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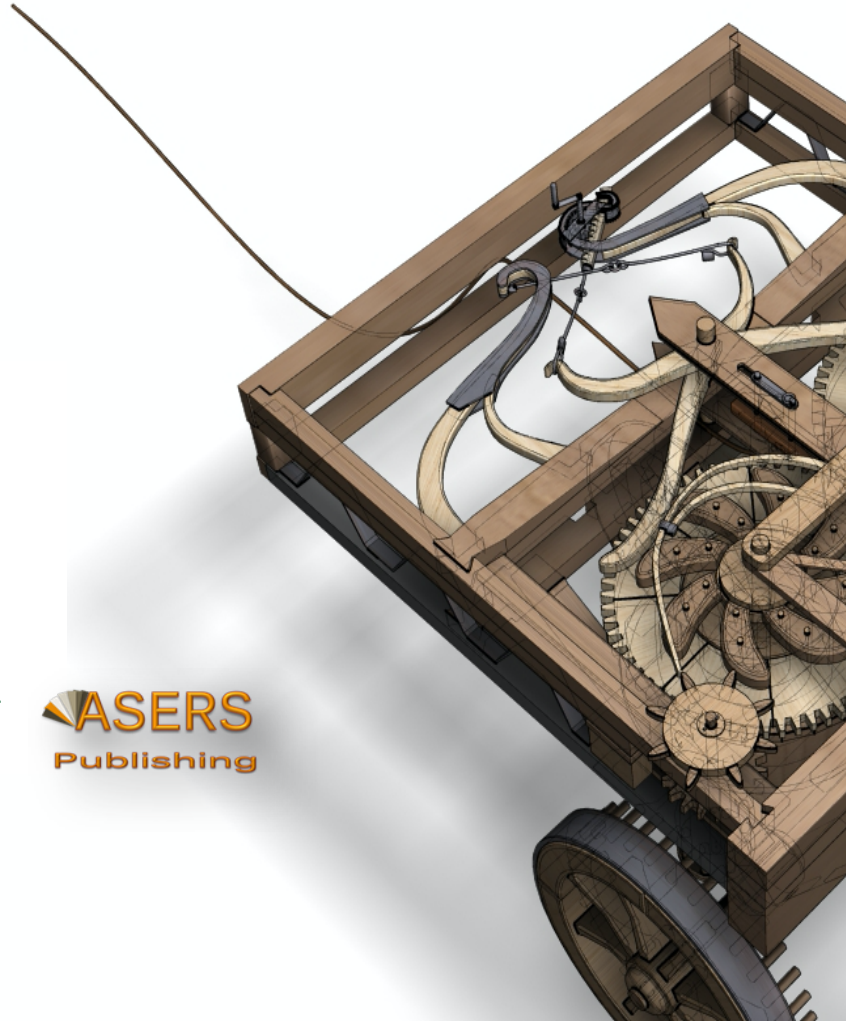
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7 Bottoms towards an Ecotourism Icon: Environmental Communication Studies in Ecotourism Areas

Mira Hasti HASMIRA
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
mirahasti@fis.unp.ac.id

Eri BARLIAN
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
e.barlian@fik.unp.ac.id

Aldri FRINALDI
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
aldri@fis.unp.ac.id

Indang DEWATA
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
indangdewata@fmipa.unp.ac.id

Siti FATIMAH
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
sitifatimah@fis.unp.ac.id

Aprizon PUTRA
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
aprizonputra@gmail.com

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Abstract:

This paper describes the meaning and naming of the destinations that are passed to the icon of an ecotourism location. This interpretation aims to provide input to ecotourism guides about the messages they must convey when guiding ecotourists. The environmental components they encounter along the way are important materials that must be presented to ecotourists. Communication must be seen not only as one of the supporting elements for environmental management but as an integral part of environmental management. As is the case in the management and development of ecotourism. The role of ecotourism guides is very important when guiding ecotourists. Ecotourism activities are communicative events and forms of experience on how to understand ecotourism itself.

Keywords: environmental communication; message; meaning; ecotourism; *Nyari*/Waterfall.

JEL Classification: D83; Q56; Q01; Z32; Q26; R11.

Introduction

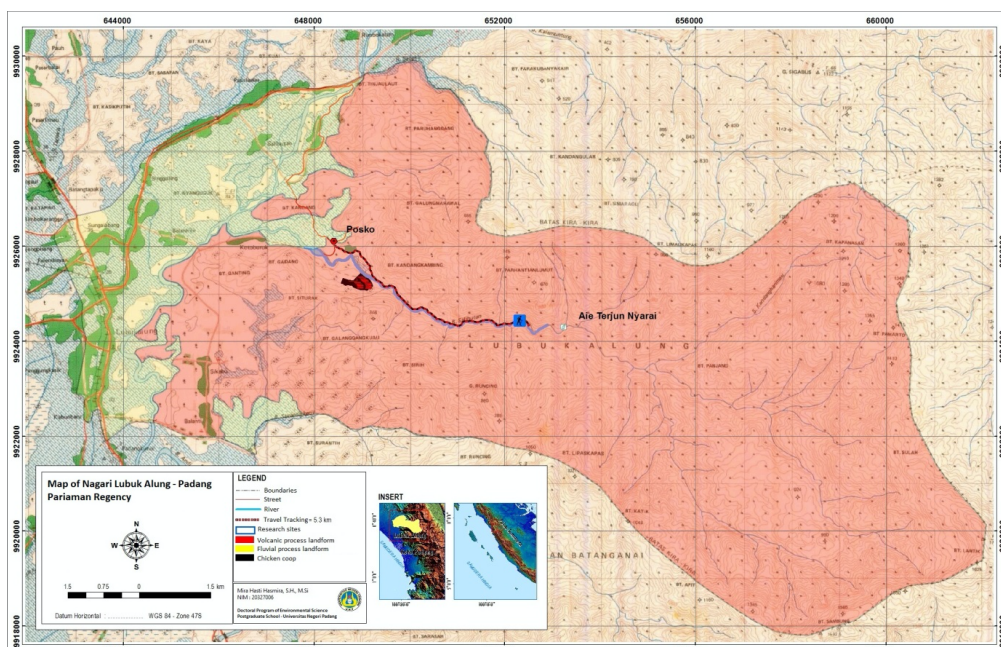
When applied to the environmental agenda, communication must be seen not only as one of the supporting elements for environmental management but as an integral part of environmental management. Without this important component, all environmental efforts will be threatened. This is an important point of the role of communication in the problems that arise related to environmental problems. Environmental problems are related

to environmental destruction and the people's use of the environment as an environmental service. Ecotourism is one of the interesting studies in this regard.

Many studies related to communication have been carried out with the object of ecotourism studies. Nilsson & Kyriazi (2017) entitled "Online Communication of Ecotourism a Multiple Case Study of NTOs' Websites", where this study develops a model by exploring the various elements used in this type of communication from NTOs. The model will be achieved by conducting a multi-case study of NTO websites in four Scandinavian and four Mediterranean countries through content analysis, guided by Rayport and Jaworski's 7C framework maps of website assessment. Then the research conducted by Cini *et al.* (2012) entitled "Promoting Ecotourism Among Young People: A Segmentation Strategy", where this study aims to segment the young tourist market using various psychosociological factors. The results show that about 80% of the sample will be open to ecotourism, and different communication strategies to promote ecotourism for different segments of potential ecotourism are also proposed.

Furthermore, research conducted by Go *et al.* (2020) entitled "The Traces of Ecotourism in a Digital World: Spatial And Trend Analysis of Geotagged Photographs on Social Media and Google Search Data for Sustainable Development", where this study identifies three (3) main themes of ecotourism perception and 13 categories of ecotourism attributes. Interest over time in ecotourism is mostly presented as its definition in Google Trends. The results show that tracked ecotourism locations and tourist trails don't match popular areas in Google search for ecotourism. From previous studies, it can be seen that environmental problems when viewed from a communication perspective, are mostly seen from the point of view of communication strategies and the use of medians such as websites, applications, and mass media. We see this as an opportunity, to communicate using an approach that utilizes communication and cultural actors as determinants of social dynamics, a new finding will emerge about the importance of studying communication related to environmental problems, especially ecotourism. Communication should not be source-oriented and media-centric. This should allow for more beneficiary engagement. Communication must always empower and enable the audience not only to be passive recipients but also to be active sources of information (Fragoso, 2022). Regarding this, we conducted a study in the *Nyarai* Salibutan Ecotourism area, Nagari Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Share this ecotourism icon has a very beautiful waterfall. The waterfall is named *Nyarai* Waterfall. This ecotourism area is within the scope of the Gamaran forest. The following Map in Fig 1 below.

Figure 1. Map of Nagari Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra Province

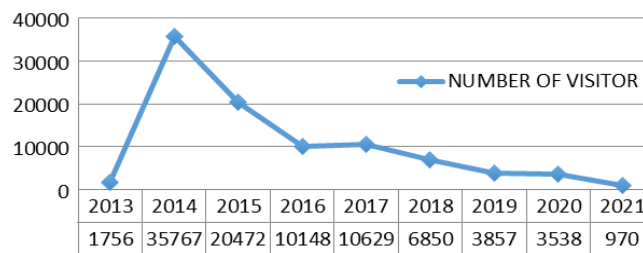


Based on our observations, the *Nyarai* Salibutan ecotourism object has seen a drastic decrease in the number of visits since this area was used for ecotourism. The number of ecotourism visits can be seen in the following graph (Fig 2).

Of the 27 guides registered with the LA Adventure Tourism Awareness Group that manages this Area, almost none of the guides explain to ecotourists what and how the environment in the *Nyarai* Lilinutan Area is.

From our experience as ecotourists at this location, they only show us the way and answer as needed when asked. This is certainly very odd, considering the concept of ecotourism itself. There are many messages in environmental communication that guides can convey to us (Ma & Hmielowski 2022).

Figure 2. Graph of visitation rate of *Nyarai*/Salibutan ecotourism (2013-2021)



Zhang *et al.* (2021) state that ecotourism is referred to as a form of tourism that pays attention to the experience of natural areas and emphasizes the preservation of the natural environment. In the nearly 30 years since the concept of ecotourism was first proposed, many studies have been carried out to solve key questions surrounding the importance of ecotourism. For example, why did ecotourism appear? what form does ecotourism take? who participates in ecotourism activities? where does ecotourism occur? and what are the impacts and how to manage ecotourism? Furthermore, (Sowards 2012) states that ecotourism activities are communicative events and forms of experience on how to understand ecotourism itself. Communication forms important expectations and experiences for enhancing conservation efforts and links between ecotourism, local communities, and others involved in the ecotourism industry. Then Mühlhäusler & Peace (2001); Sowards (2012) stated that during the trip, the ecotourist participated in the tour. Location information visited is obtained through local information. In addition, Stamou & Paraskevopoulos (2004) also wrote that ecotourism also discusses their experiences with other tourists and the people they meet during and after their visit. Ecotourism activities can be a powerful learning experience given that many eco-tourists seek experiences to learn about other environments and cultures (Chan & Saikim, 2022). However, Firman *et al.* (2022) also explained that ecotourism encourages ecotourism to have certain ways of knowing people and other things related to the outside world and also to identify appropriate actions. Ecotourism then is an industry that aims for culture and the environment, but travel can also disrupt the lives of local people and the environment.

Based on the opinions above, we assume that the role of guides is very important in guiding ecotourism when carrying out ecotourism activities. This will greatly assist ecotourists in obtaining more information about ecotourism, especially related to environmental components in the ecotourism area. Through this research, we try to explore the knowledge of the local people regarding their understanding of the ecotourism area in the Salibutan Forest area. It is hoped that this research can help provide material, especially guides when guiding ecotourists. One of the interesting findings in this research is about how the local people names and interprets several depths along the river that is passed to this ecotourism icon, namely *Nyarai* Waterfall.

To reach *Nyarai* Waterfall, which is approximately 5.5 km from the location of the *Nyarai* Ecotourism Management Post, by combing the riverbank through several holes. The pits which in local terms are called Lubuk it is Lubuk Lalang, Lubuk Ngungun, Lubuk Batu Tuduang, Lubuk Sikayan Limau, Lubuk Sikayan Tabiang, Lubuk Pasangkuhan, Lubuk Kasai Ketek then crossed until he arrived at Lubuk Kasai Gadang has just reached *Nyarai* Waterfall. The location of this waterfall is at coordinates X 100°2' 46.2" Y 00°41'00.2" (Fig 1). To reach the location, tourists are also challenged to climb an incline with a slope of <math><25^\circ</math> as much as Nyarai is at an altitude of 568 masl. To reach the location of *Nyarai* Waterfall, you can also go through an alternative route that is usually used if the weather is rainy, but still, passes an incline

1. Methods

This research is an ethnography with a research focus on human ecology (Zimmerer 2004; Féaux de la Croix *et al.* 2022; O'Neill *et al.* 2023). The research location is Nagari Salibutan, Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia (Fig 1). The names of the informants were deliberately disguised so as not to be disturbed and without prejudice to our gratitude and respect for them. This location was chosen because ecotourism *Nyarai* Waterfall is the first ecotourism location to open in West Sumatra. The decrease in the number of visits is our concern to delve deeper from the perspective of environmental communication.

Data was collected using participatory observation and in-depth interviews where we (the research) and our team acted as eco-tourists. Interviews with guides that have been prepared in advance we did while enjoying

the scenery at ecotourism locations. As for people leaders and other elements of society, our interviews were conducted at people's homes, stalls, and even where they work. The interview time follows when the informants can. Interviews and observations were carried out for approximately three months. Heavy rains sometimes hindered data collection, especially in taking photos in several locations.

The data obtained were analyzed using the interpretation method. Data interpretation is carried out concerning opinions (Geertz, 1992) which states "... what is called data are our interpretations of other people's interpretations of what they experienced". Finally, the interpretation is expected to arrive at the findings of cultural data, which according to Spradley, "... the cultural theme is an implicit or explicit cognitive principle, repeated in several domains and acts as a relationship between subsystems of cultural meaning".

2. Findings and Discussion

2.1. Findings

Through ethnographic studies, one of the interesting findings that we found was the naming of the objects encountered along the way to this ecotourism icon, namely the *Nyarai* Waterfall. People give names according to what can be seen, resembles a certain shape, or is heard around the bottom. Very simple, but this naming has been around for years. Lubuk is a geographical term that refers to the deepest part of water areas such as rivers, lakes, and seas. The word can also mean a chasm (deep) at the bottom of a river. The water below is generally calm or even relatively slow. However, there may be a strong undercurrent if there is a strong undercurrent (Muhidin, 2020). As previously described, Reaching the location of *Nyarai* Waterfall, is approximately 5.5 km from the location of the *Nyarai* Ecotourism Management Post, by combing the riverbank through several Lubuk (in English are holes). These Lubuk are:

Lubuk Lalang

According to Asril, who is 72 years old, the *Sikumbang* tribe we interviewed on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 19.00 WIB stated that Lubuk Lalang was named Lalang because the pit was once surrounded by weeds. Read or thatch is a kind of sharp-leaved grass, which often becomes a weed in agricultural land. This grass is also known for its unique names because it has different names in several regions, taken from the regional language (Suharno, 2014). When we browse Lubuk Lalang At this time (Fig 3), we didn't find any weeds, but according to Asril, the place used to be surrounded by weeds. Even though there are no weeds anymore, it doesn't fade the name of this bottom. People still call it Lubuk Lalang, meaning the pit that was once filled with weeds.

Figure 3. Result of photo documentation in Lubuk Lalang



Lubuk Ngungun

Bur, 58 years old, *Sikumbang* tribe on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 19.00 WIB stated that the meaning of Lubuk Ngungun was because in Lubuk there was a sound that sounded awake (Fig 4). Ngungun is the local people's name for the buzzing sound. If you listen carefully, it sounds like a buzzing sound near a large rock in this location. The rotation of the water in the rock cavity causes a sound like a buzzing sound. Based on the distinctive sound that exists at this location, the people then marks it by naming it according to its characteristics.

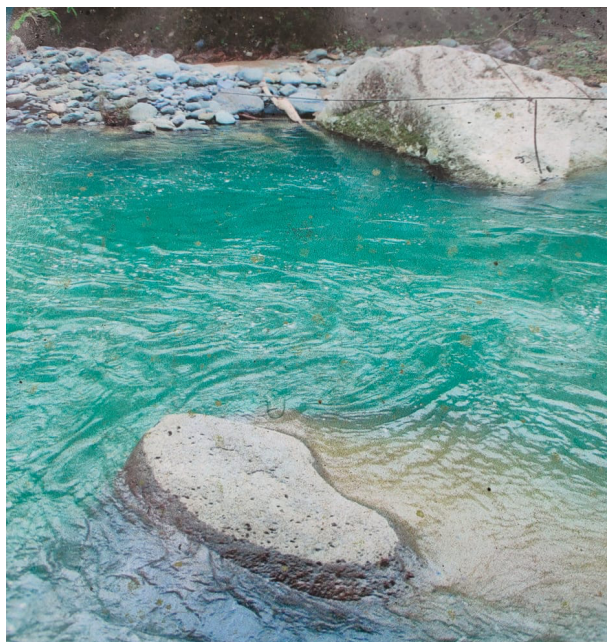
Figure 4. Result of photo documentation in Lubuk Ngungun



Lubuk Sikayan Limau

The results of an interview with Andi Lala, 45 years old, from the *Sikumbang* tribe on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 19.00 WIB, stated that the meaning of Lubuk Sikayan Limau is a river that is surrounded by lime trees (oranges) (Fig 5). This location, when we visited this ecotourism area, we didn't find any orange trees. However, the informant again said that there used to be orange trees there. As well Lubuk Lalang, we didn't find any orange trees around this location, but the people still mark the location with the same name, because based on the story they got from their predecessors that it used to be surrounded by orange trees.

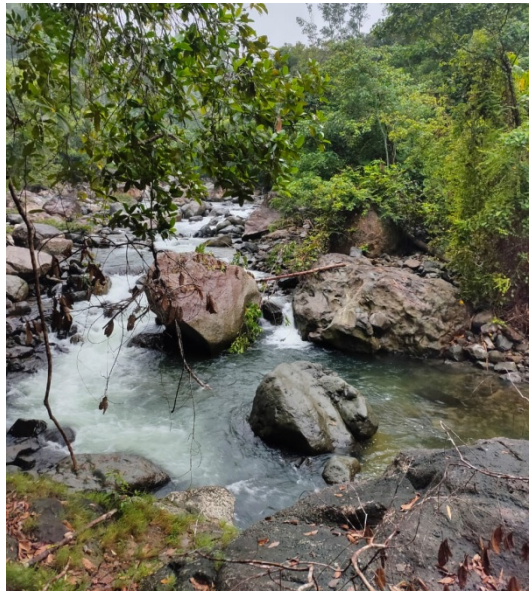
Figure 5. Result of photo documentation in Lubuk Sikayan Limau



Lubuk Sikayan Tabiang

The results of an interview with Afrizal, 52 years old, on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 20.00 WIB stated that the meaning of Lubuk Sikayan Tabiang is a river surrounded by many cliffs (Fig 6). It's the same with this location, it can be seen that the bottom of this one is surrounded by cliffs and filled with large rocks. These large stones are called cliffs or tabiang so this location is marked by giving the name Lubuk Sikayan Tabiang.

Figure 6. Result of photo documentation in Lubuk Sikayan Tabiang



Lubuk Pasangkuhan

The results of an interview with Asril, 72 years old, from the *Sikumbang* tribe on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 19.00 WIB stated that Lubuk *Pasangkuhan* meaning Lubuk shaped like *sangku* or *tenong*. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the meaning of the word *tenong* is a traditional Javanese utensil, made of woven bamboo, round in shape with a lid, commonly used for wet cakes. According to Asril, in the past, the person who named this place saw a large stone shaped like a *tenong*, but we saw no stone resembling *tenong* at this location. We suspect that the rock in question has been eroded by river water.

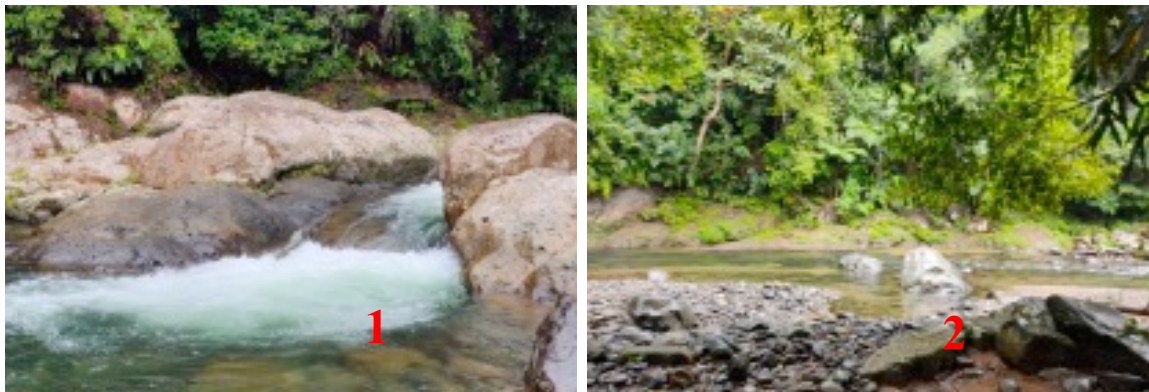
Figure 7. Result of photo documentation in Lubuk Pasangkuhan



Lubuk Kasai Ketek and Lubuk Kasai Gadang

The results of an interview with Isep, 28 years old, from the *Sikumbang* tribe on Sunday, March 6, 2022, at 11.20 WIB stated that Lubuk Kasai has the meaning of Lubuk around which there are fruit Kasai/small *matoa*. At this location, according to our informant, his grandfather used to tell me that at this location there used to be a Kasai fruit tree, or similar to *matoa*. This tree is small, in contrast to the Lubuk next to it which has a very large Kasai fruit tree. By the people, to mark this location, the people named it Lubuk Kasai Ketek, which means small in Minang language. Different from Lubuk marked with fruit trees Kasai the big one, named Lubuk Kasai Gadang. Gadang in Minang language means big. Although now the trees described by the informants are no longer found, the people still name them to make it easier to mark the location where they are.

Figure 8. Result of photo documentation in 1) Lubuk Kasai Ketek; and 2) Lubuk Kasai Gadang



Waterfall *Nyarai*

Waterfall *Nyarai* is an icon of ecotourism *Nyarai*. After going through several troughs, we finally arrived at this location. When we came, the waterfall was not that big. The results of an interview with Ritno, 36 years old, Simabua tribe on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at 14.05 WIB as a Tourism KUPS *Nyarai* stated that the designation howl that's because of the waterfall-shaped pattern. At this point, eco-tourists can swim to their heart's content, because this waterfall is surrounded by cliffs so it forms a large and deep indentation for diving and swimming. Furthermore, from the interviews with the informants above, it was revealed that the names of several bottoms that were encountered along the way to the Waterfall *Nyarai* are named after what is visible and audible to the public, with the aim that they can identify and explain where they are at.

Figure 9. Result of photo documentation in Waterfall *Nyarai*



2.2. Discussion

Folklore is an important part of cultural heritage. Folklore can also act as a means of inheriting local intellectual values, thereby contributing significantly to people's attachment to the environment. Local wisdom must be understood as all forms of knowledge, beliefs, and customs that guide human behavior within their ecological environment. Local wisdom is accumulated throughout the life of the people who have it. Therefore, ecological awareness through its presence in landmarks is an important and valuable part of today's sustainable development. However, local people's understanding and opinions about their natural environment are adaptive.

It is important to understand how valuable humans are when interacting with nature (Kenter & O'Connor 2022) asserts that Western society recognizes two types of values, namely 'instrumental value' and 'intrinsic value'. This then reduces the idea of ethics, which in this case stands out first, the ethics of use. Selfish ethics is a normative way of regulating how humans relate to nature, especially nature as a source of human food that can be utilized by humans. Nature is a secondary tool for humans as the center (anthropocentric). The second ethic is the ethic of nature, which treats non-human entities as legitimate entities like humans. This value is intrinsically intrinsic and centered on nature (ecological center).

Naming places is closely related to human culture. People have such a strong impression of a place that the naming of a place often carries a value that needs to be preserved (Janggo & Uran 2023). Delivered (Sobarna *et al.* 2018; Putra *et al.* 2023) state that humans and the environment are closely related. Humans are always trying to adapt to environmental conditions. People's attitudes and behavior towards the environment are also revealed from the interweaving of various traditions and perspectives.

Topographic nomenclature is an important topic of discussion. Because place names and vocabulary cover the way we see and understand ecosystems. Specifically, it reflects the people, people's identity, place branding, or some form of national branding (Kostanski 2011). From a scientific point of view, it is necessary to understand local wisdom to discuss the origin of the name of a place, region, or another part of the earth's surface, namely Topomini. According to various studies, the name of a place also includes an attachment to that place. According to Jorgensen & Stedman (2006), as described by Kostanski (2011), place attachment is a concept that can be classified in terms of constructing place identity and place dependence. In this study, place names are associated with local wisdom as a key component of environmental conservation through a 'sense of place' which is only built by a sense of belonging to a place. Kostanski (2011) states that there are two attachments as proposed: First, place dependence is a functional attachment to a place; and second, place identity is an emotional attachment to a place, that serves as a source of information and place meaning as a place's investment mood. However, compound words are expressions that can be considered "symbols" in linguistic theory. In this case, it doesn't always appear randomly. As pointed out by (Radding & Western, 2010), the context between words in certain languages and words in certain languages in certain situations is not arbitrary. Therefore, place names should be understood as 'symbols'. In this case, place names are symbols associated with stories, stories rooted in local culture. Cultural changes will change the meaning of place names as symbols. Thus, the meaning of a name can be traced through history and the stories that accompany it, especially through stories and oral traditions inherited from the story/stories from the person's name. This tradition is not only very helpful in preserving the name, but also very involved in preserving the related stories and values, especially those related to life, social life, and culture.

Folklore is an important part of cultural heritage. Folklore also serves as a means of communicating local intellectual values and makes a significant contribution to the relationship between local communities and the environment. Local wisdom must be understood as all forms of knowledge, beliefs, and practices that guide human behavior in an ecological environment. Local knowledge is accumulated throughout the life of the person who possesses it. Therefore, ecological awareness becoming a landmark is an important and valuable part of today's sustainable development. However, local people's understanding and opinion of the natural environment can be adjusted. It is important to understand how valuable humans are in dealing with nature. Kenter & O'Connor (2022) argues that Western society recognizes two types of values: 'instrumental value' and 'intrinsic value'. This undermines the first ethics that comes to mind in this context: the ethics of use. Ethical egoism is a prescriptive way that regulates how humans interact with nature, especially as a source of human food that humans can use. Nature, being anthropocentric, is a secondary tool for humans. The second ethic is the ethic of nature, which treats non-human entities as legitimate human-like entities. This value is very important and focused on nature (ecological center). Pointing and naming are basic ways to identify nature using communication. This study shows the relationship between symbolic behavior and eco-cultural relationships. Focusing on the rivers in the *Nyarai* Salibutan ecotourism area, we explore ways to identify nature historically.

Experts have long argued that the symbolic relationship between human nature and nature cannot be separated from the material relationship (Cox 2010; Milstein 2011; Hussain *et al.* 2022), this study argues that natural identification or strategic labeling and naming of natural aspects convey humanity and partisanship. Designation and naming can be seen as basic entry points for socially distinguishing and classifying parts of nature. Thus, the act of pointing and naming produces a certain kind of eco-cultural knowledge. These are natural aspects that are visible, unique, orderly, or characterized. The seemingly basic act of identifying and classifying nature seems to convey a certain kind of relationship within the *Nyarai* ecotourism site. The practice and industry of nature tourism are based on labeling and naming, performances, and storytelling. Most of the communications I observed existed long before they were released to the public as ecotourism sites, so they were often only relevant to the most basic levels of local peoples.

Experts who study culture and nature alienate and objectify nature, further embodying human-nature-humanity, and the power of discourse abstraction that exacerbates the ecological damage that destroys humanity (Myllylä 2001). In the industrial, technical, and mostly urban West, most people do what they find to shape nature through various forms of nature tourism. In recent years, tourism has grown to become the largest economic sector of the world economy, accounting for 10% of the world's total domestic production, while nature-based

tourism is growing three times as fast (Govdeli & Direkci 2017). Business advocates include the ecotourism industry's demand for long-term market-based solutions to key ecocultural challenges facing the world today. However, recent research suggests that the risks may outweigh the benefits. For example, nature-based tourism ranges from zoo visits (Milstein 2011) to scenic tours (Wilson, 1992), Mount Everest (Frohlick 2003), and environmental justice tours (Pezzullo 2007). As defined by Fennell (2023), wildlife tourism is "an area where nature-based tourism, ecotourism, wildlife use, rural tourism, and human-animal relations intersect. However, as some have put it, they managed to replace the camera with a gun. Similarly, we define nature tourism, as an area of overlap between nature-based tourism, rural tourism, and human relations with plants and animals. "Get what you don't understand" by ethnographically exploring specific communication practices and identification, and examining how natural identification policy perceptions, practices, and practices descend (Carbaugh 1996). We aim for that. My methodological approach focuses on the observed discourse interpretation developed by Philipsen (1992) in a particular cultural setting and is critical (Denzin & Lincoln 2009). Consistent with the concept of academic research in the form of deep involvement. The following observations, interpretations, and analyses use these guiding principles to tell stories that try to explain what discourse means and what it does in a particular context or personal experience. To connect with the public interest.

Given culture as a functional repertoire that develops skills for people to draw on meaning and integrate it into larger and more stable "behavioral strategies" (Palagi 2023), research participants take on certain meanings. This can be understood as using natural identification to convey. Create a larger strategy of action, including shelter, to connect with nature. Indeed, this examination of name identification practices helps to elucidate the methods by which culture is used to establish real perceptions of and harmony with nature. People can replace channels of discourse that tell complex stories of interdependence and reciprocity, entire ecosystems, and stories that are essential for interconnected parts and processes to thrive. Individual ecological dialectics can face cultural and contextual resistance. Scholars now use identification as a research basis to define individuals who study their impact on ecological culture, and insiders implicitly use dialectics in contextual conversations about certain natural conditions, such as nature tourism. The setting should include individual ecological dialectics more openly and generally. However, commercial nature tourism generally does not answer lifestyle challenges or deep questions about the world. As a tourist, one of them is to enjoy the beauty of nature first and then gain knowledge about the environmental elements of ecotourism places. By knowing how the local people name these places, ecotourism can connect to the history of the name and understand the environmental elements that exist in these depths along the river that leads to *Nyarai* Waterfall. The belief is that identification can create new links between ecotourism and the natural environment they visit. From the results of this study, it is expected that tour guides have a message to convey to ecotourists when carrying out ecotourism activities. On the other hand, those who choose the *Nyarai* Salibutan area for ecotourism also achieve the goal of doing ecotourism. Ecotourism is a communicative activity, not just enjoying the beautiful scenery.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be said that the meaning and naming of the location that is passed to the *Nyarai* Salibutan ecotourism icon is in the form of a waterfall. This interpretation of meaning aims to provide input to ecotourism guides about the messages they must convey when guiding ecotourists. The environmental components they encounter along the way are important materials that must be conveyed to eco-tourists. Communication here must be seen not only as one of the supporting elements of environmental management but as an integral part of environmental management. As is the case in the management and development of ecotourism. The role of ecotourism guides is very important when directing ecotourism. Ecotourism activities are communicative events and forms of experience on how to understand ecotourism itself. This should support the involvement of more beneficiaries, where communication must always empower and enable the audience not only to be passive recipients but also active sources of information. In the *Nyarai* Salibutan Ecotourism area, Nagari Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman Regency has a very beautiful waterfall. The waterfall is named *Nyarai* Waterfall. This ecotourism area is within the scope of the Gamaran Forest. In this case, place names are symbols associated with stories, stories rooted in local culture. Cultural changes will change the meaning of place names as symbols. Thus, the meaning of a name can be searched through history and the stories that accompany it, through stories and oral traditions inherited from stories or stories from especially the name of the person. This tradition is not only very helpful in the name, but also plays a very important role in the story and related values, especially those related to life, social life, and culture.

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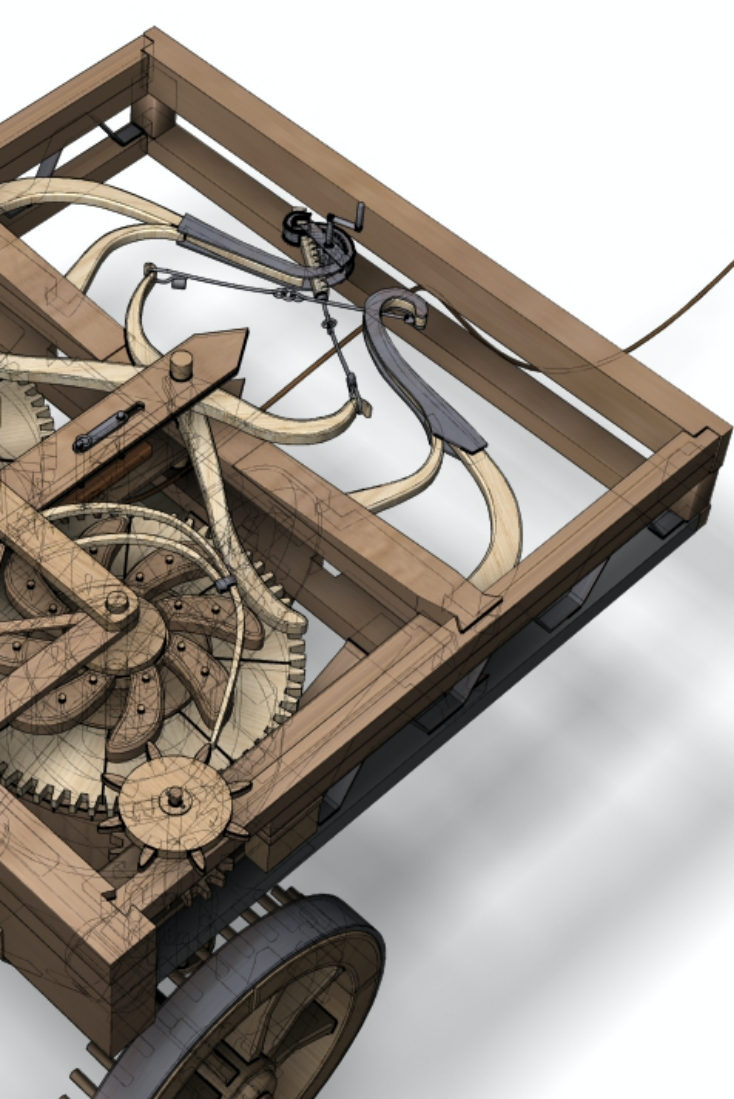
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