

Environmental Communication of the Student Corps of Nature Lovers And Environmental Studies (Kompas) of the University of North Sumatera in the Environmental Awareness and Conservation Action Campaign in North Sumatera

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the environmental communication process, challenges, and solutions implemented by KOMPAS USU in its environmental awareness and conservation campaign in North Sumatera. The theories used in this study are environmental communication theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The research subjects consist of five main informants from the KOMPAS USU management for the 2021–2025 period, two supporting informants, and seven triangulation informants consisting of senior members of the organization and the community involved in the activities. The results show that the KOMPAS USU environmental communication process takes place through the stages of environmental meaning construction, program planning, action implementation and message delivery, evaluation, and audience response. Campaigns are carried out through a combination of real actions in the field, interpersonal communication, group communication, and digital media. Solutions implemented include strengthening the substance of environmental studies in exploration activities, member regeneration, and strengthening internal discussions as an effort to deepen understanding of the environment.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental communication is a branch of communication science that examines how humans understand, interpret, and respond to the environment through various communication processes. Pezzulo & Cox (2018) explains that environmental communication focuses on how environmental issues are communicated to the public to raise awareness, shape attitudes, and encourage behavioral change towards environmental conservation. Environmental communication not only serves to convey information about environmental conditions but also serves as a means to build community involvement in maintaining environmental sustainability.

Forest destruction is also a serious environmental issue in various countries. Global Forest Watch notes that various forest areas around the world are experiencing a decline in forest area due to human activities such as land clearing, mining, and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. This decline in forest area not only impacts the loss of biodiversity but also increases the risk of natural disasters such as floods and landslides.

Indonesia also faces a variety of complex environmental issues. Issues such as deforestation, air pollution, suboptimal waste management, and rising average annual temperatures are issues that continue to receive attention from various parties. Global Forest Watch data shows that Indonesia has experienced significant primary forest loss in recent years, resulting in increased carbon emissions and forest ecosystem degradation.

This environmental issue is also evident in North Sumatra Province. The 2024 Year-End Notes (Catahu) by WALHI North Sumatra showed that forest degradation occurred in various regions, including Tanah Karo, South Tapanuli, Dairi, North Tapanuli, Toba, Simalungun, and Mandailing Natal (WALHI SUMUT, 2024). Land clearing activities, illegal logging practices, and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources are some of the factors contributing to forest degradation in these regions.

Waste management is also a serious challenge in North Sumatra. Data from the National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN) indicates that waste generation in North Sumatra reached approximately 1.8 million tons in 2023. Medan, the provincial capital, is one of the areas with the largest contribution to waste generation. This situation demonstrates that environmental issues in North Sumatra are not only related to the destruction of natural ecosystems, but also to community behavior in managing the environment.

Student organizations are one of the social actors with potential in environmental communication. As a group of young intellectuals, students hold a strategic position in building environmental awareness on campus and in the community. Various educational activities, campaigns, and environmental conservation actions can serve as a means for students to foster ecological awareness among the younger generation.

Student organizations that promote nature are one form of student community directly involved in environmental issues. Activities such as tree planting, waste management, environmental campaigns, and nature exploration are part of efforts to raise environmental awareness.

These activities not only channel students' interest in outdoor activities but also serve as a learning platform for environmental conservation (Puspita, 2022).

Various activities have been conducted to support this, such as an Environmental Webinar in 2021, independent waste management activities (separating organic and inorganic waste), a campaign collaboration with WALHI North Sumatra in 2022, community service in Siberteng Village in 2023, and a joint climb with Kahf in 2024. These activities demonstrate that KOMPAS USU has been involved in various forms of educational and participatory environmental communication.

To strengthen the position of KOMPAS USU as a research object, researchers observed the social media accounts of nature lover organizations from four state universities in Medan, namely MAPAGRATWA POLMED, MAPASTA UINSU, MAPALA UNIMED, and KOMPAS USU. These four organizations were selected because they have more than 1,000 followers on Instagram. From the observation, it was found that KOMPAS USU has the most followers, namely 2,869 accounts, and shows a higher level of activity in sharing content about environmental issues, awareness campaigns, and documentation of field activities.

Observations show that among the four organizations, the KOMPAS USU Instagram account has the largest number of followers compared to the other three, with 2,869 followers. Furthermore, KOMPAS USU appears more active in sharing various activities related to environmental conservation, including awareness campaigns and concrete actions to preserve the environment.

This activeness indicates that KOMPAS USU not only serves as a platform for the nature lover community but also plays a significant role in voicing environmental issues and mobilizing concrete actions to support environmental sustainability. This confirms the relevance of KOMPAS USU as the object of study in this research, as the communication they build through social media can serve as a concrete example in efforts to increase public awareness and participation in environmental issues.

The focus of environmental communication in this study is directed at organizational communication practices. KOMPAS USU, as a student organization, carries out communication activities both internally among its members and externally to the public. These activities form a collective interaction process that plays a role in building environmental awareness and encouraging various nature conservation actions. This study therefore examines the dynamics of organizational communication that develop within this community in an effort to build ecological awareness through various forms of interaction and activities.

Several previous studies have shown that environmental communication plays a crucial role in raising awareness and encouraging behavioral change in society. Milsten et al. (2024), for example, explored the role of community food gardens on campus as a positive and transformative medium for environmental communication.

This study demonstrated that community gardens serve not only as a food source but also as a means of conveying sustainability messages through the active involvement of students, staff, and the campus community in garden management activities.

Another study by Nugroho and Dirgantara (2023) examined environmental communication within the Integrated Green Village Program in West Cakung Village. This study used the Communicating Environmental Information model, which emphasizes the importance of information flow, message clarity, and the selection of appropriate communication media in conveying environmental issues to the public.

A study on environmental communication was also conducted by Maulidya, Fauziah, and Nurhaliza (2021), who examined communication practices within the Wijaya Kusuma Waste Bank community using the diffusion of innovation theory approach. The results of this study showed that the communication process carried out by waste bank administrators was able to increase community participation in maintaining environmental cleanliness and encourage active community involvement in waste management.

Research conducted by Tan, Sarmiati, and Elfitra (2019) showed that the local government, through the Pesisir Selatan Regency Environmental Agency, implemented communication planning in activities to prevent environmental damage in tourist areas. This communication strategy has been implemented through various environmental education and outreach programs, although its implementation still faces various limitations and has not been optimally implemented on a broad scale.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of environmental communication studies, both theoretically and practically, particularly in the local context of North Sumatra. The theoretical perspective of this research is expected to enrich the environmental communication literature by highlighting the role of student organizations in conveying environmental awareness and conservation campaign messages. The contextual approach used in this research also demonstrates how environmental communication can develop through student organization activities utilizing various communication media, including social media.

The practical benefits of this research relate to the development of more effective environmental communication strategies for student organizations. The results are expected to provide input for KOMPAS USU in designing more targeted communication strategies for conveying environmental conservation messages. The research findings also have the potential to serve as a reference for other student organizations in utilizing social media and persuasive communication techniques to educate and inspire concrete actions in preserving the environment, especially among the younger generation.

The scope for research on environmental communication conducted by student organizations is still relatively limited in previous research. Existing studies have focused more on the role of the government or formal institutions in managing environmental communication.

This situation indicates a need to expand the study of how student organizations like KOMPAS USU can contribute to influencing public environmental awareness and behavior, particularly in North Sumatra.

This study aims to analyze the environmental communication conducted by KOMPAS USU, including the challenges and solutions implemented in environmental awareness campaigns and conservation actions in North Sumatra. The analysis focuses on the activities and programs implemented by KOMPAS USU during the 2021–2025 period. This timeframe was chosen because the activities taking place in 2024 were relatively limited, necessitating a broader scope of the study to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the organization's activities.

The selection of a five-year period allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of KOMPAS USU's activity patterns. This timeframe provides an opportunity to observe trends in the organization's activities, including the dynamics of activities related to environmental communication. Analysis of these activity patterns is expected to provide a clearer picture of KOMPAS USU's contribution to increasing environmental awareness and encouraging environmental conservation efforts among the community.

The five-year timeframe also provides researchers with the opportunity to identify patterns and trends that emerge during each period of the organization's activities. These patterns demonstrate the common thread of environmental communication development conducted by KOMPAS USU over time. The results of this analysis are expected to not only provide insight into the organization's implementation of environmental communication but also serve as a basis for formulating more effective environmental communication strategies in future periods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

of other regions, it is not strong enough to become a brand. Empirical review of previous studies is essential for positioning the current research within existing scholarship, identifying points of convergence and divergence, and establishing a clear research gap. Prior studies serve not only as a strong academic reference base but also as a means to avoid duplication and improve upon the limitations of earlier works (Riswanto, 2023). Similarities in variables, concepts, and approaches provide supporting evidence for the present study, while differences among previous studies help identify the theoretical and empirical gap that justifies the need for further research (Ekasari, 2020).

Existing studies on environmental communication demonstrate that communication plays a significant role in shaping environmental awareness, encouraging public participation, and promoting sustainable behavior across a variety of social contexts. Milsten et al. (2024), for example, examined how community food gardens on university campuses function as a form of positive environmental communication. Their qualitative findings show that such gardens do not merely produce food materially, but also communicate sustainability values through direct participation and embodied experience.

Students, staff, and campus communities become actively involved in food-growing activities, which in turn strengthens ecological responsibility, sustainability awareness, and ecocentric identity. This study is relevant to the present research because both emphasize environmental communication as a participatory and experiential process. However, Milsten et al. focused on campus gardens as transformative environmental media, whereas the current study focuses on the communication strategies of KOMPAS USU, a student nature organization, in promoting environmental awareness and conservation action.

Similarly, Yulia (2024) explored environmental communication in the context of sustainable tourism through the case of Travelxism in Yogyakarta. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and drawing on Cox's environmental communication framework, the study found that Travelxism supported sustainable tourism through collaboration with tourism villages, destination development, and community empowerment. This study highlights how environmental communication can function through education, collaboration, and public participation. Although both studies use qualitative methods and environmental communication theory, the present research differs in context and subject. Yulia's work centers on a tourism startup, while the current research examines a student-based environmental organization operating in a campus and regional activism context.

Several earlier studies also focused on environmental communication at the community level. Nugroho and Dirgantara (2023), in their study of the Integrated Green Village Program in Cakung Barat, found that environmental communication operated through direct information flow, problem-solution messaging, and relatively simple communication media such as coordination meetings and official letters. Their study, grounded in the Communicating Environmental Information Model, shows that environmental communication can function as a structured means of delivering environmental information within a local governance setting. Likewise, Dwivayani (2022) found that environmental communication in a community waste management initiative in Bontang operated through both constitutive and pragmatic functions. Constitutive communication promoted awareness, responsibility, and cooperation, while pragmatic communication educated community members on proper waste management practices. These findings are important because they show that environmental communication is not limited to message dissemination; it also constructs environmental values and guides concrete environmental behavior.

The role of local wisdom in environmental communication has also been emphasized in several studies. Yasir et al. (2022) demonstrated that forest conservation in Sentajo, Riau, was sustained through environmental communication rooted in local wisdom, particularly through the concept of Rimbo Larangan. Traditional leaders served as key communicators, and their authority, supported by customary values, Islamic teachings, myths, and local narratives, strengthened community compliance with forest conservation norms.

In a similar vein, Niadi et al. (2023) examined environmental communication in the Bekarang tradition in Muara Enim and found that symbolic interaction was central to environmental preservation. Through customary symbols, prohibitions, and shared meanings, the community maintained ethical practices for fishing and protected the river ecosystem. These studies suggest that environmental communication is highly effective when it is embedded in local cultural systems and supported by shared symbols, values, and social legitimacy.

Other studies have highlighted the importance of conservation-based movements and participatory communication. Dirgantara et al. (2022), in their research on the Masigit Kareumbi Hunting Park conservation movement, found that symbolic actions in conservation education carried both pragmatic and constitutive communication functions. Educational discussions, hiking, and direct encounters with nature encouraged participants not only to understand conservation issues cognitively but also to develop deeper relationships with nature. This finding resonates with Herutomo and Istiyanto (2021), who argued that environmental communication is crucial for promoting forest sustainability by fostering public participation, community welfare, and a sense of ownership toward forest resources. Their literature-based study emphasizes that sustainable environmental management requires communication structures capable of encouraging institutional collaboration and collective ecological awareness.

At the community mobilization level, Maulidya et al. (2021) found that environmental communication in the Wijaya Kusuma Waste Bank community successfully increased environmental concern through a qualitative process involving assessment, planning, production, action, and reflection. Using Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory, the study showed that communication from community leaders and administrators helped residents understand and adopt environmentally friendly waste practices. Likewise, Tan et al. (2019), in their study of environmental communication in the Mandeh tourism area, showed that local government communication was shaped by communication planning and the eight steps of environmental communication. Their findings reveal that environmental communication was conducted through direct community engagement such as socialization, training, focus group discussions, and environmental communities, while also using media such as radio, television, billboards, prohibition signs, and online media. However, the study also noted that these efforts had not yet been implemented in a massive and systematic way. This suggests that planning and communication channels are crucial, but effectiveness depends on consistency, reach, and local adaptation.

Taken together, these previous studies show that environmental communication has been widely applied in diverse contexts, including university spaces, tourism, waste management, community conservation, local traditions, forest governance, and local government programs. Across these studies, several common themes emerge: first, environmental communication is most effective when it is participatory rather than purely top-down; second, it often combines constitutive functions, which shape values and environmental identity, with pragmatic functions, which provide practical knowledge and behavioral

guidance; third, communication becomes stronger when it is integrated with local wisdom, symbolic meaning, institutional collaboration, and community-based action; and fourth, communication media—whether interpersonal, organizational, traditional, or digital—play a significant role in expanding environmental awareness and participation (Purba et al., 2025, Ritonga et al., 2025).

Despite the richness of previous studies, an important gap remains. Most prior research has focused on communities, local governments, customary institutions, startups, or conservation programs, while relatively few studies have specifically examined the role of student organizations in environmental communication campaigns. This gap becomes even more pronounced in the context of North Sumatra, where there is still limited scholarly attention to how student nature organizations conduct environmental awareness campaigns and mobilize conservation action. In addition, earlier studies have often emphasized conventional communication channels, direct participation, or local cultural communication, but fewer studies have examined how environmental communication can be strengthened through a more integrated use of organizational communication and social media-oriented campaigning, especially among young audiences.

Therefore, the present study on KOMPAS USU (Korps Mahasiswa Pecinta Alam dan Studi Lingkungan Hidup Universitas Sumatera Utara) offers a distinct contribution. Unlike earlier studies that focused on broader public or community settings, this research examines how a university-based student environmental organization conducts environmental communication in the form of awareness campaigns and conservation action in North Sumatra. Its novelty lies in three main aspects. First, it highlights the role of student organizations as active communicators in environmental advocacy, a dimension that has received limited empirical attention. Second, it places environmental communication within a localized North Sumatran context, allowing for a better understanding of how environmental messages are shaped by regional social and cultural conditions. Third, it offers a more integrated perspective by linking environmental communication with youth engagement, organizational dynamics, and the increasing relevance of digital and social media platforms in contemporary environmental campaigns. In this way, the study is expected to enrich environmental communication scholarship by extending it into the domain of student activism, local environmental campaigns, and the strategic use of communication for collective environmental awareness and preservation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with purposive selection of informants, based on specific considerations relevant to the research focus. Informants were selected based on their role and involvement in the environmental communication campaign conducted by KOMPAS USU for the 2021–2025 period. The informants in this study consisted of primary informants, triangulation informants, and supporting informants. This research was conducted at the KOMPAS USU Secretariat, the center of organizational activities and the location of the environmental campaign. The KOMPAS USU Secretariat

is located at Jl. Alumni No. 2, Padang Bulan, Medan Baru District, Medan City, North Sumatra.

In addition, direct observations were conducted by researchers in Pasar Rawa Village, Gebang District, Langkat Regency, in 2025 during mangrove planting. Furthermore, the research also covered KOMPAS USU's activities for the 2021–2025 period, which were conducted in several areas in North Sumatra and Aceh, including Medan City, Bukum Village (Sibolangit District), the Deli River area in Medan City, Siberteng Village (Karo Regency), Mount Sibayak (Karo Regency), and Rantau Bintang Village (Aceh Tamiang Regency).

The interviews conducted in this study were in-depth interviews, where the researcher asked informants in depth and detail about issues related to the environmental communication process, challenges, and solutions implemented by Kompas USU in its environmental awareness and conservation campaigns in North Sumatra.

In this study, the researcher conducted participatory observation. In this observation, the researcher participated in the daily activities of the people being observed or used as a source of research data (Sugiyono, 2019). While conducting observations, the researcher participated in what KOMPAS USU did and shared its joys and sorrows. With this participant observation, the data obtained will be more complete and sharp, and will allow us to understand the level of meaning of each visible behavior.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Construction of Environmental Meaning

The initial stage of environmental communication in KOMPAS USU begins with how the organization and its members interpret the environment itself. Based on the interview findings, members understand the environment not merely as a place for activities such as forests, mountains, or rivers, but as a living space with social and academic dimensions. The environment is viewed as part of the responsibility of students as members of an academic community.

From a constructivist perspective, social reality does not exist objectively on its own, but is formed through interaction and shared experience (Butsi, 2019; Lubis, 2015). The meaning of the environment within KOMPAS USU emerges from internal discussions, field experiences, and an understanding of the organization's objectives as stated in its Articles of Association. On the other hand, several informants indicated that their initial interest in joining KOMPAS USU was more strongly influenced by adventure-oriented activities such as mountain climbing or nature exploration. These activities provided strong emotional experiences and therefore became the main attraction for new members.

According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), this condition suggests that some members process organizational messages through the peripheral route, in which messages are received through direct experience, symbols, or emotionally appealing activities without deep cognitive elaboration. This difference in message-processing routes explains why there is a gap between the normative understanding of environmental study and the actual practice of

activities, which tends to be more dominated by adventure aspects. Adventure activities function as strong peripheral cues because they provide direct experiences in nature, whereas environmental studies require a longer process of intellectual reflection.

This finding is also reinforced by triangulation informants from the community, who perceive KOMPAS USU as a nature-lover community that is actively involved in various outdoor activities. This perception indicates that the organization's image in the public eye is shaped largely by its visible field activities. Thus, the meaning of the environment within KOMPAS USU can be understood as the result of the interaction between two message-processing routes: the central route, which develops through discussion and organizational experience, and the peripheral route, which emerges from adventurous experiences in nature.

When linked to environmental communication theory (Pezullo & Cox, 2018), communication does not merely function to deliver information, but also shapes how humans understand their relationship with nature. When the activities most frequently displayed are adventure-based, the identity of the organization is gradually formed through those practices as well (Dalimunthe et al., 2025). This indicates a tendency toward a shift in orientation that does not appear at the level of discourse, but is more visible in the organization's everyday practices.

Philosophically, adventure skills should serve as a means for conducting environmental study. However, in several periods, these activities appear to have become more dominant than their primary purpose. This condition suggests that the construction of organizational meaning still needs to be strengthened so that there is greater alignment between the ideal values of environmental concern and the practices carried out by members.

In line with this, the results of this study show that the interpretation of the environment in KOMPAS USU is formed through the interaction of field experience, internal organizational discussions, and values inherited within the organizational culture. The way members understand the environment as a space of activity that must be protected indicates that environmental messages have, in principle, been understood normatively by the members of the organization.

This finding is also consistent with the study by Milsten et al. (2024), which explains that direct experience in environmental activities can influence how individuals interpret the relationship between humans and nature. That study shows that direct involvement in environmental activities, such as managing community food gardens on campus, can serve as an effective medium of environmental communication. This occurs because individuals do not merely receive environmental messages verbally, but also experience them directly through practice.

This similarity demonstrates that field experience plays an important role in shaping individual understanding of environmental issues. However, this study also finds a gap between that understanding and organizational practice. This indicates that although the meaning of the environment has been cognitively

understood by organizational members, the internalization of those values in organizational practice still requires further strengthening.

Organizational Orientation and the Gap Between Understanding and Practice

The results of interviews with the main informants indicate that members of KOMPAS USU generally understand that environmental studies constitute the core spirit of the organization. This understanding is reinforced by triangulation informants from senior members who explained that from the very beginning the organization was established with the objective of shaping academically minded individuals who are aware of and responsible for environmental preservation. This normative awareness demonstrates that, conceptually, members recognize the ideal direction of the organization.

However, the research findings also reveal that this understanding has not been fully accompanied by uniformity of orientation in practice. Some members interpret organizational activities as a space for learning about environmental issues and ecological responsibility, while others are more attracted to the adventure-oriented aspects of nature activities, which are perceived as more exciting, challenging, and enjoyable. These differences in orientation result in varying interpretations of environmental meaning in the organization's daily activities

Observational data and informant explanations indicate that the activities most prominently visible in organizational practice are adventure-based activities. This condition causes environmental studies not always to appear as the primary orientation consistently framing the organization's activities. The challenge does not lie in the absence of environmental understanding, but rather in the lack of uniformity in how members prioritize environmental studies within organizational practices.

From a constructivist perspective, social reality within organizations is formed through practices that are continuously reproduced over time (Lubis, 2015). The dominance of adventure activities in the organization's daily life gradually shapes a collective identity that is more closely associated with nature exploration than with the deepening of environmental studies. This reality then influences how new members interpret the direction and identity of the organization.

Analysis using the Elaboration Likelihood Model shows that adventure activities function as strong peripheral stimuli, as they provide emotional experiences and direct interaction with nature (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This attractiveness makes messages related to adventure activities easier for members to receive. In contrast, messages concerning environmental studies require deeper cognitive elaboration and therefore require stronger and more consistent reinforcement to be processed through the central route.

The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that collective behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms within the organization are formed through interaction patterns among members and through values transmitted by senior members to new members. The research results indicate that adventure values are reproduced more frequently in organizational practices than environmental

study values. This pattern leads members to follow the dominant orientation of activities within the organization.

This analysis is not intended as a critique of adventure activities within the organization. Adventure remains an important medium for developing ecological experience as well as environmental exploration skills. The issue lies in the lack of uniformity in how members interpret adventure as a means of environmental study. This inconsistency of mindset results in environmental communication messages not being fully internalized, so that in organizational practice the adventure dimension often appears more prominent than environmental studies, which constitute the organization's primary objective.

These findings are consistent with Gabriela's (2020) research, which shows that environmental awareness among university students may be relatively high at the cognitive level but is not always reflected in consistent behavior. The gap between understanding and practice indicates that the internalization of environmental values requires continuous reinforcement. In the context of KOMPAS USU, this inconsistency of mindset becomes a challenge because it influences the direction of activities, how environmental messages are interpreted, and the priorities established in organizational life.

Human Resource Limitations and Regeneration Dynamics

The research findings indicate that limitations in human resources constitute one of the major challenges in implementing environmental communication programs within KOMPAS USU. Main informants explained that during a certain period the organization did not conduct the regeneration process optimally, resulting in a limited number of active members. Consequently, organizational responsibilities had to be carried by a relatively small number of members.

Observations of organizational activities show that the limited number of members caused the organization's focus to be largely absorbed by the implementation of core activities rather than the development of more structured and sustainable environmental communication programs. Supporting informants explained that this condition often prevented certain environmental activities from being developed optimally due to limited manpower and time.

Human resource limitations also affect the organization's regeneration dynamics. With a limited number of members, individuals who have just completed the Member Orientation Period (MOA) must immediately fill management positions to maintain the continuity of the organizational structure. This accelerated regeneration process reduces the learning space available to members compared to the training patterns previously implemented in the organization.

Triangulation informants from senior members explained that in earlier periods, members who had completed MOA would enter the stage of junior membership before becoming full members. At this stage, members had sufficient time to learn various aspects of the organization, including the values of nature-loving activism, field skills, and an understanding of environmental studies. This phase served as an important learning space before members were considered ready to assume leadership roles.

However, changes in the higher education system and the increasing pressure to complete academic studies more quickly have led to adjustments in this mentoring pattern. Membership periods have become shorter, meaning that members who complete MOA often become full members immediately and soon must assume leadership responsibilities. As a result, the maturation process of members occurs more quickly than in previous periods.

This condition affects the quality of the member development process within the organization. Members who should still be in the stage of exploration and learning are required to immediately carry out managerial responsibilities. Rapid regeneration processes mean that some members are not yet fully prepared in terms of experience or organizational understanding.

Within the context of environmental communication, these human resource limitations and accelerated regeneration processes also influence the planning and implementation of environmental programs discussed earlier. Members who lack sufficient organizational experience may also have a limited understanding of environmental study concepts that form the basis for environmental program design. Consequently, the strengthening of environmental communication messages within the organization becomes less optimal and affects how environmental activities are designed and implemented.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, individual and collective behavior is influenced by perceived behavioral control, or individuals' perceptions of their capacity to perform certain actions (Ajzen, 1991). Organizational members who perceive limitations in time, energy, and resources tend to select activities that are more realistic to implement. As a result, the organization often prioritizes activities that can be conducted with existing resources rather than developing more complex environmental communication programs

This finding is consistent with the research of Tan, Sarmiati, and Elfitra (2019), which demonstrates that limitations in human resources can become a major obstacle in implementing environmental communication. Their study emphasizes that the success of environmental communication is not determined solely by program planning but also by the availability of resources capable of implementing the program consistently.

Human resource limitations also influence the processes of monitoring and evaluation. Informants explained that once an activity is completed, organizational members often have to move immediately to other activities, leaving limited space for reflection and evaluation. This condition indicates that human resource limitations are not only related to the number of members but also affect the quality of organizational learning processes, which ultimately influence the strengthening of environmental communication within the organization.

Challenges in Program Sustainability

The research findings indicate that one of the main challenges in environmental communication within KOMPAS USU lies in maintaining the sustainability of environmental programs that have been implemented. Several environmental activities, such as tree-planting programs and social

environmental initiatives, have been actively conducted by the organization. However, research observations indicate that post-activity monitoring has not always been conducted consistently.

Environmental communication theory explains that evaluation is an essential component in ensuring that activities can produce long-term behavioral change (Cox, 2018). Environmental activities that are not followed by continuous monitoring risk remaining at the level of symbolic action without generating significant ecological impact.

Ideally, the environmental communication cycle includes message dissemination, collective action, evaluation, and reflection on the outcomes of activities. The research results show that this cycle has not been fully completed in organizational practice. Environmental actions have been actively implemented, but reflection and follow-up have not yet become strong organizational practices.

The study of Nugroho and Dirgantara (2023) emphasizes the importance of information flow and evaluation within environmental communication processes so that communicated messages can produce sustainable behavioral change. Their findings indicate that without consistent evaluation, environmental communication programs risk producing only temporary participation without long-term impact.

Research findings also show that program sustainability is influenced by the dynamics of student organizations, which typically have relatively short leadership cycles. A leadership period lasting approximately one year requires organizations to complete many programs within a limited timeframe. Consequently, the organization often focuses more on preparing upcoming activities than on monitoring and evaluating the impacts of previously implemented programs.

The limited time available to members, who must also fulfill academic responsibilities, further affects program sustainability. After completing one activity, members often must immediately prepare for another activity planned within the leadership program. This situation reduces the space available for reflection, evaluation, and follow-up environmental actions.

This condition indicates that challenges related to program sustainability are not solely associated with human resource limitations but are also linked to the characteristics of student organizations that have limited leadership periods and academic responsibilities. These factors influence how environmental communication programs can be sustained from one activity to another (Dalimunthe et al., 2025).

Overall, the analysis of the research findings indicates that the challenges of environmental communication within KOMPAS USU do not primarily arise from a lack of environmental awareness among members. Instead, the challenges are more closely related to internal organizational dynamics that influence how environmental messages are produced, interpreted, and implemented in organizational activities.

The gap between normative understanding of environmental studies and adventure-oriented practices, the limitations in human resources caused by regeneration dynamics, and the weak sustainability of programs demonstrate that environmental communication within student organizations is strongly influenced by organizational structure, internal communication patterns, and the activity culture that develops within the organization.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KOMPAS USU's environmental communication process proceeds through five main stages: constructing environmental meaning, communication planning, implementing actions and delivering messages, evaluation, and audience response. During the meaning construction stage, members understand that environmental studies are the soul of the organization. However, in practice, adventurous activities tend to be more dominant than in-depth environmental studies, resulting in a gap between the ideals of the organization's goals and the implementation of activities. During the planning and implementation stages, environmental communication is implemented through four main strategies: internal organizational environmental practices, field conservation actions, public education campaigns, and community service and disaster response activities. These strategies demonstrate that KOMPAS USU combines experience-based communication and public communication to build awareness and participation in environmental conservation. The evaluation stage indicates that post-activity monitoring has not been optimal, resulting in many programs stopping at implementation without long-term follow-up. This occurs due to limited human resources and the dynamics of the student organization, which has a relatively short management period. Responses to KOMPAS USU's environmental communication have shown a positive trend both internally and within the organization, especially for activities involving concrete actions in the field. Overall, KOMPAS USU's environmental communication has been successful in building initial awareness and participation, but still requires strengthening in terms of consistency of meaning and program sustainability. This process takes place within the context of student organizational dynamics, which influence how environmental messages are produced, delivered, and received. The main challenges faced by KOMPAS USU are internal to the organization. First, members' inconsistent mindsets regarding environmental studies. Differences in background and motivation for joining mean that not all members share the same level of understanding and concern. Furthermore, the dominant value of adventure, inherited from one period to another, also influences the organization's orientation. Second, there are limited human resources and the dynamics of regeneration. Empty membership during certain periods creates a double workload and limited space for program development. This situation impacts suboptimal activity planning and evaluation. Third, there are challenges to program sustainability. Post-activity monitoring and evaluation remain weak, so the long-term impact of conservation efforts is not fully realized. The short management cycle also affects the consistency of environmental communication direction from one period to the next.

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