

Media Matters

ANALYZING MEDIA HABITS OF GENERATION-Z

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INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is the first cohort to have Internet technology throughout their whole life, which has given mobility and immediacy to Generation Z's consumption habits. While social media is mainly used for developing and maintaining relationships with people whom others are in proximity to, it is also used for keeping up with news, which has caused a drastic increase in the number of information channels and possible interactions available. This study is the only one the researchers are aware of that segments the current generation-Z adult (18 to 24 years of age) marketplace for news consumption.

METHODOLOGY

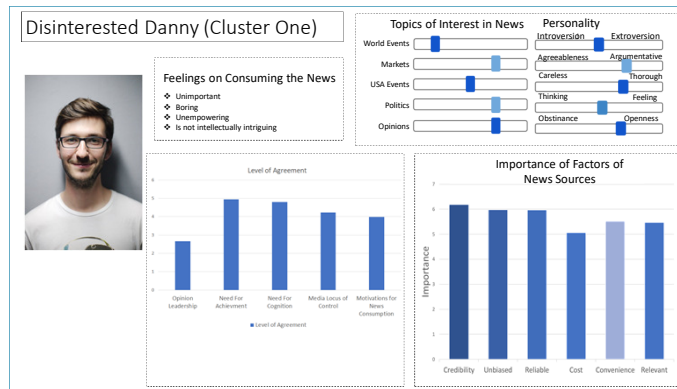
We conducted an online survey utilizing Qualtrics. Qualtrics afforded us greater reach and the opportunity to include a more diverse group of respondents while helping to ensure valid findings through technology that eliminates duplication. The survey consisted of 102 questions that included seven-point Likert scale, open-ended, forced choice option, and closed-ended, as appropriate. The study was distributed over different social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to reach potential respondents. The online survey utilized our prior findings to further measure perceptions and behaviors towards news consumption, as well as segment personality traits, psychographics, and demographics. There was a total of 270 respondents, providing a sample size large enough to hold significant explanatory and inferential value. Data was analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS

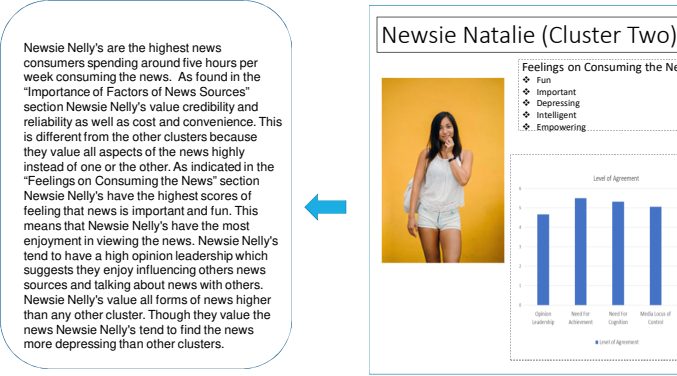
Most respondents were currently enrolled in some form of post-high school education (i.e., technical school, community college, or traditional university). A wide range of majors, household incomes, and race/ethnicities were represented with respondents coming from 18 states representing all regions of the United States. Constructs measured with multi-item measures (e.g., media brand personality dimensions, big five personality dimensions, media locus of control, news media skepticism, news consumption motivations, opinion leadership, mindful thought processing, etc.) were factor analyzed and collapsed into single items. All were found to be valid and meet standard reliability criteria ($\alpha > .70$). We obtained a wide distribution of responses to these questions. The responses, used in conjunction with respondent opinion, perceptions, and behaviors, were particularly useful for identifying actionable market segments. Segments were identified utilizing the k-means approach to clustering which performs an iterative alternating fitting process to form the number of specified clusters. We identified three segments in the 18-24-year market in the United States. Summaries of the identified clusters are provided in the form of personas.

CONCLUSION

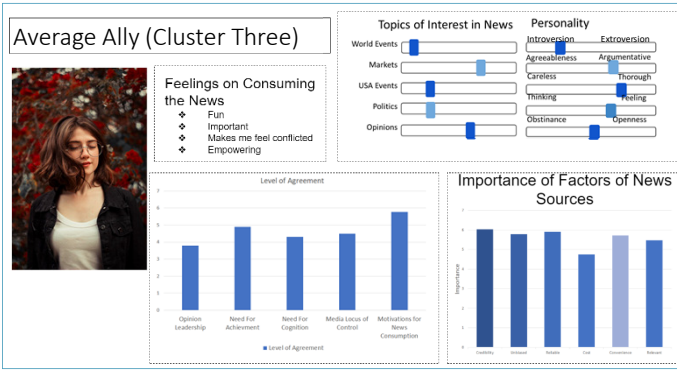
To explore and solidify consumer perceptions and attitudes regarding news consumption, key consumer insights were obtained through a quantitative study. By fully understanding the Generation Z target market segments, news providers can better tailor their messaging and communications. Our findings identified three distinct market segments containing 30.6 million people who are members of the adult Generation Z consumer group in the United States. Although each of the identified segments has unique characteristics, they all have some important commonalities. By understanding these different customer personas, news sources will be able to more strategically approach Generation Z consumers and deliver news content in more effective ways.



Disinterested Danny has the lowest interest in news spending around two hours per week consuming the news. As found in the "Importance of Factors of News Sources" section Disinterested Danny values credibility, reliability, and unbiasedness. As indicated in the "Feelings on Consuming the News" section Disinterested Danny's do not believe news media fits these values and is instead unimportant, unintriguing, and overall untrustworthy. Disinterested Danny values reliable information but does not feel it is represented correctly in news media. Disinterested Danny's tend to have a higher interest in politics and USA events than any other cluster. Disinterested Danny's also tend to be more opinionated than other clusters due to their high argumentativeness.



Newsie Nelly's are the highest news consumers spending around five hours per week consuming the news. As found in the "Importance of Factors of News Sources" section Newsie Nelly's value credibility and reliability as well as cost and convenience. This is different from the other clusters because they value all aspects of the news highly instead of one or the other. As indicated in the "Feelings on Consuming the News" section Newsie Nelly's have the highest scores of feeling that news is important and fun. This means that Newsie Nelly's have the most enjoyment in viewing the news. Newsie Nelly's tend to have a high opinion leadership which suggests they enjoy influencing others news sources and talking about news with others. Newsie Nelly's value all forms of news higher than any other cluster. Though they value the news Newsie Nelly's tend to find the news more depressing than other clusters.



Average Ally is the average news consumers spending around three hours per week consuming the news. Average Ally's have lower levels of extroversion compared to other clusters. This causes them to influence others news choices less as seen with the lowest level of opinion leadership. As found in the "Importance of Factors of News Sources" section Average Ally's values cost, convenience, and relevance more than any other cluster. As indicated in the "Feelings on Consuming the News" section Average Ally's believe reading news can be fun and empowering but also leave them feeling very confused or conflicted. Average Ally's are more likely to be influenced by others because of their wide interest in topics and low introversion. Overall, Average Ally's have interest in the news, but not feel strongly about many topics or will refrain to voice their opinions about the news media.