"Fake or not, I'm sharing it": Teen perception about disinformation in social networks

Abstract

Purpose: Disinformation has become a latent risk for online audiences, specifically for minors who are commonly exposed to a wide variety of online content at a time they are developing cognitively and emotionally. The article offers insight on minors' perception and the tools used by this age group to verify the content to which they are exposed while online.

Design/methodology/approach: 12 focus groups were held in Spain between April and June 2021 with a total of 62 participants aged 11 to 17. Besides age, sex and socio-economic group were variables taken into consideration to select the participants. A script covering the intended questions was used to structure the discussion.

Findings: Result analysis reveals that minors are excessively confident in their ability to identify false news and feel the need to share content with their online community as a means of participation in discussions or trending topics. In conclusion, the study confirms the presence of disinformation in the content which minors encounter as they surf the net.

Originality: Being a very relevant question, the article offers arguments that could help to design more effective media literacy programs.

Keywords: Disinformation; minors; social networks; hoaxes; critical thinking; fake news.

Introduction

Broad consensus has been reached on the existence of a relationship between news consumption and the development of democratic behaviors and attitudes (York & Scholl, 2015; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Kaufhold *et al.,* 2010; Baum and Jamison, 2006; Kenski and Stroud, 2006). Also agreed upon is the fact that it is not easy to attract younger people to traditional news issues such as politics or economics (Drok *et a*l., 2018; Galan *et al.,* 2019). The media has been rather unsuccessful in doing so despite the relative increase in the news offer and effort put forth to reach this younger audience as part of the extensive generalization in the consumption of internet (York and Scholl, 2015).

For those minors who are interested in political or social activism, information consumption is only relevant among a minority (Green, 2020). Some studies have shown that news consumption during the teenage years has a positive impact on developing the habit of and interest in news in adulthood (York and Scholl, 2015). A growing interest

in news related to the Covid-19 pandemic was recently detected among this age group and seems to have been associated with a negative impact on their mental health (Strasser *et al.,* 2022).

Another relevant issue is that what adolescents consider to be "news" seems to be different from and broader than what for adults (Tamboer *et al.*, 2022). As Marchi (2012) states, it is necessary to move away from previously established topics and uses and open up to new issues and ways of consuming news content, as it is covered in the Reuters Institute report from Oxford (Galan *et al.,* 2019).

According to Ohme *et al* (2022) it is likely that given the changes that have taken place in terms of news creation spread and consumption, the type of information and the channel through which it is accessed depend on each person's individual profile (Thorson, 2020), and total avoidance of information is practically impossible (Edgerly *et al.,* 2018). This fragmentation process affecting information consumption seems also to interfere with its socialization and, thus, with possible family mediation strategies. The latter point becomes particularly relevant when addressing the ability of minors to deal with disinformation.

In this context, and according to Tamboer *et al* (2022), media and information literacy efforts may not be enough, since knowledge and tools are needed for critical consumption of information (Craft *et al.,* 2016). and these involve having a broader vision than media literacy itself may provide (Kačinová and Sádaba, 2022). In order to grasp how big a challenge disinformation dissemination is among minors, it seems necessary to know how they consume information what they think about disinformation and what they do when they detect or believe they have found content that may be false.

Disinformation and teenagers

Hoaxes and false news are topics that quickly and strongly emerge when referring to the phenomena associated with the consumption of online information. Disinformation is understood as "verifiably false or misleading information created, presented and disseminated for financial gain or intentional deception of the public" (European Commission, 2019). It can be easily assumed that any context rich in information and relationships will include errors or "misinformation" (Burnam, 1986) unintentionally false messages that filter through control mechanisms and reach and spread through citizens. Disinformation, however, covers deliberate falsehoods which —in today's highly polarized environments, and sped up by technology's huge capillarity and diffusion (Sádaba and Salaverria, 2023)— are rapidly disseminated and entail potential

risks as has occurred in social media during the Covid-19 pandemic (Brennen *et al.*, 2020; Salaverría *et al.*, 2020).

This current state of disinformation not only threatens the health of democracies, but also impacts most vulnerable groups, including the minors. Herrero-Diz *et al* (2021) reviewed the different studies that have been conducted globally on the relationship of minors with the disinformation phenomenon and conclude that while adolescents are aware of its existence, they also show a high level of self-confidence in being able to recognize and deal with this type of content. It is common, as identified by Corbu *et al* (2021) to find the third-person bias among this audience: they think it is others, not themselves, who are more likely to be deceived.

Additionally, the Herrero-Diz *et al* (2021) study also pioneered on analyzing the relationship between minors and disinformation in Spain and revealed that 70% of those surveyed had heard of the disinformation phenomenon, 62% had identified some content which they suspected could be false in the social networks and 83% were aware that disinformation was deliberately created by someone to deceive other people (Herrero-Diz *et al.*, 2021).

When it comes to strategies to combat disinformation, the use of verification tools comes in first. Verification services have quickly and notably proliferated in recent years, particularly in social networks, and have become part of communication media environment. Despite this and other tools, young people seem not to meet the minimum standards to be able to correctly verify the news they consume online (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2022) partly due to a certain mistrust of the verifiers themselves. Besides that, the work of Mercenier *et al* (2021), with an interesting qualitative approach, highlights the importance of emotions in detecting false content at all ages, including adolescents.

The second strategy that stands out as key in the fight against disinformation is education: media literacy emerges as essential. Sádaba and Salaverría (2023) assert that the current information-rich context in which content itself takes on diverse forms does not easily allow for easy identification of disinformation. As Mercenier *et al* (2021) also highlight, it is necessary that education strategies and training in the use of specific techniques or tools should be directed specifically at teenagers with a special emphasis on critical thinking, given that disinformation can often be hidden as entertaining or satirical content.

Herrero-Diz *et al* (2021) analysis was the first quantitative study on the relationship between Spanish teenagers and disinformation. Their study was based on a large sample of adolescents from the Autonomous Community of Andalucía. This study deepens and

expands their results by providing a qualitative vision and a geographically wider and more representative sample nationwide, to learn the extent to which Spanish minors are aware of the presence of false news content on social networks, the channels by which it is disseminated and their strategies or reactions to protect themselves from it.

The main objective of this research is to find out what perception minors have about disinformation on social networks and what elements they possess to combat it. In short, it is about reflecting on the ability of minors to deal with this type of content and verify their exercise of critical thinking related to a phenomenon that they face daily in their digital routine. Therefore, this article seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Are adolescents aware of the presence of disinformation in the content they are exposed to on social networks? What practices do they recognize and associate with news and disinformation on social networks?

RQ2. Regarding protection strategies, how do they verify and how do they act in the presence of false or misleading content? Have they internalized their personal role in the fight against disinformation?

Methodology

Twelve focus groups were held virtually on platforms with which participants were familiar (Zoom and Microsoft Teams) between April and June 2021. This qualitative approach aimed at collecting participants' opinions and information on features regarding their exposure to news by means of a guided discussion led by two project members. Discussion groups are considered an ideal technique for studying peer dialogue dynamics (Morgan, 1997). Conversations are usually started with a five- to ten-minute long conversation devoted to having participants talk about their general perception (on social networks in this case). In this study, the first approximation covered topics such as the social network platforms they used, how much time they spent on them, their opinion of social networks, etc. Next, came the main part of the conversation which revolved around minors' perceptions, motivations, and the critical capacity they exhibited while being exposed to this kind content during their digital routines. This section dealt with relationships with influencers, challenges brought on by and exposure to hoaxes and fake news. Regarding the focus of this study, minors and their relationship with disinformation in social networks, participants were asked about the type of information they were exposed to, and what they considered a news piece. Once this segment of the conversation was ongoing, it was possible to learn how they manage and perceive disinformation, and what resources they use to try to protect themselves from it.

Qualitative data was obtained by means of thematic analysis with NVivo software (Boyatzis, 1995). Coding categories that were established were defined in terms of the research questions and topics included in the interview script. The authors' experience in studies on minors and teenagers helped improve the quality of the resulting interpretation of the analyzed material.

Focus group question guide	
Use of social networks for news consumption	- Do you receive news through social networks? - If so, what types of news are you exposed to through social networks? - Through which platforms are you exposed to news?
Perception of and mechanisms to protect yourself from disinformation	- Have you received false information through social networks? Is it common to receive false information on social networks? - How do you know if the information you receive or are exposed to is false? Is it important to you whether the information you share is true? - Have you shared false information on social networks? Do you verify beforehand that the information you share is true? How? Why?

Table I. List of questions that guided the discussion on disinformation

Sample selection for participation on focus groups was as follows. A non-probabilistic sample was selected with the support of educational centers. Two filter criteria were used to define the sample: age, and socioeconomic profile and location of the school students were attending. In terms of age, four categories were established based on the grade students were in: 6th graders (elementary students), 7th and 8th graders (1st cycle of ESO), 9th and 10th graders (2nd cycle of ESO) and 11th and 12th graders (Baccalaureate students). Two criteria were used to classify schools: funding sources and geographical location. Thus, schools were classified as private, charter or public with regards to funding, and in geographical terms, location was used as a preliminary indicator of the socioeconomic level of the households from which the minors came (Andrino *et al.*, 2019). Following this segmentation, students were classified as attending high (+€30,000 in income), medium (€11,450-€30,350) and low (-€11,450) GSE schools, based on information provided by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (Andrino *et al*, 2021)

The protocol with focus groups started by individually verifying sound and video of all attendees followed by reassuring participants once more on the confidentiality and privacy of the recordings and specifying that access to those files was restricted to participating researchers. The fact participation was voluntary was reiterated as well as that they were free to end their participation whenever they wanted. Discussion groups lasted approximately 50 minutes. All the focus groups had a number of participants

between 4-6, and only in one case and due to one of the attendees unable to join the focus group at the last moment, three minors were present.

Sixty-two minors aged 11 to 17 from different parts of Spain participated. In total, 17 schools were involved . By funding, eight were private or charter, and nine public; by socioeconomic level, six corresponded to high socioeconomic level, eight to medium level, and three to low level. Geographically speaking the North, South, Center, Levante and the Balearic and Canary Islands are represented.

Grade	GSE	Female	Male	Total
6th Elementary	High	1	2	3
	Medium	4	2	6
	Low	3	4	7
7th/8th (1st cycle of ESO)	High	4	1	5
	Medium	2	2	4
	Low	4	0	4
9th/10th (2nd cycle of ESO)	High	5	2	7
	Medium	1	5	6
	Low	1	4	5
11th/12th (high-school years)	High	4	1	5
	Medium	4	2	6
	Low	4	0	4
Total		37	25	62

Table II. Distribution of participants by gender, school year and socioeconomic level.

The ethical considerations this type of research entails, particularly given the inclusion of minors, were taken into account at all times. Parental authorization was requested, the Ethics Committee of the university financing this research supervised focus group protocols and reviewed and approved of the final results.

Results

Informative use of social networks

Minors perceive as anecdotal their exposure to informative news on social networks compared to other standard uses. The concept "news" requires a broad description in this analysis. News includes current information as well as facts participants find of interest and which are considered as worthy of being exposed to, shared, and disseminated, and which can cover topics such as the lives of influencers they follow or more personal content regarding the activities in which each individual is engaged. This means that news may be about video games, crafts, or any other topic. "I don't care

much about politics and kings and such, and I watch more TikTok news, dances, things like that" (FG 8, female, 6th grader, middle GSE).

Age is key in what is considered "news": the youngest interviewees –6th graders and 7th/8th graders (1st cycle of ESO students)– barely pay attention to informative news through social networks. Informative news reaches them through traditional media to which they are exposed while with family members (car radio while commuting; television during family meals or gatherings). As minors grow up, their relationship with informative news increases via various media and they incorporate a greater critical spirit which leads them to begin to introduce nuances and differentiate between different types of information and, thus, begin labeling some "news" as irrelevant. Minors say they gradually perceive an increase in the dissemination of inconsequential news, on social networks, television, and online newspapers. They recognize they are attracted to this type of information despite acknowledging its superfluous nature. It is particularly among 9th and 10th graders (2nd cycle of ESO students) and 11th and 12th graders classified as medium and high socioeconomic groups, that the concept of "clickbait" first appears, and which is understood as a mechanism for generating income.

Older groups seem to differentiate totally invented news from intentional manipulation of real events; however they find it harder to tell honest news pieces from adulterated ones apart.

> Sometimes you can't, (tell them apart), sometimes you just have to trust, because if you start to distrust everything you can also distrust the newspaper, which, in fact, can tell things that are not the truth, or tell them in a way that... with (a particular) interests so to speak, but especially in social networks sometimes it is difficult, you ask yourself, is this true? (FG 11, female, 11th/12th grader, medium GSE)

The teenagers interviewed have some first-hand or informal knowledge on the technical functioning of social networks. The concept of algorithm and the way in which social networks collect data to personalize their user experience emerged during the conversations with minors. Adolescents state they do not receive much news through social networks given it is not something for which they are on the lookout and, therefore, it does not usually appear. It is interesting to note that knowing how algorithms work does not seem to generate any worries for them, in fact, algorithms are considered as positive contributors. "There are times when, for example, I find it useful for it to suggest things I watch frequently (FG 4, male, 9th/10th grader, medium GSE).

Disinformation and their self-perception on how to protect themselves
The minors interviewed are not oblivious to the phenomenon of disinformation. In fact, they tend to recognize the phenomenon naturally. Age and their self-perception on their own ability to recognize false information come into play when analyzing this

phenomenon. Sixth graders, the youngest participants, tend to surf networks oblivious to the problem of hoaxes or fake news, to the point they do not even know the meaning of these terms when asked about them. Minors this age are not exposed to receiving false news given they do not seek nor share this type of content. Higher socioeconomic levels, however, did mention having witnessed, participated in or having been victims of the dissemination of false information on their own or their peers' private lives, mainly through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, or Hangout.

Minors tended to relate the phenomenon of fake news and its virality with the information published about the pandemic:

> I'm one of those people who checks where the news is coming from, because I say 'well, be careful, because it says something or other about the Covid vaccine' and I'm like 'yes, I'll see, because it's may not be so, it may be a lie' because come on, this theory that they are telling me about needs to be taken with a grain of salt (FG 2, female, 7th or 8th grader, medium GSE).

Interestingly, interviewees relate false news to certain platforms, specifically to digital spaces which they share with adults, such as WhatsApp and Facebook.

The direct reference to "family WhatsApp groups" is noteworthy. These groups are described as a virtual space in which they are expected to be present even if they do not interact that much. "I'm in family groups a bit as an obligation, because I am a relative, because, to tell the truth…" (FG 2, female, 7th/8th grader, high GSE). Minors state that these groups are a source of false news, partially due to the lack of "digital criteria" their elders have.

Consequently, minors perceive adults, especially older adults, as rather defenseless against hoaxes and deception on social networks:

> I don't think it happens to us as much as it does to older people, right? [...] Young people are much more accustomed to and familiar with this situation and I think there are not many people in my environment who fall for fake news [...] we, unfortunately, live with lies almost daily and we are immune (FG 4, male, 9th/10th grader, medium GSE).

Interviewees tend to equate the ease with which they distinguish disinformation from real information to their experience and amount of time they have been present in social networks. Thus, minors consider that adults may be naiver and more vulnerable to what is disclosed on platforms such as Facebook, which they consider a social network prone to disinformation for having a larger presence of older users. Thus, this argument allows minors to justify that given their ability to easily handle social networks, they can identify false news. Moreover, they think of themselves as a generation that has grown accustomed to being bombarded with false information, from photo montages to

fabricated news, and therefore they assert they are more skeptical of what is published on social networks.

> In general, the younger a person is, from old age to teenagers, the more familiar one is with this, the more news one finds on a daily basis and the less it happens to them. It's not like the first time (a moment in which) one can be deceived and the like (FG 4, male, 9th/10th grader, medium GSE).

Adolescents naturally assume their role of fake news receivers but seem to be less aware of their responsibility as possible transmitters of misleading information. Elementary and high school students do not exchange news pieces as such, but they do receive and share details about the lives of people they follow —especially influencers— and, in most cases, do so without contrasting the information received. "I share it and if it's wrong, well, too bad" (FG 1, male, 6th grader, high GSE). Minors are not only exposed to this type of content, they also create and distribute it among their peer groups through social networks, mainly through WhatsApp, which seems to be the most popular application used to share gossip on their peers. "On WhatsApp, there are fights are over stickers (…) People take photos of someone making a strange face or something and then they start writing things" (FG 8, male, 6th grader, middle GSE).

When asked if they have received any type of training to combat disinformation, they refer to courses given at their schools by those in charge of managing cyberbullying and cybersecurity, but no reference was made to having received specific training in this regard. Additionally, minors themselves do not seem to give much consideration to this issue given that they trust their resources and consider it normal to be constantly exposed to false and true information. Interviewees shared who their sources for information verification usually are and curiously they tend to be close adults and traditional media. Thus, when minors doubt on the reliability of content they are exposed to on social networks, they turn to their parents: "When I want to check the news or school things I consult my mother, any questions I have, she's the one I ask, I don't know how she does it, but she always answers me, always" (FG 3, male, 9th/10 grader, low GSE). In turn, parents act as a link between minors and the traditional media when verifying the origin of certain news: "I mainly read news on Twitter, it is where I mostly find out about things and then also through more traditional media, TV and such, my parents usually have it on and well, I also find out about things there" (FG 12, female, junior/senior HS student, medium GSE); " Well, sometimes I research for news on television or Google, and other times in class or through what my family tells me" (FG 10, female, 7th/8th grader, low GSE).

However, despite the precautions taken by these students, some interviewees did admit to having been victims of false information, and of its subsequent re-dissemination for fear of not being part of a group by sharing and participating in an event of some relevance. "Whenever I receive news like this, I always try to send it as quickly as possible

because, I mean, you never know if it's true or not, and just in case I forward it (FG 3, female, 9th/10th grader, low GSE).

This study reveals that minors' verification sources (namely review of alternative sources, searching for news origin or asking adults) is not influenced by the socioeconomic levels of the interviewees given that they all have tools to combat misinformation; however minors' belonging to higher GSE resort to more complex procedures as a result of a greater critical exercise. For example, minors take into consideration the presence of basic incorrect text elements in the information (spelling mistakes, poor writing, etc.), the inclusion of verifiable graphic evidence or the trustworthiness conferred to the person sharing the information are taken into account.

> With the coronavirus, well, things that are poorly written, poorly worded, eh... well, for example, I don't trust, when someone writes poorly, well, I don't know what to trust, with the issue of the vaccine, there are people who are half crazy, well, you write to me in poorly written Spanish, well, I don't know, I find it hard to believe you. Then, well, if people talk about it a lot, but then it doesn't come out on television or on the radio, then you say 'maybe it's not true'... I don't know, I think there are mechanisms that, in the end, we all have, well to detect a little where things are going, right? (FG 6, female, 11th/12th grader, high GSE).

Interviewees from high socioeconomic groups assume that the population in general has sufficient resources to live with misinformation, that the ability to identify fake news it is something universal, so they were rather unconcerned about this issue, unlike other high-school students belonging to medium and low socioeconomic levels, among whom the concern about this issue was greater. In general, minors opt for actions that require less initiative, such as consulting traditional media or the presence of warning messages social network place themselves.

"Now Instagram labels when information is false by including "False information", so that has greatly reduced (the risk of) making a fool of yourself" (FG 9, female, 11th/12 grader, low GSE). The lack of more reflective and less platform- or entity-dependent information verification methods render minors vulnerable, and places lower socioeconomic level students at a disadvantage compared to other social groups who have a comparatively more critical attitude.
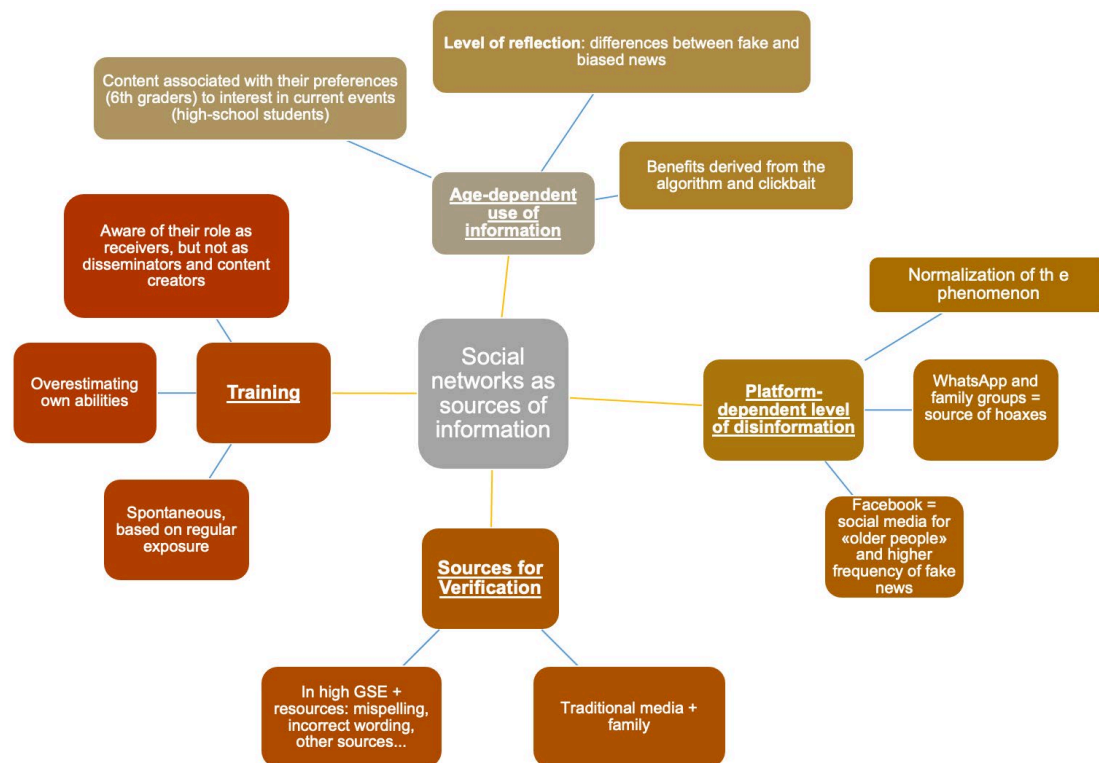
Figure 1. Summary of the main findings

Discussion

The study corroborates the results obtained by Herrero-Diz *et al* (2021) with regards to the fact that adolescents acknowledged having being exposed to disinformation while being exposed to online content. Differences in perception were identified depending on age given that as minors get older, they become more aware of the existence of false content. The results also corroborate minors are aware of the deliberate deceiving intention behind disinformation, again related to age. Minors clearly single out clickbait strategies media uses to capture their attention such as exaggerating or hiding part of a piece of information, for instance. The quantity of news and information minors are exposed to appears to be positively related to their concern about disinformation.

As Tamboer *et al* (2022) had already mentioned, minors' concept of "news" is broader than that of by adults. In this point it is important to mention that participants asserted that they have been more exposed to news than they would have been had there not been a COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, an excessively traditional concept of news, which covers most classic topics or is developed by conventional media, does not fit what minors consider to be information (Marchi, 2012), This holds true despite minors' being aware of the existence of a gradation in terms of news seriousness and many having admitted to having been attracted to what they term as "irrelevant news." This clear differentiation between types of content can render minors vulnerable given that their degree of being alert to "serious" content, such as the attention rendered to pandemic-

related news, is different from that granted to "lighter" content toward which they tend to relax and be less critical. Age plays a role in this dual behavior: elementary school students focus on influencers' lives or that of their peers.

This generation is particularly confident about its ability to detect and respond to disinformation, as they point to older people as more likely to be deceived. Somehow, they assume that disinformation is more problematic for those who browse less on the Internet, and thus they perceive themselves to be better protected from falling for false news. This finding confirms the third-person bias reported by Corbu *et al* (2021), with the particularity that they identify the channels through which they consider that adults are more exposed to fake news: Facebook and WhatsApp. It is also noteworthy to learn that family chat groups emerge as spaces where they witness fake news exchange.

However, two additional elements temper the previous assertions: on the one hand, minors sometimes have a hard time choosing not to share news that they know may be false as they fear they would be missing out on a trend or a viral issue. This is consistent with the findings of Ibrahim *et al* (2022) who stated that this generation fails to combat disinformation. This proves true even though age is linked to using more elaborate process to detect disinformation, such as the use of specific sources for information verification and being aware of the need to identify the origin of possible disinformation. These results are also consistent with the essential role of emotions that Mercenier *et al* (2021) attribute as essential in the viralization of certain disinformation.

On the other hand, even though minors attribute a third-person bias to adults, it is precisely adults to whom they turn as main source of verification when news pieces seem suspicious to them. In this instance, minors consider that the contact that adults have with traditional media allows adults to have data of which they are unaware.

Finally, adolescents assert not having received any type of specific training on how to combat misinformation on networks. They do, however, state having had classes or sessions on areas such as cybersecurity. Minors declared that sometimes it is formal aspects of the content to which they are exposed that puts them on guard on the veracity of information. Misspellings, for example, or specific technical features platforms implement help minors detect false content. It is only among the oldest minors or those who qualified as pertaining to higher socioeconomic level who mention using more advanced skills to screen hoaxes and false news.

The importance of advancing media literacy (Sádaba and Salaverría, 2023) becomes clear in this context, as does the relevance of critical thinking training (Kačinova and Sádaba, 2022; Mercenier *et al.*, 2021) which needs to be considered as one of the axes of education. In this sense, for example, participants were not overly concerned about

disseminating false rumors about friends or colleagues. One possible interpretation of this fact is their relative lack of knowledge and critical reflection on the nature of disinformation and its harmful effects on people in general.

Conclusions

This study confirms that disinformation is part of minors' routine exposure to online content. This occurs in a context in which their interest in informative (and relevant) news is scant and is closer to what they themselves consider "irrelevant news" on video games, influencers, and the like.

Minors aged 11 to 17 show a high level of self-confidence in their resources to deal with disinformation, and they consider that it is adults who are more likely to believe what they see or read online.

As much as teenagers exhibit excess self-confidence, they do they do acknowledge some limitations. Among these, first of all, is the difficulty of refraining from disseminating information that they suspect may be false if they perceive that dissemination may lead to the opportunity of being part of viral trends. The emotional aspect (Mercenier *et al.*, 2021) thus acquires a very relevant role in the dissemination of disinformation. The second limitation that they reveal is that they have not received any specific training to protect themselves from false content and hoaxes, which leads them to overly rely on solutions the platforms themselves offer.

Disinformation is by no means a new phenomenon but has acquired an unprecedented relevance through social networks. The fact that minors are privately exposed to disinformation makes it difficult for them to socialize the content they are regularly exposed to and limits the reach and efficacy of potential mediation strategies. This explains why training in media literacy emerges as one of the key strategies to combat the harmful effects, at a personal and social level, of disinformation on the youngest generation.

Despite the findings of this study focus on the description and exploration of the disinformation phenomenon, its qualitative nature impedes the authors from trying to reach any general conclusions given the size of the sample and its approach. For this reason, the authors suggest trying to establish future lines of research that may consider a quantitative approach in exploring the role of critical thinking and media literacy in the exposure to persuasive content on networks, as well as the study of the influence of the household socioeconomic level on the ability of minors to responsibly manage their use and browsing of social networks. Additionally, given the limitations inherent to the possible sociocultural conditioning factors of the sample, other similar investigations

could be promoted in other regions or countries to identify similarities and differences of a more universal nature.

References

Andrino, B., Grasso D., and Llaneras K. (2019), "¿Escuela de ricos, escuela de pobres? Cómo la concertada y la pública segregan por clase social" Available at https://bit.ly/37vtH8M (accessed 26 June 2022)

Andrino, B., Grasso D., Llaneras K., and Sánchez, Á. (2021), "El mapa de la renta de los españoles, calle a calle", Available at https://bit.ly/3JpRVi0 (accessed 26 June 2022)

Banaji, S., and Cammaerts, B. (2015), "Citizens of nowhere land: Youth and news consumption in Europe", *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 115-132. DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2014.890340

Baum, M. A., and Jamison, A. S. (2006), "The Oprah effect: How soft news helps inattentive citizens vote consistently", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68 No. 4, pp. 946-959. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00480.x

Boyatzis, R. (1995), *Transforming qualitative information: Analysis and code development*. SAGE. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Brennen, J. S., Simon, F., Howard, P. N., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020), "Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation", Available at https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation (accessed 26 June 2022).

Burnam, T. (1986), *Dictionary of Misinformation* (Vol. 1315). HarperCollins Publishers.

Comisión Europea (2019), "Tackling online disinformation" Availanble at https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/tackling-online-disinformation (accessed 26 June 2022)

Corbu, N., Oprea, D. A., and Frunzaru, V. (2021), "Romanian Adolescents, Fake News, and the Third-person Effect: A Cross-sectional Study", *Journal of Children and Media*, pp. 1-19. DOI: 10.1080/17482798.2021.1992460

Craft, S., Ashley, S., and Maksl, A. (2016), "Elements of news literacy: A focus group study of how teenagers define news and why they consume it", *Electronic News*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 143-160. DOI: 10.1177/1931243116656716

Delli Carpini, M. X., and Keeter, S. (1996), What Americans know about politics and why it matters. Yale University Press. Chelsea, MI.

Drok, N., Hermans, L., and Kats, K. (2018), "Decoding youth DNA: The relationship between social engagement and news interest, news media use and news preferences of Dutch millennials", *Journalism*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 699–717. DOI: 10.1177/1464884917703469

Edgerly, S., Vraga, E. K., Bode, L., Thorson, K., and Thorson, E. (2018), "New media, new relationship to participation? A closer look at youth news repertoires and political participation", *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 95 No. 1, pp. 192-212. DOI: 10.1177/1077699017706928

Galan, L., Osserman, J., Parker, T., and Taylor, M. (2019), "How Young People Consume News and The Implications For Mainstream Media. A report by Flamingo commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University" Available at https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/FlamingoxREUTERS-Report-Full-KG-V28.pdf (accessed 20 June 2022)

Green, L. (2020), "Confident, capable and world changing: teenagers and digital citizenship". *Communication Research and Practice*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 6-19. DOI: 10.1080/22041451.2020.1732589

Herrero-Diz, P., Conde-Jiménez, J., and Reyes-de-Cózar, S. (2021), "Spanish adolescents and fake news: level of awareness and credibility of information (Los adolescentes españoles frente a las fake news: nivel de conciencia y credibilidad de la información)". *Culture and Education*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 1-27. DOI: 10.1080/11356405.2020.1859739

Ibrahim, Y., Safieddine, F., and Pourghomi, P. (2022), "Attitudes to fake news verification: Youth orientations to 'right click'authenticate", Journal *of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1386/ajms_00051_1

Kačinová, V., and Chalezquer, C. S. (2022), "Conceptualización de la competencia mediática como una 'competencia aumentada'", *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, Vol. 80, pp. 21-38. DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2022-1514

Kaufhold, K., Valenzuela, S., and De Zúñiga, H. G. (2010), "Citizen journalism and democracy: How user-generated news use relates to political knowledge and participation", Journalism *& Mass Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 87 No. 3-4, pp. 515-529. DOI:10.1177/107769901008700305

Kenski, K., and Stroud, N. J. (2006), "Connections between Internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation", *Journal of broadcasting & electronic media*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 173-192. DOI: 10.1207/s15506878jobem5002_1

Ohme, J., Andersen, K., Albæk, E., and de Vreese, C. H. (2022), "Anything Goes? Youth, News, and Democratic Engagement in the Roaring 2020s", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 557–568. DOI: 10.1177/19401612221093008

Marchi, R. (2012), "With Facebook, Blogs, and Fake News, Teens Reject Journalistic 'Objectivity'", *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 246–262. DOI: 10.1177/0196859912458700

Mercenier, H., Wiard, V., and Dufrasne, M. (2021), "Teens, Social Media, and Fake News: A User's Perspective", *Politics of Disinformation: The Influence of Fake News on the Public Sphere*, pp. 159-172. DOI: 10.1002/9781119743347.ch12

Morgan, D. L. (1997), *Qualitative Research Methods: Focus groups as qualitative research,* SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. DOI: 10, 9781412984287

Sádaba, C., and Salaverría, R. (2023), "Combatir la desinformación con alfabetización mediática: análisis de las tendencias en la Unión Europea", *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, Vol. 81, pp. 17-33. DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2023-1552

Salaverría, R., Buslón, N., López-Pan, F., León, B., López-Goñi, I., and Erviti, M. C. (2020), "Desinformación en tiempos de pandemia: tipología de los bulos sobre la Covid-19", *El profesional de la información (EPI)*, Vol. 29 No.3. DOI: 10.3145/epi.2020.may.15

Strasser, M. A., Sumner, P. J., & Meyer, D. (2022), "COVID-19 news consumption and distress in young people: A systematic review", *Journal of affective disorders*, Vol. 300, pp. 481-491. DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2022.01.007

Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., and Daalmans, S. (2022), "'We are a neeeew generation': Early adolescents' views on news and news literacy", *Journalism*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 806–822. DOI: 10.1177/1464884920924527

Thorson, K. (2020), "Attracting the news: Algorithms, platforms, and reframing incidental exposure", *Journalism*, Vol. 21 No. 8, pp. 1067-1082. DOI: 10.1177/1464884920915352

York, C., and Scholl, R. M. (2015), "Youth antecedents to news media consumption: Parent and youth newspaper use, news discussion, and long-term news behavior", *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 92 No.3, pp. 681-699. DOI: 10.1177/1077699015588191