Infotainment as a hybrid of information and entertainment: a conceptual analysis

Manuscript accepted for publication in *Journal of Documentation*
(November 2021)

Reijo Savolainen

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences

FIN-33014 Tampere University, Finland

Reijo.Savolainen@tuni.fi

Abstract

Purpose – To elaborate the nature of infotainment as a mediating concept between information and entertainment by analysing how the above concept is approached in diverse domains such as communication research and political science.
Design/methodology/approach – Conceptual analysis focusing on 41 key studies on the topic. First, it was examined how researchers have approached the relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment. Thereafter, attention was directed to the ways in which people make use of infotainment. The conceptual analysis is based on the comparison of the similarities and differences between the characterizations of the above issues.
Findings – Early studies characterized infotainment in terms of soft news which is distinct from hard news offering factual information. Later investigations offer a more nuanced picture by approaching infotainment as phenomenon with diverse dimensions depicting the topics, focus and presentation style. Studies on the use of infotainment offer contradictory evidence of the extent to which infotaining programs can increase people´s interest in social, political and health issues, for example.
Research limitations/implications – As the study concentrates on the analysis of an individual concept, that is, infotainment, the findings cannot be generalized to concern the ways in which informational and entertaining phenomena are related as a whole.
Originality/value – By elaborating the conceptual nature of infotainment, the study contributes to information behaviour research by refining the picture of the relationships between information and entertainment.

Keywords: Concepts, Entertainment, Information behaviour, Infotainment, Soft news

Article Classification: Research paper

Introduction

One of the most obvious research gaps in information behaviour research can be found in the analysis of the relationship between information and entertainment. The gap is probably due to the assumption that information seekers and users are primarily rational "thinking beings" who look for serious and fact-based information (Case and Given, 2016, p. 127). This bias reflects a normative preference for information, as opposed to entertainment, which is regarded as a threat rather than an enrichment of information behaviour. More generally, approaching information and entertainment as categories

aversive each other suggests a utilitarian perspective on human behaviour: anything labelled as entertainment cannot inform anyone and is thus not worthy of our attention (Görke (2001, p. 221). This is particularly the case if entertainment is merely associated with soap operas, light fiction books and computer shooting games, for example.

However, there are non-normative (neutral) approaches to the relationship between information and entertainment in that the latter is not seen inferior to the former in importance. This is particularly characteristic of the *uses and gratifications* (U&G) approach. It suggests that media consumption is influenced by users' goal-directed motivations such as information and entertainment. They are approached as equally relevant though separate categories. For example, McQuail (1983, pp. 82-83) conceptualized the motivation of *information* as the need for "finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world; seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices; satisfying curiosity and general interest; learning, self-education; gaining a sense of security through knowledge", while *entertainment* denotes "escaping, or being diverted, from problems; relaxing; getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment; filling time; emotional release; sexual arousal". In the domain of information behaviour research, Matni and Shah (2015) offer a pioneering example of the attempts to define the relationships between information and entertainment. They examined the motivations and affective dynamics of surfing the Web for pleasure. It appeared that some Web information seeking activity can be classified as entertainment, a pleasurable activity in itself. To characterize how informational and entertaining elements are intertwined while surfing the Web for pleasure, Matni and Shah (2015) proposed the concept of *info-entertainment*. It describes incentives related to seeking entertaining information such as celebrity gossip. Ultimately, however, the construct of info-entertainment is indicative of the duality of information and entertainment, and it may not offer a sufficient answer to the question of how to conceptualize the amalgamation of information seeking and entertainment.

The above attempt to elaborate the relationships between information and entertainment is exceptional because in information behaviour research so far, most studies tend to treat these two concepts "as if they had nothing to do with one another" (Case and Given, 2016, p. 127). Yet, as Case and Given (2016, p. 127) suggest, they exist on a continuum, with some sensory input being "purely" enjoyable, other input being "purely" informative, and much of what we encounter in everyday life falling somewhere between the two extremes. The present study was inspired by the above idea of approaching information and entertainment on a continuum where they may appear as an amalgamation or hybrid of some kind. An attempt will be made to delve deeper into the relationships of information and entertainment and thus contribute to the conceptual elaboration of information behaviour research. To achieve this, the focus will be placed on the construct of *infotainment* - a portmanteau of information and entertainment.

As the term suggests, infotainment represents the intersection of informational and entertaining phenomena. The nature of infotainment has been discussed intensively in the fields of communication research and political science since the 1990s (Boukes, 2019). In communication research, infotainment is one of the manifestations of the *hybrid turn*. It refers to the desire to understand that which does not necessarily fit into long-used categories that have come to govern theoretical and empirical work, for example, hard (factual) versus soft news or fake versus real news because the traditional binaries such as these do not hold any longer (Witschke *et al*., 2019). The same applies to the dichotomy of information versus entertainment. Somewhat surprisingly, the construct of infotainment has not aroused interest among information scientists although the component of "info" suggests that infotainment is potentially relevant for the examination of information behaviour. This may be due to the assumption that infotainment is a marginal issue because it primarily deals with entertainment. However, it is evident that the phenomena of infotainment are particularly relevant to the study of everyday information seeking from television programs, newspapers, magazines and Internet.

To elaborate the picture of infotainment, the present investigation will examine how researchers have characterized the relationships between informational and entertaining elements constitutive of infotainment. Another issue to be examined is the way in which the use of infotainment is conceptualized in studies on this topic. The findings will not only deepen our understanding of the relationships between information and entertainment but also serve the ends of holistic information research recently advocated by Polkinghorne and Given (2021). Similar to the hybrid turn in communication studies, information research of this kind suggests that to make sense of their daily world, people seek both information and entertainment and that these elements are often amalgamated. This approach offers a more balanced picture of the ways in which people find diverse materials, for example, television programs and newspaper items as meaningful, both informative and entertaining.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. First, to create background, the concepts of entertainment and infotainment are introduced. Although infotainment stands for the blending of information and entertainment, the constituent of information will not be characterized in greater detail. As explained later, this is because information is approached as a primitive term without a specific meaning. Instead, the features of entertainment are characterized more precisely because this constituent is rarely discussed in information behaviour research. After the introduction of the concepts of entertainment and infotainment, the research questions will be specified, followed by the description of the research methodology and the communication of research findings. The last sections discuss the research results and draw conclusions of their significance.

Background

Entertainment

Entertainment is a multifaceted and semantically open concept with no generally agreed definition among researchers. Reflecting this uncertainty, Vorderer (2001, p. 257) presented a thought-provoking question: "what exactly is entertainment"? A common-sensical answer suggests that entertainment is dealing with pleasure seeking and escapist pastime by watching action movies or reading detectives, for example. Zillmann and Bryant (1994, p. 438) offer a general level definition by suggesting that entertainment is "any activity designed to delight". However, the picture of entertainment may not be that simple. For example, Bosshart and Macconi (1998) identified five key features of entertainment experiences among media users. First, entertainment means psychological relaxation because entertainment is restful, refreshing, light and distracting in nature. Second, entertainment offers stimulation by means of change, diversion and variety. Third, entertainment offers fun because it is experienced as dynamic, interesting, exciting and thrilling. Fourth, entertainment implies a merry and amusing atmosphere. Finally, entertainment gives rise to joy because it associated with qualities such as good, pleasant and comfortable.

The above characterizations suggest that at the heart of entertainment is the experience of enjoyment. It may manifest itself in manifold forms, for example, sensory delight, exhilaration, serenity, and suspense. Tan (2008) advocates this interpretation by proposing that ultimately, entertainment is emotion. More specifically, it is assumed that the main engine in support of engaging in entertaining activities is the emotion of *interest*. At the experiential level of interest is the feeling of being engaged, caught-up, fascinated, and curious (Tan, 2008, pp. 35-36). There is a feeling of wanting to investigate, become involved, or expand the self by incorporating new information and having new experiences with the object that has stimulated the interest. Importantly, interest's action tendency provides for an explanation of why many people spend so much energy in entertainment. Once we are in an entertainment episode and interest is caught, we feel an urge to continue and intensify our active engagement. Ultimately, however, the entertainment experience a product of our

own making, depending on our willingness to be entertained (Tan, 2008, p. 45). For that reason, there is abundant room for individual differences in what counts as entertainment.

To refine the empirical picture of entertainment, Rentfrow, Goldberg and Zilca (2011) developed a taxonomy of entertainment genres. The taxonomy is based on survey data gathered from over 3000 participants indicating their entertainment preferences. To this end, the participants were asked to report their degree of liking for specific songs, books, films, and TV shows, for example. No less than 108 entertainment genre items such as romance film, country music, fiction book, and recreation & sports TV were identified. The genre items were further collapsed into five factors defined by factor analysis (Rentfrow *et al*., 2011, pp. 237-241). The first factor labelled as *communal* was composed of television genres such as daytime talk shows, film genres (e.g., romance), music genres (e.g., pop), and genres from the book and magazine domain (e.g., cooking). The second factor, *aesthetic* covered diverse book genres (e.g., poetry), music genres (e.g., classic), film genres (e.g., foreign), and one television genre (arts and humanities). The third factor, *dark* was composed of various music genres (e.g., punk), television genres (e.g., horror), film genres (e.g., cult), and genres from the book and magazine domain (e.g., erotic). The fourth factor, *thrilling* incorporated diverse television genres (e.g., action adventure), book genres (e.g., action), and film genres (e.g., science fiction). Finally, the factor *cerebral* was composed of diverse genres from the book and magazine domain (e.g., news and current events), various television genres (e.g., health), and documentary film genre. Different from communal, aesthetic, dark and thrilling factors, "cerebral" is most clearly an information-oriented factor of entertainment because it offers factual information about persons, places, or things. This suggests that the set of genre items constitutive of the "cerebral" factor may be most closely related to the phenomena of infotainment.

Infotainment

The concept of infotainment was probably first coined by Ron Eisenberg who used this word in an article published in the February 1980 issue of *Phone Call* magazine (Safire, 1981). There are also related or synonymously used terms such as *politainment*, *soft news* and *tabloidization* referring to the blending of information and entertainment (Collins and Riegert, 2016; Reinemann *et al*., 2012, p. 234). Similar to the concept of entertainment, there is no consensus among researchers about the definition of infotainment (Marinov, 2020). However, most researchers agree in that infotainment rejects traditional dualisms such as entertaining versus informational content or fictional versus "factional" material (Collins and Riegert, 2016). For example, Brants and Neijens (1998) proposed that television programs can be placed on an "infotainment scale" so that on one end of the continuum are those programs that contain factual content about a matter packaged within a serious format, while on the opposite end are shows that emphasize dramatic, personalized content within an informal and heavily stylistic format. These poles, however, represent idealized types, with various infotainment programs occupying a wide range of positions in between. Similarly, Delli Carpini and Williams (2001) characterized infotainment as a convergence of entertainment and "serious" information which blurs the traditionally-assumed distinctions between entertainment and news to the point where this distinction becomes untenable. This suggests that infotainment is best understood as a phenomenon of border-crossing that problematizes common assumptions that news is necessarily objective and factual information, while the informational value of entertainment is insignificant.

More recently, Pelzer and Raemy (2020) refined the picture of infotainment by identifying its major qualities. First, infotainment content is characterized by the use exclamatory sentences, metaphors, superlatives or colloquial language, photos, the highlighting of conflicts, personalization and emotionalization. Second, infotainment makes use of visual effects like eyewitness camera movements and dramatic music. Third, compared to serious or "hard" news offering factual information, infotainment is more sensational, more personality-centred and more incident-based in that it concentrates on individual cases. Finally, infotainment emphasizes

performative or market-oriented features of news and television programs: information is blended with advice and guidance as well as with entertainment and relaxation.

Another way to characterize the nature of infotainment is to place it in a broader context of journalistic political communication. To this end, Otto, Glogger and Boukes (2017) developed a framework in which the umbrella concept of *softening* describing changes in political journalism was taken as point of departure. Under the above concept, Otto *et al*. (2017, pp. 138-140) placed the lower-order concepts of eroding of boundaries, tabloidization, infotainment, hard and soft news (HSN), and sensationalism in a hierarchical order. Of these, on the lowest level of this hierarchy, there is the microstructure of media content referring to sensationalism, for instance, single sentences as parts of a whole in a newspaper article focusing on the latest celebrity gossip. The next higher level comprises entire items of soft news, for example, pre-taped interviews of politicians. Infotainment is placed on the next level as a news genre that combines information and entertainment in one outlet, for example, political talk show. On the next level of the hierarchy, different from infotainment, tabloidization represents a type of media such as printed newspaper. Finally, at the highest level of hierarchy there is the system level indicative of the eroding of boundaries between journalism and other social subsystems such as economy. All in all, the above framework represents an attempt to dissolve the traditional dualism of entertainment and information, leading to a new hybrid media world characterized by a mix of media content and formats.

There is no consensus about the date when the elements of infotainment emerged on television, for example. Stark (1997) placed the beginning of the phenomenon in the turn of the 1970s when commercial broadcast producers in the United States began to take elements from prime-time fiction and adapted them to the local news programs. Similarly, Brants (1998) identified early examples of infotainment from talk shows in which Dutch politicians appeared during their campaigns in the 1970s. In the next decade, American talk shows such as *Oprah Winfrey* and *Larry King Live* became as prominent examples of television programs blending informational and entertaining elements. Later on, there was a marked increase in the number of infotainment features on television news, including the framing of news stories as dramatic events to retain audience interest (Marinov, 2020, p. 4). One prominent example of the encroachment of entertainment into news was the 1995 O.J. Simpson case - a criminal trial held in Los Angeles County Superior Court in which former National Football League player, broadcaster and actor O.J. Simpson was tried for the murders of his ex-wife and her friend. The trial spanned eleven months, offering a mega spectacle by which the whole nation was "hooked on infotainment and tabloid culture" (Thussu, 2015). More recently, celebrity talk shows, court and crime enactments, rescue missions, and docudramas have contributed to the scope and scale of infotainment content on television news, resulting in new symbiotic relationships between the news and entertainment genres.

These developments are not without problems, however. Particularly in the 1990s, infotainment was often understood in a pejorative sense because it was associated with the decline of hard news and the corresponding development of a variety of entertainment shows that mimic the style of news (Baym, 2008). Thussu (2007) asserted that the rise of global infotainment results in the "entertainisation" of news and "dumbing down" public discourse. As critiqued by Berrocal Gonzalo *et al*. (2014, p. 91), infotainment programs are often characterized by decontextualisation: instead of placing reality in its deep social and economic context, they only address a particular story in a trivialising way by focussing on what is happening at the moment.

Nevertheless, researchers have identified positive effects brought by the use of infotainment programs. In the domain of political information use, there is supporting evidence for the gateway hypothesis suggesting that when citizens less interested in social issues are exposed to political information as a by-product of entertainment-oriented content such as talk shows, they will accidentally acquire knowledge of political matters (Baum, 2003). This is because "soft" news items contain more sensational elements, which provoke arousal and emotions as well as naturally draw the attention of audiences. However, there is opposing evidence arguing that while infotainment

consumption can temporarily increase political awareness, the watching of infotaining programs do not necessarily lead to a well-informed electorate possessing deeper knowledge about social and economic topics (Marinov, 2020, p. 9). Again, reflecting the contradictory evidence of the pros and cons of infotainment use, there are counterarguments critiquing the notion that infotainment breeds a politically gullible populace. For example, Brants (2008) contends that political infotainment would only be really harmful if it were the dominant portrayal of politics, or if it were broadcast to distract viewers from more important matters. Brants asserted that none of these conditions has been shown to exist unconditionally, as people are still able to gain valuable information about candidates and different points of view.

Research questions

The above review revealed that infotainment is a multifaceted concept that mediates between information and entertainment. It also appeared that researchers have differently characterized the features of infotainment as a hybrid of information and entertainment, as well as presented contradictory evidence of the ways in which people can make use of infotainment. To elaborate further the picture of infotainment, the present study seeks answers to the following questions:

- RQ1. In which ways are the relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment characterized in research literature?
- RQ2. In which ways have researchers characterized the ways in which people make use of infotainment?

To strengthen the focus of the study, three limitations appeared to be necessary. First, the particular features of related concepts such as soft news, tabloidization and politainment are not examined because this topic would require a separate study. Second, although *information* is a major element of infotainment, no attempts will be made to scrutinize how researchers have conceptualized this element. Instead, a broad approach to the conceptualization of information proposed by Case and Given (2016, pp. 76-77) is adopted. While reviewing the phenomena of information behaviour, they suggest that defining information in an absolute sense is not necessary, because it is more productive to treat information as a primitive term, without needing a full explication. This view is preferred because understanding information as a primitive concept does not unnecessarily restrict the analysis of the ways in which this entity, however vague, is approached in studies on infotainment. Therefore, the present study brackets the particular meanings of the concept of information while examining the conceptualizations of infotainment. Third, in a similar fashion, *entertainment* as an element of infotainment is approached as a primitive term that is not defined in a certain way or explicated in detail. This approach is justified because the preliminary analysis of the research material revealed that researchers characterizing the features of infotainment do not draw on a particular interpretation of the concept of entertainment.

Research material and analysis

The research material was identified by conducting literature searches in eight major databases: Academic Search Ultimate (Ebsco), Google Scholar, LISA, Sage Journals Online, Science Direct, Scopus, Springer Link and Wiley Online. The key search terms were *entertainment*, *infotainment*, *infotaining* and *soft news*; in addition, the searches included queries such as information AND entertainment, and infotainment AND information behaviour. It appeared that these searches extensively identified literature relevant to the research topic. Moreover, diverse databases retrieved the same items, thus suggesting that the sample of studies is saturated and that additional searches from other databases would not have resulted in the identification of new material directly relevant to the topic. The searches resulted in the identification of 102 potentially relevant investigations. A

closer reading revealed that 61 of these studies are less relevant for the analysis because they mainly describe the findings of prior investigations. Therefore, these studies were excluded from the final sample which thus includes 41 investigations published within the period of 1981-2020. Of them, most are journal articles (30 items); the sample also includes three books, six book chapters and one conference paper.

The research material was examined by means of evolutionary concept analysis (Rodgers, 2000). This method was chosen because it emphasises the dynamic nature of concept development over time and enables the examination of how the attributes of a concepts are identified within a given context (Fleming-May, 2014, p. 205). Evolutionary concept analysis includes six major steps:

1. Identify the concept of interest and associated expressions.
2. Identify and select an appropriate setting and sample for data collection.
3. Collect relevant data to identify the attributes of the concept and the contextual basis of the concept.
4. Analyse data regarding the above attributes of the concept.
5. Identify an exemplar of the concept.
6. Identify implications for further development of the concept.

In the present investigation, the concept of interest is *infotainment* (step 1). The collection of research material was described above (step 2). As to step 3, the terminology proposed by Rodgers (2000) was slightly modified in that the present study prefers the term *element*, not attribute, while examining infotainment as a hybrid formed by informational and entertaining entities. At the next phase (step 4), to answer RQ1, the relationships between the informational and entertaining elements of infotainment were analysed. While addressing RQ2, the attention was directed to the ways in which studies on infotainment have approached the ways in which people receive and interpret infotainment content, for example, political talk shows.

To achieve this, the research material containing altogether 41 items was first read carefully to obtain an overview. Thereafter, the research material was coded by the present author by identifying sentences and text paragraphs indicative of the informational and entertaining elements of infotainment (RQ1), as well as the ways in which people use infotainment (RQ2). As there were no prior framework applicable for the conceptual analysis of infotainment, the codes were developed inductively from the research material. To strengthen the reliability of the coding, only explicit expressions indicative of the above elements and their relationships, as well as the use of infotainment were coded. Moreover, the initial coding was refined by repeated reading of the research material. In this regard, the study drew on Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 65) proposing that check-coding the same data is very useful for the lone researcher and that code-recode consistencies should be at least 90%. Following this advice, the coding was refined until it was found that the codes appropriately describe the data and that there are no anomalies.

In the coding, particular attention was directed to text portions in which researchers describe the informational and entertaining elements of infotainment. For example, informational elements were identified in text portions depicting the qualities of factual information available in "hard" news, while entertaining elements were identified by directing attention to how researchers characterized the ways in which infotaining content is presented talk shows. Thereafter, the attention was directed to the ways in which the relationships of these elements are approached in studies comparing hard and soft news, for example. Moreover, in the coding, text portions indicative of infotainment use was identified. More specifically, the attention was directed to how researchers depict the ways in which people receive infotainment programs or how such programs contribute to their knowledge. The analysis was continued by comparing the coded text portions indicative of the relationships of informational and entertaining elements, as well as the ways in which infotainment is used. Then, exemplars depicting the above two issues of infotainment were identified from the research material.

Finally, implications for further analysis of the concept of infotainment were identified (step 6); these implications will be reflected in the concluding section.

In the findings section - reflecting the idea of evolutionary concept analysis - the characterizations of the relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment (RQ1) and the use of infotainment (RQ2) will be analysed by starting from the early investigations and proceeding to the most recent ones. The main attention will be directed to a few key studies, most notably Brants and Neijens (1998), Reinemann *et al*. (2012), Bartsch and Schneider (2014) and Pelzer and Raemy (2020) because they offer the most sophisticated approaches to the conceptualization of the phenomena of infotainment.

Findings

Relating the informational and entertaining elements of infotainment

The analysis of the research material revealed that since the 1990s, the conceptualization of infotainment has evolved towards more analytical approaches. This is also reflected in the ways in which informational and entertaining elements were identified and related in the characterizations of infotainment. In early studies on this topic, infotainment was often attributed a pejorative meaning which manifested itself in expressions lamenting the growth of entertaining elements in news programs (Peters, 2011, pp. 302-303). Moreover, early studies often drew on the rational versus emotional divide which was reflected in the employment of the distinction between the 'hard' and 'other' news incorporating elements of infotainment. For example, Graber (1994, p. 486) characterized news stories of this type as "populist/sensational" because they are "obviously structured to arouse emotions and empathy". In contrast to them, there are "elitist/factual" news stories that are confined to an unemotional recounting of verifiable information told to an intellectually mature audience. Many of the distinctions of this kind resulted in schematic settings in which hard and "other" news – also referred to as "soft news" - were seen as opposites. For example, Putnam (2000) associated soft news with entertainment. In his view, (hard) news concerns reality and facts, while entertainment is based in fiction and hyperbole. News is informative and rational, while entertainment is uninformative and emotional. News produces good citizens, while entertainment pulls citizens away from their civic duties. As Edgerly and Vraga (2019, p. 809) have aptly pointed out, such schematic assumptions placed the hard and soft news genres in competition; only by upholding the boundaries separating news from entertainment can (hard) news maintain its value.

In later studies on infotainment, the use of rough oppositional dichotomies became less frequent. The analysis shifted towards considering how each news text employs the rational and emotional elements. On the one hand, attention was directed to how the news makes use of rules of truth; on the other hand, it was considered how such rules are manifested through a particular presentational style attuned to an intended experience of involvement (Reinemann *et al*., 2012, p. 223). This meant that the characterizations of infotainment shifted from either-or dichotomies to the development of continuums on which diverse elements of infotainment were placed by diverse criteria. In a pioneering investigation examining infotainment in politics, Brants and Neijens (1998) developed an *infotainment scale* by drawing on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis for measuring infotainment. For the quantitative analysis, they examined the total broadcasting time of the three public channels and two private channels in the Netherlands over a period of six weeks prior to the election. The phenomena constitutive of information - entertainment were approached as a continuum, a scale with two poles (Brants and Neijens, 1998, pp. 152-153). On one end there were "informative" programs with hard and serious news, often about politics; on the other end there were "entertainment" programs in which the emphasis was placed on taste, pleasure, lifestyle, and gossip. Importantly, the above characterizations depict ideal typical programs that seldom appear in a pure form (Brants & Neijens, 1998, pp. 162-163). Therefore, in practice, almost all programs have both

informative and entertainment elements. This results in a hybrid picture: a political talk show may be more informative than a current affairs program, while private channels' programs are not necessarily more geared to entertainment in their portrayal of politics.

More specifically, given the informative and entertainment poles of the continuum, infotainment was placed between them, incorporating factual political-informative elements in entertainment programs and entertainment aspects in traditionally informative programs. As Brants and Neijens (1998, pp. 152-153) put it, it is the domain of soft news "wherein the factual meets the emotional and is "sauced" with dramatic elements of conflict, scandal, and gossip". In order to classify programs on this continuum, Brants and Neijens (1998, pp. 152-153) distinguished three criteria: topic, style, and format characteristics. As to the *topic* of the program, the closer the pole of the quality of informative, one could expect more factual content aspects about party-political disagreements, for example. Correspondingly, the closer the entertainment pole, there more there will be topics with a more human-interest content in which politicians appear as individuals with specific characteristic traits. Therefore, in this part of the continuum, image and drama are more important than the fact-based content of message. Regarding the criterion of *style*, programs characterized by serious approach, from a certain professional distance, and meant to inform with a tone of objectivity are closer to the informative pole. In contrast, programs characterized by more informal, personal, and open style, meant to entertain and present a picture of the politician as a human being are closer to the entertainment pole. Characteristic of programs of this kind is that the host of the talk show is often a star or personality who can also speak more on behalf of the public rather than act as an independent "watchdog." Finally, regarding the *format* of the program, those preferring a businesslike approach without "fringes" such as accompanying music come closer to the pole of informative. To compare, programs nearing the opposite pole are characterized by an entertaining format. To this end, relaxation and tension are built in via conversation and debate, which can be either light or sensational and dramatic. In this case, the format may also be characterized by participating audiences, along with accompanying music.

Many of the later studies characterizing the relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment have drawn on the pioneering conceptualization proposed by Brants and Neijens (1998). For example, Reinemann *et al*. (2012, p. 225) supported the conclusion that it is not only the topic of a news item that makes it a "hard" or "soft" one, but also the framing of an event or topic. To elaborate further the characterization of hard and soft news, Reinemann *et al*. (2012, p. 232) - distinct from the continuum model proposed by Brants and Neijens - preferred a three-dimensional approach. To this end, they distinguished hard and soft news by identifying (1) the *topic* dimension, that is, the subject matter covered in a news item, (2) the *focus* dimension, that is, the specific aspects of events or topics emphasized, and (3) the *style* dimensions, that is, way events or topics are visually and verbally presented. Of these, the topic dimension is foundational in the conceptualization of hard vs soft news because focus and style dimensions are grounded on how the subject matter (topic) is covered.

Based on the above framework, Reinemann *et al*. (2012, pp. 233-234) formulated a synthetizing definition that depicts the distinguishing features of news regarding the degree of their "hardness" or "softness": "The more a news item is politically relevant, the more it reports in a thematic way, focuses on the societal consequences of events, is impersonal and unemotional in its style, the more it can be regarded as hard news. The more a news item is not politically relevant, the more it reports in an episodic way, focuses on individual consequences of events, is personal and emotional in style, the more it can be regarded as soft news" (Reinemann *et a*l., 2012, p. 233). The above definition comes close to the characterizations of news placed on the infotainment scale (Brants and Neijens, 1998) because both approaches use topic (or theme) and style as criteria. However, different from Brants and Neijens (1998), Reinemann *et al*. (2012) draw attention to the criterion of focus, that is, aspects of events or topics emphasized, instead of the criterion of format. As the criteria of style and format (of program) are partly overlapping, the three criteria employed by Reinemann *et*

al. (2012), that is, topic, focus and style offer somewhat more sophisticated approach to the characterization of the relationships of informational and entertaining elements. This is because the approach advocated by Reinemann *et al*. (2012) suggests that infotainment is a multidimensional phenomenon. Topic, focus and style are approached as diverse dimensions of infotainment, not positions marked on an infotainment scale proposed by Brants and Neijens (1998). For example, regarding the dimension of topic, the degree of the hardness (informativeness) or softness ("entertainmentness") of political talk shows can vary, resulting in varying amalgamations of informational and entertaining elements. The same applies to the dimensions of focus and style.

More recently, Pelzer and Raemy (2020) proposed a tripartite approach to infotainment, although they preferred the dynamic term *infotaining* over the static noun infotainment in order to account for the transitions in the media production system. The term infotaining is also preferred because 'infotainment' implies the binary structure; the adjective "infotaining" is more expressive of the degree of infotainment in media content, thus elucidating which aspects make a program or news item more or less infotaining. As a point of departure, they adopted the three constituting aspects of infotaining: aesthetics, content, and news values. *Aesthetics* refers to the stylistic effects such as music and camera maneuvers, while *content* highlights the subject matter that is being addressed as the new information. Finally, the aspect of *news values* refers to the notion that infotaining can be considered sensational and personality-centred, a feature that is oftentimes associated with tabloid in print news or clickbait articles online. In itself, the above three aspects come close to the criteria identified by Brants and Neijens (1998) and Reinemann *et al*. (2012). Aesthetics is closely related to style, while content is parallel to focus or topic and the aspect of news values resembles the criterion of format characterized by Brants and Neijens (1998).

Importantly, Pelzer and Ramey (2020) believe that the terminological shift from infotainment to infotaining allows to outline better how great the degree of infotaining content is in news and television programs and how to evaluate the magnitude of cultivation effects from infotaining content among media users. Thus, different from prior conceptualization, the framework developed by Pelzer and Raemy builds a bridge to the issues of how infotaining content is variously constituted by informational and entertaining elements and how the use of such hybridized content may cultivate the audience. In this regard, the critical factors are the degree of entertainment contributing the aesthetics, the degree of hard news contributing the factual information content, and the degree of sensationalist news contributing the lower news values. When the infotaining content shows a strong resemblance to the elements from (hard) news, then it is likely that the viewers judge it by its level of accuracy; vice versa, with a greater similarity to elements found in entertainment, the plausibility of the fictional world is evaluated. Said otherwise, the representations from news are consistent if they appear to be accurate, whereas in entertainment, they are perceived as real if they are plausible. Hence, to determine whether a program is being held accountable with regard to accuracy or plausibility depends on the specific infotaining content and the degree of entertaining aesthetics, news content, and lower news values.

The use of infotainment

As noted above, another significant aspect of infotainment is how people make use of it and how the utilisation of infotaining content may affect their level of knowledge. In this regard, one of the pertinent approaches elucidating the nature of infotainment use is the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic motivation. The Greek term *eudaimonia* - commonly translated as "happiness" or "welfare" - is central in Aristotelian philosophy. Eudaimonia indicates highest human good and the ways in which an individual lives according to his or values and true potentials (Odag *et al*., 2016, pp. 109-110). For the characterization of infotainment use as a process in which the reception and interpretation of informational and entertaining elements are intertwined, Bartsch and Schneider (2014) have offered a particularly relevant contribution. They suggest that entertainment consumption

can either be driven by *hedonic*, escapist motivations that are associated with a superficial mode of information processing, or by *eudaimonic*, truth-seeking motivations that prompt more elaborate forms of information processing. In contrast with the escapist nature of hedonic entertainment experiences that can provide audiences with a "brain holiday" from everyday concerns, eudaimonic entertainment experiences tend to focus on realistic and socially relevant topics. Even though Bartsch and Schneider focus on the consumption of entertainment, we may think that their approach is also relevant to conceptualization of the infotainment use because it incorporates entertaining elements to a varying degree.

More specifically, Bartsch and Schneider (2014) elaborated the nature of entertainment use in terms of the dual-process models of cognitive information processing. To this end, they drew on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion which distinguishes between peripheral versus central processing (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), and the model for heuristic versus systematic information processing (Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly, 1989). The above models suggests that hedonic entertainment experience is characterized by fast, automatic, and effortless processing (System 1), whereas eudaimonic entertainment experience requires more attentive, systematic, and effortful processing (System 2) (Bartsch and Schneider, 2014, p. 373). Examples of the peripheral or System 1 processing include the recognition of familiar objects, words, or faces, or anticipating the course of routine actions and situations (Bartsch and Schneider, 2014, pp. 373-374). In contrast, central or System 2 information processing is associated with cognitive effort when assessing the convincingness of arguments presented in a talk show, for example. However, the distinction between System 1 and System 2 processing is analytical because these modes never appear in pure forms. Thus, in the real-world instances of infotainment use, the features of information processing characteristic of System 1 and System 2 appear in mixed forms. Further support for this assumption can be found in the study conducted by Odag *et al*. (2016). They demonstrated that hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment motivations are not mutually exclusive, and audiences may experience both at the same time.

Wirth (2014) elaborated further the conceptualization of hedonic and eudaimonic motives as drivers of infotainment use. To achieve this, infotainment was approached as a simultaneous, convergent and positively valenced meta experience. On the one hand, such experiences are driven by the combination of hedonic and eudaimonic "entertainment feelings" (*Unterhaltungsgefühlen*). On the other hand, such experiences may originate from cognitive "informational feelings" *(Informationsgefühlen*), for example, the expectation to be informed about a controversial political issue while watching a talk show (Wirth, 2014, p. 80). Weber (2019, pp. 63-64) made use of the above ideas by emphasizing that for an individual, infotainment is always a subjective experience whose nature depends on how the hedonic and eudaimonic motivations are related and how on this motivational basis an individual appreciates the entertaining and informational elements. The entertaining elements can manifest themselves in an instant feeling of pleasure when the individual realizes that he or she has obtained an insight or developed a new meaning. "Informational feeling" constitutive of the infotaining experience deals with the cognitive process indicating how the individual appropriates the infotaining content in order to learn about it or to accrue his or her knowledge. All in all, the reception of infotainment requires that the infotaining content is appraised positively, the entertaining and informational feelings occur together and they are experienced simultaneously.

There are a few empirical investigations elucidating how people make use of infotaining content available in diverse media. In one of the earliest studies on this topic Kim and Vishak (2008) found that compared to (hard) news, entertainment programs offering infotaining content are less effective for the acquisition of factual political information, particularly in retaining issue and procedure knowledge. On the positive side, entertainment programs can facilitate online-based political information processing, whereas the consumption of hard news promote memory-based political information processing. All in all, the findings suggest that entertainment programs did not

promote political information acquisition as much as news containing the same topics and themes in the same duration of time.

The cultivation effects of infotainment can also be identified in the domain of health-related information seeking and use. In a study on cognitive and emotional dimensions of perceived risk perceptions in the case of H1N1 influenza in South Korea, Oh, Paek and Hove (2015) assumed that health issues can be compelling topics for entertainment media, for example, infotainment television programs which have the potential to attract large audiences because they reflect the immediate concerns of our daily life during the pandemics. Infotainment programs can effectively change people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours pertaining to a health hazard because they not only "evoke vivid emotions but also effectively inform the public about health risks" (Oh *et al*., 2015, p. 27). Moreover, exposure to infotainment content can increase people´s health knowledge or controllability of health behaviour. The empirical findings indicate that the emotional dimension of risk characteristics was positively correlated with both personal and societal level risk perceptions, while the cognitive dimension did not show such a direct relationship. This suggests that perceiving health risks is essentially an emotional experience and that people can understand health threats more easily through emotional experiences evoked by risk communication than through factual information. In light of the above findings it is evident that infotaining programs can affect people's health risk perceptions more effectively by making them not only informative but also emotionally oriented toward a risk issue through the use of personal narratives and vivid visual imagery, for example.

Further support for the beneficial effects of the infotaining elements can be found from the experimental study conducted by Davis *et al*. (2020). They compared infotainment versus expository narrations for communicating science in online videos. The researchers constructed two identical videos about climate change. Both videos were 2 minutes 52 seconds in length, and they differed only in their narration (Davis *et al*., 2020, p. 691). One was written in an expository style, where the information was provided in the serious voice of an omniscient narrator using the formal language characteristic of a science documentary. The infotainment version was written from a first-person point of view in a personable, entertaining style whereby the narrator introduced himself and spoke using colloquial, humorous and glib language characteristic of user-generated content. The findings indicate that those without a university education clearly favoured the infotainment style of narration (Davis *et al*., 2020, p. 697). As those without a university education are often the most difficult part of society to reach for science communication, the results suggest that using an infotainment version of the narration would be more effective if those unengaged with science are the primary target audience.

Discussion

The present study elaborated the relationship of information and entertainment by examining the domain where they intersect: infotainment. The main findings are summarized in Table I.

The relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment (RQ1)	**The use of infotainment (RQ2)**
Oppositional dichotomies as a point of departure, based on rational versus emotional divide: - "hard" (factual) versus "other" (soft/ populist/sensational) news incorporating entertaining elements (Graber, 1994; Putnam, 2000). The continuum approach - the infotainment scale with two poles: 1) informative and 2) entertainment (Brants and Neijens, 1998) - to a varying degree, television programs can incorporate both informative and entertaining elements regarding the topic, style and format of a program. The three-dimensional approach (Reinemann *et al*., 2012) - elaborates further the degree of the "hardness" or "softness" of television programs - distinguishing hard and soft news regarding 1) their topic (the subject matter), 2) focus (the viewpoint to a topic) and 3) style of presentation. The tripartite infotaining approach (Pelzer and Raemy, 2020) - specifies 1) the content (the subject matter), 2) news value and 3) aesthetic approach of a program - the infotaining content of a program is variously constituted by informational and entertaining elements.	The use of infotainment as reception and interpretation of infotaining elements, particularly the subject matter (topic) of a program or news item, the viewpoint to a topic (focus) and the style of presentation Eudaimonic (truth-seeking) versus hedonic (escapist) motivations as a point of departure (Bartsch and Schneider, 2014) - the use of infotainment is driven by hedonic motivation - infotainment use is characterized by superficial information processing. Related (ideal typical) approaches: the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986 and the model for heuristic versus systematic processing (Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly, 1989) - the use of infotainment is associated with heuristic, fast, automatic, and effortless information processing. A mediating approach (Weber, 2019; Wirth, 2014) - infotainment use is driven by the combination of eudaimonic and hedonic motives The cultivation effects of infotainment use - infotaining programs can facilitate political information processing (Kim and Vishak, 2008), increase people´s health knowledge (Oh *et al*., 2015) and change their attitudes to climate issues (Davis *et al*., 2020) particularly among people who otherwise would remain passive.

Table I. Summary of the main findings.

Overall, as Table I indicates, the main contributions to the conceptual and empirical issues of infotainment have been made by communication scientists. Most of the conceptualizations of infotainment and the use of infotainment use originate from the studies of television talk shows and the analysis of news genres. To compare, the role of information sources of other types has remained marginal. This is partly due to the fact that so far, the issues of infotainment have been largely neglected in information behaviour research (Case and Given, 2016, p. 127).

The first research question dealt with the ways in which the relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment are conceptualized in research literature. The findings demonstrate that the characterizations of infotainment have become more nuanced since the

1990s. Early studies on infotainment often departed from the normative assumption that entertainment is inferior to information, due to its surficial and escapist nature. The traditional dualisms of rational versus emotional were also reflected in the schematic comparisons of fact-based hard news and emotionally appealing soft news. However, foreshadowing the hybrid turn in communication research, the dualistic approaches were gradually replaced by the idea that infotainment programs represent an amalgamation of informational and entertaining elements. As Brants and Neijens (1998) suggested, such hybrid programs can be made intelligible by placing them on a continuum between the poles labelled as informative and entertainment.

The relationships between informational and entertaining elements of infotainment were further elaborated by specifying the criteria by which infotainment content such as political talk shows can be placed on the continuum. In this regard, the topic, style and format of the program are particularly important. Later characterizations of infotainment have become more nuanced in that they approach infotainment as a multidimensional phenomenon, not merely a continuum within which the degree of informational and entertaining elements varies from a program to another (Reinemann *et al*., 2012). Such variations can also occur on an individual dimension, for example, the topic or the focus of a television program. This means even more clearly that as a hybrid, infotainment is conceptualized as a relational phenomenon or a matter of degree. The nature of infotainment depends on how the informational and entertaining elements are emphasized within an individual program or news item.

From this perspective it is less important to define exactly how such elements are constituted by factual information and emotional presentation style, for example. Instead, the crux of the issue is how such elements interact and how they work together. Significantly, the emphasis of the interaction of constitutive elements reflects the main ideas of the hybrid turn of communication research (Witschke *et al*., 2019). Similarly, the preference for the dynamic term of infotaining over the static noun of infotainment reflects the ideas of the hybrid turn. As proposed by Pelzer and Raemy (2020), infotainment may better capture the varying nature of the blending of informational and entertaining elements. Nevertheless, despite the development of more nuanced conceptualizations, there is no consensus among researchers about how to define infotainment (Marinov, 2020). This suggests that infotainment is a multi-faceted construct that defies any attempts of final definition. This is not surprising, given that its elements, that is, information and entertainment are semantically open concepts subject to diverse and sometimes even conflicting characterizations.

The second research question focussed on the ways in which people make use of infotainment. The findings suggest that the analytic distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic motivation offers a relevant point of departure to conceptualize the utilization of infotainment content because the distinction indicates the degree to which people are interested in its entertaining and informational elements (Bartsch and Schneider, 2014; Weber, 2019). Infotainment use primarily driven by hedonic motivations results in superficial and effortless processing of the informational elements. The title of the study of Kim and Vishak (2008) indicates well the nature of infotainment use experience driven by hedonic motivation: “Just laugh! You don’t need to remember”. In contrast, infotainment use prompted by eudaimonic motivation is characterized by more systematic, intellectually inspiring and cognitively demanding processing of informational and entertaining elements. Thus, we may speculate that people mainly driven by the hedonic motivation will prefer infotaining content that can be placed closer on the entertainment pole of the infotainment scale (Brants and Neijens, 1998), while those mainly driven by eudaimonic motivation are likely to prefer programs which can be placed closer to the informative pole of the continuum.

The same applies to the conceptualization of infotainment use as the reception and interpretation of infotaining elements. In this regard, the subject matter (topic) of a program or news item, the viewpoint to a topic (focus) and the presentation style are particularly important. People driven by hedonic use motivations prefer infotainment programs that discuss light topics, focus on an individual´s experiences and make use of dramatic presentation style, while those driven by

eudaimonic motivations are more likely to select infotaining content that address serious topics, focus on topical issues rather than persons and avoid presentation style characteristic of entertainment programs. Unfortunately, so far, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining how people use infotainment content driven by diverse motivations and how infotainment use affects the level of knowledge. Moreover, the empirical evidence of the pros and cons of infotainment use is somewhat contradictory. For example, it seems that the cultivation effects obtained from the watching of political talk shows tend to remain temporary (Kim and Vishak, 2008). On the other hand, there are examples of studies demonstrating that infotainment programs can attract people who otherwise would remain passive in issues of health risks and climate change, for example (Davis *et al*., 2020; Oh *et al*., 2015). There is also empirical evidence supporting the argument that the entertaining elements of infotainment programs do not necessarily distract people´s attention from serious informational issues. Declercq, Tulkens, and Van Leuven (2019) examined the audience reactions on claims about food and health in an infotainment show. It appeared that about half of the audience reactions concerned the factual (informational) elements of the show, while contrary to expectations, the entertaining aspects of the show were not extensively discussed in the comments presented in Twitter and Facebook.

All in all, the findings of the present study suggest that infotainment has firmly established itself in today´s information world, as indicated by the pervasive "softening" and hybridization of media content (Otto *et al*., 2017; Pelzer and Raemy, 2020). In the domain of information behaviour research, these developments have implications particularly for everyday information seeking and use when these activities focus on social, political and health issues. For example, while considering a voting decision during general elections, political talk shows may not only offer factual information about the candidates but also shed additional light on their personality and sense of humour. Moreover, the use of infotainment content is a relevant topic for the study of leisure-related information seeking. For example, it may be examined how hobbyist cooks seek and use information about healthy ingredients from cooking programs or how people reading fiction for pleasure can be informed by new books by watching television shows on this topic.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study highlight that the traditional assumptions of information and entertainment as opposed categories aversive to each other are no longer tenable and defensible. Instead, there are evolving hybrid forms of information and entertainment, as demonstrated by the growing popularity of infotainment. While interpreting such content, people have to draw attention to both its informational value and entertaining elements with potentially persuasive intent. In the final end, the extent to which infotainment is found meaningful depends on how an individual values its informational and entertaining elements. One of the key findings of the present investigation is that people who tend to be driven by eudaimonic motivation are likely to emphasize the informational elements such as facts, while those mainly driven by hedonic motivation direct their main attention to the entertaining features of a talk show, for example. Importantly, however, the significance of informational and entertaining elements can vary situationally, depending on whether there is a need to solve a problem or just relax after a hard day at work.

Although researchers have progressed in the conceptualization of the features of infotainment, it is far from a final characterization. The same applies to the investigation of the ways in which people seek and use infotainment to monitor daily events or to solve everyday problems. In addition to communication scholars, researchers in the domain of information behaviour can elaborate the relationships of information and entertainment by examining how these fundamental realms of human life intersect and blend in our daily information world. It is evident that studies of this kind would not only offer possibilities to interdisciplinary insights but also span the boundaries of information science. Finally, the findings have practical implications for the teaching of information

literacy skills in particular. With the growing supply of hybrid forms of information and entertainment, there is a need to substantiate the teaching of information literacy in two major ways. First, courses on information literacy should offer a variety of illuminating examples of how infotaining elements manifest themselves in our information environments. Second, such courses should offer methods by which people can critically evaluate the credibility of infotainment.

References

Bartsch, A. and Schneider, F.M. (2014), "Entertainment and politics revisited: how non-escapist forms of entertainment can stimulate political interest and information seeking", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 64 No. 3, pp. 369-396, https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12095.

Baum, M.A. (2003), "Soft news and political knowledge: evidence of absence or absence of evidence?", *Political Communication*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 173-190, https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390211181.

Baym, G. (2008), "Infotainment", in Donsbach, W. (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, Blackwell, London, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405186407.wbieci031.

Berrocal Gonzalo, S., Redondo García, M., Jiménez, V.M. and Campos Domínguez, E. (2014), "Presence of infotainment in Spain's mainstream DTT channels", *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, Vol. 69, pp. 85-103, https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2014-1002en.

Bosshart, L. and Macconi, I. (1998), "Media entertainment", *Communication Research Trends*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 3-8.

Boukes, M. (2019), "Infotainment", in Vos, T.P., Hanusch, F., Dimitrakopoulou, D., Geertsema-Sligh, M. and Sehl, A. (Eds), *International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies; Forms of Journalism*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118841570.iejs0132.

Brants, K. (1998), "Who's afraid of infotainment?", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 315-335, https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323198013003002.

Brants, K. and Neijens, P. (1998), "The infotainment of politics", *Political Communication*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 149-164.

Case, D.O. and Given, L.M. (2016). *Looking for Information. A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs and Behavior*, 4th ed., Emerald, Bingley, UK.

Chaiken, S., Liberman, A. and Eagly, A.H. (1989), "Heuristic and systematic processing within and beyond the persuasion context", in Uleman, J.S. and Bargh, J.A. (Eds), *Unintended Thought*, Guilford Press, New York, NY, pp. 212-252.

Collins, S. and Riegert, K. (2016), "Politainment", in Mazzoleni, G. (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, Wiley Blackwell, Oxford, UK, pp. 974-984, https://doi-org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc157.

Davis, L.S., Bienvenido, L., Bourk, M.J. and Finkler, W. (2020), "Transformation of the media landscape: infotainment versus expository narrations for communicating science in online videos",

Public Understanding of Science, Vol. 29 No. 7, pp. 688-701, https://doi-org/10.1177/0963662520945136.

Declercq, J., Tulkens, S. and Van Leuven, S. (2019), "The produsing expert consumer: co-constructing, resisting and accepting health-related claims on social media in response to an infotainment show about food", *Health*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 602-620, https://doi-org/10.1177/1363459318763935.

Delli Carpini, M.X. and Williams, B.A. (2001), "Let us infotain you: politics in the new media age", in Bennett, W.L. and Entman, R.M.E (Eds), *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 160-181.

Edgerly, S. and Vraga, E.K. (2019), "News, entertainment, or both? Exploring audience perceptions of media genre in a hybrid media environment", *Journalism*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 807-826, https://doi-org/10.1177/1464884917730709.

Fleming-May, R.A. (2014), "Concept analysis for library and information science: exploring usage", *Library & Information Science Research*, Vol. 36 Nos. 3-4, pp. 203-210, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2014.05.001.

Görke, A. (2001), "Entertainment as public communication: a systems-theoretic approach", *Poetics*, Vol. 29 Nos. 4-5, pp. 209-224, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-422X(01)00043-2.

Graber, D.A. (1994), "The infotainment quotient in routine television news: a director's perspective", *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 5 No. 4, pp. 483-508, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926594005004004.

Kim, Y.M. and Vishak J. (2008), "Just laugh! You don't need to remember", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 338-360, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00388.x.

Marinov, R. (2020). "Mapping the infotainment literature: current trajectories and suggestions for future research", *The Communication Review*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 1-28, https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2019.1682894.

Matni, Z. and Shah, C. (2015), "For the love of information: motivations and affective dynamics of surfing the web for pleasure", *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 1, No. 1, https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.2014.14505101057.

McQuail, D. (1983), *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, Sage, London, UK.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Odag, Ö., Hofer, M., Schneider, F.M. and Knop, K. (2016), "Testing measurement equivalence of eudaimonic and hedonic entertainment motivations in a cross-cultural comparison", *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 108-125, https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2015.1108216.

Oh, S-H., Paek, H-J. and Hove, T. (2015), "Cognitive and emotional dimensions of perceived risk characteristics, genre-specific media effects, and risk perceptions: the case of H1N1 influenza in

South Korea", *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 14-32, https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2014.989240.

Otto, L., Glogger, I. and Boukes, M. (2017), "The softening of journalistic political communication: a comprehensive framework model of sensationalism, soft news, infotainment, and tabloidization", *Communication Theory*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 136-155, https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12102.

Pelzer, E. and Raemy, P. (2020), "What shapes the cultivation effects from infotaining content? Toward a theoretical foundation for journalism studies", *Journalism* (published online 25 May 2020, no pagination), https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920922704.

Peters, C. (2011), "Emotion aside or emotional side? Crafting an 'experience of involvement' in the news", *Journalism*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 297-316, https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884910388224.

Petty, R.E. and Cacioppo, J.T. (1986), "The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, pp. 123-205, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60214-2.

Polkinghorne, S. and Given, L.M. (2021), "Holistic information research: from rhetoric to paradigm", *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 71, (published online 28 January 2021, no pagination), https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24450.

Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY.

Reinemann, C., Stanyer, J., Scherr, S. and Legnante, G. (2012), "Hard and soft news: a review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings", *Journalism*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 221-239, https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884911427803.

Rentfrow, P.J., Goldberg, L.R. and Zilca, R. (2011), "Listening, watching, and reading: the structure and correlates of entertainment preferences", *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 79 No. 2, pp. 223-258, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00662.x.

Rodgers B.L. (2000), "Concept analysis: an evolutionary view", in Rodgers, B.L. and Knafl, K.A. (Eds), *Concept Development in Nursing: Foundation Techniques and Applications*, W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia, PA, pp. 77-102.

Safire, W. (1981), "On language", *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1981, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/1981/09/13/magazine/on-language.html (accessed 9 June 2021).

Stark, S.D. (1997), "Local news: the biggest scandal on TV. It´s shallow, it´s stupid, it misleads the public - it´s the local news", *The Washington Monthly*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 38-41.

Tan, E. S-H. (2008), "Entertainment is emotion: the functional architecture of the entertainment experience", *Media Psychology*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 28-51, https://doi.org/10.1080/15213260701853161.

Thussu, D.K. (2007), *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment*, Sage, London, UK.

Thussu, D.K. (2015), “Infotainment”, in Mazzoleni, G. (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, Wiley-Blackwell, London, UK, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc152.

Vorderer, P. (2001), “It's all entertainment - sure. But what exactly is entertainment? Communication research, media psychology, and the explanation of entertainment experiences”, *Poetics*, Vol. 29 Nos. 4-5, pp. 247-261, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-422X(01)00037-7.

Weber, P. (2019) “Infotainment als kognitiv-affektives Metaerleben: ein Operationalisierungsvorschlag“, in Schramm, H., Matthes, J. and Schener, C. (Eds), *Emotions Meet Cognitions. Zum Zusammenspiel von emotionalen und kognitiven Prozessen in der Medienrezeptions- und Medienwirkungsforschung*, Springer, Wiesbaden, Germany, pp. 63-72, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-25963-1_5.

Wirth, W. (2014), “Zur Rezeption von Infotainment: Informations- und Unterhaltungserleben als Kontituenten der Infotainment-Rezeption”, in Dohle, M. and Vowe, G. (Eds), *Politische Unterhaltung - unterhaltende Politik: Forschung zu Medieninhalten, Medienrezeption und Medienwirkungen,* Herbert von Halem Verlag, Köln, Germany, pp. 56-93.

Witschke, T., Anderson, C.W., Domingo, D. and Hermida, A. (2019), “Dealing with the mess (we made): Unraveling hybridity, normativity, and complexity in journalism studies”, *Journalism,* Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 651-659, https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918760669.

Zillmann, D. and Bryant, J. (1994), “Entertainment as media effect”, in Bryant, J. and Zillmann, D. (Eds), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, pp. 437-461.