

# Thematic Tourism Market as an Urban Tourism Attraction: Manado City Discourse

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## Abstract

Manado City, the capital of North Sulawesi, is renowned for its stunning natural beauty, rich culture, and the hospitality of its people. However, in recent years, the growth of the tourism sector in Manado has begun to slow down. One factor that contributes to this is the lack of tourist attractions that are interesting and relatively unique. Thematic marketing tourism, the first pilot project in Indonesia, can be a solution to increasing tourist attraction in Manado. This research aims to analyze the potential of the tourism thematic market as an urban tourist attraction in Manado City. This research uses qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques in this research with literature review and field observations. The data that has been collected is then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The research results show that thematic markets can be a compelling urban tourist attraction that increases tourist visits to Manado City. Efforts must be made to integrate and sustain thematic markets to maximize their potential as urban tourist attractions. Local governments must actively facilitate funds and bureaucracy, carry out marketing promotions, and empower the market communities to ensure the sustainability and development of the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB).

**Keywords:** Thematic Market, Tourism, Urban Tourist Attraction, Manado City.

The trade sector was identified as a sector that has the potential to be improved as a source of regional income. Programs that aim to develop and utilize resources and trade potential are expected to contribute to regional economic growth (Saleh et al., 2020). Growth in the trade sector has also become an essential factor in accelerating economic growth (Cahyani et al., 2023). This trading activity creates demand, both in consumption and investment, which will ultimately encourage activities for producing goods and services (Faisol et al., 2020). The city of Manado, also known as the capital of North Sulawesi Province, is an example of the critical role of the trade sector in the local context. In the 2020 census, this city had a population of

451,916 people, making it the second-largest city in Sulawesi after Makassar. Most Manado City residents earn their living as Civil Servants (PNS), independent entrepreneurs, sellers, farmers, breeders, fishermen, and laborers (Manado Government, 2014).

Geographically, Manado City is located at the northern tip of the island of Sulawesi, with coordinates 1°25'88" - 1°39'15" north latitude and 124°47'00" - 124°56'00" east longitude, as well as a land area of reach 157,26-kilometer rectangle. Manado is a coastal city with a coastline of 18.7 kilometers and is surrounded by hills and mountain ranges. Most of the land area consists of hilly areas with a small portion of lowlands along the coast. The elevation range of

the terrain ranges from 0 to 40%, with the highest peak located at Mount Tumpa (Adilang et al., 2022). As the largest city in North Sulawesi, Manado has various economic and tourism potentials that can support local economic growth. Over the past two decades, tourism has proliferated and become one of the leading sectors of the city's economy. One of the leading tourist attractions in Manado, and even in the entire North Sulawesi Province, is Bunaken National Park, which is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful marine parks in the world. Bunaken Marine Park is part of Indonesia's natural conservation areas or national parks (Ratar et al., 2021; Palilingan, 2017).

Seeing the potential that the City of Manado currently has, it is hoped that it can significantly contribute to North Sulawesi's economic development. As a representative of North Sulawesi Province, Manado City requires improved infrastructure, including improving the security system and developing quality, environmentally friendly urban infrastructure, as well as orderly spatial management, as regulated in the Regional Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD) for the 2016-2021 period. This is expected to support mobility and improve the population's welfare, especially in the trade sector, such as markets and the tourism sector. With its strategic location, Manado City has the potential to become a center for development, growth, and services, as well as a center for national industry, trade, transportation, communication, and tourism (Taghulihi et al., 2019; Manado Government, 2018).

In the last two decades, tourism activities have grown and become one of the mainstays of the economy of the city of Manado. The highlights of tourism in the town of Manado include local culinary activities and the Bunaken National Park, which is called one of the most beautiful marine parks in the world (Rumokoy, 2017). Besides culinary and natural tourism, trade potential is also being developed by constructing the Bunaken Adventure Market. This project involves creative collaboration

between the Government and the community, focusing on exploring local wisdom. One approach used is a tourism-based market development model (Fatmah et al., 2024). The government is then striving to develop a combination of trade potential, culinary tourism, and natural tourism in the form of urban infrastructure (Nashiruddin Al-Bakry, 2024).

These efforts were the background for planning the development of a tourism-based market that reflected local wisdom, later called the Bunaken Thematic Market. The Bunaken Thematic Market is hoped to become an additional tourism destination and support existing trade and tourism activities. This research aims to analyze the potential of the tourism thematic market as an urban tourist attraction in Manado City.

## Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research methods are research approaches that focus on an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon or issue. Qualitative researchers seek to uncover the meaning behind human behavior, experiences, and interactions (Hennink et al., 2020). The qualitative descriptive approach is a research method that focuses on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon through qualitative data analysis. The analyzed data can be words, images, goods, and/or behavior, not converted into numerical or statistical form (Waruwu, 2023). The data collection technique in this research is by reviewing literature obtained from Google Scholar and the final report of PT Rekakota Management Consultant KSO and PT Payung Perancang Nusantara in 2022, as well as field observations. The data that has been collected is then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

## Result and Discussion

Public markets are traditionally found in various regions in Indonesia and other Southeast

Asian countries. This market is usually a gathering place for local society to buy various daily necessities, such as vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, spices, and other household goods. Public markets are often bustling and lively, with seller selling their wares along the narrow alleys. Here, we can find various local products, and we can feel the warmth and friendliness of the sellers and buyers who interact with each other. Apart from being a place to shop, public markets are often centers of social and cultural activities, where locals can meet, talk, and exchange information. Even though modern markets are increasingly developing and offering greater convenience, public markets remain an essential part of people's daily lives, as they preserve cultural heritage and the local economy (Santi et al., 2023). Based on the Management Study of Public market Management conducted by the Center for Domestic Trade Studies, Trade Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia in 2017, public markets in Indonesia are run in various forms of management, including:

1. **Traditional Market:** This is a traditional public market where traders sell merchandise made from local and regional products (Lucyana, Azkiya, Safira, Khumayah, & Imawan, 2024). Traditional markets are often the center of economic and social activities in local communities. What is interesting about public markets is that there can be a process of haggling over prices.

2. **Modern Market:** A modern market is a public market that has undergone transformation and modernization in layout, management, and facilities. Seller in modern markets often use modern technology to facilitate transactions, such as cash registers and electronic payment cards. In the modern market, haggling over prices is impossible because all prices are fixed.

3. **Special Markets:** Special markets are public markets that specialize in selling specific goods, such as fruit markets, fish markets, meat markets, vegetable markets, and so on. This niche market often attracts buyers looking for

high-quality products at prices that suit their needs. In Special markets, there can be a process of haggling over prices.

In principle, managing a public market includes efficient resource use, carrying out seller's operational activities effectively, and accountable administrative, technical, and financial management (Yusmalia et al., 2021). In implementing this principle, the entire professional community market management structure must work together and have good management skills, starting from the head of the community market and staff in various fields (Bangun et al., 2023). With professional management, public markets can contribute to Original Regional Income (PAD) through market levies (Suhandoko et al., 2021).

The public markets are given a specific theme or re-curated to highlight certain aspects of particular interest (Susanti Sari, Ferdiles, & Muhammad Rusdi, 2024). For example, a public market initially only sold various daily necessities, such as vegetables, fruit, and other consumer goods, but was later developed into a thematic market with themes such as a local art market or traditional culinary market (Kurniasari et al., 2023). The market will continue to serve the community's daily needs and be a center for promoting and selling regional specialty products with added cultural or artistic value. A transformation like this can increase the market's attractiveness as a local tourist destination and expand the economic and tourism potential of the region (Bajrami et al., 2022).

The plan to build the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) in Tongkaina Village, Bunaken District, is a big plan by the Manado City Government and Ministry of Commerce to improve the economy through the trade and tourism sectors. The existence of PTB can attract both foreign and domestic tourists (Rumbayan et al., 2021). PTB will create a crowd, and the crowd will attract the masses to join in. With a beautiful and unique appearance, PTB will become the new icon of Manado City. The Bunaken Thematic Market can be managed by

the regional government, private sector, local government, and private sector (Lagarense & Walansendow, 2020).

To support the grand plan, it is necessary to be backed by a well-managed and professional organization. This is also regulated by Law No. 7 of 2014 concerning Trade. (Iskandar et al., 2021). With excellent and professional management and service, PTB visitors will feel happy visiting PTB and will even invite their relatives to visit PTB. In the Regulation of the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for the Development and Management of Trade Facilities, it is stated that management can be carried out by the Government, Regional Government, Private Sector, State-Owned Enterprises, or Regionally Owned Enterprises in a professional manner. Referring to Article 34, paragraph 2 of the Minister's regulation, the management is determined by the Governor or Regent/Mayor in accordance with the provisions of statutory rules (Ruwayan et al., 2020).

The Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) is an attraction and a magnet for foreign tourists and the surrounding community, and it will even become a new icon of Manado City and a lifestyle for the society of Manado (Raihan Averilya, 2024). This can happen because PTB is unique, starting from its market design and the facilities and infrastructure available at the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) (Fanataf et al., 2020). As for the function of the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB), apart from being a market, namely a meeting between sellers and buyers, it also functions as a place for recreation. Visitors who come to the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB), apart from shopping, can also enjoy food, go for a walk, swim, exercise, play using play furniture at RBRA for children, enjoy outdoor games, feeding animals at the mini zoo, enjoy the beauty of the sea from the viewing tower or rooftop, enjoying entertainment on the open stage or live music at the café and so on (Drissi, 2023). The Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) allows visitors to feel comfortable and

relaxed. Apart from that, to attract more visitors to the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB), all Administration and Service Officers wear traditional Manado/North Sulawesi clothing.

The Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) in Tongkaina Village will attract the public's attention to come together and create a buzz and crowd, attracting local society to join in crowding (Rumbayan et al., 2021). With the existence of the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB), the economic level and welfare of the community will increase. Because the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) provides many stall for MSMEs, its presence will also offer opportunities for business operators and MSMEs in Bunaken District and the city of Manado to obtain a place or stall to sell their goods in the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB).

The main objective of developing PTB is to serve as a marketing center for the products of various groups of traders, cooperatives, and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). However, as a creative hub in the creative economy, PTB can become more than just a conventional market. With the thematic market concept, PTB can become a center for creativity and innovation in the creative economy sector, highlighting the uniqueness and unique appeal of the products offered (Metananda et al., 2023). The creative hub allows creative economy actors to gather, collaborate, and develop new ideas, which in turn can increase the added value of products and expand markets for MSMEs and other business actors. Thus, PTB functions as a marketing place and a center for sustainable and inclusive creative economic growth.

Products that may be traded at PTB are non-wet products, mainly goods needed by tourists such as souvenirs, small gifts, clothes, t-shirts, textiles, culinary, food and drinks (Gizaw, 2019). Apart from that, PTB is also an outlet for the results of the creative economy of the tourism industry group. At that moment (2019 data – Bekraf) There are 6 of 17 creative economy sub-sectors that have begun to develop in Manado

City. These creative economy subsectors are culinary, fashion, music, crafts, and performing arts.

A creative hub is a place or space specifically designed to support growth and collaboration in the creative industry. Creative hubs can become a center for creative industry players, such as designers, artists, musicians, video game developers, writers, and other creative professionals, to gather, work, collaborate, and share knowledge (Koo et al., 2024). Supporting facilities and services are usually available in the creative hub, such as shared workspaces (co-working spaces), studios, meeting rooms, access to creative equipment and technology, and education and training programs. Besides that, it is also often a place to hold arts and cultural events, exhibitions, performances, and various other activities that strengthen the creative community within it (Susanto, 2024). The purpose of establishing a creative hub is to create an environment that stimulates creativity, innovation, and collaboration among creative industry players and helps them develop and market their works. This can also be an impetus for local economic growth because creative industries often have the potential to create new jobs and increase a city's or region's attractiveness (Wu & Virani, 2023). In the creative hub, creative industry players can take part in training on the creative economy and register Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) on the creative products they produce (Curkic, 2024).

The creative hub has a significant role in supporting the growth and development of the creative industry. As a center for collaboration and innovation, the creative hub provides an environment that stimulates the creativity of creative industry players, such as designers, artists, and video game developers. They can gather, share ideas, and work together to produce innovative new works. Besides that, it also functions as a place to provide training related to business management, marketing, and finance in the context of the creative economy, thereby helping creative industry players develop their

talents and potential professionally. Besides that, the creative hub also facilitates registering Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for creative products produced by creative industry players, thereby providing legal protection and encouraging recognition of the value of their creativity. Therefore, a creative hub is not only a place to gather and work but a driving force in strengthening the creative industry ecosystem and increasing its contribution to economic growth and cultural development in a region or community.

Based on law no. 24 of 2019 concerning the Creative Economy, meaning the Creative Economy is the realization of added value from intellectual property originating from human creativity based on cultural heritage, science, and/or technology (Zusmelia et al., 2022). Several steps to increase the attractiveness of urban tourism in Manado City discourse are:

To increase the attractiveness of urban tourism in Manado City, several steps that can be taken include:

1. Development of 3D Museum Tourism

Build a 3D museum that displays stunning three-dimensional paintings with various themes, such as Bunaken's natural beauty and marine potential. Visitors can interact with the painting to take photos, creating an exciting experience (Community & England, 2020).

2. Art Gallery Development

Building an art gallery to exhibit and sell various local works of art. Art galleries can become centers for appreciating regional art and culture and attract tourists interested in art (Amiruddin, 2022).

3. Management of Activities on the Open Stage

They hold various cultural arts activities and events on an open stage, such as music, dance, and theater performances (Koumoutsea et al., 2023). This can increase the tourist attraction of the city of Manado and provide entertainment and education to local society and tourists. The Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) is the answer for the society of Manado City to the presence of

a comprehensive entertainment venue that provides various needs for the society of Manado City. The Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) offers multiple choices for the society of Manado City because PTB offers a place to shop, a place to relax, a place to gather, a place to play for children (Child-Friendly Playroom), a place to eat with various choices, provides games outdoor, and others, as well as providing a large Open Stage (Open Theater). With the availability of an Open Stage, visitors can enjoy the entertainment displayed in the Open Theater.

#### 4. Swimming pool

The swimming pool concept used is the infinity pool concept, namely a swimming pool whose edges are designed. Thus, that they appear to blend with a larger body of water, such as the sea, or blend with nature, such as the sky and forest (Thurlow, 2021). At the Bunaken Thematic Market, visitors can enjoy nature and the performances available at the swimming pool with a fee concept that can increase the area's income.

#### 5. Development of child-friendly play spaces (RBRA)

Provide a child-friendly play space in accordance with the 2015 Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection regulations. The party hotel in PTB is safe and comfortable. This can attract tourists visiting with their families (Yanto et al., 2020). Every child around the world has the right to play. On an international scale, Article 31 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was ratified in New York City, United States, confirms that "Countries recognize the right of children to rest and relax, play, and participate in age-appropriate recreational activities." They also have the right to participate freely in cultural and artistic life." (Wismayanti et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, which has adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (KHA), its principles are reflected in Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. In Article 11 of the law, it is emphasized that "Every child has

the right to rest and leisure, socialize with peers, play, participate in recreational activities, and express themselves according to their interests, talents, and level of intelligence for the purpose of self-development." (Erdianti & Al-Fatih, 2020)

Support is provided through Article 22 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection to ensure children's right to play is realized. This article emphasizes that the State and Government are obligated and responsible for providing facilities and infrastructure to implement child protection. For example, Article 56 of Law Number 35 of 2014 states that the Government and Regional Governments must try to help children so that they can freely rest, play, be creative, and create arts and culture. Children also have the right to play in facilities that meet health and safety standards. These efforts must be adjusted to the child's age, abilities, and environment to prevent hindering or disrupting their development (Hori, 2020). In 2014, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection formed a team specifically to handle child-friendly playrooms, named the Child-Friendly Play Spaces (RBRA).

PTB Bunaken in Manado City is a strategic step to drive trade, level development, and advance the creative economy. PTB offers non-wet products such as souvenirs, fashion, culinary delights, and recreational facilities. It is hoped that its attraction for tourists will improve the welfare of economic actors and local communities. In Manado city discourse, the Tourism Thematic Market is a crucial element in describing the attractiveness of urban tourism. This market is not just a trading place but is also a center for creative and recreational economic activities that attract the interest of local and foreign tourists. With a focus on thematic products that reflect the region's culture and natural riches, this market offers a unique and varied shopping experience. In addition, by providing recreational facilities such as dining,

entertainment, and play areas, the Tourism Thematic Market creates a bustling and lively atmosphere that is attractive for tourists to explore and enjoy the local lifestyle. Through a thematic product-based approach and creative economy, this market also has the potential to improve the welfare of local communities by involving local economic actors and promoting the results of regional creative industries. In this way, the Tourism Thematic Market is not only a shopping destination but also an integral part of the city of Manado's exciting and memorable tourist experience.

## Conclusion

Development of the Bunaken Thematic Market (PTB) is a strategic step in terms of the size of the trade sector, which requires facilities and infrastructure in the public market, as well as equitable development in Manado City. Because the northern part of Manado City is still relatively untouched by development. PTB is a marketing center for the products of various groups of sellers, cooperatives, and MSMEs. It was deliberately placed in the Tongkaina area in the northern part of Manado City, which is still relatively underdeveloped and the Tongkaina

area could immediately develop. Products that may be traded at PTB are non-wet products, mainly goods tourists' need, such as souvenirs or small gifts, knick-knacks, clothes, t-shirts, textiles, food, and Drinks. Apart from that, PTB also acts as an outlet for the results of the creative economy of the tourism industry group. At that time (2019 data - Bkraf), 6 out of 17 sub-sectors of the creative economy had already begun to develop in the city of Manado. These creative economy sub-sectors are culinary, fashion, music, crafts, and performing arts. PTB is designed not only for trading various goods needed by tourists but also as a place for creation and recreation, like sports, entertainment, art stages, places to eat and drink, playgrounds, flower gardens, mini zoos, 3D museums, and swimming pools. The uniqueness of this market can also be a factor that will invite foreign and foreign tourists to visit. Tourists are PTB's primary target market; however, it is hoped that the society of Manado will also use it to shop and enjoy their lifestyles. All economic actors and local communities will improve their welfare if PTB development is based on thematic products, based on thematic areas, based on the creative economy, and based on the workforce from the local community.

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