

Article

# Promotion of ecotourism and communication policy in increasing tourists in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This article aims to analyze the form of promotion and its policies in increasing tourists in Indonesia. Ecotourism is one of the nation's vital sectors that can improve the economy, preserve nature and introduce local culture. Sadly, today, ecotourism has yet to be discovered by the public, which cumulatively causes much damage. Therefore, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is tasked with educating the public in order to create a collaborative synergy. This article uses qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The primary data sources in this study are Twitter netizens' tweets and The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's social media accounts. At the same time, the secondary data used in this study are articles, books, and reportage. Then the data will be analyzed through several procedures, namely, 1) data matrix, 2) data reduction, 3) coding, and 4) conclusion drawing. The results showed that the messages conveyed by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy regarding ecotourism were good, and the intensity was relatively high. Public conversations about ecotourism have also been substantive in accordance with ideal ecotourism. Unfortunately, the intensity of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's message is not accompanied by the intensity of ecotourism conversations in the community. However, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has issued a communication policy in promoting ecotourism in Indonesia. This aims to benefit the wider community, such as community productivity, economic improvement, and the introduction of local culture to the international community.

**Keywords:** promotion; ecotourism; communication; policy; tourists

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is an agricultural country that makes the tourism sector one of the capital attracting tourists. In Indonesia, tourism is experiencing significant development, especially after the coronavirus (PPID, 2023). The development of the tourism sector is one of the strengths of the Indonesian nation, especially the economy and local wisdom. At this level, the opportunities that the Indonesian people have can fix the shortcomings through ecotourism. Ironically, public awareness about ecotourism is still low; this can be seen through several practices of environmental destruction. Some cases, such as forest deforestation, are still high (Wahyuni and Suranto, 2021). In addition, biological and animal ecosystems in Indonesia are still not preserved, causing some extreme damage (Ramdhan and Amri, 2019; Vitasari, 2015).

Ideally, the government has implemented all the regulations that govern the smooth running of ecotourism in Indonesia, namely: 1) Law No. 5 of 1990 on the Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems, 2) Minister of Environment and

Forestry Regulation No. P.16/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/5/2017 on Nature Tourism, 3) Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia No. 7 of 2019 on Sustainable Tourism Standards, 4) Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia No. 4 of 2021 concerning Ecotourism Areas and 5) Regional regulations regarding ecotourism.

The misalignment between regulations and public understanding of ecotourism is a problem that must be resolved. Generally, in implementing the stipulated regulations, there must be prior socialization to create synergy between the community and The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has a strategic role in shaping opinions about ecotourism that are considered ideal by the community. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that emphasizes environmental sustainability and the welfare of local communities (Sulastri, 2020). In this context, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has the responsibility to develop policies and programs that support the development of sustainable ecotourism. By formulating a clear regulatory framework, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can ensure that ecotourism activities not only provide economic benefits but also pay attention to environmental and social aspects.

In order to strengthen public understanding of ecotourism and sustainable tourism practices, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is implementing a comprehensive communication strategy. This includes socialization through various media, both digital and conventional, to disseminate information on the importance of nature conservation, community participation, and sustainable approaches in ecotourism. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy also collaborates with stakeholders, including local communities, the private sector, and international institutions, to promote ecotourism as an environmentally-friendly tourism model that positively impacts local communities. This communication policy not only aims to form a positive opinion among the public about ecotourism but also to ensure that tourism activities in Indonesia provide economic benefits while preserving the environment and culture (Rawali and Ramadhani, 2021).

Regulations issued by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can also include standards and guidelines related to ecotourism principles, including nature conservation, community participation, and sustainable approaches. That way, the community will be more likely to form a positive opinion towards ecotourism promoted by the government through The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In addition, involving local communities in the process of planning and implementing ecotourism programs will help form a positive opinion because they feel involved and have a stake in the success of ecotourism. With the proactive role of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in forming regulations and involving the community, public opinion on ecotourism can be formed positively, making ecotourism an environmentally friendly tourism model that has a positive impact on local communities (Arifin et al., 2022).

The urgency of ecotourism awareness is crucial in protecting nature and biodiversity, as well as maintaining social and economic sustainability in tourism destinations. With increasing threats to the environment and culture, ecotourism awareness plays a crucial role in promoting responsible tourism practices, preserving

natural ecosystems, strengthening local community engagement, and creating meaningful tourism experiences. Only through widespread awareness and concrete actions can we preserve our natural beauty and pass it on to future generations. In this article, the author will formulate a novelty in order to create synergy between the government and the community regarding ecotourism. This is due to Indonesia's tourism potential that can accommodate national-scale interests. Therefore, it is essential to form public opinion about the awareness of maintaining and preserving tourism in Indonesia.

## **2. Literature review**

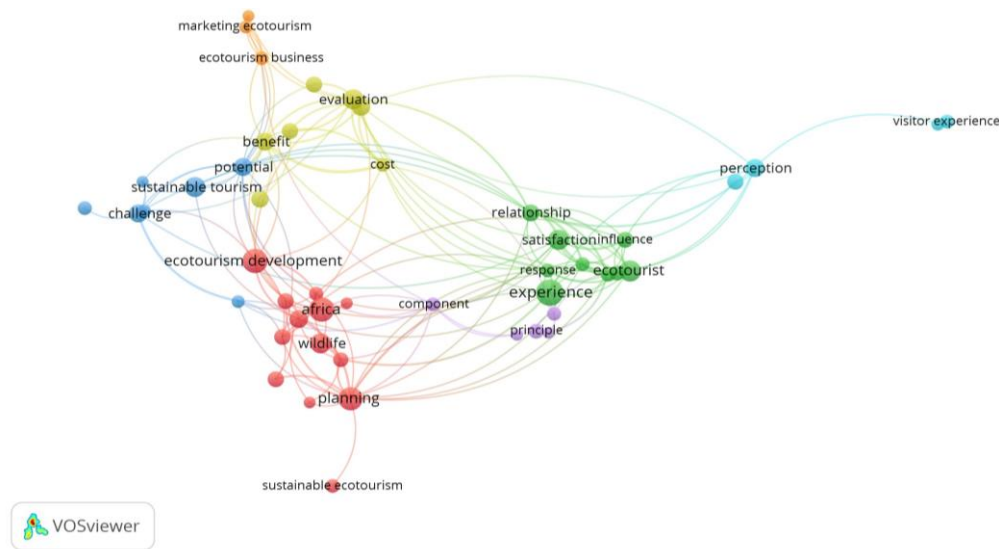
The promotion of ecotourism as a key strategy in increasing the number of tourists in Indonesia has gained significant attention in recent years. Ecotourism, which emphasizes sustainable and responsible nature tourism, not only contributes to environmental preservation, but also has a positive impact on improving the local economy. Indonesia, with its incredible natural wealth, offers a variety of attractive ecotourism destinations, ranging from national parks, tropical rainforests, to underwater conservation areas. Effective promotional strategies are needed to attract both domestic and international tourists, which in turn can raise awareness of the importance of nature conservation and support sustainable local economic and communication development (Kim et al., 2019). In the context of development communication, there are several strategies used. The first is the provision of accurate, clear and accessible information. Information about development programs and policies should be delivered in a language that is easy to understand and in a format that is accessible to all levels of society.

The main goal of development communication is to increase community participation in the development process (Yudarwati and Gregory, 2022). Development communication also aims to increase public awareness and understanding of development issues. Accurate and transparent information about development programs and policies will provide people with a better understanding, so that they can make informed decisions and contribute to development (Zhu et al., 2022). In addition, development communication also has a role in influencing people's attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets related to development (Fauzan et al., 2023; Ratriyana et al., 2022). It is important to remember that the objectives of development communication depend on the context, and the social challenges faced (Sikumbang et al., 2024). However, at its core, the goal of development communication is to build understanding, participation, social awareness, and positive change in society.

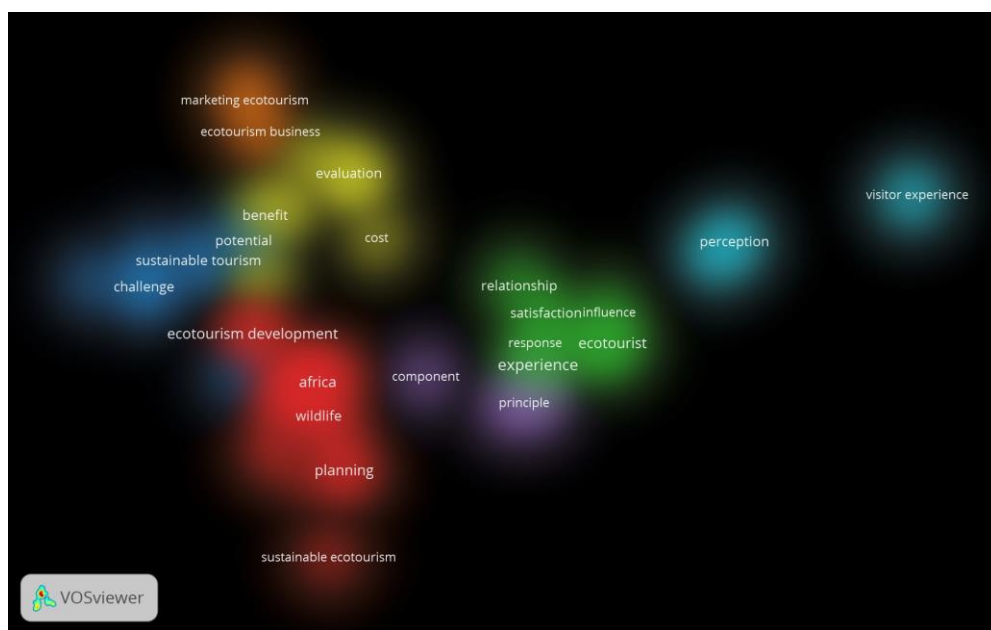
Communication policies play an important role in ecotourism promotion strategies. It should be designed to deliver clear and compelling messages about the value and uniqueness of ecotourism destinations in Indonesia to the right audiences. The use of social media, digital platforms, and collaboration with influencers and travel media can increase the reach and effectiveness of promotions. In addition, the importance of building good communication with local communities as part of this policy cannot be overlooked (Fauzan et al., 2023). Involving local communities in the process of developing and promoting ecotourism will not only improve the quality of the tourism experience, but also ensure that the economic benefits of the ecotourism

sector can be felt directly by those who are at the forefront of nature conservation.

In this literature review, the author has collected 1000 previous articles with the keyword “Ecotourism”. After collecting, the author conducted network analysis and density analysis using the VOSviewer application. The following **Figures 1** and **2** are the results of the analyses:



**Figure 1.** Network analysis.



**Figure 2.** Density analysis.

The network and density analyses of 1000 previous studies using the keyword “ecotourism” provide valuable insights into the thematic and relational dimensions underlying ecotourism research. The network analysis reveals how different themes such as ‘ecotourism development,’ ‘sustainable tourism,’ ‘marketing ecotourism,’ and ‘visitor experience’ are interconnected, highlighting the complex interplay between various aspects of ecotourism. Themes like ‘Africa’ and ‘wildlife,’ which are central in the network, suggest regional and biodiversity concerns are crucial in ecotourism

discussions. In contrast, the density analysis illuminates the most concentrated areas of discussion, with ‘visitor experience’ and ‘perception’ appearing as prominent, densely clustered themes. This suggests a significant focus on the tourist’s perspective and the impact of ecotourism experiences on visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

Both analyses are critical for understanding how ecotourism is framed within academic literature and can inform strategies for promoting ecotourism in Indonesia. By identifying key themes and their interconnections, stakeholders can better develop communication policies that address the multifaceted aspects of ecotourism. These insights can be leveraged to enhance Indonesia’s ecotourism appeal, ensuring that promotional strategies not only highlight the unique ecological and cultural aspects of Indonesian destinations but also align with global ecotourism trends and concerns, thereby increasing tourist engagement and contributing to sustainable tourism development.

Criticism of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy’s role in shaping public opinion towards ecotourism is also found in this literature. Public participation is also an important strategy in development communication. Involving the public in the decision-making process and providing space for them to express their opinions, inputs, and aspirations will increase the level of involvement and support for development programs (Arnstein, 1969). Several studies highlighted the need for increased transparency, accountability and community participation in decision-making processes related to ecotourism. In this context, the literature emphasizes that empowering local communities to participate in policy-making can result in ecotourism that is more responsive to their needs and aspirations. Therefore, the literature offers important insights to understand the dynamics of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy’s role in shaping public opinion on ecotourism. Several previous studies are similar to the discussion in this article. First, on ecotourism marketing in Uzbekistan and Indonesia (Yuliarni et al., 2023). The difference between previous research and this article is the object and substance of the discussion. This article only discusses ecotourism in the Indonesian context, and the substance relies on socialization and public understanding.

Then, research on environmental communication (Hasmira et al., 2023). Previous research has similarities with the article being discussed. The significant difference between the two is the substance of the discussion, where this article discusses the opportunities and challenges of ecotourism and the opinions formed in the community through The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy’s messages. Another article that discusses ecotourism is a review of Bali’s tourism potential in revamping the economic sector (Utama et al., 2023). The substance of this article rests on the economy and resilience of ecotourism. Whereas in this research, the author is oriented toward public awareness of the urgency of ecotourism from various substances.

Furthermore, the article discusses ecotourism intentions in Jordan, which discusses the charm of ecotourism in attracting tourists (Hunitie et al., 2022). The difference between previous research and this article is the context of the discussion. This article discusses the context of Indonesia; besides the complexity of the discussion, this article not only discusses ecotourism in attracting tourists but also economic, social, and local wisdom. The last article discusses the economic potential of tourism through social media (Kim and Truong, 2023). Previous research discussed

the potential of tourism in a visionary and positive manner. This research relies on the study of ecotourism at a critical level. The difference is that this article reviews the rampant damage to tourism so that it has the potential to degrade the strength of tourism in Indonesia.

All of the previous research has contributed to this paper. The author hopes that through this article, a novelty will emerge that can help the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in accommodating the interests of the country. Furthermore, this article will elaborate on several problems so as to form a constructive formulation.

### **3. Materials and methods**

This article adopts a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, as delineated by Moustakas (2011) and Van Manen (2014), aimed at an in-depth understanding of netizens' perceptions and interactions concerning ecotourism in Indonesia. It involves the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data.

Meanwhile, secondary data was analyzed using a literature review. The literature review constructs a description of the approach with conceptual studies through the literature review (Creswell, 2020). The analysis process is carried out by looking at several communication science studies in forming a perspective that is devoted to looking at literature oriented towards a deductive-interpretative perspective. The primary data consists of 85 tweets which the author collect from 2 July 2023 till 11 July 2023. from Indonesian netizens discussing aspects of ecotourism. These tweets were systematically gathered using specific keywords searches on Twitter and were organized for descriptive construction, where the tweets were dissected and categorized based on emergent themes reflecting the direct perceptions and responses towards ecotourism practices. Secondary data were analyzed through a literature review, which involved sourcing relevant journal articles, books, and research reports. This review employs a deductive-interpretative content analysis method to identify and evaluate how ecotourism is discussed within academic literature and scholarly publications. Each reference was organized and coded according to categories related to ecotourism policies and practices (Creswell, 2020). Overall, data collection and processing were carried out during the period July-September 2023.

Once the data is collected, Matthew and Huberman's analysis technique begins with the creation of a data matrix, which organizes information obtained from the literature review and other sources. Next, the data reduction process will take place, where data will be simplified, categorized, and coded to make it easier to understand. Next, a data reduction process will be conducted, where data will be simplified, categorized, and coded to make it easier to understand (Matthew and Huberman, 2014).

## **4. Result**

### **4.1. Social media counselling**

Counseling on ecotourism is a significant effort to increase understanding and awareness of sustainable tourism practices. Being listed in **Table 1** are some points that The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can consider in ecotourism counseling:

**Table 1.** Social media and actualization counselling.

No	Social Media Counseling	Actualization
1)	Communicating the Concept and Value of Ecotourism	Educate communities, tourists and stakeholders on the basic principles of ecotourism, with an emphasis on the importance of nature conservation, biodiversity, local community participation and equitable economic benefits.
2)	Explaining the Impact of Tourism on the Environment	Communicate the positive and negative effects of tourism on the environment, raising awareness of how tourism activities can affect ecosystems, wildlife habitats and overall environmental quality to encourage responsible tourist behaviour.
3)	Introducing Sustainable Practices	Inform tourists and the tourism industry about sustainable tourism practices, including efficient energy use, waste reduction, wise water management, support for local products, and respect for cultural traditions to minimize the ecological impacts of tourism.
4)	Educating Local Communities	Engage and empower local communities by providing an understanding of the potential and benefits of ecotourism for them. Communities need to be involved in decision-making related to tourism development and acquire the necessary skills to participate sustainably.
5)	Introducing Ecotourism Destinations	Introducing existing ecotourism destinations, highlighting the unique natural, cultural and activity offerings to inspire and motivate travelers to choose responsible tourism experiences that positively benefit the environment and local communities.
6)	Driving Behaviour Change	The main objective of ecotourism outreach is to encourage more sustainable behavior change. It should provide valuable and practical information and motivate travelers to adopt sustainable practices during their trip and become responsible environmental ambassadors.

First, Conveying Ecotourism Concepts and Values: Extension should introduce the basic concepts and values of ecotourism to communities, tourists, and relevant stakeholders. This includes understanding the importance of nature conservation, biodiversity preservation, local community participation, and equitable economic benefits.

Second, Explain the Impact of Tourism on the Environment: Extension should convey the impact of tourism on the environment, both positive and negative. This includes an understanding of how tourism activities can affect ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and overall environmental quality. With this understanding, travelers can take responsible action during their trip.

Third, Introducing Sustainable Practices: Extension should inform about sustainable tourism practices that tourists and the tourism industry can implement. These include efficient energy use, waste reduction, wise water management, purchase of sustainable local products, and respect for local culture and traditions (Dalimunthe et al., 2024).

Fourth, Educate Local Communities: Extension should also involve local communities, providing an understanding of the potential and benefits of ecotourism for them. Local communities need to be empowered in decision-making regarding tourism development, as well as acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in the tourism industry sustainably.

Fifth, Introducing Ecotourism Destinations: Extension can introduce existing ecotourism destinations and highlight the unique nature, culture, and activities offered. This can inspire and motivate travelers to choose responsible tourism experiences that provide positive benefits to the environment and local communities.

Sixth, Encourage Behaviour Change: The main goal of ecotourism extension is to encourage more sustainable behavior change. It should provide valuable and practical information and motivate tourists to adopt sustainable practices during their travels and become responsible environmental ambassadors.

Through effective ecotourism outreach, we can create a better understanding of the importance of preserving nature, promoting sustainability, and providing positive benefits to local communities. This is an essential step in achieving sustainable tourism goals and preserving natural beauty for future generations. Generally, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has socialized some essential points regarding ecotourism on social media Twitter.

The ecotourism counseling efforts carried out by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The existence of artificial intelligence today has resulted in some tourists preferring to travel using artificial technology rather than visiting tourist sites directly. This is not good for the development of tourism. Therefore, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy socializes the extension on the pretext that the sensation of traveling directly must be different from traveling using artificial intelligence.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is active in providing outreach on ecotourism. In addition to intermezzo-based counseling, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy also actively provides counseling through press conferences and collaboration with mainstream media. Presumably, the socialization carried out by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is correct, especially since the number of followers of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is relatively large.

#### 4.2. Intensity of community understanding of ecotourism

The extension and socialization carried out by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy must be in line with the opinions formed in the community. Good counseling is the internalization of messages that can then be applied in everyday life. In retrospect, if these messages cannot be internalized, they will not have much effect on the development of the tourism sector. The author has accumulated public perceptions that can be used as an indicator of the success of The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy 's socialization in educating the public.

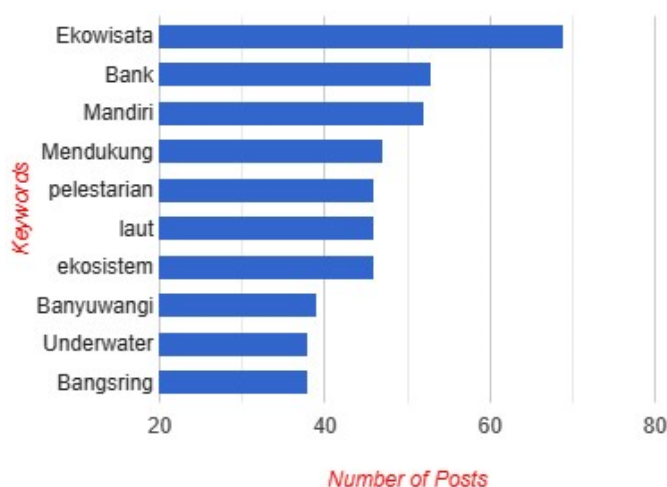
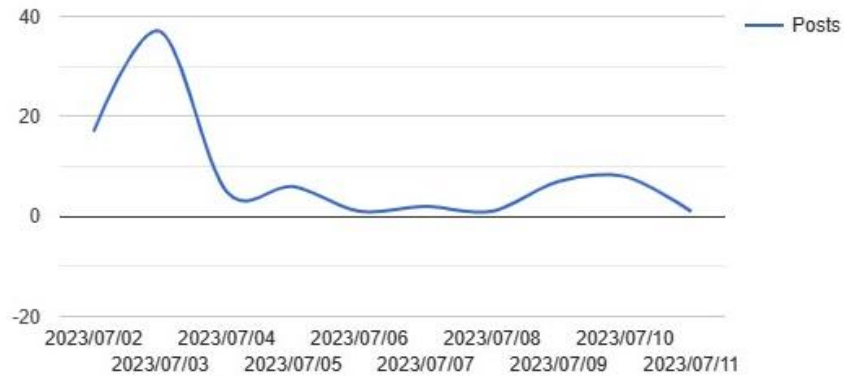


Figure 3. Conversation about ecotourism.

Social media dynamics on Twitter show that the substance of the discussion about ecotourism can already be internalized by the community. From Figure 3 above, it



can be seen that Twitter netizen conversations about ecotourism have begun to discuss ecosystems and sustainability. From a number of conversations above, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has been quite successful in raising awareness of Ecotourism.



**Figure 4.** Conversation intensity about ecotourism.

Unfortunately, public understanding runs aground on mere ceremonies. **Figure 4** above indicates that discussions about ecotourism are relatively rare even though people already know the substance of ecotourism itself. Ecotourism that is discussed continuously can lead to massive movement and active community participation. The urgency of the intensity of this conversation is so that information about ecotourism can spread evenly and create understanding for the sake of nature conservation and economic growth.

While the ultimate goal is nature conservation and sustainability, ecotourism also has the potential to provide significant economic benefits. Here are some of the ways in which ecotourism impacts the economy:

Firstly, **Income Generation and Job Creation:** Ecotourism can be an essential source of income for local communities (Fathoni et al., 2022). As the number of tourists increases, there is an increased demand for accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, and other services. This has the potential to create new jobs and increase the income of local communities.

Second, **Infrastructure Development:** To support ecological tourism, adequate infrastructure is needed, such as roads, transport, hotels, and other tourist facilities (Mawardi et al., 2019). The development of this infrastructure can create business opportunities for local communities, including construction, maintenance, and provision of other supporting services.

Third, **Economic Sustainability:** In a good ecotourism model, revenue generated from tourism is used to finance the sustainable management and conservation of nature (Mawardi et al., 2019). This includes funding conservation projects, training farmers or fishermen to switch to sustainable practices, and developing environmental education programs. Thus, ecotourism can support the economic sustainability of local communities.

Fourth, **Increased Spending and Economic Diversification:** Tourists visiting in the context of ecotourism tend to spend more on buying local products, utilizing local services, and participating in value-added tourism activities. This can increase income

and economic diversification in the area and encourage the development of small and medium enterprises (Siahaan and Saputra, 2023).

Fifth, Increased Investment and Development: The success of ecotourism can attract investors to the development of tourist destinations. These investments can contribute to infrastructure development, accessibility improvements, tourism service development, and other initiatives that boost the local economy (Mihigo and Lukenangula, 2023).

Overall, ecotourism has the potential to generate significant economic benefits for local communities and play an essential role in the sustainable development of an area. However, it is also vital to ensure that such economic benefits are distributed fairly and sustainably and integrated with nature conservation and social sustainability.

### **4.3. Challenges and opportunities of communication policy in the context of ecotourism in Indonesia**

Ecotourism in Indonesia offers a range of exciting opportunities but also faces a number of challenges. The following is an overview of the opportunities for ecotourism development in Indonesia: Firstly, Natural and Cultural Diversity: Indonesia has an incredible wealth of nature and culture. From tropical rainforests, volcanoes, and coral reefs to diverse cultural heritage, this provides opportunities to develop exciting and unique ecotourism destinations (Nugroho, 2022).

Natural and cultural diversity creates excellent opportunities for sustainable development and community well-being. In the context of natural diversity, various ecosystems and species provide invaluable ecological benefits, such as clean water provision, climate regulation, and genetic diversity that can be used in agriculture and the development of medicines. Opportunities to maintain environmental sustainability and optimize natural resource utilization are crucial in facing the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation (Lo and Janta, 2020; Nawangsari and Rahmatin, 2022; Saraan et al., 2024). By understanding the value of natural diversity, communities can develop sustainable innovations and practices to maintain ecosystem balance and ensure economic sustainability.

On the cultural side, cultural diversity creates opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and ideas that can lead to creative solutions in a variety of fields, including art, science, and technology (Baixinho et al., 2020; Duxbury et al., 2021). A rich cultural heritage gives a society a unique identity, enriches daily life, and stimulates economic growth through creative industries. These opportunities can be strengthened through the promotion of sustainable tourism, the development of culture-based products, and heritage education and maintenance. By utilizing natural and cultural diversity wisely, communities can create a balanced and dynamic environment, providing long-term benefits for generations to come (Brouder, 2020; Andreu et al., 2021).

Second, Economic Potential: Ecotourism can be a significant source of income for local communities and the country as a whole. Through ecotourism, new jobs, increased income, and economic diversification can be created in areas with natural tourism potential (Juliana and Samiu, 2022).

The economic potential in the tourism sector creates diverse opportunities for

regional development and increased community income (Feng, 2023). Attractive tourism destinations can be a magnet for domestic and international tourists, who in turn provide an economic boost through their spending on accommodation, food, transport, and various local goods and services. In addition, the development of tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, restaurants, and transport facilities, can create new jobs and have a positive impact on the surrounding micro and small business sectors. By utilizing this economic potential wisely, governments and local communities can design sustainable tourism development strategies, ensuring that local communities can widely enjoy the economic benefits generated. As stated by Yilmaz et al. (2021) ecotourism policies that prepared under the new regionalism theories have a positive effect on the development of the region.

In addition, the economic potential of tourism also involves the utilization of cultural and natural heritage as the main attraction (Al shawabkeh et al., 2023; Frame et al., 2022). Destinations rich in their unique culture, history, and natural beauty can create memorable tourism experiences, encourage repeat visits, and build a positive image that supports the growth of the tourism sector. By developing diverse and attractive tourism products, destinations can attract various market segments, create sustainable economic opportunities, and strengthen their competitiveness in the global tourism industry.

Third, Raising Environmental Awareness: Ecotourism provides an opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of nature conservation and biodiversity. Travelers involved in ecotourism can become agents of change who care more about the environment and support conservation efforts.

Increased environmental awareness opens up tremendous opportunities in the tourism industry, where travelers are increasingly likely to choose destinations committed to sustainable practices. Destinations that prioritize environmental sustainability by reducing their carbon footprint, conserving biodiversity, and implementing eco-friendly practices can attract market segments concerned with environmental issues (Li et al., 2022; Pulido-Fernández et al., 2019). Tourism businesses that adopt green practices, such as prudent waste management, use of renewable energy, and conservation programs, not only provide positive benefits to the environment but can also increase the attractiveness of the destination.

In addition, environmental awareness also creates opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism activities, such as ecotourism and responsible nature adventures. Destinations that offer travel experiences that enrich the knowledge of natural and cultural diversity while preserving the environment can attract travelers looking for more meaningful experiences. Therefore, tourism industry players that follow the trend of environmental awareness can not only make a positive contribution to global environmental protection but also optimize market potential and provide sustainable economic impact to local communities (Aytekin et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023).

Fourth, Infrastructure Development: The development of ecotourism drives infrastructure improvements such as transport, accommodation, and other supporting facilities. This provides opportunities for the development of adequate infrastructure and improved accessibility to nature tourism areas (Salahudin Saiman, 2022).

Infrastructure development plays a crucial role in unlocking significant tourism

opportunities (Shimizu and Okamoto, 2022). Tourism destinations equipped with good infrastructure, such as modern airports, efficient transport networks, and comfortable accommodations, can attract more tourists and facilitate the growth of the tourism sector. Developed infrastructure also opens up accessibility to previously hard-to-reach places, expanding the scope of tourist destinations and providing opportunities for the development of untapped tourism potential. Well-planned tourism infrastructure development can create multiplier effects, create jobs, and stimulate local economic growth (Nguyen, 2021).

In addition, the development of technological infrastructure also opens up new opportunities for the development of innovative tourism experiences (Zhuang et al., 2022). The use of technologies such as intelligent travel apps, artificial intelligence recognition, and virtual reality technology can enhance travelers' convenience and provide a more immersive experience. Destinations that capitalize on technological infrastructure developments can offer more interactive and engaging attractions, increasing their competitiveness in the global market. Therefore, investment in infrastructure development, both physical and technological, is critical in unlocking the potential for sustainable growth in the tourism industry (Putra et al., 2020).

Fifth, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity: Ecotourism aims to protect natural ecosystems and biodiversity. By promoting sustainable practices, good management, and respect for nature, ecotourism seeks to minimize negative impacts on the environment and sustain vulnerable ecosystems (Sanka et al., 2023).

The preservation of nature and biodiversity is not only an ethical responsibility but also opens up essential opportunities in the tourism industry. Tourism destinations committed to nature and biodiversity conservation have a particular appeal to travelers who value natural beauty and want to make a positive impact on the environment. Such opportunities involve the development of ecotourism, where destinations can promote their natural treasures while maintaining ecosystem sustainability (Sultan et al., 2022). Preservation initiatives can include replanting forests, wildlife conservation programs, and educating visitors on the importance of conserving biodiversity (Tortato et al., 2020).

In addition, destinations that focus on nature conservation can also capitalize on opportunities for the development of adventure-based tourism activities and nature education. Travelers are increasingly seeking experiences that provide an in-depth understanding of ecosystems and biodiversity while maintaining environmental sustainability (Musa and Nadarajah, 2023). Therefore, tourism industry players can work together with nature conservation organizations and local communities to create tour packages that not only pamper visitors with natural beauty but also make a positive contribution to environmental and biodiversity conservation (Van Wijk et al., 2015). These opportunities create a symbiotic relationship that empowers the tourism sector while protecting precious natural wealth and biodiversity.

Finally, Local Community Empowerment and Prosperity: Ecotourism seeks to provide equitable economic benefits and employment opportunities to local communities. By involving communities in tourism development and management, ecotourism can improve welfare, support sustainable local development, and preserve local cultures and traditions (Febriansyah, 2022; Marizki et al., 2022).

The empowerment and welfare of local communities can be integrated as the

main focus in the development of the tourism sector. Tourism destinations that are oriented towards local community empowerment have the opportunity to boost the local economy, create jobs, and improve the living standards of local communities. Initiatives such as skills training, micro-enterprise development, and participation in tourism management provide opportunities for local communities to be actively involved in the tourism industry. The development of homestays or community-based tourism can also provide travelers with a more authentic experience while empowering locals economically (Basak et al., 2021; Fei and He, 2020).

In addition, collaboration between tourism industry players, government, and local communities can create a socially sustainable tourism development model. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs from tourism industry players can contribute to the development of social, educational, and health infrastructure for local communities (Madanaguli et al., 2022; Kuzey et al., 2021). Tourism destinations that focus on empowering local communities not only provide economic benefits but also strengthen the relationship between travelers and local communities, creating more meaningful tourism experiences and positively impacting the well-being of local people. This opportunity creates a win-win situation where tourism growth coexists with the improvement of local communities' welfare (Ghaderi et al., 2022; Hakim, 2021).

In addition to the above opportunities, some challenges should be addressed through ecotourism extension (**Table 2**). One of the main challenges is sustainably managing nature tourism. Ensuring the preservation of nature, avoiding overdevelopment, and minimizing negative impacts on the environment require good management and close monitoring.

**Table 2.** Ecotourism challenges and conflict resolution.

No	Main Challenges	Resolution
1)	Conflict with Other Interests	Involvement of relevant parties and effective coordination are required to address such conflicts and achieve the right balance.
2)	Lack of Awareness and Education	Improved education and environmental awareness programmes are key to achieving sustainable behaviour change in the context of ecotourism.
3)	Regulation and Law Enforcement	Strengthening law enforcement mechanisms is key to preventing environmental damage and protecting the rights of local communities.
4)	Diversification of Income Sources	The development of alternative economic programmes, such as sustainable agriculture and local crafts, can diversify income sources and contribute to long-term community development.

In the context of communication policies implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to address ecotourism challenges, a holistic and integrated approach is key. First, to resolve conflicts between nature conservation and economic development, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can strengthen inter-stakeholder cooperation through sustainable communication forums (Widarini et al., 2022). This policy aims to facilitate constructive dialog between the government, local communities, ecotourism businesses, and environmental NGOs, creating agreements and policies that support the balance between conservation and local economic development.

Then, in addressing the lack of awareness and education regarding sustainable practices, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy could implement a more

aggressive education and awareness program (Rijal et al., 2022). This strategy may include the development and dissemination of engaging educational materials, the conduct of workshops and seminars on sustainable ecotourism, and the use of social and digital media to reach a wider audience. Such programs are expected to increase tourists' and local communities' understanding of and commitment to environmental conservation.

In relation to regulation and enforcement, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy communication strategy should prioritize raising awareness about ecotourism regulations and the importance of compliance with them. This could be through effective public information campaigns and cooperation with law enforcement agencies to ensure that violations of ecotourism rules are dealt with firmly (Subekti, 2022). These efforts are important to maintain environmental integrity and social justice in ecotourism practices.

Furthermore, to ensure diversification of income sources for local communities, communication policies should focus on promoting and developing local economic capacity (Yusup et al., 2022). This could involve business and entrepreneurship training, support for innovative ecotourism initiatives, and marketing of local products through effective channels. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can play an important role in connecting local communities with wider markets, both nationally and internationally, thereby providing them with sustainable economic benefits.

With a strategic communication policy that focuses on empowerment and inter-stakeholder collaboration, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can effectively address ecotourism challenges. This will not only benefit nature conservation and economic development, but also strengthen Indonesia's position as a responsible and sustainable ecotourism destination in the eyes of the world.

## **5. Discussion**

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has a very crucial role in shaping public opinion regarding ideal ecotourism. One theory that is relevant in this context is Sustainable Tourism Theory. This theory emphasizes the need to integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects in tourism development (Vanhove, 2022). The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can play an essential role by formulating policies and regulations that support the development of sustainable ecotourism. By adopting the principles of sustainable tourism theory, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can ensure that tourism activities not only provide economic benefits but also preserve nature and culture.

In addition, Community Participation Theory is an essential foundation for involving local communities in ecotourism development (Clark and Wise, 2018). The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can form positive opinions of the community by activating their participation in decision-making related to tourism development in their area. By involving local communities, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can ensure that the policies and programs implemented take into account the needs and desires of the community, thereby creating strong support from the local level and minimizing resistance to ecotourism projects (Hart et al., 2013).

The sustainability of ecotourism championed by The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy includes not only environmental aspects but also social and economic aspects. Through educational promotion, The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy can increase public awareness of the benefits of ecotourism for local communities, such as increased employment and local economic empowerment. This will form a favorable public opinion towards ecotourism as a form of tourism that is not only environmentally friendly but also has a positive social and economic impact.

At this level, in maximizing ecotourism opportunities, Kemenpar must think about the intensity of spreading messages about environmental awareness. Presumably, these opportunities can help the Indonesian nation become more advanced through the tourism sector. As for overcoming challenges, there must still be synergy between the ministry and the community in collaborative ecotourism. This is in accordance with the theory of community participation in terms of revamping ecotourism (Carbone, 2008).

Ecotourism promotion and communication policy are two key elements in the effort to increase the number of tourists visiting Indonesia. The Indonesian government, through The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, has implemented diverse and innovative communication strategies to promote ecotourism as a form of sustainable tourism that prioritizes the preservation of nature and the welfare of local communities.

One of the main communication policies implemented is the use of digital media and social media to reach a wider audience, both at home and abroad. Social media, tourism websites, and mobile applications are effective promotional tools to showcase Indonesia's natural beauty, ecotourism activities offered, and sustainable practices implemented (Saidmamatov et al., 2020). Through engaging visual content and inspirational narratives, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy succeeded in raising awareness and interest in ecotourism in Indonesia.

As a novelty, the application of innovative digital technologies in ecotourism promotion can be a progressive step for Indonesia. The integration of technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in promotional campaigns can provide an immersive experience to potential tourists, allowing them to explore Indonesia's natural beauty interactively and realistically (Huang and Wang, 2022; Pavlidis et al., 2022). In addition, utilizing blockchain technology to document and verify sustainable practices in ecotourism can give tourists confidence in Indonesia's commitment to environmental preservation. By combining technological innovation with targeted communication policies, Indonesia can position itself as a leader in the promotion of modern and sustainable ecotourism.

## **6. Conclusion**

From this research can be seen the communication efforts by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy have been informative and educational, effectively raising awareness about ecotourism among the public. However, discussions on Twitter indicate that the impact on public understanding is still classified as "sufficient." Furthermore, the public understanding of those tweeting about ecotourism is substantial and adequate—highlighting that those engaged in tweeting

have a reasonable grasp of the subject. Nonetheless, the real challenge lies in the minimal intensity of these discussions (quantity of conversations), which certainly needs to be enhanced. From this research, the author recommends to the Ministry of Tourism to intensify its educational efforts to foster greater public engagement and create synergies in building ideal ecotourism. This would bridge the gap between adequate individual understanding and broader public discourse, boosting the volume and frequency of discussions on ecotourism.

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