

## Analysis of Vendors' Ability to Purchase Stalls After Revitalization: A Case Study of “Pasar Akik” Sukaramai, Medan City

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### **Keywords:**

*traditional markets, market revitalization, small-scale vendors, consumer behavior, socio-economic impacts*

### ***Abstract***

*The revitalization of traditional markets is one of the government's strategies to enhance the competitiveness of the informal sector amid the growing dominance of modern markets. However, in practice, revitalization does not always generate positive impacts for all market stakeholders. This article examines the social and economic dynamics experienced by traders and consumers at Pasar Akik, Medan, following its revitalization. Using a qualitative approach with observation and in-depth interview techniques, the study found that increased stall rental prices and the reduction in trading space size were the main issues raised by traders. These conditions have led to rising product prices, which in turn have affected consumer behavior and reduced the number of buyers. Although the market now appears cleaner and more physically organized, the revitalization is perceived to have yet to deliver economic justice for small-scale traders. This study recommends the need for policies that integrate physical, social, and economic aspects to ensure that the revitalization process does not create new forms of inequality. These findings are expected to provide input for local governments, market managers, and academics in designing a more inclusive and sustainable model for public market revitalization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Revitalizing traditional markets is a strategy implemented by various countries to increase local economic competitiveness. Traditional markets play a crucial role in the economy, not only as centers of trade but also as venues for social and cultural interaction. Market revitalization is being implemented across various countries, including through the integration of technology and digital-based management. Over time, digitalization of traditional markets has begun to be adopted to improve trade efficiency and strengthen the position of local markets in the face of competition from modern retail and e-commerce platforms. As explained by Rahmawati and Hidayat (2023), the application of digital technology in traditional market management can help traders improve access to information, speed up transactions, and expand marketing reach. Therefore, market revitalization strategies focus not only on physical infrastructure but also on technological innovation and ongoing support for traditional traders to remain competitive in the digital era.

In the United States and Hong Kong, traditional market revitalization has been carried out using a technology-based approach and modern management. In the United States, several traditional markets in large cities have transformed into urban markets that combine local cultural elements with modern facilities to attract more visitors (Elsa Beatriz Guti´errez Navas et al., 2025). Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, the local government implemented a market modernization policy with a zoning system and improved facilities so that traditional markets can compete with modern shopping centers (Zhongbo Xiong et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, market revitalization has been carried out in various regions, including Kupang, Medan, and Surabaya. A study in Kupang showed that although market revitalization was able to increase local revenue (PAD), obstacles such as low awareness of traders in paying levies and limited supporting facilities remained major obstacles (Veronika Dhina Dewelis et al., 2023). Meanwhile, in Pasar Turi Baru, Surabaya, revitalization has improved the quality of market infrastructure, but many traders experienced a decrease in income due to a shift in consumer preferences to modern shopping centers and online markets (Heru Irianto et al., 2024).

One example of ongoing market revitalization is the Akik Market in Medan. Medan Mayor Bobby Nasution emphasized that in the market's development process, investors must pay attention to building quality to ensure it remains comfortable for both traders and buyers. He also emphasized the importance of ensuring that the market design, which includes plenty of open space for air circulation, still protects the market area from rainwater, thereby not disrupting trading activities (Diskominfo Kota Medan, 2024). However, not all traders feel they have benefited from this revitalization. Several traders at the Akik Market complained about the smaller size of their stalls compared to before and the increase in daily operating costs.

Based on these findings, this study aims to analyze the impact of market revitalization on vendors' ability to purchase stalls and run their businesses. By considering economic, social, and policy factors, this study will provide insight into the challenges and opportunities vendors face after revitalization. Furthermore, this study will evaluate strategies that can be implemented to improve the competitiveness of traditional markets, such as technology-based management, digital marketing strategies, and financial policies that support MSMEs. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for the government and other stakeholders in designing more inclusive and sustainable policies for traditional markets in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Descriptive qualitative methods are used to describe and understand social phenomena in depth based on individual experiences, perceptions, and behaviors within a specific context. Through this method, researchers can explore how vendors face challenges in purchasing stalls after market revitalization.

The case study approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth research into a phenomenon occurring within a specific group within a specific environment. A case study is a research strategy that examines one or more cases in detail within a real-life context using multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documentation. This approach is suitable for understanding complex situations where multiple factors influence each other.

With this case study approach, the research is expected to provide deeper insights into how market revitalization policies affect the economic conditions of traders and the strategies they use to survive in a changing market environment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Revitalization of Sukaramai Gemstone Market in Medan City**

The Agate Market, located on Jalan AR Hakim, Sukaramai II Village, Medan Area District, Medan City, is one of the most influential gemstone trading centers in the region. It is directly adjacent to Sukaramai Market and has for years been a gathering place for gemstone traders and collectors from various regions. The surge in agate popularity between 2013 and 2015 made this market vibrant and bustling with visitors..

However, as the gemstone boom faded, trading activity at this market declined drastically. Many stalls became inactive, and the market infrastructure deteriorated. In response, the Medan City Government implemented a policy to revitalize the market as part of its efforts to reorganize traditional markets and strengthen the microeconomic sector.

The groundbreaking for the revitalization project was held on July 5, 2024, by Medan Mayor Muhammad Bobby Afif Nasution. The project, targeted for completion within three months, includes improvements to the physical infrastructure and the restoration of the market's function as a representative and convenient trading center for both traders and consumers. During the construction period, vendors were temporarily relocated to the Sukaramai Market area, adjacent to the original location of the agate market.

The revitalization also received support from the Ministry of Home Affairs, which considered the project a good example of investment-based public-private market

development. One of the main goals of this revitalization is to create legal certainty for businesses, encourage an investment climate, and avoid the development trauma that has hampered the traditional market sector.

The project will be completed in November 2024, and the Medan City Government will immediately facilitate the relocation of vendors to the renovated market location. With a more organized and sustainable market, it is hoped that the economic activity in this sector will revive and encourage the sustainable development of gemstone MSMEs. Medan City Communications and Information Service, (2024)



Figure 1. Entrance to the Agate Market

### **Inequality of Facilities and Limited Business Space Post-Revitalization**

In the process of revitalizing traditional markets, imbalances in the distribution of space and facilities often emerge, directly impacting vendors, particularly small businesses. This imbalance is not only physical but also closely related to the function and sustainability of economic activity within the market. The revitalization of the gemstone market, carried out by the local government and private developers, brought significant changes, not only to the market's physical appearance but also to the system of arranging business space for vendors. One of the most obvious issues that emerged after the revitalization was the shrinking of stall sizes experienced by the majority of small vendors. This indicates that the revitalization did not fully consider the functional sustainability of the existing trading space.

As stated in the Hadith of Bukhari, "May Allah have mercy on someone who is tolerant when selling, when buying, and when collecting debts" (Narrated by Bukhari, no. 2076). This hadith encourages fairness, facilitation, and non-burdensome behavior in buying and selling. This aligns with the spirit of market revitalization, which should strengthen the welfare of traders, not complicate them.

One of the main impacts of this limited space is reduced storage capacity and merchandise display, as well as disrupted interaction between vendors and buyers. The

narrowing of stalls sub-optimizes the buying and selling process and limits vendor efficiency. This phenomenon has also been widely discussed in various previous studies, which highlight that failure to design a fair and functional spatial system can worsen the overall condition of traditional markets.

Inadequate market infrastructure is a major contributing factor. Many traditional markets in Indonesia still lack basic facility standards, so revitalization efforts that focus solely on visual enhancements often fail to address real needs on the ground. This finding is supported by a study by Nurahmadi et al. (2024), which found that the majority of traditional markets in North Sumatra lack adequate facilities, and that physical improvements without accompanying functional improvements actually worsen the trading experience.

From a governance perspective, decision-making that fails to consider the risks of unequal spatial distribution also exacerbates the situation. Market managers should be able to design spatial systems that accommodate the needs of small traders, especially those who have been operating for a long time. The emphasis on the importance of risk management in this policy is conveyed in research by Sepriani and Candy (2022), which shows that revitalization policies need to consider the long-term impacts on small-scale businesses.

Furthermore, the inequality in spatial distribution is also influenced by the absence of a zoning system based on trade needs and consumer movement patterns. When the zoning system is not implemented equitably, vendors occupying strategic locations have greater access to buyers than those located in market corners. Research by Netti and Erianjoni (2023) shows that an inappropriate zoning system can create internal inequality among vendors and hinder the business sustainability of those spatially impacted.

In the context of micro and small businesses, space constraints are not only about physical size but also about the ability of entrepreneurs to adapt to environmental pressures. Small businesses often lack access to training, information, and alternative capital, so structural changes such as space constraints significantly impact them. A global study by Chen et al. (2024) highlighted that these limitations weaken the resilience of micro-enterprises, especially in the face of rapidly changing business environments.

The problem becomes more complex when business owners are not directly involved in the revitalization planning process. Minimal vendor participation results in many spatial planning policies and market facilities not meeting their operational needs. Research by Syaipudin and Awwalin (2023) emphasizes that revitalization that fails to accommodate market owners' aspirations will result in structural inequalities that weaken the socio-economic function of traditional markets.



Figure 2. Agate Market Atmosphere

This finding was also reflected in field interviews. Mrs. Ani, a vegetable trader at Akik Market, said: “Previously, stalls could be up to 110 or 150 cm wide, now they are only 80 cm wide. It is difficult to arrange goods, there is not much merchandise, and the path for buyers is also limited” (Akik Market trader, 2025). A similar sentiment was conveyed by Mrs. Butet, who complained about the reduced comfort when trading due to the increasingly narrow space.

This statement reinforces the fact that limited business space not only has technical implications but also creates inequality that impacts income stability and the sustainability of small-scale businesses. When revitalization is not designed in an inclusive and participatory manner, it has the potential to become a new source of structural pressure on the people's economy.

### **The Impact of Rising Rental Prices on the Sustainability of Traders' Businesses**

The physical transformation of traditional markets through infrastructure rejuvenation programs is often positioned as a solution to improve the quality of the trading environment and competitiveness with modern markets. The efforts undertaken by traders aim to achieve the desired end results from their business and are a reflection of the various outcomes expected by various organizational units (production, marketing, personnel, etc.) that will determine the company's long-term performance (Muhammad Arif & Handiysnin, 2020). However, in its implementation, these changes are not always accompanied by adequate socio-economic considerations, especially for small business owners. At Akik Market, for example, traders complained about a significant increase in operational costs, particularly due to the involvement of the private sector in the market management system. The increase in operating expenses put traders in a difficult position. To adjust to the new cost structure, some were forced to raise prices. However, this strategy actually resulted in a decrease in the number of

buyers because the purchasing power of the surrounding community was not supportive. In such a situation, many traders reported experiencing a drastic decline in turnover.

These findings are also supported by previous research highlighting the importance of policy in maintaining business sustainability after revitalization. Putri and Gravitiani (2021) in their study emphasized the importance of policies favoring small traders during the revitalization process. At Salatiga Market, the government provided an incentive policy in the form of a three-year rental fee waiver after revitalization as a form of protection for micro-enterprises. This was not found at Akik Market, which tends to emphasize commercial management without social support for traditional market operators.

These field findings also align with the results of a study by Dewelis et al. (2024), which showed that post-revitalization market management that fails to address social justice can create inequality and horizontal conflict among vendors. When market restructuring focuses solely on aesthetics and local revenue targets, the sustainability of small businesses is threatened. Dewelis noted that inappropriate spatial allocation and a lack of accountability in restructuring can exacerbate the economic conditions of market participants, even after physical revitalization has been completed.

Meanwhile, Purkayastha et al. (2024) highlight the importance of managerial flexibility and structural support for small businesses to survive the pressures of business space transformation. Unfortunately, traditional market players generally lack these capacities.

As stated in QS. Al-An'am verse 152:

Allah ﷻ بِاللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ﷻ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ Allah وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ  
أَوْفُوا ﷻ ذَلِكَمُ قُرْبَىٰ ﷻ وَبِعَهْدِ ﷻ وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ Allah نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا  
وَصْنَكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

It means "And perfect the measure and the balance fairly. We do not impose a burden on anyone but only his ability. And when you say, then you must be fair even to your relatives. And fulfill Allah's promise. This is what Allah has commanded you so that you remember" (QS. Al-An'am: 152).

This verse emphasizes that justice must be upheld in buying and selling activities or market transactions. In the context of market revitalization, small traders must also be treated fairly, including in terms of rental prices, stall size, and facilities.

These explanations are supported by field data that reflects the actual conditions of the traders. Ibu Minah, a coconut trader at Akik Market, described the burden she had to bear after the revitalization: "Previously, the rent was only 5,000,000 rupiah per year, now it's 37,500

rupiah per day. It's three times more expensive, making it harder for us, and buyers are also running away because the price of goods has also increased" (trader, 2025).

Meanwhile, Mr. Soep added, "Now everything is wrong. Want to sell high, afraid it won't sell. Want to sell low, can't cover the capital" (trader, (2025)). This quote proves that the increase in rental prices not only has a direct impact on traders, but also has further consequences in the form of price imbalances, a decrease in the number of buyers, and the fragility of business sustainability among traditional market players.

### **Changes in Consumer Behavior and the Competitiveness of Traditional Markets**

Traditional market revitalization essentially aims to improve infrastructure quality, create a cleaner and more comfortable environment, and boost competitiveness against modern markets. However, field findings indicate that revitalization does not always have a positive impact on all market players, particularly small traders who are key players in the traditional market ecosystem.

Changes in consumer behavior are a crucial factor influencing market dynamics after revitalization. Today's consumers tend to be more selective in choosing where to shop, considering aspects of convenience, price, and time efficiency. A study by Widita et al. (2024) revealed that the distribution of MSMEs is highly dependent on location accessibility and supporting infrastructure, which also reflects the new mobility patterns of urban consumers. Consumers now consider not only price but also aesthetics and the overall shopping experience.

Although the revitalization has improved the physical condition of the market, making it cleaner, more organized, and more modern, many vendors have complained about the economic impact. One of the main issues that has emerged is the significant increase in stall rental prices. Before the revitalization, some vendors only paid around Rp 5 million per year. However, after the revitalization, rental rates have soared to Rp 37,500 per day, or around Rp 13.5 million per year. This increase not only burdens vendors but also impacts the selling prices of the goods they offer. In a market where the majority of consumers come from lower-middle income groups, price increases have the potential to reduce people's purchasing power.

Furthermore, the smaller stall sizes following the revitalization have also hampered vendor operations. Limited space has resulted in reduced stock capacity and merchandise display, leading to reduced comfort for both vendors and consumers. As a result, many vendors have struggled to maintain daily turnover, and some have even experienced a drastic drop in income.



This situation aligns with the findings of Lenasari et al. (2024), who explained that the resilience of small business owners is largely determined by their ability to adapt to external pressures, such as changes in operational costs and consumer consumption patterns. In this regard, traditional market traders lacking sufficient capital or managerial capacity are more vulnerable to the impacts of revitalization policies that lack the support of subsidies or business training.

From a consumer perspective, most appreciate the changes in the market's physical condition. They consider it to be more comfortable and suitable for daily shopping. However, most also expressed complaints about rising prices, which are not commensurate with the improvements in the market's physical quality. This has led to a shift in consumer preference to other markets that offer more affordable prices, even if the facilities are less adequate.

Bang Agung, a regular shopper at Akik Market, stated that although the market is now cleaner and tidier, the price hike remains a major complaint. He stated, “The market is now better, cleaner, and if prices go up, everything is organized. But it makes us think twice about what to shop for. Most of the people here are on a tight budget.” (2025) He also added that some residents choose to return to other, cheaper markets despite the lack of facilities, as price remains a major consideration for consumers.

This situation reinforces the findings of Suwandari et al. (2024) that perceptions of quality are shaped not only by physical appearance, but also by affordability and trust in the product's value. Field data also shows differing perceptions regarding the number of visitors after the revitalization. Some stated that there was a decrease in the number of daily customers, from around 800 to only around 600. However, others stated that visitors remained stable or even increased. This difference could be due to differences in the types of commodities sold and the attractiveness of each vendor to specific consumer groups. The decline in the number of buyers is generally associated with price increases and declining purchasing power.



Figure 3. Interview with Trader

As Mr. Nas, a longtime vendor, put it, "There are still visitors, but not as many as before. We used to get up to 800 people a day, now it's probably only around 600." (Interview with a trader, 9/2025). He added that although the market appears cleaner and tidier, the atmosphere is no longer as busy as before, especially because many consumers are now more selective in their purchases due to rising prices of goods.

Meanwhile, market management, now under the private sector, has also raised concerns among traders. They feel they have lost the protection of the local government, particularly due to unfulfilled promises of subsidies. A study by Kan (2021) shows that in the context of economic revitalization, state intervention and social protection policies play a crucial role in preventing the exclusion and marginalization of small businesses. In comparison, a study by Yoon (2024) exemplifies successful market revitalization in South Korea through a consumer experience-based approach, strengthening local identity, and digital integration. Revitalization that focuses solely on the physical aspects without considering the social and economic dimensions tends to create new inequalities and erode the sustainability of traditional markets as a community economic space.

Thus, these findings indicate that traditional market revitalization should not only focus on enhancing the physical appearance of the market, but also consider the economic resilience of business owners and price accessibility for consumers. A balance between physical transformation, social protection, and marketing strategy is key to building traditional market competitiveness amidst ever-changing consumer behavior.

Mr. Ucok, who works as a security guard and parking manager at Akik Market, observed that the market's condition appears quite stable in terms of visitor numbers. "From what I see every day, it's still busy. It's not much different from before. It's just that many vendors are complaining about rent and the increasingly cramped space." (Manager, 2025). This statement reflects that although market activity appears normal from an observational perspective, economic pressures and trader complaints remain unresolved issues.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the revitalization of Akik Market, which aims to improve the physical quality and competitiveness of traditional markets, has instead created new challenges, particularly for small traders. The significant increase in stall rental prices has become a major burden for traders. This increase not only impacts operational costs but also forces traders to raise prices, thereby reducing purchasing power and the number of customers.

Furthermore, physical changes, such as reduced stall sizes, have exacerbated the situation. Vendors face limited space, which has reduced trading capacity, reduced sales comfort, and reduced customer service efficiency. This reinforces the fact that revitalization should not only emphasize physical and aesthetic aspects, but also consider equitable access to space and economic support for small vendors.

From a consumer perspective, while appreciating the cleaner and more organized market conditions, many expressed objections to the price increases. Consumer behavior has shifted to other, more affordable markets, indirectly reducing Pasar Akik's competitiveness. Differing perceptions regarding visitor numbers also indicate that the revitalization has not had a positive impact evenly.

Therefore, traditional market revitalization should be designed as an inclusive, sustainable, and participatory process. Physical interventions need to be accompanied by socioeconomic policies such as subsidies, fair zoning, vendor involvement in planning, and rental price controls. Without these measures, revitalization risks creating new inequalities and weakening the market's function as a public economic space.

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