Determinants of digital media usage by older people based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. A qualitative and quantitative study within the research project DigiKomS

Heike Hausmann and Erko Martins

Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FHM) Rostock (University of Applied Sciences)

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this abstract should be addressed to Heike Hausmann, Research Project *DigiKomS*, Fachhochschule des Mittelstands Rostock, Kröpeliner Straße 85, 18055 Rostock, Germany. E-Mail: heike.hausmann@fh-mittelstand.de

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.
DOI: 10.18154/RWTH-CONV-245962

Abstract

Research questions

Which variables influence the usage of digital media by older people? To what extent is perceived exclusion of older people related to (lack of) interaction mediated via digital media? How can a learning workshop concept ("Lernwerkstatt") be developed, which enables older people to use digital media (more) and to participate in social life via digital media?

Theoretical background

To enable a targeted design of the learning workshop, digital media usage behavior, usage intentions and their determinants (attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) must be analyzed. The theoretical basis for this is provided by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which can be adapted in many ways and, in this case, is applied to media choice and media behavior. The chosen theoretical perspective leads to the assumption that the readiness of older people to use digital media cannot be achieved solely by increasing digital-technical skills. Attitudes toward the interaction with new media and the normative beliefs of the personal and social environment as well as other determinants must be considered. For the later design of the learning workshop, this will be used to develop a theory of planned media choice and planned media usage behavior in the context of digital media.

Method

Since the explanatory power of the TPB increases the more specific the questioned behavior is, (1) the digital media activities relevant for elders in everyday life will be explored. These are (2) examined in a qualitative interview study (N=25) (Francis et al., 2004) for influencing factors (TPB: attitude, subjective norm, and control). Obstacles and facilitating factors of digital media use are thus identified. For this purpose, both older people who do not (yet) use digital media (Offliner) and seniors who have already implemented digital media in their everyday lives (Onliner) are interviewed. The results obtained are the basis for the creation of (3) a standardized questionnaire, which is to map the

strength of behavioral factors as determinants of media choice and media behavior in a cross-sectional study (N=200, of which N=100 < 50 years; N=100 > 69 years). In addition, perceived social and societal sense of exclusion (Wenzel, 2014) and digital media use behavior by elders and their interaction will be explored. By quantitative-descriptive methods, the usage and choice behavior of digital media and their determinants will be described based on the framework model of planned media choice and media behavior, as well as their correlations and strength. These results are used as a basis for the development of the learning workshop.

Keywords: learning workshop, digital media, older people, theory of planned behavior

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211.* https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Francis, J. J., Eccles, M. P., Johnston, M., Walker, A., Grimshaw, J., Foy, R., Kaner, E. F. S., Smith, L., &Bonetti, D. (2004). Constructing questionnaires based on the theory of planned behaviour: A manual for health services researchers. *Centre for Health Services Research, University of Newcastle*. https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/1735/

Wenzel, K. (2014). „Wenn die Welt keinen Wert auf einen legt“. Entstehung und Auswirkungen subjektiv empfundener Exklusion (dissertation, University of Kassel). Uni Kassel Bibliothek. https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/handle/123456789/2014060245464