

What is the role of social media communication in older people's lives and to what extent can it help mitigate loneliness?

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Background

- A **qualitative** survey into how older people feel about social media.
- Studying its impacts on social connection and filling research gaps about lived experiences.
- **Interdisciplinary** between media & sociology.

- There is a current **gap** in research into the link between social media and impacts on **loneliness** of older adults (ages 65+).
- The COVID-19 pandemic led to **increased** attention on the subject in academic spheres.
- How online interactions affect on older adults **lacks** a current consensus.
- The current agreement is that online interactions are **supplementary** and supportive.

- Social medias role in the lives of older adults is contingent on a range of factors and has produced a range of opinions from respondents
- Social media alone **cannot mitigate** feelings of loneliness but can be **supportive** and complement **in-person** communication.
- It is increasingly important as a result to bridge technological **barriers** for older people.

Methods

- Used **non-probability sampling** to gather responses from 20 individuals who were over 65 and have used social media.
- Approach focused on a **thematic analysis** paper on the responses which was supported by a **literature review** on the topic.

- Survey responses revealed **five** prominent **themes**: community, distrust, technological disadvantages, verbal communication, and hobbies.
 - Social activities like **hobbies** and community involvement were seen as positively impacting mental health, offering **belonging** without emotional strain.
 - A significant portion of respondents engaged with social media, but **15%** had discontinued use, and **20%** had never used it, citing **distrust** and technological **disadvantages** as reasons.
 - Some participants questioned the **value** of social media compared to in-person interactions, highlighting the importance of **meaningful** online engagement and recognizing social media's **limitations**.

Literature

Conclusion

Findings

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References & more!



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