

Communication strategies of environmental activists in conducting sustainable environmental awareness campaigns

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Abstract. Environmental issues have become a global concern that requires collaborative efforts to address effectively. Despite various initiatives, public awareness and participation have not yet effectively protected the environment. This study aims to identify and analyze communication strategies used by environmentalists in environmental awareness campaigns, as well as their impact on increasing public participation and awareness. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews with 16 informants who had an active role in environmental campaigns, including community leaders, environmental cadres, volunteers, and youth environmental activists. Participatory observation is carried out to directly understand the dynamics and implementation of communication strategies in the field. The results of the study show that communication strategies that integrate spiritual approaches, local culture, and concrete actions have succeeded in increasing people's environmental awareness. Activities such as joint prayer, shadaqah bumi (earth charity), grief compensation, cleaning the residents' environment, planting trees, and the Tamsiruga program (plant, water, care for, and protect) create a sense of collective responsibility and emotional attachment to the environment. Approaches based on local wisdom, such as the use of the terms shadaqah bumi and Tamsiruga, make the campaign more relevant and easily accepted by the community. However, this campaign also faces challenges in the form of financial limitations and difficulties in inviting apathetic people. The study concludes that community approaches based on local values, spirituality, and direct involvement are highly effective in building sustainable environmental awareness. The recommendations of this study include the need for stronger collaboration between environmental activists, governments, and communities to strengthen the sustainability of campaigns.

1 Introduction

The role of environmentalists in this campaign is very important, given that they are the main actors who bridge information between scientists and the general public [1]. Environmentalists not only act as information disseminators, but also as facilitators of change

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by encouraging communities to act proactively in environmental conservation efforts [2]. They utilize various media, both traditional such as television and radio, as well as digital media such as social media, to reach a wider audience [3]. Digital media, especially social media, is an effective platform in attracting the attention of the younger generation and encouraging them to engage in campaigns [4].

In addition to using digital media, many environmental activists also apply a direct approach through community education programs, training, and advocacy activities [5]. This approach aims to create a closer relationship between environmental activists and local communities, so that the message conveyed is more relevant and easy to receive [6]. For example, reforestation campaigns that involve local residents planting trees together can increase direct participation and strengthen a sense of belonging to the environment [7]. Emphasized that participatory strategies like this are more effective in building awareness and motivating collective action because the community feels involved and has an active role in protecting the environment [8].

However, the implementation of environmental awareness campaigns also faces significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the low level of community participation in the campaign [9]. Although the information conveyed through various media has become more widespread, there are still many people who are apathetic or do not have adequate access to information [10]. Another obstacle is the existence of skepticism or rejection of environmental messages due to the influence of disinformation spread on social media [11]. This challenge is further complicated by the limited resources owned by environmental activists, both in terms of funding and labor [12].

In the face of these challenges, it is important to take a deeper look at effective communication strategies for environmentalists [13]. Community-based participatory approaches are often more successful in raising awareness and changing people's behavior [14]. This approach involves the community directly in the planning and implementation of campaigns, so that they are not only recipients of information, but also active actors who contribute to environmental conservation efforts [15].

Further research is needed to identify the most effective communication techniques and methods for environmentalists in addressing these challenge. This research aims to delve deeper into how environmentalists design and implement sustainable environmental awareness campaigns, as well as their impact on changing people's behavior. In addition, the study will also analyze the factors that affect the effectiveness of the campaign, including the type of media used, the approach applied, and the involvement of other stakeholders such as the government, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations.

The research is also expected to provide new insights into innovative strategies that environmentalists can implement to optimize the impact of their campaigns. For example, the use of augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) technology in environmental campaigns can provide a more immersive interactive experience and interest the public. In addition, collaboration between environmentalists and social media influencers who have a large following base can also be an effective strategy to expand the reach of campaigns and create a wider impact.

Ultimately, the study aims not only to understand effective communication strategies, but also to provide recommendations that environmentalists can implement in future campaign efforts. The results of this study are expected to provide a solid basis for more strategic and measurable campaign planning, so as to be able to create positive and sustainable behavior change among the community. Thus, environmental awareness campaigns are not just a momentary activity, but a collective movement that continues to grow to protect and preserve the environment for a better future.

2 Literature review

2.1 Definition and importance of environmental campaigns

A sustainable environmental campaign is defined as a series of activities designed to raise awareness and encourage community action on environmental issues that are essential for the sustainability of human life and ecosystems. This campaign includes various efforts, ranging from education, promotion of environmentally friendly actions, to policy advocacy that supports environmental conservation. According to Biancardi et al., sustainability campaigns are designed to not only educate, but also engage communities in environmental practices that support long-term sustainability.

The benefits of environmental campaigns are very significant in changing people's behavior towards a more environmentally friendly life. Through the campaign, the community is not only informed but also invited to think critically about the impact of daily activities on the environment. Emphasized that sustainable environmental campaigns have the potential to create lasting behaviors, especially if the messages conveyed can arouse people's emotional and moral awareness. Study by Sun et al. shows that successful environmental campaigns can lower resource consumption levels and increase the use of renewable energy.

Furthermore, sustainable environmental campaigns can be an important driver in strengthening government policies and environmental regulations. For example environmental campaigns involving governments and non-governmental organizations can accelerate the implementation of policies that support the environment, such as reducing carbon emissions and conserving natural resources. The policy support generated from environmental campaigns can also have a sustainable long-term impact, as it raises awareness at all levels of society.

2.2 Environmental communication strategy

In designing environmental campaigns, communication strategies play a crucial role in reaching a wider audience and creating a significant impact. An environmental communication strategy involves an approach designed to convey a message in a way that is easy to understand, emotional, and motivates the audience to participate. Environmental communication theories include narrative approaches, the use of visual media, and the delivery of messages tailored to the social values of the audience. Emphasized that the narrative approach is effective in conveying the message because it allows the audience to feel an emotional connection with the message conveyed.

Some relevant communication theories in environmental campaigns include persuasive communication models and participatory approaches. The persuasive communication model emphasizes the importance of packaging environmental messages in an engaging and relevant way, so that the audience feels moved to act. On the other hand, the participatory approach involves the audience as part of the campaign itself, by inviting them to participate in environmental activities such as tree planting or environmental clean-up. This approach reinforces a sense of belonging and responsibility for the environment.

The effectiveness of environmental communication is influenced by several important factors. First, choosing the right media for a campaign greatly affects the reach and reception of the message by the audience. For example, social media is considered effective in reaching out to the younger generation who are more open to environmental issues. Second, the message conveyed needs to be adapted to the cultural and social context of the audience so that it can be well received. Another influential factor is trust in the source of the message.

Studies show that audiences tend to receive more messages from credible environmentalists or institutions.

2.3 The role of environmental activists

Environmental activists play the role of agents of change in environmental conservation efforts. They act as a bridge between scientists and the general public, simplifying scientific information to make it easier for the wider public to understand. Environmental activists also play a role in raising public awareness by educating them through relevant and touching campaigns. The environmentalists are often leaders in real action, such as organizing reforestation activities, environmental cleanups, or plastic waste reduction campaigns.

In running campaigns, environmental activists face various challenges, such as limited funding, low community participation, and resistance to change. In addition, they also often face disinformation spread on social media, which can affect people's acceptance of environmental messages. Environmentalists need to address these challenges with innovative communication strategies, such as the use of digital technology to reach a wider audience.

Despite the challenges, there are also great opportunities for environmentalists in environmental campaigns. Technological developments, such as social media and communication apps, allow them to interact directly with the public and reach global audiences more easily. In addition, increasing public awareness of environmental issues also opens up opportunities to strengthen environmental campaigns, especially through collaboration with government agencies and private organizations. Through these collaborations, environmentalists can expand the impact of their campaigns and create broader and sustainable change.

3 Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore communication strategies in environmental awareness campaigns implemented by environmental activists. This qualitative approach is effective for delving deeply into individual experiences, perceptions, and practices, which in this context allows for a broader understanding of communication methods and the challenges faced in environmental campaigns. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with 16 informants involved in environmental campaigns in Ciputat District, South Tangerang City, Banten Province, including community leaders, neighborhood leaders, cleaners, TPS3R (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Waste Processing Place) officers, residents who are active as volunteers, representatives from sub-districts and sub-districts, environmental cadres, youth environmental activists, and waste collectors. The selection of these varied informants aims to gain diverse and rich perspectives, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of campaign strategies on the ground.

In addition to interviews, participatory observation techniques are also applied to see the application of communication strategies in real conditions. Participatory observation allows researchers to interact directly with the situation on the ground and observe how environmentalists convey messages and how communities respond. Researchers participate in several environmental campaign activities, such as clean-up campaigns, tree planting, and waste management socialization, to understand the direct interaction between environmental activists and the community. In addition, social media analytics are conducted by monitoring campaign activity on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp Groups (WAGs) where environmentalists often share campaign content and interact with their audiences. This analysis includes monitoring the content of uploads, user interactions, and public sentiment towards campaigns.

The collected data is analyzed using the thematic analysis method, which is a qualitative data analysis technique to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes in the data. This thematic analysis involves the process of coding data to identify key themes related to communication strategies, challenges, and effectiveness of environmental campaigns. Each theme that emerges from the data of interviews, observations, and social media analysis is coded and organized to find relevant patterns that reflect environmental communication practices effectively. The findings of this thematic analysis are expected to provide insight into the factors that affect the success of the campaign as well as communication strategies that can increase environmental awareness among the community.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Communication strategies used

In environmental awareness campaigns, environmentalists implement various effective communication strategies with a community approach, which combines spiritual, local culture, and concrete actions. One of the main strategies is a joint prayer activity, which is carried out at every environmental commemoration to build a collective commitment to preserving nature. This joint prayer involves religious and community leaders, creating a strong bond between humans, nature, and God. A community leader, referred to as Informant 1, explained, *"Through joint prayer, we feel reminded of our relationship with nature, and how our every action impacts the surrounding environment."* Through this activity, people feel more connected to nature and more responsible in caring for it, making spiritual values a foundation that strengthens environmental awareness.

In addition, shadaqah bumi activities carried out through mass environmental clean-up actions have become a strong strategy in increasing public awareness. This activity invites residents to see environmental cleanliness as a form of social charity that is in line with religious values. *"Shadaqah bumi makes us feel that we have a direct responsibility to maintain the cleanliness of the environment. Cleanliness is not only the responsibility of the government but our collective obligation,"* said Informant 2, an environmental cadre mother. By involving diverse elements of society, including youth, mothers, and religious leaders, this action reinforces the message that maintaining a clean environment is part of faith and shared responsibility. This approach has proven effective in increasing the awareness of the community, who are now increasingly actively participating in environmental cleanup activities.

Environmental activists also show appreciation through mourning compensation activities to the families of environmental warriors who have passed away, as a form of respect and solidarity. This momentum is not only a form of appreciation but also an inspiration for other residents to continue the struggle in protecting the environment. *"We want the public to know that every contribution to the environment is valuable and will always be appreciated, even if the person is gone,"* said Informant 3, an environmental activist. Through this grief compensation, people are increasingly inspired to get involved in environmental efforts, feeling that their contributions will be appreciated by the community. This strengthens social ties in society and instills awareness that efforts to protect the environment are part of the heritage that must be safeguarded together.

Another strategy implemented is the cleanliness of the residents' environment, routine activities that involve the community in maintaining environmental cleanliness on environmental days, such as National Waste Care Day. *"By participating in environmental cleanup activities, I am more aware of the importance of maintaining cleanliness, and I feel that our environment is also neater and more comfortable,"* said Informant 4, a young

volunteer. This activity not only educates the community but also teaches the culture of mutual cooperation. The direct involvement of residents in this activity makes the campaign message stronger and more memorable because they not only hear but also feel the direct benefits of a clean and comfortable environment.

Environmentalists also carry out tree planting activities and distribute compost, which focuses on sustainable greening. This program is held in strategic locations, such as green open spaces and other public areas, and involves various community groups. *"By planting trees together, I feel that I am contributing to maintaining the balance of the environment,"* said Informant 5, a young environmental activist. In addition, activities for compost produced from organic waste reinforce the message about recycling and the importance of reducing waste. This approach has a long-term impact that not only maintains the balance of the ecosystem but also increases public awareness of the importance of greening.

The Tamsiruga Strategy (Plant, Water, Care, and Care) is an initiative that educates the public about sustainable plant care. Through this program, the community is not only invited to plant trees but also to care for and maintain the plants after planting. *"We not only plant trees, but also take care of them. This tree is our responsibility,"* said Informant 6, an environmental cadre mother. The Tamsiruga campaign instills a long-term commitment in communities to take care of the crops they have grown, thereby providing a sustainable impact on the environment and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

In addition, environmentalists integrate local wisdom in the campaign by using cultural terms such as shadaqah bumi and Tamsiruga, which makes the campaign more relevant to the local community. *"When we use local terms, this campaign becomes more accepted and understood by the community,"* said Informant 7, a community leader. With this local values-based approach, people feel that protecting the environment is part of their identity and culture, not just an additional obligation. This creates a sense of ownership towards environmental conservation efforts.

4.2 Challenges in campaign implementation

Although the communication strategies used are quite effective, environmental activists face challenges in inviting the community to participate consistently. This barrier to participation mainly comes from segments of society that are apathetic or less concerned about environmental issues. An environmental activist, referred to as Informant 8, stated, *"There are some residents who still consider environmental activities unimportant, because they are more focused on their daily needs."* This challenge shows that environmental activists need to convey campaign messages in a more relevant and personal way so that people feel connected and care about the environmental impact in their daily lives.

In addition, this campaign also faces financial and logistical constraints. *"Our funds are limited, so we have to be good at organizing activities so that they can continue to run,"* said Informant 9, an environmental activist. Many activities require resources such as cleaning tools, tree seedlings, and equipment for compost distribution, which requires large costs. Limited funds often limit the scale and frequency of activities, making it difficult to reach the entire community. Logistical constraints, such as transportation to campaign locations that are far away or difficult to access, are also an obstacle. However, despite the limitations, environmental activists continue to strive to gather support from the community and local government to ensure the sustainability of the campaign.

4.3 The impact of the campaign on public awareness

The campaign carried out by environmental activists has succeeded in creating positive changes in people's behavior and knowledge about the environment. *"Now, residents are*

becoming aware of reducing plastic waste and using compost in their yards," said Informant 10, a resident involved in the campaign. Activities such as joint prayer, earth shadaqah, and tree planting have succeeded in instilling an understanding that protecting the environment is part of daily life. The results of the interviews show that more and more residents are starting to adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as reducing the use of plastics, recycling waste, and participating in greening.

The effectiveness of communication strategies is evident in the high participation and involvement of the community in various campaign activities. The spirituality and local culture-based approach makes the campaign more acceptable because it feels relevant to the values of the community. As Informant 11 said, *"When this campaign is in line with our religious and cultural teachings, of course the community is more willing to get involved."* Activities such as *shadaqah bumi* and *Tamsiruga* have succeeded in changing people's perspectives on the environment, fostering a greater sense of responsibility in caring for the surrounding environment. This strategy shows that an approach that prioritizes local values can significantly increase environmental awareness.

Overall, this campaign has a significant impact in increasing people's environmental awareness. The community is now more aware of the importance of protecting the environment and is actively involved in activities that support environmental conservation. This success shows that community-based approaches, spirituality, and local values are very effective in increasing community participation in environmental campaigns. Despite the challenges of participation and financial constraints, the strategies implemented were able to overcome these obstacles and prove that environmental campaigns can bring real change in society.

5 Discussion

The results of this study show that communication strategies implemented by environmental activists have a significant impact on increasing public awareness and participation in environmental conservation efforts. Some key strategies, such as activities *Prayer Together*, *shadaqah bumi*, *Grief Compensation*, and a reforestation campaign through *Tamsiruga* and *Plant trees* and the distribution of compost, have succeeded in increasing environmental awareness in the community. These findings are in line with the concept outlined by Rishi & Mudawild, which emphasizes the importance of a spiritual and community value-based approach in environmental campaigns to create deep emotional engagement among communities. In this context, *Prayer Together* and *shadaqah Bumi* not only being a spiritual activity, but also an effective means of strengthening social bonds and a sense of collective responsibility towards the environment.

In addition, approaches based on local wisdom, such as the term *Shadaqah Bomi* and *Tamsiruga*, have proven to be effective in increasing campaign receipts in the community. This is in line with the opinion Gong, which states that environmental communication strategies tailored to local cultural values are more acceptable and relevant to audiences. The concept of using local values is also supported by research Purani & Jeesha, which found that community-based campaigns and cultural values are highly effective because people feel that they are in line with their identities and values. Through a campaign that is integrated with local culture, environmental activists in this study have succeeded in making environmental conservation efforts part of community traditions, not just foreign obligations.

Other strategies, such as *Clean the Residents' Environment* and *Plant trees*, showing success in increasing direct community participation, especially at the moment of commemoration of environmental days such as National Waste Care Day and World Clean Up Day. The direct participation of the community in this activity strengthens the results of the research Núñez-Barriopedro et al., where real actions in campaign activities have a

stronger influence than just through the delivery of information. Through concrete action, people not only get informed, but also engage in hands-on experiences that drive long-term behavior change. These results are consistent with research Irani et al., which found that active participation in environmental campaigns directly increased community engagement and sense of responsibility.

However, while these communication strategies have succeeded in raising awareness and participation, major challenges remain in terms of limited funding and uneven participation. This is in line with the findings O'Leary et al., which identified financial constraints as one of the biggest obstacles to environmental campaigns, especially when campaigns must cover a wide and diverse area. This research shows that despite the limitations, environmental activists continue to innovate by rallying support from local governments and communities to maintain the sustainability of the campaign. This approach is in line with the advice Nguyen & Hamasaki regarding the importance of collaboration between environmental activists and related parties to strengthen the implementation of the campaign.

In addition, the existence of apathetic or less caring segments of society shows that communication strategies need to be adjusted to be more relevant and personal for hard-to-reach audiences. Research findings by Chen et al. emphasizing the importance of a more personalized approach in conveying environmental messages to people who are not directly affected by environmental issues. In the context of this research, environmental activists can consider developing more specific small programs according to the needs of communities that have not been actively involved, so that the campaign can reach a wider range of people.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that communication strategies that integrate spiritual approaches, local wisdom, and concrete actions have high effectiveness in increasing public awareness and involvement in environmental campaigns. This is in line with the concepts outlined in the literature review, where community-based approaches, local values, and direct involvement have been shown to be able to create positive and sustainable behavioral change. The results of this study emphasize that to achieve wider success, environmentalists need to continue to strengthen community-based strategies, pay attention to financial limitations, and develop more personalized communication for hard-to-reach communities.

6 Conclusions

This study shows that communication strategies implemented by environmentalists, which combine spiritual approaches, local cultural values, and concrete actions, have proven to be effective in increasing public awareness and participation in environmental conservation. Activities such as *joint prayer*, *earth shadaqah*, *grief compensation*, *cleaning the residents' environment*, *planting trees*, and *the Tamsiruga program* have succeeded in building a sense of collective responsibility and emotional attachment of the community to the environment. Approaches based on local wisdom, such as the terms *shadaqah bumi* and *Tamsiruga*, also facilitate the acceptance of the campaign because these values are in line with the culture of the community.

Despite its success in raising awareness, the campaign faces several challenges, especially in overcoming financial constraints and difficulties in engaging apathetic segments of society. This obstacle requires continuous innovation in communication strategies and stronger collaboration with the government and related parties to ensure the sustainability of the campaign. Overall, the study underscores that community-based communication strategies, which consider spiritual, local cultural, and tangible aspects of action, are an effective approach to building environmental awareness in a sustainable manner. These results provide insight that environmentalists can continue to develop and adapt their

strategies to be more inclusive and have a broad impact, to create positive and sustainable behavior change in society.

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