

Investigating Older Adults' Technological Needs for Social Activities

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Background

With the global phenomenon of the aging population, there is a widespread of interest on this population and how to improve their quality of life (QoL). Previous studies supported that the improvement of QoL leveraged the risk of having mental and physical health problems by increasing social interactions with others. However, how to articulate and integrate technological features to support various kinds of social activities remain unknown and require further investigation in details. Therefore, this preliminary study intends **to examine older adults' demands and preferences of social technologies.**

Method

The **qualitative methodology** of case study was adopted. Critical instances of **three older adults aged 65 and above were interviewed.** Participants were invited to assess their QoL, lifestyle, interpersonal interaction and social media use before the interview. In-depth, semi structured interview with visuals of several conceptual prototypes was conducted one-on-one to explore older adults' perceptions, preferences, and experiences of adopting current and possible future technologies to satisfy their social needs.

Table 1 Demographics of participants

	A	B	C
Age	70	86	66
Gender	F	M	F
Marital status	Married, cohabiting	Widowed	Married, cohabiting
# of children	4	4	2
# of grandchildren	9	5	1
Live alone within 3 months	No	No	No
# of co-residence	1	1	4
Co-resident	Spouse	Foreign caretaker	Children, family
Occupation	Agriculture	X	Saleswoman
Working time per week	4-5 hrs	X	40 hrs
Monthly living expenses	12,000-18,000 TWD (388-583 USD)	30,000-36,000 TWD (972-1,166 USD)	30,000-36,000 TWD (972-1,166 USD)
Education	Elementary school		University
Chronic diseases or degeneration	Yes	Yes	Yes

Results

- All experienced **increase in confidence of using technologies** such as mobile phones, video calls, and social media in their social life.
- Those who were primarily attached to their children and spouse expected the adoption of current technologies could **enhance social interactions with their children specifically.**

"I look forward to learn about my children, but not necessary my grandchildren.

最期待能瞭解兒女，孫子女不一定"

"It is good to provide social information, can understand each other's information... let children understand their parent's situation.

社交資訊還蠻好的，可以彼此瞭解... 多讓子女瞭解父母狀況"

- They were proactive about using those common technologies that were frequently used by younger generation.
- Preferred being laid-back with the major **concerns of disturbing their children**

"My daughter and son are very busy, you have to check their availability before calling. Eating by myself is faster

女兒、兒子都很忙，看誰有空才通話。自己進食可能比較快"



Figures An interview held during a dining session with self-cooked meals

Discussion

There were **demands for technologies** that could serve as **medium to facilitate social interaction and activities between older adults and their children.** Ongoing development of scenarios with social technological interventions based on the interview results is conducted to further our understanding toward older adults' needs for social technologies in details.

Acknowledgement

The authors thank Taiwan Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST 107-2923-S-002-001-MY3) for their grants that partially support this study.

