The Effects of Mobile Phones in Mitigating Cultural Shock amongst Refugees: Case of South Africa

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Abstract : The potential of mobile phones is evident in their ability to address isolation and loneliness, support the improvement of interpersonal relations, and contribute to the facilitation of assimilation processes. Mobile phones can play a role in facilitating the integration of refugees into a new environment. This study aims to evaluate the impact of mobile phone use on helping refugees navigate the challenges posed by cultural differences in the host country. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data for the study, involving a sample size of 27 participants. Participants in the study were refugees based in South Africa, and thematic analysis was the chosen method for data analysis. The research highlights the numerous challenges faced by refugees in their host nation, including a lack of local cultural skills, the separation of family and friends from their countries of origin, hurdles in acquiring legal documentation, and the complexities of assimilating into the unfamiliar community. The use of mobile phones by refugees comes with several advantages, such as the advancement of language and cultural understanding, seamless integration into the host country, streamlined communication, and the exploration of diverse opportunities. Concurrently, mobile phones allow refugees in South Africa to manage the impact of culture shock.
Keywords : mobile phones, culture shock, refugees, South Africa