A Greying Society:
How does Facebook communication facilitate successful ageing of older adults living in the rural municipality of Hagfors?

Lame Maatla Kenalemang
ABSTRACT

Older adults are increasingly using social networking sites such as Facebook to maintain social relationships. A growing body of literature indicates that frequent communication with family members and close friends influences successful ageing. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to establish the nature of the relationship between the impact of Facebook communication and successful ageing on older adults living in the rural municipality of Hagfors. This study defines an older adult as a person aged 55 years and above. Self-reported life-satisfaction, social engagement and social trust are used as indicators of successful ageing. Predictions about Facebook communication and successful ageing are tested by theories of socio-emotional selectivity and social capital. This is based on 15 semi-structured interviews conducted with older adults living in the municipality of Hagfors. The results indicate that having small social connections and frequently exchanging privately composed communication with family members and close friends promotes successful ageing. Facebook is found to be a potential source of social capital.

Keywords: Facebook communication, successful ageing, older adults, rural, Hagfors municipality, socio-emotional selectivity theory, social capital
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DEDICATION

To my dearest mother, Bonolo Kenalemang
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and motivates the research problem and the specific questions that this thesis addresses. First, this section gives an introduction of the subject and why the topic is relevant in a contemporary context. Second, this chapter discusses previous research in order to establish what has been done before and what knowledge gaps this study will fill. Third, is a presentation of the research objectives and approaches. Finally, this section presents the structure of the present paper.

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Globally, the population is ageing rapidly, and therefore research on successful ageing, which is on the rise, is crucial to understanding its social ramifications. In Europe, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above is projected to increase from 18.5 percent in 2014 to 28.7 percent by 2080 and the number of adults over 80 years of age is projected to more than double in 2080 (Eurostats, 2015a). Successful ageing reflects a constant adaptation to age-related changes where ageing presents inevitable declines in performance and function; and a person must learn how to cope with these deteriorations (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). A more common approach of the term, defines successful ageing as freedom from disease and disability, good mental health (Rowe & Kahn, 1998), physical functioning and life-satisfaction (Strawbridge, Cohen, Shema, & Kaplan, 1996). Current debates surrounding the phenomenon aim to identify ways to support older adults to age well. One of the concerns is how to keep older adults socially connected (Cornwell, Laumann, & Schumm, 2008; Leist, 2013). Later life transitions such as geographical distance to family members, impaired mobility, cognitive impairments, retirement and bereavement may prompt greater connectedness. One of the ways of overcoming these challenges is through the use of social networking sites (SNSs), such as Facebook. As new communication tools, SNSs can be used to maintain meaningful social relationships without regard to neither geographical location nor time. Studies (see for example, Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Tolan, & Marrington, 2013) show that people can derive similar social connectedness and social support from online environments as in traditional face-to-face encounters, which positively relates to higher levels of well-being. A growing body of research shows that the impact of online communication on well-being is dependent on interaction with different social
connections, users’ particular goals (Kraut & Burke, 2015) and the nature of messages exchanged (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). Other studies (see for example, Cross et al., 2013), however, indicate that time spent on Facebook leads to higher levels of depression and isolation among older adults, which negatively relates to well-being. Although younger demographics continue to constitute a majority of social networking site (SNS) users, research shows that older demographics are increasingly using these sites (Pfeil, Zaphiris, & Wilson, 2009). Substantiating this claim, Greenwood, Perrin, and Duggan (2016) found that 62 percent of American adults aged 65 years and above are using Facebook. The ability to communicate with people online is essential for this segment as ageing is often associated with social isolation and loneliness (Finn, n.d).

SNSs are web-based services that enable users to create a profile and create a network with other users with whom they have mutual connections or interests. As a result, SNSs have become virtual meeting places for friends, family and acquaintances and provide users with more than just an online chat forum. Users have the possibility to create content in regards to their opinions, beliefs, interests, such as in music, television programmes, issues related to politics, the environment, religious affiliations and life in general. Also, users are also able to upload photographs of themselves and their friends and family, videos and music files. Further, users are also at liberty to give general or particular information about them regarding factors such as age, gender, relationship status, city of residence and so forth. Participation on SNSs can be in the form of either active or passive behaviour. Active behaviour includes, for example, uploading multimedia content, posting or blogging. While on the other hand, passive behaviour or lurking exemplifies acts such as scrolling through other users’ profiles, reading posts and online discussions without commenting or liking. Moreover, SNSs allow users to address a broad audience of users (public wall posts) and persons individually (private messages, group messages or posts shared within a closed group). Currently, with more than 1.23 billion daily active users worldwide (Facebook Newsroom, 2016), Facebook is the most popular SNS in the world (Hutt, 2017). In Sweden, Facebook is also said to be the most dominant site with about 71 percent users amongst the population nationwide (The Internet Foundation in Sweden (IIS), 2016). Further, in the age group 56 to 65 years, 56 percent and 40 percent report using Facebook sometimes and on a daily basis respectively. Those aged 66 to 75 years, 53 percent and 36 percent said to use Facebook sometimes and daily respectively. Finally, those aged 76 years and above, 36 percent and 18 percent report using Facebook sometimes and daily respectively (IIS, 2016). Since older adults are increasingly participating on Facebook (IIS, 2016), one can assume that older adults stand to benefit from social networking activity significantly and can improve their well-being.
Also, Xie (2007) found that the impact of computer usage of older adults suggests that increased social interaction of seniors in online communities has a positive correlation with their perceived quality of life and well-being. This premise is based on the idea that older adults receive, give or exchange information and news as well as offer emotional support to one another. Such findings mirror the tenets of the theory of socio-emotional selectivity, which suggests that as people age, they tend to focus their resources on emotionally meaningful goals and activities (Carstensen, 2006). The theory of socio-emotional selectivity is a life-span theory that describes how an individual’s perspective of time influences their motivational goals; in turn, these goals affect their thoughts, behaviours and emotional experiences (Charles & Urban, 2015). The theory posits that because of the high value older adults place on emotional satisfaction, they are more likely to spend time with people whom they experience fulfilling relationships with such as relatives and close friends. By selectively narrowing social interaction, older adults can maximise positive emotional experiences and minimize emotional risks (i.e. depression and loneliness). Further, this theory asserts that older adults hone their social connections so that their existing social partners can gratify their emotional needs. In recent years, studies indicate that older adults are healthier, better educated, more physically and economically dependent, more energetic and richer in experience as well as open to changes (Berleen, 2004; Fisk, Czaja, Rogers, Charness, & Sharit, 2009). These finding contradict the popular belief that older adults are sick, frail and backward people who cannot do anything for themselves let alone adapt to the use of SNSs that has prevailed for years. Further, research, for instance, shows that most old people remain “active” even at an advanced age (Greenfield & Marks, 2004). They contribute significantly to their communities through volunteer work, participation in communal activities, and so forth, and to their families (Tang, Choi, & Morrow-Howell, 2010). Scholars argue that older adults’ volunteerism is important for community development, the public good (Wu, 2011) and their well-being (Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003). Thus when compared with other age demographics, in general, older adults have a stronger, and more comprehensive social connections, as they regularly and consistently interact with their social connections even after retirement through volunteer work (Cornwell et al., 2008). Also, studies show that older adults are active in today’s society and look forward to a high quality life in later years and ageing well (Cherry, Marks, Benedetto, Sullivan, & Barker, 2013). Further, older adults are likely to be more active and available in all forms of civic participation compared to their younger counterparts (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005). The municipality under study, Hagfors, states that their community lacks commitment in terms of civic participation (Hagfors municipality, 2017a).
However, with the newly developed strategy for Hagfors 2017-2027\(^1\), the municipality hopes to change such behaviours and improve the quality of life for everyone. At a local level, the municipality intends to “increase social solidarity and everyone’s participation in, and influence on, societal development” (Hagfors municipality, 2017a, p. 7). In turn, increased social engagement both on an individual and community level can potentially help older adults age successfully and further reinforce the stock of social capital.

A growing body of research (see, for example, Eriksson, 2011) suggests that social capital is associated with improved mental and physical health. The concept of social capital is an evolving term that combines elements of networks, relationships, cluster of norms and values, informal sanctions of punishment and reward which shape both the quantity and cooperative quality of social interactions (Chen, 2009). Social interactions provide different forms of social support, which may potentially reduce feelings of loneliness and depression. Social capital is most usually seen in the form of both structural, which encompasses bonding, bridging and linking social capital, and cognitive, made up of norms, trust and reciprocity social capital. According to Eriksson (2011) social capital may have implications for the quality of life among older adults at both individual and collective levels. Additionally, other scholars, for instance, Pillemer and Glasgow (2000) argue that older adults’ active engagement in the society is likely to contribute to both their own quality of life and the well-being of the community. It is essential to note that the process of social participation creates socially valued productive roles performed by older adults (Bass & Caro, 2001). This in turn generates the important elements of older adults’ social capital as well as the community’s social capital. This is because of older adults’ social engagement in the community, their social connections, the values and norms generated from these engagements and the mutual trust built through the process. In brief, based on the preliminary explorations of the generation of “modern” older adults in Sweden (see for example, Hyyppä & Mäki, 2001) and their desire to actively engage in society and age well, the question arises: What impact does Facebook communication with social connections have on older adults’ successful ageing? How does the way in which older adults communicate on Facebook affect successful ageing? These questions form the basis and rationale for the current research topic.

\(^1\) The Hagfors strategy 2017-2027 will further be elaborated in the following chapter.
1.2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Over the last decades, urbanization in Sweden has grown rapidly and is continually increasing (Government Offices of Sweden, 2016). Young people move to bigger cities in search of better education, jobs, services and life, consequently leaving older people behind. Hence, the concentration of the country’s population in urban areas has caused significant challenges of depopulation in rural Sweden and thus threatens the fabric of Swedish society (Söderberg, 2015). An ageing population coupled with the increased prevalence in the number of older people living alone implies that social capital within communities will become an essential element of successful ageing. This is based on the premise that older adults living in rural communities are well supported within their communities, as rural communities tend to be close-knit and responsive to the needs of their members (Keating, Swindle, & Foster, 2004). The municipality of Hagfors is one of the many municipalities in Sweden that is currently experiencing a demographic decline. Based on the writings of Söderberg (2015), if these challenges persist, rural municipalities such as Hagfors are likely to experience a decline in social connections and social support, for instance, between friends, family and acquaintances, and weakened social connectedness between members in the municipality. Exploring social connectedness in the realm of the framework of socio-emotional selectivity theory allows one to consider how SNSs can be used to explain maintained contact with distant relatives and friends (Carstensen, 2006). Scholars (see, for example, Cannuscio, Block, & Kawachi, 2003) found that communities that are rich in social connections allow older adults to maintain productive, independent and fulfilling lives. Conducting this study on Hagfors municipality, gives the opportunity to determine the degree to which older adults living in the community can use Facebook communication to promote successful ageing. Given that Sweden is currently experiencing an ageing population, older adults can be considered significant demographic trends as their increased life expectancy has an impact on the future of rural areas (Hörnström & Roto, 2013), hence the need to be studied more. Moreover, older adults have significantly increased their use of information and communication technology (ICT) in everyday life on both a personal and professional level (Tatnall, 2014). Taking this into account, a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2012) states that one of the benefits of using new technologies to develop social relationships could be considered as a factor for the successful ageing of older adults. This is because online social connections provide individuals with an alternative means to valuable resources, such as social support when needed. In this regard, the well-being of older adults can thus be considered as an important indicator of the health of society. SNSs have become meeting
places for friends, family and colleagues and goes beyond just chatting online. People can create content, organize activities and engage in meaningful discussions. Pfeil et al. (2009) found that older adults are increasingly using these sites to engage with each other online as well as participate in online communities. In terms of older adults’ needs in cultural, social, economic and political perspectives in the community, the increasing economic and social changes in rural towns in present day have caused many challenges that undermine the well-being of older adults. Although a significant number of studies have been conducted on different aspects of SNSs regarding older demographics, for instance, regarding older adults well-being (Burke & Kraut, 2016), use motives (Baugess, 2015) and perceptions of SNSs (Xie, Watkins, Golbeck, & Huang, 2012). However, little has been done specifically on how communication on SNSs impacts older adults’ successful ageing. To fill this gap in the literature, the purpose of the present study is to examine the nature of the relationship between the impact of Facebook communication and successful ageing on older adults in the rural municipality of Hagfors.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND APPROACHES

Based on the preliminary reviews and the limited research on the relationship between Facebook use and ageing well, the research objectives of the present study were formulated. First, this study aims to identify how Facebook communication can be used to derive social connectedness between older adults and their social connections on Facebook. Social connections in this case refer to relationships among people that are used for sharing knowledge, information, experiences and feelings. Social connections can be strong, weak or latent, depending on the extent of exchanges and interactions between two people. In this paper, emotionally gratifying relationships (EGR) are used to refer to social connections with family members and close friends while shallow relationships are used to refer to social connections with acquaintances, neighbours and familiar strangers.

Second, this study also aims to find out how Facebook communication affects older adults’ successful ageing. This study takes place in Hagfors municipality and 15 respondents aged between 55 and 75 years are interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The respondents are asked about their use of Facebook and the potential impact this has on their social lives. Facebook communication in this paper is used to refer to the different activities on Facebook

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A more detailed description of social connections is provided in Chapter 3 under the sub-heading social capital.
such as liking or reacting to posts and photos, updating Facebook status, posting photos, sharing other users’ posts, posting on other users’ wall and commenting on other users’ posts and so forth that are available to users. To achieve these aims, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the concepts and theories related to social connectedness as well as a way to objectively assess social connectedness at an individual level as perceived by the older adults. Further, it demands a good knowledge of issues related to the current global phenomenon of ageing and life expectancy of older adults and how to keep them connected.

The top three vulnerable municipalities in Värmland County ranked in order of the most vulnerable are Filipstad, Grums and Hagfors respectively (WSP, 2013). The vulnerability is measured based on factors such as the concentration of people employed within the construction and manufacturing industry, concentration of industries, concentration of companies, education level, demographic age-structure and local economic prospects (WSP, 2013). The most vulnerable municipalities are further characterized by a low percentage of university graduates in the labour market (WSP, 2013, p. 5). Even though Hagfors is ranked as the least vulnerable out of the three, the municipality has the highest proportion of older people, that is, inhabitants aged 55 years and above living in Filipstad, Grums and Hagfors are 4326, 3498 and 5312 respectively (Statistics Sweden, 2016b). In addition, out of the three municipalities, Hagfors municipality is the only municipality that is post-industrial; the economy of Grums continues to heavily rely on the paper industry; and Filipstad’s economy on the production of chips and crisp bread (Lansstyrelsen, n.d). Hagfors municipality has and continues to make significant achievements regarding community development and encouraging the value of civic responsibilities among residents (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). Results from brief interviews with these groups showed that beyond their daily life, many of the older adults had a strong desire to live a more fruitful life and make contributions to their community, some of them reported to volunteer after retirement as well as participate in community and national elections. Older adults in Hagfors municipality showed that they wanted to and were able to have more control over their lives and living environments. These observations echoed the evidence of much empirical research that the civic participation of older adults is an important process of building social capital (Sander & Putnam, 2006). The large proportion (52.3 percent) of older adults living in the municipality of Hagfors is a valuable resource for an active civil segment. The present study is theoretically driven and involves empirical studies in the research procedures.
1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The present study consists of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the research problem, a solution to the problem and how the thesis is structured to achieve the research purposes. The second chapter consists of the research background associated with the current study. Chapter three is a comprehensive literature review on the theory of socio-emotional selectivity, the theory of social capital, and successful ageing of older adults. The fourth chapter delineates the theoretical framework and the research framework of the study. Chapter five is concerned with the methodology used to answer questions and the rationale for the research approach by previous background chapters. Chapter six reports the results obtained by implementing these methods. Finally, chapter seven discusses the results, presents the conclusions, presents contributions of study, discusses the limitations of this study and makes recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

Chapter 2 provides background information about the study. This section first provides a description of Hagfors by classifying it as a rural settlement, presenting the history of Hagfors municipality and digital media engagement in the area. Second, this section discusses ageing by explaining old age, ageism in the society and in Sweden as well as the concept of successful ageing. Finally, an overall explanation of digital media in terms of the Internet, SNSs and Facebook and its features are shown. Based on an understanding of these concepts, the research examines how older adults’ use of Facebook affects successful ageing.

2.1 HAGFORS MUNICIPALITY

2.1.1 DEFINING A RURAL SETTLEMENT

Before giving a description of the rural municipality of Hagfors, it is important to explain why Hagfors municipality is classified as a rural settlement. The total population of Sweden is approximated at 9,995,153 people (Statistics Sweden, 2016a), 3,134,941 people of which are estimated to consist of the older adult population, that is, those aged 55 and above (Statistics Sweden, 2016a). In terms of population size and physical attributes, Sweden lacks a proper definition of what a city is. As a result, some studies choose to define regions and make delimitations in terms of accessibility and proximity to place (Tillväxtanalys, 2010). According to the categorization of Swedish regions made by the Bureau of Statistics Sweden (2017c), Hagfors municipality is a rural settlement. Together with the division mentioned above, this study also used a Swedish living conditions delimitation of a rural settlement. Usually, in Sweden, this is used in cases where people have more than a 2 kilometre distance to a nearby health-care centre, and then they are considered to be living rurally. When living less than 2 kilometres from health-care centres, people are usually considered to be living in a closer agglomeration and in a city. This delimitation also classifies Hagfors municipality as a rural settlement.
2.1.2 HISTORY OF HAGFORS MUNICIPALITY

Hagfors municipality lies in Värmland County in west central Sweden. In December 2016, Statistics Sweden estimated the population of Hagfors municipality at 11,917 inhabitants (Statistics Sweden, 2016d) on an area of 1,834 square kilometres, which is less than seven inhabitants per square kilometre (Statistics Sweden, 2011). In December 2016, 5,312 inhabitants constituted the municipality’s elderly population, that is, those aged 55 years and above (Statistics Sweden, 2016d), which constitutes about 44.6 percent of the municipality’s total population. The area is historically known as home to the world-leading supplier and manufacturer of tool steel company, Uddeholm AB, in Central Sweden. In addition, Hagfors municipality is also well known for its connections to the paper and pulp industry, farming and forestry, which have immensely contributed towards the municipality’s economic development over the years (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). The industrialization of the society also led to the development of the old railway, which contributed to good communication and trade opportunities (Bäckman & Ellmarken, 2017). The tool steel industry has had a great impact on the development of the local community and has shaped the society to what it is today (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). In particular, the tool steel industry has formed the municipality’s labour market. Uddeholm AB is the biggest private employer in Hagfors municipality (Larsson, 2015). Currently, the company employs about 850 people (Teknik College, n.d) and as such, it plays a pivotal role in terms of local employment in the area. The heavy reliance on one industry, in terms of high percentage of employment, can make a municipality more vulnerable (WSP, 2013). According to their ranking, the most vulnerable municipality was given the ranking 290, and in 2013, Hagfors municipality was ranked 286 (WSP, 2013, p. 5). This means that the municipality of Hagfors is ranked amongst the top 5 most vulnerable communities in Sweden. Similar to other rural municipalities in Sweden, Hagfors

3 Currently, the railway is used as a cycle path (Klarälvsbanan) and runs along the Klarälvens River from Uddeholm to Karlstad (Hagfors municipality, 2017a).
has experienced a long-term demographic decline or rural de-population (Ehrén, 2012). The line graph below, Figure 2.1, shows the decline in the number of inhabitants from 1993-2015 and a slight population increase at the end of 2016. The increased population numbers are the result of high rates of immigration currently being experienced by the country (Hagfors municipality, 2016).

*Figure 2.1 Population Development 1993-2016 Hagfors Municipality*

As shown in *Figure 2.1*, the most dramatic loss of inhabitants occurred in 1993 and 2000. The 1993 population decline can be said to be the result of the centralization of many social services, such as education and health-care services in the 1990s, which prompted many people to move from rural areas to urban areas (Amcoff, 2006). In 2000, population declines in the municipality can be assumed to have resulted from problems related to the high unemployment rates in the municipality and the county at large during this period (Martinsson, n.d). This explains why there are still large proportions of local people, especially the younger demographics, who continue to move out of the municipality in search of better work opportunities and to receive higher education (Söderberg, 2015). In addition, the municipality has recorded more deaths than births.
(Statistics Sweden, 2016d). As such, the municipality faces challenges of an ageing population. The following Table 2.1 shows the municipality’s population change in 2016.

Table 2.1 Population Change in 2016 Hagfors Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality of Hagfors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>11 917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Deaths</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Births</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-migration</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-migration</td>
<td>630</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Sweden (2016d)

The municipality reports that it is pretty challenging to prevent out-migration. This is because of factors related to, for example, unemployment, low level of education and negative attitudes about living in a rural area (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). Based on these factors, many young people find it relatively important to move to big urban areas in order to obtain higher education as well as to develop themselves. As such, these individuals are very unlikely to move back home after completing their studies due to the high unemployment rates in the municipality (Hagfors municipality, 2017b). Statistics from February 2017 indicate that 10.8 percent of youth living in Hagfors municipality are unemployed (Hagfors municipality, 2017b), which is a slight decrease from the previous year. In addition, a survey carried out by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (2013), which ranked municipalities in Sweden based on local business climate, ranked Hagfors number 259 where rank number 290 was considered to have the worst local business climate. Consequently, middle-aged and older people characterize a majority of the population living in the municipality; as such Hagfors faces a great challenge of age-structure, which is currently very high (Region Värmland, 2016). According to Statistics Sweden (2016a), in December 2016, the municipality had a total of 159 deaths compared with only 99
births. In comparison to the country, the percentage of people aged 55 and above in the municipality is slightly higher. In the country as a whole, people aged 55 and above make up more than one-third of the population while over half of the population of the same age group reside in Hagfors. As already stated above, the increase in the number of in-migrants to Sweden that are born in another country has had a small impact on the demographic development of the municipality. Table 2.2 below shows some of the demographic and geographic descriptions of Hagfors municipality.

Table 2.2 Descriptions of Hagfors Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality:</th>
<th>Hagfors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Population Centres</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Centre</td>
<td>Hagfors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants 2016</td>
<td>11,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Change 1993-2016</td>
<td>-24.95 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Sweden (2016)

The proposed “Hagfors Strategy 2017-2027” is an indication of the municipality’s strong belief in the future and the possibility of attracting in-migrants as well as people who would consider moving back into the area (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). The municipality’s civil servants together with the people who live and work in the area develop the Hagfors strategy. The strategy seeks to address the challenges faced by the municipality such as the weak labour market and high levels of out-migration. In light of this, the municipality identifies five priority areas: “a good quality life for everyone, a stronger business sector, enhanced skills on all levels, better communications and a greener municipality” (Hagfors municipality, 2017a, p. 10). In order to make the municipality attractive for children and young people, the municipality intends to create positive images and feelings about their hometown that will make them keep in touch and want to come back in the future (Hagfors municipality, 2017a).
2.1.3 DIGITAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN HAGFORS MUNICIPALITY

As already established, Hagfors municipality is faced with the challenge of an ageing population due to a low birth rate and out-migration by younger demographics. The municipality of Hagfors follows the trends of the second demographic transition on the macro-level view (see European Association for Population Studies (EAPS), 2005) that has taken place throughout Sweden since 2000 (Eurostat, 2015). In addition, Hagfors mainly has primary education schools and one senior secondary school, which also enrol students from neighbouring municipality, Munkfors. Consequently, saturation in the senior secondary school forces many children to commute to the nearest city, in this case Karlstad, in order to complete the mandatory secondary education. This has an impact not only on their families, but also on the municipality’s educational system. The low enrolment rates in the schools have forced the municipality to close down or consider closing some primary education schools. For instance, in 2003 the school in Mjönas was shutdown (Sveriges Radio, 2003) and the municipality has considered closing down both schools in Sunnemo and Ekshärad (Bengtsson, 2010). More recently, the re-building of the school in Norra Råda will be for children aged 7 to 9 years old and not for 13 years old as per the original plan (Sveriges Radio, 2016). Children aged 10 to 13 years old are instead expected to attend school in Ekshärad (Sveriges Radio, 2016), which is approximately a 20-minute commute by car.

In terms of ICT or information and communication technologies (ICTs) adoption and use in rural areas such as in Hagfors, the ageing population and the out-migration by younger demographics represent strong challenges. In spite of the fact that children moving may present a motivation for their parents or grandparents to better connect with them, older demographics still lag behind their younger counterparts in terms of ICT adoption and use (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). Additionally, Zickhur (2010) argues that younger demographics have external exposure to digital media through social connections, for instance, their friends and in schools and as such are more innovative. Consequently, a community that is mainly populated by adults and older people is likely to decrease their levels of ICT adoption and usage. In addition, studies also suggest that young people can act as digital media facilitators in their families by influencing the adoption of computers and the Internet as well as helping their families, parents and grandparents to adjust to new technologies (Correa, 2014, 2015). Some studies (see, for example, LaRose, Strover, Gregg, & Straubhaar, 2011) suggest that schools are relevant socialization agents in the community and thus have effects on home broadband adoption as they affect people’s perceptions of broadband services. The closure of schools, therefore, presents itself as a problem in this regard. This is because younger demographics serve as entry points for new ideas.
about digital technologies in their families, which may shape people’s knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards new technologies and eventually help them get included in the digital environment. In addition, LaRose et al. (2011) argue that children and youth may help confront negative views regarding technology and hence trigger a need to engage with it. Although there are currently no statistics on ICT adoption specifically on Hagfors municipality, statistical data show, however, that at least 80 percent and 39 percent of people aged 65 years and above have access to the Internet at home and use it for online participation with social connections respectively (Statistics Sweden, 2016e). Further, Hagfors municipality intends on expanding digitalization in the community by making sure that everyone who lives in area has access to broadband (Hagfors municipality, 2017a). In so doing, the municipality opens up more avenues for participation and engagement for both younger and older demographics. As older adults specifically interest this study in the use of Facebook, it is essential to have a precise definition of what is meant by old age.

2.2 AGEING

2.2.1 DEFINING OLD AGE

There are varying definitions of what being old means. According to WHO, most countries in the developed world, including Sweden, accept the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of an older person (WHO, 2002). This definition is usually associated with the age at which an individual begins to receive pension benefits. However, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) argues that due to an ageing population and increased life expectancy, the eligibility for retirement has been under change and the official retirement age is currently rising (OECD, 2015). Even though the United Nations (UN) currently has no numerical criterion, the organization uses 60 years and older to refer to the older population (WHO, 2002). On the other hand, people aged 80 years and above are called the “older-old” (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015, p. 2). On a global spectrum, the number of people aged 60 years and above is 12.5 percent and by 2050, this proportion is expected to reach 20 percent (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015, p. 3). Further, in Europe, the older-old population is rising rapidly (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015, p. 2). Consequently, countries face the challenge of providing social and health-related services, care, improving living conditions and adopting other public resources related to the everyday life
and functioning of these demographics. Taking into account recent research on older adults adoption to technology (see for example, Sinclair & Grieve, 2016; Jung & Sundar, 2016; Gell, Rosenberg, Demirirs, LaCroix, & Patel, 2015), and in a bid to more effectively ground the present study within the most relevant literature, this study defines older adults as those aged 55 years or older.

2.2.2 AGEISM AND SOCIETY

In Western culture, ageism is deeply embedded within society (Butler, 2005). Butler (1995) defines ageism as the stereotyping of and discrimination against people by virtue of being old. Like racism and sexism, ageism fails to look at people as individuals. Instead, it judges people based on their membership in a social category. Ageism has also been defined as the prejudice and discrimination against older people because they are believed to be less attractive, less intelligent and less productive (Ferraro, 1992). Negative attitudes towards ageing take various forms. For instance, Quadagno and Reid (1999) suggest that older adults are usually stereotyped as poor, frail and deserted by their children. While Binstock (1996) on the other hand argues that stereotypes of older adults often depict them as a prosperous, selfish, politically powerful group that is using up scarce resources in the society. The contradictions regarding ageing as per the outline by Quadagno and Reid (1999) and Binstock (1996) reflect the assumptions of the theory of political economy of ageing, which posits that social class determines an individual’s access to resources (Stephenson, 2015). The theory argues that dominant groups within society try to sustain their interests by perpetuating class inequalities (Stephenson, 2015). Thus implying the possibility that ageism prejudices are more related to people’s socio-economic status as opposed to old age in itself. Moreover, another scholar, Fairlie (1988) as cited in Overall (2003) refers to older people as an unproductive segment of the population that has no promise, when compared to children, to one day be productive. In present society, ageism can be found at the individual, institutional and social level. Ageism at the individual level is seen in avoiding making contact with older people, denial of one’s own ageing, ageist humour and having negative attitudes towards and stereotypes of older adults (Palmore, Branch, & Harris, 2005). When compared to younger people, older people are considered to be less intelligent and less responsible, and other people view them as irritable, dull, weak and essentially cognitively impaired (Scholl & Sabat, 2008). Kruse and Schmitt (2006) argue that older adults themselves may also endorse such negative stereotypes in what they refer to as “negative self-stereotyping”. The institutional level
of ageism involves discrimination such as in public policy, the workplace and inappropriate care in institutional settings (Palmore et al., 2005). Finally, the social level of ageism includes age segregation, patronizing ageist language and age norms (Butler, 2009). Tornstam (2007) conducted a study that shows that approximately 90 percent of Swedes believe that old people are merely pensioners who are lonely, bored and dissatisfied with life. In turn, such views of old people that are based on negative stereotypes may affect old people’s general satisfaction with life. It is thus imperative to shift from the common belief of negative stereotypes of ageing to a paradigm of successful ageing. Such a change will not only improve others’ views of ageing but will also improve the view of older adults.

**2.2.3 AGEING IN SWEDEN**

Sweden is currently experiencing a significant rise in life expectancy and a decline in birth rates. For example, life expectancy in Sweden has increased from 73 years in 1960 to 82 years in 2016 (Statistics Sweden, 2016d). During the previous year, the average life expectancy for women was 84.0 years and 80.3 years for men (Statistics Sweden, 2016d). In addition, the country’s proportion of people aged 80 years and above in 2016 was about 5.07 percent of the total population (Statistics Sweden, 2016a). In terms of declining birth rates, during the last year, Sweden had a recorded total of 117 425 live births, which was a slight increase from the previous year which recorded 114 870 births (Statistics Sweden, 2016e). Considering that Sweden has a low birth rate and low death rate, the country can be said have an old or ageing population. Similar to other countries in Europe, Sweden has recorded a general increase in its population, in particular among the older demographics. Statistics Sweden (2016c) predicts, for instance, that in 2045 the number of those aged 80 and older will increase by more than one million. Despite an increase in the number of persons aged 20-64, the high increase in the number of older means that the share of persons in the same age group will decrease (Statistics Sweden, 2016c). Statistics Sweden (2016c) reports that in 2014, those aged 20-64 made up 58 percent of the population and is expected to decrease to 52 percent in 2060 (see Table 2.3).
Table 2.3 Population Statistics for 2014 and Forecast for 2030 and 2060 (Number of Persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2030 Projection</th>
<th>2060 Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of inhabitants</td>
<td>9747 000</td>
<td>11 385 000</td>
<td>12 903 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number aged 80 and older</td>
<td>499 000</td>
<td>1 252 000</td>
<td>1 358 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of births</td>
<td>115 000</td>
<td>129 000</td>
<td>145 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deaths</td>
<td>89 000</td>
<td>103 000</td>
<td>122 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of immigrants</td>
<td>127 000</td>
<td>114 000</td>
<td>108 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of emigrants</td>
<td>51 000</td>
<td>73 000</td>
<td>87 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Sweden (2016c)

Furthermore, in Sweden, those aged 65 years and above make up 17.5 percent of the working-age population (20-64 years) (Statistics Sweden, 2017a). Currently, Sweden has a demographic dependency ratio of approximately 75, which implies that for every 100 persons in the actively working population, 75 persons who are younger or older (Statistics Sweden, 2017b). Further, the level is expected to further increase to 92 persons per 100 persons by 2060 (Statistics Sweden, 2017b). As such, Eurostat (2015) reports that policymakers have considered ways of creating more adaptable employment opportunities that may motivate older demographics to remain working. These include, part-time work provisions and benefits of prolonged employment. Additionally, governmental pension reforms and plans to increase the retirement ages are also on-going across Europe due to increased life expectancy and healthy life years (Eurostat, 2015). Sweden’s population pyramid in 1900 (see Figure 2.2) shows a classic pattern that was common in societies whose economy relied on agriculture in the past and found in many developing countries today. The pyramid has a broad base made up of younger cohorts and older cohorts towards its peak. This implies that a larger percentage of the population is young. The population structure in 2000 (see Figure 2.3), however, shows that the traditional pyramid shape was replaced in the following century by a more rectangular structure, with a smaller base and a wider top than before; implying, therefore, that the population is made up of mostly older adults.
The proportion of older people is expected to increase (Statistics Sweden, 2016c), thus making the form more and more rectangular.

*Figure 2.2* Population Pyramid 1990

**Population Pyramid 1900**

Source: Statistics Sweden
2.3 THE CONCEPT OF SUCCESSFUL AGEING

In an attempt to stipulate the factors that influence the ability of an older person to age well, gerontologists, public health officials and policymakers have generated the notion of “successful ageing” over the past several decades. Havighurst first introduced the term in 1961, and it has been used synonymously with the terms “productive ageing” and “ageing well”. Despite the vast amount of existing literature on the concept of successful ageing and its dimensions, there is no consensus on the definition of the term (Pruchno, Wilson-Genderson, & Cartwright, 2010; Bowling, 2007) and its meaning continues to be ambiguous (Lee, Lan, & Yen, 2011). As such, several models of successful ageing have been proposed from different scopes of the subject over the years. The three primary fields of discourse that attempt to define successful ageing are the biomedical, psychosocial and layperson conceptual models. The biomedical conceptual model mainly portrays the research of scholars Rowe and Kahn (1987, 1998). According to the biomedical conceptual model, successful ageing refers to a phenomena used to describe how
“older adults and the people around them can reach a state of utmost physical, mental and social satisfaction by demonstrating a positive potential in each of these areas” (Rowe & Kahn, 1987 as cited in Cha, Seo, & Sok, 2012). The psychosocial conceptual model of successful ageing analyses the term by evaluating if the influence of mental aspects such as self-esteem, (Cho, 2002, as cited in Cha, Seo, & Sok, 2012), self-achievement and self-efficacy or self-confidence (Kim & Shin, 2005), social aspects such as family and social relationships (Strawbridge, Cohen, Shem, & Kaplan, 1996) and physical aspects of physiological and life-satisfaction have been attained (Wong, 1989). The layperson conceptual model focuses on how older people define successful ageing (Kim, Shin, Kang, & Kang, 2004; Kang, 2003).

2.3.1 THE BIOMEDICAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The concept of successful ageing was first popularized by the work of Rowe and Kahn (1987). Their work stressed the necessary separation between physical and cognitive illnesses associated with ageing and those caused by the environment. Rowe and Kahn (1987) defined successful ageing as the ability to “demonstrate little or no loss in a constellation of physiologic functions” (p. 143) in old age. Their definition was, however, heavily criticised for its exclusion of most elders. It was found that even in studies that have expanded the inclusion criteria produced by the authors to include minor as opposed to no illness and disease, minimal results were produced. For instance, Strawbridge et al. (1996) found that only 20 to 33 percent of the older adults who participated in the various studies classified as aging successfully (p. 727). Based on the research produced from the MacArthur studies\(^4\) of successful ageing, Rowe and Kahn (1998) expanded their definition to encompass more positive aspects of ageing in their work. Rowe and Kahn (1998) defined successful ageing as the ability to maintain “low risk of disease and disease-related disability, high mental and physical function and active engagement with life” (p. 38). To be considered successful, the definition requires that all three criterions be met. As such, the definition prevents many older persons from qualifying as aging successfully. The first criteria, low risk of disease and disease-related disability promotes a preventative approach to ageing. It explains that even though vulnerability to disease and disability is not entirely within the control of an individual, many diseases and illnesses, in particular chronic disease of old age, are followed by signs of future problems (Rowe & Kahn, 1998, p. 41). The work promotes the

\(^4\) The MacArthur studies are the most well-known and widely published biomedical studies of successful ageing (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1549).
modification of the behavior of an individual and claims that many chronic illnesses are dependent upon extrinsic factors such as a person’s environment and individualized behaviors, which Rowe and Kahn (1998) claim individuals maintain control. However, the work of the authors fails to take into account that differing environments foster differing health outcomes, which are partly caused by systemic barriers that contribute to resource inequities. These inequities influence the behavior of an individual and thus contribute to health disparities. According to Rowe and Kahn (1998), the second criterion, maintaining high mental and physical function, suggests that like young people, old people want to be independent (p. 42). In this case, independence is defined as “living in one’s own home, taking care of oneself and carrying out daily life routines” (Rowe & Kahn, 1998, p. 42). In particular, the authors define daily life activities as housework chores such as washing and cooking, shopping and dressing. The biomedical model claims that the independence of an individual is directly dependent upon their level of cognitive and physical functioning and thus associates high levels of cognitive and physical functioning with successful ageing (Rowe & Kahn, 1998, p. 43). The third and final criteria active engagement with life, is defined as maintaining close relationships with others and involving oneself in productive activities. Rowe and Kahn (1998) maintain that active engagement is essential for the overall well-being of an individual both in old age and throughout their life span. Relationships are defined using two criteria: socio-emotional and instrumental support (Rowe & Kahn, 1998). Interactions within socio-emotional support express esteem, respect and affection (Rowe & Kahn, 1998, p. 47) to one another, whereas interactions within instrumental support offer direct assistance in the form of physical aid. In addition, productive activities are defined as “all activities, paid or unpaid that create goods or services of value” (Rowe & Kahn, 1998, p. 47). In summary, Rowe and Kahn (1998) state that, “the task of successful aging is to discover and rediscover relationships and activities that provide closeness and meaningfulness” (p. 51). Scholars such as Katz (2000) have criticized the general acceptance of activity and its association to successful ageing. Katz (2000), claims that non-stop activity can act as a substitution for personal growth later in life (p. 136). The two definitions of successful ageing proposed by Rowe and Kahn (1987, 1998) are the basis for other models of successful ageing and continue to be the mostly used models of the concept (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1549). The authors’ biomedical model of successful ageing is essential as it challenges the inevitability of age-related diseases or illnesses and promotes a preventative as opposed to a reactive approach to ageing. Nonetheless, it is vital to note that the prevention of all mental and physical impairments is unrealistic and that a lack of acceptance of age-related diseases or illnesses is missing from this model (Strawbridge, Wallhagen, & Cohen, 2002). Critics (for example, McDaniel, 2005) argue that the analysis of successful ageing by Rowe and Kahn (1987,
1998) fails to acknowledge the process of ageing. This is supported by the fact that the McArthur study has been criticised for only exhibiting individuals with few or no signs of age-related decline (McDaniel, 2005). Despite the fact that Rowe and Kahn’s (1987, 1998) definition of successful ageing is the most used model, a majority of older adults do not identify with it. Reports show that according to their own definitions of successful ageing, half of the older demographics classify themselves as ageing successfully. However, less than a fifth of the same older demographics would not be categorized as “successful” in accordance with Rowe and Kahn’s (1987, 1998) criteria (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1549). Also, the model created by Rowe and Kahn (1987, 1998) fails to take into account the societal implications that influence the environment, health and sense of self of an individual. The work of Rowe and Kahn (1987, 1998) makes the assumption that people are responsible for successful ageing through their decisions. Their assumption, however, fails to acknowledge the existence of societal barriers that reduce the ability of a person to access resources needed to help them age well or successfully (Stowe & Cooney, 2015). Within their model, not ageing successfully is associated with bad habits. For instance, it is assumed that if an individual does not exercise, it is because they are choosing not to, rather than taking into account that their environment may impact their ability to do so (Rozanova, 2010, p. 215). Consequently, this study uses the biomedical model to find out how older adults, regardless of their health status, can use Facebook to maintain social interactions with EGR and shallow relationships and what this means for ageing successfully. Older adults’ interactions are specifically based on the socio-emotional support they receive from their social connections.

2.3.2 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Psychosocial models of successful ageing analyse the process of ageing through people’s “life-satisfaction, social participation and functioning, and psychological resources, including personal growth” (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1549). The psychosocial models of successful ageing cover a broad range of topics, for example, satisfaction with one’s current circumstances as well as their previous experiences (Reichstadt, Sengupta, Depp, Palinkas, & Jeste, 2010). Increased levels of satisfaction (Wiest, Schüz, & Wurm, 2012) have been related to excellent health outcomes (Collins, Sarkisian, & Winner, 2009). In a later chapter, life-satisfaction and its relation to successful ageing will be explored. In this model, ageing is viewed as a lifelong process. The model promotes the growth and development throughout a person’s life to cope with the
challenges related to ageing. The phrase “selective optimization with compensation” describes a three-pronged psychological approach to successful ageing (Baltes & Baltes, 1990, p. 1). The importance of acceptance and perspective adjustment expresses the first prong; the second prong encourages individuals to engage in behaviours that produce optimized results; and finally the third prong advocates for the modification of behavior to compensate for physical and cognitive changes (Baltes & Baltes, 1990, pp. 21-25). In contrast to the model created by Rowe and Kahn (1998), the selective optimization with compensation model acknowledges and accepts changes that accompany the process of ageing. By promoting the acceptance of ageing and modification of behaviours associated with a person’s cognitive and physical abilities, the selective optimization with compensation model provides tangible methods to address physical and psychological changes related to ageing. In addition, the aim of psychological models of successful ageing is to determine the desired and beneficial amounts of activities for seniors. The activity theory of ageing, first introduced by Havighurst and Albrecht (1953), states that “individuals should maintain the activities and orientations of middle age for as long as possible, and then find substitutes for those activities which they must give up as they age in order to maintain high life satisfaction in retirement” (Havighurst, 1961, as cited in DeLiema & Bengtson, 2015, p. 1), which according to Katz (2000), is the widely accepted conceptual model in successful ageing (p. 139). For instance, studies such as “Leisure activities and quality of life among the oldest old in Sweden” conducted by Silverstein and Parker (2002) found that participation in activities has the ability to compensate for social and physical deficiencies. Results of the findings in their study were most strongly showed amongst the most vulnerable elders, specifically the developmentally impaired, those with limited family interactions and those widowed (Silverstein & Parker, 2002, p. 530). Also included within the psychological models of successful ageing, is the disengagement theory of ageing. Originally proposed by Cumming and Henry (1961), the disengagement theory states “a society and older people engage in a mutually beneficial process of reciprocal withdrawal to maintain social equilibrium” (Miller, 2009, p. 38). The disengagement theory argues that distancing oneself from the aspects of society, better prepares an individual for death. One of the many conflicting ideas within research concerning successful ageing is illustrated in these opposing theories. In addition, the main points of discussion within psychological models of successful ageing lies within the evaluation of social relationships and interactions with both individuals and society. Bowling and Dieppe (2005) argue that analysis within this model examines the effect of different types of social and societal support, the impact of support frequency and the effect of reciprocity on an individuals’ ageing (p. 1549). As such this study is able to determine how older adults who are either
widowed, physically impaired or have limited family interactions can use Facebook to derive social support and how this interaction on social media contributes to successful ageing.

2.3.3 THE LAYPERSON CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Layperson perspectives focus on older people’s definition of what it is to age well. Layperson perspectives include an older person’s “mental, psychological, physical, and social health; functioning and resources; life-satisfaction, having a sense of purpose; financial security; learning new things; accomplishments; physical appearance; productivity; contribution to life; sense of humour; and spirituality” (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1549). In a study conducted by Tate, Swift and Bayomi (2013) it was found that 92 percent of the respondents classified themselves as ageing successfully even though only 15 percent of them met the criteria for lack of physical illness and only 28 percent for limitation in basic physical activities. The huge difference in percentage between layperson driven and researcher definitions of successful ageing suggests the great degree of differences surrounding this subject. In addition, layperson definitions note the differences in the older demographics, for instance, independent variables such as social-cultural context, ethnicity, race, which are said to influence layperson definitions of successful ageing. In their analysis of successful ageing by ethnic group, Hilton, Gonzalez, Saleh, Maitoza and Anngela-Cole (2012) found that Latinos and Latin Americans produced similar ageing criteria to one another, and dissimilar responses to Anglo, Japanese and Japanese-American study participants (p. 183). An examination of a layperson definition of successful ageing, thus requires the researcher to identify and recognize the subcategories of older people and not just assume that one definition can be applied for all older persons. Lastly, and to a much lesser degree, successful ageing has been defined in terms of social capital that is, retiring in a safe neighbourhood with good community facilities (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005, p. 1550). Based on this premise, the author of this study presents a new definition and conceptual framework (see Figure 4.3 in chapter 4 below) of successful ageing. The factors influencing the degree of successful ageing among older adults living in the municipality of Hagfors used in this study were selected based on the findings from previous studies on successful ageing and were linked together with the domains of social capital (see section on social capital in chapter 3 below). These factors affect successful ageing as independent factors among older adults living in Hagfors municipality. Confirming the factors influencing the degree of successful ageing among

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5 A study designed to compare researcher and layperson definitions of successful ageing.
older adults in the municipality of Hagfors in this study can potentially help promote stimulating and active ageing within the community.

2.4 DIGITAL MEDIA

2.4.1 THE INTERNET

In general, the Internet can be described as a large communications network that is connected to a great number of computers across the global spectrum, and allows users to exchange information with others. According to Abbate (1999), the combination of military strategy, science cooperation and the technological ability of the between 1990-2000 resulted in the establishment of the Internet. Initially, Internet use was limited for research purposes at the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), which is one of the most advances institutions in the United States of America (USA) (Castells, 2001). However, the prominence of the Information Age resulted in the development of a communications system, which was unaffected by nuclear attack. Unlike previous systems, the new system was independent of control centres. As time went by, the system started to exchange all kinds of messages including images, sounds and videos with various nodes. In 1969, ARPANET became the first computer network to be established. It connected the University of California at Los Angeles, the Stanford Research Institute, the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of Utah. Even though it was launched to cooperate with the Defence Department of the USA, the network was used to facilitate communication between scientists. Consequently, it became essential to divide the network between military and scientific purposes. Ultimately, the military application became known as MILNET and the network for scientific purpose as ARPANET. Later on, a number of networks were created in the 1980s, such as BITNET and CSNET. The National Science Foundation (NSF) developed the NSFNET in 1990 and it became the Internet’s main foundation. However, pressure from the commercial faction resulted in the increased emergence of private networks and by April 1995, government-operated networks had vanished.

Since its expansion across the globe at the end of the ‘80s, the network based on TCP/IP is the latest type of the Internet. Today, there are approximately 5000 computer networks and 9 million host computers throughout 145 countries. Consequently, the increased number of Internet users has made the Internet a universal phenomenon. Additionally, Manasian (2003), claims that the
Internet is becoming embedded into people’s daily lives. According to the International Telecommunication Union (2016), the estimated rate of the number of individuals using the Internet in the world is 47 percent. In general, Internet penetration rates have rapidly increased since the early 2000s. Turow and Kavanaugh (2003) claim that in the same manner that children growing up with the Internet take the television and telephone for granted, so will they and future generations take the Internet. The proliferation of the Internet affords individuals with large amounts of information and activities that can be used to satisfy their needs and desires. Heitner (2002) suggests that in recent years, the amount of time spent on the Internet by individuals has increased drastically, which to a certain extent can be credited on the improved accessibility and growth of online services (Armstrong, Phillips & Saling, 2000). The Internet offers a number of different services such as information seeking, news, e-mails, discussion, chatting, hypertext, file transfers and online games. Essentially, the world has changed in fundamental ways because of the growth of information technology; it has developed new services such as real-time broadcasting and video conferencing. One of the main features of these services is known as “interactive communication”. By definition, interactive communication is a two-way communication process between both participants where ideas are exchanged (Mahmoud & Auter, 2009). For instance, Gross, Juvonen and Gable (2002) found that children aged 13 years tend to use the Internet to chat and exchange instant messages with their friends using their computers. Other scholars (Hampton & Wellman, 2003) suggest that at certain times people use the Internet to connect to family and friends who live far away from them. Consequently, it is found that people mainly use the Internet, especially e-mail, for communicating with other people, thus, maintaining interpersonal relationships (Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001; Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Presently, people tend to use the message services afforded by SNSs such as Facebook’s Messenger, as compared to e-mail.

The influence of interactive communication has not fallen short of some scholars who have discussed its prospects in different perspectives. Several scholars have been influenced by the concept of interactive communication and have thus discussed its prospects in different perspectives. For instance, Ellison et al. (2007) argue that interactive communication on the Internet enables individuals to increase their social connections and essentially enhance their social connectivity, which makes interactive communication on the Internet valuable. Katz, Rice and Aspden (2001), for example, propose that compared to non-users, users of the Internet are more likely to meet friends offline and have wide social connections. Howard et al. (2001), for example, suggest that the use of e-mails strengthens social life and widens the social connections of individuals. Some scholars (for example, Uslaner, 2000), for example, contend that compared
to non-users, users of the Internet have larger social connections. However, other scholars suggest that, compared to face-to-face communication, Internet interactive communication serves as a sterile form of social connectivity and will produce negative impacts, such as depression and loneliness (Sanders, Field, Miguel, & Kaplan, 2000; Muusses, Finkenauer, Kerkhof, & Billedo, 2014). Bargh and McKenna (2004), for instance, suggest that Internet interactive communication results in the weakening and lessening of neighbourhood and community ties. As a consequence of the said negative outcomes, Bargh and McKenna (2004) further suggest that Internet interactive communication is thus not an effective tool for maintaining relationships, and as such older adults totally refuse to use the Internet (Hafner, 2003). However, more recent studies indicate an increasing number of older adults that use the Internet (Pan & Jordan-Marsch, 2010; Gatto & Tak, 2008) and may, in fact, help older adults maintain contact with social connections (Cotten, Anderson, & McCullough, 2013). Even though there are negative and positive outcomes associated with interactive communication, it is obvious that it provides an environment that allows users to create, modify and even re-connect to their information at a later stage. This means that the Internet allows its users to choose the information they want and enables them to set an environment, which makes them active. Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 below illustrate the top 5 most visited websites in the world and Sweden respectively published by Alexa as of December 28th, 2016. Alexa’s “global traffic rank is a measure of how a website is doing relative to all other sites on the web over the past three months” (Alexa, 2017). Further, the rank is calculated using “a proprietary methodology that combine a site’s estimated average of daily unique visitors and its estimated number of pageviews” (Alexa, 2017). Alexa6 also provides a similar ranking for individual-specific countries. However, in the case of countries, ranking is done over the past month.

---

Table 2.4 Top 5 website visits in the world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Daily Time on Site</th>
<th>Daily Page Views Per Visitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google</td>
<td>8:55</td>
<td>8.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>9:33</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>14:41</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baidu</td>
<td>7:31</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td>4:29</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexa (2017)

Table 2.5 Top 5 website visits in Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Daily Time on Site</th>
<th>Daily Page Views Per Visitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google.se</td>
<td>6:36</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Google.com</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>15:04</td>
<td>10.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexa (2017)

The fact that Google.com is listed as the third most visited website in Sweden implies that people living in Sweden are interested in accessing information on a global spectrum. This can also be related to the increasing number of international migrations\(^7\) in the country (Statistics Sweden, 2016c). SNSs are examples of virtual communities and the fact that Facebook and YouTube, for example, are among the top 5 most visited websites both in the world and in Sweden show the

\(^7\) International migration refers to "persons living in a country other than where they were born" (UN Sustainable Development, 2016, para. 1).
increasing emergence of virtual communities in contemporary society. Given their current relevance in modern society as well as to the present paper, SNSs are discussed.

2.4.2 SNSs

SNSs are a form of virtual communities or online communities that allow users to create their online profile containing information that relates to their photos, likes, dislikes and shown interests. Users are able to communicate with other people on these platforms through a variety of means such as chat, message, voice and video. In addition, these sites have come to serve as channels used for face-to-face meetings. Used by those who communicate with each other, SNSs are the virtual community of the 21st century. Today, finding sites for business, friendship and dating, for example, has relatively become easy. SNSs enable individuals to find other individuals and connect with them, thus facilitating socialization amongst them (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Users tend to use SNSs as mediums to share all kinds of information, thoughts and express their emotions or self-presentation. These sites also make it possible to interact with other people as a way of maintaining their relationships. In particular, the primary use of most SNSs is to maintain already existing social relationships. Ellison, et al. (2007) found that Facebook was primarily used either to maintain existing offline relationships or to reinforce offline connections. SNSs have several features and one of them is found in the relative ease of joining and/or withdrawing from these sites. Moreover, joining SNSs is cheap and only requires users to have access to the Internet. When compared to face-to-face communication, communication via SNSs has the advantage of being used without much sense of responsibility. Given that messages on SNSs are spread between people interactively, this may create the illusion that people are communicating with each other in public places and in real time. SNSs are primarily used for the purpose of interaction. The nature of the conversation, its content and the information shared between users during the process of communication can strengthen users’ social connections. When SNSs were first established, they were created to allow users to be able to create and customize their own websites on the Internet.

To date, the use of SNSs has expanded over a range of means and can also be used through mobile phones. In the context of Sweden, for example, IIS (2016) found that majority of Internet users, that is four out five, have smartphones and often use them to visit SNSs, 68 percent and 52 percent reported that they use their smartphones sometimes and daily respectively. Presently, the
most popular SNSs are Facebook (www.facebook.com) and Twitter (www.twitter.com), which provide services that are relationship centered; LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com), which provides career-related services; Instagram (www.instagram.com), which provides services related to the sharing of pictures and videos; and YouTube (www.youtube.com), which provides video sharing services, to name a few. In some countries, other SNSs take precedence over the examples listed above. For example, the most popular SNSs in China and Russia are Baidu (www.baidu.com) and VKontakte (www.vk.com) respectively (see Alexa, 2017). Numerous SNSs have grown intensely since 2007. Globally, the top three most visited SNSs are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (see Alexa, 2017). Additionally, a report by Greenwood et al. (2016) indicates that approximately 64 percent of American adults aged 50 to 64 and about 34 percent of American adults aged 65 and over use SNSs on a daily basis with Facebook as the most widely used platform at about 68 percent. Further, about 60 percent SNSs users live in rural areas (Greenwood et al., 2016). This indicates that Internet use in rural areas is increasing (see, for example, Choudhary, Mitra, & Ahluwaila, 2016). However, some studies indicate that the rural-urban digital divide is still strong (Correa & Pavez, 2016). In a similar study conducted in Sweden, IIS (2016) found that people aged 66 to 75 years frequently use SNSs and spend about 4.9 hours per week on these sites. The following tables (Table 2.6 and 2.7) show the top 5 SNSs in the world and Sweden respectively.

Table 2.6 Top 5 SNSs in the world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SNS</th>
<th>Daily Time on Site</th>
<th>Daily Page Views Per Visitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>14:19</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>6:50</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>6:46</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>4:05</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Google Plus</td>
<td>8:48</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexa (2017)
Table 2.7 Top 5 SNSs in Sweden 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SNS</th>
<th>Usage in Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IIS (2016)

According to Alexa (2017), Facebook is the mostly used SNS in the world. This is also true in Sweden where IIS (2016) found that Facebook is the most popular SNS is the country. As such, the present study places specific focus on Facebook.

2.4.3 FACEBOOK

Since 2008, Facebook surpassed MySpace in the number of subscriptions and became one of the most notable SNSs in the United States as well as globally. A report issued by Facebook Newsroom (2016) indicates that the company had an average number of 1.86 billion monthly active users and 1.23 billion daily active users in 2016, which is a 17 percent and 18 percent increase of the previous year, respectively. The release of the Facebook-based movie ‘The Social Network’ in 2010 by director David Fincher was a reflection of the sites extraordinary popularity, so much as to be considered as some form of culture. The then Harvard University student Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook on February 4th 2004. At first, the use of Facebook was limited for the exclusive use of students enrolled at Harvard University, however, in March 2004, the service was open to students enrolled in other universities, such as Stanford, Colombia, Yale, MIT, Boston and Northeastern. On September 2nd 2005, Facebook further extended its parameters to include all high school students and by the end of the same year it had included students from other countries, such as Canada and England. By 2006, Facebook opened its doors
to everyone over the age of 13 (Jamal, 2010). Facebook provides a number of services for its users.

First, users are able to create profiles that contain a considerable amount of information about them and are thus able to present themselves to other users of the platform. Other users have access to the individual’s name, date of birth, e-mail address, address, hometown, level of education, employment status, hobbies, sexual orientation, relationship status, pictures, favourite movies, music and so forth. Such information plays a pivotal role in interacting with other individuals on the platform. It is reported that over 50 percent of Facebook users tend to seek other users’ information by looking over their profiles as a way to effectively interact with them (Tufekci & Spence, 2007). On the contrary, other scholars argue that the amount of information users provide about themselves, the open nature of the information and the lack of privacy control enacted by the users puts users at risk both in an online setting, for example, identity theft and offline setting, for instance, stalking (Gross & Acquisti, 2005). Of recent, scholars argue that privacy concerns are one of the underlying reasons why most people may choose not to participate on Facebook (Steijn, Schouten, & Vedder, 2016), this is especially true for older demographics (Jung, Walden, Johnson, & Sundar, 2017; Nef, Ganea, Müri, & Mosimann, 2013) or share too much information about themselves (Van den Broeck, Poels, & Walrave, 2015).

Second, the Wall is one of the most utilized services by a majority of the users. On the Wall, users usually leave messages or express a thought or emotion, which can be seen by their Facebook contacts or “friends” and friends of their friends through the News Feed service. The News Feed service also provides a personalized list of news stories that are generated by user activity throughout the day. Being friends with someone on Facebook means that users are able to completely utilize all of the services offered on Facebook. After “friending” someone, users are at the liberty to send each other messages, create groups together, invite friends to events and play games together. Facebook has an immeasurable opportunity that allows users to have large social connections. This is based on the fact the platform allows users to easily search for other people and send them a friend request if they wish to. Additionally, users have the possibility to look up their “friends” friends list, which can be used to expand their social connections. Facebooks’ segment “people you may know” may also help users expand their social connections as it suggests people based on different factors such as imported contacts, work and education information and mutual friends. Furthermore, the functions of Facebook include photo, video and link sharing, even in cases where contents belong to other websites. Also, the chat function enables users to see a list of online friends and can thus alert users of which friends are available for communication.
CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical perspectives explored in this study that will guide the analysis presented later in this chapter. The chapter is divided into two separate parts. The section begins with a description of the theory of socio-emotional selectivity. The concept is then followed by two sub-headings where older adults’ use of Facebook, composition of social connection and well-being are discussed in terms of socio-emotional selectivity. The chapter ends with a description of the theory of social capital. Social capital is also discussed in relation to the Internet, SNSs, Facebook and older adults.

3.1 SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SELECTIVITY THEORY

The theory of socio-emotional selectivity was first coined in 1992 by Carstensen in her article: Social and emotional patterns in adulthood: Support for socioemotional selectivity theory. The theory of socio-emotional selectivity proposes that social motivations vary across the life span due to individuals’ increasing awareness of time left (Carstensen, 1992). Carstensen (2006) further asserts that while younger demographics have open-ended time horizons, that lead them to prioritize goals aimed at optimizing the future, for instance, information gathering, pursuing career goals and establishing new social connections that can serve as important future resources; their older counterparts on the other hand are increasingly aware of time limitations and thus tend to prioritize present-oriented goals aimed at avoiding negative emotional states and experiencing positive ones, for instance, finding meaning in life, maintaining relational intimacy with others and satisfying a need for social belonging. The theory of socio-emotional selectivity provides concrete and testable predictions about age differences in the composition and size of social connections as well as the amount and quality of social contacts sought (Lang & Carstensen, 2002). Considering that this study is particularly interested in older adults, the applicability of the socio-emotional selectivity framework is tested only on older adults and not on their younger counterparts. Carstensen (2006) hypothesizes that when people age and their perceptions of future time becomes more limited, they increasingly value EGR, hence, they are more likely to prioritize quality over quantity in traditional face-to-face social connections.

Consistent with Carstensen’s (2006) hypothesis, some studies have found that older adults have smaller social connections with a greater proportion of EGR and fewer shallow relationships in their offline social connections (Fung, Carstensen, & Lang, 2001). On the contrary, other studies
propose that older adults are less close to members in their social connections (Cornwell et al., 2008). Moreover, taking into account the idea that age-related shifts in social connections are adaptive (Charles & Carstensen, 2010), older adults are more likely to be satisfied with the size of their current social connections and do not want to increase it by adding new friends compared to their younger counterparts (Luong, Charles, & Fingerman, 2011). Even though the framework of socio-emotional selectivity theory is well supported in the domain of offline social connections, little is known in online contexts. One study found that the size of online social connections reflects the patterns observed offline, that is, the number of Facebook friends is similar to that of offline face-to-face social connections (Dunbar, 2016). Chang, Choi, Bazarova, and Löckenhoff (2015) found that older adults have smaller social connections, with a greater proportion of people who are considered to be actual friends. Furthermore, the authors found that a higher proportion of actual friends are associated with lower levels of social isolation and loneliness (Chang et al., 2015). By extending the theory of socio-emotional selectivity theory to SNSs (see also Chang at al., 2015), this study argues that older adults’ engagement with EGR promotes successful ageing. Further, older adults’ social motivations may also be mirrored by the types of social interactions that they engage in online. Facebook offers different communication activities, for instance, posting and sharing content, messaging, video-calling and looking at other users’ profiles. Depending on the content of information shared or received and the type of social connections, that is, EGR and shallow relationships, these activities could support present-oriented social goals. Earlier studies (see for example, Hampton, Goulet, Her, & Rainie, 2009) on SNSs found that people tend to have larger, more diverse number of online social connections and relatively fewer social connections in traditional face-to-face relationships. Their online networks, however, are often characterized by weak, low-commitment ties and in some instances tend to be inactive (Lewis & West 2009; Ellison et al., 2007). For example, a study conducted by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2011) found that approximately a quarter of total Facebook friends are recognized as ‘actual’ friends, that is, people whom users have shared history and meaningful connections with. Other scholars (for example, Sosik & Bazarova, 2014) found that at least one third of the relationships in university students’ Facebook networks are made up of either lapsed friendships or familiar strangers, that is, people of whom users know little about. Furthermore, scholars, for instance, Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012) found a positive correlation between the size of college students’ networks and increased proportion of shallow relationships. Although a majority of studies on SNSs have been conducted on younger demographics, studies conducted on older demographics suggest that as people age, they tend to have smaller networks (Cornwell et al., 2008) with more diverse age distributions (Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009). Based on the premise that personal relationships mirror peoples’ salient
motivations and taking into account that motivational priorities change with age (Carstensen, 2006), it can be assumed that the size and composition of online social connections mirror age-related goal shifts. As such, it is imperative to understand such effects considering that network characteristics affect behaviours such as information sharing, for example, what is shared, how it is shared, and with whom it is shared. Further, the size and composition of a person’s network may, for instance, result in varying levels of knowledge gain and awareness of social norms, which in general impact well-being and socialization (Southwell, 2013). Consequently, this study again argues that using Facebook for socially meaningful goals is related to ageing successfully.

3.1.2 FACEBOOK USE, COMPOSITION OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND WELL-BEING

Over the years, scholars have studied the relationship between the use of Facebook and well-being and health. On one hand, for example, Kross et al. (2013) found that the use of Facebook is associated with feelings of loneliness, depression and declines in life-satisfaction among diverse age groups. Consequently, this suggests a negative association between Facebook use and well-being. On the other hand, for example, Burke and Kraut (2016) found that Facebook use leads to increases in life-satisfaction, declines in loneliness, stress, depression and so forth among older people. Thus, this implies a positive relationship between Facebook use and well-being of the users. As witnessed, various studies produce conflicting findings, this suggests that Facebook use can have both positive and negative effects on interpersonal relationships, depression and loneliness (Chasombat, 2014). Research on Facebook use shows that decreases in well-being or in life-satisfaction are connected to time spent online, consequently linking Facebook usage to loneliness and depression (Kross et al., 2013); social overload, which is related to stress and emotional exhaustion (Maier, Laumer, Eckhardt, & Weitzel, 2012); and an over-optimistic perception towards other people’s lives that generally leads to feelings of lack of self-esteem (Chou & Edge, 2012). On the positive, studies show that the use of Facebook is beneficial to developing and maintaining social connectedness (Grieve et al., 2013) and social capital (Ellison et al., 2007); and an increase in psychological well-being (Burke & Kraut, 2016; Sims, Reed, Carr, 2016). Taking into account the findings of the studies mentioned above, it can be assumed that the use of Facebook may result in both increases and decreases of well-being. These studies note specific characteristics related to, for instance, use, perceptions and individuals’ characteristics that determine either increases or decreases of well-being. In this regard, it
becomes pivotal to analyse specific characteristics of Facebook, for example, size, composition, type of communication and variations between communication of ties with different strengths, and well-being. According to Fung et al. (2001), people obtain important resources from their networks, for example, feelings of social embeddedness, emotional support and new information. The socio-emotional selectivity theory proposes that individuals form social connections that gratify their social goals and improve their well-being (Carstensen, 2006). Fung et al. (2001) further contends that ungratified personal goals in existing social connections may lead to feelings of loneliness, disconnectedness and dissatisfaction. Yielding similar results, a study by Green, Richardson, Lago, and Schatten-Jones (2001) found that loneliness in older adults was associated with lower closeness to social connections. Scholars (see for example, Sundar & Limperos, 2013) assert that online social networking affords users with new means of socializing through which they can use to satisfy their relational needs, as well as gain essential social benefits and bridging and bonding social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Bonding social capital is derived from EGR and is associated with present-oriented emotional goals whereas bridging social capital is derived from shallow relationships and is linked to future-oriented information acquisition goals. The work of Ellison et al. (2011) on college students’ bridging and bonding social capital suggests that as opposed to total Facebook friends, individual perceptions of actual friends on Facebook provide meaningful social connections and valuable network resources. Integrating the findings yielded from the scholars’ work (Ellison et al., 2011) with the argument posited by the socio-emotional selectivity theory that network composition constitutes an adaptive response to specific goals and motivations, this study argues that older adults value a higher proportion of actual to total Facebook friends. Thus, proposing that older adults’ perceptions of a Facebook network that is low in actual friends is negatively associated with successful ageing. On the final count, it is essential to examine factors that were previously shown to be associated with older adults’ Facebook use patterns and its impact on well-being (for example, Shakya & Christakis, 2017; Burke & Kraut, 2016). These include factors such as gender, income, ethnicity, education, marital status, intensity of Facebook use, adaptation to Facebook and/or Internet use and physical and mental health.
3.1.3 OLDER ADULTS AND THE USE OF SNSs

This section shows why older adults use SNSs and what needs they satisfy. Khalid (2006) suggests that compared to their younger SNSs counterparts, older adults are much more aware of the effects of ageing and hence have different emotional mechanisms which accordingly influence their perceptions of SNS. As already mentioned, the theory of socio-emotional selectivity, suggests that people have different perceptions of time remaining until a critical future point, for example, death. This perception, according to Carstensen (2006) plays a pivotal role in individual emotions and motivations. At present, the socio-emotional selectivity theory is often used to explain older adults’ social networking or communication behaviour. Previous research has identified different ways in which the use of SNSs differs between age groups. This is due to the fact that interpersonal relationships are constructed by the social roles and structures found within each age group (Ryan, Hummert, & Boich, 1995). A study conducted by Arjan, Pfeil, & Zaphiris (2008) examined different ways of communicating with online friends through SNSs by comparing the profile pages of younger and older users. The scholars found that younger users tend to have large social connections of friends with similar age, whereas older users have small social connections made up of diverse age groups. The scholars concluded that each age group uses affordances of SNSs differently to meet their social goals. In particular, older adults were found to have a strong preference for and distaste of specific affordances of SNSs, for example, they prefer to use simple affordances that are easy to understand such as the “Like” button. In their study concerning the use of technology among older adults, Mitzner et al. (2010) found that older adults have positive attitudes towards convenient technological features that reduce effort. Owing to the fact that older adults are relatively physically and cognitively impaired, Pfeil et al. (2009) suggest that such results are expected since such impairments make it difficult to perform complex technological tasks. Additionally, other scholars (for example, Lewis & Ariyachandra, 2010; Leist, 2013) found that one favourite activity of older adults on SNSs is viewing photos. Also, Righi, Sayago, & Blat (2012) study on SNSs photos and older adults found that a majority of the participants indicated that photo sharing on Facebook is the most useful and enjoyable form of communication. The respondents indicated that this was because this function enables them to keep in touch in a visual manner with family members, for example, children and grandchildren, living in distant places. A study related to that of Righi et al. (2012), indicates that older adults prefer to view past family and holiday photographs, even though they hardly create their own content (Leist, 2013). In other words, older adults are more
likely to monitor or lurk over other users’ profiles than update their own status (Evjemo, Svendsen, Rinde, & Johnsen, 2004).

3.2 THE THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Over the years, the concept of social capital has been defined in multiple ways in a number of studies across different fields (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Social capital has been defined as:

- Trust in social relations (Fukuyama, 2001)
- Civic engagement built through participation in voluntary associations (Putnam, 1995)
- A social fabric that creates a willingness to cooperate in the development of physical capital (Ostrom, 1994)
- An explanatory variable in the creation of human capital between generations and an aspect of social structure that promotes particular forms of action and cooperation (Coleman, 1988).

Broadly defined, “social capital” is used to refer to the resources embedded in the relationships among people (Williams, 2006; Lin, 2001; Resnick, 2002). Although various scholars have understood the term differently, a majority of them, however, acknowledge the idea that social capital is network-based (Lin, 2001; Dekker & Uslander, 2001; Putnam, 1995; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, 1986). These studies conclude that there are a number of positive outcomes related to social capital at both individual and collective levels. At the individual level of social capital, Lin (2001) built his framework based on the concept of capital by Karl Marx. According to the scholar’s theory, social capital is defined as the “resources embedded in a social structure which are assessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (Lin, 2001, p. 29). Based on Lin’s (2001) definition, social capital can be said to consist of three elements, namely: social resources, accessibility or opportunity and “action-oriented” (Lin, Cook, & Burt, 2001, p. 12). Further, Lin (2001) claims that social resources are gained by individuals with purpose and are assumed to bring positive outcomes. The collective level of social capital refers to the collective value of all social connections and potential social connections, and it produces civic engagement that improves the common health of a society (Putnam, 2000). Based on this concept, Putnam (2000) observed that community social capital in America was declining, which he associated with lower levels of trust in government and lower levels of civic participation. Due to the rapid
increase of SNSs, the relationship between SNSs and social capital has received considerable attention from scholars. Scholars (for example, Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Williams, 2006) argue that the key component for creating content on SNSs among users is influenced by their interpersonal relationships. In other words, by using SNSs individuals seek to maintain and increase their social connections. By investing in their social connections, individuals are able to develop norms of trust and reciprocity, which are essential for successful engagement in collective activities, for example, participating in neighbourhood associations (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Put otherwise, trust enables individuals to work with others on common issues (Putnam, 2004).

Social capital also enables individuals to access information and opportunities, for example, job openings, that are otherwise not available (Lin, 2001). Accordingly, improving the well-being and quality of life of individuals are consequences of social capital. Some scholars (for example, Pfeil et al., 2009) propose that different uses of SNSs are dependent on age demographics and thus provide significant consequences as to how to increase theoretical knowledge concerning the designs of SNSs aimed at specific populations. For instance, Madden (2010) suggests that older peoples use of SNSs are motivated by their need to reconnect with others in their age group, gain social support from online friends and bridge generational gaps. Righi et al. (2012) suggests that older people mainly use Facebook to share photos. Jung & Sundar (2016) in their study found that older people use Facebook based on their motives to keep in touch, share photos, respond to family member requests, and for social surveillance, convenient communication and curiosity. Although previous studies have identified older adults’ primary motivations for using SNSs, very little has been done in terms of examining the impact of SNSs on the well-being of older adults, which is what the present study seeks to identify. A number of studies (for example, Ellison et al., 2007) have identified elements of reciprocity, civic engagement and life-satisfaction as closely related to the theory of social capital. As such, some researchers (for example, Scheufele & Shah, 2000) have proposed that the framework of social capital is too broad to be a useful scientific concept. Another way to go about it is to acknowledge social capital as a multi-dimensional framework that is based on peoples’ social connections and their predicted effects. In this case, the challenge lies in integrating different dimensions of social capital into a coherent theoretical framework. The work of Scheufele and Shah (2000) (see also Howard & Gilbert, 2008) exemplifies such an effort. In their study, the scholars were able to identify three dimensions of social capital: a) intrapersonal social capital, related to individuals’ life-satisfaction; b) interpersonal social capital, refers to trust among individuals, it is also referred to as social or generalized trust in others; and c) behavioral social
capital, involves individuals active participation in civic and political activities (Scheufele & Shah, 2000, p. 123). The present study uses the framework developed by Scheufele & Shah (2000) to examine the impact of Facebook communication on older adults’ successful ageing. Older adults’ life-satisfaction, social trust and civic and political participation are used as indicators of successful ageing.

3.2.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE INTERNET

Existing literature on the relationships between SNSs and individual’s well-being, trust and participation tends to be limited and circumstantial. However, this is not true for studies conducted on the general use of the Internet and social capital. In fact, an overwhelming body of research is enough to accommodate competing concepts, which may illuminate researchers’ discussions on the Internet’s effect of SNS use on social capital (Nie, 2001). In imitating the “time displacement hypothesis” (Putnam, 2000) found that like heavy television watchers, users of the Internet had fewer face-to-face interactions (see also Kraut et al., 1998). Researchers later found that online communications have a positive effect on peoples’ social trust and participation in community life (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006; Kavanaugh, Reese, Carroll, & Ross, 2005). The intellectual fight between cyber-pessimists and cyber-optimists continues to manifest in existing literature. Williams (2006) argues that it is clear that the positive and adverse effects of the Internet on social capital depend on the way in which scholars hypothesize the medium, and how people use it (Kwak, Shah, & Holvert, 2004; Kim, 2006). Furthermore, Williams (2006) argues that the problem with the time displacement hypothesis is that it ignored the differences between broadcast media and digital media. For example, when individuals watch television, they are unable to communicate with each other. However, with SNSs, chat services and e-mails, enables people to communicate with each other. When researchers (for example Nie & Hillygus, 2002) rationalise Internet use as time spent on the medium, they fail to consider factors such as motives, experiences and multiple audiences that the medium affords. As such, results tend to show a negative effect on the individual level production of social capital (Nie & Hillygus, 2002). However, when researchers acknowledge different Internet uses such as entertainment, communicative, informational and recreational uses, they tend to find a positive link between particular Internet use motives and social capital (see for example, Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

8 See the proposed self-constructed conceptual framework in chapter 4 below.
The assumption is that patterns of new media use that are related to community building and acquisition of information, for instance, political blogs, online communities and online news, are positively associated with the individual-level production of social capital (Valenzuela et al., 2009). On the contrary, patterns of use that are related to diversion and entertainment, for example, online movies and games, are negatively associated with social capital (Shah, Schmierbach, Hawkins, Espino, & Donavan, 2002; Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). Therefore, inherently technology does not affect an individual’s social capital but the specific ways in which individuals use the technology. Consequently, this provides an explanation as to why activities online have been found to both reduce and increase social capital. For instance, Resnick (2002) found that when individuals spend time on the Internet that would otherwise be used to engage in face-to-face communication, social capital is likely to diminish. On the other hand, he found that if going online displaces activities such as watching crime dramas or commuting, the Internet effect could be positive. Extending this rationale to SNSs, it could be said that their impact on social capital should be contingent upon the specific emotional gratifications sought by users. Taking into account the concepts of bridging (shallow relationships) social capital, that is, ties across diverse social groups, versus bonding (EGR) social capital, that is, ties across homogeneous groups suggested by Putnam (2000), Williams (2006) notes that the types of relationships found within social connections can predict different kinds of social capital. Shallow relationships produce bridging social capital because they connect people from different life situations. These networks broaden the set of information and opportunities for users in the network. However, people in shallow relationships do not gain the benefits of bonding social capital, such as emotional support that occurs based on the interdependence and commonalities of EGR. It shall later be discussed how Facebook features allow for the production and maintenance of both EGR and shallow relationships which in turn is likely to positively influence users’ life-satisfaction, trust and public participation.

3.2.2 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND USE OF SNSs

In spite of the debates concerning the potential differences between online and offline social capital, researchers of social media (for example, Resnick, 2002; Donath & boyd, 2004; Ellison et al., 2007) have found that SNSs provide a platform for transforming offline social capital into online social capital. For instance, Resnick (2002) proposes that new forms of social capital and relationship building will occur in SNSs due to the way that technologies like distribution lists,
photo directories and search capabilities support online linkages with others. Donath & boyd (2004) suggest that SNSs could increase the number of weak ties a user might be able to maintain because their affordances are well suited to the maintenance of these relations in an easy and cheap manner. Ellison et al. (2007) argue that SNSs are a way to maintain and intensify existing social capital, especially when people move to a new geographic location. SNSs such as Facebook and Friendster enable users to create and maintain diffuse networks of relationships. As such, users can use these sites to gain certain benefits and resources and in turn, increase bridging social capital (Resnick, 2002; Wellman et al., 2001; Donath & boyd, 2004). Further, researchers (for example Ellison et al., 2007) have found strong correlations between the use of Facebook and both bridging and bonding social capital. Ellison et al. (2007) note that Facebook is especially helpful for building social capital. Hence, SNSs play a pivotal role in helping people maintain old friendships and develop new ones, including both bridging and bonding social capital. Nonetheless, because the study by Ellison and colleagues (2007) was carried out among college students from one university, their conclusions cannot be generalized to a larger population in other geographic areas or a larger age group. Their hypothesis needs further examination in a more diverse population of users of SNSs. In another study, Ellison et al. (2011) found that there is a relationship between offline and online communication. The authors also found that the use of Facebook is mostly beneficial for individuals who seek social information in pursuit of turning latent ties (see Haythornthwaite, 2005) into weak ties and build up bonding social capital. The authors concluded that, because close friends are always at the disposal of multiple ways of communication and hence are less reliant on Facebook, the platform has less impact on maintaining bonding social capital or EGR (Ellison et al., 2011). The finding by Ellison et al. (2011) is consistent with Haythornthwaite’s (2005) finding when she argues that the introduction of a medium can “create latent tie connectivity among group members that provides the technical means for activating weak ties” (p. 125).

3.2.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND OLDER ADULTS

According to Collom (2008), in an ageing society, bridging social capital suggests the integration of linkages between individuals with diverse age distributions. In their study, Pfeil et al. (2009), described older adults bonding social capital in terms of the close relationships with family members or very close friends, in which emotional support is exchanged. Bridging social capital was described in terms of older adults’ relationships with diverse age distributions or their
heterogeneous relationships (Pfeil et al., 2009). Older adults with Facebook are able to maintain contact with family members, relatives and close friends and thus build on bonding social capital; they are also able to increase bridging social capital by keeping in touch with familiar strangers, acquaintances and neighbours (Erickson, 2011). Scholars (see for example, Lee, 2013) argue that individuals perceived bridging and bonding social capital determine their continued use of SNSs. Further, considering that social capital consists of both emotional and informational resources accumulated through interactions with strong or weak ties, SNSs can therefore be said to be beneficial tools of gaining social capital (Lin, 2015). Social capital in terms of reciprocity, civic trust and participation is essential for understanding the health of older adults. Pollack and Von Dem Knesebeck (2004) argue that low levels of social capital are associated with poorer health indicators. Moreover, some scholars (Nilsson, Rana, & Kabir, 2006) on one hand assert that low social capital at individual and community levels are important indicators of older adults’ poor quality of life. On the other hand, other scholars (Sum, Mathews, Pourghasem, & Hughes, 2008) claim that older adults with recorded higher levels of social capital in family and work relations have higher levels of national well-being. Colom (2008) suggests that compared to their younger counterparts, older adults are more likely to generate bonding social capital, as they seem to greatly value reciprocity. Older adults participation in community activities and their health behaviours are associated with cognitive social capital, therefore, for successful ageing to be achieved, it is important to encourage cognitive social capital (Aihara, Minai, Kikuchi, Aoyama, & Shimanouchi, 2009). Cognitive social capital refers to “shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs, predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective action” (Claridge, 2013, para. 2). Social capital is positively associated with increased levels of involvement as older adults’ volunteers. McNamara and Gonzales (2011) suggest that the effects of social capital, for instance in the community and family relationships, depend on the quality of older adults relationships. Older adults are reported to have smaller network sizes compared to younger people (Pfeil et al., 2009), thus suggesting that older adults are most likely to mainly seek bonding social capital on SNSs (Keating, Swindle, & Foster, 2004).

3.2.4 FACEBOOK AND THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Among the first to hypothesize that online social connections may not increase the number of strong ties a person has were scholars Donath & boyd (2004). Rather, they proposed that a person’s weak ties might increase due to the fact that the technology is suited to maintaining such links easily and cheaply. Ellison et al. (2007) tested this hypothesis using empirical data collected
from a small sample of undergraduate students in America. They concluded that the use of Facebook is closely related to maintaining existing offline relationships as opposed to meeting new people. However, the strongest relationship was between the use of Facebook and bridging social capital. Interestingly, Ellison et al. (2007) found that the use of SNSs could be related to the students’ psychological well-being, thus suggesting that Facebook might provide users who have low life-satisfaction and low self-esteem with greater benefits. Despite the fact that existing literature shows a connection between the use of Facebook and an individual level of production of social capital, it is, however, not clear what specific features produce such effects. The theory of socio-emotional selectivity (see for example, Chang et al., 2015) provides a useful framework for drawing such conclusions.

Firstly, Facebook is a useful tool for the construction of personal identity, which according to the uses and gratifications theory is one of the key motives of consuming media (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 26). This is because the platform has a number of channels that allow for interpersonal feedback and acceptance by peers. For example, Facebook has two types of messaging services; a private system which quite similarly resembles web-based e-mail services and a public system also known as the “Wall”, which enables contacts or “friends” to leave comments to the owner of the Facebook profile which can be viewed by other users as well. In most cases, wall posts contain short messages that reflect sentiments, common activities between friends or details about external websites or events. Another form of feedback found within the platform is information concerning whether an owner of a profile has been accepted or rejected as a friend by prospective contacts. Taking into account that interpersonal feedback and acceptance by peers are strong predictors of life-satisfaction (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006), it can thus be said that Facebook can have both positive and negative effects of the self-esteem and life-satisfaction of users.

Secondly, Facebook is a useful tool for fulfilling users’ informational needs, which is an essential feature in strengthening weak ties and promoting collective action (Shah et al., 2001; Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Moreover, Facebook has two features that keep users updated about their social circles. First, the “News Feed”, which appears on the homepage of each user. Updates on the News Feed are a personalized list of news stories that are generated by the activity of friends throughout the day, for example, John changed his relationship status to “single”; Jane added Adele to her favorites. Hence, users get the latest updates about their contacts every time they log in. Second, the “Mini-Feed”, which appears in the profile of each individual. The only difference between the mini-feed and News Feed is that the Mini-Feed centers around one individual. The
Mini-Feed of each individual shows recent changes in their profile and what content or applications they have added. Consequently, the use of Facebook can strengthen existing ties and communities by regularly keeping users regularly informed about what their contacts are doing (Hargittai, 2007). Furthermore, by incorporating the profiles of users into the “Facebook Groups” application, Facebook allows users to create and join groups based around common interests and activities. The “groups” application shows the group membership of each individual as well as the groups their friends have joined. As a result, those who belong, for example, to a civic or political group within Facebook can receive mobilizing information that may not be available elsewhere. Consequently, members can encounter more opportunities that allow them to engage in civic and political activities. Thus, it becomes relevantly important for the civic and political impact on Facebook to occur within groups that have been developed by users and organizations. Nonetheless, an increase in participation both in online and offline groups usually helps members to build trust in relationships, and further enhance Facebook’s potential to increase social capital (Kobayashi et al., 2006).

Thirdly, users can also satisfy their entertainment and recreational needs. This feature of Facebook is negatively related to the production of social capital (Nyland, Marvez, & Beck, 2007 as cited in Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). “Fun Wall” is an example of a popular application for Facebook, which allows users to post a much wider range of content as opposed to the traditional Wall, for instance, music, videos and games. Even through posting links to jokes on YouTube on the Fun Wall or creating Facebook Groups such as “If 500,000 people join I will get an enormous tattoo across my chest” can promote a sense of originality and fun. It can also divert attention away from reality. Scholars (for example, Shah et al., 2001) argue that in such instances, “recreation and socializing may become privatized while the illusion of social interaction is maintained” (p. 154). As a result, users may be distracted from more meaningful public affairs content if they mainly use Facebook for fun. Fourthly and lastly, users join SNSs for purposes of integration and social interaction (McQuail, 2005). People are motivated by a number of reasons to use SNSs. These include identifying with others, gaining a sense of belonging, finding a basis for conversation and social interaction, connecting with family, friends and society and gaining insight into the circumstances of others. By making users feel connected to a community and increasing their knowledge of other members, sites such as Facebook can foster norms of reciprocity and trust and thus create opportunities for collective action.
CHAPTER 4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on previous background chapters, this chapter explains in detail the conceptual framework used in the present study. Based on the research purpose, the theoretical framework of socio-emotional selectivity and social capital, relevant operational definitions, research questions and hypothesis will be described. In order to facilitate the research design, the conceptual framework will be generated.

4.1 RATIONALE FOR PRESENT STUDY

Based on the comprehensive literature review previously discussed, it is evident that in many Western countries, older adults expressed a desire to be involved in communities where their talents were valued and their active engagement reflects positive outcomes in their lives. Unlike people with few social connections, the socio-emotional selectivity theory proposes that people with stronger and more frequent connections have better health outcomes (Carstensen, 2006). The work of scholars such as Cornwell et al. (2008) mirrors these assumptions. In order to interpret social phenomena, social capital captures the core notion of a social tie, social norms and its connections with an individual, a group and a society’s well-being. Social capital can serve as a causal factor or an interpretative tool (Castiglione, Deth, & Wolleb, 2008, as cited in Chen, 2009, p. 75). Taking into account that the specific functions of social capital heavily depend on group-specific and culture-specific arrangements, research in this field should focus on specific groups in specific settings. As such, Hagfors municipality has been accorded a priority in the research theme on social capital, successful ageing, socio-emotional selectivity and community life.

4.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SELECTIVITY THEORY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

As previously mentioned and in relation to older adults, the socio-emotional selectivity theory basically asserts that older adults value stable and positive emotional experiences and hence tend to prioritize meaningful activities such as spending time with loved ones and close friends. As such, the integration of these factors can be used to represent a significant source of social
capital, or more specifically into bonding social capital. The classic capital theory (Marx, 1975) and neo-capital theories (Bourdieu, 1986) conceive the social-structural resources that reside in networks and associations as a capital asset for the individual, that is, as social capital (Putnam, 1993). This non-economic capital is made up of structural and attitudinal resources that people invest with expected returns of individual well-being. According to Putnam (2000, 2004), the investment in social capital and the anticipated outcomes may reinforce each other. However, the cycle of both investment and outcome appraisals varies in specific situations and for particular purposeful actions. In the present study, the stakeholders are older adults with the study focus on ageing successfully and community well-being from the perspectives of the theories of socio-emotional selectivity and social capital. According to the invest-return of socio-emotional selectivity the theoretical rationale for the current study is: older adults’ Facebook communication is an investment process in building their socio-emotional selectivity and social capital which in turn may functionally make a return to the individuals by positively impacting the process of successful ageing and well-being of the community in general. The individual gains, that is, life-satisfaction, is likely to strengthen the ties, trust and reciprocity respectively and further form the stock of social capital. The proposed corresponding theory model is illustrated in *Figure 4.1* below.

*Figure 4.1* Invest-Return Model of the Socio-emotional Selectivity Theory (Self-constructed)
4.2.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF FACEBOOK COMMUNICATION AND SUCCESSFUL AGEING

Currently there is no definition of Facebook communication. Consequently, this study defines Facebook communication as the use of Facebook activities which allow for the exchange of messages with other users in the form of posting content (i.e. status update) aimed at a wider audience, composed content intended for a specific user (i.e. wall posts, comments on other users’ posts and private messages sent through Facebook’s messenger service), and reacting to or liking posts that enable individuals to derive social capital, achieve personal goals and ultimately improve their well-being. It is important to note, however, that the proposed definition does not include other uses of Facebook that are used for informational and/or recreational needs. Additionally, the definition incorporates important factors identified from previous scholarly work (for example, Kross et al., 2013; Lin & Utz, 2015) as well as the theoretical framework described above. Drawing back to the socio-emotional selectivity theory, it is argued that Facebook communication enables users to achieve quality social interactions and desired emotional goals. Consequently, social connections and the embedded interactions that one can invest in networking constitute a norm of reciprocity for both individuals and collective entities. These structural properties of formal and informal relationships among people and the associated norms of reciprocity constitute the complex phenomenon in any given society. They serve as instruments of community development with expected outcomes (Uphoff & Wijayaratna, 2000) that can possibly strengthen the fabric of a society. Consequently, three essential elements compose the operational concept of Facebook communication in the current study, namely, content communication, composed communication and one-click communication. The structure presented in Figure 4.2 indicates the interaction between the three elements.

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9 Here formal relationships refer to participation in civic and political agendas and informal relationships refer to social interactions with friends, family and acquaintances.
This study proposes that: a) through composed communication, users are able to fulfil their need for belonging as well as maintain their relationships. Peoples’ need to belong is satisfied by both social interactions and stable interpersonal relationships marked by genuine concern and caring (Ben-Zeév, 2014). A study conducted by Cockshaw, Shochet, and Obst (2014) shows that social interaction improves well-being; frequent communication with social connections helps relationships stay alive (Roberts & Dunbar, 2010); and provides opportunities for self-disclosure and social support, which in turn deepen relationships (Spies-Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Both the need to belong and relationship maintenance will be used in an attempt to explain older adults potential access to emotional support derived from their networks and its likely effects on well-being; b) content communication enables individuals to present themselves in a self-enhancing way (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006) by sharing positive stories about themselves. The downside, however, is that other people are likely to compare their lives with other people’s lives and may perceive theirs as unsuccessful (Zuo, 2014). Content communication will, therefore, be used to try and explain the effects of social comparison on older adult’s life-satisfaction; and finally c) one-click communication is a way to give positive feedback to friends. Even though it has less impact than composed communication, one-click communication offers individuals with social support and can also be used to invest in relationship maintenance as people can mark their support and/or existence using minimal effort in the form of a like (Seiter, 2016).
Consequently, one-click communication is an attempt to explain the effect of vague communication on individual well-being. Currently, there is no specific definition among scholars on a single definition of successful ageing that would fit every situation. The lack of consensus on the definition of the term has encouraged different ways of measuring it, which has inhibited the advancement of research on successful ageing, limited the generalizability, and confounded descriptors of studies on successful ageing (Cosco, Prina, Perales, Stephan, Brayne, 2013). Broadly defined, successful ageing refers to “…life satisfaction, longevity, freedom from disability, mastery and growth, active engagement with life and independence” (Moody, 2005, p. 59, as cited in Martin, Kelly, Kahana, Kahana, Willcox, Willcox, & Poon, 2015, p. 15). This study, however, defines successful ageing as an individual’s perception of a beneficial outcome in adapting to the physical and cognitive changes associated with old age, while experiencing life-satisfaction, social trust and satisfying a need for social engagement. In order to attain successful ageing, older adults must first cope effectively in these three areas: life-satisfaction, social trust and social engagement. Arguably, this definition is very much limited as it does not include biomedical and physiological measures, for instance, however, based on the rationale for this study, which is to assess successful ageing in terms of social capital, the three domains of social capital were deemed important factors of measurement. Additionally, biomedical and physiological constructs were not used in this study because individuals age in different ways. As such, some individuals may age in good physical and mental conditions and others may not. The ‘individual life-satisfaction’ indicator is used to explain the nature of social connections, such as the quality and commitment of connections found within groups, communities as well as family and friends. This is used in an attempt to explain the potential access of older adults’ emotional support (Putnam, 2004) derived from their networks. In turn, social trust is addressed in terms of how older adults’ trust in their networks is related to the emotional support they receive from their networks and how this generally affects life-satisfaction. Lastly, social engagement is used to refer to civic and political participation. This study uses Facebook use and news attention as indicators of participation. Figure 4.3 below proposes a model that illustrates the relationship between the three domains of social capital and successful ageing.
The following chapter on methodology will introduce both the measures of Facebook communication and successful ageing in explicit detail.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Owing to the current literature on SNSs and successful ageing, the present study focuses on how Facebook communication can facilitate successful ageing. The study also seeks to find out the characteristics of successful ageing among groups of older adults with different socio-economic factors such as, gender, age, education, income, ethnicity, employment status and family size. Research question 1 attempts to address objective 1, which aims to identify how Facebook communication can be used to obtain social connectedness between older adults and social connections. Similarly, research question 2 attempts to address objective 2, which aims to find out how Facebook communication affects older adults’ successful ageing.
RQ 1 How does Facebook communication with social connections promote (or undermine) successful ageing of older adults in the rural municipality of Hagfors?

RQ 2 What are the implications of Facebook communication on successful ageing of older adults?

In order to find the answers to the research questions, a set of hypotheses are put forward in line with the research questions. These hypotheses will be tested based on the data collected for this study.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses were formulated based on the research questions, the conceptual framework (illustrated below) as well as the literature review. The proposed hypotheses were used to test the relationship between Facebook communication (independent variable) and successful ageing (dependent variable). Older adults can use Facebook communication to promote successful ageing. The reinforcement of Facebook communication is likely to enhance older adults’ process of ageing successfully. The following hypotheses are relevant to the research questions.

H1 The higher the frequency of Facebook use the better the chances of successful ageing

H2 The higher the frequency of Facebook communication with EGR the better the chances of successful ageing

H3 The higher the frequency of Facebook communication with shallow relationships the lesser the chances of successful ageing
4.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 4.4 below is constructed based on the research questions and hypotheses, which present the design of the present study. The framework presents the major variables involved and their proposed associations addressed by the hypotheses. Appropriate methods will be chosen to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. Also, the following chapter explains the justification of the method selected.

Figure 4.4 Conceptual Framework (Self-constructed)

Independent

Frequency of Facebook communication

H2

EGR

HGR

Shallow relationships

 Successful ageing

Dependent

H3

H1
CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will give an account of the research design, the construction of the interview guide, in-depth semi-structured interview processes and their justifications. The rationale for data analysis and its procedure to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses will also be described in detail in this chapter.

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is planned according to the objectives of the study, research questions and the framework of the research. In-depth semi-structured interviews with 15 participants are conducted. The study therefore adopts a qualitative paradigm to fulfil the objectives of the study, answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses. Qualitative research typically provides an in-depth focus on relatively small purposively selected samples (Patton, 1990).

5.2 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH METHOD

Due to the purpose and nature of this study, interviews are used as the method of data collection. The data was gathered over a period of 3 weeks through face-to-face interviews. In media and communication studies, qualitative methods are frequently being used to analyse the reception and production of media texts as well as the activities and strategies of media actors (Østbye, Knapskog, Helland, & Larsen, 2008, p. 100). In addition, several scholars (see for example, Burns & Grove, 2005; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002) argue that qualitative research is a way to explore peoples’ life experiences such as emotions or behavior and give them meaning. Further, Burns & Grove (2005) argue that the approach is holistic and thus allows researchers to examine specific phenomenon more entirely and deeply (p. 52). Consequently, it aims to describe or explain a phenomenon or to define new theories (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 11). There are a number of important elements in qualitative research.

The first element is the primacy of data. Qualitative research is a dynamic process that derives from incoming data. Since the data is usually collected and analysed continuously, this allows forming new ideas and research development (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, pp. 10-12). The
second element is multiple realities, that is, the diverse perceptions of the outside world of each individual. Furthermore, individual views change over time. According to Burns & Grove (2005) this means that peoples’ knowledge is bound by a certain situation and time (p. 52). Based on the above-mentioned elements of qualitative research, Holloway & Wheeler (2002) argue that researchers should acquaint with the individuals and settings they intend to study and see them as wholes within the scope of their cultural, political and economic views. The authors further argue that the focus of qualitative research is on the participants’ own “perception, meaning and interpretation” of the phenomenon (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, pp. 10-12). Accordingly, within the frame of this study, qualitative research was deemed as the best method to allow older people the opportunity to describe their perceptions, motives and satisfactions concerning Facebook use, which could have not been possible to achieve through questionnaires (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 174). Additionally, Thomas and Brubaker (2008) suggest that as opposed to distributing questionnaires, conducting interviews could suggest to the participants the researcher’s genuine value in their opinions (p. 174). However, because the findings of qualitative research are bound by context, the findings of this study can only be interpreted within the settings of Hagfors municipality and present time.

5.3 IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Holloway & Wheeler (2002, p. 79) interviewing is one of the most common methods of gathering data in qualitative research. An interview refers to verbal communication between a researcher and a participant in order to obtain valid and reliable information (Burns & Grove, 2005, p. 396). There are several types of interviews, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In a semi-structured interview, also known as a focused interview, a guide is formed to cover the research topic. In contrast to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews allow researchers flexibility, for instance, the researcher is able to change the sequence of questions according to interview development or give additional questions (Gillham, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2007; Denscombe, 2008). However, the researcher still focuses on areas to be discussed and assures similarity of data from all participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 82). Based on these reasons, this study employed in-depth semi-structured interview as a method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study mainly as a way to encourage the participants to freely discuss their own opinions about Facebook communication and what this means for ageing successfully.
First, a topic guide with open-ended questions in English (Appendix A) was created to conduct the interviews. The use of open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to adjust their questions depending on the attributes of the participants and any given type of problems that they may face. They provide the opportunity to regulate the order of the questions and the respondents have the possibility to expand their ideas and speak in great detail about diverse subjects as opposed to relying only on concepts and questions defined ahead of the interview (Newton, 2010). The questions were divided into different discussion themes. Since all the interviewees were either native speakers or fluent speakers of the Swedish language, the topic guide was translated into Swedish language (Appendix B). Scholars argue that there are no rules for the sample size in qualitative research and the number of participants depends on the purpose of the study and on the depth of information gathered (Burns & Grove, 2005, p. 358; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 128). Additionally, Patton (2002) suggests that although the sample size for the interviews very much depends on the kind of research being undertaken, time and resources available for research are important factors.

As a way of recruitment, a purposive sample, with 15 people altogether was used. The inclusion criteria were aged 55 years or above, living in the municipality of Hagfors, had good mental health and interest in discussing the topic. Informed consent and the topic guide were sent to all participants a week before the study. Interviews were carried out at times and places that were convenient for participants, for instance in their homes, at work, in parks and so forth. The age of participants ranged from 55 to 75 years with an average age of 68\(^{10}\). Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and included only a single individual. Generally, one problem encountered whilst conducting qualitative interviews with open-ended questions is that the interview is influenced by the interests and opinions of the interviewer. Semi-structured interviews are rather organized in terms of what issue will be discussed during the interview. However, the follow-up questions will depend on the opinions of the interviewer. Another problem that can occur is misunderstandings and misinterpretations of words. This could in particular be a problem within this research since interviews have been conducted in Swedish, which is not the mother tongue of the interviewer. Nonetheless, in order to increase the reliability of the answers all interviews have been audiotaped, subsequently transcribed material has been sent to the respondents, statements have been amended according to the respondents’ comments and finally the participants have approved the material. The transcribed material was later

\(^{10}\) One of the participants refused to disclose her real age – she said she was 50-something, and as such the calculated average age does not include her age.
categorized into different themes. This is helpful in identifying similarities and differences between the answers.

5.4 DATA RESOURCES AND CHOICE OF TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION

In an attempt to understand the social (Hennink, Hutter, & Baile, 2011, p. 17), a triangulation between different methods of data collection is applied. This allows one to deepen, complement and cross-check the results (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012, p. 99). Additionally, the social is understood from both the perspectives of the study subjects and the researchers own perspective (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 17). This study uses information collected from primary sources and secondary sources that has been produced by different scholars, for instance, newspapers, magazines, websites, published literature and governmental reports and in-depth semi-structured interviews. In-depth semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection.

5.5.1 SAMPLING

The research target of this study is the elderly population currently living in the municipality of Hagfors in Sweden. The inclusion criteria for participants of this study are as follows: a) aged 55 or older; b) has an active Facebook account; c) shared their lives through Facebook posts or kept in personal contact with ‘friends’ on Facebook either through the messenger service, the video-call feature, posting on their walls, sharing other users’ posts, liking their posts or commenting on their posts; d) willingness to articulate in detail descriptions of their experiences with the phenomenon as well as reflect their experiences; e) physical and mental capability to handle the interview; f) ability to give informed consent to participate; g) has lived in Hagfors municipality for at least 2 years; and h) voluntary participation. The exclusion criterion includes: a) people who do not have an active Facebook account; b) are not fluent speakers of either Swedish or English; and c) have lived in Hagfors municipality for less than 2 years. Following these conditions, participants recruited for this study were chosen purposively. This allowed an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of older adults’ perceptions regarding the use of Facebook. The objective was to produce information rich cases, which could bring forward
issues of pivotal importance (Polit & Beck, 2004). The study had a total number of 15 participants, 7 men and 8 women and an age range of 55 to 75 years.

5.5.2 SAMPLING PROCESS

Participants of this study were selected by means of a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling or selective sampling is a non-probability sample that is chosen based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Patton, 2002). It is, however, important to note that systematic sampling was also considered as an appropriate sampling method. This would have ensured that all members of the older adult population in Hagfors municipality stood an equal chance of being selected and represented (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 130). The sampling method is suitable for studying small populations (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 131), for instance the older adult population living in the municipality of Hagfors. However, this idea was dismissed when most adults selected using systematic sampling did not want to participate in the study. Further, using a systematic sampling method would have had a risk of not achieving sufficient variation in the sample. The risk of having participants of the same gender and age group for instance, would have increased significantly if a systematic sampling method was pursued. According to O’Muircheartaigh (2008), purposive sampling suggests that the researcher uses their own judgments to choose entities that represent essential characteristics (p. 296), of older adults living in the municipality of Hagfors. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is hence considered to be the deliberate seeking out of informants with specific characteristics. There are a number of reasons why this method has been chosen when conducting this study.

Firstly, this method is useful when the researcher is concerned about time and extent of study as well as convenience (Silverman, 2010), which was the case in this study. Secondly, purposive sampling was used in this study in order to ensure that people with different backgrounds, for example, in terms of age, gender and socio-economic status were amongst the study population (see for example, Mati, 2015). This is important when minimising biases in the data sample (Silverman, 2010). Thirdly, considering that the purpose of a qualitative study is depth understanding as opposed to making generalizations about the findings, it is necessary to have a small sample size, which is usually achieved through purposive sampling (Patton, 2002). Fourthly, the method of sampling also allowed for the use of a “snowball” sample. The snowball sampling technique is whereby participants who have already participated in an interview
recommend other participants that can be used in the study from among their acquaintances. A “reliable” informant using a snowball sample was first found. The participant was then asked if they knew any other persons that might be interested in taking part in an interview (Morse, 2004, pp. 885-886). However, the disadvantage of using such a method is that informants are likely to control the sample in order to provide the study with interesting individuals (Trost, 2005, p. 119). Even after receiving recommendations about potential participants, this did not necessarily imply that they were included in the study automatically. Achieving a certain variation in the sample, especially within the group of older adults in order for the empirical data to be able to draw conclusions about the entire population, was vital when selecting the participants. The main purpose of this study is to examine the uses of Facebook from an older person perspective. Thus, establishing contact with these individuals was a priority as they would be able to contribute relevant information regarding the role of Facebook in acquiring social capital and what this means for ageing successfully. It was vital to achieve variation regarding age, gender, marital status, employment status, number of children and grandchildren, income, highest level of education achieved and so forth. The participants in the study are between 55 and 75 years old, which imply that the empirical data represents the opinions of individuals over a wide range. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the number of interviews within interview studies should be around 15 +/-10 (p. 130). After conducting 15 interviews, the data reached saturation (Polit & Beck, 2008, pp. 70-71). This was based on the fact that older adults answered the questions in a similar manner, thus implying that the amount of new information had significantly decreased.

5.6 RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

This section describes the steps of conducting the current research, which include constructing the interview guide, conducting the interviews, and analysing the data collected from the interviews.
5.6.1 CONSTRUCTING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Following the suggestions of Kvale (1996), a set of guideline questions was prepared. The questions relate to both the themes and questions that encourage interaction with the interviewee, looking forward to the data analysis. The interview is divided into three parts: successful ageing measurement, Facebook communication measurement and demographic measurements. The measurements are adopted in light of the research purposes. The interview guide has a brief introduction of the researcher and the purpose of the study. The cover page also includes information that informs participants that taking part is voluntary and that the collected information is used for research purposes only. In order to allow participants to voice any concerns in regards to their participation or the study in general, the researcher also provided her contact information (i.e., mobile number and e-mail address) at their disposal. The participants are also asked to sign a consent form that confirms their agreement to voluntarily participate in the study. The interview guide and the cover page are both translated from English to Swedish. As the researcher is not a native speaker of Swedish, an acquaintance who is a native speaker of Swedish was asked to go over the translated Swedish version as well. The interview guideline questions can be found in Appendix A and B.

5.6.2 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

In order to unfold the meaning of the experiences of the interviewees and uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations, qualitative interviews try to understand the world from their point of view (Kvale, 2007). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) argue that interviewing is a craft that does not follow explicit steps of rule-governed methods, but rests on the practical skills and personal judgments of a qualified researcher. Hence, when conducting qualitative research interviews, the interviewer is instrumental to the outcome of the interview, as it depends on the skills, knowledge, sensitivity and empathy of the interviewer (Kvale, 2007). Taking this into account, the interviewing process began. All the interviews are conducted from the 14th of April to the 10th of May 2017 in the municipality of Hagfors. A total of 15 participants are selected for this study and interviews are conducted individually. The interviews used in this study are of a conversational nature. The questions are open-ended and are thus used to guide, rather than direct the responses of the participants. This also allows the participants to express their opinions, understanding, beliefs, values and experiences freely (Polit & Beck, 2004). Basavanthappa
(2009) suggests that the art of interviewing is governed by certain scientific principles. Consequently, Basavanthappa (2009) argues that interviewers should make every effort to create a conducive environment of trust and confidence where interviewees feel at ease while discussing issues with and talking to the interviewer. Consequently, the interviews are conducted at a place and time most convenient for the participants, for instance, some of the participants are met in their homes, at work, a café or at the library. Before starting each interview, the interviewer always greeted the participants with a smile and said “god dag!” although it means “good day!” the phrase is equivalent to “how do you do?” and is usually used when talking to elderly people. Other remarks about the weather, participants’ health and feelings, for instance were also made. The interviewer then proceeded to introduce herself, explain the purpose of the study and asked the participants name. The interviewer went over the possibilities of withdrawing from the study and also explained the participants’ usefulness for the study. The participants are then asked if they allowed the interviewer to record their conversation, following which they are also asked to sign the letter of consent (Appendix C and D\textsuperscript{11}).

Once the participants agreed to let the interviewer record the interviews, the interviews commenced. Participants are first asked if they have any questions regarding the interview. The initial briefing was, however, not considered as part of the interview. After establishing a good rapport and friendly atmosphere, the interviewer started to conduct the interview using a semi-structured interview guide with a sequence of themes to be covered as well as some suggested questions. The use of open-ended questions used in the interview guide allowed the interviewer to follow the participants lead, ask clarifying questions and facilitate the expression of the lived experiences of the participant (Kvale, 1996). These conversational interviews gave the interviewer entrance into the residents of the older people’s world and became an excellent source of data (Gubrim & Stein, 2001). According to Kvale (1996) such opening questions may yield spontaneous, rich descriptions where the participants themselves provide what they experience as the main dimensions of the phenomena being investigated. The interview then continued with follow-up questions where the answers of the participants may be extended through a persistent, curious and critical attitude of the interviewer. Kvale (1996) suggests that this can be done through the direct questioning of what has just been said. Additionally non-verbal gestures such as a nod or even “mm” or a pause can be used as indicators to show the participants to continue the description (Kvale, 2007). The ability of the interviewer to listen to things that are important to the participants and at the same time keep in mind the research question being examined are vital issues during an interview (Kvale, 2007). As such,

\textsuperscript{11} Appendix C is the English version while D is the Swedish version.
participants’ responses are listened to attentively, with a show interest. Kvale (2007) claims that the ability of the interviewer to listen attentively to what the participants say is more vital than the specific mastery of the questioning techniques. In a polite manner, some probing questions are asked in cases where further clarification is needed. A genuine interest and concern in the ideas expressed by the participants while also maintaining an objective and impartial attitude is essential in conducting interviews. These questions encouraged the participants to elaborate freely and further expand as well as clarify their responses to the questions posed (Polit & Beck, 2004).

The directive of questions and the manner in which the interviewer asks them can affect the way in which the interviewees tell their stories during an interview. This can also affect the possibilities of getting potential new and rich information from the participants (Ryan, 2011). Consequently, the interviewer remained open and flexible during the entire interview period. This helped the interviewer to understand the lived world of the participants from their own point of view (Dowling, 2005). The interviewer also listened to the participants without any prejudice and as such allowed them to describe their experiences without interrupting them with questions and the presuppositions involved (Kvale, 1996). This also allowed the participants to talk freely as the interviewer asked follow-up questions in between the questions from the interview guide. As such, the interviewer was able to keep the flow of the conversation going (Kvale, 2007). As it is not possible to capture non-verbal cues on audio recordings, the interviewer sometimes made notes following the interviews in terms of facial expression, gestures, voice tone, clothing and other things that the interviewer thought were essential to the analysis (Kvale, 1996). Each interview was audio taped during the time of the interviews. The words, tone, pauses, emotions and so forth of the participants were recorded in a permanent form, which made it possible to listen to the interviews time and time again (Kvale, 2007). Since a digital audiotape recorder provides high acoustic quality and can record for many hours without interruption, it is used during all the interview sessions. The recordings were then transferred directly onto a computer and were stored there until they were played for analysis. Each interview lasted for 20-30 minutes. The interviewer concluded the interviews when she felt like there was no more new information to be acquired (Van Manen, 1997). The interviewer ended the interviews by asking the participants if there was anything they wanted to ask before the interview was completed. This gave the participants another opportunity to deal with issues that they may have been thinking or worrying about during the interview process (Kvale, 1996). The interviewer ended the interview by thanking all the participants with a warm and friendly smile for sharing the information and for their valuable time with her.
5.6.3 THE TRANSCRIBING PROCESS

According to Kvale (1996), the process of transcribing involves translating from an oral language with its own set of rules to a written language with another set of rules. The transcription of interviews from an audio-recorder into text involves a series of interpretational and technical issues, whereas standard verbatim transcription only involves a few standard rules. Therefore, standard verbatim is found as an appropriate procedure for transcribing the data used in this study. In addition, Kvale (1996) also found that standard verbatim is a useful transcription style for linguistic analysis. The development and recognition of important concepts and themes were worked upon as soon as the collection of data began (Polit & Beck, 2004). After each interview was completed, the audio recordings were played several times, reflective notes were made and all the interviews were transcribed in standard verbatim. According to Poland (1995), in standard verbatim transcription, each word of the participants is transcribed along with some aspects of non-verbal communication. Poland (1995) further stresses the importance of transcribing material as quickly as possible after the interview while the ambience of the encounter is still fresh. For purposes of the present paper, all the oral interviews were undertaken in the Swedish language and then translated into the English language. During the transcription process, some grammatical changes have been made. This has been made with great consideration so as to avoid the risk of altering the content. All of the transcriptions were carried out solely. Bailey (2008) argues that a researcher who places emphasis on the mode of communication and linguistic style may choose to do their own transcribing in order to ensure attention to the many details relevant to their specific analysis. Also included in the standard verbatim transcription were the participants’ general behavior, body language, interruptions, emotions and changes in tone of voice. These non-verbal cues were written in brackets, for instance, hand gestures, crying, coughing, sighing, head nodding, short sharp laugh and so forth. Kvale (2007) argues that this can provide a great deal of insight into both the nature of the conversation as well as its informational content. Based on their irrelevance to the later analysis and as a way to avoid cluttering the text (Bailey, 2008) words such as aha, hmm, umm, and so forth were not included in the transcription. During the conversation, brief pauses were marked with three dots (…) and long pauses with the text “long pause” in brackets. It is ensured that consent forms and all interview transcriptions are stored separately and kept secure at all times. In addition, once no longer of use, the audio recordings and the texts will be disposed.
5.6.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

According to Polit and Beck (2008), the aim of data analysis is to classify research data and give them meaning (p. 235). Qualitative research is “a complex, time consuming and iterative activity” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 235). Despite the approach used, there are several common steps followed in data analysis. First, interviews are transcribed and notes are organized. Second, the transcripts and the notes are read repeatedly. Third, data is coded or indexed and then categorized. Outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis has been used to analyse data in this study. First, thematic analysis is used in this study, as it is easier to use compared to other types of qualitative analysis. Second, this method of analysis allows for flexibility when choosing a theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unlike some methods of analysis that are closely tied to specific theories, for instance, discourse analysis and narrative analysis, thematic analysis can be used with any theory of the researchers’ choosing. Through its flexibility, thematic analysis allows for rich, detailed and complex description of data. The downside of using thematic analysis is that analysis may be reductive, because the method encourages researchers to break down the data, it is possible to lose context; the method of analysis is also disadvantageous as it has limited interpretative power beyond a mere description (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to the authors, thematic analysis is defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This method of analysis will be used to establish common patterns relating to older adults’ experiences. This paper follows the six steps involved in this process as highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Step 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data

- Each of the interviews is first listened to and then transcribed them verbatim and then translated them to English. Next, the data is read repeatedly as a way to familiarize oneself with the data. Finally, the entire data is read through before coding and searching for meanings and patterns.
Step 2: Generating initial codes

- In this stage, the initial codes of the data are manually produced. Highlighters are used to outline important words, phrases and sentences and notes are written into text. After all necessary meaning units were identified, they were written down, compared and then given a code. A number of different codes and themes are created. After coding all of the data, data that is identified by the same codes is grouped together.

Step 3: Searching for themes

- In this stage, the different codes are sorted into potential themes. A table is used to sort the codes. At the end of this stage, a collection of themes and sub-themes are available.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

- This stage involves a refinement of the themes identified in stage 3. First, all data extracts that fits into each theme were re-read. This was a way to ensure that all of the data formed a coherent pattern. Second, each theme was considered in relation to the data. A thematic map is used as a way to visualize the relationship between the themes. After establishing that the relationships between the themes reflect the meaning of the data in general, step 5 begins.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

- In this stage, an overall narrative with all of the data is created. Each theme and its individual narrative are analysed. As a way to immediately give the reader of a sense of what the theme is about, the themes were concisely named.

Step 6: Producing the report

- Finally, a description of the results is provided. The analysis provides sufficient evidence of each theme using vivid examples from the data.
CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, findings of the current study are presented. Measurements of the concepts used in this research are shown; ethics, and the reliability and validity of this study are tested. Basic findings and analysis are presented and finally the analyses of hypotheses and research questions are explored.

6.1 OPERATIONALIZATION

Operational measures of Facebook communication and successful ageing are provided below.

6.1.1 MEASURE OF FACEBOOK COMMUNICATION

Participants answered questions related to the different types of Facebook communication they use when they engage with social connections on the medium. For instance, who do you usually communicate with on Facebook? How would you describe your relationship with this person? How do you usually communicate on Facebook? How often do you compose posts? How often do you comment on other people’s posts?

6.1.2 MEASURE OF SUCCESSFUL AGEING

Indicators of successful ageing were measured from a social aspect (i.e. engagement with life). For example, social support was assessed in terms of giving and receiving emotional and instrumental support, which included satisfaction derived from social connections; active social participation, for instance taking part in social groups, political groups and so forth; and trust in individuals to offer emotional support, for example.
6.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are important. This is because they help the researcher to determine the objectivity of the research (Polit & Beck, 2004). The two concepts can be seen as different measurement instruments that illustrate the level of trustworthiness and credibility of the research. Reliability and validity are separated into internal and external concepts (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Internal reliability refers to whereby there is more than one researcher within the study group, hence the observers can agree in regards to what they see and hear. Within qualitative research, internal reliability is typically perceived as strength since researchers tend to observe the social setting over a long period of time which generally results in excellent correspondence between observations and concepts (Bryman & Bell, 2007). External reliability refers to the extent in which research can be completed again with results comparable to the original study, however, because qualitative researcher’s generally make use of small samples and case studies; external validity is seen as a problem within qualitative research. Further, it might be difficult to achieve high external reliability since the scene and the setting is likely to change from the time of the original research to the time of a second one. Nonetheless, Bryman & Bell (2007) mention a strategy whereby the researcher adapts a similar role as taken on by the original researchers in order to be able to replicate the initial research. Consequently, in order to achieve high reliability in this study, this section describes the process of gathering data in detail and how the interviews were performed. Additionally, all interview questions are presented in Appendix A and B. Such a detailed description increases the ability for other researchers to replicate this study under the same conditions with comparable results. In order to establish reliability, participants in this study were chosen based on those who had a genuine interest in participating in the study and had experience with the research subject (Kvale, 2007). In order to make the participants feel comfortable about expressing their feelings and experiences, a calm and relaxed atmosphere during the interviews is created (Kvale, 2007). Issues of reliability also arise in connection with the transcription and analysis of the interviews, pertaining to whether different transcribers and analysers will come up with similar transcriptions and analyses. All the interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Since the study is independent work, the analysis of the text and the synthesis of the findings are also solely performed. This helps one to pay attention to many relevant details in their specific analysis. Additionally, the transcribed material is sent back to the respondents to receive their approval. This was a way of increasing reliability and decreasing the possibilities of using the interviewers own interpretation of the data.
The validity and reliability of the study also depends on whether the study actually provides answers to the research questions. Kvale (2007) suggests that validity refers to whether an investigation yields correct answers. On the other hand, reliability means that investigations of the same phenomenon by the same method will yield the same answer, which means the findings are consistent. Throughout the interviews, the participants were asked follow-up questions to clear up and misunderstanding created during the interview. This according to Kvale (2007) refers to “communicative” validation. Follow-up questions were also posed during the interview to ensure the participants’ understanding (Kvale, 2007). The coding, categorization and organization of subthemes into a main theme were done accordingly and further reviewed by a second party as a way to validate coding and categorization. Additionally, “member validation” or “member checks” (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016) is used. This involves allowing participants to read through the data and analyses and provide feedback on the transcriptions. This allows one to check inconsistencies, challenges assumptions and provides an opportunity to re-analyse the data. Additionally, a second party, who is not involved in this project, read a large part of the transcribed interviews to verify the interpretation of the study (Kvale, 2007). Kvale (2007) suggests that the criterion for validity is whether a consensus may be obtained and whether the interpretation is reasonably documented and logically coherent. Most of the interpretations in this study were found to be reasonable and if there were any doubts about interpretation, current parts of the interviews were re-read and the meanings were reassessed. It was also essential to show validity by remaining close to the participants’ own voices as a way to ensure confidence in the truth of the study (Kvale, 2007). This can be done by reading and re-reading the text, so as to remain as close as possible to the participants’ own expressions and be able to perform interpretation in several steps (Kvale, 2007). The main idea in interviews is to understand the meaning of what the interviews express. The interview guide focused on the main variables in the research questions that may have increased the interview’s validity, insofar as every participant was asked the same questions (Kvale, 2007).

6.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Holloway & Wheeler (2002, p. 47) suggest that legal and ethical issues need to be considered before research is conducted. As such, the department of Media and Communication at Karlstad University approved this study. Permission for conducting this study has also been sought from the relevant authorities in the municipality of Hagfors. In addition, signed informed consents
were obtained from the participants before each interview. Informed consent entails informing the participants about the overall purpose of the study and the main features of the design, as well as telling them of the possible risks and benefits from participating in such a study (Kvale, 2007). Further, informed consents also involve obtaining the voluntary participation of subjects and informing them about their right to withdraw from the study at any given time and without any consequences (Kvale, 1996). The philosophical principle of ethics deals with the “dignity, rights, safety and well-being of those who take part in research” as such researchers should follow these basic principles when conducting research (Stuart & Barnes, 2005, p. 3). The right of autonomy for participants assures independent decision-making based on thorough information about a research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 52, 58). In regard to this study, all the participants received information letters (Appendix C and D\textsuperscript{12}) detailing a description of the purpose of research, methods, topics of discussion, results presentation, information about the participants’ rights to access the transcribed material as well as the analysis of the interviews if they pleased to see it a week before the interviews were conducted.

The main points of the informed consents were once more discussed before the participants signed the forms. The right to withdraw at any time before the study was published was discussed (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Holloway & Wheeler (2002) argue that researchers have to assure participants’ well-being and as such no harm must be done to the participants and the benefits of the project should overweigh its potential risks. The risks of this study can be evaluated as a temporary discomfort as the participants may have experienced unpleasant feelings while talking about their estranged children. Dignity can be understood as the fair treatment of the participants and selection of material. This is because the identity of participants should be unrecognizable from the quotations used in the report (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 162). As such, this study tried to create the same conditions for all the participants by sending informed consents in advance, going through the main points once again, giving them the opportunity to ask questions before the interviews and making the results available to them (Burns & Grove, 2005, pp. 189-190). Due to the fact that the target group of this study was older adults, some special features in conducting interviews had to be taken into consideration. Older people’s understanding and decision-making can be affected by cognitive disability, poor health or impaired vision or hearing (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 51). Hence, one of the conditions for participating was a good mental status. As a way to assure the participants’ understanding and to give them an opportunity to ask about the research, informed consent and topic guides were discussed before each interview once more (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). As a way to create a

\textsuperscript{12} Appendix C is the English version and Appendix D is the Swedish version.
feeling that the interviewer has a general interest in the participants, the interviews are started and ended with small talks. This is a way to support a feeling that participants are not only research objects, and attention should also be paid to concluding of the interview. Hence, the interviews were started with questions concerning the life of the participants’ as a way to get to know them better and create a comfortable environment. In order to leave the interview on a positive note, the interviews were ended with neutral questions such as the weather (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).

6.4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic findings and analyses of the present study are discussed here. This section is divided into two main parts. Firstly, the four themes are presented: relationship maintenance, the need to belong, social support and self-disclosure. These themes describe different aspects of the participants’ experiences in using Facebook to stay socially connected to their social connections and what this means for successful ageing. Secondly, the themes will be discussed in terms of how the approaches mentioned earlier might contribute to an understanding of these experiences.

Relationship maintenance

The most important factor related to older adults’ use of Facebook, as reflected in all of the interviews, was the participants’ desire to maintain social connections with EGR. All of the participants indicated that they use Facebook to maintain contact with close friends and family members who they do not get to meet often and friends such as old school buddies, former acquaintances and so forth, who they report to talk to only on Facebook. For example, other participants expressed that they used Facebook to keep contact with their children and grandchildren who lived outside of the municipality. Marica is a 62-year old woman living in Solbacka with her husband Olle who is 60 years old. The couple owns an all organic, food producing company called Torfolk Gård in the area, which they have dedicated their lives to. They have two children who live in Gothenburg and Stockholm and often talk to them by telephone or through the Facebook messenger service. Marica says, “Our children do not visit me as often as I hope they would. But they have their own lives now, so... I mainly keep in contact with them by telephone or by sms through Facebook messenger.” In addition, Marica also says
she talks to old school friends and people who have an interest in their company or the products they sell. Marica says, “I sometimes talk to people who have taken a course with me here at the farm and want to ask something more about it, for example, or people interested in the products we sell.” Originally from Gothenburg, 55-year old woman Annelie lives in Solbacka with her husband Ove who is 65 years old and their dog Elsa. Annelie is an employee of Torfolk Gård and works in jam production all-year-round. Annelie has a son who lives in Hagfors and another who lives in Småland with their families. Her two siblings and their families as well as some of her close friends still live in Gothenburg. Apart from calling them, Annelie keeps in contact with her children, especially her son in Småland, her family and close friends through Facebook. Annelie says that she sometimes comments or likes their posts, but mainly talks to them through messenger. A proud grandmother of three (soon to be four), says she looks forward to seeing pictures of her grandchildren and son in Småland as they often do not meet in person. Annelie says, “My oldest son lives in Hagfors, we meet him and my granddaughter often. Although we try to meet my other son who lives in Småland, this is not possible because of the distance. It is easier to contact him on Facebook as he is always online.” As Ove was born and breed in the area, he has frequent contact with his family who also live in the area. Ove is a car mechanic and owns his own car repair shop. Ove says that he uses Facebook to keep in contact with his stepsons and extended family members and close friends. Ove says “I often like and comment on my contacts’ posts. I also write on my friends’ walls when they have their birthdays. However, I use the messenger service more to keep in contact with them.” Another participant is a 62-year old Barbro, who lives alone in Hagfors. Barbro is an account and works at a local firm. She sometimes works at her son’s kitchenware store in the area. Barbro does not communicate much on the medium with his son as he lives in Hagfors with his family. However, Barbro reports that she uses Facebook to communicate with other family members and close friends. For instance, she says, “I can communicate with my sister’s son who is Norway, for example, as we do not get to meet that often.” Sixty-two year old, Christina is a shop assistant at COOP in Hagfors. She lives with her husband and their cat in Hagfors. Christina says they have one daughter who does not live with them. Christina says, “Originally, I am not from Hagfors, I come from Dalarna. So, I am on Facebook so that I can keep contact with my family, friends and old school friends back in Dalarna as well as my daughter.” Lars is a 73-year old widowed man who lives alone in Höje. Lars is a retired carpenter originally from Stockholm. Because of his deteriorating health, Lars reports that he relies on Facebook communication now more than ever, to facilitate social contact with close friends and more especially his children and grandchildren who live in Stockholm. Lars says, “I recently encountered a stroke and lost my eyesight on the right side of my eye. This has made it extremely difficult to do anything, especially travel, as I cannot keep my balance with
one eye. So I am mostly home and try to go by. I am, however, able to interact with my community, children and grandchildren on Facebook often. I usually leave comments and likes on my friend’s posts.” Similarly, divorced 75-year old handicapped man Roy, states that his condition hinders him from interacting much with other people in an offline context. Roy has been divorced for 40 years and lives alone. He has a house in Spain where he lives during the winter period in Sweden. He has one son who lives in the area and is neighbours with his brother Ove in Solbacka. Roy states that he has four grandchildren, one of which lives in Norway, another in Karlstad and two in Kil. Roy used to work in the steel factory and when he was 28 years old he encountered an accident at work that unfortunately paralysed his legs. He has been a pensioner ever since. Roy, however, has been very active in his life and is independent. However, Roy states that due to old age it has become more challenging for him to participate in activities. Roy says, “When I was younger, I had no problem interacting with friends in face-to-face encounters. I also used to do a lot of activities, for example, I participated in the Berlin marathon wheelchair class for many years. Now, as I become older, I do not have the will to do much anymore. I am mostly home and work in my workshop fixing mopeds or editing my photographs. Facebook allows me to talk to my family and friends that I do not meet often. For example, we have family members living in the U.S. and one of my grandchildren lives in Norway because of work. I also use Facebook to meet and talk to people that I went to school with that I haven’t seen in years.” Gunn is a 67-year old woman who lives in Solbacka with her husband Mauritz who is totally against the use of Facebook. Gunn and Mauritz do not have children and live with their cat, Risen. Gunn is a retired chef assistant and sometimes works during the summer as a chef assistant in old people homes and at helping Annelie with jam production at Torfolk Gård. Gunn’s sisters live in close proximity to her and some of her nieces and nephews. She also has nieces who live in Gothenburg who she talks to sometimes on the messenger service. Gunn indicates that she uses Facebook to keep contact with close friends in Finland and Norway that she is unable to meet on a regular. Gunn states, “I use Facebook to keep in contact with my nephews and nieces who I do not see much. I also keep contact with my friends in Finland and Norway.” All of the participants indicate that they use Facebook to maintain contact with people they do not meet so often as well as maintain contact with social connections in general. Further, all participants indicate that they also log onto Facebook every day and spend at least 15 minutes on the site. During the time logged in, participants indicate that they sometimes talk to their EGR through the messenger service or comment or like their friends posts. Participants also indicate that they use Facebook together with other communication means such as e-mail and telephone contact to keep in touch with EGR.
The need to belong

All of the participants indicate the desire to engage in more meaningful interactions with EGR as they get older. Participants reported that they are more likely to communicate with people who provide them with security and a sense of belonging such as long-term friends and family members on Facebook. All of the participants report to have a low number of Facebook friends and no one had more than 200 Facebook friends. Vidar is a 60-year old Norwegian man who has been living in Hagfors for a little over 2 years. Vidar has no children and lives alone. However, he is in a long-distance relationship with Natalia who lives in Czech Republic. Vidar is a care assistant in a children’s home in Åkerby, which is approximately 331 kilometres from Hagfors. As he works long hours, about 15 hours in a day, Vidar usually works between 2-3 days in a week and is free from work the rest of the week. During his off days, Vidar works on his recently bought house, which he is currently renovating. With a busy schedule like his and clashing schedules between his and his friends’, Vidar indicates that he cannot interact much with his close friend’s offline, even though he wishes to. Consequently, Vidar uses Facebook to communicate frequently with his close friends. He states, “I update my status almost every day. I more or less talk about everything, personal events, what I am doing, how am I feeling, everything. I also frequently comment or like my friends posts, engage in online discussions and in Facebook groups where I am a member.” Further, Vidar indicates that he has close relationships with his Facebook friends; he in fact considers them family. He says, “I do not have friends on Facebook. I have family. I know all of my Facebook friends well and I feel like I can really relate to them.” Helen describes herself as a 50-something year old single woman, without any children. She lives in Solbacka with her dog Rasmus and two cats Morris and Sixten. Helen has a receptionist qualification but has recently taken up a course as a nurse assistant and will start working in an assisted living facility for old people. Helen has lost almost all of her family members to death. She has about six remaining relatives. Helen indicates that she therefore relies on contact with her close friends, to offer her a sense of security and belonging. Like Vidar, Helen also thinks of her Facebook friends as family – “my Facebook friends are my family, otherwise I have no one.” Although Helen is not that active on Facebook, in the sense that she hardly writes on her friends’ wall or comments or likes their posts, she indicates that they have a very tight relationship on messenger. Helen says, “My friends and I are not into writing on each other’s wall, we prefer to talk in private on messenger. Some of my friends and I have also created a group on messenger where we can interact. We also talk a lot on Whatsapp.”
works at the municipality head office as an administrator, where she has been for 40 years. She
lives with her husband in Hagfors and they have one daughter who lives in Karlstad. Mirja says,
“I am not active on Facebook, I do not post anything. I don’t think it’s interesting to post on
Facebook. I just look at other peoples’ posts. Otherwise, I talk to my extended family on
messenger and on video chat.” Lena is a co-owner of a boutique in Hagfors. She is a 62-year old
married woman with four children and five grandchildren. She lives in Hagfors with her husband
and their children have moved away from Hagfors. She says, “My children and I have a
Facebook group chat on messenger where we mainly talk. Other than that, I usually like other
peoples’ posts, but I do not comment on them.” Both Olle and Marica also indicate that they also
hardly comment or like their friends’ posts, but talk to them on messenger. Annelie says that she
talks regularly to “close and dear” friends on Facebook as opposed to her other social
connections. She says she usually comments or likes their posts, but mainly talks to them on
messenger. Ove says, “I like my friends’ posts sometimes, but I often do not comment to their
posts. I am, however, very active on messenger, where I mostly talk to them.” For 43 years, 66-
year old Thomas has owned his own company. Thomas is single and has one daughter who does
not live with him in Hagfors. Thomas indicates that mainly use his Facebook account for
business purposes. Otherwise he is no longer interested in Facebook because of all the nonsense
that people write. Thomas indicates that he talks to his daughter by telephone or sms
(messenger). Moreover, Tommy is a 61-year old single man on sickness pension, who previously
worked at the steel factory. Tommy has a child that he has never met and lives in Backarna with
his dog Zicko. He states that as he has not worked for over 20 years due to his poor health, he has
lost contact with many of his friends that he met during his work career. He says that because is
unemployed, this means that he cannot interact much with other people as everybody works and
are “busy” with their own lives, including his two siblings. Although he occasionally meets with
his siblings and their families on special holidays, such as Christmas, they do not interact more
than an occasional phone call or a text on messenger. He says that he uses Facebook to talk to
those friends that he still has contact with either on messenger or through comments and likes on
their posts. Tommy indicates that he occasionally writes on his friends’ wall. Tommy says, “I log
onto Facebook every morning before I take my cup of coffee. I usually talk to my friends on
messenger or on their wall. I sometimes like and comment on their posts as well. More specially,
I talk with my best friend, Stefan every day.” Tommy’s friend Stefan, lives close to Tommy, and
visits Tommy everyday as well. The findings show that older adults mainly use messenger for
frequent communication with EGR. This shows that a majority of older adults prefer to privately
talk to their friends as opposed to publicly talking to them, like writing on their Facebook walls.
The same respondents, who indicate that they mainly talk to their EGR using messenger, also
report that they use e-mail and sms to communicate. Again, this indicates that older adults prefer private means of communication.

Social support

Respondents indicate that they receive some form of social support from their EGR on Facebook. Due to their life circumstances, for example, being unemployed, health disparities, pension and living alone, some of the participants indicated that they receive some form of social support from their Facebook friends. Participants indicate that they receive social support from their friends in the form private messages, wall posts, comments on their posts and reactions to their posts. Tommy suffered from a heart attack earlier this year. He says that he received many messages from his friends. He says, “I didn’t know I had so many friends who cared about me. I received a lot of messages wishing me a speedy recovery on my wall and some in my private messages. Stefan and another friend of mine took care of my dog and me. It was a nice feeling to know that people were thinking about me.” Vidar recently lost his father in Norway. He says that he received an overwhelming number of messages of condolences during this period. He says, “My friends have been very supportive during the tragic loss of my father. I received a lot of messages of condolences in comments, on my wall and privately.” Further, Vidar states, “It is boring when you live alone. I have no one to argue with, have discussions with or engage with. I check my phone whenever I get a notification from Facebook, so that I can engage with someone there. My friends make me feel happy.” Helen also says that she can depend on her Facebook friends for support whenever she needs it. For example, she says, “I am going to Spain on vacation soon, one of my friends who are also my neighbour knows about my trip. She offered to take care of little Rasse and the cats during my absence.” Lars says, “My friends have been very supportive since my stroke. They occasionally check on me through Facebook if they are unable to come and visit me. One of them even offered to cut my grass for free.” Other participants indicate that they get support from Facebook groups that they are a part of. Barbro, says, “I am a member of a number of Facebook groups, like yoga, which I have recently shown an interest in. There I get tips and can talk to others.” Annelie says, “My husband got diagnosed with cancer, it has been tough on us. We are learning to cope with the stress and I can talk to other on support groups on Facebook. I am also a member of health groups such as FitLine where I can read about how to best help my husband with a good diet and so forth. It is also for my health benefit. Our friends and family have also been very supportive.” Older adults also report that in as much as they appreciate receiving social support from their social connections, they also found
pleasure in being able to provide support to some of their friends. For instance, Ove says, “I like to show my support to my Facebook friends when they are going through difficult times. I show this by commenting on their posts, when they have lost a loved one for example.” Roy says, “It is wonderful to be able to congratulate my friends on Facebook when they share good news.” Further, by merely being able to talk to their social connections regularly, participants indicate that this is a form of support. Marica says, “It is always nice to get a message from my children that I did not initiate.” Most participants who were married state they did not rely on social support from their Facebook friends. One participant, Lena says, “I am not lonely, so I don’t use Facebook in this manner. But I do think that Facebook is a good place for people who are lonely to connect with people so that they may feel less lonely.” The results indicate that people living alone or had no children received the most support from their online friends. They report a heavy reliance on Facebook to offer them emotional support or just companionship. Also, they report that they mostly interact with the same people online as they do offline. This implies that they have the same network of friends online as they do online. On the other hand, married couples and people who had children state that they do not derive much support online. They do, however, offer support to their friends who might need it. Married people indicate that they show support by liking or commenting on their friends posts’ or sending them private messages on messenger.

**Self-disclosure**

A majority of the participants report that they hardly update their Facebook status. They are passive participants of Facebook. This means that they mainly use Facebook to scroll through the newsfeed to look at new updates, look at friends’ profiles to see what they are doing, read friends’ post without commenting or liking and so forth. Hence, this implies that many older adults do not find it amusing to post things on Facebook. As Mirja indicates, “I don’t find it interesting to post my own status. I can look at other peoples’ profiles and see what they are doing though.” Gunn says, “I don’t often update my Facebook status. I mainly look at my friends’ profiles and see pictures that they post, especially from my friends in Finland and Norway without doing anything more. Thomas says, “I am not at all active on Facebook. I usually read news on Facebook or discussion but I do not comment on anything.” Lars also reports that he stays updated on the lives of his children and grandchildren by looking at their photographs and going through their profiles to see what they are doing: “I often go into my children and grandchildren’s profiles to see what they are doing, see pictures they have posted,
which I sometimes like or comment on.” For people like Thomas, Lena, Ove, Barbro, Marica and Olle who had business interests, they were more interested in promoting their business through their personal pages. As such they indicate that most of their posts were business-related. For example, Barbro says, “My son owns a kitchenware store in town, I use my Facebook page to promote his business.” Otherwise Barbro, says, “I usually just scroll through the newsfeed and go through my friends profiles to see what they are doing. Especially those I don’t get to see often like my sister’s son in Norway. On Facebook I can see pictures of when he goes on vacation, for example. I do all of this without commenting or liking.” Similarly, Lena says, “I mainly post about business-related issues, like when we get new stock. People usually respond to my posts and come in to buy.” Olle says, “Marica and I place most focus on our business. I can’t talk for her, but we mostly work on promoting our business on Facebook, it is time-consuming, so I do not have time to update about personal things.” Helen and Roy report that they usually update their statuses about things that interest them. For example, Helen usually shares content on her wall about horses and Roy shares photographs that he has been taking since he was 11 years old. In so doing, Roy and Helen report that they are able to connect to their online friends who share similar interests and are thus able to connect more with them. Vidar and Tommy were the only participants who updated their status regularly. For example, Tommy says, “I update my status almost every day.” His status updates mainly surround the activities he does during the day, like when he takes his afternoon coffee or about the weather. Vidar on the other hand says that his status updates are mainly about interesting activities that he does. For example, getting a new job, buying a new car, pictures of his newly renovated bathroom, having a good time with his colleagues at work or eating good food as so forth. Vidar also updates about negative things that happen in his life, for example, he wrote about the time he lost his job in Hagfors, when his father passed away and when is feeling sick. Annelie reports that she only writes about interesting things that she does, for instance she says, “I post pictures of when we do something interesting, like celebrating Midsummer, dressing up as an old witch for Easter, pictures of when my grandchildren visit and the activities we do and so on.” Annelie also reports that even though she sometimes creates content on her wall, she mainly uses Facebook to look at pictures of her son and his family in Småland. She says, “I enjoy seeing photos of my grandsons on Facebook that he and his fiancé usually post.” Based on the findings presented, it is evident that majority of the participants do not use Facebook for self-disclosure. Those that do are happy to share with their friends what they are doing. Most participants in this study show that they are passive users of Facebook and are more interested in what is sometimes referred to as lurking or social surveillance, which is evidenced by their inactivity on Facebook. Even though most participants report high levels of social surveillance, they report that they do not compare themselves to
others on their network. Further, as evidenced, a number of adults mainly use Facebook to looking at pictures of their close ties, especially those that they do not meet quite often.

Relation to Theories and Concepts

Socio-emotional Selectivity

The interviews conducted with older adults who live in Hagfors municipality indicate that older adults have small, online ties, which they frequently communicate with. This finding is consistent with Cornwell et al.’s (2008) finding that older adults tend to have smaller social connections. Moreover, older adults also indicate that they interact with the same people online as they do in face-to-face encounters and consider them to be EGR. Frequent communication with EGR allows older adults to maintain relationships with their social connections and makes them feel less lonely and socially isolated. As many older adults indicate that their online networks primarily consists of EGR, this implies that older adults are selective of whom they engage with the most on Facebook. Arguably, this allows them to engage in more meaningful and EGR that are positively related to higher levels of life-satisfaction, as postulated by the socio-emotional selectivity theory. The results indicate that older adults who live alone or have no children are able to derive more gratification from their online relationships as opposed to married couples or participants who live in close proximity to their family. This is because older adults who either live alone or have no children spent most of their time on Facebook looking to communicate with someone. They are also more likely to comment, like, and message their friends more often than older adults who are married, have children or live close to their family members. For example, Vidar, Helen and Tommy all indicate that their online networks compensate for the lack of family members in close proximity. Roy and Lars, whose mobility is confined, indicate that they also turn to their online networks for some form of support. Frequent communication with EGR implies that older adults are able to satisfy their need for belonging and maintain their relationships with EGR, which is likely to stimulate their relationships. Arguably, in cases where older adults solely rely on their Facebook friends for social support, there is a risk that such reliance may put strain on relationships. Consequently, this may harm relationships. On the other hand, family members, in particular, children and spouses are the main source of support for some of the participants. Even in cases where they did not get to meet their children often, participants still report to have frequent communication with their children either on Facebook, telephone or by e-mail. As such, this implies that these participants are more
likely to depend on their spouses and children for social support as opposed to their friends and other family members. Further, participants indicate that they use Facebook as a supplement to other means of communication such as email and phone calls. Interestingly, two participants, Barbro and Christina indicate that they use Instagram and Snapchat to communicate with EGR as well. As a majority of older adults indicate that they mainly use the Facebook messenger service to communicate with their social connections, this implies that older adults in Hagfors municipality prefer to communicate privately with their friends than publicly. Older adults also report to prefer one-click communication that is, liking posts over composed communication, that is, commenting or writing on their friends’ walls. They indicate that liking a post is a simpler way to show friends support. However, it is important to note that the only form of composed communication that older adults mainly engaged in was sending messages. Furthermore, because older adults indicate that they do not use Facebook for social comparison. This implies that older adults living in Hagfors municipality do not think less of their lives. Further, this is consistent with the fact that participants report that they are generally satisfied with their life. As many older adults use Facebook passively, this implies that they are unable to derive much gratification from the medium when compared to active users. Vidar and Helen, for instance, report that they feel less isolated because of Facebook and are highly satisfied with lives. To conclude, it is argued that active participation on Facebook can help older adults gain emotional gratification from their online friends and feelings of social connectedness. In addition, older adults also indicate the need to interact with their friends in face-to-face encounters as well. This implies that Facebook alone cannot curb feelings of loneliness and social isolation, to name a few.

Social capital

One of the main motivations to consider social capital in light of older adults’ social connections is found in the fact that social connections are said to be positively associated with well-being (Forsman, 2012). Maintained relationships and social interactions with close friends and family members are linked to decreases in loneliness and feelings of isolation (Cotten et al., 2013). The results in this study indicate that maintained relationships with family members and close friends, especially for older adults who have health disparities or live alone helped them feel less isolated and connected. Consequently, this implies that social connections may be an essential resource of successful ageing. On the other hand, however, because older adults expect high levels of support from EGR, this puts a strain on relationships and reduces the potential for bonding social capital that otherwise is a strength. However, as there is no consensus on what constitutes successful
ageing, this makes it difficult to evaluate whether social capital might lead to successful ageing. Nonetheless, following the definition of successful ageing used in this study, which is defined in terms of older adults’ life-satisfaction, political and civic engagement and social trust, this study looks at whether social connections constrain or enhance these opportunities. As already established, older adults have frequent communication with EGR on Facebook. This exposes them to the benefits of bonding social capital, such as emotional and social support. As suggested by previous studies (see for example, Thoits, 2011), frequent communication with social connections is linked to an individual’s life-satisfaction. Extending this argument to SNSs, it can be argued that older adults who actively participate in Facebook communication are more likely to experience more social connectedness and feelings of happiness than those who passively use the medium. Consequently, interviewed older adults who report to actively participate on Facebook communication also report to be more socially connected to their social connections and report a general contentment with life, as these are the people they also occasionally meet in face-to-face encounters. This also implies that, in the absence of proper support systems offline, older adults with lower life-satisfaction could consider engaging more with their online networks as a way to increase individual well-being and feelings of happiness. Moreover, older adults who report higher life-satisfaction also report a generalized trust in their networks. As older adults report to trust their Facebook friends, they are also likely to receive more emotional support from their social connections especially during difficult times. For example, Vidar reports that he received emotional support following the death of his father. Similarly, when he suffered from a heart attack, Tommy also received emotional support from his friends. In turn, this could further enhance their trust in their Facebook friends. In terms of political and civic participation, as older adults report to sometimes use Facebook as an informational tool, this implies that older adults can keep informed about what goes on in their community on Facebook and also get an opportunity to engage themselves in community discussions. For example, through the municipality’s official Facebook group and another group that is not affiliated with the municipality – ‘Diskutera Hagfors’ or in English “Discuss Hagfors”, older adults are able to know what goes on around them. Older adults in the present study indicate that they do not participate on online discussions more than just reading posts and they do participate offline either. This was because they were not interested and because of a lack of time and health disparities. In conclusion, it is evident that older adults already have access to social capital, which they derive from EGR. As such, older adults benefit from bonding social capital. This is consistent with reports of contentment and life-satisfaction by older adults, as bonding social capital relates to increased well-being. Further, bonding social capital is associated with attaining emotional goals, which is also consistent with the findings of this study. However, as most older
adults indicate that they are not looking to expand their social connections, this suggests that older adults do not benefit from bridging social capital. These findings are consistent with the finding by Arjan et al. (2008) that found that compared to their younger counterparts, and because of their social goals, which is to derive emotional gratification from social connections; older adults do not use Facebook for bridging social capital. Nonetheless, in the case of the 6 respondents that indicate that they mainly use Facebook to promote their businesses, and in the case of one, her son’s business, this implies that some older adults do use Facebook for bridging social capital. Consequently, this suggests that Facebook is a potential source of bonding social capital among older adults living in Hagfors municipality. This can be especially true for participants who are physically impaired, such as Roy and Lars as their immobility reduces their chances of face-to-face interactions and those with work demands such as Vidar.

Facebook communication

Based on the findings, a majority of the older adults indicate that compared to shallow relationships, they prefer to communicate with EGR on Facebook. A number of older adults indicate that they use composed communication (messages) to talk to their loved ones. In terms of other forms of composed communication (comments and wall posts), older adults indicate that they are not keen on using these forms of communication. Older adults also indicate that they prefer to use one-click communication (likes and reactions) as this form of communication is easy to use and requires minimal effort. This way, older adults are able to give positive feedback to friends without much effort. However, as many older adults did not post much content themselves, they are unable to disclose how they feel when they receive likes. As such, the likely impact of receiving likes on this segment cannot be properly measured. This also means that well-being cannot be measured. Those that did receive likes, indicate that they are satisfied by their friends’ effort in giving them feedback. This they say, makes them feel acknowledged by their friends and generally makes them feel happy. In turn, this may improve well-being. Moreover, older adults indicate that they seldom use content communication (status updates). Older adults indicate that they prefer to read other people’s posts, look at photos of their friends and family members as opposed to creating their own content. Specifically, the respondents indicate that they mostly enjoy looking at photos of their grandchildren, children, nephews and nieces for instance, that they hardly get to see in person. They report that this gives them some form of assurance that their family members are doing well and this makes them feel happy as well. This finding is consistent with the finding from Leist’s (2013) study. Further, as proposed
by this study, findings indicate that sending and receiving messages on Facebook help older adults maintain social connections with EGR and to a lesser degree shallow relationship as well as fulfil their need for belonging. Older adults indicate that they log onto Facebook at least once a day and spend on average 15 minutes with every log in during which time they lurk over the profiles of EGR. In some instances other older adults indicate that they also try to message EGR. In this regard, older adults can be said to be in constant communicate with their loved ones, which may imply that messaging helps older adults gratify their emotional needs. Consequently, the interactions between older adults and EGR may reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation and in turn improve older adults’ well-being, which is a good indicator of successful ageing. Moreover, by constantly communicating with EGR, older adults are to keep their relationships alive as well as receive social support which in turn can deepen relationships with EGR. Many older adults, however, report that they do not use Facebook for self-disclosure which implies that they cannot use the medium to deep their relationships in that regard. As older adults indicate that they seldom communicate with shallow relationships, it is difficult to determine how communication with these ties may affect their well-being and ageing successfully in general. In terms of self-enhancement, results show that many older adults do not use Facebook to enhance their image. This is seen in the fact that older adults hardly update their status. Those that do, however, mainly post about interesting things, which arguably implies that, some older adults use Facebook in a self-enhancing manner. Older adults report that while they think that it is fun to look at the other users’ profiles they do not compare themselves to the lives of others and are satisfied with what they have. Arguably, this shows that older adults think of themselves as successful. Furthermore, older adults report that they mainly use composed communication in the form of messages and one-click communication. This implies that the interaction of the three elements of Facebook communication, as shown by the proposed operational model (see Figure 4.2) is not applicable to older adults living in the municipality of Hagfors.

Successful ageing

The definition of successful ageing adopted by this study is: an individual’s perception of a beneficial outcome in adapting to the physical and cognitive changes associated with old age, while experiencing life-satisfaction, social trust and satisfying a need for social engagement. As already stated in chapter 4 above, individuals must first cope effectively in the areas of life-satisfaction, social trust and social engagement to be classified as ageing successfully. Following this definition and the conditions, all of the participants in this study can be said to not be ageing
successfully. As already established, the nature of social connection is used to explain older adults’ life-satisfaction. Results indicate that older adults frequently communicate with EGR as compared to shallow relationships. Older adults report that talking to EGR on a regular basis makes them feel happy, more socially connected and less lonely. Furthermore, and as already established above, composed communication in the form of messages, enables older adults to receive social support from EGR. As such, the increased level of interaction between older adults and EGR can be said to be positively related to the participants’ life-satisfaction. On the other hand, no relation to life-satisfaction can be made in terms of composed communication in the form of wall posts and comments. This, as already stated, is found in the fact that older adults are not fond of posting content on their friends’ wall or commenting on their posts. Moreover, as older adults also report that their friends also hardly post content on their walls, life-satisfaction in this regard cannot be measured. In addition to receiving messages, receiving likes on one’s posts is also related to life-satisfaction. Older adults report that likes, even though to a lesser degree than messages, are a form of social support from their friends. In terms of content communication, no relation to life-satisfaction can be made as older adults are not keen on status updates. The perceived social support that older adults receive from EGR is linked to social trust. Older adults report that they trust their social connections and are thus comfortable disclosing even sensitive information to them. Such trust enables older adults to openly talk about feelings of distress and get the support they need from social connections. In turn, this may likely improve well-being and life-satisfaction. In essence, social trust may be said to promote successful ageing. Based on the results, findings indicate that interviewed older adults hardly use Facebook as an informational tool. A majority of the participants indicate that there is a circulation of large amounts of fake news on Facebook and other users of the medium use it to write offensive content. This is the primary reason why many older adults choose not to engage with other users in public online discussions about politics and other current issues. In addition, many older adults indicate that while they prefer to read online newspapers as opposed to traditional newspapers, they do so by going directly to the news outlet websites and not through Facebook. Most of the participants also indicate that they do not follow the municipality’s official Facebook page. As such, this implies that they may miss some of the information that the municipality announces online. Even though older adults may participate in social engagement activities offline (which was not fully investigated by this study) the results show that they do not do so online. Hence, in terms of using social engagement as an indicator of successful ageing, this study has not been successful. This implies that older adults living in Hagfors municipality only fulfil two out of the three criteria’s, that is life-satisfaction and social trust, used for measuring successful ageing adopted by this study. In summary, this means that composed
communication, in the form of messages and one-click communication are the two elements of Facebook communication that can be used to measure successful ageing. Following the idea that in order to age successfully, older adults need to maintain social connections in later life, the interaction between older adults and EGR through messages and likes positively relates to successful ageing. However, no link between social participation and successful ageing has been made.
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

This section will summarise the main findings that have been obtained in this paper. In addition, this chapter also presents potential contributions of this work to the field of media and communication studies and other potential areas, the limitations of the present study and prospects of future research.

7.1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Globally, the challenge of an ageing population calls for increased attention to the phenomenon. This study derives predictions from the socio-emotional selectivity theory and social capital theory by trying to establish how social interactions on Facebook can affect older adults’ successful ageing. The first aim of this study is to find out how Facebook communication can be used to derive social connectedness between older adults and social connections. According to Grieve and Kemp (2015), social connectedness reflects a form of social capital. Taking this into account, social connectedness can therefore be measured by the number of social connections one has (Goswami et al., 2010), how often one communicates with their social connections and their participation on activities (Rafnsson, Shankar, & Steptoe, 2015), in this case, Facebook activities. Findings indicate that most participants have small, online social connections and tend to use messages to communicate frequently with EGR. All of the participants indicate that they log onto Facebook at least once a day and spend on average a minimum of 15 minutes on the SNS. The results indicate no gender differences in total time spent on Facebook and the number of Facebook friends. While logged on, older adults are able to maintain relationships with social connections. Older adults indicate that maintaining relationships on Facebook, especially with grandchildren or nieces and nephews, is easier to do as young people are almost always online. Even though older adults indicate that they occasionally talk to shallow relationships, they indicate that they prefer to talk to EGR, which is evidenced by the frequency of interaction between older adults and EGR as they found it to be more fulfilling and linked it to life-satisfaction. This may imply that older adults seek emotional gratification from social connections, and hence tend to prioritise communication with EGR over shallow relationships. These findings mirror the idea proposed by the theory of socio-emotional selectivity, which states that as people get older, they tend to have small social connections and prioritise communication with EGR, as this helps them derive emotional gratification from such
relationships (Carstensen, 2006). Further, by forming social connections that gratify their social goals, older adults are able to improve their well-being, which is an indicator of successful ageing. Another way in which older adults interact with EGR is through likes and comments, even though they indicate that they do not do this regularly, specifically when it comes to comments. Further, older adults also report that they mainly interact with people online that they are most likely to meet during face-to-face encounters. This means that older adults are not on Facebook for the purpose of meeting new people. Moreover, many older adults also report that they value traditional face-to-face interactions over online communication, which can be used to explain why some of them seldom use Facebook. Social interactions are likely to deepen relationships and further form the trust that exists between older adults and social connections. In terms of participation, results indicate that older adults hardly participate on civic and political activities online. Older adults indicate that the distribution of fake news on Facebook and the offensive remarks of other users on certain issues contribute to their non-participation on the medium. Nonetheless, this does not imply that older adults do not participate in civic and political activities offline. As the focus of this study was specifically on Facebook, participation of older adults in an offline context was not fully investigated. The findings, therefore, confirms hypothesis 2 and 3, which predict that Facebook communication with EGR promotes successful ageing and Facebook communication with shallow relationships undermines successful ageing respectively. Additionally, it is shown that frequent communication with EGR is likely to promote successful ageing. Thus, answering research question 1 which asks how Facebook communication with social connections promotes (or undermines) successful ageing.

The second aim of this study is to find out how Facebook communication affects older adults’ successful ageing. It is found that Facebook communication, more specifically composed communication helps older adults maintain relationships. As already confirmed, maintained relationships are an essential factor of ageing successfully in later life (WHO, 2012). Hypothesis 1 predicts that frequency of Facebook communication promotes successful ageing, which is confirmed by the findings. Further, research question 2 asks what are the implications of Facebook communication on successful ageing of older adults. Results indicate that a majority of older adults interact with both EGR and shallow relationships on Facebook through messages. However, they are not keen on interacting with them on Facebook using any other means such as through comments or likes on their posts. Older adults that receive the most gratification from social interactions online are those that frequently communicate with social connections, especially those who live in distant places. Those that report that they do not use the medium
beyond lurking over other users’ profiles did not benefit from online social interactions. These findings indicate that individuals who mainly use Facebook communication tools for social interaction purposes are more likely to improve well-being than those that do not. This implies that older adults who use Facebook communication for social interaction purposes can be said to age successfully as opposed to those that do not. Again, this finding, confirms the assumption proposed by the socio-emotional selectivity theory that states that activity goals that are not emotionally gratifying lead to feelings of loneliness, disconnectedness and dissatisfaction (see, Fung et al., 2001). Successful ageing is, therefore, promoted by sending and receiving frequent composed communication. Overall, the findings suggest that Facebook communication promotes successful ageing. This finding is consistent with findings from other studies that show a positive relationship between Facebook use and well-being, for example, Grieve et al. (2013) and Burke and Kraut (2016).

7.2 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Findings indicate that social interactions on Facebook can promote successful ageing. As such, results from this study can be used to examine how SNSs, such as Facebook can be used to improve older adults’ well-being and potentially help curb the challenges of social isolation, depression and loneliness among the population in small rural communities such as Hagfors. Further, considering that the population of older people is currently increasing all over the world, results obtained from this study can be used by researchers in media studies and other subjects such as gerontology and psychology as well as policymakers as an essential point of reference for improving older adults’ quality of life.

7.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has several limitations that qualify the findings and presents opportunities for further research. One limitation is the sample size. As there were only 15 participants, this limits the generalizability of this study. Another limitation of this study results from the sampling methods. Taking into account that participants were purposively selected, this implies that the
sample may not be fully representative of the population. However, as results mirrored those seen in prior research (for instance, Burke & Kraut, 2016), this suggests that the current sample was reasonably representative. Future studies can conduct research on a larger, more representative sample. Considering that this study only focused on Facebook, future research may also focus on how other SNSs such as Skype, Instagram and Twitter may promote or undermine successful ageing.


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW GUIDE (ENGLISH)

1. Please introduce yourself- state your name, age, marital status, number of children and/or grandchildren you have, current place of residence, who do you live with, highest level of education obtained, current employment status.

2. If participants have children and/or grandchildren- where do your children or grandchildren live?

3. Where do other family members live? How often are you in contact with them? Through which means?

4. Do your close friends also live in the area? How often do you communicate with them? Through which means?

5. Do you have access to the Internet at home?

6. Do you know what Facebook is?

7. Do you use Facebook?

8. Why do you use Facebook?

9. Which device(s) do you use to log onto Facebook?

10. How often do you log onto Facebook?

11. What do you like to do mostly on Facebook?

12. On average, how many minutes do you spend on Facebook?

13. On average, how many friends do you have on Facebook?

14. How many of your Facebook friends are EGR and how many are shallow relationships?

15. How often do you communicate with EGR on Facebook? Using which feature of Facebook?

16. How often do you communicate with shallow relationships? Using which feature of Facebook?

17. Which other features of Facebook do you use?
18. What do you find most fulfilling about communicating with EGR on Facebook?

19. How do you feel when you read a lovely post directed to you from your Facebook friends?

20. Do you feel connected to your Facebook friends?

21. Do you feel lonely?

22. Are you satisfied with your life?

23. Do you trust people in your network?

24. How often do you meet your friends in person?

25. How engaged are you in the community?

26. Do you think that Facebook can help you become more or less engaged in activities in the community?

27. What does ageing successfully mean to you?

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW GUIDE (SWEDISH)

1. Presentera dig med namn, ålder, civilstånd, antal barn ev. barnbarn, hemvist, antal i hushållet, utbildningsnivå, nuvarande äanställning.

2. Om du har barn och ev. barnbarn var bor dessa?

3. Vart bor dina andra familjemedlemmar? Hur ofta är ni i kontakt med varandra? Hur kontaktar ni varandra?

4. Bor dina nära vänner i området? Hur ofta kommunicerar ni? På vilket sätt?

5. Vet du vad facebook är?

6. Använder du facebook?

7. Varför använder du facebook?

8. Vad använder du för att logga in på facebook?
9. Hur ofta besöker du facebook?
10. Vad tycker du mest om att göra på facebook?
11. I snit hur många minuter tillbringar du på facebook?
12. I snit, hur många vänner har du på facebook?
13. Hur många av dina facebook/vänner är djupare vanskaper och hur många är ytliga bekanta?
14. Hur ofta kommunicerar du med dina djupare vänner? Vilka verktyg i facebook använder du dig av?
15. Hur ofta kommunicerar du med dina ytliga bekanta? Vilka verktyg i facebook använder du dig av?
16. Vilka andra verktyg som facebook erbjuder använder du?
17. Vad ger dig mest tillfredställelse när du kommunicerar med familj och nära vänner?
18. Hur far det dig att ma när du laser ett positivt inlagg riktat till dig från en av dina facebook-vänner?
19. Känner du dig nära med dina facebook?
20. Känner du dig ensam?
21. är du nojd med ditt liv?
22. Litar du på folk i ditt natverk?
23. Hur ofta träffar du vänner i verkligheten?
24. Hur engagerad är du i grannskapet?
25. Tror du facebook kan hjalpa dig att bli mer eller mindre engagerad i aktiviteter i ditt grannskap?
26. Vad menas med framgångsrikt åldrande för dig?
APPENDIX C (ENGLISH VERSION)
INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

A request for your participation in the study “The relationship between Facebook communication and successful ageing of older adults living in Hagfors municipality?”

**Background and Purpose:** My name is Lame Maatla Kenalemang. I am currently pursuing my Masters’ Degree Program in Media and Communication at Karlstad University. This study aims to investigate how older adults are using Facebook to translate into social capital and what effect does this have on successful ageing in Hagfors municipality. Your participation in this study will help me understand how people of old age benefit from the affordances of Facebook and what this means for their well-being. The findings from this study may help policy-makers improve the living conditions of older adults in the municipality.

**What, How:** The study entails that you participate in an interview. The interview will last approximately 20-30 minutes and the questions will basically be about your perceptions of Facebook and successful ageing. After you have confirmed your participation to me, I will be able to contact you for an appointment. The interview will be carried out at a place suitable for the participant. The whole interview will be recorded in an audiotape, to help me remember what was being said when I am to analyse the interview at a later stage.

**Possible advantages and disadvantages:** There are no known advantages or disadvantages of participating in the study. However, the experiences that you share could contribute to a better understanding of how Facebook use impacts successful ageing. This information may again be used to help the municipality to tackle the challenge of an ageing population and help older adults age better.

**What happens to the information about you?** The information that you give only is used to investigate the relationship between Facebook communication and successful ageing. Audiotapes
and transcriptions will safely be stored in a lockable cabinet with an access to author only. All interviews, recordings and notes will be deleted after the end of this study.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntarily and you retain the absolute authority to withdraw your participation at any time for no reason. If you decide to take part in this study, you are requested to sign the consent form attached, and submit it to me during the time of our interview. For further information, if need be, please contact me either at 072 879 777 3 or maatlakenalemang@gmail.com.

This study has been approved by the department of Media and Communication at Karlstad University. Ethical considerations have also been taken into account.

Yours sincerely,

Lame Maatla Kenalemang

Consent Form

I hereby declare that I received information about the study ‘Can Facebook be used to explain the impact of social capital on successful ageing of older adults living in Hagfors municipality?’ and would like to participate in the study.

Signature:…………………………..

Date:…………………………..
APPENDIX D (SWEDISH VERSION)
INFORMATION TILL DELTAGARE SAMT MEDGIVANDE TILL INTERVJU

Detta är en förfrågan om deltagande i studien “Hur bidrar kommunikation via Facebook till framgångsrikt åldrande hos äldre invånare i landsbygdskommunen Hagfors?”

Bakgrund och mening: Mitt namn är Lame Maatla Kenalemang. Jag är student på Karlstads universitet inom medie och kommunikationsvetenskap. Denna studie siktar på att undersöka hur äldre personer använder Facebook för att skaffa socialt kapital och vilken effekt det har på framgångsrikt åldrande i Hagfors kommun. Din medverkan i denna studie kommer att hjälpa mig att förstå hur äldre människor kan gynnas av Facebooks fördelar och vad de betyder för välmåendet. Sammanfattningen av studien kan komma att hjälpa kommunen att förbättra levnadsvillkoren för äldre invånare i kommunen.


Möjliga fördelar och nackdelar: Det finns inga kända fördelar eller nackdelar med att delta i studien, men de erfarenheter som du delar med mig av kan bidra till en bättre förståelse av hur Facebook-användning kan påverka framgångsrikt åldrande. Denna information kan hjälpa kommunen att tackla utmaningen med en allt äldre population och hjälpa äldre vuxna åldras bättre.

Vad händer med din information? Informationen jag får från dig används bara för att undersöka Facebookanvändning och framgångsrikt åldrande. Inspelningar och nedtecknade noter
kommer att förvaras i last skåp där enbart författaren till studien har tillgång. Alla intervjuer, inspelningar och noter kommer att förstöras när studien är klar.

**Frivilligt deltagande:** Deltagande i studien är helt och hållet frivilligt och du kan återkalla ditt medverkande vid vilket tillfälle som helst utan att ange några skäl. Om du bestämmer dig för att delta i studien vill jag att du signerar det medföljande formuläret där du godkänner att du vill delta i intervjunk med de förutsättningar som skrivits i detta dokument och överlämnar detta formulär när vi möts för intervjun. För ytterligare information, om det behövs, kontakta mig på tel. 072-879 77 73 eller per epost: maatlakenalemang@gmail.com

Denna studie är godkänd av Medie & Kommunikations-avdelningen på Karlstad Universitet. Etiska riktlinjer för studien har också beaktats.

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Lame Maatla Kenalemang

**Medgivande-formulär**

Jag meddelar härmed att jag delgivits informationen om studien “Hur bidrar kommunikation via Facebook till framgångsrikt åldrande hos äldre invånare i landsbygdsådelen Hagfors?” och jag vill delta i studien.

Datum: ..................................................

Påskrift: ..................................................

Namnfördtydligande: ..................................................