



Editorial

Older Adults in Developing Countries Seem to be Neglected Contacts in Technological Products

Siros Samei-Sis¹, Haidar Nadrian², Akbar Azizi-Zeinalhajlou^{3*}

¹ Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Research Center, Aging Research Institute, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

² Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

³ Research Center for Integrative Medicine in Aging, Aging Research Institute, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran

* **Corresponding Author:** Research Center for Integrative Medicine in Aging, Aging Research Institute, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran. **Tel:** +989143190228, **Email address:** akbarazizi55@gmail.com

Received 11 Nov 2022

Citation: Samei Sis S, Nadrian H, Azizi Zeinalhajlou A. Older adults in developing countries seem to be neglected contacts in technological products. *Elderly Health Journal*. 2022; 8(2): 58-59.

The present era is known as the time of communication and information due to the deep influence of communication tools, new technologies, and comprehensive technological progress on the world (1). Most technological products are designed to become popular and universal and to be used by superlative users. As the products progress toward universal designation, an increase is expected to happen in the likelihood of their popularity (2). Technologies are developed to accelerate and ease the provision of services and to reduce costs (3). One of the most obvious examples of technological progress is the electronic banking system including web-based banking, Automated Teller Machines (ATM), etc. which has influenced the daily routines of populations (3).

Due to inequality in information accessibility and some types of pessimism or fear toward technology use, older adults hardly communicate with new technologies, which may result in big differences in intergenerational behavioral patterns and deepened intergenerational gaps (4). The intergenerational gaps may arise from differences between the attitudes and value orientations of younger and older generations (5, 6) which may, consequently, result in social exclusion, loneliness, and social isolation for older people (7). Failure in using technological advancement in older adults may have different reasons, including biological changes in their body system, insufficient knowledge of technology use, inadequate literacy, and adherence to traditional norms in their life (4, 8). In developing and less developed countries, older people are faced with specific issues, like poor literacy, which aggravates the effect of the intergenerational gap and senior deprivation (9). Compared to literate older people,

illiterate seniors are less successful in social interactions and social acceptability within societies (9).

Even though literacy rates continue to rise around the world (10), in 2016, there were 40% more illiterate aged people than illiterate youth (11), and the number of illiterate older adults, those aged 65 and above, continues to grow in low and middle-income countries (10). In 2018, illiteracy rates among 65+ years people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Northern Africa and Western Asia were about 63%, 57%, 51%, and 47%, respectively (11). Also, using paper-based banking systems for these populations results in problems and difficulties for them, which threatens the seniors' independency due to their need for help while using the systems.

Equality in all opportunities is a universal right (12) and needs comprehensive technological services like banking services. Failure in using electronic banking tools among older people may lead to an increased level of dependency on current affairs, a lack of self-control, and a decrease in the sense of belonging and life satisfaction (13-16). The provision of electronic-based services for seniors in developing countries will also be questioned in terms of utility and productivity, which include issues like maximum use with the least cost, time, and usability for all individuals. Considering that about half of older adults in developing countries cannot use these facilities, their efficacy and effectiveness are skeptical.

Designing technological products for older people seems to be complex, due to changes in their sensory systems, illiteracy, and lower levels of education. This problem should not result in neglect in designing age-friendly products, especially technologies that are tied to older people's daily lives. It seems that the use of

particular symbols, shapes, icons, and audiovisual effects is an alternative to adopting web technologies to the life of older adults in developing countries.

References

1. Garkushenko ON. Information and communication technologies in the era of the smart industry development: problems of definition and conditions of development. *Economy of Industry*. 2018; 2(82): 50-75.
2. Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. 10 things to know about UD [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2022 Oct 15] [Available from: <http://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-10-things-to-know-about-ud/10-things-to-know-about-ud.html>]
3. ESCAP. Inequality in Asia and the Pacific in the era of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. United Nations; 2018.
4. Hasanaali L. Media literacy training and coping with the inter-generational gap (emphasis on Inter-generational digital gap). *Proceedings of the First National Congress on Pathology and Harm Reduction of Inter-generational gap (background, challenges, and solutions)*; 2018 Jan 30. Bushehr; 2018. [Persian]
5. Abbasi-esfanjir A, Sam S, Amirian Reyhaneh. The generation gap in values: comparison of the young and elderly. *Journal of Specialized Social Science*. 2013; 10(38): 162-85. [Persian]
6. Moedfar S. Generation gap or generation discontinuity (Generation gap in Iran). *Sociological Review*. 2004; 24(24): 55-80. [Persian]
7. Niazi M, Babayifard A, Zamani R. Old Age Sociology. *sokhanvaran*; 2011. [Persian]
8. Azadarmaki T. Investigating the theory of modernization: a case study on cultural fatalism in Iran. *Culture*. 1997; 22: 191-208. [Persian]
9. Larijani M, Tajmazinani AA. A study of factors influencing social exclusion of the elderly in Varamin city. *Journal of Applied Sociology*. 2015; 26(3): 57-74. [Persian]
10. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Literacy rates continue to rise from one generation to the next [Internet]. 2017 [cited 2022 Oct 17]; Available from: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy>
11. Global Education Monitoring Report. *Global education monitoring report 2019: Migration, displacement, and education: Building bridges, not walls*. UNESCO Paris; 2018.
12. Morsink J. *The universal declaration of human rights*. University of Pennsylvania Press; 2010.
13. Davies S, Ellis L, Laker S. Promoting autonomy and independence for older people within nursing practice: an observational study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. 2000; 9(1): 127-36.
14. Oleson M, Heading C, McGlynn K, Bistodeau JA. Quality of life in long-stay institutions in England: nurse and resident perceptions. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 1994; 20(1): 23-32.
15. Nyström AE, Segesten KM. On sources of powerlessness in nursing home life. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 1994; 19(1): 124-33.
16. Darvishpoor Kakhki A, Abed Saeedi J, Delavar A, Saeed-O-Zakerin M. Autonomy in the elderly: a phenomenological study. *Hakim Journal*. 2010; 12(4): 1-10. [Persian]