



PROSIDING SEMINAR ANTARABANGSA INOVASI MASJID KETIKA PANDEMIK 2021 (SIMPan21)

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**MOHD NASIR MASROOM
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[10] REDESIGN BUSINESS MODEL OF MASJID KITCHENS AS SOUP KITCHENS, PROVIDING JOBS EMPLOYMENT AND NURTURING OF ASNAF AS ENTREPRENEURS, AND INCOME GENERATION FOR THE MASJID

By:

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ABSTRACT

A survey conducted by the Department of Statistics Malaysia in May 2020 has found that: (a) 46.6% of self-employed respondents had reported losing their jobs; (b) an estimated 90% respondents were still working with lower than usual salaries; (c) more than two-thirds (71.4%) of self-employed respondents have sufficient financial savings for less than one month; and (d) the majority of respondents said they are unprepared if the duration of the MCO was extended except for employees under Government Linked Companies and multinational companies. In the "Families on The Edge" UNICEF report dated October 2020, COVID-19 crisis has pushed more low-income (or B40) urban Malaysian families into poverty. The poverty rate in the B40 community is higher than last year, with 50% of the families now living in absolute poverty. 70% of these households reported that COVID-19 had affected their ability to meet their basic living expenses, with 37% reporting that they struggle to purchase enough food for their families while 35% are unable to pay their bills on time. Hence, the main objectives of this paper is to offer a conceptual business model in turning masjid kitchens (or mKitchen) as a potential (a) soup kitchen for the B40 and Asnaf community, (b) job employment and nurturing of the Asnaf as entrepreneurs, and (c) income generation for the masjid via rental of kitchens. This is to turn the Asnaf community 'Dari Penerima Zakat ke Pembayar Zakat'. The

conceptual mKitchen business model can be adapted for possible implementation by masjid or mosques.

Keywords: Masjid kitchens, Soup kitchen, Job employment, Entrepreneurs, Income generation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has brought about new challenges as well as new opportunities to businesses, societies, and nations. The pandemic has changed the daily life activities and business landscape. The lack of vaccines and social distancing requirements made daily life and businesses more challenging. The lockdowns measures have exacerbated the survival of businesses and has pushed more low-income (or B40) urban Malaysian families into poverty. Innovative initiatives are required to assist this B40 community, including leveraging on existing and under-utilized community-based resources such as mosques kitchens. According to JAKIM, there are about 6,500 mosques in Malaysia. Hence, this paper is to explore and offer a conceptual mKitchen business model by leveraging and turning masjid kitchens as a potential (a) soup kitchen for the B40 and *Asnaf* community, (b) providing job employment and nurturing *Asnaf* as entrepreneurs, and (c) income generation for the *masjid* via rental of kitchens. This includes providing upskilling and reskilling programmes to turn the B40 and *Asnaf* community 'Dari Penerima Zakat ke Pembayar Zakat'. The conceptual business model can be adopted or adapted for possible implementation by *masjid* or mosques.

2.0 BACKGROUND, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 Impact of COVID-19 and MCO on Lives and Livelihood

COVID-19 kills people and fuels fear. It cripples businesses and shrinks bank accounts. Pity the countless workers, especially the B40 workers, who have or may lose their jobs. And the numerous employers who feel they are sinking in a financial quicksand. Based on different scenarios for the impact of COVID-19 on global GDP growth, the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2020) estimates indicate a rise in global unemployment of between 5.3 million ("low" scenario) and 24.7 million ("high" scenario) from a base level of 188 million in 2019. ILO calls for urgent, large-scale and coordinated measures across three pillars: (i) protecting workers in the workplace, (ii) stimulating the economy and employment, and (iii) supporting jobs and incomes. Underemployment is also expected to increase on a large scale, as the economic consequences of the virus outbreak translate into reductions in working hours and wages. A survey conducted by the Department of Statistics Malaysia in May 2020 has found that: (a) 46.6% of self-employed respondents had reported losing their jobs; (b) an estimated 90% respondents were still working with lower than usual salaries; (c) more

than two-thirds (71.4%) of self-employed respondents have sufficient financial savings for less than one month; and (d) the majority of respondents said they are unprepared if the duration of the MCO was extended except for employees under Government Linked Companies and multinational companies. In the "Families on The Edge" UNICEF report dated October 2020, COVID-19 crisis has pushed more low-income (or B40) urban Malaysian families into poverty. The poverty rate in the B40 community is higher than last year, with 50% of the families now living in absolute poverty. 70% of these households reported that COVID-19 had affected their ability to meet their basic living expenses, with 37% reporting that they struggle to purchase enough food for their families while 35% are unable to pay their bills on time.

2.2 Booming of Digital and Online Business Models with Less Face-to-Face Interactions

The biggest impact of Covid-19, in the short term, is that there less or will no longer be any face-to-face interactions. Almost everything will have to done online (Fong, 2020). Consumers who may not have otherwise tried your business model may do so now. From buying goods and services to payment transactions; online businesses and e-Commerce are booming. What a great opportunity to show how the digital platform economy works. If you are, for example, an online financial aggregator, would your partners (banks and insurance companies) not need your digital acquisition model more than ever to find customers? Branches are closed. Sales team and insurance agents are home-bound. The traditional channels are closed, while the demand online channels are on the rise. The demand for online transaction including payments has taken on a new urgency in recent weeks (Jones, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous pressure on consumers and small businesses struggling to generate income as public health concerns force travel, retail shopping and billions of dollars in business activity to a halt. The growth within the digital economy has accelerated as the pandemic has forced changing to new digital businesses, forced traditional brick-and-mortar businesses to pivot online, and saw millions of Malaysians go virtual for their daily needs including eCommerce, entertainment, and education (EPU, 2021).

2.3 Malaysian Government Stimulus Packages

On March 27, 2020, the Malaysian government issued its second stimulus package to combat the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Medina, 2020). This second package includes addressing the growing and urgent needs of cripple small businesses and the countless workers who may lose their jobs. The second package, valued at 250 billion Malaysia Ringgit (MYR), enhances the existing financing facilities issued in the first stimulus package. It also aims to support businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), assist low and middle-income households, and provide fiscal injections to strengthen the national economy.

2.4 Masjid and Surau in Malaysia

The first city component introduced by Rasulullah s.a.w. in Madinah was the masjid institution, the Prophet's Mosque. Since its inception, the masjid functioned as a community development center (Omar et al., 2019; Spahic, 2020). Different types of activities were conducted within its realm. In addition to serving as a place for congregational prayers, as well as for other collective worship ('*ibadah*) practices, the Mosque, likewise, provided the Muslims with other essential social amenities and services. It was the seat of the Prophet's government, a learning center, a place for medical treatments and nursing, a detention and rehabilitation center, a welfare and charity center, and a place for some legitimate leisure and recreational activities.

Masjid as center for community engagement and empowerment have been understood by most of the Muslims, but the reality shows that the mosques are somewhat between a place of rituality and a place of people empowerment. If this perception and practices are not deconstructed, the mosque would lose the "Rahmatan lil-alamin" role and function to empower Muslims to have *sejahtera*, inner and outer wellbeing, in this world and the hereafter. The mosque is not isolated space for those who want to achieve a high degree of purity and only for pure worship. It should play its role to empower society. Revitalization of the roles and functions of the mosque with various systems is much needed (Omar et al., 2019; Spahic, 2020), especially during this post-pandemic and digital era.

There are more than 17,200 mosques and surau in Malaysia, as shown in Table 1 (<http://masjid.islam.gov.my/index.php?data=c3RhdGlzdGlrLnBocA==>).

Table 1

KOD	NEGERI	KATEGORI MASJID				KATEGORI SURAU		
		Masjid Kerajaan	Masjid Negeri	Masjid Daerah/Jajahan	Masjid Mukim/Kariah	JUMLAH	SURAU	Surau
01	JOHOR	9	4	15	794	822	10	1,953
02	KEDAH	0	1	9	567	577	140	1,925
03	KELANTAN	0	1	9	574	584	1	1,067
04	MELAKA	8	2	0	184	194	0	801
05	N. SEMBILAN	9	1	11	277	298	28	1,057
06	PAHANG	1	1	30	566	598	20	1,666
07	PULAU PINANG	0	1	5	207	213	0	540
08	PERAK	0	1	16	631	648	13	1,897
09	PERLIS	0	1	1	97	99	1	198
10	SELANGOR	11	1	9	400	421	7	1,904
11	TERENGGANU	19	2	7	456	484	1	1,846
12	SABAH	8	1	21	1,042	1,072	63	1,065
13	SARAWAK	0	1	35	333	369	62	750
14	W.P. KUALA LUMPUR	1	1	1	64	67	7	427
15	W.P. LABUAN	0	0	0	15	15	0	28
16	W.P. PUTRAJAYA	2	0	0	1	3	0	86
JUMLAH		68	19	169	6,208	6,464	353	17,210

These mosques and surau have more than 27,000 staff, as shown Table 2 (<http://masjid.islam.gov.my/index.php?data=c3RhdGlzdGlrLnBocA==>). With these human resources plus other assets such as land, property and kitchens, mosques should play their leading roles to empower the society including providing free foods, creating job employment, as well as nurturing these poor B40 community as entrepreneurs by leveraging on the mosques' resources and assets.

Sustainable soup kitchens then have the capacity to help rejuvenate the neighbourhood, gradually transforming the landscape by getting the B40 and *asnaf* community back on their own two feet. The Ottoman Waqf Soup Kitchen Model - A Benchmark: The Ottoman Waqf Soup Kitchen Model, as shown in Figure 1, provided an excellent benchmark towards a sustainable and socially desirable soup kitchen business model (Ibrahim & Dahlan, 2015). Historical evidence has described it to be highly successful until the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Wikipedia, 2014). It provided free food, offering added value propositions to the poor B40 and homeless as a one stop centre for them to improve their existing conditions - getting out of poverty and homelessness. An important point to note, the Waqf Assets are both resources to be used (e.g. building/space for soup kitchen) and a key value proposition. A soup kitchen with the backing of waqf assets would be very compelling in attracting more donors and sponsors.

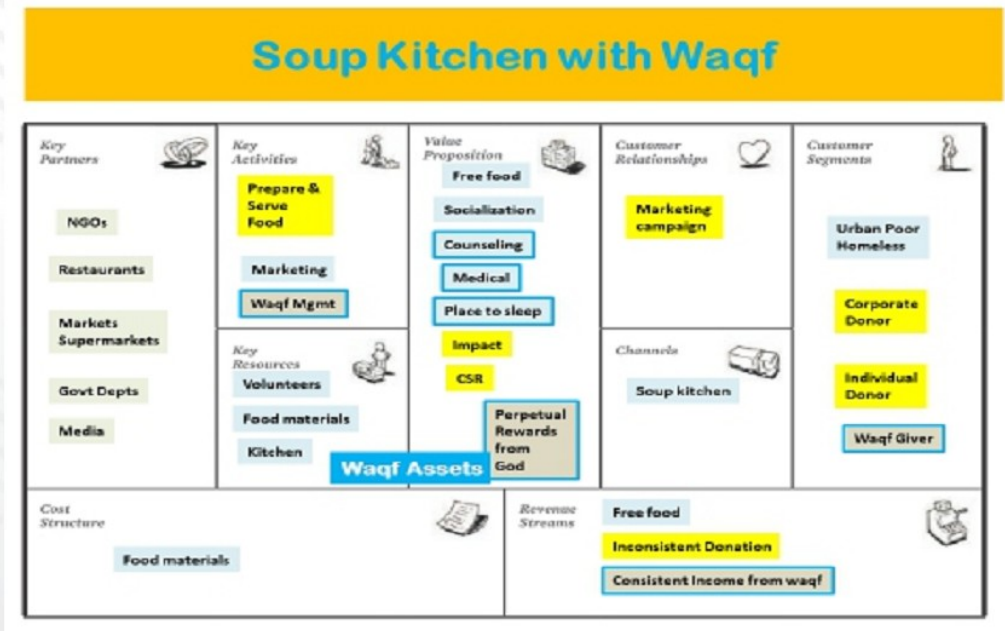


Figure 1

A profit-oriented Food and Delivery Service Providers like *UberEats* business model is shown in Figure 2.

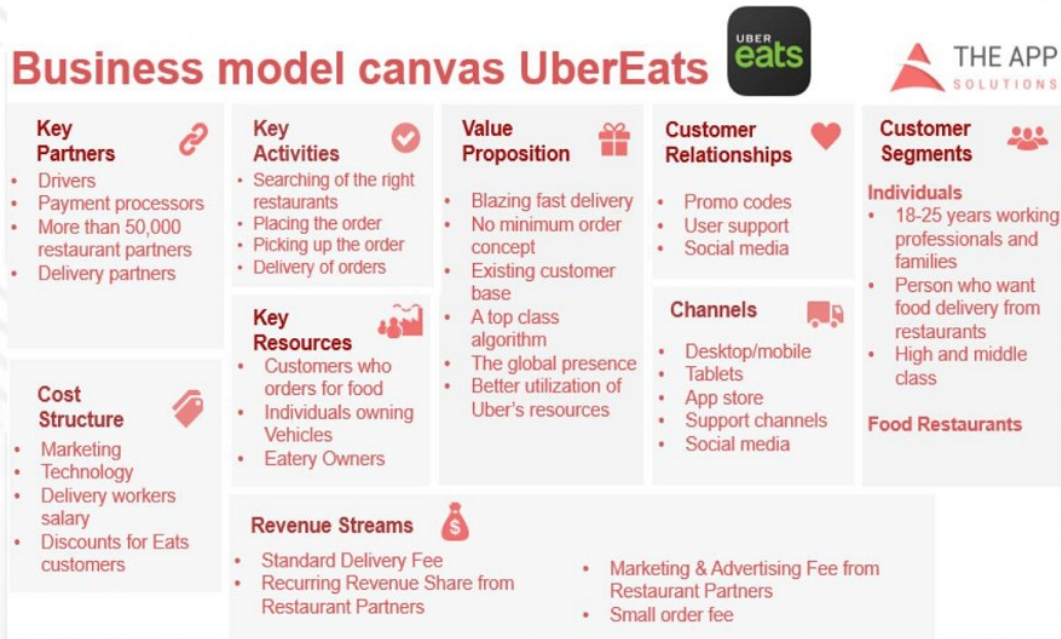


Figure 2

3.0 POSSIBLE BUSINESS MODEL FOR M-KITCHEN

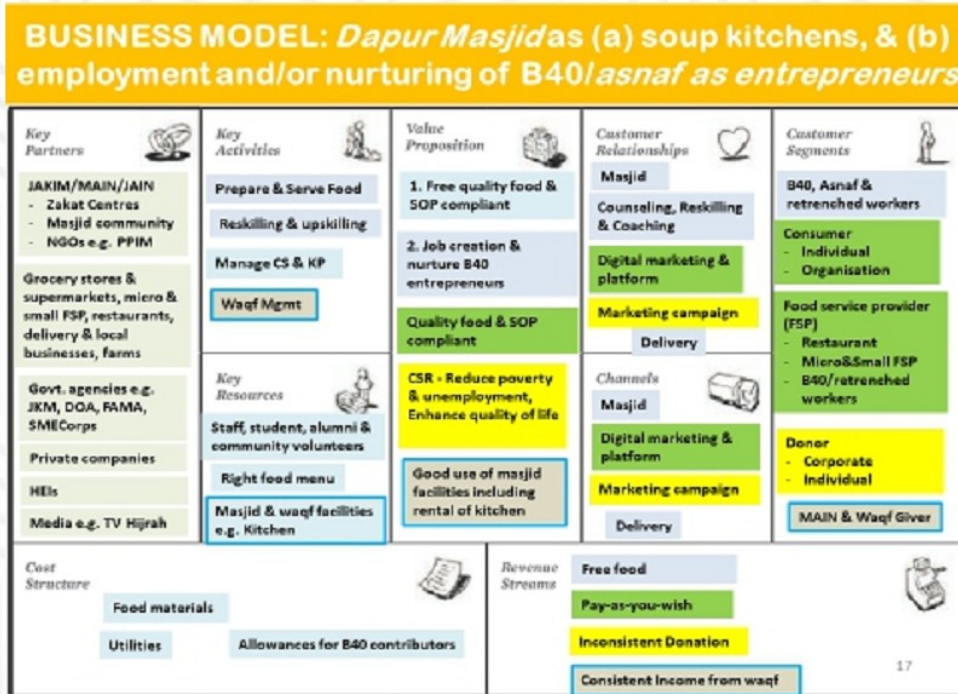


Figure 3

One of the possible *mKitchen* business models, shown in Figure 3, is presented using the Business Model Canvas (BMC) framework. It is a combination of the soup kitchen and commercial food and delivery business models. The nine blocks of the BMC capture *mKitchen* business big picture and its logic, and are described as follows:

- a. Value Proposition (VP): The VP describes the bundle of products & services that create value for each stakeholders and Customer Segment (CS) in terms of *Job-to-do*, *pain relievers*, *gain creators*. For *mKitchen*, the VP and benefits include: Free quality food & SOP compliant, and Job creation & nurturing B40/*asnaf* (zakat recipients) as entrepreneurs; Quality food & SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) compliant for consumers; CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) for donors in terms of reducing poverty & unemployment, and enhance B40 (Bottom 40% based on the categorization used by the government to determine financial assistance) quality of life; and the good use of masjid & *waqf* facilities including rental of kitchen.
- b. Customer Segments (CS): The CS defines the different groups of people or organizations *mKitchen* via products & services aims to reach and serve. The

- customer segments of *mKitchen* include: B40/*asnaf*/retrenched workers; Consumers - individual & organizations; Food service providers such as restaurants and home cooking; Donors - individual & organizations; Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN) & Waqf contributors.
- c. Channels (CH): How a *mKitchen* communicates with & reaches its various CS to deliver the VP and benefits. These include physical and digital infrastructure such as *masjid*, social media & digital platforms, and delivery services.
 - d. Customer Relationships (CR): The types of relationships *mKitchen* establishes & sustains with various CS including physical and digital engagement such as *masjid*, social media & digital platforms, counseling, reskilling & upskilling, and delivery services.
 - e. Revenue Streams (RS): Represents the donations and income *mKitchen* generates from various CS excluding the B40/*asnaf*/retrenched workers. These RS are to cover the costs incurred to operationalize *mKitchen*. The B40, *asnaf*, and retrenched workers will be getting free foods, provided with employment opportunities as well as reskilling & upskilling in entrepreneurship with basic digital marketing, ordering & delivery knowledge, skills, and competencies.
 - f. Key Partners (KP): The network of partners and suppliers that enable *mKitchen* to successful deliver its VP and benefits to the various CS. The key partners include grocery stores & supermarkets, micro & small FSP, restaurants, delivery & local businesses, farms; JAKIM/MAIN/JAIN, Zakat Centres, Masjid community & NGOs e.g. PPIM; government agencies e.g. JKM, DOA, FAMA, SMECorps; companies, MNCs and GLCs; and Higher Education Institutions.
 - g. Key Activity (KA): The most important tasks *mKitchen* must do that enable the successful delivery of its VP and benefits to the various CS. The key activities include procure, prepare & serve food; reskilling & upskilling in food & beverages management and digital entrepreneurship; manage & enhance digital platform; manage CS & KP; and Waqf facilities management.
 - h. Key Resources (KR): The most important assets required to make *mKitchen* business model work e.g. *Competency, Financial, Intellectual, physical*. The key resources include staff, student, alumni & community volunteers; Right food menu; Masjid & waqf facilities e.g. Kitchen & land.
 - i. Cost Structure: All costs incurred to operate *mKitchen* that include procurement of food materials; storage, cooking & packaging equipment; utilities; and incentives for B40 contribution in preparing, cooking, packaging, and delivery services.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The *mKitchen* is a freemium business model with multi-sided platform. However, nothing is really free. Someone has to pay for the free food, services, and equipment. A multi-sided platform business model makes it possible for the *mKitchen* to give away free food by leveraging on *masjid* kitchens, while donors will actually pay for the food cost. The sustainability of *mKitchen* is highly dependent on the consistency of the donations, gifts, and waqf from the complementary customer segments - individual and corporate donors. As well as the potential *masjid* kitchen rental income in the long run. On the other hand, the amount and consistency of donations depends on the innovative value propositions being offered by *mKitchen*. This paper offers a conceptual business model with value propositions and benefits in transforming *masjid* kitchens as potential (a) soup kitchens for the B40 and *Asnaf* community, (b) job employment and nurturing of the *Asnaf* as entrepreneurs, and (c) income generation for the *masjid* via rental of kitchens. This is to turn the *Asnaf* community from Zakat Receivers to Zakat Contributors. The conceptual business model can be adopted or adapted for possible implementation by many more *masjid*. Eventually leading to the formation of network-of-mosque in the form of physical and digital platform. Similar transformation concepts can be applied to other key resources of *masjid* like land and properties.

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