Navigating the information overload: a study of different types of news avoidance among audiences in Chile

Navegando la sobrecarga informativa: un estudio de distintos tipos de evitación de noticias entre las audiencias en Chile

Navegando a sobrecarga informativa: Um estudo sobre diferentes tipos de evitação de notícias entre as audiências no Chile

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ABSTRACT | Based on an online survey of 4,943 audience members in Chile, this study analyzes sociodemographic and attitudinal factors associated with four types of news avoidance: unintentional, consistent, occasional, and selective news avoidance. The results show a significant and negative, but only moderate, relationship between intentional news avoidance and the frequency with which respondents report consuming the news. Although audiences tend to avoid the news, this does not necessarily mean a low news consumption and vice versa. Likewise, the results show that selective news avoidance is significantly higher among audiences in Chile than the other types of news avoidance. Regarding the factors that explain news avoidance, the results show that trust in news and interest in politics are the only variables significantly associated with all four types of news avoidance analyzed. Media literacy, gender, age, political orientation, and level of education are linked to some types of news avoidance but not to all. At the same time, economic capital does not predict news avoidance in Chile. In terms of low news consumption on specific media platforms, our data shows that interest in politics and gender are consistent predictors for all of them.

KEYWORDS: news avoidance, news consumption, audiences, news trust, survey

RESUMEN | *Con base en una encuesta en línea aplicada a 4943 miembros de la audiencia en Chile, este estudio analiza los factores sociodemográficos y actitudinales asociados con cuatro tipos de evitación de noticias: no intencional, consistente, ocasional y selectiva. Los hallazgos muestran una relación significativa y negativa, aunque solo moderada, entre el hecho de evitar intencionalmente las noticias y la frecuencia con que las personas dicen consumirlas. Es decir, si bien la audiencia tiende a evitar las noticias, esto no indica necesariamente un bajo consumo de noticias y viceversa. Asimismo, la evitación selectiva de noticias es significativamente superior a otros tipos entre las audiencias. Respecto de los factores explicativos, los resultados muestran que la confianza en las noticias y el interés en la política son las únicas variables significativamente asociadas con todos los tipos de evitación analizados. La alfabetización mediática, el género, la edad, la inclinación política y el capital cultural se relacionan con algunos de los tipos de evitación de noticias, pero no con todos, mientras que el capital económico no predice la evitación de noticias en Chile. En relación con el bajo consumo de noticias en plataformas mediáticas específicas (televisión, radio, redes sociales, medios impresos y en línea), los resultados muestran que el interés en la política y el género son predictores consistentes en todas ellas. Nuestro estudio revela que la dinámica de evitación de noticias en Chile es multifacética y refleja una interacción compleja entre factores sociodemográficos y actitudinales.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *evitación de noticias, consumo de noticias, audiencias, confianza en noticias, encuestas*

RESUMO | Com base em uma pesquisa online aplicada a 4 943 membros da audiência no Chile, este estudo analisa os fatores sociodemográficos e atitudinais associados a quatro tipos de evitação de notícias: não intencional, consistente, ocasional e seletiva. Os resultados mostram uma relação significativa e negativa, embora apenas moderada, entre evitar intencionalmente as notícias e com que frequência as pessoas dizem consumi-las. Ou seja, embora a audiência tenda a evitar as notícias, isso não necessariamente indica um baixo consumo de notícias e vice-versa. Além disso, a evitação seletiva de notícias é significativamente superior a outros tipos de evitação de notícias entre as audiências. Em relação aos fatores explicativos, os resultados mostram que a confiança nas notícias e o interesse na política são as únicas variáveis significativamente associadas a todos os tipos de evitação de notícias analisados. A literacia midiática, o gênero, a idade, a inclinação política e o capital cultural estão relacionados com alguns dos tipos de evitação de notícias, mas não com todos, enquanto o capital econômico não prediz a evitação de notícias no Chile. Com respeito ao baixo consumo de notícias em plataformas midiáticas específicas, os resultados mostram que o interesse na política e o gênero são preditores consistentes em todas elas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: evitação de notícias; consumo de notícias; audiências; confiança em notícias; pesquisas.

INTRODUCTION

The abundance of information and overexposure to news requires greater efforts to distinguish what is relevant and what is not (Van Aelst et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016). This means that some people are forced to be selective in the news they consume, while others limit or restrict their consumption. Previous studies have shown that news avoidance has increased in recent years (Newman et al., 2024). However, despite numerous previous studies, there is still no consensus on the conceptualization and operationalization of this phenomenon (Ohme et al., 2022; Palmer et al., 2023). Some authors distinguish between intentional and unintentional news avoidance (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020), while others view it from the perspective of little or no news consumption (Villi et al., 2022; Ohme et al., 2022). Others have argued that news avoidance varies in degree depending on whether people intentionally avoid exposure to general information or to specific topics (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020).

Each approach has contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon (Edgerly, 2022; Bruin et al., 2021; Ohme et al., 2022). However, there are still gaps in knowledge regarding the conceptual and analytical operationalization of the different types of news avoidance as well as the factors that explain it.

In Latin America, news avoidance has not yet been studied in depth. Especially in Chile, this phenomenon has only been partially analyzed from specific points of view, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Peña y Lillo & Guzmán, 2022; Rocamora Villena et al., 2023) and hate speech in migrant communities (Sibrian Díaz et al., 2024). However, the different types of news avoidance by audiences are still unknown when examining their general news consumption habits in the Chilean context.

The Chilean reality highlights several aspects that support this study and make it relevant: people report low levels of trust in the news (Newman et al., 2024) and the general evaluation of journalism and media in the country is negative (Mellado & Cruz, 2024). Nevertheless, the majority of people report a high level of news consumption (Mellado & Cruz, 2024), which is even higher than the global average (Newman et al., 2024).

Another aspect to consider is that traditional media such as radio, television and print media are being used less and less for news consumption in Chile, while social media and online media have become the preferred platforms (Mellado & Cruz, 2024). In this context, the media have a responsibility to promote trust in the journalistic work they produce, as this has an impact on audience consumption and preferences.

This study aims to understand how Chilean audiences avoid exposure to the news by examining the relationship between stated news consumption and intention to avoid the news. It also identifies the sociodemographic and attitudinal factors associated with four different types of news avoidance: unintentional, consistent, occasional and selective.

Conceptual approach to news avoidance

Various studies show that the intention to avoid news has increased worldwide in recent years (Newman et al., 2024). While some traditionally refer to news avoidance as low news consumption (Edgerly, 2022; Toff & Palmer, 2019; Ohme et al., 2022), the phenomenon has been approached from different conceptual perspectives, such as the analysis of intentional versus unintentional avoidance (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020), selective avoidance (Palmer et al., 2023), or consistent news avoidance (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020).

However, as there is no consensus on how to operationalize news avoidance, the results vary and it is unclear which type of avoidance is being referred to when comparing numbers and percentages and trying to explain the phenomenon.

In an effort to clarify the different nuances in the study of news avoidance, Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020) define it as low news consumption in a given time period, which can be caused by an aversion to news or a preference for other types of media content. Following their conceptualization to distinguish different types of news avoidance based on their nature, this study first distinguishes between intentional and unintentional news avoidance.

Intentional news avoidance is a deliberate action to avoid consuming news, which can be based on different reasons, such as sociodemographic factors (Edgerly, 2022; Bruin et al, 2021; Ohme et al, 2022), negative evaluations or distrust of news and media (Wagner & Boczkowski, 2019; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020), the negative impact that news can have on people's mood and well-being (Tamboer et al, 2020), fatigue due to information overload (Groot Kormelink & Klein Gunnewiek, 2022; Park, 2019) or self-efficacy in identifying, selecting and consuming news (Edgerly, 2022).

Unintentional news avoidance, on the other hand, is more complex to understand and explain as it is not based on a conscious and active decision. In other words, these are people who exhibit low news consumption but do not intentionally avoid contact with news. The reasons for this behavior may lie in a preference for consuming other types of media content related to their individual interests (Van den Bulck, 2006), as well as contextual factors (Palmer et al., 2023; Lindell & Mikkelsen Båge, 2023).

In the same vein, and following Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020), we can also distinguish consistent news avoidance, a phenomenon that refers to low or no news consumption, which corresponds to the conceptualization traditionally used by other studies to understand news avoidance. In contrast to other researchers, Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020) argue that consistent news avoidance can be both intentional and unintentional, as the reasons for this decision are unknown.

Indeed, several authors reject the traditionally established relationship between low news consumption and news avoidance (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021; Ohme et al., 2022), as these phenomena are not mutually exclusive and different factors may be associated with them.

Studies conducted in different contexts have shown that people who claim to avoid news (sometimes or often) do end up consuming a considerable amount of general news (Ohme et al., 2022; Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021; Palmer et al., 2023), and their level of information does not seem to be lower than that of people who do not avoid news (Ohme et al., 2022; Woodstock, 2014; Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021).

In this sense, while consistent news avoidance (low news consumption) may be associated with an intentional or unintentional desire to avoid the news, it does not necessarily indicate a less informed audience and vice versa (Garrett, 2009; Ohme et al., 2022).

However, as few studies have investigated and questioned the relationship between low news consumption and news avoidance, the link between the two remains an open question. Therefore, considering the Chilean context, we ask:

> *RQ1.* What is the relationship between news consumption and the intention to avoid news among Chilean audiences?

The scope of intentional news avoidance

In addition to the distinction between intentional and unintentional news avoidance and the relationship between these phenomena and consistent avoidance (low news consumption), Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020) identify two further types of avoidance, defined according to their extent: occasional avoidance and selective avoidance.

The first type, occasional news avoidance, refers to the intentional avoidance of news at certain times in general. To identify this type of avoidance, researchers rely on individuals' explicit and conscious declaration of their intention to avoid news in general, even though they often maintain a significant level of news consumption (Woodstock, 2014; Van den Bulck, 2006).

On the other hand, various authors point out that it is difficult to completely disengage from all news in a digital media environment where information is proliferating (Toff & Nielsen, 2018; Toff & Palmer, 2019). As a result, news avoidance often relates to specific topics rather than a general aversion to consuming informative content.

Following this idea, Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020) conceptualize selective news avoidance as the act of intentionally avoiding certain topics or types of news within one's news consumption (Newman et al., 2024).

Based on the conceptualization and operationalization of these different types of intentional news avoidance, research in this area has asked which type of news avoidance is more common among viewers (Ohme et al., 2022). However, the results are not consistent.

While some authors find that audiences mainly avoid consuming news on specific topics (Groot Kormelink & Klein Gunnewiek, 2022; Mannell & Meese, 2022), others find that people avoid consuming news in general, regardless of the topic (Ohme et al., 2022).

Based on similar findings, some researchers have suggested that avoiding news on certain topics may even be beneficial for individuals' psychological well-being (Nguyen et al., 2023; Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021), as it prevents them from being exposed to information that causes stress without leading to complete disengagement from the news.

As previous research shows no consensus on which type of intentional news avoidance is most common, we ask in the Chilean context:

> *RQ2.* Which type of intentional news avoidance is most common among Chilean audiences?

Factors associated with news avoidance

In terms of factors and reasons for news avoidance, previous studies have found a significant correlation with various sociodemographic and attitudinal variables.

First, research has consistently found that those who avoid news tend to have a lower interest in politics and public affairs, while habitual news consumers (of all types) tend to have a higher interest in politics (Lindell & Mikkelsen Båge, 2023; Edgerly, 2022).

Therefore, we hypothesize that:

> *H1.* There is a significant negative relationship between the level of interest in politics and public affairs and the intention to avoid the news.

Trust in the media and the news was also consistently associated with the intention to avoid the news. The perception that the news is unreliable and that the media are biased and promote their own political and economic interests are some of the reasons for their distrust and avoidance of news consumption (Schrøder, 2016; Toff & Nielsen, 2018; Díaz Noci & Pérez-Altable, 2023; Serrano-Puche, 2020). When people do not trust news sources, they tend to avoid them and turn to sources they consider more reliable (Wagner & Boczkowski, 2019; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Villi et al, 2022; Palmer et al, 2023). Therefore, we propose:

> *H2.* There is a significant negative relationship between trust in the news and intention to avoid news.

Previous studies have also found that people who perceive the news as irrelevant (Lee & Chyi, 2014) and report low knowledge of the media system and news (Edgerly, 2022; Karlsen et al., 2020; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Schwarzenegger, 2020) tend to avoid the news more often.

Audience media literacy is crucial because it involves understanding the personal and social processes by which news is produced, disseminated and consumed, as well as the skills that enable audiences to exercise some control over these processes (Tully et al., 2022; Vraga et al., 2015; Pérez Tornero et al., 2021). Edgerly (2022) and Schwarzenegger (2020), for example, find that lower levels of media literacy are significantly related to news avoidance. In other words, people who consider themselves more competent to navigate the media system tend to avoid news less frequently and vice versa. Therefore, we propose:

> *H3.* There is a significant negative correlation between the level of media literacy and the intention to avoid news.

Several studies have also shown that demographic factors influence the intention to avoid news. Age has been found to be related to news avoidance (Bruin et al., 2021; Ohme et al., 2022; Edgerly, 2022), with younger people more likely to avoid the news. In terms of gender, women have been found to have a greater intention to avoid news compared to men (Ohme et al., 2022; Bruin et al., 2021; Toff & Palmer, 2019; Serrano-Puche, 2020). Furthermore, people who self-identify as more politically left-wing are more likely to avoid the news than those who identify with the political right (Bruin et al., 2021; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020). Therefore, we expect that:

> *H4.* Women, younger people and people who lean towards the political left are more likely to avoid news consumption.

In addition, socioeconomic status has also been associated with the intention to avoid news (Lindell & Mikkelsen Båge, 2023; Toff & Palmer, 2019; Díaz Noci & Pérez-Altable, 2023; Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2017). For example, some studies show that people with lower economic and cultural capital, without a college degree or with a lower level of education tend to avoid the news more often (Lindell & Mikkelsen Båge, 2023; Lee et al., 2016; Karlsen et al., 2020). Therefore, we expect that:

H5. People with lower economic and educational capital are more likely to avoid the news.

Although the variables that predict the likelihood of news avoidance in the Chilean context and globally are diverse, studies have not found a consensus on which of these factors best explain the intention to avoid news. There are also no studies that analyze differences in the factors associated with different types of news avoidance, such as those examined here.

Therefore, we ask:

RQ3. Which sociodemographic and attitudinal factors best explain the different types of news avoidance?

Factors associated with low news consumption across media platforms

In addition to sociodemographic and attitudinal factors, we are interested in further analyzing consistent news avoidance (low news consumption) to determine whether this phenomenon varies by the type of platform through which audiences consume news. Competition and frequency of consumption across different platforms are evident. Mellado and Cruz (2024) and Newman and colleagues (2024) show that the audience's use of online platforms and social media for news consumption has increased, while the frequency of consumption of traditional media such as radio, television and print media has decreased. Therefore, we seek to identify:

RQ4. What factors are associated with low news consumption (consistent avoidance) on specific news platforms?

METHOD

Sampling and data collection

To achieve the objectives of the study, a survey was conducted among 4,943 media users from the three most populous regions of the country, which together account for 60% of the Chilean population: the Metropolitan Region, the Biobío Region and the Valparaíso Region.

The survey was conducted online in December 2023, with an average response time of 12 minutes. The data was collected by the market research company Feedback. The database used for this study consisted of citizens aged 18 years and older from the three regions mentioned above. From this database, a group of people were randomly selected using a stratified sample with sociodemographic representation criteria, achieving a response rate of 10%.

The sampling strategy used by Feedback considers the regions, gender, age and socioeconomic level of the potential participants, based on the characteristics of the Chilean population. Since online surveys depend on people's willingness to respond to a self-administered instrument, sociodemographic segmentation variables such as gender, age or socioeconomic level tend to have representations that are not accurately adjusted to the actual distribution of the population. Therefore, a weighting mechanism was used to adjust their weights within the sample (and thus the weight of their responses) to the actual distribution they represent.

Finally, the weighted sample, according to the weight of each region in relation to the whole and taking into account its internal composition in terms of gender, age groups and socioeconomic level, consisted of 66.6% of inhabitants from the Metropolitan region, 15.2% from the Biobío region and 18.2% from the Valparaíso region. In terms of gender, 48.2% were men and 51.8% women. Regarding age, 40.8% were under 40 years old and 39.9% were over 50 years old. As for socioeconomic level, 18% belonged to the ABC1a and C1b segments, 38.8% to the C2 and C3 socioeconomic levels and 43.2% to the D and E levels.

Measures

After participants had given their informed consent to take part in the survey, they completed an online questionnaire. As in previous studies (Edgerly, 2022; Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Villi et al., 2022; Vraga et al., 2015), they were asked about their media consumption, their intention to actively avoid news, their interest in news, politics and public affairs, their trust in news, their overall evaluation of journalism and the media, their level of media literacy, and various sociodemographic variables (gender, age, economic capital (income), cultural capital (education level) and political orientation).

For further details on the measures used, see: https://osf.io/raczn/.

RESULTS
Relationship between news consumption and the intention to avoid the news

The results of our study show a significant and negative relationship between intentional avoidance and the frequency with which people report consuming

news (RQ1). However, the strength of the relationship is only moderate (r=-0.393). In fact, the data show that a significant percentage of those who report avoiding news nevertheless access it frequently, and that a sizable minority of those who report low consumption do not report intentionally avoiding news (figure 1).

While the average news consumption of those who do not say they avoid news is 5.86 on a 7-point scale, the average news consumption of those who say they often or always avoid news is 4.45, well above the midpoint of the scale. Of those who access news more frequently, 45.3% state that they often or always actively avoid news.

One plausible explanation for this is that even a news-savvy audience becomes more active and selective in its news consumption and avoids exposure to content that causes discomfort. However, this does not necessarily indicate low overall news consumption.

On the other hand, the results show significant differences in the way different types of news avoidance manifest themselves among Chilean audiences. The data shows that only 21.9% of respondents said to avoid news consistently, while more than half of the audience intentionally avoids news sometimes or often (71.1%).
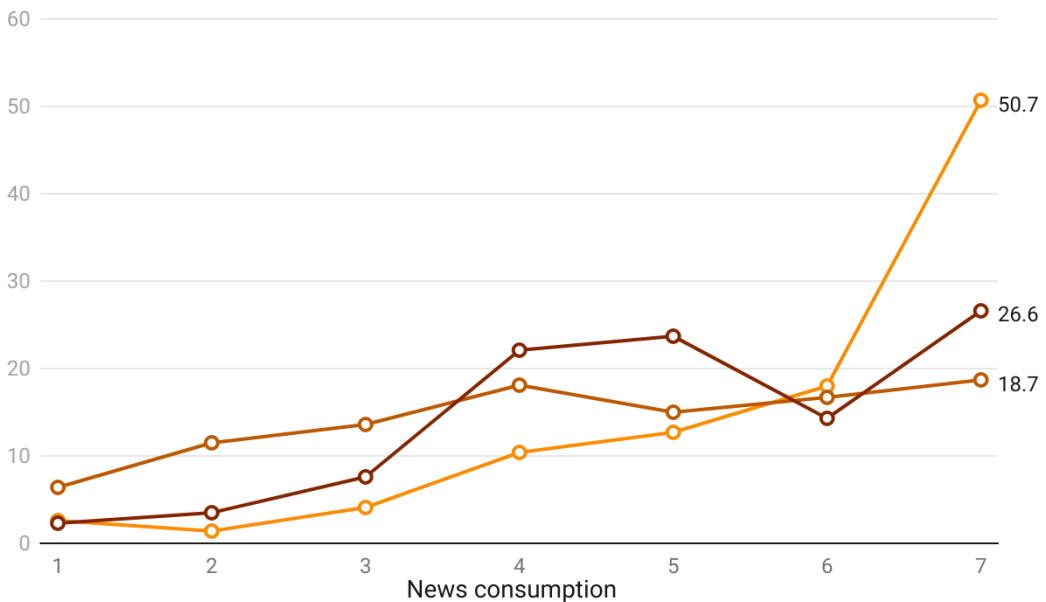

Figure 1. Relationship between news consumption and occasional news avoidance
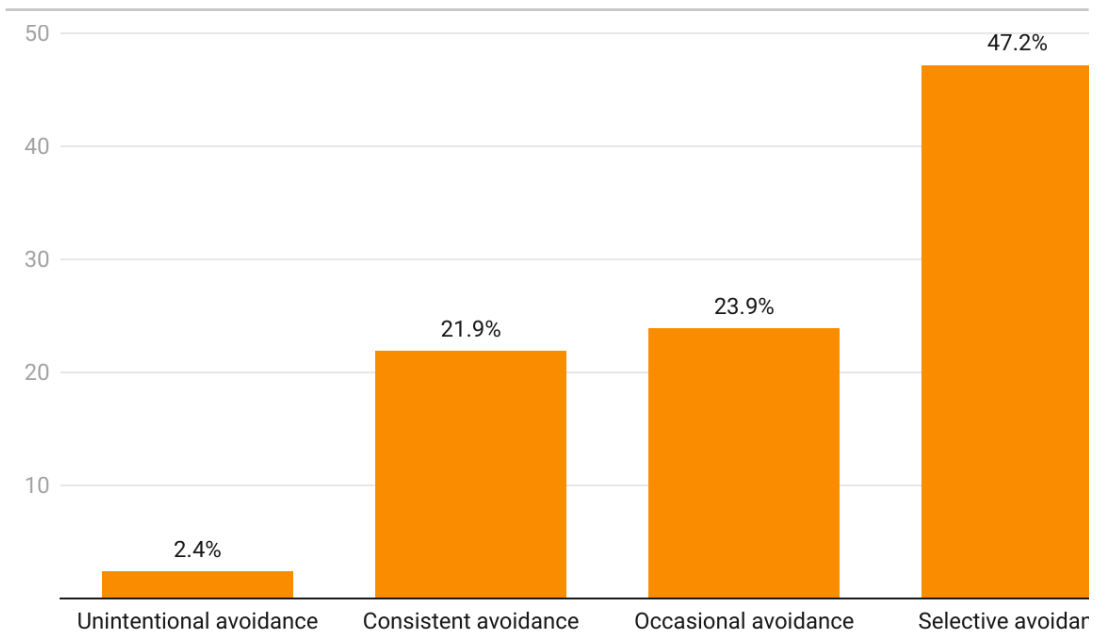
Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 2. Types of news avoidance

Source: Own elaboration.

However, the majority do not just avoid news on every topic. Only 23.9% of respondents say they avoid news in general (occasional news avoidance), while 47.2% say they avoid news on specific topics (selective news avoidance). Finally, only 2.4% of respondents state that they avoid news unintentionally, i.e., they state that they consume little news and have little or no intention of avoiding the news (figure 2).

Based on this data, we answer RQ2, which aims to determine which type of intentional avoidance is most common. Our analyzes show that the intention to selectively avoid news is significantly more common than the intention to occasionally avoid news overall. In other words, although Chilean audiences report a high intention to avoid news, most do not avoid the news altogether but focus on specific topics, as Mannell and Meese found in Australia (2022) and Villi and colleagues found in Israel, Argentina and Japan (2022).

Factors associated with different types of news avoidance

To test hypotheses 1-5 and RQ3, various binary logistic regression analyzes were conducted to estimate the extent to which the likelihood of avoiding news is influenced by age, gender, economic capital, cultural capital, political orientation, interest in politics, media literacy, and audience-reported trust in news (table 1).

The Hosmer-Lemeshow test showed good fit for each model with a classification accuracy between 75% and 96%.

H1 and H2 propose that there is a significant inverse relationship between the level of interest in politics, trust in the news, and intention to avoid the news. Specifically, these hypotheses state that people with a higher interest in politics and greater trust in the news have a lower intention to avoid the news.

The results support both hypotheses and show that the variables interest in politics and trust in the media are significant and negatively predict different types of news avoidance. Greater interest in politics and higher trust in the news are associated with higher levels of unintentional, consistent, occasional and selective news avoidance.

Media literacy, gender, age, political orientation and cultural capital are associated with some, but not all, types of news avoidance.

In terms of media literacy, the results suggest that higher media literacy leads to a lower likelihood of unintentional news avoidance. Similarly, higher media literacy is associated with a lower likelihood of occasional news avoidance (intentional news avoidance overall). However, this variable is not significantly related to consistent (low news consumption, whether intentional or unintentional) and selective (intentional avoidance of certain topics) news avoidance. Therefore, H3, which postulates a significant inverse relationship between the level of media literacy and the intention to avoid news, is partially supported.

The results also show that respondents' gender is significantly related to two types of news avoidance: consistent and occasional. Specifically, this means that being a male is associated with a lower likelihood of consistent and occasional news avoidance. On the other hand, older age is associated with a lower probability of occasional news avoidance and a higher likelihood of selective news avoidance. In terms of political orientation, the results are only significant for occasional news avoidance, with greater proximity to the political right being associated with a lower likelihood of avoiding the news in general.

In contrast, gender, age and political orientation are not significant predictors of unintentional news avoidance. Similarly, gender and political orientation show no association with selective news avoidance, and age and political orientation are not significantly associated with consistent news avoidance. Thus, H4, which states that women, younger people and people with a left-wing political orientation are more likely to avoid consuming news, is partially supported.

In terms of educational and economic capital, the results show that higher cultural capital is associated with a lower likelihood of unintentional news avoidance, consistent avoidance (low news consumption) and selective news avoidance (intentional avoidance of certain topics). However, the level of education

is not associated with occasional news avoidance (general topic avoidance). Economic capital, on the other hand, is not associated with any type of news avoidance. Thus, H5, which states that people with lower economic and cultural capital are more likely to avoid news, is partially supported for cultural capital and rejected for economic capital.

	Unintentional		Unintentional/ Intentional		Intentional			
	Low news consumption + low or zero intention to avoid the news		Consistent news avoidance (low news consumption)		Occasional news avoidance		Selective news avoidance	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Gender (1 = Male)	-.119	.888	-.501***	.606	-.116*	.890	.023	.682
Age	-.004	.996	.000	1.000	-.011***	.989	.009***	1.009
Economic capital	.080	1.083	.056	.944	.016	1016	-.003	.997
Cultural capital	-.221***	.882	-.154***	.857	.017	1.017	.057**	1.058
Political orientation	-.032	.968	-.047	.954	-.075***	.928	-.005	.995
Interest in politics and public affairs	-.312***	.732	-.516***	.597	-.098***	.907	-.047**	.954
Media literacy	-.242***	.785	-.034	.967	-.060*	.942	.004	1.004
News trust	-.550***	.577	-.486***	.615	-.132***	.876	-.070***	.933
Negelkerke R2	.208		.302		.130		.102	

Table 1. Factors explaining unintentional, consistent, occasional, and selective news avoidance

Source: Own elaboration.

Factors associated with low news consumption across different media platforms

The results show that the factors predicting consistent news avoidance (low consumption) vary by media platform (RQ4). However, interest in politics and public affairs and gender are the only variables that are consistently associated with low news consumption across all media platforms (table 2).

The higher the interest in politics and public affairs, the lower the likelihood of low consumption across media platforms.

In the case of gender, the correlation is not always the same. Men are less likely to consistently avoid news in print, online media and on the radio (low consumption), while they are more likely to have low news consumption on television and social media.

Another variable related to low news consumption is age, which is significant for radio and social media. The older the person is, the less likely they are to consistently avoid news on the radio (low consumption) and the more likely they are to avoid it on social media. These results align with current consumption habits, with older people primarily listening to the radio and younger people primarily using social media (Mellado & Cruz, 2024). However, age is not a significant predictor of consistent avoidance of print media, television or online media.

Furthermore, the results suggest that a higher level of trust in the news leads to a lower likelihood of consistently avoiding news in print, television, online media and radio, but not social media. In terms of political orientation, the results show that those who identify more with the political right are more likely to consistently avoid news in online media and less likely to consume news in print media, television and radio.

Similarly, the higher the level of media literacy, the lower the probability of consistently avoiding news in print, online media, radio and social media. However, this variable is not significant for low news consumption on television, which could be due to the fact that television is a transversal medium that is well known in its production and functioning and where a high or low level of media literacy does not influence consumption as much as on other platforms.

As far as economic capital is concerned, it is only relevant for a low level of news consumption on television and social media. Higher economic capital corresponds to a higher probability of low news consumption on TV and social media. This could indicate more selective behavior in choosing or discriminating between news and platforms among those with better economic position, partly due to the wider range of options they can access based on their financial position (Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2017).

	Low news consumption of print media		Low news consumption of television		Low news consumption of online media		Low news consumption of radio		Low news consumption of social media	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Gender (1= Male)	-,073* (,061)	,928	.282*** (.063)	1.325	-.521*** (.065)	.594	-.197*** (.058)	.822	.145* (.067)	1.155
Age	,003 (,002)	1,003	.003 (.002)	1.003	-.001 (.002)	.999	-.012*** (.002)	.988	.030*** (.002)	1.031
Economic capital	-,020 (,024)	,980	.245*** (.025)	1.277	.006 (.025)	1.006	.022 (.023)	1.022	.086*** (.026)	1.090
Cultural capital	-,063*** (,020)	,939	-.035 (.020)	.965	-.061*** (.019)	.941	-.009 (.019)	.991	-.015 (.021)	.985
Political orientation	-,173*** (,018)	,841	-.107*** (.019)	.899	.047* (.020)	1.048	-.043* (.018)	.958	.017 (.020)	1.017
Interest in politics and public affairs	-,115*** (,018)	,892	-.116*** (.018)	.891	-.167*** (.018)	.846	-.102*** (.017)	.903	-.081*** (.019)	.922
Media literacy	-,111*** (,027)	,895	-.007 (.027)	.993	-.192*** (.027)	.826	-.076* (.025)	.927	-.171*** (.029)	.842
News trust	-,167*** (,019)	,846	-.508*** (.022)	.602	-.154 (.021)	.858	-.184*** (.019)	.832	.012 (.021)	1.012
Negelkerke R2	,090		.208		.110		.078		.104	

Table 2. Factors explaining consistent news avoidance across different media platforms

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, cultural capital is only relevant for print and online media. Higher cultural capital corresponds with a lower likelihood of consistent news avoidance on both platforms, suggesting that audiences with higher levels of education engage more critically and selectively with the news, especially as print and online media require audiences to be more engaged with the news.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to understand how and to what extent Chilean audiences avoid news by examining the relationship between reported news consumption and the intention to avoid news. At the same time, the sociodemographic and attitudinal factors associated with four different types of news avoidance were identified: unintentional, consistent, occasional and selective.

The results provide important insights into news avoidance in Chile and reveal a complexity in audience behavior that goes beyond the simple dichotomy of consumption and avoidance.

First, the study shows a negative but moderate relationship between reported news consumption and the tendency to intentionally avoid news. This suggests that many people who report avoiding news still consume them, even if they are more selective in their news choices. These findings are consistent with other studies that have found that people report avoiding certain news topics but continue to stay informed (Groot Kormelink & Klein Gunnewiek, 2022).

This attitude could be interpreted as a sign that consumers are taking a more active role in their news consumption, possibly as a self-protection mechanism against the stress associated with negative or sensationalist news, as has been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another possible explanation is that the trend to avoid news is a manifestation of information overload and fatigue in the face of constant and ubiquitous news cycles in today's media ecosystem. The fact that a significant group of people (70.1%) intentionally avoid the news sometimes or often indicates a cultural shift towards more conscious information consumption. This pattern suggests that audiences may be developing resilience to constant information stimuli by deciding when and how to engage with the news, or doing so to protect their emotional and mental well-being (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021; Groot Kormelink & Klein Gunnewiek, 2022).

Second, the results support the hypothesis that factors such as interest in politics (H1) and trust in the news (H2) play a crucial role in the analysis of people's relationship with the news, as these variables are significantly related to all types of news avoidance analyzed.

This result could be due to the search for a balanced news consumption, where the quality and relevance of the content are more important than the quantity (Lindell & Mikkelsen Båge, 2023; Toff & Nielsen, 2018; Villi et al., 2022). In this sense, our results show that restoring and maintaining trust in the media is essential to overcome news avoidance.

Third, our results partially support the inverse relationship that other authors have found between media literacy and news avoidance (H3). Specifically, individuals with higher media literacy tend to avoid the news less unintentionally, which may suggest that a greater understanding of how to navigate, evaluate, and understand the media leads to a higher likelihood of news consumption. However, the fact that media literacy is not significantly associated with consistent and selective news avoidance suggests that other factors may play a role in these forms of avoidance.

Fourth, this study highlights that sociodemographic factors such as gender, age and cultural capital are related to different types of news avoidance (H4, H5), suggesting different audience profiles.

In contrast, economic capital is not a significant predictor of any type of news avoidance, suggesting that barriers to news access are not based on financial resources, but rather on psychosocial factors and individual preferences. However, this result differs for low news consumption via certain media platforms. For example, higher economic capital predicts lower news consumption on television and social media. This may suggest that individuals with more resources are more discerning in their choice of platforms and content, in part due to wider access to technology and premium content or streaming subscriptions (Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2017).

Fifth, the differences in factors predicting consistent news avoidance (or low consumption) by media platform emphasize the need for differentiated strategies to improve audiences' relationship with news in different media environments.

To summarize, this study reveals nuanced and multidimensional dynamics of news avoidance that reflect a complex interaction between sociodemographic and attitudinal factors. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering trust and interest in the news and improving the media literacy of audiences (Pérez Tornero et al., 2021). Patterns of news avoidance are not monolithic, but vary according to context. This highlights the need for personalized approaches to understand and address audiences' relationships with news in the digital age.

Our study is not without limitations. The first limitation relates to various contextual and individual causes that might be associated with different types of news avoidance — such as emotional reactions, information fatigue, lack of time for news consumption, or perceived self-efficacy— - which were not measured in this study.

A second limitation is that the data collection was based on a cross-sectional survey that captured respondents' reported perceptions and attitudes about their news consumption or avoidance. Therefore, we cannot say with certainty to what extent respondents' answers correspond to their actual behavior when confronted with news in everyday life.

A third limitation is that the data was collected exclusively in Chile and only in three regions, so the results cannot be generalized. We encourage future studies to investigate or compare the phenomenon of news avoidance in different regions or countries.

Despite these limitations, this study provides an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon in Chile and establishes a solid foundation for future research on news avoidance. The results show that audiences do not simply avoid the news at certain times, but that this avoidance reflects a conscious decision and a critical attitude towards the media. Furthermore, the results suggest that interest in

politics, trust in the news and media literacy are closely linked to the way people engage with the news, ahead of other important factors.

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