

Research article

Strategy of News Media Consumption: Perception of the Media by Russia's Residents

A.N. Novgorodtseva*, **N.I. Sivkova**, **E.L. Sysolyatina**, and **S.V. Kunshchikov**

Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation

ORCID

A.N. Novgorodtseva: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7042-3867>

N.I. Sivkova: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6331-0124>

E.L. Sysolyatina: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4371-9141>

S.V. Kunshchikov: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5740-766X>

Abstract. Media consumption studies differ because different researchers pay attention to specific characteristics of the media or consumption analysis. The problems of information noise, information hygiene, and the demand for certain genres have been observed, and there are statistics of certain media and content consumption which highlight the differences in groups by age and education. Within the framework of this article, the emphasis was placed on the practice of media consumption, taking into account the regularity of referring to the media. The value and importance of the information's impact for a specific consumer of content were also emphasized. 20 focus group discussions were held in the cities of the Ural Federal District of Russia. Six strategies of news media consumption were distinguished based on these focus group discussions, and an attempt was made to combine age and behavioral models of news media consumption. The following six strategies were identified: casual occurrence, concernment, absorption, rituality, conservatism, and expertise. Strategies of casual occurrence in the perception of information noise were obvious. However, strategies of expertise were identified when a consumer checks information using different channels, which includes referring not only to Russian but also to foreign information sources (a contemporary city dweller is included in the global media scene).

Keywords: media consumption, media, information hygiene, strategies of news consumption, global media scene

1. Introduction


The growing importance of information in the everyday life of a 21st-century city dweller has also sharpened researchers' interest in such a problem as the media consumption study. This is also associated with the transformation of media content [1], the withdrawal of many magazines, newspapers, and TV to the Internet environment, while the consumption of print media and television content is still underway. Every day, each person is faced with a large flow of various information (special search or a spontaneous flow of information in social networks and in applications), while some information turns out to be more important and sought after in making both everyday decisions (consumption of

Corresponding Author: A.N. Novgorodtseva; email: a610170016@student.ums.ac.id

Dates

4 February 2022

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

 A.N. Novgorodtseva et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the Culture, Personality, Society Conference Committee.

 **OPEN ACCESS**

goods and services, choosing a traffic route) and strategic economic, political decisions, whereas some information types pass by and are not memorized. A contemporary city dweller is advised to regularly carry out information hygiene, especially with respect to daily media consumption of various content within a significant part of the active time of the day [2, 3].

The dynamics of various media consumption, which is measured by the Public Opinion Foundation on the annual basis (the data from 2010 to 2019 are presented), indicates that television is losing its positions (a drop of 16%), while the consumption of news websites on the Internet is growing (from 13% in 2010 to 44% in 2019) [4]. The study allows fixing differences in terms of age and education. However, these are only statistics of access to the media. This article presents the models of news consumption from the point of view of behavioral characteristics, the requests, and practices that are implemented by residents of Russia in different age groups.

2. Methodology and Methods

Due to the growing importance of the media in the life of contemporary society, the authors' interest in the study of media consumption is not subsiding (Amzin *et al.* [5], Komarova [6], Kolobova [7]). The works dedicated to the peculiarities of media consumption in contemporary Russian society are noteworthy (Kolomiets [8], Dzyaloshynsky [9], Poluekhtova [10]).

There are studies focusing on the age characteristics of media consumption (Zvereva and Khvorova [11], Nazarov *et al.* [12], Adindex [13]). The studies of the style features of media content consumption stir particular interest (Troyanskaya and Petrova [14], Sivirikova [15]). For the purpose of research, the studies dedicated to media consumption of news of various media are the most interesting (Dunas *et al.* [16]). Within the framework of research on media consumption of news, studies dedicated to the comparison of media consumption of different age cohorts, X, Y, and Z generations, or specific age groups are distinguished. More often, young people are considered [17]. Differences in the consumption of news in electronic and print media, social networks are studied [18].

This article offers two “cross-sections” to identify strategies for news media consumption. The first “cross-section” characterizes the age strategies of news media consumption — the youth strategy, the strategy of the “middle” age, the strategy of the “older” generation. Age-specific strategies for news media consumption are typical strategies found in different age groups. The second “cross-section” is based on the selection of strategies for news media consumption, which are based on the

perception and analysis features of information (see Table 1). The type of perception in this case is the frequency of referring to the news and the regularity of viewing the news, and the analysis of information is associated with identifying the attitude towards news through the completeness of attention, the depth of information analysis (cursory viewing, increased interest or targeted search).

Some studies have highlighted the random strategy of media consumption of news, which is common among those who do not take an active interest in news [3]. However, this is a narrow approach. It is obvious that there exist much more strategies. It is necessary to study those who evince a more interested and targeted search for news. To create a model of news media consumption, a study was conducted in 2020 in Russia.

The focus group was chosen as the research method which makes it possible not only to gain access to the individual history but also to find out the attitude towards various strategies and experiences of fellow citizens through group activity. Within the framework of this study, 20 focus groups were studied, which included different age groups: youth (18-35 years old), middle age (36-55 years old), older age (over 56 years old). The study object was the residents of the Ural Federal District (the cities of Yekaterinburg, Nizhnyaya Tura, Bogdanovich, Alapaevsk, Artemovsky, Tavda, Berezovsky, etc.). The research subject was the strategies for viewing and analyzing information received in the form of news messages.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the focus group study made it possible to clearly record the age-specific strategies of news media consumption. **The "youth" strategy** feature is in that young people are more prone to choose Internet resources as the main source of information, including news. The main thing about it is the constant choice of different sources, accessibility and ease of use, especially when the news is viewed through the phone. At the same time, young people do not deny radio, for example, Ecbe ho of Moscow, and television as information channels. Living in a certain social environment (relatives, parents) also gives rise to joint practices of watching TV. It should be noted that young people are virtually not interested in newspapers as an information source (extremely rarely and indirectly through the older generation).

Paying attention to Internet resources, it is impossible to ignore the opportunity to join the discussion about specific news through chats, comments, and other forms of

views exchange. However, the group discussion within the framework of the focus group indicates that few people are ready to post their opinions in the public space.

Young people can be conditionally divided into several groups (two bright poles can be highlighted, although there are also practices in the space between them): the first are those who view news just as a pastime, that is, any news feeds that are installed in the browser or on the phone ("*just to be aware*"), the second — those who try to purposefully choose channels or sources of information (for example, specific portals — Channel One, RussiaToday). In general, among young people, very few tend to view news as an important aspect of life, that is, it is more of a background, distracting and entertaining. At the same time, among the older group of young people, there are also attempts to build a system for viewing news, taking into account different sources and different information channels.

Middle age strategy. Middle-aged persons occupy the middle position: on the one hand, there are many who actively use the Internet among this group (which brings them closer to young people), on the other hand, there are also those who actively use television and newspapers (which brings them closer to the older generation). Middle-aged people prefer watching summary analytical programs, which, in addition to news coverage, are subject to automatic processing. They trust the professionalism of the presenters, especially on television. Examples of analytic TV programs: *60 Minutes* — Russia 1, *Vremya Pokazhet (The Time Will Reveal)* — Channel One, *Meeting Place* — NTV, *Open Studio* — Channel Second, *Evening with Vladimir Solovyov* — Russia 1.

The strategy of the "older generation". Persons of the older generation prefer television and newspapers, radio (radio due to the fact that they spend a lot of time in the countryside tending crops at their country house), although they keep up with young people — some are actively exploring the Internet. The older generation representatives are chiefly experts in newspapers; some of them continue to go to a newsstand to buy newspapers, and also note that this is becoming an expensive habit, in this regard, there are those who read newspapers after those who have bought them.

Also, representatives of the older generation actively use radio as a news channel, as it allows them to combine different types of employment, especially in the garden, in the country, in the kitchen garden.

Representatives of the older generation feel less confident on the Internet, and they mostly use not separate portals and channels, but those settings that open automatically when the Internet is loaded, that is, postal services.

The attempt to identify strategies for news media consumption subject to perception and analysis is of particular interest. In the course of the study, it was suggested

TABLE 1: Strategies for news media consumption subject to the perception types and information analysis

Completeness of attention and regularity of viewing	Small part (Background)	Partly	Fully (Attention)
Rarely, irregularly	Casual occurrence	Concernment	Absorption
Frequently, regularly	Rituality	Conservatism	Expertise

that there might be different strategies for media consumption of news: from casual occurrence to concernment. The results of the focus groups allowed presenting a detailed definition of this assumption and identifying six main strategies for news media consumption. These strategies are visually presented in Table 1.

The casual occurrence strategy is widespread among those who are not actively interested in the news. News for them is part of awareness just to keep the conversation going as a background. Basically, it is a low degree of content perception, just a factual memory. Here are some typical statements by participants in the focus groups:

1. "On TV, if it works, as a background" (youth focus group, woman)
2. "It pops up to me, I click, read, and forget" (youth focus group, woman)
3. "When I turn on the TV, I watch a movie and sometimes encounter the news on the First, Second channels" (older generation focus group, woman)
4. "Constantly switches" (older generation focus group, woman)

The concernment strategy is typical for a group of people who pay attention to particular information only at a particular time period. Interest appears, which is of a situational nature and does not imply a targeted search for other sources. For example, girls are interested in discounts and promotions, but in general, they are not engaged in a specific search for information, but if suddenly somewhere information about discounts appears, they will listen and try to remember the information. Here are some typical statements by participants in focus groups:

1. "Promotion events of shops" (youth focus group, woman)
2. "In Yandex, I usually read news headlines only if I'm interested, only then I poke and read" (older generation focus group, man)

The absorption strategy is typical for people who target specific information, but which is not broadcasted often. The emerging interest in the news motivates a targeted search for various information sources. Its difference from the concernment strategy is in that when an object of interest appears, attention increases, an interest to learn more

becomes more pronounced, and even furthers the purposeful search for information from different sources.

1. "I watch the news related to my job, chiefly in the context of style. What's trending. I look everywhere, buy magazines. Newspapers, on the Internet. Everything related to beauty. I surf everywhere" (middle age focus group, woman)
2. "I get news from my parents. And from colleagues at work. If there is something interesting, then I go to Yandex and type specifically the news that I want to learn, about which I have heard from someone" (middle age focus group, woman)

The strategy of rituality — news media consumption as a ritual, not associated with the search for specific news or its verification. This strategy describes people who view or listen to the news as a ritual. For example, when one turns on the Internet, the browser news feed is necessarily viewed, and only then one enters the mail box. However, this is exactly viewing, without any desire to find out details or check information. Here are some typical statements by participants in focus groups:

1. "I watch the news when I go to work in the morning, turn on the TV, and watch it" (older generation focus group, woman).
2. "I come home from work, turn on the news" (middle age focus group, male).
3. "Well, starting with 24, I usually watch the news in the morning, then the First, Second, central channels, on the Internet" (older generation focus group, man)

The conservatism strategy — describes people who prefer to keep abreast of events, for them reading or watching news is a habit or tradition for further communication, the feeling of being included in different information streams. Usually, such people read the information in order to form their opinion in the form of agreement or disagreement with the comments of the presenter or subscribers. Here are some typical statements by the participants in focus groups:

1. "I watch the news in order to keep up with my husband, he knows everything that you may ask. And in my tablet, I look through the news, read the headlines, sometimes poke at the news itself" (older generation focus group, woman)
2. "In the morning, when I go to work, I listen to (the radio), so as not to waste time — that's the way to be aware of developments within a short space of time. If something is more detailed, then one can go to Yandex to read. In Yandex, because I use Yandex, I like it" (middle age focus group, man)

3. "I watch nationwide news coverage about Russia, and on the First channel. And I watch the news in the evening every day. I also watch news on Mail.ru. And in our newspaper" (middle age focus group, woman)

This strategy is typical for those who want to keep abreast of events, watching the news is not only a habit or tradition but also an opportunity to feel included in significant information and communication groups. Thus, it is the practice of awareness that becomes the conservative (traditional) practice.

Expertise strategy — describes people who are prone to treat news as an important part of the information flow, they try to analyze the information received, including making decisions based on it. These are the people who have several channels of information to compare and determine information veracity. It is important for them to form their own opinion. Here are some typical statements from participants in focus groups:

1. "You just need to read, listen, and filter in your brains. You listen and right away determine whether it is a lie, or truth" (youth focus-group, man)
2. "Well, I read the news purposefully every night. I have Google, everywhere on my laptop, my phone, and my tablet. There the news is also highlighted, and I read what is interesting to me. Then I open E1, then I open Vesti Russia (Russia News), and read, look through everything, but of course, I am more interested in such incidents, especially those related to children" (middle-age focus group, woman).
3. "On the Internet, you can watch the same news from different sources, both on RIA and on TASS and others" (middle age focus group, man).

In the course of the study, a hypothesis was put forward that the strategies of news media consumption are manifested in different ways in different age groups. To test this hypothesis, the authors carried out a frequency analysis of the prevalence of media consumption strategies for news in different age groups. The results of this frequency analysis are presented in Table 2.

The results obtained confirm, to a certain extent, the conclusions drawn earlier when describing age-related strategies for media consumption. In particular, they confirm the conclusion that among young people, on the one hand, casual and concerned media consumption is more pronounced, on the other hand, the strategy of rituality with some hint of expertise is presented.

TABLE 2: Types of perception and analysis of information in different audiences

Age group/types of perception	Youth	Middle age	Old age
Casual occurrence	12%	0	0
Concernment	12%	0	10%
Absorption	12%	20%	23%
Rituality	26%	10%	23%
Conservatism	12%	20%	34%
Expertise	26%	50%	10%

For the middle age, the strategies of expertise and conservatism are more pronounced, and the older age no longer pretends to be expert; among the representatives of this group, the strategies of absorption and rituality are slightly more pronounced.

3.1. Conclusions

The study conducted made it possible to identify six strategies for news media consumption, subject to the types of perception and information analysis. These include: Casual occurrence, Concernment, Absorption, Rituality, Conservatism, and Expertise strategies. The study proved that for the younger generation, two strategies are more pronounced: the casual occurrence strategy and a strategy of rituality with a “tinge” of expertise. Middle age is characterized by expertise, and older age is characterized by ritual conservatism.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that the perception of news as a whole is a changing process. For some people, the news becomes fragments of attention (for example, an emphasis on a children’s topic, on a professional topic, etc.), for others, it becomes important to double-check information from different sources. Thus, there is obvious evidence of city dwellers’ media consumption in the contemporary global media space.

In the future, the search for such empirical indicators that would most adequately reflect the age and behavioral patterns of news media consumption in quantitative analysis seems to be promising.

References

[1] Turow J, Couldry N. Media as data extraction: Towards a new map of a transformed communications field. *Journal of Communication*. 2018;68(2):415-423.

- [2] Molodtsova IA, Maksimova EA, Slivina LP. Information hygiene: General theoretical assessment of the problem. *NBI Technologies*. 2018;12(2):25-29.
- [3] Sharakhina LV, Skvortsova V. Big data, smart data in effective communication strategies development. 2019 Communication Strategies in Digital Society Workshop (ComSDS) [Internet]; 2019 Apr 10-10; Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation: Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI"; 2021 [cited 2021.01.20]. 221 p. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1109/COMSDS.2019.8709651>.
- [4] "Public Opinion" Foundation. News sources and media credibility [Internet]. Moscow, Russian Federation: "Public Opinion" Foundation; 2019 Jan 30 [cited 2021.01.20]. Available from: www.fom.ru/SMI-i-internet/14170
- [5] Amzin A, Galustyan A, Gatov V et al. How new media changed journalism. Yekaterinburg: Humanities University; 2016.
- [6] Komarova AA. Main trends of media consumption in Russia under conditions of reality subject to dynamic changes. *Vestnik Universiteta*. 2018;5:162-166.
- [7] Kolobova EY. Transformation of media consumption under conditions of digital reality. *Saint Petersburg Economic Journal*. 2020;4:25-39.
- [8] Kolomiets VP. Media environment and media consumption in the contemporary Russian society. *Sociological Studies*. 2010;10(1):58-66.
- [9] Dzyaloshynsky IM. Media consumption as media audience characteristic. *Media Education 2014. Regional aspect. Collection of abstracts and articles of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (with international participation)* [Internet]; 2014 Oct 7-9; Moscow, Russian Federation. Moscow, Russian Federation: Sholokhov Moscow State University for Humanities; 2014 [cited 2021.01.20]. 360 p. Available from: www.publications.hse.ru/mirror/pubs/share/folder/o1x1fd2s5z/direct/137842503.pdf
- [10] Poluekhtova IA. The study of audience and media consumption in digital environment: Methodological and practical application problems. Moscow, Russian Federation: Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University; 2016. Available from: www.mediascope.ru/2199
- [11] Zvereva EA, Khvorova VA. Y and Z generations: Features of media consumption. *Vestnik NSU. Series: History and Philology*. 2020;19(6):131-140.
- [12] Nazarov MM, Ivanov VN, Klubitskaya EA. Media consumption in age cohorts: TV and internet. *RUDN Journal of Sociology*. 2020;20(3):560-571.

- [13] Adindex. Features of media consumption of Russia's three generations. Adindex; 2019 Dec 27. Available from: www.adindex.ru/news/researches/2019/12/27/278643.phtml
- [14] Troyanskaya SL, Petrova MA. Problems of formation of students' media consumption culture and style in the course of their education. *Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University*. 2013;22:205–209.
- [15] Sivirikova NV. Features of media consumption style in early and late adolescence. *Herald of South-Ural State Humanities-Pedagogical University*. 2016;3:140-145.
- [16] Dunas DV, Tolokonnikova AV, Cherevko TS. Actual conceptual approaches to considering the process of media consumption of online news by young people. *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 2017;5:30-50.
- [17] Cherevko TS, Dunas DV, Tolokonnikova AV. News under internetization conditions: Analysis of students' news consumption. *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 2018;1:3-25.