

**AN INVESTIGATION ON INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT OF
TELECENTRES USERS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE PUSAT
INTERNET DESA (PIDS) IN NORTHERN STATES OF MALAYSIA**

ZAHURIN BINTI MAT AJI @ ALON

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Abstrak

Komuniti informatik merupakan satu bidang yang memberi tumpuan kepada pelaksanaan dan penggunaan teknologi maklumat dalam kalangan komuniti. Pemerksaan sebagai satu konsep yang penting bagi menilai kesan teknologi ke atas organisasi dan komuniti. Potensi untuk memperkasakan komuniti luar bandar adalah melalui pembangunan *telecentre* yang menyediakan platform untuk mendapatkan pelbagai kemahiran dan pengetahuan. Namun begitu, masih terdapat berbagai masalah yang menyebabkan kurangnya penglibatan masyarakat dalam menggunakan *telecentre* berkenaan. Kajian lepas juga lebih memfokuskan kepada aspek operasi *telecentre* tetapi kurang memberikan perhatian kepada pemerksaan psikologi. Sehubungan itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana konstruk pemerksaan psikologi iaitu intrapersonal, interaksi dan tingkah laku menggambarkan pemerksaan pengguna Pusat Internet Desa (PID) dan mencadangkan model pemerksaan pengguna *telecentre*. Kajian ini mengaplikasikan teori pemerksaan psikologi (PE) yang dikemukakan oleh Zimmerman pada tahun 1995 untuk meninjau hasil pemerksaan daripada pelaksanaan *telecentre*. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif menerusi pendekatan kajian pelbagai kes. Data diperolehi daripada pengguna PID melalui pengedaran borang soal selidik dan temubual bersemuka. Kaedah pemerksaan juga dilakukan terhadap gelagat pengguna dan aktiviti PID, manakala ulasan dokumentasi dibuat berdasarkan laporan tahunan dan buletin PID. Teknik interpretasi telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa semua faktor iaitu jangkaan kawalan, keberkesanan diri, kecekapan, motivasi, kesedaran kritikal, kemahiran membuat keputusan, kemahiran penyelesaian masalah, serta penyesuaian dan penyertaan menunjukkan maklum balas positif terhadap pemerksaan pengguna *telecentre* kecuali kemahiran kepimpinan. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pembangunan *telecentre* dapat membantu memperkasakan masyarakat luar bandar di Malaysia. Dapatan juga mengesahkan bahawa teori pemerksaan psikologi oleh Zimmerman boleh diaplikasikan dalam persekitaran sistem maklumat. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pembentukan model pemerksaan psikologi pengguna *telecentre*. Selain itu ianya juga menyumbang kepada cabang ilmu pengetahuan sistem maklumat khususnya dalam bidang komuniti informatik dan seterusnya kepada polisi-polisi berkenaan pelaksanaan *telecentre*.

Kata kunci: Teori pemerksaan psikologi, Komuniti infomatik, Model pemerksaan *telecentre*

Abstract

Community informatics is an area that focuses on the implementation and application of information technology in communities. Empowerment as an important concept used in assessing the impact of technology within organizations and communities. The potential of empowering the communities is through the development of telecentres that provide a platform for acquiring various skills and knowledge. Nevertheless, previous studies indicated various problems in engaging community when using the telecentre. In addition, most of these studies were concentrating on the operational aspects of the telecentre rather than the users. Thus, the objectives of this study are to describe how psychological empowerment constructs such as intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioural reflect empowerment of Pusat Internet Desa (PID) users and propose a telecentre users empowerment model. This study had applied the psychological empowerment (PE) theory introduced by Zimmerman in 1998 to examine the empowerment outcome of the telecentres implementation. The study was conducted using qualitative investigation of the multiple-case study of PIDs. Data was obtained from the users through open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face interview. Observation was also carried out on the users' behaviours and PID activities, while documentation reviews were performed based on the PID annual reports and bulletins. Data analysis was done using interpretation technique. The findings reveal that all factors; perceived control, self-efficacy, competence, motivation, critical awareness, decision making skill, problem solving skill, and coping and participation; show positive feedback except for leadership skill. This indicates that telecentre establishments can help in empowering the rural community in Malaysia. In addition, it is confirmed that the Zimmerman empowerment theory can be applied in the information systems environment. This study contributes to the development of a telecentre user psychological empowerment model. Moreover, it also contributes to the information systems body of knowledge particularly in the area of community informatics as well as to the telecentre establishment policies.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment theory, Community informatics, Telecentre empowerment model

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

The term empowerment is defined as the notion of people having the ability to understand and control themselves and their environments (including social, economic, and political factors), expanding their capabilities and horizons and elevating themselves to greater levels of achievement and satisfaction (Lee, 2005; Wilson, 1996). Three levels of empowerment include organizational, community, and individual empowerment. The organizational empowerment refers to the organizational processes and structures that enhance member participation and performance and eventually improve the achievement of organizational goal. Community empowerment refers to collective action to improve the quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organizations, while individual empowerment refers to the transformation of individuals' lives in achieving goals and reaching targets (Clement, 1994; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Wilson, 1996).

Regarding the information and communication technology (ICT) usage, individual are empowered by offering more power as citizens, more power as consumers, and more power to shape their own lives (Moore, 2003). Empowerment through ICT is achieved by supporting individual use of technology for personal needs and goals (Hermano, 1996 as cited in Lee, 2005). This means that empowerment implies the transformation of individual skills into actions to produce a self-determined change.

The contents of
the thesis is for
internal user
only

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