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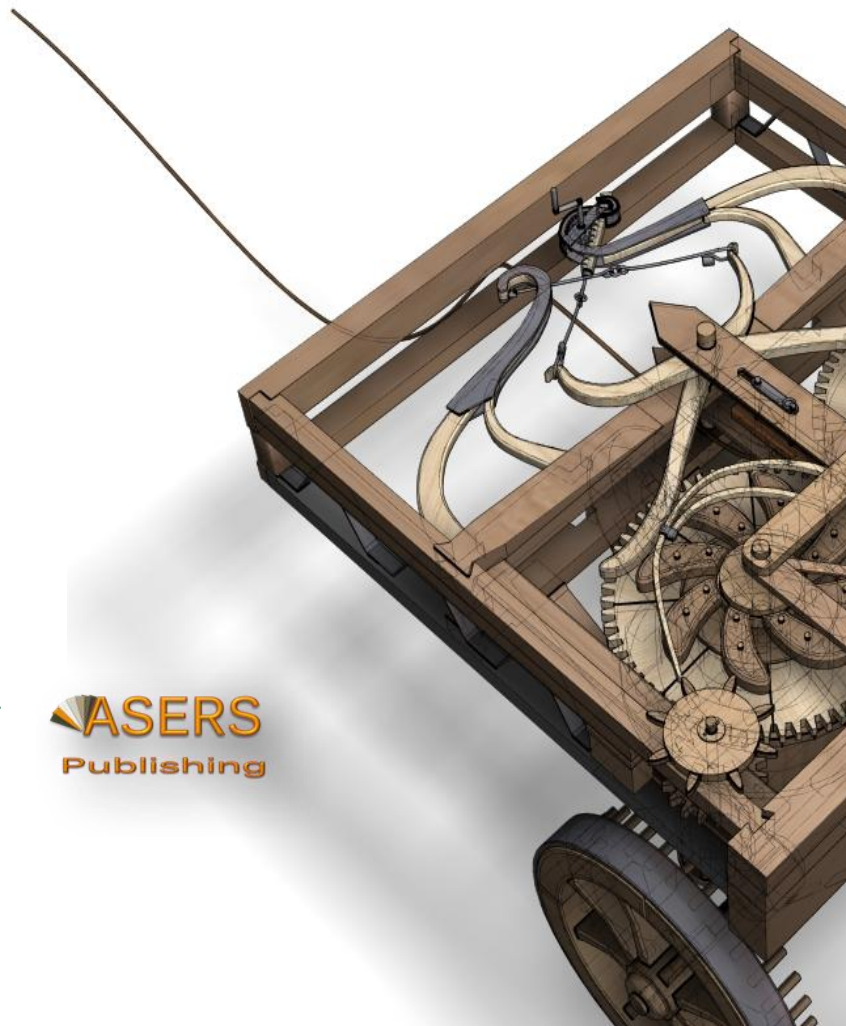
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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is an open access, peer-reviewed interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences. The Journal publishes original research and seeks to cover a wide range of topics regarding environmental management and engineering, environmental management and health, environmental chemistry, environmental protection technologies (water, air, soil), pollution reduction at source and waste minimization, energy and environment, modelling, simulation and optimization for environmental protection; environmental biotechnology, environmental education and sustainable development, environmental strategies and policies.

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Saving Hidden Paradise: An Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Communication Needs for the Conservation of the Sawarna Beach Ecosystem, Indonesia

Enjang Pera IRAWAN
Mercu Buana University, Indonesia
enjang.irawan@mercubuana.ac.id

Andi Pajoloi BATE
Mercu Buana University, Indonesia
andi.pajoloi@mercubuana.ac.id

Imam RISMAHAYADIN
Department of Culture and Tourism (Disbudpar) of Lebak Regency, Indonesia
belingagus40@gmail.com

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Abstract: Tourism is recognized as an important sector for the national economy, with significant contributions to GDP and foreign exchange earnings. This study was conducted under the auspices of Sawarna Beach as a result of increased tourism contributing to the economic growth of the local ecosystem and the general population. This study aims to analyze the communication needs of sustainable tourism that can support the preservation of the Sawarna Beach ecosystem. The method used is a case study with qualitative approach. Data were obtained from observations, study documentation, focus group discussions (FGD), and interviews. Collaboration among various stakeholders in Sawarna Beach, including district government, BUMDes, business owners, NGOs, Lebak Regency government, media, and academics, is crucial for promoting sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. In addition, each group has specific communication needs, such as discussion forums for district officials, information sheets for tour operators, training programs for tour guides and accommodation owners, as well as storage and information areas for tourists for tour guides. This study also suggests that effective education thru social media and academic materials is crucial for enhancing participation and sustainable environmental maintenance. All of this significantly contributes to the development of stricter and more sustainable tourism practices in ecologically sensitive areas.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; communication needs; conservation; Sawarna Beach; community involvement.

JEL Classification: Q57; L83; Q28; D83; O13; R11.

Introduction

In Indonesia, the tourism sector is a significant contributor to the national economy, although specific figures regarding its contribution to GDP can vary. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that the tourism sector contributed approximately 5.25% to the national GDP prior to the pandemic, qualifying its role as a major source of foreign exchange through tourism receipts (Putranto *et al.*, 2023; Lukman *et al.*, 2022). The tourism sector not only increases national income but also plays an important role in empowering the local economy through job creation and increasing the income of the surrounding community.

One of the tourist destinations with great potential is Sawarna Beach, located in Lebak Regency, Banten Province. During the Nataru holiday period in 2024, the Sawarna Beach area attracted between 40,000 to 50,000 visitors, demonstrating its significant appeal as a tourist destination (Nurabidin, 2024). Of course, this condition presents an opportunity for the community, especially business operators in Sawarna Beach, to increase their income.

However, this great potential also brings serious challenges, especially related to environmental impacts. The increasing number of tourist visits to Sawarna Beach has caused serious waste problems, which have the potential to

damage the sensitive beach ecosystem (Ganiem & Pandjaitan, 2020). This condition not only threatens environmental health but also affects the quality of the tourist experience, which in turn can negatively impact the local economy.

Previous research shows that the accumulation of waste can reduce the number of tourist visits and harm the local economy, such as souvenir craftsmen, stall owners, and accommodation and transportation staff (Ganiem & Pandjaitan, 2020). On the other hand, communication media, including digital platforms, can play an important role in raising environmental awareness among tourists and supporting efforts to preserve coastal ecosystems (Inayah & Istiqomah, 2020). In addition, collaboration and communication between villages, guides, and accommodations are also crucial in minimizing the negative environmental impacts of tourism (Ruscitasari, 2023).

The main issue raised in this research is how to formulate effective sustainable tourism communication needs to support the conservation of the Sawarna Beach ecosystem. This research aims to understand the communication needs necessary to develop programs that can promote ecosystem sustainability, reduce the negative impacts of tourism, and enhance community participation in environmental preservation. Through this approach, it is hoped that the government and tourism stakeholders can design more effective strategies to maintain environmental sustainability while still leveraging the economic potential of the tourism sector.

The solutions proposed through this research include several strategic steps to support sustainable tourism. First, the research will focus on identifying relevant stakeholders in the tourism and ecosystem conservation sectors. Next, an in-depth analysis will be conducted regarding the communication needs required for ecosystem conservation, as well as the challenges that may arise in the process. Additionally, this study will also explore the perceptions of local communities and tourists towards sustainable tourism and environmental conservation through Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

Various previous studies have highlighted the importance of communication in sustainable tourism. Ganiem & Panjaitan (2020) identified several communication issues at Sawarna Beach, including the lack of community empowerment, communication gaps, and limited communication channels (Ganiem & Panjaitan, 2020). Tomohardjo *et al.* (2021) emphasize the importance of institutional communication to enhance community awareness and capacity but note a decline in tourist visits during the pandemic (Tomohardjo *et al.*, 2021). Research by Jones & Walmsley (2022) reveals the potential of the tourism sector to harm the environment if not managed properly, while Font *et al.* (2017) highlight the need for local stakeholder involvement to support tourism sustainability (Jones & Walmsley, 2022; Font *et al.*, 2017).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing the communication needs of sustainable tourism specific to the conservation of the Sawarna Beach ecosystem, which has not been extensively explored in previous studies. By identifying relevant stakeholders, analyzing communication needs, and exploring the perceptions of local communities and tourists, this research offers a more comprehensive and contextual approach to supporting sustainable tourism at Sawarna Beach. Additionally, this research develops effective communication strategies to promote environmental awareness and community participation in ecosystem conservation, thus making a significant contribution to the development of sustainable tourism in Indonesia.

This research is very important to conduct, considering that the analysis of communication needs in sustainable tourism is crucial for conveying clear information, reducing conflicts among stakeholders, and addressing environmental issues such as pollution. Identifying stakeholders and conflict areas facilitates beneficial resolutions (Kalalo & Setiawan, 2023). The participation of local communities and collaboration among stakeholders is also important, especially in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Social capital plays an important role in conflict resolution and the promotion of sustainable practices (Rianty *et al.*, 2024). By understanding communication needs, strategies can be developed to effectively support sustainable tourism.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Conservation

Sustainable tourism is an important approach in the development of tourist destinations, especially in sensitive ecosystems like Sawarna Beach. According to Font *et al.* (2017), sustainable tourism not only focuses on economic benefits but also on environmental preservation and the empowerment of local communities. In Indonesia, the tourism sector contributes 5.25% to the national GDP and serves as a significant source of foreign exchange (Putranto *et al.*, 2023; Lukman *et al.*, 2022). However, the increase in the number of visitors to Sawarna Beach, reaching 40,000 to 50,000 people

during Nataru 2024, poses serious challenges related to environmental impact, particularly the issue of waste that can damage the beach ecosystem (Ganiem & Pandjaitan, 2020). Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that support environmental conservation while harnessing the economic potential of tourism.

Sawarna Beach faces environmental challenges, particularly the accumulation of waste due to the increase in visitors. Ganiem & Pandjaitan (2020) noted that this issue can damage the coastal ecosystem and reduce the quality of the tourist experience. This research highlights the importance of effective communication to raise environmental awareness among tourists and the local community (Goboro *et al.*, 2025).

1.2. The Need for Communication in Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism in Sawarna Beach requires an effective communication system to bridge the interests of various stakeholders. Ganiem & Panjaitan's (2020) research revealed that the communication gap between the village government, business actors, and the community is a major obstacle in environmental management. Regular discussion forums and clear communication channels are needed to align conservation programs with practical needs. Inayah & Istiqomah (2020) emphasize the importance of digital media as a means of educating tourists, considering that 78% of Sawarna's visitors come from the younger generation who are active on digital platforms.

Communication needs are also specific according to the role of each stakeholder. The village government requires technical guidelines on waste management, while business operators need communication training to convey conservation values to tourists (Ruscitasari, 2023). Tourists also need real-time information about waste disposal points and environmental regulations through digital information boards and mobile applications. The integration between formal and informal communication is key to creating a holistic communication ecosystem (Chen & Cheng, 2023). By integrating real-time data, such boards can update visitors about the availability of waste disposal options, which can help manage littering behavior. Such interactive displays are known to be effective in increasing tourist engagement through enhanced situational awareness (Yang, 2025).

1.3. Community and Tourist Participation

The active participation of local communities and tourists is crucial in supporting the success of sustainable tourism at Sawarna Beach. According to Mahiddin (2023), environmental education that involves the community can raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage their participation in conservation activities. Activities like beach cleanups and conservation training strengthen the bond between the community and tourists. This can increase community involvement in conservation, making them more invested in the ecosystem.

Tourists also play an important role in supporting the sustainability of tourism. Ginting *et al.* (2020) show that tourists are increasingly aware of the importance of environmentally friendly practices and tend to choose destinations that support conservation initiatives. However, they often face obstacles such as a lack of information and limited choices regarding sustainable options (Arcana *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, it is important to create communication channels that allow tourists to participate in conservation activities.

1.4. Communication and Education Strategies in Supporting Sustainable Tourism

Digital media-based communication strategies have proven effective in raising environmental awareness. Gulati's research (2021) shows that platforms like Instagram and TikTok can be used to disseminate educational content about beach conservation. At the community level, environmental education programs need to be developed participatively, involving community leaders as agents of change (Farsari, 2022).

The integration of traditional and modern technology is the key to the sustainability of the program. Dewi & Roziqin (2022) found that digital information boards at strategic points on the beach can increase visitor compliance with cleanliness rules. Such integration of modern technology with traditional environmental management practices can lead to better ecological outcomes, as demonstrated by research linking circular economy practices in the tourism sector with sustainable development (Jacob *et al.*, 2025).

2. Research Methodology

This research adopts a case study approach to explore the communication needs of sustainable tourism in supporting conservation at Sawarna Beach. The selection of a case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and factors influencing tourism communication in a complex context. These findings are consistent with

previous research indicating that qualitative methodologies, including case studies, are highly effective in exploring issues related to tourism and the environment (Scherrer, 2020; Hafizha *et al.*, 2023).

The research process begins with a literature review and the preparation of a proposal, which provides a strong theoretical framework for this study. Next, the researchers collected data through FGDs, interviews, observations, and document studies. In this case, the selection of informants was carried out purposively based on certain criteria, such as cultural understanding and involvement in related activities. This approach ensures that the information obtained is not only valid but also rich in context, supporting the findings of previous studies (Sufiawan *et al.*, 2021; Maudiarti & Adriani, 2021). The informants are the involved and interested parties such as the local village head, tourism managers, accommodation owners, traders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the environment, the local community, and tourists. Below is information about the informants (refer to Table 1).

Table 1. Informant criteria

Informant	Criteria	Quantity
Village Head	Holds an official leadership role; deep cultural understanding; policy-maker	1
Tourism Managers	Directly involved in tourism operations; understand tourism dynamics	1
Accommodation Owners	Provide tourism services; observe tourist behavior and needs	1
Local Traders	Engage with tourists daily; have insight into economic impact	1
Environmental NGOs	Concerned with conservation efforts; active in sustainable development	1
Local Community Members	Residents with cultural and environmental knowledge; involved in tourism	2
Tourists	Experience tourism services; can reflect on communication effectiveness	10

Source: Researcher's calculation (2025)

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman approach, which involves data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction process focuses on selecting relevant information, while data presentation is carried out systematically to facilitate further analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method is recognized in literature as an effective way to capture the complexity of issues related to tourism and conservation.

The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, which is the use of various data sources to verify findings. Data from interviews and FGDs were analyzed and categorized, with conclusions agreed upon by the informants through a member check process. This step supports the validity of the research results and ensures the accuracy of the obtained information, in accordance with the principles of participatory research as explained in the studies by Rostini & Rudiyanto (2021). By exploring perspectives from various sources, this research contributes to the development of more effective sustainable tourism practices at Sawarna Beach. This study strengthens the discourse on sustainable tourism communication for conservation, creating a better framework for future initiatives.

3. Research Results

Sawarna Beach, located in Lebak Regency, Banten Province, has emerged as one of the premier tourist destinations with stunning natural beauty. Every year, this beach attracts the attention of thousands of tourists, especially during the holiday season. Data shows that Sawarna Beach during the Christmas 2023 and New Year 2024 (Nataru) holidays, the number of visitors reached 40 to 50 thousand people, reflecting a significant increase in popularity from year to year (Nurabidin, 2024). Its main attraction lies in the beauty of its exotic coastline and its enchanting natural atmosphere, making it an ideal location for those seeking an escape from urban life.

However, behind this attraction, Sawarna Beach faces serious challenges related to environmental issues, particularly waste problems. The increase in the number of tourist visits in recent years has worsened this situation. The local community has expressed deep concern over the negative impact caused by the accumulation of waste, which not only damages the natural beauty but also has the potential to harm the fragile coastal ecosystem. Although the presence of trash is still under control, preventive measures must be taken immediately before the problem becomes more acute.

The presence of trash along the beach not only creates an unsightly view but also affects the lives of marine biota that depend on the coastal ecosystem. Plastic waste, for example, can cause severe damage to marine animals and destroy their habitats. Therefore, it is important to address this issue effectively through an approach that involves all stakeholders.

This research aims to address the issue with an initial approach focusing on identifying the communication needs of sustainable tourism to support coastal ecosystem conservation. The study covers various aspects, including: challenges in maintaining ecosystem conservation at Sawarna Beach, communication needs related to ecosystem conservation in the area, stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism, and the perceptions of tourists and the community towards sustainable tourism and ecosystem conservation.

4. Discussions

4.1. Challenges in Ecosystem Conservation Maintenance at Sawarna Beach

The maintenance of ecosystem conservation at Sawarna Beach faces a series of complex and interrelated challenges, as identified in this study. Various factors, ranging from the role of village governments, BUMDes managers, to community awareness, business actors, NGOs, local media, and academics, all contribute to the existing dynamics of environmental conservation. First of all, the role of the village government in managing waste from visitors is very crucial. Although there are efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of cleanliness, the issue of littering remains significant. Research shows that budgetary support from the central government is crucial for the success of sustainable conservation programs (Saadah *et al.*, 2023; Satria, 2023). Without adequate support, efforts to maintain cleanliness and environmental preservation will become increasingly difficult, as discussed in the study on sustainable tourism destination management (Sya *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, BUMDes managers often face limitations in resources and capacity when implementing conservation programs. Although there are innovative ideas, real challenges arise when external support is insufficient. Research shows that better collaboration with the government and local communities is key to enhancing the effectiveness of the program (Sutikno *et al.*, 2023). Solid cooperation can have a positive impact on the environment and society. This is in line with previous analyses regarding the management of BUMDes institutions, which emphasize the importance of synergy among parties (Sutikno *et al.*, 2023).

One of the main obstacles in conservation efforts is the low public awareness of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability. Many residents are unaware of the impact of daily behaviors, such as littering, on the environment. To address this issue, it is necessary to enhance education and participatory activities involving the community so that they become more caring and active in preserving the environment (Nugraha *et al.*, 2022). Social participation initiatives have proven effective in raising awareness and strengthening community capacity in environmental conservation (Anwar & Shafira, 2020).

Business actors also face challenges in integrating sustainable business practices with local economic needs. Although there is a desire to implement environmentally friendly methods, this often poses a risk to profitability. Research shows that educating customers about the importance of conservation is not easy, as many pay more attention to price than to environmental impact (Supriatna, 2023). Therefore, creative and collaborative efforts are needed to raise public awareness so that sustainable practices can be accepted and support economic and environmental sustainability (Zakiah, 2023a; Jacob *et al.*, 2025).

NGOs also face difficulties in conveying effective information and education to the public. Although various methods have been attempted, the results are often unsatisfactory. The challenge of garnering support for conservation programs also becomes an obstacle, as many parties are more focused on instant gains (Fauziatunnisa *et al.*, 2021). Better collaborative strategies are needed to attract public attention and gain the necessary support in preserving the environment (Dinar *et al.*, 2022).

Local media, on the other hand, face challenges in reaching a wider audience and conveying conservation messages in an engaging manner. Resource limitations often hinder their ability to conduct more intensive campaigns (Sya *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, collaborative support from various parties is needed so that conservation messages can be more easily accepted and implemented by the wider community (Supriatna, 2023).

Lastly, academics often face limitations in applying research findings to real-world practices in the field. Although the research produced is beneficial, challenges arise when implementing it effectively. Closer cooperation with the government and the community is crucial to ensure that the research results can be effectively implemented and provide a positive impact on the environment (Zakiah, 2023a).

Overall, the challenges in maintaining ecosystem conservation at Sawarna Beach indicate that a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders is essential. The proposed solutions in this study include enhancing

collaboration between village governments and NGOs, as well as between BUMDes and local communities. Research shows that NGOs can play a crucial role in enhancing community participation in natural resource management (O'Connell *et al.*, 2022). Leveraging NGO networks can help village governments obtain better budgetary support and resources for sustainable conservation programs.

From a practical standpoint, BUMDes managers need to build stronger partnerships with various stakeholders to address resource limitations. Effective collaboration among various actors can strengthen conservation capacity and enhance program success (Kark *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, to address the low public awareness about the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental preservation, there is a need for enhanced education and participatory activities. Research shows that educational programs that directly involve the community can enhance their understanding of the impact of daily behaviors on the environment (Gavin *et al.*, 2018).

Business operators who want to implement sustainable business practices need to be supported with education about the long-term benefits of these practices. Customer awareness about the importance of conservation can be enhanced through creative and collaborative campaigns (Romero-Brito *et al.*, 2016). NGOs can also enhance the effectiveness of conservation programs by developing better communication strategies to reach the community. A more collaborative approach in conveying information can help attract public attention and gain the necessary support for conservation programs (Crosman *et al.*, 2021).

Finally, academics need to be more involved in applying research results to real-world practices by building closer collaborations with the government and the community. Collaboration between academics and other stakeholders can strengthen the positive impact of research and help address environmental issues more effectively (Armitage *et al.*, 2020). Thus, all parties involved in the conservation of the ecosystem at Sawarna Beach need to collaborate to create sustainable and effective solutions, in order to ensure environmental preservation for future generations.

4.2. Communication Needs for Ecosystem Conservation at Sawarna Beach

Based on the FGD results, there are various communication needs among the stakeholders. The Sawarna village government needs better discussion spaces and adequate waste management facilities. Tourism managers want information boards about cleanliness and support from content creators to encourage tourists to be disciplined in maintaining cleanliness, while traders and homestay owners need training and information related to tourism trends and promotions. Tourists themselves expect the addition of trash bins and information about cleanliness. All parties agree that improving facilities and effective communication are crucial for maintaining cleanliness and enhancing the tourist experience at Sawarna Beach.

As stated by the village government and the managers of Sawarna tourism, they need more intensive discussion space. This aligns with research findings stating that effective communication between various parties is crucial for strengthening collaboration (Asmah, 2023). Regular meetings and discussion forums can serve as platforms for stakeholders to share information, solve problems together, and develop comprehensive strategies for conservation.

The discussion space is expected to foster a commitment to a clear division of tasks and responsibilities among stakeholders, which is crucial to prevent overlapping roles and ensure efficient management. Furthermore, well-defined roles help improve coordination in the field, which in turn will contribute to achieving conservation goals (Rahayu, 2023). For example, the government can act as a regulator, while NGOs can focus on educating and training the community. Musleh *et al.* (2023) explain that dialogue among stakeholders provides an opportunity for various parties to contribute with their expertise and resources (Moya *et al.*, 2023).

The main need from the perspective of traders is to obtain data on tourists' preferences in choosing souvenirs, so that the products we offer can meet their expectations. Meanwhile, from the perspective of homestay owners, they need training on the standardization of quality homestays to attract both domestic and international visitors. In addition, strengthening promotion is still necessary. It would be better if there were more communication media informing about the cleanliness of each homestay, facilitated by the government through cooperation with business operators.

One crucial initial step is the development and promotion of ecotourism certification programs. Certification not only recognizes environmentally friendly practices but also serves as a guide for tourists in choosing sustainable destinations (Dania, 2023). Chen & Cheng (2023) show that engaging content on social media is necessary to attract tourists (Amalia & Hanika, 2021; Fitriyah & Nurhaeni, 2021; Moslehifar *et al.*, 2016), and furthermore, social media can enhance awareness and encourage tourist participation in sustainable activities (Chen & Cheng, 2023).

This research also highlights the urgency of using digital and outdoor media to educate tourists. This aligns with the research by Emrizal & Primadona (2020), which emphasizes the importance of valuing local values, including environmental sustainability, and communicating them through appropriate media, such as social media, posters, and direct campaigns, which are crucial for reaching a wider audience and creating interactive engagement (Emrizal & Primadona, 2020), such interactive elements are known to be effective in increasing tourist engagement by enhancing situational awareness (Yang, 2025). Gulati's (2021) research highlights the importance of using social media to promote sustainable behavior and strengthen conservation movements more broadly and quickly at tourist destinations (Gulati, 2022). Font *et al.* (2019) stated that digital information platforms can also serve as a primary source of information for visitors and local communities regarding ongoing conservation initiatives. Meanwhile, Tanti *et al.* (2024) emphasize the importance of effective communication involving cultural sensitivity, collaboration, and technological adaptation. Additionally, stakeholder involvement, including government and NGOs, is crucial in the development communication process, including in the context of tourism.

4.3. Perception of Tourists and the Community towards Sustainable Tourism and Ecosystem Conservation

Overall, the perceptions of tourists and the community indicate an increased awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism and ecosystem conservation, as well as hopes for better management. Sustainable tourism has become an important issue for the local community, with diverse views on the benefits and challenges involved. Many members of the Sawarna Village community see sustainable tourism as an opportunity to gain economic benefits through jobs, businesses, and local investments. They hope to see an increase in income and economic opportunities generated by the tourism industry (Zakiah, 2023b). In addition, the community also feels that sustainable tourism helps preserve local culture and the environment. Efforts to respect and preserve traditions as well as reduce negative impacts on the environment are considered important in maintaining cultural and environmental sustainability (Dewi, 2021; Kurniasari, 2021).

However, there are challenges faced by the community regarding sustainable tourism. Some of the issues that often arise include waste management, high tourists' density, and the potential changes in traditional ways of life. Conflicts between economic needs and the preservation of culture or the environment can also arise in the context of sustainable tourism. To address this challenge, cooperation between local governments, the private sector, and local communities is considered important (Munandar *et al.*, 2022). For this reason, a joint commitment from various parties is necessary to achieve sustainable tourism that benefits all involved, including local communities, tourists, and the environment.

From the perspective of tourists, they are increasingly aware of the importance of environmentally friendly and responsible practices in sustainable tourism. They tend to choose destinations that implement environmentally friendly practices and support conservation initiatives (Ginting *et al.*, 2020; Kurniasari, 2023). Additionally, tourists also seek authentic and sustainable experiences, including interactions with local communities and activities that promote environmental conservation (Rachmatie *et al.*, 2020).

Although many tourists support the principles of sustainable tourism, they also face obstacles such as a lack of information, limited destination choices, or additional costs for sustainable options (Arcana *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, it is important to raise awareness and improve the accessibility of information related to sustainable tourism so that tourists can make more sustainable choices.

In developing sustainable tourism destinations, the integration of local wisdom and culture becomes an important factor. The potential of cultural and natural tourism that a region possesses can be a strong attraction for tourists (Masesa, 2023; Rukmana & Purnomo, 2023). In addition, the development of sustainable tourism also requires the active role of the local community, such as through tourism awareness groups or organizations driving the tourism sector (Choirunnisa & Karmilah, 2022; Widagdo & Mulia, 2022).

Increasing public understanding and participation in the conservation of the Sawarna Beach ecosystem is very important to promote sustainable tourism practices. One effective strategy is through educational campaigns that include workshops, seminars, and other educational activities. Mahiddin (2023) emphasizes that environmental education plays a crucial role in educating tourists and empowering communities, which in turn can raise awareness about environmental issues in the context of sustainable tourism. The development of engaging educational materials, such as brochures and guides, is also a crucial step in expanding the community's knowledge about sustainable practices (Farsari, 2022).

This research also reveals the urgency of using social media as a means of promoting and educating about sustainable tourism and ecosystem conservation. Educational materials can be presented in the form of brochures, videos, and posters on social media, which have proven effective in disseminating information and raising environmental awareness among tourists and the community (Dewi & Roziqin, 2022). Collaboration with the media is also important to expand the reach of conservation messages (Kerber & Kramm, 2021). Moreover, community involvement in educational campaigns and active participation in waste management can foster a sense of ownership towards conservation initiatives, thereby enhancing the success of these programs (Nuryadin *et al.*, 2021; Tarigan *et al.*, 2023).

4.4. Stakeholder Participation in Sustainable Tourism at Sawarna Beach

Increasing the participation of tourists and local communities in conservation efforts requires an approach that directly involves them. Based on the information obtained from the FGD, it shows that all elements of stakeholders are involved in maintaining cleanliness, both in the homestay environment and in the Sawarna beach area. The vendors consistently urge visitors to maintain cleanliness and clean up the trash in their selling areas. Additionally, community members and environmental NGOs also frequently directly encourage tourists to keep the area clean.

Meanwhile, the homestay owners are also very disciplined in maintaining cleanliness in their respective areas, due to the awareness that visitors will be attracted to clean and friendly homestays. This is confirmed by visitors' statements that traders often inform them about waste disposal locations. However, visitors expect trash bins to be evenly distributed in the Sawarna beach area.

This participatory approach involves two-way communication, where feedback from tourists and the community is used to improve and adjust conservation strategies. This research shows that listening to and responding to feedback from local communities and tourists can strengthen relationships and enhance the effectiveness of conservation programs. This also creates a greater sense of community for conservation initiatives.

Active participation programs, such as beach clean-up activities and conservation training, have been proven to enhance a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the ecosystem. This involvement encourages proactive actions that support environmental preservation. The development of strategies to increase participation also involves ongoing education and motivation through incentives or rewards, such as the provision of certificates or awards for individuals or groups actively engaged in conservation activities. This research underscores that strategies combining education, engagement, and incentives can result in higher and more sustainable participation.

Increasing public understanding and participation in the conservation of the Sawarna Beach ecosystem is key to promoting sustainable tourism practices. One effective strategy is through educational campaigns that include workshops, seminars, and educational activities. Research by Mahiddin (2023) emphasizes the importance of environmental education in empowering communities, which can be applied in the context of sustainable tourism to raise awareness of environmental issues (Mahiddin *et al.*, 2023).

Involvement of the local community, including community leaders and organizations, is a crucial element in the planning and implementation of conservation activities. Research by Jumiati (2024) underscores the importance of local leaders in bridging community needs and conservation goals, thereby creating effective synergy in preservation efforts. Participatory programs are also very important in building community engagement (Jumiati *et al.*, 2024). Research by Gorpe & Öksüz (2022) shows that activities such as beach clean-ups not only increase participation but also strengthen the community's sense of ownership towards the environment (Görpe & Öksüz, 2022; Kusmendar *et al.*, 2023). These activities can encourage the community to directly engage in ecosystem preservation, thereby increasing awareness and commitment to sustainability.

The development of engaging educational materials, such as brochures and guides, can also enhance public understanding. Farsari's research (2021) indicates that informative educational materials can help disseminate knowledge about sustainable practices, making them an effective tool in raising awareness (Farsari, 2022). Finally, it is important to implement a transparent monitoring and reporting system. According to research by Bhutio *et al.* (2022), open reporting of activity results not only increases accountability but also allows for better strategy adjustments in the future (Bhutio *et al.*, 2022). By integrating these various approaches, sustainable tourism communication efforts at Sawarna Beach can be more effective, support ecosystem conservation, and enhance community participation in environmental stewardship.

Communication and education efforts related to waste management at Sawarna Beach are very important to support the conservation of the local ecosystem. One of the initial steps is to conduct an awareness campaign that highlights the negative impact of tourism on the environment. Research by Aziz & Jefri (2020) shows that effective campaigns can enhance tourists' understanding of the importance of responsible waste management, thereby encouraging them to adopt better disposal practices. Training for tour managers and hotel staff is also very crucial (Aziz & Muharani Jefri, 2020). Research by Xu *et al.* (2023) emphasizes that education on environmentally friendly practices can improve waste management efficiency in the tourism sector (Xu *et al.*, 2023). With training, they can implement more sustainable practices in their daily operations.

Educational materials such as brochures, videos, and posters are effective tools for disseminating information. Research by Dewi & Roziqin (2022) underscores the importance of these materials in raising environmental awareness among tourists and the community (Dewi & Roziqin, 2022). In addition, collaboration with the media can expand the reach of conservation messages (Kerber & Kramm, 2021). Community involvement in educational campaigns is also key. Research by Nuryadin *et al.* (2021) notes that community participation can foster a sense of ownership towards waste management initiatives, thereby enhancing the success of the program (Nuryadin *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, workshops and seminars discussing effective waste management techniques, as revealed by Tarigan (2023), can serve as important means to educate the community (Tarigan *et al.*, 2023).

The distribution of trash bins in strategic locations will facilitate proper waste disposal. Research by Lumeno *et al.* (2022) notes that the accessibility of trash bins can encourage more responsible waste disposal behavior (Lumeno *et al.*, 2022). Promoting the 3R principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) to tourists and the local community is also important (Obersteiner *et al.*, 2021). Lastly, education in schools that includes material on waste management and conservation can foster environmental awareness from an early age. With all these efforts, Sawarna Beach can achieve better waste management, support the conservation of its ecosystem, and contribute to the sustainability of tourism.

This research has important implications for the development of sustainable tourism strategies, especially in the context of ecosystem conservation in tourist areas such as Sawarna Beach. The participatory approach involving local communities and tourists is not only effective in raising environmental awareness but also significantly contributes to long-term preservation. The success of the conservation programs identified in this study shows that close collaboration between local stakeholders, including community leaders, organizations, and tourism industry players, is key to creating sustainable conservation initiatives with real impact.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that conservation programs in Sawarna Beach and other tourist areas continue to integrate environmental education into all aspects of tourism activities. This includes regular training for tour operators and homestay managers, as well as awareness campaigns involving the wider community. In addition, the government and non-governmental organizations should continue to develop and expand incentives for active participation in conservation activities, such as awards and certifications, to enhance community motivation and commitment. Lastly, the implementation of a more transparent monitoring and reporting system, as well as involving the community in the evaluation process, will be very useful for assessing the effectiveness of existing programs and making the necessary adjustments for future improvements.

Conclusions and Further Research

The conclusion of this research emphasizes the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders at Sawarna Beach to support sustainable tourism and ecosystem conservation. The findings indicate that the synergy between village governments, BUMDes managers, business actors, NGOs, the Lebak Regency government, the media, and academics plays a crucial role in cleanliness management and environmental promotion. Effective coordination and a deep understanding of each stakeholder's role can avoid overlapping responsibilities and improve management efficiency. The results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) revealed that each stakeholder has specific communication needs: the village government requires discussion spaces and better waste management facilities, tourism managers need information boards and support from content creators, while traders and homestay owners need better training and promotion. Tourists expect the addition of trash bins and information on cleanliness to support compliance with environmental regulations. Effective communication through social media and educational materials has proven to be key in enhancing participation and environmental management. Research also shows that cleanliness and waste management are major concerns for tourists, who expect better conservation efforts and positive interactions with the

local community. Suggestions include the need for managers to clarify conservation efforts and utilize social media for education, which aligns with strategies for educational campaigns and community engagement in environmental conservation. Further research could focus on exploring the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Additionally, research could also evaluate the long-term impact of implemented conservation programs and identify factors influencing their success.

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Enjang Pera Irawan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review and editing

Andi Pajolloi Bate: Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft

Imam Rismahayadin: Validation, Visualization, Writing - review

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Declaration of Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors declare that in the writing of this article, they have utilized generative AI technology and AI-assisted tools to enhance the language structure and clarity. The use of AI was aimed at improving the quality of writing and language clarity, without altering the substance and research findings presented. They take full responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the data, results, and conclusions presented in this article, and they have conducted thorough verification and validation of all information presented. We affirm that the use of AI in the writing of this article has been done transparently and in accordance with the ethics of scholarly writing.

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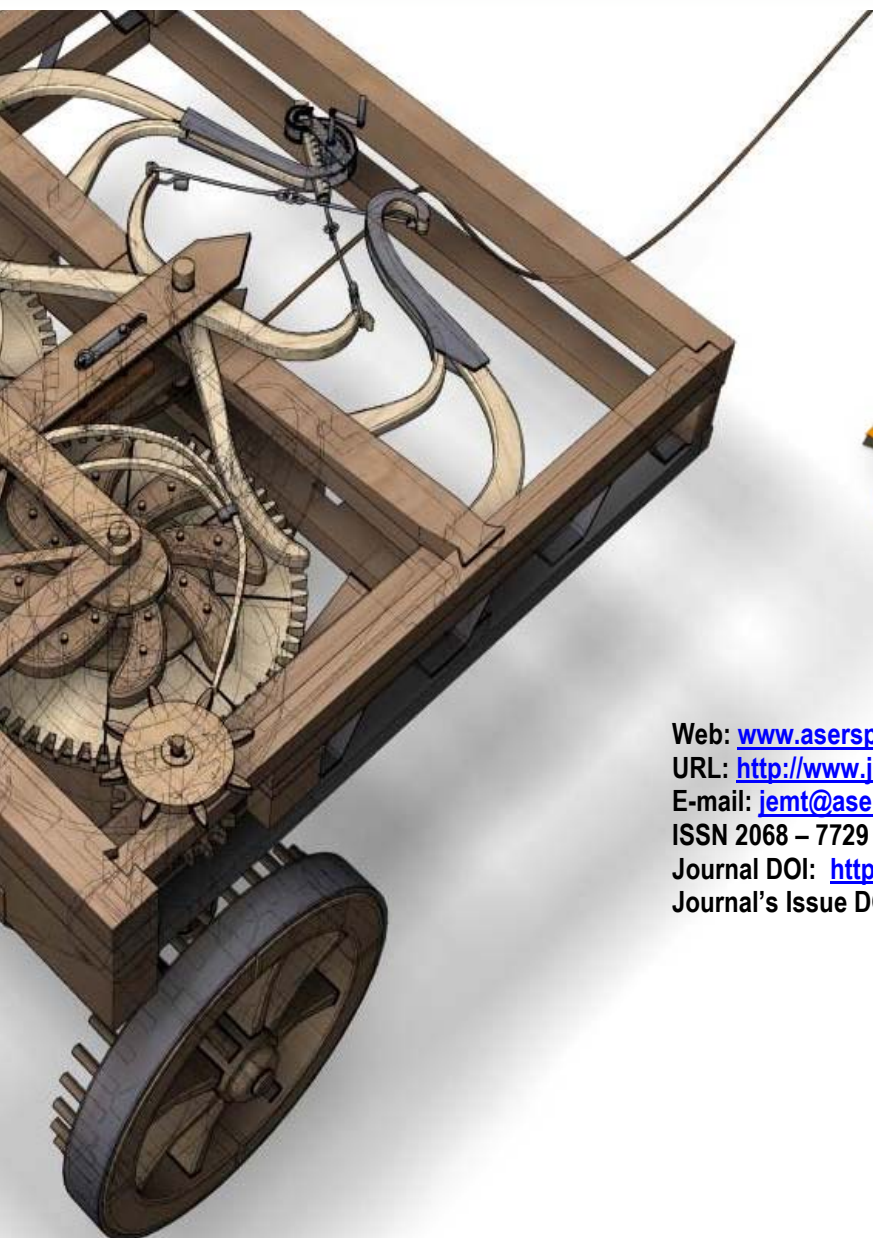
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