

The Role of Social Enterprises in Achieving Sustainability Development Goals for Malaysia

Salina Daud

College of Business Management and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional

Wan Noordiana Wan Hanafi*

College of Business Management and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional

Nurhidayah Mohamed Othman

College of Graduate Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional

** Corresponding Author*

Email: diana.hanafi@uniten.edu.my

Abstract

Purpose: Social enterprises apply business solutions to social problems. The goal is to achieve sustainability by enabling non-profits to support themselves financially in innovative ways instead of relying solely on grants and donations. Thus, the purpose of this study is to discuss the types of business model in the fields of social enterprises and associate them with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Design/methodology/approach: Analysis of previous literatures is used in the study.

Findings: This study identified 30 types of business models, from eight different authors. All business models proposed by the authors have a practical solution that are applied in real contexts that support sustainable development goals in Malaysia.

Research limitations/implications: This research presents an attempt to discuss the types of business models used in social enterprises. Further empirical research is required to gain more in-depth insights.

Practical implications: Social entrepreneurs can use the findings to support their objectives in supporting government initiatives towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Originality/value: Mapping social enterprise business operation with Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise, Entrepreneurship, Business Model and Sustainability

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is a business oriented field which aims to provide efficient basic human needs that the existing markets and institutions failed to fulfil (Kusumasari, 2016). Interest in social entrepreneurship by practitioners, policymakers, and academics has grown exponentially over the past three decades. It is an important tool to tackle social challenges and to respond to them when the market and the public sector do not. Social enterprises and social entrepreneurs create innovative initiatives and solutions to unsolved social problems, putting social value creation at the heart of their mission in order to create benefit to different individuals, 'communities' and other groups.

The mission of social entrepreneurs is to solve societal problems and achieve social and/or ecological change (Keohane, 2013). Next to poverty, modern society faces various other problems and challenges in education, health, work and environmental issues that could not be

solved so far (Grimes, McMullen, Vogus, & Miller, 2013; Marshall, 2011). In the last two decades, there have been several government-based efforts to approach poverty and people have largely set their hopes on the government to solve social and environmental problems. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship is about the decisions of people to undertake a process, and the attributes of people affect the decisions that they make about the entrepreneurial process (Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003).

Businesses are increasingly attracted to social entrepreneurship due to the potential of increased demand for goods and services, driven mostly by macroeconomic trends in the external business environment. However, the business model approach for emerging markets differs from the one for developed markets as they are faced with a different set of demand and supply conditions. A business model is at the core of a firm's activities and defines how value is delivered, customers and beneficiaries is reached as well as how the business is sustained (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010; Zott, Amit, & Massa, 2011). Several scholars have analysed business models in social entrepreneurship (Dohrmann, Raith, & Siebold, 2015; Markman, Russo, Lumpkin, Jennings, & Mair, 2016; Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019; Yunus, 2011).

According to Jbara and Darnton (2019), current business models lack the ability to highlight social aspects in an integrated way, as most efforts are focused on the traditional and commercial business models. Other than that, current researches on social entrepreneurship are primarily interested in the following four topical areas: (1) defining social entrepreneurship, (2) comparing social enterprises with other organizational forms (non-profit and commercial enterprises), (3) examining the entrepreneurial process in consideration of the emerging opportunities and social impact assessment, and (4) factors that determine the development of social enterprises (Urbano, Ferri, Peris-Ortiz, & Aparicio, 2017).

Literature Review

Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are global goals that cover three major dimensions namely, social (56%), economic (20%) and the environment (24%), and have specific targets (Zainal, Mustafa, & Othman, 2019). SDGs provide a bold aspiration for a sustainable, prosperous and equitable future. There is universal agreement that the goals cannot be achieved by 2030 on a business-as-usual trajectory, and that we need new agents of change, such as business, government and civil society (Grainger-Brown & Malekpour, 2019). Malaysia which currently ranks 68 out of 162 countries, stands exceptionally well compared to other countries in terms of achieving some of the United Nation's SDGs. Additionally, with the global alignment with SDGs, there has been a strong emphasis on understanding the various approaches, concepts and mechanisms of accomplishing or contributing to the successful implementation of SDGs. As shown in Figure 1 below, some of these items may be more relevant to certain industries than others, and there are certainly many other ways that businesses can approach the goals.

<p>1 NO POVERTY</p> <p>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p>	<p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p> <p>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.</p>	<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> <p>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p>	<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> <p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p>	<p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p> <p>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p>	<p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p> <p>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</p>
<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p> <p>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.</p>	<p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p>	<p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.</p>	<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> <p>Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p>	<p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> <p>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.</p>	<p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> <p>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p>
<p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.</p>	<p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p> <p>Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.</p>	<p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p> <p>Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land Degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.</p>	<p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p> <p>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive Institutions at all levels.</p>	<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p> <p>Strengthen the means for implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.</p>	

Figure 1: 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Social Entrepreneurship

The notion of social entrepreneurship has been around since the 1950s (Bowen, 1953), and it is only within the past decade that social entrepreneurship research has become a major and influential literature stream. The term ‘social entrepreneur’ was first mentioned by Joseph Banks in 1972 in his work named “The Sociology of Social Movements,” where he utilized the term to portray the need to utilize administrative abilities to address social issues, in addition to addressing business challenges (Banks, 1972). Social entrepreneurship is a kind of

entrepreneurship whose major aim is to create social value, i.e. large-scale benefits for society, and its positive externalities are not taken into account by society or government. Everyone seems to agree on the fact that social entrepreneurs identify opportunities to solve new social problems, by providing new ideas and new types of services, by searching for more efficient or new combinations of resources (Petrella & Richez-Battesti, 2014). Meanwhile, Bornstein and Davis (2010), defines social entrepreneurship as a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses and corruption, in order to make life better for many. Social enterprise has also been referred to as any organisation, non-profit or for-profit, community enterprises, voluntary organisations or government sectors that are looking to create value for the betterment of the wider society (Austin et al., 2006; Shaw, 2004).

What is Social Enterprise?

Social enterprise refers to non-profits that operate businesses both to raise revenue and to further enhance their social missions (Zainon et al., 2014). The character of social enterprise has to be business-like in its strategies and meet the financial and commercial goals (Cheah, 2018; Jones, Regan, & Mitra, 2011). Owing of this feature, social enterprise is sometimes referred as an organisation with a “double bottom line” with integrated values of social and financial return (Hockerts, 2006; Nicholls, 2011).

Business Model for Social Enterprise

The term “business model” first appeared in an academic article by Bellman, Clark, Craft, Malcolm, and Ricciardi (1957) and in the title and abstract by Jones in 1960 (Osterwalder, 2004). However, the concept wasn’t properly defined and only became significant with the emergence of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s. Business models pave a useful path and are effective tools for corporate decision-makers to capture information, analyse situations and make decisions in order to create competitive advantages for enterprises (Gandhi & Raina, 2018). Business models also generate fruitful insights into how social and sustainable entrepreneurship ventures create social (and economic) value (Schaltegger, Lüdeke-Freund, & Hansen, 2012). Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) argued that every organization has a business model, because it must generate enough revenue to cover its expenses to survive. The only difference between traditional business enterprise and social enterprise is in the focus of the organization. Business enterprise focuses more on financial returns or shareholder value, while social enterprise focuses more on ecology, social causes, and public service mandates. Accordingly, Boons and Lüdeke-Freund (2013) stated that there is no significant difference in the business models themselves. In fact, social businesses are a powerful way to increase social impact.

Method

This study is conducted by studying the secondary data (websites, journal, articles) on business model applied by social enterprises. Literature analysis was conducted to discuss the types of business models practices in social enterprises and map them with SDGs.

Findings

Social Enterprise Development

As discussed in the literature above, the core element of social entrepreneurship is a successful realization of an effective business model (Grassl, 2012). Accordingly, a business model can be analysed with the use of different methodologies and tools. According to Yunus (2009), building social business models relies on same strategic moves as conventional business model

innovation. However, this type of business model requires the consideration of all stakeholders, and the definition of social profit. Thus, Table 1 below illustrates the type of social enterprise business model.

Table 1: Type of Social Enterprise Business Model

No	Authors/Year	Social Enterprise Business Model
1	Yunus (2011)	Yunus Social Business Global Initiatives (YSB): 1. Maximization of positive socio/environmental and economic impact 2. Financial sustainability without the distribution of dividends.
2	Grassl (2012)	Nine types of social business model: 1. Entrepreneur support model 2. Market intermediary model 3. Employment model 4. Fee-for-Service Model 5. Low-Income Client as Market 6. Cooperative model 7. Service subsidization model 8. Market linkage model 9. Organizational support model
3	Agafonow, Donaldson, and Hoerber (2015)	Business model based on supply chain management theory 1. Social-input business 2. Social process business 3. Social enterprises based on output
4	Smuda and Dorn (2015)	Social Business Model based on Business Operation: 1. B1G1 (Buy One, Give One) business model
5	Santos, Pache and Birkholz (2015)	Four Hybrid social enterprise models: 1. Market hybrid model 2. Blending hybrid model 3. Bridging hybrid model 4. Coupling hybrid model
6	Spiess-Knafl, Mast, and Jansen (2015)	Six types of social business model innovation: 1. Opportunity creation model 2. Smart distribution model 3. Ecosystem engineering model 4. Cheap sourcing model 5. Smart pricing model 6. Inclusive production model
7	Kusumasari (2016)	Four types of business model 1. Mixed-based Model 2. Sharia-based model 3. Volunteerism-based model 4. Cooperation based model
8	Hahn, Spieth, and Ince (2018)	Hybrid business model design based on social or ecological with purely focus on economic

From the findings above, business model by Yunus (2011), which is known as Yunus Social Business Global Initiatives (YSB), entails the distribution of dividends. This business model differs from the not-for-profit organizational model, in which organizations depend to some extent on external mobilization of resources for the fulfilment of their purpose (Ciccarino, Malpelli, de Mello Moraes, & Do Nascimento, 2019; Yunus, 2006; Yunus, Sibieude, & Lesueur, 2012)

Next, Grassl (2012), proposed 9 types of social business model, namely entrepreneur support model, market intermediary model, employment model, fee-for-service model, low-income client as market, cooperative model, service subsidization model, market linkage model and organizational support model. However, Alejandro Agafonow, Cam Donaldson and Thomas Hoerber (2015) stressed more on operation inside the social business model especially on the procurement phase of production process (social business input), followed by companies transformation of inputs into outputs (social process business) and creation of social value that produces distinctive goods or service (social output business).

Smuda and Dorn (2015) differed from all other authors, where they were focusing on Buy 1 Give 1 (B1G1) approach in social business model, where it spurs the idea of converting business model from conventional business to social business orientation. Further, Santos, Pache, and Birkholz (2015) proposed social business model based on hybrid models. Accordingly, four types of model were proposed namely market hybrid model, blending hybrid model, bridging hybrid model and coupling hybrid model. According to the authors, the hybrid model will enable social entrepreneurs and managers of hybrid organizations to assess their situation, learn how to best design their social enterprises, and organize for sustainable value creation.

Spieß-Knafl et al. (2015), on the other hand, were focusing on six (6) types of social business model based on innovation that could be identified, namely opportunity creation, smart distribution, ecosystem engineering, cheap sourcing, smart pricing and inclusive production. Kusumasari (2016), propose four types of business model, which are: mixed-based model, sharia-based model, volunteerism-based model, and cooperation-based model. All four models proposed are based on sustainability.

Similar to Santos et al. (2015), Hahn et al. (2018) proposed a business model based on hybrid business model, where the hybrid businesses implement a business model following a commercial logic as a prerequisite for achieving sustainability for themselves and to contribute to a more sustainable society. From the findings, it can be concluded that all business models proposed by the authors present a practical solution to be applied in real contexts. The strength of the model is that the business model combines the internal and external factors and shows how a firm is embedded and interacts with its environment.

Social enterprises business model and Sustainable Development Goals

The developed business model has its main strength in its categories, focus on direct and economy wide indicators of different types of value, which are social, environmental and economic. The first business model by Yunus (2011) is cause-driven rather than profit-driven, with the potential to act as a change agent for the world. The scope of this business model is to create social values by helping the poor through microcredit and social business ventures. Since the focus of the model is on helping the poor, this business model can be mapped to SDGs 1, and SDGs 8 where the goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere and for decent work and economic growth.

Grasll (2012) proposed 9 business models, and each business model has its own key success factors, like appropriate training for the entrepreneur, creative distribution systems, lower production and marketing costs, high operating efficiencies, job training appropriateness and

commercial viability, and etc. From the key success factors discussed, the business models are focusing on education and employment. Hence, the business models can be mapped to SDGs 4, and SDGs 8, where the goal is for quality education and for decent work and economic growth.

Business model by Alejandro Agafonow, Cam Donaldson and Thomas Hoerber (2015) stresses more on operation inside the social business which are social business input, social process business and creation of social value from social output business. The business model is focusing more on transferring the knowledge and building the skills while also providing an opportunity for income earning. This business model can be mapped to SDGs 3 and SDGs 8, where the goal is focusing on good health and wellbeing and on decent work and economic growth.

Smuda and Dorn (2015) proposed a business model known as Buy One Give One. This business model creates both commercial and social value, where it focusses on using business funds to help others in need. This business model can be mapped to SDG 1 and SDG 3, where the goal is to end poverty and focus on good health and wellbeing.

Santos, Pache and Birkholz (2015) created a hybrid business model which combines financial and societal value. Every hybrid model has its own role such as serving paying clients who are the beneficiaries of their societal mission (blended hybrid model), bridging the needs and resources of both constituencies (bridging hybrid model), and performing both the commercial and the impact operations with the highest level of expertise (coupling hybrid model). Since the focus of this business model is on financial and societal value, it can be mapped to SDG 1 and SDG 3. Here, the goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, focusing on good health and wellbeing.

Next are business models by Spiess-Knafl et al. (2015), involving 6 types of innovation business model proposed, where the aims are to create new entrepreneurial opportunities, develop distribution channel to reach customers, combine initiatives to change an existing ecosystem or create a new ecosystem, identify underutilized resources to support provision of service, use pricing innovations to facilities consumption and include disabled persons or persons with special skills in the production process (Spiess-Knafl et al., 2015). As discussed previously, besides focusing on new entrepreneurial opportunities, these business models also focus on new innovation. Other than that, the business models also reduce inequalities with the inclusion of disabled persons and persons with special skills, ensuring no one is left behind. The business models can be mapped to SDGs 8, SDGs 10 and SDGs 12, where the goal is on decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities and responsible consumption and production.

The business model by Kusumasari (2016) aims to resolve the social, economic and environmental issues. Since the business model is focusing on increasing the economic growth, supporting marginalized communities and focusing on solution for complex issues, it can be mapped to SDGs 3, and SDGs 8. Here, the goals are good health and wellbeing, and decent work and economic growth. The last model is hybrid business model by Hahn et al. (2018) which focuses on contributing toward sustainable community. This business model can be mapped to SDGs 1, SDGs 8 and SDGs 12, where the goal is on achieving no poverty, decent work and economic growth and lastly, on responsible consumption and production. Table 2 below presents the mapping of social enterprise business models with SDGs.

Table 2: Business Model and Sustainable Development Goals

Authors	Business model	Sustainable Development Goals
Yunus (2011)	Yunus Social Business Global Initiatives (YSB)	SDG 1 (No poverty) SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)
Grasll (2012)	1. Entrepreneur support model 2. Market intermediary model 3. Employment model 4. Fee-for-Service Model 5. Low-Income Client as Market 6. Cooperative model 7. Service subsidization model 8. Market linkage model 9. Organizational support model	SDG 4 (Quality education) SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)
Agafonow et al. (2015)	1. Social-input business 2. Social process business 3. Social enterprises based on output	SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing) SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)
Smuda and Dorn (2015)	B1G1 (Buy One, Give One) business model	SDG 1 (No poverty) SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing)
Santos, Pache & Birkholz (2015)	1. Market hybrid model 2. Blending hybrid model 3. Bridging hybrid model 4. Coupling hybrid model	SDG 1 (No poverty) SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing)
Spiess-Knafl et al. (2015)	1. Opportunity creation model 2. Smart distribution model 3. Ecosystem engineering model 4. Cheap sourcing model 5. Smart pricing model 6. Inclusive production model	SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities) SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production)
Kusumasari (2016)	1. Mixed-based Model 2. Sharia-based model 3. Volunteerism-based model 4. Cooperation based model	SDG3 (Good health and wellbeing) SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth),
Hahn et al. (2018)	Hybrid business model	SDG 1 (No poverty) SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production)

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to discuss the types of business model in the fields of social enterprises and associated them with the Sustainable Development Goals. The findings show that there are 30 types of business model proposed by different authors. All of the business models from the authors can be matched with different SDGs like SDG 1, 3, 4, 8, 10 and 12. Most of the business models practiced by social entrepreneur focus on SDG 8 which is to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and SDG 3 which is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. There are similarities among the business models discussed above in terms of the variables used (Yunus et al., 2010; Spiess-Knapf et al., 2015; Gebauer et al., 2017). However, each of the identified social business models enables a company to generate income either directly or indirectly while

sustaining its social mission and improving its social impact. Business models have been essential features of market economies where there exist consumer choice, transaction costs, competition and heterogeneity amongst producers and targets (Teece, 2010). Social enterprises operate by applying a business approach to solve social problems and at the same time support government initiatives towards achieving SDGs. The situation is tough, which means the only way to success is to apply a proper business model. In that sense, business model plays a critical role in any social enterprise. A helicopter view of the different types of business model which are also moving towards SDGs is useful for scholars who are doing research in this field. This research adds new insights to the understanding of how social enterprise organizes and designs their business model towards sustainable development goals.

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