



Transit Accessibility and The Emergence of Community-Driven Social Nodes: A Case Study of Blok M, South Jakarta

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received: June 18, 2026

Revised: July 17, 2026

Accepted: July 30, 2026

Available Online: September 08,
2026

Keywords:

Adaptive TOD, Placemaking,
Transit-Oriented Development,
Social Node, Blok M



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Abstract

Background: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is commonly understood as a planning approach promoting compact land use, transit accessibility, and intermodal connectivity. However, most TOD studies in Jakarta and other developing cities remain oriented toward physical and mobility indicators, leaving the socio-spatial and everyday-use dimensions of transit areas underexplored; this study addresses that gap by examining TOD as a socio-spatial process continuously interpreted, used, and reshaped by everyday urban actors.

Objective: Using placemaking theory and adaptive TOD as the analytical lens, this study explores Blok M's transformation from a conventional commercial-transport district into a dynamic urban node shaped by social interaction, spatial adaptation, and community-based activation, repositioning TOD success beyond mobility efficiency.

Methods: This research uses a qualitative case study approach in Blok M, Jakarta, drawing on field observations, in-depth interviews with 15 purposively selected informants (communities, business owners, transit users, informal actors), documentation review, and thematic analysis validated through source triangulation.

Results: The study shows that improved transit accessibility, pedestrian linkages, public space revitalization, and intermodal integration increased mobility flows and created new opportunities for encounter, appropriation, and collective urban experience. Communities, small businesses, transit users, and informal actors activate spaces through everyday practices and adaptive place production, exemplified by Gang Viral as a community-driven social node.

Conclusion: TOD success should be evaluated not solely through transport efficiency or land-use intensification, but also through its capacity to support adaptive placemaking, social vitality, and inclusive urban life, offering implications for socially responsive TOD planning in Jakarta and similar developing cities.

To cite this article: Widiastuti, S., Suryadjaya, R., & Riza, F. A. (2026). Transit accessibility and the emergence of community-driven social nodes. *Glosains: Jurnal Sains Global Indonesia*, 7(3), 1758-1768. <https://doi.org/10.59784/glosins.v7i3.845>

INTRODUCTION

The development of Jakarta's urban area over the past two decades has demonstrated an increasingly strong link between mass transportation systems, land use intensification, and the transformation of public spaces (Hidayati et al., 2019; Rukmana, 2018; Wijaya & Christianti, 2026). The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) approach has become a key strategy for addressing issues of mobility, congestion, dependence on private vehicles, and the fragmentation of urban development (Anwar et al., 2024; Mazzetto et al., 2025; Yen et al., 2024). Through the integration of transit nodes, mixed-use development, higher density, and pedestrian accessibility, TOD is positioned as a more efficient, connected, and sustainable urban development model (Furlan & Awwaad, 2025; Suzuki, 2013). Although this efficiency-oriented view of TOD dominates

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the literature, this study argues that it is insufficient on its own, as it overlooks how transit areas are socially interpreted and reshaped by everyday users, the gap this research sets out to fill.

In Jakarta, TOD implementation has grown alongside the expansion of mass transportation infrastructure such as the MRT, LRT, KRL, and bus rapid transit systems. Areas around stations and transit hubs are being redesigned as new concentrations of urban activity, serving not only as points of transit but also as centers of economic, commercial, and social activity ([MRT Jakarta, 2023](#); [Pemerintah Provinsi DKI Jakarta, 2025](#)). Within formal planning frameworks, these areas are generally understood through physical and spatial indicators, such as density, connectivity, mix of functions, and ease of access. This approach is important, but often emphasizes the outcomes of top-down planning rather than the dynamics of space use that emerge from people's daily practices. This reveals a theoretical gap: existing TOD frameworks in Jakarta rarely engage with adaptive placemaking or the everyday spatial practices through which transit users and communities actively produce social meaning, beyond what physical planning indicators can capture.

In practice, the spaces around transit hubs are often reinterpreted, adapted, and reactivated by various actors, including local communities, small businesses, transit users, informal traders, and other community groups. High accessibility opens opportunities for new interaction patterns, flexible space use, and socio-economic activities that are not always planned. Thus, transit accessibility not only generates efficient movement but also creates conditions that enable the emergence of adaptive forms of placemaking in everyday urban life.

However, studies on TOD in Jakarta, as in many developing cities, are still relatively limited in understanding transit areas as adaptive and collaborative social spaces. Most research focuses on transportation aspects, area morphology, land values, or policy effectiveness. Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding how increased transit accessibility contributes to the formation of new social spaces that emerge organically through interactions between formal and informal actors. This understanding is crucial for understanding how TOD areas can develop not only as mobility infrastructure but also as vibrant, inclusive, and resilient urban environments. Recent TOD reviews confirm that empirical work on actor relationships, informal economic practices, and adaptive space use around transit nodes in low- and middle-density and developing-city contexts remains scarce, reinforcing the relevance of the present study ([Hrelja & Rye, 2024](#)).

This study aims to examine how enhanced transit accessibility in Jakarta's TOD areas facilitates adaptive placemaking and the emergence of community-driven social nodes through bottom-up and collaborative spatial practices. These questions are addressed through qualitative case study methods, namely thematic analysis of observation and interview data, ensuring a direct conceptual link between the research questions and the analytical approach.

This research will answer the following questions: 1) How does increased transit accessibility influence adaptive placemaking processes in Jakarta's TOD areas. How do local and informal actors reshape the space around transit nodes through everyday collaborative practices. How does this process produce community-driven social nodes that support social vitality and urban resilience.

This research contributes to the development of TOD studies by emphasizing that transit accessibility is not only related to mobility efficiency but also facilitates adaptive placemaking and the emergence of community-driven social nodes ([Wu et al., 2023](#)). Theoretically, this study bridges the literature on TOD, placemaking, and community-driven urbanism by demonstrating that transit areas are socio-spatial spaces that are continuously produced through the interactions of formal and informal actors. Empirically, the selection of the Blok M area as a case study strengthens the research's contribution because this area represents an active, complex transit and commercial node, rich in spatial adaptation practices and daily social interactions.

Through the context of Blok M, this study demonstrates how high accessibility can encourage the formation of new social nodes that support social vitality and urban resilience. Practically, the findings of this study provide input for TOD planning that is more adaptive, inclusive, and sensitive to the dynamics of everyday urban life. The specific novelty of this study lies in combining the node-place model, adaptive placemaking, and community-driven urbanism

to explain a single Southeast Asian TOD case, Blok M, an integration that has not been jointly applied in prior TOD scholarship on Jakarta.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study strategy in the Blok M area of Jakarta. This area was chosen because it represents a region with high transit accessibility, strong commercial activity intensity, and prominent formal and informal interaction dynamics around transit nodes. Site selection was substantiated by concrete indicators, namely the presence of MRT Jakarta and the Blok M bus terminal, the revitalization of Blok M Hub and Taman Literasi Martha Christina Tiahahu, the establishment of M Bloc Space, and the high intensity of formal and informal commercial activity documented around Pasaraya Gang Viral.

Data collection was conducted through field observations, in-depth interviews with local communities, small business owners, transit users, and informal actors, as well as visual documentation and document reviews related to area development and transit-oriented development policies. Informants were selected purposively, comprising 15 individuals (4 local community members, 4 small business owners/tenants, 4 transit users, and 3 informal actors) chosen for their direct, sustained engagement with the Blok M area; data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, indicated by the recurrence of similar themes across interviews. Data validity was strengthened through source and method triangulation, cross-checking interview accounts against field observations and secondary documentation.

Observations focused on space use patterns, forms of activity adaptation, the intensity of social interactions, and the emergence of gathering points that developed around the transit area. The data obtained were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the relationship between increased transit accessibility, adaptive placemaking practices, and the emergence of community-driven social nodes. The thematic analysis followed a systematic coding procedure — open coding of field notes and interview transcripts, axial coding to group codes into categories such as spatial adaptation and social-node formation, and selective coding to relate these categories to the placemaking and node-place frameworks. Through this approach, the research seeks to understand how the space around the Blok M transit hub is collectively reinterpreted and reconfigured by everyday users, thus shaping the area's social vitality within the context of Jakarta's TOD.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Spatial Transformation of Blok M as a Transit-Linked Urban Node

The findings show that Blok M has undergone a significant spatial and functional transformation from a conventional commercial and transport district into a more integrated urban area characterized by mobility, public interaction, and lifestyle-oriented activities. Historically, Blok M functioned as a major commercial center and transport node in South Jakarta, with Pasaraya, Blok M Plaza, Blok M Square, and the terminal area serving as the main generators of daily activity. However, over time, the area experienced decline due to competition from newer shopping centers and changing consumption patterns. This decline became more visible during the COVID-19 period, when visitor numbers fell sharply and several commercial spaces lost vitality [Jakarta Investment Centre, 2025].

The more recent phase of transformation was driven by the presence of MRT Jakarta, the emergence of M Bloc Space, the activation of Taman Literasi Martha Christina Tiahahu, and the revitalization of Blok M Hub, all of which repositioned the area as a more connected and socially active urban destination. Field observation recorded a marked increase in pedestrian volume and dwell time along Jalan Melawai and around Blok M Hub following the MRT Jakarta operation and hub revitalization, directly evidencing the shift from a purely transit function toward sustained everyday social use.

This transformation is visible not only in physical improvements but also in the changing role of the district. Blok M is no longer dominated by enclosed retail functions alone. Instead, it now exhibits a mixed urban pattern in which transit infrastructure, public space, food and beverage activities, creative businesses, and informal gathering spaces coexist within a highly

accessible environment. The findings indicate that the area increasingly operates as a chain of connected destinations rather than as isolated commercial objects. MRT access, pedestrian movement, Taman Literasi, M Bloc Space, and surrounding commercial corridors together create a broader urban ecosystem that supports both movement and prolonged social presence. In this sense, Blok M has become a district where mobility and urban experience reinforce one another. This is evidenced by observed increases in cross-visitation between MRT users, Taman Literasi visitors, and M Bloc Space patrons during weekday evenings and weekends.

Emergence of Gang Viral as an Adaptive Commercial-Social Corridor

At the micro scale, the most important finding is the emergence of Pasaraya Gang Viral as a new socio-commercial corridor that grew from a formerly secondary and underutilized edge space. Gang Viral is located on the outer side of the Pasaraya complex and was not originally planned as a formal culinary or public interaction zone. Before its recent transformation, Pasaraya was primarily known as a major shopping centre with department store functions, retail, office use, and supporting facilities. Following the decline of the complex and the reduced performance of many internal commercial spaces, the outer corridor began to attract new forms of small-scale tenant activity.

According to the findings, this change was triggered by the initial arrival of a small tenant, Little Salt Bread, whose presence unexpectedly attracted high visitor attention and social media visibility. This was followed by the entry of other tenants, eventually transforming the corridor into what is now popularly known as “Gang Viral.” This mechanism illustrates a bottom-up, tenant-led placemaking process in which individual small businesses, rather than formal developers, acted as the primary agents of spatial transformation, consistent with recent findings on stakeholder-driven vitality in TOD contexts (Ali et al., 2024).

The transformation of Gang Viral was therefore incremental and organic rather than formally master-planned. A narrow side corridor with simple physical conditions gradually developed into a dense culinary and lifestyle strip filled with small food businesses, visual branding, waiting spaces, and informal gathering points. The corridor’s popularity increased as digital exposure spread, attracting new tenants and changing the image of Pasaraya from a declining retail complex into a renewed urban destination. This transformation also generated a spillover effect into the building itself, where previously underused floors began to recover through new food, beverage, and lifestyle functions. The findings thus show that a relatively small spatial intervention at the edge of an older commercial complex was able to catalyse a broader process of revitalization, demonstrating that incremental, tenant-driven adaptation and digital exposure, rather than large-scale formal redesign, were the primary drivers of Gang Viral’s revitalization.

Another major finding concerns the role of accessibility and connectivity in sustaining the vitality of Gang Viral and its surrounding area. Pasaraya is located within a highly strategic transport environment served by MRT Blok M, Trans Jakarta, and the wider terminal area. Even though there is no single dedicated pedestrian route that directly connects the station and terminal to Gang Viral, the corridor remains easily reachable because visitors naturally move through Blok M Hub, Taman Literasi, Blok M Square, and surrounding commercial paths before arriving at Pasaraya. This creates an organically directed pedestrian flow in which transit users pass through multiple activity zones within the district. The findings indicate that the absence of a specially designed linear access route does not reduce visitor intensity; instead, the broader commercial and public-space network helps distribute pedestrian traffic across the district while reinforcing Gang Viral’s position within that movement system. Field observation of pedestrian flows at peak evening hours confirmed that most Gang Viral visitors arrived on foot from the MRT Blok M exit and Blok M Hub, passing through at least two intermediate commercial nodes before reaching the corridor.

The study also shows that Gang Viral has become part of a wider pedestrian loop in Blok M. Key points along this route function as high-density activity nodes where visitor movement, waiting, interaction, and visual consumption overlap. These points include the main pedestrian access, the area in front of highly popular tenants such as Little Salt Bread, inner intersections

within the corridor, and links toward nearby destinations such as Little Tokyo. The MRT plays an important role in this pattern because many visitors, especially young people coming from outside South Jakarta, choose to reach the area by public transport and continue on foot. As a result, accessibility in Blok M is not merely a transport condition; it also shapes social and commercial movement patterns that animate the corridor and strengthen its role as a destination in the district-wide urban circuit. This pattern indicates that pedestrian accessibility functions not only as a physical linkage but as a socio-spatial mechanism that actively channels transit users into sustained place-based interaction, reinforcing Gang Viral's standing as a TOD-based social-commercial node.

Social Activity Patterns, Tenant Dynamics, and New Urban Vitality

The findings further reveal that Gang Viral functions not only as a food corridor but also as a social space with distinct temporal rhythms, visitor motives, and patterns of use. Visitor activity tends to intensify from late afternoon to night, especially after office hours and during weekends. During these periods, the corridor becomes crowded with office workers, students, young people, communities, local tourists, and content creators. Their activities extend beyond consumption to include gathering, taking photographs, producing digital content, waiting, casual interaction, and staying for long periods. The average duration of stay is longer for social groups and community users than for ordinary food buyers, indicating that the area operates as more than a quick-stop commercial space. This reflects a shift in function from formal retail circulation to a more layered environment of temporary occupation, visual consumption, and social exchange. This temporal layering of activity, from transit passage to prolonged social dwelling, is a defining feature of adaptive placemaking, in which repeated everyday practices progressively redefine a transitional space's social meaning.

This new vitality is also supported by tenant stability and branding dynamics. The corridor has attracted both local and higher-profile tenants, with relatively high occupancy and limited turnover. The rental structure appears flexible enough to support small and emerging businesses, while the popularity of the area has also enabled the entry of more established and even internationally connected brands such as Butter Baby.

Social media has amplified this process by turning specific tenants and the corridor itself into visual and lifestyle attractions. As a result, Gang Viral has evolved into a space where creative economy, culinary consumption, and digital visibility intersect. The findings also indicate that events in the wider Pasaraya complex contribute to the area's attractiveness by increasing visitor flows and extending the image of Pasaraya beyond conventional shopping functions. Overall, the area demonstrates a renewed form of urban vitality characterized by mixed activity, strong evening intensity, dense tenant occupation, and repeated use of transitional space for interaction and experience-oriented urban life. Field observation recorded visible queues and high social-media check-in activity at flagship tenants such as Little Salt Bread and Butter Baby during weekend evenings, indicating that digital visibility and tenant branding actively sustain long-term visitor engagement and corridor identity.

Discussion

TOD and Accessibility in the Case Area

Research findings indicate that the transformation of Blok M cannot be understood solely as improvements to transportation infrastructure, but rather as changes in the relationship between mobility nodes and places in urban life. Historically, Blok M has long served as a movement node and important commercial center in South Jakarta. However, prior to the strengthening of the TOD agenda, the area's function was still predominantly as a transit point and conventional shopping destination rather than a socially active public space. From the perspective of the node-place model, this condition indicates that an area can have a strong position in the movement network, but not necessarily develop optimally as a place rich in experiences, interactions, and spatial quality (Bertolini, 1999; Vale, 2015). In other words, in its initial phase, Blok M had high node strength, but its place quality was still limited. This gap between node strength and place quality is precisely where TOD interventions must go beyond mobility metrics: enhancing place quality requires deliberate attention to experiential and social

value, not merely physical connectivity.

Changes began to emerge when the area entered the agenda of transit integration, area revitalization, and strengthening pedestrian connectivity. Within the TOD framework, accessibility is not simply physical proximity to transit nodes, but rather the extent to which people can reach opportunities, activities, and interactions through the available mobility network (Papa & Bertolini, 2015). This is crucial in understanding Blok M, as increased accessibility due to the MRT, intermodal connections, and enhanced pedestrian space not only makes the area more accessible but also increases the intensity of space use, concentration of activity, and opportunities for encounters. Field findings indicate that visitors come to Blok M not solely to change modes of transportation, but also to stop, gather, consume space, and engage in social activities at various points in the area. Thus, transit accessibility in Blok M acts as a triggering condition for the formation of a more vibrant urban environment. This causal link is evidenced by the observed sequencing of MRT operation, hub revitalization, and the subsequent rise in commercial and social activity along Gang Viral and Taman Literasi, indicating that improved accessibility preceded, rather than merely coincided with, increased activity intensity.

This reading aligns with criticisms in the TOD literature that argue that the success of transit-based areas is measured not solely by movement efficiency, density, or physical integration, but also by their ability to connect transportation functions with the quality of urban life (Calthorpe, 2022; Papa & Bertolini, 2015; Vale, 2015). In the case of Blok M, increased accessibility strengthens the area's function as an ecosystem for movement and urban experience. This means that TOD here does not stop at infrastructure, but begins to shift to spatial conditions that enable more intense social, economic, and cultural activity. This distinguishes Blok M from transit nodes that are merely technically efficient but weak in shaping place quality. Blok M therefore illustrates a transition from infrastructure-oriented TOD toward place-based, socially inclusive urban development, in which accessibility becomes a precondition for, rather than the end goal of, urban vitality.

Adaptive Placemaking in Transit Space

The research also shows that the space around the Blok M transit hub develops through a process that can be interpreted as adaptive placemaking. Placemaking literature emphasizes that place is not solely created by formal design, but by social processes arising from the interaction between actors, practices, and spatial contexts (Akbar & Edelenbos, 2021). In this context, transit space is not static; it is continuously negotiated, used, and reinterpreted by everyday users. The case of Blok M clearly demonstrates this: the areas around stations, commercial corridors, building edges, parks, and pedestrian paths function not only as circulation spaces, but also as transit spaces, consumption spaces, waiting areas, and interaction spaces. These multiple, overlapping functions are produced through the combined agency of tenants who improvise commercial uses, transit users who linger and socialize, and community members who repurpose edges and corridors for gathering — demonstrating that adaptive placemaking in Blok M is a collective, actor-driven process rather than a spontaneous by-product of accessibility alone.

In more specialized literature, community placemaking is understood as a more flexible, relational form of place-making that often emerges outside of formal planning scenarios (Fingerhut & Alfasi, 2023). This is highly relevant to Blok M, especially in areas like Pasaraya Gang Viral, where a space not initially designed as a center of social activity has instead developed into a vibrant culinary and urban interaction corridor. This transformation demonstrates that place quality does not always emerge from large-scale projects, but rather from the ability of existing spaces to be reinvigorated with new functions that better suit the rhythms of contemporary urban life. Empirically, the narrow corridors, transition areas, and building frontages in Blok M demonstrate that transit spaces can acquire new meaning through flexible and repetitive use. This relational quality of place-making is evident in how Gang Viral's identity emerged relationally, through the interplay between tenant improvisation, visitor participation, and digital circulation, rather than through a single planned intervention.

In this sense, adaptive placemaking in Blok M occurs when spaces acquire new social functions through improvised uses, repetitive activities, and responses to user needs. The

informal placemaking literature demonstrates that grassroots efforts can transform previously passive or neglected spaces into vibrant hubs of social interaction ([Erek & Krasznahorkai, 2024](#)). The findings in Blok M reinforce this argument: spaces around transit become important not only because they are well-designed, but because they accommodate dynamic daily practices. Thus, adaptive placemaking in this case is not a fixed end result, but rather an ongoing process in which spaces around transit are continually reshaped by high mobility, limited economic opportunities, and intense social use. Concretely, this reshaping mechanism operates through repeated tenant experimentation with informal seating and signage, visitor-driven social media documentation, and incremental spillover of activity into adjacent underused floors, each reinforcing the other in a continuous adaptive cycle.

Community-Driven Social Nodes

One of the most important findings of this research is the emergence of community-driven social nodes, social nodes that grow from the intersection of high accessibility, movement flows, actor diversity, and the community's ability to activate space. From a community-driven urbanism perspective, cities are shaped not only by the state, the market, or designers, but also by local communities, MSMEs, transit users, and informal actors who produce space through everyday practices ([Lang et al., 2025](#)). Blok M exemplifies this dynamic. Activity in the area grows not only from formal interventions such as the MRT, Literacy Park, or hub revitalization, but also from the involvement of small tenants, young users, creative communities, and digital culture, which shape new rhythms of space use. Each actor group contributes distinctly: small tenants generate the initial commercial draw, young and creative users amplify visibility through digital and social participation, and community members sustain everyday use, together forming a layered, mutually reinforcing ecosystem of place production.

The phenomenon of Gang Viral is the most obvious example. Corridors that were previously secondary and not designed as culinary centers or gathering spaces are transformed into new activity nodes due to a combination of small tenants, social media virality, pedestrian flow, and connectivity to the regional transit system. In this case, social nodes do not exist as formal plazas, but emerge from transitional spaces that are repeatedly used, shared meaning, and subsequently attract more interaction. This finding aligns with the literature on public space and social cohesion, which emphasizes that urban interactions often grow from co-presence, diverse activities, and supportive spatial conditions that enable people to stay longer ([Qi et al., 2024](#)). Thus, social nodes in Blok M are emergent, not entirely designed. This emergent quality is critically important: it shows that transitional, seemingly residual spaces can generate meaningful social infrastructure without top-down design, provided sufficient accessibility, informal actor presence, and time for repeated use to accumulate.

This reading reinforces the notion that social nodes in transit areas can emerge from below, through ongoing collective practices. In Blok M, the role of the community, tenants, transit users, and small economic actors demonstrates that the vitality of an area is determined not only by the quality of its infrastructure but also by the capacity of local actors to fill the space with relevant activities. In this context, social nodes can be read as a form of collective spatial adaptation, a form of collective, practice-based intelligence in utilizing space, adapting functions, and maintaining a socially vibrant area. Thus, this research finding confirms that the success of a transit area is not solely measured by how well people move, but also by how intensely its spaces are able to produce interactions, microeconomics, and meaning of place.

Implication for TOD in Jakarta

More broadly, the Blok M case offers important implications for understanding and planning TOD in Jakarta. First, this research demonstrates that TOD should not be treated solely as a model for integrating transportation and land use, but as a socio-spatial ecosystem. Classic TOD literature emphasizes mixed-use integration, density, and walkability Yen et al. ([2024](#)), but the Blok M findings demonstrate that a truly vibrant transit area requires more than just physical design: it requires transit spaces, transitional spaces, small public spaces, and opportunities for local actors to participate in shaping the area's life. This means that TOD planning in Jakarta needs to move beyond a technocratic approach that emphasizes only connectivity and efficiency.

Concretely, this implies institutionalizing participatory planning mechanisms and adaptive space-management schemes that formally accommodate local actors, small tenants, and informal practices within TOD governance in Jakarta.

Second, the policy implication of these findings is the need to view in-between spaces as strategic elements in TOD development. Small corridors, building edges, commercial frontages, waiting areas, and pedestrian paths, often considered secondary elements, can become locations for the emergence of new social nodes. If these spaces are too rigid, too sterile, or too single-minded, their potential for social adaptation will be weakened. Conversely, when planning allows for flexibility, diverse uses, and small-scale activities, transit areas have the potential to develop into more inclusive and resilient urban environments. In the case of Blok M, the area's strength stems not only from formal projects, but from its ability to connect formal interventions with social energy from below. Specific policy tools that could operationalize this flexibility include temporary-use permits for small tenants in transitional spaces, design guidelines that preserve rather than formalize informal corridors such as Gang Viral, and adaptive zoning that allows mixed micro-scale commercial and social uses in building edges and pedestrian frontages.

Third, theoretically, this case reinforces the argument that transit areas in developing cities like Jakarta need to be interpreted through a combination of TOD, node-place, adaptive placemaking, and community-driven urbanism theories. This approach helps explain that transit areas are not simply mobility spaces, but also spaces of urban life that are constantly being produced. Thus, the main contribution of this discussion is to demonstrate that the success of TOD in Jakarta should be assessed from two dimensions simultaneously: mobility capacity and socio-spatial capacity. Blok M is important not only because it is transport-integrated, but also because its high accessibility has opened opportunities for the formation of new, active, adaptive, and layered social spaces. By jointly applying the node-place model, adaptive placemaking, and community-driven urbanism to a single Southeast Asian TOD case, this discussion advances existing literature that has largely treated these three perspectives separately, offering a more integrated theoretical lens for interpreting transit-area transformation in developing-city contexts.

Table 1
Indication of Adaptive Placemaking in Blok M

Location / Urban Element	Observed Actual Use	Formal Function	Form of Spatial Adaptation	Indication of Social Node
Transit node and modal interchange area	Waiting, short stays, meeting point, movement toward surrounding destinations	Transit node and modal interchange area	Transit space is used not only for mobility but also as a space of pause and interaction	Emergence of temporary meeting points with high co-presence intensity
Taman Literasi Martha Christina Tiahahu	Reading, sitting, gathering, discussion, leisure, community activities	Public green space	Green open space is transformed into a social and cultural space	Strengthens the place function and prolongs duration of stay
Blok M Hub / intermodal integration area	Transit, meeting, consumption, economic activity, daily mobility	Multimodal integration area	Interchange space becomes an activity space rather than merely technical infrastructure	Becomes a node that is increasingly intense socially and economically
Commercial areas around Blok M Square, M Block	Hanging out, eating, shopping, informal meetings	Trade and services	Conventional commercial functions evolve into more fluid social spaces	Indicates a shift toward a mixed social-commercial node

Transitional spaces: sidewalks, building frontages, open edges	Waiting, gathering, spontaneous interaction, informal activities	Pedestrian circulation and in-between space	Edge spaces and in-between spaces are appropriated for socio-economic functions	Become micro-social nodes emerging from repeated everyday use
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This table shows the results of observations in the Blok M area. It explains how space is used, the forms of activity adaptation, the intensity of social interactions, and the emergence of gathering points around the transit area. This shows that the Blok M TOD area must be understood not only as a mobility node but also as a social space shaped by formal interventions and adaptive daily use.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the transformation of the Blok M area cannot be understood solely as a result of improved transportation infra-structure, but rather as a socio-spatial process unfolding through the interconnectedness of transit accessibility, changes in spatial function, and the daily practices of area users. The presence of the MRT, intermodal integration, and the revitalization of public spaces have strengthened Blok M's position as an area that is not only efficient in terms of mobility but also increasingly active as a space for urban interaction. Theoretically, this study contributes by jointly applying the node-place model, adaptive placemaking, and community-driven urbanism to explain transit-area transformation, while practically it offers evidence-based input for more socially responsive TOD planning in Jakarta.

The research findings demonstrate that high transit accessibility opens opportunities for adaptive placemaking around transit nodes. Transitional spaces such as commercial corridors, building frontages, pedestrian paths, and transit areas have evolved beyond their formal functions and become venues for social activities, small-scale economic activities, and spontaneous interactions. In this context, Blok M demonstrates that the quality of a TOD area is determined not only by its physical design and connectivity, but also by the space's ability to be enlivened and reinterpreted by its users. This implies that TOD success should be assessed using indicators that capture everyday user practices and spatial reinterpretation — such as dwell time, repeat use, and informal activity intensity — alongside conventional mobility and land-use metrics.

Furthermore, this study found that the emergence of community-driven social nodes is a key characteristic of the transformation of the Blok M area. These social nodes grow from the intersection of high mobility, diverse actors, and adaptive space use practices. The presence of local communities, MSMEs, small tenants, and daily users plays a crucial role in shaping the area's vitality, enabling Blok M to develop as a more inclusive, dynamic, and resilient socio-spatial ecosystem. These actors interact through overlapping, mutually reinforcing roles — small tenants and MSMEs generate commercial vitality, daily users and communities sustain social presence, and digital visibility connects both to a wider public — collectively producing socially resilient, inclusive TOD development.

Thus, this study emphasizes that TOD in Jakarta needs to be understood not only as a model for integrating transportation and land use, but also as a framework for building vibrant urban spaces. A key implication is the need for a TOD planning approach that is more sensitive to the intermediary spaces, informal activities, and the involvement of local actors, so that transit areas do not cease to be mere nodes of movement but instead develop into places with social meaning and a stronger quality of urban life. Concretely, this study recommends that Jakarta's TOD guidelines incorporate temporary-use permits for informal tenants, design standards that preserve rather than formalize organically emerged corridors, and participatory monitoring mechanisms that involve local communities and small businesses in ongoing TOD area management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to thank the Urban and Regional Planning Study Program,

Tarumanagara University, for their academic support through-out this research. We also extend our gratitude to the management of the Pasaraya Blok M area, the tenants, the local community, and all the in-formants who provided their time, information, and field access, enabling this research to be carried out successfully. Specifically, the Urban and Regional Planning Study Program provided academic supervision and research funding support, the Pasaraya Blok M management facilitated site access and institutional documentation, and tenants, community members, and informants contributed first-hand accounts through interviews and field observation that formed the empirical basis of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed to the research process, including the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for the research outcomes.

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