A Phenomenological Study of Elderly Biomedia during the Coronavirus: A Case Study of Analog Media Generation of Smartphone

Mahya Barekat[1]*, Zahra Chalengar[2], Najibeh Mohebbi[3]

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus has had a profound effect not only on people's lifestyles, human relationships, and media experiences, rather increased their connection with new media. Members of the analog media generation entered a new space and built their new bio-world. With an emphasis on theories of Mannheim and reading concepts such as media landscape and media ecology, the print and analog generation's exposure to new post-Covid-19 media world and the lived experience of analog media generations in corona-specific conditions have been studied. This phenomenological study has had in-depth semi-structured interviews with 13 individuals over 60 years of age. Findings were analyzed by thematic analysis. Under the sub-theme of "Print and Analogue Generations Biomedia", three themes: "Media Biography", "Staying at Home" and "Post-Covid Experience Perspective" were extracted. The findings showed that the biomedia phenomenon during the Covid-19 pandemic is made up of the following elements: A) How do people understand the media, their media experience; B) This experience shapes their biomedia throughout their lives; C) Based on this meaning, an experience of the new media space is created in their consciousness, through which, biomedia finds its meaning; D) The Coronavirus outbreak as a break in understanding the qualities of social, economic and political relations gives a new form to the experience of living in a new media space; E) This new semantic form also creates the future of the post-COVID media experience in the consciousness of individuals and creates different qualities in the subjectivity of individuals. The generation of print and analog media is regaining its presence in the new media ecology. It means being with full acceptance through resistance.

Keywords: media ecology, phenomenology, Coronavirus, media landscape, media generation

1. Ph.D. Student of Social Communication Sciences, Department of Social Communication Sciences, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran Iran (Corresponding Author)
✉ Mahyabarekat@gmail.com
2. Ph.D. Student of Social Communication Sciences, Department of Social Communication Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Iran
3. M.A. in Social Communication Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of Tehran, Tabriz, Iran

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the world encountered with a novel Coronavirus, and the two phenomena of "Ageing" and "Mediatization" during the pandemic could change the media life of people. Before the outbreak of the disease, individual media life of people belonging to different generations changed with quarantines, and media use became pervasive. In this research, with qualitative and phenomenological approaches, we studied biomedia experiences of the elderly and their interaction with the new media during the Coronavirus and tried to answer the following questions with phenomenological analysis:

1) Based on what meaning of media and in the face of which media, do the studied generations shape their world media life?

2) How is the old media generation shape new media platforms based on their experience in different media perspectives throughout their lifetime?

3) How did the Coronavirus outbreak redefine the meaning of new media space and living in it for this generation?

PURPOSE

The most important goal of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the coexistence of mankind with media and technology. Turning to media creates new forms of action and reaction in the social world and gives new definitions to "time", "place", "space", "interaction" and "identity". Communication and information media have been widely developed and the evolution of the process of turning to media is a natural trait of the world. (Loon Joost Van, 2012, 11)

Another goal is to focus on the elderly as a community whose rights have been trampled upon. Focus on how they find themselves in the modern media world. The emergence of any media and its logic in any period of history is considered a part of the events and historical developments of that period and everyone in that generation experiences the media in different ways and it becomes a part of their social life cycle.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted with qualitative and phenomenological approaches and the new-age-media experience of 13 elderly people during the Coronavirus was collected through an in-depth interview technique. After recording and implementing the data, we developed meaningful propositions through the thematic analysis. We used themes to describe the phenomenological experience of the participants and provided a combined description that focuses on their shared experiences.

FINDINGS

The findings of the research focus on the main themes of "the media experience of the elderly" and the three categories of "media biography", "generalizing media" and "perspective of the post-COVID interactions of the elderly with media and technology".

Media biography: It includes the process of shaping the media experience and the evolution of its meaning.

Generalizing media: It is about the stage in which the public starts welcoming media in their everyday life. A combination of acceptance and resistance, based on which the media finds practical meaning in the context of everyday life. In the process of generalizing media, participants share their experiences with media before and during the pandemic.

The perspective of post-COVID interactions of the elderly with media and technology: Participants who became acquainted with new technology and media during the pandemic and quarantines, outlined their aspirations for the future and the aftermath of the pandemic and were classified into two categories of: "disbelief in previous media", and "interaction and negotiation with previous media".

Abstract

Table 1. Conceptual Codes and Themes

Themes: The experience of the elderly in the new generation of media	
Sub-themes	**The main themes**
Intensified need for media due to corona Changing the meaning of media due to corona Media migration due to corona	The evolution of media, from the beginning to Corona
Full acceptance of media in the modern view of the global village Resisting media in the modern view of the global village	The meaning of media in the essence of everyday life
Disbelief in previous media Interaction and negotiation with previous media	The vision of the post-pandemic experience

CONCLUSION

In this article, with a phenomenological approach, we studied the experience of a generation of media users, most of which interacted with analog and print media, and discovered the modern world of media in more recent stages of their lives. We defined the elderly based on their exposure to and coexistence with different media platforms. Therefore, we use the term "generation media".

In the results of phenomenological interviews, the way we coexist with the media from the beginning, or in other words, the beginning of the media biography, plays

a larger role in shaping the experience of a modern media space. We defined the media experience theme and outlined the three main categories of media biographies, generalizing media, and the perspective of the post-Covid interactions of the elderly with media and technology, based on media experiences before, during and after the Coronavirus.

According to the theoretical approach, the landscape of media in each period changes and evolves, at the same time social, economic, political, and cultural forces play a role in shaping this space. In the media landscape, both material and symbolic aspects of the media landscape create a structure for individuals, as well as the experience of the media landscape and the type of internalization it forms. Generations of print and analog media, in their sense of meaning to this type of media, internalize it in their lives. The generation of print and analog media is retrieving a different way of "being" in the new media ecology.

NOVELTY

The issue of this article is one of the most important human biosocial events in the last two years i.e. during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The modern social experience of the analog media generation and how they deal with new media is discussed. The target population of this study, namely the elderly, is of great importance. In sociology, the elderly is considered a group whose rights are trampled upon. It is valuable to pay attention to one of the denied social communities for research work.

The third distinctive feature in this research is the use of the phenomenological method. Through in-depth interviews with participants, this method seeks to understand the experience the analog generation went through; a sudden switch to the modern technological media due to the pandemic. This approach has helped us understand the modern-day media experience of a generation and how they are interacting with the technology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baumer, F.L.B. (2006). *Main currents of Western Thought: Readings in Western Europe intellectual history from the middle Ages to the present* (H. Bashiriye, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Baz.

Bolin, G. (2017). *Media generations: Experience, identity and mediatized social change.* London & New York: Routledge.

Cirilli, E., & Nicolini, P. (2020). Elderly People, Covid-19 and technologies: A qualitive research. *12th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies*, Online Conference, July 6-7.

Creswel, J.W. (2014). *Research design qualitive, and mixed method approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (H. Danaee Fard & H. Kazemi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Saffâr. (Original work published 2007)

Givskov, C., & Deuze, M. (2016). Researching new media and social diversity in later life. *New Media & Society,* 20(1), 399–412. doi:10.1177/1461444816663949

Hepp, A. & Hasebrink, U. (2014). Human interaction and communicative figurations. The transformation of mediatized cultures and societies. In K. Lundby (Ed). *Mediatization of Communication* (pp.249-272). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. doi: 10.1515/9783110272215.249

Hepp, A., & Berg, M., & Roitsch, C., (2017). A processual concept of media generation, the media-generational positioning of elderly people. *Nordicom Review*, 10(38), 109-122. doi: 10.1515/nor-2017-0395

Husserl, E .(2007). *Cartesian meditations: an introduction to phenomenology* (A. Rrashidian, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Elmi Farhangi. (Original work published 1931)

Kaveh Firouz, Z. (2015). Population features of elderly women. In F. Javaheri (Ed.), *The Social Status of Women in Iran (2001-2011) (pp. 35-54).* Tehran, Iran: Ney.

Khaniki, H. (2020). *Corona and Iranian society; Cultural and social aspects* (Collection of articles). Tehran, Iran: Research Center for Culture, Art and Communications.

Mandelbaum, M .(2013). *The phenomenology of moral experience* (M. Khodadadi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Ghoghnos. (Original work published 1955)

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* London: SAGE Publications.

Naab, T., & Schwarzenegger, C., (2017). Why ageing is more important than being old, understanding the elderly in a mediatized world. *Nordicom Review*, 10(38), 93-107. doi: 10.1515/nor-2017-0400

Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract

Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (A. Guivian, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Elmi Farhangi. (Original work published 2009)

Scolari, C.A, (2012). Media ecology: Exploring the metaphor to expand the theory. *Communication Theory*, 22(2), 204–225. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2012.01404.x

Sharifi, A., Kamali, M., & Chabok, A. (2014). Social needs of people with cerebral palsy: a qualitative study with phenomenology method. *Journal of Modern Rehabilitation*, 8(2), 21–30.

Sokolowski, R. (2006). *Introduction to phenomenology* (M .R .Ghorbani, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Gām .(Original work published 1999)

Tavakol, M., & Ghazizaze, M. (2006). Generation gap in macro sociological approaches. *Journal of Social Sciences Letter*, 1122, 95-124.

Van Loon, J. (2008). *Media technology: Critical perspectives* (A. Aligholian, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Hamŝahri. (Original work published 2007)

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* New York: Routledge.

Zolfali Fam, J., Faraskhah, M., Maleki, A., & Zahedi Mazandarani, M. J. (2018). Phenomenology of social ethics of virtual social network users. *Quarterly Journal of Communication Research*, 94, 155- 185. doi: 20.1001.1.25382977.1397.25.94.7.6