

Comparative analysis of information preferences of young people and people of mature age during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract. This article presents the results of a study of the information preferences of young people and mature people during the Covid-19 pandemic. The choice of informational preferences is seen as an important factor in informational socialization. A brief analysis of personality traits of representatives of the new information generation "Net gen" is carried out.

Keywords: digital socialization, generation "Net gen", information preferences.

Introduction

According to the annual report on the state of the digital environment from Global Digital 2021, in January 2021, 4.66 billion people worldwide use the Internet, which is 7.3% more than last year, and 53.6% of the world's population use social networks. ... We see how the virtual world has been added to the space of the real world, which every year plays an increasing role in the life of every person. All this leads to changes in the conditions of human socialization. On the one hand, expanding its resource, on the other hand, it forces one to be in a constant situation of uncertainty and the search for personal boundaries.

In our country, out of 145.9 million inhabitants, 124 million are active Internet users.

Don Tapscott, studying the impact of the penetration of digital technologies into life, identifies the following norms that have formed among people of the Internet generation [1, p. 73]:

1. Freedom. The Net Gen (as Tapscott calls them) have been given the freedom to choose what to buy, where to work, and who to be through the Internet. They do not strive to find a job immediately after receiving an education, to which they will give their whole life. They are open and ready to experiment. Young people today tend to avoid traditional office space and tightly regulated work schedules. And many tech giants like Google and Intel are striving to create the most comfortable work environment for the next generation of their employees.

2. Customization. Young people strive to do everything for themselves. When they buy various goods, they change them in order to express themselves in their things. Today you can see a lot of young people with different stickers, pins and badges.
3. Skepticism. The Net Gen motto is "Trust but Verify." This norm is especially important in the digital space, where there is a lot of false information. Therefore, representatives of this generation, who were familiar with the digital environment from an early age, adapted to it by checking the incoming information.
4. Tolerance. Net Gen representatives strive to be honest, considerate of the world's problems and concerns of others, and to honor their commitments. However, Professor Jean Twenge disagrees with this norm, highlighted by Tappscott, who calls the younger generation "the I generation" and believes that this is the most narcissistic generation in history.
5. Cooperation. With the advent of digital technologies into our lives, it has become easier to communicate, find like-minded people and unite with them in groups to work on a common cause.
6. Speed. Young people today are online almost all the time. At any moment they can receive messages on the phone, and they immediately answer. If they need to find some information, then the search process will not take them long. The ability to quickly navigate a situation young people can transfer to any field of activity.
7. Innovation. Today's world is constantly evolving. New technologies appear every year. The Net Gen representatives, who are most densely integrated into the digital environment, strive to keep up with the progressing world, actively seeking new information. The drive for innovation is also associated with the drive for customization. Young people want to adjust everything for themselves and therefore come up with something new.

All these norms look like positive consequences of living in the digital space, but attention should also be paid to the negative impact of digital technologies.

Modern users who receive information, mainly from digital sources, are characterized by a superficial style of information processing, rapid switching of attention, which in turn can lead to a violation of the formation of important educational skills: logical analysis, critical thinking and reflection [2, p. 50] .

Purpose of the study

One of the main tasks is to study the way a person adapts to a new reality. We see how much young people differ from people of the older generation, and we are interested in how these changes take place, how the digital socialization of the younger generation takes place.

Digital socialization is mediated by the technosystem. The technosystem includes human interaction with both living (peers) and non-living (electronic devices, programs, applications) its elements. The use of more complex tools (elements of a technosystem) by a person in the process of socialization may require the development of more and more complex cognitive processes, which means a more complex person to interact with the outside world [3, p. 72]. Digital socialization is an important part of traditional socialization and is the process of mastering and appropriating a person's social experience, which was acquired in the context of the virtual and real world. The result of digital socialization is the formation of a digital personality of a person, which today is an integral part of a real personality.

One of the important aspects of digital socialization is the formation of information preferences - that is, the choice of the most suitable and reliable sources for a person to find the necessary information.

The formation of information preferences is significantly influenced by such factors as: reference group, categorization in the process of forming a group identity, leading human activities, territorial position, as well as age, interests and values.

Our earlier study of information preferences [4, p. 90] showed that today the most preferred sources of information for representatives of younger and older age groups is the Internet, and people spend about two hours a day searching for the information they need.

It was also found that young people prefer social networks and information sites, while older people spend more time on news sites.

Informational preferences affect the behavior of people, the construction of their lifestyle. The issue of information preferences turned out to be especially relevant to us in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, when there was a lot of information about this disease in various sources, and sometimes the information was rather contradictory.

An empirical study of the information preferences of young people and adults during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Objective of the study: comparative analysis of information preferences of representatives of young and mature age groups during the covid-19 pandemic

Study sample. The study involved 167 people, including 89 at the age from 18 to 25 years old and 78 at the age from 45 to 60 years old.

Materials and methods

The respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire to identify information preferences during the covid-19 pandemic.

Results and discussion

During the covid-19 pandemic, the new disease was talked about from various sources of information. We were interested in how our respondents learned about the coronavirus. The results are shown in the diagram below.

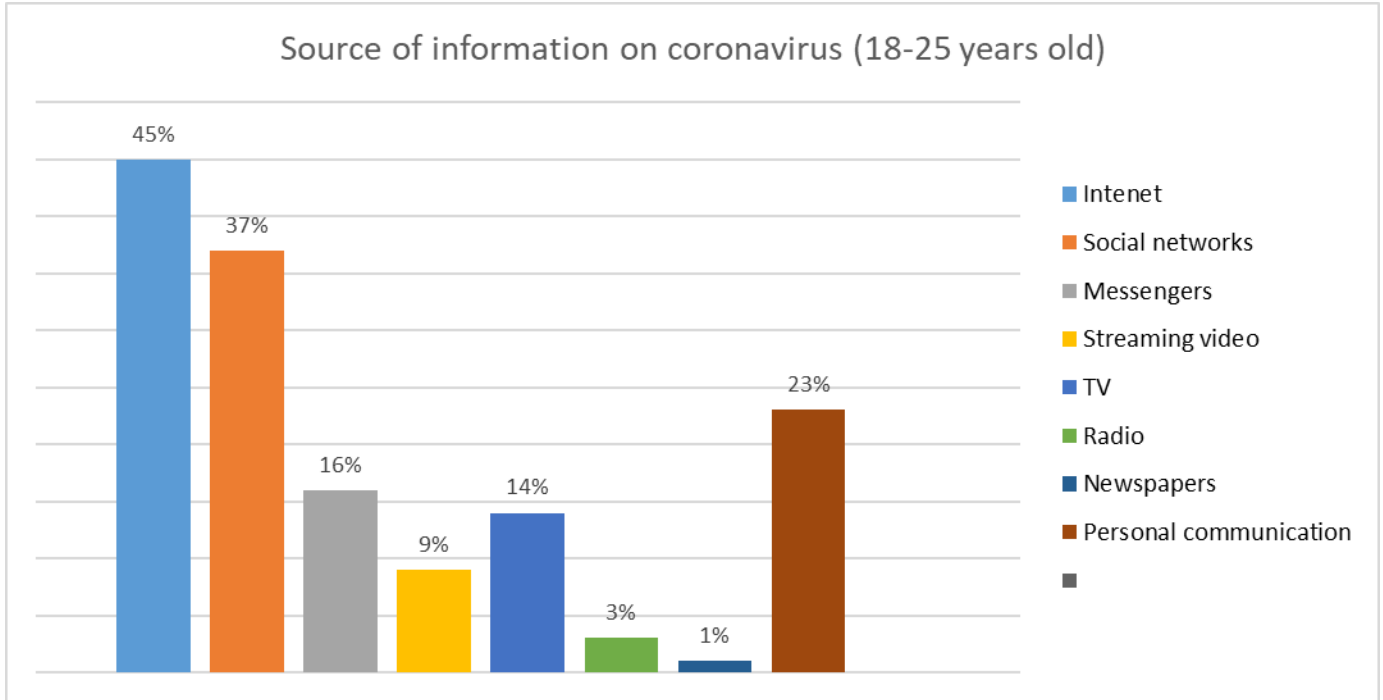


Fig. 1. Source of information on coronavirus (18-25 years old)

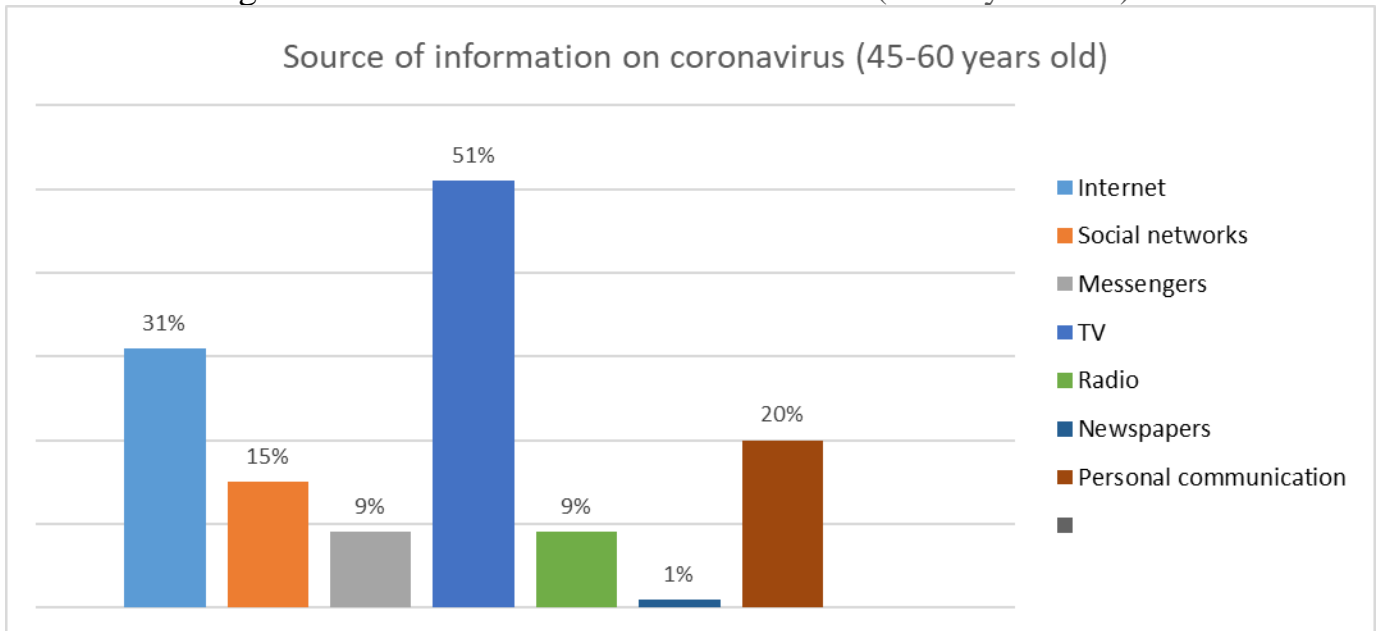


Fig. 2. Source of information on coronavirus (45-60 years old)

It can be seen that the main source of information about the coronavirus differs in different age groups. So, young people learned about a new disease, mainly from the Internet and social networks, and adults received this information more through television. In addition, young people have such a source of information as "streaming video", while mature people do not use this source.

It is also worth noting that in both age groups, almost a quarter of the respondents received information about the coronavirus from personal communication.

It was important for us to find out which sources of information the surveyed respondents trust.

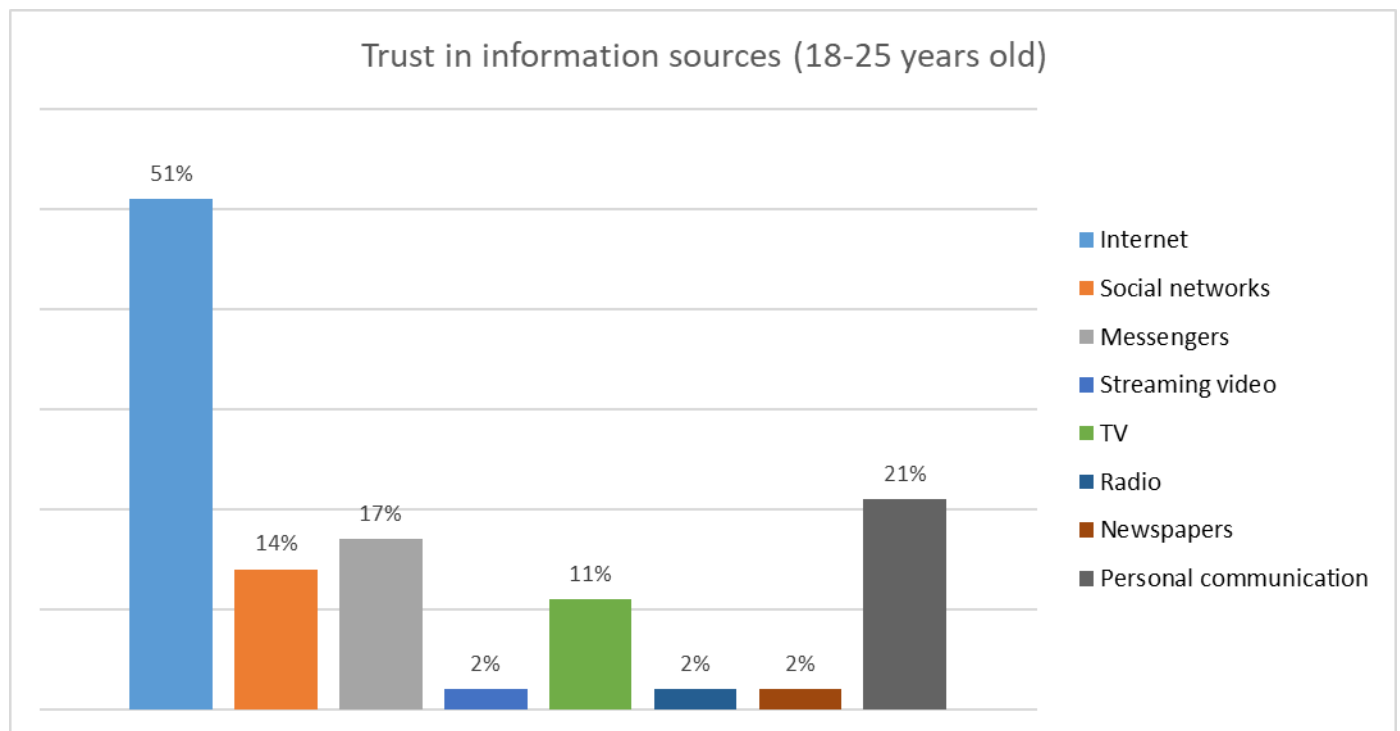


Fig. 3. Trust in information sources (18-25 years old)

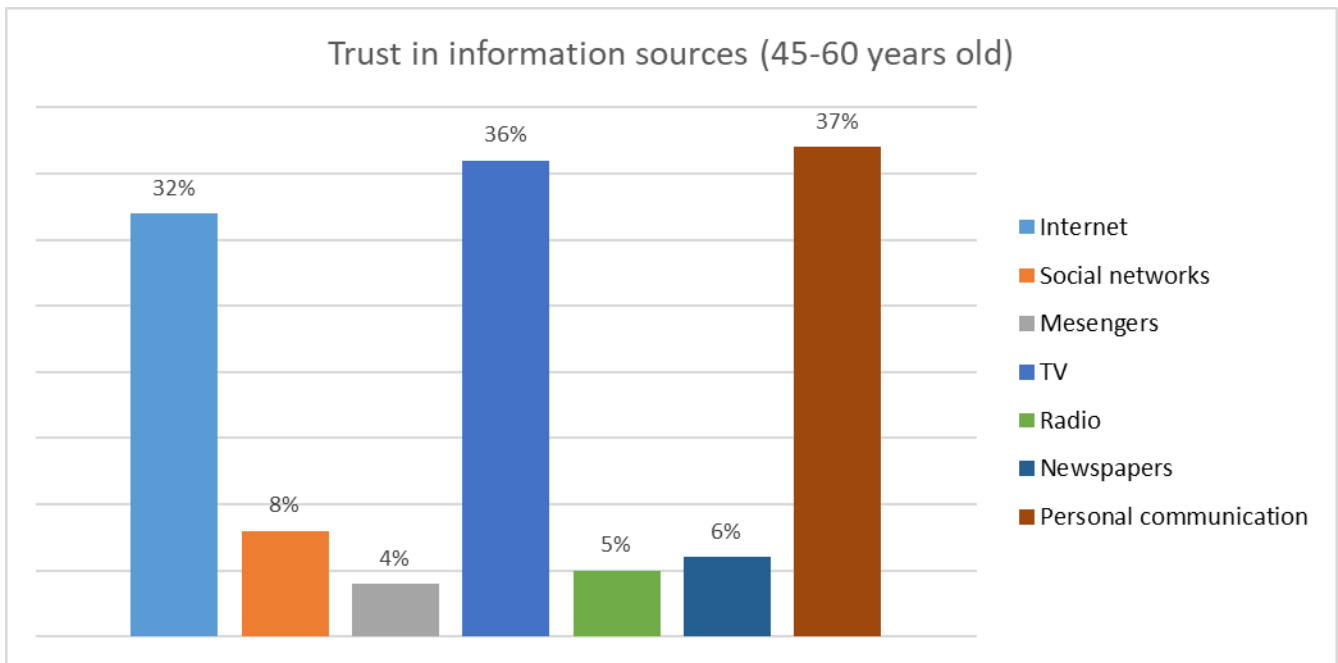


Fig. 4. Trust in information sources (45-60 years old)

On this issue, we have obtained quite interesting results that illustrate the discrepancy between different age groups. Thus, young people most of all trust information received from the Internet, and only a quarter of respondents from this age group trust personal communication.

For mature people, there are three main sources of information that are most trusted: the Internet, television and personal communication. Such a higher level of trust in information obtained from personal communication can be justified by the fact that people of mature age either have more competent acquaintances, or by the fact that they are less confident in themselves and in the information that they have found on their own, so it is easier for them to trust other people whom they consider to be more competent in this matter.

All respondents actively monitored the spread of coronavirus in the world and we were interested in what sources they used to search for up-to-date information about the situation with the coronavirus.

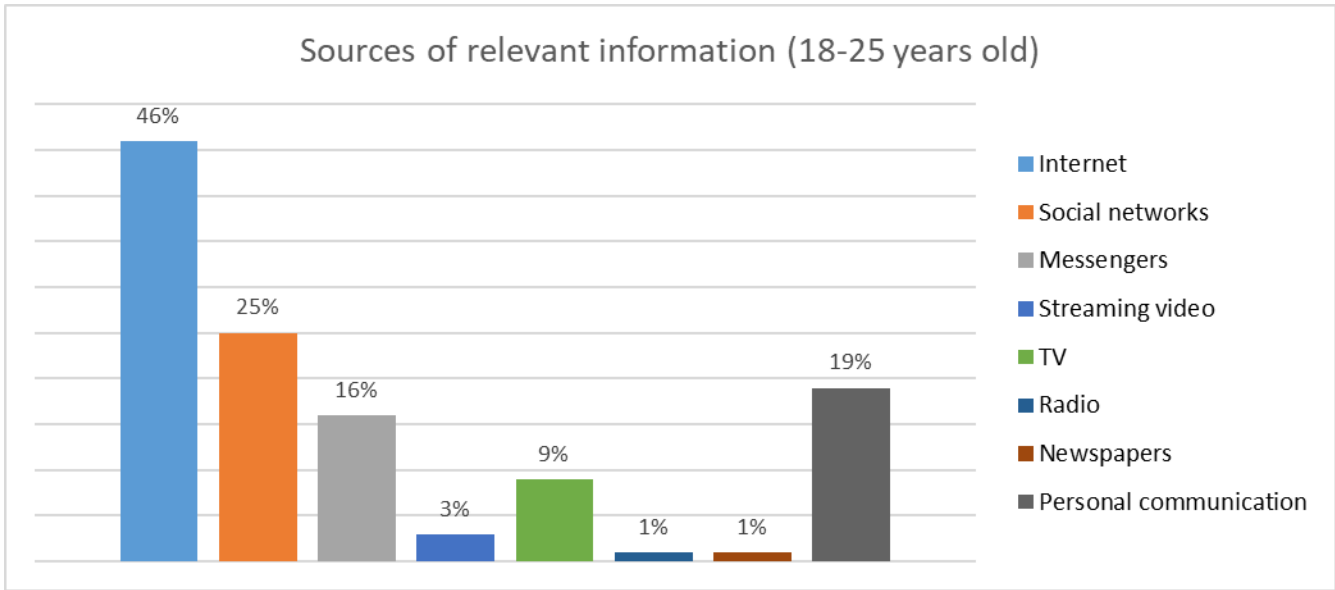


Fig. 5. Sources of relevant information (18-25 years old)

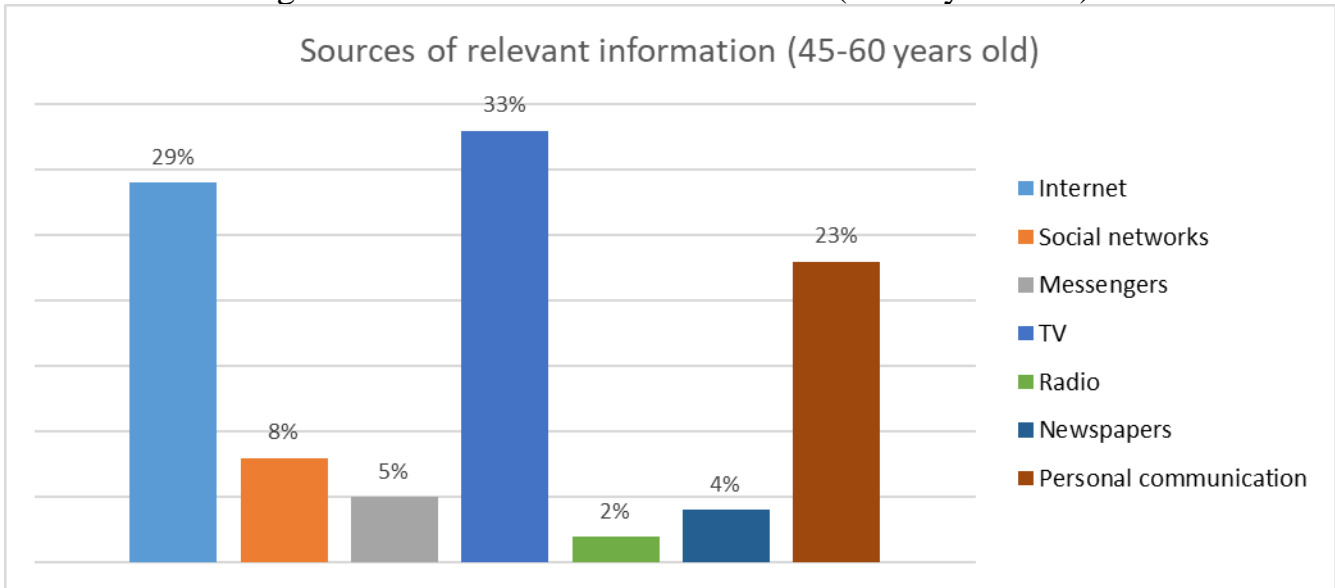


Fig. 6. Sources of relevant information (45-60 years old)

The results obtained are similar to those of the previous question. The Internet stands out among young people, followed by social networks and personal communication. For people of mature age, television and the Internet are approximately at the same level and, with a slight lag, personal communication follows.

In the midst of the covid-19 pandemic, there was a lot of different information from different sources. Along with useful and reliable information, a lot of fake news about a new disease, its spread and possible consequences got into the information field. We asked the respondents a question about

whether they got to such news or viewed them. In both age groups, the majority of respondents (90% in both groups) answered negatively to this question.

Many famous people spoke about the situation in the world, who shared their opinions and attitudes towards the coronavirus and the precautions that were taken in many countries. In this regard, we were interested in how important the opinions of famous people about the pandemic were for our respondents.

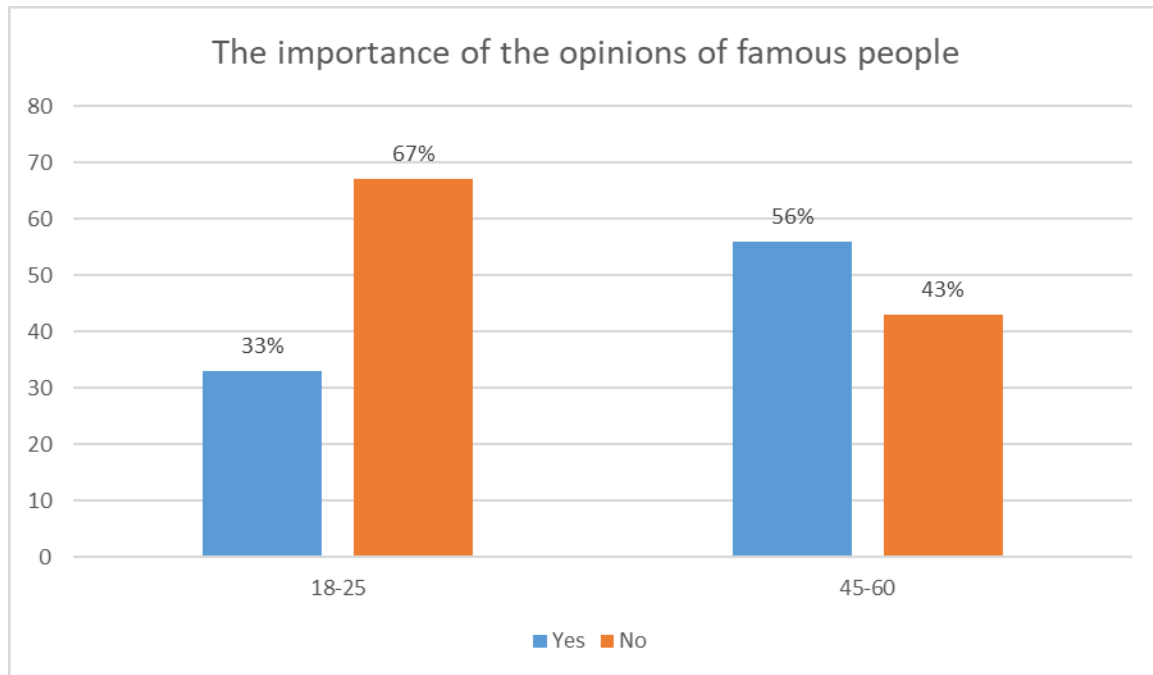


Fig. 7. The importance of the opinions of famous people

The results obtained show us that for young people the opinion of famous people is generally not important. It can be assumed that they themselves form an individual opinion about the current situation and independently decide whether to take precautions or not. For the majority of mature people (56%), the opinions of famous people turned out to be an important indicator.

Through our research, we obtained data on the preferred sources of information about the coronavirus and the sources that are most trusted by our respondents. But it was also important for us to find out how the respondents disseminate information about the coronavirus among their friends, relatives and, possibly, among other people through a blog.

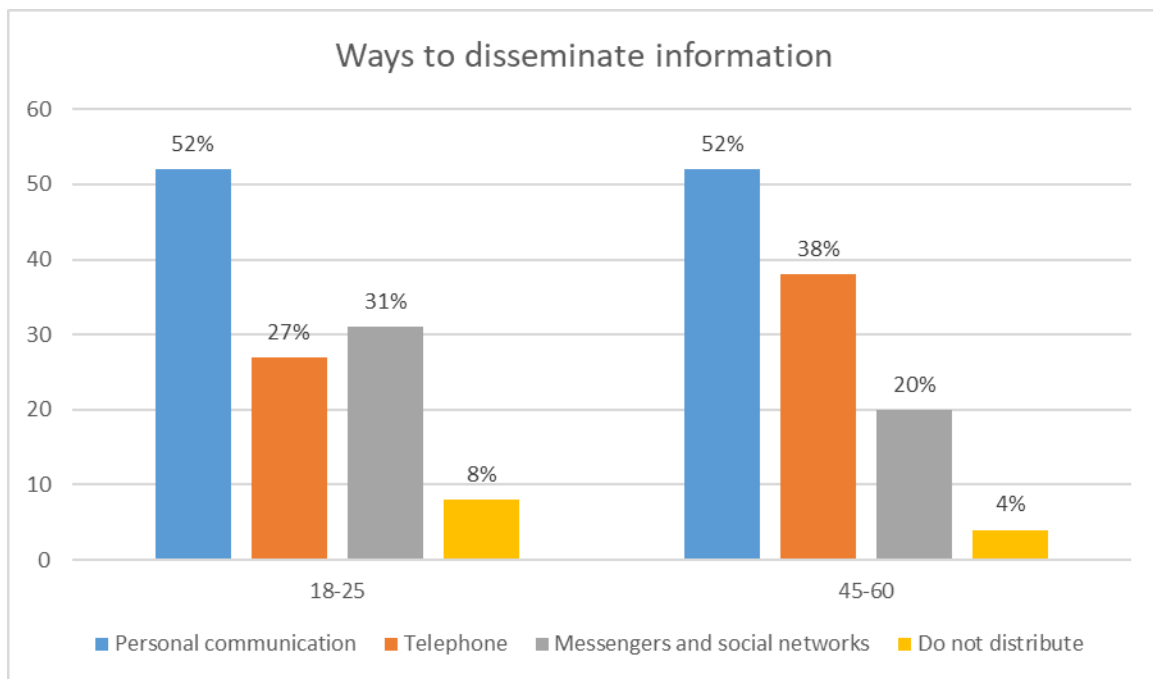


Fig. 8. Ways to disseminate information

Representatives of both age groups prefer personal communication as the main way of disseminating information. There is a slight discrepancy in the second most popular way of disseminating information: young people prefer instant messengers and social networks, while mature people prefer live communication by phone.

The choice of information sources, even in critical conditions, is largely due to how the process of digital socialization of people took place.

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