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

Bongani Khumalo[1,2], **Sipho Mdluli**[3], **Nomalakaniso Dlamini**[4], **Nokuthula Mngqivinkulu**[5,6]

[1] Department of Software Engineering, Vaal University of Technology (VUT)

[2] Department of Software Engineering, University of the Free State

[3] University of KwaZulu-Natal

[4] Department of Software Engineering, University of KwaZulu-Natal

[5] Department of Software Engineering, Rhodes University

[6] Vaal University of Technology (VUT)

Author notes

Bongani Khumalo is affiliated with Department of Software Engineering, Vaal University of Technology (VUT) and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Sipho Mdluli is affiliated with University of KwaZulu-Natal and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Nomalakaniso Dlamini is affiliated with Department of Software Engineering, University of KwaZulu-Natal and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Nokuthula Mngqivinkulu is affiliated with Department of Software Engineering, Rhodes University and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Abstract

Rural areas in South Africa often face significant digital inclusion gaps due to limited internet access and technological infrastructure. A comprehensive search of academic databases was conducted using specific keywords related to digital inclusion in rural settings. Studies were filtered based on quality and relevance, with data synthesized through thematic analysis. The findings indicate that community-led initiatives have demonstrated the most effective strategies for bridging the digital inclusion gap, particularly when involving local leaders and leveraging existing resources. This review highlights the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing rural digital exclusion, underscoring the need for tailored approaches based on local contexts. Recommendations include fostering partnerships between government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community groups to implement feasible and sustainable solutions. 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, Technological Infrastructure, Access Studies, Socio-Technical Systems, Empirical Research, Policy Analysis*

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