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## Unleashing the Power of Internet Skills towards Entrepreneurship Engagement among Youth in Malaysia

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### Abstract

The maze around Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has led youth to narrow their focus on technologies that matters in venturing into new businesses. Internet in particular offers countless of opportunities that one with efficient skills could get with promising benefit of brighter career possibilities and income expansions. The purpose of this study is to examine internet skills competency towards entrepreneurship engagement among youth in Malaysia. This study used a quantitative approach whereby 400 youths in Malaysia were selected as respondents. The study is based on non-probability sampling. The data were gathered through self-administrative questionnaire which has been written in English and Bahasa Melayu. The findings show that youth should accept and practice certain elements such as access to right information, competency in using the internet and acquiring technical skills in order to strengthen their entrepreneurial engagement. The study stresses on the need for youth to advocate and utilize internet resources as it will lead the society for development of entrepreneurial measures for new generation of internet users.

**Keywords:** Internet Usage, Youth Entrepreneurship, Internet Skills, Entrepreneurship Engagement, ICT

### Introduction

Youth are considered as digital natives of computers, smart phones and the internet. This is where mutual global perspective of using internet technologies simply portrays a notion that is connected, educated and well informed. Youth are major consumer of internet technologies, as it has been indicated in a survey by Statista (2018) daily internet usage rate by age group indicates under 25 with 93 per cent, 25-34 with 88 percent, 35-44 with 90 percent, 45-54 with 87 per cent and above 55 with 69 per cent.

Rapid growth of the internet did not fall on deaf ears over the past years, millions of users contributed greatly to the non-stop dissemination of information – setting a benchmark for

societies to embrace new technologies faster than ever. This, however, raised higher level of living standard among youth which created a reality that every government should give especial attention to. Therefore, within this context, youth in Malaysia show constant attention towards internet technologies, as such, one should comprehend the fact that youth involvement in internet-based activities paves the way for economic and social facility developments in the country. Not only youth involvement in internet technology enables new skills to emerge, also creates unique tycoons in the country for years to come (Mahadevan, 2007).

### **Internet in Malaysia**

The creation of new enterprise in the age of industrial advanced society relies on nothing but to have a robust and sustainable internet technology. Apart from that, individual internet competency in exploring and creating new ventures may influence decision making and opportunities on the internet. A study by Geraldine, Selvadurai and Hamid (2009) found that prominent governmental actors in Malaysia are involved in organizing various programs, training, research and other activities pertaining to internet on youth development. To name these governmental bodies they are Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia and The Institute of Youth Development Research Malaysia (Institute Penyelidikan Pembangunan Belia Malaysia/IPPBM). These bodies also organize entrepreneurship programs in various sectors including public universities, public youth organizations and schools - paving the way to cultivate entrepreneurship potentials among youth in the country.

In places where access is limited and the digital divide is evidence, there has been indication that younger generations are having sufficient knowledge about technologies and latest trends as compare to their parents (Samsuddin, Omar, Samah, & Bolong, 2016). This implies that there are no boundaries on the speed-journey of internet across globe. For instant, rural areas in Malaysia at certain point have access to full-range of internet coverage. Within this context, a recent article by The Star (2019) revealed that the Rural Development Ministry has program in placed on the development of high-speed internet access infrastructure in rural areas to attract youth to venture into online businesses. A considerable fact to ponder within this context is that high-speed internet access creates employment opportunities for young people, enabling to build a career and serve in their hometown without having to migrate to the city.

Malaysia ranked one of the highest in Asian countries in relation to internet usage as there are over 21 million internet users in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). To put some shades on this matter, the internet serves different purpose and how it has been served matters as many scholars highlighted and emphasised on this concern. In Singapore youth use internet to obtain information on sports, entertainment, science, technology and hobbies (Hechanova and Czincz, 2009). On the other hand, a study conducted by Ransom (2007) in Taiwan found otherwise, youth go on internet for mostly games, searching information, entertainment and chatting. Majority of youth's internet usage in Malaysia is to maintain their social relationship with family members and close friends (Omar, Fadzil, & Bolong, 2019).

In a report by Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) (2017) for 86.9% of users, internet remained as an important source of information in terms of leisure activities, online radio, downloading video, watching TV, downloading audio, images or reading materials and playing computer games. The MCMC findings also suggest that the

internet adoption rate increases as level of education attainment increases. Despite the fact that internet participation was prevalent among young college/university degree holders (94.4%), only 35.1% of those with primary education went online. Moreover, only 13.8% of those with no formal education used internet.

### **Entrepreneurship Engagement**

Entrepreneurship engagement links to tools and technologies and one of the top places that would take entrepreneurs beyond borders is by far the internet, a platform to access any sort of resources including ICT tools in order to explore opportunities in creating ventures. Malaysians combine ICT usage and the internet as a significant tool of communication for gathering information concerning social and other types of information pertaining to entrepreneurship engagement and activities (Abdullah, 2008). Within this regard, the World Association Newspaper (WAN) (2016) revealed that internet-based social networks appeared to be the key source of spreading information for people in Malaysia. The WAN reports suggest internet in particular Facebook, Twitter and other social platform as the primary source of information among young entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

Youth should bear that involvement in entrepreneurial movement requires prior knowledge on internet, therefore, it is part of youth's responsibility to ensure that ICT tools and internet usage is used in an appropriate and meaningful way. In Malaysia, Chandra (2011) discovered that youth go on internet to set up social profiles, add friends on social networking platforms, upload photos and mainly to keep in touch and share events with friends. This shows that youth have limited themselves for being informed on other social matters and opportunities that could lift up their future.

Personality traits are not separated from entrepreneurship intention and in order to be a competent entrepreneur Sánchez (2011) highlighted three main concepts such as self-efficacy, proactiveness and risk taking to be practiced in order to achieve highest results. On the other hand, Moreno, Castillo and Triguero (2012) pointed out that passion is a key component of success and need to be recognized in workplaces as well as among university peers. Passion to take risk and passion to think out of the box is something that lies under perceived desirability followed by entrepreneur's personal feasibility to start and engaged into a venture.

### **Youth Internet Skills Competency**

In order to have relevant skills competency on entrepreneurship, youth should attain a complete control over internet tools. This competency either come from self-learning or external institutes. In order to integrate internet usage into youth curriculum at the early stage, institutions should provide appropriate and sufficient support for the teachers to educate youth on how to use and implement skills on the internet (Hadi & Zeinab, 2012). A relevant study by Joorabchi, Osman and Hassan, (2013) summarized that the internet is the fastest way to knowledge acquisition providing the fact that internet is a solid platform for learning and competency for youth in order to do research on entrepreneurial matters.

Youth internet skills competency is highly associated with their past experiences using online internet tools. For instance, computer skills are at the frontline to young people when starting a new venture as by far it is the main tool in e-business that requires entrepreneurs to have hands-on skills on exploring the internet. These skills are important for creating e-commerce

platform such as social pages, blogs, forums, website and most importantly marketing materials during the start-up process (Fadzil et al., 2019).

Internet tools for learning are readily available, and it is quite easy for youth to find them, and make use of the information (Jagodic, 2016). Some of these internet tools such as smart web browsers, emails, File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and e-learning services offer access to knowledge bases, and business ideas exchange platforms. Some of these solutions are also reachable free of charge, for instance one can create a free website using ready-made templates provided by WordPress or Wix. However, there is no doubt that these internet tools provide the opportunity to work together with other entrepreneurs and learn how to solve the problems.

### **Methodology**

This study uses non-probability sampling. All data were gathered through self-administrative questionnaire which has been written in English and Bahasa Melayu. Convenient sampling has been implemented to collect all data because everyone is somehow exposed to internet in general. The survey questionnaire consists of sections divided to demographic data of respondents and youth internet skill competency. Printed versions of the questionnaire were distributed to the social areas and Universities (University Malaya) in Kuala Lumpur. A total number of 400 questionnaires were distributed in which 400 were returned completed. A descriptive statistic particularly percentage (%), mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) was used to summarize internet skill towards entrepreneurship engagement among youth in Malaysia. A correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between internet skill competency and use behavior of youth entrepreneurship intention. The variables in the research were measured using descriptive method with further analysis using inferential analysis (correlation).

## Results

**Table 1: Demographic of Youth Internet Usage in Malaysia**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean score
Gender			
Male	195	48.8	
Female	205	51.2	
Ethnicity			
Malay	165	41.3	
Chinese	164	41.0	
Indian	71	17.8	
Marital status			
Married	55	13.8	
Single	345	86.3	
Age (years)			
18-22	148	37.1	23-24
23-26	150	37.6	
27-30	102	25.5	
Education Level			
High School	122	30.5	
Diploma/Degree	138	59.5	
Master degree	40	10.0	
Employment status			
Unemployed	19	4.8	
Government employee	59	14.8	
Private sector employee	104	26.0	
Self employed	3	.8	
Student	215	53.8	
Individual monthly income			
≤ RM1000	181	45.3	
RM1,001 - RM1,500	16	.5	
RM1,501 - RM2,000	45	11.3	
RM2,001 - RM5,000	147	36.8	
≥ RM5,001	11	2.8	

The demographic data of youth internet usage in Malaysia indicates higher participation of females with close number of participations from the males. In terms of ethnicity, both Malay and Chinese were showing high participations followed by small portion of Indians. Majority of the respondents were single young people with the age range between 23-26 years old followed by 18-22 years old and 27-30 years old. More than half of the respondents were having a higher education and similarly more than half were students followed by private sector employee and government employee. In terms of income, most of the respondents were earning ≤ RM1000 as this is mainly due to the fact that they were students. Other high earning monthly income was between RM2,001 - RM5,000 as these were individuals with employment status. Lowest rate of participations in monthly income belong to last item ≥ RM5,001 as this is due to most participants were individuals at their young age pursuing their education in colleges.

### Youth Internet Skills Competency

This section illustrates respondents' descriptive analysis concerning youth internet skill competency in Malaysia towards entrepreneurship engagement. The framework of youth internet skill competency was measured under two categories namely: operational skills and informational skills.

**Table 2: Internet Skills among Youth - Operational Skills**

Statement	% (100)					M	S. D
	1	2	3	4	5		
I am able to operate Google search engine using different menu bars (e.g. image, map, google scholars).	0	0	0	48.5	51.5	4.51	0.50
I can browse through many pages on the internet without getting distracted.	0	0	0	50.5	49.5	4.50	0.50
I am able to bookmark pages on the internet.	0	0	0	58.3	41.8	4.42	0.50
I know how to change browser preference and use hyperlinks.	0	0	0	61.0	39.0	4.39	0.49
I have the skills to operate various common file formats (e.g. PDF, Word, SWF).	0	0	0	63.7	36.3	4.30	0.48
I am able to open websites by entering URL - surf forward and backward through pages using the browser.	0	0	0	69.5	30.5	4.30	0.46
I have skills on how to use social media campaign (e.g. Facebook Ad, Google AdWord, Twitter Ad and etc..) to promote my product or business online.	0	0	0	81.5	18.5	4.18	0.39
I am able to place an advertisement on social media in order to promote my business or product online.	0	1.8	41.8	46.3	10.3	3.65	0.68
I have the skills to create my own website. (This can be from free websites or using your own coding).	0	5.8	40.8	53.5	0	3.48	0.60
I have skills to use tools on the internet such as: Google Analytic and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools to improve my product or business online.	0	19.8	48.8	28.7	2.8	3.14	0.75
<b>Total</b>						<b>4.13</b>	

In terms of operational skills concerning youth internet skill, the highest score indicates that youth are able to operate Google search engine without any difficulties. The mean value is 4.51 which is stating '*I am able to operate Google search engine using different menu bars (e.g. image, map, google scholars)*'. Vast number of respondents perceived the fact that searching on Google pertaining various search information is commonly easy to use. Although, it might not be challenging to perform and operate Google search engine using different menu bars, yet having confidence and skills indicates self-awareness among youth when comes to internet search engine.

In terms of operational skills regarding youth internet skill, quite remarkable numbers of respondents believed that it is easy for them to browse through multiple pages without getting distracted. The item stating '*I can browse through many pages on the internet without*

*getting distracted*' as the second highest mean value in the table with the mean of 4.50 is an indication that the individual responses are clustered and not diverge from the mean.

On the other hand, in relation to operational skills concerning youth internet skill, there is lack of confidence when it comes to technical skills, for instance: being able to perform or to use tools on the internet such as: Google Analytic and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools to improve product or business online. The mean value is 3.14 which is stating '*I have skills to use tools on the internet such as: Google Analytic and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools to improve my product or business online*'. It is tempted to assume that training plays a major role in gaining internet skills. There are many online courses available through internet that educate users on platforms such as Google Analytic, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Social Media Analytics for Business.

As this section of the questionnaire was to understand youth internet skill competency, the second lowest mean score was also calculated which withdraw a valuable result in terms of operational skills. The attribute indicates lack of confidence when it comes to technical skills such as being able to create own website. The question stating '*I have the skills to create my own website. (This can be from free websites or using your own coding)*', and the mean score was 3.48. Having an online profile is sometimes limited to social media platforms among youth. However, this barrier and limitation can be shattered if youth increase their level of awareness and seek assistances from peers in their social setting who are skilful in website related matters.

**Table 3: Internet Skills among Youth - Informational Skills**

Statement	% (100)					M	S. D
	1	2	3	4	5		
I am able to recognize hyperlinks in different websites lay-outs.	0	0	0	57.3	42.8	4.42	0.49
I am able to evaluate information on different websites.	0	0	0	62.0	38.0	4.38	0.48
I am skilful in seeking information on appropriate websites.	0	0	0	68.5	31.5	4.31	0.46
I can recognize non-functional hyperlinks or websites.	0	7.2	20.0	56.8	16.0	3.81	0.78
I have skills to use certain free tools on the internet to minimize cost (e.g. blogger, downloadable materials).	0	4.8	29.3	50.3	15.5	3.80	0.76
<b>Total</b>						<b>4.14</b>	

In terms of informational skills regarding youth internet skill, the highest score indicates vast number of respondents perceived the fact that recognizing hyperlinks in various web platforms are commonly easy to distinguish and differentiate. The mean value is 4.42 which is stating '*I am able to recognize hyperlinks in different websites lay-outs*'. On the other hand, evaluating information on different websites earned a high score stating '*I am able to evaluate information on different websites*' with the mean value of 4.38. Vast number of respondents perceived the fact that evaluating information on various web platforms are not challenging



as this could be due to their high level of consciousness in specific information or subject that they seek on the internet.

In relation to informational skills, the lowest score indicates number of respondents perceived the fact that using internet tools to minimize cost is challenging. The mean value is 3.80 which is stating 'I have skills to use certain free tools on the internet to minimize cost (e.g. blogger, downloadable materials)'. On the other hand, the second lowest score indicates lack of recognition among non-functional hyperlinks or websites. The mean value is 3.81 which is stating 'I can recognize non-functional hyperlinks or websites'. This is highly related to addressing right information on the right website. This implies that, it is imperative to distinguish functional website from non-functional one to avoid confusion and ultimately to evade receiving unrelated information that could be unworthy or harmful.

**Table 4: Correlation test between internet skill competency and use behavior of youth entrepreneurship intention**

		Internet skill competency	Use behavior of youth entrepreneurship engagement
Internet skill competency	Pearson Correlation	1	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Use behavior of youth entrepreneurship engagement	Pearson Correlation	.498**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation test between internet skill competency and use behavior of youth entrepreneurship intention is statistically significant. It is an indication that there is a strong positive relationship between internet skill competency and use behaviour of youth entrepreneurship engagement  $r(398) = .498, = .000$  with internet skill competency explaining 24.8 percent of the variation in use behavior of youth entrepreneurship engagement. However, it can be concluded that changes in one variable is strongly correlated with changes in the second variable.

### Discussion

As the result of this study indicated significant positive relationship between internet skill competency and use behavior of youth entrepreneurship engagement, technological literacy is of paramount importance for embarking on entrepreneurship activities among youth. It is widely believed that reflective and conceptual internet skills is essential to engage and extract relevant content out from the internet. As it has been indicated from the results of this study, these could include basic computer skills from browser navigation, searching, bookmarking, web addresses, hyperlinks to abilities on utilizing common Information Technology (IT) tools including hardware, software and other search engines tools. It is tempted to assume that, essential internet skills lead the way for gaining confidence in self-entrepreneurship, meaning one's independency on others will reduce to the lowest point.

Introducing new technologies to be accessed by youth such as Google analytical tools, editing software or social media perks are great ways to increase interest and involvement of young

entrepreneurs in using internet is to provide hands-on experience and skills on tools in order to improve production and enhancing their employment status. It is tempted to assume that organizations transfer great amount of skills to youth, combining both internet and ICT for better implementation of skill related technologies Hosseini, Lashgara and Jamal (2014).

As this study explored and discovered an important emphasis on the internet skills among youth, other studies have also indicated identical attention to the entrepreneurial engagement among young people. Within individual's entrepreneurial intention level, it is vital to pay equal attention to access the know-how, access to know-who, access to material support as oppose to only focusing on opportunity, achievement and independency Dohse and Walter (2012). It has been indicated that skills create a long-term stand on various platform where users can manoeuvre without any challenges.

However, looking at data results in this study, certain attributes indicate lack of confidence when it comes to technical skills. For instant, there are challenges and lack of skills when it comes to perform or to use tools on the internet such as: Google Analytic and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools that are meant for improving product or online business. While, contrary to this attribute, there is a notion that majority of the youth in Malaysia see themselves skilful and see less challenges when it comes to use social media campaign usages such as (Facebook Ad, Google AdWords, Twitter Ad and etc..) to promote product or online business. Likewise, the result indicates high level of confidence when it comes seeking informational skills on various websites, as youth perceive themselves skilful in terms of seeking information on various websites and platform.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Various studies pertaining entrepreneurship suggests youth should increase their skill towards available tools on the internet. There is a tendency among youth to refrain from using the internet for entrepreneurship activities. This is due to lack of confidence in skills and lack of interest in entrepreneurship, yet these are few factors preventing some youth in Malaysia to embark on entrepreneurship using internet technologies. Hence, what would be the antidote to curb this matter? The answer would be the fact that more surveys and studies need to be conducted in order to give stakeholders a better understanding of entrepreneurship environment and internet usage among youth in Malaysia. Youth must accept and practice certain elements such as access to right information, internet competency, technical skills and links with surrounding in order to strengthen their entrepreneurial engagement. Accordingly, by utilizing these resources, youth will lead the society for development of new tools, such as (1) governing new policies for the government to support economic growth and, (2) establishing an internet usage patterns for businesses and stakeholders to improve their innovation and growth.

Many studies related to internet usage often indicate problems around interaction of use behavior within social media. Yet, theoretical framework of this research engages the critical thinking of readers to further implement deeper and critical understanding of internet related concerns. Specifically, within internet skills, this study has provided new perspectives in which paves the way to view and ameliorate level of involvements in entrepreneurship and use behavior among youth. Therefore, it is anticipated that this research would generate a great deal of interest, not only among youth, but also among the general public who are somehow associated with internet in their daily life.

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