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Retirees and News in the Digital Age: A Study of Sources, Preferences, and Factors Influencing News Consumption in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

With many new ways to access news in the digital age, it is important to understand the consumption patterns of different audience segments. This study examined the news consumption of retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, in the digital age. It aimed to identify their sources and platforms of news, their frequency and duration of news consumption, their content and quality preferences, and the factors influencing their choices and behaviors. It used the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the News Media Repertoires Theory, and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology as theoretical frameworks. It surveyed 384 retired public servants selected from an infinite population using the Cochran formula. It analyzed the data using frequency tables, mean averages, and standard deviation. The study found that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja mainly consumed news from traditional newspapers, television, and radio, and preferred local news on politics and economy that were objective, informative, accurate, and reliable. It also found that their news consumption was influenced by interest, affordability, digital literacy, and trust. It recommended that media houses should provide news for older people through traditional media and focus on local news on politics and the economy. It also suggested that government and others should improve digital literacy and access for older people.

Keywords: News, news consumption, Internet, digital age, traditional media

Introduction

It is widely accepted that one of the most significant advancements facilitated by rapid progress in communication technology is the mass media. The mass media, particularly the news media, plays a crucial role in informing, educating, entertaining, shaping agendas, framing issues, priming audiences, persuading, and influencing public opinions and behaviors on various topics (Schudson, 2011). However, technology continues to transform how audiences consume news.

News, in essence, is a report on current events or developments in the world or a specific region or field of activity. Nevertheless, this definition is too broad and does not capture the intricacies of news. Various scholars have put forth criteria to define news, including timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict, human interest, consequence, and novelty (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016). Based on these criteria, Gans (2004) asserts that news is essentially what journalists and editors decide to report, guided by their professional judgment and newsworthiness criteria.

The advent of the digital age has fundamentally altered how audiences access news today. The digital age, characterized by the rapid evolution and widespread adoption of digital technologies like computers, the internet, mobile devices, social media, and artificial intelligence (Kerunga, Mwaura & Ngugi, 2020), has revolutionized the creation, distribution, and consumption of digital media



encompassing text, images, audio, and video. This transformation has completely reshaped the production, dissemination, and consumption of news.

The internet along with mobile devices enables easy online news access. Chukwu (2014) observed that traditional media, such as print and broadcast, decline as internet news and information increase globally. Many traditional news outlets have gone digital to attract wider and younger audiences. For example, The New York Times has over seven million digital subscribers and various online products and services while BBC News has a global website with over 500 million visitors and 42 languages (The New York Times Company, 2021; BBC News Online, 2021). This shows the growing demand for digital news services, as shown by a 2020 Pew Research Center survey, which found that 86% of Americans get news through digital devices and 52% prefer digital platforms, such as news websites, search engines, social media, or podcasts (Pew Research Center, 2020).

The media landscape in Nigeria has also undergone significant changes due to the impact of the digital age on news production, dissemination, and how audiences consume news. As noted by Adekannbi and Agbolabori (2018), the way news is consumed today is vastly different from the time when people relied on morning newspapers or tuned in for scheduled evening TV news. With the advent of the internet, an increasing number of readers, viewers, and listeners now turn to online sources for their news. Nigerian newspapers and television stations, including well-known outlets like *Punch* Newspaper, *Vanguard* Newspaper, and *Channels* Television, have shifted to the web, offering official websites, social media accounts, and video streaming platforms (Chukwu, 2014; Adekannbi & Agbolabori, 2018).

One segment that is under-researched in news consumption is retired public servants or pensioners. Retirees are a significant and growing part of the population in many African countries, such as Nigeria. The World Bank (2019) projects that the number of people aged 65 and above in sub-Saharan Africa will increase from 23 million in 2020 to 67 million in 2050. Retired people face various challenges and opportunities in their post-retirement life, such as health, social, financial, leisure, and civic issues. How they consume news can affect their well-being, social integration, and political participation. However, there is a gap in empirical evidence on how pensioners in Africa, especially Nigeria, consume news in the digital age when new media technologies have changed the media landscape and created new opportunities and challenges for news access and engagement. Most studies on news consumption in Africa have focused on urban youth or middle-class professionals, ignoring the views and experiences of older populations (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2017).

However, it is essential to recognize that not all news consumers have adapted to the digital age in the same way. News consumption habits and preferences may differ between older individuals, such as retirees, and younger generations. As mentioned by Kemp (2023), of the 122 million internet users in Nigeria, only about 4 percent are aged 55 and above, while more than 88 percent are younger citizens between the ages of 16 and 44. This demographic disparity highlights variations in how different age groups in Nigeria engage with digital news consumption. This

means that older people may be less familiar or comfortable with using the internet and other digital tools to access news, especially because they were born in an age where digital facilities were not popular or had not even been developed. As a result, they may have stronger loyalty and trust in traditional news media brands that they have used for a long time. For instance, Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi & Nielsen (2020) note that older people are more likely to use television as their main source of news than younger people.

News consumption is crucial for civic engagement and democracy, as it informs citizens about current issues and enables them to act on them. In the digital age, news consumption is more diverse and dynamic, as new media technologies have changed the media landscape and created new opportunities and challenges for news access and engagement (Chadwick, 2017). However, news consumption patterns differ among different segments of society, depending on factors such as age, education, income, location, and media preferences.

It is, therefore, important to empirically investigate how these older citizens have fared concerning news consumption in the digital age. It is vital to understand their perception and use of digital facilities to access news, their habits and preferences as well as the factors that may contribute to their patterns of news consumption in the digital age. This will provide insight into whether they are evolving with the times or whether the digital age is hampering their access to, and consumption of news. Specific objectives of the study were to: identify the main sources and platforms of news consumption in the digital age among retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council; measure the frequency and duration of news consumption among retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council; analyze the content and quality of news consumed by retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council and explore the factors that influence the news consumption choices and behaviors of retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council in the digital age.

News Consumption in Nigeria

The concept of news is multifaceted, encompassing various forms, sources, and functions of communication that serve to inform, educate, guide, and entertain the public. News can be described as the reporting of current events, issues, and trends that are of interest or relevance to a particular audience. Croteau and Hoynes (2014) assert that news serves as a form of communication that conveys information about these subjects, thereby acting as a medium for the creation, maintenance, and dissemination of public knowledge and shared understanding (Zelizer & Allan, 2011). Thus, the news is a window into the happenings in the world, performing also the social function of encouraging civic engagement and democratic participation. It is disseminated through various media platforms, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet.

News consumption in Nigeria is diverse and dynamic, with many print and broadcast outlets, and a thriving digital media industry. Nigeria has one of the highest rates of online news consumption, with 95% of respondents getting news via digital devices at least monthly, according to the Reuters Institute Digital News

Report 2021. Nigeria also has one of the highest levels of social media news consumption, with 71% of respondents using social media as a news source at least monthly. Facebook (62%) and WhatsApp (60%) are the most popular social networks for news (Newman et al., 2021).

However, news consumption in Nigerians faces peculiar challenges. False and misleading information about politics, elections, health, and other topics has affected the public's trust in news outlets. Newman et al. (2021) report that only 44% of respondents in Nigeria believe the news most of the time, which is low compared to other countries. Only 19% trust news from social media most frequently. There are also big differences in the trustworthiness of various news sources. For example, more respondents trust foreign brands like the BBC and CNN (68% and 67%) than local internet brands like Sahara Reporters and Naij.com (45% and 43%). (Newman et al., 2021).

News Media in the Digital Age

In the digital age, the media environment has drastically changed. Digital technologies, including the internet, cell phones, social media, and online platforms, have revolutionized how individuals access, consume, produce, and share news and information. For example, online-only news sites are websites or apps that exclusively offer news online, without a print or broadcast counterpart. Some of these sites in Nigeria include *The Daily Post*, *Premium Times*, *Sahara Reporters*, etc. However, it should be mentioned that some conventional news organizations have also launched online news portals to adapt to the digital age and expand their audience reach. Examples of publications with online versions of their print editions include *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation*, *Guardian*, and *Nigerian Tribune* (Newman et al., 2021).

Furthermore, social media, podcasts, and streaming services are other media for accessing news in the digital age. While *social media* are programs or platforms that let users engage in social networking or produce and distribute information (eg Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat), *podcasts* are online-distributed audio shows that can be downloaded or streamed. *Streaming services*, on the other hand, are websites or programs that offer online video material on demand. On these media, news can easily be accessed through any internet-enabled device and from anywhere. However, news media in the digital age face issues such as the spread of misinformation and difficulty in regulation (Nielsen, Fletcher, Newman, Brennen, & Howard, 2020; Newman et al., 2021).

What Studies Say about Older People and News

News consumption is important for civic engagement and social participation, but different age groups have different news habits and attitudes. Older individuals tend to use traditional news media like TV, radio, and newspapers, rather than digital news sources. They often prefer scheduled news consumption over on-demand access (Newman et al., 2021; Nielsen et al., 2020; Wettstein & Wahl, 2020).

However, older individuals are not isolated from the digital news landscape. Many have adopted digital devices and platforms, especially during the pandemic. Some may use both traditional and digital news sources to diversify their news exposure and meet their information needs. Research suggests that older individuals have more positive attitudes toward news than younger generations. They are more likely to enjoy staying informed, trust the news media, and view news as accurate, fair, and relevant. They also follow more hard news topics than soft news topics (Newman et al., 2021; Wettstein & Wahl, 2020).

Older individuals are not uncritical or passive news consumers. They may face challenges or concerns about the quality and quantity of news in the digital age. However, a study by Newman et al. (2021) notes that some may feel overwhelmed by online news and information, while others could face difficulties or barriers in accessing or using digital news media. Moreover, older individuals may be more vulnerable to online misinformation or disinformation, especially if they have low digital literacy or limited trust in alternative sources (Wettstein & Wahl, 2020; Nielsen et al., 2020).

Oyero, Oyesomi, Okorie, and Oyewunmi (2019) explored the media consumption patterns of older adults in Nigeria, using the uses and gratifications theory and the digital divide theory. A quantitative research design was employed, using a structured questionnaire to sample 400 respondents from a population of 1.2 million older adults in Lagos State. They analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. It was found that older adults preferred traditional media forms over digital media forms and consumed media for information, entertainment, and education. They also identified factors influencing their media consumption, such as literacy, income, health, and social support. They recommended that media practitioners should create more relevant and accessible content for older adults.

Strömbäck, Shehata, and Lindgren (2018) examined the news consumption patterns and civic involvement of older adults in Sweden, using the media malaise theory and the civic voluntarism model. They used a quantitative research design with a postal survey to sample 1,500 respondents from a population of older Swedish citizens. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. They found that older adults preferred traditional news media over online news media and consumed news more often and longer than younger adults. It was further found that older adults who read more news were more likely to engage in civic duties and that news consumption had a positive effect on civic involvement. They concluded that older adults in Sweden read the news as a civic duty.

Van der Wurff, Barkker and Picard (2008) investigated the quality of news provision and consumption among older adults in the Netherlands, using the quality of news production and quality of news consumption as the theoretical framework. They used a mixed-methods research design with a postal questionnaire and a newspaper content analysis to sample 1,500 respondents from a population of Dutch citizens aged 18 and older. They analyzed the data using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that older adults were more satisfied, diverse, and critical in their news consumption than younger adults.

They also found that older adults had more political knowledge and participation, and were more interested in public affairs news than soft news. They concluded that older adults' news consumption enhanced civic discourse and democracy. They recommended that news organizations should cater to older adults' interests and preferences.

Nielsen and Sambrook (2016) examined the news consumption of older adults in the UK, using the uses and gratifications theory and the digital divide theory. They used a quantitative research design with an online survey to sample 2,000 respondents from a population of UK adults 50 and older. It was found that older adults preferred traditional news media over internet news media and consumed news more often and longer than younger adults. They also found that older adults focused more on local, national, and global news than on lifestyle, entertainment, or celebrity news. They reported that older adults had high expectations for the quality, impartiality, and accuracy of news sources. They concluded that more efforts were needed to bridge the digital divide between older and younger generations.

Oyelude, Bamigbola, and Oyewoke (2018) examined older adults' digital access and literacy in Nigeria, using the framework for digital inclusion and exclusion. They used a mixed-methods research design with an interview guide and a questionnaire to sample 200 respondents from a population of elderly residents of Ibadan. They analyzed the data using descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis. They found that older people faced difficulties and barriers in using digital technology due to a lack of knowledge, awareness, affordability, availability, relevance, literacy, and access. They also found that older people had low levels of digital participation and engagement and needed more support and training to benefit from the digital era. They concluded that older people were online outsiders and that more efforts were needed to enhance their digital well-being.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the assumptions of the Uses and Gratifications theory, the News Media Repertoires theory, and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). The Uses and Gratifications theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory postulates that people put specific media content and medium to specific use in the hope of having some needs gratified. The theory seeks to explain the uses of media and the satisfaction derived from them in terms of the motives and self-perceived needs of audience members. Uses and gratifications theory stresses how and why the audience uses the media (Klapper, 1963 cited in Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). In other words, it can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. The theory argues that people use the media to satisfy basic needs such as cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-free needs.

People who want to satisfy *cognitive needs*, use media for acquiring knowledge, information, facts, etc. Among the audience, some have the thirst to acquire

intellectual and academic knowledge. People also use the media to satisfy *affective needs*, which refers to emotional needs, and to fulfill self-esteem needs (*personal integrative needs*) by reassuring themselves of their status. *Social integrative needs* refer to the need to socialize with family members while *tension-free needs* are fulfilled when people use the media as a means to escapism from the real world and to relieve tension and stress.

The News Media Repertoires theory was introduced by Uwe Hasebrink and Hanna Domeyer in 2012. The theory offers a user-centered perspective on understanding news consumption within a media landscape characterized by hybridity and a multitude of choices. Developed based on prior research exploring the patterns and preferences of media users, this theory asserts that news consumption is not a singular activity but rather a combination of different media platforms and content that collectively form distinct repertoires. At its core, the theory relies on two fundamental principles. Firstly, it recognizes media users as active and selective agents who make choices about and combine various media platforms and content based on their individual needs, interests, and motivations. Secondly, it acknowledges that media users are situated within specific social and cultural contexts that influence their media choices and how they interpret media content.

The theory proposes four key assumptions about media use (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012): people have distinct preferences and patterns for different media platforms and content, reflecting their personal and social characteristics; people adjust their media consumption according to various situations and contexts, such as time, location, and mood; people use media not only for themselves but also for others, sharing, discussing, or recommending media content and connecting with people who have similar or different view; people's media consumption choices have outcomes for themselves and society, affecting their knowledge, attitudes, opinions, participation, satisfaction, and more, as well as their civic and political engagement.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), on the other hand, was developed by Venkatesh and his colleagues in 2003. It is a technology acceptance model designed to elucidate user intentions to adopt an information system and subsequent usage behavior. This theory consolidates constructs from eight previous models aimed at explaining information systems' usage behavior. The UTAUT posits four essential constructs: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Performance expectancy refers to the belief that using the system or technology will enhance one's job performance. Effort expectancy, on the other hand, is the ease of using the system; while social influence is the perception that others want one to use the system. Another important factor is facilitating conditions, which is the organizational and technical support for system use. The importance of these factors varies depending on the user's experience and voluntariness to adopt the system.

Methodology

This study took the form of a survey. The population for the study consists of retired public servants in the Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja, Nigeria. Gwagwalada is one of the six (6) area councils in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, maintaining proximity to Abuja Metropolis. Since there is no reliable data on the precise number of retired public servants within the study area, the Cochran formula for determining sample sizes for an infinite population was used to select a sample of 384 respondents. Multistage sampling was used to divide the sample across the study area. In the first stage, the Area Council was stratified according to the administrative wards therein. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select six of the wards. The communities selected were Tunga Maje, Quarters & Centra, Zuba, Gwagwalada Centre, Gwako, and Dobi. In the third stage, the sample was divided equally across the six wards ($384 \div 6 = 64$). Thus, using purposive sampling, 64 copies of the research instruments were administered to retired public servants within each of the selected wards with the aid of three (3) research assistants. A structured Likert scale questionnaire was used as the instrument for collecting data from the respondents. Analysis of the collected data was done using tables and frequencies as well as mean averages and standard deviations. The analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20). A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for the study, where the options carry the following values: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The decision rule, therefore, states that if the mean average produced from the analysis of a particular statement is higher than the set criterion of 3 ($\pm > 3$), the statement is to be accepted. However, if it is less than 3 ($\pm < 3$), then the statement is to be rejected.

Discussion

Demography of Respondents

Table 1 displays the demographic features of the respondents, such as sex, marital status, education, and area of residence. The sex distribution shows that most respondents were male, while less than half were female, meaning that more male pensioners participated in the survey. The marital status distribution reveals that almost all respondents (93%) were married, while the remaining were either divorced or widowed. No respondents were single. The education distribution shows that most respondents (77.9%) had tertiary education, while a minority had either primary or secondary education. A small percentage (9.9%) had other types of education. The respondents were literate and likely to consume news. The area of residence distribution shows that the respondents were evenly distributed across six areas in Gwagwalada Area Council, suggesting that the data collection was unbiased.

Respondents' Sex		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	259	67.4
Female	125	32.6
Total	384	100
Respondents' Marital Status		
Single	0	0

Married	357	93
Divorced	13	3.4
Widowed	14	3.6
Total	384	100
Respondents' Educational Status		
Primary	16	4.1
Secondary	31	8.1
Tertiary	299	77.9
Others	38	9.9
Total	384	100
Respondents' Place of Residence		
Tunga Maje	64	16.6
Quatere and Central	64	16.6
Zuba	64	16.6
Gwagwalada Centre	64	16.6
Gwako	64	16.6
Dobi	64	16.6
Total	384	100

Table 2: Main Sources and Platforms of News Consumption in the Digital Age among Retired Public Servants in Gwagwalada Area Council

Items	Frequency					N	X (Mean)	SD	Decision
	SA	A	N	D	SD				
I frequently use traditional print newspapers as a source of news	141	155	13	48	27	384	3.80	1.106	ACCEPTED
I regularly watch television news broadcasts for information	139	150	15	54	26	384	3.77	1.113	ACCEPTED
I often listen to the news on radio	98	189	19	35	43	384	3.60	1.105	ACCEPTED
I access news online through websites and apps	49	63	11	126	135	384	2.27	1.362	REJECTED
I have subscribed to specific news websites or apps for regular updates	26	47	10	134	167	384	1.83	1.197	REJECTED
I engage with news on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter	60	57	09	117	141	384	2.39	1.403	REJECTED
Cumulative Mean							2.94		

Table 2 shows a Likert scale analysis of the main news sources and platforms for retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council in the digital age. The respondents accepted the first three statements with mean averages above 3, the set criterion. They agreed that they frequently used traditional newspapers, watched TV news, and listened to radio news. They rejected the other three statements with mean averages below 3. They disagreed that they accessed news online through websites and apps, subscribed to specific news websites or apps, or engaged with news on social media. These responses suggest that the respondents preferred traditional media sources over online sources for news consumption.

Table 3: Frequency and Duration of News Consumption among Retired Public Servants in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Items	Frequency					N	X (Mean)	SD	Decision
	SA	A	N	D	SD				
I read, watch, or listen to the news every day	122	149	13	67	33	384	3.64	1.113	Accepted
I read or watch the news multiple times a day	98	169	14	58	45	384	3.53	1.091	Accepted
I rarely read, listen or watch the news regularly	88	61	11	115	109	384	2.52	1.409	Rejected
I spend at least 30 minutes a day consuming news	137	111	05	69	62	384	3.64	1.189	Accepted
I prefer to get a quick news update to spending an extended period consuming the details	48	53	15	142	126	384	2.20	1.358	Rejected
Cumulative Mean							3.1		

The table above shows the frequency and duration of news consumption among retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council. The first two propositions were accepted by the respondents, indicating that they read, watch, or listen to the news every day and that they do so multiple times a day. They, however, rejected the third proposition that they rarely read or listened to news regularly, while accepting the fourth proposition that they spend at least 30 minutes a day consuming news content. The last statement on whether respondents prefer a quick news update to consuming the news details over an extended period was rejected. These responses imply that most of the respondents frequently consume news and usually spend a long time doing so.

Table 4: Content and Quality of News Consumed by Retired Public Servants in Gwagwalada Area Council

Items	Frequency					N	X (Mean)	SD	Decision
	SA	A	N	D	SD				
I feel well-informed about local events and issues through my news consumption.	131	155	10	58	30	384	3.72	1.091	ACCEPTED
I usually prefer to consume news about international events	36	64	12	130	142	384	2.13	1.366	REJECTED
I prefer news on politics, the economy, and health to entertainment and lifestyle stories	102	190	14	34	44	384	3.69	1.053	ACCEPTED
I usually read, listen to, or watch news that are informative and educative	179	194	11	0	0	384	4.49	0.502	ACCEPTED
I like it when news is unbiased and objective	152	202	10	11	09	384	4.34	0.583	ACCEPTED

I consume news that is accurate and reliable	137	215	09	07	16	384	4.28	0.646	ACCEPTED
Cumulative Mean							3.78		

Table 4 shows a Likert scale analysis of the news content and quality preferred by retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council. The respondents agreed that they got information on local events from news, but disagreed that they liked news on international events. They also agreed that they favored news on politics, economy, and health over entertainment and lifestyle and that they wanted news that was informative and educative, unbiased and objective, and accurate and reliable. With a cumulative mean of 3.78, these responses indicate that the respondents' content preferences were local and hard news and that their quality preferences were high.

Table 5: Factors that Influence the News Consumption Choices and Behaviours of Retired Public Servants in Gwagwalada Area Council in the Digital Age

Items	Frequency					N	X (Mean)	SD	Decision
	SA	A	N	D	SD				
I am more likely to engage with news that covers topics I have a personal interest in	137	125	15	69	38	384	3.59	1.144	ACCEPTED
My inability to afford digital devices such as phones and computers affects how I consume news	121	148	11	74	30	384	3.64	1.091	ACCEPTED
Poor internet service restricts my access to news on the radio, newspaper, and television	101	52	06	156	69	384	2.72	1.309	REJECTED
I lack the digital literacy to access news online	95	154	18	73	44	384	3.52	1.091	ACCEPTED
I trust news on radio, television, and newspapers more than online and this affects how I consume news	154	123	13	51	43	384	3.72	1.092	ACCEPTED
Cumulative Mean							3.44		

Table 5 shows an analysis of the factors that influence the news consumption choices and behaviours of retired public servants in the Gwagwalada Area Council. The first two statements were accepted, as respondents agreed that they are likely to consume news if it covers topics of interest, and the lack of affordability of digital devices for news consumption affects their consumption pattern. They, however, rejected the third statement that presented poor internet service as a factor affecting their access to news online. The final two statements that digital literacy and trust in traditional media are factors influencing their consumption choices were accepted by the respondents. The cumulative mean of 3.44, implies that the factors

influencing the respondents' news consumption choices are personal interest, affordability of digital facilities, digital literacy, and trust in traditional media.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the main sources and platforms of news consumption in the digital age among retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council?

The analysis in Table 2 answers this research question. It shows that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council use traditional media sources of TV, radio, and newspaper more than online sources for news consumption. They said they regularly use these sources and do not access or subscribe to news websites, apps, or social media. This means that most retired public servants in Gwagwalada have not embraced digital devices like phones or computers for news. They, however, depend largely on traditional media. This is not surprising as older people are often seen as big consumers of traditional media. For example, at newspaper stands, many buyers are older people. Other studies support this. Oyero et al. (2019) found that older adults in Nigeria prefer traditional media over digital media. Nielson and Sambrook (2016) also found that for older people in the UK, there was a preference for traditional news media, such as TV, radio, and newspapers, to internet news media.

The Uses and Gratifications theory and the Media Repertoires Theory explain the preference of retired public servants for traditional media. The former assumes that media audiences choose media based on their needs while the latter assumes that individuals have different media preferences. This implies that retired public servants in Gwagwalada prefer traditional media because it meets their need for easy and understandable information. The current finding agrees with these theories, as they show that media audiences have distinct preferences.

Research Question 2: What is the frequency and duration of news consumption among retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council?

The answer to this research question is provided in Table 3 of the analysis. The data showed that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council frequently consumed news and did so for long periods. The retirees, from the analysis, agreed that they consumed news content every day and could even do so multiple times each day. Furthermore, they said they could spend at least 30 minutes consuming news; they disagreed that they preferred quick news updates to consuming the details over extended periods. In other words, they would rather spend more time getting in-depth information about a news event than just relying on headlines and quick summaries.

This finding is a clear indication that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council consider news an important part of media content and they enjoy consuming it. Thus, they did so repeatedly each day and preferred to spend considerable amounts of time-consuming news. A study by Strömbäck et al. (2018), further lends credence to this finding. The researchers studied news consumption

among older adults in Sweden and found that older people consumed news more frequently and for longer periods than younger adults. The findings of another study by Van der Wurff et al. (2008) indicate why older people may spend longer periods consuming news and the high frequency with which they do so. The study reveals that older people consume news more diversely and critically than younger ones. Hence, their interests are not limited to simply the facts of the story, but the details and what they mean.

The News Media Repertoires theory explains why retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council may have developed a high frequency and long duration in their news consumption. The theory explains that as individuals have distinct preferences and inclinations for news content based on their needs, these inclinations form unique repertoires or patterns. In other words, since pensioners in Gwagwalada Area Council need in-depth information on news events, they prefer to consume such content every day for long periods and, according to the theory, this forms a repertoire or pattern of consumption which is repeated over time and becomes an attitude or characteristic of the individual.

Research Question 3: What is the content and quality of news consumed by retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council?

The analysis in Table 4 answers this research question. It shows that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council prefer news on local events, politics, and the economy, and they consume news that is informative, objective, accurate, and reliable. They are not very interested in international news or entertainment and lifestyle news. This shows a preference for hard news over soft news. They also demand high quality in the news they consume. This finding agrees with those of Nielsen and Sambrook (2016), who found that older persons prefer local, national, and worldwide news over lifestyle, entertainment, or celebrity news; and have high standards for the quality, impartiality, and veracity of news sources. The only difference is that older people in their study also liked international news. Van der Wuff et al. (2008) also found that older persons had more political knowledge and participation, and were more exposed to and engaged in public affairs news than soft news. These studies show that older people are more interested in public affairs news and care about the truthfulness, informativeness, objectivity, and reliability of the news they consume.

The Uses and Gratifications theory explains how the content and quality of news that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council consume reflect their media needs. The theory states that individuals consume media selectively according to their needs. Some people consume media to satisfy cognitive needs, such as information, knowledge, or facts; while others consume it to satisfy tension-free needs, such as pleasure or entertainment. The retired public servants in this study prefer hard news and public affairs news because their needs are mainly cognitive, rather than tension-free. Their preference for this news content affects their knowledge and participation in civic matters, as confirmed by Van der Wuff et al. (2008). The News Media Repertoires Theory says that media use is

consequential, meaning that it has outcomes for individuals and society, such as knowledge, attitudes, opinions, participation, satisfaction, etc.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that influence the news consumption choices and behaviours of retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council in the digital age?

The analysis in Table 5 answers this research question. It shows that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council prefer news on topics of personal interest and their consumption choices are affected by their inability to afford digital devices like phones or computers. They also said that their lack of digital literacy and their trust in traditional media influence their choices. The main factors that influence news consumption choices and behaviours in the digital age are interest, affordability, digital literacy, and trust.

Ojebuyi et al. (2020) found some of the same factors in their study of news consumption habits and preferences of older adults in Nigeria. They found that interest, authority, accessibility, and affordability affected older individuals' news consumption. Interest affects the content of the news they consume, as they prefer public affairs news. Affordability affects their use of digital devices, as many of them are expensive and more common among younger audiences.

Digital literacy is another factor that affects their choices. Many older people are not familiar with digital devices and prefer traditional media. Oyelude et al. (2018) found that older people struggle to use digital technology due to various reasons, such as lack of knowledge, awareness, availability, and relevance, as well as poor digital literacy and access. They also have low digital participation and engagement and need more assistance and training. Some also trust traditional media more than digital sources and are biased against them. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) explains how these factors affect their adoption of digital sources of news. The theory says that adopting a technology depends on some factors, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. The pensioners' lack of digital literacy may mean that they do not find digital sources of news useful or easy to use and rely on radio, TV, and newspapers. Their affordability issues also affect the facilitating conditions for using digital sources of news.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja have a strong attachment to traditional media for news consumption, such as radio, television, and newspaper. Perhaps, because they have more time and consume news on platforms and devices with less distracting features, they have a high frequency of consumption and spend more time doing so. This demonstrates that even though they may be retired, they are not tired of the news. However, they also face some barriers in accessing and using news content in the digital age and they have specific preferences in terms of content and quality which must be taken into consideration by news media organizations and media professionals in news coverage and dissemination.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the news consumption patterns of retired public servants in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, in the digital age. The findings of this research highlight the importance of traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, as primary sources of news for this audience segment. Moreover, the study reveals that retired public servants in the area prioritize local news on politics and the economy, seeking objective, informative, accurate, and reliable content. The study's findings also underscore the significance of factors such as interest, affordability, digital literacy, and trust in shaping the news consumption behaviors of retired public servants. These insights have important implications for media houses, policymakers, and other stakeholders seeking to effectively reach and engage with older adults.

To optimize news consumption among retired public servants, media houses should consider providing news through traditional media platforms, while focusing on local news that addresses the interests and needs of this demographic. Furthermore, efforts to improve digital literacy and access among older adults are crucial to ensuring their inclusion in the digital news landscape. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the need for a nuanced understanding of the complex factors influencing news consumption patterns among different audience segments, particularly in the context of an aging population. By doing so, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and effective news ecosystem that caters to the diverse needs and preferences of all citizens.

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