

A Study of Older People's Motivations for Using WeChat in Tangshan, China

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of social media platforms has overturned traditional modes of interpersonal communication, access to information and personal lifestyles, challenging traditional concepts of interpersonal communication and social communication. It has had a significant impact on the thinking and behaviour of older people, as well as promoting the creation of new modes of social communication and social interaction. Although older people are not the mainstream social media users, with the advent of an ageing society, social media has penetrated the older population, and the rate of social media use among older people has increased significantly especially in China. WeChat, as one of the most commonly used social media, has become the leading choice for people to communicate with each other online. The emergence of WeChat has brought together traditional communication and new Internet technologies. This paper takes WeChat as an object of study and examines the motivation of older people to use WeChat based on the theory of uses and gratification. The study finds that the motivations of older people for using WeChat can be divided into four categories: expressing concern, strengthening contact, obtaining and sharing information, and presenting oneself.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature on the understanding of elderly's motivations in using WeChat and their needs in using social media. The findings help to better assist older people in using WeChat to avoid becoming "digital refugees" in modern society and to promote the development of an actively ageing society.

1. Introduction

China has the largest elderly population in the world and is also the country with the fastest growing ageing population. Data shows that by the end of 2018, the number of people aged 60 or over in China reached 249 million, accounting for 17.9% of the total population, with 167 million people aged 65 or over accounting for 11.9% (Pang, 2019).

China has entered a comprehensive ageing society, and the many issues that come with it require urgent attention. With the development of society and the improvement of people's living standards, the life of the elderly is no longer only satisfied with the basic material needs of life but also pursues spiritual satisfaction. Combined with the seventh national census data and the data released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of December 2020, the Internet penetration rate of the middle-aged and elderly people over 45 years old was 62.8%, and the Internet penetration rate of the elderly people over 60 years old was 38.6% ([Research Report on Internet Access Behavior of Middle-aged Groups in 2021, 2021](#)). This shows that the Internet is gradually penetrating the middle and senior age groups. Among them, WeChat, as a new type of mobile communication tool, provides a new way of communication for people's daily life, and also makes some changes to the original information dissemination and social structure. The operation of WeChat is relatively simple and the content is relatively rich, which attracts the elderly to participate in it, using WeChat to help them obtain Information and strengthen communication with the outside world ([Wang, 2017](#)). WeChat social interaction is believed to help enrich the social life of the elderly, meet the spiritual needs of the elderly, and promote the realization of active aging ([Yu, 2019](#)).

Older people are 'digital refugees' who have never been exposed to the Internet and are gradually becoming surrounded by online social networks, even becoming 'silver-haired low-lifers'. In this process, older people have shown different and unique motivations for using WeChat than younger people.

A search of the China Knowledge Network reveals a lack of research on the motivations of older people for using WeChat. A comprehensive understanding of the motivations and characteristics of older people's WeChat use can better guide older people to use the Internet correctly and provide guidance for theory and practice.

With age, the physical fitness and function of the elderly will gradually decline, and these internal physical changes will also cause changes in the mentality of the elderly. When facing changes in many aspects, some elderly people tend to close themselves to a small living area and lack communication with the outside world. Therefore, they need a way to vent their loneliness from social life ([Ji, 2016](#)). The emergence of social media WeChat can help people break the limitations of the region, time and space, and effectively maintain and expand people's contacts and exchanges with the outside world. The use of WeChat by the elderly helps to increase the frequency of their communication with the outside world, thereby helping the elderly rebuild their social communication system ([Yu, 2019](#)). This enhances the motivation of the elderly to use WeChat. Based on this, the researchers took WeChat as the platform, the elderly as the research object, and the uses and gratification theory as the theoretical basis to explore the research question, what motivates the elderly to use WeChat?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The current status of WeChat use by the elderly in China

There are many research documents on WeChat in academia, and the overall trend is increasing. The research angles are also diversified. Among them, there are more studies on media literacy, WeChat government affairs, WeChat marketing, and WeChat official accounts. However, there are still few studies on the use of WeChat among the elderly in China. Regarding the basic situation of the elderly's use of WeChat, in the survey and

analysis of the use of WeChat among the elderly in Beijing, [Zhao \(2017\)](#) analyzed the contact and use of WeChat among the elderly based on the theory of innovation diffusion, and proposed the application of the functions of WeChat by the elderly. It is narrower, less use of WeChat payment functions, games, shaking and other functions are rarely used, basically staying at WeChat data transmission and Moments functions. The research is also based on the theory of uses and gratification to explore the characteristics and influence of the use of WeChat among the elderly, including the media needs of the elderly, use of scenes, and communication dependence.

[Qi \(2017\)](#) selected the elderly in the main urban area of Baoding City as the research object, using questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews and other methods, focusing on the behavioral preferences of the elderly for WeChat and the functional orientation of the elderly in the use of WeChat, and proposed that WeChat elderly There is no obvious gender difference between users. The age distribution is concentrated in the 60-69 years old. Most of them are non-empty nesters, living with their spouses and children, and have a relatively high economic level. Secondly, with regard to the exploration of the motives of the elderly in using WeChat, [Cai and Zang \(2012\)](#) started from the perspective of "behavior and result" and proposed the relationship between new online media and the elderly. "Acquisition (information and knowledge)", "sharing (emotion and life)" and "participation (community and society)". [Tang \(2015\)](#) and others mentioned that for the elderly, WeChat is returning from the entertainment and pastime tool at the initial use stage to a communication tool and social tool, and their dependence on WeChat is increasing. Most of their motives for using WeChat are to increase family affection, social entertainment, and save money.

Finally, with regard to the research on the influence and factors of the use of WeChat by the elderly, [Li \(2017\)](#) proposed that WeChat has gradually become an important tool for the elderly user groups to contact relatives and friends, enhance interpersonal interaction, and broaden the scope of making friends. Most elderly users tend to show their life world on WeChat, and through "social sharing" to deepen the communication and communication between family and friends, narrow the information gap between generations, and make the elderly feel better and better. Life satisfaction has improved significantly. [Peng \(2018\)](#) believes that the social model of the WeChat network not only breaks through the limitations of the physiological function and life circle of the elderly to a certain extent, but also allows them to find a sense of belonging among family members, friends and classmates, and gain in real social life attention.

In terms of information circulation and functionality, social networks not only bring changes in the way of communication for the elderly, but also include a "return" to mainstream social life. However, in the long process of using WeChat, the elderly user groups may be unfamiliar with the use of WeChat due to their own media literacy. The limited awareness of personal security protection may result in not paying attention to the protection of personal privacy information and not understanding the interface and functions of the WeChat software. Relatively complex technologies such as operating procedures may also cause the elderly to have certain technical thresholds in the use of WeChat. [Chen \(2017\)](#) studied the use and adoption of WeChat among the elderly over 60 years old in Shenzhen from the perspective of the digital divide. The perception of popularity among peers) and structural factors (equipment, external support, etc.) analyzed the obstacles of the elderly in the adoption and use of WeChat.

2.2. The conceptual and theoretical framework of motivation

Early communication theories usually regarded the communicator as the primary research factor, believing that the audience only passively receives the content produced by the communicator (Jiang, 2019).

This view ignored the audience's consciousness, as the information produced by the communicator could quickly elicit a response or even dictate their behaviour. With the development of information dissemination methods, the number and channels through which audiences can receive information have increased rapidly, allowing them to choose the content and channels of information.

Use and gratification theory states that audiences can use media based on specific needs and motivations and show different types and degrees of initiative in their behaviour (Katz, 1974). With the advent of the Internet era and the emergence of various new social media based on the development of information technology, users have been empowered to produce and exchange content, transforming audiences from passive recipients of information to creators and redistributors of information, participating in the process of information dissemination in all aspects. In the context of this shift in audience identity and function, the question of whether use and satisfaction theory can explain the use of new media and whether people's motivation for using media has changed has come to the fore. Depending on the focus of the research, there is no consensus on the definition of 'motivation' in different disciplines. In psychology, *motivation* is defined as "the coordination of one's intrinsic requirements with external triggers for behaviour under the influence of self-regulation, resulting in a motivating factor that inspires and sustains behaviour", and as a rational person, the more an individual expects an outcome, the stronger the motivation is likely to be (Zhao, 2014). The relationship between motivation and behaviour is more complex; not all behaviour derives from the influence of motivation, but motivation largely influences the occurrence of behaviour (Zhang, 2014) and is, therefore, the leading intrinsic cause and motivator of behaviour.

The ultimate aim of influencing audience choice behaviour is to get audiences to produce usage behaviour, which becomes motivation when the need is recognised and becomes the driving force that sustains the occurrence and completion of the behaviour. Needs and motivations are the key factors influencing audience choice behaviour (Zhang, 2014). The theory of use and satisfaction is often used in mass communication research to examine the psychological and behavioural effects of mass communication by analysing what motivates audiences to access the medium and what motivations are satisfied by accessing the medium. In this paper, we extract the motivations of older people for using WeChat based on the uses and gratification theory (Katz, 1974).

3. Methodology

This study focuses on elderly in Tangshan, China that has about 22 housing homes. Only one was chosen that is Sunshine Community because its occupants are mostly healthy and are active users of smartphones. There are about 52 occupants in the Sunshine Community. The researchers had initially planned to interview 12 to 15 respondents but eventually 10 were interviewed as saturation data had reached its point.

This research used in-depth interviews to explore elderly's motivations in using WeChat and samples were chosen using a snowball sampling method. This is done by selecting

familiar and eligible elderly as interviewees and then asking them to provide some other familiar and eligible members. The cycle repeats itself to form a snowballing effect as a way to obtain a more efficient and accurate research sample.

All respondents must be of voluntariness. Respondents were provided with an informed consent for the interview and received an explanation about this in order to allow the respondents to have a general understanding of the research objectives; privacy, and confidentiality for the respondents and interview content. Respondents can also decline to continue the interview sessions if they feel uneasy or uncomfortable with the situation (Liming Shi, 2017). Permissions from the caretakers and family members were also obtained. Each interview took about 40 to 50 minutes and the interview locations were varying from a community park to an activity room for the elderly and the interviewee's home. All interviews were recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

This research used thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning (or "themes") in qualitative data (Virginia & Victoria, 2006). The transcription was coded to identify themes. Then the data were analysed using NVivo software to get connections and patterns among the themes. NVivo has two functions: data sorting and text encoding, helping researchers sort the original data into more accurate types, topics and concepts and then perform in-depth explanation and theoretical mining through the functions of word frequency analysis, node analysis, and relationship model (Given, 2008).

4. Result

Through Nvivo11 coding analysis (see Table 1), it can be seen that the needs of the elderly using WeChat are divided into five categories: tool use, information acquisition, leisure and entertainment, self-presentation and interpersonal interaction. Their reference points are 21, 43, 34, 56 and 143. There are relatively more reference points for self-presentation and interpersonal interaction among them. The "reference point" figure indicates how many places the need is mentioned. This paper introduces the "reference point" concept or frequency in the analysis, which represents the number of codes under a particular node (the content represented by the same overview) in the target text—the greater the number of codes, the greater the need for the elderly to use WeChat.

Table 1: The needs of the elderly using WeChat

Theme	Reference point	Example
tool usage	21	"It's very convenient to pay with WeChat now. I use WeChat to pay for grocery shopping every day in the market, and I also use WeChat to transfer the living expenses to my children who go to school every month." A6 ; "I sometimes use WeChat as a learning tool. It has a collection of dialects and Chinese and English dictionaries. When encountering some words and words that you do not understand, you will write them and look them up in the dictionary. If you do not understand pronunciation, you can also output them by voice. It is very convenient and easy to operate. Practical value" A1

information acquisition	43	"Now as soon as something happens outside, WeChat can know immediately. A few days ago, a child was lost in our village. The whole circle of friends was helping to forward the search. By mobilizing everyone's strength, the child was quickly found. WeChat is so convenient to obtain and disseminate information." A9; "I usually subscribe to and follow WeChat public accounts. When I have time, I will read some content related to my interests, as well as current affairs news, health care, chicken soup for the soul, etc., These meaningful things help me a lot" A3
leisure and entertainment,	34	"Sometimes I will play some WeChat test games. For a period of time, I have played a small game to test my age and physical sensitivity. Every time I get addicted, I am used to opening the practice test every day when I have nothing to do. It can be regarded as a test. It's a little fun" A2; "I usually like to listen to Teochew operas, watch funny videos, online novels and feng shui articles on the WeChat public account, which are also regarded as entertainment." A7
self-presentation	56	"I like to post on Moments, and I will share the photos I take when I go to play with others as a record of my life; I will post current news and educational articles to benefit others, and I will also post interesting videos and pictures, so that the Let's be happy together" A4; "The content I share in my Moments is selective. Now there are too many boring, negative and overly entertaining things on WeChat. Useless information will not be posted in Moments by myself, and it will have a bad impact." A7
interpersonal interaction	143	"My four sisters are not in Tangshan, they are scattered all over Tangshan. We usually start voice and video chat in the WeChat group, which is convenient and saves money. I also named our WeChat group as 'Wuduo' Jinhua' haha" A2; "I will often chat in groups at home, with friends, and occasionally in travel groups. Everyone shares travel photos and travel experiences in the group, which can broaden their horizons and recognize More friends to chat, why not do it" A5

4.1. The motivation of the elderly to socialize on WeChat

By compiling and coding the interview data, the motives of the elderly socializing on WeChat can be divided into four aspects: expressing concern, strengthening connection, obtaining and sharing information, and presenting oneself. Due to space reasons, some codes are combined and shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Motivation of the elderly to socialize on WeChat

Theme	Mentioned	Example
expressing concern	6	"I won't be stingy with likes in the circle of friends, because I think a like expresses your concern and concern for others, and lets them know that you are following him (her), which is actually a kind of information exchange and interaction" A6; "Sometimes

strengthening connection	7	<p>when I see some good health care articles, I will habitually post it to the family and classmates for everyone to read, so that I and others can benefit, and it is also to express my concern for others. A10</p> <p>"I have some close friends and relatives who live far away and are not easy to meet. We rely on WeChat to communicate daily. After we have WeChat, we have more contact with them than before, and our relationship has become better. "A4;" Through the WeChat group, I added some old classmates from the past. I am very grateful to WeChat for this platform, so that friends and classmates who have not been in contact for more than ten years have been restored. Friendship with classmates who have been in touch for many years"</p> <p>A1</p>
obtaining and sharing info	9	<p>"My family members are all in different places. I have video chats with them every day when I have time. My family members usually take videos of their daily life or my grandson's every move and share them in the group, so that I can always know what they are doing, I feel that they are always by my side" A9; "Sometimes I see videos, beautiful music, and health care articles with positive energy, extensive knowledge and reference learning value, and they will be forwarded to others to share. Everyone learns from each other and benefits each other as a fun addition. and growing insight" A4</p>
presenting oneself	10	<p>"I like to post on Moments, and I will share the photos I take while playing with others as a record of my life; current news, educational and helpful articles will be posted on Moments, so that others can</p> <p>I also benefit from it. I will also post interesting videos and pictures when I see them, so that everyone can be happy together." A1; "I often "post" pictures of myself playing with my family, parties with friends and classmates in the circle of friends and sharing myself with others. The beautiful life and feelings of "A3</p>

4.2. Self-presentation

Cooley (2015) once pointed out that self-presentation is one of the instinctive emotions of human beings. There are also various self-presentation behaviors of the elderly in online social media. From the interview data, it can be seen that the elderly is willing to show their individuality and express their social emotions through WeChat. The interviewee (A1) said:

"I usually like to show myself in the circle of friends, and share the life photos of myself and my family going out to play and class reunions to others, and sometimes I may just share a song, an article. Wen, I just want to pass on my happiness and happiness to everyone."

In the strategy selection of self-image management, the elderly are more cautious in their self-presentation. On the one hand, the elderly adopts the strategy of "avoiding shame and embarrassment". The respondent (A7) said:

"I usually don't send friends much. Because I feel that my cultural level is low, I am worried that the content I post on Moments is of no value and connotation, and no one wants to read it; including group chats, the same is true. Sometimes the links shared in the group are not responded to by anyone, and I feel that If I don't have a sense of existence, I will rarely speak in groups in the future."

On the other hand, the elderly will adopt the strategy of "showing a positive image". The respondent (A2) said:

"I will consider many factors when posting on Moments, and I will not post sensitive topics. I want to express my views appropriately, so the content that is more inspiring to myself and others will be posted on the Moments."

The interviewee (A5) also said that the content shared by the Moments that he usually posts is somewhat different. The ones she chooses are generally positive and educational content. Now there are too many boring and overly entertaining things on WeChat, and useless information will not be sent casually, for fear of affecting others and making others feel that you are overreacting. It is meaningless for people to post all kinds of information in the circle of friends.

At the same time, respondents often check WeChat to learn about other people's news. They rarely publish original information themselves. Most of the news they publish is to forward other people's information to gain a sense of identity and belonging. Since the interpersonal interaction in the WeChat of the elderly occurs in the network of strong ties, in reality, the image that the elderly WeChat users strive to build on the WeChat platform will more directly affect the views of others in their offline daily life. By constantly adjusting and shaping their roles, the elderly present themselves in real-time in the WeChat interpersonal circle, conveying a positive self-image to other groups.

4.3. Expressing concern

Connecting with people and emotional communication is an integral part of the life of the elderly, and the WeChat platform is a new way for the elderly to socially and emotionally communicate. For the elderly, WeChat meets their need to care about the people around them. They can use WeChat to convey their concerns and greetings anytime, anywhere, manifested in the "likes and comments" of the elderly group in the circle of friends. Most of the interviewed senior citizens said they would like and comment on the circle of friends of their relatives and friends, and the frequency of likes was relatively high. For example, the respondent (A6) said:

"Even if some friends are not in the same city as they are, and they get together less often, they will not lose contact, and I will often like and comment on others on WeChat Moments...give others encouragement and support, and tell them that they have been following him".

Another interviewee (A3) also said:

"I have some classmates who like photography, writing calligraphy and singing Teochew opera, and they often share it in the circle of friends. I will like these when I see it or if there is a happy event such as a friend hugging

a grandson, moving to a new house...I will also comment on congratulations and express my concern and blessing to them. Everyone tacitly understands that after the other party receives the blessing, I will also thank myself in the form of likes or comments."

In this interpersonal interaction between you and me, the emotional connection with each other is also deepened invisibly. It shows that in the use of WeChat social interaction by the elderly, the likes or comments in the circle of friends play a role of emotional comfort and, to some extent, create a harmonious atmosphere of interpersonal communication.

4.4. Strengthening connections

WeChat has become an essential tool for the elderly to connect with friends and strengthen connections. Most of the retired elderly in China have more spare time. They hope to actively participate in social activities as before, communicate and interact with friends, and be recognized and respected by others to reduce loneliness, increase a sense of comfort and a sense of belonging. Thus, they choose to get rid of the emptiness and enrich their lives by contacting the Internet. Moreover, WeChat provides such a platform so that the elderly can increase the number of communications with their family and friends outside through WeChat. The elderly also relies on WeChat to expand their spiritual world, extend and establish their network social circle, and enrich their later life. The interviewee (A9) said:

"I will chat with my friends privately through WeChat every day, and I will also actively participate in discussions in the group. It is not necessarily that there is something important to talk about, but I am used to saying hello to everyone every day. In my free time, I just chat about everyday things."

The interviewee added that in fact, he is used to greeting "punch cards" every day, which is also a state of informing the other party that he is in a healthy state, that's all. If someone is usually active but suddenly goes silent for a while, we all worry that something is wrong. Another interviewee (A1) said:

"I have resumed contact with an old classmate who I haven't been in touch with for a long time through WeChat. Before, I chatted with an old classmate who had not been in contact with him for more than ten or twenty years. It's been a long time, and I've been in touch now. When I only had phone calls before, it was very difficult to find people who haven't been in touch for a long time, because it's not always possible to find or contact them."

Because of the convenience of WeChat, the elderly can find friends who have not been in contact for a long time, break the distance of time and space, and communicate with each other more frequently. It can be seen that WeChat helps the elderly maintain daily social interaction and restore contact with old friends.

4.5. Obtaining and sharing information

An interview with Clay Shirky by [Song \(2014\)](#) revealed that the digital audience is not only willing to receive information but also willing to participate and share. We are in a world

of sharing, and everyone is enjoying the "bonus" that sharing brings. With the growth of their age, the retired elderly group has the emotional need to obtain and exchange information and soothe their emotions. In addition to obtaining information, they are more willing to share information with others and maintain a positive state of life. Moreover, WeChat provides such a platform, and the elderly can speak freely on WeChat, share and transmit all kinds of information, and undoubtedly promote the connection between people. An interviewee (A4) said:

"Through the open platform of WeChat, the channels for receiving information from the outside world are no longer blocked. I can learn a lot from it, share and communicate with friends, and take the best and get rid of the dross. So as to get a comprehensive understanding and thinking".

The above shows that the information shared by the elderly may be on health care, entertainment and leisure, life knowledge and news. Through sharing via WeChat, they can achieve their emotional sustenance. They often share this information with their younger children in order to show a caring and helping role. In addition, from the above analysis of the motivation of the elderly's WeChat social interaction, it can be said that the elderly's WeChat social interaction has the structural characteristics of "renting" and "flatter" as the core.

In traditional Chinese social interaction, people pay great attention to flattery and sophistication. Reciprocity is also reflected in all aspects of social interaction. WeChat social networking is the overlap and extension of real social interaction. In the interpersonal communication of WeChat, an "acquaintance community", the elderly considers flattery and affection in every occasion. On the one hand, the elderly gets good comments from others by presenting themselves in WeChat Moments. On the other hand, the elderly gives favours to others by caring, praising, thanking, etc., all of which have strong Chinese cultural characteristics and strong formalism (Zhu, 2014).

5. Discussion

Older people's motives for using WeChat can be classified into four categories: expressing concern, strengthening contacts, obtaining and sharing information, and presenting oneself. This finding is in contrast to previous studies on older people's motivations in using WeChat by Cai and Zang (2012) which concluded that older people's demands for new media such as WeChat are acquiring information and knowledge. This study delves further into the needs and motivations of older people in using WeChat.

Social media enables older people to enrich their lives and access more information. The use of social media by older people can effectively reduce feelings of loneliness which is an important issue faced by older people in current society. Loneliness mainly refers to the unpleasant or even painful experience in which individuals subjectively feel isolated due to the lack of human contact (Jiu, 2019). As social media has broken through geographical limitations, it can bring people closer together online, enabling older people to strengthen their links with family and friends. In China, social media, represented by WeChat, is not only a tool for people to communicate but also plays a vital role in transportation, quick payment, news, and entertainment. Young people are using WeChat extensively while older people are also trying to use it under the guidance of the next generation in order to increase communication opportunities with their families and establish their circle of friends. Even if children or family members are out of town or even

abroad, they can instantly contact each other and express their concerns through mobile phone videos and voice messages. Various family groups and old friend groups have become the main content of WeChat for the elderly. Social media such as WeChat, which is utilized by many people who are part of a person's circle of acquaintances and relatives, has created conditions to eliminate the loneliness of older people. On social networks, older people re-establish their way of interacting with their circle of friends. Especially for activities that older people love, such as travel, sports and fitness, as well as square dancing, WeChat has become the primary means of contact and communication, actively building their social network and reshaping their social identity.

In the Research Report on the Internet Access Behavior of Middle-aged Groups in 2021 [Zhao \(2018\)](#) points out that the Internet use of middle-aged and older people is focused on both communication and information acquisition. About 75.8% of older users go online to read news and information, and 45.9% of middle-aged and older people follow and browse WeChat public articles ([Zhao, 2018](#)). In the traditional media era, people could only passively receive information by reading newspapers and watching television, but they could not readily disseminate and share the information they saw. In the era of new media, one can receive the latest information and share developments anytime and anywhere. This has led to a significant increase in the daily use of WeChat by the elderly, enriching their spare time and keeping them abreast of the latest developments. In particular, older people are most concerned about health and wellness information online. They choose to use the internet, particularly social media to gain knowledge and best practices, which can be effective in health care and in the prevention of illness.

The findings also revealed that older people too can gain a sense of well-being through self-presentation and interpersonal interaction through WeChat. Once older people have completed their self-presentation on WeChat by forwarding messages, sharing their thoughts and activities, trimming videos, photos, and so on, they will look forward to feedback from others. This feedback usually come from the likes, comments, and retweets of friends and family members. Through the feedback from others, older people gain emotional rewards, and complete their image of themselves. At the same time, they feel that their messages have been recognized and that they are gaining social support and respect, increasing their social participation. This positive emotion encourages older people to use the Internet more actively, to have a more positive attitude toward life, to be exposed to new things, to participate in various social activities, and build a network of people, thus forming a positive cycle and contributing to a greater sense of subjective well-being.

6. Conclusion

With the continuous development of media technology, social media represented by WeChat brings convenience for the elderly to obtain information. Also it provides a new platform for the elderly to self-present themselves and change the way they do interaction and socialization to a certain extent. It breaks the autistic state of the elderly due to geographical restrictions, leaving work and other reasons, and provides convenience for the elderly to broaden interpersonal communication and participate in social life. Most importantly, it increases the sense of belonging and self-efficacy of the elderly. It continues to exert social influence in interpersonal interaction among the elderly.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

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