

Pelestarian Pulau dalam Perspektif Semiotika Pariwisata: Studi di Pulau Sanrobengi, Kabupaten Takalar

Preserving Island from the Perspective of Tourism Semiotics: A Study at Sanrobengi Island, Takalar Regency

Annisa Dzikra Tsabitah Ilham^{1*}, Ilham Junaid²

¹Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

²Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

*e-mail (corresponding author): annisatsabitah2005@gmail.com

Abstrak

Pulau sebagai destinasi pariwisata rentan mengalami degradasi lingkungan akibat proses alam dan aktivitas pariwisata. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji kondisi lingkungan Pulau Sanrobengi, mengidentifikasi tanda, simbol, dan bentuk komunikasi yang berkaitan dengan pendidikan pelestarian, serta merumuskan strategi konservasi dari perspektif semiotika pariwisata. Penelitian lapangan dilakukan di Pulau Sanrobengi pada Oktober 2025 dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung dan wawancara dengan masyarakat setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kondisi lingkungan pulau mengalami penurunan akibat pengelolaan yang belum jelas, sampah berlebihan, keterbatasan fasilitas, dan kurangnya perhatian terhadap pariwisata berkelanjutan. Dari perspektif semiotika, tanda dan bentuk komunikasi yang tersedia telah memberikan dorongan bagi pengunjung untuk menjaga lingkungan, tetapi jumlah, kejelasan, dan konsistensinya masih terbatas. Penelitian ini menawarkan tiga strategi, yaitu memperkuat tanda edukatif dan interpretatif, melibatkan masyarakat lokal sebagai pengelola dan pemandu wisata edukatif, serta meningkatkan kolaborasi antara pemerintah, pengelola, masyarakat, dan pemangku kepentingan lainnya. Strategi tersebut diharapkan memperkuat komunikasi pelestarian dan mendukung pengelolaan Pulau Sanrobengi sebagai destinasi pariwisata bahari yang berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: pengelolaan pulau; pelestarian; Pulau Sanrobengi; semiotika pariwisata

Abstract

Islands used as tourism destinations are vulnerable to environmental degradation caused by natural processes and tourism activities. This study examines the environmental condition of Sanrobengi Island, identifies signs, symbols, and communication related to conservation education, and formulates preservation strategies from a tourism semiotic perspective. Fieldwork was conducted on Sanrobengi Island in October 2025 using a qualitative approach. Primary data were collected through direct observation and interviews with local residents. The findings indicate that the island's environment has deteriorated because of unclear management, excessive waste, inadequate facilities, and limited attention to sustainable tourism. From a semiotic perspective, existing signs and forms of communication provide some encouragement for visitors to protect the environment, but their number, clarity, and consistency remain insufficient. The study proposes three strategies: strengthening educational and interpretive signage, involving local communities as island managers and educational guides, and enhancing collaboration among government, managers, communities, and other stakeholders. These strategies can strengthen conservation communication and support sustainable management of Sanrobengi Island as a marine tourism destination.

Keywords: island management; preservation; Sanrobengi Island; semiotics of tourism



1. INTRODUCTION

Island tourism in Indonesia has experienced significant growth in recent years. The appeal of the beaches, clear seas, white sand, and unspoiled natural environments attracts both domestic and international tourists. These destinations are frequented for recreation and relaxation. Despite this potential, islands remain highly susceptible to environmental degradation. Such degradation may result from natural processes, including abrasion and climate change, as well as from unregulated tourism activities. The rising number of visitors is frequently not matched by effective management systems. Common issues include litter, damaged infrastructure, and insufficient oversight. If these challenges are not addressed, the long-term sustainability of the islands as tourist destinations may be compromised. Consequently, comprehensive management and preservation efforts are essential to protect island environments.

Sanrobengi Island, located in Takalar Regency, has been designated as a marine tourism destination. The island is recognised for its scenic ocean views and tranquil environment, attracting visitors for swimming, camping, and appreciation of natural landscapes. A field visit in October 2025 indicated that the island's environmental condition is deteriorating. Several areas were observed to be poorly maintained, with waste present in multiple locations. The island's management structure remains ambiguous and lacks a systematic approach. Existing tourism facilities do not adequately support sustainable tourism principles. These findings suggest that the island's significant tourism potential has not been accompanied by effective conservation measures. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the environmental conditions and management systems on Sanrobengi Island is warranted.

Island environmental conservation efforts extend beyond written regulations and official government policies. The communication of messages to visitors significantly influences tourist behaviour. Signs, symbols, information boards, and other communicative tools at tourist sites serve as effective educational instruments. These signs guide visitors to maintain cleanliness, prevent damage to facilities, and respect the environment. In this context, a semiotic approach is employed to examine how signs and symbols generate meaning. Semiotics facilitates the analysis of relationships among signs, objects, and the interpretations visitors form. Unclear or unattractive signs may hinder the effective transmission of conservation messages. Consequently, analysing the signs and symbols on Sanrobengi Island constitutes a critical component of this research. Understanding the meaning and function of these signs enables the development of more effective and accessible conservation strategies.

This study identifies the natural environmental conditions of Sanrobengi Island as a tourism destination, examines existing signage and communication forms, and formulates conservation strategies from a tourism semiotic perspective. A qualitative approach was employed to analyse phenomena observed during fieldwork. Primary data were obtained through direct observation and interviews with local residents. This methodology enabled a comprehensive understanding of the island's current condition. The findings reveal that the island's environmental quality has deteriorated due to ambiguous management and insufficient attention to cleanliness. From a semiotic perspective, several signs promoting environmental conservation were identified, but these have not effectively increased visitor awareness. Consequently, a more targeted and systematic strategy is required to communicate conservation messages. This strategy should include providing educational information, active involvement of local communities in management, and collaboration among stakeholders. These measures are expected to support the development of Sanrobengi Island as a sustainable tourism destination.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Defining Semiotics and Tourism Semiotics

Semiotics examines signs and the processes by which they generate meaning. In this field, signs encompass not only symbols and written language but also images, gestures, colours, sounds, and other representational forms. Charles Sanders Peirce identified three fundamental components of a sign: the representamen, the object, and the interpretant (Liszka, 1996; Lorino, 2014). The representamen refers to the perceptible form of the sign, the object denotes what the sign signifies,

and the interpretant is the meaning produced in the observer's mind. The interaction among these elements constitutes semiosis, the process through which individuals interpret their environment via a system of signs. Consequently, semiotics provides a critical framework for analysing diverse social and cultural phenomena.

Semiotics in tourism provides a framework for understanding how destinations are constructed and interpreted through specific signs. Destinations are characterised by symbols, narratives, and images that influence visitors' perceptions. Information boards, slogans, logos, and the spatial organisation of tourist areas function as sign systems that communicate particular messages (Malik et al., 2021). These signs serve not only as navigational aids but also as channels of communication between destination managers and tourists. Employing a semiotic approach enables a deeper analysis of the meanings embedded in tourism symbols and messages. This perspective clarifies how destination identity is shaped through both visual and verbal communication. Consequently, tourism encompasses not only economic activity but also the construction of meaning and image.

Tourism semiotics examines the relationship between signs, meaning, and tourists' experiences at destinations. The physical environment, local culture, and social interactions function as components of a sign system. Tourists interpret the meanings embedded in attractions, and individual social backgrounds and experiences shape this process. Consequently, identical signs may be understood differently by various visitors. Semiotic analysis provides insight into how conservation and sustainability messages are communicated at tourist sites (Widiastuti et al., 2025). This approach also evaluates the effectiveness of existing signs in shaping visitor awareness.

An understanding of semiotics is essential in tourism destination management. Effective signs and symbols can enhance tourists' awareness of environmental issues, while ambiguous signage may impede message delivery. The application of semiotics in tourism encompasses both theoretical and practical dimensions. Destination managers can incorporate sign systems into communication and educational strategies. This practice supports sustainable tourism, which seeks to balance environmental, social, and economic considerations (Dodds & Graci, 2012). In this context, tourism semiotics functions as a link between meaning, communication, and destination management.

2.2. Preserving Island as a Tourism Destination

Preserving islands as tourism destinations is essential to maintaining a balance between resource utilisation and environmental protection. Due to their relatively small and sensitive ecosystems, islands are particularly vulnerable to ecological degradation if not managed appropriately. Although increased tourism can generate significant economic benefits, it also imposes considerable pressure on local environments. Consequently, the principle of sustainable tourism is fundamental to effective island management (Dodds & Graci, 2012). Sustainable tourism underscores the need to preserve natural resources, local culture, and community well-being concurrently. Preservation involves not only safeguarding natural assets but also ensuring that their benefits remain accessible to future generations. Through effective management strategies, islands can sustain development while retaining ecological integrity.

Effective island preservation requires a systematic, consistent management approach. Key measures include regulating visitor numbers, implementing environmentally sustainable facilities, and ensuring proper waste management. Additionally, educating tourists about the significance of environmental stewardship is essential to support preservation efforts. Without adequate public awareness, conservation policies are unlikely to be successfully implemented. Consequently, conservation strategies should engage multiple stakeholders, including management authorities, government agencies, and the local community. Collaborative efforts among these groups will enhance the sustainability of the island as a tourist destination.

Local communities are integral to island preservation, as they experience the direct impacts of tourism and contribute significantly to environmental management. Community involvement may include roles such as tour guides, facility managers, and environmental stewards (Okazaki, 2008; Fong & Lo, 2015). Engaging local residents helps preserve local values and traditional knowledge (Abas et al., 2022). Moreover, active participation fosters a sense of ownership over

tourist destinations, which in turn encourages collective responsibility for sustaining the island's environment (Sahabuddin et al., 2026). Community-based conservation initiatives are generally more sustainable due to the support of shared awareness (Brooks et al., 2013).

In addition to management and community involvement, effective island preservation depends on a clear communication strategy. Information about environmental protection must be presented in an accessible way. Tools such as information boards, prohibition symbols, and invitations are effective for education. Well-designed messages can influence tourist behaviour. Using a semiotic approach helps assess how well signs and symbols communicate their intended meaning. Analysing these meanings supports the development of conservation strategies that improve communication and public acceptance. Ultimately, the success of island preservation relies not only on regulations but also on how visitors interpret these messages.

2.3. Preserving Island from the Perspective of Tourism Semiotics

Preservation of the island environment requires not only official regulations and policies but also effective communication strategies. Tourism semiotics offers a valuable framework for understanding how signs and symbols influence tourists' awareness and behaviour. The island environment contains a variety of signs, including information boards, prohibition symbols, and invitations. These signs are not solely decorative; they also fulfil a significant educational role. By utilising signs, managers can communicate conservation values more persuasively. Thus, semiotics serves as a bridge between environmental messages and visitors' tangible actions.

According to Charles Sanders Peirce, a sign comprises a representamen, an object, and an interpretant, each of which is interconnected (Liszka, 1996). The representamen refers to the physical form of the sign, such as text or imagery visible to visitors. The object denotes the concept or directive to which the sign refers, for instance, a prohibition on littering. The interpretant is the meaning visitors construct upon viewing the sign. The effectiveness of a message is therefore contingent on the degree to which the interpretant aligns with the manager's intended objectives. Consequently, effective sign design must account for clarity, contextual relevance, and the diverse backgrounds of visitors.

In island destinations, conservation signs often include instructions to maintain cleanliness, prohibitions on damaging facilities, or requests to respect nature. The effectiveness of these signs depends not only on their presence but also on the manner in which they are communicated. Visual design, word choice, and sign placement all influence visitor interpretation. Visually appealing, clearly worded signs are generally easier to understand and remember. In contrast, ambiguous or excessively rigid signs may be disregarded. Consequently, semiotic analysis is required to assess whether current signs effectively promote environmental awareness. Such analysis enables a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the existing sign system.

Preserving island environments through tourism semiotics underscores the need for collaboration between managers and local communities. Involving communities in the design of educational messages ensures alignment with local character and culture. Incorporating local values into signage increases relatability and significance. Additionally, tour guides who explain the meaning of symbols and rules enhance comprehension. The integration of visual signs with verbal communication improves the effectiveness of conservation messages. This approach demonstrates that semiotics encompasses both sign theory and practical communication in the field. With careful planning, a robust and meaningful sign system can support island environmental preservation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilises a qualitative approach to examine the environmental conditions of Sanrobengi Island and to interpret the meanings of its signs and symbols. The qualitative method was selected because the research emphasises the interpretation of social and environmental phenomena from a tourism semiotic perspective, rather than numerical or statistical data. Data collection involved direct observation on Sanrobengi Island in October 2025. The observations focused on evaluating the condition of facilities, the level of environmental cleanliness, and the types of signs and communication present in the tourist area. This approach enabled a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of the island's situation.

This study employed field observation and interviews as the primary data collection techniques. Observations involved documenting the island's physical condition, the availability of public facilities, educational signage, and the activities of both the community and visitors. Additionally, interviews with local residents provided information regarding island management and community participation in tourism. Data from both methods were systematically recorded in field notes for subsequent analysis. The combination of these techniques was intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the condition of Sanrobengi Island.

Data analysis was conducted within the framework of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic perspective. The collected data were analysed by identifying the sign forms (representamen), the objects they refer to, and the meanings that emerge during the interpretation process (interpretant). Through this process, researchers attempted to discern how signs and symbols on Sanrobengi Island shape meanings related to environmental conservation. The analysis was conducted descriptively and interpretively to understand the relationship between the island's physical condition and the existing sign system. The analysis results were then used as a basis for formulating environmental conservation strategies from a tourism semiotic perspective.

4.2. Signs, Symbols, and Educational Communication on Sanrobengi Island

Based on my field observations, educational signs and symbols on Sanrobengi Island are still relatively limited. There are a few information boards specifically reminding visitors to maintain cleanliness or environmental sustainability. Some forms of communication are more informal and not systematically organised. The lack of written signs prevents conservation messages from being conveyed effectively to tourists. Yet, in tourist destinations, signs play a crucial role as a means of communication. Signs can serve as reminders, guides, and even control visitor behaviour. The limited number of signs on Sanrobengi Island indicates that environmental communication has not been a primary concern. This has led to a lack of collective awareness about maintaining the cleanliness and order of the tourist area.

In addition to written signs, direct interactions between residents and visitors represent a more visible form of communication. Such interactions typically occur verbally and spontaneously, as when residents remind visitors to maintain cleanliness or avoid damaging facilities. However, this form of communication is not consistently present and depends heavily on the specific situation. The lack of a structured communication system results in inconsistent educational messaging. From a semiotic perspective, verbal communication functions as a sign system that shapes meaning. Nevertheless, in the absence of clear visual cues, the impact of these messages is diminished. Strengthening the integration of verbal and visual communication is therefore recommended.

From a symbolic perspective, the island environment functions as an educational medium. Its natural beauty, tranquil atmosphere, and coastal ecosystem can be interpreted as symbols of sustainability that require preservation. However, this symbolic meaning is often not recognised by visitors in the absence of explanatory materials or signage. According to Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, a sign necessitates a relationship among the representamen, the object, and the interpretant for meaning to be conveyed. Without explicit signs, interpretation varies among visitors, resulting in a weakly established conservation message. This underscores the need to design symbols that are both communicative and easily understood.

Educational communication is also reflected in the island's facilities. The absence of public toilets, the limited number of trash cans, and the presence of unkempt houses indirectly reflect the quality of the island's management. From a semiotic perspective, these physical conditions signify insufficient attention to environmental management (Binoya, 2025). As a result, visitors may perceive the island as poorly managed as a tourist destination. Such perceptions can influence tourists' behaviour on-site (Chatawanich & Chatawanich, 2018). When the environment appears poorly maintained, tourists' awareness of cleanliness may also decline. Thus, the island's physical condition functions as a form of nonverbal communication.



Figure 1. Educational information at Sanrobengi Island
[Source: Authors, 2025]

Overall, the signs, symbols, and forms of educational communication on Sanrobengi Island are still not optimal in supporting environmental conservation. Conservation messages have not been conveyed through a planned and integrated sign system. Yet, in tourism semiotics, signs have the power to shape visitor perceptions and behavior. Strengthening visual and symbolic communication aspects can be a strategic step in increasing ecological awareness. The addition of information boards, invitation symbols, and attractive message designs can aid the tourist education process. Furthermore, involving local communities in conveying messages can also strengthen the meaning formed. With a more focused sign system, environmental conservation efforts on the island can be more effective and sustainable.

4.3. Strategies for Preserving Island Environment from the Perspective of Semiotics

In light of current environmental conditions and the lack of educational signage on Sanrobengi Island, an effective conservation strategy should address both technical and communication requirements. Enhancing the signage system in tourist areas is crucial. Signs and symbols should be purposefully designed to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour. Information boards, prohibition symbols, and directives should use clear, concise language. Visually engaging designs and strategic placement, particularly in high-traffic locations, will help ensure that conservation messages are effectively communicated to visitors.

The first strategy is to install educational signs using a tourism interpretation approach. This method not only informs visitors but also fosters understanding and awareness. For example, information boards can highlight the importance of keeping beaches clean and the effects of waste on marine ecosystems. According to Peirce's framework, these signs serve as representamen, reflecting the island's environmental conditions. The goal is to encourage tourists to recognise their responsibility and avoid harming the environment. Messages should be clear, relevant, and easy for visitors to understand. This approach links educational content to practical actions.

The second strategy is to engage local communities in conservation communication. Local residents can serve as educational guides, clarifying the island's symbols and rules. Direct verbal communication reinforces visual signs and fosters a sense of ownership among the community. Social interaction also contributes to meaning-making, and messages delivered by locals are often more impactful and personal for visitors. This approach strengthens communication and empowers local communities.

The third strategy is to foster collaboration among managers, the government, and other stakeholders. Such cooperation is essential for a clear and sustainable management system. Official policies and programs also signal a commitment to environmental protection. Well-maintained facilities, adequate trash receptacles, and clear signage help visitors perceive the island as well-

managed, which encourages responsible behavior. Effective conservation requires not only written messages but also consistent alignment between signs and actions on the ground.

The island's environmental conservation strategy, viewed through a tourism semiotics lens, highlights the need for a cohesive system of signs, symbols, communication, and environmental conditions. When these elements are well-designed and consistently managed, they enhance visitor awareness and reinforce conservation as an ongoing communication process rather than a mere obligation. Sanrobengi Island can further its development by adopting a targeted strategy that engages multiple stakeholders and strengthens semiotic management. This approach is expected to support the creation of a sustainable island tourism destination.

5. CONCLUSION

This study finds that environmental conditions on Sanrobengi Island, a tourism destination, are deteriorating. Key issues include poorly maintained facilities, inadequate hygiene, and the absence of a sustainable management system. While the island offers significant natural beauty, conservation efforts remain insufficient. From a tourism semiotic perspective, some signs and messages promote environmental protection, but their presence and impact are limited. These measures have not yet raised sufficient awareness among visitors about maintaining the island's cleanliness and sustainability. Greater focus on environmental management is needed to support Sanrobengi Island's development as a sustainable tourism destination.

Environmental preservation on Sanrobengi Island should use a tourism semiotics approach that highlights the importance of signs, symbols, and educational communication. Clear, accessible signage can effectively communicate conservation messages to visitors. Engaging local communities as educational guides and managers will further reinforce these messages. Collaboration among managers, government, and stakeholders is essential for effective island management. A well-designed signage system and consistent management can increase visitor awareness of environmental protection. These measures aim to ensure Sanrobengi Island is managed as a sustainable tourism destination while preserving its environment.

REFERENCES

- Abas, A., Aziz, A., & Awang, A. (2022). A systematic review on the local wisdom of indigenous people in nature conservation. *Sustainability*, 14(6). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063415>
- Aulia, A. (2025). Sustainable tourism in island destination: A study at Samalona Island, Indonesia. In *Proceedings International Conference on Marine Tourism and Hospitality Studies* (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 193–201).
- Binoya, S. L. (2025). Sustainability through the Lens of Semiotics: A study on tourism symbols and meaning. *International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 4, 217–222. <https://doi.org/10.56472/25835238/IRJEMS-V4I1P122>
- Brooks, J., Waylen, K. A., & Mulder, M. B. (2013). Assessing community-based conservation projects: A systematic review and multilevel analysis of attitudinal, behavioral, ecological, and economic outcomes. *Environmental Evidence*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2047-2382-2-2>
- Chatawanich, M., & Chatawanich, S. (2018). The influence of semiotics towards the memorable images of destination through the intellectual and cultural capital. *Dusit Thani College Journal*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.14456/dtcj.2018.12>
- Dodds, R., & Graci, S. (2012). *Sustainable tourism in island destinations*. Routledge.
- Fong, S. F., & Lo, M. C. (2015). Community involvement and sustainable rural tourism development: Perspectives from the local communities. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 11, 125–146.

- Hasrul, H., Amirullah, A., & Nurmila, N. (2025). Tourism and sustainability at the crossroads: global–local interactions in Bira, Bulukumba. In *Proceedings International Conference on Marine Tourism and Hospitality Studies* (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 90–98).
- Liszka, J. J. (1996). *A general introduction to the semiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Indiana University Press.
- Lorino, P. (2014). Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). In *Oxford handbook of process philosophy and organization studies* (pp. 143–165).
- Malik, A., Bagja, B. R., & Istianah, R. (2021). Analisis semiotika charles sanders peirce tentang makna logo pariwisata Kabupaten Sukabumi. *Journal of Computer Science and Visual Communication Design*, 6(1), 40–49.
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511–529.
- Sahabuddin, C., Azis, S., Irmayani, N., et al. (2026). Evaluating key indicators for sustained environmental campaigns through a community based tourism social policy model. *Discover Sustainability*, 7, 119. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-02432-x>
- Widiastuti, W., Ilmi, N., & Idris, A. M. S. (2025). Analisis semiotika pola-pola bahasa iklan pada media sosial dalam meningkatkan pariwisata di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 5(4), 7531–7541.
- Young, T., Reindrawati, D. Y., Johnson, P., & Lyons, K. (2022). Community meaning making for tourism sustainability on Madura Island, Indonesia. In *Island Tourism Sustainability and Resiliency* (pp. 238–261). Routledge.