

Utilization of Social Media for Rural Women Entrepreneur Project: A Case Study of Setiu Wetland

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship empowerment towards rural women remains crucial to attain better living standard among rural communities. To help improve the living livelihood through e- business, the community needs to be equipped with entrepreneurship skill explicitly and Information and Communication (ICT) skill implicitly. This paper presents a study case of rural women entrepreneur in Setiu Wetland, Terengganu, Malaysia under NRGS research grant from the period of 2015 to 2018 by a group of UMT researchers and academicians. The study utilizes facebook social media as the electronic business (e-business) and networking platform in marketing and establishing the local products of Setiu Wetland women entrepreneurs. Through the six (6) months period of tracking the respondent's income rate, the outcome of this NRGS project depicts 17% of women entrepreneurs achieve linear proportion of increasing income rate, 33% of decreasing income rate and the rest 50% of income shows a fluctuating rate.

Keywords: Social media; Entrepreneurship skill; ICT skill; Rural women entrepreneur; e-business; Setiu Wetland.

1. Introduction

Research on Social Media Platforms and their impact in improving the living livelihood among rural women entrepreneurs is trending locally and globally [1]. Social media refers to a group of interactive internet-based applications, uses internet and mobile platforms to support the creation and exchange of user-generated content [2]. Social media platforms such as blog, micro-blog, social network, text message and shared photos and companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram (IG) operate across these various platforms. Social media is becoming vital to the new generation of gender based ventures that are digitally driven through the use of technology. This type of development is done which rural women adapt and utilise Social Media platforms that promotes a new revolution of modern digital entrepreneurial culture, by changing the rural women entrepreneur to be Information Communication Technology (ICT) savvy [1,3].

Rural women need to be empowered to sustain a better livelihood for their families. Due to their significant role as an "in-house family planner", they need to be empowered economically through entrepreneurship. In promoting entrepreneurship, empowerment, an important strategy is to enhance the capacity of women to participate in many economic activities. They would certainly benefit from such ventures and, at the same time, contribute to the economic growth process.

This paper describes a case study of women entrepreneurial skill in Setiu Wetlands, Terengganu, Malaysia. The main project aims to improve the livelihood of local communities using the niche Setiu Wetland natural resources, focusing at utilising the entrepreneurship skill using social media among rural women that has taken place from 2015 to 2018 through Niche Research Grant Scheme

(NRGS) project entitled "Improving The Livelihood of Local Communities Using Setiu Wetland Resources". The project is led by six (6) UMT researchers [4].

This study involves villages in Setiu Wetlands comprises of Kg Mangkok, Kg Fikri, Kg Saujana and Kuala Setiu. Setiu wetland is situated in the Northeast of Terengganu, 1 hour 30 minutes' drive from the state capital, Kuala Terengganu. The wetlands of Setiu begins in Kampung Penarik at about 300m from the shoreline, Sungai Setiu flows northward, parallel to the beach and reaches a narrow river mouth at Kuala Setiu Baharu [4-6]. Generally, the wetland ecosystems provide provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services that generate economic values and livelihood to the local communities. The value can be partly assessed in terms of their direct and indirect use values, as well as for the non-use values. The results for the direct use values are estimated at RM 2.9 million yearly, generated using a market price-based approach. This value is contributed mainly from the utilization of aquatic resources particularly mud crabs [7], prawns, brackishwater fish, clams and mussels. However, the traditional livelihood among community is depending upon the timber and non-timber forest resources such as woods, honey and nypa leaves collections which contributes to generate higher income in monthly ratio as compared to the aquatic resources.

2. Methodology

The project is based on underlying framework as depicted in Figure 1 [4,6]. There are four (4) stages of Social Invention E-Business framework i.e. Stage 1- Define Objective, Stage 2 – Training & Module Requirement, Stage 3 – Training Process and Stage 4 –

Evaluation. Stage 1 is where objective is defined through the elicitation of questionnaire & interviews, the setting of demographic profile, educating on computer literacy and explaining on the concept of business information to the community. Stage 2 is delivering on community talk, sharing session and workshop training on Business Awareness, ICT Literacy, Entrepreneurship concept and development of E-Business Blog.

The Business Awareness module is about an introduction to entrepreneurship, challenges and threats in the field of entrepreneurship and developing self-esteem at the personal level. The ICT Literacy module aims to train participants to use ICT in entrepreneurship since the majority of participants have no basic computer skills. As such, learning on how to use computers and the Internet is a necessity. Participants will find out how to register e-mail accounts and know the functions of electronic mail. The third module, 'Entrepreneurship Preparedness' exposes participants to market surveys where those successful women in entrepreneurship and e-business are invited to share their experiences. The fourth module is the development of an e-business blog. This module provides skills to participants to build their business blog through facebook applications. The objective is to promote their products globally. Through this blog, participants can also interact with customers.

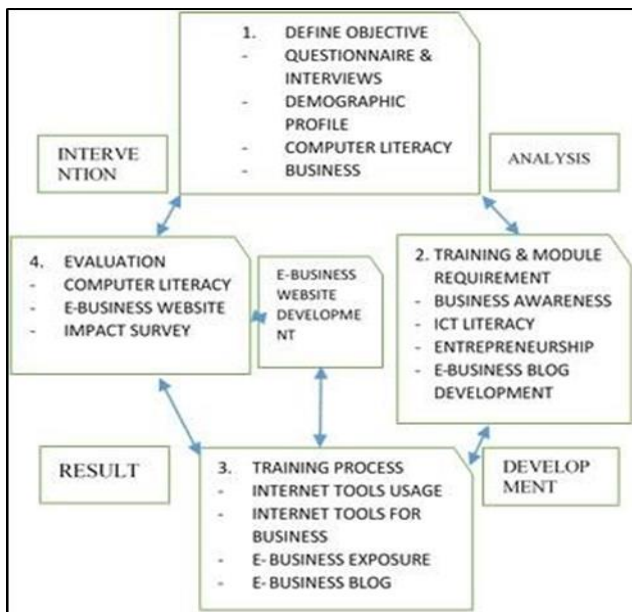


Fig. 1: Social Invention for e-business framework

Detail commencement of each modules in Stage 2 is tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: NRGs Vot 53131 : Module Timeline

Module	Detail	Commence Date
Business Awareness	Community Talk "Bagaimana Menjadi Seorang Usahawan : Realiti & Cabaran"	31/07/2017
ICT Literacy	Community Talk "Kepelbagaian Teknologi Maklumat & Komunikasi (ICT) Masa Kini"	27/11/2015
Entrepreneurship	Community Sharing Session "Kisah Benar Seorang Usahawan Berjaya"	19/02/2016
E-Business Blog Development	Community Workshop "Pembangunan Facebook Sebagai Media Perniagaan & Pemasaran"	15/04/2016

3. Setiu Wetland Civilian Demographic

The characteristics of Setiu Wetland community is categorized under low utilization of natural resources. There are total of 498 respondents whom directly took part in the project. However, out of 498 respondents whom took part, only few involved in sustaining Setiu Wetland resources for generating their income, particularly for forest resources such as 173 respondents involve in fish and prawn, 105 respondents involve in mud crab, 152 respondents involve in bivalves- clam, mussel, oyster and cockle while the rest 68 respondents involve in other forest resources. The ratio of adult and senior citizens of age above 50 years old is above 50 %. The population is dominated by male with above 85% and low education level (with more than 35% received only primary education).

4. On-sites Experimentation Results

The current socioeconomic status of the respondents indicates that women have no source of earnings and are dependent on their spouses' income. Since the spouses' income is within the poverty range, women should be empowered to generate their income. The total of twelve (12) selected women respondents involved in the project tracking and monitoring. The monitoring is done in the first six (6) months of 2015. The evaluation is tracked in terms of monthly income analysis as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Projection of 6 month income period of 12 Setiu Wetland women respondents

Respondent	Income (RM) in 6 months					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
RESP-1	300	300	300	0	0	0
RESP-2	0	125	155	64	229	172
RESP-3	1200	1300	1200	1400	1900	2100
RESP-4	300	300	470	370	300	0
RESP-5	1100	1100	1100	1100	2100	2590
RESP-6	670	460	515	600	1282	2118
RESP-7	530	440	530	500	610	800
RESP-8	300	300	300	300	0	0
RESP-9	200	200	200	200	0	0
RESP-10	100	100	190	100	100	100
RESP-11	300	300	0	0	0	0
RESP-12	863	509	613	476	345	0

The above statistical data of twelve (12) shows a triple projection of income ratios i.e. increasing, decreasing and fluctuating income among Setiu women respondents.

Figure 2 illustrates few samples of Usahawan Setiu facebook webpages that are currently under operation as the outcome of the four (4) training modules in the project implementation.



Fig. 2: Usahawan Setiu Facebook Page About Local Products

Figure 3 shows the evaluation analysis in the first six (6) months of the project implementation among twelve (12) Setiu Wetland women entrepreneurs.

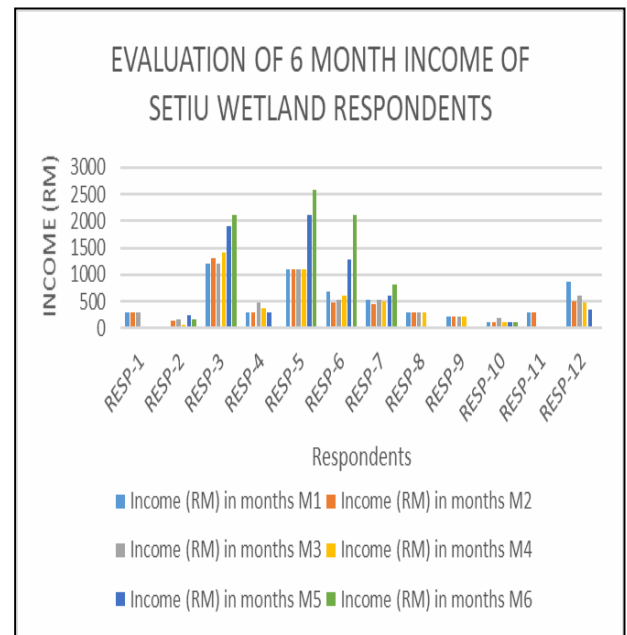


Fig. 3: Income rate Analysis in 6 months ratio among Setiu Wetland women entrepreneur

Figure 4 illustrates that 16.7% of Setiu Wetland women entrepreneur gain an increasing income rate, 33.3% of them fall under decreasing income rate and the rest 50% of the Setiu Wetland women's income rate is fluctuates (increasing and decreasing throughout the six (6) months period.

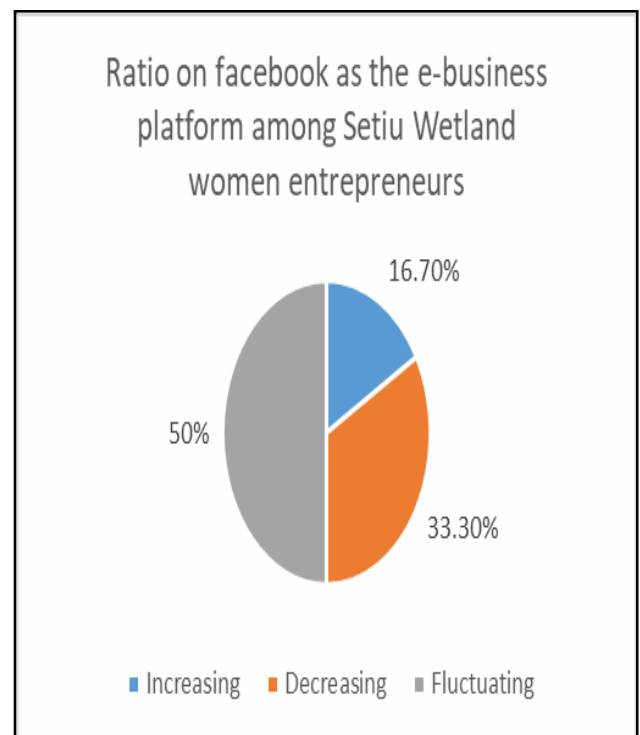


Fig. 4: Income rate Analysis in 6 months ratio among Setiu Wetland and women entrepreneur

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This part of NRGs project is considered to attain successful result as overall. Even though only 17% of increasing income rate of Setiu Wetland women have truly become entrepreneur, the figures established a 'good' signal that it has helped the women entrepreneur in promoting to market Setiu Wetland product based on its natural resources to public. This is proved in their facebook creation and the use of 'catchy' words in promoting product (as depicted in Figure 2).

The decreasing income rate of 33% as well as 50% of fluctuating income rate show a moderate percentage due to some reasons. For 33% of Setiu women entrepreneurs fall under decreasing income rate is due lack of efforts towards sustaining, maintaining and updating the news and highlights or the newest revolution (i.e. in the aspects of taste, color, shape, presentation, etc) on their product through their facebook platform. Thus the customers may switch to another seller or promoter and start to look for new offers from another seller or promoter. Then, the same scenario did happen to fluctuates income rate. For the 50% of Setiu women entrepreneur income rate did fluctuates is depending upon their skill and effort in establishing their marketing strategies. The more active in facebook post and updates, the more sales they are gaining.

6. Recommendation and Future Works

Our recommendation is towards inspiring Setiu women entrepreneurs to promote their e-business product through the other social media channel such as in Instagram, Telegram, Tweeter or other tele-marketing strategies in such a way that they can put their marketing planning into a bigger scale but at no cost.

To boost up their chances, they may apply the push and pull marketing strategies such as in [8-10]. Each respondent needs to improve and sustain in marketing their product through facebook or any preferable social media network platforms. A push strategy is to push a product at a customer, while a pull strategy pulls a customer towards a product. In e-business concept, a push strategy is a quick way to move a customer from awareness to purchase, whereas pull strategy is to create a prolong relationship with the brand. But, both strategies aim in moving the customer along the journey from awareness to purchase, however pull strategies tend to be more successful at building brand ambassadors [10]. They need to always update their products with 'WOW' factor and control and monitor any global issues pertaining to market price, innovative ingredients or any substances that could put their product up-front.

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