the field of attention and analysis, which in turn forms a certain associative array with a specific university and understandable to its audience. Particularly relevant is the appeal to the theory on the strength of weak ties by M. Granovetter, which makes it possible to realize the importance of including the university in social networks and their use for positioning and managing information flows [Granovetter, 1973].

The research materials compiled publicly available statistical and analytical data that assess the activities of the university from various angles. Basic methods include analysis of secondary information and comparative analysis of materials. Two groups of materials can be distinguished: firstly, the international QS World University Rankings, with a geographical focus on TOP Russian universities; secondly, the rating of the media activity of educational institutions of higher education, which is supervised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. At the first stage, the positions of TOP Russian universities in the international educational market were analyzed. The TOP 10 universities in Russia were ranked according to QS (2021), and it is obvious that these universities are making significant efforts to maintain and improve their positions in the ranking. The methods include strengthening the university brand at the regional, country and world level, attracting potential applicants, partners and colleagues, expanding various forms of cooperation with other universities in the form of two diplomas, network programs, etc. At the second stage the analysis of statistical data presented in the form of ratings of media activity on the website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation was carried out. In addition to the existing and developed methodology (which will be further demonstrated and analyzed in detail in the results section), the authors of the article calculated the coefficients of variation for a comprehensive assessment of the activities of universities in the field of media activity on the Internet.

The combination of the two analytical models for analyzing the functioning of modern universities, which are widely publicly represented in the media sphere and are the subject of discussion, allows us to emphasize the role of digital statistics and analytics as a continuation of discussion on the development of digital sociology in Russia.

Results of research

In the modern world in the context of global digitalization and digital globalization, a competitive environment and the national and global positioning of the university plays an important role in its strategic development. In the XXI century the universities not only use modern IT technologies, products and formats of new media, they form new media trends for promotion in the Internet space. The main indicators of effective positioning of a modern university and its media activity in the Internet space are the university's presence in global rankings such as Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), QS World University Rankings, The Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), Webometrics, etc.; the availability of network programs and international accreditation of educational programs; an increase in the number of international students, MOOCs on Coursera and edX platforms, etc.

Positioning a modern university is an activity focused on the most beneficial presentation of the university and its services using marketing tools based on objective advantages over competitors. The main goal of positioning modern

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universities is to create competitive advantages to strengthen their place in the market of educational, scientific and innovative services.

A modern university, thanks to a properly structured activity in the field of its positioning, creates a certain place or the desired image of the university brand in the minds of consumers; it forms the reflection of the main idea and value of the university brand in the «mirror of perception» of consumers and consolidates the result of brand communications, that is, what the university brand «says» to the consumer. In this regard, a number of key areas of modernization of the activities of a modern university in the field of positioning can be identified:

- Increasing the recognition of university, its scientists and graduates in the international scientific community and among employers, creating conditions for keeping and developing highly qualified scientific personnel at the university, including foreign academic staff and PhDs.
- Developing and building research potential (scientific projects, citations, etc.).
- Ensuring the quality of educational programs and intellectual products, bringing them in line with international standards.
- Implementing measures for the digital transformation of university.
- Participating in international scholarship programs.
- Implementing international student and teaching mobility programs (attracting foreign teachers to develop educational programs, increasing the attractiveness of Russian universities among foreign students, etc.).
- Popularizing science among children and youth.
- Integrating innovations into professional training (online courses, gamification, simulators, etc.).
- Promoting the university in the media and Internet space.

In the study, the authors reviewed the results of the QS World University Rankings and identified the TOP 10 Russian universities in the global university ranking for 2021. Studying global trends in the positioning of modern universities, the research aimed to identify patterns such as direct and/or indirect relationship between the media activity of a modern university and the strengthening of the university's position in global and national rankings. Top universities are the legislators of global trends in media promotion in the Internet space. The monitoring results of TOP Russian universities are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 shows the TOP 10 Russian universities according to the QS World University Rankings, 2021. QS World University Rankings in its methodology¹ is based on six indicators: the academic reputation of the university (the opinion of academic experts about the university and the educational process in it, weight – 40 %); reputation of the university among employers (employers' opinion about

Table 1. TOP 10 Russian universities in the ranking «QS World University Rankings»*, 2021

TOP 10	Rating position	University	Abbreviation
1	74	Lomonosov Moscow State University	MSU
2	225	Saint Petersburg State University	SPbU
3	228	Novosibirsk National Research State University	NSU
4	250	National Research Tomsk State University	TSU
5	281	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (National Research University)	MIPT
6	282	Bauman Moscow State Technical University (National Research University)	BMSTU
7	298	National Research University Higher School of Economics	HSE
8	314	National Research Nuclear University «MEPhI» (Moscow Engineering Physics Institute)	MEPhI
9	326	Peoples' Friendship University of Russia	RUDN
10	331	Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin	UrFU

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

* QS World University Rankings (2021). Available at: www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2021 (accessed 20.09.2021).

graduates and the quality of education, weight – 10 %); the ratio of students and teachers at the university (universities with the smallest study groups and individual mentors, weight – 20 %); citation index per 1 tutor (characterizes the influence of the university in the field of scientific research, weight – 20 %); attraction of foreign tutors (the best conditions for foreign tutors, weight – 5 %); attracting foreign students (the best conditions for foreign students, weight – 5 %). QS World University Rankings does not assess the media activity of universities, therefore it is valuable to compare the TOP Russian universities according to QS with the results of the ratings of the media activity of Russian universities: M-RATE, Social Index, Index Mass-Media, Index Site, to identify the presence or absence connections between the media activity of a modern university and the strengthening of the university's position in global and national rankings.

The General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE)² compares the media activity indices of universities from three rankings: the ranking of the presence of universities in the Social Index (Social Index)³; the ranking of universities on

1 QS World University Rankings – Methodology (2022). Available at: <https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings/methodology> (accessed 20.09.2021).

2 General University Ranking (M-RATE) (October 2021). Available at: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%B8%CC%86.pdf> (accessed 15.11.2021).

3 Ranking of universities in social networks (Social Index) (October 2021). Available at: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%81%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8.pdf> (accessed 15.11.2021).

Table 2. General University Ranking (M-RATE), sample of ranking results from July to October 2021

Abbreviation	Rating position, July, 2021	Rating position, August, 2021	Rating position, September, 2021	Rating position, October, 2021
UrFU	2	1	4	2
MIPT	3	8	6	8
RUDN	4	9	8	5
TSU	8	5	9	6
BMSTU	11	4	7	4
NSU	14	23	26	35
MEPhI	15	19	15	21
Coefficient of variation, V	65,53 %	82,51 %	70,61 %	104,29 %

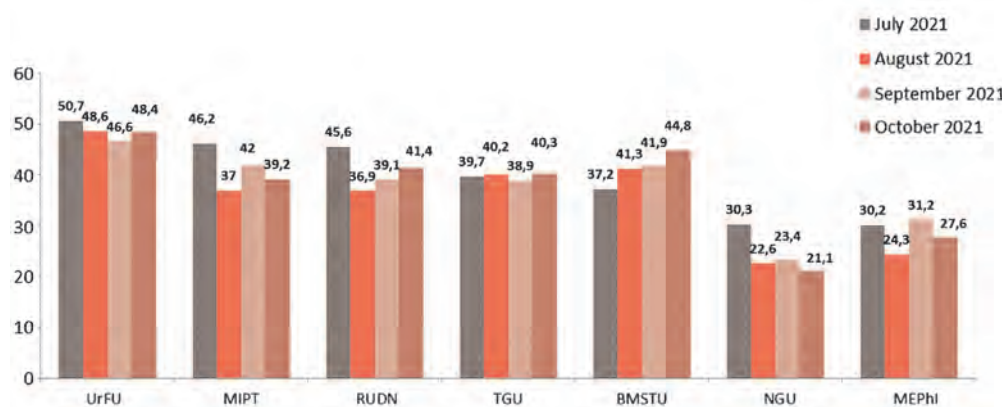
Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

communication with mass media (Index Mass-Media)⁴; the site development ranking (Index Site)⁵. The M-RATE ranking focuses on the popularization of science and higher education in the Internet space and the media sphere. **Table 2** shows the positions of the TOP Russian universities in the general university ranking (M-RATE).

Comparing the TOP Russian universities according to QS (2021) with the results of the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE), it is highlighted that 219 Russian universities participate in the ratings of media activity and from the TOP 10 Russian universities according to QS (2021) the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE) included 7 universities and all of them occupied leading positions in the M-RATE ranking. In the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE), out of 7 universities, 4 univer-

4 Rating of universities in terms of work with the media (Index Mass-Media) (October 2021). Available at: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/%D0%A1%D0%9C%D0%98.pdf> (accessed 15.11.2021).

5 Site development rating (Index Site) (October 2021). Available at: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/%D0%A1%D0%90%D0%98%C-%86%D0%A2.pdf> (accessed 15.11.2021).

Figure 1. The M-RATE University Media Activity Index, sample of results from July to October 2021

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

sities were included in the TOP 10, and 3 universities in the TOP 20 (July 2021). It should be emphasized that the ratings of media activity do not include 3 Russian universities from the TOP 10 Russian universities according to QS (2021): Lomonosov Moscow State University, St. Petersburg State University, National Research University Higher School of Economics. The coefficient of variation of the group turned out to be more than 33 %, from which it can be concluded that these universities do not belong to a homogeneous statistical group. We can explain this by the fact that these universities are far from each other in the ranking, and also possibly have significant differences in their positioning strategies and ways of implementing them. Therefore, one should look at the change in the degree of homogeneity in dynamics, where the coefficient of variation rises or falls. If it is rising, it indicates that universities are pursuing different strategies in their media positioning, if it is decreasing, then they have similar media activity in the Internet space.

Table 2 shows the positions of the TOP 7 Russian universities in the M-RATE Rating, taking into account their media activity indices, which are described in more detail in the histogram “University Media Activity Index according to the M-RATE Rating” (see **Figure 1**).

The histogram “Index of media activity of universities according to M-RATE” shows the indices of media activity of TOP Russian universities from July to October 2021. It is clear that the media activity of the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin surpasses the media activity of other universities. Figure 1 shows the dynamics of changes in the indices of media activity for each university from July to October 2021. UrFU demonstrates monthly stable dynamics of changes in the index of media activity of the university in the Internet space.

Table 3 compares the positions of the 7 TOP Russian universities according to QS (2021) with the results of the M-RATE ranking (October 2021), there are strategic trends in the development of Russian universities.

In the M-RATE Ranking, universities are also not a homogeneous group, standing far apart in the ranking.

When comparing TOP Russian universities according to QS (2021) with the results of the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE, October 2021), it can be seen that Novosibirsk National Research State University is ranked 3rd in the TOP 10 Russian universities according to QS (2021), and in the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE, October 2021) it occupies the 35th place, while the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin takes 10th place

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Table 3. Comparison of the positions of the TOP 10 Russian universities according to the QS version with the results of the M-RATE rating

Rating Place in M-RATE, October 2021	Abbreviation	TOP-10 in QS, 2021
2	UrFU	10
4	BMSTU	6
5	RUDN	9
6	TSU	4
8	MIPT	5
21	MEPhI	8
35	NSU	3
104,29 %	Coefficient of variation, V	-

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

in the TOP 10 Russian universities according to QS (2021), and in the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE, October 2021) it occupies the 2nd place. After analyzing the results of the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE) from July to October 2021, we can identify the following pattern that the TOP Russian universities occupying high leading positions in the ratings of media activity, at the same time, occupy lower places in QS World University Rankings, and TOP Russian universities that occupy high, leading positions in the QS World University Rankings, occupy lower positions in the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE). Based on this, it is possible to record the development trends of TOP Russian universities, which distribute their activities in accordance with the strategic development tracks of the university in different directions of the positioning sphere. But the strategic development tracks of TOP Russian universities, with their diversity, allow these universities to enter national and global rankings and occupy leading positions.

The ranking of the presence of universities in social networks (Social Index) reveals the index of the media activity of universities based on the analysis of presence of a particular university in various social networks, which takes into account the indicator of the coverage of publications about the university, the indicator of content quality, the indicator of audience activity, the indicator of the effectiveness of social networks in terms of attracting the audience to the official website of the university and the number of subscribers, likes, posts, reposts and mentions. In **Table 4**, the TOP Russian universities are sorted according to their place in the ranking of the presence of universities in social networks (Social Index) from July to October in 2021.

Table 4 shows the positions of the 7 TOP Russian universities in the Social Index Rating, taking into account their monthly dynamics of changes in the indices of media activity. The table clearly shows that the Ural Federal Uni-

Table 4. Social Index (Social Index), sample of results from July to October, 2021

Abbreviation	Rating position, July, 2021	Rating position, August, 2021	Rating position, September, 2021	Rating position, October, 2021
RUDN	3	5	3	2
UrFU	5	1	1	1
MIPT	8	16	12	17
BMSTU	9	4	4	3
TSU	14	10	16	18
MEPhI	17	56	34	35
NSU	82	130	79	52
Coefficient of variation, V	141,48 %	148,98 %	130,81 %	105,09 %

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

versity named after the first President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin ranks first in the period from August to October 2021. The index of media activity of universities according to the Social Index Rating is presented in more detail in histograms (see **Figure 2 and 3**).

In the Social Index, from July to October 2021, the media activity of universities was more likely to go in the direction of similar events, at least the gap in the ranking was decreasing (the coefficient of variation decreased).

Figure 2 "Index of media activity of universities according to the Social Index" shows the indices of media activity of TOP Russian universities from July to October 2021. The histogram demonstrates that the media activity of the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin again surpasses the media activity of other universities. Figure 2 indicates that UrFU has a stable monthly dynamic of changes in the media activity index of the university and its presence in social networks.

Presenting the index of the media activity of universities according to the Social Index Rating lets us trace the reason for the stable situation in the leading presence of UrFU in social networks (see **Table 5**).

Table 5 shows the indices of the media activity of the TOP Russian universities in social networks: VK, Insta-

Table 5. Ranking universities in social networks (Social Index), index of the university's media activity in social networks in October 2021

Abbreviation	Traffic share	Index VK	Index Instagram	Index Facebook	Index YouTube	Index Telegram	Index Twitter
UrFU	0,422	60,890	31,574	14,418	1,453	72,658	55,963
RUDN	0,174	37,326	58,990	62,310	12,587	18,505	23,510
BMSTU	0,442	62,034	36,593	12,898	2,466	29,195	22,377
MIPT	0,176	34,298	17,907	22,078	7,779	30,691	3,133
TSU	0,653	23,780	25,503	12,341	13,994	34,401	31,762
MEPhI	0,265	26,823	12,390	13,007	8,921	19,270	25,910
NSU	0,061	20,514	15,517	1,761	34,312	6,773	0,000
Coefficient of variation, V	64,90 %	44,98 %	56,76 %	99,08 %	94,77 %	69,25 %	80,43 %

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

gram, Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, Twitter, OK, TikTok, taking into account not only the presence of the university in a specific social network, but also the indicator of the coverage of publications about the university, the indicator of content quality, the indicator of audience activity, the indicator of the effectiveness of social networks in terms of attracting an audience to the official website of the university and the number of subscribers, likes, posts, reposts and mentions (see **Figure 3**).

Comparing the values of the coefficient of variation for activity in social networks, one can see that, according to the VK index, universities are more homogeneous in their media activity, while they are completely different according to the OK index.

Let's compose the final ranking of the type of social networks according to the degree of homogeneity of the media activity of universities based on the coefficient of variation: VK, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, OK.

Analyzing the indices of media activity of universities in social networks, one can single out the fact that not all universities are represented on Twitter, OK, TikTok in October 2021. Note the maximum presence of universities on Tik-

Tok for the reporting period: RUDN University – 94,573; MSTU named after N. E. Bauman – 72,345; NSU – 63,773; UrFU – 62,695. This indicates that Russian universities are shaping a positive image of the university in the youth social network itself, where almost 41 % of the audience aged 16 to 24 is present⁶. This category of TikTok users is the target audience for all universities.

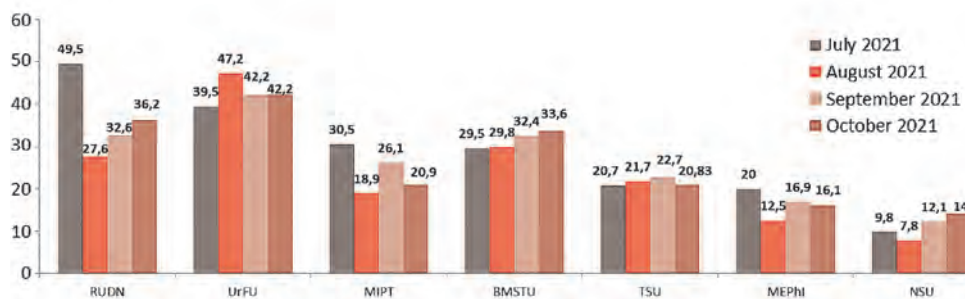
The Index Mass-Media of universities compares the index of the media activity of universities through the interaction of the university with the media, which takes into account the total number of publications about the university (posts), the total monthly coverage of sources of publications about the university, the number of TV-stories about the university and the number of publications about the university and its projects posted on various information resources of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Mass media is not just the production, storage and distribution of any information, it is an instrument of mass influence, a way of forming a positive brand and image of the university in the eyes of a large number of people. **Table 6** lists the TOP Russian universities taking into account their position in the ranking of universities for communications with the media (Index Mass-Media)

in July 2021. The places of the TOP Russian universities in the Index Mass-Media ranking according to **Table 6** can be analyzed from July to October 2021.

According to the **Table 6**, the leading position in the Index Mass-Media Rating from July to October 2021 is occupied by the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (National Research University). **Figure 4** shows in a more detailed visual form the index of media activity of universities according to the Index Mass-Media Rating.

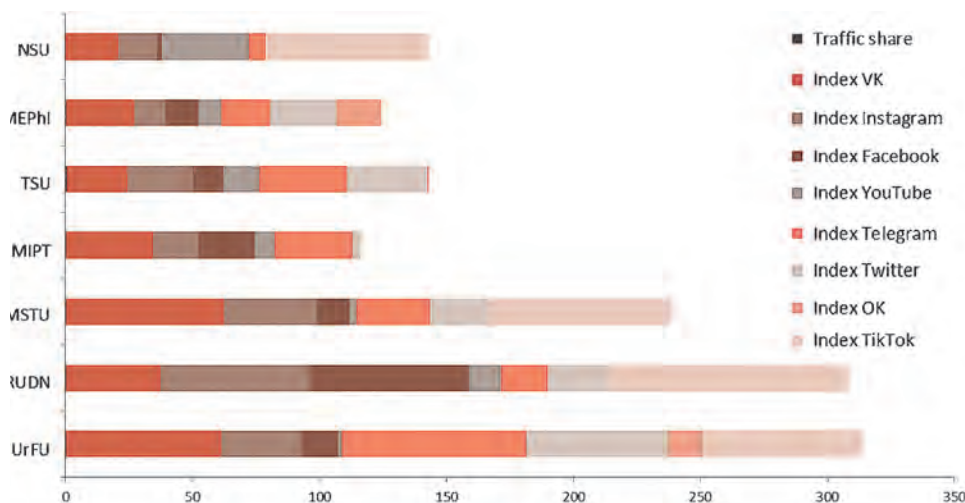
Universities are more homogeneous in their work with the media than in their policies in other aspects (the coefficient of variation in this rating is lower than in the previous ones). During July-October period, there is no pronounced convergence or distance from media events.

Figure 2. Index of media activity of universities according to the Social Index Ranking, sample of results from July to October 2021



Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

Figure 3. Index of media activity of universities in social networks according to the Social Index Rating, sample of results from July to October 2021



Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

⁶ How many people are on TikTok: why is the application so popular with the audience? (26.03.2020). Available at: <https://zarabativaem.com/skolko-lyudej-sidyat-v-tik-toke/> (accessed 16.11.2021).

ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

Table 6. Ranking universities on work with mass media (Index Mass-Media), sample of results from July to October 2021

Abbreviation	Rating position, July, 2021	Rating position, August, 2021	Rating position, September, 2021	Rating position, October, 2021
MIPT	2	2	4	3
UrFU	4	11	9	7
NSU	6	13	18	19
TSU	7	6	8	11
RUDN	8	7	7	5
BMSTU	11	5	6	4
MEPhi	16	22	10	16
Coefficient of variation, V	60,21 %	70,58 %	50,67 %	67,17 %

Table 7. Site development rating (Index Site), sample of results from July to October 2021

Abbreviation	Rating position, July, 2021	Rating position, August, 2021	Rating position, September, 2021	Rating position, October, 2021
UrFU	1	1	9	3
TSU	3	2	8	1
BMSTU	6	4	6	13
MEPhi	8	10	10	26
RUDN	16	28	7	33
MIPT	25	32	4	62
NSU	29	59	18	139
Coefficient of variation, V	87,48 %	110,55 %	50,67 %	122,71 %

Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

Figure 4 shows the indices of media activity of TOP Russian universities from July to October 2021 and the dynamics of changes in the indices of media activity for each university from July to October 2021. The media activity of MIPT is higher than the media activity of other universities. MIPT demonstrates a stable monthly change in the index of media activity of the university. The interaction of other universities with the mass media is chaotic and unstable.

In the ranking on website development (Index Site), the index of media activity of universities is compared through the analysis of the official website of the university, which takes into account the total traffic for the reporting month, the average time a user spends on the university website and the bounces rate. The bounce rate is used in web analytics, which correlates the number of university website visitors who leave the site immediately after entering or after viewing a maximum of one page of the website. This indicator is automatically calculated as a percentage of the total number of visits. The official website of the university is a space within which the university independently creates its own platform for communication, advertising, positioning, promotion of the mission, goal, builds the brand of the university. The university website is a point of attraction, where new events,

projects and the most interesting news, maximum results and achievements of the university are announced. The University creates its own unique and inimitable website, which can attract a large number of applicants and their parents, foreign students and teachers, researchers and practitioners, employers and academic partners. **Table 7** shows which places in the Index Site rating were occupied by TOP Russian universities from July to October in 2021.

Table 7 shows the positions of the TOP Russian universities in the Index Site Rating, taking into account the indices of their media activity. The leading positions in the Index Site rating for the reporting period are shared by two universities: the National Research Tomsk State University and the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin. In more detail, the dynamics of changes in the index of media activity of universities according to the Index Site Rating are indicated in the histogram (see **Figure 5**).

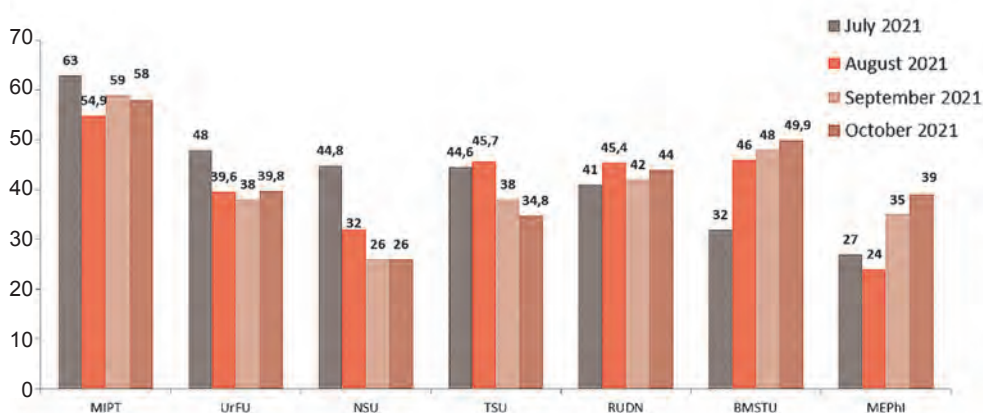
The media activity of universities in the development of their websites was rather more heterogeneous during July-October 2021 period. In September, the coefficient of variation was the lowest, when all universities upload a lot of information to the official website in connection with the enrollment of new applicants and the beginning of new academic year.

The histogram "Index of media activity of universities according to the Index Site Rating" shows the indices of media activity of the TOP Russian universities from July to October 2021. In October 2021, Tomsk State University became the leader in the Index Site Rating, and in July and August the first position in the ranking occupied the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin.

Conclusion

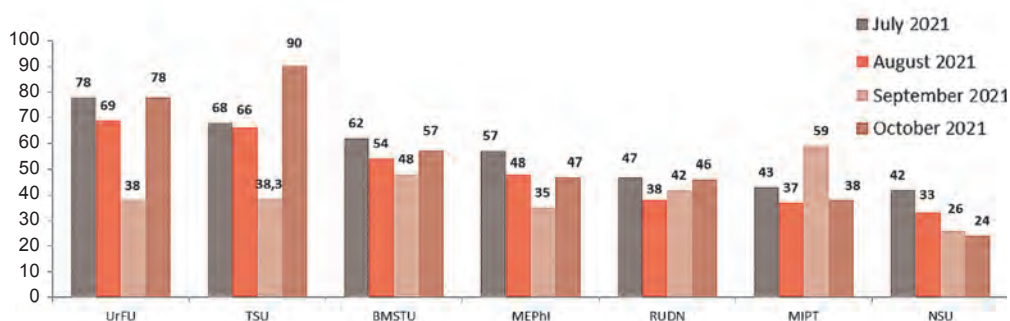
The results of the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE) from July to October 2021 revealed that the TOP Russian universities occupying leading positions in the ratings of media activity, at the same time also occupy lower places in the QS World University Rankings. And TOP Russian universities that occupy leading positions in the QS World University Rankings, reach lower places in the General Ranking of Universities (M-RATE). Based on this feature, the development trends of TOP Russian universities were recorded, which distribute their activities in accordance with the strategic development tracks of the university in different directions of the positioning sphere. The implementation of the strategic development tracks of TOP Russian universities with its diversity allows universities to enter national and global rankings and occupy leading positions in them. For example, according to QS (2021), TOP Moscow universities are inferior to the Ural Federal University in terms of media activity. It is important to note that only one federal university, UrFU, entered the TOP 10 Russian universities according to QS ranking (2021). On the example of the Ural State University, an important conclusion can be drawn from this study stating that there is a direct and/or indirect

Figure 4. Index of media activity of universities according to the Rating Index Mass-Media, sample of results from July to October 2021



Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

Figure 5. Index of media activity of universities according to the Index Site Ranking, sample of results from July to October 2021



Source: Compiled by the authors on the materials of the study

relationship between the media activity of a modern university and the strengthening of the university's position in global and national rankings.

In the contemporary world, the national and global positioning of the university plays a significant role in the strategic development of modern universities in the context of global digitalization and digital globalization. Universities independently create new trends and tendencies for media promotion in the Internet space using IT technologies, products and formats of new media. The positioning of modern universities is focused on presenting them with marketing tools based on objective advantages over competitors. Their competitive advantages are aimed at strengthening their positions in the market of educational, scientific and innovative services.

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