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يُونِيسَيتِي اِسْلَامِي اِنْتَارَا اِنْعَسَا فِلْدِسِيَا
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Innovation is a Way Forward: Possibility of Adopting Robotic Process Automation (RPA) as the solution at ABC Industry Sdn. Bhd.
Zaini Zainol

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Siti Nurhayati Khairatun

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Editorial Note

The primary theme of the issue is “Community-centric enterprises with *Sejahtera* principles.” This issue provides an opportunity to analyse the integration of community-oriented ideals across various backgrounds and sectors. The editorial seeks to bring together insights from these scenarios, enabling readers to have an in-depth perspective on the implementation of these concepts across numerous contexts.

The concept of *Sejahtera*, characterised by holistic well-being and long-term viability, is apparent in the given scenarios. Every instance, ranging from the utilisation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) by Malaysia's ABC Industry to improve supply chain efficiency, to Wasinah Kuntagil's empowering journey in Sabah, showcases different facets of *Sejahtera*, such as the pursuit of balance, the advocacy for sustainable practices, and the improvement of communal welfare.

The Pracharumjai Foundation's shortage of volunteers in Thailand underscores the significance of effective handling of human resources in non-profit organisations. The adoption of cross-training volunteers, planned as compensation, resulted in unforeseen challenges, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive approach in volunteer administration. Likewise, Jaya Abadi's business venture in Malaysia, specialising in providing human resources services for the construction sector, stands out for its strong commitment to advancing diversity. The founders' immigrant background had a significant impact on their empathetic and insightful business approach, which is in line with *Sejahtera*'s emphasis on holistic welfare.

Additionally, the Indian legal disputes concerning the rice trade and MDH spices provide insight into the worldwide impact of native goods. These instances demonstrate the use of cultural heritage in global marketplaces, while emphasising community-oriented ideals. Furthermore, the cases involving the University of Darussalam Gontor in Indonesia and the Malaysian research on changing academic majors reveal the intricate nature of educational settings. These scenarios underscore the importance of recognising psychological agreements and human capacities, which align with *Sejahtera*'s focus on personal accomplishment and organisational accountability.

Further, the Stone Hotel case, as shown via Ahmad's personal experience, presents a compelling narrative that carefully integrates the principles of *Sejahtera* and *Madani*. This emphasises the significance of equitable remuneration and labour rights, not just as economic necessities, but also as integral elements of comprehensive welfare, societal equity, and advancement of civilization.

Moreover, Rahman's association with BanglaMarket in Bangladesh centres around the complicated nature of e-commerce entrepreneurship. The case emphasises the significance of adapting to the needs of the market while simultaneously promoting local enterprises, through community-oriented ideals. .

In a different setting, the journey that Hasan has taken, which is founded on the principles of *Sejahtera*, places an emphasis on matching job options with personal strengths and well-being to ensure a harmonic balance. The implementation of this strategy not only promotes personal satisfaction and achievement, but it also contributes to the overall prosperity of the community. This is because individuals are more engaged and productive in their work when their careers are in line with their innate capabilities.

Entrepreneurship Week, also known as Entrepweek, is a programme that plays an important role in promoting the creation of an economically prosperous neighbourhood, the promotion of ecologically responsible business practices, and the cultivation of overall development. Through the implementation of this programme, which is in perfect harmony with the *Sejahtera* concept, an atmosphere is created in which an entrepreneurial spirit can thrive alongside a dedication to ecological sustainability and holistic growth, which is to the advantage of both individuals and society.

Likewise, the narrative of Wan Ali at Kafe Kawan, enriched with *Sejahtera*, demonstrates the importance of the "5S" approach of lean management in improving business efficiency and community well-being. Indeed, the *Sejahtera Ulu al-albab* initiative at Senyum Printing Enterprise, led by Encik Asri, showcases how his managerial skills and the execution of the 5S principles create a work environment that promotes employee well-being and community engagement, in line with the *Sejahtera* goals.

These lessons, encompassing technological advancements, social entrepreneurship, volunteer management, and labour rights, collectively demonstrate the importance and relevance of *Sejahtera* principles in multiple industries. Each narrative provides a distinct viewpoint on how organisations and businesses could apply these concepts to promote the well-being of the community, implement sustainable practices, and achieve comprehensive growth. This editorial seeks to motivate readers to adopt these principles in their endeavours to make a positive impact on a world that is characterised by more harmony, longevity, and fairness.

Prof Dr Suhaimi Mhd Sarif
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Innovation is a Way Forward: Possibility of Adopting Robotic Process Automation (RPA) as the solution at ABC Industry Sdn. Bhd.

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ABSTRACT

The case study highlights the obstacles faced by supply chain management (SCM) cycle in the automotive industry, which are caused by various factors including human inconsistency. The industry operates in a dynamic ecosystem where customer preferences constantly change, necessitating a more reliable and less human-dependent approach to enhance market response. As the government advocates for Industry 4.0 to embrace technology and reduce dependence on intensive labour, innovative solutions like Robot Processing Automation (RPA) offer a potential remedy.

Keywords: Robot processing automation (RPA); automotive industry; innovation; industrial revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0), supply chain management (SCM).

Introduction

The tension was palpable in the logistics operation room of ABC Industry Sdn. Bhd (not a real name)., affectionately known as the "war room" by the workers. The room was abuzz with discussion about an issue letter from their major customer, XYZ Berhad (an automotive manufacturer), which had complained about the company's failure to deliver the necessary materials on time, resulting in a four-hour halt in production.

The root cause of the problem was human error, including a failure to monitor and organize orders, production, material supplies, and manpower readiness. This had been an ongoing issue for the past seven years, causing considerable frustration for Mr. Johan, the Head of the Production Department. The customer was demanding a penalty of 7 million ringgit for the company's inability to deliver as per the contract. Even though the issue would be resolved, Mr. Johan knew that it was not going to go away anytime soon.

During a walk along the assembly line, Mr. Johan observed a welding shop assembly line where twelve expensive robots from Germany were flawlessly performing their assigned tasks. He recalled the issues the company had faced with human workers, such as high turnover, inconsistent quality, frequent injuries, and difficulty finding replacements for resigned staff. Mr. Johan realized that adopting robots could solve these issues, and wondered if they could be used in his own department. With the government promoting the digitalization of operations in accordance with the Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 blueprint, Mr. Johan knew that he had to innovate and develop a proposal to get approval from top

management. He recognized the need to research topics related to innovation, robotics, and other relevant areas to implement a new approach to production and logistics operations. While government campaigns on innovation, particularly on IR 4.0, were prevalent in various media, he diligently conducted research on the subject.

By scouring seminar papers, articles, online news, and other resources, he gleaned crucial insights on innovation. However, the demands of his core work meant he had limited time to pursue his project, leaving him feeling overwhelmed. To progress, he delegated the preparation of the proposal, including selecting the most suitable technology, to his subordinate, Mr. Amran. In his mind, the solution involved replacing humans with robots, with robotic processing automation (RPA) being the most promising option. The proposal now hinges on whether RPA is a justifiable choice, and Mr. Amran will need to complete the detailed proposal accordingly ranging from the need for innovation to RPA application.

Innovation in general

In the current era, innovation has never been more critical to mankind's history. The innovation process requires a blend of knowledge and technology and is a vital component of the modern economy (Ghaffari et al., 2017). Numerous definitions of innovation exist, such as Roger's (2010), who defined it as any new idea or form of adoption, and Dosi's (1982), who saw innovation as a historical process. Schumpeter (1939) viewed innovation as different from invention and identified three characteristics: building a new plant or material, launching a new institution, and new leadership of men. Anthropologist Barnett (1953) referred to innovation as any new idea, behaviour or object that is significantly different from existing ones.

Digital innovation can be defined as a continuous process of using technological support to solve human problems. Yoo et al. (2010) described it as a system that produces a new or novel product through a compilation of digital and physical elements. Physical products are digitized to make more sense in terms of programming, addressing, communicating, and tracing (Yoo 2010).

In today's economy, innovation is crucial at every level, from international to individual, and is equally important for the government and private sector. According to UNESCO, the top five leading performers in terms of research and development (R&D) expenditure are the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and the Republic of Korea, all of which are large economies and developed countries. In 2016, the US allocated \$145.2 billion for R&D, a 6.4% increase from the previous year (Budget of USA FY 2016).

Japan's allocation in financing innovation amounted to 4.4 trillion Yen (US\$ equivalent 36.1 billion) in 2017 (Budget of Japan 2017). The Australian government allocated \$10.3 billion for research and experimental development (R&D) in the 2017-18 national budget, a 2.3% increase from the previous year (Budget of Australasia for 2017-18).

As an emerging developing economy, Malaysia has adopted Transformasi Nasional 2050 (TN50) in 2017, with the main objective of becoming a top 20 developed nation by 2050 through economic development, social advancement, and innovation. Prior to this, Vision 2020 aimed to make Malaysia a developed country, with innovation as one of its top priorities (Budget 2016, Ministry of finance Malaysia).

In 2016, the Malaysian government allocated RM1.5 billion under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI) and launched a range of initiatives to promote innovation, including double tax benefits for Small and Medium Enterprises with an R&D investment exceeding RM50,000, RM50 million allocated to the Public-Private Research Network, and RM100 million to the Malaysian Innovation Agency (MIA).

The need for manufacturing innovation

Manufacturing innovation stands as a compelling pathway for Malaysia's economic advancement. With manufacturing serving as a pivotal driver of the economy, and employing a substantial labor force, the imperative of unceasing innovation looms large to ensure sustained competitiveness within the swiftly evolving economic landscape. Through diverse governmental channels, notably the Ministry of Trade and Investment, resolute efforts have been consistently channeled towards catalyzing indigenous manufacturers to imbue innovation into their operational paradigms.

Relying heavily on foreign labor as a cost-effective workforce proves unsustainable over prolonged periods due to a medley of challenges. Thus, pivoting towards innovation and substantial investment in high-end technologies, as envisioned by the IR4.0 blueprint, emerges as the logical trajectory. This direction is particularly pertinent for tasks characterized by iterative processes necessitating unwavering adherence to stringent benchmarks of quality, timeliness, and expertise. In this context, the adoption of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) emerges as a viable and propitious solution.

The crucible of manufacturing evolution entails not only technological ingenuity but also transformation in work processes and the behavioral patterns of organizations. These facets collectively compose the constituents of Manufacturing Process Innovation (MPI) as studied by Yamamoto and Bellgran (2013). This holistic framework encompasses not only technological metamorphosis but also product and process innovation (Knight, 1967), alongside administrative and technical advancement (Evan, 1966).

The Case is known as ABC Industry Sdn. Bhd.

The case refers to a top-level supplier of a Malaysian car manufacturer. Being a 1st tier vendor, the case holds the responsibility of ensuring timely supply of components from its sub 2nd tier vendors (approximately 50 vendors). The components are welded further for final assembly at the main production line of the primary customer.

The current ordering system

Following the post-COVID 19 period, the economy has demonstrated a positive growth with a significant increase in vehicle orders in Malaysia, rising from an average of 500,000 to over 600,000. Due to its prominent reputation as a primary vendor for metal components, the case has been involved in the automotive industry since its establishment. The Logistic Department manages the transportation of components to and from the main customer (refer to XYZ Berhad – an Automotive Manufacturer).

As a first-tier vendor for metal components, the case is accountable for overseeing more than 50 sub-vendors that supply loose metal components to its production line. These loose components are processed further and welded together by an advanced robotic welding shop to manufacture larger components. However, complications arise when human actions still play a significant role in recording and managing the flow of components, despite the use of the current enterprise resource planning (ERP) of Baan system. Even though the workers are

trained beforehand, errors still occur when handling over 1,000 metal components on a daily basis. These components are named according to a numeric code, which makes them difficult to identify.

Additionally, the various models produced by the main customer lead to drastic changes in the required components. The inputting of the wrong code leads to discrepancies in the actual number of components manufactured, which can severely impact the final production line at the main customer's facility. As per the contract, any disruption to the main customer's production line due to component shortages can result in penalties amounting to the value of the final products supposed to be produced, which can amount to millions of ringgit.

The way forward

Mr. Johan, who is in charge of the Logistics Department, is considering the implementation of RPA to address the persistent issues. In general, robotics refers to the utilization of sophisticated machines that emulate human functions to carry out repetitive tasks. This technology has been adopted by numerous organizations worldwide. Recently, he attended a knowledge-sharing session on RPA where a company shared its experience and revealed that adopting RPA had eliminated human errors. This success story has motivated Mr. JOHAN to propose RPA for his department. Is his proposal justified?

Discussion Questions

1. Enumerate a few difficulties associated with overseeing the supply chain in a highly unpredictable sector like the automotive industry.
2. What is your view on the necessity of continuous innovation, as encouraged by the government through grants, seminars, conferences, etc.?
3. Is RPA a component of digital transformation? Provide an explanation.
4. What are some of the benefits that companies worldwide have reported after adopting RPA? Provide examples.
5. What are some of the challenges that organizations face when implementing RPA?
6. When choosing between a private network or cloud-based storage for RPA data, what are the advantages and disadvantages of each option? Discuss.
7. What changes need to be made to an organization's IT ecosystem to accommodate RPA? Provide examples.
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using RPA versus human labor, and how might this affect employment opportunities? Discuss.

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Empowering Rural Communities through Social Entrepreneurship: A Case Study from An Indigenous Dusun Woman in Ranau, Sabah

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Abstract

This case study presents an inspiring journey of Wasinah Kuntagil, an indigenous Dusun woman from Sabah. Facing financial challenges due to her husband's illness, she started producing and selling *tuhau* floss, a traditional culinary delight from her community. Using a social entrepreneurship model, she not only supplemented her family's income but also provided opportunities for others in her community to earn more. By employing an interview method to collect comprehensive data, this research provides a valuable chance for students to examine the decision-making process of a rural entrepreneur and evaluate the positive effects of her management style on the economy and social well-being of the women in her community.

Keywords: Agricultural economics, commercialisation, indigenous women, microeconomics, social entrepreneurship

Background of business

This case study chronicles the journey of Wasinah Kuntagil, an indigenous woman belonging to the Dusun ethnic group in Sabah. She ventured to introduce one of her community's traditional culinary delights from the rural highlands of Ranau, Sabah to the commercial market through a social entrepreneurship model. In 2005, due to her husband's illness, which prevented him from working as a coconut picker, Kuntagil, a full-time homemaker, decided to produce *tuhau* floss at home to supplement her family's income.

Tuhau is a wild ginger from Sabah-Borneo's jungles, used in a relish-like dish. It's finely chopped and mixed with lime juice or vinegar, chilis, garlic, and salt. Popular in Sabah, Malaysia, it's sold year-round in markets. *Tuhau* can also be pickled, enhancing its tart, savory taste, and is often eaten with white rice. Using her father's original recipe, she made and sold *tuhau* floss to residents in Marakau, a hamlet in Ranau district.

Kuntagil's product utilises *tuhau*, a locally sourced wild ginger-type plant that grows abundantly in the Ranau highlands and has a delightful aroma. Her business not only provided her with an extra income but also benefited the people of Ranau by offering them opportunities to earn additional money. These individuals were crucial to Kuntagil's social entrepreneurship model. For more than a decade, Kuntagil sold her *tuhau* floss from home until she secured several grants from the Malaysian Government to assist in commercialising her product. The grants she received aided in financing the implementation of safety and

quality assurance measures for the product, acquiring food certifications, and producing labeling and packaging materials. The journey to commercialise the *tuhau* floss was challenging for Kuntagil, but her unwavering determination to overcome obstacles led to her current success.

This case study provides an opportunity for students to analyze how a rural entrepreneur made the decision to pursue commercialisation and engage in social entrepreneurship. Students will examine the factors that influenced her decision-making process. Furthermore, students will evaluate how the entrepreneur's management style positively impacted the economy and social well-being of the women in her community.

Indigenous women, like Kuntagil, often have limited access to capital, market data, and training, which can hinder their ability to grow their businesses and participate in the formal economy. This lack of access to resources can also make it difficult for indigenous women to adapt to changes in the economy, such as shifts in consumer demand or new technologies. Kuntagil's business growth was initially slow, and she had to participate in numerous business pitching competitions to secure monetary prizes, which enabled her to purchase more supplies, hire additional workers, and access to business opportunities outside Ranau.

Company's profile

Starting in 2005, Kuntagil sold small batches of *tuhau* floss in her neighbourhood with only RM50, equivalent to approximately USD12, as her start-up capital. She received assistance in processing the product from close family members and neighbours, who were all housewives or single mothers. After making a profit, Kuntagil registered NurCahaya Enterprise as a sole proprietorship business entity in 2007. The following year, she moved her processing facility from her home to a nearby location that she built using her own savings. The facility was approximately 10 feet by 12 feet long and could accommodate small equipment used for preparing, cooking, drying, and packing processes. It was not until 2010 that Kuntagil was able to expand her sales beyond Ranau, specifically in Kota Kinabalu City, with the help of her husband and children. They sold the *tuhau* floss exclusively at the farmers' market on weekends due to the high travel cost, as the distance from Ranau to Kota Kinabalu City took nearly three hours by car.

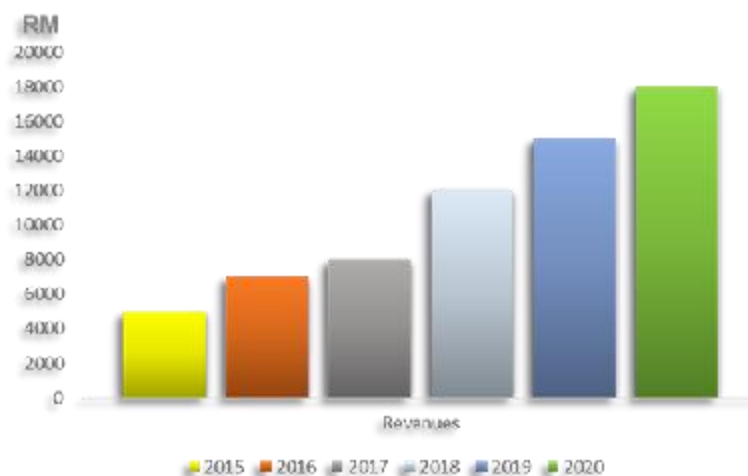
Kuntagil was approached by the Malaysian Innovation Foundation in 2011, following the success of her *tuhau* floss, and was offered a business grant of RM100K. The foundation is linked to the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation and recognized the potential of Kuntagil's innovative product. This grant was specifically designated for indigenous rural women who aimed to expand their businesses while practicing social entrepreneurship. Originally, the *tuhau* floss packaging was very unappealing and did not comply with the food regulations as stipulated under the Malaysian Food Act 1983. After being awarded the grant, Kuntagil managed to get some professional services to design and print the packaging with proper labeling. Figure 1 shows the comparison between the early packing of the *tuhau* and after the modifications made to the packaging.

Figure 1: Early packaging (*left*) and latest packaging (*right*)



Within four years, Kuntagil established Cahaya Kasih Sdn. Bhd (CKSB) to increase the production volume of *tuhau*. Once again, her company was granted RM500K by another government investment agency, Teraju Superb. With the help of a grant she received, she successfully registered her brand "BessBah" with the Malaysian Intellectual Property Office (MyIPO). This allowed her to establish legal ownership over her brand and protect her intellectual property rights. According to the financial statement for the end of 2020, her company's annual revenue was recorded at RM20K. Figure 2 illustrates a gradual increase in CKSB's income each year.

Figure 2: Income statements of CKSB for the years 2015-2020

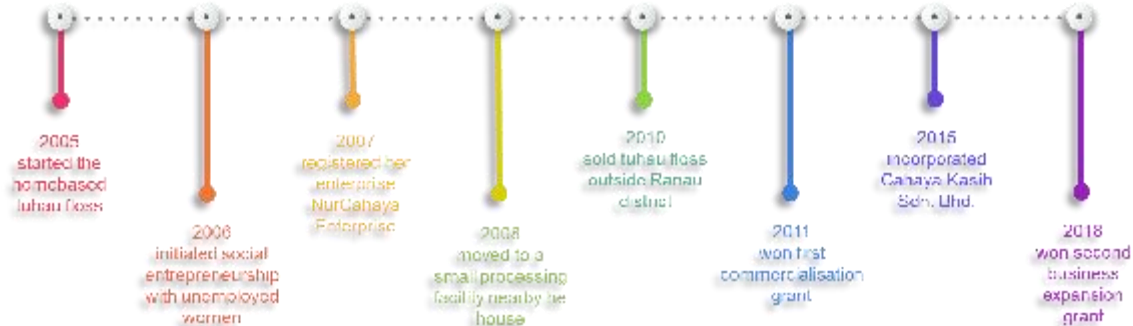


This amount of revenue was categorized as micro enterprise as defined by SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp).

Kuntagil's strategy to expand her sales network involved inviting housewives and single mothers in her area to become selling agents. By appointing these agents, she was able to effectively market her *tuhau* floss to a wider audience. Her approach proved successful, and her network of agents grew to include areas beyond her immediate vicinity, such as Linkabau, Giring, and Kota Belud. *Tuhau* is a traditional food in Ranau that is commonly used in local dishes. However, Kuntagil's innovative use of *tuhau* to make *tuhau* floss has allowed her product to be embraced by people of various ethnic backgrounds. Despite the challenge of introducing a new product with an unfamiliar ingredient, Kuntagil persevered in building her

business. It took over a decade of hard work to establish and expand her market beyond Ranau. Today, her brand "BessBah" is well-known and continues to grow in popularity, a testament to Kuntagil's determination and creativity. Figure 3 shows the timeline of Kuntagil's business expansion.

Figure 3: Timeline of Kuntagil's business growth



Social entrepreneurship model

Kuntagil, who resides in the rural area of Ranau in Sabah, has made a significant impact on the local economy, particularly for housewives and single mothers with limited education or access to employment opportunities in nearby towns. Her efforts have resulted in an improvement in the economic situation of those within her community. Despite the limited economic activities and access to technology in the area, Kuntagil's business has provided employment opportunities for those in her community. Her part-time workers were all local residents who lived near her processing facility and would walk to work. She paid them an hourly rate of RM4.50 (equivalent to USD1) without setting a minimum number of hours. Kuntagil understood that her employees had other obligations, such as caring for their children and preparing meals for their families. As a result of her flexibility, her employees were content and appreciative.

In recruiting agents to sell her *tuhau* floss, Kuntagil took a unique approach. She did not impose any minimum purchase or sales requirements on her agents. Instead, she motivated and encouraged them to sell as much as they could in order to maximize their earnings. This approach gave her agents a sense of autonomy and they were not compelled to buy more stock than they could handle. By empowering her agents in this way, Kuntagil built a loyal and committed team that helped her expand her business.

Kuntagil realized that processing *tuhau* floss was a time-consuming and physically demanding task. In early days, she obtained the raw *tuhau* from the nearby woods where it grew wild. Kuntagil would start searching for *tuhau* as early as 6 a.m. daily, with some of her part-time workers assisting her. Once the *tuhau* stems were collected, they were processed immediately into floss to prevent quality deterioration. The resulting floss had a light and fluffy texture, similar to coarse cotton. The entire process, including 12 hours of sun drying, took around 18-20 hours before the *tuhau* could be packed and sealed. Initially, all processing was done by hand using basic kitchen tools. Kuntagil's husband then brought the *tuhau* floss to local grocers, where it sold for around RM15 (USD3.60) per 100 grams. Occasionally, she received substantial commissions from customers for special events. She no longer had to forage for *tuhau* in the woods because she had created a network of freelance farmers who grew and sold the *tuhau* to her at a competitive price.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Kuntagil's income suffered, affecting not only her but also her part-timers and the *tuhau* farmers she worked with. In her search for solutions, Kuntagil reached out to the Department of Agriculture, who advised her to explore online business opportunities. To this end, she recruited a group of young people and trained them on how to operate an online business. Unfortunately, her efforts were hindered by the poor internet connectivity in Ranau, which made it difficult to successfully sell their products online. Furthermore, the cost of shipping Kuntagil's product doubled due to the courier company's difficulty in reaching her village.

Company's management style

Kuntagil did not engage in micromanaging her employees, instead, she trained them on how to process the *tuhau* floss and operate the processing machinery. In addition, she compensated them in cash at the end of each workday. By building a high level of trust, employees under this style of management feel appreciated and are willing to contribute more to the company's success. This management style empowers employees and holds them accountable for their work, which motivates them to perform at their best, leading to improved efficiency and productivity within the organization. On another note, her *tuhau* suppliers were not obliged to sell exclusively to her, even though she had aided them in the early stages of cultivating the *tuhau*. In the initial phases, Kuntagil sought assistance and guidance from the Department of Agriculture for the *tuhau* farmers in their village, as the crop had never been grown on farms before.

Conclusion

Kuntagil's case exemplifies the characteristics of a successful social entrepreneurship venture and a unique management style, particularly among indigenous community.

As a social entrepreneur, Kuntagil identified a need for a product in her community and developed a solution that not only met that need but also created a sustainable business model. She sourced her raw materials sustainably and developed relationships with local farmers to ensure a consistent supply of quality raw materials. Kuntagil's business not only generated profit but also created value for her community by providing employment opportunities and supporting local farmers.

In terms of management style, Kuntagil's approach was employee-centred and empowering. She trusted her employees and offered them flexibility in terms of working hours, which allowed them to balance their work with their personal commitments. She provided her employees with the necessary training and tools to do their jobs effectively and rewarded them with monetary incentives. Her management style encouraged employee engagement, accountability, and contribution, which in turn led to improved efficiency and productivity.

Overall, Kuntagil's case highlights the importance of social entrepreneurship and the positive impact it can have on local communities. It also emphasizes the effectiveness of employee-centred and empowering management styles in creating a successful and sustainable business.

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Discussion Questions

Question 1

A quiz may consist of five short questions:

- i) What was the name of the protagonist in this case study?
- ii) What is the name of the plant used in Kuntagil's food product?
- iii) Where is the tuhau floss produced by Kuntagil located?
- iv) What was the name of Kuntagil's first registered enterprise?
- v) When did Kuntagil receive the second business grant?

Question 2

In reference to social entrepreneurship model, what inspired Kuntagil to start her social entrepreneurship venture and how did she get started? Provide justifications for your answer.

Question 3

What challenges did Kuntagil face in the early stages of her business and how did she overcome them?

Question 4

What impact did Kuntagil's social entrepreneurship venture have on the local community, particularly on rural women?

Pracharumjai Foundation: The Trap of Volunteers Shortage

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Abstract

The problem of a shortage of volunteers for the Pracharumjai foundation, a public charitable organization, has been a persistent issue since the expansion of the foundation's offices in 1989 and the restructuring of the organization, which resulted in an increased workload for existing volunteers. This signifies a growing demand for volunteers. However, the human resource management process, especially job analysis and design, of the foundation has been deficient, leading to insufficient volunteer engagement with the work. The foundation attempted to address this problem by supporting cross-training to enable volunteers to work interchangeably. However, this approach has become a more complex issue, as it has led to an increased workload for volunteers and reduced commitment to the main tasks of volunteering, consequently affecting the efficiency of the foundation. This research will present the human resource management process of the foundation so far in order to discuss suitable strategies within the public charitable organizational context.

Keyword: Job analysis and design, cross-training, volunteer, foundation,

In June 2023, at the monthly meeting between the executives and volunteers of the Pracharumjai Foundation, a public charitable organization, Mr. Nattiphong Kaopong, the foundation's committee and as human resources manager of the foundation, expresses extreme concern over the severe shortage of volunteers within the foundation. This concern was raised by former volunteers' complaint due to the increasing demand for new volunteers to assist in various positions within the expanding offices of the foundation and the restructuring of the organizational structure of the new branch office. As a result, the workload on existing volunteers significantly increases.

The establishment of new office branch directly affected to an increased number of volunteers to carry out the expanded operations. Furthermore, due to the geographical distance between multiple offices, the board of directors felt the need to engage volunteers to assist in the administration and management of the newly established office, in order to alleviate the burden on the executive team responsible for overseeing the main office and ensure smooth management practices. Therefore, Pracharumjai Foundation demanded not only volunteers for emergency and disaster relief efforts, but also volunteers to work in the office of the new branch.

To resolve the volunteers shortage in the foundation, Mr. Nattiphong Kaopong and the management committee attempted to distribute diverse tasks to each volunteer, allowing them

with cross-training to understand and practice each other's skills in order to compensate for the volunteers shortage. However, this approach has created a more complex problem, negatively affecting of the foundation.

The first impact was the excessive workload imposed on volunteers, as they had to take various responsibilities. Their primary duty was to serve as volunteer rescuers in the field, but they were also expected to handle office tasks. This heavy workload made it challenging for volunteers to manage their responsibilities effectively.

The second impact was the performance of tasks that volunteers were not skilled in, leading to substandard results and causing volunteers to feel oppressive in their work. the result was poor performance and volunteers' dissatisfaction.

According to the impacts significantly affect to the efficiency of volunteers' work and the effectiveness of the foundation. Volunteers were unable to fulfill and devote to their roles the greatest because of the workload from other positions that they have taken responsible for and the original problem of volunteer shortage still remains unresolved. Moreover, If the volunteers are inadequate, the foundation's operations could not be effectively executed. As a result, the public's in the foundation would decrease, which means foundation's existence becomes less necessary in society. Therefore, the issue of volunteer shortage is a matter of priority concern for the Pracharuamjai foundation.

Inception of the Pracharuamjai Foundation

The Pracharuamjai foundation has been established since June 25th, 1982 with Phra Boonyarit Hongprasart being as the founder and chairman of the committee.

Vision: Every life is precious. We wish them safety.

Mission: Pracharuamjai foundation belongs to the people of every race and every religion

The objectives of Pracharuamjai Foundation

The foundation has established key priorities for supporting communities and individuals in need.

Firstly, it supports essential community institutions like hospitals, schools, religious activities, and sports.

Secondly, it emphasizes educational support by sponsoring funds for students in need.

Thirdly, the foundation aids individuals facing hardships, including victims of public hazards.

Fourthly, it offers cremation services for abandoned corpses. Additionally, the foundation collaborates with other organizations for greater impact and acknowledges supporters with rewards and recognition.

Lastly, it upholds a principle of political neutrality to ensure a focused humanitarian approach. Overall, these sequential priorities demonstrate the foundation's commitment to diverse aspects of social welfare and making a positive impact on society.

Organizational structure of the new Precharuamjai foundation office

Figure 1: Organizational chart

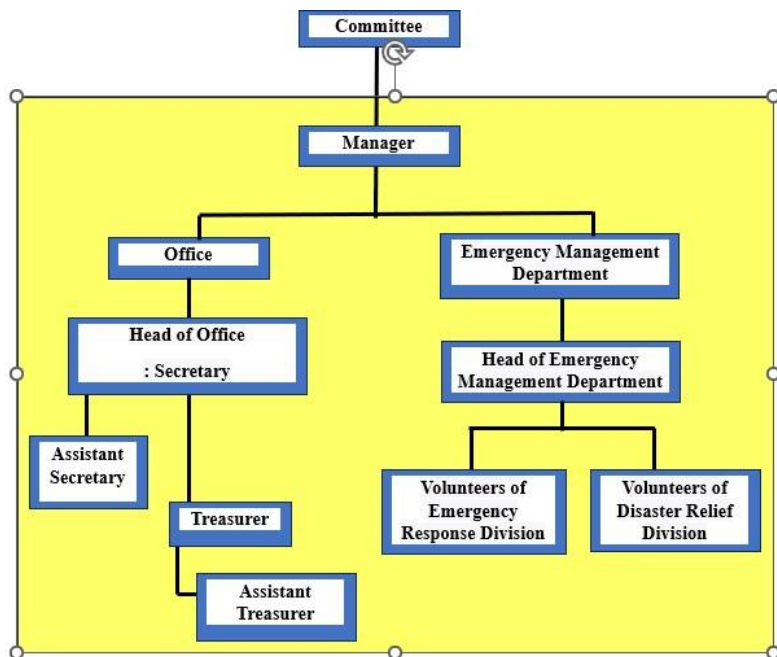


Figure 1 shows the organizational chart. In the organizational structure of the new Precharuamjai foundation office is divided its responsibilities into two parts between committee and volunteers of foundation. The committee part is responsible for managing and resolving the problem faced by volunteers, taking care of volunteers, making decisions on organizational issues, and collaborating with other organizations to enhance their competency in public hazards. The committee members include the chairman, vice chairman, and committee whereas the volunteers department (yellow zone) consists of the manager, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, and assistant secretary in office department, and the head of the automotive department, volunteers in emergency response vehicles, and volunteers in relief vehicles in the emergency management department. The details are as follows:

The manager is a main key of volunteers for managing and coordinating the activities of volunteers, both in office and non-office works. This position is to assist and manage all activities, ensure the smooth operation of the foundation, coordinate between the committee and the volunteers in the new office, and organize the agenda for meetings with the committee. The secretary as the head of the office department is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the entire office. This includes overseeing document management and the workflow of all departments within the office. Additionally, the secretary serves as a representative and attends meetings with the foundation's management.

The assistant secretary, the individual is responsible for assisting and supporting the Secretary in all aspects of their work as directed.

The treasurer duty is organizing a transparent and accountable accounting system, including handling donation receipts and financial certification documents.

The assistant treasurer is responsible for assisting and supporting the treasurer in all financial matters. The head of the automotive department is responsible for generating work assignments and overseeing the operations of the department. This position has to handle the communication and coordination among volunteers within the foundation to create effective teamwork of volunteer.

Volunteers are divided into two groups: those assigned to emergency response vehicles, responsible for rescuing and assisting victims in incidents and disasters, and those assigned to relief vehicles, tasked with distributing relief supplies to the public. Furthermore, all volunteers have full authority to make decisions regarding their work. They are empowered to do their judgment and take actions in carrying out their work responsibilities.

Working procedure

In the general work process, volunteers receive information about emergency situations through police radio communication and from the local community in the area facilitated by the head of the automotive department of the foundation. In the large-scale disaster case, volunteers may receive contact from the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, specifically directing and requesting assistance from the secretary.

After that, volunteers will be assigned duties and deployed to the incidents to carry out their tasks. When the assistance is finished, a performance analysis meeting will be held by all participating volunteers to discuss the limitations and obstacles faced during the operations. All issues will be gathered by the secretary and presented at the monthly meeting with the committee for problem-solving and planning for future performances. Additionally, in the case of receiving compensation from the National Institute for Emergency Medical and donations from the public, financial certification documents will be prepared by the treasurer as evidence for transparency.

Reasons for volunteers shortage

The problem of volunteer shortages in the community foundation has been persistent since the expansion of new offices and the organizational restructuring of the foundation. However, the problem intensified significantly in 2020 with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a reduced number of available volunteers. Despite the decline in volunteers, the workload increased significantly. As a result, the previously identified problem became even more severe.

Change 1: The Expansion of the Foundation

In 1982, the headquarters of Pracharuamjai foundation was established in Khanom district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province where is near Surat Thani province. Being the first public hazards foundation in the city, its role and responsibility in serving the public significantly increased. For example, the public sector requested their assistance in helping people in danger areas, the foundation's volunteers were entrusted the authority and responsibility of training people in healthcare and disaster prevention, and it became a place of emergency assistance for the public as a second home.

With the increased responsibilities and the increased demand from people in other areas of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the chairman approved of expanding the assistance coverage to every

area in the province. The reasons for the expansion new branch office in Muang district, Nakhon Si Thammarat, were as follows.

Firstly, the foundation's first location was not comfortable to provide convenient coverage for the people of Nakhon Si Thammarat as initially expected. The location in Khanom district being situated the edge or border between Nakhon Si Thammarat province and Surat Thani Province, was far from most area within Nakhon Si Thammarat. Due to the faraway distance, giving aid to people within the province became complicated. The communication and coordination between foundation and people were difficult, and it took an hour to reach the emergency areas. Consequently, the providing of assistance to the public in Nakhon Si Thammarat was not smooth.

Finally, the collaboration with the office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, a government agency, has impacted the foundation and increased responsibility and an expanded role of foundation in society. As a result, the foundation's duties included both its own tasks and collaborative work the government sector.

All the reasons mentioned above, in 1989, the new branch office of Pracharuamjai foundation in Muang district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province was situated. Definitely, when the office expanded, the demand of manpower increased. However, the demand of volunteers was not met sufficiently. At that time, the human resource planning was not clearly planned and well-prepared. The committee decided to adapt and rotate former volunteers between the old and new offices in a period of time. Simultaneously, they extended invitations to the network of former volunteers who had previously coordinated and collaborated with the foundation to become permanent volunteers. Additionally, the office opened registration to the public for those interested in volunteering with the foundation

Fundamentally, the chairman of the foundation expected a minimum requirement of 20 field volunteers to ensure sufficient coverage in two time slots, day and night with each slot consisting of 12 hours for 10 individuals. However, the foundation was unable to meet the anticipated number of volunteers. The chairman resolved this issue himself by managing and coordinating to generous people such as motorbike taxi rider for helping the patient transfers. Besides, he fully promoted and encouraged people who were interested in volunteering.

During the interview, Mr. Nattipong commented on the volunteers shortage, he said:

Many people were interested to work as volunteers within the foundation. However, the limitations and obstacles, training requirement and uncertain work schedule, affected their convenience to commit. Consequently, the applicants could not become part of foundation, but expressed to assist the foundation as external volunteer helpers according to their convenience.

From the interview, it could be explained that the limitations mentioned was a mandatory 40-hour basic volunteer training by the office of disaster prevention and mitigation. Without completing the training, they could not be certified as volunteers. Additionally, they were devoted to the foundation's operational procedures and were accepted the working time conditions, which might have an impact on their own life schedules.

From the interview, it can be further explained that the limitation mentioned is that in order to become a full-fledged volunteer, individuals must undergo a preliminary 40-hour basic

volunteer training provided by the Provincial Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. Only after passing the training could they be certified as volunteers. In addition to that, they are required to familiarize themselves with the foundation's operational procedures and accept the conditions regarding time commitment, which may have an impact on their personal schedules.

Change 2: the Restructuring of the structural organization

The establishment of new office branch necessitated an increased number of volunteers to carry out the expanded operations. In the year 1989, following the expansion of the office of Pracharumjai Foundation, a public charitable organization, by establishing branches in the Muang district of Nakhon Si Thammarat province to provide widespread and convenient public services. The chairman had a vision to develop a self-managing team to reduce the control from the committee, minimizing delays caused of waiting for command in rapid issues, tackling from the head office.

In the addition, it aimed to distribute the workload and burden among the committee responsible for overseeing the main office and the new office. Furthermore, the committee believed that empowering volunteers would foster their skills, create a sense of unity with the foundation, and provide them with a better situation understanding and awareness of the challenges faced by the foundation compared to the committee and individuals who were located far away.

Therefore, a new organizational structure was implemented in the foundation's new office, resulting in additional responsibilities for volunteers in the office. Table 1 shows the comparison of the job positions with main office and new office.

Table 1: The comparison of job positions between the main office and the new office

Positions	Main office	New office
Manager	-	volunteer
Secretary	Committee members	volunteer
Assistant Secretary	Committee members	volunteer
Treasurer	Committee members	volunteer
Assistant Treasurer	Committee members	volunteer
Head of Emergency Management Department	Committee members	volunteer
Volunteers of Emergency Response Division	volunteer	volunteer
Volunteers of Disaster Relief Division	volunteer	volunteer

From the comparison table of job positions between the main office and the new office, it was exact that all positions in the new office were under the volunteers' responsibility, covering office tasks and field works. The significant impact of the restructuring within the new branch of Pracharumjai foundation was the transfer of authority to manage the foundation from the committee members in the main office to the volunteers in the new office. Moreover, the newly introduced position in the new office was Manager who was responsible for overseeing and managing the overall smooth operation of the foundation.

The manager also act as a coordinator between the main office and the new office for crucial activities such as annual meeting to plan the foundation's operation for the next year or

budgeting approval, and monthly performance reports to the main office. This position did not exist in the main office before, as the committee administered all aspects of management. Considering all these changes, it was explicit that volunteers in the new office have taken on office responsibilities that were previously not assigned to them. It could be said that the workload of volunteers in the new office, both in the field and in the office, has dramatically increased. Therefore, there was a greater need for more volunteers than before.

Aftermath of changes

After the foundation's office was expanded, the organization grew larger, and the restructuring of the organization within the new office involved recruiting volunteers to take on office-related responsibilities. Consequently, the situation concerning human resources in the foundation was severely affected. Specifically, the organization had expanded in size, resulting in an increased number of positions that needed to be filled, requiring a greater level of volunteer involvement.

However, the lack of a clear volunteer planning, it has impacted the shortage of volunteers into the organization. The procedure of recruiting and selecting the volunteers through the opening applications and former volunteers' suggestion. Later, candidates will get the job interviews and internship such as providing basic training for first aid, going to the disaster or accident-prone areas to study and practice form the real situations. Besides, all volunteers must complete a 40-hour volunteer training conducted by the provincial public health department to ensure their professional competency in dealing with public emergencies.

In the volunteer interview process, the interview panel typically consisted of the foundation manager and respective department heads. The main questions asked during the interview were related to the volunteer's desired position and whether they were ready to start working immediately. The foundation manager provided a brief overview of the responsibilities of the position and then selected candidates for a 3-month probation period before final approval for the position. According to Mr.Nattiphong, if volunteers expressed their interest in specific positions during the interview, they were more likely to be assigned to those positions based on the organization's needs. However, even after joining, volunteers might undergo training and work in various positions as needed.

The situation where additional tasks were added beyond what was initially agreed upon was considered an unauthorized job offer, as it lacked mutual consent from both parties. Specifically, while the foundation had agreed to the changes in the job, the volunteer did not provide consent but was rather compelled to accept the new responsibilities without prior discussion. This was seen as a manipulative and distorting practice of the original job offer.

Therefore, it was observed that the approach used was not aggressive in seeking volunteers but rather a passive approach, as they waited for volunteers to come forward. It was more of a reactive approach rather than a proactive one in recruiting volunteers. The pool of available volunteers remained extremely limited, with some volunteers being relocated from the main office and new volunteers being convinced to join from existing volunteers. Nonetheless, there were still no external individuals who personally applied to become volunteers. This shortage of volunteers became a prominent issue for the foundation following the various changes that had taken place.

Table 2: The number of volunteer requirement and the number of volunteers available

Positions	The number of volunteer requirement	The number of volunteers available
Secretary	1	1 (former volunteer)
Assistant Secretary	1	-
Treasurer	1	1 (former volunteer)
Assistant Treasurer	1	-
Head of Emergency Management Department	1	1(former volunteer)
Volunteers of Emergency Response Division	10 (minimum)	5 (Both former and new volunteers)
Volunteers of Disaster Relief Division	10 (minimum)	2 (former volunteer)
Total	25	10

Based on Table 2, it was evident that the number of volunteers that the foundation required was significantly lower than expected, by more than half. The majority of the existing volunteers were actually the same volunteers who had relocated from the main office to assist with the operations of the new office of the foundation. At that time, the situation was characterized by a heavy workload, but there were insufficient volunteers to manage the tasks.

The relocated existing volunteers from the main office had to step in as primary leaders. They had to take responsibility for their own disaster response duties and simultaneously train the new volunteers. Furthermore, the old volunteers were selected by the committee to assume office responsibilities. However, the selection process focused on familiarity with the foundation and the desire to work in those positions, without adequately considering the necessary knowledge, abilities, and skills required for the job. For instance, the position of treasurer requires individuals with expertise in mathematics, accounting, and an understanding of the foundation's financial disbursement processes. For all positions in the office, volunteers would learn their duties through teaching and guidance provided by the representatives of the foundation's committee who oversaw the initial phase for approximately 3 months. After that period, the volunteers were entrusted to take full responsibility according to the plans set by the committee.

During interviews with volunteers at that time, they all shared a common view that it was a transitional period where the volunteer capacity had not yet stabilized. This resulted in a mismatch between the workload and the available volunteers. The operations of the foundation were greatly affected due to the inadequate number of volunteers. Some volunteers had to work more hours than what was initially assigned by the foundation. For example, they had to start their shift from 6:00 AM until 6:00 PM and would have to stay until 9:00 PM or even later if there were a shortage of volunteers for the next shift. This caused disruptions in the workflow. The volunteer representative explained the issue of volunteer shortages during that time as follows:

I worked for more than 12 hours, and on some days, it was as long as 18 hours. There was even a time when I had to stay overnight because there weren't enough people for the next shift. Even though I didn't have to continue working, I felt the need to help the foundation keep going. At that time, I requested the executive committee to intervene and address this shortage issue because otherwise, people wouldn't be able to stay.

Apart from interviewing volunteers, the situation of insufficient volunteers in the organization was acknowledged by the foundation's management committee as something beyond their expectations. Initially, it was believed that there would be an adequate or slightly lower number of volunteers than anticipated, and there would be occasional new volunteers joining the foundation. However, due to various issues related to the working conditions of volunteers, such as work schedule, training, and responsibilities, the majority of the network and individuals interested in volunteering chose to assist the foundation as external volunteers on an ad hoc basis, rather than becoming full-time volunteers.

Mr. Nattipong explained the problem of volunteer shortage in an interview:

The number of volunteers was less than what the foundation had anticipated, and we were unable to address this shortage immediately. However, we were actively seeking alternative solutions to ensure the continuity of the foundation's work.

The shortage of volunteers experienced by the foundation was acknowledged by the management as something beyond expectations. They did not anticipate that it would have such a significant impact on the organization's operations, leading to existing volunteers having to work overtime and shoulder a heavy workload. This is mainly due to insufficient numbers of volunteers in the same positions.

This reflected the consequences of the volunteer shortage in the foundation, indicating that the foundation faced a lack of job analysis and design. Job analysis helped in collecting data within the operations of the foundation, in order to analyze the significance of each role within the organization. This aided in planning for the required volunteer workforce in the future, but the committee members had not assessed job description of each position that how each position differed from one another, the job specification was necessary to analyze and assess the suitability of individuals for specific job positions, and the KASOCs framework could be used for this purpose. It allowed us to evaluate the knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics that helped volunteers determine if they were suitable for the job and enabled the organization to select volunteers who were a good fit for the role. Work environment analysis was also essential in understanding the risks associated with job performance and finding individuals with suitable qualifications to carry out the tasks in that particular position effectively. Job design helped to define how work would be performed and the tasks that would be required in a given job.

Due to the unexpected shortage of volunteers compared to what the foundation had anticipated, the workload and responsibilities of the remaining volunteers increased significantly. They had to take care of both emergency and office-related tasks. However, the situation escalated beyond manageable levels due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Many volunteers contracted the virus and were unable to work, while some were afraid to come to work, resulting in a reduced number of available volunteers. As a consequence, the remaining volunteers had to shoulder an overwhelming workload, leading to a decline in work efficiency.

Replacing volunteers shortage through cross-training

When the Pracharumjai foundation faced a shortage of volunteers due to the lack of human resource planning, the management sought ways to address this issue. They recognized that the current recruitment strategies were not effective in attracting new volunteers. Therefore, relying on an increased number of volunteers joining the organization was not a feasible

solution. Instead, the foundation opted to focus on developing the existing volunteers within the organization to maximize their contributions.

The foundation chose to utilize human resource development methods to enhance the skills of the current volunteers, enabling them to perform various roles and responsibilities within the organization. This approach aimed to mitigate the shortage of volunteers in specific positions during different time periods. By cross-training all the volunteers, they could effectively fill the gaps caused by the volunteer shortage.

The foundation employed the human resource development approach to enhance the capabilities of volunteers, which involved cross-training. Each volunteer was encouraged to be capable of practicing and performing tasks in various positions within the organization. This approach addressed the limitation of volunteer shortage and was seen as a means of supporting volunteers in developing self-improvement skills for their personal benefits in the future.

In an interview, Mr. Wichai, a representative of the foundation's management committee, stated:

I wanted volunteers to be able to work in diverse roles within the organization, partly to compensate for our volunteer shortage. Moreover, it helped to develop their knowledge and skills, which could become valuable assets for them in the future.

The process of cross-training involved creating a learning environment where volunteers could engage in various job tasks. It started with the management committee assigning each volunteer position as a mentor to their colleagues. Clear lesson plans were developed within a timeframe of 1-3 months. As part of the evaluation process, volunteers had to produce at least one tangible outcome during their learning period, which was assessed by their mentors in the respective positions. Additionally, they were required to submit their work to the operations manager for further evaluation, ensuring their ability to take responsibility and support work in other positions within the foundation.

For example, a volunteer in the disaster relief department learned the work of the secretary position in the office. Their tangible outcome was producing the financial statements of the foundation. Similarly, a volunteer in the field department was expected to handle administrative documents and record meeting minutes, similar to the responsibilities of a secretary. Their tangible outcome was their effective management of meetings. Meanwhile, an office volunteer was able to assist in disaster relief efforts and support affected individuals in the field. Their tangible outcome was successfully aiding and assisting disaster-affected individuals.

In accordance with the interview with the volunteers representative, they mentioned the following:

I was responsible for the disaster relief department, but I also took the opportunity to learn about accounting. Sometimes, it took a lot of time and calculations. There were instances when I didn't understand certain things during work, so I had to discuss them after work. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to complete the tasks.

As for me, I was in charge of the office's administrative tasks. However, I also had to go out into the field. Initially, it was quite challenging, and I struggled to grasp certain things. But I had to persevere because I needed to deliver tangible results for the organization to see.

According to the interview with the volunteer representative, additional information was provided regarding the learning process. It was mentioned that learning took place in two time periods: during working hours and outside of working hours. During working hours, volunteers utilized break times or periods when they had no responsibilities to learn about other positions. Otherwise, they would have to learn outside of working hours. This meant that they had to complete their assigned tasks within their designated working hours before learning about other positions. This arrangement had an impact on their personal time after work.

Therefore, the utilization of the human resource development approach to foster a multi-skilled work among volunteers was the selected method to address the issue of volunteer shortages within the organization, as outlined in the aforementioned process. Despite the potential challenges in volunteer learning, the mandate to achieve successful outcomes through cross-functional learning necessitated that volunteers produced work results based on their expanded learning beyond their designated roles, as expected by the management committee.

Unexpected result: The complexity of the problem

After the effort to address the problem of volunteer shortages in the Pracharumjai foundation by using human resource development method, cross-training have been developed for the volunteers. The expected outcome from the management committee's perspective was that each volunteer could perform multiple roles to compensate for the shortage of personnel in different positions during their working hours. However, unexpected consequences have emerged, including 1) an excessive workload and 2) discomfort in performing tasks that volunteers were not suited for. These unforeseen impacts have affected the efficiency of volunteer work and the overall performance of the foundation.

The excessive workload referred to the situation where volunteers were responsible for various positions, including their own assigned tasks and other areas that needed to be covered due to volunteer shortages. This led to an increase in the number of tasks from one to two or three, each with its own job details and varying levels of difficulty. Some tasks required a significant amount of time and effort, in addition to the already time-consuming main responsibilities. For example, a disaster response role required being on duty for 12 hours, preparing rescue equipment, conducting rescue drills, and planning operations with clear and precise steps.

However, concerns also arose regarding office-related tasks, such as unfinished meeting documents, adding to the workload. Consequently, the increased workload affected the personal time of volunteers, as there were multiple tasks that could not be completed during working hours. Each task required dedication and time, leading to a higher workload and impacting the personal time of volunteers, as the tasks could not be finished within the allocated working hours. According to the interview with a representative volunteer from the foundation, he stated:

The workload was extremely heavy. I had to handle both the on-site disaster response tasks and the administrative duties simultaneously during working hours. What made it

challenging was that both tasks had very different job requirements, and I had to perform both of them at the same time. The workload was too overwhelming for someone who had to take responsibility for both tasks.

The discomfort in performing tasks that volunteers were not suited for meant that each volunteer had their main assigned position that aligned with their skills and preferences. However, with the approach of developing volunteers to perform various tasks to compensate for volunteer shortages in the foundation, volunteers needed to learn and take responsibility for tasks in areas where they were not skilled or interested.

Consequently, some volunteers felt overwhelmed and unhappy when carrying out tasks that they were not suited for. Each position required different qualities and skills, and the suitability of individuals for each position needed to be analyzed, including their knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics. As a result, volunteers who did not have the qualifications aligned with their assigned tasks struggled in their work.

For example, volunteers assigned to financial tasks in the field were responsible for financial matters despite requiring individuals with accounting knowledge, analytical skills, numerical proficiency, and a professional demeanor. Without the appropriate qualifications, volunteers faced difficulties in their tasks. Similarly, office volunteers who were responsible for overseeing field-related tasks encountered challenges due to the lack of alignment between their personal qualities and the specific requirements of those tasks. The details and qualifications required for each task needed to be considered, and the lack of alignment could lead to discomfort when carrying out tasks outside their main responsibilities. It aligned with the volunteer's interview, as they stated:

I did not really like having to deal with tasks like donation receipts and accounting. There were many steps involved, and it required precision. I wasn't good with numbers, and I wasn't a detail-oriented person. It became very stressful when I had to do them.

The work didn't fit well with me. For certain field tasks, it was specific and I didn't know what to do. It went beyond just being responsible for the task; it required skills that were compatible with the job.

The unexpected results mentioned above had a direct impact on the efficiency of the volunteers' work and the overall effectiveness of the Pracharuamjai foundation. When the workload that volunteers had to handle became excessive due to the need to manage tasks in multiple positions, their focus and dedication to their main responsibilities diminished. There was no time for proper preparation and readiness to carry out tasks since the workload was overwhelming. Additionally, their personal time for rest and rejuvenation, essential for performing well in subsequent work, was affected. The cumulative burden resulted in a decrease in the volunteers' performance in their main tasks and subpar performance in other assigned tasks due to lack of interest and suitability. The work was executed merely to complete the tasks rather than striving for optimal efficiency. Ultimately, this had a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the foundation. Furthermore, it emphasized that the underlying problem of volunteer shortages in the organization was not genuinely addressed but rather temporarily patched. These circumstances directly affected the organization's reputation since the shortage of volunteers meant that the existing volunteers had to handle multiple responsibilities without being able to excel in both their primary and secondary tasks. As a result, the organization's achievements were unclear, and public confidence and support

in terms of financial donations diminished. This, in turn, undermined the organization's viability and its essential existence in society.

Therefore, developing multi-skilled work among volunteers did not effectively address the issue of volunteer shortages in the nonprofit organization. Instead, it added complexity to the problem, resulting in a negative impact on the work performance of volunteers and the effectiveness of the organization.

Move forward or change direction?

The situation of volunteer shortages in the Pracharumjai foundation was evident in the middle of 2023. Mr. Nattiphong was deeply concerned about this issue. The attempt to solve the problem of volunteer shortages by providing volunteers with a variety of job skills resulted in creating more complex problems within the foundation. In other words, volunteers were burdened with excessive workloads and had to work in positions they were not suited for, which affected the overall efficiency of the foundation.

However, ultimately, he understood that all the consequences that occurred within the collaborative charity foundation were indeed the result of addressing the problem incorrectly at its core. The foundation had a deficiency in Human Resource Planning, but the problem-solving approach had been focused on Human Resource Development. Therefore, the root cause of the problem, which was the shortage of volunteers, had not been properly resolved. Instead, it had been left unresolved, as if the problem had been swept under the rug. At present, it could be likened to "*burying the problem under the carpet*," where the real problem was not addressed decisively, but rather, attempts were made to manage it on a day-to-day basis. It was similar to taking medication that didn't match the illness. This understanding led him to comprehend the concept of a "*chronic disease*" that couldn't be completely cured.

Mr. Nattiphong understood well that the foundation was a public charitable organization, and volunteers joined with a selfless intention to contribute to society. Therefore, regardless of the management committee's approach to operations, volunteers would try their best and fulfill their duties. Even though there might be some opposition, it never exceeded the volunteers' aspirations to create benefits for the community. Notwithstanding, he believed that it was not the right approach, and he wanted to truly understand the genuine needs of the volunteers and address the obstacles they faced before they had a lasting impact on both the volunteers and the foundation. He knew that, for now, it might not be possible to achieve that, but even so, he was determined to continue his effort

Discussion Questions

1. What is your opinion on the definition of "Volunteer" within the management committee? Does it result in a chronic shortage of volunteers in Pracharumjai foundation? Why?
2. Do you think the problem of volunteer shortages in Pracharumjai foundation is a significant issue? Why?
3. Do you agree or disagree that managing the problem of volunteer shortages through cross-training is a viable solution? Why?
4. If you were a committee member with a role in decision-making within an organization, how would you solve the problem of volunteer shortages in the organization?

Providing Human Resource Services in Construction Projects

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Abstract

Jaya Abadi was established by two colleagues who themselves started from humble beginnings in the construction sector. The partnership provides human resource to contractors of the construction industry in Malaysia. It acts as a bridge between job seekers and contractors of the construction projects that need the skills. The partners, Andrianto and Sulaiman Dayat created the business by drawing upon their own journey as immigrants in Malaysia. They recognized the opportunity to assist individuals who share similar backgrounds as theirs. The foundation of their business rests upon the invaluable lessons learned and the wealth of experiences gained over the years, complemented by the trust forged through meticulous networking efforts.

Key words: Construction, entrepreneurship, small business, Malaysia

Introduction

Jaya Abadi stands as a highly valued and reliable human resource provider that plays a pivotal role in meeting the labor requirements of diverse construction development projects in Malaysia. With the booming growth in the construction industry, numerous ambitious ventures such as housing projects, hotels, apartments, and more arise, necessitating a substantial workforce to bring these projects to fruition. Recognizing this pressing demand, Jaya Abadi has emerged as a solution-driven service provider, sourcing and providing skilled human resources from Indonesia to meet the specific needs of each project.

The inception of Jaya Abadi can be attributed to the unwavering determination and extensive experience of its founders, Andrianto and Sulaiman. These two dedicated partners have dedicated themselves to the construction sector, rising from the lowest positions and gradually ascending through the ranks. Their journey has been marked by perseverance, resilience, and an unyielding commitment to excellence. Coming from humble beginnings, Andrianto and Sulaiman have never allowed their circumstances to hinder their ambitions. Instead, they have channeled their hardships into motivation, fueling their drive to succeed.

With a shared vision and complementary skill sets, Andrianto and Sulaiman joined forces to establish Jaya Abadi. Their partnership represents a powerful combination of experience, expertise, and industry knowledge. Drawing upon their first-hand experience of working on construction sites, including working as manual labor, they have gained invaluable insights into the industry's intricacies. Through their arduous journey, they have developed a deep understanding of the labor requirements, the skills needed, and the challenges faced in construction projects.

The success of Jaya Abadi can be attributed to the relentless pursuit of opportunities and a commitment to delivering high-quality services. Andrianto and Sulaiman's never-give-up attitude has propelled them forward, enabling them to seize valuable opportunities and build strong relationships within the construction industry. Their strong work ethic and exceptional communication skills have contributed to forging solid partnerships with clients and stakeholders, earning them a reputation for reliability, efficiency, and professionalism.

Today, Jaya Abadi stands as a testament to Andrianto and Sulaiman's journey, their resilience, and their unwavering dedication to excellence. As a trusted human resource provider service, they bridge the gap between the labor demands of construction development projects and the skilled workforce available in Indonesia. By delivering competent and committed workers to these projects, Jaya Abadi not only contributes to the successful completion of ventures but also plays a significant role in supporting the growth and advancement of Malaysia's construction industry.

From nothing to be something

Emerging from the depths of adversity, Andrianto and Sulaiman's remarkable odyssey from destitution to prosperity stands as an embodiment of unwavering determination, resilience, and unyielding spirit. Hailing from Kangean Island, a modest and economically constrained enclave in Madura, Indonesia, their early years were defined by limited prospects and meager aspirations.

Kangean Island is in East Java province, Indonesia. The hills of the island are covered with teak. Teak (locally known as 'kayu jati') contains high natural oils and rubber, making it durable, even if left untreated. The people raise cattle, and export copra, fish, salt, and timber across the Bali Sea.

However, refusing to succumb to the shackles of circumstance, these tenacious individuals transcended their humble beginnings, forging an extraordinary path towards success. Driven by an unwavering hunger for a better life, Andrianto and Sulaiman embarked on an audacious venture to Malaysia as Indonesian Migrant Workers, defying the odds stacked against them. This arduous journey, however, was not without its trials and tribulations. In their quest for financial assistance, they sought the benevolence of neighbors and relatives, securing a loan amounting to approximately RM400. With these borrowed funds and hearts brimming with hope, they set foot on Malaysian soil in 2003, leaving behind their familiar surroundings in pursuit of brighter horizons.

Their arrival in Malaysia marked the beginning of a grueling struggle against the harsh realities of an uncertain and often unforgiving landscape. Embracing various menial jobs, they toiled tirelessly, eking out a meager existence with a meager income of approximately RM30 per day. Burdened by the weight of debts and exorbitant interest rates, they were left with a mere RM5 to sustain themselves over arduous two-week intervals. Yet, it was within

this crucible of adversity that their unwavering determination began to take root, fueling their relentless pursuit of success.

Motivated by their trying circumstances, Andrianto and Sulaiman resolved to repay the world with unwavering diligence and unwavering triumph. Their dreams, while seemingly modest in nature, were propelled by boundless ambition and an insatiable hunger for accomplishment. They aspired to grasp substantial amounts of money, fortified by the thickness of RM100 bills, or even venture into livestock ownership upon their eventual return to their homeland. These aspirations served as unwavering beacons, steadfast reminders of the possibilities awaiting them, propelling them ever forward beyond the confines of their circumstances.

Driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and self-improvement, Andrianto and Sulaiman seized every available opportunity to enhance their skills and expand their capabilities. Undeterred by limited financial resources, they seized the chance to partake in the prestigious Bina Usahawan Malaysia program, a three-day event held in Shah Alam designed to cultivate nascent entrepreneurs. This invaluable experience, coupled with intermittent study sessions dedicated to business and economic literature, fortified their intellectual prowess, and equipped them with the requisite acumen to navigate the intricate realm of entrepreneurship.

Yet, their ascent to success was not solely shaped by intellectual pursuits. Recognizing the instrumental role of effective communication and relationship-building, Andrianto and Sulaiman leveraged their innate interpersonal skills to forge enduring connections and cultivate an extensive network of contacts. With unwavering work ethic and genuine affability, they nurtured a broad and diverse network that not only broadened their horizons but also granted them access to various lucrative job vocations. These formative experiences became steppingstones, honing their skills and nurturing their expertise within the construction sector.

Embracing the indomitable spirit of entrepreneurship, Andrianto and Sulaiman embarked on numerous ventures, meticulously carving their own path to success. A notable enterprise included the establishment of an Eco Shop Franchise in Kuala Lumpur, a testament to their resolute determination. Despite arduous training sessions and substantial financial investments in preparation for a grand inauguration, the unexpected onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic cast an ominous shadow over

Unyielding in the face of adversity, Andrianto and Sulaiman fearlessly embarked on a multitude of business ventures, notably including the establishment of an Eco Shop Franchise in Kuala Lumpur. Despite their meticulous preparations, which encompassed exhaustive training regimens and substantial financial investments, the unforeseen onset of the COVID-19 pandemic dealt a harsh blow, forcing the closure of their store within a mere three months of its eagerly anticipated inauguration. Nevertheless, Andrianto and Sulaiman's unwavering resolve remained unshaken, as they astutely recognized that triumphs and setbacks are inherent in the dynamic realm of entrepreneurship. With a steadfast commitment to resilience and an unwavering belief in their capabilities, they remained undeterred by adversity, their minds firmly attuned to the pursuit of knowledge and progress. Embracing a mindset that transcends excessive fear of failure, they continue to learn, grow, and evolve, forever mindful that setbacks are merely steppingstones on the path to success.

Presently, Andrianto and Sulaiman's extraordinary saga stands as a beacon of inspiration, illuminating the transformative potential inherent within the realms of perseverance, relentless industry, and unwavering self-belief. Their remarkable ascent from adversity to prosperity not only defies the constraints of circumstance but also epitomizes the pinnacle of entrepreneurial success. Their indomitable spirit serves as a guiding light, demonstrating the profound impact of an unwavering dedication to lifelong learning and an insatiable hunger for personal and professional development. Through their resolute pursuit of growth and unyielding commitment to their dreams, Andrianto and Sulaiman embody the essence of entrepreneurial triumph, inspiring others to embrace resilience, forge their own paths, and harness the transformative power that lies within.

Enlightened opportunities

Enlightened by their profound expertise and comprehensive understanding of the construction industry at every level, Andrianto and Sulaiman's astute awareness and unwavering determination led them to recognize a unique business opportunity within their field of experience. Leveraging their exceptional communication skills and adept relationship-building capabilities, they cultivated an extensive network that earned them a reputation for reliability and trustworthiness. This, coupled with their deep understanding of the prevailing job market and the challenges faced by job seekers, spurred them to act. With great initiative and entrepreneurial spirit, Andrianto and Sulaiman established Jaya Abadi in 2007 as a sole proprietorship based in Cheras, Selangor.

Jaya Abadi swiftly emerged as a vital intermediary, bridging the gap between skilled laborers seeking employment and the burgeoning demand for workforce in the ever-expanding construction projects throughout Malaysia, with a particular focus on the vibrant capital city of Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas. Recognizing the dire need for qualified workers in the industry, Andrianto and Sulaiman, with their keen insight and robust network, effectively matched job seekers with the most suitable construction projects. Each project became an opportunity for Jaya Abadi to deploy a workforce of 20 to 30 individuals, meticulously selected for their skills and expertise. The duo's commitment to excellence and unwavering dedication earned them the trust and respect of contractors, further solidifying their position as a reputable human resource provider.

Over time, as Jaya Abadi continued to thrive and earn recognition for its exceptional services, the number of project bids increased significantly. This growth necessitated an expansion of their workforce to meet the escalating demands of industry. Today, the company stands as a testament to their unwavering vision and exceptional management skills, boasting a team of over a hundred field workers and supported by five competent field supervisors. These supervisors serve as flexible mediators, seamlessly coordinating between contractors and the workforce to ensure smooth operations and unparalleled service delivery.

The remarkable success of Jaya Abadi is not merely a testament to Andrianto and Sulaiman's entrepreneurial prowess but also a tribute to their unwavering commitment to excellence, resilience in the face of challenges, and their innate ability to seize opportunities. Through their enterprising spirit and unwavering dedication to building and maintaining strong relationships, they have not only carved a niche for themselves within the construction industry but also provided countless job seekers with valuable employment opportunities. Their unwavering confidence and drive to excel continue to propel Jaya Abadi forward, driving the company towards even greater achievements, empowering individuals,

contributing to the continued growth and success of Malaysia's construction sector, and making a positive impact in the communities they serve.

Maintaining the business despite the challenges

Jaya Abadi's journey has not been without its share of challenges, yet Andrianto and Sulaiman have demonstrated unwavering determination and resilience in navigating these obstacles. Recognizing that their business operates on a project-based model, they understand the need to differentiate themselves from competitors in the increasingly competitive marketplace. They have consistently emphasized the work ethic of the workers they provide and the responsible approach they adopt in managing their business, highlighting their commitment to delivering superior service.

Health and safety considerations are also paramount in the construction industry, and Andrianto and Sulaiman have made it a priority to ensure the well-being of the workers they deploy. Acknowledging the inherent risks associated with construction work, they diligently reinforce health and safety protocols to their workforce in every project. They understand the importance of preventing accidents or illnesses and take the necessary steps to guarantee the implementation of all required safety measures. In the unfortunate event of a worker falling ill or experiencing a tragic incident while on a project, Andrianto and Sulaiman, as the business owners of the human resource service provider, assume the responsibility of ensuring that proper precautions and procedures are followed.

Furthermore, another challenge that Andrianto and Sulaiman must address pertains to the nature of their contract-based business. There are instances where certain project tenders choose to default on their contractual obligations, fleeing without remunerating Jaya Abadi for the services rendered. In such circumstances, Andrianto and Sulaiman find themselves compelled to bear the financial burden of compensating the workers they had deployed to the project. Despite diligently reporting such incidents to the authorities, encountering fraud still results in financial losses. Nevertheless, Andrianto and Sulaiman uphold their integrity and commitment to their workers, always prioritizing the welfare of their team members by ensuring they receive their rightful payment, irrespective of the project's outcome.

Despite the numerous challenges encountered along the way, Andrianto and Sulaiman remain resolute and steadfast in their pursuit of business success. They recognize that their workers heavily rely on Jaya Abadi for their livelihoods, creating a deep sense of responsibility within them. Additionally, they frequently extend financial and non-financial support to their workers, aiming to improve their quality of life and provide opportunities for personal growth. It is through these initiatives that some workers have achieved remarkable success, established their own businesses or advanced to higher positions. Andrianto and Sulaiman's own arduous experiences in their formative years have instilled in them a profound understanding of the importance of offering ongoing opportunities to individuals from less fortunate backgrounds, empowering them to strive for a brighter and more prosperous future.

In the face of adversity, Andrianto and Sulaiman's unwavering commitment to their workers, their steadfast perseverance, and their belief in the transformative power of opportunity have enabled Jaya Abadi to overcome obstacles and thrive. Their resilience and determination serve as an inspiration, not only to their employees but also to the broader business community. By fostering an environment that supports personal growth and social empowerment, they exemplify the profound impact that entrepreneurial spirit, compassion,

and unwavering dedication can have in transforming lives and creating a more equitable society.

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Discussion Questions

1. What might be the primary motivation of Andrianto and Sulaiman to set up their own company? Explain.
2. Besides supplying labour to the construction industry, what may be another business that Andrianto and Sulaiman could consider? Why?
3. Do you think the two business partners will be comfortable in providing a similar business if they decide to return to Indonesia? Take a position and justify.
4. To what extent being in Malaysia has sparked the urge in Andrianto and Sulaiman to engage in the manpower supply services to the construction projects?
5. How would entrepreneurs Andrianto and Sulaiman continue their business in Malaysia if they decide to return to their home country?

Rice Matters: From Household Love to Global Trade

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Abstract

In Gwalior, India, Vikram Kapoor asked his wife Meenal to make lunch on July 30, 2023, sparking a discussion about rice. Rice, originating in India and China 9,000-10,000 years ago, is now a global staple. India is the world's top rice exporter (40% of global exports). Rice is the second most important cereal crop globally, with 510 million metric tons produced in the last harvest year and 510.3 million metric tons consumed in 2021/2022. India provides subsidized rice through government schemes. Meenal's concern was about the distribution system and costs of subsidized rice in India.

Keywords: Supply chain management, international trade and export management, policy, and decision-making

About Rice

Rice, one of the most important staple foods in the world, has a long and fascinating history. Its origins can be traced back to around 9,000-10,000 years ago in the region of eastern India and southeastern China, making it one of the earliest domesticated crops in human history. From its birthplace, rice cultivation gradually spread throughout Asia, reaching Southeast Asia, Korea, Japan, and the Pacific Islands through trade and migration. It played a crucial role in the development of ancient civilizations in China and India, shaping their societies and cultures.

In Southeast Asia, rice farming was instrumental in the rise of powerful kingdoms like the Khmer Empire. Japan and Korea also embraced rice as a central part of their diets and cultural identity. Over time, rice spread to other parts of the world through trade routes, reaching the Middle East, Egypt, and eventually the Americas through European exploration and slave trade. Today, modern agricultural practices and technologies have boosted rice production, ensuring its continued significance as a vital food source for more than half of the world's population and preserving its cultural importance in diverse societies globally.

History of rice

Origins: Rice cultivation is believed to have originated in China around 10,000 to 14,000 years ago. From there, it spread to other parts of Asia, including India, Southeast Asia, and eventually to Africa and Europe through trade routes. It is thought that rice cultivation began as a wild grass known as *Oryza rufipogon*, which early humans gradually domesticated into the cultivated rice we know today (*Oryza sativa*).

Spread to Different Regions: Rice cultivation reached the Indian subcontinent around 5000 to 4000 BCE, and it became an essential crop in the Indus Valley Civilization. From India, rice cultivation expanded to Sri Lanka, and it was later introduced to regions like Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), and Indonesia.

In China, rice farming has a rich history dating back thousands of years. The Yangtze and Yellow River valleys were crucial areas for rice cultivation. Chinese farmers developed sophisticated irrigation systems to grow rice in these regions.

Spread to Other Continents: Rice was introduced to the Middle East around 3000 BCE, reaching regions such as Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and Persia (modern-day Iran). The spread of rice continued westward, reaching the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. In Europe, rice cultivation began to appear in Spain and Portugal during the Middle Ages.

In Africa, rice was introduced through trade with Arab merchants and subsequently spread to various regions, becoming a significant crop in West Africa and the African Great Lakes region.

Rice in the Americas: Rice also made its way to the Americas during the period of European exploration and colonization. It is believed that African slaves brought to the New World played a crucial role in the establishment of rice plantations in places like South Carolina and Georgia in the United States.

Modern Cultivation and Importance: Today, rice is grown on every continent except Antarctica and is a staple food for over half of the world's population, particularly in Asia, where it is a dietary staple. It is also an essential crop for millions of farmers and an important source of income for many countries. Different varieties of rice are cultivated, and various methods of rice farming are employed, including traditional flooded paddies, terraced fields, and dryland cultivation.

Rice plays a crucial role in global food security, and efforts continue to improve its cultivation, yield, and resistance to pests and diseases to meet the demands of a growing population. Overall, the history of rice is a testament to the ingenuity and resilience of human agricultural practices and their impact on shaping civilizations and cultures around the world.

Meenal pointed out to her husband that he might be aware of Rice and its history, but did he know that the Government of India distributes free rice to people?

Her husband replied, "Yes, I am aware of it, but not everyone has access to it. The government has specific criteria, and based on those criteria, they provide free rice to eligible individuals."

Meenal expressed concern, saying, eligible individuals? "Distributing rice for free could lead to price hikes and affect everyone."

Vikram Kapoor chimed in, "You're right, but there are many poor people who cannot afford rice and food grains. It is the responsibility of the Government of India to support them and provide free rice. In India, various schemes offer free or subsidized rice and food grains, and the Government of India even provides rice at Below Poverty Line (BPL) rates to State Governments under the Welfare Institutions & Hostels Scheme. Table 1 explains about the free or concessional rates distribution system in India.

Table 1: Annual allocation of foodgrains for 2023-24 (In lakh tons)

Name of Scheme	Rice
A. TPDS (NFSA Allocation)	
Antyoday Anna Yojana (AAY)	73.04
Priority Household (PHH)	279.51
TPDS (Tide Over)	21.25
PM POSHAN (MDM)	11.67
WBNP(ICDS)	12.83
Total	398.30
B. Other Welfare Schemes	
Hostels and Welfare institutions	1.43
Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)	0.225
Annapurna	0.00
Total	1.66
C. Additional Allocation (Festival, calamity, additional TPDS, etc.)	
Natural Calamity etc. (MSP Rates)	0.30
Festival/Additional Requirement etc. (Economic Cost)	0.91
Total	1.21
Total (A+B+C)	401.17

Source: Department of Food & Public Distribution, Govt. of India

Public Distribution System (PDS) in the 1960s

Public distribution of essential commodities was in existence in India during the inter-war period. However, PDS, with its focus on the distribution of food grains in urban scarcity areas, had emanated from the critical food shortages of the 1960s. PDS substantially contributed to the containment of the rise in food grain prices and ensured access to food for urban consumers. As the national agricultural production had grown in the aftermath of the Green Revolution, the outreach of PDS was extended to tribal blocks and areas of high incidence of poverty in the 1970s and 1980s.

Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS)

The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was launched in June 1992 to strengthen and streamline the PDS as well as to improve its reach in the far-flung, hilly, remote, and inaccessible areas where a substantial section of the poor live. It covered 1775 blocks wherein area-specific programs such as the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP), and Desert Development Programme (DDP) were being implemented and in certain Designated Hill Areas (DHA) which were identified in consultation with State Governments for special focus. Food grains for distribution in RPDS areas were issued to the States at 50 paise below the Central Issue Price. The scale of

the issue was up to 20 kg per card. The RPDS included an area approach for ensuring the effective reach of the PDS commodities, their delivery by State Governments at the doorstep of FPSs in the identified areas, additional ration cards to the left-out families, infrastructure requirements like additional Fair Price Shops, storage capacity, etc. and additional commodities such as tea, salt, pulses, soap, etc. for distribution through PDS outlets.

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was launched in June 1997 by the Government of India with a focus on providing food grains to the poor. States were required to establish foolproof systems for identifying the poor and ensuring transparent and accountable distribution of food grains at the Fair Price Shops (FPS) level. Initially, the scheme aimed to benefit about 6 crore poor families with an annual allocation of approximately 72 lakh tonnes of food grains. The identification of the poor was based on State-wise poverty estimates from the Planning Commission for 1993-94.

The TPDS also included a transitory allocation for families above the poverty line (APL) to continue receiving subsidized food grains. In 2000, the allocation of food grains for below-poverty-line (BPL) families was increased from 10 kg to 20 kg per family per month at 50% of the economic cost (Table 2). The Central Issue Prices (CIPs) for APL were set at 100% of economic cost, ensuring that the entire consumer subsidy benefited the BPL population. The number of BPL families was increased in 2000, and TPDS allowed flexibility to States/UTs in fixing retail issue prices, ensuring better distribution of food grains. Table 2 shows the economic cost of rice from 2018-2023.

Table 2: Economic Cost of Rice

Year	Cost Rs. Per quintal
2018-19	3444.10
2019-20	3720.06
2020-21	3939.26
2021-22	3562.49
2022-23	3858.19
2023-24 BE*	3918.05

Source: FC Accounts for Economic Cost and FCI for Offtake under TPDS and OWS, BE-Budget Estimated*

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

The Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) , launched in December 2000, aimed to reduce hunger among the poorest segments of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) is a public distribution system scheme of the Government of India.

It identified one crore of the poorest BPL families and provided them with highly subsidized food grains at Rs. 2 per kg for wheat and Rs. 3 per kg for rice. The entire food subsidy was passed on to the consumers, and the scale of the issue increased from 25 kg to 35 kg per family per month from April 1, 2002. The scheme expanded to cover 2.50 crore poorest households, including 50 lakh BPL households in 2003-04, and another 50 lakh households at risk of hunger in 2004. By 2005, the AAY covered 2.5 crore households, accounting for 38% of the BPL population.

Meenal told Vikram, "If the government has been distributing a significant amount of rice to the poor people and also selling it in the wholesale market, why don't they consider exporting it and earning foreign exchange?"

Vikram replied, "Yes, the government does engage in rice exports. Let me tell you about the export of rice."

Rice exports

IMF warns of worldwide food inflation, fears of shortages, and panic buying due to India's export ban on non-Basmati white rice. India is the largest rice exporter globally, accounting for 40% of worldwide exports, with non-Basmati white rice making up almost half of it. African countries, Bangladesh, and Nepal are significant buyers of Indian non-Basmati rice, while the Middle East and Central Asia prefer Basmati exports.

The export ban (July 20, 2023) could impact import needs and global rice prices. The ban was deemed necessary due to poor monsoon, diminishing harvest prospects, and domestic price increases. In South Asia, India is the seventh-largest country by area with a population of 1.44 billion, and though fertility rates decline, population growth continues due to improved sanitation and healthcare, leading to increased life expectancy and reduced child mortality.

Rice exports from India

India was the world's largest rice exporter, followed by Thailand and Vietnam. The export of rice other than the basmati variety increased by a whopping 109 percent since 2014, with parboiled rice making up the majority of exports in this category. Milled rice, broken rice, rice in husk, and husked brown rice were also exported.

Table 3 shows the country exported rice to over 150 nations, continuing to extend its market share in Africa, Asia, and Europe. In 2022, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, and the United Arab Emirates were the major importers of Indian rice.

Table 3: The World's Biggest Exporters of Rice in Year-2022

Country	Export (in percent)
India	22.5
Thailand	8.5
Vietnam	7.5
Pakistan	3.6
U.S.	2.1
Others	11.4

Source: USDA, Reuters

Statistics and facts about rice

Worldwide

Rice is the world's second most important cereal crop following only corn. Nearly 510 million metric tons of milled rice were produced in the last harvesting year worldwide. Traditionally, countries in Asia have the largest share of world rice production. According to the most recent official data, with a production volume of over 212 million metric tons in 2021, China was the world's leading paddy rice producer, followed by India and Bangladesh.

U.S. market

The United States was also ranked among the leading global rice producers in 2021. The nation's rice production value amounted to just over three billion U.S. dollars in 2021. Leading U.S. states in rice production were Arkansas, California, and Louisiana. The United States was also ranked among the leading five rice exporters worldwide, primarily shipping this commodity to Mexico, Haiti, and Japan.

Global trade

The major rice-exporting nations include India, Vietnam, and Thailand. India had the highest export volume of rice worldwide, at 18.75 million metric tons as of 2021/2022. Vietnam was the second largest rice exporter, with about 6.5 million metric tons of rice worldwide in that year. The largest rice importers were the Philippines and China. The retail price of white rice has increased in recent years. The average price per pound of long-grain white rice was 92 cents in the U.S. in 2022, almost double the price in 2004.

Total global consumption

Total global consumption of milled rice amounted to approximately 510.3 million metric tons in 2021/2022. China consumed almost 155 million metric tons of milled rice in 2021/22 and was by far the world's leading rice consumer in that year. Following China, India is ranked second with 108.5 million metric tons of rice consumption in the same period.

The average global consumption of rice is about 70 kilograms per person per year. This figure varies significantly from country to country, with people in Asia consuming much more rice than people in other parts of the world. Table 4 shows the average rice consumption in China is about 140 kilograms per person per year, while the average rice consumption in the United States is only about 4 kilograms per person per year, however, monitoring the rice market was a critical task considering more than half of the world's population consumes rice daily.

Table 4: Global consumption of Rice (Top three countries)

Country	Consumption (million metric tons)
China	155
India	108.5
Indonesia	33.5

Source: Statista

Paddy rice production

Paddy or rough rice are the unprocessed rice kernels grown in a flooded or well-irrigated field. Paddies require a maintained level of water, around 10 to 15 centimeters, for the growth part, and the fields are then dried before harvesting in the sunny season. Table 5 shows the Asia Pacific region, China and India were the leading rice paddy producers, with a significant gap to Indonesia in third place.

Table 5: All India production of Rice (July-June) ((Million Tons)

Year	(Kharif)	(Rabi)	Total
2019-20	102.28	16.59	118.87
2020-21	105.21	19.16	124.37
2021-22	111.00	18.47	129.47
2022-23	110.03	15.90	125.93
Total	428.52	70.12	498.64

Source: Economics & Statistics Division, M/o Agriculture & FW

Impact of rice production

Rice requires highly specific environmental conditions to grow. After maize, rice was the world's most produced crop. India ranked second in rice production globally. This volume amounted to over 129 million metric tons in the financial year 2022. The Indian rice industry is positively impacted by government support for rice production, suitable monsoon season, an increase in the number of rice processing industries, and exports. However, climate change has had an impact on the crop seasons, along with high fertilizer prices, inadequate irrigation systems, and issues within farming communities. The most recent of the latter involved the farmer protests, one of the largest demonstrations in the world. Despite these shortcomings, however, the annual yield of rice was 2.8 metric tons per hectare in fiscal year 2022, significantly higher than the previous year.

Global rice market

Global rice consumption has been increasing by population growth. China and India are the main consumers of rice. As of February 2019, China and the Philippines were the main importing countries of rice, while India and Thailand were the main exporters.

Rice cultivation

Rice requires specific growing conditions to be successfully cultivated. It must be grown in a flooded field in several inches of water. Once the unprocessed rice is harvested, it is known as paddy rice. In 2021, China produced about 213 million metric tons of paddy rice, making that country the top producer of paddy rice worldwide. India had the largest harvest area of rice in the 2020/21 crop year, at 45 million hectares, while China harvested 30.8 million hectares of rice in that year.

Rice trade worldwide

In addition to having the largest harvest area of rice, India also was the top exporter of rice in the 2022/2023 marketing year. During that period, India exported 21.5 million metric tons of rice. Despite being the top producer of rice worldwide, China's consumption of rice cannot be satisfied by domestic production. China is also the top importer of rice any country in the world, with over five million metric tons of rice.

Rice is the most common staple food in many Asian countries including India. Rice is India's most significant food crop. It is a Kharif (autumn) crop cultivated in warmer regions during the monsoon season from June to September. Rice is extracted from the paddy crop during harvesting. The leading rice-producing states were West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. Over 3,000 varieties of rice are grown across the country, some of which take as less as 60 to 75 days to be grown. The South Asian peninsular ranked second for consumption of rice globally. This barely comes as a surprise when more than half of the Indian population consumes rice. Of all varieties, white

rice is most consumed as it also helps with digestive problems. Table 6 shows the state-wise rice production and procurement in India.

Table 6: State wise Rice Production and Procurement in India (In Lakh Tons)

Sates/UTs	2018-19 (Kharif & Rabi Crop)		2019-20(Kharif & Rabi Crop)		2020-21 (Kharif & Rabi Crop)		2021-22 (Kharif & Rabi Crop)		2022-23	
	Prod.	Proc.	Prod.	Proc.	Prod.	Proc.	Prod.	Proc.	Prod.	Proc. Upto 31.07.23
Andhra Pradesh	82.35	48.06	86.59	55.32	78.83	56.66	77.64	44.61	85.42	28.34
Telangana	66.7	51.9	74.28	74.54	102.17	94.53	124.10	73.94	160.14	88.35
Assam	52.21	1.01	49.85	2.11	52.15	1.42	43.82	3.79	49.80	3.98
Bihar	61.56	9.49	62.98	13.41	67.47	23.84	77.17	30.09	67.25	28.17
Chandigarh		0.13		0.15		0.19	0.00	0.18		0.13
Chhattisgarh	65.27	39.71	67.75	50.53	71.61	47.74	80.22	61.65	82.38	58.65
Delhi							0.19			0.00
Gujarat	19.12	0.09	19.83	0.14	21.46	0.74	21.01	0.82	23.95	1.18
Haryana	45.16	39.42	48.24	43.07	44.25	37.89	46.18	37.06	54.07	39.77
Himachal Pradesh	1.15		1.44		1.4		1.68	0.19	1.19	0.09
Jharkhand	28.94	1.53	30.13	2.55	27.53	4.28	29.30	5.12	14.00	1.17
Jammu & Kashmir	0	0.09		0.1		0.26	4.93	0.27		0.22
Karnataka	34.31	0.59	36.35	0.41	42.92	1.38	43.18	1.47	40.01	0.14
Kerala	5.78	4.65	6.06	4.82	6.34	5.2	4.87	5.09	5.81	4.97
Madhya Pradesh	44.95	13.95	47.78	17.4	44.14	24.97	48.15	30.70	76.57	30.93
Maharashtra	32.76	5.8	28.96	11.67	32.92	12.72	35.98	12.27	38.99	12.38
Odisha	77.34	44.48	83.6	47.98	88.1	52.58	92.91	48.31	96.21	53.83
Puducherry				NEG			0.57	0.00		0.00
Punjab	128.22	113.34	117.79	108.76	127.84	135.89	128.85	125.48	131.47	122.01
Net (Tripura)		0.07		0.14		0.16	8.11	0.39		0.29
Tamil Nadu	61.31	12.94	71.71	22.04	68.81	30.53	79.07	18.76	78.51	21.74
Uttar Pradesh	155.45	32.33	155.18	37.9	155.2	44.78	152.72	43.91	151.71	43.89
Uttarakhand	6.18	4.62	6.58	6.82	7.15	7.18	7.16	7.74	6.42	6.00
West Bengal	162.42	19.79	158.81	18.38	165.24	18.9	167.29	24.01	156.37	23.37
Rajasthan	4.53		4.81		6.34		4.79	0.05	5.77	0.00
Others	29.09		29.98		31.82		14.84		29.37	
All India Total	1164.78	443.99	1188.7	518.27	1243.68	601.85	1294.71	575.88	1355.42	569.60

Production Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Procurement Source: FCI Daily Bulletin

Meenal's dilemma

Meenal was taken aback by the rice statistics, prompting her to question Vikram. She pondered over the seeming contradiction: despite our nation's rich status and rice being a significant export commodity earning foreign exchange, why does the government allocate such large quantities under various welfare schemes? The concept of this widespread distribution troubled her, as it created a disparity where some receive the resource for free while others purchase it with their money. She envisioned a unified nation governed by a single set of rules.

In response, Vikram engaged Meenal in a discussion. He questioned whether the act of government distributing items for free was inherently problematic. Drawing upon the cultural notion of India being referred to as the "Bowl of Rice," Vikram highlighted the centrality of rice in the country's cuisine, economy, and way of life.

Yet, Meenal's concerns ran deeper than mere free distribution. She also contemplated the logistics surrounding storage, transportation, and potential spoilage costs. Her primary dilemma lay in the intricate distribution system and the associated expenses it incurred.

Discussion Questions

1. What elements could be included in a multifaceted solution for widespread freeship distribution of rice?
2. How can a comprehensive market analysis help in addressing the challenges associated with determining the price of rice?
3. In what ways could streamlining the distribution system contribute to ensuring equitable access to rice across different regions?
4. How would a cost-benefit analysis help in deciding whether to export rice or use it for domestic consumption?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Pesticide spraying at the farm



Source: Self-taken, pesticide spraying

Appendix 2: Harvesting at the farm



Source: Self-taken, harvesting rice

Exploring the *Mahashian Di Hatti* (MDH) 'Spice King' Saga: Unveiling Entrepreneurial Insights and Leadership Wisdom

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Abstract

This case study delves into the thriving spice trade, with a specific focus on the remarkable journey of Dharampal Gulati and the iconic brand MDH. Starting with just two products, *Mahashian Di Hatti* (MDH) embarked on a remarkable expansion journey, catapulting it into the ranks of India's top 10 brands. This unique case study offers a comparative analysis of MDH against its peers, chronicles its historical trajectory and managerial strategies, examines the evolution of leadership styles employed by MDH from 1919 to the present, and dissects pivotal decisions that have shaped the company's competence and survival. Furthermore, it delves into MDH's ambitious growth plan and the posthumous legacy of Dharampal Gulati, who passed away in 2020. Ultimately, this study extracts valuable lessons from MDH's enduring success story, providing insights into the company's future operations and the broader entrepreneurial landscape.

Keywords: Spice trade, MDH spices, entrepreneurial path, leadership styles, growth strategies

Introduction

In the realm of the spice trade, where flavors and aromas converge to shape culinary experiences, a remarkable journey unfolds. This case delves into the intriguing narrative of MDH, an iconic brand synonymous with quality and tradition in the world of spices. With the global spice trade experiencing a resurgence in recent years, this case study shines a spotlight on MDH and its visionary leader, Dharampal Gulati, who steered the company through decades of evolution. In reflecting on MDH Spice's remarkable journey, confronted with a crucial question: How does a company that has reached the pinnacle of success sustain its position and thrive in an ever-evolving market? MDH Spice's story is a testament to the power of unwavering commitment to core principles, emphasizing affordability without compromising on quality.

Introduction to MDH

MDH stands for *Mahashian Di Hatti*, the spice king of all kitchens. It was founded in 1919 by Mahashay Chunni Lal in Sialkot, Pakistan. He lived the first 25 years of his life with his father, mother, and siblings (2 brothers and 5 sisters). Mahashay Dharmapal Gulati, Chunni Lal's son, was dropped out of school after the fifth grade when he was ten years old. He had a desire to be an entrepreneur from that time, and he attempted selling soaps, carpenter work, hardware, and rice dealing. But none of these efforts yielded results, so he went into his father's spice business. The family arrived in Amritsar as refugees during the partition. Gulati tried his luck in India by riding a tanga and subsequently selling sugarcane juice, with his father providing the initial seed money of Rs. 1500.

Running a viable business selling excellent products in India after partition was challenging due to the fact that more than 80% of the population lived in poverty. Many food items, such as milk, salt, and spices, were found to be contaminated. People were motivated to acquire things based on price rather than quality at the time. Mahashay Gulati had to spend a lot of money to offer high-quality products. Nevertheless, he desired to sell only genuine spices.

Mahashay Gulati personally oversaw the manufacture of spices in order to provide pure spices to the Indian people. People quickly realized that MDH spices were the best on the market since they were not adulterated like other spices. His business grew, and in 1953, he opened a second spice store in Chandni Chowk, and in 1965, he registered his company, MDH. Mahashay Gulati outsourced some of his spice production to local vendors as his business grew. But, because of his commitment to quality, he soon discovered that these merchants were adulterating his products. So, in 1959, he took his entire life savings and founded his first factory to halt all outsourcing practices.

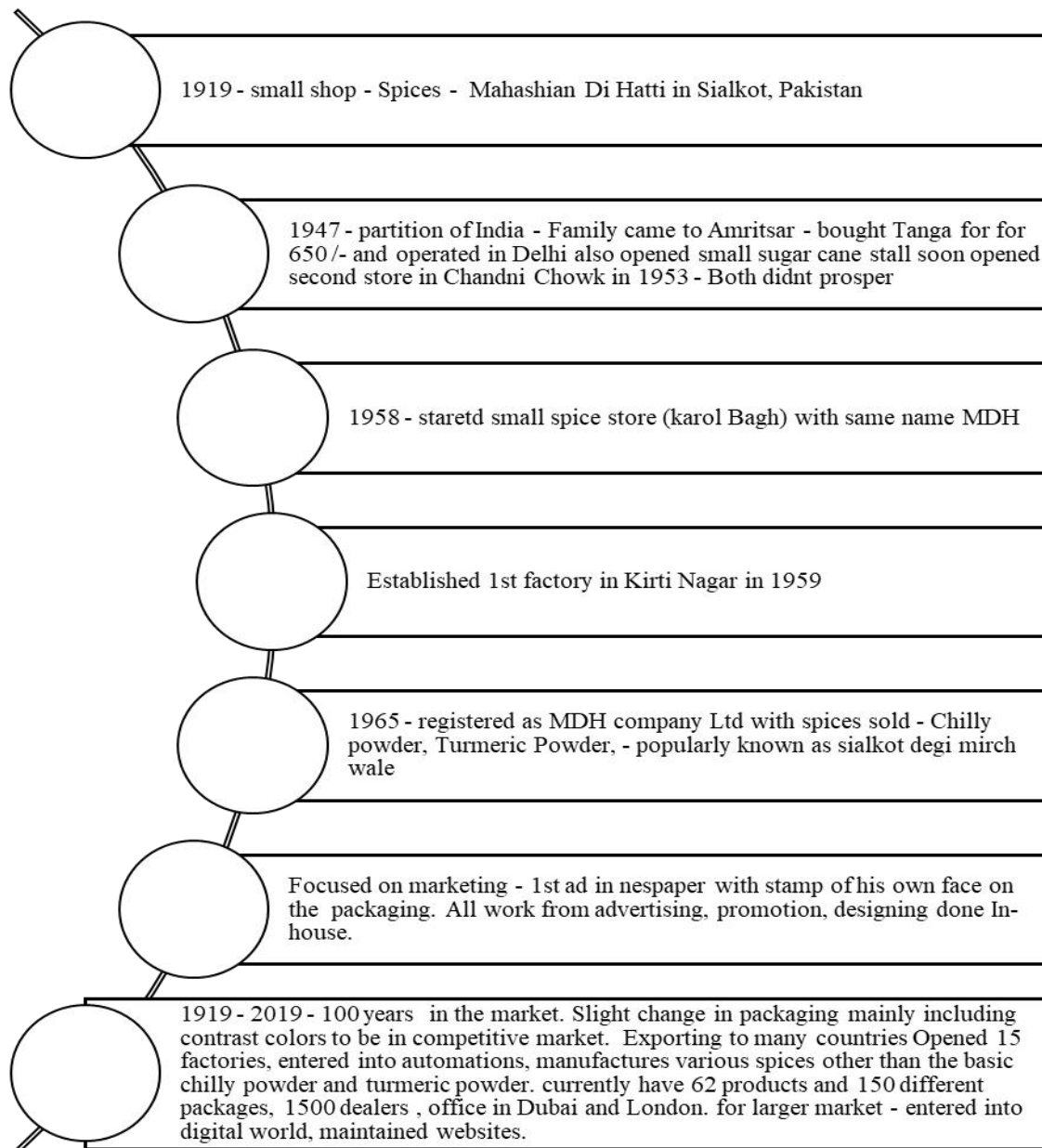
Despite numerous setbacks, Mahashay Gulati devoted his life and blood to the expansion of his company. He handled all of his marketing initiatives in-house, including promotion, design, and advertising. MDH became a household name not just in India, but also in the United States, China, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Singapore, and Sri Lanka.

MDH celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019 (from 1919 to 2019), and in order to stay competitive in the market, some improvements were made to its packing procedures. MDH adopted automation for their manufacturing process in order to stay on pace with and ahead of the competition. MDH currently produces and sells 62 items through 150 distinct packages and 1500 dealers, with offices in Dubai and London. MDH has also digitized and maintained its website in order to cater to bigger consumers.

Timeline of MDH

Figure 1 shows the timeline of MDH.

Figure 1: Timeline of MDH

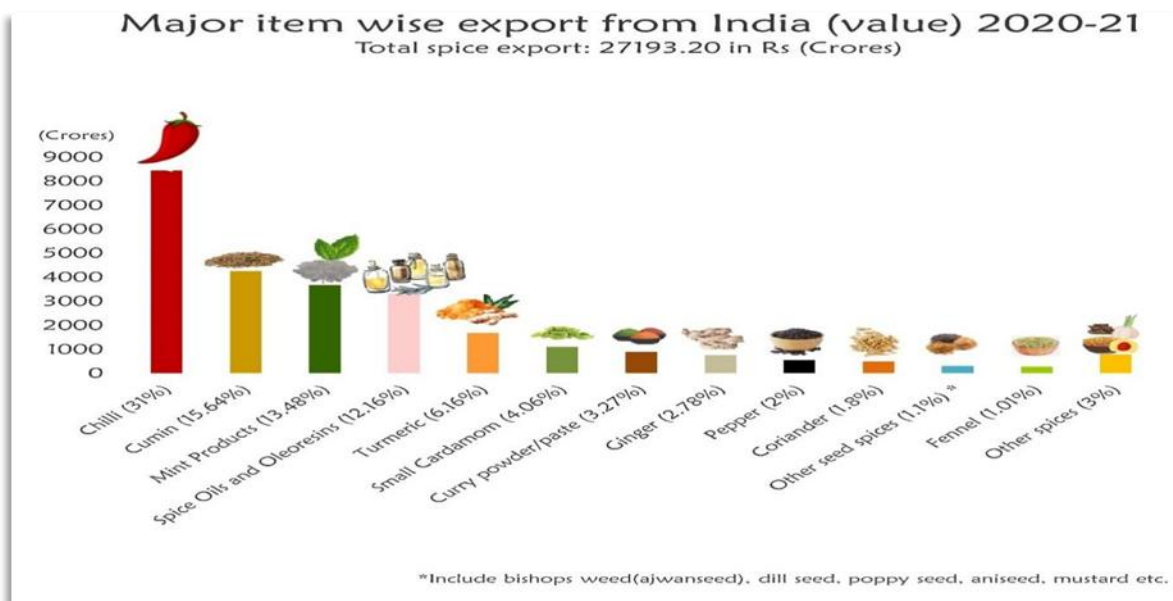


Industry analysis

India is well-known for its wide variety of spices. According to Investor Portal's statistics on spices, it ranks first in terms of spice production and exports. According to the report, spice exports of USD 3 billion in 2019 – 20 and 2021 total USD 4.0 billion, an increase of 8% over previous years (Market Research, 2022). Spice is anything that is necessary in everyday cooking, baking, or items such as ready-to-eat packs. Nothing can be visualized without the addition of spices, such as turmeric, chilli, or coriander powders. As a result, this market has

risen at an exponential rate in recent years. Figure 2 shows the maor item wise export from India (2020-2021).

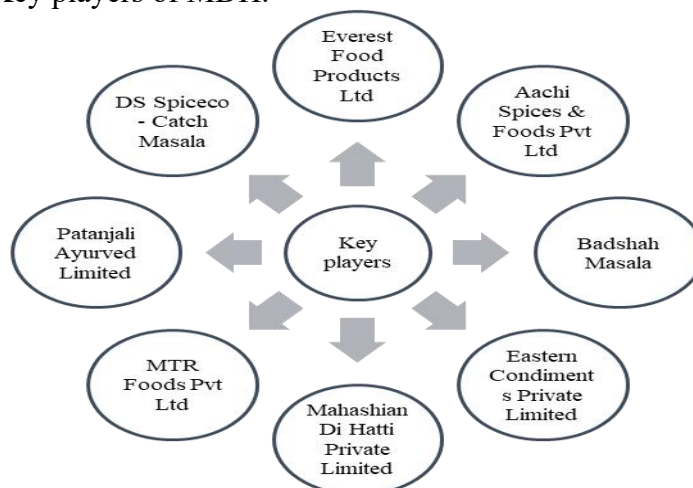
Figure 2: Major Item Wise Export from India (2020-21)



Source: Spiceindia (Indianspices, 2022)

Figure 3 shows the key players of MDH.

Figure 3: Key players of MDH.



Top brands positioning

Table 1 shows the top brands positioning.

Table 1: Top Brands Positioning

Brands	Market Leadership	High Proportion of Blended spices	Material Margin (%)	Revenue (FY 2020) (INR Cr)	Valuation Drivers
Everest Food Products Ltd	No. 1 in India (PAN India)	xxx	~50%+	2000	Market Leadership and Dominance, High proportion of blended spices, High growth, Large scale, Platform for future growth
Aachi Spices & Foods Pvt Ltd	No.2 in Tamil Nadu	xx	NA	900	
Eastern Condiments Private Limited	No. 1 in Kerala	xx	40%	881	
Mahashian Di Hatti Private Limited (MDH)	Strong brand in North India	xxx	51%	450	
MTR Foods Pvt Ltd	No. 1 in Karnataka	xxx	48%		
Patanjali Ayurved Limited	No. 1 in Gujrat	xx	35%	4111	
DS Spiceco - Catch Masala	Strong Brand in North India	xxx	50%	500	
Source: Report by (Agarwal et al., 2021)					

Table 2 shows the breakup by product type.

Table 2: Breakup by Product Type

Breakup by Product Type				
Pure Spices	Coriander	Tamarind	Clove	Tulsi Leaf
Chilli	Cumin	Asafoetida	Cardamom	Blended Spices
Turmeric	Pepper	Bay Leaf	Cinnamon	Jaljeera Masala
Garam Masala	Kitchen and King Sabzi Masala	Chat Masala	Paneer and Curry Masala	Others
Non-Veg Masala	Chole and Channa Masala	Sambhar and Rasham Masala	Pav Bhaji Masala	

According to the preceding facts, the spice sector is seeing tremendous expansion. It could be about spice exports or spice usage in the home market. MDH is still the most popular in India, followed by Catch, MTR, Eastern, and other options. A few spice firms, such as ITC – Sunrise (05), Everest (11), MTR (13), MDH (16), and Shakti (20), have made their mark among the top 20 food companies (Agarwal et al., 2021). Branded spices currently account for 35% of the spice market. The spice market is likely to develop, with the overall spice market valued at 67,500 crores in 2020 and forecast to reach 1,00,000 crores in 2025, including both straight and blended spices. According to the Compound Average Rise Rate (CAGR) for 2015-2020, it was 15%, with a robust growth expected in 2021-26 as well

(Market Research, 2022). If the current rate of growth continues, 15 leading spice brands might generate 1000 crores in revenue by 2030, with four of them having a 5000 crore annual turnover (Livemint, 2021). According to the current industry situation, MDH is competing for market share in the spice market with competitors such as Catch, MTR, Eastern, and Aachi. Currently, all of these brands are leading in their respective regions. As Everest has done, it is necessary to focus on pan-India to propel brands forward. Overall, India's spice sector has a lot of room to develop and expand.

Strategic decisions

MDH was founded from nothing during the partition as they lost their enterprise thus beginning from the ground up requires dedication and clear goals, which they had in mind: honesty, quality, and affordability as a vision for the dynamic business empire that exists today. MDH's current position in people's thoughts is the result of strategic decisions made at all times. MDH's introduction into the spice sector was characterized as a differentiation strategy at the time, with a broad target market and focused cost as one of the company's goals. The idea of having powdered spices that were "ready to use" was novel. The entrepreneurial strategy continued in India with the decision to engage in the same family firm that his father Mahashay Chunni Lal Gulati began in Pakistan (Leveraged Growth, 2020; Sugarmint, 2022). After failing to run Tonga, he returned to Delhi and restarted his spice business. He also attempted a variety of other professions and acquired new talents. Gulati was able to examine the micro and macro environments in order to determine market need and how to meet it. Slowly, the spice business gained traction in the market, prompting him to expand by constructing another manufacturing unit, following the Ansoff model of opening new manufacturing units in other locations with existing items.

Soon after, the company prospered to the point that they had to accept change and accept automation as a step toward expansion and, according to Henry Mintzberg's adaptive strategy, where decisions are made to expand with the market. Technology-assisted equipment was installed in manufacturing operations. MDH opted to outsource the grinding of spices in order to focus on packaging and labeling. Continuous follow-up and quality control remained a top priority for the organization, which reverted to vertical integration - backward integration by purchasing raw spices from Karnataka, Rajasthan, Afghanistan, and Iran (Dhoker, 2020), grinding them, and selling them in the market all under one roof.

Another reason MDH was preferred was the packaging, which was introduced as an innovation by bringing packaged masala, making it more simple for households to acquire and keep, resulting in a huge shift in people's mentality. The corporation opted on net quantities of 50g, 100g, 200g, and 500g, and gradually launched 1kg packs in response to demand and purchasing habits. As MDH has grown, it has become clear that no concept is too little, and that every idea has the potential to help MDH achieve new heights. The concept must be in line with the company's goals and vision. The reason for this is that before the idea of a spice company was born, women used to physically blend their own spices for cooking, which MDH now does.

Initially, the concept was unacceptably radical, but as time passed, convenience and comfort necessitated the use of ready-to-use spices in the kitchen. MDH used a competitive market strategy in which they attempted to enter all of the key spice segments, as well as MDH Dant Manjan, MDH Kesar, and MDH Havan Samagri. Everest and Catch were in competition because they are both in the spice business. MDH's other approach was a penetration plan, in which they attempted to expand not just in the Indian market, but also in the global market.

Because they understood the Indian market was price sensitive, MDH masala was sold at a low cost as the cost leader. Accepting change was the key to the company's success, as everything was being digitised at the same time. MDH also entered the internet arena to advertise and market themselves in order to reach a wider audience.

"Who will endorse?" was another strategic decision. Mahashay Dharam Pal Gulati became the company's face for all advertisements, giving it a distinct identity and making it memorable for people to remember, as advertisements at the time were focused on young and youthful people, and in the midst of that, *an old man coming for an ad was capturing making it a real brand as self-endorsement* (Trivedi, 2020).

MDH was able to attract the market in 2019 using *guerrilla marketing for their 100-year existence in the spice market*. After entering social media with their brand with the caption "100 years of Affinity till infinity," they attracted millennials by having MDH followers in Insta 10K, Facebook 50K, and an overall reach of more than 50 million (Malik, 2021). The next step in the business's growth was to expand internationalization, which led to the establishment of 15 factories, including a fully automated manufacturing unit in Gurgaon, New Delhi, and Nagpur (Brandyuva.in, 2022; Dhoker, 2020).

When looking at the global market, MDH realized that it needed to reach every hamlet, city, and town, so it opted to distribute through wholesalers and retailers so that it could be found in local corner stores and supermarkets. The other reason MDH has been able to stay afloat in such a competitive industry is the trust that has been built in the quality of masalas produced in these factories, as well as the commitment and dedication that has made the company a brand in its own right. Every step of the entrepreneurial path involves decisions on product, newness in product, expansion of factory units, changing manufacturing technologies such as automation, outsourcing, and worldwide company.

To compete with other companies such as Everest and Catch, MDH implemented a penetration strategy and concentrated on providing quality service to clients. MDH had another side, where it did more than just sell spices in the market; the school dropouts built 20 schools, established a 300-bed hospital, and committed acts of kindness through donations (Zatakia, 2021). As a result, MDH has been present in the market in every way, demonstrating the long-term worth of quality and generosity.

Leadership strategies adopted by MDH

Dharampal Gulati had a *can-do attitude* and a lot of zeal. They lost the nerve to start a spice business from scratch when they moved from Sialkot to India. The desire to grow the business from merely selling two spices to selling a variety of other items (CoFounder, 2022). He used to visit all of his factories and dealers till he died. His commitment to quality was so strong that every product packed and transported out of the production unit had to meet it. Every decision made by the leader should be based on the mission and vision established at the company's founding.

The corporate ideals that have been committed must be adhered to faithfully. Adopting a competitive strategy and penetration strategy to compete with the big players, as well as a penetration strategy in which they attempted to keep the price low while maintaining the quality of the product for people to buy (Verma, 2021).

Introducing start-ups to the idea that no idea is too tiny, and proving it by selling pre-packaged masalas in the 1990s, which steadily built values and a brand on their own. There was a psychological contract created in the work system where responding to calls for duty and responsibility went beyond the norms, which Dharampal Gulati clearly followed in his organization, demonstrating that he was a sustainable leader as he led his people, understanding mutual dependence to achieve goals.

Another characteristic Gulati possessed was the ability to hear the silent murmurs of customers about a product, formulate an aim, and deliver it to them (Verma, 2021). This resulted in the arrival of various-sized packets, allowing users more purchasing alternatives. The term '*Yeh Sab Aapki Meherbaani Se*' (Malviya, 2017) was used to brand MDH and provide credit to customers, resulting in a positive connection with the market. Another factor is his market self-endorsement, which he achieves by his ethnic attire, welcome smile, family feeling, and being an outstanding host (Balachandran, 2021). Only by being determined and pinned can one strive to be the best and give the best.

Challenge: Successor of MDH

Dharampal Gulati has been the company's main cornerstone since the company's inception. He was also the CEO of MDH at the age of 97, owning 80 percent of the company. He was an iconic model and an inspiration to many aspiring businesses. Dharampal Gulati's passion and conviction helped the organization achieve its current level of success. Gulati died of heart arrest in December of the year 2020. After that, no one has been named to the position of CEO. Mr. Rajeev Gulati, Ms. Jyoti Gulati, and Ms. Harshana Gulati are the directors of MDH Private Limited. It falls under the non-government corporation category and is a company limited by shares. After Dharampal Gulati's death, the company's growth numbers aren't as evident. The success tale continues to owe its existence and progress to the 'Dadaji.' There have been no new updates from the company thus far. "MDH uncle" himself self-endorsed the advertising. The choice of who will be the brand's CEO and face is still up in the air. The longer it takes to fill the vacuum, the greater the risk to the company.

Learning outcome for business

After reaching the top ten, a company must determine whether to maintain its position and market. According to MDH Spice, after the brand was recognised locally, the company opted to focus on developing fundamental principles. The values emphasized making things affordable while not sacrificing quality. MDH's adaptation strategy was to move away from hand-ground spices and toward machine-ground spices (Aadhya, 2022). However, the company was directed by one person throughout the research, as Dharampal Gulati was the CEO and managed the daily business operations at the age of 97. His passion, perseverance, and work style undoubtedly contributed to the company's current market share of 12 percent. When compared to the year 2020, he was also the highest paid CEO (Aadhya, 2022; Balachandran, 2021; Sachdev, 2019). Dharampal Gulati's death in the year 2020 was so unexpected that no one has yet been able to fill the CEO job. From the MDH spice end, succession planning was considered. Because it will be two years, the corporation has not yet announced its operations and expansion strategy. The company's website is still not up to date. Considering all of this, we can conclude that a leader like Dharampal Gulati can lead the organisation to greater heights through his will and expertise. However, he failed to teach the following generation how to plan and grow.

As a result, the company's market share and brand image may be threatened. In order for a business to continue to expand and compete, succession planning must be considered. The

essential beliefs and goals must be articulated and communicated clearly. The business's functionality and transparency aid in achieving a shared vision. A successor must be chosen and groomed to carry on the heritage in the same way as previous generations did. Dharampal Gulati, a dropout, joined his father's firm and developed the abilities and attributes needed to be an entrepreneur in the case of MDH. As a result, he was able to identify himself as "Rags to Riches" (Sachdeva, 2018). Transfer of information and skills is critical for growth and sustainability. However, the unexpected passing of Dharampal Gulati in 2020 has left a void, one that the company has yet to fill. Two years have passed without a clear announcement of the company's operational and expansion strategy, as the corporate website languishes without updates. This raises an essential question: "How might the leadership qualities of an individual like Dharampal Gulati, combined with their will and expertise, influence an organization's success compared to the importance of succession planning?"

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Recruiting the Case Writers

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Abstract

Case writing is a different art, the art of sharing the real-life situations through written cases. Readers of the case will be able to learn about the issue(s) and people contained in the case without having to be in the organization and interacting with the relevant people. Problem-solving or decision-making case study requires the reader to understand the scenario and respond to the guided questions. In this case study, Yasin Yahya, approached his peers and former students to write case studies independently or jointly. He adopted a few methods to encourage his targets to understand the basic characteristics of problem-solving case studies and start writing. He would be serving as a resource person, coach, and editor for each case. His efforts for a few months do not show positive outcomes. Being a new learning tool, even experience instructors need time to try. Readers are asked to evaluate which among the four methods Yasin used might be able to help his peers produce case studies for teaching purposes.

Keywords: Case writing, Coaching, Communication, Training

Yasin Yahya has been a co-author for several case studies. During the past 15 years, he edited and revised field case study assignments of a few of his former students in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management courses and incorporated these as part of the end-of-semester examination. He never published those cases in case study journals.

He started to publish joint case studies in a university case studies journal since the past eight years.

Case studies are not new to Yasin. His first exposure to case studies occurred during his undergraduate years. His graduate education also gave case studies as part of the academic assessment. It was in the Strategic Management course in both the undergraduate and graduate programs that Yasin learned through case method.

His former instructors who graduated from ivy league business schools adopted case teaching method in the Strategic Management course. They used the Harvard Business School cases in the courses. The instructors alternated between lectures and case analysis every week. The cases were relatively long, amounting to almost the length of a book chapter.

Yasin enjoyed the case method approach as a student and proved competent in his course work and class discussions. He did not sit for the typical written examination in the classrooms for the case-based courses. He attended lectures, submitted a report on each lecture. He submitted the case analysis report every week and participated in the case discussion. The instructor gave no participation mark for students who remained idle in the classes. When he became an instructor, Yasin did not actually replicate the case teaching method that he was exposed to during his student days. He taught mostly local students who tended not to engage actively in case discussions. Based on this background, Yasin adopted light case discussions in his classes.

Yasin was zealous to encourage his colleagues in the same and other faculties in the same university and former students to write independently or co-write with him problem-solving or decision-making case studies. He also communicated with his former colleagues and students overseas. Since September 2023 until the first week of December the same year, Yasin communicated with 15 target case writers. After his initial briefing on case writing, face-to-face and online, Yasin would send WhatsApp reminders to his targets.

Yasin observed that the people that he approached wanted to contribute a case study but their first attempt to learn the type of academic work could not compete with their more important daily chores. For the instructors, they had to manage their daily classes, giving lectures, marking assignments, giving, and marking the tests and mid-semester exams, attending meetings, and participant in their joint-research activities. For the students, submitting their compulsory assignments and preparing for their classes and exams takes a priority.

The instructors are familiar with cases during their student days. They also use cases with the students. The only difference is they have not written case studies due to lack of encouragement and experience.

Yasin adopted several approaches to brief his targets about the case study type and the steps to go through to collect and process the data and compose the field-based case in the form of storytelling essay. He did not explain much about the case writing conventions that may be read in select guidance papers (see Exhibit 1). He also did not disclose the list to his target writers.

Exhibit 1 References on Case Writing

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The different approaches of case writing that Yasin used are explained below.

Model 1

Explanation on case study writing with field-based data

Think of a problem that you have faced, or someone has faced and requires a solution. The problem might happen in the past, is current or will likely happen in the future. Gather or recall information about something that you are familiar with.

Write on a piece of paper, or type in your laptop the following:

Describe in a few sentences the problem, issue, dilemma faced by a person.

Describe the actor.

List points related to the problem, the person, people who are directly related to the problem, his department, his organization.

Assemble related points under a 'working' subtopic.

If you think you have gathered adequate points, you may start composing.

After describing the above, Yasin requested the target writer to provide the facts. He types the writer's description on-the-spot. Before parting, he sends the file through WhatsApp so that the writer will compose the draft later.

His briefing took place between 10 and 30 minutes, to 60 minutes.

Model 2

Explanation on case study writing with field-based data as File 1

This briefing model attempts to relate the proposed case with the *The IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management* (IJCSM) that requires the online submission of three related MS Word files.

File 1 – (a) Case title, (b) Abstract and keywords, (c) Body of the case, and (d) Discussion questions.

File 2 – Teaching notes: (a) Courses that may adopt the case and rationale; (b) Discussion questions and suggested answers.

File 3 - (a) Case title, (b) Name of author(s), (c) Organizational affiliation, (d) E-mail address, (e) * *Corresponding Author*, (f) Abstract, and (g) Keywords

Yasin emphasizes that the writer ignores (a), (b) and (d) in gathering the information. After the information is gathered and organized, writing the body (c) will be easy. The discussion questions (d) will be created by referring to the body of the case.

Model 3

Explanation on case study writing with field-based data as File 1 and sample published cases

This briefing model repeats Model 2 and explains the structure of two sample published cases in the *The IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management* (IJCSM). The first case is based on field information, whereas the second case is based on the literature.

Yasin encourages the writer to write the field-based case because he thinks it can be composed in a story form, interesting and natural. The literature-based case seems to resemble a scholarly work which academics are familiar with.

Budi Sejahtera, Reliance and Resilience at Mak Teh Enterprise

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Integrating 'Sejahtera': A Holistic Approach at Agoda

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Model 4

Explanation on case study writing with W format

“W” refers to the journalistic line of questions – What, Who, When, Why, and How?

Yasin shows the format below to the writer and explains the items accordingly. He uses either pen and paper or his laptop to illustrate.

Exhibit 2 Model 4 Case Writing

?

SWIFTEST GUIDE TO WRITE A problem-solving case study ?

STEP 1
State a problem in a few sentences.

STEP 2
Next, write briefly on each of these questions?

What

When

Who

Who

Where

How

STEP 3
With the 'answers' provided ...

STEP 4
... I will ask related questions to help you provide additional points, if necessary.

With the cumulative info/points, you can start writing the case study.

STEP 5
The approach is adopted for learning by doing instead of giving explanations on the case writing conventions. etc

I will review, edit, and exchange the working Word file with you, *insha Allah*.

Coaching model

Yasin tested a few models on different targets with the objective of facilitating the prospective case writer to produce a draft based on the information available or to be gathered. He thinks briefing on ‘theory’, conventions, concept, guidelines, and the do’s and don’ts will make the writers apprehensive.

Yasin used Google Meet to discuss with his target writers in the same university, other universities, within Malaysia and outside.

He believes that if a writer has produced relevant facts on the working draft, he can guide the person to compose. This is like learning *while* doing or learning *by* doing. He could impart some advice on case writing conventions while reviewing and editing the draft in progress.

In fact, there was a writer who produced similar scholarly like versions, not the story like case study briefed earlier.

Another writer has provided paragraphs under some subtopics for a literature driven case study. But the writer has not incorporated supporting secondary data and expands the draft yet.

Writers who are pursuing studies requested postponement of their draft for review. This is because they have deadlines for assignments and tests. Full-time instructors could not submit due to work commitments.

Interestingly, a first timer who has never studied business or management was able to submit drafts within three days and requested to submit his pre-final draft 2 days later due to assignments and tests. The target went through Model 4.

Case writing conventions

Yasin did not explain much about case writing conventions. However, he conveyed some of the points during the briefing, follow-ups, and when he was reviewing the draft.

He said to the writers to produce a 3000-word case, approximately 5 pages of A4, Times New Roman, 12-point font size, and single-line spacing. Yasin conveyed information about case conventions more orally than in writing, see Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3 Select Case Writing Conventions

<p>Problem or decision-focus</p> <p>At least one decision-maker</p> <p>Provide background information</p> <p>Include facts</p> <p>Retain only inter-related information</p> <p>Write in past tense</p> <p>Avoid using full proprietary information, utilize the gist</p> <p>Create enhancements, e.g., dialogue, exhibits</p> <p>Create sub-topics</p> <p>Consider the draft as tentative until finalized</p> <p>End but do not conclude</p> <p>Disguise the final version of the case study</p>
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It is the first week of December, Yasin decided to write a case himself. He could fill in if his faculty's case journal is short of cases for the next issue.

He enjoys interacting with the prospective case writers because this gives him the opportunity to learn about their commitment, the current engagements, the personal and family challenges they face, and the fact that they decide when to start writing their cases.

Discussion Questions

1. What might be the motivation of Yasin to launch his case writing campaign among his colleagues and former students? Could you please suggest one factor with his colleagues, and another factor with his former students? Discuss.
2. In your opinion, which consumes less time for a writer, writing a case study or an academic (scholarly paper) that is based on the literature (without using questionnaire, time series)? Why?
3. If you desire to write a case study, which among the four methods do you prefer and why?
4. Do you think based on the contents of the case study, you are confident to write a case study independently without the face-to-face assistance or/and online discussion with coaches like Yasin? What is your opinion?
5. What might be the feeling of a person who uses his own created case and a case authored by others in class teaching?

Stone Hotel and the fight over minimum wages

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Abstract

This case study examines at how Ahmad, a hotel worker, changed over the course of his life while the hospitality business and labour laws in Malaysia changed. At first, Ahmad's family lived a simple life, like many others in their coastal town. They made a living by fishing and working in other nearby industries. But commercial and tourism growth pushed by the government drove them to move, which put Ahmad into the growing hotel business. Ahmad's job at Stone Hotel is very different from what he used to do for a living, which shows that he can adapt to new situations. Ahmad worked hard, but his pay stayed the same. He joined a trade union to try to get better working conditions and pay. This action started a big argument about how to read the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012, mainly about whether or not service charges should be counted towards the minimum wage. The fights between the union and the hotel, as well as the later court cases, show how complicated labour laws and collective bargaining can be. The court's decisions against the hotel's pay practises made it clear how important fair pay is and set a standard for how labour law should be applied. Ahmad's story shows how group action and legal actions can change fair labour practises and is a microcosm of the larger fight for worker rights in Malaysia.

Keywords: Minimum Wages; Collective Agreements; Industrial Relations; Conciliation

Twenty years ago, Ahmad and his family lived in a cute house by the beach. The area used to have a calm coastline and a close-knit community of farmers. Many people in the town, including Ahmad's family, lived simple lives. Many worked as fishermen and made a living from the sea's bounty. Others went to work in companies nearby, which helped the region's industrial sector grow.

The town started to look different, though, when the government saw the area as a great place for business and tourism growth. For Ahmad's family and their neighbours, this choice meant the end of an era. The villagers were given money to trade their homes and land for

government land, which was important for progress. Along with this payment, Ahmad's family and other people were given discounts to buy cheap flats in a brand-new housing complex.

Ahmad's family moved into the cheap flat, which would become their new home, even though they didn't want to leave their seaside home. It was a big change to go from living by the sea to living in a city, where the pace of life and rhythms were very different.

As the years went by, the area around their new home changed a lot. When hotels and tourist spots opened up, they took the place of the village's familiar sights and sounds with the noise and activity of tourists. As a child, Ahmad heard stories about the old village and how simple life was for fishers. This new world was all he knew.

Ahmad had to decide what he wanted to do with his life after he finished his SPM, which was a big turning point. He saw chances in the growing hotel business, and since there were now several hotels close to his flat, he chose to join the Stone Hotel, which was only a five-minute walk away. This choice was practical for a number of reasons: he wouldn't have to travel every day, and he wouldn't have to pay extra to take a room somewhere else.

Ahmad became a part of the new economy that had changed his family's life when he started working at the Stone Hotel. Even though his job was very different from the fishing that his ancestors did, it showed how flexible and strong his family was when things changed. He also stayed close to his roots because he could still live with his family in the flat that was a link between the past and the present.

A work trip

Ahmad's stay at the Stone Hotel was the start of a new stage in his life. It happened right after he got his SPM certificate. He went into the world of hospitality with goals and dreams because he was young, eager, and ready to start a new journey. His first job at the hotel paid only RM500 a month, which was a small start for a young guy just starting out in the workforce.

After some time, Ahmad became a well-known and trustworthy figure inside the Stone Hotel. His days were spent carefully cleaning the house and making sure that every guest arrived to a clean and comfy space. Ahmad's hard work was clear in the way he paid attention to everything, from how crisp the sheets were to how shiny the glasses were.

Even though Ahmad worked hard at his job for years and years without taking a break, he didn't make much money. It seemed like every year, his pay went up a little, but not much. After working hard for almost ten years, he was only making RM800 a month. It was making Ahmad very angry that his money wasn't growing faster. He had thought that his hard work and loyalty would be rewarded more.

Ahmad saw a lot of changes at the hotel over these years. There were new employees coming and going, improvements and updates to the decor, and a steady stream of guests from all walks of life. He learned a lot about the hotel business and got skills that can only be learned by working for years.

Ahmad stayed committed to his job even though his pay growth slowed down. This made him happy because he knew that his work made the hotel guests more comfortable and happy.

As a member of a union

The staff at Stone Hotel worked hard to make sure everything ran smoothly, but there was one thing that wasn't there: an internal union to fight for the workers' rights and needs. Even though there was a gap, Ahmad, a hardworking housekeeper, still went after the help and representation he and his coworkers earned.

Being naturally social and interested in getting to know other people led Ahmad to become an active member of a trade union. Not only did he talk to people at the Stone Hotel, but he also often mixed with workers from motels and restaurants nearby. For Ahmad, these relaxed but thought-provoking chats over coffee or breaks showed him a whole new world: the world of trade unions.

These conversations gave Ahmad the chance to hear from his peers about how being in a trade union had made their work lives better. They talked about better pay, better working conditions, and feeling safe because they had a say as a group. This was a big surprise for Ahmad, who had always felt responsible for his own health and the health of his coworkers.

Ahmad went ahead and asked union officials for more information because he was interested and wanted to learn more. He went to meetings, asked questions, and read all the information the union gave him. Every conversation he had and piece of information he learned helped him understand more about the role and value of trade unions in fighting for workers' rights.

Ahmad came to a decision after taking in all of this information and thinking about his own time at Stone Hotel. His choice to join the union was a conscious one. They didn't make this choice without giving it a lot of thought. They thought about what was best for him and his coworkers as well.

With his new status, Ahmad felt like he had more power. Because he was in a trade union, he thought that he and his coworkers would be better protected and have their needs met. It was a step towards making sure that their rights were not only known, but also protected. Ahmad's choice to join the union was more than just a personal one; it was a promise to work together with others to make the workplace a better place. Ahmad was also sure that joining a trade union was proof of the strength of unity and the big difference that well-informed group action can make in better workers' rights and working conditions.

Strength of union

Ahmad took a big step when he realised the power of speaking and acting as a group. He joined a well-known union that is known for always standing up for workers in Malaysia's hotel, bar and restaurant sectors. For many workers, like Ahmad, who often had to deal with the complicated issues of labour rights and workplace talks, this union was a bright spot of hope.

It's amazing that Stone Hotel agreed with Ahmad's choice. The management knew how important it was for their workers to have a way to voice their worries and request. The hotel did something very progressive; they did more than just acknowledge the union; they made an official relationship with them by signing a Collective Agreement. This agreement was a big step forward because it showed that both sides were committed to fair labour practises and gave the hotel management and workers a way to talk to each other in a constructive way.

This event marked a turning point for Ahmad and his coworkers. With the Collective Agreement and the union, there was a structured way to talk about things like wages, working conditions, and employee perks. Giving the staff a sense of security and protection that they hadn't had before gave them power.

Ahmad chose to join the union because he had a goal that went beyond his own personal gain. Not only did he think that becoming a member would help him get better working conditions at Stone Hotel, but he also saw it as a way to join a larger movement that aimed to raise the standards for all hospitality workers. Ahmad knew that the problems he was having were not unique to him; many other people in hotels, restaurants, and bars across the area were also having the same problems.

He joined the union because he believed in the power of working together as a group. Ahmad knew that when different views came together, they could have a bigger effect than when they were raised separately. This belief came from the basic idea that more people means more power. Ahmad joined the union and became part of a group of people who all wanted a fair and just workplace.

This sense of community was very important to Ahmad's journey. He thought of himself as an involved member of a movement that wanted to change the way work was done in the industry completely, not just little things here and there. Fair wages, reasonable hours, safe working conditions, and respect for the rights and equality of all workers were all part of Ahmad's vision.

In Ahmad's mind, the union was a way to push for these changes. He got involved in many union activities, such as going to meetings and talking with other people, as well as planning events and campaigns to raise awareness. His goal with these actions was to make his friends more aware of their rights and the benefits of sticking together as a group.

Ahmad's membership in the union was also a protest against the idea that people who work in the service industry should just put up with bad conditions. He was one of many people who were speaking out against the status quo. This showed that change was possible if workers banded together and pushed for it.

Not only did Ahmad's choice to join the union make the workplace more fair for him, but it also made the workplace more fair for everyone in the hospitality industry. It made the point that workers can make real and lasting changes to the way they work if they band together, help each other, and speak up for their common interests.

The bare minimum

When the Malaysian government passed the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012, it was a big deal for Ahmad and his coworkers at Stone Hotel. When they were looking for better pay, this new law that raised the minimum wage to RM900 per month gave them hope. Many of them had been making pay that barely covered their basic needs for years, and this rise was supposed to help them out financially.

Ahmad had worked at the hotel for almost ten years without getting much more money. He saw this change in the law as a possible turning point in his career. The rise from his current wage of RM800 to the new minimum wage of RM900 was not only good for his income, but it also showed that his and his coworkers' hard work was appreciated.

There were lots of happy talks going on in the staff rooms and hallways of Stone Hotel. Employees talked about what this rise would mean for them. It might help them with their finances, give them more money to help their families, or even let them enjoy small treats they couldn't have before.

Some of Ahmad's coworkers, especially the younger or less experienced ones, had never had their pay go up by this much before. They felt hopeful and grateful for their jobs in the service industry afterward. For them, their jobs were more than just a way to get something else.

Even though people were hopeful, there was also a sense of cautious expectation. They knew that putting this new wage system into place could be hard, especially when it came to how the hotel management would handle the changes. Would their work hours, duties, or even job security change? These were the questions that kept going through their thoughts.

Still, the establishment of the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012 was a major turning point for the Stone Hotel employees. It was a step towards making Ahmad and his friends' lives better, and it gave them a taste of a workplace that was more fair and equal. This change to the law wasn't just about putting more money on people's paychecks; it meant progress, hope, and the chance for a better future for the hardworking people in Malaysia's hospitality business.

How the hotel works

The hotel, on the other hand, had other ideas. They chose to change how they calculated wages to meet the new minimum wage law without making their costs go up by a lot. Instead of raising the basic pay, they wanted to add the money workers made from service charges to the minimum wage. This meant that if an employee's base pay and tip did not add up to RM900, the hotel would add the difference to make it 900.

The Union, on the other hand, did not like this plan. They thought the service charge shouldn't be used to raise the minimum wage. The Union and the hotel's management couldn't come to an understanding, which made things worse.

The Management Thinking

Ahmad still could vividly remember the conversation between him and his manager about the Minimum Wage Order, which established RM900 as the minimum monthly wage. However, to bypass this regulation, the Stone Hotel's management, led by the astute yet budget-conscious general manager, discovered a loophole. Ahmad lodged a dispute with his manager, who responded that the matter was of a business nature. Ahmad is merely an employee.

Ahmad: "Sir, I've been contemplating the recently enacted Minimum Wage Order by the government, which establishes an RM900 minimum salary. For us as employees such as ourselves, this is a momentous progression."

Manager: "I am informed of the new policy, Ahmad. How about that?"

Ahmed: "At the very least, I've observed that our salaries have remained static. The current base salary we are receiving is less than RM900. The remaining amount consists solely of service charges.

Manager: "You must recognise, Ahmad, that this is a commercial matter. We must consider the broad picture and effectively manage our expenses. The service charges constitute a component of your revenue, contributing to a minimum of RM900 in your total income."

Ahmad: "However, that does not exactly adhere to the Minimum Wage Order, does it? Its purpose is to ensure a rudimentary level of living standards, and our income becomes uncertain when we depend on service charges. This is in contrast to the concept of a stable base salary."

Manager: "I acknowledge your concerns, Ahmad. But you must remember that you are just an employee here. We, the management of the hotel, also has a responsibility to ensure the hotel operates with optimal efficiency. Occasionally, this requires balancing regulatory requirements with the practicalities of conducting business. We're taking the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the law and the efficient operation of the hotel."

Ahmed: "I comprehend that, sir; however, does the welfare of your staff not influence the efficient operation of your company? Fairness and adherence to legal regulations take precedence over mere identification of vulnerabilities."

Manager: "Look, Ahmad, I value your perspective; however, wage determinations are intricate. We have to take into account numerous factors. At this time, the existing system remains unchanged."

Ahmed: "My stance remains that it is improper, sir. While technically compliant, it appears that we are being cheated."

Manager: "Your input is valued; however, as I mentioned, this judgement is of a business nature. Maintaining the hotel's profitability while simultaneously complying with legal obligations, even if it's only by the letter of the law."

The hotel's defence

When the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012 went into effect at Stone Hotel, it caused a big fight between the hotel managers and the workers, who were backed by a union. The main point of disagreement was how the hotel decided to understand and use the new law on minimum wage.

The management of the Stone Hotel was adamant that the way they calculated the minimum wage was legal and in line with the National Wages Consultative Council's standards. They specifically pointed to Order 6 of the Minimum Wages Order 2012 as proof. They said that their plan, which included adding service fees to the minimum wage, was a legal way to reach the RM900 mark. They thought that this method didn't lower the employees' overall pay; instead, it was a practical way to meet the new wage standards without having to make big changes to how they paid their employees.

The hotel also said that they had talked about this change in wages with the union ahead of time, which suggests that there was at least some agreement on this method. However, this claim caused a disagreement because the union had a very different view.

The disagreement got so bad that it didn't look like it would be solved through the hotel's normal routes. The problem was taken to the Director General of Industrial Relations so that it could be solved. It was an official admission of how hard and important the problem was that this was done.

During the very important process of conciliation, the Stone Hotel management came forward with confidence and a clear plan. The way they argued was based on how they saw the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012 and the rules set by the National Wages Consultative Council. At the heart of their case was the idea that the legal minimum wage could include different parts of an employee's total pay, such as service charges.

They didn't just use this interpretation as a small part of their case; it was the very basis of how they planned to enforce the new minimum wage law. According to the management, including service charges in the minimum pay meant that they were following the law and making sure that every worker got at least RM900 a month.

Their case depended on how they read certain parts of the law, which they thought allowed for such a broad way of figuring out pay. From what they knew, the law didn't say that the minimum wage had to be the basic salary alone. It could be interpreted in a larger way, which could include other money that workers make, like service charges.

According to the personnel of Human Resources of Stone Hotel, this approach was a good and legal way to meet the new wage standards and keep the hotel's finances in order. They thought this method was a practical way to deal with the extra financial stress that the new minimum wage law put on businesses, especially those in the hospitality industry where service charges are a normal part of pay.

The way they explained their position during the conciliation process showed how sure they were of this reading. They made their case by saying that it was not only legal, but also would protect the well-being of all workers without hurting the hotel's bottom line.

This point of view from the hotel's management showed how complicated and nuanced it can be to understand labour rules, especially in fields where pay structures are not clear. It brought up how hard it is for both companies and employees to understand the laws that govern wages. It also showed how important it is to have clear laws that are easy to follow so that there are no confusions.

While the negotiations were still going on, the union for the Stone Hotel workers made a strong case against how the management was interpreting the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012. The union strongly felt that the hotel's method of including service fees in the minimum wage calculation was fundamentally against the goal of the new law.

The union took a stand because they thought that the main purpose of the minimum wage rule was to give workers a stable and predictable basic income. This income wasn't supposed to depend on things that changed, like service charges, which could change a lot from month to

month due to things that weren't in the workers' control, like how many people stay in a hotel during different times of the year or how much they tip.

It was their belief that the law's goal was to give workers a strong financial base by making sure they got a steady wage that could cover their basic living costs. The union said that the hotel was possibly making it so that workers' earnings would be unpredictable by relying on service charges, which change all the time, to make up the difference between the minimum wage and actual pay.

The union said that this range of pay could hurt the security and predictability that the minimum wage law was supposed to bring. They said that workers shouldn't have to depend on the uncertain earnings from service charges, which could be changed by many outside factors. In their statement, the union said that adding these variable factors to the minimum wage could cause earnings to be inconsistent, which would not provide the financial security and steadiness that the law meant.

The union's argument showed how important it was to interpret the law in a way that stayed true to its original purpose: to give workers a guaranteed minimum amount of income that they could count on, even if other parts of their pay changed. Their disagreement with the hotel's view wasn't just a legal one; it was also a fight for workers' basic rights to a steady income, which is important for their health and their ability to plan their finances. This disagreement over readings showed how hard it is to enforce labour laws and how important unions are for fighting for workers' rights and well-being.

Trade disputes and settlement

The fight between Stone Hotel and the Union was more than just a disagreement between an employer and an employee; it got into the complicated rules of how to understand and apply employment and labour laws. This was especially hard to understand because of the complicated ways that people are paid in the hospitality industry. Wages usually include a base pay plus variable parts like service charges.

Ahmad: "The situation at Stone Hotel is definitely troubling me, Mr. Kumar. We're deeply divided on the interpretation and application of employment and labour legislation inside our business; this isn't your average argument."

Union Representative: "I agree with you, Ahmad. The problems at Stone Hotel show how complicated our labour regulations are, particularly when it comes to the hotel industry."

Ahmad: "I just could not understand. Why the hotel's management could not adhere to the Minimum Wage Order about the minimum wage of RM900. Base pay (RM900) and variable components, such as service charges, make up our wages. All the chaos and, to be honest, unfairness is due to this arrangement."

Union Representative: "We have noticed that same worry in other locations as well. It's a loophole that allows businesses to meet the letter of the law without really following it. Benefits and job security are affected by this because they are typically tied to the base salary. Ahmad, don't worry," The Union Representative reassured.

Involving the Director General of Industrial Relations in this disagreement through conciliation was more than just the right thing to do; it showed how important the issues were.

It was made clear by this high-level intervention that a solution was needed that was not only fair and legal, but also took into account how things work in the hospitality business.

At the heart of this disagreement was how to correctly apply the Minimum Wages Order to the unique pay structures of the hotel industry. The way the hotel calculated the minimum wage with service charges was controversial, and it led to questions about the legal and moral effects of this action.

This situation wasn't just about Stone Hotel and its employees; it affected the whole hotel industry and maybe even other fields with similar pay structures. The result of this mediation process was likely to set a standard for how minimum wage rules should be interpreted and applied when an employee's pay is made up of both fixed and variable components.

Thus, getting this disagreement resolved was of the utmost importance. It was supposed to give businesses and unions clarity and direction by giving them a way to figure out how to pay their workers legally while also following the minimum wage law. The fact that the Director General of Industrial Relations was involved showed how important it was to take a balanced approach that took into account the concerns of both employers and employees, followed the letter of the law, and took into account the costs of running a business.

Basically, this mediation process wasn't just a way to settle a disagreement; it was also an important step towards defining how labour relations and wage laws work in Malaysia. It was a chance to set a standard that would be used to interpret and apply employment rules in the future, especially in fields where pay structures are complicated and have many levels.

The Court's Award

The wage dispute at Stone Hotel took a final, important turn when it was brought to the attention of the judges. In this case, the courts looked closely at both the hotel management's and the union's points of view, which led to a big change. The Court of Appeal made decisions that would completely change the course of the debate after looking at two important cases.

A clear legal precedent was set when the Court of Appeal supported the decisions made by the High Courts in these cases. This meant that employers could not use service charges to raise workers' wages above the minimum wage level. This decision was very important because it directly questioned what Stone Hotel had done in answer to the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Order 2012.

When the industrial court looked at these appeal decisions, it made a decision that Stone Hotel did not like. The court said that the hotel's way of meeting the minimum wage standard by adding service charges to workers' wages did not follow the spirit of the Minimum Wages Order 2012. This decision made it clear that the basic pay should cover the minimum wage, not things like service charges that change often and are hard to predict.

This choice was a turning point in the argument. It made it clearer how to read the Minimum Wages Order and set a standard for future cases like this one. The court's decision made it clear how important it is to follow the letter of the law and make sure that workers get a stable base pay that meets the minimum wage requirements without having to rely on variable extra earnings.

This decision meant that Stone Hotel had to rethink their policies and pay structure. It was used as a guideline for how to legally and morally follow minimum wage laws in the hospitality business and other fields with similar pay structures. This case showed how the courts can change the way industrial relations are done. It also reinforced the idea that employment rules are there to protect workers' basic rights and make sure they get paid fairly for their work.

Things to learn

The stories of Ahmad and his coworkers at Stone Hotel were connected to a bigger story that went beyond their own experiences. Their fight for fair pay was a key part of a bigger story about workers' rights, legal battles, and the struggle of all hospitality industry workers as a whole. What was going on at Stone Hotel was a picture of the problems and victories in the fight for fair working conditions.

As the wage dispute went through different stages, such as internal talks, union involvement, and finally legal processes, Ahmad and his coworkers learned more about how complicated labour rights can be. They saw for themselves how the way employment rules were interpreted could have a big effect on their jobs and the way the whole sector worked.

The Stone Hotel situation showed how important group bargaining is. The strength that comes from working together as a team was seen by Ahmad and his coworkers. The union's help was crucial in voicing their concerns and questioning the hotel's wage practises, which eventually led to a court decision in favour of the workers' point of view.

Everyone who took part in this learned something from it. It made a point of showing how important it is to pay workers fairly, not just to follow the law but also to respect their worth and hard work. The people who worked at Stone Hotel learned that they could speak up and have their rights respected, especially when they were part of a union.

The story of Stone Hotel also served as both a warning and an inspiration for other hospitality companies. It made a point of showing companies how important it is to think about their wage practises in terms of the law and morality. It also showed how strong workers are when they stand together to fight for their rights.

This trip changed Ahmad in many ways. It taught me more about how labour relations work and reminded me how important it is to stand up for my rights. The events at Stone Hotel not only changed the way wages were set at that business, but they also started a larger conversation about fair pay in the hotel industry. This was a big step forward in the fight for worker rights and fair working conditions.

Questions for Discussion

1. What were the changes in the lifestyle and social dynamics of Ahmad's community when it shifted from being a traditional fishing village to a bustling commercial and tourist centre?
2. How does Ahmad's transition from a conventional occupation to a contemporary one exemplify the broader transformations occurring in Malaysia's economy and society?
3. What insights may be gleaned from Ahmad's narrative regarding the significance of safeguarding workers' rights via collective action and legal advocacy?

Rahman's Quest with the BanglaMarket: Triumph or Tragedy?

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Abstract

This case study explores the journey of Rahman, an aspiring entrepreneur, as he navigates the complex landscape of e-commerce in Bangladesh. Rahman's vision is to create 'BanglaMarket' an e-commerce platform that not only competes with established players but also addresses unique market niches and supports local businesses. The case is systematically constructed, relying on a wealth of information learned from public sources and in-depth interviews with Rahman. The case delves into key strategic decisions Rahman faces, including market analysis, customer engagement, technology investment, and competitive differentiation. Students will examine Rahman's entrepreneurial journey, analyse market dynamics, and formulate a comprehensive marketing strategy. The case is designed for undergraduate students, offering valuable insights into entrepreneurship, e-commerce, and the challenges and opportunities presented by the dynamic Bangladeshi market. Through this case, students will enhance their critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills while unravelling the complexities of launching and managing an e-commerce business in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Entrepreneurship, E-commerce, Strategic decisions

Introduction

In the bustling streets of Dhaka, Rahman, a young and ambitious entrepreneur, saw an opportunity amidst the chaos. With the digital transformation sweeping across Bangladesh, Rahman envisioned creating an e-commerce marketplace, 'BanglaMarket', which could make shopping easier, more efficient, and accessible for everyone. Armed with knowledge and an innovative spirit, Rahman embarked on a journey to materialise his vision.

The idea was that 'BanglaMarket' would aim to be one of the biggest e-commerce platforms where users could purchase a wide range of products such as electronics, clothing, groceries, and more. 'BanglaMarket' aimed to revolutionise the shopping experience in Bangladesh by creating a reliable, extensive, and user-friendly e-commerce platform that would cater to the diverse needs of consumers while also empowering local businesses. Rahman is a tech-savvy individual with an exhaustive understanding of the local market and extensive experience in the IT field. As he noticed the potential of e-commerce in Bangladesh, given the increasing internet penetration and mobile phone usage, he wanted to offer a wide range of products ensuring that customers could find almost everything they would need in one place. He also wanted to create opportunities for local manufacturers, artisans, and retailers to reach a

broader audience by listing their products on ‘BanglaMarket’, establishing a platform that is easy to navigate, reliable, and focused on customer satisfaction through quality service and products.

Rahman envisioned ‘BanglaMarket’ as a bountiful platform, brimming with a diverse array of product categories that encapsulated the essence of a comprehensive e-commerce experience. In Rahman’s vision, the platform was uniquely multifaceted, with a core focus on enhancing customer convenience and contentment. He saw customers luxuriating in the comfort of their homes, browsing through a vast array of products effortlessly. Rahman placed a substantial emphasis on quality assurance; each product was meticulously scrutinised to ensure it met stringent standards, thereby providing customers with remarkable value for their money.

In Rahman’s design, security was of utmost importance. He envisaged a platform where a variety of secure payment options were available, ranging from credit and debit cards to mobile banking and cash on delivery. Rahman carefully curated collaborations with trustworthy logistics partners, ensuring that each product would be delivered promptly and securely, augmenting the overall customer experience. Technologically, Rahman aimed for ‘BanglaMarket’ to be avant-garde. He planned the integration of innovative strategies to optimise the shopping experience, envisioning the development of a responsive website and mobile application to ensure a seamless and efficient customer journey. Rahman also prioritised the integration of data analytics, foreseeing its pivotal role in extracting insights into customer preferences and shopping behaviours, which would enable the customization of customer interactions and experiences. Rahman’s vision of ‘BanglaMarket’ also embodied a deep sense of responsibility and a steadfast commitment to sustainability. He imagined the platform as a pillar supporting and amplifying local economies by incorporating local businesses and manufacturers into the marketplace. This, Rahman believed, would not only augment the diversity of products but also spotlight and celebrate the excellence of Bangladeshi enterprises. Rahman’s ethos also included environmental stewardship, encouraging sellers to adopt eco-friendly packaging and sustainable practices, mirroring ‘BanglaMarket’s unwavering dedication to social responsibility and its aspiration towards fostering a positive societal impact.

Overview of the market

In the throbbing heart of Bangladesh lies Dhaka, a city brimming with life, chaos, and boundless potential. It was here that Rahman saw a canvas of opportunity, a landscape filled with the colours of digital transformation, and a market ripe for e-commerce innovation. Dhaka, with its bustling streets and the relentless pace of urban life, presented unique challenges but also a gateway to a new horizon of business possibilities. Rahman observed Dhaka’s urban dynamics with a discerning eye. He saw beyond the traffic jams and the crowded markets; he saw a city that was connecting, evolving, and ready to embrace the future. With a population increasingly gaining access to the internet, and mobile phones becoming ubiquitous, Dhaka was at the cusp of a digital revolution.

Dhaka’s urban landscape was a crucial element in Rahman’s strategic plan. The city’s densely populated areas and hectic lifestyle necessitated solutions that brought convenience, efficiency, and simplicity. Rahman envisioned an e-commerce platform that could mitigate the hassles of traditional shopping, navigating through traffic, and spending valuable time in queues. Analysing the data, Rahman found the trends in digital adoption in Bangladesh very promising. In 2023, the country had 66.94 million internet users and 179.9 million mobile

connections, indicating a society deeply intertwined with digital technologies. The statistics painted a picture of a nation on the cusp of a digital revolution, where over a third of the population was internet-savvy, and mobile phones were ubiquitous. These numbers were not just cold facts; to Rahman, they represented a multitude of people who could benefit from a more accessible, efficient, and diverse shopping experience. Figure 1 shows the digital users in Bangladesh.

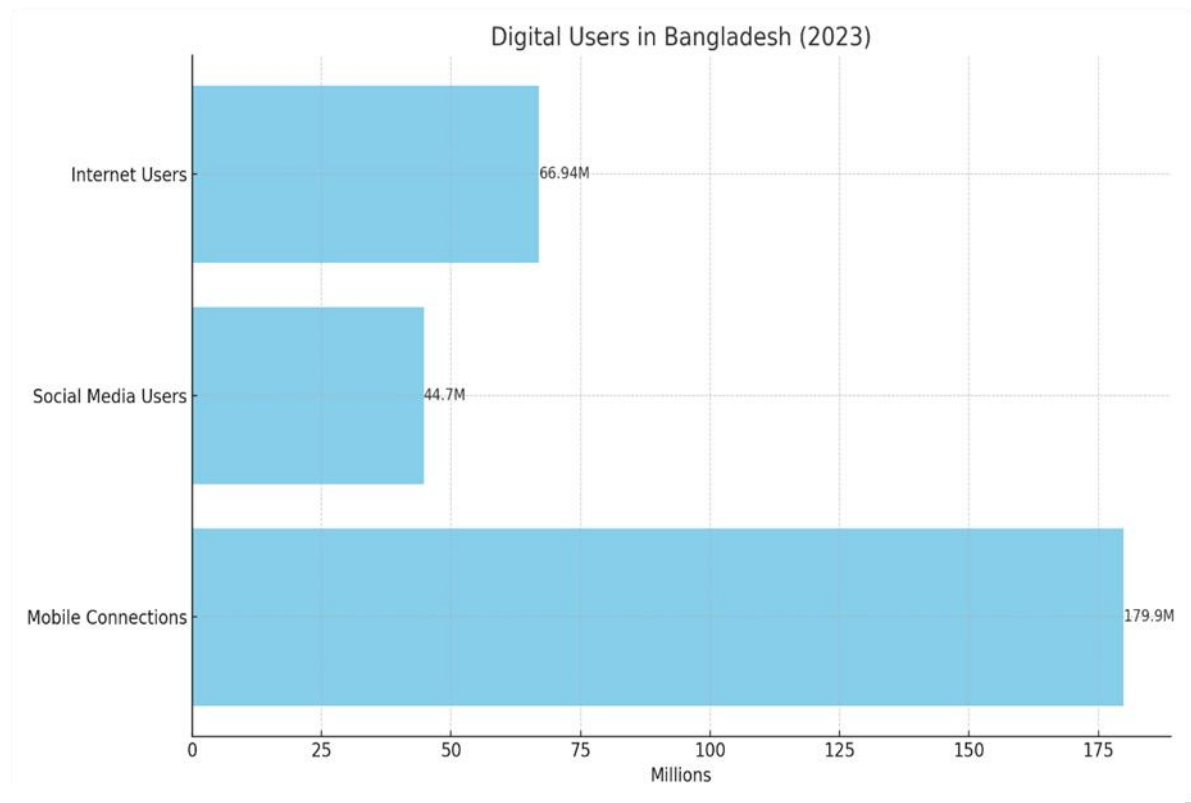


Figure 1. Digital Users in Bangladesh
Source: Developed by the author based on data from Statista (2023)

Rahman carefully analysed the e-commerce market in Bangladesh before embarking on his journey to establish 'BanglaMarket'. A critical aspect of his analysis was understanding the revenue trends across various sectors within the e-commerce landscape. He observed a consistent growth in total e-commerce revenue from 2017 to 2023, a testament to the increasing acceptance and adoption of online shopping among consumers in Bangladesh.

Rahman noticed that the 'Electronics' category exhibited substantial growth, with revenue soaring from 0.64 billion in 2017 to an estimated 2.64 billion in 2023. This promising trajectory indicated a robust consumer appetite for electronic goods, aligning well with his vision for 'BanglaMarket' to offer a wide range of products, including electronics. The 'Beauty, Health, Personal, and Household Care' category also captured Rahman's attention, showing a consistent uptick in revenue from 0.39 billion in 2017 to a projected 1.48 billion in 2023. Such a trend underscored consumers' growing inclination towards self-care and household convenience, marking a lucrative avenue for 'BanglaMarket' to explore and capitalise on. Rahman was also intrigued by the progression in the 'Fashion' sector, which demonstrated a remarkable rise from 0.28 billion in 2017 to an expected 1.56 billion in 2023.

Recognising the immense potential, Rahman envisioned ‘BanglaMarket’ as a platform where fashion enthusiasts could indulge in a diverse array of clothing and accessories, thereby tapping into this burgeoning market segment.. Rahman viewed Figure 2 carefully.

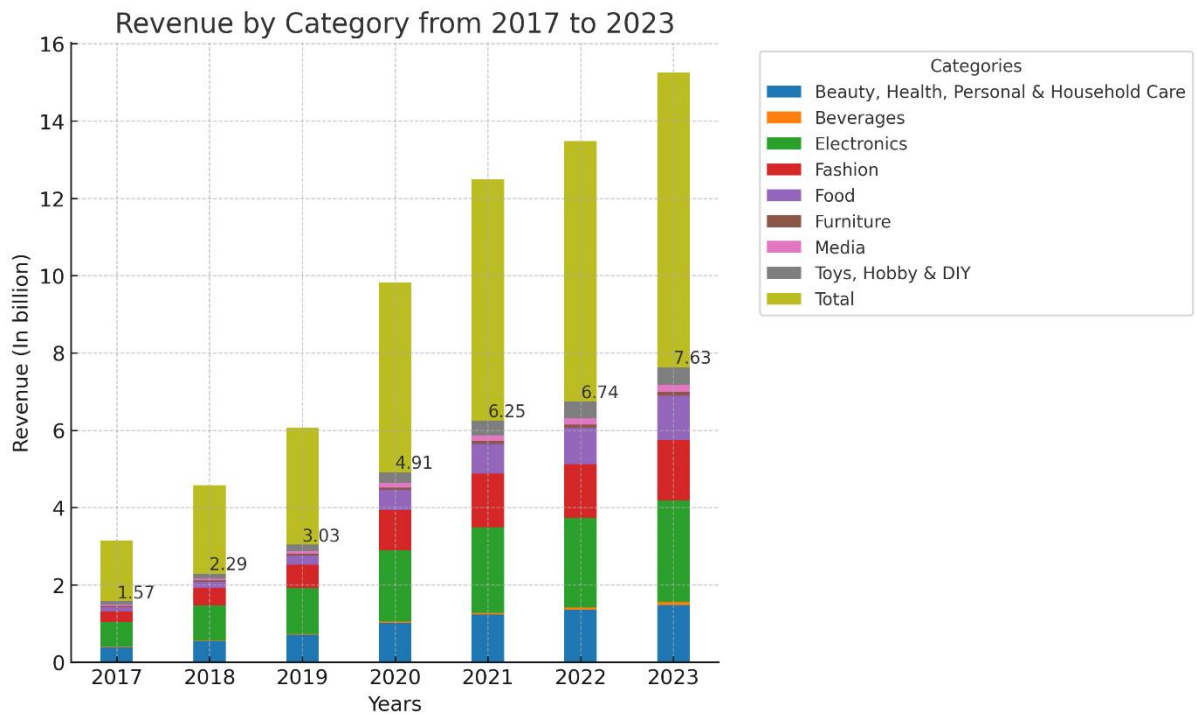


Figure 2. Revenue of E-commerce categories
Source: Developed by the author based on data from Statista (2023)

The upward trajectory across multiple categories painted a picture of a thriving e-commerce ecosystem, ripe with opportunities. Rahman, fuelled by these insights, was motivated to position ‘BanglaMarket’ as an all-inclusive e-commerce platform that catered to the multifaceted needs and preferences of the Bangladeshi consumers. By strategically aligning the product offerings with the prevailing market trends, Rahman aimed to harness the growing momentum in the e-commerce sector, ensuring that ‘BanglaMarket’ resonated with consumer demands and preferences, driving its success and growth in the competitive landscape.

The customers

Rahman meticulously analysed the market data, closely observing the user trends across various e-commerce segments from 2017 to 2023 in Dhaka. The numbers painted a vivid picture of a market in the midst of a significant transformation, with users increasingly gravitating towards online platforms for their purchasing needs.

The ‘Beauty, Health, Personal, and Household Care’ segment particularly caught Rahman’s attention. He saw the user base in this category burgeon from 8.7 million in 2017 to a projected 28.4 million by 2023. Rahman recognised this as more than a mere trend; it was a

paradigm shift in consumer behaviour, indicating a burgeoning market ripe with opportunity. Convinced by the data as shown in Figure 3, Rahman decided to channel significant efforts and resources into this segment. He believed that by focusing on health and beauty products, his business could carve a niche in the market, capitalising on the growing interest and demand within this category.

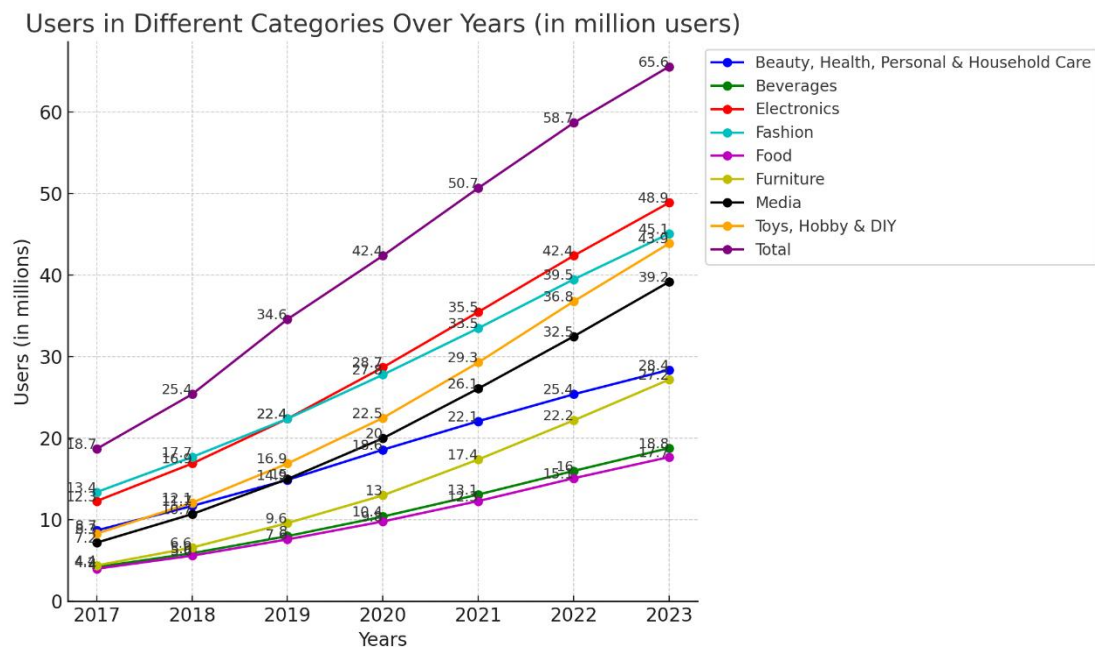


Figure 3. Users in Difference Categories

Source: Developed by the author based on data from Statista (2023)

Rahman was also captivated by the promising prospects in the electronics sector. He noticed a remarkable upswing in user numbers, from 12.3 million in 2017 to 48.9 million by 2023. He interpreted this as a clear indication of consumers' increasing comfort and reliance on online platforms for purchasing electronics. Rahman strategized to harness this trend, planning to offer a wide range of electronic products and ensuring quality and competitive pricing to attract and retain a substantial customer base. The fashion segment, too, held lucrative promise. With user numbers expected to soar from 13.4 million to 45.1 million between 2017 and 2023, Rahman envisioned a thriving market. He strategized to tap into this potential by offering a diverse array of fashionable items catering to various customer preferences, aiming to establish a strong foothold in this segment.

In this way, Rahman's strategic approach was methodical and data-driven. He aimed to align his business offerings with market trends, ensuring that the products and services resonated with consumer needs and preferences. By doing so, Rahman sought to maximise profitability, driving sustained business growth in Dhaka's dynamic e-commerce landscape.

The current situation

Rahman embarked on a journey to explore the e-commerce landscape of Bangladesh, armed with comprehensive data and a discerning eye for identifying burgeoning market potential. His research painted a vivid picture of a sector experiencing significant transformation and growth, influenced by various factors ranging from technological advancements to changes in consumer behaviour and regulatory adjustments.

Rahman discovered that since the early 2000s, there had been a dramatic evolution in the sector. Initial hurdles, such as limited internet access and the absence of a reliable online transaction system, were gradually overcome. By 2021, Bangladesh boasted an impressive 123.82 million internet subscribers, a testament to the increasing digital connectivity in the country (Statista, 2023). The environment in Bangladesh is dynamically shaped by a variety of features, including the political, economic, sociocultural, technological, and legal systems, as well as the environment itself (Debnath & Mahmud, 2007). The political climate is characterised by predictability and a supportive posture towards digital transformation and e-commerce activities; as a result, the environment is favourable for the expansion of online marketplaces. The country's economy is going through a period of expansion that is being characterised by rising disposable incomes and a growing middle class, indicating a larger market with more purchasing power that is conducive to the spread of e-commerce businesses.

In terms of its sociocultural landscape, Bangladesh is undergoing a period of transition, during which it is fusing traditional values with an increasing receptivity to modern ways of life and technologies (Uddin, 2023). The cultural shift, when combined with technological developments such as ubiquitous internet access and breakthroughs in digital payment systems, paves the way for an atmosphere that is optimal for the development of e-commerce platforms like 'BanglaMarket'. The development of legal frameworks, with an emphasis on e-commerce regulation, data protection, and consumer rights, is also taking place, with the goal of ensuring a structured and ethical corporate landscape. Furthermore, a rising tide of environmental consciousness within society gives 'BanglaMarket' the potential to link itself with responsible practices and eco-friendly offerings, improving its appeal to a more conscious client base. By utilising political support, capitalising on economic trends, aligning with sociocultural shifts, utilising technological advancements, adhering to legal provisions, and embracing environmental consciousness, Rahman's strategic navigation through this complex matrix of factors is instrumental in positioning 'BanglaMarket' as a resilient and thriving e-commerce venture in Bangladesh's dynamic market landscape.

The market displayed a rich diversity of e-commerce types, including Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), Business-to-Business (B2B), and Business-to-Government (B2G), each with its own unique characteristics and contributions to the overall market ecosystem (e-CAB, 2022; ITA, 2022). Rahman observed that the government had played a pivotal role in fostering this diversity by enacting policies such as the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act of 2006, encouraging the growth of information technology and safeguarding against cybercrime. Rahman paid close attention to the prevailing consumer trends in urban areas. He noted the burgeoning popularity of B2C websites, driven by the convenience of home delivery services in the face of traffic congestion and challenging driving conditions. He saw immense potential in tapping into this trend, envisioning a service that could offer convenience, trustworthiness, and a wide range of product choices to the urban consumer.

The data also revealed a vibrant C2C market, with platforms like Bikroy, Ekhanei, and ClickBd leading the way. Rahman interpreted this as an indication of a maturing market where consumers were not just passive buyers but also active participants, engaging in selling and trading activities. He saw this as an opportunity to create a platform that could facilitate and enhance these consumer-to-consumer interactions. Rahman was particularly struck by the transformative impact of mobile e-commerce. With 117.3 million internet subscribers as of

May 2021, the predominance of mobile internet users underscored the centrality of mobile platforms in the e-commerce landscape. He recognised the potential of leveraging mobile platforms to create accessible, user-friendly, and efficient e-commerce solutions.

The regulatory environment, too, was a crucial consideration in Rahman's analysis. The government's proactive measures, such as allowing 100% foreign ownership in e-commerce companies and the promotion of mobile financial services (MFS), have been instrumental in boosting the sector (ITA, 2022). In the Bangladeshi e-commerce sector, challenges such as the prevalent cash-on-delivery payment preferences and concerns related to online fraud and cybersecurity were prominent (e.g., Tanni, 2021). Rahman had sincerely acknowledged each of these as significant issues that needed to be addressed.

Armed with these insights, Rahman envisioned an e-commerce business that was resilient, adaptive, and attuned to the unique dynamics of the Bangladeshi market. His strategy was to cultivate a business that would not only navigate the existing challenges but also harness the immense potential of a market characterised by rapid internet adoption, a growing young population, and evolving consumer behaviours. Thus, informed by a rich tapestry of data and market insights, Rahman embarked on his e-commerce venture with a vision to make a significant impact in Bangladesh's e-commerce landscape.

The competition

In the active e-commerce landscape where Rahman aimed to carve a niche, the competition was a vibrant mosaic of diverse players, each offering a unique blend of services and products to capture the essence of consumer desires and needs. The competitive arena, as Rahman cautiously analysed, unfolded into three prominent categories: Generalist Marketplaces, Specialist Retailers, and Social Media Entrepreneurs.

Generalist Marketplaces

Generalist marketplaces, like the mighty giants Daraz and Bikroy, commanded a pervasive presence across the diverse realms of consumer needs, from electronics and fashion to groceries and household items. Rahman compared them to the automated platforms - highly efficient, widely available, and offering a diverse range of solutions to meet the needs of a large consumer base. These platforms were the convenience stores of the online shopping world, where consumers could find an extensive array of products and services under one virtual roof. The advantage of these generalist platforms was their extensive reach and variety, but they often lacked the personal touch and specialized focus that some consumers sought.

Specialist retailers

Then there were specialist retailers, the likes of BoiMela and Rokomari, who channeled their efforts towards catering to specific market segments with a refined focus and expertise. These platforms emerged as the custom shopping centres of the e-commerce sphere, where specialized care, depth of selection, and a nuanced understanding of customer needs took centre stage. They offered a curated shopping experience, where consumers seeking specialized products or services could find a haven of options, expertise, and quality. These platforms, while not as vast as the generalist marketplaces, brought a unique value proposition through their specialized offerings and deep consumer insights in their respective niches.

Social media entrepreneurs

Social Media Entrepreneurs, the new-age innovators of the e-commerce landscape, operated predominantly through platforms like Facebook. They brought a fresh, dynamic, and personalized touch to the online shopping experience, akin to the self-service car owners who take joy in the personal care and touch in maintaining their vehicles. These entrepreneurs often focused on specific categories such as fashion, beauty products, or homemade crafts, creating a space where consumers could engage directly, enjoy personalized services, and find unique products that were not typically available in mainstream marketplaces.

Starting the business

Initial investment

Rahman methodically planned the financial aspects of his venture, ensuring every detail was scrutinised and optimised for sustainable operations and growth. The foundational pillar of his financial strategy was the allocation of fixed costs. A substantial portion, €10,000, was dedicated to the development of a robust website and mobile application, essential tools to facilitate user-friendly customer experiences and seamless transactions. Accompanying this was a €3,000 investment in an inventory management system, ensuring that stock levels, order tracking, and product categorizations were managed with precision. Additionally, a €2,000 allocation was made for the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System, an invaluable asset for cultivating customer loyalty, personalising user experiences, and enhancing customer service.

Monthly operating costs were another crucial component of Rahman's cost structure, necessitating diligent planning and allocation. Rahman budgeted €200 for website hosting and maintenance, a fundamental expenditure ensuring the continuous, efficient operation of the online store. Utilities, inclusive of internet charges, were projected to be €150 monthly, essential for maintaining the operational integrity of the business. Recognising the pivotal role of marketing in driving traffic and sales, Rahman allocated €300 monthly towards digital marketing initiatives aimed at enhancing online visibility, engaging potential customers, and driving conversions. Furthermore, employee salaries were projected at €1,500 monthly, a necessary expenditure to secure a dedicated, proficient team to manage various operational facets of the business. Rahman also considered the variable costs associated with each sale, meticulously calculating the expenses tied to product procurement, packaging, and delivery to ensure pricing strategies were both competitive and profitable.

Rahman also embarked on a particular analysis to ascertain the revenue per sale, which was a linchpin in determining the breakeven point for his e-commerce venture. Foremost, he conducted comprehensive market research to glean insights into customer preferences, pricing strategies of competitors, and the overall purchasing behaviour within the e-commerce landscape of Bangladesh. Armed with these insights, Rahman curated a diverse array of products, ensuring that his offerings resonated with customer needs and preferences. He then devised a strategic pricing model where the products were priced competitively, striking a balance between customer affordability and profitability. For instance, Rahman estimated that the average sale (as shown in Table 1) on his platform would generate a revenue of €50, taking into consideration the diverse range of products and their respective price points.

Table 1. Initial Investment

Description	Amount (€)
Fixed costs	
Website and mobile application development	10,000
Inventory management system	3,000
Customer relationship management (CRM) system	2,000
Total fixed costs	15,000
Monthly operating costs	
Website hosting and maintenance	200
Utilities, including Internet	150
Digital marketing	300
Employee salaries	1,500
Total monthly operating costs	2,150
Variable costs per sale	
(Assumed based on product procurement, packaging, and delivery)	30
Revenue per sale	50

Furthermore, he took into account the costs associated with each sale, including procurement, packaging, and delivery costs. For example, if the cost associated with each sale amounted to €30, it meant that the gross profit per sale was €20. Such granularity in understanding revenue and cost per sale was instrumental in enhancing the financial robustness of his business strategy. Rahman also factored in seasonal promotions and discounts, understanding that these marketing strategies were pivotal in attracting and retaining customers. However, he ensured that such promotions were strategically aligned with the business's financial goals, ensuring that the discounted prices still contributed positively towards covering the operational costs and inching closer to the breakeven point.

Every element within Rahman's revenue model was systematically strategic. He consistently reviewed and refined his strategies, ensuring that pricing and offerings remained dynamic and responsive to market trends and customer preferences. Such an approach was instrumental in steering his e-commerce business towards sustainability, growth, and success, allowing him to navigate the competitive e-commerce landscape of Bangladesh with strategic precision.

Operations

The web store that Rahman had envisioned was an open and user-friendly e-commerce platform that offered shoppers a wide selection of high-quality goods along with the benefits of purchasing online: ease, accessibility, and trustworthiness. The operation hours were designed to cater to the flexibility and ease of customers, functioning 24/7, ensuring that shopping aspirations were never bound by time.

He intended to start with a compact yet passionate team, fuelling the business with dedication, creativity, and innovative strategies. Rahman was prepared to invest his time and effort, playing a pivotal role in steering the business towards success and sustainability. In terms of logistics and delivery, Rahman considered partnering with reliable courier services, ensuring that customers received their orders with efficiency and care. Additionally, he contemplated options like offering various payment methods, including cash on delivery and secure online payment gateways, to cater to diverse customer preferences.

Marketing

When Rahman embarked on his e-commerce journey, he was armed with a vibrant palette of marketing strategies, each carefully chosen to paint a vivid picture of his brand in the minds of potential customers. His approach was multifaceted, incorporating various elements to create a holistic and engaging marketing plan.

Firstly, Rahman wanted to carefully cultivate a strong online presence. His website would serve as a welcoming gateway into the brand's universe, a place where customers could effortlessly navigate through a galaxy of products, finding everything they needed with simplicity and ease. He complemented this with a dynamic presence on social media, creating spaces filled with engaging content that resonated with the lifestyles and interests of his audience. Here, customers could connect with the brand in a more casual and engaging manner, allowing for a sense of community and loyalty to flourish. Promotions and discounts were sprinkled generously across Rahman's marketing plan. These special offers shimmered like stars, attracting customers and making their shopping experience feel rewarding and valued. Rahman believed in celebrating his customers, and these promotions were his way of saying thank you, ensuring that every purchase felt special and appreciated.

A sense of community and connection were integrated into Rahman's strategy. He aimed to build relationships that extended beyond mere transactions, fostering a sense of belonging and shared values. Events, partnerships, and involvement in local initiatives all played a role in nurturing this sense of community engagement, each contributing to the strengthening of the bond between the brand and its customers. Rahman also recognised the value of collaboration. By partnering with influencers, bloggers, and compatible brands, he expanded his brand's reach. These collaborations served as a platform to amplify the brand's message to a broader audience, building trust and credibility along the way. Customer reviews and testimonials held significant value as trustworthy endorsements. Rahman actively encouraged and appreciated customer feedback, integrating the voices of satisfied customers into the brand's marketing communications. In addition to this, Rahman employed a strategic selection of paid advertisements. These carefully targeted ads were crafted to capture the attention of potential customers, inviting them to explore the brand's products. They functioned as effective signposts, facilitating a seamless shopping experience for customers.

Decisions

Rahman had gone on a challenging journey in the vibrant landscape of Bangladesh's e-commerce narrative. He skilfully manoeuvred through the dynamic and challenging business environment of 'BanglaMarket', where the forces of innovation collided with fierce rivalry. Rahman devised a vessel with the purpose of traversing the digital marketplaces, with the goal of distinguishing himself and delivering unique and useful services. With rigorous attention to detail, he carefully examined the vast amount of data and information he had collected, analysing the expenses and projected consumer volume with precise discernment.

He was prepared for a slow beginning, knowing that it might take time to achieve a satisfying return on his investment, considering the effort and time he intended to dedicate to the firm.

Rahman's financial reservoir comprised €25,000, which he had amassed via careful savings and a tiny contribution from his family. That cash was essential for traversing the challenging early stages of the business landscape until achieving stable profitability. Rahman devised a plan in which the steady increase in customer traffic and sales would enable him to hire more skilled individuals to help guide the enterprise towards success. An important decision loomed ahead: selecting a technological platform that would effectively support his online store, guaranteeing a user experience that would lead to consumer loyalty and repeat transactions. Rahman, equipped with his inquiry, financial planning, and strategic standpoint, stood on the verge of making a firm commitment. He had to decide on his ideal business site, a digital domain with extensive client reach and operational adaptability. In addition to these critical decisions, Rahman faced several other important questions as he embarked on his entrepreneurial journey: (i) Given the bustling e-commerce landscape of Bangladesh, what specific market niches or gaps had Rahman identified that 'BanglaMarket' could uniquely address to carve out a distinctive market position? (ii) How could Rahman translate his vision of sustainability and support for local businesses into tangible initiatives through 'BanglaMarket'? (iii) Considering the diverse competitive landscape, what strategies could 'BanglaMarket' employ to differentiate itself from generalist marketplaces, specialised retailers, and social media entrepreneurs with the aim of attracting and retaining a loyal customer base? (iv) What innovative marketing approaches could Rahman adopt to build 'BanglaMarket' as a brand that resonated with consumers, fostered a sense of community, and enhanced customer loyalty?

The e-commerce industry is a highly competitive sector that offers great opportunities for spectacular success. Rahman's decisions were significantly influenced by the fundamental nature of time. The e-commerce landscape, vibrant but volatile, awaited Rahman's decisive actions, where each moment carried the weight of opportunity and each delay held the risk of lost horizons. Thus, Rahman stood on the shores of choices, prepared to lead 'BanglaMarket' into the challenging yet promising field of e-commerce entrepreneurship in Bangladesh, where the unfolding chapters would disclose either tales of success or lessons learned from adversity.

Discussion Questions

1. Given the bustling e-commerce landscape of Bangladesh, what specific market niches or gaps had Rahman identified that 'BanglaMarket' could uniquely address to carve out a distinctive market position?
2. How could Rahman translate his vision of sustainability and support for local businesses into tangible initiatives through 'BanglaMarket'?
3. Considering the diverse competitive landscape, what strategies could 'BanglaMarket' employ to differentiate itself from generalist marketplaces, specialised retailers, and social media entrepreneurs with the aim of attracting and retaining a loyal customer base?
4. What innovative marketing approaches could Rahman adopt to build 'BanglaMarket' as a brand that resonated with consumers, fostered a sense of community, and enhanced customer loyalty?

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The Contents of Indonesian Muslim Academics' Psychological Contract: A Case Study at the University of Darussalam Gontor

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Abstract

This case study describes the dynamics of psychological contracts within the academic environment, with a focused examination on the experiences of academics at the University of Darussalam Gontor. Eight distinct psychological contracts emerge, encompassing appropriate compensation, fair distribution of workload, flexible working hours, full attention from the university, full organisational supports, clear systems and rules, quick movement, and good culture. Each representing a unique set of expectations and obligations. Additionally, the study sheds light on the development of these contracts, highlighting how prior experiences, interactions within the university, institutional policies, and organizational culture collectively shape and influence academics' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities. The findings provide invaluable insights into the nuanced interplay between individual expectations and institutional obligations, offering a deeper understanding of the factors that underpin a thriving academic community. Moreover, this study serves as a foundation for fostering an environment that supports the holistic development of both academics and the institution.

Keywords: Indonesian Muslim academics, contents of psychological contract, development of psychological contract

Introduction

Indonesia, as the fourth largest education system in the world (Korotkov & Yarrow, 2022), currently has 3,115 HEIs and 296,040 academic staff in total (Ministry of Education, Culture Research, and Technology, 2022). Such academic staff, according to the Indonesia Act No 14 Year 2005, are obliged to carry out their main tasks called *Tri Dharma* which include teaching, research, and community service. In addition to such roles, they are also assigned to do academic advisory and supervisory functions for students and perform other tasks given by their institutions (Arquisola et al., 2020; Lubis & Huda, 2019). Therefore, they are presently being urged to enhance their quality for better performance (Halim et al., 2018). Furthermore, Indonesia is a country with multitudinous number of Islamic higher education

institutions. Islamic higher educations in Indonesia emerged with various historical backgrounds (Indra, 2016; Musnandar, 2008). There are three types of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, namely *sekolah tinggi agama Islam*, *institut agama Islam* and *universitas Islam*. Each of them has different organizational systems. Beyond their shared focus on Islamic education, each type features unique organizational systems that shape the academic, administrative, and cultural aspects of these institutions.

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI)

STAI institutions typically serve as specialized schools of Islamic learning, emphasizing religious studies and knowledge. The organizational structure of STAI is often designed to cater to the specific needs of Islamic education, with a keen emphasis on religious scholarship. Faculty members in STAI institutions are central to the organizational framework, as they play a crucial role in imparting religious knowledge, nurturing spiritual development, and upholding the traditions of Islamic thought. The administrative structures in STAI are tailored to support these goals, fostering an environment where religious education takes precedence.

Institut Agama Islam (IAI)

IAI institutions, on the other hand, adopt a more comprehensive approach to Islamic education, offering a diverse range of academic disciplines alongside religious studies. The organizational system in IAI reflects this multidisciplinary focus, with faculties dedicated to both Islamic and secular fields. The administrative structures are designed to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, creating a space where Islamic values are integrated into broader academic domains. The organizational challenge lies in harmonizing the dual roles of religious educators and contributors to secular academic disciplines within the institution.

Universitas Islam (UI)

At the highest echelon of Islamic higher education, UI institutions encompass a wide array of academic disciplines, mirroring the structure of conventional universities. The organizational system in UI is complex, featuring various faculties and departments catering to diverse fields of study. Faculty members in UI institutions are expected to excel in their specific disciplines while upholding Islamic principles in their academic and personal lives. The administrative structures here are designed to support a balance between academic excellence and the integration of Islamic values into a global educational context. The challenge lies in maintaining cohesion and a shared vision across the diverse academic landscape within the university.

While these three types of Islamic higher education institutions share a common commitment to Islamic values, their organizational systems reflect their unique educational philosophies and goals. Exploring the content of the psychological contract will contribute not only to the academic discourse on Islamic higher education, but also to the broader understanding of how the intricate interplay between institutional structures and individual aspirations influences the professional journey of academic staff.

The Establishment of University of Darussalam Gontor

University of Darussalam Gontor (Unida Gontor) was established by the three brothers, the late KH Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fannani, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi, shortly after founding the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution (PMDG- Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor) in Ponorogo, Indonesia, in 1926. The rapid progress and remarkable achievements of the school soon sparked the idea of creating a world-class Islamic university.

Their aspiration was to establish a higher learning institution capable of producing genuine and authoritative Muslim scholars (ulama). After the school's first graduate in 1942, the founders made an initial attempt to establish higher education known as Underbow and Bovenbow. However, due to colonial and wartime conditions, the program could not continue.

The institutional renewal in PMDG began with the endowment of the PMDG to an institution called the Waqf Board of PMDG. The commitment to this endowment has been publicly declared by the three founders of the institution. In the 1958 Waqf Charter of PMDG, they clearly stated that the school was no longer their personal property but belonged to the Waqf for the Muslim Ummah. With the signing of the waqf charter, PMDG is no longer the personal or individual property, as commonly found in traditional institutions. By doing so, institutionally PMDG becomes the property of the Muslim community, and all members of the Muslim community are responsible for all its affairs.

The Waqf Board then becomes the highest body in PMDG. This body is responsible for appointing kyai for a term of five years. Thus, the kyai acts as a representative and is accountable to the waqf institution. For this reason, the Waqf Board has five programs related to the fields of education and teaching, equipment and facilities, endowments and funding sources, caderisation, and welfare, all of which are summarized in the Panca Jangka program of PMDG. With such an organizational structure, kyai and their families do not have any material rights from PMDG. Kyai and teachers also do not handle money from the students, so they never differentiate between wealthy and self-sufficient students. Financial matters are the responsibility of the administrative office staff, consisting of several senior students and teachers who can be replaced periodically. Thus, the management of the educational organization becomes dynamic, open, and objective.

Furthermore, based on the waqf charter, PMDG was mandated to be further developed into an Islamic university and serve as a major centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies. Therefore, despite various challenges and considerable efforts, the vision materialized on the 1st day of Rajab 1383/17th November 1963, with the establishment of Darussalam Institute of Education (IPD- Institut Pendidikan Darussalam). the university embodies the aspirations of the three founding fathers with the testament to establish a high-quality and meaningful university. In his inaugural speech, Imam Zarkasyi, the acting Rector, envisioned the institute becoming like the centuries-old Al-Azhar University in Egypt, a leading center for Islamic Studies worldwide. The hope was also for the institute to emulate Aligarh Muslim University in India, symbolizing Muslim revival through the integration of both Islamic and Western knowledge. The aspiration extended to the sincerity of the guardians and lecturers of the University of Darussalam Gontor, similar to Muslim scholars in Syanggit, Mauritania. The campus design was envisioned to resemble Shantiniketan in India, a village that taught the world from its remote and harmonious setting. Therefore, historically, Unida Gontor is a waqf-based university. This makes the application of Tri Dharma (three obligations of higher education institutions) are based on the vision, mission, and spirit of PMDG. Figure 1 shows the history of University of Darussalam Gontor.

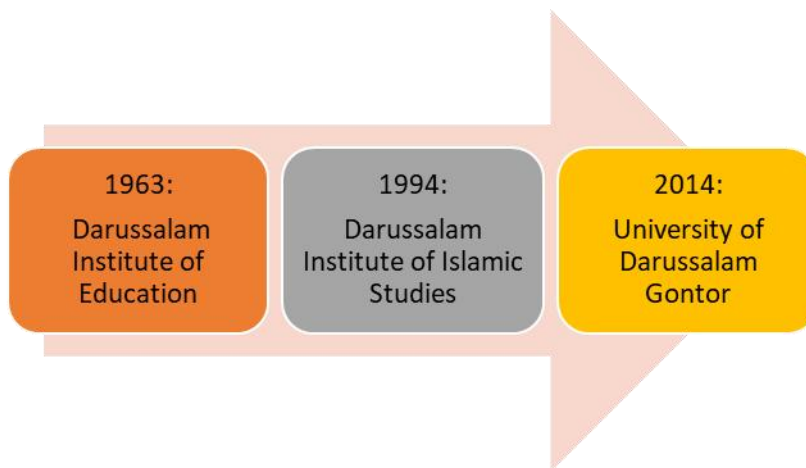


Figure 1. The History of University of Darussalam Gontor

In its establishment, IPD had two faculties, Ushuluddin and Tarbiyah. In 1985, when the late KH. Imam Zarkasyi (the youngest of the Trimurti) passed away, IPD could not be elevated to the status of a university despite regularly graduating students. It later evolved into the Darussalam Institute of Islamic Studies (ISID- Institut Studi Islam Darussalam) in 1994, primarily by introducing the new faculty, Shari'ah. Two years later, in 1996, the institute expanded and relocated to a new site in Siman, Ponorogo. In 2010, ISID initiated a new postgraduate program, and several departments across faculties naturally began and developed based on national accreditation standards. With the newly established postgraduate program in Islamic Studies, the institute is now gearing up for the next phase of setting up an Islamic University, as envisioned by its founders. Following the Decree of the Gontor Waqf Board and the recommendation of the headmaster of PMDG, the committee for the establishment of University of Darussalam Gontor was assigned in 2013. Finally, in 2014, the Darussalam Institute of Islamic Studies officially became a university with the Minister of Education's Decree Number 197/E/O/2014, dated July 4, 2014, concerning the Establishment Permit for Universitas Darussalam Gontor. On the following Saturday, September 18, 2014, the University of Darussalam Gontor was officially inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Ja'far Abdussalam, the Secretary-General of the World Islamic University League, at the auditorium of Darussalam Gontor Islamic Institution.

Vision, mission, and values upheld by University of Darussalam Gontor

While striving for excellence and contributing to the Muslim community Unida Gontor continues to uphold the vision, mission, and spirit of the PMDG for the realization of the testament of the founders. The university upholds the vision, mission, and spirit of the Islamic teachings in practicing the pillars of higher education. Its vision is to become a qualified and meaningful *pesantren*-based university, as a centre for science development oriented to the Islamisation of contemporary knowledge and as a centre for the study of the language of the Qur'an for the welfare of mankind. Meanwhile, the university has three missions, namely:

1. Organising education, teaching, research, and community service within the framework of the Islamization of contemporary knowledge and the development of the language of al-Qur'an;
2. Developing a system of *pesantren*-based higher education as the basis of campus life in order to develop various competencies in accordance with the needs of the community;

3. Building cooperation with various parties locally and internationally, in order to establish the three pillars of university, develop human resource, and strengthen the network.

Aside from having vision and mission, Unida Gontor also developed its objectives. The first objective is to implement education, teaching, research, and community service within the framework of the Islamization of contemporary Science and the development of the language of Al-Qur'an. Meanwhile, the second objective is to produce people who have faith, noble character, knowledgeable, think creatively, master ten basic competencies which include problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligent, judgment and decision making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility that is able to apply their knowledge creatively, innovatively and professionally, and able to compete at national and international levels.

Such vision, missions, and objectives are drawn upon its spirits and principles, namely sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. The spirits and principles are embedded within the ethos of Unida Gontor to foster an environment of mutual respect and a profound commitment to Islamic education. These foundational principles guide the actions and interactions of all members of the university, creating a nurturing and supportive environment for personal and intellectual growth.

Sincerity

Sincerity signifies selflessness, meaning to do something not driven by the desire for specific benefits. All actions are carried out with the sole intention of worship, for the sake of Allah. The is sincere in educating, the students are sincere in being educated and educating themselves, and the assistants of the Kyai are sincere in assisting in the educational process. KH Imam Zarkasyi, one of the founding fathers, said that the spirit of sincerity is the foundation of every aspect within the boarding university and the key to the acceptance of deeds in the sight of Allah SWT. Everything is done with the sole intention of worship, for the sake of Allah. Within the boarding university, an atmosphere is created where all actions are based on sincerity. Sincerity in social interactions, in advising and being advised, in leadership and being led. Sincerity in educating and being educated, sincerity in discipline, and so forth.

There is an atmosphere of sincerity among fellow students, between students and teachers, between students and *kyai*, between teachers, and so on. The cultivation of sincerity in education is manifested through the exemplary actions of the founders of the boarding university, who endowed the entire institution, except for the personal residence of the *kyai*. Another example of instilling the spirit of sincerity is seen in the education of students, where *kyai* willingly provide their teachings without monetary compensation. Even to this day, there is no salary system for lecturers in Unida Gontor; instead, the term "family welfare" is used. Such an atmosphere needs to be nurtured so that everyone can continue to contribute for the greater good, not driven by a desire for personal gain. This is made possible through sincere intentions, purely for the sake of Allah.

Simplicity

Simplicity means that life within this boarding university is an educational experience enveloped by an atmosphere of simplicity. Simplicity here does not imply passivity or resignation, nor does it mean poverty and destitution. Simplicity, in this context, signifies alignment with needs and appropriateness. It carries values of strength, capability, resilience,

and self-mastery in facing the struggles of life. Behind this simplicity radiates a magnanimous spirit, courage to progress, and a steadfast refusal to retreat in any circumstance.

Simplicity also does not imply passivity; rather, it is a manifestation of the strength of capability, resilience, and self-control in facing life's struggles. This spirit is a valuable asset for building an unwavering attitude in confronting various difficulties. The education of simplicity encompasses various aspects, including simplicity in dressing, haircuts, eating, sleeping, speaking, behaving, and even thinking. The personal life of the *kyai*, including their home, dressing style, eating habits, behaviour, and the way they educate students, serves as an example of leading a simple life. This approach ensures that less privileged students do not feel inferior, and wealthy students do not develop arrogance.

However, simplicity at Unida Gontor is not rigid. The measure of simplicity is regulated within its management framework, utilizing things that align with needs while considering efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the construction of multi-story buildings at Unida Gontor is not for show or to impress; instead, it is based on educational needs and requirements, demonstrating a practical and purposeful approach to simplicity.

Self-reliance

Self-reliance or the ability to help oneself not only means that students are capable of learning and managing their own affairs but also that the Islamic boarding university itself, as an educational institution, must be self-reliant. This implies that the institution should be capable of sustaining itself, ensuring that it does not continuously depend on the assistance or compassion of others for its survival. The ability to help oneself is not only applicable to individual students but also to the institution. Being self-reliant means constantly learning and training oneself to manage one's affairs without continuously relying on the kindness of others. This principle applies both to independent individuals and self-sufficient institutions.

In the daily life of Unida Gontor, students are educated to take care of their own needs, manage mini-stores, organizations, activity units, secretariats, dormitories, sports, and courses. Everything is organized by and for the students. Therefore, Unida Gontor is cautious about accepting assistance from external sources, as there is a concern that such help may compromise the self-reliant spirit being fostered in the boarding university. However, this approach does not mean that Unida Gontor becomes inflexible, rejecting those who genuinely want to contribute to the development of the institution. Instead, it signifies that any assistance should be non-binding to preserve the essence of self-reliance.

Islamic brotherhood

Life in the boarding university is filled with close brotherhood, where all joys and sorrows are shared together in the bonds of brotherhood as fellow Muslims. This brotherhood extends not only during their time within the boarding university but also influences the direction of unity among the people in society once the students return from the university.

The spirit of brotherhood forms the foundation for interactions among students, *kyai*, and lecturers in the boarding university's life system. It is from this foundation that a willingness to share in both joy and sorrow grows, fostering a sense of togetherness where pleasures and sorrows are experienced collectively. This awareness of sharing is not only expected to be applicable within the boarding university but is intended to become an integral part of each individual's character after completing their education at the boarding university and contributing to society. The spirit of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) is evident in the daily

interactions among students, where mutual respect and appreciation are instilled between senior and junior students. This interaction among students is woven into the fabric of Islamic brotherhood, and there are no barriers that can separate them within the boarding university. Furthermore, this spirit influences the direction towards unity among the people in society after they graduate and become active members of the community.

Freedom

Freedom in thought and action, freedom in determining the future, freedom in choosing one's path in life, and even freedom from various negative influences from the outside. This freedom should not be abused by becoming excessively liberal, leading to a loss of direction, purpose, or principles. Therefore, this freedom must be returned to its original form, which is freedom within the boundaries of positive discipline, with full responsibility both within the boarding university life and in society. The meaning of freedom lies in being free within positive boundaries, with full responsibility, both within the life of the Islamic boarding university and in society. As explained by former President of Unida Gontor, KH. Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, "Freedom does not mean being free without rules, but it means being free with responsibility, in accordance with the rules, because in any aspect of life, there is no freedom without rules." Additionally, this spirit is reflected in the institution's motto, emphasizing freedom from the interests of specific groups or political parties and standing "above and for all groups."

The development of the values of *pesantren* has become a tradition practiced by PMDG. This is carried out every year at the beginning of the new academic year, with the organized introduction week known as *Khutbatu-l-'Arsy*. *Khutbatu-l-'Arsy* is the series of activities lasting approximately one and a half months that aims to introduce everything within the school to the entire academic community of Unida Gontor and solidify the understanding of the values of the *pesantren*. The *Khutbatu-l-'Arsy*, held annually, serves the purpose of ensuring that the entire academic community understands and appreciates the values instilled by Unida Gontor. Gontor's leaders often emphasize in their speeches the role of Gontor in upholding Islamic values and the *pesantren*, emphasizing the need for maximum commitment. All elements of PMDG, especially the cadres, are expected to have a high level of militancy in safeguarding and preserving the values of PMDG. The implementation of the Charter of Endowment of PMDG 1958, including ideas, values, systems, content, and the mission of the Trimurti (founders of PMDG), is considered established, precise, solid, consistent, and disciplined.

The curriculum at Unida Gontor is crafted to harmonize Islamic teachings with academic pursuits. Students are provided with an understanding of their chosen fields, underpinned by the ethical framework provided by Islam. This approach ensures that graduates leave the university not only as skilled professionals, but also as individuals grounded in Islamic values, poised to make positive contributions to both their professions and society at large. Unida Gontor has experienced significant institutional growth as an Islamic university. Unida Gontor stands has been an example of the harmonious integration of academic rigor with Islamic principles. This university is renowned for its unwavering dedication to providing a holistic education that not only enriches the intellect, but also nurtures the spirit. With a strong foundation in Islamic traditions, Unida Gontor has established itself as an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and moral values for successive generations of students.

Additionally, Unida Gontor has played a role in improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia and has actively participated in various social and humanitarian activities. With

strong Islamic values as its foundation, the university continues to promote innovation in learning and research while preserving the traditional heritage of recognized Islamic education. In other words, Unida Gontor places great emphasis on research endeavours that are aligned with Islamic principles. The university's research infrastructure and distinguished research centres provide fertile ground for pioneering breakthroughs. These endeavours are particularly oriented towards research endeavours that tackle societal issues while adhering to ethical principles and aligning with Islamic teachings. This commitment to ethical research extends to all fields, from the sciences to the humanities, reinforcing the institution's dedication to upholding Islamic values in the pursuit of knowledge. This makes Unida Gontor become a key higher education institution in producing young generations with integrity, broad knowledge, and a commitment to making positive contributions to the society and the nation.

Unida Gontor established with a commitment to blend Islamic values with contemporary educational practices, it has emerged as a distinguished institution of higher learning in the region. Its commitment to fostering intellectual community is evident in the diverse array of academic programs offered, ranging from Islamic studies and theology to the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. What sets Unida Gontor apart is its emphasis on nurturing a holistic educational experience that encompasses not only rigorous academic training, but also a deep appreciation for moral and ethical values rooted in Islamic teachings. This ethos is reflected in the engaged community of scholars, students, and staff who collectively contribute to the university's dynamic and intellectually stimulating environment. The faculty members are not only encouraged to pursue their academic prowess, but also to instil Islamic ethics and values into the educational journey of their students.

Unida Gontor recognizes that its mission extends far beyond the walls of its campuses. The institution actively engages with the wider community through a range of initiatives aimed at addressing societal needs while upholding Islamic values. From community outreach programs to partnerships with local organizations, Unida Gontor serves as a force for positive change, embodying the principles of compassion, justice, and service that are central to Islam.

Human Resource Management at University of Darussalam Gontor

Regarding people management, through the Human Resources Bureau, Unida Gontor consistently encourages all members of the academic community to enhance their competencies in their respective fields professionally. The profession of an academic should entail having the necessary competencies and academic qualifications by means of transforming, developing, and disseminating knowledge and technology through education, research, and community service.

Unida Gontor prioritizes its human resources to establish a high-quality university with Islamic values. Unida Gontor is one of the private Islamic universities based on *pesantren* principles, implementing a boarding system for all its students. However, it's not just the students who reside in the dormitories; faculty members and educational staff also receive housing facilities.

These efforts are undertaken to realize the vision of Unida Gontor, especially in enhancing the quality of its human resources through a Professional Oriented and Spiritual Oriented approach. The professional approach includes improving quality through advanced degree studies, scholarships for Arabic language enhancement in Qatar, academic writing, and scientific meetings and assignments. Meanwhile, the spiritual approach encompasses activities such as remembrance (dhikr), contemplation, emotional refinement, and physical

exercise. The human resources design devised by Unida Gontor facilitates the institution in managing its resources to create a religious environment (Spiritual Habit) so that its human resources not only master general knowledge, but also excel in religious studies, particularly in Islam.

Additionally, Unida Gontor is currently implementing a program of generating 100 Ph.D. holders as a gesture of gratitude to the PMDG on its 100th anniversary. PMDG has significantly contributed to the development of Unida Gontor. This program has been underway and the academic staff have been distributed to various universities, both domestically and internationally. As expressed by President of Unida Gontor, Prof. Dr. Amal Fathullah Zarkasyi:

"Gontor is now 100 years old, and with all its contributions to Unida Gontor, we intend to contribute 100 Ph.D. holders as a gift to the institution on its 100th anniversary. Insha Allah, this program has been running for several years, and these scholars have continued their studies at various universities, both within and outside the country."

In addition to the doctoral program, Unida Gontor also emphasizes the intellectual strengthening of its human resources in Islamic knowledge by organizing weekly Islamisation studies on campus. Similarly, the cultivation of *pesantren* values is a mandatory annual event. Another effort involves improving Quranic recitation skills for every faculty member and educational staff. For those faculty members with Quranic memorization abilities, a Quranic centre is provided as a space to review and reinforce their memorization skills.

Unida Gontor has a policy of organizing scientific meetings to enhance the knowledge and experience of its educators. The activities include conventions, workshops, seminars, and discussions with the aim of increasing the knowledge of lecturers on recent developments in various academic units, from faculties and departments to study groups among academic staff. Scientific meetings are considered part of human resource management to broaden the knowledge of lecturers through discussions and seminars.

Assignments given to lecturers at Unida Gontor are considered obligations, as everything done by human resources is intended as an act of worship. Whether in the implementation of community service, teaching practice, or student activities, lecturers play a role in supervising these activities. Additionally, lecturers at Unida Gontor are frequently involved in campus or faculty committees, receiving direct guidance from the rector or faculty deans. In these committees, lecturers are given instructions on their tasks.

The university also strives to enhance the spiritual knowledge of its human resources through activities such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), contemplation, emotional control, and physical exercise. In addition to academic activities, the university emphasizes the importance of spiritual activities such as congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, obligatory and voluntary fasting, and more. Lecturers with Quranic memorization are facilitated in Markaz Quran to review their memorization. To increase understanding of Islam, the university conducts Islamisation programs, aiming to provide knowledge about Islam and prevent the adoption of liberal or secular ideologies. The university has its own institution, LAZISWAF, for managing zakat (charitable giving) and waqf (endowment), making it easier for lecturers to contribute.

Lecturers at Unida Gontor are provided with housing facilities within the university campus. The allocation of housing is based on criteria such as seniority, full-time status, family status, and alumni status. The university also implements monitoring and evaluation as an essential aspect of human resource management. Monitoring of tasks and responsibilities assigned to lecturers is regularly conducted by the Human Resources Department and the Quality Assurance Unit, working in collaboration with the heads of academic units. Each head of the academic unit is required to report the performance of lecturers to the Human Resources Department.

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial in organizational management, particularly in human resource management. Without proper monitoring and evaluation, the effectiveness of the management may be compromised. Unida Gontor conducts monitoring of tasks and responsibilities, and evaluation is carried out at the end of each program. The focus is primarily on identifying weaknesses that need improvement when implementing educational management. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the work is done on target as planned. The evaluation involves assessing each department, providing feedback to help educators understand and address any issues in their work.

The university conducts comprehensive evaluations of human resources through weekly meetings, which are assessed by leaders, foundation heads, rectors, and others. Feedback and evaluations are provided to staff members with subpar performance, allowing them to understand their shortcomings.

Overall, within the context of Unida Gontor's commitment to the development of its human resources, the issue of academic staff's psychological contract emerges as a central and critical aspect. The university's multifaceted approach might significantly influence the psychological contract, delineating the mutual expectations and obligations between the institution and its academic workforce. Moreover, Unida Gontor's comprehensive and intentional approach to human resources development underscores the significance of the psychological contract with academic staff. The interplay between professional development opportunities, spiritual well-being initiatives, and strategic programs could directly influence and shapes the psychological contract, solidifying the mutual commitment and understanding between the institution and its academic workforce.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the contents of Indonesian Muslim academics' psychological contract?
2. How are Indonesian Muslim academics' psychological contracts developed?

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Changing a Major

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Abstract

Pursuing a degree programme of one's childhood dream and blessed by one's parents could not guarantee that the person will be able to complete his studies. The case walks the readers through the experience of Hasan who completed his matriculation studies and enrolled into MBBS (medical) programme of a public university in Malaysia. Hasan realized that there was a misfit between his aptitude and the nature of medical studies when he was in his second year. The case chronicled Hasan's actions and reactions in coping with his poor academic performance, fulfilment of his parents' wish, his lack of concentration and inability to digest his courses, changing to another academic discipline with his current university, or withdrawing from his university and making a new application to other public and private universities. There are compelling lessons that students, instructors, university authorities and parents could generate and contemplate after going through Hassan academic adventure.

Keywords: Career counseling, tertiary education, personality, personal development.

Introduction

Muhammad Hasan Bin Ibrahim is 22 years old, born in 2001. He is the seventh among eight siblings. His father is a government pensioner while his mother is still working as a lecturer in engineering faculty at a well-known public university in Malaysia. university in engineering faculty. The first four children in his family are females, while the remaining four are males.

Hasan has siblings who graduated from the same university that he is studying – IIUM (International Islamic University Malaysia). The eldest sister, 37 years old, graduated with a law degree, followed by the second child with an accounting degree. The third child obtained a degree in linguistics. The fourth broke the chain by obtaining a degree with art and design degree from UiTM. The fifth sibling resumed the broken IIUM link by completing a degree in business administration. There was another break from the IIUM chain for the sixth sibling, who obtained his business administration degree from UKM. The seventh, i.e., Hasan reconnected with the IIUM chain. He is caught in the dilemma of deciding between two different degree programmes. He was in his second or third year but must descent to first year if his plan works.

Matriculation

Hasan matriculated at IIUM branch campus at Gambang, in the state of Pahang. The matriculation centre is located about 28 km or 30-minute drive from the Bandar Indera Mahkota (also referred to as Kuantan) campus. The main campus of IIUM is situated in Gombak, Selangor about 237km or 2 and ½ hr drive.

Unlike all his siblings who studied in the art field, Hasan was the only one who chose science. Since he was a kid, he was convinced that the science majors, especially medicine, provide the greatest contribution to society and have higher reputation compared to the others. Hasan grew up with such belief and never considered any other fields besides medicine. Hence, being a medical doctor became his ultimate career. Thus, after completing SPM, he matriculated in MBBS programme at IIUM Centre of Foundation Studies (CFS), Gambang in 2019. He excelled in his foundation program by earning 3.88 CGPA in 2020.

Despite his achievement in the medical foundation program, Hasan did not have a fairly good idea about the field of medicine. All he wanted to achieve was to become a medical doctor. He noticed that some of his classmates in the same programme, seemed to have a good idea about the field of medicine. Hasan reminisced about his choice of university when he submitted his online application to enroll in the country's institutions of higher learning through the Ministry of Higher Education portal.

His first choice was IIUM because all his family members, including his parents are familiar with the University. His father graduated from UM (Universiti Malaya), whereas his mother graduated from UTM (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia) and a university in the United Kingdom. His second choice was Universiti Malaya, a reputable university in the country, where his mother teaches. He was aware of the competition with other applicants in the medical program even if he could complete UM's matriculation programme. His third choice was Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), another reputable public university.

Hasan's parents only advised him to choose MBBS because of the potential that they saw in him. In addition, they were also hoping that one of their children could be a medical doctor in the future. Parental wishes gave extra motivation to Hasan to prove to his parents and family that he could be a doctor.

High School

Hasan's education at lower and upper secondary schools were related to the sciences. He attended SMK Saujana Utama, Sungai Buloh for his Form 1- Form 3 because the school was located near to Hasan's house. It was a public school that also offered. He was in the first class of the school with addition KAA (Kelas Aliran Agama, religious studies stream). He had to take Arabic and *Qiraat* besides other PT3 papers. He completed his PT3 (previously known as PMR) and with excellent results he got admission to a boarding school MRSM Taiping for his Form 4-Form 5 education. (MRSM refers to Maktab Rendah Sains MARA). He enrolled in the science stream at MRSM. He grew up focusing on sciences.

Hasan was an active member of Police Cadet from Form 1 to Form 5, but never joined any competitions. However, being a member of the Taekwondo club at MRSM, he attended regular training and participated in a few competitions among the various MRSM branches throughout Malaysia.

Hasan made a few friends within the same programme in CFS and they were successfully admitted into MBBS at the undergraduate level. During his matriculation, he used to study with them almost every day at the library and Student Centre.

Matric. Vs. Undergraduate

At matric level, Hasan studied the basic science subjects like physics, biology, mathematics, statistics, and chemistry. He managed to do well in all of the subjects. score well for every subject. The study group was helpful to make him complete all his assignments, perform necessary revisions. He used to spend most of his time at the library doing his assignments.

During his last semester in CFS, Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Malaysia. Students vacated the campus and returned home to study online. The Covid-19 environment did not affect his studies that much because it was towards the end of the last semester. Hasan obtained high CGPA and managed to get into MBBS programme at IIUM Kuantan. It was still under Covid-19 pandemic, and he studied from home. He discovered that the methods to study the undergraduate subjects were different compared with the subjects that he studied at CFS. The undergraduate subjects seemed conceptual. He studied alone and did not get the opportunity to study in groups like he used to do during matriculation.

Undergraduate performance

In the first year of his undergraduate studies, he passed his papers because the examination formats during covid-19 outbreak were relatively easier to score. Moving to his second year (session 2021/2022), the exams reverted to the normal format. He had to struggle to study and face the exams. When he attended the physical classes, he could not comprehend much. He did not make adequate preparations for his tests and exams.

Hasan became very demotivated. He thought that his poor performance was not due so much to lack of motivation than his declining interest in becoming a medical doctor. Although he endured his classes and activities in the programme, but he kept saying to himself that he really couldn't see himself in the whitecoat treating patients. With all the predicament, he lost all motivations to even study, and consequently failed his repeated papers. He was worried about his future and the disappointments that he inflicted on his parents.

Hasan's concern was to fulfill the wish of his parents that one of the family members would become a medical doctor.

1st Year performance

It was during Covid-19 era. The formats of assignment and examinations were relatively easy because they used multiple-choice format. As a result, he managed to score all his 4 blocks in his 1st Year in MBBS. Hasan studied to pass his examinations, not so much to achieve the zeal of becoming a doctor. He realized that studying the subjects had been a burden, not a source of enjoyment. He suppressed all his emotions and eagerness of becoming a doctor at that time.

The MBBS uses blocks system instead of semesters system. But the results for 4 blocks will impact the total result for that current year of study. Each year of the study level has 4 blocks that are approximately equivalent to 2 semesters. Usually, 2 semesters are equal to 1 year (assuming a student does not take a short semester or 3rd semester in that year). Failing more than 1 block in one particular year required the failed student to repeat the whole year of

study. For example, in Year 2, Hasan passed Block 2 only and failed Block 1, Block 3 and Block 4, Hence, he was required to repeat his Year 2 studies.

2nd Year performance

Year 2 resumed the typical face-to-face semester. Lectures, assignments, and exams were administered the usual way. Returning to normal mode of studies gave Hasan a shock since it was his first time studying the MBBS subjects under that mode. He tried to study with his friends, but he was out of focus. Each class bombarded him with information overload; he could not digest his lessons well.

And that time, he could not answer the examination papers like what he could in his previous Year 1. Exam questions comprised essays, subjective questions and multiple-choice. He failed 3 out of 4 blocks in Year 2. Hence, he needed to repeat the whole Year 2 while his friends were all going into Year 3.

He felt pressured. He discussed his situation with his family and some lecturers. At first, he considered to change from MBBS to another programme, like dentistry. Due to quota and other factors, Hasan decided to repeat his 2nd year. He was confident that if he really focused on the lectures, he could pass his exams. He repeated his Year 2 with a new spirit.

3rd Year (Repeating 2nd Year) performance

He wrote notes of lectures and submitted his homework. However, this spirit did not last long. He really could not comprehend the lectures. Hasan could endure his first hour lecture of the day, but lost focus when he attended the second class. Upon finishing 2 blocks of the year, the results showed that he failed those blocks.

Identifying alternatives

By this time, Hasan concluded that medicine is not for him. He was not fit to be in MBBS. He decided to change his programme within university but after reading the rules and regulations of CoP (Change of Programme) in IIUM, he found out that he was not eligible to apply for it anymore since he had already exceeded the credit hours. None of the officers from his faculty could give him definite answers that he could succeed if he applied to change to another academic programme. Hasan was very worried that if he stayed in the faculty, he would be dismissed and give him a bad record.

He was considering applying through UPU, but to do this, he would have to withdraw from his current university to be eligible to apply. He already put away all of his thoughts of MBBS and wanted to proceed with the withdrawal. He was also concerned about increasing MARA educational loan burdens if he stayed on the programme any longer. Withdrawing from the programme soon will allow him to stop increasing the amount of the loan.

With all the issues in mind, Hasan decided to withdraw from the university as soon as possible, around March 2023. He needed time and space to plan his next move – choosing courses and universities. New student intake in all public universities takes place in October.

Initially, he wanted to stay in the fields of science and biology field due to his secondary school education. But, after obtaining advice from some relatives he wanted to try something new related to economics. Hasan's good scores in SPM and CFS IIUM make him eligible to apply for the field. He did some reading and concluded that he liked it. The field is marketability of the field and not as harsh as medicine.

He surveyed some public universities like UiTM, UM and UKM but learned that they could not take students with IIUM CFS certificate because the certificate was only valid for IIUM or private universities, like UNITEN.

Hasan obtained some advice from one of the faculty's administrators who said that he could make a direct application as a new student of IIUM. It is the prerogative of the admissions office to process his application with strong supporting documents. Hasan drafted his appeal letter and requested his father's friend who is lecturer of his target faculty to review and give feedback on the letter.

He submitted his application and appeal letter to the admissions office on 7th August 2023. Upon his telephone inquiry, the admissions officer said that she would invite Hasan to come to campus for an interview if she is satisfied with his application and appeal letter. Hassan will be notified of the interview in 2 days. The admissions office notified Hassan on 8th August 2023 to attend the interview on 10th August.

Discussion Questions

1. Hasn't Hasan wasted his time both at matriculation and in the MBBS programme? Take a position and justify.
2. What positive benefit has Hasan obtained after going through the two academic programmes? Discuss only one point.
3. How do you reconcile Hassan's original choice and his parents' wish to have a medical doctor in the family? In what way might the decision affect Hasan's future careers? In what way does the predicament become a blessing in disguise for Hassan and his parents?
4. Do you think that the secondary schools and the matriculation centres have provided adequate career guidance to students so that the students become better informed of their choice of degree programmes, career choices, and their inclinations? Take a position and justify by offering only one argument.
5. If you were the Dean of matriculation centre, explain what would you do to provide career guidance to your students? Please discuss four (4) initiatives.

Navigating Post-Graduation Crossroads: Seeking Employment or Continuing Education

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Abstract:

Hasan Syamsuddin, a native Indonesian, a recent graduate of a public university in Malaysia, faced a pivotal juncture post-graduation: choosing between entering the workforce or pursuing further education. His journey encompassed profound introspection and exploration. Returning to Malaysia for convocation, Hasan reflected on his undergraduate years, contemplating the crossroads between political science and entrepreneurship. He navigates the complexities of dual aspirations – a global career in international relations or entrepreneurial pursuits aligned with his passion for arts and crafts. Amid burnout and rest, Hasan proactively sought opportunities, delving into internships, volunteers and entrepreneurial endeavors. The weight of responsibility as a firstborn intensified the pressure to decide on a path shaping his professional trajectory. Hasan's intricate preparations and scholarship applications for Romania, the US, and the UK showcased his unwavering commitment to learn about and contribute towards global change in international relations.

Keywords: Career, Education, Graduate studies, Career management, Scholarship applications

Reminiscing the recent past

During the tumultuous process of making post-graduate decisions, Hasan, a recent graduate facing the juncture between entering the workforce and pursuing further studies, finds himself in a profound dilemma. This year, brimming with surprises and challenges, has led Hasan through the culmination of his undergraduate journey and into the daunting realm of decision-making for the next chapter of his life. As Hasan reflected on the struggle to complete his final year project and meet the academic demands, he grappled with the question of whether to step into the professional arena or continue his educational voyage.

Hasan Syamsuddin was enrolled in the Faculty of Social Science of a public university in Malaysia. He pursued Political Science, specializing in International Relations. He minored in Entrepreneurship under the Faculty of Business and Economics. Hasan embarked on this academic journey in 2019. This was his first experience pursuing education in a foreign land, away from his rustic roots in East Java. However, after four transformative years, Hasan not

only completed his courses but also overcame the hurdles leading up to his graduation ceremony, a culmination of both academic and personal triumphs.

Returning to his hometown in Sumberejo, a small village located in East Java, Indonesia, Hasan found solace in the familiar embrace of his village after a year-long absence since the last time he returned home. The burnout from the last semester, coupled with the intense academic grind, compelled him to choose rest over immediate action. Despite these challenges, Hasan turned to the internet during moments of respite, seeking options for his post-graduation path. The pursuit of opportunities led him to explore volunteer and internship programmes, reflecting his proactive approach to career development. Intriguingly, Hasan also ventured into the field of entrepreneurship, conceiving business models aligned with his passion for crafts and arts. However, despite his proactive efforts, Hasan found himself stagnating, prompting an unsettling sense of anxiety about his future. The weight of responsibility as a firstborn, setting an example for younger siblings, intensified the pressure on Hasan to make a decision that would shape his professional trajectory. Hasan has four junior siblings, two male and two female, respectively. Pursuing a higher education also presents its own temptation for the fresh graduate Hasan.

Awaiting convocation: Reflection and reconnection

After a four-month hiatus, Hasan found himself on the precipice of a significant chapter—the awaited convocation at his alma mater. The anticipation of reconnecting with familiar faces, revisiting cherished places on campus, and embarking on planned and impromptu activities filled Hasan with a mix of excitement and nostalgia.

Two weeks before the graduation ceremony, Hasan boarded a flight from Surabaya, marking his return to the place where his university journey began. The seamless journey back to the university set the stage for a series of memorable experiences and reflections.

Upon his arrival on campus, Hasan secured a dorm room, a strategic choice that allowed him easy access to the familiar spaces that held profound meaning for him. The accommodation choice reflected a desire to immerse himself in the campus atmosphere and engage in activities that would form lasting memories.

The impending arrival of Hasan's parents added an extra layer of significance to this short stay. A week before the convocation, they were set to join him, creating an opportunity for familial bonds to intertwine with the academic celebration. As Hasan settled into his temporary abode, he seized the chance to reconnect with friends—locals, Indonesians, and foreigners alike. The multicultural pot of the university came alive as Hasan engaged in conversations, laughter, and shared moments with friends who had been part of his transformative journey.

Exploration became a central theme during Hasan's short stay on campus. The familiar hostel and faulty cafeterias, once routine stops during his undergraduate days, now held a nostalgic charm. A natural river nestled a couple kilometers behind the campus became a place of reflection, symbolizing the flow of time and experiences during Hasan's university years.

A weekend brought about a pre-planned trip to Thailand, a venture conceived a year earlier with Hasan's closest friends. The four folks explored Phuket, delving into the vibrant atmosphere of Phi Phi Islands, engaging in snorkeling adventures, wandering through the historic Phuket Old Town, and navigating the colorful night markets. The constraints of a

limited budget added a layer of resourcefulness to their journey, emphasizing the value of experiences over extravagance.

As a week passed since Hasan's return to Malaysia, the eagerly awaited arrival of his parents finally transpired. Hasan took on the role of the host, picking them up from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and embarking on small trips around Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh. *Ipoh is the capital city of the state of Perak.* These excursions were not only about exploring cities but also about creating shared memories and reconnecting with his parents after an extended period of separation. A visit to his parents' friends' house in Kuala Lumpur added a sentimental touch to Hasan's stay. The reunion marked an important moment, emphasizing the enduring bonds that extended beyond academic and personal realms.

The climax of Hasan's short return to Malaysia was his convocation, the culmination of years of academic endeavours. The ceremony unfolded seamlessly, without any hindrances, creating a moment of immense pride and joy for Hasan and his fellow graduates. The presence of acquaintances, friends, and underclassmen added a communal celebration to individual achievements.

With the echoes of convocation settling, Hasan found himself at another juncture—preparing to navigate the uncertainties of his post-graduation chapter. The time had come to look beyond the familiar landscapes of the university campus and embark on a new phase of life. Reflecting on these moments, Hasan sees his short stay at the university as an example of his entire undergraduate experience filled with challenges, celebrations, and meaningful connections.

Now, armed with a degree and a wealth of memories, Hasan stands at the threshold of a new chapter. The next step involves not only finding future opportunities but also carrying forward the lessons and experiences gathered during these transformative university years. Whether Hasan chooses to consider the professional realm or pursue further studies, the foundation laid during his undergraduate journey will undoubtedly shape the trajectory of his future endeavours.

Post-Graduation crossroads: Career vs. Education

Hasan found himself standing at a crossroads after completing his undergraduate studies, facing the intricate dilemma of choosing between entering the professional world or pursuing higher education, Hasan finds himself at a crossroads. Upon returning to Indonesia, his mind was buzzing with aspirations, ambitions, and a yearning to chart a purposeful path forward.

His academic journey, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Entrepreneurship, equipped Hasan with a diverse skill set. While this rich pool of knowledge was critical to his decision-making, it also complicated the process. While contemplating the possibilities, Hasan's heart tugged in two directions - the fascinating domain of Political Science and International Relations and his passion for innovation in the entrepreneurship world.

The allure of a global career within the realm of political science captivated Hasan's imagination. The prospect of becoming a diplomat or contributing significantly to international organizations became the focal point of his aspirations. Eager to unravel the roadmap leading to such esteemed roles, Hasan embarked on an information-gathering quest. He searched deep into online resources, scoured through articles, and attended a paid webinar, hoping to gain insights into the prerequisites for these coveted positions. His findings

consistently echoed the necessity of amassing extensive experience through volunteering and internships—a realization that steered Hasan's focus towards enhancing his practical exposure in the field of international relations.

Simultaneously, Hasan envisioned a parallel trajectory in the entrepreneurial arena. His entrepreneurial dreams painted a vivid picture of managing multiple ventures, specifically aligning with his passion for F&B and Arts and Crafts. Fueling this ambition, Hasan plunged into self-study sessions, revisiting his academic notes, and exhaustively researching various business models and proposals. Understanding the intricate mechanisms and potential capital sources for entrepreneurial endeavours consumed his days, yet the magnitude of this venture seemed daunting, especially his political science ambitions.

The pursuit of dual professional trajectories presents challenges. Hasan fervently applied for strategic volunteer and internship positions, both domestically and internationally. However, the lack of responses and numerous rejections from organizations dented his confidence, raising doubts about the viability of these avenues. Gradually, he found himself compelled to prioritize his aspirations in the political science realm over immediate entrepreneurial ventures. With the hope of strengthening his possibility to achieve one of the two of his dreams.

In a moment of introspection, Hasan discovered an enduring desire for continued education. A thriving academic life beckoned—a space where he could explore deeper into his undergraduate discipline and bridge the gaps in his understanding. Embracing this realization, Hasan actively engaged in webinars, focusing on scholarship opportunities toward a master's degree. Recognizing the financial constraints that barred self-funded education, Hasan realized that scholarships were pivotal to materializing his academic ambitions.

In preparation for this academic pursuit, Hasan adopted a meticulous approach. Language proficiency posed a significant challenge, propelling him to relearn English to meet the requirements for tests like IELTS. The compilation of essential documents was an arduous yet critical endeavour, meticulously crafted to align with the stringent requirements of scholarship applications. Hasan's dedication to the pursuit of scholarships stands as a testament to his unwavering commitment to further academic venture.

For Hasan, the aspiration for a master's degree transcends personal growth. It emerged as a beacon of hope for effecting positive societal change and environmental conservation on a global scale. Armed with this vision, Hasan embarked on a journey of preparation, filled with aspirations, resilience, and a fervent commitment to his dreams.

The pursuit of scholarships and the anticipation of commencing a master's degree emerged as an invigorating yet demanding chapter in Hasan's life. His strategic approach and steadfast commitment underlined his unwavering dedication to educational advancement and the realization of his professional aspirations.

Countries of choice: Global aspirations

Hasan's quest for academic and professional advancement extends beyond the borders of his home country, Indonesia. Fueled by a passion for international relations, with a specific focus on matters related to the environment, culture, and societal issues, Hasan casts his gaze upon several countries as potential destinations for his quest of master's degree.

The list of targeted countries was both diverse and purposeful, reflecting Hasan's meticulous consideration of academic programmes and the societal contexts they offered. Among the nations on his radar were Romania, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Romania, a country steeped in history and culture, emerged as an intriguing choice. Hasan recognized the potential for gaining a unique perspective on societal issues, given Romania's rich dossier of traditions. The prospect of immersing himself in an environment where history intersects with contemporary challenges motivated Hasan's interest in the Romanian academic landscape.

The United States, renowned for its academic excellence and global influence, stood out as a beacon for Hasan. The country's commitment to addressing international relations matters, particularly those related to the environment and culture, aligned seamlessly with Hasan's academic and career aspirations. The prospect of studying in the U.S. presented a dynamic platform for Hasan to engage with diverse perspectives and cutting-edge research.

Similarly, the United Kingdom, with its globally recognized institutions and a history of addressing complex societal issues, captivated Hasan's attention. The UK's commitment to fostering a multicultural environment and its impact on international relations made it a compelling choice. The prospect of immersing himself in the academic legacy of the UK resonated with Hasan's pursuit of excellence in the field.

The overarching theme in Hasan's country selection was a strategic alignment of his academic pursuits with nations that had a track record of excellence in addressing the intricate interplay between international relations, the environment, culture, and societal issues. The U.S. and the UK represent academic frontiers where Hasan envisioned delving deep into these matters, contributing to ongoing dialogues, and preparing himself for a career that transcended geographical boundaries.

The reasons behind Hasan's choice of these countries were multifaceted. Beyond the academic considerations, the socio-cultural landscapes of the U.S. and the UK held promise for Hasan's personal and professional growth. The exposure to diverse perspectives and the opportunity to engage with global thought leaders were integral to Hasan's vision of not just pursuing a master's degree but actively contributing to the broader discourse on international relations.

Hasan's goal was ambitious yet resonated with the ethos of his academic journey—to make a meaningful impact on the global stage by addressing critical issues. His choice of countries reflected a strategic approach, blending academic excellence with a commitment to fostering positive change on a global scale.

Hasan's pursuit of academic excellence led him to discern specific scholarships tailored to each of his chosen countries. For Romania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Scholarship stood out as a prestigious opportunity offering a comprehensive academic experience in international relations, Babeş-Bolyai University and West University of Timisoara stood out as promising option for Hasan. The United States, a global hub for education, offered the esteemed Fullbright Scholarship. This renowned programme would enable Hasan to engage deeply in the study of international relations with esteemed institutions such as Columbia University and Harvard University. Meanwhile, Hasan aimed to apply for the Indonesian LPDP Scholarship to facilitate his academic journey to the United

Kingdom, which would potentially open doors to esteemed institutions like Glasgow University and the University of Edinburgh. LPDP refers to *Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan* or Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education.

Each scholarship carried its unique requirements and selection criteria, demanding Hasan's focused attention. The MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Scholarship for Romania required a keen understanding of the country's cultural fabric and its significance in shaping global discourse. Conversely, the Fulbright Scholarship for the United States emphasized a strong academic record, a robust research proposal, and a keen interest in addressing pressing international issues. Lastly, Hasan recognized that the Indonesian LPDP (*Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan*) Scholarship for the UK necessitated a careful alignment of his academic goals with the societal challenges prevalent in the UK, especially those related to international relations and cultural dynamics.

As Hasan embarked on the intricate process of applying for scholarships in these chosen countries, he was aware that the journey ahead would demand meticulous preparation. The scholarship application process necessitated a nuanced understanding of each country's academic requirements, cultural nuances, and the specific focus areas of the scholarships he aimed to secure.

In this phase of his academic pursuit, Hasan's strategic thinking and global perspective were poised to shape his future trajectory. The countries he targeted were not just geographical locations for potential academic endeavours, but they were also canvases on which Hasan aimed to paint a narrative of positive change and impactful contributions to the field of international relations.

The path forward: Preparing for the next chapter

Hasan's journey, marked by academic achievements, cultural exploration, and a commitment to societal impact, reached a pivotal juncture as he prepared for the next chapter. The decision to pursue a master's degree in international relations had evolved into a meticulous process, requiring Hasan to navigate the complexities of scholarship applications, engage in comprehensive preparations, and chart a course that aligned with his aspirations.

As Hasan was engrossed in the application process for the countries of his choice—Romania, the United States, and the United Kingdom—he embarked on a multifaceted approach. His pursuit was not merely about gaining admission to esteemed institutions but about crafting a narrative that intertwined his academic prowess, personal experiences, and the potential for meaningful contributions to global challenges.

The initial steps in Hasan's preparation were grounded in practicality. Recognizing the importance of standardized language proficiency tests, he devoted considerable time to preparing for the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test. Hasan has previously taken the TOEFL ITP (Test of English as a Foreign Language - Institutional Testing Program), achieving a commendable score of 600. However, he discovered that this language proficiency test is only applicable for local Indonesian scholarships and a U.S.-based Fulbright Scholarship. Understanding the need for a broader range of opportunities, Hasan is currently in the process of gearing up for the IELTS test. Aware of its complexity and the expenses involved, he is diligently preparing for this pivotal examination, recognizing its significance in expanding his horizons for international scholarships. As an individual committed to effective communication and understanding the nuances of global discourse,

Hasan approaches language proficiency as a cornerstone for successful academic engagement in a new cultural and academic milieu.

Simultaneously, Hasan engaged in a reflective process, identifying key figures from his academic and professional past who could vouch for his capabilities and character. Approaching former lecturers and internship supervisors, Hasan sought recommendation letters that would not only attest to his academic achievements but also provide insights into his character, work ethic, and potential for future success. These letters, Hasan believed, would serve as a testament to his readiness for the challenges of advanced academic pursuits.

Understanding the importance of articulating his vision and purpose, Hasan dedicated his time to practicing both written and oral expression. The composition of essays and motivation letters became a canvas for Hasan to articulate not only why he sought a master's degree but also how this academic journey aligned with his broader goals of fostering positive change in international relations.

Practicing interviews served a dual purpose for Hasan. Beyond honing his ability to respond effectively to queries about his academic and professional journey, these sessions became a platform for self-reflection. Hasan explored into his motivations, aspirations, and the impact he envisioned making—a process that not only enhanced his interview skills but also solidified his sense of purpose.

Recognizing the value of shared experiences and collective wisdom, Hasan actively sought out webinars and joined communities focused on scholarship pursuits. Engaging with individuals who shared similar goals provided Hasan with diverse perspectives, valuable insights into the application process, and a sense of camaraderie in the pursuit of academic excellence.

In essence, Hasan's approach to preparing for the next chapter was characterized by a meticulous and comprehensive strategy. He recognized that success in the competitive realm of international scholarships demanded more than academic brilliance—it required a holistic understanding of self, effective communication of aspirations, and a network of support from mentors, peers, and communities with shared goals.

The tasks Hasan undertook were not mere checkboxes on an application checklist; they were deliberate steps in crafting a narrative of ambition, resilience, and commitment to societal impact. The journey Hasan undertook to prepare for the next chapter was an investment in his future—one where academic pursuit converged with a passion for positive change on a global scale.

Prospecting with hopes

The entire process of scholarship application has been an effort to achieve his dreams, and he did so with a profound sense of purpose. The path forward was not just about securing admission; it was about positioning himself as a catalyst for positive transformation. Hasan's journey, marked by strategic preparations, reflective practices, and a commitment to continuous growth, stood as a testament to the potential within every young scholar to shape a future where knowledge, empathy, and global understanding converge for the betterment of society.

Hasan's journey after graduation was nothing short of a transformative odyssey, steering him through profound introspection and unwavering determination. Having navigated the post-

graduate crossroads with a delicate balance between career aspirations and educational pursuits, Hasan stands at the precipice of a new chapter, armed not just with a degree but with a trove of experiences that have shaped his vision for the future. His return to Malaysia, though brief, was a tapestry woven with moments of reconnection, reflection, and anticipation as he prepared for the awaited convocation. It was a chapter filled with laughter among friends, exploration of familiar haunts, and the joyous embrace of family—a cherished interlude before the forging of a new path.

Contemplating a choice between political science and entrepreneurship, Hasan explored various opportunities, ranging from internships to venturing into business initiatives. Ultimately, he realized that his true passion resided in pursuing further education. His meticulous preparation and application for scholarships in Romania, the US, and the UK underscored not just academic pursuit but a fervent commitment to contribute towards effecting global change in international relations.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Hasan based on his efforts to continue his education? Explain.
2. Would you agree that if Hasan were to continue his graduate studies in Indonesia, he would be able to also contribute towards his country's international relations with other countries? Take a position and substantiate your answer.
3. In your opinion, is it realistic for Hasan to be able to apply and secure a place abroad this year, i.e., within a few months of his graduation? Explain.
4. Based on the current global economic situation, do you think universities abroad will provide scholarships to international students? Take a position and justify.
5. What will be your suggestion to Hasan if he is unable to get a place from one of the universities that he has applied for? And your justification of the suggestion?
6. In your opinion, how effectively did Hasan manage his future dilemma? Take a position and justify.

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Nurturing Entrepreneurial Excellence: The Transformative Journey of Entrepreneurship Week (Entrepweek)

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek), tailored for Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS) students, encourages entrepreneurship participation and is primarily organized by the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Council, Economics and Management Science Society (EMSS), Department of Business Administration (DeBA) and KENMS Entrepreneurship lecturers. Originally a physical bazaar in 2013, it transitioned into a hybrid mode (physical and online bazaar) during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This event is organized at Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. The EntrepWeek Team, consisting of advisors and trainers, includes notable figures such as Dr. Fatin Husna Suib as the leader of this project, Dr. Amirah Ahmad Suki, Dr. Al Amirul Eimer Ramdzan Ali, and Dr. Arbaiah Abdul Razak. Student Councils, namely the Bachelor of Business Administration Council (BBAC) and the Economic and Management Science Society (EMSS), also contribute to the team. Furthermore, Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, along with the Entrepreneurship Development Centers (EDC) IIUM, extends sponsorship to support both the physical and online EntrepWeek's bazaars.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Graduate Employability

Entrepweek's objectives, issues and solutions

EntrepWeek is driven by a set of well-defined objectives aimed at empowering KENMS entrepreneurship students. Through the implementation of an online bazaar, the event strives to provide students with a practical platform to showcase and market their entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, it offers real-time learning opportunities through modules focusing on crucial aspects such as social media advertising, business planning, and financial statements. These modules not only contribute to the academic progress of students enrolled in KENMS' Entrepreneurship courses but also equip them with practical skills essential for entrepreneurial success.

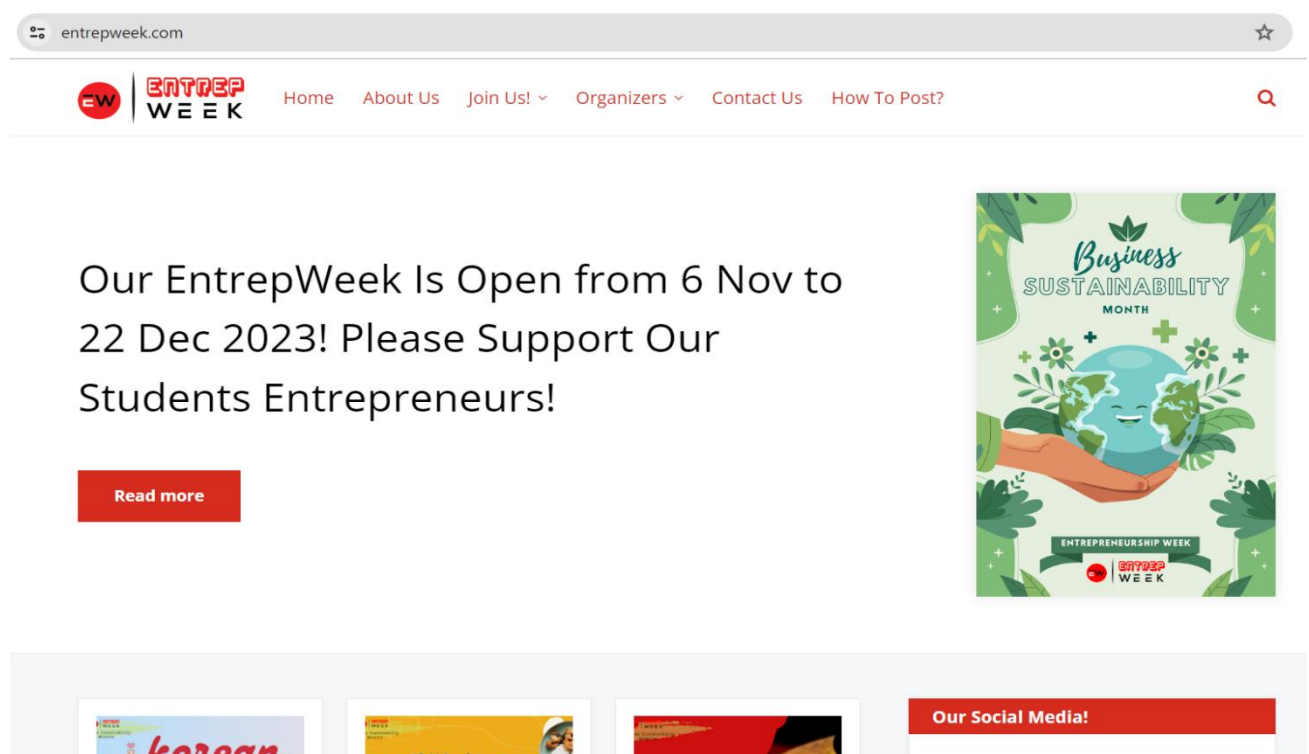
Ensuring the employability of fresh graduates remains a pressing concern, even for those with degrees from reputable universities (Rajaendram, & Menon, 2022). To empower graduates and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, Malaysia has mandated compulsory entrepreneurship courses for all university students, aligning with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). This strategic move aims to equip graduates with the skills needed for financial independence and success, especially in cases where securing traditional employment proves challenging. In response to these challenges, EntrepWeek takes a proactive stance by identifying and proposing solutions to issues such as a lack of practical business skills, insufficient working experience, and perceived customer trust issues. By actively addressing these concerns, EntrepWeek endeavors to create an environment conducive to fostering entrepreneurial growth and success among students.

Moreover, EntrepWeek emphasizes the value of entrepreneurial activities in students' portfolios, thereby improving their employability. The event also plays a significant role in building trust by involving recognized student councils and faculty members, instilling confidence in IIUM customers when purchasing from entrepreneurship students. This support contributes to enhancing the credibility and reputation of student businesses, fostering increased trust and, consequently, encouraging more sales.

Entrepweek's digital presence

EntrepWeek strategically employs various platforms, such as its website (Figure 1), Instagram and Facebook Page accounts (@entrepweek), alongside hosting physical bazaars at KENMS, IIUM Gombak. These multifaceted platforms play a crucial role in advertising and showcasing the diverse products created by entrepreneurship students. Leveraging social media aligns with research findings that emphasize its potential to enhance entrepreneurs' capacity for discovering and creating new entrepreneurial opportunities by fostering prior knowledge, alertness, and social cognition (Park et al., 2017). Moreover, the importance of trust within online entrepreneurial groups is underscored, with research indicating that such groups primarily fulfill learners' needs for trust and profit, with trust emerging as the pivotal factor (Wu & Song, 2019). This integrated approach underscores EntrepWeek's commitment to utilizing diverse channels for fostering entrepreneurial engagement and growth.

Figure 1: EntrepWeek's Website



Source: <https://www.entrepweek.com/>

Entrepweek's project model and timeline

The EntrepWeek project model (Figure 2) commences with the engagement of entrepreneurship students in digital business training provided by EntrepWeek through its modules. Following the training, students submit their business advertisements for promotion on EntrepWeek's website and social media platforms. The resulting promotions generate customers for the students, and they receive their profits accordingly.

In terms of the project timeline (Figure 3), each semester spans approximately 14 weeks. The first to fourth weeks of EntrepWeek involve the training of students. Post-training, business registration with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) is carried out to ensure the legal operation of the students' businesses. Subsequently, students begin selling their products or services on their individual Instagram accounts and through EntrepWeek's hybrid bazaar, encompassing both online and physical platforms. Weeks five to eleven are designated as

EntrepWeek month, during which students actively sell their products. Business Model Canvas (BMC) presentations from all students occur during this month and post the 11th week, students prepare business reports, encompassing financial reports and business plans.

Figure 2: EntrepWeek's Project Model

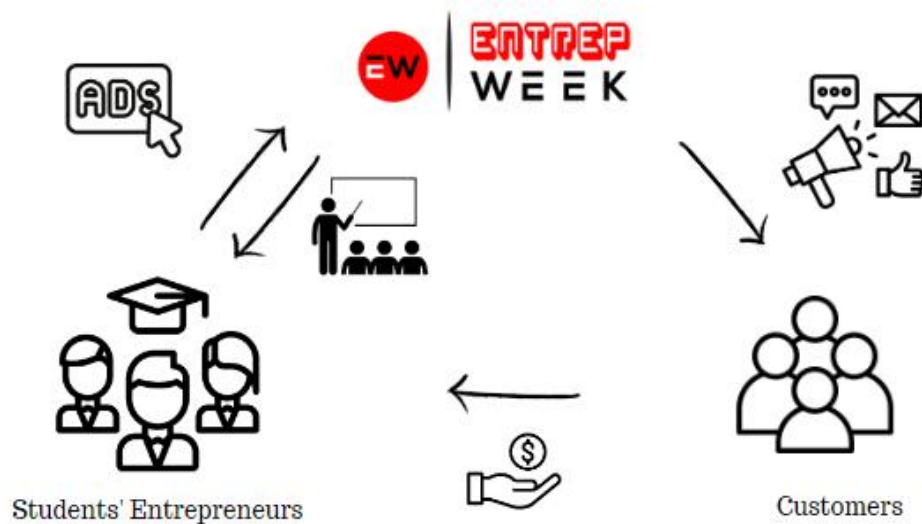
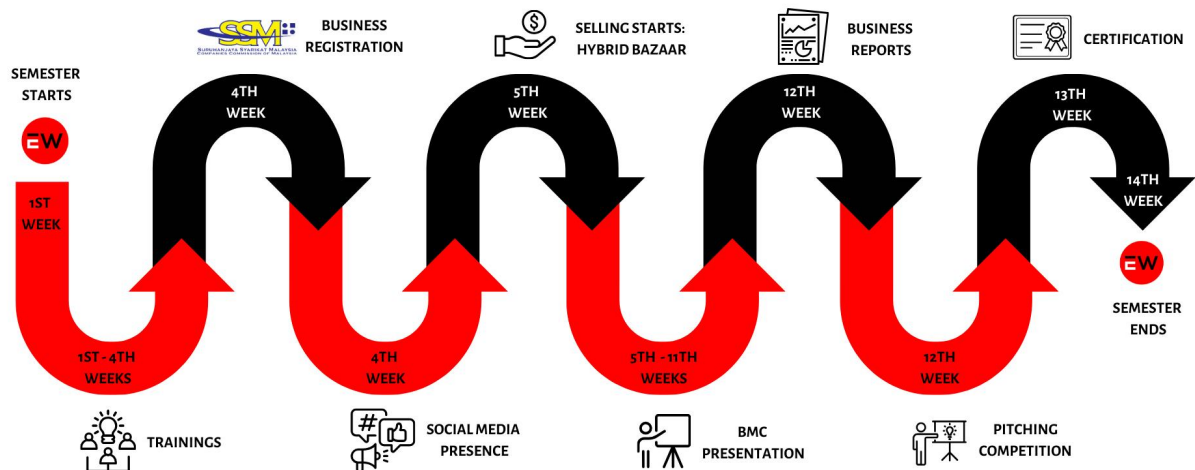


Figure 3: EntrepWeek's Timeline for IIUM's Entrepreneurship Students



To conclude EntrepWeek month, a business pitching competition takes place in the 12th week, followed by the issuance of certifications to all participating students. The EntrepWeek project concludes in the 14th week of the semester. Notably, this project repeats twice a year, aligning with the two semesters in a given year.

Entrepweek's modules and training

The integration of a university training program into the core curriculum has proven effective in enhancing students' entrepreneurial skills and transversal employability competencies, underscoring the value of such initiatives (Laguna-Sánchez et al, 2019). While digital entrepreneurship education has successfully boosted undergraduates' soft skills, particularly

in the realm of information technology, it is noted that leadership skills exhibit the least improvement (Zainal & Yong, 2020). Furthermore, the implementation of a developed digital entrepreneurship learning model has demonstrated effectiveness in inspiring students to venture into businesses utilizing information technology, thereby fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and enhancing 21st-century literacy skills (Erdisna, Ridwan, & Syahputra, 2022).

EntrepWeek's training modules encompass a comprehensive range of skills designed to equip participants with the knowledge and expertise required for entrepreneurial success. These modules carry a significant weight in the assessment of KENMS entrepreneurship students, constituting the majority of their marks. These modules will also be employed to educate public entrepreneurs, particularly those in need, through training sessions.

The module kicks off by delving into the realm of digital marketing with a module on designing business advertisements using CANVA. This hands-on training focuses on developing visually appealing and effective promotional materials, a crucial aspect of creating a compelling brand image in the digital landscape. In addition, a key aspect of initiating a business is the legal process of business registration. EntrepWeek addresses this by collaborating with *Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia* (SSM) (Commission of Companies Malaysia) to provide training on the registration of businesses for startups. This module ensures that participants are well-versed in the legal aspects of establishing and operating a business, laying a solid foundation for compliance and ethical business practices.

EntrepWeek places a strong emphasis on the digital presence of entrepreneurial ventures, offering training on content creation through Blogger at www.entrepweek.com. Participants learn to leverage this platform to establish a professional and user-friendly online presence, a critical element for reaching a broader audience and enhancing brand visibility. The program extends its digital marketing focus to include training on scheduling business advertisements through Facebook Meta Business. This module equips participants with the skills to strategically plan and execute advertising campaigns on one of the most widely used social media platforms, ensuring effective outreach and engagement.

Moving beyond static content, EntrepWeek introduces modules on dynamic social media marketing through Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook Page Marketing. Participants learn how to leverage these platforms to create engaging content and build a strong online presence, fostering customer engagement and brand loyalty. On the other hand, brand identity is a key consideration for any business. (citation) EntrepWeek addresses this by incorporating a module on brand logo and product labeling. This training focuses on the visual elements that contribute to brand recognition and differentiation in the market, emphasizing the importance of a cohesive and memorable brand identity.

EntrepWeek also covers a range of crucial skills for entrepreneurs, including multimedia proficiency with video editing using CAPCUT, emphasizing the creation of visually compelling content for the digital landscape. Additionally, the program addresses financial management essentials through a module on Financial Management in Excel, offering practical insights into budgeting, financial analysis, and record-keeping vital for sustaining successful businesses. Furthermore, the curriculum focuses on the art of Business Pitching, providing participants with the skills to craft compelling presentations and offering a unique opportunity to apply these skills through a competitive Business Pitching Competition. Business planning is central to the program, incorporating modules on Business Model

Canvas and Business Plan, guiding participants in articulating concepts and creating robust plans for sustainable ventures.

Recognizing the potential for social impact, EntrepWeek introduces a module on Social Enterprise, promoting a holistic approach to entrepreneurship that considers broader societal needs. Additionally, the program emphasizes the importance of effective written communication with a module on Copywriting via ChatGPT. Finally, recognizing the prominence of digital commerce, EntrepWeek collaborates with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) to provide insights into leveraging digital platforms for e-commerce through the Go-Ecommerce Portal module.

Engaging industries' experts in entrepweek

According to a study by Wu and Chen (2019), integrating experts with entrepreneurial experience from the information industry into college entrepreneurial education courses positively impacts students' entrepreneurial skills and team collaboration efficacy, aligning with industry expectations. In a parallel effort, EntrepWeek strategically aligns with prominent entities to elevate students' entrepreneurial education. Partnering with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM), the event conducts comprehensive Business Registration Workshops and Talks, providing participants with practical insights into business registration and ensuring a legal foundation for their business. Another significant collaboration involves with PERNAS to offer profound insights into franchising opportunities through engaging talks, equipping participants with crucial knowledge for future business ventures. These strategic partnerships collectively contribute to EntrepWeek's mission of providing practical learning experiences for aspiring entrepreneurs, fostering a dynamic educational environment.

Furthermore, pivotal support comes from the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), which offers a key partnership by providing a Go-Ecommerce portal and tailored certificates for entrepreneurship students. This collaboration not only elevates students' digital business acumen but also awards them a recognized certification, bolstering the credibility of their entrepreneurial accomplishments. Similarly, partnerships with the ADLA Group and Shopee University focus on delivering essential skills through Business Pitching Talks and Shopee E-commerce Workshops, respectively. These collaborations collectively enrich EntrepWeek, providing students with valuable opportunities for learning, networking, and skills development under the guidance of industry experts.

Reaching out to external entrepreneurs through flagships

EntrepWeek also aimed at reaching its sub-community, which comprises external entrepreneurs, particularly those from the B40 group, single mothers, and *asnaf* entrepreneurs. *Asnaf* denotes the distinct categories that meet the criteria for receiving zakat, as delineated in Islamic doctrines." The foundation of this concept is based on the *Quranic* verse from Al-Tawbah (9:60), in which Allah specifies eight distinct groups who are eligible to receive zakat. These categories encompass those who are economically disadvantaged, those who lack basic necessities, individuals entrusted with the responsibility of distributing zakat, those striving to foster harmony among people, individuals who are enslaved and seeking liberation, individuals saddled with financial obligations, endeavours dedicated to advancing the cause of God, and individuals who are in need when travelling. This classification is not random but rather ordained by a divine authority, revealing the profound wisdom and knowledge of God in many issues. This notion is exemplified by a narrative from the Hadith, in which Prophet Muhammad elucidates that the qualification for receiving zakat is not determined by

humans, but rather by a heavenly decree. In a recorded conversation in Abû Dâ'ûd, the Prophet emphasises that even prophets do not have the authority to decide who should receive zakat. This highlights the sacredness and distinctiveness of the eight categories of zakat receivers as declared by Allah.

The digital business module was employed to provide training and education, helping these entrepreneurs enhance their business capabilities, particularly in the context of online operations. By imparting relevant skills and knowledge, EntrepWeek aimed to empower these entrepreneurs to effectively manage and grow their businesses in the digital landscape.

To engage with external entrepreneurs, EntrepWeek collaborates with three primary flagship programs at IIUM. The first flagship is YSM Sejahtera, with its primary objective being the development of the Sejahtera community within Gombak. Through this initiative, EntrepWeek targets entrepreneurs within the youth, single mothers, and the less fortunate IIUM community members. The second flagship, TACTIC, adopts a comprehensive approach to foster technical innovation and commercialization. This flagship not only provides training for entrepreneurs in Johor, Malaysia but also conducts advocacy and public awareness programs aimed at promoting entrepreneurship.

The third flagship, *iTaajir*, functions as a research project dedicated to offering financial support to disadvantaged entrepreneurs. This initiative also focuses on enhancing the digital business skills of these entrepreneurs through training. Throughout these flagship programs, EntrepWeek employs its modules to train all entrepreneurs associated with these initiatives.

Entrepweek's outputs, recognitions and sustainable development goals (SDGs)

EntrepWeek has yielded notable outcomes, recording an impressive RM 1.6 million in student sales as of June 2023 over a five-year span. In addition to the financial success, Entrepreneurship students are honored with valuable MDEC Digital Entrepreneurship Certificates, acknowledging their achievements in the field. The program goes beyond monetary gains, fostering diverse skill sets among students, including proficiency in social media campaigns, effective business pitching, and the development of comprehensive business plans and financial reporting.

Furthermore, EntrepWeek has garnered esteemed recognitions, underscoring its impact on the entrepreneurial landscape. The event has been acknowledged during the IIUM Grand Community Engagement (CE) 2022 Day, highlighting its significant contribution to the university community. Additionally, EntrepWeek secured a Silver Award for Entrepreneurship Week at the International University Carnival on e-learning, further attesting to its excellence in promoting entrepreneurial education and engagement. Dr. Fatin Husna, the founder of entrepweek.com, also received an award from Malaysia Digital Transformation Awards 2023, namely, the Special Mention - The Rising Digital Star Award 2023. These accolades not only validate the success of EntrepWeek but also emphasize its noteworthy standing within the academic and entrepreneurial spheres.

EntrepWeek actively contributes to three key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Firstly, it aligns with SDG 4, focusing on quality education. This is attributed to EntrepWeek's commitment to transforming digital entrepreneurship education through its modules, contributing to the advancement of quality education. The second SDG that EntrepWeek supports is SDG 8, emphasizing decent work and economic growth. This is achieved by enhancing students' portfolios to boost employability and elevating the standard of living for

other entrepreneurs. Lastly, EntrepWeek contributes to SDG 9 by promoting innovation. This is accomplished through EntrepWeek's digital modules, which align with the focus on industry innovation and infrastructure development, thereby advancing the cause of SDG 9.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the transformative journey of Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek) at Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS), IIUM, reflects a dynamic evolution and a substantial impact on entrepreneurial development. The event, organized by various entities including the BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) Council, EMSS (Economics and Management Sciences Students' Society), DeBA (Department of Business Administration), and KENMS Entrepreneurship lecturers, has transitioned from a physical bazaar to a hybrid model, embracing both physical and online components in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The EntrepWeek team, along with student councils and sponsors underscores the collaborative effort in fostering entrepreneurial growth.

The objectives of EntrepWeek, addressing issues such as employability concerns for fresh graduates and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset, showcase a proactive approach to solving real-world challenges. The integration of expert insights, strategic partnerships with industry entities, and the emphasis on digital presence highlight the program's commitment to providing a holistic entrepreneurial education. Furthermore, EntrepWeek's contribution to SDGs 4, 8, and 9 affirms its alignment with global sustainability goals, emphasizing the program's broader impact on education, economic growth, and innovation. As EntrepWeek actively engages with external entrepreneurs through its flagship programs and attains recognitions and awards, it stands as a beacon for fostering a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem within and beyond the academic realm.

Discussion Questions

1. How has the transition of Entrepreneurship Week (EntrepWeek) from a physical bazaar to a hybrid model impacted its effectiveness, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the key objectives of EntrepWeek, and how do they address the challenges faced by KENMS entrepreneurship students, particularly in terms of employability and practical business skills?
3. How does EntrepWeek leverage digital platforms and social media to enhance entrepreneurial engagement, and what role does a digital presence play in the success of student businesses?
4. What is the significance of engaging industry experts in EntrepWeek, and how do collaborations with entities like the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) contribute to students' entrepreneurial education?
5. How does EntrepWeek contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8, and 9, and what role does the program play in advancing quality education, decent work and economic growth, and innovation

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5S Brew at Kafe Kawan

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Abstract

The 5S Brew at Kafe Kawan tells the inspiring story of Wan Ali, a dedicated employee at a Japanese multinational in Malaysia, who embarked on a transformative journey in Japan. This narrative explores his discovery of the 5S concept - Seiri, Seiton, Seisō, Seiketsu, and Shitsuke - and its profound alignment with Islamic values of orderliness, cleanliness, and discipline. Upon returning to Malaysia, Wan Ali's newfound insights and unwavering dedication lead him to establish Kafe Kawan in Ipoh, Perak. The cafe becomes a symbol of quality management and ethical practice, blending 5S principles with the warmth of Malaysian hospitality and Islamic ethics. It emerges as a community beacon, illustrating the powerful impact of integrating cultural and ethical values in business, transcending cultural and industrial boundaries, and creating a thriving, meaningful enterprise.

Keywords: 5S Methodology, Islamic Ethics, Quality Management

Monologue

"As I stand on the brink of a new chapter in my life, I am thinking back on the path that brought me to this point. I spent a year in Japan, a place very different from Malaysia, and it completely changed not only how I saw the world but also how I approached my work. Beyond my wildest expectations, the peaceful, well-organized streets of Japan have taught me more than the busy streets of Kuala Lumpur. I discovered a harmony that spoke to my spirit as I meandered through Tokyo's calm coffee cafes. I found the essence of the 5S philosophy there—the precise organisation and the serene atmosphere. It resonated with me and fit in perfectly with the principles of Islam that I find so important. This was about building a sanctuary, a place where the soul might find calm, not merely about efficiency or cleanliness.

I am now imbued with a sense of purpose as I get ready to take this philosophy back to Malaysia and incorporate these ideas into the design of my very own café. More than just a coffee shop, Kafe Kawan will serve as a symbol of the knowledge gained and the gaps between civilizations. It will be a place where warmth and efficiency coexist, and each cup of coffee will remind you of a voyage across continents and cultures."

Wan Ali, a devoted employee at a prominent Japanese multinational, stood at a crossroads of fate in the heart of Malaysia, amidst the bustle of busy streets and towering skyscrapers. He had recently received the surprising news that he had been selected for a training programme in Japan for a full year. Wan Ali shared in his loved ones in a warm living room as they surrounded him, listening to his fears.

The words "I can't believe they picked me for this" came out of Wan Ali's mouth with a trace of shame. "A whole year in Japan... it's a big change."

Ahmad, his companion, chuckled loudly from across the room. "Wan, this is a chance of a lifetime! Think of what you'll learn there. And the Japanese efficiency, it's legendary!"

Wan Amirah who is Wan Ali's sister, spoke out as well, her enthusiasm evident in her dazzling eyes. "And don't forget the coffee, Abang Long! You might finally find a blend that lives up to your high standards!"

Wan Ali eventually arrived in the land of the rising sun as the days stretched into weeks. The peaceful orderliness and orderliness of Japan's streets stood in sharp contrast to the chaos of Malaysia. Adapting to new methods of work and learning new things filled Wan Ali's days. However, his true inspiration came during the peaceful hours, in the hidden coffee shops of Tokyo.

During a quiet evening at a well maintained coffee shop, Wan Ali started up a chat with the proprietor, a gracious old man who was deeply passionate about his work. "Your coffee shop... it's so organised, so peaceful," Wan Ali commented, his cup of coffee prepared to perfection.

With wrinkles in the corners of his eyes, the owner grinned. "Ah, my friend, that is the essence of our way. It's not just about serving coffee. It's about creating harmony, order – a haven for the soul."

Wan Ali felt a profound emotion stirred up by these remarks. He started to view his environment as more than just an admirable source of foreign ideals; it was a source of ideas that could be accepted and transformed. Something he had never encountered in his own country was the balanced combination of efficiency and calmness exemplified by his workplace's rigorous organisation and his disciplined yet quiet way of life.

Wan Ali came to the realisation that his year in Japan had been more than just professional training as the year drew to a close. It had been an eye-opening adventure that changed the way he saw the world and his career. He was ready to go back to Malaysia, brimming with inspiration and fresh information, and he couldn't wait to convey it in his own special way.

A 5S realisation

With his family gathered in the nice living room of their Malaysian home, Wan Ali felt a rush of enthusiasm as he started to recount his adventures in Japan. His normally serene and introspective eyes shined with the fervour that comes from being inspired and discovered.

"You know, I've learned something incredible in Japan," Wan Ali began, his voice steady but brimming with excitement. "It's called the 5S concept."

With an insatiable need for knowledge, his cousin Hafiz leaned forward, his interest aroused. "5S? What's that?"

In his detailed explanation, Wan Ali used hand gestures to arrange his ideas, much like the concept he was about to present. "It's a philosophy - Seiri, Seiton, Seisō, Seiketsu, and Shitsuke," according to Wan Ali. "Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain. It's not just about keeping things in order; it's a whole approach to efficiency, respecting your surroundings, and leading a disciplined life."

A woman of profound faith and profound wisdom, Wan Ali's aunt listened carefully and nodded in comprehension. "That sounds a lot like the principles we've been taught in our faith, doesn't it? The importance of cleanliness and orderliness in Islam."

"Indeed," Wan Ali concurred, his grin expanding. "It's fascinating how these principles align with our Islamic values. It's about respecting the environment, maintaining harmony in our spaces, whether it's a sprawling factory or a quaint coffee shop."

Another coffee lover and lifelong friend of Wan Ali, Amir, interjected with a question that had been bothering him. "So, how did this change the way you saw things there?"

As he considered the far-reaching effects of his encounters, Wan Ali halted briefly. "It changed everything," he responded, his voice betraying his awe. "In Japan, even the smallest coffee shops practise these principles. Everything has its place, each process is meticulously refined, and there's a sense of calm and order everywhere. It made me realise how even the simplest spaces can be elevated through discipline and thoughtful care."

Over the course of the evening, Wan Ali related stories about the 5S coffee shops he had visited. He went on to talk about how these encounters had struck a chord with him, describing the baristas' silent harmony with their surroundings and the calm precision with which they worked. Wan Ali saw the 5S concept as more than just a collection of rules; it was a philosophy that reflected his core beliefs and changed the way he looked at making the world a better place via more balance and efficiency.

Incredulous and proud of Wan Ali's development and the wisdom he had received from a culture so different from their own, yet fundamentally similar, his loved ones listened intently as he recounted his experiences.

Aspirations of Malaysian coffee

After ten years of dedicated devotion, Wan Ali returned to Malaysia inspired. He embarked on an entrepreneurial journey armed with the knowledge he had acquired from his time in Japan and his dogged determination. He dreamed of a one-of-a-kind cafe that would exude Islamic virtues, the welcoming spirit of Malaysia, and the 5S methodology.

Wan Ali declared, "I've made a decision," his voice calm but full of anticipation. "After all these years in Japan, I've decided to start my own venture."

Looking at him with a blend of pride and curiosity, his mother, a figure of constant support, gazed at him. "Oh? What have you planned, my son?"

With his eyes sparkling with ambition, Wan Ali leaned forward. "I'm going to open a cafe, but not just any cafe. I want to create a place that reflects everything I've learned and cherished. A cafe that embodies the 5S principles I've seen in Japan, combined with the warmth of our Malaysian hospitality and the ethical values of our Islamic faith."

An entrepreneur for most of his life, his uncle arched an eyebrow in curiosity. "That's a bold move, Wan. Blending the 5S principles in a cafe setting here in Malaysia – how do you plan to do that?"

With an unmistakable picture taking shape in his head, Wan Ali responded with assurance. "Every aspect of the cafe, from the layout to the operations, will be aligned with the 5S concept. We'll have a place for everything and everything in its place. Cleanliness and order will be our top priorities, ensuring a serene and welcoming environment for our customers."

Maya, his cousin, who is always up for exploring new ideas, joined in. "And I bet the menu will reflect our local flavours too, right?"

Wan Ali grinned and gave a playful nod. "Absolutely, Maya. We'll offer a fusion of traditional Malaysian flavours with a modern twist, all served with the highest standards of quality and care."

Wan Ali was the object of Amir's serious gaze as he reclined in his chair. "It's a great blend, Wan. The discipline and efficiency of 5S and our rich Malaysian culture. It's unique, something that will stand out."

As the discussion progressed, thoughts and ideas were passed around the group. Knowing that the path ahead would be difficult but rewarding, Wan Ali soaked up every word and nugget of wisdom. The unwavering backing of his loved ones and the advice of his acquaintances would serve as the foundation for his ambition.

Wan Ali's goal remained as strong as ever as the night came to an end. He had a vision for his café that went beyond being a mere company. It would represent cultural peace, be a hub where efficiency and friendliness intertwine, and each cup of coffee would be a reflection of a cross-cultural journey.

Standardising 5S practices

Amidst verdant scenery in Ipoh, Perak, Kafe Kawan came to life, fulfilling Wan Ali's ambition. His life's work and his beliefs came to life in this cafe, which was more than just a building. From the carefully placed furnishings to the spotless cleanliness that welcomed each guest, this establishment exuded an air of perfect organisation. Exemplifying the ideal combination of consistency and quality, the cafe's standardised procedures were followed by every aspect, even the customer service. In every area of Kafe Kawan, you could feel the soul of Shitsuke—the determination to constantly uphold these standards.

Hafiz, his cousin, exclaimed, "Look at this place, Wan!" as he marvelled at the carefully organised tables. "You've really brought a piece of Japan here with this organisation."

Wan Ali escorted them through the café with a smile on his face. "The details are crucial," he emphasised. "Every piece of furniture, every item, is placed with thought. It's Seiton - everything in its rightful place for maximum efficiency and aesthetics."

Reaching out to touch the immaculate counter, his aunt said, "And the cleanliness, it's just impeccable. It's like stepping into a different world."

"That's Seisō for you," was the response from Wan Ali. "I wanted to ensure that the cafe isn't just clean, but that it shines. It's about taking pride in our space, a principle deeply rooted in both the 5S and our Islamic values."

Their tour guide, Mr. Lim, stopped what he was doing to convey his congrats from a nearby cafe. "I've been running my cafe for years, Wan Ali, but this is something else. How do you maintain such consistency?"

Wan Ali, who was shaking Mr. Lim's hand, "Thank you, Mr. Lim. It's all about Seiketsu, standardising our processes. From how we brew our coffee to the way we serve, everything follows a standard procedure to ensure quality and consistency."

As if to convey his comprehension, Mr. Lim nodded, clearly impressed. "And the discipline to keep it all going, that's something special."

"Yes, that's Shitsuke, the discipline to sustain these standards," said Wan Ali. "It's a continuous effort, a commitment from me and my team to uphold these principles every single day."

As the night went on, loved ones mixed and mingled, relishing in Kafe Kawan's one-of-a-kind ambiance. A welcoming atmosphere was created by the combination of the sound of people talking and the smell of coffee.

Amir, his friend, remarked as he sipped his expertly prepared coffee, "You've done more than open a cafe, Wan. You've created a haven where efficiency and hospitality blend seamlessly."

As he took in the joyful expressions on his guests' faces, Wan Ali was filled with contentment. A symbol of his journey, Kafe Kawan brought together the precise organisation of Malaysian hospitality with the warmth of his faith and the 5S concept. It was more than just a dream come true; it was a reflection of his journey. The spirit of Shitsuke, the discipline to uphold these standards, was evident in every aspect of Kafe Kawan, guaranteeing that every guest would have an unforgettable experience.

Sejahtera at Cafe 5S

Despite setbacks, Wan Ali persisted in his goal of making *Sejahtera* and the 5S technique integral parts of his cafe. As the cafe was filled with the soft murmur of patrons, Wan Ali got together with a circle of friends, family, and fellow business owners to talk about his novel strategy.

A man of profound insight and knowledge, his uncle was the one who initially broke the ice. "Wan, I've seen many cafes, but Kafe Kawan feels different. Tell me more about this *Sejahtera* you speak of."

With a calm expression on his face, Wan Ali started to elaborate. "Uncle, *Sejahtera* is more than just a word for us. It's about creating a space where peace and completeness reside. It's about nurturing the '*insan kamil*' – the perfect human being – in all of us. I believe that a simple cup of coffee can be a medium for this."

Consistent cafe-goer and buddy of his, Amir, nodded in accord. "It's true. Every time I come here, there's a sense of tranquility that I don't find elsewhere. The atmosphere here is just different."

Mrs. Tan, the proprietor of a nearby bistro, leaned in, her curiosity aroused. "But how do you infuse *Sejahtera* into a cafe setting? It sounds fascinating but challenging."

Around the cafe, Wan Ali waved. "It's in everything we do, Mrs. Tan. From the way we greet our customers to how we present our coffee. Each step is done with mindfulness and respect. We believe in creating an environment where our customers can find a moment of peace in their busy lives."

He was interrupted by his inquisitive cousin Hafiz. "And combining that with 5S, it must be quite a task to balance efficiency with such a profound concept."

Wan Ali acknowledged, "Indeed, Hafiz. The 5S ensures our operations are smooth and efficient, while *Sejahtera* brings a deeper meaning to our work. We sort, straighten, shine, standardise, and sustain not just our physical space but also our approach to service and customer engagement. This harmony creates a unique experience for everyone who walks through our doors."

Conversation, like the coffee, became easier to follow as the evening progressed. Family members recounted tranquil moments they had experienced at the cafe, while business entrepreneurs spoke about how to put this principle into practice at their own cafes.

With a kind grin, Wan Ali's aunt expressed what many felt as they said their goodbyes. "Wan, you've not just opened a cafe; you've created a haven. A place where people come not just for coffee, but for a taste of *Sejahtera*. And that's truly special."

Looking around his cafe, Wan Ali had a profound feeling of contentment. With the merging of 5S principles and the essence of *Sejahtera*, Kafe Kawan became more than simply a coffee shop; it became a haven where people could escape the chaos of their lives and enjoy a cup of peace.

Cafe 5s featuring *Ulul al-albab*

The man behind this one-of-a-kind combination, Wan Ali, hosted an evening of contemplation and conversation in his café, inviting friends, family, and fellow business owners.

Wan Ali started the conversation as they sat at the rustically elegantly placed tables, enjoying the thick scented coffee that Kafe Kawan was known for. "You know, for me, combining 5S

with *Ulul al-albab* is about creating an environment that encourages thoughtfulness and reflection, leading to a sejahtera way of life."

"Wan, could you tell me more about *Ulul al-albab* and how it relates to what we've been through here at the café?" his cousin Ayesha asked, her interest piqued by the idea.

Wan Ali, looking thoughtfully at him, responded, "*Ulul al-albab* refers to those endowed with intellect and insight. It's about being mindful, always thinking, reflecting, and acting in ways that promote peace and well-being. Here, at Kafe Kawan, every cup of coffee serves as a starting point for this journey."

According to Mr. Kumar, a fellow café owner who really appreciates Wan Ali's work, "I've noticed this in your staff's approach. There's a calm, reflective quality in their service. Is this part of practicing *Ulul al-albab*?"

"Indeed," Wan Ali agreed with a nod. "We train our staff not just in the practicalities of café management but also in embodying these values. We believe that serving coffee is more than a transaction; it's an opportunity to encourage contemplation and tranquilly."

One of Wan Ali's closest friends, Amir, voiced his opinion. "Every time I come here, I feel a sense of serenity. It's like the hustle of the outside world pauses for a while. I suppose that's the sejahtera experience you aim for."

Wan Ali seemed pleased. "Precisely, Amir. The idea is to create a space where our customers can pause, reflect, and find balance in their busy lives. The 5S methodology ensures that the environment supports this – organised, clean, and efficient, allowing for a peaceful experience."

Throughout the evening, the group continued to explore how to apply these philosophical ideas to their daily work. Many of the relatives who frequented Kafe Kawan spoke about how the peaceful atmosphere had become an oasis where they could relax and think. The proprietors of other cafes thought about how they may implement comparable policies in their own businesses.

One other café owner, Mrs. Lee, put it this way: "Wan Ali, what you've created here is not just a café. It's a sanctuary for the mind and soul. You've shown us how a simple cup of coffee can be the beginning of a journey towards mindfulness and peace."

After everyone had left, it was obvious that Kafe Kawan had been more than a success story for Wan Ali's business spirit. An oasis of peace and contemplation in the middle of Ipoh, it was the product of a more profound comprehension of life, where the concepts of 5S and *Ulul al-albab* met.

Much more than just coffee scent

Wan Ali's vision and passion were on full display at Kafe Kawan in the middle of Ipoh's busy core. The neighbourhood took great pride in this one-of-a-kind enterprise, which had evolved into much more than a coffee shop. As the café hummed with the contented murmurs of its patrons, Wan Ali took a seat with a gathering of loved ones who had played a significant role in his voyage.

The discussion was started by his sister Wan Amirah, who was absolutely beaming with pride. "Wan, you've really created something special here. Kafe Kawan isn't just a café; it's a part of the community's soul now."

According to Wan Ali, who was enjoying his special coffee mix, "Thank you, Amirah. My aim was always to create more than just a café. I wanted a space that reflects our values, a place where quality, ethics, and comfort are not just words but a living reality."

A close friend of Wan Ali's, Yusuf, who had been there from the start, chimed in, saying, "And you've done it brilliantly, brother. The way you've integrated the 5S principles with our Islamic teachings, it's remarkable. There's a sense of discipline and peace here that's hard to find elsewhere."

Nodding in agreement was Wan Ali's uncle, who had served as his tutor. "Your dedication to ethical practices, especially in today's fast-paced business world, is commendable. It's not just about making profits; you've shown that a business can thrive on principles and values."

Overhearing the discussion, a cluster of frequent customers joined in. Mrs. Siti, an esteemed member of the community, was one of them who spoke up. "We come here not just for the coffee, which is excellent, by the way, but for the experience. The sense of joy, safety, and belonging you've created here is something we all cherish."

Mrs. Lim, her friend, added, "Yes, and it's so heartening to see a place that upholds such strong ethical practices. It sets an example for other businesses in our community."

From the beginning of Kafe Kawan's history to plans for the future, the talk flowed naturally as the night progressed. Many people spoke about how Wan Ali's story had touched their life, whether it was in their careers or in their personal pursuits.

Reflecting on the journey, Wan Ali felt a profound sense of fulfilment. "When I started Kafe Kawan, I hoped to create a place that embodied the principles I believe in. Seeing how it has positively impacted our community and inspired others, it makes all the challenges worthwhile."

Everyone left agreeing that Kafe Kawan was more than just a café. It stood out as an exemplar of a place that not only embraced but also cherished conventional management principles, cultural diversity, and religious beliefs. The Ipoh community held Wan Ali's legacy in high esteem because of the impact he had on their lives.

Kafe Kawan's enduring impact

Situated in the very centre of Ipoh, Kafe Kawan has become an illuminating example of the extraordinary merging of cultural and ethical principles in business. Wan Ali reflected on this trip with a group of aspiring entrepreneurs who had sought his guidance on a sunny afternoon as the café was bustling with its typical mix of locals and visitors.

"You can see," Wan Ali said, waving around the busy café, "that Kafe Kawan is more than just a coffee shop. It exemplifies the profound impact that traditional values and moral principles can have on a company."

"How did you manage to blend these aspects so seamlessly, Wan Ali?" one of the young entrepreneurs inquired, clearly captivated.

Wan Ali grinned as he thought back on his time spent training in Japan. "It all started when I was a trainee in Japan. I was initially hesitant, out of my comfort zone. But there, I learned about the 5S principles, which are universal. They're not confined to any one culture or industry. I realised these principles could be the foundation of something much larger."

As Mr. Tan, a local businessman who had known Wan Ali from the beginning of Kafe Kawan, put it, "And you've woven these principles with the teachings of Islam beautifully. The sense of community and ethical responsibility here is palpable."

Wan Ali acknowledged, "Exactly, Mr. Tan. The ethical teachings of Islam, emphasising honesty, quality, and community welfare, align perfectly with 5S. Together, they create an environment that's not just about transactions but about building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging."

"So, it's not just about the coffee?" asked a woman with entrepreneurial aspirations.

Wan Ali said, "The coffee is important, of course. But it's more about the experience we provide. Here, every cup of coffee serves as a bridge connecting people, cultures, and values. We're not just a café; we're a community space where people come to find a sense of connection and peace."

With the discussion ending the group was filled with wonder and motivation. Thanks to Wan Ali's foresight and hard work, Kafe Kawan had become an example of the great possibilities of combining cultural and religious values with traditional management methods. It was a model of how a company could go beyond making a profit and leave a lasting impact on the people it served.

Epilogue

Today, Kafe Kawan stands tall in Ipoh, serving as a reminder of the trip that I, Wan Ali, have made. Lessons learnt from the streets of Malaysia to the heart of Japan have been realised in this small café. A singular oasis has been formed by the merging of Islamic norms and the rich tapestry of Malaysian hospitality with the 5S principles. Customers find an experience—a break from the hectic pace of their lives—here, in addition to a cup of coffee.

Observing customers from diverse backgrounds coming and going, I observe more than simply the prosperity of a company. I envision a community emerging, a place where individuals can stop, think, and get together. The values I took up and modified have inspired people to pursue their personal and professional goals even outside of Kafe Kawan.

Kafe Kawan is now an integral part of the community and a symbol of the success that can be achieved in business when ethical and cultural values are combined. The voyage that started with a cautious step into the unknown has resulted in a legacy that goes beyond coffee smells. It is a legacy of moral behaviour and cultural harmony as well as evidence of the long-lasting effects of uniting people from different backgrounds by promoting common ideals.

Discussion Questions

1. How can the principles of 5S be adapted to various business environments, and what challenges might arise during this adaptation?
2. In what ways do cultural and religious values impact business ethics and management practices, and how can they contribute to sustainable business models?
3. How can businesses balance the need for efficiency and organization with the goal of creating a welcoming and culturally rich customer experience?

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***Sejahtera Ulu al-albab* with 5S at Senyum Printing Enterprise**

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Abstract

Senyum Printing Enterprise, led by Encik Asri, exemplifies the transformative power of the 5S methodology in lean management. Over two decades, Senyum evolved from traditional offset printing to a digital-focused approach, adapting to changing technologies and consumer demands. Encik Asri's leadership embraced the 5S principles (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain), fostering an environment of efficiency, quality, and continuous improvement. This case study explores how Senyum balanced traditional and digital printing methods, adopted eco-friendly practices, faced online competition, and diversified its services. Encik Asri's approach not only ensured business resilience during economic fluctuations but also instilled a culture of '*sejahtera ulu al-albab*'—a state of well-being and wisdom, reflecting a holistic approach to business and personal growth.

Keywords: 5S Methodology, Digital Transformation, Sustainable Printing.

Encik Asri, owner of Senyum Printing Services, remembers that a friend from college told him to apply "*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*" in his company. He told his college friend Affendi, who also ran a small business selling frozen food, how he felt.

"Affendi, do you remember Yahya?"

"Indeed, he has become an important figure in Islamic finance. He runs his own business and does community work. What do you know about him?"

"I still think about what he said when he told me to run my business with "*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*."

"*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*"?

"Have you explored it with Yahya?"

"Yes, he said that "*Sejahtera*" in Malay means "peace and wealth" and "*Ulu al-albab*" in Arabic means smart and wise people."

"Now I get it. Yahya wanted you and your company to aim for more than just success. He wanted you and your company to aim for wisdom and understanding as well."

"Oh, yes! The key is to make these ideas part of the way my company works. Choosing carefully means not only getting the most money possible, but also helping our community grow intellectually and emotionally."

Encik Asri often thinks about what the words really mean, even though they are common, and people use them every day. He really connects with the term "*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*." This beautiful mix of Malay and Arabic has a deep message. Malay, which is the original language of Malaysia, says "*Sejahtera*" which means peace, wealth, and health. It seemed to Encik Asri like it was more than just a word. When people meet each other, they say "*Salam Sejahtera*" disseminate peace and goodwill.

Next, is "*Ulu al-albab*," an important Arabic phrase that his friend taught him and that he loved. It comes from the lessons in the Quran. Intellectuals and people with deep understanding are people who seek knowledge and have deep insight, especially into things that affect the mind and spirit.

When two thoughts are put together, "*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*" means something different. It's not just a desire for money; it's an understanding of how important knowledge and understanding are to real happiness and health. This statement can serve as a guide in the business, which involves getting thoughts and information out there through printed materials. It is a lesson that getting rich isn't the only way to live a good life; people also need to improve their thinking and be smart.

As a result of the strong cultural ties between Malay and Arabic traditions, this phrase has a significant value. For the good of everyone, it tells us to make the worlds of religion and education places that value information and wisdom. Encik Asri's heartfelt goal to support these ideas and make sure that all printed materials send messages of peace, acceptance, and

success. "*Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*" is all about wanting to be smart, know a lot, and be successful in every way.

In the heart of *Sejahtera Ulu al-albab*, a transformation unfolds at Senyum Printing Enterprise, guided by the visionary Encik Asri. His journey through the 5S methodology of lean management is not just a tale of business reformation, but a narrative of personal and community evolution.

Senyum Printing Enterprise, a seasoned player in the printing industry with a history spanning two decades, presents a fascinating case study of adaptation and resilience in a rapidly evolving sector. In its early years, Senyum Printing relied heavily on offset printing, the gold standard for high-quality prints. However, the digital revolution transformed the landscape.

The introduction of digital printing technologies marked a pivotal moment for Senyum. They embraced these changes, investing in new machinery and training. This shift enabled them to offer faster turnaround times, cost-effective solutions for smaller print runs, and personalized printing options, keeping them in step with the market's pulse.

The rise of digital media reshaped customer expectations and demands. Senyum noticed a growing preference for digital formats, driven by convenience and environmental concerns. Despite this shift, the company recognized the enduring demand for traditional printed materials such as brochures and business cards. Striking a balance, Senyum continued to offer high-quality printed materials while adapting to digital trends, ensuring it catered a diverse client base.

The demand for personalized and customized printing services surged with the advent of digital printing. Senyum adapted to meet these demands, offering unique designs and on-demand printing. Its ability to handle a wide range of custom orders set them apart in a competitive market. As environmental sustainability became a significant concern among consumers, Senyum took proactive steps. It incorporated eco-friendly practices like using recycled paper and soy-based inks, reducing its ecological footprint. This not only aligned with their corporate responsibility goals but also attracted environmentally conscious customers.

The emergence of online printing services posed a new challenge. To compete with the convenience and pricing offered by these platforms, Senyum focused on delivering superior quality, personalized customer service, and unique product offerings, differentiating themselves from online competitors. Understanding the importance of digital marketing and social media presence, Senyum evolved its marketing strategies. It developed a robust online presence and explored online ordering options, recognizing the need to adapt to the changing landscape of customer engagement and retention.

To remain relevant and create additional revenue streams, Senyum diversified its services beyond traditional printing. It expanded into graphic design, mailing services, and even digital marketing solutions, catering to a broader range of customer needs and staying ahead of industry trends. Navigating through economic ups and downs, Senyum faced challenges as businesses often cut back on marketing and printing expenses during economic downturns. It adjusted its strategies, focusing on cost-effective solutions and diversifying its client base to maintain profitability in tough times.

Through these adaptive strategies and a keen understanding of industry dynamics, Senyum Printing Enterprise not only survived but thrived in a landscape marked by constant change, securing its place as a respected and innovative leader in the printing industry. In a lively gathering of friends, relatives, and printing business enthusiasts, Encik Asri, the visionary behind Senyum Printing Enterprise, shared insights into his business's journey and the implementation of 5S practices, along with the concept of '*sejahtera ulu al-albab*'—a state of well-being and wisdom.

Encik Asri acknowledged technological advancements: "When we started, offset printing was our backbone. But with the digital revolution, we had to adapt. We invested in new technologies, not just to stay current, but to offer something more to our clients. Faster turnaround times, cost-efficiency, especially for small jobs, and personalized printing options. It was a leap of faith, but absolutely necessary."

Encik Asri added: "In fact, offset printing was more than a method; it was our identity. However, the digital revolution wasn't just a wave; it was a tsunami of change. We had to ride it. Investing in new digital technologies was not merely about keeping up. It was about offering enhanced services—faster, more efficient, and tailored to the modern client's needs. It was a leap into the unknown, but stagnation wasn't an option."

He added about customer preferences: "But with everything going digital, wasn't it risky to continue with traditional printing methods?" Encik Asri nodded, "Indeed, the digital shift changed many preferences. Yet, we noticed that high-quality printed materials still had a demand. It was all about balance—embracing digital trends while continuing to offer traditional services. This flexibility is crucial in our line of work."

He continued: "The digital era posed a significant question: Should we abandon traditional printing? The answer wasn't straightforward. Despite the digital inclination, there was a clear demand for high-quality printed materials. Our response was to strike a balance. We embraced digital trends, but without discarding our roots in traditional printing. This adaptability has been crucial in catering to a diverse clientele."

Pertaining to customization and personalization, Encik Asri said: "With the rise of digital printing, we focused on personalization. Our clients wanted unique designs, short-run prints. It's about understanding and responding to specific needs. This approach set us apart in the market." Encik Asri added: "The digital age brought a new customer expectation: customization. It's no longer about bulk and uniformity. Our clients seek unique designs, limited runs, and prints that tell a story. We adapted by focusing heavily on personalization, which has become a cornerstone of our business model. This shift has not only set us apart but also forged deeper connections with our clients."

At the same time Encik Asri emphasised eco-friendly practices: "It was a significant shift. We started using recycled paper, soy-based inks. It wasn't just about reducing our ecological footprint; it resonated with our responsibility towards society and attracted customers who valued sustainability." He explained: "Adopting eco-friendly practices was more than a business decision; it was a moral imperative. Using recycled paper and soy-based inks was a start. We aimed to reduce our ecological impact and align our operations with a broader societal responsibility. This approach resonated well with our environmentally conscious clientele, further enhancing our brand's reputation."

In facing online competition, Encik Asri said: "That's where superior quality, personalized service, and unique offerings come in. Online platforms offer convenience, but we provide something more personal, something more tangible." He added: "Digital platforms have reshaped the competitive landscape. They offer convenience and aggressive pricing. However, we focused on what they couldn't—superior quality, personalized service, and unique product offerings. We provide experiences, not just services."

Encik Asri emphasised the evolving marketing approach: "Extremely crucial. We developed an online presence, embraced digital marketing, and social media. It was about staying relevant and connected with our clients." He said: "Adapting our marketing strategy was vital. We had to be where our clients were—online. Developing a strong online presence, leveraging digital marketing, and engaging through social media became pivotal. It's about building relationships, not just transactions."

Also on diversifying services: "Yes, it was. We expanded into graphic design, mailing services, even digital marketing solutions. It's about offering a comprehensive package to our clients." He explained: "Expanding our services to include graphic design, mailing solutions, and digital marketing was a strategic move. It allowed us to offer a comprehensive package, addressing the evolving needs of our clients."

In terms of handling the economic fluctuations, Encik Asri said: "By being agile. We focused on cost-effective solutions and diversified our client base. It's all about adapting to the market's needs while staying true to our core values." He stressed this: "The key to navigating economic fluctuations has been agility. Focusing on cost-effective solutions and diversifying our client base helped us stay resilient. It's a delicate balance of adapting to market needs while staying true to our core values."

Throughout the conversation, Encik Asri emphasized the importance of the 5S methodology—Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain—in creating an efficient, productive work environment. He linked these practices to '*sejahtera ulu al-albab*', highlighting how achieving a state of wisdom and well-being was integral to navigating the challenges and changes in the industry.

His insights offered a unique perspective, blending traditional business acumen with a holistic approach to personal and professional growth. "Implementing the 5S methodology was transformative. It streamlined our operations, creating an efficient, productive work environment. But more importantly, it aligned with the concept of '*sejahtera ulu al-albab*'—achieving a state of wisdom and well-being. This holistic approach has been pivotal in navigating the industry's challenges and changes."

Lean quality management through 5S methodology

At Senyum Printing, the journey began with Seiri, the art of sorting. Picture a designated area marked by red, known as the 'red tag area', a temporary home for items awaiting removal. The goal was simple yet profound: reduce clutter, enhance safety, and increase operational efficiency. Every item was scrutinized, with only the essential retained. This transformative step cleared not just the physical space but also the mental clutter, fostering a more focused and efficient work environment.

Next came Seiton, setting everything in its rightful place. It's akin to an orchestra where every instrument has its specific position for optimal performance. The layout of Senyum Printing was reimagined, tools and equipment rearranged for ease of access and logical workflow. This reordering was not just about efficiency; it was about creating a rhythm in the workplace, where every movement was smooth, and every tool was just an arm's length away.

The third phase, Seiso, brought a ritualistic approach to cleanliness. It was not just about keeping the workplace tidy; it was a daily commitment to excellence. Every corner of the enterprise gleamed, reflecting the pride of the workers. This phase went beyond mere cleaning; it was a thorough inspection of the workplace and equipment, ensuring everything functioned flawlessly, thereby preventing errors, and enhancing safety.

With Seiketsu, Senyum Printing standardized its processes. It was about creating a blueprint for maintaining the achieved order and cleanliness. Visual guides, schedules, and checklists became part of the daily routine, ingraining the practices of Seiri, Seiton, and Seiso into the company's DNA. This standardization was the foundation upon which continuous improvement could be built.

Finally, Shitsuke, the phase of self-discipline, cemented the 5S methodology into the culture of Senyum Printing. It was no longer about following rules; it had become a part of who they were. Regular audits, continuous training, and encouraging worker input for improvements made the 5S approach a living, breathing aspect of their workday.

The awakening of seiri at a local entrepreneur meetup

Encik Asri stood among his entrepreneurial peers, his eyes sparkling with the fire of innovation. He was sharing his team's journey through the principles of Seiri, the sorting phase of the Japanese 5S methodology, a technique aimed at workplace organization and efficiency. "When we embraced Seiri, it wasn't merely about decluttering," he shared, his voice resonating with a blend of passion and wisdom. "It was a profound journey to redefine our priorities, to understand what truly matters in our workflow."

A fellow entrepreneur, intrigued by Asri's enthusiasm, leaned in. "How did your team react to this change? It sounds like a significant shift in mindset," she asked, her curiosity piqued.

Shukri, one of Asri's team members, who had accompanied him, chimed in. "Change breeds resistance," he admitted, his tone reflective. "Initially, there was skepticism. Many wondered if it was worth the effort. But as we progressed, as the team witnessed the tangible benefits - the saved time, the safer, more efficient work environment - their doubts turned to endorsement. They wholeheartedly embraced the change."

Another entrepreneur, a young man with an analytical gaze, raised a question. "Did you face any particular challenges during the implementation? How did you overcome them?" he inquired.

Asri nodded, acknowledging the valid concern. "Absolutely, challenges were part of the journey. The biggest one was altering long-standing habits. It's not easy to change behaviors that have been ingrained over years. We overcame this by starting small, focusing on one area at a time, and celebrating small victories. This approach helped in building momentum and enthusiasm for the larger goal."

Shukri added, "Encik Asri also ensured constant communication. He held regular meetings to discuss progress, address concerns, and gather feedback. This open dialogue fostered a sense of ownership among us. We felt involved and valued in the process."

A woman from the group, who had been listening intently, shared her perspective. "What you've achieved is remarkable. It's not just about organizing a physical space, but also about cultivating a mindset of continuous improvement."

Asri smiled, grateful for the acknowledgment. "Indeed, it's a transformative journey. Beyond the immediate benefits, what we've really gained is a culture of efficiency and a mindset geared towards constant improvement. This journey with Seiri is just the beginning."

The conversation sparked ideas and inspired thoughts among the entrepreneurs. As the discussion continued, it was evident that Encik Asri and his team's experience had not only transformed their own workspace but also ignited a flame of inspiration among his peers.

Harmony of seiton at a family gathering

At a bustling family gathering, the air was filled with the aroma of traditional dishes and the sound of lively conversations. Encik Asri, the owner of Senyum Enterprise, was surrounded by his relatives, each curious about the recent transformations at his printing business.

A cousin, who had always taken an interest in Asri's entrepreneurial endeavors, quizzed him about the significant changes he'd heard about. "I've been hearing about some big shake-ups at Senyum. What's going on there?"

With a serene smile that seemed to reflect an inner peace, Encik Asri responded, "Ah, you're referring to our adoption of Seiton, the second phase of the 5S methodology. It's the art of setting everything in order, but for us, it transcended mere efficiency."

His aunt, intrigued, leaned in. "How so? What does that mean for your business?"

"It's more than just a business practice," Asri explained. "It brought a harmonious rhythm to our workspace. Imagine every tool, every individual, finding their perfect place and purpose. It's like a well-orchestrated symphony where each element complements the other, creating a seamless flow."

His nephew, a college student studying business, was fascinated. "But how did you implement such a concept in a practical, everyday setting?" Encik Asri nodded, acknowledging the valid question. "It wasn't easy at first. We started by identifying and categorizing every item in our workspace. Then, we designated specific places for them, optimizing the layout for efficiency. But the most crucial part was involving every team member in the process, making sure they understood the value of Seiton and embraced it as part of our culture."

Syukur, Encik Asri's business partner and a distant relative, who had joined the gathering, added, "Encik Asri's leadership was pivotal. He led by example, showing us the importance of order and discipline, not just in our physical space but in our thoughts and actions too."

A younger cousin, who aspired to start her own business, asked, "Has this change affected your personal life in any way?" Encik Asri's eyes twinkled with a mixture of pride and humility. "Indeed, it has. One of the principles of Seiton, i.e., the discipline and order, has

seeped into my personal life as well. There's a newfound balance and clarity that I experience daily. It's like I'm not just organizing my workspace, but also aligning my life's goals and priorities."

The family listened, captivated by the evident harmony that Seiton brought not just to Senyum Printing, but to Encik Asri's life. His journey resonated with many at the table, inspiring thoughts of order and harmony in their own lives and workspaces. As the conversation continued, it was clear that Encik Asri's experience with Seiton had sparked a flame of curiosity and inspiration within his family, blending the realms of business efficiency with personal well-being.

The ritual of seiso during a client meeting

Encik Asri was seated opposite Encik Abdul Rahman, a client who had been with Senyum Printing Services for a very long time, in the office of the company. The customer, who was really pleased by the spotless atmosphere of the printing shop, was unable to refrain from commenting on it.

As Encik Abdul Rahman surveyed the perfectly maintained space, he made the following remark: "Encik Asri, each time I come to visit, I am amazed by how absolutely spotless your facility is."

When Encik Asri overheard the compliment, he smiled and acknowledged it. I am grateful to you, Encik Abdul Rahman. At Senyum Printing, we adhere to the Seiso phase in a very stringent manner because it is an essential component of our method of conducting business. There is more to it than just a superficial level of cleanliness, it is about maintaining cleanliness.

The impressed Encik Abdul Rahman leaned forward in his chair. "Could you explain on that, Encik Asri?"

As Encik Asri began, "Of course," he said. "It is the Seiso phase that we begin our day with each morning. To do this, we will be cleaning our entire equipment in a meticulous manner. On the other hand, cleaning is only one aspect of the process; there is also a comprehensive inspection. During the process of cleaning our digital printers, for instance, our crew makes sure to carefully examine them for any indications of wear and tear or ink spilling. Because of this, we can identify any possible problems before they become urgent."

In response, Encik Abdul Rahman remarked, "That seems to be quite comprehensive."

"It is," Encik Asri concurred with the statement. "Consider, for example, the space where we store our paper. Making sure that it is spotless always is essential to the quality of our prints. Damage to the paper stock might be caused by dust or moisture. Consequently, throughout the Seiso phase of our operation, we not only clean, but we also keep a close eye on the current humidity and temperature levels."

Undoubtedly impressed, Encik Abdul Rahman nodded his head. "And how does this affect your operations?"

The explanation provided by Encik Asri was as follows: "This routine cleaning helps us maintain a highly efficient workflow." While we are in the process of organising our ink

supplies during Seiso, for example, we also examine the levels of our inventory. Especially during huge print runs, it guarantees that we will never be without the colours that are necessary. Furthermore, it instills a feeling of discipline and attention to detail in our staff, which is reflected in the quality of the printing services that we provide.

“To be honest, Encik Asri, I must state that your dedication to the Seiso phase is quite extraordinary. Clearly pleased by the exacting standards that were an essential component of Senyum's corporate philosophy,” responded Encik Abdul Rahman. In addition, he remarked, “It is not surprising that the quality of your work is consistently of the highest possible standard.”

As a result of the appreciation of their efforts, Encik Asri smiled, expressing his satisfaction. “I am grateful to you, Encik Abdul Rahman. Our company, Senyum Printing, is committed to achieving excellence in every facet of our work. This commitment includes the Seiso phase, which is simply one component of it.”

Blueprint of seiketsu at a supplier conference

At the annual supplier meeting, which was a lively event that brought together vendors from across the region, Encik Asri was present with a group of suppliers. Among them was Mr. Lee, a paper supplier who had been with Senyum Printing Services for a very long time. He couldn't help but note the metamorphosis that had taken place.

While Mr. Lee was sipping his coffee, he made a statement to the effect of “Encik Asri, your company's operations have become exceedingly systematic in recent times.” “It's quite impressive how efficient your ordering and delivery processes have become.”

Having a knowing smile on his face, Encik Asri shook his head in accord. Oh, that's all because of Seiketsu, which is our dedication to become more standardised in our procedures. In addition to being a routine, it serves as a beacon of direction for us.

Encik Asri became the focus of attention of a few additional vendors who had overheard the talk and were curious about the strategy that was being taken.

The next thing that Encik Asri said was, “Seiketsu is about creating workflows that are both predictable and efficient. As an illustration, we have standardised the system that we use to process orders. At this point, each and every order, regardless of its size, is subjected to the same stringent checks, which helps to maintain consistency and minimise errors.”

In the intervening moment, Mr. Lee said, “That must have necessitated some significant adjustments to your operations.”

“Yes, indeed,” Encik Asri acknowledged. “I believe,” He explained: “Consider, for example, the printing schedule that we have. Once upon a time, we conducted our business on a first-come, first-served basis; nevertheless, this approach resulted in inefficiency and delays. The implementation of a fixed scheduling system has been accomplished with Seiketsu. We ensure that we fulfil deadlines without sacrificing quality by planning and carrying out jobs in accordance with the level of urgency and complexity to which they are assigned.”

Cik Siti continued, "I've noticed that your orders are now more consistent in terms of quantity and frequency." Cik Siti, another vendor who provided inks, was the one who made the observation. We were able to better plan our output with its assistance.

The explanation that Encik Asri provided was, "That is another aspect of Seiketsu." Encik Asri explained: "We examine the trends of our usage and then adjust our ordering procedure to reflect the findings of that analysis. It contributes to the maintenance of ideal inventory levels and results in a reduction in waste."

The words that he spoke struck a chord with the sellers, many of them were beginning to recognise the advantages of this methodical approach in their dealings with Senyum Printing.

Encik Asri concluded that the implementation of Seiketsu had not only caused a transformation in our internal operations, but it had also improved our collaborations with each and every one of you, our esteemed partners. To create a peaceful and efficient environment that is to everyone's benefit, this can be accomplished.

What Encik Asri had to say about the significant influence that Seiketsu had on the room reverberated throughout space. In recognition of the ripple effect that such activities have on the wider industrial network, the suppliers shared looks of understanding and admiration with one another.

Culture of shitsuke at an industry networking event

Encik Asri, who runs Senyum Printing Services, became acquainted with others his age while attending a lively industry networking event. The event was attended by prominent figures and pioneers in the printing industry. During a chat, a friend named Mrs. Tan, who was the proprietor of a competitive printing company, posed an issue that had been on the minds of many people.

"Encik Asri, it must be difficult for you to keep up with the high standards that you strive to achieve at Senyum Printing. What steps may be taken to ensure sustained viability over the long term? Clearly displaying her interest, she inquired.

"Our success in maintaining these standards lies in Shitsuke, which is the discipline to maintain," Encik Asri responded with a demeanour that was composed and full of self-assurance. It is the foundation upon which our activities are built.

A few of the other members of the group, including Mrs. Tan, bowed their heads in eagerness to learn more about this strategy.

Encik Asri continued by saying, "Shitsuke is not just a practice; it is about deeply embedding these principles into the culture of our company." He explained: "As an illustration, we carry out routine audits of each one of our procedures. The purpose of this is not just to ensure compliance, but also to locate areas that could use some improvement."

Mr. Kumar, a young entrepreneur who was a part of the group, inquired, "How do you manage to keep your staff aligned with these high standards?"

In response, Encik Asri said, "That is a very interesting question." He explained: "Training that is ongoing is essential. Our employees receive frequent training and workshops thanks to

the investments we make in them. Enhancing one's skills is only one aspect of the process; equally important is cultivating a mindset that places a premium on quality, efficiency, and consistency.”

Mrs. Tan continued by saying, "So it's a continuous cycle of improvement and learning," while nodding her head in complete comprehension.

"Exactly," Encik Asri concurred with the statement. “Aside from that, it goes beyond only training. Providing input on our procedures is something that we urge our team to do. The adoption of this all-encompassing strategy guarantees that every single person is committed to upholding our rigorous standards. We believe that Shitsuke is about taking collective responsibility and taking pride in the work that we do.”

The colleagues that were surrounding him listened attentively, recognising the extent of the shift that Shitsuke had facilitated at Senyum Printing thanks to his efforts. The explanation provided by Encik Asri shed light on the significance of adopting a method that is not only disciplined but also inclusive and constantly changing in order to keep corporate standards at a high level.

"Shitsuke is more than a discipline; it's a way of life at Senyum Printing," Encik Asri said on the conclusion. It motivates us to not only keep our standards at the same level but also to raise them on a consistent basis, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of the industry.

His words struck a chord with the gathering, creating an indelible impression of the precise and environmentally conscious approach that had become synonymous with Senyum Printing Services.

Encik Asri, through these varied interactions, personified the essence of the 5S methodology. Each conversation, whether with friends, relatives, customers, or industry peers, mirrored a facet of the 5S phases, showcasing the profound impact of this journey. Senyum Printing Enterprise, under Encik Asri's stewardship, became more than a business; it evolved into a beacon of continuous improvement and operational excellence, a testament to the transformative power of lean quality management.

Senyum Printing Enterprise became more than just a printing business; it became a symbol of efficiency, quality, and continuous improvement. The 5S methodology was not just implemented; it was embraced, creating a workplace that was not only productive but also a joy to work in. This is the essence of lean quality management – a journey that transforms workplaces and the people within them.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the implementation of the 5S methodology contribute to Senyum Printing's ability to adapt to the digital revolution in the printing industry?
2. What strategies did Senyum Printing employ to balance traditional printing methods with the rising demand for digital formats and customization?
3. In what ways did Senyum Printing's commitment to environmental sustainability influence its business practices and customer base?

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About the Journal

The IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management is an internationally refereed journal published twice yearly (January & August) by the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.

The journal promotes case studies in the field of management. However, the editorial committee may receive a case study that is superficially related to “management” (MG), whereas its contents are directly related to another discipline. For example, a case study on “Financial Management” (FM). It is more linked to finance than management because the case contains a core issue on finance or financial management, not management. The word “management” in FM does not change the FM discipline to MG. FM is not MG, and vice versa but the two disciplines can be inter-related. To make the FM case fit the journal, the case author must reshape it towards “management” although the core issue of finance or FM remains.

The same explanation can be offered, for instance to “Marketing” or “Marketing Management” (MM). The word “management” in MM does not change the discipline of MM to MG. To make the MM case fit the journal, the case author must reshape it towards “management” although the core issue of marketing or MM remains.

Case studies provide certain educational objectives. While academic papers are more inclined towards enhancing knowledge and understanding in the areas, case studies inculcate applied-based learning and the acquisition of (problem-solving and decision-making) skills. In management, textbooks normally publish decision-making or problem-solving case studies.

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There are three files:

1. Main case file WITHOUT author details. The case ends with Discussion questions,
2. Teaching notes which comprises the answer to the Discussion questions, and
3. Title page which consists of the Title of the case, names, and affiliations of all the authors and the abstract of the case.

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The text is DOUBLE-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics, rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.

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Cases submitted for review must be written in English language (UK) and typed in double-space or single-space using Times Roman 12-point font to be printed on A4 size paper with 1-inch margin on all sides. Cases should be described in past tense. The journal prefers short and medium length cases of not exceeding 6,000 words.

Three files should be uploaded. The first file will contain the case which ends with Discussion questions. This file should be anonymous. The second file will contain the teaching notes. Without teaching notes, the case will not be processed, and authors will be notified accordingly. The teaching notes should include the following:

- a) The learning objectives addressed in the case.
- b) The relevant management issue observed in the case.
- c) Linkages with available literature on the issues highlighted in the case.
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