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The Role of Government in the Implementation of Smart Branding in Blora Regency

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OPEN ACCESS

Citation: Sofie, T., & Rachmawati, R. (2024). The Role of Government in the Implementation of Smart Branding in Blora Regency. *Jurnal Bina Praja*, 16(2), 261–278. <https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.16.2024.261-278>

Submitted: 22 June 2024

Accepted: July 2024

Published: August 2024

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Abstract: Blora Regency is one of the districts selected in the “Movement Towards 100 Smart Cities” program, where smart branding is one of the important elements that support the implementation of smart cities in the district. Smart branding utilizes local potential and uniqueness to promote regions’ competitiveness. The application of smart branding is seen in three aspects: tourism branding, business branding, and city appearance branding. This research analyzes the condition of smart branding in Blora Regency and the government’s role in supporting smart branding. It will also analyze short-, medium-, and long-term smart branding priority programs. The research used a qualitative method, where data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This research shows that smart branding in Blora Regency is one of the efforts to increase promotion and create a competitive area. This condition encourages tourists to visit and investors to invest their capital. Strengthening smart branding is also carried out through city planning. Meanwhile, accessibility optimization continues. Some slogans strengthen smart branding, including “Dolan Blora.” The government’s role is quite good in providing training and assistance for tourism managers, promoting the area to investors, and increasing accessibility. Various programs are deployed to support smart branding in the short, medium, and long term. Several programs to support the implementation of smart branding have been implemented either by the government or by involving third parties.

Keywords: Smart City; Smart Branding; City Branding; Government.

1. Introduction

Geography is a science that studies everything on the surface of the earth. Geography has three approaches, namely spatial, ecological, and regional complex approaches. As time goes by and globalization increases, geographical phenomena are influenced by developments in information technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is technology related to the retrieval, collection (acquisition), processing, storage, dissemination, and presentation of information (Leriyono et al., 2018). ICT is a collection of technologies and applications related to electronic processes, storage, and transfer of information for various uses (Cohen et al., 2002; Rachmawati, 2014). ICT use is growing rapidly and has become a tool in developing smart cities in an area. For the government, ICT is used for renewal, evaluating how a city can function best at all times, setting up the necessary technology, and anticipating and dealing with problems that arise (Rachmawati, 2019). Information itself has become society's primary need in the digital era (Sari & Rachmawati, 2021).

Smart cities are urban services that integrate local governments and various stakeholders through information and communication technology resources, human resources, and the ecosystem (Djunaedi et al., 2018). Smart city implementation is related to physical and non-physical aspects of developing smart infrastructure (Rachmawati et al., 2020). Smart cities aim to improve citizens' quality of life; this condition, of course, requires interconnection between various stakeholders (Qi, 2021). The concept of smart cities is increasing in line with the Movement Towards 100 Smart Cities program launched by the Ministry of Communication and Information in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of PUPR, Bappenas, and the Presidential Staff Office. Through this movement, guidance is provided to designated districts/cities to prepare Smart City Masterplans so that they can make good use of technology so they can improve community services and accelerate the potential of each region (Direktorat Jenderal Aplikasi Informatika Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2021).

Blora Regency is one of the districts that successfully implemented a smart city in 2018. The determination of a smart city in Blora Regency was ratified through the Regent's Decree (SK) Number 458.1/394/2018 concerning the Establishment of the Blora Regency Smart City Council. Smart City is also a superior program in the Blora Regency Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) for 2021-2026. Districts/cities developing smart cities are competing to further demonstrate the advantages of the smart cities being implemented. Every city tries to form a brand that differentiates its city from other cities.

In an effort to increase competition between regions, appropriate strategies are needed, such as increasing regional branding. City branding can foster a sense of pride and make residents feel more connected to the vision and identity of their city (Sutjiatmi et al., 2023).

City Branding is marketing to promote a tourist destination's positive image to attract tourists to visit (Blain et al., 2005). A strong brand image is demonstrated to increase an organization's visibility, recognition, and reputation (Jo Hatch & Schultz, 2003). As one of the dimensions of a smart city, smart branding aims to highlight regional identity through its potential and uniqueness. Smart branding is applied to attract interest and participation from the community both within and outside the region, as well as business actors and investors, to positively contribute to accelerating regional development. Smart branding includes tourism, business, and city spatial planning. As for opportunities in terms of city branding, increasing development with

a unique background will display the city brand so that it can advance the city (Suardi et al., 2023).

Blora Regency itself has unique advantages in terms of tourism, culture, and natural resources. This condition can attract investors to invest their capital or tourists to visit. In response to this reality, smart branding is an important dimension that the Blora Regency government must optimize. This condition also considers the presence of petroleum in Blora Regency, whose mining and excavation sector provides the highest regional income. Based on Gross Regional Domestic Income (GRDP) by the business field at current prices, this sector contributed Rp8,489,321.57 (Statistics of Blora Regency, 2024). The mining and quarrying sector itself comes from non-renewable natural resources, so they will run out at any time. Therefore, the government must take advantage of other potentials to support regional income.

Blora Regency has various potentials that are worthy of further development. This district is covered by teak forests, where the Blora forest is said to be the world's number one quality teak forest area (Nurkholifah & Kasuma, 2018). This potential makes Blora Regency an important city in the economy of the Netherlands East Indies (Nurkholifah & Kasuma, 2018). Since colonial times, teak wood has been traded on the European market. Therefore, some of the relics of the reign are the Loco Tour Heritage tourist attraction, which was previously used as a teak wood carrier. Apart from that, a tourist destination that utilizes teak forests is the Gubug Payung Tour in Temengeng Village, which was once a train stopover.

Besides attracting tourist interest, creative Blora teak wood crafts can penetrate the international market. These crafts include wood carvings, lathes, antique furniture, building materials, etc. These creative crafts are mostly in Jiken District and Jepon District, especially in Bangsri and Tempellemahbang Villages. Creative crafts can be one of the attractions in tourist destinations where tourists can be involved in making teak wood crafts. Cultural tourism potential includes various traditional arts and cultural attractions of the Blora community, where this potential can support regional and national tourism attractions (Kristiani et al., 2013). Cultural tourism that is developing in the community includes the arts of barongan, tayub, wayang krucil, wayang tengul, kentrung, klothek, drumblek and so on.

The low level of public awareness regarding Blora's uniqueness, such as traditional culture, natural tourism, and local crafts, is an obstacle to promoting the area. Optimizing smart branding is also influenced by the digital literacy of the people in it. If public knowledge regarding digital platforms for regional branding is still low, it will be difficult to involve the public in branding efforts. Apart from that, a coherent regional identity has not been implemented well. Some brands used in Blora Regency include; "Blora Mustika," which was used from 2008 to 2017, "Blora Kuncara," which was used in 2018, and "Blora Pesona Mustika."

Although "Dolan Blora" has now become a brand that has mushroomed both among the government and the people of Blora Regency in supporting regional tourism and business activities, this brand does not yet provide a clear picture of the potential in Blora Regency. The basic problem in this district is that the distributed branding is not optimal, so interaction is relatively low. The low level of interaction in Blora Regency makes this district the area with the lowest population density and even the quietest district in Central Java, according to the Central Java Provincial Statistics Agency in Figures (2021). Based on this data, the population density in Blora Regency in 2020 was 490.05 people/km² with a population of 884,333 people.

Previous studies analyzed the effectiveness of smart branding in an area. A study by Patabuga et al. (2019) explains how smart branding in Tomohon City was deployed

to exploit the community's tourism potential and social conditions to become a city icon that is easy to remember and provides its message for visiting tourists. Similar studies by Hartono et al. (2019) regarding the government's strategy in building city branding in Tanjung Pinang City, namely by optimizing infrastructure and active participation from the private sector and the community. Both studies discuss the impact of implementing smart branding and things that support the sustainability of regional branding.

The research focuses on the government's role in implementing smart branding to support implementation in Blora Regency itself. The final dynamics of the research deployed are the existing conditions of the government's implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency, the government's role in developing smart branding, and the smart branding priority program that supports the implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency. The research method used is qualitative, using primary data and secondary data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

2. Methods

Research was conducted on the government's role in implementing smart branding to support smart city implementation in Blora Regency. The selection of research locations was based on the district's success in becoming one of 100 districts/cities promoted as smart cities in Indonesia by the Ministry of Communication and Information. In accordance with the 2021 Smart City Masterplan Guidelines published by the Ministry of Communication and Information, Blora Regency implements six dimensions in a smart city, namely Smart Governance, Smart Branding, Smart Economy, Smart Society, Smart Living, and Smart Environment. In connection with increasing competitiveness and accelerating regional economic growth, smart branding is a factor that needs to be considered. This fact is based on the fact that cities must have the right promotional strategies to attract investors, tourists, and business people. Blora Regency has various potentials and characteristics. Viewed from a tourism perspective, Blora Regency has the potential for natural, cultural, artificial, and special interest tourism. The uniqueness of the karst landscape encourages the diversity of hill and cave tourism. Hilly nature tourism includes places such as Pencu Hill, Kemuning Hill, etc. Meanwhile, cave tourism in Blora Regency includes Sentono Cave, Kidang Tinapan Cave, Terawang Cave, and so on. Artificial tourism in Blora Regency includes Greneng Reservoir, Tempuran Reservoir, Bentolo Reservoir, and Seloparang Reservoir. Cultural tourism includes the Sunan Pojok Tomb, the Jipang Duchy Temple, the Baitunnur Great Mosque, etc. Meanwhile, special interest tourism such as Tirtonadi Recreation Park and Griya Keramik Balong.

Viewed from a business ecosystem perspective, Blora Regency has various business potentials. Blora Regency is present as a petroleum-producing area, where the mining and quarrying sector makes a high contribution to Gross Regional Domestic Income (GRDP) according to Business Sector based on current prices based on data from the Blora Regency Central Statistics Agency (2024) amounting to Rp8,489,321.57. However, this sector is classified as a non-renewable natural resource, so it will run out anytime. City identity is enforced through regional potential and assets. Smart branding is one of the dimensions determined by the Blora Regency Government as a relevant program to strengthen the implementation of smart cities in the Blora Regency. Therefore, the government's role in developing smart branding in Blora Regency is very important.

The research used primary and secondary data, which were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with

the Department of Youth, Sports, Culture and Tourism (Dinporabudpar), Department of Agriculture, Food and Livestock, Blora Regency, Department of Communication and Information (Dinkominfo), Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (DPUPR), Department of Housing, Settlements and Transportation (Dinrumkimhub), Department Environment (DLH), Blora Regency Trade Cooperatives and UMK Service (Dindakop), Integrated Investment and Licensing Service (DPMPTSP) and the Community. The community consists of the admin of the Instagram account “Dolan Blora” and two members of the general public. Data analysis used the stages of Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data display, and verification (Ricardo et al., 2022; Rosyada, 2020). Data analysis used the stages of Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data display and verification (Ricardo et al., 2022; Rosyada, 2020).

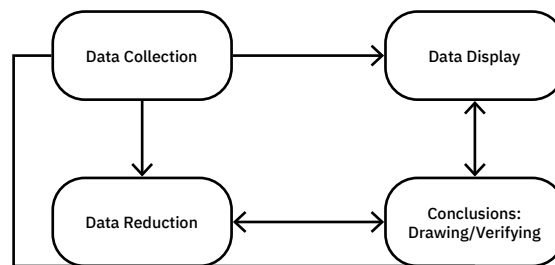


Figure 1. Data Analysis Used the Stages of Miles and Huberman (1994)

Source: Rosyada (2020) and Ricardo et al. (2022)

Figure 1 shows the data processing process carried out. After the data is collected, the next step is data reduction. Reduction is a form of analysis carried out by sorting, concentrating, simplifying, and focusing data obtained in the field based on notes made by researchers from interviews with data sources (Jaya, 2021). In general, data presentation in qualitative research uses narrative text. However, it can also be presented as graphs, matrices, networks, and diagrams. Conclusions in qualitative research are new findings that have never existed before. The conclusions can be temporary if various findings are still obtained. However, if no data is found in the field or the data is saturated, this conclusion can be said to be the conclusion. In the research, the technical data analysis used was descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach. Descriptive analysis is a data analysis technique that attempts to provide an overview of the characteristics of data originating from a sample (Jaya, 2021). Descriptive qualitative is a research method that moves on a simple qualitative approach through an inductive flow.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Condition Existing Smart Branding in the Regency Blora

The area needs a unique identity for the interesting interests of various parties in competition between areas. Good in increasing investment and visiting travelers (Ashworth & Page, 2011). Success determination branding in a city or area, of course, is related to the role of government, investors, industry tourism, and society existing locally (Mernawati et al., 2022). If a city has a brand, the city's development will also be faster, and the city will become more famous (Juniarti et al., 2023). Government Regency Blora uses the branding “Dolan Blora” to promote the potency area. “Dolan Blora” is used to promote the potential unique Regency Blora to the audience in general. However, the branding “Dolan Blora” was deemed inappropriate because Dolan's facilities, such as transportation and hotels, were not yet supported. Based on Location Quotient (LQ) analysis, which is based on Gross Regional Income (GRDP) based on current prices according to business fields, during the last five years (2019-

2023), the sectors that have an LQ value > 1 are the sectors that have an LQ value > 1. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Sector; Mining and quarrying; Wholesale and Retail Trade, Car and Motorcycle Repair; Provision of Accommodation and Food and Drink; Government Administration, Defense, Social Security; Education Services and Other Services.

Table 1. Location Quotient (LQ) Analysis of Blora Regency

BUSINESS FIELD		LQ BLORA REGENCY				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	1,60	1,70	1,61	1,53	1,62
B	Mining and excavation	10,09	7,68	9,39	11,34	10,44
C	Processing industry	0,29	0,31	0,30	0,29	0,31
D	Procurement of Electricity and Gas	0,63	0,68	0,64	0,62	0,64
E	Water Supply, Waste Management, Waste, Recycling	0,58	0,62	0,57	0,55	0,61
F	Construction	0,39	0,41	0,39	0,40	0,42
G	Wholesale and Retail Trade, Car and Motorcycle Repair	1,13	1,21	1,12	1,07	1,13
H	Transportation and Warehousing	0,79	1,00	0,94	0,78	0,83
I	Provision of accommodation and food and drink	1,04	1,18	1,13	1,09	1,15
J	Information and communication	0,30	0,32	0,29	0,28	0,29
K	Financial Services and Insurance	1,01	1,08	1,00	0,96	1,03
L	Real estate	0,72	0,77	0,72	0,68	0,71
M, N	Company Services	0,75	0,82	0,77	0,74	0,78
O	Government Administration, Defense, Social Security	1,14	1,22	1,13	1,09	1,15
P	Education Services	1,33	1,42	1,34	1,30	1,37
Q	Health Services and Social Activities	0,98	1,05	0,99	0,95	1,01
R, S, T, U	Health Services and Social Activities	1,27	1,41	1,34	1,25	1,32

Table 1 illustrates that these sectors have the potential to become leading sectors and can serve markets outside the region (Muta'ali, 2015). The more basic sectors a region has, the greater the potential for economic activity. The analysis above shows that mining and quarrying are the sectors with the highest LQ values in the Blora Regency. This sector cannot always be relied on because it is included in renewable energy. This condition encourages the government to shift economically by branding other leading sectors. "Dolan Blora" does not describe other potentials apart from tourism and the creative economy in Blora Regency. However, the existence of this branding is quite high, and regional agencies also use this branding to introduce regional potential. The ICT component encourages the optimization of the dissemination of information on branding use. This condition is characterized by the high number of followers of the "Dolan Blora" account on Instagram social media.

This Instagram account is followed by 8,631 other Instagram accounts. The "Dolan Blora" Instagram account contains content about tourist destinations, culinary delights, tourism and cultural events, and sports competitions organized by the local government. Even though the district government does not manage the Instagram account, its posts are quite active in promoting the region. This condition also shows that this branding is widely known by the public. This branding was deliberately used by the community to introduce Blora Regency to other areas. However, the government

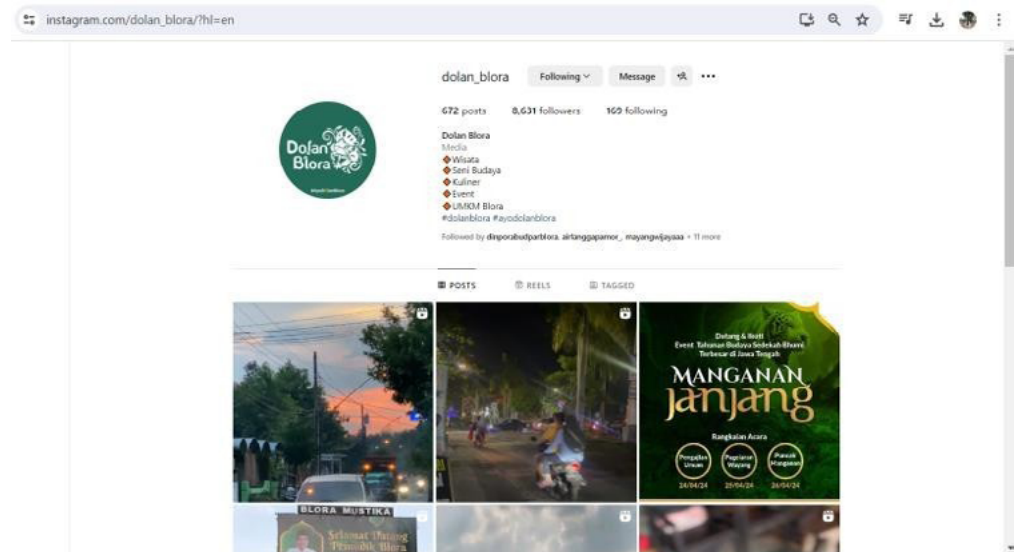


Figure 2. Instagram Account "Dolan Blora"

Source: Instagram Account "Dolan Blora"

must make efforts to change the public's perspective so that the involvement of tourists in every tourism activity must be prioritized, even planned wisely (Fitri et al., 2023).

Implementing integrated smart branding with branding slogans can become a strong focus in optimizing promotion potency. From a tourism perspective, destination brand equity is also used in assessing destination brand performance (Shi et al., 2022). Deployed promotions through optimization branding slogans and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) have given breakthroughs in ecosystem tourism in Regency Blora. The condition thereby showed an increase in the number of tourists visiting in the period of 5 years' time. In 2017, the number of tourists in the Regency Blora was as many as 256.237 tourists; in 2018, there were 363.730 tourists; in 2019, there were 378.370 tourists; in 2020, there were 243.129 tourists; in 2021, there were 300.559 tourists; in 2022, there were 538.790 tourists and in 2023 there were 789.667 tourists.

Government Regency Blora has built and developed a destination worth tourists' trips to. From an economic perspective, tourism activities can contribute to regional income from taxes, parking fees, and tickets or bring in foreign exchange from foreign tourist visits (Simandjorang et al., 2023). Potency tourism in the Regency Blora is diverse from tour nature, culture, and artificial. This is not enough. There are 21 destinations tour feasible in the District Blora, both managed by the government or individuals among them are Kemuning Hill, Key Hill, Serut Hill, Sentono Cave, Terawang Cave, Bluron Village, Samin Village, Village Tour Sambongrejo, Loco Tour, MC Edupark, Puncak Pencu, Puncak Mundri, Kedung Pupur, Gedong Temple Pitu, Kampung Duren, Tempuran, Taman Sarbini, Tirtonadi, Noyo Gimbal, Griya Ceramics Balong, Prayer Deer Tinapan and Reservoir Greneng. The distribution of tourist destinations is in Figure 3.

Completeness infrastructure tourists Still Keep going deployed by the government. Infrastructure tourists are anything else customized to the tourist's location. Like infrastructure, the path that becomes responsibility government regency If the road in question is road district, as well as responsibility answer government village If the road in question is road village.

The potential and uniqueness found in Regency Blora are enough to interest investors in investing capital. Investment No can separate from a growth economy. The growth economy will increase along with enhanced investment inside it (Todaro

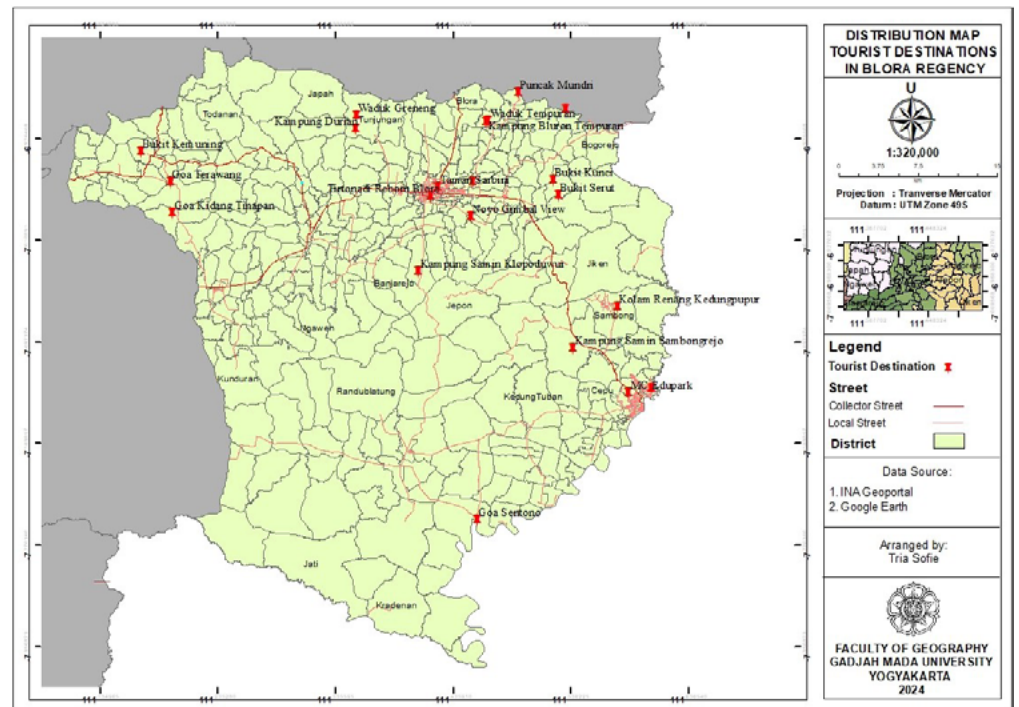


Figure 3. Map of the Distribution of Tourist Destinations in Blora Regency

Source: Researcher, 2024

& Smith, 2011). In 2023, investor interest in investing capital in the District Blora increased. Not only local investors but also foreign investors are looking at the unique Regency Blora. Foreign Investment (PMA) in the District Blora originates from China and Korea, though it has not yet reached the stage of seriousness. That matter is caused by various considerations like its height, price, land, and energy work in the district of Blora. Blora Alone is tall compared to regency surroundings, namely IDR 2,100,000 (In-depth Interview with DPMPTSP). Another consideration is the availability of electricity, which is still low. If the availability of electricity is sufficient, so the possibility of needing a big factory can be sufficient. The availability of electricity is a crucial factor in investment enhancement, especially in industry manufacturing. Infrastructure electricity influential in a growth economy (Putri, 2014).

Overall, the existence of smart branding encourages increased investment in Blora Regency. This condition is in line with the majority of investment from MSMEs because of the large number of business actors in this sector. According to data from the Blora Regency Cooperative Trade and SME Service, the number of MSMEs in Blora Regency is currently 13.652 business actors (In-depth Interview with Dindakop). Meanwhile, based on data from the Blora Regency Investment and Integrated Licensing Service, the largest MSME investment in Blora Regency from August 2021 to 2024 was the majority of retail trade in rice and secondary crops, with a total of 1.513 projects. Rice and corn in Blora Regency are superior natural products, but there are not many derivative products. Apart from that, technology optimization in cultivating these two products has also not been carried out properly. The climatic conditions of Blora Regency, located in a karst area, are also an obstacle in supporting water needs for rice and corn cultivation. The next largest majority of MSMEs in Blora Regency are businesses in the cracker and similar industries, with a total of 1.036 projects, and other food product industries, with a total of 964 projects (In-depth Interview with DPMPTSP).

The city appearance of Blora Regency has not been properly improved, and the center of community activity is still in the market and square. Meanwhile, other sub-districts, especially those on the border, have not developed well. The area around Blora Square will develop rapidly, thereby encouraging a backwash effect of expanding development in urban areas, which will hamper development in the areas behind it. This condition causes economic inequality (Fudhail et al., 2021). Several corners in Blora Regency have been beautified, some decorated with lights to attract public interest. Blora Square is made no less attractive with lighting elements that highlight every corner. Apart from that, the arrangement of the city's face can also be seen in the Bangkle Park.



Figure 4. Light Ornaments in the Bangkle Park

Source: Researcher Observation, 2024

One way to revive the hunger-free area is around Tirtonadi Park, which is located in Jalan Sudirman. Arranging the business stalls and installing beautiful lights makes the area a comfortable place to hang out. This development was able to revive the economy, especially MSMEs, after being slumped due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 5. Blora Regency Hunger Free Zone

Source: Official Social Media of Blora Regency Government, 2017

3.2. Role Government in Smart Branding Development

Implementation of smart branding in Regency Blora is Not free from the role of government inside it. The presence of the government supports efforts to develop tourists as a driving motor in forming decisions on the plan development (Alfiyah, 2019). As regulators and policyholders, the government is the main part of implementing smart branding. The implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency is encouraged by the integration of activity and business licensing served by Regional Apparatus Organizations. Indirectly, this condition impacts improving the regional business ecosystem, where it is easier for business actors to register their businesses. This change in governance supports increased regional investment because it indirectly invites people to legalize their businesses. So, it can be used as a plus point in attracting regional investment.

A region is expected to produce quality human resources, a political life prioritizing democracy, and a clear vision of the future. In response to the smart branding program, the Blora Regency Government conducted various training sessions to improve the quality of human resources. In building city branding, several things must be considered by the city government and the community (Zahrah, 2023). Training is aimed at tourism village managers to provide optimal quality in the management of natural resources and cultural resources. These conditions are hoped to produce a unique and attractive tourist village. Developing tourism requires integrated planning involving various sectors and stakeholders (Soesanta et al., 2023).

Making decisions must be based on reality to produce something solid, healthy, and good verdict (Ananto et al., 2015). The government is present as the supervisor and regulator of the planning and implementation process area. Besides commitment and infrastructure improvements, smart branding also requires attractive promotional packaging (Ismiati & Rachman, 2023). The government's role is to emit policies and regulations to accommodate every need of each element area. Government naturally has a role in generating creative ideas or innovation in an area. Innovation must applied through conceptual bureaucracy and system innovation via procedures and methods of Work (Lobbu et al., 2017). Innovations carried out by the Government Regency Blora about the implementation of smart branding are through the smart branding programs launched in the Smart City Masterplan. Next is the role government in the implementation of smart branding in the Regency Blora.

Organization Related Government	Role Government in Implementation of Smart Branding
Service Youth Sport Culture and Tourism (Dinporabudpar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling and promoting package tour • Organizing tourism and economic events creative • Training and mentoring to village tour • Use technology information and communication in promotion destination tourism, arts and culture with launching "Dolan Blora" application • Collaboration with party third in management village tour • Providing "Bankeu" capital to village tour • Increase infrastructure tourist • Appreciation perpetrator economy creative
Service Communication and Informatics (Dinkominfo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation network wifi on site tourism and culinary spots • Supervision to implementation smart branding
Service Work General and Setup Room (DPUPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement accessibility tourist
Service Housing, Settlements and Transportation (Dinrumkimhub)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application smart system in management Public Street Lighting (PJU)
Service Environment Life (DLH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Maintenance Green Open Space (RTH) • Management Square as landmarks area

Organization Related Government	Role Government in Implementation of Smart Branding
Service Trading Regency Cooperatives and MSEs Blora (Dindakop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSME training and mentoring Sticking of the “Dolan Blora ” logo inside packaging MSME products
Agriculture, food and fisheries (Dinpertan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of superior agricultural seeds
Service One Stop Investment and Licensing (DPMPTSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion potency local area towards investors Management profile and potential investment area Intensive and easy invest
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense of belonging to the region resulting in brand strengthening Evaluate regional brand credibility

Source: Analysis Researcher, 2024

Optimizing tourism is supported by the development of the “Dolan Blora” application, which includes tourist destinations, hotels, tourism directions, culinary and tourism, and cultural events carried out by the Blora Regency government. The “Dolan Blora” application supports the implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency. Similar to the “Hi Sumenep” application developed by the Sumenep City Government and “Wis Semar” developed by the Semarang Regency Government, “Dolan Blora” was launched to support the increase in tourists. Through the development of this application, smart tourism was developed to make it easier for tourists to obtain tourism information (Hamjen et al., 2023). This condition is the same as the Ekabo application used by the government for tourism marketing in Bogor Regency (Nugraha, 2024). In 2018, the government also launched the “Blora Kuncara” application. This application contains various important information, such as tourism, MSMEs, regional culinary delights, property, regional buying and selling, public service complaints, information on public transportation, job vacancies, and more. It makes it easier for local and non-regional people to get information about the Blora Regency more quickly and accurately.

In line with the government’s rapid development of the tourism sector, the implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency is hampered due to the lack of infrastructure to increase tourist attraction. The infrastructure in question supports infrastructure such as roads and quality human resources. Even though we have empowered Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to encourage tourism, the existing facilities and infrastructure are still inadequate. There is still a lot of tourism potential in Blora Regency that is worthy of development but is not balanced with adequate infrastructure (Seta et al., 2017). Limited access, accommodation, tourist transportation, and other facilities are obstacles that need to be considered.

Determining Blora Regency as an Industrial Potential Area (KPI) is an advantage in attracting investor interest. Currently, Blora Regency has 14 KPIs; if investors want to invest their capital in Blora Regency and their business field is industry, they can place it in one of these KPIs. The government becomes an informant for investors in knowing the condition of water, electricity, and accessibility for each KPI. The availability of KPI in Blora Regency is still limited. This condition is because 49% of the land in Blora Regency is managed by Perhutani, which is under the authority of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) (In-depth Interview with DPMPTSP). In several cases, investors withdrew their investment because the local government could not provide 50% of the integrated land in KPI (In-depth Interview with DPMPTSP). Regional geographical conditions are still an obstacle to accelerating regional investment. Road conditions for accessibility are also an important factor that must be developed.

Regarding the development of the creative economy, the government provides space for appreciation to creative economy players. Interesting activities were developed to support businesspeople in selling and buying their products. One of



Figure 6. Blora E-Craft Festival

Source: <https://www.beritaku.net/> (2023)

the activities launched was the Blora e-kraft Festival, as well as creative economy exhibitions and shows.

In fact, in 2024, a Creative Space will be inaugurated, which will be a gathering space for e-kraft practitioners to develop skills and collect work results. This shows that the government is aware of the importance of the creative economy in encouraging regional business activities. Tourism and regional business are closely related, where the government involves the private sector, including restaurants, hotels, and cafés in Blora Regency, to participate in promoting regional potential. The government collaborates with communities to implement tourism programs such as the Indonesian Tourism Association (HPI) and the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI). The creative industry products of each tourist village are promoted with the support of building places to sell souvenirs.

City appearance branding is one aspect that receives less attention from the government. This condition is based on the development of the city's face, which only focuses on the government center and areas with high economic activity. Urban planning provides an optimal impact on economic development. The Blora Regency Government is actively revitalizing regional parks. The revitalization of parks in Blora is indirectly an effort to make the smart branding program successful, namely the arrangement of Green Open Space (RTH) as a place for creativity. The arrangement of city parks includes the construction of a city park in Blora Square.

Based on the Decree (SK) of the Regent of Blora Number 650/285/2022 concerning the Determination of Public Green Open Space (RTH) in the Functional Area of the Blora Regency Subdistrict, there are several city parks managed by the regional government. Regional city parks are found in Blora District and Cepu District, where two areas are the government and economic centers of Blora Regency. The following is the distribution of city parks in Blora Regency. The arrangement of mini parks in Blora Regency makes the area even more colorful. Apart from that, the face of the city also becomes green and beautiful. The park's layout is quite strategic, so the view of public road users is cool. The arrangement of these parks supports the creation of a beautiful, neat, and comfortable city atmosphere.

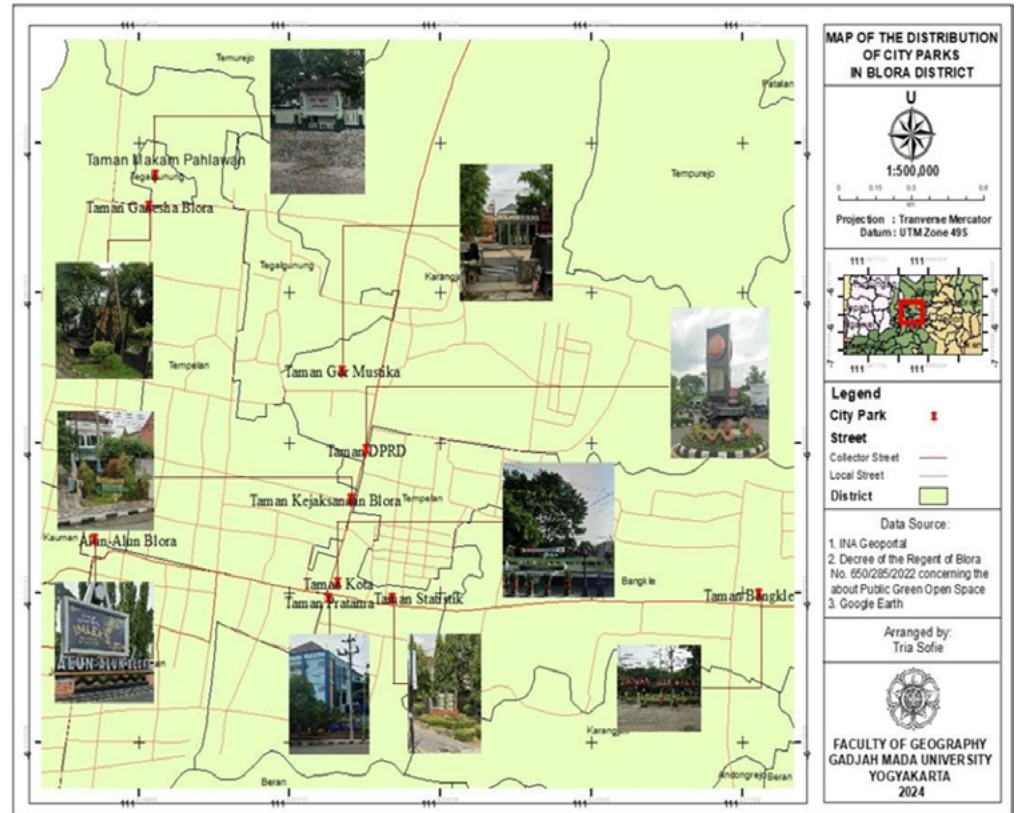


Figure 7. Map of the Distribution of City Parks in Blora District

Source: Analysis Researcher, 2024

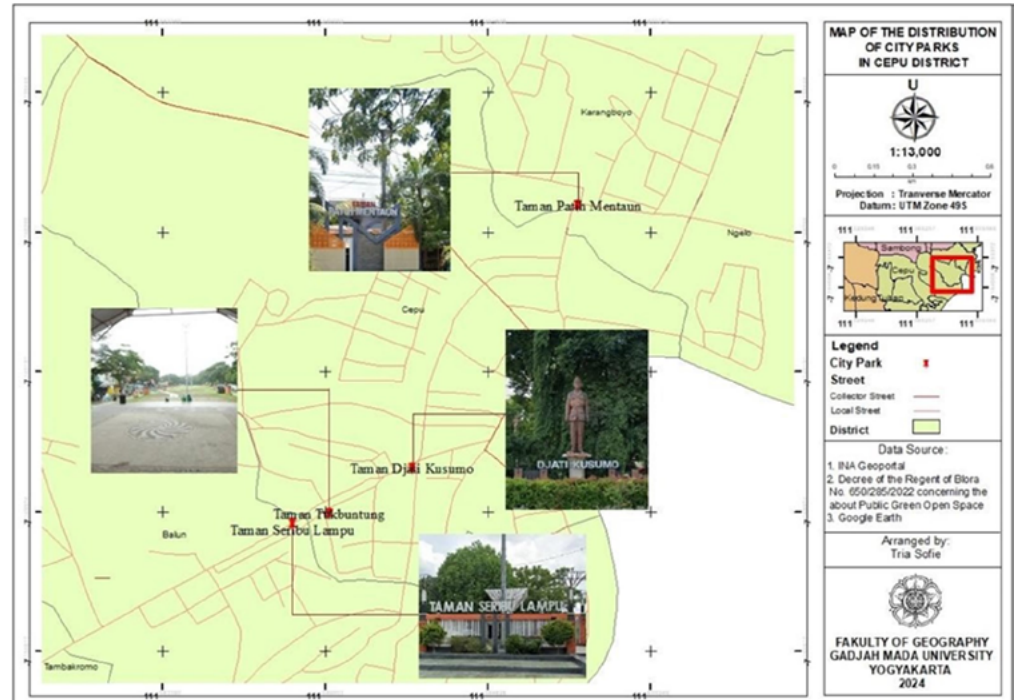


Figure 8. Map of the Distribution of City Parks in Cepu District

Source: Analysis Researcher, 2024

Apart from that, the government focuses on developing roads. Roads are an important element in developing smart branding because they can link one tourist destination to another or from one culinary spot to another.

The public's still high expectations regarding road improvements have encouraged the government to take active action to speed up road construction. This condition is reinforced by the regional head's appeal to build roads in Blora Regency intensively. The government is also increasing the development of regional street lighting. The street lighting itself is integrated with a smart system or smart lighting. This system controls street lighting; when damage occurs, it is easy to detect. This smart lighting system is one of the programs deployed to make smart branding a success in Blora Regency. The smart system that controls street lighting is in the form of an application. Street lighting using the system is deployed on Jalan Pemuda only, then the government will add three more sections by 2024.

3.3. Priority Program Smart Branding in Blora Regency

The smart branding program planned by the government involves several related agencies. These agencies include the Department of Youth, Sports, Culture and Tourism (Dinporabudpar), Department of Agriculture (Dipertan), Department of Communication and Information (Dinkominfo), Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (DPUPR), Department of Agriculture, Housing, Settlements, and Transportation (Dinrumkimhub) and the Department of the Environment (DLH). There are agencies that also play an important role in implementing smart branding, namely the Cooperative and UMK Trade Service (Dindakop) and the Integrated Investment and Licensing Service (DPMPTSP).

Determining the smart branding program in the Smart City Masterplan certainly involves agencies. The smart city master plan was determined by synthesizing the Regional Long-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) documents. The work program launched in the RPJMD is assessed for its relevance to implementing smart branding. The program that has been determined is then analyzed further with the relevant agencies. The agreed work program is then budgeted. The budgeted program will become a work program to encourage the implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency.

The smart branding program grouped becomes a priority program period in the short, medium, and long term. Grouping the program based on relevance with the latest conditions. Determining priority programs, including short, medium, and long smart branding-based societal trends. Term program intermediate implemented in period 5-year period (2019-2022) and term program long implemented in period 10 years (2023-2028) (Meitibellina & Hariyanti, 2020). Besides that, determining priority programs period medium and long also based on activities permanent like education, health, and infrastructure are becoming a principal area.

The implementation of the smart branding program, both short, medium, and long-term, was carried out well, although there were programs whose implementation was less than optimal. Approximately 27 smart branding programs are featured in the 2018 Blora Regency Smart City Masterplan. These programs are generally related to regional tourism, business, and the city's layout. This program is expected to be sustainable because it directly impacts optimizing regional branding. Quick Win smart cities in Blora Regency include Blora Kuncara, Smart Eco Village, and Sedot a Mas. Blora Kuncara is a Quick Win that supports the implementation of smart branding in Blora Regency. Launching the "Blora Kuncara" application is also a form of special attention from the government to promote the region by adapting technology and communication.

Some smart branding programs the Blora district government implements are The Blora Typical Culinary Place, Car Free Day, Motocross Championship, Tour Package

Sales, Event Calendar, and many more. The Blora Typical Culinary Place program is still actively implemented. This program is implemented by inviting regional guests and tourists from outside the region to visit typical Blora culinary places such as Soto Galuh, Lontong Ngloram, and Nasi Pecel Blora.

The regional government continues to facilitate the development of MSMEs, especially regional culinary delights. Koplakan is a typical Blora culinary place in the city center because it is located across from Blora Square. The government even provides free internet facilities at these culinary places. The Regent of Blora and the Dinporabudpar took advantage of the homecoming moment to introduce the culinary potential that must be tasted in Blora Regency. The moment of going home is certainly important in regional branding because the migrants return to their hometowns.

Blora Car Free Day is a program that was implemented before Blora Regency was declared a smart city. This activity itself was held at Blora Square. Based on the official government website, this program was stopped due to COVID-19 and will be held again in 2022 (<https://www.blorakab.go.id/>). This program is, of course, very relevant to smart branding, especially involving the community. Information about the area can also be disseminated via social media to people participating in Blora Car Free Day activities to improve the image of the area. Car-free day is present as a new trend of activism as well as economic entertainment for the community (Budiarti et al., 2024). This program is implemented every weekend as a movement to encourage people to exercise as well as an opportunity for MSMEs to market their products.

The Motocross Championship is a program that has been implemented since 2018. This National Championship is held at the Super Mario Blora Circuit. Of course, this activity is a branding event for the region because the championship participants come from various big cities in Indonesia. Moreover, the Super Mario Blora Circuit offers beautiful views of green trees. However, this program has not been implemented yet.

Regarding tour packages, the government has been actively encouraging their sale. The government also organizes human resources (HR) training in tourism and coaches Pokdarwis. The government actively supports tourist village managers to develop tourism packages. Training and coaching for managers and Pokdarwis continue to be deployed to optimize existing potential. Based on the government's official website (<https://www.blorakab.go.id/>), the government also conducted a Test Tour Package which was carried out in 2021 in Kampung Pelangi, Bangsri Village, Jepon District and Bukit Kunci, Bangowan Village, Jiken District. The creative event calendar is a smart branding program that is still active. This program is quite good in increasing tourist visits to Blora Regency. This condition is caused by a creative event calendar providing information about tourism, cultural, and sports events in the Blora Regency.

Based on the analysis, the smart branding program has focused on realizing regional brands; however, several programs have not been implemented due to changes in responsibilities and management of several Regional Apparatus Organizations. Besides, limited costs are an obstacle to implementing the smart branding program in Blora Regency. Determining the smart branding program is sufficient to support the implementation of a smart city in the Blora Regency. The government must strongly commit to implementing the smart branding program. The existence of a smart city, which, of course, has a positive impact on regional development, must be strengthened with binding regulations. Smart cities can be a solution to development problems at the city and regional level (Hasibuan & Sulaiman, 2019).

4. Conclusion

Smart branding is an effort to promote the potential and advantages of Blora Regency. In general, the government is quite good at launching various tourism programs and business activities and planning the face of the city. Various trainings are provided, including training for tourism managers and business actors and increasing accessibility. The government is also reorganizing the face of the city by developing attractive ornaments in every corner of the area and planting regional parks. However, there is a need to strengthen coordination with third parties so that the smart branding program can run optimally.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank the supervisors of all educational staff at Gadjah Mada University for their warm support, motivation, and inspiration, as well as the departments under smart branding in Blora Regency for their support in data collection.

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