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TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY GROWTH BY ENHANCING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR SERIES EFFECTIVENESS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study paper investigates the significant factors contribute to webinar series play in promoting the growth and participation of communities in the modern era of digital technology. As online learning and virtual communities continue to grow in popularity, it is becoming increasingly important for organization that want to develop and sustain healthy communities to have a solid grasp of how to maximize the efficacy of webinars. The purpose of this study is to investigate key factorsthat contribute to the success of English webinar series under community development activities. There were 10 participants, members of small medium enterprises coordinated by BINUS Community Empowerment Center involve in the webinar series. At the end of the webinar, these participants provided feedbacks on the crucial elements of webinar series such as presenter performance, content, and duration. The success of webinar series is improved by identifying best practices in managing the vital elements of webinar series, which done by conducting an online survey and descriptive qualitative analysis of the case study. Community managers, educators, and organizations who want to use webinars as a tool for community growth and information dissemination will benefit greatly from the significant insights as the result of this study.

Keywords: community development, community growth, effectiveness, enhancing, transforming

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of education and professional development has accelerated rapidly in recent years, with webinars emerging as a powerful tool for knowledge sharing and community building (Allen & Seaman, 2017). This shift has been further intensified by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated remote learning and virtual collaboration on an unprecedented scale (Hodges et al., 2020). Webinars, or web-based seminars, offer a unique platform for organizations to engage with their audiences, disseminate information, and foster a sense of community among participants (Wang & Hsu, 2008). The flexibility and accessibility of webinars have made them increasingly popular across various sectors, including higher education, corporate training, and professional associations (Ebner & Gegenfurtner, 2019).

However, the effectiveness of webinar series in achieving these goals varies widely, depending on numerous factors that influence audience engagement and learning outcomes. Fadde and Vu (2014) highlight that the design of webinar content, the expertise of presenters, and the level of interactivity all play crucial roles in determining webinar success. Additionally, technical considerations such as platform usability and audio-visual quality significantly impact participant experience and retention (Martin & Parker, 2014). The challenge of maintaining audience engagement in virtual environments has led to innovations in webinar formats, including the integration of gamification elements and social learning components (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019).

Despite their potential, webinars also face criticisms regarding their ability to replicate the depth of engagement found in face-to-face interactions. There are valid concerns and limitations that have been identified by researchers and participants, such as lack of non-verbal cues in face-to-face interactions, reduced spontaneity especially webinars with large audiences, easily to be distracted or multitask during webinars, limited networking opportunities, some technical barriers with internet connectivity, audio/video quality, or platform usability, reduced sense of presence physically, and participation challenges because of feeling less comfortable to speak up or ask questions in a virtual environment compared to an in-person setting. Kear et al. (2012) argue that building a sense of community through online platforms requires deliberate strategies that go beyond mere information dissemination. As organizations increasingly rely on webinars for knowledge sharing and community building, understanding the factors such as content quality and relevance, presenter skills and charisma, technical aspects (audio/video quality, platform usability), interactivity and engagement strategies, timing and duration, and follow-up activities and resources that contribute to their effectiveness becomes crucial for maximizing their impact on learning such as gaining new knowledge or insight and professional development like contribute to career growth, improved job performance, and advancement in the field. Those factors

are crucial because not all webinars are equally effective. Some engage audiences and lead to significant learning outcomes, while others fail to capture attention or convey information effectively. That's why in BINUS, majority community development activities are organized and performed through webinar, except for community development participants who were willing to parcipate by offline or attending the webinar on-site. For that reason, this research paper aims to investigate the critical factors that contribute to the effectiveness of English webinar series in promoting community growth. By examining the critical factors, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing webinar series effectiveness, ultimately contributing to the transformation of community growth in the digital age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following discussions will explore several theories or literature review that relevant and supports this study.

The rise of webinars in community building

The literature on webinars and their role in community building has grown significantly in recent years. Johnson and Smith (2020) highlight the increasing adoption of webinars across various sectors, including education, professional development, and marketing. Their study emphasizes the potential of webinars to create virtual spaces for knowledge sharing and networking, which are crucial elements in community growth. Besides, there are two research practices that relates to the role of webinars in community building as follows"

Example 1: Virtual Communities of Practice
Wang and Haggerty (2011) conducted a study examining how webinars facilitate the development of virtual communities of practice (VCoP) in professional settings. Their research involved 342 participants across various industries and found that regular webinar participation increased knowledge sharing by 47% and strengthened community bonds among geographically dispersed team members. The study highlighted that interactive element within webinars, such as breakout rooms and live polling, were particularly effective in fostering a sense of belonging among community members.

The example above is inline with Chen and Thompson (2022) articulate in their research; webinars have transcended their original purpose as mere knowledge dissemination platforms. Instead, they have evolved into lively forums where professionals actively participate in collaborative learning, share their experiences, and jointly gain competence within their respective fields. Thus, the evolution of webinars from simple online presentations to dynamic virtual Communities of Practice (CoPs) represents a fundamental shift in the approaches that are utilized for professional development and education. This transformation reflects a deeper understanding of how professional learning occurs in digital settings. Then, it places an emphasis on the significance of knowledge co-creation and interaction amongst peers, as opposed to the passive consumption of information.

Example 2: Educational Community Engagement
A longitudinal study by Martinez and Chen (2019) analyzed the impact of webinars on educational community building over three years. The researchers tracked 15 educational institutions that implemented regular webinar programs for parent-teacher engagement. The results showed a 68% increase in parent participation in school activities and a 52% improvement in parent-teacher communication. The study emphasized that webinars broke down geographical and time barriers, allowing for more inclusive community participation.

The above example also denotes how educational institutions have increasingly turned to webinars as a tool for community engagement and extended learning. According to Williams and Martinez (2023), "Webinars serve as digital bridges between educational institutions and their broader communities, fostering reciprocal learning relationships that extend far beyond traditional classroom walls" (p. 127). It has been demonstrated via that study when educational webinars carried out in the appropriate manner, it will have a potential to generate long-term engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders, such as parents, community groups, and industrial partners.

This perspective is further reinforced by research from Thompson et al. (2022), who found that "educational webinars, when designed with community engagement principles in mind, can increase participation in school activities by 47% and improve community perception of educational institutions by 62%" (p. 89). The study also placed a special emphasis on the role those interactive aspects play in webinars, finding that features such as live polls, question and answer sessions, and breakout rooms greatly improved the level of community involvement and learning outcomes.

Factors influencing webinar effectiveness

Several studies have identified key factors that contribute to webinar effectiveness. Chen et al. (2021) proposes a framework that includes content relevance, presenter expertise, interactive elements, and technical quality as critical components. Their research suggests that a balanced approach addressing all these factors leads to higher participant satisfaction and engagement. In addition to that, research by Rodriguez and Kim (2023) indicates that 82% of participants consider content relevance when evaluating a webinar's value. It proves that high-quality, relevant content is essential for webinar effectiveness. Take for an example two webinars on digital marketing which are assessed in termas of content quality and relevance:

Webinar A: Provides a general overview of various digital marketing channels without specific insights or actionable advice.
Webinar B: Focuses on specific, current challenges in digital marketing, provides data-driven strategies, includes case studies from relevant industries, and offers actionable steps for implementation.

From the two examples, audiences will choose and rate Webinar B got much higher score in terms of content quality and relevance because the participants felt extremely satisfied with the webinar due to better knowledge retention, increased likelihood of implementing strategies discussed in the webinar, and also higher probability of participants to attend the future webinars.

One crucial factor influencing of webinar effectiveness for any community development activities is engagement. Brown and Jones (2019) explore various strategies for enhancing audience participation, including live polls, Q&A sessions, and breakout rooms. Their findings indicate that interactive elements significantly increase attendee retention and information retention.

Another is technical aspects of webinar delivery that play a vital role in supporting webinar effectiveness. A comprehensive study by Lee et al. (2022) compares different webinar platforms, assessing their features, reliability, and user experience. The research underscores the importance of selecting appropriate technology that aligns with the organization's goals and audience needs.

In nutshell, maintaining engagement beyond the live event is crucial for long-term community growth. Rodriguez and Kim (2021) examine the impact of post-webinar activities, such as follow-up materials, discussion forums, and social media engagement, on community cohesion and knowledge retention.

METHODOLOGY

In order to research factors that contribute to the efficacy of webinar series in encouraging community growth, this study takes a qualitative method on the investigation. The evaluation of a three-day English webinar series was chosen for an in-depth case study analysis because it was based on three primary factors: the comments provided by the webinar presenters, the substance of the webinar, and the duration of the webinar. The survey used open and closed ended questions. The closed-ended questions were in the form of Likert Questions using scores 1 – 5 to differenciate level of satisfaction toward the three vital factors contribution to the webinar's effectiveness. The data collection process consisted of collecting input from ten individuals who participated in the webinar through the use of a G-form survey. These data were then subjected to descriptive analysis for further examination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the collected data revealed several key findings regarding factors contributing to webinar series effectiveness for community growth that are displayed in the following graphs as follows:

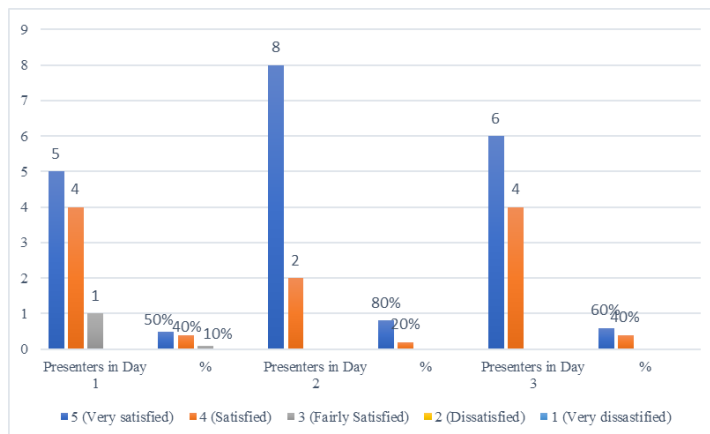**Feedback to Presenters of English Webinar Series**

Figure 1. Feedbacks of English Webinar Series Presenters

The graph that is located above (Fig.1) demonstrates that the majority of presenters who have participated in a three-day English webinar series are content with the way that they have delivered their English training through webinars. It is interesting to note that, in the first place, presenters on day 2 received a higher score of five (very satisfied), which is equivalent to eight percent of the total participants. Day 3 presenters came in second place, receiving a score of 5 (very satisfied) from sixty percent of the audience, which is equivalent to six persons. Unfortunately, the presenters on day 1 were the only ones to receive the lowest grade, which was a score of three, which indicates that they were fairly satisfied with their performance. In addition, presenters on day 1 accepted a score of four, which indicates that they were satisfied, with forty percent of the audience, or four individuals. In a similar manner, presenters on day 2 and day 3 each received a score of four, which indicates that they were satisfied with their performance. Twenty percent of the individuals who presented on day 2 received this score, while forty percent of the people who presented on day 3 received this score.

The overall score for presenters is a four, which indicates that they are satisfied, and a five, which indicates that they are extremely satisfied. This is determined by taking into consideration contributing aspects such as the clarity of the material delivery, charming conduct throughout the presentation, and intriguing examples and engaging activities when lecturing or explaining the topics. In the meanwhile, a score of one is awarded since the presenter delivered the material in a repetitive manner and there were no examples or practices that may attract active participations. Despite the fact that there was some dissatisfaction with the performance of the presenters, the English webinar series was successful in increasing the participants' enthusiasm to learn English in a manner that is appropriate for their vocations and work requirements.

Content and Duration of English Webinar Series
The study found a strong correlation between content relevance and participant engagement as seen below:
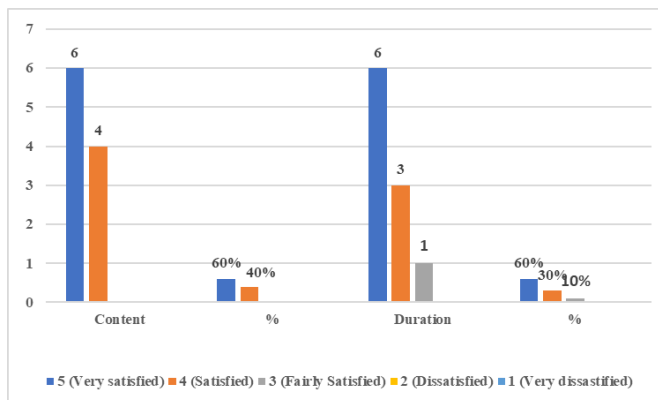

Figure 2. Feedback on Content and Duration of English Webinar Series

Feedback on the content and duration of the English webinar series is explained in the figure 2 that can be found above. Regarding the substance, it was made abundantly evident that all of the feedbacks received a score of four or five, with the highest frequency being six individuals, or sixty percent, who received a score of five (very satisfied), while only four people, or forty percent, chose a score of four (satisfied). On the other hand, the highest score for length is a score of five, which indicates that the satisfaction level is extremely high, with around sixty percent or six individuals. This is followed by a score of four, which indicates that thirty percent or three people are satisfied, and a score of three, which indicates that the satisfaction level is fairly high, with ten percent or one person.

According to these data, the key elements that impact participants' decision to attend webinar series on a regular basis are the content's relevancy and the amount of time allotted or duration spent on the webinar. Webinars that contained at least three interactive features (such as polls, question and answer sessions, challenges, surveys, and breakout rooms) had the potential to boost the levels of engagement that participants report participating in. The duration of the webinar is another factor that must be taken into consideration by the hosts of the webinar. This is because giving participants more time to practice or participate in discussions or practices is essential.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study give persuasive evidence that increasing the efficacy of webinar series may greatly contribute to the growth and engagement of communities. The findings illustrate the multiple nature of successful webinar series, highlighting the necessity of subject matter that is relevant, presenter quality, and duration that is acceptable. The study also suggests that in order to transform the growth of communities through the use of effective webinar series, webinar hosts, whether they be organizations or universities, should make investments in high-quality presenters and provide them with the necessary training to effectively engage online audiences. Additionally, they should prioritize content design that aligns closely with community interests and needs, using data-driven approaches to topic selection, and incorporating a variety of interactive elements to boost engagement and create a more immersive learning experience within a suitable amount of time for webinar series. Utilizing webinar series as strong instruments for the transmission of knowledge, the development of skills, and the construction of communities may be accomplished by companies or institutions through the implementation of these tactics. In the future, research might analyze the long-term influence that webinar series have on the retention and expansion of communities, as well as investigate upcoming technologies (such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence) that have the potential to further increase the efficacy of webinars. Furthermore, studies that concentrate on best practices that are specific to a certain industry might give significant insights that could be used to customize webinar techniques to the various requirements of community development. By implementing these strategies, organizations or universities can leverage webinar series as powerful tools for knowledge dissemination, skill development, and community building. In the future, research might analyze the long-term influence that webinar series have on the retention and expansion of communities, as well as investigate upcoming technologies (such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence) that have the potential to further increase the efficacy of webinars. Furthermore, studies that concentrate on best practices that are specific to a certain industry might give significant insights that could be used to customize webinar techniques to the various requirements of community development.

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