A Conceptual Event Service Provider (iEvent) Digital Platform Business Model

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Abstract: **The purpose of this business case paper is to help clients, service providers and B40 people who seek services for their upcoming events such as wedding ceremonies and family events. They need trusted services with complete packages (all-in-one services) and skillful crews to manage their events successfully. Therefore, we create Event Service Provider (iEvent), a digital platform that provides event planner services for those who need them. Event planning includes all the important elements in an event like budgets, dates, themes and venues. By using iEvent, all the services will be managed by trusted and skilled crews, following Term & Conditions agreement. iEvent also will help many people especially in this Pandemic Covid-19 by planning proper flow with limited participants in an event, whether to undergo online events or physical events that apply effective social distancing. Besides, iEvent may help clients, service providers and B40 people in many aspects of life to overcome the problems with effective solutions. With iEvent, we are able to relate our project with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnership for The Goals), at the same time iEvent also a Consumer-to-Customer (C2C) business model that able to provide a conceptual solution of event planning and management [1]. The methodology adapted for this paper is based on the Design Thinking process using literature review, biz modelling tools namely Business Model Canvas (BMC) and Value Proposition Canvas (VPC), and survey. All the VPCs are based on BMC that we create and brainstorm for the sake of iEvent in order to satisfy Customer Segment requirements.**

Keywords: **Event Service Provider (iEvent), digital platform, event planner, Consumer-to-Customer(C2C), event planning and management, Business Model Canvas (BMC), Value Proposition Canvas (VPC).**

I. INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays many people in Malaysia especially from urban areas often organize events such as wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, retirement parties, festival celebrations and many more. However, most of them cannot do the event without having proper planning from experts. Having someone expert can help them save their cost, time and value [2]. Our target markets are middle to upper-middle class families, couples, individuals, or private and public organizations. We chose these groups because they are most able to afford event planners, and have the least amount of time to spare for event planning in general. Statistics show the current population of Malaysia which 78.4 % of the population is urban (25,361,963 people in 2020) [3]. As we know, normally the urban people tend to use event planners to organize an event, especially big events which indirectly give a positive impact to our business.

iEvent is a platform which offers their customer event management services like event coordinator, event planner, event caterer and many more to ease their event flow. Customers have to book early to secure the event planner of their choice appropriate to the event. Customers may choose their preferable packages according to their budget as we combine several services into one package in order to make the event run smoothly. Some customers might have lost trust towards event planners because they have been cheated or because of the service that is not worth the price which is too expensive. As for the solution, we provide the services with terms and conditions to gain trust from customers. They will also get the services with reasonable and affordable prices which are also very convenient.

Meanwhile, service providers will provide goods or services to the event with a special discount given. Maybe it is difficult for some of them to get sales and profit as they are not recognized well among the majority of people due to lack of promotion. So, with this way of concept, their business will get promoted during events. Moreover, we will provide skillful crews to help them finish the tasks. Besides, iEvent also provides a platform to other event management services to promote their business on the website. They can have access to the market data where they can customize their packages based on trends and requests from customers [4]. Creating job opportunities for B40 groups is one of the sustainable development goals which can help them to survive in daily life rather than just receiving help from others. As they will be recruited as crews for the event to help service providers, they will get free and balanced training to improve their skills.

With the existence of iEvent, it will not only help the clients who need the services, but also help the service providers such as any freelancer who does their jobs related with events like photographer and decorator. Our business project can help them shine up their skills and be one of their additional source incomes. We also expand the event scope by collaborating with companies that can help us run the event smoothly.

II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this paper are to justify the need for and viability of implementing i-Event digital platform in Malaysia. Besides, the other objective also is to provide several types of events with several event service providers that will be needed in particular events in one digital platform. Furthermore, to build a conceptual business model for sustainable implementation of iEvent. Information such as responses surveys collected and also BMC and VPC that we build using a design thinking process will be used as references. The purpose of this paper also to highlight key features of iEvent digital platform as gain creators and pain relievers to our customer segments. The customer segments are divided into three categories which are client, service provider and B40 ; where each of them will be offered with benefits and value propositions. To be able to survive in business, we have to be unique in providing solutions to our customers based on their needs that are relevant for now and future as well as change in the external factors such as COVID-19 and MCO. This demands for the business model and plan as well as environment map to be reviewed, understood, and updated regularly.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted the design and system thinking approach to develop a conceptual business model of an Event Service Provider (iEvent) focusing on providing community engagement programmes and activities. The conceptual business model is developed through understanding the needs of Event Service Provider (iEvent) by using business modeling tools such as Business Model Canvas (BMC) and Value Proposition Design Canvas (VPC). Business Model Canvas (BMC) (Osterwalder, Pigneur & al. 2010) [5] is divided into 9 blocks which are Key Partners, Key Activities, Key Resources, Value Proposition, Customer Relationships, Channels, Customer Segments, Cost Structure and Revenue Stream. Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) (Osterwalder, Pigneur & al. 2010) [6] are used to analyse value propositions in relation to customer segments and help to systematically analyse their needs and requirements. The approach involves carrying out online surveys and literature review to identify key challenges and issues of various customer segments, formulating and devising an initial conceptual business model – in the form of BMC and VPC, and a value proposition to enhance the wellbeing of various communities in Malaysia. The initial BMC and VPC is validated by conducting an online survey for various customer segments which are clients, service providers and B40 through a series of standardized questions using Google Form. It is an easier way to reach out to the respondents as it is less time-consuming than the traditional way of gathering information through one-to-one interactions, and less costly.

The literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The review should describe, summarize and evaluate this previous research. It should give a theoretical base for the research and help to determine the nature of research. It is a way to give some basic understanding of the materials chosen. Benchmarking is also used in the process of comparing our operations or processes of organization against other platforms with the same concept. It can be applied with any products, strategies or approach in business. It is a very important component because with benchmarking, we can identify the weakness and improve our performance of our business.

IV.   LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Event Management Industry

Events management services companies include areas of corporate events such as product launches, seminars and business forums. The services are also part of advertising programs for retail, such as exhibitions, training programs, event promotions, events based on television, special events like concerts, fashion shows and more. Event Managers are the one that are in charge of planning and running events. They are involved in the planning, implementation, marketing and communication strategy of the events. Event Managers are the most experts in creative fonts, technical and logistical help to a successful event. Event management in Malaysia, is an industry that is growing rapidly, with mega shows and events recurrently. Given the professional aspect, event management is a glamorous and exciting profession that needs a lot of hard work and enthusiasm. Event management service providers will do all the planning and tasks that are necessary for any type of function. This service also serves the society as it actually helps to decrease the rate of unemployment as it will create more job opportunities especially when they need more crew to handle big events.

B. Importance of event management company

Some events are very important and it is organized to celebrate it in the best way. To make it an unforgettable event, it has to be perfect in every way. Proper event planning and management are vital to the success of any event or occasion. Thus, hiring an event management services company to organize an event is a very good decision as it increases its risk management capabilities. An event is undeniably full or uncertainties. From a medical emergency to a power failure or failed execution of certain activities – all of these could result in chaos if you are handling them all single handedly. To counter these possible issues, a reliable event management company is always suitable for this. Besides that, by outsourcing the event planning & management tasks to reliable companies who hold expertise in handling such successful events, a company or organization is able to save a lot of time and money. From a personal event to a big corporate event, it has never been a wrong decision to hire a trustworthy event management company as it looks after all the necessary proceedings while you can enjoy the occasion.

https://boldmarketing.in/importance-of-the-event-management-company/

C. Effective business with effective event

In order to have an effective business, it is proven that a good marketing strategy can cave the path to it. One of the effective business marketing strategies is event marketing. Event marketing is a marketing tactic that involves exhibits, displays, presentations or gatherings to showcase your company's product, services or causes. One of the reasons why events are the most important marketing tool is that customers are always looking for specific products or services. Besides that, events are a cost effective way to roll out new products or services as it offers live sales during the event. Lastly, by organizing events, the feedback is immediately generated by the comments of the customers that attend the event which make the improvement process are much easier. That is why event management services companies are the best choice as they can organize the event systematically, by fulfilling the preference from the company and make the events a success.

https://www.sendiancreations.com/event-management-benefits/

D. Benchmark

We also take a look for another organization that adopts a similar business model with us. This platform also gives the customer a wide range of choices to pick their own preferences regarding their events. These are 2 companies that offer the same service as our company:

1) Jiggee Asia was established in 2001 and is a leading independent full-service event management agency with branches in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. It manages public and private business or pleasure events regardless of the number of attendees. Having over 16 years' experience in event management with around 500 clients, Jiggee has executed special events, launches, gala dinners, conferences, exhibitions and private soirées for Coca-Cola, Allianz, United Overseas Bank, Deloitte, AirAsia, Ernst & Young, Microsoft Pfizer and Nissan [7].

Figure 1: Jiggee Asia

2) Genio Sdn Bhd was established in 2004 and this award-winning integrated event management and production company is well known for delivering outstanding events in Malaysia and across Asia. It is also recognised for producing some of the largest, most sophisticated, innovative and memorable events for world leading brands and individuals. Among its services are corporate dinners, road shows, exhibitions, product launches, theme parties, concerts, fashion shows, internal conferences, awards presentations, opening ceremonies, family day, sports carnival, sales campaign with promotion and team building [8].
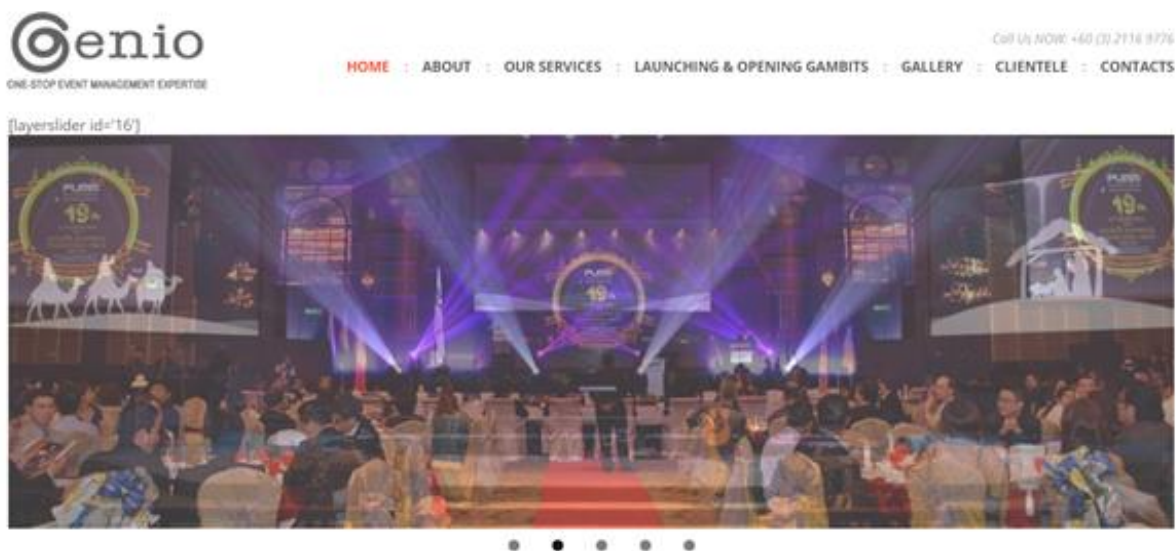
Figure 2: Genio Sdn Bhd

E. Demands of Event Management Services

According to Tourism and Culture Minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Malaysia's business events industry is expected to generate more than RM3.9 billion in gross national income and bring in 2.9 million visitors by 2020. He also stated that industry would also offer 16,720 jobs and last year alone, 5.1% of tourist arrivals came from business event visitors. This shows that event service providers have a promising demand from the customers.

V. PROPOSED INITIAL BUSINESS MODEL
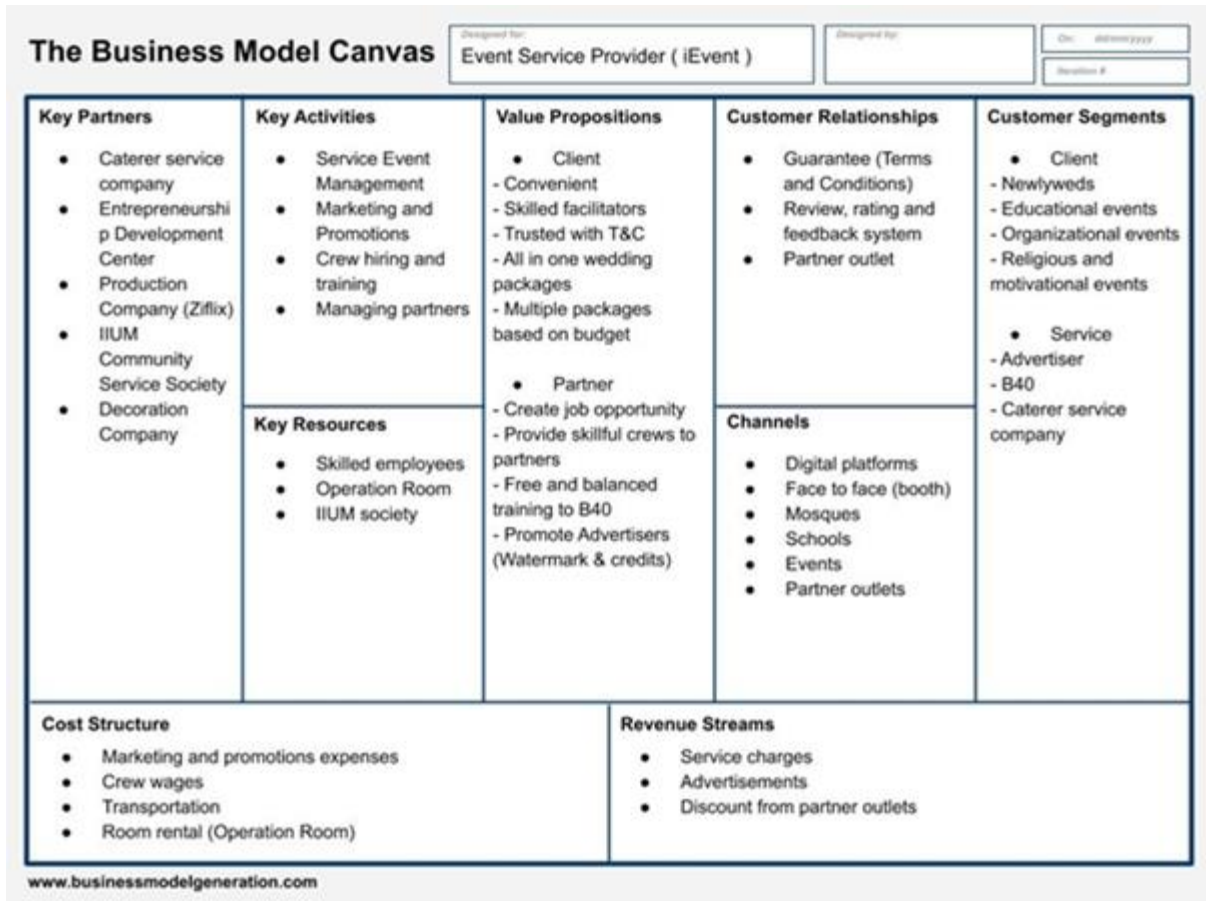
1. *Initial Business Model Canvas*

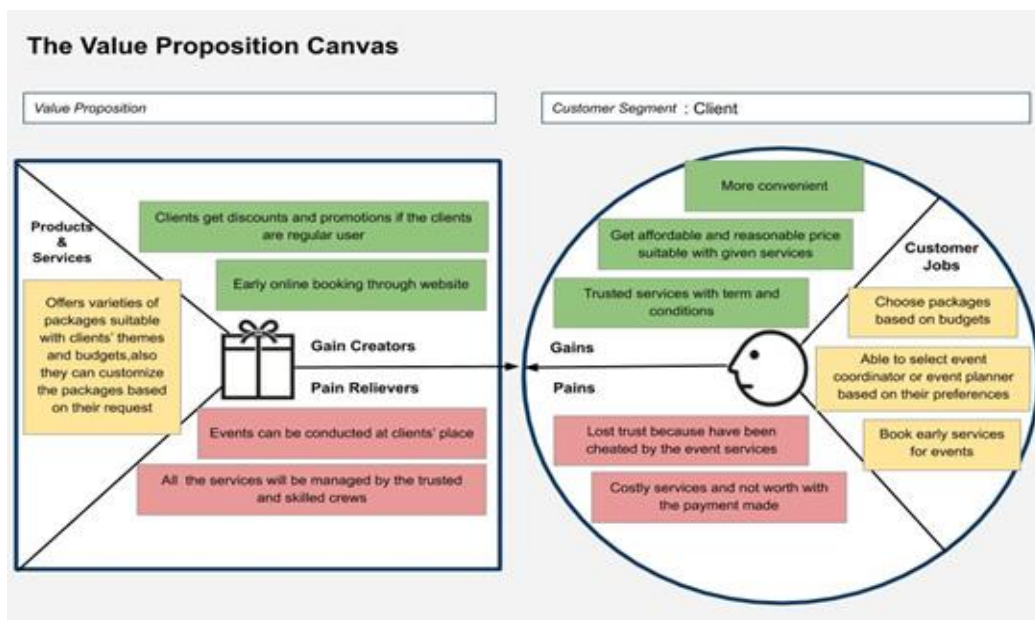**Figure 3: Initial BMC**

2. *Initial Value Proposition Canvas*
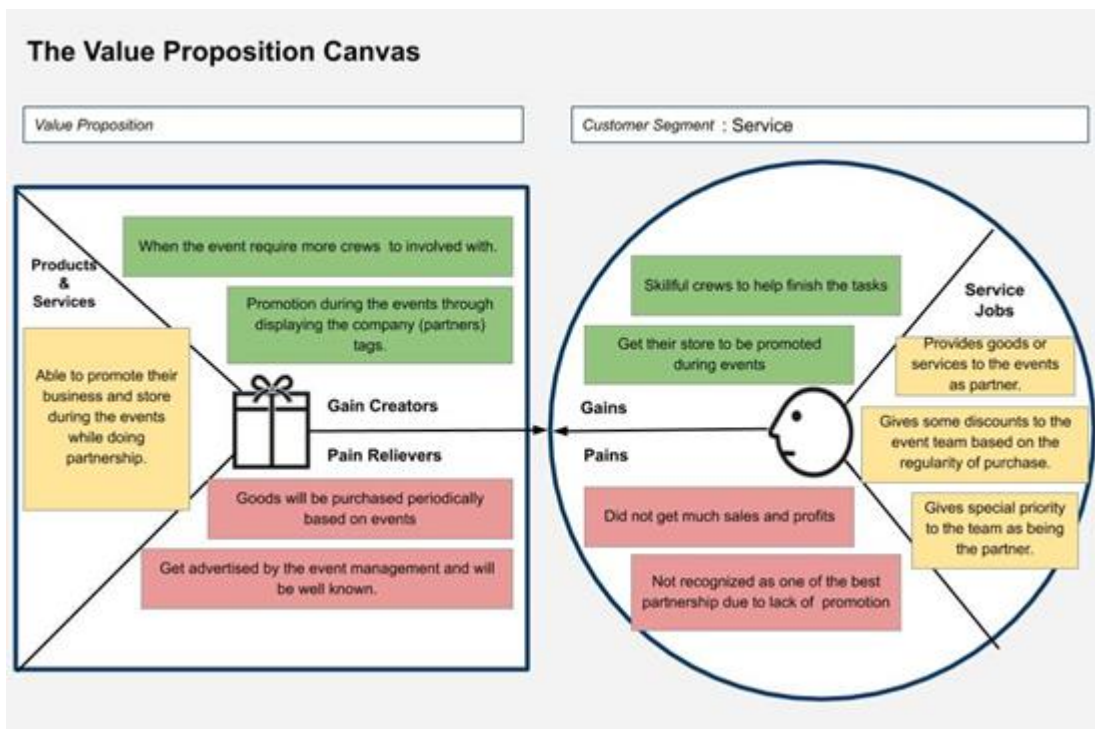

Figure 4: Initial Client's VPC

Figure 5: Initial Service Provider's VPC

C. Challenges Business Model Using 4 Lenses of Innovation

1) Challenging Orthodoxies

iEvent web application is competing with other similar web applications that offer the same services. Therefore, iEvent will come with new approaches and strategies to attract customers in dealing with it. It will provide simple features and an attractive interface to customers, so with these strategies, customers do not have to think deeply about the flow of the event as iEvent will arrange all stuff needed for the event.

2) Harnessing Trends

Following the trends, iEvent always wants the best services for its customers. So, it will provide a better solution to solve the problem. Especially during this Pandemic Covid-19, everything is using an online platform. Demand for online business through Facebook, Instagram, Lazada and Shopee also keep increasing from day to day as mentioned in the news [9]. For example, a customer needs a delivery service to send their gift to the birthday boy, so a delivery service is provided to ease the flow. The customer can book the delivery service through the website and provide the details of the receiver. Time will be saved more by doing this.

3) Leveraging Resources

For the leveraging resources of iEvent, the main targets are media advertiser company, B40 community who want to be part of crews, caterer for events, freelancers who want to increase their income, decoration franchise company and any society of community service. They will act as medium in order to run the event smoothly with a systematic plan and strategy created by them.

4) Understanding Needs

We understand that clients and service providers do not have enough time and have limited schedules to manage the event, as said by Christina Wells in a blog [10], therefore the existence of iEvent will reduce the burden and save more time. Moreover, with the limited time, they do not have ideas or solutions to think about the planning of events, so iEvent will save them by providing the solution to their problem in a professional way it can be. With the current pandemic COVID-19, iEvent can provide service to organize virtual events or gatherings such as scheduling timetables and detailing the activities. Besides, when it comes to physical events, it can help customers to manage and control the number of participants as well as follows the Standard Operating Procedures in their event.

VI.   VALIDATION OF INITIAL BUSINESS MODEL & KEY FINDINGS

For this project, we have conducted an online survey to validate and refine our business plan. Below is the visual feedback that we have received from the Google Form survey. From this survey, we got a total of 30 respondents.

The first question is where we asked users if they have any experience on booking online for any events using any online platform. We found that 53.3% experienced booking online for events while 46.7% do not have any experience.

Figure 6: Question 1

Moving to the second question, we asked whether users need an event planner to manage their event from the start until the end of the event. The result showed that 80% needed an event planner while 20% responded otherwise.

Figure 7: Question 2

Furthermore, the next question we asked users' agreement on the existence of event planner can make things become easier. Based on the feedback, 86.7% agreed with the existence of an event planner, 13.3% are neutral and no one disagreed with the existence.
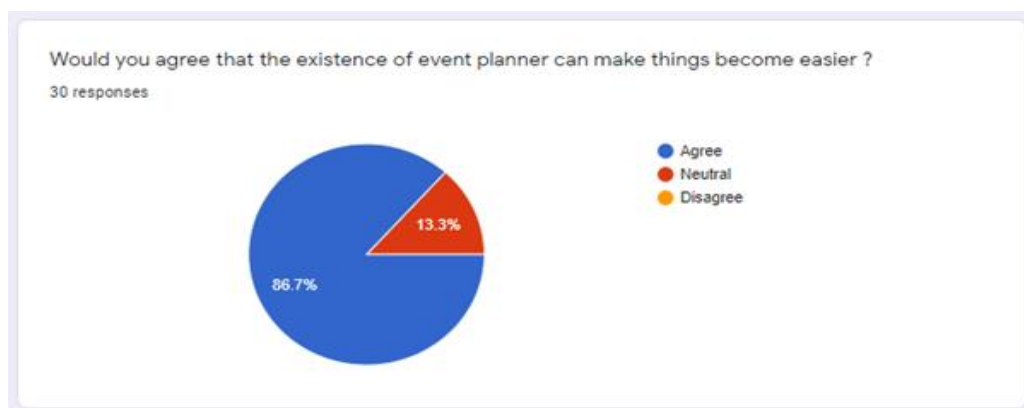

Figure 8: Question 3

Next question, in order to achieve our goal by helping B40 people, we asked users do we create more job opportunities through an online event booking platform.53.3% respondents agreed that we are able to create job opportunities, 3.4% disagreed, while 43.3% choosed maybe our project is able to create job opportunities.
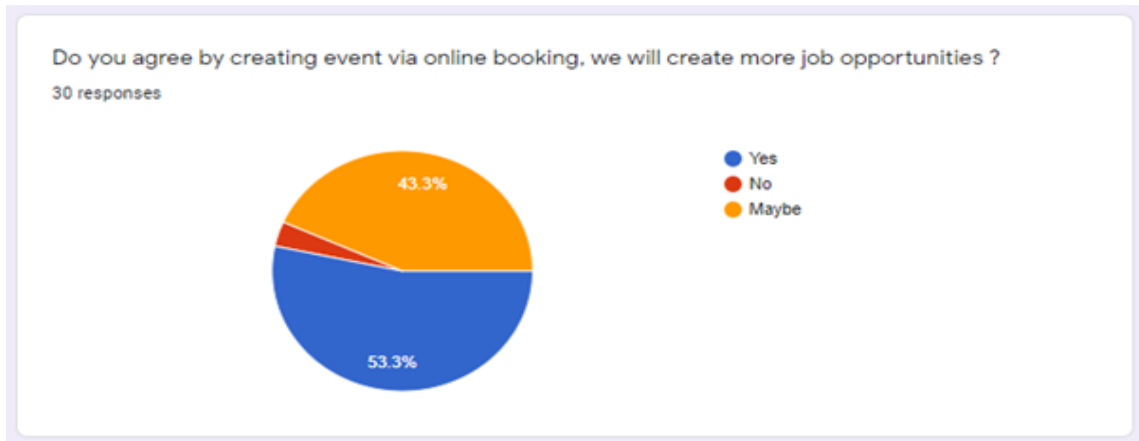

Figure 9: Question 4

On top of that, we asked about the budget of an event, whether they prefer to follow our budget or their budget. The pie chart showed that 46.7% preferred to follow their budget, 50% chosen depending on the situation to put the budget, while 3.3% would like to use the event planner budget.
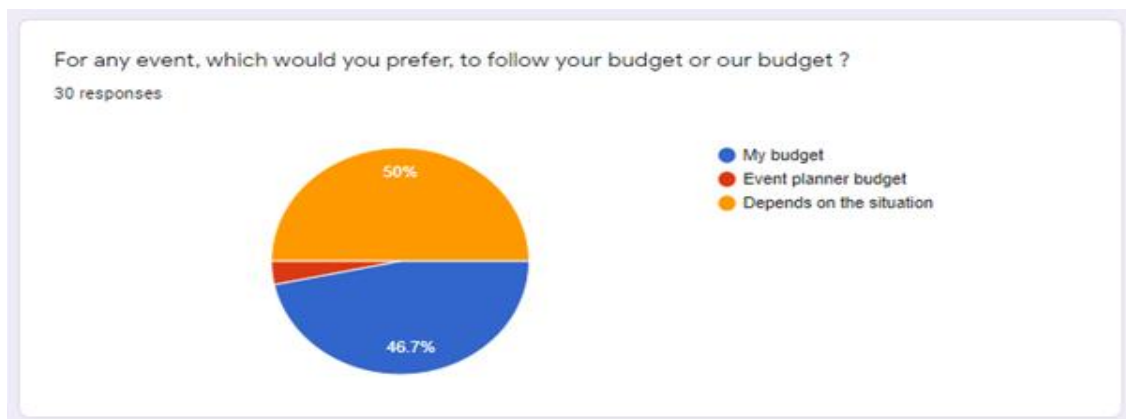

Figure 10: Question 5

The sixth question is where we asked users if they faced any problems when they are using online booking for any events. We found that 56.7% faced problems when using online booking while 43.3% did not face any problems.
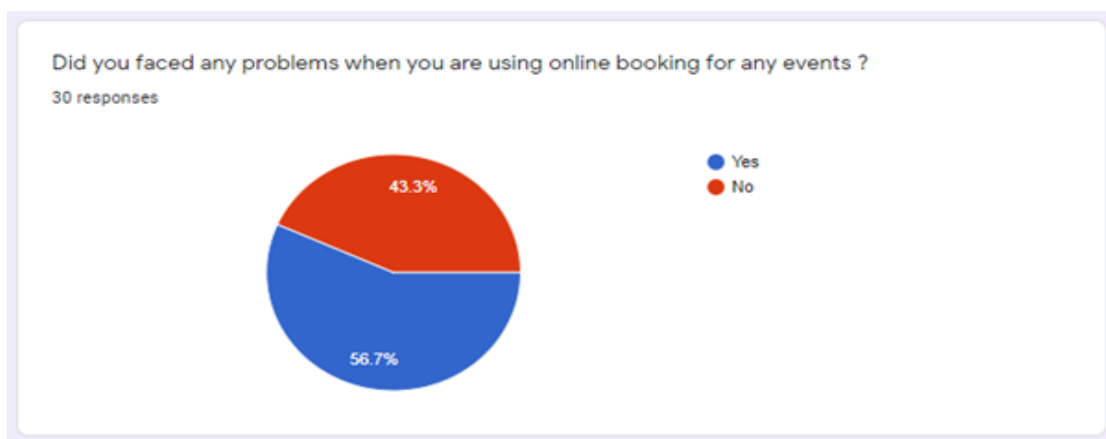

Figure 11: Question 6

Page | 210

Moving to the seventh question, we asked users to choose common problems they faced when using an online platform for event booking. The result showed that 23.3% faced scam problems, 23.3% faced late response problems, 33.3% faced not up to date (package) problems and 20% faced difficult to contact person-in-charge problems.
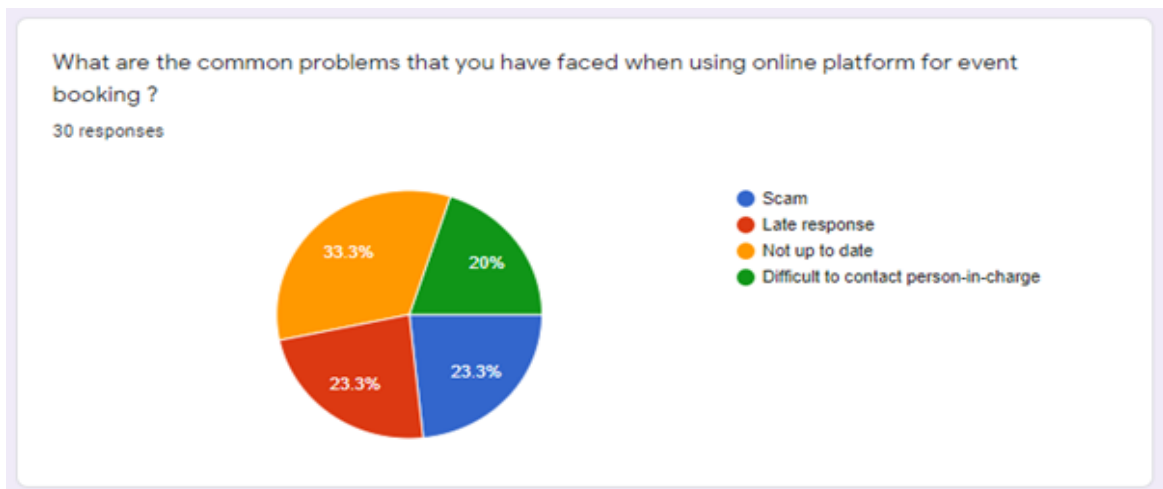

Figure 12: Question 7

Furthermore, the next question we asked users' biggest concern in order to use an online booking platform. Based on the feedback, 26.7% choosed financial issues, 3.3% choosed durability issues, 26.7% choosed reliability issues and 43.3% choosed trust issues.

Figure 13: Question 8

Next question is an open question where we finally asked users' opinion on what occasion or event that most likely needs an event planner. Because the question is open which does not have any choices, we would like to summarise the result. The results are below ;

Table 1: List of Suggested Events

Types of Events	Number of Voting
Corporate Events	1
Farewell Party	1
Graduation Party	1
Mass Exhibition	1

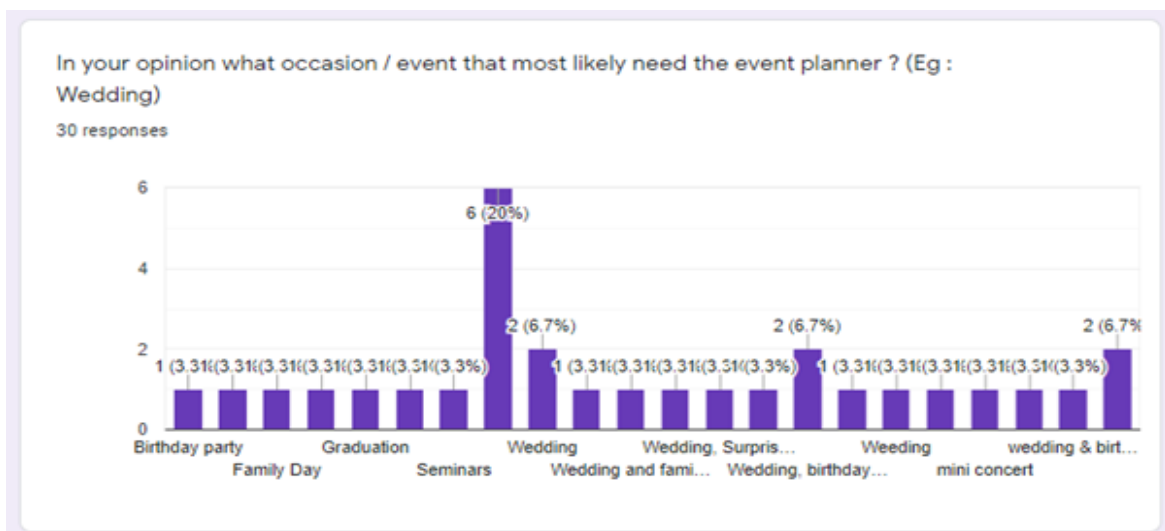| Seminars Event	1
Surprise Party	1
Run Event	1
Anniversary	2
Concert	2
Family Day	2
Vacation Trip	2
Birthday Party	8
Wedding Events	21

Figure 14: Question 9

Lastly, again we asked users their opinion on the suitability of this service in this situation (Pandemic Covid-19). We do the result clustering and put the summarization below ;

● Necessary.

● Preferable.

● Demanding.

● Less interest.

● Hard to get clients.

● Decrease the price.

● Useful for some people.

● Less customer demands.

● Produce a great platform.

● Affect service's financial.

● Understand the procedure.

● Easier online booking process.

- Need to reschedule the events.

- Open job opportunities for jobless people.

- No need for an event planner for small events.

- Cancelling event for having limited participants.

- Safe because users get to apply social distancing.

- Good for having limited people attend the events.

- Not useful because users have some restrictions of movement and SOP.

- The government does not allow any gathering of more than 250 participants.

List summarization of opinions about this service.

Figure 15: Question 10

VII. ENHANCED BUSINESS MODEL

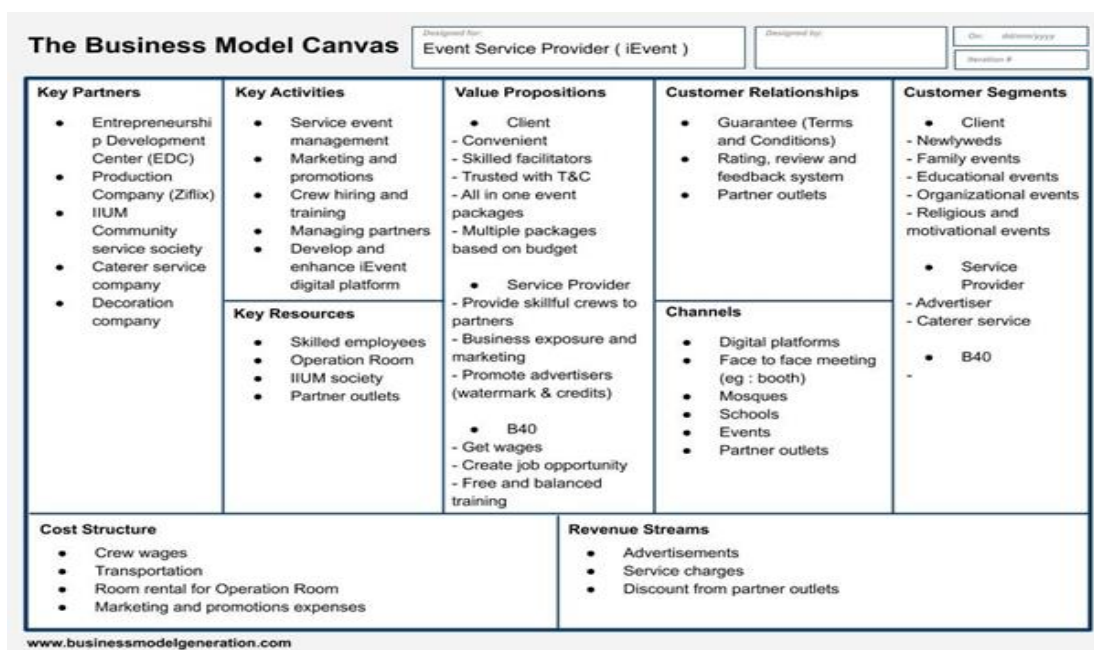1. *Enhanced Business Model Canvas*

Figure 16: Enhanced BMC

1.1 Value Proposition

The Value proposition is a service, or feature that is offered in order to satisfy the needs and requirements of customer segments. The values offered to each type of customers is specified below:

a. Client: Convenient, systematic and reliable event management such as guarantee assured for the event. Skilled crew and employees provided to make sure the events run smoothly. Various packages of events depend on the preferences of the client and their budget to make sure the event meets their satisfaction. Beside that, the event will be provided with all necessities such as caterer, cameraman, PA system etc. By providing all in one events, clients can rest assured and do not have to go through such a hassle to book one by one as we already managed them.

b. Service provider : As for the caterer service provider, we will provide skillful manpower to the event to make sure the event is well managed. This goes the same for other service providers. Business exposure and marketing are also provided whereas the company or shop that engages with the events are going to have some promotion at the booth,event etc. beside that, there will also be some promotions on various types of social media for the company and advertiser such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. With these kinds of promotions, the acknowledgement of the respected service provider will increase and surely it will enhance the sales and request from other clients.

c. B40 : Job employment is made available for them as crews and employees. From that, they can gain some income which is adequate with their expertise. They are going to have some privileges when there are jobs offered. Besides that, they can have a free and balanced training in managing events provided specially for the crews.

1.2 Customer Segments

Customer Segments defines the groups of people or organizations we aim to reach or serve. The business model focuses on customer segments that include: Clients such as newlyweds, service providers such as caterer service companies and B40. B40 can take this opportunity to gain some incomes by joining as the event crews.

1.3 Customer Relationship

Customer relationships describes the type of relationship we want to establish with specific customer segments. The relationship for this business model is built based on virtual free learning activities and the certifications given to teachers certified by rightful government departments. Besides that, third-party tuition services could use this platform to attract customers to their own service as well by advertising. The advertisement can be posted by contacting the technical development team face to face to organize effectively.

1.4 Channels

Channels describes how we plan to reach out and communicate customer segments to deliver the value proposition. The channels include the use of digital platforms including social media and emails, and Network-of-Mosques [11]. Key features of Event Service Provider (iEvent) such as guarantee, review and feedback system etc. Partner outlet is also used particularly to supply goods with some engagement.

1.5 Key Activities

This section describes the important key activities to be performed in order to deliver the value propositions to the customer segments. The key activities include service management, marketing and promotion and providing a platform for clients to organize any events based on their preferences. Apart from that is hiring and training qualified students or B40 as the crew and managing partners. Lastly, develop and enhance iEvent digital platform.

1.6 Key Resources

Key resources are the important assets required to make sure the value prepositions can be delivered to each customer segment. An operation room is needed to make sure the management of the goods, tasks and processes regarding the event runs smoothly. Other than that, is selecting crews and employees who have qualification and expertise to execute specified tasks, and the virtual platform itself that is able to operate through the internet.

The partner outlet such as a decoration company is also one of the key resources. A collaboration with some of IIUM society to provide some workforces during the event such as IIUM Community Service Society.

1.7 Key Partners

This section describes the external partners or organizations who can collaborate as partners to execute and deliver the value propositions. The key partners include caterer service company, entrepreneurship development center, production company(Ziflix) and decoration company to provide goods and equipment for the event. Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, Zakat Centres & masjid will be the medium to provide contact and facilitate the B40 in getting jobs.

1.8 Cost Structure

The cost structure defines the costs needed in order to execute, sustain and deliver the goals. This includes the marketing and promotions expenses, crew wages, transportation and room rental fee for the operation room.

1.9 Revenue Streams

The revenue stream comes from the customer segments. The purpose is to cover the cost of operations mentioned in the cost structure. The revenue streams include service charges by the client, charges of the advertisement for the company involved and discounts from our partner outlets.

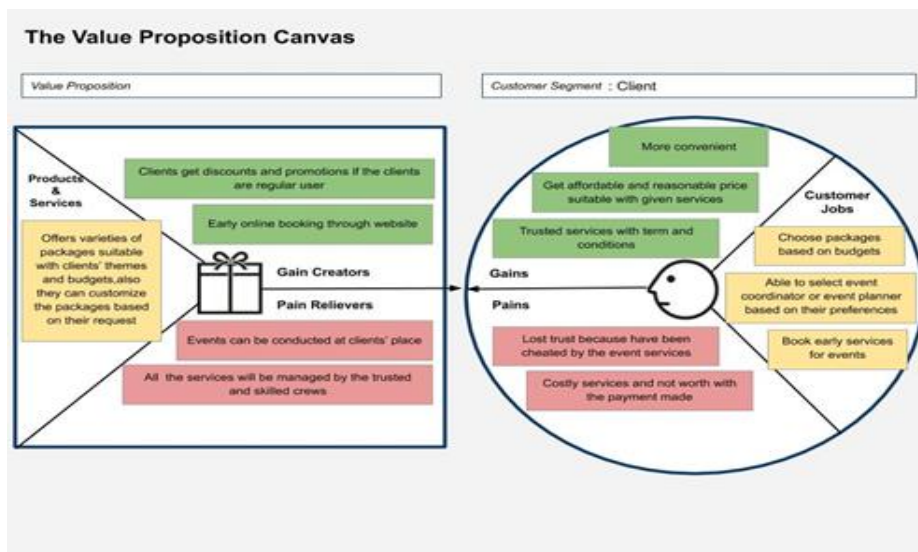### 2. *Enhanced Value Proposition Canvas*
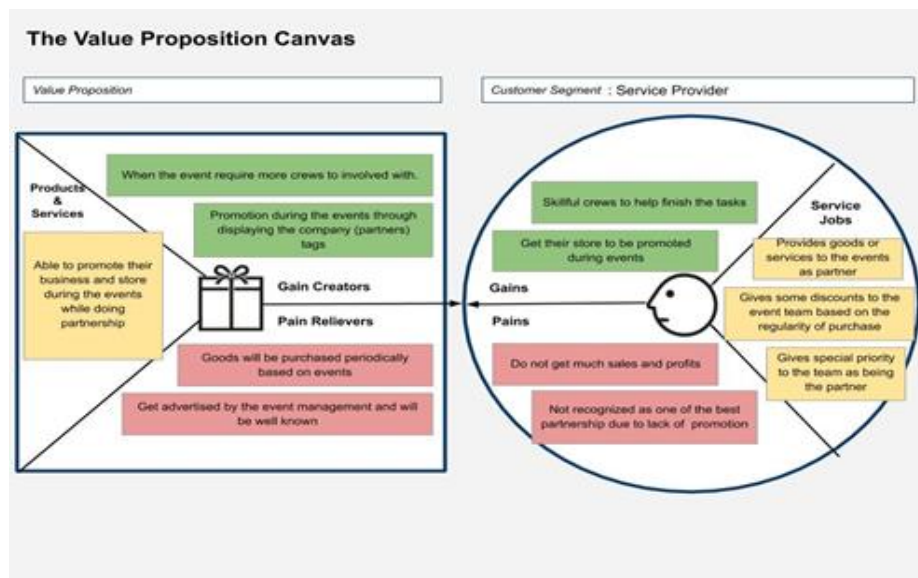

Figure 17: Enhanced Client's VPC

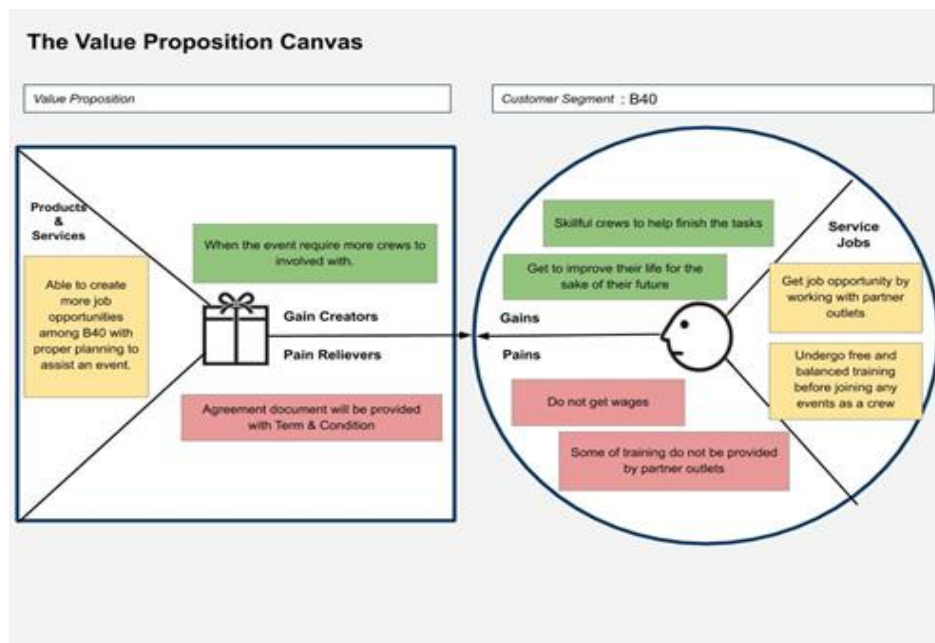**Figure 18: Enhanced Service Provider's VPC**

Figure 19: Enhanced B40's VPC

Briefly, this business project is giving a lot of benefits and opportunities to our customers who are clients, service providers and also B40 groups. Clients will use our platform to search for any event planner when they want to. As for the service providers, they will eventually get customers and their service or product will get promoted at the same time. Also, helping the community especially the B40 people whom we focus on creating job opportunities for them such as being one of the crew for the events. This effort will improve their life in a better way and by this way, they are able to help others too. We are not helping Muslims only, but we are also welcoming non-Muslim to use our platform in order to ease their business in searching for event planners. Therefore, we ensure that iEvent is able to help us achieve the goals and values delivered to the customers which satisfy their requirements. Hopefully, iEvent can be accepted and used widely around Malaysia.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

To conclude with, iEvent web application is providing all-in-**VIII. SUMMARY**

one services under one platform that everyone can reach or surf the website anytime and anywhere. To achieve the mission and vision of the business project, BMC and VPC are used to ensure that this project is on the right track. Also, the project is not only delivering the goods, but has chances to do charity for the people who are worthy to get the chance. For the future plan, iEvent is able to be one of the best web applications that get the highest demand from customers by using design thinking, business modelling and strategic planning approaches. We will make sure that the iEvent web application is not just friendly-user, but also provides good customers' experience when dealing with it. For future work, we aim to turn this conceptual business model into a Business Plan that will be present to the investors.

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