

Environmental Communication of the Kapuas River Clean Action by the Pontianak Young Generation

Netty Herawati, Lina Sunyata, Suci Lukitowati*, Julia Magdalena Wuysang

Communication Science Program, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak

*Correspondance author : suci.lukitowati@fisip.untan.ac.id

Article

Article History

Received : 2024/02/29
Reviewed : 2024/05/21
Accepted : 2024/07/05
Published : 2024/07/17

DOI:

doi.org/10.29313/ethos.v12i2.3501



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Volume : 12
No. : 2
Month : Juni
Year : 2024
Pages : 123 - 132

Abstract

This article aims to increase the perception, experience, and communication of the young generation of Pontianak City in maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River. The most considerable pollution of the river comes from household waste. River hygiene socialization often involves the people of riverside areas, as if they are the ones responsible for river cleanliness. The river cleanup action so far is also considered just ceremonial. This P.K.M. (community service) focuses on two activities: the digital campaign and the *collective movement* #AksiBersihSungaiKapuas. The digital campaign is carried out ten days ahead of World Environment Day. It contains education and recordings of the actual actions of Pontianak's Young Generation. 134 digital campaigns are using the hashtag #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas. Meanwhile, the *Collective Movement* is held on World Environment Day every June 5. A total of 2 tons of garbage was collected in the Kapuas River clean-up action. Plastic waste, water hyacinth, and household waste are the most common. The young generation of Pontianak City is not only a spectator but a subject in education and disseminating the habit of maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River environment.

Keywords: Environmental Communication; Kapuas River; the Young Generation.

Copyright © 2024 The Author(s).

Introduction

A clean environment is an important aspect of sustainable human life. In reality, many people still live in a less clean environment. Data and information from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia noted that the waste produced by Indonesia was 21.88 million tons in 2021 (Susanti, Rina; Evanita, 2022). This waste problem can occur if people throw garbage carelessly, and one of the disposal places is a river.

Waste has the potential to be harmful to health. It will disrupt the balance of the ecosystem through flooding and interfere with comfort and beauty (decrease in aesthetic value). Over time, the garbage pile continues to increase, coupled with the increase in population growth and lifestyle and the limited capacity of cleaning services, making it a problem that must be faced (Amaranti *et al.*, 2016).

Indonesia is among the top 10 countries with the largest population in the world. This inevitably raises several further problems, including waste production and disposal. According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia produced up to 65 million tons of waste in 2016. This number increased by 1 million tons from 2017. The difficulty of solving the waste problem is not only the waste disposal facilities that are not optimal but also the habit of people who throw garbage carelessly. The habit of people throwing garbage carelessly is the toughest problem because changing and stopping this habit requires a long process and time, but if it is not started now, the waste problem will become very large and complex (Kementerian LHK, 2018).

Overcoming environmental problems in Indonesia requires collective awareness. Collective awareness is closely related to community participation. According to (Husodo *et al.*, 2021), factors that distinguish the formation of active and passive community participation in waste management in the residential environment are perception, experience, communication, and facilities. The purpose of implementing this community service program is to increase the perception, experience, and communication of the young generation of Pontianak City so that active participation is formed in maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River.

The Kapuas River has a total length of 1,143 km and explores 65 percent of West Kalimantan. The length of this river is almost the same as the length of Java Island, which is 1,143 km. The Kapuas River flows from Kapuas Hulu Regency to Pontianak City and crosses seven other districts in West Kalimantan. This river's districts are Sintang Regency, Melawi Regency, Sekadau Regency, Sanggau Regency, Landak Regency, Kubu Raya Regency, and Mempawah Regency. The Kapuas River has various roles for the people of West Kalimantan. The main role is as a source of clean water for various community needs, such as bathing, washing, and toilets (MCK). Other roles include shipping and transportation, settlement activities, industry, and tourism. These various activities, if not carried out wisely, can potentially reduce the water quality of the Kapuas River. For example, in residential activities, if residents who live on the Kapuas River throw garbage and household waste into the river and are carried out continuously by many households, the quality of the Kapuas River will decrease.

Not only in West Kalimantan but also in the Ganges River in India, solid waste from landfills in India is one of the largest sources of Ganges River degradation in the Indian capital. Since the 1950s, more than 12 large landfills have been filled with all kinds of non-biodegradable and toxic waste in Delhi (Sinha, S. N., & Banerjee, 2007).

One of the main sources of pollution in the Kapuas River is the disposal of garbage into the river. Garbage interferes with the aesthetics of the riverside area. Most importantly, garbage causes various diseases, creates discomfort, and causes flooding. Waste, as a pollutant, can make the river shallow. Such a condition automatically affects the food chain and the ecosystem that exists in the river. The lack of education and counseling causes this bad habit to be carried out continuously.

The Kapuas River is one of the tourism icons of Pontianak City. The Pontianak City Waterfront area was deliberately built as a tourist destination. In tourism activities, the awareness of visitors to *the* Pontianak Waterfront to not throw garbage into the river also becomes the key to maintaining the tourism area. According to Law Number 23 of 1997 concerning environmental management, every Indonesian citizen has the same rights and obligations in environmental management, including rivers. Therefore, the community and visitors of *the Pontianak Waterfront* tourist attraction have the same rights and obligations to protect the river environment.

The 024. home community is a community (*collective movement*) whose current concern lies in environmental issues. They often carry out actions to clean the river voluntarily. In addition to the river cleanup action, they also conducted direct socialization to increase public awareness of the importance of protecting the river. The problem is that the river clean-up action has been only ceremonial. The action of caring for the river should start with the personal environment and become a habit that is carried out daily. The lack of sustainability and success in increasing community participation in viewing river problems is a common problem in the home tasks of all parties.

Environmental communication is important and necessary to increase public awareness and participation in maintaining the river's cleanliness. According to (Patrianti *et al.*, 2020),

communication indicators serve as a medium to increase knowledge about scientific messages such as climate change that can change people's attitudes to believe that climate change is real, as well as change their behavior to protect the environment.

Environmental communication needs to be carried out creatively and attractively to avoid the resistance of the community, which often receives socialization and counseling on the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the river. Robert Cox, in his book *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*, argues that environmental communication is a pragmatic and constitutive means of providing people with an understanding of the environment, just like our relationship with the universe. This is a symbolic medium used to create environmental problems and negotiate different responses to environmental problems that occur. In other words, environmental communication is used to create an understanding of environmental problems (Pedelty, 2022).

According to (Cangara, Hafied; Flor, 2018), environmental communication is an approach, strategy, and communication technique aimed at environmental management and protection. According to (Pezzullo, Phaedra C., and Cox, 2017), there are seven areas of environmental communication: (1) environmental rhetoric and discourse; (2) environmental media and journalism; (3) public participation in making decisions on the environment; (4) social marketing and advocacy campaigns; (5) environmental collaboration and conflict resolution; (6) crisis communication; and (7) representation of nature in pop culture and green marketing. Cleanliness is still a benchmark for the quality of life of the community, so there needs to be socialization from the government to change people's thinking about maintaining the river so that it can be free from the waste problem. The success factor in implementing waste management depends on community awareness.

The younger generation, as the next generation, is expected to be an agent of change to improve the condition of the Kapuas River. Therefore, their participation is important, not only in river clean-up actions but also in spreading the habits of caring for the Kapuas River through real actions and social media.

The presence of social media has been felt as a means that can be used to make human affairs easier. This has made social media an important part of the dissemination of information in Indonesia over the past few years (Safitri, Romli, & Siregar, 2022). People's lives today cannot be separated from technology. The development of technology has brought changes to the aspect of communication in human life (Harahap & Kurniawati, 2018). When it comes to social campaigns, the use of social media can help messages spread faster and wider. Digital campaign creators are required to be able to create realistic campaign materials, reach the audience according to their segmentation, provide message materials according to the needs of the audience, and use communication channels commonly used by campaign targets, as well as choose campaign agencies that are reliable and accepted by the audience (Pratiwi, 2019). The campaign itself is known to change the perspective (cognitive), attitude (affective), and behavioral tendencies (conative) of each individual. Therefore, optimally, campaign management is needed (Rahmaniya *et al.*, 2023).

Method

This community service activity uses the approach of the principle of adult education (*androgogy*). This is intended so that the target of this community service activity does not feel patronized. This PKM activity will be carried out for 3 months, starting from April to July 2023 (calculated from the beginning of the survey to completion).

This community service consists of two types of activities: (1) Digital campaigns. This campaign contains persuasive messages that can be packaged through Instagram social media using socialization. Socialization can be said to be effective if it follows the social pattern in the intended community. (2) Clean action on the Kapuas River. The implementation of the activity was carried out in a participatory and active manner, with participants participating directly in the River Clean Action on World Environment Day on June 5, 2023.

Results and Discussion

Communicating environmental issues appropriately is key to influencing behavior and creating sustainable awareness. Environmental communication through the #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas campaign is one of the communication strategies tailored for young people as the target audience of the campaign. Young people, or Generation Z, who were born in the mid-1990s to early 2010s, are a generation that is very familiar with the digital world. Therefore, one of the environmental communication strategies carried out is a digital campaign. In addition, there is also a campaign in the form of a *collective movement* called #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas. This *collective movement* campaign aims to provide emotional support for the common concern of the cleanliness of the Kapuas River. The campaign itself, according to Venus (2019), has several functions, namely: (1) being a means to change people's mindsets; (2) raising awareness and opinions from the community regarding a certain problem; (3) developing businesses and convincing the audience to buy products that are being marketed; and (4) building a positive image in the community. Venus (Venus, 2019) also explained that, in general, anyone involved in activities such as drafting, designing, organizing, and conveying campaign messages means that they are campaign actors. The *collective movement* campaign aims to make the younger generation realize the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River. According to Sharma, Devi, Sancheti, Vidyawadi, and Rajasthan (2022), the collective movement consists of several stages. The first stage is the awareness stage, which is when humans realize a problem that must be solved together. The second stage is the institutionalization or internalization stage, which is when a *collective movement* is no longer initiated by grassroots communities but through a more established organization. The third stage is the regression stage, which is when the community no longer considers this issue important enough to be considered together. The purpose of the *collective movement* in this PKM activity has entered the first stage, which seeks to provide awareness to the young generation of Pontianak about maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River.

To create sustainable awareness, the implementation of the #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas campaign was carried out on May 26, 2023, exactly 10 days before the celebration of World Environment Day. For 10 days, the young generation of Pontianak City was asked to find out factors that can affect the cleanliness of the river, apply them in daily life, and then communicate them by uploading them on social media and Instagram. The upload of Instagram content by the young generation of Pontianak City contains education and their real actions in maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River. It is hoped that the digital campaign can persuade other young generations who watch their content to also care about the environment, especially maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River.

During the 10 days leading up to the World Environment Day Celebration, there were a total of 134 digital campaigns carried out by 40 young generations of Pontianak through Instagram. The following is a snippet of the digital campaign content that has been created by the young generation of Pontianak City and tagged with the @PeduliSungaiKapuas Instagram account.

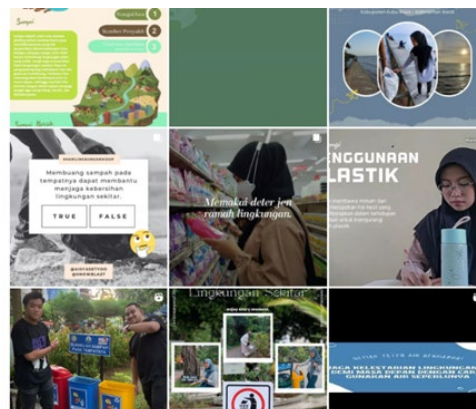


Figure 1. Digital Campaigns

The cleanliness of the Kapuas River is highly dependent on the cleanliness of the ditches in Pontianak City. This is because the flow from these ditches will drain into the Kapuas River. Hence, the cleanliness of the Kapuas River also depends on the cleanliness of its ditches. Therefore, many of the real actions of the younger generation, or "River Warriors," focus on cleaning ditches in their respective neighborhoods. The education and real actions they carried out consisted of several themes, which can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Digital Campaign Post Theme

Post Theme	Sum	Post Type
Why is it important to take care of the environment	12	Education
Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R)	8	Education, Real Action
Consequences/impacts of polluted rivers	10	Education
Bring your lunch box	6	Education, Real Action
An invitation for fellow young people	1	Narration
Cleaning the river	14	Real Action
Benefits of rivers	15	Education
Reasons why you should keep the river clean	5	Education
Carrying a tumbler or drinking water bottle	8	Real Action
Cleaning ditches/gutters	10	Real Action
Sorting garbage	8	Education, Real Action
Reduce the use of plastic bags	12	Real Action
Dangers of plastic waste	7	Real Action
Use eco-friendly detergents	1	Education
Dispose of garbage in its place	15	Real Action
Save water	2	Real Action

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

Of the 134 digital campaigns, there are various styles or types of posts. These types of posts are humorous, mystery, monologues, memes, reportage, narratives, satire, quizzes, and even poetry musicalizations. Those types of posts make digital campaigns very interesting to listen to. Many netizens were entertained by the digital campaign. This can be seen from the various comments in the comment column.

On World Environment Day, which falls on June 5, 2023, the Kapuas River Clean Action activity is held. This activity coordinates with the 0.24 home communities, which are environmental care communities in Pontianak City. They provide recommendations for places and share information about the equipment that needs to be prepared. The initial location of cleaning is at Senghie Port, the closest location to the Kapuas River Waterfront. The waterfront is a riverside tourist area for the public, managed by the Pontianak City Government. Unfortunately, there is a lot of garbage around the area of Senghie Port, especially in the morning when it rises to the surface of the river. Thus, the implementation of the river cleanup action is carried out in the morning.

The activity was opened with awareness of the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River by the head of the PKM team, Dr. Netty Herawati, M.Si. It was then continued with the handover of plaques to the 0.24 home community as a partner of the Community Service Program, followed by a group photo session.



Figure 2. *Opening of the Kapuas River Clean Action*

After that, the activity continued with the division of groups and locations. The River Warriors were divided into six groups at six locations between Senghie Port and Pontianak Waterfront. For the cleaning activity, the tools used were simple: medium-sized garbage nets, garbage bags, and gloves.



Figure 3. *Participants and the Tools Used in River Clean Action*

The clean action of the Kapuas River is not carried out by going down the river with safety factors in mind. At that time, the river water was at high tide, so it could be dangerous for young people who carried out river cleanup actions. Therefore, the activity was deliberately conducted in the morning with the consideration that the garbage would begin to float or appear on the surface, starting at around 07.00 and above. The following picture of the Kapuas River clean action can be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. *Garbage Collection Action*

Starting from 09.00 to 11.00, the young people of Pontianak City managed to collect 2 tons of garbage. The most common items of waste found were plastic, water hyacinth, and household waste. The garbage was then transported using a pickup truck and disposed of at the final disposal site at 17.00 at Batu Layang (TPA). This is because the landfill is only open in the afternoon.



Figure 5. *The Collected Waste*

Although *garbage* cans have been provided around the waterfront, there is still a lot of garbage being thrown carelessly into the river. Public awareness needs to be increased by setting an example, such as this Kapuas River cleanup action.

During this campaign, fellow young generations and the organizing committee created a familiar nickname, namely "river warriors." This familiar call is also one of the campaign strategies in the form of *persuasion* to the target of the message, namely the young generation of Pontianak City. Calling each other "river warriors" is also an invitation and *emotional support* to continue to fight to keep the river clean.

Based on the explanation above, environmental communication efforts are carried out in four ways: (1) digital campaigns through Instagram social media; (2) real actions through *collective movements*; (3) creating the nickname "river warriors" as a persuasive communication strategy; and (4) choosing the right momentum, namely World Environment Day.

Based on the results of the evaluation of #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas campaign activities, the young generation of Pontianak City considered the campaign very useful.

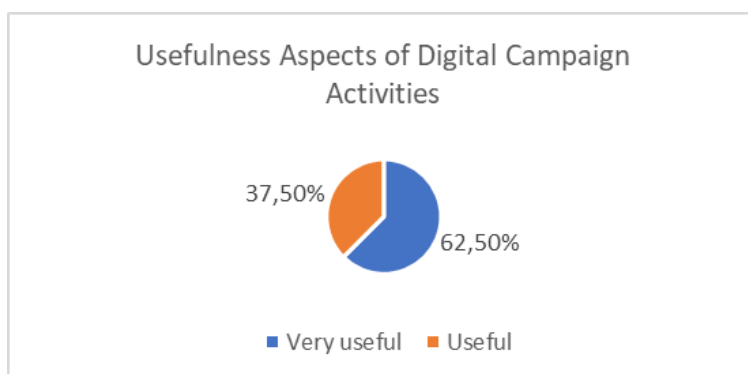


Figure 6. *Diagram of Digital Campaign Usefulness Aspects*

Based on the diagram above, 62.50% of the young generation of Pontianak City feel the benefits of the digital campaign activities being carried out. It appears in the pie chart that the blue part (62.50%) is larger than the orange part (37.50%).

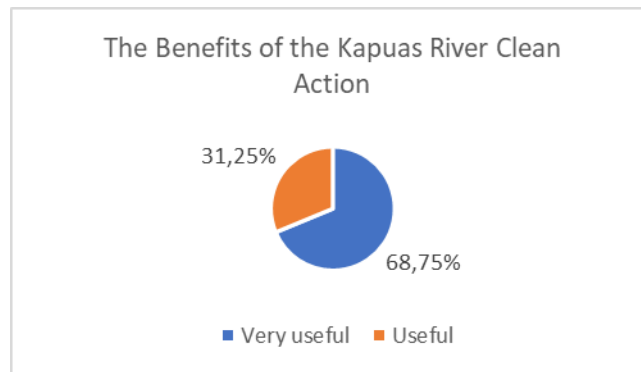


Figure 7. Diagram of the Usefulness of the Real Action of Kapuas River Cleanup

Meanwhile, the *collective movement* activity #AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas (the real action of the Kapuas River Cleanup) is considered very useful, with a score of 68.75%. Then, 31.25% of the Pontianak Young Generation considered the activity useful.

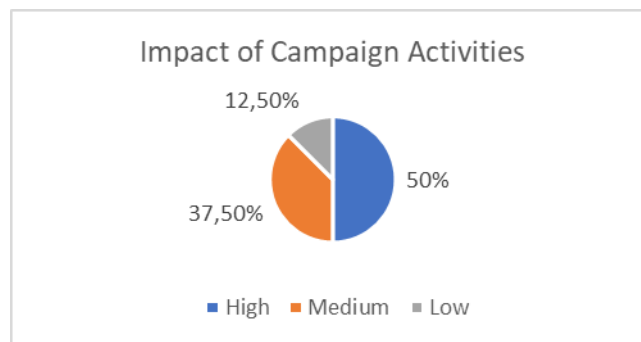


Figure 8. Diagram of the Overall Impact of Campaign Activities

Furthermore, the impact on the overall campaign activities was known to be in the "high" category, in which 50% of campaign participants admitted that the effects caused by campaign activities in the form of awareness and continuity of environmental protection actions were extensive. It can be seen in the pie chart above, which shows that the data on the blue part (50%) is larger than the orange part (37.50%) and the gray part (12.50%). In addition, the online impact of digital campaign activities felt by the young generation of Pontianak City is an increase in the number of followers and digital activities on their Instagram accounts.

Evaluation activities are conducted 3 months after PKM is carried out through the distribution of questionnaires. After 3 months of PKM, the results of the evaluation show that this clean action still has an impact on the participants today. In addition, the young generation of Pontianak City also revealed that this activity increased self-awareness of the importance of protecting the surrounding environment for the sake of environmental sustainability and raised the community's concern for the river in their area. This community service activity has succeeded in causing changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward the young generation of Pontianak City. The young generation of Pontianak City revealed that the campaign activities and clean actions of the Kapuas River give them motivation to live cleaner and always remember not to throw garbage carelessly, especially into the river.

Conclusion

The PKM activity entitled Environmental Communication Efforts to the Young Generation in Maintaining the Cleanliness of the Kapuas River has won the attention of the community, especially the young generation of Pontianak City. They are not only the object of this PKM but, at the same

time, the subject of maintaining the cleanliness of the Kapuas River. Environmental communication efforts are carried out through four things: (1) digital campaigns on social media (Instagram); (2) real action through *collective movements* (#AksiNyataBersihSungaiKapuas); (3) creating the familiar nickname "river warriors" as a persuasive communication strategy; and (4) choosing the right momentum, namely World Environment Day. Environmental communication efforts should be carried out on an ongoing basis. The first step is to provide awareness, then direct experience both individually and through *collective movements* or joint actions, as well as other emotional support in the form of the nickname "river warriors."

References

- Amaranti, R., Achiraeniwati, E., Nasution, A., & Satori, M. (2016). Pendampingan Masyarakat dalam Pengelolaan Sampah Organik Rumah Tangga untuk Mendukung Program Urban Farming. *Ethos (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat)*, *Vol 4 No.2*, 283–290. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29313/ethos.v0i0.1973>
- Cangara, Hafied; Flor, A. G. (2018). *Komunikasi Lingkungan: Penanganan Kasus-kasus Lingkungan Melalui Strategi Komunikasi*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media.
- Harahap, H. S., & Kurniawati, D. I. (2018). Whatsapp sebagai Media Strategi Komunikasi Ustadzah dalam Menyampaikan Dakwah (Studi Deskriptif Kualitatif Komunitas “ Belajar Islam Seru ”). *Dynamic Media, Communication, and Culture Conference E- Proceeding*, *1*, 131–150. Retrieved from <http://e-journal.president.ac.id/presunivojs/index.php/DIMCC/article/view/513>
- Husodo, Teguh; Wulandari, Indri; Megantara, Erri N; Shanida, Sya sya; Kuncoro, Dwiki Danang; Ratnaningsih, N. (2021). Partisipasi dan Persepsi Masyarakat Desa cinunuk dalam Pengelolaan Sampah. *Ethos (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat)*, *9(2)*, 192–203. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29313/ethos.v9i2.6984>
- Kementerian LHK, D. P. (2018). Kendalikan Sampah Plastik Industri. Retrieved from <https://ppkl.menlhk.go.id/website/reduksiplastik/pengantar.php>
- Patrianti, T., Jakarta, U. M., Bajari, A., Padjadjaran, U., Agustin, H., & Padjadjaran, U. (2020). Climate Change Communication in Energy Sector Towards Sustainable Development Goals. *International Journal of Advance Science and Technology*, *29 No.06*(January). <https://doi.org/10.33403/rigeo.8006826>
- Pedelty, M. (2022). *Environmental communication and the public sphere. Environmental Communication*, *9(1)*(October), 139–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2014.1003440>
- Pezzullo, Phaedra C.; Cox, R. (2017). *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Pratiwi, S. R. (2019). Manajemen Kampanye Komunikasi Kesehatan dalam Upaya Pengurangan Prevalensi Balita Stunting. *Jurnal Manajemen Komunikasi*, *4(1)*, 1–23. Retrieved from <https://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/manajemen-komunikasi/article/view/23435>
- Rahmaniya, N., Hafizh, S., Ramadhan, D. B., Alamsyah, R. M., Putra, R. P., Nur, T. R. I., & Noviar, A. (2023). The Effectiveness of Garbage Sorting Campaigns for Villagers. *Ethos (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat)*, *11 (2)*(105), 143–154. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.29313/ethos.v11i2.11128>
- Safitri, D., Romli, N. A., & Siregar, D. (2022). Pelatihan Komunikasi Persuasif dalam Menarik Minat Konsumen pada Komunitas Wirausaha Perempuan. *Ethos (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat)*, *10(1)*, 77–84. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.29313/ethos.v10i1.7976>

Sharma, A., Devi, L., Sancheti, P., Vidyawadi, M., & Rajasthan, P. (2022). Social Movements: Collective Behaviour and Social Change in Modern Era - A Study. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 10(9), 850–855. Retrieved from <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2209352.pdf>

Sinha, S. N., & Banerjee, R. . (2007). Pollution Indicators and Impact Assessment of Pollutants Discharged into the River Ganga. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 48(3–4), 231–244. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207239508710993>

Susanti, Rina; Evanita, S. (2022). Strategi Komunikasi Lingkungan pada Pengelolaan Sampah di Jorong Galuang Kecamatan Sungai Pua. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4, 1806–1815. Retrieved from <https://journal.universitaspahlawan.ac.id/index.php/jpdk/article/view/4964/3421>

Venus, A. (2019). *Manajemen Kampanye*. Jakarta: Simbiosis Rekatama Media.