

Chapter 21

What Motivates Immigrants for ICT Adoption and Use?

A Systematic Review of the 21st Century Literature (2001–2017)

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ABSTRACT

Several studies demonstrate that most immigrants feel positively about technology adoption and use, and they use information and communication technologies (ICTs) more than non-immigrants or earlier immigrants. What motivates immigrants to use ICTs? Is their motivation to use ICTs for back home connection with their families and friends, or to adjust to their new environment? What are the factors that influence immigrants' ICT behaviors most often? For this study, the author chose 24 peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2001-2017 to assess immigrants' motivations for ICT adoption and use. The chapter, based on the systematic review of the existing literature for a longitudinal assessment, will discuss primary motives for immigrants' ICT adoption and use, as well as identify factors that influence immigrants' behavior with respect to ICT adoption and use. Based on these influencing factors, the chapter proposes a framework of technology adoption and use by immigrants.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration refers to the movement of people, usually from their country of birth to another country for the purpose of permanent residence (Perry, 2017). There are several socio-economic and socio-political reasons to migrate from a home country to a host country. These include poverty, unemployment, conflicts, threats, and political captivity. During the 1950s and 1960s, the influx of people in foreign countries was at the highest point as consequences of World War II, the fall of colonial regimes in Asia and Africa, and natural calamities (Perry, 2017). Nowadays, people's movement towards foreign countries, often more developed ones, has become a global phenomenon. Searching for better opportunities (such

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as, employment and education), joining with family members (spouses, children, parents), and escaping from humanitarian crises (war, conflicts, and natural calamities) are the primary reasons for today's immigration (Perry, 2017; Wellman, 2015).

However, leaving a community known since birth and adjusting to a new environment can be challenging for immigrants mainly because of the socio-cultural differences. For instance, a lack of proficiency in the host-country's language, lack of familiarity with government services and legal systems, attitudes towards work traditions, cultural perceptions on gender, race, and other issues may create difficult a situation for immigrants in integrating into the life of a host-country. On one hand, immigrants feel disconnected and isolated from their friends and family that they have left behind. On the other hand, there is a lack of strong networks with people in their new community. Restricted communication due to a limited knowledge of the host country's language may also cause feelings of loss.

Several studies assessing immigrants' struggles in adjusting to the host country's environment have identified that ICTs—mobile devices, computers, and the Internet—play pivotal roles in the successful resettlement of immigrants. By using ICTs, immigrants can:

- Reconnect and maintain sociocultural networks back home (Bacigalupe & Càmara, 2012; Benitez, 2006; Chen, 2010; Gonzalez, & Katz, 2016; Peile & Híjar, 2016; Williams, Gavino & Jacobson, 2017);
- Familiarize themselves with and adjust to a new environment (Benitez, 2006; Kabbar & Crump, 2006; Khvorostianov, Elias & Nimrod, 2011; Peile & Híjar, 2016; Williams et al., 2017; Yoon, 2016);
- Explore information and provide various support services (Alam & Imran, 2015; Barth & Veit, 2011; Peeters & d'Haenens, 2005; Peile & Híjar, 2016);
- Retrieve health information (Bacigalupe & Càmara, 2012; Mikal & Woodfield, 2015; Selsky, Luta, Noone, Huerta, & Mandelblatt, 2013);
- Enhance children's education (Gonzalez & Katz, 2016; Kabbar & Crump, 2006, 2007; Tripp, 2010);
- Entertain people in their leisure time (Khvorostianov et al., 2011; Peile & Híjar, 2016).

Studies have noticed different purposes of ICT adoption and use by immigrants in different parts of the world.

Several studies indicate that limited income, low-level education, lack of skills, and language barriers cause recent immigrants to have lower rates of access to computers and the Internet than the locals (Barth & Veit, 2011; Chen, 2010; Haight, Quan-Haase, & Corbett, 2014; Kabbar & Crump, 2006; Mossberger, Tolbert, Bowen, & Jimenez, 2012; Tsai, 2006; Williams et al., 2017). Ahmed and Veronis (2016), Gonzalez and Katz (2016), and Haight et al. (2014) noted that recent immigrants are more likely to be affected by the digital divide—"The gap between individuals, households, businesses, and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities" (OECD, 2001, p. 5).

When recent immigrants do have access to the Internet, they have higher levels of online activities and social media interactions (Haight et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2017). Similarly, Kabbar and Crump (2006, 2007), Peile and Híjar (2016), and Yoon (2016) observed that immigrants view ICTs, particularly the mobile device, computer, and the Internet, positively and want to use them as soon as they have the opportunity. Other scholars, such as Mossberger et al. (2012) and van Dijk (2012) argue that some im-

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