

Student Business Assistance At Al Baqalal Faculty Of Islamic Studies (FPI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

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Abstract.

This community service article delves into the entrepreneurial journey of self-employed students at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FPI) within Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. These students have established a business called Al Baqalal, a convenience center catering to the culinary needs of the student community. The article highlights the community service goals aimed at enhancing the students' entrepreneurship skills and preparing them for post-graduation entrepreneurial endeavors. The report covers Al Baqalal's profile, business operations, workforce structure, and procurement schemes. It also discusses the methodology employed in the community service program, utilizing the Service Learning (SL) method. Results and discussions showcase the positive impact of mentoring on entrepreneurial students, including improvements in business foundations, marketing, financial management, and operations. The article concludes by emphasizing the significance of ongoing high-quality training, expanding the program, fostering external collaborations, conducting regular evaluations, and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among students to further enhance the community service program's effectiveness.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial students, Al Baqalal, Community Service, Service Learning Method, and Business Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FPI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, a group of passionate students have embarked on a journey that not only appreciates the spirit of entrepreneurship but is also proof of the power of community involvement. This article explores the world of self-employed students and their business Al Baqalal, a convenience center that meets the culinary needs of the student community. Al Baqalal is a story of ambition, service, guidance, and determination that not only talks about profits, but also values that uphold social goals that have been instilled in them since they were students (Fayolle, A., & Gailly, B. (2015). Their readiness to grow and develop is the reason why the Master of Management lecturers at Syiah Kuala University (USK) have made them the target of international community service activities in 2023.

Community Service Goals

This community service aims to empower students at FPI, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, who run businesses in Al Baqalal. The main goal is to improve their skills in entrepreneurship and business development (Reinders, HS, & Ward, RA 2001). Apart from that, this program aims to help them understand the practical aspects of running a business and serving the culinary needs of the student community on campus. This community service also aims to develop their entrepreneurial abilities so they can apply them after they graduate from university (Bringle, RG, & Hatcher, JA 1996).

Scope of Report

This report will discuss various aspects related to the community service program in the form of mentoring carried out by FEB USK lecturers for entrepreneurial students at FPI, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, with a focus on their businesses in Al Baqalal. The scope of the report includes Al Baqalal's profile, business schemes, work schedules, and employee payment schemes. The methodology used in community service programs, especially the application of the Service Learning (SL) method. Results and

discussion of the community service program, including the focus on mentoring and discussion of key aspects that have been taught to entrepreneurial students. Then it ends with conclusions and recommendations based on the results of this community service program. This report will provide in-depth insight into the journey and experiences of students at Al Baqalal as well as the efforts made to improve their entrepreneurial skills and develop their businesses.

Al Baqalal Profiles

History and Beginnings of Business

Al Baqalal is not just a food outlet, but also a reflection of the perseverance, determination, and creativity of students at FPI. The doors open at 9.00 am and close at 5.00 pm, providing food for the university community throughout the day. The workforce behind Al Baqalal works in shifts, with each student dedicating four hours of their day. They are paid a wage of RM 3 per hour for their hard work. While these wages may seem low compared to the market standard of RM 8 per hour, it is important to recognize that this venture is not just about financial gain. Al Baqalal represents a commitment to student welfare and the development of an entrepreneurial spirit among others.

Organizational Structure and Work Shifts

Al Baqalal's organizational structure reflects the strong spirit of cooperation and responsibility among students at FPI. They work in four-hour shifts, ensuring smooth daily operations. This organization is based on democratic principles, where each member plays an active role in decision-making and carrying out tasks.

Worker Salaries and Rates

The wages given to students working at Al Baqalal reflect their hard work spirit and commitment to this business. Although the hourly rate of RM 3 is lower than that of market workers, it reflects a genuine intention to serve the student community at an affordable price. Such wages may include not only financial compensation but also the satisfaction of providing service to fellow students.

Procurement Scheme

Al Baqalal F&B products adopt two food and beverage (F&B) product procurement schemes. The first scheme is 'Tip Sell', where the supplier delivers food in the morning and collects the proceeds in the afternoon after Al Baqalal deducts its commission. The scheme ensures a supply of fresh food and strengthens relationships between self-employed students and their suppliers. The second scheme is 'Buy Disconnect', which involves the direct purchase of the product. In this scheme, Al Baqalal purchases products directly, allowing them to have more control over inventory and ensuring supplies remain consistent. This approach reflects the flexibility and strategic thinking of the Al Baqalal team in utilizing various approaches based on their business needs (Monczka, RM, Handfield, RB, Giunipero, LC, & Patterson, JL 2016).

II. METHOD

This program adopts the Service Learning (SL) method. Service Learning is a learning method that emphasizes practical aspects by referring to the concept of Experience-Based Learning (Eyler, J., & Giles, DE (1999). Implementing a program that teaches entrepreneurship using the Service Learning (SL) method involves a combination of community service and experiential learning practical tools to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to manage their businesses effectively (Bringle, RG, & Hatcher, JA (2002).

The following are the steps taken in carrying out a community service program using the Service Learning (SL) method.

- Identifying the Needs of Entrepreneurial Students.

This activity begins by identifying the needs or challenges of Entrepreneurial Students that are related to entrepreneurship and can be overcome through this mentoring program. Including promoting entrepreneurship, and addressing specific challenges faced by target beneficiaries.



Fig 1. Service Learning Model

- Set Program Goals.

Determine clear and measurable program objectives. What specific learning outcomes do you want students to achieve? What impact do you hope to have on society?

- Training for Students.

Provide students with initial training in the basics of entrepreneurship, such as business planning, marketing, financial management, and the legal aspects of running a business. This training can be delivered through lectures, workshops, and online resources.

- Community Service Activities through accompaniment

Assistance to students in preparing and developing marketing developments, providing financial analysis and budget planning assistance, assisting in fulfilling legal and documentation requirements, and organizing workshops and training sessions for prospective entrepreneurs

- Evaluation and Assessment.

Continuously assess the program's impact on students and the community. Gather feedback from students, mentors, and involved businesses to make improvements. Provide regular feedback to students about their projects, and encourage them to adjust and refine their solutions based on the feedback received.

- Sustainable and Developing.

Consider the sustainability of the program beyond the initial phase. Explore opportunities to expand, improve, and make it an ongoing part of the curriculum or extracurricular activities, to ensure the sustainability of this student entrepreneurship program.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the assistance provided to entrepreneurial students at FPI UKM has begun to show results in their businesses. Some progress that can be noted includes aspects (Zimmerer, TW, & Scarborough, NM (2017).

1. Business Foundations. In understanding business models, students develop knowledge about various business models, such as retail businesses, subscription services, and affiliate marketing. With guidance from their supervisors, they succeeded in identifying the most suitable business model for their business. In terms of business planning, the students succeeded in formulating a strong business plan. They set short and long-term goals, identify their target market, and design effective marketing strategies. For example, they set a monthly income target of RM 3,000 in the first six months.



Fig 2. Al Baqalal's Outlet

2. **Marketing and Sales.** Students conduct comprehensive market research and identify student preferences regarding food and beverages. They found that there was a strong demand for healthy snacks and high-energy drinks. With this knowledge, they formulated a marketing strategy that included promotions through social media and product exhibitions on campus. Students create a promotional budget of RM 500 per month to advertise Al Baqalal on social media, such as Instagram and Facebook. They also organize discount programs and promotions to attract customers. In terms of sales techniques, students are trained to interact with customers well. They use a friendly approach and actively listen to customer input. As a result, average sales increased by 20% after implementing this strategy.

3. **Financial management.** Students plan their finances carefully. They create a monthly budget that includes operational costs such as purchasing supplies, employee salary costs, and marketing costs. This budget helps them control their expenses. They also create financial projections showing expected income and expenses for the next six months. With this projection, they can see the break-even point and profit targets. Students use accounting software to record all their financial transactions. They now have a solid understanding of bookkeeping and can produce accurate monthly financial reports.

4. **Operations and Supply Chain Management.** To improve production and operations management, students decided to automate some production processes. They introduced modern equipment and technology that increased production efficiency. Students learn to manage inventory better. They track daily inventory and reduce waste. With this method, they succeeded in reducing inventory holding costs. To improve the quality of their products, students introduced strict quality control. This includes regular inspections and employee training. As a result, the level of customer complaints decreased significantly. Students forge closer relationships with their suppliers. They schedule inventory deliveries more efficiently, reduce shipping costs, and ensure supplies are always available when needed (Hisrich, RD, Peters, MP, & Shepherd, DA 2019).

All these actions yielded significant results. Their business income increased from RM 900 per day to RM 1,200 per day within three months. This describes the positive impact of mentoring and student creativity in managing Al Baqalal.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The assistance provided to the group of entrepreneurial students at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FPI) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, who operate the Al Baqalal kiosk, has brought positive changes in the management of their business.

Fig 3. Management Meeting



Along with the guidance and training they receive, these students have experienced development in various aspects of business (Fayolle, A., & Matlay, H. 2010). Here are some of the main points to conclude.

- a. Students have increased their understanding of various aspects of business, including business models, business planning, marketing, financial management, and operations management.
- b. In addition to knowledge, they have also developed the practical skills necessary to manage a business effectively. This includes skills in financial planning, conducting market research, managing inventory, and optimizing supply chains.
- c. As a result of these changes, Al Baqalal's business performance has improved significantly. They have succeeded in increasing their daily sales from RM 900 to RM 1,200 in three months.
- d. Students have also learned to be more creative and innovative in running their businesses. They have introduced significant changes in their operations, including the use of technology and automation.

Recommendation

Based on the results of this assistance, the following are several recommendations for continuing and improving this community service program (Löbner, H., & Dunz, A. 2008).

- a. Continue to provide high-quality training to entrepreneurial students. Ensure they are continually provided with the latest insights on business and entrepreneurship.
- b. Consider expanding this program to include more students and businesses at FPI. This can create a greater impact on the campus community.
- c. Collaboration with External Parties. Establish more partnerships with external parties, such as local entrepreneurs, business support institutions, and companies. This can help in providing students with a broader and deeper experience.
- d. Continue to carry out regular evaluations of the impact of this program. By gathering feedback from students, employers, and stakeholders, you can make necessary adjustments and improvements.
- e. Actively promote the entrepreneurial spirit among students. This can include organizing events that allow students to share ideas and collaborate on entrepreneurship.

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