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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK IN SUPPORTING SENIOR ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

Senior entrepreneurs are increasingly turning to social media platforms, notably Facebook, to promote and grow their businesses. Despite often having limited technical skills, senior entrepreneurs recognize the benefits of using social media as an essential tool for business communication and marketing. While there may be initial resistance to adopting social media, its benefits for businesses are widely recognized, making it a valuable entrepreneurial tool, facilitating communication and marketing efforts. This area of research is significant due to the global rise in the aging population and the growing trend of seniors transitioning into entrepreneurship after reaching retirement age. This qualitative investigation employed semi-structured interviews complemented by observations to explore the use of Facebook among senior entrepreneurs. Ten participants were interviewed face-to-face, with observations conducted based on insights gathered from these interviews. The findings indicate that senior entrepreneurs utilize Facebook to a moderate extent, primarily constrained by their limited digital knowledge. However, numerous features on Facebook remain unexplored, presenting potential opportunities for further business innovation within this demographic. This investigation provides insights into the adaptation of senior entrepreneurs to social media, particularly Facebook, as a tool for enhancing their business activities.

Keywords: Senior entrepreneurs, aging, ICT, social media, Facebook usage.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a recent surge of interest in entrepreneurial activities among older adults approaching retirement age. Maritz et al. (2021) the percentage of senior entrepreneurs is expected to increase in the coming years, a trend that is already becoming evident. The Global Entrepreneurship Report 2022/2023 revealed that individuals aged 55 and above represent approximately 15 percent of the global entrepreneurial population. Data from the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC) also indicates a notable rise in the number of senior entrepreneurs in Malaysia, highlighting a growing trend of older adults engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Prior to 2022, senior entrepreneurs, typically defined as individuals aged 50 and above, constituted about 6 percent to 8 percent of the entrepreneurial population in the country (Shafie et al., 2023). Despite this growing interest, the field of entrepreneurship among older adults remains unexplored, primarily due to a lack of empirical data and limited research focused on senior entrepreneurs. The 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Report spanning 65 countries, ranked Malaysia as 65th in terms of senior entrepreneurship, making it the last country on the list, with a Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate of just 1.2 percent (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). However, the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2022/2023 report highlights Malaysia's progress in entrepreneurship despite the challenges of post-pandemic recovery. This report assessed Malaysia along with 50 other economies, focusing on Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA), which measures the percentage of adults starting or running new businesses. The findings suggest that Malaysia, like many countries, experienced mixed impacts from the pandemic on entrepreneurial activity, with varying levels of adaptation and recovery.

Research on ICT remains limited in terms of understanding how ICT use supports the business activities of senior entrepreneurs (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). Most existing literature has focused on the motivations and theoretical frameworks surrounding senior entrepreneurship, leaving a gap in exploring ICT as a form of technical support. While social media platforms are often used for personal purposes, they also provide businesses with the ability to reach a broader and more diverse customer base (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Among the various social media platforms, entrepreneurs and small business owners tend to prefer Facebook (Chawla & Chodak, 2021). In an analysis conducted on Facebook data involving a sample of 5.4 million users, Luders and Brand (2019) found that teenagers (aged 13 to 17) constituted 5.0 percent of the sample, young adults (aged 18 to 34) comprised 57.5 percent, middle-aged adults (aged 35 to 54) accounted for 57.6 percent, and older adults (aged 55 years and above) constituted 9.9 percent. Further research by Chawla and Chodak (2021) revealed that Facebook stood out as the leading social media platform for marketing among small businesses, with over 2.74 billion active monthly users. The study found that 95.8 percent of respondents used Facebook for marketing, compared to 50.8 percent for LinkedIn, 31.5 percent for Twitter, and 20.5 percent for YouTube.

Nonetheless, senior entrepreneurs often have certain needs, such as requiring lower levels of technical expertise compared to younger entrepreneurs (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). According to Kumar (2021), there is a growing trend of social media adoption, particularly LinkedIn and Facebook, among older adults. The results suggest that social media is playing an increasingly significant role in the business activities of senior entrepreneurs. Hence, ICT applications such as social media can be valuable tools for senior entrepreneurs, especially for marketing purposes (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). Utilizing existing social media platforms can help them sustain their businesses, while avoiding unnecessary investments in ICT tools that may not be required in their businesses (Loo et al., 2024). The researcher employed a qualitative approach to explore social media usage among senior entrepreneurs through semi-structured interviews along with observations of their social media activities. As noted by Creswell (2018), qualitative research is particularly suited for investigating complex research problems

that require a deeper understanding of phenomena. Hence, adopting this approach can yield comprehensive insights and contribute meaningfully to the body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Productive Aging

The concept of productive aging encompasses various activities in which older adults contribute to society, including volunteering, mentoring, caregiving, and civic engagement. Engaging in productive activities, whether paid or unpaid, has been associated with enhanced mental health and overall well-being in older adults (Marfeo & Ward, 2020). One reason for the shift towards self-employment after retirement is the flexibility in working hours and the nature of work that aligns with the preference of older adults (Maritz et al., 2021). Additionally, ICT is often highlighted as a means to support aging in place, offering tailored technological solutions to meet the needs of older adults. Examples include innovative devices such as webcams, mobile phones and social networking technologies that facilitate communication (Fu & Xie, 2021). Across all age groups including seniors, ICT is recognized as an essential tool for doing business. For senior entrepreneurs in particular, technology support is essential (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). Older entrepreneurs often have different requirements, such as a lack of technical skills, compared to their younger counterparts (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021). Despite these challenges, entrepreneurship can effectively transform older adults into technologists. While various ICT applications can support business activities (Laudon & Traver, 2022), a certain level of ICT literacy is important for senior entrepreneurs to conduct businesses more effectively and achieve their goals.

Motivational Affordances Design Principles

Motivational affordances design principles are recommended for ICT design in general to cater to four key motivational sources: psychological, cognitive, social, and emotional (Tang & Zhang, 2019; Zhang, 2008). Zhang (2008) developed 10 design principles based on these motivational sources, each tailored to address specific motivational needs. A summary of these design principles categorized according to motivational source and need is illustrated in Table 1. These principles are relevant to studies examining how seniors use Facebook features, specifically investigating how certain specific aspects of the platform align with user motivation.

Table 1

Motivational Design Principles

Source of Motivation	Motivational Needs	Design Principles
Psychological	Autonomy and the self	1. Support autonomy. 2. Promote creation and representation of self-identity.
Cognitive	Competence and achievement	3. Design for optimal challenge. 4. Provide timely and positive feedback.
Social and psychological	Relatedness	5. Facilitate human-to-human interaction. 6. Represent human social bond
Social and psychological	Leadership and followership	7. Facilitate one's desire to influence others. 8. Facilitate one's desire to be influenced.
Emotional	Emotion and affect	9. Induce positive emotions via ICT features 10. Induce intended emotions via ICT features

Note. Source by Zhang (2008)

Therefore, the application of motivational affordances design principles ought to be applied selectively to enhance the motivation of ICT users, particularly older users like senior entrepreneurs. In this study, Facebook is identified as a primary social media platform favored by majority of entrepreneurs for business marketing, especially given its popularity among elderly users. Consequently, the features of Facebook that support the motivations of senior entrepreneurs are important for successful adoption and sustainable use of the platform, beyond just the sustainability of their businesses.

The Role of Social Media as Digital Marketing Tools

The emergence of social media has not only transformed interpersonal communication but has also profoundly impacted business and marketing practices. Social media platforms have evolved into pivotal marketing tools for businesses, with influencers and user-generated content playing a crucial role in advertising (Chawla & Chodak, 2021). According to Chawla and Chodak (2021), Facebook is a widely utilized platform for businesses to connect with customers through targeted advertising. The rise of smartphones and the accessibility of mobile internet have significantly transformed social media, turning it into a powerful avenue for businesses and marketing activities. Today's platforms like Facebook Marketplace and Instagram Shopping have integrated e-commerce features, facilitating direct buying and selling within the social media environment. The expansion of social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok has enabled businesses to reach a broader and more diverse audience than ever before. As a digital marketing tool, social media offers a distinct advantage by encouraging customer engagement. Through these platforms, businesses can interact directly with their customers, address inquiries promptly, and gather real-time feedback (Kotler et al., 2017). Additionally, social media marketing is cost-effective, as most platforms are generally free to use, allowing businesses to reach a large audience without incurring substantial advertising costs.

Nevertheless, social media marketing also comes with significant challenges. With a multitude of businesses leveraging these platforms for marketing activities, it can be difficult to stand out and gain visibility. Additionally, the constantly evolving algorithms of social media present an ongoing challenge for businesses trying to stay current with the latest trends and optimize their strategies (Kotler et al., 2017). Despite these challenges, social media has evolved into a vital tool for businesses to promote their products and services in today's digital era. Its advantages, such as enhanced customer engagement, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to deliver targeted advertising, make it an invaluable asset for any business.

Social Media Supporting Senior Entrepreneurship

Senior entrepreneurs often have specific needs in terms of technical support, as noted by Al-Jubari and Mosbah (2021). Generally, they tend to lag behind younger counterparts in terms of technical skills and face time constraints when navigating their new ventures (Huang & Knight, 2020). Currently, the adoption of ICT among senior entrepreneurs remains limited. However, recognizing the numerous benefits that ICT can offer in the business domain, increased usage could significantly enhance their entrepreneurial efforts. ICT enables senior entrepreneurs to expand their market reach and access information from various sources. Older individuals starting businesses after retirement are often classified as start-ups, which are typically regarded as a subset of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The surge in popularity of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube among SME entrepreneurs has been noted by Gilani et al. (2020). This trend is complemented by the integration of ICT tools, particularly computers and the Internet which have

revolutionized the entrepreneurial landscape through innovative business practices. Moreover, social media has become a pivotal networking technology, playing a crucial role in propelling Internet growth—an indispensable aspect for most entrepreneurs. The rise of social media has opened new opportunities for entrepreneurs; however, the existing literature on ICT adoption within SMEs does not sufficiently address the specific role ICT plays in supporting senior entrepreneurs. This gap is evident, as most studies focus primarily on the motivations behind senior entrepreneurship, neglecting a comprehensive examination of how ICT contributes to their business success. The lack of rigorous empirical data raises critical questions about the efficacy of ICT in supporting the small businesses of senior entrepreneurs.

Factors Influencing Facebook Usage by Senior Entrepreneurs

Facebook is one of the most widely used social media platform among entrepreneurs (Nawi et al., 2019; Appel et al., 2020). According to DataReportal-Global Digital Insights, as of 2023, Facebook has approximately 3.07 billion monthly active users, showing a steady increase from previous years. As a result, Facebook is widely regarded as an essential tool for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs use social media for a variety of purposes that are essential to their business activities, such as marketing and promotion (Olanrewaju et al., 2020). The emergence of social media has undeniably provided entrepreneurs with access to numerous opportunities. Although there is limited information on how senior entrepreneurs specifically utilize social media for business, many studies have highlighted the benefits of social media platforms such as Facebook in fostering connections and overcoming loneliness among the elderly (Fu & Xie, 2021). While some seniors use social media to connect with new people, others prefer to use it for activities such as playing games or sharing media content, such as videos or photos (Sheldon et al., 2021). Apart from personal interactions, entrepreneurs—particularly, senior entrepreneurs—leverage social media for business-related activities, including marketing, information gathering, networking, and even crowdfunding (Olanrewaju et al., 2020). Overall, these factors contribute to the widespread adoption of social media among entrepreneurs including those in the senior demographic (Olanrewaju et al., 2020).

Older adults often have a strong familiarity with Facebook, as many were early adopters of the platform to maintain social connections and stay updated with family and friends. This familiarity makes Facebook an appealing choice when they transition into entrepreneurial roles later in life. Research indicates that previous experience with a technology or platform can significantly influence its continued use, particularly when it becomes part of a daily routine (Mitzner et al., 2019). As a result, when older adults become senior entrepreneurs, they are more likely to use Facebook for their business activities, capitalizing on their existing comfort with its features to promote their products and engage with customers (Nawi et al., 2019). Familiarity with the platform helps reduce the learning curve associated with adopting new tools, making Facebook a preferred choice for senior entrepreneurs looking to expand their online presence (Appel et al., 2020).

Past studies have indicated that senior entrepreneurship is influenced by several factors, including access to social networks, previous work experience, and a desire for economic independence (Nawi et al., 2019). Many older adults pursue entrepreneurship as a means of staying active and contributing to their communities after retirement, leveraging their accumulated knowledge and social connections (Maritz et al., 2021). However, research has also highlighted significant barriers, such as difficulties in adopting new digital tools. These factors suggest that while there is significant potential in senior entrepreneurship, it faces unique challenges that require deeper exploration. Thus, the study is necessary

to address the growing importance of supporting senior entrepreneurs in adapting to the evolving digital landscape and ensuring their sustained economic participation.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of senior entrepreneurs' social media usage through a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were obtained verbally from participants, employing a non-quantifiable method of data collection (semi-structured interviews) and a non-numerical data analysis technique (thematic analysis). According to Quinlan et al. (2015) qualitative research is characterized by its focus on non-numeric data, providing insights into individuals' thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Thus, this study adopts a qualitative research design, allowing the researcher to gather and interpret new information effectively. The following sub-sections describe the methodology used in the study.

Sample Selection and Key Characteristics of the Participants

This study employed a purposive sampling approach for participant recruitment, aligning with the research objectives. This method was chosen to ensure that participants possess specific qualities essential for obtaining relevant and insightful data (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Non-probability sampling was selected due to its compatibility with the qualitative research design, enabling a more in-depth exploration of the research questions. While non-probability sampling is primarily associated with qualitative research, probability sampling is more commonly used in quantitative research studies (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Table 2

Inclusion Criteria of Participants

Inclusion Criteria	Description
Retired – mandatory or optional retirement	Participants must be retired from previous employment, which includes both mandatory and optional retirements. Mandatory retirement refers to retiring at the age of 60, as applicable to both public and private sectors in Malaysia. In contrast, optional retirement involves retiring before the age of 60, based on the terms stipulated in the contract of service or collective agreement, in accordance with the Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012.
Minimum of one year in business	Participants must be actively running their own businesses, having started their entrepreneurial activities at the time of retirement and continued for at least a year. The age range for participants is between 50 and 67 years. This ensures that the study includes active senior entrepreneurs with valuable experience who initiated their ventures later in life.
Business initiated after retirement	All participants must be senior entrepreneurs who began their entrepreneurial journey after retiring from previous employment. This study specifically excludes those who initiated businesses at a younger age, before reaching retirement. Therefore, the participants are characterized as first-time or novice entrepreneurs in this context.

Various non-probability sampling methods are available within qualitative research designs, but qualitative sampling generally focuses on more purposeful selection. Purposeful sampling is a deliberate research strategy that involves selecting participants who can offer profound insights into the study's subject matter, actively involving them in the research process (Creswell, 2018). This method, often applied with a smaller sample size, allows for an in-depth exploration of specific individuals or groups, capturing nuanced data on their experiences, attitudes, and the underlying processes shaping their perspectives (Creswell, 2018). In qualitative research, the sample size is determined by reaching data saturation point, which indicates that sufficient information has been gathered. The selection of participants is guided by specific inclusion criteria to ensure the study's success in meeting its objectives. These criteria were meticulously defined by the researcher to enhance the reliability and relevance of the findings. Refer to Table 2 for a detailed outline of the inclusion criteria for the participants.

Profile of Senior Entrepreneurs

The study primarily focuses on senior entrepreneurs of Malay ethnicity and Muslim faith due to the challenges in identifying participants from diverse racial or religious backgrounds. In some instances, the participants facilitated connections with other senior entrepreneurs, who were also predominantly from the Malay and Muslim communities. It is assumed that the number of senior entrepreneurs from other ethnicities is relatively small in the selected context. The study comprises ten participants (n=10), showcasing diversity in terms of educational backgrounds, previous employment sectors, and the nature of businesses. The gender distribution includes four female and six male participants. Three of the participants retired from the private sector, while the remaining seven retired from the government sector. Despite a two to one ratio of male to female participants, the gender difference is not intended for generalization in the study's findings. Therefore, it is not feasible to draw broad conclusions about whether older entrepreneurs in Malaysia are predominantly male or female based on this sample alone. Regarding educational backgrounds, the participants range from high school graduates to those with the highest educational qualifications (PhD). These senior entrepreneurs reside in a metropolitan area in Peninsular Malaysia, specifically in Sungai Petani, Kedah. This location was chosen due to the significant number of retirees actively running businesses in the area. Additionally, the researcher lives and works nearby facilitated convenient access for participant visits and interviews. The participants clearly understood the objectives of the study and were able to articulate their responses effectively, facilitating the researcher in exploring the current ICT applications they utilize in their entrepreneurial activities. Table 3 presents an overview of the participants' profiles.

Data Collection

To recruit participants, the researcher relied on introductions facilitated by the researcher's acquaintances. For instance, a colleague informed the researcher about a nearby car and tire workshop owned by a senior entrepreneur who was a retiree. Furthermore, one of the researcher's acquaintances, who is also an entrepreneur with nearly 10 years of experience, played a key role in connecting the researcher with potential participants. This acquaintance knew some senior entrepreneurs around his area and had prior business interactions with them. This acquaintance then acted as the researcher's liaison, helping to identify and recruit participants. Additionally, some of the recruited senior entrepreneurs referred the researcher to their friends who had also become entrepreneurs after retirement and were willing to participate in the study. This approach is known as non-random sampling specifically utilizing a technique known as snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, participants are

recruited through referrals from other participants. While snowball sampling may have drawbacks in terms of broader population representation, this concern is considered less critical in qualitative research, as noted by Guest et al. (2020). However, two potential participants declined to be interviewed citing health issues and time constraints. Consequently, the study was conducted with a total of 10 participants, instead of the initially planned 12 senior entrepreneurs.

Table 3

Profile of Participants

Participant	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age (2023)	66	65	61	59	69	64	53	67	63	70
Educational level	PhD	SPM	SPM	Degree	STPM	Degree	Degree	Degree	Certificate	STPM
Previous employment	Academician	Clerk	Manager (Hospitality)	Teacher	Teacher	Manager	Teacher	Teacher	Carpenter	Teacher
Nature of business	Automobile workshop	Conventional laundry	Homestay	Pet shop	Restaurant	Self-service laundry	Conventional, self-service laundry, & decoration store	Bakery and confectionaries	House renovation	Conventional laundry
Business age (Years)	6	9	8	9	12	5	9	8	10	15
Related industry	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Age when starting a business	61	57	54	51	58	60	45	60	54	56

Interview with Senior Entrepreneurs

This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews, a method characterized by its more informal approach, making it suitable for exploring diverse topics of interest (Saunders et al., 2019). Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews offer flexibility, enabling the researcher to design open-ended questions based on the literature review, providing a foundation for exploration. Additionally, a set of interview questions served as a guide during the interview sessions, to ensure a comprehensive yet adaptable approach. An example of the interview questions can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Interview Questions

	Interview Questions
Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of business are you currently operating? • What products/services do you offer? • How do you advertise or promote your product/services? • Do you use ICT to support your business? • What types of ICT tools are you using? • What limitations or challenges have you encountered in using ICT?

Observations of Facebook

Apart from conducting semi-structured interviews, participants were also requested to demonstrate their social media usage, especially how it supports their daily business activities. Observation in qualitative research is considered one of the oldest and most fundamental methods involving the collection of data through systematic looking and listening (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). During the initial phase of observation, the researcher examined the participants' Facebook homepages while simultaneously listening to their narratives and experiences with the social media platform. Subsequently, the focused observation method (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018) was employed during the data analysis phase. Here, the researcher paid close attention to specific, well-defined elements on each participant's Facebook homepage, providing a deeper understanding of how senior entrepreneurs employ this social media tool for business purposes.

RESULTS

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2022/2023 report, senior entrepreneurs are increasingly leveraging digital tools and platforms, such as social media to promote and expand their businesses. The study's findings align with this trend, as participants utilized social media platforms, particularly Facebook, for marketing their products and services. Hence, ICT applications, such as Facebook, were identified as effective tools to support senior entrepreneurs.

Senior Entrepreneurs' Facebook Usage

Interviews and observations indicate that six out of 10 participants used Facebook to support their business activities. Detailed accounts of their Facebook usage are summarized in Table 5, while examples of the participants' Facebook pages are illustrated in Table 6.

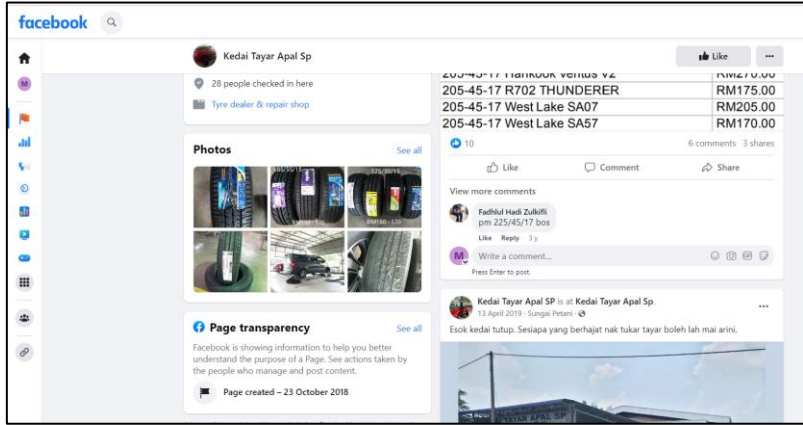
Table 5

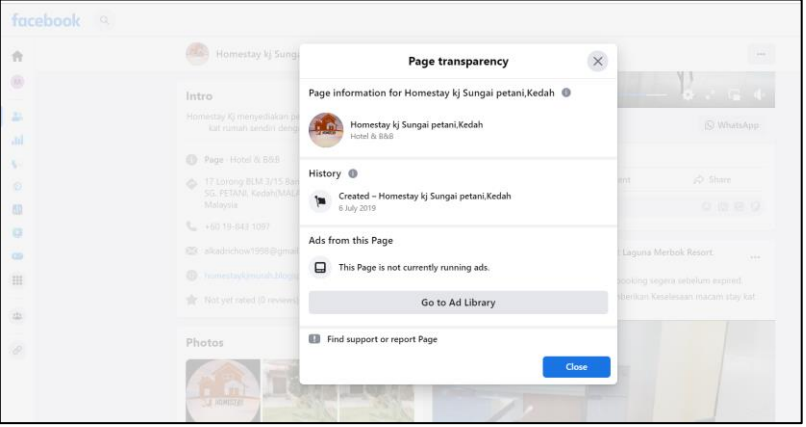
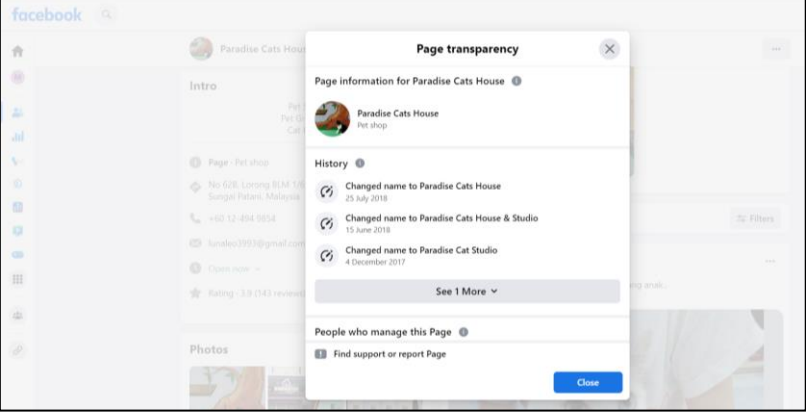
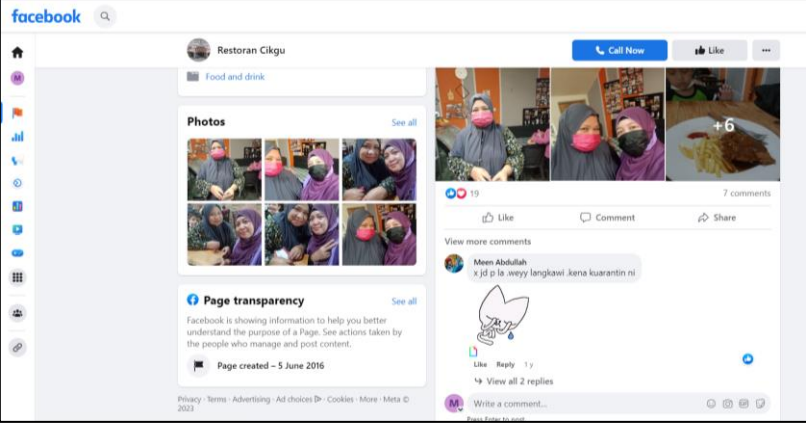
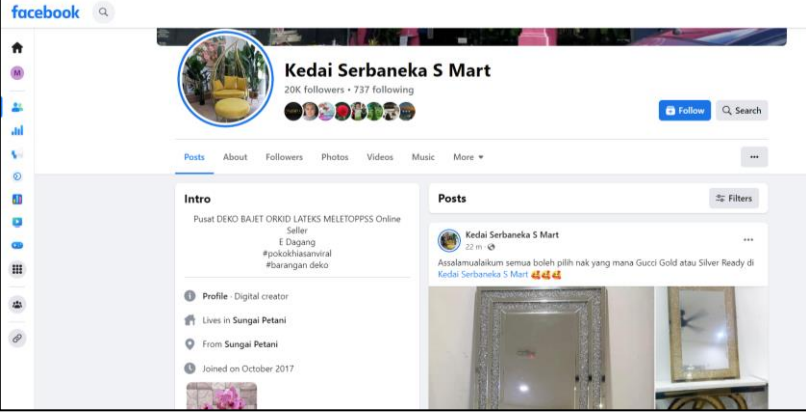
Participants' Facebook Usage

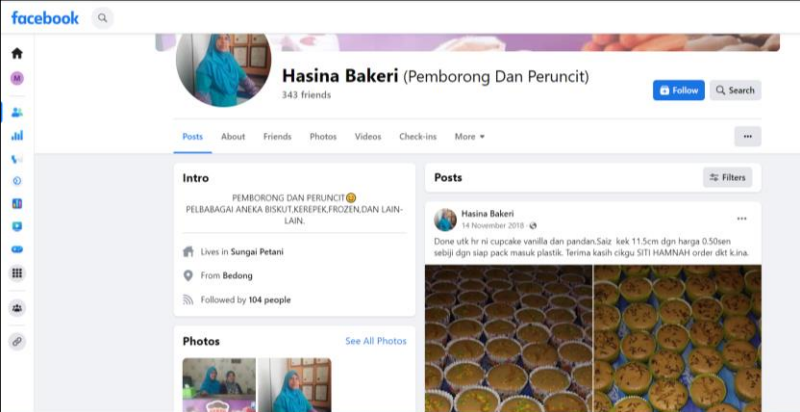
Participant	Type of Facebook	Year created	Usage in years (2022)	Nature of business
P1	Personal page	2018	4	Automobile workshop
P3	Business page	2019	3	Homestay
P4	Business page	2017	5	Pet shop
P5	Personal page	2016	6	Restaurant
P7	Personal page	2017	5	Laundry and decoration store
P8	Personal page	2018	4	Bakery and confectionaries

Table 6

Participants' Facebook Accounts

Facebook Account Type	Participant	Example
Personal account	P1	

Business account	P3	
Business account	P4	
Personal account	P5	
Personal account	P7	

Personal account	P8	
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The following statements illustrate the types of Facebook accounts they owned:

“My clerk manages the Facebook account. Although I don’t manage the page, I know its purpose.” (P1)

“I find my customers through Facebook, mostly from the internet. My children help me manage it online.” (P3)

“I get customers through Facebook. I created a business page for this pet shop. However, my employees also post and upload information regarding the shop.” (P4)

“I only advertise and promote the dishes on the Facebook account of Restoren Cikgu. Every day I take pictures and update the daily menu, while my son uploads them on social media (Facebook).” (P5)

“I use my personal Facebook page since I have many friends on it.” (P7)

“We used to have a business page, but it’s no longer active. Now, my wife just uses her personal account. I noticed that when I used a business page, fewer people wanted to connect, as it seemed more formal. But when we use a personal account, our friends automatically want to connect. My wife updates the page, and her friends see the posts and ask her about them. I don’t use paid ads on Facebook.” (P8)

The majority of participants preferred using their personal Facebook pages for business purposes. For instance, P7 and P8 noted that utilizing their personal pages, which already had a large number of followers, made it more convenient to share business-related content and reach a wider audience. In contrast, P3 and P4 opted for dedicated business pages. P3 relied on his child to set up the business account, while P4, a former teacher, had sufficient technical skills to set up a business page for her pet shop independently. P1 and P5 initially used Facebook for social interactions but transitioned to sharing business content on their existing personal pages after starting their ventures. Research by Sheldon et al. (2021) indicates that personal Facebook pages are primarily intended for socializing and maintaining relationships with family members and friends. According to Facebook’s Help Center, personal accounts have limited features compared to Facebook Pages (business page), such as restricted access to run advertising tools, analytics, and customization options (Facebook, n.d.).

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Facebook is recognized as a valuable tool for senior entrepreneurs, enabling them to connect with customers and expand their business reach. From the observations and interviews conducted, it is evident that while participants acknowledge the importance of social media for business purposes, they may lack comprehensive knowledge and skills to use Facebook effectively. As highlighted by Al-Jubari and Mosbah (2021) older entrepreneurs often require additional training and support to navigate social media platforms and optimize their use for business purposes. By utilizing the features and capabilities of Facebook, senior entrepreneurs can strengthen their online presence and expand their business in the contemporary digital landscape. However, despite their awareness of Facebook, many senior entrepreneurs still encounter challenges in effectively using the platform for business purposes.

The integration of digital technologies in the Industry 4.0 (IR4.0) era has significantly transformed the entrepreneurial landscape, particularly for senior entrepreneurs. According to Rahim et al. (2022), technologies such as IoT and cloud computing have made remote work and digital engagement more accessible, providing senior entrepreneurs with greater opportunities to reach new markets and sustain business operations. This digital transformation aligns with the trends observed among senior entrepreneurs who leverage social media platforms for marketing and customer engagement. Given their familiarity with platforms like Facebook, it becomes a preferred platform for expanding their entrepreneurial activities, using it for advertising, networking, and community building (Nawi et al., 2019). The combination of advanced digital tools and user-friendly social media platforms supports senior entrepreneurs in adapting to the rapidly changing business environment. This adaptation enhances their ability to remain competitive and relevant in the digital age. This shift is crucial for fostering sustainable business practices and supporting the economic participation of older adults in a technology-driven economy.

Facebook provides two distinct types of pages that users can use to interact with their audience: personal pages and business pages. These page types have different features that are tailored to meet the specific needs of users. Personal pages are intended for individuals who wish to connect with friends, family, and acquaintances. They provide a platform for users to share updates about their personal lives, post pictures, and videos and interact with others who share similar interests, as highlighted by Aichner et al. (2021). In contrast, Business pages are designed for organizations, brands, and public figures aiming to promote their products, services, or personal brands. Business pages serve as a platform for businesses to engage with their customers, share updates, and market their products or services, as noted by Chawla and Chodak (2021).

Key features of Facebook personal pages include the option to set a profile picture and a cover photo, allowing users to showcase their personality and interests, as mentioned by Yang (2019). Personal pages enable users to connect with friends and followers through the “Follow” feature, which allows users to share their thoughts and experiences with a wider audience as noted by Purwandari et al. (2022). Additionally, the newsfeed on personal pages is a personalized stream of content, containing updates from friends, groups, and pages that the user has liked or followed, as discussed by Ravaja (2021).

Facebook offers distinct features and functionalities for personal and business pages, tailored to meet the specific needs of individual users and organizations. Some of the key features of business pages include “Call to Action” button, Insights, Ads Manager, and the Shop section. Business pages have a customizable call-to-action button that allows businesses to direct users to take specific actions, such as “shop now” or “contact us” (Manzerolle & Daubs, 2021). Business Pages offer analytics and insights

on the performance of the page, such as page views, engagement metrics, and audience demographics. These tools are not available on Personal Pages (Dwivedi et al., 2020). According to Drivas (2022), analytics and metrics play a crucial role for businesses and marketers in monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of their social media strategies. Business Pages have access to the Ads Manager, which enable the creation and management of Facebook advertisements, a feature unavailable in Personal Pages (Chawla & Chodak, 2021). The Shop feature allows businesses to create an online storefront on their Facebook page where they can showcase and sell their products (Tang et al., 2022). In terms of privacy, Business Pages are public by default, allowing anyone to view and interact. In contrast, Personal Pages allow users to restrict who can see their content and information. This information can be found in Facebook's privacy policy and is widely known.

In summary, business pages have enhanced features not available on personal profiles, such as a call-to-action button, analytics, and insights to view the performance of the page, such as page views, engagement, and demographics, a shop section, a verified badge, and the ability to create targeted advertisements to reach specific audiences effectively. Facebook personal and business pages provide a platform for individuals and organizations to connect with their followers, share updates, and promote their businesses. While personal pages are meant for individuals to connect with their friends and family members, business pages are designed for organizations, brands, and public figures to promote their products, services, or personal brands. Both types of pages offer unique benefits and can be used strategically to achieve different objectives.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This empirical study aimed to explore the use of Facebook among senior entrepreneurs, seeking to uncover untapped opportunities in ICT that can support the growth of senior entrepreneurship. The findings correspond with earlier findings presented in the GEM report, which noted that senior entrepreneurs use Facebook as a key tool to promote and grow their businesses. A key observation of this study is the prevailing trend among senior entrepreneurs to use personal Facebook pages for business-related activities. This trend largely stems from their limited knowledge or awareness of the distinct advantages offered by Facebook business pages. Given that senior entrepreneurs belong to one of the earliest generations to adopt Facebook, their preference for this platform over other social media alternatives can be attributed to their familiarity with it. This study offers insights into how senior entrepreneurs can effectively use Facebook, which remains a preferred social media platform within this cohort. Theoretically, the study contributes to the existing literature on senior entrepreneurship by highlighting the adaptation of older individuals to digital platforms for business growth. It challenges traditional notions about technological barriers faced by older adults and underscores the importance of exploring the intersection of age and technology in the context of entrepreneurship. For senior entrepreneurs, the study highlights the importance of embracing technology and committing to continuous learning in order to thrive in today's business landscape.

As with many qualitative studies, this research has several limitations, particularly concerning generalizability. The use of purposive sampling in this study restricts the ability to generalize the findings to the broader population of senior entrepreneurs beyond those identified in the study. Given that only 10 participants were involved, using semi-structured interviews, the sample size is relatively small and may be considered unrepresentative of the wider population. Additionally, the study focused solely on Facebook usage among senior entrepreneurs, which may have overlooked the potential impact of other social media platforms on business growth and innovation. Despite this limitation, this study

aimed to provide an initial exploration into an area that has not been extensively studied. Although the research participants may not represent the entire demographic of senior entrepreneurs in Malaysia, the sample was deemed adequate to capture insights into the current ICT applications used by this group. To address the limitations and build upon the findings, future research should employ a mixed methods approach to validate findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social media usage and business outcomes among senior entrepreneurs. Such an approach could allow for a nuanced perspective on how various social media strategies and tactics contribute to key business metrics, including brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales growth. Furthermore, future studies should explore the potential synergies between different social media platforms in supporting senior entrepreneurship. Since each social media platform offers unique features and targets different audiences, exploring these potential synergies may help senior entrepreneurs optimize their marketing efforts and achieve better business outcome.

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