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Editorial

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

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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

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

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