

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COMMUNICATION THROUGH POKDARWIS (KELOMPOK SADAR WISATA) IN WEST BANDUNG DISTRICT

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is a concept of tourism development emphasizing the efforts to maintain the environment and cultural preservation of the tourism object, which in turn would guarantee the sustainability of tourism objects for long period of time. However, this sustainable tourism concept might achieve its goals as long as it is supported by a proper policy communication. Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District employs sustainable tourism communication through the Kelompok Sadar Wisata (Pokdarwis) in developing each of its top tourism objects. This study aims to investigate and analyze the sustainable tourism communication employed by Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District through its Pokdarwis. This is a case study research where the data collection incorporates both observation and in-depth interviews with Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District and two top Pokdarwis. The result indicates that sustainable tourism communication employed by Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District including roadshow and workshop to every potential tourism object destination. The roadshow and workshop aim to encourage local people's active participation in developing potential tourism object in their area based on the concept of sustainable tourism by establishing its own Pokdarwis. Each Pokdarwis has to be able to generate development concept of its tourism object and in charge of the tourism object sustainability.

Keywords: *Policy Communication, Sustainable Tourism, Case Study, Kelompok Sadar Wisata*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism is originally a developed concept of eco-tourism. World Trade Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as an effort to meet the tourists' and the tourism destination's needs, where local people are able to maintain and preserve the tourism object for future purposes at the same time. Meanwhile, The German Forum on Environment and Development suggests there are some main concepts of sustainable tourism include using long-term based development approach, which could be adopted ethically, socially, culturally, and also ecologic.

UNESCO mentions some specific characteristics that differs sustainable tourism from other concepts that is including local people empowerment, support for nature and culture preservation, identify product quality and tourists satisfaction, also adoption implementation by management and monitoring. The development process of sustainable tourism incorporates several stages, where the first and significant stage of this process is to identify the tourism problems also the stakeholders involved in the concept implementation. UNESCO elaborates there are several stages on tourism management planning include:

- Background determination, team and structure making of the planning process.
- Stakeholder identification and the role of each stakeholder.
- Information needed mapping to generate policy regarding sustainable tourism development.
- Mutual agreement among stakeholders.

These stages would be accomplished by utilizing communication as the media to increase stakeholders' involvement. Thus, communication plays significant role in the success of sustainable tourism stages.

Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District employs sustainable tourism communication through the *Kelompok Sadar Wisata (Pokdarwis)* in developing each of its top tourism objects. Most of West Bandung District's tourism destinations – include nature tourism, cultural tourism and thematic tourism – involve beautiful and extraordinary scenery. These kinds of tourism destination need to be treated differently in order to be able to survive for a long period of time. It is not only about eco-tourism but also socio-cultural preservation.

The development of tourism destinations does not only bring positive impact – particularly economically – but also bring negative impacts, especially for the tourism object itself and the local people around it, either environmental impact, socio-cultural, or socio-economic. UNESCO addresses the environmental impact of tourism destinations development regards the increasing number of visitors might put harm on the ecosystem or worse, damage the environment. Meanwhile, socio-cultural impact regards the foreign culture exposure towards local people where local people might get influenced by the foreign culture instead of introducing their own.

Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District employs sustainable tourism communication through the *Kelompok Sadar Wisata (Pokdarwis)* in developing each of its top tourism objects. The reason behind *Pokdarwis* establishment is to empower local people around tourism destination in order to increase their life income and in turn their welfare as well. Besides, local government would like to ensure the preservation of tourism object by involving local people in the tourism destination development process directly.

This study aims to investigate and analyze how Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District employs sustainable tourism communication through its *Pokdarwis*. The first part of this article will describe sustainable tourism programs by Department of Tourism and Culture followed by how the programs being communicated to each *Pokdarwis* in the field.

Sustainable Tourism

World Travel and Tourism Council, quoted from UNESCO report, reveals that tourism increase Global Domestic Product by 11%, employing 200 million people, and more than 700 million people travelling the world every year. The high economic activities of tourism bring in huge profit for the whole stakeholders but also disadvantage for the tourism service providers.

UNESCO claims tourism does not only bring positive impact to the tourism destination but also negative impact, as listed below:

1. Environment impact towards ecosystem, the high number of visitors indirectly threatening ecosystems existence or damage the environment. This might be caused directly by tourists' activities such as damaging nature, or indirectly such as climate change because of long distance flight.
2. Negative impact on socio-cultural, tourism also threatening the socio-cultural of tourism destination. The local people of tourism destination might not prepare themselves to be exposed by the foreign culture brought in by the tourists.
3. Negative impact on socio-economic, each country seeks for huge benefit from tourism sector. However, in order to achieve the huge benefit, government has to spend huge capital on promotion, which in turn affects the socio-economic indirectly.
4. Positive impact on socio-economic, it is undeniable that tourism will bring positive impact on socio-economic for a country by tourists visit rate. Local people also gain benefit from the tourism activity.
5. Positive impact on socio-cultural, it will be achieved when local people promote their own culture to the tourists during their visit. This promotion will also lessen stereotype and prejudice upon the locals.
6. Positive impact on environment, the income from tourists visit can be used as the maintenance cost to minimize environmental damage.

Tourism generates dilemma effect that trigger critique among practitioners and academics. UNESCO recorded the critiques emerged around 1960-ies and it was answered by the emergence of eco-tourism. As it progresses, eco-tourism concept developed into sustainable tourism on the early of 2000.

World Trade Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism as a set of effort to meet tourists' and tourism destinations' needs, where at the same time local people preserves and maintains tourism destination for future opportunities. Meanwhile, The German Forum on Environment and Development suggests there are some main concepts of sustainable tourism include using long-term based development approach, which could be adopted ethically, socially, culturally, and also ecologic.

The definition above indicates that sustainable tourism's focal point is on the significant of preserving and maintaining tourism objects for future sustainability. It is different from the usual tourism concept where both government and local people do not have comprehensive and measurable planning on tourism object development. UNESCO claims the main characteristic of sustainable tourism, which differs it from other tourism concept, as followed:

- Local people empowerment, sustainable tourism involves stakeholders in the tourism industry field including local people. It is because local people are the main actor in supporting the sustainable tourism implementation.
- Support for nature and culture preservation, sustainable tourism will be realized as long as each stakeholder participate with its own capacity. For instance, government's support can be realized by generating rules or policy regarding sustainable tourism.
- Identify product quality and tourists satisfaction; the beginning stage of sustainable tourism development or planning is to identify the tourism quality and tourists' satisfaction rate.
- Adopting implementation by management and monitoring, sustainable tourism process also marked by adopting and controlling by the management.

UNESCO also elaborates there are several stages on tourism management planning include:

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METHODS AND DATA

The method used is descriptive qualitative. Sugiyono (2005) defines descriptive method as a method used to describe and analyze research results but cannot be used to make general conclusion. Meanwhile Whitney (1960) suggests that descriptive method looks for facts with proper interpretation. In order to achieve the research goals, descriptive method considered the best method to apply.

Data collection incorporates in-depth interviews with several staff of several divisions include division of tourism destination, division of partnership, and division of promotion of Tourism and Culture Department of West Bandung District. These interviews then followed by literature study regarding the issue of sustainable tourism in the area of West Bandung District and West Java as the bigger picture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tourism destination development in each area of West Bandung District based on the awareness of Tourism and Culture Department of West Bandung District of its tourism object potentials. In order

to achieve optimal development of tourism destination that also empower local people, West Bandung District government, through its Department of Tourism and Culture, socialize the Act No. 10 of 2009 regarding Tourism. One of the main points of this act related to local tourism destination development is the significance of *kelompok sadar wisata* existence in each potential tourism destination.

Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District socializes the establishment of *kelompok sadar wisata* or known as *Pokdarwis* in each potential tourism area. *Pokdarwis* is a structured organization established by local people, which guided and directed by Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District but also independent and responsible of managing each tourism destination. The main goal of *Pokdarwis* establishment is local people empowerment and also to increase their income and welfare.

Promotion Head Division of Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District, Ukas Maolana, further elaborated that *Pokdarwis* establishment has to be based on local people initiative in order to raise and increase local people awareness to maintain tourism object preservation and sustainability. Local people empowerment is the main goal of tourism destination development in West Bandung District. Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District considers *Pokdarwis* plays the key role in promoting, managing, and maintaining each potential tourism object.

Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District also provides training for *Pokdarwis* members and local people around tourism destination regarding the importance of preparing themselves to welcome tourists visit and cope with the impacts might be brought by the visits. The Head Division of Tourism Destination, David Oot, claimed that they held routine training every year for *Pokdarwis* members and the local people around tourism destination. Emphasizing the role of *Pokdarwis* is government's way of support in driving local people to develop their tourism object potency actively.

Considers the role of government only as a regulator and facilitator while the local people itself is the main actor in managing and developing tourism object potency. Even, there is few tourism destinations have been managed and developed by private sector. While private sector has capital source to develop its tourism object, local people does not have the upper hand. This is where government plays significant role in providing support, training, accompaniment, and guidance in the development process of each *Pokdarwis*' tourism object potency, in order to ensure the development of tourism destination under *Pokdarwis* management.

The socialization and training provided by government itself mainly regarding sustainable tourism, where *Pokdarwis* guided and directed to generate sustainable tourism oriented development programs. Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District has adopted tourism development concept of sustainable tourism based in each socialization and training program. One of Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District's concepts of sustainable tourism refers to *Sapta Pesona*, which a definition of tourism awareness concept related to local people's support and role as the host in the effort to create conducive environment and condition that able to promote the growth of tourism industry through the realization of seven components of *Sapta Pesona*. The seven components of *Sapta Pesona* include security, order, cleanliness, coolness, beauty, hospitality, and memories. This *Sapta Pesona* has to be the concept base of tourism potency development managed by each *Pokdarwis*. It is the main implementation of sustainable tourism concept employed by Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District.

CONCLUSION

The study implication generates another issue to be solved, which is on how other stakeholders interpret local government's implementation of sustainable tourism concept. It needs to be investigated consider it will generate different perspectives on how sustainable tourism concept ideally implemented on the technical term. The concept of sustainable tourism employed by Department of Tourism and Culture of West Bandung District through *Pokdarwis* only covers the local people empowerment part, while other main ideas of sustainable tourism concept still left behind.

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