

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF INTERNET USAGE ON QUALITY OF LIFE OF SENIOR CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

In the present era of electronic revolution, internet is playing a major role not only in the lives of younger adults but for the senior citizens as well. With the increase in the population of older people, to improve their quality of life is a major concern today. Thus in this context, emphasis is also given to internet technology that may play a significant role in enhancing the quality of life of senior citizens. The present study aimed at understanding the frequency and usage pattern of internet amongst senior citizens of different age group and gender and how it affects their quality of life. For the purpose of study questionnaires were distributed amongst the senior citizens. The results indicate the positive and significant relationship between the internet usage and quality of life of senior citizens.

Keywords: Internet, Senior Citizens, Quality of Life

1 Introduction

In today's world everyone is busy in their own assignments and due to this the senior citizens are more prone to loneliness and depression. As people grow older, they often lose touch with friends and family. It's difficult to make new connections with people because they are unable to participate in the activities they once enjoyed. The Internet has been able to help seniors reconnect with people and form new relationships and thus overcoming loneliness is that much easier through the Internet and social media. As more and more of the population ages and sticks closer to home, the Internet as a support and educational tool becomes ever more important. Technology has greatly enhanced the potential of our seniors feeling isolated and alone.

Quality of life is defined as the general well-being of a person or society, defined in terms of health and happiness, rather than wealth (Collins). The major factors that determining the quality of life of older people vary between groups of older people. According to the research findings from previous studies, the most common determinants for Quality of life for the older people are good health, social and intergenerational relationships, availability of friends and social support, and socio-economic status (Walker & Mollenkopf, 2007). With the invention of internet technology, the usage of internet is increases amongst the senior citizens. The aim of this study is to understand the internet usage amongst the senior citizens and to examine the impact of Internet use on the quality of life of the older people.

According to the Pew Research Center, The Internet usage is increases amongst 65 and older by 150 percent between 2009 and 2011, which shows the largest growth in a demographic group. Another study conducted by them in 2012 showed that out of the senior citizens who go online, 71 percent do so daily and 34 percent use social media. The senior citizens use these tools to bridge the geographic gap between them and their loved ones far away and as a way to re-connect with friends from a far off time. Studies also show that the internet has become an important portal for reducing isolation, loneliness and other depressive symptoms.

2. Review of Literature

Studies to date have revealed that older adults use computers for entertainment, education, as well as creative and business endeavors. Computer training helps them to increase productivity, learn skills and boost short-term memory. Electronic mail, online services and the Internet encourage socialization (Lawhon; Tommie, 1996).

Wright (2000) surveyed older internet users and found that those who frequently participated in online communities experienced less life stress and were more satisfied with their support networks than those who infrequently participated in online communities.

Various studies also have shown that the Internet facilitates social interaction and communication amongst the older people and older people can use the Internet to communicate with family members and friends (Sum et al., 2008a; White et al., 2002).

Shapira et al. (2007) explored the impact of Internet use and training on the sense of empowerment and well-being of seniors who attend day care centers for the elderly or reside in nursing homes. The researchers concluded that computer and Internet use improves well-being and sense of empowerment of the elderly by affecting interpersonal interactions and developing cognitive functioning, sense of control and independence.

Cotton R et.al (2013) while studying the impact of internet use on loneliness and contact with others among older adults found that internet usage may be beneficial for decreasing loneliness and increasing social contact among older adults in assisted and independent living communities.

Ractham et.al (2014) commented that social media usage have improved the satisfaction of senior citizens in five domains such as community, consumer, family, health, and work domains.

Penard and Mayol (2015) also state that Internet use allows individuals to complement their face-to-face interactions with family members and friends. Hence, the Internet helps the elderly people to communicate with others which in turn help them to protect from social isolation.

Kendall Van Blarcom discussed the five reasons senior citizens use internet more are Personal Fulfillment, Boosts Brain and Cognitive Longevity, Motivates Seniors to Exercise More, Improves Social Relationships and Decreases Depression senior citizens use internet

Hillary Schaub discussed the findings of the ACLP and OATS study which shows the online usage patterns of a growing population that is living in an increasingly digital world. Online proficiency is critical for older adults as Internet access is a major avenue to procure important information about healthcare, finances, and to communicate with family members.

3. Objectives of the Study

To study the frequency of usage of internet amongst senior citizens

To find out the different purposes for which the internet is used by the senior citizens.

To identify the impact of internet usage on quality of life of senior citizens.

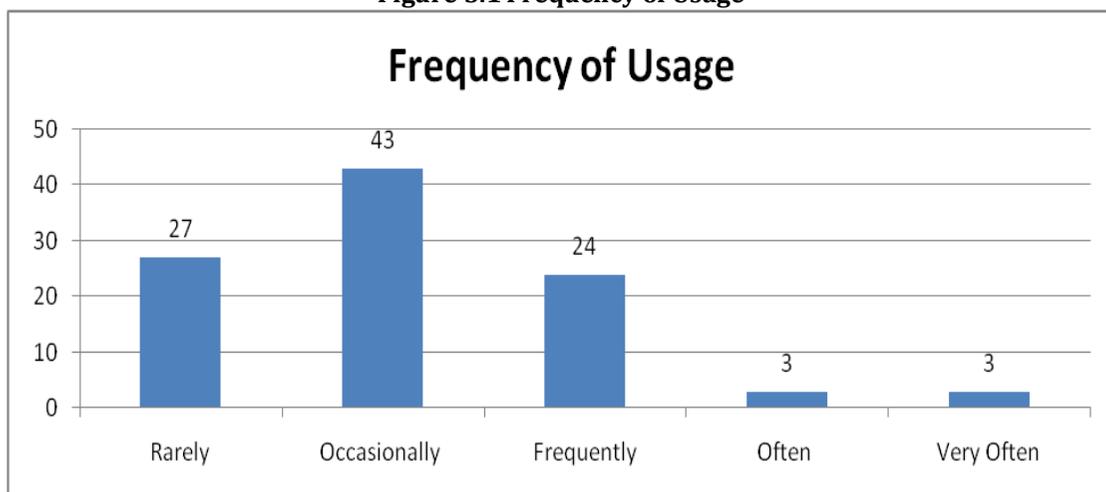
To study the internet usage amongst senior citizens of different gender and age group.

4. Research Methodology

The present study is mainly based on primary data collected from 100 senior citizens who are the users of internet in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh. A self-designed questionnaire was administered amongst the respondents. Non Probability Convenience Sampling Method was used for choosing the sample respondents. Statistical tools such as Independent t-test, Anova, Correlation and Pie Charts were used for analysis and interpretation of collected data.

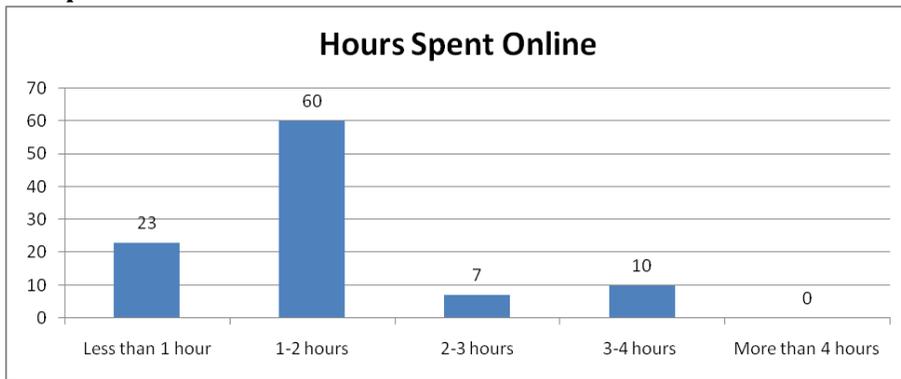
5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Figure 5.1 Frequency of Usage



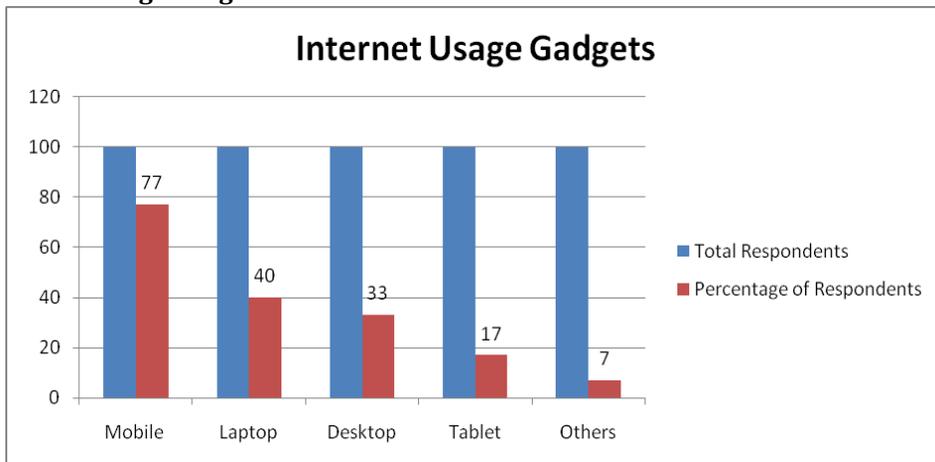
Out of total respondents 43% of the senior citizens use internet occasionally, 27% are using internet rarely, 24% are frequently using internet and the remaining 3% each using internet often and very often. Thus it can be said that the internet usage frequency amongst the senior citizens is less they generally used internet rarely or occasionally only 30% are using internet frequently or often.

Figure 5.2 Hours Spent Online



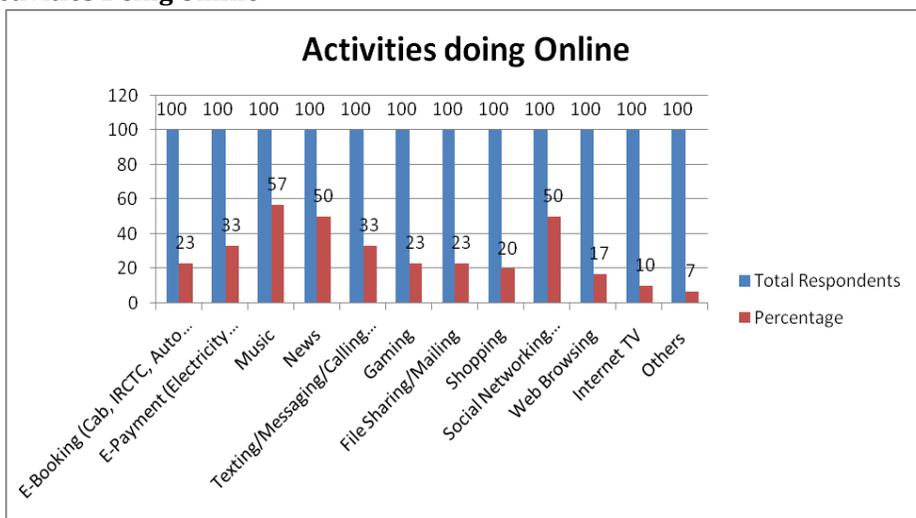
Majority i.e. 60% of the total respondents using internet 1-2 hours, twenty three percent are using internet less than one hour, 10% are using 3-4 hours and remaining 7% are using internet 2-3 hours. Thus it can be said that the duration of internet usage is less amongst senior citizens.

Figure 5.3 Internet usage Gadget



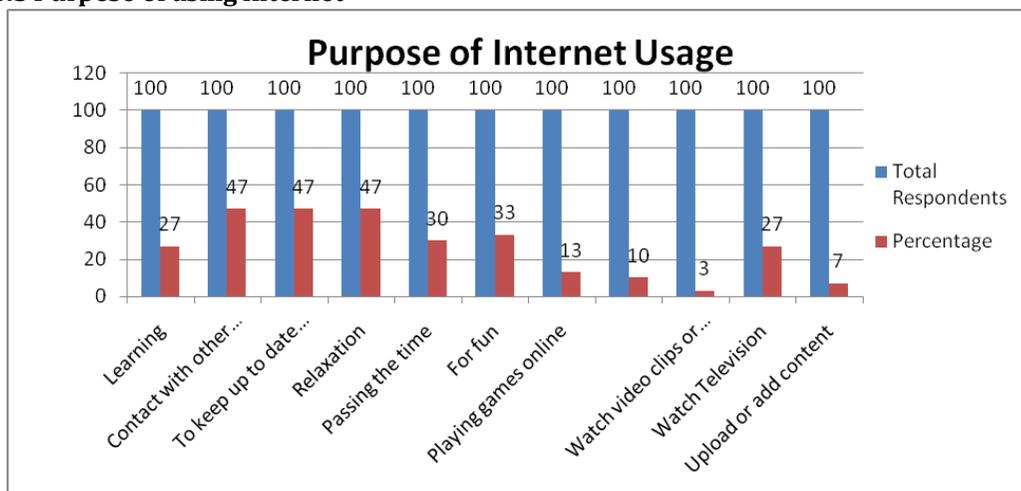
Majority of the respondents are using Mobile Phone to use the internet, other gadgets they have used for the using internet are laptop, desktop, tablet and others as shown above.

Figure 5.4 Activities Doing Online



The above graph shows that majority of the respondents are using internet for the purpose of music, social networking sites and news and then for other purposes.

Figure 5.5 Purpose of using internet



Majority of the respondents are using internet for the purpose of contact with other people, to keep updated with the news, sports and for relaxation where as others are using internet for passing the time, for entertainment and other purposes as shown.

5.6 Age and Internet Usage

Descriptives

Internet

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
55-60	7	2.2782	.42511	.16067	1.8850	2.6714	1.58	2.79
60-65	16	2.3067	.55794	.13949	2.0093	2.6040	1.16	3.00
65-70	5	2.4842	.58062	.25966	1.7633	3.2051	1.68	2.95
70 & above	2	1.7895	.96762	.68421	-6.9042	10.4832	1.11	2.47
Total	30	2.2951	.54875	.10019	2.0902	2.5000	1.11	3.00

ANOVA

Internet

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.694	3	.231	.749	.533
Within Groups	8.039	26	.309		
Total	8.733	29			

H1: There is no significant relationship between the age and internet usage amongst senior citizens. F-Value for internet usage by senior citizens is .749 and significance is 0.533 which means that null hypotheses H1 is accepted. This shows that there is no relationship between the age and internet usage amongst senior citizens.

5.7 Gender and Internet Usage

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Internet	Male	20	2.3026	.61352	.13719
	Female	10	2.2801	.41869	.13240

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	4.192	.050	.104	28	.918	.02251	.21625	-.42046	.46549	
Internet Equal variances not assumed			.118	25.031	.907	.02251	.19066	-.37013	.41516	

H2: There is no significant difference between the internet usage amongst male and female senior citizens.

Above table shows that p value is equal to 0.05, it shows that stated null hypotheses H2 is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference between the internet usage amongst male and female senior citizens. Thus it is said that male and female senior citizens are differ in their usage of internet. From the mean table it is clear that usage of internet is more amongst males as compared to their female counterparts.

5.8 Impact of Internet Usage on Quality of Life of Senior Citizens.

Correlations			
		Internet	QWL
Internet	Pearson Correlation	1	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	100	100
QWL	Pearson Correlation	.062	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	100	100

Above table shows the correlation relationship between the internet usage and quality of life of senior citizens. There is a weak degree positive correlation between internet usage and quality of life of senior citizens and its value is .062. This shows that quality of life of senior citizens is increases with usage of internet. P-value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Hence null hypotheses H1: There is no significant impact of internet usage on quality of life of senior citizens is rejected. Thus it may be said that there is a with the usage of internet quality of life of senior citizens is increases.

6. Major Findings and Conclusion

The findings of the study show that majority of senior citizens use internet rarely and occasionally for maximum of 1-2 hours. Internet usage is more amongst male as compared to female senior citizens. They are generally using internet for the purpose of contacting with other people by using social networking sites, to keep themselves updated with the news, sports and also for relaxation where as others are using internet for passing the time, for entertainment and other purposes. The research also shows the positive correlation between the internet usage and the quality of work life of senior citizens which shows that quality of life of senior citizens is improved after the usage of internet.

The study concludes that internet usage helps to improve the social relationships of senior citizens due to increased interaction with their near one's, they also feel independent due to control over the various activities in daily life and it also helps them in their leisure activities, develops positive attitude that leads to psychological and emotional wellbeing which in turn helps them to live life actively. Thus, it may be said that internet usage is bit increases amongst the senior citizens in past few years and it also helps the senior citizens in improving their quality of work life. Thus, development of proper policies encouraging senior

citizens to use the Internet is very important in order to prevent their omission from society and to improve their quality of life.

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