Article

Information Consumption Habits of Young Colombian University Students

Andrés Barrios-Rubio [1,2]

1 Faculty of Communication and Arts, Universidad Nebrija, 28248 Madrid, Spain; andresbarriosrubio.abr@gmail.com or barriosr_andres@javeriana.edu.co
2 Department of Communication, Pontifical Javeriana University, Bogota 56710, Colombia

Abstract: The younger generations are exerting a profound influence on the future of the media. The current crisis of reputation facing traditional media is compelling those involved in the creation, production, and distribution of content to rethink the logic underpinning these processes. The consumption of entertainment and information via smartphones is becoming increasingly concentrated in screen devices and social platforms. In light of the particularities of a convergence of media and the characteristics of the digital sphere of users, it is necessary to investigate the information consumption habits and preferences of young university students towards conventional and digital media platforms, as well as social networks within the digital sphere. The objective of this research was to ascertain the news consumption habits of young university students in the context of the new digital landscape, characterised by the pervasiveness of connectivity and the ascendency of smartphones as the primary gateway to the internet. A survey of 1300 students was conducted in October 2023 to investigate their adoption, use, and consumption of traditional and digital media, as well as the devices they use and the importance of podcasts. The results, viewed through the lens of a specific ecosystem, such as that of Colombia, challenge prevailing stereotypes and suggest that younger generations continue to value traditional journalistic brands, potentially due to familial influence. The majority of content is accessed through screen devices and social media platforms. Despite the existence of prejudices, young people supplement their musical preferences with informational content and leisure and entertainment products.

Keywords: information; youth; media; digital ecosystem; consumption

1. Introduction

The advent of technology has brought about a profound transformation in the production and distribution of information. The current age of instantaneity presents a number of challenges to the media ecosystem. The credibility and impact of traditional media, such as press, radio, and television, are diminishing among younger generations. In this context, the purpose of the media industry becomes increasingly unclear. Its role is to satisfy the human need for information about events by providing an account of daily events and helping people to make sense of their immediate environment. Media brands provide content for both traditional channels and social media platforms (Catalina García et al. 2015). The latter are used to distribute news, set the news agenda, and enable interpretation of reality (Thompson et al. 2020). The integration of new communication platforms (Ufarte 2019) has created a hyper-information bubble in which both credible and fake news converge. This presents a challenge for citizens, who must navigate the political, economic, and social landscape while discerning between reliable and unreliable sources of information.

The media are gradually overcoming their reluctance towards technological innovation and coming to accept that the dynamics of the modern world require the creation of technology-assisted information (Lewis and Westlund 2015). They are developing novel

business models in response to a market that has been characterised by a paucity of innovative content. The media industry must strengthen productive routines that address the transmedia narrative linked to current affairs and journalistic elements with the capacity to attract young people. This can be achieved by incorporating the insights of Albarello (2020), Larrondo (2020), and Rampazzo and Peret (2017). A failure to analyse user behaviour, both quantitatively and qualitatively, can result in a decline in the penetration and consumption of traditional mass media. This can result in the inability to capture the attention of a community of followers, which in turn creates space for other actors, both political and social, to alter the traditional news cycle. Consequently, the audience assumes a novel role (Enli 2017). A global relationship spiral is created where spatial–temporal limitations are eliminated. Any individual with access to the online ecosystem is able to participate in the discussion, express their opinion, and contribute to the dialogue. This process facilitates the construction of a shared perception and understanding of reality.

Social networks have become a fundamental platform for political communication and the public sphere (Chadwick 2017). Bureaucratic agents utilise social networks to elucidate their decisions, justify their positions or changes of opinion, and validate their actions (Losada Díaz et al. 2020), irrespective of their geographical location (Manfredi-Sánchez et al. 2021). The digital environment is becoming increasingly relevant, affording users greater control over their consumption. This confounds the linear essence of the broadcast model, creating a scheme where content and thought processes can capture the deception of those who use subliminal messages and smokescreens. It is of utmost importance to be aware of these tactics and remain vigilant. The normalisation of a new paradigm is based on connectivity, ubiquity, timelessness, and interactivity (Viñals Blanco 2016). This paradigm equates the potential scope of all leisure and entertainment proposals with the smartphone screen (Romero Rodríguez and Rivera-Rogel 2019). The smartphone is a device that centralises all consumer actions. It is of note that the use of non-smartphones is becoming increasingly uncommon.

In the context of the scenario described here, it is imperative to examine the manner in which young people in a specific social ecosystem, such as the Colombian one, consume content, and not only entertainment content. The consumption of digital content, delivered through a variety of screen devices and social platforms, has led to the formation of distinct habits when compared to traditional or conventional media, as well as those individuals who have been labelled as 'digital natives'. The study presented here, although it coincides with global trends in media consumption among the younger demographic groups, will demonstrate the characterisation of a group, emphasising the importance of adapting content to mobility, ubiquity, timelessness, and the multiple platforms that today capture the attention of audiences. The interests of different population groups vary around the world. In order to question, refute, or reaffirm stereotypes about young people, it is important to be aware of the diverse range of interests that exists. The following sections will outline the value of the media and their impact on news consumption in the Colombian environment. This will be followed by an explanation of the methodology used in this study, the results, the analysis, and the discussion that will lead to the conclusions.

The Role of the Media in Colombian News Consumption

The Colombian media landscape is primarily composed of three main elements: the press, radio, and television. The press has been present in the country since 9 February 1791. Radio arrived on 7 August 1929, and it has focused on commercial broadcasting since 1934, while television was introduced on 13 June 1954. The advent of the internet in Colombia on 4 July 1994 has had a significant impact on the media market, resulting in a decline in its reach (Barrios-Rubio and Gutiérrez-García 2022). The industry is undergoing a process of reconfiguration in order to accommodate the multiplicity of screens and the current focus of consumption on laptops, tablets, and smartphones. This has resulted in the formation of multimedia conglomerates (Albarello 2020). In order to adapt to the social and technological context, it is necessary to consider the communicative particularities of new

technologies and social networks. The business model has undergone a transformation, converging on the network, and is characterised by technical diversification and variation in its structure, brought about by information and communication technologies (ICTs).

In the online context, communication is influenced by the increasing prevalence of mobile phones (141.8%) in a country with a population of 51.96 million. Furthermore, 75.7% of the population has internet access, and 74% of these individuals are active social media users. The average Colombian spends approximately nine hours and one minute online. This includes 3 h and 34 min spent watching streaming television, 3 h and 32 min on social networks, 1 h and 48 min reading the press, 1 h and 50 min listening to music, 1 h and 16 min listening to the radio, 59 min listening to podcasts, and 1 h and 10 min playing games (Hootsuite 2023). The data from Colombia indicate a pattern of media consumption that is responsive to the dynamics of an audience that primarily consumes media on smartphone screens (61.53%), followed by laptops (37.69%), tablets (0.74%), and other devices (0.04%). According to the Reuters Institute (2023), 80% of people are informed online, with 64% using social networks, such as Facebook (58%), WhatsApp (41%), YouTube (36%), Instagram (29%), TikTok (20%), and Twitter (18%). These figures diverge from those indicating Colombians' access to information from traditional media outlets, including television (48%), radio (13%), and print media (22%) (Reuters Institute 2023).

The expansion of information channels has transformed the manner in which we seek out and consume news, necessitating a critical approach to the verification of facts (McArthur 2016). In the contemporary global context, characterised by immediacy and participation, intolerance is expressed and propagated (Isasi and Juanatey 2016). The dissemination of hate speech can serve to exacerbate existing tensions and incite violence (Davidson et al. 2017). In the current context, conventional media outlets are better-positioned to fulfil their role as providers of reliable information to citizens (Casero-Ripollés and García-Gordillo 2021). In order to facilitate political discourse (Hermida and Mellado 2020; De-la-Garza-Montemayor et al. 2019), it is necessary to conduct comparative studies that examine how citizens receive information and their media consumption habits. The media have undergone a significant transformation in the digital environment, where web-based multimedia and transmedia offerings, podcasts, live streaming, and short videos converge with social networks.

The contemporary media environment is shaped by the pervasive and near-universal connectivity of the population, as well as the ascendancy of smartphones as the primary conduit for internet access (Pérez-Tornero and Pedrero-Esteban 2020). In light of the afore-mentioned circumstances, it is imperative to investigate narrative formats that preserve the intrinsic value of authenticity while upholding the principles of objectivity, independence, and clarity, which are essential to effective communication (Reuters Institute 2023). The evolving landscape of media–audience relations necessitates the availability of content on any device, at any time, and in any location (Ribes et al. 2015). This necessitates that followers adapt to new search habits (Ismandianto et al. 2022; Tarullo 2020) and the use of non-traditional media for product demand.

This study begins by examining the specifics of audio–visual consumption among young people on their screen devices, with a particular focus on smartphones (Martínez-Costa et al. 2019). The advent of digital media and platforms has transformed the industry's relationship with new audiences (Zaid et al. 2022). This has resulted in the emergence of a new type of information consumer who alternates between conventional broadcasting and digital distribution platforms, such as apps and websites. The news diet is influenced by a number of factors, including technological devices, family, and virtual communities (Yuste 2015).

The advent of digital culture (Pérez-Escoda et al. 2019) and the increasing interconnectivity with the environment through social networks (Maniou and Veglis 2016) necessitate that media companies maintain a presence on all platforms and generate a return on investment for each of them (Moreno Fernández et al. 2017). In this context, profitability is not solely measured in economic terms but also in social terms, such as volume and

impact on followers. This effect is derived from the reception practices to which journalistic diversification strategies are oriented. These strategies include integrated newsrooms that address specific topics in order to capture niche audiences, formats that combine narratives and media in order to expand the story, and immersive content design that gives control to the user for a more personal experience (Vázquez Herrero and López García 2019).

The media industry endeavours to capture and retain the attention of young audiences, who have exhibited the greatest distancing from traditional media. In order to achieve this, they utilise platforms that have the capacity to transform into web media (Barrios-Rubio and Gutiérrez-García 2022), thereby offering dynamism and versatility, which enables them to compete in the current situation of information overload. The flow of information can be complex due to the rhythms and schemes involved in its creation and distribution, which often differ from traditional models used by conventional media. In order to ensure clarity, it is of the utmost importance to adhere to productive routines when publishing news on websites, social networks, push notifications, or digital formats. Although the media remain a space for analysis, the participation of contact communities in different platforms has gained weight (Nieborg and Poell 2018). A flow is generated in accordance with the generational traits of the public of each network or scenario. This relevance now exceeds that of the classic communicative paradigm (Cea 2019).

The pervasive use of smart mobile devices (Aguado 2020) for accessing information and digital entertainment has transformed the production, distribution, and marketing practices of the traditional media industry. In the present era, the industry is striving to capture the attention of users in novel scenarios of interaction and consumption, particularly on social networks (Salaverría 2019). The proposed research analysed and systematised the information consumption routines of young Colombians through a quantitative survey. The objective of the study was to identify the positioning, treatment, and effectiveness of information in the digital ecosystem (García-Orosa et al. 2020). The findings enabled the identification of a renewal of online and offline production routines within the industry. This renewal is necessary to defend the credibility of the brand against the emergence of an offer that is increasingly less linked to the inherent demands of journalism.

The field of communication research, particularly the study of mass media in the digital age, is focused on the convergence of media and platforms (Ramos del Cano 2014). However, it is also essential to consider interactivity (Zuboff 2019), the audience's response to content distribution, and the tactical reconfiguration of the media industry (Bonini and Monclús 2015). While the message is transmitted in a unidirectional manner (Pinseler 2015), the media industry is promoting scenarios where users participate in the production of content (Pérez-Escoda and García-Ruiz 2020) and the development of transmedia narratives (Albarello 2020; Benítez de Gracia and Herrera Damas 2019). This study is concerned with observing the process from the perspective of reception, given the prominent role that the audience plays in this transitional chain.

The advent of digital media has prompted the development of strategies that redefine the relationship between media and the public. The media's penetration among young people (ages 12–18, 19–26, and 27 and older) and their impact on short- and medium-term indicators have led the industry to pursue strategies for diversifying the distribution of news content in order to adapt to changing media consumption patterns. The objective of this research is to investigate the news consumption habits of young citizens, with a focus on a core group of young university students. The study seeks to address the following question: what are the information consumption habits and preferences of young university students regarding conventional and digital media platforms, as well as social networks in the digital sphere? The investigation of this guiding question becomes relevant in order to understand the media consumption patterns of the new generations. It is important to determine whether the precept that young people approach the media only in search of entertainment is accurate. Furthermore, it is necessary to ascertain whether this detachment from traditional media and the news of the daily agenda or their close environment is a genuine phenomenon.

In order to provide coherence to the elements of the research and with the aim of analysing the patterns of information and media consumption among university students in Colombia, four sub-questions were posed in line with the specific research objectives. In light of the rapid evolution of media landscapes and the growing influence of digital platforms on news consumption behaviour, RQ1 was designed. Does the consumption of music on digital platforms by young people result in the consumption of news content? This is a pertinent question that elucidates the training and information diet of the younger demographic, a detail that delineates a path of significance for RQ2: what is the prevalence and credibility of conventional media in the information diet of social networks? This question not only reveals the devices and platforms used by young Colombians for media consumption but also opens up another question that is addressed by RQ3: what are the uses and gratifications that young people obtain from the information products they consume? The investigation challenges the assumption that young people are primarily interested in entertainment, delving deeper into the reasons behind their consumption of news content. This leads to the formulation of RQ4. This question seeks to ascertain how young people integrate podcasts into their information consumption habits. By posing this question, we can determine the value that this communicative product takes on from the digital media in comparison to the traditional canons of conventional media. The RQs serve not only to guide the development of the work but also to outline the methodology and subsequent analysis of the results, which will answer the guiding question of this research.

The digital and social news landscape is shaped by the use of screen devices and social media by young people (Bosetta et al. 2018). The manner in which traditional media are consumed has led to a crisis of reputation. Nevertheless, they continue to serve as a reference point for political, economic, social, and sporting events during critical moments, as evidenced by their role during the pandemic (Barrios-Rubio 2022). This study will present an approach to the value of information among young people and its role in shaping their perception of the global reality (Morduchowicz 2018). The convergence of conventional and digital media underscores the significance of narrative strategies in journalism, as they facilitate the establishment of an effective dialogue that aligns with contemporary consumer demands.

2. Methodology

The relationship between young people and the media has been the subject of study of various research projects. However, there has been little exploration of the topic in terms of information consumption, particularly in the context of a population that is increasingly disaffected with journalism and traditional media. It is of significant importance to direct attention towards the consumption dynamics and approach to news content of the younger demographic. The younger generations represent a crucial demographic in order to comprehend the evolution of cultural norms, behaviours, and attitudes in the context of globalised communication. This academic study will examine the preferences, values, and interests of the young audience, which is confronted with the media not only as an element of leisure but also as a tool for learning about and constructing reality. The proposed project employed a quantitative methodology and a case study approach to examine the convergence of socio-demographic elements of the young population, the dynamics of the media industry, and the behaviour of young people immersed in screen devices.

The study corpus comprised young university students from five educational institutions located in five areas of the country. These educational institutions were selected to represent the diversity of young people from different regions of Colombia. The study was conducted in five geographical zones across the country: the Central Zone of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, the Northern Zone of the Universidad del Norte, the Southern Zone of the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente, the Eastern Zone of the Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga, and the Western Zone of the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. The sample was divided into three age groups: 16 to 18 years (first semesters), 19 to 21 years (middle and final year), and 22 and over (postgraduate students) (Pérez-Contreras

et al. 2018). The sample size of 1300 surveys is sufficiently large and diverse to identify trends in the habits of young multiplatform consumers in terms of in-format content. However, it should be noted that young people who are not in university were not included in the survey. The survey will address the media that young people consult, the platforms they use, their frequency of access, their use, appropriation, and devices.

The selection of the study sample was conducted with the intention of ensuring the inclusion of students with regional characteristics. The universities selected for inclusion in the study were chosen for their student composition, which ensures the presence of students from the various Colombian populations. The researchers were keen to ensure that direct and permanent contact with the actors involved in this project was guaranteed. The selected topics are highly representative and significant due to the socio-demographic composition of the sample and its size, which aligns with the findings of the target group analysis conducted across the national geography. It is notable that from a methodological standpoint, non-probabilistic and purposive sampling concepts were employed, with the latter category being frequently applied in case studies. The research was based on a structured questionnaire developed using Google Forms. The questionnaire solely comprised quantitative questions designed to yield a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Betrián et al. 2013). Furthermore, the study measured previously established variables, allowing for the specification of aspects closely related to the research sub-questions (Bericat 1998).

The questionnaire was distributed between the 1st and 31st of October 2023 and comprised five sections. The initial block was designed to ascertain the social and technological profile of the respondents. The second block was designed to ascertain the respondents' proximity to the press. The third block recorded the respondents' connection with the radio. The fourth block sought to ascertain the respondents' consumption of television. Finally, the fifth block sought to ascertain the evolution of podcasts in the audience's media diet. A rating system based on the Likert scale was employed to collect responses. This operational tactic provides a straightforward method for gauging respondents' opinions and facilitates straightforward correlation between questions (Hartley and Betts 2010). Table 1 presents the variables employed for the analysis of the results. It is of the utmost importance to emphasise that the students were previously informed of the exclusively academic objective of the study, the anonymity of their participation in the study, and their right to participate or not in the study. As the study was conducted in a classroom setting and did not involve the disclosure of any private information about the students, parental consent was not required for participants under the age of 18.

Table 1. Variables for survey analysis.

Variable	Descriptor	Criteria for Analysis	Issues Addressed in the Instrument	Research Question Answered
Technological appropriation	The user's use of social media platforms and their interaction with the displayed content on their device screen.	Media consumption by the audience and participation in the content (Peña-Fernández et al. 2019). The media as a reliable source and channel of information (Casero-Ripollés and García-Gordillo 2021).	Type of network access, time spent online, network usage and consumption, link to social networks, and network accounts.	This category enables us to respond to RQ1. The questions developed throughout the instrument allow for the delineation of access to analogue and digital media, as well as the consumption of communication products.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Variable	Descriptor	Criteria for Analysis	Issues Addressed in the Instrument	Research Question Answered
Traditional media and their content	Information content in the digital ecosystem. Thematic proposals and convergence of narrative elements denoted in the consumption diet.	New journalistic landscape (Salaverría et al. 2019). The media and their influence on the construction of public opinion (Terán-Villegas and Aguilar-Castro 2018).	Profile monitoring, media coverage, searching for news on the web, user reaction to media news, credibility given to content, confirmation of news, and consumption of mainstream media.	This classification item provides the answer to RQ2. The questions addressed in this classification item seek to elucidate the presence of the media brand in the imaginary of young people, their attachment to social profiles, and the information they provide.
Device, time, and company	A technological device is used to access information content either individually or collectively.	Social influence of the media in the information diary of citizens (Casero-Ripollés and García-Gordillo 2021). Multiplatform synergies (Negredo et al. 2020).	Type of mobile device and computer equipment, time spent consuming digital and conventional media, media brands that are related to the user, and place of consumption.	This scale of analysis enables a response to RQ3. It is necessary to determine the manner in which the user utilises the products consumed from the different devices and the needs that are satisfied by them.
Podcast	Digital sound products of spoken content that can be downloaded for timeless consumption. The frequency and regularity of interaction should be considered.	The emergence of a hybrid consumer (Gutiérrez-García and Barrios-Rubio 2021). Listening attitude (Pérez-Alaejos et al. 2022).	Times and days of listening, device used for consumption, preferred content, approach to the product, and type of listening.	The investigation of how users approach podcasts in a country with a sound culture will provide an answer to RQ4. The objective is to ascertain how the information component is integrated into the digital agendas of young people.

Source: author's elaboration.

The survey yielded empirical evidence that corroborates the approaches delineated in the theoretical framework of this research. This work addresses the research questions based on the assumption that passive audiences absorb media content through the mediation of media agents while active audiences choose media content based on their own beliefs. The participants were informed of the research objectives, the academic and scientific purposes of the study, and the preservation of anonymity in the results. The data were subsequently organised in Excel pivot tables for coding and unification prior to being processed using SPSS-21 statistical software V21.0. The analysis sample was subjected to triangulation in order to identify the factors within the categories of analysis (Table 1). This approach facilitated the investigation of the research sub-questions and the corresponding responses, which will be presented below.

3. Results

The study corpus was divided into three age groups: 16–18 years (23.39%), 19–21 years (71.93%), and over 22 years (4.09%). One individual (0.59%) did not provide information regarding their age range. This distribution indicates a decrease in the number of students in the first semesters of undergraduate degrees and a lower inflow of postgraduate students. A notable proportion of both women (63.74%) and men (36.25%) continue to reside with their family (85.96%), as opposed to living alone (8.19%), with friends or tenants (4.68%), or with a partner (1.17%). The population has access to a comprehensive range of internet connectivity options. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of connection times. The majority of internet users access the internet through their mobile phones, with 59.65% utilising iPhones and 40.35% utilising Android devices. In addition, other devices are utilised, including laptops (89.47%), tablets (21.05%), and PCs (21.05%). The majority of internet

access occurs through mobile data plans (82.45%), residential plans (88.30%), public Wi-Fi (74.26%), or fibre optics (8.77%).
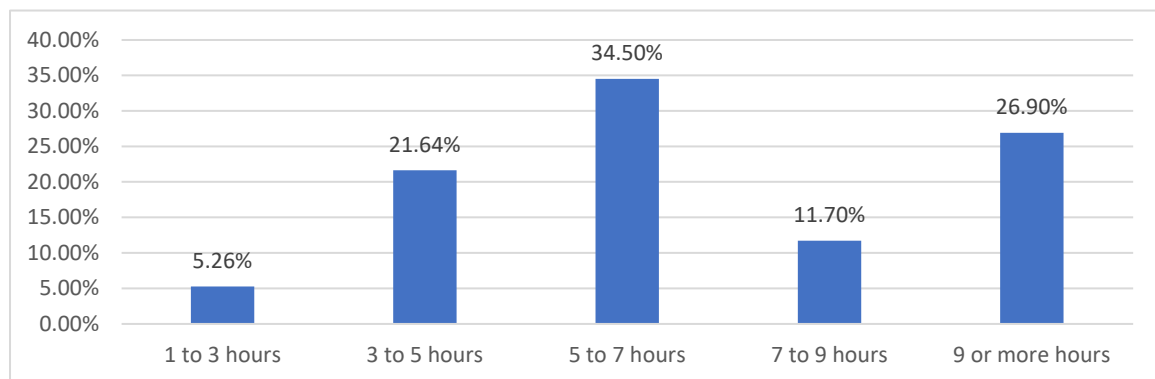

Figure 1. Connection times. Source: author's own work.

The internet connection is employed for a multitude of activities, including the utilisation of social media (97.07%), the consumption of videos (86.54%), the transmission and receipt of emails (81.28%), and the viewing of audio–visual streaming (69% for entertainment and 23.39% for news). Furthermore, the internet is employed for the purposes of searching for news (67.25%) and utilising search engines (66%). The study revealed that 54.97% of participants utilised the internet for product searches and purchases, while 50.87% consulted web-based media. Furthermore, 48.53% of respondents indicated that they listened to podcasts or audiobooks for entertainment purposes, including news (36.25%), fiction (20.46%), and other content. Additionally, 36.84% of participants reported playing video games, while 25.73% read newspapers. Only 17.54% of respondents listened to radio streaming, 11.69% generated topics, and 8.77% participated in forums. The public's adoption of the digital landscape indicates a trend towards consuming information through written, audio, and audio–visual media available on the internet. The use of screen devices by young people appears to be intermittent and linked to specific activities. The correlational examination of the results revealed that the consumption of content on social platforms is concentrated in smartphone (85.39%), as is the case with entertainment activities (93.28%), information (54.93%), and listening to podcasts or audio (47.59%). The PC and laptop are the preferred devices for searching for news or particular topics (79.32%), as well as for researching news or consulting the media (56.07%) and educational activities (69.24%). The distribution of activities across different screen devices is relatively even for sending emails and checking emails, playing video games, or listening to streaming radio. The tablet appears to be an ideal device for academic activities for students, representing the modern equivalent of the notebook.

As anticipated, younger members of the population are demonstrably engaged with social media platforms, including WhatsApp (95.83%), Instagram (95.90%), YouTube (87.13%), TikTok (75.43%), X/Twitter (65.49%), and Facebook (52.04%). These platforms serve as a means of accessing information, entertainment, and other offerings. The social scenarios within the social ecosystem serve as entry points to specific content, with news being consumed on X/Twitter (85.29%), WhatsApp (43.24%), and YouTube (42.96%). The consumption of entertainment and video or audio–visual content is associated with Instagram (94.29%), YouTube (83.09%), and TikTok (78.45%). Podcasts are integrated not only with podcasting platforms but also with social networks, representing an entry point to the sound universe with audio–visual components. The data indicate that Instagram (23.86%), YouTube (67.23%), TikTok (35.84%), X/Twitter (25.07%), and Facebook (32.34%) are the most popular social media platforms for accessing podcasts.

In the study corpus, 71.93% of respondents indicated that they followed conventional media profiles, while 66.67% indicated that they followed digital native media. The tradi-

tional media outlets with the greatest reference among the members of the study corpus were El Tiempo, El Espectador, and Semana (print), Caracol, Blu, and RCN Radio (sound), and Noticias Caracol and RCN (audio–visual). Pulzo, La Silla Vacía, and La Oreja Roja were the digital media outlets that were most highly regarded in terms of consumption, as evidenced by the responses of those surveyed. The study indicates that 91.23% of respondents search for news facts through social networks. The news that capture the attention and interest of digital users reveal consumption actions that correspond to the dynamics of social scenarios (Figure 2).
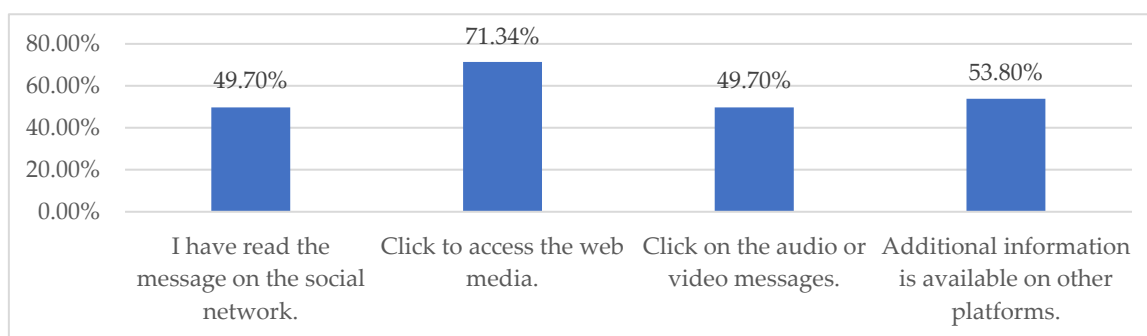

Figure 2. User behaviour in social settings when confronted with news. Source: author's own work.

The behaviour of users in relation to media messages on their social profiles (Figure 2) indicates that a significant proportion of those surveyed seek additional information by accessing the web media of the journalistic house or verifying the facts on other platforms. Those respondents who only read the post text are also the same ones who tend to click on the audio and video clips that are published. The study corpus indicates that sharing media publications is a less common activity, with only 2.92% of respondents agreeing to doing it and 1.75% admitting to always doing it. The proportion of respondents who reported doing this on occasion was 45.03%, while 43.28% reported never doing it. A further 7.02% of respondents either abstained from answering the question or were unable to provide a response.

The veracity of information disseminated on social media is a crucial factor in the current context. The survey revealed that 69.01% of respondents sometimes give credibility to information on social networks, while only 2.34% assume it to be true. Conversely, 27.48% of respondents expressed a lack of trust in the news content disseminated on social networks. The credibility of memes, a form of irreverent communication popular among young people, is fragmented among 28.66% of the members of the study corpus of this research. Sixty-five point five percent of respondents indicated that they sometimes found memes to be credible, while only four point zero nine percent asserted that they were always relevant. This passage underscores the significance of exercising critical thinking when consuming media. The study revealed that 42.69% of participants confirmed news they had seen on social media, while 52.63% did so occasionally. A mere 4.09% of respondents indicated that they never confirm news on social media. The survey revealed that 35.67% of young people do not accept news shared by friends or relatives without question. Conversely, 58.48% of respondents typically verify the veracity of the information, while only 4.68% consistently discredit it.

The Role of the Press, Radio, Television, and Podcasting in the Consumption Habits of Young People

Despite the prevalence of preconceived notions, young people are in fact familiar with and have access to both written and digital press. The consumption of the press among younger demographics is undergoing a transformation, with only 20.46% of those surveyed indicating that they consult physical media. In the present era, written journalism is predominantly accessed through the digital media of traditional outlets (63.15%) and digital native media (63.15%). The study revealed that 84.79% of participants followed the

profiles of written journalistic houses, while 8.77% accessed the live content proposed by the media. The consumption actions were limited to smartphones (97.66%), with laptops (59.64%), PCs (15.78%), tablets (14.03%), and smart TVs (7.01%) representing other points of encounter between users and the digital content of print media. The mean time spent reading the press by users is less than 30 min (52.05%), with some users spending between 30 and 60 min (39.18%). A mere 5.26% of respondents indicated that they spent more than an hour reading newspapers.

Young people tend to consume written press for the purpose of obtaining information about news, current events, sports, culture, and entertainment (Figure 3). The content selected is based on the individual's preferences and affinity towards the media (69%), rather than recommendations on social networks (34.50%) or suggestions from friends and family (25.14%). A mere 25.73% of young people indicated a preference for using an app or web-based media. The majority of individuals (71.92%) read press content in private settings, with a relatively small proportion reporting doing so in public places (35.08%), with family members (31.57%), or with friends (25.14%).
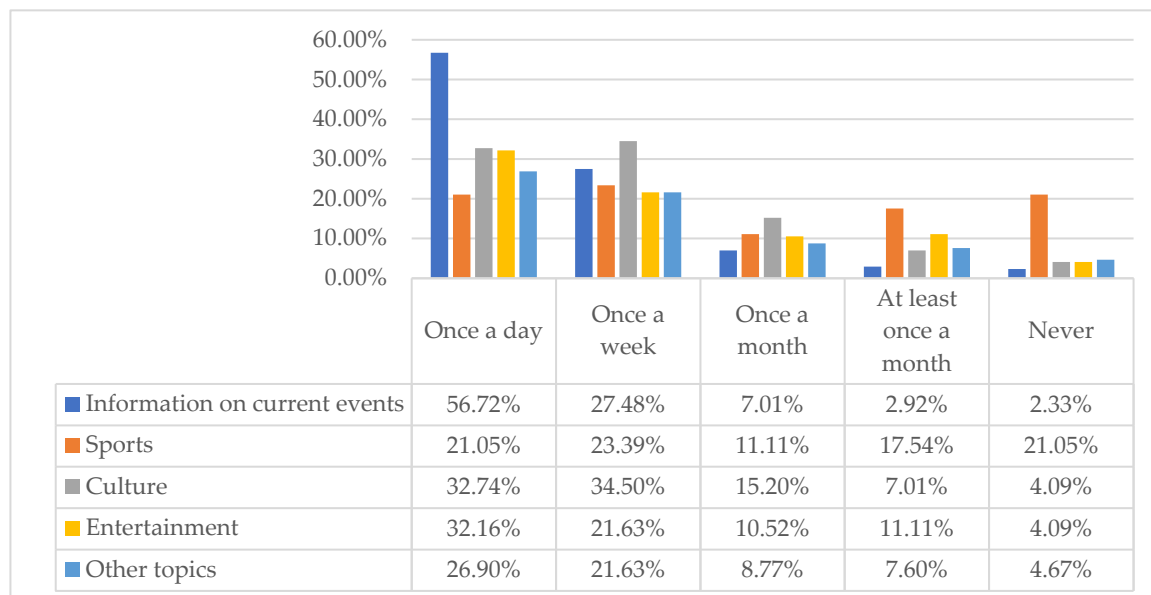

	Once a day	Once a week	Once a month	At least once a month	Never
■ Information on current events	56.72%	27.48%	7.01%	2.92%	2.33%
■ Sports	21.05%	23.39%	11.11%	17.54%	21.05%
■ Culture	32.74%	34.50%	15.20%	7.01%	4.09%
■ Entertainment	32.16%	21.63%	10.52%	11.11%	4.09%
■ Other topics	26.90%	21.63%	8.77%	7.60%	4.67%

Figure 3. Contents and reading times. Source: author's own work.

The study corpus indicates that 42.69% of young people do not listen to the radio at all. Among those who do listen, the majority do so for less than 60 min. In fact, 31.58% listen for less than 30 min, while 17.54% listen for 30 to 60 min. The traditional FM transistor/car radio is the most common method by which users access radio content (59.64%), in contrast to the press. The majority of those who report listening to the radio only engage with the medium through digital means. The most common digital devices used for this purpose are smartphones (42.69%), computers (21.63%), and tablets (9.35%). Additionally, other devices, such as smart speakers and smart TVs, are also commonly used (12.28%).

As with the press, radio is a source of news, current affairs, sports, politics, and entertainment (Figure 4). The content selected is based on the listener's personal preferences (54.38%), with little consideration given to recommendations from friends or family (19.88%), social media (8.77%), or suggestions from apps or web media (14.61%). Radio listening is a pastime that is frequently undertaken in the company of family members (38.59%) or in a private setting, with or without headphones (21.05% and 22.22%, respectively). A small proportion of respondents indicated that they listen to the radio with friends (9.35%).
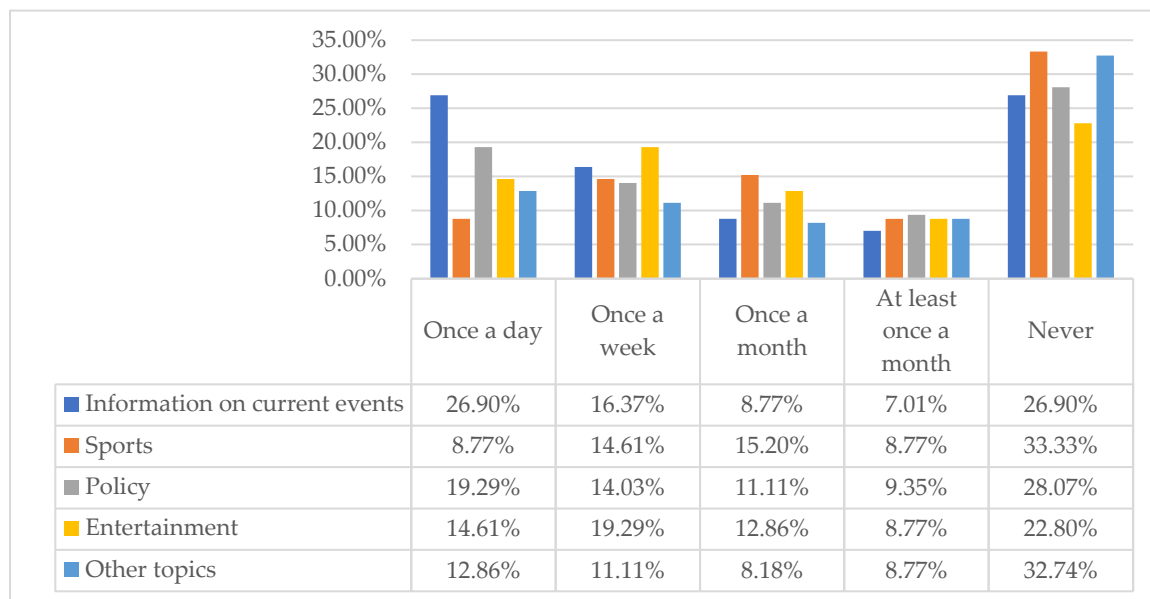
	Once a day	Once a week	Once a month	At least once a month	Never
■ Information on current events	26.90%	16.37%	8.77%	7.01%	26.90%
■ Sports	8.77%	14.61%	15.20%	8.77%	33.33%
■ Policy	19.29%	14.03%	11.11%	9.35%	28.07%
■ Entertainment	14.61%	19.29%	12.86%	8.77%	22.80%
■ Other topics	12.86%	11.11%	8.18%	8.77%	32.74%

Figure 4. Contents and times of listening. Source: author's own work.

The proportion of television viewing that occurs through subscription platforms has increased significantly, accounting for 72.51% of total consumption. Conversely, conventional channels are experiencing a decline in viewership, with digital platforms, particularly social media, emerging as a significant source of content for younger demographics (48.53%). Non-paid digital platforms and conventional media websites account for 28.07% and 29.23% of consumption, respectively, while 56.14% of viewership still originates from conventional channels. In accordance with the aforementioned characteristics, the relevance of smart TVs (80.11%) is increasing, surpassing that of laptops (54.97%) and smartphones (51.46%) as preferred technological devices. PCs (14.61%) and tablets (12.86%) occupy a secondary position. The younger generation's engagement with audio–visual content is considerable, with 40.35% of respondents reporting watching for 30 to 60 min and 33.34% watching for over an hour. A mere 20.47% of respondents indicated that they spent less than 30 min watching television.

Television, like the press and radio, serves as a social gathering place for young people, providing a forum for meeting specific needs. These include obtaining information, staying up to date on current events, sports, series, and competitions, and using streaming platforms (Figure 5). The selection of content is based on personal preferences, including a particular taste for a channel (61.40%) or the choice of an app or website (49.70%). The influence of recommendations from friends or family (34.50%) and social networks (23.39%) on television consumption is comparatively less significant. The majority of individuals engage in television viewing in a private setting with family members (55.55%) and, less frequently, with friends (33.33%). It can be observed that public viewing (8.18%) appears to be associated with the broadcasting of sporting events.

The podcast is becoming an increasingly significant source of entertainment for young people, with 64.91% of survey respondents indicating that they listen to it at some point during the week. Of those surveyed, 34.5% indicated that they listen to a podcast episode once a week, with a steady increase in daily listenership. Specifically, 9.36% of respondents have already established a daily routine, 8.19% listen twice a week, and 5.85% listen three days a week. The mean time spent listening to audio products includes 26.90% of respondents listening for less than 30 min, 23.98% for 30 to 60 min, and 9.36% for more than an hour. The smartphone is the most prevalent device for podcast consumption, with 62.57% of respondents indicating that they use this device for this purpose. The computer is the second most prevalent device, with 30.99% of respondents indicating that they use

this device for this purpose. A further 14.03% of respondents indicated that they use other devices, such as smart speakers, for podcast consumption.
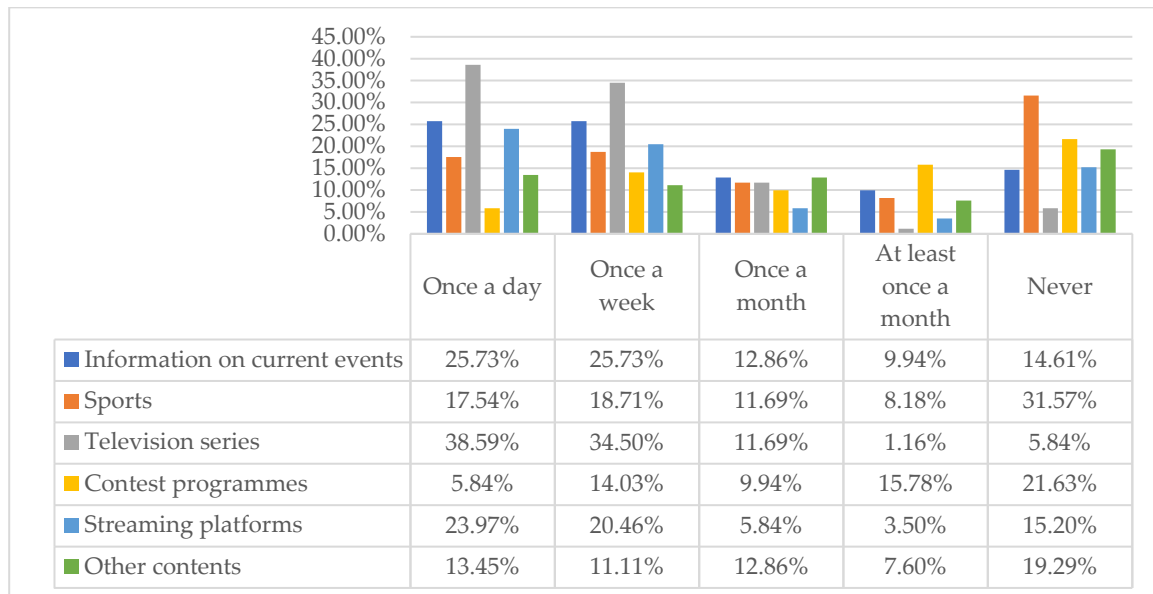

	Once a day	Once a week	Once a month	At least once a month	Never
■ Information on current events	25.73%	25.73%	12.86%	9.94%	14.61%
■ Sports	17.54%	18.71%	11.69%	8.18%	31.57%
■ Television series	38.59%	34.50%	11.69%	1.16%	5.84%
■ Contest programmes	5.84%	14.03%	9.94%	15.78%	21.63%
■ Streaming platforms	23.97%	20.46%	5.84%	3.50%	15.20%
■ Other contents	13.45%	11.11%	12.86%	7.60%	19.29%

Figure 5. Content and viewing times. Source: author's own work.

In the Colombian market, the most popular podcast content is related to current events, sports, fiction, and information (Figure 6). The user's preference for podcast products is influenced by a number of factors, including their personal taste (51.46%), access through apps or platforms (32.74%), recommendations from friends or family (27.48%), and suggestions from social networks (18.71%). Private consumption activities are frequently conducted with headphones (48.53%) or without them (27.48%), rather than with friends (7.01%) or family (4.67%).
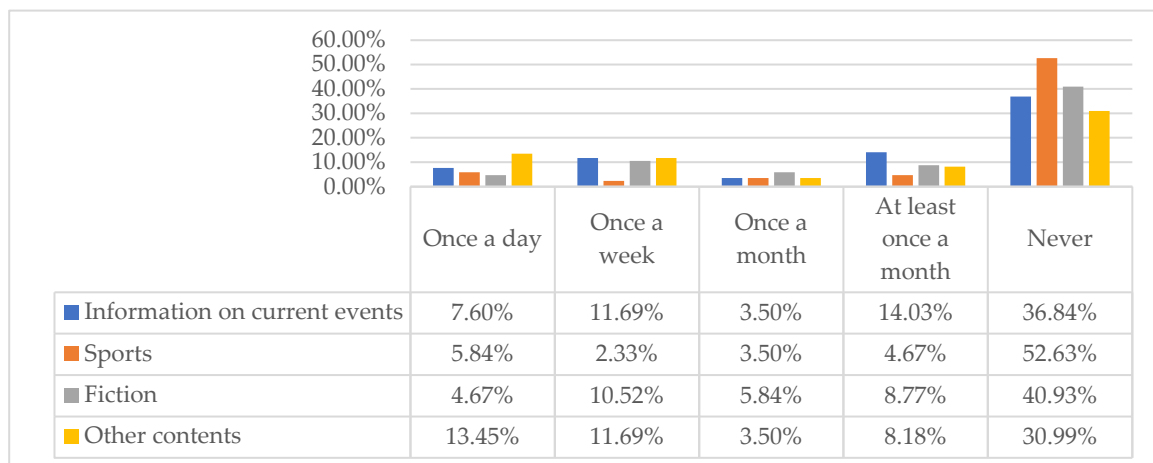

	Once a day	Once a week	Once a month	At least once a month	Never
■ Information on current events	7.60%	11.69%	3.50%	14.03%	36.84%
■ Sports	5.84%	2.33%	3.50%	4.67%	52.63%
■ Fiction	4.67%	10.52%	5.84%	8.77%	40.93%
■ Other contents	13.45%	11.69%	3.50%	8.18%	30.99%

Figure 6. Podcast content and listening times. Source: author's own work.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that younger audiences are driving structural changes in the co-communication media communication model (Bonini and Monclús 2015). The traditional scheme was designed for linear and synchronous mass consumption and was, for a long time, financed by advertising (Cea 2019). However, with the advent of autonomous distribution technologies, this model is being challenged and transformed. It is

of significant importance to note that these changes are being driven by young audiences. In the current era, young people engage with digital media across a multitude of devices (Aguado 2020), frequently while on the move and with a proactive approach. The digital ecosystem has shifted control of consumption to the user, thereby blurring the traditional linear radio and television programming that constituted the essence of the broadcast model. In the contemporary era, content is the paramount factor, accessible at any time and from any location, on any device. In the digital realm, users leave a digital footprint that generates vast quantities of data, which in turn feed platform capitalism. The media landscape is characterised by a netcasting model that caters to on-demand, personal, and asynchronous consumption, with the financing of services that support technological and cultural convergence being based on payment.

The data presented here demonstrate that the digital landscape has become increasingly globalised (Morduchowicz 2018), and the multi-platform world has transformed the manner in which young people utilise digital media throughout the day. The interrelation between media and social platforms (Catalina García et al. 2015) denotes a non-exclusive distribution of content and the development of communicative products in the media ecosystem. The presented study indicates that young people have adopted a new media paradigm characterised by connectivity, ubiquity, timelessness, and interactivity. This paradigm aligns with the potential reach of all of the information, leisure, and entertainment proposals currently available on the web. Young audiences engage with and consume on-demand content, which includes products that have already been disseminated by conventional media and that have expanded their availability through web media, media applications, and social networks (Barrios-Rubio and Gutiérrez-García 2022). The internet offers a catalogue of content that is both labelled and segmented, which directly competes with that of conventional media. Newspaper houses possess an established brand with credibility and resources, which they leverage to offer competition to native online content.

In the digital ecosystem, young Colombians have access to a wide range of topics that capture their attention (Pérez-Escoda et al. 2019). The media's experimentation with different methods of producing and presenting communicative products provides a context in which to validate timeless, current, or past content from alternative perspectives, thereby encouraging consumption in specific niches. In this context, the visibility and accessibility of the communicative proposal through the Web/App, promotion in conventional media, social networks, and newsletters are of crucial importance. Video content is a fundamental element on the screens of the devices used to access the network (Aguado 2020), as it is capable of capturing the attention of young people. This is because the users in question are not only digital natives but also audio–visual and mobile natives. Video represents a central component of the multimedia strategy. The majority of audio–visual productions are designed to be consumed on mobile phones and social networks (Salaverría et al. 2019). Consequently, respondents attach significant importance to the square and subtitled format, which can be consumed without audio.

The findings of the survey indicate that the advent of new technologies is broadening and diversifying the audience for media content (Barrios-Rubio 2022). The younger generation is inclined to seek information, news, and entertainment in a variety of formats, including text, audio, and video. In the digital age, a plethora of products are designed to meet the needs of the younger population (Ismandianto et al. 2022). The research presented here indicates that a significant proportion of users access content and media through social networks. The advent of alternative broadcasts has the effect of enhancing the immediacy and proximity of content, thereby stimulating the consumption of news products. The findings indicate that alerts represent a novel format of micro-journalism that draws attention to breaking news and content designed for all audiences, thereby reinforcing the identity of a journalistic brand (Pérez-Tornero and Pedrero-Esteban 2020).

The findings indicate that young people demonstrated a response to media coverage of a coordinated global dissemination of events on the news agenda. The advent of social media profiles on social networks and the evolution of web-based media have engendered a

novel mindset among young audiences. In light of the digital environment, it is imperative to innovate in the interfaces designed to deliver content. The products in question seek to reinforce their content and provide context through the use of interviews, debates, and other journalistic components (Vázquez Herrero and López García 2019). The audio–visual screen space has become a prominent medium for the dissemination of sound, no longer functioning as a mere subsidiary component of information.

The global pandemic served to rekindle the relationship between the media industry and its audiences. The younger generation exhibits a proclivity for consuming both entertainment products and news, indicating a desire to be informed about the events occurring in their immediate vicinity and beyond. The use of screen devices by the younger generation has resulted in the further segmentation of audiences, with specific messages being conveyed on mobile phones, computers, tablets, television, and other screens. The research presented indicates that both free-to-air and subscription TV are becoming increasingly relevant in terms of content, while also diversifying the consumption of information, entertainment, and leisure. Furthermore, the written press is undergoing a resurgence, employing audio and video resources to enhance its written content and appeal to younger audiences. Television remains the primary source of information for Colombians, although the importance of radio and print media cannot be overlooked. The integration of traditional media with digital channels has led to a notable increase in the visibility of journalistic brands among young people. This type of content is most frequently consumed between 7 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

The research conducted here provides evidence that young digital users consistently consume news, with political debates being a particular focus of interest. Furthermore, current affairs, sporting events, and entertainment are also relevant to young people. The observed consumption trends have remained consistent throughout the pandemic. This study has demonstrated that the youngest members of the population are responsible for the immediacy of social networks and digital platforms. They are linked to traditional journalistic brands due to familial tradition. Consumer confidence in the mass media within the digital ecosystem is enhanced by the fact that journalistic brands have adopted technology and altered their communication style (Albarello 2020).

Although podcast consumption is on the rise in Colombia, the survey findings indicate that there is no clear differentiation between different audio formats among young people, including podcasts, audiobooks, audio entertainment, and video podcasts. The genres of content offered cater to two distinct audience profiles: conversational, leisure, and entertainment, as well as narrative non-fiction related to current affairs. The consumption of podcasts by young people is facilitated by the various platforms dedicated to disseminating this content, as well as the production of content and the presence of traditional media on various platforms, such as Spotify, Apple, and other podcasting scenarios. The consumption patterns indicate that taxonomies from other environments are adopted and adapted to the age groups of the audience on each platform.

Social networks are a popular destination for young people (Hootsuite 2023) aged between 15 and 24. Social networks serve as a source of information, leisure, and entertainment, where journalism competes for attention by producing engaging content (Reuters Institute 2023). In this context, young users have the capacity to determine which information they interact with and share with their friends and family (Yuste 2015). It can be observed that infotainment products, which utilise viral trends or employ memes to satirise reality, tend to attract the greatest attention. The manner in which conventional media produce content has undergone a transformation, a shift that has been acknowledged by users. It is crucial to understand how to present serious and pertinent news in an informal manner. The public is drawn to videos, maps, infographics, and elaborate formats in the messages published on social media profiles. The didactic and curious content can be employed as a hook to reach those reports or notes that can be found in the media. Young people on social networks are inclined to consume news that are truthful and balanced

and produced by professionals. It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between false information and reliable data (Casero-Ripollés and García-Gordillo 2021).

5. Conclusions

The integration of information consumption into the daily routine of young people has led to the emergence of social networks as the primary source of news. The internet is the primary source of information for this demographic. The advent of digital technologies has brought about significant changes in communication practices, transforming the ways in which various audiences consume information. The network offers a plethora of avenues that diverge from the conventional unidirectional communication paradigm. Furthermore, it provides access to a vast amount of content that is available at any time and in any location. This study demonstrates that young Colombians have migrated to the digital environment to search for all types of information, given that technology is an integral part of their daily lives and they spend most of their time using it.

One crucial aspect to consider is the capacity of young individuals to discern reliable profiles, websites, and messages, as well as their ability to ascertain the legitimate source of specific topics. It is important to note that this perception of credibility may not always be accurate and that an objective evaluation is necessary. In the digital ecosystem, young people frequently place greater trust in the sender of information than in the direct source of the facts. The replication and viral spread of a message is often perceived as a reliable indicator of credibility for profile users. The capacity of young people to engage in critical and reflective thinking about the content they encounter online is not necessarily proportional to their level of engagement with technology. It is of the utmost importance to encourage young people to develop their critical thinking skills and to exercise caution when navigating the internet. Their utilisation and adaptation of technology remains instrumental, and their affinity with a profile or journalistic brand is often limited to familial tradition. Consequently, they may be inclined to follow links provided in posts. Young people access media industry content through various digital platforms, including Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube.

The majority of young people primarily use social media, particularly Instagram, as a gateway to news. The written press remains the most popular traditional medium. Audio–visual entertainment is dominated by the consumption of Netflix series or video games. Gender does not appear to influence the consumption of journalistic brands. However, there is a notable gender divide in social media use, with women tending to favour Instagram and TikTok, while men tend to prefer YouTube. The significance of digital native media lies in their expression of distrust towards conventional media and brands. Consequently, the study's corpus treats media and digital platforms as being of equal importance. Young people select news based on their political and social interests, rather than relying on influencers or YouTubers. Their personal interests tend to gravitate towards sports and specific forms of entertainment. The survey responses indicate that young people perceive social media as more aligned with their interests than traditional media.

The study participants, who are young people, reveal their habits, preferences, and motivations for consuming information. These factors are likely to influence their future practices. The process of socialisation and identity formation is no longer constrained to face-to-face interactions; it is also consolidated in the digital world. Social networks are employed by citizens to engage in civic discourse, express opinions, and seek support. The consumption of media and news has undergone a transformation. In the contemporary era, young people utilise social platforms to access content and connect with friends and family who share similar views. While music remains a popular form of content, young people are increasingly seeking outspoken products that facilitate conversations and open, spontaneous dialogues about daily events.

Young people rely on information to remain apprised of developments in their immediate environment. This engenders a sense of gratification and awareness of current events and the world around them. The rapid and continuous flow of data on social networks

has resulted in the creation of a constantly changing landscape of information, which has in turn led to the atomisation of facts and the necessity for the provision of personalised content. In the present era, young people employ a multitude of conventional and digital media outlets to gain insight into their country. The presented findings indicate that the use of technology for information consumption is influenced by the cultural capital of young people. The survey findings indicated that young people value and actively seek out information sources that enable them to gain deeper insights into their nation. Social media platforms have responded to this innate human need for knowledge.

The podcast represents a novel form of communication that revitalises sound-on-screen scenarios and captures the attention of young people. The format is designed to be concise, with an average broadcast duration of 30 min or less. Podcasting represents a reinvention of the radio product for the internet era, offering a portable sound communication that can be distributed and customised in scenarios where young people are present. The current era is witnessing a surge in popularity of audio content, which is becoming increasingly adaptable to various platforms. This is due to its capacity to align with the consumption habits of younger generations. The podcast, as an audio format, exemplifies a product that exploits the potential of audio comprehension and RSS content syndication technology. These features confer a distinctive value upon digital products, which is particularly appealing to younger demographics.

The overview presented in this article paves the way for further research. In this initial phase, we have identified the quantitative aspects of a phenomenon that must now be contrasted with qualitative inputs that provide greater insight into the findings. It will be essential to conduct further analysis of the data obtained from focus groups, with a particular focus on issues such as family traditions, credibility and the consumption of traditional media brands versus digital natives. It will also be important to focus on areas of work that allow us to correlate the amount of time dedicated to consuming different types of media with the academic performance of students, among other factors. The work that has just been presented, along with the second stage that is now proposed, provides a more profound comprehension of the cultural and social dynamics that influence media consumption. The findings can be applied and contrasted in other social ecosystems where young people's behaviour and approach to media varies.

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