

EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL COMPETENCIES ON DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ATTITUDE AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE IN ISOLO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract—As technology permeates daily life activities, older adults in Isolo struggle to keep up. Progressing without them, many still find it difficult to join basic online conversations platforms. The descriptive survey design approach framework was adopted in this study to examine the influence of digital competencies on digital communication attitudes of older residents in Isolo Local Government Area. The research made use of cluster and simple random sampling techniques to select 250 respondents aged 60 and above participants included. A deeper dive reveals that device handling influences participants' feelings of staying connected in a consistent manner. Two hundred and fifty people over the age of sixty years from a variety of neighbourhoods shared their experiences first-hand. To avoid guesswork, questionnaires were used to gather responses, which were developed for this study context. The numerical data were converted into clear patterns of habits and feelings using SPSS 25.0. While the majority of participants have a gadget, more than 58 percent said they have some kind of digital tool, and one-third still have trouble getting reliable web access at all times. As participants become more comfortable with technology, they become more social and their confidence increases with their skill. However, there are still major challenges as ageing bodies make screens difficult to see or hear, confusion about devices persists and mobile data costs exclude many users. Training developed with specific needs in mind? More than 6 out of 10 said it just doesn't exist where they are. Older adults see technology as a way to maintain social connections with family and friends or to monitor health care needs. Sometimes it's a matter of cost, and cheaper internet service can help.

Index Terms—Older People, Online Conversations, Digital Competency, Digital Communication Attitudes, Isolo Local Government

I. Introduction

Communication in the digital age is increasingly dependent on the use of digital platforms like smartphones, social media, and email. With the constant advancement of technology, it is important for people to have a certain level of digital competence to use and interact with these technologies. With rapid technological developments and the widespread use of the internet, life, including school, work, and personal life, has undergone a significant transformation, as Hamzah, et al. (2023) noted. Since the internet has been part of everyday activities, examining how digital tool impacts human behavior should be explored now since we use devices all the time. Elderly people, however, may have difficulties in learning digital skills, which may impact their attitude towards using digital communication platforms. These challenges, in turn, can lead to the digital divide, in which elderly individuals may feel left out of the advantages of modern communication technologies (Charness & Boot, 2016).

Digital competency is defined as the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to use digital devices and applications effectively. Digital skills can have a significant effect on how older people can connect with family, friends and society as a whole. A number of studies have pointed out that older adults with low digital skills are at a higher risk of social isolation and lower quality of life (Helsper & Reisdorf, 2017). It is therefore crucial to enhance digital skills of older people to foster social inclusion and well-being in a more connected society. The attitude elderly persons towards using digital communication tools depends on their confidence and familiarity in using these tools. A positive attitude towards digital tools is correlated with higher levels of digital competency, and negative attitudes can result from fear, anxiety, and lack of experience (Vroman, Arthanat, & Lysack, 2015). The first reactions of elderly in the face of new digital platforms may be conditioned by the level of understanding as well as interaction with these platforms.

Tsai, Shillair, and Cotten (2017) found that digital literacy program participants had more positive attitudes towards digital communication technology in cases when elderly people being more likely to be engaged in such programs. These programs are designed to empower elderly people to navigate the digital world by giving them the knowledge and confidence to use digital devices. The impact of such programs, however, is dependent on the support that is offered, the complexity of tools to be learnt as well as the personal motivations of the individual. Thus, further investigation is required to find out how the digital literacy program can be maximized for positive communication attitude among the elderly. Factors affecting the adoption of digital skills among older citizens are age-related, such as cognitive impairment, physical disability and lack of familiarity with technology. Such barriers can cause frustration and withdrawals from the digital platform, which can confirm negative attitudes to the technology (Chen & Chan, 2014).

Furthermore, access to digital devices, affordable internet services and technological infrastructure is still a major challenge, especially in low-income and rural areas. In addition to communication, digital skills of older people are also relevant to access to public services and health care. The delivery of many health care services and government programs is increasingly being done online, which poses challenges for older people with low levels of digital competence who require access to information and support (Heart & Kalderon, 2013). With the global population ageing, it is important that older adults have the skills to engage with the digital world, which is a social and policy issue (Hargittai, Piper, & Morris, 2019). Although digital inclusion is increasingly being acknowledged as a social issue, older people are not always able to follow the pace of technological evolution. The first time they use a digital device and how they are taught to use it can have a profound impact on their acceptance and ongoing use of technology.

Statement of the Problem

Digital technologies are essential for communication, sharing information and social engagement. In a more and more connected society, the capacity to use digital technologies effectively is crucial for maintaining relationships, accessing services and engaging in everyday activities (van Dijk, 2020). But many older people still struggle to learn the digital skills they need to engage with the digital world with confidence. Low digital competence can have a negative impact on older people's attitudes towards digital communication technologies. People without the skills may feel uncertain, frustrated and anxious when using digital platforms, which can make them less likely to engage in online communication. This can lead to social isolation, limited access to information, and challenges in maintaining relationships with family, friends, and broader social networks (Charness & Boot, 2016). Digital exclusion among older people has been exacerbated by the growing digitisation of healthcare, government services, financial transactions and social interactions. Digital skills are becoming increasingly important for accessing services and opportunities, and people who do not have them may struggle to access these (Czaja et al., 2019). Digital exclusion is therefore a major issue for the health and social integration of older people. Digital literacy programmes have been developed to enhance the digital skills of older people, but there is limited evidence of their effectiveness in fostering positive attitudes towards digital communication (Lee, Coughlin, & Thimbleby, 2019). Additionally, many older adults are still feeling overwhelmed by the speed of technological change, and are reluctant or resistant to using digital communication tools. In view of these difficulties, it is necessary to investigate the correlation between digital competencies and digital communication attitudes of older people.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What is the current level of digital competencies among elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?
2. What are the attitudes of elderly people toward digital communication tools in Isolo Local Government Area?
3. How do digital competencies influence the digital communication attitudes of elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?
4. What factors affect the development of digital competencies among elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?
5. What are the main barriers preventing elderly people from effectively using digital communication tools in Isolo Local Government Area?

II. Conceptual review

2.1.1 Digital Competencies

Digital competences are complex conceptual constructions that attempt to define the knowledge and skills to carry out actions in the academic, labor or vital field for social development. Digital competences are basic and advanced skills for the achievement of human interrelationships, learning and teaching to achieve human communication (Engen, 2019). Therefore, we define Digital Competence as the set of values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that permit the use of the tools required for managing information when dealing with any task or problem presented in the environment. These tools can be, on the one hand, computing devices and on the other, a range of telematic programs and services (tools) enabling us to search, select, organize and process data (Gutierrez, Prendes & Castaneda, 2015). Digital competencies are multidimensional set of capabilities required to navigate and use digital environments productively, safely, and ethically (Meyers et al., 2020). Claro et al. (2018) highlight digital competence as the ability to effectively use technology for communication, problem-solving, information management, and digital content creation in a way that meets ethical standards.

Spante et al (2018) defined digital competence as the ability to use digital tools in meaningful ways for communication, problem-solving, creativity, and engagement in digital environments. Digital competence is the ability to use digital tools, applications, and communication platforms to access, manage, and critically evaluate digital information, communicate and collaborate, and create and share content online (Ilomäki et al., 2016). Redecker (2017) emphasized that digital competencies encompass the ability to engage in online collaboration and communication, as well as the skills required to access, evaluate, and share digital content responsibly. Carretero et al (2017) define digital competence as the ability to use digital technologies in everyday life and work, to search for, evaluate, and use information critically, communicate and collaborate effectively, and solve digital problems.

2.1.2 Digital Communication Attitude

Digital communication refers to the exchange of messages, data, and information using electronic devices and digital technologies, which involves transmitting and receiving information through digital tools. This process involves the transmission and reception of information through digital tools, enabling organization and individuals to interact with each other in real-time or exchange messages at different times and collaborate remotely which may not be separated from the workflow (Bordi et al., 2018). Floridi (2018) defines digital communication as the transmission of information via digital platforms and technologies that enable interaction and collaboration between individuals and groups in digital environments. Digital communication is the exchange of messages, including text, images, audio, and video, through digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, and email (Moreno et al., 2017). According to Sokolova and Perez (2021), digital communication is the process by which individuals or organizations use digital channels and tools to interact with others, facilitate collaboration, and exchange information.

According to Khang et al. (2020), digital communication is the process of using electronic and digital platforms to send messages and encourage interaction in different contexts such as personal, organizational, and marketing communication. Digital communication is the process of sharing information, ideas, and content digitally, both synchronously and asynchronously (Baym, 2017). Digital communication is defined by Van Dijck et al. (2018) as the way people communicate, share content and have public and private conversations in digital environments. According to Smith and Anderson (2018), digital communication is the use of digital technologies such as social media, email, and messaging apps to communicate and connect in a networked society. Digital communication is the sharing and distribution of digital information via digital channels, such as text, multimedia, and interactive, that enable connection and interaction (Nielsen et al., 2019).

Digital communication is defined by Andrejevic and Selwyn (2020) as the process of communicating information via digitally mediated technologies, in which the sender and receiver can interact in real time or in a delayed manner. Digital Communication is defined by Lim et al (2021) as the communication, collaboration and dissemination of content through digital communication with a focus on speed, reach and interactive possibilities.

2.1.3 Benefits of Digital Communication among Elderly People

Digital communication technologies can assist older people to stay connected with family and friends, which combat loneliness and social isolation. Older adults can use video calls, social media and instant messaging to connect with others, even from a distance. This connectivity has been demonstrated to increase their mental health and well-being overall (Gonzales et al., 2018). Older adults can access news, health information, and education online quickly and easily via the internet or digital platforms. This helps to improve their autonomy and quality of life (Xie et al., 2020) as it helps them to make informed choices regarding their health, finances and day to day activities. Using digital devices such as apps and online games has been associated with mental activity in older adults. These activities can help maintain their cognitive skills and help postpone age-related cognitive decline. The learning of new technologies is also a mental exercise and it helps to improve memory and attention (Yoon et al., 2022).

Telemedicine and digital health communication platforms enable older people to speak with health care providers from their homes. This convenience lowers the amount of in-person visits required and makes healthcare more accessible, particularly for individuals that have difficulty moving or live in rural regions (Polinski et al., 2017). Emotional support can be provided through digital communication, with elderly people being able to join online support groups or forums to share their experiences and feelings. This emotional connection creates a sense of belonging, which minimizes anxiety and depression, especially in the case of a person with chronic illness or those who have experience loss (Chopik, 2019). Older adults can continue to perform tasks such as shopping, banking and booking with digital tools and retain their independence. It helps maintain their dignity and autonomy, as they are able to manage their daily activities without the need for the help or support of others (Wang et al., 2021).

There are many opportunities to learn online for older adults, from courses to tutorials. Older adults who engage in lifelong learning have been found to experience an increase in cognitive functioning, purpose, and life satisfaction (Kamin et al., 2020). Some older people enjoy using electronic gadgets for entertainment, for example, listening to music, viewing films or playing online games. These activities allow them to relax and enjoy themselves, helping to improve their emotional well-being and happiness (Nimrod, 2020).

2.1.4 Challenges of Digital Communication Attitudes among Elderly People

Our technology is essential, it's part of our lives on a day to day basis. Navigating from place to place in a digital space is for many one of the more important skills they can acquire in their lifetime. However, there are a lot of barriers and pitfalls to be overcome before the digital lives that many older adults will be anticipating become possible. For elderly people, the anxiety and apprehension of using new technologies can be common, as they may be afraid of breaking or making a mistake. This anxiety results in resistance to use digital communication tools to the point of limiting their use. Such training to decrease this worry has yielded mixed results. Lack of confidence is one of the major factors that hinder digital inclusion (Xu &

O'Brien, 2021). Many elderly have a problem with modern technology, using the internet would be very annoying for them.

Older residents, like the elderly, are less likely to be digitally literate than younger people. This gap makes it difficult for them to effectively use digital platforms for communication. Digital literacy programs have been developed, but they are not always scalable and engaging (Choi & DiNitto, 2022). The younger generations' digital skills can make some elders feel excluded and isolated.

Modern digital communication tools are too complex for older people to handle as their cognitive function decreases. For older people, the experience is frustrating, and they are not able to navigate around the online platform or retain information. Although developers are recommended to provide simplified user interfaces, this is not always the case (Naudé et al., 2019).

Physical limitations

Physical impairments like reduced motor function, sight and hearing pose a major obstacle to digital device usage. Older adults find it challenging to use modern communication tools due to the small buttons, the small text and the complex hand movements needed, causing a need for adaptable tools that are not widely available (Berner et al., 2020).

There are a lot of older people out there who don't trust online privacy and data security. Cybersecurity threats and personal data misuse have led to a reluctance to interact online. This is especially true due to a lack of confidence in their ability to privacy settings correctly (Torous et al., 2018). Moreover, older adults might be concerned about security and privacy of their personal information when using online services, especially regarding data breaches and identity theft that have occurred recently.

The old usually do not have immediate family members or friends to help them learn and troubleshoot digital problems. This lack of social support results in a sense of isolation, and they are less likely to seek help or invest time in learning. Formal education programs are still underfunded and underdeveloped in this demographic (Schreurs et al., 2017).

Access to devices and a good internet connection are needed for digital communication, and may be expensive. Many older people have fixed incomes and may choose to spend money on other essentials rather than on high-tech equipment or Internet access. This is because these economic factors make it difficult to engage in digital activities on a regular basis (Nimrod, 2021).

Cultural resistance

Older adults' resistance to digital communication is also influenced by cultural factors. Older people tend to prefer traditional methods of communication like phone calls and in-person interactions as more authentic and meaningful. This cultural resistance makes it more difficult to persuade them of the advantages of digital communication (Niehaves & Plattfaut, 2022).

III. Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory

George Homans, an American sociologist, is the main developer of Social Exchange Theory, which was developed in the 1950s. He was influenced by economic principles and behavioral psychology. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) also made a major contribution to the development of SET with their work on the "interdependence theory" which extended and clarified Homans' original concepts. George Homans presented Social Exchange Theory which states that social behavior can be viewed as a cost-benefit analysis. He used principles of behavioral psychology to describe how people try to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs in their social interactions. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) further developed the theory by emphasizing the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and the evaluation of the outcomes of those relationships. They came up with the idea of "comparison level" meaning the criterion people use to measure the rewards and costs of their relationships.

For elderly people, digital communication can be a rewarding way to connect with family and friends, which can help alleviate loneliness. Digital competencies provide access to a vast amount of information, which can be a positive thing when it comes to health, money and everyday life. Engaging with digital technologies can provide cognitive stimulation, which is perceived as a reward for mental exercise and

learning. The first time and effort to learn digital skills can be seen as a cost. The process can be difficult or frustrating for elderly people. Problems such as device malfunctions or internet connectivity issues can be seen as costs, impacting their overall experience and attitude towards digital communication. Data security and privacy issues may be seen as a major expense and affect their adoption of digital communication tools.

Good digital skills can help to create a balance in communication opportunities, minimising the gap between tech-savvy elderly people and those who are not. Fair access to training and support can enhance their attitudes towards digital communication. Elderly people's attitude is influenced by how much they rely on digital communication for social interaction and information. Increased reliance on these tools can result in more positive attitudes if the digital experience is rewarding. Digital competencies can change the power dynamics in communication, giving elderly people control over their communication and information management. This empowerment can have a positive impact on their attitude towards digital communication.

Technology Adoption Models

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was propounded by Fred Davis in 1986. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was developed by Fred Davis to account for user acceptance of technology. TAM was designed using the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and is based on two main constructs: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU). Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU); the degree to which a person believes that using the technology will be free of effort and Perceived Usefulness (PU); the degree to which a person believes that using the technology will enhance job performance (Lourenço de Oliveira Mariano, 2021). The model was extended to TAM2, which added other factors such as social influence and cognitive instrumental processes. The objective of TAM2 was to enhance the model's explanatory power in terms of user acceptance. TAM3 was developed, which included other constructs like computer self-efficacy and computer anxiety. TAM3 offered a more complete framework by considering the impact of these factors on PEOU and PU. Digital skills that make technology easier to use, including intuitive interfaces and user-friendly designs, improve the ease of use for older people. When they find digital communication tools easy to use, their attitudes towards these tools become more positive. Elderly people are more likely to have a positive attitude towards digital communication tools if they feel that they can use them to communicate with family, access information, or manage their daily tasks effectively. These benefits can be emphasized through training programs, which can increase their perceived usefulness.

Methodology

This work is based on a survey methodology and targets the elderly in Isolo, to understand their perception of technology. The method is selected because it allows the real-life perspectives to be clearly seen and answers to emerge without being forced. Those who participated are sixty years old or older, about thirty-two thousand of them reside there, perhaps a little more. The names were not chosen at random, but clusters first, then individuals at random, and then two hundred fifty voices were included. The nature of their responses was influenced by how they spoke about gadgets and connection.

From a custom-built survey came the data, one that used a five-point rating system split into themes matching what the research aimed to explore. It was reviewed by experts to ensure that questions were sensible and covered the appropriate content. Thirty respondents in Kosofe Local Government Area were tested in a small trial and Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the consistency of the answers. All of this was brought into SPSS version 25, and the numbers became counts, averages and proportions. What came out was analyzed with simple summaries intended to reveal the patterns.

IV. Results

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Items	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Gender	Male	185	76.1
		Female	58	23.9
2.	Age	60-65 years	173	71.2
		66-70 years	44	18.1
		71 years and above	26	10.7
3.	Educational Level	No formal education	27	11.1
		Primary education	86	35.4
		Secondary education	96	39.5
		Tertiary education	34	14.0
4.	Marital Status	Single	10	4.1
		Married	176	72.4
		Divorced/Separate	52	21.4
		Widowed	5	2.1
5.	Occupational Status (Prior to Retirement)	Formal employment	80	32.9
		Self-employed	78	32.1
		Unemployed	40	16.5
		Others (specify)	45	18.5

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.1 above, showed that 76.1% of the respondents were male while 23.9% were female. Also, 71.2% of the respondents fall within 60-65 years, 18.1% fall between 66-70 years, while 10.7% respondents fall above the age bracket 70 years. The table shows that 11.1% of the respondents had no formal education, 35.4% had primary education, 39.5% had secondary education, while 14.0% had tertiary education. More so, 4.1% respondents were single, 72.4% were married, 21.4% were divorced/separated, while 2.1% were widowed. Furthermore, 32.9% respondents had formal employment, 32.1% were self-employed, 16.5% were unemployed, while 18.5% had other occupations.

4.2 Answering of Research Questions

Table 4.2: What is the current level of digital competencies among elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?

S/ N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
6.	Access to at least one digital device (e.g., smartphone, tablet, or computer) is readily available.	142 58.4 %	64 26.3 %	22 9.1%	15 6.2%	0 0.0%
7.	Regular internet access is available for personal or social use.	78 32.1 %	28 11.5 %	29 11.9 %	81 33.3 %	27 11.1 %
8.	Basic tasks such as turning on and navigating digital devices are performed without assistance.	62 25.5 %	59 24.3 %	47 19.3 %	55 22.6 %	20 8.2%
9.	Digital devices are used daily for communication or entertainment purposes.	94 38.7 %	69 28.4 %	20 8.2%	41 16.9 %	19 7.8%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.2 indicated that 58.4% respondents strongly agree that access to at least one digital device (e.g., smartphone, tablet, or computer) is readily available, 26.3% agreed, 9.1% were neutral, 6.2% disagree while none strongly disagreed. The finding showed that 32.1% respondents strongly agree that regular internet access is available for personal or social use, 11.5% agreed 11.9% were neutral, 33.3% disagree while 11.1% strongly disagree. The finding also showed that 25.5% respondents strongly agree that basic tasks such as turning on and navigating digital devices are performed without assistance, 24.3% agreed, 19.3% were neutral, 22.6% disagree while 8.2% strongly disagreed. The finding also showed that 38.7% respondents strongly agree that digital devices are used daily for communication or entertainment purposes, 28.4% agreed, 8.2% were neutral, 16.9% disagree while 7.8% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.3: What are the attitudes of elderly people toward digital communication tools in Isolo Local Government Area?

S/ N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
10.	Digital communication tools make it easier to connect with people outside of my immediate area.	114 46.9 %	40 16.5 %	37 15.2 %	40 16.5 %	12 4.9 %
11.	Digital communication tools are a valuable resource for managing health information and appointments.	73 30.0 %	101 41.6 %	4 1.6% 	46 18.9 %	19 7.8 %
12.	Digital communication tools are helpful in keeping up with news and current events.	97 39.9 %	105 43.2 %	1 0.4% 	32 13.2 %	8 3.3 %
13.	Using digital communication tools makes staying in touch with family and friends more convenient.	150 61.7 %	74 30.5 %	12 4.9% 	7 2.9% 	0 0.0 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.3 indicated that 46.9% respondents strongly agree that digital communication tools make it easier to connect with people outside of my immediate area, 16.5% agreed, 15.2% were neutral, 16.5% disagree while 4.9% strongly disagreed. The finding showed that 30.0% respondents strongly agree that digital communication tools are a valuable resource for managing health information and appointments, 41.6% agreed 1.6% were neutral, 18.9% disagree while 7.8% strongly disagree. The finding also showed that 39.9% respondents strongly agree that digital communication tools are helpful in keeping up with news and current events, 43.2% agreed, 0.4% were neutral, 13.2% disagree while 3.3% strongly disagreed. The finding also showed that 61.7% respondents strongly agree that using digital communication tools makes staying in touch with family and friends more convenient, 30.5% agreed, 4.9% were neutral, 2.9% disagree while none strongly disagreed.

Table 4.4: How do digital competencies influence the digital communication attitudes of elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?

S/ N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
14.	Digital communication has made it very easy to maintain communication with family and friends.	165 67.9 %	62 25.5 %	14 5.8 %	1 0.4% 	1 0.4%
15.	Digital communication helps reduce feelings of isolation.	148 60.9 %	84 34.6 %	11 4.5 %	0 0.0% 	0 0.0%

16.	Higher digital competency makes digital communication more enjoyable.	88 36.2 %	96 39.5 %	3 1.2 %	41 16.9 %	15 6.2%
17.	Having more digital skills improves the confidence in communicating with others online.	84 34.6 %	82 33.7 %	4 1.6 %	39 16.0 %	34 14.0 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.4 indicated that 67.9% respondents strongly agree that digital communication has made it easier to stay in touch with family and friends, 25.5% agreed, 5.8% were neutral, 0.4% disagree while 0.4% strongly disagreed. The finding showed that 60.9% respondents strongly agree that digital communication helps reduce feelings of isolation, 34.6% agreed, 4.5% were neutral, while none disagree and strongly disagree. The finding also showed that 36.2% respondents strongly agree that higher digital competency makes digital communication more enjoyable, 39.5% agreed, 1.2% were neutral, 16.9% disagree while 6.2% strongly disagreed. The finding also showed that 34.6% respondents strongly agree that having more digital skills improves the confidence in communicating with others online, 33.7% agreed, 1.6% were neutral, 16.0% disagree while 14.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.5: What factors affect the development of digital competencies among elderly people in Isolo Local Government Area?

S/ N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
18.	The physical condition of elderly individuals (e.g., vision, hearing) impacts their ability to develop digital skills.	106 43.6 %	73 30.0 %	2 0.8 %	45 18.5 %	17 7.0%
19.	The willingness of elderly people to engage with technology is crucial in the development of their digital competencies.	56 23.0 %	79 32.5 %	8 3.3 %	49 20.2 %	51 21.0 %
20.	Having previous experience with technology makes it easier for elderly people to develop new digital competencies.	75 30.9 %	88 36.2 %	3 1.2 %	67 27.6 %	10 4.1%
21.	Access to the internet is essential for elderly people to enhance their digital literacy.	61 25.1 %	111 45.7 %	4 1.6 %	56 23.0 %	11 4.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.5 indicated that 43.6% respondents strongly agree that the physical condition of elderly individuals (e.g., vision, hearing) impacts their ability to develop digital skills, 30.0% agreed, 0.8% were neutral, 18.5% disagree while 7.0% strongly disagreed. The finding showed that 23.0% respondents strongly agree that the willingness of elderly people to engage with technology is crucial in the development of their digital competencies, 32.5% agreed, 3.3% neutral, 20.2% disagree while 21.0% strongly disagree. The finding also showed that 30.9% respondents strongly agree that having previous experience with technology makes it easier for elderly people to develop new digital competencies, 36.2% agreed, 1.2% were neutral, 27.6% disagree while 4.1% strongly disagreed. The finding also showed that 25.1% respondents strongly agree that access to the internet is essential for elderly people to enhance their digital literacy, 45.7% agreed, 1.6% were neutral, 23.0% disagree while 4.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.6: What are the main barriers preventing elderly people from effectively using digital communication tools in Isolo Local Government Area?

S/ N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
22.	Lack of technical skills and knowledge make it difficult for elderly people to use digital communication tools.	98 40.3 %	99 40.7 %	29 11.9 %	14 5.8%	3 1.2 %
23.	Fear of making mistakes or breaking digital devices hinders elderly people from using communication tools effectively.	96 39.5 %	120 49.4 %	22 9.1%	5 2.1%	0 0.0 %
24.	The cost of internet and digital devices is a barrier for elderly people to use communication tools.	103 42.4 %	112 46.1 %	1 0.4%	14 5.8%	13 5.3 %
25.	There is insufficient support and training available for elderly people to learn how to use digital communication tools.	148 60.9 %	99 40.7 %	3 1.2%	29 11.9 %	14 5.8 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.6 indicated that 40.3% respondents strongly agree that lack of technical skills and knowledge make it difficult for elderly people to use digital communication tools, 40.7% agreed, 11.9% were neutral, 5.8% disagree while 1.2% strongly disagreed. The finding showed that 39.5% respondents strongly agree that fear of making mistakes or breaking digital devices hinders elderly people from using communication tools effectively, 49.4% agreed, 9.1% were neutral, 2.1% disagree while none strongly disagree. The finding also showed that 42.4% respondents strongly agree that the cost of internet and digital devices is a barrier for elderly people to use communication tools, 46.1% agreed, 0.4% were neutral, 5.8% disagree while 5.3% strongly disagreed. The finding also showed that 60.9% respondents strongly agree that there is insufficient support and training available for elderly people to learn how to use digital communication tools, 40.7% agreed, 1.2% were neutral, 11.9% disagree while 5.8% strongly disagreed.

V. Discussion

Surprisingly, over half of older adults in Isolo have a gadget, but that does not mean they are online regularly. Even though phones are common in city areas across Nigeria today, around one-third cannot count on steady internet. Owning something isn't the same as using it well. Some folks manage just fine without help; twenty-five percent figure out core tasks all by themselves. Nearly two out of five stay in touch through apps such as WhatsApp or watch videos on YouTube every day. Gaps remain when tools exist but connections fail. Older adults feel good about using digital tools because they help them stay close to loved ones and keep track of their health. Because of lockdowns during the coronavirus outbreak, many now see tech as key for staying in touch with relatives around six out of ten say it's vital. People also rely on online platforms such as organisation websites to schedule doctor visits and keep abreast current happenings. When someone understands what they're doing, fear fades, and connection grows: nearly 61 percent report feeling less alone thanks to these skills.

However, barriers are accumulating when it comes to digitizing everyone. Nearly 44% of respondents reported that a lack of visual or auditory function, a condition that may come with age, made learning more difficult. Too many people are afraid to try something because they fear they will damage their product or press the wrong button; confidence plays just as much of a role in this area as the tools do. These individual issues are exacerbated by the lack of assistance, and by the cost of mobile plans. While there is a desire to remain connected online, improvement can only be realized through reduced costs and teaching methods that suits older adults' lifestyles.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study highlighted significant issues of digital accessibility and usage of the respondents, using a representative sample of Isolo Local Government Area in Lagos State, Nigeria. The survey revealed salient information regarding internet access and use among the Internet Users in Nigeria. The penetration of digital devices is growing, with the majority of people having access to at least one digital gadget. But challenges like limited internet access and varying levels of digital literacy highlight the disparities in digital inclusion. Moreover, the fact that most people have digital devices to communicate and entertainment suggests that they are becoming more relevant in daily life. The results indicate that although efforts have been made to improve access to technology, there are still gaps to be filled in terms of infrastructure, affordability, and the development of digital skills, which requires further action. The study identified that digital platforms enable older adults to stay connected to family and friends, have less social isolation and have more positive communication experiences, especially for those with higher digital competence.

Moreover, digital skills are a key factor in confidence for online activities and digital services. The results highlight the role of digital technologies in social well-being and in enhancing the communication between older adults in Nigeria. Results also suggest that digital tools help communication not only in immediate geography but also help to access health-related information, news and current affairs and to maintain personal relationships. These outcomes collectively indicate the growing intertwining of digital technologies in daily life and its significance in Nigeria's changing social and economic landscape. The study also reveals that there are a number of factors which affect the capacity of older people to acquire digital competencies. Physical difficulties are also important restricting factors in the use of technology, especially vision and hearing. At the same time, the openness to technology and experience of using digital devices can foster the growth of digital skills. A robust internet connection also proved to be an important factor for meaningful digital participation and digital literacy.

Results also reveal the spectrum of problems faced by older people in the adoption of digital communication technologies. There are several barriers, including lack of technical knowledge and skills, fear of making mistakes or breaking devices, financial barriers of buying devices and internet services, and lack of training and support. These limitations not only impede older persons' capacity to incorporate digital technologies into their everyday lives, but they also aggravate the digital divide, restricting their access to critical services and possibilities for social involvement.

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