

Master of Arts in the field of ICT Policy and Regulation

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS, POLICY AND REGULATION WITH RESPECT TO ADOPTION OF e-HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES FOR ELDERLY PERSONS

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Abstract

This research report investigates motivational factors, policy and regulation with respect to the adoption of e-health technologies by elderly persons in the context of rural South Africa. Digitisation in health, including digital devices such as fitness trackers which monitor daily activities and health patterns are being advocated by insurance companies as a solution to promote healthy living. Older people can monitor and improve their health using fitness tracking devices. There are extensive research studies on motivational factors to adopt e-health technologies, however literature reveals that there are few studies that have investigated the extent and motivational factors contributing to the adoption of health technology by older people explicitly focusing on rural area in developing countries. Also, in the context of the information and communication technologies (ICT) industry, there is limited research that addresses issues of motivational factors, benefits and challenges.

As a data collection approach, the study employs review of policy documents, in-depth individual interviews and a single focus group, conducted at the case study institution, Wisane retirement home in Hammanskraal in Northern Gauteng. The retirement home's vision and mission are to provide older people with a secure and affordable retirement environment. A qualitative analysis approach was adopted where inductive reasoning was used to compare emerging themes.

The promised benefit to improve quality of life, in particular, emerged as the primary motivator to adopt these technologies. The poor quality of public health service is a secondary factor contributing to the perceived need to adopt these technologies. Poor ICT infrastructure in rural health care institutions emerged as an inhibitor to diffusion of e-health technologies. Issues of security and privacy, social and economic factors such as affordability, and digital skills knowledge were also highlighted. The study proposes future research to investigate practice-oriented models relevant to the greater adoption of e-health technologies.

Keywords: e-Health technologies adoption, older people, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, policy.