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# The Influence of Adaptive Reuse on The Vitality of Urban Public Space: A Case Study of M-Bloc Space Jakarta

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### ABSTRACT

Urban development requires public spaces that can support social, cultural, and economic activities in a sustainable manner. One widely adopted approach to revitalizing urban environments is adaptive reuse, which repurposes existing buildings to accommodate new and relevant functions. This study aims to analyze how the implementation of adaptive reuse at M Bloc Space influences visitor preferences and contributes to the vitality of the public space. A quantitative descriptive method was employed, involving 120 respondents who had previously visited M Bloc Space. The research variables include four components of adaptive reuse (sustainability, heritage conservation, functional adaptability, and social-economic revitalization) and five indicators of public space vitality (activity diversity, simultaneous activities, activity duration, social interaction, and physical environmental quality). The findings indicate that adaptive reuse in M Bloc Space is categorized as high with the strongest contribution derived from the preservation of historical character and the presence of local economic activities. Public space vitality is also classified as high largely influenced by the diversity of activities, spatial comfort, and the presence of local tenants that attract visitors. These results confirm that adaptive reuse significantly shapes visitor preferences and enhances the vibrancy of urban public spaces. The study provides theoretical implications for strengthening the concept of urban vitality and practical insights for developing adaptive reuse-based public spaces in urban contexts.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of major cities in Indonesia, particularly Jakarta, presents significant challenges in providing public spaces that are inclusive, creative, and sustainable. Public space is an essential component of urban life because it not only functions as a place for social interaction but also serves as a venue for cultural, economic, and recreational (Gehl, 2011). According to (Carmona et al, 2010) public space holds a strategic role in supporting the quality of urban life as it acts as a democratic arena where people interact, engage in activities, and build social identity. In other words, a good public space is not only assessed by its physical aspects but also by its ability to foster a sense of ownership, social connectedness, and meaning for its users.

However, along with increasing urbanization and pressure from commercial development, many urban spaces have lost their social functions. Public spaces that should serve as arenas for community interaction are diminishing, both physically and functionally. This condition demands a design approach that goes beyond physical considerations and emphasizes the social, cultural, and economic roles in urban life. (Gehl, 2011). asserts that the vitality of public space is determined by the extent to which it is “brought to life” by people through a diversity of activities and continuous social interactions. A vital space is not only visually appealing but also able to create a sense of safety, comfort, and participation for users from various backgrounds.

Unfortunately, in many urban areas of Jakarta, there are still open spaces that exist physically but are not utilized optimally due to limitations in comfort, accessibility, or the lack of engaging activities that encourage public participation. This condition indicates that the aspect of vitality has not yet become a primary concern in public space design. On the other hand, several areas possess great potential to be revitalized through adaptive reuse strategies, which involve repurposing old buildings for new functions that are more relevant to contemporary community needs. This approach serves as a strategic alternative amid limited urban land and the increasing demand for public spaces.

One tangible example of adaptive reuse implementation in Jakarta is M Bloc Space, a creative public area in South Jakarta. Initially, the site was an old complex owned by the state-owned enterprise Perusahaan Umum Percetakan Uang Republik Indonesia (Peruri), built in 1971 and abandoned for several years. In 2019, the area was revitalized into a new public space without extreme renovation of the original building structure. Instead, the character of the old building with its industrial elements became a unique attraction for the urban community.

This transformation introduced the concept of adaptive reuse based on the creative economy, where old spaces are repurposed to accommodate new activities such as cafés, art galleries, performance venues, music stores, and various community events. M Bloc Space embraces the principle of empowering local actors and the creative economy, making it not only an entertainment space but also a sustainable creative economic ecosystem. This concept aligns with the idea of creative placemaking, which focuses on creating spaces that foster community engagement, strengthen social networks, and revive areas through cultural and economic activities.

Interestingly, despite the non-extreme revitalization process, M Bloc Space has succeeded in demonstrating a high level of public space vitality. Based on a report by Kumparan (2020), the 6,500 m<sup>2</sup> area records an average of around 6,000 daily visitors, increasing to 11,000 during weekends. Activities within the space are highly diverse, ranging from culinary experiences, music performances, art exhibitions, to creative community events. This

phenomenon shows that the success of a public space is not solely determined by the grandeur of its architectural design but by how effectively it serves as a platform for vibrant and meaningful social activities.

M Bloc Space serves as an exemplary case of how adaptive reuse can generate high public space vitality without sacrificing the historical value of the building. The relationship between adaptive reuse and vitality becomes relevant to examine as it reflects a balance between preserving old values and adapting new functions that meet the needs of contemporary society. This research seeks to analyze how the vitality of public space at M Bloc Space emerges through indicators such as types of activities, activity frequency, duration of stay, levels of social interaction, and the quality of the physical environment.

Today, M Bloc Space has evolved into an urban public space icon that represents Jakarta's urban vitality. Various activities such as music concerts, art exhibitions, creative bazaars, seminars, and public discussions are regularly held in the area. The diversity of activities and functions makes M Bloc Space a public space capable of accommodating various segments of society from young people to professionals, and from art communities to creative industry actors. This phenomenon reinforces that the vitality of public space does not rely solely on physical design but on its ability to support dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable social life.



Figure 1. Existing M Bloc Space  
Source: Prianggara & Pratiwi, 2023

However, despite its success in attracting public attention, M Bloc Space still has significant potential for further development. Several challenges remain, including limited spatial capacity, the need for wider diversification of activities, and the importance of applying sustainability principles in future design expansions. The use of environmentally friendly materials, spatial optimization, and the integration of smart technologies are essential aspects to support the long-term vitality of M Bloc Space.

Studies on public space vitality have become a major focus in architecture and urban planning over the past several decades. The concept was first popularized by (Jacob, 1961) in her seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which emphasizes that the life of a city depends on the diversity of activities and the intensity of social interactions occurring within its public spaces. This idea was later developed by (Montgomery, 1998) who identified

three core components of spatial vitality activity, diversity, and meaning which indicate the extent to which a space can remain lively, utilized, and sustained by the community.

Recent studies in Indonesia show a similar direction. Dianty & Dwisusanto (2020) in her research on public space vitality in Bandung, found that functional diversity and accessibility are dominant factors in increasing community activity. Meanwhile, Putri & Wibowo (2021) through her study of Kota Lama Semarang, highlighted that community-based management can extend the life cycle of public spaces. However, most of these studies still focus on conventional open spaces such as city parks, town squares, or pedestrian malls, and have yet to explore the vitality of creative public spaces developed through the revitalization of old buildings which are now increasingly emerging in major cities like Jakarta.

Research on urban public space vitality using M Bloc Space as a case study offers a new perspective on this phenomenon. M Bloc Space represents a contemporary form of public space born from the adaptive reuse of the former Peruri building complex and now functions as a center for creative, social, and economic activities. Its uniqueness lies in its ability to transform a previously unproductive space into an active and inclusive area through collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector. This phenomenon is highly relevant to the socio-cultural transformation occurring in Jakarta, along with the growing need among urban communities for spaces that are flexible, participatory, and locally rooted.

The selection of M Bloc Space as the research object is based on its relevance as a model of creative public space vitality within a metropolitan context. Architecturally, the area demonstrates how adaptive design strategies can preserve historical value while simultaneously fostering new social life. From a socio-economic perspective, the presence of M Bloc supports the growth of the creative industry ecosystem and strengthens the identity of the Blok M area as a sustainable urban lifestyle center.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Adaptive Reuse**

The concept of adaptive reuse has developed as an important approach in modern architecture and urban planning, emphasizing the repurposing of existing buildings for new functions without eliminating their historical value and identity. De Vita et al. (2020) explain that adaptive reuse is an intervention strategy applied to historical buildings in order to introduce new functions that are relevant to contemporary contexts while preserving the artifact value and community attachment to the space. Similarly, Vafaie et al., (2023) emphasizes that adaptive reuse practices focus on understanding the character and underlying intentions of old buildings so that the transformation does not erase their architectural meaning, but instead extends their life cycle in a sustainable manner. Meanwhile, Gruis et al., (2023) view adaptive reuse as an architectural technique that supports sustainability by reusing existing structures for new purposes while preserving the energy, materials, and historical integrity of the building.

### **2.2. Public Space**

According to Rrona (2022) public space serves as a container for collective expression, making it a crucial element in urban democracy and the dynamics of social life. Trancik (1986) adds that the quality of public space is determined by its spatial connectivity and its ability to stimulate continuous human activity. Furthermore, Low et al. (2022) emphasize that an ideal public space is one that accommodates diverse identities, provides inclusivity, and becomes an arena for negotiating social values. Thus, public space is not only a physical entity but also a symbolic realm that reflects social interactions, identity, and urban dynamics.

### 2.3. Vitality

According to Jan Gehl (2011) urban vitality emerges when a space is able to facilitate social activities that are enjoyable, inclusive, and sustainable. M Bloc Space successfully achieves this through its multifunctional areas such as concert venues, cafés, art galleries, and pedestrian pathways designed to encourage interaction among visitors. Meanwhile, Carmona (2021) emphasizes that vitality is not only about physical activity but also about the public’s positive perception of comfort, safety, and the relevance of the space. M Bloc Space combines the historical value of old buildings with modern design elements that support creativity, making the area perceived as lively, welcoming, and aligned with the needs of urban communities.

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research approach. This approach was selected because the vitality of public space is a complex phenomenon that must be understood from the perspective of user experience as well as the social dynamics that occur within the public space (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

In the quantitative component, this research utilizes questionnaire data designed to measure user perceptions related to indicators of public space vitality, including activity, comfort, accessibility, safety, and social participation at M Bloc Space. The quantitative data were then analyzed descriptively and comparatively to identify patterns and trends in public perceptions.

The research design adopts an exploratory case study model, focusing on a specific object M Bloc Space Jakarta as a public space resulting from the revitalization of a heritage area. A case study is considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to examine the phenomenon of public space vitality intensively within a complex real-world context (Yin, 2018). Through this case study approach, the research is also able to identify adaptive reuse practices and vitality factors that contribute to shaping the public space vitality of M Bloc Space.

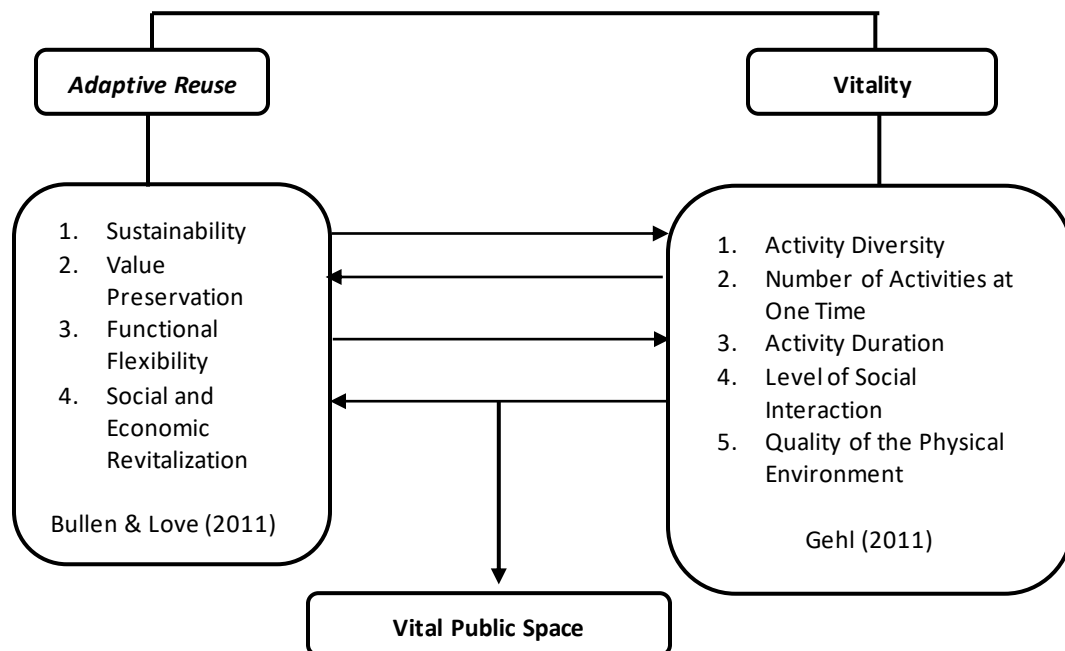


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework  
Source : Researcher, 2025

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Characteristics Of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents in the study on public space vitality at M Bloc Space Jakarta reflect a diverse user profile relevant for understanding visitor behavior and preferences.

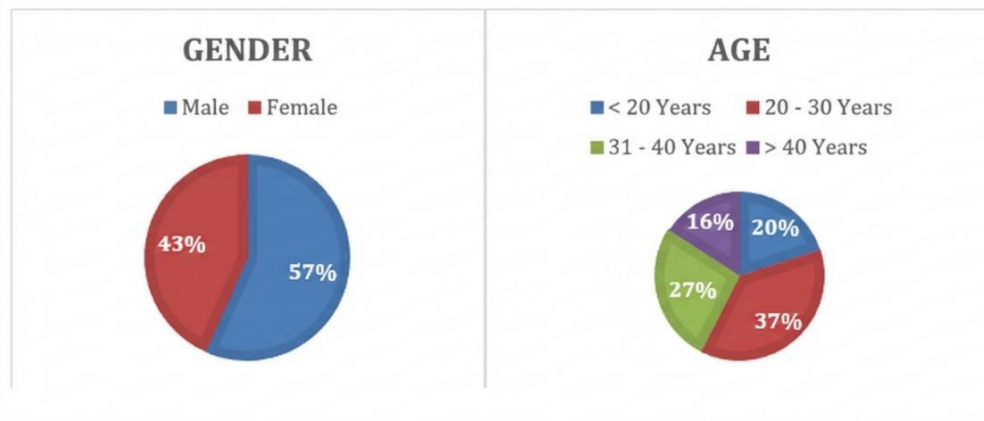


Figure 3. Characteristics Respondents I

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Of the 120 respondents, the gender composition is relatively balanced, with males accounting for 57% and females 43%. In terms of age groups, individuals aged 20–30 dominate with 38%, followed by those aged 31–40 (27%), under 20 (20%), and over 40 (16%). This distribution illustrates that M Bloc Space appeals strongly to younger and productive-age groups. Regarding domicile, most respondents come from South Jakarta (28%) and Central Jakarta (27%), while other areas East, North, and West Jakarta also contribute, albeit in smaller proportions, indicating a relatively wide catchment area.

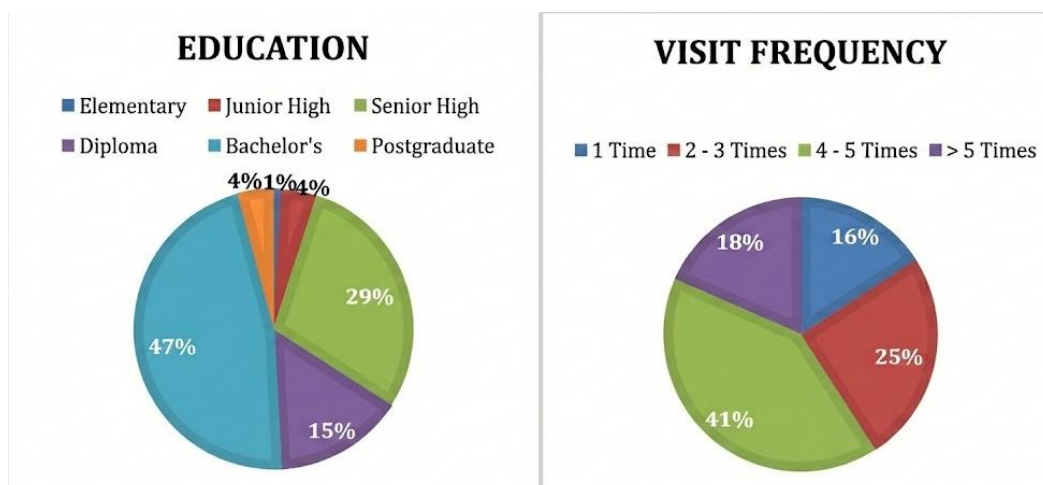


Figure 4. Characteristics Respondents II

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Respondents' educational background is dominated by Bachelor's degree holders (47%) and high school/vocational school graduates (29%), followed by Diploma, Postgraduate, and a small proportion of junior high and elementary school graduates. This suggests that most M Bloc Space users come from moderately to highly educated groups typically associated with creative activities. Visit frequency indicates that the majority of respondents are returning visitors, with 41% having visited 4–5 times and 25% visiting 2–3 times, demonstrating strong attachment and interest toward the area.

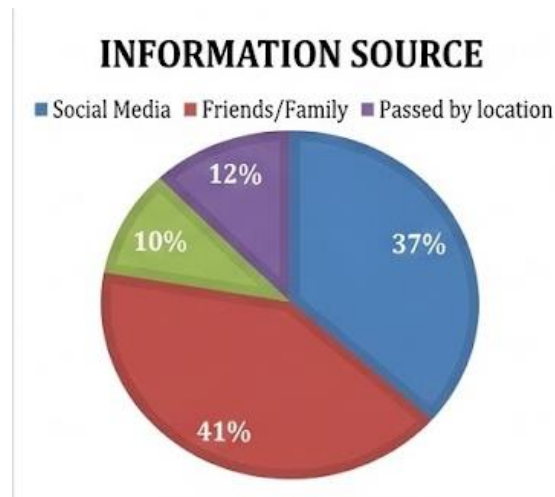


Figure 5. Characteristics Respondents III  
Source : Primary Data, 2025

Regarding sources of information, most respondents learned about M Bloc Space from friends/family (41%) and social media (37%), highlighting the significance of word of mouth and digital platforms in shaping the popularity of this public space. The types of activities conducted are varied, with visiting MSME tenants being the most dominant activity (30%), followed by attending community events (24%), photography/space exploration (18%), casual hangouts (16%), and working/reading (13%). Overall, these findings show that M Bloc Space functions as a multifunctional creative public space capable of attracting diverse demographic groups, supporting social and cultural activities, and generating repeat visits that significantly contribute to public space vitality.

#### 4.2. Validity and Reliability Tests

A validity test was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the instrument in measuring the research variables. Following (Sugiyono, 2022), validity indicates the extent to which the collected data reflect the actual conditions of the research object. The test was performed by correlating each questionnaire item using the Pearson Product Moment formula and comparing the calculated *r*-value with the *r*-table value at a 5% significance level.

The results show that for the Adaptive Reuse variable, all 27 items have *r*-values greater than the *r*-table (0.179–0.205), indicating that all indicators are valid. Similarly, for the Public Space Vitality variable, all 40 items obtained *r*-values exceeding the *r*-table (0.179), confirming that all items are valid and appropriate to be used as measurement instruments.

Reliability testing was then carried out using Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency. According to Ghozali (2018), an instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.6. The results show that the Adaptive Reuse variable has a reliability value of 0.883 and the Vitality variable 0.798. Therefore, all instruments in this study are reliable and capable of producing consistent results for subsequent analysis.

#### 4.3. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical results show that the Adaptive Reuse variable at M Bloc Space attained an average score of 3.76, categorized as high. This indicates that the implementation of adaptive reuse is generally perceived as effective in enhancing comfort, visitor interest, and spatial experience.

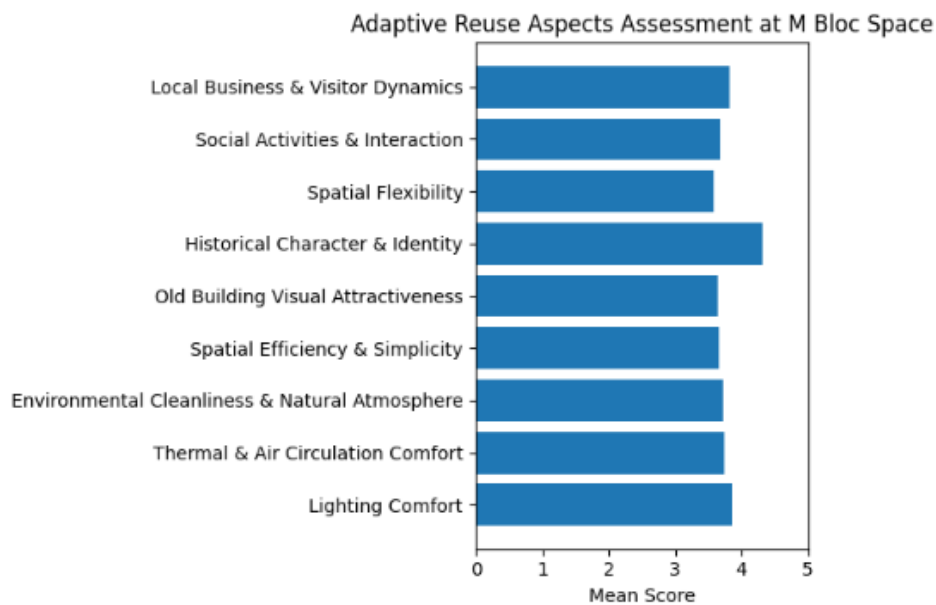


Figure 6. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers I  
Source : Primary Data, 2025

In the sustainability dimension, indicators such as lighting, temperature, air circulation, and cleanliness received scores between 3.69 and 4.01, suggesting that physical environmental comfort is a crucial factor contributing to visitor satisfaction and repeat visits. Additionally, the natural and eco-friendly ambiance was positively appreciated.

For the preservation of historical value, respondents provided highly positive assessments, reflected in a score of 4.63 for indicators related to maintaining the historical atmosphere and distinctive features of the original building. This confirms that heritage elements serve as a key attraction that sets M Bloc Space apart from other public spaces.

The functional flexibility dimension also reached high category scores (3.20–3.69). Although one indicator scored moderately (3.20), others such as the ability to support various events, flexible spatial layout, and accommodation of diverse activities were rated highly. This indicates that M Bloc Space is viewed as capable of accommodating a wide range of community and personal activities.

In the social and economic revitalization dimension, the scores were similarly high (3.55–4.19). The presence of MSME tenants stood out with a score of 4.19, showing that local economic activities play a major role in attracting visitors. The dynamic social environment and community events also contribute to creating a lively atmosphere, although not all visitors participate directly in community activities.

Overall, the application of adaptive reuse at M Bloc Space can be considered successful. The preservation of old buildings, physical comfort, spatial flexibility, and social and economic activities have collectively created an attractive, character-rich, and sustainable public space. Historical elements and social atmosphere are the strongest contributors to the positive perceptions of visitors.

#### 4.4. Public Space Vitality

Descriptive analysis results show that the Public Space Vitality variable at M Bloc Space achieved an average score of 3.54, categorized as high. This indicates that the area demonstrates strong vitality, reflected in its variety of activities, spatial comfort, and intensity of use.

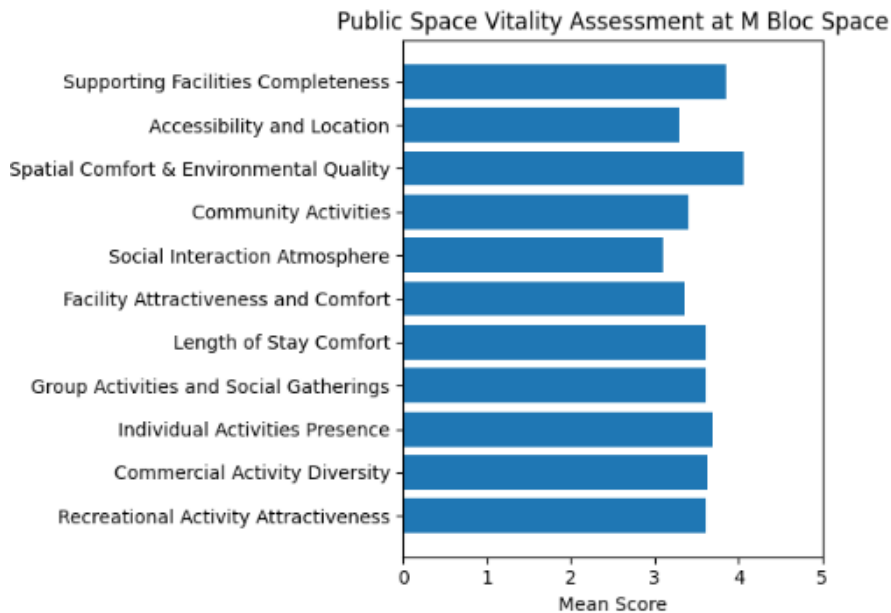


Figure 7. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers II  
Source : Primary Data, 2025

In the recreational and commercial activity dimension, scores were in the high category (3.56–3.68). This demonstrates that activities such as culinary experiences, recreation, exploration, and entertainment are the main drivers of visitor interest. The dimension of simultaneous activities also received high scores (3.58–3.79), showing that individual and group activities occurring concurrently create an active and dynamic spatial atmosphere.

The duration of activity dimension indicates that visitors tend to stay longer, with scores ranging from 3.59 to 3.66. The comfortable environment encourages longer stays, thereby increasing public space vitality. For social interaction, scores ranged from moderate to high (2.96–3.73). The relatively lower values suggest that although social interaction exists, the degree of engagement is lower compared to other dimensions. Visitors tend to engage in personal or small-group activities rather than broader social interactions.

The community participation dimension scored moderately to high (3.34–3.61). While community events contribute to vitality, many visitors tend to be passive observers. In contrast, the physical environment quality dimension achieved high to very high scores (3.43–4.26). Cleanliness, safety, well-maintained spaces, and adequate facilities were the most influential factors in creating a comfortable spatial experience. However, the accessibility aspect scored moderately (3.27–3.33), indicating that access to the location may still be improved.

Overall, the vitality of M Bloc Space is classified as high, particularly supported by activity diversity, spatial dynamics, and physical environment quality. Social interaction and accessibility are areas that may be further enhanced to optimize public space vitality.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** The level of public space vitality in the M Bloc Space area is categorized as high.

Based on the mean value of the vitality variable, which is 3.54 (high category), hypothesis H1 is accepted. This indicates that M Bloc Space is an active and well-visited public space that successfully attracts visitors through a diverse range of activities, a comfortable spatial atmosphere, and good environmental quality.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** The adaptive reuse components implemented in M Bloc Space meet the characteristics of adaptive reuse in urban public spaces.

With a mean value of 3.76 (high category) for the Adaptive Reuse variable and consistently high scores across all dimensions (sustainability, heritage, functional flexibility, socio-economic revitalization), hypothesis H2 is accepted. Visitors perceive the adaptive reuse implementation in M Bloc Space as highly effective, as reflected in the physical comfort, preservation of historical buildings, spatial flexibility, and socio-economic atmosphere. This demonstrates that the adaptive reuse applied in M Bloc Space meets the characteristics of adaptive, historic, and sustainable urban public space.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that M Bloc Space exhibits a high level of public space vitality, as reflected by the strong visitor interest in engaging in various recreational, commercial, social, and individual activities. This result aligns with the public space vitality theory proposed by (Gehl, 2011), which emphasizes that a lively public space is characterized by diverse activities, longer visitor duration, and high intensity of social interaction. The mean vitality score of 3.54 (high category) demonstrates that M Bloc Space successfully fulfills the characteristics of an active public realm as outlined in Gehl's framework, encompassing necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities. The dominance of recreational and commercial activities also indicates that the spatial adaptations made within the area have effectively supported optional and social activities at an optimal level.

From the adaptive reuse perspective, this research finds that all four dimensions sustainability, historical preservation, functional flexibility, and socio-economic revitalization received positive evaluations from users. The mean score of 3.76 (high category) suggests that visitors perceive the benefits of spatial adaptation, including environmental comfort, strengthened building identity, ease of spatial use, and the vibrancy of economic and community activities. These findings are consistent with Plevoets & Van Cleempoel (2013) who assert that adaptive reuse extends beyond physical conservation and concerns how old structures can acquire new, relevant functions. The results also support (Bullen & Love, 2011) view that successful adaptive reuse contributes significantly to the social and economic sustainability of an area.

The uniqueness of M Bloc Space lies in its ability to blend the former PERURI complex's historical architectural character with a modern creative-space concept, without losing its original identity. Unlike other adaptive reuse projects that primarily preserve the façade, M Bloc Space consistently maintains the existing materials, spatial scale, and 1970s industrial atmosphere as part of its main attractions. The strong presence of community activities and local SME tenants further enhances the vibrancy of the space, making it more dynamic compared to similar projects such as De Tjolomadoe in Solo or the revitalization of Kota Tua Jakarta, which tend to focus on tourism and large-scale events. With its more intimate and everyday character, M Bloc Space demonstrates how adaptive reuse can produce relevant, active, and sustainable public environments.

Therefore, the high vitality of M Bloc Space is not solely determined by its physical design but also by the success of its adaptive reuse process in creating a dynamic social and economic environment. The implementation of old-building adaptation has been proven to increase visitation interest, enrich the variety of public activities, and sustain the function of the space amid the urban dynamics of Jakarta.

Theoretically, this study reinforces Gehl's urban vitality theory by demonstrating that activity diversity and flexible spaces resulting from adaptive reuse can enhance social interaction and the overall intensity of public space use. The findings also extend the understanding of adaptive reuse theory by showing that the preservation of historical

elements not only maintains collective memory but also serves as an attraction that increases visitor interest. This supports Plevoets & Van Cleempoel's argument that adaptive reuse is a cultural process that transfers existing values into new uses that suit contemporary societal needs.

Practically, the results provide guidance for M Bloc Space's management to maintain and enhance its vitality. Strong elements such as its historical ambiance, diverse local tenants, and the vibrancy of community-driven activities should be preserved as the core identity of the area. Meanwhile, several indicators that fall under the "moderate" category such as accessibility and specific facilities offer important input for improving physical quality and visitor comfort. More broadly, this study offers recommendations for government and urban planners that adaptive reuse strategies can serve as an effective approach for area revitalization, particularly in activating old buildings without erasing their historical value. The spatial adaptation model demonstrated by M Bloc Space may also serve as a reference for developing other public spaces that aim to foster community-based creative ecosystems.

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