

Purwokerto Wage Market: A Social Historical Perspective (2000-2024)

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Abstrak

Pasar Wage adalah pasar tradisional yang sudah beraktifitas sejak masa kolonial yang pernah direnovasi pada tahun 1990-an. Pasar ini senantiasa mengalami dinamika dan pada tahun 2000-an terjadi kebakaran yang menyebabkan berbagai persoalan sosial. Penelitian ini berusaha mengungkap aspek sosial dan kebijakan yang diberlakukan sejak tahun 2000-2024, dengan fokus pada dampak kebakaran serta upaya revitalisasi yang dilakukan pemerintah daerah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan, metode sejarah yang meliputi heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi dengan memanfaatkan sumber primer berupa arsip pemerintah daerah, laporan UPTD Pasar Wilayah I Dinas Perindustrian dan Perdagangan Kabupaten Banyumas, serta wawancara dengan pedagang dan pengelola pasar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebakaran menjadi titik balik yang berdampak signifikan terhadap penurunan aktivitas ekonomi dan jaringan sosial pedagang. Meskipun revitalisasi berhasil memperbaiki infrastruktur pasar, namun upaya tersebut belum sepenuhnya mampu mengembalikan fungsi sosial-ekonomi pasar. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa Pasar Wage merupakan ruang sejarah yang mencerminkan relasi antara kebijakan pemerintahan dan dinamika sosial-ekonomi masyarakat lokal.

Kata kunci: pasar wage, revitalisasi, pasar tradisional.

Abstract

Pasar Wage is a traditional market that has been operating since the colonial era and was renovated in the 1990s. This market has always experienced dynamics, and in the 2000s a fire occurred that caused various social problems. This study seeks to uncover the social aspects and policies implemented from 2000 to 2024, with a focus on the impact of the fire and the revitalization efforts undertaken by the local government. The research method used is a historical method that includes heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. It utilizes primary sources in the form of local government archives, reports from the Regional Market Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) I of the Banyumas Regency Industry and Trade Office, and interviews with traders and market managers. The results show that the fire was a turning point that had a significant impact on the decline in economic activity and the social networks of traders. Although the revitalization succeeded in improving the market infrastructure, these efforts have not been able to fully restore the market's socio-economic function. This study confirms that Pasar Wage is a historical space that reflects the relationship between government policies and the socio-economic dynamics of the local community.

Keywords: wage market, revitalization, traditional market.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional markets are socio-economic institutions that play a vital role in the social life of Indonesian society. They not only function as centers for the distribution of goods and services but also serve as spaces for social interaction that

shape economic, cultural, and solidarity-based relationships among individuals in the community. From a social history perspective, markets are understood as spaces that records the dynamics of daily community life, including changes in economic structure, power relations, and

the impact of government policies on the people's economy.

Along with economic development and urbanization, traditional markets face increasingly complex challenges. The emergence of modern markets, shopping centers, and franchise minimarkets has altered the patterns consumer spending and displacing traditional markets within the goods distribution system (Cross, 2000). This situation has not only led to a decline in the number of visitors but has also impacted the viability of small-scale traders who rely on traditional markets as their primary source of livelihood. In this context, traditional markets have become a battleground for competition among the local economy.

Pasar Wage in Purwokerto is one of the main traditional markets in Banyumas Regency, having long served as a central market and wholesale hub for the Banyumas community. The development of Purwokerto which functions as the regional administrative and economic center of Banyumas Regency has influenced the existence of Wage Market. Wage Market has become a vital space for community economic activities. For small and medium sized merchants, it serves as a venue for social interaction among urban and rural communities in the surrounding areas. The market, which has existed since the early 19th century, originally began as a gathering of Chinese people selling goods in an open field, and the

colonial government designated the site as a market.

Entering the reform era, Wage Market faced significant structural challenges. Pressure from modern markets, coupled with internal issues such as overcrowded stalls, limited facilities, and suboptimal market management, further exacerbated the market's conditions. This situation reached its peak with a fire in 2008, which recurred in 2020. The fire not only caused physical damage to the buildings but also disrupted economic activities and severed the social networks that had been established over a long period. The market, once a flagship, has gradually lost its existence following the fires and the emergence of modern markets that have since become competitors.

In social studies, the fire can be understood as a turning point that brought significant changes in the market's socio-economic structure. The fire not only destroyed the physical trading space but also affected traders' survival strategies, patterns of interaction among traders, and the relationship between traders and the local government (Lindell, 2010). These impacts are often long-term and cannot always be resolved through physical reconstruction alone.

In response to the post-fire conditions, the local government undertook various revitalization efforts for Wage Market as part of its policy on the

management of traditional markets. The role of the government in the market revitalization and renovation process will be discussed in this study. Market revitalization is generally understood as efforts to improve the physical quality of buildings, reorganize stalls, and enhance market management with the aim of boosting the competitiveness of traditional markets. However, several studies indicate that revitalization focused on physical aspects does not always align with the social-economic needs and experiences of vendors (Masitha, 2010). In some cases, revitalization has actually created new problems, such as increased stall rental costs, spatial changes that do not align with vendors' habits, and a decline in the number of market visitors. Markets that were once bustling with vendors selling their goods and consumers who still chose markets as places to meet their daily needs have now changed and must compete with modern markets that increasingly make shopping easier for consumers.

Studies on traditional markets in Indonesia generally focus on economic, management, and public policy aspects. The literature review includes a discussion of market research on Wonokromo Market, a flea market located next to Wonokromo Station that has a high crime rate (Puteri & Rahma, 2023). Mayang Sari Market in Jambi, a food market that has been famous since 1985 (Eka Nofita Sai, 2021).

Articles discussing traditional markets, such as Andriani's work, examine the traditional Mojosongo Market, which is experiencing a decline (Andriani, 2013). Endi Sarwoko's work examines the condition of traditional markets from a consumer perspective and the impact on traditional market vendors with the emergence of modern retail chains such as Indomaret and Alfamart (Sarwoko, 2008). Meanwhile, studies that position the market as a space of social history, using the fire as a turning point for change, remain very limited. It is important to address this gap by viewing the market not merely as an object but as a living space for traders and the local community.

Based on the background above, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of Wage Market in Purwokerto from a historical perspective for the period 2000-2024, with an emphasis on the impact of the fire and market revitalization efforts. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of local socio-economic historical studies.

METHODS

This study uses Based on the issues outlined above, to reconstruct and analyze the dynamics of the Purwokerto Wage Market from a historical perspective during the 2000-2024 period using a social perspective approach, this study employs historical methods. These methods aim to understand and explain past events in a

scientific manner by collecting (heuristics) primary and secondary data. In historical research, it is crucial to ensure the authenticity of sources and the validity of information (credibility) (Gottschalk, L. 1986). Therefore, the historical method involves not only data collection but also critical analysis of historical sources to arrive at a reliable interpretation. Historical methods essentially consist of the stages of source collection (heuristics), source criticism (verification), source analysis (interpretation), and finally the writing of history or (historiography) (Kuntowijoyo, 2013).

The first phase of this study was heuristic. The primary sources used included local government archives, reports from the Regional Market Unit I of the Banyumas Regency Industry and Trade Office, policy documents related to market management and revitalization, and data on the fires at Wage Market in 2008 and 2020. This study also utilized data from oral interviews with vendors, market managers, and relevant parties as sources of oral history to obtain perspectives from those directly involved. An interview was conducted with Mrs. Surati (52 years old), a beverage vendor who has been selling at Wage Market for 32 years. The second informant was Mr. Eko (50 years old), a staff member of the General Administration of the Regional Market Unit I (UPTD) under the Banyumas

Regency Industry and Trade Office (DINPERINDAG). Secondary sources used include journal articles to strengthen the analysis and theoretical context.

The second stage is source criticism; the sources identified are then verified through a series of critical evaluation steps, both internal and external. External criticism is conducted to test the authenticity and reliability of the sources, particularly archives and official documents, while internal criticism aims to assess the credibility of the source's content, including the consistency of information and the potential for subjectivity on the part of the informants. Following the source collection and source criticism stages, the third stage is Interpretation. In this stage, the researcher conducts a critical analysis of the identified sources by selecting relevant facts. Once the facts and data are established, they are interpreted using concepts and theories from previous research. The data is analyzed using a social approach to understand the impact of the fire and the market's revitalization on the socio-economic lives of the merchants, as well as the changes in the function of Wage Market within the community. The final stage is writing or historiography. The presentation of historiography is not merely chronological but also emphasizes cause-and-effect relationships and the socio-economic dynamics occurring in the development of

Wage Market in Purwokerto during the research period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conditions of Wage Market Before the 2008 Fire

Purwokerto's Wage Market has a long history and has significantly influenced the economy of the Banyumas community. Located in the center of Banyumas Regency, this market is viewed as a pillar of the informal sector and a provider of employment opportunities for low-to-middle-income groups.

During the Dutch colonial period in the 1920s, Wage Market was already bustling as a trading hub for the Banyumas community, marked by rows of Chinese shops surrounding it, as shown in Figure 1 (Sunbulatul, 2021).



Figure 1. Chinese Shops at Wage Market, Purwokerto, 1920-1930. Source: Chinese Shops at Wage Market, Purwokerto, 1920-1930

Source: www.tropenmuseum.nl

This market became a center for shopping and the distribution of basic necessities for the people of Banyumas, making it the main market. The market, which was once merely a gathering place

for Chinese people to sell their goods, has now become a large market (Banyumas, 2019). This is evident in Figure 2, which shows the arrangement of semi-permanent stalls in 1960, depicting the front view of Wage Market.



Figure 2. Wage Market in 1960.
Source: Banyumas Regency Archives Office

The site currently used as a market was once the administrative center of the Kadipaten under the rule of Adipati Pancurawis, which served as the town square. This square, which had evolved into a trading hub for the Chinese community, was eventually designated by the government as a market. Since then, it has grown rapidly and became Wage Market, while the former Kadipaten courtyard has been transformed into the Hok Tek Bio Temple.

Pasar Wage was built by the Dutch colonial government with the aim of facilitating the Dutch economy and trade, as the Netherlands was still colonizing Indonesia at that time. The market was named "Wage," derived from the day of the week in the Javanese calendar, signifying that the market was bustling on

that day. Similarly, markets like Pon, Kliwon, and Legi are named after the days when they are most active. However, in modern times, this naming convention no longer holds significance, and Wage Market is bustling with visitors every day. The original structure housed 1.600 vendors, accommodating approximately 1.200 stalls and 61 kiosks across a land area of 3,550 m²; eventually, the entire old structure was demolished to expand the market and accommodate the growing number of vendors (Banyumas, 2019).

Pasar Wage continued to develop with contributions from the colonial government until its management was handed over to the local government. In the post-reform era at the beginning of the 21st century, Wage Market underwent significant changes in line with government policies. Decentralization, as outlined in Law No. 22 of 1999 which officially took effect on January 1, 2001 granted local governments greater authority in managing (RI, 1999). This management encompasses physical planning, the collection of fees, and the regulation of trading activities. The implementation of this decentralization has had both positive and negative impacts on traditional markets. On the one hand, this law provides space for participation and opportunities for traders to make decisions; on the other hand, it presents new challenges regarding the managerial capacity of local governments

and budget constraints for market infrastructure maintenance. In the case of Wage Market, these changes are marked by an increase in trading activity and the number of traders.

Under this decentralization regulation, the government collaborated with the third-party contractor PT. Pumas Basata to build the new Wage Market on a plot of land measuring 10.305.44 square meters. Construction of Wage Market was completed and the market was officially opened on March 6, 2002, selling various goods such as vegetables and fruits in Block C. Block A is dedicated to sellers of clothing, household goods, and various metal items. Block B offers basic foodstuffs, beef, poultry, and fish, while Block D sells various types of goods. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the floor plan of Wage Market on the second floor (Banyumas, 2019).



Figure 3. Floor plan of Wage Market.
Source: Personal archive.

As economic activity continues to increase, the conditions at Wage Market increasingly reveal its limitations. Permanent structures, with densely packed and haphazardly arranged stalls and booths, along with electrical

installations that do not meet standards, are common issues found in traditional markets, including Wage Market. Problems regarding weak management of market infrastructure and security systems are common, especially in markets experiencing rapid growth that is not adequately supported by government-led development and renewal. This situation also applies to Wage Market, making it vulnerable to high-risk incidents such as fires.

The 2008 and 2020 Fires and Initial Recovery Efforts

The fire at Wage Market in Purwokerto occurred on July 5, 2008, destroying Blocks B-17 through B-21, marking a turning point in the market's history. Block B, which housed stalls selling groceries, meat, and fish, was completely gutted by the fire. The fire broke out at 11:00 PM local time and raged until the morning of July 6, 2008; the exact cause remains unknown. The fire caused significant structural damage and had a severe economic impact on vendors whose livelihoods depended on the market. As a result of the 2008 fire, affected vendors were directed to set up stalls outside the market area along the roadside. The government directed the vendors to sell their goods at a designated location along the road leading to the market, which is now also used as a stall area where they sell various daily necessities. The 2008 fire

severely impacted the vendors. Upon investigation, the incident was found to have been caused by an electrical short circuit in one of the stalls, and the equipment used around the stalls was made of flammable wood, which allowed the fire to spread rapidly. A total of 8 stalls and 50 market stalls were destroyed by the fire. The police and fire department deployed eight units to extinguish the flames.

The fire did not occur just once; the incident recurred with the same cause an electrical short circuit on September 21, 2020, at 3:30 AM on the first floor of the western section of Block B. As seen in Figures 3, 4, and 5, which show the condition of the market following the fire.



Figure 4. Floor Plan of the 2020 Kiosk Fire.
Source: Regional Market Office I,
Department of Industry and Trade,
Banyumas Regency

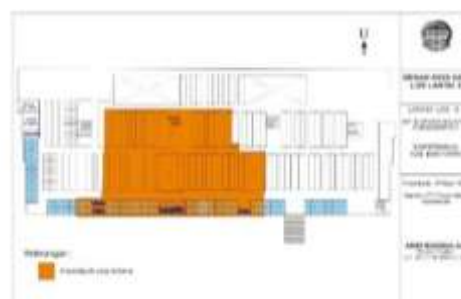


Figure 5. Floor Plan of the 2020 Market Stall Fire. Source: Regional Market Office I, Department of Industry and Trade, Banyumas Regency



Figure 6. Condition of the Market After the 2020 Fire. Source: Regional Market Technical Implementation Unit I, Department of Industry and Trade, Banyumas Regency

The losses suffered were not limited to income sources but also extended to the socio-economic networks that had long supported the sustainability of micro-enterprises at Wage Market. The government did not remain idle in addressing this incident. The government's initial response was to provide temporary locations for vendors to regain their income sources. Over time, the government implemented policies involving revitalization, which included institutional restructuring and market governance, as well as physical reconstruction.

Mrs. Surati (52), a vendor who sells beverages at Wage Market and has been there for 32 years, has witnessed the changes occurring at Wage Market. She noted that since the fire, she has observed improvements in the market's infrastructure and facilities, which the government has been steadily upgrading. The market, which was once dilapidated and disorganized, is now better managed and more orderly.

The fire incident has led to the market's continuous improvement and transformation into a better market. Wage Market in Purwokerto, which serves as the main market, continues to develop, with the government's contributions through revitalization efforts making it a more adequate traditional market.

Revitalization and Efforts to Preserve Wage Market (2009-2024)

As part of the revitalization process undertaken by the local government following the fire, the Banyumas Regency Administration, through the DCKKTR, rebuilt the structures damaged by the 2008 fire into a modern traditional market design with a budget of approximately Rp. 680.000.000.00. The Department of Industry, Trade, and Cooperatives (now the Department of Industry and Trade of Banyumas Regency) immediately reorganized the vendors affected by the fire to reoccupy Block B in 2009. In 2010, the government also optimized the use of the second floor of Wage Market and added several facilities, including escalators on various sides to improve access to the second floor.

Mr. Eko (50), General Administrator of the UPTD Pasar Wilayah I DINPERINDAG of Banyumas Regency, stated that following the 2020 fire, the government provided assistance to affected vendors in the form of a flat-rate payment of 15 million rupiah. This created disparities

among some vendors, as not all suffered the same level of loss; consequently, some vendors received funds exceeding the amount of losses they actually incurred. During this event, the Governor of Central Java was present to personally inspect the market renovations and speak directly with the affected vendors. Mrs. Surati (52) said that while the government's goal of transforming Wage Market into a clean and well-organized market is indeed commendable, on the other hand, there has been a steady increase in stall and kiosk rent payments, and she believes the market's reputation is declining. In her view, it would be better to maintain the old conditions with the existing, modest infrastructure, as long as the market retains its status as a central market.

The revitalization carried out in 2020 following a fire was completed at a cost of over Rp. 9 billion, with the hope that it would boost the economy of the Banyumas community and increase local revenue (PAD). The results of this revitalization are shown in Figure 6, which reveals that many stalls remain vacant to this day.



Figure 7. Results of the 2024 Wage Market Revitalization. Source: Personal Archive

Following the revitalization, it is hoped that Wage Market will attract more shoppers and maintain its reputation as a central market. As of now, the market covers an area of 10.304.44 m² with 206 stalls located on the upper and lower floors, 2.449 stalls, and 1.756 active vendors. Facilities available at the market include 6 restrooms, a parking lot, and a mosque (Banyumas, 2019).

Impact Socio-Economic on Vendors

The fires at Wage Market that occurred in 2008 and 2020 not only caused damage to the market's infrastructure but also had profound socio economic impacts on the vendors. These events significantly altered the socio-economic landscape of the vendors' lives.

Following the fire on July 5, 2008, vendors directly affected in Blocks B-17 through B-21 suddenly lost their business premises. The local government, through the Banyumas Regency Industry and Trade Office, carried out an emergency relocation by moving the vendors to temporary locations in the courtyard and along the roadside leading to the market area. This relocation aimed to allow vendors to continue their economic activities despite conditions that were far from ideal (Banyumas, 2019).

The temporary nature of this relocation created new problems. Vendors were forced to adapt to a new, open-air location lacking adequate facilities in

terms of weather, security, and a less-than-ideal location. Research by Dikmantara and Trilaksana on Pasar Turi Baru following the fire indicates that emergency relocations of vendors often result in a 40-60% drop in income due to reduced consumer accessibility and the loss of established customer networks built over years (Dikmantara & Trilaksana, 2024). The disorganized and increasingly dilapidated surroundings also contribute to the income decline.

The direct impacts felt by vendors include the loss of business capital, damage to inventory, and the disruption of distribution chains. Mrs. Surati, who has been trading for decades, stated that this fire not only caused physical destruction but also erased years of investment in the form of relationships with suppliers and customers. This phenomenon aligns with the findings (Supriadin, 2025), which emphasizes the importance of social networks in the sustainability of micro-enterprises in traditional markets, where the disruption of these networks can threaten the very existence of traders' businesses.

The impacts felt include not only material losses but also emotional and psychological stress on traders. The trauma resulting from the loss of merchandise their primary source of income creates a distinct trauma and severe mental strain. Lindell's 2010 study indicates that informal sector traders who

experience disasters or major disruptions tend to suffer from prolonged stress that affects their productivity and family well-being (Lindell, 2010).

The affected social aspects also include the disruption of social interactions among vendors, which have long served as vital social capital in the life of traditional markets. Markets function not only as venues for economic transactions but also as social spaces where vendors build solidarity, foster a sense of family, assist one another in times of difficulty, and shape a collective identity as a vendor community (Bromley, 2000). Temporary relocations that disperse vendors across various locations result in weakened social cohesion and the loss of the sense of community and established routines that had previously formed.

The renovation process following the fires in 2008 and 2020 also had its own economic impact on vendors. During the 2009 renovation period, affected vendors had to continue trading at a temporary location provided by the government namely, on the sidewalk leading to the market. This situation lasted for several months until the renovation was completed, resulting in a significant drop in income due to the less-than-ideal location and lack of supporting facilities.

The post-2020 fire renovation, which lasted longer and had a larger budget (Rp 9 billion), meant vendors to

endure uncertain conditions for nearly four years. Although the government provided alternative locations, the uncertainty regarding the renovation's duration and suboptimal trading conditions caused many vendors to lose their regular customers. Some customers switched to modern markets or began shopping online and did not return even after the renovation was completed.

Mrs. Surati revealed that during the renovation period, many vendors chose to change professions or move to other markets because they could not survive with their continuously declining income. Those who remained certainly faced severe economic pressure; some were forced to take out loans to keep their businesses afloat. Research (Andriani 2013) on the Mojosongo traditional market indicates that an extended renovation period can lead to an exodus or permanent relocation of vendors, ultimately diminishing the market's vitality even after renovations are completed.

After the revitalization was completed in 2024, conditions at Wage Market underwent significant changes. Improved infrastructure with additional facilities such as escalators, adequate lighting systems, and a more organized layout of stalls should have enhanced the market's appeal. However, the reality faced by vendors reveals a different situation. Although the market's physical

conditions have improved, the number of visitors and economic transactions have not returned to pre-fire levels.

One of the main factors is the increase in kiosk rental costs following the revitalization. The local government raised the fee rates, arguing that better facilities require higher maintenance costs; however, this increase has not been offset by a corresponding rise in vendors' income. This is stipulated in Banyumas Regency Local Regulation No. 1 of 2004 regarding kiosk rentals. Mrs. Surati stated that the increase kiosk rent has become an additional burden that squeezes vendors' profit margins, especially amid increasingly fierce competition from modern markets and e-commerce. According to Mr. Eko, there are differences in rental prices depending on the location vendors choose. For a ^{250-square-meter} kiosk on the second floor, the rent is 30.000.00. On the first floor, the rent is Rp. 44.000.00; next to the market, it is Rp. 38.000.00; and inside the market, it is Rp. 32.000.00.

Data from the UPTD Pasar Wilayah I DINPERINDAG of Banyumas Regency indicates that following the 2024 revitalization, a number of stalls remain vacant and unoccupied. This situation suggests that not all former vendors have returned to trade at Wage Market, and the interest of new vendors in opening businesses at this market has also not yet returned to previous levels. This

phenomenon aligns with the findings of Mulyana, Wulandari, and Liani (2024), who state that the revitalization of traditional markets does not automatically enhance market competitiveness if it is not accompanied by effective marketing strategies and adaptation to changes in consumer behavior (Mulyana et al., 2024).

Facing structural challenges following the fire and revitalization, Wage Market vendors have developed various survival strategies. Vendors have begun adapting by leveraging technological advancements in hopes of expanding their market reach; however, the adoption of these technologies remains limited due to low digital literacy and a lack of capital to invest in digital infrastructure. Additionally, some vendors are elderly and thus not fully familiar with the technical mechanisms involved in using social media.

Other vendors chose to strengthen their networks with loyal customers through more personalized and flexible services, such as credit or installment payment systems for long-time customers. This strategy leverages the social capital built up over the years, where trust and personal relationships serve as a competitive advantage compared to the impersonal nature of modern markets.

However, not all merchants are able to survive. Interview data indicates that some merchants, particularly those who are elderly or have limited capital,

choose to stop trading and seek alternative employment. This phenomenon reflects the structural pressures faced by traditional merchants in the face of economic modernization, where those unable to adapt are forced out of the market (Sarief et al., 2025).

Market Dynamics of Wage Market from a Socio-Economic Perspective (2000-2024)

Wage Market is the main market in Purwokerto, offering both wholesale and retail sales, and is currently open 24 hours a day. This market has a significant impact on the economy, particularly in Banyumas Regency. Established in the early 19th century by the Dutch colonial government, its purpose was to facilitate economic activity during that era. The average consumer is from the lower-middle class, which is why Wage Market serves as a pillar of economic activity.

The existence of traditional markets such as Pasar Wage Purwokerto has a wide-ranging impact on the local economy, the social structure of the community, and the consumption patterns of the surrounding community. Traditional markets generally serve as distribution centers for basic necessities, providers of employment for the lower-middle class, and spaces for social interaction that strengthen local economic networks.

This impact is also evident in the economic aspects of the communities surrounding the market, where traditional

markets help increase the income of local merchants and create business opportunities for micro and small entrepreneurs. Many merchants from outside Purwokerto seek economic opportunities at Pasar Wage. Pasar Wage has recently been revitalized, and is expected to provide new job opportunities for the community. Given Wage Market's strategic location and its role as the main market in Purwokerto.

However, beyond these positive impacts, the dynamics of traditional markets also reveal long-term structural challenges. Traditional markets must compete with modern markets and the ever-evolving trend of economic digitalization. Changes in consumer behavior—where people increasingly seek convenience, comfort, and a wider range of product choices place pressure on traditional markets to improve the quality of their facilities and management. Competition with modern or digital markets requires more responsive adaptation strategies so that traditional markets like Pasar Wage remain relevant and contribute to local economic growth.

Considering the context of Pasar Wage in Purwokerto between 2008 and 2024, the impact of this traditional market's existence can be observed across various dimensions: as an economic hub for small-scale traders, as a social and cultural space that enriches communal life, and as an economic entity facing the

challenges of modernization and shifting consumption patterns. Thus, the existence of Pasar Wage is not merely a venue for economic transactions but also serves as one of the driving forces of the local economy, impacting community well-being, while simultaneously necessitating strategic efforts to maintain its relevance within an ever-changing economic structure.

The fires that occurred on July 5, 2008, and September 21, 2020, caused Wage Market vendors to suffer significant losses, not only physically but also mentally due to the loss of their primary source of income. The government did take immediate action by providing assistance to every affected vendor; however, these events led to a decline in Wage Market's. The glory of the market that had existed since the colonial era is now slowly fading, having a major impact on vendors and the economy of the Purwokerto region in Banyumas Regency (Banyumas, 2019).

The Decline of Purwokerto's Wage Market

In addition to its significant economic role and revitalization efforts following the fires of 2008 and 2020, the survival of Purwokerto's Wage Market over the past two decades has been increasingly challenged by shifts in consumer patterns and competition from modern markets and digital commerce channels.

Mrs. Suarti (52) stated that several factors contributing to the decline of Wage Market include competition from modern markets such as Rita Supermall, the rise of online shopping, the irregularity of market entrances which used to have only two entrances but now have more than one, affecting visitor flow and rising rental costs, which have led to a higher ratio of vendors to customers. Mrs. Suarti's statement reflects a reality also found in academic studies on the dynamics of traditional markets facing modern and digital competition.

The competition between traditional and modern markets remains a frequently studied research topic. Research findings indicate that modern markets offer consumers greater convenience, product variety, and better facilities, making them the preferred choice and leading to a decline in visits and transactions at traditional markets. Modern markets provide a standardized experience compared to traditional markets, which have limited facilities and disorganized layouts, causing the appeal of traditional markets to decline, particularly among urban consumers (Sulaeman, 2025). The rapid development of digital commerce or *e-commerce* has also contributed to a decline in consumer demand in shopping at traditional markets. The ease of access, the prevalence of digital promotions in society, and the wide variety of products

are further contributing to the decline in visitors. This is particularly evident among the younger generation, who are highly dependent on digital technology (Sulaeman, 2025).

Mrs. Suarti noted that rising kiosk rental prices indicate economic pressure on traditional business operators. As rental costs continue to climb, while consumer purchasing power fails to keep pace and in some cases declines proportionally this has led to a decrease in merchants' interest in starting businesses at the market. A similar phenomenon was also observed in a study showing that traditional markets face ongoing challenges regarding pricing, infrastructure, and efficient spatial planning (Mulyana et al., 2024).

Competition from vendors not merely a shift in consumer preferences also demands adaptation to remain relevant. Leveraging advancements in digital technology such as through online marketing, integration with delivery services, or collaboration with small digital trading platforms demonstrates that despite intense competitive pressure, opportunities still exist to sustain the existence of traditional markets amidst the dynamics of modern and digital markets. Traditional markets must continue to survive and adapt to surrounding developments and changes. Beyond ensuring the the community's economy, markets also serve as social

spaces for creating new cultures and preserving the market's existence as a colonial-era legacy, serving as evidence of a region's development.

Thus, the decline of Wage Market in Purwokerto, as experienced by vendors like Mrs. Suarti, is not merely a subjective phenomenon but is also reflected in macro trends documented by academic research. Factors such as market competition, the rise of modern markets, the emergence digital shopping options, poorly organized market layouts, rising operational costs, and changes in consumer purchasing patterns are structural conditions that must be understood to grasp the dynamics of traditional markets in this modern era.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the dynamics of Wage Market in Purwokerto from a social history perspective over the period 2000-2024, with particular attention to the impacts of the 2008 and 2020 fires and the government's revitalization efforts. Established in the early 19th century, Wage Market has undergone a transformation from a traditional local marketplace into a central economic hub that serves both retail and wholesale transactions. It provides a wide range of goods, including clothing, household items, groceries, meat, and gold, making it an important center of community economic activity.

The fires in 2008 and 2020 caused significant physical and economic disruption, drastically altering the market's layout and temporarily halting normal trading activities. Affected vendors were relocated to open spaces and roadside areas provided by the government to ensure continuity of income. Financial assistance amounting to Rp. 15 million per vendor was distributed, although this policy generated perceptions of inequality, as not all traders experienced the same level of loss.

In response, the government implemented revitalization programs aimed at restoring and modernizing the market. The post-2008 reconstruction was completed in 2009, while the revitalization following the 2020 fire required a budget of over Rp. 9 billion and was officially inaugurated on April 18, 2024. These efforts included the addition of improved infrastructure and facilities, such as enhanced building layouts and vertical access like escalators.

However, despite these improvements, Wage Market has faced ongoing challenges in maintaining its economic vitality. Changes in consumer behavior, increasing competition from modern retail outlets, and the rapid growth of digital marketing and e-commerce have contributed to a steady decline in visitor numbers. While revitalization was intended to enhance attractiveness and generate employment

opportunities, its outcomes have not fully met expectations, as many traders continue to experience reduced income compared to the pre-fire period.

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