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Impact of Social Networks on Access to News among the French Generation Z Population

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Abstract

This thesis named "Impact of Social Networks on Access to News among the French Generation Z Population" examines the effects of social networks on Generation Z's access to information in France, in a global context where these platforms have profoundly changed the circulation and consumption of information. The study focuses on the evolution of the media scene in France, in particular the inter-action of social networks with traditional media, as well as on the information consumption preferences of Generation Z youth.

This research was based on the results of a qualitative questionnaire sent to members of Generation Z in France.

The research shows that social networks have become preferred sources of information for this generation, encouraging them to seek information in real time via these platforms rather than through traditional media.

However, it also highlights the problems associated with this transition, such as the spread of false information and the formation of information bubbles.

Keywords/tags

Social Networks, French population, Generation Z, News, Traditional Media

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

No confidential information was disclosed in the thesis.

Contents

Figures

Tables

1   Introduction

1.1   Background, motivation, and purpose

Social networks have irreversibly changed the way information is circulated and consumed around the world. In an age of digitization and interconnection, social networks have become central to our daily lives, significantly influencing our understanding of current affairs. That's why research into the impact of social networks on access to news by Generation Z in France is so interesting.

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and 2010, represents young adults who have grown up in a new media environment. This thesis examines the impact of social networks on access to information by Generation Z in France, looking at changes in the media landscape and the implications for the way young people inform themselves, form their opinions and engage with contemporary society.

The evolution of media over the last few decades has been characterized by the development of social media platforms. Giants like Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and Tik Tok have become essential channels of communication, providing a space where people can share, comment, like and discuss news in real time. These platforms have not only facilitated the dissemination of information, but also changed the way it is presented and consumed. Born into a constantly evolving digital world, Generation Z has naturally become the generation that has integrated social networks into its lifestyle, bringing about significant changes in the way we access information.

Generation Z represents a group of young people born and raised in an era when access to information has become ubiquitous thanks to the Internet and social networks. While the previous generation, the Millennials, witnessed the development of the Internet, Generation Z was born with a smartphone in hand, social networking applications installed and constant access to multiple sources of information. As highlighted (Cilliers, 2017), "Generation Z has naturally become the generation that has integrated social networks into its lifestyle, bringing about significant changes in the way we access information".
As a result, social media has become an integral part of their lives, influencing not only the way they receive information, but also their perception of the world around them.
Generation Z, often referred to as the "digital generation" or the "Internet generation", is a particularly interesting demographic to study. They were born into a world of digital transformation, where information was instantly accessible and the boundaries between traditional and social media were blurring. These young people became actively involved in the production, distribution and consumption of information. Their online browsing habits, penchant for multimedia formats and engagement with social networks have created a unique context that deserves to be explored in depth.

France, as a European nation with strong networks, has not escaped cultural and media transformations. Young French Generation Z are exposed to numerous social networking platforms that play a key role in their daily lives. In France, traditional media such as television, radio and the written press have long played a central role in the dissemination of information. However, with the advent of social networking, these media are facing new challenges. As claimed (Langlais, 2020) "The challenge for traditional media is to adapt to these new behaviors". Generation Z young people are less and less likely to stay informed through traditional methods, preferring digital platforms to keep abreast of current events. This transition has profound implications for the media industry, journalistic practices and the way society receives and interprets information. Indeed, France, as a European nation with strong networks, has not escaped cultural and media transformations. Generation Z young people in France are exposed to numerous social networking platforms that play a key role in their daily lives. According to recent statistical data, the country's generation stands out for its massive use of social platforms, with an average of over 21.8 million monthly active users on the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X) and Tik Tok. These young people are not simply present on these platforms, but use them intensively, spending an average of three hours a day interacting with multimedia content. These statistics underline the crucial importance of social networks in the daily lives of Generation Z in France, positioning them as key players in the way information is disseminated and consumed. Thus, this study takes place in a global context where media dynamics are rapidly evolving, with major implications for French youth and their perception of news, politics and civic participation.

The evolution of media and information consumption habits is also influenced by social networks. Social media platforms have changed the way information is distributed and consumed. News will now be presented in the form of "feeds". The feed's primary aim is to reduce the burden on users of identifying relevant information and automatically recommending items that are likely to be of interest to everyone (Freyne, 2010). By this way, it enabling users to interact, comment, share and instantly create news-based content. This dynamic has not only changed the nature of information, but also the way the public understands it.

In a global context, the rapid evolution of social networks has brought about significant changes in the way information circulates and is consumed. The rise of the main social networks used today by Generation Z has created a new media ecosystem where real-time interaction and rapid dissemination of information have become the norm. These global trends are having an impact on the way individuals, particularly Generation Z, inform themselves and interact with the world around them.

In addition, the impact of these changes on civic participation, political engagement and opinion-forming within this generation is analyzed. To do this, it is important to take into account several key factors, including the demographics of Generation Z, changes in media and information consumption, and the unique communication dynamics of social networks.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of media, information practices and citizen participation in an increasingly digital world. It aims to provide an overview of the significant changes that have taken place in the French media landscape, and highlights the opportunities and challenges faced by Generation Z in finding and interacting with information in the 21st century.

1.2   Research objectives, questions, and approach

RQ 1.0 What is the impact of social networks on French Generation Z's access to news?

RO 1.0 To find out what is the impact of social networks on French Generation Z's access to news based on qualitative survey in form of questionnaire.

RQ 1.1 What impact have social networks had on the traditional media landscape in France?

RO 1.1 To find out what impact have social networks had on the traditional media landscape in France based archival research in form of relevant publications.

RQ 1.2 How do Generation Z young people access the news?

RO 1.2 To find how do Generation Z young people access the news based on questionnaire.

1.3   Thesis structure

The thesis is organized into several main parts to examine how social networks have impacted on Generation Z's access to information in France. First and foremost, a thorough review of current literature is carried out, focusing on the evolution of traditional media in France, the impact of social networks on information distribution, and trends and developments in the media landscape. This first step aims to create a solid framework for understanding the context in which Generation Z is developing.

Following this, particular attention is paid to how Generation Z access news. This section looks in detail at their preferred methods of accessing information, the frequency with which they consult news, and their reactions to news exposure on social networks. This analysis will help to better understand the information behaviors and expectations of this generation.

The thesis explains in detail the research methods used to collect the data required for this study, after defining the theoretical framework and analyzing the information access habits of Generation Z. This includes a qualitative survey of a sample of Generation Z young people in France.

A crucial step in the thesis is to analyze the results of this qualitative study. The data collected offer a better understanding of Gen Z youth's attitudes, opinions and experiences regarding access to information, as well as their perceptions of traditional media and social networks.

Finally, an in-depth discussion is conducted between the results of the literature review and the findings of the qualitative research. The final section highlights the convergences, divergences and practical implications of the research findings as a whole. The thesis offers an in-depth understanding of the complex interplay between Generation Z, social networks and access to information in France by integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical data.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In order to examine the impact of social networks on Generation Z's access to news, the author relied in particular on research from three publications related to the subject, but which allow us to delve deeper into the issue while addressing the different research sections.

Table 1. Main articles from Literature Review

Author	Year	Title	Factors	Experience
Emil Magnusson	2023	Information, news, and politics gathering through social media by Generation Z	Replacement of traditional media by social media; Dependence of younger generations on social media; Awareness of the importance of reliable sources	Semi-structured interviews with 10

				par- tici- pants
Ira Bruce Gultney	2022	Political polariza- tion, misinfor- mation, and media literacy	Easy access to digital and social media; initia- tives to combat misin- formation; assessing news credibility	Study of 206 stu- dents' inter- ac- tion with social me- dia
Ignacio Ramonet	1993	Get informed fa- tigue	The decline of the print media; the influence of television on direct in- formation; the modified concept of veracity	Anal- ysis of be- hav- ior and fun- da- men- tal con- cepts

2.2   Impact of social networks on the traditional media landscape in France.

2.2.1   Evolution of traditional media in France

Over the past 25 years, major changes have taken place in the dynamic environment of news communica-
tion media. From the age-old medium of print to social networks, television and radio, the news media

have constantly evolved and reinvented themselves. By revising their codes and concepts, this race for news has considerably changed the media landscape.

Indeed, the written press has seen a significant decline in its circulation, suffering in particular from "a loss of identity and personality, explained by the mutation of the basic concepts of journalism" Ramonet (1993). Where once readers sought information in order to understand a specific, verified element, they now seek to see in order to understand. This concept changed radically with the advent of television news. The action of "informing" shifted the emphasis to "showing the story in action, so that people can witness the event". From then on, "seeing" became synonymous with "understanding". In this way, the viewer changed his or her vision of veracity. In the age of the written press, "a fact is true because it is verified at source"; then came television, and its sharing of direct information, veracity then translated into "a fact is true because it is shared and confirmed by other media". This new mechanic has highlighted the viewer's new main attraction: the time of information has become pre-eminent, the directness and immediacy of information is now essential, implying that only TV (thanks to its daily news and all-news channels) and radio are capable of providing information in the time allotted. This trend reflects a new concept: "television constructs the news and forces the written press to follow".

Thus, the direct revolution has condemned paper newspapers to take a back seat to radio and TV news. Alongside the digital revolution, education has played a key role in the introduction of media into everyday life (Frau-Meigs, 2013). Indeed, at a time when screens were multiplying in the home (television and computers), the arrival of the Internet only accelerated this movement. But media education has also played a major role in the "implementation of media in social life". One of the reasons for this is the "E-Learning" program launched by the European Union, which puts the spotlight on "information and communication technologies for education". The growing importance given to IT and its resources has given a prominent place to new media. Beginning with the transmission of news on the Internet, the first information was broadcast on social media.

This transformation was confirmed by McIntyre (2013) in his work The Evolution of Social Media from 1969 to 2013; demonstrating a theoretical transition in the evolution of social media. "Direct competition between platforms has become competition for the public's time and attention. With the public looking for hard-hitting, easy, straightforward news, each of the media then focuses on these criteria. Far removed from the in-depth analysis of the print media, it's now time to focus on the optimal ability to reach an audience as quickly as possible. This is where a new concept comes into play: "Social media can influence the news industry as a whole".

2.2.2 Evolution Influence of social networks on news distribution

Hellmann (2014), "The importance of network structure in social and economic systems is by now very well understood." In one sentence, the author explains that social networks are no longer limited to the social concept, as they may have been at their inception, when their aim was to create relationships between users. Today, they have a real economic stake, due to the presence of new online media, new influential users, and their role as global informers. As stated by Lagnier (2011), social networks now play a major role in information dissemination media. The main challenge of these digital tools is "predicting the dissemination of information". By emphasizing the choice of the best points of entry into the network to "ensure optimal dissemination of the given information", the author here induces the asset of a social network: to parameterize the dissemination of content through precise and analyzed indicators. By presenting the 3 key indicators "number of neighbors who have already disseminated the information; relevance of the information for each person; willingness of the user to disseminate the information", he describes the essential concept of today's Internet: the algorithm. The algorithm's main objective is to maximize influence. This principle is also taken up by Guille (2014) in his study presenting the MABED method, which uses social media data to "automatically detect important events that arouse user interest", underlining the advantage held by social networks over traditional media. Indeed, by analyzing user data in this way, social networks can target their audience to optimize their power to transmit information. This is an ability that print media, television and radio do not have, since they have to address an entire audience uniformly. Due to this huge audience, social networks have a big impact on the public opinion, claimed Hu (2015), "the interactions among agents within social networks can amplify media influence", which clearly underlines the importance of these ongoing exchanges, which can help to influence ways of thinking or points of view on certain events. De plus, le fait que le consommateur de ces plateformes soit également le producteur d'une partie des informations, amplifie cette idée d'opinion publique. This is what Weeks (2015) explains when he talks about "prosumers", a term derived from the contraction of the 2 functions of users. They are the first to be aware of their impact and the influence they have on opinion, and this enables them to optimize their audience by knowing exactly how to captivate it.

In addition to targeting their audience, social networks also have well-defined dissemination strategies, as Al-Oraiqat (2021) explains: the principle is to influence public opinion using various types of information, such as images, short, punchy texts, concise videos and so on. However, Denisova (2022) stresses the importance of not confusing the concept of "viral journalism" with that of "clickbait". Viral journalism consists in adopting a strategy that promotes media facts through hard-hitting headlines and images, in order to gain greater exposure. Conversely, "clickbait" is the use of shocking images or headlines for the sole purpose of attracting readers, without any connection to the final information. By understanding user behav-

ior, the aim is to get closer to what will be most effective for them. News is no longer used as a piece of information to be understood, but as a form of entertainment that strikes a chord with the user. To this end, it also introduces the "opinion-leader" principle, which underlines the importance of "influential figures" in the propagation of information. Social media can use the power of influence to impact a maximum number of people in a minimum amount of time. As a result, news is not only disseminated by the central transmitter of information, but by all the other users likely to be affected. In this way, the range of possibilities for disseminating information via social networks is exponential.

2.2.3   Analysis of trends and changes in the media landscape

This evolution in the way information is disseminated since the mass arrival of social networks has prompted an in-depth analysis of emerging trends in the contemporary media landscape. The emergence of new ways of getting information is intimately linked to the dynamics of the journalistic platforms present on the various social networks. This evolution has led to the emergence of new, less conventional alternative media sources, such as independents, which have gained in popularity by offering information from a new, simpler perspective. This notion is explained by Rauch (2016) "alternative media persist in being less commercial, producing more critical content and being more committed to social change than their mainstream counterparts".

By creating dedicated entities on these platforms, the media have contributed significantly to the shift in consumption towards mobile devices, accentuating the predominance of information circulation through social networks. According to Rebillard (2019), this trend is defined as the "platformization of information consumption". In this way, it is possible to assert that the various displacements towards mobile terminals have accentuated the cross-fertilization of information with communication, leading the public to assimilate social networks as an informative medium.

This trend is also linked to a crisis of confidence in the media and the public's loss of reference points. Indeed, since the arrival of the Internet, the public's perception of the media and information as such has changed fundamentally, calling into question, as Saulnier (2021) explains, "the added value of journalism in a changing media environment". Traditional media are being confronted by new media, and vertical distribution is being replaced by horizontal distribution.

The role of "infomediaries" also needs to be taken into account in this evolution of comportments. This term is a combination of "intermediary" and "information» and represents an entity or platform with a role in information distribution. Its role is to facilitate the retrieval and presentation of information from a vari-

ety of sources. These infomediaries, which today operate as search engines on social networks, exert a significant influence on the contemporary media landscape. Indeed, they have reintegrated themselves deeply into users' habits, becoming key players in the process of accessing information. The impact of infomediaries on information distribution extends beyond simply facilitating research. They also contribute to the selective presentation of information according to user preferences and behaviors. Using sophisticated algorithms, these platforms personalize search results, creating information bubbles that can influence individual perceptions of news.

2.3 How Generation Z forms its opinion on the media facts it receives.

2.3.1 Preferred access methods (social networks, news sites, apps, etc.)

Generation Z navigates a complex media landscape, shaped by the advent of information technologies and social networks. To understand the methods of accessing information favored by this generation, it is crucial to understand the various practices and trends that characterize this generation in its interaction with information.

A look at the articles studied reveals a marked trend towards the use of digital platforms as the main channels for accessing news. According to Mellot (2021), search engines such as Google News appear to play a central role, acting as a gateway to a diverse media panorama. This choice highlights the trust placed in these tools to aggregate relevant content and reflects the way in which Generation Z actively uses technology to inform themselves. Indeed, it's fair to say that today's subscribers are beginning to trust political bloggers (Hugo Décrypte, Bonjour Tristesse, Gaspard G) more than the official media. For Mockba (2021), this may indicate a change in the way Generation Z accesses information, preferring more informal and personal sources.

However, it is also worth noting that there is a certain distrust of traditional media, such as television and radio, often perceived as less suited to the dynamic and connected lifestyle of Generation Z explained Catenaro (2017). Young people prefer to turn to online sources of information, notably social networks and digital media, despite a heightened awareness of intrusive advertising attempts.

Even so, Generation Z seems to place particular importance on the quality and veracity of information. "The trusting approach to detailed content, rich in testimonials and tweet captures, indicates that the perception of truth takes precedence over the traditional media source" quotes Mellot (2021). These points of importance, therefore, drive young people to prioritize social networks that can contain this kind of format, i.e. Instagram, Twitter or even Tik Tok mainly since 2020.

As a result, Generation Z is resolutely orienting its methods of accessing news towards the digital world, placing social networks at the heart of its information process. These platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter

and Tik Tok, stand out as the preferred ways for this dynamic generation to stay connected with the world around them. Search engines, in particular Google News, also remain key players in this quest for fast and varied information.

The emergence of these social networks as preferred channels underlines the importance of interactivity and rapid information viewing for Generation Z. However, beyond this common preference, the diversity of individual information consumption practices highlights a nuanced approach within this generation. Some prefer in-depth linear reading, while others prefer a more fragmented approach, extracting information from online media and combining it with their pre-existing knowledge.

In conclusion, Generation Z's preferred access to news is emerging through a digital web in which social networks play a central role. This preference is not, however, unified, reflecting the diversity of individual approaches within this attentive, active generation, constantly on the lookout for quality content.

2.3.2   Frequency of news viewing

Social networks are today's main source of information. According to a study conducted by Médiamétrie in 2018, 71% of young people aged 15 to 34 use social networks every day to obtain news, preferring this platform to other sources such as TV news, music radio news flashes or the online daily press stresses Boyadjan (2020). A claimed Ozkan (2015), "Using of the mobile phones with technical innovations has become more common for this group named as generation Z".

The consumption of short, visual content particularly reflects this high frequency of access to news. Platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter are highly valued for their ability to disseminate information quickly and interactively. Generation Z therefore prefers formats suited to a fast-paced lifestyle, which reinforces their need to stay informed. High access frequency is influenced by mobility. Today's young people, as a mobile generation, use mobile applications to stay connected to current events even on the move. Their dynamic, connected lifestyles match this constant accessibility.

It's important to note that frequent access to news is not limited to information seeking. Generation Z takes an active interest in social, environmental and political issues, and positions itself as a committed player in causes that affect them directly. As a result, Generation Z stands out for its daily engagement with actuality, fueled by intensive use of social networks and a constant search for content tailored to their needs. This reinforces their essential role in redefining the way young people consume and interact with information.

However, today generation Z's intensive use of smartphones is a cause for concern, as it seems to be creating a dependency that affects their social and personal lives. This is what explained Mason (2022), "Recent studies found that smartphone usage has become an addiction nowadays, especially among young consumers."

2.3.3 Feeling of Gen Z, about their exposure to news on social networks

A fascinating aspect of the evolution of contemporary media is the phenomenon of Generation Z in relation to their exposure to news via social networks. According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center in 2022, 78% of Gen Z members believe that social networks are their main source of information. In part, this preference is due to the ease of access and speed of dissemination of information on these platforms.

However, it is important to note that Gen Z faces unique men-tal health problems as a result of this use of social networks. According to a WHO survey, 65% of Gen Z young people feel stress due to news broadcast on social networks. Overexposure to information can lead to information fatigue, a condition in which excessive amounts of information cause emotional distress.

Despite these concerns, young people also demonstrate a degree of informational independence. Some 56% of Gen Z members believe that social media enable them to inform themselves on subjects that are important to them. Consequently, the impact of social networks on the feelings of this generation is complex, combining both the opportunity to access information and the risks to their emotional well-being.

2.4 Identified Research Gap

The identified research gap for my thesis on "the impact of social networks on access to news for Gen Z" has been shaped by significant challenges encountered during the conception of this study. Firstly, the difficulty in finding information specifically related to social media access in France has been a major obstacle. This challenge is echoed in the thesis (De Miguel Molina , 2019), ""Fake News" Is Not Simply False Information: A Concept Explication and Taxonomy of Online Content," where the authors highlight the complexities of online content classification, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach. Similarly, the thesis (Gaultney, 2022), "Political polarization, misinformation, and media literacy" emphasizes the importance of understanding the influence of political polarization on news consumption, a factor that varies across regions, including France.

Furthermore, the struggle to find objective reports based on data studies, as mentioned in my research gap, resonates with the findings of the thesis (Amsalem, 2023), "Do people learn about politics on social media? A meta-analysis of 76 studies." This meta-analysis emphasizes the importance of reliable data and balanced analyses, which aligns with the need for a critical and balanced approach in my research. Additionally, the taxonomy introduced in the thesis ""Fake News" Is Not Simply False Information" provides a framework for disambiguating online news content, which can be valuable in addressing the challenges of subjective analyses and extreme points of view found in existing literature.

In sum, these insights underscore the necessity of a critical and nuanced approach in analyzing the impact of social networks on information access for Generation Z in France. By addressing the challenges of data specificity, objectivity, and balanced analysis highlighted in existing research, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interaction between young people and social media in the French context.

2.5 Research Framework

The research framework of this thesis was based on Magnusson (2023). "Information, news, and politics gathering through social media by Generation Z".

This choice is based on several significant factors. Firstly, the author adopts a similar perspective by focusing on Generation Z, a key demographic group in the evolution of social media and online communication. Using this group as an example, he offers an in-depth understanding of the behaviors and attitudes that are crucial to understanding the interaction between young people and digital media. In addition, the author exhaustively analyzes the various methods of accessing social networks used by Generation Z. This provides a solid basis for our own research, enabling us to deepen and broaden these analyses while maintaining methodological consistency with his work. By combining our research efforts, we hope to make a significant contribution to understanding the complex dynamics of contemporary media communication.
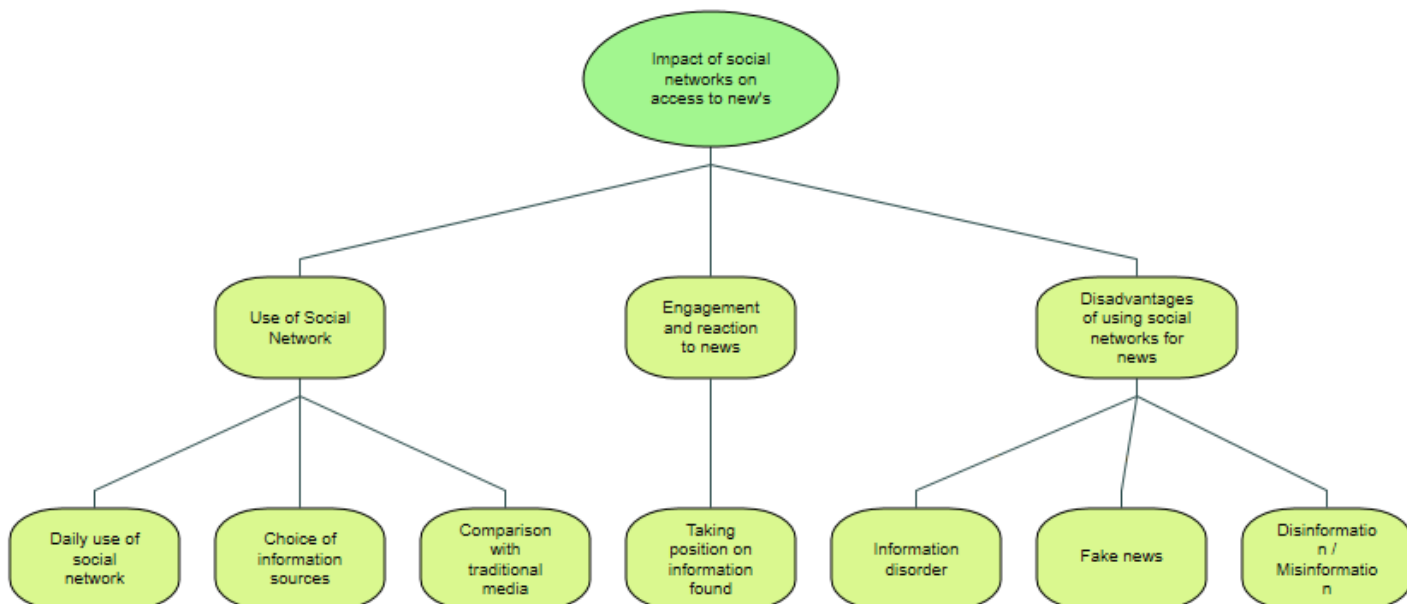

Figure 1. Research framework based on Emile Magnusson (2023)

3 Research methods and implementation

3.1 Research context

The emergence and widespread adoption of social networks have profoundly altered the way information is disseminated and consumed, especially among Generation Z. The research aims to understand the effects of social networks on information access for Generation Z in France, a population born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s. Members of Generation Z have grown up in an era marked by rapid technological advancements and the omnipresence of social media platforms, as digital natives.

The rise of social networks has changed the dynamics of information consumption, leading to changes in how people access and interact with information. The research objectives (RO) of this study are to examine several facets of this evolving landscape.

The overall impact of social networks on information access for Generation Z in France is examined in RO 1.0. This research aims to uncover the subtleties of how social media platforms influence the news consumption habits of this population using qualitative surveys in the form of interviews and questionnaires (RO 1.0).

By examining the impact of social networks on the traditional media landscape in France, RO 1.1 delves into broader implications. Archival research, including relevant publications, will be utilized (RO 1.1) to analyze how the advent of social media has altered the dynamics between traditional news media and digital platforms that dominate the contemporary information ecosystem.

RO 1.2 focuses on the specific channels through which Generation Z accesses information. This research aims to provide insights into the different strategies used by young people of this generation to stay informed in an era dominated by social media (RO 1.2).

In summary, this study is situated within the broader context of the evolving media landscape, emphasizing the importance of understanding the complexity of the relationship between social networks, traditional media, and information consumption habits of Generation Z in France. The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex interaction between technology, media, and access to information in the contemporary digital age by addressing these research questions.

3.2   Research design

3.2.1   Research purpose

The fundamental objective of this research is to deeply explore the impact of social networks on information access for Generation Z in France. More specifically, this study aims to understand how social networks influence news consumption habits within this generation, as well as the implications of this influence on information perception.

Most of the research here is therefore exploratory, asking open-ended questions about different perspectives on the subject.

The research focuses on key questions regarding how members of Generation Z use social networks to access information, how these platforms interact with the traditional media landscape, and the emotional and cognitive reactions of young people to news disseminated through these platforms.

In summary, the purpose of this research is to provide in-depth and relevant information on the complex dynamics between social networks and information access for Generation Z in France. This study aims to enhance our understanding of the socio-cultural and media implications of social media use in this specific population by comprehending these relationships.

3.2.2   Research approach

Using social media as a source of information, this study takes a qualitative approach to thoroughly investigate the experiences, perceptions, and interpersonal relationships of the French Z generation. The qualitative methods were chosen because they enable the capture of individuals' complex emotional responses, behaviors, and attitudes. This qualitative approach provides the flexibility required to identify emerging themes, recurring patterns, and significant variances in participant responses. The qualitative approach enables a thorough analysis of how social media affects this generation's access to information by taking into account individual contexts and personal histories.

In order to grasp the global consequences of social network use in young people's daily lives, a qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of going beyond simple information. The aim of this approach is to give Generation Z an important voice and enable them to explore in depth and detail their experience with social networks as a means of learning. By highlighting the ability of qualitative methodology to explore new territories and understand complex phenomena through the interpretation of collected data, this version further emphasizes the abductive approach.

3.2.3 Research strategy/method/s

This study primarily utilizes a structured questionnaire to collect data. This questionnaire has been carefully designed to encompass several relevant aspects of information access via social networks for Generation Z in France. The chosen method provides a systematic and standardized approach while offering sufficient flexibility to gather detailed data.

The questionnaire was electronically disseminated to a representative sample of Generation Z in France. The use of online platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, or Snapchat enabled efficient and rapid distribution, facilitating the participation of young social media users.

The questionnaire is structured into 6 distinct parts. The first part includes questions related to demographic information. This section aims to establish a precise context by collecting data on age, place of residence, level of education, etc. These pieces of information are intended to better understand the person responding anonymously. The second part concerns the respondent's use of social networks, thus allowing exploration of usage habits, favorite platforms, frequency of access, and the type of content consulted. Next, the third part consists of questions about engagement and reaction to current events. This enables investigation into how participants engage with news on social networks, knowing their preferred sources, reasons, but especially their emotional reactions. Finally, the fourth and fifth parts aim to invite participants to share their opinions on the positive and negative aspects of using social networks as a source of news. Lastly, the last section allows participants to provide their final impressions and add additional comments if desired.

3.2.4 Methodological choice

For this study issue, the choice between a quantitative and qualitative technique is based on a number of important factors. This study adopts a monomethod approach, specifically utilizing qualitative methodology.

First of all, there are several benefits to using the qualitative method in order to enhance the intricacy and depth of research. This study's qualitative methodology allows it to fully explore the complex experiences of the participants and capture the nuances of their social, emotional, and cultural dynamics around using social networks to get information. This level of study is especially useful for examining the complex social media participation of Generation Z in France.

Moreover, the utilization of qualitative technique enables a thorough comprehension of the contextual aspects involved. Through the use of open-ended responses, the qualitative approach facilitates the expression of participants' ideas and views their experiences in a comprehensive manner within the larger framework of their everyday lives. Deciphering the complex connections between social media use and

numerous socio-cultural influences on the behavior of Generation Z in France requires this contextualiza-
tion.

To put it briefly, the qualitative approach allows for a deeper investigation of the context and intricacies
present in the research issue in addition to improving the depth of analysis. This study seeks to offer a thor-
ough and nuanced knowledge of the dynamics of information access via social networks among French
Generation Z by employing this analytical approach.

3.2.5   Time horizon

This temporal choice is significant as it coincides with a phase where members of this generation show an
increased desire to explore the world and stay informed. Furthermore, this year follows the years marked
by the Covid-19 pandemic, during which social networks played a central role in the quest for information
for the majority of the population.

Moreover, the year 2023 is marked by major events such as the war in Ukraine, conflicts in Gaza, and signif-
icant protests in France in reaction to controversial political decisions. These events have sparked consider-
able national interest and have reinforced the need for information within society. Launching the question-
naire during this specific period thus enhances the representativeness of the study regarding the impact of
social networks on information access, as it captures informational dynamics in a context marked by signifi-
cant events. In summary, the chosen timing strengthens the relevance of the analysis by considering the
socio-political context and current concerns of the population.

3.3   Data collection

This paper used qualitative data from a questionnaire. In the table below, the readers can find a codebook
based on the qualitative survey shared for data analysis.

Table 2. Codebook for data analysis based on the qualitative survey

CODE	DEFINITION	WHEN TO USE	WHEN TO NOT USE
Use of Social Networks	The use and significance of social networks for Gen Z, examining usage time, interests, and reli-ance on these platforms	To highlight the fact that social networks have become indispen-sable for information seeking and entertain-	Do not to use for an-swers that talk about is-sues other than the uti-lization of social networks for the Gen Z.

	for staying informed about current events	ment, it is crucial to underline the importance of following accounts to refine personalized recommendations, as mentioned: I find that this answer varies depending on the source of the information. This trust needs to be verified, sometimes requiring additional research. What's more, the diversity of accounts and content offers different perspectives, especially in the news, as illustrated by : "It's quite diversified because today there are more and more news accounts on social networks".	
Engagement and reaction	Analysis of Gen Z's involvement in current events through new media. This assessment evaluates their sense of concern, active participation, and stance towards events, notably through their responsiveness and online interactions.	This category is relevant when studying how individuals interact with information on social media. As one participant stated, 'The words used, and the images shown will gauge my sensitivity to a subject,' highlighting the influence of language and visuals on reactions. In-	Do not to use for answers that talk about issues other than Engagement and Reaction of the Gen Z on the social networks about news.

		stances of strong reactions, such as reposting content due to feeling alerted or offended, provide valuable insights. In summary, 'Engagement and Reaction' is crucial for understanding how social media shapes information access and individual responses."	
Positive effects	Analysis of the beneficial advantages of new media for Generation Z, considering their contribution to youth knowledge and engagement in information, often surpassing traditional media with their interactivity and immediate access to a diverse range of perspectives	The 'Positive Effect' category is significant when analyzing the ways in which social media improves access to knowledge. It is applicable when, as one participant observed, information is quickly disseminated to a large audience. "This allows it to be relayed much more quickly to a very wide audience." It's also appropriate when considering how efficiently information is consumed, since people can quickly understand content, unlike with traditional media. Moreover, it is relevant when content shows up in	Do not to use for answers that talk about issues other than Positive Effects of using social networks for news.

		consumers' news feeds without them having to actively look for it.	
Negative effects	Analysis of the detrimental impacts of social media on Generation Z, highlighting the limitations of this phenomenon. This includes considerations of misinformation spread, polarization of opinions, and the risk of cyberbullying, elucidating the complexities and challenges posed by social media usage	"The 'Negative Effect' category can be used to examine the negative effects of social media on the availability of information. As one participant noted, it is pertinent in circumstances where misleading information spreads quickly because of careless sharing. "Mass sharing of false information as everyone relays it without checking or questioning." It also relates to the construction of "echo chambers," where people are only exposed to information that confirms their preconceptions. As another respondent pointed out, "Due to the algorithm that is enriched by our likes, a bubble is inevitably created."	Do not to use for answers that talk about issues other than Negative Effects of using social networks for news.
Conclusion	Analysis of general opinion on the use of social networking sites to keep abreast of current events. This opens up	When talking about the changing role of social networks in information availability, the 'General	Do not to use for answers that talk about issues other than the global idea of the impact of social networks

	the subject of the future role of new media.	Opinion' category is relevant. It makes sense considering social media's expanding influence, as one participant pointed out, with others even speculating that it would eventually displace traditional media. It also discusses worries over social networks "limitations as information sources. such as the creation of echo chambers where users" opinions are reinforced without exposure to opposing views, as highlighted by another respondent.	on the access to news for Gen Z.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis

NVivo12 is a computer program that the author utilized to help with qualitative data analysis during the collection and analysis phase. With the help of this software, you can effectively organize, analyze, and extract data from a variety of sources, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, research papers, journals, and books.

It makes data organization, querying, and storage easier, allowing researchers to respond to research queries quickly and effectively. Additionally, the author successfully gathered pertinent citations from survey responses and classified them by designating the right references to the right nodes. The purpose of the nodes' construction was to guarantee a comprehensive data analysis by classifying different thoughts. Some of the nodes were divided into smaller sub-nodes to facilitate a more thorough investigation.

Additionally, developing a codebook was essential to this process in order to collect, arrange, and evaluate qualitative data from numerous pertinent articles and determine the study topic. To help you stay on track, it includes the essential terms from the research along with definitions for when and when not to use them. By precisely identifying what to look for in this secondary data and utilizing the codebook as a reference to determine the answers to research questions based on it, the author was able to save a great deal of time.

3.5   Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for this study include ensuring that any information used is acquired ethically and legally while maintaining confidentiality and data privacy. Potential limitations or biases in the data and analysis are also identified and examined objectively. During knowledge research, it is essential to avoid negative impacts on individuals or groups, while ensuring fair and honest communication of research results. This study produces reliable and accurate results while respecting established moral criteria and protects the social responsibility and reliability of study methods.

4   Research Results

This paper examined the connection between Social Networks Impact Factors on Access to News, as well as the challenges, opportunities, dangers and limits for Gen Z France. The objective is to answer these main questions: "What is the impact of social networks on French Generation Z's access to news?", "What impact have social networks had on the traditional media landscape in France?", "How do Generation Z young people access the news?". The author used NVivo 12 to gather and analyze data from the relevant answers of the qualitative survey on Nvivo12 (**Appendix 1**) and coded them into the related nodes (**Appendix 3**).

4.1   Use of social networks analysis
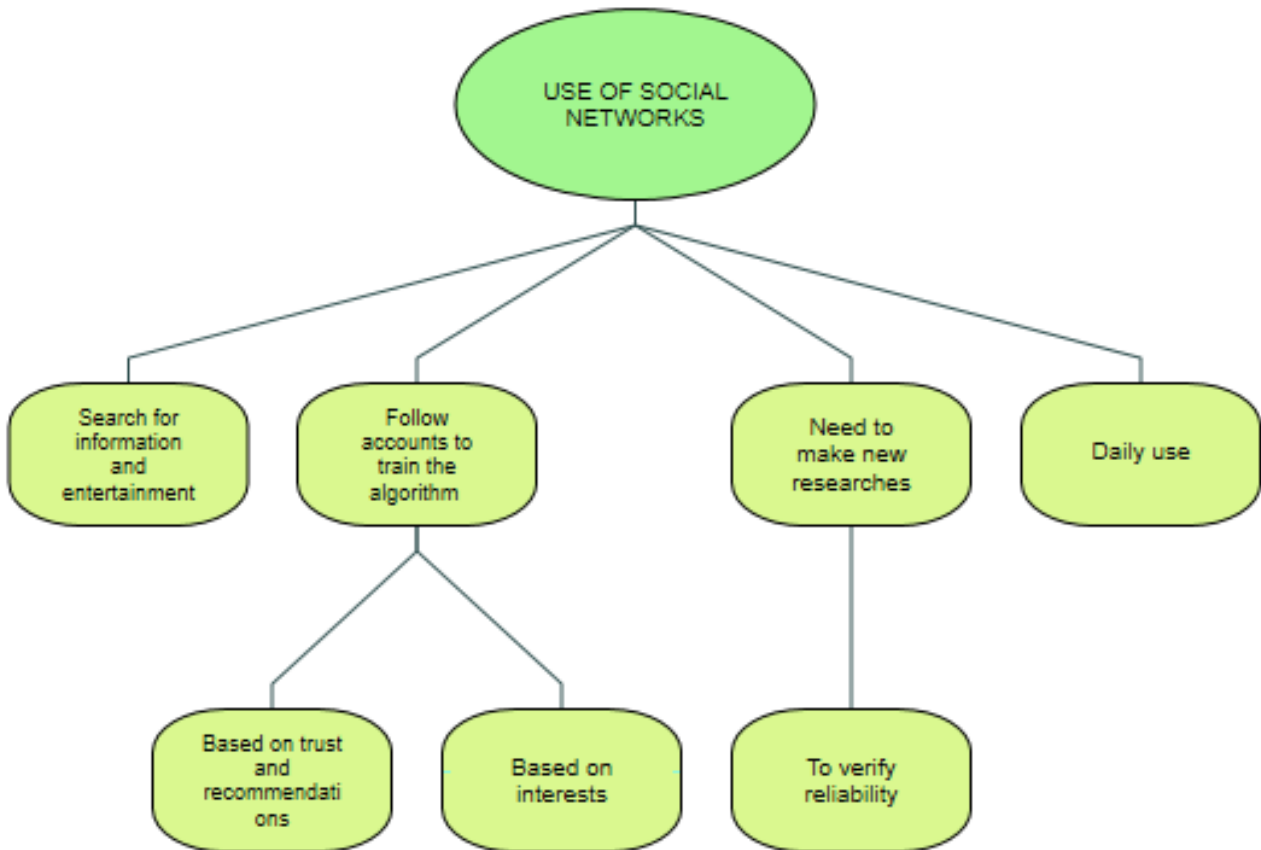
Figure 2. Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating The Use of Social Networks by the Gen Z to access to News - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

This mind map shows the various factors and sub-factors that drive Gen Z to use social networks to keep up to date with current events.

4.1.1 Search for information and entertainement
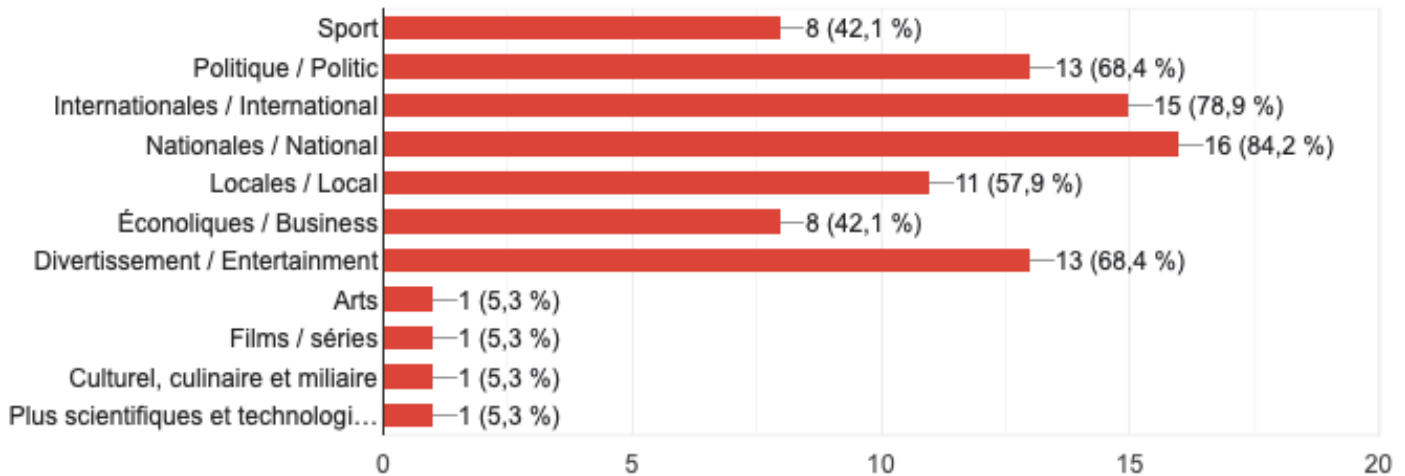
What type of news interest you?

Figure 3. chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: What type of news interest you?

Generation Z has shifted towards social networks as their primary source of news. A member of this generation emphasizes, "I subscribe to several news accounts for their specialization (such as Kombini), speed and accessibility (such as Brut and Hugo Decrypt), and accuracy (such as Le Monde and Le Parisien)." (**Appendix 3**). They can stay informed in ways that suit their individual preferences and are convenient thanks to this varied approach. Through the use of specialist platforms such as Kombini, they are able to explore subjects in great detail. In the meanwhile, the quick-witted and easily navigable material from Brut and Hugo Decrypt complements the hectic way of life. Accuracy is ensured by reliable sources like Le Monde and Le Parisien. This customized strategy highlights how Generation Z is resourceful and adaptive when navigating the digital news landscape, demonstrating their dedication to remaining informed while utilizing digital platforms.

4.1.2   Follow accounts to train the algorithm

Social network users belonging to Generation Z have developed a distinct method of obtaining information by carefully selecting subscriptions that align with their own interests. With every connection, they refine their tailored content algorithm and give priority to accounts that align with their hobbies. As expressed by a member of this demographic, "For public accounts, I subscribe according to my current interests. But for private accounts, I follow my friends and family" (**Appendix 3**). Through a thoughtful selection process, appropriate content is automatically added to their feeds, creating a personalized news consumption experience that encourages their curiosity and active participation in the world.

In this way, Generation Z shapes their digital world and uses social media to create a news ecosystem that reflects their own interests and deepens their engagement with subjects that are important to them. This

method not only makes it easier for them to get information, but it also makes them feel like they belong as they interact with stuff that friends and family have posted. Essentially, Generation Z's sophisticated social media strategy emphasizes how adaptive and resourceful they are in navigating the digital world, while also reinforcing the significance of individualized material in forming their worldview.

4.1.3   Need to make new reseaches

Though they are aware of the spread of false information, Generation Z primarily get their information via social media sites. Their first priority is precision, and they frequently look for validation of internet content from other platforms or conventional media. This generation's representative highlighted the significance of source verification by saying, "I think you should always check your sources. I watch anecdotal and informative videos on Instagram without checking the sources, when many of them must be fake" (**Appendix 3**). Their proactive approach to information intake demonstrates their commitment to finding reliable sources among the cacophony of the digital world.

In spite of the difficulties presented by the digital environment, Generation Z's diligent attempts to verify information highlight their steadfast dedication to guaranteeing the credibility of the material they come across. Their distrust of unsupported assertions is indicative of a rising understanding of the perils of false information and the value of critical thinking in the digital era. They carefully seek for reliable sources and actively verify them to safely traverse the immense ocean of online information.

Gen Z's social media information intake style is essentially defined by a careful balancing act between convenience and prudence. Although they like the ease of access and instantaneous nature of internet content, they also understand that in order to prevent the spread of misleading information, caution and source verification are necessary.

4.1.4   Daily use

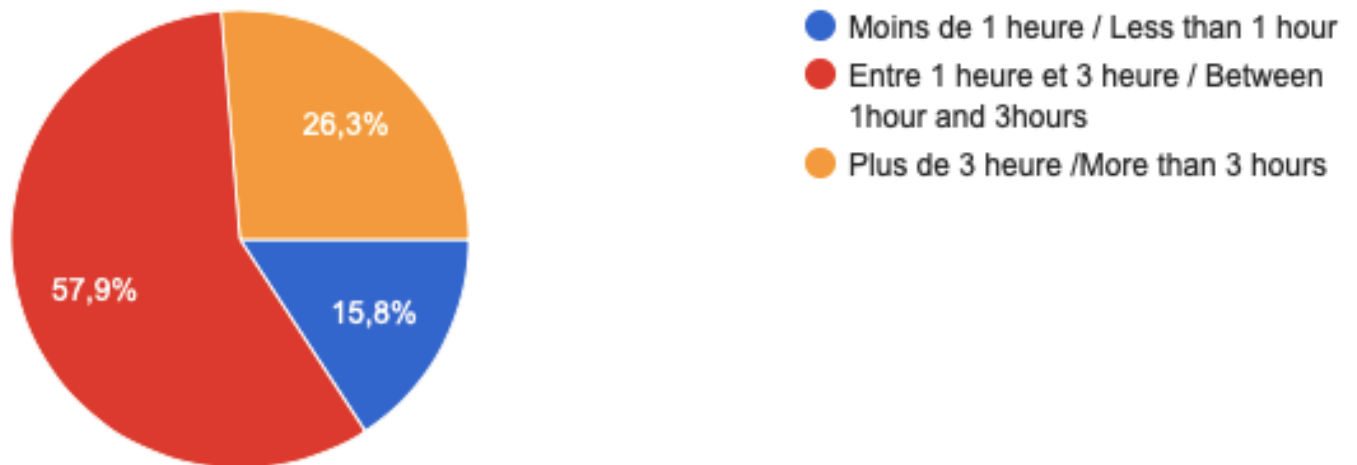*On average, how much time do you spend on social networks each day?*

Figure 4. Pie chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: On average, how much time do you spend on social networks each day?

Social networks are becoming the main source of everyday information for members of Generation Z. According to recent studies, a considerable fraction of this group, almost 58%, spends one to three hours a day on social media (**Appendix 3**). These platforms have shaped their interactions and shaped their opinions on current events, becoming an essential part of their everyday lives. Generation Z uses social networks as a portal to the outside world because they provide a constant flow of information from a variety of sources. Their sense of connectedness is enhanced by this dynamic environment, which also encourages them to keep an eye on changes that may affect their immediate surroundings. As such, social media platforms play a vital role in keeping this generation informed and engaged with the ever-changing landscape of global events. Their profound integration of social media into their daily lives underscores the influential role these platforms play in shaping the information consumption habits of contemporary youth.
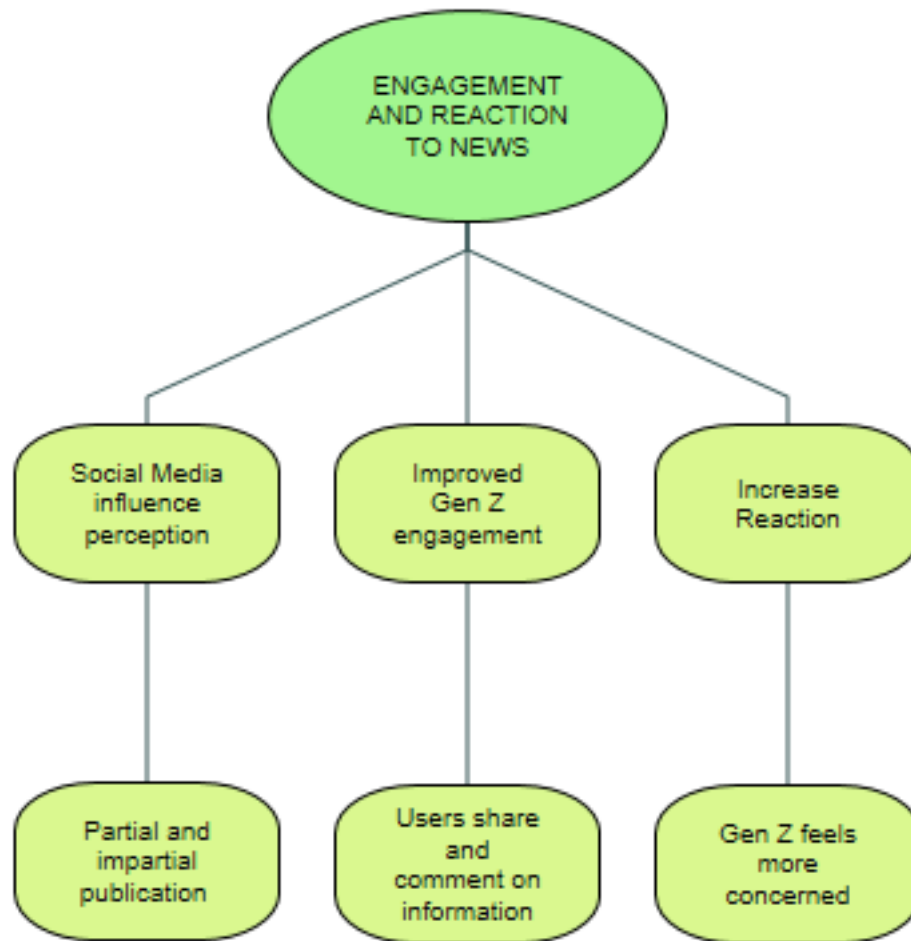
4.2 Engagement and reaction analysis

Figure 5. Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating The Engagement and Reaction to News on Social

Networks by the Gen Z to access to News - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

4.2.1   Social Media Influence Perception

Have you ever changed your behavior or opinions because of information found on social networks?
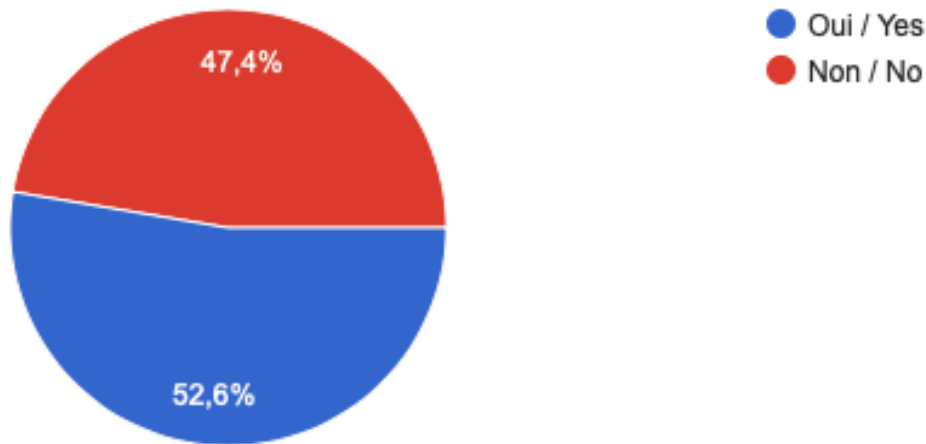

Figure 6. Pie chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: Have you ever changed your behavior or opinions because of information found on social networks?

The news that Generation Z is exposed to through their social media feeds greatly influences how they view current affairs and how they comprehend the world. As one person from this generation puts it "They allow us to question what we hear, and sometimes to be more objective about an event" (**Appendix 4**). This suggests that social media platforms facilitate critical thinking and in-depth examination, encouraging users to reevaluate their first assumptions and approach news with greater discernment.

Furthermore, the insight that "Information on social networks is often structured to tell us from which point of view to approach the subject, so we need to differentiate between subjective and impartial information," (**Appendix 4**) elucidates the complexity of navigating information online. This comment highlights the significance of differentiating between objective reporting and subjective opinions and the necessity of critically assessing content found on social media platforms.

In summary, social media platforms provide Generation Z with insightful opinions and viewpoints on current affairs, but they also make it difficult to separate prejudice from truth. Because subjective information is so common, people have an even greater obligation to double-check and authenticate the information they come across on the internet. Generation Z works to lessen the effects of false information and preserve the integrity of their worldview by promoting a culture of skepticism and vigilant information consumption.

4.2.2 Improved Gen Z engagement

Generation Z is willingly subscribing to news accounts on social networks and is becoming more and more interested in current affairs. They deliberately choose to consult information sources that align with their problems and areas of interest. In the words of one person from this generation: "I feel better informed and therefore legitimate in expressing my opinion" (**Appendix 4**). This claim emphasizes how knowledge access on social media platforms can be powerful. People who keep up with current affairs are more comfortable voicing their opinions and engaging in social conversations.

The phrase "I feel better informed and therefore legitimate in expressing my opinion" (**Appendix 4**) suggests that being well-informed enhances one's sense of authority and credibility when engaging in discussions or debates. It suggests that having knowledge gives people the ability to speak more persuasively and meaningfully participate in discussions about significant problems. This sentiment emphasizes the significance of educated participation in influencing public discourse, especially in light of Generation Z's active involvement in choosing their information sources.

Furthermore, Generation Z's aspiration to be actively involved citizens is demonstrated by their proactive approach to remaining informed. By locating trustworthy news sources and keeping up with current events, kids demonstrate their dedication to being knowledgeable members of society. Their awareness of the part they play in influencing public opinion and the narrative is shown in their proactive engagement. Thus, the citation encapsulates the idea that being well-informed not only enriches individual perspectives but also strengthens the collective dialogue within society.

4.2.3 Increase Reaction

Social media has developed into a vital component of how Generation Z keeps up with current events. They actively participate because they are engrossed in the stuff that they come across on their feeds. As elucidated by one member of this generation, "I sometimes take part in petitions when the cause is close to my heart, or re-share content that interests me" (**Appendix 4**). They actively remark, voice their thoughts, and participate in online arguments; their involvement goes beyond simple likes or shares.

Moreover, they leverage the information garnered from social networks as fodder for face-to-face discussions with their peers, as highlighted by another respondent: "I'm more inclined to discuss them verbally

with my friends" (**Appendix 4**). The fact that social networks serve as both informative centers and sparks for in-depth interpersonal conversations highlights the significant influence they have on Generation Z's awareness of current affairs.

In addition to staying informed, Generation Z also helps to shape public opinion and promote meaningful dialogue by actively engaging in online discourse and using social media as a forum for sharing their ideas. Their diverse involvement in current issues is indicative of their proactive handling of the digital environment and their dedication to remaining knowledgeable and involved members of society. As a result, social media platforms help to create lively and dynamic conversations among Generation Z in addition to being informational sources.

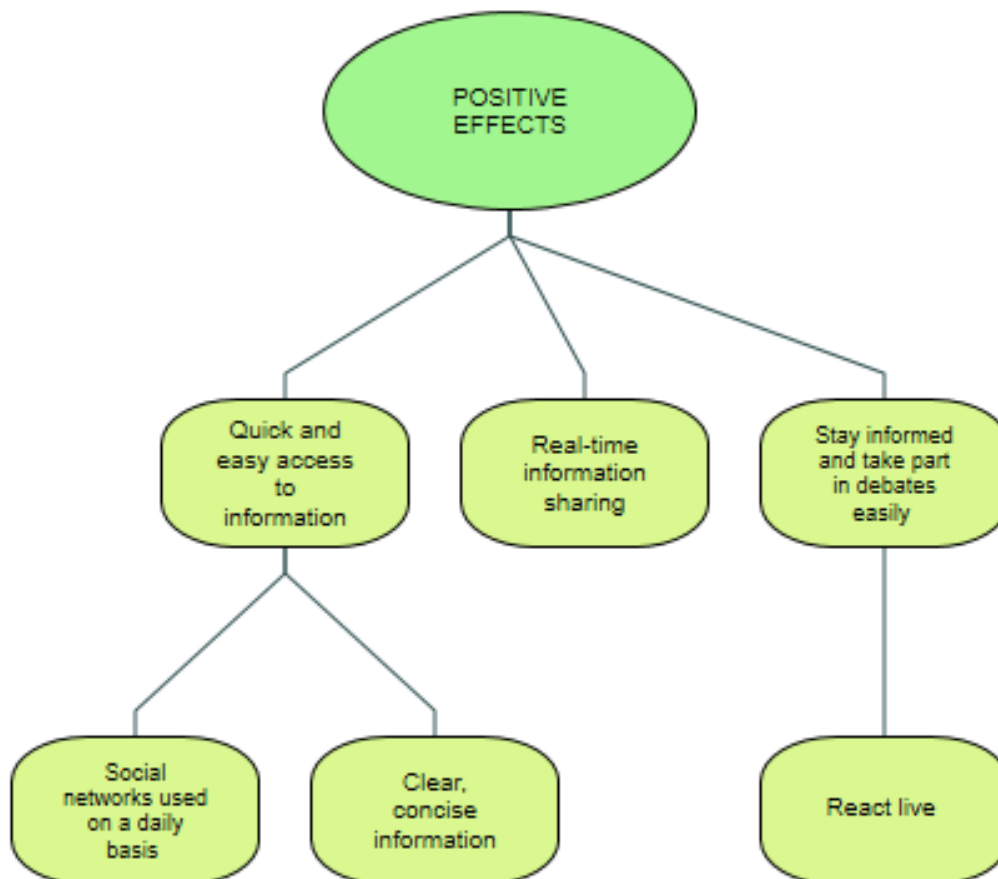## 4.3   Personal opinion analysis: Positive Effects

Figure 7. Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating The Positives Effects to use Social Net-works to Access to News - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

4.3.1 Quick and Easy access to information

Gen Zers derive a lot of advantages from using social media to keep up with current affairs. First off, they can stay up to date all the time due to the quick spread of information. This allows it to be relayed much more quickly to a very wide audience" (**Appendix 5**). His immediate broadcast guarantees that news effectively reaches a large number of people, promoting broad awareness and involvement.

Social networks also make it easier to communicate with a wider audience, which streamlines the information-dissemination process. Individuals who are subscribers to news accounts can easily repost, share, or "like" stories, which increases their visibility to a wider audience. Because of this interconnectedness, significant news issues are more visible and approachable, encouraging more community discussion and participation.

Additionally, information is presented on social networks in a clear and succinct manner that improves understanding. This style, which is usually supported by eye-catching images, straightforward headlines, and brief, clear language, makes things easier to understand. As noted by another respondent, "Very accessory, and straight to the point, it's less complicated than understanding" (**Appendix 5**). This accessibility ensures that even complex topics can be grasped quickly, catering to the preferences and habits of Generation Z.

In summary, the utilization of social networks for news consumption offers Generation Z a multitude of advantages, including rapid dissemination, enhanced communication, and simplified presentation. These benefits contribute to their ability to stay informed, engaged, and connected within an increasingly interconnected digital landscape.

4.3.2 Real Time information sharing

Given the substantial amount of time people spend on social networks on a daily basis, as the data above demonstrate, these platforms are a preferred source of information. They provide a way for people to obtain news in real time straight from their news feeds. As elucidated by one respondent, "They appear in the news feed without you having to search for them" (**Appendix 5**). This instantaneous accessibility eliminates the need to wait for designated time slots, as is often the case with traditional media outlets.

Moreover, because they are always glued to their cellphones, Generation Z members reduce the possibility that they will overlook important information, regardless of whether it comes from accounts they currently follow or is reshared by others. As articulated by another member, "We don't have to wait for information, because it's available in real time and continuously. It's also the possibility of receiving information from

several sources simultaneously" (**Appendix 5**). This highlights the advantage of new media in allowing for the rapid comparison of multiple sources.

Furthermore, social networks play a critical role in keeping individuals informed about global events. As underscored by one respondent, "Social networks enable us to keep abreast of events around the world. This feature was particularly useful during the Paris attacks, when we knew in real time how many people were in danger, how many terrorists were on the scene" (**Appendix 5**). This testimony highlights the invaluable role of social media in providing real-time updates during crises, allowing users to stay informed and connected during critical moments.

In conclusion, social networks provide several benefits, such as continuous connectivity, instant access to news, and the speedy comparison of various sources. They also have a major impact on the dissemination of vital information during catastrophes, which emphasizes how important they are for keeping people informed and involved in world events.

4.3.3   Stay Informed and take part in debates easily

Do you think social networks are helping to strengthen Generation Z's civic commitment to societal and political issues?
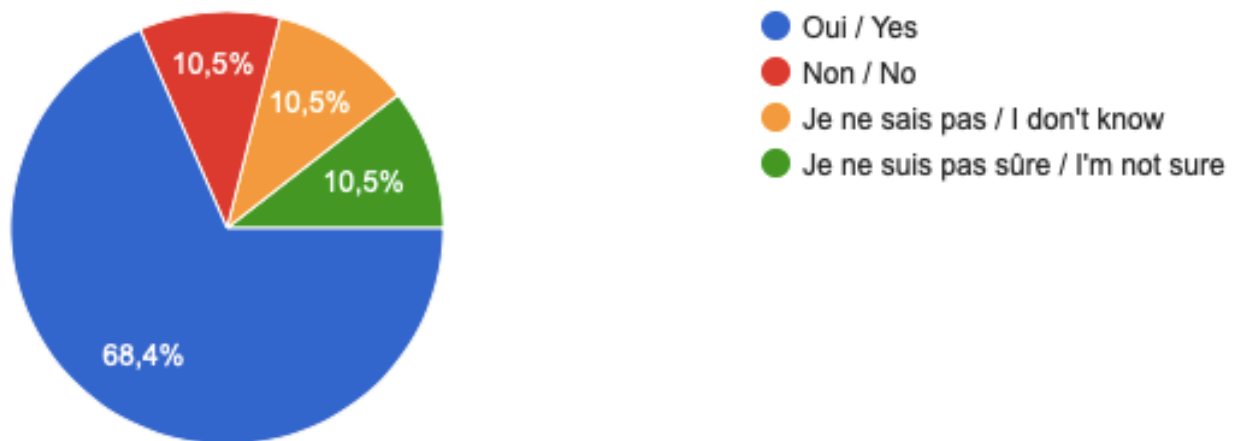

Figure 8. Pie chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: Do you think social networks are helping to strengthen Generation Z's civic commitment to societal and political issues?

Another positive aspect of social networks for keeping abreast of current events noted by this generation is the possibility of reacting directly to events, taking part in debates and giving their opinion on subjects that interest them. This idea is represented in the pie chart above (**Figure 8**), where respondents affirms they are more engaged in political issues, thanks to the news they can read on social networks. These media al-

low users to comment on publications, share them and send them to other social networks. As one member points out, "Young people get informed and take part in debates." (**Appendix 5**). What's more, social networks make it quick and easy to interact with other users, encouraging the exchange of ideas and constructive discussions, with some accounts enabling real discussions by organizing live broadcasts, for example. As another member mentions, "It's the best way to get information quickly and exchange ideas." (**Appendix 5**). So, for Generation Z, social networks have become an essential platform for staying informed, expressing themselves and interacting with their online community.

These online interactions are not limited to simply exchanging points of view, but can also lead to concrete action. This is the case, for example, with the #MeeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements, which have become international social battles. Social networks have made it possible for these movements to spread on a massive scale, raising awareness of important issues. This proves that social networks are not only used by new generations to take part in debates, but also to share debates and raise awareness on subjects that are important to them.

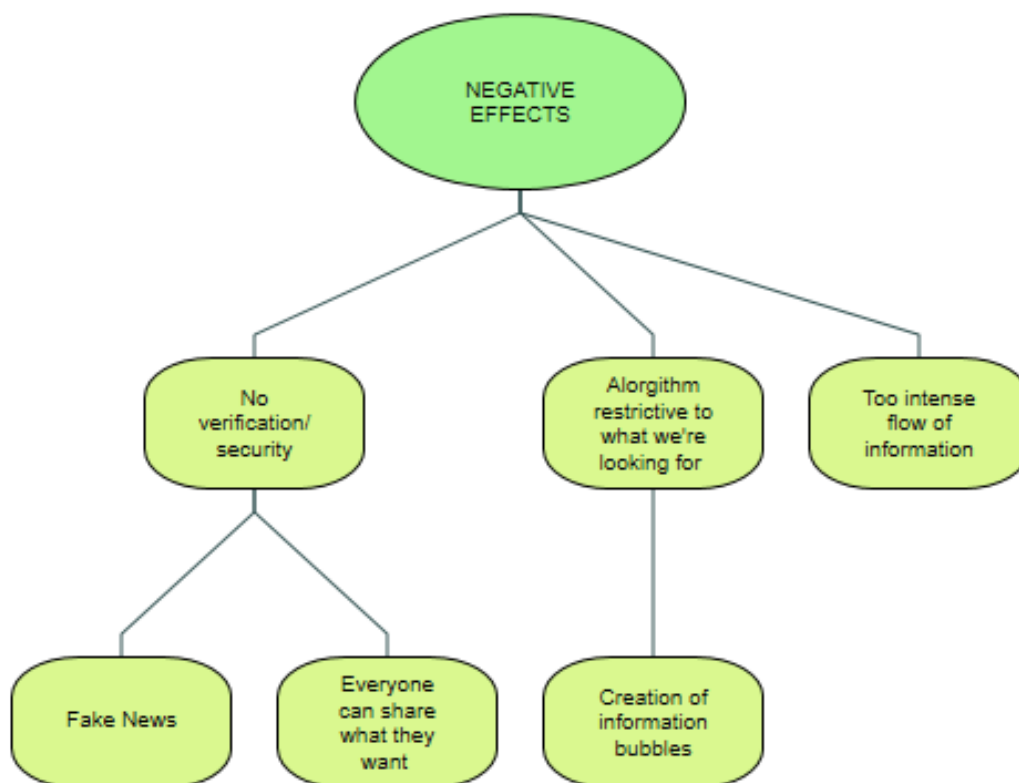## 4.4   Personal opinion analysis: Negative Effects

Figure 9. Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating The Negative Effects to use Social Net-works to Access to News - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

4.4.1 No verification or Security

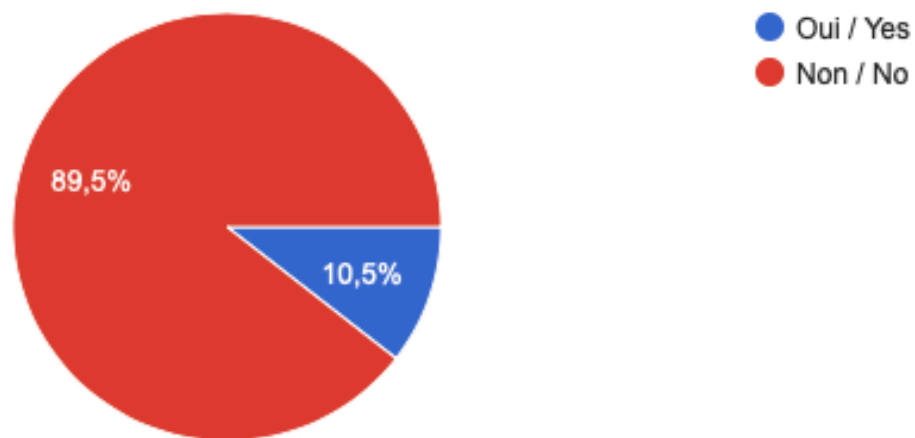Have you ever changed your behavior or opinions because of information found on social networks?

Figure 10. Pie chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: Have you ever changed your behavior or opinions because of information found on social networks?

The use of social networks to keep abreast of the news can also have its downsides, in the eyes of Generation Z youngsters. Firstly, the lack of control over what is published leads to a proliferation of false information, also known as "fake news". As one member of this generation deplores: " Unreliable source. anyone can say what they want without having any real knowledge, and we often only have one point of view that we follow." (**Appendix 6**). This overabundance of false information greatly complicates the task of differentiating the true from the false. What's more, the security aspect of social networking is called into question, as anyone can post whatever they like without any filter or control. As another member points out: " Mass sharing of false information as everyone relays it without checking or questioning." (**Appendix 6**). Indeed, unlike traditional media, where people invited to share their knowledge and opinion are generally qualified to do so, on social networks it's more complicated to control the person's profile, or their acquaintances. Every piece of information found on social networks should be taken with a grain of salt unless it is disseminated by an official account.

4.4.2 Algorithm restrictive to what we're looking for

Another disadvantage of using social networks to keep up with the news is the algorithmic principle. The algorithm is formed on the basis of each user's interactions, such as likes, subscribes and shares. This can lead to the creation of information bubbles, where the individual remains informed only of what he or she initially wishes to follow. As one member of this generation points out, " they are more likely to be locked into their ideas if they subscribe to content that is particularly focused on their way of thinking." (**Appendix 6**). As a result, this can lead to closed-mindedness, comforting them in their convictions without ever being

confronted with a different point of view., This trend of becoming enmeshed in informational bubbles may have negative effects on how an individual perceives the world around them. User's risk missing out on a more nuanced overview of events and issues if they only receive a limited selection of content corresponding to their pre-established interests and preferences. As another member observes, " Due to the algorithm that is enriched by our likes, a bubble is inevitably created, as we are offered only (or almost only) what we want to see." (**Appendix 6**). Thus, while social networks offer rapid access to information, they can also contribute to a narrow, biased view of the world.

4.4.3   Too intense flow of information

Finally, another disadvantage of using social networks to keep abreast of the news is the overwhelming volume of information they present. Users often feel bombarded with a constant stream of posts and updates, making it difficult to stay focused. As one participant mentioned, this flood of content can lead to a "lack of concentration» (**Appendix 6**). Social media platforms inundate users with information throughout the day, leaving little time for reflection. Users may even feel "spammed" by the constant flow of updates (**Appendix 6**). This information overload can be particularly challenging for young people, who may struggle to distinguish between real news and misinformation, leading to confusion and forgetfulness.

This continuous information overload can also lead to stress and anxiety for young people who are confronted with it daily. This is what the respondent "I'd even say that these accounts give me anxiety." (**Appendix 6**). The fact of being constantly informed, even when it's not by choice, can have an impact on awareness and the unconscious well-being of everyone.

In summary, the relentless influx of information on social networks can hinder concentration, impair judgment, and undermine memory retention, highlighting the importance of developing critical media literacy skills. It underscores the need for individuals, especially the younger generation, to be equipped with the tools to navigate the vast sea of information available on these platforms effectively.
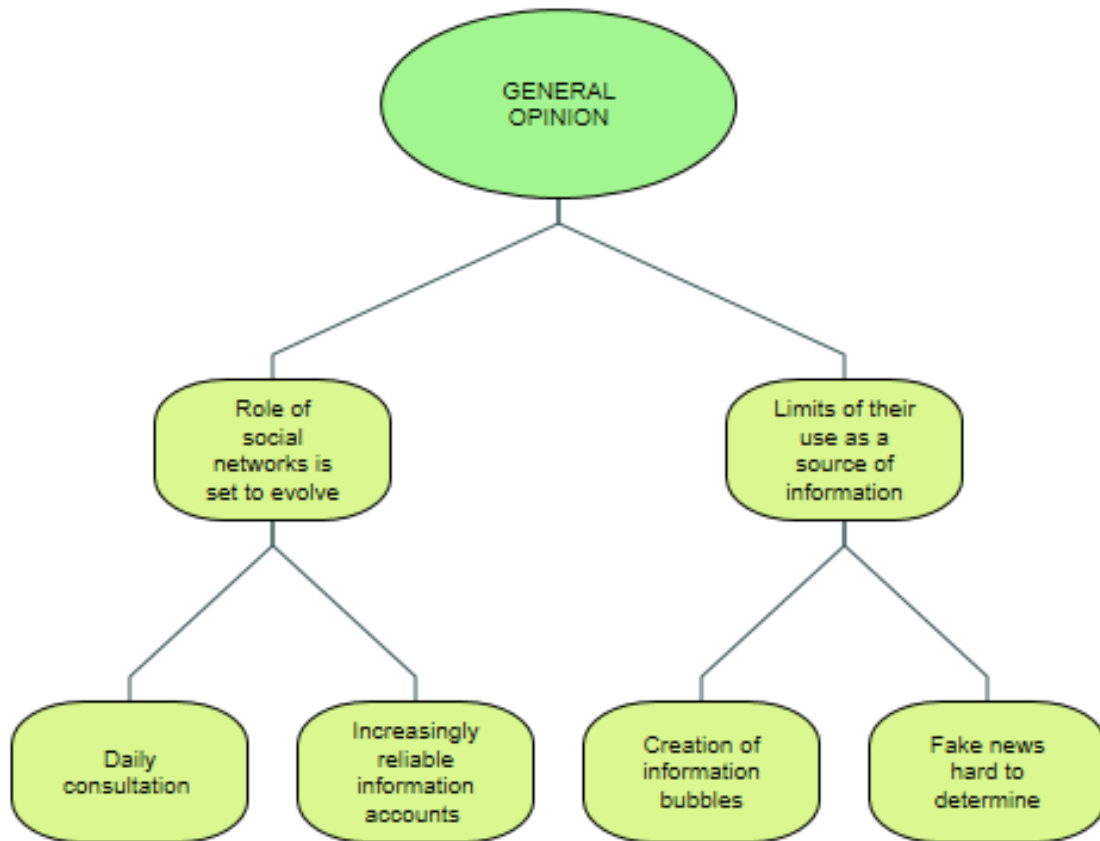
4.5   General Opinion analysis

Figure 11. Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating The General Opinion to use Social Net-works to Access to News - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

4.5.1   Role of Social Networks is set to Evolve

Do you consider social networks to be more effective than traditional media for keeping up to date with current events?
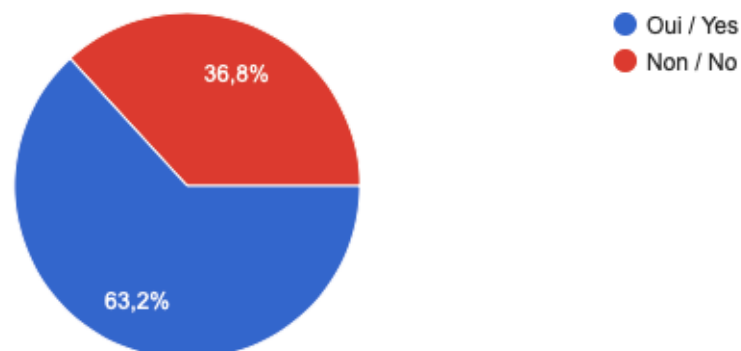

Figure 12. Pie chart generated from Google Forms which answers the question: Do you consider social networks to be more effective than traditional media for keeping up to date with current events?

Generation Z sees the use of social networks to keep abreast of current events as an inevitable trend in a changing media landscape. With the increasing omnipresence of telephones and new technologies in our daily lives, the place of social networks is bound to evolve over the coming years. Some even believe that social networks will eventually replace traditional media, as one member of this generation points out: " I think it's only growing and that social networks will eventually replace traditional media." (**Appendix 7**). She also recognizes the benefits they offer, not least in encouraging new generations to take a greater interest in current affairs. So, rather than systematically blaming social networks, the general idea is to recognize their value and find solutions to counter their negative aspects to improve the use of social networks in the future, by putting in place measures to guarantee the reliability of information and promote responsible use of these platforms.

4.5.2   Limits of their Use as a Source of Information

Generation Z has a divided opinion on the use of social networks to keep abreast of current events. While some recognize the benefits of this practice, others point to its limitations. Indeed, social network algorithms can create information bubbles, locking users into their ideas of what to think, where their opinions are reinforced without being confronted with contradictory points of view, as one member of this generation mentions: " This has the effect of keeping a person in a bubble where their own opinions are reinforced, without being confronted with arguments to the contrary." (**Appendix 7**). What's more, information overload makes it difficult to distinguish between real news and fake news, which can lead to a partial understanding or misunderstanding of certain topics, as another respondent points out: " Perhaps partial comprehension of certain in-formation or misunderstanding." (**Appendix 7**). Overall, while social networks offer rapid access to information, it's important to recognize their limitations and develop critical skills to filter and interpret information responsibly. Users need to develop critical thinking skills to assess the validity and relevance of the data that is presented. This includes the ability to double-check the sources, spot misinformation, and be aware of algorithmic bias. By cultivating a critical mindset, people may navigate the digital landscape with clarity, avoiding the traps of information manipulation and helping to promote more ethical and responsible use of social media.

5   Discussion

5.1   Limitations, reliability and validity

Social networks are being used by Generation Z more and more as information sources, which raises concerns about the legitimacy and dependability of the material. It's critical to understand that data shared on

social media platforms is susceptible to bias, misinformation, and manipulation. Because it's possible that platform algorithms could promote the spread of sensationalist or political claims, the veracity of such material is frequently questioned. It's crucial to keep in mind that information published on social media platforms might originate from a variety of sources, some of which may not be reliable, when considering data veracity. As a result, evaluating the veracity and accuracy of such data can be challenging. Furthermore, the reliability of inferences made from such data may be jeopardized by an abundance of information and a lack of filtering.

It should be highlighted that research using social network data may be biased due to issues with sample representativeness and data quality, among other methodological limitations. It is true that social network users may not accurately represent the general public, and the data gathered may be impacted by elements like recommendation algorithms and self-selection.

In summary, social networks provide quick access to information, but it's critical to understand the issues with validity, dependability, and data collection techniques. These restrictions must be taken into consideration in order to assure the validity of research in this area, and rigorous methodological techniques must be developed for assessing and analyzing data from social networks.

Furthermore, strict safeguards were put in place during the development and data gathering phases to address the validity and reliability concerns. First off, the questionnaire's questions were painstakingly created with the study's target group in mind, drawing from previously published material. To make sure the questionnaire items were relevant and clear, pilot testing was done. Second, the methods used to acquire the data were methodical and exacting. Since most of the comments were in French, each one was read separately and translated into English. This methodical technique sought to reduce errors and preserve data integrity. Also, The ethical considerations have been crucial throughout the entire research procedure. Every participant gave their clear consent, and steps were taken to ensure confidentiality and the protection of their right to a private life. The participants were informed of their rights, which included the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without facing repercussions. Respecting ethical principles adds to the validity and dependability of research findings.

5.2 Answering the research questions

Throughout this research, these main questions were asked by the author:

RQ 1.0 What is the impact of social networks on French Generation Z's access to news?
On the whole, social networks have a positive impact on the way Generation Z keep up to date with the news. Indeed, being on social networks on a daily basis encourages them to read posts related to current

affairs, whether by chance or on purpose. However, social networks are also the source of a lot of fake news, which can lead to disinformation among the population studied.

RQ 1.1 What impact have social networks had on the traditional media landscape in France?

The progressive use of social networks by the Z generation has had an impact on traditional media in France. Paper newspapers have seen the biggest drop in consumption. But television and radio are also impacted. In fact, they are suffering from a significant drop in audience numbers among this generation. However, this enthusiasm for social networks has, in a way, pushed traditional media to diversify, with the creation of live news applications and official social network accounts.

RQ 1.2 How do Generation Z young people access the news?

The study showed that today's Generation Z mostly access news via social networks. Whether it's by subscribing to the accounts that interest them, chatting with friends and family, or doing specific research on the subject. But most of them are also convinced that the traditional media are official and reliable sources, and so may refer to them to confirm information.

The study was conducted using primary data to answer these research questions. Based on the results, this research findings indicate that the way young people of Generation Z access news in France has been profoundly changed by social networks. Previously, the written press, then television and radio, were the main sources of information, but with the advent of social networks, information has been disseminated via interactive and instant digital platforms, whether on Insta-gram, Twitter or even more recently Tik Tok. The perception of the veracity of information has changed as a result of this transition, which now favors speed and immediacy.

This rise in the power of information technology and its resources has also had an impact on everyday life through media education. Today's new generations see new technologies as a central resource in their daily lives, and in particular social networks, on which they spend several hours a day. They adopt an interactive and constantly connected approach to information, shaping their perception and use of digital media.

Members of Generation Z currently prefer digital means of communication, in particular social networks, as their main source of information. This gives them immediate and rapid access to information by subscribing to news accounts on the various networks. A point that is also reinforced by the simplicity of explanations given on these media compared to traditional media.

In short, Generation Z in France generally prefers digital platforms, especially social networks, which offer a variety of fast, interactive content. However, this evolution also raises the question of the limits of these

new media, which are still too little controlled and secured.

5.3 Dialogue between key results and knowledge base

The qualitative study carried out with 19 participants from the French Generation Z showed various key elements of the impact of social networks on access to news. As explored in **section 4**, the main finding was that the constraints presented by traditional media in keeping up to date with the news have pushed the new generations to adopt social networks as a new source. As social networks are ubiquitous in their daily lives, their use for this purpose has gradually grown to become the main, if not the only, source of information for some of them. Nevertheless, this generation seems to be perfectly aware of the limits of these new media and considers Fake News to be still too present to trust everything they can read or see.

Some of the points made in the Literature Review find similarities in the responses to the qualitative study. Indeed, dependence on social networks is a topic present in **section 2.3.2**, which suggests that today's Generation Z is subject to an addiction to new technologies, and in particular to social networks as claimed Boyadjan (2020) "people aged 15 to 34 use social networks every day to obtain news". This hypothesis is confirmed in **section 4.1.4**, given the number of hours each participant admits to spending per day on these digital platforms. Another similarity is the way users select information sources, since both **section 2.3.1** and **section 4.1.2** emphasize that Gen Z members select the stories they subscribe to according to their interests and preoccupations. The aim is to personalize their news feeds, explained Mockba (2021) **"**preferring more informal and personal sources".

Finally, another point common to the Review literature and the survey is the concern for the veracity of information. **Section 2.3.1** points out that this generation recognizes that the rapid and massive dissemination of information can lead to the sharing of Fake News. Mellot (2021) quotes "the perception of truth takes precedence over the traditional media source". This was confirmed by survey respondents, as it was the point most mentioned in the Negative Effects section.

However, other points raised can be presented as divergences between the Literature Review and the study's analysis. In **section 2.2.1**, the aspect of trust in traditional media is mentioned as being in transition to social networks, claimed McIntyre (2013) "Social media can influence the news industry as a whole". Conversely, **section 4.1.3** mentions that young people of Generation Z use traditional media to confirm what they can read on new media. Another topic that does not find similarities between these two sections is the role of social networks in opinion formation. Since this is a major element of **section 4.4.2**, underlining the fact that these new technologies can enclose individuals in information bubbles, not confronting them with points of view other than their own, then this topic has not been explicitly mentioned in previous research.

Finally, two new perspectives can be drawn from these analyses. Firstly, in view of the evolving role of social networks in people's daily lives, responsibility and education in new media for new generations seems to be paramount, enabling them to develop critical skills for filtering and interpreting information.

Also, the need for traditional media to adapt to emerging preferences for changing sources of information may become a real necessity. Although literature review research has shown a decline in their predominance in favor of social networks, the study conducted supported the trust that some members of Generation Z still place in these media.

5.4 Compliance with research ethics guidelines

This research examined the impact of social networks on access to news by using secondary data from relevant publications and primary data from a qualitative survey. In conducting this study, the author took great care to ensure that our research adhered to ethical guidelines. As this study involved secondary and primary data analysis, the primary ethical considerations focused on the data's privacy and confidentiality.

Firstly, data employed by the writer was sourced from reliable sources, including academic literature, scholar sources, and news items. All sources were properly referenced in our work to ensure compliance with copyright regulations. Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that no copy- righted or intellectual property-protected information was incorporated into this written piece.

After that, the author was aware of the potential harm that could result from using sensitive material, particularly when it came to people's personal information. To minimize the risks associated with this procedure, only widely available and published data were obtained, making sure that no human subjects were involved. The author exercised great caution to avoid using statistics associated with identifiable groups or individual identities in order to completely mitigate danger.

Thirdly, by keeping all of the information in a secure area with restricted access, the author took precautions to ensure the privacy of the data. Additionally, the author made sure that all data that may be linked to particular people or organizations was anonymized and that no data was shared with third parties without the necessary authorizations.

Lastly, the author reduced the risks by cross-checking the data from other sources and using a critical and objective analysis. The author was aware of the potential drawbacks and difficulties associated with using data analysis.

6   Conclusions

6.1   Key Findings

The study revealed that Generation Z in France is questioning the use of traditional media for news and information, in favor of emerging new media. The study's findings provide light on the impact of social networks on the access to news. The following key findings were identified:

- The omnipresence of social networks in the daily lives of this generation encourages them to stay informed only through these platforms, giving them quick and easy access to the latest news.

- Accessing news via social networks means being up to date with information in real time, as it appears instantly in their news feed, in a more simplified and condensed way than on traditional media.

- Generation Z rarely have access to traditional media (TV, newspapers, radio) in their daily lives, which means they are forced to go there just for the news. It therefore makes more sense for them to follow the news via social networks.

- Using social networks for information means you can get more different kinds of information, and several sources at once, so you can compare opinions if necessary.

- Members of this generation confess their fear of Fake News when using social networks and worry about the veracity of what they see or read because there is little security or verification on these new media.

- The excessive flow of information of all kinds also represents a danger, as it becomes more complicated to take a step back from what is offered in the news feed.

- The information bubbles created involuntarily by some users subscribing to the same type of content represent the threat of being informed in ideas without having the necessary hindsight to understand another point of view.

- For some members of Generation Z, as the role of social networks in the media landscape evolves, it's vital to learn how to use them responsibly now.

6.2   Managerial implications

Media companies and digital platform managers need to understand the impact of social networks on access to news for Generation Z in France. Here are some important managerial implications to consider:

Tailored content strategies are needed for traditional media and social networking platforms to meet the news consumption preferences of Generation Z. To capture their attention and foster engagement, this may involve the use of visual formats, short videos and interactive elements.

Transparency and reliability of information: Platform managers need to place greater emphasis on the transparency and reliability of the information presented on their platforms. They can reinforce Generation Z's trust in online news sources by implementing strict policies against misinformation and promoting fact-checking.

Personalizing the user experience: Media companies and digital platforms need to invest in advanced technologies and recommendation algorithms to personalize the user experience according to Generation Z's interests and preferences. This can increase user engagement and loyalty.

Media education: Educators and digital platform managers need to work together to provide effective media education for Generation Z. By teaching young people to critically evaluate online information, they can strengthen their ability to resist misinformation and encourage responsible consumption of news.

Media companies and digital platform managers can better meet the needs and expectations of Generation Z in terms of access to news, while fostering a responsible and critical information culture in society by implementing these managerial implications.

6.3   Recommendations for future research

The analyses carried out as part of this thesis shed light on two new perspectives. Firstly, given the evolving role of social networks in people's daily lives, it seems crucial to place a premium on responsibility and new media education for new generations. This will enable them to acquire essential skills for filtering and interpreting data. It is crucial to educate young people so that they can identify quality and trusted content, given the expansion of information sources on social networks.

What's more, it could become a real emergency for traditional media to adapt to emerging preferences for changing sources of information. The study conducted confirmed the trust that some members of Generation Z place in these media, although the research in the literature review showed a decline in their predominance in favor of social networks. Consequently, it would be interesting to investigate further the ways in which traditional media can modernize and adapt to the expectations and consumption patterns of this young generation.

In conclusion, future research should focus on creating educational strategies to help young people better understand the contemporary media landscape, as well as efforts to modernize traditional media to meet changing consumer needs. By combining these two strategies, Generation Z could adopt a more informed and responsible consumption of information.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. A screenshot showing the publications uploaded as primary data from the NVivo 12 program.

Appendix 2. A screenshot showing the results of the qualitative questionnaire.

Appendix 3. Quotes from relevent answer to the qualitative survey about Use of Social Network

Search for information and entertainment	"No, because they depend on the author's subjectivity. If we evoke feminism in DeBeauvoir and then in Paulette Nardal (an essayist and former Sorbonne professor who wrote on feminism among black women), the points of view and ideas will not be the same. Yet the subject of feminism remains very real and converges on different subdivisions of ideas. It's always necessary to cross-reference data and information." (Respondent 7, P4, 2024) "I choose them according to their reputation, the way they share information. Is the content explained clearly or not, is the news general or on a single topic…" (Respondent 1, P6, 2024) "I subscribe to several information accounts because some are specialized in a field (Kombini), others are quick and easy to understand (Brut and Hugo Decrypt) and others are more precise and therefore more practical when I want to be better informed on a subject (Le Monde, Le Parisien)." (Respondent 2, P6, 2024)
Follow accounts to train the algorithm	"For public accounts, I subscribe according to my current interests. But for private accounts, I subscribe to my friends and family." (Respondent 1, P6, 2024) "I have the impression of always having the same point of view. if you're on the right, you have information from the right that defends that information, and if you're on the left, you never have

	the opinion of both at the same time. this leads to an orientation of our opinions." (Respondent 5, P14, 2024)
Need to make new research	"Yes, to check the information shared, to have more details, to have another point of view." (Respondent 1, P11, 2024)

"If I have to check my sources outside social networks, it will be for important subjects that interest me. For example, geopolitical conflicts or politics." (Respondent 2, P11, 2024)

"I think you should always check your sources. I watch anecdotal and informative videos on Instagram without checking the sources, when many of them must be fake." (Respondent 3, P11, 2024) |
| Daily use | "Less than 1 hour" (15,8% of the respondents, P2, 2024)

Between 1 and 3 hours (57,9% of the respondents, P2, 2024)

More than 3 hours (23,3% of the respondents, P2,2024) |

Appendix 4. Quotes from relevent answer to the qualitative survey about Engagement and Reaction to News

| Social Media influence perception | "The words used, and the images shown will gauge my sensitivity to a subject." (Respondent 1, ER5, 2024)

"In the end, I don't read much, because for current events I rely on other sources, or on pages linked |
|---|---|

	to newspapers that present the news in a relatively objective way." (Respondent 2, ER5, 2024) "They allow us to question what we hear, and sometimes to be more objective about an event." (Respondent 3, ER5, 2024) "Social networks make information easily accessible and can therefore easily influence the people who receive it." (Respondent 4, ER5, 2024)
Improved Gen Z engagement	"Occasionally, I'll repost a story about a publication that has particularly alerted or offended me. But I never react in the comments, even if I don't necessarily agree with what's being said." (Respondent 2, ER1, 2024) "Yes, because I feel better informed and therefore legitimate in expressing my opinion." (Respondent 1, ER6, 2024)
Increase Reaction	"I sometimes take part in petitions when the cause is close to my heart, or re-share content that interests me." (Respondent 3, ER1, 2024) "I don't react to current events on social networks; I'm more inclined to discuss them verbally with my friends." (Respondent 1, ER1, 2024)

Appendix 5. Quotes from relevent answer to the qualitative survey about Positive Effects

Quick and easy access to information	"Quick and easy access." (Respondent 1, PE1, 2024) "This allows it to be relayed much more quickly to a very wide audience" (Respondent 2, PE1, 2024)

	"Very accessory, and straight to the point, it's less complicated than understanding, takes less time and is easier to share with others to inform them of it" (Respondent 3, PE1, 2024) "In a few seconds I can usually understand what it's all about, whereas TV news always takes longer to explain." (Respondent 3, PE2, 2024)
Real-Time information sharing	"They appear in the news feed without having to search for them" (Respondent 1, PE2, 2024) "We don't have to wait for information, since it's available in real time and continuously. It's also the possibility of receiving information from several sources at the same time." (Respondent 1, PE2, 2024) "Because I've subscribed to news accounts, and they now automatically appear in my feed." (Respondent 2, PE3, 2024) "Because I'm on my phone a lot (several hours a day), I can't miss news if it's broadcast on social networks." (Respondent 3, PE3, 2024) "Information on social networks is often structured to tell us from which point of view to approach the subject, so we need to differentiate between subjective and impartial information." (Respondent 4, ER5, 2024) "Social networks enable us to keep abreast of events around the world. This feature was particularly useful during the Paris attacks, when we knew in real time how many people were in danger, how many terrorists were on the scene...» (Respondant 4 ; ER 4, 2024)

Stay informed and take part in debates easily	"By obtaining information more quickly, young people become informed and take part in debates." (Respondent 1, PE9, 2024) "Twitter! In the good old days, it was the best way to get quick information and exchange ideas." (Respondent 3, PE4, 2024) "On social networks you can comment and react directly, unlike newspapers/TV." (Respondent 2, PE2, 2024)

Appendix 6. Quotes from relevent answer to the qualitative survey about Negative Effects

No Verification/Security	"Unreliable source. anyone can say what they want without having any real knowledge, and we often only have one point of view that we follow." (Respondent 2, NE1, 2024) "Mass sharing of false information as everyone relays it without checking or questioning." (Respondent 3, NE1, 2024)
Algorithm restrictive to what we're looking for	"Yes, of course, the algorithm suggests content that I liked previously or that is similar to it" (Respondent 2, NE2, 2024) "Probably yes, since my searches will then target the ads and information I receive." (Respondent 3, NE2, 2024)

	"Yes, they are more likely to be locked into their ideas if they subscribe to content that is particularly focused on their way of thinking." (Respondent 3, NE3, 2024) "Due to the algorithm that is enriched by our likes, a bubble is inevitably created, as we are offered only (or almost only) what we want to see." (Respondent 1, NE4, 2024)
Too intense flow of information	"Lack of concentration" (Respondent 5, NE1, 2024) "They spam you with information all day long" (Respondent 2, NE8, 2024) "I'd even say that these accounts give me anxiety." (Respondent 4, P15)

Appendix 7. Quotes from relevent answer to the qualitative survey about General Opinion

Role of Social Network is set to evolve	"I think it's only growing and that social networks will eventually replace traditional media." (Respondent 1, C2, 2024) "As it's practically my only source of information, I think it's going to evolve more and more." (Respondent 2, C2, 2024) "I think this will become increasingly important as time goes by, given the role our phones and networks now play in our daily lives." (Respondent 4, C2, 2024)
Limits of their use as a source of information	"This has the effect of keeping a person in a bubble where their own opinions are reinforced, without being confronted with arguments to the contrary.

	In this way, they adopt their ideas without developing a critical sense or being exposed to opposing views." (Respondent 1, C1, 2024)
	"Perhaps partial comprehension of certain information or misunderstanding. Everyone can interpret information in their own way, and not necessarily objectively." (Respondent 3, C1, 2024)