Strategies for Bridging Digital Inclusion in Rural South Africa: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Rural communities in South Africa face significant digital exclusion despite efforts to bridge this gap. A systematic literature review was conducted using electronic databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, and Web of Science. The search criteria included keywords related to digital inclusion in rural South Africa. The analysis revealed a predominance of strategies targeting mobile phone connectivity (85%) for bridging the digital gap, with evidence suggesting that these interventions are effective but require sustained support from public and private sectors. Despite promising initiatives, there is an ongoing need to evaluate the long-term impacts of implemented strategies on rural communities' digital literacy and usage patterns. Future research should prioritise community engagement in planning digital inclusion programmes and consider integrating digital skills training alongside connectivity enhancements. Model estimation used $\hat{\{\theta\}} = argmin\{\theta\} \, sumiell(yi, f\theta(\xi)) + \lambda lVert\theta rVert \, 2^2$, with performance evaluated using out-of-sample error.

Keywords: *Digital Divide, Rural Development, E-Services, Accessibility Studies, Information Technology Policy, Community Engagement, Socioeconomic Factors*

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