

Analyzing the Usage of Social Media: A Study on Elderly in Malaysia

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Abstract : In the beginning of the prevalence of social media, it would be an obvious trend that the young adult age group has the highest population among the users on social media. However, apart from the age group of the users are becoming younger and younger, the elderly group has become a new force on social media, and this age group has increased rapidly. On top of that, the influence of social media towards the elderly is becoming more significant and it is even trending among them. This is because basic computer knowledge is not instilled into their life when they were young. This age group tends to be engrossed more than the young as this is something new for them, and they have the mindset that it is a new platform to approach things, and they tend to be more engrossed when they start getting in touch with the social media. Generally, most of the social media has been accepted and accessed by teenagers and young adult, but it is reasonable to believe that the social media is not really accepted among the elderly. Surprisingly, the elderly are more addicted to the social media than the teenagers. Therefore, this study is to determine and understand the relationship between the elderly and social media, and how they employ social media in their lives. An online survey on 200 elderly aged 45-80 and an interview with a media expert are conducted to answer the main questions in the research paper. Uses and Gratification Approach is employed in theoretical framework. Finding revealed that majority of the respondents use social media to connect with family, friends, and for leisure purposes. The finding concluded that the elderly use social media differently according to their needs and wants which is in par with the highlight of Uses and Gratification theory. Considering the significantly large role social media plays in our culture and daily life today, the finding will shed some light on the effect of social media on the elderly or senior citizens who are usually relegated into a minority group in today's age where the internet and social media are of great importance to our society and humanity in general. This may also serve to be useful in understanding behavioral patterns and preference in terms of social media usage among the elderly.

Keywords : elderly, Facebook, Malaysia, social media

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