

# Persuasive Communication of the Kuningan Regional Board for Disaster Management (Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah) in Mitigating Forest Fire Disasters in Mount Ciremai National Park

Fiona Hasanah<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Najih Farihanto<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Communication Sciences, Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, 55191, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author's email: fiona2000030190@webmail.uad.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Persuasive  
Communication  
Mitigating

Forest fires can threaten the environment and disrupt the balance of ecosystems in Mount Ciremai National Park. This study aims to determine the persuasive communication of BPBD in mitigating forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park through persuasive communication strategies proposed by Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Using interviews, observations, and documentation studies for data collection. The results showed that BPBD Kuningan Regency applied psychodynamic, sociocultural, and meaning construction strategies in mitigation efforts. This research confirms the critical role of persuasive communication in changing people's behavior to be more proactive in protecting the environment, especially in dealing with the risk of forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park, with potential contributions to strengthening disaster mitigation systems at the local level.

## 1. Introduction

Persuasive communication is carried out to invite or persuade communicants to act according to the wishes of the communicator (Barata, 2003). The purpose of persuasive communication is for the audience to accept particular views, attitudes, or behaviors desired by the communicator. In persuasive communication, the communicator tries to persuade the audience through strong arguments, relevant evidence, and other persuasion techniques.

Communication and disaster mitigation are two interrelated aspects of keeping people safe amid the threat of natural disasters. Communication is the best way to mitigate disasters, prepare, respond, and recover successfully (Lestari, 2018). According to Law No. 24 of 2007, mitigation is a series of efforts to reduce disaster risk through physical development and awareness and improvement of the ability to face the threat of disasters (UU Nomor 24 Tahun 2007 Tentang Penanggulangan Bencana, 2007). In disaster communication theory, communication is seen as a powerful tool to facilitate understanding and awareness of disasters, both before, during, and after.

In the disaster mitigation phase, effective communication can convey information about disaster risks, precautions, and the community's preparatory measures. When people clearly understand the risks and precautions, they can take appropriate actions to protect themselves and their environment. In addition, disaster communication theory emphasizes the importance of coordinated communication between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, media, and communities in building mutual awareness and strengthening disaster preparedness and response.

Mount Ciremai National Park is located in West Java Province, Indonesia. This national park is located in Kuningan and Majalengka regencies with an area of 15,500 hectares, bordering 25 villages

in Kuningan Regency and 20 villages in Majalengka Regency (Kuningan, 2022). Mount Ciremai is the highest mountain in the West Java region, with its peak reaching 3,078 meters above sea level. Mount Ciremai National Park is a natural attraction with natural beauty that can attract local and foreign visitors.

The existence of Mount Ciremai National Park provides benefits to the community and the surrounding environment. The national park is a tourist destination in the tourism sector and provides residents with economic opportunities. In addition, Mount Ciremai National Park has a significant hydrological role in regulating water systems and ensuring the sustainability of agriculture for most of the surrounding areas. Despite its many potentials and benefits, there are still challenges in preserving and managing it. The park's ecosystems can be significantly threatened by uncontrolled human activities such as illegal logging, poaching, and fires. Therefore, to preserve Mount Ciremai National Park, more monitoring, protection, and education are needed.

In 2020, there were 2.6 hectares of forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park. As a prevention effort, the Mount Ciremai National Park Center (BTNGC) and volunteers built water reservoirs north of Mount Ciremai. In 2021, the fire area decreased to 0.0375 hectares. Forest fire control efforts are carried out routinely through Fire Care Camp patrols with partners, maintenance of firebreaks, fire extinguishing, and procurement of forest and land control facilities and infrastructure. However, in 2022, fires again increased significantly with an area of 138.34 hectares, spread in several points such as Pejaten Block, Cileutik, Manguntapa, and Erpah.

The losses caused by these forest fires are not only in the form of material, time, and energy, but more importantly, the disruption of the ecological function of the Mount Ciremai National Park area as a water tower that supports the people of Kuningan, Majalengka, Indramayu, and Cirebon Regencies. 2023 forest fires reached 177 hectares, becoming the largest fire in the last three years. The burned vegetation includes shrubs, reeds, and pines. Forest fires are more common in northern Ciremai because the area consists mainly of shrubs and volcanic eruptions that direct their rocks to the north, while the more fertile parts are to the south.

BPBD Kuningan Regency is the regional disaster management agency responsible for disaster management in Kuningan Regency, including dealing with forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park. In addition, BPBD Kuningan District works closely with related organizations such as the provincial government, fire agencies, and Mount Ciremai National Park to ensure a quick and efficient response to fires.

With the phenomenon of forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park, BPBD Kuningan plays an essential role in conveying information and building public awareness about the risk of forest fires by the persuasive communication theory of Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach. Through a structured persuasive communication strategy and collaboration with various parties, BPBD seeks to influence community behavior to be more proactive in preserving the environment. Thus, this research is expected to understand how persuasive communication of BPBD Kuningan is in mitigating forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park.

## 2. Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation studies. This qualitative approach will examine how persuasive communication of BPBD Kuningan in mitigating forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park. The data analysis technique used, according to (Sugiyono, 2013), includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data validation is done through technical triangulation, which uses various data collection techniques from the same source to ensure the accuracy of the information.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Presenting the Results

**The Psychodynamic Strategy.** Psychodynamic strategies in forest fire mitigation in Mount Ciremai National Park focus on understanding and influencing the psychological factors and internal dynamics of individuals and groups in the community that play a role in forest fire prevention.

As KASI Prevention and Preparedness, Yayan Indrayana said that in the pre-disaster, BPBD Kuningan conducted socialization on disaster mitigation and education to reduce apathy and increase public awareness about the risk of forest fires. The purpose of socialization is so that people can adapt to disasters and recognize potential disasters so that forest fires can be prevented. This psychodynamic strategy is critical in pre-disaster to avoid adverse impacts such as disruption of flora and fauna ecosystems, fire smoke pollution, and pollution of water sources.

BPBD established a disaster emergency response field command so that instructions are carried out from one source, namely the head of the field command. At the time of the disaster, BPBD overcame the fear and anxiety of the community by providing clear instructions so that the community would not panic.

Based on data on forest and land fires in the TNGC area, the incident did not affect community settlements, so they did not experience post-fire trauma and stress. BPBD also works with religious leaders, community and traditional leaders, and village and sub-district government officials to participate in the rehabilitation and reconstruction program

**The sociocultural Strategy.** Sociocultural strategies in forest fire mitigation in Mount Ciremai National Park focus on understanding and utilizing local communities' social and cultural aspects to improve mitigation efforts' effectiveness. This approach considers the community's values, norms, beliefs, and cultural practices to build awareness, participation, and proactive action in preventing forest fires.

To increase public awareness and participation in the prevention and management of forest and land fire disasters, BPBD Kuningan is working with community and traditional leaders to encourage local culture as a significant force in the pre-disaster mitigation process. Dinda Triaprilia delivered this as the first expert in BPBD's Disaster Analyst.

Local media plays an essential role in disseminating information about forest and land fires and their handling with the support of information dissemination by BPBD. BPBD coordinates disaster information through the Kuningan Regency government command center.

Furthermore, at the post-disaster stage, BPBD involves local communities in post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction activities with a sociocultural approach that prioritizes local culture, and the messages are delivered by religious leaders, community and traditional leaders, and village and sub-district government officials.

**The Meaning Construction Strategy.** The meaning construction strategy in forest fire mitigation in Mount Ciremai National Park focuses on building shared meaning and understanding of the importance of forest fire prevention. This approach involves shaping and strengthening community perceptions of forest fires and mitigation efforts to understand better, appreciate, and engage in preventive action.

At the pre-disaster stage, BPBD works with local governments and stakeholders to build a strong narrative on the importance of forest conservation and fire prevention, one example of which is organizing activities such as the Mount Ciremai Sweep Movement.

During the disaster, BPBD actively communicated with all volunteers to demonstrate the importance of collaboration and solidarity in the face of disaster. The main focus was emphasizing a precise meaning the community could immediately follow.

In the post-disaster stage, BPBD Kuningan collaborates with related agencies to redevelop positive narratives and aspirations after forest fires and coordinates activities such as reforestation and appeals to the community to preserve forests by not burning land.

### 3.2. Discussion

**The Psychodynamic Strategy.** This study discusses the implementation of psychodynamic strategies in reducing the risk of forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park, which can be linked to the theory of psychodynamics according to Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach cited in (Soemirat, Saleh; Satiri, Hidayat; Suryana, 2007). This theory emphasizes that societal internal psychological factors and group dynamics influence individual behavior.

This psychodynamic strategy aims to understand and change the psychological and social dynamics influencing community participation in forest fire prevention efforts. BPBD considers three aspects based on psychological factors, namely understanding motivation and behavior, participatory approaches, stress and trauma management.

Psychodynamic strategies emphasize the importance of understanding people's motivations, emotions, and behaviors related to forest fires in order to understand their behavior. The second aspect is the participatory approach, where BPBD involves the community in the mitigation process so that they feel responsible and directly involved. The principle of participation involves direct involvement of the community and can only be achieved if the community is involved from the beginning to the process and formulation of results (Purbathin Hadi, n.d.). Active participation can increase awareness and commitment to prevent forest fires. The third aspect is stress and trauma management, where BPBD also pays attention to the psychological impact of forest fires, such as trauma or fear.

Overall, the psychodynamic strategy in mitigating forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park demonstrates a broader approach to managing the psychological aspects of communities about disasters. The Kuningan Regency BPBD seeks to prepare, respond to, and restore communities and the environment following forest fires by focusing on understanding and influencing psychological factors and the internal dynamics of individuals and groups. Support from various parties, including community leaders and local government, is critical in successfully implementing this strategy.

**The Sociocultural Strategy.** Sociocultural strategies in dealing with forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park use social and cultural elements of the local community to increase the effectiveness of mitigation efforts. Understanding cultural values, norms, beliefs, and practices becomes the foundation for building awareness, participation, and preventive action in forest fire prevention.

To mitigate forest fires in Mount Ciremai National Park, BPBD involves the community in mitigation to create a sense of ownership, works with influential community leaders to deliver and develop culturally appropriate mitigation messages. By integrating these sociocultural aspects, forest fire mitigation strategies in TNGC become more comprehensive and relevant to local conditions. This approach increases community awareness and participation and strengthens social and cultural relationships that support environmental conservation efforts.

**The Meaning Construction Strategy.** The meaning construction strategy in forest fire mitigation in Mount Ciremai National Park aims to build shared meaning and understanding of the importance of forest fire prevention. This approach involves shaping and strengthening people's perceptions of forest fires and mitigation efforts to understand better, appreciate, and engage in preventive action.

Maintaining consistent and open communication and framing mitigation efforts as positive actions helps build trust and understanding and change people's perceptions about the importance of forest fire prevention. BPBD Kuningan can build a strong understanding and meaning of the importance of forest fire mitigation in TNGC by implementing The Meaning Construction strategy.

According to Farah Qoonita, gaining knowledge and understanding of the environment around persuasion, and the problems that often occur makes persuade realize that they have much potential (Hajar & Anshori, 2021). Applying this strategy will increase people's desire to prevent and protect the environment. One proof is the coordination of reforestation efforts to preserve the forest.

### 4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion of psychodynamic, sociocultural, and meaning construction strategies in forest fire mitigation in Mount Ciremai National Park, it can be concluded that this approach successfully integrates psychological, sociocultural, and communication factors in disaster prevention

and management efforts. Psychodynamic strategies focus on understanding and managing individual psychological factors and group dynamics, helping to motivate and address people's fears and anxieties during disasters. This is important to maintain psychological balance and reduce the impact of post-disaster trauma.

Meanwhile, sociocultural strategies utilize local cultural values and practices to increase community participation and awareness in mitigation efforts strengthen community involvement in all stages of mitigation, including post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. Through open and consistent communication, the meaning construction strategy helps build positive community perceptions about the importance of forest conservation and fire prevention. It helps motivate communities to actively participate in preventive actions such as reforestation and preserving forests after disasters.

The suggestion is to strengthen collaboration between BPBD Kuningan and local government, community, and other related agencies in forest fire prevention efforts. Strengthening communication and education on the risks and consequences of forest fires also needs to be improved directly and through local media to expand public understanding and participation. In addition, developing more targeted training programs can strengthen the community's capacity to deal with disasters and ensure the long-term sustainability of mitigation efforts in the area.

## 5. Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to thank the Almighty God for the favors and health given so that the author can complete this research. Thank you very much to all the parties who have provided support and help in completing this research. Thank you to Dr. Muhammad Najih Farihanto, M.A. Thank you to BPBD Kuningan for the cooperation and information provided. And also to my family and friends for their moral support and motivation. This research will be helpful for all interested parties.

## 6. References

- Barata, A. A. (2003). *Dasar - Dasar Pelayanan Prima*. Elex Media Komputindo.
- Hajar, S. A., & Anshori, M. S. (2021). Strategi Komunikasi Persuasif Farah Qoonita Dalam Menyampaikan Dakwah Melalui New Media. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial*, 2.
- Kuningan, P. K. (2022). Taman Nasional Gunung Ciremai. Dinas Komunikasi Dan Informatika Kabupaten Kuningan. <https://kuningankab.go.id/home/taman-nasional-gunung-ciremai/>
- Lestari, P. (2018). Perspektif Komunikasi Bencana. In *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6(11), 951–952. [http://eprints.upnyk.ac.id/23779/1/Puji Lestari - Buku Komunikasi Bencana Aspek Penting.pdf](http://eprints.upnyk.ac.id/23779/1/Puji%20Lestari%20-%20Buku%20Komunikasi%20Bencana%20Aspek%20Penting.pdf)
- Purbathin Hadi, A. (n.d.). *Konsep Pemberdayaan, Partisipasi Dan Kelembagaan Dalam Pembangunan*.
- Soemirat, Saleh; Satiri, Hidayat; Suryana, A. (2007). *Komunikasi Persuasif* (3rd ed.). Universitas Terbuka.
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D* (19th ed.). Alfabeta, CV. <https://anyflip.com/utlqr/qtha>
- UU Nomor 24 Tahun 2007 Tentang Penanggulangan Bencana, Pub. L. No. 24 (2007).