

The battle of the generations: the difference in news sources, motivations and information literacy between baby boomers, gen X, millennials and gen Z

A quantitative study

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Abstract

The world is currently facing a big crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyday new information comes to light, sparking debate within society. The news has therefore become even more important. However, news consumption can be different per individual or group. Not much is known about differences in news consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of this study is to answer the question whether baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z differ in news consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. The news sources, motivations to consume news and awareness of misinformation will be examined within these four generations. It is expected that baby boomers and generation X use traditional sources more than millennials and generation Z, who are expected to prefer online news content. Baby boomers and generation X are also expected to be motivated by information, whilst millennials and generation Z are expected to be motivated by entertainment. Baby boomers and generation X are also expected to be less aware of the risks of misinformation in online news content than millennials and generation Z.

To conduct the study a quantitative approach was used. A survey was distributed under the Dutch-speaking population using a snowball-sampling approach. The survey was constructed using existing surveys. The main existing survey used was the “Biennial Media Consumption Survey 2008” (BMCS) made by the Pew research center.

The results revealed that baby boomers and generation X do prefer traditional media, mainly television, to consume news. Millennials and generation Z prefer to consume news using their smartphone. Baby boomers and generation X use a more mixed media approach to news consumption whilst millennials and generation Z use online media only approach. Overall, all generations are motivated by information to consume news. However, only generation Z is also significantly motivated by entertainment to consume news. Lastly, no significant difference is found pertaining the awareness of misinformation. All the generations are equally aware of the risks of misinformation.

To conclude, there is a difference in news consumption between baby boomers,

generation X, millennials and generation Z during the COVID-19 pandemic. This difference mostly lies within the news sources the generations use to consume news. Baby boomers and generation X still use traditional media accompanied by online media. Millennials and generation Z have steered away from traditional media to consume news. Generation Z is also motivated by entertainment to consume news, whilst this was not the case for the other generations.

Keywords: News consumption, Generations, Motivation, Information Literacy, News sources

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1. Introduction

As of January 2021 more than half of the world population makes use of the internet (Statista, 2021). This encompasses both younger generations as well as older generations (Zickuhr & Madden, 2012). The wide usage of the internet makes for a favorable platform for news sites to present their content. The last year this news content has been focused on one subject, the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has a worldwide impact, as of June 2021 the death toll reached 3.862.120 people (John Hopkins University, 2020). Many people are experiencing lifelong consequences, either due to health problems after a COVID-19 infection, or because of the economic impact. In addition to the physical consequences, the pandemic also causes many mental problems.

Literature suggests that the pandemic causes mental problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, sleeping disorders and eating disorders (Hossain, Tasnim, Sultana, Ahmed & Ma, 2020). These problems can then be heightened by news, as news and the way it is consumed can cause mental complaints as well, or the factual information causes stress (Su, et al., 2021). Apart from factual information, news can bring misinformation into the public domain. Misinformation can lead to trust issues and public stress (Su, et al., 2021).

Misinformation does not only cause mental problems but can also lead to changes in behavior without the individual noticing this, for example, voting in political elections can be unconsciously influenced (Bastick, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic causes a lot of problems and strict measurements are being taken every day, it is important that both the old as well as the young stay up to date with the newest developments.

The news is a platform through which this can be done. Online news has not been around forever, which creates a divide between generations. Some have used the internet for their entire lives, whilst others started using the internet later in life. Is it therefore right to use the same news strategies for each generation? Although previous research has focused on news consumption by different generations, little is known about news consumption by different generations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the current research is to map motivation around news consumption and the awareness of misinformation from different generations during this worldwide crisis.

There are many ways to define different generations. The most wide used method is the divide by age (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). McCrindle & Wolfingers (2010) method defines five generations based on birthyear and big developments during these generation defining years. These five generations are “the builders”, “the baby boomers”, “generation X”, “millennials” and “generation Z” (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). But this is not the

only way to divide the generations. A distinction can also be made according to their preferred news source, or their experience with digital technology (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Prensky, 2001; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). In short, there is not only one way to distinguish different generations. The many ways will be more thoroughly discussed in this study.

Motivation encompasses the why of news consumption, why do people consume news? The need to gain knowledge and surveille is an innate need humans have had for a very long time, but there are more reasons why people consume news (Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016) For instance, they can be information, entertainment, opinion or socially motivated (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). People value objectivity, accessibility and relevance when it comes to the news they consume (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Yanardağoğlu, 2020).

Misinformation will be researched by the “information literacy” approach. This pertains the ability to identify and use the right information (ACRL, 2000; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). It is not only seen as a way to identify misinformation, but also as a way to combat this.

The focus of the current study will lie on Dutch-speaking people from different generations. It is important that all generational groups are equally represented. It is also important that the participants have a similar array of news sources offered to them. This is why it was decided to only include those who are Dutch-speaking. The data has been collected over the course of two to three months in the beginning of 2021, while the pandemic was still relevant in the news. The data collection has been done by survey.

This article will attempt to answer the following research question:

How does news consumption, news motivation and the awareness of the risks of digital news consumption differ between generations?

The different news sources the four generations use and why they choose these sources will be studied. Sources can be television, radio, newspaper, news sites and social media sites. Millennials and Gen Z are expected to consume news mainly from social media because it is easily available. Baby boomers and generation X are expected to watch television or read the newspaper more often than millennials and generation Z. When baby boomers and generation X do use the internet to consume news they are expected to use actual news websites. The current research expects that the reason for this is that baby boomers and generation X do not trust social media as much as traditional media or news sites. To what extent baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z recognize the risks of digital news media will also

be examined. It is expected that all four of the generations are aware of the risks. However millennials and generation Z are expected to take the risks less serious as they see these risks as part of life on the internet. Baby boomers and generation X are expected to take the risks more seriously. They will assess the messages and sources more critically before they accept them as true.

The following chapter will offer an overview of existing research and theories on the concepts previously discussed. The different classifications of generations will first be discussed followed by different approach to news motivation. Lastly, theory about misinformation and information literacy will be presented. After the theoretic framework, chapter three, the method, will offer the explanation of the instruments used to conduct the research and an overview of the sample. After the method section, the most important results will be presented in chapter four. Chapter five, the discussion, will interpret these results and attempt to explain what these mean. Lastly, chapter six will contain the conclusion. Limitations and suggestions for future research will also be presented.

2. Theoretic framework

The current study examines different generations. Defining the beginning and end of a generation is difficult as generations tend to flow into each other (Wang, Myers & Sundaram, 2013). For the sake of research, however, the current study draws hard lines between the beginning and end of different generations. Previous literature has described different divisions of generations. After defining the different generations, news consumption will be discussed. The use of different news sources and what consumers deem to be important aspects of news will be presented. This will give a clearer view of what news consumption entails and how people interact with news. Lastly, information literacy and misinformation will be discussed. This will create a more extensive view on the relationship between people and misinformation.

2.1 Generations

As previously mentioned, there are many ways to define different generations. In the following chapter multiple of these theories will be discussed. A clear divide will be made and explained for the sake of the current study.

2.1.1 Builders, Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z

A phrase very popular on social media these days is “Ok Boomer”, an attempt of younger generations to generalize their older counterparts (Meisner, 2020). The same is done the other way around, baby boomers who generalize millennials. But where do these terms boomer and millennials stem from? McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010) have described five generations, the builders, the baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z. McCrindle and Wolfingers (2010) work is seen as an important source to comprise the basis to define the generations for the current study. These five generations will later be placed in the context of other theories regarding the definition of different generations.

The first generation is the builders, born between 1925 and 1945 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). This generation was born in the time of the great Depression and the second World War, often named the greatest generation as they enjoyed the relatively comfortable years after the war (McCrindle, 2009). They built the infrastructure and economy as a response to their time (McCrindle, 2009). Builders value loyalty, commitment and a strong work ethic and are the last generation to live out their adult lives in stereotypical gender roles (McCrindle, 2009). The second generation is the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010; Cook & Whitehead, 2010; ; Shariff, Zhang & Sanderson, 2017). This generation is defined by the surge in births after the second World

War, named the baby boom (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009; Cook & Whitehead, 2010). Within the baby boomers a distinction can be made between younger and older boomers (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Zickuhr, 2011). The older baby boomers are born between 1946 and 1954, the younger baby boomers are born between 1955 and 1964 (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Zickuhr, 2011). However, when looking at the use of the internet little difference is found between these two boomer groups (Miller, 1996; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2007). In the time of the baby boomers the television was invented (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). Baby boomers are seen as the inventors of workaholics, where women juggled work and family. They value individualism and informality, and are seen as the wealthiest living generation (McCrindle, 2009). The third generation is generation X, born between 1965 and 1979 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010; Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). In this time the birth rate began surging again after dropping at the end of the boomers, reaching a peak in the 1970s only to drop again (McCrindle, 2009). They are the first generation to have a computer in the house and at school (McCrindle, 2009; Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). Opposed to the earlier generations, generation X values work-life balance. They are willing to work hard, but family comes first (McCrindle, 2009). The fourth generation is generation Y, more often referred to as millennials, born between 1980 and 1994 (McCrindle, 2009; Cook & Whitehead, 2010). In this age the internet and DVD were invented (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010; Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). The millennials have overtaken baby boomers as the biggest generation in the United States, making them the focus of many news articles and studies (Kurz, Li & Vine, 2018). Millennials value friendship, social awareness and tolerance for diversity (McCrindle, 2009). They focus more on the outcome than the process and are a techno-centric generation that makes frequent use of technology in their social lives (McCrindle, 2009; Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). The last generation is generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010; Lev, 2021). This generation is growing up in a rapidly changing world. The global population has doubled since 1966 and is going through massive ageing (McCrindle, 2009). This means that they will live and work longer (McCrindle, 2009; Lev, 2021). Having been born in the digital age, generation Z has managed to integrate technology into all areas of their life. They are the most digitally saturated and globally connected generation so far (McCrindle, 2009; Lev, 2021).

In short, McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010) argue that there are five generations that can be divided by birthyear. Each generation is characterized by a big event happening in that timeframe (McCrindle, 2009; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). The developments in technology play a big part in these distinctions (McCrindle, 2009).

2.1.2 Print, online and individualized generations

Though the five previously mentioned generations are widely known, they are not the only classification in existence. McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010) already take into account the developments in technology in their classification, but Westlund and Färdigh (2012) expand on that and propose three generations based on their sources of news consumption.

The first generation is the print generation, born between 1920 and 1949 (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012; Francisco, 2014). The majority of this generation consumed their news purely from print such as newspapers (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The use of online media was nonexistent in the 1920 cohort and is responsible for only a small part of the news consumption in the rest of the print generation (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The second generation is the online generation born between 1950 and 1979 (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012; Francisco, 2014). This generation uses mostly online media to access news, showing a sharp decline in print only use (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The third generation is the individualized generation, born between 1980 and 1999 (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012; Francisco, 2014). This generation is characterized by the use of cross-media sources in their news consumption (Hoplamazian, Dimmick, Ramirez & Feaster, 2018; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). They tend to use both online and print media for their news consumption (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The usage of print and online media was greater than the usage of online and mobile media across all generations (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012).

It is important to note that this can be explained by the accessibility of online media as online media has gradually become more present and advanced (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). Westlund and Färdigh (2012) found that the older generations contain more non-users than the younger generations. From 1920 to 1970 the biggest part of the generations did not use print, online or mobile at all, from 1970 to 1990 this started to become more balanced only to increase again from 1990 onwards (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012).

The print, online and individualized generations are comparable to the five generations suggested by McCrindle (2009). The print generation encompasses the builders and the first five years of the baby boomers, indicating that the builders would mostly use print media (McCrindle, 2009; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The online generation encompasses the baby boomers and generation X, which indicates that they will use online media almost exclusively (McCrindle, 2009; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The individualized generations contains millennials and the first four years of generation Z, this would mean that millennials use both print as well as online media (McCrindle, 2009; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012).

To conclude, apart from McCrindle and Wolfingers (2010) five generations, the

generations can also be divided into groups based on news consumption. The older generation who mostly use print paper, the online generation who mainly get their news online and the individualized generation who combine the two media. These three generations correspond quite well with the five generations described by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010).

2.1.3 A digital distinction: digital immigrants and digital natives

When describing different generations, age and birthyear are not the only distinctions that can be made. Oftentimes, how digital media is used and the skills one has are seen as a way to differentiate between different groups. Digital technology is still fairly new and not everyone has equal experience with digital technology. When studying the generations and digital technology a distinction is often made between digital immigrants and digital natives.

Digital natives are those who are born in the digital era, from around 1980 to now, and have been using technology since they were young (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Prensky, 2001). Younger people often get their news firstly via social media as they are accidentally informed by their twitter feed, when they want more information they will turn to news websites (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016; Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001). The younger generations often find that news does not cover the events they find relevant to their lives and therefore are less interested in consuming news (Inthorn, Street & Scott, 2013; Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). They are, however, able to distinguish between news they find relevant and that which they do not, aware that information on the internet is not always factual even though they still prefer online media (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Ripollés, 2012; Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013).

The digital immigrants started using digital technology later in life, born between 1946 and 1979 (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Prensky, 2001). They are slower in adopting digital technology than younger generations and often still read the morning newspaper, though this is decreasing (Bergström, 2020; Wadbring & Bergström, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). Social network sites are not yet widely adopted by the older adults, instead they still avidly watch news broadcasts on television but the online version of television broadcast is starting to gain popularity (Bergström, 2020; Edgerly, 2015). A similar pattern can be found in other digital technologies, such as GPS, smartphones or the internet. However, there are instances that digital immigrants prefer digital technology over traditional technology. Digital immigrants prefer to use an interactive roadmap, such as a car GPS, over a paper version (Salajan, Schönwetter & Cleghorn, 2010; Slomska-Przech & Golebiowska, 2020).

The digital natives and digital immigrants can further be divided. Digital observers are

those who were already middle age when technology started to rise, they are aware of technological devices but do not use them as much as later generations (McCrindle, 2009). Digital transactors grew up without technology, but embrace it (McCrindle, 2009). Digital integrators have lived their entire lives using digital technologies (McCrindle, 2009). This divide in generations by use of digital technologies again fits with the five generations described by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010). The digital observers correspond with the builders, to who technology is foreign (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). The digital immigrants and digital transactors correspond with the baby boomers and generation X, as they did not grow up with technology but do use it (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). The digital natives and digital integrated have grown up with technology and have used it all their lives, corresponding with millennials and generation Z (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010).

To conclude, experience with digital technologies is another way to divide people into generations. Digital natives, those born and raised with digital technologies, and digital immigrant, those who learned to use digital technologies later in their lifetime. Again, these generations correspond with the generations described by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010). The digital natives correspond with millennials and generation Z, whilst the digital immigrants correspond with the baby boomers and generation X (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Brown, 2011; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010).

The rapid development of technology has a significant impact on the way media is consumed (Ahlers, 2006; Meyer, 2009). Due to the rise of the internet, news is increasingly being consumed online, posing a threat to traditional news media such as the newspaper (Ahlers, 2006; Meyer, 2009). The generations as described by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010) most completely show which generations are affected by this. Therefore, the current research will make use of the following generations based on the generations described by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010): the baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z. As the builders do not use technology as frequently they will not be included in this research (McCrindle, 2009).

2.2 News consumption

The second central concept in the current study is news consumption. To be able to compare news consumption between generations, it is important to further investigate what news consumption entails and what influences news consumption.

2.2.1 News sources; analogue and digital

News consumption can be divided into analogue news consumption and digital news consumption (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Prior, 2007). Analogue news consumption can be seen as traditional news consumption, encompassing television, newspapers and radio (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Prior, 2007). Digital news consumption encompasses the news found on the internet (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Prior, 2007). In the past years the media landscape has gone through a few changes (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Prior, 2007). First, the internet has become the primary source for information and entertainment (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). The amount of time spent on the internet has in consequence increased, as online media is used for study, work and entertainment (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). The consumption of online media demands a bigger time commitment than traditional media (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). And because of the wide variety of options, media consumption has become an ‘anywhere, anytime’ offer (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Taneja, Webster, Malthouse & Ksiazek, 2012). The popularity of social network sites has made way for a wide variety of sources to consume news. However this does not mean that there is a bigger diversity in viewpoints (Bermejo, 2009; Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). Lastly, the volume of media consumption available has drastically increased, leading to a more fragmented market (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Tewksbury, 2005).

These changes can also be seen in news consumption. The content available is more fragmented and the consumers are more selective (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Tewksbury, 2005). Overall, there is less news consumption than at the start of the previous century across all platforms, both traditional as well as digital (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). An explanation for this can be that women have joined the workforce, leaving several household duties for other members of the family (Ogan, 2009; Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). This, together with the rise of online media, has taken attention away from traditional media consumption leading the traditional platforms to expand their content to online media. (Boczkowski, 2005; Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). However, these changes do not yet mean that traditional media is becoming extinct, television is still the most popular platform for media consumption. (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013).

In short, as media shifts from traditional to online, news consumption too has become more and more internet focused (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). However, it has been shown that traditional media is yet to be in real danger of ceasing to exist. Traditional

television is still very popular even though there are multiple online options. It is possible that traditional and online media can co-exist.

2.2.2 Online vs traditional media

As traditional media slowly seems to make way for the seemingly endless possibilities of online media, it can be expected that traditional media will become less and less relevant. Online media slowly takes up more and more time in our day to day lives. However this does not need to mean that traditional media will be replaced.

There are two perspectives on whether online media will replace traditional media. The first is the complimentary perspective which states that the use of new media in everyday media habits can complement traditional media use, also called the media saturation hypothesis (Bergström, 2020; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Online media can be used to further investigate what is seen in traditional media and the use of internet does not need to mean a decrease in use of television (Althouse & Tewskbury, 2000; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016; Bergström, 2020).

The second perspective is the replacement perspective, or the displacement hypothesis (Bergström, 2020; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). This perspective argues that the consumers will decrease their use of traditional media, or even completely forsake traditional media in favor of online media (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004; Bergström, 2020). This hypothesis falls in the niche theory, which states that media organizations have to compete for resources (Dimmick, Feaster & Hoplamazion, 2011; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). The internet taking over traditional media is an example of this, the internet could win the fight over resources. A reason for this is that the internet can satisfy gratification opportunities easier (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). These gratification opportunities are the factors that allow gratification needs to be met (Dimmick, 2002; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). The anytime anywhere nature of the internet gives it a competitive edge (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). This is not the first time media has been displaced by a new competitor. When television was new, comic book reading, movie-going and radio-listening decreased (Livingstone, 2009; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016).

It is, however, important to note that the relationship between traditional media and new online media can be seen as fluid (Bergström, 2020; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). One can choose to replace traditional media with new online media in one instance, but choose to use new online media in addition to traditional media in another (Bergström, 2020; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). It has been shown that newspapers are slowly being replaced with their

online counterpart, television however is still very popular and online media is mostly used to compliment television consumption (Bergström, 2020; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016).

To conclude, there are different ways in which traditional and online media interact and it is possible that they can co-exist next to each other. Whether this is the case for all generations is still unclear. This leads to the first hypothesis of the current study.

H1: Baby boomers and generation X are expected to watch television or read the newspaper more often than millennials and generation Z. Millennials and Generation Z are expected to use online sources more often than baby boomers and generation Z.

2.2.3 News consumption in a global view

Media are a global phenomenon, almost every country uses some form of media. This global aspect might be even more prominent in online media, as it allows consumers to reach beyond the borders of their own country. It is possible to watch series, read books or connect with people from all over the world. This globalization has also reached news media.

The global aspect of online media has also changed news consumption as it has introduced a more international character (Heinrich, 2012; Wildholm, 2019). Foreign news has become widely available as news platforms have navigated towards online and social media (Heinrich, 2012; Wildholm, 2019). These social media platforms have allowed for a more personal experience (Thurman, 2011; Wildholm, 2019). The bigger media companies such as Facebook and Google also play a part in this (Nielsen, 2017; Wildholm, 2019). These companies use user consumption patterns to forward users towards a certain news platform (Nielsen, 2017; Wildholm, 2019). However this wide availability of content and personal oriented content has also made it increasingly easier to avoid news content in favor of other types of content, dividing society into news seekers and news avoiders (Aalberg, Blekesaune & Elveberg, 2013; Wildholm, 2019). This could also explain why overall news consumption has decreased (Aalberg, Blekesaune & Elveberg, 2013; Wildholm, 2019).

There are multiple reasons why people would consume international news. First, it gives an understanding of the world around them (Higgins Joyce & Harlow, 2020; Wildholm, 2019). International news provides content with different viewpoints than native news (Higgins Joyce & Harlow, 2020; Wildholm, 2019). A second reason is that people prefer news in their native language (Higgins Joyce & Harlow, 2020; Wildholm, 2019). Those who have immigrated prefer to watch news from sources seen as foreign as it is presented in their mother tongue. Thirdly, having friends or family living abroad also motivates to consume international news (Higgins Joyce & Harlow, 2020; Wildholm, 2019).

The divide between traditional international media and new online international media seems to correspond to that previously discussed. Social media and online newspapers are the most popular platforms for news consumption, followed by analogue television broadcasts and online television (Wildholm, 2019).

To conclude, as the world becomes more globalized, news media has also changed into a more international character. It has become easier to access news from different parts of the world which can help consumers understand the world better, offers news in one's mother tongue and helps consumers stay in touch with loved ones living abroad. The globalization has however also allowed the attention of the consumer to be steered away from news and focus more on other content.

2.2.4 Consumers view of news

The current study aims to discover the motivations of consumers to consume news. As previously discussed, general news consumption is starting to decrease. Consumers focus more and more on other content. To keep people engaged with news, it is important to investigate what consumers see as crucial to good news.

There are several aspects of news that the consumers find important (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). The relevance of news articles is important as it helps to keep up with what is happening in the world (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Yanardağoğlu, 2020). It has also been noted that certain topics are not covered in the news though they are still relevant to some consumers, causing some to avoid news consumption (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). The audience also prefers to be provided with a wide range of general news content instead of person-oriented content (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013).

Objectivity is also of importance, the audience prefers to be presented with neutral facts and different viewpoints (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Yanardağoğlu, 2020). The meaning of objectivity does differ between different groups (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). Those who consume traditional media want a complete picture from several viewpoints including images (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). Those who consume online news do not believe that objectivity exists. They believe that news is always influenced by the opinion and background of the journalist (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Yanardağoğlu, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary that it is explained how news stories are constructed and how these decisions were made (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Yanardağoğlu, 2020).

Thirdly, the accessibility of news is important (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Zerba, 2011). This again differs between those who consume traditional news and those who consume online news (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Zerba, 2011). Traditional news consumers had a more passive stance towards news consumption, to them accessible means being able to acquire it without effort, it must be easily understandable and clear (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). This often stems from habits, such as reading the newspaper at breakfast, or to counter boredom (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). The online news consumers thought of accessibility as having access to a wide variety of content anywhere, anytime (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Zerba, 2011). They had a more active stance, searching for news and keeping up with what they found to be interesting (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). This view on accessibility is strengthened by the rise of mobile devices, as these allow the audiences to consume news anytime and anywhere they want (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013; Zerba, 2011).

These preferences and needs can lead to four categories of motivation as theorized by Lee (2013). First, information-driven motivation stems from need for knowledge about the world around us (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014; Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Second, entertainment-driven motivation pertains the consumption of news to fulfill the need for excitement and laughter (Hmielowsky, Holbert & Lee, 2011; Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). This can be seen in talk-shows which address news events. Opinion-driven motivation pertains the need to seek validation for one's opinion, or help to build one (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). Lastly, socially-driven motivation refers to news consumption to keep up with the conversations of those around us and come across as informed (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014).

News consumption can also be seen as an innate need for surveillance (Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). As humans we want to know what is going on around us to make sense of the world (Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). This can explain why breaking news tends to attract humans attention (Miller, 2006; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Apart from this biological reaction, cultural factors also play a role in what the audience watches (Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Especially proximity is a big factor, the closer the news is the more it attracts attention as this breaking news triggers the need to surveil (Miller, 2006; Wise, Eckler, Kononova & Littau, 2009; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016).

However, news consumption does not always have a clear motivation. News

consumption can also come from incidental exposure (Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Especially with the rise of social media, it is easy to come across news articles as they are displayed on one's social media page. This incidental exposure is still valuable as it has been shown to correlate with knowledge of current events (Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). News exposure often leads to further investigation in online media, especially pertaining bad news (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016).

To conclude, people prefer news that is relevant, objective and accessible. What this means, however, differs between those who prefer traditional news and those who prefer online news. Those who prefer traditional news prefer news that is detailed and easily accessible. Those who prefer online news prefer news that is more general and accessible anytime and anywhere. News consumption is not only motivated by the content, but also by an innate need for surveillance and by accidental exposure. Four motivations for news consumption can be identified, information, entertainment, opinion and social motivation. This lead to the second hypotheses.

H2: Baby boomers and generation X are expected to consume news to find information, as they are expected to use more traditional media. Millennials and generation Z are expected to consume news with entertainment purposes, as they are expected to prefer online media.

2.3 Misinformation in news consumption

News brings information to the consumer. However, this information is not always factual. News can spread misinformation under the public (Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2018). It is important to investigate this risk in new online media.

2.3.1 The risk of online media

Online media allows for anybody to generate content. This makes it a place full of different opinions. As previously mentioned, it offers a wide scale of international content made for and by all citizens of this world. However, the use of online news consumption also brings a risk of misinformation being spread (Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2018).

The current study aims to investigate to what extent baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z are aware of these risks and how this differs between these generations. It has been found that younger generations think that the older generations do not have the cultural and social skills to live in digital spaces, as their digital immigrant status would suggest (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020; Prensky, 2001).

The younger generations are mainly concerned about the excessive and indiscriminate

use of social media of their older counterparts (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020; Siibak & Traks, 2019). The older generations have little knowledge of online etiquette (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020; Siibak & Traks, 2019). The younger generation tends to see the older generation as addicted and at risk of pervasive technologies who target digitally inexperienced people (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020). The older generation is seen as naïve and susceptible to scams and misinformation (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020). Interestingly, this is a reflection of what the older generation often says about the younger generations (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020). It seems that both sides see the other as at risk (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020).

To conclude, the accessible nature of online media brings with it a risk of misinformation. The older generation sees the young as at risk of misinformation as they are more inexperienced in life. However, the young think that the older generation is more at risk as they are less experienced with the internet. The young have grown up using online media whilst the older generation had to learn in a later stage in life. From this follows the third hypothesis.

H3: The baby boomers and generation X are expected to be less aware of the risks of misinformation than millennials and generation Z.

2.3.2 How to combat misinformation

The risk of misinformation is not just a problem in news consumption. In the academic world, misinformation can be a threat as well and has been studied before (Cameron, Wise & Lottridge, 2007; Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015). Whether people can identify misinformation adequately, among other things, has been a topic of study for a few years. But especially how to combat misinformation has been of importance.

Different approaches towards fighting misinformation have been suggested (Clayton et al., 2020; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). First, the development of algorithms that combat misinformation, reducing its spread (Clayton et al., 2020; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Second is using the consumers to correct misinformation, allowing them to comment and change content which they see as misinformation (Bode & Vraga, 2015; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Lastly, media literacy is suggested and lies in the audiences ability to process misinformation (Flynn, Nyhan & Reifler, 2017; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). By educating the consumers on media literacies it is thought that they will be more skilled in combating and processing misinformation (Flynn, Nyhan & Reifler, 2017; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021).

There are various kinds of literacies. First there is media literacy, the ability to access, analyze and produce information for a specific outcome (Aufderheide, 1993; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Secondly, information literacy is a set of skills to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use that information (ACRL, 2000; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). It views information as a tool to use in understanding how to act in the world (Livingstone, Van Couvering & Thumim, 2008; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). News literacy means understanding the role news plays in the world, motivation to seek out this news and the skill to recognize news (Malik, Cortesi & Gasser, 2013; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Lastly, digital literacy focuses on the online, digital and social media environment (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021).

It has been found that information literacy has a significant relationship with the identification of misinformation (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). As information literacy addresses the skill to identify and use information, proficiency in this skill can help distinguish misinformation. It would be expected that media literacy, the understanding of media messages would be of similar significance, however this was not found to be the case (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Both news literacy and media literacy did not have as strong of a relationship with identifying misinformation as information literacy was found to have (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021).

A reason for this could be that media literacy focuses more on traditional media whilst information literacy is focused on digital media (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Because of the similarity in format between real news stories and fake news stories, containing misinformation, purely understanding the media message is not enough to recognize fake news (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). It is important to note that those who believe to have knowledge of a topic are less likely to seek information on that topic (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021; Vraga et al., 2015).

Despite the small relationship between media literacy and the identification of misinformation, media literacy is still a concept often used to combat fake news (Raj & Goswami, 2020). It was found that those who most often spread misinformation, namely older adults, were also the ones with the lowest media literacy (Guess, Nagler & Tucker, 2019; Raj & Goswami, 2020). Even though this relationship is weaker than that of information literacy and identifying misinformation, it can still be a useful tool in combatting the spread of fake news. Interestingly, those spreading the most fake news also were the most avid users of smartphones (Raj & Goswami, 2020). Even though there was awareness of the spread of misinformation, most consumers do believe that it is the responsibility of individuals to assess

whether what they share is real (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

To conclude, information literacy can be used to test the ability to identify and use information. This skill can be trained to combat misinformation. There are other literacies that can play a part, however information literacy is the most focused on online media and has the strongest relationship with the identification of misinformation.

2.4 The current study

Several important points have been made. First, the different generations that will be used have been defined. These are the baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). Though there are many ways to define generations, these categories most accurately fit the current study. Second, there are many motivations as to why people consume news. Four categories can be made, information-driven news consumption, entertainment-driven news consumption, opinion-driven news consumption and socially-driven news consumption (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014; Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). However, news consumption does not always have a clear motivation as incidental exposure can cause people to accidentally come across news (Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Motivation can also differ between those who prefer online media and those who prefer traditional media (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). Lastly, information literacy has been presented as a way to measure the awareness of misinformation and as a strategy to combat misinformation (Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021).

3. Method

To conduct this study a quantitative research method was used. While qualitative research aims to explore, is more interpretative and the goal is to find more meaning and to explain, quantitative research aims to study more objectively and aims to generalize to a greater population (Goertzen, 2017). The current study aims for this objectivity. The current research uses different variables and how these variables behave in the world is of interest. Lastly, the data is numerical. All these aspects are characteristics of quantitative research (Sukamolson, 2007). The standardized approach makes the research replicable in the future (Goertzen, 2017). However, the results do not explain why certain phenomena happen which keeps the research from going in depth, for which a qualitative approach would be more suited (Goertzen, 2017).

3.1 Data collection

The data has been collected through a web-based survey gathered by the researcher. The survey was made using the program Qualtrics. The survey asked questions related to news sources, motivation for these sources and their news consumption, and their awareness of the risks of online news consumption. These subjects are the main interest of this study. The advantages of a survey are the low costs, the low time-demand from the researcher and the safeguarding of anonymity (Sukamolson, 2007). It is important to mention the disadvantages of using a survey. The biggest disadvantage is the chance that it takes a long time before enough data is collected (Sukamolson, 2007). The survey will have to be started well before the data is needed.

3.2 Measurements

The current survey was based on the “Biennial Media Consumption Survey 2008” (BMCS) made by the Pew research center (Carpini & Lee, 2010). The BMCS aims to research news consumption in young people, which is something the current study aims to do as well, making the BMCS a good blue print. A pre-existing survey was chosen as the basis, as this survey has previously been proven as valid and reliable (Carpini & Lee, 2010). The BMCS asks questions about different subjects of news consumption, such as news sources and the use of these sources. This survey also asks a few questions on trustworthiness of online news consumption. These are very relevant topics in the current study as these can give a clearer view on misinformation. These questions by the BMCS offered a coherent beginning of the current survey. The questions in the BMCS regarding language and politics were not

used, as they were not relevant for the current study. Questions regarding news consumption motivation were added. How these questions were formulated will be discussed further below. Why do the participants choose this news source and what do they think of online news? These questions were formulated as statements answered by a five-point Likert scale (see the Appendix). The survey was spread through online snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961). The survey was shared through the social media network of the researcher, allowing others to share the survey for a bigger reach. A limitation of this way of collecting is that the personal network of the researcher is not very big and depends on acquaintances to help. Allowing others to share not only expands the reach of the survey, but will also lead to the inclusion of those not acquainted with the researcher.

3.2.1 Respondents

The respondents each answered the questions independently from one another. Afterward they were divided by date of birth. The four groups used were baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). The groups were based on the division created by McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010). The builders were not included in the current research. This because they use significantly less online sources compared to the other generations (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The survey was sent in the timespan of a few weeks, as it was important that COVID-19 was still relevant in the news. This is also why pre-existing data could not be used. Data before the pandemic was not relevant for the current study as the focus lies on COVID-19 news. As more and more people become vaccinated, news to far into the future may be less focused on the pandemic.

This division of generations should be equal to that in the total population, however it is also important that the groups are comparable and of equal size (Fink, 2003). To maximize generalizability this study aimed to survey 200 Dutch participants, seeing the size of the total population.

3.2.2 News sources

To investigate the news sources used by the respondents, questions of the BMCS were slightly adapted and translated into Dutch. Five sources were included. A physical newspaper, specified to *het AD*, *NRC*, *de Volkskrant*, *Trouw*, *de Telegraaf* or other. These are five big and national newspapers based upon the Mediamonitor website. News sites, specified to NOS.nl, nu.nl, AD.nl, volkskrant.nl or other. General television news broadcast, watched live on a television. General online television, watched on an online device such as a tablet. And lastly social media sites, specified to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and other. The

questions investigated the amount of time spent on each of the sources in the last two weeks and how many times the participants used that source. These questions pertained multiple choice answers to make the results numerical. The participants were also asked which device they use for online media and which source they use most often.

3.2.3 Motivation

There are several motivations for news consumption. The first is information-driven news consumption, to understand what is going on in the world (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). The second motivation is entertainment-driven news consumption, to fulfill the need for humor (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). Opinion-motivated news consumption is the third motivation, this means that individuals use the news to form opinion (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014). The last motivation is social-motivated news consumption, consuming news to keep up with what the people around us are talking about (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014).

The current study based the motivation questions on the index proposed by Lee (2013). For each type of motivation several statements were made which were answered by a five point Likert-scale. For example, a statement for information-motivated news consumption was “I consume news to find out what is going on in the world”. The participant could answer with completely disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree and completely agree. The questions were largely adapted to fit the COVID-19 pandemic as that is the focus of the current study.

To test the reliability of the scale a Cronbach’s Alpha test of reliability was conducted for each scale separately as well as all scales together. The information scale has good reliability, Cronbach’s alpha = .897. The entertainment scale has moderately low reliability, Cronbach’s alpha = .601. However, the entertainment scale was still used as the entertainment motivation is expected to be a big part of the differences between the generations. The opinion scale has good reliability, Cronbach’s alpha = .834. The social scale also has good reliability, Cronbach’s alpha = .786. Overall, the total motivation scale has good reliability, Cronbach’s alpha = .860.

3.2.4 Awareness of online news consumption risks

The awareness of risks of consuming online news was measured using “information literacy” (ACRL, 2000; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). Information literacy can be measured using the Information Literacy Test, which has been proven to be valid (Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015). There are five standards of information literacy. Determining the nature and extent of information needed, accessing needed information

effectively and efficiently, the critical evaluation of sources and information, effectively using information for a specific purpose and the understanding of economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information, and the legal and ethical use of this information (Cameron, Wise & Lottridge, 2007; Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015). The fourth standard is often omitted as it is better measured by performance (Cameron, Wise & Lottridge, 2007; Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015).

As discussed previously, the current study based the information literacy questions on the survey developed by Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo and Bartol (2015) and a survey developed by Beutelspacher (2014). These questionnaires focus on university students and academic literature. Therefore, the surveys were adapted towards news consumption (Beutelspacher, 2014; Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015). Not all questions were used as these surveys are very extensive and not all questions were relevant for the current study. An example is the question “In which list have the information sources been correctly ordered from the least to the most formally established and verified?”, this question has been adapted to “Rank the following news sources from least to most trustworthy”. The questions were mostly multiple choice questions and, unlike the original surveys, did not always contain a right answer. The decision was made to not include the fourth standard as this is difficult to measure through surveys (Cameron, Wise & Lottridge, 2007; Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2015).

3.3 Sample

The sample consisted of 177 respondents with an average birthyear of 1977 ($SD = 17.04$). The sample consisted of 137 females with an average birthyear of 1977 ($SD = 16.84$) and 38 males with an average birthyear of 1977 ($SD = 18.32$) as well. Majority of the sample had either finished higher education or university. Almost all participants were Dutch and all participants were able to understand Dutch as the questionnaire was not available in any other language.

As seen in Table 1, the baby boomers consisted of 56 respondents with an average birthyear of 1957 ($SD = 5.28$). The baby boomers contained 43 females and 13 males. Generation X consisted of 40 respondents, 33 females and 7 males, with an average birthyear of 1971 ($SD = 3.97$). Millennials consisted of 28 respondents of which 22 females and 6 males, with an average birthyear of 1988 ($SD = 4.80$). Lastly, generation Z consisted of 51 respondents, 39 females and 12 males, with an average birthyear of 1997 ($SD = 1.91$).

Table 1.*Descriptive statistics*

	<i>N</i>	Mean age	<i>SD</i> birthyear
Baby boomers	56	1957	5.28
Generation X	40	1971	3.97
Millennials	28	1988	4.80
Generation Z	51	1997	1.91

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the data the program SPSS was used. The independent variable was the generational groups, the dependent variables were news sources, motivation and information literacy. The reliability and validity were calculated using SPSS. When the results are consistent in several measurements, it is shown that the correct measuring instrument has been used (Heale & Twycross, 2015). To be able to reject the null-hypotheses, and confirm the alternative hypotheses, the results needed to reach a significance of $p < 0.05$. This was determined by taking into account type I and type II errors. Type II errors, accepting a false null-hypotheses, will be less likely with a significance of $p < .05$ (Labovitz, 1968). However, there is a higher chance of type I errors, accepting a false alternative hypotheses (Labovitz, 1968). The size of the sample was therefore also taken into account to determine the significance level. The sample of the current study is relatively small, so large differences may not reach the significance level. A significance of $p < 0.05$ was used to combat this (Labovitz, 1968).

To test the hypothesis regarding news sources several Chi-square tests of independence were conducted as both variables are categorical. The questions regarding the use of a news source were recoded into yes or no categories, those who do use that source and those that do not. A Chi-Square test of independence was also used to investigate the amount of time spent consuming news and the preferred device to consume online news.

To analyze the motivation scale, the questions were divided into information,

entertainment, opinion and social. For each category a mean was calculated with which a One-Way ANOVA was conducted. A Tukey post hoc test was used to determine the direction of the differences found. Lastly an overall mean of motivation was computed and used in a One-Way ANOVA to investigate the overall difference between the generations regarding motivation.

To analyze information literacy, Chi-Square tests of independence were conducted on each information literacy question as these are categorical variables. As the questions have different natures and response types, they were investigated separately.

4. Results

In the following chapter the results will be presented, in the chapter further below, chapter five, these results will further be discussed and interpreted.

To analyze the data several steps will be made to prepare the sample for the statistical analyses. First the respondents will be grouped into their respective generations. A new variable will be computed dividing the respondents into those born between 1946 and 1964, between 1965 and 1979, between 1980 and 1994 and between 1995 and 2010. The analysis will be divided into the three sections of the research question, the news sources, motivation and information literacy. Several statistical analyses were performed to test the hypotheses, in the following chapter the most important results will be discussed.

4.1 News sources

Several Chi Square tests of independence were performed to examine the relationship between generations and news sources. First the test was performed to examine the relationship between the generations and reading a physical newspaper. As seen in Table 2, the relationship between these variables was found to be significant, $X^2(3, N = 158) = 9.92, p = .019$. The baby boomers and generation X were more likely to read the newspaper than millennials and generation Z.

Second a Chi Square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the generations and the usage of a news site. This relationship was found to be insignificant, $X^2(3, N = 160) = 4.95, p = .176$. No generation was more likely to use a news site than another.

A Chi Square test of independence was also used to examine the relationship between the generations and the frequency in which the news is watched on the television. This relationship was found to be significant, $X^2(12, N = 158) = 34.55, p = .001$. The baby boomers and generation X were more likely to watch the news on the television multiple times a week.

A Chi Square test of independence was again performed to examine the relationship between the generations and the consumption of news via social media. The relationship was not found to be significant, $X^2(3, N = 157) = 1.63, p = .652$. There was no significant difference between the generations regarding the use of social media to consume news. The biggest part of all generations used social media to consume news.

The first hypothesis suggested that baby boomers and generation X use traditional media, such as newspapers and television, more often than millennials and generation Z. This was based upon the finding that online media is becoming more and more accepted but has

not yet replaced traditional media (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). The data supports this hypothesis. Baby boomers and generation X use traditional media to consume news more often than millennials and generation Z.

To examine the relationship between the generations and their preferred news source, a Chi Square test of independence was again performed. This relationship was found to be significant, $X^2(15, N = 160) = 38.27, p = .001$. The baby boomers and generation X largely chose watching news on television, whilst millennials and generation Z opted for news sites. As shown in Table 3, baby boomers were more divided between newspapers, news sites and television than the other three generations. Generation X, millennials and generation Z hardly chose newspaper as their preferred source. These results again support the first hypotheses as baby boomers and generation X preferred more traditional media, millennials and generation Z chose online media as their preferred source.

To examine the relationship between the generations and the amount of time spent consuming news a Chi Square of independence was again performed. The relationship between these variables was found to be significant, $X^2(9, N = 160) = 19.07, p = .025$. As seen in Figure 1, baby boomers and generation X were more likely to spend more than sixty minutes consuming news in two weeks than millennials and generation Z.

To examine the relationship between baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z and the device used to access online news again several Chi-Square tests of independence were computed. First, the relationship between the generations and the device used to access news sites was examined. A significant relationship was found between these variables, $X^2(12, N = 160) = 40.90, p < .001$. Millennials and generation Z almost all chose for a smartphone as the device used to access news sites. Baby boomers and generation X more often chose a tablet or a laptop, although the smartphone was most chosen.

A Chi-Square test of independence was also used to examine the relationship between generation and the device used to watch online television. No significant relationship was found between these variables, $X^2(12, N = 158) = 17.89, p = .119$. Most respondents answered that they do not watch news on online television.

Lastly, a Chi-Square test of independence was also conducted to examine the relationship between the generations and the device used to access news on social media. A significant relationship was found, $X^2(9, N = 154) = 50.03, p < .001$. Generation X, millennials and generation Z mostly chose a smartphone as their preferred device, baby boomers were divided over smartphones, tablets and laptops or computers. Overall, as seen in Figure 2, the smartphone was the most chosen out of all the devices.

Table 2.*Chi-square test of independence Generation*News source*

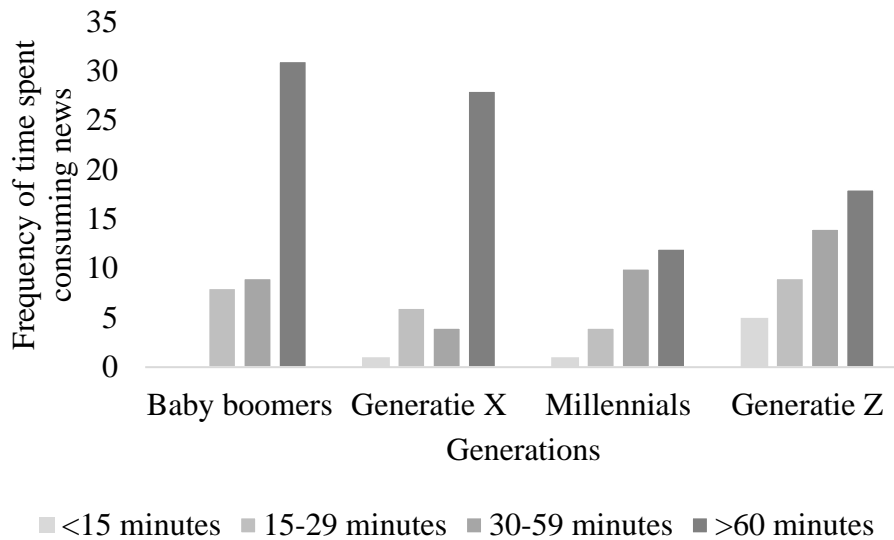
	N	X^2	p
News paper	158	9.92	.019
News site	160	4.95	.176
Television	158	34.55	.001
Social media	157	1.63	.652

Table 3.*Crosstabulation generation*preferred news source*

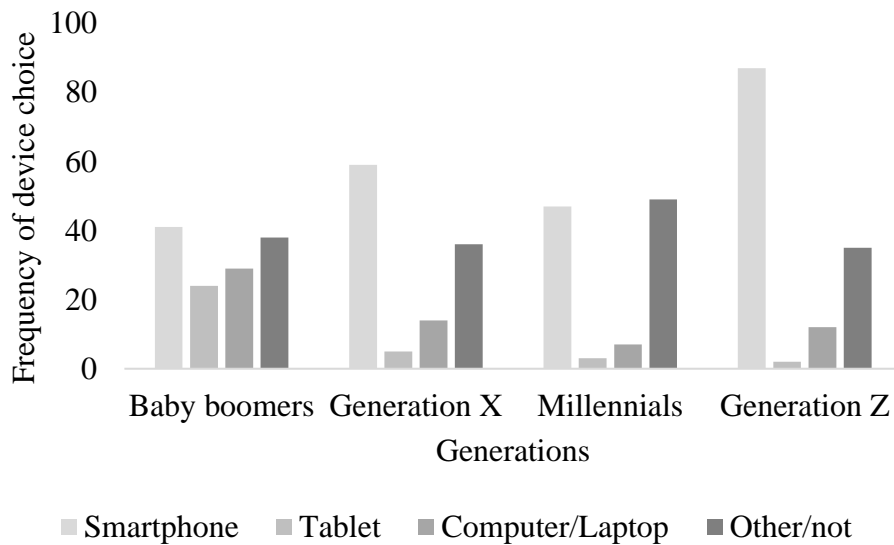
	News paper	News site	Television	Online television	Social media
Baby boomers	14	13	16	1	2
Gen X	5	12	13	0	4
Millennials	0	15	4	2	3
Gen Z	5	21	7	0	11

Figure 1.

*Histogram generation*time spent consuming news is 2 weeks*

**Figure 2.**

Frequency of device choice for news sites, online television and social media



4.2 Motivation

Motivation was categorized into four drives, information, entertainment, opinion and social (Lee, 2013; Lee & Chyi, 2014; Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). To test whether there is a significant difference in the motivation for news consumption between the different generations several variables were computed. The answers to the motivation

questions were divided into the four motivation categories, information, entertainment, opinion and social. For each category a mean was calculated. In the following paragraph the results for each drive will be discussed.

A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare the information motivation between the four generations. There was no significant difference between the groups ($F(3, 147) = .24, p = .869$). The generations were not significantly differently motivated by information. When investigating further by examining the frequencies, it showed that most average information motivation scores were above three, or in the agree range.

To compare the entertainment motivation between the four generations a One-Way ANOVA was again conducted. There was a significant difference between the groups ($F(3, 147) = 4.92, p = .003$). A Tukey post hoc test revealed that the amount of entertainment motivation was significantly lower in the baby boomer group ($2.16 \pm .51, p = .004$) compared to the generation Z group ($2.66 \pm .82, p = .004$). The other groups however, did not compute a significant difference.

A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinion motivation between the four generations. No significant difference was found ($F(3, 147) = .97, p = .411$). No generation was significantly more motivated by opinion than another. Again the frequencies were studied to examine the results more closely. Most of the averages lay around the middle mark, some slightly agree.

A One-Way ANOVA was also conducted to compare the social motivation between the four groups. A significant difference was found ($F(3, 147) = 4.22, p = .007$). A Tukey post hoc test revealed that social motivation was significantly lower in the baby boomer ($2.29 \pm .61, p = .042$), generation X ($2.26 \pm .71, p = .037$) and millennial ($2.14 \pm .76, p = .013$) groups compared to the generation Z group ($2.71 \pm .88$).

Lastly a total motivation mean was computed. A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare motivation between baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z. no significant difference was found ($F(3,147) = 2.24, p = .087$). Overall, the generations do not seem to differ significantly in their overall motivation to consume news.

These findings partially support the second hypothesis, which stated that baby boomers and generation X are more motivated by information and millennials and generation Z are more motivated by entertainment. This was expected because millennials and generation Z were expected to use online media more, which makes it easier to avoid news or to be exposed accidentally, allowing them to only investigate news when they think it is entertaining (Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Baby

boomers and generation X did not seem to be more motivated by information than millennials and generation Z. Though generation Z was more motivated by entertainment than the baby boomers, millennials were not.

4.3 Information Literacy

Information literacy pertains the skills to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use that information (ACRL, 2000; Jones-Jang, Mortenson & Liu, 2021). To examine the relationship between the generations and information literacy, Chi-Square tests of independence were performed on all questions regarding the information literacy scale. Only one significant result was found. The relationship between generations and where they look for the newest information on corona policy was found to be significant, $X^2(9, N = 140) = 29.72, p < .001$. Millennials and generation Z overwhelmingly chose to look on a news site, whilst baby boomers and generation X also opted for newspapers, television and social media. This question was part of the second standard, the ability to access information effectively and efficiently.

These results do not support the third hypotheses, which stated that baby boomers and generation X are less aware of the risks of misinformation than millennials and generation Z. The hypotheses stemmed from the notion that baby boomers and generation X are less aware of online etiquette as they did not grow up using the internet (Piccioni, Scarcelli & Stella, 2020; Siibak & Traks, 2019). Apart from one question, none of the questions or scales produced a significant difference in information literacy between the four generations. Millennials and generation Z are not more aware of the risks of misinformation online than baby boomers and generation X.

5. Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the difference in news consumption between baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z. These generations were defined conform the descriptions of McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010). The aspects of news consumption examined were news sources, motivation and information literacy. The results indicate that there is a difference between the generations regarding the use of news sources and motivation. No difference was found for information literacy.

5.1 News sources

When investigating the difference in news sources a few interesting findings were made. First, the use of a physical newspaper differed significantly between baby boomers and generation X, and millennials and generation Z. The baby boomers and generation X read the newspaper more often than millennials and generation Z. This is in line with previous literature which states that digital immigrants, baby boomers and generation X, did not grow up with digital media and therefore still prefer physical newspapers over the digital kind (Bergström, 2020; Wadbring & Bergström, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). The same was found regarding television as a news source. Baby boomers and generation X were found to still watch news on the television whilst millennials and generation Z rarely chose television as their preference.

When looking at news sites however, there was no significant difference. All generations had a preference for news sites as source. This is not in line with the hypothesis, which states that baby boomers and generation X prefer traditional sources whilst millennials and generation Z prefer online media. It seems that all generations avidly use online media. A similar outcome was found for the use of social media as a news source. All generations used this, but a lot less frequently than news sites.

Interestingly, when the participants were asked to choose only one source as their preferred news source, a significant difference was found. Baby boomers and generation X often opted for news on television whilst millennials and generation Z often opted for news sites as their preferred news source. This is again in line with previous research that states that the older generations still prefer traditional media (Bergström, 2020; Wadbring & Bergström, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019).

Overall it seems that baby boomers and generation X use a more mixed media approach, whilst millennials and generation Z almost exclusively use online media. This is the opposite of what previous research has speculated. Baby boomers and generation X are in line with the online generation which only uses online sources (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012).

Millennials and generation Z are in line with the individualized generation characterized by the mixed use of traditional and digital media (Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). The current study suggest that it is the other way around.

Reasons why the baby boomers and generation X still prefer more traditional media can be that the older generations are slower in adopting digital technologies (Bergström, 2020; Wadbring & Bergström, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). Sites such as Facebook and Instagram are not yet completely accepted and reading the paper at breakfast can be a habit for baby boomers and generation X who grew up when this was still a very standard thing to do (Bergström, 2020; Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013).

When taking the news sources together, it was found that baby boomers and generation X largely prefer television whilst millennials and generation Z prefer news sites. This supports the notion that news on the television still remains relevant and that the older generations have not yet completely accepted social media (Bergström, 2020; Wadbring & Bergström, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019).

As previous research has stated that news consumption has lessened in the last years, the amount of time spent consuming news was investigated (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013; Westlund & Färdigh, 2012). Baby boomers and generation X were likely to spend more than sixty minutes over two weeks consuming news. Millennials and generation Z however, consumed news for not even an hour in two weeks. This indicates that the younger generations do not consume news as much as the older generations. If this pattern were to continue, news consumption can become even less frequent in the future than it is now.

The last important finding regarding the use of news sources was that of the device used. For both news sites as well as social media, millennials and generation Z mostly chose smartphones as their preferred device. Baby boomers and generation X often opted for a tablet or a laptop.

A reason for this can lie within the importance of accessibility (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). As baby boomers and generation X still consume news via traditional media, accessibility for them means being easily obtainable and clear. A laptop or tablet offers a bigger format than a smartphone, which might be clearer and easier to obtain than the compressed format of a phone. Millennials and generation Z see accessible as a variety of content anywhere anytime (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). The portability and constant internet access of a smartphone offers just that.

Another reason can be the digital immigrants and digital natives divide, which is made between those who learned to use technology later in life and those who grew up with it

(Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Prensky, 2001). Though smartphones have been around for a few decades now, baby boomers and generation X did not start using them until later in life. This can mean that the use of a smartphone is not yet as much a habit as using a computer is, which came earlier. Previous research has shown that consuming news can be a habit to these older generations (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013).

When it comes to the millennials and generation Z, the use of a smartphone started at a young age and using one is a skill they often have since childhood. This can make it easier and more habitual to use a smartphone opposed to a tablet or laptop. This can tie into the result that millennials and generation Z consume less news than their older counterparts.

The use of a smartphone and social media can cause accidental exposure (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016; Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001). The headlines come up on their feeds, but to get the full story they need to either click through to the article or look it up themselves. It can be speculated that millennials and generation Z might find this too much work and see the headlines as information enough. Baby boomers and generation X need to actively look for news on the laptop or computer, which is not only more time consuming but also offers a more complete and longer article.

Overall, it can be said that baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z do differ in their use of news sources. Baby boomers and generation X still use the more traditional media whilst millennials and generation Z stick to online media. When consuming online news, the baby boomers and generation X groups tend to spread out over smartphones, tablets and laptops or computers whilst millennials and generation Z stick to just a smartphone. Lastly, Baby boomers and generation X spend more time consuming news than millennials and generation Z.

5.2 Motivation

The current study hypothesized that baby boomers and generation X are more motivated to consume news by the need to seek information. Millennials and generation Z were expected to be more motivated by entertainment. Four categories of news consumption motivation were examined; information motivation, entertainment motivation, opinion motivation and social motivation.

In contrast with the hypothesis, there was no difference between the four generations regarding their information motivation. Baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z were almost equally motivated by the need to seek information. This can be explained by the idea that the need for surveillance, to know what is going on around us, is

biologically imprinted in humans (Shoemaker, 1996; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). If all humans possess this instinct, this motivation will not be limited to baby boomers and generation X alone. Another reason can be the fact that this study is focused on news in times of COVID-19. As the prospects and measures change often, it can motivate people to keep up with news more often to make sure they have the most up to date information possible. Especially since mental health issues have grown because of the pandemic, people can turn to the news to find out whether there is an end in sight (Hossain, Tasnim, Sultana, Ahmed & Ma, 2020). Overall, information did seem to be a strong motivator for news consumption.

When examining the entertainment motivation, a significant difference was found. This difference was mostly apparent between the baby boomers and generation Z, the oldest and the youngest generations. Generation Z was significantly more likely to consume news motivated by entertainment. This partially supports the hypothesis, as this difference was not found regarding generation X and millennials. There are several explanations possible for this result.

Firstly, as mentioned before the younger generations tend to get their news from social media first (Tewksbury, Weaver & Maddex, 2001; Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016). Social media offers both a wide variety of news content as well as content steered towards the individuals tastes and preferences. This can cause more entertainment based news content to be shown more prominently, for instance news about movies, music or the individuals favorite actors or news offered by their favorite talk show.

Baby boomers and generation X more actively search news on the internet via laptop and are more likely to make use of traditional media such as newspapers and television. Especially the latter options have a limited area in their timeslot or paper to present news and therefore need to clearly present informative news. They have limited time for entertainment related news. Especially television, which was one of the most popular news platforms for baby boomers and generation X, has a clear divide between entertainment and news. Most shows on television aim to entertain or are specially designed to talk about news of the entertainment industry, news programs can therefore focus more on more information based content.

Another explanation can be that social media sites, used by the younger generations, allow consumers to easily ignore news content in favor of other types of content (Wildholm, 2019). This can mean that generation Z and millennials have a more entertainment focus and avoid news seen as more boring. Objectivity can play a part in this, as those who prefer online news often see objectivity as almost impossible. The opinion of the writer will always seep

through (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). This view can make millennials and generation Z more skeptical towards news and view it as a source of entertainment instead of clear information.

The stark difference between baby boomers and generation Z can be explained by the fact that they are the two extremities of the generations, they have the biggest age gap. Whilst millennials spent a little part of their life at the beginning of technology, generation Z have experienced technology since they were born making them the most integrated with technology. Baby boomers have very clear memories of life before the big rise of technology and possibly the strongest habits regarding traditional media.

Regarding the development of an opinion as motivation to consume news, no significant difference was found. None of the four generations was more likely to be motivated by opinion than another. Mostly, opinion was not a strong motivator for any of the generations, which could explain why there was no significant difference. It may be that the generations do not think of news forming their opinion as they associate good news with objectivity (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013).

Social motivation did compute a significant difference. Interestingly, generation Z was the outlier in this effect. They significantly differed from baby boomers, generation X and millennials. The social motivation of generation Z was higher than all the other generations, meaning that they more often consume news to be able to engage in conversation with others.

A reason can be the avid use of social media by the younger generation. As they use their smartphone to access news, it is very simple to than share that news with friends and followers. It can also be more likely that news popular on the internet is known to their friends and peers, heightening the pressure to stay updated on the latest developments. The everywhere anytime nature of smartphones also allows users to immediately search for news mentioned in a conversation. In this way news can be used to further engage in a conversation. Interestingly, the social motivation was not as prominent in millennials as in generation Z. It would be expected that these factors would also be applicable to millennials as they too prefer the use of a smartphone.

Interestingly, motivation as a whole did not significantly differ between the four generations. Baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z seem quite like-minded in their motivation for news consumption. This might be because gaining information was a strong motivator. As previously mentioned, seeking information is a biological need all generations have (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016; Shoemaker, 1996). News triggers the need to surveille for threats, this does not apply to only one group of people (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson,

2016; Shoemaker, 1996).

Cultural factors can also influence the way news is consumed, particularly which stories the audience attends to (Tandoc Jr. & Johnson, 2016; Shoemaker, 1996). As all participants were Dutch-speaking and mostly of Dutch nationality, these cultural factors are much the same for all participants. These innate and cultural influences can explain why there was no overall significant effect regarding motivation for news consumption.

Another interesting finding is that the significant results often pertained generation Z as one of the groups that differed from the others. This indicates that the youngest generation might have a different relationship with news than the older three generations, seeing news as an entertaining social platform.

Overall, the results regarding news consumption motivation indicate that there are some small differences between the generations, but the hypothesis cannot be fully accepted. Generation Z did differ from the other three generations and was more motivated by entertainment and social factors. However, millennials did not significantly differ from the other generations in the same manner, which they were expected to do. For all generations, information was a big motivator.

5.3 Information literacy

Information literacy yielded the smallest results. Only one question pertaining information literacy gave a significant result, the question regarding which news source they choose to find the newest information. Millennials and generation Z chose news sites, baby boomers and generation X chose newspapers and television. This is in line with the results pertaining news sources discussed previously. As millennials and generation Z prefer news sites for their news consumption and baby boomers and generation X prefer television, it is not strange that they turn to these sources when looking for the newest information about COVID-19. As this can explain the one significant result found pertaining information literacy, it can be said that the four generations do not differ in their information literacy. The hypothesis that baby boomers and generation X are less aware of the risks of misinformation than millennials and generation Z is therefore rejected. The amount of awareness seems to be equal for all four generations.

There are several reasons why the amount of awareness of misinformation does not significantly differ between the generations. First, objectivity is important for all generations (Van Cauwenberge, d'Haenens & Beentjes, 2013). This indicates that both the older and the younger know to judge articles to see whether the information given is objective and relevant.

Second, it has been shown that younger generations are aware that traditional media is often more credible and factual and older generations are hesitant to accept online and social media (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Bergström, 2020). This can indicate that all four generations have an awareness of the risks of misinformation on the internet. Furthermore, the risks of the internet gain more attention as it becomes more and more difficult to avoid. Especially during this pandemic, awareness has been raised about misinformation and scamming on the internet.

Lastly, it is important to mention that the scales used to measure information literacy were adapted from a student oriented questionnaire. The adaptation towards media focus might have weakened the scale. The answers presented might not have covered all the possibilities completely.

Overall, information literacy did not differ between baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z. All generations seem to be equally aware of the risks of misinformation on the internet. As both the younger and older generations found the other more at risk, it seems to be that neither side is right or wrong.

6. Conclusion

The current study aimed to answer the question: How does news consumption, news motivation and the awareness of the risks of digital news consumption differ between generations? Based upon the results of the current research, it can be concluded that baby boomers, generation X, millennials and generation Z differ in news consumption and news motivation but not in information literacy.

Baby boomers and generation X prefer more traditional, analogue media. Mostly television was a popular choice of source. When using online sources they use a tablet or computer to access the news. The younger generations, millennials and generation Z, preferred online sources such as news websites. They have a strong preference for the use of a smartphone to access news. Support for the decline of news consumption has been found, as the younger generations spend less time consuming news than the older generations.

Regarding motivation, generation Z is more entertainment and socially driven. All generations seem to be motivated by the need to seek information. Lastly, no difference was found pertaining information literacy. The four generations seem to be equally as aware of the risks of misinformation. During this time of crisis, this awareness is very important.

Interestingly, a clear divide between the older generations, baby boomers and generation X, and the younger generations, millennials and generation Z, was expected. This was not always the case, generation X was often an outlier, but millennials did not always differ from generation X and baby boomers.

6.1 Limitations and future research

Though the current study has yielded some interesting results, it is important to mention the limitations to the study. A limitation of the current study is that the results cannot be explained nor interpreted further in depth. Future research could use a more qualitative approach to explain the current findings and observations more in depth.

Another limitation lies within the questionnaire. The reliability of the entertainment-motivation scale had moderately low reliability. The scale for news sources, though pretty straight forward, has different response options per item and the reliability can therefore be difficult to calculate. The same applies to the information literacy scale. Though this scale is based on previous questionnaires of which the reliability has been proven, the items have been adapted and might have lost their strength in the translation. This could be because of the limited research in information literacy regarding news consumption. Most existing research lay their focus on information literacy in an education setting.

Future research could examine the current questionnaire more in depth. It would especially be interesting to investigate the information literacy scale. As most of the current information literacy tests focus on an educational setting, it could be useful to construct a test which focuses on the online environment.

The third limitation lies within the sample. As the current study aims to compare different groups, it is important that these groups are close to equally represented. Though this was the case for baby boomers, generation X and generation Z, the millennial group contained less participants. This might influence the average scores and therefore skew the comparison. This could also be an explanation for why millennials and generation Z were not always paired as was expected.

Future research could use different classifications of generations, such as the digital immigrants and digital natives (Amaral & Silveira, 2018; Prensky, 2001). As the current study focuses on four generations, expanding this to six could also be interesting. The builders were not taken into account as they often stay away from digital technology, however it might be interesting to include them. Generation Z is also not the youngest generation anymore, generation Alpha has claimed that title. As this newest generation becomes older they also start to partake in news consumption and online media. Including the builders and generation Alpha could not only give a more complete view, it could also investigate whether the pattern set by generation Z continues into the newest generation.

Furthermore, though the generations are easily divided, you cannot completely separate them. Each generation raises the next and it would be interesting to further investigate the influence the generations have on each other regarding news consumption. Does the generation of the parents moderate or mediate the relationship between the child and their news consumption? This would be especially interesting as not all millennials have the same generation for parents. The same applies to generation X or generation Alpha. Not only could this offer an explanation towards the difference between these generations, but it can also indicate why no difference was found between these generations pertaining information literacy. Will those that are aware of the risks of misinformation raise their children to be aware?

The last limitation pertains the sampling of the current study. A snowball sampling strategy was intended and used, starting at the personal network of the researcher and allowing the questionnaire to be shared through said network. However, the nature of the research asked for a big sample for which the personal network was not sufficient. To resolve this, the questionnaire was shared through different public groups on Facebook, allowing for

those outside of the personal network to participate in the research. For future research it would be best to start with this as it saves time and therefore allows for a bigger sample to be collected. This would be especially beneficial as not everybody completes the entire survey.

6.2 Implications

The current study has both theoretical implications as well as practical implications. The first of three theoretical implications pertains the quantitative support for several claims of previous research. It offers support for the notion that older generations still prefer more traditional media to consume news and younger generations prefer online media. But it has also shown that baby boomers and generation X also make use of online news sites, indicating that they use a more mixed media approach. This offers support for the theory that online media will not replace traditional media, but rather that the two media types can exist together and complement each other.

Another theoretical implication of this research is the addition to the limited knowledge about misinformation in a news media setting. Not only has the current study shown that information literacy might not be effected by generation, the need for a sufficient scale to measure this concept has also become apparent. Furthermore, the current research and the results have raised questions pertaining this subject of news consumption that can further be studied to expand the field of news consumption research.

The practical implications of this study are fourfold. First, the current pandemic climate has shown that clear and correct information is very important. To be able to make sure people of all generations are up to date about the newest developments, it is important to know where to present this information. The current study has shown that mostly news sites are preferred, but news on the television is also still very much consumed. News broadcasters and governmental institutions can make sure that the right information is first presented via these sources and make sure that these channels have the correct information. This way the public will quickly and clearly be notified about the measurements and new knowledge about the corona virus.

In addition, it has been shown that younger people do not consume news as much as the older generations. When they do consume news it is often via a smartphone. This knowledge can help build a strategy to inform younger generations about developments and measures pertaining COVID-19. Making information more accessible on a smartphone, and using different channels to do so, can help raise awareness of the pandemic under younger people.

The current study has also shown that generation Z is influenced by the entertainment and social value of news. These are motivators for them to consume news. This knowledge can help newsmakers and governmental institutions to develop strategies to reach the younger public. Offering news in an entertaining engaging way, adding a social element, can help news channels and governmental institutions to reach the younger audience. This can help to reduce the amount of youngsters that don't take the measurements and policies as serious.

Lastly, the implications regarding the need for correct information, the decline of news consumption under younger generations and the motivation of news consumption of generation Z do not only apply to the current state of pandemic. The news industry as a whole could greatly benefit from these results. Knowing which sources are preferred by different generations can help news media to steer content towards their target audience. As news sites were popular under all generations, starting a website can be beneficial for more traditional news channels. It has also been shown that news on television is still very popular, which shows news broadcasters that they are not yet being replaced.

Knowing the motivations of the consumers is also very important. As information was a big motivator, news channels can make sure that their articles are clear when relaying information. Informative articles can be more prominently displayed on their sites or get more air time on television.

The results also indicate that generation Z is attracted by entertainment, news media can cover more entertaining news and present their content in a more entertaining way to attract the younger generation. For the same reason, it might be beneficial to add a social element to their channels.

Overall, the current research can be used to clarify and add to existing research and theories. It offers support to previous claims but also questions some of the previous studies. Practically, the result can be used to transform the news media landscape to attract more audiences. As news consumption lessens, attracting the younger generations is important and the current study offers insight into ways to complete this.

6.3 Conclusion

To conclude, there is a difference between generations pertaining news sources and news motivation. There is no difference between generations regarding the awareness of misinformation. Although not without limitations, this study has offered contributions to the field of news media research. It has shown support for various theories and offers a different perspective on others. The need for more research on information literacy in news media has

been demonstrated. The results can be used to help news media to lessen the decline of news consumption and steer their content towards their target audience. It also can be used by governmental institutions to make sure that as much information about COVID-19 and the measurements gets correctly relayed to the public. Especially in times of crisis, this is important information that can help combat misinformation in news media.

7. References

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Appendix

Questionnaire: Nieuws consumptie tijdens COVID-19

De volgende vragenlijst betreft de nieuws consumptie tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie. De vragen betreffen het gebruik van nieuwsbronnen, motivatie voor nieuws consumptie en de omgang met online nieuws. Dit onderzoek wordt gedaan vanuit de master Media & Creative Industries aan de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. De verzamelde gegevens worden anoniem en vertrouwelijk behandeld en worden gebruikt voor het huidige onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10-15 minuten.

Deelname aan de vragenlijst is volledig vrijwillig, u kunt te allen tijden uw deelname stoppen door de vragenlijst af te sluiten. Dit heeft geen verdere consequenties. U heeft ook het recht om het beantwoorden van een specifieke vraag te weigeren. Voor vragen kunt u mailen naar 450033ep@student.eur.nl. U kunt ook contact opnemen met de supervisor op huiberts@eshcc.eur.nl.

Ik heb de voorwaarde gelezen en ga akkoord

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

Q1 Wat is uw geboortjaar?

Q2 Wat is uw geslacht?

Vrouw (1)

Man (2)

Anders (3)

Q3 Wat is uw nationaliteit?

Q4 Wat is uw hoogst genoten afgeronde opleiding?

Basisonderwijs (1)

Voortgezet onderwijs (2)

MBO (3)

HBO (4)

Universiteit (5)

Anders, namelijk (6) _____

De volgende vragen betreffen de nieuwsbronnen die u over de afgelopen **twee weken** heeft gebruikt.

Q5 Welke papieren krant heeft u het vaakst gelezen in de afgelopen twee weken?

▼ Het AD (1) ... Niet (7)

Q6 Hoe vaak las u een papieren krant?

- 1-2 keer (1)
- 3-4 keer (2)
- 5-6 keer (3)
- 6+ keer (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q7 Hoe lang las u gemiddeld de krant?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 Minuten (3)
- 60+ Minuten (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q8 Welke nieuws site bezocht u het vaakst?

▼ NOS.nl (1) ... Anders (6)

Q9 Hoe vaak bezocht u deze nieuws site in de afgelopen twee weken?

- 1-2 keer (1)
- 3-4 keer (2)
- 5-6 keer (3)
- 6+ keer (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q10 Hoe lang besteedde u in totaal op deze nieuws site in de afgelopen twee weken?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 minuten (3)
- 60+ minuten (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q11 Met behulp van welk apparaat bezocht u deze nieuwssite het vaakst?

- Een smartphone (1)
- Een tablet (2)
- Een computer/laptop (3)
- Anders, namelijk (4) _____
- Niet (5)

Q12 Hoe vaak keek u naar het nieuws op de televisie in de afgelopen twee weken?

- 1-2 keer (1)
- 3-4 keer (2)
- 5-6 keer (3)
- 6+ keer (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q13 Hoe lang keek u in totaal het nieuws op televisie in de afgelopen twee weken?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 minuten (3)
- 60+ minuten (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q14 Hoe vaak keek u het nieuws via online televisie in de afgelopen twee weken?

- 1-2 keer (1)
- 3-4 keer (2)
- 5-6 keer (3)
- 6+ keer (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q15 Hoe lang keek u in totaal het nieuws via online televisie in de afgelopen twee weken?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 minuten (3)
- 60+ minuten (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q16 Met behulp van welk apparaat keek u online nieuws televisie het meest?

- Een smartphone (1)
- Een tablet (2)
- Een laptop/computer (3)
- Anders, namelijk (4) _____
- Niet (5)

Q17 Op welke sociale media site las u het nieuws het vaakst?

▼ Facebook (1) ... Niet (6)

Q18 Hoe vaak las u nieuws op sociale media sites in de afgelopen twee weken?

- 1-2 keer (1)
- 3-4 keer (2)
- 5-6 keer (3)
- 6+ keer (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q19 Hoe lang las u in totaal het nieuws op sociale media sites in de afgelopen twee weken?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 minuten (3)
- 60+ minuten (4)
- Nooit (5)

Q20 Op wat voor een apparaat bezoekt u sociale media het meest?

- Een smartphone (1)
- Een tablet (2)
- Een laptop/computer (3)
- Anders, namelijk (4) _____

Q21 Van welke bron krijgt u het liefst uw nieuws?

- De papieren krant (1)
- Een nieuwswebsite (2)
- Het nieuws op de televisie (3)
- Online televisie (4)
- Sociale media (5)
- Anders, namelijk (6) _____

Q22 Hoe lang besteedde u ongeveer aan het consumeren van nieuws in totaal?

- Minder dan 15 minuten (1)
- 15-29 minuten (2)
- 30-59 minuten (3)
- 60+ minuten (4)
- Niet (5)

De volgende vragen betreffen stellingen over waarom u het nieuws consumeert. Kiest u de optie die u het best vindt passen.

Q24 Ik consumeer het nieuws om uit te vinden wat er in de wereld gebeurt betreffende de COVID-19 pandemie

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q25 Ik consumeer het nieuws om geïnformeerde burger te blijven over COVID-19

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q26 Ik consumeer het nieuws om belangrijke informatie te verkrijgen omtrent COVID-19

- Helemaal oneens (1)
 - Oneens (2)
 - Niet oneens noch eens (3)
 - Eens (4)
 - Helemaal eens (5)
-

Q27 Ik consumeer het nieuws omdat het helpt andere te begrijpen omtrent COVID-19

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q28 Ik consumeer het nieuws om te lachen tijdens de huidige COVID-19 pandemie

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q29 Ik consumeer het nieuws omdat het een gewoonte is

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q33 Ik consumeer het nieuws omdat er niks anders te doen is tijdens de lockdown

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q34 Ik consumeer het nieuws voor entertainment

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q35 Ik consumeer het nieuws om meningen te kunnen vormen over de maatregelen en de aanpak van de pandemie

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q36 Ik consumeer het nieuws om meningen van anderen te zien betreffende COVID-19

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q37 Ik consumeer het nieuws om ander meningen dan die van mijzelf te leren

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q38 Ik consumeer het nieuws om op de hoogte te blijven van waar de mensen om mij heen over praten en mee te kunnen doen met de gesprekken over COVID-19

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q39 Ik consumeer het nieuws omdat de mensen om mij heen dit doen

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q40 Ik consumeer het nieuws rondom COVID-19 om een gespreksonderwerp te hebben

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

Q41 Ik consumeer het nieuws om onderdeel van een gemeenschap uit te maken tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie

- Helemaal oneens (1)
- Oneens (2)
- Niet oneens noch eens (3)
- Eens (4)
- Helemaal eens (5)

De volgende vragen betreffen de wijze waarmee u met het nieuws omgaat. Probeer u deze zo eerlijk mogelijk te beantwoorden.

Q43 Als ik veel tegenstrijdig nieuws hoor controleer ik dit door

- De krant te lezen (1)
- Het op te zoeken op het internet/een ander soort site (2)
- Het op te zoeken op een nieuws site (3)
- Het nieuws op de televisie te volgen (6)

Q44 Zet de bronnen op volgorde van meest tot minst betrouwbaar volgens u

_____ Krant (1)

_____ Nieuwsuitzending (2)

_____ Sociale media (3)

_____ Nieuwssites (4)

Q45 Wanneer u nieuws op zoekt waar u nog niks van weet zoekt u dit in

De krant (1)

Een nieuwswebsite (2)

Ik google het/zoek het op een ander soort site (3)

Ik kijk of het in de nieuwsuitzending voorkomt (4)

Ik kijk of ik het kan vinden op sociale media (5)

Anders, namelijk (6) _____

Q46 U bent benieuwd naar het laatste nieuws over de coronamaatregelen, waar kijkt u als eerst?

Onder de hashtag '#coronamaatregelen', daar vind ik het meest recente nieuw en dit is snel te vinden (1)

Ik lees 's ochtends de krant, dit is het meest betrouwbaar en vertrouwd (2)

Ik kijk op de pagina van NOS.nl, daar is een liveblog (3)

Ik volg het nieuws op de televisie meerdere keren per dag, zo wordt de informatie het duidelijkst uitgelegd door iemand die ervan op de hoogte is (4)

Q47 U heeft op sociale media gelezen dat er versoepelingen komen in de maatregelen, waar kijkt u voor meer informatie?

- Ik zoek het op in google (1)
- Ik bekijk een nieuwssite (2)
- Ik kijk naar de trending pagina's op sociale media (3)
- Ik lees de krant (4)
- Ik kijk het nieuws (5)

Q48 U zoekt het nieuwste nieuws over de incubatietijd van Corona, maar kan het niet vinden wanneer u naar incubatietijd zoekt. Wat doet u?

- Ik zoek op het woord "corona", dan komt het vanzelf voorbij (1)
- Ik zoek op "corona symptomen", daar moet ook bij staan wanneer die komen (2)
- Ik zoek op "corona besmetting" (3)
- Ik zoek op "hoelang na de besmetting komen symptomen op" (4)

Q49 Een betrouwbaar artikel bevat

- Bronnen die je kan controleren (1)
- Bevestiging van anderen (2)
- De nieuwste informatie (3)

Q50 Om te bepalen of een artikel betrouwbaar is kijk ik naar

- Hoeveel likes en reacties het artikel heeft (1)
- De auteur van het artikel (2)
- Of en welke bronnen er worden gebruikt (3)
- Hoe lang het artikel is (4)

Q51 Om te zien of het artikel de juiste informatie bevat controleer ik

- De titel (1)
- De introductie (2)
- De reacties (3)
- Ik scan het gehele artikel (4)

Q52 Een online artikel is het betrouwbaarst wanneer deze het vaakst gedeeld is

- Juist (1)
- Onjuist (2)

Q53 Stel een artikel op facebook door een levensmiddelen winkel geeft aan dat het dagelijks gebruik van neusspray helpt corona te voorkomen. Wat doet u?

- Ik geloof het niet, waar is het bewijs? (1)
- Ik ben sceptisch, maar het kan geen kwaad het te proberen (2)
- Ik sla meteen neusspray in, de winkel heeft hier vast onderzoek naar gedaan (3)
- Het artikel is vaak gedeeld en de reacties zijn positief dus ik geloof het (4)

Q54 Wanneer u een artikel wilt gebruiken voor een presentatie, wat moet u dan doen?

- Niks, als het online staat mag ik het gewoon gebruiken (1)
- Ik geef aan dat ik het online gevonden heb (2)
- Ik vertel de naam van de originele auteur (3)
- Ik vertel de naam van de originele auteur en datum van publicatie (4)

Q55 Wat wordt er bedoeld met netiquette?

- Regels omtrent de communicatie met anderen online (1)
- Een kwaliteitsgarantie van online sites (2)
- Toestemming voor het gebruik van gegevens (3)
- Weet ik niet (4)

Q56 Heeft u het gevoel dat uw webpagina's vaak aangepast zijn naar uw eigen profiel en interesses?

- Ja, ik denk van wel (1)
- Nee, ik denk van niet (2)
- Weet ik niet, daar heb ik nooit op gelet (3)