



BUKIT LAWANG ECOTOURISM DIGITAL CAMPAIGN IN CULTIVATING ECOCENTRISM ETHICS FOR MEDAN CITY RESIDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Bukit Lawang, located within Gunung Leuser National Park and characterized by an ecocentric lifestyle, has the potential to influence urban communities through social media. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Gunung Leuser National Park is home to approximately 10,000 plant species, 580 bird species, and key mammals such as Pongo (orangutans), tigers, rhinoceroses, elephants, and sun bears (UNESCO, 2024). This study adopts an interpretative paradigm. Data are collected through content analysis and literature review methods. Recent studies that are directly and indirectly related to the destination objects namely Bukit Lawang, Instagram, YouTube, and websites are thematically examined through descriptive presentation. There are several travel agency service blogs, such as sumatra-orangutan-explore.com, bukitlawang.com, bukitlawangguide.com, orangutan-trekking.com, and others. These travel agencies are managed by professionals who understand marketing communication and package information about Bukit Lawang in ways that effectively encourage prospective international users to purchase their services.

Keywords: *Orang Utan, Ecocentrism, Urban Society, New Media, Communication.*

1. INTRODUCTION

There are two land gems of North Sumatra whose brilliance surpasses that of Ecuador, namely Lake Toba and Bukit Lawang. Both are located within the same administrative region, as the provincial government is centered in Medan, which also serves as one of the busiest international hubs in western Indonesia (Harahap et al., 2024; Sitepu et al., 2025). This position facilitates access for multinational tourists (Feng et al., 2022; Quer & Andreu, 2023). Beginning at the arrival gate of Kualanamu

International Airport, visitors are greeted with posters of various tourist destinations, including the Toba Caldera, which ranks first among Indonesia's five Super Priority Tourism Destinations according to Government Regulation (PP) No. 50 of 2011 (Government Regulation, 2011).

More modestly, Bukit Lawang is listed as a tourism village nominated among the 75 best tourism villages under the 2023 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) (Nugroho & Sari, 2023; Sisriany & Furuya, 2024). Although Bukit Lawang holds village status, it is part of the Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP) (Situmorang & Hussain, 2022). As a wildlife sanctuary for diverse flora and fauna, including one of the world's three orangutan species, Bukit Lawang has become a favored national and international destination (Molyneaux, 2022; Purwoko et al., 2022). Its high humidity, with 172 rainy days recorded in 2023 (Central Bureau of Statistics of Langkat Regency, 2024), and access limited to pedestrian routes add to its uniqueness. Bukit Lawang is naturally a green area with low pollution levels, preserved by the local community (Musa & Nadarajah, 2023; SOON et al., 2024).

From a sensory perspective, it can be observed that residents speak a variety of dialects, including Malay, Karo, Javanese, Pakpak, Dairi, Mandailing, and Toba (Perangin-angin et al., 2023). The initial assumption is that a relatively homogeneous culture without domination by any single ethnic group fosters diverse local wisdom, synergizing humans and nature as a shared moral foundation (Ofosu-Asare, 2024; Pandey, 2024). In contrast to several urban areas in North Sumatra, modernity and urban development tend not to be environmentally oriented as indicators of quality of life. Brief observations suggest irresponsible attitudes among urban residents toward environmental quality (Murtyas et al., 2025). Low-income families are assumed to perpetuate such negative practices as a domino effect of limited access to education, adequate housing, clean water, and proper sanitation facilities (Brown et al., 2023; Norton, 2023). In other sectors, middle- and upper-class residents display similar egocentric behavior; luxury car owners are often seen disposing of household waste along public roads without facing any sanctions.

In fact, Indonesian Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, Article 65, reaffirms the right to a good and healthy environment as a fundamental human right (Rasjidi et al., 2024; Yustina et al., 2023). Article 67 obliges

all parties to control environmental pollution, with consequences including administrative sanctions, fines, and even criminal penalties as stipulated in Articles 76, 81, and 100 (Burelli, 2023; Kärner, 2022). This law was reinterpreted by the Medan City Government into City Regulation (Perwal) No. 6 of 2015. Ideally, this regulation should lead to improvements; however, environmental violations are rarely reported, and sanctions are not strictly enforced (Ewing et al., 2024).

Through a literature review and content analysis, this article briefly compiles facts from previous and recent studies in academic journals and textbooks, selected blogs focusing on specific scientific fields, as well as the authors' observations of two monitoring sites: Bukit Lawang and Medan City. The study also seeks to formulate a communication model based on various government programs addressing national issues such as nature conservation, the eradication of human trafficking (TPPO), stunting, online gambling, and others programs that function not only as law enforcement mechanisms but also as multidirectional communication processes. Successful communication models that closely achieve program objectives such as counseling, focus group discussions (FGDs), and mediated communication are proposed as replicable steps toward the theme "Digital Ecotourism Campaign of Bukit Lawang in Fostering Ecocentrism Ethics among Medan City Residents".

The Concept of Ecotourism

Ecology-centered sustainable development has involved the tourism sector with attention to ecological impacts since the 1970s (Shaherani et al., 2025). At the international level, this commitment has been reflected through the establishment of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/UN Tourism, 2023) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) in 1990. The concept of ecotourism aligns closely with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including: (1) Goal 6 ensuring the availability and sustainable management of clean water and sanitation; (2) Goal 7 ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; (3) Goal 12 ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns; (4) Goal 13 taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; (5) Goal 14 conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development; and (6) Goal 15 protecting, restoring, and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial

ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation as well as biodiversity loss.

These goals place strong emphasis on environmental conservation to support human needs. In line with Goal 8 promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all the concept of ecotourism serves as a practical implementation of these Sustainable Development Goals (Raman et al., 2025).

Kenton Miller widely known as the Father of Ecotourism introduced the concept of ecotourism. According to Miller, ecotourism must incorporate educational aspects within natural areas (Huang et al., 2023). Below are several definitions of ecotourism proposed by various scholars:

Table 1.

No	Author	Research
1	(Kutay, 1989)	Ecotourism is a socio-economic sector model by developing and planning natural areas as a basis for tourism.
2	(Ziffer, 1989)	Ecotourism is tourism based on the culture and natural history of an area without prioritizing consumerism towards animals or natural resources. Instead, it contributes both manpower and finances to conservation and the local economy.
3	(John. & Pang, 2002)	A journey in a natural, fragile, protected area, where the journey is carried out by minimizing impact, providing education to visitors, contributing funds for conservation and other direct and indirect economic benefits, political empowerment, and providing appreciation for culture and human rights (Rhama, 2019).
4	(Muntasib, 2007)	Ecotourism is the use of biodiversity services by minimizing interruptions to biodiversity so that it becomes an alternative for conservation (Sya & Said, 2020).

The fundamental principles of ecotourism aim to promote environmental conservation and community development, ensuring that all aspects operate in harmony with sustainable tourism activities (Habibulloev et al., 2024). The eight core

principles of ecotourism are as follows:

- a) minimizing psychological, physical, social, and behavioral impacts;
- b) fostering environmental awareness, cultural understanding, and respect;
- c) providing positive experiences for both visitors and host communities;
- d) generating direct financial benefits for environmental conservation or preservation;
- e) producing financial benefits for local communities, industry, and the private sector;
- f) offering meaningful interpretive experiences for visitors to enhance sensitivity to the political, environmental, and social contexts of the destination;
- g) designing, constructing, and operating facilities or infrastructure with minimal environmental impact; and
- h) recognizing the rights, spiritual beliefs, and cultures of indigenous peoples, as well as empowering them.

Rural areas in Indonesia, with their rich natural potential, can reshape the definition of ecotourism by grounding it firmly in community-based approaches. The involvement of all social elements carries the responsibility to emphasize the role of local communities in enhancing environmental knowledge and promoting cultural heritage as key attractions (Katelieva & Muhar, 2022). Policies aimed at empowering rural communities can be implemented through assignments, regulations, and incentives that encourage household-based microenterprises, partnerships, market access, and business financing. Conversely, community participation in nature-based tourism programs encompasses planning, direct involvement, implementation, evaluation, and supervision. Community empowerment in the development of nature-based tourism also involves a series of strategic communication actions (Davie et al., 2024).

Antroposentrisme

Anthropocentrism is an ideology that positions environmental moral values as polarized toward humans (human-centered ethics), while other ecosystems are regarded merely as supporting infrastructure for human civilization. Douglas John Hall

views human interests as the primary mode within anthropocentric ideology, emphasizing the exploitation of natural resources despite their harmful impacts. Hall considers this ideology to be deeply traditional in nature (Shaman, 2024).

At the mezzo and micro levels, similar perspectives are evident. Everyday life in society, particularly in large cities, often fails to uphold biological values. A lack of moral awareness distorts behavioral systems, leading to increased levels of crime that also harm nature, such as illegal logging, wildlife poaching, narcotics cultivation, exploitation of water mitigation areas, blockage of drainage systems, and other environmentally destructive practices. This moral decline contradicts Pancasila the philosophical foundation and mandate of Indonesia which ideally should be upheld as a core moral principle, particularly as reflected in the First Principle (Setyawan, 2023).

The ongoing environmental crisis is widely believed to stem from a misunderstanding of the anthropocentric paradigm, which causes humans to behave improperly toward both one another and nature (Droz, 2022). This paradigm is regarded as a shallow or narrow environmental ethic, first articulated by Aristotle through his view that “plants exist for the sake of animals, and animals exist for the sake of humans.” The principle of subordinating simpler forms of life to more complex ones positions humans at the apex of the chain of being. Philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant likewise emphasized human attributes such as language, consciousness, free will, and reason as supreme. These philosophical positions form the foundation of the anthropocentric fallacy:

- a) Humans are viewed solely as social animals whose existence, identification, and determination are defined by social communities; they are not regarded as ecological beings.
- b) Ethics are considered applicable only within human social communities, with moral norms and values limited exclusively to human beings.
- c) The flaws of the anthropocentric perspective are further reinforced by modern Cartesian scientific and technological paradigms rooted in Descartes’ thought with their predominant mechanistic and reductionist characteristics.

Anthropocentrism has received extensive criticism due to its excessive application, although it continues to be defended by its proponents (Treich, 2022).

Ecocentrism

Contemporary interdisciplinary ecology recognizes the interconnectedness of all things on Earth and their surrounding environments, forming interdependent ecological relationships. In 1949, Aldo Leopold introduced the Land Ethic in a broader sense, encompassing the concept of an ecological community that includes soil, water, plants, animals, and other natural elements. The first environmental philosophy conference was held at the University of Georgia, United States, in 1971, which two years later inspired Richard Routley to write "Is There a Need for a New Environmental Ethic?". In 1973, the concept of Deep Ecology took shape after being proposed by Arne Naess of Norway (Sharma, 2025).

In principle, ecocentrism stands in contrast to anthropocentrism. Ecocentrism advocates an ecological mindset in which humans are interconnected with and dependent on all living beings. The model of interconnectedness provides a counterbalance to anthropocentric human attitudes (Liang & Segalas, 2024). Mitigation approaches that are able to maintain environmental stability without depleting natural resources or causing ecological damage have given rise to the concept of Sustainable Development. Such efforts aim to address the dynamics of technological advancement, economic growth, and population increase (Zhao et al., 2022).

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study is approached using a qualitative method within an interpretative paradigm (Creswell, 2021). Employing inductive logic, data are collected through content analysis and literature review and are interpreted in a definitive manner. Literature derived from recent studies that are directly and indirectly related to the research objects namely Bukit Lawang, Instagram, YouTube, and websites is thematically examined throughout the descriptive presentation. Several case studies employing communication approaches are analyzed to draw conclusions regarding appropriate designs for problem-solving. These include: (1) Media Management in the Implementation of Human Trafficking Eradication in West Java, Indonesia by Mulyana and Mirawati (2017); (2) Counseling on the Potential of Information Media and the Internet for MSME Business Development in Bukit Lawang Village by Tommy et al. (2020); and (3) Analysis, Discussion, and Recommendations for Tourism Area

Introduction Strategies with Tourism Area Management Actors in Bukit Lawang. The conclusion of this study replicates the influence of urban communities in adopting ecocentric lifestyles as demonstrated by the Bukit Lawang community through social media.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pongo Habitat Village

The world's first orangutan rehabilitation center was established in Ketambe, Southeast Aceh, Aceh Province, initiated by Herman D. Rijksen, a professor at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, in 1971. In 1972, the second orangutan rehabilitation center was founded in Bukit Lawang, which is part of the eastern area of Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP) (Molyneaux, 2022). This was later followed by the establishment of an orangutan rehabilitation center in Tanjung Puting National Park (TPNP) in Central Kalimantan, initiated by Dr. Biruté Galdikas in 1997 (YOSL-OIC, 2009).

In 1980, the Ketambe rehabilitation center was handed over to the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHPA). Several orangutans were also transferred to the Bukit Lawang rehabilitation center in Langkat, North Sumatra (Purwoko et al., 2022). With its natural contours, including the Bahorok River as a vital source of life for surrounding indigenous communities, Gunung Leuser National Park is directly connected to village communities as a supporter of daily livelihoods and, at times, as a source of disaster. In 2003, Bukit Lawang experienced a flash flood that destroyed settlements along the Bahorok River watershed and claimed the lives of approximately 200 people (Aksa & Sinulingga, 2022).

After several rehabilitation centers were transferred to government management in the 1980s, Bukit Lawang developed into an ecotourism industry and became a favored tourism object of the Langkat Regency Government, contributing to Local Original Revenue (PAD). In the early 2000s, a post-confiscation orangutan rehabilitation center was established, which became an attraction for both domestic and international tourists. Feeding-time activities created memorable interactions. Approximately 30 meters from the rehabilitation center, there is an area inhabited by

recently released orangutans that typically forage for food, allowing tourists to interact with them.

Moreover, such activities require permission from the Bukit Lawang GLNP Authority, which issues an Entry Permit for Conservation Areas (SIMAKSI) at a cost of IDR 20,000 per person per day. The revenue is allocated as follows: 30% to the central government, 30% to the provincial government (Level I), and 40% to the regency government (Level II) (Purdiono et al., 2025).

Bukit Lawang is one of the nominees among the 75 Best Tourism Villages according to the 2023 Indonesian Tourism Village Awards (ADWI), an award program organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf). Bukit Lawang is administratively located in Langkat Regency, Bahorok District. There are 23 districts in Langkat Regency, with Bahorok being the largest, covering 17.59% or approximately 1,101.83 km² of the total district area (BPS Langkat Regency, 2024). Bukit Lawang ranks as the fifth-largest village, with an area of 21.69 km² or 1.97%. As a self-sufficient village, Bukit Lawang has 27 hotels and lodging facilities. With a population density of 41 people per km² relative to its land area, Bukit Lawang is the least densely populated village in Langkat Regency (Habibi, 2025).

As part of Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP), the Bukit Lawang area is protected by various stakeholders, including government and non-government actors, both domestic and international. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), GLNP is home to approximately 10,000 plant species, including 17 endemic species; more than 200 mammal species; and 580 bird species, including 21 endemic species. It also hosts around 22 endemic species of Southeast Asia, 15 of which are found only in Indonesia, including the orangutan. In addition to Pongo, key mammal species such as tigers, rhinoceroses, elephants, and sun bears also inhabit the area.

Using the 6A Tourism Framework, Bukit Lawang fulfills key tourism components: Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Available Packages, Activities, and Ancillary Services.

- 1) Attractions: Bukit Lawang and GLNP serve as one of the world's natural habitats for Pongo, making Indonesia a unique global tourism destination.

- 2) **Accessibility:** Medan, as an international gateway to North Sumatra, serves as the main access point to Bukit Lawang Tourism Village and GLNP.
- 3) **Amenities:** Accommodation and entertainment facilities in Bukit Lawang adopt local wisdom, emphasizing a retreat concept amid the forest environment.
- 4) **Available Packages:** Numerous private companies offer services for both domestic and international visitors, including transportation, accommodation, forest stays, meals, and entertainment.
- 5) **Activities:** Beyond tour packages, additional activities include research, village tours, painting classes, wood carving, cooking classes, inner-tube rafting, and more. Although there are no formal cultural performances in halls, the available activities are highly engaging.
- 6) **Ancillary Services:** Currency exchange, telecommunications, healthcare facilities, and other services are available within a 15-minute distance from Bukit Lawang Tourism Village. Digital technology also facilitates additional transactions beyond package fees.

Khairuddin Tampubolon et al., through a community empowerment program conducted in 2023, provided recommendations to local tourism business managers regarding marketing strategies, including:

- a) building a tourism destination identity, which relates to the historical formation of the destination and its unique features that make it worth visiting;
- b) determining the target market, as market segmentation enables more accurate communication of the established destination identity to the intended audience;
- c) setting prices, where pricing reflects the quality of services provided and should be aligned with market segmentation and available facilities, while also offering promotional packages;
- d) formulating a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) for products or services through persuasive strategies and practical techniques; and

- e) marketing, which can be carried out through various forms of communication, particularly by utilizing new media that can reach tourists in a cost-effective manner.

The involvement of the Bukit Lawang village community enables the sharing of values, traditions, emotions, loyalty, obedience, and collective responsibility. Such collaboration helps achieve a balance between social and economic factors. This tourism area also creates opportunities for self-employment among local youth, reducing unemployment rates and the potential for criminal activities caused by weak economic conditions. Unemployed residents can still develop skills in fields such as culinary services, handicrafts, tour guiding, hospitality, rentals, and others. Several types of accommodation and supporting facilities are available, including:

- a) **Accommodation:** A number of lodges with an ecolodging concept are located in the Bukit Lawang river buffer zone, with prices ranging from IDR 100,000 to IDR 2,500,000, depending on capacity and facilities.
- b) **Restaurants:** A variety of local and Western gastronomic offerings are available, either as part of accommodation facilities or as standalone services.
- c) **Travel Agencies:** Travel agencies provide information, transportation, accommodation, and guiding services at relatively similar prices and service standards.
- d) **Supporting Facilities:** These include mosques, churches, rafting equipment, photo studios, local motorcycle taxis, carving and painting studios, as well as clothing and souvenir shops (Ramadhan & Imsar, 2023).

Changing Attitudes with Digital Ecological Literation Campaigns

The reason new media have become the primary choice among modern communication tools lies in their ease of use, wider reach, and lower time consumption compared to books, newspapers, radio, and even television. With minimal barriers, social media have become spaces for expressing minority voices, as many movements are mobilized through these platforms (Ciszek et al., 2023). Deep

ecology can also be transmitted more rapidly through digital media, particularly among young people as future catalysts.

Environmental Communication is often associated with Health Communication, as it historically emerged from campaigns against the negative impacts of chemical use in agriculture since the 1960s. As a derivative of Development Communication, Environmental Communication encompasses comparative analyses of social and cultural processes related to global environmental issues that can be translated into changes at the household level (Cardey et al., 2024).

Communication serves several functions, including: (1) providing information, (2) education, (3) entertainment, and (4) persuasion. Contexts related to these communication functions, including ecology, can be embedded in messages. In the ecological context, message planning is applied in a continuous sequence. By utilizing internet-based media, messages are created through a combination of information, education, and entertainment to achieve planned effects.

There are at least four communication objectives: (1) attitude change, (2) opinion formation, (3) behavioral change, and (4) social change. This sequence represents a hierarchy in which messages influence attitudes that shape opinions, leading audiences to act in accordance with principles established through communication processes. The ultimate goal is societal change involving all layers of society. Approaches may be persuasive or coercive by sharing an understanding of legal frameworks at both central and regional levels (Alonso-Villota & Arcos, 2025).

Replicating Previous Studies

There are counseling studies that employ various communication strategies with high levels of effectiveness in addressing interdisciplinary problems. One example is a study conducted by Nova Ahmed, which examined cases of sexual violence in Bangladesh between 2012 and 2017. Nova collected information from victims of sexual abuse who experienced silence as a result of trauma. She employed interpersonal communication through face-to-face interactions, group communication via Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), communication through diaries, online surveys, posters, technical discussions with women members, social media to

combat sexual violence, and community-based anti-sexual violence movements. Nova also applied both direct and indirect techniques, in which she avoided asking traumatic questions and instead prioritized trust and bonding to ensure that the information obtained could be used to resolve the problem. For Nova, there is no single best communication model; context-appropriate communication can have an impact and even change attitudes.

Another exploratory case study titled *Media Management in the Implementation of the Eradication of Human Trafficking in West Java, Indonesia* by Sari (2025) observed the Human Trafficking Eradication Program (Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang/TPPO) implemented by a joint task force consisting of the West Java Provincial Government, the Ministry of Manpower, the Cirebon City Government, and the Indramayu City Government. The program initially used brochures, as they were considered effective in delivering messages to target groups. These brochures were entrusted to 1,300 village heads, who were responsible for forwarding the messages to residents. The target groups included elementary to senior high school students, housewives, religious study groups, members of the Family Welfare Empowerment Program (PKK), NGO administrators, and Indonesian migrant worker agents such as Indonesian Manpower Service Companies (PJTKI). One external challenge of the program was the limited understanding of the TPPO issue among the target audiences, requiring the task force to act as an information bridge. Therefore, careful media planning was essential. Message production was tailored to the audience's capacity for comprehension, ensuring that the language used was easily understood. The task force also conducted FGDs, counseling sessions, and monitored training programs, with the communicators' skills as program presenters being a key determinant. Mass media such as newspapers, radio, and new media were also utilized.

The next study is a community service-based research conducted reported under the title *Counseling on the Potential of Information Media and the Internet for MSME Business Development in Bukit Lawang Village*. This activity prioritized seminars (group communication) held at a lodge named Tiga Dara. The messages delivered focused on the use of information media and the internet as support tools for local

MSME business activities. Through these seminars, residents gained an understanding of the existing virtual civilization, the use of social media as a tool for image building, and digital storefronts with minimal costs and broader potential customer reach, as well as digital payment technologies.

A more recent study conducted by Tampubolon et al. also took the form of community service. The activity report, titled “Analysis, Discussion, and Recommendations for Tourism Area Introduction Strategies with Tourism Area Management Actors in Bukit Lawang” (2023), defines tourism based on the legal framework of Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism. It states that Bukit Lawang Village is both a tourism destination and a strategic tourism area with functions and potential that significantly influence economic, social, and cultural aspects, as well as natural resource empowerment. The destination is located within one or more administrative areas equipped with facilities, accessibility, and active community involvement. The service aimed to provide strategic recommendations for setting development and marketing priorities for the area. Employed several communication strategies, including observation, interviews, counseling, and recommending word-of-mouth strategies for tourism promotion (Rahman & Mia, 2025). Four key aspects were identified for strengthening: (1) building tourism destination identity, (2) determining target markets, (3) setting pricing, and (4) formulating a Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

Bukit Lawang Through Gadgets

As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Tourism No. PM.04/UM.001/MKP of 2008 on Tourism Awareness, there is a Guidelines for the Implementation of Tourism Awareness. It explains that “the participation and support of all components of society in encouraging the creation of a conducive climate for the growth and development of tourism in a region” define Sapta Pesona. The concept of Sapta Pesona is manifested through seven elements: Safety, Orderliness, Cleanliness, Coolness, Beauty, Hospitality, and Memorability. These seven elements are conveyed both directly and through written content, images, and videos across various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and blogs.

The attractiveness of Bukit Lawang is able to draw both domestic and international tourists. Visitors document their experiences through video reports uploaded to their respective YouTube accounts. Similarly, Instagram and TikTok feature photographs of locations shared by local and foreign visitors, tour guides or service providers, and non-governmental organizations that demonstrate shared concern for Bukit Lawang's potential as a tourism destination. Several non-governmental organizations focusing on environmental cleanliness are also active, such as Bank Sampah Sumatera, the Bukit Lawang Foundation in the field of education, and Arras Adventure, which has organized three marathons. The most recent Arras Adventure event was held on May 11–12 this year and was attended by runners from North Sumatra, other regions, and even abroad. The resonance of this activity can be seen through extensive coverage on their Instagram account.

There are several travel agency service blogs such as sumatra-orangutan-explore.com, bukitlawang.com, bukitlawanguide.com, orangutan-trekking.com, and others. These travel agencies are managed by professionals who understand marketing communication. They package information about Bukit Lawang in ways that effectively encourage prospective international clients to purchase their services. Since being designated as a tourism area, Bukit Lawang Tourism Village has consistently sought to comply with the guidelines of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), particularly in terms of Tourism Awareness through the elaboration of Sapta Pesona. In all activities whether tourism, research, community service, or sports visitors associated with Bukit Lawang can observe the community's implementation of Sapta Pesona. Local residents frequently remind visitors not to damage nature by leaving trash in the Gunung Leuser National Park area or in surrounding villages.

4. CONCLUSION

Four previous studies successfully applied various communication strategies and were able to change communicators' attitudes. As demonstrated by Nova in addressing cases of sexual abuse in Bangladesh, Nova and her team succeeded in building trust and transforming victims' silence into openness. Tampubolon et al. conducted

counseling as a means of providing guidance to tourism business actors in Bukit Lawang, similar to the work of Tommy et al., which focused on digital MSME business activities. Finally, there is a study on the implementation of the West Java Human Trafficking Eradication Task Force (TPPO) program, which was scientifically evaluated by Mulyana and Mirawati. The TPPO Task Force carried out internal communication through meetings (group communication) and external communication targeting audiences through printed communication strategies such as brochures or leaflets, FGDs, counseling, newspapers, radio, and word of mouth.

As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Tourism No. PM.04/UM.001/MKP of 2008 on Tourism Awareness, a Guidelines for the Implementation of Tourism Awareness is provided. Sapta Pesona is defined as “the participation and support of all components of society in encouraging the creation of a conducive climate for the growth and development of tourism in a region.” The concept of Sapta Pesona is manifested through seven elements: Safety, Orderliness, Cleanliness, Coolness, Beauty, Hospitality, and Memorability. These seven elements are expressed both directly and through written content, images, and videos across various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and blogs.

Unplanned new media can influence and even change the attitudes and cultures of netizens. Bukit Lawang, with its charm frequently captured through smart devices, often appears on social media screens. Including promotional content about Bukit Lawang at targeted posting times is expected to spark curiosity about the destination. The presence of target audiences in Bukit Lawang Tourism Village and their experiences accompanying local residents in synergy with nature will serve as a gateway to understanding the ecocentric paradigm that they will take home with them.

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