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Communication of the Setu Tujuh Muara Depok Tourism Awareness Group in Nature Tourism Management

Agustini [1*], Robby Firliandoko [2], Apriansyah[3]
[123]Universitas Djuanda, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: Apriiansyah234@gmail.com , agustin@unida.ac.id , robby.firliandoko@unida.ac.id

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the role of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in strengthening local ecotourism potential in Setu Tujuh Muara, Bojongsari, Depok. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving Pokdarwis members, the surrounding community, visitors, and relevant stakeholders. The results indicate that Pokdarwis has a strategic role in environmental management, tourism facility development, community economic empowerment, digital promotion, and mobilizing citizen participation. Group communication within Pokdarwis runs effectively through social, educational, persuasive, problem-solving, and coordination functions that support organizational sustainability. Pokdarwis is able to increase community participation, tourism-based income, and environmental awareness. However, there are obstacles such as limited funds, suboptimal infrastructure, and institutional legality that has not been fully completed. This study concludes that group communication and community involvement are the keys to developing sustainable ecotourism in Setu Tujuh Muara.

Keywords: group communication, Pokdarwis, ecotourism

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has various sectors that can boost the country's foreign exchange. One of them is the tourism sector which is the top source of foreign exchange (Rahma 2020) . West Java Province is one of the provinces in Indonesia that has a lot of potential, one of which is the potential in tourism, such as its attractive natural beauty, various cultural traditions and typical foods located in 27 regencies / cities in West Java, Depok is one of the youngest cities in West Java province. The location of Depok city is adjacent to Jakarta and Bogor. The area is approximately 200.29 km, Depok City is inhabited by 2.05 million people , from this area, Depok city also has the potential of its natural resources so that Depok city can develop quite rapidly, geographically Depok city is flowed by large rivers, such as the Ciliwung River and the Cisadane River. In addition, the city of Depok also has 25 lakes spread across the East, West and Central regions based on what Purwanto wrote in Depok City: From Private Land to Becoming a Buffer for the Nation's Capital https://kompaspedia.kompas.id

Depok City has good tourism potential, particularly through the utilization of water resources. The tourism sector is the most promising because it can increase the country's foreign exchange earnings. Naibaho *et al.* (2023) explain that tourism is a complex sector encompassing industries such as handicrafts, souvenirs, accommodation, and transportation. Furthermore, it is also included as a service industry (Chakim *et al., 2019). al* (2023) . Village tourism has the potential to spur innovation, ignite creativity, and make a significant contribution to economic and social growth.

One of the potential local resources of Depok City is Lake. However, many people are still unaware of and unable to utilize the potential of local resources in their area (Andrika *et al.* , 2023) . For example, Situ Bojongsari is one of the places located in Bojongsari Village, Depok City, West Java Province. It is approximately 15 kilometers from Jakarta. Setu Bojongsari is a tourist destination that is useful in the field of nature recreation. There are several opportunities or potentials in Situ that can

be utilized by the local community, namely air transportation or water bicycles. Bojongsari is known as a place that still has water transportation, such as bicycle boats and odong odong to getek boats, which continue to operate today. This greatly contributes to progress in the tourism sector, because many people still want to ride boats. However, many people are still unaware and have not taken the initiative to manage the potential of local resources in their area. An example is Situ Bojongsari, which is located in Bojongsari and Sawangan Villages, Bojongsari District, Depok City, West Java Province. The location is about 15 kilometers from Jakarta.

Situ Bojongsari serves as a tourist attraction, with a focus on utilization in the natural tourism sector. There are several opportunities within Situ Pengasinan that can be utilized by local residents, such as MSMEs or culinary stalls. One such opportunity at Situ Tujuh Muara is the presence of MSMEs. MSMEs play a significant role in driving Indonesia's economic activity, both as primary and secondary sources of income, as well as being a driving force for local economic growth (Prasetyo and Ellitan 2023) . The presence of MSMEs is expected to attract more visitors to Situ Tujuh Muara. From the stalls provided, residents around Situ Tujuh Muara can sell various snacks, such as drinks and food, and there are also several restaurants located around Setu Tujuh Muara. From the various potentials described above regarding what is available in Situ Tujuh Muara, it is hoped that it will become known to the wider community, not just residents of Depok. Such things can be useful if the local potential in their area is managed with good public awareness.

Utilizing local potential through tourism can improve people's welfare, reduce poverty and unemployment, and preserve the environment (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy 2012) . This is reinforced by the Depok City Tourism Regional Regulation (Perda) number 16 of 2013 concerning Tourism and the Sapta Pesona Indonesia. Utilizing local potential essentially involves the roles of all stakeholders, namely the government, the private sector, and the community, with all community groups playing a role. This allows community groups to play a more active and optimal role in improving their welfare.

With dynamic and participatory group communication, Pokdarwis can explore local potential, develop work programs, and involve the community in sustainable tourism activities. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply the role of group communication within Pokdarwis in developing the natural tourism potential of Setu Tujuh Muara, Bojongsari, Depok (Zuhdi and Rifai, 2024) .

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to explore phenomena in depth through directly observed words, behaviors, and social activities. This approach was chosen because it is able to explain phenomena that cannot be measured quantitatively and allows researchers to understand the meaning behind group actions and communication. The unit of analysis in this study is the Setu Tujuh Muara Bojongsari Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), which plays a role in developing local potential and managing tourism areas. Research informants consisted of the Pokdarwis Chairperson, members, local residents, visitors, and security workers. Data collection techniques included participatory observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted with the researcher's direct involvement in Pokdarwis activities. Interviews were used to gather information about their activities and roles, while documentation was used to obtain supporting data in the form of archives, photographs, and notes related to tourism activities and group activities.

Data validity was tested using source triangulation techniques by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation from various sources to obtain consistent and credible information. Triangulation was carried out by checking the consistency of data from the Pokdarwis Chairperson, members, the community, and other involved parties, so that the data obtained could be verified. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the processes of data collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. This method allowed researchers to interpret the findings in depth, connect various pieces of information, and identify communication patterns that emerged in Pokdarwis activities related to the development of the Setu Tujuh Muara Bojongsari tourism potential. Through these stages, the research produced a comprehensive picture of the role

of group communication in supporting the sustainability and development of local tourism destinations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Group Aware Tour in development of local potential

The Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) plays a significant role in developing local potential based on community participation. This role includes managing the tourism environment, empowering the community's economy, training human resources, and digital promotion. In practice, Pokdarwis not only carries out administrative functions but also acts as a driving force for the social and economic well-being of local residents. Pokdarwis Setu Tujuh Muara plays a key role in developing the local potential of the Setu Tujuh Muara natural tourism area in the Bojongsari area of Depok. This role encompasses various aspects, from potential identification and management to promotion and community empowerment. Based on interviews with key informants and supporters, Pokdarwis's role is evident in several ways. First, Pokdarwis is involved in identifying and developing tourist attractions, such as lake views, photo spots, and lake trails. This development is carried out in stages and based on group deliberations. Second, they actively develop strategies for developing tourism facilities through collaboration with residents, both through mutual cooperation and through communication with external parties.

Third, Pokdarwis also carries out tourism promotion functions, both digitally through social media and directly through community activities. This is crucial for attracting tourists and building a positive image of the destination. Fourth, in terms of human resource development, Pokdarwis provides informal training to members and the community regarding tourism services, cleanliness, and site management. Fifth, Pokdarwis helps encourage local economic empowerment by opening business opportunities such as culinary, parking services, and homestays. Finally, their role is also evident in their efforts to establish cooperation with local governments and private institutions to support sustainable tourism development. Through solid group communication, Pokdarwis is able to unite various parties and build a shared awareness that tourism is not just for entertainment, but also for improving the potential and welfare of the surrounding community.

a. Development of Tourist Attractions

The primary goal of developing tourist attractions is to create added value at destinations, thereby satisfying tourists and encouraging them to return. These efforts are also expected to support local economic growth by increasing the number of visits, expanding employment opportunities, and promoting regional identity more widely. The primary goal of developing tourist attractions is to create added value at destinations, thereby satisfying tourists and encouraging them to return. These efforts are also expected to support local economic growth by increasing the number of visits, expanding employment opportunities, and promoting regional identity more widely.

Figure 1: Setu Cleaner



Source: Researcher documentation

The development of tourist attractions in Setu Tujuh Muara is carried out through efforts involving the active participation of the Tourism Group (Pokdarwis) and the local community. Pokdarwis utilizes existing natural resources, such as lakes, shady trees, and the natural beauty of the surrounding environment, to develop them into value-added tourist attractions. This development is realized through the provision of supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as photo spots, children's play areas, gazebos, trails along the lake, and relaxing areas to provide comfort for visitors.



This development process is implemented using a community-based approach, where Pokdarwis members and the surrounding community work together to build, organize, and maintain tourist facilities. Examples of these activities include cleaning the lake area, repainting boats, constructing seating and gazebos, and decorating the fence with plants. These activities not only improve the area's aesthetics but also create a more comfortable and attractive atmosphere for tourists.

b. Digital-Based Tourism Promotion

In practice, digital tourism promotion typically relies on engaging visual content, such as high-quality photos, short videos, virtual tours, and stories. The advantage of digital promotion lies in its ability to disseminate information quickly, reach a wider market without geographic boundaries, and enable direct interaction between destination managers and tourists. Digital-based tourism promotion at Setu Tujuh Muara is one of the main strategies of the Tourism Group (Pokdarwis) in attracting interest and increasing the number of tourist visits. Many also said they learned about it from Pokdarwis' Instagram. "It used to be very quiet, with only local residents visiting. But since it's been frequently uploaded on social media, it's become increasingly busy. I even sometimes help direct parking." Utilizing social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allows Pokdarwis to disseminate information quickly, reach a wider audience without geographic boundaries, and build a positive destination image at a relatively low cost.

c. Increasing the Capacity of Community Human Resources

Training and human resource development (Pokdarwis) are key to successfully managing local tourism potential. Through training, Pokdarwis members learn effective tourism promotion techniques, destination management, and environmental sustainability. Meanwhile, human resource development helps foster creative mindsets, strong communication skills, and problem-solving skills needed to develop and maintain tourist attractions. The training ranges from becoming a tour guide and managing a homestay to creating local culinary products. The goal is for members to have comprehensive skills, not only managing tourist attractions but also marketing and maintaining their quality. With trained human resources, we can provide better service and keep tourists coming back.

d. Community Economic Empowerment

Community economic empowerment means involving local residents in various activities such as managing tourist destinations, providing boat rentals, opening food stalls, and renting out tourist equipment. This way, community incomes increase, employment opportunities increase, and regional potential can be developed without damaging the environment or local cultural values. The direct impact of the Pokdarwis (Tourism Group) is also evident in the increased economic activity of the surrounding community. In an interview with Ms. Siti Mawarni, a food vendor in the Setu area, she admitted that her income increased after she opened a small stall on the edge of Setu since Pokdarwis actively managed tourism.

e. Cooperation with the Government and Other Institutions

To strengthen its programs, collaboration between Pokdarwis and the government is a key factor in developing local tourism potential. Through government support, at the village, sub-district, and tourism office levels, Pokdarwis gains access to various forms of assistance, such as training, mentoring, infrastructure provision, and regulations that strengthen the legality of tourism management. This support not only helps improve the Pokdarwis' human resource capacity but also provides greater space to promote tourist destinations to the wider public. This collaboration ensures that tourism development is more focused and aligned with regional policies.

2. The Role of Group Communication in Pokdarwi Activities

The success of the Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Group (Pokdarwis) in managing local potential is inseparable from the effectiveness of the group communication they have built. Group communication is the backbone of implementing work programs, strengthening relationships between members, resolving conflicts, and encouraging community participation. According to Bungin (2021), group communication has five main functions: social relations, education, persuasion, problem-solving, and increasing group effectiveness. In the context of the Setu Tujuh Muara Pokdarwis, these five functions are clearly evident in their daily practices.

a. Function of Social Relations

The function of social relations in the Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) communication is evident in their ability to build togetherness and solidarity between members and the surrounding community. These social relations take place not only in formal activities such as meetings, but also in informal activities that create familiarity and a sense of shared ownership of the tourist area. Social relations within the Pokdarwis group are well-functioning. Through joint activities, both formal and informal, strong social bonds are formed between Pokdarwis members and the surrounding community. Activities such as mutual cooperation, deliberations, and leisure activities serve as a forum for fostering a sense of togetherness and social awareness. The communication established is not merely about conveying information, but also building strong interpersonal relationships. According to Riadi (2022), communication, which functions as a social glue within a group, creates a sense of togetherness and solidarity that is essential for maintaining team cohesion, especially in community self-help groups such as Pokdarwis.

b. Function of Education

The educational function of the Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Group (Pokdarwis Setu Tujuh Muara) plays a crucial role in imparting knowledge and skills to both members and the surrounding community. Through targeted communication and learning activities, the community becomes more than just spectators of tourism activities, but also participates in understanding how to manage, maintain, and utilize the tourism potential within their community. The group also serves as an educational platform. This exchange of information enriches members' knowledge and strengthens their abilities in carrying out their duties. Thus, the educational function carried out by Pokdarwis not only creates a tourism-aware society, but also forms an independent and creative mindset.

c. Persuasion Function

The persuasive function is clearly evident in Pokdarwis's efforts to encourage local residents to care more about the Setu environment. When Pokdarwis was first established, many residents were not yet involved in tourism activities and even littered. However, over time, Pokdarwis's persuasive approach began to bear fruit **.** Pokdarwis realized that not all residents were immediately willing to participate in tourism activities. Initially, some residents considered tourism management solely the responsibility of Pokdarwis administrators. However, through persuasive communication, the community gradually began to realize that they also have a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness, safety, and comfort of the tourist area.

d. Problem Solving Function (Problem Solving)

The problem-solving function within the Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Group (Pokdarwis) is implemented in a participatory and familial manner. Pokdarwis acts as a communication bridge between the community, visitors, and management, allowing any issues to be resolved without causing social tension. According to DeVito (2016), small groups like this are capable of producing more

rational and solution-oriented decisions because all parties have the opportunity to express their opinions equally.

d. Function of Increasing Group Effectiveness

Communication also supports increased group work effectiveness, particularly by utilizing digital communication technology. The Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) uses WhatsApp as its primary coordination tool. Information about activities, meeting schedules, task assignments, and even activity documentation are all disseminated through the WhatsApp group . This technology helps Pokdarwis stay connected and coordinated despite time or distance constraints. Trisula et al. (2024) also demonstrated in their research that utilizing digital media in tourism group communication can increase member responsiveness and engagement more efficiently.

CONCLUSIONS

The Setu Tujuh Muara Tourism Group (Pokdarwis Setu Tujuh Muara) plays a strategic role in developing the local natural tourism potential in Bojongsari, Depok. This group actively maintains the cleanliness of the area, improves tourist facilities, provides recreational facilities, and promotes the destination through social media. Furthermore, Pokdarwis empowers the surrounding community by providing training and creating business opportunities, enabling community-based tourism to improve the economy and boost environmental awareness. This role demonstrates that Pokdarwis is a driving force behind tourism management, focusing not only on increasing tourist visits but also on social development and community empowerment **.** Group communication within Pokdarwis is effective and key to the organization's success, characterized by the creation of solidarity, coordination of activities, deliberative problem-solving, and the exchange of educational information. All of the functions of group communication, as outlined by experts, are reflected in Pokdarwis activities. The impact is evident in increased community participation and a growing sense of ownership of the tourist area, despite challenges such as limited funding, suboptimal infrastructure, low community involvement, minimal follow-up training, and incomplete organizational legality. Therefore, institutional strengthening through formal legalization, funding diversification, increasing human resource capacity, and expanding community participation are important steps to ensure that the management of Setu Tujuh Muara tourism is more professional, inclusive, and sustainable.

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