

# VISITORS' PERCEPTION OF THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF TAMAN CERDAS SAMARINDA AS A PUBLIC SPACE



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## Abstract

Urban growth and population expansion have heightened the demand for public spaces with sufficient facilities and infrastructure to support diverse recreational activities. Taman Cerdas Samarinda, developed by the government, serves as a public space intended to meet community needs. This study examines the effectiveness of Taman Cerdas Samarinda in fulfilling its social and educational functions. The objective is to identify and analyze visitors' perceptions regarding these roles. A descriptive quantitative research method was employed, incorporating observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Findings indicate that the social function of Taman Cerdas Samarinda, as perceived by visitors, is adequately fulfilled, achieving a score of 79% (categorized as good). The educational function is also perceived as effective in fostering environmental literacy, with a score of 76% (good).

**Keywords:** Public Space, Taman Cerdas Samarinda, Social Function, Educational Function

## INTRODUCTION

Public space is defined as a social area free from specific forms of control and domination, allowing all members of society to enter and occupy such spaces (Yudisman 2020). These domains are provided, accessible, and usable by all individuals for a variety of activities, including recreation, social interaction, and other engagements, thus playing a significant role in human life. The use of urban public space extends beyond interpersonal interaction to include broader community engagement. This study draws on Habermas's theoretical frameworks regarding the public sphere and Oldenburg's concept of the third place. According to Habermas, public space serves as a domain for rational exchange, discourse, and civic participation in social and political processes. In urban contexts, public space is not only a physical setting but also a social arena where public opinion, collective identity, and inclusive social relations are formed (Azizah 2023).

Oldenburg's concept of the third place posits that, beyond the home (first place) and workplace (second place), individuals require an informal, relaxed, and inclusive third space for socialization and non-formal interaction. Urban parks, green open spaces, and city gardens can serve as third places that support social interaction and relaxation and foster a sense of place ownership among community members. In Samarinda Taman Cerdas Samarinda exfosteres a third place, where residents engage in activities, cultivate social relationships, and construct spaces of everyday experience (Andriani and Liauw 2020).

Public space is also a component of Green Open Space, which every city is mandated to provide in accordance with Article 29, Paragraph (2) of Law Number 26 of 2007 on Spatial Planning, stipulating that "the proportion of green open space within urban areas shall amount to a minimum of 30 (thirty) percent of the total city area". The provision of public space is a key indicator of urban community quality of life, as it serves as a venue for both collective and individual activities. Additionally, adequate public space is considered a prerequisite for a city to be recognized as a global city (Rohmah 2022). Public space generally encompasses two primary typologies: enclosed public space, which refers to permanent or semi-permanent buildings, and open public space, which refers to areas outside buildings. Both typologies are multifunctional and can accommodate a diverse range of activities (Ngurah, Murtionoama, and Suwarlan 2022). Urban parks are particularly essential public spaces in urban environments, supporting community quality of life. Agustin et al. (2023) define an urban park as a human-designed open space equipped with facilities to meet community needs for both active and passive recreation.

Open land, urban parks serve social, cultural, and educational purposes, and function as recreational facilities for urban residents. These parks feature diverse vegetation, contribute to water infiltration, and regulate the microclimate within a 5 km radius (Azra 2024). Optimal functioning of urban parks is expected to benefit the community. Their primary functions include facilitating inclusive social interaction, fostering social relations and collaborative engagement, and serving as aesthetic landmarks that enhance subjective well-being and emotional attachment. Additionally, urban parks serve an educational function by fostering intellectual capacity, moral character, practical skills, and environmental awareness through formal education and research.

Rapid urban development and increased rural-to-urban migration exert significant pressure on urban areas, necessitating comprehensive management and integrated design (Rijal and Tahir 2022). The ongoing urbanization and population growth have intensified demand for spaces that provide facilities and infrastructure for recreational activities. Samarinda City, the capital and main urban center of East Kalimantan, is characterized by a heterogeneous, highly mobile population. It serves as a hub for political, social, economic, and cultural activities. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), Samarinda City's population reached 868,499 in 2024, driven by continued economic development, infrastructure expansion, and migration. This growth has led to a scarcity of accessible public open spaces, especially for children and young people who require areas for play and physical activity.

In response, Samarinda City has developed new parks, particularly along riverfronts, and has improved and redesigned existing parks based on modern, sustainable concepts, including facility enhancements to improve visitor comfort. One such example is Taman Cerdas Samarinda, which underwent a revitalization in 2024 under a modern design concept, offering visitors a renewed experience. A smart park (*taman cerdas*) is a public space designed by the government to enable communities to engage in a wide range of activities within its premises. In light of this, it is necessary to examine the effectiveness of Taman Cerdas Samarinda in utilizing its social and educational functions. Although facilities have been provided and upgraded, not all visitors make optimal use of them in line with the revitalization's original objectives. Visitor perceptions of the park's role and function are critical to evaluate, as satisfaction, participation, and facility utilization will ultimately determine the park's success as a public space that delivers meaningful benefits to the community.

From a demographic and spatial perspective, the population growth of Samarinda City, which reached 868,499 inhabitants in 2024, accompanied by increasing migration flows and the expansion of urban activities, has directly imposed structural pressures on both the availability and quality of existing public spaces. This reality positions the assessment of the extent to which public open spaces function effectively as a planning priority that can no longer be deferred.

A number of recent studies have demonstrated that public spaces and green open spaces play a significant role as public domains that support social and recreational functions. A study entitled "Analysis of Visitor Perceptions of the Social Function Infrastructure of Taman Samarendah" (Ayuni and Syafitri 2024) found that several

facilities were rated highly important but received low satisfaction scores, underscoring the need to improve facility quality and increase community participation in the management of public spaces. Meanwhile, a study entitled “Analysis of the Functions of Urban Parks in Bogor City Based on Community Perceptions” (Astiandi and Hidayah 2024) found that the ecological and aesthetic functions of urban parks were relatively well-regarded, whereas the socio-cultural and economic functions remained suboptimal, indicating the need for facility enhancement and more effective patterns of utilization. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the quality of parks and public perceptions of their functions are decisive factors in determining their effectiveness as social and recreational public spaces. However, the majority of existing research remains focused on aspects of infrastructure, comfort, ecology, and aesthetics, with limited attention given to the socio-educational functions of urban parks within urban contexts.

This study integrates the assessment of social and educative functions within a single, interrelated analytical framework in which neither dimension can be examined in isolation from the other. This approach departs from the majority of urban park studies conducted in Indonesia, which tend to examine each function independently or place disproportionate emphasis on ecological, technical, and aesthetic dimensions. The present study positions both functions as manifestations of a single fundamental mission: an inclusive and democratic public space. Furthermore, this study represents the first scholarly effort to document and evaluate Taman Cerdas Samarinda as a smart park following the 2024 revitalization, examining it through the perspective of its visitors, thereby addressing a gap in the existing literature that has remained largely unexplored.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach to systematically characterize the social and educational functions of Taman Cerdas Samarinda as a public space, as perceived by its visitors. Primary data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire to obtain a quantitative representation of visitor perceptions. The social function variable was measured through the following indicators: the capacity to accommodate diverse activities; the provision of social facilities; the enhancement of safety, comfort, and cleanliness; the public nature of the space; ease of access; and inclusivity for persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, the educational function variable encompassed indicators relating to environmental education, stimulation of public interest in reading, and the provision of an alternative learning environment.

Data were obtained through field surveys and direct observation at Taman Cerdas Samarinda. Interviews were used as supplementary data to deepen the interpretation of questionnaire results, and questionnaires were distributed to a predetermined sample of 40 respondents, along with documentation. Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis based on a Likert scale to measure visitor perceptions. Each response was assigned a score ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. The analysis was conducted by applying the mean percentage formula derived from visitor perception scores.

$$P = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{x} \times 100\%$$

Description

P :Percentage Value

Total score :The cumulative result of all points across the summed statements

x :The result of the highest score × number of respondents × number of statements

The following presents the index criteria derived from the percentage values, which will indicate the research findings.

Percentage	Category
85% - 100%	Very Good
65% - 84%	Good
45% - 64%	Fair
0% - 44%	Poor

**Table 1. Percentage Index Criteria Score**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Social Functions

Direct observation by the researchers involved systematic observation of the activities carried out by visitors at Taman Cerdas Samarinda. Visitors were found to arrive in groups and to exhibit heightened activity at specific times and days. The visitor population comprised various social groups, including peer groups, couples, and families, with peak attendance recorded between 15:00 and 21:00 Central Indonesian Time (WITA) and on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Primary activities observed included attending organized artistic performances, participating in community exercise sessions,

accompanying children in play, and engaging in informal leisure and relaxation.



**Figure 1 Exercise Activity**

Based on the questionnaire administered to 40 respondents regarding the social functions of Taman Cerdas Samarinda, the following percentage results were obtained.

Indicator	Percentage	Category
Accommodating Diverse Activities	81%	Good
Providing Social Facilities	86%	Very Good
Enhancing Safety, Comfort, and Cleanliness	77%	Good
Being Public in Nature	85%	Very Good
Easy Accessibility	85%	Very Good
Disability Inclusivity	62%	Fair
Total Percentage of Social Function	79%	Good

**Table 2 Recapitulation of Social Function Indicator Percentage**

Based on the table above, the strongest indicators were the provision of social facilities (86%, Very Good), the public nature of the space (85%, Very Good), and ease of access (85%, Very Good), indicating that the park effectively serves the broader community. Conversely, inclusivity for persons with disabilities recorded the lowest score (62%, Sufficient), reflecting the need for improvements in accessibility provisions.

Below are the interview results regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to accommodate a diverse range of visitor activities. As expressed by Informant 1:

*"I usually come here with my boarding house friends to hang out casually, as the place is comfortable and offers a wide variety of culinary options."*

Furthermore, another informant also provided a different perspective regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to accommodate a diverse range of activities, as expressed by Informant 2:

*"I visit Taman Cerdas every day after work, simply to sit and relax as a means of refreshing myself."*

Below are the interview results regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to

provide social and public facilities for visitors. As expressed by Informant 3:

*"The facilities here serve multiple functions; for instance, the roundabout area can function as a seating space or a performance venue, and it is open to everyone free of charge."*

Additionally, further information provided by Informant 4 states that:

*"It is entirely free of charge; however, for parking near the vendor area, there is a parking attendant present, and the usual fee is IDR 2,000."*

Below are the interview results regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to enhance security, comfort, and cleanliness, as well as to provide easy access and disability inclusivity for visitors. As expressed by Informant 5:

*"The park is clean and safe; however, it is not yet sufficiently accessible for individuals with special needs, as there are no dedicated wheelchair pathways, given that the area has numerous staircases."*

Furthermore, additional information provided by Informant 6 states that:

*"Given that the park is newly renovated and better maintained, it is comfortable, well-lit, and equipped with ample seating. Previously, prior to the renovation, the area was frequently associated with indecent behavior. Additionally, there are no street performers soliciting here."*

Based on the statements above, it can be identified that visitors appreciate the diversity of activities available, such as casual gathering, leisure, and culinary exploration (Informants 1 and 2), as well as the free and multifunctional social facilities, including the plaza area utilized for seating or public performances (Informant 3). The facilities are publicly accessible without an entrance fee, although parking is managed by attendants at a charge of IDR 2,000 (Informant 4). Safety, comfort, and cleanliness have notably improved following revitalization, with the addition of numerous seating benches, adequate lighting, and a reduction in street performers and inappropriate behavior (Informant 6). However, the park remains insufficiently accessible for persons with disabilities, as numerous staircases are present without dedicated wheelchair ramps or pathways (Informant 5).

### **Educational Function**

Direct observation conducted by the researchers involved systematic observation of educational activities taking place within the park. Visitors were observed using the park for coloring activities targeting early childhood, formal teaching and learning sessions, and a free reading stall offering a diverse range of literary genres, including

children's books and educational games. These activities engaged a broad range of age groups, demonstrating the park's inclusive educational role as a public space.



**Figure 2. Coloring Activity**

Based on the questionnaire administered to 40 respondents regarding the educational function of Taman Cerdas Samarinda, the following percentage results were obtained.

Indicator	Percentage	Category
environmental education	79%	Good
stimulation of public reading interest	76%	Good
alternative learning spaces	75%	Good
Total Percentage of Educational Function	76%	Good

**Table 3. Recapitulation of Percentage of Educational Function Indicators**

Based on the table above, all indicators received a rating of "Good," with environmental education scoring 79%, stimulation of reading interest at 76%, and alternative learning space at 75%. Supporting factors include educational signage, interactive activities such as coloring sessions and artistic performances, and a free community reading program, although utilization of the library facilities has yet to reach its optimal level. Respondents demonstrated a satisfactory level of appreciation for the educational function of Taman Cerdas Samarinda as a non-formal learning environment, with potential for further improvement in library facilities to achieve more optimal outcomes.

Below are the interview results regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to provide environmental education and to stimulate public interest in reading among visitors. As expressed by Informant 7:

*"There is a wealth of information regarding East Kalimantan's endemic fauna as well as plant identification labels throughout the park, which serves to broaden children's knowledge. This is particularly relevant as many visitors come accompanied by their children."*

Furthermore, an additional perspective provided by Informant 8 states that:

*"The informational notices are clearly displayed, making them effective for educational purposes. Given that the library has not yet been officially opened, its impact has not yet been fully observed; however, a free community reading group is already in place."*

Below are the interview results regarding Taman Cerdas Samarinda capacity to serve as an alternative learning space for visitors. As expressed by Informant 9:

*"I visit fairly frequently, as I often have school assignments that I complete here."*

Furthermore, additional information provided by Informant 10 states that:

*"I visit very frequently to read, as I am also part of the team that organizes the free community book reading events."*

Based on the statements above, Informants 7 and 8 expressed appreciation for the educational signage pertaining to endemic fauna of East Kalimantan and plant nomenclature, which were noted to broaden children's knowledge, as well as the free community reading group, which serves as a stimulus for reading interest despite the library facilities not yet functioning optimally. Informants 9 and 10 affirmed the park's role as an alternative learning space, used to complete school assignments and host regular reading sessions, further supported by the park's comfortable, conducive atmosphere.

## **Discussion**

### **Social Functions**

These findings are consistent with the research by Suherman & Murwadi (2021), which states that activities and comfort are primary factors influencing park visitation within the context of social function, with leisure activities accompanied by friends or family on weekends being the most dominant. Furthermore, the findings of Rahmawati & Sudiby (2024) indicate that a park aligned with its social function is one in which visitors use the provided social facilities to engage in a diverse range of activities deemed supportive and adequate.

The findings at Taman Cerdas Samarinda confirm this proposition by demonstrating that attainment a social function score of 79% is not merely a measure of visitor satisfaction but rather a reflection of the process of forming a democratic public space in a more essential sense. When examined through the lens of Habermas's theory of the public sphere, the overall percentage of 79% and the distribution of indicator values reveal the extent to which Taman Cerdas Samarinda has realized the preconditions of

*Öffentlichkeit*, namely the notion of public space fundamentally functions as an arena in which members of society from diverse backgrounds are free to be present, interact, and exchange ideas.

The process of forming a democratic public space constitutes an obligation of the municipal government to provide high-quality public spaces (Sadli and Sukmawati 2021). The capacity to serve as a public space, supporting the community's social life, is paramount, as it inherently functions as a venue where individuals from various social classes are free to gather, interact, and exchange ideas.

The indicators of public nature (85%) and ease of access (85%), both of which fall within the very good category, represent the two pillars that most fully embody Habermas's theory within this park. The absence of an entrance fee, as affirmed by Informant 3, constitutes a concrete manifestation of the principle of civic openness, enabling the park to function as a shared common space. Its proximity to the city center, commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, schools, and higher education institutions further extends its social reach by attracting high-mobility groups, thereby making the park accessible to diverse segments of society. Within the framework of Oldenburg's concept of the third place, the accessibility of Taman Cerdas Samarinda positions the park as a *leveler*, a space that equalizes differences in social status, as it can be reached and utilized by virtually anyone on a relatively equal basis.

This upholds one of the fundamental principles of public space: openness and ease of access for all segments of society (Afif, Pandiangan, and Tafridj 2023). The democratic dimension implies that the rights of all public space users are protected and that individuals are free to express themselves within such spaces. The absence of an admission fee has significantly reduced the economic barriers that frequently prevent certain segments of the population from using public spaces.

The indicator of social facility provision, which achieved a score of 86% (very good), further reinforces the above argument from the perspective of material infrastructure. The multifunctional plaza described by Informant 3 as an element capable of serving simultaneously as a seating area and a performance stage represents a concrete example of what Oldenburg refers to as *leveling infrastructure* within the concept of the third place, a single architectural element that accommodates spontaneous and egalitarian cross-group interaction. The presence of park benches and children's play areas, which attract families from diverse social backgrounds, collectively generates what Habermas terms *communicative action*, that is, communicative acts oriented toward the sharing of

experience rather than toward purely instrumental interests. When a community exercises group convenes in one corner, children play in another, and young couples leisurely enjoy their meals in yet another, all simultaneously, the park does not merely accommodate activities in parallel but also facilitates social encounters among groups that might otherwise have no shared space in which to meet.

The multifunctional character of the park's physical elements is reflected in their integrated design. These zones serve not merely as aesthetic elements but also function as social facilities that foster interaction among visitors (Untiyarto and Rahman 2025). The delineation of such zones enables the regulation of activities and the utilization of public space by visitors, thereby enhancing overall comfort and spatial experience.

The capacity indicator, scoring 81% (good), reflects the park's ability not only to accommodate a heterogeneous visitor population but also to handle simultaneous activities without disrupting groups. Informant 1 recounted visiting with dormitory friends for casual gatherings while enjoying street food, whereas Informant 2 described arriving alone on a daily basis after work simply to sit and unwind. Taken together, these accounts illustrate that the range of activities available at Taman Cerdas Samarinda can meet the varied social and psychological needs of its users. This constitutes a form of *playful mood*, a free, fluid, and non-judgmental atmosphere that represents the true spirit of a living third place. This necessitates that the park accommodate a diverse range of activities and provide facilities accessible to various segments of society, including children (Putri, Yudana, and Suminar 2023).

The indicator of safety, comfort, and cleanliness, which recorded a 77% (good) score following revitalization, was perceived by visitors as a source of physical satisfaction derived from the park environment. The account of Informant 6, who drew a direct comparison between the condition of the park before and after renovation from a space prone to immoral conduct and overcrowded with street performers to one that is now well-lit, clean, and orderly, illustrates how the physical transformation of a public space directly reconstitutes the social norms that govern conduct within it. Habermas asserts that the communicative conditions necessary for free and equal interaction cannot be realized if users of a space feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Accordingly, the physical revitalization of Taman Cerdas Samarinda represents not merely an urban aesthetic project, but a social strategy that creates the material preconditions for the formation of a democratic public space, a condition that Habermas regards as the foundational basis for the healthy growth of civic participation in collective life.

Physical elements, such as lighting, are a determining factor in shaping visitors' perceptions of comfort and safety in public spaces (Stevan and Gunawan 2023). Physical transformation, through adequate illumination and spatial regulation, directly alters the social norms that operate within that space.

The cleanliness of public environments is not merely an aesthetic concern, but carries far broader implications ranging from disease prevention to the creation of a comfortable, peaceful, and pleasant atmosphere. The low level of public awareness regarding the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of public spaces is often attributable to insufficient knowledge and weak oversight, rather than solely to individual behavior (Karim, Rahmanto, and Chaidir 2024). Therefore, a gradual and systematic process is required. Taman Cerdas Samarinda has produced a clean, orderly park following its revitalization, which has not only improved the physical environment but also re-educated societal norms surrounding the use of public space.

The significant dimensions of comfort in public spaces do not rest upon a single aspect alone, but encompass physical comfort, psychospiritual comfort (natural elements that support relaxation), sociocultural comfort (the capacity of the space to accommodate social interaction), and environmental comfort (comprising aroma, air circulation, noise levels, lighting, and aesthetic appeal) (Tuahena, Martosenjoyo, and Radja 2019).

Nevertheless, the indicator of inclusivity for persons with disabilities, which recorded a score of only 62% (sufficient), constitutes a critical finding that cannot be overlooked. When compared with the social facility provision indicator at 86%, a 24-percentage-point gap, this disparity reveals that the park is inclusive for able-bodied people with full mobility but remains structurally non-inclusive for persons with disabilities. Within Habermas's theoretical framework, the ideal public space explicitly rejects the *exclusion principle*, which systematically prevents particular groups from participating in public life. The limited provision of ramps and dedicated wheelchair pathways, as acknowledged by Informant 5, is not merely an infrastructural deficiency but rather an expression of structural discrimination concealed beneath the image of an open and democratic park. This condition serves as a reminder that the development and provision of a truly democratic public space extends beyond the mere provision of aesthetically pleasing facilities and general accessibility. It must also incorporate dimensions of social justice to ensure that every spectrum of urban users, including persons with disabilities, is afforded equitable participation.

The development of urban public spaces must give careful consideration to the site's existing characteristics, including ensuring that these spaces are child- and elderly-friendly and implicitly encompass the needs of persons with disabilities (Kusdiwanggo and Sholihah 2023). This underscores the importance of realizing inclusive public spaces as a fundamental quality of sustainable urban public space.

### **Educational Function**

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Amiany, Widati, and Harysakti (2023), which assert that education aims to foster self-development, intellectual capacity, moral character, and personal skills, a most noble objective that nonetheless requires well-prepared facilities and structured programs in order to be fully realized. Furthermore, the findings of Rini and Afriyani (2018) indicate that the educational function is manifested through accessibility that is open to all age groups and is not constrained by specific social segmentation. However, both studies share a common challenge: suboptimal management of formal reading facilities and limited availability of shaded, adequate learning spaces. This indicates that the challenges associated with optimizing the educational function of urban parks are cross-contextual in nature and require serious attention from both park management authorities and the relevant local government.

The findings at Taman Cerdas Samarinda confirm that educational functions can develop through formal government facilities, alongside the organic cultivation of knowledge ecosystems driven by community initiatives. The overall educational function score of 76%, with relatively balanced values across all three indicators environmental education (79%), stimulation of public reading interest (76%), and alternative learning space (75%) implies that Taman Cerdas Samarinda has successfully established a comprehensive knowledge ecosystem foundation that is not contingent upon any single aspect alone. From a Habermasian perspective, the educational dimension is most closely associated with the formation of *public reason*, wherein quality human resources are cultivated through processes of knowledge exchange, discourse, and collective reflection. A park that fosters literacy, ecological awareness, and informal learning thereby fulfills the essential function of public space as a domain in which individuals can develop into critically and reflectively engaged intellectual beings. In this regard, the 76% score represents an initial measure of the park's contribution to cultivating a culture of literacy and enabling meaningful civic participation in public life.

The environmental education indicator achieved the highest score of 79%, reflecting the effectiveness of the park's visual elements as a consistent pedagogical medium. The signage containing information on endemic fauna of East Kalimantan and plant identification, as appreciated by Informant 7, imparts knowledge through direct experiential engagement in an open-air setting. Within the third-place concept, these elements serve as instruments that deliver immediate intellectual value. When a child asks their parent the name of an animal depicted on a signboard, or when a visitor idly reads an informational panel while waiting for a friend, a process of natural and incidental learning takes place. Nevertheless, violations of park regulations, particularly littering, cannot be adequately addressed solely through visual elements such as warning signage; they must also be accompanied by consistent enforcement of rules and by park management's cultivation of a civic culture.

Signage elements are one of the constituent components of public space, functioning as informational markers throughout the site (Lutfiana 2023). Beyond serving merely as technical directional guides, these elements also function as effective educational media, shaping visitor behavior in accordance with the park's prevailing norms and regulations.

The most compelling and meaningful dynamic within the educational dimension lies in the gap between government provision and community initiative, as reflected in the indicator of public interest in reading stimulation (76%). The library facility has been physically established yet remains suboptimally operational, while simultaneously, a community-led free reading stall has emerged independently and conducts activities on a regular weekly basis. Within Habermas's theoretical framework, when the state is absent or has yet to function optimally, society does not remain passively waiting but instead actively creates solutions to meet collective needs. The involvement of Informant 10, who not only utilizes the park as a personal reading space but also actively serves as an organizer of weekly reading events, exemplifies the emergence of a civic-minded community capable of generating meaningful and positive change. The government's delay in operationalizing the library has, paradoxically, prompted community members to take the initiative, sustaining a literacy movement that encourages continued reading and learning among the public.

Literacy is not merely concerned with individual reading and writing abilities, but encompasses how a person communicates, processes information, and participates in social and community life (Utami et al. 2021). The free reading stall community at Taman

Cerdas Samarinda does not solely engage in reading activities; rather, it actively trains and practices social and community life. It is precisely this institutional void that has driven the community to fill the space left behind by formal institutions and government bodies.

The indicator of alternative learning space (75%) positions Taman Cerdas Samarinda as a venue regularly used by students, such as Informant 9, to complete school assignments, as well as by literacy communities for knowledge sharing. While Oldenburg originally conceptualized the third place as a social recreational space free of productive activities, the findings at Taman Cerdas Samarinda reveal a significant evolution in function, with the park now serving as a multifunctional space that integrates learning, socialization, and leisure within a single environment.

The edutainment concept is an effective approach to enhancing the quality of education and learning by integrating entertainment into a recreational context (Hanorsian, Suharto, and Isnaini 2024). Taman Cerdas Samarinda naturally embodies this edutainment dimension, where the learning process takes place in an enjoyable, unpressured atmosphere.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, the social function of Taman Cerdas Samarinda as a public space has been fulfilled in the perception of its visitors, as evidenced by its capacity to accommodate a diverse range of recreational activities such as relaxation and leisure, supported by multifunctional facilities, free access, and a safe, comfortable, and clean environment following revitalization. Although accessibility for persons with disabilities remains in need of improvement through the provision of ramps and dedicated pathways, the park's public character and management by the city government further reinforce its role as a counterbalance to the pressures of urbanization. The educational function of Taman Cerdas Samarinda is assessed as effective in fostering environmental literacy through visual elements such as informational signage, stimulating reading interest through community-driven initiatives, and serving as an alternative learning space for informal activities, including discussion and group-based activities learning. This potential positions the park as a model of a smart park that contributes meaningfully to sustainable urban development.

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