

Environmental Communication Model Through Tourism Destination Management to Enhance Conservation Awareness

"Case Study of the Marun River-Pacitan"

Khairatun Niswa Aceh 26*¹, Mikke Setiawati², Henni Gusfa³, Ramadanis⁴

Doctoral Program in Development Communication IPB^{1,2}, Master of Communication Science Program Universitas Mercubuana³, Faculty of Communication Science Muhammadiyah Business Institute⁴

Email: khairatunniswaaceh@apps.ipb.ac.id¹, mikkesetiawati@apps.ipb.ac.id²
henry.gusfa@mercubuana.ac.id³, dhanis.habib@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

The Marun River area is a vital ecosystem facing various environmental challenges, including habitat destruction and pollution. Addressing these issues necessitates enhancing conservation awareness in tourism destination management among local communities and tourists. This study explores an environmental communication model aimed at increasing conservation awareness through tourism management in the Marun River Pacitan. The research employs a case study methodology, utilizing interviews with stakeholders and tourists for data collection. The findings indicate that the environmental communication model is characterized by internatural communication, demonstrating interactions between natural communities such as rivers, estuaries, seas, beaches, and mountains alongside their social groups. The goals of this internatural communication can enhance tourists' knowledge and concern regarding environmental issues in the Marun River. Furthermore, this communication model can classify the actions of stakeholders and tourists into pro-conservation and degradation of conservation awareness categories.

Keywords: Communication, Environment, Awareness, Conservation

A. INTRODUCTION

The integration of environmental communication models within tourism destination management is crucial for enhancing conservation awareness among tourists and local communities. This approach not only promotes sustainable tourism practices but also fosters a deeper understanding of environmental issues, thereby encouraging responsible behavior towards natural resources.

One of the primary mechanisms through which tourism can enhance environmental awareness is through the design of interpretive experiences that emphasize education and conservation. Ballantyne et al. highlight that there is a growing demand from tourists for experiences that facilitate learning about wildlife and environmental sustainability, which aligns with the broader goals of sustainable tourism (Ballantyne et al., 2011). This educational aspect is essential, as it helps visitors form lasting memories and connections with the environment, ultimately leading to increased conservation efforts (Ballantyne et al., 2011). (Ballantyne et al., 2011). Furthermore, the role of national culture and environmental awareness in shaping tourism demand underscores the importance of cultural context in promoting sustainable practices (Bacsi & Szanati, 2011). (Bacsi & Szanati, 2021). As consumers become more environmentally conscious, they are more likely to support tourism initiatives that prioritize sustainability.

Moreover, the concept of responsibility in tourism is pivotal. Confente and Scarpi discuss how awareness of tourism's negative environmental impacts can activate a sense of responsibility among stakeholders, motivating them to adopt more environmentally friendly behaviors. (Confente & Scarpi, 2021). This aligns with the findings of Üzülmöz, who notes that while ecotourism awareness is growing, there are still significant gaps in environmental awareness within the tourism sector, particularly due to challenges such as overtourism and waste mismanagement. (Üzülmöz et al., 2023). Addressing these gaps through targeted communication strategies can enhance the overall effectiveness of conservation efforts.

In addition, the role of community engagement in environmental education cannot be overstated. Initiatives that involve local communities in conservation efforts not only empower them but also foster a sense of ownership over their natural resources. Zhao and Li emphasize that tourism development can lead to improved environmental awareness and infrastructure, which are critical for sustainable development. (Zhao & Min Li, 2018). Similarly, the importance of education in shaping environmental attitudes is highlighted by Harun et al., who argue that schools play a crucial role in instilling environmental values in the younger generation. This educational framework can be further supported by community-based programs that encourage participation in conservation activities.

Furthermore, the integration of environmental communication models into tourism management practices can significantly enhance the effectiveness of conservation messages. Hidayat notes that effective environmental communication is essential for educating the public about ecological issues and fostering a culture of sustainability. (Hidayat et al., 2022). By employing strategies that resonate with diverse audiences, tourism managers can create impactful campaigns that raise awareness and promote responsible behaviors among tourists and residents alike.

In conclusion, the synthesis of environmental communication models within tourism destination management is vital for enhancing conservation awareness. By focusing on education, community

engagement, and effective communication strategies, tourism can play a transformative role in fostering a culture of environmental stewardship. This multifaceted approach not only benefits the environment but also enriches the tourist experience, creating a more sustainable future for both the industry and the ecosystems it relies upon.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is cultural discourse analysis (CuDa) to explain the process of understanding culture and nature. CuDa combines theoretical, descriptive, interpretative, comparative, and critical analyses, starting with decisions for practice based on specific decisions. (Littlejohn, Stephen et al., 2017). In this study, the approach used is a qualitative method with a case study. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field, particularly in the context of environmental communication at tourist destinations. The case study focused on the Marun River in Pacitan provides a clear picture of how destination management can contribute to raising conservation awareness among local communities and tourists. According to (Giampiccoli, 2020), a community-based approach to tourism development can enhance community participation and strengthen the relationship between tourists and the environment. The data obtained in this study will be analyzed descriptively to identify patterns and themes that emerge from interactions among various stakeholders.

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Data in this research were collected through various methods, including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including destination managers, local communities, and tourists visiting the Marun River area. This process aimed to explore their views on the importance of environmental communication in the context of tourism. Participatory observation was carried out to understand the dynamics of interactions between tourists and the surrounding environment, as well as to observe practices that support conservation awareness. Additionally, document analysis was conducted to evaluate existing policies and programs related to destination management and environmental conservation. (Dubravská et al., 2020)..

After data collection, analysis was performed using thematic analysis techniques. This process involved identifying themes that emerged from interviews and observations, as well as relating them to relevant literature. This technique allows researchers to understand how environmental communication is applied in tourism destination management and its impact on conservation

awareness. For example, (Lundberg, 2017) shows that tourism impacts can vary among different local resident groups, which means it is important to consider diverse perspectives in the analysis.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several steps were taken. First, data triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents. This aims to reduce bias and enhance the accuracy of findings. Second, feedback from participants was also obtained to ensure that the researcher's interpretations align with their views. (Jurin et al., 2010) emphasizes the importance of transparent and inclusive communication in ensuring that all voices are heard in the research process.

Ethical considerations are also an important concern in this research. The researcher ensures that all participants provide informed consent before participating in interviews. Furthermore, privacy and confidentiality of information provided by participants are strictly maintained. This research is also committed to not causing negative impacts on the environment or local communities. Thus, this study aims not only to generate new knowledge but also to respect and protect the rights of all stakeholders involved. (Widhagda et al., 2019) .

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pacitan Regency is geographically located between 7° 92'- 8° 29' South latitude and 110° 90'- 111° 43' East longitude. Pacitan Regency is located at the south-western tip of East Java Province, directly adjacent to Central Java. It is bordered to the East by Trenggalek Regency (East Java), to the West by Wonogiri Regency (Central Java), to the North by Ponorogo Regency (East Java) and Wonogiri Regency (Central Java), and to the South by the Indonesian Ocean.

. In terms of topography, Pacitan is 85% hilly and limestone mountainous, while the rest is low-lying (<https://pacitankab.go.id/>), hence the expression 'not rocky soil but rocky soil'. In addition, Pacitan is geographically close to the megathrust earthquake source zone, making Pacitan prone to earthquakes and tsunamis that not only diminish the attractiveness of tourism destinations, but also create fear and anxiety. This causes consideration for most tourists who want to visit Pacitan (<https://www.antaranews.com>). following is a map of the Pacitan Regency Area.



Image 1 Map of Pacitan Region

Pacitan has marine potential, seeing that Pacitan Regency is directly adjacent to the South Sea of Java. The majority of people's livelihoods, especially in coastal areas, are fishermen. In addition to marine potential, Pacitan Regency also has other potential, namely natural stones and stunning tourism potential including beach tourism, where Disparpora (Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports) has recorded 50 beaches in Pacitan Regency. Located in the Kidul Mountains chain and on the southern coastal route, Pacitan Regency is blessed with many beautiful beaches with different characteristics on each beach with large waves from the South Sea that are suitable for *sport* tourism.

The most famous beach tourism in Pacitan is Klayar beach which is located in Donorojo sub-district, about 35 km to the west of the city center. The most interesting thing about Klayar beach is the presence of ocean flutes and rocks that resemble the *Sphinx* statue in Egypt. Furthermore,

there are also waterfall tours, pine forest tours, hot spring tours, river tours and cave tours. Especially for cave tourism, Pacitan has 25 caves as a miracle so Pacitan is called the 1001 cave district. However, before the reform era Pacitan was still isolated, underdevelopment and poverty were still prevalent there. The location and road access to Pacitan is still very difficult because this region is not a crossing area between cities so access to information is still very minimal.

Pacitan tourism consists of natural and man-made tourist destinations, and the natural and man-made potential of these destinations provides economic value in the development of Pacitan following an overview of Pacitan tourist destinations.



Image 2 Tourist Destinations in Pacitan

There were 1,566,186 tourists in Pacitan Regency in 2022. This number has increased from the previous year, which was 582,643 tourists. The recorded tourists were dominated by domestic tourists, with 1,565,922 tourists, and foreign tourists were 264 tourists. As for the most visited tourist attraction, it is Klayar Beach with a total of 312,416 tourists. The least visited tourist attractions are Luweng Jaran and Luweng Ombo, each with only 2 tourists.(BPS in figures, 2023). The experience of experiencing the beauty of natural and artificial tourist destinations in Pacitan is an environmental communication which according to Emily Plec uses the phrase '*natural communication*' to indicate interactions 'between natural communities and social groups' (jhon, 2017) and the classification of natural and social is an interdisciplinary study. The essence of communication is the uncertainty of the environment perceives the prediction of decisions about the certainty of the size of nature in this case the perception of the natural world and its contents defined in human actions and relationships in nature, while the tourism destination managed by the Maroon River Pokdarwis is a sustainable marine destination managed for water

conservation and the provision of areas with four management functions, namely planning, organizing, acting and controlling and the determination of activities and their funding Experience is key in the dialogue model.

Environmental communication is an interaction process of listening to nature, for environmental scholars, conversations that humans have about nature reflect, build, produce, and naturalize human attitudes and practices in relation to the environment. meaning that environmental communication aims to build human awareness about nature and encourage pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. The knowledge and awareness possessed by pacitan leaders in managing natural destinations ensures that it becomes the main focus of sustainability in branding the beauty of natural destinations and is configured in attractive tourism based on collaboration with leaders and community self-sufficiency involvement.(Nyoman Sunarta et al., 2024). The role of the leaders as actors in the destination area is stated by the maroon river tourism actors as follows:

This river was originally only for ordinary swimming by local residents, the idea arose to make Maron so that it could be known to the public because we thought with friends who were here in 2012 there were visitors here, and the existence of tourism could boost the economy of the community, their profession was previously farmers, continued gardening and so on, the existence of this tour, thank God, jobs can increase people's income, and the crowds were around 2014 until now. One year visitors are more than 10 thousand, the day of the Eid holiday can reach 5 thousand more in one week. During the pandemic we closed, obeying the rules of the government, now, it is starting to improve again.

The communication model involving experience according to burn (Griffin, 2012; Richard West & Lynn H Turner, 2010),has constraints not only the meaning generated from speech and conversation, but noise and obstacles from various elements including the environment or space and time. But the intersubjective experience of listening to nature and actors who are experienced and have environmental knowledge/insight about the complexity of an uncertain environment and high ambiguity, this potential triggers changes in managing nature tourism destinations that have balance. The dialogical environmental communication model as a strategic communication model for managing the Suangi Maroon tourism destination has products and conservation awareness.

Pacitan is a homeland that is loved and blessed by the leaders and managers as well as the community as well as having a professional role to maintain the area, its environment. So the dialogic environmental communication model is sustainable strategic communication in the tourism sector. Where the role of professional actors in dialogic environmental communication as sustainable strategic communication has an environmental impact and the traceability of

communication products significantly provides sustainability to the environment. (Ulrike Roettger & Rettler, 2024).

Environmental communication conservation researchers stem nature because, nature is materialism dominated by human needs, so nature is isolated. But the environmental approach is not for everyone, so environmental communication is not just one type of communication that is sometimes produced - rather, environmental communication is a dimension in all systems of communication practice in a balance that has a double value of listening to nature and expressing itself or listening to the earth and its contents and expressing the earth and its contents. for this reason, environmental communication is a heuristic exploration that explores people and places on earth to produce new ways of continuing and relating to nature.

When nature is the subject, it means that nature is an actor that contributes to tourism development such as tropical rainfall measurements that use technology to map the agenda of tourism activities in the destination (As-syakur et al., 2014; Gibson & Hardman, 1998). Dialogical environmental communication that treats nature as a subject and sustainable strategic communication in the economic and social value sector by means of communication objectives and methods maximizes the professional role of communicators including professional commitment in the process of creating economic and social value in the maroon river.

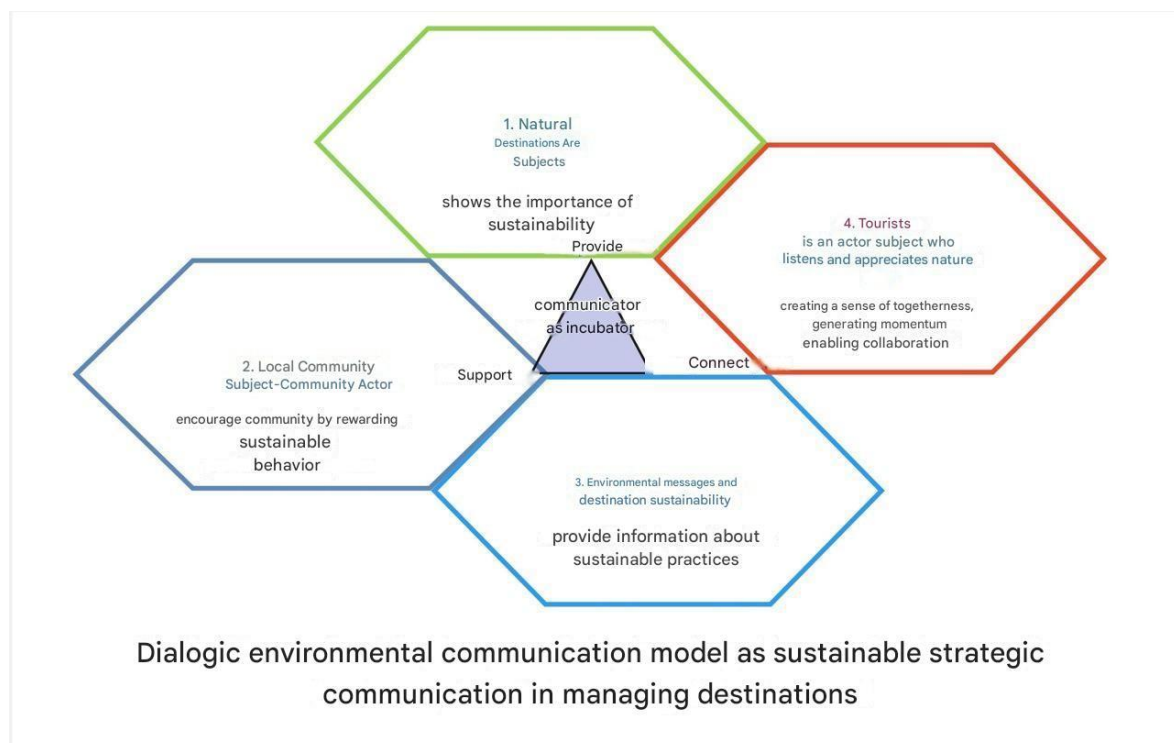


Image 3 Environmental Communication Model

The role of Communicators as actors in Sustainable Tourism Destination Governance

1. Having knowledge of protecting the earth and sunagi with daily cultural performances, namely maintaining the cleanliness of the river with the initiative of the community working together, sorting out the garbage along the river and burning it, utilizing trees and wood around the river as natural property in managing boats and maroon river docks. This means that the ability of destination managers to make changes in their communities is based on knowledge about nature and its contents.
2. Collaborate with other units or organizations to foster a culture of sustainability as expressed by dwi:
Thanks to the help of pacitan figures who provide concern in the renewable energy program by providing gasoline to gas conversion in fishing boats used to serve tourists along the maroon river. In addition to energy conservation, the leaders configured their professional programs with the help of solar energy lighting street lights in the village using solar lights. Internal transformation in resources is maximized by community leaders to provide, connect and support sustainable strategic communication objectives, namely the awareness of sustainable tourism development in the Maroon River tourism destination with destination governance that is pro-green. (Cameron & Green, 2004),(Kurniawidi et al., 2024).
3. The role of tourism actors as incubator actors navigates sustainable changes such as those carried out by destination managers with community self-sufficiency in performing keseahrian rituals serving tourists with their boats along the river and providing messages through river *storytelling* and the impact of river sustainability. According to tourism observer Sunarta said:
Traditional destination management does not consider social risks, namely conflicts of interest of river users on both sides of the river, the river should be managed by involving investors or village-owned enterprises, and access to river destinations is opened and maintained with other attractive value agendas.
4. Management commitment in the dialogic communication model is inseparable from the role of pentahelik, including the media pacitaku.com said:
A sense of passion for my homeland inspires me to explore and provide information about Pacitan on the media that I manage, the development of Pacitan that I integrate through social media content makes Pacitan and its destinations popular and increasingly in demand to be visited especially for domestic tourists. This means that

the pentahelik in dialogic environmental communication provides double value, namely destination branding. (Chaysalina, 2023) and the destination develops as an economic area (Septadiani et al., 2022).

5. Environmental impact management has not been an orientation in the dialogic environmental communication of tourism actors who manage the maroon river, this is expressed by dwi: that traditionally we understand the tidal cycle of river water in certain months where the water is murky, and dry or vice versa, the high rainfall season gives consideration to temporarily closing service activities. (Hashemi, 2021).

Comparison of our findings so far discussed in environmental communication is not dialogical, more understanding of the environment is an object that is used as a source for human activities, with the treatment of nature is a subject, such as rivers are the heart of life for living things, rivers that irrigate the land, rivers that carry materials to the sea, the meeting of the sea and the river then the tourism actors maintain nature with their awareness. and this is all we make arguments to support dialogical environmental communication, nature is a subject, humans are also subjects, both communicate to provide mutual benefits to life. While the previous article is discussing that nature is merely a subject for humans. So the study of empowerment to protect nature is part of treating nature as an object, there is no awareness that nature is a subject. Usually the perspective of traditional rituals and traditional beliefs to give offerings to nature, one of the proofs that natural intervention affects human life and they treat nature as a subject.

D. CONCLUSION

1. The dialogic environmental communication model is a sustainable communication strategy to manage destinations and raise conservation awareness. The role of the communicator is incubator to provide. Nature destination is a subject that shows the importance of sustainable
2. Travelers are subject actors who listen to and appreciate nature, communicators connect by creating a sense of community, generating momentum that enables collaboration. Local communities as subject actors are pioneering communities that embrace sustainable behavior.
3. Environmental messaging and destination sustainability, communicators as pioneers providing information and linking sustainable practices.
4. It is hoped that this research will be an input for researchers to provide a more comprehensive perspective on nature and humans. And hopefully this research will bring awareness for us to better see nature and humans as a unity of mutual need.

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