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OPTIMIZING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN ADDRESSING URBAN ISSUES IN BEKASI

Evi Mafriningsianti[1] , Sandi Setiadi[2]
[1]Universitas Muhammadiyah, Indonesia
[2]STISIP Guna Nusantara Cianjur
Email: evimarfrin@gmail.com[1] , setiadi442976@gmail.com[2] .

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Abstract

The paradigm shift from government to governance requires the active involvement of the community as partners in addressing complex urban issues such as flooding and waste management. This study aims to analyze the influence of community participation on collaborative governance and the effectiveness of urban problem handling in the city of Bekasi. The novelty of this study lies in placing the community as the main unit of analysis to fill the gap in previous studies that tended to focus on the perspective of government institutions. The research method used is quantitative explanatory with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) analysis techniques. Data were collected from 130 respondents in Bekasi City through purposive sampling. The results of hypothesis testing show that community participation has a very strong positive influence on strengthening collaborative governance (t=34.897). Furthermore, collaborative governance has a significant effect on the effectiveness of urban problem handling (t=3.440). Although citizen participation has a direct impact on effectiveness (t=2.299), the role of collaborative governance as a mediating variable is proven to be vital in optimizing citizen contributions into real and sustainable solutions (t=3.461). These findings confirm that substantive participation through equal dialogue spaces is the key to successful modern city governance.

Keywords: Community Participation, Collaborative Governance, Urban Issues, Bekasi City, New Public Governance.

INTRODUCTION

The development of public governance over the past two decades has shown a paradigm shift from government to governance, namely a model of public management that is no longer dominated by state actors, but involves a multi-actor network including the community, the private sector, and civil society (Žuvela et al., 2023). This shift is known in the literature as New Public Governance (NPG), which emphasizes collaboration, participation, and co-production as the main foundations of modern public service delivery(Bjärstig et al.,2024) . The complexity of contemporary public issues, especially in urban areas, cannot be resolved through a hierarchical bureaucratic approach alone, but requires the active involvement of citizens as partners in the governance process (Buelow et al.,2024). This phenomenon is increasingly relevant in the context of global urbanization, where cross-sector collaboration is key to managing various urban issues (Fossheim & Andersen, 2022). Developing cities face multidimensional problems such as urban flooding, waste management, traffic congestion, public service inequality, and environmental degradation, which are interdependent and involve various sectors (Behnke & Hegele, 2023 ; Hedlund et al.,2025). The cross-sectoral and interdependent nature of urban problems has led to the emergence of a collaborative governance approach that emphasizes deliberative dialogue and consensus among government and non-government actors (Moreno-Serna et al., 2024 ; Wang & Xu, 2024). Collaborative governance as a public decision-making process involving a collective of government and non-government actors through deliberative and consensus-based dialogue (Akiyama et al., 2022) . In this framework, the community is no longer positioned as an object of policy, but as an actor that participates in producing public policy solutions, encouraging inclusive participation and joint influence in decision-making (Hoefsloot et al., 2022; Wang & Xu, 2024). In Indonesia, post-decentralization reforms in local government administration have opened up opportunities for community participation through various formal mechanisms such as Development Planning Consultative Meetings (Musrenbang), public consultation forums, and community empowerment programs (Rusfiana & Kurniasih, 2024). However, various studies show that community participation is often still procedural and symbolic in nature, not yet

fully reflecting substantive collaborative practices (Be-Ere, 2022) . The success of collaborative governance is largely determined by the quality of social interaction, the level of trust, and the capacity of the community to engage meaningfully in the policy process (Bynner et al., 2023). This condition becomes even more important in the context of metropolitan satellite cities such as Bekasi City (Kurnia et al.,2023). As part of the Jabodetabek megacity area, Bekasi City has experienced rapid population growth and urbanization, which has led to increasingly complex urban problems, such as seasonal flooding, domestic waste management, pressure on residential infrastructure, and a growing need for public services. The Bekasi City Government has developed various community-based collaborative programs, including strengthening environmental participation, community forums, and community empowerment approaches (Sun et al.,2024). However, phenomena in the field show a gap between collaborative policy design and the actual level of community involvement. Community participation is often still limited to mobilizing activities or administrative attendance, rather than the process of joint formulation and decision-making (Bressane et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2024).

The main issue that arises is whether the collaborative governance practices that have been developed have truly created equal opportunities for community participation, or whether they are still dominated by a top-down approach by the government. Low public trust, unequal access to information, and differences in capacity among community groups are factors that have the potential to hinder the formation of effective collaboration in addressing urban issues (Badirova et al., 2023; Vento, 2024). Academically, research on collaborative governance in Indonesia generally still focuses on the perspective of government institutions or policy program evaluations, with local governments as the main unit of analysis in many studies (Mukhlis & Perdana, 2022). Many studies place local governments as the main unit of analysis, while the experiences and practices of community participation as collaborative actors have not been studied in depth (Rusfiana & Kurniasih, 2024). In fact, from the perspective of New Public Governance, public value is generated through interactions between the state and citizens in the co-production of public services, where collaboration between the government and the community is key to creating this value (Bjärstig et al., 2024). Thus, there is a research gap in the form of limited studies that specifically explore how communities understand, experience, and carry out collaborative roles in solving urban problems at the everyday practice level, which is still rarely discussed in depth in academic literature in Indonesia (Mukhlis & Perdana, 2022 ; Rusfiana & Kurniasih, 2024).

Based on these gaps, this study offers novelty by placing the community as the main unit of analysis in the study of collaborative governance, an important approach for understanding citizen involvement in complex and dynamic governance and co-production at the local level (Arai et al., 2021). The research not only assesses the existence of formal participation mechanisms but also explores the social dynamics of collaboration from the perspective of citizens, including their experiences of interaction with the government, levels of trust, capacity for participation, and forms of co-production that emerge in addressing urban issues in the city of Bekasi, in line with the latest approach that focuses on citizen participation and co-production in city management (Hoffman, 2022). This approach is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of New Public Governance studies in the Indonesian urban context while also generating practical recommendations on strategies to strengthen more inclusive and sustainable government-community collaboration, taking into account the challenges and opportunities in collaborative governance and community participation as agents of social change (Perera et al., 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

New Public Governance (NPG)

The paradigm of public administration has evolved from Old Public Administration, which emphasized bureaucratic hierarchy, to New Public Management, which is oriented toward market efficiency, and has further developed into New Public Governance (NPG) in response to the increasing complexity of public issues that cannot be resolved by the government alone (Krogh & Triantafillou, 2024). NPG places public service delivery in the context of network governance, which involves the government, society, and the non-state sector in the process of creating public value. From an NPG perspective, the community is no longer positioned as service users, but as co-producers who contribute to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public policy (Campomori & Casula, 2021). This approach emphasizes interdependence among actors, horizontal collaboration, social trust, and deliberative participation as key elements in the delivery of public services (Zhang et al., 2025).

Community Participation in Urban Governance

Community participation is a key element in collaborative governance, which can be seen through the concept of the ladder of citizen participation, which shows levels of participation ranging from manipulation to

citizen control (Bjørgen et al., 2021). In the constellation of modern governance, effective participation requires the active involvement of citizens in the decision-making process, not just physical presence or formal administration (Gonçalves et al., 2024). In the context of urban studies, community participation is highly strategic due to the complexity of urban issues and their proximity to citizens' daily lives. Public participation not only strengthens policy legitimacy but also improves the quality of decisions and the sustainability of program implementation(Jäntti et al.,2023). Participation also plays an important role in building the collaboration and trust needed in urban governance (Vento, 2024). In this study, participation indicators include (Jin & Guo, 2024) : (1) Participation in public forums and the expression of aspirations as part of planning, contribution of labor, ideas, or cooperation in environmental programs during implementation, as well as oversight through monitoring and the expression of criticism. (2) Access to transparent information and communication, as well as close interaction between the government and the community. (3) Community initiatives in independently building collective action.

Collaborative Governance

The concept of collaborative governance is rapidly developing in modern public policy studies, emphasizing the role of direct involvement of public and non-public actors in collective decision-making that is formal, consensual, and deliberative (Nel & Rymajdo, 2024). The collaborative governance model emphasizes several key elements, such as face-to-face dialogue or direct interaction between actors, which is an important foundation for building effective communication in a collaborative environment. Collaborative governance is a process of collaboration between the government and the community in solving public problems through equal and participatory interaction (Ansell et al.,2025). In this study, the main indicators include (Tian & Wang, 2024) : (1) Collaborative dialogue, which is open and two-way communication between actors. (2) Trust, reflected in government transparency and consistency. (3) Commitment to collaboration in the form of continuous community involvement. (4) Shared understanding, namely a common perception of problems and shared goals. (5) Co-production, namely the real involvement of the community in program implementation.

Effectiveness of Urban Problem Management

The effectiveness of urban problem management is the level of success of the government and the community in overcoming urban problems in a targeted, responsive, and sustainable manner through collaborative policies and actions (Bjärstig et al., 2024). This effectiveness is reflected in the ability of public programs to reduce the impact of urban problems such as flooding, waste, or environmental services, improving service quality and environmental conditions, meeting community needs, and generating public satisfaction (Wang, 2024). From the perspective of New Public Governance, effectiveness is not only measured by policy output, but also by the quality of the collaboration process, citizen participation, and the sustainability of the solutions produced jointly (Campomori & Casula, 2022). The effectiveness of urban problem management shows the level of success of policies and programs in addressing urban issues appropriately, quickly, and sustainably (Higgs et al., 2024). In this study, the indicators include (Higgs et al., 2024) : (1) The accuracy of program targets in accordance with community needs. (2) Government responsiveness in addressing issues and complaints. (3) Improvement in environmental quality and public services. (4) Level of community satisfaction with program outcomes. (5) Sustainability of policy implementation through consistent community maintenance and participation in supporting urban solutions.

Hypothesis Development

Based on theoretical studies and research frameworks, this study formulates hypotheses to explain the relationship between the main variables. These hypotheses describe the expected direction of influence and will be tested empirically to produce systematic and accountable scientific findings (Setiadi et al.,2025).

H1: Community participation has a positive effect on collaborative governance
H2: Community participation has a positive effect on the effectiveness of problem handling Urban
H3: Collaborative Governance has a positive effect on the Effectiveness of Urban Problem Handling Urban Issues
H4: Community participation has a positive effect on the effectiveness of problem handling Mediated by Collaborative Governance

The research framework is presented in the form of a diagram to visualize the relationships between the variables analyzed. The model is constructed based on relevant theoretical foundations and supported by previous research results described earlier as the conceptual basis of the study.

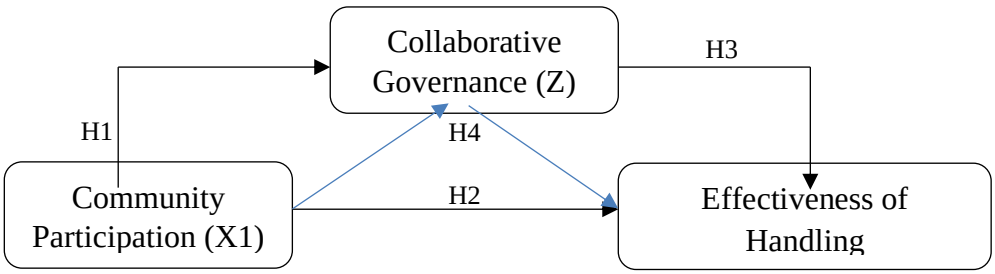

Figure 1. Research Framework
Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method, which is research that aims to explain the causal relationship between variables through empirical hypothesis testing (Setiadi et al.,2025). This approach was chosen because the study examines the influence of community participation on collaborative governance and the effectiveness of urban problem handling, while also analyzing the mediating role of collaborative governance in this relationship. The research was conducted in Bekasi City, West Java, which is a buffer zone for the Jabodetabek metropolitan area with high urbanization dynamics and faces various urban problems such as flooding, waste management, and environmental services. Bekasi City has also developed various community-based programs in urban governance, making it a relevant location for research.

The research population consists of Bekasi City residents who have experience in public participation activities, members of environmental communities, residents involved in government programs, and users of urban public services. Respondents in this study were determined through a non-probability sampling approach using purposive sampling techniques, namely the selection of respondents based on specific criteria in line with the research objectives. The sample size was determined based on the approach of Hair et al. in SEM/PLS analysis, which is a minimum of 5-10 times the number of research indicators (Magno et al.,2024). With 26 statement indicators multiplied by 5, the sample size was 130 respondents to increase the reliability of the analysis results. Data collection in this study used a questionnaire as the main instrument, which was then tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with the help of SmartPLS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model and Structural Model

This study analyzed 26 manifest variables and 3 latent variables using the Partial Least Square-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) method to examine the relationships between constructs comprehensively. The analysis included measurement models and structural models. The measurement model was used to assess the validity and reliability of latent constructs through observable indicators with a confirmatory factor approach ( ). Validity was tested through convergent and discriminant validity, with factor loading criteria above 0.70 (or ≥0.60 still acceptable) and AVE above 0.50. Reliability was measured using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70). The SEM-PLS method was chosen because it is flexible and robust for analyzing complex research models (Panahi et al., 2023; Rianto et al., 2024).

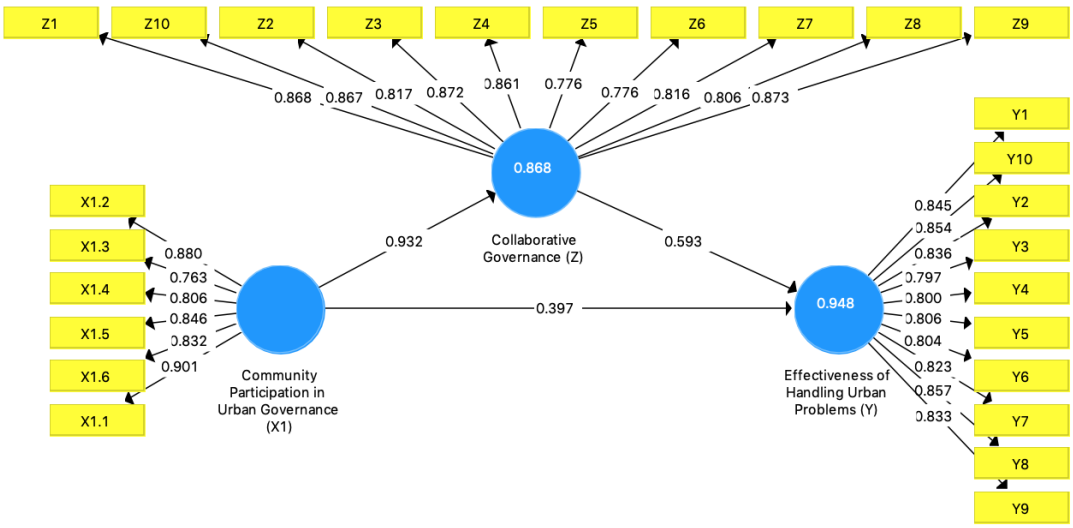

Figure 2. Outer Model
Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The loading factor values show that all indicators in the Community Participation, Collaborative Governance, and Urban Problem Handling Effectiveness variables are above 0.70, thus meeting the convergent validity criteria. This indicates that each indicator is able to represent the latent construct strongly and consistently, so that all indicators are declared valid and suitable for use in the research model analysis.

Table 1. AVE Values, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1)	0.704	0.915	0.934
Collaborative Governance (Z)	0.696	0.951	0.958
Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	0.682	0.948	0.955

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The AVE values for all variables were above 0.50 (0.682–0.704), indicating good convergent validity because the indicators were able to adequately explain the variance in the construct. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability all exceed 0.70 (0.915–0.958), indicating very high internal consistency. Thus, the three constructs are declared reliable and suitable for use in further structural analysis. Structural model testing using the PLS method was conducted to analyze the relationships between latent variables through path coefficient estimation using the bootstrapping technique. This approach was used to assess the direction of the relationship and the level of significance of the influence between the research constructs (Maulana et al., 2025).

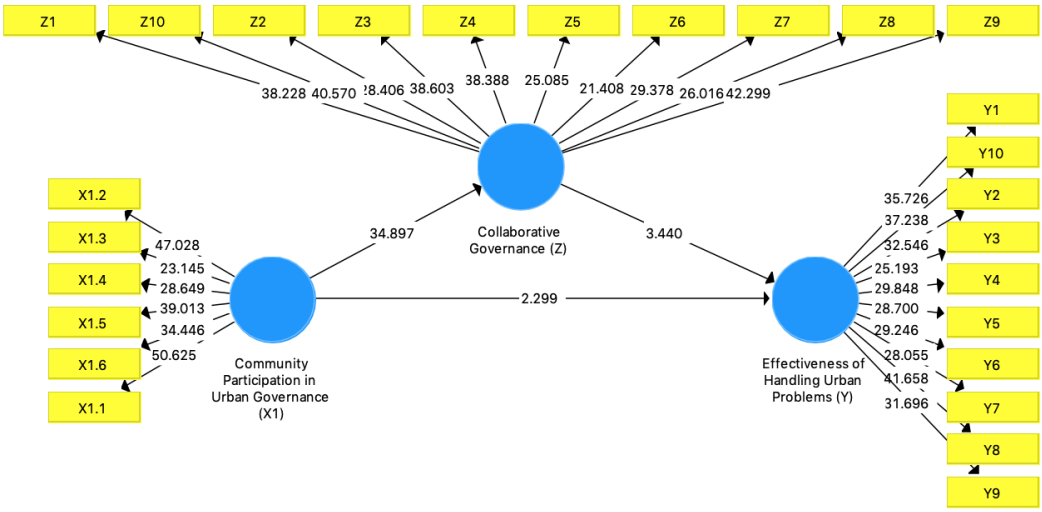

Figure 3. Bootstrapping
Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The results of the SEM-PLS analysis in Figure 3 show that all relationships between constructs in the model have a positive and significant direction based on the t-statistics values from bootstrapping. Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1) has a significant effect on Collaborative Governance (Z) with a t-value of 34.897, indicating a very strong influence. Furthermore, Collaborative Governance (Z) has a significant effect on the Effectiveness of Urban Problem Handling (Y) with a t-value of 3.440. In addition, Community Participation (X1) also has a direct and significant effect on the Effectiveness of Urban Problem Handling (Y) with a t-value of 2.299. All indicators in each construct have t-statistics values above 1.96, so they are declared valid in reflecting latent constructs. These findings confirm that increased community participation strengthens collaborative governance practices, which ultimately promotes the effectiveness of urban problem handling.

R-Square Test

Inner model testing using SmartPLS 3 was conducted to analyze the relationship between latent constructs. The R-Square value was used to assess the ability of exogenous variables in explaining endogenous variables, thereby indicating the strength and predictive power of the developed structural model (Kamranfar et al., 2023) . The R-Square estimation results are presented in the following table:

Table 2. R-Square Results

Variable	R-Square
Collaborative Governance (Z)	0.868
Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	0.948

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The R-Square value shows that Collaborative Governance (Z) of 0.868 means that 86.8% of the variance can be explained by Community Participation. Meanwhile, the Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y) of 0.948 shows that the explanatory power of the model is very strong, with 94.8% influenced by the variables in the research model.

Predictive Relevance

The Q^2 value in PLS analysis is used to assess the predictive power of the model against empirical data. The model is considered to have good predictive power if Q^2 is positive, with a value above 0.25 indicating moderate relevance and above 0.50 indicating strong predictive power (Adegbenjo et al., 2024).

Table 3. Q-square

Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Collaborative Governance (Z)	1,300,000	523,004	0.598
Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	1,300,000	471,265	0.637

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The Q^2 value shows that Collaborative Governance (Z) has a value of 0.598 and Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y) has a value of 0.637. Both values are above 0.50, so the model has strong predictive capabilities. This shows that the research model is able to explain and predict empirical data well.

Goodness of Fit Evaluation

Goodness of Fit (GoF) in PLS-SEM is used to complement model evaluation in addition to R^2 and Q^2 to provide a more comprehensive assessment of model fit. The GoF value indicates the model's ability to represent empirical data, with categories of 0.10 being low, 0.25 being moderate, and ≥0.36 being high. In addition, SRMR is used to assess model fit, where a value below 0.08 indicates that the model has a good fit (Salahshouri et al., 2023).

Table 4. SRMR

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.039	0.039

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The SRMR values for the saturated model and estimated model are both 0.039, which is below the 0.08 threshold. This indicates that the research model has a good level of fit and is able to adequately represent the empirical data.

Table 5. GoF Index

Average AVE	Average R Square	Goodness of fit index
0.694	0.908	0.794

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

This value is above the criterion of ≥ 0.36, indicating a very high level of model fit and that the research model has excellent ability to represent empirical data.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS 3 was chosen because it is flexible, does not require normal data distribution, and is effective for use with relatively small sample sizes. This method produces accurate estimates of path coefficients and t-statistic and p-value values to assess the significance of the relationship between research variables (Kostanek et al., 2024)**.**

Table 6. Path Significance Test

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Description
Collaborative Governance (Z) -> Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	0.593	3.440	0.001	Influential
Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1) -> Collaborative Governance (Z)	0.932	34.897	0.000	Influential
Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1) -> Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	0.397	2.299	0.022	Influential
Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1) -> Collaborative Governance (Z) -> Effectiveness of Handling Urban Problems (Y)	0.553	3.461	0.001	Influential

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

The results of hypothesis testing based on SEM-PLS bootstrapping analysis show that all relationships between variables in the model are positive and significant. H1 proves that Community Participation in Urban Governance (X1) has a significant effect on Collaborative Governance (Z) with a coefficient of 0.932 and a t-value of 34.897, indicating a very strong influence. H2 shows that Collaborative Governance (Z) has a significant effect on the Effectiveness of Urban Problem Handling (Y) with a coefficient of 0.593 and a t-value of 3.440. Furthermore, H3 proves that Community Participation (X1) also has a direct effect on the Effectiveness of Urban Problem Handling (Y) with a coefficient of 0.397 and a t-value of 2.299. H4 confirms that Collaborative Governance acts as a significant mediating variable in channeling the influence of community participation on the effectiveness of urban problem handling (coefficient 0.553; t = 3.461). Overall, these findings confirm that increased community participation strengthens collaborative governance practices, which ultimately improves the effectiveness of urban problem handling.

DISCUSSIONS

This study confirms that complex problems in Bekasi City, such as flooding and waste management, can no longer be handled hierarchically, but require a New Public Governance (NPG) paradigm that emphasizes collaboration and co-production. Based on SEM-PLS analysis, the following is an in-depth discussion of the four main hypotheses:

The Power of Participation in Building Governance (H1).

The results of the H1 test show that community participation has a very strong positive influence on strengthening collaborative governance, with a t-statistic value of 34.897 and a coefficient of 0.932. This finding is highly significant and consistent with the views of Nel and Rymajdo (2024), who emphasize that face-to-face dialogue between actors is the foundation of effective communication in a collaborative environment. In Bekasi, citizen involvement in public forums is not merely a formality, but a vital element that builds the governance structure itself.

Effectiveness Through Collaborative Design (H2).

Hypothesis H2 proves that collaborative governance has a significant effect on the effectiveness of urban problem handling (t = 3.440). This supports the theory of Bjärstig et al. (2024) that horizontal collaboration and social trust improve the quality of public services. When collaborative dialogue and shared understanding are established, government programs become more targeted and responsive to citizens' complaints.

Direct Impact of Citizen Participation (H3).

Interestingly, H3 shows that community participation also has a significant direct influence on policy effectiveness (t = 2.299). Although significant, this direct influence is smaller than the influence through collaboration. This confirms Be-Ere's (2022) concern that without a strong collaborative framework, citizen participation often gets stuck at the procedural or administrative level.

The Vital Role of Mediation in Collaborative Governance (H4).

The H4 results confirm that collaborative governance acts as a significant mediating variable (t = 3.461) in channeling the influence of citizen participation towards effective problem handling. This is a key finding: community participation will have a much more optimal impact if it is channeled through established collaborative mechanisms, such as information transparency and mutual commitment. This reinforces the role of the community as co-producers who participate in policy planning and evaluation, rather than merely being objects. Synthesis and Academic Novelty Overall, this study addresses the research gap by placing the community as the main unit of analysis, unlike previous studies that often focused on government institutions. These findings provide a basis for the Bekasi City Government to shift from merely mobilizing citizens to substantive empowerment for the sustainability of urban solutions. By exploring social dynamics from the perspective of citizens, including levels of trust and capacity for participation, this study provides practical recommendations for the Bekasi City Government to develop more inclusive and sustainable collaboration strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study was initially designed to highlight the paradigm shift in public governance towards a more collaborative model in addressing the complexity of urban issues. Its main focus is to fill the gap in the literature, which has been dominated by the perspective of government agencies, by shifting the focus to the community as the main unit of analysis in the process of creating public value. Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that active citizen involvement is the main foundation for building strong governance. Direct interaction between the government and citizens has proven to be able to strengthen collective cooperation. Furthermore, success in overcoming various urban issues is highly dependent on the quality of this collaboration, where co- tial governance mechanisms act as a bridge that channels community contributions into tangible policies that have a broad impact on the environment. For future service development, a strategy that goes beyond mere administrative formalities is needed. Service implementation must prioritize building public trust and providing transparent access to information in order to minimize capacity gaps between community groups. The government is expected to create a more equitable space for dialogue, where citizens are positioned as partners who participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs on an ongoing basis. By strengthening the role of the community as true partners, solutions to urban problems can be more responsive, targeted, and sustainable for all city residents.

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