New Direction

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EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

Within the current report we present the results of an empirical study investigating the perceptions of Russians and Ukrainians, the perceived efficacy of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia in response to the military aggression on the territory of Ukraine. Within the study, we assessed not only the accuracy of knowledge about the real sanctions, but also we assessed the tendency to overclaiming (i.e., agreeing with the non-existing sanctions) and evaluated the association between accuracy and overclaiming to the subjective perception of the imposed sanctions. The study has been conducted on a representative (in terms of gender, age, and place of living) sample of Poles (N = 220). The results revealed that Russians are perceived negatively, while Ukrainians positively. Furthermore, we provided evidence that the citizens of Poland generally perceive imposed sanctions as effective. Greater accuracy of knowledge about the imposed sanctions acts like a buffer preventing from having more negative perceptions of the effectiveness of sanctions.

Keywords: sanctions; overclaiming; knowledge

KEY FINDINGS

- Russians are perceived negatively, while Ukrainians positively
- The sample of Polish respondents is characterized of good accuracy of knowledge about the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia
- The sample, however, is also characterized by the high level of overclaiming of their knowledge (i.e., stating familiarity with the non-existing sanctions)
- Higher educational reduce the degree of overclaiming
- The sanctions imposed by the EU are generally seen as good, even if admittedly expensive
- Older participants are evaluating EU actions more favorable
- Younger participants and females are more vulnerable to disinformation and manipulation of information
- Disinformation is related to more positive feelings to Russians and negative feelings towards Ukrainians
- Disinformation is related to the lesser accuracy of knowledge about the sanctions
- Positive evaluation of the EU sanctions is related to lesser overclaiming

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INTRODUCTION

Brief Overview of *Why* European Union Imposed Sanctions on Russia

In February 2014, in response to the forming of a new and pro-European Ukrainian government which was established after the Euromaidan, the pro-Russian separatists initiated fights in Crimea Peninsula and Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. These actions were militarily supported by the Russian Federation, starting the Russo-Ukrainian War, which lasts until now. The result of the military actions during the 2014 period finally resulted in maintenance of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts within the borders of Ukraine. However, as a result of the Crimean status referendum and the declaration of independence, the Crimea Peninsula has been formally annexed by the Russian Federation. The annexation has been recognized as illegal by most of the European countries, Australia, Japan, United States and many more. As a result, these countries imposed individual sanctions preventing Russian and Crimean officials from traveling and freezing their assets. Also, the EU imposed a set of sanctions on financial, energetic, and military markets and banned import from the Crimea and exporting dual-use goods. These sanctions were constantly prolonged since 2014. On 24 February 2022, Russian Federation launched an unprovoked and unjustified full scale invasion on the whole territory of Ukraine. Although the military actions are still ongoing, Russian aggression resulted in the proclamation of annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. The EU, as well as many other countries in the world, introduced sanctions which were meant to reduce the financial possibilities for continuing war. The current report focuses on the activity of the EU, which, to date, in response to illegal actions of the Russian Federation imposed a set of nine packages of sanctions, which are described below.

Sanctions Imposed by the EU Against Russia and the Introduced Exceptions

First Package. In response to the decision made by the Russian Federation on 21.02.2022 claiming the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in Ukraine as “independent” entities, the European Council imposed the first package of sanctions against Russia. This package of sanctions was directed against the 351 members of the Russian State Duma and additional 27 Russian individuals. Moreover, this package also imposed restrictions on the economic relations with the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The first package of sanctions was closed with restrictions on Russia’s access to the European capital and financial markets and services.

Second Package. Second package of sanctions was agreed on 25.02.2022, in response to the full-scale Russian invasion on the territory of Ukraine on 24.02.2022. This package has frozen the assets of the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. This package also included restrictive measures on the members of the National Security Council and members of the Russian State Duma who were supporting recognition of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk “republics”. During the special summit, European leaders agreed on the character of further sanctions.

Third Package. According to the settlements from the previous package, the new sanctions against the Russian Federation regarded individual as well as economical measures. More specifically, starting from 28.02.2022, there is a ban on transactions with the Russian Central Bank. Furthermore, the European Union closed its airspace as well as the access to its airports to Russian carriers. This package also included individual sanctions on 26 persons and one entity, which was furthermore imposed on 14 oligarchs and 146 members of the Russian Council. Alongside sanctions against the Russian Federation, this package was the first support package financing equipment and supplies worth €500 million to Ukraine. During the subsequent days, this package has further escalated in terms of financial and media sanctions. In terms of the former, seven Russian banks were excluded from the SWIFT system, investing and contributing to future projects co-financed by Russia and selling or exporting euro banknotes to Russia. In terms of the latter, to prevent disinformation, the EU has suspended the broadcasting activities of Sputnik and Russia Today.

Fourth package. The new sanctions were imposed on 15.03.2022. This package included a ban on all transactions with certain state-owned enterprises, providing the credit rating services to any Russian individual or entity and introduced trade restrictions for iron, steel, and luxury goods. This package was also the first to impose a ban on goods

and technology which potentially might contribute to the advancements in the defense and security sector.

Fifth Package. The fifth package of sanctions, which was imposed on 08.04.2022 included a ban on a) importing Russian coal and other solid fossil fuels as well as the other goods such as wood, cement, seafood, and liquor; b) exporting jet fuel and other goods; c) depositing to crypto-wallets; d) closing EU ports to Russian vessels and closing road transport operators from entering EU; and e) imposing further sanctions on individuals and entities, including major Russian banks.

Sixth Package. The sixth package was imposed on 03.06.2022 and mostly extended sanctions from previous packages. That is, it extended the ban on a) importing to crude oil and refined petroleum products; b) SWIFT system for three Russian banks; c) suspended broadcasting for three media outlets; and d) extended sanctions on 65 individuals and 18 entities.

Seventh Package. This package of sanctions which was imposed on 21.07.2022 extended the ban on importing Russian-origin gold and jewelry and on exporting dual use goods. Sanctions were also extended on 54 individuals and 10 Russian entities. To date, the sanctions have been imposed and renewed on: finance market, energy, technology, industry, dual use goods, transport, and luxury goods.

Eight Package. The eight package introduced on 06.10.2022 proposed a new approach on further escalation of the severity of sanctions against Russia. It announced a price cap of Russian oil, which was later agreed to equal $60 per barrel. Moreover, the price cap has been set to discounted and premium petroleum products to $45 and $100 per barrel, respectively. In addition, the sanctions have been extended on items which potentially might contribute to military and technological advancement, additional restrictions on trade and services with Russia and sanctions on 30 individuals and 7 entities.

Ninth Package. To date, it was the last package of sanctions introduced on 16.12.2022. It extended the ban on exporting drone engines and further extended the list of dual-use goods and technology. Previous financial sanctions have been extended on the Russian Regional Development Bank as well as services sanctions were extended to advertising, market research, and public opinion polling services. New sanctions regarded investments in the mining sector.

Finally, the EU also suspended four broadcasting licenses and imposed sanctions on 141 individuals and 49 entities.

Exceptions. There are various exceptions to the previously described sanctions. Firstly, the EU sanctions do not regard food and agricultural products. Crude oil can be imported from Russia if it complies with the current price cap. The price cap of oil, however, does not regard products which are produced from Russian oil outside of its borders. In regard to maritime transport, the vessels carrying energy, pharmaceutics, medical, agricultural, and food products, humanitarian aid, nuclear fuel, and coal – can enter the EU ports. Moreover, Russian vessels in need of assistance and seeking a place of refuge may also enter EU ports. Under similar conditions as to maritime, also road transport could be opened.

Summary

During the course of the year since Russia launched an unprovoked and unjustified invasion on Ukraine, the EU imposed historically strong sanctions against Russia. These sanctions regarded a broad range of individuals and entities, financial markets, import and export of different goods, banning different services EU, transportation, and setting price cap on oil. Of importance, all of these sanctions are fully compliant with obligations under international law.

These sanctions resulted in many objective results. According to the World Bank (2022) Russia gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to drop by 3.5% in 2022 and 3.3% in 2023. Both the Russian import and export significantly decreased (approximately by 15-20%). The Russian capital market has decreased by almost a third since the launch of the invasion. Sonnenfeld et al. (2022) who conducted a comprehensive analysis of Russian economic activity indicated that business retreats from Russia and concludes that the consequences of the sanctions are catastrophic for the Russian economy. Despite these objective effects of sanctions, the citizens of the EU might differ in how they perceive the effectiveness of these sanctions. Thus, the goal of the current report is to assess the knowledge about actions taken by the EU as well as more general evaluation of these subjective perceptions of the effectiveness of sanctions per se.

Evaluating of Knowledge about Sanctions Imposed by the EU

Evaluation of knowledge is a challenging task due the fact that individuals tend to provide inflated, overly positive responses (Shi et al., 2017). Within the empirical literature, this phenomenon is described as overclaiming bias, which could be defined as the tendency of asserting knowledge of a concept that does not exist (Paulhus et al., 2003). In this vein, to conclude about the effects of accuracy (i.e., actual knowledge) one need to consider overclaiming bias. Thus, accuracy

resembles the ability to discriminate between real and fake items (Paulhus, 2012). There are many consequences of the tendency to overclaim such as it has been found to be positively related to fake new gullibility and susceptibility to populist political claims (Pennycook & Rand, 2020; Van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2020). Moreover, overclaiming has been repeatedly found to be related to narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Thus, overclaiming might as well have its implications on how one perceives the effectiveness of the imposed sanctions and the extent to which one believes in Russian disinformation. Within the current report, we therefore analyze the role of this overclaiming in how it shapes the perceptions of sanctions imposed by the EU.

Goals of the Current Report

The goal of the current report is to examine the perceptions of how effective the EU sanctions against Russia are in the eyes of the EU citizens. For this purpose, we asked citizens of Poland about their perception of Russian and Ukrainian citizens. We hypothesized that Russians would be generally more negatively perceived by Polish citizens as compared to Ukrainians.

Furthermore, we assessed not only the degree to which Polish citizens are aware of real sanctions imposed by the EU, but we also assessed the degree of overclaiming facts. We hypothesized that Polish citizens would be characterized by greater accuracy of knowledge than overclaiming, which would be expressed in the high level of correctly recognized real sanctions as opposed to wrongly recognized foil sanctions. Our next hypothesis regarded the assessment of the perceived subjective effectiveness of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. We evaluated these perceptions under the three distinct areas of: a) assessing if one see's sanctions as effective; b) assessing if one see's sanctions as counter-effective; and c) assessing if one accepts the sanctions for higher stake. We expected that most of the studied sample would see the sanctions as more effective than counter-effective, which would be expressed in the different mean scores on these variables. Furthermore, we also expected that the moral view of the imposed sanctions should be higher as opposed to the counter-effectiveness of the introduced sanctions. Finally, we put all the findings together and analyzed whether the accuracy of knowledge as well as the overclaiming of knowledge would be differently related to the perceptions of the effects of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. That is, we expected that higher knowledge would act as a buffer against having more negative perceptions of the effectiveness of sanctions, whereas overclaiming would be related to the perceived counter-effectiveness of the introduced sanctions.

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METHOD

Participants and Procedure

For the purposes of the current study we recruited N = 220 adult participants from Poland, which were recruited by a professional agency. The sample was representative of age, gender, and place of living. As a result, the sample included 51.8% females and 48.2% males aged between 19 and 84 years (M = 48.10; SD = 16.47). About a third of the studied sample was characterized by primary education (33.6%), about a fifth of higher education (23.2%) and the remaining part of the sample (43.2%) have had middle education. Most of the participants lived in the villages (40%), followed by small cities (i.e., up to 50 000 residents; 24.1%), medium cities (between 50 001 and 200 000 citizens; 15%) and large cities (above 200 000 residents; 20.9%).

The participants were living in all of the 16 voivodeships in Poland (ranging from Lubuskie – 2.3% of the sample to Mazovia – 15% of the sample). Participants completed the survey presented in detail within the method section in the order they appear. Items within each survey were presented within a random order. Each participant was compensated with points, which could be further exchanged for monetary compensation according to the rules within the agency.

Measures

Assessment of Perceptions of Russian and Ukrainian Citizens. Within the current study, we used the feeling thermometer to assess the attitudes towards Russian and Ukrainian citizens. Each participant was presented with two separate thermometers presented in a random order ranging from -50 (very cold, negative) to +50 (very warm, positive) and was instructed to rate his or her feelings towards Russians and Ukrainians. The initial "temperature" was set to 0, however, to ensure that the participants could skip the question, to proceed a participant had to choose a specific value (which also included 0 as a potential answer). This method has been previously used in research assessing attitudes towards different groups and the long response scale has been found superior to shorter (i.e., Likert-type) versions (Alwin, 1997; Górska et al., 2022).

Assessment of Efficacy of Imposed Sanctions Against Russia. For the purposes of assessing the perceived efficacy of the imposed sanctions against Russia, a nine-item scale capturing different aspects was developed (the content of which is presented in Table 2). We hypothesized the existence of three distinct aspects of perceived efficacy of sanctions. Each statement was beginning with a general notion that: *sanctions imposed by EU on Russia...* and ended accordingly to the conceptualized factor. First, we conceptualized a very general evaluation of the effectiveness of the imposed sanctions (sample item: *...will result in a quicker end of the war*). Second factor corresponds to the disinformation about the sanctions imposed by the EU reflecting that the efforts made by the EU is harmful not for Russia but for the EU citizens (sample item: ... *should be minimized so a regular citizen wouldn't experience their consequences*). Finally, the third factor regards acknowledging the moral cost of sanctions, however this cost has been considered as necessary (sample item: ... *are increasing the cost of living, however this price doesn't matter when people in Ukraine are dying*). To determine the factorial structure, we conducted a principal-axis exploratory factor analysis with oblimin rotation. The scree plot supported the existence of three factors explaining 71.72% variance. The eigenvalues of the three factors were as follows: 3.99, 1.41, and 1.06. The standardized factor loadings are given in Table 1. Each of the distinguished factors was also characterized by good internal consistency. Thus, the developed scale might be considered as a good proxy measure of different perceptions of sanctions imposed against Russia.

TABLE 1

Item Content, Standardized Factor Loadings and Internal Consistencies of the Scale Assessing the Efficacy of Imposed Sanctions Against Russia

SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY EU ON RUSSIA...	EFFECTIVENESS	DIS-INFORMATION	MORAL COST
... are effective	.55	-.04	.18
... are damaging the Russian economy to the extent, that Russia will sooner decide about withdrawing its army from Ukraine	.86	.03	.01
... will result in quicker end of the war	.88	-.04	-.02
... are damaging the citizens of EU more than Russia	-.22	.55	.08
... should be minimized so a regular citizen wouldn't experience their consequences	-.01	.73	-.12
... created energetic crisis and should be therefore removed	.12	.88	-.02
... are a high price, which needs however to be paid	.04	.10	.59
... should be imposed no matter at the costs for the Western counties nor its citizens	.14	-.24	.63
... are increasing the cost of living, however this price doesn't matter when people in Ukraine are dying	-.03	-.09	.68
α	.84	.78	.73

Overclaiming Task. Within the current report, we created a list of 30 statements about real (20) and fake (10) sanctions that the EU imposed on Russia. Participants were asked to rate their degree of familiarity with each of these statements using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*never heard of it*) to 6 (*very familiar*). All of the 30 statements were presented in randomly varying order to ensure that the obtained results are not due the order of presentation. To calculate the estimates of knowledge (i.e., accuracy) and overclaiming, we relied on the Signal Detection Theory scoring. Under this paradigm, there are four potential combinations of how one could answer a signal. If the signal is present (i.e., real statement) and the participant would rate high familiarity with it, it could be interpreted as a hit. If the signal is absent (i.e., foil statement) and the participant would also rate high familiarity, it could be interpreted as a false alarm. If the signal is present, but the participant rate has low familiarity, it could be interpreted as a miss. Finally, if the signal is absent and participants rate low familiarity, it is interpreted as correct rejection. Within the current report, we relied on so-called "common sense" indices, which are simplifying the signal detection indices (Paulhus et al., 2003; Vonkova et al., 2018).

The index of knowledge is therefore calculated as the difference between the hit rate and false rate (Accuracy = Hits - Falses), while the index of overclaiming is calculated as the negative sum of hits and falses divided by two (Overclaiming = -(hits+falses)/2). Given that within the current report we employed polytomous response options, hits and falses were calculated on a given threshold (i.e., cut-off point) across all the possible thresholds. For instance, within the current report we calculated seven thresholds (0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, and 6-7) to calculate the number of hits and falses (see Vonkova et al., 2018). The statements presented to participants are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Real and Foil Statements Used in the Overclaiming Task

REAL SANCTION	FOIL SANCTION
• Blocking EU airspace for Russian carriers	• Ban for telephone conversation with individuals in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts
• Ban for maintaining deposits over 100 000 euro for Russian citizens	• Ban for importing food and agricultural products
• Ban from SWIFT system	• Ban for exporting sports gear
• Ban for export and import of weapons	• Taking over Russian buildings by national treasury
• Ban for exporting goods and technologies associated with cosmic industry	• Ban for offering telecommunication services in Russia
• Ban for importing iron and steel	• Closing EU ports for Russian vessels carrying energy
• Ban for selling goods exceeding the value of 300 euro	• Suspension of teaching Russian language in schools
• Ban for credit rating services	• Ban for exchanging euros to rubles worth more than 300 euro
• Ban for broadcasting of Russian media	• Ban for offering tourist services in Russia
• Ban for bilateral cooperation programs	• Setting a price cap for Russian iron and steel
• Ban for touristic services at Crimea	
• Ban for servicing technical help in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts	
• Suspending diplomatic talks	
• Ban for offering assurance services in aircraft industry	
• Ban for transactions with Russian central bank	
• Limiting access to technology associated with production of crude oil	
• Setting a price cap for crude oil	
• Ban for selling service parts for aircrafts	
• Freezing assets of individuals on sanction list	
• Ban for importing and transit of Russian coal	

3

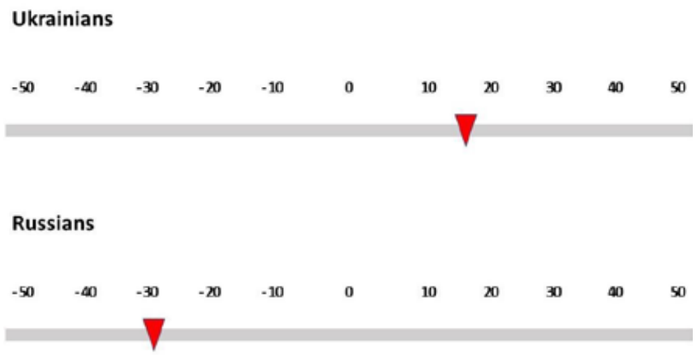
RESULTS

Perceptions of Russian and Ukrainian Citizens

Figure 1 presents the mean result of how participants of the study perceived Ukrainian and Russian citizens. On average, the studied participants have had rather positive feelings towards Ukrainians (M = +17.19; SD = 24.01) and cold and negative towards Russians (M = - 29.18; SD = 26.53). These two perceptions were largely divergent, which was expressed in fact it exceeded the range of the standard deviation ($t(219)$ = -18.49; p < .001; d = -1.25). Thus, the first hypothesis was confirmed in full.

FIGURE 1

Thermometer of Feelings Towards Ukrainian and Russian Citizens.



Next, we assessed the perceptions of Ukrainian and Russian citizens in regard to gender, age, education, and place of living. To assess any potential gender differences, we used t test for independent samples, while when assessing the effects of age, education, and place of living, we employed one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). On average, males (M = -28.45; SD = 27.93) and females (M = -29.86; SD = 25.26) did not differed in their perception of the citizens of Russia ($t(218)$ = 0.39; p = .695; d = 0.05). While we observed some gender differences in the perceptions of Ukrainian citizens, where males (M = 19.81; SD = 21.73) evaluated as warmer more than females (M = 14.75; SD = 25.80), this difference was at the boundary of the assumed significance threshold ($t(218)$ = 1.57; p = .059; d = 0.21). In terms of age, we did not observe any differences in how different age groups perceived Russian citizens, that is – they all had negative feelings towards them ($F(5, 214)$ = 0.31; p = .909; η^2 = 0.01). There were, however, some slight differences in how age groups perceived Ukrainian citizens ($F(5, 214)$ = 2.36; p = .041; η^2 = 0.05). As revealed by the Bonferroni post-hoc comparison, there was a small, albeit non-significant (p = .094) difference across different age groups. Although all of the analyzed age group assessed Ukrainian citizens positively, the mean perception was lowest in the 18-24 group (M = 9.50; SD = 27.10) and highest in the 65+ group (M = 24.92; SD = 22.29). Nevertheless, we observed a positive linear relation between age and the perception of Ukrainian citizens (r = .23; p < .001), which suggests that older participants are generally more likely to better evaluate Ukrainian citizens.

Neither the education level ($F(2, 217)$ = 0.24; p = .785; η^2 = 0.00; $F(2, 217)$ = 0.42; p = .661; η^2 = 0.00) nor the place of living ($F(3, 216)$ = 0.29; p = .829; η^2 = 0.00; $F(3, 216)$ = 0.34; p = .799; η^2 = 0.01) have differentiated the perceptions of Russian and Ukrainian citizens, respectively. That is, while Ukrainians were perceived positively, Russians were consequently viewed negatively. Summing up, these results provide further evidence about our first hypothesis.

Accuracy and Overclaiming of Knowledge about the Sanctions Imposed by the EU Against Russia

Within Table 3 we present the frequency of responses to real items, while in Table 4, we present frequency of responses to foil items. Participants taking part within the study, generally recognized real items from the foils. On average, more than a third of participants were very familiar with the presented statements, while approximately a fifth of participants did not hear of the real sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. Four statements were especially difficult for the participants as most of the sample hadn't heard of the specific sanction. These statements regarded ban for selling luxury goods, ban for servicing technical help in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, ban for offering touristic services at Crimea Peninsula and ban for offering assurance services in aircraft industry. Overall, participants did well with this task, however, there is certainly a space for improvements.

The answers to foil items revealed that the participants have had high difficulties in accurate differentiation between real and foil statements about the imposed sanctions. On average, although approximately a fourth of participants correctly indicated they never heard of these sanctions, almost a third responded they're very familiar with these inexistent sanctions. Thus, almost the same amount of participants correctly rejected the foil statements as compared to those who wrongly accepted them as real. In fact, only in four out of ten foil statements, most participants correctly indicated they never heard of them. The items characterized by highest difficulty regarded exceptions of the real imposed sanctions, such as allowing the import of food and agricultural products or accepting Russian vessels carrying energy. Nevertheless, a significant number of participants also endorsed statements like taking over Russian buildings by national treasuries as real. Thus, it could be concluded that the studied sample is generally characterized by the tendency to overclaim their knowledge.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Responses to Real Items

	0 = NEVER HEARD OF IT	1	2	3	4	5	6 = VERY FAMILIAR WITH IT	BOTTOM 2 BOX	TOP 2 BOX
Blocking EU airspace for Russian carriers	8.2	1.4	2.3	11.8	14.5	18.6	43.2	9.6	33.1
Ban for maintaining deposits over 100 000 euro for Russian citizens	21.8	5.9	7.7	15.5	15.5	15.9	17.7	27.7	31.4
Ban from SWIFT system	8.6	4.5	5.5	11.4	12.7	20	37.3	13.1	32.7
Ban for export and import of weapons	8.6	3.6	5.5	13.2	16.4	19.5	33.2	12.2	35.9
Ban for exporting goods and technologies associated with cosmic industry	13.2	5.9	7.3	21.8	19.5	14.1	18.2	19.1	33.6
Ban for importing iron and steel	17.3	3.6	7.7	16.4	18.6	20	16.4	20.9	38.6
Ban for selling goods exceeding the value of 300 euro	27.3	10	8.6	20.5	14.5	10	9.1	37.3	24.5
Ban for credit rating services	20.9	5.5	10.9	17.7	15.9	11.4	17.7	25.9	27.3
Ban for broadcasting of Russian media	12.7	4.1	5.5	17.7	18.2	19.5	22.3	16.8	37.7
Ban for bilateral cooperation programs	14.1	5.5	6.8	20.9	15.9	18.2	18.6	19.6	34.1
Ban for touristic services at Crimea	23.2	5.9	8.2	16.8	16.8	11.8	17.3	29.1	28.6
Ban for servicing technical help in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts	25.5	7.7	10	26.4	11.8	9.5	9.1	33.2	18.6
Suspending diplomatic talks	15.5	5.9	6.4	22.3	16.4	16.8	16.8	21.4	33.2
Ban for offering assurance services in aircraft industry	22.3	6.8	9.5	20.9	15.5	10.5	14.5	29.1	25
Ban for transactions with Russian central bank	8.6	5	5.5	13.2	18.6	20.9	28.9	13.6	39.5
Limiting access to technology associated with production of crude oil	9.5	4.5	7.3	15.9	24.1	17.7	20.9	14	38.8
Setting a price cap for crude oil	9.1	5	7.3	19.1	12.3	19.1	28.2	14.1	31.4
Ban for selling service parts for aircrafts	15.5	5.5	7.7	17.3	16.8	16.4	20.9	21	33.2
Freezing assets of individuals on sanction list	6.8	2.7	0.9	12.3	16.4	24.5	36.4	9.5	40.9
Ban for importing and transit of Russian coal	5.5	0.9	2.3	10	17.7	22.7	40.9	6.4	63.6
MEAN	**14.7**	**5**	**6.7**	**17.1**	**16.4**	**16.9**	**23.4**	**19.7**	**40.3**

Note. In bold we present items where the top2box was **lower** than the bottom2box.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Responses to Foil Items

	0 = NEVER HEARD OF IT	1	2	3	4	5	6 = VERY FAMILIAR WITH IT	BOTTOM 2 BOX	TOP 2 BOX
Ban for telephone conversation with individuals in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts	35	10	10	15.5	12.7	9.5	7.3	45	16.8
Ban for importing food and agricultural products	9.5	5	5	16.8	17.3	24.5	21.8	14.5	46.3
Ban for exporting sports gear	25.9	4.5	8.2	17.7	14.1	17.7	11.8	30.4	29.5
Taking over Russian buildings by national treasury	13.6	5.5	5.9	15	18.6	17.7	23.6	19.1	41.3
Ban for offering telecommunication services in Russia	19.1	5	9.5	15	19.5	14.5	17.3	24.1	31.8
Closing EU ports for Russian vessels carrying energy	11.8	2.3	5.9	16.4	16.8	19.5	27.3	14.1	46.8
Suspension of teaching Russian language in schools	32.7	9.1	10.5	16.8	10.9	8.6	11.4	41.8	20
Ban for exchanging euros to rubles worth more than 300 euro	23.2	10	9.5	16.4	14.5	10	16.4	33.2	26.4
Ban for offering tourist services in Russia	19.1	5.9	4.1	20.9	17.7	14.5	17.7	25	32.2
Setting a price cap for Russian iron and steel	17.3	6.8	11.8	20	18.6	12.7	12.7	24.1	25.4
MEAN	**20.7**	**6.4**	**8.0**	**17.1**	**16.1**	**14.9**	**16.7**	**27.1**	**31.6**

Note. In bold we present items where the top2box was **higher** than the bottom2box.

Next, we evaluated the effects of gender, age, education, and the place of living differentiates individuals in terms of accuracy and overclaiming. In terms of gender differences, we did not found any differences in how males (M = -2.33; SD = 0.35) and females (M = -2.33; SD = 0.36) overclaimed their knowledge ($t(218) = 0.02$; $p = .494$; $d = 0.00$). There were some slight differences, however, in the accuracy of knowledge where males (M = 0.06; SD = 0.08) were characterized of slightly higher level than the females (M = 0.04; SD = 0.08; $t(218) = 1.57$; $p = .058$; $d = 0.21$). The level of education, while it did not impacted the overall tendency to overclaim knowledge ($F(2,217) = 1.87$; $p = .156$; $\eta^2 = .02$), there were significant differences in the accuracy of knowledge ($F(2,217) = 3.95$; $p = .021$; $\eta^2 = .04$). The Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that the only significant difference ($p = .016$) was between the individuals with primary education (M = 0.04; SD = 0.08) who achieved lower scores as compared to individuals whom completed the higher level of education (M = 0.08; SD = 0.08). Finally, neither age nor the place of living did not influenced the overall levels of neither the overclaiming ($F(5,214) = 0.97$; $p = .440$; $\eta^2 = .02$; $F(3,216) = 1.05$; $p = .370$; $\eta^2 = .01$) nor the accuracy of knowledge, respectively ($F(5,214) = 0.25$; $p = .941$; $\eta^2 = .01$; $F(3,216) = 2.19$; $p = .090$; $\eta^2 = .03$).

Assessment of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Sanctions Imposed by the EU Against Russia

On average, participants scored highest on the moral cost factor (M = 7.25; SD = 2.08), followed by the effectiveness of the imposed sanctions (M = 5.80; SD = 2.34) and least on the disinformation ($M = 4.54$; $SD = 2.35$). As indicated by the t-test for the paired samples, these means were significantly different from one another (all p's < .001). Thus, it could be concluded that on a very general level, Polish citizens are generally more prone to accept different sanctions, regardless of their cost, even if they see only a moderately fair effectiveness of these sanctions.

Least respondents, albeit still a significant number, indicated that the sanctions do not work at all and are mostly harmful for the EU citizens and should be therefore removed as soon as possible. In terms of gender differences, it has been found that there were no differences between the males (M = 7.44; SD = 1.99; M = 5.99; SD = 2.40) and females (M = 7.08; SD = 2.15; M = 5.61; SD = 2.29) in regard to moral cost and effectiveness of the imposed sanctions, respectively ($t(218)$ =

1.21; $p = .114$; $d = 0.16$; $t(218) = 1.28$; $p = .101$; $d = 0.17$). Nevertheless, we also observed significant differences in respect to the score in disinformation. The results revealed that on average, females (M = 5.11; SD = 2.39) scored much higher than did the males (M = 3.93; SD = 2.17) for about the half of the standard deviation ($t(218) = 3.81$; $p < .001$; $d = 0.51$).

In regard to age, all of the results were at the boundary of the assumed threshold reaching: $F(5,214) = 2.10$; $p = .067$; $\eta^2 = 0.05$ for effectiveness; $F(5,214) = 2.23$; $p = .053$; $\eta^2 = 0.05$ for disinformation; and $F(5,214) = 2.12$; $p = .064$; $\eta^2 = 0.05$ for moral cost. Although the Bonferroni post-hoc comparison did not revealed any significant differences between the analyzed age groups, there was a visible linear trend stressing that youngest participants (18-24) scored lowest in the effectiveness (M = 5.17; SD = 6.43) and highest in disinformation (M = 5.67; SD = 2.40), as compared to the oldest age group (65+), which achieved the opposite results (i.e., highest for effectiveness (M = 6.43; SD = 2.24) and moral cost (M = 7.88; SD = 2.04) vs. lowest for disinformation ($M = 3.82$; $SD = 2.24$)). This linear trend (positive for effectiveness and moral cost vs. negative for disinformation) was also captured in significant estimates of correlation between each factor and age, which was as follows: effectiveness ($r = .19$; $p = .004$); moral cost ($r = .19$; $p = .005$), and disinformation ($r = -.23$; $p < .001$). Thus, along with the age, participants within the current sample were generally characterized as evaluating sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia as more favorable than did the youngest participants.

In regard to the level of education, while we did not observed any differences in regard to more favorable perceptions of the imposed sanctions, that is, effectiveness ($F(2,217) = 1.28$; $p = .280$; $\eta^2 = 0.01$) and moral cost ($F(2,217) = 0.72$; $p = .486$; $\eta^2 = 0.01$). We observed that participants differed in terms of scores in disinformation ($F(2,217) = 7.87$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = 0.07$). The results of the Bonferroni post-hoc test indicated that while there were no differences between the individuals who achieved primary (M = 4.86; SD = 2.40) or secondary education (M = 4.89; SD = 2.31; $p = 1.00$), both these groups were significantly different from individuals who completed higher education ($M = 3.43$; $SD = 2.03$), whom scored lower on disinformation (p's ≤ .002). The only demographic variable that did not differentiate participants was the place of living.

Regardless of the place of settlement, participants scored similarly in effectiveness ($F(3,216) = 0.18$; $p = .909$; $\eta^2 = 0.00$); moral cost ($F(3,216) = 0.42$; $p = .737$; $\eta^2 = 0.01$); and disinformation ($F(3,216) = 1.41$; $p = .241$; $\eta^2 = 0.02$).

Assessing How Accuracy and Overclaiming of Knowledge About the Sanctions Imposed by the EU are Related to the Perceived Effectiveness of These

The zero-order relations between the variables of interest are given in Table 4. Whereas the moral cost and effectiveness of the imposed sanctions were positively related one to another, both of these were expectedly negatively related to disinformation. In a similar vein, neither the effectiveness nor the moral cost were related to the accuracy of knowledge, they were negatively related to the tendency to overclaim false facts. In contrast, the disinformation was unrelated to the overclaiming, however, it was related negatively to the accuracy of knowledge. These findings supported our final expectation. We also found that the different factors of the perceived effectiveness of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia were characterized by different relations to how one evaluated Russian and Ukrainian citizens. More specifically, while both effectiveness and moral cost were related negatively to Russian and positively to the evaluation of Ukrainian citizens, the disinformation was related inversely. That is, the higher the score in disinformation, the more favorable one evaluated Russians and less favorable Ukrainians.

TABLE 4

Relations Between the Effectiveness of Imposed Sanctions, Accuracy and Overclaiming of Knowledge, and the Perceptions of Russian and Ukrainian Citizens

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Effectiveness						
Moral cost	.52***					
Disinformation	-.39***	-.40***				
Overclaiming	-.21**	-.25***	.00			
Accuracy	-.12	.10	-.22**	.29***		
Perception of Russians	-.24***	-.32***	.21**	.17*	.12	
Perception of Ukrainians	.37***	.33***	-.31***	-.09	.07	-.08

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

3

DISCUSSION

The current report was focused on the assessment of how the citizens of the EU perceive the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed against Russia. To address it, we asked 220 residents of Poland about their perceptions of Russia itself, as well as the different orientations towards sanctions imposed by the EU. Furthermore, we also assessed how the accuracy of their knowledge about the sanctions as well as the tendency to overclaim (i.e., claiming non-existent sanctions as real) are associated with these different orientations towards sanctions against Russia.

Perceptions of Russians and Ukrainians

Prior to the aggression on Ukraine, the study of Witkowska et al. (2019) revealed that Poles already had rather cold and negative perceptions of Russians reaching -10 degrees.

Perceptions of Russians within Polish society, however, are characterized by elevated distrust due the fact that Poland was not only a part of the Soviet Union but also suffered mass deportations and mass murders during World War II (Witkowska et al., 2019). The citizens of New Zealand, for instance, without these historical ties with Russia perceive Russians neither favorably nor negatively (approximately 0 degrees; Andrews et al., 2018). Within the current examination, the Russians were perceived much more negatively than before the invasion of Ukraine (i.e., the feelings towards Russians reached approximately -30 degrees). Although the nature of this finding is cross-sectional, we stipulate that it could be interpreted causally stressing that Poles (who were perceiving Russians negatively prior to the invasion) in response to the military aggression of Russia on the territory of Ukraine, perceived Russians even more negatively. Such finding is congruent with findings that the attitudes towards other groups turns more negative in light of the threatening events (Davis, 2007). For instance, the attitudes of the German students towards Syrian migrants turned more negative in response to the attacks in Paris in November 2015 (Jungkunz et al., 2018).

In contrast, the perceptions of Ukrainians in Poland prior to the Russian invasion were mostly positive, even if there were as well historical conflicts between the countries during the past century. The research of Szymkow et al. (2021) revealed that prior to the Russian invasion, residents of Poland perceived Ukrainians positively at approximately +14 degrees. Within the current report, the perceptions of Ukrainians were highly congruent, reaching approximately +17 degrees. During the outbreak of the invasion, Poland accepted approximately 1,5 million of Ukrainian refugees and organized broad aid for them (for review see: Ociepa-Kicińska & Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj, 2022). Although such strong efforts and the such high presence of Ukrainians in Poland might result in the increase of xenophobia (Davis, 2007; Jungkunz et al., 2018), we demonstrated that the perceptions of Ukrainians remained stable and positive.

Perceived Effectiveness of the Sanctions and the Impact of Knowledge

Using the validated methodology of the overclaiming task (Paulhus et al., 2003) we asked Polish participants about their degree of familiarity with real as well as non-existing sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. This procedure was to disentangle accuracy of knowledge from the tendency to overclaim. Previous research documented that overclaiming predicts anti- establishment voting (van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2020) as well as believing in fake news (Pennycook & Rand, 2020), thus, it was important including it within the assessment of perceived effectiveness of the imposed sanctions. Given that the task has been developed for the purposes of the current study, we cannot compare results to the previous studies. Nevertheless, the results revealed that the studied sample was characterized by a good accuracy of knowledge about the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. In other words, participants were reporting a higher level of familiarity to the real sanctions in general. Simultaneously, however, the participants were also characterized by the high level of overclaiming, which means that the participants endorsed their familiarity with the non-existing sanctions. This finding suggests that there is a necessity to improve the ability of the EU residents to disentangle real and the fake news. Such a task is especially important given that the Russian approach to news is sometimes labelled as the information war (Jankowicz, 2020). Such propensity to believe in fake news should be therefore diminished as much as possible.

In general, the perception of the effectiveness of the sanctions was good, regardless of the fact that participants admitted they were expensive. This finding is in line with empirical evidence suggesting that individuals are likely to support actions that reduce power of a group which is perceived as a threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Recent study provided evidence that priming Americans with Russia's military aggression leads to reduction of affective polarization and increase in cooperativeness of Americans (Kaiser & Seier, 2023). It might be, that while most of the crises tend to divide and polarize societies (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Huddy & Feldman, 2011), in this particular case, not only the Americans, but also Europeans are those who were largely united. Interestingly, our results revealed that age was an important factor differentiating the views of the participants. That is, whereas older participants evaluated EU actions more favorably, the younger participants were more vulnerable to disinformation and manipulation of information. This findings is congruent with reports that youth is more likely to be polarized and has lower ability to accurately identify fake and real news (Deinla et al., 2022). Thus, actions aimed at increasing the ability of recognizing fake news should put emphasis on the younger population.

Within the current report, we also analyzed how the propensity to overclaiming knowledge is related to the different perceptions of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. Our expectation was that higher knowledge would act as a buffer against having more negative perceptions of the effectiveness of sanctions, whereas overclaiming would be related to the perceived counter-effectiveness of the introduced sanctions. Within the current report, we documented that along with the tendency to overclaim knowledge about the sanctions imposed by the EU, the perceived effectiveness of these sanctions is less favorable. In other words, individuals who are more prone to believe in non-existing facts, are also more likely to negatively evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions. Furthermore, we also demonstrated that alongside the accuracy of knowledge, the tendency to believe in disinformation lowers. In other words, those who are able to differentiate real vs. non-existent sanctions, are also less likely to negatively evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. These findings are in line with existing research stressing that the exposure to disinformation and propaganda have a broad range of negative consequences (Azzimonti & Fernandes, 2022; Barua et al., 2020; Tucker et al., 2018).

Conclusion

The goal of the current report was to assess the perceived effectiveness of the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia. The results of the current study revealed that in general, the citizens of Poland perceived Russians negatively, while Ukrainians – positively. The imposed sanctions have been seen as effective by the majority of the respondents. Greater accuracy of knowledge about the sanctions acted as a buffer, preventing from believing in disinformation, while the overclaiming was related to the counter-effectiveness of the sanctions. These results emphasize the need for education programs addressed for young EU citizens, who are more prone for disinformation.

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