

# Tourism Communication in Community Based Tourism in Dieng Community, Central Java, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

To encourage a community's role in the field of tourism, the local government of Central Java, Indonesia promotes a Community Based Tourism (CBT) as a tourism development for the sustainable economy. It involves the community in decision-making processes, especially related to the acquisition of income, employment, and the preservation of the environment, and culture of the indigenous people. This research aimed to determine communication activities in the implementation of CBT. The theory used was tourism communication using Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (AIDA) model. Then, the method was a case study by choosing Dieng as a tourist destination, and the tourism communication activities were undertaken in Dieng's society, especially in the activities of Dieng Culture Festival (DCF). The results show that the tourism communication activities involving the community, POKDARWIS (Kelompok Sadar Wisata - Tourism Awareness Group), tourism advocates, and local governments should pay attention to the cultural and natural tourism potentials, and empower the local communities.

**Keywords:** tourism communication, Community Based Tourism (CBT), Dieng Culture Festival (DCF), AIDA approach

## INTRODUCTION

Dieng plateau, located in Wonosobo, Central Java, Indonesia, has the charm of tourism which is not inferior to other areas scattered throughout Indonesia. Various arts and cultural products, handicrafts, and typical local food exist in Dieng. Through the annual cultural festival known as Dieng Culture Festival (DCF), it presents a variety of art and cultural performances, and an exhibition of Dieng's finest products. The pinnacle is the dreadlock kids' ritual ceremony (Ruwatan Anak Gembel/Gimbal).

DCF is pioneered by a tourism awareness group (POKDARWIS) of Dieng Kulon, Batur, Banjarnegara, Central Java. This cultural event is an activity to preserve the culture and tradition and to promote the potentials of natural and cultural tourism in Dieng, Central Java. Geographically, Dieng is located in the area of Wonosobo. The location is in Figure 1.

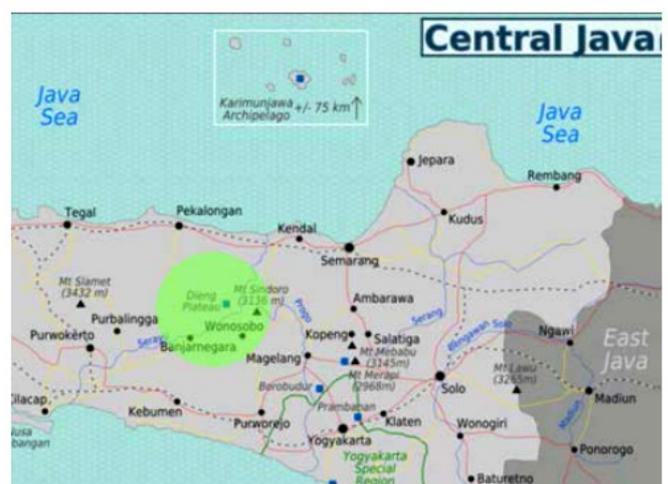


Figure 1 Location of Dieng Culture Festival (DCF)

DCF is an annual cultural festival to promote Dieng as a tourism destination (tourism village). The increasing numbers of tourists are expected to propel the economic fundamentals of Dieng society. Hence, tourism activity could be one of the alternatives to improve the welfare of society. DCF is also a preservation effort of cultural activities which is environmentally friendly, and exploration of the potential of tourism, socio-economic community by involving all elements of society according to the program of Community Based Tourism (CBT). Then, DCF can become the pride of the Dieng society which has unique cultural diversity and also maintains the environmental sustainability. In 2016, DCF used "The Soul of Culture" as its theme. It means that every culture contains intangible knowledge and becomes a good resource for human's life. DCF is a cultural festival with the concept of synergy between the elements of local culture, natural tourism potential of Dieng, and the empowerment of the local community. The performance of the traditional and contemporary art is displayed in this cultural festival with the aim of involving all elements of society to promote the creation of community economy.

CBT emphasizes the central role of local communities in tourism and has a larger correlation with community development than other forms of tourism (Tolkach, 2013). According to Tolkach (2013), the majority of CBT initiatives are small scale, rural, or regional, and partially owned and managed by the community to deliver community benefits. It aims to support the community development and to improve the livelihoods of local residents. In some instances, tourism initiatives in community settings are 'top-down,' and in others are 'bottom-up.' CBT has common attributes. It aims to benefit local communities, particularly rural or indigenous people or people in small towns by contributing to their well-being and the well-being of their cultural and environmental assets, host tourists in the local community, manage a tourism scheme communally, share the profits or benefits equitably, use a portion of the profits or resources for community development to maintain and protect a community's cultural or natural heritage asset (e.g. conservation), and involve communities in tourism planning, on-going decision making, development and operations. (APEC Tourism Working Group, 2010).

According to APEC Tourism Working Group (2010), CBT may enhance social sustainability by empowering local communities to manage their resources, providing meaningful employment, and assisting with capacity building and cultural preservation. Environmental benefits include income generation for communities to actively protect their land from degradation and enhance conservation efforts to attract tourists, especially about eco-tourism initiatives.

If CBT can work effectively, it can have several benefits. For example, it supports local economic development through diversification of employment

which is financially viable, respects and encourages equitable participation of the local community, and is ecologically sustainable and minimizes the impact on the environment. Moreover, it can conserve and promote living cultural heritage and welfare, educate visitors about culture and nature, demonstrate good management practices, and ensure a qualified and safe experience for all of the individuals involved.

According to Mulyana (2000), communication functions as a social communication hinting that it is important to build self-concept, self-actualization, survival, happiness. It also avoids the stress and strain among others through communication that is entertaining, and to cultivate relationships with others. Tourism activities cannot be separated from the process of social communication involving all elements in society. To maintain continuity of human life, people must communicate with others. Effective communication will benefit all the people who communicate. The characteristics of effective communication are providing practical information, giving the fact of being delivered, clarifying and summarizing information, saying something specific, and persuading others and offering recommendations (Bungin, 2015).

The success of development in the tourism cannot be separated from the community in that field which is an object and subject of development itself. Development as a process of social change aims to improve the whole quality of life or the majority of the people without ruining the environment and cultural places. The society is trying to involve many members of the community in this effort and make them determine their goals. (Dilla, 2007). When using a community-based tourism development approach it is relevant to understand the stakeholders sense of place, or place attachment, i.e. how the residents feel about their community and also what they do in that community such as how they engage visitors, each other, and natural resources (Amsden, Stedman, & Kruger, 2010).

Community participation in tourism activities can determine the outcome of the tourism activity itself. One strategy used is Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (AIDA) approach. This approach explains that a tourism activity should draw the attention of communicators, so it will generate interest and desire to be involved in the activities. Local community participation is needed in building a tourism village by holding various community activities to sustain the program. It is a program which is capable of improving the quality of life.

Then, sustainable tourism business is a business of community empowerment. The public is fully involved in tourism activities proposed. The programs run in a sustainable manner which should involve the community. Even the benefit from the activities should be perceived by the public so that people get economic added value and people can support themselves through tourism activities. Therefore, the community must be empowered. Then, they can change things especially

the economic conditions. According to Shardlow in Adi (2003), empowerment discusses how individuals, groups or communities try to control their lives and shape the future in accordance with their wishes.

The involvement of individuals, groups, and communities drives the success of a development program. Society is instrumental in supporting the success of a program so that local communities should be encouraged to become an important part of the implementation of the program. Local community development is a process that is to create social and economic progress for society through active participation and initiative of community members (Edi, 2005).

Through communication, the awareness from individuals, groups, and society should be built to decrease the poverty and unemployment level. According to Dilla (2007), the society must perform a development as a process of social change aimed at increasing the life quality of all or majority of the people without ruining the local environment and culture. Moreover, local communities should be seen as the community that has potential in developing their region. Each has potential, but not everyone is aware of it. This potential should be encouraged to be more valuable in the development of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, Sumodiningrat (1996) said that the empowerment of community could be performed in three ways. Those were creating an atmosphere or climate that allows the potential for developing society, strengthening the potential or community-owned power (empowering), and preventing the weak to be weaker.

In tourism activity, participation can include the community in promoting economic growth. According to Harun and Ardianto (2011), participation is an empowerment process to the community so that they are given the authority to organize and give opinions for their development.

Therefore, tourism climate must be created to reflect the dynamics of the community, so the potential of each region could be seen as well. The potential that exists in the community should also be encouraged. Then, sustainable tourism development cannot be denied from involving the community; they can feel the impact directly. The sustainability should be maintained while competing in the various fields of business to provide a great passion for improving the welfare of local communities.

Hall (1996) in Blackstock (2005) said CBT focused on the involvement of the host community in planning and maintaining tourism development to create a more sustainable industry. It is the concept of sustainable economic development of tourism by involving the community in its implementation of whole things. Therefore, in the development of tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged to provide goods and services to the visitors. Moreover, community involvement is a process to empower people through tourism and to improve the well-being of the social, economic and

development. Thus, Hardy, Beeton, and Pearson (2002) in Fong and Lo (2015) said that local communities' involvement in decision making process was the key element in sustaining the cultural products in a tourist destination.

The World Bank states that the concept of CBT involves the community in many ways especially in the decision-making process. It is particularly related to the acquisition of income, employment, and the preservation of the environment and the culture of the indigenous people which in turn foster self-identity and pride of the local population to grow the tourism activities. CBT is also an implementation of the democratic economy in the real sector of the community by the community and for the community. ASEAN Community Based Tourism defines CBT as tourism activity which community owns, operates, manages, or coordinates at the community level. It contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued social-cultural traditions, and natural and cultural heritage resources (ASEAN, 2016).

Furthermore, Lindström and Larson (2016) said that community participation composed an integral part of sustainable tourism development specifically in accordance with the community-based tradition (Tosun, 2000; Blackstock, 2005; Beeton, 2006; Saarinen, 2006; Iorio & Corsale, 2014). Community participation is an integral part of developing CBT. The role of the community determines the sustainability of the local tourism because it becomes part of the CBT process. The implementation of CBT should involve the whole public in the management of sustainable tourism. Contributions from the community start from planning to evaluation giving a strong impetus to build territory with their consciousness. Community ownership is stronger with the support of the existing socio-cultural values. The benefits are not only social impacts but also economic impacts to improve the welfare. This means that tourism activities provide economic added value in the communities that they manage jointly. It is the big role of society which determines the success of the planned action.

According to Mnguni and Giampiccoli (2016), CBT is commonly understood as managed and owned by the community and for the community. It is a form of 'local' tourism that helps local service providers and suppliers and focuses on interpreting and communicating the local culture and environment.

Empowerment of local communities is the key to the effort to encourage people to get involved in tourism activities. It is required for the communication strategy adapted to the local culture. The success of communication can persuade the public to participate actively in the tourism activities.

Okazaki (2008) showed that community participation approach had been advocated as an integral part of sustainable tourism development. The community-based approach, despite the implementation barriers, is still the best course of action due to the reasons listed. First, local issues have

a direct influence on the tourist experience. Second, the image of tourism is based on the assets of the local community including not only the local people but also the natural environment, infrastructure, facilities, and special events or festivals. Therefore, the cooperation of the host community is essential to access and develop these assets appropriately. Third, public involvement functions as a driving force to protect the natural environment and culture as tourism products, and simultaneously encourages greater tourism-related income. Fourth, since the tourism industry is sensitive to both internal and external forces, many tourism development plans are often partially implemented or not at all.

In the implementation of CBT, it must observe the principles of management so that it is in accordance with the expected objectives. The principles are various. Those are recognizing support and developing community ownership in the tourism industry, involving community members in starting every aspect, developing community pride, improving the quality of life of the community, ensuring environmental sustainability, maintaining the unique character and culture in the local area, assisting in the development of learning about cultural exchange in the community, respecting cultural differences and human dignity, distributing benefits equitably to the community members, and playing a role in determining the percentage of revenue (income distribution) in existing projects in the community (Suansri, 2003).

The basic principles can be used as a direction in sustainable tourism development to enable the next program in supporting the previous program. The focus of these principles is to emphasize the importance of community that the society becomes the object and subject of the sustainable tourism activities. The existence of the principle balancing between local industry and local communities is the manager of tourism activities. The balance gains aim to combine efforts and to manage the environment, so all parties feel the impact of their activity by maintaining the culture of the community and the social relationships among them. Then, the environment preservation is well maintained which is conducted by the community.

The research of communication in the tourism industry is still very rare. Buckley (2012) identified five factors that had the most significant effect on the sustainability of the tourism industry. Those were (1) parks, biodiversity, conservation; (2) pollution, climate change; (3) prosperity, poverty alleviation; (4) peace, security, safety; and (5) population stabilization and reduction. Therefore, the research results are expected to contribute to the development of tourism in Dieng.

## METHODS

Newman (1997) said that the interpretive approach held social life which was based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning system. People possessed an internally experienced sense

of reality. This subjective sense of reality is crucial to grasp human social life. This research uses a descriptive method with a single case study about the life of individuals and communities in DCF. According to Mooney cited in Salim (2006), the descriptive case study describes the phenomenon. Through this research, some decisions taken by social actors in the society can be found. According to Newman (1997), the researcher also analyzes the data differently. Immersion gives the researcher an intimate familiarity with people's life and culture. The researcher looks for the pattern in the life, actions, and words of people in completing the case as a whole.

The research location is in Dieng Plateau especially Dieng Kulon, Banjarnegara. Thus, the key informants are the community of Dieng Pandavas, the activists of tourism in the highlands, public relation of local government of Banjarnegara, and communities around the DCF. The technique of collecting the data is divided into several points. First, there is the in-depth interview with Alif Faozi (Founder & Activist of POKDARWIS), public relation of local government in Banjarnegara, Budhi Hermanto (tourism activist/ Chief of DCF), opinion leader, homestay providers, and residents around DCF location. Second, the researcher does participant observation. It is when the researcher is an observer (observer as a participant). It is conducted to obtain a description of the condition in the location of observation. Last, there are documentations, secondary data, and other data required.

Data analysis technique is written by Bogdan as suggested by Miles and Huberman in Denzin and Lincoln (2009). The data analysis consists of three interrelated sub processes, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions or verification. Meanwhile, the validity of the data uses the method of triangulation. According to Yardley in Yin (2011), the principle of triangulation comes from navigation, where the intersection of three different reference points is used to calculate the precise location of an object. In research, the principle pertains the goal of seeking at least three ways of verifying or corroborating a particular event, description, or fact. Such corroboration serves as another way of strengthening the validity of the research. The data triangulation in this research is the resource and triangulation method. The researcher conducts a cross-check from several informants and observation to get a realistic portrayal of the object.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Dieng Plateau is often called Dieng which is geographically divided into two administrative regions, Dieng Kulon in Banjarnegara and Dieng Wetan in Wonosobo. This region is one of the most remote regions in Central Java. Dieng is located in the west of Sindoro and Sumbing mountains. In the dry season (July and August), the temperature can

reach 0° C in the morning and bring local frost called bun upas (poisonous dew) causing damage to crops. In addition, natural condition in Dieng with fertile soil makes agriculture become livelihood for general public. It particularly produces vegetables, mountain papaya (*Carica*), mushrooms, kemar fruit (terung belanda), and purwaceng. However, due to rapid agricultural activities and uncontrolled forest area on the top of the mountains, the land space for cultivation of vegetables such as potatoes runs out. This also causes erosion. There are many existing attractions in Dieng. First, people can do climbing tour, visit mountain cleft, Sindoro Mountain, Prahur Mountain, Pakuwojo Mountain, and Sikunir Mountain. Secondly, there is Color lake that elicits red, green, blue, white, and violet shades, Pengilon which the water is clear; and Merdada lake which is the largest lake in Dieng Plateau. The water never recedes though it is continuously used as irrigation for agricultural fields. Third, people can visit Ghatot Kacha, Bima, Arjuna, Semar, Sembadra, Heroine, Setyaki, Gangsiran Aswatama, and Dwarawati temples. Fourth, there are Semar Cave, Jaran Cave, and Sumur Cave that are often used as spiritual place. Fifth, Dieng Volcanic Theater is for screening the volcanoes in Dieng. Sixth, Kailasa Dieng Museum contains artifacts and provides information about things related to Dieng such as good nature, society, and historical heritages.

Since the tourism village is established in Dieng Kulon, the society awareness about tourism village has begun to develop. During DCF, houses belonging to the resident change into homestay. Almost all the houses are occupied by domestic or international tourists during the event. It encourages the local people to concern more about cleanliness, orderliness, and comfort of their place as a tourism destination. Dieng previously is only known by its local potato farm and is known for its neighborhood of Dieng with its advanced aspects of hygiene, discipline, and security. Since the annual event DCF is held, the cleanliness and safety have never become problem. Community and POKDARWIS Dieng Pandawa have sterilized the place of the event. Cleaning activity is done voluntarily; they realize that the aspect of cleanliness and security will give credence to the tourists to come back. Furthermore, this awareness is the key factor to make Dieng clean and safe tourism area. This can be seen from the increasing number of tourists coming to Dieng. The other positive impact is the increasing number of DCF visitors year by year. It is indicated by the increasing numbers of homestays, and DCF tickets which are sold out before the event.

This event is organized by the Community of Dieng Pandawas in Banjarnegara. The community consists of various other business groups. DCF was first held in 2010 which was previously referred to Dieng Cultural Week. It began to introduce the cultural activities in Dieng to celebrate the Independence Day in 2007. The contests are the race craft, local specialties, local art competitions, and others.

Dieng tourism village is promoted through

various media including online social media. POKDARWIS Dieng Pandawa becomes well-known. DCF has given a good impact on the economic development of Dieng society. Even the people's creativity is grown in the form of handicraft and local food products. The contests and performances in DCF are developing year by year. The more visitors come to Dieng, the more the residents of Dieng get economic benefits. Thus, the unemployment number can be decreased, and the young people start to find ways to make money. It indicates that DCF brings social and economic impact to the people around Dieng.

In 2016, DCF was held again by #jazzAtasAwan musical performance. The musical performance which had begun since 2013 was held in Arjuna and served as the closing event of DCF. The activities of DCF have increased year by year, in line with market needs of many parties who want to get involved in DCF. DCF 2016 consisted of three days of activities. In the first day, there were Maiyahan Cak Nun Kiai Kanjeng, jazz performances at 4°C performed on the main stage of DCF, and fireworks. The second day consisted of scooter, Panganan sunrise tracking, a leisurely stroll around the village around Dieng Kulon, Puwaceng party, a parade of art and culture, acoustic concerts and puppets, and party lanterns. The third day included Carnival of the culture of motorcade by introducing Bajang children (child beggars to be purified), and the top event was Ruwatan and tangled hair shaving, and Pelarangan in Telaga Warna.

The concept of DCF year by year has increased. It is done to avoid the tourist's boredom with the same show every year. However, the event that never goes away is Ruwatan Dreadlock Hair. This event becomes the distinguishing characteristic and events in the DCF, in addition to performances of jazz music. It is apparent attempt to combine traditional art with modern art. In the 2016 DCF, tourists were given the opportunity to participate in the carnival by wearing local custom. To participate in dreadlocks shaving, they were required to wear batik as a typical fashion of Indonesian. Therefore, DCF reflects the fixed forward of Indonesia insight. Despite featuring jazz, it does not leave the local cultural identity as the residents of Wonosobo and Banjarnegara.

The concept of CBT operating in the tourism communication activities in Dieng has been able to encourage community participation in the realization of a tourism village. Various attempts are made by tourism activists through the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) Dieng Pandawa including all tourism stakeholders. To support various activities, POKDARWIS is divided into several clusters. There are (1) working group on SMEs of food industry such as carica syrup, purwaceng drink, and potato chips; (2) working group on crafts such as wooden batik handicraft goods made of the wood whip, Pringgondani, and Tengsek. Those are shaped souvenir key chains, miniature temple, and screen printing Dieng T-shirt; (3) working group on homestay; (4) art and culture working group. It consists of various

leaders and activists of art based on local cultural wisdom; (5) working group on guides; (6) working group on agro-tourism; (7) working group on security; (8) working group on marketing by establishing cooperation with the parties related to Dieng travel, including travel agencies, media, and government. Each Working Group is led by the youths in Dieng whom most of them do not have a college education. However, they have a high motivation to participate in developing Dieng as a tourism village. They promote Dieng as a tourism destination to improve the economy for people around Dieng.

The emerging of Dieng Pandawa started from their concern with a wide range of information spread nationwide over the exploitation of potato plantation causing damage in Dieng in 2005. It also triggered by the condition that many youths were unemployed. These conditions encouraged the establishment of youth community which later was developed as POKDARWIS in Dieng Kulon. Then, in 2007, the name of Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) Dieng Pandawa was inaugurated in Banjarnegara.

The POKDARWIS Dieng Pandawa has also received the award twice at the level of Central Java province in 2008 as the third champion in Central Java Tourism Awareness and Appreciation, and in 2009 as the first champion for the same championship. In 2008, the chairman of POKDARWIS was also appointed as the chairman of Dieng tourism as the development program of local economies in Banjarnegara by Forum for Economic Development and Equipment Promotion (FEDEP). It was so active in the development of tourism in Central Java. The other achievements were the first winner for homestay at the level of Central Java Province in 2010. It also participated in an empowerment exhibition together with Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2011, got the award of craft competition at the local level in 2011 and 2013, and defended The National Tourism Village PNPM Recipient in 2012.

POKDARWIS coming from surrounding communities has successfully brought Dieng as a tourism village. Community participation in various events becomes the impetus success of the event held. Thus, there are always more tourists visiting Dieng, which in turn can improve the local economy. Dieng community can still do farming without harming the environment. In addition, they will get additional revenue from various tourism businesses.

Communication between the various stakeholders in the tourism event is capable of delivering Dieng as an interesting tourism without leaving the local culture.

Various tourism businesses begin to be built, ranging from tour guide, homestay, to the local food for direct consumption or souvenirs. Moreover, the typical crafts of Dieng begin to grow and be introduced to tourists especially in the activities of DCF. Thus, Dieng community can realize that the area can be managed as a tourism business to make money, and not only depend on being potato farm workers.

DCF has created awareness for people to be involved in developing Dieng as a tourism village. The local people involvement could give a positive impact on their economic life. They are even able to build a good tourism communication with many stakeholders to make Dieng be a tourism village. Moreover, the tourism communication encourages the perseverance of local tourism in Dieng Kulon. The good communication relationship also helps the continuous cooperation among the stakeholders. Thus, the Dieng society can develop Dieng Kulon as the local tourism destination to increase the local income.

The communication in Dieng Pandawa also involves multiple stakeholders from the planning and evaluation of communication activities. Tourism promotion activities are carried out through various media such as Internet by creating their website (diengpandawa.com). The website is expected to invite domestic tourists and encourage foreign tourists to come to Dieng. The number of tourists visiting Dieng has increased since DCF. It also adds the amount of revenue received by the residents.

Moreover, the exchange of information that exists among tourism stakeholders become inevitable in building the understanding of tourists to come to a tourism location. The other supporting factors are packaging a message on location, type of activities, and accommodation, and providing the main attraction for tourists. The concept of combining a cultural festival with cultural and traditional, and contemporary art can attract the traveler to come to Dieng by convening DCF 1-7. The high spirit of cooperation which will embody CBT is strong enough to be used on the swift durability of foreign cultures coming into Indonesia.

Based on the research, the process of the tourism communication in Dieng is presented in Figure 2.

Tourism management related to the CBT principles is applicable in ASEAN and the World Bank. The concept of empowerment by considering

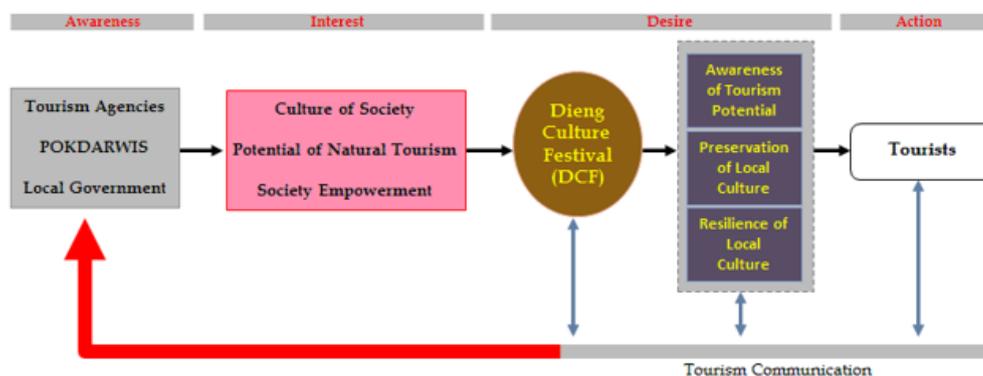


Figure 2 The Process of Tourism Communication in DCF Coherence with AIDA Approach

the preservation of local culture and tradition, and contributing to sustainable environmental management and tourism communications activities undertaken by Dieng Pandawa has succeeded in improving the welfare of the surrounding community. In addition, DCF has successfully raised the name of Dieng as one of the national and even international travel destinations. It is characterized by many different types of businesses supporting tourism. In addition, the management of the travel has been arranged neatly. Increasing number of tourism businesses in Dieng shows that people have actively participated in the management of tourism. Local communities have become not only as objects of development but have also contributed as the subject of development. The spirit of mutual culverts as the key success of the program can run well and cannot be separated from people's desire to go forward.

Finally, tourism communications in this communication research have not become an interesting field of research for researchers of communication. It should be encouraged to study the growth of tourism communications so that it can produce the basic theory of tourism communications and other communication studies. The advanced communication researches related to the CBT program using different approaches and methodologies of different theories should be conducted.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that community in Dieng has applied good standard of CBT in ASEAN and the world. CBT performed by POKDARWIS encourages the growth of business in Dieng. Cultural festival packed in DCF also increases the number of tourists coming to Dieng. Moreover, the community realizes that they become the object and the subject of tourism communications in Dieng. Then, packaging that message is done by combining traditional and contemporary art into a tourism attraction. DCF has made new media (Internet) as the alternative media in promoting the tourism. Next, the mutual cooperation is conducted to be a resilient factor in supporting the success of various communication activities of Dieng tourism. There is coherence between the AIDA approach with tourism process in Dieng.

There are recommendations proposed from the research. First, it is necessary to strengthen the partnership between the tourism actors. Hence, all parties can take benefit of the various programs in Dieng tourism. Second, the benefits of tourism activities should not be only felt by the society in Dieng Kulon, but also in Dieng Wetan. Third, the venue of DCF is spread in two regencies, Wonosobo, and Banjarnegara. The involvement of the local government in Central Java is needed in addressing regional income disparities.

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