

PROFILING OF APPLICANTS FOR KELULUTPRENEURS INCUBATOR UNDER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT OF UITM CAWANGAN MELAKA AND YAYASAN TM

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Article info

Received:
10/10/2024
Received in Revised Form:
14/12/2025
Accepted:
20/12/2024
Published Online:
28/12/2024

Keywords:
Community Engagement,
Kelulutpreneur,
Entrepreneurship,
Kelulut Farming,
Low-income household.

DOI:
[10.24191/JIPSF/v6n22024_70-79](https://doi.org/10.24191/JIPSF/v6n22024_70-79)

Abstract

A community engagement project is an organized and planned effort to actively involve residents of a particular community in various tasks and decision-making procedures. Such a program encourages shared responsibility, collaboration, and ownership among community members to solve their needs, problems, and goals. UiTM Cawangan Melaka supports low-income communities' economic growth, particularly those with a Kelulut (stingless bee) farming interest. Therefore, in collaboration with Yayasan TM (YTM), UiTM Cawangan Melaka opened the door for suitable individuals to participate in the Kelulutpreneur Incubator Project 2023 to enhance the quality of life for the local low-income community near UiTM. The purpose of this study is to analyse the profile of applicants and to determine suitable candidates for this project. The participant selection procedure involved a two-step screening process. This study adapted an exploratory research method through content analysis of submitted forms by the applicants. The creative profiling of applicants for the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator has offered an innovative and insightful approach to understanding the potential entrepreneurs for the program.

INTRODUCTION

Community involvement is an agenda that has gained traction among institutions of higher learning in recent years, and students who participate in community service are generally regarded positively. Community Engagement is "working collaboratively with and through groups of people linked by

geographic proximity, special interest, or similar circumstances to address issues affecting those people's well-being." It is a potent tool for enacting environmental and behavioural changes to benefit the community and its members' health. Partnerships and coalitions are frequently used to mobilize resources, influence systems, and change relationships among partners and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices (CDC,1997). Community engagement benefits individuals, organizations, and governments. Community engagement enables communities to work with government agencies to impact the communities in which they live and work positively. Community engagement aims to understand a community's needs better so that the government can easily address those needs and enhance the lives of the individuals.

Public universities (UA) are responsible for developing competent personnel in many professions and contributing knowledge and skills to local community development. Multiple initiatives are implemented to bridge the gap between the university and community as part of the university socialization process. This is consistent with the university's objective to publicize its existence as UA so that its presence is felt, and the community hears their voice. Community engagement refers to the process through which organizations and individuals work together to create a continuity or relationship that benefits the community through high-impact community programs.

UiTM hosted the first conference on sustainable development for community empowerment on the 23rd of August 2023. At the International Conference on Sustainable Development for Community Empowerment (unitE2023), researchers and industry professionals convened online to discuss approaches to building communities through university-community partnerships. UiTM Cawangan Melaka continues to promote the economic growth of low-income areas, notably those interested in Kelulut (stingless bee) farming. As a result, in conjunction with Yayasan TM (YTM), UiTM Cawangan Melaka invites qualified individuals to join the Kelulutpreneur Incubator Project 2023, which aims to improve the quality of life for the local low-income community in the area surrounding UiTM Cawangan Melaka.

This study aims to analyse application profiles and select the best individuals for this project. The participant selection technique included a two-step screening procedure. Through content analysis of the applicants' submitted forms, this study adopts the exploratory research approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Engagement

The term "community engagement" refers to the cooperative process of working with and through groups of people who share geographic proximity, common interests, or comparable situations to solve issues affecting their well-being, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2011). According to a more contemporary interpretation, community involvement is people coming together via inspired action and learning to create and realize lofty aspirations for their shared future (Born, 2012). In all cases, community engagement is centred on working together to address common issues or goals. Establishing trust and cultivating connections that result in enduring collaborations and, eventually, positive outcomes that improve the quality of life for community people are the primary goals of community involvement. There are nine key concepts that leaders and organizations should consider in creating successful engagement procedures and partnerships, according to the concepts of Community Engagement (CDC, 2011). These guidelines are divided into three categories: things to think about before starting, crucial components for engagement, and crucial elements for guaranteeing successful involvement.

Community engagement is the practice of actively involving and working with people, groups, or organizations to address problems and make decisions that have an impact on their well-being and the general improvement of the community. It involves giving people the chance to engage in and contribute to forming projects, policies, programs, or initiatives that have an impact on their lives. Community

involvement aims to include residents in the decision-making process and goes beyond merely sharing facts. This can be done in several ways, such as by asking for feedback, integrating locals in project planning and implementation, working with stakeholders, promoting community empowerment, bringing significant concerns to light, and fostering open discussions.

Community engagement is viewed as a crucial component to democratic governance and social development since it guarantees that community needs, and preferences are met. Community engagement attempts to actively involve members of the community in the decision-making process, going beyond merely educating people about decisions or actions that are being taken. This can be accomplished through a variety of techniques and strategies. First is consultation; getting the community's opinion and feedback before making choices or putting plans into action. Second, participation involves residents in the conception, development, and implementation of projects, initiatives, or programs. Third, collaboration is the process of cooperatively developing strategies and solutions with stakeholders, organizations, and people in the community. Fourth is empowerment by giving community members the tools, knowledge, and assistance they need to take charge of their own needs and problems. Next, information sharing and public awareness-building regarding significant concerns affecting the neighbourhood and finally making opportunities for open and honest communication during dialogue.

Young people's involvement in communities has drawn much attention in academic and practical contexts. Early research in this field centred on issues including adolescent cognitive development, the stability of intergenerational dynamics, and political socialization (see Flanagan 2004). Through the prisms of civic engagement and social capital, the involvement of young people within communities has been studied in more recent decades (Coleman 1988; Jarrett et al. 2005). The term "youth" in our context refers to both teenagers and those in their early to mid-twenties.

The term "community" has many different meanings, ranging from small, neighbourhood-level collectives to larger, even global, ones (Kadushin et al. 2005). Young people actively participate and assert their influence in the environments around them through a variety of interconnected processes, primarily through formal and informal organizations and civic activities within the communities they are situated in. This definition of youth community engagement is based on these constituent elements.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is the process of starting and running companies with the dual goals of making a profit and having a beneficial social or environmental impact. These endeavours strive to be financially viable while addressing a variety of societal challenges, including poverty, healthcare, education, and environmental sustainability. Using creative and long-lasting solutions is the primary objective to bring about positive change. Businesses that engage in social business, namely a kind of business centred on resolving environmental and social issues while maintaining a profitable operation, contribute significantly to society and the common good. Social enterprises are committed to solving particular environmental or social issues. They make a difference by coming up with creative answers to issues like hunger, poverty, access to healthcare, clean water, and environmental sustainability.

The long-lasting effect comes next. As opposed to traditional NGOs that rely on donations and grants, social businesses aim to be financially independent. They contribute to long-term solutions by creating income-generating strategies that allow them to keep tackling social issues without just relying on outside funding. Additionally, social enterprises can help create jobs. Social businesses frequently offer job possibilities, especially in places or among groups who are struggling financially. The creation of these jobs boosts the regional economy. The creation of income is the next contribution of social business as it enables marginalized and vulnerable populations the opportunity to generate income. Possible outcomes of this are lowering poverty and raising living standards. Innovative Business Models can also be used in social business. New business models combining profit and social impact can be

pioneered by social businesses. These inventions can act as role models for other businesses hoping to bring about constructive change.

Other than that, one of the most important aspects of social companies is measuring and reporting their environmental and social impact through constant impact monitoring and transparency. They are in favour of responsibility and openness in the social sector. Numerous social enterprises conduct educational and awareness campaigns to raise public knowledge of critical social and environmental issues to foster a more understanding and compassionate society. The close engagement between the social companies and the community fosters a sense of ownership and duty among community members, which further aids in social evolution. Lastly, involvement in alliances and teamwork where in order to increase their influence, social entrepreneurs usually collaborate with NGOs, governments, and other stakeholders. These partnerships support a coordinated strategy for addressing societal issues. The contributions of social businesses are particularly relevant in the context of the "double bottom line," where they aim to achieve both financial sustainability and positive social or environmental impact. These contributions help create a more inclusive, sustainable, and socially responsible business ecosystem.

This Kelulutpreneur Incubator project practices social business, and the collaboration between the community, university and company or agency Yayasan TM as grant sponsors will contribute to increasing the household income of community.

Entrepreneurship Program

The goal of the entrepreneurship program is to cultivate the abilities, know-how, and attitude required to launch and run a profitable company. A variety of methods, including seminars, workshops, mentorships, and courses, can be used to carry out the program. Many target groups, including women, students, recent graduates, labourers, and rural areas, can be catered for in entrepreneurship initiatives (Kuratko, 2016). The process of developing something novel and worthwhile while taking chances and dealing with uncertainty is known as entrepreneurship (Hashim, Othman, & Buang, 2009; Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2017). Motivation, attitude, knowledge, skills, and personality are the five pillars of entrepreneurial preparedness (Bolton & Thompson, 2000).

The fundamental components of an entrepreneurship program consist of five essential areas that must be addressed to ensure the success of entrepreneurs. The intrinsic force that drives individuals to achieve their entrepreneurial aspirations is termed motivation. Neck, Neck, and Murray (2018) identify these incentives as the aspiration for success, financial autonomy, and personal satisfaction. Secondly, attitude delineates an individual's viewpoints and approaches to addressing the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship. Success necessitates an optimistic and proactive mentality, as it empowers entrepreneurs to surmount obstacles and capitalize on possibilities (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Third, comprehending the market, products, and business strategy is crucial. Entrepreneurship programs provide the knowledge necessary for making strategic and informed decisions (Rae, 2007). Fourth, possessing practical skills such as marketing, business operations, and financial management is essential. To enable entrepreneurs to proficiently oversee their businesses, these programs often integrate practical training to enhance these skills (Kuratko, 2016). Finally, possessing the appropriate psychological traits—such as resilience, creativity, and collaboration—is essential for entrepreneurial success. Ali, Topping, and Tariq (2019) assert that entrepreneurs with robust personalities are more adept at navigating challenges and adapting to shifts in the business landscape.

Previous research on the elements influencing entrepreneurs' success and the ways in which entrepreneurship programs can foster their growth has demonstrated the effectiveness of this curriculum. One study that looks at the level of entrepreneurship among small and medium-sized business owners that are registered with the Southeast Johor Development Authority (KEJORA) is that conducted by Razuan, Zaimah, and Sarmila (2019). Entrepreneurial quality is measured in this study using personality

traits, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneur development programs. The study's findings demonstrated that entrepreneurship had a reasonable level of quality, with the orientation component having the biggest impact. This demonstrates that in order to improve the caliber of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial orientation is a crucial component that must be taken into consideration in entrepreneurship programs.

Furthermore, Johnes et al. (2018) investigated the prosperity of traditional Kuih business owners in Sabah's Papar District. Capital, location, skills, marketing, innovation, family support, and government backing were all recognized by the study as predictors of success. The study's findings demonstrated a strong link between these elements and traditional Kuih entrepreneurs' success. This analysis highlights how crucial it is for entrepreneurship programs to provide comprehensive support that covers marketing expertise, strategic location, and financial considerations.

González et al. (2024) analyze the pivotal choices encountered by start-up entrepreneurs during the initial phases. These considerations encompass the choice of company models, marketing methods, and finance sources. This study aggregates options according to their significance and usefulness for entrepreneurship programs, aiding participants in comprehending the critical choices required in the initial phases of their organization. This indicates that coaching in strategic decision-making is a crucial element of entrepreneurship programs.

Subsequently, Al-Moaid and Almarhdi (2024) investigate the significance of change management in the success of digital transformation initiatives within entrepreneurship. Digital transformation necessitates dynamic capabilities that can adjust to technical and market fluctuations. The research highlights the necessity for entrepreneurship programs to integrate components of digital transformation to enable participants to compete in the digital economy. The capacity to adapt to emerging technology is essential for the success of contemporary entrepreneurs.

Amaral et al. (2024) assessed the impact of entrepreneurship education on individual entrepreneurial orientation among university students. Effective entrepreneurship education can enhance students' inclination to establish their own enterprises. This study demonstrates the significance of entrepreneurship education programs in cultivating future entrepreneurs. This underscores that an education centered on entrepreneurship can establish a robust basis for future entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, entrepreneurship programs are crucial in cultivating successful entrepreneurs. The curriculum can facilitate individual success in entrepreneurship with adequate training, mentorship, and support. Entrepreneurial preparedness, encompassing motivation, attitude, knowledge, abilities, and personality, is essential for success. Case studies indicate that elements such as finance, location, and familial and governmental support are crucial for entrepreneurial success. Moreover, pivotal judgments in an initial phase, digital transformation, and proficient entrepreneurial education are essential components to consider in an entrepreneurship program.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Study Design

A preliminary was conducted on 1st until 28th February 2023. The respondents are the applicants for the Kelulutpreneur Incubator Project 2023, a community engagement project between UiTM Cawangan Melaka with Yayasan TM (YTM).

1. Research Design:

This study implied descriptive research design, which describes the characteristics of the respondents. It determines to provide a clear picture of their demographic, socioeconomic, and entrepreneurial background. We used a survey involves assortment of information from representative target respondents using the designed questionnaire. A semi-structured survey questionnaire was designed to collect relevant information.

2. Data Collection Tool:

For this study, structured questionnaire was used for collecting data. This structured questionnaire includes closed-ended questions to collect specific data about the respondents' background.

A total of thirty-two applicants have provided complete information for this study. The number of respondents is dependently on the number of zakat recipients under Melaka State Religious Islamic Centre or Majlis Agama Islam Melaka (MAIM), that categorized as asnaf fakir and miskin. The selected respondents are those who live nearby UiTM Campus (Lendu, Alor Gajah and Masjid Tanah).

3. Elements to Include in the Questionnaire:

The open-ended questions are divided into four sections. Firstly, demographic information such as age, gender, education level, number of dependent and marital status were asked. Secondly, socioeconomic background; their employment status, income level, and household size. The survey also asking their entrepreneurial experience such as previous/current entrepreneurial experience, business ownership, or any specific experience related to kelulut honey production or agriculture. Lastly, they were asked on motivation and aspirations for wanting to join the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator, especially their reasons for wanting to join Future business aspirations related to kelulut honey or entrepreneurial goals

4. Sampling Method:

The Census or Simple Random Sampling was used because the total number of respondents is manageable, and all applicants participated. So, every possible subject has an equal chance of being selected.

The feedback from the respondents compiled the profiling procedure that considered many aspects of the individuals' backgrounds and goals. This involved compiling demographic and socioeconomic information, investigating their entrepreneurial experience and identifying their driving forces.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 32 applications were submitted between February 1 and February 28, 2023. Data gathered through the Google form was subjected to frequency counts. In other words, the subjects' responses for each question were added together to find the highest frequency of occurrence (i.e., the number of times a particular response occurs). These responses to the questions, which were quantified, are then presented in percentage forms. The findings of the respondents' demographic profile are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Demographics

| | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | Below 20 years old | 1 | 3.12 |
| | 21-25 | 1 | 3.12 |
| | 26-30 | 3 | 9.38 |
| | 31-35 | 5 | 15.63 |
| | 36-40 | 3 | 9.38 |

| | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| | 41-45 | 2 | 6.25 |
| | 46-50 | 2 | 6.25 |
| | 51-55 | 5 | 15.63 |
| | 56-60 | 4 | 12.90 |
| | 61-65 | 3 | 9.38 |
| | Above 66 years old | 3 | 9.38 |
| Gender | Male | 31 | 96.87 |
| | Female | 1 | 3.12 |
| Race | Malay | 30 | 93.75 |
| | Chinese | 2 | 6.25 |
| Religion | Islam | 32 | 100 |
| Income | > RM2500 | 3 | 9.37 |
| | RM2100- RM2400 | 4 | 12.5 |
| | RM1600-RM2000 | 7 | 21.8 |
| | RM1000-RM1500 | 9 | 28.1 |
| | <RM1000 | 6 | 18.8 |
| | Not fixed | 3 | 9.37 |
| Status of Marriage | Married | 28 | 87.5 |
| | Divorce | 2 | 6.25 |
| | Single | 2 | 6.25 |

The frequency distribution of age groups and corresponding percentages were shown in this table. Eleven different age groups, ranging from "Below 20 years old" to "Above 66 years old," were used to categorize the population. With five people apiece, the age categories of 31–35 and 51–55 have the highest frequency. However, in the "Below 20 years" and "21–25 years" groups, the lowest frequency is 1. Most participants were in the middle age range (31–60 years), which seems to be the center of the population distribution. There were fewer people in the younger (less than 30) categories than in the middle-aged and older groups. There is only one female (3.12%) and 31 males (96.87%) in the population. This demonstrated that there are comparatively few women among the applicants, who are overwhelmingly men.

Two Chinese (6.25%) and thirty Malay (93.75%) make up the population. This suggested that Malay people make up the majority of B40 households interested in kelulutpreneurial, with very few members of other races. Muslims make up one hundred percent of the candidates. Three people (9.37%) made more than RM2500, and four people (12.5%) made between RM2100 and RM2400. Seven people made between RM1600 and RM2000 (21.8%). Nine people (28.1%) made between RM1000 and RM1500. Six people made less than RM1000 (18.8%). Three (9.37%) do not have a fixed income. Most make between RM1000 and RM1500 or RM1600 and RM2000. Less than RM1000 or more than RM2500 are earned by a smaller percentage. The distribution of income is skewed towards middle- and lower-class individuals.

Most of the population is married, with very few being single or divorced. Married (28 individuals, 87.5%), Divorced (2 individuals, 6.25%) and Single (2 individuals, 6.25%). The population is homogeneous in terms of race (Malay majority) and religion (100 percent Islam), we can conclude. Because men make up most participants, the field is controlled by men. With a large proportion of people in the RM1000–RM2000 range, the majority of people are in the middle-income category. A considerable portion of the population is married.

DISCUSSION

The participant selection strategy for the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator project used a two-step screening procedure. This study employs the explanatory research method through an analysis of the data provided on the forms by the candidates. The results of the study were applied in the subsequent stages of participant screening. Even though there were many applicants interested in this programme, they did not meet the requirements for the B40 income level. Thus only 32 applications were granted at the end of the period. This was done before the suitability of the place is evaluated.

This program targets the difficulties and obstacles that Kelulutpreneurs might face in their beekeeping ventures, such as finding resources for Kelulut farming, marketing honey and associated products, or understanding the nuances of beekeeping legislation. The incubator also offers specialized educational materials and training to further develop their entrepreneurial talents. Moreover, by customising support services, the incubator provides coaching and guidance that align with the distinct aspirations and goals of each Kelulutpreneur. This not only enables participants to surmount problems but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to their beekeeping pursuits. The outcome is a more vibrant and thriving network of entrepreneurs, enabling the Kelulutpreneurs to optimise their potential, use their talents, and address their particular needs.

In the end, this partnership between Yayasan TM and UiTM Cawangan Melaka is a prime example of how innovative thinking and community involvement can foster sustainable development and entrepreneurship. It presents a viable path for advancing Kelulut beekeeping as a source of income and community development.

CONCLUSION

The profiling of applicants for the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator under the Community Engagement Project of UiTM Cawangan Melaka and Yayasan TM plays a crucial role in ensuring that the most suitable and capable candidates are selected to participate in this initiative. Kelulut farming, as both a business venture and an environmentally sustainable practice, requires participants who are not only passionate about agriculture but also possess the drive to innovate and respond to market needs effectively.

Additionally, the profiling ensures that applicants are aligned with the broader objectives of the incubator, which aim to improve community livelihoods, foster environmental stewardship, and promote economic resilience. By identifying individuals who are not only skilled but also committed to uplifting their communities, the project fosters a holistic approach to development, where economic success is intertwined with social responsibility.

The partnership between UiTM Cawangan Melaka and Yayasan TM enhances the impact of this incubator by combining academic expertise with corporate social responsibility, thus providing a comprehensive support system for the selected participants. This collaborative effort creates an environment where kelulutpreneurs can access both technical guidance and business mentorship, further increasing their chances of success.

In conclusion, the creative profiling of applicants is a forward-thinking and strategic component of the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator. It ensures that the selected individuals have the potential to succeed not only in kelulut farming but also as socially responsible entrepreneurs, ultimately contributing to the long-term goals of economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. The collaboration between UiTM and Yayasan TM underscores the significance of such initiatives in driving community-based development through innovative entrepreneurship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The success of the Kelulutpreneurs Incubator under the Community Engagement Project of UiTM Cawangan Melaka would not have been possible without the generous support and partnership of Yayasan TM (YTM). We sincerely acknowledge YTM's commitment to empowering local communities and fostering sustainable development through this collaboration. Their contribution, both in resources and expertise, has been instrumental in nurturing the next generation of innovative kelulutpreneurs. We deeply appreciate YTM's dedication to creating meaningful opportunities for economic growth and environmental stewardship, ensuring that the project has a lasting impact on both the participants and their communities.

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