

Reducing selective news avoidance of young audiences with personalized content adaptations and explanations

Media Futures.

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Abstract

This project investigates selective news avoidance among young audiences and explores strategies to counter it through personalization, content adaptation, and gamification. Around 40% of people globally – particularly younger demographics – report avoiding news due to factors like perceived negativity, bias, irrelevance, or information overload. Approaches to mitigate selective news avoidance – the deliberate disengagement from some types of news while still consuming others – remain underexplored despite critical implications for democratic participation and resilience against misinformation. Emerging approaches in personalization and content design hold potential to reduce avoidance and encourage more sustained engagement with avoided topics by tailoring news presentation, making it more approachable and engaging. The project will design and test these interventions, drawing on theories of explainability, persuasive communication, and cognitive information processing. Combining experimental studies, applications of large language models for news presentation, and user-centered design, it aims to generate practical insights for news organizations and deepen understanding of how personalization can nudge young readers toward a more balanced and diverse news diet.

Background

Global trend of **increasing news avoidance** (2025: 40%) [1], especially among young audiences [2] → mostly **selective** news avoidance (avoiding only certain topics/genres) [5]

Primary causes: perceived negativity of news, lacking relevance, news distrust and news fatigue [6]

Societal consequences of news avoidance:

- ↓ Lowers democratic participation [3]
- ↑ Increases vulnerability to mis- & disinformation [4]

Young consumers' individualistic view: news should be useful, interesting and fun [7]

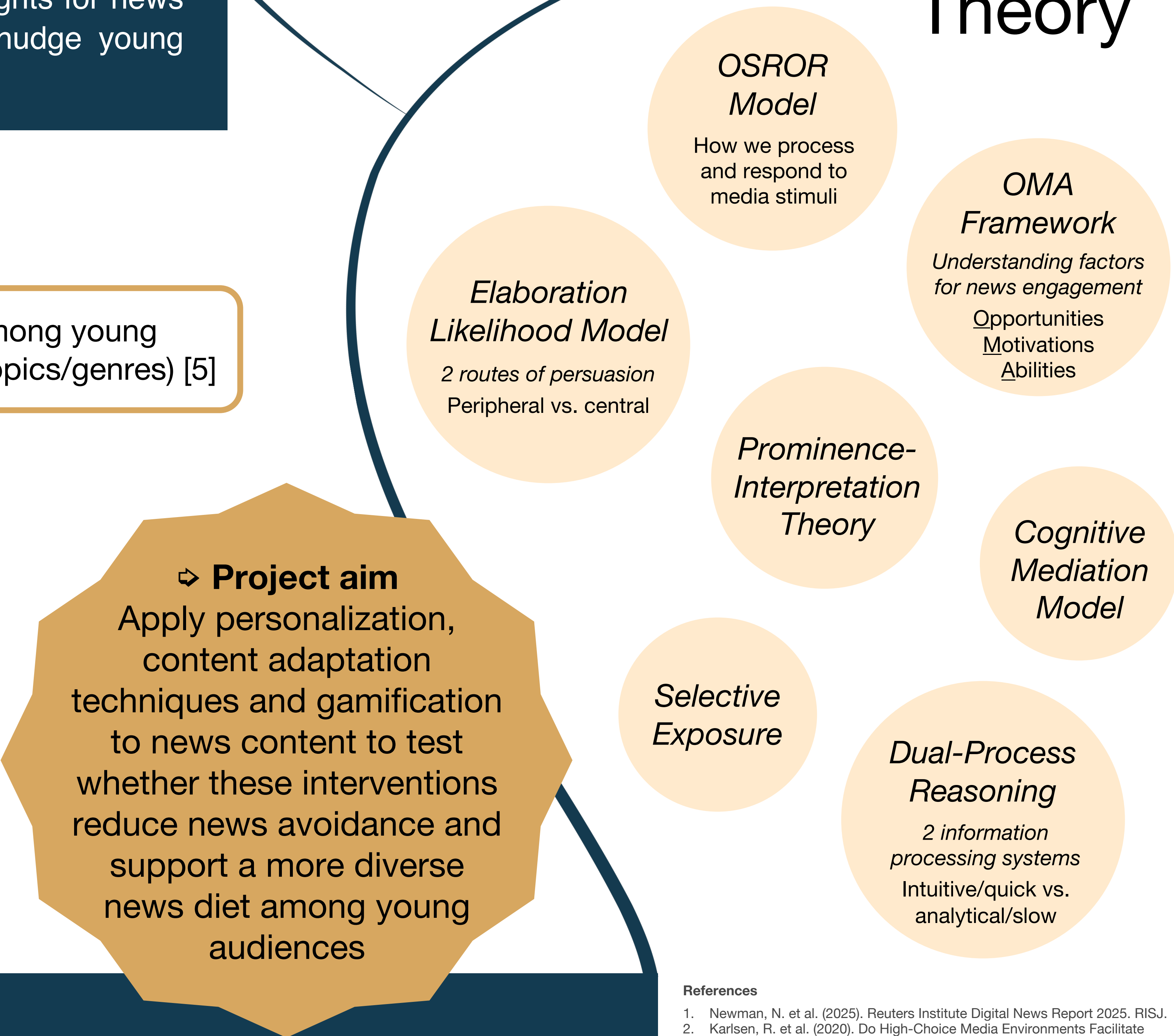
Research questions

1. To what extent can personalized explanations increase trust and engagement with news among young audiences?
2. To what extent can content adaptation strategies reduce news avoidance in young audiences?
3. How can interaction design strategies like gamification elements and personalization techniques foster sustained news engagement and reduce selective news avoidance among young audiences?

Methods

- Explanations, transparency & content adaptation have shown to improve understanding & perceived trustworthiness [8,10]
- Gamification elements like streaks or achievements have proven to improve engagement, participation and learning for young users, e.g. in educational settings [9]
- ⇒ **Mixed methods approach** combining qualitative and quantitative studies to address the research questions

Theory



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PARTNERS



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