

https://dspace.org/

The role of ICT's in maintaining care relationships within internal migration an exploration of family networks, social inclusion and digital divide

Mathebula, Risuna

2022
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/34234

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

Migratory patterns bring about radical changes in communities and impact familial relationships. However, the increased use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) challenges the notion that face-to-face interactions are a requirement for strong family relationships. Increasingly relationships between migrants and the loved ones they leave behind are being shaped differently through the use of technology, which allows people to overcome geographical distance. ICTs allow us to think of social lives which are not necessarily based on a physical place and territorial boundaries but are a corporation of connections characterised by distance (Baldassar, 2014).

Recently much research has been done internationally exploring the use of ICTs in migrant and transnational families. However, by comparison little has focused on the phenomenon of internal migration (rural-urban), especially as it relates to the South African context. This study aimed to fill this research gap by looking at the experiences of families in a rural area of South Africa whose family members have emigrated to Gauteng, especially as they relate to their use of ICTs to maintain family relationships. .

This study also aimed to add to the knowledge production of psychology and migration that is relevant to the South African context through the theoretical framework of critical community psychology. A qualitative approach was used through a case study phenomenon to highlight in depth and holistic nature of the migrant's and their families experience. The findings of the study revealed that migration tends to result in different types of losses for both the migrants and those staying behind. ICTs play an important role in mitigating those losses. However, challenges mostly linked to the huge digital divide that still exists between rural and urban areas often decrease the advantages that technology potentially holds for migrant families. Lastly, the findings reveal the use of ICTs not just to communicate but also to aid the process of assimilation for migrants. Moreover, they reveal that most rural communities are excluded from the social larger community as differences between rural arears and urban areas can be seen.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration, internal migration, loss, digital divide, critical community psychology