



Considerations for Community engagement for Artificial intelligence research in Africa: a review of literature



Author: Harriet Nankya
Institution: Makerere University, Uganda

Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) has potential to reduce inequality, alleviate poverty, and improve access to health services for African societies (1).

However, AI in Africa faces challenges including; AI being still new, is a threat to African values of care, and can face vast digital divide.

Fears of data colonialism

Potential for unequitable AI benefits distribution.

Community engagement (CE) is one of the means to mitigate such technical, ethical and sociotechnical challenges in AI research, however, how CE should be conducted is not clear.

Methods

Literature was reviewed and analyzed from; Google, Google scholar, and PubMed, on how to conduct CE for AI research in Africa.

Findings

Key CE considerations for AI research in Africa included;

a) Respect for African values of;

interconnectedness, solidarity, communality and mutuality

These values are conceptualized in ethical frameworks such as Ubuntu (2).

b) AI research should be inclusive and socially beneficial:

young people, especially girls, and women should be included (3).

c) AI research teams should have social scientists to ensure the consideration of the impact of AI on fundamental human rights, and on collective social and ethical values pertinent in the community.

Conclusion

Ensuring ethical conduct of AI research in Africa requires the identification and respect for unique aspects and values of African communities.

References

1. Bohr, A., & Memarzadeh, K. (2020). The rise of artificial intelligence in healthcare applications *Artificial Intelligence in healthcare* (pp. 25-60): Elsevier.
2. Eke, D. O., Wakunuma, K., & Akintoye, S. (2023). Responsible AI in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities.
3. Gwagwa, A., Kazim, E& Shawe-Taylor, J. (2021). Road map for research on responsible artificial intelligence for development (AI4D) in African countries: The case study of agriculture. *Patterns*, 2(12).