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Policies for The Implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in an Effort to Reduce Traffic Congestion in The City of Cirebon

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ABSTRACT

Urban traffic congestion and the declining effectiveness of public transportation are among the main challenges in managing mobility in the city of Cirebon. In response to these conditions, the Cirebon City Government developed a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system as an alternative public transportation option, which was expected to improve the quality of mobility services for the public while reducing dependence on private vehicles. However, BRT operations were ultimately suspended in 2026 due to various issues affecting the sustainability of the service. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy in Cirebon City, identify the factors that have prevented the policy from achieving the desired effectiveness in public transportation and reducing traffic congestion, and formulate directions for reformulating a more adaptive and sustainable public transportation policy. The study employs a qualitative method with a public policy approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using James E. Anderson's public policy cycle theory, which encompasses the policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The research findings indicate that the primary issue with Cirebon City's BRT does not lie in low public demand for public transportation, but rather in the mismatch between policy design and community mobility patterns, weak integration of transportation services, high reliance on local subsidies, and insufficient governance and sustainability of operational funding. These conditions have prevented the policy objectives of promoting a shift in transportation modes and reducing the dominance of private vehicles from being fully achieved.

Keywords: Bus Rapid Transit; Public Policy; Policy Termination; Public Transportation; Governance.

INTRODUCTION

Urban traffic congestion and the declining effectiveness of public transportation are among the main challenges in managing mobility in the city of Cirebon. This phenomenon can no longer be understood merely as a consequence of the increasing number of motor vehicles, but rather as an indication of an imbalance between the growth of public mobility and the capacity of the available transportation system. Mustikarani and Suherdiyanto note that traffic congestion not only hinders the movement of people and goods but also causes economic losses, energy waste, and a decline in urban environmental quality. These conditions indicate that congestion has evolved into a development issue requiring systematic and sustainable policy interventions (Mustikarani & Suherdiyanto, 2016).

Public transportation is viewed as a strategic tool for curbing the growth in private vehicle use while improving the efficiency of urban mobility. A reliable public transportation system enables the public to access safer, more affordable, and more sustainable travel options. The World Resources Institute emphasizes that the modernization of public transportation is a crucial component of sustainable urban development, as it reduces pressure on road networks while improving the quality of mobility services for the public (World Resources Institute,

2016). Ultimately, the role of public transportation is not merely about providing transportation services but is also tied to efforts to establish more effective urban governance.

The city of Cirebon is one of the centers of economic and service growth in the Ciayumajakuning region, which has a relatively high level of community mobility. The growth of commercial, educational, office, and public service activities has driven an increase in daily travel by residents, both within and outside the city. Hikmatullah and Sugiyanto found that urban public transportation in the Cirebon region faces various challenges, including a decline in ridership, low service competitiveness, and the growing dominance of private vehicles in public mobility (Hikmatullah & Sugiyanto, 2022). Changes in public transportation behavior are also evident in the growing preference for modes of transportation considered more practical and flexible compared to conventional public transportation (Erawati, 2020).

This issue prompted the Cirebon City Government to develop a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system as part of its local public transportation policy. The BRT system is designed to provide a more modern and comfortable mass transit service capable of increasing public interest in using public transportation. The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy explains that BRT is a road-based transportation system developed to provide mass transit services with higher service standards than conventional transportation, in terms of operational aspects, accessibility, and travel efficiency (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, 2024). The operation of the BRT in Cirebon is expected to serve as a policy tool to reduce the public's reliance on private vehicles while supporting efforts to alleviate urban traffic congestion. However, BRT operations were ultimately suspended in 2026 due to various issues affecting the sustainability of the service.

The reality on the ground shows that these objectives have not yet been fully achieved. Sugiyanto, Hariani, and Hikmatullah found that the operation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems still faces various challenges related to service effectiveness, fleet utilization rates, and the operational sustainability of the program (Sugiyanto, Hariani, & Hikmatullah, 2023). Similar findings have also emerged in various studies on BRT implementation in other regions, indicating that the success of mass transit is not solely determined by the availability of the fleet but is also influenced by service quality, transportation network integration, community mobility patterns, and sustained policy support (Fauziah et al., 2019; Mukhamad et al., 2024). Prayogi and Satwikasari further emphasize that the shift of the public from private vehicles to public transportation is significantly influenced by the level of travel convenience and the benefits directly experienced by service users (Prayogi & Satwikasari, 2019).

The evolution of BRT policy in Cirebon City indicates that the issues that have arisen are no longer limited to transportation services alone. The discontinuation of operational subsidies for the BRT in 2026 highlights more fundamental concerns regarding policy sustainability and the local government's fiscal capacity to maintain public transportation services (Fajar Cirebon, 2026). This situation indicates that public transportation issues cannot be analyzed solely through a technical transportation approach but must be understood as part of the public policy process, which involves the stages of policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. Anderson explains that the success of a public policy is largely determined by the interconnections among these policy stages, which unfold dynamically from the emergence of the policy agenda through to the evaluation of the policy (Anderson, 2014).

Previous studies have examined Bus Rapid Transit from the perspectives of operational performance, service quality, fares, and mode-shift preferences (Fauziah et al., 2019; Prayogi & Satwikasari, 2019; Mukhamad et al., 2024). However, the scope of studies that specifically focus on BRT as an object of public policy analysis remains relatively limited, particularly those examining the relationship between the implementation process, policy evaluation outcomes, and the need for reformulating public transportation policies at the local government level. In fact, various issues arising in the operation of public transportation often stem not only from operational aspects but also from the mismatch between policy design and public mobility needs, as well as the limited implementation capacity of local governments.

This study aims to fill this research gap by analyzing the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy in Cirebon City through the lens of James E. Anderson's public policy cycle. The study employs a qualitative method with a public policy approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using Anderson's public policy cycle theory, which encompasses the policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The research focuses on evaluating the implementation of the BRT policy, identifying the factors that have prevented the policy from effectively improving public transportation and reducing urban traffic congestion, and formulating directions for reformulating public transportation policies that are more responsive to the mobility needs of the community and the region's capacity. The research findings indicate that the primary issue with Cirebon City's BRT does not lie in low public demand for public transportation, but rather in the mismatch between policy design and community mobility patterns, weak integration of transportation services, high reliance on local subsidies, and insufficient governance and sustainability of operational funding. These conditions have prevented the policy objectives of promoting a shift in transportation modes and reducing the dominance of private vehicles from being fully achieved. The research findings are also expected to contribute academically to the development of public transportation policy studies while serving as input for local governments in formulating more effective and sustainable transportation policies.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a public policy approach. This approach was chosen because the study is not aimed at quantitatively measuring relationships between variables, but rather at understanding the dynamics of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy in Cirebon City, from the emergence of the policy agenda to the evaluation of its implementation. The research focuses on analyzing the implementation of the BRT policy, the factors influencing the effectiveness of public transportation, and the need for reformulating local public transportation policies.

The research analytical framework employs James E. Anderson's public policy cycle theory, which encompasses the policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. This theory is used to analyze the processes of policy agenda emergence, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and evaluation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the city of Cirebon. The results of the policy evaluation are then used to identify the need for policy changes and to formulate

directions for reformulating public transportation policies that are more in line with the mobility needs of the community and the capacity of the local government (Anderson, 2014).

The study was conducted in the city of Cirebon, given that the city serves as a hub for economic, commercial, educational, and service activities in the Ciayumajakuning region, which is experiencing increased urban mobility as well as various challenges in the provision of public transportation. The study focused on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policies as part of the regional public transportation system.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews and field observations. Interviews were conducted with informants who have connections to and an understanding of public transportation operations in Cirebon City, specifically officials from the Department of Transportation and parties familiar with the operations of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Observations were conducted to obtain an empirical understanding of the state of public transportation services, the utilization of bus stops, and the mobility patterns of the urban population.

Secondary data were obtained through a review of various regulations, policy documents, public transportation operational reports, regional planning documents, transportation support data, and scientific literature relevant to the study. The documents analyzed include Law No. 22 of 2009 on Road Traffic and Transportation, Government Regulation No. 30 of 2021 on the Management of Road Traffic and Transportation, as well as various policy documents related to the management of public transportation in the city of Cirebon.

Data collection methods included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to gain an understanding of the state of public transportation and urban mobility. Interviews were conducted to gather information regarding the implementation, evaluation, and development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policies. Documentation was used to analyze regulations, policy documents, transportation reports, operational data, and various other supporting sources related to the management of regional public transportation.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which involves the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The analysis was conducted by linking the empirical findings of the study to each stage of Anderson's public policy cycle: policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The results of the policy evaluation were then used to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of BRT implementation and to formulate directions for reformulating public transportation policies that are more adaptive, integrated, and sustainable for the city of Cirebon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy in Cirebon City has undergone quite complex dynamics from the time it was first formulated until its operations were finally suspended in 2026. Field findings reveal that the challenges faced were not limited to technical aspects of public transportation operations but also encompassed institutional capacity, financial sustainability, urban mobility integration, and the policy's ability to adapt to community needs. These conditions indicate that the success or failure of a public

transportation policy cannot be understood solely from the perspective of service operations but must be analyzed as part of an ongoing public policy process.

The analysis in this study employs James E. Anderson's public policy cycle framework, which encompasses the policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The results of the evaluation are then used as the basis for formulating the direction of public transportation policy reformulation in the city of Cirebon. This approach is used to understand how a policy is created, implemented, and evaluated, as well as how the experience of policy implementation can serve as the foundation for developing more adaptive and sustainable policies in the future.

1. Policy Agenda: Traffic Congestion and the Declining Effectiveness of Public Transportation in Cirebon

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy in Cirebon City emerged at a time when urban mobility issues were beginning to receive increasing attention from the local government. The growth of commercial, service, educational, and public service activities has made Cirebon City one of the major hubs of community movement in the Ciayumajakuning region. This continuously increasing mobility has not always been matched by the capacity of the urban transportation system to effectively accommodate the public's travel needs. This situation has subsequently given rise to various problems, ranging from increased traffic congestion on major roadways to the public's growing reliance on private vehicles.

This phenomenon is not limited to the city of Cirebon; it is a common challenge faced by many developing cities in Indonesia. Mustikarani and Suherdiyanto note that the rise in private vehicle use, when not accompanied by improvements to public transportation, has the potential to worsen traffic congestion and cause various social and economic impacts on urban communities (Mustikarani & Suherdiyanto, 2016). Traffic congestion is no longer understood merely as a traffic issue but has evolved into a public policy issue that affects productivity, mobility efficiency, and the quality of life of the community.

This situation is also reflected in the declining role of urban public transportation as the primary mode of transportation for the public. Before the introduction of the BRT, public transportation services in Cirebon City were still dominated by conventional city buses, which faced various limitations in terms of comfort, service reliability, and coverage. Research by Hikmatullah and Sugiyanto indicates that urban public transportation in the Cirebon region has seen a decline in effectiveness as the use of private vehicles has increased and urban residents' mobility patterns have shifted (Hikmatullah & Sugiyanto, 2022).

These changes in mobility patterns have occurred alongside a growing public preference for modes of transportation that are considered more practical, flexible, and capable of providing travel certainty. The emergence of app-based transportation has further reinforced this trend. Erawati found that the public's level of trust in transportation services is significantly influenced by ease of access, speed of service, and flexibility of use in daily activities (Erawati, 2020). This situation has made it increasingly difficult for conventional public transportation to compete in meeting the mobility needs of urban residents.

These emerging issues subsequently prompted the local government to begin viewing public transportation as a strategic issue requiring policy intervention. According to James E. Anderson, an issue enters the policy agenda when it gains the government's attention and is perceived as requiring public action for its resolution (Anderson, 2014). In the context of Cirebon City, the increasing use of private vehicles, the declining effectiveness of public transportation, and the need for a more modern transportation system have become factors driving the emergence of an agenda for regional public transportation reform.

The push for public transportation modernization has gained momentum as the central government promotes the development of urban mass transit in various regions. Public transportation is increasingly viewed as a key tool for reducing reliance on private vehicles while improving the quality of mobility for urban residents. The World Resources Institute emphasizes that strengthening public transportation is one of the primary strategies for achieving more efficient and sustainable urban mobility (World Resources Institute, 2016). This understanding has also influenced the direction of local government policies in addressing evolving transportation challenges in the city of Cirebon.

Interviews with government officials indicate that the need for a more organized public transportation system began to attract the attention of the local government when the performance of urban transportation was deemed to be declining and no longer capable of optimally meeting the public's mobility needs (Government Official, 2025). Public transportation is seen as needing to be revitalized through a more structured service system, with higher service standards, and capable of increasing public interest in using public transportation again.

The issues included in this policy agenda ultimately concern not only the provision of transportation infrastructure but also local government efforts to manage urban mobility in a more targeted manner. The introduction of BRT was subsequently viewed as one of the policy alternatives that could be used to address these needs. From the outset, BRT was not merely intended as a new mode of transportation, but rather as part of the government's efforts to build a more modern public transportation system capable of responding to the dynamics of urban mobility.

The characteristics of the evolving policy agenda in Cirebon City indicate that the introduction of BRT stemmed from a real need to improve public transportation, which had been steadily deteriorating. Traffic congestion, the dominance of private vehicles, and the declining competitiveness of public transportation became the primary issues driving the local government to seek alternative transportation policies deemed capable of improving the quality of public mobility. These conditions subsequently became the starting point for the formulation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy as a public transportation system in the city of Cirebon.

2. Policy Formulation: The Development of BRT as a Public Transportation Policy in the City of Cirebon

The inclusion of public transportation issues on the local government's agenda was followed by a search for policy alternatives deemed capable of addressing the mobility needs of urban residents. At this stage, the local government is no longer grappling with the question of whether or not there is a public transportation problem, but rather with

which policy options are most feasible to implement given the region's available capacity. These choices are critical because every transportation policy requires significant institutional support, funding, infrastructure, and resources.

The policy formulation process for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Cirebon City cannot be separated from the central government's policy at the time, which was promoting the development of urban public transportation in various regions. This momentum gained further strength when the Cirebon City Government received a grant of ten buses from the Ministry of Transportation in 2018. The arrival of this fleet opened opportunities for the local government to begin developing a public transportation system that was more modern than the conventional city transport that had been operating up to that point. This situation indicates that the BRT policy formulation process did not arise entirely from local initiatives but was also influenced by the direction of national transportation policy, which promoted the modernization of urban transport (World Bank, 2019).

However, the presence of a donated fleet does not necessarily mean that the local government has a well-developed public transportation plan. Research findings indicate that in the initial phase, the government's focus was more on the operational opportunities of the available fleet rather than on developing a public transportation system based on a comprehensive mapping of community mobility. This situation is evident in the lack of thorough studies on community movement patterns, areas with high mobility levels, and the integration of transportation services with urban spatial development.

Anderson explains that the policy formulation stage is the process of developing various alternative solutions to a public issue before they are selected as official government policy (Anderson, 2014). The quality of formulation is crucial to the success of implementation because it is at this stage that policy design, program objectives, the distribution of authority, and resource requirements begin to be defined. In the context of the Cirebon City BRT, the formulation process indicates that an orientation toward public transportation modernization had emerged, but the policy foundations related to operational sustainability and community mobility needs had not yet been fully and robustly established.

This situation is reflected in the governance structure established for the operation of the BRT. The Transportation Agency serves as the regulator and policy overseer, while service management involves PD Pembangunan as a Regionally Owned Enterprise (BUMD) and PT BIG as the operating entity. Administratively, this division of roles is intended to support the effectiveness of service management. However, research findings indicate that this institutional structure is not yet fully supported by robust coordination mechanisms, potentially leading to fragmentation in public transportation management.

Institutional issues are crucial because the success of public transportation is not determined solely by the fleet and infrastructure. Wahyudi and Alterkawi emphasize that the quality of governance, inter-agency coordination, and the consistency of government policies are critical factors in ensuring the operational sustainability of public transportation (Wahyudi & Alterkawi, 2023). These findings are relevant to the situation in Cirebon City, where it has been evident since the planning stage that BRT management involves several

actors with different functions, but has not yet been fully integrated into a comprehensive public transportation management framework.

Another aspect evident during the planning phase is the tendency to view BRT as a symbol of urban transportation modernization. The presence of a new fleet, bus stops, and a more organized service system is viewed as a step forward in regional development. While this perspective is not entirely incorrect, it has the potential to create problems if modernization is emphasized more on the provision of physical infrastructure rather than the establishment of a mobility system that aligns with community needs. Consequently, the success of the policy is measured more by the presence of new services than by its ability to change public transportation behavior.

Prayogi and Lissimia explain that the success of a BRT system is heavily influenced by the service's ability to provide travel efficiency, punctuality, and connectivity that align with the mobility needs of urban residents (Prayogi & Lissimia, 2021). Public transportation that cannot offer benefits more competitive than those of private vehicles will struggle to attract the public's interest in switching modes. These findings suggest that the success of transportation policy formulation is not solely determined by the availability of a fleet, but must be built upon a strong understanding of the mobility characteristics of the communities to be served.

The next issue concerns the sustainability of funding. Research findings indicate that, from the outset, the BRT system was designed to rely heavily on subsidies from the local government. Revenue from service fares is not projected to be sufficient to cover operational costs on its own. This situation makes the sustainability of the service highly dependent on local fiscal conditions and government budget priorities in the future.

Kreindler and Olken explain that public transportation in many developing countries faces sustainability challenges due to high dependence on government subsidies, while service usage levels are not yet sufficient to sustainably cover operational costs (Kreindler & Olken, 2023). This situation highlights that the financing aspect should be a primary consideration in the public transportation policy formulation process. Without an adequate financing design, public transportation services will be vulnerable to operational pressures when fiscal support is reduced.

Research findings indicate that various issues that subsequently arose during the implementation phase actually had their roots in the policy formulation process. An institutional design that was not fully integrated, limitations in mapping community mobility, and a high dependence on local subsidies indicate that the foundation of the BRT policy was not optimally established from the outset. These conditions do not imply that the local government made a mistake in choosing BRT as a public transportation alternative, but rather indicate that the policy formulation process still contained a number of weaknesses that ultimately affected the effectiveness of policy implementation in subsequent stages.

3. Policy Adoption: Establishment and Implementation of the BRT in Cirebon City

The policy adoption phase marked the transition of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from a mere policy concept to a program officially selected and implemented by the local government. After various public transportation issues were placed on the government's policy agenda and policy alternatives began to be formulated, the Cirebon City Government

finally designated BRT as the public transportation model to be developed to support urban mobility. This decision also demonstrates that the local government views BRT as the most feasible alternative to implement compared to other transportation policy options given the region's available capacity.

The policy adoption process did not occur in isolation from national transportation policy directions. Support from the central government, in the form of a grant of ten buses in 2018, was one of the factors that accelerated the local government's decision to develop BRT services. The availability of the fleet ultimately provided a strong enough foundation for the local government to begin building a public transportation system that was more organized than the conventional city transport that had been operating up to that point. These conditions indicate that the policy adoption process in the case of Cirebon City's BRT occurred through a combination of local needs and policy support from the central government (World Bank, 2019).

Although the fleet had been available since 2018, the BRT could not be put into operation immediately. Research findings indicate that the local government needed time to prepare various administrative, institutional, and operational aspects before the service could be fully operational. This situation resulted in the received fleet remaining out of service for a certain period, indicating that the policy decision was not fully supported by adequate implementation readiness. Anderson explains that the success of policy adoption is not solely determined by the decision to choose a policy, but is also influenced by the government's ability to establish the necessary supporting mechanisms to ensure the policy can be effectively implemented (Anderson, 2014).

The policy implementation phase began to take a more concrete form when the Cirebon City Government officially launched BRT Corridor I on April 12, 2021. The launch of this corridor marks a significant milestone in the development of modern public transportation in Cirebon, as it represented the first time the local government had introduced a mass transit service designed with a more structured operational system. The BRT was expected to serve as a transportation alternative capable of improving the quality of public services while reducing the public's reliance on private vehicles.

The next phase of development was marked by the opening of Corridor II in 2023. The addition of this corridor demonstrated the local government's efforts to expand service coverage and improve public transportation accessibility for the community. This expansion of services essentially reflected the government's optimism regarding the sustainability of the BRT program while also demonstrating a commitment to strengthening the urban public transportation system.

Public perceptions of the BRT system during its initial implementation were generally positive. Interview results indicate that some members of the public believe the BRT offers a higher level of comfort compared to conventional city transit. The relatively new fleet, more comfortable cabins, and a more organized service system are the primary reasons for this positive response (Community Informant, 2025). These findings suggest that during the initial phase of policy adoption, the BRT successfully established public expectations regarding the availability of a more modern transportation service.

The local government's decision to adopt BRT is also consistent with various studies that identify mass transit as a key tool in managing urban mobility. The Institute for

Transportation and Development Policy explains that the BRT system was developed to improve the efficiency of public mobility through more integrated services, higher service standards, and the ability to address a broader range of urban mobility needs (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, 2024). This understanding serves as one of the foundations reinforcing the local government's conviction that BRT can be a solution to the evolving transportation challenges in the city of Cirebon.

The optimism surrounding the policy adoption phase has not yet been fully accompanied by the resolution of various fundamental issues that have arisen since the policy formulation process. Institutional readiness, long-term financing models, the integration of services with community mobility patterns, and operational sustainability still present a number of challenges that have not been fully addressed. Consequently, although the policy was successfully adopted and implemented, the foundation supporting the program's sustainability remains relatively fragile. This situation subsequently affects the dynamics of BRT implementation during the policy implementation phase, which will be discussed next.

4. Policy Implementation: Implementation of the BRT as Urban Public Transportation in the City of Cirebon

The launch of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Cirebon marks the beginning of the policy implementation phase of a public transportation policy that had previously been formulated and adopted by the local government. At this stage, the success of the policy is no longer determined solely by the quality of planning or administrative decisions, but rather by the government's ability to translate policy design into services that the public can actually utilize. Implementation serves as a test of whether the objectives formulated in the previous stage can be realized in the daily practice of public transportation operations.

When it first began operations, the BRT received a relatively positive response from some members of the public. The better condition of the fleet, the comfort of the cabins, and the more organized service system provided a different experience compared to conventional city buses, which had long dominated public transportation in Cirebon. Interview results indicate that a number of users consider the BRT to be more comfortable, safer, and more suitable for supporting daily activities compared to previous modes of transportation (Community Informants, 2025). These findings suggest that, in terms of service quality, the introduction of the BRT has brought positive changes to the landscape of local public transportation.

The progress of implementation on the ground reveals a reality that does not fully align with initial expectations. The number of service users has not increased significantly as the local government had hoped. At certain times, the fleet continues to operate even though the number of passengers is relatively limited. This situation has resulted in a fleet occupancy rate, or load factor, that is insufficient to support the optimal sustainability of service operations, indicating that the presence of a more modern public transportation system has not automatically been able to change the public's mobility behavior.

Research findings indicate that private vehicles remain the primary choice for most people in carrying out their daily activities. Ease of access, travel flexibility, and the ability to reach destinations directly are the reasons most frequently cited by the public. On the other hand, the BRT service has not yet been able to provide sufficient advantages to

encourage the public to abandon private vehicles. Relatively long wait times during certain operational periods, as well as limited service coverage, cause the public to maintain their established mobility patterns.

These findings are consistent with the research by Prayogi and Satwikasari, which explains that the shift toward public transportation is strongly influenced by perceptions of travel efficiency, travel time reliability, and ease of service connectivity (Prayogi & Satwikasari, 2019). Public transportation that fails to offer perceived benefits superior to those of private vehicles will struggle to build user loyalty. This situation is quite evident in the implementation of the Cirebon City BRT, where the public acknowledges the better service quality but has not yet adopted it as their primary choice for daily mobility.

Implementation challenges are also evident in terms of service connectivity. Observations indicate that some areas with growing economic, educational, and residential activity in recent years are not yet fully connected to the BRT network. As a result, residents still have to use private vehicles or other modes of transportation to reach departure points or their destinations. This situation reduces the appeal of public transportation, as travel becomes less convenient than using a private vehicle directly.

Sugiyanto, Hariani, and Hikmatullah found that the operational effectiveness of Bus Rapid Transit is still influenced by issues related to corridor connectivity, accessibility, and the effectiveness of the public transportation network (Sugiyanto, Hariani, & Hikmatullah, 2023). These findings indicate that challenges in BRT policy implementation are not limited to the quality of the fleet or in-vehicle services but also pertain to the transportation system's ability to comprehensively address the public's mobility needs.

Another notable aspect during implementation is the high level of operational dependence on local government subsidies. Revenue from passenger fares has not yet been sufficient to cover operational costs on its own. Expenses related to fuel, fleet maintenance, facility upkeep, and other operational needs still rely on fiscal support from the local government. This situation makes the sustainability of the service highly sensitive to changes in local financial conditions.

Kreindler and Olken explain that one of the main challenges facing public transportation in developing countries lies in the imbalance between operational costs and service usage rates. When the number of users is not yet large enough to sustain operations, public transportation becomes heavily reliant on government subsidies in the long term (Kreindler & Olken, 2023). This situation is evident in the implementation of the Cirebon City BRT, which from the outset has failed to build a sufficiently strong user base to support the financial sustainability of the service.

Changes in public mobility patterns also present a unique challenge. The emergence of app-based transportation has transformed the way people choose their mode of travel. Speed of access, ease of booking, and travel flexibility have become increasingly important factors in determining transportation choices. Erawati found that urban residents tend to place a higher level of trust in transportation services that offer convenience and flexibility for daily use (Erawati, 2020). This reality indicates that BRT not only competes with private vehicles but must also contend with the evolving mobility ecosystem driven by digital technology.

This overview of the implementation shows that the main issue with the BRT in Cirebon is not a lack of demand for public transportation. The public still needs transportation services that are safe, comfortable, and affordable. The problem that arises is actually related to the public transportation system's ability to adapt to the public's ever-changing mobility patterns. A high-quality fleet is not enough if it is not supported by adequate service connectivity, operational reliability, and integration with the public's daily travel needs.

Wahyudi and Alterkawi emphasize that the success of public transportation is heavily influenced by the integration of mobility policies, the quality of governance, and the consistency of government support for the transportation system being developed (Wahyudi & Alterkawi, 2023). Research findings indicate that the primary issue with BRT policy implementation in Cirebon City does not lie in the quality of the fleet or the absence of public demand for public transportation. On the contrary, various field data show that the public still requires safe, comfortable, and affordable transportation services to support daily activities. The challenges that arise are instead related to the BRT system's inability to establish mobility connectivity that aligns with the movement patterns of urban residents. Limitations in service coverage, suboptimal integration between activity zones, low service usage rates, and high dependence on local subsidies indicate that the BRT issue has shifted from merely an operational concern to a matter of policy effectiveness. This situation points to a gap between the policy objective of encouraging the public to switch to public transportation and the reality of implementation on the ground. It is this gap that serves as a crucial basis for assessing the extent to which BRT policies can achieve their stated objectives, as well as identifying the factors preventing the optimal realization of service effectiveness and sustainability.

5. Policy Evaluation: Evaluating the Effectiveness and Sustainability of the BRT in Cirebon

The policy evaluation phase serves as a critical opportunity to assess the extent to which the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) policy has achieved the objectives set at the outset of its formulation. The BRT system is fundamentally designed to strengthen the public transportation system, increase public interest in using public transit, and reduce the growing reliance on private vehicles in urban areas. However, the reality of its implementation indicates that these objectives have not yet been fully realized. Various field findings reveal a gap between policy expectations and the results achieved during the operational phase of the service.

The research findings indicate that the primary issue with Cirebon City's BRT does not stem from low public demand for public transportation. Interviews with users and community members reveal that public transportation remains essential for daily mobility, particularly for students, university students, workers, and community groups without access to private vehicles (Community Informant, 2025). Some informants even acknowledged that the quality of BRT service is relatively better than that of the conventional city transport that previously operated. A more comfortable fleet, a cleaner vehicle environment, and a more organized service are added benefits recognized by service users.

Problems begin to arise when the quality of service is not matched by the system's ability to fully meet the public's mobility needs. Most people prioritize travel speed, ease of access, and punctuality as the primary considerations when choosing a mode of transportation. BRT has not yet fully met these expectations due to limited service coverage, unstable operational frequency, and suboptimal connectivity to areas of public activity. As a result, private vehicles are still viewed as a more efficient option for supporting daily activities.

These findings align with the research by Gaduh, Gračner, and Rothenberg, which explains that the development of a BRT system does not automatically encourage a shift in transportation modes if the services provided are not yet able to offer tangible mobility benefits compared to private vehicles (Gaduh, Gračner, & Rothenberg, 2022). The success of public transportation is ultimately determined not only by the availability of a fleet or infrastructure, but also by the service's ability to create travel efficiencies that are genuinely experienced by the public as users.

The next issue concerns the effectiveness of the service network. Observations show that some high-activity areas are not yet fully covered by the existing BRT corridors. This situation forces people to continue using other modes of transportation to reach their departure points or destinations, lengthening the travel chain and reducing the appeal of public transportation. When people are faced with a choice between a direct trip using a private vehicle or a trip that requires a mode transfer with a longer travel time, the choice of a private vehicle becomes more rational.

Rahadi found that the effectiveness of public transportation is not only determined by the availability of a fleet but is also significantly influenced by the accessibility of supporting facilities such as bus stops and the ease with which the public can access available transportation services (Rahadi, 2022). This finding reinforces the results of this study, which indicate that the issues facing Cirebon City's BRT cannot be separated from the suboptimal integration of services with the mobility patterns of the urban population.

Another issue that consistently emerged during the study was the question of sustainable financing. BRT operations remain heavily reliant on local government subsidies, as revenue from passenger fares has not yet been sufficient to cover operational costs on its own. This situation means that the continuity of service is heavily influenced by the local government's fiscal capacity to provide financial support each fiscal year. This high dependence on subsidies places the public transportation system in a vulnerable position when local governments face financial pressures or shifts in development priorities.

Kreindler and Olken explain that one of the main challenges facing public transportation in developing countries is maintaining a balance between public service needs and the long-term sustainability of operational funding (Kreindler & Olken, 2023). The same issue is evident in the case of the Cirebon City BRT. Low ridership has prevented service revenue from growing significantly, while operational costs must still be covered to keep the service running. This situation creates a fiscal dependency that is increasingly difficult to sustain in the long term.

The accumulation of these various issues eventually reached a critical point when the local government ceased to allocate operational subsidies for the BRT in the 2026

Budget Implementation Document. This decision directly led to the suspension of BRT operations, which had previously served as the backbone of the local public transportation program (Fajar Cirebon, 2026). This suspension indicates that the challenges faced by the BRT have moved beyond mere technical service issues and have evolved into a matter of policy sustainability.

From a policy evaluation perspective, the suspension of BRT operations does not merely indicate a failure in public transportation management. Research findings actually reveal an imbalance between policy ambitions and the local government's implementation capacity. The policy was designed to encourage changes in community mobility patterns, but the available institutional support, service integration, and fiscal capacity have not been fully capable of sustaining these objectives over the long term. This situation indicates that the primary issue with Cirebon City's BRT does not lie in the absence of a need for public transportation, but rather in the lack of alignment between policy design, public mobility needs, and the local government's ability to sustain service operations.

These policy evaluation findings are significant because they demonstrate that the suspension of BRT operations should not be interpreted as the end of the need for public transportation in Cirebon City. On the contrary, the evaluation results indicate the need for a restructuring of public transportation policy that is more responsive to community mobility patterns, more realistic in light of the region's fiscal capacity, and more integrated with the overall urban mobility system. It is these findings that subsequently form the basis for the need for policy reformulation in the future development of public transportation in Cirebon City.

6. Policy Reformulation: The Direction of Public Transportation Restructuring in Cirebon City

The policy evaluation results indicate that the suspension of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) operations should not be interpreted as the end of the public's need for public transportation. On the contrary, the research findings show that the need for safe, comfortable, affordable, and easily accessible transportation services remains. The main issue lies in the inability of the established system to adapt to the public's mobility patterns, as well as the local government's limited capacity to maintain the operational sustainability of the service. These conditions make policy reformulation an unavoidable necessity if the local government wishes to continue strengthening the public transportation system in Cirebon City.

From a public policy perspective, policy evaluation does not stop at assessing the success or failure of a program. Anderson explains that evaluation results can serve as a basis for the government to make adjustments, improvements, or policy reformulations to better align with the needs of the community and the realities of implementation (Anderson, 2014). The focus on reformulation in this study is not intended to revive the BRT in the same form as before, but rather to formulate a more adaptive direction for public transportation policy based on the implementation experience that has taken place.

The first step that needs to be taken is to conduct a more comprehensive remapping of community mobility patterns. Research findings indicate that one of the main weaknesses of the BRT lies in the suboptimal connectivity of the service to areas that serve as hubs of community activity. Future public transportation corridors must be developed

based on data regarding community movement, not solely on the availability of infrastructure or administrative considerations. Educational, commercial, and office districts, terminals, public service centers, and residential areas with high mobility must form the foundation for designing public transportation networks. This approach is essential to ensure that the services developed truly align with the public's daily travel needs.

The next improvement relates to the development of an integrated transportation system. Operational experience with the BRT has shown that the public still faces difficulties reaching service points from their residential areas or places of activity, causing private vehicles to remain the primary choice even when public transportation is available. The public transportation system to be developed must be supported by feeder services capable of connecting residential areas with the main public transportation corridors. An integrated network will shorten travel distances and improve public access to transportation services.

The importance of transportation network integration is also emphasized by the World Bank, which explains that the success of public transportation is heavily influenced by the system's ability to connect various urban activity hubs through an integrated network (World Bank, 2019). Public transportation that operates in isolation without intermodal connectivity tends to struggle to become the public's primary choice. This finding is relevant to the situation in Cirebon, which still faces challenges in aligning service connectivity with the development of urban areas.

Another aspect that requires attention is the use of digital technology in public transportation operations. Interview results indicate that uncertainty regarding fleet arrival schedules was one of the most frequent complaints raised by the public during BRT operations (Community Informant, 2025). This situation affects the public's level of trust in public transportation services. The development of a digital-based travel information system capable of providing real-time information on fleet locations, departure schedules, and estimated arrival times could be one step toward improving service quality while strengthening user trust.

Changes in public mobility behavior, which are increasingly aligned with digital technology, are also a key reason why this transformation is necessary. Erawati found that the public's level of trust in transportation services is significantly influenced by the ease of accessing information and the flexibility of using these services in daily activities (Erawati, 2020). Public transportation that can adapt to technological advancements has a greater chance of attracting users compared to services that still rely on conventional operational models.

Policy reformulation should also focus on strengthening public transportation financing models. The experience of the BRT service suspension demonstrates that complete reliance on local government subsidies creates significant vulnerability regarding service sustainability. Public transportation fundamentally serves a social function that cannot always be measured solely through economic benefits. Nevertheless, the sustainability of services still requires stable and planned financial support. Local governments need to develop more sustainable financing schemes through collaboration

with the central government, inter-regional cooperation, or other funding mechanisms that ensure public transportation operations do not rely entirely on a single source of funding.

Kreindler and Olken explain that the success of public transportation in urban areas is not only determined by service quality but is also heavily influenced by the government's ability to establish a financing model capable of sustaining operations in the long term (Kreindler & Olken, 2023). The experience of the Cirebon City BRT demonstrates that fiscal issues can be a decisive factor in whether a public transportation service continues or ceases operations. Therefore, policy reformulation must prioritize the sustainability of financing as one of its foremost concerns.

The integration of public transportation with urban land-use policies is also a priority of equal importance. The growth of commercial, educational, service, and residential areas must be accompanied by the development of a transportation network capable of serving the public's movement to these areas. Public transportation will struggle to develop if spatial planning and mobility planning proceed in isolation. The World Resources Institute emphasizes that building a sustainable transportation system requires integration between mobility policies and urban spatial development (World Resources Institute, 2016). This perspective demonstrates that reformulating transportation policy cannot be done in a sectoral manner but must be part of the city's overall development strategy.

The research findings ultimately indicate that the future of public transportation in Cirebon City does not depend solely on the decision to resume BRT operations. The challenges faced are far more fundamental: namely, how to build an urban mobility system capable of meeting the needs of the community, possessing strong institutional support, integrated with urban development, and underpinned by sustainable financing. Policy reformulation presents an opportunity for the local government to use the experience of implementing and suspending BRT operations as a source of policy learning, so that future public transportation policies do not face the same issues as before.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Cirebon City is the local government's response to growing urban mobility issues, particularly the high use of private vehicles and the declining effectiveness of conventional public transportation. The BRT is expected to serve as a tool for modernizing public transportation while encouraging the public to shift toward more efficient and sustainable modes of transport. However, the research findings indicate that public transportation issues in Cirebon are not solely related to fleet provision or the construction of transportation infrastructure, but rather concern how such policies are designed, managed, and sustained in the long term.

Research findings indicate that, starting from the policy formulation stage, there have been a number of fundamental shortcomings that have affected the effectiveness of BRT implementation. Policy formulation was driven more by the momentum of public transportation modernization and fleet support from the central government than by a comprehensive mapping of public mobility. As a result, the service design, corridor patterns, and management model that were developed have not been fully capable of meeting the evolving travel needs of the people of Cirebon City.

The most significant finding of this study indicates that the suspension of BRT operations should not be interpreted as a failure of the public to accept public transportation, but rather as a policy failure in establishing a transportation system that aligns with the public's mobility needs and the capacity of the local government. Therefore, the reformulation of public transportation policy in Cirebon City should not be directed solely at the resumption of fleet operations, but must be oriented toward the development of an integrated urban mobility system that is adaptive to changes in public travel patterns, supported

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