

# Group Communication in Decision Making for the Establishment of Tourist Attractions: Case Study of Sekapuk Village, East Java, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This research is entitled "Group Communication in Decision Making for the Establishment of Tourism Objects: A Case Study of Sekapuk Village, East Java, Indonesia". The purpose of this study was to determine the communication carried out by the Pelangi Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in Sekapuk Village in making decisions about the formation of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects. The theory used in this study is group communication using the theory of group functional perspective by Hirokawa and Gouran. This study uses a qualitative approach, which uses case studies to explain in-depth the group decision making. The findings of this study reveal that there are four functions used by Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village, namely analysis of the problem of the existence of former mining excavations in Sekapuk Village, setting common goals between group members and the community, identifying alternatives for new problems, and determining other efforts for the smooth formation of tourist attractions. , finally evaluated the positive and negative characters with regular discussions conducted by Pokdarwis Sekapuk Village. Communication interactions carried out by members of Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village were assisted by the Village government, especially the Village Head in making decisions regarding the establishment of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects.

**Keywords—** Group communication, Decision Making, Group Functional Perspective, Tourism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a very important sector for the development of the Indonesian economy [1]. The achievement of the national tourism sector in the 2015 to 2019 period experienced consistent and significant growth, the contribution of the tourism sector to the national GDP continued to increase and achieve the target, so that tourism as the *leading sector* was recorded as the highest foreign exchange contributor after palm oil [2]. In 2019 there was a very significant increase in GDP of 4.8 percent, where this value increased by 0.30 points from 2018 of 4.5 percent [2].

Currently, tourism and its potential catalysts are expected to be able to encourage growth in remote rural areas [3]. The impact of the tourism sector has a very significant influence on regional development [4]–[6].

The tourism industry opens up new opportunities in increasing economic growth [7]. Tourism development is too

focused on the island of Bali and is vulnerable to natural disasters and terrorism [8]. The community as a stakeholder group is the most involved, and tourists are the least involved compared to the government and the business sector [9]. The potential use of community-based tourism for the community includes economic benefits, such as the contribution to rural development and poverty alleviation [10], as well as the use of natural resources [11], [12].

Based on research conducted by Mak (2017) the decision-making process in tourism planning can provide a better understanding of how tourism can benefit society. A new approach in the tourism sector to make it easier and more equitable for community-based tourism to be considered as a possible solution in achieving the goal. Community-based tourism is adopted in various developing ways as an effort in sustainable tourism development which will ensure the achievement and distribution of tourism benefits for all people, through community empowerment and tourism participation [14], [15].

The community as a stakeholder group is the most involved, and tourists are the least involved compared to the government and the business sector [9]. Community-based tourism is a form of small-scale tourism established in rural areas, where residents, through organizational structures play an important role in controlling and managing [16]. Pokdarwis as a bridge in increasing the role of the community in industry and the effectiveness of the establishment of tourist attractions in rural areas.

Tourism is not only for business but for nature protection where the manager must be fully responsible for the tourist location. The role of the government or encouraging regional development in determining more aspirational programs for the benefit of the community [17]. Although the motivation and participation of community planning are still lacking, the role of the community is a very important development initiative in developing countries [18]. Regional development through community-based tourism villages or tourism awareness groups in the process of formation and implementation for regional development. The community has an important role to preserve and develop the potential of

natural resources and human resources [19].

Tourism awareness groups have an important role in inviting the community to participate in the process of forming tourist objects. The Pelangi Sekapuk Village Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) held a meeting with the community to provide an understanding of the establishment of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction and to unite the same goals in village development. After the inauguration of the village head Abdul Halim in 2017 the people who agreed to make Sekapuk Village a Tourism Village were recorded in the Decree of the Head of the Gresik Regency Tourism and Culture Office No. 55/2128/437.59/2020 Regarding the Inauguration of the Tourism Village of Gresik Regency. Although some communities do not support the establishment of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction, the people who support actively participate in starting from efforts to clean up waste in ex-mining areas to holding savings to meet the needs of the tourist attraction.

Group communication is carried out by Pokdarwis Pelangi in Sekapuk Village by holding regular meetings with the community and socializing the purpose of establishing tourism. Research conducted by Puška et al. (2021) that the development of rural areas for tourism is very important, a decision-making method is used and selected to evaluate tourism potential in rural areas.

The communication process carried out until the creation of the tourist attraction cannot be separated from the decisions of members and the village government in making decisions. Group decision-making is a participatory process in which several individuals collectively analyze the situation, think about alternative actions, and choose alternative options to solve a problem [21]. Decision-making among groups is a critical indicator and needs special attention to increase the effectiveness of the overall group dynamics of the group [22]. So this study tries to explain how the decision-making communication process carried out by Pokdarwis in Sekapuk Village to build a tourist attraction.

This study aims to determine the process of group communication in decision making using the theory of functional perspective of group communication in making decisions for the formation of tourism. This study aims to determine the role of tourism-aware group communication through the functional perspective theory of group communication in making decisions for the formation of tourism. So that this research is expected to be able to explain in-depth related to the function of decision making in fulfilling group tasks or goals.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative research is more sensitive to the possibility and pattern of diverse values in research [23].

The results of qualitative research emphasize meaning [24]. This research was conducted in Village SekapukPanceng,

Gresik Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The research approach uses case studies. The use of case studies to see phenomena in real life, where the boundaries between phenomena and contexts are not visible where there are too many sources [25]. To elaborate and explore the general picture, the researcher used the main instruments in this study, namely observation, in-depth interviews. The selected informants were the chairperson and members of the Sekapuk Village tourism awareness group. Sources of data collected are secondary data and primary data. Data collection techniques in this study were literature review, documentation, interviews, and direct observation. interview technique used *interviews* were carried out in-depth. Informants selected in this study have the authority and in-depth understanding of the decision-making of the establishment of Selo Tirto Giri tourism object. Meanwhile, the technique of taking informants is by using the purposive sampling technique to select the right informants and understand the conditions of the changes made. After that, the researcher collected documents. The process of collecting data through literature review comes from news releases in the mass media, scientific journals, relevant documents related to marketing and digital marketing. A literature review is a way of collecting data through scientific journals, books, and the internet [26]. Data analysis used qualitative analysis with Miles and Huberman's interactive model where the stages in this study were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing [27]. Qualitative data was collected to strengthen and emphasize the findings of the data that has been obtained. This qualitative analysis focuses on decision-making functions in fulfilling group tasks or goals.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Regarding the Establishment of Tourism Objects*

The tourism sector is a sector that never dies and is very important for the country, especially for regional progress. With the utilization of tourism, it can make income for the area to develop. The tourism sector can boost other sectors, such as the economy and the social welfare of the community. Tourism provides a lot of income for regions that are aware of their potential for the tourism sector [28].

kapuk Village has natural potential that can be utilized for local tourism. Utilization of its potential has resulted in the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction. The establishment of this tourist attraction was initially spearheaded by the Head of Sekapuk Village, namely Abdul Halim, and the Pelangi Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) of Sekapuk Village. Their way of inviting the community to achieve a common goal in establishing Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects is through communication. Starting from the communication of the Pokdarwis Pelangi member group to communicate with the community.

Based on the social context in which the communication process occurs, small group communication generally involves three to fifteen people [29]. Small groups are generally working groups that complete tasks for the

organization. Completion of this task includes the efforts and decision-making of group members to achieve common goals. In the tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis) Pelangi Sekapuk Village is a group representing the community to form the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction.

The existence of a tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis) Pelangi Sekapuk Village as a bridge for the community to participate in the process of forming and making decisions. Pokdarwis has a role to communicate all kinds of information to members and the public. Small groups are considered not only capable of creating a competitive position and enriching knowledge but also being able to communicate and integrate that knowledge into their area and the whole group.

The Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction has been open since May 7, 2018, but began operating in early 2020 which is the result of the reclamation of the conversion of former limestone or limestone land that is no longer used by PT. Polowijo Gosari, the tour was themed Geo Karst Tourism [30]. In addition to the communication and socialization carried out by Pokdarwis Pelangi, the community plays a role in the fundraising process. After the collected community investment funds are regulated by BUMDes, it is hoped that the village economic institution will be able to accommodate the community's economic activities and provide a strengthening of village income.

The role of Pokdarwis Pelangi in communicating the program to be carried out to the community is very important to achieve common goals. Communication has a role in the form of power to pull the group organization back to the true group goals [31]. Hirokawa distinguishes the role of communication in decision-making into three types. The first type is promotive or supportive, namely interactions that move the group towards a goal by paying attention to one of the four functions needed in the decision. The second type is disruptive or disruptive, namely interactions that distract and delay the ability of group members to achieve all four functions. The last is the counteractive or neutralizing type, namely the interaction used by group members to return the group to its original goal [31].

Group roles and functions cannot work even though each group member considers himself to know [32]. Kelompok sadar wisata (Pokdarwis) and functions cannot work even though each group member considers himself to know [30]. The Pelangi Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in Sekapuk Village has 81 members from each hamlet and also from community groups such as youth organizations, and Family Welfare Programme. The amount of knowledge of each individual cannot run if it does not have the same goal. So that the creation of Pokdarwis can achieve the goal of making every decision in the formation of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects.

#### *Determination Function in Group Decision Making*

In the group decision-making process, namely the continuity

process in the formation of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects, the researcher tries to see the communication and interaction of group members in four functions according to functional perspective theory in making quality decisions.

Hirokawa and Gouran's analogy that small groups in organizations are like parts of biological systems that carry out certain functions in decision making in dealing with an ever-changing environment [31]. There are four functions formulated by Hirokawa and Gouran in becoming a functional perspective theory in group decision making.

The first function is problem analysis where the group must understand the origin of the problem, the seriousness and gravity of the problem, the possibilities and consequences if they do not solve the problem. Group members must see the conditions for solving problems so that they can make decisions quickly and appropriately.

In dealing with problems, groups must decide whether they should make improvements or replacements by looking at the current situation. Analysis of problems where there is a failure to recognize the potential that exists. After understanding the need to be addressed, they still have to figure out the nature, extent, and possible causes of the problems the group is facing. Next to goal setting, group members must be aware of what they want to achieve. A group needs to establish criteria for evaluating the proposed solution. These criteria should define the minimum qualities that an acceptable and acceptable solution has.

Therefore, discussing goals and objectives is the second function needed in decision making. Group members must establish criteria in assessing the alternative solutions offered.

The third function is the identification of alternatives, namely the importance of compiling alternative solutions that can be chosen by group members. There are fewer chances of finding the answer so the probability of finding the right answer is also low. Their final decision turned out to be a combination of these ideas.

The fourth function is the evaluation of positive and negative characters. After the group has identified alternative solutions, group members must examine these options according to the criteria that are important to the group. In this final function, Hirokawa and Gouran remind that groups sometimes become negligent and need other group members to remind them of the positives and negatives of each alternative. When a group moves to achieve a goal, communication can influence decision-making.

#### *a) Functions of Problem Analysis*

The decision-making process usually begins with identifying and assessing a problem. The Pelangi Sekapuk Village Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) must answer various questions regarding the current situation. The problem-finding process is used to overcome the problems encountered in addition to being used for decision-making in setting goals

[33].

Starting from the problems faced due to former mining excavations that were once managed by PT. Polowijo Gosari is used as a trash can and cannot be used as a local community settlement because of the damaged soil and rocks. In addition, Pokdarwis utilizes the natural resources of Sekapuk Village, making it a tourist attraction. Community groups are trying to build motivation to form a tourist attraction in the former mining area.

The second problem is that Sekapuk village is included in the list of poor and disadvantaged villages, one of the reasons for the existence of Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction, as an effort to overcome poverty that occurred in Sekapuk Village. The first problem is where the former mining area in Sekapuk Village is used as a garbage disposal site. If not addressed immediately, it will cause environmental problems that occur in Sekapuk Village. Members of the Rainbow Pokdarwis Sekapuk Village were involved in the problem-solving process until there was a solution in solving the existing problems in Sekapuk Village, namely the use of natural resources in the form of ex-mining areas to form the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction.

Group members try to understand the instrument by seeing the problems in Sekapuk Village. The problem of ex-mining excavations is caused by the majority of people who work as mining excavation workers. Former mine excavations that cannot be used are used by the community as a garbage disposal site. In fixing the existing problems in Sekapuk Village, several communities formed a tourism awareness group to discuss the waste problem. That problem solving, decision making and thought creation each involve a single process [34].

The problem analysis process in Sekapuk Village was carried out together in a discussion organized by the Tourism Awareness Group. After the discussion process was carried out, the members and the community made a decision in solving the problem, starting with the cleaning of former mines and collecting funds for the construction of tourist objects.

The existence of a difference between the actual situation and the stated desire does not guarantee that the right decision will be made to solve the problem. So then three things must be seen, namely being aware of differences, the motivation to reduce these differences, and the knowledge, abilities, and resources needed to solve the problem [31].

#### b) *Goal Setting*

Function The second function is goal setting, tourism awareness groups must be aware of goal setting in forming a tourist attraction called Selo Tirto Giri. Before establishing a tourist attraction, the Pokdarwis determination was stipulated in the Decree of the Head of the Gresik Regency Tourism and Culture Office No 556/36/437.59/2018 So that the Sekapuk Village Pokdarwis played an active role in the formation of

Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects.

Members of the tourism awareness group discuss ways to develop Selo Tirto Giri tourism. Communication in the decision-making process of efforts to establish Selo Tirto Giri tourism is often carried out by the group leader because generally the knowledge possessed by group members and also the authority exercised. The group leader is considered a person who can make decisions and has in-depth knowledge.

The purpose of the establishment of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction is to increase the community's economy and prosper the community. The decision-making by Pokdarwis is the output of the process of considering all the information obtained from the joint decision. Based on decisions that are recognized as the result of the information process, where the organization can be viewed as a particle of information moving forward, and its consequences in the context of community communication [35].

In the process of setting this goal, it is prioritized in forming a tourist attraction. The process of forming the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction started with the role of Pokdarwis who together built Selo Tirto Giri. The purpose of group member communication is to solve problems faced by the Sekapuk Village community in making decisions. This decision-making is carried out to realize the wishes of members and the community in forming Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects.

Based on this, the creation of the Selo Tirto Giri tourism object is one of the factors needed in achieving the goal. The decision-making process is the process of selecting the best alternative from various ways to solve problems. Decisions are the result of solving problems faced firmly. The decision is a definite answer to a statement so the decision must be able to answer the question that becomes a problem. Decisions can also be in the form of actions against very deviant implementation [32].

The decision taken by members of the tourism awareness group and the village head of sekapuk is an action that is a reaction to a problem to achieve a common goal. The village head approved the decision by inviting the whole community to save together. Based on this explanation, the establishment of local tourism can improve the welfare of the community and help the community's economy so that the expected targets are by the objectives carried out.

Related to the function of setting goals, there are two objectives in decision making, namely; a) *a single goal*, if the resulting decision only concerns one problem, it means that once it is decided it has nothing to do with other problems. b) *dual goals* where if the decision is taken at the same time to solve two contradictory or non-contradictory problems [36]. The purpose of decision-making carried out by members of Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village is dual in that the decision-making process can be carried out to solve various kinds of problems faced by the community in the formation of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects..

In making this decision, Pokdarwis members and the village head consider social expectations from outside the group. The expectations made by them lead to the expectations of society in the future. As well as community expectations are directed at taking part in communication. Joint decision-making in meetings for goal setting and exploring factors influencing decision-making [37].

In distinguishing and integrating many opinions and information to achieve goals, the importance of structural support for groups in carrying out complex tasks so that full decisions can be made [38]. So that the decision-making process carried out by Pokdarwis Sekapuk is supported by structural institutions, namely the village government to establish the Selo Tirto Giri Tourism object.

#### c) *Alternative Identification*

Function The third function is the identification of alternative problems, namely compiling alternative solutions that can be chosen by group members through various ways.

Group members try to identify and analyze the problems caused by the ex-mining area so that it becomes a tourist attraction for Selo Tirto Giri. Several alternative solutions when the group makes decisions about the problems being faced together the group must develop various kinds of proposals and strategies in dealing with alternative solutions to these problems [31].

The process of forming a tourist attraction requires a very large budget, but in starting the formation of tourism, Sekapuk Village does not ask for a budget from the central or regional government. So starting from the due process carried out by the community. The public contribution is called Taplus Mandiri which is accumulated as individual shares.

Alternative problems faced so that people can save with a nominal value of IDR 8000.00 per day for one share if in a matter of years the community spends IDR 2,400,000 per share. The process of collecting the money was assisted by the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) Sekapuk. Pokdarwis participates in inviting or socializing so that the community wants to participate in the due process carried out in the formation of the tourist attraction. Although initially the decision was made by the group and the village government that one family head may only buy one share. However, due to the lack of funds made for the attraction, one family head may buy up to five shares at a time. The communication process carried out in making these decisions stems from problems faced by Pokdarwis who do not have funds in the formation of tourist objects so they want to invite the community to participate in the formation of these attractions in full.

#### d) *Positive and Negative Character Evaluation*

The four functions are positive and negative evaluation. Hirokawa noted that some group assignments have a negative bias in that seeing the negative side of each alternative is more

important than identifying its positive qualities [31].

At this stage, the group evaluates the choices made by practicing directly and through a process of trial and error. Discussions were held by the group at each meeting to evaluate all activities carried out by Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village. The decision-making process is based on deliberation and then submitted to the village government or village head in making decisions so that. This evaluation process is carried out by the Tourism Awareness Group once a month at Selo Tirto Giri tourism.

The discussion conducted by Pokdarwis Pelangi, Sekapuk Village, was carried out together with the village government, especially the village head in making decisions. Evaluation is carried out through discussion with the group leader. Analysis of the problems faced in the establishment of Selo Tirto Giri tourism object by conducting socialization to the community. Even though some people did not take part in or contra with the development of the tourist attraction, Pokdarwis remained together to disseminate information to the community in various ways.

Based on the dimensions of cooperation and assertiveness, Thomas and Kilman suggested five types of conflict management styles, namely competition, collaboration, *compromising*, avoiding, and also accommodating, related to the findings of the researcher, in the sekapuk village tourism awareness group, collaboration, compromise, and accommodation are used [39]. The Sekapuk Village Pokdarwis not only try to avoid conflict but all work together to manage conflict.

Conflicts occur due to different motives and interests of the community, so the Pokdarwis of Sekapuk Village seeks to communicate with the community to keep saving together in the formation of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction. According to what Hirokawa and Gouran described three types of communication in decision-making groups[31]:

1. *Promotion—the interaction* that moves the group along the path of the goal by calling attention to one of the four necessary decision-making functions. Promotion and interaction are carried out by Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village by conducting outreach conducted by members to the community so that they agree in the decision-making process. In addition to groups, the role of community messages is very important because the community is the first stakeholder in the development process of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction.
2. *Disruptive—interactions* that distract, hinder, or frustrate group members' ability to achieve four task functions. Disruptive interaction process that diverts those who disagree in the decision-making carried out by the group. the communication process is carried out by giving various options or choices to members with various consequences, but members will have choices that are adjusted to the prevailing conditions,

3. *Counteractive—the interaction* members use to revive the tracking group. Contradictory in which group members interact very actively in reviving the group. the role of the chairman and leaders such as the head of Pokdarwis and the village head in communicating is very important. The Sekapuk Village Head as a person who is able to revive the spirit in the decision-making process of making Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects. Meanwhile, the Chair of the Tourism Awareness Group acts as a coordinator in every step of decision-making by members and the community.

The results of the research findings and analysis show that members of the Pokdarwis Sekapuk Village can fulfill the four functions in making quality decisions to fix problems and rules related to the process of forming Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Group communication was carried out by members of the Wiasata Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) of Sekapuk Village in making decisions for the establishment of the Selo Tirto Giri tourist attraction through several stages. First, problem analysis is used to see the problems that exist in Sekapuk Village where the former mining area is used as a trash can. Second, setting goals is an effort to equalize the steps of group members. Third, identification of alternative problems based on existing analysis so that there are other efforts for decision making in the formation of Selo Tirto Giri tourism objects. Finally, the evaluation of positive and negative characters through discussions held regularly by Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village.

Decision-making carried out by Pokdarwis Pelangi Sekapuk Village, carried out by the Chair and its members, besides the role of the Village Head also has a very important influence in making decisions on the formation of the tourist attraction. These efforts are made to achieve the goal so that it runs well.

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