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ENHANCING SOCIETAL WELLBEING, ISLAMIC TRANSFORMATION CENTRE AND NETWORK-OF-MOSQUE: A CONCEPTUAL SOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

Lessons learnt from the history of Prophet Muhammad saw and his companions in harnessing mosques to provide holistic and value-added services such as community, education, businesses, advisory and halal center for the purpose of society wellbeing. Today, mosques are at every nook and corners in Malaysia, but the functions of the Mosque are limited and are used for specific religious and spiritual purposes. Thus, this conceptual program will develop the Islamic Transformation Center (ITC) through the Network-of-Mosque (NoM). Harnessing on the NoM capabilities, mosques can be used as a center for transformation which provides value-added services to the society. These services will include community classes, marriage services, zakat collection and distribution, promoting halal center, sermons and Islamic learning and education hub. Also with NoM, Mosque can be used for medical clinic, home for the poor and the travelers, and eating place for the hungry and needy. This conceptual program introduces to improve the quality of service through strategic partnership between government, industry, and society which will result to raise the entrepreneurs and lead to the prosperity. This program demands for Quadruple Helix Model (QHM) collaboration which involves the Government, Academia, Industry, and Citizen as the main actors for this program. Nine blocks of Business Model Canvas (BMC) framework and literature review used as the methodology for this paper. To achieve its goals, this program consolidates and synergizes the initiatives of government agencies based on the Whole of Government (WoG) approach. The findings of this paper show that the Mosque can facilitate the development and sustainability of ITC functions that serve the public and citizens better by harnessing the NoM potential and capabilities.

Keywords: Islamic Transformation Center, Network of Mosque, Business Model Canvas, Society Wellbeing, Quadruple Helix Model.

INTRODUCTION

Today, mosques are used mainly for the purpose of specific religious duties. However, the Network of Mosque (NoM) has a great potential to contribute towards improving the societal wellbeing, especially those living around the mosque. By harnessing the NoM capabilities, the public can save time where they do not have to go physically to government agencies or companies. At the same time, mosque committee can provide value-added services on

worldly and religious matters.

Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are ten factors to measure a national wellbeing¹. These factors include health, personal wellbeing, relationship, and education and skills. Islamic Transformation Center (ITC) program, based on these ten factors can help the government to improve the societal and national wellbeing. One of its programs is to provide medical service. ITC collaborating with NoM will create better relationship to the public around the mosque. Personal interaction between the public and mosque committee can bring the positive impact and satisfy the stakeholders. In the education sector, ITC can offer and provide educational programs to the public. ITC and NoM can provide online and face-to-face classes for Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, ITC and NoM can help small businesses and SMEs with their wealth creation activities. With ITC, the personal wellbeing can be given priority in order to enhance the society wellbeing.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

This paper proposed the establishment of ITC and by harnessing the potential of Network of Mosque (NoM) capabilities in enhancing the societal wellbeing. We propose mosques to be our as our center services. Since mosques are everywhere in Malaysia, than we can provide many activities that can help more people. The targeted audiences of this program, initially, are all the people who live around the mosques.

This program has the potential to provide quality and value-added services for the society and improve the societal wellbeing. This can be achieved by providing popular services and programs such as education on marriage, hajj and umroh; zakat collection and distribution; and wealth creation and social welfare. This program synergize with the Whole of Government (WoG), where related/cluster of government agencies collaborate to achieve common or similar goals². This program can also offer Quadruple Helix Model (QHM) based services/activities, combining the contribution of Government, Academia, Industry, and Citizen³.

ITC/NoM-based programs provide services to help the Muslim society. These include counselling and advisory services on family and marriage, social relationship, health, businesses, education and skill development, poverty eradication; making the Muslim communities aware of help and opportunities available to them, have some sort of facilities to the help the destitute and the homeless. This program organizes for welcoming visitors to the mosques and promoting mosque events/activities to the community. Thus, demonstrating the meaning of "Rahmatan Lil Alamin", contributing values and mercy to all mankind.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The main objective for this paper is to propose the creation of ITC in enhancing the societal wellbeing. ITC is defined as a center or hub where the communities are well advanced in terms of nomic, public services and living in accordance to the teaching and traditions of Islam⁴.

By harnessing the NoM, this program can help the public to be more effective in dealing with government or companies by providing a one-stop service center for them. At the same time, mosque committee can provide value-added services such as education on Islamic studies,

marriage, hajj and umroh; waqaf and zakat collection and distribution; economic and community services; and more. These can make the Muslim society more effective and productive in performing their obligation.

As we know, most of the services that are mentioned above are rare to be seen at one same place/center. This is an opportunity for the Muslim to centralize all of the Muslim activities in one place where it is called as an “Islamic Transformation Center” or ITC. The ITC will facilitate the Islamic scholars and experts around the world to contribute in national and human development including giving sermons and public lectures. ITC can be accessible globally and play a very important role in spreading the teaching of Islam and also in clarifying the misconceptions of Islam to the non-Muslims.

This program demands for Quadruple Helix Model (QHM) collaboration involving the Government, Academia, Industry, and Citizen as the main actors. The government actors are Jabatan Kebajikan Malaysia (JKM), Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM), Ministry of Education (KPM), MARA, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), Tabung Haji and zakat centers.

For events development, this program will facilitate the collaboration with companies such as wedding event organizers that will help the society in managing and organizing wedding functions. For educational cluster, this program will collaborate with universities in Malaysia and the society experts who want to be volunteers. As the main actor in this program, mosque committee has a significant impact to handle the program through the network of mosque.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word mosque or masjid is taken from the Arabic language which is sujud (sajada). It means the devoted, loyal, and with bowed heads with full of respect and reverence. The mosque is used for many functions, not only for worship but also to seek for knowledge, Muslim center activities, as well as the center for developing the economics of the ummah.

According to Omar Bakri (n.d)⁵ there are 20 activities/tasks which we expect from the mosque, such as mosque in the prophet era as home for needy, mosque as Judiciary Court, mosque as a University for Learning and Teaching, mosque as platform for oratory, eloquence and poetry, mosque as home and refuge for the poor, needy and the travelers, mosque as an eating place for the hungry and needy, mosque as place where people can ask for help, mosque as a place for consultation and exchanging views, and more.

From the points above, only a few activities that handled by the mosque in this time. Today, mosques do not act as the Muslim center-of-excellence anymore. Muslim uses a mosque as the place for specific religious practices only. We as Muslim should expand the strategic role of the mosque based on the Prophet saw era, as a key center of Muslim activities. We need to restore the Mosque to its original role and function.

In this globalization and the new digital age, the Mosque can be utilized as the center-of-excellence as well as the network-of-excellence in making contributions and value-added services to the society and nation. QHM collaborative type of programs can harness the Network of Mosque capabilities in making all mosques as a center for education; zakat collection and distribution; marriage, Umroh and Hajj training; halal certificate distribution; Islamic seminars and workshops; human capital development and wealth

creation; and providing other value-added services to the people who live around the mosque. But, in order to develop ITC, all QHM actors must make their contributions including by the Government agencies, mosque committee, companies, and the society.

In Malaysia, Urban Transformation Centre or UTC becomes one of the good examples to improve the social wellbeing for the public. UTC is one of the government initiatives in providing the urban community with key government and private sector services under one roof. With UTC, people around can come for many purposes and activities. The one-stop services that UTC provide are the services offered by the National Registration Department, MyEg, Public Transportation Commission (SPAD), Immigrations Departments, Department of Road and Transportation (JPJ), Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri (LHDN), and Companies Commissions of Malaysia⁶.

The main purpose of UTC is to provide the businesses and government services under one roof that enhances the societal wellbeing⁷. Based on the News Strait Times dated 6 of August 2014, the government targeted 123000 business registrations for the Goods and Service Tax (GST) which bring the social welfare for those who live around UTC⁸. Currently, the coverage of UTC is still not nation-wide. Thus, the researchers suggest the Network of Mosque as the solution to improve the societal wellbeing because mosques can be found including in remote areas.

Smart city is the concept for a specific vision of modern urban development. Smart city recognizes the growing importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) as drivers of economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and general live ability⁹. Smart cities are expected to be the key to combining a sustainable future with continued economic growth and job creation which also contributed to the wellbeing of the society. According to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, UK 2013: "The concept is not static, there is no absolute definition of a smart city, no end point, but rather a process, or series of steps, by which cities become more 'liveable' and resilient and, hence, able to respond quicker to new challenges".

ITC consolidates and synergizes government agencies, private and NGO services in a collaborative approach thus saving effort, money and resources. ITC will connect all the Mosques in Malaysia through Network of Mosque (NoM) and provide collaborative front-desk services to the public and citizens. The services that can be offered in the ITC 1. program through the use of Network of Mosque (NoM) include:

1. Community classes

Community classes' purposes to educate people become better. This will help Muslim youth to learn how to read the Quran, learn about Islamic history, manners and Etiquettes, traditions of the holy prophet (SAW), Fiqh as well as memorization of the Quran. And for the Non-Muslim, they may join the language classes such as English and Arabic for their benefits. We can have Muslim volunteers who are fluent in Arabic and English to teach them.

Furthermore, ITC can organize special classes for the elderly women and men separately. As the fact is, that in our societies we find many elders who cannot even read the Quran. We will provide special classes teaching how to read the Quran properly and memorizing the small surah's of the Quran so that they can read in their prayer. This will also help the elders spent their time in a good matter and gives them the opportunity to meet each

other and strengthen the bond of Muslim brotherhood. These special classes can be offered to the non-Muslims as well. This can be a good example of Da'wah as well as mercy to all mankind.

2. Marriage-related services

Marriage is the Sunnah of our prophet. Based on the malay mail online.com dated march, 3rd 2014 there are 148,806 Muslim marriages in 2012, according to the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and a total of 65,993 marriages were registered in 2012¹⁰. This number shows a significant number of marriages each year. ITC will facilitate and help people who want to get married by providing marriage services. These services include marriage registration, certification and wedding event. For marriage event, NoM will also cooperate with other wedding organizers. Besides, it also provide birth certification and marriage consultation.

3. Zakat and Waqaf collection and distribution

Zakat is the practice of taxation and redistribution, including benefits contributed to poor Muslims, imposed upon Muslims based on accumulated wealth. It is obligatory for all who are able to do so, and it is considered to be a personal responsibility for Muslims to ease economic hardship for other Muslims to eliminate inequality among followers of Islam¹¹. As the center of Muslim community, Zakat can be collected through the mosque and it can be distributed to the needy people around the mosque. This will enhance the societal wellbeing, especially those living around the mosque because the mosque committee members know who are the needy and can distribute it to the right people on a timely basis.

4. Promoting Halal Product

NoM enables ITC to distribute and promote halal products easily. One of the conceptual solutions for promoting halal products via eHala¹⁴. All Portal which aim to improve the economic and social status of rural communities, SMEs, and entrepreneurs^{12,17}. ITC can collaborate with JAKIM/JAIN in promoting halal products.

5. Sermons and Islamic lecturers

As the center of Muslim society, Mosque can be used to share and demonstrate Islamic values. One of the ways to share Islamic teaching and value is through the lectures and sermons. Mosque also can be used as the place for those who want to understand and convert to Islam. New Muslim converts, Muslims and non-Muslims can attend the lecturers and learn basic Islamic obligations such as how to perform wudhu, prayers, fasting, zakat and hajj.

6. Umroh and Hajj learning

By harnessing ITC and the NoM, government can manage and monitor the Muslims who intent to perform Umroh and hajj easily. Mosque committee can collaborate with Tabung Haji for Umroh and Hajj learning classes. It includes the registration, classes and seminars,

and practical guidance and counselling on Hajj/Umroh. Besides that it facilitates the public to apply for passport, health test, payments, and providing updated information about hajj.

7. Medical and disaster relief center

Based on the WHO Statistics, Malaysia has a big number for the total expenditure on health per capita in Malaysia which is \$692¹³. With this conceptual solution, mosque can be used as the medical as well as disaster relief center. Thus, Muslims without insurance or those who are in need of emergency help can receive medical treatment and assistance. It can be coordinated with the Minister of Health Malaysia through the nearby hospitals to the mosque. With NoM, people can save their time and money because they do not need to go further if they need any treatment.

8. Home for the disable, needy, and traveller

Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM) has stated that one of their objectives is to help the disable people¹⁴. With NoM, ITC can collaborate with JKM to provide home and shelter facilities for disable people and needy. Not only that, mosque can be used as the lodging and shelter for travelers, especially for those who spread the Islamic messages (da'wah).

9. Eating place for the hungry and needy

ITC and NoM can help government to control and help the disable, hungry and needy people. Based on the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the poverty rate went up from 3.6 percent in 2007 to 3.8 percent in 2009 while the hardcore poverty rate remained at 0.7 percent¹⁵. Thus, by utilizing the NoM, ITC can collaborate with government agencies like JKM to feed the disable, hungry, and needy people. People may also give their Sadaqah to the mosque to feed the needy. In addition, ITC may organize weekly fasting program in the mosque.

10. ITC portal

ITC portal is an online website that consists of all information regarding the services and activities of ITC. Through the ITC portal, the public can get and update any information directly through their gadget and mobile apps. The portal provides online learning capabilities for the public who want to learn Islam via internet. The suggested activities as mentioned above may be able to contribute towards enhancing the societal wellbeing. With NoM, it is possible to develop and enhance the contribution and activities of ITC. The practice of people coming to the mosque at least for performing five times prayers, need to be harnessed by ITC/NoM. Apart from performing Islamic rituals, the people coming to the mosque five times a day may have potential and competencies for making contribution to the public through ITC/NoM platform. Mosques in the center of a city, town or village can be leveraged as a central of ITC/NoM activities because of its strategic location and closeness to the public. With NoM, ITC can provide more value-added services and activities to the society around the mosque.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL SOLUTION

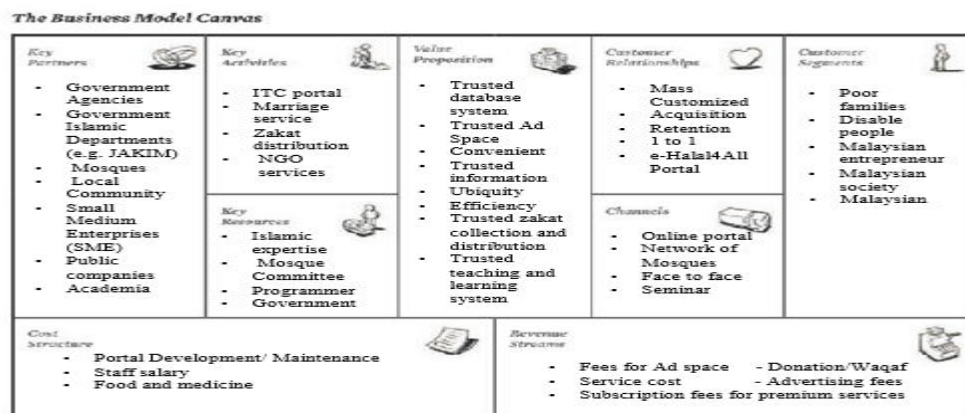
In order to create value-added services and activities, ITC can utilize the NoM to enhance

and improve the wellbeing of the society. Ibnu Khaldun, one of Muslim scholars, states that entrepreneur is seen as a knowledgeable individual and is instrumental in the development of a city-state where enterprises will emerge¹⁶. ITC may apply this concept by leveraging the NoM capabilities and its closeness to the public to improve societal wellbeing. Managing and leveraging the Mosque as the Community center can help the public involved in many value-added activities. Moreover, the public can find the mosque everywhere, which has a better reach to targeted audience in the society.

ITC can provide online portal that include all information and activities that are related to, integrated, and synergize with all of its key partners programs/activities. This portal will help people to view and get the updated news about ITC/NoM activities. It will include the procedure to apply marriage certificate, halal promotion, and eLearning materials. Also it will display information of events and programs that are to be organized by ITC/NoM such as skills development seminar/training/workshop and wedding events. Not only that, it also will include library facilities, business opportunities, khutbah, Islamic articles, and entrepreneurship/skills development articles that can be read by the public for free. Organizations and individuals can offer online consultation services via ITC portal. Thus, it can enhance further the wellbeing of people.

In order to achieve its goal, this program will collaborate with various government agencies including JAKIM, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia, Zakat centers, and Tabung Haji Malaysia. Another collaborator will be the universities and academia in order to provide research outputs and educational program e.g. human capital and skill development, entrepreneurship, and Islamic finance and banking. As for the industry partners, this program is open to Muslim SMEs such as wedding organizers, restaurants and caterers. Mosque committee plays an important role in ITC. They will collaborate with the government, industry, academia, and citizen who will use the system.

Figure 1: Business Model Canvas (BMC)



CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

The Customer Segments are organizations and individuals that ITC/NoM has to serve. The customer segments include poor families, disable people, Malaysian organizations and companies, Malaysian entrepreneurs and SME owners.

COST STRUCTURE

The Cost Structure is the expenses to manage and operate ITC activities. The Cost structure includes Portal development and maintenance, staff salary, food for the poor and needy, seminars and classes, and medicine.

REVENUE STREAMS

The Revenue Streams are the revenue generated from the customer segments to cover the costs in operating ITC/NoM. The revenue streams include:

- Service fees for marriage and hajj program
- Proposal funds from the government
- Freemium service for Online Islamic learnings
- Booking fees for using the ITC/mosque facilities
- Advertising fees for advertisement
- Donation and Waqaf from the public and corporations

KEY PARTNERS

The Key Partner describes the organizations, people or group of people who that act as QHM partners to run the ITC Program. The key partners include:

- Private companies and SMEs such as wedding organizers, restaurants and food caterers, halal food producers
- Citizens that want to be volunteers
- NoM and mosque committees
- MoHR, MoE and institutions of higher learning for education, training and employment services
- Ministry of Health and hospitals for health services
- Social & Welfare Department for welfare and community development services
- JAKIM/JAIN, Zakat centers and Tabung Haji for Islamic related services
- Banks, MARA and Zakat centers for business development and entrepreneurship services

KEY ACTIVITY

The key activities conducted by ITC include:

- Community and youth, human and skill, business development and entrepreneurship classes/couching
- Marriage and family related services
- Collection and distribution of zakat and Waqaf
- Halal certification and promoting halal products/services
- Islamic education and outreach services e.g. Umroh/Hajj
- Government and healthcare services
- Home and shelter for the disable and needy
- Eating place for the hungry and needy
- NGO services

KEY RESOURCES

The key resources required to run and operate ITC program including staff, building, financial and experts on matters such as Islamic affairs, marriage and family relationship, NGO services, welfare and community development, youth development, human and skill development, business development and entrepreneurship.

VALUE PROPOSITION

The value propositions by offered by ITC in satisfying the customer segments include:

- Convenient, effective and efficient services
- Trusted zakat collection and distribution
- Trusted database system
- Trusted advertisement space
- Trusted information distribution
- Trusted teaching and learning system and content
- Ubiquitous and mobile apps

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

The Customer Relationships is the type of relationship that used in the Islamic city Program. The purpose of this program is to providing the efficiency of different aspect of activities, including marriage, umroh, hajj, learning, waqaf, zakat and other related activities for the Muslim society.

CHANNEL

The channels are the platforms that communicate ITC program to its target customer segments. The Channels include Network of Mosque (NoM), ITC Portal, Face to face, and Seminar.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

During the era of Prophet Muhammad saw, the mosque was used to provide holistic and value-added services such as dakwah, justice, community, education, businesses & entrepreneurship, advisory and halal center for the purpose of societal wellbeing. Today, mosques are at every nook and corners in Malaysia, but the functions of the mosque are limited and are used for specific religious and spiritual purposes. To restore and revive the function of a mosque towards societal wellbeing in this world and hereafter, Islamic Transformation Center (ITC) program harnessing the Network of Mosque (NoM) is proposed for implementation as Proof-of- Concept in Malaysia. The ITC program shall leverage on the ICT capabilities including ITC portal, mobile apps and social media.

Later, the concept of ITC can be considered for national and international roll-out. Thus, ITC program acts as a model in demonstrating the meaning of "Rahmatan Lil Alamin", contributing values and mercy to all mankind in all walks of life.

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