

Research on the use and satisfaction of social media for the disabled: an analysis based on qualitative interviews

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Abstract. Social media is one of the keys to helping people with disabilities integrate into society. It can empower people with disabilities so that they can participate in social activities like normal people. This article interviewed special groups with cerebral palsy and leg and foot disabilities in the community and on social media platforms. Based on the analysis of interviews, people with disabilities use the communication function of social media to chat with familiar people and other functions for entertainment. Social media has no barriers and restrictions, which can be better integrated into social life for people with disabilities. At the same time, the convenience of social media helps people with disabilities solve difficulties in social life and meet their use and needs. In addition, in view of a series of problems such as the use of the Internet by persons with disabilities exposed some complex functions and the lack of exclusive websites for persons with disabilities, this paper provides some improvements for the future use of the Internet by persons with disabilities.

1 Introduction

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities are defined as "including persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which interact with various barriers and may prevent persons with disabilities from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others."^[1] China has more than 85 million people with disabilities, including 17 million visually impaired people, 20 million hearing-impaired people, and 70 million people with reading and writing disabilities. According to statistics, on average, one in 16 people suffers from a disability or mental retardation. In relatively developed cities in China, many streets have help centers for the disabled and community care stations. Despite the help and support of society, the living environment of disabled people in China is still not optimistic.

The Internet is called an international network. It is a collection of networks and then forms a large network. Social media is an Internet-based application program, and web2.0 is the basis for these applications and allows social media users to create and share their content ^[2]. Social media provides a free platform for Internet users to create their Internet files, who can record their lives through text and pictures. At the same time, they can also find information and make friends through social media and users can create a sense of satisfaction by expressing their opinions or sharing their lives ^[18]. The main social media in China are WeChat and Weibo. Both platforms are free for users and meet the needs of

users for social communication. When they use the internet, they can easily get information and have a new replaceable method to contact others ^[7]. Disabilities can chat with others and know the society or entertainment news from social media, which means social media provides a platform for disabilities to have a social connection with others. This article believes that both the Internet and social media platforms provide users with the opportunity to express their views on important news and share things in life to help them achieve self-worth satisfaction and self-needing.

As a necessary media communication channel in people's lives, social media has brought a lot of speed and convenience to a wide range of people. However, whether disabled people, as a vulnerable group, can use the Internet well or help their lives through the Internet has aroused my interest. At the same time, there has also been a discussion in society about the Internet providing a platform for the employment of people with disabilities. The use, motivation, and impact of social media for people with disabilities on their lives have always been a discussion issue, so this article aims to study the way and motivation people with disabilities use the Internet and the impact of the Internet on their lives. Can the Internet empower people with disabilities? Can the Internet provide substantial life help to socially vulnerable groups like people with disabilities? What role does the Internet play in the lives of people with disabilities? Does it play an empowerment role? This is not only the research content of the communication but also has research value in sociology. The Internet helps vulnerable groups gain their rights and interests and

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promote social equality, which has a substantial impact on promoting the equal rights of all groups in society.

Many pieces of literature use theories of use and satisfaction and other theories to study the impact of Internet use for persons with disabilities, and very few scholars have discussed the motivation for using the Internet and their sense of social integration. The help and impact of "social networking+" technology on the integration of people with disabilities into society [11]. The topic has theoretical and practical research significance, and plays a social research significance in the applicability of the use and satisfaction theory of social media to disabled people and the Internet to help them integrate into society. What is the difference between the motivation of people with disabilities or disabilities and normal people to use social media? And the changes in the influence of the media on the quality of life of people with disabilities are directions that have not been summarized before. Can social media empower people with disabilities and improve their social life and help them find the same group as themselves? The purpose of this study is to study the motivations, habits, and ways in which people with disabilities use the Internet.

2 Literature review

2.1 Overview of the theory of use and gratification

2.1.1 Use and gratification theory

The theory of use and satisfaction is based on psychology and communication, through which people's motivation and needs to use the media are studied. Use and Gratification Theory is a media use paradigm in mass communication research, which is used to guide consumers to evaluate media use and acquisition motivation [13]. At the same time, this theory explains the social reasons and psychological and action motivations of people who use the media to satisfy their behavior. From the perspective of users, the use and satisfaction theory is closely related to their needs [14]. Generally speaking, the theory of use and satisfaction analyzes the psychological and behavioral impact and significance of the media spread to them from the perspective of the audience. However, the theory of use and gratification focuses on the psychological factors of people using the Internet or social media, but ignores the restrictions on realistic conditions and social environment. The theory of the psychological factors is escape from freedom.

2.1.2 The relationship between social media use and gratification theory

Because the theory of use and satisfaction originated from communication, it is related to media such as social media and the Internet [2]. People's use of mass media is related to the dissemination of the Internet. The law of

simultaneous use and satisfaction also studies how the use of social media or the Internet brings users satisfaction or self-affirmation value [13]. Users who use social media or the Internet must be active, interactive with others, and have clear goals to be the basic condition for using and meeting the theory [4]. Because the interactivity of the Internet is consistent with the importance U&G attaches to user activities, the Internet leads to more research on U&G[14]. The motivation to use social media is discussed from the perspective of social and psychological factors of the audience like disabled people [8]. The Internet allows users to actively communicate and participate in the use, and it also provides research on the theory of use and satisfaction. The use of the Internet also has different motivations, such as finding interesting things in life, learning a skill, or simply consuming time. Omar classifies these motivations: as looking for information, finding entertainment, social interaction, etc. [13]. As smartphones became more and more widely used, the law of use and satisfaction began to strengthen the study of the mobile Internet. Compared with mass media, the Internet is more interactive and synchronous [20]. Therefore, according to the law of use and satisfaction and the investigation of user psychology, it can be seen that the Internet can meet the sharing needs and uses the value of users. The correspondence between the intention of U&G theory for the plan and the self-satisfaction caused by the former [17].

2.2 A review of theories on the use of social media by people with disabilities

Internet use is the key to making people live better lives. Internet use is the behavior of social individuals to carry out different forms of network activities through the Internet to achieve personal purposes[19].The Internet provides a place for people to participate in social interaction, which promotes the development of communication and interpersonal relationships[20].

People with disabilities focus on their physical or mental impairments that prevent them from performing complex tasks. Therefore, though disabilities can work, they earn less than normal people for their work. Research shows that disabled people can use the internet in their daily lives [12]. People can realize their value by using the Internet, because they can share their lives, write their comments, and chat with others in the social media without discrimination. Otherwise, disabilities can see that other look them as normal people, which can make them feel comfortable and help them realize that there are lots of people support them. This theory also applies to people with disabilities. The use of the Internet can bring people's livelihood to the disabled and the disabled. Although the Internet can help people with disabilities overcome physical and mental limitations, people with disabilities have barriers to the use of the Internet [21]. Some people with disabilities have congenital symptoms that affect brain development and intellectual development, such as cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. They don't have the level of living and

use the Internet. Some patients with cerebral palsy can do the most basic work of normal people after training and education, such as sweeping and stringing clothing tags. But their brains still can't use social media. People with disabilities have some psychological problems because of their shortcomings, and they are unwilling to communicate too much with the outside world. Some people feel that they cannot be accepted by society and are not understood by society, so they refuse to socialize with others. Social media can help people with disabilities improve their social level and frequency, and they can make friends and reduce loneliness on the Internet[5]. The Internet brings self-confidence and self-esteem to the disabled. They can easily use the Internet to understand society, integrate into society and greatly reduce their sense of loneliness. Information technology is usually characterized by new technologies, which can reduce the distance between mainstream society and marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities. Thus creating a more inclusive and affinity social environment [15].

The use of the Internet and social media by people with disabilities has also brought them employment opportunities. According to the China Disabled Employment and Entrepreneurship Network Service Platform as an example, since it was officially launched in 2017, the platform has stabilized 250,000 disabled people and enterprise users, with a total number of 82,000 jobs [6]. Internet employment brings new opportunities for people with disabilities to have a new way of life, which can better reflect their values. According to the statistics of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, every year, more than 68,000 disabled people have achieved online employment through information technology, including e-commerce, live streaming, etc., and more than 200,000 disabled people have been employed and started businesses on various e-commerce platforms. Most of the surveys and analyses of the use of the Internet by people with disabilities use the real-name survey, but some people with disabilities and people with disabilities are unwilling to be accessed and surveyed by others, so they have some limitations.

This paper studies the Internet use of disabled people based on the theory of use and satisfaction, and uses qualitative interviews to analyze the basic situation of disabled people using the Internet. Research is carried out based on the reasons why people with disabilities use the Internet and their impact on their lives.

According to the above analysis, this paper studies the following problems through qualitative interviews and literature research:

Q1: How do people with disabilities use the Internet or social media?

Q2: The purpose and motivation of disabled people to use social media?

Q3: How do people with disabilities use the Internet? Q4: What kind of life changes do the use of the Internet and social media bring to people with disabilities? What needs have been met?

3 Research method

The purpose of this study is trying to find out the motivation of people with disabilities to use social media and the impact of social media on their lives. The research method used in this study was in-depth qualitative interview analysis. Firstly, having a communication with interviewee for 15 to 20 minutes about their use of social media and analysing the social media impact on them.

3.1 Data sources

Because I visited the disabled community when I was a child and did some simple work with them, I had a greater interest in the living conditions of people with disabilities and their family background. The test site is the care center for the disabled in a street in Yuexiu District, Guangzhou. As the old city with the largest population density in Guangzhou, the number of disabled people is relatively large. Moreover, the living support facilities in Yuexiu District are complete, and the government also has subsidized relief funds in terms of humanistic care. As a result, there are many care centers or rescue stations for the disabled in urban areas, which also provides convenience and diversity for the experiment. The experimental disability care center is located in the street, and the location is a little difficult to find. People with disabilities usually do some simple work there, and as long as they stay there for a day, they can get a subsidy of 20 yuan. The number of disabled people is fixed and needs to be reviewed before they can enter the community for simple manual work. The stability of personnel facilitates investigation and research and in-depth qualitative interviews, which is conducive to the accuracy of the results

3.2 Research process

This experiment is an in-depth qualitative interview. The researchers will conduct in-depth research and exchanges with the interview group and observe and understand the specific situation. Based on the information collected and the information summarized in the interview, the experimental results and conclusions are obtained.

First of all, as a researcher, I will first outline to determine the experimental process and then list the questions to be studied on the disabled. At the Disability Care Center at the pilot site, I will first carry out basic work and a simple greeting exchange with them, so that we can get familiar with each other before conducting the next interview. Due to respect for the privacy and will of persons with disabilities, all interviews can only be carried out with their consent. Initially, the interview was conducted one by one, with a total of four people. The age stages of the four persons with disabilities interviewed were different, one was 19 years old, the other was 50, and the other two respondents were 35-40 years old; the age group was different, so Internet usage and use were also different. After the four interviews,

there will be a symposium that is stress-free for the interviewees. Considering the psychological factors of people with disabilities, I intend not to let disabled respondents feel too much pressure. The whole experimental process needs to be natural to make the interviewees with disabilities feel comfortable, so the type of this interview is a semi-structured interview. The interview questions are as follows:

(I) The use of social media

1. What is the way to use the Internet or social media?
 2. When do you usually use social media?
 3. Why do you use the Internet or other social media software?
 4. What is the length of time to use the mobile phone?
- (II) The impact of social media use
1. Does social media can bring any substantial help to life?
 2. What emotions or knowledge do you use social media to gain?
 3. Does social media can help interpersonal and social connections?
 4. Does social media use can have a positive impact on the family?
 5. Does social media use can affect your work?
 6. Is the current mobile phone or all other Internet access convenient for you?
 7. Do you think there are any shortcomings in social media? Is there anything to improve the use of social media for people with disabilities?

3.3 Research findings

3.3.1 The situation of interviewees

There are five interviewees, all from different ages. All four interviewees have certain mental defects, which have a certain impact on the use of social media. The last interviewee is not an employee of the disabled factory, but a netizen I met on social media.

The interviewee No. 1 is 19 years old. Although his intelligence is not as good as that of his peers, he can also communicate normally. It can't be seen from his appearance and interview that he is mentally retarded, but his memory is less different from other behaviors of normal people.

Respondent No. 2 was 39 years old man with no physical disabilities. But there are some defects in his brain that make it difficult to sleep at night, so his memory and mental state are average.

The interviewee No. 3 was a 35-year-old woman. Although her mental development is abnormal, she can communicate normally. Some things that are normal for ordinary people and work are very difficult for her.

The interviewee No. 4 is a 54-year-old uncle. He is middle-aged, but his intelligence is not mature. He can't control his laughter and can only communicate in the most basic way.

Respondent No. 5 is a 35-year-old middle-aged office worker. The author met and interviewed the interviewees from the Disabled Super Topic of the social media software Weibo. Respondents only have leg

disabilities, which has little impact on the use of social media.

Table 1. Interviewees' basic situation

Number	Gender	Defects	Times
1	Male	Memory impairments	20mins
2	Male	Mental problems	12mins
3	Female	Mild hand disability and poor memory	10mins
4	Male	Immature intellectual development	7mins
5	Female	Broken leg	15mins

3.3.2. Respondents' use of social media:

The use of social media by the author's five interviewees is divided into three stages: less than one hour a day, one hour to an hour and a half, and more than an hour and a half. Three respondents used social media within an hour (numbers 2, 3, and 4), and the other two respondents were from an hour to an hour and a half (number 1) and more than one and a half (number five).

According to the use of social media by five different respondents, the author divides different uses into three types: basic use, flexible use, and advanced use.

Basic use: No. 4 respondent's mobile phone operation is too difficult for him. He can only make the most basic phone calls and text messages, and other more complex functions need to be carried out by seeking the help of others.

No.4: "It's too difficult for me to operate my mobile phone. I can barely use it to make phone calls, and no other functions work."He still hopes to have the opportunity to try using social media alone. During the interview, he was also interested in my mobile phone and asked me what kind of mobile phone I was using and what functions I had. Usually, he uses social media, just to call his family and greet each other. Social media provides a small platform for him to be interested in trying new things for him. For the improvement of social media platforms, he said, "I want to try to learn to use software such as WeChat, but it's a little difficult for me. Every time my family teaches me, I will forget it after a while. If only there were a more convenient way."

Flexible use: No. 2 respondents used social media on his mobile phone to help him record some important events and names and addresses in his life. The most commonly used software is a memo, because, in addition to recording something, he can also write some diaries

about a day's life. In addition to using his mobile phone to take notes, he will also browse and read on some comic and novel websites, and also watch some movies on weekends to enrich his life. Social media allows him to chat with his family, and usually uses WeChat to communicate some life problems with his family when he gets off work. He thinks video calls are very convenient, just like face-to-face chats can convey messages quickly.

No. 2: "My family will miss it when I'm outside. Video calls can make me rest assured."

In addition, he sometimes uses the applet on social media to scan the code to ride a shared bicycle or take a bus with the traffic software of his mobile phone. He feels that he doesn't need to bring a wallet or transit card with a mobile phone. The job information of the disabled factory was obtained through social media software, and it was lucky for him to find a suitable life and work with his mobile phone. He wants to learn some skills to edit videos to shoot short videos, and hopes that the tutorials on social media can be simpler. At the same time, he wants some social media areas where people with disabilities can meet different special groups of friends.

No. 3 respondents will use social media software to read comics and cartoons, and sometimes read some novels. She will use social media software such as WeChat to communicate with her family, and will also make video chats with friends. But other social media functions are too complicated for her and need the help of family and friends to continue to use them.

Advanced use: No. 1 respondents can use the Internet or social software similar to WeChat, which can make different friends. Whether they are normal people or people with slight mental disabilities like him, they can have a friendly relationship. In addition, they can also learn about social news from some popular social networking. Get new news in the media, just like TikTok and Baidu. Because he doesn't have a good memory, he will use some software to record what happened, a person's name, or the address. The Internet and social media have taught him some more convenient tips and made him have ambiguous relationships. He has contact with a woman from another institution. He likes to get along with that lady, so he uses WeChat to keep in touch with her. WeChat provides a platform for him to communicate with others. While integrating into society, he also uses WeChat to communicate with his family and friends. He believes that the Internet and social media are very useful for her life, and he will even buy some daily necessities online on her mobile phone.

No. 1: "Online shopping is convenient. I can quickly get what I want."

No. 5 respondents can use multiple social media software, of which he uses Weibo the most. Usually, read the news on Weibo and read other people's posts, and sometimes I will post some posts or comment on Weibo.

No. 5: "There are many things on Weibo that can be discussed with others, and I feel like I communicate with normal people."

He also met many friends on Weibo. Weibo created a super topic for the disabled, on which both disabled and

ordinary people can chat and communicate. Post on it when you are in trouble, and everyone will try their best to help. There are many social events on Weibo, as well as some rights protection and water drop chips. He always helps forward them. This simple operation made him very satisfied and felt that he was also involved in social activities.

No. 5: "Sometimes when forwarding, I feel that this small move can help others, and I have also contributed."

WeChat and other chat software are not difficult for him to operate. He thinks WeChat is very simple and convenient to operate. I usually use WeChat to chat with my family and care about each other's recent situation. Sometimes I make an appointment with my friends to travel abroad, and I also use WeChat to communicate and make itineraries.

4 Result

4.1. Reason for use

Based on the interview, the author will collect the reasons for using social media for classification.

4.1.1 The most basic communication and recording

All five respondents will use the Internet to communicate with family and friends for the most basic. Everyone cares about each other's physical condition and maintains specific contact with friends. You can maintain interpersonal communication by using social media.

No. 2: "If you haven't contacted some friends or relatives for a long time, I will use WeChat to care about them and ask about their physical condition."

The rapid development of social media allows people to chat and communicate anytime and anywhere. In the process of chatting and communicating, people with disabilities can feel relaxed and less nervous. The recording function of social media helps people with disabilities solve some problems in their lives. They use software to record what happens and the names of new friends and some important life and work addresses.

4.1.2 Recreational recreation

Most respondents will use social media for entertainment activities such as watching videos, watching comics, watching dramas, etc. These recreational activities meet the entertainment and spiritual needs of people with disabilities and relax them under the pressure of work.

No. 1: "Sometimes I'm too tired to watch videos with social media software at night, which makes me feel much easier."

The interviewee read a lot of comics on the 3rd and felt very happy when reading them. She feels that watching these during work hours can make her feel relaxed and comfortable, and entertainment videos on social media can make her forget the troubles of life.

Social media recreational activities can reduce stress in life and work, and can make people with disabilities feel temporarily happy.

4.1.3 Self-satisfaction

When using social media, people with disabilities feel as if they are no different from normal people and integrated into society. Even if you have a disability, you can contribute to society.

Number 5: "I feel really satisfied when I help forward it. Although it's a small thing, it makes me happy to help others."

Because there is a large platform on social media, you can make friends similar to yourself without being discriminated against by others because of disability.

4.2 The impact on their work and life

Social media helps them find a satisfactory job. They can filter it first and then pick out a few jobs they want for an interview.

Number 1: "I used to work in a convenience store and found it online. It's too difficult to find a job offline."

There will be something to record at work, and people with disabilities will also use social media software to record and archive, so that they can work better and not forget some important things.

No .2: "Notes is my most commonly used software, and I really can't remember a lot of things, so I use it to help me."

5 Discussion and summary

5.1 Research summary

People with disabilities can use the most basic social media, such as texting and video chatting. Watching entertainment, social media and recreational activities such as videos and comics are not stressful for them. However, because there are certain mental defects in the brain, only groups with physical disabilities can carry out advanced operations of social media, such as posting posts and videos. Some special groups with mental disabilities cannot even use social media and can only rely on the help of family and friends. Without the help of others, if you use your mobile phone, you will forget the operating procedures and how to use it.

The social media function allows people with disabilities to meet their needs for making friends and their desire to integrate into society. There is no speech restriction and the attention of others on the online platform, so people with disabilities can speak freely and look for like-minded disabled friends or normal friends. Social media plays a protective role for persons with disabilities, prevents them from receiving discrimination, and gives them the right to integrate into society. In the process of using social media, groups of people with disabilities can do the same thing as normal people, and

the Internet is fair to everyone. Social media can empower people with disabilities.

The operation of social media is too complicated for the disabled. People with mental disabilities cannot operate themselves and need the help of others to use social media. There is no special platform on social media for people with disabilities to make friends. Although people with disabilities can find friends, it is difficult to find them. Respondents said that it would be more convenient and faster to have a platform specially opened to the disabled.

5.2 Different from previous studies

Previous studies have aimed to investigate the use of social media or the Internet for people with disabilities, just as Standen and Brown have previously studied how people with permanent disabilities use ICT [16]. Social media for people with disabilities is compared with normal people. For example, two scholars, Azy Barak and Yael Sadovsky, study the difference between hearing-impaired people and people with sound hearing in using the Internet for social interaction [3]. This article increases the reasons for the use of social media by people with disabilities and the impact of social media on their lives or work. In addition to a survey on the use of social media for persons with disabilities, the author also asked about their views on improving social media, which can better reflect the views and demands of groups of persons with disabilities on social media.

5.3 Practical Significance of Research

This article analyzes the impact of social media on the work and life of disabled people, and also cares about the convenience of the emotional world of disabled people and social media for communication of disabled people. Social media helps people with disabilities find their groups so that they also feel belonging on the Internet. At the same time, there are no requirements for social media to empower people with disabilities to integrate into society. Persons with disabilities are free to speak on the Internet, comment on different social events, and communicate with others. This process just helps people with disabilities integrate into society and increase their sense of social participation. It can enable persons with disabilities to realize the value of self-satisfaction and greatly contribute to their mental health.

5.4 Limitations and future research direction

The number of experimental samples is not large enough, which has certain limitations and cannot fully understand the use of social media by disabled people. In addition, there is no in-depth research on different types of people with disabilities. The single sample leads to the instability of the experimental results, which cannot fully represent and prove the use of social media and the impact of social media on the work and life of all persons with disabilities.

The future research direction is to help people with disabilities solve the operational difficulties caused by social media and whether social media will harm their lives or physical health. And whether social media brings happiness to people with disabilities will also be one of the future research directions.

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