



## The Analysis of Communication Problems in Geotourism Development in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (RLUGGp)

Meria Octavianti<sup>1</sup>, Asep Suryana<sup>2</sup>, Atwar Bajari<sup>3</sup>, Nurzali Ismail<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran ([meria.octavianti@unpad.ac.id](mailto:meria.octavianti@unpad.ac.id))

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran ([a.suryana@unpad.ac.id](mailto:a.suryana@unpad.ac.id))

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran ([atwar.bajari@unpad.ac.id](mailto:atwar.bajari@unpad.ac.id))

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Communication Science , University Sains Malaysia ([nurzali@usm.my](mailto:nurzali@usm.my))

### ABSTRACT

The recognition of Rinjani Geopark as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2018 requires that it be managed in accordance with global regulations. The central government and the local, in this case the Regional Government of West Nusa Tenggara, responded to this by issuing policies on geopark development. Geotourism is a kind of sustainable tourism development, and the government consider it an effort to develop global geoparks and it must be carried out by the managements, including the Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark Management Agency (BP-RLUGGp). Based on this, this article sought to reveal the form of the RLUGGp management and to analyze communication problems in geotourism development in the RLUGGp. This article is a preliminary analysis of an ongoing complex study. The analysis of the data from interviews, observations, documents and literature review showed that there were two main communication problems in the management of RLUGGp. The first is the absence of rights and authorities of the RLUGGp Management Agency over areas included in the geopark, even though they have to implement programs in those areas. This requires that the RLUGGp Management Agency establish a good communication in order to realize coordination and collaboration in their program implementation. The second is the misconceptions of geotourism development among all stakeholders involved in the management of RLUGGp. Based on these problems, a deeper study of communication networks in the management of RLUGGp is needed. An analysis of communication networks will provide solutions to the communication problems.

**Keywords:** Communication Problems, Sustainable Tourism, Geotourism, Geopark, RLUGGp

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### INTRODUCTION

2018 was an extraordinary year for Indonesian tourism sector, particularly in Lombok Island. The amazing island with great tourism potentials was struck by a powerful earthquake. The M6.4 earthquake hit Lombok on July 29, 2018 and the M7.0 (the largest earthquake in Lombok) on August 5, 2018 did have a big impact on all sectors of community life. Tourism is a significantly-affected sector, because after the two major earthquake, there were 521 *aftershocks*. In terms of magnitude, they were indeed smaller than the two, but still they affected the life of the people of the island in the east of Bali.

An impact of the disaster was the decline in economic growth by 1.5% and the increasing number of unemployed in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) by 180,000 in many sectors, including tourism. Lombok tourism is a leading sector that supports the community economy. The continuous earthquake over a long period surely paralyzed the tourist destinations in NTB,

particularly in northern Lombok, from North Lombok to northern Central Lombok to northern East Lombok. This immediately affected the economy and created mass poverty in the community who were highly dependent on tourism.

According to data of the Mount Rinjani National Park (TNGR), the number of tourist visits, both foreign and domestic, had drastically decreased. In 2017 there were 39,659 foreign visitors and 43,120 domestic visitors with a peak season between April and October and monthly average more than 4,000 foreign visitors. Whereas in 2018, as of July before the earthquake, there were 19,158 foreign visitors and 26,582 domestic visitors. Based on the calendar, the peak season would be between April and July 2018, before the large earthquakes in Lombok (Juaini & Murdi, 2019). This shows a significant decline.

The earthquakes in July 2018 had a huge impact on tourist visits in 2018, particularly after TNGR was closed. Compared to 2017, there was a decline of visitors by 46%. In terms of revenue, in 2017 TNGR managed to contribute to Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) by Rp10 billion, while in 2018 only Rp4 billion (Republika.co.id).

The devastating earthquake not only had an impact on the people of Lombok, but also on the Indonesian economy, especially the tourism sector. This is in accordance with data from the presentation of the Head of Marketing Area III (Taiwan) of the Ministry of Tourism at the Technical Guidance for Synchronizing Tourism Promotion in the Asia Pacific and American Markets held at the Puteri Gunung Hotel, West Bandung Regency on April 6, 2019 that in 2018 the number of foreign visitors did not reach the target. The failure was due to the many natural disasters in Indonesia in 2018, particularly the large earthquakes and the long-period aftershocks in Lombok. Even though the data shows that the number of foreign visitors has increased significantly since 2015, it drastically declined in 2018. The targets of 10 million foreign visitors in 2015, 12 million in 2016, and 15 million in 2017 were managed to accomplish. However, the target of 17 million in 2018 was not managed to achieve. Only 15.8 million foreign visitors came to Indonesia in 2018 (NTB in Numbers 2019).

Since 2015 tourism has been recognized as a *leading sector* in Indonesia. President Joko Widodo in a Plenary Session on Tourism at Bogor Palace on February 16, 2015 stated that, "Hereby I establish tourism as a *leading sector*. The establishment of tourism as a *leading sector* is good news and all other ministries must support it and I have decided it." This was due to the growth of foreign exchange earnings from year to year: from USD6,297.99 million in 2009 to USD7,603.45 million in 2010 to USD8,554.39 million in 2011 to USD9,120.85 million in 2012 to USD10,054.15 million in 2013. This is why tourism becomes a *leading sector* in Indonesia. Not to mention the achievement of Indonesian tourism in 2017, where it finished in 47th place in global tourism rank after being in 100th in the previous year (Octavianti et al., 2018).

Based on the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), tourism has been a national priority sector. The targets are USD30,000 million of foreign exchange earnings, 15 million of manpower in tourism sector, and 5.5% contribution to Gross Domestic Income (GDI). Thus, various developments in Indonesian tourism are needed. One of them is establishing 10 new "Bali" tourist destinations as described in the Letter of Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Resources Number S54/Menko/Maritim/VI/2016. Over time, the government evaluated the 10 New Balis and on the basis of accelerating infrastructure and utilities, they finally established five destinations as super priorities. Apart from Lake Toba, Borobudur, Manado-Likupang, and Labuan Bajo, Lombok Island is one of them (Aditya, 2019).

This was due to the significant growth of Lombok tourism in the recent years. This is also represented in the vision of Lombok tourism development that "Lombok is a sustainable, resilient,

and inclusive destination that provides quality cultural and natural experiences." This vision shows three keywords, i.e. the focus of tourism development approach in Lombok: sustainable, resilient, and inclusive. *Sustainable* tourism must be applied in Lombok to avoid overexploitation in its development. The sustainability must not only be environmental but also social and economic. *Resilient*, the second keyword, means that every tourism development program in Lombok must be based on disaster mitigation in order to create a responsive and safe tourism environment for visitors and tourism actors. Inclusive, the last keyword, shows that Lombok tourism must be beneficial for everyone, where all stakeholders have an important role in the tourism development in Lombok.

In fact, this has been a lever for tourism development in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, Indonesia. This is evidenced by the data on the growing number of foreign visitors in NTB, from 565,944 in 2013 to its peak of 1,430,249 in 2017. In addition, the number of domestic visitors was growing as well, from 791,658 in 2013 to 2,078,654 in 2017. Apart from the decline in foreign visitors and domestic visitors in 2018 due to the earthquakes, NTB currently is in the 18th of Indonesian tourist destinations (Lampiran Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia 2020).

On the other hand, on April 17, 2018, shortly before the earthquake struck Lombok, Lombok geopark area was recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The recognition through the 204th UNESCO executive board meeting in Paris, France immediately escalated the status of Mount Rinjani area and did affect the tourism development in West Nusa Tenggara (Nurhanifa et al., 2020). This is in line with Chairul Mahsul, the General Manager of Rinjani Geopark at that time, who stated that the recognition of Mount Rinjani as a UNESCO Global Geopark would be an effective international promotion and will have an impact on the number of Mount Rinjani foreign visitors (Setia, 2018).



Figure 1.1 Certificate of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (2018)  
Source: Review Masterplan, 2020

However, unexpectedly, shortly after being recognized as a global geopark, Lombok was struck by earthquakes. In fact, ideally, the management of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark should have started various development programs for the global geopark. Certainly, the implementing unit could not carry out their duties and functions properly when all walks of life were required to concentrate on post-earthquake recovery. This condition was certainly an obstacle and crucial problem for the development of RLUGGp. On the one hand, being globally recognized

meant many variables should be considered in order to comply with the standards. On the other hand, earthquake disasters struck.

In the same year as the earthquakes, the regional government of West Nusa Tenggara Province issued NTB Governor Regulation Number 51/2018 which specifically regulates the form of management of Rinjani as a UNESCO Global Geopark. It states that the conservation, utilization, and development of the sites in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark are based on national and international geopark management principles. Nationally, geopark development is regulated by Presidential Decree Number 9/2019, article 4 paragraph (3) that it is mainly conducted by developing tourist destinations. Based on article 24, the technical guidelines for geopark development are made by the relevant minister, according to his duties and functions. Thus, in this case it means the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia.

The technical guidelines for developing a geopark as a tourism destination, which is an attachment to the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy / Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency Number 2/2020, state that geopark development is carried out with sustainable tourism development. Geopark development is expected to provide a stimulus to economic activity and sustainable development through geotourism development. This shows that geotourism has a critical position in the development of geoparks as a tourist destination. This is also based on what UNESCO states in the Global Geopark Network document that geoparks stimulate economic activity and development through geotourism. With geotourism, geoparks will bring in more and more visitors and stimulate local socio-economic development through quality promotions linked to local natural heritage (Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark, 2009).

According to the Presidential Decree No. 9/2019, geopark development is geopark management to realize the preservation of *geoheritage*, *geodiversity*, *biodiversity*, and *cultural diversity*, which is carried out jointly by the central government, local governments, and other stakeholders through conservation, education, and sustainable community economic development. Meanwhile, article 5 of the Presidential Decree No. 9/2019 states that the stages for geopark development are (1) identifying *geoheritage*, (2) planning geopark, (3) establishing the status of geopark, and (4) managing geopark.

Considering this background, the authors conduct research on the management of a UNESCO Global Geopark, specifically analyzing the communication networks in geotourism development in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (RLUGGp). The focus of this article is only the initial part of ongoing research. The authors conduct pre-research to find out communication problems in the management of Rinjani-Lombok geopark after its recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp). Thus, in this article the authors are going to describe the communication problems in the management of RLUGGp, which are inseparable from national and global social problems, including earthquakes and covid-19 pandemic.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the authors used qualitative method. In order to reveal the communication problems in the management of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (RLUGGp), data were collected by interviewing several key informants of the stakeholders involved in the management of the geopark. From the interviews, the authors obtained data of spoken words of the people whose behavior was observed (Bogdan & Taylor, 1992). Using qualitative approach or investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), the authors collected data by conducting directed face-to-face interviews and interacting with the observed in order to get a holistic background of the informants (Moleong, 2009).

This research solely aimed at describing the situation in the management of the RLUGGp, without finding out nor describing any relationships, let alone testing a hypothesis or making a prediction. Therefore, the research design was descriptive (Rakhmat, 2012). In this research, the authors are the key instruments to collect data by triangulation and inductive data analysis, and they tried to give meaning to each data because they didn't generalize (Sugiyono, 2016).

In this study, the authors collected actual data from interviews and observations, studied relevant documents, and conducted a literature review on relevant sources. The authors collected data for this article from November 2020 to February 2021. This article only discusses the preliminary analysis of a fraction of data on an ongoing research. The authors identified problems and practices by conducting participatory observations, where they were involved in every activity related to geopark management, particularly geotourism development. The authors then compared and evaluated the collected data to determine recommendations or further plans to solve every problem they found. This is as stated by Rakhmat (2012):

"Descriptive research is aimed at (1) collecting detailed and actual information to illustrate the symptoms; (2) identifying problems or examining prevailing conditions and practices; (3) comparing or evaluating; (4) identifying what other people do to deal with the same problem and learning their experience to make future plans and decisions."

As the key instrument, the authors explored and sought to deeply understand every meaning of the geotourism development in the Rinjani Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark that each informant has. The communication problems found in this research stemmed from the social problems of the members of the social system, which in this case are those who are involved in the geotourism development (Cresswell, 2015). In regard to the communication problems in this article, Creswell (2016: 4) argues that qualitative research is a method to explore and understand the meanings that a number of individuals or a group of people consider derived from social or humanitarian problems.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **The Founding of RLUGGp Management Agency**

Responding to the recognition of Rinjani-Lombok Geopark as a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp), the Provincial Government of West Nusa Tenggara issued a regulation on the management of the area to comply with UNESCO's international standards. It is the West Nusa Tenggara Governor Regulation No. 51/2018 on the management agency of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark. It states that geopark is a geographical area where geoheritage sites are part of the concept of protection, education, development, utilization, management, and sustainable economic development by involving local communities. Meanwhile, according to UNESCO (2004), geopark is an area with *outstanding geology*, i.e. archaeological, ecological, and cultural values, that involves local communities to protect and complement natural heritage functions (Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark, 2009).

Basically, the Governor Regulation No. 51/2018 states that the Management Agency of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark, hereinafter referred to as BP-RLUGGp, is a forum for coordination, integration, facilitation, socialization, education, publication, and consultation in the formulation and implementation of RLUGGp management policies. The duty of BP-RLUGGp is to help the local governments optimize the achievement of the vision and mission of glorifying geoheritage and prospering the community in a sustainable manner to realize an advanced, competitive region.



The BP-RLUGGp consists of an advisory board, steering board, and executive board, the one that will be the technical implementer and involved and work directly on the field. The executive board consists of seven members, appointed by the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara, with the following duties: to plan, coordinate, and implement strategic policies in the development and management of RLUGGp. In terms of duties, apart from planning and coordinating, the executive board has to execute the strategic policies. However, in terms of implementation, the executive board doesn't have any rights or authorities over all areas of RLUGGp. This is that the areas have their own stakeholders or owners, and thus they have their own development and management regulations.

This condition becomes a challenge for the executive board to carry out all of their duties and functions. Thus, communication is a key to solve this problem. This is in line with Fathul Rakhman, the RLUGGp Manager of Community and Women's Role Empowerment, who stated that without communication between the executive board of RLUGGp and the regional stakeholders, it is impossible that any programs can be implemented in the areas of RLUGGp <sup>1</sup>. According to the governor regulation, geosite is an area with geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity within the delineation of RLUGGp, where delineation is an area which is included in the RLUGGp through a governor's decree and UNESCO recognition.

The absence of BP-RLUGGp's rights and authorities over geopark areas is indeed a challenge for the Management Agency in running the geopark management programs. The large areas of Rinjani-Lombok geopark delineation makes many parties have to be involved in managing the geopark. Apart from the community and tourism actors, landowners are the main stakeholders to get involved in geopark management with the Management Agency. Government stakeholders, from village to provincial, are also the parties involved in geopark management. The BP-RLUGGp was founded by the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara as an official agency under the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of West Nusa Tenggara. In terms of duties and functions, they have to be accountable to the NTB Bappeda and, in terms of programs, they have to collaborate with the Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) at the provincial level. This is based on the Presidential Decree No. 9/2019, chapter five on geopark management, article 13 point (2) (a), stating that geopark management is regulated by the governor when a geopark is in a cross-regency or cross-city region within a province. Rinjani-Lombok Geopark includes five regions: North Lombok Regency, East Lombok Regency, Central Lombok Regency, West Lombok Regency, and Mataram City. This makes the Management Agency, in terms program implementation, under the responsibility of the provincial government, in this case Bappeda NTB.

This also makes many stakeholders involved in geopark management, both at the strategic and technical levels. Inter-stakeholder collaboration and coordination is very important in geopark management, and communication is the key to the success of such collaboration and coordination. The communication network for stakeholders is an important thing to understand. This is in line with Noel Scoot et al. in their book entitled *Network Analysis and Tourism from Theory to Practice* who state that "*network in tourism may be more important than in other areas of the economy of many countries*" (Scott et al., 2008) . This is that tourism involves many stakeholders with their inherent roles, functions, and powers. Therefore, tourism stakeholders, who in terms of network are known as actors, must relate to each other. Their large and varied numbers make network analysis in the context of tourism an important thing to do.

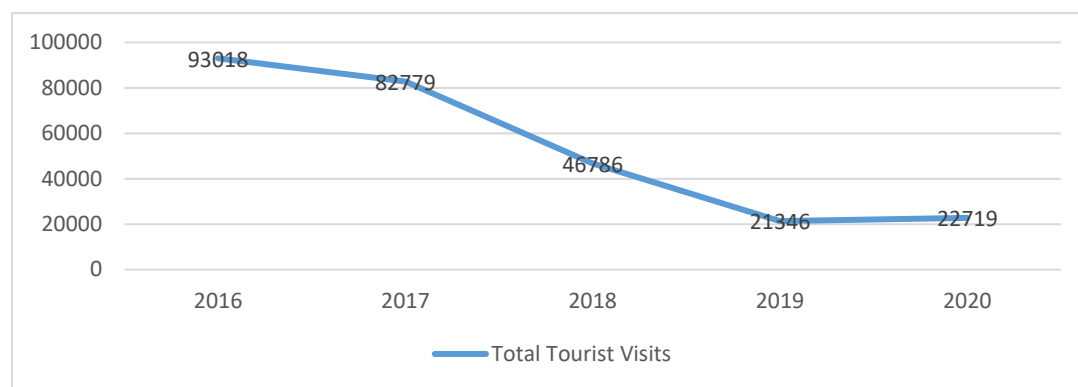
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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Fathul Rakhman, the RLUGGg Manager of Community and Women's Role Empowerment on Thursday, December 28, 2020.

### Tourism Development in RLUGGp Area

In addition to the involvement of many stakeholders in the management of the RLUGGp, differences in understanding about tourism development in RLUGGp are also a communication problem that can be found in the management of RLUGGp. As previously explained, sustainable tourism, in this case geotourism, is a form of geopark management. This is stated by the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy / Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2/2020.

However, in terms of Rinjani-Lombok geopark, with Mount Rinjani as the main *icon*, long before it was recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark, it has been very attractive to the eyes and hearts of both domestic and foreign tourists. This is evident from data on Mount Rinjani National Park (TNGR) visitors in 2016 and 2017, before it was recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The number of the visitors was already high, but declined significantly due the 2018 earthquakes and covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

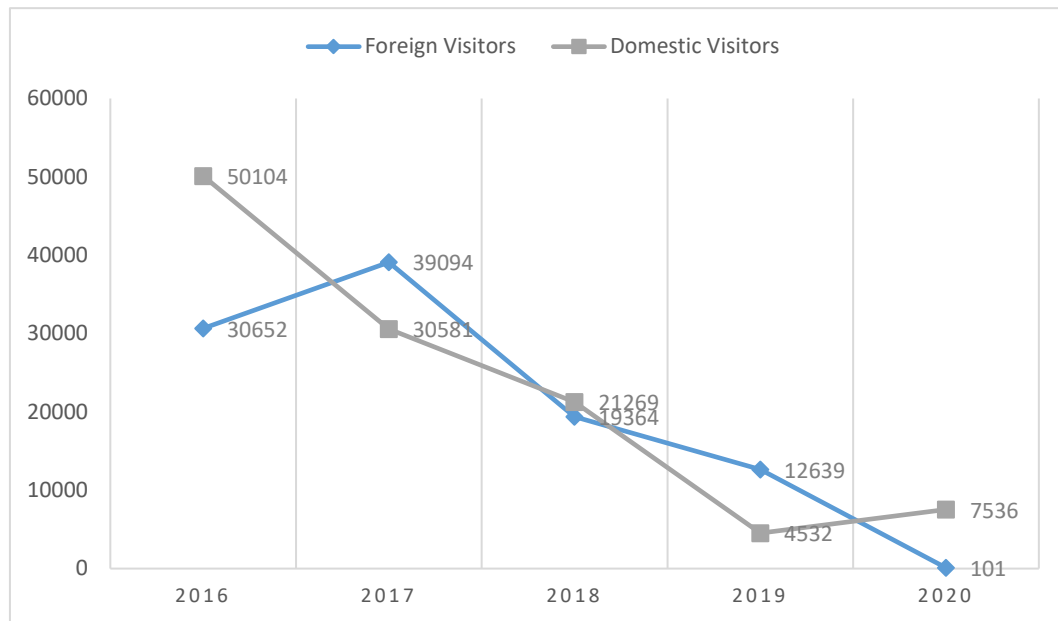


Graphic 1

Tourist Visits to TNGR in 2016-2017

Source: Mount Rinjani National Park (2021) and Data Processing Results (2021)

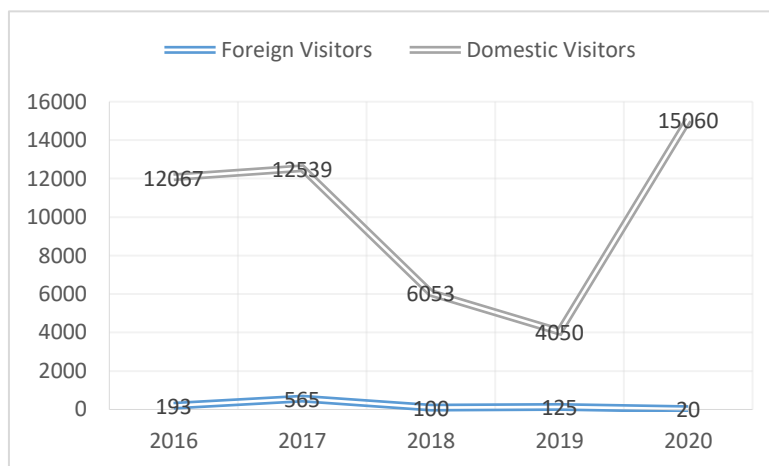
The high number of visits to TNGR before it was designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark shows that Rinjani is well known by both foreign and domestic tourists. The *branding* of Rinjani has been worldwide. The number of foreign tourist visits to Rinjani is so high. The trend shows that the majority of TNGR visitors come for climbing. The gap in numbers between the climbing and non-climbing visitors are very wide. In addition, the trend also shows that in 2017, a year before the recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark, the number of foreign visitors for climbing Rinjani was very large, greater than domestic.



Graphic 2

Data on Mount Rinjani Climbing Visits in 2016-2020

Source: Mount Rinjani National Park (2021) and Data Processing Results (2021)



Graphic 3

Data on Mount Rinjani Non-Climbing Visits in 2016-2020

Source: Mount Rinjani National Park (2021) and Data Processing Results (2021)

The large number of visitors shows that tourism activities in the Rinjani geopark had been running, even though it had not been recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The stakeholders in tourism development knew and understood the meaning of tourism. Based on the collected data, the understanding of tourism stakeholders is still limited to traditional tourism, in which the measure of successful tourism is the number of visits. They don't yet have a comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism development, in this case geotourism development. The authors also took into account the *statements* from policy makers when establishing the RLUGG area. In addition to the *statement* from the then General Manager of Geopark—which has been mentioned earlier, Muhammad Faozal, the then Head Head of the Tourism Office of NTB, also



stated that the recognition of Rinjani as a geopark made the area more global and the number of tourist visits grow, and created a ripple effect through all involved parties (Setia, 2018). The *statement* still indicates the concept of tourism oriented to the quantity of tourist visits.

This shows a gap. While the community and stakeholders still uphold traditional (non-geopark) tourism development, the government, in this case the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy / Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, states that geopark is developed within sustainable tourism development. Geopark development is expected to provide a stimulus to economic activity and sustainable development through geotourism development. Geotourism development has a different purpose from non-geotourism development and of course it has a different implementation and tourism development as well.

The development of non-geotourism, which has been established for a long time in the Rinjani Lombok Geopark area, aims to increase tourist visits as high as possible (mass tourism). However, that is not the goal of geotourism development. According to Dowling (2013), geotourism is a new form of tourism based on the geological environment. Geotourism is defined as tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis of fostering sustainable tourism development. Geotourism is a form of special interest tourism where it focuses on the geological appearance of Earth's face to encourage people's understanding of culture and environment, appreciation, conservation, and concern for the preservation of local wisdom (Ginting & Sasmita, 2018; Wood, 2002). The term geotourism was first introduced by Tom Hose who in 1996 published an article entitled "*Geotourism or can tourists become casual rock hounds: Geology on your doorstep*" (Dirgantara, 2012). In the context of sustainable tourism, geotourism can be considered an alternative to mass tourism, in terms of a tourism *niche* that represent a conservation-oriented tourism area (Pásková & Zelenka, 2018).

### **Stakeholders' Understanding of Geotourism Development in RLUGGp**

Based on the findings, the authors sought to describe the gaps by interviewing several informants, the representatives of each stakeholder in the geotourism development in RLUGGp. Putrawan Habibi, the Head of Institute for Research and Community Service (LP2M) of Mataram Tourism Academy (Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Mataram), who is part of the pentahelix element in the development of Rinjani-Lombok geopark, states that the understanding of the parties involved in the geotourism development is still low, even for managers at village or district level, let alone the community. They do not yet have knowledge about sustainable tourism development, in this case geotourism. This is supported by Bq. Sri Mulya, the Head of Sembalun-Nina Community, who states that the low understanding of sustainable tourism development is not only at the level of ordinary people, but also policy makers. This is evident in tourism development, which is still partial both at the policy and technical levels.

In addition, Hamka Abdul Malik, an initiator of Seven Summit Sembalun and the Chairperson of the Association of East Lombok Rinjani Climbing Entrepreneurs, states that in general the people at the foot of Mount Rinjani, particularly Sembalun, are still confused by tourism development concepts derived from other regions/abroad. In fact, according to Hamka, they have long applied tourism development based on the principles of conservation. However, the flood of information, either from the media or incomprehensive and unintegrated tourism development programs, eventually creates confusion and bias in the community.

Abd Haris Agam, the owner of a *trekking organizer*, adds that there has been socialization of geotourism development, but the *transfer of knowledge* was only received by certain people. As a result, the distribution of information and continuity has not yet occurred, and thereby the

principles of geotourism cannot be implemented in tourism management in the Rinjani Geopark area, especially in Sembalun.

The data from these informants are supported by data from an interview with and observation on the owner of a climbing *basecamp* in Sembalun who expresses his ignorance about geopark, sustainable tourism, and geotourism. Let alone implementing the concepts in his daily activities when interacting with tourists, he does not even have knowledge and understanding of geopark, sustainable tourism, and geotourism. "What is it, ma'am? I have *no idea*." That was the spontaneous answer of an owner of a climbing *basecamp*, which is also a *guide* in an area of the RLUGGp, who did not wish to be identified.

The authors also interviewed a resident of RLUGGp. When the interview was conducted, the informant was studying at the Travel Department, semester 1 of the Diploma 3 Program at the Mataram Tourism Academy. The female student was born and raised in Sajang Village, a village at the foot of Mount Rinjani and part of the RLUGGp area. When the authors tried to open a discussion with her about the concepts of sustainable tourism, geopark, and geotourism, they got a very unexpected response. It turned out that she, who was a student at the Tourism Academy and has lived in a tourist destination since birth, did not know and understand the tourism concepts that the researchers put forward.

These findings indicate that the problem of *transfer of knowledge* about tourism concepts to apply in RLUGGp development should be everyone's *concern*. Moreover, the tourism concepts to develop are of the sustainable one in the form of geotourism, which includes *educational aspect* in its development. Therefore, a deeper analysis on the communication problems in RLUGGp is needed. The results of this research will certainly be useful for solving the problems and may provide recommendations for policy makers to develop integrated programs according to the needs.

### **The Communication Problems**

Based on data from interviews, observations, and documents related to geopark management as well as literature review on previous studies and relevant books, the authors found two communication problems in the geotourism development and management in RLUGGp. In terms of quantity, there are only two problems. However, after *breaking them down*, the two are the sources of other problems. The two are cross-sectoral communication problems among the stakeholders of geotourism development and misconceptions about geotourism development in the RLUGGp. Illustrated with a model, the analysis of communication problems in the management of RLUGGp is shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1 illustrates that after being recognized as a UGGp, Rinjani Geopark faces many social problems. Two major problems are earthquakes in 2018 and covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to present. However, at the strategic level policies are implemented as an effort to develop geoparks, both at national and regional scales. Nationally, the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 9/2019, which was responded to by the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy / Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2/2020 on technical guidelines for developing geoparks as tourist destinations. Regionally, prior to the issuance of the two policies, the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara had issued Decree No. 51/2018 on the Management Agency of Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark.

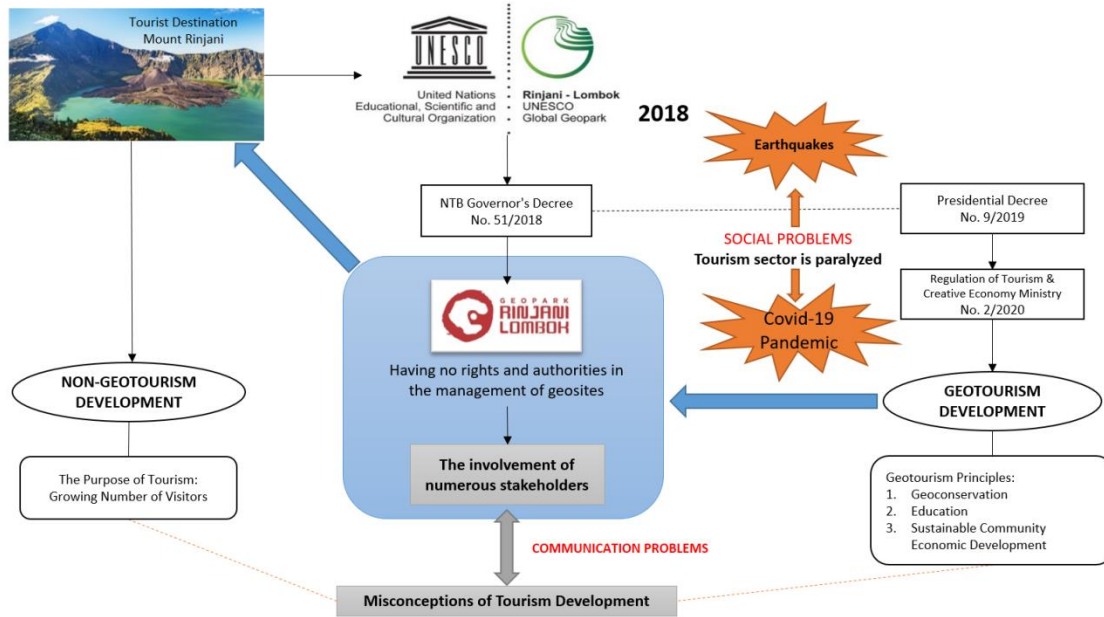


Diagram 1

Model of Analysis of Communication Problems in Geotourism Development in RLUGGp  
 Source: Research Data (2021) and Data Processing Results (2021)

The NTB Governor's Decree was issued in response to the recognition of Rinjani-Lombok as a UNESCO Global Geopark, implying that every development in the geopark must comply with UNESCO global criteria. The Management Agency was founded as a technical implementer of development programs in the RLUGGp. One of which is to develop the geopark as a tourist destination. Tourism development must be in accordance with sustainable tourism development, and thus it is specifically called geotourism. The development and purpose of geotourism is absolutely different from that of general (traditional) tourism. The principles of geotourism are geoconservation, education, and sustainable community economic development. This is different from that of general tourism, which is mass-oriented. As stated by Pásková & Zelenka (2018), in terms of sustainability, geotourism can be considered an alternative to mass tourism, or it can be said that it is a tourism *niche*. In terms of implementation, misconceptions arise among stakeholders in the management of geotourism in the RLUGGp.

In addition, the establishment of a Management Agency to plan, coordinate, and implement strategic policies are practically not working well since it does not have any rights or authorities over all areas of the RLUGGp. This is that the areas have their own stakeholders or owners, and thus they have their own development and management regulations. Therefore, the RLUGGp Management Agency needs to coordinate and collaborate with the stakeholders of every area included in the RLUGGp delineation. Communication is the key in the coordination and collaboration of every program implementation related to geopark development, one of which is geotourism.

From these two problems, the authors see that a deeper study on inter-stakeholder communication in the management of RLUGGp is needed. In addition, an intensive communication is needed for diffusing the concept of geotourism development, which is still unfamiliar to and not understood by these stakeholders. Noel Scoot, Chris Cooper, and Rodolfo Baggio in *Advance in Tourism Marketing Conference (ATMC)* in Valencia, Spain on 10–12

September 2007, in their article entitled "*Use of Network Analysis in Tourism Research*" state that the application of network in the context of tourism will provide many advantages. This is because the use of network analysis opens up the complexities and also anticipates and analyzes the possible *chaos* in tourism. In addition, a network study of the tourists and their friends and acquaintances can show how they behave during their visits and can influence this behavior (Scoot et al. 2007).

## **CONCLUSION**

The geotourism development in the RLUGGp is the right decision since it does not merely offer natural wealth and beauty. Cultural and social factors of the community in the geopark area are the main attractions to manage and develop it. Developing RLUGGp into a tourist destination, in this case geotourism, is complex. Not only to provide a travel experience for visitors, but also to encourage the conservation of geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity, as well as to encourage community and regional economic growth through community empowerment.

The results indicate two communication problems in geotourism development in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark: many parties involve in geopark management because the RLUGGp Management Agency does not have the rights and authorities in geosite management, and there are misconceptions about geotourism development, which is based on sustainable tourism development. All stakeholders of RLUGGp must keep a good communication management because it will be the center of an effective management of RLUGGp. In addition, geotourism management as a sustainable tourism should be massively socialized by the authorities and the credible parties. The Management Body of RLUGGp is the first and foremost party to do it.

## **LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD**

The topic of this article is a preliminary research for the preparation of one of the authors' dissertation. This research only explored the communication problems in the management of Rinjani Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (RLUGGp), particularly geotourism development in Sembalun Geosite in East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Two communication problems that the authors found was solely originated from Sembalun geosite. This is a limitation of this study. Thus, the authors cannot generalize them as the problems of RLUGGp as a whole. Accordingly, research on communication problems in other RLUGGp geosites will be beneficial. Moreover, considering the topography, Sembalun geosite is located in a plateau. This may affect the characteristics of the community, which will be different from those of the coastal or lowland community. So if a similar study will be conducted, a coastal or lowland geosite will be an interesting option for the research site. Thereof, the authors can obtain comparison data of problems in RLUGGp lowland and highland geosites.

Since this study is a preliminary research of a dissertation, the authors will explore the communication network in the management of RLUGGp in their following research. Thereof, they expect to contribute to solve two communication problems they have found so far in order to make the management of RLUGGp more effective.

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