

Dynamics of Inter-Group Communication in Tourism Management in Banda Neira

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ABSTRACT

Banda Neira is one of the historical and cultural tourist destinations in Central Maluku and is a favorite destination for foreigners. However, it is undeniable that Banda Neira faces challenges in sustainable tourism management, including in communication. The dynamics of communication between groups—both local communities, governments, and tourists—are key factors in the success of tourism management. This study aims to determine the dynamics of communication between groups in the context of tourism in Banda Neira, as well as the obstacles in the dynamics of communication in Banda Neira. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive, employing interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The results show that effective communication between groups results in good collaboration in environmental conservation and local cultural development. However, obstacles such as differences in interests, lack of trust, and limited access to information hinder successful management.

Keywords: *intergroup communication, tourism, Banda Neira*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country, also known as the largest hydroarchipelago state in the world, where two-thirds of its territory is ocean (Rusdiana et al., 2021). Indonesia has 38 provinces, each possessing its own unique beauty. One such province is Maluku, which boasts natural landscapes that remain pristine and stunning (Asterhan & Bouton, 2017; Junco, 2015). Comprising numerous islands surrounded by ocean, Maluku is a favored destination for adventurers and tourists from both within the country and abroad. Beyond its captivating beaches, Maluku offers a variety of other attractive tourist destinations, one of which is *Banda Neira* (Bugis et al., 2024).

Banda Neira, one of the islands in the Banda Islands of Maluku, is renowned as a tourist destination with significant historical and cultural value. As part of the historic spice trade route, *Banda Neira* presents unique natural beauty and a rich history that draw both domestic and international visitors. However, challenges in tourism management frequently arise, particularly concerning communication among various groups (Junco, 2015; Kumar & Nanda, 2019).

Communication between groups encompasses interactions among local communities, governments, business actors, and tourists. *Dynamics of communication* form the essential link connecting members within these groups and create communication dynamics.

Communication dynamics within a group are defined as activities performed when two or more individuals convey messages face-to-face, are aware of the presence of other group members, and recognize the power of shared interests aimed at reaching mutual agreements (Dewi et al., 2020).

These dynamics significantly influence the effectiveness of cooperation in environmental conservation, promotion of local culture, and the resolution of conflicts that may arise. Therefore, *Banda Neira*, as a leading tourist destination in the Banda Islands, possesses great potential for the development of community-based tourism (Greenhow et al., 2019; Sánchez et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the success of tourism management depends not only on the natural and cultural assets but also on the quality of communication among the involved groups, including *Pokdarwis* (Tourism Awareness Groups), local communities, government bodies, and tourism business actors (Kumar & Nanda, 2019).

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of communication in community-based tourism and its impact on tourism development. For instance, Dewi et al. (2020) investigated the *dynamics of communication* in tourism management, highlighting the role of communication among diverse stakeholders such as local communities, governments, and business actors (Gunawan & Susilowati, 2019). They identified that communication dynamics substantially affect the success of cooperation in environmental conservation, cultural promotion, and conflict resolution within tourism regions (Simon & Alouini, 2021). However, Dewi et al. (2020) did not thoroughly explore the specific challenges encountered in tourism management in remote or archipelagic areas like Maluku, where geographical and infrastructural barriers complicate communication among stakeholders.

Similarly, Bugis et al. (2024) explored the tourism potential of Maluku, focusing on *Banda Neira* — a destination rich in history and culture. They noted the region's appeal to tourists and the difficulties in achieving sustainable tourism management. Yet their research did not specifically address the communication dynamics among local communities, government, and tourism stakeholders in these areas (Evi Zahara, 2018). While they acknowledged management challenges, they did not provide an in-depth analysis of communication processes and their direct influence on successful tourism development (Huang et al., 2022; Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

This study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on the *dynamics of communication* in *Banda Neira*, Maluku. It examines how interactions among local communities, government entities, tourism business actors, and tourists impact the development of sustainable community-based tourism (Cahyadi & Newsome, 2021). By analyzing these communication processes in detail, this research aims to offer practical insights into how improving communication dynamics can enhance cooperation, support environmental conservation, and effectively promote local culture.

The objective of this study is to analyze the *dynamics of communication* among various stakeholders involved in tourism management in *Banda Neira*, Maluku, and to assess how these dynamics influence the development of community-based tourism. The study seeks to identify key communication challenges and provide recommendations to improve stakeholder collaboration, ultimately enhancing the sustainability of tourism in the region. The benefits of this research include offering valuable insights to local communities, tourism business actors,

and policymakers, thereby improving tourism management practices, fostering cooperation, and ensuring sustainable tourism development that respects the environment and local culture.

METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research involves collecting data in a natural setting with the aim of interpreting the phenomena that occur. The researcher acted as the key instrument, and purposive and snowball sampling were employed. Data collection used triangulation techniques, data analysis was inductive and qualitative, and the results emphasized meaning rather than generalization (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018).

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with local communities, Pokdarwis members, business actors, and government representatives to explore their experiences, challenges, and communication strategies. The researcher also observed interactions between groups during tourism activities such as community meetings and cultural promotions. Additionally, relevant official documents, reports, and tourism-related publications in *Banda Neira* were collected to support the analysis.

The data analysis followed a qualitative, inductive approach as described by Anggito and Setiawan (2018), focusing on interpreting phenomena in their natural context. The goal was to uncover the underlying meanings and dynamics shaping tourism management and communication in *Banda Neira*. The analysis involved coding the data and identifying emerging themes and patterns rather than aiming for generalizations. This approach aimed to build a deep understanding of the communication dynamics among local communities, Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Groups), government officials, and business actors involved in tourism management.

To ensure validity and reliability, data from interviews, observations, and documentation were triangulated. Interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were analyzed to extract key themes related to communication strategies, challenges, and opportunities for improving tourism management in *Banda Neira*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term communication in English "*communication*", from the Latin "*communicatus*" which means sharing or belonging together, communication is defined as the process of sharing between the parties who carry out the communication activity. According to Lexicographer, communication is an effort that aims to share to achieve togetherness. If two people are communicating, then the same understanding of the messages being exchanged is the desired goal for both. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary edition in 1977 explains, among other things, that communication is a process of exchanging information between individuals through a system of lambing, signs, or behavior (Simon & Alouini, 2021)

The term communication or in English communication comes from the Latin word *cnmmunicatio*, and is derived from the word *communis* which means sa- ma. The same meaning is the same meaning. So, if two people are involved in communication, for example in the form of conversation, then communication will occur or take place as long as there is a common meaning about what is being talked about (Effendy, 2019).

Communication dynamics are changes in the patterns, content, and communication media that are influenced by communicators and communicators (Evi Zahara, 2018).

Communication between groups in Banda Neira plays a central role in creating close cooperative relationships between various parties involved in tourism management, such as local communities, governments, and tourism business actors. Without effective communication, collaboration between these groups will be limited, so tourism management cannot run optimally. In this context, communication is a means to unite various different visions and interests, as well as to achieve common goals in developing sustainable tourism.

For example, local communities who have a deep understanding of the culture and surrounding environment work with local governments in organizing cultural events that aim to promote the uniqueness of regional culture. One concrete example is a cultural festival involving various elements of society, such as traditional arts, local culinary, and cultural performances that depict the rich history and traditions of Banda Neira.

Local governments play a role in supporting the event through policies, funding, and facilities, while tourism businesses, such as lodgings and restaurants, support the smooth running of the festival by providing services for tourists. Meanwhile, tourism business actors must also collaborate with the community to ensure that the tourism developed is not only economically profitable, but also has a positive impact on cultural and environmental preservation. For example, hotel managers or tour guides work with local communities in educating tourists about the importance of maintaining a clean environment and understanding and respecting existing cultural norms.

This requires clear and supportive communication between the parties involved so that the common goal can be achieved. However, even though communication between groups is going quite well, there are several obstacles that can interfere with the smooth flow of communication and cooperation. One of the main obstacles is the lack of access to information which leads to miscommunication, particularly between tourists and local communities.

For example, in some cases, tourists do not understand the local norms that are important to respect while in Banda Neira, such as how to dress or how to interact with the locals. This can happen due to a lack of information conveyed by tour guides or other communication materials, such as brochures or information plaques that educate tourists.

Barriers in Communication

Difference of Interest

The difference in interests between local communities, business actors, and the government is one of the biggest obstacles in communication between groups. Local communities generally prioritize cultural and environmental preservation, while tourism business actors often focus more on the economic benefits obtained from the tourism sector. When these interests are not managed properly, tensions can arise that affect cooperation.

For example, local communities may feel that the construction of tourism facilities such as larger hotels or restaurants could damage the environment or displace public spaces that are part of their traditions. On the other hand, business actors see the development as an opportunity to increase tourist attraction and increase income. Misunderstandings and imbalances in understanding the needs of each party can add complexity in communication. Therefore, it is important for each group to have clear and organized communication channels

to discuss, find common solutions, and maintain a balance between cultural preservation and economic growth.

It is also important to involve the community in every decision-making process related to tourism management, so that they feel valued and not just the disadvantaged. By creating space for open discussion and collaboration, it will create understanding and balance between different interests.

Lack of Trust

Trust between groups in Banda Neira is still an issue that needs attention. Many local people feel that they are not involved in the decision-making process related to tourism management, especially related to the management of funds sourced from the tourism sector. They feel that the allocation of funds for tourism is not transparent and does not provide direct benefits to the local community. In addition, tourism business actors also often feel that the government policies implemented do not support them in developing their businesses. This may be due to overly bureaucratic policies or restrictions that are considered burdensome on small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector. Low trust between these groups can hinder productive collaboration and reduce community participation in tourism management.

To address this issue, transparency in fund management and policies is essential. The government must open more effective communication channels with the public and business actors, as well as provide clear information about the allocation of funds and the policies implemented. By building trust, local communities and business actors will feel more involved and enthusiastic in developing tourism in a sustainable manner.

Lack of Technology Infrastructure

Another significant obstacle in communication between groups is the limited technological infrastructure, especially in terms of limited internet access in Banda Neira. The Internet plays an important role in supporting tourism promotion, coordination between groups, and providing quick information to tourists. However, most areas in Banda Neira still have difficulty in getting stable and fast internet access (Kurniasari & Nugroho, 2022).

This limited access hinders business actors from utilizing digital platforms to promote tourist destinations. In addition, local communities and governments also have difficulty in coordinating and sharing information related to effective tourism management. For example, announcements related to events or other important information often cannot be disseminated quickly to tourists who are outside the area, which can reduce the effectiveness of tourism promotion.

For this reason, there needs to be an effort to improve technological infrastructure in Banda Neira, especially to expand better internet access. With adequate infrastructure, communication between groups will become more efficient and effective, and can support tourism promotion more widely through digital media.

CONCLUSION

Communication between groups plays a strategic role in the sustainable management of tourism in *Banda Neira*, where challenges such as conflicting interests, lack of trust, and inadequate infrastructure hinder effective collaboration. These obstacles can be addressed

through targeted training programs, the adoption of appropriate technology, and enhanced cross-group cooperation. Successfully implementing these strategies is expected to promote sustainable tourism development and improve the welfare of local communities. Future research could explore the specific impacts of digital communication tools and capacity-building initiatives on strengthening stakeholder collaboration and overcoming infrastructural barriers in remote tourism settings like *Banda Neira*.

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