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Understanding News Avoidance in Social Media: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

In the age of digital media, news avoidance behaviour is continually increasing. This behaviour has brought new challenges for society and democracy. Research on news avoidance has recently experienced a surge, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are many uncertainties on this topic, and this systematic literature review attempts to resolve them. This research uses the PRISMA framework to answer the research questions. Two databases are used for this study: Web of Science and Scopus. The study uses the inclusion criteria of research papers published in English and the exclusion criteria of review papers. The research study is based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 23 selected articles from both databases. Quantitative results show a sudden increase in the number of news

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avoidance studies in 2023. The analysis also revealed a dominance of quantitative methods and non-probability samples. The regional distribution of the studies underlines the concentration of research in Europe and North America. The qualitative analysis highlights the causes of news avoidance, the profile of news avoiders, the connection between news avoidance and news overload, social media and engagement, the disadvantages of avoidance, and solutions to avoidance. The study concludes that trust in news, interest in news, enjoyment of news consumption, news curation and constructive news provide a solution to news avoidance behaviour.

Keywords: *news avoidance, digital media, social media, democracy, PRISMA*

1. Introduction

The boost in internet penetration has led to an increased reliance on digital platforms to access news. Social media is now one of the most-used news platforms worldwide (Watson 2023). This has created new challenges related to news consumption. The continuous news updates on social media create a feeling of news overload among people and lead them to avoid news content. Increasing news avoidance has necessitated research into the phenomenon, and researchers are trying to understand it. Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020) define news avoidance as limited news consumption over a long period of time. This can be due to either a dislike of the news, called intentional news avoidance, or a stronger preference for other content, called unintentional news avoidance. Toff and Palmer (2019), on the other hand, considered news avoiders as people who follow news less than once a month. According to Lee, Holton, and Chen (2019), selective scanning, news avoidance, and media denial/resistance are examples of conscious and unconscious behavioural reactions to information overload. Aharoni, Kligler-Vilenchik, and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2021) identified three dimensions of news avoidance: avoiding journalistic topics or media, avoiding news-related technologies that are considered uncontrollable, and avoiding news to reduce overall media consumption.

News avoidance is continually increasing worldwide. It is an emerging area of research. According to Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020), research on news avoidance is hampered by a lack of shared understanding of the phenomenon. There is no systematic literature review on news avoidance. Particularly, we try to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive overview of existing research on news avoidance behaviour, which will help to build a shared understanding of news avoidance. The study specifically focuses on news avoidance on social media, as research shows that users experience greater news overload when they consume news via digital devices (Song, Jung, and Kim 2017). This research study aims to highlight the key insights on news avoidance through a systematic review of the literature.

The phenomenon of news avoidance has recently attracted considerable attention from both scholars and practitioners, as more and more people appear to be turning their backs on the news (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2022). Recent advances suggest that the news media's pervasive negativity is causing many people to avoid the news altogether, undermining the media's ability to keep the public informed (Overgaard 2023). It brings new challenges for an informed society and democracy. A deluge of news from multiple sources and platforms leaves news consumers feeling overloaded, with negative consequences such as fatigue and indifference to news (Song, Jung, and Kim 2017).

The Reuters digital news report for 2023 (Newman et al. 2023) shows that selective news avoidance is at 36 per cent, an increase of 7 per cent from the level of 2017. Selective news avoidance is the tendency to avoid selective types of news content. News avoidance is often viewed as a challenge for society, as people with lower news consumption are associated with less political engagement (Ohme et al. 2023). Furthermore, Skovsgaard and Andersen (2022) note that news avoidance is challenging because news consumption brings benefits at individual and societal levels.

In a high-choice media environment, politically interested people may consume more news, while disinterested people are more likely to avoid such content because they can consume the content according to their taste (Karlsen, Beyer, and Steen-Johnsen 2020). It will widen the knowledge gap between informed and uninformed citizens in a democratic setting.

1.1. Research Questions

This research study attempts to understand the phenomenon of news avoidance in the social media space. It will also shed light on various

aspects of news avoidance discovered by scholars working in the field. By linking the different findings, an attempt is made to build a comprehensive understanding.

RQ1. What are the methodological approaches used to understand the phenomenon of news avoidance?

RQ2. What are the key findings on news avoidance?

RQ3. What are the major gaps in existing literature?

1.2. Significance of the Study

The level of news avoidance behaviour is rising globally, and concerns about the repercussions of this behaviour are also increasing. However, there is a lack of comprehensive conceptual understanding of news avoidance in the existing literature. Based on the systematic literature review, this study addresses this gap by building a conceptual understanding of news avoidance. It provides a structured overview of findings that can guide future research on news avoidance. This research study highlights the causes of news avoidance, the profile of news avoiders, the connection between news avoidance and news overload, social media and engagement, the disadvantages of avoidance, and solutions to avoidance.

2. Methodology

The relevant research articles for the study are selected from the Web of Science and the Scopus database to ensure the quality of the research included. The two databases are leaders in the social sciences. This systematic literature review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al. 2009). The researchers used two keywords to search for relevant literature: news avoidance and social media, using the Boolean operator AND. The keywords were found appropriate to answer the research questions in preliminary searches. Synonyms for news avoidance were not used because synonyms like information avoidance and news aversion were not found suitable to explain the phenomenon.

Social media is now one of the world's most widely used news platforms, surpassing radio, print news publications, blogs and word of

mouth (Statista 2023). Therefore, the study focuses on news avoidance on social media. The keywords “news avoidance” and “social media” yielded a total of 145 results in the Web of Science and 109 results in the Scopus database. After excluding review articles and including articles written in English, 143 articles remained for screening in Web of Science and 101 in Scopus. Further, 53 duplicate files were removed from Scopus. For the screening process, 143 articles were included from the Web of Science and 48 from the Scopus database.

In the title and abstract screening, 109 articles were excluded from Web of Science, and 35 from the Scopus database; the research articles were excluded because news avoidance was not the central theme of the papers. A total of 47 articles (34 articles from Web of Science and 13 articles from Scopus) went through the full-text screening. After the completion of full-text screening, 14 articles were excluded from Web of Science and 10 articles from Scopus. A total of 23 articles (20 articles from Web of Science and three articles from Scopus) were included in the systematic analysis of research papers on news avoidance from both databases.

The research timeline was not decided in advance before searching for relevant articles because news avoidance is an emerging research area, and therefore, very little literature is available on it. The articles included are published in the timeline from 2014 to 2023. Data extraction from the databases was conducted in October 2023.

The data analysis is based on a quantitative and qualitative approach. First, quantitative analysis is carried out by taking into account the annual distribution of the studies, the publishers of research papers, methodological aspects, the geographical focus, sampling methods, and theoretical frameworks used in the studies. RQ1 is answered by the quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis is based on thematic analysis.

A total of seven themes were developed using a thematic analysis approach from selected studies (N=23). RQ3, which aims to find research gaps, is answered from the combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. RQ2 is answered from the qualitative data.

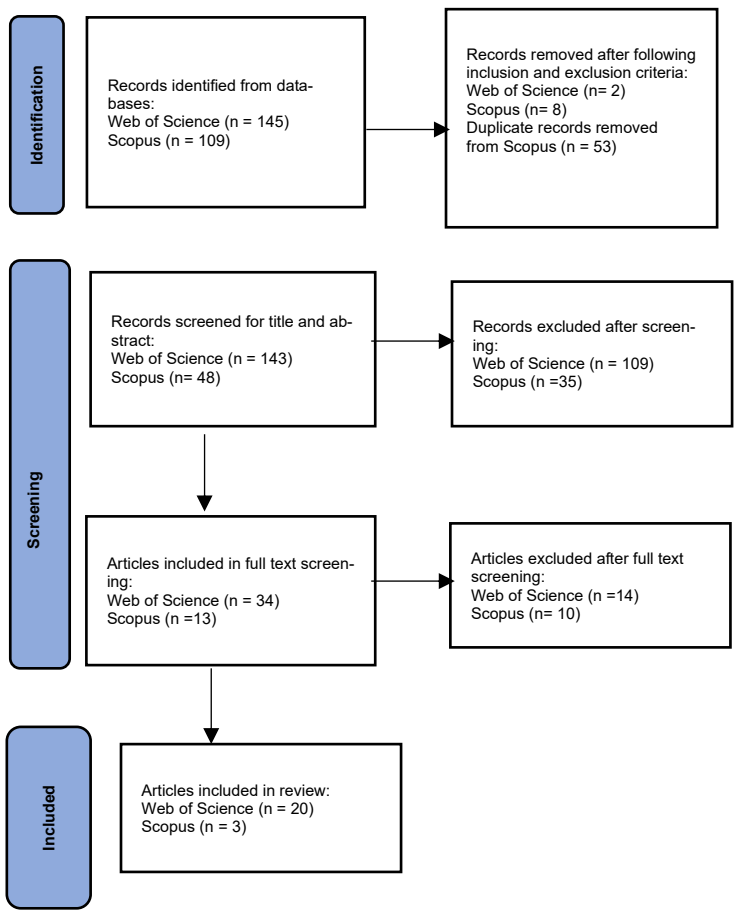


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

3. Graphical Representation on the Focus of the Selected Studies

The graphical representation is based on the keywords of the selected research studies (N=21). Two studies are excluded from this presentation because no keywords were provided in the studies. It shows the focus of the research included in the analysis. The selected studies mainly revolve around news avoidance, overload and social media. The researchers intended that the research studies should focus on news avoidance on social media, and this is also reflected in the graphical representation of the selected studies.

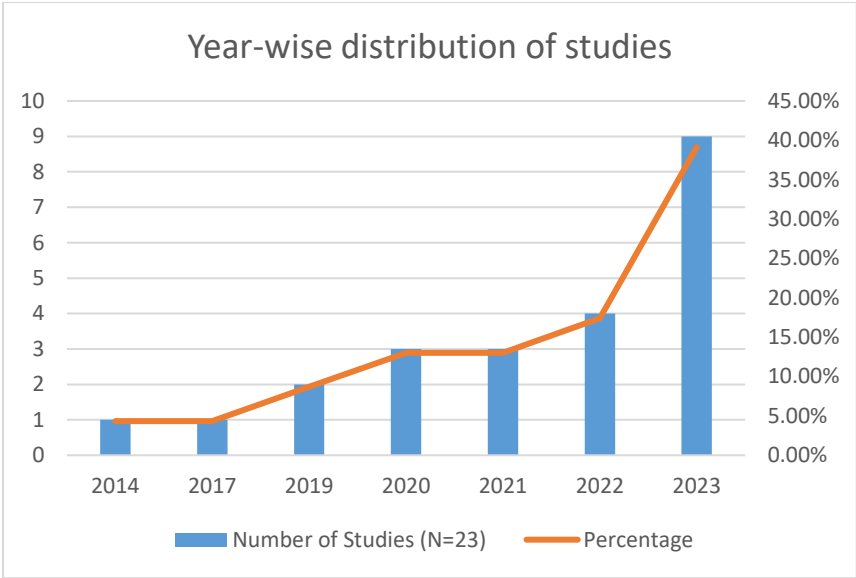


Figure 3 Year-wise distribution of studies

4.2. Distribution by Publication

Most of the selected research studies are published in journals of communication research like *Digital Journalism*, *Journalism Studies*, *Communication*, *Communication Research*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Journalism*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Communication*, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Social Media and Society*.

Only four papers are published in journals other than the communication field, which are *Public Health*, *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, and *Sage Open*. News avoidance is directly related to the field of communication, but also has an impact on democracy and society. Therefore, the phenomenon needs to be discovered from the perspective of other disciplines, such as political science and sociology.

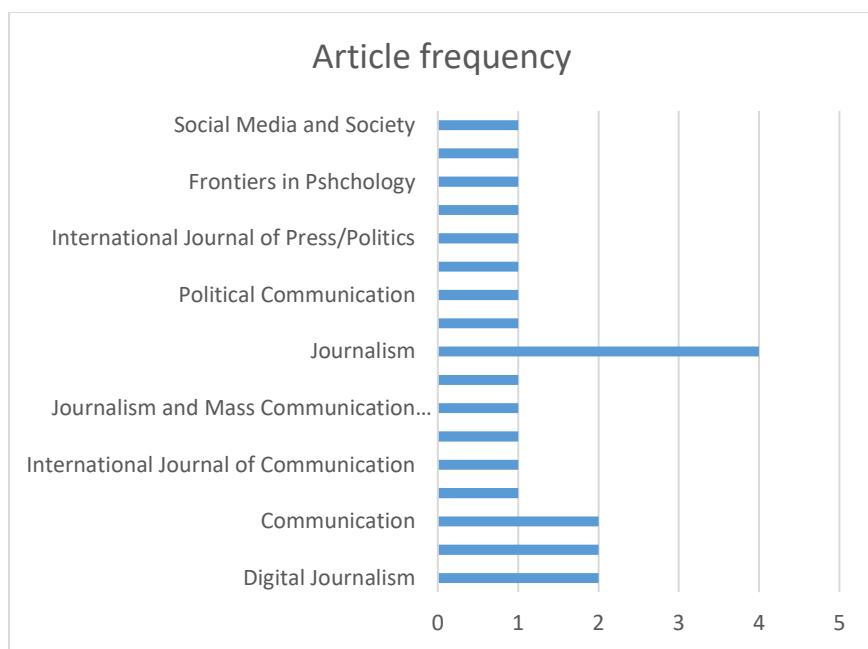


Figure 4 Distribution of studies in various journals

4.3. Methodological Aspects

The systematic analysis of 23 research papers found that research studies on news avoidance predominantly use quantitative methods. In the selected studies, 15 studies relied on quantitative methods for data collection, including surveys (used in 9 of the selected studies), panel surveys (4 studies), and experiments (2 studies). In most research studies on news avoidance on social media, surveys and panel surveys are clearly at the forefront. Qualitative research methods are used in only 4 of the studies; all qualitative studies adopted interview methods for data collection.

Secondary data sources were used in 4 of the selected studies. These studies used quantitative survey data. It appears that the proportion of qualitative studies corresponds to secondary data sources used to understand news avoidance on social media. It clearly shows that the use of the qualitative method has not been given much emphasis. Some factors associated with news avoidance can be uncovered using quantitative methods, but

others require qualitative methods for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

4.4. Sampling Techniques

This study tries to shed light on the sampling methods mostly used in research studies on news avoidance. It was found that in the selected studies ($N = 23$), four studies used secondary data, and the remaining 19 studies relied on primary data. In these 19 studies, 11 studies have used non-probability sampling techniques, whereas only 1 study has used probability sampling for data collection. The remaining seven studies have not mentioned the sampling methods used for collecting relevant data.

Most research studies rely on non-probability samples to collect data. It limits the understanding of the phenomenon in different populations. By using probability sampling techniques, researchers can help make generalisations about news avoidance that are still missing from existing research on the phenomenon.

4.5. Geographical Focus of the Studies

In the selected studies, ten studies focus on the European region, although according to Worldometer (2024), this region hosts only 9.32 per cent of the total world population. North America is second with six studies; all studies in the region focus only on the USA. Other countries in the region are completely ignored in research on news avoidance. The Asian region is home to 59.22 per cent of the total world population, but only six studies focus on the region. In the Asian region, two studies focus on China, two on South Korea, and one on Israel and Singapore. In Asia, India is the world's most populous country, yet there is a lack of research on news avoidance. One study brings together countries from the North and South American regions.

Africa and the Australian continent are completely ignored in existing research on news avoidance. Although Africa is home to 18.15 per cent of the world's total population, this is more than the total population (16.71 per cent of the world's total population) of Europe and North America. Nevertheless, the majority of existing research on news avoidance focuses on the European and North American regions. Researchers studying news

avoidance should focus on the ignored regions of Asia and Africa. This will help build a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

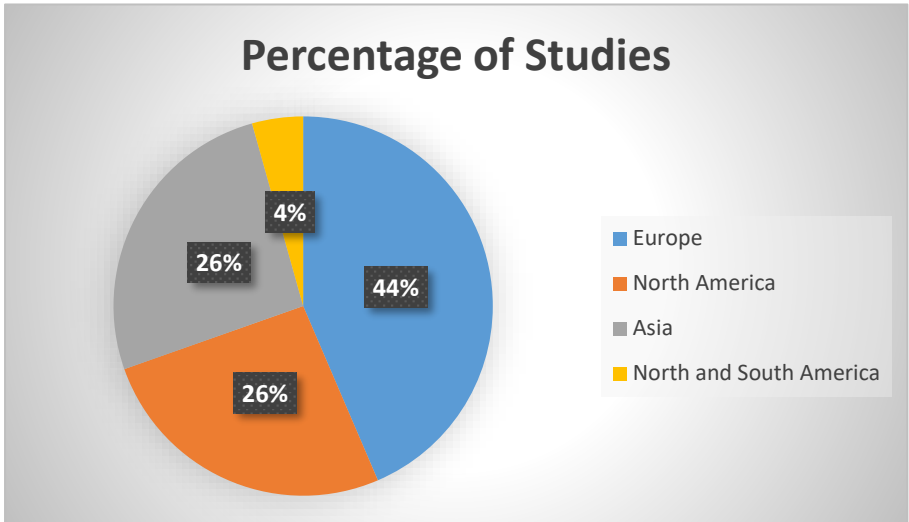


Figure 5 Geographical distribution of the selected studies

4.6. Theoretical Linkage with News Avoidance

In the selected research studies on news avoidance, most studies (17 studies) did not use a theoretical framework. In the selected studies, only six mention the theoretical framework used. The theoretical frameworks used by researchers are Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Carey's theory of communication as ritual, new media theory, extension and construction theory, practice theory and selective exposure theory. Few studies have used a theoretical framework, and the theories used are different in nature, so creating a pattern does not help.

5. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the selected studies tries to get a deeper understanding of the existing body of research on news avoidance. This qualitative analysis is based on a thematic analysis approach, which is based on the most occurring themes in the selected papers.

5.1. News Overload and Avoidance

Researchers have tried to understand the link between news overload and news avoidance. This theme describes a linkage from the existing body of literature. In the digital media age, a person is getting news constantly; these constant news updates create a feeling of news overload. According to Park (2019), individuals who feel overloaded by news have lower confidence in their capacity to locate and comprehend news on social media, and this diminished news efficacy results in avoiding consuming news on social media. The news overload created by news bombardment leads people to take some measures to relieve the cognitive burden, and people relieve this burden by avoiding the news content. Ni, Zhu, and Krever (2023) find the direct influence of news overload on the affective load (negative reactions such as anxiety or stress) of users and the direct influence of the affective load of users on their avoidance behaviour. News overload is a strong, significant indicator that people say they consume little news due to avoidance motivations (Ohme et al. 2022).

Tian (2022) states that when people feel that they are being overloaded with news, they will either avoid searching for news or prefer to filter out the relevant news from the multitude of news available. In this way, news overload is linked with two subsequent behaviours: avoiding news and filtering out news to find the most appropriate content. Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga (2023) found that in an environment where media is overly saturated, news avoidance may be interpreted as a coping mechanism for perceived news overload and an effort to free up cognitive resources.

It is crucial to understand the underlying mechanism which makes a person prone to avoid news content. Tandoc and Kim (2023) explain this mechanism in their study; they describe that information overload was associated with news fatigue and difficulty in analysing and processing relevant information. News fatigue and analysis paralysis subsequently led to news avoidance. Song, Jung, and Kim (2017) state that people utilise news avoidance as a coping strategy when they experience cognitive burdens due to perceived news overload. They also found a link between news overload and digital devices in their study. They explain that those who consume news through digital platforms are more likely to perceive news overload. People using mobile devices, in particular, had a higher level of perceived news overload. Younger people were also found to experience more perceived news overload. Studies have tried to understand the factors

associated with perceived news overload. Lee, Holton, and Chen (2019) found that political news contributes to the highest level of perceived news overload. As per the research findings, overall, news overload is most likely determined by news topics and news attributes rather than who the news consumer is. Respondents deal with this news overload by avoiding the news completely instead of engaging in selective scanning.

From the present research, it can be inferred that news overload in the digital media age causes a person to avoid news content. A person engages in avoidance behaviour to alleviate the cognitive load associated with news overload. The flood of news is, therefore, a challenge for the media industry and society as a whole.

5.2. Agents/Factors of News Avoidance

Most of the earlier research studies have tried to understand the major agents or factors which make a person prone to avoid news. This section tries to shed light on those major agents linked with news avoidance. According to Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga (2023), people who hold a 'news finds me perception' (a perception that they do not need to follow the news actively as the news will find them) are more prone to news avoidance behaviour. Although people holding this belief may be motivated to be informed, they perceive the process of obtaining information to be different. It is found from the analysis of the selected studies (N=23) that it has recently emerged as a factor of news avoidance; therefore, a smaller number of studies focus on it. People who are politically disinterested are somewhat more likely to avoid the popular online press (Lindell and Mikkelsen Båge 2023). Similarly, another study finds that political interest is an important predictor of news avoidance, but its effect does not increase over time (Gorski and Thomas 2022).

According to Mukerjee and Yang (2021), avoiding news posts with out-party cues is more evident than selecting news posts with in-party cues. It clearly establishes the impact of political ideology on news avoidance behaviour. Another study finds that one motivation for avoiding news is its perception as biased (Aharoni et al. 2021). Trust in the news is a major factor linked with news avoidance behaviour; Toff and Kalogeropoulos (2020) also confirm this in their study. The study also explains media genre preferences as among the strongest predictors of news avoidance at the individual level.

Palmer and Toff (2020) stated that news avoiders perceived news consumption as a bad deal. They believed that it offered limited informational benefits and high costs in terms of time, emotional energy, and mental effort, particularly when compared to readily available alternatives. News avoiders also believed that news was particularly useless in facilitating meaningful political action because it tended to concern itself with far-flung issues that had little to do with their daily lives. Lor, Oh, and Choi (2023) found in their study a connection between the amount of news consumed and the feeling of powerlessness experienced. Therefore, the feeling of powerlessness caused by news consumption could also lead people to avoid news.

It indicates that avoiders associate different types of motivations with news avoidance behaviour, which triggers them to avoid news content. Woodstock (2014) also found some other motivations linked with news avoidance; news resisters explained that they feel calmer, more purposeful, and willing to work with others. Lottridge et al. (2022) explained that lack of time, the omnipresence of news, the negativity of news and distrust in the news content are agents of news avoidance behaviour. The factors found linked with news avoidance behaviour will help to better understand the phenomenon and also to deal with it to a certain extent.

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged from the selected literature as an agent for news avoidance behaviour. Buneviciene et al. (2021) found that one-third of study participants lost interest and avoided news about the COVID-19 pandemic. These results suggest that COVID-19-related fatigue may lead to desensitisation and avoidance of news about the pandemic.

5.3. Profile of News Avoiders

News avoidance is considered a complex phenomenon; researchers are working to arrive at a common understanding of it. However, by identifying the news avoider, we can get an understanding of the phenomenon to some extent. Researchers have tried to understand the characteristics which make a person prone to news avoidance. Lindell and Mikkelsen Båge (2023) found in their study that people in less privileged social positions are more likely to report completely avoiding news online. The study suggests that social class, as measured by individuals' access to economic and cultural capital, explains why people avoid certain types of online news platforms. Further, being a woman and older age is linked with higher

avoidance of quality press online. Ohme et al. (2022) also found that women had lower general news consumption as well as news topics. This clearly establishes the fact that women are more prone to news avoidance behaviour.

According to Karlsen, Beyer, and Steen-Johnsen (2020), women, young people, and less educated people are more likely to avoid news content. An increase in news avoidance was generally present in groups with low socioeconomic status. It clearly establishes a link between the low socioeconomic status of a person and subsequent news avoidance behaviour. The longitudinal study finds that the number of news avoiders increased significantly in the group of people with low levels of education. However, according to Toff and Kalogeropoulos (2020), education has no significant association with levels of avoidance. Younger people, women, people with left-leaning ideology, and those with lower internal efficacy or trust in the news were significantly more likely to say they actively avoid news (Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020). However, Ni, Zhu, and Krever (2023) found that age, gender, education, or occupation have no impact on users' avoidance behaviour. The contradictions in the research findings require more research on these aspects to reach a clear understanding. The factors associated with news avoiders might help identify them. In addition, it will also help to better understand the phenomenon and deal with it in the future.

5.4. Social Media and News Avoidance

Today, people have many platforms for accessing news content; with technological advancements, many users are relying on digital media platforms for news consumption. Social media is a major segment in the realm of digital media for news. Researchers have investigated its impact on news avoidance behaviour. Toff and Kalogeropoulos (2020) found in their study that individuals who primarily gathered news from social media were much more likely to report purposefully avoiding the news. Similarly, Tian (2022) also found that social media news overload will drive people to avoid seeking news. Due to the abundance of information available on social media, people are feeling bombarded with news, affecting their cognitive abilities and making them more likely to avoid news altogether. On the other hand, social media offers its users a wide range of choices effortlessly.

5.5. News Avoidance and Engagement

Ohme et al. (2023) state that news avoidance is often associated with less political engagement, posing a direct threat to a democratic society. Researchers have tried to explore this side of news avoidance, and the research revealed some unexpected findings contrary to the already-held belief about news avoidance. Ohme et al. (2023) conducted a study during COVID-19, and they found that news avoidance has a positive association with civic engagement in prosocial activities during a crisis. The study concludes that less news consumption is not necessarily bad news for democracy. Woodstock (2014) explains that news avoidance gave people an optimistic worldview, and some of them reported a renewed energy to engage in democratic action. These findings highlight some of the possible benefits associated with a person's news avoidance behaviour.

5.6. The Drawback of News Avoidance

Understanding the implications of news avoidance behaviour on individuals and society is crucial. Only then will some measures take place to address it. Literature suggests some drawbacks of news avoidance. According to Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga (2023), those people who do not actively seek news and take steps to avoid inadvertent exposure. They are unlikely to be able to learn about or discuss complex political issues, participate in collective action for social change or hold political elites accountable. Therefore, it becomes a challenge for a well-functioning democracy, which solely depends on an informed citizenry.

A study finds that intentional news avoiders scored lowest on accurate beliefs (Damstra et al. 2023). It makes news avoidance a problem for the knowledge of the avoiders. Misinformation is posing a new set of threats to society, particularly in the age of digital media. Avoiding news can make people who are frequently exposed to misinformation more likely to believe it (Tandoc and Kim 2023). Hameleers and Meer (2023) found in their study that participants who tended to avoid the news were more likely to have misinformation related to COVID-19 than news seekers. Therefore, it becomes crucial to take news avoidance seriously. According to Song, Jung, and Kim (2017), news avoidance has negative consequences at the societal level; it could also hinder the formation of civic and political knowledge. These challenges make it urgent to consider news avoidance as a serious threat to society.

5.7. Solutions to News Avoidance

From the findings of research studies, it is established that news avoidance is a big challenge for individuals and society at large. Earlier research studies tried to investigate some of the ways which can help deal with news avoidance. According to Park (2019), news overload can be removed by increasing citizens' belief in their news efficacy through literacy initiatives on news consumption led by politicians and educators.

Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga (2023) suggest in their research that the more you trust professional news, the less you avoid the news. Trust in professional news reduces news avoidance. Therefore, media houses can work on trust building to bring back news avoiders. A study by Ohme et al. (2022) highlights that high interest in politics and enjoyment linked with news consumption reduce the chances of not being aware of the news. Furthermore, they explain that news curation can be utilised to deal with news avoidance by increasing the relevance of news to its users. Song, Jung, and Kim (2017) also found news curation as a solution to deal with news avoidance. In his research study, Overgaard (2023) found that constructive social media posts enhance positive feelings, improve self-efficacy, and increase media credibility. Therefore, constructive journalism can be used to deal with some of the most common factors linked with a person's news avoidance behaviour.

People also try to deal with news avoidance behaviour caused by news overload on their own. As Park (2019) mentioned in his research study, some users are likely to rely on social filtering to alleviate perceived news overload. In social filtering, a person relies on friends to identify and access relevant news content. These facts clearly indicate that society can take some measures to deal with news avoidance at the individual level, and also with the help of initiatives from the media and policymakers.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The level of news avoidance behaviour is on the rise (Newman et al. 2023). It is imperative to take this rising level seriously because civic and political engagement is significantly lower among news avoiders than among news seekers (Edgerly 2022). Skovsgaard and Andersen (2022) also confirm that political knowledge and engagement are low among people who

consistently avoid news. It makes news avoidance challenging for society and democracy.

The quantitative examination of the selected studies shows some relevant patterns in the literature on news avoidance. Year-wise distribution highlights a sudden increase in the number of studies in 2023. However, work started on the phenomenon in 2014. However, it took 8 years for it to emerge as a key issue in the area of communication research. News avoidance behaviour increased during the COVID-19 crisis (de Bruin et al. 2021). It explains the rise in the number of studies on news avoidance. The analysis of published research papers (selected research studies) on news avoidance shows the concentration of research in the communication discipline. There is a need to understand this phenomenon from other disciplinary angles, considering its implications. The methodological analysis shows that 82.6 per cent of the selected studies (N=23) used primary methods for data collection, while the remaining 17.39 per cent of the studies relied on secondary sources for relevant data. The analysis shows a dominance of quantitative methods: 65.21 per cent of the selected studies (N=23) adopted quantitative methods for primary data collection. Only 17.39 per cent of the selected studies used qualitative methods. The remaining 17.39 per cent of studies use secondary sources. News avoidance is a behavioural phenomenon that can be better researched using qualitative research methods. Most researchers have used nonprobability sampling techniques when studying news avoidance. This prevents researchers from generalising their research results and also from assessing the severity of the phenomenon.

Geographical analysis of the selected studies shows that most research studies focused on the European region (43.47 per cent) and North America (26 per cent). The Asia region is represented in only 26 per cent of the selected studies, even though 59.22 per cent of the world's population lives in this region. On the other hand, the African region is completely ignored in existing research, even if it accounts for 18.15 per cent of the world population. This demonstrates the fact that the regional distribution of studies is disproportionate to the population in the regions. A clear and holistic understanding of the phenomenon can be built when each region is represented in the research.

The qualitative examination of the selected studies reveals significant insights from the existing body of research. The studies show how news overload is linked to subsequent news avoidance behaviour. Most of the

research studies consider it an important cause that results in news avoidance (Park 2019; Ohme et al. 2022; Tian 2022; Tandoc and Kim 2023). News overload is prominently found in people using mobile devices (Song, Jung, and Kim 2017). People avoid news when they feel overloaded in an attempt to free cognitive resources, so they utilise it as a coping strategy for news overload (Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga 2023).

Researchers have identified the key factors of news avoidance. These agents make a person vulnerable to news avoidance behaviour. News finds me perception, political disinterest, trust in news, lack of time, the ubiquity of news, and negative news are some of the most common reasons that lead a person to avoid news content (Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga 2023; Lindell and Mikkelsen Båge 2023; Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020; Lottridge et al. 2022). In addition, there are also some individual characteristics that make a person more likely to avoid news. People in less privileged social positions, women, old age, young, less educated people, people with left-wing ideology, and people with lower internal efficacy are more likely to report news avoidance (Lindell and Mikkelsen Båge 2023; Ohme et al. 2022; Karlsen, Beyer, and Steen-Johnsen 2020; Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020). Social media offers an abundance of choices for news consumption, and researchers have investigated its impact on users' news consumption. Research has shown that social media leads people to avoid news (Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020; Tian 2022). The primary reason behind this behaviour is the news overload experienced on social media.

It is critical to understand the factors that make news avoidance a threat to society. The research suggests that news avoiders are unlikely to discuss complex political issues, participate in social change and hold politicians accountable (Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga 2023). Additionally, avoiders hold false beliefs and believe in misinformation (Damstra et al. 2023; Tandoc and Kim 2023). These factors combine to make news avoidance a challenge to democracy and society as a whole. Given the potential challenges of news avoidance, studies have found some solutions to deal with this behaviour. Researchers suggest trust in news, interest in news, enjoyment of news consumption, news curation, and constructive news to deal with news avoidance (Goyanes, Ardèvol-Abreu, and Gil de Zúñiga 2023; Ohme et al. 2022; Overgaard 2023; Song, Jung, and Kim 2017). However, it is equally important to understand that news avoidance is associated with participation in prosocial activities during times of crisis (Ohme et al. 2023). Similarly, Woodstock (2014) also finds that news

avoidance actually gave people an optimistic outlook, and some avoiders engaged in democratic action with renewed energy.

With news avoidance increasing worldwide, media companies are planning to combat news avoidance in a variety of ways. Media companies are looking for better explanations for complex stories (67 per cent), solutions/constructive journalism (44 per cent), more inspiring human stories (43 per cent), a diverse presenting reporting team (35 per cent), simpler language/accessible formats (35 per cent), more positive news (21 per cent), more funny or entertaining news (18 per cent) (Newman 2024).

When studying news avoidance, it is important to consider news consumption by applications; otherwise, online news avoidance will be overestimated (Reiss 2023). Most research studies used quantitative methods. There is a clear gap in the qualitative understanding of news avoidance. The regional distribution of studies highlights the lack of research in Asia and Africa. The consequences of news avoidance behaviour are often linked in the literature to political implications for society, but may also have other effects that need to be discovered. Studies have proposed solutions to curb the effects of news avoidance, but none have tested the actual effects on avoidance behaviour. Experimental research into proposed solutions can help the research community find some proven solutions to news avoidance. The response of media companies to avoidance behaviour is also inadequate. It is important to understand how they perceive this phenomenon and how they try to deal with it. By leveraging media and audience data, a holistic understanding of its impact can be built.

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