

EXPLORING RAMADHAN MSME TRENDS AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION IN BATAM CITY

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Abstract

Ramadhan-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) grow rapidly in major cities as seasonal economic activities, yet their potential as culinary tourism attractions remains underexplored. This study aims to explore the potential of Ramadhan MSME in Batam City and propose development strategies within the framework of sustainable tourism. A mixed method approach was used, involving 195 tourist respondents through questionnaires and 30 vendors selected purposively for interviews. Data were gathered through field observation, documentation, and analyzed using descriptive and thematic techniques. Findings show that MSME activities peaked in the first three weeks of Ramadhan, with popular products including snacks and full meals. Most vendors were micro-enterprises managed independently, earning daily turnovers of IDR 500,000–1,000,000. Tourists valued service and the Ramadhan atmosphere as key attractions, although cleanliness and facilities need improvement. Pasar Mega Legenda was the most visited site. Recommended strategies include product innovation, integration into tourism packages, digital branding, and ongoing training. This study highlights that Ramadhan MSME have strong potential to become part of Batam's inclusive, creative, and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

Keywords: *Ramadhan-based MSMEs; Culinary Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Seasonal Bazaar*

INTRODUCTION

The month of Ramadan not only has spiritual significance for Indonesian people, but also gives rise to unique economic and social dynamics. One of the main manifestations is the increase in seasonal trade activities through Ramadan bazaars that are widespread in various cities (Wahyudi et al., 2023). In Batam City, this phenomenon is even more striking because of its position as a service city as well as the main entry point for tourists from Singapore and Malaysia. Ramadan bazaars are generally dominated by MSMEs who play an important role in short-term economic turnover, from food distribution to informal job creation (Widyastuti et al., 2022). Interestingly, based on the data shown in Figure 1, the number of MSMEs in Batam City far exceeds other areas in the Riau Islands Province, strengthening the argument that this sector is the backbone of the local economy. With a large number of actors and a strategic location, MSME activities during Ramadan actually have great potential to be developed as a seasonal culinary tourism attraction. However, this potential has not been widely touched on in academic discourse or in policy plans for developing community-based tourism destinations.

Although Ramadhan MSMEs appear to be growing rapidly every year, because they are seasonal, informal, and have not been managed systematically, their role in regional tourism development strategies is still not optimal. On the other hand, tourists' interest in authentic culinary experiences based on local culture continues to increase. Research (Wirawan et al., 2022) shows that culinary tourism is now one of the main reasons people travel. Ramadhan MSME activities actually include important elements of culinary tourism, such as community involvement, serving typical foods, and unique shopping experiences. Therefore, policies and academic approaches are needed to bridge this potential so that it is in line with the principles of sustainable tourism. (Shabrina et al., 2024) state that sustainable tourism depends on local economic resilience. In this case, Ramadhan MSMEs have great opportunities to be developed as part of the creative economy and strengthening the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

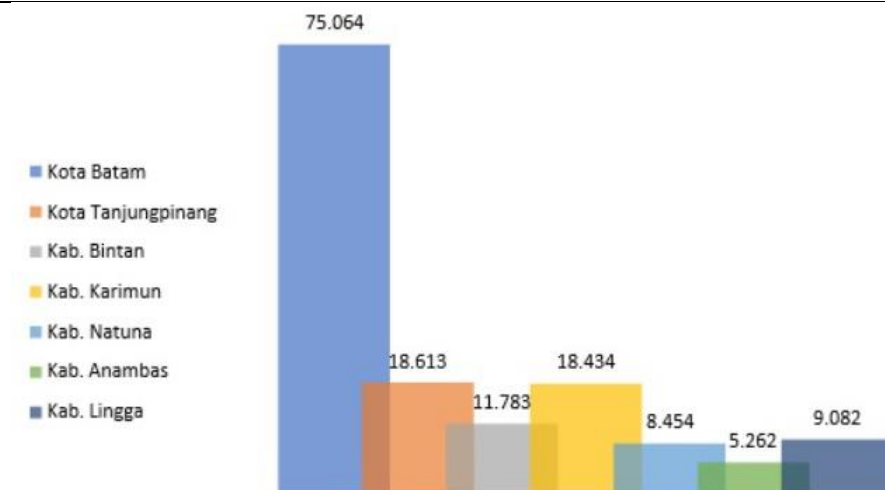


Image 1: Number of MSMEs in Riau Islands Province in 2022

(Source: (Farahdewi, 2023))

To support the analysis in this study, several relevant theories were used. The MSME theory according to (Luthfiyah et al., 2025) explains that small businesses play an important role in creating jobs and strengthening the local economy, especially in the informal sector. The concept of tourist attraction from (Rachmawati et al., 2022) includes activities or experiences that attract tourists, including unique and seasonal Ramadan bazaars. (Haris, 2011) states that seasonal traders, although informal, still contribute greatly to supporting the local economy. According to (Fitriyani, 2025), the culinary sector is one of the main routes for entrepreneurial growth because of the relatively small capital and large market. (Babu et al., 2024) emphasizes that sustainable tourism strategies need to involve local communities and maintain cultural sustainability. Meanwhile, community empowerment that optimizes local potential can improve the economic welfare of the community through the development of community-based tourism (Adhistian et al., 2020).

Based on the previous description, the formulation of the problem in this study includes three main things, namely: (1) how are the growth trends and business patterns of MSMEs during the month of Ramadan in Batam City; (2) to what extent can the potential of MSMEs during Ramadan be developed as a culinary tourism attraction; and (3) what strategies can be carried out to make MSMEs during Ramadan part of the sustainable tourism industry. These three questions are the basis for seeing how seasonal MSMEs can play a role in supporting local tourism sustainably.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) analyze how the growth and business patterns of MSMEs occur during the month of Ramadan in Batam City; (2) identify the potential of MSMEs during Ramadan as a culinary tourism attraction based on local experience and culture; and (3) formulate development strategies so that MSMEs during Ramadan can be integrated into the sustainable tourism industry at the regional level. This study is expected to contribute both in theory and practice, especially in helping the government and MSME actors to develop more targeted, participatory, and sustainable programs in supporting community-based tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are an economic sector that plays an important role in a country's economy. According to (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun, 2008) concerning MSMEs, micro businesses are productive businesses owned by individuals or individual business entities that meet certain asset and turnover criteria. Small and medium enterprises have a larger business scale with a significant contribution to national economic growth. According to research by (Tambunan, 2021), MSMEs that are supported by innovation and appropriate policies have a greater opportunity to develop and contribute significantly to local and national economic development.

Tourist attractions are the main factors that influence tourists' decisions in choosing a destination. (Cooper, 2005) defines tourist attractions as elements that can attract tourists to visit a place, whether in the form of natural, cultural, or man-made objects. In the context of Ramadhan MSMEs, the appeal of culinary tourism is a factor that determines the success of temporary markets in attracting visitors. According to (Yoeti, 1985), the appeal of culinary tourism is influenced by the uniqueness of the product, quality of service, and marketing strategies implemented by business actors.

Seasonal traders are individuals or groups who run businesses for a certain period of time, usually related to a certain momentum or event. According to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016), people's consumption patterns change based on seasonal factors, where demand for certain products increases in certain periods, such as the month of Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, temporary markets such as Ramadan bazaars are a common phenomenon in various regions, including in Batam City. Seasonal traders who operate during the month of Ramadan usually sell typical culinary products for breaking the fast as well as various other needs relevant to the traditions of Ramadan.

The economic and social impacts of the existence of Ramadhan MSMEs are very significant, especially in creating job opportunities and increasing people's purchasing power. According to (Porter, 1998), MSMEs contribute to increasing regional economic competitiveness through the creation of added value and diversification of income sources. From a social perspective, the existence of Ramadhan MSMEs also plays a role in strengthening social and cultural interactions in the community. Community-based economic activities such as Ramadhan bazaars can increase social solidarity and strengthen local cultural values. Therefore, understanding the economic and social impacts of Ramadhan MSMEs is essential in designing its development strategy as part of the tourism sector of Batam City.

METHOD

This study uses a mixed method approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more complete picture of the Ramadan MSME phenomenon. This approach was chosen so that researchers can understand both data in the form of numbers from tourists and in-depth views from business actors. This study is descriptive exploratory, with the aim of identifying trends, perceptions, potential, and strategies for developing seasonal MSMEs during the month of Ramadan in Batam City as part of culinary tourism that can be developed sustainably.

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from two main groups of respondents, namely tourists who visited the Ramadhan bazaar and MSME traders who participated as seasonal business actors. Secondary data were obtained from various supporting documents such as reports on bazaar management by local governments, media news archives, data from tourism and MSME offices, and relevant literature discussing MSMEs, culinary tourism, sustainable tourism, and community-based seasonal activities.

The sampling technique in this study is divided into two. For tourists, a probability sampling technique with the Slovin formula was used to determine the number of respondents proportionally from three Ramadhan bazaar locations: Pasar Mega Legenda, Taman Dang Anom, and Pasar Tiban Center. With a 5% error rate, 195 tourist respondents were obtained. Meanwhile, for MSME traders, a purposive sampling technique was used, namely the deliberate selection of informants based on certain criteria such as trading experience, product type, and regular participation in the bazaar. A total of 30 traders were interviewed in depth to obtain information on business strategies, challenges, and the potential for developing the bazaar as a tourist attraction.

Data collection was conducted through four main methods. First, questionnaires were given to tourists to determine their perceptions of products, atmosphere, service, cleanliness, and motivations for visiting, including demographic data and visiting patterns. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with MSME traders to gain information about their businesses, sales strategies, challenges, and views on the potential of bazaar tourism. Third, field observations were conducted to directly record the conditions of the bazaar, such as layout, visitor and trader interactions, and available facilities. Fourth, documentation was used to collect secondary data from reports and other written sources.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and graphs to see tourist patterns and preferences. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews were analyzed by grouping the main themes that emerged from the traders' answers. All findings were then compared and linked to each other through data triangulation for greater accuracy. The results of the analysis were arranged narratively and linked to relevant theories to produce conclusions that support the development of local tourism policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Ramadhan Bazaar at Pasar Mega Legenda, Batam Centre, looks very crowded and full of activity. From the attached photo, you can see rows of food and beverage stalls arranged in a covered corridor, filled with visitors from various circles. Although the facilities are simple, the use of tents and banners is quite eye-catching. Buying and selling activities take place quickly, especially nearing the time to break the fast. This crowd shows that Pasar Mega Legenda is the center of economic activity during Ramadhan and has great potential as an annual culinary tourism destination.



Image 2: Bazaar Conditions at Mega Legenda Market

The Ramadhan Bazaar in Dang Anom Park looks neat and well-organized. The bazaar area is decorated with brightly colored pedestrian paths, neatly arranged white tents, and colorful lights and flags that add to the festive atmosphere. This atmosphere feels modern and comfortable, suitable for families and tourists who want to enjoy the atmosphere of Ramadhan. In terms of design and location, this bazaar has the potential to be developed as an annual culinary tourism attraction. However, running a culinary business requires the right strategy and analysis in order to attract more visitors and ensure the sustainability of the business in the future (Lubis & Afriani, 2025).



Image 3: Condition of the Bazaar in Dang Anom Park

The Ramadhan Bazaar at Pasar Tiban Center looks simple and traditional. Stalls are neatly lined up on the left and right sides of the road with uniform blue tents, but without additional decorations or lights. The buying and selling atmosphere is quite calm, dominated by local residents, especially teenagers and adults. This bazaar is more local and community-oriented, with warm interactions even on a small scale. Even without entertainment or visual appeal, economic activity continues during the month of Ramadhan.



Image 4: Bazaar at Tiban Center Market

This study produced a number of important findings related to trends, perceptions, and potential for developing Ramadhan MSMEs as culinary tourism attractions in Batam City. Quantitative data were obtained from 195 tourist respondents who visited three Ramadhan bazaar locations, while qualitative data were collected from in-depth interviews with 30 MSME traders. The three research locations—Mega Legenda Market, Dang Anom Park, and Tiban Center Market—have different characteristics in terms of the number of visitors, provision of facilities, and consumption patterns.

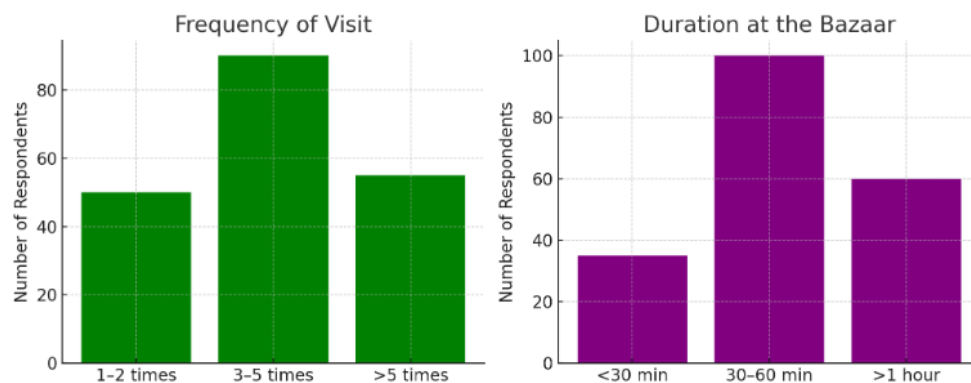


Image 5: Frequency of Visits and Length of Tourist Visits

In general, the results of the study showed that the majority of tourists visited the Ramadhan bazaar more than twice during the fasting month. As many as 51% of them spent between IDR 50,000 and IDR 100,000 per visit, indicating that this bazaar has a fairly stable middle purchasing power. In terms of demographics, visitors are dominated by the 21–30 year old age group, which is a productive age segment with a high interest in culinary and social experiences.

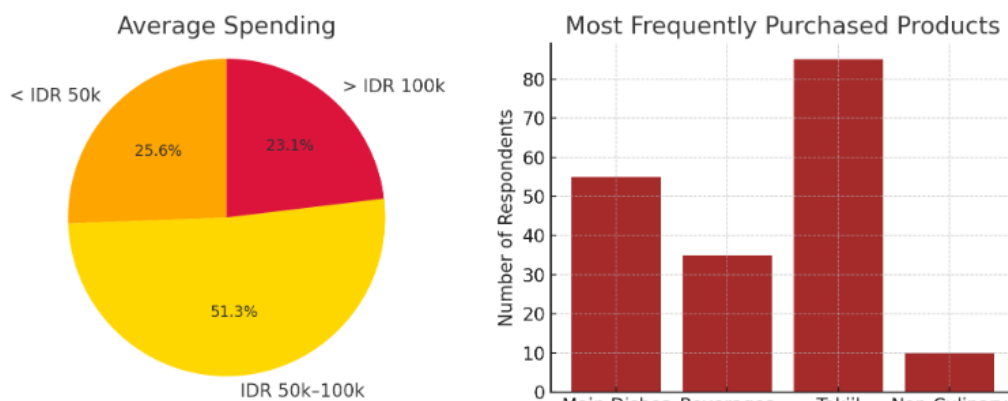


Image 6: Amount of Expenditure and Type of Products Consumed

One of the important findings in this study is the perception of tourists towards the quality of the experience of visiting the Ramadhan bazaar. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the aspect of merchant service received the highest level of satisfaction, followed by product variety, price, and environmental cleanliness. This shows the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of public areas (Supardi, Rais, et al., 2024) and service quality, which directly affect the level of visitor satisfaction (Jeniffer et al., 2024). The visualization in the following Figure shows the distribution of respondents' satisfaction levels towards four main aspects:

Visitor Satisfaction Level on Ramadhan Bazaar (Scale 1-5)

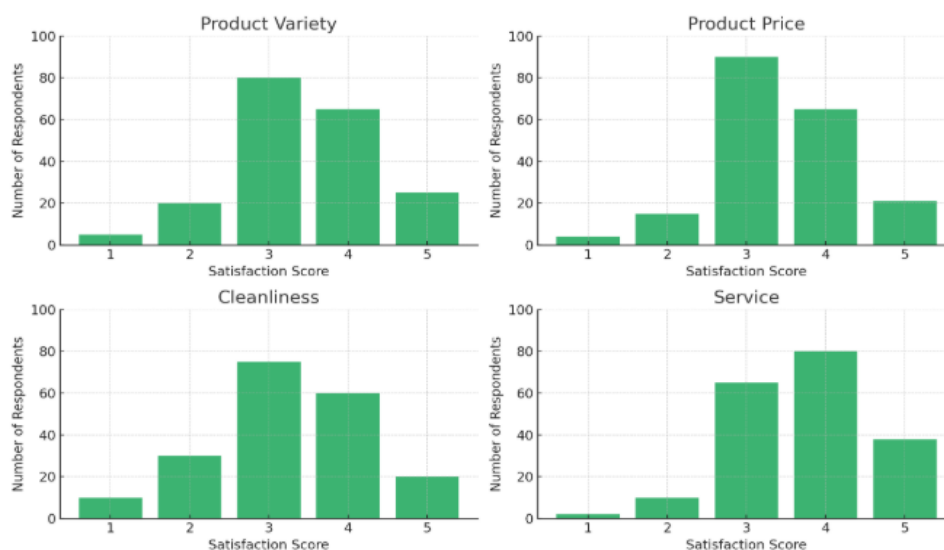


Image 7: Level of Visitor Satisfaction with the Ramadhan Bazaar

As seen in the figure, the satisfaction score for merchant service peaked at 4 and 5, indicating that the friendliness and responsiveness of the merchants are their own advantages. Meanwhile, product variety and price received the highest scores at 3 and 4, reflecting that although the products offered are quite diverse and affordable, there is still room for quality improvement and innovation. The cleanliness aspect, although it received a moderate score, needs further attention because many visitors gave scores of 2 and 3, indicating that there are still shortcomings in the management of sanitation and public facilities. Therefore, it is important to implement strict sanitation hygiene, especially for food products, to ensure the comfort and health of visitors and maintain the reputation of the tourist destination (Supardi, Wibowo, et al., 2024).

From the perspective of MSMEs, the interview results showed that most traders participated in the Ramadhan bazaar as a seasonal business that they relied on to increase their income. The average daily turnover was in the range of IDR 500,000–IDR 1,000,000, with operational costs ranging from IDR 200,000–IDR 500,000. Although many traders stated that their income this year was stable or increasing, they still faced challenges related to promotions, less strategic stall locations, and lack of supporting facilities such as lighting, drainage, and seating for consumers.

Some locations such as Pasar Mega Legenda are centers of activity that do not rely on additional promotions, while Taman Dang Anom shows great potential visually and in terms of location but has few visitors. This shows that facilities and location have proven to influence visitor satisfaction, where strategic locations and adequate facilities can increase the attraction and visits of tourists (Sariani & Lubis, 2024). This shows that the success of a bazaar is not only determined by physical facilities, but also by the strength of social networks and the reputation of the location in the collective consciousness of the community. One interesting point that emerged from field observations was that there were no additional promotional or entertainment activities at Mega Legenda, but visitor enthusiasm remained high due to popular perception factors that had been formed socially from year to year.

Other findings show that the dominant types of products sold are takjil and heavy meals, with limited product innovation. Most traders have not used modern promotional strategies such as bundling, discounts, or active use of social media. This is a great opportunity for intervention for digital marketing training or product packaging for MSMEs. In addition, observations of visitors show that the busiest visiting time is around dusk until evening, with most visitors coming from families and teenagers. The interaction between traders and buyers is generally short transactional without further communication, which indicates that the "tourism experience" aspect in these buying and selling activities is not yet optimal.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that Ramadhan MSMEs not only play a role as seasonal economic activities, but have strong potential to be developed into part of the seasonal tourism ecosystem of Batam City, especially in the realm of culinary tourism. However, to realize this potential, strategic intervention is needed from various parties in terms of promotion, spatial planning, improving product quality, and strengthening the identity of the bazaar destination. This finding is an important basis for the preparation of a development strategy which will be discussed in the next section.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that Ramadhan MSMEs in Batam City have become quite active seasonal economic activities and are able to increase the income of traders. This activity is most crowded in the first three weeks of Ramadhan, then decreases in the fourth week, along with the decreasing number of visitors and traders. This pattern is in accordance with the characteristics of seasonal businesses that tend to be fluctuating and temporary. However, the consistent involvement of traders every year shows that Ramadhan MSMEs have the potential to be further developed as part of the annual tourism agenda of Batam City.

From the tourist perspective, the highest level of satisfaction was obtained from the aspect of merchant service, followed by product variety and price. This finding confirms that interpersonal factors in direct service in the field are still the main determinants of the quality of the culinary tourism experience (Batti et al., 2024). On the other hand, the aspects of cleanliness and public facilities scored lower, indicating the need for improvement in terms of bazaar location governance. This supports the argument (Sidabutar & Hidayat, 2023) that sustainability in tourism is not only determined by product diversity, but also by the destination's ability to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable environment for visitors.

Regarding the products offered, the majority of traders sell traditional snacks (takjil) and heavy meals, with limited product innovation. These results are in accordance with the MSME theory by (Aziz et al., 2024), which states that MSMEs tend to choose products with low risk and easy to mass produce. However, the lack of product differentiation is also a challenge in increasing the added value and positioning of the bazaar as a culinary tourism destination. Opportunities for improvement can be carried out through product innovation training based on local

culture, more attractive packaging, and the development of culinary storytelling as part of an authentic tourism experience (Lubis et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the existence of the Ramadhan bazaar in Batam City spatially shows an imbalance in terms of the number of visitors and the attractiveness between locations. Pasar Mega Legenda, for example, is a central point for visitors despite minimal promotion or additional entertainment activities. On the other hand, Taman Dang Anom, which has a strategic location and attractive lighting, is less popular. This shows that collective perceptions of the community and historical experiences play a bigger role than just visual aspects or physical locations (Rahman, 2023). Therefore, the development of seasonal tourist destinations is not enough just by improving infrastructure, but also needs to build a strong identity and branding for bazaar locations.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, the results of this study emphasize the importance of integration between MSME actors, bazaar organizers, and other tourism stakeholders. As explained by (Haeril et al., 2024) MSMEs play an important role through the advancement of local culture, product and service development, innovation, collaboration, increasing community participation, and environmental conservation. One important form of local community participation is their involvement in planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating sustainable tourism. This involvement also increases a sense of ownership of sustainable tourism development initiatives, which in turn strengthens the competitiveness of the tourist destination itself (Satrio Wibowo & Arviana Belia, 2023).

From interviews with traders, it was found that most of them were interested in continuing their business after Ramadan if there was support from facilities and a stable market. This desire is a positive signal that MSME actors are ready to be directed towards a more sustainable business and not limited to annual events. Therefore, a long-term strategy needs to be designed not only to facilitate activities during Ramadan, but also to create a competitive culinary MSME ecosystem throughout the year. This is in line with the concept of community-based tourism which promotes economic sustainability through the active participation of local communities in the planning and management of tourist attractions (Syafiqah et al., 2022).

Overall, Ramadhan MSMEs have the potential to be developed into part of sustainable tourism if they are well managed, based on data, and involve cooperation from various parties. The findings of this study can be the basis for formulating development strategies that are in accordance with conditions in the field and the needs of tourists and MSME actors in Batam City.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and previous discussions, this study recommends a number of development strategies that can be adopted by local governments, business actors, and tourism stakeholders as seen in the image below.



Image 8: Recommendations for Developing a Ramadan Bazaar

First, regular product curation is needed for MSME actors who are members of the Ramadhan bazaar to ensure product quality, cleanliness, and uniqueness. Second, the management of the Ramadhan bazaar needs to be directed to become part of thematic tourism activities, such as "Ramadhan Culinary Night" or "Batam Takjil Tourism", which can be packaged in tour packages with hotel partners, travel agents, and other destination managers. Third, it is

recommended to strengthen the digital capacity of MSMEs, through short training related to digital marketing, use of social media, and creation of interesting culinary content. Fourth, spatial planning and visual management of the bazaar need to be carried out professionally by involving community architects, visual designers, or design students who can present layout concepts that are aesthetic, functional, and in accordance with local character. Fifth, operational guidelines for the Ramadhan bazaar need to be prepared based on data and local needs. These guidelines can include cleanliness standards, operating hours, queuing systems, waste management, and evaluation mechanisms based on visitor surveys. Finally, it is important for local governments and policy makers to carry out cross-sector integration between the tourism office, the cooperative and MSME office, and the trade office, in order to create holistic and non-sectoral bazaar governance. If these strategies are implemented consistently, then Ramadhan MSMEs can transform from just a seasonal activity into an integral part of the dynamic, creative, and inclusive tourism ecosystem of Batam City.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the most active MSME Ramadan activities in Batam City occur during the first three weeks of the fasting month, then decrease sharply in the last week. Most traders are micro-entrepreneurs, usually managed alone or with family, with the main products being takjil and heavy meals. Although seasonal, this business shows a fairly promising daily turnover, so it has the potential to be developed into a sustainable business if it is supported by adequate facilities and policies. In terms of tourism, MSME Ramadan is considered attractive to local and out-of-town tourists because it offers typical culinary delights that are only available during the month of Ramadan and a different social atmosphere. Pasar Mega Legenda is the busiest location even without major promotions, while Taman Dang Anom has visual potential but is still quiet. MSME Ramadan is not only a place to shop for food, but also offers a unique experience that can be used as a seasonal culinary tourism attraction. Therefore, several development strategies are recommended such as product innovation, integration in Ramadan tour packages, digital promotions, comfortable spatial planning, and training and certification for traders. Routine evaluation is also needed so that bazaar management is more professional. If this strategy is implemented collaboratively, MSME Ramadan can become an important part of creative and sustainable tourism in Batam City.

For further research, it is suggested that the focus be directed at the long-term economic impact of Ramadhan MSMEs, including their contribution to the tourism sector. Research can also evaluate the effectiveness of government policies in supporting seasonal MSMEs to become sustainable businesses. A broader quantitative approach and the use of digital technology such as social media analysis or visitor mapping will enrich the results. In addition, comparative studies outside Batam City will provide a broader picture of the development of MSMEs based on religious events as culinary tourism attractions in Indonesia.

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