

DISCUSSION PAPER 2/25 | 30 APRIL 2025

Why Night Markets Matter?: A review of literature

Nur Sofea Hasmira Azahar and Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim



Khazanah Research Institute

The **KRI Discussion Papers** are a series of research documents by the author(s) discussing and examining pressing and emerging issues. They are stand-alone products published to stimulate discussion and contribute to public discourse. In that respect, readers are encouraged to submit their comments directly to the authors.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not necessarily represent the official views of KRI. All errors remain authors' own.

DISCUSSION PAPER 2/25 | 30 APRIL 2025

Why Night Markets Matter?: A review of literature

This discussion paper was prepared by Nur Sofea Hasmira Azahar (Research Associate) and Dr Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim (Senior Research Associate) from the Khazanah Research Institute (KRI). The authors are grateful for the valuable comments from Associate Professor Dr Roza Hazli Zakaria (Universiti Malaya, UM) and Dr Teoh Ai Ni (Research Associate, KRI).

The authors would also like to thank Sufiah Bee Bee SM Raja Mohideen (Intern) for her valuable assistance in preparing this paper.

Authors' email address: nursofea.azahar@krinstitute.org and amirul.rahim@krinstitute.org

Attribution – Please cite the work as follows: Nur Sofea Hasmira Azahar & Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim. 2025. Why Night Markets Matter?: A review of literature. Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Research Institute. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0.

Translations – If you create a translation of this work, please add the following disclaimer along with the attribution: This translation was not created by Khazanah Research Institute and should not be considered an official Khazanah Research Institute translation. Khazanah Research Institute shall not be liable for any content or error in this translation.

Published April 2025. Published by Khazanah Research Institute at Level 17-1, Mercu UEM, Jalan Stesen Sentral 5, Kuala Lumpur Sentral 50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: +603 2705 6100; Fax: +603 2034 0000; Email: enquiries@KRInstitute.org.

All queries on rights and licenses should be addressed to the Chairman's Office, Khazanah Research Institute, at the address stated above. Information on Khazanah Research Institute publications and digital products can be found at www.KRInstitute.org.

Cover photo by [gracethang](#) available at iStock.

Why Night Markets Matter?: A review of literature

Nur Sofea Hasmira Azahar and Dr Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim

Summary

This discussion paper delves into three (3) parts of the research: i) examine the overall night markets hawking landscape in Malaysia, ii) understand the night market sector through its definitions and classifications, evolution and contributions alongside the challenges it faces, and iii) assessing the broader implications of the findings.

Night markets, more commonly known as *pasar malam*, are a distinct category within the broader hawking scene in Malaysia. They offer a unique blend of culture and lifestyle stemming from a multiracial society. Officially, night markets are classified under a specific category—Small Business Orientation (SBO)—which refers to small-scale businesses that operate informally or are registered under the local authorities (PBT) or district offices. The business concept of an SBO is non-permanent, and the business operates independently.

In the past, night market business was particularly helpful for less-privileged Malaysians, as hawking was perceived as a primary source of income for those lacking the skills and training to compete in the formal job market. Additionally, night markets have become a key alternative source of income during economic downturns. The government has historically introduced various schemes to support low-income earners in establishing and operating new businesses and reviving their affected sources of income during economic crises.

Night markets accounted for 34% of informal businesses in Kuala Lumpur in 2023—the largest share compared to other forms of hawking activities. The relatively high participation in night market business is facilitated by various government incentives and low entry barriers, making night markets attractive incubators for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Literature review highlights several key issues that warrant further policy attention and consideration. These include the effectiveness of existing licensing frameworks, the adequacy of food safety practices, and the need for clearer guidelines on waste management and spatial planning. At the same time, notable initiatives such as the adoption of digital payment systems, financing access, and structured tourism-based promotional campaigns have emerged as relevant strategies to enhance the viability of night markets.

While these findings offer a valuable foundation, they remain largely conceptual without validation from the ground. The upcoming Night Market – Understanding the Experience and Socioeconomic Contributions (NEXUS) survey—focusing directly on night market hawkers and consumers—is therefore essential to substantiate these policy propositions and uncover the lived realities often overlooked in top-down planning. Hence, the study will help reposition Malaysia's night markets not only as vibrant informal economic hubs but also as resilient, well-integrated components of urban development and national economic strategy.

Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	5
Building upon our prior work: The transition from hawkers' landscape to night markets	5
The role of hawkers in Malaysia's informal economy	6
2. Understanding night markets in Malaysia.....	10
2.1. Comparative definitions of night markets	10
2.2. How night markets are defined in Malaysia.....	11
Common characteristics of night markets.....	13
2.3. Growth and development of night markets.....	15
Policies towards a coherent and inclusive development trajectory of the night markets....	18
2.4. Economic and social roles of night markets.....	27
3. Key challenges and untapped potential of night markets.....	29
3.1. Lack of regulatory oversight.....	29
3.2. Public health and environmental concerns.....	33
3.3. Night markets as tourism hubs: An underutilised asset	35
4. Research Gap	37
5. Concluding remarks.....	38
6. References	40
Appendix 1: Literature Review Matrix on Night Markets	49

1. Introduction

Building upon our prior work: The transition from hawkers' landscape to night markets

Hawkers have long been an essential part of Malaysia's socio-economic landscape, serving as the backbone of informal commerce while providing accessible and affordable goods and services to the community. Our previous discussion paper, [Hawkers and Hawking Space in Malaysia: A Case Study](#)¹, examined the general landscape of hawkers in Malaysia and explored their historical significance, economic contributions, and regulatory challenges. It detailed how hawkers, particularly in urban centres, have thrived amidst regulatory pressures, rapid urbanisation, and shifting consumer behaviours.

Building upon these insights², this paper narrows its focus to night markets (*pasar malam*), a distinct and integral component of Malaysia's hawking culture. The presence of night markets can be traced back to the period before Malaysia's independence. During this period until the late 1960s, hawkers, including those operating at night markets, were primarily concentrated in the central cities and areas popular among tourists, such as Kuala Lumpur and Selangor³. Night market business also plays a crucial role for vulnerable and low-income Malaysians, offering a primary source of livelihood for individuals lacking the skills and training to compete in the formal job market.

Between 1970 and 2019, the number of hawkers rose tenfold, driven by rapid urbanisation—especially among the Malays in the 1970s—and supportive government policies that promoted equal participation across all ethnic groups. As a result of these sustained efforts, statistics from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) show that night markets now account for the largest share of informal businesses in Kuala Lumpur, comprising 33.9% of the sector⁴.

Nonetheless, night markets offer more than just economic opportunities; they also encapsulate cultural heritage, social interaction, and an evolving business model that adapts to changing urban environments. For one, night markets are seen as an alternative to formal retail shops, providing customers with a casual and convenient shopping experience⁵.

Given their longstanding presence and socioeconomic relevance, this paper aims to provide an in-depth examination of Malaysia's night markets by understanding their economic significance, challenges, and policy implications.

¹ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

² Ibid.

³ Hassan (2003)

⁴ DBKL (2023a)

⁵ Ibid.

The role of hawkers in Malaysia's informal economy

Our previous discussion paper delved into the hawkers' landscape in Malaysia and how the distribution of hawkers interacts with their role in the economy and the changing food preferences among households. Hawkers constitute a significant share of Malaysia's informal economy, contributing to job generation, improved food security, and local economic vibrancy. Historically, hawking has also served as an important economic activity, particularly for low-income individuals seeking self-employment opportunities with minimal capital investment⁶. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOS), the informal sector employed nearly 10% of the workforce in 2023, with a substantial portion engaging in hawking and street vending^{7, 8}.

Furthermore, data shows that hawking is a key economic activity for certain ethnic groups in Malaysia. The statistics on active hawker licenses by ethnicity in 2023 provide a more comprehensive picture of the distribution of licensed hawkers across different types of businesses, although the data is limited to Kuala Lumpur⁹ (Table 1). The Chinese hold the highest number of active hawker licenses, accounting for 48% of the total, followed by Malay hawkers at 45%, Indian hawkers at 6%, and other ethnic groups at only 1%. This distribution reflects longstanding diverse economic and entrepreneurial patterns in Malaysia, where different ethnic groups have traditionally occupied distinct segments of the hawker trade.

One of the key findings from our previous discussion is the evolving preference of households towards hawkers. Over time, accelerated urbanisation, increasing share of dual-income families, and shifting work-life balances have led to an increasing demand for convenient food options, making street and hawker stalls an essential food source in Malaysia. Malaysian households have progressively moved away from home-cooked meals to food-away-from-home (FAFH), benefiting hawkers and informal food vendors who provide quick and affordable meal solutions. Our assessment in *The State of Households 2024*¹⁰ has indicated that FAFH spending among Malaysian households has consistently risen, particularly for those living in urban areas. This trend is consistent with food spending patterns in other Asian economies such as China, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam¹¹. FAFH has become the primary source of food for urban households, with monthly expenditure surpassing that of food-at-home (FAH) in recent years. As such, the increased reliance on food away from home suggests the importance of hawkers in catering to the changing needs of consumers.

⁶ Bhowmik (2005)

⁷ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025) and DOS (2024).

⁸ Hawking refers to small traders who engage in hawking activities, either in a static or mobile manner (on a small scale), at locations such as stalls, retail shops, houses, *warongs*, sidewalks, business complexes/arcades, restaurants, markets, night markets, farmers' markets, day markets, and others. Meanwhile, street vending refers to stationary vendors occupying public or private spaces or mobile vendors using pushcarts or carrying goods in baskets.

⁹ Open data DBKL [website](#)

¹⁰ KRI (2024)

¹¹ Dawe et al. (2019)

Table 1: Statistics of active hawker licenses by ethnicity, 2023*

Hawkers' categories/ethnicity	Malay n (%)	Chinese n (%)	Indian n (%)	Others n (%)	Total n (%)
Friday bazaar	4 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.0)
Late night bazaar	569 (4.1)	29 (0.2)	3 (0.2)	2 (0.6)	603 (2.0)
Car boot sales	39 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	39 (0.1)
Food truck	41 (0.3)	9 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	51 (0.2)
Locked stalls	85 (0.6)	8 (0.1)	16 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	109 (0.4)
Roadside stalls	1,660 (12.0)	1,624 (11.1)	470 (26.0)	136 (41.8)	3,890 (12.7)
KL Madani temporary license	3,286 (23.7)	408 (2.8)	334 (18.4)	71 (21.8)	4,099 (13.4)
Market with buildings	1,463 (10.5)	3,279 (22.4)	362 (20.0)	7 (2.2)	5,111 (16.7)
Night market	4,472 (32.2)	5,518 (37.7)	328 (18.1)	83 (25.5)	10,401 (33.9)
Open market	135 (1.0)	2,866 (19.6)	68 (3.8)	5 (1.5)	3,074 (10.0)
Temporary permit	106 (0.8)	84 (0.6)	19 (1.0)	2 (0.6)	211 (0.7)
Temporary permit (recreational and recreational park)	38 (0.3)	1 (0.0)	2 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	41 (0.1)
DBKL hawker centre	1,264 (9.1)	678 (4.6)	148 (8.2)	11 (3.4)	2,101 (6.9)
Private hawker centre	208 (1.5)	79 (0.5)	24 (1.3)	2 (0.6)	313 (1.0)
Restricted time	273 (2.0)	26 (0.2)	19 (1.0)	4 (1.2)	322 (1.1)
Others**	245 (1.8)	17 (0.1)	18 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	281 (0.9)
TOTAL	13,888 (45.3)	14,626 (47.7)	1,811 (5.9)	325 (1.1)	30,650 (100.0)

Source: Data Terbuka DBKL (DBKL, 2023a)

Note:

1. *Statistics presented as of 3 October 2023
2. **Others include Kiosk/ Entrepreneur kiosk for urban youth/ Motorcycle/ Mobile hawker- caravan/ Recreational Park temporary permit (Bicycle)/ Promotion in DBKL buildings
3. n = number.

Another important aspect that our discussion anchors is the role of hawking spaces in fostering micro-entrepreneurship. For many low-income and informal workers, hawking represents an accessible path to economic participation, requiring relatively low startup capital compared to formal business ventures. The study also highlights the spatial dynamics of hawkers, showing that their concentration in high-density urban areas is driven by foot traffic, consumer preferences, and flexible regulatory frameworks. However, hawkers face increasing pressure from urban redevelopment projects, gentrification, and stricter enforcement by local authorities, which compete with traditional hawking spaces and threaten their long-term viability.

Given these challenges, this paper aims to better understand by shifting the focus to night markets, which provide a structured yet flexible business environment within the hawking ecosystem. While night markets share similarities with general hawking activities, they also exhibit unique characteristics that justify further research.

Hawkers' distribution highlights variations in ethnic participation

Night markets continue to dominate hawker licensing in Kuala Lumpur, accounting for the largest share of active licenses in 2023, with 4,472 active permits (Table 1)¹². Within this category, Chinese hawkers appeared to be leading, followed closely by Malay hawkers, reflecting a longstanding trend of Chinese entrepreneurs maintaining a strong foothold in established urban trading networks¹³. This suggests that while Malays dominate many other temporary hawking spaces, Chinese hawkers have a particularly strong presence in night markets, likely due to their established networks and experience in this form of trade¹⁴.

This pattern extends beyond night markets. Chinese hawkers also represent the largest group in markets with buildings and open markets, highlighting their significant presence in more formalised and permanent hawking spaces¹⁵. Previous studies have pointed to deep-rooted entrepreneurial traditions among Chinese communities, enabling their sustained dominance even in highly regulated sectors¹⁶.

In contrast, Malay hawkers show higher participation in more temporary and flexible setups. They constitute nearly half of the license holders for roadside stalls and dominate categories such as KL Madani temporary licenses, food trucks and temporary permit categories. This pattern suggests that Malays may be leveraging newer or more accessible entry points into urban entrepreneurship, aligning with government support programmes such as the P3PK¹⁷ that promote micro and small businesses among Bumiputera traders. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that Malays often enter informal entrepreneurship via government-initiated support mechanisms¹⁸.

Meanwhile, Indian hawkers remain significantly underrepresented across most categories, with notable presence only in specific niches such as restricted time permits and food stalls. This persistent marginality may point to deeper structural barriers, such as access to capital, spatial restrictions, or lower inclusion in policy initiatives targeting trader development¹⁹.

¹² DBKL (2023a)

¹³ In our first Discussion Paper (Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi, 2025), we have highlighted the pattern of Chinese dominance in night market trading, which consistent with longer-term historical trends. Between 1970 and 2000, Chinese hawkers consistently formed the largest ethnic group among licensed hawkers in Kuala Lumpur. In 1970, they accounted for the overwhelming majority of hawkers compared to Malays and Indians. Although the number of Malay hawkers increased substantially over the decades — from just 223 in 1970 to over 11,000 by 2000 — Chinese hawkers still maintained a strong lead, growing from 4,377 to 20,812 over the same period. Indian hawkers, meanwhile, remained a smaller but steady group.

¹⁴ Bhowmik (2005); Hassan (2003)

¹⁵ Norhaslina Hassan (2003)

¹⁶ Bhowmik (2005); Pamungkas (2016)

¹⁷ KUSKOP (2023)

¹⁸ Abd Latif (2011); Ahmad, Tian, and Hussain (2021)

¹⁹ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

Overall, the distribution pattern reveals different degrees of formality across ethnic groups. Chinese hawkers show stronger footholds in structured and permanent markets, while Malays and other ethnicities are more associated with flexible, temporary, and emerging forms of hawking. This duality reflects broader socioeconomic dynamics where historical roots, policy interventions, and market accessibility converge to shape entrepreneurial outcomes²⁰.

However, it is important to exercise caution when interpreting these variations. As the 2023 statistics represent a single-year snapshot, they limit the ability to fully understand the longitudinal dynamics of ethnic participation in hawking. Historical, social, and cultural factors, such as the persistence of Chinese business dominance post-New Economic Policy (NEP) reforms, may play a substantial role but are not fully captured within this dataset. Future research using more granular and longer time series data would be necessary to unpack these complex evolutions over time and allow for a more comprehensive understanding of participation patterns across ethnic groups²¹.

Furthermore, while policy recommendations are important, they must be framed carefully given the current data limitations. Existing observations suggest that sustainable pathways should be designed to support Malay traders beyond temporary licenses, foster greater inclusion opportunities for Indian hawkers, and ensure equitable access to permanent trading spaces across all ethnic groups. These policy implications align with broader national development goals outlined in D3PKN 2030²² and the SDG-aligned frameworks under Phase II of the Malaysia SDG Roadmap²³.

Finally, deeper exploration of night markets is essential. Unlike conventional hawking spaces, night markets offer distinctive economic, cultural and social dynamics that are yet to be fully valued in policy discourse. Research suggests that night markets serve not only as important nodes of informal urban economies but also as cultural institutions that promote social interaction, community resilience, and urban vibrancy²⁴. As Malaysia urbanises, understanding these evolving dynamics will be key to crafting inclusive and sustainable hawker development strategies.

²⁰ Moghaddam (2013); Md Isa, Azman, and Ahmad Sukri (2020)

²¹ Ishak, Abdul Aziz, and Ahmad (2012); Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

²² KUSKOP (2024)

²³ MOF (2024)

²⁴ See for example Muhammad Iqbal et al. (2017); Zhao (2025); Ibrahim and Soh (2003)

2. Understanding night markets in Malaysia

2.1. Comparative definitions of night markets

Night markets have been defined in various ways, shaped by unique experiences and cultures in individual economies, especially in the Asian region. From a regional perspective, night markets hold significant cultural and economic values. They serve as important communal spaces for social interaction, economic activity, and cultural preservation.

In China, night markets are popular open-air retail spaces where small vendors set up stalls along designated streets, known as *tanfan* zones. They transform roads, parks, and walkways into vibrant, lively areas filled with colours, sounds, and aromas, creating a bustling atmosphere that attracts both locals and visitors²⁵. Night markets are viewed as places for residents to seek relaxation after hectic business days and as a means to improve their quality of life²⁶. With the pace of life accelerating, night markets have become an essential avenue for leisure and entertainment for some residents in the face of greater survival pressure and increasing material and cultural needs²⁷.

In Singapore, night markets, also known as *pasar malam*, are more itinerant. They are normally set up temporarily in different residential neighbourhoods on designated days. Night markets provide an accessible shopping experience featuring street food, affordable clothing, household items, and cultural performances for the community in Singapore. The transient nature of *pasar malam* distinguishes them from permanent markets, with their existence often aligning with seasonal festivities and community events²⁸.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, *pasar malam* similarly refers to temporary markets but differs slightly in purpose and structure. While they share the same mobile characteristics as those in Singapore, Indonesian night markets are deeply integrated into rural and urban communities, often featuring carnival-like attractions, games, and local crafts, alongside food and retail stalls²⁹.

Thailand's night markets, locally called *talat nad* or *talat lai rot*, are among the most famous in Southeast Asia. Unlike their Singaporean and Indonesian counterparts, many of Thailand's night markets have semi-permanent or permanent locations. These markets are major economic hubs and tourist attractions, blending traditional commerce with modern entertainment. They often feature themed sections for street food, retail, and cultural performances, contributing significantly to the country's tourism-driven economy³⁰. Prominent examples include the Chatuchak Night Market in Bangkok and the Sunday Night Market in Chiang Mai, which attract both local and international visitors.

²⁵ D. Lee and Pearce (2019)

²⁶ Li, Wang, and Wang (2021)

²⁷ Kuo, Chung, and Kuo (2012)

²⁸ Ibrahim and Soh (2003)

²⁹ Pamungkas (2016)

³⁰ S. Lee et al. (2008)

Taiwan's night markets are perhaps the most systematically structured compared to other Asian countries. They typically operate daily in fixed locations and are characterised by organised layouts with clearly defined vendor areas. These markets are known for their strict hygiene standards, which are maintained through regular government monitoring. Taiwan's night markets play an important role in the country's culinary and retail culture, drawing both domestic and international visitors. They have also been noted for their role in tourism development, significantly contributing to Taiwan's economy³¹.

Lastly, in South Korea, night markets have gained prominence as part of the country's urban nightlife economy. Unlike the informal nature of Southeast Asian night markets, South Korea's night markets are often state-supported initiatives designed to promote tourism and small businesses. They feature well-organised layouts, designated rest areas, and themed events that showcase Korea's modern street food culture. Notably, they operate as a seasonal event with curated vendor participation, reflecting a structured and modernized approach to night market culture³².

2.2. How night markets are defined in Malaysia

Zooming into Malaysia, the descriptions of night markets are more specific to the national context. Night markets in the country, commonly known as *pasar malam*, are a distinct category within the broader hawking scene, offering a unique blend of culture and lifestyle stemming from a multiracial society³³. Officially, the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development (*Kementerian Usahawan dan Koperasi*, KUSKOP) classifies night markets under the category of Small Business Orientation (SBO), which refers to small-scale businesses that either operate informally or are registered under the local authorities (*Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan*, PBT) or district offices that provide aid to the businesses. KUSKOP also defined the business concept of an SBO as non-permanent, and that the business operates independently³⁴.

"Small Business Orientation or SBO refers to small-scale businesses that operate either informally or are registered under Local Authorities (PBT)/District Office for livelihood and sustainability purposes. The business concept is non-permanent and operates independently. Examples of this group include night market hawkers, food trucks, temporary sale stalls and static vendors." - KUSKOP (2024)

³¹ Kuo, Chung, and Kuo (2012)

³² Nam (2017)

³³ Hassan (2003); Aziz and Lye (2011); Ahmad et al. (2019)

³⁴ KUSKOP (2024)

Night markets typically operate from evening until late night. For instance, hawkers registered under DBKL are allowed to trade from 6 PM to 12 AM on designated days and locations approved by the council³⁵. As night markets are considered non-permanent establishments, traders have the flexibility to change locations from time to time and are not fixated on a specific business premise³⁶.

They are usually organised as open-air markets, where street hawkers or small-scale traders set up stalls along designated streets in cities³⁷ or public spaces near residential areas³⁸ (Figure 1). This setting creates a lively and inviting atmosphere, allowing visitors to enjoy a relaxed and immersive shopping and dining experience.

Figure 1: Surrounding of night markets in Malaysia



Source: Muhammad Iqbal et al. (2017); Xu et al. (2024)

³⁵ DBKL (2023b)

³⁶ Mazlan et al. (2017)

³⁷ The sites of night markets are usually decided by the local authority in which the location must not disrupt the traffic or public roads.

³⁸ Aziz and Lye (2011); Ramli and Jamri (2021)

Common characteristics of night markets

Importance of Night Markets to Locals and Tourists

Night markets are not merely trading centres; they are vital socio-economic and cultural spaces that serve both local communities and tourists. Across Asia, night markets have evolved into major tourist attractions, providing visitors with an opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture while exploring a vibrant mix of food, retail, and entertainment³⁹.

Night markets offer a well-balanced combination of local products, souvenirs, traditional street food, and live performances that create an authentic cultural experience. According to Chou (2013), night markets have become a popular recreational activity for both tourists and locals, offering social and cultural benefits beyond just a source of food. Furthermore, visitors of night markets can enjoy a pleasant atmosphere, a diverse selection of local foods, and a space that fosters social interaction and relaxation.

Additionally, research by Wu, Cheng, and Hsu (2014) suggests that night markets cater to tourists' need for novelty, socialisation, and cultural exploration. This experience helps tourists gain a deeper understanding of the places they visit. Unlike formal retail stores and shopping malls, night markets provide more flexible bargaining opportunities and diverse product choices with cheaper options. These features make them especially appealing to budget-conscious travellers.

Night markets also contribute significantly to the local economy by creating jobs, generating income for businesses, and supporting urban livelihoods, particularly among small businesses and informal vendors⁴⁰. As such, from the cultural and economic perspectives, night markets hold deep importance for local communities.

Structural and Functional Characteristics of Night Markets

The structure of night markets reflects the vibrancy and walkability of urban spaces. Public spaces are transformed into dynamic social and economic hubs, allowing people to engage in cultural exchange while supporting small businesses⁴¹. A key feature of night markets is their immersive sensory experience—visitors are immersed in a rich blend of sights, sounds, and aromas, making the environment lively and engaging⁴². These markets are also defined by a wide range of consumption activities, including food stalls, clothing vendors, handicrafts, and interactive entertainment, distinguishing them from morning markets or formal shopping centres⁴³.

³⁹ Bhowmik (2005)

⁴⁰ Md Isa, Azman, and Ahmad Sukri (2020); Hassane (2024)

⁴¹ Tan'G and Aminuddin (2019)

⁴² Zhao (2025)

⁴³ Hassane (2024)

The dynamic nature of night markets is shaped by distinct structural and functional attributes that define their vibrancy, accessibility, and sustainability⁴⁴. Figure 2 summarises six core characteristics commonly found across night markets:

- i. **Cultural and Social Hub:** Night markets help preserve local traditions and provide vibrant spaces for social interaction⁴⁵;
- ii. **Diverse Offerings:** Night markets offer a wide range of products such as food stalls, handicrafts, clothing, and entertainment, which cater to varied visitor interests⁴⁶;
- iii. **Tourist Attraction:** Night markets create an authentic local experience, enhancing tourism by showcasing unique sights, sounds, and cultural expressions⁴⁷;
- iv. **Economic Significance:** They serve as important sites for job creation, income generation, and supporting small business ecosystems⁴⁸.
- v. **Accessibility and Facilities:** A pedestrian-friendly layout, complemented by rest areas and public amenities, enhances visitor comfort and market walkability⁴⁹.
- vi. **Bargaining Culture:** Flexible pricing and negotiation opportunities appeal to visitors seeking affordable shopping experiences⁵⁰.

Figure 2: Common Characteristics of Night Market



Source: KRI compilation

⁴⁴ Ishak, Abdul Aziz, and Ahmad (2012); Zhang, Zhou, and Zhang (2022); Zhao (2025)

⁴⁵ Tan'G and Aminuddin (2019)

⁴⁶ Chou (2013); Tsai (2013)

⁴⁷ Tsai (2013)

⁴⁸ Hassane (2024)

⁴⁹ Ishak, Aziz, and Latif (2012)

⁵⁰ Nam (2017)

2.3. Growth and development of night markets

Night markets can be considered a form of “traditional institution” in Malaysia—their existence can be traced back to the period before Malaysia gained independence, albeit limited in number (Table 2)⁵¹. During this period until the late 1960s, hawkers, including those operating at night markets, were primarily concentrated in the central cities and areas popular among tourists, such as Kuala Lumpur and Selangor⁵². The concentration of hawkers can be attributed to several reasons, including the restricted number of licenses issued by local authorities to petty traders, operations limited to specific locations, and low ethnic diversity in participation.

Table 2: The development of night markets since pre-independence

Pre-1957 – 1960s	1970 – 2019	2020 – current
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawking was a form of socioeconomic mobility for Bumiputera to enter the commerce sector Limited number of night market traders due to restricted number of licenses offered by authorities and limited participation across ethnicities Night market spots were only concentrated in several city areas and hotspots for tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hawkers started to rise significantly Primarily driven by urbanisation and more favourable government policies such as a higher number of loans, permits, and licenses More equal opportunities and participation from all ethnicities were encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many hawkers and petty traders were negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and extensive lockdowns that did not allow them to operate normally The government announced stimulus packages to support MSMEs during the pandemic through special grants, micro-credit schemes, and social financing programmes DBKL issued temporary licenses under the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) programme to help B40 households sustain income during the peak of the pandemic Accelerated digital adoption among night market hawkers and consumers, driven by social distancing measures and transition to the new normal – e.g., increased use of QR code-based payments and food delivery services

Source: Hassan (2003); Ishak, Abdul Aziz, and Ahmad (2012); Ramli and Jamri (2021)

⁵¹ Chin and Othman (2015)

⁵² Hassan (2003)

During the period between 1970 and 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of hawkers rose significantly by 10 times. Such a drastic increase in hawkers was primarily driven by rapid urbanisation, especially among the Malays since 1970⁵³. In addition, government policies, such as the Second Malaysia Plan, played a significant role in this expansion by promoting equal opportunities and participation from all ethnic groups in informal economic activities⁵⁴. These policies included more liberal issuance of traders' permits and licenses, access to loans, and improvements in facilities and infrastructure⁵⁵.

The effects of these policies have borne fruit over time. As a whole, data from DBKL shows that night markets account for the largest share of informal businesses in the capital city, Kuala Lumpur (33.9%, Table 3)⁵⁶. Years of policies aimed at developing this sector have also contributed to improved diversity in participation across ethnic groups⁵⁷, though the distribution seems skewed towards Malays (43%) and Chinese (53%)⁵⁸. The significantly larger proportion of hawkers involved in night markets suggest the importance of this type of business for hawkers compared to other alternatives or types.

Additionally, accelerated digital adoption at night markets, particularly since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, has enhanced the convenience of cashless transactions for consumers. At the same time, it has enabled traders and operators to sustain their businesses amid social distancing measures⁵⁹. Not only that, night market hawkers also demonstrated resilience by leveraging on e-commerce platforms such as *Warungku* to maintain operations during challenging times. These developments underscore the adaptability and resilience of hawkers in the face of adversity⁶⁰.

The significant share of night market businesses in Malaysia also indicates that this sector is an important source of employment, particularly for less-educated and low-skilled workers who tend to be impacted disproportionately during economic downturns. In addition, the motivations for participating in night market trading vary for some. It could serve as a primary source of income and family support, while for others, it functions as a supplementary income stream or a form of "moonlighting" to cope with rising living costs⁶¹.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The breakdown for informal businesses in the 1970s was not published by DBKL.

⁵⁷ Ishak, Aziz, and Latif (2012) highlighted that prior to 1969, participation in hawking used to be dominated by one ethnic group.

⁵⁸ DBKL (2023a)

⁵⁹ BERNAMA (2020)

⁶⁰ Kaur (2021)

⁶¹ Md Isa, Azman, and Ahmad Sukri (2020); Hassane (2024)

Table 3: Number and share of hawkers in Kuala Lumpur, by type of license, as of 3 October 2023

Type of license	Number	Share (%)
Temporary permit	211	0.7%
Private hawker centre	313	1.0%
Restricted time	322	1.1%
Others*	525	1.7%
Late night bazaar	603	2.0%
DBKL hawker centre	2,101	6.9%
Open market	3,074	10.0%
Roadside stalls	3,890	12.7%
KL Madani temporary license	4,099	13.4%
Market with buildings	5,111	16.7%
Night market	10,401	33.9%
TOTAL	30,650	100.0%

Source: Data Terbuka DBKL (DBKL, 2023a)

Note: Others* include Friday bazaar, car boot sales, food truck, locked stalls, kiosks, entrepreneur kiosk for urban youth, motorcycle, mobile hawker - caravan, temporary permit (recreational park), recreational park temporary permit (bicycle) and promotion in DBKL buildings.

To further support the growth of night markets, the government has consistently been introducing various schemes to support low-income earners in establishing and maintaining the operation of businesses and reviving their affected sources of income. For example, the *Geran Khas Prihatin* (GKP) was launched by the then government during the pandemic to relieve the financial burden among night market traders, many of whom had to suspend operations during extended lockdowns and subsequently had to cope with rising operational costs after the lockdown period⁶².

Not only that, the expansion and growth of night markets in Malaysia have been driven by assistance and initiatives primarily from the federal and state governments, as well as agencies such as city councils (Table 4). Generally, the support encompasses financial and non-financial components, such as the Night Market Transformation programme, microfinancing schemes, special grants, upskilling initiatives for small traders and hawkers, and efforts from the state governments to promote local night markets and increase technological adoption among hawkers.

⁶² Ramli and Jamri (2021)

Table 4: Key initiatives to support night market traders and the whole sector

Initiatives	Descriptions
Night Market Transformation Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government allocated RM25 million to 50 major night market sites beginning in 2022 • Implemented by the Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Ministry (MEDAC) • Offers several forms of assistance, including business packages up to RM5,000, support services, and sales training
Geran Khas Prihatin (GKP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off financial assistance amounting to RM3,000 for eligible Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to ease the financial burden of businesses that have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic
Microfinancing programme for hawkers and small traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank Rakyat offers shariah-compliant financing with a zero-profit rate • TEKUN provides microfinancing and entrepreneurship development support • Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB) provides an integrated entrepreneurial package for Bumiputera entrepreneurs comprising business support and support
State government initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, Selangor state government actively promotes night markets through their own platforms, that was launched in 2020
Large-scale events for business expansion (e.g., Mega Festival for Hawkers, Traders, and Small-time Entrepreneurs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A platform to introduce various ranges of products sold by local traders and to attract tourists
Upskilling of night market traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided by various agencies such as Shah Alam City Council (MBSA), Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) • MBSA requires traders who are licensed under them to attend training sessions conducted by the establishment (e.g., Food Handle Course) • AIM offers capital financing, compulsory savings, and welfare funds to support poor and low-income entrepreneurs through financial guidance and training • MARA offers a range of entrepreneurship-related services to produce global entrepreneurs, such as entrepreneurship training, advisory services, and marketing programmes
Facilitating digital adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEDAC launched <i>Warungku</i> programme with an allocation of RM3.11 million through SME Corp to boost the earnings of micro-entrepreneurs including hawkers by promoting online sales and digitalising their businesses • The programme also offers training or courses tailored for those with limited technical knowledge as well as digital literacy particularly in business

Source: Author's compilation from various sources. See for example, SME Corp (2021); Md Isa, Azman, and Ahmad Sukri (2020); Hazim (2021)

Note: The list is non-exhaustive. These initiatives are shaped by and anchored on key national policies and action plans introduced and implemented by the government. They include **Small Hawkers and Traders Development Plan 2023–2027**, **Hawkers and Small Traders Development Policy 2030 (D3PKN2030)**, **National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (DKN 2030)**, and **Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (KLSP 2040)**.

Policies towards a coherent and inclusive development trajectory of the night markets

The evolution of night markets in Malaysia has been deeply intertwined with the transformation of the microenterprise and informal economy landscape. While night markets have traditionally emerged as community-driven informal institutions⁶³, their formalisation and development are now increasingly shaped by national strategies aimed at empowering grassroots entrepreneurship and creating inclusive economic ecosystems. This strategic alignment is evident across three foundational documents:

⁶³ Where their existence have been organically formed to meet local economic and social needs. Source: Hassane (2024)

1. Small Hawkers and Traders Development Plan (*Pelan Pembangunan Penjaja dan Peniaga Kecil – P3PK*) 2023–2027⁶⁴;
2. Hawkers and Small Traders Development Policy 2030 (*Dasar Pembangunan Penjaja dan Peniaga Kecil Negara 2030 – D3PKN2030*)⁶⁵;
3. National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (*Dasar Keusahawanan Nasional 2030 – DKN 2030*)⁶⁶; and
4. Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (KLSP 2040)⁶⁷

Small Hawkers and Traders Development Plan (*Pelan Pembangunan Penjaja dan Peniaga Kecil 2023–2027 – P3PK*)

The P3PK 2023–2027 serves as a practical, medium-term implementation framework for supporting small traders and hawkers, including those operating in night markets. The plan recognises the pressing challenges faced by hawkers and small hawkers—from insecure site tenure and limited infrastructure to uneven licensing enforcement by local authorities (PBTs). Notably, night market operators are included in this category, as many operate without formal business premises and rely on temporary or mobile trading zones.

One of P3PK’s key contributions to night market development is its focus on improving the physical and regulatory ecosystem. Through the initiatives under its first strategic thrust to strengthen the hawker and small trader ecosystem, the plan proposes better zoning, harmonised licensing, infrastructure upgrades (e.g., lighting, waste disposal, and rest areas), and more inclusive access to designated trading sites. These align directly with the needs voiced by night market hawkers, especially those in urban areas who commonly face issues of overcrowding and inconsistent approval processes.

Furthermore, the plan champions digital transformation and business modernisation, such as the Go Digital initiative that promotes e-wallet usage, online marketing, and digital entrepreneurship training. These digital tools are crucial for night markets to remain competitive and relevant to younger consumers, especially post-pandemic. Hence, P3PK plays an important role in enabling night markets to transition from traditional, survivalist operations to semi-formal, future-ready microenterprises.

“...Hawkers and small traders are part of the MSME ecosystem. However, in Malaysia, this group still faces challenges in competing or adapting, often remaining content with being classified as micro or small-scale traders. Many of them operate home-based businesses with minimal standards and regulatory compliance.” - Small Hawkers and Traders Development Plan 2023–2027⁶⁸

⁶⁴ KUSKOP (2023)

⁶⁵ KUSKOP (2024)

⁶⁶ MED (2019a)

⁶⁷ DBKL (2023c)

⁶⁸ KUSKOP (2023)

Hawkers and Small Traders Development Policy 2030 (*Dasar Pembangunan Penjaja dan Peniaga Kecil Negara 2030 – D3PKN2030*)

Where P3PK provides operational direction, the D3PKN 2030 offers a long-term national vision for empowering hawkers and small traders. Framed around the notion that these groups are national assets, D3PKN elevates their roles from informal actors to strategic contributors to national economy. It recognises the intertwined functions of these traders in creating employment, supporting food security, and boosting local economies.

In the context of night markets, D3PKN is significant for its emphasis on formalisation, spatial integration, and data governance. It advocates for a more coherent regulatory system involving federal, state, and local authorities to reduce fragmentation and confusion—an issue frequently faced by night market traders due to differing PBT procedures. This coherence is essential for the structured development of night markets, especially in high-density cities.

The policy also calls for the use of data systems and digital mapping to track, monitor, and plan hawker activities across the country. Such data-driven planning is crucial to understanding the distribution, demographics, and operational patterns of night markets, especially for ensuring adequate infrastructure, mobility access, and community integration. Hence, D3PKN provides a fundamental policy framework for mainstreaming night markets into national entrepreneurship and spatial development frameworks.

“D3PKN2030 aims to empower hawkers and small traders as a vital pillar of the national economy. This will be achieved through an inclusive business environment, improved access to markets and financing, and a strong emphasis on developing business capabilities and capacities. The policy is committed to ensuring that this group continues to grow sustainably, thereby contributing to national economic development and societal well-being.” – D3PKN2030 Policy Statement⁶⁹

National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (*Dasar Keusahawanan Nasional 2030 – DKN 2030*)

While D3PKN and P3PK focus on hawkers and small traders, the DKN 2030 situates their growth within Malaysia’s broader ambition to be a globally competitive entrepreneurial nation. The policy highlights inclusivity, resilience, and innovation as cornerstones of the national entrepreneurial landscape. Although night markets are not explicitly mentioned, the document’s spirit and strategies speak directly to the transformation of micro and informal enterprises.

⁶⁹ KUSKOP (2024)

A critical contribution of DKN 2030 is its focus on opportunity-based entrepreneurship. This challenges the prevailing narrative of night markets as spaces for necessity-driven or subsistence livelihoods. Instead, DKN encourages shifting toward value-added, scalable, and digitally enabled micro businesses. This is highly relevant for night markets, many of which already serve as testing grounds for product innovation, cultural branding (e.g., traditional snacks, fusion cuisine), and tourism-based retail.

DKN 2030 also calls for consolidated support systems, integrated performance tracking, and ecosystem-wide data governance. These principles are essential for addressing the disjointed experiences of night market vendors across different cities and local councils. Furthermore, the policy aligns with broader national goals such as IR4.0 readiness and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets for inclusive growth, making it an essential tool in elevating night markets to 21st-century entrepreneurial hubs.

“Globally, entrepreneurship policies not only facilitate the process of entrepreneurial culture as a driver of innovation and encourage the creation of new jobs but also outline plans and programs of the country to shift from the traditional economy to the new economy.

The New Economy is defined as the rise of knowledge-driven businesses backed by the digital revolution, where technology creates innovations, with an ecosystem of information technology and high-tech companies driving the GDP of a country. The New Economy is collaborative, less reliant on material sources, more knowledge-intensive and requires highly skilled talents.” – National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030⁷⁰

Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (KLSP 2040)

The KLSP2040 offers an urban planning lens through which to view night market development—particularly within the capital. The plan identifies night markets as integral to Kuala Lumpur’s informal economy, with over 11,000 stalls documented under various forms of temporary business structures.

KLSP2040 explicitly integrates informal trading activities into its strategic objectives under *Goal 2: Inclusive, Equitable and Liveable City*. It calls for expanding access to strategic and affordable retail spaces, including food carts, pop-ups, and night bazaars, which recognise the commercial value of night markets while addressing issues of urban displacement and gentrification.

⁷⁰ MED (2019a)

Importantly, KLSP2040 also ties night markets to cultural and creative economy aspirations. It positions them as enablers of culinary tourism, heritage preservation, and public space activation—especially in districts such as Jalan Raja Bot and Kampung Bharu. These place-based strategies elevate night markets from informal street retail to curated urban experiences, aligned with the city’s aspiration to be a “Cultural City” and a regional creative capital.

While KLSP2040 is territorially specific, its approach embodies the urban governance shift required nationwide—one that treats night markets not as temporary or fringe, but as integral to a dynamic, inclusive, and culturally rich urban economy.

Several initiatives will be implemented in Kuala Lumpur to encourage more locals, such as housewives and B40 groups, to venture into the economy to increase household income. The initiatives include facilitating the provision of a broad selection of premises that suit the needs of informal sector operators and that are affordable and accessible. The provision of informal sector business spaces in the future will involve the cooperation of various government agencies.

“Kuala Lumpur will support the growing contribution of the informal sector to the future economy by expanding business opportunities to all groups, especially those outside the labour force and existing micro-entrepreneurs. The informal sector is expected to be thriving in the future and be pioneered by the youth. Currently, the informal sector generates 57,700 jobs in various fields, especially businesses and services.

Several initiatives will be implemented in Kuala Lumpur to encourage more locals, such as housewives and B40 groups, to venture into the economy to increase household income. The initiatives include facilitating the provision of a broad selection of premises that suit the needs of informal sector operators, affordable and accessible. The provision of informal sector business spaces in the future will involve various government agencies cooperation.” – Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040⁷¹

As the country’s administrative, economic, and urban innovation hub, Kuala Lumpur often functions as a testing ground for national policies, with many of its strategies setting precedents or influencing adoption in other state capitals and local councils. In this regard, KLSP2040’s treatment of night markets and the broader informal economy provides a valuable reference for how such spaces can be integrated into future-oriented urban planning.

⁷¹ DBKL (2023c)

Additionally, KLSP2040 is progressive in its recognition of the informal economy—not as a sector to be formalised and replaced, but as a legitimate contributor to city life. With over 32,000 informal stalls documented, including night market operations (n = 11,208) in 2020⁷², the plan reflects an understanding of how informal trading contributes to employment, community vibrancy, and urban accessibility. This recognition is essential, given that many local councils outside Kuala Lumpur still treat night markets as temporary or ad hoc phenomena, often without long-term planning or infrastructure investment. In a national context, KLSP2040 aligns with and underpins key thrusts in D3PKN 2030, P3PK 2023–2027, and DKN 2030, particularly in three ways:

1. Urban Inclusivity and Access to Space:

KLSP2040 proposes expanded access to “strategic and affordable retail spaces,” including mobile stalls and night markets. This directly complements D3PKN’s call for equitable infrastructure development for small traders and could serve as a replicable model for other cities seeking to embed night markets into formal zoning frameworks.

2. Cultural Economy and Identity:

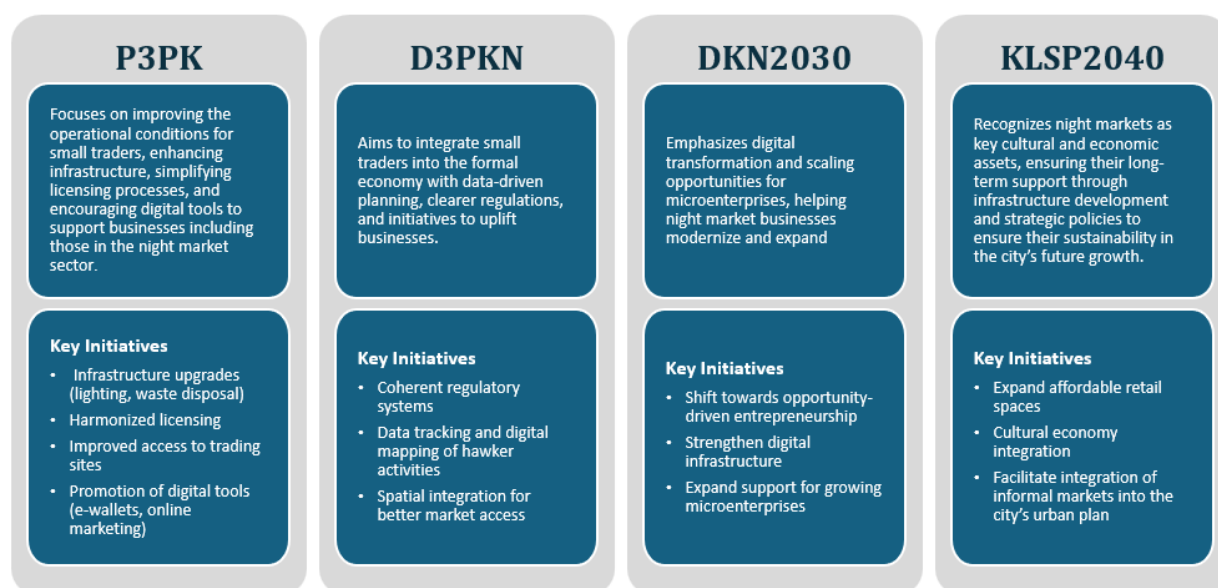
By framing night markets as part of Kuala Lumpur’s creative and cultural economy, KLSP2040 offers a broader interpretation of night markets—not just as retail sites but as experiential spaces of culinary tourism, heritage preservation, and multicultural interaction. This perspective aligns closely with national entrepreneurship goals outlined in DKN 2030, particularly in promoting cultural-based enterprise and innovation.

3. Policy Integration and Municipal Coordination:

KLSP2040 demonstrates how urban planning documents can incorporate informal trade into long-term development goals, something that national policies like P3PK advocate for but are often hindered at the implementation level due to local authority fragmentation. KLSP’s approach, therefore, models a multi-level governance alignment that can be scaled nationally with sufficient policy support.

⁷² DBKL (2023c)

Figure 3: Comparative Overview of P3PK, D3PKN, DKN 2030, and KLSP 2040



Box 1: Narrating the Night Markets through the Lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Figure 4: Illustrating the Night Market through the Lens of the SDG Framework



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline the 2030 Agenda to transform the world by advancing human well-being, promoting economic growth, and safeguarding the environment. With 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDGs are designed to address the interconnected and multifaceted challenges facing humanity.

As Malaysia moves toward more inclusive and sustainable economic development, the transformation of night markets plays a role in localising the SDGs. While often viewed as informal or peripheral, night markets are key enablers of multiple SDG targets—particularly in empowering grassroots entrepreneurship, enhancing urban inclusivity, and fostering cultural vibrancy.

SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) are directly supported through the income-generating opportunities night markets offer to low-income communities, many of whom lack access to formal employment. These markets are often lifelines for B40 households and act as stepping stones into micro-entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is advanced as many night market operators are women, including single mothers and informal caregivers, who are able to benefit from the flexible trading hours and low entry barriers of night market businesses.

Efforts to integrate night markets into city planning and business policy frameworks also align with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), ensuring that marginalised groups—such as youth, elderly, and urban poor—have equitable access to commercial space and community engagement.

Furthermore, with the growing emphasis on digital adoption, waste reduction, and sustainable sourcing, night markets contribute to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Finally, as these developments require coordination among ministries, local councils, vendors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and fintech providers, the role of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) becomes indispensable.

Therefore, night markets are beyond just spaces of trade—they are microcosms of sustainable urban livelihoods. Recognising and investing in this ecosystem not only uplifts communities but also grounds Malaysia's SDG commitments in everyday practice.

Source: DOS (2019); MOF (2024); Pradhan et al. (2017); United Nations, n.d.; Chin and Othman (2015); D. Lee and Pearce (2019)

Alongside the various initiatives highlighted above, the growth of Malaysia's night market sector has prompted the adoption of more structured management practices, exemplified by the development and implementation of comprehensive guidelines. For example, DBKL has consolidated various standard operating procedures (SOPs) into a single document for the reference of night market traders and organisers. This document addresses key aspects of night market management, such as the key agencies and local authorities, operating hours, updated list of registered traders, as well as requirements for the night market traders and operators, including licensing, criteria of the canopy, guidelines on business operations, food handling, and waste and traffic management⁷³.

More importantly, strategic considerations in planning and establishing night markets have helped this informal economy thrive and remain relevant for consumers. Key considerations involved in the planning of night markets include accessibility, transportation, and supporting facilities like accommodations (e.g., hotels, Airbnb), toilets, parking, and prayer rooms to accommodate different needs and requirements.

For example, the strategic locations of night markets such as *Lorong Tuanku Abdul Rahman* (TAR), managed by DBKL, near well-known tourist attractions like *Petaling Street*, *Dataran Merdeka*, *Masjid Jamek*, Central Market, and shopping malls have notably contributed to the rising number of visitors to the night market (Figure 5 and Figure 6)⁷⁴. Moreover, the success of night markets

⁷³ DBKL (2021)

⁷⁴ Zakariya and Ware (2010)

at *Lorong* TAR can also be attributed to the availability of parking facilities within nearby shopping complexes such as *Pertama* Complex and SOGO Shopping Complex, and public transportation, which enhances visitors' accessibility as well as provides convenience for traders to conduct their businesses⁷⁵.

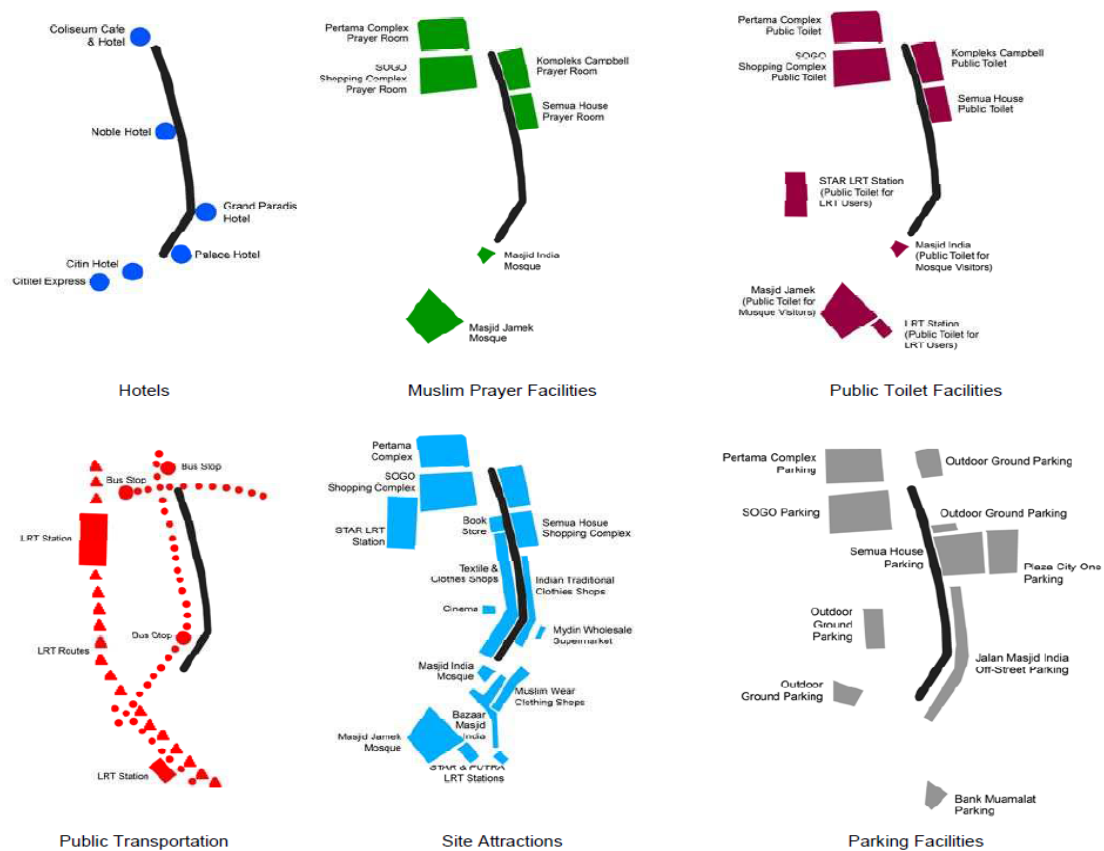
Figure 5: Location plan of Lorong Tuanku Abdul Rahman (TAR) night markets and their surrounding



Source: Zakariya and Ware (2010)

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Figure 6: Detailed plan of attractions and facilities surrounding Lorong TAR night markets



Source: Zakariya and Ware (2010)

2.4. Economic and social roles of night markets

Over decades, the growth of night markets in Malaysia has been driven by their significant role in the local economy and is deeply embedded in the societal culture. Within Malaysian society, night markets are seen as an alternative to formal retail shops like supermarkets, providing customers with a casual and convenient shopping experience⁷⁶. They serve as community-centric places that foster social interactions (e.g., gatherings) and allow traders to express their creativity about Malaysian culture⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Abd Latif (2011)

Amid shifts in consumption patterns, particularly increasing preference for food away from home⁷⁸, night markets have continued to cater to a wide demographic, especially working adults with demanding schedules or caregiving responsibilities⁷⁹. Night markets bring together a diverse array of stalls offering goods such as cooked food, vegetables, fruits, snacks, toys, and apparel, which are often at more affordable prices⁸⁰, helping to ease financial burdens amidst current economic conditions. Hence, it can be observed that night markets serve as an accessible and cost-effective alternative for working individuals while adding greater variety to their consumption choices.

While night markets have greatly catered to evolving consumption patterns, history has shown that they have also played a crucial role in supporting entrepreneurs within the sector. In the past, involvement in the night market business was particularly helpful and crucial for vulnerable and low-income Malaysians, as hawking was perceived as a primary source of income for those lacking the skills and training to compete in the formal job market⁸¹. Additionally, this sector is often viewed as an attractive incubator for MSMEs due to its low barriers to entry that require minimal capital⁸². As a result, hawking, including operating at night markets, has been recognised as an important path for certain individuals to improve their economic and social mobility.

This sector has also emerged as a key driver of the Malaysian economy, particularly in times of crisis. During economic downturns, night markets are found to be an essential lifeline, offering employment opportunities to individuals who have been laid off and providing a platform for those seeking to transition into business or self-employment to sustain their livelihoods.

However, despite the deep-rooted history of night market culture in the Malaysian economy and society, the sector and its traders continue to face significant challenges. These are related to regulatory shortfalls, especially in waste management and food safety, ongoing concerns about public health and environment, as well as the underutilised potential of night markets as a driver for tourism in Malaysia. Moreover, as incomes improve, segments of the middle class may increasingly favour formal retail options that emphasise healthier food choices, more hygienic environments, and structured shopping experiences⁸³. Although empirical studies specifically tracking such shifts in Malaysia's context and perspective remain limited, it is vital to explore these emerging trends to ensure night markets remain competitive and responsive to evolving societal expectations.

⁷⁸ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

⁷⁹ Mazlan et al. (2017)

⁸⁰ Abd Latif (2011)

⁸¹ Hassan (2003)

⁸² Xu et al. (2024)

⁸³ Lim and Lee (2022)

3. Key challenges and untapped potential of night markets

3.1. Lack of regulatory oversight

As highlighted in our first discussion paper, hawkers are essential for Malaysia's informal economy, accounting for nearly 10% of the workforce⁸⁴. In the context of hawking, this means unlicensed hawkers run the business. However, evidence generally suggests that the informal nature of night markets has resulted in the ineffective implementation of broad-scale guidelines and regulations, one of the most notable issues within the night market landscape. Worryingly, past studies have also highlighted that the lack of effective regulations in this sector has resulted in various consequences, including the creation of unhealthy competition, crimes, social conflicts, labour exploitation, mismanaged garbage disposal, and road congestion⁸⁵.

In Malaysia, issues related to unregulated hawking have frequently been a point of concern. For instance, Hassan (2003) discovered that residents in *Pantai Dalam*, Kuala Lumpur, had raised complaints about their residential night market, especially on the lack of hygiene practices in food handling and waste disposal (51%) and traffic congestion (62%). The study also highlighted that certain hawkers preferred operating illegally as long as they could secure strategic locations near residential areas with high demand, even if it meant periodically paying fines.

Nevertheless, state authorities such as the DBKL and Pulau Pinang City Council (MBPP) have pursued significant work to better regulate the sector. For instance, DBKL has made it a minimum requirement for hawkers to obtain licenses to operate since 1905⁸⁶. This move was also crucial as it allowed DBKL to collect data on hawkers to monitor their activities and provide statistics for planning purposes⁸⁷. Additionally, these licenses came with specific obligations that traders must adhere to, as outlined in the Guidelines and Night Market Information Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur (*Garis Panduan dan Maklumat Pasar Malam Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur*)⁸⁸. Table 5 shows the responsibilities hawkers registered under DBKL must adhere to.

Table 5: Responsibilities of hawkers as outlined by DBKL

Areas of responsibility	Description of responsibilities
Display of license	The license holder must always display the license issued by DBKL in a clearly visible area or corner within the stall or canopy space.
Presence of the license holder	The license holder must always be present to operate and supervise the business. It is strictly prohibited to transfer ownership, lease, or sell the licensed stall space without written permission from DBKL.
Restrictions on employment of foreign workers	The license holder is strictly prohibited from employing foreign nationals during the operation of the night market business.
Cleanliness of business premise and equipment	The license holder must always maintain and ensure that the stall or canopy and business-related equipment are kept clean.

⁸⁴ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

⁸⁵ Ab Rahman and Yaakob (2021)

⁸⁶ Hassan (2003)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ DBKL (2021)

Areas of responsibility	Description of responsibilities
	The license holder must always maintain the cleanliness of the stall or canopy during and after the night market's operating hours.
Adherence to stall dimensions and operating hours	The license holder must comply with the stall size, stall or canopy color, and night market operating hours.
Display of price tags	The license holder must always display price tags on all food, goods, or any items being sold.
Usage of plastic straws	The use of plastic straws is prohibited.
Usage of approved biodegradable products	The license holder must use approved biodegradable products classified as biodegradable or compostable, certified under SIRIM ECO-001:2018 or SIRIM ECO-009:2016 by SIRIM Berhad.
Prohibition on the sale of certain goods	The license holder is prohibited from selling counterfeit goods, tobacco products, and nicotine-containing items that have not been approved by the government.
License renewal	The license holder must renew the license at least sixty (60) days before the expiration date.
Requirements under site development or restructuring	If the business area or site is involved in development or restructuring, DBKL has the right to revoke the issued hawker license, and the trader must relocate or find a new business location.
Take-away only sales	The license holder must operate the business on a takeaway-basis only.
Cleanliness of clothing	Food and beverage traders must wear clean clothing, including a head covering, gloves, and an apron.
Vaccination	Obtain typhoid vaccination and keep the vaccination card.

Source: DBKL (2021)

In Pulau Pinang, MBPP has also introduced its own set of guidelines titled the Guidelines for the Application and Management of Mobile/Static Hawkers Licenses using Motor Vehicles (Motorcycles, Cars and Mobile Trucks) Penang Island City Council⁸⁹. These guidelines were developed to regulate the local hawkers, as the state is well known, especially among tourists, for its vibrant hawker scene. Table 6 highlights several key responsibilities related to licensing in the document that hawkers managed by MBPP must adhere to.

Table 6: Guidelines for hawkers with licenses issued by MBPP

List of guidelines for hawkers' license application and management
The license is issued by the Council on a one-vehicle-per-license basis .
The license issued by the Council is based on the approved business location .
The license holder must operate the business.
The license holder must personally operate the business at all times.
Subletting is not allowed.
The license holder must always display the prices of the items being sold .
The construction of any permanent structure or canopy at the business site is not allowed .
The license holder must always display the license clearly for Council officers and customers to see .
Approval is granted only for the registered vehicle and cannot be transferred to another vehicle.

⁸⁹ MBPP (2024)

List of guidelines for hawkers' license application and management

Traders are required to comply with the guidelines set by the State Government and the Council, including:

- i) Implementation of the **Waste Separation at Source Policy**;
- ii) **No Plastic Bag policy** and the **use of biodegradable food packaging**;
- iii) **Prohibition of polystyrene use**; and
- iv) Adoption of **cashless/e-wallet payment**.

Applicants are encouraged to participate in the **MBPP recycling project**.

Licenses are granted only to Malaysian citizens, with **priority given to permanent residents of the state** of Pulau Pinang.

Foreign assistants/workers are strictly not allowed.

The **setup of chairs and tables for customers is strictly not allowed**, except with Council approval on private land only.

Traders must ensure that the **business area is always clean and free from litter**.

The **license holder must comply with both verbal and written instructions from the Council** or other agencies at all times.

Traders must ensure that the **business area does not disrupt traffic or cause any disturbances**.

The **Council is not responsible for any accidents, injuries, or thefts** that occur during business operations.

Traders must comply with the enforced legal provisions and existing guidelines. **The Council reserves the right to revoke the license if the license holder commits any offense or violates the conditions.**

Holders of Mobile/Static Hawker Licenses Using Motor Vehicles (Motorcycles, Cars, and Mobile Trucks) **must provide public liability insurance** (minimum RM100,000.00, subject to the type of insurance).

Any changes to the business plan must be reported in writing to the Council and will be subject to a processing fee.

Cleanliness – Comply with the regulations and conditions of cleanliness management as well as the By-Laws enforced by the Council.

Waste Management – Implement waste separation at the source as required by the Council.

Waste Management – Leaving trash at the business site during and after operations is not allowed.

Pollution – The license holder must comply with the Environmental Quality Act 1974 (Act 127), which includes regulations on noise, water, and air pollution.

Nuisance – The Council may take action to stop, remove, and eliminate any nuisances in the permitted area.

Advertising – The license holder must comply with the requirements and conditions set by the Council regarding advertisements.

All displayed advertisements must obtain approval from the Council.

Source: MBPP (2024)

These comprehensive guidelines indicate proactive efforts by local authorities to ensure hawkers are properly licensed while also addressing rising concerns, particularly poor hygiene practices and traffic congestion. For instance, these issues can be mitigated through some of the key requirements: 1) requiring license holders to be present at the premise to operate and supervise the business, 2) ensuring stalls, canopies, and business-related equipment are kept clean, 3) prohibition from leaving trash at business premise during and after operating hours, 4) preventing business areas from disrupting traffic or causing disturbances, and 5) enforcing no plastic bag and waste separation at the source policies⁹⁰.

⁹⁰ DBKL (2021); MBPP (2024)

Additionally, regular inspections of night markets by city councils such as DBKL could help ensure compliance by monitoring traders for prohibited activities, including operating outside of designated locations or subletting their lots without valid justifications⁹¹.

Despite the efforts to standardise night market regulations in Malaysia through established guidelines, recent studies, albeit limited, highlighted several ongoing issues on adherence to regulations, which was also highlighted in the Development Plan for Hawkers and Small Traders (P3PK) 2023-2027⁹². One of the most pressing issues is improper waste disposal, mainly driven by consumer behaviours stemming from the lack of awareness⁹³.

The impact of this limited public awareness is also compounded by inadequate oversight by local authorities on waste management involving government personnel and waste management contractors. An observational study on a night market in *Petaling Jaya, Selangor*, discovered a real-life example demonstrating the adverse effects caused by poor enforcement. Insufficient dedicated garbage bins at the sites have caused significant issues in recycling high volumes of waste generated from night market operations⁹⁴. It was also reported that the designated garbage bins were too small, and poorly categorised and maintained, leading to inconvenience for businesses and consumers in disposing of and recycling waste⁹⁵.

Consequently, these issues have resulted in waste disposal in non-designated areas, such as the nearest gutter or drain, causing pungent odours, breeding grounds for pests, and blocking drainage systems. This problem was further exacerbated by inadequate municipal services in charge of garbage collection, according to some hawkers⁹⁶. Waste removal trucks typically target only certain areas and solid waste on the streets while neglecting waste in the surrounding areas⁹⁷. As a result, these problems have caused ineffective and disorganised waste disposal following night market operations and health implications among consumers and residents in the vicinity (Figure 7).

⁹¹ Lim and Lee (2022)

⁹² KUSKOP (2023)

⁹³ Xu et al. (2024)

⁹⁴ Xu et al. (2024)

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Hassan (2003)

⁹⁷ Xu et al. (2024)

Figure 7: Conditions of the night market in Jalan 17/1A of Petaling Jaya, Selangor



Source: Xu et al. (2024)

3.2. Public health and environmental concerns

Another pressing issue within the night market landscape resulting from the lax enforcement of regulations is the negative impact on public health and the environment, especially for consumers.

In Malaysia, food safety at night markets is often overlooked, but the repercussions of this neglect can be severe. First, one alarming concern is the recurring association between night markets and foodborne illnesses, particularly *Salmonella*, as several life-threatening cases have been reported in the past. In 2011, an 11-year-old girl lost her life after consuming contaminated food and beverages purchased from a night market in Selangor⁹⁸.

⁹⁸ Lieong et al. (2017)

Similarly, in 2014, Kuala Terengganu witnessed a devastating outbreak where a young boy died from Salmonella poisoning, and an additional 68 individuals required treatment at the hospital after consuming food from certain night markets⁹⁹.

Following the Kuala Terengganu incident, a study revealed that the majority of affected respondents experienced multiple symptoms, including diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting, and fever. The investigation linked these cases to hawkers' violations of the food handling standards, particularly in critical areas such as improper storage of raw materials and poor cleanliness of utensils¹⁰⁰ (Figure 8). While there are no publicly available data on night market-specific cases, the incidence rate of food poisoning has become more common – rising from 43.77 per 100,000 population in 2022¹⁰¹ to 53.67 in 2023¹⁰².

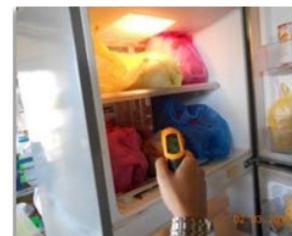
Figure 8: Snapshots of night market food preparation conditions surveyed in Kuala Terengganu in March 2014



(a) Improper storage of the utensils



(b, c) Improper storage of raw foods in the refrigerator and the temperature is tested to be higher than the acceptable standard



(d) Chilli paste container not sealed



(e) Dirty kitchen floor



(f) Water in the buckets used for washing raw materials is kept at room temperature

Source: Ab Karim et al. (2017)

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ab Karim et al. (2017)

¹⁰¹ MOH (2023)

¹⁰² MOH (2024)

This dire situation resulted in concerns about the level of awareness among night market operators regarding food handling practices. Past research has highlighted instances where night market traders lacked essential knowledge in critical aspects of food safety, posing significant risks to consumers. This issue is primarily driven by the reported absence of clear official guidelines and a generally low level of awareness regarding the right techniques for handling food¹⁰³. Even when food handling training is made compulsory, safety issues persist—highlighting the urgent need for more stringent policies and enforcement.

For example, Azman et al. (2012) found that more than half of the surveyed night market traders had only a moderate understanding of the risks associated with the usage of repeatedly heated cooking oil, while 18% had very poor knowledge of the matter. Despite many traders acknowledging that reusing cooking oil is an unsafe practice, over half admitted to doing so for deep-frying. Alarmingly, none of them reported having received or followed any official or unofficial guidelines on proper food handling. This shows a lack of compliance with the standards of safe food handling practices due to limited knowledge and undesirable attitudes of the night market traders, possibly leading to various repercussions on health.

Second, as pointed out in Section 3.4, poor and ineffective enforcement of regulations at night markets can have detrimental effects on the environment. For one, if food and beverages are improperly disposed of, they will create ideal breeding grounds for insects and serve as a food source for pests. This is particularly worrying given that food waste from the night market is the second-largest contributor to overall food waste in Malaysia, trailing only behind household waste¹⁰⁴ alongside the usage of single-use plastic¹⁰⁵, which can further exacerbate environmental degradation. Ineffective waste management by municipal services coupled with irresponsible public behaviour has been proven to lead to serious consequences, such as clogged drainage systems¹⁰⁶. If left unaddressed, these issues could escalate into bigger problems, including pollution and an increased risk of flash floods.

3.3. Night markets as tourism hubs: An underutilised asset

While night markets are deeply embedded in Malaysian culture and attract both locals and tourists, their full economic potential in the international market remains largely and understudied. In several states like Selangor¹⁰⁷ and Sabah, especially Kota Kinabalu¹⁰⁸, officials have acknowledged the need to promote tourism through night markets by featuring local cuisines and cultural performances, as well as launching night market programmes. However, efforts at the national level appear to be limited.

¹⁰³ Azman et al. (2012)

¹⁰⁴ Bashir et al. (2020)

¹⁰⁵ Saifuddin (2017)

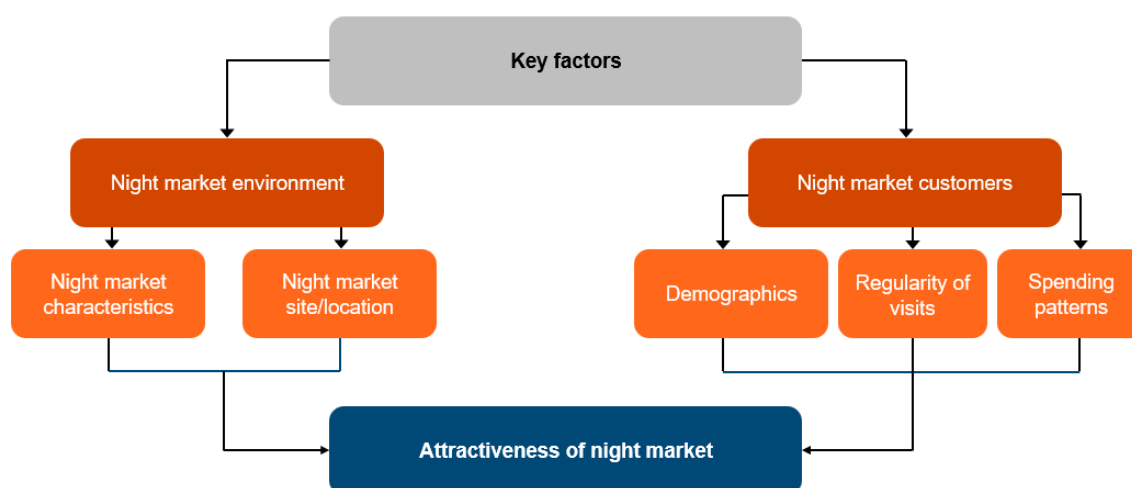
¹⁰⁶ Xu et al. (2024)

¹⁰⁷ Priya and Wahab (2023)

¹⁰⁸ Sabah Media (2023)

According to Ahmad, Chiew, and Hussain (2021), making night markets alluring for tourists would require further analyses of two key aspects, which are the night market environment and customers (Figure 9)¹⁰⁹.

Figure 9: Research framework to study the night market environment and customers' behaviour



Source: Illustration based on Ahmad, Tian, and Hussain (2021)

They discovered six (6) main factors influencing tourist visits to night markets in Malaysia: 1) close proximity to other tourists' destinations, 2) availability of other night markets, 3) strong support from local authorities to ensure safety and security, 4) positive consumer perception towards the night market, 5) friendly environment and atmosphere, and 6) the display of local cuisine and culture¹¹⁰.

Some of these factors align with the earlier findings of Chou (2013), who identified key determinants influencing tourists' decisions to revisit night markets in Taiwan. In addition to initiatives by the Taiwanese government—such as distributing night market food vouchers to attract foreign tourists—this study also highlighted three critical aspects which would drive revisitation: the tourism image of night markets, the overall consumption experience and the recreational benefits¹¹¹ they offer¹¹².

As such, the limited research on the association between experiences at Malaysian night markets and likelihood of visiting or returning among tourists presents a significant gap for further exploration. Understanding the factors that improve visitor satisfaction and encourage revisitation could provide valuable insights for developing key policies and initiatives to elevate night markets as a key driver of tourism.

¹⁰⁹ Ahmad, Tian, and Hussain (2021)

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Recreational benefits can include relaxation, education, social interactions, self-expression, and physiological.

¹¹² Chou (2013)

4. Research Gap

The literature on night markets has gained increased scholarly attention in recent years, particularly across Asian economies, where these spaces are deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric. Drawing on our literature review of over 50 filtered resources, as summarised in **Appendix 1**, we observe a wide thematic range—from night markets' role in tourism, cultural identity, and sensory experience to their function in informal economies, urban design and food safety. International studies, notably from Taiwan, China, and South Korea, frame night markets as vibrant communal spaces that support local economies and preserve cultural authenticity. Malaysian scholarship, meanwhile, tends to emphasise typologies, trader profiles, and the challenges of informal governance.

However, several knowledge gaps emerge in the literature, particularly in Malaysia's context. Despite this growing body of work, very few studies delve into the granular, lived realities of hawkers and consumers—two key stakeholder groups that lie at the heart of the night market ecosystem.

Among hawkers, existing studies offer a limited understanding of the day-to-day barriers they face. While licensing regimes and urban displacement are occasionally mentioned, there remains a lack of empirical research into how hawkers experience and navigate regulatory uncertainties, competition from formal retail and e-commerce, or the implications of urban planning decisions. There is also insufficient documentation of their perception of night markets' economic value, especially in terms of income stability and micro-entrepreneurial growth. These gaps hinder efforts to design supportive and inclusive policies for the informal sector.

The evidence base for consumers is even thinner. Most literature on night markets is trader-centric or focused on municipal management. Questions about consumer perception, particularly around food safety, space conflict, and the evolving relevance of night markets in an era of digital retail and food delivery, remain largely unaddressed. Without consumer insights, policies aiming to sustain or revitalise night markets risk misalignment with public expectations and urban behaviour patterns.

Furthermore, while policy documents often advocate for formalisation, capacity-building, and entrepreneurship development, there is scant empirical evidence on what forms of support would actually be useful and appropriate for night market traders. The literature remains largely lacking on traders' digital readiness, financing needs, or appetite for tourism-oriented initiatives such as festivals, voucher schemes, or digital cashless systems.

Against this backdrop, a structured, respondent-centred approach to research through a fieldwork study that focuses on both hawkers and consumers is needed. On the hawker side, the gap emerged to uncover operational challenges, regulatory navigation, business resilience, and support needs. On the consumer side, it aims to capture public sentiment regarding safety, space, cultural value, and night market relevance. This evidence-based work could be enriched by demographic segmentation to enable more tailored and fair insights.

5. Concluding remarks

This article is the second discussion paper from KRI's ongoing Night Market (NEXUS) project. It provides a preliminary understanding of night markets to uncover shortfalls in their operations, regulations, and economic significance. Through the analysis of literature and existing data, this paper lays the groundwork for our upcoming field survey that will provide deeper empirical insights into the realities of night market traders in Malaysia.

Literature reviews based on a filtered list of 60 research articles, reports, and policy documents (refer to Appendix 1) reveal that while night markets occupy a significant proportion of the informal economy, their structural and regulatory development has not kept pace with their social and economic significance. The bulk of existing research focuses on fragmented dimensions—such as consumer behaviour, spatial configuration, tourism potential, or food safety—often siloed from broader urban, environmental, and entrepreneurial frameworks. This fragmented understanding points to the need for a more integrated approach to research and policymaking.

Several recurrent themes emerge from the review of the literature. The evolution of night markets is closely tied to Malaysia's urbanisation trajectory and shifting food consumption patterns. However, there is limited empirical work that examines how these shifts intersect with licensing frameworks, spatial access, and the economic resilience of night market traders. Studies have pointed to persistent gaps in waste management, food safety compliance, and uneven enforcement by local authorities, indicating systemic weaknesses that cannot be resolved through top-down regulation alone. On the consumer side, perceptions of cleanliness, safety, and accessibility continue to shape their engagement with these spaces, yet these perspectives remain underexplored in policy discourse.

Moreover, as the standard of living of Malaysian households continues to rise, it becomes increasingly important to understand how these socioeconomic shifts may affect consumer preferences towards night markets. Questions arise as to whether middle-class consumers will continue to prefer night markets, given the growing emphasis on food safety, hygiene, and convenience, or whether they will shift towards formal retail and food service outlets. Equally relevant is the need to explore whether night markets serving different consumer segments display varying characteristics, and whether the broader trend towards food-away-from-home consumption is benefiting night market traders or shifting demand elsewhere. These emerging dynamics are critical yet remain largely unexamined in existing research.

Additionally, while digitisation has begun to shape the way traders operate—especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic—the literature remains limited on how digital payment systems, online visibility, and cashless incentives are transforming the micro-enterprise dynamics in night markets. Similarly, the role of night markets in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly for women, youth, and B40 communities, is frequently acknowledged but rarely substantiated with robust evidence.

These observed gaps point to the need for a future research agenda—one that centres on the lived realities of both night market traders and consumers within the Malaysian context. Future studies should seek to capture the everyday experiences, motivations, challenges, and support needs of night market hawkers, while also understanding consumer behaviours, expectations, and concerns, particularly across different income segments. Such dual-perspective research would help validate many of the conceptual propositions that surfaced in the literature, including those related to informal economic resilience, regulatory burdens, spatial usage, digital transitions, and shifting consumption patterns. Disaggregated insights across gender, income level, locality, age, and digital engagement would further enrich policy dialogues by grounding them in the diversity of realities that shape night market ecosystems. Ultimately, such studies would provide a critical empirical foundation with evidence to inform more inclusive, adaptive, and context-sensitive policy interventions.

6. References

- Ab Karim, Balkis, A Liza Latip, Anita Surani Abd Shukor, Norafidah A Rashid, Wan Madiah Wan Mohd, and Fadzilah Kamaludin. 2017. "A Large Common Source Outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium Linked to Kuala Terengganu Night Markets, Malaysia, 2014." *OSIR* 10 (2): 1–7.
- Ab Rahman, Mohd Nazir Sukaimi, and Ahmad Faiz Yaakob. 2021. "Managing Unlicensed Street Hawker by Local Government: A Conceptual Paper / Mohd Nazir Sukaimi, Farah Adilla Ab Rahman and Ahmad Faiz Yaakob." In , 506–9. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/54489/>.
- Abd Latif, Rohaizah. 2011. "Night Market a New Perspective: A Study of It's Potential As Tourism Attraction." In *ResearchGate*. Lisbon. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315474885_Night_Market_a_New_Perspective_A_Study_of_It%27s_Potential_As_Tourism_Attraction.
- Ahmad, Amri, Chiew Boon Tian, and Muhammad Firdaus Hussain. 2021. "Customers Behaviour and Tourist Attraction Factors of the Bestari Jaya Night Market." *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* 13 (1): 193–202.
- Ahmad, Amri, Poh Kok Weng, Khursiah Abd Aziz, Nor Asmawati Nor, and Nurul Auni Hasbullah. 2019. "The Dynamism of the Night Market Environment at Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor." *International Journal of Innovation* 6 (4).
- Aziz, Khursiah Abd., and Wai Yeng Lye. 2011. "Dynamism of a Night Market Taman Sri Muda, Shah Alam" 2 (4): 27–39.
- Azman, A., S. Mohd Shahrul, S. X. Chan, A. P. Noorhazliza, M. Khairunnisak, M. F. Nur Azlina, H. M. S. Qodriyah, Y. Kamisah, and K. Jaarin. 2012. "Level of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Night Market Food Outlet Operators in Kuala Lumpur Regarding the Usage of Repeatedly Heated Cooking Oil." *The Medical Journal of Malaysia* 67 (1): 91–101.
- Bashir, Muhammad 'Arif Aizat, Hairul Nizwan Abd Majid, Sperico Michael Alden, Shahril Hussin, and Mohd Redzuan Mohd Shah. 2020. "Knowledge and Attitude among Night Market Food Operators toward Food Waste Management Practices: A Conceptual Paper." *ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4 (1): 36–45.
- BERNAMA. 2020. "Peniaga pasar malam manfaatkan kelebihan e-Tunai." Bernama. January 24, 2020. <https://www.bernama.com/bm/news.php?id=1809089>.
- . 2022. "Hawkers, Traders and Small-Time Entrepreneurs Mega Festival Extended until Saturday." Bernama. October 21, 2022. <https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2130972>.
- . n.d. "Govt Channels RM5.76 Bil to 261,651 MSME Entrepreneurs — Kuskop." Bernama. Accessed November 26, 2024. <https://theedgemalaysia.com/node/730094>.
- Bhowmik, S. 2005. "Street Vendors in Asia: A Review." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40 (22): 2256–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4416705>.
- Chin, Othman, and Mohd Zainal Munshid Bin Othman. 2015. "Night Market: A Platform for Creating New Entrepreneurs." *Humanities and Social Sciences* 3 (1): 32. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.hss.20150301.14>.
- Chou, Hsiu-Jung. 2013. "The Effect of the Visitor's Consumption Experience and Tourism Image on Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention of Taiwan's Night Markets." *GSTF Journal on Business Review (GBR)* 3 (1): 6. <https://doi.org/10.7603/s40706-013-0006-2>.
- Dawe, David, Roehlano Briones, Nazmul Hassan, Hermanto, Jikun Huang, A. Ganesh Kumar, Le Hoa Nguyen, et al. 2019. "Trends in Food Prepared Outside the Home in Some Asian Countries." *World Food Policy* 5 (1): 16–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wfp2.12001>.

- DBKL. 2021. "Garis Panduan Dan Maklumat Pasar Malam Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur." <https://www.dbkl.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Garis-Panduan-dan-Maklumat-Pasar-Malam-Wilayah-Persekutuan-Kuala-Lumpur-14.12.2021.pdf>.
- . 2023a. "Data Terbuka DBKL." <https://www.dbkl.gov.my/data-statistik/data-terbuka>.
- . 2023b. "Garis Panduan Pelesenan: Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur." Jabatan Pelesenan dan Pembangunan Perniagaan. https://www.dbkl.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/GARIS-PANDUAN-PELESENAN-DBKL-PINDAAN_2023.pdf.
- . 2023c. "Pelan Struktur Kuala Lumpur 2040 – PPKL2040." Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur. <https://ppkl.dbkl.gov.my/en/pskl2040/>.
- . 2023d. "Statistik Penjaja Aktif Mengikut Parlimen Dan Kaum." <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dbkl.gov.my%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2024%2F07%2FStatistik-Penjaja-Aktif-Mengikut-Parlimen-dan-Kaum.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.
- DOS. 2023. "Household Income Survey Report 2022." Putrajaya: Department of Statistics Malaysia.
- . 2024a. "Gross Domestic Product by State 2023." https://open.dosm.gov.my/publications/gdp_state_2023.
- . 2024b. "Informal Sector and Informal Employment Survey Report 2023." Putrajaya: Department of Statistics Malaysia. <https://newss.statistics.gov.my/newss-portalx/ep/epFreeDownloadContentSearch.seam?cid=9813>.
- . 2024c. "Population Table: Administrative Districts." OpenDOSM. 2024. <https://open.dosm.gov.my>.
- . n.d. "Household Income & Expenditure." OpenDOSM. Accessed November 30, 2024. <https://open.dosm.gov.my>.
- Gomez, Christina, Joanne C. White, and Micheal Wulder. 2011. "Characterizing the State and Processes of Change in a Dynamic Forest Environment Using Hierarchical Spatio-Temporal Segmentation." *Remote Sensing of Environment* 115 (7): 1665–79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2011.02.025>.
- Hassan, Norhaslina. 2003. "Accommodating the Street Hawkers into Modern Urban Management in Kuala Lumpur." https://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/293.pdf.
- Hassane, Abdella Mohammed. 2024. "Social and Economic Aspects of Night Markets in Selected Towns of East Hararghe Zone." MA Thesis, Ethiopia: Haramaya University.
- Hazim, Anis. 2021. "Govt to Allocate RM25m to Transform Night Markets." *The Malaysian Reserve*, December 4, 2021, sec. News. <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/12/04/govt-to-allocate-rm25m-to-transform-night-markets/>.
- Ibrahim, Muhammad Faishal, Yuan Lim Lan, and Leng Soh Kok. 2004. "Identifying the Dimensions of Suburban Shopping Centres and 'Pasar Malam' (Night Markets) in Singapore from a Shopper's Perspective." *Pacific Rim Property Research Journal* 10 (1): 79–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14445921.2004.11104155>.
- Ibrahim, Muhammad Faishal, and Kok Leng Soh. 2003. "Shoppers' Perceptions of Retail Developments: Suburban Shopping Centres and Night Markets in Singapore." *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property* 3 (2): 176–89. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.rlp.5090174>.
- Ishak, Nor Khomar, Khursiah Abdul Aziz, and Amri Ahmad. 2012. "Dynamism of a Night Market." *Journal of Case Research in Business and Economics* 4 (1): 1–14.
- Ishak, Nor Khomar, Khursiah Abd Aziz, and Rohaizah Abdul Latif. 2012. "Typology of Night Markets in Malaysia." *Journal of Case Research in Business and Economics* 4 (1): 1–10.

- Junaidi, Noni Harianti, and Anisa Safiqah Othman. 2021. "Illegal Street Hawkers Issue Facing the Local Authorities in Sarawak: A Case Study of Urban Streets in Kuching City." *Voice of Academia (VOA)* 17 (1): 37–54.
- Kalnaovakul, Kanapot. 2021. "Dimensions of Night Market Visit Experience of International Dimensions of Night Market Visit Experience of International Tourists: An Analysis of Google Reviews of Night Markets in Phuket, Thailand." *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 21 (3): 56–73.
- Kaur, Minderjeet. 2021. "With Businesses on the Line, Pasar Malam Traders Go Online." *Free Malaysia Today* | FMT. May 19, 2021. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/05/19/with-businesses-on-the-line-pasar-malam-traders-go-online/>.
- KPKT. 2023. "Rujukan Ringkas Mengenai Dasar-Dasar Berkaitan Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan (PBT)." Putrajaya: Kementerian Pembangunan Kerajaan Tempatan. <https://shorturl.at/MJyLb>.
- KRI. 2024a. "Households and the Pandemic 2019-2022: The State of Households 2024." Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Research Institute.
- . 2024b. "The State of Households 2024: Households and the Pandemic 2019-2022." Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Research Institute.
- Kuo, Cheng-Ter, Mei-Ling Chung, and Fang-Chi Kuo. 2012. "To Explore Taiwanese Night Markets Culture and Tourism Experience and Behaviour." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 40:435–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.212>.
- KUSKOP. 2023. "Pelan Pembangunan Penjaja Dan Peniaga Kecil (P3PK) 2023-2027." Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives. [https://www.kuskop.gov.my/admin/files/med/image/portal/PDF/PELAN%20PEMBANGUNAN%20PENJAJA%20DAN%20PENIAGA%20KECIL%20\(P3PK\)%202023-2027.pdf](https://www.kuskop.gov.my/admin/files/med/image/portal/PDF/PELAN%20PEMBANGUNAN%20PENJAJA%20DAN%20PENIAGA%20KECIL%20(P3PK)%202023-2027.pdf).
- . 2024. "Dasar Pembangunan Penjaja Dan Peniaga Kecil Negara 2030 (D3PKN2030)." Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi. <https://www.kuskop.gov.my/admin/files/med/image/portal/PDF/Penerbitan/DP3K-2030-FA.pdf>.
- Lam, T. T-F. 1982. "Food for the City: The Role of the Informal Sector." *GeoJournal*, 49–59.
- Lee, Derrick, and Philip Pearce. 2019. "Shining a Light on Asian Night Markets: Vendors' and Visitors' Views." *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 6 (2): 467–84. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-02-2019-0027>.
- Lee, Su-Hsin, Shu-Chen Chang, Jing-Shoung Hou, and Chung-Hsien Lin. 2008. "Night Market Experience and Image of Temporary Residents and Foreign Visitors." Edited by Huei-Ju Chen. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 2 (3): 217–33. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17506180810891591>.
- Li, Runzhe, Xiujuan Wang, and Yi Wang. 2021. "Night Market Cultural Transformation and Upgrading." *Journal of Service Science and Management* 14 (04): 412–28. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jssm.2021.144026>.
- Lieong, Sook Theng, Mohammed Adnan, Normardiana Mohammad Jaafar, Siti Nur' Afifah Jaafar, and Norainy Mahyudin. 2017. "Comparative Study of Consumers' Knowledge and Attitudes towards Food Safety and Purchase Intention of Night Market Foods Containing Poultry in Low and High Food Poisoning Cases States." *Malays Appl. Biol.* 46 (3): 131–41.
- Lim, Jarod, and Cy Lee. 2022. "A Lot to Lose." *The Star*, August 1, 2022, sec. Metro. <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2022/08/01/a-lot-to-lose>.
- Liu, Chih-Hsing Sam, Sheng-Fang Chou, and Jun-You Lin. 2021. "Implementation and Evaluation of Tourism Industry: Evidentiary Case Study of Night Market Development in Taiwan." *Evaluation and Program Planning* 89 (December):101961. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2021.101961>.
- Marimuthu, Malliga, and Siti Hasnah Hassan. 2016. *Consumption in Malaysia Meeting of New Changes*. Penang: Penerbit USM. <https://shorturl.at/Vvk8R>.

- Mashuri, Mas Affandy. 2022. "Does COVID-19 Stop Night Market's Traders from Losing Their Income?" *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts (JTHCA)* 14 (2): 24–34.
- May, Rachel Yong Yuen, and Muhammad Safuan Abdul Latip. 2021. "The Perspectives of Street Food Traders on Foreign Worker Dependency during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication Research* 13 (1): 61–77.
- Mazlan, Sauda, Nur Eleesha Sufi Meran, Malina Hanum Mohd Kamal, and Noorazlin Ramli. 2017. "Decision to Visit Night Market from Malaysian Customer Perspective" 9 (2): 143–52.
- MBPP. 2024. "Garis Panduan Permohonan Dan Pengurusan Lesen Penjaja Bergerak/Statik Menggunakan Kenderaan Bermotor (Motosikal, Kereta Dan Trak Bergerak) Majlis Bandaraya Pulau Pinang (Pindaan 2024)." Majlis Bandaraya Pulau Pinang. <https://shorturl.at/4FkkY>.
- Md Isa, Azwardi, Noor Azura Azman, and Nur Syazwani Aisyah Ahmad Sukri. 2020. "Night-Market Traders Are They Entrepreneurial or Just Making Ends Meet?" *The South East Asian Journal of Management* 14 (2): 230–45. <https://doi.org/10.21002/seam.v14i2.12258>.
- MED. 2019. "National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030." <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2019/08/national-entrepreneurship-policy/>.
- Moghaddam, Salome Ghodsi. 2013. "The Role of Night Markets on Urban Quality, Identity and Image; Case Study: Bazar JB Night Market, Johor Bahru City Centre."
- MOH. 2023. "2023 Health Facts." Ministry of Health Malaysia. <https://shorturl.at/JeUMT>.
- . 2024. "2024 Health Facts." Ministry of Health Malaysia. <https://myhdw.moh.gov.my/public/documents/20186/150084/HEALTH+FACTS+2024/52a11e45-a0ed-4379-b226-1bd2786cc11e?version=1.0&download=true>.
- Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim, and Goh Hao Yi. 2025. "Hawkers and Hawking Space in Malaysia: A Case Study." Khazanah Research Institute.
- Moraga, Paula. 2023a. "Spatial Autocorrelation." In *Spatial Statistics for Data Science: Theory and Practice with R*. Chapman & Hall/CRC Data Science Series. <https://www.paulamoraga.com/book-spatial/spatial-autocorrelation.html#morans-i-scatterplot>.
- . 2023b. "Spatial Neighborhood Matrices." In *Spatial Statistics for Data Science: Theory and Practice with R*. Chapman & Hall/CRC Data Science Series. <https://www.paulamoraga.com/book-spatial/spatial-neighborhood-matrices.html>.
- Muhammad Iqbal, Bambang Karsono, Atthaillah, and Nova Purnama Lisa. 2017. "Night Market Contribution to Sustainability of Urban Spaces." *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 25 (S): 131–38.
- Nam, Sung-Jip. 2017. "Exploring Success Factors of Night Markets: Utilizing the Diamond Model." *The Journal of Industrial Distribution & Business* 8 (2): 33–38.
- Ngesan, Mohd Riduan, and Hafazah Abdul Karim. 2012. "Impact of Night Commercial Activities towards Quality Of Life of Urban Residents." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 35:546–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.02.121>.
- Nguyen, Bach. 2021. "Local Institutions, External Finance and Investment Decisions of Small Businesses in Vietnam." *Economic System* 45 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecosys.2021.100880>.
- Nguyen, Thi Phuoc Lai, and Antonio Peña-García. 2019. "Users' Awareness, Attitudes, and Perceptions of Health Risks Associated with Excessive Lighting in Night Markets: Policy Implications for Sustainable Development." *Sustainability* 11 (21): 6091. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11216091>.
- Noordeyana Tambi. 2016. "Kelestarian Komuniti Peniaga Melayu Bazar Larut Malam Di Lembah Klang, Malaysia."

- Nungsari, Melati, Kar Yern Chin, Shenyi Chua, and Fatin Nadhirah Jamalolail. 2024. "Conditions of Precarity and Strategies of Resilience: The Malaysian Hawker Community and COVID-19 Pandemic." In *SDGs in the Asia and Pacific Region*, 141–66. Springer.
- Omemu, A.M., and S.T. Aderoju. 2008. "Food Safety Knowledge and Practices of Street Food Vendors in the City of Abeokuta, Nigeria." *Food Control* 19 (4): 396–402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2007.04.021>.
- Pamungkas, Bani. 2016. "Pedagang Kaki Lima Dan Pengembangan Kota: Analisa Kebijakan Pengelolaan Pasar Malam PKL Kota Jakarta Dan Kuala Lumpur." In , 664–80. Universitas Bakrie, Jakarta. <http://jurnal.bakrie.ac.id/index.php/INDOCOMPAC/article/view/1632>.
- Pradhan, Prajal, Luís Costa, Diego Rybski, Wolfgang Lucht, and Jürgen P. Kropp. 2017. "A Systematic Study of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Interactions." *Earth's Future* 5 (11): 1169–79. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017EF000632>.
- Priya, Sheila Sri, and Farid Wahab. 2023. "Rebranding Morning and Night Markets as Tourism Products | The Star," November 16, 2023. <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2023/11/16/rebranding-morning-and-night-markets-as-tourism-products>.
- Radomskaya, Valeriya, and Abhishek Singh Bhati. 2022. "Hawker Centres: A Social Space Approach to Promoting Community Wellbeing." *Urban Planning* 7 (4): 167–78.
- Ramli, Muhammad Wafi, and Mohamad Hafifi Jamri. 2021. "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Closer Look at the Night Market Traders' Experience in Penang, Malaysia." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11 (1): Pages 741-760. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i1/8408>.
- Ratna, Faruqi Zahan. 2012. "Hawkers in Dhaka: Their Struggle for Livelihoods and Functionality of the City."
- "Rebranding Morning and Night Markets as Tourism Products." 2023. The Star. November 16, 2023. <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2023/11/16/rebranding-morning-and-night-markets-as-tourism-products>.
- Sabah Media. 2023. "Inisiatif Buka Lebih Banyak Pasar Malam Mampu Jadi Tarikan Pelancong Asing." *Sabah Media* (blog). August 22, 2023. <https://sabahmedia.com/2023/08/22/inisiatif-buka-lebih-banyak-pasar-malam-mampu-jadi-tarikan-pelancong-asing/>.
- Saifuddin, Farida. 2017. "Zero Waste Night Market." February 13, 2017. <https://zerowastemalaysia.org/zero-waste-night-market/>.
- Secretariat, Legislative Council. 2023. "Promoting Street Markets in Singapore and London."
- Seng, Alan Teh Leam. 2019. "Tracing Our Hawker Roots." *NST Online*, March 17, 2019, sec. Sunday Vibes. <https://shorturl.at/JlJul>.
- Shazwan Mustafa Kamal. 2014. "Google Finally Brings 'Street View' to Malaysia." *Malay Mail*, September 30, 2014, sec. Malaysia. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2014/09/30/google-finally-brings-street-view-to-malaysia/755313>.
- Siwar, Chamhuri, and Mohd Fauzi Mohd Jani. 2007. "Poverty and Socioeconomic Profile of Hawkers in Kuala Lumpur: Implications for Hawker Development Policy." *Growth, Development and Poverty Alleviation in the Asia-Pacific*, 179.
- Smart, Josephine. 1986. "The Impact of Government Policy on Hawkers: A Study of the Effects of Establishing a Hawker Permitted Place." *Asian Journal of Public Administration* 8 (2): 260–79.
- SME Corp. 2021. "Program WARONGKU Dilancar Bantu 3,500 Usahawan Mikro Lonjak Pendapatan," April 25, 2021. https://www.kuskop.gov.my/admin/files/med/image/portal/PDF/Kenyataan%20media/Siaran%20Media%20Warongku_edited%2025042021-FINAL%20SUA.pdf.

- Sookram, Sandra, and Patrick Kent Watson. 2008. "Small-Business Participation in the Informal Sector of an Emerging Economy." *The Journal of Development Studies* 44 (10): 1531–53.
- Sukaimi, Mohd Nazir, Farah Adilla Ab Rahman, and Ahmad Faiz Yaakob. 2021. "Managing Unlicensed Street Hawker by Local Government: A Conceptual Paper." In *E-Proceeding 8th International Conference on Public Policy and Social Science (ICOPS) 2021*, 506–9. Negeri Sembilan: UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/54489/1/54489.pdf>.
- Sun, Yi-Mei, Shu-Tai Wang, and Kuo-Wei Huang. 2012. "Hygiene Knowledge and Practices of Night Market Food Vendors in Tainan City, Taiwan." *Food Control* 23 (1): 159–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2011.07.003>.
- Tan'G, Angelyn, and Asrul Aminuddin. 2019. "How Does Street Trading Activities Keep Chinatown in Kuala Lumpur a Living Cultural Enclave?" *Journal of Design and Built Environment* 19 (3): 42–52.
- Teoh, Ai Ni. 2024. "Unhealthy but Not by Choice: Food Environment and Nutrition Inequalities." Discussion Paper 2/24. Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Research Institute.
- Tilaki, Mohammad Javad Maghsoodi, Gelareh Abooali, Massoomeh Hedayati Marzbali, and Narimah Samat. 2021. "Vendors' Attitudes and Perceptions towards International Tourists in the Malaysia Night Market: Does the COVID-19 Outbreak Matter?" *Sustainability* 13 (3): 1553. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031553>.
- Tobler, W. R. 1970. "A Computer Movie Simulating Urban Growth in the Detroit Region." *Economic Geography* 46:234–40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/143141>.
- Toh, Poh See. 2000. "The Evaluation and Control of Food Safety in Hawker Foods in Kuala Lumpur."
- Toh, Poh See, and A Birchenough. 2000. "Food Safety Knowledge and Attitudes: Culture and Environment Impact on Hawkers in Malaysia.: Knowledge and Attitudes Are Key Attributes of Concern in Hawker Foodhandling Practices and Outbreaks of Food Poisoning and Their Prevention." *Food Control* 11 (6): 447–52.
- Tsai, Chiung-Tzu Lucetta. 2013. "Culinary Tourism and Night Markets in Taiwan." *International Journal of Business & Information* 8 (2). <https://www.proquest.com/openview/3e223e05ee73f6ff1cbca95ec8ce4963/1?cbl=236248&pq-origsite=gscholar>.
- United Nations. n.d. "SDG Communication Materials." United Nations Sustainable Development. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>.
- UTAR (n.d.). 2017. "Customer Satisfaction on Penang Hawker Centre, Malaysia: The Perception of Penang Tourists."
- Wang, Chien-Yao, I-Hau Yeh, and Hong-Yuan Mark Liao. 2021. "You Only Learn One Representation: Unified Network for Multiple Tasks." *arXiv Preprint arXiv:2105.04206*.
- Williams, Colin, and Anjula Gurtoo. 2011. "Evaluating Competing Explanations for Street Entrepreneurship: Some Evidence from India." *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research* 1 (2): 3–19.
- Williams, Colin, and Sara Nadin. 2012. "Entrepreneurship in the Informal Economy: Commercial or Social Entrepreneurs?" *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 8:309–24.
- Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain. n.d. "Street Foods in Developing Countries: Lessons from Asia." FAO. Accessed December 17, 2024. <https://www.fao.org/4/u3550t/u3550t08.htm>.
- Wu, Hung-Che, Ching-Chan Cheng, and Fu-Sung Hsu. 2014. "An Assessment of Visitors' Behavioral Intentions in the Taiwan Tourist Night Market Using a Multilevel and Hierarchical Approach." *Tourism Analysis* 19 (2): 185–97.

- Xu, Jiajun, Wanying Liao, Noor Hashimah Hashim Lim, Chng Saun Fong, Hongtao Wang, and Yuan Xu. 2024. "Operational and Environmental Assessment for Night Markets under the Informal Economy Impacts: Insights from the Case Study of Selangor, Malaysia." *3C TIC: Cuadernos de Desarrollo Aplicados a Las TIC* 13 (1): 189–219. <https://doi.org/10.17993/3ctic.2024.131.189-219>.
- Zakariya, Khalilah, and Prof. Dr. Sue Anne Ware. 2010. "Rediscovering the Night Market as an Itinerant Urban Space." https://www.academia.edu/226111/Rediscovering_the_Night_Market_as_an_Itinerant_Urban_Space.
- Zhang, Yangxing, Lincheng Zhou, and Zhonghac Zhang. 2022. "Identities and Spaces for Mobile Hawkers. A Study of Chinese Urban Policies and Planning," April. <https://www.politesi.polimi.it/handle/10589/184454>.
- Zhao, Jiawei. 2025. "From 'Buzz'to 'Re'Nao': Atmospheric Encounters and Sensory Landscapes in Urban Night Markets." *Social & Cultural Geography*, 1–20.

Appendix 1: Literature Review Matrix on Night Markets

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Chou (2014) ¹¹³	Taiwan	To explore the influence of consumption experience and tourism image on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in night markets.	Quantitative survey with structural equation modelling (SEM).	Positive consumption experiences and image significantly affect satisfaction and future revisit behaviour.
Wu et al. (2014) ¹¹⁴	Taiwan	To assess visitors' behavioural intentions in Taiwan night markets using multilevel modelling.	Quantitative approach using hierarchical regression on visitor survey data.	Behavioural intentions influenced by novelty, pleasure, and food involvement levels.
Iqbal et al. (2017) ¹¹⁵	Indonesia	To examine the contribution of night markets to urban space sustainability.	Qualitative case study with spatial observations.	Night markets enhance urban walkability, cultural interaction, and local economic vibrancy.
Ibrahim & Soh (2003) ¹¹⁶	Singapore	To assess shopper perceptions of night	Quantitative surveys with comparative analysis.	Night markets perceived as more culturally engaging but less convenient than formal retail.

¹¹³ Chou (2013)

¹¹⁴ Wu, Cheng, and Hsu (2014)

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Iqbal et al. (2017)

¹¹⁶ Ibrahim and Soh (2003)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
		markets versus suburban shopping centres.		
Tsai (2013) ¹¹⁷	Taiwan	To explore culinary tourism experiences within Taiwanese night markets.	Qualitative analysis with tourism and cultural behaviour lens.	Night markets serve as immersive cultural and culinary spaces attracting local and international tourists.
Lee et al. (2008) ¹¹⁸	Taiwan	To examine night market experience and its impact on temporary residents and foreign visitors.	Quantitative surveys analysed with SEM approach.	Positive emotional and sensory experiences enhance destination image and loyalty.
Zhao (2025) ¹¹⁹	China	To explore atmospheric and sensory landscapes of urban night markets.	Ethnographic fieldwork and sensory mapping.	Night markets facilitate multisensory encounters that contribute to cultural and emotional connection with space.
Nam (2017) ¹²⁰	South Korea	To identify critical success factors for night markets using the Diamond Model.	Analytical model framework applied to night market settings.	Government support, product uniqueness, and location accessibility are key enablers.
Pradhan et al. (2017) ¹²¹	Global	To analyse interaction and synergies between different SDGs, including informal urban economies.	Systematic literature review and policy mapping.	Informal economies can simultaneously contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable urbanisation.

¹¹⁷ Tsai (2013)

¹¹⁸ S. Lee et al. (2008)

¹¹⁹ Zhao (2025)

¹²⁰ Nam (2017)

¹²¹ Pradhan et al. (2017)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Kuo et al. (2012) ¹²²	Taiwan	To explore night market tourism behaviour and cultural values.	Behavioural surveys of domestic and foreign tourists.	Markets serve as low-cost tourism sites and incubators of cultural transmission.
Abdella Mohammed Hassane (2024) ¹²³	Ethiopia	To study the socio-economic contributions of night markets in East Hararghe towns.	Field survey and descriptive statistics.	Night markets support household income, social interaction, and local food systems in small towns.
Gomez et al. (2011) ¹²⁴	Canada	To use spatio-temporal segmentation to map urban change in dynamic environments.	Remote sensing and spatial analysis.	Urban transformation can be captured using high-resolution spatiotemporal datasets—relevant for mapping informal night economies.
Zhou et al. (2022) ¹²⁵	China	To study urban consumption culture and socio-spatial configuration of night markets.	Ethnographic fieldwork and spatial mapping.	Night markets blend consumption and leisure, contributing to the nocturnal economy and identity of modern Chinese cities.
Ishak et al. (2012) ¹²⁶	Malaysia	To establish a typology of Malaysian night markets based on their operational characteristics.	Case study analysis of selected night market locations.	Identified four market types: traditional, hybrid, commercial, and cultural.

¹²² Kuo, Chung, and Kuo (2012)

¹²³ Hassane (2024)

¹²⁴ Gomez, White, and Wulder (2011)

¹²⁵ Zhang, Zhou, and Zhang (2022)

¹²⁶ Ishak, Aziz, and Latif (2012)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Md Isa et al. (2020) ¹²⁷	Malaysia	To determine whether night market traders act as entrepreneurs or are survivalists.	Survey-based study with descriptive and thematic analysis.	Most traders engage in night market activities as a means of livelihood rather than entrepreneurship.
Xu et al. (2024) ¹²⁸	Malaysia (Selangor)	To assess the operational and environmental impact of informal night markets.	Case study with environmental observation and performance evaluation.	Identified key issues like sanitation, congestion, and waste management as sustainability barriers.
Ahmad et al. (2021) ¹²⁹	Malaysia	To examine customer behaviour and tourism attractiveness of Bestari Jaya night market.	Quantitative analysis using structured questionnaires.	Food variety and affordability were primary drivers of visitation and repeat attendance.
Ramli & Jamri (2021) ¹³⁰	Malaysia (Penang)	To investigate the impact of COVID-19 on night market traders.	Survey and case study approach during MCO restrictions.	Traders faced severe income disruptions and relied on temporary informal mechanisms for recovery.
Aziz & Lye (2011) ¹³¹	Malaysia (Shah Alam)	To analyse spatial and social dynamism of night market in Taman Sri Muda.	Field observation and descriptive analysis.	Night markets are dynamic economic spaces with vibrant social interactions and community function.
Mazlan et al. (2017) ¹³²	Malaysia	To assess factors influencing the decision to visit night markets from a consumer perspective.	Quantitative survey among local customers.	Customer visits are driven by price, product variety, and food quality.

¹²⁷ Md Isa, Azman, and Ahmad Sukri (2020)

¹²⁸ Xu et al. (2024)

¹²⁹ Ahmad, Tian, and Hussain (2021)

¹³⁰ Ramli and Jamri (2021)

¹³¹ Aziz and Lye (2011)

¹³² Mazlan et al. (2017)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Ahmad et al. (2019) ¹³³	Malaysia (Kuala Selangor)	To evaluate the environmental and physical setting of a night market.	Observation-based case study with stakeholder interviews.	Site layout and density impact the comfort and experience of both traders and visitors.
Bashir et al. (2020) ¹³⁴	Malaysia	To propose a conceptual model on food waste management attitudes among night market food operators.	Conceptual framework supported by review of related literature.	Attitude and knowledge gaps exist among vendors on sustainable waste management practices.
Abd Latif (2011) ¹³⁵	Malaysia (Tourism)	To explore the tourism potential of night markets.	Qualitative assessment and tourism potential mapping.	Night markets hold strong potential for tourism branding but require better promotion and hygiene standards.
Ghods Moghaddam (2013) ¹³⁶	Malaysia	To assess the spatial character and role of night markets as urban public spaces.	Urban planning analysis using mapping and interviews.	Night markets contribute to urban identity and informal placemaking but face planning neglect.
Pamungkas (2016) ¹³⁷	Malaysia & Indonesia	To compare policies managing night markets (PKL) in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur.	Comparative policy analysis.	Both cities lack long-term inclusive policy, resulting in tension between regulation and trader survival.

¹³³ Ahmad et al. (2019)

¹³⁴ Bashir et al. (2020)

¹³⁵ Abd Latif (2011)

¹³⁶ Moghaddam (2013)

¹³⁷ Pamungkas (2016)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Lieong et al. (2017) ¹³⁸	Malaysia	To study consumer knowledge and attitudes on food safety in night markets.	Survey among consumers in states with high/low food poisoning cases.	Awareness is higher in high-risk states, but purchasing habits are still influenced by price and preference.
Ab Rahman et al. (2021) ¹³⁹	Malaysia	To examine local government roles in managing unlicensed street hawkers conceptually.	Conceptual paper supported by literature review.	Calls for clearer coordination and enforcement standards across local authorities to manage informal vendors.
Azman et al. (2012) ¹⁴⁰	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	To evaluate night market food operators' knowledge and practice regarding the reuse of cooking oil.	Survey-based cross-sectional study.	Majority of vendors reuse oil multiple times, raising health concerns; awareness campaigns are needed.
Saifuddin (2017) ¹⁴¹	Malaysia	To highlight a zero-waste night market initiative in Malaysia.	Case documentation by environmental advocacy group.	Demonstrated feasibility of plastic-free and waste-minimal operations in community-led markets.
Zakariya & Ware (2010) ¹⁴²	Malaysia	To rediscover night markets as itinerant urban spaces and public realms.	Urban design and spatial theory approach.	Night markets are flexible spaces that challenge conventional boundaries of urban planning.
Hassan (2003) ¹⁴³	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	To explore the integration of street hawkers into	Urban governance analysis.	Lack of cohesive policy for hawker inclusion in modern city design; night markets operate in liminal planning zones.

¹³⁸ Lieong et al. (2017)

¹³⁹ Ab Rahman and Yaakob (2021)

¹⁴⁰ Azman et al. (2012)

¹⁴¹ Saifuddin (2017)

¹⁴² Zakariya and Ware (2010)

¹⁴³ Hassan (2003)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
		formal urban management.		
Ab Karim et al. (2017) ¹⁴⁴	Malaysia (Kuala Terengganu)	To investigate a Salmonella outbreak traced to night market food stalls.	Epidemiological outbreak investigation.	Poor hygiene practices in food handling at night markets can cause large-scale public health risks.
Tan'G & Aminuddin (2019) ¹⁴⁵	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur – Chinatown)	To explore how street trading sustains cultural identity in urban enclaves.	Ethnographic observation and stakeholder interviews.	Street vending, including night markets, plays a key role in maintaining cultural heritage in urban settings.
Ahmad et al. (2021) ¹⁴⁶	Malaysia (Policy / Local Economy)	To understand the role of night markets as a catalyst for community-based local economy in semi-urban towns.	Qualitative interviews and stakeholder mapping.	Night markets function as community hubs and economic bridges between rural producers and urban consumers.
Lim & Lee (2022) ¹⁴⁷	Malaysia (News Feature)	To highlight the risks faced by night market traders during and after COVID-19.	News reporting and trader interviews.	Many vendors face financial precarity due to reduced footfall, inflation, and lack of formal support.
Hazim (2021) ¹⁴⁸	Malaysia (Government Policy)	To report on government financial assistance and transformation plans for night markets.	News article summarising policy and budget statement.	Government allocated RM25 million to support night market infrastructure and digitisation.

¹⁴⁴ Ab Karim et al. (2017)

¹⁴⁵ Tan'G and Aminuddin (2019)

¹⁴⁶ Ahmad, Tian, and Hussain (2021)

¹⁴⁷ Lim and Lee (2022)

¹⁴⁸ Hazim (2021)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
BERNAMA (2020) ¹⁴⁹	Malaysia	To document the impact of e-wallet and digital incentives on night market traders.	News report with anecdotal data.	e-Tunai boosted trader visibility and introduced digital payments to informal vendors.
Sheila Priya & Farid Wahab (2023) ¹⁵⁰	Malaysia (Tourism Product)	To explore rebranding of night and morning markets as tourism attractions.	News feature with quotes from tourism officials and stakeholders.	Night markets are increasingly seen as experiential tourism assets that blend food, heritage, and local culture.
Ab Rahim & Goh (2025) ¹⁵¹	Malaysia	To map the hawker ecosystem and informal spatial practices in Malaysian cities.	Case study combining document review, spatial mapping and interviews.	Hawker zones including night markets are essential to inclusive city life but often exist in underregulated grey spaces.
KRI (2024) ¹⁵²	Malaysia	To examine household-level economic stress and coping mechanisms during 2019–2022.	Household survey data analysis.	Many households turned to informal sector activities like night markets for additional income during COVID-19 recovery.
DBKL (2021) ¹⁵³	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	To provide licensing guidelines and operational conditions for mobile and night market traders.	Policy and guideline document.	Outlines rules for operational zones, trading hours, application procedures and vehicle types for night markets.

¹⁴⁹ BERNAMA (2020)

¹⁵⁰ Priya and Wahab (2023)

¹⁵¹ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

¹⁵² KRI (2024)

¹⁵³ DBKL (2021)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
DBKL (2023) ¹⁵⁴	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	To provide updated guidelines for hawker licensing and night market operations.	Official regulatory framework documentation.	Details requirements for licensing, location management, operating hours, and compliance for night market traders.
KUSKOP (2023) ¹⁵⁵	Malaysia (National)	To outline development goals for hawkers and small traders under P3PK 2023–2027.	National strategy plan document.	Targets infrastructure improvements, business capacity-building, and digital transformation for informal and night market traders.
KUSKOP (2024) ¹⁵⁶	Malaysia (National)	To set a long-term national agenda for small traders through D3PKN2030.	Policy framework document.	Emphasises inclusive governance, spatial equity, and inter-agency alignment for the sustainability of night markets.
MED (2019) ¹⁵⁷	Malaysia (National)	To set the 2030 vision for entrepreneurship, including micro and informal segments.	Policy document (National Entrepreneurship Policy).	Calls for formalising and digitising micro-enterprises such as night market traders within the national entrepreneurship ecosystem.
MOF (2024) ¹⁵⁸	Malaysia (National)	To implement Phase II of the SDG Roadmap in Malaysia.	Multi-agency strategy document.	Night markets align with multiple SDGs, including poverty reduction, gender equality, and sustainable cities.
MBPP (2024) ¹⁵⁹	Malaysia (Penang)	To regulate mobile hawkers and night market operations using vehicles.	Local authority guidelines.	Clarifies licensing procedures and designations for mobile and night-based trading zones.

¹⁵⁴ DBKL (2023b)

¹⁵⁵ KUSKOP (2023)

¹⁵⁶ KUSKOP (2024)

¹⁵⁷ MED (2019b)

¹⁵⁸ MOF (2024)

¹⁵⁹ MBPP (2024)

Author(s) / Year	Country / Context	Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
UTAR (n.d.) ¹⁶⁰	Malaysia	To study vendor motivation and customer interaction at local night markets.	Academic thesis with field interviews.	Trader satisfaction is shaped by customer loyalty, access to infrastructure, and perceived legitimacy.
Mohd Amirul Rafiq & Goh (2025) ¹⁶¹	Malaysia	To map and analyse hawker dynamics and policy tensions across Malaysian cities.	Multi-city case study combining spatial and policy analysis.	Hawkers, including night market traders, occupy semi-formal spaces with fragmented institutional support.

¹⁶⁰ UTAR (n.d.) (2017)

¹⁶¹ Mohd Amirul Rafiq Abu Rahim and Goh Hao Yi (2025)

