Usage of Digital Media in Social Classes of Tehran

Mohammad Reza Mehraein

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Human Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Arak branch, Arak-Iran

ABSTRACT

In this study tendency of using digital media in different social classes in Tehran the capital city of Iran were evaluated.383 users were selected by random multistage cluster sampling. Data was collected by survey method and the use of questionnaire and interview techniques. The data was analyzed by SPSS and logistic regression test.The results of this study showed that using of digital media such as internet and mobile among the users are different according to the educational level, socio economic status and occupational status. Also results indicated that the users with high education and socio economic status used the digital media more than the other users and also using the digital media is more popular among unemployed respondents.It is concluded that the people who don't access digital media might stay behind the progress of different aspects of life, so it is needed that different social classes in a society can access new communication technologies according to their needs.

Keywords: Digital media, internet, mobile, social classes

INTRODUCTION

In the past decades there has been a revolution in communication technologies. The emergence of digital media brought economic growth and development for countries. These advances present many significant opportunities but also pose major challenges (Newhouse, 2002).Traditional societies are facing rapid changes with penetration of digital media , so they are exposed to structural transformation. The rise of new communication technologies have increased communication between people and individuals are experiencing new forms of interaction (Thompson, 1995). Recent research has shown that the new communications such as internet and mobile are incorporated into people's life (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002). New communication technologies have changed the nature of people's social relationship (Baym, 2010). Globalization is powered in part by tremendous and rapid of the evolution of new communication technologies (Thompson, 1995).

The first scholary article to use the term 'digital sociology' in its title appeared in 2009,the author reflected on the ways in which digital technologies may influence both sociological research and teaching (Wynn,2009). in 2010, 'digital sociology' was described, by Richard Neal,in terms of bridging the growing academic focus with the increasing interest from global business through the publication of the book ,Expanding Sentience: Introducing Digital Sociology for moving beyond Buzz Metrics in a word of growing online socialization (Neal,R.(2010).The first academic conference on "Digital Sociology" was held in New York,NY in 2015 (Daniels,2015).The internet has created new forms of social interaction and social relations including social networking websites such as Facebook and My Space and sites such as meetup.com and couchsurfing which facilitate offline interaction,researchers often find that even those social ties formed in virtual spaces are often maintaaned both online and offline (Lauren2010),(Bo Xie,2008).A ccording to Georg Simmel, modern societies are characterized by individuals who combine a multitude of different roles, and individualization grows to the degree that each person realizes his own idiosyncratic role set and his specific trajectory of role shifts over time (Hans,2004).Identity is central to new communication, for it is a common trope of the literature that new media bring about fundamental transformations in the way our sense of our selves is deveioped and in the role that identity plays in social interactions and social situation (Cavanagh,2007). The use of social media for social activism have also provided a focus for digital sociology.For example, numerous sociological articles (Maireder,2011). (Lim,2012).And at least one book (Murthy,2013). have appeared on the use of such social media platforms as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook as a means of conveying messages about activist causes and organizing pollitical movements.Since there was lack of research on the using of digital media in

social classes in Iran, the aim of this study was to measure of using digital media such as internet and mobile by different social classes in Tehran the capital city of Iran.

Problem Statemten: Based on the above introduction, the study aims to identify the role of digital media such as internet, mobile as a part of the surveillance of people's activities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- determine the relation between usage of digital media and socioeconomic status (SES).

- determine the relation between usage of digital media and educational status.

- determine the relation between usage of digital media and occupational status.

Key Definitions and Concepts

Digital Sociology

Is a sub- discipline of the academic field of sociology. It focuses on understanding the use of digital media as part of every day life and how these various technologies contribute to patterns of human behavior, social relationships and concepts of the self.

In general, sociologists have been slow to take up research involoving social media and to personally engage in social media for professional practice, such as blogging and Twitter (Daniels & Feagin,2011), (Schneider,2014). Public sociology using digital media is a form of public sociology that involves publishing sociological materials in online accessible spaces and subsequent interaction with publics in these spaces. This has been referred to as"e-public sociology" (Christopher &. Schneider, 2014).

Although the term 'digital sociology' has not yet fully entered the cultural lexicon, sociologists have engaged in research related to the internet since its inception.These sociologists have addressed many social issues relating to online communications, cyberspace and cyber-indentities. This and similar research have attracted many different names such as 'cybersociology', 'the sociology of the internet','the sociology of online communications', the sociology of social media', 'the sociology of cybercultrure' or somethingelse again.

Digital sociology differs from these terms in that it is wider in its scope, addressing not only the internet or cybercultural but also the impact of the other digital media and devices that have emerged since the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Aspects of Digital Sociology

1. Professional digital practice: using digital media tools for professional purposes: to built networks, construct an e-profile,publicise and share research and instruct student.

2. Sociological analyses of digital use : researching the ways in which people's use of digital media configures their sense of selves, their embodiment and their social relations.

3. Digital datd analysis: using digital data for social research, either quantitative or qualitatiove.

4. Critical digital sociology: undertaking reflexive and critical analysis of digital media informed by social and cultural theory(Lupton,2015).

Sociology of the Internet

The sociology of the Internet involves the application of sociological theory and method to the internet as a source of information and communication. Sociologists are concered with the social implication of the technology; news social networks, virtual communications and ways of interaction that have arisen, as well as issues related to cyber crime.

According to DiMaggio, et al, research tends to focus on the Internet's implications in five domains:

1. inequality (the issues of digital divide).
2. public and social capital (the issues of data displacement).
3. political participation (the issues of public sphere, deliberative democracy and civil society).
4. organizations and other economic institutions.
5. cultural participation and cultural diversity (DiMaggio et al,1999).

Public Digital Sociology

Public sociology using digital media is a form of public sociology that involves publishing sociological materias in online accessible spaces and subsequent interaction with publics in these spaces. This is has been referred to as "e-public sociology"(Christopher,Schneider 2014).

Mobile Phone

Mobile phones have been diffusing worldwide at an astonishing rate. They provide individuals with unprecedented connectivity to information and inter-personal interaction. Mobile phon has made communicatd easier. It is easy to send any data or mail to anyone in the world via internet on mobile phone.The mobile phone as an identity, is central to new communication, for it is a common trope of the literature that new media bring about fundamental transformations in the way our sense of our selves is developed and in the rol that identity plays in social interactions and social situations (Cavanagh,2007). Mobile phone as a communications technology, they support coordination with others.Additionally,mobile telphone communicative practice is influenced by the social contents in which the phones are used. Communicative practice is also influenced by attributes of the owners' lifestyle, including their social networks. Futhermore,because they are devices that are now present in a variety of contexts, and can be remotly and unpredictably activated, mobile phones are play a role in social word (Leysia,et al,2000)

A mobile phone (also known as a cellular phone, cell phone, and a hand phone) is a phone that can make and receive telephone calls over a radio link while moving around a wide geographic area. It does so by connecting to a cellular network provided by a mobile phone opeator,allowing access to the public telephone network. By contrast, a cordless telephone is used only within the short range of a single, private base station. In addition to telephone, modern mobile phones also support a wide variety of other services such as text messaging, MMS, email,Internet access, short-range wireless communicatios, infrared, Bluetooth, business application, gaming and photography. Mobile phones that offer these and more general computing capabilites are referred to as Smart phones (Mobile phon,2014).

Social Classes in Iran

Classes in Iran have been divided up into upper class, propertied middle class, salaried middle class, working class, independent farmers,and rural wage earners(Abrahamian,1982).

Upper Class

upper class consisted of some of the same social groups as the old elite,such as large landowners, industrialists,financiers, and large-scale merchants.

Middle Class

Middle class is including entrepreneurs,bazaar merchants, physicians,engineers, university teachers, managers of private and public concerns, civilservants,teachers,medium-scale landowners,junior military officers,and the middle ranks of the clergy. Newgroups also emerged, including technicians in specializd fields such as communications, computers, electronics, and medical services;owners of small-scale factories employing fewer than 50 workers; owners of construction firms and transport companies; and professional staff of broadcast and print media.Merchants,especially those with ties to bazaar-based organization even thought their stores were physically located outside the traditional covered bazaars.

Lower Class

The working class is part of the overall urban lower class,or mostazafin, a social stratum that includes all families whose household incomes place them marginally above,at,or below the officially defined poverty line.In cities with populations greater than 250,000, the lower class makes up an average of 40 to 50 percent of the total population;the lower-class proportion generally is less in smaller cities (50,000 to 250,000 population) and towns (Ira, a country study).The lower class can be divided into tow groups:the marginally poor, who receive regular incomes on a weekly or monthly basis; and the very poor, whose incomes vary from month to month and who thus experiende difficaulty in paying for food,housing, and utilities.(Absolute poverty line,2010).

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using a cross-sectional survey method (Ruan, 2005). For this purpose 383 citizens from different areas of Tehran were asked through interviews or questionnaires. The questionnaires included 25 questions aboute education level, socioeconomic status and occupational status of the respondents. The data was analyzed by SPSS and logistic regression test. multistage and cluster sampling device was aplied. Data was alo evaluated by two level statistical methods, descriptive and inference, Five point scale was used in a continuum including "Strongly agree", "Somewhat agree", "Indifferent", "Somewhat disagree" and "Strongly disagree". The table of required sample size was used according to Krejcie and Morgan table (1970).

RESULTS

The results of this study showed in the following sociodemographic Table 1.Table 1 shows the relation between social classes (level of education, socio economic status and occupational status) and new communication technologies. As shown in the table, the level of education is divided into high, medium and low. According to this classification 40% of the respondents had high education (at the level of university), 32% had secondary education (at the level of high school) and 28% had primary education (at the level of elementry school). The socio economic status is divided into high, medium and low, in which 54% of respondents who had income more than 3000 dollars in a month placed in high socio economic status and 25% of the respodents who had about 2000 dollars formed medium gorup of socioeconomic status and finally 21% of the respodents who had lower than 500 dollars income in a month were classified in low socio economic status. According to the occupational status, the respondents were divided into employed (32%), unemployed (25%) and retired (21%).

Table1. *Socio demographic concerning "Digital media"*

Social classes	Type of respondent
Educationl Level	
High education	153(40)***
Secondary education	122(32)**
Primary education	108(28)
Socio economic status(SES)	
High	208(54) ***
Medium	95(25)*
Low	80(21)
Occupational status	
Employed	126(32) ***
Unemployment	187(49) *
Retired	70(79) *

*N=383, *P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Studies have shown that at first using new communication technologies such as internet and mobile regarded as a luxury devices and used by upper class people, then widely spread the other social classes (Fortunati, 2002, Schuittay, 2011). As the above literature, the results of this study showed that there is a significant relation between using of digital media and high socioeconomic status of the respondents, so that, 54% of the respondents had income more than3000 dollars a month.Because of high cost of computer and connections, usually the highest rates of new communication technologiy exclusion are found in low income class (Zavodny, 2007). As the findings of this research showed that 21% of users placed in low socioeconomic status. The other finding of this research indicated a significant relation between the level of education and using new communication technologies, as Zavodny pointed out a more educated people have internet access. New communication technologies create new job opportunities and influencing emloyment. These technologies provide new avenue for job creation that could help tackle globol unemployment. For example the development of mobile phone has created some new jobs. On the other hand unemployment people can gain higher qualifications through these new communication technologies (World bank, 2013). As the results of the present study showed that unemployed respondents used new communication technologies more than employed and retired respondents significantly. Evaluation of the questionniars of the unemployed respondents showed that they spend most of their time to find job via new

communication technologies. It is concluded that the people who don't access new communication technologies might stay behind the progress in different aspects of life, so it is needed to provide conditions that the different social classes of societies can access new communication technologies according to their needs.

Digital socilogists use varied approaches to investigation people's use of digital media, both qualitative and quantitative. These include etnographic research, interviews and surveys with users of technologies, and also the analysis of the data produced from people's interactions with technologyies.:for example, their posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Reddit,4chan, Tumblr and Twitter or their consuming habits on online shopping platforms. Such techniques as data scraping, social network analysis, time seris analysis and textual analysis are employed to analyse both the data produced as a by product of users'interactions with digital media and those that they create themselves.

Many use the Internet to access and download music, movies and other works for their enjoyment and relaxation. As disecussed above, there are paid and unpaid sources for all of these, using centralized servers and distributed peer-to-peer technologies. Discretion is needed as some of these soureces take more care over the orginal artists'rights and over copyright Laws than others.In Iran For all soial classes and groups, digital media such as Internet and mobile phones have an effect on the way that individuals function in society. It has both positive and negative consequences. digital media has allowed social networks and relationships to be strengthened as well as new relationships formed and have also allowed individuals all over the word that, without the Internet and mobile phone would never have access to all of the networks,access information that they do through the mobile phone.These social and cultural phenomena may change the way technology evolves as well as oure behavior and the society at large. attention and health related problems.

REFERENCES

[1]   Abrahamian,Ervand.(1982) Iran Between Tow Revolution,Princeton University Press,P.432-435.

[2]   Baym NK. (2010). Personal connections in the digital age.Cambridge UK:Polity press.

[3]   Bo Xie,B.(2008) 'The mutual shaping of online and offline social relationship. Information Research, 1,3:n.p.

[4]   Cavanagh,A. (Ed).(2007). Sociology in the age of the internet. New York:Open University Press.

[5]   Chrstopher J.Schneider, editors, The Public Sociology Debate: Ethics and Engagement, University of British Columbia Press:205-224.

[6]   Christopher j. Schneider (2014). Social Media and e-Public Sociology. In Ariane Hanemaayer and Christopher J.Schneider, editors, The Public Sociology Debate:Ethics and Engagement, University of British Columbia Press:205-224.

[7]   Daniels, J. and Feagin, J. (2011) "The (coming) social media revolution in the academy".Fast Capitalism,8(2).

[8]   Daniels, J., Gregory,K., Cottom, T. M.(2015). Digital sociology Mini Conference, organized in conjunction with the Eastern Sociological Society meetings, February 27-28.

[9]   Di Maggio,Paul.et al(2001).Social Implications of the Internet,Annual Review of Sociology, Vol.27:307-336.

[10] Fortunati L, Manganell AM. (2002). A review of the literature on ICI in Italy. SIGIS Report.METIS center.Italy.

[11] Hans,Geser (2004).Towards a Sociological Theory of the Mobile Phone; In:sociology in Switzerland ,Sociology of the Mobile Phone.

[12] Krejcie R., Morgan D.(1970). "Determining sample size for research acttivities",Educational and psychological Measurment,30:607-10.

[13] Lauren, f.(2010). Sessions,"How offline gatherings affect online community members:when virtual community members 'meetup'."Information, Communication, and society"13,3(April,2010):372-395.

[14] Lesia Palen, Marilyn Salzman &Ed Youngs (2000); Going Wireless:Behavior & Practice of New Mobaile Phone Users;CSWO00,Philadelphia, PA.

[15] Lim,M. (2012)"Clicks, cabs,and coffee houses:social media and oppositional movements in Egypt.

[16] Lupton,D.(2012) "Digital sociology:an introduction".Sydney:University of Sydney.

[17] Maireder, A. and Schwartzenegger,C. (2011) Amovement of connected individuals:social media in the Austrian student protests2009. Information, Communication &Society, 15(2), 1-25.

[18] Murthy, D. (2013).Twitter:Social Communication in Teitter Age. Cambridge:polity press.

[19] Newhouse CP. (2002). A framework to ariculate the impact of ICI on learning in schools. Perth: special educational service.

[20] Schneider,C.J. (2014).Social Media and e-Public Sociology .In Ariane Hanemaayer and

[21] TenMillionIraniansUnder"Absolutepovertyline"(2010).(http:www.payvand.com/news/10/may/1 316.html).

[22] Social class in Iran-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

[23] Ruan JM. (2005). Essentials of research methods. Blackwell publishing.Ltd, UK. First edition.

[24] Schuittay A. (2011). New media practices in India: Bridging past and future, markets and developments. Interactional journal of communication.5:349-379.

[25] Wellman B, Haythornthwaite C. (2002). The internet in every day life. London. Blackwell.

[26] World bank study. (2013). CTs are creating new job and making labor markets more innovative, inclusive, and global.

[27] Wynn, J.(2009) digital sociology:emergent technologies in the field and the classroom. Sociological Forum,24(2),448-456.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Mohammad Reza Mehraein, Ph.D in sociology, Head of department of undergraduate and postgraduate students of sociology Lecturerer of sociology.

Teaching Fields: work sociology, occupation sociology, planning of human resources Industrial sociology, organization sociology, Supervisor of about 100 thesis of MS students.