Strategies for Bridging Digital Inclusion in Rural South Africa: A Methodological Framework

Sello Mashinini[1]**, Nkosingiphile Mncobo**[2,3]

[1] Department of Artificial Intelligence, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

[2] Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

[3] Department of Cybersecurity, University of the Free State

Author notes

Sello Mashinini is affiliated with Department of Artificial Intelligence, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Nkosingiphile Mncobo is affiliated with Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and focuses on Computer Science research in Africa.

Abstract

Digital inclusion in rural South Africa is a critical challenge that affects socioeconomic development. Despite efforts by government and NGOs to bridge this gap, significant disparities persist. A mixed-methods approach involving surveys, focus groups, and qualitative interviews was employed to gather data from 1000 participants across five provinces. Statistical analysis used a logistic regression model to assess the effectiveness of interventions in terms of participant engagement and knowledge acquisition (OR = 1.23, CI: [1.05-1.46]). The findings indicate that digital literacy programmes have shown a moderate improvement in participant engagement with an average increase of 15% in the proportion of participants who reported increased confidence in using digital tools. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of targeted digital literacy initiatives, highlighting their role in narrowing the digital inclusion gap in rural South Africa. Based on these findings, policymakers and practitioners are encouraged to invest in scalable digital literacy programmes that include both formal training and community-based workshops.

Keywords: *Digital Divide, Geographic Information Systems, Rural Development, Telecommunications Infrastructure, Participatory Methods, Community Empowerment, Socioeconomic Analysis*

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