

Clicking towards a new horizon: How digital technology shapes cognitive processes and migration decisions

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Abstract

Digital technology is transforming how people make decisions about life, with people increasingly relying on digital resources for information, connecting with others, and making decisions about migration. The decision to migrate is not always straightforward, emigrants periodically contemplate the decision to leave the host country, on account of personal needs, desires, and aspiration. Equally, family needs as well as the economic stability, political freedom, structural conditions, and quality of life in the destination country, influence other migration considerations. Migration decisions are presumed highly rational and well-informed, but in reality, people frequently make these decisions under stress, urgency, and uncertainty, with limited information about their destination. Research is steadily moving away from simplistic explanations of the push and pull model, towards a cognitive perspective. More work is needed to explore how individuals process information and make decisions. What can we learn from the experiences of Ghanaian migrants and non-migrants? In my discussion, I will delve into the role of imagination and prospective thinking in the migration decision making and technology use. A deeper understanding of migration decision-making and its complexities in a digitalized world, are important to support and empower migrants in their journeys.

Biography

Dzifa Abra Attah, a clinical psychologist with over 14 years of clinical experience, provides mental healthcare, conducts research, and teaches at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School. Her expertise lies in treating trauma and stress-related disorders in women, children, and adolescents, and promoting positive mental health through psychosocial interventions. Attah has co-authored a number of publications in peer-reviewed journals, covering topics like sexuality, abuse, digital mental health interventions, migration, and cultural adjustment. She dedicates a portion of her time to mental health advocacy and community service in Ghana.

