



Gender Analysis on the Behavior and Profiles of Elderly Women in Using Social Media to Support Development Policies: A Research on Taklim Council Purwokerto Community

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ABSTRACT

The quality of human resources (HR) among elderly women often leads to limited economic potential. However, the access to social media of elderly women as well as information and communication technology (ICT) is relatively high. These women face a rapidly developing environment that requires proficiency in ICT. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze gender behavior in using social media and ICT among elderly women in the Taklim Council Purwokerto community. A descriptive quantitative analysis was adopted by using secondary data collection. The primary focus of the research was on elderly women over 60 years old within the community. These individuals were selected through purposive sampling due to the active use of ICT, both among members and officials. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FDGs), and secondary sources, which were further analyzed using interaction analysis. The results showed that elderly women in the Taklim Council exhibited a high level of engagement with social media and ICT. This included extensive use of mobile phones, laptops, and the Internet, despite generally low socio-economic conditions with mobile phone usage being particularly prominent among these women. However, there was a significant gender gap in ICT access between elderly men and women which was a divergence from the more balanced gender gap observed in the general (non-elderly) population. This correlated with Setiansah's (2018) publication that Internet usage among men and women in the non-elderly population was relatively equal. Furthermore, the high level of ICT usage among elderly women in the Taklim Council supported the development positively.

Keywords: Elderly Women, Social Media.

Introduction.

In the current era of rapid development, social media such as the Internet as well as information and communication technology (ICT) is considered to have transformed the technological landscape. Previously perceived as male-dominated property, technology is currently more accessible and female-friendly. Historically, farmers particularly women were marginalized due to the introduction of agricultural technology during the Green Revolution. However, the relationship between women and this technology has significantly shifted with the advent of smartphones. The Internet and digital technology have fostered a new dynamic (Setiansah, 2018), enabling women not only to access technology but also to use it as a tool for gender advocacy, societal transformation, and empowerment.

Recent population research focuses on the growing elderly population of both men and women, increasing in absolute numbers and percentages. According to Law Number 13 of 1998, the elderly population includes individuals who have reached the age of 60 and older. The elderly population continues to rise alongside

advancements in healthcare which have increased life expectancy and reduced mortality rates. This demographic shift impacts various sectors including healthcare, economics, socio-cultural aspects, and technology. Consequently, data on the elderly is essential for effective policy-making and strategic planning, ensuring that the growing elderly population contributes positively to national development (BPS, 2020). The elderly can also support the sustainability of the policies through the use of social media and ICT, which serve as tools to facilitate national development.

Human development data from BPS (2020) shows that Indonesia's elderly population doubled over the past five decades (1971-2019), reaching 9.6% approximately 25 million individuals. The percentage of elderly women at 10.10% is slightly higher compared to men who are at 9.10%. Within the elderly population in the country, the younger elderly (aged 60-69 years) comprise 63.82%, followed by the middle-aged (70-79 years) and the oldest (80+ years) at 27.68% and 8.50%, respectively. As of 2019, five provinces have elderly populations exceeding 10% namely Special Region of Yogyakarta (14.50%), Central Java (13.36%), East Java (12.96%), Bali (11.30%), and West Sulawesi (11.15%).

In 2018, the elderly population accounted for 9.27% of Indonesia's total population. The increasing elderly population requires specific attention and care for various reasons. These include the vulnerability of elderly populations, the moral and ethical obligation to express gratitude for the contributions, the socio-economic consequences of improved life expectancy, and the influence of changes in population structure on family as well as household dynamics (Singarimbun, 1996).

Society including elderly women needs to keep pace with technological advancements in the digital era, specifically ICT. This necessity is exemplified by the predominance of elderly women as both members and officials in the Taklim Council in Purwokerto. Despite being aged 60 and above with relatively low economic resources and education, the elderly actively use smartphones and ICT to support development. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze the gender behavior of elderly women in using digital social media and ICT within the Taklim Council Purwokerto community. Although these elderly women may be less productive due to age, the elderly are highly respected and considered valuable assets in current development efforts.

Research Method.

The research method adopted a qualitative descriptive analysis, incorporating secondary data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). This method was selected to ensure a comprehensive analysis, using secondary data from relevant institutions and enriching the research with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews as well as FGDs conducted among elderly women in the Taklim Council Group. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, focusing on elderly women in the Taklim Council Purwokerto community due to the active participation in various social and religious activities including the use of ICT and social media. This research was supplemented by the analysis of secondary data sourced from the "Statistik Penduduk Usia Lanjut 2019" published by the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The data were analyzed descriptively and statistically by comparing elderly men and women to assess the gender gap. However, not all provincial-level data provided gender-disaggregated details particularly concerning elderly access to ICT media. Certain data were compared with national context and previous conditions to examine the elderly population in Central Java, specifically data from five years before 2014.

Behavior of Elderly Women in Accessing Social Media and ICT Supporting SDGs Development Policy Strategies

The development program aimed to increase access to social media and ICT for all societal layers, including the elderly. Another target was to provide affordable and universal internet access for everyone, including the elderly (BPS, 2020). Elderly populations born around 1950 and earlier were considered unfamiliar with social media during the era of "conventional technology." Data from the 2018 Susenas survey on ICT access included mobile phone, computer, and Internet usage over the past three months. Mobile phone usage was most relevant to the elderly with data showing that four out of ten elderly populations used mobile phones playing a significant role in development efforts (BPS, 2019).

Data showed that elderly access to ICT was relatively low compared to national figures, applicable to all types of ICT including mobile phone, computer, and Internet usage. This disparity might be attributed to the lower socioeconomic status of the elderly in Central Java. For instance, mobile phone usage showed a significant difference between Central Java and the national level.

At the national level, a significant gender gap existed between elderly men and women in accessing ICT, particularly mobile phones. This differed from the gender gap in the general (non-elderly) population. Furthermore, Setiansah (2018) stated that the use of the Internet by men and women was relatively balanced. The presence of the internet and ICT transformed the reputation of technology from being male-dominated to female-friendly. While female farmers were marginalized during the Green Revolution due to agricultural technology, the advent of smartphones shifted the relationship between women and technology. Currently, the internet and digital technology fostered a new relationship between women and technology (Setiansah, 2018). A member of the Taklim Council known as MSL and aged 64 who was a homemaker shared the daily use of a mobile phone as follows.

“... This was the story of a housewife, aged 64, who currently lives with a child after the passing of the husband. MSL used the cellphone daily to find information about religious recitations on the internet, monitor activities in WhatsApp groups, and actively participate in discussions. Additionally, MSL kept track of political activities and price developments leading up to Ramadan, communicated with neighbors, and filled the time when feeling lonely or the child was at work. To avoid cognitive decline, MSL used the cellphone to increase knowledge. Occasionally, MSL watched religious videos on the smartphone which was purchased when the husband was working at a banking company in Purwokerto. MSL used the cellphone for positive purposes believing that at an advanced age, it was important to continually engage in beneficial activities.”

Women not only accessed technology but also used it for gender advocacy, transformation, and empowerment. The FGD results showed that elderly women used mobile phones for positive purposes such as interacting with fellow alumni from WhatsApp groups (elementary, junior, high school, and university), religious research groups, community centers, and women's groups. The elderly women also engaged in activities such as watching religious lectures and monitoring consumable goods, clothing, and food. This was confirmed by Ms. MSH who was aged 54 and a member of the Takwim Council group sharing the mobile phone usage in the following statement.

“MSH used a mobile phone for various beneficial purposes, such as receiving information about community members' passing, updates on unwell friends, details about religious gatherings, and news about those returning from the Hajj pilgrimage. MSH also checked on residents included in accidents and assisted neighbors in need during COVID-19. The WhatsApp group had been very effective in strengthening social bonds and facilitating communication with the children and grandchildren living outside the city. Furthermore, MSH used the internet to expand knowledge. In total, WhatsApp usage by elderly women including MSH was extremely positive.”

The discoveries correlated with Donna Haraway's statement (Ganito, 2012) that “*technology could empower women or at a minimum facilitate gender transformation.*” Therefore, research on elderly women and social media as well as ICT was considered necessary. Furthermore, Table 1 detailed the behavior of elderly women on social media, particularly ICT among the Taklim Council Purwokerto community in Banyumas Regency.

Table 1. Behavior of Elderly Women in Social Media and ICT

No.	Behavior Of Elderly Women In Social Media	Frequency (Most)	Percentage (%)
1.	Strengthening Social Solidarity	12	15,79
2.	Religious (Research)	13	17,11
3.	Information Increases Knowledge	15	19,74
4.	Family Gathering	6	7,89
5.	Information on the Development of Goods Prices	8	10,53
6.	Fill the Free Time	4	5,26
7.	Monitor Organizational Activities	7	9,21
8.	Gathering/Missing School Time Alumni (Elementary; Middle School; High School; Univ)	11	14,47
TOTAL		76	100,00

Source: Primary Data, processed

Based on Table 1, the behavior of elderly women in using social media and ICT was diverse. These women's motivations generally included increasing knowledge, filling leisure time, strengthening family ties with distant relatives, reminiscing with former schoolmates, and frequently engaging in religious lectures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the behavior of elderly women in the Taklim Council was leveraged to foster social solidarity, motivate those affected by the virus, deepen religious knowledge, and disseminate information. Many participants also used social media to reminisce, reconnecting with old school or college friends. Certain participants also monitored the price fluctuations of daily necessities while others used social media to maintain connections with extended family and religious groups, bridging geographical gaps in relationships. Alongside the positive impacts originating from the behavior of elderly women in using social media and ICT, there were also unexpected negative effects. A senior female member of the Taklim Council referred to as Ms. TBR expressed concerns in the following statement.

“Each behavior had both an expected positive and an unexpected negative impact. The participant reflected on the past, mentioning frequent visits to siblings before the advent of mobile phones and the Internet. Traditionally, TBR returned home to maintain familial ties every Eid. However, the proliferation of ICT social media platforms such as mobile phones, WhatsApp Groups, and Instagram altered the behavior. Ms. TBR admitted feeling “lazy” to visit relatives due to the convenience of virtual gatherings through platforms such as WhatsApp Group video calls, Zoom, and Gmeet. While these online meetings were cost-effective, time-saving, and less cumbersome, the platforms lacked the traditional charm (‘apdol’). These insights underscored the negative repercussions of ICT including mobile phones, the Internet, and WhatsApp, prompting a broader societal reflection on the need to adapt to technological advancements to avoid being left behind as inevitable changes occur.”

The account from this participant emphasized the negative impacts of technology such as mobile phones, the internet, WhatsApp, and Instagram. For a more comprehensive understanding, the research presented the negative impacts of social media in the form of ICT in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Negative Impact of the Behavior of Elderly Women on Social Media and ICT.

No.	Negative Impact Of Elderly Behavior In Ict Social Media	Frequency (Most)	Percentage (%)
1.	Individualist, selfish	9	11,84
2.	Less face to face	18	23,68
3.	Social Method was reduced	18	23,68
4.	Familiarity Decreased	14	18,42
5.	Lack of Apdol in friendship	9	11,84
6.	Lack of family relationships with older individuals	8	10,54
	TOTAL	76	100,00

Source: Primary data processed

Based on Table 2, participants showed that the majority of the negative impacts included a reduction in face-to-face social interactions and less effective social methods. Another negative impact suggested was the lack of respect and courtesy ("unggah-ungguh") towards elders. Certain participants also believed that celebrating occasions such as Eid using only ICT media felt less proper, emphasizing the importance of meeting family members face-to-face. These negative impacts were observed alongside the positive effects of the behavior of elderly women in using social media and ICT. Furthermore, Table 3 presented the behavior of elderly women and men to differentiate the positions in the use of information technology in Central Java and Indonesia. The results were based on secondary data collected by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2019 and 2020.

Table 3. Access of the Elderly Population in Central Java and Indonesia to Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Group Characteristics	Access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT)					
	Cell phone use		Computer use		Internet Use	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Central Java Elderly	-	33,44	-	0,92	-	5,74
Indonesian Elderly	41,81	43,08	2,57	1,55	5,73	7,94
REGIONAL TYPE						
Urban	48,32	49,05	4,44	2,61	10,12	13,43
Rural	34,87	36,41	0,56	0,36	1,05	1,80
GENDER						
Male	50,44	51,81	3,72	2,14	7,46	10,35
Female	33,98	35,14	1,52	0,76	4,15	5,75
Gender Gap	16,46	16,67	2,20	1,38	3,31	4,60

Source: BPS, 2019 and BPS, 2020

Table 3 showed a gender gap between elderly women and men in the use of communication media such as mobile phones, computers, and the Internet for communication from 2018 to 2019. This gender gap suggested that elderly men had higher or more frequent usage of ICT compared to women during this period both in urban and rural areas across Indonesia. The finding correlated with the publication by Setiansh (2018) which asserted a social gap in the use of social media including mobile phones, the Internet, and other ICTs, between elderly women and men. The social gap was attributed to differences in human, social, and economic resources among the elderly population. Furthermore, a member of the Takwim Council referred to as IMS who was aged 68 years and retired stated the following.

"Every day, the participant could not leave the mobile phones such as WhatsApp and the Internet. In the morning upon waking up, IMS immediately pursued the mobile phone, then searched for WhatsApp information both in groups and direct messages as well as browsed the internet. The participant paid more attention to clothing necessities such as clothes, shoes, and headscarves, while also monitoring prices for items including cakes, apart from food. Additionally, the participants kept an eye on the WhatsApp Group, even when greeting others did not occur to ensure no information was missed out on news and gossip. The participants also engaged in religious research on the Internet. Essentially, the mobile phone was by the side and when not possessing the gadget confusion would set in."

The absence of gender-disaggregated data in the provincial-level statistics on the elderly population profile was understandable, considering the ICT data was relatively new. Therefore, Table 1 only detailed the access of the elderly population in Central Java to ICT without gender breakdown which was available at the national level.

Table 4 provided a gender analysis of the profile of the elderly population in Central Java in 2019, categorized by gender and age groups. Furthermore, the table depicted the proportion of the elderly population in Banyumas Regency in 2019 (Purwokerto is part of Banyumas Regency) based on gender and age groups.

Table 4. Proportion of Elderly Population in Banyumas Regency in 2019 Based on Gender and Elderly Age Group

Elderly Age Group (years)	M	%	F	%	M + F	%
Young Elderly 1 (60 – 64 years)	41.385	35,80	39.706	32,93	81.091	34,33
Young Elderly 2 (65 – 69 years)	30.303	26,21	28.668	23,77	58.971	24,97
Middle Elderly 1 (70 – 74 years)	18.571	16,06	20.528	17,02	39.099	16,55
Middle and Older Elderly (75+)	25.342	21,92	31.690	26,28	57.032	24,15
Total of Elderly	115.601	100,00	120.592	100,00	236.193	100,00
Proportion of Elderly	13,78		14,34		14,07	

Source: BPS Kab. Banyumas, 2020

As shown in Table 4, the proportion of elderly populations in 2019 was 13.36% suggesting that Central Java had an aging population given the proportion exceeding 10%. Significantly, the proportion of the very elderly population (over 80 years old) had reached 11.77% of the total elderly population. This discovery supported the program of the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia (KPPPA-RI), emphasizing the need for handling and protecting elderly women from violence, neglect, and discrimination. The method should consider the differing characteristics and needs of elderly women and men, particularly as the number who required special attention was significant.

Interestingly, the proportion of middle-aged and elderly women (those over 75 years old) in Banyumas Regency was significantly higher compared to the provincial and national levels, amounting to 26.28%. Furthermore, the data from the Banyumas Regency BPS categorized the highest age structure at 75 years. Table 5 further detailed the proportion of elderly populations in Banyumas Regency.

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Source: BPS Kab. Banyumas, 2020.

Table 5 showed that in Banyumas Regency, the proportion of middle-aged and Elderly Women (those over 75 years old) was significantly higher compared to the provincial and national levels, amounting to 26.28%. Additionally, the data from the BPS Banyumas Regency categorized the highest age structure as 75 years and above, making it difficult to specifically calculate the proportion of the very elderly (80 years and above). Based on this analysis, the research expected that the provided "database" of gender-disaggregated elderly population data could serve as a foundation for mapping and policy strategy. This would further ensure that the growth of the elderly population became a potential asset in building a gender-sensitive nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the gender analysis of the behavior of elderly women in the Taklim Council Purwokerto community showed that the use of social media and information communication technology (ICT) was generally high. This usage positively impacted social, economic, and religious aspects of the lives including increasing knowledge, strengthening bonds, reminiscing about youth at school and college, monitoring developments in prices of basic daily necessities, and establishing family relationships. Despite the predominantly positive influence, some unexpected negative impacts also evolved. However, these negative effects typically did not significantly disrupt societal social, economic, and religious dynamics. The positive impacts outweighed the negative among the elderly women of Taklim Council. Further findings showed that while the proportion of these women in development was significant, attention was needed due to the existing gender gap. Despite the larger quantity, these women tended to occupy lower socio-economic positions compared to men. The most significant gender difference lay in the varying roles between men and women across all regional levels. Despite the lower quality of human resources (HR) among elderly women, the economic potential remained low, and engagement with social media as well as ICT continued to remain high. Based on these results, the recommendation was to focus on educating elderly women within the Taklim Council Purwokerto community on the effective use of ICT and social media. This education was crucial for minimizing potential negative impacts associated with ICT and social media usage as well as preventing the dissemination of misinformation by the elderly. Additionally, there was a need to raise awareness about the ICT policy among elderly women.

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