

Environmental Communication Model Through Tourism Destination Management to Enhance Conservation Awareness

“Case Study of the Marun River-Pacitan”

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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, using 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 international 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, through responsible encouraging 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). 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, 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 behavior 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 analysis, 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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The 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., n.d.)emphasize 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 (Widhagtha et al., 2019).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Geographically, Pacitan Regency is an area located between 7° 92' - 8° 29' South Latitude and 110° 90' - 111° 43' East Longitude. Pacitan Regency is located at the Southwest tip of East Java Province, which directly borders Central Java. The East borders Trenggalek Regency (East Java), the West borders Wonogiri Regency (Central Java), the North borders Ponorogo Regency (East Java) and Wonogiri Regency (Central Java), and the South borders the Indonesian Ocean.

. Pacitan Regency from the topographical side, the structure of its area which is 85% is part of the hills and limestone mountains, while the rest is lowlands (<https://pacitankab.go.id/>), so that the expression *"Not rocky land but rocky soil"* appears. In addition, geographically Pacitan is also facing the *megathrust earthquake source zone*, making Pacitan prone to earthquakes and tsunamis which have an impact not only on reducing the appeal of tourist destinations, but also causing fear and alertness. This causes concern consideration for most tourists who want to visit Pacitan (<https://www.antaranews.com>).



Gambar 1 Here is a map of Pacitan Regency.

Pacitan has marine potential, considering that Pacitan Regency borders directly with the South Java Sea. The majority of people's livelihoods, especially in coastal areas, are fishermen. In

addition to marine, Pacitan Regency also has other potentials, namely natural stones and stunning tourism potential, including beach tourism, where Disarpura (Youth and Sports Tourism Office) has recorded 50 beaches in Pacitan Regency. Located in the Kidul Mountains series and also located on the southern coastline, Pacitan Regency is blessed with many beautiful beaches with different characteristics on each beach with large waves from the South Sea which are suitable for sports tourism.

The most famous beach tourism in Pacitan is Klayar beach located in Donorojo District, about 35 km to the west of the city center. The most interesting thing about Klayar beach is the presence of an ocean flute and coral 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 tours, Pacitan has 25 caves as a miracle so that Pacitan is called the Regency of 1001 caves. Rivers, however, before the reform era Pacitan was still isolated, backwardness and poverty were still widespread there. The location and road access to Pacitan are still very difficult because this area is not an inter-city route area so that access to information is still very minimal.

Pacitan tourism consists of natural and artificial tourist destinations, and the natural and artificial potential of these destinations provides economic value in the development of Pacitan, including a description of Pacitan tourist destinations.



The level of tourism visits 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 feeling the beauty of natural and artificial tourist destinations in Pacitan is environmental communication, where according to Emily Plec, the phrase *internatural communication* is used to indicate the interaction "between natural communities and social groups (Jhon, 2017) and the classification of nature and society is an interdisciplinary study. The essence of communication is the uncertainty of the environment perceiving predictions of decisions about the certainty of the size of nature in this case the perception of the natural world and its contents which are 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 provisions Area with four management functions, namely planning, organizing, actuating and controlling and determining activities and their funding (Pariwisata Bahari Berkelanjutan Desa Jungutbatu et al., 2021). Experience is key in the dialogic model (Griffin, 2012)

Environmental communication is the process of listening to nature interaction, for environmental scholars, the conversation that humans have about nature reflects, builds, produces, and naturalizes human attitudes and practices in relation to the environment. meaning environmental communication that aims to build human awareness of nature and encourage pro-environmental attitudes and behavior. The knowledge and awareness possessed by Pacitan figures 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 figures and community self-sufficiency involvement (Nyoman Sunarta et al., 2024). The role of figures 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 of that 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, then gardening and so on, the existence of this tourism, thank God the job market can increase the income of the community, and the crowds around 2014 until now The visitors are more than 10 thousand a year, these Eid holidays can reach more than 5 thousand in one week. During the pandemic We closed, obeyed the government rules , now , things are starting to get better again.

Communication model involving experience according to Burn (Griffin, 2012; Richard West & Lynn H Turner, 2010), has constraints not only the meaning produced 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 the environment that is uncertain and high ambiguity, this potential triggers changes in managing natural tourism destinations that have balance. The dialogic environmental communication model as a strategic communication model for managing the Maroon River tourism destination has conservation products and awareness.

Pacitan is a birthplace that is loved and blessed by the figure and the manager as well as the community as and has 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 provides environmental impacts and traces of communication products significantly provide sustainability to the environment. (Ulrike Roettger & Rettler, 2024).

Environmental communication conservation researchers dam nature because, nature is materialism dominated by human needs, then nature is isolated. But in the environmental approach not everyone experiences it for that environmental communication is not just one type of communication that is sometimes produced - but rather, environmental communication is a dimension in all communication practice systems in a balance that has a double value where

listening to nature and expressing itself or listening to the earth and its contents and expressing the earth and its contents. for this environmental communication is a heuristic exploration that explores people and places on earth to produce new ways of continuing and doing relationships with nature.

When Nature as a subject means nature is an actor that contributes to tourism development such as tropical rainfall measurement using technology to map tourism activity agendas at destinations (As-syakur et al., 2014; Gibson & Hardman, 1998). Dialogic 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 that maximize the role of the communicator profession, including with professional commitment in the process of creating economic and social value in the Maroon River.



Gambar 2 Model The Role of Communicators as Actors in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management

The Role of Communicators as Actors in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management

1. Having knowledge to maintain the earth and river with daily cultural performances, namely maintaining the cleanliness of the river with community initiatives to work together, sorting garbage along the river and burning it, utilizing trees and wood around the river as natural properties in managing boats and the Maroon River pier. This means that the ability of destination managers to make changes to their communities is based on knowledge about nature and its contents.

2. Collaborate with other units or organizations to develop a sustainable culture as stated by Dwi:
Thanks to the help of Pacitan figures who provide concern in the renewable energy program by providing gasoline conversion to gas in fishing boats used to serve tourists along the Maroon River. In addition, energy conservation figures configure their professional programs with the help of solar energy street lighting in the village using solar lamps. Internal transformation in resources is maximized by community leaders providing, connecting and supporting sustainable strategic communication goals, namely sustainable tourism development suggestions in Maroon River tourism destinations with destination management that is pro-go (Cameron & Green, 2004)green .(Kurniawidi et al., 2024)
3. The role of tourism actors as incubator actors navigate sustainable change as done by destination managers with community self-sufficiency in daily ritual performances serving tourists with their boats along the river and delivering messages through river *story telling* and the impact of river sustainability. According to tourism observer Sunarta said:
Traditional destination management does not take into account social risks, namely conflicts of interest between river users on both sides of the river. The river should be managed by involving investors or village-owned business entities , and access to the river destination should be opened and maintained with other attractive value agendas.
4. Management's commitment to the dialogic communication model cannot be separated from the pentahelic role, including media pacitaku.com saying:
The sense of love 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 pentahelic in dialogic environmental communication provides a double value, namely the destination brand (Chaysalina, 2023)and the destination developing as an economic area.(Septadiani et al., 2022).
5. The environmental impact reduction has not yet become an orientation in the dialogical environmental communication of tourism actors who manage the Maroon River, as expressed by Dwi: that traditionally we understand the cycle of the ebb and flow of river water in certain months when the water is murky, and dry or conversely the high rainfall season gives consideration to temporarily closing service activities.(Hashemi, 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

1. The dialogic environmental communication model is as a sustainable strategy communication to manage destinations and raise conservation awareness. The role of the incubator communicator is to provide. Destination/nature is a subject that shows the importance of sustainability
2. Tourists are the subject actors who listen and appreciate nature, communicators connect by creating a sense of togetherness, generating momentum that allows

collaboration. Local communities as subjects are actors, namely pioneer communities that model sustainable behavior.

3. Environmental messages and sustainability of tourist destinations, communicators as pioneers who provide information and connect sustainable practices.

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