Pikukuh: A Communication Model of the Kanekes Community with the Natural Environment in Lebak, Banten, Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper is based on the assumption that every community has a unique tradition and method in maintaining the environment. Local wisdom becomes a unique characteristic within the traditional societies. This can be seen in the efforts of the Kanekes community in Lebak, Banten, Indonesia to utilize and preserve their environment. One form of their appreciation for preserving the nature is conducted through teaching the advice to always protect their surrounding environment which is may not be destroyed within the framework of the social doctrine, namely *Pikukuh*. In the understanding of the Kanekes community, the term *Pikukuh* means rules, ethics, norms, values, or customary law which is developed based on local wisdom to communicate with their surrounding environment. Even though the times are constantly changing and globalization has so massively influenced on the life of modern society, the Kanekes community in Lebak, Banten have never abandoned their traditional doctrine for preserving their environment. This doctrine has evidently positive effect on the Kanekes community to interact with their nature and environment, where they are able to protect the springs, maintain the trees, including maintain the fertility of rice fields and fields, so that they can continue to provide long-term benefits to human life.

Keywords: *Pikukuh*, Communication, Environment, Kanekes, Community.

1. Introduction

Entering the 21st century today, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as one of the international organizations under the United Nations (UN) has formulated 21 issues that must be faced by the international community. The formulation of the 21 issues is contained in the book *21 Issues for the 21st Century: Result of the UNEP Foresight Process on Emerging Environmental Issues*. One of the underlined points in these issues is stated that the large number of human interactions with the natural environment can effect on low, increase, and accumulate decline for the environment, such as depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, deforestation in the tropics, destruction of mangroves, loss of biodiversity, and so forth (UNEP, 2012).

Furthermore, there are the so-called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in 2015 by the United Nations through the UN General Assembly and aimed to be achieved in 2030 in accordance with UN Resolution 70/1 as the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs design consists of 17 global goals as a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all international community. Among the 17 targets most related to environmental issues, namely: Goal 2: Zero hunger: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 2: zero hunger: end hunger, achieve food security. and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 15: life on land: protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage the forests, combat

desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss, and Goal 15: living on land: protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests in a sustainable manner, fight desertification, resist and reverse land degradation, and resilience the loss of biodiversity (Schleicher, Schaafsma, & Vira, 2018).

In Indonesia, there are at least ten environmental problems such as garbage, floods, river pollution, marine ecosystems destruction, global warming, air pollution, the difficulties in getting clean water, forest damage, abrasion, and soil pollution (Sari, 2019). This is supported by the facts that the high level of environmental damage in Indonesia due to human activities, such as deforestation rate of up to 1.8 million hectares per year that resulted 21% of 133 million hectares of the forest in Indonesia were lost (Boehm & Siegert, 2001). Until now, almost 30% of the 2.5 million hectares of the coral reefs in Indonesia were damaged; and the Citarum River was named the Most Polluted River in the World by the huffingtonpost.com website in 2010. The World Bank also ranks Jakarta as the capital city with the third highest pollutant after Beijing, New Delhi, and Mexico City. Moreover, according to the IUCN Red list records, as many as 76 animal species and 127 plants in Indonesia are in the highest threat status, including 205 animals and 88 plant species are in the endangered category, and also consists of 557 animals and 256 plants species are in vulnerable status (Leberger et al., 2020).

To overcome various issues of more severe environmental damage in Indonesia, it can be done through applying environmental communication (Stamm, Clark, & Eblacas, 2000). In some literatures, the term environmental communication is mean the pragmatic and constitutive modes of expression – the naming, shaping, orienting, and negotiating – of our ecological relationships in the world, including those with non-human systems, elements, and species. There are at least seven areas of concern for environmental communication, such as: first, personal and interpersonal identity from the natural environment; second, environmental organizational communication studies; third, environmental science, technology, and health communication; fourth, public participation in environmental decision making; fifth, environmental mass media studies; sixth, green applied media and arts; and seventh, environmental rhetoric and cultural studies (Pezzullo, 2017).

Moreover, to analyze the response of traditional communities to their environment, it can be explored through the study of environmental organization communication, which we can investigate how the certain institutions or networks discuss or organize the environmental problems (Costanza & Ruth, 1998). Therefore, the aims of this study try to examine the hierarchical language, fairy tales, rituals, environmental rules or regulations, and anti-environmental discourses that affected on public life or daily lives. Besides that, the environmental rhetoric and cultural studies can bridge fiction with non-fiction, individual and collective expressions, verbal and non-verbal interactions, face-to-face or face-to-face communication with screens, attention to meaning, materiality, effects, and so on (Meister & Japp, 2002).

Thus, communication carried out by human beings is basically a symbolic action. Our beliefs, attitudes, and behavior towards environmental issues are completely mediated by communication so that the public space then appears as a discursive space to communicate about the environment. Shortly, the environmental rhetoric and cultural studies can mainly analyze the range of communication phenomena in certain society through a language, discourse, visual texts, pop culture, places, environmental advocacy campaigns, movements, stage appearances, or controversy in public spaces (Burgess, Harrison, & Filius, 1998).

Referring to the background above, the Kanekes community in Lebak, Banten, Indonesia is one of the interesting phenomenon which very well known in Indonesia as a very caring traditional community in maintaining the preservation of the surrounding environment. They use the *Pikukuh* as a traditional doctrine to communicate and preserve their surrounding environment. In this, there are some interesting questions that needed to analyze such as what is the media or discourse used by the Kanekes community to communicate with the natural environment and protect them, how the function of media or discourse mechanism can be used by them to preserve the natural environment, and what are the beneficiary of the media or discourse used by them implicated to increase a mutual understanding between the Kanekes and other communities. Therefore, the focus of this study is to analyze *Pikukuh* as a communication model of the Kanekes community with the natural environment in Lebak, Banten, Indonesia.

2. Method

To explain the communication model between humans and the environment, there are various methods and approaches according to the situation and conditions. Therefore, this research uses descriptive-qualitative method. The sources of the data are obtained from the number of literatures and also supported by the interview results with the informants who are several leaders and indigenous peoples of the Kanekes community regarding on *Pikukuh* as a form of communication rhetoric or symbolic interaction between the Kanekes community and their surrounding natural environment in the region of Lebak, Banten, Indonesia. The analysis of the data is conducted through the combination between deductive and inductive approaches until the formulation of conclusion.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1   *Environment Communication*

Environmental communication is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon and all environmental messages have ideological roots that are influenced by individual experience, geography, history, and culture. It is not only involves exchange of information and ideas, but also actions (Corbett, 2006). Other definitions explain that environmental communication is an application of communication approaches, principles, strategies and techniques to environmental management and protection. In short, environmental communication is an exchange of environmental information, knowledge and even wisdom that leads to mutual understanding between the parties (Flor, 2004).

Environmental communication can be understood as a study of how we communicate about the environment, the influence of this communication on our perceptions of the environment, ourselves and our relationship with the natural environment. Environmental communication is a pragmatic and constitutional vehicle or tool to study and understand the environment, including our relationship to the environment (Cox, 2013). It is also explained that environmental communication is a sub-field of communication science in which there are several different or in-disciplinary study areas. However, environmental communication in principle has two main functions, namely: first, pragmatic functions, which include functions to educate, alert, mobilization, and persuasive functions; second, a constitutional function, in which language and other symbols play a role in shaping our perception of the reality and nature of the environment (Aerts & Cormier, 2009).

Environmental communication is a symbolic medium used to construct environmental problems and to negotiate different community responses. Environmental communication does not only involve environmental governance, but more than that, environmental communication also includes the study of public opinion and perceptions (Ardian, 2019). Furthermore, Lie & Servaes classify environmental communication as one of the thematic sub-disciplines in the field of development communication and social change which addresses all interactions between humans and the environment (Lie & Servaes, 2015).

Environmental communication can be understood as an effort to increase the role of communication science in preserving the environment. The point is to make the audience aware of the environment through various communication channels. For example, in a campaign entitled "save global warming", the public did not know much about the message of the campaign. In fact, people may not even know the meaning of the term global warming. The main objective of the campaign is to save the earth from various environmental damage crises. Therefore, to provide this awareness, the role of environmental communication is to communicate various forms of environmental damage and efforts to save them through various communication media (Agustin, 2016).

Environmental communication is a communication process that supports a policy and in the process, the use of media is carried out in a planned and strategic manner to make the community participate, and in the implementation of the project communication is directed at environmental sustainability. In addition, environmental communication also plays an important role in problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, management, control, and other aspects related to human interaction with the environment. In this context, concepts, technology, and human skills are crucial aspects in communicating with the surrounding environment. Besides that, the policy makers, opinion leaders, strategic groups or the public in general can provide complete information into understandable elements and place them on the relevant socio-cultural agenda as a prerequisite for consensus building and significant change to preserve the environment.

One form of the interesting communication approaches between humans and the environment can be seen in the Kanekes traditional community in the region of Lebak, Banten, Indonesia. They have combined religious and traditional values as a way of life to call for goodness, recognize the existence of God as the Creator of Nature, and at the same time make them respect to the natural environment around them. They also believe that the form of local wisdom based on local spirituality and traditions will bring them happiness and prosperity. Based on the reason, they communicate with their surrounding environment through a social doctrine called *Pikukuh*.

There are many writings that describing the *Pikukuh* as a form of local wisdom in the Kanekes community, as compiled by many researchers. In general, these studies can be classified into four categories: first, explaining local wisdom and religiosity in the Kanekes community; second, explaining how the Kanekes community maintains water and food security; third, explaining how the Kanekes community manages the environment, water, rice fields, fields, and forests; and fourth, explaining how the Kanekes community conducts environmental conservation and greening. However, this topic seems that it is still very rare to explain the communication model of the Kanekes community with the surrounding natural environment. Therefore, this paper will focus more on explaining the environmental communication model between the Kanekes community and their natural surroundings.

3.2   *Pikukuh as Local Wisdom within the Kanekes Traditional Community*

Pikukuh is a media or discourse applied by the Kanekes tradisional community relating to the communication with their environmental in the line of preserving the surrounding natural environment (Danasasmita & Djatisunda, 1986). Among them, *Pikukuh* is not only understood as local wisdom, but also the same with tradition or cultural value that consists of rules, ethics, norms, values, or customary law. It as the words or messages of the Kanekes community ancestors that are passed down from generation to generation to be obeyed (Indrawardana, 2012). Among Sundanese scholars, in the life of the ancient Sundanese people, *Pikukuh* seems to be synonymous with traditional ethics (*Patikrama*), which is derived from the *Sanghyang Siksakandang Karesian Script* or the legacy of the Sundanese ancestors (*Panujungria Sya Seda*) (Garna, 1987).

Among the Sundanese people today, *Pikukuh* is called a mandate as well as a message that should be conveyed again from person to person, from community to community, and from one generation to next generation because if it is not done by them, they will always feel wrong throughout his life. The purpose of the mandate is not only to convey a message, but also provisions that cannot be changed or abolished because the mandate or gift is no longer there. One of the *Pikukuh* contents can be read in this statement:

Grandparents are entrusted to the country, thirty-three countries, sixty-five people, all countries or mountains should not be melted, valleys should not be damaged, bans should not be demolished, grandparents should not be altered or family hood should not be cut, short should not be connected, the others need to be played, those who do not need to be defeated, those who do need to be healed or squatted should be permission, digging should be asked, digging turmeric should be thanking, holding ginger should be permission, digging should be notice or asking should be measured, talking should be invitation or do not say free will, do not be greedy, do not steal extortion, do not commit adultery or have to stand up straight, cutting or cast a bird to be queen, cast crazy to be noble, cast accumulation will be influence, cast a bland charisma or cast do not work battlefields, cast not win the war, cast defeat bravery, cast defeat supernatural powers, will be feared by many countries (*Buyut nu dititipkeun ka puun, nagara satelung puluh telu, bagawan sawidak lima, pancer salawe nagara/gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang diruksak, larangan teu meunang dirempak, buyut teu meunang dirobah/lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung, nu lain kudu dilainkeun, nu ulah kudu diulahkeun, nu enya kudu dienyakeun/mipit kudu amit, ngala kudu menta, ngeduk cikur kudu mihatur, nyokel jahe kudu micarek, ngagedag kudu bewara/nyaur kudu diukur, nyabda kudu diungang/ulah ngomong sageto-geto, ulah lemek sadaek-daek, ulah maling papanjingan, ulah jinah papacangan/kudu ngadek sacekna, nilas saplasna/matak burung jadi ratu, matak edan jadi menak, matak pupul pangaruh, matak hambar komara/matak teu mahi juritan, matak teu jaya perang, matak eleh jajaten, matak eleh kasakten, matak sangar sanagara*) (Halmahera et al., 2019).

The contents of the *Pikukuh* above contain great-grandmothers (taboo, sacral, and prohibition) because of the religious mindset. The meaning of "Buyut" in the Kanekes community is actually more similar to the meaning of "haram" in Islam. Furthermore, the two authors divided the Kanekes *Pikukuh* into taboo into two levels, namely "Buyut Adam Tunggal" which applies to *Tangtu* people (Inners Baduy of the Kanekes community) and "Buyut Nahun" which applies to *Panamping* people and *Dangka* (Outers Baduy of the Kanekes community). The meaning of "Buyut Adam Tunggal" is also taboo principal along with branches and twigs (without exception). For the *Tangtu* community, all taboos apply in their entirety, both main and small taboos (twigs), while the people of *Panamping* and

Dangka are only obliged to follow the main taboos. This difference has resulted in things that seem common in the *Panamping* area but prohibited in the *Tangtu* area, such as in terms of kitchen utensils and food processing methods (Yulianti, 2006).

Meanwhile, in terms of function, taboo in Kanekes community includes three types of taboo, namely: first, taboo to protect the purity of the human soul; second, taboo to protect the purity of the mandala; and third, taboo to protect the purity of tradition. Thus, the attitudes and actions that the *Pikukuh* want are to maintain the integrity and its purity through an attitude that puts forward the word "*teu wasa*" (do not have the heart, do not have the heart, and do not want to act). This means that they do not have the heart to carry out an attitude that is not mandated by their ancients or *Karuhun* as stated in the *Pikukuh*. As the reason is everything that mandated by their ancestors or *Karuhun* is taboo, sacral, and prohibited for the Kanekes people which is called *Buyut* (Nadroh, 2018).

Regarding on the function, the term taboo appears to be similar prohibition and sacral even though in other things its meaning is different. Initially, taboo was used for all kinds of prohibitions which had two meanings, namely obeying certain specific behavioral barriers and if those restrictions were violated, one would get sick or possibly die. Thus, the meaning of both is the customary violator will endanger others and can only be returned to its original state through a purification ceremony.

Meanwhile, great-grandfather or *Buyut* had something to do with *Kabuyutan*, which was generally touted in pre-Islamic times as a holy place or a religious center. It is based on the background that in pre-Islamic times, the Sundanese Kingdom, the term *Kabuyutan* was divided into two meanings: first, in the Hindu religious, *Kabuyutan* was called *Lemah Dewasasana*, and *Kabuyutan* for the Sundanese Kanekes people who put forward their traditional beliefs was called *Lemah Parahyang*. It is the dwelling place of the Hyangs who were considered to be of higher position and power of the God (Sujana, 2018).

Furthermore, *Kabuyutan* is a very important holy area. Thus, *Kabuyutan* must be defended by the political authorities and the people who support the *Kabuyutan*. A ruler who is unable to maintain the *Kabuyutan* is considered to be of a lesser degree than the weasel skin which was dumped in the trash. The current *Kabuyutan* of Kanekes community is *Lemah Parahyang* who has a function as *Sasaka Domas* or *Mandala Parahyang* and *Sasaka Pada Ageung* or *Arca Domas*. These two holy places are meant by the *Kabuyutan* of the Kanekes community, who are the source of the great-grandmother of the Kanekes community. In this context, *Kabuyutan* is simply very honorable and the importance of great-grandparents. Therefore the meaning of action is something that cannot be ignored in the religious concept of Kanekes. These are the messages that must be considered by everyone who has to do like outlined by the *Karuhun* (ancestors). Thus, the term of powerless (*teu wasa*) is used as an antidote for various things that in the *Pikukuh*. It is stated that they should not be done by simply stating a brief reason, great-grandmother or forbidden (*teu meunang*).

In a certain extent, finally, we can see the understanding of great-grandmother (*buyut*) from two far-flung sides, namely the real thing and the abstract or symbolic meaning. It means that these expressions have the real meaning as they are aimed at the real symptoms of life, but can also have a broad meaning that is not limited to boundaries. Thus, the *Pikukuh* is the great-grandmother that becomes the guideline for every Kanekes person to live the life of the Kanekes community in *Buana Pancatengah* or the world. Based on the reason, *Pikukuh* can be seen as a reflection of the beliefs and religions of the Kanekes community. The most

important content of *Pikukuh* is the concept of without any changes or changes as little as possible. This taboo in everyday life is interpreted literally, and it turns out that the Outer Kanekes make different interpretations and act according to predetermined rules. The Kanekes act based on the basis of their understanding trough using its rules to decide the appropriate type of their actions (Suparmini, Setyawati, & Sumunar, 2013).

Thus, the definition of the Kanekes people about the meaning of *Pikukuh* is simply influenced by the relationship between the Kanekes community and their own *Pikukuh*. This relationship is also in turn influenced by the text itself. The chaos has given Kanekes community's sense about how their interpretation and actions that is seemed logical. This feeling is called logical power. In prerogative power, the Kanekes community is also carrying out their customary provisions because of causal power. This means that their previous people (their ancestors or *Karuhun*) have left the *Pikukuh* to be carried out by their future generations. For some of the young Kanekes generation, of course, this is a pressure because on the one hand they cannot be separated from the social penetration of the community in the Kanekes pillar, and on the other hand, the coordination of the meaning of *Pikukuh* occurs well because it is inherited by their ancestors and it is done and guided entirely by the *Panamping* and *Dangka*.

3.3 The Environmental Communication Mechanism among the Kanekes Community

The environmental communication mechanism within the Kanekes community is very commonly related to "the mandala protection taboo". In this sense, they reflect in the strong passage (*Pikukuh*): "The mountains may not be melted, valleys may not be destroyed, prohibitions may not be demolished, grandparents may not be altered, longer may not be cut, and huts may not be connected" (*gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang diruksak, larangan teu meunang dirempak, buyut teu meunang dirobah, lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung*). Among the Kanekes communiity, it is simply seen as a worthy the way of life that must be protected and do not even allowed to be changed (Widowati, n.d.).

Based on the *Pikukuh*, in the practice of everyday life related to the nature, the Kanekes community should not do the following: first, it is forbidden to change the waterways, such as making fish ponds, regulating drainage, and making irrigation, so that the paddy farming system is paddy fields, it is also forbidden to farm rice in the form of rice fields; second, it is forbidden to change the shape of the land, such as digging the ground to make wells, leveling the land for settlement, and hoeing the land for agriculture; third, it is forbidden to enter the forest reserve to cut down trees, open fields, or take other forest products; fourth, it is forbidden to use chemical technology, such as using fertilizers, pesticides, using kerosene, bathing with soap, brushing teeth with pasta, and poisoning fish in rivers; fifth, it is forbidden to grow plantation crops, such as coffee, cocoa, cloves, oil palm, etc.; sixth, it is forbidden to keep four-legged livestock, such as goats and buffaloes; seventh, it is forbidden to farm indiscriminately, so when farming should be in accordance with customary provisions, eight, it is forbidden to use arbitrary clothes, so the clothes of the Bedouin community must be uniform.

This mechanism that cannot make any changes is the view of the Kanekes' life towards the surrounding environment. In other words, persistence forms the ecological awareness of the Kanekes community towards the natural environment surrounding them (local ecology). Awareness of the living space is projected on shared behavior and awareness in an effort to transmit the objective experience gained in daily life, while aiming to

demonstrate the duties and roles of each person as a part and community members for the sustainability of natural resources places of the residence and places, including to hang the life of the community. Therefore, the forms of symbols used are very much related to the state of the environment, livelihood as well as their daily activities and relationships.

In the binary of *pikukuh* view, it inter-textually indicates a difference, but in practical life of the Kanekes community, it actually shows the equilibrium based the concept of the cosmos and macro cosmos form. Naturally, the concept of difference can be used to maintain equilibrium which is also found in the order of reality such as men and women, black and white, rich and poor, and so on, because the concept of *pikukuh* within the Kanekes community emphasizes that the differences must be maintained, managed, and do not be altered (Venayaksa, 2010).

The closeness of the environment communication between the Kanekes community and the nature like with the mountains and valleys (*Lebak*) implicated them to them to respect these two areas. Even though is seemed the binary opposition, it is sometime to be a contrast. However, the mountains and valleys must not be destroyed because if that happens, all of their lives will also be destroyed. Likewise with the binary opposition, it is similar with the message that the length may not be cut, short may not be joined (*Lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung*). In this case, the Kanekes community believes that everything in the nature has been created by the Creator. It is the same with humans who are also created by God, which humans do not have the right to damage such as cutting or joining. Based on the reason, the concept of life within the Kanekes community is generally making them to maintain the stability of nature in order to remain in balance condition, including in the hectic life, they hold on to consider a fixed price and cannot be changed (Faridah, Adisendjaja, & Sriyati, 2020).

To convey this *Pikukuh* view to a wider audience in the Kanekes community, the various verbal communication patterns are available. In the practice of oral communication, there are at least three classifications of popular terms, such as Enumeration (*Cacahan),* Discussion *(Ngawangkong),* and Advice (*Magahan*). From the point of view, the perpetrator will see the other person and the space horizontally and vertically. In Kanekes' overtime life, the meaning of space expresses the distinction which they called *Kolot* (shortened to *Olot*, Old), *Urang* (Us), and *Sahandapeun* (Below Us) (Ahmad, 2019).

Enumeration (*Cacahan*) is a non-formal discussion among the Kanekes community about anything in the morning, evening, or night in one's house such as in the open front of the house (*Tepas*). Enumeration shows the importance of the neighborly aspect, because it is communication among the actors at an equal level. This means that the perpetrator considers the interlocutor is not only the elder or not someone who is considered lowly, but also socially and culturally equal to the interlocutor. So, they may be women and men who are older or younger.

Discussion (*Ngawangkong*) is a conversation with traditional and religious leaders, such as *Puun, Baresan Kolot, Kokolot,* and *Jaro* who are distinguished figures because they are considered *"Jelema nu leuwih nyaho ti urang"* (humans who very well know better than us). In other words, *Ngawangkong* means talking to the people who are considered more than the doer or the speaker. Ift it is compared to enumeration (*Cacahan*), discussion (*Ngawangkong*) is motivated by various intents to ask for an opinion or to what extent the perpetrator has done and will do the truth. So, *Ngawangkong* will cross neighboring boundaries, in overtime and among over territory, because the leaders are in charge of a lot of overtime or territory.

Meanwhile, the term advice (*Magahan*) refers to the talk of the perpetrator (*Urang*) to a person of lesser position (*Sahandapeun*), both in the relationship between parent and child (*Kolot-Budak*), between husband and wife (*Salaki-Pamajikan*), and others. Here, *Magahan* means giving advice or telling the content of which tells something about a problem and tends to insist on the will of the doer. Shortly, here shows the power that the actor has in the space in which the doer has his power.

The communication channels mentioned above are used as a place to convey their ideas about the obligation to carry out the *Pikukuh* on the one hand, and away from great-grandparents on the other hands. Even if these communication patterns do not work, the Kanekes community has a certain punishment mechanism for those who violate the *Pikukuh* or those who commit great-grandmothers. That is what is called *Nyapuan* or *Panyapuan* ceremony. The sanction for violators is being *ditamping* (put aside or thrown away, which is carried out through *Panyapuan* (broom or erased) as mean as removal or cleaning. The purpose of *Panyapuan* is to clean up various dirty in social life. Thus, the *Pikukuh* offenders are considered a stain that pollutes their natural environment, so they must be removed from their daily living environment as well as lowered their citizenship status. In practice, *Tangtu* are generally accompanied at their own request because they feel that they are no longer strong enough to follow the *Pikukuh* or feel that they are "not worthy" to remain in *Tangtu*. In other words, these are the communication mechanisms that enable within the Kanekes community to preserve the natural environment around them.

3.4   The Kanekes Community Perceptions among the Visitors

Local wisdom is reflected in the view of the Kanekes community in maintaining a balance between humans and each other, humans and the natural environment, humans and their God, which in the *Sundanese Wiwitan* concept is called *Sanghiyang*. This can be seen from their understanding of life and death that comes from nature and returns to nature. Among the Kanekes people there is an assumption that *Sundanese Wiwitan* is not a religion, but the origin of all religions or the origin of all religions. All existing religions will reflect the basic values of the *Wiwitan* teachings or the *Wiwitan* nursery, according to their terms. Furthermore, according to their belief, only Kanekes people have the task of *tamping*, maintaining, guarding and enforcing *Wiwitan* as a source of religion. Therefore they think that *Wiwitan* belongs to everyone, not only to the Kanekes. Everyone thinks they must love, protect, and strengthen their knowledge because if there is a change in the basics of understanding, there will certainly be changes in the whole of life (Halmahera et al., 2019).

Likewise with the way of Kanekes community communicates with their surroundings, they take sides with life, namely holding on to the view that life is planting, maintaining, and reaping the rewards. This pattern is contradicted with the lifestyle and the way of thinking of modern societies that grew and developed initially in Western Europe, who was a place for the local culture of European society to grow and develop, starting from the revival of the Old Greek way of thinking with the Indo-Germanian mindset, settled in Central Europe, and lived in the steppes by moving while tending their livestock. One the one hand, this natural condition and livelihood gave birth to the primordial mindset of European society, namely life is death. On the other hand, the principle of domination and aka anthropocentric in the form of homo hominy lupus is mean that someone wants to stay alive then the others and he must be sacrificed (Iskandar, 1992).

The ecological thinking pattern of the Kanekes community is based on the strength of the local culture that produces artificial nature from the natural surroundings, and at the same time preserves it, so that for the Kanekes community, planting rice in the fields (*Ngahuma*) is seen as a form of harmonizing or marrying *Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Asri* with the earth even substantively put together something different to produce something new and more useful in human life as a whole. This view, in turn, is the interactions result with the others between the community and environment, because the meaning is created in human interactions (Rahardjo & Rahayu, 2002).

The essence of the Kanekes community way in communicating with the environment is represented in the cultivation (*Ngahuma*), lived in the mountains and hills. In simply, there is an understanding of binary opposition that explains and complements each other. If these are combined, this opposition pair will create a paradoxical condition and will give birth to ife and new life. So, it can be said that in the view of the Kanekes community, the life is not only the combination of two opposing substances, but also a necessary partner. Therefore, in the view of the Kanekes community, if we want to maintain a life, we have to combine the harmonious among the opposition pairs, because they are still seemed separately, and of course, it will not have any meaning for human life. Thus, the fundamental meaning that can be captured from the Kanekes community is we have to always believe to God and respect to all God's creatures through maintaining the natural surroundings in line with environmental communication like represented in the *Pikukuh* by the Kanekes community. However, it is not only part of local wisdom, but also the concept of harmony among various conflicting elements within the life of all human beings.

4. Conclusion

Every society has a very unique way or method of interacting with the surrounding environment. Likewise, the Kanekes community, who live in the region of Lebak, Banten, Indonesia, has a way to protect and preserve the surrounding environment as well as the way to convey it to their fellowmen through the implementation of the *Pikukuh*. This customary rules set out the prohibitions that must be obeyed by its citizens. For violators or those who are not strong enough to carry out the *Pikukuh* rules, the Kanekes community imposes the sanctions in the form of being accompanied, isolating, or throwing the perpetrators get out of their territory. For those who violate or are not strong enough to observe the rules of the *Pikukuh*, they must follow the *Panyapuan* ceremony (removal, cleansing), so that the Kanekes area as a *Mandala* (the holy place) returns to be cleaned from the various elements that can pollute it. Finally, the environmental communication model carried out by Kanekes community is conducted through the forms of verbal communication in the term of Enumeration (*Cacahan*), Discussion *(Ngawangkong),* and Advice (*Magahan*). These forms enable peers to meet peers, children, or young people with the parents, and the position people are under the speaker to convey the obligation to maintain the *Pikukuh* as a local wisdom among them in preserving their natural environment in order to remain sustainable.

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