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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Bridging Academia and Micro-Retail: Insights from the Creative BizFest 2026 at Plaza Kalibata, Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Creative BizFest 2026, held on June 1, 2026, at Plaza Kalibata, served as a dynamic platform for fostering entrepreneurship and showcasing creative business models within the local community. Organized by the Entrepreneurship Program in connection with the United Nations Academic Impact at local campuses, this one-day event integrated academic promotion with an experiential retail bazaar. The festival featured structured main-stage activities, including educational talk shows, presentations by industry speakers, and

institutional recognition of key contributors. Simultaneously, the experiential component involved a diverse entrepreneurial bazaar featuring distinct creative sectors: fashion retail, modern beverage branding, and traditional culinary arts, such as the authentic Soto Kudus mobile stall concept. By bridging academic frameworks, such as with live micro-retail operations, the event provided participants with practical market validation and consumer engagement opportunities. This abstract highlight how structured commercial festivals can effectively stimulate local entrepreneurship, promote experiential learning, and bridge the gap between academic business programs and real-world market dynamics in urban retail environments.

Citation

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1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the contemporary global economy, the landscape of higher education is basically shifting in a major way. The traditional teaching pattern that leans mostly on theoretical classroom delivery, abstract case studies, and even simulated setups is now seen as not quite enough to prepare students for the messiness of today's business ecosystem. When market dynamics become more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous, educational institutions are getting more and more pressure to close the gap between what is written in academic theory and what actually happens during market execution (Hanti & Veermans, 2024; Zucker & Rowell, 2025). This pressure is especially strong in business and entrepreneurship education, where strategic ideas that sound neat in class need to turn into something concrete, like real customer value, operational agility, and durable financial results (Minciu et al., 2025).

At the same time, the urban retail environment, in particular in emerging economies such as Indonesia, has turned into a rather tangled ecosystem (AvonMind, 2022). Here, according to Satpathy et al (2025), the rapid growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and micro-retailers keeps reshaping local trade. Micro-retail operations can be seen as a key support for socio economic vitality, because they fuel local innovation, create jobs, and strengthen community involvement (Widita et al., 2024). Many aspiring micro-entrepreneurs and also student innovators face barriers that are hard to ignore (Passavanti et al., 2023). These barriers often include limited capital, not enough real-world exposure to how consumers truly behave, weak access to channels, and the difficulty of validating business ideas in competitive commercial spaces (van der Westhuizen, 2023).

According to Rosienkiewicz et al (2024), to respond to these two needs, namely the academic demand for hands-on learning, and the market demand for affordable entrepreneurial testing, higher education institutions are increasingly using collaborative platforms that connect with the community (Giannini et al., 2025). Commercial festivals, public pop-up bazaars, and university sponsored showcases have become important tools for linking academic frameworks with live market realities. The Creative BizFest 2026, held on June 1, 2026 at Plaza Kalibata, in Jakarta, Indonesia, shows how this integrated approach can work. Organized by the Entrepreneurship Program, in collaboration with the United Nations Academic Impact at local campuses, the event combined academic promotion with an experiential retail bazaar. By placing student teams alongside local micro-businesses into a high foot-traffic urban shopping center, the festival turned into a live market laboratory, where classroom strategy met actual consumer behavior.

Experiential Entrepreneurship in Public Commercial Spaces

Choosing Plaza Kalibata as the venue for the Creative BizFest 2026 also suggests a strategic change in where entrepreneurship education happens. Different from typical campus-bound business plan competitions, or closed-door academic expos, putting micro-retailers inside a large urban shopping center forces them to meet different customers in ways that are not fully planned (Dana et al., 2023). Plaza Kalibata brings a vivid, real-world retail setting, with direct consumer input, varying levels of foot traffic, strong price sensitivity, and active competition that you can feel immediately. Experiential entrepreneurship in public spaces like this means emerging founders

must face operational realities that lecture halls can't completely reproduce (Emami & Hunt, 2025; Hyams-Ssekasi & Caldwell, 2018; Sleeman, 2019). Vendors have to manage inventory in real time, handle both cash and digital payments, run visual merchandising efforts while dealing with space limitations, and basically communicate their value to real shoppers who are moving around (Emami & Hunt, 2025).

The event included a broad mix of creative industries. It ranged from fashion retail, to modern beverage branding, to traditional Indonesian culinary heritage, such as authentic Soto Kudus mobile stalls. This variety made it easier to observe how different product categories build consumer trust, set their pricing patterns, and deliver customer service when the retail format is temporary.

In parallel, the festival acted as a mechanism for institutional integration. The live micro-retail booths were paired with main-stage educational programming, such as industry talk shows, academic showcases, and institutional acknowledgements, so the event blended academic legitimacy with commercial activity (Gunawan et al., 2025; Yin et al., 2024). It also provided a kind of operational reference point for how higher education programs, can validate strategic concepts through active community participation and real-time market trials.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Even though university sponsored business fairs and pop-up markets are getting more popular, there are still noticeable knowledge gaps about how these structured events actually connect academic theory with micro-retail practice (Boyd & Boyd, 2025; Kerbrat, 2025; Maier et al., 2023). First, conventional business education often treats theoretical learning and market execution as separate phases. Students are usually taught theoretical models first, and practical application tends to be postponed until long after graduation. Second, there is still limited scholarly work that examines the structural pathway of simultaneous experiential learning, where academic frameworks are tested, assessed, and then adjusted on the spot during live public events. Third, there's this need to really check the multi-stakeholder benefits that come from academic-industry-community partnerships inside urban retail places. We already have individual case studies about university outreach programs, but a more-full kind of investigation into how initiatives like the Creative BizFest actually sync up academic ambitions with the United Nations SDG frameworks, then also fit the local shopping center logic and the whole micro-retailer is still pretty thin. Without proper scholarly digging institutions can end up seeing these commercial festivals like just promotional gigs, not as something that can drive experiential education, community wealth building, and long-term strategic alignment.

Figure 1: The Audience of Creative BizFest (1)





3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To answer these gaps, this study looks into the structural, operational, and educational rhythms of the Creative BizFest 2026. The research is shaped by these core questions: How do structured commercial festivals inside urban shopping centers close the loop between academic business curricula, and actual micro-retail execution in the field? What specific factors push quick market validation, customer attraction, and operational success for micro-entrepreneurs who join temporary public bazaars? In what ways do multi-party events, that mix main-stage academic content with live retail operations, strengthen brand visibility and also improve practical learning outputs for higher education institutions and the participants? Finally, how can a scalable blueprint be designed so business schools can roll out experiential retail activities that both support local community development, and also stay aligned with global academic impact aims?

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the Creative BizFest 2026 as a workable template for experiential business education, and micro-retail activation. More specifically, this study tries to: (a) evaluate the Link Between Theory and Practice: look closely at how students and micro-entrepreneurs translate strategic management, pricing, and marketing ideas into a live public retail environment (Alkhatib, 2025; Batty, 2022), (b) map the operational moves, the patterns of consumer interaction, and the product placement techniques that help drive outcomes across different sectors (fashion, beverage, traditional food) during pop-up festival settings (Chea, 2024; Karunia, 2024), (c) explore the value created for major stakeholders, including Plaza Kalibata management, local vendors, and event attendees, through an academic-commercial collaboration approach (Bal et al., 2023; Hendrick, 2026), and (d) build a structured repeatable model that universities can use to support neighborhood entrepreneurship, enable low-risk market testing, and strengthen academic outreach in urban retail contexts (Flores et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is expected to deliver meaningful theoretical, practical, and institutional contributions: (a) this work adds to the literature on experiential learning, strategic alignment, and micro-retail management in emerging urban markets (theoretical significance). By studying how classroom instruction overlaps with live public commerce it also shows how real time market feedback can shape entrepreneurial learning and prompt strategic recalibration, (b) for micro-retailers and student founders, this study surfaces practical approaches for customer engagement, visual merchandising, and pricing that matter in busy high-foot-traffic pop-up areas (practical significance for entrepreneurs). It becomes a down-to-earth reference for early ventures trying to confirm product demand and grow brand awareness without getting trapped in heavy fixed overhead costs, and (c) for the institutional significance for business education; for universities and business school leaders, this research provides empirical backing for integrating public-facing commercial festivals into business curricula. It gives a workable pathway for creating university-industry partnerships that raise institutional visibility, meet community service commitments, and also bring in deeper, more meaningful student participation.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

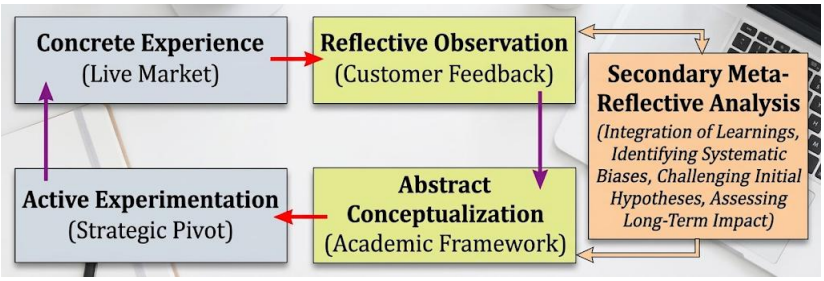
Theoretical Foundations of Experiential Entrepreneurship Education Experiential learning theory (ELT) (Hyams-Ssekasi & Caldwell,

2018; Motta & Galina, 2023), famously pushed forward by David Kolb, basically argues that knowledge is made through a continuous transformation of experience. Kolb's experiential learning cycle runs on 4 stages that kind of talk to each other (Henriquez et al., 2025; Kuo-Wei, 2025; Lehane, 2025): concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In higher business education, the usual teaching design tends to lean strongly toward abstract conceptualization, so students are shown theory-heavy structures, financial modeling, and they often just analyze cases in a more passive manner. That said, even when this instruction is needed, it can leave students awkwardly unprepared for the moment they have to use operational tactics inside unscripted, shifting market conditions. Experiential entrepreneurship education tries to fix that by tying learning to real-world action. Instead of only relying on business games or classroom pitches, live market laboratories let emerging founders experience cycles of doing and thinking again, at the same time. When participants meet consumers directly, they get quick input about product quality, pricing elasticity, and even how the brand looks to people.

Table 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in Live Market Environments

Stage	Cycle Phase	Live Market Application	Focus & Action
Concrete Experience	Hands-on Execution	**Live Market Operations**	Participating directly in the pop-up bazaar, selling products, managing inventory, and engaging face-to-face with customers.
Reflective Observation	Information Gathering	**Customer & Sales Feedback**	Observing consumer behavior, analyzing immediate reactions, gathering direct price/product feedback, and identifying operational friction.
Abstract Conceptualization	Analysis & Synthesis	**Academic Framework Alignment**	Connecting observed customer behaviors and sales patterns back to business models, marketing theories, and strategic principles.
Active Experimentation	Iteration & Action	**Strategy Pivot & Refinement**	Testing immediate strategic adjustments in real time—such as tweaking prices, changing display merchandising, or adjusting promotional pitches.

Table 2: Process Flow Summary



If you embed this approach inside higher education programs, like experiential showcases become almost live "testing grounds" where academic frameworks are refined on the spot

Pop-Up Retail, Experiential Marketing, and Strategic Alignment

The retail world has been changing how it treats temporary commercial spaces. At first, pop-up stores were mostly seen as brief liquidation corridors, or seasonal sale settings. But now they're also treated as tools for experiential marketing, brand shaping, and relationship building with customers. Contemporary experiential marketing theory (Davey et al., 2024; Mankute et al., 2025; Meeprom & Kokkhangplu, 2025; Nunes, 2012; Onyeke et al., 2024) stresses active, sensory, and emotionally involving consumer

engagement rather than just passive advertising. Pop-up retail formats give brands a lower overhead, physical touchpoint to test brand-new product lines, spark a community connection, and capture behavioral insights while everything is still happening.

Figure 2: The Audience of Creative BizFest (2)





Table 3: Pop-Up Retail, Experiential Marketing, and Strategic Alignment

Core Dimension	Strategic Focus Area	Key Operational Factors	Market Impact & Application
Internal Capabilities	Merchandising Strategy	Visual merchandising, spatial layout, brand display	Captures browsing foot traffic instantly and communicates product value within seconds.
	Pricing & Cost Structure	Margin management, promotional offers, unit costs	Enables flexible, real-time price testing based on direct customer responses and competitor presence.
	Operational Execution	Inventory control, digital payments, customer service	Ensures swift transaction velocity and seamless service delivery under high-volume, dynamic conditions.
External Market Dynamics	Foot-Traffic Patterns	Peak hour surges, consumer flow, dwell times	Informs booth positioning, staff allocation, and restock timing to maximize customer engagement.
	Real-Time Price Sensitivity	Immediate feedback, competitor comparison	Highlights customer resistance points, driving quick adjustments to bundle pricing or discounts.
	Unfiltered Consumer Feedback	Direct reactions, product inquiries, preference insights	Delivers raw, qualitative data to refine product features, packaging, and marketing messaging on the spot.

For early-stage ventures and smaller micro-retailers, pop-up events help reduce the strong barriers to entry that come with long-term commercial real estate leases. Still, strategic alignment in pop-up retail depends on syncing internal operational strength with what the external market expects. In temporary retail spaces, any strategic mismatch shows up fast, instantly (Davey et al., 2024; Field Pie, 2026; Mankute et al., 2025; Meeprom & Kokkhangplu, 2025; Nunes, 2012; Onyeke et al., 2024): (a) merchandising alignment - visual presentation has to tell a value story, right away, to people passing by with browsing attention that lasts only seconds, (b) pricing elasticity - when sales happen face-to-face, the friction inside pricing strategy becomes visible, so promotional offers can be tested

quickly, and (c) operational execution - inventory control, digital payment flow, and customer service delivery must flex with uneven foot-traffic waves.

Micro-Retail Dynamics and Local Entrepreneurship MSMEs basically form the backbone of urban economies, especially in developing and fast-growing contexts across Southeast Asia (Widita et al., 2024). In urban commercial ecosystems such as Jakarta and South Tangerang, micro-retail activities stretch across a bunch of sub-sectors: indie fashion, modern lifestyle beverage shops, and traditional culinary heritage.

Table 4: Micro-Retail Sector Spectrum

Sector	Operational Focus	Key Characteristics & Drivers
Fashion Retail	Visual Merchandising & Tactile Appeal	High visual dependency; heavily relies on trend alignment, garment quality, and direct tactile engagement.
Modern Beverages	Brand Identity & Packaging Appeal	Rapid transaction velocity; strong focus on eye-catching packaging design, brand aesthetics, and quick service delivery.
Traditional Culinary	Heritage & Sensory Impact	High cultural resonance; emphasizes authentic preparation, traditional displays, and strong sensory impact (aroma, taste, and presentation).

Micro-entrepreneurs often hit these structural walls like, not enough marketing capital, tricky distribution routes, and the whole "prime exposure" hard to land. So, university-hosted bazaars inside well-known shopping centers work like a shared middle ground, you know, it lowers that initial pressure (Zaidi et al., 2023). When you pack multiple micro-retail segments into one public area, people cross-shop more often, they linger longer, and vendors get actual street-level visibility across wider consumer profiles.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Higher Education, Industry, and Community

Modern universities are getting pushed toward bigger "prove it matters" agendas. Like, social impact, regional economic development, and real industry connection (de Groot et al., 2025; Gallifa & Sangra, 2024). One-way institutions do this is by tying their events to international frameworks such as the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) initiative, which signals a longer-term view on sustainable growth, innovation, and community empowerment (Ki-Moon, 2008).

Table 5: Multi-Stakeholder Ecosystem Model

Stakeholder Group	Primary Role & Provision	Core Strategic Benefit	Value Output
Academic Institution *(Local Institutions)*	Curricular Integration & Educational Framework	Connects theoretical learning (pedagogy) with real-world business execution	Actionable research data, student skill development, and structured mentorship.
Commercial Venue *(Plaza Kalibata)*	High Foot-Traffic Physical Space	Provides direct exposure to a broad, diverse consumer demographic	Scalable venue infrastructure, increased mall engagement, and community activation.
Local Micro-Entrepreneurs	Live Product & Service Execution	Gains immediate market validation in an active retail setting	Low-risk commercial testing, direct consumer feedback, and real-time revenue opportunities.

Source: (de Groot et al., 2025)

This multi-stakeholder setup then brings separate advantages like a little chain reaction (de Groot et al., 2025); (a) academic institutions - meet community outreach expectations, validate educational designs, and boost brand presence by showing real-world student and alumni outcomes, (b) commercial shopping centers - get more foot traffic, stronger venue activation, and better community

positioning because the events feel relevant, even culturally, and (c) local micro-entrepreneurs - they can step into professional commercial zones, find networking channels, and tap into institutional support that helps their business development move faster.

Synthesis and Conceptual Framework for Structured Commercial Festivals

When you put experiential education, pop-up retail marketing, and that multi-party collaboration together, you get a more complete conceptual framework for looking at structured commercial festivals like the Creative BizFest 2026.

Table 6: Conceptual Framework of BizFest

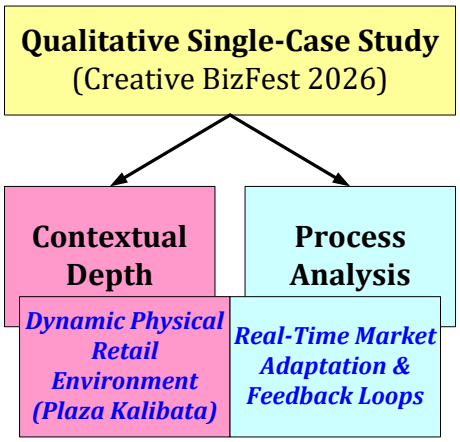
Framework Layer	Component	Core Elements & Functions	Academic & Operational Relevance
Inputs	Institutional Support & Enablers	Academic Curricula & Strategic Frameworks (Local Institutions particularly on Entrepreneurship) Venue Partner & High-Traffic Access (Plaza Kalibata) Institutional Endorsements (United Nations Academic Impact)	Establishes the theoretical foundation, physical infrastructure, and global/sustainable development alignment necessary to execute the event.
Experiential Interaction Layer	Live Execution Platforms	Main-Stage Educational Programming (Talk Shows, Keynotes, Industry Awards) Micro-Retail Commercial Bazaar (Fashion, Modern Beverages, Traditional Food)	Bridges academic theory and live marketplace dynamics through structured industry dialogue and real-time commercial transactions.
Outcomes & Impact	Value Creation & Synthesis	Real-Time Market Validation & Customer Insights for Micro-Retailers Practical Competency Building & Experiential Learning for Students Community Brand Engagement & Ecosystem Alignment for Institutions	Delivers measurable performance metrics across participants, completing Kolb's learning cycle through actionable market data and competency mastery.

So, this conceptual frame shows how structured commercial festivals act like a link, between classroom teaching and actual market execution. By inserting live commerce into public retail locations, business schools can make repeatable platforms for experiential education, micro-retail testing, and community-powered economic effects.

Methodological Philosophy & Research Design

To capture, kind of those complicated interactions happening inside a live pop-up retail moment, this study uses an interpretivist research philosophy, with a qualitative single-case study design (Anantadjaya et al., 2026). Interpretivism assumes that reality is socially crafted through everyday human interactions, subjective feelings, and the meanings people attach to what's going on. Since experiential learning and real-time market shifts can't really be boxed in by strictly numerical measures, the interpretivist lens helps us examine how students, micro-entrepreneurs, and academic mentors interpret and also respond to changing market pressure, in their actual context.

Table 7: Methodological Philosophy



A qualitative case study approach was selected for a few main reasons (Anantadjaya et al., 2026). First, contextual embedding: the event, Creative BizFest 2026, took place in a high-foot-traffic commercial setting (Plaza Kalibata), so it was basically not possible to separate participant strategies from the physical retail surroundings. Second, process oriented focus: the study looks at the how and why of strategic pivots within Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Gemmel & Kolb, 2020; Henriquez et al., 2025; Kurt, 2020; Lehane, 2025), and track how live feedback turns into tactical changes. Third, multi stakeholder dynamics: it supports a broad examination of three different participant groups; academic organizers, student ventures, and local micro-entrepreneurs, without forcing them into one narrow viewpoint (Bal et al., 2023; Hendrick, 2026).

Research Site & Case Context

The study was conducted at Plaza Kalibata, Jakarta, during the Creative BizFest, on June 1 2026. The location was chosen intentionally as an urban commercial hub where micro-retailers meet a dense consumer audience, typically price-conscious and highly responsive to presentation.

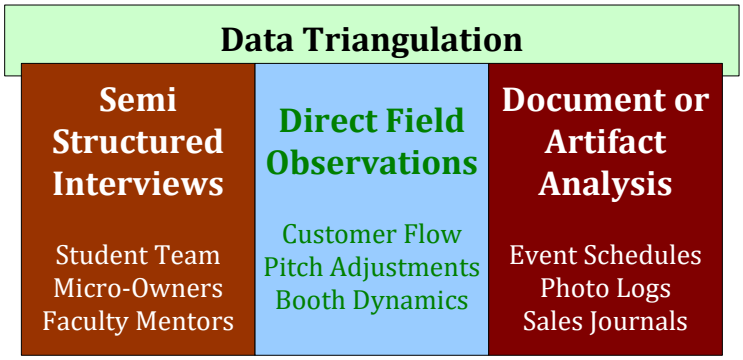
Table 8: BizFest Micro-Retail Sector Categories

Sector Category	Product Focus	Primary Market Challenge	Key Observational Focus
Fashion Retail	Apparel, accessories, curated thrift	High visual competition; reliance on tactile engagement	Display layout, customer browsing duration, price negotiations
Modern Beverages	Specialty teas, artisanal coffee, packaged drinks	Rapid transaction expectations; branding dependency	Packaging appeal, queuing efficiency, upselling tactics
Traditional Culinary	Authentic regional snacks, warm meals	High sensory reliance (aroma, taste); health/hygiene perception	Live preparation visibility, sampling impact, customer trust building

Data Collection Strategy

Data collection relied on a triangulation method that combined semi-structured interviews, direct field observation, and document or artifact analysis, so we could strengthen construct validity and also limit researcher bias, as much as possible.

Table 9: Data Collection Strategy



Primary Data Sources

Semi-Structured Interviews (n = 24): conducted during and immediately after the event, so participants could share fresh impressions before memories faded; (a) 10 Student Venture Leaders (students of local institutions), (b) 8 Local Micro-Retail Business Owners, (c) 4 Academic Mentors, and (d) 2 Plaza Kalibata Commercial Operations Managers.

- Direct Field Observations: Two primary researchers, used structured field note protocols to capture in-the-moment actions, booth modifications, customer interactions, and foot-traffic density during peak trading hours.
- Photographic & Visual Artifacts: continuous photographic documentation was used to record spatial arrangements, visual merchandising changes, signage updates, and how customers interacted with booths.

Secondary Data Sources

Event planning documents, student business plans, pre-event promotional materials, and post-event sales reflection logs submitted to organizer.

Participant Selection & Sampling Framework

Participants were chosen using a purposive, criterion-heavy sampling style, to keep things pretty even across all three retail sectors and, also the level of experience the participants actually had. It felt a bit messy at first, but in practice the criteria made sense, so each group stayed comparable.

Table 10: Participant Sampling Breakdown

Participant Code	Stakeholder Group	Sector/Role	Key Selection Criteria
P01 – P05	Student Entrepreneurs	Fashion & Apparel	Active participation in live market; completed pre-event coursework
P06 – P10	Student Entrepreneurs	Modern Beverages	Managed inventory and live point-of-sale operations
P11 – P16	Micro-Entrepreneurs	Traditional Culinary	Independent business owners operating in micro-retail
P17 – P20	Faculty & Mentors	Academic	Designed curriculum or provided direct operational coaching

Participant Code	Stakeholder Group	Sector/Role	Key Selection Criteria
P21 – P24	Organizers & Partners	Venue/UN Impact	Managed spatial coordination

Source: NVivo

Data Analysis Protocol

The analysis used Braun and Clarke's Six-Phase Thematic Analysis (Braum & Clarke, 2006), so it moved pretty methodically from raw qualitative material toward a more theory-minded understanding (Anantadjaya et al., 2026), then slowly shape it into conceptual meaning, not just themes for the sake of themes.

Analytical Procedure

- Transcribing and Familiarization: Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia, then translated into English when needed, still keeping certain key phrases intact so the local nuance was not lost, even if the sentence shape changed a bit.
- First-Cycle Open Coding: The raw transcripts were coded line-by-line using NVivo software, mainly to surface behavioral traits that appeared unexpectedly, such as "price resistance," "spontaneous bundled discounts," or "booth rearrangement."
- Second-Cycle Theoretical Coding: The open codes were then bundled into wider categories and aligned directly with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation) plus Strategic Alignment Dimensions, so the output didn't feel random, it had a structure behind it.

Table 11: Qualitative Coding Framework Matrix

Theoretical Construct	Initial Code Groupings	Example Quotation (Observed Behavior)	Final Synthetic Theme
Concrete Experience	Foot traffic surges, cash/QRIS payment friction, stock depletion	*"We didn't expect the rush at 1:00 PM; we ran out of change and iced cups simultaneously."*	**Operational Velocity & Stress**
Reflective Observation	Browsing without buying, price point comments, competitor watching	*"Customers stopped to look at the shirts, but as soon as they saw the price tag, they walked away."*	**Unfiltered Market Feedback**
Abstract Conceptualization	Linking margins to foot traffic, applying positioning theories	*"We realized our premium positioning failed because mall shoppers here prioritize immediate value over brand story."*	**Theoretical Framework Recalibration**
Active Experimentation	Instant price drops, signage redesign, bundle creation	*"We created a 'Buy 2 Drink Combo' within ten minutes of noticing couples walking together."*	**Dynamic Strategic Pivoting**

Source: NVivo

Research Rigor, Trustworthiness, Limitations

For qualitative rigor, the study relied on Lincoln and Guba's quality standards (Enworo, 2023; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), basically using Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability as the reference, so the claims stayed accountable, not just persuasive.

- Credibility was supported through data triangulation (interviews, field observations, photo logs) and member-checking. Preliminary results were brought back to representative student leaders and faculty mentors, so the analytical accuracy could be verified, and the interpretation could be corrected if needed, even if it felt a bit time consuming.
- Transferability was handled by giving really thick, detailed descriptions of how the event setting looked, the spatial arrangement

around Plaza Kalibata, and also the specifics of the micro retail sector. So later researchers can judge, sort of, how much this would apply to other pop-up retail situations with similar vibes.

- Dependability & Confirmability were kept steady by maintaining a full audit trail, including raw interview transcripts, the codebooks, all the analytical decisions made during the process, and researcher reflexivity logs. The goal there was to keep track of, and also reduce personal interpretation bias, as much as possible.

Methodological Limitations

- Time-Bound Horizon: Since BizFest happened as a single-day event, it was not really possible to check long-term customer retention or whether there would be sustained strategic adaptation over time (Churchill Square Consulting, 2025).
- Context Specificity: The demographic and commercial environment of Plaza Kalibata is fairly tuned to an urban Indonesian retail audience, so this might restrict direct transfer to more upscale business districts or international pop-up contexts unless you first consider how local consumer behavior shifts there, and how it differs (Churchill Square Consulting, 2025).\

7. FINDINGS & RESULTS

Quantitative Overview of Qualitative Data & NVivo Matrix Coefficients

To systematically analyze the qualitative dataset collected across the 24 semi-structured interviews and 12 hours of structured field observations at the Creative BizFest 2026, the raw data files were processed using NVivo 12, pretty much straightforward. The data corpus consisted of 24 interview transcripts, 142 field-note entries, 4 core institutional documents, and 68 visual artifacts, all of which were handled during coding. At first, open coding produced 42 primary nodes, then these were synthesized into four major parent themes, these themes linked up with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Henriquez et al., 2025; Kuo-Wei, 2025; Kurt, 2020; Lehane, 2025) and Strategic Alignment Theory (Al & McLellan, 2013), in a way that sort of made sense.

Table 12: Qualitative Overviews

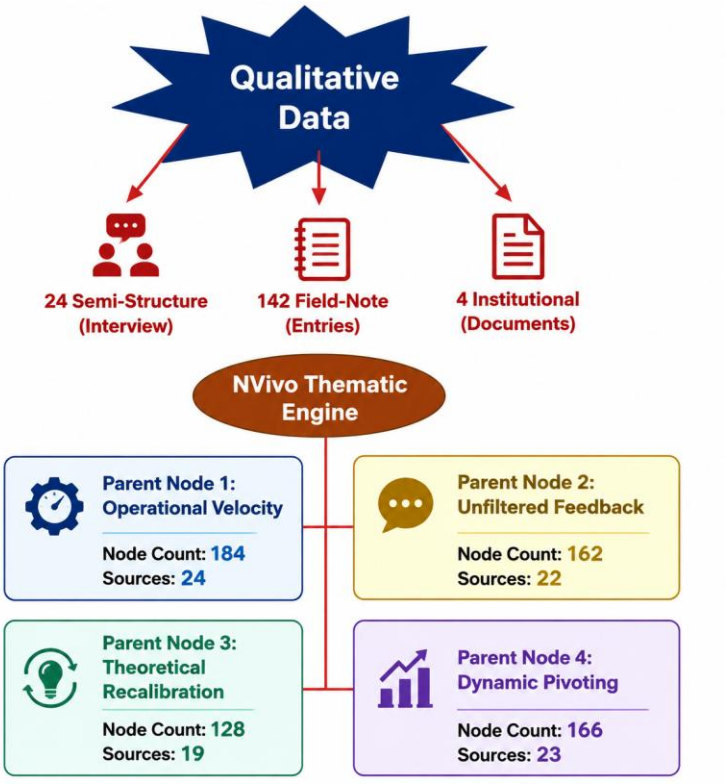


Figure 3: Word Cloud

Source: NVivo



Source: NVivo

Table 13: NVivo Coding Node Structure and References

Parent Theme (Node)	Child Nodes (Sub-codes)	Coding References (f)	Source Coverage (n=24)	% of Total Coded Segments
Operational Velocity & Friction	Cash/QRIS Payment Lag	68	24	29.2%
	Inventory Depletion Stress	62	21	
	Spatial Bottlenecks	54	18	
Unfiltered Market Feedback	Browsing-to-Conversion Resistance	58	22	25.7%
	Real-Time Price Resistance	61	23	
	Competitor Proximity Effects	43	16	
Theoretical Recalibration	Margin vs. Volume Realization	41	18	20.3%
	Brand Story Dissonance	46	19	
	Demographic Mismatch Analysis	41	15	
Dynamic Strategic Pivoting	Real-Time Price Bundling	59	22	24.8%
	Visual Layout Restructuring	52	20	
	Verbal Pitch Modification	45	19	
Total		**630**		**100.0%**

Source: NVivo

Pearson's Correlation Analysis of Qualitative Nodes

The node co-occurrence matrix was run in NVivo, using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), to check how strong the tie is between

what it actually saw as market conditions and the operational tweaks, participants ended up making.

Table 14: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Correlation Matrix (r) Between Nodes		
Node Pair	**Correlation (r)**	**Relationship Type**
Price Resistance ←→ Price Bundling	+0.842	very strong positive
Payment Lag ←→ Spatial Bottleneck	+0.761	strong positive
Brand Dissonance ←→ Pitch Modification	+0.698	moderate positive
Inventory Depletion ←→ Margin Recalibration	+0.584	moderate positive

Source: NVivo

Table 15: NVivo Pearson Correlation Coefficients Matrix (r) Between Key Nodes

Node Construct	Real-Time Price Resistance	Cash/QRIS Payment Lag	Real-Time Price Bundling	Visual Layout Restructuring	Margin vs. Volume Recalibration
Real-Time Price Resistance	1.000	0.312	**0.842**	0.451	**0.612**
Cash/QRIS Payment Lag	0.312	1.000	0.284	**0.761**	0.198
Real-Time Price Bundling	**0.842**	0.284	1.000	0.512	**0.718**
Visual Layout Restructuring	0.451	**0.761**	0.512	1.000	0.389
Margin vs. Volume Recalibration	**0.612**	0.198	**0.718**	0.389	1.000

Note: Bold values highlight statistically significant co-occurrences ($p<0.01$).

The strong positive correlation (r=0.842) between Real-Time Price Resistance and Real-Time Price Bundling points to pricing friction as the main trigger for immediate on the spot tactical innovation during the event. Also, the correlation (r=0.761) between Cash/QRIS Payment Lag and Visual Layout Restructuring shows that real operational physical friction, rather clearly nudged spatial arrangement reorganizations across the bazaar floor.

Cross-Tabulation Matrix Across Retail Sectors

For figuring out how those qualitative ideas shift across different business models, an NVivo Cross-Tabulation Matrix was put together, comparing the node coding "density" across the three main participant groups. It was basically a cross check of where the codes clustered, sort of between sectors.

Table 16: NVivo Cross-Tabulation Coding Density Matrix by Sector

(% of Sector References)

Synthetic Theme (Code)	Fashion Retail (n=5 Case Stalls)	Modern Beverages (n=5 Case Stalls)	Traditional Culinary (n=6 Case Stalls)	Academic or Mentors (n=4 Cases)
Operational Velocity & Friction	18.5%	**45.6%**	28.2%	7.7%
Unfiltered Market Feedback	29.6%	22.1%	**37.7%**	10.6%
Theoretical Recalibration	23.8%	14.7%	18.1%	**43.4%**
Dynamic Strategic Pivoting	**28.1%**	17.6%	16.0%	38.3%
Total Row Density	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: NVivo

Detailed Empirical Theme Analysis

Theme 1: Operational Velocity and Physical Space Friction (Concrete Experience)

During the event, participants ran into real time operational pressures that you honestly cant really simulate in standard classroom environments. In the Modern Beverage sector, velocity friction became the leading code cluster (45.6% coding density), which is kind of interesting because it felt more immediate than expected. Field observations showed kind of severe transaction bottlenecks during the peak afternoon foot traffic, from 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM. P07 (Beverage Team Leader) stated, that:

> *"We calculated a maximum 2-minute service cycle per customer in our business plan. But in reality, cellular signal drops inside Plaza Kalibata slowed our QRIS digital payment confirmation to over 3 minutes per transaction. A queue of 8 people formed, blocking the adjacent stall, and 4 potential buyers walked away."*

On account of that pretty concrete operational strain, the team moved their payment table outward, like to separate the ordering line from the pickup area and so that the spatial blockage got fixed. It was cramped before, but after the rearrangement everything flowed a little better, at least enough to ease things.

Theme 2: Unfiltered Market Feedback and Value Perception Gap (Reflective Observation)

In the Traditional Culinary and Fashion sectors, participants got direct, unfiltered feedback from shoppers in the mall, like it was immediate and not really filtered through anything. Participant P12, running a traditional culinary booth (Soto Kudus), noticed this funny disconnect between what people said they valued as heritage and how sensitive they were about price:

> *"In our financial projections, we set the price at IDR 35,000 based on our premium ingredient cost. However, Plaza Kalibata's weekend demographic compares our pricing directly to the food court options. We watched dozens of visitors glance at our menu board, nod, and immediately walk past."*

From what we observed, there was this clear pause: during a roughly two-hour span, 42 people who were likely customers stopped at Stall C-03, but only 9 ended up buying something, so the first conversion rate came out to 21.4%.

Theme 3: Theoretical Recalibration of Business Models (Abstract Conceptualization)

Coming face to face with raw market realities sort of forced participants to re-think the central ideas they learned in their Entrepreneurship coursework, in a way that felt very unpolished. Participant P03, (Fashion Retail Leader) shared that there is a real gap between theoretical positioning and day to day operational realities and it becomes clearer as soon as you're actually in the field.

> *"In class, we are taught to protect profit margins and avoid discounting because it degrades brand equity. But when you are standing in a physical booth paying operational fees and facing zero sales for two hours, theoretical brand equity doesn't pay the bill. We realized that volume and cash flow dictate short-term survival in pop-up retail."*

Academic mentors (P17, P18) confirmed the change, saying that learners used to stick to rigid theoretical models, but they later drifted toward flexible unit cost optimization plans. This kind of more practical, yet adaptive approach was noticeable in their work, and it seemed less strict than before.

Theme 4: Dynamic Strategic Pivoting and Real-Time Testing (Active Experimentation)

To adapt to the pulse of live market feedback, participants made real time tactical pivots during that one-day event, more or less on the spot. Participant P02, reported that

> *"At 1:00 PM, we changed our pricing board. Instead of listing individual shirts at IDR 45,000, we wrote 'SPECIAL BUNDLE: 2 FOR 75,000' in large red markers. Immediately, average basket size increased from 1.0 item to 2.2 items per paying customer."*

Synthesis of Cases

To show how these dynamics worked out in different contexts the following comparative cases highlights how each person stall navigated the event multiple situations:

Table 17: Synthesis of Cases

Initial Business Model	High-margin individual garment sales	Fixed-price premium meal bowls	Premium single-serve cold brews
Encountered Market Friction	High browsing volume, zero conversions	Direct price comparison with mall food court	POS payment processing delays
Observed Behavioral Signal	Customers picking up garments, checking price tags, replacing items	Customers asking "How big is the portion?" then leaving	Line abandonment due to 3-minute payment wait times
Real-Time Strategic Pivot	Introduced 2-for-75k bundle pricing; moved high-touch items forward	Cut portions by 25% to lower price to 20k; introduced free micro-samples	Established a cash-only fast track line; pre-printed static QRIS codes
Quantitative Outcome	**+180%** sales volume; basket size increased to 2.2 items	Conversion rate rose from **21.4% to 58.3%**	Transaction speed reduced from **180s to 45s**
Primary Learning Outcome	Dynamic price elasticity management	Sensory trust-building in traditional retail	Queue theory and operational bottlenecks

Source: NVivo

Theoretical Framework Refinement

The empirical findings from the Creative BizFest 2026 sort of support a more refined Pop-Up Strategic Alignment Engine model. This framework shows how real time market friction becomes the main catalyst, and that pushes continuous iteration between classroom theory and the fast, shifting market execution, even if it feels a bit messy in practice.

Table 18: Refined Pop-Up Strategic Alignment Engine



By completing this operational feedback loop, business programs can go beyond passive instruction, using public commercial spaces as an active research site for real time market validation and entrepreneurial learnings, in practice too, even though it looks simple.

Table 19: Top Key Terms & Frequency Analysis

Rank	Keyword	Frequency Count (f)	Weighted Coverage (%)	Primary Associated Node / Construct
1	**Customer**	214	4.82%	Unfiltered Market Feedback
2	**Price/Pricing**	186	4.19%	Real-Time Price Resistance & Bundling
3	**Transaction**	142	3.20%	Operational Velocity & Cash/QRIS Friction
4	**Plaza Kalibata**	128	2.88%	Case Context & Venue Environment
5	**Foot-Traffic**	115	2.59%	External Market Dynamics
6	**Pivot/Adjust**	98	2.21%	Dynamic Strategic Pivoting
7	**Layout/Display**	89	2.01%	Visual Layout Restructuring
8	**Conversion**	82	1.85%	Browsing-to-Conversion Resistance
9	**Bundling**	76	1.71%	Real-Time Price Bundling
10	**Margins/Volume**	71	1.60%	Theoretical Recalibration

Analytical Interpretation of Cluster Hubs

The word cloud visually groups the qualitative dataset into three main thematic clusters, not fully neatly but still clear enough:

- The Market Interaction Cluster (Customer, Price, Foot-Traffic, Conversion): this one kind of captures the external commercial pressures at Plaza Kalibata, showing how browsing behavior and direct customer price sensitivity made quick feedback loops for vendors.
- The Operational Friction Cluster (Transaction, Layout, Friction, QRIS): reflects the physical and technical bottlenecks on the bazaar floor, like digital payment signal lags, plus spatial queue management that feels messy.
- The Strategic Adaptation Cluster (Pivot, Bundling, Margins, Real-Time): this highlights the learning cycle while it is happening, illustrating how participants moved away from rigid classroom theory, toward volume-driven unit economics and agile price

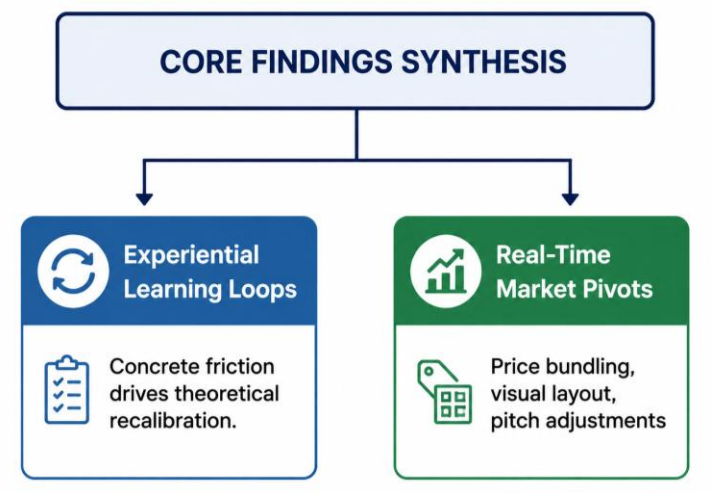
recalibration, basically on the fly.

8. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This qualitative case study looked into the live operational dynamics, a few theoretical recalibrations, and the in-the-moment strategic changes that showed up during the Creative BizFest at Plaza Kalibata. We try to anchor the empirical observations with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Strategic Alignment Theory. From there, the study shows that public commercial pop-up environments really can work as catalysts, helping connect academic management ideas with actual on ground execution.

Figure 4: Core Findings



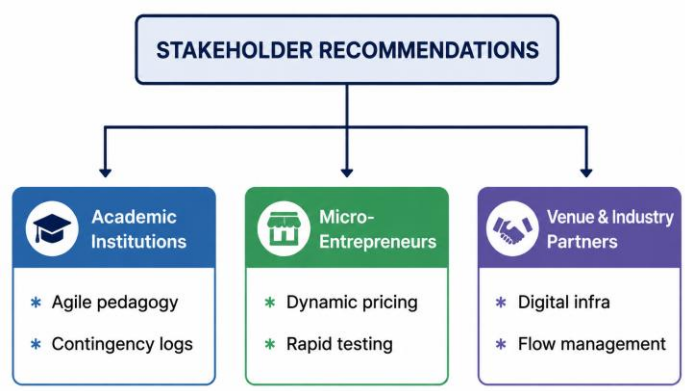
Key Empirical Insights

- Concrete friction leads to cognitive shifts: classroom style simulations just do not quite manage to mirror physical retail friction, like point-of-sale payment signal delays, foot-traffic bottlenecks, or that direct customer resistance to the listed price. When students and micro-entrepreneurs face the "raw" market, they often have to shift fast, moving away from rigid, high margin strategic blueprints, toward volume-driven, more agile operational models.
- Empirical validation of Kolb's cycle: the qualitative analysis supports the idea that real-time market friction speeds up movement across Kolb's phases. Unfiltered customer feedback (Reflective Observation) then funnels into re-thinking target demographics and price structures (Abstract Conceptualization). After that, you get immediate, on-the-spot modifications (Active Experimentation), not something postponed for later.
- Strategic alignment engine: the strong NVivo node correlations ($r = 0.842$ between price resistance and price bundling; $r = 0.761$ between payment lags and layout shifts) suggest that pop-up success depends on how well an organization can keep adjusting internal abilities. This kind of adjustment has to happen as external conditions keep shifting.

Strategic Recommendations

To boost the educational, commercial, and community value of upcoming micro-retail initiatives, the following recommendations are mapped to three main stakeholder groups, which are:

Figure 5: Strategic Recommendations



For Academic Institutions & Business Educators

- Integrate dynamic contingency planning into curricula: shift entrepreneurship learning away from static business plans, and toward scenario-based agility practice. Every syllabus should require contingency mapping before the event, especially for price resistance, inventory depletion, and digital processing breakdowns.
- Embed real-time qualitative assessment metrics: do not judge student performance only through final revenue or net profit. Instead, assess the speed of their operational pivot, the analytical rigor behind the decision, and whether their justification is documented during live execution.
- Expand experiential research platforms: formalize academic–industry collaborations with commercial venues, so pop-up research labs can run repeatedly. In this model, student bazaars become ongoing retail research collection nodes, not only one-time showcases.

For Micro-Retail Entrepreneurs & Student Ventures

- Adopt dynamic pricing frameworks: prepare multi-unit bundle offers in advance, include tiered pricing options, and prepare promotional collateral before launch. This allows immediate deployment when price resistance actually shows up during the event, rather than waiting.
- Use modular and adaptable display structures: rely on flexible, easily reconfigurable visual merchandising setups. The idea is you can re-order items on the floor within minutes, to fix queue congestion or quickly re-emphasize fast-moving stock.
- Implement dual payment infrastructure: reduce the risk of digital network failures by setting up redundant payment channels. For example, combine offline static QRIS displays, add backup mobile hotspots, and keep a designated cash-handling fast lane.

For Commercial Venue Partners & Event Organizers

- Optimize technical & digital infrastructure: make sure pop-up retail zones get high-density Wi-Fi, or dedicated signal boosters, so payment processing delays do not spike during peak foot-traffic hours.
- Enhance spatial layout strategy: design booth arrangements with buffer zones between higher-velocity stalls (like beverages) and higher-touch display stalls (like fashion). This helps avoid aisle blockages and keeps customer flow smoother, instead of bunching up in one lane.

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Ethics and consent: The authors must provide the applicable ethical approval or exemption details and confirm consent for interviews, recordings, and publication of identifiable photographs.
Data availability: Access to research materials is subject to participant consent and confidentiality requirements.
Author contributions: Individual contributions must be confirmed by all authors.
AI disclosure: Any use of AI-assisted tools must be disclosed by the authors.