

Convergence Communication in Community-Based Ecotourism Management

Faris Budiman Annas¹ | Djura P. Lubis² | Dwi Retno Hapsari³ | Sumardjo⁴

¹Department of Communication Science, Paramadina University, Indonesia

¹²³⁴Department of Communication and Community Development Sciences, IPB University, Indonesia

Received 17-06-2024

Revised 18-06-2024

Accepted 07-07-2024

Published 09-07-2024



Copyright: ©2024 The Authors. Published by Publisher. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Abstract:

The development of sustainable tourism can be realized through ecotourism. Ecotourism itself is an environmentally conscious tourism activity that prioritizes aspects of nature conservation, social, cultural, and economic empowerment of local communities, as well as learning and education aspects. This research aims to analyze the dynamics of convergence communication in community-based ecotourism management in Indonesia. The method used in this research is literature review. There are four community-based ecotourism locations selected purposively, namely Blekok Village ecotourism, Mola Wakatobi Village, Berjo Village, and Wae Rebo Village. The results obtained from these four ecotourism sites show the process of convergence communication in ecotourism management consisting of stages of understanding, agreement, and collective action. Through collective action, the aim is to develop ecotourism in accordance with its principles from aspects of environmental conservation, economic benefits, cultural preservation, and community participation.

Keywords: Convergence, Communication, Ecotourism, Community, Participation.

Introduction:

Tourism is a sector that plays a significant role in development in Indonesia. In the third quarter of 2023, the tourism foreign exchange value reached over USD 6 billion with a contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of tourism of 3.76 percent. Additionally, the tourism sector was able to employ more than 45 million workers, with a breakdown of 21.93 million tourism workers and 24.34 million creative economy workers. Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) recorded 3,613 tourism villages in 2022 and 4,714 tourism villages in 2023 (Wisnubroto, 2023).

In implementing tourism policies, the government, through Republic of Indonesia Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, emphasizes that sustainability is one of the principles to be considered in tourism

development. Sustainable tourism is tourism that fully considers the current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts and is able to meet the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and the local host community (UN Tourism, 2024).

One manifestation of sustainable tourism development is through ecotourism. Ecotourism, or eco-tourism, is tourism activity that prioritizes environmental awareness by focusing on nature conservation, empowerment of local social, cultural, and economic aspects, as well as learning and education (Priyambodo, 2022).

Ecotourism differs from other tourism activities because it has specific characteristics that involve concern for environmental preservation and

providing economic benefits to local communities (Ross & Wall, 1999; Björk, 2000). Ecotourism activities must follow principles of sustainable management, including: 1. Being nature-based tourism. 2. Focusing on conservation activities. 3. Contributing to sustainable tourism development. 4. Being related to educational development activities. 5. Incorporating local culture. 6. Providing positive contributions to the local economy (Butar-butur, 2021).

Moreover, community-based ecotourism emphasizes the active role of the community (Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014). Community-based ecotourism involves tourism management practices where the community has dominant control, participates in its development and management, and experiences its benefits (Stone, 2015). This is based on the fact that communities possess knowledge about the environment and culture, which serve as potential and attractive tourism assets, making community involvement essential. The pattern of community-based ecotourism recognizes the rights of local communities to manage tourism activities in their customary areas or as managers (Hijriati & Mardiana, 2014).

Therefore, community participation is a crucial component in managing community-based ecotourism. Kunjuraman (2021) explains that developing ecotourism without involving community participation can lead to the demise of its sustainability. Previous studies also emphasize that community participation is a fundamental aspect to consider in the development of community-based tourism (Afua, 2012).

Meanwhile, Burgos and Mertens (2017) explain that in community-based tourism, communities need to be involved in participatory tourism management in planning, implementation, and evaluation of tourism impacts. Mohd Noh et al. (2021) elaborate that high community participation is needed to motivate communities to contribute to ecotourism development programs. A higher level of participation is required for local communities to develop and transition from conventional and

traditional lifestyles to more sustainable ones by leading a balanced life between consistent economic income from nature conservation and educating tourists about the importance of environmental preservation.

The management of community-based ecotourism certainly involves communication activities. Communication plays a crucial role in developing human resources for ecotourism practitioners. Interpersonal communication is essential for building relationships among individuals within the group (Yasir et al., 2019; Yasir, 2021). Furthermore, effective communication, good collaboration with stakeholders, and openness are essential requirements for developing synergistic interactions among tourism stakeholders (Heslinga, Groote, & Vanclay, 2017).

Communication also plays a significant role in strengthening the social capital of groups. Social capital refers to the resources and relationships within a community that enables cooperation and collective action (Jones, 2005). Social capital plays an important role in the development of community-based ecotourism. A high level of social capital can contribute to community initiatives in ecotourism management. Social capital facilitates cooperation, collective action, and network formation, which are crucial for the success of ecotourism projects. Managing and maintaining social capital is vital for the sustainability of ecotourism efforts. If social capital declines, it can negatively impact the quality of ecotourism performance and management (Jones, 2005).

Kincaid (1979) suggests that communication should be viewed as a two-way process, rather than a one-way process, as in the linear communication model. Kincaid (1979) believes that the communication paradigm should shift, thus proposing the convergence communication model. This model explains that communication is a cyclical process that converges and diverges over time.

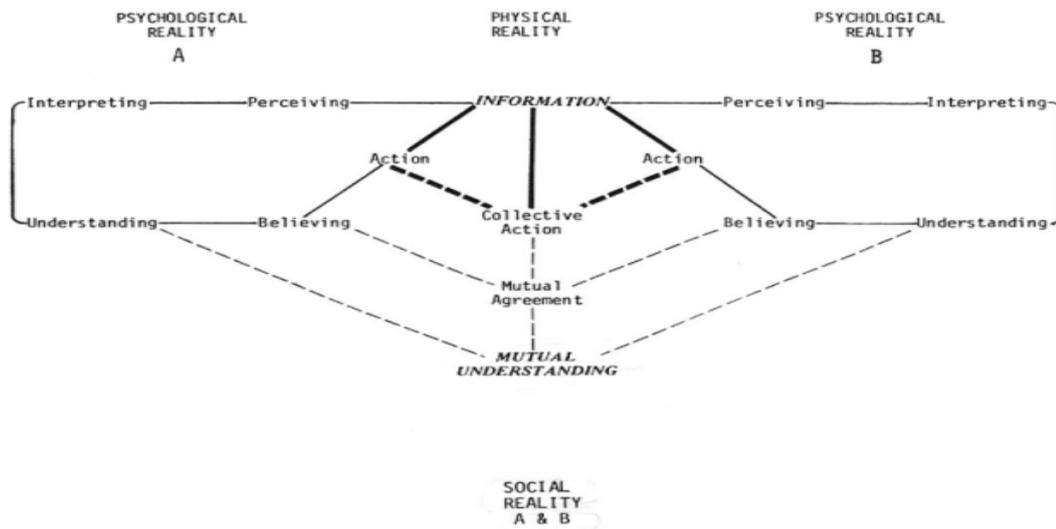


Figure 1. Basic Components of Kincaid's Convergence Communication (1979)

The diagram above, as described by Kincaid (1979), illustrates that communication occurs interactively and cyclically. No distinction is made between the source and receiver, or between message and feedback. In other words, participants in the communication process can be viewed as having equal or equivalent positions. In the model proposed by Kincaid, there is no beginning or end; there is only a mutually determining relationship among the parts that give meaning to the whole structure. Each component in the diagram above has differences but still represents a unity that embodies the nature of communication as a process.

In the convergence communication model, each communicating party shares information with each other. The information shared between them then forms the basis for mutual understanding among the communicating parties. Collective agreement is reached if two or more people believe that the same statement is valid, and then the statement becomes true through consensus. Meanwhile, Collective action is the result of the activities of two or more people (A and B), built on the basis of mutual agreement and mutual understanding.

In the principle of convergence, each component implies that the opposite of convergence may also occur: perception errors, misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and distrust can reduce mutual understanding and lead to disagreement, and forms

of collective action in such cases are called conflicts. By creating a dichotomy between mutual understanding and agreement, we can imagine four possible states: (1) mutual understanding with agreement, (2) mutual understanding with disagreement, (3) mutual misunderstanding with agreement, and (4) mutual misunderstanding with disagreement.

Flor and Cangara (2018) explain that in environmental/ecotourism management, communication should not be seen merely as a supporting factor but needs to be an integral part of it. Without involving communication as a crucial component, efforts in environmental or ecotourism management as a whole can face many challenges because communication can determine social dynamics. Communication should be able to encourage and enable participation in the community as active parties in managing ecotourism in their areas. Based on the above explanation, this article aims to elaborate on the dynamics of convergence communication in community-based ecotourism management in Indonesia.

Method:

This study uses the literature review method. A literature review is a research approach that focuses on reviewing existing literature to compile and analyze information relevant to a specific research topic. A literature study involves a series of

activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading and noting, as well as managing research data objectively, systematically, analytically, and critically (Putri et al., 2020).

Cooper (2010) explains that the literature review has several purposes: 1) integrating studies that have been conducted by others, 2) critiquing academic works that have been produced, 3) building bridges between various topics, and 4) identifying key issues within a topic. Berg & Lune (2009) describe several systematic steps in writing a literature review: 1) Tentatively determine a research topic, 2) Develop a research strategy design, 3) Search for related research reports, and 4) Write the literature review.

In this study, four community-based ecotourism locations were selected using purposive sampling. Kriyantono (2008) explains that purposive sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling technique, meaning not all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected as samples in the study. Generally, Kiper (2013) categorizes ecotourism activities into two types: marine-based ecotourism and land-based ecotourism. Marine-based ecotourism means the natural conditions are related to marine environments, so ecotourism activities that can be carried out include diving, snorkeling, kayaking, or sailing, and so on.

On the other hand, land-based ecotourism has natural conditions related to land, so ecotourism activities that can be carried out include cycling, hiking, backpacking, trekking, rafting, and others. The ecotourism criteria selected purposively in this study include Blekok Village and Mola Village in Wakatobi for the marine-based ecotourism category, and Berjo Village and Wae Rebo Village for the land-based ecotourism category.

Results and Discussion:

Communication dynamics convergence plays a crucial role in community-based ecotourism management. Interpersonal communication among various stakeholders is essential for building relationships within the group (Yasir et al., 2019; Yasir, 2021). Heslinga et al. (2017) also explain

that effective communication can drive good collaboration with stakeholders, and openness is a crucial requirement for developing synergistic interactions among tourism stakeholders.

In this research context, it is observed that there is communication convergence dynamics in community-based ecotourism management. This dynamics is seen as a two-way communication process, rather than a one-way process as in the linear communication model. This communication dynamics forms convergence in terms of mutual understanding and mutual agreement. In the process, communication dynamics in ecotourism management is a cyclical process that tends to converge and diverge over time (Kincaid, 1979).

Mutual Understanding in Ecotourism Management:

Examining mutual understanding in community-based ecotourism management is an intriguing aspect. Mutual understanding plays a crucial role in ecotourism management, which can be in the form of shared visions or goals desired by stakeholders in ecotourism management.



Figure 2. Water Birds in Blekok Village Ecotourism (Source: Rachmawati, 2019)

In Blekok Village, covering an area of approximately 26 hectares, the region includes mangrove forests with various mangrove species. Blekok Village is the largest habitat for water birds in Situbondo Regency, East Java. Water birds serve as a unique attraction that distinguishes it from other mangrove tourism areas (Ramadesta et al., 2022). Ecotourism management, resulting from

collaboration between the government and the community, aims to ensure the preservation of mangrove forests and their biodiversity, making them a superior attraction for Blekok Village Tourism. Ecotourism in Blekok Village also aims to educate all stakeholders about the values of sustainability and the importance of nature conservation (Ramadesta et al., 2022).



Figure 3. Bajo Mola Village, Wakatobi
(Source: Meli, 2020)

Meanwhile, in Bajo Village, Mola, Wakatobi, this village is a settlement of the Bajo tribe in the South Wangi-Wangi District, called Mola, with a coastal settlement that extends into shallow waters. The distinctive feature of the Bajo tribe's settlement is the use of stilt houses by the sea. They are connected by bridges and small boats as the main means of transportation to access the mainland. These boats also serve as a means of livelihood for traditional fishermen (Brata et al., 2022). The Bajo people have local wisdom in the form of ancestral traditions, rules, or taboos (pamali) that are upheld, preserved, and adhered to. The Bajo tribe believes that the sea is their source of livelihood and the dwelling place of sea gods and ancestors. Their various conservation efforts aim to preserve and protect marine waters, coastal ecosystems, mangrove forests, and marine resources. The Bajo community deeply cares about the preservation of coral reefs as the foundation of their livelihoods (Marlina et al., 2023).

In other ecotourism areas with a main land-based focus, there is Berjo Village, a tourist village

located in Karanganyar Regency, precisely on the slopes of Mount Lawu. Located at an altitude of +1,500 meters above sea level, Berjo Village is known as a tourist destination in Karanganyar Regency. Some attractions in this village include Sுகuh Temple, Jumog Waterfall, and Madirda Lake.



Figure 4. Jumog Waterfall, Berjo Village Source (Prasetya, 2021)

The development of Berjo Village into a tourist village began in 2008. Before that, tourism development was initiated by an external figure named Mr. Dulah. The development of the tourist village was carried out because the village area has natural potentials that can be managed as ecotourism attractions, namely the Jumog waterfall and Madirda lake. In 2008, Mr. Dulah handed over the development of the tourist village to the community of Berjo Village, which was initiated by the village head who was serving at that time (Pranoto et al., 2023).

The community manages ecotourism in Berjo Village while also paying attention to environmental aspects. This is done by planting trees around the tourist attractions to maintain their natural beauty and prevent environmental damage. Additionally, a well-maintained environment enhances the aesthetic value and attractiveness for tourists. The Jumog waterfall and Madirda lake tourism sites showcase pristine and clean environments due to good management (Pranoto et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, mutual understanding in ecotourism management can also be observed in Waerebo Village located in eastern Indonesia. Waerebo Village is a traditional village in Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Waerebo is one of the cultural tourism destinations in Manggarai Regency, situated at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level. In this village, there are only 7 main houses called Mbaru Niang. Waerebo Village was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in August 2012, surpassing 42 other countries.



Figure 5. Wae Rebo Village (Source: Fajar, 2023)

The Waerebo traditional village is developed by adopting the concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) or also known as Community Based Ecotourism (CBeT) in the context of ecotourism. The Waerebo community has a high commitment to participation as they are determined to make changes to overcome poverty. The development of Waerebo Village is the result of collaboration with a Civil Society Organization (CSO) called the Indonesia Ecotourism Network (Indecon). Ecotourism management in Waerebo Village is carried out by the Waerebo Cultural Preservation Institution (LPBW), established in 2007. The Waerebo community and LPBW have a vision to preserve the culture of the Waerebo indigenous community and manage Waerebo ecotourism to be known worldwide through community-based tourism activities driven by a high cultural spirit (Suhandi, et al., 2022).

The vision regarding environmental preservation is in line with the development of ecotourism in

Waerebo Village. Visitors to Waerebo Village receive education about the environment and early conservation, where the community teaches about the village and daily activities. The local community in Waerebo Village learns to emphasize the importance of preserving cultural values and daily life by sharing stories with tourists, as most tourists come to Waerebo not only to enjoy the natural beauty but also to experience and listen to stories directly from the Waerebo community.

Interpretation has great power and adds significant value to a tourism product. Waerebo Village itself has uniqueness, how its people live their daily lives, and how they maintain their relationship with ancestors. The meaning of Waerebo's traditional house architecture is very interesting for tourists to learn. If tourists know more, they usually give more appreciation to the community.

Mutual Agreements in Ecotourism Management

In the convergence communication model, the exchange of information and bringing together two or more participants leads to increased mutual understanding and agreement. Differences of opinion and conflicts can arise from disagreements. Besides mutual understanding, it is important to build unity to minimize misunderstandings (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). In the context of ecotourism in Blekok Village, active community involvement in development and management is facilitated through the formation of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis). Pokdarwis in Blekok Village generates agreements related to task distribution and responsibilities in ecotourism management, such as maintenance and supervision of facilities like the Blekok sanctuary, wooden structures, and cleanliness. Regarding the management of the water bird sanctuary, there are several rights and obligations of the Tourism Awareness Group, including: 1) Obtaining food and medication for the preservation of water bird sanctuaries; 2) Proposing the need for additional facilities and maintenance materials for cages and all matters related to the preservation of water bird sanctuaries; 3) Caring for and breeding water bird

species in their managed sanctuaries; 4) Following instructions and guidance provided by the Environmental Agency; 5) Maintaining the cleanliness, safety, and comfort of the water bird sanctuary location; 6) Reporting sanctuary development periodically to the Environmental Agency; 7) Processing all necessary permits with relevant authorities. Effective conservation area monitoring is carried out by the Environmental Agency with assistance from the surrounding community. Evaluation is conducted by the Environmental Agency, the village government, and also involves the Tourism Awareness Group (Ramadesta et al., 2022).

Furthermore, there are agreements regarding the distribution of income obtained from tourism services. The large number of tourist visits to Berjo Village has a positive impact on the village's income. Due to the substantial annual income generated, the Berjo Village-owned Enterprise (BUMDes) has become the wealthiest BUMDes in Karanganyar Regency (Mashuri, 2021). Even during the pandemic in 2020 when the tourism sector was declining, the Berjo Village-owned Enterprise (BUMDes) earned a revenue of 3.4 billion Indonesian Rupiah. It is stated that outside the pandemic period, revenue could reach 4.5 billion only from two tourist attractions, Jumog Waterfall and Madirda Lake.

Not all tourism income enters the village treasury. Income from the tourism sector is divided into three parts, namely 30% for the tourism department, 30% to the village treasury, and 40% to the BUMDes treasury for maintenance and improvement of tourism infrastructure as well as employee salaries. From the income earned, the BUMDes can contribute tens to hundreds of millions of Indonesian Rupiah to the Berjo Village government's local revenue (Pranoto, et al., 2023).

In convergence communication, disbelief can occur, which can reduce mutual understanding and lead to disagreements, and such collective actions are called conflicts (Kincaid, 1979). In the case of Berjo Village, it is suspected that the management of BUMDes has been lacking in transparency and accountability for several years. Residents from

local neighborhood units (RT) and neighborhood associations (RW) complained about the tourism revenue entering the village treasury being too little, considering that BUMDes revenue for a year can reach billions of Indonesian Rupiah. This incident has caused a decrease in trust in BUMDes among the residents, whereas if trust can be established well, it will foster a close relationship or network between BUMDes and the community. This case came to light in 2023 when the head of Berjo Village was found guilty of embezzling the BUMDes funds resulting from ecotourism management in the village. The head of Berjo Village, Suyatno, was eventually dismissed after being temporarily suspended. This decision was made after the corruption case involving BUMDes that ensnared him became legally binding (Wardani and Ashshidiqy, 2023).

In Mola Bajo Village, stakeholders agreed that 65% of the proceeds from tourism management would be allocated to preserving cultural and environmental aspects, particularly to address waste management issues in the area. The goal is to strengthen the region's economy by enhancing the community's ability to manage tourism businesses, intensifying supervision, and implementing innovative and productive activities in the tourism sector. Additionally, this also assists residents in effectively managing environmental waste difficulties (Sudirman et al., 2022).

The progress of tourism in Mola Bajo involves many individuals with personal interests. Each individual stakeholder agrees to actively fulfill their roles and responsibilities within their respective organizations. Tourism progress in Mola Bajo takes the form of high-level collaboration, characterized by a lack of selfish tendencies, complete transparency among stakeholders, extensive communication, and equal participation from all stakeholders in the collaboration process.

The knowledge held by the Mola Bajo community enables them to effectively manage, preserve, and sustainably maintain marine functions, thus reflecting ecological and sustainability values. The Mola Bajo people demonstrate principles of balance and cooperation through their obedient

actions. The knowledge held by the Mola Bajo community regarding marine management, conservation, and preservation embodies ecological and sustainability values.

This forms agreements reflected in the cultural practices of Duata Sangal Parika, Pamali, and Parika, which have significant implications for the wise utilization of marine resources. Duata Sangal is a ritual of releasing several types of endangered small fish into the sea to attract other fish to gather and live together. The value of Parika is to provide space for fish to spawn and give birth, and to limit fishing based on specific agreed-upon periods by traditional leaders and community figures. Meanwhile, Pamali is a forbidden area designated by the Bajo tribal chief for fishing in a certain area. There are specific penalties for those who violate this area. The values of the Mola Bajo community, namely Duata Sangal, Parika, and Pamali, play a crucial role in ensuring sustainable marine ecotourism management while addressing the needs and welfare of the community (Marlina et al., 2020).

In Waerebo Village, the community agrees that tourism funds are allocated for various purposes including operational costs, support for traditional ceremonies, environmental improvement support, new facility construction support, maintenance costs, funds for the elderly, educational support, and cultural activity support. The allocation may change annually depending on agreements between the Waerebo Cultural Preservation Institute (LPBW), the community, and traditional leaders (Suhandi, et al., 2022).

Tourism in Waerebo not only provides financial benefits to the Waerebo community but also to the surrounding communities. The income data above only represents the financial data received and managed by the LPBW. Additionally, there are other income sources from tourism stakeholders, such as porters, motorcycle taxi drivers, and accommodation income in Denge and Dinthor. Economic benefits are divided into direct beneficiaries (received by LPBW administrators and members, including cooking groups, chips groups, coffee groups, chicken groups, weaving

groups, handicraft groups, local guides, and porters) and indirect beneficiaries (received by the surrounding communities of Waerebo Village, such as accommodation owners in other villages, motorcycle taxi drivers, market traders, farmers, and others) (Suhandi, et al., 2022).

Collective Action in Ecotourism Management

Individual collective actions are part of the coordinated actions needed in communication. Communication that results in convergence, if participants agree on a common position they can trust each other to implement, then the result is cooperation. The outcome of this cooperation is formed in collective actions (Kincaid, 1979).

Collective actions in Blekok Village involve collaboration between the Environmental Agency, the Village Government, and the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) involved in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Convergent communication occurs in the cooperation between the government and the community, especially during program planning, where coordination is carried out between the Environmental Agency, the Village Head, and Pokdarwis through a process of socialization. During the management phase, agreements formed are led by the Environmental Agency sector, with support from Pokdarwis (Ramadesta et al., 2022).

The management actions of Blekok Village blend natural tourism, education, and the wisdom of local communities as the main attraction while still adhering to the concept of preserving mangroves. There are implicit attractions that invite visitors to love the environment and maintain ecosystem balance. Another attraction is the zero waste campaign initiated by the management to conserve the mangrove conservation area (Insani et al., 2019).

Blekok Village has designed tour package prices ranging from 30,000 to 50,000 Indonesian Rupiah per person. All of these tour packages are managed by local residents who have received training from the Environmental Agency of Situbondo Regency. The activities offered in these tour packages include mangrove tracking, birdwatching, boat

tours, learning to make traditional crafts typical of Blekok Village, education on various mangrove species, and mangrove planting followed by learning to utilize plastic bottle waste for crafting (Insani et al., 2019).

Moreover, several methods are employed to boost the economy in Blekok Village, including hosting events, establishing waste banks, collaborating with various parties, and crafting souvenirs from wood, such as surfboards, dream catchers, and other handicrafts. Some handicrafts are even sent to Bali. Apart from artisans using wood-based natural resources, there are also artisans using materials from marine biota like shells. Additionally, for the development of tourist sites in Blekok Village, tour packages are created to facilitate tourists enjoying the existing facilities or attractions in the village (Insani et al., 2019).

In Bajo Mola Village, collective actions are demonstrated through collaborative efforts involving private entities such as the British Council and Bank Mandiri, together with the government and local community. The main objective of these efforts is to facilitate the growth and development of the tourism sector in Wakatobi, with a specific focus on Bajo Mola Tourism. This initiative aims to provide training and guidance to the residents of Bajo Mola, which serves as a tangible manifestation of their dedication to the tourism development process in the area. In the era of globalization, the persuasive approach is considered more appropriate because of its capacity to enhance integration among various stakeholders. Since 2013, the Wakatobi local government has adopted a convergence approach by partnering with Bank Mandiri and the British Council, intending to implement the Mandiri Bersama Mandiri (MBM) program.

The British Council and Bank Mandiri provide training and guidance to the Bajo Mola community as a testament to their commitment to the tourism development process in Bajo Mola. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the British Council, Bank Mandiri, and Bajo Mola Village Society, signed on June 2, 2014, and renewed on April 1, 2015, includes agreements

related to a one-year tourism development initiative in Bajo Mola Village. This collaboration involves not only the British Council and Bank Mandiri but also the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which collaborates in educating the residents of Bajo Mola about environmental protection (Sudirman et al., 2022).

In Bajo Mola Village, collective actions take the form of mentoring programs conducted through mentoring and infrastructure development to facilitate the enhancement of the potential of the local area. Similarly, with the approach taken in the progress of Bajo Mola Village, several community representatives are held to participate as delegations to collectively consider and assess untapped opportunities that can be exploited in the Bajo Mola Tourism sector. The creation of tourism packages emphasizes the importance of commitment, building trust, and mutual understanding, and stands as a pioneering effort in the Indonesian tourism industry. These packages are tailored to the cultural order of the Bajo community (Sudirman et al., 2022).

The management of Bajo Mola, accompanied by the British Council, is done by creating tour packages including culinary tours, walking tours, canoeing, stargazing, and dolphin-watching tours. These five tour packages are the advantages of the Bajo tribe presented to tourists. The Bajo tribe manages, preserves, and utilizes marine biological resources based on cultural norms and values institutionalized and inherent in the Bajo community. They maintain these practices through social control based on their belief system. In its development, the Bajo village has undergone quite significant changes. Among them, there have been changes in the governance system in Wakatobi, placing the Bajo Mola village within the administrative area (Sudirman et al., 2022).

Unlike the ecotourism management in Waerebo Village, collective actions of the community are manifested by establishing a management structure in the Waerebo Cultural Preservation Institution (LPBW) consisting of a Supervisory Board, Management Board, and Daily Management to preserve culture and manage tourism together with

the entire Waerebo community. The managers selected since 2007 represent the Waerebo community directly elected by all Waerebo residents. After their term ends, the management will be regenerated (Suhandi, et al., 2022).

Collective action is also manifested in the daily management of tourism in Waerebo Village, which already has a very good system. Guest services at the inn are coordinated by daily managers assigned by the LPBW. One of their duties is to provide information about what tourists can and cannot do while visiting the village by reading out the participatively formulated tourism code of conduct. They also must ensure the comfort of tourists and respond to tourist complaints.

Maintaining cultural order and participation from local communities becomes the key form of convergent communication that occurs in the tourism world, especially community-based tourism. The same goes for Wae Rebo Village. The sustainability of ecotourism in Wae Rebo Village is greatly influenced by this management system. A rotation system is applied to ensure daily services for guests. Tourism services are provided by 5 women's groups formed by LPBW. Each group consists of 8 or 9 women, totaling 42 women involved. These groups take turns every day to provide various services such as meals and accommodation. Each group serves on different days, with one group assigned to duty for only one day. The next day, the task is handed over to the next group, and so on (Suhandi et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, in Berjo Village, collective actions manifested in the involvement of the village community in the development and management of tourism in Berjo Village are slowly overcoming the economic challenges faced by the community. Around 200 people are employed as tourism employees, vendors, and shuttle operators at Jumog Waterfall. This regulation limits individuals from outside Berjo Village to become employees, vendors, or craftsmen, to ensure that tourism presence in the village benefits the community, especially economically.

The community members working as tourism employees receive monthly salaries taken from tourism revenue. Employee salaries range from 1.5 million to 4.5 million depending on the unit of work they perform. Many vendors who used to work as farmers have switched professions to become vendors after the advent of tourism. When they were farmers, their income was barely enough, but after becoming vendors, their income is sufficient to meet daily needs and can be used to finance their children's education (Pranoto et al., 2023).

Other community members also participate, with some farmers involved in planting fruit commodities such as guava and bananas, which are sold at tourist locations, especially at Jumog Waterfall. Farmers also benefit more because the harvests sold at tourist locations can be sold at higher prices than the market price. There are many vendor stalls ranging from children's food sellers, fruits, and merchandise, to heavy meals selling within the waterfall tourist area. Farmer involvement can also support the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the village through the sale of harvests.

Furthermore, collective actions are also taken in waste management, pollution reduction, and energy management, where the application and utilization must also consider possible negative impacts. The natural tourism objects in Berjo Village require maintenance and care to prevent damage to tourism and the surrounding environment. A well-preserved environment will add aesthetic value and attraction for tourists. Tourism at Jumog Waterfall and Telaga Madirda showcases pristine and clean environments thanks to good management. The environment is routinely cleaned, and many trash bins are provided so that visitors do not have difficulty disposing of trash properly (Pranoto et al., 2023). The summary of the dynamics of convergent communication in terms of shared understanding, shared agreement, and collective actions in the various villages above can be observed in the table below.

Table 1. Recap of Convergence Communication Dynamics in Blekok, Mola, Wae Rebo, and Berjo Villages

Ecotourism	Mutual Understanding	Mutual Agreements	Collective Action
Blekok	The preservation of mangrove forests along with their flora and fauna remains intact and is a superior attraction for Blekok Village Ecotourism.	Shared responsibilities and tasks in managing ecotourism in Blekok Village, such as the maintenance and supervision of facilities like the heron sanctuary, wooden structures, and cleanliness.	Collaboration between the Environmental Agency, Village Government, and Tourism Awareness Group involved in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.
Mola, Bajo	Their conservation efforts aim to preserve and protect the marine waters, coastal ecosystems, mangrove forests, and marine resources.	Stakeholders agree that 65% of tourism management proceeds are allocated for the preservation of cultural and environmental aspects, particularly to address waste management issues in the area.	Collective actions in the form of capacity-building programs are conducted through mentoring and infrastructure development to facilitate the enhancement of local potentials.
Wae Rebo	Preserving the cultural heritage of Wae Rebo's indigenous community and managing Wae Rebo ecotourism to gain global recognition.	The community agrees that tourism funds are allocated for various purposes, including operational costs, support for traditional ceremonies, environmental improvement, new facility construction, maintenance costs, funds for the elderly, educational support, and cultural activities.	Community collective actions materialize through the establishment of a governance structure within the Wae Rebo Cultural Preservation Institution (LPBW), consisting of Supervisory, Management, and Daily Management Bodies to preserve culture and manage tourism together with the entire Wae Rebo community.
Berjo	Conducting afforestation around the tourist attraction area to maintain its lushness and prevent environmental damage. Additionally, preserving the environment enhances aesthetic value and attractiveness for tourists.	Agreements related to the distribution of income derived from tourism services.	Increased community involvement in managing tourism development in Berjo Village to address economic challenges faced by the community.

Conclusions:

The dynamics of convergence communication play a crucial role in community-based ecotourism management. In this management process, shared understanding and agreements among various stakeholders are key. Shared understanding involves a common vision and goals desired by all parties involved. In the researched tourism villages, all of them have a similar vision regarding environmental preservation, although Wae Rebo and Mola, Bajo Villages, also emphasize cultural preservation.

Agreements in ecotourism management can involve concrete task allocation and responsibilities to achieve common goals. Other agreements may be related to the distribution of tourism revenue used for community welfare and environmental preservation. Collective actions also reflect convergent communication in coordinated efforts for ecotourism management, such as collaboration between private entities, government, NGOs, and local communities in the development, training, and conservation of the local environment and culture.

Practices in various ecotourism destinations demonstrate concrete efforts in maintaining environmental sustainability, strengthening local economies, and preserving culture. Collaboration between government, local communities, and various stakeholders forms a robust management system that not only aims for environmental sustainability but also local community welfare. Moreover, these collective actions also allow for positive social and economic changes, such as increased income, infrastructure development, and cultural preservation.

In conclusion, convergent communication in community-based ecotourism management can create synergy among various stakeholders to achieve holistic sustainable tourism development goals. As a recommendation, it is important to continue improving communication and collaboration among all stakeholders, strengthening ecotourism management systems, and maintaining a balance between environmental

preservation, culture, and local community welfare.

References:

1. Afua, A. E. (2012). Community participation in ecotourism: Evidence from Tafi Atome, Ghana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 2(2). ISSN: 2223-814X.
2. Brata, J. T., Nashar, A., & Suprianto, F. (2022). Management of Mola Raya slum areas becoming a tourism area in Wakatobi Regency. *Journal of Political Science*, 1(April), 1–12.
3. Butar-Butar, R. R., & Soemarno. (2012). Community empowerment effort in sustainable ecotourism management in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. *J-PAL*, 3(1), 1-7.
<https://jpal.ub.ac.id/index.php/jpal/article/view/120>
4. Bjork, P. (2000). Ecotourism from a conceptual perspective: An extended definition of a unique tourism form. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2(3), 189–202.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1522-1970\(200005/06\)2:3<189::AID-JTR195>3.0.CO;2-T](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(200005/06)2:3<189::AID-JTR195>3.0.CO;2-T)
5. Burgos, A., & Mertens, F. (2017). Participatory management of community-based tourism: A network perspective. *Community Development*, 48(4), 546–565.
6. Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Pearson.
7. Cooper, H. (2010). *Research synthesis and meta-analysis: A step-by-step approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
8. Flor, G. A., & Cangara, H. (2018). *Komunikasi lingkungan: Penanganan kasus-kasus lingkungan melalui strategi komunikasi*. Prenadamedia Group.
9. Fajar, M. (2023, 12 Maret). Desa Adat Wae Rebo benar-benar magis, lihat saja ini. Diambil pada 25 Februari 2024 dari <https://travel.detik.com/cerita->

- perjalanan/d-6613912/Desa-adat-wae-rebo-benar-benar-magis-lihat-saja-ini
10. Hijriati, E., & Mardiana, R. (2014). Community-based ecotourism influence the condition of ecology, social, and economic: Batusuhunan Village, Sukabumi. *Sodality*, 2(3).
 11. Heslinga, J., Groote, P., & Vanclay, F. (2017). Strengthening governance processes to improve benefit-sharing from tourism in protected areas by using stakeholder analysis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 9582(December), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1408635>
 12. Insani, N., Wirahayu, Y. A., Arif, D. A., & Sabilau, O. G. (2019). Feasibility study, carrying capacity, and ecotourism activities in the Blekok Village mangrove area of Situbondo Regency. *Geography and Geography Education*, 3(2), 2580–1775. <http://sjdgge.ppj.unp.ac.id/index.php/>
 13. Jones, S. (2005). Community-based ecotourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(2), 303–324. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.06.0
 14. Kriyantono, R. (2008). *Teknik praktis riset komunikasi*. Jakarta: Prenada Media Group.
 15. Kiper, T. (2013). Role of ecotourism in sustainable development. *Advances in Landscape Architecture*. doi:10.5772/55749
 16. Kincaid, D. L. (1979). The convergence model of communication. *East West Communication Institute*.
 17. Kunjuran, V. (2021). Local community participation challenges in community-based ecotourism development in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. *Community Development Journal*. doi:10.1093/cdj/bsaa065
 18. Littlejohn, S., & Foss, K. (2009). Humorous communication theory. In *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384.n1>
 19. Meli, N. (2020, 16 Maret). Mengenal Suku Bajo di Perkampungan Bajo Mola, Wakatobi. Diambil dari <https://osc.medcom.id/community/mengenal-suku-bajo-di-perkampungan-bajo-mola-wakatobi-958>
 20. Marlina, Mkumbachi, R. L., Mane, A., & Daud, L. R. (2023). Environmental care character education based on local wisdom for marine resource management. *Jambura Geo Education Journal*, 4(2), 199–207. <https://doi.org/10.34312/jgej.v4i2.21920>
 21. Mashuri, D. (2021). Desa Berjo Nargoyoso satu-satunya desa milyarder terkaya di Kabupaten Karanganyar. Diambil tanggal 3 Maret 2023 dari <https://detikcyber.com/index.php/2021/04/06/Desa-berjo-ngargoyoso-satu-satunya-Desamilyarder-terkaya-di-kabupaten-karanganyar/>
 22. Mohd Noh, A. N., Razzaq, A. R. A., Mustafa, M. Z., Nordin, M. N., & Ibrahim, B. (2021). Sustainable community-based ecotourism development. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*.
 23. Pranoto, B., Utami, T., & Sunesti, Y. (2023). Pengembangan Desa wisata Berjo menuju SDGs Desa Mandiri dan Berkelanjutan. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 12(2), 381–395. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish.v12i2.61185>
 24. Putri, F. A., Bramasta, D., & Hawanti, S. (2020). Studi literatur tentang peningkatan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa dalam pembelajaran menggunakan model pembelajaran The Power of Two di SD. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v6i2.561>
 25. Prasetya, W. A. (2021, 29 Mei). Harga tiket dan jam buka Air Terjun Jumog Karanganyar. Diambil tanggal 25 Februari 2024 dari <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2021/05/29/150300727/harga-tiket-dan-jam-buka-air-terjun-jumog-karanganyar-2021>

26. Priyambodo, U. (2022, 11 Januari). Menelisik potensi ekowisata di Indonesia dan cara memasarkannya. Diambil tanggal 25 Februari 2024 dari <https://nationalgeographic.grid.id/read/133086639/menelisik-potensi-ekowisata-di-indonesia-dan-cara-memasarkannya?page=all>
27. Rachmawati, I. (2019, 26 Maret). Berkawan dengan ratusan burung air di Kampung Blekok. Diambil tanggal 25 Maret 2024 dari <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2019/02/26/141600327/berkawan-dengan-ratusan-burung-air-di-kampung-blekok-situbondo>
28. Ramadesta, P., Sukana, M., & Narottama, N. (2022). The role of stakeholders in the development of mangrove eco-tourism at Blekok Tourism Village, Situbondo, East Java. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(3), 255–260. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2022.7.3.1448>
29. Suhandi, A. S., Novianti, E., Oktavia, D., Khan, A., & Simatupang, W. P. (2022). Community participation process in community-based tourism development in Waerebo Traditional Village, Manggarai Regency, Flores. *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism*. Institut Teknologi Bandung.
30. Ross, S., & Wall, G. (1999). Ecotourism: Towards congruence between theory and practice. *Tourism Management*, 20(1), 123-132. ISSN 0261-5177. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00098-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00098-3)
31. Stone, M. T. (2015). Community-based ecotourism: A collaborative partnerships perspective. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 14(2-3), 166–184. doi:10.1080/14724049.2015.1023
32. Sudirman, F. A., Tombora, I. T. A., & Tarifu, L. (2022). Tata kelola kolaboratif (Collaborative Governance) pembangunan pariwisata Bajo Mola Wakatobi. *Indonesian Journal of International Relations*, 6(1), 114–132. <https://doi.org/10.32787/ijir.v6i1.2>
33. United Nation Tourism. (2024). *Sustainable tourism*. Diambil tanggal 20 Maret 2024 dari <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22684502/0>
34. Wardani, I. S., & Ashshidiqy, K. H. (2023). Perkara korupsi BUMDes inkrah, Kades Berjo Karanganyar dipecat - Solopos.com. Diambil tanggal 25 Februari 2024 dari <https://soloraya.solopos.com/perkara-korupsi-bumdes-inkrah-kades-berjo-karanganyar-dipecat-1798528>
35. Wisnubroto. (2023). Rapor biru pariwisata nasional. Diambil tanggal 25 Februari 2024 dari <https://indonesia.go.id/kategori/editorial/7771/rapor-biru-pariwisata-nasional?lang=1>
36. Yasir. (2021). Komunikasi pariwisata dalam pengembangan destinasi wisata di Kecamatan Kuok Kabupaten Kampar. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 9(1), 108-120. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v9i1.26170>
37. Yasir, Y., Nurjanah, Salam, N. E., & Yohana, N. (2019). Kebijakan komunikasi dalam membangun destinasi dan masyarakat sadar wisata di Kabupaten Bengkalis. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.3i3.1548>