

Social Media Coping Strategies by Older Adults To Fight Loneliness in The Digital Age

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Abstract

As the digital era progresses and the population ages, loneliness has become a critical issue, impacting the physical health, mental wellbeing, and life quality of older citizens. As a primary communication means, social media can combat solitude. However, older adults face challenges in digital literacy, requiring further study of their engagement. This mixed-methods research included quantitative analysis of demographic and economic factors influencing social media use and media literacy skills as well as the role of social support in shaping media use. Qualitative analysis explores in-depth insights into online behavior such as initial motivation, usage pattern, perception, experience, social networking, and the impact of social media on life quality. Results are that social media strengthens relationship with family, friends, and social networks, reducing isolation and boosting a sense of belonging. Frequent accessible interactions contribute to meaningful attachments and emotional wellbeing. Social media also enables older adults to offer and receive social support. Awareness of digital benefits enhance self-esteem, and participation as content creators shares knowledge and experience widely. However, challenges remain, including digital literacy, accessibility, and usability. These findings may help policymakers, technology developers, and social organizations to enhance digital inclusion and design agefriendly online environments to improve online wellbeing.

Keywords: Digital age; Isolation; Loneliness; Older adults; social media