Bridging Digital Inclusion Gaps in Rural South Africa Through Strategic Frameworks

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Abstract

Rural communities in South Africa face significant digital exclusion due to infrastructure deficiencies, affordability constraints, and technological illiteracy. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys ($N=120) \wedge focus\, groups\, (N=30)\, was\, employed\, \dot{c}\, gather\, data\, on\, digital\, literacy\,, affordability\,, \wedge connectivity\, issu$. Survey results indicated that only 45% of respondents had reliable internet access at home, with a significant proportion experiencing frequent disconnections due to unreliable infrastructure. The framework identified key barriers such as cost and availability of digital devices, leading to tailored recommendations for policy makers and service providers. Policy recommendations include subsidizing device purchases and improving public Wi-Fi hotspots in underserved rural zones.

Keywords: *Geographic, Sub-Saharan, Rural, Digital Divide, Community Engagement, Technological Access, Empowerment Strategies*

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