

OKT 2025 / BIL. 14 / 2025

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ISSN 2773-5869

9 772773 586005

HOME-BASED BAKERY VENTURES AMONG MALAYSIA YOUTH: A POST-SPM ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE

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Introduction

In today's fast-changing world, not every SPM school leaver opts to continue their studies right away. Some may face financial limitations, while others may prefer to explore different opportunities before committing to higher education. For these young individuals, finding a practical way to generate income becomes a priority. One increasingly attractive option is starting a bakery business from home. With the rising popularity of baking and the ease of using social media and online platforms to promote products, home-based baking offers more than just a source of income, it can also be a stepping stone toward self-reliance and financial independence.

The rise of home-based baking businesses

In recent years, home-based businesses have gained strong momentum as more people look for flexible and practical

ways to earn a living. Among these ventures, baking stands out for its creative appeal and consistent demand. Special occasions like birthdays, weddings, and festive seasons often create opportunities to sell cakes, cookies, and other sweet treats. Many customers also prefer homemade products, believing they offer better freshness, quality, and personal touch compared to factory-made goods.

For SPM school leavers, starting a home bakery is especially attractive because it is affordable and accessible. Most homes already have the basic kitchen tools needed to get started, and baking itself is a skill that can be self-taught or improved through short courses and vocational training. Moreover, starting a home bakery is also not too difficult. One does not need expensive machines to begin his/her venture. Many home bakers start with just a few

simple tools and grow from there. Basic equipment includes a reliable oven, electric hand mixer, mixing bowls, measuring cups and spoons, baking trays, cake tins, piping bags and nozzles, and of course, essential ingredients like flour, sugar, eggs, and butter. As demand grows, they can slowly invest in better tools and more advanced equipment.

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Transforming passion into profit

Baking has become a favourite hobby for many teenagers, not just for fun, but as a creative outlet with real potential. What starts as weekend baking can grow into a thriving small business with the right mindset.

Young bakers can whip up cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and bread tailored for birthdays, festive seasons like Hari Raya and Chinese New Year, or themed parties.

Thanks to social media, home bakers now have powerful platforms to reach customers and build their brand. For instance, Keem Ooi (Instagram: @keempossible_2) from Damansara gained over 58,000 followers in just a few months by sharing stunning, character-themed cakes with designs inspired by Animal Crossing and Pokémon. Her story shows how stunning presentations and free tutorials can build a loyal following and even lead to paid classes.

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Another inspiring example is Amora, known as @amorasloves on TikTok. She began selling soft cookies to fund her university fees. By weaving personal stories into her videos like relatable tales of heartbreak and daily life, her brand took off. What started as about RM1000 per month eventually grew into a five-figure business every month.

Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and even WhatsApp Business are essential tools for

showcasing creations, communicating with customers, and managing orders. Combined with free tools like Canva, young bakers can create eye-catching graphics and cultivate a strong, personal brand that resonates with their audience.

First steps for young bakers

There are several practical ways for SPM leavers to build and grow a successful home-based bakery business. With the right strategy, mentality, and tools, even a small kitchen setup can lead to big results.

1. Get trained and understand the basics of running a business

One of the first things aspiring bakers should do is to equip themselves with the right skills, not only in baking, but also in managing a business. Short courses offered by institutions such as Giat MARA, Community Colleges, and private baking academies provide hands-on training in both areas. These programs often include modules on food preparation, safety, and entrepreneurship, giving young bakers a strong foundation to start with. On top of that, understanding basic business practices such as cost calculation, pricing, and bookkeeping is crucial. Tools like free Excel templates and money

manager apps can help with managing expenses and tracking sales.

2. Leverage the power of social media and digital tools

Social media has become a game-changer for home-based businesses. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok allow bakers to showcase their creations, engage with customers, and promote their products to a wider audience. A visually appealing feed and consistent posting can build trust and attract loyal followers. Apps like Canva help create attractive menus or flyers for free, while WhatsApp Business makes it easier to manage orders and respond to enquiries professionally. Some successful young bakers in Malaysia, like @keempossible_2 and @amorasloves, have used these platforms to grow from kitchen start-ups into popular brands with thousands of followers.

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Image 1: Easy-to-sell homemade rolls and pizzas
(Source: Author's own collection)

3. Be creative and offer something unique

To stand out in a competitive market, bakers need to add a personal touch or offer something different.

This could mean designing character-themed cakes, creating low-sugar or gluten-free options, or introducing seasonal packages for festivals and special occasions.

Being creative does not always mean being complicated, but it is about understanding what customers want and presenting it appealingly. Innovation in flavour, design, and presentation can build a strong brand identity and drive word-of-mouth marketing.

Broader impact on personal and economic development

Running a home-based bakery is not just about making money but a much wider impact, both personally and within the community. For many young people, it becomes a stepping stone to something bigger.

1. Building confidence and creating opportunities

Starting a small baking business helps young people grow in ways that go far beyond the kitchen. As they learn to plan, take orders, manage finances, and interact with customers, they gain valuable life skills such as problem-solving, time

management, and communication. For many, it becomes a first real step into the world of adulthood. Especially for those who do not pursue higher education, entrepreneurship offers a practical and empowering path to financial independence. It gives them a sense of control, purpose, and hope for a more stable future.

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Image 2: Homemade mini pizza that became a crowd favourite (Source: Author’s own collection)

.Others may use the experience as a springboard to further their studies in culinary arts, food technology, or business. There is also room to go digital, where they can offer online baking classes, share recipes, or build a loyal following on social media.

For many young people, especially those finishing SPM and unsure of their next step, baking from home offers more than just a way to earn some money. It is a chance to learn real-world skills, grow in confidence, and take the first steps toward independence

At its core, this journey goes far beyond just baking. It is about turning a simple interest into something meaningful, especially a way to grow, to earn, and to build a better future. What was once seen as a domestic chore is now a platform for creativity, confidence, and real change. These young entrepreneurs are not only shaping their own lives but they are also contributing to a more self-reliant, forward-moving Malaysia.

2. Strengthening community ties and the local economy

Home bakers often play an active role in their local communities. Many support nearby suppliers, work with other small businesses, or even help friends and neighbours learn the ropes. As they grow, they may register their businesses, contribute to local taxes, and even create part-time jobs, thus adding value to both the informal and formal economy. These small efforts collectively help build a more resilient and self-reliant community.

3. Preserving culture with a modern twist

Young bakers are also helping to keep cultural heritage alive. By giving traditional recipes a fresh look or flavour, they can appeal to younger customers

while still celebrating family and cultural roots. It is a creative way of honouring the past while staying relevant in the present.

Conclusion

For many young people, especially those finishing SPM and unsure of their next step, baking from home offers more than just a way to earn some money. It is a chance to learn real-world skills, grow in confidence, and take the first steps toward independence. With time, effort, and a bit of creativity, a small home-based bakery can become something bigger, for example, a steady source of income, a personal brand, or even a full-blown business.

Some may start supplying local cafes, rent shared kitchens to meet growing demand, or invest in better tools and training.