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PROFITABLE LOCAL CLIMATE NEWS

A thesis on how the Norwegian commercial Amedia-owned newspapers might benefit from a universal practise when covering cases about the climate and environment.

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Abstract

In the commercial media world, it is necessary not to consider economic profit and the press' social responsibility as separate goals, but rather two sides of the same coin – making the public wanting to learn and read the articles published. This thesis presents data that would be necessary to secure an economic profit, and at the same time making sure that the social responsibility of the press is sufficiently fulfilled. It presents an overview of the history and current dilemmas related to climate news and suggests some factors that might increase engagement and sales. The thesis also provides a critical approach to how well these factors contributes to fulfilling the media's social responsibility. The conclusions drawn argues that some of the factors can contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility as well as generating engagement and sales if used as tools to trigger the readers' curiosity and consequently willingness to learn by reading the article. Finally, based on the findings presented, it is suggested that it should both be both doable and beneficial to have an internal universal practise with some factors needed to write news about the climate and environment that both generates engagement and sales, and fulfils the social responsibility.

1.0 Introduction

Today, we scroll, scroll, scroll, and scroll on our screens to only see a fraction of the whole world of social media and its endless stream of impressions. We now more than ever seek comfort, knowledge, and entertainment in the digital world, which has answers to all the questions we might think of and to all we did not know we had. Fighting for our attention today is harder than ever because who can compete with social media? This is a challenge the media faces every day, and even though social media offers vast opportunities to spread and find news, the media's agenda is now competing with the agenda that the public follow (Sjøvaag, 2020, p. 20). An agenda that not always line up with the rights and duties of the media. Sjøvaag writes that as part of the social contract between the public, media and the state, the media has a right to report news uncensored and a duty to supervise the power of the state, the state has a right to adjust the media, and a duty to ensure freedom of speech, and the public has a right to information from the media. The media can, according to the contract, also expect the public to react to the information they are given (2020, p. 29). The problem is that the public cannot be forced to read news, and hence, in practise the media cannot count on reactions from the public.

However, it is crucial for the democracy that the public do read the news and react to what they read in order to be part of the deciding society. That is why the media often have to prioritize news that are relevant for the readers' need for being updated, get necessary information, and entertainment – in other words, news that are part of the publics' agenda (Sjøvaag, 2020, p. 49). A study conducted in 2019 about the content diversity in the Norwegian media show that the media – local as well as national – tend to write more about sports and politics, and less about the elaborate news such as finance and energy (Sjøvaag, 2020). It is not cheap to run a commercial news production that fulfils the media's social responsibility, a responsibility that is explained through the role they play in the social contact. The fact is that the large income does not come from the investigative, often complicated journalism, but the day to day news that are entertaining and lifestyle oriented (Sjøvaag, 2020, p. 47).

But could the "difficult topics" become "fruitful topics" by doing simple content adjustments? There are studies done to enlighten the framing of climate news, and the importance of climate news as part of the media's social responsibility and the difficulties related to engagement. However, the question of how climate news can become more economic profitable and still

contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility of the media has not been paid as much attention in the academic world.

That is why I want to investigate how local newspapers can write news about a topic that is considered challenging in relation to engaging the public, and that generates sales and make the topic a part of an agenda that the public *wants* to follow. One of the topics written less about from the content-study of 2019 was "energy", which is why the topic of climate and environment is chosen to be studied in this thesis.

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Based on this, the problem statement to be discussed in this thesis is:

"The commercial media house Amedia would benefit from having a research-based universal practise for their local newspapers in relation to writing articles with climate and environment as the main topic, because it would contribute to fulfilling their social responsibility and generate more engagement and sales."

Amedia is the second largest media group in Norway when measured by turnover, and owns 78 subscription-newspapers based all over the country (Garvik, 2020). The Amedia newspapers are commercial, which means that they depend on having paying readers and advertisers to secure a profit (Aaberge, 2018). Despite Amedia being a commercial media group, its newspapers do not solemnly depend on commercials to gain a profit. Subscription sales are crucial for the newspapers to be able to secure a profit and is the main source of income, which means that they have to make sure they satisfy their subscribers to secure a profit. Compared to tabloid medias, the power lies not with the advertisers, but with the paying subscribers.

Editorial development manager Eivor Jerpåsen in Amedia explains that it in effect means that Amedia newspapers are free to write news they think their subscribers wants and needs to read about their local community (2021b). A "universal best practise" is in this case the best possible way of writing articles about the climate and environment in relation to achieving high engagement generate sales, while at the same time fulfilling the newspapers' social responsibility. By analysing Amedia news articles with climate and environment as the main topic, I can hopefully enlighten specific factors in the articles that could be important for the engagement and sales and discuss to which degree the factors contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility of the newspapers. In doing so, I might be able to suggest a universal best practise of how Amedia newspapers could write about the climate and environment, that they would consider fruitful.

There are three research questions that will be discussed to be able to enlighten the problem statement of the thesis. The first research question will be answered as part of the findings chapter, by using the findings discovered through the quantitative text analysis of 100 articles produced by Amedia-newspapers. The second and third research questions will be enlightened in the discussion chapter by considering selected findings in relation to relevant theory presented in this thesis.

1. What are the factors that could affect engagement and sales in digital news articles written with climate and environment as the main theme?
2. What could be the consequences related to the local newspapers' social responsibility of writing digital news articles with climate and environment as the main theme that 1. *Do* include set factors and 2. *Do not* include set factors?
3. Could – and in what way – a universal practise in relation to covering cases with climate and environment as the main topic contribute to *both* public education *and* increased engagement and sales?

The word "engagement" is used frequently throughout the thesis and is another word for the average reading time which will be further explained in the methods chapter. Engagement and sales generated will be used as measurements to indicate the economic successfulness of the articles. "News" is something that has just happened or something we just heard about (Overland & Tørdal, 2018), and hence a "news article" is an article about news. In the following subchapters we will take a closer look at what is meant by the social responsibility of the media, the history of climate and environment news, and the common debate about the commercial media's interests and priorities, to get a better sense of the aspects of the topic in this thesis.

1.2 The Social Responsibility and the Ethical Regulations of the Media

The media's social responsibility is relevant to this thesis, because it is the fundament to a democracy and self-imposed duty that involves preparing the citizens to make rational and well-informed social and political decisions (Sjøvaag, 2020). Without it, the society would be without a watch dog making sure no abuse goes uncriticised or no questionable conditions being informed of and questioned, which in term could lead to a weakening of the democracy. Hence, if articles achieve high engagements and number of sales, but do not fulfil the social responsibility of the media, it can be argued that the Amedia-newspapers are not fully doing their job. Before explaining how I intend to discuss the fulfilment of the social responsibility in relation to certain factors in Amedia-articles; it is necessary to inform the reader about the

Norwegian media's ethical regulations that was first introduced in 1936, and later revised. "Pressens Faglige Utvalg" (PFU), which is directly translated to "The Media's Professional Committee" in English, is a professional committee chosen by the Norwegian Press Association who has the task of *"monitoring and promoting the Norwegian ethical professional standard"* (Orgeret, 2018b). The task includes ensuring that the standard is maintained, which is why "Vær Varsom-plakaten" (VVP), directly translated to "The poster of being careful" in English, was written. It consists of four paragraphs with rules designed to guide the Norwegian media towards maintaining an ethical professional standard, which they are obliged to follow (Norsk Presseforbund, 2015). If someone experiences that a newspaper breaks one or more of the rules in the VVP, he or she is free to report the newspaper to PFU. The reported newspaper face consequences if PFU finds that the reported rules are indeed broken, and the newspaper have to publish both PFU's justification of their decision, correct any errors and apologise to the offendant on behalf of the newspaper on all publishing platforms – which includes both in the printed and digital version of the convicted newspaper (Orgeret, 2018b).

VVP works as both rules and tools for the Norwegian media to ensure that they fulfil their social responsibility. The first paragraph of the VVP is called "the media's social role" and is a full specific description of what the media's social responsibility entails. Paragraph 1 as a whole will be used when discussing the factors that might have contributed to increased engagement and sales. The following paragraphs is directly translated and presented as it is written in the Norwegian Press Association:

1.1. *Freedom of speech, information and press are basis in a democracy. A free, independent press is among the most important institutions in a democratic society.*

1.2. *The press takes care of important tasks such as information, debate, and social criticism. The press has a special responsibility of making sure that different opinions are expressed.*

1.3. *The press shall protect the freedom of speech and press and the principle of openness. It cannot give in to pressure from someone who wants to stop open debate, free information dissemination and free access to the sources. Agreements on exclusive dissemination of events shall not be an obstacle to free news dissemination.*

1.4. *It is the press' right to inform about the things that happens in the society and uncover criticisable conditions. It is the press' duty to shed a critical light on how the media fulfils their social responsibility.*

1.5. It is the press' job to protect individuals and groups against abuse or negligence from the public authorities and institutions, private companies, or others.

(Norsk Presseforbund, 2015).

Some argue that the Norwegian media overall fulfil their social responsibility (Sjøvaag, 2020) and some are of the opinion that the media globally has lost its ability to be critical, and has taken the role of primarily being entertainers to generate more sales (Aalberg & Elvestad, 2005; Habermas, 2006). My intention with this thesis is not to undermine the crucial role the media plays in a democratic society or claim that they do not in any way fulfil their social responsibility, but to investigate if Amedia with small actions that would not cost large resources, could make more news about the climate and environment that results in an economic profit, while still making sure they sufficiently fulfil the social responsibility. If the factors that might contribute to increased engagement and sales do not contribute positively to parts of paragraph 1 of the VVP, one could argue that the articles not fully fulfilling the newspaper's social responsibility.

1.3 Personal Experience and The Editorial Dilemma

I have worked as a journalist for three of the local newspapers owned by Amedia since 2011 and experienced how difficult it can be to write articles that are both informative and achieves high engagement among the public. I have often seen the challenges with writing sensational news that not necessarily are as informative as I wished they were, because of the struggle it is to appeal to the public with topics that are more complicated to write about, to read about and react to.

In addition to working as a journalist writing news articles, I have since 2018 worked as a "frontsjef" (translated to "acting web editor" in English) in two of the three mentioned Amedia-owned newspapers. The area of responsibility involves deciding which articles should be placed high on the digital news page, and which should be less exposed. The articles that have the most readers at one time are often placed higher up on the news page to increase their exposure, to in term – hopefully – generate new subscription sales.

The tendency I have seen throughout the years of being a journalist in local newspapers in the Amedia group, is that articles with elements of entertainment or sensation gain higher reading numbers and generate more subscription sales. This experience-based statement is supported by the American Media Expert, Neil Postman, who argue that the public wants to be entertained at all costs, which leads the media to shift their focus from hard, factual news to amusing, "fast"

news (Postman, 1985). This change in the media landscape could make it harder for the editor of a newspaper to allow their journalists to spend hours on an article about a topic, that might be important in the aspect of the media's social responsibility but lack the potential of resulting in high reading numbers and new paying subscribers.

According to Jerpåsen in Amedia, articles about the climate and environment often demands more work, because the topic is comprehensive and often of national or international interest, which could make it difficult to break down into articles that will engage local subscribers. Hence, articles about this topic do not regularly result in as high of an average reading time and number of new paying subscribers they should to justify the time spent on writing them (Jerpåsen, 2021b).The average reading time of an article is how Amedia measures engagement, which will be explained in the methods chapter. It is not only Amedia that recognises challenges in relation to climate and environment news. This spring (2021) the Swedish newspaper Expressen saw the need to close the climate editorial office, due to lack of interest in climate and environment news from readers (Aarli-Grøndalen, 2021). However, the editor-in-chief said they would still write news about the topic, but that they had to try other reporting methods (2021).

Despite the challenges of generating engagement and sales in relation to climate and environment news, Jerpåsen says that the Amedia-newspapers still have increased the number of articles written about the topic in the recent years because it has become a topic that their readers more than before are interested in. Jerpåsen says that Amedia consider climate and environment as an equal important topic to write about in relation to the social responsibility as for instance culture, sports and politics, but the challenge is to figure out a way to write about the topic in a way that engages local subscribers (Jerpåsen, 2021a).

1.4 Topic Background and History

The Norwegian media coverage of cases considering the climate and environment reached a turning point in 2019 and became *the year* of climate- and environmental journalism. According to an analysis done by the Norwegian data analysis company "Retriever" the number of media spreads on climate goals and CO_2-emissions increased with a hundred percent from 2019 to 2020. 25.406 media spreads were made about the topic in 2019 compared to 12.420 the year before (Falnes, 2020). The journalist Johan Falnes in Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB), the central news agency in Norway, writes that many of the spreads were made due to the aftereffects of the Swedish student Greta Thunberg's protest against climate change during

the Swedish political election at the end of 2018. She was 15 years old at the time, and her protesting made her the front figure of school strikes against climate change all over the world in the beginning of 2019 (Garvik & Tjernshaugen, 2019).

In addition to Greta Thunberg's movement, wind energy and the development and construction of wind turbines took hold in 2019, which triggered many debates and resulted in a tripling of media spreads about the topic of wind power compared to 2018 (Falnes, 2020).

In conclusion, there are many factors that made 2019 the year of media spreads about the climate and environment. Although 2019 was a turning point for the mentioned topic in relation to a considerably increase in the Norwegian media coverage, I have chosen the year of 2020 to analyse a selection of local, digital news articles. The reason for that being to make sure that it was not a volatile trend but a more permanent change, to increase the chances of the selection being representative. This statement is supported by a newer analysis done by Retriever in cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate for Development Cooperation (Norad). The analysis shows that the number of media articles written up until September 2020 has decreased slightly compared to 2019 but is still high. 3,4 percent of the articles written in 2019 had climate and environment as their topic, and in 2020 (up until September) the share has decreased to being 3 percent (Retriver & Norad, 2020, p. 6). Despite the slight decrease, the change is clear according to Retriver: Norwegian media have been producing considerably more spreads about the climate and environment since 2019.

In the wake of the topic now being an important part of the Norwegian media's agenda, the national Norwegian broadcast Norsk Rikskringkastning (NRK) released a new collective strategy in 2020 explaining amongst other things how the editorial offices are to produce content about the climate and environment (Norsk Rikskringkastning, 2020). This strategy is the first of its kind in Norway, and introduces the main goal of NRK's journalism about the climate and environment is to *"(…) enable everyone in Norway to participate in climate discussions and make good choices, and thus strengthen and develop democracy"* (Norsk Rikskringkastning, 2020). NRK is a state-owned broadcaster with 15 district and local offices (Enli, Smith-Meyer, & Syvertsen, 2020). Because it is state-owned, all their TV, radio and written productions are free of commercials and with no fees to get access for the public, which means that they are not dependent on gaining daily new paying subscribers.

The reason for introducing NRK's strategy is that I want to discuss how it can be further developed into a best universal practise with recommendations that offers more specific tools,

that commercial media houses such as Amedia might benefit from. After the first conversation I had with an employee in the Amedia group, I established that they do not have a universal strategy regarding specific themes and content, but they recommend their newspapers to have a mix of cases about topics considering, amongst others, culture, sports, events, and housing, because Amedia has seen the positive effect on the readers' engagement when having a variety of articles, in other words *"having something for everyone (old, young, females and males)"* (Jerpåsen, 2021b). Jerpåsen explains that the reason for not having a universal strategy yet considering climate and environment news specifically is because:

> *"When it comes to specific topics to prioritize writing articles about, it has to be up to each newspaper to decide how they relate to the topics. That is because the newspapers have audiences who often have different content preferences, and it would due to this be difficult to construct a universal strategy related to only one topic [climate and environment]. It is better that decisions concerning prioritizing the most important content are made by the newspapers who knows their audience the best"* (Jerpåsen, 2021b).

In addition to the possibility of local differences in reading patterns depending on the location of the newspapers (making it challenging to have a strategy such as NRK's climate strategy), Jerpåsen further explains that Amedia do not have an editorial power to make decisions concerning all the newspapers. They can only provide recommendations based on statistics, testing and experience (2021b). However, it would be interesting to see if the inclusion of certain factors could be part of a universal practise that would be economically and socially beneficial for Amedia-newspapers.

1.5 The Common Debate

Do today's Norwegian commercial media still fulfil their social responsibility, or are they controlled by economic interests? This question has become more and more relevant in relation to the increasingly large numbers of commercial media. Some argue that private-owned media are a necessity to achieve independence from state control in order to fully be able to carry out their social responsibility (Allern & Roppen, 2010; Sjøvaag, 2020), while others are worried that the voices shown through today's commercial media is not representative of the general public (Habermas, 2006), which in term could contribute to the media not fully carry out their social responsibility. However, most agree that for commercial media to fulfil their social responsibility they have to have an effective self-justice system in place (Allern & Roppen, 2010; Brurås, 2010; Habermas, 2006; Sjøvaag, 2020). Sigurd Allern did an analysis of 10 Norwegian newspapers and by using the sub-paragraphs of paragraph 1 of the VVP to decide

whether the articles fulfilled the social responsibility of the media. He came to the conclusion that the media generally did take their responsibility related to societal information and debate seriously (Allern, 2001). Helle Sjøvaag draws the same conclusion, and writes that the Norwegian media offers information about many areas of the society – not only entertaining or commercially profitable topics (Sjøvaag, 2020).

Jürgen Habermas on the other hand is of the opinion that commercial media can be seen as "media professionals" that *"produce an elite discourse, fed by actors who struggle for access to and influence on the media."* (2006, p. 417), which is further problematized by Niklas Luhmann in his system theory. The theory says that the media has created a self-referential functional system (Luhmann, 2013), and that the political actors increasingly have to adapt to the media's inner logic to get attention. This is among the reasons why Habermas argues that it is necessary with a self-justice system in the commercial media world. Such a system was created in Norway in 1928 and is what is known as PFU (Orgeret, 2018b). Brurås explains the advantages and disadvantages of PFU in an article as part of Kokkvold 2010: PFU makes the Norwegian commercial media independent of the state and has shown to be effective. Being convicted based on not properly following the VVP is seen as both uncomfortable and shameful for the convicted media house (Brurås, 2010). However, such a system does raise some questions. The first being "who will decide?" and do the ones in charge serve the interests of the media (Brurås, 2010)?. Brurås argues that when considering the pedagogical instrument in Norwegian media, there is no doubt that it has a positive effect in relation to making sure the social responsibility is fulfilled (2010).

To sum up, the common debate is often torn between the commercial media's real interests and intentions with their news production today, but some have also recognized the importance of economic profit in relation to the media's democratic role in a society (Sjøvaag, 2020). The market contributes to free the media from the state and is hence a necessity to facilitate news production that fulfils the media's social responsibility (2020). However, the specifics of just how the commercial media can *both* secure economic profits *and* fulfil their social responsibility is an aspect of the debate that I would argue is not discussed enough. Without a debate considering the economic- and social aspects of what many commercial newspapers wishes to achieve as equally important, we might overlook an increasingly and essential challenge of todays and future journalism, considering the newspapers need for fulfilling their social responsibility while achieving high engagement- and sales numbers.

Hence, the purpose of the thesis is to contribute to a needed debate on the specifics of modern commercial news production, in relation to how one can use specific factors that might contribute to articles both selling and fulfils the social responsibility of the media.

2.0 Theory

In this chapter I will introduce the different theories related to identification and what it is that triggers humans' emotions and curiosity. These theorical approaches to the way we feel, react, and learn will be central in this thesis, because they introduce reflections that will be relevant in the discussion of research question 2.

2.1 Personification – What Happens When Readers Emotions are Triggered?

What is it that make us become emotionally attached to a complete stranger's feelings? In other words, how is it that we can identify with other people without knowing them? When reading articles that have a strong sense of personification, humans might be more likely to be invested in a text because there is an increased chance of us being able to identify with the person we read about. Personification is a technique not only used in the fictional world when making films or writing books, but that has become a prominent technique used in the world of media. It can be defined as a case being made human by giving someone that has been affected by something the chance to tell his/her story through an article (Østlyngen & Øvrebø, 1999, pp. 112–113). When reading about a person our emotions tend to be triggered, either by being fond of the person, being able to relate through seeing similarities between ourselves and the person, or that we in some way are able to embrace the persons feelings through memories or previous experiences, which enables us to forget our own emotions for some time and feel what the person we read about feels – identifying with the person (Cohen, 2001, p. 252).

The ability humans have to identify with other humans is not only a way of extending our emotional and social perspective, but a crucial survival skill to fit into groups in a society (Cohen, 2001). The personification technique and the way we identify with someone we have never seen before though either written text, is relevant to the thesis in relation to discussing the use of sources, because it could contribute with interesting reflections about what role sources could play in achieving an economic as well as social profit.

2.2 News Photos – Is Identification Through Text the Only Way Readers Curiosity Can Be Triggered?

We have established in the last subchapter that identifying with people we have never met through text is one way of triggering our emotions. In addition to identification through text we could also identify with someone or something through photos, and when our emotions are triggered, we often get curious to know more: *"Photos have a great influential power. They appeal to a much greater extent to our emotions than written texts (…)"* (Tørdal 2018). If we

see a photo of a smiling face, an animal we had when we grew up or anything with qualities we can identify with, our attention is more likely to be drawn to the content of an article because it is often the first thing we see before reading any text (Meilby, 1996). The news photos qualities are not only to document an event (Løberg, 2011) but also has an effect on how we understand and store information due to the associations we get when looking at the photo (Gibson & Zillmann, 2000). For instance, when looking at photos of different animals, it is our previous experiences with the animal that determines which emotions are triggered (Jacobs, 2009). Our experiences with the animal – being positive or negative – could awaken emotions that might result in us being curious enough to read the article.

In addition to photos of animals, a study done by American researchers has shown that photos of faces online are especially something that attracts our attention, and that these kinds of photos receive greater engagement on social media (Bakhshi, Shamma, and Gilbert 2014). Analysing people's faces are something that we do intuitively from the day we are born. Our language is so much more than words, and by reading people's body language and face expressions we can see what mood they are in and what we are supposed to feel when looking at their faces – even without them saying a word (Bakhshi et al. 2014). Based on this it is natural to think that we might be able to identify with people not only through text but through photos, that could result in us becoming curious and be willing to read the article to learn more about the person/people in the photo.

The way our emotions and curiosity are triggered when seeing a photo and how photos work as attention grabbers, are relevant because it provides important information about how photos can affect our willingness to learn that will be discussed later in the thesis.

2.3 The News Criteria – What are News and How Do They Shape Us?

Today's commercial journalism is highly influenced by a set of criteria that tend to decide whether news is worth reporting on or not, which is why the criteria is relevant to this thesis. They are called News Criteria, and their purpose is to determine whether a something should be considered news or not. If this "something" is significant, has a sense of identification, sensation, relevancy, and/or conflict, then it is news that should be reported (Meilby, 1996). Some versions of the criteria includes "essentiality" as a fifth criterium (Kjendsli, 2008; Orgeret, 2018a), while others do not (Meilby, 1996). Despite the different opinions of what to include and not as a news criterium, the contents of them are similar. It is argued that the criteria should be considered as part of deciding if one should go forward with making a case news,

and only fulfilling one criteria is rarely enough to carry news (Meilby, 1996, p. 55). Meilby further notes that if one of these criteria is fulfilled to a great extent, there will be less need for other criteria to be equally as fulfilled (1996). The News Criteria might be important from an economic point of view to trigger the readers' curiosity, but are they important from a social point of view considering fulfilling the media's responsibility? Looking at the criteria separately, one could argue that identification might be one of the more important out of the five criteria. According to American cognitive neuroscientist Jonathan Cohen identification *"(...) is a mechanism through which audience members experience reception and interpretation of the text from the inside, as if the events were happening to them"*, and could be, amongst other things, a contributor to shaping the reader's identity (Cohen, 2001, pp. 245–246). Cohen further refers to the German psychologist Erik Erikson, who writes this about identification:

> *"Individually speaking, identity includes, but is more than, the sum of all the successive identifications of those earlier years when the child wanted to be, and often was forced to become, like the people he depended on"* (Erikson, 1994, p. 87).

In other words, the way we identify with information and impressions in our society contribute to shaping our identity. Identity-shaping through facilitating debate and making sure different opinions are being expressed through articles is also a part of the media's social responsibility. Hence, the reader being able to identify with aspects of an article could be an important factor in their identity-shaping. The importance of identification in relation to both economic profit and the social responsibility, will be further discussed in the discussion part of the thesis.

2.4 Place-identity – What Are Readers Expected to Care About and What Do They Care About?

The Norwegian media landscape consists of both local and national media who in total provide a diverse news image (Sjøvaag, 2020). National media tend to report on cases concerning the big and often heavy questions, while the local media tend to report on questions that are important for the local democracy, which is strongly connected to what the media expect the public to care about (Sjøvaag, 2020, p. 78). We have already established the importance of identification in relation to the readers' identity-shaping, however there is another important possible factor that could contribute to identification. Humans tend to identify with people to the extent of which they can experience their emotions without being the ones to experience them. The ability to identify with other people could be a contributory factor in our identity-shaping. In addition to identifying with people, the researchers Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe

K. Fabian and Robert Kaminoff, claims that place-identity plays an important supporting role in what makes us able to identify with people (1983). Their theory is further explained by the Canadian geographer Edward Relph, who defines place-identity as having strong connections to specific places that contributes to increasing our ability to identify with certain people. Relph claims that *"(…) to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: To be human is to have and to know your place"* (1976), and that "home" is the place that plays the most significant role in our lives. That could consequently be a strong identification-trigger when for instance reading about someone's experience that he/she experienced close to our home. The role of place-identity in our ability to identify with people is relevant to this thesis when discussing the effects of proximity of a case in an article to the readers' home.

2.5 Journalists as Educators – How and Why Do Readers Want to Learn?

For journalism to be successful not only economically but also socially in terms of the media's responsibility, it is crucial that the reader actually reads the articles produced by the media. The newspapers cannot force the public to be interested in news, but they can be aware of how they prefer to obtain knowledge and adjust their way of writing news accordingly. According to educational researchers we have a different way of obtaining new knowledge depending on which stage of life we are in (Illeris, 2002; Wahlgren, 2012). Children are hungry for information and devour every bit of new knowledge they can come across, due to human instinct related to them having to *learn* in order to be part of a community. As we grow older, we become more selective when deciding which new knowledge we want to obtain, because we might feel like we already know enough (Illeris, 2002). This research is relevant to the thesis because it provides knowledge about how Amedia potentially better can understand their readers' way of learning and in term possibly make it easier to fulfil their social responsibility by appealing to the readers' curiosity and willingness to learn.

Grown-ups learn when they need to learn (Wahlgren, 2012), whereas younger people are like sponges and seek out information solemnly because they still feel the need to learn something about anything. In other words, the grown-ups' motivation to learning is often connected to the need for information to achieve something, and the motivation of younger people is simply the wish to learn, because they *need* to learn. Youths and young adults are therefore somewhere in between, and their motivation could be the need for information, or it could be the willingness to still learn. The question is how should journalists write articles that appeal to both grown adults *and* young adults?

First, we should define what is meant by "grown adults" and "young adults". In Amedia, the latter is considered the readers that are under 40 years old, and the readers above 40 is considered grown adults (Jerpåsen, 2021b).

One approach that could make both grown- and young adults more willing to learn, is sparking their *curiosity.* According to the American pedagogue George Loewenstein, curiosity is an important factor that can stimulate learning (Loewenstein, 1994), and could be defined as being the driving force for learning. There are different kinds of curiosity, related to what it is that trigger our curiosity.

According to the way grown adults learn, it is simply not enough that the article in itself is informative, it has to answer some specific questions that the grown reader has a need to know to achieve something greater than "just" obtaining new knowledge. This kind of curiosity is called specific curiosity (Livio, 2017). The challenge with specific curiosity could be that when the reader finds the answer, he/she was looking for, the rest of the article might not be considered worth to read. However, this might be a challenge that is difficult to overcome due to the selective ways of grown adults obtaining new knowledge. Maybe it should not even be seen as a problem that the grown readers stop reading when he/she finds what he/she were looking for? One of the media's main social responsibilities is to facilitate public information, and if the reader feels content with the information given in the article before finishing, one could argue that it should not be a goal that the reader reads the rest of the article.

Young adults on the other hand might, to a greater extent than grown adults, need to be reassured that the information that is coming up is worth reading. In other words, the journalist might benefit from appealing to the younger reader's *epistemic* curiosity. The epistemic curiosity is the kind of curiosity that is sparked because of the lust we have of obtaining new knowledge (Livio, 2017), studied by both philosophers Immanuel Kant and Thomas Hobbes. By tempting the younger reader with information that is new to them, it might in term increase their willingness to continue reading the article. New information could for instance be writing about new topics, using new sources, using different photos or facilitating new debates about well-known topics.

The way we learn and the ways of which our curiosity could be sparked is valuable research that will be used when discussing the media's social responsibility in relation to the positive and negative consequences of the presence of – or lack of – factors that could contribute to increased engagements and sales.

3.0 Method

The thesis is based on a quantitative text analysis, which in other words means that the content of the analysis can and will be counted (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). The reason for choosing a quantitative approach to the data collection is because it is *the effects* of specific factors I want to research. That calls for counting and a statistical data collection. A central goal of the thesis is that the analysis and reflections should be able to be used by Amedia in recommending a best practise of writing climate and environment news to their newspapers. Hence making it necessary to use Amedia's internal tools as long as they are reliable. A further explanation and justification of the use of these tools will follow in this chapter.

3.1 Language

All informants and data that are part of this thesis are Norwegian, which is why all excerpts included from interviews and from the data is translated to English by the researcher (me). I have emphasized to translate as direct as possible to prevent giving any other meaning to the excerpts than what the content of it was meant to convey.

3.2 Selection

In this chapter the selection of newspapers and articles (the data base for the quantitative text analysis) will be explained and justified.

The Newspapers

Because Amedia owns 78 newspapers which publishes numerous of articles every day, there would be difficult to conduct an in-depth quantitative text analysis of all the newspapers' news articles about the climate and environment. Hence the 20 largest newspapers were selected, because they have the largest number of subscribers. By having a large number of subscribers, the articles in these newspapers might give a clearer result that is less likely to random, compares to newspapers with fewer subscribers.

These 20 largest newspapers are divided into two categories by Amedia: "VEI4" and "VEI5", where "VEI4"-newspapers have the second- and "VEI5" has the highest number of subscribers. In total these newspapers alone have about 382.000 subscribers compared to the newspapers in the categories of "VEI1", "VEI2" and "VEI3" where there is a total of about 251.000 subscribers (E. Jerpåsen, personal communication, January 4, 2021).

The year of 2020 is chosen because of the mentioned turning point of number of media spreads in Norway in 2019, and to limit the chance of the result of 2019 being a one-time case and not

representable for today's climate and environment journalism in Norway. Furthermore, it is not relevant to investigate all articles in the 20 newspapers due to the thesis being about news articles written about the topic of climate and environment. For that reason, I asked Amedia to retrieve all news articles written by hired journalists in the "VEI4"- and "VEI5"-newspapers in 2020 based on the category called "Nature and environment".

The News Articles

The news articles in the selection are in-house produced by hired Amedia-journalists. All articles published by Amedia newspapers are divided into specific categories based on the topic and overall theme of the article. The way the articles are categorized is through a Machine Learning model trained on labelled Amedia data. In an email correspondence with Igor Pipkin, the Chief Data Scientist of Amedia, he explains that the model has been made by using embeddings (representations of every word in the first 200 words in an article) as a vector to be able to categorize other articles. Based on this model and the first 200 words of every article, Amedia categorizes all content into 20 categories, one of which is "nature and environment" (I. Pipkin, personal communication, February 24, 2021) used when selecting articles to study in this thesis.

The model will in other words be able to categorize articles based on the "rules" (algorithms) the neural network has learned through training. The accuracy of the kat20 model is 88 percent, which means that for every 100 articles that the model categorizes as "nature and environment" 11 of these will be incorrectly categorized (I. Pipkin, personal communication, February 24, 2021). In conclusion, Pipkin argues that the "nature and environment" category is well defined, due to the exclusivity of the vocabulary often used in these articles: *"Even though the category [nature and environment] contains relatively few examples, the articles are so alike and differ to a great extent from other categories that the precision is very high"* (I. Pipkin, personal communication, February 24, 2021).

To be able to do an in-depth text analysis 100 articles in the category "nature and environment" that will be analysed and were retrieved from Amedia. 50 of the news articles have the highest number of readers in 2020 in its category, and 50 of the news articles have the lowest number of readers. The reason for choosing a selection of the most read articles and least read articles in the "nature and environment"-category, is to be able to discuss the effects the factors might have on engagement and sales by comparing the engagement and sales of articles that contain the factors and articles that do not contain the factors.

Another decision made in relation to the selection is to replace three articles in the 50 least read articles. This is done, because the three original articles did not fit in the selection. The first article was made to promote a live stream on the newspaper's web page and did not contain any text to analyse. The second was a reader's letter which was made in a new article format, resulting in the categorisation model not recognizing the article as a reader's letter. Reader's letters are not included in the selection, because they are written by other people who are not hired by Amedia, and do not necessarily follow press ethics. The third article could not be found anywhere and might have been unpublished. To replace the mentioned articles, the three next least read articles on the list where chosen.

Limitations of the Selection

There are some limitations in the selection that should be discussed. Firstly, by selecting articles from the largest newspapers in Amedia one could miss out on important findings that would not be found in the larger newspapers. On the other hand, considering how geographical width the larger newspapers provide, in addition to a large readership, the selection will give a sufficient basis for generalisation. Secondly, there are external factors that cannot be controlled by the newspapers such as events, and positioning on the news page, that could be a reason for an article to be read more than others. As an attempt to minimize the limitations of some of the uncontrollable external factors, the variable of "time of publishing" is included in the text analysis form. For instance, if an article has been published as the first article of the day (early in the morning), it is highly likely that article will be available for the subscribers for a longer time than other articles on the news page. As a result, the article could easier reach higher average reading time and generate more sales than other articles that are published at different times throughout the day.

3.3 The Text Analysis

To obtain the data needed to answer my research question and discuss the problem statement of this thesis, I used a quantitative text analysis. A quantitative analysis is used when the data can be counted, to achieve the goal of finding connections and structures in the data (Helland, 2013). The content and structure of the analysis will be further explained in the next subchapter.

Text Analysis Form

To analyse the selected articles, a text analysis form will be used. The form is made based on the theory of quantitative analysis introduced in "Metodebok for mediefag" (Helland, 2013), using units, variables and variable values to conduct the analysis.

The units in this thesis are the news articles, the variables are the traits I want to analyse in the article, and the variable values are the factors within the traits to be studied. The traits and factors to be analysed are chosen because they will contribute to discussing the research questions of the thesis. There are a total of 8 variables with associated variable values, which in the following paragraphs will be defined and accounted for.

Sources

Variable 1 is "sources" which are people who has been cited in an article. A citation is marked with the following quotation mark in an article: "–". A source in this case is someone who gives information to a journalist and can be interviewed and cited, or contribute with tips or background information (Allern, 2001). According to the American media researcher John McManus, the quality of the information in a news article is related to three main factors, where number of cited sources is one of them (McManus, 1994, pp. 220–221). He argues that the probability of more perspectives being included in an article increases with the amount of sources used (1994). The use of a higher number of sources could be an important factor that might affect how the reader processes and understands the case in an article. Based on that, the use of sources could influence the engagement, which is why it is relevant to count the number and kind of sources used in each article.

The variable values are chosen based on the most frequently used types of oral sources in Amedia news articles. An oral source is a person who share their opinion or views through citations in an article and could be either a first-hand source or a second-hand source. In this case, a first-hand source is someone who has been directly affected by something in which he/she speaks about in an article, whereas a second-hand source is someone who knows someone/heard about someone who has been directly affected by something and speaks about in an article (Smith-Meyer, 2020). The variable values are "Consequence source", "Expert source", "Spokesperson for a business or an association", "Jurisdiction source" and "No oral sources". The last variable value is needed, because some articles might not contain any oral sources, which in itself could lead to important findings.

A consequence source is a source that is interviewed because he or she has a direct connection to a case or/and might face consequences of the case written about in the article. A spokesperson for a business or an association is someone who does not represent themselves, but the firm, organisation etc. he or she is a part of. A source fit into this variable value if he or she is cited as being for instance a "communications manager". An expert source is someone

who knows more about a specific topic than the general public and will often contribute with factual citations in articles. An example of an expert source could be a scientist or a meteorologist. In some cases, politicians have been categorised as being expert sources (Overland & Tørdal, 2018). A politician in a democracy is a person who has been chosen by part of the public to represent them as part of a political position in a society (Tjernshaugen, 2021). Politicians will not be a categorized as an expert source, because of the different roles they play in an article when being cited. Politicians are in this thesis categorized as being a jurisdiction source, which can be defined as a person with *"authority of a court or official organization to make decisions and judgments"* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, n.d.-b). Someone is a jurisdiction source if he or she is cited as being someone who has some sort of imposed authority, whether it being a politician, a municipal adviser or a policeman. Some sources might fit into more than one category. In times of that happening it is up to the researcher to determine which role the person has in the article and choose the suitable source-category accordingly.

The News Criteria

Due to the importance of the News Criteria regarding determining whether news is news worth reporting on, it is highly relevant to identify the criteria fulfilled in the selected articles, and the frequency of their presence, which is what will be researched in variable 2 ("News Criteria"). Not all the criteria are easily defined and as consequence could be difficult to categorise. That being the case, only "conflict", "identification" and "sensation" are selected to research in this thesis.

According to Meilby "conflict" as a news criterion can be defined as often being a disagreement between two parts in an article, which is dramatic and makes it possible for the reader to take a stance (Meilby, 1996, p. 58).

"Identification" is defined as an article containing something that the reader can identify with, and there are three conditions that must be considered, to be able to say whether an article has an aspect of identification or not: Personification, social environmental- or cultural proximity and relevance. Personification of an article is to make sure you have cited *people* in the article, who the reader can identify with. Social environmental- or cultural proximity is a *place* that the reader can identify with, and relevance is about writing the article in a way that highlights the possible *consequences* the reader might face (Meilby, 1996, p. 59).

"Sensation" is defined as something sensational that has a high chance of making a strong, surprising impression on the reader (Meilby, 1996, p. 56). The news criterium "relevance" are not included as a variable value, because it is too hard to measure properly and could make it challenging to generalise findings. On the other hand, relevance is closely related to identification and will be discussed as part of the identification-variable value. The reason for choosing to collect data based on whether an article contains one, more or no news criteria, is because lack of – or the presence of – news criteria could have an effect on the engagement, sales and potentially the fulfilment of the social responsibility.

Main photo

Variable 3 is "Main photo" which is related to the photo placed at the top of an article. In Amedia-newspapers the placement is after the title and before the introduction, which makes the news photo among the two first objects the reader sees when entering a digital article.

According to researcher Andrew Mendelson, news photos can be effective memory and attention stimulators, based on the novelty of a photo. He defines "novelty" as being something unexpected and uses an example of two similar photos of a farm: In one photo, there is a tractor placed in front of the farm and in the other there is an octopus. The picture containing an octopus would be the novel photo, because we expect to see a tractor in front of a farm but not necessarily and octopus (Mendelson, 2001). His conclusion is that if a news photo has a high sense of novelty, it will be more successful in triggering the viewer's attention and memory. We are not as interested in photos containing things we have seen before and/or cannot identify with, and as a result it will not secure our attention in the same way as photos with a high novelty.

Mendelson's findings suggests that a news photo could be a great way of securing a reader's interest, which is why data related to the main photo of the selected articles is collected, to discuss in what way it could have affected engagement and numbers of sales of each article. To be able to compare the data of the main photos of the selected articles, they will be divided into 11 variable values based on the contents of the photos. The variable values are constructed based on the researcher's personal experience with the most common contents of Amedia news photos. The variable values are:

1. Photos containing a person
2. Photos containing two or more people
3. Photos containing an or more animals, insects, reptiles or crustaceans

4. Photos containing an incident
5. Photos containing a person/people and an animal/animals
6. Photos that show an overview of a place with no people in it
7. Photos that show an overview of a place with no people in it, and with a portrait edited on top of it and placed somewhere in the corner of the picture
8. Illustration photos
9. Surveillance footage or a photo taken of someone or something without them knowing
10. Photos that show a close-up of an object

Some articles do not have a main picture and are placed in the "no main picture"- variable value. Data collection of contents of main photos is important to include, because it is often one of the first things the reader sees in the article and could therefore influence the reader's interest.

The first variable value (photos containing a person) is all photos containing a person – whether taken from afar or close. A photo "containing two or more people" are photos containing two or a group of people. A photo "containing one or more animals, insects, reptiles or crustaceans" are photos containing all animals, insects, reptiles, or crustaceans. If the photo contains something that suggests that there has been an incident, it is categorized as a photo "containing an incident".

An incident is something that happens *"(…) that is either unpleasant or unusual"* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, n.d.-a). An example of an incident would be a sunken boat or a fire. Photos "containing a person/people and an animal/animals" are just that. It could be more than two people and only one animal, or more than two animals and a human being. But they have to be in the same photo.

"An overview of a place with no people in it" are photos that are taken of a place, building or road, that is relevant to the case in the article, but have no humans or animals in it. Sometimes newspapers would use the mentioned form of photo as a background and edit a portrait of someone (human) on top of it, which brings us to the next variable value: "An overview of a place with no people in it, and with a portrait edited on top of it and placed somewhere in the corner of the picture".

Sometimes the journalist has an article, but no suitable illustration. That is when an "illustration photo" comes into play and is often bought or retrieved from the newspaper's photo archive. Other times photos can be retrieved by other measures, by for instance using "surveillance

footage or a photo taken of someone or something without them knowing". These are photos not taken by the journalist but sent to them either as a tip or by the journalist finding the photo's source and asking to use it in an article. If a photo is of something taken up close to a non-living (not an animal, insect, reptile nor human) object it is categorized as "a close up of an object".

Geographics

The proximity of the case in an article could affect the reader's ability to identify (Meilby, 1996), and as a result might impact the reader's regarding whether or not the article is worth spending time on reading. Because of this, variable 4 is called "Geographics" which is related to the proximity of the case in the article to the newspaper's location. It can be physical proximity, but it can also be proximity related to the local community's identification with the case in the article. The proximity is divided into three variable values: "Near", "close" and "far away". "Near" is if the case in the article is something that directly affect the local community. "Close" is if the case in the article something that could affect the local community. Typically, cases that has been "brought home" (to use a journalistic internal term) by the journalist, in other words, made a national case local with local sources and issues. "Far away" is if the case in the article is something that does not directly affect a great part of the local community.

The Average Reading Time

To be able to discuss readers' interest of reading an article – in other words their engagement, data related to each articles' average reading time should be collected. Hence, variable 5 is "The Average Reading Time". The average reading time is calculated automatically by Looker, which is the average time subscribers spend actively reading an article before exiting the article page (Jerpåsen, 2021a). The average reading time could be considered high when being one minute or more (Jerpåsen, 2021a), which might sound like a short time.

However, in a minute you would be able to see the main picture, read the introduction and likely also scanned large parts of the article before exiting, which means that you probably have gotten at least a decent overview of what the article is about. That is because news articles often are written by using the inverted pyramid model, where the most important information comes early in the article and the less important information later (Saakvitne, 2018). If an article is short, it is naturally a higher probability of the average reading time being lower than in a long article. With that in mind, Amedia see it as beneficial if the average reading time of

an article is high (one minute or more), because it implies that the subscribers are satisfied with the content of the article (Jerpåsen, 2021a).

Variable 5 is relevant to include, because it works as one of two measurements of engagement when discussion research question 1 and 2.

Time Of Publishing

Amedia newspapers publish digital news articles frequently throughout a working day. Some publish hourly, others less often. My time as a "frontsjef" has given me an insight into what it is that determines when an article is published. One answer is that it varies from day to day and from newspaper to newspaper, but a common argument is that the time of publishing is often highly influenced by external factors such as unexpected incidents, an increase or decrease in digital traffic, or/and the degree of exclusiveness of a case in an article. Even though one cannot state the exact reason for publishing an article at a specific time, one can discuss to what degree there are connections between publishing time and the engagement and number of sales of the selected articles. The result could give an indication of which time of the day is the most favourable in relation to achieving high engagement and sales.

At what time most use media were studied by Kantar called 24 hours, which gave an insight to the media habits of the Norwegian population in 2020. According to the survey, most people used media between 18.00 and 22.00 in 2020, with a peak hour at around 21.00 where 64 percent of the Norwegian population used media (Nergården Jortveit & Arne Futsæter, 2020, p. 35). There is also a peak hour at around 16.00, where 42 percent of the population used media, and around 10.00 where 41 percent used media (2020, p. 35). The Kantar-survey will be used when discussing the findings and research question 1.

Hence, in order to investigate whether the time spent on medias had an effect on the engagement and sales numbers, variable 6 is "Time of publishing". Time of publishing refers to when (time of day) the article has been published that day. I divided the day and following night (24 hours) into 5 time periods (variable values):

- **Morning**: Between 5 am and 11 am
- **Lunch**: Between 11 am and 1 pm
- **Afternoon:** Between 1 pm and 5 pm
- **Evening:** Between 5 pm and 11 pm
- **Night:** Between 11pm and 5am the following morning

There are little to no activity in terms of publishing new articles in the night-period, which is why the time span is longer in the last variable values compared to the other variable values.

Length

Even though every article selected is a news article, they might differ in lengths in terms of number of characters. It is necessary to collect data about the length of the articles, to be able to determine if the average reading time is high or low. Hence, variable 7 is "Length" which is related to the length of the article based on the number of characters in an article. The length of an article has been divided into three variable values: Short, medium, and long.

A short article is an article with between 500 and 2.000 characters. The articles selected are all above 500 characters, which is necessary to have enough text to analyse. An article is of medium length if the article has between 2.000 and 4.000 characters, and long if it has 4.000 characters or more. A short article has a high reading time if it is 30 seconds or more, a medium or long article has a high average reading time if it is 1 minute or more.

Number Of New, Paying Subscribers Generated

Variable 8 is "Number of new, paying subscribers generated" which refers to how many subscription sales each article in the selection generated the day it was published in the newspaper it was first published in. An article generates 1 sale if someone sign up for a subscription and reads the article as the first article after he/she signed up for the subscription. In other words: The first article a new subscriber reads, gets 1 sale, because it is considered as a direct reason for why the subscription-sale happened (Jerpåsen, 2021a). The variable values associated with variable 8 are articles that has generated between 0 and 5 sales, between 5 and 10 sales or 10 or more sales. Variable 8 is relevant to include, because it works as the measurement of engagement when discussion research question 1 and 2.

3.4 Informants, Information Letter and Declaration of Consent

The thesis is mainly based on written data and will not have any qualitative interviews. However, some background information about Amedia's history with climate news and how the articles are categorized automatically to be "nature and environment"-news, could not be obtained in any other way than through contacting two Amedia employees. According to good social research ethics, the participants in a project should be informed of their rights and what his/her participation in the project entails (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 55). Blaikie also states that it is preferred to collect the consents in writing, which is why an information letter, and a

digital declaration of consent was sent to the informants per e-mail. Both informants gave me their consent to use excerpts from e-mail correspondences and phone calls if they could read though the excerpts before submitting the thesis.

3.5 Data Collection and Storage

All findings presented in the thesis has been found through analysing the 100 articles (referred to as the data) in Nvivo using coding and the matrix tools. NVivo is a program for qualitative researchers who have great amounts of textual data to analyse (The University of Oslo, n.d.), and provides the tools needed to structure, store and analyse the data in this thesis. The data the researcher import as part of a new project created in the programme, is structured using "nodes" that are divided into the variables and associated variable values defined in chapter 3.3. Nodes is in this context another word for "codes" and works as a way of structuring findings collectively, making it easier to pinpoint similarities and dissimilarities in the selected articles. The data presented as findings does not contain any person-sensitive information and has therefore been saved and stored on the researcher's personal computer.

The findings were found by using the matrix tool in Nvivo that allows the researcher to compare different codes and by using filters see patterns and dissimilarities between codes. To investigate the findings, the researcher made a different matrix for each variable and compared the variable values with number of sales generated and the average reading time of each article, which was done in two different matrixes to make it easier to analyse. See the following illustration of how the matrixes related to the articles' lengths looked like:

Table 1: Matrix conducted to show the relationship between the length of an article and sales generated.

Article title	Small	Medium	Long	0 (No sales)	1-5	5-10	>10
A	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
B	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 2: Matrix conducted to show the relationship between the length of an article and the average reading time (measured by seconds).

Article title	Small	Medium	Long	30>	30-60	>60
A	1	0	0	0	1	0
B	0	1	0	0	0	1

Table 1 and 2 shows how the researcher easily can see that article A was a short article that generated 5-10 sales and had an average reading time of 30-60 seconds, and that article B had a medium length, generated more than 10 sales, and had an average reading time of more than 60 seconds. As the reader might see; by using the matrix tools, it is easy to compare the data, make patterns clearer and draw conclusions based on the findings.

3.6 The Method's Credibility

The Amedia group was chosen to be studied, because they own newspapers located in 11 out of 11 counties in Norway (Amedia, n.d.). That makes Amedia unique due to the media group's nationwide media coverage and provides the most representative selection of newspapers in Norway. The thesis has a quantitative data collection, which is why reliability, validity, and objectivity – collectively called credibility – should be considered.

Reliability in quantitative research is about to what extent other researcher will get the same results when following the same measures and doing the same measurements under the same conditions, and validity is to what extent the researcher can be sure that A happens because of B, and not because of anything else than B. In other words, if the measurements can be trusted to measure what they are supposed to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

I would argue that the thesis has sufficient reliability, because there is a high possibility of another researcher getting the same results when measuring the same data, but it is not as likely that he/she would get the same results when measuring the data that depends on the researcher's decision-making (such an oral source should be categorized as). A thought scenario would be if another researcher with no journalistic experience using the same measurements for the data collection, and the collection being based on the same selection of articles. I have made it clear that I have experience with working as a journalist in Norwegian newspapers, which could affect the way I as a researcher see and interpret the data studied. This could in term might give another researcher with a different background slightly different results. However, due to clear, unchanging definitions of each variable and variable value that is to be studied, future results should not differ greatly from the results presented in this thesis.

Moreover, I would argue that the findings of the data selection have a high validity, because it is possible to present indications of A happening because of B, however it will not be possible to rule out the possibility of other variables being the cause of A happening. In other words: Articles might have a high engagement (A) and containing factor B, but also containing factor C, which could be just as important for the article to achieve high engagement (A) as factor B.

But it is likely that if more than one article has high engagement rates (A) and contains factor B, that factor B might be part of why the articles achieve a high engagement (A). In other words: It is likely that A happens because of B, since A – more often than not – happens when B is present. Considering the question of the ability to generalize based on the findings in the thesis, I would argue that by emphasizing breadth and objectivity in the data selection, there is a high possibility that the researcher would get similar results with a different year, and different articles. However, I cannot claim that the results are applicable for other newspapers in Norway that are not Amedia-owned. But that is not part of the goal with the thesis, which is why it will not be further discussed.

Furthermore, there is a high scientific objectivity in the methods used in the thesis. Scientific objectivity is about to what extent the researcher does not let her personal opinions and interests affect the scientific method and is by some social scientists argued to be hard to achieve. But that does not mean that the researcher should not strive to achieve it either way (Letherby, Scott, & Williams, 2013, p. 76). When choosing the selection, I used a highly objective method by studying Amedia-newspapers, because they would represent the breadth of Norwegian local media. Moreover, the newspapers that are part of VEI4- and VEI5 size category were chosen to ensure breadth in the data to be collected, the year of 2020 was chosen to ensure the data being representative compared to other years, and the articles were chosen to ensure that suitable data was collected to be able to discuss the research questions. Every choice done in terms of choosing the selection in the thesis is related to ensuring that the findings are representative for Amedia-newspapers and has nothing to do with the researcher own preferences or personal opinions.

Also, when choosing variables and variable values, the researcher has been objective, because they are included due to other researchers arguing that the variables and variable values are in fact relevant and important aspects when writing news articles, hence, making them relevant to research as part of this thesis.

4.0 Findings – The Success Factors

Specific content of each article is the basis of the data in this thesis and is collected to be able to answer just why and how some articles achieve a higher engagement and number of sales than others, in other words, answering research question 1: What are the factors that could affect the engagement in digital news articles written with climate and environment as the main theme?".

"Factors" is another word for the variable values in this thesis, which are similar/dissimilar elements or aspects of the articles that might contribute to increased engagement and sales. I want to know to what extent the factors analysed can give an answer to which effect they might have on increasing engagement and sales, and how they can be used to achieve higher engagement and sales. To be able to discuss the research question at the end of this chapter, I have constructed six statements that are based on the factors analysed which will be enlightened in this part of the thesis. The statements are necessary, because they contribute to structuring the findings in this chapter, in addition to providing a base for discussion in the discussion chapter of the thesis:

1. The length of articles affects the engagement and sales.
2. Articles containing oral sources achieve a greater engagement and generate more sales than articles containing no oral sources, and some specific oral source(s) increase the possibility of an article achieving an average reading time of 60 seconds or more and generating 10 sales or more.
3. Articles containing no News Criteria have a lower average reading time and number of generated sales than the articles fulfilling one or more criteria, and the higher the number of News Criteria in articles, the greater the engagement and number of sales.
4. Articles with main photos containing specific aspects are more likely to achieve great engagement and generate more sales.
5. Articles with cases that are near the local community of where the newspaper is located achieves a greater engagement and generate more sales than articles with cases that are far away.
6. The articles published later in the day achieve greater engagement and generate more sales than articles published in the middle of the day.

4.1 Length

The reason for discussing if the length of an article had an impact on engagement and sales is because it could contribute to better knowledge about which kinds of articles should be prioritized when deciding on format to have the best chances of gaining an economic profit. This does not mean that one format should always be preferred over the others, but it would give an indication of how Amedia-newspapers could make use of their resources in an economic efficient way. Hence, the problem statement to be discussed in this subchapter is: *The length of articles affects the engagement and sales.*

Table 3: The length of the selected 100 articles compared to the articles average reading time.

Length/ average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
Short n = 36	1	22	13
Medium n = 54	1	17	36
Long n = 10	0	0	10

By comparing the length of the articles with the average reading time each of them had, we see that it is likely that articles of medium length and long articles will be read longer than 60 seconds. It is less likely that short articles will read longer than 60 seconds. The results indicates that the articles' lengths do affect the engagement, but does it affect the number of sales generated? To discuss this, I compared the articles' lengths to the number of sales each article gained. The results are firstly that it is more likely that a short article generates 0 sales (table 4). Secondly, it is likely that articles of medium length are almost as likely to generate between 1-5 sales as to generate no sales (0). Lastly it is likely that long articles will generate between 1 to 10 sales.

Table 4: The length of the selected 100 articles compared to the number of sales the articles generated.

Length/sales n = 100	1-5 sales	5-10 sales	>10 sales	No sales
Short n = 36	11	4	2	19
Medium n = 54	20	6	2	25
Long n = 10	5	3	0	2

The table further gives data needed to do a percentage calculation to find the percentage of long, medium, and short articles that have generated sales and generated no sales:

- **Long articles:** 5+3+0/10 = <u>80%</u>
- **Medium articles:** 20+6+2/54 = <u>52%</u>
- **Short articles:** 11+4+2/36 = <u>47%</u>

80 percent of the long articles have generated sales, and about 47 percent of the short articles have generated sales. It is more likely that short articles generate no sales than long articles. The results of the percentage calculations indicates that length of an article is likely to influence the number of sales generated.

4.2 Sources

Discussing the frequency of using different sources is important to the thesis, because it could give an indication of how decisive some might be in relation to engagement and sales, in addition to providing knowledge about whose voices in the local community readers might be more interested to read about when entering a digital article. This could in term give the newspapers an insight to which sources they should prioritize to cite when writing articles, to increase the chances of achieving high engagement and many sales. Based on this the problem statement for this subchapter is: *Articles containing oral sources achieve a greater engagement and generate more sales than articles containing no oral sources.*

By comparing the number of articles that contained one or more oral sources and their average reading times and the number of articles that contained no oral sources, we see that the only two articles that had an average reading time of 30 or less seconds had no oral sources. That could indicate that oral sources are needed to achieve an average reading time of more than 30 seconds. The comparison also indicates that articles containing consequence sources will probably be read longer than 60 seconds.

Table 5: The oral sources the selected 100 articles contained, compared to the articles average reading time.

Source/ average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
All	2	39	59
Consequence n = 44	0	9	35
Expert n = 9	0	2	7
Spokesperson n = 29	0	13	16
Jurisdiction n = 36	0	15	21
No oral sources n = 15	2	7	6

Based on these numbers, one could suggest that an article should contain oral sources to achieve a higher average reading time than 30 seconds. Do we get the same results when comparing sources to the number of sales generated?

Table 6:The oral sources the selected 100 articles contained, compared to the number of sales the articles generated.

Source/sales n = 100	0 sales	1-5 sales	5-10 sales	>10 sales
All	47	36	13	4
Consequence n = 39	5	28	9	2
Expert n = 16	1	9	4	3
Spokesperson n = 16	13	10	5	1
Jurisdiction n = 14	22	6	4	2
No oral sources n = 9	11	3	0	0

The results of the test show that firstly, that there are almost a 50/50 chance of an article in the "nature and environment"-category generating sales, as not generating sales. And if articles contain no oral sources, it is more likely that they will generate no sales than one sale or more. This could indicate that articles containing at least one oral source might have a greater chance of generating more sales than those not containing oral sources.

Furthermore, the table shows that 22 of the 100 selected articles contained one or more jurisdiction sources and generated 0 sales, which is significantly higher number than the articles containing other sources or no oral sources at all. This could indicate that it is more likely that articles containing one or more jurisdiction sources generate 0 sales compared to articles with other sources, or no oral sources.

The table also shows that it is more likely that articles containing one or more consequence sources will generate 1 sale or more than not generating any sales at all. We get similar results

for articles containing one or more expert sources. Based on this, it is possible that including oral sources would result in articles having a greater chance of achieving more sales than articles not containing any oral sources.

Some Sources Engage Readers More Than Others

To further discuss the effects of using sources, I wanted to investigate the possible impacts certain sources had on engagement and sales by considering the following statement: *Some specific oral source(s) increase the possibility of an article achieving an average reading time of 60 seconds or more and generating 10 sales or more.*

When writing about sources, they will from now on be mentioned in this way: (Example) "Consequence source", instead of "consequence source(s)" to make it easier to read. In other words, "consequence source" refers to one or more of this kind of source.

Table 7: The combination of oral sources the 85/100 selected articles that had an average reading time of 60 seconds or longer contained.

Source/average reading time of >60 seconds n = 85	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 44	15 (17,6%)	6 (7,1%)	2 (2,4%)	4 (4,7%)
Expert n = 9	6 (7,1%)	1 (1,2%)	0	2 (2,4%)
Spokesperson n = 29	2 (2,4%)	0	4 (4,7%)	0
Jurisdiction n = 36	4 (4,7%)	2 (2,4%)	0	9 (10,6%)

According to the test (table 7), it is more likely that an article that contains a combination of consequence source and expert source will be read longer than 60 seconds than article

containing either spokesperson/expert or spokesperson/jurisdiction source. The table also indicate that articles containing a combination of consequence- and jurisdiction source probably will have an average reading time of 60 seconds or more, even though it is a higher probability of achieving the mentioned average reading time when using the combination of consequence- and expert source. There are no articles containing at least one of each of the oral sources, which is why the category is not included in the test. To further investigate the decisiveness of the consequence/expert combination, I did the same test on the articles with an average reading time of 30-60 seconds:

Table 8: The combination of oral sources the 39/100 selected articles that had an average reading time of between 30 and 60 seconds contained.

Source/average reading time 30-60 seconds n = 39	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 9	5 (12,8%)	0 (0%)	2 (5,1%)	2 (5,1%)
Expert n = 2	0 (0%)	1 (2,6%)	1 (2,6%)	0 (0%)
Spokesperson n = 13	2 (5,1%)	1 (2,6%)	8 (20,5%)	2 (5,1%)
Jurisdiction n = 15	2 (5,1%)	0 (0%)	2 (5,1%)	11 (28,2%)

This test (table 8) shows that it is more likely that articles containing the combination of either consequence source and spokesperson or consequence- and jurisdiction source have an average reading time of 30 to 60 seconds, than the combination consequence/expert. This is interesting, because it might indicate that the combination consequence/expert source in articles should be prioritized to increase the probability of achieving a higher average reading time (60 seconds or more).

It is also more likely that articles containing only jurisdiction source have an average reading time of 30 to 60 seconds than articles only containing consequence source, expert source, or spokesperson. Another interesting finding is that when using only one or more consequence sources articles are likely to achieve an average reading time of 60 seconds or more (table 7). Only using jurisdiction source will probably also result in an average reading time of 60 seconds or more, even though it is not as likely as when using only consequence source.

The results of the test in table 8 further strengthen this theory, because there is a smaller share of articles containing only consequence source that was read between 30 and 60 seconds than articles containing only jurisdiction source that was read between 30 and 60 seconds. This could suggest that it is more likely that an article containing only consequence source would have an average reading time of 60 seconds or more than an article containing only jurisdiction source.

To conclude: Firstly, it is likely that articles containing the combination of consequence- and expert source achieve an average reading time of 60 seconds or more. It is also likely that articles not containing this source combination will have an average reading time of 30 to 60 seconds. Secondly, it is likely that articles containing only consequence source will achieve an average reading time of 60 seconds or more. Not only is this conclusion valid for engagement, but also sales. The following tests give an indication of how combining different sources could give a higher or lower number of sales:

Source/>10 sales n = 8	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 2	0	2	0	0
Expert n = 3	2	0	0	0
Spokesperson n = 1	0	0	0	0
Jurisdiction n = 2	0	0	0	1

Firstly, let us look at findings among the articles that have generated 10 or more sales. There are two articles containing only one or more expert- and consequence sources that generated more than 10 sales, compared to other combinations of sources. All other combinations – except articles containing only one or more jurisdiction source – did not generate 10 sales or more. That could indicate that it is likely that articles with this source combination generates 10 or more sales.

When considering the articles that have generated between 1 and 5 sales (table 11), we see that there is a higher number of articles with the same source combination – expert/consequence – present in the sales category than other articles with other source combinations. Even though there are only one article containing the combination that have generated between 5 and 10 sales (table 10), but in total it is a higher number of articles containing the combination that has generated sales than other combinations. This could mean that articles with only expert- and consequence source would have a greater chance of achieve a high sales payoff than other combinations.

If we look at articles using only one kind of oral source, we see that there is a high number of articles containing only consequence source that generated between 1 and 10 sales (table 10

and 11). But there are no articles using only the mentioned source resulted in more than 10 sales (table 9). This could indicate that even articles only containing one or more consequence sources could generate sales, but it might not be enough to generate more than 10 sales.

Table 10: The combination of oral sources the 13/100 selected articles that generated between 5 and 10 sales contained.

Source/5-10 sales n = 13	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 9	5	0	0	1
Expert n = 4	0	0	0	1
Spokesperson n = 5	0	0	1	0
Jurisdiction n = 5	1	1	0	1

Table 11: The combination of oral sources the 36/100 selected articles that generated between 1 and 5 sales contained.

Source/1-5 sales n = 36	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 28	13	4	4	3
Expert n = 9	4	1	1	1
Spokesperson n = 10	4	1	1	0
Jurisdiction n = 7	3	1	0	1

However, a source that does not seem likely to generate sales when used alone in articles is jurisdiction source (table 12). 17 articles containing only one or more jurisdiction sources generated 0 sales. Only three articles containing only the mentioned source gained sales (one article for each sales category), which further shows the likelihood of articles containing only one or more jurisdiction sources not generating sales. But even though only using consequence source in an article would likely give a higher economic profit, it could cause some ethical challenges that will be discussed in the analysis.

Table 12: The combination of oral sources the 47/100 selected articles that generated 0 (no) sales contained.

Source/0 sales n = 47	Consequence	Expert	Spokesperson	Jurisdiction
Consequence n = 5	2	0	0	2
Expert n = 1	0	1	0	0
Spokesperson n = 13	0	0	10	2
Jurisdiction n = 22	2	0	2	17

4.3 The News Criteria

The reason for analysing the presence – or lack – of the News Criteria, is because they are claimed to be a crucial part of how the commercial media prioritize news. Investigating to what extent the criteria influence engagement and sales would potentially give the Amedia-newspapers a better understanding of what their readers are more drawn to in terms of framing of content. Hence, the statement to be discussed in this subchapter is: *Articles containing no News Criteria have a lower average reading time and generate less sales than the articles fulfilling one or more criteria.*

News Criteria/ average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
All	2	39	59
Identification n= 78	2	29	47
Sensation n = 28	0	7	21
Conflict n = 38	0	9	29
No News Criteria n = 6	0	5	1

It is only two articles that has an average reading time of 30 seconds or less that fulfils one of the criteria (table 13). This could indicate that by making sure to fulfil one or more criteria the article would probably have an average reading time that is longer than 30 seconds. There are only six out of 100 articles containing no News Criteria, but none of them have read less than 30 seconds. This is interesting, because it would be natural to believe that in order for news to be news worth reading it should fulfil at least some of the News Criteria. It is nearly impossible to establish exactly why all of these articles had a relatively high average reading time, which is why suggestions would only be speculations that cannot be proven to be either right or wrong. Based on this, the findings related to articles containing no News Criteria is a deficient basis for further discussion.

However, what *can* be established is that it is a higher number of articles in the 30-60 and >60 category that do fulfil one or more of the criteria. Based on this observation, one could suggest that it is more likely that it will be a higher number of articles that fulfils at least one News

Criteria represented in the average reading time-categories of 30-60 and >60 seconds than articles that do not fulfil any News Criteria. But one cannot, based on the data, say with certainty that articles containing no News Criteria have a lower reading time than the articles fulfilling one or more News Criteria. However, when comparing the News Criteria with sales generated, the findings show that the one article that did not fulfil any News Criteria generated 0 sales. Hence, that could indicate that it is likely that articles fulfilling one or more criteria have a greater chance at generating sales than the articles that do not fulfil any criteria.

Some News Criteria Engage Readers More Than Others

To further discuss the effects of fulfilling more than one of the News Criteria, I wanted to investigate the possible impacts certain criteria-combinations had on engagement and sales by considering the following statement: *The higher the number of News Criteria in articles, the greater the engagement and number of sales.*

Table 14: The combination of the News Criteria in the 58/100 selected articles that had an average reading time of 60 seconds or longer.

News Criteria/ average reading time >60 seconds n = 58	Identification	Sensation	Conflict	All
Identification n = 47	13 (22,4%)	11 (19%)	19 (33%)	N/A
Sensation n = 21	11 (19%)	5 (8,6%)	1 (1,7%)	N/A
Conflict n = 29	19 (33%)	1 (1,7%)	5 (8,6%)	N/A
All n = 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	4 (6,9%)

There is a greater number of articles fulfilling the identification criterium that have an average reading time of more than 60 seconds, than an average reading time of 60 seconds or less. This could indicate that it is likely that an article that fulfils the identification criterium will have an average reading time of more than 60 seconds.

In addition to the articles fulfilling the identification criterium achieve a high average reading time, the table shows that there also is many articles fulfilling the sensation- and/or conflict criterium that have an average reading time of more than 60 seconds. Based on this, one might

suggest that it is about as likely that articles fulfilling the sensation criterium would achieve an average reading time of more than 60 seconds, as articles fulfilling the conflict criterium.

There are four articles that fulfils all three News Criteria and they have read more than 60 seconds, which could indicate that it is likely that an article will achieve a high average reading time if it fulfils all the News Criteria. However, articles fulfilling only one or two of them are also likely to have a high average reading time. Table 14 shows that there is both a high number of articles fulfilling the conflict- and identification criterium, and a high number of articles that fulfils the sensation- and identification-criterium that were read longer than 60 seconds.

The findings indicate that it is likely that articles only fulfilling the identification criterium and none of the other criteria still could achieve a high average reading time, and that the identification/conflict-combination also would result in high engagement (table 14). But does a higher number of criteria fulfilled in an article result in a greater engagement? One could argue that it does, because the only four articles that fulfilled all three criteria read more than 60 seconds. On the other hand, one could argue that it does not, because even though an article only fulfils one or tops two news criteria, it could still achieve a high average reading time. The conclusion is just as relevant when discussing the impact of the News Criteria have on sales. It is four articles containing all three news criteria that have generated sales. None of them generated 0 sales, which could indicate that articles containing all three criteria might generate sales. There are six articles that did not fulfil any of the News Criteria, and they generated 0 sales.

The findings show that by combining the sensation- and identification criterium, it is more likely that the article will generate more than 10 sales then when using other combinations. It is also likely that if you combine the sensation- and identification criterium or conflict- and identification criterium the article will generate between 1 and 10 sales. On the other hand, combining the sensation- and conflict criterium would less likely generate sales. This is an interesting finding, because of the role the identification criterium might play in increasing the chances of an article generating sales, which will be further discussed later in the thesis.

4.4 The Main Photo

The importance of photos in relation to catching the readers' attention is reason enough to investigate the impact the contents of the 100 articles' main photos might have on engagement and sales. To enlighten the topic, the following statement will be discussed in this subchapter:

Articles with main photos containing specific aspects are more likely to achieve great engagement and generate more sales.

Table 15: The contents of the main photo in the selected 100 articles compared to the average reading time of the articles.

Main photo/average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
All	2	39	59
Containing a person n = 18	0	7	11
Containing two or more people n = 17	0	12	5
Containing an animal/animals n = 23	0	9	14
An overview of a place w/no people in it the photo n = 10	1	3	6
An overview of a place w/no people in it the photo, but w/a portrait edited on top of it, placed in a corner of the photo n = 3	0	1	2
Containing an incident n = 5	0	0	5
Illustration photo n = 3	0	1	2
Surveillance footage or a photo taken of someone or something without them knowing n = 4	0	0	4

A close-up of an object **n = 9**	0	4	5
Containing a person/ people and an animal/animals **n = 5**	0	2	3
No main picture **n = 3**	1	0	2

The results presented in table 15 indicates that articles that have main photos containing one or more animals are likely to achieve an average reading time of more than 60 seconds. We get close to the same results for articles with main photos containing a person. Articles with main photos containing one person or people will likely achieve an average reading time of more than 30 seconds. The table further shows that it is likely that articles that have a main photo achieve an average reading time that is longer than 30 seconds. There are two articles that read less than 30 seconds. One of them had no main photo and the other one had a photo that showed an overview of a place with no people in it. This could indicate that the photos engaging readers the least (have an average reading time of less than 30 seconds) might be photos that show an overview of a place with no people in it, or articles that do not have main photos. The findings further show that articles with main photos containing animals or people might engage readers the most. This also applies to the articles that generated most sales:

Table 16: The contents of the main photo in the selected 100 articles compared to the number of sales the articles generated.

Main photo/sales **n = 100**	**0**	**1-5**	**5-10**	**>10**
All	47	36	13	4
Containing a person **n = 18**	8	5	5	0
Containing two or more people **n = 17**	12	3	1	1

Containing an animal/animals **n = 23**	9	10	2	2
An overview of a place w/no people in it the photo **n = 10**	6	4	0	0
An overview of a place w/no people in it the photo, but w/a portrait edited on top of it, placed in a corner of the photo **n = 3**	1	1	1	0
Containing an incident **n = 5**	0	1	3	1
Illustration photo **n = 3**	1	2	0	0
Surveillance footage or a photo taken of someone or something without them knowing **n = 4**	1	2	1	0
A close up of an object **n = 9**	4	5	0	0
Containing a person/people and an animal/animals **n = 5**	3	2	0	0
No main photo **n = 3**	2	1	0	0

No articles with main photos in the categories: "Containing a person/people and an animal/animals", "a close up of an object", "illustration photo", and "An overview of a place w/no people in it the photo" have generate more than five sales. This could indicate that these kinds of photos increase the possibility of generating 0 sales.

There are more articles having main photos that contain two or more people that has generated 0 sales, than generated one or more sales. It is also more articles without a main photo that have generated 0 sales than one sale. This could indicate that photos of only people or articles without main photos may not be enough to generate large amounts of sales. On the other hand, it is more likely that articles with main photos containing one or more animals generate one or more sales, than it is that they generate 0 sales. In other words, this could mean that main photos containing animals more often would result in sales than resulting in no sales.

4.5 Geography

The reason for analysing the proximity of a case in an article to the local community and which effect it could have on engagement and sales, is that it could give the Amedia-newspapers an indication of how interested their readers are in cases that is considered "near", "close" or "far away". This could in term possibly provide valuable information of how articles should be written to achieve greater engagement and number of sales. The statement that is to be discussed in this subchapter is: *Articles with cases that are near the local community of where the newspaper is located achieves a greater engagement and generate more sales than articles with cases that are far away.*

Table 17: The proximity of a case in the selected 100 articles compared to the average reading time of the articles.

Geographics/ average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
All	2	39	59
Near n = 46	1	15	30
Close n = 31	1	15	15
Far away n = 23	0	9	14

Table 17 shows that it is likely that articles with a case that is near to the local community have an average reading time of more than 60 seconds, and rarely 30 seconds or less. It is also likely that articles with a case that is close to the local community will have an average reading time of 30 seconds or more. There are no articles with a case that is far away from the local community that has read less than 30 seconds. There is almost the same number of articles read longer than 60 seconds that has a case that is "far away" as the articles categorised as "close". This could indicate that it is almost just as likely that articles with cases that are "close" are read longer than 60 seconds as it is that articles with cases "far away" are read as long. But it is more likely that articles with a case that is "near" are read longer than 60 seconds than articles with cases that are "close" or "far way". Hence, the findings could indicate that the statement is correct in relation to engagement, but also in relation to sales.

According to the findings, it is more likely that articles with cases that is close or far away from the local community generate 0 sales than it is that they generate more than 10 sales, and that articles with cases that are near the local community is more likely to generate more than 10 sales than articles having cases that are close or far away. This indicates that one might want to prioritize writing articles that have cases that is near the local community of the newspaper's readers to increase the probability of it generating more than 10 sales.

4.6 Publishing Time

One cannot always decide when to publish articles, because there will always be external factors that would make it necessary to publish when news happen. It could be the weather, an event, or simply that the article has been out for a long time and that the readers want to read something new. Anyhow, when the newspapers can decide the time they are publishing an article, it is natural to believe that the time that would give the best chances of high engagement and number of sales would be valuable information to consider. The time of the day might give the best economic profit will be discussed through enlightening the following statement: *The articles published later in the day achieve greater engagement and generate more sales than articles published in the middle of the day.*

Table 18: The time each of the selected 100 articles were published, compared to the average reading time of the articles.

Publishing time/ average reading time n = 100	<30 seconds	30-60 seconds	>60 seconds
All	2	39	59
Morning n = 20	0	6	14
Lunch n = 17	2	9	6
Afternoon n = 23	0	9	14
Evening n = 37	0	15	22
Night n = 3	0	0	3

The table shows that it is a higher number of articles that are published in the evening that achieves an average reading time of longer than 60 seconds, and there are no articles published in the evening that is read less than 30 seconds. Articles published in the morning or afternoon are also more likely to achieve an average reading time of longer than 30 seconds than less than 30 seconds. The only two articles read 30 seconds or less are published at lunchtime. This could indicate that the subscribers might spend more time on reading articles in the evening than at lunchtime. Furthermore, it is fewer articles published at night-time and at lunchtime that have achieved an average reading time of longer than 60 seconds. Hence, by publishing articles in the evening, or even in the morning or afternoon, you might increase the chance of the articles being read longer than 60 seconds, than if you publish them at lunch- or night-time. We get almost the same results in relation to sales, where it is a higher possibility of articles generating one or more sales if published in the morning, afternoon, or evening.

The Kantar-survey about what time most of the Norwegian population used media in 2020 showed that most people tended to spend time on medias around 18.00 in the evening. The results could explain why articles published in the evening had a higher engagement and generated more sales than other articles published in other time-periods.

4.7 The Contents of an Economically Profitable Article

After discussing factors that have shown to have an effect on engagement and sales, it is time to summarize, and answer research question 1: *What are the factors that could affect engagement (the average reading time and sales) in digital news articles written with climate and environment as the main theme?*

The findings show that articles that:

1. Contain at least one oral source (preferably one or more consequence sources),
2. Contain a main photo of one or more animals,
3. Contain aspects of identification,
4. Contain a case that is near the local community,
5. Is published in the evening,
6. And is of medium length,

tend to both have a higher average reading time and generate more sales. Economically speaking, these six factors can be called success factors, because they most probably would result in an article gaining a higher profit when used. To test this theory, I looked into whether there were any articles having all six factors, and what the economic outcome was. There was only one article containing all six factors, but as predicted; it was read longer than one minute and generated four sales.

The findings show that all factors analysed potentially could influence the engagement, but why do these factors have an effect on the average reading time and sales generated, and do these factors contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility of the media? What it is that potentially could make some of the factors successful will be further discussed in the next chapter. There are factors that are too exposed to external conditions that would be almost impossible to recognise, hence, four of the six factors will be discussed in relation to how they contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility. These factors are the use of sources, main photo, the presence or lack of the News Criteria, and the proximity of a case to the local community.

5.0 Discussion – Economy Vs. Social Responsibility

In the previous chapter I established that there are six factors that might have a positive economic effect, but to what extent do they contribute to fulfilling the newspapers' social responsibility? In the next subchapters we will look at the possible positive and negative consequences related to the local newspapers' social responsibility of writing digital news articles with climate and environment as the main theme that 1. *Do* include set factors and 2. *Do not* include set factors (research question 2). Research question three will be enlightened in the last subchapter of this chapter: *Could – and in what way – a universal practise in relation to covering cases with climate and environment as the main topic contribute to both public education and increased engagement and sales?*

5.1 Sources – We Want to Read About People

Humans are by nature social creatures, which means that we are curious and *want* to know about other humans' opinions, views, and knowledge they share, which today can be easily accessed through our digital screens (Chappell & Parsons, 2021). The two professors at Brunel University London claim that our curiosity in fact has increased with the ever development of the internet and social media, and that we now more than ever are fascinated and want to know about people lives and stories (2021).

A commonly known journalist technique is to find a person that can carry the case in the article – also called *personification*, to give the case a deeper meaning and the reader a better insight (Østlyngen & Øvrebø, 1999, p. 112). The technique is frequently used in the selection of articles in this thesis by presenting a case and letting "Jens" or "Maria" tell the story: "Jens" that saw a bobcat on his way home from work, or "Maria" that was shocked by the garbage piles she saw in the city centre (made up cases due to anonymisation considerations). In other words, someone who has an experience with the case written about in an article – also known as consequence sources, that is different from other sources because they are not part of an organisation or an established business that is easily accessible to all journalists (Allern, 2001).

When using the technique of personification in articles by letting Jens or Maria be the face of a case, one might trigger emotions that could result in the reader identifying with the case more than if the article did not let Jens or Maria tell their stories. The positive effects of using consequence sources as part of the personification technique is that the reader might pay more attention to the case because he/she is able to live the life of the source when reading the article. The moment we identify with a source, our willingness to learn might also increase because

we get curious about for instance specific aspect of the story like how the source's story will end, or about what we can learn from his/her story. We *want* to read the article, because we are curious to know what happens next, and are willing to invest time to find out. As a result, we might learn something from reading the article which is why identification and triggering curiosity through personification could play an important role in fulfilling the social responsibility of providing public information.

Furthermore, sources have been claimed to be not only a key factor to take personal observations or a statement further, and develop news (Allern, 1996), but is according to the VVP also a crucial factor to how well an article provide sufficient information and whether the content of the article could be considered well-balanced (Norsk Presseforbund, 1936). Making sure that different views are expressed in an article is part of the Norwegian media's social responsibility and would most times naturally require more than one source represented in an article. 85 of the 100 articles contained at least one oral source, and only 15 out of the 100 articles did not contain any oral sources. However, more than half of the articles (54/100) contained only one kind of oral source, which was one or more consequence sources. A result of an article only containing one or more of just one kind of source, could be that it does not sufficiently facilitate debate or is as informative or balanced as it should be. This is a problem, because the social responsibility of the Norwegian media clearly states that different opinions should be presented in an article in order to fulfil paragraph 1.2 of the VVP.

Furthermore, according to Østlyngen and Øverbø using the same sources repeatedly in different articles could result in skewed representation of the society and the case as such (Østlyngen & Øvrebø, 1999, p. 276). One could argue that the claim is applicable for using the same *kind* of source in an article, because there might be other opinions and views that should have been expressed though the article to potentially making it more informative and balanced. Despite these arguments, the findings show that more than half of the 100 articles contain only one kind of source, and it is especially consequence sources that are more frequently used without any additional kinds of sources. Why? The answer might be economics.

According to the findings, articles containing at least one consequence source have a high chance of readers staying in the article for longer than one minute and generate at least 1 sale, probably between 5 and 10 (table 5). This could indicate that even when using only consequence source it is a high possibility of the article achieving high engagement in terms of both the average reading time and sales. Based on this one could argue, from on an economic

standpoint, that using only one or more consequence sources might be positive. However, due to the Norwegian media's democratic role explained through VVP (social responsibility), economy should not control the news productions. Sjøvaag and Allern sates that the Norwegian media is in general interested in fulfilling their social responsibility (2010; 2020), which is why that could be reason enough for them to use the time and resources needed to make sure that the article is as well-balanced and informative as possible. However, McManus would say that time saved is money saved, and that economic interests always will come first in commercial medias (1994). The challenge is to find the golden mean of economic profit and the social responsibility. Which changes can be made to ensure a better fulfilment of the social responsibility while still making an economic profit through personification?

One way of finding an answer could be by looking at how well the composition of two different kind of sources work together, in terms of engagement rates. According to the findings we see that the highest number of articles that have read more than one minute contained only consequence source and expert source (C/E). There was also a high number of articles that contained only consequence source and jurisdiction source, but not as high as the former combination. Considering sales, we see similar results, where articles with C/E generated at least one sale and was the only combination of two kinds of sources that generated more than 10 sales.

These findings suggest that in the article about Jens who saw a bobcat on his way home from work would potentially also achieve great engagement and sales numbers if Grethe, the Norwegian wildlife expert, was cited in the article in addition to Jens. Grethe might be able to supply the article with facts about why the bobcat was there, how normal it is to see bobcats in the area where Jens lives, and what you should do if you see one – facts that Jens probably would not be able to provide – and in term make it a more informative article. Hence, the possible positive effect of the C/E-source combination is that it might both increase the chances of achieving high engagement while still – to a greater extent than only using one kind of source – making sure that the article is well-balanced and informative, and in that way to a greater extent contributing to fulfilling the social responsibility. However, should it be a goal in itself that journalists – no matter what – should strive to make sure that only these two sources are cited in articles? I would argue that the answer is no, because it is important that sources used in an article is chosen because they are *relevant* and contribute with information, views or opinions that makes the article informative and enlightening (Norsk Presseforbund, 1936).

However, if the deadline is short and resources are scarce, and the alternative is to only include one kind of source in an article, making time to interview an expert in addition to a consequence source would probably result in a better written article in terms of social quality, than if only one source carry the case in the article. But is a two source-combination enough to fully fulfil the social responsibility, or should more sources be cited in the article? An article should contain as many different sources needed to make sure contrasting views is expressed in an article, which means that depending on the complexity of the case in an article two kinds of sources could be sufficient, or it could be insufficient. Hence, it is up to the journalist to decide whether two different kinds of sources are enough to shed light on the case from different points of views.

An article containing no oral sources could hence be argued to not contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility. However, some articles did contain no oral sources. Could it be because using no oral sources would result in a higher profit? According to the findings, the answer would be no, because 12/15 of the articles containing no oral sources generated 0 sales. A consequence of articles not containing sources could be an increased chance of them generating 0 sales in addition to probably not sufficiently fulfilling the social responsibility, which is why it could be argued that sources should be used when writing any kind of article.

To conclude, when asking the question of whether the effects of the use of sources could fulfil the social responsibility in addition to securing an economic profit, I would argue that the findings show that it can be done if one is willing to sacrifice some sales in exchange for securing social interests: Only using consequence sources might be economically beneficial, but could result in not sufficiently fulfilling the social responsibility, because the article would potentially not contain different opinions and views in relation to the case. In addition to that, 15/100 articles did not contain any sources which turned out to have a negative effect on sales and could have made it less likely that the social responsibility was fulfilled. Hence, I would recommend that the Amedia-journalists should include sources when writing articles, both because it could result in economic and social profit by potentially triggering the readers curiosity and their willingness to learn.

The journalists should always ask himself/herself the question of "why am I choosing to speak with this specific source, and are there any other sources who could enlighten a different aspect of the case that should be interviewed for the article?" Often, the answer to the last question would be "yes", and if the source you already have interviewed is a consequence source and

the source who could contribute with another point of view in the article happens to be an expert, the possibility of the article achieving higher engagement will probably increase according to the findings.

5.2 Main photo – The Influence of Animals and Faces

Photos in general tend to appeal more to our feelings than text (Tørdal, 2018), and it has actually been proven by tracking readers' eyes when seeing an article that our attention is normally first directed towards photos before we read any text (Meilby, 1996, p. 297). Hence, photos could be an effective tool to help catching the reader's attention and trigger the readers emotions and curiosity. The news photo is not only a way of documenting events, it also plays an important role in how the reader perceives and store the information about a case in an article because of the associations he/she gets when looking at the photo (Gibson & Zillmann, 2000). The effects of the main photo in an article varies based on the contents of the photos. The findings show that main photos containing one or more animals is more likely to have an average reading time of more than 60 seconds than 60 seconds or less and is more likely to generate more than 1 sale than 0 sales (table 13; table 14). Compared to the other kinds of photos, main photos containing animals are without a doubt the ones that achieved the highest engagement.

Why is it that the readers tend to buy subscriptions and spend more time reading the articles with main photos containing animals? One of the articles that achieved one of the highest average reading times and that generated 13 sales had a main photo of a wolf. It was published in newspapers that because of their location, might make the photo of the wolf novel – in other words, unexpected and surprising.

Photo: Original photo retrieved from a digital article published by an Amedia-newspaper.

Due to this, the answer to the question might be that if a photo trigger curiosity, we tend to want to learn more about the case. "Curiosity" has been defined as something derived from different internal lusts. One of them is said to be a drive we humans have to learn, that is triggered by new impulses, and that is reduced only when we obtain the knowledge that caused us to become curious (Livio, 2017). When we become curious about something, our natural response according to human psychology is to explore the source of our curiosity. This lust for information is also claimed to be an important factor in more efficient learning (Loewenstein, 1994), which makes the effects of curiosity not only positive from an economic perspective, but also potentially in relation to fulfilling the media's social responsibility. If the photo of a wolf could trigger the readers' curiosity, it might increase the chances of the readers *wanting* to obtain new knowledge through the article. However, for the social responsibility to be sufficiently fulfilled, it is up to the journalist to make sure that there is information and different opinions expressed in the article for the readers to learn something from, when they decide to explore the source of their curiosity.

The findings further show that in addition to photos of animals achieving high engagement- and sales rates, main photos used in articles that contained one person was likely to achieve an average reading time of more than 30 seconds. It was also more likely that they generated more than 1 sales than 0 sales. Articles with main photos that contained two or more people were more likely to generate 0 sales than 1 or more sales (table 13; table 14). However, it is highly likely that these articles have an average reading time of 30 seconds or more and none of them were read 30 seconds or less. This could indicate that even though photos with two or more people did not generate the greatest amounts of sales compared to photos with one person, they could have influenced the readers' engagement towards spending more time reading the article.

A study has shown that photos of faces online are especially something that attracts our attention, and that these kinds of photos receives greater engagement on social media (Bakhshi, Shamma, & Gilbert, 2014). The high engagement related to the Amedia-articles and the pictures in the American researcher's study, might be connected to the readers' ability to identify with the feelings faces convey through photos. Identification can happen by for instance the reader recognising a known face, or it could even be that the person in the photo is about the same age as the reader. If the reader is able to identify with the person/people in the photo, it could in term trigger their curiosity to read more of the article. Hence, using main photos containing one or more people could potentially have a positive effect on the readers' engagement.

But would using pictures of people contribute to fulfilling the social responsibility of the media? Indirectly it would, if it succeeded in triggering the reader's curiosity and willingness to learn by reading parts or the whole article. It could also contribute to democracy and identity-shaping, by showing the diversity in a local community through photos of the people living in it. However, one could argue that using photos of people could also have a negative effect in relation to the fulfilment of the social responsibility, by for instance regularly publishing photos of elderly people and males and rarely younger people and females. This could in term contribute to a skewed representation of the society, which would not be beneficial for the democracy and the public's identity-shaping. Based on these reflections, a recommendation could be that photos of people should be used with an awareness of the possible effects they could have on readers.

When looking at the articles not having a main photo at all, we see that this factor could have a negative effect on sales. 2/3 articles having no main picture generated 0 sales, which could indicate that to increase the chances of new readers subscribing, the article should have a main photo. On the other hand, 2/3 articles had an average reading time of more than one minute, which could indicate that readers do not necessarily demand a main photo in order to be interested in spending time reading the article. However, in general articles having main photos tend to be read longer than 30 seconds and generate more sales, which probably makes the consequences of having no main photo more negative than positive – economically speaking. Considering the social responsibility there are no clear guidelines considering the use of photos specifically. However, one could argue that photos used should contribute to making the article more informative and contribute to the public's identity-shaping, to further fulfil the social responsibility.

To conclude, we have seen that the articles having main photos is economically beneficial. And the findings show that it is especially economically beneficial to use photos that contain either animals or faces. These photos could be argued to also be socially beneficial if used to trigger the readers curiosity and willingness to learn, and/or contribute to the public's identity-shaping. However, should journalists always use main photos containing either faces or animals? If the photo contributes to additional information that cannot be provided through text and/or could work as an attention grabber, it could be argued to be beneficial to use the photo to makes the reader more willing to learn because they become curious to know more about the case. On the other hand, one cannot claim that it would always be relevant to use such a photo. According to the – at the time – Norwegian lecturer Anders Rosenqvist at Oslo University College, a

successful news photo is a photo that documents to its best abilities (Løberg, 2011). Hence, one could argue that from a social point of view the journalist should always use a main photo that documents the reality of the case in an article in the most accurate way, and also providing additional knowledge or information that is necessary to trigger the public's curiosity.

5.3 The News Criteria – Guidelines, But No Recipe

We have discussed how our curiosity and emotions can be triggered through personification, due to specific factors in an article such as sources and photos used. Are there other factors that could be just as important in triggering curiosity and emotions? For news to be considered news they should according to Meilby fulfil at least one News Criteria (1996). The criteria (identification, conflict and sensation) are never written in plain text in an article, but are an important part of how an article comes to be and is perceived by the reader (1996). We have established that our curiosity is commonly known to be the key to why we want to learn, and by paying attention to the effects the News Criteria could have might be important to tempt readers into reading and learning.

According to the findings, there are no doubt that the presence of News Criteria is crucial to achieving high engagement and generate sales. The negative consequence of the articles not containing any News Criteria is that they generated 0 sales and were read less than a minute (table 11). Compared to articles that fulfilled all three criteria, they were not as economically successful. The articles fulfilling all criteria generated at least 1 sale and were read longer than one minute, which economically speaking shows that the presence of News Criteria positively affects the engagement- and sales numbers. Also combining two criteria has been shown to be a success for increased chances of gaining a profit, where the identification criterium could be the decisive factor.

Our ability to identify with people, places, or topics is an important part of our identity-shaping process (Erikson, 1994). Presenting cases that show the public what roles they could have in a society is part of the social responsibility (Orgeret, 2020), and also part of identity-shaping (Cohen, 2001). When reading about things we identify with, it could result in us reflecting upon issues that we otherwise would not have paid much attention to, because we feel an emotional attachment to the case. This emotional attachment could in term have influential power in shaping the way we think, talk and act (Cohen, 2001), in other words; in shaping our identity. What it is that makes us identify with certain aspects of texts will be further discussed in the chapter about the proximity of a case in an article to the reader.

The two other criteria (sensation and conflict) could in a way be seen as tools to be able to fulfil the social responsibility in relation to both facilitating debate, uncovering illegalities, and making sure to maintaining freedom of speech. Without them, the publics curiosity might not be triggered and could result in them not reading the article. That is a problem, because the media are depending on the public's interest in reading the news they publish in order to fulfil their social responsibility (Sjøvaag, 2020). However, there are some challenges with the criteria considering fulfilling the social responsibility that should be discussed. If the criteria are to be seen as the threshold for all cases to become news, we might have an issue at our hands. There is a possibility that there are important cases in the society that should be reported on to fulfil the social responsibility, but that do not fulfil the criteria. The question is then, should the case be made news?

Economically speaking; probably not, however, socially speaking; absolutely. If a case is of public interest, it should according to the VVP be reported on to ensure that the media fulfils their social responsibility. Based on the VVP's explanation of the Norwegian media's duties on behalf of the society, one could argue that the criteria should be *guiding* and not *deciding*. Sjøvaag did a study about the variety of cases the Norwegian media covers on a daily basis, and found that they in total contribute to presenting a diverse news picture (Sjøvaag, 2020, p. 78). The results of the study could indicate that the News Criteria are indeed guiding tools of choosing the framing of an article but does not necessarily hinder cases in being reported on. However, newspaper might benefit from searching for aspects in cases that could fulfil some of the criteria to not only generate more sales, but because they have qualities that could trigger curiosity and contribute to the readers' increased willingness to learn by reading the article – such as the identification criterium. Triggering the readers' curiosity and their willingness to learn could be argued to be important to ensure public education by providing needed information. As a result, triggering curiosity though fulfilling one or more of the News Criteria could contribute to fulfilling the media's social responsibility.

5.4 Geography – We Care About What Happens Close to Home

Jens is on his way home from work when he saw something in the forest, close to his home in Nameless town. He thought to himself "this must be one of the rare cases!" and took a photo of the bobcat. He looked forward to showing his kids the photo and felt like he had witnessed something special that he would remember for a long time.

Let us pretend that Jens also sent the photo to the local newspaper in Nameless town and the text you just read was an excerpt of the article written about the event. Like Jens, you also live in Nameless town. Could you identify with any of Jens' emotions? Our ability to identify with a case in an article is strongly dependent on our ability to forget ourselves for a moment and live the life and feel the emotions of someone else, which allows us to experience something we have not experienced in real life – also called vicarious experience (Cohen, 2001).

Identification through vicarious experience is important, because it contributes to identity-shaping through expanding our social perspectives and emotional spectrum (Cohen, 2001). Jens could make the readers feel the emotions he feels through telling a story that could just as well have happened to you, which in term could result in you identifying with Jens. Not only because Jens' storytelling contains emotions that you can relate to, but because it happened close to your home. Let us pretend that Nameless town is the town of where the local newspaper has its headquarters and where a great amount of their readers lives. Jens telling about his experience with seeing a bobcat close – or even in – the hometown of most of the newspapers' readers could be a way of making the readers identify with Jens.

Articles written with a case that is considered near in proximity to the local community (which is the closest of the three categories), was mostly read longer than a minute and was the only ones that generated more than 10 sales. This could indicate that in addition to wanting to read about people, we want to read articles about things happening close to home because we might be able to identify to a greater extent with the people in the article. However, another interesting finding is that articles that were written with a case that was far away, but with the use of local sources brought it closer to home, where also likely to be read longer than one minute and were also more likely to generate more than one sale than 0 sales. An example of a case that would be considered far away, but was brought closer to Nameless town by using local sources:

A new national law forbids people to hunt for bobcats. Jens from Nameless town is used as a consequence source in the article telling the stories of how he every day has seen the same bobcat on his way home from work and how he is glad the law is introduced. This is a way of "bringing the case home" to the local community by using a local oral source to react to- or share his opinions about the law, which in term could increase the possibility of readers identifying with the case even though it is technically not close to home. This technique that could make it easier to economically justifiable to write about big national questions could also have a positive effect on fulfilling the social responsibility, because it could contribute to public

information in relation to the national democracy – and not only the local democracy. However, articles with cases that are near the local community are more likely to both generate more sales and achieve high engagement than cases that are close or far away, in other words; Writing articles with a case that is near the local community might to a greater extent have a positive effect from the economic point of view.

Despite this, always striving to keep the production of articles to cases that are near, might limit the educational benefits the reader should get from reading articles. In other words, the newspaper might limit the possibility of sufficiently fulfilling the social responsibility by only reporting on cases that are nearby. In conclusion, Amedia-newspapers should not only report on cases that are nearby, even though it might result in a better economic profit, but should aim to bring larger questions closer to the local society by making sure different local views and opinions are expressed to increase the fulfilment of the social responsibility. However, the cases that are nearby are just as important for the local democracy by keeping the public informed about policies that might affect them. Hence, a balance between cases that are nearby, close, and far away could give the best result in terms of fulfilling the social responsibility.

5.5 The Commercial Universal Practise

We are surrounded by universal practices every day and differ from industry to industry. In some industries a universal practise is crucial for the operation. For instance, ambulance workers have a universal practise they follow when arriving at an accident, train workers when they arrive at and depart from stations, and teachers when they make sure the students are being taught what they should when they should. Universal practices are everywhere, even if we are not aware of them. In the last subchapters we have looked at factors that could contribute to increased engagement and sales, and how they might increase or decrease the ability for an article fulfilling the newspapers' social responsibility. In some industries universal practises are important and even crucial as part of the operational machinery. However, could it be argued that such a practise would be beneficial or even necessary in the media world? And could a combination of the success (economically speaking) factors discussed in the previous chapters be part of a universal practise for all Amedia-newspapers?

Based on these questions, the third research question will be discussed in this chapter: *Could – and in what way – a universal practise contributes to both public education and increased engagement and sales?*

According to Luhmann, media is already operating based on inner systems, through deciding which topics to write about, who to interview, and the framing of articles – in other words, that they are operating based on a system-theory. Luhmann's theory criticises the media for creating what he calls a self-referential functional system, where actors have to adapt to the media's inner logic to get attention (Luhmann, 2013). However, the VVP was made in order to prevent unbalanced and biased articles being exposed to the public, but that does not mean that the media do not have inner selective systems they work by.

Systems based on how the media select topics and cases to report on do not necessarily have to be negative. By having such systems, the media can secure diversity in deciding whose voices are being heard and which topics are being reported on. However, one cannot overlook the possibility of profit speaking louder than the media's social responsibility in choosing the cases to report on. Fulfilling the social responsibility is not cheap and demands resources (Sjøvaag, 2020), and one would be naïve to believe that cases that the media knows has a higher probability of generating sales and engagement never are prioritized when the resources are few. On the other hand, the VVP is there to ensure that once the cases are chosen, the sources interviewed are relevant and that the ethical regulations are being followed, which is why the inner system, or a best practise, of the media related to choosing cases might be argued to be necessary more than something that is unwanted.

There is already a practise introduced by NRK which is an example of how the social responsibility of writing articles about the climate and environment can become part of a universal practise. The strategy is clear about what the NRK editorial offices should strive to achieve when producing news about the topic. However, it does not specifically mention which factors should be included in order to follow the guidelines of the strategy, which potentially would make it easier for journalists to put the words of the strategy into action through producing news. On the other hand, it is understandable that NRK has been as general in their guidelines as they have, because they have – like Amedia – editorial offices all over Norway and different audiences to appeal to, which could make it challenging to have a more specific strategy that would be beneficial to all offices.

But what if one were to be a just a little more specific than NRK in suggesting some factors to include in articles that possibly would increase engagement and number of sales, in addition to contributing to sufficiently fulfilling the media's social responsibility?

I would argue that a commercial universal practise's goal would be to suggest a best possible way of writing climate news that could result in an increase in both economic and social profit, and as we have seen in the previous chapters, we have considered the factors that might result in economic profit and discussed the likelihood of them being effective to increase engagement- and sales. We established that it is likely that some factors are more efficient to secure an economic profit than others, and hence them being part of a universal practise as part of recommendations considering how to write economically profitable articles about the climate and environment might contribute to increased engagement and sales. However, I would argue that it is not desirable that one should always make sure that all success factors are included in every article published about the climate and environment, but in the cases where it is appropriate to include at least some of them one should strive to do so. The factors could contribute to public education if they are seen as tools to encourage learning, but not if merely considered a mean to selling articles.

6.0 Conclusion

Through this thesis we have established that there are six specific factors that possibly could increase the chances of higher engagement and number of sales when used in articles. These factors are called success factors and consisted of articles that contained at least one oral source (preferably one or more consequence sources), a main photo of one or more animals, aspects of identification, a case that is near the local community, was of medium length published in the evening. The findings supported the theory of the effects of the success factors, because the one article that contained all factors had achieved great engagement and number of sales.

Furthermore, four of the six success factors were discussed in relation to how well they potentially would contribute to fulfilling the local newspapers' social responsibility. The discussion showed the importance of being able to trigger emotions, curiosity, and identification to increase engagement, to increase the readers willingness to learn and making the news part of their agenda of choice. Readers' willingness to learn is crucial for the newspapers to be able to fulfil their social responsibility, because if the public does not read the news the newspaper publish, the social responsibility cannot be fulfilled. If the public is not being provided with the information needed to take part in important aspects of the society, it could have negative consequences for the democracy.

The discussion also showed the importance of using the success factors as tools and not as a recipe for writing articles about the climate and environment, because they will not always be suitable to use for every article. Hence, I would argue that the best practise should contain the success factors and a recommendation of using them wisely, by considering how it would affect the potential of triggering the readers' curiosity through emotions and identification and resulting in them wanting to learn something from reading the article.

The problem statement of this thesis is: *"The commercial media house Amedia would benefit from having a research-based universal practise for their local newspapers in relation to writing articles with climate and environment as the main topic, because it would contribute to fulfilling their social responsibility and generate more engagement and sales"*.

If the balance between the newspapers' mentioned economic (success factors) and social interests can be achieved, I would argue that a universal practise for the Amedia-newspapers would be beneficial.

Finally, it is important to note that the world of news is immense and ever changing with external and internal factors that I as a researcher cannot recognise or foresee, and there will always be a possibility of other factors influencing the economy and how the social responsibility is being considered at different times. However, the fact that there might be some specific factors that increases the possibility of higher engagement and number of sales has previously only been based on experience: Six factors investigated in 100 Amedia-articles about the climate and environment have now been empirically proven to possibly influencing engagement and sales. Based on this, I would argue that the topic is important to discuss to shed light on one of the greater challenges the media faces today with the way the public uses technology, how the readers' attention is harder to hold onto, and the increasing urgency of ensuring sufficient coverage of climate and environment news.

This master thesis has scratched the surface of a topic that should be further researched to achieve a better understanding of all the factors that could influence the way articles are written and will be written about the local climate and environment in the future, to make sure that both economic and social interests are considered.

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