

LANDMARK IDENTIFICATION OF PEKANBARU CITY

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ABSTRAK

Landmark berperan penting dalam membentuk citra kota sebagai penanda orientasi dan identitas visual. Pekanbaru, ibu kota Provinsi Riau, mengalami perkembangan pesat yang melahirkan berbagai bangunan ikonik, namun belum dikaji secara sistematis berdasarkan persepsi masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi landmark utama Kota Pekanbaru dan menganalisis karakteristik visual yang memengaruhi keterbacaannya. Metode campuran digunakan melalui observasi lapangan, dokumentasi visual, dan survei terhadap 150 responden dengan purposive sampling. Analisis deskriptif dan statistik menggunakan SmartPLS menguji hubungan antarvariabel persepsi visual (singularity, location, uniqueness, memorable) terhadap pengakuan landmark. Hasil menunjukkan Masjid Agung An-Nur, Perpustakaan Soeman HS, dan Kantor Gubernur Riau sebagai landmark paling dikenal. Faktor lokasi dan memorable berpengaruh positif signifikan, sedangkan uniqueness berpengaruh negatif. Penelitian menegaskan pentingnya desain dan tata ruang landmark untuk memperkuat navigasi dan identitas visual Kota Pekanbaru.

Kata kunci: Landmark, Citra Kota, Identitas Visual, Persepsi, Pekanbaru.

ABSTRACT

Landmarks play a vital role in shaping the city's image as orientation markers and visual identity elements. Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau Province, has experienced rapid development that produced many iconic buildings, yet systematic studies based on public perception remain limited. This research aims to identify the main landmarks of Pekanbaru City and analyze the visual characteristics influencing their legibility. A mixed-method approach was applied through field observation, visual documentation, and a questionnaire survey involving 150 purposively selected respondents. Descriptive and statistical analyses using SmartPLS were conducted to examine relationships among visual perception variables (singularity, location, uniqueness, memorable) and landmark recognition. The findings reveal that An-Nur Grand Mosque, Soeman HS Library, and the Riau Governor's Office are the most recognized landmarks. Location and memorable factors have significant positive effects, while uniqueness shows a negative influence. The study emphasizes that enhancing landmark design and spatial arrangement strengthens urban navigation and visual identity in Pekanbaru.

Keyword: Landmark, City Image, Visual Identity, Perception, Pekanbaru.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pekanbaru, the capital city of Riau Province, has experienced rapid urban transformation characterized by the expansion of residential zones, commercial centers, public facilities, and infrastructure. This urban metamorphosis has

significantly reshaped the city's spatial layout and visual character. In such a context, landmarks are vital as orientation markers and visual identity symbols that contribute to the city image [1].

According to [1], landmarks are physical features easily recognizable and serve as primary

reference points for navigation while reinforcing a city's collective image. [2] emphasized that *place identity* is established through human interaction with symbolic and visual elements inherent in a place. [3] similarly noted that visual perception of the built environment is deeply influenced by cultural context, experience, and users' aesthetic preferences. In this sense, landmarks are not merely physical structures but also cultural and social representations embedded within a community.

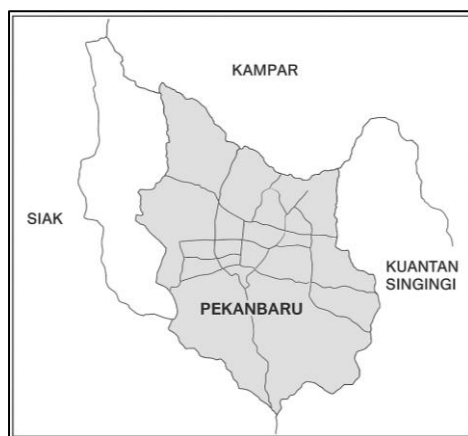


Figure 1. Administrative Map of Pekanbaru City

In Pekanbaru, notable landmarks such as the An-Nur Grand Mosque, Zapin Monument, Soeman HS Library, Idrus Tintin Art Pavilion, and Siak IV Bridge have emerged as significant city icons. However, few systematic academic studies have identified dominant landmarks in Pekanbaru based on public perception. Prior research has largely centered on tourism potential and architectural identity without addressing how visual perception, wayfinding, and the city image interact together.

Table 1. Problems in Identifying Landmarks of Pekanbaru City

No	Main Problem	Description
1	Lack of comprehensive studies	Numerous landmarks in Pekanbaru have been mentioned in general terms, but there has been no systematic scientific research identifying dominant

		landmarks based on public perception.
2	Architectural homogenization	Urban modernization encourages the emergence of buildings with homogeneous designs, potentially obscuring the distinctive visual identity of Pekanbaru [4], [5]
3	Limited integration of local culture	Many modern landmarks fail to highlight Riau Malay cultural elements or ornaments, making them less accepted as authentic local icons [6].
4	Unmapped public perception	Local governments tend to determine city icons in a top-down manner without adequately assessing how residents truly perceive and interpret these landmarks [7].
5	Lack of navigational data support	There is insufficient empirical data on how landmarks assist citizens in everyday spatial navigation, reducing their potential role in the city's orientation system.

Therefore, this research aims to identify dominant landmarks in Pekanbaru through the lens of public perception and analyze the visual characteristics that enhance landmark legibility. Employing a mixed-methods approach—combining field observations, visual documentation, and survey questionnaires—this study aspires to contribute both theoretically to the urban image discourse and practically to spatial planning strategies that reinforce Pekanbaru's visual identity and orientation framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Landmarks

Landmarks are prominent visual elements in the urban fabric that serve as essential reference points for both orientation and the construction of city identity. According to [1] in *The Image of the City*, landmarks are easily recognizable elements that act as anchors in spatial navigation. They may take the form of buildings, monuments, bridges, or other structures that stand out due to their unique form or symbolic meaning. Beyond their functional role in navigation, landmarks also embody cultural and emotional values that strengthen the sense of belonging and attachment to the city [2], [8].

2.2 City Identity and Landmarks

City identity represents the distinctive character of a city shaped by its physical form,

history, culture, and social values. Sánchez (2022) highlights that city identity is a social construct that develops through continuous interaction between people and urban space. Landmarks, therefore, play a crucial role in shaping this identity, as they become visual representations of collective values. For example, the An-Nur Grand Mosque symbolizes religious and cultural traditions of the Malay community, while the Siak IV Bridge illustrates Pekanbaru's modernization and infrastructural progress. A strong city identity enriches the meaning of landmarks, and iconic landmarks, in turn, reinforce the broader image of the city [1], [9].

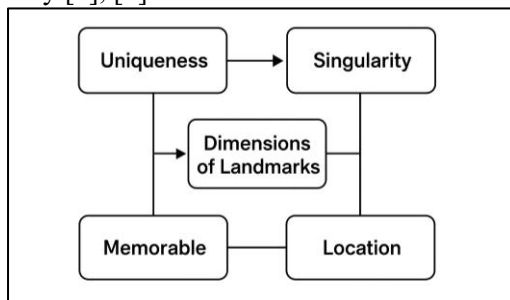


Figure 2. Physical and Non-Physical Elements of the City

2.3 Visual Dimensions of Landmarks

Drawing upon Lynch's [1] theoretical framework, four key dimensions determine the legibility of landmarks:

1. **Singularity** - visual distinctiveness that makes a structure stand out from its surroundings, often supported by unique form, proportion, or symbolic content [10].
2. **Location** - strategic placement within the city structure, facilitating accessibility and visibility from multiple vantage points [11].
3. **Uniqueness** - distinctive qualities, monumental scale, and symbolic meaning that differentiate a landmark from other urban elements [12].
4. **Memorability** - the ability of a landmark to be easily remembered due to visual contrast, cultural relevance, or role in social interaction [1].

These dimensions highlight how landmarks are perceived not merely as physical structures but as cultural artifacts shaped by social interaction and collective memory.

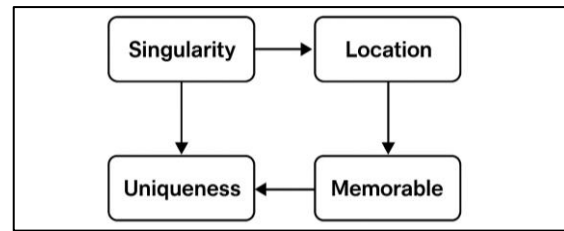


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Landmark Dimensions

Table 2. Summary of Landmark Dimensions and Indicators

Dimension	Indicators	References (Accessible)
Singularity	Visual distinctiveness; symbolic meaning; historical/cultural value	[1], <i>The Image of the City</i> ; [10], "Landmarks in wayfinding"
Location	Strategic placement in city structure; accessibility; visibility along routes and nodes	[11], "Landmarks in wayfinding: a review"; [13]G. Cullen, <i>Townscape</i>
Uniqueness	Distinct form compared to surroundings; monumental scale; cultural integration	[3], <i>Human Aspects of Urban Form</i> (1977); [10], "Competitiveness, distinctiveness and singularity in urban design"
Memorability	Easy to remember; collective memory; emotional attachment; role in social activities	[14], <i>The Evaluative Image of the City</i> ; [8], <i>Space and Place</i>

2.4 Previous Studies

Research on public perception of landmarks has been carried out in various urban contexts. [15] studied the perception of Semarang residents towards Lawang Sewu and found that visual uniqueness, historical significance, and symbolic value were the most influential aspects. [16] emphasized that emotional experiences and visual composition significantly contribute to the image formation of Jakarta's Old Town district. Internationally, [17], [18] examined the role of landmarks in shaping New York's identity through icons such as the Statue of Liberty, while [14] underscored the relationship between landmark perception and urban legibility. These studies confirm that landmarks serve as both functional orientation devices and symbolic anchors of identity within the city.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

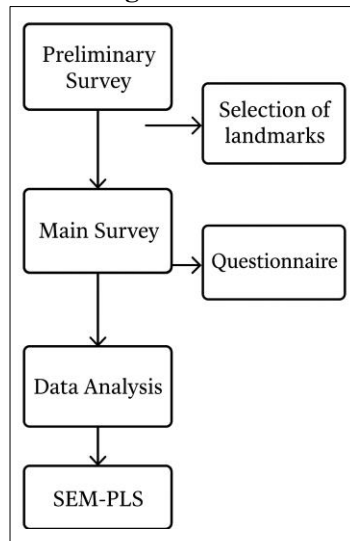


Figure 4. Research Flowchart

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to analyze public perception of landmarks in Pekanbaru City. The research was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved a preliminary sociological survey to select three primary landmarks from a list of 52 potential objects. The second stage consisted of measuring public perception of these selected landmarks using a Likert-scale questionnaire. The methodological framework was adapted from [1] *Image of the City*, focusing on how landmarks contribute to urban legibility and city image, and reinforced by studies such as [14] and [19].

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population was based on the residents of Pekanbaru, totaling 1,007,540 according to [20]. Using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error, a sample size of 100 respondents was determined from the population aged 15–64 years (698,345 individuals). Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, with criteria including: (1) minimum age of 17 years, (2) residing in Pekanbaru for at least five years, and (3) general familiarity with urban public spaces. This ensured that the participants had sufficient knowledge of the city's landmarks.

Table 3. Population of Pekanbaru by Age Group, BPS 2022

Kelompok Umur Age Groups	Jenis Kelamin/Sex		Jumlah Total
	Laki-Laki Male	Perempuan Female	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
0–4	49 987	47 178	97 165
5–9	45 163	43 230	88 393
10–14	41 713	38 898	80 611
15–19	39 814	37 882	77 696
20–24	41 987	41 993	83 980
25–29	43 307	44 246	87 553
30–34	42 298	42 807	85 105
35–39	39 623	40 928	80 551
40–44	37 785	37 093	74 917
45–49	34 698	35 149	69 847
50–54	28 884	29 217	58 101
55–59	23 830	23 404	47 234
60–64	16 903	16 467	33 370
65–69	11 452	11 732	23 184
70–74	5 640	5 703	11 343
75+	3 907	4 583	8 490
Pekanbaru	506 231	501 309	1 007 540

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The preliminary survey compiled a list of 52 potential landmarks using triangulation of sources, including:

1. Official planning documents (e.g., RTRW Pekanbaru 2023–2043, Department of Tourism data)
2. Online platforms (Google Maps, TripAdvisor, Google Reviews)
3. Local news articles
4. Field observations for validation

Respondents were asked to select up to five objects considered most striking, strategic, unique, or symbolic. The three most frequently chosen objects were then established as the main landmarks for further analysis.

In the main survey, data were collected using structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) measuring perceptions across four independent dimensions—**Singularity, Location, Uniqueness, and Memorability**—and one dependent variable: **Landmark Recognition**. Data collection was conducted both offline and online (via Google Forms).

3.4 Research Instruments

The instruments consisted of:

1. **Hardware:** Digital camera for field documentation.
2. **Software:**
 - Preliminary questionnaire (landmark selection)
 - Main questionnaire (perception measurement)
 - Google Form (online distribution)
 - SPSS (factor analysis and descriptive statistics)
 - SmartPLS v4.1.0.9 (SEM-PLS analysis)

3.5 Variables and Indicators

The research variables were developed from [1], [14], [19]. Independent variables included:

1. **X1: Singularity** (distinctive appearance, cultural meaning, symbolic value, historical layers, design concept, spatial proportion).
2. **X2: Location** (land-use zoning, accessibility, availability of public facilities, parking, transport connection).
3. **X3: Uniqueness** (visual difference, monumental scale, cultural integration, symbolic meaning, distinctive function).
4. **X4: Memorability** (visual contrast, orientation, collective memory, social interaction role).

The dependent variable (Y) was **Landmark Recognition**, measured by recognition as a city icon, orientation function, symbolic meaning, popularity, presence in tourism promotion, relevance to identity, and collective memory.

All variables were measured with multiple indicators on a Likert scale, ensuring construct validity and reliability [21].

Table 4. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	References (Accessible)
X1	Singularity	- Distinctive appearance- Cultural meaning- Symbolic value- Historical layers- Design concept- Spatial proportion	[1], <i>The Image of the City</i> ; [14], <i>The Evaluative Image of the City</i> .
X2	Location	- Land-use zoning- Accessibility- Public facilities- Parking availability- Transport connection	[13], <i>Townscape</i> ; [11], "Landmarks in wayfinding".

X3	Uniqueness	- Visual difference- monumental scale - cultural integration- Symbolic meaning- Distinctive function	[3], <i>Human Aspects of Urban Form</i> ; [10], "Competitiveness, distinctiveness and singularity".
X4	Memorability	- Visual contrast- Orientation- Collective memory- Social interaction role	[8], <i>Space and Place</i> ; [14], <i>The Evaluative Image of the City</i> .
Y	Landmark Recognition	- Recognition as city icon- Orientation function- Symbolic meaning- Popularity- Presence in tourism promotion- Contribution to identity- Collective memory	[1]; [21], <i>Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R</i> .

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistics mapped the general perception of respondents, while inferential analysis used **Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS)**. This method was chosen due to its suitability for moderate sample sizes and its ability to assess both measurement (outer model) and structural models (inner model) simultaneously [21]. SEM-PLS is advantageous as it does not require strict assumptions about data distribution and is effective in handling reflective and formative indicators.

The analysis followed two main steps:

1. **Measurement Model (Outer Model):** to test validity and reliability of indicators.
2. **Structural Model (Inner Model):** to test the relationship between visual perception dimensions and landmark recognition.

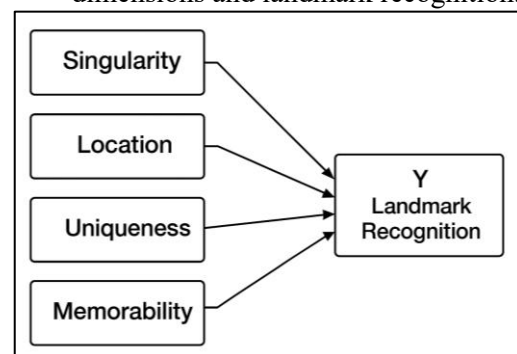


Figure 5. SEM-PLS Model Framework

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Respondents

Table 5. Characteristics of Respondents

Descripti on	Category	Frequency (Responden ts)	Percenta ge (%)
Age Range	17–25 years	18	18%
	26–35 years	27	27%
	36–45 years	32	32%
	46–55 years	17	17%
	56–65 years	6	6%
Educatio n	Senior High School (SMA)	22	22%
	Diploma (D3)	11	11%
	Bachelor (S1)	48	48%
	Master/Docto ral (S2/S3)	19	19%
Occupati on	Private Employee	(data available in thesis, continuing frequencies in full table)	—

A total of 100 respondents participated in the main survey, representing various age groups, occupations, and districts across Pekanbaru. The demographic profile shows a balanced distribution between male and female respondents, with the majority belonging to the productive age group (20–40 years). This distribution confirms that the participants had sufficient exposure to urban spaces and the city's landmarks, thereby ensuring the reliability of their perception data.

4.2 Identification of Dominant Landmarks

From the preliminary survey of 52 potential landmarks, the most frequently mentioned and recognized by respondents were:

1. An-Nur Grand Mosque.
2. Soeman HS Library.
3. Riau Governor's Office.

These landmarks represent a combination of religious, cultural, educational, and administrative functions, illustrating how different aspects of urban life are reflected in public recognition of the city's visual anchors. This finding aligns with [1] concept of landmark legibility, where distinct physical features coupled with symbolic meaning enhance recognition and memorability.



Figure 6. Selected Dominant Landmarks in Pekanbaru

4.3 Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument testing using SmartPLS demonstrated that all indicators met the required thresholds for convergent and discriminant validity (loading factors > 0.7 , AVE > 0.5) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.7). This confirms that the four independent dimensions—Singularity, Location, Uniqueness, and Memorability—are valid constructs for measuring landmark perception in Pekanbaru [21].

Table 6. Construct Validity and Reliability Result

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
AX1. Singularity	0.670	0.670	0.801	0.502
AX2. Location	0.534	0.538	0.753	0.506
AX3. Uniqueness	0.711	0.720	0.821	0.535
AX4. Memorability	0.600	0.628	0.831	0.711
AY. Public Perception (Landmark Recognition)	0.651	0.658	0.792	0.489

4.4 Structural Model Results (SEM-PLS)

The structural model analysis revealed the following results:

- **Location (X2)** and **Memorability (X4)** showed a significant positive influence on Landmark Recognition (Y). This finding underscores the importance of strategic placement and the ability of a landmark to be remembered in reinforcing city image.
- **Singularity (X1)** had a positive but weaker effect, indicating that while visual distinctiveness matters, it must be supported by accessibility and social meaning.
- **Uniqueness (X3)** demonstrated a negative effect, suggesting that extreme differentiation may reduce collective acceptance if it lacks cultural or contextual integration.

These results are consistent with previous studies highlighting that accessibility and collective memory are stronger determinants of landmark

recognition compared to purely physical distinctiveness [10], [11].

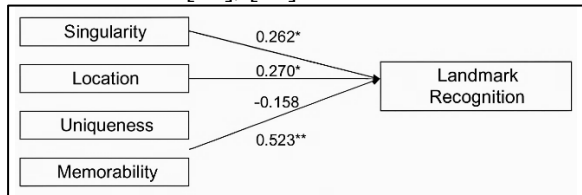


Figure 7. SEM-PLS Path Model with Coefficients

Table 7. Path Coefficient and Significance Levels

Path	Coefficient	t-value	Significance
X1 → Y (Singularity → Landmark Recognition)	0.262	2.807	Significant
X2 → Y (Location → Landmark Recognition)	0.270	2.865	Significant
X3 → Y (Uniqueness → Landmark Recognition)	-0.158	1.655	Not Significant
X4 → Y (Memorability → Landmark Recognition)	0.523	6.627	Significant

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The analysis confirms that landmarks in Pekanbaru are not only recognized for their physical form but also for their socio-cultural and spatial relevance. The An-Nur Grand Mosque is recognized due to its monumental scale and religious significance, Soeman HS Library for its unique architectural design symbolizing an open book, and the Governor's Office for its institutional role as the administrative center of Riau.

The results emphasize that landmark recognition is shaped by both tangible (physical form, visibility, accessibility) and intangible (symbolic meaning, collective memory) dimensions. This aligns with [2], [8] concept of *place identity* and Tuan's view of *place as a cultural construct*. In Pekanbaru's context, landmarks that integrate local cultural values and provide orientation in daily urban life are more likely to become dominant icons.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

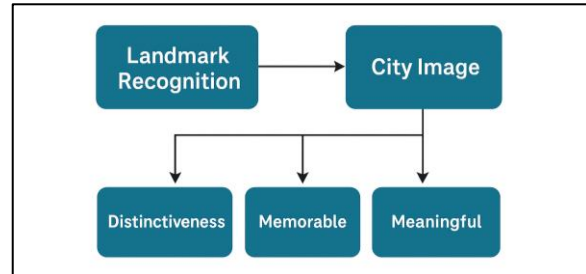


Figure 8. Conceptual Link Between Landmark Recognition and City Image

This research set out to identify the dominant landmarks of Pekanbaru City based on public perception and to evaluate the visual characteristics that contribute to their recognition. The analysis produced several key conclusions:

1. **Dominant Landmarks Identified:** From the preliminary survey of 52 candidate objects, three dominant landmarks were consistently recognized by the public: **An-Nur Grand Mosque, Soeman HS Library, and the Riau Governor's Office**. These landmarks represent religious, cultural-educational, and administrative functions that collectively embody Pekanbaru's urban identity.
2. **Determinants of Landmark Recognition:** The SEM-PLS analysis demonstrated that **location** and **memorability** are the most significant factors influencing landmark recognition. Singularity, while positively associated, has a weaker impact, and uniqueness even showed a negative effect when disconnected from cultural and social context. This suggests that landmarks are more strongly defined by accessibility and collective memory than by extreme physical distinctiveness.
3. **Integration of Tangible and Intangible Aspects:** Landmark recognition in Pekanbaru is not only a matter of physical form but also of symbolic and cultural value. This finding aligns with Lynch's (1960) theory of city image and Relph's (1976) concept of place identity, emphasizing that both physical visibility and cultural meaning are indispensable in strengthening city image.
4. **Theoretical and Practical Contribution:** The study contributes theoretically by

reinforcing landmark perception dimensions (singularity, location, uniqueness, memorability) as valid constructs in urban studies. Practically, it provides direction for city planners and policymakers to prioritize accessibility, visibility, and cultural resonance when designing or revitalizing urban landmarks.

Table 8. Summary of Key Findings

Key Aspect	Findings	Supporting References
Dominant Landmarks	An-Nur Grand Mosque, Soeman HS Library, Riau Governor's Office	[1], [2]
Strongest Factors	Location ($\beta = 0.270$, $t = 2.865$, $p < 0.05$); Memorability ($\beta = 0.523$, $t = 6.627$, $p < 0.01$)	[21]
Moderate Factor	Singularity ($\beta = 0.262$, $t = 2.807$, $p < 0.05$)	[14]
Weak/Negative Factor	Uniqueness ($\beta = -0.158$, $t = 1.655$, not significant)	[12]
Implication for City Image	Landmarks are defined not only by physical distinctiveness but also by accessibility, cultural meaning, and collective memory.	[2], [8]

5.2 Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed:

- Urban Design and Planning:** Local governments should integrate landmark development into spatial planning by prioritizing visibility, accessibility, and cultural representation. Future landmarks should balance iconic form with contextual integration to ensure broad public acceptance.
- Cultural Integration:** Landmark design must reflect Riau Malay cultural values to strengthen public identification. Modern projects should avoid homogenized designs and instead incorporate local architectural motifs to enhance uniqueness and memorability [6].
- Community Involvement:** Decision-making in selecting and developing

landmarks should not be conducted solely through a top-down approach. Public participation is essential to ensure that the chosen landmarks truly reflect community perception and identity [22].

- Further Research:** Future studies could expand the scope by including comparative analysis with other cities, employing eye-tracking or GIS-based spatial analysis to validate landmark visibility and legibility, thereby enriching the methodological framework.

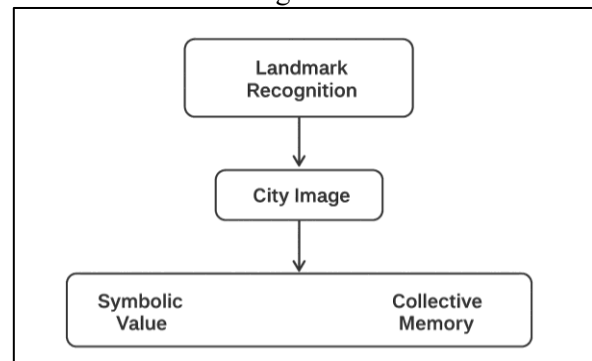


Figure 9. Policy-Oriented Framework for Landmark Development in Pekanbaru

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