

THE ROLE OF LOCAL WISDOM AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of local wisdom in development communication in Bali as a social and cultural foundation for achieving sustainable and equitable development. The research focuses on how Balinese local wisdom values, such as Tri Hita Karana, menyama braya, and ngayah, can be integrated into development communication practices that emphasize community participation and local empowerment. The study employs a qualitative approach, using a literature review. Data were collected from academic sources, including scholarly journals, books, research reports, and relevant regional development policies. The analysis was conducted descriptively to identify concepts, communication patterns, and development practices rooted in Balinese cultural values. The findings suggest that local wisdom serves a strategic function as a cultural framework in the development communication process. These cultural values not only act as social and ethical guidelines but also strengthen participation, solidarity, and community trust in development programs. Integrating local wisdom into development communication in Bali promotes a more dialogical, participatory, and sustainable approach, aligning with the principles of community-based development and sustainable communication.

Keywords: local wisdom, development communication, Tri Hita Karana

1. INTRODUCTION

Bali has always been a special place, with its natural beauty and sublime arts and culture. The development of tourism, supported by advanced technology, has become a profitable business for agents who have positioned Bali as a world-class tourist destination, leveraging its cultural heritage. This has raised concerns among many experts about the preservation of Balinese culture. This concern is not merely a matter of discourse; several young Balinese are striving to preserve Balinese culture through modernized activities without diminishing the meaning of the culture and arts within. This challenge must be addressed by various parties, including the younger generation of Bali (Subawa, 2018).

One relevant and sustainable alternative solution to address this problem is local wisdom. Local wisdom serves as a guideline for community attitudes and behavior in environmental conservation activities, both physical and ritual, both routine and incidental, based on the benefits (Ahmad et al., 2022).

One of the local wisdom concepts originating from Bali is Tri Hita Karana, a concept that teaches about the 3 causes of happiness and the importance of maintaining balance and harmony in three main relationships, namely the relationship with God (Parahyangan), the relationship between humans and other humans (Pawongan), and the relationship between humans and the environment (Palemahan).

Tri Hita Karana also serves as an ethical and moral foundation for Balinese society, integrating spiritual, social, and ecological values into daily life, thereby shaping Balinese cultural identity and guiding sustainable, harmonious development. When

these principles are integrated into development communication, the development process becomes more participatory, dialogue-based, and oriented towards shared well-being. Therefore, this study examines the role of local wisdom in development communication, focusing on how Balinese cultural values are used to strengthen sustainable tourism practices.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach with a literature review. Data were collected from various academic sources, such as scientific journals, books, research reports, and regional policies related to development communication and tourism in Bali. The analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, consisting of three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This approach was chosen because it allows for contextual exploration of cultural meanings and values while connecting them to modern development communication concepts.

3. RELATED RESEARCH/LITERATUR REVIEW

3.1 Local Wisdom in the Context of Development

Local wisdom represents a community's collective knowledge, formed through historical experiences, cultural practices, and ecological interactions passed down through generations. In the context of community service, local wisdom serves not only as a decorative cultural element but also as a vital epistemological resource for designing social interventions that are contextual, sustainable, and deeply rooted in the community's social structure (Sonjaya et al., 2025).

Local wisdom is a system of values, norms, and knowledge that develops within a society through human interaction with its environment. Local wisdom not only guides human life but also helps manage natural resources sustainably.

The importance of cultural values education in maintaining local culture and cultural heritage in Indonesia, including population size, ethnic diversity, religious diversity, and collective culture. In addition, research by Suherman & Sirajuddin (2018) shows that local wisdom can function as a basis for communication between the government and the community in resolving social and communal conflicts.

Of course, the application of local wisdom in development is inseparable from the challenges posed by modernization. The shifting values caused by modernization, the weakening of policies that favor indigenous communities, and the community's lack of understanding of their cultural values are key obstacles. Furthermore, top-down development policies often ignore local context, rendering local wisdom merely symbolic rather than concrete.

In Bali, local wisdom manifests itself in various forms: the banjar system as a social institution, the subak concept in irrigation management, and values such as *menyama braya* (brotherhood) and *ngayah* (voluntary work for the common good). These values not only reflect cultural identity but also embody principles of sustainable development such as solidarity, justice, and environmental balance (Ardhana, n.d.)

3.2 Development Communication

Development communication is a planned, systematic process aimed at improving social and cultural conditions by changing public behavior, attitudes, and understanding. Development communication focuses on educating and motivating the public, employing systematic methodologies and approaches to communication

across its activities. Development communication is also used to instill ideas and attitudes, as well as to teach the skills communities need to improve their lives.

Development movements that lead to subsystems within a development entity align with the development goals. One of these subsystems is communication and information. Development communication is experiencing dynamic processes and is moving towards a more interactive and participatory form.

According to research by Arifin & Ardhiyansyah (2020), the principles of communication in sustainable development must ensure the participation and empowerment of local communities to maintain local culture and achieve environmentally friendly tourism. Conceptually, development communication is viewed as a variable that connects development policies with real changes within the community. The success of a message in reaching the community depends on how it is designed and delivered.

3.3 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is a tourism development concept that aims to meet the needs of tourists and local communities today without compromising future generations. This concept emphasizes a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018), Sustainable tourism must consider current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts and meet the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development declared that the current environment and development were not sustainable, necessitating action to ensure future sustainability. This commission was established as a development effort to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable tourism development is a strategic approach that balances economic, social, and environmental interests (Pratiwi & Hulu, 2025). Socially, tourism activities must respect the local community's cultural values and norms and improve the quality of life. Several studies have shown that the success of sustainable tourism is greatly influenced by the active participation of local communities.

As stated by Wibisono et al. (2020), without community involvement in planning and management, tourism activities can lead to social conflict, environmental degradation, and economic inequality. A participatory approach provides space for the community to become the main actors in managing tourism potential in their area, ensuring that economic benefits are felt evenly.

In addition to community participation, government policy is also a crucial factor in implementing sustainability principles. Strong government commitment will mobilize available resources, thereby accelerating and optimizing tourism development (Suardana, 2016). However, implementing sustainable tourism faces serious challenges, including weak stakeholder coordination, unclear regulations, and limited awareness of sustainability principles among tourists and businesses.

In Bali, the implementation of sustainable tourism is increasingly important to address the negative impacts of mass tourism, such as overtourism, traffic congestion, and environmental damage (Cole, 2012). Routledge. Local wisdom,

such as Tri Hita Karana, provides an ethical framework for restructuring tourism to align with social and ecological harmony.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local wisdom serves as a social mechanism that regulates the balance between humans and the environment. Within the sustainable development paradigm, values such as mutual cooperation, harmony with nature, and deliberation are key elements aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This integration ensures that development is oriented not only toward economic growth but also toward social and ecological sustainability.

In its implementation, development communication often draws on participatory communication principles that involve individuals or communities in their own development. In this process, development communication plays a crucial role, both as an environmental education tool and as a means of strengthening cultural identity. With a participatory communication approach, communities become not only objects but also subjects of tourism development.

One example is Balinese local wisdom, which plays a strategic role in shaping development communication patterns. This can be seen in deliberation practices in the banjar (village), which serve as a space for horizontal communication between residents and local leaders, reflecting the principles of dialogue and participation (Suartana, 2020). In this context, menyama braya promotes social solidarity, while ngayah fosters a spirit of mutual cooperation in the implementation of development programs

Menyama Braya is a form of local wisdom that reaffirms tolerance among communities. According to the Balinese, the concept of Menyama Braya means mutual assistance, working together to create or resolve issues within the community. This concept is evident in everyday life, as in the nguopin, mapitulu, and mejenukan traditions, all of which use communication as a dialogical process rather than simply the transmission of messages from top to bottom.

This relates to the application of the Tri Hita Karana value, a process of creating harmony and balance among 3 things: humans with God, humans with the environment, and humans with humans. Several community-based tourism destinations also show that practices that integrate local wisdom can attract visitors and strengthen cultural identity, creating new economic opportunities that empower local communities.

Indonesia still faces challenges in implementing sustainable development communication. Sustainable tourism is a crucial issue in Indonesia, as the country's tourism sector relies heavily on cultural and environmental aspects as attractions. Sustainable tourism can be achieved if communities around tourist attractions understand the importance of maintaining environmental balance.

Challenges include the commercialization of culture, dependence on the tourism sector, and weak regulations protecting cultural resources. Therefore, strengthening strategies are needed through local culture-based education to strengthen the identity and ethical values of the younger generation, cross-sector collaboration to expand our reach, and the use of local and digital communication media that prioritize sustainability.

5. CONCLUSION

Balinese local wisdom plays a crucial role as a cultural framework for development communication that supports sustainable tourism. Values such as Tri Hita Karana, menyama braya, and ngayah form participatory communication patterns that encourage community involvement and strengthen social trust. The integration of

local wisdom and development communication makes development more inclusive, ethical, and sustainable. By prioritizing cultural values in development communication practices, Bali can become a model for tourism development that is not only economically profitable but also maintains social and ecological balance.

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