

Social Media Use Among Elderly People in Latifabad, Hyderabad, Pakistan



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Abstract

Social media has got the status of an important part of our daily lives. About social media, some studies have shown that its use is also found among elderly people. It also lets users build and share content instantly with the public. Hence, it is sought by this study to know the usage patterns of social media among elderly people, as in previous studies the usage of social media by elderly people has not been investigated. The data of this study has been collected by conducting a cross-sectional survey based on a questionnaire from purposively sampled 100 elderly people who resided in Latifabad, Hyderabad, Pakistan. The results mentioned that most of them spend more than three hours daily on social media, and most of them use social media for a whole week. Particularly elderly people use Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube. The main purpose of elderly people using social media is to get more socialized; They also upload their personal information on social media- on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

Keywords: *Social media, elderly people, usage of social media, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube*

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Introduction

In the current times, social media is a digital technological tool that lets users instantly generate content and communicate it with the public. Social media covers a wide range of websites and applications (Hudson, 2020). Some examples of popular social media applications and Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Most of these social media platforms have various features as Facebook permits joined users to generate profiles, upload photos, and videos, send messages and stay in contact with peers, family, and colleagues (Lutkevich & Wigmore, 2021). Likewise, Twitter lets enlisted members post short posts known as tweets. Other such applications and websites such as WhatsApp are popular in the form of messaging, voice calling, and video calling on phones around the world for interacting with family and friends (Lutkevich & Wigmore, 2021). However, amongst the popular video-sharing applications, YouTube is the best.

Thus, social media is a vital component of people's daily lives. People regularly access various social media applications and SNSs through various means such as mobile apps or computer web browsers. In a survey of more than six hundred social media users (Herhold, 2018), most of the users are associated with social media. Ennis-O'Connor (2019), on average 60% of global users are constantly connected to social media. The main social media applications and SNSs (Facebook,

WhatsApp, and YouTube) have 2.4 billion users. However, the number of users of YouTube and WhatsApp is above one billion. The population of the world is more than 7 billion. More than 3.5 billion people are online on different social media applications and SNSs. This is a big number of users of these platforms. It means that every fourth person in the world uses social media (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). According to a recent survey conducted by Pew Research Center, 72% of older adults are using social media (Davis, 2013).

Scholars claim that social media has transformed the world. In that context, the prompt and enormous acceptance of these platforms is transforming how we find affiliates, and how we approach data from the world. Social media is an easy way to search the thought of our minds. Not only you but also adults are using social media.

Keeping significant social interaction is commonly considered to be one of the major causes of aging. Can such as geographical distance from relatives, poor mobility, or time responsibilities make it difficult for older adults to meet their social networking needs, with the risk that these adults will feel alone, but there is little chance of engaging in social interactions (Leist, 2013). According to Nguyen, Hunsaker, and Hargittai (2020), the emergence of social networking sites and online communities has opened up innovative opportunities for older adults to remain socially connected, and older adults are increasingly comprising social media, user groups.

Adult people face a lot of issues they must spend most of their time doing nothing at their home. Some elderly get more depressed as compared to others. In some cases, adults demand more time and support from their families, and that is the reason they are feeling depressed. In that case, social media plays a vital role to support the loneliness time spend with adults (Hajek & König, 2021). The Internet may provide ways for people to maintain such social ties. There is controversy in the research literature, however, about whether Internet use increases or decreases social connection and its psychological benefits (Campbell, Cumming, & Hughes, 2006).

Moreover, social media affects our society in many ways, such as relaxation, information, and connecting with family, friends, and colleagues. Adults today also benefit from using social media in a variety of ways. Connect them to the world using YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other means. However, online technologies are promising to help older adults maintain social connections, especially with young people (Zhang, Kim, Silverstein, Song, & Burr, 2021). Even so, many older adults resist or at least participate in the mainstream technologies that young members of their social networks use. In support of the above hypothesis, the results of a study show that older adults (ages 71-92) understand communication (Brewer, Morris, & Piper, 2016).

Van Swol and Braun (2014) conducted a study on adults between the ages of 60 and 90 who use the Internet. The results show that in this group, 44% also reported at least occasional use of social networking sites. Adults today are interested in using social media to fulfill their desires. However, there are no such relevant studies regarding the use of social media among elder people in Pakistan. Thus, to fill this gap, the purpose of this study is to investigate the usage patterns of social media among elderly people. In this context, the specific objectives of the study are i) To study the patterns of social media usage among elderly people, ii) To determine the purposes of social media usage among elderly people, and ii) To know the impacts of social media usage upon elderly people. Following the research objectives, the research questions of this study are i) What are the patterns of social media usage among elderly people? ii) What are the purposes of social media usage for elderly people? and iii) What are the impacts of social media usage upon elderly people?

Literature Review

Social media refers to various web-based applications and SNSs through which users communicate with each other. Social media platforms encourage adults to give out their experiences, opinions, and knowledge (Hudson, 2020). Though, with the advancement of smartphones and applications for mobile devices (phones, computers, and tablets), many users no longer need to visit a real website and instead of an app for social networks. Some networks are hosted only in applications, although the content can be viewed on websites, while access to other SNSs, such as Facebook and Twitter, is limited to one application or website. It can be done through. Therefore, the term social networks represent both SNSs and mobile applications (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019).

Further, as new social media spheres are created every day, it can be complicated to classify social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These websites, video games, mobile applications, and blogs can take many forms. On the one hand, social media allows you to communicate via photos, videos, and/or text, primarily with friends and family (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) or more qualified communications (e.g., LinkedIn, Academia) and these are used to communicate information with academia.edu and ResearchGate) (Lutkevich & Wigmore, 2021). Social media, on the other hand, allows sharing specific tasks such as blogging (text or image) and writing (e.g., Blogger, Tumblr, WordPress), images, videos, drawings, and/or text (e.g., Vine, Snapchat), many apps can also be used (Instagram, Twitter) for sharing and discussing information (e.g., Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter), gaming (e.g., Farmville, World of Warcraft), storage of information for later viewing and ratings (Pocket, Google+, Pinterest), etc. Nevertheless, there is considerable overlap in the use of many of these social media platforms, and they are discussed in general terms.

In an old study, Rubin and Rubin (1982) said a larger, later life, population growth, and increasing age divisions are two obvious social trends. The over-55 age group now makes up about 21% of the population of about 44 million people. Television is the greatest means of communication for the elderly and the elderly. Watching television is an important pastime for older people. Recently, however, communications researchers have begun to examine the important role of television in the lives of older people. The research focuses largely on the behavior and actions of older people watching television, which works for the older population. An older person prefers regular programming of news and public affairs but he also watches game shows, some musical programs, dramas, and maybe even comedy shows (Rubin & Rubin, 1982).

Mo, Zhou, Kosinski, and Stillwell (2018), explored the usage patterns of older adults Facebook users and the effect of their different features usage and social groups. They found a rapid digital divide among the younger generation and older generation on SNSs, and existing older Facebook users are primarily doubles. Second, personal information can forecast the behavior of older people using SNS. Older adult users with advanced bluntness and extraversion have more acquaintances, status updates, and group memberships, and those with higher levels of integrity have fewer likes and status updates. Older users are more likely to find insightful content on SNSs. Furthermore, when using SNSs, they may have a more balanced attitude than young users. Third, older people create small social circles on SNSs that "copy" real family relationships. However, they do create large social circles with interests and hobbies that are difficult to share in the real world. Based on these findings, detailed suggestions are made on how to better target the elderly in ways that lead to SNSs (Mo et al., 2018).

In a content analysis study of social media content Makita, Mas-Bleda, Stuart, and Thelwall (2021) analyzed the patterns of representation of Twitter according to aging, old age, older people, and elderly of 1200 tweets. The study concluded that assessment reveals that 'personal interests/ideas' and 'health and social care are the most important overall topics, although some topics are linked to specific keywords. The language often used in tweets reinforces the negative discourse of age and old age which sees older adults as a helpless, vulnerable and homogeneous group. Aging is considered a problem, and aging is considered something that needs to be resisted, slowed down, or disguised. These topics and discussion patterns are like experimental articles. Social perceptions of old age and visual studies of traditional media indicate that social media and Twitter appear to be acting as an online platform for current adjustment discourse in traditional media. Reproduce and reinforce the social perceptions of old age and old people (Makita et al., 2021).

Meymo and Kenn (2017) explained that the participants are due to missing experiences in the use of Internet technology and social media. We do not believe that the lack of interest in using social media is limited to people over the age of 80 or that it is just a coincidence. Participants have been selected. So, it will be interesting to see if age groups, old and young, are not included in social media, to see if the reasons vary with age. It would be good to refer to the studios of (Finnna 2016), which talk about the use of social media, and how younger people (50 to 64) older generations of older people (this More than 60 years). Solving the second research problem will require a long-term approach to solution ideas to strengthen knowledge among young and old. Before you learn the old tools for using things like the internet and social media, you will fit the story of a life more than 80 years old. To teach people when they are already at that age, they use technology to access multimedia elements and other online functions, as well as accomplish transitions. However, if the option does not exist, active support is more in your daily activities (Meymo & Kenn, 2017).

Ongun, Guder, and Demirag (2016) analyzed the relationship between perceived loneliness in the elderly and the choice of media devices. The sample study consisted of 300 randomly selected seniors over the age of 60 who live in holiday homes in two different Turkish cities, Hatay and Istanbul. Participants were given a three-part questionnaire. The first part included questions about participants' demographic data, and the second part related to participants' perceived state of loneliness. The last section discusses their choice of media and related details such as the purpose and time spent on them. Analyzed according to the data, the results of the study show that with two different social backgrounds and demographic changes, the forms of media they used, their choices, goals, and perceived status isolated. There is an important relationship between different degrees. Loneliness is a serious global concern, and the elderly are at the forefront of global issues. Although it is believed that Turkey still has a relatively young population, statistics show that older people are gaining more and more attention. Both historical and current records show that the elderly were and still are a cause for concern today and in the past. The study aims to broaden the issue from a national to a global perspective, questioning the relationship between isolation and the role of old and new forms of media in the light of population standards.

Although there has been a small improvement, it is not surprising that the digital divide between young and old is as strong as that of emerging media formats. This study also confirms the reality that non-communicating multimedia forms such as print media, radio, television, and computers still make friends with older people. In the context of our study, computers and cell phones have served as important and transitional means by which the elderly rely on their

loneliness. Television in general is a source of information as well as entertainment. It is difficult for social media to find itself in these forms of media. Facebook and WhatsApp are the only ones that can go through the aging tunnel. Finally, media technologies and the shapes associated with them are also objects of emotions, feelings, and experiences related to how media can be integrated and used in the social life of the elderly. To that end, further studies should offer training programs for seniors to improve media literacy so that they can help their peers, parents, friends, children, and grandchildren overcome the expected loneliness and isolation. Being able to build mutual and strong relationships with each other. In this study, it has not been easy for researchers to reach elderly nursing homes for bureaucratic and confidential reasons. Media devices, old or new, are undoubtedly essential for the treatment of loneliness. Needless to say, handshakes and beautiful conversations are the most humane and basic means of communication. These are just some of the goal-setting shareware that will be available to you.

Methodology

In this quantitative research, a cross-sectional survey method was applied. A cross-sectional survey collects data to estimate the population (universe) of interest at a time (Lavrakas, 2008). In this connection, the population of this study is elderly people residing in District Hyderabad, Sindh province, Pakistan. Whereas the exact number of the population was unknown. Hence, in this situation, the purposive and convenient sampling technique was applied. As purposive and convenient sampling is non-probability sampling. It is selected based on the characteristics of the population and the purpose of the study. The included target sample differs from the practical sample and is also known as the decisive, selective, or thematic sample (Crossman, 2020). Hence, the sample sizing 100 elderly people was chosen purposively and opportunistically. The sampled respondents in this study were aged from 60 to 80 and above. The researchers personally distributed the questionnaire among the sampled respondents and after completing took it back

Then the data was entered into the SPSS software. The results were generated in frequency tables and were presented in tabular form for further analysis and discussion.

Results and Discussion

The study is about knowing the social media usage among elderly people residing in Sub-division Latifabad, District Hyderabad. The data of this survey consists of three sections, the first about demographics, the second about the usage of social media, and the third one is about the purpose of social media use.

Table 1. *Demographic Information*

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	52	52.0
Female	48	48.0
Total	100	100
<i>Age</i>		
60 to 69	80	80.0
70 to 79	12	12.0
80 and above	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	56	56.0
Single	36	36.0
Divorced	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0
<i>Education</i>		
Matric	20	20.0
Intermediate	22	22.0
Bachelor's degree	34	34.0
Master's degree	16	16
M.phil/ Ph.D.	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0
<i>Profession</i>		
Business	18	18.0
Retired employee	14	14.0
Housewife	32	32.0
Other	36	36.0
Total	100	100.0

Table.1 shows findings of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. In this way, regarding gender, it was observed that the proportion sizing slightly higher than fifty percent (52.0%) was male. Whereas, the remaining proportion of little lesser than fifty percent (48.0%) was female. Thus it was deduced that the simple majority of the respondents were male.

Regarding age, it was found that the first highest proportion sizing four-fifths (80.%) of the respondents was from 60 to 69 years old. The second-highest proportion that was over one-tenth (12.0%) was from 70 to 80 years old. However, the remaining proportion measuring little less than one-tenth (8.0%) of the surveyed elderly people was above 80 years. Thus, the great majority of the respondents were from 60 to 69 years old.

Context to marital status the first proportion calculated as higher than fifty percent (56.0%) mentioned that they were married. The second proportion sizing over one-third (36.0%) was single. Whereas the last proportion of little less than one-tenth (8.0%) was divorced. In this way, it surfaced that most of the sampled elderly people were married.

From the perspective of education, it was seen that the proportion of bit less than one quarter (24.0%) of the respondents were educated at master's level (16.0%) or above (8.0%). However, the remaining proportion of slightly greater than three quarters (76.0%) had education till bachelor level (34.0%), Intermediate level (22.0%), and matric level (20.0%).

The respect to the profession, the proportion of little less than one fifth (18.0%) of the sampled elderly people were had business. Second, the proportion of slightly over one fifth (22.0%) were retired employees. The third proportion of almost one-third (32.0%) were housewives. Whereas the last proportion of a little higher than one third (36.0%) had other various work.

Table 2. *Using social media type*

Social media type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Facebook	64 (64.0%)	36 (36.0%)	100 (100.0%)
Twitter	20 (20.0%)	80 (80.0%)	100 (100.0%)
WhatsApp	66 (66.0%)	34 (34.0%)	100 (100.0%)
YouTube	56 (56.0%)	44 (44.0%)	100 (100.0%)

Table 2 presents findings of the type of social media platform used by elderly people. Thus, it is observed that Facebook usage the proportion of over three-fifths (64%) said that they used Facebook. Similarly, regarding the usage of WhatsApp, the proportion sizing greater than three-fifths (66.0%) mentioned that they used this social media platform. Whereas, about YouTube, the proportion calculated as higher than fifty percent (56.0%) expressed that they used YouTube. Finally, subject to Twitter just the ratio of one-fifth (20.0%) of the sampled elderly people said that they used Twitter. In this way, it surfaced that the most popular social media platforms among the elderly people in District Hyderabad in decreasing order are first WhatsApp (66.0%), second Facebook (64.0%), and then YouTube (56.0%). However, the lowest use of all the social media platforms among elderly people is Twitter.

Table 3. *Device type for using social media*

Device type	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Mobile	82 (82.0%)	18 (18.0%)	100 (100.0%)
Tablet	6 (6.0%)	94 (94.0%)	100 (100.0%)
Desktop computer	10 (10.0%)	90 (90.0%)	100 (100.0%)
Laptop computer	12 (12.0%)	88 (88.0%)	100 (100.0%)

Regarding using the device type for access to the social media platforms table 3 shows that the proportion sizing little greater than four-fifths (80.0%) of the elderly people said that they access social media platforms on their mobile. About accessing social media on the laptop, the proportion of a little higher than one-tenth mentioned that they use a laptop computer. similarly, the ratio of exact one-tenth (10.0%) told they used desktop computers for accessing social media platforms. lastly, the proportion that is lesser one-tenth (6.0%) used their tablet for social media. Hence, as a result, it was observed that the great majority of the surveyed elderly people (82.0%) used their mobile phones for using social media.

Table 4. *Social media usage frequency, duration, and time*

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Social media usage frequency		
Daily	66	(66.0%)
Twice a week	24	(24.0%)
More than twice a week	10	(10.0%)
Total	100	(100%)
Social media usage period		
Up to 2 hours	38	(38.0%)
Up to 3 hours	28	(28.0%)
More than 3 hours	32	(32.0%)
Total	100	(100%)
Social media usage time		
Morning	14	(14.0%)
Noon	6	(6.0%)
Evening	22	(22.0%)
Night	24	(24.0%)
Any time / whole day	34	(34.0%)
Total	100	(100%)

Table 4 has data about the frequency, duration, and time of social media usage by elderly persons. In this way, the data mentioned that out of the total of 100 respondents the proportion of over three-fifths (66.0%) accessed social media daily. Subject to the duration, it was found that the highest proportion of almost two-fifths of the elderly people (38.0%) mentioned that they used social media for up to 2 hours. Similarly, in the perspective of time, it surfaced that the highest proportion slightly bigger than one-third (34.0%) said that they used media any time during the 24 hours. And another significant fact developed that about a quarter (24.0%) of them used social media at night time. Summarily it developed that the typical elderly person used social media daily and for the duration of up to 2 hours. Additionally, they mostly used social media at nighttime or against it then anytime in whole the day.

Table 5. *Interaction in social media usage*

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
I upload personal information on social media		
Yes	28	(28.0%)
No	34	(34.0%)
Sometimes	38	(38.0%)
Total	100	(100%)
I prefer to upload personal information on		
Facebook	26	(39.45%)
Twitter	6	(9.0%)
Whatsapp	30	(45.55%)
Any other	4	(6.0%)
Total	66	(100%)

Data in table 5 about having interaction on social media platforms it was observed that most of the elderly persons (66.0%) said that they upload personal information on social media. However, among them, the proportion of little less than two-fifths (38.0%) uploaded their personal information on social media 'sometimes'. Moreover, it divulged that the proportion of slightly greater than a quarter (26.0%) uploaded their personal information on Facebook. Whereas the other proportion of little less than one third (30.0%) preferred to upload their personal information on Whatsapp social media platforms.

Table 6. *Purposes of social media usage*

Purposes	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
I use social media for			
Entertainment	36 (36.0)	64 (64.0)	100 (100)
Business & marketing promotion	10 (10.0)	90 (90.0)	100 (100)
Interacting with people via social media	60 (60.0)	40 (40.0)	100 (100)
Understanding other cultures & religions	74 (74.0)	26 (26.0)	100 (100)
Acquiring information about products & services	80 (80.0)	20 (20.0)	100 (100)
Socialization	18 (18.0)	82 (82.0)	100 (100)

The data presented in Table 6 reports the purposes of social media usage made by the surveyed elderly persons in this study. It was an inquiry total about six common purposes of social media usage from the respondents. As a result, it was observed that the priority (80.0%) for the use of social media platforms was given to the purpose to use social media for "acquiring information about products & services". Similarly, the second (74.0%) important purpose for using social media was "understanding other cultures & religions". Whereas the third (60.0%) significant purpose for which the elderly people used social media was "interacting with people via social media". Added the remaining three purposes for using social media by the elderly persons, in decreasing order, were 'entertainment' (36.0%), 'business & marketing promotion' (10.0%), and "socialization" (8.0%). Thus, it developed that the main purposes of elderly people to use social media platforms were "acquiring information about products and services", 'understanding cultures & religions, and 'interacting with people via social media.

Table 7. *Impact of social media usage*

Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	Sometimes	Total (%)
Due to social media, I often refuse to gather with family/friends	38 (38.0)	42 (42.0%)	20 (20.0%)	100 (100.0)
I usually get up early in the morning to use social media	26 (26.0)	46 (46.0%)	28 (28.0%)	100 (100.0)
I be frustrated and annoyed when a social media application gets unavailable	34 (34.0)	42 (42.0%)	24 (24.0%)	100 (100.0)
I believe social media creates generation gap between teenagers and elder people	68 (68.0)	20 (20.0%)	12 (12.0%)	100 (100.0)

Table 7 has data about the impact of social media usage. It was observed that social media usage has an impact on elderly people. A proportion of greater than one-half (58.9%) of the sampled elderly people said that they often refuse to get together with family or friends due to social media; however, a proportion of one-fifth (20.0%) of them said ‘sometimes. Similarly, the other proportion of greater than one-half (54.0%) told that they get up early in the morning for using social media; however, the proportion of over a quarter (28.0%) of them mentioned ‘sometimes. Even the proportion sizing almost three fifths (58.0%) of the elderly people reported that they get frustrated and annoyed when social media is not available to them; however, the proportion of almost one quarter (24.0%) told ‘sometimes. Finally, the great majority of the elderly people (80.0%) also believed that social media usage creates a generation gap between teenagers and elder people; yet the proportion of bigger than one-tenth (12.0%) said ‘sometimes. Overall, the biggest impact of social media usage among elderly people is that the social media usage generation gap between teenagers and elderly people is created.

Discussion and conclusion

Social media particularly Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube are used to create and share content with the public. Thus, is study was conducted to know how elderly people in Sindh province, Pakistan uses social media. Further, it was to know for what purposes they use social media platforms and what impact they suffer through due to the usage of social media. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect the relevant data from 100 elderly people sampled by non-probability purposive and convenience sampling technique from Sub-division Latifabad in District Hyderabad Sindh province, Pakistan. The typical elderly person surveyed in this study was male, married, and in the age range between 60 to 69 years old. The four most popular social media platforms used by the surveyed elderly people were Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Additionally, it was found that their favorite device to access or use any social media platform was mobile. It was also observed that the typical elderly person used social media daily and mostly at nighttime. However, it was surprising to know that their main purpose to use social media is to first acquire information about products and services, and second, they wanted to understand other cultures and religions. Whereas their third main purpose to use social media was to interact with people via social media. Finally, it surfaced that the chief impact on the elderly people of social media use was that there develops a generation gap between teenagers and elderly people due to usage of social media. The other impact they mentioned is that elderly people get so addicted to social media

usage that even they refuse to get together with their family and friends while they are engaged with social media.

Limitations

There are some limitations of this study. The findings of this study have to be seen in the context of some following limitations:

1. Present research work is limited to Latifabad, District Hyderabad.
2. The target population of this research is urban social media users.
3. The sample size is limited to the number of 100 elderly persons.

Suggestions for future studies

1. Future studies in this field may be conducted on larger sample size.
2. Future such studies may be conducted in various other cities.

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