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ANALYSIS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE MSMEs IN THE BANTIMURUNG NATURE TOURISM AREA, MAROS REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to: 1) Identify the characteristics of food and beverage MSME actors in the Bantimurung Nature Tourism Area (NTA), Maros Regency; 2) Analyze the sustainability of Food and Beverage MSMEs in the Bantimurung NTA based on MSME classifications and categories. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method for analysis. The study findings indicate that the characteristics of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) food and beverage business actors in KWA Bantimurung are as follows: a) The business actors are generally female ; b) With a predominance of individuals over 35 years of age ; c) In terms of educational level, they are graduates of junior high school and/or senior/vocational high school ; d) They are generally married with children ; e) They reside in and own their permanent homes with their families ; f) They consider the Food and Beverage MSME business in the Bantimurung NTA as their primary business or main occupation to support their families, an endeavor they have pursued for more than ten years.

Keywords: Sustainability; Food and Beverage Business; Tourism Area; tourist attraction

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the strategic sectors that plays an important role in driving national and regional economic growth. In Indonesia, the tourism sector is expected to become a major source of foreign exchange earnings after the natural resource sector, while also serving as a driving force for regional economic development and improving the welfare of local communities. Tourism development is capable of generating a multiplier effect through increasing community income, job creation, and the growth of various supporting business opportunities, particularly in the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector (Rahman, 2022; Santoso et al., 2021; UNWTO, 2023).

The tourism sector also plays a significant role in regional development, particularly in areas that possess tourism potential and attractions, including natural tourism, cultural tourism, and special interest tourism. A region's tourism industry will develop successfully if it possesses

destinations supported by the 3A components, namely attractive tourism attractions, accessible and affordable accessibility, and adequate amenities, including tourism infrastructure and public facilities (Cooper & Hall, 2021; Middleton et al., 2021).

According to a press release from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Indonesian Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, Indonesia's tourism sector ranked 22nd out of 117 countries worldwide in 2024. This achievement indicates a significant improvement from 32nd place in 2021 to 22nd place in 2024 (WEF, 2024). This ranking demonstrates the strong potential of the tourism sector in driving national economic growth, particularly in areas surrounding tourist destinations, through increased foreign exchange earnings from international visitors, employment generation, trade, and service sector development (Santoso et al., 2021). Furthermore, tourism development also contributes to increasing tax revenues and national income. In addition, local communities benefit directly and indirectly from tourism development, creating a positive reciprocal relationship between tourism and society (Chaerunissa & Yuniningsih, 2020).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as tourism activities designed by fully considering economic, social, and environmental consequences both in the present and for the future. The objective is to balance the needs of tourists, industry stakeholders, environmental preservation, and the welfare of local communities. One of the essential needs of tourists is the availability of food and beverage services at tourist attractions. Bantimurung, as one of the natural tourist attractions located within the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area (KWA Bantimurung), offers various types of food and beverage services managed by 50 MSME owners and operators.

Maros Regency, as a world-class tourism destination marked by the existence of the Maros-Pangkep UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG), possesses promising tourism prospects in the future. As a tourism destination, Maros Regency has several well-known tourist attractions, including Bantimurung Natural Tourism, the Rammang-Rammang River Tourism Area, and the prehistoric site of Leang-Leang, all of which hold high cultural and educational value (UNESCO, 2022).

The Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area (KWA Bantimurung) is a leading tourism destination visited by local, domestic, and international tourists. According to Law Number 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Ecosystems, which was amended by Law Number 32 of 2024, nature-based tourism is defined as activities that utilize natural resources and environmental conditions for recreation and tourism purposes. Nature-based tourism serves as a medium for

physical and mental recovery from daily routines and urban pressures, supporting life balance and enhancing creativity. Additionally, these activities provide both physical and psychological satisfaction (Vitasari et al., 2021; Buckley et al., 2022).

Historically, Bantimurung has been a popular tourism destination since the colonial era, particularly among European elites in Makassar (Siryayasa et al., 2020). Besides offering recreational experiences, this area also provides educational tourism attractions, with its main features including karst formations, caves with impressive stalactites and stalagmites, waterfalls, and the iconic butterfly habitat, which has earned Bantimurung the nickname “The Kingdom of Butterfly.”

Tourism attractions in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area are supported by accessible transportation infrastructure and the availability of tourism amenities and public facilities. Moreover, the uniqueness of tourism attractions in KWA Bantimurung, which integrates natural resources, local cultural values, and educational elements, reflects efforts toward sustainable tourism development (Saharuna & Rahman, 2024). These strengths are expected to stimulate tourism activities in KWA Bantimurung, acting as a catalyst for community economic growth and contributing significantly to regional development in Maros Regency.

To establish Maros Regency as a global-standard tourism destination, support from various tourism-related businesses is essential to fulfill the needs of visitors and tourists within and around tourism areas. Based on Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, tourism businesses are defined as enterprises that provide goods and/or services to meet the needs of tourists and tourism operators. Tourism entrepreneurs refer to individuals or groups engaged in tourism-related business activities. There are thirteen categories of tourism businesses considered as the foundation of the tourism sector, which are divided into several subcategories (BPS, 2015). Among these thirteen categories, this study focuses on the sustainability of food and beverage service businesses in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area within the MSME sector.

Referring to the criteria established by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and Law Number 20 of 2008 concerning MSMEs, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are business entities categorized based on certain standards, such as workforce size, asset ownership, and annual turnover. MSMEs have significant potential for sustainable growth and play a crucial role in supporting national economic development. Furthermore, MSMEs contribute to economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, and equitable development outcomes, particularly in the economic and tourism sectors.

MSMEs cover various sectors, including culinary businesses, fashion, handicrafts, and others. Among these sectors, culinary businesses are considered one of the most reliable sectors in supporting regional economic development (Kholik & Rahmi, 2023). According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs, as of mid-2024, there were approximately 1.7 million MSMEs operating in the food and beverage sector, employing approximately 3.6 million workers.

The sustainability of food and beverage MSMEs in Maros Regency, particularly in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area, is closely related to tourism sector development in the region. Culinary products with distinctive local flavors form an important part of regional cultural identity. Various local dishes, including fresh seafood such as grilled fish and processed shrimp, as well as local agricultural products such as boiled or roasted corn, reflect the cultural diversity and natural richness of the region (Richards, 2021; UNWTO, 2023).

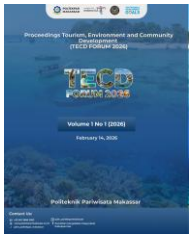
In addition, traditional dishes such as *Coto* and *Roti Maros* also serve as culinary attractions that play an important role in meeting the needs of tourists visiting KWA Bantimurung. The presence of food and beverage MSMEs supports regional economic development. Supported by improved accessibility and increasing tourist arrivals, MSMEs in this sector have the potential to grow continuously, absorb local labor, and contribute to increased regional income while strengthening the appeal of culinary tourism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the social and economic phenomena related to the sustainability of food and beverage Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area (KWA Bantimurung), Maros Regency. The qualitative approach was selected to obtain a comprehensive overview of business conditions, the characteristics of MSME actors, and the social and environmental dynamics associated with these enterprises.

The research data were derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through field observations and structured interviews using questionnaires administered to food and beverage MSME actors operating in KWA Bantimurung. The research informants consisted of 50 MSME owners or managers, selected through purposive sampling with criteria including actively operating businesses that serve tourists during the research period. Primary data focused on business development aspects, MSME actor characteristics, capital ownership, and human resource management.

Secondary data were obtained from official documents and reports issued by regional



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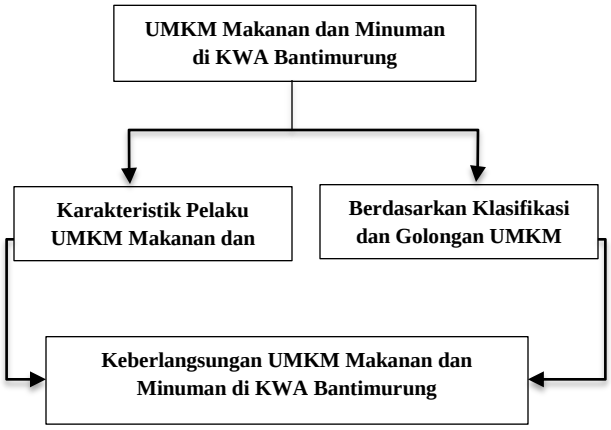
government agencies, particularly Local Government Organizations (OPD) within the Maros Regency Government, such as the Department of Tourism, Youth, and Sports, and the Central Statistics Agency of Maros Regency. Additionally, secondary data were strengthened through literature studies, including laws and regulations, academic literature, scientific books, and other relevant sources related to the research topic.

Data collection techniques included direct observation at the research location, structured interviews using questionnaires, and document analysis. The research instruments were designed to explore information regarding the business conditions of food and beverage MSMEs, capital capacity, business management practices, and the role of MSMEs in supporting tourism activities within the natural tourism area.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative analysis. Data obtained from observations and questionnaires were processed and presented in tabular form to facilitate understanding, and subsequently interpreted qualitatively to identify meanings and patterns relevant to the research objectives. The analysis process involved stages of data collection, data classification and presentation, interpretation, and drawing conclusions regarding the condition and sustainability of food and beverage MSMEs in KWA Bantimurung.

This research was conducted in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area, Maros Regency, over a three-month period from July to September 2025. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that KWA Bantimurung is a major tourism destination in Maros Regency with a high level of tourist visits and a relatively large number of active food and beverage MSMEs.

Gambar 1. Kerangka Konseptual



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Food and Beverage MSME Actors

The findings indicate that food and beverage MSME actors in the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area (KWA Bantimurung) are predominantly female, with the majority aged above 35 years. The educational background of respondents is generally at the junior high school and senior high school/vocational high school levels. Most respondents are married and have family dependents. This condition indicates that

food and beverage MSMEs play a crucial role as the primary source of livelihood for business actors' households.

Most respondents have managed their businesses for more than ten years, reflecting a strong level of business resilience in facing tourism dynamics. Food and beverage MSMEs in this area are generally operated as primary occupations rather than side businesses. This finding reinforces the strategic role of MSMEs in supporting household economies as well as the local economy surrounding the tourism area.

MSME Sustainability Based on Business Classification and Category

Based on the analysis results, all food and beverage MSMEs involved in this study fall into the micro-enterprise category. This classification is determined based on the scale of business capital and the level of annual sales, which remain within the threshold of micro-enterprises. The business capital owned by MSME actors is relatively limited and mostly derived from personal funds. Access to formal financing remains low, as many business actors experience difficulties in obtaining loans from financial institutions and banks due to limited collateral ownership.

Despite these limitations, food and beverage MSMEs in KWA Bantimurung have demonstrated long-term business sustainability. Business continuity is strongly influenced by the dependence of MSME activities on tourist visitation flows. On regular days, visitor numbers tend to be relatively stable, while during weekends and public holidays, visitor numbers increase significantly, directly affecting the sales growth of food and beverage MSME products.

However, limited capital, low financial literacy, and the absence of proper financial record-keeping remain major obstacles to business development. These conditions indicate that MSME sustainability remains at a survival stage and has not yet fully reached a sustainable growth phase.

Discussion

The findings of this study emphasize that the sustainability of food and beverage MSMEs in KWA Bantimurung is influenced not only by economic aspects but also by social and environmental dimensions, as highlighted in the Triple Bottom Line concept. MSMEs have proven to play a significant role in supporting local economic development and tourism activities. However, they continue to face various structural limitations, particularly in terms of capital access, business management, and the capacity development of business actors.

Within the context of sustainable tourism development, strengthening food and beverage MSMEs should focus on improving business capacity, expanding access to financial resources, and providing continuous business mentoring that considers social and environmental sustainability aspects. Therefore, MSMEs are expected not only

to survive but also to grow sustainably in alignment with the conservation and sustainable management of natural tourism areas.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Maros Regency holds a strategic position as a world-class tourism destination, marked by the presence of the Maros–Pangkep UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG), including the Bantimurung Natural Tourism Area (KWA Bantimurung). Within this area, food and beverage Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are widely distributed and play a significant role in supporting tourism activities and the local community's economy.

The results of this study indicate that food and beverage MSME actors in KWA Bantimurung are predominantly female, aged above 35 years, and mostly have educational backgrounds at the junior high school and senior high school/vocational high school levels. Most business actors are married, possess permanent housing, and rely on food and beverage MSMEs as their primary occupation, which has been sustained for more than ten years. These findings confirm the essential role of MSMEs as the primary source of household income for business actors.

Based on MSME classification and business category, all food and beverage enterprises in KWA Bantimurung are categorized as micro-enterprises, characterized by individual ownership, limited assets and capital, and relatively low annual sales levels. Nevertheless, these MSMEs have demonstrated sustainability and continued operation alongside tourist visitation activities within the natural tourism area.

Recommendations

To maintain the existence, continuity, and sustainability of food and beverage MSMEs in KWA Bantimurung, continuous support and empowerment from stakeholders are required through training and development programs tailored to the needs of business actors, particularly in business management, product quality improvement, and tourism service enhancement.

Furthermore, food and beverage MSMEs that remain within the micro-enterprise category require assistance in accessing financial institutions and banking services to obtain affordable, accessible, and sustainable funding sources. Improved access to capital is expected to encourage business expansion and enhance the welfare of MSME actors.

In supporting clean and sustainable tourism development, special attention should be given to environmental aspects, particularly waste and environmental management, including plastic waste management in the KWA Bantimurung area. Synergy among government institutions, tourism area managers, MSME actors, and local communities is essential in ensuring MSME

sustainability aligned with environmental conservation principles and sustainable tourism destination development.

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