

**INFORMATION NEEDS OF RURAL FARMERS IN KEDAH:
A CASE STUDY OF PUSAT INTERNET DESA (PID)**



MASTER OF SCIENCE (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

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Abstrak

Pencapaian kepada maklumat yang tepat, sesuai dan boleh dipercayai memainkan peranan yang penting dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran masyarakat di luar bandar. Kajian yang lepas kurang memberi tumpuan kepada laman web yang merangkum keperluan para petani di luar bandar. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan keperluan maklumat petani luar bandar melalui PID di Kedah, Malaysia. Untuk tujuan ini, teori membuat pertimbangan oleh Dervin telah digunakan sebagai panduan. Maklumat yang diperlukan oleh petani telah di masukkan ke dalam laman web yang sesuai menggunakan dwi bahasa iaitu Bahasa Melayu dan Bahasa Inggeris, laman web ini akan digunakan oleh petani di Kedah dalam menguruskan pertanian mereka. Seramai 200 orang petani di Kedah dari kedua-dua jantina telah di ambil sebagai sampel kajian tetapi hanya data dari 187 orang responden digunakan untuk analisis. Teknik persampelan rawak digunakan untuk pemilihan sampel manakala soal selidik digunakan bagi mendapatkan maklumat daripada responden. SPSS versi 20 telah digunakan untuk analisis data, dan data tersebut dianalisis dalam pendekatan kuantitatif. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa keperluan maklumat yang tertinggi adalah berkaitan dengan kemudahan kewangan, pemasaran pertanian, dan pengurusan serangga perosak. Umur, pendidikan tertinggi dan hubungkait dengan ICT telah menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dengan kebolehan pencapaian maklumat. Adalah dicadangkan bahawa maklumat yang secukupnya seharusnya disediakan di kawasan yang diperlukan dan program pemeraksanaan ekonomi perlu diberi perhatian yang serius bagi meningkatkan pencapaian maklumat yang diperlukan. Seramai tiga puluh orang petani dari kawasan yang berbeza di Kedah telah dipilih untuk menguji kebolehgunaan laman web (INRFK). Keputusan umum menunjukkan laman web INRFK memberi kepuasan dalam keperluan mereka dengan menyediakan maklumat yang tepat.

Katakunci: Keperluan maklumat , Sumber maklumat, Petani Luar Bandar, Telecentre, PID.

Abstract

Access to accurate, appropriate and reliable information plays a crucial role in improving the rural community's knowledge and skills. Previous studies have little focus on website that embeds the rural farmers' information needs. This study aims to determine the rural farmer's information needs, through the PID of Kedah State, Malaysia. For this purpose, Dervin's sense making theory was utilized as a guideline. The farmer's needed information was embedding into a suitable website in two languages, namely local (Malay) and English language, this website would serve the rural farmers in Kedah by managing their farming. A sample size of 200 rural farmers from both genders in Kedah was initially taken to determine their information needs, but the usable data was only 187 respondents were analyzed. Simple random sampling technique was used for the sample selection as well as using of the questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. SPSS version 20 was used for data analysis, and the data was analyzed in quantitatively approach. The results revealed that the highest information needs were related to the areas of financial facilities, agriculture marketing and pest management. Age, level of education and connectivity to ICT showed significant relationships with their accessibility to information. It is recommended that enough information should be provided in the needed areas and economic empowerment programs should be given serious attention to enhance their access to the needed information. Thirty farmers from different areas of Kedah were chosen to test the usability of the (INRFK) website. General findings revealed that INRFK website satisfied their needs by providing proper information.

Keywords: Information needs, Information source, Rural farmers, Telecentre, PID.

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List of Abbreviations

INRFK	Information Needs of Rural Farmers in Kedah.
ICT	Information and Communication Technology.
BDD	Bridging the Digital Divide.
PID	Pusat Internet Desa.
RIC	Rural Internet Centre.
MID	Medan Info Desa.
UN	United Nations.
IT	Information Technology.
ASK	Anomalous State of Knowledge.
PCs	Personal Computers.
MICC	Ministry of Information Communication and Culture.
TC	Telecentre.
PHP	Personal Home Page.
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
HCI	Human Computer Interaction.
UE	Usability Evaluation.
UI	User Interface
MEWC	Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication.
MSD	Maju Sedunia Digital.
FTC	Federal Territories Currently.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the general overview and concept of the study. Firstly, the chapter provides an introduction about the background of the study. It presents the statement of problem, research questions and objectives, significance and scope of the study, and finally the chapter's summary.

1.2 Background

Moomal and Masrom (2015) states that the world is currently in such a situation where Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has diffused into nearly the entire human activities. There has been an expansion in the extensive proliferation of ICT technologies within the last twenty years, thereby causing the latest skill achievement and up-to-date commercial discovery (Heshmati, Al Hammadany, & Mohammed, 2013).

According to Meng, Samah and Omar (2013), ICT usage may have a progressive influence on commercial improvement, learning, information dissemination and transportation as well as to enabling prospects for constructive improvement. For example, Malaysia is one of the emerging nations that has been stimulated by the positive results of ICT implementations in nearly all industrialized nations, and then has embraced ICT as portion of its federal development policies (Meng et al., 2013).

Dogara (2011) also argues that the extent of a country's development is determined by the level of its citizens' accessibility to ICT. As a result, presently, community ICT

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only

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