Policy Implications for Developing Creative Pop-up Markets as Potential Creative Tourism Attractions in Jakarta

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Abstract. Creative pop-up markets (CPMs) have grown rapidly in Jakarta as a temporary, curated format that is now being discussed as a potential creative tourism attraction, as they are able to draw urban visitors to interact directly with independent creators. Although attention has largely focused on the visitor experience, the systemic challenges threatening the long-term sustainability of CPMs as viable creative tourism attractions as well as the associated governance gaps, have not been extensively studied. This study examines these challenges through a qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with organizers and creators (tenants), specifically, 11 of the 20 qualitative informants in a broader study on CPMs in Jakarta, drawn from four curated CPM events held between March and April 2026. Three systemic challenges were identified: market saturation due to the rapid growth of similar events; organizers' reliance on informal, non-standardized evaluation practices; and limited structural support from government agencies, particularly regarding venue subsidies and fair promotional exposure for creators. The findings also indicate that creators occupy a structurally important yet vulnerable position, bearing risks from both organizers and visitors without formal protections. These findings point to governance gaps that make the development of CPM as a potential creative tourism attraction dependent on informal, case-by-case arrangements rather than structured policy support. This study offers preliminary policy implications for local tourism and creative economy authorities seeking to develop CPM toward realizing this potential, while acknowledging the need for further research that directly involves government stakeholders as informants.

Keywords: creative pop-up market, creative tourism, creative economy, governance, policy

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P. N. G. Akbar and K. A. Safitri (eds.), *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference of Vocational Education, Applied Science and Technology (ICVEAST 2026)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 1034,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-620-8_32

1 Introduction

Creative pop-up markets (CPMs), curated temporary events that bring together independent creators, small vendors, and urban visitors, are increasingly being discussed in Jakarta as a potential form of creative tourism attraction: a place where visitors come specifically to meet local creators, discover original works, and participate in curated cultural experiences, rather than simply a typical retail space. This growth is part of a broader shift toward experimental and experience-based formats in the national creative economy [1], which the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has identified as one of the most popular trends in the creative economy today [3], within a creative economy sector that is formally divided into 17 subsectors [4]. Media reports highlight the rapid growth of creator-led curated markets across cities that can attract their own visitor traffic, demonstrating sustained public interest in CPMs as destinations [17].

This growth has also clearly caught the government's attention: The DKI Jakarta Provincial Government has announced an official partnership with the Ministry of Creative Economy to strengthen Jakarta's creative economy and position the city as a global creative hub [16]. However, behind this commitment, most research on CPMs and similar temporary cultural-retail formats still focuses on visitor experiences and behavioral impacts. The systemic and governance aspects of this ecosystem, whether this commitment is truly felt by the organizers and creators running these events, have not been extensively studied.

It is important to note that CPM's potential as a creative tourism attraction, at this stage, remains merely potential—not a confirmed reality. Participation in the CPM events examined in this study, consistent with patterns observed in the broader ecosystem, has so far been dominated by local visitors from the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek), rather than out-of-town or international tourists. This study does not aim to test or confirm CPM's ability to attract these visitor groups. The governance challenges discussed here are better understood as challenges to the day-to-day sustainability of CPM—something that must be addressed first before its potential as a tourist attraction can be realized or further evaluated.

Organizers and creators bear operational and structural risks directly in running these events, so they have their own perspective on the challenges facing the ecosystem; however, their perspective rarely takes center stage in the literature or policy discussions. This paper reports on one component of a larger parallel convergent mixed-methods study on CPM in Jakarta. This paper presents only qualitative findings regarding systemic challenges and governance needs from the perspective of organizers and creators; it does not draw on the quantitative component of the study, which examines visitor experiences, or the broader sustainable development model, as these fall outside the scope of this paper.

2 Literature Review

The term "creative economy" was first popularized by Howkins, who described it as an economic system in which creativity is the primary input in value creation [1]. This

concept was later developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which defined the creative industries as the cycle of creation, production, and distribution of goods and services based on creativity and intellectual capital [2]. More recent studies combine this definition with those from UNESCO, UNCTAD, the European Union, and WIPO [5].

In the literature on pop-up retail, CPM shares key characteristics with the broader category of pop-up retail: temporary setups built around brand and community experiences, rather than sales alone, driven by enjoyment, uniqueness, and atmosphere [6], and kept alive by a sense of urgency created by their time-limited nature [7]. This time-limited nature has been shown to influence visit intent [8], purchase urgency [9], and word-of-mouth spread [10]. Pop-up formats are generally categorized into two types: Brand-Based Pop-Ups, run by a single brand for its own customers, and Marketplace-Based Pop-Ups (MBPU), which rely on collaboration among three parties: the organizer, independent vendors, and visitors [11]. CPM aligns more closely with the MBPU model, bringing together dozens to hundreds of independent creators in a single shared space [11]. This distinguishes CPM from pop-ups run by major brands, as CPM relies on participation driven by independent creators [12], often in a co-curated format that unites small or niche brands [13].

This multi-stakeholder structure also serves as a space where value is co-created: organizers provide the space and curation, creators contribute their original works and personal stories, and visitors enrich the ecosystem through engagement and word-of-mouth promotion. This pattern of shared value creation has also been documented in other independent pop-up retail ecosystems [14]. Beyond the retail context, research on creative tourism also emphasizes that community-based, temporary creative formats require development models deliberately designed for their local contexts, rather than simply being viewed as emerging spontaneously alongside the creative industries [15].

Viewing CPM as a creative tourism attraction is also linked to another distinct yet related body of literature. Creative tourism was first defined as travel aimed at active and direct experiences of art, cultural heritage, or the distinctive character of a place, rather than merely passive tourism [20]. This concept was later further developed as a form of tourism that enables visitors to build their own creative skills through active participation in courses and learning experiences related to the destination [21]. CPM fits this description perfectly: visitors come specifically to interact with independent creators, discover original works, and engage with curated cultural offerings, making CPM a destination, rather than merely an incidental stop for shopping.

Although our understanding of time-bound formats, consumer behavior, and multi-stakeholder structures is already quite robust, the existing literature is largely written from the perspectives of marketing, retail, and the tourist experience, with little attention paid to how these temporary and informal ecosystems are managed, or, conversely, not managed, as they grow into enduring tourist attractions. Temporary and informal event ecosystems such as CPM typically fall outside the scope of formal regulations or accreditation systems. This can be described as a governance gap: a situation in which the growth of a new attraction depends largely on the informal capacities of its own actors, rather than on organized institutional support. Understanding this gap from the perspective of the actors most directly affected, organizers and creators, is a necessary

first step toward more informed policies for the development of CPM as a creative tourism attraction.

3 Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a six-phase thematic analysis [18]. The broader study on which this paper is based collected qualitative data from 20 informants: 4 organizers, 7 creators (tenants), and 9 visitors, selected through purposive sampling. This paper specifically uses data from 11 organizers and creators, as its focus is on governance challenges from the supply side within the CPM ecosystem; the visitors' perspective falls outside its scope. Events were selected using convenience sampling based on three criteria: (1) the event was a curated creative pop-up market, not a general, unselected bazaar; (2) it was located in DKI Jakarta; and (3) it took place during the data collection period.

Four events meet these criteria: Kira Kira Art Market (March 28–29, 2026), Artket 06 (April 4–5, 2026), OMO Market (April 11–12, 2026), and Tochaku Market (April 25–26, 2026). The interview guide consisted of three sections: an opening section (introduction and informed consent), a core section on potential and challenges from the informants' own perspectives, and a closing section asking for reflective views on the future of the CPM ecosystem. Data were analyzed thematically using a six-phase approach [18], focusing on themes related to systemic challenges and structural support. This paper is drawn from a larger parallel convergent mixed-methods study [19] and reports only on the qualitative portion relevant to governance and systemic challenges.

4 Findings and Discussion

Before discussing the systemic challenges that are the focus of this paper, it should be noted that the same interview data also reveals clear signs of potential within the CPM format itself. Organizers and creators explained how direct interactions at these events validate the authenticity of creators' work and encourage the sustainability of creative production, and creators view CPM as a more democratic pathway to market access compared to conventional galleries or retail channels. These signs are consistent with CPM's position as an emerging creative tourism attraction, and with the broader understanding that creative tourism formats need to be deliberately developed for their local contexts, rather than assumed to emerge on their own [15]. However, the same interview data also revealed three systemic challenges that threaten the day-to-day sustainability upon which the potential of this tourism attraction relies.

4.1 The Market Saturation as a Governance Challenge

Both organizers and creators, separately, have expressed concerns about the rapid growth of CPM events within a short timeframe and their overlapping schedules, which

they attribute to increasing competition for the attention and limited spending of visitors. One organizer described this concern directly:

> "The main challenge is market saturation. Art markets in Indonesia are popping up everywhere—there can be three events in a single month… We're worried that eventually it will be like in Singapore, where there's almost an art market every week and the scene is already very saturated." (EOA-1)

The fact that the same concern is being raised by these two distinct groups, organizers and creators, indicates that market saturation is not merely an operational concern for a single organizer, but rather a structural risk to the sustainability of the ecosystem as a whole, a risk that cannot be effectively managed by individual organizers.

4.2 The Lack of Formal Evaluation Standards Among Organizers

Organizers report that they rely on informal assessments, often described as "feeling the vibe", rather than systematic or standardized evaluation processes to assess the quality of events. Without standardized metrics, organizers rely on passive signals, direct observations of the atmosphere, social media posts, and informal reports from volunteers and vendors, to assess how an event is going. This reliance on informal and non-standardized evaluations further exacerbates the risk of market saturation mentioned earlier: without systematic data on visitor experiences, organizers have limited ability to detect and address issues early on, and often only become aware of problems once their impact has become significant.

4.3 Risk Mitigation Related to Independent Organizers by Creators

A related yet distinct pattern emerges from the creators' own accounts, separate from the organizers' evaluation practices described earlier. Due to the absence of a formal accreditation or certification system for organizers, creators explained that they must independently verify an organizer's track record before deciding to participate in an event, relying on their own experience and informal inquiries with other creators. This places the burden of quality assurance on individual creators rather than managing it through the ecosystem, highlighting a second, creator-specific aspect of the same governance gap.

4.4 Limited Structural Support from the Government

From the organizers' perspective, the lack of structural support is most acutely felt through rising venue rental costs, without equivalent subsidies or incentives for small-scale organizers. One organizer explained their hope:

> "It would be a great opportunity if events like this could be supported by the tourism agency or ministry through sponsorship… if possible, lower venue rental rates for MSMEs, or secure sponsorship from the Ministry of Creative Economy." (EOC-1)

From the creators' perspective, the concern that arises is not primarily about venue costs, but rather about the uneven distribution of exposure and attention among independent creators, compared to the reach of current government programs. One creator shared their perspective:

> "I hope the Ministry of Creative Economy pays more attention… their intentions are good, and I do see positive progress from the Ministry, but the benefits still only reach a handful of people." (KRB-1)

This finding stands out when compared with the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government's own public statements. The government has clearly committed to strengthening cooperation with the Ministry of Creative Economy and positioning the creative economy as part of the city's identity [16]. However, organizers and creators directly involved in one of the city's most visible creative economy initiatives report that this commitment has not yet translated into structural support that is felt on the ground. This gap suggests that the issue is not primarily a lack of political will, but rather one of implementation: the link between stated policy commitments and the actual operational needs of CPM organizers and creators does not yet appear to be fully established.

Overall, these two perspectives show that the lack of structural government support is experienced differently depending on an actor's position within the ecosystem, but both point to the same fundamental gap: the absence of coordinated policies that organizers and creators can rely on.

4.5 The Vulnerable Yet Essential Role of Creators

Creators occupy a position that is both central and vulnerable within the CPM ecosystem. As the only actors with direct relationships with both organizers and visitors, creators face pressure from both sides: they are expected to maintain the authenticity of their work and remain personally engaged with visitors, while at the same time having to manage the risks associated with an organizer's reliability on their own, since there is no formal intermediary directly connecting organizers and visitors. This dual exposure means that the sustainability of the ecosystem as a whole depends heavily on creators' ability to continue fulfilling this demanding, central role.

4.6 Governance Implications

The challenges identified here, market saturation, informal evaluation practices, and limited structural support, collectively point to one fundamental issue: the CPM ecosystem in Jakarta currently operates with very minimal formal governance. Its sustainability depends largely on the ability of organizers and creators to address issues informally, rather than on coordinated government policies. This highlights a clear role for policy action, not to formalize or over-regulate the creative nature of these events, but to provide supportive structures, such as light-touch quality standards, targeted facilitation, and fairer support mechanisms, which would alleviate the burden currently borne largely by individual actors, and to enable the potential identified at the beginning

of this section, CPM's capacity to validate creators' authenticity and democratize market access, to be pursued from a more stable governance foundation, a foundation necessary before that potential can more fully transform into a recognized creative tourism attraction.

5 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

This study examines the systemic challenges in developing creative pop-up markets in Jakarta into viable creative tourism attractions, from the perspectives of organizers and creators. Three interrelated challenges were identified: market saturation, the absence of formal evaluation standards among organizers, and limited structural government support, accompanied by the broader finding that creators occupy a position that is structurally vulnerable yet central to the ecosystem's sustainability. Overall, these findings point to a governance gap, in which the development of CPMs as sustainable tourist attractions is left to informal, case-by-case arrangements rather than structured policy support.

Based on these findings, this study offers policy implications that reflect the structure of the applied roadmap used in the broader research underlying this paper, which is translated here into the specific governance challenges discussed in this paper: market saturation, informal evaluation, and limited structural support. In the short term (0–6 months), the Ministry of Creative Economy could initiate structured consultations with organizers to map out their operational needs and challenges, as well as formally document CPM as a distinct, recognized event category, for example, through the Ministry's official portal. This step would provide a clearer institutional foundation for the sector than currently exists. In parallel, organizers can be supported in adopting more structured post-event evaluations, such as simple visitor satisfaction surveys, and in publishing clearer and more structured tenant curation criteria, including common reasons for rejection, to replace the current informal "getting a feel for the atmosphere" approach and help address quality concerns related to market saturation.

In the medium term (6–18 months), the Jakarta Capital City Government's Department of Tourism and Creative Economy (Disparekraf DKI Jakarta) can identify locations that are strategically suitable for CPM events and design subsidy or venue facilitation schemes for organizers, which in turn can be passed on by the organizers as more affordable booth rental fees for creators, particularly new creators with limited capital. In the medium to long term, the Ministry of Creative Economy and Disparekraf DKI Jakarta can jointly map out how various categories of creators are distributed throughout the ecosystem and create opportunities for exposure and promotional support for creators that are more equitable and transparent, in order to address the disparities in access to government programs highlighted by the creators in this study.

Each implication identifies the responsible actors, an indicative timeline, and concrete mechanisms, following the same level of detail as the roadmap developed in the broader study. However, these implications remain preliminary and specific to the governance dimensions discussed in this paper.

The policy implications of this study should be viewed as preliminary. This study did not include government representatives as informants, and its findings are limited to four curated CPM events held in Jakarta in March–April 2026. Further research that directly involves policymakers as informants is needed to examine and refine these implications before they are translated into concrete policies for the development of CPM as a creative tourism attraction.

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