

# **SOUTH SEA PEARLS IN LOMBOK, INDONESIA: INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN BOOSTING AQUACULTURE TOURISM**

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## **Abstract**

*The rich marine resources of Indonesia, epitomized by the South Sea Pearls (SSP) of Lombok, have highlighted the country's vast potential in the jewellery and tourism sectors. This study delves into the 'aquaculture tourism' concept by exploring the symbiotic relationship between pearl farming and tourism in Lombok, focusing on the critical role of Public Relations (PR) in amplifying this nexus. Through consultations with multiple stakeholders, this research identifies the power of PR to craft a compelling narrative surrounding the unique qualities of Lombok's pearls, emphasizing their origins and sustainable farming practices. Key findings suggest that strategic PR can bridge the understanding between tourists, local communities, and industry stakeholders, by fostering two-way communication. The emphasis on sustainable and harmonized practices resonates with global sustainability trends, positioning Lombok as a model for integrating luxury with eco-conscious tourism. This research is a template for regions looking to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility, advocating for a future where luxury and sustainability coexist harmoniously.*

**Keywords:** public relations, aquaculture tourism, pearl aquaculture

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A pearl forms when a grain of sand or another irritant lodges inside an oyster, prompting the secretion of calcium carbonate, aragonite, and calcite over time—often a span of 1 to 2 years. These secretions, so minuscule that light waves reflect off them, give pearls their unique iridescence, termed 'orient' (Oe & Yamaoka, 2022). Unlike other

gemstones, pearls are organic and produced by specific mollusks, particularly oysters and mussels. The formation of a pearl inside a mollusk is typically a response to an irritant, often a parasite or even a fragment of coral. This irritant stimulates the mollusk to produce nacre, a substance composed of the mineral aragonite and mother-of-pearl, resulting in the pearl's glossy exterior (Oe & Yamaoka, 2022). Pearls are natural and cultured types. While natural pearls grow without human intervention and are becoming increasingly rare, cultured pearls, primarily produced through human endeavours, dominate today's pearl and jewellery market. Indonesia, an archipelago nation with approximately 17,500 islands and 81,000 km of coastline, is renowned for its marine bounty, which includes the South Sea pearl (SSP), considered among the world's finest pearls. Produced in regions like Papua, Bali, Ambon, Sulawesi, Kupang, Bima, and Lombok, the Lombok pearls stand out for their size and exquisite luster, sourced from the *Pinctada Maxima* oyster, they surpass other renowned pearls like the Japanese Akoya, Chinese freshwater pearls, and Tahitian black pearls in quality (Ulya, 2019). Such pearls, besides being luxury items, also hold potential in marine or aquaculture tourism (Perles-Ribes et al., 2022).

Indonesia's extensive history in aquaculture has made significant socio-economic contributions over centuries. The intertwining of pearl and seaweed farming with tourism has birthed the concept of 'aquaculture tourism' (Tempo.co, 2023). Despite challenges, such as environmental strains on wild oyster populations due to intensive pearl farming, the industry is trying to balance economic and environmental needs (Gokkon, 2019). Parallel developments, like the resurgence of seaweed farming in Bali as an environmentally sustainable tourism alternative, also show promising economic outcomes (Hunt, 2021). With Indonesia preparing to host the 2024 Asian Pacific Aquaculture Conference, the country is poised to cement its leadership in the Asia-Pacific aquaculture domain (Tempo.co, 2023). In this intricate web of opportunities and challenges, the role of Public Relations (PR) emerges as crucial. PR can play a transformative role in spotlighting the unique allure of South Sea Pearl aquaculture tourism, especially in regions like Lombok. Beyond conventional promotional strategies, PR has the power of storytelling, making it invaluable in a world increasingly drawn to authenticity and sustainability (Widjanarko et al., 2022).

Although much has been written about Indonesia's pearl industry and aquaculture tourism, there is scant literature on the specific role of Public Relations in advancing the South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism, especially in Lombok. The unique allure of Lombok's pearls, combined with the broader sustainable tourism trend, presents an under-researched niche. This study seeks to fill this void by investigating tailored PR strategies that can elevate the distinct characteristics and sustainable practices of South Sea Pearl aquaculture tourism in Lombok. This research aims to delve into PR's potential impact on promoting South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism in Lombok. This study offers a fresh perspective by examining its effectiveness in projecting Lombok's pearl industry as eco-friendly and underlining its economic viability. As Indonesia remains a dominant force in the global pearl market and holds immense potential as a tourist destination, understanding PR's role in shaping these perceptions is paramount. The findings will equip stakeholders, from pearl cultivators to tourism agencies, with insights into harnessing PR as an essential

tool for enhancing the appeal and sustainability of South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism in Indonesia.

#### *Aquaculture Overview*

Aquaculture is in various ways. Aquaculture is the growing of aquatic organisms under controlled or semi-controlled circumstances. That is a brief yet complete definition. Aquaculture is defined as "underwater agriculture" in a nutshell. The aquaculture divides into three primary components (Afewerki et al., 2023; Cai et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2023):

1. Fresh, brackish, marine and hypersaline waters are all examples of aquatic ecosystems. Each ecosystem is classified based on its salinity (the quantity of salt dissolved in the water).
2. Any organism that lives or can survive in water is considered an aquatic organism. Mariculture is a subset of aquaculture that focuses on marine organisms raised in salt water (which can range from low salinity to hypersaline). Aquaculture species of interest for human feeding include a wide range of plants and, in some circumstances, terrestrial plants cultivated using a technique known as hydroponics or aquaponics.
3. Controlled or semi-controlled refers to the aqua culturist's cultivation of one or more types of aquatic animals in an environment changed to varying degrees from the habitat in which the species is found. The amount of control exercised by the aqua culturist might vary greatly. Spreading oyster shell on the bottom of a bay to create a platform for settlement or larval oysters is one extreme while running an indoor hatchery with a water-reuse system for early life stage rearing and, in many cases, growing out to harvest is the other.

Saha et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2023) supported that aquaculture is aquatic organisms farming, such as fish, mollusks, crustaceans, and aquatic plants. Farming includes some intervention in the raising process to improve output, such as regular stocking, feeding, predator protection, etc. It also indicates personal or corporate control of the cattle being grown. Collaboration between stakeholders or all parties concerned (stakeholders) with this business is required for pearls, as a marine tourist product, to be known to a large audience and become a tourism attraction in Lombok, Indonesia. For this reason, the Public Relations (PR) role is required to establish a harmonious connection with stakeholders to boost the appeal of the tourism sector collectively. Unfortunately, Indonesia, which has the potential for aquaculture tourism with seawater pearls as one of its exports, is not fully utilizing this tourism potential.

#### *Public Relations Role*

Public relations' job in the tourism industry is to convince potential customers to use those services; in this context, PR and marketing are usually used to highlight the industry's strengths and draw in new customers. Although PR is essential for all companies, its worth varies widely depending on the type of enterprise. Nine principles of public relations practice have been identified as "applicable across cultures and political/economic systems" (Anani-Bossman & Mudzanani, 2020). The guiding principles are as follows: PR practitioners must be involved in the strategic planning process of their organisations as

this enables them to develop strategies to reach key stakeholders; a PR professional must be part of the dominant coalition or report directly to senior management; the PR function must be integrated under a single department for it to be strategically effective; the PR function must be separated from other functions such as marketing and human resources as it allows the practitioner to develop PR activities strategically; the PR department must be headed by a manager who can conceptualise and manage PR programmes rather than by a technician who carries out routine services; the PR practice should be based on two-way symmetrical communication which allows organisations to engage in genuine interaction with key stakeholders; the PR departments should be decentralised so that professionals enjoy autonomy and engage in symmetrical communication with their employees; the PR professionals should have professional training and theoretical knowledge of the field and the PR departments should be made up of both men and women and people from different ethnic groups. According to Anani-Bossman and Mudzanani (2020), the generic principles reflect a global standard of the PR profession because they are an extension of the general excellence theory first published in 1992 by James Grunig.

The research confirms the importance of public relations in attracting tourists and enhancing a destination's reputation among travellers (Santoso & Negoro, 2019). According to Kamariani et al. (2021), the results provide light on what stakeholders may do to coordinate and combine their efforts for the benefit of a sustainable tourist destination. For this reason, you should agree with the conceptual framework that defines stakeholders as "individuals or groups outside the firm that have a relationship to, investment in, interest in, or ability to influence the firm's strategic direction" (Alsalami & Al-Zaman, 2021).

**Table 1.** State of the Art

No	Author (year), Title	Methodology	Findings	Recommendation
1	Wardhana et al. (2021), Sustainable Aquaculture Development in Indonesia	-	Three primary components underpin the policies for self-reliant, competitive, and sustainable aquaculture development: (1) production technology, (2) socioeconomic considerations, and (3) natural resource management.	The government's initiatives encompass streamlining and coordinating regulations to spur investments, establishing a cohesive business chain from downstream to upstream sectors, and bolstering product competitiveness via IndoGAP (Good Aquaculture Practices).

No	Author (year), Title	Methodology	Findings	Recommendation
2	Oe and Yamaoka (2022), Sustainable Coastal Business Strategies for Cultured Pearl Sectors: Agenda Development for Coast-Area Actors' Collaboration	Qualitative approach	The sustainability of the cultured pearl industry appears to hinge on three factors: (1) the mutual creation of value through cooperation among local stakeholders and communities (satoumi), (2) the evolution and preservation of traditional cultured pearl technology targeted at international markets, and (3) improved industrial support in coastal regions fostered through collaborative efforts among locals, industry, and government, promoting an ecology-centred inbound tourism strategy	The recommendation is to conduct comprehensive analyses incorporating quantitative economic data.
3	Dimitrovski et al. (2021), Understanding Coastal and Marine Tourism Sustainability – A Multi-Stakeholder Analysis	A mixed-method approach studied stakeholder viewpoints on the sustainability of coastal and marine tourism in cross-border regions of the Nordic coastal area. The research initiated with a customer-centric approach, acquiring quantitative data from British cruise passengers arriving in Pori, a city on the south-west coast of Finland. The investigation also provided an in-depth exploration of stakeholders' understanding of the criticality of sustainability in coastal and marine areas in the present and future.	The research infers that a comprehensive comprehension of coastal, marine, and cruise tourism sustainability is essential. The study underscores the critical role of involving multiple stakeholders and encouraging cross-sector dialogue in managing Nordic coastal and marine regions and novel cruise tourism destinations. The quantitative part of the research validates the model of cruise tourists' attitudes-norms-behaviour and its relevance in grasping coastal and marine sustainability. The study accentuates the importance of sustainability in these	The study advocates a holistic perspective on compassionate sustainability in coastal, marine, and cruise tourism. It emphasizes the value of stakeholder engagement and cross-sector dialogues in managing coastal and marine regions and upcoming cruise tourism destinations. Also, the research highlights the significance of sustainability in these regions in the current and future.

No	Author (year), Title	Methodology	Findings	Recommendation
			areas, currently and in the future.	
4	Trueman et al. (2022), Transparency and Communication in Norwegian and Nova Scotian Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Industries	A blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches facilitates the detection of trends in participant subjectivity. The outcomes underscore the urgency for the industry to champion transparency and communication.	The results emphasize the significance of engaging genuinely and reporting on environmental standards, alongside the need to track and report on social.	Comparing Norway and Nova Scotia aids in understanding the role transparency and communication play in attaining SLO, which might be critical in spurring the growth and sustainability of the salmon aquaculture industry globally.
5	Kanani (2020), Importance of Public Relations in the Tourism Sector	-	The function of PR in the tourism sector is crucial in marketing services to tourists. In this context, public relations and promotion are leveraged extensively to demonstrate service quality and accessibility in tourism and attract tourists for sectoral growth.	Tourism and public relations promotion aims to cultivate a sense of familiarity between tourists and locals, promote cultural exchange, and more.
6	Ahmad and Hoodbhoy (2016), Importance of Public Relations in New Business	Qualitative	Importance of Public Relations in New Business Qualitative Public relations play a vital role at specific stages in a business, but its relevance varies according to the business nature.	It recommends that more opportunities be created for these individuals to expand their networks and interact with other professionals in their fields for healthy idea exchanges and trend discussions.
7	Machado et al. (2023), Regional communication and media analysis of aquaculture in Atlantic islands	-	There were distinct events that caused changes in the volume and framing of news coverage for aquaculture. The media mostly revolved around political and economic issues, whereas social, environmental, scientific, and landscape topics received less attention. Government voices dominated the discourse over the five years, and aquaculture	Recommendation underscores the necessity for open and transparent communication between stakeholders and the media for the sustainable advancement of the aquaculture industry.

No	Author (year), Title	Methodology	Findings	Recommendation
			was usually portrayed with a balanced tone, leaning slightly towards negativity.	
8	Rupasingha (2021), The Impact of Public Relations on the Tourism Industry; A Study Based on Tourism in Sri Lanka	Qualitative Approach	The study concludes there is a strong interconnection between Public Relations and Tourism. PR plays a significant role in marketing tourist spots and creating a positive perception among global tourist consumers.	Public Relations strategic initiatives and campaigns to bolster the image of Sri Lanka tourism and mitigate the adverse effects of events such as the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks and the Covid-19's impact on tourists
9	Park and Kohler (2019), Collaboration for sustainable tourism through strategic bridging: A case of travel2change.	In-depth investigation	The results offer insights into actions that stakeholders can adopt, enabling the constituents to synchronize and coordinate their resources and efforts towards developing a sustainable tourism destination.	The recommendation is for further research on strategic bridging and other forms of collaboration to enhance our understanding and practice collaboration effectively to attain worldwide sustainable tourism.
10	Kaehu (2018), Stakeholder Collaboration Strategies in the Hawaii Tourism Industry	A qualitative study	The research supports the theoretical framework that identifies stakeholders as members with unique relationships, investments, interests, and the capacity to impact the strategic direction of the organization.	-

Source: Author's Analysis, 2023

Those ten priors in Table 1 showed that research on aquaculture tourism, seawater pearls, and how to promote them to visitors or travellers, which is when employing the role and function of PR is regarded to be better, they are still inferior to marketing, media, and advertising functions. The study by Wardhana et al. (2021) discussed sustainable aquaculture development in Indonesia, emphasizing the government's approach includes harmonizing and simplifying regulations, interconnecting business chains from downstream to upstream, and strengthening product competitiveness via Good Aquaculture Practices (IndoGAP). An investigation into sustainable coastal business strategies by Oe and Yamaoka (2022) identified key factors contributing to sustainability in the cultured pearl industry. They underscored the importance of value co-creation, innovative technology, and supportive industrial measures in coastal areas, suggesting the need for

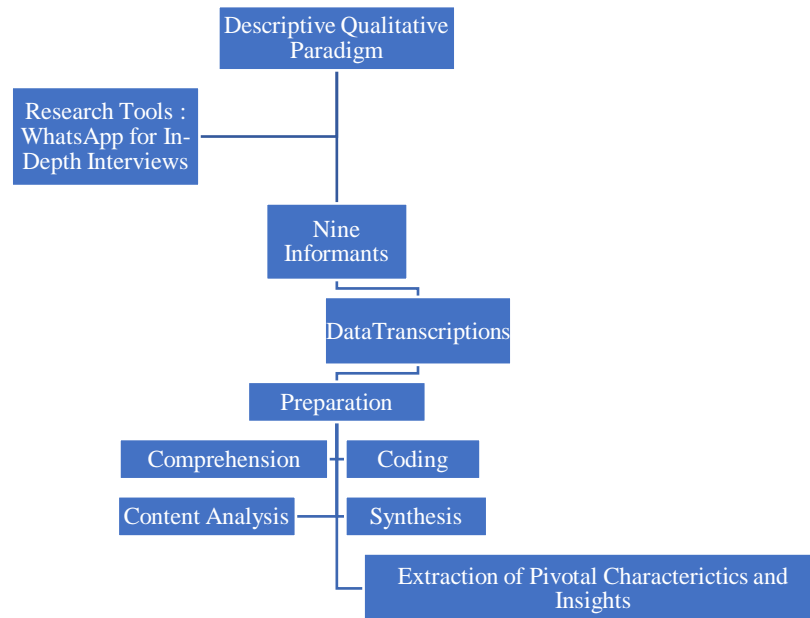
integrated analysis with quantitative economic data. Additionally, transparency and communication analysis in Atlantic salmon aquaculture industries by Trueman et al. (2022) revealed the critical role of industry leadership in transparency and communication. They further advocated for monitoring and reporting of social standards along with environmental standards, highlighting the informative value of comparisons between Norway and Nova Scotia. Kanani (2020) emphasized the crucial role of Public Relations (PR) in the tourism sector, promoting a sense of intimacy between tourists and locals. In addition, Ahmad and Hoodbhoy (2016) found PR to vary in importance according to the type of business, with a need for professionals to engage in knowledge exchange. Machado et al. (2023) analysed regional communication and media coverage of aquaculture, revealing the prominence of political and economic issues, while other crucial areas received less attention. They called for open and transparent communication between stakeholders and media for sustainable aquaculture development. Rupasingha (2021) researched the impact of PR on the tourism industry in Sri Lanka and concluded that PR plays a significant role in promoting destinations and building a positive image. Park and Kohler (2019) in-depth investigation into strategic bridging in sustainable tourism highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts for sustainable tourism. Kaehu (2018) studied stakeholder collaboration strategies in Hawaii's tourism industry found value in recognizing stakeholders' distinct relationships and influences on the organization's strategic direction. This review provides a solid foundation for "South Sea Pearls in Lombok, Indonesia: Investigating the Effectiveness of Public Relations in Boosting Aquaculture Tourism." It emphasizes the need to examine the role of PR and communication strategies, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainability measures in the context of Lombok's aquaculture tourism. It concludes that public relations is the one who has the capability and ability of art, science, management in communication, assists in the establishment and maintenance of mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics in order to serve the public interest; needs, and wants, as well as a way to create opportunities and techniques that the organization, product, or service requires in order to build, maintain, or improve their image and reputation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The framework of this research is in a descriptive-qualitative paradigm (see Figure 1). While quantitative inquiries predominantly revolve around the measurable and numeric, qualitative research is oriented towards a comprehensive exploration of the non-numeric spectrum of human experience, delving into the intricacies of motivations, behaviours, and attitudes (Laumann, 2020). This methodology is particularly apt for the present study, which necessitates a nuanced comprehension of the multifaceted dynamics surrounding Lombok's South Sea Pearls within tourism and regional industries. To ensure that the methodology is in line with the overarching objective of understanding the significance and role of Lombok's South Sea Pearls, we utilized the WhatsApp application as a primary tool for conducting in-depth interviews. This digital medium provided an efficient avenue to



engage with informants who satisfied specific criteria pivotal to the investigative purpose of the study (Yin, 2018).

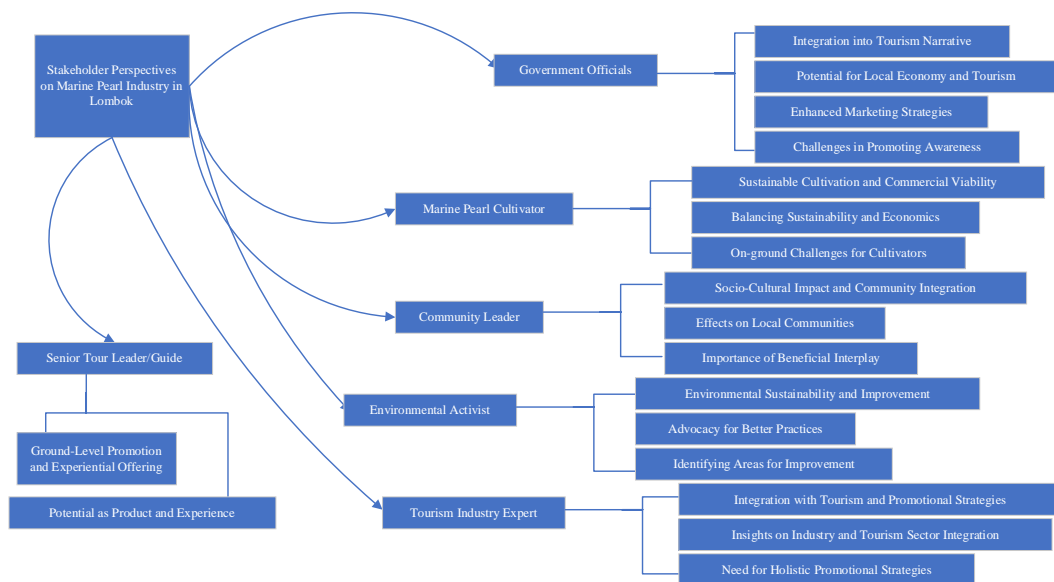


**Figure 1.** Research Framework Qualitative Paradigm  
Source: Yin, 2018

Our informant base was diverse yet centred around the core theme. The panel consisted of individuals like Fauzi, who operates as the Chairman of the West Nusantara Pearl Traders and Craftsmen Association (PEL NTB), and representatives from the customer base who view South Sea Pearls as a notable tourist allure. The inclusion of Senior Guides provided insights into ground-level promotional endeavours aimed at spotlighting Lombok's aquacultural pearls. Organizational perspectives were gleaned from the Head of the Indonesian Tourist Guide Association (ITGA), which represents the collective interests of tour guides in a non-partisan and autonomous capacity. Additionally, media and business standpoints were obtained through interactions with a Journalist from the NTB region and a Pearl Businessperson, respectively. Their insights painted a broader picture of Lombok's seawater pearls' recognition and stature in the larger Indonesian context. The panel finished with inputs from the Head of a Tourism Organization and a Senior Tour Leader/Guide. In-depth interviews, by nature, are aimed at capturing the essence of individual narratives. These discourses, ranging from structured to open-ended dialogues, often require extensive durations, potentially extending from a solitary hour to multiple exhaustive sessions (Woodward, 2022). Bachman and Schutt (2020) said that the objective of such engagements is not just data collection but a more profound endeavour to "listen and interpret how individuals perceive and navigate their worlds". An extensive analysis started after the rigorous data collection phase. Transcriptions, meticulously crafted from audio or textual records of informants, formed the base for subsequent stages of data processing. It was managed in line with the study's conceptual framework. The adopted approach to text and thematic analysis was sequential, commencing with

Preparation, where relevant interview outcomes were collated. They were succeeded by a Comprehension phase, focusing on an immersive engagement with the data. Subsequent stages encompassed Coding, where pivotal analysis units were identified, followed by Organization and Categorization to determine distinct themes. Every theme underwent a rigorous Detailed Content Analysis, which, during the Synthesis phase, patterns and correlations were identified and extrapolated (Timmermans & Tavory, 2022). The culmination of these phases was not without challenges, especially given the depth and richness of the data. However, the comprehensive methodology ensured a detailed and discerning extraction of pivotal characteristics and insights.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION



**Figure 2.** Mind Map Theme  
Source: Author's Analysis, 2023

From the Figure 2, the discourse generated by the government officials delineates a critical evaluation of existing policies and promotional strategies surrounding the marine pearl industry. Here's a breakdown and analysis of each theme:

### *Government Officials (Informants 1-4)*

1. **Policy and Promotion:** Refers to the involvement of government officials in formulating and promoting policies for the marine pearl industry.
2. **Enhanced Marketing Strategies:** Suggests a need for more effective marketing techniques and strategies for promoting pearls.
3. **Integration into Tourism Narrative:** This implies that pearls can be integrated into the broader tourism narrative of Lombok, potentially making it a unique selling point.
4. **Potential for Local Economy and Tourism:** Highlights the economic benefits and tourism potential that the pearl industry can bring to Lombok.

5. **Challenges in Promoting Awareness:** Indicates potential barriers, or challenges, in raising awareness about the pearl industry.

*Marine Pearl Cultivator (Informant 5)*

1. **Sustainable Cultivation and Commercial Viability:** Discusses the balance between cultivating pearls sustainably and ensuring they remain commercially viable.
2. **Balancing Sustainability and Economics:** Reinforces the idea of balancing environmental considerations with economic interests.
3. **On-ground Challenges for Cultivators:** Directly addresses the challenges that pearl cultivators face in their day-to-day operations.

*Community Leader (Informant 6)*

1. **Socio-Cultural Impact and Community Integration:** Discusses how the pearl industry integrates with and impacts local communities from a socio-cultural perspective.
2. **Effects on Local Communities:** Highlights the direct impact, whether positive or negative, on local communities.
3. **Importance of Beneficial Interplay:** Suggests the importance of mutual benefit between the pearl industry and local communities.

*Environmental Activist (Informant 7)*

1. **Environmental Sustainability and Improvement:** Emphasizes the need for sustainable practices and potential areas of improvement from an environmental standpoint.
2. **Advocacy for Better Practices:** Calls for better adoption of more sustainable practices within the pearl industry.
3. **Identifying Areas for Improvement:** A proactive approach to identify and address potential challenges or shortcomings in the current practices.

*Tourism Industry Expert (Informant 8)*

1. **Integration with Tourism and Promotional Strategies:** Discusses how pearls can be more integrated effectively into Lombok's tourism strategies.
2. **Insights on Industry and Tourism Sector Integration:** Provides expert insights on how the pearl industry can better align with the broader tourism sector.
3. **Need for Holistic Promotional Strategies:** Highlights the need for comprehensive promotional strategies that consider various industry aspects.

*Senior Tour Leader/Guide (Informant 9)*

1. **Ground-Level Promotion and Experiential Offering:** Discusses the importance of promoting the pearl industry at the grassroots level and offering experiential tours or experiences related to pearls.
2. **Potential as Product and Experience:** Highlights the potential of pearls as both a product to be sold and an experience to be had by tourists.

This conceptual map offers a comprehensive view of the diverse stakeholder perspectives on the Marine Pearl Industry in Lombok, highlighting opportunities and challenges. The interconnected lines suggest that these themes and perceptions are not isolated but interact and influence one another in various ways.

The marine pearl industry in Lombok is a multifaceted entity, underscored by various stakeholder perspectives. At the governmental level, officials play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the industry through policy formulation and promotion. The emphasis here is on integrating advanced marketing strategies to enhance the appeal of pearls and dovetail them into Lombok's overarching tourism narrative. This integration is not merely a commercial venture. It holds the promise of bolstering the local economy and augmenting tourism inflows. However, this potential is tempered by challenges, particularly in promoting widespread awareness of the industry's significance. From the vantage point of marine pearl cultivators, there's a persistent tension between ensuring sustainable cultivation and maintaining commercial viability. These stakeholders grapple with the delicate act of harmonizing environmental sustainability with economic imperatives. Their challenges are not just conceptual; they manifest in tangible on-ground difficulties that influence daily operations. Community leaders provide a socio-cultural lens, emphasizing the industry's impact and integration into local communities. Their concerns pivot around the tangible and intangible effects on these communities and underscore the importance of a synergistic relationship between the industry and the communities it operates within. In juxtaposition, environmental activists champion the cause of environmental sustainability. Their advocacy underscores the imperative for environmentally sound practices within the industry. They hope to drive the industry toward a more ecologically harmonious direction by identifying areas ripe for improvement. Adding another layer of complexity is the perspective of tourism industry experts. They advocate for a more cohesive integration of pearls into Lombok's broader tourism and promotional strategies. On their expertise, there's a clarion call for holistic promotional endeavours that offer a panoramic view of the industry's potential as a commercial entity and tourist attraction. Ground-level insights from senior tour leaders and guides underscore the untapped potential of pearls as experiential offerings. They suggest that beyond being mere products, pearls can be the linchpin of unique, immersive tourist experiences. In conclusion, the marine pearl industry in Lombok is not merely a commercial venture; it's deeply entwined with regional identity and pride. There is a palpable knowledge gap and needs integrated educational and promotional efforts. Next, as the map suggests, is an organic promotion characterized by authentic engagement. An integrated approach, marries attractions with local products, can pave the way for sustainable future prospects. Emphasis on stakeholder collaboration and an unwavering focus on sustainability will be paramount in steering the industry towards a prosperous future.

The intricate relationship between the formation of pearls, with its underlying scientific and organic processes, is a testament to the delicate balance between nature and nurture (Oe & Yamaoka, 2022). The South Sea Pearls (SSP), especially those from Lombok, Indonesia, have been widely acknowledged for their exemplary quality and are, as Ulya (2019) elucidates, emblematic of Indonesia's marine wealth. These pearls, with

their unmatched luster and size, notably exceed the quality of renowned pearls from other regions. The role of Public Relations (PR) in spotlighting this unique offering is paramount. With the prominence of SSP in the global pearl market, and the enormous tourism potential of regions like Lombok. Our findings, when juxtaposed with the backdrop provided by Anani-Bossman and Mudzanani (2020) about the generic principles of PR, illuminate its indispensable role in the tourism industry. PR professionals need to be proactive in the strategic planning processes of their organizations, ensuring a coherent approach to promoting South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism in Lombok. By focusing on two-way symmetrical communication, PR can foster genuine interactions with stakeholders and potential tourists, emphasizing the eco-friendly aspects of the industry and the economic viability of aquaculture tourism in Lombok. The concept of aquaculture tourism, essentially the convergence of aquaculture practices and tourism, has been gaining traction (Tempo.co, 2023). Wardhana et al.'s (2021) insights on sustainable aquaculture development in Indonesia emphasize the importance of harmonizing regulations and interconnecting business chains for enhanced product competitiveness. While environmental challenges persist, with concerns about strains on wild oyster populations, there is a concerted effort to ensure that economic and environmental interests are balanced (Gokkon, 2019). Moreover, the study by Oe and Yamaoka (2022) underscores the significance of value co-creation and innovative technology for the cultured pearl industry's sustainability. These insights resonate with our findings about the symbiotic relationship between pearl businesses and tourism, emphasizing high-quality standards and design innovation. Public Relations, as Kanani (2020) articulated, is pivotal in bridging the gap between tourists and locals, creating a sense of intimacy. It serves as a tool to highlight industry strengths and works to narrate compelling stories, making the industry more relatable and appealing. This sentiment aligns with the perspectives shared by our informants, emphasizing the unique allure of South Sea Pearls as a primary motivator for tourists. Plus, the role of collaborative efforts in sustainable tourism, as highlighted by Park and Kohler (2019), stresses the significance of collective endeavours for long-term success. This research reinforces this by showcasing the synergistic relationships between pearl cultivators, tourism agencies, and other stakeholders in Lombok. In conclusion, the potential impact of Public Relations on promoting South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism in Lombok is vast. It is not merely about promoting the pearls but weaving an authentic narrative around their origin, the region's commitment to sustainability, and the unmatched experience awaiting tourists. As this study suggests, with a strategic approach, PR can undoubtedly serve as a vital tool in amplifying the appeal and sustainability of South Sea Pearl Aquaculture Tourism in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSIONS

The interplay between nature, industry, and tourism, as manifested in the South Sea Pearls (SSP) from Lombok, underscores the profound potential of Indonesia's marine resources. These pearls, renowned for their unparalleled quality, serve as a beacon of Indonesia's marine wealth, illuminating opportunities for the jewellery and tourism sectors. The convergence of pearl farming with tourism, or aquaculture tourism, presents a

promising avenue for socio-economic growth, blending the allure of luxury with the prospect of sustainable exploration. Public Relations (PR) emerges as a pivotal tool in this equation. As the findings suggest, PR can promote the unique characteristics of Lombok's pearls and craft an engaging narrative surrounding their origins and the region's commitment to ecological balance. Through strategic two-way communication, PR has the potential to bridge the gap between tourists, locals, and stakeholders, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and co-creation. The emphasis on sustainable practices, harmonized regulations, and collaborative efforts resonates with the global trend towards sustainability. As tourism worldwide grapples with the challenges of environmental concerns, Lombok's approach serves as a template for balancing economic interests with ecological imperatives. In sum, the South Sea Pearls of Lombok, with their unmatched allure, combined with strategic PR efforts, can boost the region's tourism and position Lombok and, by extension, Indonesia, at the forefront of sustainable aquaculture tourism. It is a testimony to the harmonious coexistence of nature, industry, and culture, advocating for a future where luxury and sustainability can unite seamlessly.

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