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The Role of e-Government in Bogor City's Smart City Strategy toward SPBE Enhancement

Analisis Strategi Smart City Kota Bogor Melalui E-Government dalam Meningkatkan SPBE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: smart city, e government, Bogor City	The increase in the electronic-based government system (SPBE) has increased by 4% throughout 2024 in Bogor City, showing the success of Bogor City's smart city in the aspect of e-goverment. On the other hand, Bogor City also has many awards. Therefore, this research will analyze the smart city strategy through e-government as an example of digital services. This research employs a qualitative method with a constructivist paradigm and a case study approach as proposed by Creswell. The case analyzed represents a positive example of how Bogor City has successfully implemented its smart city initiatives through the concept of e-governance. Data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews with six participants, consisting of three key informants, two supporting informants, and one expert informant. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the assistance of NVivo software to construct an understanding of Bogor City's e-government strategies in enhancing the SPBE implementation. This study indicates that the Government of Bogor City has effective strategies like (1) strategic orientation and stakeholder mapping, (2) substantive policy underpinnings, and (3) symbolic action and hooked tagline. Implementation in Bogor smart city is (1) urban infrastructure and experiential signals, (2) strategic publicity and digital presence, and (3) public opinion and responsive governance.
INFO ARTIKEL	***ABSTRAK***
Kata kunci: *kota pintar, e-governance, Kota Bogor*	*Peningkatan Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik (SPBE) sebesar 4% sepanjang tahun 2024 di Kota Bogor menunjukkan keberhasilan smart city Kota Bogor dalam aspek e-government. Di sisi lain, Kota Bogor juga telah meraih banyak penghargaan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini akan menganalisis strategi smart city melalui e-government sebagai contoh layanan digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan paradigma konstruktivis dan pendekatan studi kasus sebagaimana dikemukakan oleh Creswell. Kasus yang dianalisis merepresentasikan contoh positif tentang bagaimana Kota Bogor berhasil mengimplementasikan inisiatif smart city melalui konsep e-governance. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan enam partisipan, terdiri dari tiga informan kunci, dua informan pendukung,*

dan satu informan ahli. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dengan bantuan perangkat lunak NVivo untuk membangun pemahaman mengenai strategi e-government Kota Bogor dalam meningkatkan implementasi SPBE. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan pemerintah Kota Bogor memiliki strategi yang efektif, yaitu: (1) Orientasi strategis dan pemetaan pemangku kepentingan, (2) Landasan kebijakan substantif, dan (3) Tindakan simbolik dan hooked tagline. Temuan mengenai Implementasi smart city di Kota Bogor mencakup: (1) Infrastruktur perkotaan dan sinyal pengalaman (experiential signals), (2) Publikasi strategis dan kehadiran digital, serta (3) Opini publik dan tata kelola yang responsif.

Introduction

In 2024, the Bogor City Government achieved a significant milestone in the implementation of the electronic-based government system (*Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik,* or SPBE), attaining an index score of 4.08. This achievement reflects the city's strong commitment to accelerating digital transformation within the public sector and serves as a clear indicator of improved bureaucratic performance in delivering public services that are efficient, transparent, and citizen-oriented. The marked increase in the SPBE score is the result of strategic, cross-sectoral collaborations among various local government agencies, with a focused effort on enhancing digital governance and optimizing public service delivery.

This advancement also reinforces Bogor City's positioning in the development of the *smart city* concept, an integrated urban management approach that leverages information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve governance, citizen services, and sustainable urban development. With an increasingly mature digital governance infrastructure, Bogor is better equipped to implement the core pillars of smart governance, smart environment, and smart living. In this regard, the SPBE index is not merely an administrative benchmark but serves as a foundational component in realizing the city's vision of becoming an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable smart city, responsive to the dynamic needs of its digital-era citizens. In support of the "100 smart city movement" Master Plan (GM 100SCI), which was initiated in 2017 by eight Indonesian ministries, Bogor City was selected as one of the cities to develop a strategic smart city plan. Since its selection, Bogor City has actively implemented a range of initiatives to align with the objectives of this national movement. One of these efforts includes the issuance of regional regulations to support smart city development, such as Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2018 concerning the Administration of Informatics and Communication.

Bogor City's smart city initiatives have received wide recognition. In 2021, the city was awarded the Digital Transformation and smart city Indonesia Award by the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). According to Maulidi (2021), Bogor received 10 awards from ITB, including categories such as Smart Economy City, Smart Society City, Smart Environment City, Smart Mobility City, Smart Health City, Resilient City, Climate-Responsive City, Smart Energy City, and Best Digital Readiness City. As reported by Detik News, the evaluation conducted by ITB's Center for Innovation on Smart Cities and Communities categorized 93 cities in Indonesia based on size and population into three groups: large, medium, and small cities.

Additionally, Bogor was recognized as the second-best city in the "Toward Smart Economy City" category among large cities, according to the 2021 smart city rating published by ITB's Center for Innovation on Smart Cities and Communities (Maulana, 2022). Bogor outperformed major cities like Bandung and Semarang in terms of economic growth and improvements in public welfare. Key indicators for the smart economy dimension include the development of economic infrastructure such as markets, industries, MSMEs, and tourism.

Under its smart city agenda, Bogor has launched several infrastructure and service initiatives, including the revitalization of the train station park, expansion of Otista Bridge to reduce congestion, development of the R3 regional ring road, and other sustainable infrastructure projects (Rahayu, 2019).

Other initiatives such as the drive-thru e-ID card service (Muhammad, 2021), the launch of the BisKita public transport system (Susanti, 2021), and improved financial transparency and planning mechanisms reflect the city's commitment to efficient public service delivery. Programs like "Kata Kreatif" and the "Satu Pos" app support MSME empowerment (Pangestu, 2023), while initiatives such as Ekotifa (Creative Ecotourism Indonesia) and Baik Heritage reflect efforts to strengthen Bogor's tourism sector (Pratiwi, 2023). Bogor also ranked fourth in the 2023 Best Local Government Administration Award with a score of 3,404, as assessed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. While it ranked below cities like Semarang (3,430), Surabaya (3,425), and Surakarta (3,406), Bogor was the only city from West Java included in the top ten, showcasing significant progress in public service delivery (Mardiana, 2023). Notably, the city had not ranked in the top ten in previous years.

The concept of a smart city emphasizes the strategic utilization of existing resources to enhance community well-being through efficient and effective urban management. Cardullo and Kitchin (2019) define a smart city as one that leverages technological innovation to improve the quality of life for its citizens, ensuring that urban development benefits the community holistically. This approach aligns with the broader objective of fostering sustainable urban ecosystems that are responsive to the needs of their inhabitants.

In the context of Indonesia, the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) has outlined a comprehensive roadmap for urban development from 2015 to 2045, aiming to transform cities into sustainable, competitive, and liveable spaces. This roadmap underscores the importance of smart city initiatives in addressing challenges such as climate change, resource management, and socio-economic disparities (Bappenas, 2015). Bogor City exemplifies the implementation of these principles. In 2024, the city achieved a significant milestone by attaining an SPBE (Electronic-Based Government System) index score of 4.08, reflecting its commitment to digital transformation and efficient public service delivery. This achievement is indicative of Bogor's progress in adopting smart governance practices, which are integral to the smart city framework.

The smart city Wheel, developed by Cohen (2014), identifies six pillars essential for smart city development: Smart Governance, Smart People, Smart Economy, Smart Living, Smart Mobility, and Smart Environment. Bogor's initiatives align with these pillars as follows: (1) Smart Governance: Implementation of transparent and accessible government services through digital platforms. (2) Smart People: Investment in education and community engagement to foster an informed and active citizenry. (3) Smart Economy: Promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship, and support for startups to drive economic growth. (4) Smart Living: Enhancement of public health, safety, and overall quality of life through smart infrastructure. (5) Smart Mobility: Development of sustainable transportation systems that reduce congestion and environmental impact. (6) Smart Environment: Initiatives focused on environmental conservation, waste management, and green spaces. By integrating these pillars into its urban planning and development strategies, Bogor City demonstrates a comprehensive approach to becoming a smart city that prioritizes sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience.

A key component of any smart city initiative is the realization of *smart government*, which emphasizes the digitalization of administrative processes, open data policies, participatory decision-making, and improved service responsiveness (Anthopoulos, 2017). Smart government, therefore, serves as both a driver and a product of smart city ecosystems, ensuring that technological innovation is aligned with good governance principles and public accountability. As Anthopoulos (2017) argues, *"smart government refers to the transformation of traditional public administration through digital technologies, enabling more agile, efficient, and inclusive governance frameworks"* (p. 145). In this regard, the success of Bogor's SPBE implementation not only marks a technical achievement but also symbolizes a broader transition toward more intelligent, responsive, and citizen-focused urban governance. It underlines the city's aspiration to institutionalize technology in a way that facilitates sustainable development and improved quality of life for its residents.

Given the City of Bogor's ongoing commitment to digital transformation in governance, this study focuses on the e-government component of the smart city framework. Specifically, the concept is examined through the lens of *e-government*, which plays a pivotal role in enhancing transparency, public service delivery, and participatory governance within urban settings. This study adopts a qualitative approach, integrating the theoretical model proposed by Ndou (2004), who asserts that the success of e-government initiatives in developing countries hinges on three core factors: technological infrastructure readiness, strong government commitment, and active citizen participation. These elements form the foundation for evaluating how digital governance is implemented in local contexts.

Furthermore, Norris (2005) emphasizes that beyond infrastructure and participation, the effectiveness of e-government also depends heavily on efficient management practices and ongoing evaluation. These aspects ensure that digital initiatives are not only well-implemented but also adaptive to the changing needs of society. By synthesizing these perspectives, the research aims to identify critical success factors in the application of e-government within the smart city agenda of Bogor, particularly under the smart government pillar. Another key finding of this study is the importance of the public relations (PR) function in the context of Bogor's smart city implementation. Based on the NVivo analysis, the node representing the "Role of Public Relations" ranked second in frequency, with 61 references. This indicates that the interviewees frequently discussed the significance of public relations, underlining its strategic relevance in the smart city ecosystem.

The role of public relations, as revealed through this research, is not limited to information dissemination. Rather, it serves as a critical bridge between the government and the public, facilitating two-way communication that is transparent, responsive, and participatory. Informants highlighted that the effectiveness of smart city initiatives is highly dependent on how well these programs are communicated, understood, and supported by the community. PR functions, therefore, extend to building public trust, promoting citizen engagement, and ensuring that digital services are accessible and inclusive. In the case of Bogor, public relations also play a strategic role in framing and socializing the city's smart city policies. This includes actively managing the narrative of digital transformation, clarifying the objectives of new services such as e-government platforms, and addressing potential public concerns or misconceptions. As smart solutions evolve, PR departments are also responsible for providing timely updates, creating feedback loops, and leveraging both traditional and digital media channels to reach diverse audiences.

Moreover, PR professionals in Bogor are increasingly expected to utilize data and analytics to tailor their communication strategies. The integration of ICT in public service delivery requires that PR not only inform but also educate and empower the public, especially in adopting new digital tools and platforms. Thus, PR becomes instrumental in supporting behavior change, fostering digital literacy, and amplifying the government's responsiveness. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that a smart city cannot thrive without strategic and adaptive public communication. The high frequency of PR-related mentions by informants underscores the recognition that public relations is a vital component in ensuring that smart city programs are not only technologically sound but also socially accepted and democratically implemented.

Method

This study is a qualitative case study grounded in a constructivist paradigm. Adopting Creswell's case study approach, the research aims to provide an in-depth, bounded examination of Bogor City's smart city strategies within the context of e-Governance. The researcher acted as the primary research instrument, interpreting multiple data sources to construct a contextualized understanding of the case. Data collection in this study is conducted through triangulation methods, and analysis follows an inductive process that prioritizes meaning over generalization (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data for this study were collected through direct, in-depth interviews conducted without inter-mediaries to ensure authenticity and accuracy of information. The fieldwork took place from December

2024 to the end of July 2025 in Bogor City, Indonesia. The researcher obtained formal permission from each relevant government institution to access and interview the selected informants. Participants were selected using a non-probability sampling technique, with snowball sampling. This approach was employed because the study needed to first identify and confirm which individuals and institutions were directly involved in the implementation of e-government initiatives in Bogor City. Initial key informants provided referrals to other relevant participants who possessed in-depth knowledge and experience related to smart city programs and SPBE development, ensuring that the data collected were rich, relevant, and contextually grounded.

Table 1 Informants List

No	Nama	Informant Type	Position / Affiliation
1	Yani Kurniasih	Key Informant	Policy Analyst (Intermediate Expert), Department of Communication and Informatics, Bogor City Government
2	Achmad Sandy Bukhari	Key Informant	Head of smart city E-Governance Team, Department of Communication and Informatics, Bogor City Government
3	Tony Ibrahim	Key Informant	Information Systems and Technology Management Officer, Department of Communication and Informatics, Bogor City Government
4	Iceu Pujiastuti	Supporting Informant	Head of the Department of Tourism and Culture, Bogor City Government
5	Rahmat Hidayat	Supporting Informant	Head of the Department of Communication and Informatics, Bogor City Government
6	Soni Fajar Gumilang	Expert Informant	Assessor, Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (ICT Implementation E-Government)

Data collection uses methodological triangulation to increase the study's trustworthiness with Semi-structured, in-depth interviews (recorded and later transcribed) with the six informants to elicit perceptions, experiences, and explanations regarding strategy, implementation, and outcomes. Document analysis of official policy documents, strategic plans, performance reports, and digital artifacts (e.g., social media content, Si Badra complaint logs) to corroborate interview data and provide documentary evidence of actions and outputs. Interview guides, note templates for observations, and a document checklist were prepared in advance to ensure consistency across data collection activities.

This study uses a thematic analysis approach to interpret and organize the qualitative data. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows the researcher to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) that emerge from the data in a systematic and flexible manner, consistent with the constructivist paradigm of this study. The analysis process followed the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

The interview recordings were first transcribed verbatim and used as the primary data source for this study. Meanwhile, literature review and observational notes served as supporting data to enrich contextual understanding and strengthen the interpretation of findings during the analysis process. To ensure systematic and rigorous data organization, the researcher utilized NVivo 16 software to conduct thematic analysis. The application facilitated the coding, categorization, and visualization of qualitative data. The steps undertaken in the NVivo-assisted data analysis process were as follows:

1. The researcher downloaded and installed NVivo 16 from the official NVivo website. After installation, a new project file was created by selecting *"New Project."*

2. In the application interface, the researcher selected the *"Data"* tab and uploaded the interview transcripts for processing.

3. Once all transcripts were uploaded, the researcher accessed the *"Codes"* section to create nodes—the equivalent of analytical subunits or "rooms"—that represent emerging themes and subthemes in the study.

4. Key sentences and meaningful expressions from the interview transcripts were then coded and categorized into the corresponding nodes, reflecting the thematic structure of the research focus.

5. After completing the coding process for all transcripts, NVivo was used to visualize patterns and frequencies of the discussions, highlighting dominant themes related to Bogor City's city branding strategy in enhancing tourism attractiveness.

6. Finally, the processed and coded data were exported for further synthesis and interpretation. Through this process, the researcher obtained both factual and perceptual insights that contributed to the depth and reliability of the thematic findings.

This systematic use of NVivo 16 allowed for transparent and traceable analysis, ensuring that the coding process accurately reflected the perspectives of informants while maintaining analytical rigor consistent with qualitative research standards.

The object of this research is the strategic planning and implementation of smart city within the e-government initiated by the Bogor City Government, particularly how these strategies aim to enhance significant milestones in the implementation of the electronic-based government (SPBE). This study examines the processes of smart cities through the e-government concept. According to Heeks (2001) as cited in Twizeyimana (2019), *e-government* is defined as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support good governance. Heeks further explains that *e-government* comprises three key components: (1) e-administration–aimed at improving governmental processes by reducing costs, managing performance more effectively, building strategic internal connections within government institutions, and promoting empowerment. (2) e-citizen & e-services–focused on connecting citizens with the government by enhancing communication and accountability, fostering public participation and democracy, and improving the delivery of public services. (3) e-society – Seeks to foster interactions beyond government boundaries by enhancing collaboration with the private sector, supporting community development, strengthening intergovernmental partnerships, and promoting the growth of civil society.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of Bogor City's smart city branding reveals that the government's communication strategy aligns closely with Kavaratzis' (2005) city image communication model, which consists of three interrelated dimensions: primary, secondary, and tertiary communication. Each dimension represents a unique form of interaction between the city and its audiences, ranging from non-verbal infrastructural cues to managed publicity and uncontrolled citizen-generated narratives. Collectively, these three levels of communication form a coherent strategy for shaping urban identity and enhancing the city's tourism attractiveness.
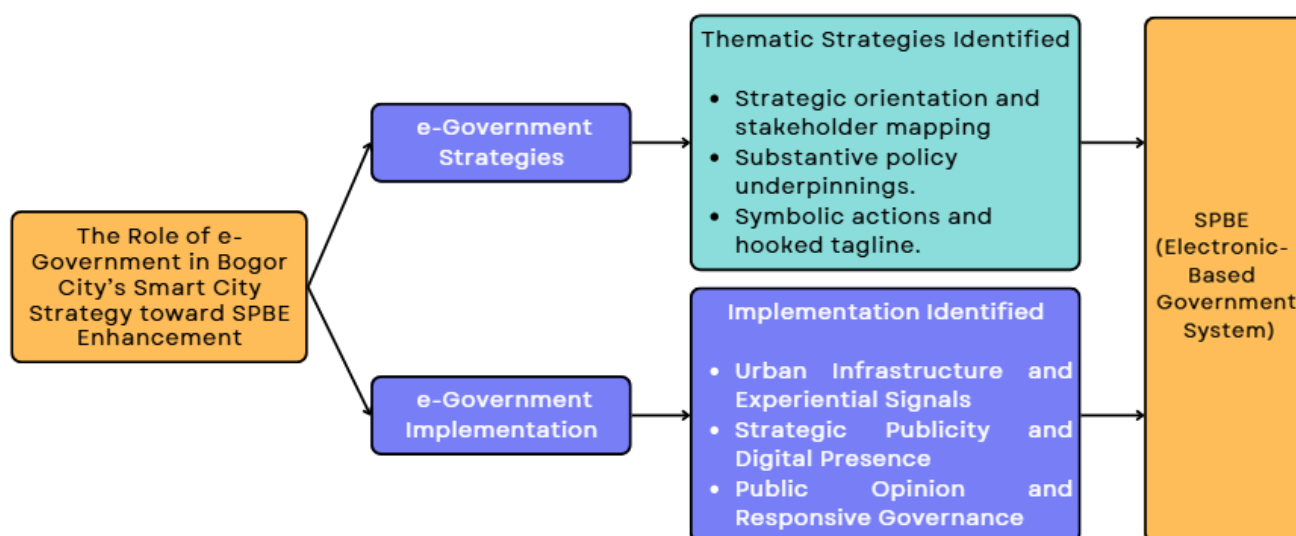
Figure 1 Result and Discussion Flowchart

Strategies

This study primarily aims to analyze the city branding strategy of Bogor's smart city in enhancing its tourism appeal. To achieve this objective, the research focuses on two specific questions: (1) How does the Bogor City Government strategize its smart city branding? and (2) How is the city branding implemented within the smart city framework? The discussion in this paper is structured to explicitly address both research questions. In general, the findings reveal that the Bogor City Government has implemented a city branding concept that emphasizes culinary tourism and sports tourism as its core identity pillars. The first research question (Strategy) is addressed through an analysis of the City Identity, which encompasses Strategy, Substance, and Symbolic Actions, following the framework proposed by *Anholt (2007)*. Meanwhile, the second question (Implementation) is answered through the mapping of the city's communication efforts, categorized into Primary Communication, Secondary Communication, and Tertiary Communication, based on Kavaratzis' (2004*)* city branding communication model. Accordingly, each sub-section in the subsequent discussion, from the formulation of branding direction to media monitoring, serves as structured empirical evidence that systematically responds to the research questions established in this study.

Guided by Anholt's competitive identity lens (strategy, substance, and symbolic actions), Bogor foregrounds culinary and sports propositions as identity anchors. Strategically, this orientation fits a dense, small-area city where large-scale nature attractions are limited; substance is created through programs and facilities that make dining and sporting experiences discoverable, repeatable, and narratively distinctive; and symbolic actions (events, taglines, ambassadorial cues) reinforce mental availability. Interpreting the evidence, this choice is not merely thematic but resource-rational: it lowers capital intensity relative to nature-based attractions and leverages existing urban assets, thereby improving time-to-impact for place equity.

Strategic Orientation and Stakeholder Mapping: Culinary and Sport Tourism

In this study, strategy, or *arah branding,* is understood as the process through which a city identifies its key stakeholders and resource endowments and subsequently determines the brand direction it intends to pursue. The diagnostic stage encompasses an appraisal of urban assets—such as physical geography, infrastructure readiness, and local cultural capital—together with perceptions held by visitors and residents. In practical terms, the assessment means delineating the city's spatial configuration, auditing available facilities, and interpreting socio-cultural attributes to inform the branding blueprint.
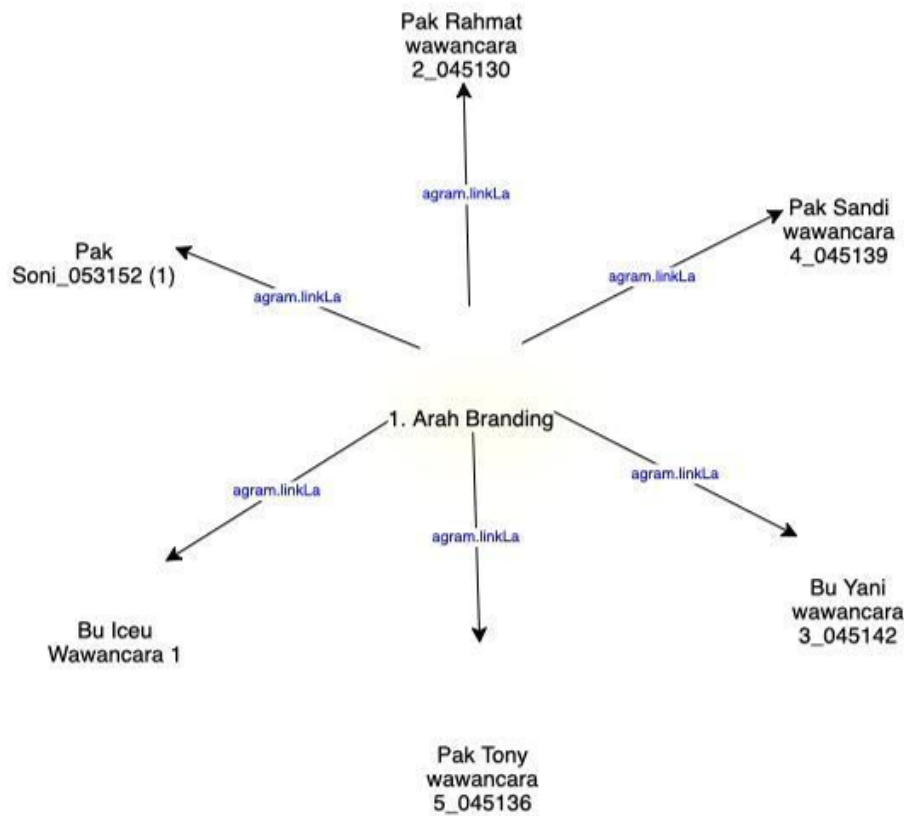
Figure 2 Explore Diagram in Strategy

Empirical evidence indicates that Bogor's branding gravitates toward culinary tourism and sport tourism. The choice is largely conditioned by the city's compact territorial extent, which constrains the development of large-scale nature-based attractions. This logic aligns with the literature showing that urban areas frequently cultivate culinary experiences due to more manageable investment requirements and better accessibility for visitors (Scheyvens & Laeis, 2021). Likewise, scholarship on sustainable culinary systems underscores the revenue potential of food-based propositions for space-constrained cities (Gössling & Hall, 2013), while research on sport-oriented destinations notes that dense urban environments often leverage athletic facilities and events as viable tourism draws (Bazzanella et al., 2023). The economic rationale is further illustrated by statistical evidence from Indonesia's capital: in 2023, the culinary sector reportedly contributed about 26% of Jakarta's locally generated revenue, suggesting that food-led offerings can materially support municipal finances (BPS, 2023).

Substantive Policy Underpinnings, or What is Described as Program Implementation

To capitalize on culinary and leisure interests, Bogor introduced Laksa, a tourism support application that consolidates up-to-date information on eateries and attractions, city events, public transport routes, lodging options, and related services. The platform includes an AI-enabled chatbot designed to improve trip planning and on-the-ground navigation, thereby enhancing visitor experience and reducing search frictions.
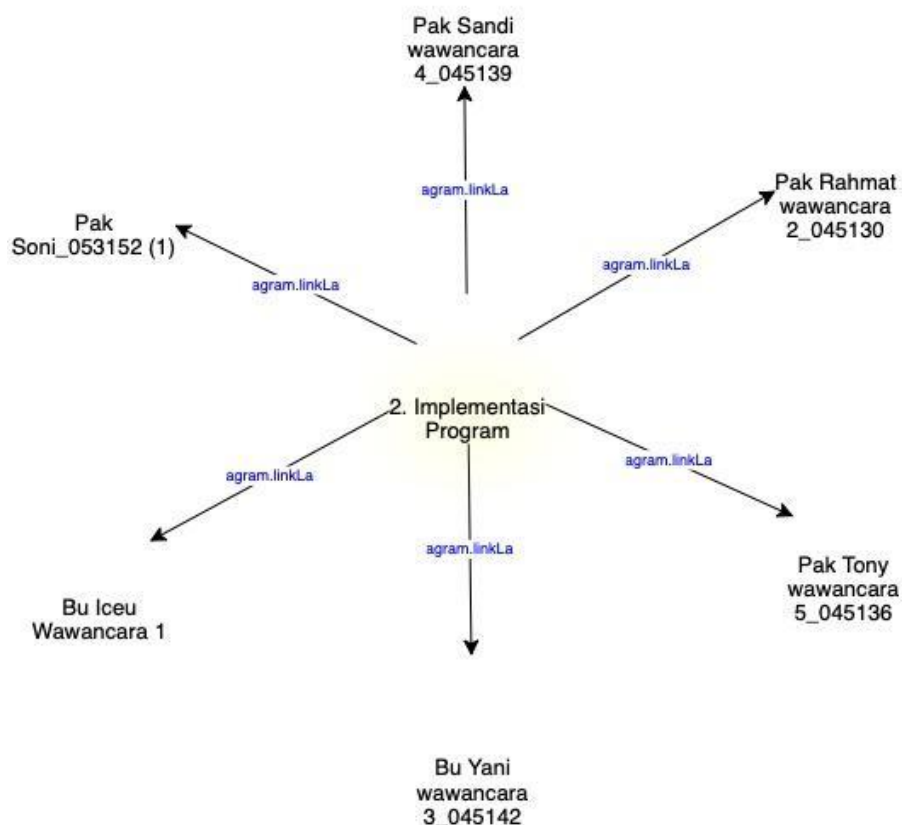
Figure 3 Explore Diagram in Substantive

The 2019–2027 Bogor smart city masterplan functions as the principal policy scaffold for the city's branding endeavors. Consistent with place-branding theory, clear governmental rules are essential to orchestrate coordination among heterogeneous stakeholders (Kavaratzis in Wiyono et al., 2021). Structured policy, in turn, strengthens administrative accountability (Aragonez et al., 2017) and improves interdepartmental alignment when branding is treated as an integrated governance agenda rather than a merely promotional exercise (Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014). Notwithstanding this framework, the present study observes that cross-unit coordination in Bogor remains uneven, with multi-agency tasks at times defaulting to a single "lead" office; as a result, end-to-end integration of branding activities is not yet optimal.

In parallel with policy measures, the city deploys digital innovations to stimulate demand. The expectation that an official tourism app can lift visit numbers is broadly consistent with findings that municipalities operating dedicated platforms report measurable gains in tourist flows—on the order of 15–20% in some cases (Wang et al., 2016)—and higher repeat-visit rates when features like event reminders and personalized itineraries are present (Dias & Afonso, 2021; e.g., "Jakarta Tourism"). To sustain implementation quality, the municipal human resources agency (BKPSDM) conducts regular briefings, webinars, and training programs aimed at strengthening civil service competencies. Evidence suggests that semi-annual training can raise performance consistency over multi-year horizons (Meyer & Smith, 2000), and that e-government-specific capacity building can reduce complaint volumes substantially (Kurniawan et al., 2020). These initiatives are intended to translate the brand promise into reliable frontline execution.

Symbolic Actions and Hooked Tagline

Following Anholt (2007), symbolic actions or what we used to call *kampanye kota,* are persuasive, memorable communication efforts that render the brand legible to broad audiences. In communication

science terms, planned, time-bound activities with explicit persuasive intent constitute campaigns (Atkin & Rice, 2012). Bogor's city campaign centers on the tagline "Bogor Berlari," which conveys speed and agility in public service (Rahayu, 2019), and—by associative implication—frames the city as conducive to running and active lifestyles. From a branding perspective, effective taglines deploy mnemonic cues and associative memory to enhance recall (Aaker, 2020). Properly leveraged, such devices help differentiate the city, strengthen destination competitiveness, and ultimately support local economic revitalization (Anholt, 2020).
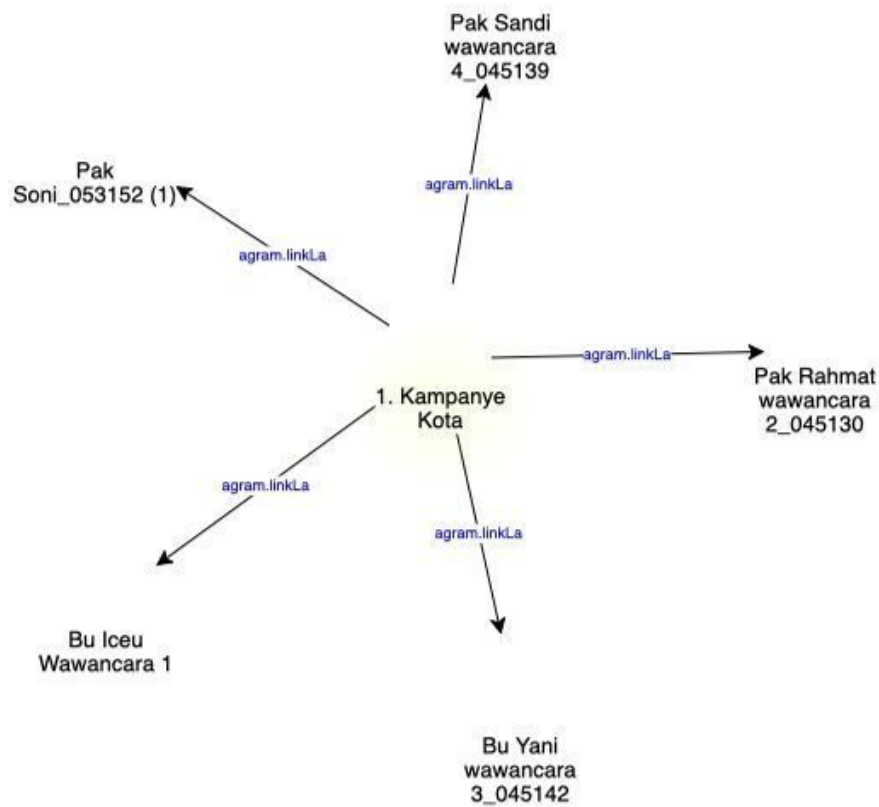

Figure 4 Explore Diagram in Symbolic Action

In conclusion, Bogor's branding approach is diagnostic (stakeholder and asset identification), strategic (selection of culinary and sport tourism as feasible, high-leverage pillars), and operational (policy codification, inter-agency routines, digital platforms such as Laksa, and staff capacity building). Symbolic instruments—the "Bogor Berlari" campaign—serve to compress these choices into a coherent, memorable narrative. Continued improvements in interdepartmental integration and inclusive service access are likely to further align day-to-day delivery with the city's articulated identity.

Primary Communication: "Infrastruktur kota" as Urban Infrastructure and Experiential Signals

The visual dimension of a city is a critical element of city branding, serving to project a specific image to both its community and visitors. As such, infrastructure projects must be intrinsically linked to the city's branding strategy. Data from the five informants confirms this relationship, with frequent mentions of city infrastructure emerging as a key theme in primary communication, as visualized in the subsequent exploration diagram.
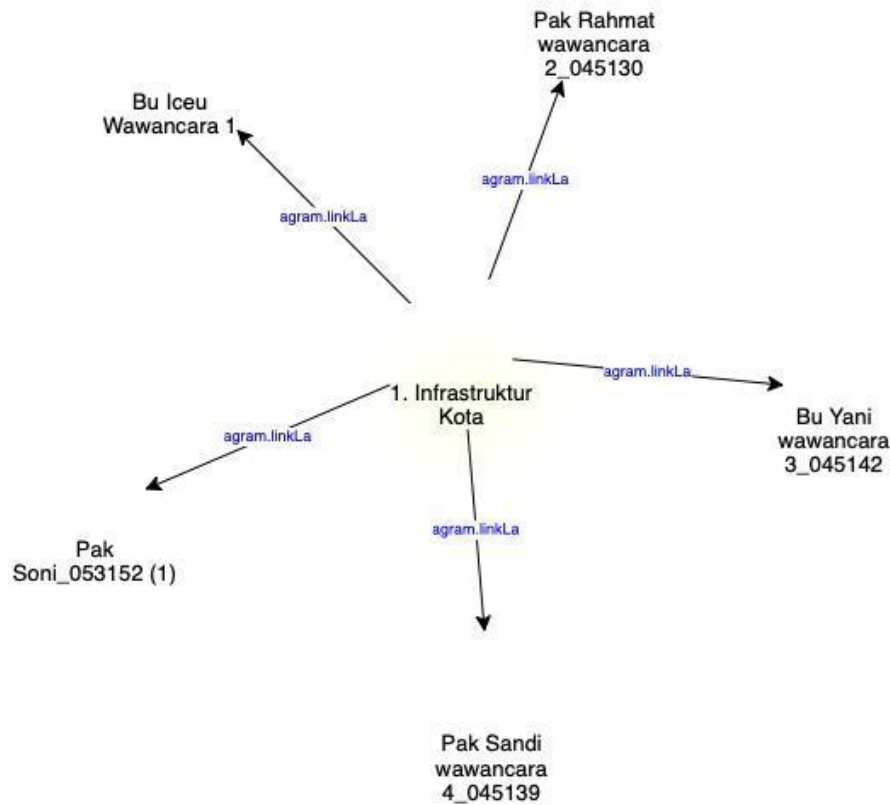
Figure 5 Explore Diagram in Primary Communication

The findings from Bogor underscore the profound role of primary communication as a foundational, albeit often unintentional, mechanism in city branding. As defined by Kavaratzis (2005), these planned urban actions—from infrastructure to cultural programs—generate symbolic meaning that is directly "read" by residents and visitors. The revitalization of Surya Kencana, the pedestrianization around Kebun Raya, and the modernization of public transport are not merely functional upgrades; they are non-verbal declarations of a city aspiring towards progress, accessibility, and enhanced liveability. This phenomenon powerfully echoes McLuhan's (2013) axiom, "the medium is the message," positioning the physical urban fabric itself as the primary communicative medium through which the city's identity and ambitions are projected.

The empirical weight of this communicative mode is significant. The study's alignment with Eshuis et al. (2018), who quantified primary communication's contribution to city image formation at 68%, moves the discussion from the theoretical to the empirical. It compellingly argues that a city's tangible reality—its built environment and lived experience—holds more sway over public perception than controlled promotional campaigns. The argument is further substantiated by the negative case of Jakarta, where Wibowo et al. (2020) demonstrated that infrastructural deficits like congestion and pollution can erode the efficacy of a well-funded branding campaign by up to 40%. This contrast creates a critical dialectic: while positive primary communication builds brand equity organically, negative primary communication acts as a structural veto on marketing claims, creating a credibility gap that is difficult to bridge through media alone.

Bogor's strategic focus on culinary and sports tourism, viewed through Anholt's (2006) "silent salesman" framework, reveals a conscious leveraging of the urban landscape to "sell" a specific identity. This approach is not merely about providing amenities but about curating an experience that authentically represents the city's character. The success of such place-based branding is corroborated by Zenker and Braun's (2017) work on the "brand equity of a city," where they argue that a positive and distinctive

city experience directly increases resident satisfaction and tourist attraction, creating a virtuous cycle of advocacy and visitation.

Furthermore, the integration of flagship cultural events like the Bogor Street Festival: Cap Go Meh demonstrates an understanding that primary communication extends beyond static infrastructure to include dynamic, performative elements. This finding resonates strongly with Richards and Wilson's (2004) theory on the "eventful city," where strategic cultural programming is used to animate public spaces, enhance the city's image, and attract flows of tourists and capital. Darmiati's (2020) findings in Gianyar reveal a remarkable correlation, showing that cultural performances accounted for 86% of tourist growth and suggesting that the synergy between hard infrastructure and soft cultural programming is not incidental but fundamental. Together, they form a holistic communicative ecosystem where the physical stage (the infrastructure) and the performances upon it (the events) jointly narrate the city's brand story, making it tangible, experiential, and memorable.

This research analyzes the case of Bogor and affirms that effective city branding is an architectural and curatorial endeavor as much as a communicative one. It requires the strategic alignment of physical development, cultural policy, and brand strategy to ensure that the city's "lived message" is coherent, positive, and authentic.

Secondary Communication: "Manajemen Komunikasi" as Strategic Publicity and Digital Presence

This research found that communication management is a strategic priority for city promotion, as its effective implementation ensures that the intended outcomes are systematically achieved. The findings from the six informants, visualized in the NVivo 16 exploration diagram below, illustrate this critical aspect of communication management.
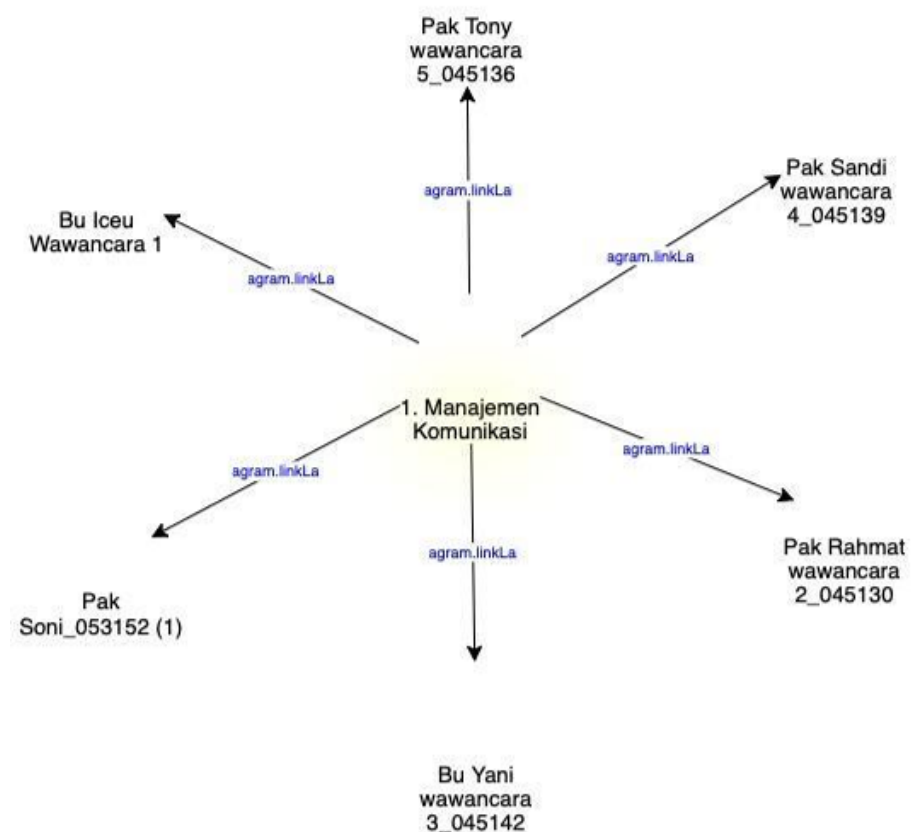

Figure 6 Secondary Communication

Secondary communication represents the intentional and controlled dimension of city branding, where messages are strategically crafted and disseminated to shape public perception (Kavaratzis, 2005). In the case of Bogor, this is not merely an auxiliary activity but a sophisticated, multi-channel strategy that leverages digital tools, influencer partnerships, and symbolic assets to construct and propagate a cohesive city narrative. The deployment of a robust digital ecosystem, centered on platforms like the official Instagram account @pemkotbogor, exemplifies a shift from one-way broadcasting to interactive place governance. This platform functions as a dynamic portal, blending information on governance with curated content on culinary heritage and tourism, thereby fostering a sense of community and transparency. The efficacy of this approach is empirically grounded. Eshuis et al. (2018) confirm that such official social media channels can achieve engagement rates up to four times higher than traditional advertisements, while Muslimah (2021) highlights their role as a cost-efficient medium for branding. This aligns with the broader paradigm of "government 2.0," where social media enables not just communication but citizen engagement and cocreation of the city's image (Merge & Kerk, 2023).

A particularly strategic element of Bogor's approach is its collaboration with influencers, including the mayor's personal account. This move transcends mere trend-following; it is a calculated response to a media landscape characterized by declining trust in institutional voices. As Abidin (2023) notes, 68% of millennials place greater trust in influencer-generated content than in official government advertisements. This trust is rooted in what Zenker and Erfgen (2014) identify as the higher perceived authenticity and relatability of influencers. Consequently, influencers act as "humanizing intermediaries" (Vuignier et al., 2023), bridging the credibility gap and lending social proof to the city's branding claims, thereby making the abstract concept of the "city" more tangible and trustworthy for the digital citizenry.

The creation of the mascot "Si Rubo" represents a masterful application of symbolic branding. More than a graphic element, it is an anthropomorphic vessel for the city's identity, directly operationalizing Kavaratzis's (2005) view of secondary communication as planned, symbolic action. By rooting the mascot in local folklore (the Bogor deer), the city taps into a reservoir of cultural meaning, enhancing memorability and emotional connection. The empirical support for this is strong; Reddy et al. (2024) found that folklore-based mascots increase destination recall by 2.5 times compared to abstract logos. Furthermore, its extension into merchandise, as shown by Ariesta (2020), transforms the mascot from a passive symbol into an active, revenue-generating touchpoint that continuously reinforces brand awareness and fosters local civic pride.

Bogor's proactive media relations strategy ensures that the city's narrative is amplified through credible third-party channels. This practice is a direct application of agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), where consistent media coverage informs the public not what to think, but what to think about—in this case, Bogor's achievements in tourism and public service. As Wijaya (2024) asserts, collaboration with media outlets enhances news accuracy and public trust, providing an external validation that paid media cannot. This creates a powerful synergy: while owned media (social media, mascot) and earned media (influencers, press coverage) operate independently, their collective effect is a reinforced and multi-sourced brand narrative that significantly boosts the credibility and penetration of Bogor's secondary communication efforts.

Tertiary Communication: "Media Monitoring" as Public Opinion and Responsive Governance

Tertiary communication, encompassing the uncontrolled and organic discourse generated by word-of-mouth, citizen reviews, and media commentary (Kavaratzis, 2004), represents the most authentic and often most influential layer of a city's brand perception. In Bogor, the significance of this dimension is not merely acknowledged but is met with a proactive and institutionalized response. The analysis reveals that "media monitoring" emerged as a central theme among informants, indicating a strategic pivot from simply broadcasting messages to actively listening to and managing the public conversation. This proactive stance is visualized in the exploration diagram below.
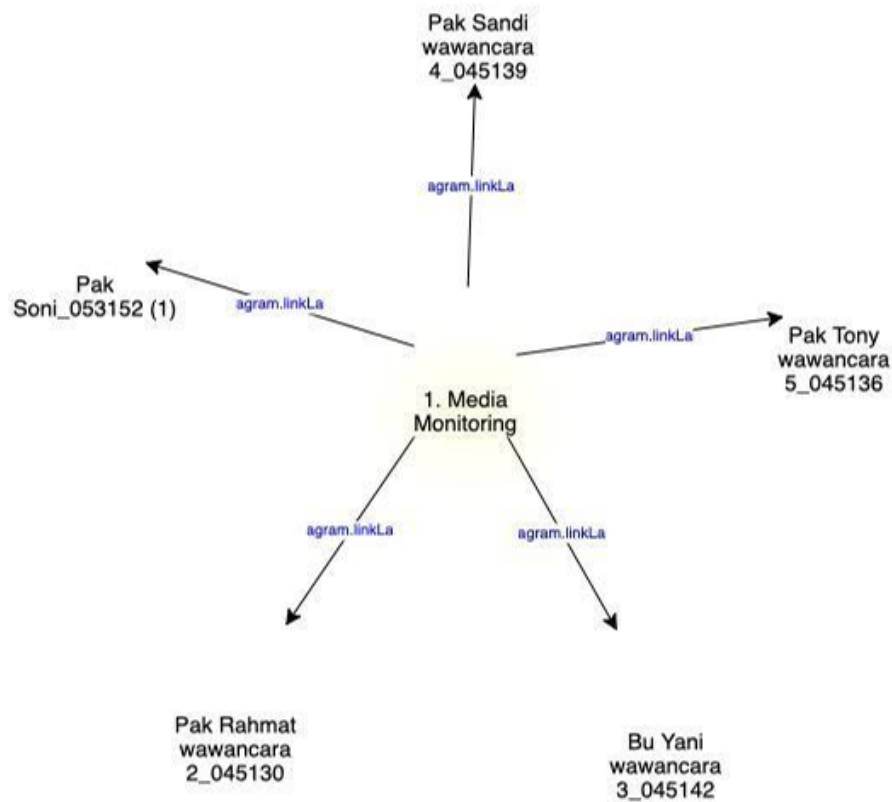
Figure 7 Tertiary Communication

The cornerstone of this strategy is the digital complaint system, Si Badra (Sistem Informasi Berbagi Aduan dan Saran), which formalizes the city's engagement with tertiary communication. By providing a structured channel for citizens and tourists to report issues—from potholes to public service failures—the government effectively captures and channels organic public discourse into a manageable feedback loop. The guaranteed response time of under 48 hours, coupled with an automatic escalation mechanism to the mayor's office, transforms passive grievance into a dynamic tool for accountability. This operational model directly addresses the risks highlighted by previous research (Sparks & Browning, (2011); Rohimakumullah, M.A. et al., (2025)), which found that unaddressed negative online reviews can significantly damage a destination's image and deter visitation. Conversely, as Tanković et al. (2022) argue, empathetic and timely responses to such feedback are instrumental in restoring public trust and rehabilitating a tarnished reputation.

Beyond reactive complaint management, Bogor's media monitoring division employs sentiment analysis to scan the digital landscape, identifying emergent crises and shifting public moods. This practice aligns with the concept of "*reputational resilience*" articulated by Santos et al. (2018), who demonstrated that open-source intelligence tools can serve as an early-warning system, allowing organizations to preempt full-blown crises. By systematically analyzing public discussions, the city transitions from being a passive subject of conversation to an active interpreter of its social and reputational context.

In this synthesis, Bogor's sophisticated approach to tertiary communication underscores a profound understanding that in the digital age, a city's brand is not what it says it is, but what the public perceives it to be. The city's strategy demonstrates that sustainable city branding is an iterative dialogue, not a monologue. It hinges on a governance model that is fundamentally responsive, transparent, and adaptive. This aligns with Ruslan's (2010) assertion that modern public relations is defined by maintaining two-way communication and effective crisis mitigation. Ultimately, Bogor's management of tertiary communication is not a peripheral support function but a core component of its "smart city" identity,

proving that the most powerful branding occurs not in the messages a city sends but in the conversations it fosters and the problems it solves.

Conclusion

Bogor's branding strategy is grounded in a diagnostic reading of stakeholders and assets, from spatial constraints to cultural capital, which motivates a resource-rational choice of culinary and sport tourism as the city's identity pillars. This strategic orientation is codified through substantive policy—the 2019–2027 smart city masterplan—and supported by delivery capacities (e.g., civil-service training) and digital products such as Laksa, which aggregate destination information and reduce visitor search frictions. Symbolic instruments, especially the "Bogor Berlari" tagline, compress these choices into a memorable cue that signals agility in service and an active urban lifestyle. Together, strategy, substance, and symbolic action articulate a coherent value proposition while highlighting the need for stronger cross-unit integration so that communicative promises are continuously verified in everyday experience.

Implementation aligns with Kavaratzis' three communication layers. Primary communication materializes the brand through urban form and programs—pedestrian environments, transport upgrades, and event culinary/sport experiences based—so the city itself functions as an experiential signal. Secondary communication orchestrates managed publicity across owned and earned channels (official platforms, media partnerships, influencer collaborations, and mascots) to maintain narrative coherence and reach. Tertiary communication institutionalizes listening and responsiveness via media-monitoring routines and the Si Badra complaint loop, converting organic discourse into actionable service improvements. In concert, these communicative layers are enabled by e-government mechanisms—platforms, data integration, and feedback management—that advance SPBE dimensions of governance maturity, service quality, transparency, and citizen participation, thereby demonstrating the role of e-government in Bogor City's smart city strategy toward SPBE enhancement.

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