The Technophobia among Older Adults in China

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Abstract : Technophobia, namely the fear or dislike of modern advanced technologies, plays a central role in age-related digital divides and is considered a new risk factor for older adults, which can affect the daily lives of people through low adherence to digital living. Indeed, there is considerable heterogeneity in the group of older adults who feel technophobia. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify different technophobia typologies of older people and to examine their associations with the subjective age factor. A sample of 704 retired elderly over the age of 55 was recruited in China. Technophobia and subjective age were assessed with a questionnaire, respectively. Latent profile analysis was used to identify technophobia subgroups, using three dimensions including techno-anxiety, techno-paranoia, and privacy concerns as indicators. The association between the identified technophobia subgroups and subjective age was explored. In summary, four different technophobia typologies were identified among older adults in China. Combined with an investigation of personal background characteristics and subjective age, it draws a more nuanced image of the technophobia phenome among older adults in China. First, not all older adults suffer from technophobia, with about half of the elderly subjects belonging to the profiles of "Low-technophobia" and "Medium-technophobia." Second, privacy concern plays an important role in the classification of technophobia among older adults. Third, subjective age might be a protective factor for technophobia in older adults. Although the causal direction between identified technophobia typologies and subjective age remains uncertain, our suggests that future interventions should better focus on subjective age by breaking the age stereotype of technology to reduce the negative effect of technophobia on older. Future development of this research will involve extensive investigation of the detailed impact of technophobia in senior populations, measurement of the negative outcomes, as well as formulation of innovative educational and clinical pathways.

Keywords : technophobia, older adults, latent profile analysis, subjective age
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