
Managing Seasonal Demand Surges: Sales Strategies for Homemade Cookie Businesses During the Ramadan Peak Season

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the surge in demand for Leon Cookis homemade cookies during the peak Ramadan season, driven by the tradition of exchanging gift hampers, increased consumer purchasing power, and promotional activities through WhatsApp. The objective of this research is to identify the factors influencing the demand increase, examine the sales management strategies implemented by the business, and compare business performance during Ramadan and normal periods. A qualitative approach was employed through interviews with the business owner and direct observations of the production process. The findings reveal that the cookies are produced fresh based on customer orders, while affordable pricing is maintained through the direct procurement of ingredients from suppliers. As a result, monthly sales volume increased significantly from 15 to 150 jars during the Ramadan peak season. The business strategy focuses on a made-to-order production system and direct purchasing of raw materials to optimize efficiency and maintain product quality. A comparison between Ramadan and regular periods indicates substantially higher operational efficiency and sales performance during the Ramadan peak season.

Keywords: Demand Surge, Homemade Cookies, Ramadan, Leon Cookis

1. Introduction

The Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr periods are characterized by significant changes in consumer behavior, resulting in increased demand for various food products, particularly traditional snacks and homemade cookies. During this period, consumers tend to purchase cookies not only for family consumption but also as gifts, hampers, and refreshments for guests during Eid celebrations (Prastowo et al., 2024). Studies have shown that Ramadan influences purchasing behavior and consumption patterns, leading to a substantial increase in household spending and demand for seasonal products (Hosen, 2024; Al-Najjar et al., 2023). Furthermore, consumer behavior during Ramadan is often influenced by social and cultural values, including generosity, social gatherings, and gift-giving traditions, which contribute to higher consumption levels compared to ordinary months (Affandy & Pratiwi, 2021; Setiawan, 2022).

The increasing demand for homemade cookies during Ramadan presents substantial opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the culinary sector. In Indonesia, cookies have become one of the most popular seasonal products during Eid celebrations, making them an attractive business commodity for home-based entrepreneurs (Masri et al., 2025). Consumers increasingly prefer homemade food products because they are perceived as fresher, more authentic, and produced using carefully selected ingredients, creating a competitive advantage over mass-produced products (Zhang et al., 2024). As a result, many home-based businesses experience a dramatic surge in sales during the Ramadan peak season.

The rapid growth of digital technology has further expanded market opportunities for MSMEs. The adoption of social media, e-commerce platforms, and digital marketing strategies enables businesses to reach broader consumer segments and increase sales performance (Arafah et al., 2022; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Previous studies have demonstrated that

digital marketing activities positively influence brand awareness, customer engagement, and purchasing intentions (Bilgin, 2018; Alalwan, 2018; Lim et al., 2022). Social media platforms facilitate electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which significantly affects consumer decision-making processes and purchase intentions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Additionally, influencer marketing, fear of missing out (FOMO), scarcity appeals, and online recommendations have become increasingly effective tools for stimulating consumer demand during Ramadan campaigns (Alfina et al., 2023; Baltasar et al., 2025; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Despite these opportunities, many MSMEs continue to face significant challenges in managing increased demand during peak seasons. Limited digital literacy, insufficient utilization of social media, and weak marketing capabilities often hinder business growth and competitiveness (Wibowo, 2021; Lestari et al., 2025). Furthermore, the effectiveness of digital marketing depends not only on technological adoption but also on strategic integration between social media promotion, customer engagement, and sales management practices (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Kapoor et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2017). Research also indicates that WhatsApp marketing can significantly improve MSME sales performance due to its accessibility, direct communication features, and customer relationship-building capabilities (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2023).

Apart from marketing factors, product quality remains one of the most important determinants of consumer purchasing decisions. Customers tend to prefer cookies that offer superior taste, attractive appearance, freshness, hygiene, and high-quality packaging (Johari & Keni, 2022). Packaging innovation can further enhance product attractiveness and increase sales performance, particularly when products are intended as gifts or hampers during Eid celebrations (Bahri & Sani, 2023). Therefore, maintaining product quality while ensuring attractive packaging becomes a critical strategy for sustaining customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Another challenge faced by cookie-based MSMEs concerns production and supply chain management. Seasonal demand fluctuations often create difficulties in forecasting production volumes and managing raw material inventories. Without effective planning, businesses may experience stock shortages, production bottlenecks, or excessive inventory costs. Ulfah et al. (2023) identified demand uncertainty as one of the primary risks in the cookie supply chain, emphasizing the need for adaptive production strategies to meet market demand efficiently. Consequently, many small businesses adopt pre-order systems and flexible production approaches to minimize risks while maintaining product freshness and quality.

Although previous studies have extensively examined digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, product quality, and MSME performance during Ramadan (Arafah et al., 2022; Baltasar et al., 2025; Hidayat & Nugroho, 2023; Johari & Keni, 2022; Masri et al., 2025), limited research has specifically investigated how a homemade cookie business manages a substantial demand surge during the Ramadan peak season through the integration of production management, direct procurement strategies, and digital promotion practices. Most existing studies focus on consumer purchasing behavior, marketing effectiveness, or general MSME performance, while empirical evidence regarding operational responses and sales management strategies at the micro-business level remains limited. This condition constitutes the research gap addressed in the present study.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how home-based culinary MSMEs can effectively manage seasonal demand fluctuations while maintaining product quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for MSME owners facing similar challenges during high-demand periods. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Leon Cookis as a case study of a homemade cookie business that experienced a significant increase in sales volume during Ramadan and implemented a combination of fresh-made-to-order production, direct raw material procurement, and digital

marketing through WhatsApp and social media. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize marketing or consumer behavior, this research integrates demand surge analysis, operational management, and sales strategy within a single case study framework.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors contributing to the surge in demand for Leon Cookis homemade cookies during the Ramadan peak season, examine the sales and production management strategies implemented by the business, and compare business performance during Ramadan and normal periods. The results are expected to contribute to the literature on MSME management, seasonal consumer behavior, and digital marketing strategies in the culinary sector.

2. Research Method

According to Fadli (2021), qualitative research is a methodological approach designed to explore and understand phenomena comprehensively and contextually by collecting data within their natural settings, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation. This approach enables researchers to gain in-depth insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which was considered appropriate for examining the surge in demand for Leon Cookis homemade cookies during the peak Ramadan season and the sales strategies implemented to manage this increase in demand. A qualitative descriptive approach allows researchers to describe real-world conditions, identify factors influencing business performance, and understand how business owners respond to seasonal market fluctuations. The study focused on capturing detailed information regarding consumer demand patterns, production management practices, pricing strategies, marketing activities, and operational adjustments undertaken during Ramadan compared to normal business periods.

Data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. Observation was conducted to directly examine the production process, order management system, packaging activities, and overall business operations of Leon Cookis. This method enabled the researcher to obtain firsthand information regarding how the business manages production capacity, maintains product quality, and fulfills customer orders during periods of high demand.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owner of Leon Cookis as the primary informant. The interviews explored several key aspects, including factors contributing to the increase in demand during Ramadan, consumer purchasing behavior, sales and promotional strategies, production planning, raw material procurement, pricing policies, and challenges encountered during peak sales periods. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in obtaining detailed information while ensuring that all relevant research topics were adequately covered.

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis technique. The analysis process involved data reduction, data organization, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Information obtained from observations and interviews was systematically categorized according to the research objectives, allowing patterns, themes, and relationships to emerge. Through this analytical process, the study identified the main factors driving the surge in demand, evaluated the effectiveness of the sales and production strategies employed, and compared business performance during the Ramadan season with normal operating periods.

The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for MSMEs in the culinary sector, particularly home-based cookie businesses, regarding effective strategies for managing seasonal demand fluctuations, maintaining operational efficiency, and maximizing sales opportunities during high-demand periods such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.

3. Results and Discussion

Operational Mechanism of Leon Cookis

Leon Cookis operates using a pre-order (PO)-based business model to maintain product freshness while ensuring efficient capital utilization. The operational mechanism begins with promotional activities conducted primarily through WhatsApp and other social media channels. Customers place orders during the open pre-order period, followed by order confirmation and payment processing. Once orders are finalized, raw materials are procured, production is carried out according to the confirmed order volume, products are packaged, and finally distributed to customers.

Based on field observations and interviews with the business owner, sales performance is highly dependent on promotional activities and the effectiveness of the pre-order system. During the Ramadan peak season, promotional campaigns generated a substantial increase in customer orders within a short period. However, after the official pre-order period closed, the business often experienced labor shortages due to the limited number of workers involved in the manual production process. The rapid increase in orders created bottlenecks in production activities, reducing the ability of the business to fulfill all incoming requests efficiently.

To address this challenge, Leon Cookis implemented a work management reconciliation strategy through a batching production system and task specialization among available workers. Under this system, production activities were divided into specific work clusters, enabling employees to focus on designated tasks such as dough preparation, baking, packaging, and order fulfillment. This approach improved workflow efficiency and increased production capacity without requiring the immediate recruitment of additional workers.

Table 1. Comparison Before and After Work Management Reconciliation

| Indicator | Before Reconciliation | After Reconciliation |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Workforce Management | Random work distribution, high fatigue levels due to manual operations | Specialized task allocation through batching system, resulting in approximately 50% higher efficiency |
| Sales Capacity | Maximum of 15 jars per month | Increased to 150 jars per month |

The implementation of the batching system successfully resolved labor-related operational constraints and significantly increased production capacity. As a result, customer orders that were previously rejected due to limited production capabilities could be accommodated more effectively.

Raw Material Management Strategy

In addition to increasing production capacity, Leon Cookis focused on improving raw material management by sourcing ingredients directly from wholesale suppliers. The business conducted supplier comparisons to identify vendors offering competitive prices while maintaining product quality standards. Key ingredients such as low-protein flour, butter, powdered sugar, and chocolate chips were purchased directly from trusted suppliers.

This procurement strategy enabled the business to reduce production costs while maintaining consistent product quality. Consequently, Leon Cookis was able to offer competitive selling prices without sacrificing profit margins. Direct supplier relationships also contributed to more stable raw material availability during periods of high demand.

Factors Contributing to the Demand Surge

Interview findings revealed several factors contributing to the significant increase in demand for Leon Cookis products during Ramadan. The primary factor was the combination of affordable pricing and premium product quality. Customers perceived the products as offering

excellent value due to their appealing taste, crispy texture, and homemade characteristics despite being sold at relatively affordable prices.

Another important factor was product freshness. Because production was conducted only after customer orders were confirmed, cookies were prepared shortly before delivery or collection. This practice ensured that customers received products in optimal condition, thereby increasing satisfaction and encouraging repeat purchases.

The implementation of the pre-order system also contributed to operational efficiency. The business could accurately estimate production requirements, align raw material purchases with order volumes, and minimize waste associated with unsold inventory. Furthermore, advance customer payments improved cash flow stability and reduced financial risk.

Sales Management Strategies

The results indicate that consistent product quality has become one of Leon Cookies' primary competitive advantages. The business maintains standardized production procedures, including ingredient selection, precise formulation, mixing processes, and baking techniques. This consistency ensures that customers receive products with similar taste and quality across different purchase occasions.

Additionally, the business prioritizes direct procurement of raw materials from suppliers to ensure quality consistency and cost efficiency. This approach allows Leon Cookies to maintain stable production standards while controlling production expenses. Effective raw material management contributes significantly to maintaining customer satisfaction and sustaining business performance during high-demand periods.

Comparison of Sales Performance During Peak and Normal Seasons

The findings reveal a substantial difference between sales performance during normal months and the Ramadan peak season. Under normal conditions, Leon Cookies sells approximately 15 jars of cookies per month. During Ramadan, particularly in the weeks leading up to Eid al-Fitr, sales increase dramatically to approximately 150 jars per month.

The increase in sales volume also generated a significant rise in business profitability. During the Ramadan peak season, Leon Cookies achieved profits of approximately IDR 2,300,000, considerably higher than profits generated during regular months. This increase was driven by strong customer demand for cookies intended for family consumption, guest hospitality, and Eid gift hampers.

Overall, the combination of a pre-order production system, competitive pricing, high product quality, and effective promotional activities contributed to the successful management of increased demand during the Ramadan season. These strategies enabled the business to improve operational efficiency, enhance customer satisfaction, and maximize profitability during its busiest sales period.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the substantial increase in demand for Leon Cookies homemade cookies during Ramadan is closely related to changes in consumer behavior during the holy month and Eid al-Fitr. Sales increased from approximately 15 jars per month during normal periods to 150 jars during Ramadan, confirming that Ramadan creates a seasonal market characterized by higher consumption and purchasing activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that Ramadan significantly influences consumer spending patterns and purchasing behavior (Affandy & Pratiwi, 2021; Setiawan, 2022; Hosen, 2024; Al-Najjar et al., 2023). In Indonesia, cookies have become an important part of Eid celebrations, both as family

snacks and as gifts or hampers, contributing to the seasonal increase in demand (Prastowo et al., 2024).

The study also reveals that product quality is a major factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Customers perceived Leon Cookis products as offering premium taste, freshness, and good value at an affordable price. This result supports Johari and Keni (2022), who found that product quality significantly affects purchase intention in bakery-based MSMEs. In addition, attractive packaging enhances product appeal, particularly during Ramadan when cookies are frequently purchased as gifts, supporting the findings of Bahri and Sani (2023). The made-to-order production system further strengthens customer trust by ensuring freshness and consistent quality, which are important attributes in food purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2024).

From an operational perspective, the implementation of a pre-order (PO) system and batching production strategy proved effective in managing demand fluctuations. The PO system enabled the business to align production volumes with actual orders, reduce inventory risks, and improve cash flow stability. These findings are in line with Ulfah et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of production planning and supply chain management in mitigating demand uncertainty within cookie-based MSMEs. Furthermore, direct procurement of raw materials from suppliers allowed Leon Cookis to maintain quality while controlling production costs, thereby supporting business profitability.

Digital marketing also played a significant role in increasing sales performance. Promotional activities conducted through WhatsApp and social media successfully attracted customers and generated a rapid increase in orders during the open pre-order period. This finding supports Hidayat and Nugroho (2023), who reported that WhatsApp marketing positively influences MSME sales performance. Similarly, studies by Arafah et al. (2022), Bilgin (2018), Alalwan (2018), and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) highlight the effectiveness of digital marketing in expanding market reach, strengthening brand awareness, and encouraging purchase intentions. The ability of customers to share information and recommendations also reflects the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in influencing consumer decisions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Another factor contributing to the demand surge was the psychological impact of limited pre-order periods. Customers tended to place orders quickly due to concerns about product availability, reflecting the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and scarcity effects. This observation is consistent with the findings of Alfina et al. (2023) and Baltasar et al. (2025), who reported that FOMO, scarcity, and social influence can significantly increase purchasing behavior during Ramadan. Customer engagement through WhatsApp and social media also strengthened relationships with consumers, supporting the arguments of Lim et al. (2022) regarding the importance of customer engagement in enhancing business performance.

The success of Leon Cookis further demonstrates the importance of digital literacy and social media utilization for MSMEs. Businesses that effectively adopt digital technologies are better positioned to respond to changing consumer preferences and market opportunities (Wibowo, 2021; Lestari et al., 2025). Consistent with the views of Dwivedi et al. (2021), Kapoor et al. (2018), Kumar et al. (2017), and Vrontis et al. (2021), the integration of product quality, digital marketing, customer engagement, and social influence creates a synergistic effect that enhances sales performance. Therefore, the demand surge experienced by Leon Cookis can be understood as the result of the interaction between seasonal consumer behavior, effective operational management, high product quality, and strategic digital marketing efforts.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that Leon Cookis experienced a substantial surge in demand for homemade cookies during the Ramadan peak season, with sales increasing from approximately

15 jars during normal periods to around 150 jars during Ramadan. The findings indicate that several factors contributed to this increase, including affordable pricing, premium product quality, product freshness ensured through a made-to-order production system, and promotional activities conducted through WhatsApp. In addition, effective sales management strategies, such as pre-order implementation, direct procurement of raw materials from suppliers, batching production systems, and task specialization, enabled the business to manage increased demand efficiently despite limited production resources.

The comparison between normal and peak-season sales revealed a tenfold increase in sales volume, resulting in a net profit of approximately IDR 2.3 million during the Ramadan period. These findings demonstrate that integrating product quality, operational efficiency, and digital marketing can significantly improve the performance of home-based culinary MSMEs during seasonal demand periods. Therefore, Ramadan represents a valuable opportunity for small businesses to maximize sales and profitability through appropriate production and marketing strategies.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted as a single case study focusing exclusively on Leon Cookis, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other MSMEs operating in different sectors or regions. Second, the study relied primarily on qualitative data obtained through interviews and observations, which may be influenced by the perceptions and experiences of the informant. Third, the analysis focused mainly on demand surges, sales management strategies, and operational practices during Ramadan without examining broader factors such as consumer demographics, competitor behavior, or detailed financial performance indicators.

Future studies are encouraged to investigate similar phenomena using larger samples involving multiple culinary MSMEs to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the statistical relationships between product quality, digital marketing activities, customer engagement, and sales performance. Furthermore, future research could examine the influence of consumer demographics, social media analytics, customer satisfaction, and product innovation on seasonal purchasing behavior. Comparative studies across different regions, product categories, or festive seasons would also provide a broader understanding of how MSMEs can effectively manage demand fluctuations and sustain business growth.

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