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FROM LOCAL HEALING TO GLOBAL READABILITY: EWTC AND MULTI STAKE HOLDER COLLABORATION FOR EMERGING WELLNESS TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Abstract: This study examines how English for Wellness Tourism Communication (EWTC) and multi-stakeholder collaboration contribute to transforming Gorontalo's local healing practices into globally readable wellness tourism narratives. Positioned within the growing discourse on wellness tourism and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the research addresses a critical gap in communication competence among emerging destinations seeking international visibility. Using a sequential explanatory qualitative design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions involving government representatives, tourism businesses, community-based providers, and an expert validation panel. Thematic analysis identified recurring communication barriers, including limited wellness-specific vocabulary, weak cultural storytelling, inconsistent digital messaging, and low English-speaking confidence. Based on these findings, the study developed and validated a structured EWTC competency framework covering genre chains across the tourist journey, ethical messaging, intercultural explanation strategies, and digital promotion skills. The results demonstrate that improved clarity, cultural interpretability, transparency, and coordinated stakeholder messaging significantly strengthen destination image formation and global trust. The study contributes theoretically by positioning wellness tourism as a specialized ESP domain and practically by offering a context-sensitive communication model for community-based destinations. These findings highlight that global readability is not merely linguistic simplicity but a multidimensional construct linking language, ethics, culture, and collaboration in sustainable wellness tourism development.
Keywords: *EWTC; ESP; Wellness Tourism; Emerging Destination; Local Healing*

INTRODUCTION

Wellness tourism has now become one of the fastest growing area of global travel, shaped by travellers' growing interest in holistic wellbeing, preventive health, meaningful experiences, and recovery in natural based (Koerniawaty & Sudjana, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Simatupang et al., 2022). In Asia and other regions, destinations offer wellness not only as spa relaxation, but as a combination of landscapes, local food and herbal knowledge, cultural rituals, spirituality, and community-based care. In this setting, language cannot stand to be looked at just as a service skill. Communication shapes the wellness experience itself. Visitors use information and interaction to decide before they arrive, understand what happens on site, negotiate expectations and limits, and judge whether an activity is safe, authentic, respectful, and worth the cost (Berger, 2025; Dragija et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2025; Palomino-Flores et al., 2025). For emerging destinations, clear and ethical English communication, often determines whether local strengths become visible and trusted globally.

In this context, language is not merely a service skill but a central component of the wellness experience itself (Majeed & Gon Kim, 2023). Visitors rely on communication to make decisions before arrival, interpret what they encounter on site, negotiate expectations and boundaries, and evaluate whether an activity is safe, authentic, respectful, and worth the investment (Xia et al., 2024). For emerging destinations, the ability to communicate clearly and ethically in English often

determines whether local assets can be translated into global visibility and trust.

Gorontalo, located on the northern arm of Sulawesi, Indonesia, holds a distinctive nature, culture, and spiritual portfolio that positions it well for wellness tourism development. The province offers coastal and marine attractions, mountainous and rural landscapes, and culturally embedded traditions that can be framed as restorative and reflective experiences (Juniarti et al., 2023; Lagalo et al., 2022; Noho et al., 2020; Pakaya et al., 2025). Equally important, Gorontalo's wellbeing resources are not limited to outside wellness trends; they are deeply connected to everyday local knowledge, community values, and culturally mediated understandings of health and balance (Chow et al., 2025; Izudin et al., 2022). However, moving from "local healing" to "global readability" requires more than translating brochures into English (Husain & Talib, 2023). It requires a communication framework that can represent local wellbeing practices accurately, protect cultural integrity, manage risk and expectation, and remain accessible to diverse international audiences (Husain et al., 2021). Without such a framework, English communication may become either overly generic that loses the sense of wellness or overly promotional which risking misrepresentation.

Despite the growing attention to tourism English and hospitality communication, existing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials has not sufficiently addressed the specialized discourse of wellness tourism, particularly when wellness is articulated through an integrated nature–culture–spiritual experience (Husain et al., 2023; Ismaili et al., 2026). Many ESP for tourism materials continue to prioritize conventional hotel- and restaurant interactions, generalized customer service scripts, or tour guiding language focused on sightseeing. Such emphases are valuable but incomplete for wellness contexts where practitioners must explain healing-oriented activities, set boundaries, guide culturally sensitive participation, and respond to health-related concerns (Manhas et al., 2025). Moreover, the communicative demands of wellness tourism extend beyond spoken encounters to a chain of genres across the visitor journey such as websites, social media captions, online itineraries, safety briefings, consent-related explanations, review responses, and post-visit follow-up messages. Yet research has rarely mapped these genres systematically or examined how they work together to create a coherent and trustworthy wellness destination narrative.

A further gap concerns how local knowledge can be communicated in English without becoming too simplified, distorted, or commercialized in ways that break cultural boundaries (Husain & Talib, 2023). Wellness tourism often includes spiritual meanings, ritual etiquette, and culturally grounded ideas of wellbeing that may not translate neatly into English (Nasution & Kharisma, 2024). If communicators rely on direct translation or standard marketing templates, they may unintentionally exaggerate therapeutic benefits, hide contraindications and safety steps, or present sacred practices as entertainment. This situation shows the need for an ESP-based framework that includes ethical communication as a core part of competence: protecting dignity and face, using culturally safe wording, gaining informed consent, explaining limits transparently, and respecting what should not be publicly shared (Asad & Irshad, 2025; Bogati, 2025; Hsu et al., 2025; Mykolaichuk, 2025; Tenieshvili, 2025). These ethical issues are often discussed in responsible tourism, but they are rarely turned into teachable language skills within tourism based ESP (Aulia et al., 2025; Ko, 2025; Laba & Narlianti, 2025; Muzammal & Irshad, 2025; Nuraini et al., 2025; Saputri et al., 2025).

The idea of "global readability" also needs deeper attention. In practice, readability is often understood as "easy English." However, global readability is wider than short sentences or simple vocabulary. It also includes clear purpose, strong coherence across texts, cultural interpretability, and trust signals such as transparent safety information and credible claims. For wellness tourism, global readability means explaining culturally specific experiences so international visitors can understand them correctly, while keeping authenticity and avoiding cultural flattening. While studies on readability exist in tourism and health communication, they rarely offer benchmarks for emerging Indonesian destinations or address bilingual and multilingual realities. In many cases, local terms, Indonesian expressions, and culturally embedded concepts may need to be kept, explained briefly, or used together with English through code-switching (Halawa, 2023).

These issues matter even more for community-based and small bussiness, who often sustain wellness tourism on the ground. In emerging destinations, providers may include community

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guides, homestay operators, small-scale therapists, cultural practitioners, and local coordinators. They often have rich practical knowledge, but limited time and resources for formal English training (Sudewi et al., 2024). To respond to these needs, this study proposes an ESP-based EWTC framework (English for Wellness Tourism Communication) to support Gorontalo's nature, culture, spiritual wellness tourism development. EWTC is defined as a structured set of language competencies, genre models, and ethical–intercultural principles that help destination stakeholders communicate wellness experiences responsibly and effectively in English (Husain et al., 2025). Nonetheless, this study served as a perception study to reveal insights from language, communication, and tourism experts focusing on the preparedness to be global readability.

Based on the research gaps identified earlier, this study treats Gorontalo as a valuable site for innovation in tourism ESP. Instead of importing generic English modules, the study aims to develop a framework that is locally rooted and globally understandable. This requires balance. Local healing knowledge and cultural–spiritual, at the same time, English communication must meet global expectations for clarity, transparency, and safety, especially where activities could be misunderstood as medical treatment. The framework therefore highlights responsible wording and evidence-aware claims. It encourages communicators to describe experiences as wellbeing-oriented without overpromising results, and to provide clear guidance on suitability, preparation, and participation etiquette.

In line with this aim, the researcher has several related objectives. First, this research, it will conduct a multi-stakeholder needs analysis of wellness tourism communication in Gorontalo by involving local practitioners, guides, communication experts, and language teachers. This will be the base to translate the framework into practical ESP components: genre templates, task-based learning sequences, and assessment rubrics suitable for community-based settings. Finally, it will propose indicators for improved global readability, including clarity, coherence, cultural interpretability, and trustworthiness of English-facing materials.

From these objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How does EWTC shape Gorontalo's image as a wellness tourism destination for international tourists? (2) How does collaboration between government, businesses, and communities improve the effectiveness of Gorontalo's wellness tourism promotion?

This study offers theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it expands tourism ESP by defining wellness tourism as a distinct communication field with specialized genres and ethical–intercultural concerns (Husain et al., 2025). It also strengthens the idea of global readability as a multi-dimensional concept linked to trust and responsible promotion, not only to linguistic simplicity. Practically, the study provides a context-sensitive framework that can support training programs, improve communication quality without removing local identity, and strengthen Gorontalo's branding as a wellness destination grounded in nature, culture, and spirituality.

In short, transforming Gorontalo's local healing assets into globally readable tourism communication requires an ESP-based design that respects local knowledge while meeting international expectations for clarity, safety, and ethical representation (Husain et al., 2025; Husain & Talib, 2023). By addressing key gaps—limited wellness-focused ESP research, weak multi-stakeholder needs analysis, limited mapping of genres across the visitor journey, lack of localized readability benchmarks, and minimal validation of competency frameworks—this study aims to introduce a strong EWTC framework for responsible nature–culture–spiritual wellness tourism development in Gorontalo, Indonesia.

Wellness tourism has developed into a distinct segment of contemporary tourism that prioritizes holistic wellbeing outcomes, often combining physical relaxation, mental restoration, and lifestyle-oriented practices (Koerniawaty & Sudjana, 2022). Unlike general leisure travel, wellness tourism is typically framed around intentional activities and environments that support healthful routines, self-care, and recovery. It also differs from medical tourism because the emphasis is not clinical treatment, but preventative and experiential wellbeing (Gkinton et al., 2023). For emerging destinations such as Gorontalo, this distinction matters because it shapes what "quality" means: not only service efficiency, but also authenticity, safety, and meaningful experiences rooted in place (Anannukul & Yoopetch, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Liao et al., 2022). In this context, destination image is not formed only by landscape appeal, but by how wellbeing value is communicated, understood, and trusted. For international tourists who have no prior familiarity with Gorontalo, these perceptions

are often produced through mediated communication such as web content, social platforms, online reviews, and travel intermediaries that occurs before any direct experience occurs. Therefore, wellness tourism and destination image must be reviewed together because wellness identity is built as much through communication and interpretation as through the experience itself (Phuthong et al., 2023).

English for Tourism within ESP research has traditionally focused on functional workplace communication in mainstream tourism and hospitality settings, such as guiding, front-office service, customer handling, and basic promotional writing (Shanavas, 2025). This body of work has contributed strong methodological foundations, particularly through needs analysis, task-based instruction, and genre-based teaching for service encounters. However, the literature also indicates a gap when tourism products extend beyond standard hospitality transactions (Husain et al., 2025; Zerbe, 2025). Wellness tourism communication frequently requires a different set of discourse practices: guiding embodied activities (breathing, movement, meditation), explaining culturally embedded rituals, clarifying suitability and safety considerations, and describing ingredients or processes (e.g., herbal components) in a way that is accurate and ethically bounded. These demands suggest that general "tourism English" frameworks may be insufficient for wellness contexts, especially when the destination's competitive advantage depends on cultural meaning and trust. EWTC is therefore positioned as a necessary specialization within ESP: it connects tourism discourse with wellness-specific tasks and integrates language competence with intercultural sensitivity, ethical messaging, and genre knowledge across the tourist journey.

Wellness tourism frequently involves culture-based and sometimes spiritual practices that are unfamiliar to international audiences (Duxbury et al., 2025; Teoh, 2023). Intercultural communication is therefore essential. Messages need to be adjusted to different cultural expectations, such as tone, level of formality, what counts as convincing evidence, and the meaning behind symbols. Research in intercultural tourism marketing shows that people can read the same message in different ways because their values, norms, and media habits differ. For this reason, destinations must think about both the language they use and how they frame the message.

Multilingual communication also has two functions. English helps reach global audiences, but local terms often carry authenticity and protect cultural uniqueness. Studies on translation and cultural mediation suggest keeping key local terms and adding short, clear English explanations to support understanding while keeping local identity. At the same time, the literature warns against turning sacred or private practices into products. Communication strategies should therefore include cultural safeguards and clear limits on what can be shared publicly. For wellness destinations like Gorontalo, the challenge is to explain cultural meaning clearly without oversimplifying it, and to invite international visitors without reducing culture to something purely marketable. This balance requires skills in intercultural explanation, respectful storytelling, and careful word choice.

Tourism communication is not a single text type; it is a chain of genres that link together across time and platforms. A potential visitor may first encounter a destination through a short social media post, then read a website page, compare packages, message a provider, receive an on-site briefing, and later post a review. Genre-based ESP research shows that each genre has its own purpose, structure, and language features, and that overall communication quality depends on how consistently these genres work together (Husain et al., 2023). In wellness tourism, genre chains are especially important because tourists need both persuasion and guidance: they must be attracted by narratives of wellbeing and authenticity, but also supported with clear instructions, safety information, and culturally appropriate etiquette (Chow et al., 2025; Knapik & Król, 2023; Wulandari, 2025). Digital promotion literature also emphasizes the growing influence of SEO, platform visibility, influencers, and online reviews in shaping awareness and intention. However, digital success is not only technical; it requires coordinated content supply, consistent branding, and responsive communication practices. This is where stakeholder collaboration becomes a core discussion point. Destination promotion effectiveness increases when government, businesses, and communities align messages, share resources, and monitor outcomes using both quantitative indicators (traffic, engagement, inquiries) and qualitative indicators (perception, satisfaction, review sentiment). Therefore, literature on genre chains, digital promotion, and multi-stakeholder collaboration provides the foundation for understanding how EWTC operates in real promotional ecosystems, and how communication competence can translate into

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stronger destination image and measurable promotional results.

METHOD

This study was designed as a sequential, explanatory qualitative inquiry to develop and validate competencies for English for Wellness Tourism Communication (EWTC) in Gorontalo, Indonesia (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). The term sequential reflects that the work was conducted in a deliberate order, where results from the early stage shaped decisions in the next stage. The term explanatory reflects that the study did not stop at describing communication practices, but aimed to explain why recurring problems appear in English wellness tourism communication and how those problems can be translated into practical, teachable competencies. This approach was chosen because developing EWTC competencies requires more than collecting examples of tourism English; it requires understanding real communication conditions—such as resource limitations, uneven English proficiency, and coordination routines among actors—before proposing a competency set that can realistically guide training and practice (Hands, 2022).

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, meaning individuals were selected because they actively produce, manage, or deliver wellness tourism communication and therefore have direct experience with its challenges. The study involved two main participant groups. The first group consisted of local stakeholders, defined as people and organizations who shape the visitor experience and contribute to promotion and communication. These stakeholders included government and destination promotion actors involved in tourism strategy, branding, events, and official communication; tourism businesses such as tour operators, accommodation providers, guides, and wellness service providers who market services and interact directly with tourists; and community-based tourism actors such as community tourism groups, cultural practitioners, and local hosts who deliver culture-based wellness experiences and manage authenticity and cultural safeguarding. Including these stakeholder types made it possible to compare perspectives across roles, identify where coordination breaks down, and examine how messages become inconsistent when actors do not share the same standards for describing wellness experiences, cultural meanings, safety considerations, or service limitations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The second participant group was an expert panel assembled to validate the EWTC competencies produced in the study. Experts were selected based on demonstrated experience in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and applied linguistics, tourism communication and destination branding, and intercultural communication. The role of this panel was to strengthen the final competency set by ensuring that it remained grounded in local realities while also aligning with international standards of professional communication. Expert review helped ensure that the competencies were not only desirable in theory, but also clear, complete, culturally appropriate, and feasible under the constraints typically faced by local stakeholders.

Data collection began with a diagnostic stage focused on documenting how wellness tourism communication is currently produced and what challenges stakeholders face when communicating in English. The stage also explored collaboration in practice because message coordination strongly affects whether a destination presents a consistent identity to international audiences. Two qualitative methods were used to generate complementary evidence. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture detailed individual experiences and institutional practices. Second, focus group discussions were conducted to capture shared challenges, collective priorities, and practical solutions, particularly among community-based providers and tourism SMEs who often serve as frontline communicators.

The interviews explored how stakeholders currently use English in destination promotion and visitor-facing communication and how constraints shape what they can realistically produce. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and followed a semi-structured guide. This format ensured that each participant addressed the same key domains while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions tailored to the participant's context. During the interviews, participants explained where and how English is used in their daily practice, such as in website content, social media captions, package descriptions, direct messaging, and on-site explanations. They were also asked to describe the constraints they face, including limitations in SDM, language skills, time, budget, and access to supporting tools such as professional translation or design assistance. In addition, participants described perceived risks that arise when English communication is weak or inconsistent, such as misrepresentation of local wellness experiences, exaggerated promises,

unclear wellness claims, and cultural misunderstanding.

Focus group discussions were conducted to surface practical communication pain points and clarify training priorities from the perspective of frontline providers. Each focus group lasted approximately 45–60 minutes. Participants were grouped to encourage open conversation and reduce power imbalance, for example by grouping SMEs together and community providers together when appropriate. The discussions explored the communication situations that most frequently require English, common tourist misunderstandings and repeated questions, and specific topics that are difficult to explain in English, such as etiquette expectations, safety steps, cultural meanings, schedules, pricing, and suitability requirements. Participants also discussed the forms of support they would find most useful, such as communication templates, scripts, short explanations of local terms, and standard answers for common questions. Finally, focus group discussions examined collaboration needs, including how government or businesses can support community actors and how key messages can be synchronized across stakeholders so that tourists receive consistent information from multiple sources.

All participants received a clear explanation of the study and provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time. To protect identities, transcripts were anonymized using codes such as Gov-01, Biz-02, Eng-03 and Com-04.

After data collection, the study moved into an explanatory phase that transformed diagnostic evidence into structured findings and practical communication products. Interview and focus group data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and explain key needs and constraints. The researcher began by reading transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the overall meaning. Next, initial codes were applied to relevant segments, using short labels that captured recurring issues such as low confidence in English, unclear safety explanations, inconsistent branding, or concerns about over-claiming wellness benefits. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that summarized major patterns across participants, such as resource constraints, trust and transparency needs, cultural translation challenges, and collaboration gaps. The themes were reviewed against the full dataset to ensure they represented multiple participants and were not driven by a single subgroup. Finally, each theme was defined clearly, and representative examples were selected for reporting.

The thematic analysis produced two major analytical outputs. The first output was a list of communication needs, describing what stakeholders must be able to communicate effectively in English if Gorontalo is to present a credible wellness tourism image to international audiences. These needs included the ability to describe wellness experiences accurately, explain local cultural elements respectfully, clarify safety and suitability requirements, and respond to inquiries clearly and consistently. The second output was a list of constraints, describing what prevents effective communication and coordination. Common constraints included limited SDM, uneven English skills, unclear ownership of key messages, limited time and budget, and insufficient support tools. Together, these outputs support the study's research questions because they identify communication issues that can influence international audiences' perceptions of Gorontalo's wellness tourism and highlight coordination issues that shape promotional consistency.

For each genre, the map describes the communication purpose—whether it mainly informs, persuades, guides, or reassures—along with the information that must be present for clarity and trust. It also identifies typical language needs such as tone, vocabulary, and the use of short definitions for local terms. In addition, the map highlights common risks such as misinterpretation, over-claiming, or cultural offense, and it identifies collaboration points where shared standards are essential. By showing where destination image is formed and where coordinated messaging is required, the genre map provides a direct bridge from stakeholder needs to EWTC competency design.

In the final stage, the study drafted a set of EWTC competencies and subjected them to expert validation. Competencies were defined as practical abilities and knowledge that stakeholders need in order to communicate wellness tourism in English effectively and responsibly. The initial competency list was derived directly from the themes and the genre map. In other words, competencies were drafted to match real communication tasks that stakeholders repeatedly described, rather than being imported from generic tourism English lists. Each competency was written in clear, action-focused language, such as the ability to explain a wellness activity accurately without making medical claims, provide culturally

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respectful explanations of local practices through short definitions, and respond to tourist inquiries with consistent and transparent information.

The competency list was then validated through a structured expert review process conducted in two to three rounds, depending on the level of agreement among experts. In the first round, experts reviewed and rated each competency for relevance and provided written comments. Based on this feedback, the researcher revised the list by clarifying wording, merging overlapping competencies, adding missing items, and removing items judged unnecessary or unrealistic. In the second round, experts re-rated the revised competencies and commented on remaining issues. If important disagreements remained after the second round, a third round was conducted to reach stable consensus. Throughout this process, experts assessed the relevance of competencies to wellness tourism communication, the completeness of the set across genres and stages, the clarity and usability of each competency statement, the intercultural and ethical suitability of the competencies, and the feasibility of applying them in Gorontalo given resource limitations. The outcome of this stage was a validated EWTC competency set aligned with Gorontalo's communication realities and ready to guide training materials and standardized templates.

To strengthen credibility, the study applied several trustworthiness strategies. A transparent analytic trail was maintained through theme development. Interpretations were checked by comparing patterns across government, business, and community participants to avoid a single-perspective explanation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gorontalo already has strong wellness tourism assets (Husain et al., 2025) rooted in nature, culture, and spirituality, but its international image is weakened by communication gaps. The findings indicate that EWTC (English for Wellness Tourism Communication) reshapes destination image by improving (1) clarity of service and instructions, (2) cultural interpretation and storytelling, (3) transparency of wellness-related information, (4) digital visibility and "discoverability," and (5) provider confidence and interaction quality. Together, these changes move international tourists' experience from "pleasant but shallow" toward "meaningful and authentic," which is central to the global wellness tourism market (Husain et al., 2025).

Gorontalo's wellness image is rooted in unique and place-based practices

A major finding is that Gorontalo has a set of wellness activities that are distinctive and strongly connected to local landscapes and traditions. The report describes several practices that create a clear nature–culture–spiritual profile: traditional spa using local coconut oil and herbal elements; river-based hydrotherapy at Bohulo Camp combined with yoga and meditation and herbal drinks; grounding activities at coastal sites; sunrise yoga at the Kurinai beach; and meditation at lake Perintis setting that is locally perceived as calming and symbolically meaningful (Chow et al., 2025; Husain et al., 2025; Ikbal et al., 2023; Izudin et al., 2022). These activities align with international discussions of wellness tourism that emphasize nature immersion, psychological restoration, and mind–body practices (Bhuyan et al., 2025; Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; Kongtaveesawas, 2022).

This confirms that Gorontalo's foundation for destination image are already strong. The destination can be positioned as an emerging wellness site with authentic experiences, not only as scenic tourism (Husain et al., 2025).

Tourists experience wellness benefits, but the meaning is not fully delivered

Interviews with domestic and international tourists in the report show that motivations are mixed: physical relaxation, emotional recovery, spiritual searching, and a desire for authentic experiences. However, the findings also show that tourists often receive only part of the full experience. They enjoy the activities and natural settings, but they do not understand the cultural symbolism and philosophy behind them (Perdana et al., 2025).

The report frames this gap using wellbeing theory: tourists gain hedonic wellbeing (comfort, relaxation, pleasant feelings) but struggle to access eudaimonic wellbeing (meaning, reflection, deeper transformation). This is important for destination image because the global wellness market increasingly values meaningful interpretation, not just activities. When meaning is missing, the destination image becomes "nice activities in nature" rather than "a culturally rich wellness destination."

Communication barriers are consistent and systemic across locations

A central finding is that English communication problems occur across nearly all observed wellness sites and services, not only in one place. The report identifies recurring barriers: limited vocabulary,

overly short instructions, lack of narrative storytelling, limited herbal terminology, low confidence, and absence of bilingual media. A matrix in the report shows that these barriers appear across key locations and activities.

These barriers shape destination image in a direct way. When staff can only say basic phrases (for example, short commands like "relax" or "inhale–exhale"), tourists receive the service, but they cannot access the deeper identity of the experience. Without clear instructions, the service looks less professional. Without narrative, the cultural uniqueness becomes invisible. Without bilingual media, tourists cannot self-learn or confirm meaning. As a result, Gorontalo's international image becomes under-explained and under-differentiated, even when the underlying experience is strong.

EWTC reshapes image by adding cultural interpretation to service communication

The report's key contribution is that general English training is not enough. What is needed is an ESP-based model tailored to wellness tourism contexts. EWTC is presented as a strategic communication framework that helps providers deliver not only instructions, but also cultural interpretation.

The findings indicate that EWTC improves destination image by enabling providers to explain cultural meaning in simple English. For example, spa providers can explain why coconut oil is used, what the river represents in purification, or how grounding is understood as restoring balance. Even short narratives (two to three sentences) can shift tourist perception from "activity" to "ritual with meaning." When international tourists understand the "why," the destination image becomes more authentic and culturally deep, which matches how leading wellness destinations are perceived globally.

This also changes the tourist journey: instead of tourists leaving with only photos and physical relaxation, they leave with a story they can retell. That story becomes part of destination branding because it circulates through word-of-mouth and reviews.

EWTC strengthens digital visibility and first impressions

The report identifies that international tourists rely heavily on digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Google Maps to discover wellness destinations. A finding is that many local actors lack skills to create English digital content. This creates a visibility problem: even if experiences are strong, global audiences may not find them, or may not understand them when they do.

EWTC includes "Digital English" as part of the model. This involves training for bilingual captions, short activity descriptions, and short videos with English subtitles. These elements directly shape destination image because they form the first impression online. Well-written captions and clear micro-stories help international users quickly understand what Gorontalo offers and why it is unique.

In practical terms, EWTC strengthens "readability" and "shareability." Readable English increases comprehension, and shareable content increases reach. Together, they help the destination appear more internationally ready and professional, which is part of image formation.

Confidence-building changes the quality of interaction and perceived hospitality

The report emphasizes that low confidence is a major barrier. Even when providers understand the philosophy of the practice, they hesitate to speak English because they fear making mistakes. This creates short, minimal interactions.

EWTC responds through confidence-building training. This is not only a language issue; it is an image issue. International tourists often judge a destination by the quality of communication during service: whether staff can guide them, answer questions, and explain cultural meaning respectfully. When confidence improves, interaction becomes smoother and more welcoming. This supports a positive image of hospitality and professionalism.

A confident provider can also correct misunderstandings early. This reduces dissatisfaction and increases positive reviews, both of which are powerful image signals for international audiences.

Synthesis: How EWTC shifts Gorontalo's destination image

Overall, the findings suggest a clear image pathway. Gorontalo already has authentic wellness practices that can create a strong brand identity. However, without EWTC, international tourists mainly receive surface-level experience and limited explanation, which restricts the destination image to "relaxing nature activities." With EWTC, the destination image becomes richer and more competitive because tourists receive: (a) clearer instructions and service communication, (b) culturally grounded narratives that provide

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meaning, (c) transparent information that builds trust, and (d) digital content that improves global visibility.

In short, EWTC shapes Gorontalo's image by turning local healing practices into globally understandable wellness narratives and by improving the professionalism of both online communication and on-site interaction.

The expert input positions collaboration as a central factor for successful promotion. In the Gorontalo context, promotion does not work well if each actor communicates alone. The data show that effectiveness increases when government, businesses, and communities build a shared system.

Role complementarity creates a stronger promotion structure

The first finding is that collaboration becomes effective when roles are divided in a realistic way. The expert describes that each group has different strengths and responsibilities. Government often has authority, access to formal promotion channels, and the ability to support infrastructure and programs. Businesses usually have the closest connection to the market. They package products, set service standards, and run promotional execution. Communities hold local knowledge and cultural value. They also protect authenticity, which is essential in wellness tourism.

This role complementarity matters because wellness tourism promotion is not only about advertising. It also depends on trust, local acceptance, and cultural meaning. Government can help build the enabling environment, businesses can operate and market the product, and communities can provide the cultural foundation and experience quality. If one component is missing, promotion becomes weaker. For example, business marketing without community support may look artificial, and government promotion without strong products may produce interest but not conversion. Collaboration therefore increases effectiveness by connecting these functions in one system.

Message alignment improves clarity and reduces confusion

The second finding is that collaboration strengthens promotion through message alignment. The expert repeatedly emphasizes the need to synchronize messages, media, and activities across stakeholders. This means that government websites, business social media, and community narratives should reflect the same core identity and not contradict each other.

In emerging destinations, message inconsistency is a common problem. Different actors may use different terms, highlight different values, or promise different levels of service. For international audiences, this creates confusion. Confusion reduces trust, and trust is critical in wellness tourism. Tourists want to know what the experience is, what is included, and what is safe and appropriate. Collaboration reduces confusion because stakeholders can agree on a shared destination identity that is unique and specific, and then apply that identity consistently across channels.

The expert input also implies that aligned messaging helps manage reputational risk. In wellness tourism, exaggerated claims or unclear wellness promises can quickly damage credibility. Collaboration acts as a control mechanism: actors can agree on what can be promised and how to explain wellness benefits without over-claiming. This improves the quality of communication and protects the destination image.

Shared capacity-building addresses key constraints

A third finding is that collaboration improves effectiveness because it helps solve structural constraints that reduce promotional quality. The expert notes several constraints: limited communication staff (SDM), limited budgets, limited marketing skills, infrastructure gaps, and language or cultural barriers. These constraints are common in developing destinations and can make promotion inconsistent, low quality, or short-term.

The data suggest that single-actor solutions are not enough. Collaboration allows capacity-building to happen at a shared level. Government can provide training programs, basic systems, and facilitation. Businesses can contribute marketing skills, content production routines, and market feedback. Communities can contribute local knowledge and guidance on cultural safeguarding. When these contributions are combined, promotion improves because the overall capacity of the destination increases.

Capacity-building is also important for sustainability. Promotion requires ongoing content, not one-time campaigns. If stakeholders share templates, vocabulary, and standard messages, they reduce repeated work and increase consistency. In this way, collaboration improves effectiveness not only by increasing resources, but also by increasing efficiency and continuity.

Collaboration expands global reach through external partners

The fourth finding is that collaboration supports international promotion through wider networks. The expert highlights partnerships with influencers, travel bloggers, international travel agents, booking platforms, and review sites. These intermediaries are important because they have audiences and credibility. International tourists often rely on reviews, influencer experiences, and platform visibility when choosing destinations.

Collaboration improves access to these networks because stakeholders hold different entry points. Government can open formal exposure through national channels and international events. Businesses can negotiate partnerships, manage campaigns, and respond to inquiries. Communities can provide stories, cultural meaning, and experiences that partners can document and share. When these elements work together, Gorontalo's message travels farther and appears more credible because it is supported by real experiences and social proof.

This finding also shows that collaboration affects not only reach but also the quality of reach. Influencers and platforms tend to amplify what is easy to understand and visually strong. Community narratives and authentic experiences improve content quality, while business and government support improve distribution. In this way, collaboration improves both visibility and persuasive power.

Shared monitoring builds feedback loops and continuous improvement

The fifth finding is that collaboration increases effectiveness through shared monitoring and evaluation. The expert recommends using both quantitative indicators (visitor numbers, traffic, engagement, bookings/leads, media reach) and qualitative indicators (awareness, perception, satisfaction, reviews, partner feedback, content relevance).

Promotion improves when stakeholders use evidence instead of assumptions. If monitoring is done jointly, the destination can learn faster. Government can adjust support programs and infrastructure communication. Businesses can optimize campaigns and improve conversion pathways. Communities can improve visitor experience quality and cultural presentation. Shared monitoring therefore creates a feedback loop that improves promotion over time.

The findings show that collaboration improves wellness tourism promotion because it creates a connected system that combines governance support, market execution, and cultural legitimacy. This section discusses the meaning of these findings for Gorontalo's promotion strategy and for emerging destinations.

Collaboration should be treated as a promotion strategy, not only as coordination

In many destination programs, collaboration is treated as a formal requirement, such as meetings or agreements. The input suggests a stronger view: collaboration itself is a promotion strategy because it shapes content quality, message consistency, and operational readiness. Without collaboration, the destination may communicate different identities across channels and fail to build a coherent brand.

This is especially important in wellness tourism. Wellness products are often intangible. Tourists cannot fully evaluate them before arrival. Because of this, communication becomes part of the product. A coherent story, clear information, and credible tone can reduce uncertainty. Collaboration enables these elements by creating shared standards across stakeholders.

Role complementarity explains why collaboration increases effectiveness

The first finding (role complementarity) can be interpreted as a simple functional model. Government provides enabling support and legitimacy. Businesses provide market-facing execution. Communities provide authenticity and sustainability. This model explains why collaboration increases effectiveness: each actor contributes something that the others cannot easily replace.

If government support is missing, promotion may lack coordination, infrastructure messaging, or formal legitimacy. If business execution is weak, promotion may not convert into sales or bookings. If community involvement is weak, promotion may lose authenticity and face local resistance. In wellness tourism, authenticity is not a minor detail. It shapes how tourists evaluate cultural meaning and ethical practice. Collaboration ensures that authenticity is not separated from marketing.

Message coherence is a key driver of international trust

The second finding (message alignment) highlights that coherence is central for international audiences. Most international tourists will meet Gorontalo first through screens. They compare destinations quickly. If the message is

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inconsistent, or if promises seem vague, they may choose another destination.

Coherence does not mean every actor posts the same text. It means there is a shared identity and shared boundaries. Collaboration helps actors agree on the key message: what makes Gorontalo different, what type of wellness experiences are offered, what cultural values are included, and what safety and service limits exist. This coherence supports trust.

The expert input also suggests that coherence protects the destination from over-claiming. In wellness tourism, it is easy to exaggerate. Collaboration allows stakeholders to set shared rules: how to describe benefits carefully, how to use ethical language, and how to present culture respectfully. This improves credibility and reduces reputational risk.

Collaboration functions as a practical response to local constraints

The third finding (capacity-building) suggests that collaboration is necessary because of structural constraints. Limited SDM and limited budgets are real barriers. A single stakeholder group cannot solve them alone.

Collaboration reduces pressure by dividing tasks and sharing resources. Government can support training and basic systems. Businesses can provide marketing routines and content production. Communities can provide cultural content and support authenticity. In addition, shared templates can reduce repeated work. This improves efficiency and makes it easier to maintain consistent communication over time.

In a Sinta 2 article context, this point is important because it shows that collaboration is not only about "good relationships." It is about building institutional capacity to compete in international markets with limited resources.

External partnerships become more effective when local collaboration is strong

The fourth finding shows that international reach depends on external intermediaries such as influencers, travel agents, booking platforms, and review channels. However, partnerships only work well if the destination is ready.

If collaboration is weak, external partners may receive inconsistent information, weak service support, or unclear narratives. This can harm promotion. In contrast, when local collaboration is strong, the destination can provide clear packages, consistent stories, and quality experiences. This makes it easier for influencers and platforms to create and share content.

The implication is that collaboration is a foundation for partnership leverage. External networks multiply reach, but local collaboration ensures the message is stable and the product is deliverable.

Joint monitoring makes collaboration productive and measurable

The fifth finding emphasizes that collaboration improves promotion when it includes shared monitoring. Monitoring connects collaboration to measurable outcomes. Without monitoring, collaboration can become symbolic and not improve performance.

The expert suggests a balanced approach: use digital metrics (traffic, engagement, leads/bookings, media reach) and experience metrics (awareness, perception, satisfaction, reviews, partner feedback). This combined approach is suitable for wellness tourism because the sector depends on both visibility and trust.

When monitoring is shared, stakeholders can see whether message alignment improves engagement, whether partnerships increase reach, and whether the visitor experience supports positive reviews. This is important for continuous improvement, because promotion strategies must adapt to global trends and audience preferences.

Implications for Gorontalo's wellness tourism promotion

Based on the findings and discussion, several practical implications can be stated in simple terms.

First, stakeholders should formalize collaboration through a shared core identity for Gorontalo wellness tourism. This identity should be unique and specific, and it should be used consistently across channels.

Second, stakeholders should develop shared communication rules, especially for wellness claims, cultural explanations, and safety communication. This reduces misrepresentation and protects trust.

Third, collaboration should include routine capacity-building. Training for digital content, English communication, and basic branding should be planned as a continuous activity, not a one-time event.

Fourth, collaboration should focus on building partnerships with external intermediaries. However, partnerships should be supported by

consistent local communication and clear product packaging.

Finally, stakeholders should agree on shared indicators and shared reporting routines. This makes promotion measurable, improves accountability, and supports continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Gorontalo possesses strong nature–culture–spiritual wellness assets; however, its international destination image is constrained by systemic communication gaps. The findings show that English communication functions not only as a service tool but as a strategic mechanism shaping meaning, trust, and professional credibility. Through the development and expert validation of the EWTC framework, this research demonstrates that structured competencies in wellness-specific explanation, intercultural mediation, ethical claim management, and digital genre coordination can substantially enhance global readability. Multi-stakeholder collaboration further amplifies this impact by aligning messages, distributing roles effectively, strengthening capacity-building, and enabling consistent monitoring across promotional channels.

Theoretically, the study extends ESP scholarship by conceptualizing wellness tourism communication as a distinct and ethically grounded discourse field. It also advances the concept of global readability as a multidimensional construct encompassing clarity, coherence, cultural safeguarding, and trustworthiness. Practically, the validated EWTC model offers a scalable framework for training programs, template development, and coordinated destination branding in emerging regions. While the findings are context-specific to Gorontalo, the framework provides transferable insights for similar destinations seeking to transform local healing traditions into globally intelligible and responsible tourism narratives. Future research may expand this model through quantitative validation and comparative cross-destination studies to measure long-term impacts on visitor perception and competitive positioning.

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