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Thesis**

**EXPLORING THE IMPACTS OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON MIGRATION PERCEPTIONS
AND DECISION-MAKING BETWEEN NIGERIA AND CANADA**

BY

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Thesis Abstract

This study explores the impact of digital media on migration perceptions and decision-making, focusing on the migration nexus between Nigeria and Canada. It examines how platforms like YouTube influence migration trends, perceptions, and decisions, addressing the broader implications of digital media in the Information Age. Guided by a multi-faceted theoretical framework, including Media Systems Dependency Theory, Migration Systems Theory, and Social Capital Theory, the research analyses how digital communication reshapes transnational ties, and reduces/amplifies informational barriers and migration flows.

Using a sequential explanatory design, the study integrates digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis, with data sourced from relevant YouTube videos and viewer interactions.

MAXQDA software facilitated a systematic analysis of themes and narratives emerging from the content. Findings reveal that digital platforms significantly mediate migration experiences by providing practical insights, reducing perceived risks, and fostering diasporic connections.

In addition, findings corroborate Dekker and Engbersen's (2014) assertion that digital media serve as informal migration guides, while also aligning with Carling and Collins' (2018) observation of the interplay between aspirations and anxieties in migration. This study on the impacts of digital media on migration perceptions and decision-making highlights the dual sentiments evident in migration narratives, where exhilaration over opportunities is tempered by cautionary tales of cultural adjustment and bureaucratic hurdles. Furthermore, it underscores how digital media bridges formal migration systems with the personalized experiences migrants need to navigate these systems effectively.

This research emphasizes the stratified nature of digital access, as highlighted by Afrobarometer (2018), revealing that middle- and upper-class Nigerians—enabled by financial stability and digital literacy—are more likely to leverage platforms like YouTube. The findings also reflect on how digital tools support integration, facilitating connections with home and host communities, offering guidance on housing and employment, and easing daily life in Canada. However, the study calls attention to the digital divide that perpetuates economic disparities, urging policymakers to prioritize digital literacy and equitable access to migration resources.

The study contributes to academic discourse on migration and digital media by uncovering the complex interplay between technology, transnational networks, and diasporic identities, offering practical implications for policymakers, content creators, and migration communities.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

This study engages in a multifaceted exploration of how digital media influences migration trends between Nigeria and Canada. Against the backdrop of globalization and the widespread adoption of digital technologies the world over, this research project attends to the intricate interplay between digital media usage and immigration perceptions, and the dynamic relationship between Nigeria and Canada, focusing primarily on YouTube as a digital communication medium.

This study begins from the assertion that digital media (or new media as it is sometimes referred to) not only provide information, entertainment, escape, and relaxation, and even help us make small talk (Lind, 2023), they also play a central role in the entire immigration process, resulting in a perceived influence on how individuals think, act, and engage in decision-making.

Throughout the course of human history, the dissemination of messages has progressed from the oral tradition to script, print, wired and wireless electronics, and finally digital communication. We are currently witnessing a defining moment in the world's history – not just the start of a new millennium, but the beginning of a new technological era: if the past two hundred years have been characterized as the Industrial Age (based on machines, motors and energy), we are now moving into the Information Age, driven by microprocessors – the “brains” inside the computers, cellular phones, and many other electronics devices (Wilson A., 1999). The greatest change in message dissemination in recent history occurred with the introduction of computers and the internet in the early 1990s (Guo-Ming Chen, 2012). Since then, a dramatic shift in communication media has had a profound impact on humans' perception of media, time and space, reach, accessibility, and control.

Harvey (1990) observed that in the present age of digital media and communication, time has been compressed by reducing the distance between different points in space, and the sense of space has led people to feel that local, national and global space has become obsolete. In addition, the broader accessibility and/or access to digital media can now extend to a wide array of people, rather than to mere limited audiences and publics. This is significant because without the constraints of time and space, the control of message production, dissemination and consumption is no longer a privilege possessed only by church, state and government, but instead may be leveraged by a much broader variety of people and communities.

In view of the above context, this research is grounded in the recognition of Nigeria (in West Africa) and Canada (in North America) as significant actors in the global migration landscape. Nigeria, with its large population and economic challenges, has witnessed substantial emigration, driven by factors such as foreign economic opportunities, domestic political instability, and social aspirations. Canada, on the other hand, is renowned for its perceived welcoming immigration policies, robust economy, and multicultural ethos, attracting migrants from diverse corners of the world, including Nigeria.

Conceptual Definitions

This research sheds light on two phenomena central to exploring and understanding the topic at hand: digital media and immigration. By delving into these two subject areas and by revealing the profound implications therein, the study lays a solid foundation for navigating the complex landscapes of technology and human movement in today's interconnected world.

Towards a definition of digital media

Digital media, as defined by Lev Manovich (2001), a prominent media theorist and cultural critic, refers to the broad spectrum of content that is encoded in a numerical format and processed by electronic devices. In his influential work, *The Language of New Media*, Manovich emphasizes the shift from traditional media forms to digitally encoded information, highlighting the pivotal role of algorithms and computation in shaping the contemporary media landscape. In essence, digital media encompasses various types of content, including text, images, audio, and video, all of which exist in a binary code format.

In Manovich's view, the advent of digital media marks a significant departure from the linear and static nature of traditional media, introducing a dynamic, interactive, and computationally-driven dimension to media consumption. He underscores the impact of digitization on how information is stored, transmitted, and experienced, emphasizing the role of databases, interfaces, and software in shaping the user's engagement with digital content.

Furthermore, Manovich's definition acknowledges the transformative influence of the internet on the dissemination of digital media, enabling global connectivity and facilitating the rapid exchange of information. The interactive nature of digital media, according to Manovich, is characterized by user participation, navigation, and the creation of user-generated content, contributing to a more participatory media environment.

Other definitions of digital media have been put forward by the likes of Olena Pryiatelchuk (2020), who defines the former as products and services in digital format, and Yue-Ling Wong (2004) who emphasizes digital media's association with art, communication, and film. Joseph Nye (2014) further expands this definition, highlighting its use as a carrier of digitized content

and its application in various fields, including education and vocational training. Despite these variations, digital media is recognized as a key player in modern industry, with five distinctive characteristics: namely, digitality, convergency, interactivity, hypertextuality, and virtuality (Guo-Ming Chen, 2012).

Specifically within the YouTube medium ecology, digital media can be considered from the perspective of a broad range of online platforms and content, which have transformed how information is distributed, consumed, and interacted with worldwide. Burgess and Green (2018) and Al-Marouf et al. (2021) aptly affirm that one of the most influential forms of digital media is video-sharing platforms, with YouTube being a prime example.

YouTube, launched in 2005, is a video-sharing website where users can upload, watch, share, and comment on videos. It represents the convergence of audiovisual content with the interactive and participatory features that define digital media. Unlike legacy or traditional media, where content production is typically controlled by media professionals, YouTube democratizes content creation. Anyone with an internet connection and basic recording equipment can produce and share videos, giving rise to a diverse array of voices and perspectives on a variety of topical issues like migration (Burgess and Green, 2018; van Dijck, 2013).

According to Matthew (2011), a key feature of YouTube is its user-generated content model. This means that the platform's vast repository of videos is created by its users, ranging from amateur hobbyists to professional content creators. This diversity fosters a wide range of content (from factual to non-factual alike), from educational tutorials and personal vlogs to entertainment and news, catering to virtually every interest and demographic. Interactivity is another hallmark of YouTube. Viewers are not passive consumers; they engage with content through likes, comments, shares, and subscriptions. This interaction creates a dynamic community where users

and content creators can communicate directly with one another, fostering a sense of connection and participation (Burgess and Green, 2018; Matthew, 2011).

The platform's recommendation algorithm personalizes the viewing experience by suggesting videos based on users' viewing history and preferences. This feature enhances user engagement by continually presenting relevant content, although it also raises concerns about creating echo chambers where users are exposed only to information that reinforces their existing beliefs (van Dijck, 2013).

YouTube's global reach and accessibility are significant. The platform serves as a global stage where individuals from around the world can share their stories and perspectives. This has profound implications for cultural exchange and the dissemination of information, breaking down geographical and social barriers. Also, economic opportunities on YouTube further highlight its impact. The platform enables content creators to monetize their videos through advertisements, sponsorships, and memberships. This has transformed YouTube into a viable career path or side hustle for many, influencing the nature and quality of content produced (Al-Maroofof et al., 2021; Burgess & Green, 2018; van Dijck, 2013).

When it comes to migration, YouTube plays a critical role. It serves as a valuable resource for potential migrants, offering videos that document personal migration experiences, provide procedural advice, and depict life in destination countries. Such content can significantly influence viewers' perceptions and decisions about migration. Research indicates that digital media can shape perceptions surrounding migration by offering aspirational narratives and practical information, thereby reducing uncertainty and perceived risks associated with moving to a new country (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Towards a definition of immigration

Immigration in its own right is one of today's most important media stories (Lind, 2023, p. 124).

It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that involves the movement of people from one country to another, often with the intention of settling in the destination country. This global phenomenon has been constant throughout history, shaped by economic, political, social, and environmental factors. The meaning of immigration extends beyond the act of simple geographic relocation; it encompasses a range of individual aspirations, societal impacts, and policy considerations.

Economically, immigration can be seen as a response to disparities in opportunities and living standards between countries. To this effect, Gary Becker (1975) has argued that individuals migrate to maximize their lifetime utility by seeking better economic prospects, whether in the form of higher wages, improved job opportunities, or access to a more stable and prosperous economy. This economic perspective highlights the role of immigration as a rational choice made by individuals seeking to improve their standard of living.

From a sociopolitical standpoint, immigration has been instrumental in shaping the cultural diversity of nations. Sociologist Milton Gordon's (1964) theory of assimilation posits that immigrants enter into a process of cultural adaptation, whereby they adopt the values, norms, and practices of the host society over time. However, assimilation is not a linear process, and different individuals and communities may navigate it in diverse ways. This cultural dimension underscores the richness and dynamism that immigrants bring to the social fabric of their adopted countries.

Policy discussions surrounding immigration often revolve around issues of border control, national security, and economic impact. George Borjas, a prominent labour economist, has extensively studied the economic consequences of immigration and has argued that while immigrants contribute to the overall economic output of a country, the benefits are not evenly distributed, leading to winners and losers in the domestic labour market (Borjas, 2014 and Lind, 2023, p. 124). Borjas's argument hinges on the idea that while immigration contributes positively to the overall economic output within a host country, the benefits accrued are not equally shared across the domestic labour market. He asserts that immigrants help to expand the labour force, supporting industries facing labour shortages and often driving economic growth by filling roles in critical sectors. This boost to production and productivity can lead to lower prices for consumers and increased profits for employers, particularly those relying on lower-wage labour. However, Borjas emphasizes that these economic gains are often concentrated among business owners, high-skilled workers, and consumers, leaving certain domestic workers, particularly those with lower skill sets, vulnerable to wage stagnation or job displacement.

Lastly in this regard, the meaning of immigration is deeply intertwined with the concept of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, recognizes the right of individuals to seek asylum from persecution and to enjoy freedom of movement within the borders of each state (United Nations, 1948). This perspective emphasizes the ethical imperative of providing refuge and opportunities for those fleeing adversity. Considering the fact that immigration is often a lifeline for individuals fleeing conflict, poverty, and environmental disasters, makes the phenomenon a fundamental aspect of global justice. By supporting humane immigration policies, societies affirm their commitment to protecting the dignity and rights of all people, regardless of their origin. Ultimately, treating

immigration as a human right fosters international solidarity and upholds the shared values of equality and compassion.

Research Themes and Orientations

This study on the impact of digital media on migration perceptions encompasses a multifaceted examination of how digital media influences the migration dynamics between Nigeria and Canada. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of the state of knowledge regarding im/migration to Canada. Rather, this inquiry arises from the recognition of the significant role that digital platforms like YouTube play in shaping contemporary migration decision-making, alongside the recognition of Nigeria and Canada as representative actors in the global migration landscape (Afolayan et al., 2008; Levitt, 2001; Sigona, 2012; Simmons, 2010).

At its core, this research addresses the following themes and orientations:

1. To study how YouTube use among Nigerian populations influence their perceptions, aspirations, and decision-making processes regarding migration to Canada;
2. To situate and contextualize the specific YouTube platforms and channels Nigerian migrants utilize to gather information, exchange experiences, and facilitate migration-related activities pertaining to Canada;
3. To make sense of the broader implications surrounding YouTube-driven im/migration trends and patterns for Nigerian migrants.

By addressing these research inquiries, the study elucidates the complex interplay between YouTube (a ubiquitous digital media tool) and migration dynamics, offering insights into the transformative effects of digital technologies on contemporary patterns of mobility, belonging,

and transnationalism. Furthermore, the research problem attended to in these pages constitutes one strategy for better informing policymakers, migration scholars, and migrant communities about the opportunities and challenges arising from the digitalization of migration processes between Nigeria and Canada.

Research Questions

The following research questions address various dimensions of the research themes and orientations, providing an understanding of the role of digital media (YouTube) in shaping migration perceptions between Nigeria and Canada:

1. How do the common YouTube searches by Nigerians about life in Canada influence their migration decisions?
 - 1.1 What role does YouTube play in shaping the expectations and aspirations of Nigerians who are considering migrating to Canada?
 - 1.2 What impact do YouTube videos addressing immigration routes, visa processes and career options in Canada have on the final decision of Nigerians considering migration?

Significance of the Study

This research is potentially significant for several reasons, with potential contributions to academic scholarship, policy formulation, and practical applications in the field of migration studies. Firstly, the research contributes to the academic discourse by filling a critical gap in the literature concerning the role of digital media in shaping contemporary migration perceptions.

While there is substantial research on traditional migration factors such as economic opportunities, political stability, and social networks, the nuanced role of digital media remains underexplored. By investigating how digital media platforms influence perceptions, decision-making processes, and migration experiences, the study adds a vital dimension to understanding modern migration dynamics. This aligns with the growing body of work on the digitalization of society and its implications for various social phenomena (Castells, 1996; Diminescu, 2008).

Secondly, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers in both Nigeria and Canada. Understanding how digital media shapes migration can inform the development of more effective immigration policies and support programs. For instance, by identifying the specific digital channels through which potential migrants gather information, policymakers can better tailor their communication strategies to ensure accurate and helpful information reaches prospective migrants. Additionally, recognizing the influence of digital media on migration decisions can help policymakers anticipate and manage migration flows, enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Practically, this research has significant implications for migration practitioners, including immigration consultants, legal advisors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). By shedding light on the digital tools and platforms that migrants rely on, practitioners can better assist their clients through targeted supports and resources. For example, they can develop online resources and digital outreach programs that address common concerns and provide step-by-step guidance on immigration procedures. This can enhance the efficiency and accessibility of migration support services, ultimately benefiting migrants.

Finally, the research has broader implications for the global understanding of migration in the digital age. As digital technologies continue to evolve, their impact on migration is likely to

become even more pronounced. This study, therefore, offers a timely examination of current trends and sets a foundation for future research on digital media and migration. By contributing to this evolving field, the study helps to map out the future landscape of migration, providing a basis for ongoing scholarly and practical exploration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abundant literature exists on digital media and immigration, as well as the intersections between these two spheres, yet perspectives vary significantly between Western and African contexts. While Western scholarship has a tendency to focus on the role of digital media in the assimilation and integration processes of immigrants, African perspectives tend to highlight issues of representation, identity preservation, and the socio-economic impacts of migration as influenced by digital platforms.

Western Perspectives

Western or Eurocentric perspectives on digital media and immigration present a multifaceted understanding of how these technologies influence the migration experience. As noted above, these perspectives often emphasize integration, social networking, identity formation, and political engagement within immigrant communities in Western societies. By engaging deeply with these studies, this research uncovers a rich interplay of agreement and divergence, which collectively enhances our understanding of this complex subject.

Leila Komito's (2011) research emphasizes the role of social media in creating virtual communities that mimic the support systems of immigrants' homelands. Platforms like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) offer immigrants a means of sharing experiences, seeking advice, and

gaining emotional support. Komito's findings underscore the dual functionality of digital media: it facilitates integration by fostering new social networks in the host country while preserving connections to cultural heritage. This duality points to the adaptability of immigrants in leveraging digital tools to navigate their circumstances.

Dekker and Engbersen (2014) extend these insights by examining how social media transforms migrant networks and facilitates the migration process. They argue that platforms lower barriers to migration by providing real-time information about destinations, jobs, and living conditions. Their focus on the logistical benefits of digital tools complements Komito's emphasis on social aspects, highlighting a broader scope of digital media's utility. Together, these studies paint a picture of how digital platforms serve as bridges—both socially and practically—for immigrants adapting to new environments.

Expanding on integration and belonging, Gifford and Wilding (2013) provide a nuanced view of young Karen refugees in Australia, exploring how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) aid identity formation and cultural expression. Their work highlights how digital platforms serve as spaces for engaging in cultural and religious practices, preserving a sense of continuity amid disruption. Unlike Komito and Dekker and Engbersen, Gifford and Wilding focus on the psychological dimensions of integration, particularly for younger refugees, offering a critical lens on the role of technology in mental health and cultural adaptation.

Madianou and Miller's (2012) concept of polymedia adds further depth to our understanding by illustrating how transnational families manage relationships across borders through diverse media tools. By balancing emotional and practical needs, immigrants utilize platforms in complementary ways to maintain familial bonds. This approach reveals a layered understanding of media use, showing how it facilitates not just communication but also the negotiation of

complex emotional landscapes. The focus on family dynamics enriches the broader conversation about digital media's role in sustaining connections amid migration.

While these studies collectively highlight the empowering aspects of digital media, they also reveal its darker side. Jessie Daniels (2008) argues that social media algorithms amplify xenophobic and racist content, creating environments where immigrants are dehumanized. Her work underscores how the commercial goals of maximizing user engagement often prioritize divisive and sensational content, enabling extremist groups to exploit these platforms for propaganda. This algorithmic bias starkly contrasts with the empowering narratives of earlier studies, highlighting a critical tension within digital media's role.

Deen Freelon and Alice Marwick (2018) build on this theme by examining how social media polarizes public opinion about immigration. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, for example, anti-immigrant narratives circulated widely within online echo chambers, reinforcing stereotypes and entrenching biases. Their work complements Daniels' findings by showing how digital media not only amplifies harmful content but also fosters ideological segregation, making constructive dialogue about immigration increasingly challenging.

Lisa Nakamura's (2008) exploration of visual media adds a unique dimension by focusing on the representation of immigrants in digital spaces. Memes, videos, and images depicting immigrants as threats or burdens perpetuate stereotypes, contributing to their dehumanization. Nakamura's emphasis on visual cultures reveals how digital media shapes societal attitudes through imagery, reinforcing narratives of exclusion and justifying hostile policies. This insight into the power of visual media broadens the scope of our understanding of digital platforms' societal impact.

Robin Mansell and W. Lance Bennett (2016) examine the spread of fear-based narratives about immigration on social media. They argue that misinformation and sensationalism create a climate of fear, which is strategically exploited to dehumanize immigrants. The resulting hostility not only impacts public opinion but also influences policy in ways detrimental to immigrant communities. This work ties closely to Daniels and Freelon and Marwick, emphasizing the systemic nature of digital platforms in perpetuating anti-immigrant sentiment.

Anna R. Triandafyllidou (2017) takes these lines inquiry further by exploring the psychological and social impacts of online hate speech on immigrants. Her research reveals how the anonymity afforded via digital platforms facilitates the proliferation of racist and xenophobic abuse, leading to social isolation and emotional distress for victims. Triandafyllidou's call for stronger regulatory frameworks and community guidelines underscores the urgency of addressing the harmful consequences of unregulated digital spaces, contrasting sharply with earlier studies that celebrate digital media's empowering potential.

Taken together, these perspectives reveal the dual role of digital media in the migration experience. On the one hand, digital platforms empower immigrants by providing tools for integration, cultural preservation, and familial connection. On the other, they amplify xenophobia, spread misinformation, and perpetuate stereotypes, reflecting and shaping societal prejudices. This complex dynamic highlights the need for ethical and regulatory interventions to ensure that digital media serves as a force for inclusion rather than marginalization. By integrating these insights, this research is rooted in a holistic understanding of how digital technologies shape, and are shaped by, the migration experience in Western contexts.

African Perspectives

African scholarship on digital media and immigration presents a unique lens through which the complex dynamics of migration are understood. These academic inquiries emphasize the preservation of cultural identity, economic implications, and the rejection of negative stereotypes, offering a rich tapestry of insights distinct from Western viewpoints.

First in this regard, Nanjala Nyabola's (2018) work, *Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics: How the Internet Era is Transforming Politics in Kenya*, is a cornerstone in this discourse. Nyabola argues that digital platforms are not just tools for communication but spaces of cultural resistance and identity preservation for African migrants. Through digital storytelling, diasporic communities challenge negative stereotypes propagated in Western media, offering authentic narratives that reflect their lived experiences. Nyabola's analysis highlights how these platforms enable African migrants to reclaim their agency, reshaping global perceptions of African cultures and migration. This theme of cultural reclamation is a thread that runs through much of the African scholarship on digital media.

Bitange Ndemo and Tim Weiss's (2016) *Digital Kenya: An Entrepreneurial Revolution in the Making* adds an economic dimension to this conversation by examining the transformative impact of mobile money technologies like M-Pesa. Their work underscores how these platforms facilitate remittances, providing financial stability for families and supporting development projects in migrants' home countries. This focus on economic empowerment complements Nyabola's cultural emphasis, illustrating how digital technologies strengthen the ties between African migrants and their homelands. Together, these studies present a holistic view of how digital media supports both cultural and economic continuity for African migrants.

John A. Arthur's (2010) *African Diaspora Identities: Negotiating Culture in Transnational Migration* explores how digital media enables African immigrants to construct hybrid identities in transnational contexts. Arthur argues that social media facilitates a dynamic interaction between the cultural practices of the homeland and the host country, allowing migrants to adapt without losing their sense of self. This process of identity negotiation is crucial for navigating the complexities of cultural integration, offering a sense of belonging in foreign environments. Arthur's focus on the interplay of cultures adds depth to Nyabola's emphasis on cultural preservation, highlighting the transformative potential of digital platforms in shaping identities.

Mohamed Abdilahi Abdi's (2019) study, "The Role of Social Media in Diaspora Identity Formation and Community Building: The Case of Somali Youth in Finland," aligns closely with Arthur's work, examining how Somali youth in the diaspora use platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp to maintain their cultural and religious practices. Abdi highlights the psychological benefits of this engagement, emphasizing how digital media fosters a sense of continuity and belonging despite geographical distance. While Arthur focuses on the negotiation of hybrid identities, Abdi sheds light on the collective aspect of identity formation, emphasizing the role of community in sustaining cultural ties.

A key theme across these studies is the role of digital media in resisting negative stereotypes and narratives about African migrants. Nyabola's focus on digital storytelling as a tool of cultural resistance complements Arthur's and Abdi's discussions on identity formation, collectively illustrating how African migrants use these platforms to counteract the homogenizing and often dehumanizing portrayals found in mainstream media. These acts of digital resistance serve to reframe global narratives, offering more accurate and nuanced representations of African migration.

In addition to cultural and psychological dimensions, Ndemo and Weiss's emphasis on economic contributions highlights the multifaceted ways in which digital media shapes the migration experience. The use of mobile money platforms by African migrants not only facilitates financial stability but also strengthens the economic resilience of their home countries. This economic empowerment stands in stark contrast to Western narratives that often portray migrants as burdens to their host societies, further challenging stereotypes and showcasing the positive impacts of migration.

While these studies agree on the empowering potential of digital media, they also reveal the complexities and challenges inherent in its use. For example, Nyabola and Arthur emphasize the importance of digital platforms in preserving cultural identity, but they also acknowledge the potential for these platforms to reinforce cultural divides or perpetuate stereotypes within diasporic communities. This duality highlights the need for a critical engagement with digital technologies, ensuring they serve as tools of empowerment rather than division.

Moreover, Abdi's focus on Somali youth introduces an intergenerational perspective, illustrating how younger migrants adapt to digital platforms in ways that may differ from older generations. This generational nuance adds depth to the broader conversation, showing how digital media's impact varies across different demographic groups within African migrant communities. It also underscores the evolving nature of digital engagement, shaped by technological advancements and shifting social dynamics.

Collectively, these works demonstrate how African scholarship helps to understand migration flows, patterns and perceptions through the uses and affordances of digital media as tools for adaptation, resistance, and connection. Whether through digital storytelling, mobile money transfers, or social networking, these platforms empower migrants to maintain cultural ties,

support their communities, and challenge misrepresentations. This agency contrasts with the often passive portrayals of migrants in Western literature, offering a richer and more dynamic understanding of migration.

In summary, African scholarship on digital media and immigration broadens the discourse by centering the voices and experiences of African migrants. By emphasizing cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and identity negotiation, these studies reveal the transformative potential of digital technologies in shaping the migration experience. They also challenge Western-centric narratives, providing a more nuanced and inclusive perspective on the role of digital media in global migration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This research employs a multi-faceted theoretical framework from migration studies and media sociology to explore the relationship between digital media and migration dynamics.

Beginning with Manuel Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), I establish that digital technologies have fundamentally transformed social, economic, and cultural interactions by creating a global network of information and communication. Similarly, Giddens (1991) provides theoretical insights into the role of digital media in restructuring social relations and facilitating transnational connections. More specifically, Giddens' notion of "deterritorialization" underscores the erosion of traditional spatial boundaries in the digital age. These theories/theorists are crucial to understanding how digital media facilitates the dissemination of information and connects potential migrants in Nigeria with networks and opportunities in Canada.

In the same vein, this study is based upon the Media Systems Dependency (MSD) theory that states that individuals who are more dependent upon a particular medium to fulfill needs are more likely to be affected by that medium, including changes of opinions, preferences, and actions. Melvin DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1976) note that when dependency occurs within the traditional media system, the media establishment has the power not only because it controls information flows, but also because the information that is used by the audiences then affects them in the process. With YouTube content, though large corporations like Google may still control and manage what it features on its website, the creative power has been divested from the mainstream media and redistributed to everyday users. Thus, taking MSD theory further, the central focus of this study examines the assertion that as digital media consumption grows, particularly among younger demographics, YouTube has become a significant source of information, shaping perceptions and decisions (Auxier, B., and Anderson, M. 2021, and Pew Research Center, 2021). For instance, content creators and influencers based in Canada who share their migration stories, lifestyle, and success can influence the aspirations of Nigerians considering migration. This aligns with the MSD theory's assertion that individuals become more dependent on media, especially in uncertain or high-stakes situations like migration, where reliable information is crucial for decision-making.

Furthermore, the MSD theory highlights how media can act as a mediator in the migration process. YouTube content can reduce the perceived risks associated with migration by providing detailed insights into the challenges and benefits of moving to Canada. This mediated reality can either encourage or discourage migration, depending on the narratives presented. For example, videos showcasing the positive aspects of life in Canada, such as economic opportunities and a better quality of life, might increase the desire to migrate, while content highlighting the

difficulties, such as the housing crises, cultural adjustment or discrimination, might serve as a deterrent (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1976; Melkote and Steeves, 2015).

The theory also emphasizes the reciprocal nature of media dependency, where both the audience and the media influence each other. As more Nigerians turn to YouTube for information about migration, content creators may produce more videos catering to this interest, thereby reinforcing the cycle of dependency. This interaction illustrates how digital media like YouTube may not only reflect but also shape migration trends.

Complementing the above is the Migration Systems Theory as articulated by Akin Mabogunje (1970), which situates migration as a system influenced by various interconnected factors, including economic, social, political and environmental conditions. This framework is crucial for analyzing how digital media acts as a facilitating mechanism within the broader Nigeria-Canada migration system, impacting the decision-making processes and migration flows of various peoples.

More specifically, the Migration Systems Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the interconnectedness of the above identified factors that influence migration patterns. As discussed above, digital media has revolutionized the way information is disseminated and consumed, significantly influencing migration decisions. Therefore, Mabogunje's framework is extended to include digital media as an integral component of the informational infrastructure that shapes migration flows. In the context of Nigeria-Canada immigration, digital media platforms like social media, online forums, and diasporic websites serve as vital sources of information for potential migrants. These platforms provide insights into living conditions, job opportunities, immigration processes, and community support systems in

Canada, thereby reducing the uncertainties associated with migration and lowering the psychological and informational barriers to movement. Among the various digital platforms, YouTube's versatility, accessibility, and ability to facilitate personal yet discreet engagement make it a uniquely valuable platform for studying how digital media influences migration narratives and decisions.

In addition, Mabogunje's theory emphasizes the role of feedback mechanisms within migration systems. Digital media enhances feedback loops by enabling real-time communication between migrants and their networks back home. For instance, Nigerian immigrants in Canada can share their experiences, successes, and challenges through social media, which in turn have the capacity to influence the perceptions and actions of prospective migrants. This continuous exchange of information creates a self-perpetuating cycle that sustains and potentially amplifies migration flows.

The concept of transnationalism, which is integral to Migration Systems Theory, is also reinforced by digital media. Digital platforms facilitate the maintenance of strong ties between migrants and their countries of origin, fostering a transnational identity. This is evident in the active participation of the Nigerian diaspora in Canadian social, cultural, and political life, while simultaneously engaging with Nigerian affairs through online platforms. This dual engagement supports the integration of migrants into their new environment while preserving their connections to their homeland.

The impact of digital media on diasporic media use is another critical aspect. Diasporic media, including online news portals, radio stations, and community websites, cater specifically to the needs and interests of the diaspora. These media outlets not only provide relevant news and

entertainment but also serve as platforms for advocacy and community mobilization. In the case of Nigeria-Canada migration, diasporic media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy discussions related to immigration and integration.

In the same vein, this study also simultaneously draws from, and potentially builds upon, the broader discourse on digital diasporas, which examines how digital technologies mediate diasporic experiences and transnational belonging (Diminescu, 2008). By analyzing digital media usage patterns among Nigerian diasporic communities in Canada and their impact on migration flows, the research aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of contemporary migration dynamics.

Additionally, the study is informed by Social Capital Theory, as developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and later expanded by Robert Putnam (2000). This theory emphasizes the value of social networks and relationships in providing resources and support. It helps investigate how digital media enhances social capital among Nigerian migrants by enabling the formation and maintenance of transnational networks and communities.

Lastly, the concept of Transnationalism, as explored by Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992), is instrumental in understanding how digital media supports the transnational practices of Nigerian migrants. This framework examines the sustained ties and interactions that migrants maintain across national borders, providing insights into how digital communication tools facilitate the navigation of life between Nigeria and Canada.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, this study adopts a multi-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of my primary research questions: how do YouTube searches about life in Canada carried out by Nigerians influence migration decisions?; what role does YouTube play in shaping the expectations and aspirations of Nigerians who are considering migrating to Canada?; and lastly, what impact do YouTube videos addressing immigration routes, visa processes and career options in Canada have on the final decision of Nigerians considering migration? Using a sequential explanatory design model, this study codifies data from both the selected videos and their comments sections, using qualitative methods to analyse and explain the results.

Digital ethnography is also conducted to observe and analyse content from YouTube channels where potential Nigerian migrants interact. This method provides insights into the digital spaces that facilitate information exchange and support networks. As stated above, qualitative content analysis was performed to understand the nature and quality of interactions, support mechanisms, and the role of digital media in shaping migration narratives.

Digital ethnography, also known as netnography, involves the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from digital environments. For the purposes of this study, I immersed myself in the YouTube online community used by migrants. This immersion helped in understanding the nuanced ways in which digital media influences migration decisions, supports the integration process, and maintains transnational connections. Kozinets (2010) defines netnography as a qualitative research method that adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications.

Researchers have applied digital ethnography to study various aspects of migration. For instance, Madianou and Miller (2012) examined the role of digital media in maintaining familial ties among Filipino migrants in London. They found that platforms like Facebook and Skype enabled continuous and intimate communication, helping migrants maintain strong emotional bonds with their families despite physical separation. Madianou and Miller's study highlights how digital ethnography can reveal the emotional and relational dimensions of migration, which are often overlooked in more quantitative approaches.

In the context of Nigeria-Canada migration, digital ethnography illustrates how Nigerian migrants use digital media to navigate the immigration process and adapt to life in Canada. I explored relevant YouTube channels where information about how to emigrate from Nigeria to Canada, visa applications and job opportunities, among other things, are shared. The content I examined via various YouTube channels represent vital interactions capable of providing insights into the collective knowledge and strategies developed by migrants, which can be critical for their successful integration. For example, a study by Dekker and Engbersen (2014) on how social media facilitate migration decision-making found that migrants use these platforms to reduce the risks and uncertainties associated with migration by obtaining reliable information from their peers.

Digital ethnography also facilitates the exploration of diasporic media and its role in shaping migrant identities and experiences. YouTube channels and other social media platforms created by, for, or about Nigerians across the globe, as well as online news portals and community radio stations collectively known as diaspora media, cater specifically to the needs of the diaspora, providing a sense of belonging and a connection to the homeland. For instance, Nigerian

migrants in Canada might engage with the YouTube channels of Nigeria-based local television stations, online platforms like Sahara Reporters or The Nigerian Voice to stay informed about events in Nigeria and discuss issues relevant to their community. This engagement helps sustain a transnational identity, allowing migrants to participate in the socio-political life of both their home and host countries.

In terms of the affordances of this method, digital ethnography is a flexible and adaptive method, well-suited for studying rapidly evolving digital landscapes. In this study, data collection and analysis are treated as distinct steps. I use various data collection techniques to gather representative data on how digital media influences migration. These include methods like videos observation and coding, transcription of videos content, as well as comments and metadata extraction. Further details on both the data collection process and the subsequent analysis can be found below.

The above methodological approaches have yielded a deeper understanding of how digital media influences migration patterns between Nigeria and Canada. This research offers new insights into the specific digital platforms and channels used by Nigerian migrants, generates useful analyses pertaining to how digital media facilitate transnational networks and diasporic community formation, and produces policy recommendations to support digital media literacy and effective migration information dissemination. By integrating the aforementioned theoretical perspectives and employing a robust methodological approach, the study contributes significantly to the academic discourse on migration and digital media, offering practical implications for policymakers and migration communities.

DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

This section of the study describes the data gathering process, discusses the rationale for content selection, and explains the adopted procedures for analyzing all data gathered to investigate the impacts of digital media on migration patterns between Nigeria and Canada. This section discusses the relevance of YouTube data, while at the same time examining MAXQDA's usefulness and affordances as a reliable qualitative data analysis tool.

During the course of this study, data collection focused on both digital content and user interactions, particularly within social media platforms like YouTube. YouTube was selected by virtue of its appeal to, and extensive use by, Nigerians seeking information on migration, providing a rich source of user-generated content and discussions (Mathew, 2011). The data gathering process involved identifying and analyzing three specific kinds of content from different YouTube channels that are dedicated to enlightening Nigerians on the procedures, challenges, and opportunities related to migrating to Canada. This content was chosen based on relevance, popularity, and the level of engagement from viewers, making these examples credible sources for understanding the digital media's role in migration perceptions.

The content for this study consists of three YouTube videos selected for their comprehensive focus on critical aspects of the migration experience:

1. "How to get a free immigration lawyer and faster visa acceptance for Canada" by Wakawaka_doctor (2024);
2. "Dear New/prospective CA immigrants, Do Not Fall for These Lies!" by Ms_Yemisi (2022);
3. "How to immigrate from Nigeria to Canada" by Gooselaw Immigration (2021).

These videos were chosen based on their thematic focus and ability to represent a broad range of migration-related topics, including immigration pathways, cultural adaptation, and socio-economic challenges. Each video was analyzed in-depth, and both the video content and the associated viewer comments were collected and reviewed to understand their influence on migration narratives and decision-making processes. The selected videos provide insights into practical migration pathways and the emotional and social aspects of migrating, appealing to a diverse audience, including prospective migrants and those already navigating migration challenges.

To ensure the quality and rigor of the study, detailed data elements were gathered from each video. This included the video metadata (e.g., publication date, view counts, likes, and shares), and viewer comments representing varying perspectives and levels of engagement. These elements were critical in assessing the influence and reception of the videos. As a platform, YouTube not only hosts videos but also fosters vibrant discussions through comments and interactions, offering insight into public sentiment and the influence of digital content on decision-making processes. The qualitative nature of this data necessitated an in-depth analysis to identify patterns and themes that reflect broader migration trends.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, MAXQDA, widely recognized qualitative data analysis software, was employed. MAXQDA's robust features allow for the coding, categorization, and interpretation of large volumes of qualitative data. This software's ability to manage and analyze textual data from various sources, including YouTube, made it particularly useful for this study. By utilizing MAXQDA, I was able to systematically explore the content of YouTube

discussions, identifying recurring themes, sentiments, and the overall impact of digital media on the migration aspirations of Nigerian YouTube users.

The affordances of MAXQDA, such as its visualization tools and capacity for complex queries, provided deeper insights into how specific narratives and pieces of information from YouTube influence migration decisions. The software's ability to cross-reference data points and visualize connections between different themes and variables was instrumental in better deciphering the nuances of digital influence. The analysis not only considered the direct impact of the content but also examined the broader socio-cultural implications of digital media in shaping migration trends between Nigeria and Canada.

DISSECTING THE “*JAPA*” CONCEPT IN NIGERIA MIGRATION LANDSCAPE

The *Japa* concept, a colloquial term derived from the Yoruba language meaning “to flee” or “to escape,” has evolved into a significant phenomenon within Nigeria’s migration discourse (Premium Times, 2022). It aptly captures the growing trend of Nigerians, particularly the youth, seeking better opportunities abroad to escape the socio-economic challenges bedeviling the country. This concept has become a reflection of the aspirations and frustrations of many Nigerians navigating a landscape marked by several uncertainties (Okunade & Awosusi, 2023). Ignoring the *Japa* narrative in any contemporary discussion of Nigeria’s migration trends would amount to a critical oversight, as it offers vital insight into the macro, meso, and micro dynamics driving migration.

As the world becomes more globalized with improved communication technologies and transportation, migration – especially international human migration – has become an

increasingly global phenomenon in the 21st century (Wilczek, 2012). Massey et al. (1998), Castles and Miller (2009), and de Haas (2010) have argued that macro, meso, and micro factors are responsible for driving people's decisions to migrate to and integrate in other countries. Their research highlights that migration decisions are influenced by a combination of macro (e.g., economic conditions, political context), meso (e.g., social networks, community ties), and micro (e.g., individual motivations, personal circumstances) factors. Specifically in Africa as a whole and Nigeria in particular, migratory behaviours are linked to the push factors of unemployment, political instability, poverty, infrastructural decay in home countries, and the pull factors of enticing promises of better living conditions in the destination countries (Nwosu et al., 2022).

A 2014 United Nations Children's Fund/Global Migration Group report has seen noticeable increases in youth migration, including the search for better means of livelihood, quests for further education, family reunion, gender-based violence, natural disasters, wars, and supranational crises (UNICEF, 2014).

As of 2017, 1.24 million people were reported to have emigrated from Nigeria, making it a nation with one of the world's highest number of emigrants (Nevin and Omosomi, 2019). In addition, a YouTube video produced by Gooselaw Immigration entitled "How to Immigrate from Nigeria to Canada" (2021) states that Nigeria was the fourth largest source of those who were granted permanent resident status in Canada in 2019 (after India, China and the Philippines). Most recently, Punch (2024) newspaper reported that Canada has accepted 1,500 Nigerians seeking asylum during the past 15 months. This new trend of migration has bred the adoption of the colloquial term *Japa* among the populace to describe the mass outmigration in Nigeria. *Japa* is a novel term used by Nigerians to describe the outmigration trend of Nigerians into Europe and other parts of the world. According to Professor Toyin Falola, *Japa* is a Yoruba

word that means to flee, and once achieved, a celebration comes with it as it feels more like gaining freedom at last (Premium Times, 2022). This urban Yoruba slang is used mainly by young Nigerians to describe the recent emigration trends and patterns by those within that demographic category. It connotatively means “to quickly flee a difficult situation,” an apt depiction of the attitude of most Nigerians toward the perceived bleak socioeconomic uncertainties prevalent in the country (Ikuteyijo, 2021). The word itself is an informal expression used mainly by young people from the southwestern states of Nigeria. *Japa* is popular among millennials and post-millennials. It is a new form of migration distinct from the old patterns. In the past, Nigerian youths have been known to brave perilous terrains (e.g., deserts and oceans) to travel to Europe in search of better opportunities in the global north. Most of these young people were artisans and low-skilled laborers on a quest for survival, with a minority comprised of educated migrants, some of whom would take the appropriate legal channels.

The upscale emigration of these people has lately dominated media discourses and has constituted a source of worry to government and policy actors. The most visibly impacted sector is the health sector, where agencies in the United Kingdom and Canada recruit Nigerian health workers in large numbers (Punch, 2021). Dakuku Peterside (2022) explains that migration among Nigerian youths is voluntary and has been fuelled in large part by the spate of insecurity in the country, the search for better education, good governance, and better career opportunities. The *Japa* migration cohort is not limited to aspirational youths; it also consists of middle-aged adults who want to avoid the uncertainty of life after retirement and/or sudden redundancy.

Japa does not refer to illegal or irregular migration; rather, it is suggestive of those with the wherewithal to leave their country with enough material possessions to satisfy a desperate wish for a better living outside of the home country. This out-migration route requires financial

resources that young people cannot afford on their own; therefore, the proportions of those leaving are in the middle class and those in mid-level career positions (Ikwuegbu, 2023). They usually move with their nuclear families—spouses and children. Costs and expenses associated with these ventures are often outside the means of those in the lower rung of the economic ladder. The most popular routes to immigration (based on available content from across YouTube) include the express entry, postgraduate education, and healthcare job opportunities, among others. This trend has led to increasing demands for dollars and British pounds, thereby contributing to the depreciation of the Naira. The loss is not only economic; local hospitals' loss of healthcare workers has led to further decline in the health sector. Nigerian healthcare worries are beginning to give rise to growing concerns over the massive exodus of doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to overseas countries that draw these workers with better remuneration and infrastructure. Although these concerns are not new (Dyer, 2002), the urgency this time is more problematic. Premium Times reported that “while Nigerian hospitals lament insufficient personnel, 13,000 leave for the UK in one year, Nigeria is second only to Indians in the number of visas granted for the ‘Skilled Worker—Health & Care’ with 14 per cent (13,609)” (Okafor, 2022). In 2021, 33,000 doctors left the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Ewepu, 2022). This led to the depletion of the country's healthcare quality. Other African countries are also battling with this new migration wave. In October 2022, desperate to avert the medical brain drain, the Zimbabwean government reportedly stopped issuing clearance letters to nurses to prevent them from leaving the country for greener pastures (News Central TV, 2022).

Digital Media and Migration in Nigeria

In an increasingly interconnected world, digital technologies are profoundly influencing the decisions of human migrants regarding where, how, and when to migrate. Among these technologies, YouTube has emerged as a particularly significant platform for influencing migration decisions, setting itself apart from other social media through its unique capacity for long-form video content and user engagement (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Unlike platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat, which focus primarily on brief messages, images, or short videos, YouTube allows users to create detailed, visual narratives that provide in-depth insights into their migration experiences and lives abroad. This ability to share comprehensive personal stories makes YouTube a more effective tool for shaping migration decisions among potential migrants, who seek detailed and relatable information.

YouTube's influence is evident in how Nigerians use it to explore migration opportunities and experiences. Unlike other platforms, which may limit the depth and breadth of shared content, YouTube facilitates the creation of video content that can range from a few minutes to several hours, offering a more thorough portrayal of life in the diaspora. This in-depth format allows for nuanced discussions of the complexities of migration, including both the challenges and opportunities, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding for viewers. Through personal vlogs and storytelling, YouTubers can convey the reality of life abroad in a way that feels authentic and relatable, thus exerting a strong influence on the migration decisions of their viewers (Akakpo & Bokpin, 2021).

For many Nigerians considering migration, YouTube serves as a primary source of information and inspiration (Obi, Bartolini & D'Haese, 2020). It enables users to follow channels that

chronicle the migration journey in real-time, offering step-by-step guides on everything from visa applications to finding jobs and housing in a new country. This direct access to lived experiences makes YouTube a more reliable and relatable source of information compared to other social media platforms (Obi, Bartolini, & D'Haese, 2020). Additionally, the platform's video format allows for a more immersive experience, showing viewers not just the "highlights" of life abroad but also the day-to-day realities, thereby creating a powerful narrative of aspiration and transformation.

While there is no doubt that YouTube has become a central platform for Nigerians seeking information and inspiration about migration, it is essential to recognize that not all immigration-themed content on the platform fits the positive and aspirational narrative described above. Many videos such as “Dear new prospective CA Immigrants, do not fall for these lies” by Ms_Yemisi, present the harsh realities of migration, detailing the difficulties of adjusting to a new culture and weather conditions, navigating legal obstacles, or finding employment abroad (Ms_Yemisi, 2023). In some cases, these content creators aim to offer a balanced or cautionary perspective, showing both the rewards and risks involved in migration.

Despite the presence of such cautionary videos, many Nigerians appear undeterred. In fact, rather than discouraging potential migrants, these videos often spark debates in the comments sections, where viewers challenge content creators not to discourage others who are still determined to emigrate. This resistance can be attributed to the strong aspiration for better economic opportunities, safety, and quality of life abroad, which often outweighs the risks or challenges portrayed in the videos. As documented by Kazeem (2019), the "*Japa*" trend—the growing

movement of Nigerians emigrating abroad—reflects a deep-seated desire for change, with many people willing to face potential challenges head-on in pursuit of a better future.

Additionally, this phenomenon highlights how selective viewing practices on platforms like YouTube shape public perception. While the platform provides access to a range of perspectives, viewers may choose to focus on content that aligns with their aspirations, often overlooking or downplaying more critical narratives (Allen, Blinder & McNeil, 2020). This selective engagement reinforces the dominant narrative of aspiration and transformation, even in the face of videos that attempt to offer a more cautionary or critical perspective.

In this context, YouTube continues to serve as a powerful tool for fostering migration-related aspirations, even when counter-narratives exist. Rather than being discouraged, many Nigerians remain resilient in their pursuit of opportunities abroad, reflecting the broader economic and social pressures driving the "*Japa*" movement.

As I argue, the appeal of the "*Japa*" out-migration trend among Nigerians is significantly amplified by the content shared on YouTube. Here, content on the immigration consultants' YouTube channels and Nigerian YouTubers living abroad often portray affluent lifestyles characterized by well-manicured lawns, clean streets, shopping malls, and uninterrupted electricity—images that contrast sharply with the realities faced by many in Nigeria. These YouTubers often share their migration stories, depicting their improved status under the guise of offering advice to those back home. Their content frequently includes discussions about available immigration routes and living expenses like taxes, rent, and bills, framed in a way that implicitly suggests superiority over those who remain in Nigeria. This messaging, conveyed through statements like, "I am better than you because I now have bigger problems: I can afford

\$1000 (the equivalent of the annual salary of an average Nigerian) as a monthly rent payment,” resonates with viewers and often intensifies their desire to migrate (Ikuteyijo, 2021). Rather than discouraging migration, these portrayals often increase the viewers' determination to seek perceived social status and economic improvement abroad.

The unique role of YouTube in influencing migration decisions among Nigerian youths is supported by research into social media's facilitative impact on migration (Ennaji & Bignami, 2019; Olawale, 2021). Unlike other platforms, YouTube's capacity for detailed, long-form storytelling makes it a particularly powerful tool for influencing decisions about migration. Chinyere Opia has noted that "In contemporary societies, migration is being enabled by technological advances... Social media has shifted sources of information on migration from the real to the virtual world" (Opia, 2021). Given YouTube's distinct advantages over other social media platforms, its role in shaping migration decisions among Nigerian youths warrants further investigation, especially in the context of the new "*Japa*" trend. Are these youths from specific age groups or socioeconomic backgrounds? Is YouTube a more influential tool than other social media sites for this cohort, and do their demographics represent particular youth categories often associated with social media and migration? These critical questions are explored in greater detail below.

YOUTUBE AS A MEDIUM OF INFLUENCE

Emerging studies are increasingly associating development processes, including digitalization and social transformations, as important elements of migration (Cooke & Shuttleworth, 2018; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). These new elements are said to enhance people's access to migration information, as well as improve their aspirations and capabilities to migrate (Carling & Telleraas, 2016). Digital platforms, particularly social media, have become significant players in shaping migration narratives, with YouTube representing one of the most influential sites (Obi, Bartolini, & D'Haese, 2020). In exploring the impact of digital media on migration patterns between Nigeria and Canada, YouTube acts as a crucial medium, providing prospective migrants with first-hand information, advice, and community support. This section of the study focuses on why YouTube is preferred (or sought after) for gathering migration-related information and the role it plays in influencing migration decisions, highlighting its effectiveness in disseminating information, shaping perceptions, and fostering cross-border connections.

According to Obiechina (2023), anonymity and privacy are critical factors underpinning Nigerians' preference for YouTube for sourcing information about migration. Migration is a sensitive topic for many out-migrants, as revealing plans to leave the country may have social or familial consequences. Therefore, some people prefer to keep their migration intentions private, and YouTube provides a platform that allows them to do so (Obi, Bartolini, & D'Haese, 2020). One commenter on a YouTube channel discussing migration between Nigeria and Canada noted:

“Although I use Facebook, I find YouTube less distractive, unlike the other social networking sites with many trolls and bot marketing selling products. I used YouTube for my *Japa* plans. I also didn't have to reveal my identity to watch the video clips because I

didn't want people to know my business. With Twitter, one would have to follow the influencers or like their page if they are on Facebook to get information from them. I also gathered more information about my Japa migration plans from the viewers' comments on these channels.”— (@Obafemi2020's comment on YouTube, 2023)

This sentiment highlights the unique position YouTube holds compared to other social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, or X. While many social media platforms have proven to be ephemeral, YouTube continues to rapidly expand and has become the second most visited website in the world (Arthur, Drakopoulou, & Gandini, 2018). Similarly, while other platforms often require active participation, following influencers, or joining groups to access content, YouTube allows for passive consumption (Obi, Bartolini, & D'Haese, 2020). Users can watch videos, gather information, and read through comments sections without ever revealing their identities or making their migration intentions known to others in their social circle. For individuals planning to migrate discreetly, this level of anonymity is invaluable. It allows them to research migration pathways, including visa applications and living conditions, without exposing their plans to potential scrutiny.

As migration decisions are often complex and multifaceted, YouTube serves as a valuable source of both practical and accessible information. For Nigerians considering migration to Canada, YouTube videos created by fellow Nigerians or migrants who have successfully navigated the process offer insights that traditional media and official sources may not provide. These videos often include detailed explanations of the various pathways to Canada, such as student visas, express entry, and work permits. By watching these firsthand accounts, viewers can get an in-depth understanding of the challenges and steps involved in the immigration process. This

information, delivered by individuals with similar backgrounds, adds an element of relatability and trust that official channels may lack. As Chinedu Obi, Fabio Bartolini, and Marijke D'Haese (2020) highlight in their work on digitalization and migration, social media platforms like YouTube empower migrants with more comprehensive and accessible information, thus enhancing their migration capabilities.

In addition to offering technical advice, YouTube serves as a platform for the dissemination of personal stories, which have a profound impact on shaping migration aspirations. These stories often humanize the migration experience, offering real-life examples of success and failure. For example, Nigerian YouTubers living in Canada frequently document their daily lives, sharing not only the positive aspects of their experiences, such as career advancements and quality of life improvements, but also the inherent challenges, including cultural adaptation and feelings of isolation. These honest portrayals help potential migrants form more realistic expectations of life in Canada. In this sense, YouTube does not merely inform; it influences by creating aspirational content that resonates with viewers' desires for better economic opportunities and improved quality of life. This aligns with Carling and Telleraas' (2016) findings that access to detailed, relatable migration stories can enhance both the aspirations and capacities of potential migrants.

Furthermore, YouTube also acts as a social connector, fostering a sense of community among Nigerian migrants and those still considering their options. Comments sections associated with these videos often become informal forums where viewers engage in discussions, ask questions, seek clarification and receive feedback on various aspects of migration. For instance, someone considering a move might ask about the cost of living in Toronto or how to navigate visa rejections, and the video creator and/or other viewers will respond with advice or shared

experiences. These virtual communities offer emotional and practical support, helping to alleviate some of the anxieties associated with the migration process. This dynamic illustrates the importance of online networks, as highlighted by Obi, Bartolini, and D'Haese (2020), who argue that digital platforms not only provide information but also create transnational networks that are critical in migration decision-making.

Another important dimension of YouTube's influence on migration is its role in shaping perceptions of Canada as a desirable destination. Video creators frequently highlight Canada's strengths, such as its robust healthcare system, high-quality education, and multicultural society. These elements are visually reinforced through video clips that showcase clean cities, well-maintained public spaces, and testimonies from satisfied migrants. The visual and emotional appeal of such content can significantly affect viewers' perceptions, making Canada seem like a land of opportunity. However, it's also important to note that some YouTubers provide a more balanced perspective, addressing the challenges of living in Canada, such as difficulties finding employment consonant with one's qualifications, gaining access to a family doctor, or experiences of racism. By presenting both positive and negative aspects of migration, YouTube content creators and users help potential migrants form a more nuanced understanding of what life in Canada entails.

Despite its benefits, YouTube's influence on migration patterns is not without complications. The platform's algorithms can create echo chambers, where viewers are continually exposed to content that reinforces their existing beliefs and desires. For example, a user interested in migrating to Canada may be inundated with success stories, leading them to develop an overly optimistic view of migration. This phenomenon, as noted by Obi et al. (2020), can lead to an

imbalance in the type of information migrants receive, sometimes creating unrealistic expectations. Therefore, while YouTube can be a valuable resource, it is essential for viewers to critically evaluate the content they consume and seek out a variety of perspectives.

An overview of YouTube channels discussing Nigeria-Canada migration

The advancement of digital media has had a profound impact on migration patterns globally, and specifically, between Nigeria and Canada, with YouTube constituting a significant presence for disseminating information, shaping perceptions, and most importantly, influencing migration decisions. These channels, created and managed by both licensed professional immigration consultants and Nigerian immigrants in Canada (sometimes called pseudo information mongers or amateurs by professional information managers and broadcasters), provide detailed advice, share personal experiences and offer insight into the practical aspects of migration.

Understanding the scope of this phenomenon requires an analysis of both quantitative data on the prevalence of such channels and a qualitative look at the narratives they promote.

In his paper on “YouTube channels, upload and views”, Mathias Bärthel estimates that by 2016 the total number of videos hosted on the site was around four billion”. A thorough evaluation shows that as of 2023, YouTube hosts hundreds of channels that focus on discussions centered on Nigeria-Canada migration, reflecting a growing interest in this topic. Channels such as Wakawaka_doctor, Peter Isesele, Gooselaw immigration with lawyer Donovan H. Francis, Seyi Obasi, Diamonds in Nations, Ms_Yemisi, Funke Suyi, Gloria Oz, Tomi Adenuga, Cassie Daves, IFRS IS EASY, Hamzat Aminat and Community Update, to mention but a few, have garnered tens of thousands of subscribers, while others continue to grow, thereby contributing to a thriving

digital media ecosystem where content related to immigration advice, success stories, and critical analyses of the migration process are impacting migration decision-making. For instance, Wakawaka_doctor, with 261,000 subscribers, regularly posts videos that attract thousands of views, with the comments section highlighting different perspectives on the topic discussed. These channels offer practical advice and guidance on various categories related to visa applications, job searches, and adaptation and acculturation to life in Canada; hence, playing a central role in shaping migration aspirations.

Table 1: Some YouTube channels discussing Nigeria-Canada migration

YouTube Channel	Content Focus	Approximate Subscriber Count	# of Views	Notable Features	URL
Wakawaka_doctor	Migration advice, immigration pathways, visa tips and job search strategies	261,000	7,436,812	Personal Migration experiences, interviews with experts, etc.	www.youtube.com/wakawakadoctor
Peter Isesele	Study abroad, scholarships, admissions, visa applications, life in Canada	49,000+	3,360,442	Personal migration, honest critiques of Canada’s immigration process	www.youtube.com/@PeterIsesele
Gooselaw Immigration Lawyer Donovan H Francis	Canadian immigration law firm for tech and multi-industry companies seeking Canadian work permit approvals for foreign employees	43,000	1,459,907	Focus on job markets	www.youtube.com/@gooselawimmigrationTV

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Seyi Obasi	Stories of successful Nigerian immigrants, study visa, express entry advice	36,000+	1,181,252	Detailed procedural videos for various immigration categories and pathways	https://www.youtube.com/@SeyiObasiCanada
Diamonds in Nations	Challenges faced by immigrants, underemployment, life struggles	35,000+	1,663,331	Personal migration experiences, reality in Canada and managing expectations	youtube.com/channel/UCk_KVHCu5LXEo9SVdMkdCag
Ms_Yemisi	Migrating and living in Canada	32,000+	2,558,290	Honest critique of Canada's immigration process, and reality of life in Canada	www.youtube.com/@MsYemisi
Funke Suyi	Migration, information on job prospects and acculturation process in Canada	29,000+	1,243,778	Detailed procedural videos for various immigration categories and pathways	www.youtube.com/@funesuyi
Gloria Oz	Step-by-step guides for student visas, express entry and work permit	19,000+	525,733	Personal migration experiences, focus on student immigration and settlement in Canada	www.youtube.com/@Glowwriyah
Tomi Adenuga	Stories of successful Nigerian immigrants, and express entry	14,000+	1,462,695	Personal migration experiences and reality of life in Canada	www.youtube.com/@TomiAdenuga
Cassie Daves	Practical tips for settling in Canada	14,000+	1,599,724	Personal migration experiences and reality of life in Canada	www.youtube.com/@cassiedaves
IFRS IS EASY	Information on job prospects, cultural adaptation and visa regulations	11,000+	296,150	Useful tips on International Financial Reporting Standards and information about relocating to Canada	www.youtube.com/@ifrsiseasy

Hamzat Aminat	Stories of successful Nigerian immigrants, and express entry and practical tips for settling in Canada	2,000+	183,760	Personal migration experiences and reality of life in Canada	www.youtube.com/@hamz.aminat
Community Update	Community lifestyle updates and practical tips for settling in Canada	960	64,096	Community news and personal migration experiences and reality of life in Canada	www.youtube.com/@communityupdate

Table 1 above shows the statistical details of some YouTube channels discussing Nigeria-Canada migration.

In this study, I selected a number of YouTube videos to review, prioritizing those most relevant to my research objectives of exploring the impacts of digital media on migration perceptions and decision-making between Nigeria and Canada. More specifically, I reviewed a total of three respective videos from Wakawaka_doctor, Peter Isesele and Seyi Obasi, two respective videos from Gooselaw Immigration, Diamonds in Nations, Funke Suyi, Gloria Oz and Ms_Yemisi, and one video each from of Tomi Adenuga, Cassie Daves, IFRS IS EASY, Hamzat Aminat and Community Update.

The videos were chosen based on their content focus, the unique features highlighted by each channel, and the balance between larger, more well-established channels, and smaller, more niche ones. My selection process aimed to capture a variety of experiences and advice, including but not limited to procedural guides, personal migration stories, and critiques of immigration systems. Through my engagement with the comments sections of these videos, I selected and analyzed a purposive sampling of viewer comments that were directly related to this study, focusing on the community's sentiments, shared experiences, and any additional insights.

Furthermore, complementing the viewership statistics, engagement levels such as comments, likes and shares on these videos reflect the popularity of YouTube in promoting discussions about migration. More often than not, videos attract hundreds of comments, where viewers make enquiries, share their thoughts and experiences, seek advice and express interest in booking consultation sessions. This level of interaction signifies YouTube's role not only as a source of information but also as a digital community space for potential migrants to network and learn from others' experiences. The content associated with these channels can be grouped more generally into two categories: positive and cautionary narratives, with each set of narratives influencing the migration decisions of Nigerian audiences in different ways.

On the positive side, all of the channels surveyed in this study portray Canada as a land of opportunity, citing some success stories of Nigerian immigrants who have built successful careers, achieved financial stability, and integrated into Canadian society. These videos often focus attention on the merits of Canada's immigration policies, in comparison to countries like the United Kingdom (UK); hence, making it an attractive destination for Nigerian professionals, students, and skilled workers (Thevenot, 2023). Narratives of this kind are best deemed to be considered aspirational, designed to encourage viewers to take the leap and apply for a Canadian visa.

In addition to discussing opportunities in Canada, the majority of these channels provide detailed, step-by-step guides on how to navigate the often complex immigration process, providing relevant links and sites to consider during the preliminary or preparatory stages of an immigration application. This practical information makes the migration process feel more manageable and attainable. The existence of these resources arguably enhances the perception

that moving to Canada is within reach for the average Nigerian, provided that immigration seekers follow the correct procedures as described in their videos and meet the prerequisite qualifications.

However, these positive representations are not above criticism, as many channels seem to have balanced their content with discussions of the challenges faced by immigrants in Canada. In a similar vein, the recent immigration policy adjustments affecting different visa categories like work permits for visitors, postgraduate work permits for international students, among others, have received adequate coverage and discussion via the majority of these channels. YouTubers like Ms_Yemisi in her video entitled “Dear new/prospective immigrants, Do Not Fall For These Lies,” critique the overly rosy narratives that dominate some channels by conveying the reality that many immigrants struggle to find jobs in their fields, and by speaking to the difficulties some encounter in adjusting to colder climates and social environments. Others like Seyi Obasi and Gloria Oz have made videos to update prospective immigrants about recent changes in the entire Canada immigration system, which has generated mixed reactions from Nigerians contemplating migration to Canada. For instance, in response to Seyi Obasi’s video entitled, “Shocking changes to Canada immigration for work permit, international students and asylum,” @dazzlingsignatures9080 posted the following comment: “A balanced video, madam Sheyi. I wish people could understand that Canada needs quality immigrants and not just anybody. I am sure whatever the policies may be, it will favour me”. Another comment by @feyifunmiagnes2014 on the same video reads: “Canada is not heaven. We will start looking for another country again. One of the reasons why people are choosing Canada is because of easy PR pathway, but now that they are misbehaving, we will have a plan B”. The above identified content, and many similar ones, vis-à-vis similar viewers’ comments serve as a counterbalance to

the more idealized depictions of migration, bringing prospective immigrants up to speed with the latest immigration information and helping viewers develop more realistic expectations.

These cautionary narratives are crucial for providing a clearer picture of the migration experience. Many YouTubers also emphasize the importance of financial preparedness, advising their audience not to assume that jobs will be easy to come by, or that the cost of living will be manageable without adequate planning and preparation. Such content, on most occasions, dissuades viewers from making unrealistic and impulsive decisions based on hearsay and incomplete information, encouraging them to take a more strategic approach to migration.

The impact of these YouTube channels, many of which simply report or interpret the information sourced from government official websites or local traditional media platforms, extends beyond mere information dissemination, as they play a central role in shaping the migration patterns themselves. Scholars have noted that digital media, including platforms like YouTube, can act as “virtual migration corridors” that facilitate the movement of people by providing them with the knowledge and networks needed to migrate successfully (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). For prospective Nigerian immigrants to Canada, these YouTube channels serve as virtual guides, providing both technical advice on how to set up an express entry profile, apply for visas and incorporate practical tips on how to integrate into Canadian society.

This dual nature of YouTube content on Nigeria-Canada migration, both positive and cautionary, creates a complex but invaluable resource for Nigerians nurturing the desire to immigrate. On the one hand, it is evident from the YouTube comments that these channels inspire hope and offer practical assistance to viewers’ migration intentions, while on the other hand, it is also clear that aspirations are tempered with realistic advice regarding the potential challenges and hardships

that lie ahead. Therefore, it may be inferred that this balance is crucial for helping Nigerians make informed decisions about whether to migrate and how to prepare for the reality of life in Canada. These observations represent generalized findings from my review. In the next section, the study delves into a close analysis of three specific videos and accompanying viewer comments to provide a more detailed examination of key themes in migration to Canada.

Content Analysis of Selected Migration-related Videos

In the contemporary digital age, as amplified by the internet, platforms like YouTube have become essential information resources for individuals who are contemplating migration, providing both practical insights and emotional support. To offer deeper insight into digital media's influence on migration perceptions between Nigeria and Canada, this section presents a content analysis of three selected YouTube videos, focusing on migration-related discussions.

The analysis aims to establish the extent to which digital content not only reflects but also inspires migration narratives, providing YouTube content creators and their audiences a platform to share thoughts and experiences, seek advice, and express sentiments. Qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA, was used to analyse and codify the video comments sections, in the interests of identifying representative themes associated with viewers' migration-related motivations, concerns and perspectives.

The three selected YouTube videos are as follows: "How to get a free immigration lawyer and faster visa acceptance for Canada" by Wakawaka_doctor (2024); "Dear New/prospective CA immigrants, Do Not Fall for These Lies!" by Ms_Yemisi (2022); and "How to immigrate from

Nigeria to Canada” by Gooselaw Immigration channels (2021). The inclusion of these videos in this study is justified by their diverse focus on critical aspects of the migration experience. The videos offer comprehensive perspectives on the immigration process, addressing both the bureaucratic aspects of migration (with detailed discussions on the various immigration pathways) and personal lived experiences, including cultural adaptation, climate differences, and socio-economic challenges. The videos are intended for a broad audience to provide practical guidance, advice and emotional narratives, which are vital for both prospective migrants and those already navigating the complex migration landscape. Furthermore, each respective video’s popularity is evident based on the high level of user engagement and participation, suggesting that content of this nature resonates with individuals either considering migration from Nigeria to Canada, or for immigrants already in Canada. As such, the selected videos are suitable for an in-depth analysis of how digital content influences perceptions and shapes migration decision-making. Thus, it is important to stress that the videos capture the informational, emotional, and aspirational aspects of migration.

In “How to get a free immigration lawyer and faster visa acceptance for Canada” by Wakawaka_doctor (2024), the presenter highlights the study route (i.e., education) as an efficient pathway for migration, with emphasis on organizations offering free legal, admission, and visa processing services. The video stresses the advantages of applying through partner agencies, which cover application fees, and the importance of having documentation and financial capabilities prepared to ensure smooth processing. Viewers are encouraged to sign up using a referral code for VIP treatment, which includes faster processing times and personalized support. With access to diverse academic programs and a high success rate for both admissions and visas,

this guide provides practical and accessible strategies for prospective immigrants exploring the study route to become permanent residents in Canada.

In “Dear New/prospective CA immigrants, Do Not Fall for These Lies!” by Ms_Yemisi (2022), the focus shifts to debunking common myths and misconceptions about migrating to Canada. The presenters share insights into the realities of living in Canada, addressing issues such as underemployment, high living costs, healthcare costs, cold weather, cultural adaptation, transportation challenges and perception of cities. Drawing from personal experiences and testimonials from other immigrants, the video adopts a cautionary yet empathetic tone, urging viewers to approach their migration plans with realistic expectations and thorough research. This video stands out for its focus on bridging the gap between perception and reality, offering a balanced perspective on the rewards and challenges of starting anew in Canada.

“How to immigrate from Nigeria to Canada” by Gooselaw Immigration (2021) provides a comprehensive overview of the various pathways available for Nigerian nationals seeking to migrate to Canada. The video outlines key immigration streams, including family sponsorship, provincial nominee programs, and study permits, offering a step-by-step guide to navigating these options. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding eligibility requirements and adhering to timelines. Presented in a clear and methodical manner, the video serves as a foundational guide for individuals at the initial stages of their migration planning, providing clarity on the bureaucratic processes and necessary documentation.

In addition to video content, the comments sections also provide a rich data source for understanding the impact of digital media on migration-related decision-making. Comments were extracted into a Microsoft Word file and imported into MAXQDA, allowing for a systematic coding process. A total of 184 comments were collected from Wakawaka_doctor

(2024), 922 comments from Ms_Yemisi (2022), and 152 comments from Gooselaw Immigration channels (2021). These numbers amount to the total comments on each video, and signifies the level of engagement and relevance of the discussions within each comments section. The larger number of comments from Ms_Yemisi reflects the high level of interaction with her cautionary and experience-driven content, while the focused and resource-oriented nature of the other two videos resulted in fewer but equally insightful comments. Themes were generated both inductively (emerging from the data) and deductively (based on predefined categories). Therefore, the prominent themes to be explored subsequently include general inquiries and feedback, positive and cautionary sentiments towards migration, discussions pertaining to Canadian immigration policies, personal migration experiences, socioeconomic impacts, cultural assimilation, weather factors, and the influence of digital media in shaping migration perceptions.

The data revealed that viewers' often engaged with content in order to make sense of and receive clarification on specific processes, express personal migration goals, and receive feedback on the perceived authenticity of the information presented in the videos. Many viewers inquired about visa types, eligibility criteria, and practical aspects of living in Canada, underlining the need for detailed and feasible guidance. These enquiries often led to peer-to-peer dialogues, with YouTubers and experienced viewers sharing insights and adding depth to the discourse. Feedback from viewers revealed both their aspirations and apprehensions whereas feedback from YouTube content creators often provided clarification through their lived experience or through referral links for paid consultation. This collection of general enquiries and feedback themes create the scope for the more specific sentiments and thematic trends emerging from the data.

A positive sentiments theme also garnered significant attention, as viewers expressed optimism about migrating to Canada, noting better economic opportunities, career prospects, and improved standards of living. For instance, one user commented the following: “I came into Canada as a student and now a citizen. Whatever you get here in Canada (in totality) is far better than what is obtainable in Nigeria.” Many other commenters expressed excitement at the prospect of leaving Nigeria for a more stable and prosperous society, often citing stories of Nigerians who had migrated successfully. This theme aligns with existing literature on digital media’s influence in promoting migration by showcasing success narratives and reinforcing perceptions of better economic opportunities in foreign countries (Massey et al., 1998).

Cautionary sentiments also appeared as one of the top themes, reflecting the level of anxiety and challenges associated with migration-related phenomena. On several occasions, viewers expressed the emotional toll of leaving family behind in search of greater opportunities, and the difficulty of adjusting to new climate conditions and cultural norms in Canada. Some commenters noted dissatisfaction with the evolving Canadian immigration system, describing long wait times, general uncertainty, and bureaucratic bottlenecks as particularly unpleasant. This tension between the positive and cautionary sentiment reflects the complexity of migration decisions, where both aspiration and anxiety coexist (Carling and Collins, 2018).

Immigration policy was another central theme worthy of mention, though its prominence varied significantly across the videos. *Wakawaka_doctor* (2024) recorded only four comments on this theme, while the other two videos had no mentions at all. This limited engagement suggests that while digital media platforms can serve as forums for peer-to-peer advice, their effectiveness in facilitating discussions on specific policy issues may depend on the video’s content focus and

audience priorities. For example, the sparse engagement with immigration policy in Wakawaka_doctor reflects its emphasis on practical steps like securing a free immigration lawyer or accessing expedited pathways, leaving little room for policy-specific discussions. This finding aligns with Dekker and Engbersen's (2014) observation that digital media often complements, rather than replaces, official government resources, as commenters exchanged informal guidance on visa requirements, eligibility criteria, and application timelines.

Brinkerhoff (2009) highlights YouTube's capacity to serve as a digital communal space, where personal narratives facilitate the exchange of practical tips and emotional support among migrants. This dynamic is particularly evident in the data, where the theme of personal experiences recorded no comments in Wakawaka_doctor (2024), only one comment in Gooselaw Immigration channels (2021), but a significant 64 comments in Ms_Yemisi (2022). The high engagement in the third video underscores its focus on firsthand migration stories and lived experiences, which resonated with viewers seeking relatable experiences and actionable advice. In contrast, the limited engagement in the other videos reflects their emphasis on procedural aspects of migration rather than personal narratives. These findings demonstrate how the nature of video content shapes the thematic engagement of its audience, reinforcing the idea that digital platforms thrive as communal spaces when grounded in relatable, experience-driven content.

The theme of socioeconomic impact also surfaced, with many commenters contrasting Nigeria's economic difficulties with Canada's perceived prosperity. Many viewers discussed the challenges of Nigeria's job market, rates of unemployment, inflation, and overall lack of opportunities in comparison with Canada's higher quality of life vis-à-vis industrial advancement and higher education. These exchanges indicate the push-pull factors that continue to drive

migration from Nigeria to Canada, with economic motivations constituting a central factor (Massey et al., 1993).

Porter and Rumbaut (2001) emphasize the importance of digital spaces in preparing migrants for cultural integration, particularly in navigating the complexities of life in a new country. This theme of cultural assimilation was most prominent in Ms_Yemisi (2022), which recorded 23 comments, while it was absent in both Wakawaka_doctor (2024) and Gooselaw Immigration channels (2021). The engagement in Ms_Yemisi reflects the video's focus on personal and cautionary narratives, resonating with viewers who shared their struggles with racism, cultural alienation, and the challenges of integrating into Western society. Some commenters lamented the loss of communal support among Nigerians in Canada, attributing it to Western individualism, while others offered practical advice on navigating cultural differences. The lack of engagement on this theme in the other two videos suggests that their procedural and resource-oriented content did not encourage discussions on cultural adaptation. These findings reinforce the role of digital platforms in fostering conversations about cultural assimilation, as well as the specific influence of content focus on thematic engagement.

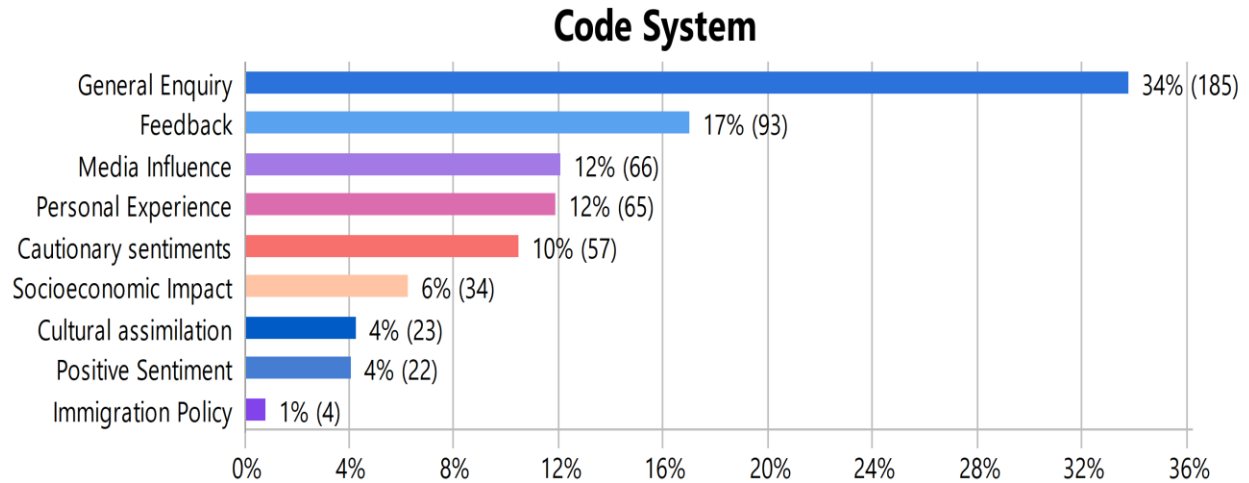
On a final note, Mercea (2016) emphasizes the growing impact of digital media in shaping migration narratives, with user-generated content playing a key role in informing and inspiring migration decisions. This influence is reflected in the data, where the theme of digital media influence recorded 12 comments in Wakawaka_doctor (2024), 45 in Ms_Yemisi (2022), and 9 in Gooselaw Immigration channels (2021). The significant engagement in Ms_Yemisi highlights how her cautionary yet relatable content resonates with viewers, prompting them to reflect on their migration plans. Meanwhile, the moderate engagement in Wakawaka_doctor and Gooselaw Immigration channels suggests that while their procedural focus informs viewers, it may not

evoke the same level of personal introspection about digital media's role in their decisions. These findings underscore the dual role of YouTube videos as both informational resources and agents of influence in the migration journey, aligning with Mercea's argument about the transformative power of digital platforms in shaping migration narratives.

Table 2: Statistical Summary of Themes' Frequency

Themes	Video 1	Video 2	Video 3	Total
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ud0AO9bWAJo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-AJkd4ryw&t=52s	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tI2tnJ9Om40&t=62s	
Positive Sentiment	13	8	1	22
Cautionary Sentiments	-	-	57	57
Immigration Policy	4	-	-	4
Personal Experiences	-	1	64	65
Socioeconomic Impact	-	-	34	34
Cultural Assimilation	-	-	23	23
Media Influence	12	9	45	66
General Enquiry	59	49	77	185
Feedback	23	31	39	93
Total	110	99	340	549

Table 2 above shows the summary of the frequency of themes across the three videos and viewer's comments, providing quantitative data on the distribution of different migration-related discussions.



This analysis indicates the diverse range of discussions surrounding migration, as seen through the lens of digital platforms. The prevalence of general inquiries and feedback, positive sentiments, as well as narrations on immigration policy and personal experiences, to a large extent, suggests that YouTube plays an important role in both informing and shaping migration decisions. At the same time, the expression of cautionary sentiments and discussions around cultural assimilation highlight the challenges and complexities inherent in migration. By and large, this content analysis of both the videos and viewer comments therein offer some insight into the role that platforms like YouTube continue to play in shaping the migration landscape between Nigeria and Canada.

Influence of YouTube Content on Potential Migrants’ Perceptions and Decision-making

Practices: Case Study

Over the past several years, digital media platforms such as YouTube have been instrumental in shaping the perceptions and decision-making practices of potential migrants. The case of

migration between Nigeria and Canada presents an enthralling illustration of how YouTube content holds the capacity to mitigate both the life-changing expectations and realities of migration.

According to Arthurs et al. (2023), YouTube has established a unique role as a vast repository of experiences, advice, and instructional content related to popular culture, including migration. For Nigerians aspiring to relocate to Canada, the platform offers a wide range of information, ranging from captivating narratives of licensed immigration consultants, former and current international students to that of immigrant skilled workers now permanent residents or citizens of Canada, providing guidance on visa applications, express entry to permanent residency procedures, scholarship opportunities, and ways of navigating Canadian immigration laws. Influencers, also alluded to as YouTube celebrities, immigration consultants, and former migrants use the platform to share their personal journeys, creating a virtual pathway for others to follow. However, while these narratives can be informative and motivational, they also risk presenting an oversimplified or inaccurate depiction of the migration process, hence, breeding unrealistic expectations and, in some cases, tragic outcomes.

On the brighter side of the divide, some migrants have successfully leveraged YouTube's breadth of content to shape informed or positive migration outcomes. The story of Hamzat Aminat, a Nigerian woman who relocated to Canada with her family, is instructive and stands out as a testament to the constructive role of online research. In her YouTube video entitled, "How we relocated to Canada from Nigeria/My PR journey to Canada/Learning French" (2023), Aminat highlights how she embarked on thorough research by watching countless YouTube videos related to her desired goal. She noted that these videos provided her with critical insights

into the immigration process, especially the importance of learning French to scale-up her chances of obtaining permanent residency in Canada. This narrative is a reflection of how, when used judiciously, YouTube can offer aspiring migrants a realistic roadmap towards making their goals achievable, by connecting them with the right resources and strategies.

In the same vein, drawing on my own personal experience as an international student, my decision to study in Canada (rather than in the UK or the US) was largely influenced by YouTube videos. YouTube channels like Seyi Obasi, among others, provided firsthand insights into students' living situations, academic environments and overall cultural experiences in different countries. Unlike brochures, prospectuses, or official websites, the candid and unscripted nature of vlogs, testimonials and webinars allowed me to see what it's truly like to live and study abroad. The YouTubers shared their personal challenges and successes, which resonated with my own personal aspirations. Over time, this content presented a picture of Canada as a welcoming and supportive destination for international students, and one that aligned with both my academic goals and lifestyle preferences.

It is perhaps useful to note that since arriving in Canada and presently concluding my studies, my expectations have not only been met, but in many instances exceeded. The welcoming atmosphere, both within the University community and in the broader city of Halifax, has mirrored the experiences I researched in those YouTube videos. From the quality of education to the support networks available for international students, I have found the resources and opportunities to succeed both academically and personally. The diverse and inclusive environment has made adapting to life in Canada much easier, as I have no reason to regret my decision to choose Canada over other study destinations. The reality of my experience has

mirrored the optimistic portrayal I first witnessed online, reaffirming that I made the right choice of university, province, and country.

Conversely, the story of Lola Akinlade, a Nigerian international student in Canada, highlights some of the pitfalls associated with counting too heavily on digital content when making migration decisions. In her situation, as reported by Shaina Luck of CBC News (2024), Akinlade and her family currently have no immigration status in Canada following the recent discovery that her initial admission letter, which she had assumed was genuine, was fraudulent. Akinlade had invested her time, money and future into the belief that she was legally admitted to the country based on an official offer of admission from a Canadian university, only to find out that the letter was fake. Although Akinlade makes no mention of YouTube video consultation before deciding on Canada in the telling of her story, her situation can be aptly interpreted as emblematic of how misinformation, often spearheaded by unscrupulous agents and fueled by online content, can gloss over complexities and can lead to devastating outcomes.

The allure of glamorous representations of life abroad, combined with the lack of adequate research or professional guidance, can spur prospective migrants into making hasty decisions. For example, many aspiring students or skilled workers may not wholly comprehend the stringent requirements for obtaining visas or permanent residency in Canada. As such, they become victims of immigration scams, fraudulent document handlers, or misleading advice found on the internet.

In another related example based on a Statistics Canada report on post-migration realities, a significant percentage of internationally trained professionals (including Nigerians), experience underemployment or unemployment because their credentials are not easily transferable to

Canadian standards (Community Update, 2024). The video entitled “Canadian dream or delusion – Dapo Bankole” on the Community Update channel, gives an in-depth picture of this scenario. Bankole noted that some Nigerian skilled professionals who migrated to Canada after watching countless YouTube tutorials on how to navigate the express entry route to Canada find this aspect of reality in Canada a wholly unexpected shock. Although these videos highlight the basic requirements for securing a visa, they fail to inform migrants of the challenges they may face in getting their foreign credentials recognized. Despite successfully migrating, this category of immigrants struggles for months to find work in their respective fields because their qualifications are not deemed equivalent to Canadian standards. For example, as one video commenter (@nsanyijacob) noted, “This is my story. I left my country with my family as a lawyer but I’m a cleaner in Canada. Africans must be wise before taking the immigration decision. If we speak, those back home will insult. But when you rush here, you will testify.” This experience underscores the partial or incomplete content that many YouTube creators offer, focusing heavily on the process of entry without addressing the post-migration realities.

The above illustrations depict the powerful role YouTube plays in shaping migration aspirations and decisions. While it provides a platform for shared experiences and valuable information, it also perpetuates certain myths and glosses over the complexities of migration. Hence, for prospective Nigerian migrants, YouTube content may serve as both a guide and a trap – offering inspiration but, in some instances, aid misinformed or over-idealized views of what migration to Canada truly entails.

As more Nigerians seek to migrate, it becomes increasingly essential for them to access reliable, well-rounded sources of information, including official government websites, professional and

licensed immigration services, and peer-reviewed studies. This balanced approach will help mitigate the potential for misinformation and ensure that the life-altering decision to migrate is made with a full awareness and understanding of both the opportunities and challenges that await.

REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND CLASS FOR NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS

The international migration of Nigerians globally foregrounds the dynamics of social stratification and class as a lever for understanding who migrates and for what purposes. Nigerian society is deeply shaped and influenced by class division, which to a great extent impacts access to resources such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities (Afrobarometer Report, 2018). These class divisions can considerably impact the probability of migration, especially to countries like Canada which requires significant financial investment, educational accreditation and professional experience.

A study by Thomas and Oluwole (2018) reveals that one in three Nigerians have considered emigration. Key findings in this research indicate that motivations to emigrate increase steadily with respondents' level of education, ranging from 21% among those with no formal education to 44% among those with post-secondary qualifications. The study also notes that younger respondents are more likely to consider leaving the country than their elders (39% of 18-35 year olds as opposed to 22% of individuals over 55). Additionally, city residents tend to consider emigration more seriously than their rural counterparts (40% vs. 30%).

The study also attests that respondents to its questionnaire in southern Nigeria are more likely to have considered emigration than their northern counterparts, ranging from more than 4 in 10 in the South-East (44%) and South-West (42%), to less than one-third in the North-West (30%) and North-East (27%). These variations by geographic zone, according to the study, may be related in part to differences in poverty levels and access to information. While nationally the research found no major differences across lived poverty levels in the propensity to consider emigration, the poorer and more remote northern zones may also have less access to information, which may influence ideas about emigration.

Furthermore, a 2019 report by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) suggests that financially stable Nigerians or those with professional backgrounds are more capable of affording the cost of migration, ranging from visa fees to costs associated with moving, including expenses for processing documents. This class of Nigerians tends to possess higher levels of formal education, often university degrees or professional certifications, and as such are well suited in competing for entry to Canada in its skilled-based immigration programs like Express Entry.

To corroborate the above, a respondent in the Afrobarometer report stated:

I was a senior accountant in my company with many managerial responsibilities, and my pay was good. I decided to immigrate to the United States because of the security situation in the country. I did not see any future in the country (Nigeria), and I do not want my kids to be stranded in a country with no development plan. *Japa* was my only option... I consulted videos on YouTube and also joined a WhatsApp group of ex-staff of my colleague who has *japa-ed* to gather information and insights on my plan. This helped me a lot. (p. 9)

This class phenomenon among migrants has been exacerbated by the digital age. According to Dekker and Engbersen (2014), lack of information can make migration opportunities less equal;

digital media only provides that kind of transparency to digitally-enabled persons with economic resources to use those platforms. The middle and upper classes are making use of social media networks, online forums, and migration consultancies to navigate their way through the complicated bureaucracy of international migration. However, for lower-class Nigerians, these digital resources may be out of reach, both in terms of digital literacy and financial capacity, therefore widening the divide in who gets the opportunity to migrate.

The types of jobs that Nigerian immigrants secure in Canada, most times, reflect their social stratification and class in Nigeria. Based on the narrative depicted in Hamzat Aminat's video (described above), professionals who manage to have their educational qualifications and professional certifications recognized after their conversions may secure jobs that are commensurate with their training, enabling them to access employment in the healthcare, IT or engineering sectors, where there is strong demand in the Canadian labour market. But in actual fact, many other Nigerian immigrants, even those from middle-class backgrounds, encounter challenges like credential recognition and may initially be forced into lower-paying, less dignifying jobs that do not reflect their qualifications.

This trend, as explained above, underlines the paradoxical nature of migration, underlining the reality that, while many Nigerians seek to evade the limitations of class boundaries in their home country, they often encounter new forms of stratification in the diaspora. The very process of migration, while more accessible to some educated and financially capable elites does not guarantee upward mobility in Canada, hence, further complicating the narrative of class mobility for Nigerian immigrants.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIGITAL MEDIA TO INTEGRATION PROCESS IN CANADA

The role of digital media in fostering the integration of immigrants from across the globe in general, and Nigerians in particular, into Canadian society is significant and continues to evolve. As immigrants navigate the complex nature of settling in a new country, digital platforms like Facebook, Kijiji, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, FaceTime and YouTube, to mention but a few, have emerged as important tools for accessing information, building and nurturing social networks, and participating in the broader Canadian community. Digital platforms provide a critical means for communication and social participation, enabling immigrants to adjust swiftly to their new environment, as highlighted in research on transnationalism and media by Brinkerhoff (2009). The platforms not only assist in easing the transitional period, but also help in fostering a smoother integration process, making them indispensable tools for many.

According to a recently released annual report by the Media Technology Monitor (MTM) (“Newcomers-top Trends Report”), mobile phones are an essential part of newcomers’ lives. The report states that the majority of responders to its questionnaire have their own cellphones, with only 5% sharing a phone with another adult in the household. Almost half (47%) sign up for a new phone plan in person at a kiosk or store. This shows that nearly 4 out of every 10 newcomers purchase a phone before arriving in Canada (MTM, 2024).

Furthermore, the report notes that spending time on social networks is one of newcomers’ main online activities, with more than 9 in 10 accessing platforms on a monthly basis. The report affirms that newcomers spend approximately five hours more on average per week than the average born-in-Canada citizen. The report reveals that Facebook (76%), WhatsApp (70%) and Instagram (67%) are newcomers’ favourite platforms. Similarly, Telegram is the most popular

among newcomers' from Ukraine, with 64% of Ukrainian immigrants using the service, Wechat (71%) and Douyin (46%) are the most popular with people from China, according to MTM.

The Canadian immigration process, much like that of other countries, can be unsettling due to its complexity, as newcomers face challenges related to housing, healthcare, employment and legal requirements. Digital platforms such as Canada's official immigration site (IRCC), and immigrant-centered social media groups like the ones identified above, offer guidance on navigating these systems. This access to digital tools, including map and bus navigating apps like Google Maps and Transit, significantly reduces the transitional and integration period for new immigrants (Elias, 2020). Several studies indicate that online resources provide immigrants with real-time assistance in assimilating into Canadian society (Chiswick & Miller, 2011).

Equally important is the role of digital media in helping immigrants integrate professionally in Canada. For example, platforms like LinkedIn allow immigrants to leverage both Canadian and Nigerian networks in acquiring the necessary skills for professional advancement. Applications of this kind enable Nigerian immigrants to tap into the Canadian professional grid while also maintaining ties with their Nigerian contacts. Research involving immigrants has found that using the internet to access global professional networks can improve employment outcomes (Maitland & Xu C, 2019). Based on several testimonials found in YouTube videos, many Nigerian professionals usually find it difficult to break into the Canadian labor market due to factors such as incompatible foreign credentials or having no available workplace experience in Canada (Bankole D., 2024). To this end, digital platforms are closing these gaps as they connect immigrants with potential employers and sometimes provide a bridge to more traditional

employment. Statistics Canada (2023) has also confirmed that immigrants who participate in digital networks report better results in their job search.

The importance of digital media in cultural integration also cannot be ignored. According to reports from YouTube videos, many Nigerian immigrants confirmed that they have experienced isolation when confronting cultural differences or adapting to Canada's colder weather conditions (Ms_Yemisi, 2022). Online communities such as the Nigerian-Canada Facebook account or YouTube channels provide platforms for discussing issues relating to healthcare, education, and the preservation of Nigerian cultural practices. These platforms promote emotional wellbeing and practical support, helping immigrants navigate the challenges of life in a multicultural society (Adepoju, 2022.)

In the same vein, digital media has become an important tool for participating in civic life. Nigerian immigrants use online platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram to educate themselves about their rights and responsibilities as residents or citizens of Canada. WhatsApp groups like New Arrivals in Canada, New Arrivals in Ontario/Halifax, and Nigerians in CBU, among others, serve as channels for information dissemination: advocacy efforts related to immigrant rights, immigration policies, and rental or labour laws, as well as engaging in local politics. Wallace (2020) emphasizes how social media empowers immigrants to stay informed on political issues and to participate in public life, thereby, facilitating their integration into Canadian society.

Digital media's contributions to language learning is another critical aspect of integration worth mentioning. The importance of possessing ability or proficiency in another language like French or English (being bilingual) cannot be overemphasized in facilitating one's integration and/or in securing employment. Language-learning apps and online tutorials offer Nigerian immigrants

opportunities to improve their language skills at their own pace. Gonzalez-Lloret (2015) points out that online language tools significantly improve immigrants' ability to integrate into local communities and to find suitable employment, overcoming the language barriers that frequently impede newcomers.

Finally, the ability to stay connected with communities both in Canada and back home also represents another crucial aspect of digital media's impact on the integration process. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, for example, play a sustained role in helping Nigerian immigrants maintain ties with family and friends in Nigeria, while at the same time fostering new relationships in Canada. Research by Dekker and Engbersen (2014) shows that these transnational networks provide both emotional supports and benefits, including insights on employment opportunities and life experience in Canada.

On the flip side, it is also important to acknowledge challenges posed by digital media within the context of this discussion. Studies have shown that not all immigrants have the same access to digital tools or literacy skills, especially those from less affluent backgrounds (Thomas & Ojewale, 2018). This inequality can slow the pace of integration for some immigrants. As Hilbert (2011) notes, social stratification in the digital age often mirrors existing inequalities, creating barriers for those who lack digital resources. Despite these imbalances, digital media remains for many Nigerian immigrants an indispensable tool that shapes their integration into Canadian society.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study explores how digital platforms, particularly YouTube, have become centralized hubs for digital resources and reference points for sourcing migration-related information, offering both practical tips and emotional support to aspiring migrants and those already in their destination country. The selected video case studies centering on immigration pathways and policies, personal migration experiences, and challenges faced by migrants have provided valuable insights into understanding individual and collective roles in shaping mediated migration perceptions. These findings emphasize the role of digital platforms not only in sharing migration stories but also in influencing the choices and preparedness of migrants, reflecting the interplay between digital media and migration systems.

First, this study corroborates and deepens Dekker and Engbersen's (2014) findings on the role of digital media as informal migration guides. By analyzing YouTube videos and viewer interactions, it highlights the platform's dual function as a source of practical guidance and emotional support for migrants. Unlike formal migration resources, which may be technical and less accessible, YouTube content offers nuanced, experience-based information that directly addresses migrants' concerns. This insight calls for further scholarly exploration into how informal digital resources complement traditional systems and how their influence varies across different migratory routes and socioeconomic contexts.

The research also reiterates YouTube's prominence in the digital media ecosystem as a platform where success stories, advice, and lived experiences are shared, directly shaping contemporary narratives associated with migration. Analyses of the selected videos offer a comprehensive view of the migration process, spanning from the decision-making phase and bureaucracy in the visa application procedures to cultural adjustment and socio-economic integration in Canada. Such

insights demonstrate how digital media acts as a bridge between formal systems and the personalized experiences that migrants need to navigate these systems effectively.

Second, the study aligns with Carling and Collins' (2018) assertion that migration involves a complex interplay of aspirations and anxieties. One key finding relates to the dual nature of sentiments shown in the videos and their comments sections. On the one hand, positive sentiments are prominent (e.g., the exhilaration of better career opportunities and quality of life in Canada), aligning with migration literature that points to the economic motivations underpinning migration decisions (Massey et al., 1998). On the other hand, these narratives are tempered by cautionary sentiments, where both content creators and viewers express concerns about the emotional effects of leaving home, challenges of adjusting to new climates, and the difficulties of navigating bureaucracy in the Canadian immigration system. By analyzing the dual sentiments expressed in YouTube content and comments, this research adds nuance to existing migration literature by showing how digital platforms act as arenas for both aspiration-sharing and cautionary storytelling. Future studies could build on this by examining how such narratives influence not just migration decisions but also migrants' preparedness and eventual success in integrating into new environments.

Additionally, this study contributes to discussions on class and access in migration, as highlighted by Afrobarometer (2018). It underscores how digital platforms are disproportionately accessible to middle- and upper-class Nigerians, whose financial stability and digital literacy enable them to maximize the affordances associated with these tools. This finding suggests that the "digital divide" not only reflects economic disparities but also perpetuates them, a theme underexplored in current literature. Scholars should investigate strategies for bridging this divide,

including programs to enhance digital literacy and accessibility for low-income and under-educated groups.

In the same vein, this study reveals that migration from Nigeria to Canada is not solely shaped by personal aspirations but is also intertwined with the framework of class and access to resources.

Nigerians from the middle and upper classes, who often possess higher education and financial stability, are more likely to migrate due to the considerable financial commitments required.

While digital media plays a central role in bridging information gaps, it is evident that access to these tools remains stratified. Those with the resources and digital literacy to leverage these platforms are better positioned to utilize the opportunities they offer, further underscoring the class divide in migration patterns.

Beyond facilitating migration decision-making, digital media continues to play an essential role in the integration process for newcomers to Canada. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn are indispensable in helping Nigerian immigrants adjust to their new environments. According to the Newcomers-top Trends Report by Media Technology Monitor (MTM), about 50% of newcomers arrive in Canada with smartphones, and nearly 90% actively engage with social media platforms, spending more time on them than Canadian-born citizens. Social media not only helps maintain connections with home countries but also offers critical support for navigating life in Canada, such as securing housing and connecting with potential employers. Elias (2020) stresses how digital tools, such as Google Maps and Transit apps, ease commuting for newcomers, thus providing practical guidance for daily life.

From the preceding discussions, it is evident that this study has explored the transformative role of digital media in shaping migration decision-making and facilitating the integration of Nigerian immigrants in Canada. By examining platforms like YouTube, this study highlights their dual

function as sources of practical guidance and emotional reassurance. It also draws attention to the stratification of access to these resources along lines of class and digital literacy, emphasizing the need for initiatives that address these digital divides. Policymakers in Nigeria and Canada can leverage these findings to enhance digital literacy programs and ensure equitable access to migration resources.

Future research can explore how digital media impacts migration decisions for other populations and regions, assessing whether the trends observed here hold across diverse migratory contexts. Longitudinal studies could also examine how the reliance on digital platforms evolves throughout the migration journey and the extent to which it influences long-term integration outcomes. These areas of inquiry could further refine our understanding of digital media's role in global migration patterns.

Furthermore, there is a need to investigate the intersection of digital media and mental health among migrants. While this study highlights the emotional support provided by platforms like YouTube, it also raises questions about the psychological toll of consuming content that alternates between aspirational and cautionary narratives. Scholars can explore how digital media consumption impacts migrants' mental well-being and identify strategies for mitigating potential harms.

For policymakers, this study provides a foundation for policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the migration process and integration experience. Nigerian policymakers should prioritize expanding internet access and digital literacy, particularly for marginalized populations, to deter unsuspecting potential migrants from becoming victims of pseudo migration agents and “ghost” consultants. Similarly, Canadian policymakers and community organizations can collaborate with digital platforms to develop tailored content that addresses the

unique challenges faced by newcomers, such as navigating bureaucratic systems and adapting to cultural norms.

By and large, while digital platforms like YouTube have emerged as indispensable tools in the migration process, this study underscores the need to address systemic inequities in access and utilization. By leveraging the transformative potential of digital media, policymakers and researchers can ensure a more inclusive and supportive migration experience for individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Challenges and Limitations of the Study

One of the primary challenges associated with this study is the rapidly evolving nature of digital media itself. Digital platforms, tools, and user behaviors change quickly, influenced by technological advancements, regulatory shifts, and socio-cultural trends (boyd & Ellison, 2007). This dynamic environment means that the data collected could quickly become outdated, making it difficult to capture a comprehensive and representative picture of digital media's impact on migration. Longitudinal studies could mitigate this issue, but they require substantial time and resources.

Another challenge is the diversity of digital media usage among Nigerian populations. Internet access and digital literacy levels vary widely across different regions and socio-economic groups in Nigeria (Adeniran, 2020). This variability can result in a sample that might not fully represent the experiences and behaviors of all potential migrants. Ensuring a representative sample requires carefully designed survey methods and possibly stratified sampling techniques, which can be complex and resource-intensive.

The self-reported nature of much of the data presents a significant limitation, particularly when it comes to YouTube user comments, whether made transparently or anonymously. These comments depend on individuals accurately expressing their thoughts and experiences, but there is always a risk of bias. For instance, social desirability bias may lead content consumers to tailor their responses to align with what they believe is favorable or acceptable. As a result, discerning the authenticity of what people say in such online spaces remains a challenge (Christopherson, 2007; Podsakoff et al., 2003; and Sardá, et al., 2019). This can lead to inaccuracies in the data and potentially skew the research findings.

Furthermore, there are possibly expected ethical and privacy concerns related to digital ethnography. Observing and analyzing online communities and forums involves navigating issues of consent and confidentiality (Garcia et al., 2009). Researchers must balance the need for accurate data with respect for participants' privacy, ensuring that personal information is anonymized and that participants are aware of the research when possible.

Additionally, the study's reliance on internet-based data collection methods could exclude individuals without reliable internet access. This digital divide means that the voices of less-connected populations might be underrepresented, potentially biasing the results towards more digitally literate and connected individuals (Hilbert, 2011).

The study encountered logistical challenges, particularly in terms of geographic and cultural differences. Conducting research across two countries with distinct legal, cultural, and social landscapes requires a nuanced understanding of both contexts. This can be challenging for researchers, especially in ensuring that data collection methods and analyses are culturally sensitive and relevant.

Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of the study, which spans fields such as migration studies, digital media, sociology, and policy analysis, requires a comprehensive methodological approach. This complexity could pose challenges if the researcher lacks expertise in any of these areas, potentially leading to gaps in analysis and interpretation.

However, despite these challenges and limitations, the study is designed to provide valuable insights into the impact of digital media on migration perceptions. By acknowledging and addressing these potential issues, the research has the potential to offer a more robust and nuanced understanding of the relationship between digital media and the Nigeria-Canada immigration perceptions.

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