

## **A Framework for Exploring the Stage of Public Response on Social Media Sites (SMSs) Towards Social Enterprise in Malaysia**

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Received Date: 7 June 2021

Accepted Date: 16 July 2021

Published Date: 31 July 2021

### **ABSTRACT**

*Social enterprise is popular among researchers because of its contribution and prominence in society. Many entrepreneurs seek to create ventures that not only yield a profit but also add value to society. However, previous studies have found that the level of public awareness of the existence of social enterprises is still low and at an early stage. Thus, they suggest the use of social media as an alternative way to attract attention and create public awareness on social enterprise in Malaysia. This concept paper seeks to explore the stages of public responses to existing social enterprise in Malaysia and discover the role of social media in terms of enhancing social enterprise awareness and promoting social enterprise. There are three stages of public responses used in this concept paper which are 'aware', 'interested' and 'engaged'. Essentially, this concept paper attempts to provide the first insight regarding the stage of social enterprise awareness in Malaysia and to recognize the vital elements in social media sites. To enhance public awareness toward social enterprise existing, this concept paper proposes a storytelling canvas as a support tool to spark the effects of the vital elements. Data could be retrieved from social media (Facebook and Twitter). For data analysis and data management, this paper proposes to use Nvivo to develop the framework and flow of data collection. The expected results can add more value to the theories and identify the stage of public responses towards social enterprise business activities and their social mission.*

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Social Enterprise, Public Response, Storytelling Canvas, Social Media*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The existing social enterprises in Malaysia focuses more on the shareholders and beneficiaries through their business activities (Daud & Othman, 2019). In the meantime, the development of social enterprise in Malaysia is moving forward. Based on a study by the British Council (2018), the number of Malaysian social enterprises had increased. Mostly, they worked hard to sustain their business and

to fulfil their social missions as well as the core of the social enterprises' existence. Currently, the world is facing a threat from the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, the social enterprises still have to play their part to achieve their social missions. Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic has impacted negatively almost all businesses and industrial activities. It also threatens social enterprise development in this country. Still, it indirectly brings advantages to social enterprise. During the first wave, Malaysian local social entrepreneurs stood together to support the front liners in performing their duty (Astro Awani, 2020). The Malaysian government also encouraged the social enterprises which played an important role to communities by providing special initiatives through "*Pakej Rangsangan Ekonomi Prihatin Rakyat (PRIHATIN)*" (Jabatan Audit Negara Malaysia, 2020).

The main purpose of a social enterprise is to balance and maximizing benefits to society and the environment. Many social entrepreneurs seek to create ventures that not only yield a profit but also add significant value to society. The significant value of existing social enterprise needs more support from others (British Council, 2018). Existing social enterprise must be under public awareness (Social Enterprise World Forum, 2018). This is in line with Daud and Othman (2019) who propose that public awareness should be increased through social media sites.

The development of social enterprise in this country has gone through a few phases. It has started to thrive with Malaysia Social Enterprise Blue Print 2015 – 2018 which promoted a "social enterprise" (MaGIC Social Entrepreneurship, 2015) and improve the social function under National Key Results Areas (NKRA) based on the Government Transformation Program 2.0. Currently, it is under National Entrepreneurship Framework under the supervision of the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development (MED) (British Council, 2018). In years past, although the social enterprise has become increasingly popular among researchers because of its contribution and prominence in society, a recent study has shown a rather contradictory tendency. For example, in 2018, the British Council reported the lack of awareness of social enterprise in this country among the public (only 36% awareness). This, to some degree, makes it quite challenging for social enterprises to garner support, recruit and retain quality staff or volunteers. In addition, the low awareness among the public can also be attributed to the absence of legal definition and recognition of social enterprise as a business in Malaysia and confirmed by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP (ESCAP, 2019). Perhaps, as Daud and Othman (2019) stated, such a low level of awareness among the public towards social enterprise is due to it still being at an early stage. Thus, they suggest the use of social media as an alternative means to attract attention and create public awareness on social enterprise in Malaysia (Daud & Othman, 2019). Hence, this concept paper intends to propose a framework to explore the stage of public responses towards existing social enterprise in Malaysia, followed by identifying the elements in the social media that can grow the stage of public responses towards social enterprise. Lastly, this concept paper proposes a storytelling canvas to enhance the stage of public responses towards the business activities and social mission of social enterprises.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Entrepreneur and Social Enterprise

Social enterprises are formed due to the lack of resources to fund social activities (Nicholls 2006). This situation forces social entrepreneurs to move to the "commercial market" to generate income for their social activities. It is done using three ways namely, (1) existing non-profit efforts, (2) the efforts of newly established subsidiaries for the profit and (3) cross-sectorial partnerships with commercial companies. Social enterprise encompasses various sectors which are equally applicable to health, environment, education and social well-being such as economic development programs or job creation (Alter, 2003). Although this type of enterprise is initially less well known, several changes at the global, national and local levels nowadays have subsequently created a complex political, economic and social framework that in turn make the concept of entrepreneurship to have begun to be

accepted and an attraction not only to social entrepreneurs but also academics and the general public (Abdul Kadir & Mhd Sarif, 2016).

Social entrepreneurship is one of the direct approaches used to overcome global social issues through business activities. Many big companies in Malaysia have carried out the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach and charity activities (Ahmad, Sulaiman, & Siswantoro, 2003). Unfortunately, a few reports show that CSR impacts are insufficient to cope with the social issues because the purpose or the attention of a particular CSR is directed towards more on promoting corporate image as opposed to solving social problems and unsustainability impact to communities. The same thing also happens to non-governmental organizations or NGOs (Yap, 2011). Previous studies indicate that social enterprise can provide and sustain social impact through its business activity by focusing less on profit (which often involves the bottom of the pyramid) (Prahalad, 2006). Many governments all over the world have not given any priority to this aspect since the cost is not effective although it has a value (profit and social impact) to the community (Muhammad Yunus & Weber, 2010).

## **Public Responses**

Yaure (1973) argue that awareness is a faculty of the mind, meaning “attention” might be variously directed, at will, into particular phases of the past, the present, or the future. This concept paper seeks to explore the trend of local social enterprise awareness by focusing on direct social reach and share of conversation through social media as proposed by Weiner (2020) i.e. by stressing on three stages of public responses i.e. “aware”, “interested”, and “engaged”. The first stage i.e. “aware” refers to a condition when members of the public get to know the existing social enterprise based on their impression, mention and web visits. The second stage i.e. “interested” refers to a condition when the members of the public have communicated with social enterprise by following and signing up as a social follower. The third stage i.e.; “engaged” refers to a condition when the members of the public get themselves involved directly with social enterprise social and business activities such as by sharing, commenting and joining the programs in person.

## **Social Media**

Daud and Othman (2019) refer to the term of Social Media Sites (SMS) as web-based services used by individuals to construct public or limited profiles within a defined system that list the other users that share connections to the site. Social media have many forms such as social networks like Facebook and Instagram, microblogs like Twitter and Blogs, media-sharing websites like YouTube and Website.

## **Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory**

Media Richness Theory is referring to the ability of information to explain the level of understanding through communication transactions. This theory explained the lower level of communication transactions knows as a lower level of media richness and next is a higher level of media richness. According to Daft and Lengel (1984) in Bergin (2016), the characteristics of media determine the richness of information managed or used. This theory purposing the vital medium depended on the number of channels used (e.g., audio, video, or both), the language variety (e.g., photos), personalization, and the feedback speed (Daft & Lengel 1984; Yang & Kankanhalli, 2014). Meaning that the efficient way to communicate must involve those mediums with facts and fully information (Rice & Shook. 1990; Bergin, 2016). The evaluation of Media Richness Theory focused on exploring media should align with individual needs and jobs demand. The media was used equivalent with the information processing requirements to the task environment.

Nowadays, social media is a very popular communication media used to share information about themselves and the organizations they convey (Ishii et al., 2019). In this study, Uses and Gratifications Theory assist researchers to explain the patterns of social media used for social interaction, information seeking, communicatory utility and information sharing. Based on this theory, social media can help businesses (or Social Enterprises) to market and communicate more effectively with their existing and potential customers. (Whiting & Williams, 2013). According to the characteristics of messages highlighted through social media, previous studies derive three kinds of messages regarding the reason of existing and company information for social mission, and reposts of benefices reviews. Marketing message characteristics can influence the public to awareness of social enterprise business activities and social mission (Yang & Kankanhalli, 2014). Based on these theories assist the researchers to develop a research model to identify the vital elements in social media to increase the trend of awareness among selection social enterprises in this country. The vital elements in the message (share of conversation) will be observed such as a text, text and image, including video and animation. Those vital elements are known as a part of the social media marketing message format (Yang & Kankanhalli, 2014).

### The Storytelling Canvas

According to Kernbach (2018) and Tong et al., (2018), the storytelling canvas can aid social entrepreneurs to combine all the elements, recommendations and best practices of storytelling in a single visual framework. The canvas consists of two parts known as the general conditions and the story elements. Kernbach reports that the general conditions consist of the topic that the story is about, followed by the identification of the audience and their needs using the empathy map canvas. The process of developing an effective story must begin with the “beginning stage”, followed by the “middle stage” and “the end”. The “beginning stage” must start with the question “why” and state the common ground as well as one big idea. Under “middle stage” the seven elements are abbreviated as the SUCCESS formula. The last structure in the storytelling canvas should have “call for action” and “rewards”. The audience at the end is able to receive the inputs provided through storytelling canvas (Kernbach, 2018). The researchers assume that using this canvas, will be able to increase the stage of public responses towards social enterprise business activities. Figure 1 shows the example of a storytelling canvas.

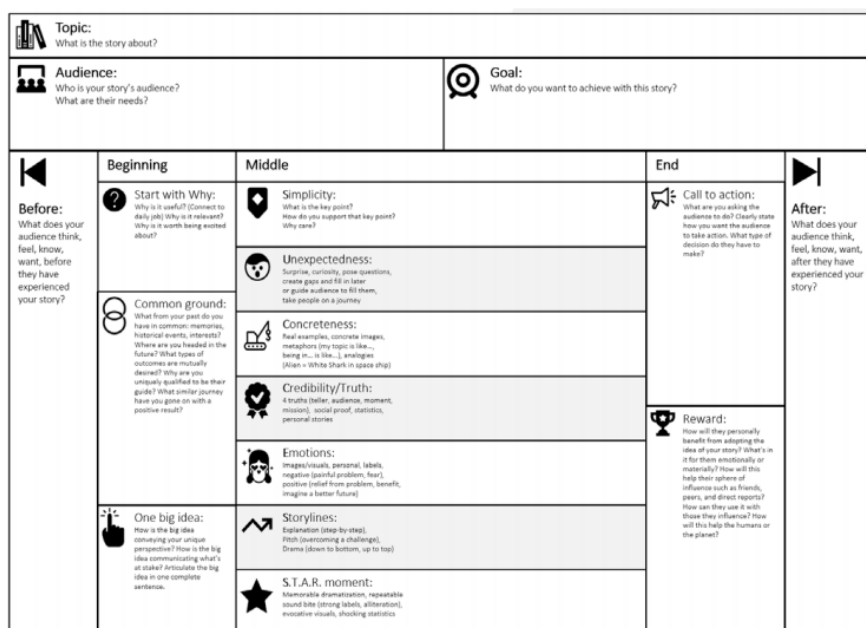


Figure 1: The Example of Storytelling Canvas

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to design a framework by using the Nvivo features to explore the data and extracted the data from the social enterprise's social media. The latest Nvivo features can view detail and answering the research objectives. The researchers also use this software as a medium to organise inputs from the literature review. Based on input provided by Weiner (2020), Daud & Othman (2019), Bergin (2016), Ishii et al., (2019), Kernbach (2018) and Tong et al., (2018), this qualitative study propose research design as explained in results and discussion section below.

### Research Design

This concept paper will suggest research design information, population and sampling technique as well as an instrument for data collection as stated in Table 1. From that, it will proceed to identify the stage of public responses of existing social enterprises in Malaysia in 2020. This section provides detailed information on the research methodology. The use of Nvivo for data analysis and data management is also elaborated.

**Table 1: The Flow of Research Methodology**

Research objectives	Research questions	Sources	Analysis
To explore the stage of public responses on existing social enterprise	At what stage of (awareness/ interest/engagement) public responses are on existing social enterprises in Malaysia?	The data was obtained directly from social media via Facebook and Twitter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content Analysis                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Explore</li> <li>b) Descriptive</li> <li>c) Comparison</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
To identify the elements in social media that can increase the level of public responses towards social enterprise.	Which elements of text, text with picture, or text with animation in social media increase the level of public responses towards social enterprise in Malaysia?		
To propose a storytelling canvas to increase the stage of public responses towards social enterprise business activities.	How the storytelling canvas can aid social enterprise to increase the stage of public responses?	The suggestion from previous studies and practical reports by experts.	

The process manual or protocol is considered a part of the analysis process and it must be aligned with the research objectives. Preliminary data gathering will be collected from the social enterprise that has received the Social Enterprise Accreditation (SEA) from the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development & Cooperatives (MED) and Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) (Digital New Asia, 2020). To help make the finding to be accurately representative of social enterprises in Malaysia, this research will focus only on public responses towards social enterprises through Facebook and Twitter. Figure 2 proposes the framework to explore the stage of public responses towards social enterprise by focusing on social media sites. Lastly, this research suggests a story-telling canvas to increase the stage of public responses towards social enterprise business activities by focusing on the core of the business (product provider, service provider and both business activities provider) and social mission.

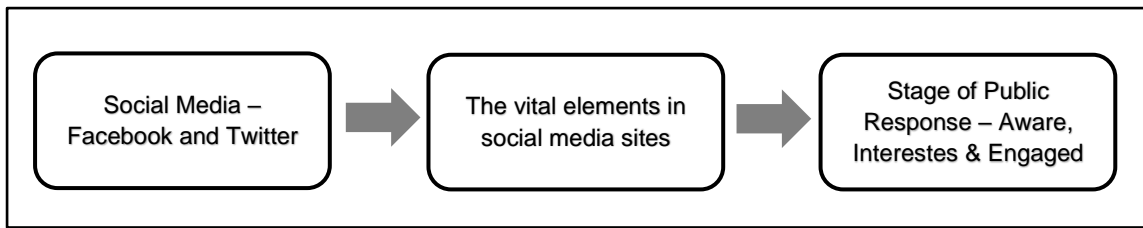


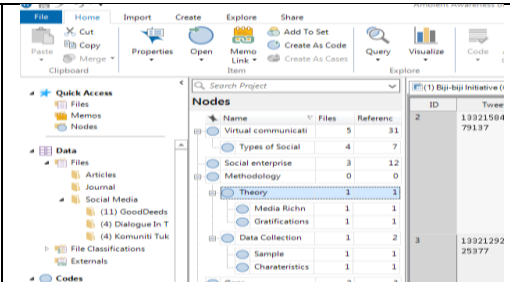
Figure 2: Framework for Explore the stage of Public Responses towards Social Enterprise through Social Media Sites (SMSs)

### Manual Primary Data Collection

Table 2 describes the manual process for data collection. All data will be transferred to Nvivo for the next process. All the inputs will be extracted from the content analysis process by developing Node or Themes.

Table 2: The Flow of Manual Data Collection Process from Social Media Sites

The Flow of Manual Data Collection Process		
<p>Step 1: List of the social media platforms</p>	<p>Identify social media medium or platform e.g. Facebook, and Twitter used by research participants.</p>	
<p>Step 2: Collecting data</p>	<p>The researcher started to collect all the posts, reviews, messages, pictures or videos on the social media platforms</p>	
<p>Step 3: Extract the possible main data and preparation for the analysis process</p>	<p>Develop the Node or Themes.</p>	

The Flow of Manual Data Collection Process		
Step 4: Reorganize the data	Documentation process based on the purpose of the study and analysis process according to techniques	

### Proposed Storytelling Canvas as a Support Tool

After achieving two previous research objectives, researchers generate a proper story design based on the elements identify in social media. By using the seven elements abbreviated as the SUCCESS formula, the researchers will propose and develop a storytelling canvas according to the core of the business (product provider, service provider and both business activities provider) and social mission at the storytelling canvas in the “middle stage”. In this section, researchers will use “the popular identify the elements” such as a text, text and image, including video and animation in social media to i) simplicity the issues, ii) create the unexpectedness, iii) concreteness or support the issues, iv) develop the credibility, v) emotional, vi) create the element of a storyline and lastly to create the “STAR” moment like memorable and dramatization. In the end, storytelling canvas can generate the motivation and action toward to issues highlighted and support the social enterprise business activities as well as their social mission.

### CONCLUSIONS

The proposed study expects to be able to develop a framework to explore the stage of public responses towards existing social enterprise in Malaysia, followed by identifying the elements in the social media that can grow the stage of public responses towards social enterprise. Lastly, this concept paper also proposes a storytelling canvas to enhance the stage of public responses towards the business activities and social mission of social enterprises. It will be able to offer key insights regarding the stage of social enterprise awareness in Malaysia and recognize the vital elements of social media sites. Perhaps, those results can add more value to those theories (Media Richness Theory & Uses and Gratifications Theory) and justify how to use the vital elements in storytelling canvas to increase the stage of public responses towards social enterprise business activities and their social mission. In the end, this expected outcome positively able to sustain the existence of social enterprise in this country.

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