Pattern of ICT Usage Among Youth at the Rural Libraries in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the pattern of ICT usage at the rural library among rural youth in Malaysia. Data for the study were collected via questionnaire, and based on mix method of sampling (multi-stage cluster and simple random sampling), a total of 400 rural youth from four districts in Malaysia were selected as the respondents. The analysis performed confirms that school students are the main rural library visitors, discovered that more than two hours of time spent in using ICT and Internet is the highest ICT tools used by the rural youth at the rural library. As conclusion the ICT services at rural library remains relevant to the rural youth for their daily lifestyle and they prefer information from Internet than printed sources. It is expected that this study will assist the rural libraries administrators to sustain the ICT services and encouraging the private and NGOs to contribute with government in development of the local communities.

Keywords: rural library; ICT usage; rural youth; community development; rural development

INTRODUCTION

In the mainstream development in Malaysia, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was not foreign in part of nation development including rural areas. ICT comprise of hardware, software, networks and media that can be applied for many purposes such as processing, transmission, storage and presentation of information (data, text, images, videos, and voices) (Neto et al., 2005). There were efforts and initiatives been undertaken by the government in ensuring equal development can be felt by both urban and rural communities. 1 Malaysia Internet Centers (PI1M) and Wi-Fi Village (KTW) are some of the facilities and services been introduced in rural areas which aimed to reduce the digital gap between urban and rural areas. The acceptance of ICT among rural communities have no longer odd to them, especially students nowadays, they have been exposed in early stage of their school education. Rural library also one of information centers in rural areas that have started to provide ICT facilities and services to the rural communities since 2011 throughout the National Broadband Initiative by the Universal Service Provision (USP). The administrators of rural library in this case National Library of Malaysia (NLM) have realized on the importance of ICT services to library users. Rural library services can be a solution in reducing the knowledge gap

between urban and rural communities with the access to the information provided by the rural library (John, 1995). In line with the statement, Josephine (2003) did mention that besides the information was necessary to stimulate the rural community development process, it also could improve the rural information system. Definition of ICT in this research were subject to ICT facilities and services provided by rural libraries such as desktop/ notebook (Computer), Internet/ Wi-Fi, printer, scanner, photostat machine, telephone (fixed line), fax machine, television, radio, and DVD/ VCD player.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ICT is playing important roles on society in terms of development. It is clearly that enhancement of ICT has made an impressive transformation of socio-economic environment in nations and also act as a mechanism through bridging the digital divide that exists between rural and urban areas (Bashir et al., 2011). Several rural areas projects have been introduced such as Rural Internet Centre, National Information Technology Centre and Rural Info Centre which aims to provide infrastructure development for rural community before this (Abu Samah, et al., 2013). However, most of the projects have been rebranding and also some of them have been no longer operating. The crucial parts of providing the facilities and services for the communities especially in rural areas is all about sustaining issues. They are lack of studies in identifying the information and service needs of rural communities in Malaysia (Anwar & Supaat 1998). Abdul Razak (2009) in her study on telecentres has highlighted that, it is important to focus on the needs of rural communities besides delivering pre-determined services to them.

Besides the importance of needs study, there is a must also in conducting research regarding on the effectiveness of the facilities and services provided for each projects. There are several studies on effectiveness and usage of ICT services in rural areas such as Rural Internet Centre, Community Broadband Centre, Wi-Fi Village, Rural Telecentre and 1 Malaysia Internet Centre (Abu Samah et al., 2013; Masrek & Rashidi, 2012; Rahmat et al., 2013; Samah et al., 2011; Samsuddin et al., 2015). However only few studies been done regarding ICT usage in rural libraries in Malaysia as a whole, if there was only focusing on rural library services, rural library usage, Internet usage and factors influencing rural library visits (Mazuki et al., 2014; Omar et al., 2016a; Omar et al., 2016b; Samsuddin et al., 2016). Also there's an argument by Piirto (1993) and Omar et al. (2014) regarding the reluctant of ICT usage at the rural library. Due to inexistence of internet, there were also youth whose own ICT at their home preferring not to visit the library. This study aims to identify the pattern of ICT usage at the rural library among rural youth community.

Youth and Rural Libraries in Malaysia

It seems that youth have been relate with ICT for a while, because they have starts involves and shifting towards ICT reliance as a whole especially youth in urban areas (Samsuddin, 2014). Inclusive rural youth, their dependence on ICT tools and gadgets has influenced some of them on their lifestyle and information seeking behavior. By the fact that youth is the future generation that will reflects on the development of the nations, it is in consistence to equip them with adequate volume of knowledge and information

(Mazuki et al., 2014). Ministry of Youth and Sports of Malaysia (2007) has defined those ages between 15 to 40 as youth in Malaysia.

Rural library which also known as Perpustakaan Desa was first introduced in 2000, and develops by NLM as an agent of social restructuring which also provide information for rural community growth (NLM, 2011). Beside the main purpose of the rural library is to facilitate and enable the rural community to enjoy reading through numbers of reading material resources, there was also services such as book loan services, reference services, computer services (internet surfing for free), scanner and printer. Rural library has provided an established of central computerized information search through the multimedia forms that could appropriate activities for children and adults as well as promote reading habit among local community.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is quantitative in nature, whereby a questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool. The instrument were built, adopted and adjusted based on earlier studies, reviews of the literature, research questions and the objectives as a guide. The questionnaire design were mainly based on previous study done by Omar et al. (2014) and Samsuddin et al. (2015) which have been through the focus group discussions (FGDs) process and were considered the suitability of the questions were mannerly structured. Their studies on rural library effectiveness and village Wi-Fi services have constructed the demographic and ICT patterns questions of this study. Multi-stage cluster and simple random sampling was used to randomly select four states for data collection, namely Perak, Pulau Pinang, Melaka and Pahang. Each of the states was represented by 100 respondents (100 respondents x 4 districts = 400 respondents). Each of states was represented by four rural libraries with ICT services. Than a total of 25 library users were randomly selected as the respondents for each of the rural library and make the total of the respondents are 400. The sample size (399) was determined based on the prerequisite for the statistical analyses and were based on Taro Yamane (2003) sampling procedure on cumulative registered rural library membership 199,788 (N). The data collection took two months to complete (from January 2016 to February 2016). The data collection process was carried out by trained and experienced enumerators and monitored by the researcher. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS, whereby descriptive analyses such as frequency, percentage and mean score were performed in order to describe the general findings of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The results displayed in Table 2 (below) show the demographic profile of the respondents in this study. The table shows that female respondents are 55% and 45% were male. This is inconsistent with several previous studies on the differences between genders, female more than male respondents when it is related to rural library user (Mohamad Yusoff et al., 2013). Most of the respondents were those ages 15 to 17 years

old (39.8%), followed by those aged 18 - 24 years (26%), aged 31 - 40 years (24.3%) and then those 25 to 30 years of age (10%) which have recorded mean score at 23.2. Most of the rural library users were popular among school students whose are still studying.

Table 1: Study Location

States	Rural Library
Perak	1- Perpustakaan Desa Lekir
	2- Perpustakaan Desa Padang Tembak
	3- Perpustakaan Desa Batu 3 Segari
	4- Perpustakaan Desa Pangkalan Baru
Melaka	1- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Bukit Nangka
	2- Perpustakaan Desa Paya Datuk
	3- Perpustakaan Desa Seri Pengkalan
	4- Perpustakaan Desa Parit Melana
Pulau Pinang	1- Perpustakaan Desa Taman Sempadan
	2- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Besar
	3- Perpustakaan Desa Sg Chenaam
	4- Perpustakaan Desa Batu Kawan
Pahang	1- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Teluk Sentang
	2- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Bintang
	3- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Tanjong Kerayong
	4- Perpustakaan Desa Kg Batu Sawar

During their spare time, they love to visit the library either after school, weekends or during school holidays. Besides completing their assignments and school exercises, they manage to handle discussions and small study group. These statements were in-line with other researcher that has been conducting rural library studies (Anwar and Supaat, 1998; Omar et al., 2016a; Samsuddin et al., 2016).

In terms of ethnicity, most of the respondents were Malay (97.5%), while only 8 Indian (2%) and 2 Chinese (0.5%) have involved in this study. This result clearly shown that, most of the location of the study (rural libraries) was located at Malay village. With regards of education level, 57.8% of the respondents had achieved their secondary education level (secondary school), 34.3% had achieved primary education, and only 8% of the respondents had obtained tertiary education level (degree level). It seems that all the respondents have at least attended the primary school, which have illustrated that nowadays rural community are concerns on their children education. Indirectly it will reflect on how they were able to use the library services provided. Furthermore, employment status of the respondents have explained that most of them unemployed (66.5%) because they were youngsters who are still studying and attending school and as well as fulltime housewives (Norshila et al., 2011). Meanwhile the average mean score of household income of the respondents stated RM2,301.87 monthly which 34.3% earn more than RM2,001.00. The results quite high for household income among rural

communities which can be interpreted that, rural communities in this study earns highly monthly income for their daily livings. Albeit the mean average results, household income ranged from RM801.00 to RM1,500.00 stated second highest (31.3%) household income per month. Most of the respondents declared above poverty line (RM760) according to Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) 2014 annual report.

In terms of household numbers among respondents, 57% of the respondents have 4 to 6 of household members, 27.3% been identified has more than 7 household numbers, and a total of 15.8% number of household less than 3 members. It was observed that rural communities have started to have a thorough family planning which is consistence with Samsuddin et al. (2016) findings. Distance between rural library and user residents also could contribute to rural library usage. In this study, it was recorded that most of the respondents have stated the distance of the nearest rural library and their house was between 101 to 1000 meters (57.5%) with distance mean score 701.09 meters. However, there were also 17% of the respondents reported that rural library distance more than 1001 meters from their residents.

Pattern of ICT Usage

Findings on the pattern of rural library visit among rural youth in Malaysia in table 3, regarding the frequencies of visiting the rural library in a month, most of the respondents visiting 2 to 5 times a month (38.3%), followed by 6 times and more (35.3%) and the rest once a month visiting the rural library (26.5%) which stated the mean scored at 2.09. In addition, the respondents reported that most of them visit the rural library by individually which possibly they are more comfortable or easier to move around and similar results with Samsuddin et al. (2016). It shows that the rural library is still relevant for rural community in Malaysia especially youth (Samsuddin et al., 2016; Samsuddin, 2014; Omar et al., 2012; Anwar and Supaat, 1998). However, Norshila et al. (2011) discovered that the geographical or standards of living factors will affect library user to visit the library.

In terms of duration of time spent on ICT use at the rural library, it has been divided by three situation categories namely weekdays, weekend and school/ semester break. It is discovered that all three situations stated more than two hours the most respondents spent time on ICT use at the rural library with 2.16 mean score on weekdays, 2.64 on weekend and 2.68 mean score on school/ semester break. Meanwhile, the main time majority of the respondents using the ICT at the rural library are between 12.00 pm - 5.00 pm on weekdays or during school/ semester break. While during the weekends, the respondents prefer to use ICT at the rural library during the morning (between 8.00 am - 11.59 am). In the morning most of the respondents are busy with various tasks and responsibilities such as work and school especially on weekdays. The results reflect on the majority of rural library user which is housewives and students (Norshila et al., 2011).

Table 2: Demographic factor

Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	180	45.0	
Female	220	55.0	
Age (years)			23.2
15 - 17	159	39.8	
18 - 24	104	26.0	
25 - 30	40	10.0	
31 - 40	97	24.3	
Ethnic			
Malay	390	97.5	
Indian	8	2.0	
Chinese	2	0.5	
Education level			
Primary education	137	34.3	
Secondary education	231	57.8	
Tertiary education	32	8.0	
Employment status			
Employed	134	33.5	
Unemployed	266	66.5	
Household Income (n = 400)			RM2,301.87
Less than RM800	48	12.0	
RM801 - RM1500	125	31.3	
RM1501 – RM2000	90	22.5	
More than RM2001	137	34.3	
Number of household			
Less than 3	63	15.8	
4 - 6	228	57.0	
More than 7	109	27.3	
Distance from house to rural library (meters)			701.09m
Less than 100m	102	25.5	
101m – 1000m	230	27.5	
More than 1001m	68	17.0	

Furthermore, based on the results shown, Internet/ Wi-Fi have been ranked the most ICT tools frequently used by rural youth at the rural library. Following by computer (desktop/ notebook) second and printer ranked third as a frequently ICT tools been used by rural youth in this study (Samsuddin et al., 2016). More than half of library user enjoys using the Internet in the rural library, and this result has supported by Omar et al. (2016b) research done on Internet usage at the Rural Library among rural youth in Malaysia. In her studied also did mentioned on several purposes rural youth using the Internet such as gain knowledge on the latest information and current issues, stay connected and have a connection through social network sites, and for entertainment purposes (watching videos and playing games). While study done by Buyukbay and Gunduz (2011) on computer and internet use for agricultural development in rural areas in Tokat, Turkey, their findings also revealed that most of the computer user also used Internet for various purposes.

Regarding the changes in information searching and reading habits nowadays, Tenopir (2009) have mentioned that, youth prefer to read electronic materials rather than printed materials. In additional, Norshila (2011) also found that youth prefer to get information from Internet instead of using sources in the library. Hence, not only youth in urban have dependence on ICT for their daily life style, it has contagious to rural youth. Another study done by Samsuddin et al. (2015) has confirmed, that attitude is the main factors in influencing rural youth towards ICT usage.

Table 3: Pattern of visit and ICT usage at the rural library among rural youth in Malaysia

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
How many time you come to the rural library in a month?			2.09
Once	106	26.5	
2 - 5 times	153	38.3	
6 times and more	141	35.3	
How do you visit the rural library?			
Individually	235	58.8	
In group	165	41.3	
Duration of times spent of ICT use at the rural library during weekdays (n = 400) (hours)			2.16
Never	155	38.8	
Less than an hour	90	22.5	
Between an hour to two hours	90	22.5	
More than 2 hours	65	16.3	
Main time using ICT at the rural library during weekdays (n = 400) (hours)			
Never	156	39.0	
Between 8.00 am - 11.59 am	92	23.0	
Between 12.00 pm - 5.00 pm.	152	38.0	

Duration of times spent of ICT use at the rural library during weekend (n = 400) (hours)			2.64
Never	51	12.8	
Less than an hour	129	32.3	
Between an hour to two hours	135	33.8	
2 hours and more	85	21.3	
Main time using ICT at the rural library during weekend (n = 400) (hours)			
Never	51	12.8	
Between 8.00 am - 11.59 am	178	44.5	
Between 12.00 pm - 5.00 pm.	171	42.8	
Duration of times spent of ICT use at the rural library during school and semester holidays (n = 400) (hours)			2.68
Never	76	19.0	
Less than an hour	99	24.8	
Between an hour to two hours	104	26.0	
2 hours and more	121	30.3	
Main time using ICT at the rural library during school and semester holidays			
Never	75	18.8	
Between 8.00 am - 11.59 am	150	37.5	
Between 12.00 pm - 5.00 pm.	175	43.8	
Types of ICT tools frequently used at the rural library (n = 400)			Rank
Desktop/ Notebook (Computer)	186	46.5	2
Internet/ Wifi	213	53.3	1
Printer	92	23.0	3
Scanner	46	11.5	6
Photostat Machine	62	15.5	4
Telephone (fixed line)	38	9.5	7
Fax Machine	9	2.3	9
Television	59	14.8	5
Radio	35	8.8	8
DVD/ VCD Player	9	2.3	10

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that, based on the pattern of ICT usage at the rural library, rural community especially youth still find that ICT provided in rural libraries remains relevant to them. They could possibly use the ICT services for free although within the short time of period (computers). Due to most of the rural library user were housewives and students, the main time preferred for using the ICT at the rural library on weekdays

during the afternoon (12.00 pm - 5.00 pm), while on the weekends, they most prefer during the morning (8.00 am - 11.59 am). Besides that, most of youth today have their own smartphones and gadgets that enable them to use the Internet/ Wi-Fi services at the rural libraries. From the study also, it seems that most of rural youth are IT literate and preferring online information because of the speed in gaining information. It is recommended that, rural library should sustain the ICT services provided for a long time in the future. Although there are some of the rural community are from fortunate family, there are also several library user are not able to have this facilities. The library staff should consider identifying and investigating their user profile in addressing this issue. This will help the administrators serving their patrons in a proper and better way. Several researchers have started to have interests in rural libraries in Malaysia in various kinds of aspects. However, in terms to ensure the rural library establishment purposes continuing in the future, this kind of study should be carried out periodically. Besides that, the governments can starts to collaborate with private or NGOs company to ensure that the financial problems can be overcome and solved in providing long lasting services to the rural communities in terms of community development.

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