Speaking the Ship: Documenting the In-Group Lexicon of Indonesian Cruise Ship Crew toward Sustainable Tourism Communication

Ni Putu Somawati[1], Elvira Septevany[1], Harisal Harisal[1,*], and I Putu Ari Utama Irawan[1]

[1] Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali, Bali, Indonesia
harisal@pnb.ac.id

Abstract. The transformation of global tourism toward sustainability concerns not only environmental management but also the internal work culture and communication practices of its workforce. Yet linguistic studies in tourism remain focused on guest-facing service, leaving the internal language of tourism workers largely undocumented. This study addresses that gap by identifying, classifying, and describing the in-group lexicon used by Indonesian cruise ship crew in their daily professional communication. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to 113 Indonesian crew members and supported by documentation. The study recorded 301 in-group terms, which were classified by language origin and by occupational function. Findings show that the lexicon is strongly multilingual: it is dominated by Italian borrowings (175 terms), followed by English (36) and Spanish (22), alongside a distinctive set of ship-specific slang (19 terms) understood only among crew. Functionally, the terms cluster around operational efficiency (deck, F&B, medical, and safety routines) and social solidarity (informal terms marking belonging and shared identity). These results demonstrate that the in-group lexicon is not merely a communication tool but a marker of professional identity and group cohesion. Viewed through a green tourism lens, efficient and shared internal communication reduces miscommunication and strengthens a sustainable work culture, positioning workforce language as an under-recognized contributor to the sustainability of Indonesia's tourism human resources.

Keywords: Green Tourism, In-Group Lexicon, Indonesian Cruise Ship Crew, Professional Identity, Tourism Linguistics

1 Introduction

The global tourism industry is increasingly shaped by cross-border mobility, complex operations, and the need for responsible and sustainable practices. Cruise tourism exemplifies this transformation, functioning as both a tourism product and a highly multicultural workplace where employees from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds must communicate effectively to support daily operations, guest services, and safety (Gössling, Hall & Weaver, 2015).

Within these communities, repeated workplace interaction generates an internal or in-group lexicon consisting of specialized terms and expressions that serve not only communicative purposes but also reinforce professional identity, solidarity, and group

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membership (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015; Rebrina & Generalova, 2019). From a community-of-practice perspective, such shared linguistic practices develop through participation in everyday professional activities and become part of the knowledge that sustains the work community (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). In this study, 301 lexical entries were identified and classified to examine the linguistic and social dimensions of communication among Indonesian cruise ship crew.

The significance of occupational vocabulary is particularly evident in multilingual maritime workplaces, where ambiguity may hinder operational coordination and require clarification or reformulation. Maritime communication research therefore emphasizes clear and standardized language, while studies of Indonesian and Balinese cruise ship crew have highlighted intercultural communication challenges, pronunciation differences, linguistic interference, and strategies such as repetition and rephrasing to maintain mutual understanding (Bocanegra-Valle, 2011). Indonesian cruise ship crew operate within this demanding multicultural environment, where occupational terms may originate from established maritime and tourism vocabulary, be adapted from other languages, or emerge informally through crew interaction. However, such internal lexical practices have received considerably less attention than guest-facing tourism communication. This study therefore focuses specifically on the in-group lexicon of Indonesian cruise ship crew and its linguistic and social functions, rather than on general English proficiency or intercultural communication competence.

Previous research provides important foundations for understanding professional language in tourism and related workplaces, but these studies address contexts adjacent to, rather than identical with, the cruise-ship setting examined here. Tourism terminology has been investigated in relation to specialized vocabulary and language-for-tourism purposes (Safarova, 2020; Orel Frank, 2022), while hospitality research has documented professional expressions used by hotel and tourism practitioners (Marasabessy, Mustika, Indriyani, Amelia & Rintaningrum, 2025). Other studies have examined workplace jargon and professional identity (Rebrina & Generalova, 2019; Angouri, 2018), as well as multilingual and intercultural communication among maritime workers (Bocanegra-Valle, 2011; Riyanto, Nurmala, Agustina & Maidari, 2023). Research on tourism work has further emphasized the importance of understanding the experiences, organizational environments, and employment conditions of tourism workers (Ladkin, Mooney, Solnet, Baum, Robinson & Yan, 2023). However, these studies do not systematically document the in-group lexical repertoire of Indonesian cruise ship crew, particularly its language origins, occupational distribution, communicative functions, and relationship to professional identity. This constitutes the specific research gap addressed by the present study.

The relevance of this issue can also be understood from the perspective of green tourism. Green or sustainable tourism should not be understood solely in terms of environmental protection. Sustainable tourism encompasses interconnected economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The economic dimension concerns the long-term viability of tourism activities, employment, income generation, and the distribution of tourism benefits; the social dimension concerns human well-being, working conditions, social relations, cultural integrity, and the quality of interactions among tourism stakeholders; while the environmental dimension concerns responsible resource use, conservation, pollution reduction, and the protection of ecosystems (UNEP & UNWTO, 2015). In this broader framework, the present study is primarily

concerned with the social and organizational dimension of sustainability because workplace communication forms part of the way tourism employees coordinate their activities and participate in a shared work culture.

For cruise ship crew, this social dimension is particularly relevant because employees from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds must coordinate their work within a highly interdependent operational environment. Effective internal communication can facilitate coordination, reduce avoidable misunderstanding, and strengthen workplace relationships and organizational cohesion. Research on tourism work and green workforce practices has increasingly emphasized the importance of organizational culture, human resources, and working conditions in sustainable tourism development (Ladkin, Mooney, Solnet, Baum, Robinson & Yan, 2023; Ivasciuc & Ispas, 2026; (Mahran, Ibrahim, Albarrak & Elamer, 2025). The in-group lexicon examined in this study is therefore not conceptualized as an environmental practice in itself. Rather, it is approached as a linguistic and social practice that may support the organizational and human-resource dimensions of sustainable tourism.

Despite the growing literature on tourism terminology, workplace jargon, maritime communication, and sustainable tourism employment, research that brings these perspectives together remains limited. Existing studies have generally examined either tourism terminology, professional communication, maritime language, or tourism sustainability separately. What remains insufficiently documented is how an occupational lexicon develops among Indonesian cruise ship crew, how its multilingual forms are distributed across occupational domains, how it functions in everyday professional communication, and how its use reflects membership and identity within a shared work community. Rather than treating cruise-ship communication only as a matter of language proficiency or intercultural communication problems, this study examines the lexical repertoire that Indonesian crew members actually use and share as part of their everyday professional practice.

Accordingly, this study is guided by two research questions: (1) What are the forms, classifications, and functions of the in-group lexicon used by Indonesian cruise ship crew in their daily professional communication? and (2) How does the use of this lexicon reflect the professional identity of Indonesian cruise ship crew from a green tourism perspective? The study contributes to tourism linguistics by documenting an underexplored occupational vocabulary, interpreting its relationship with professional identity through a community-of-practice perspective, and positioning internal workforce communication within the social and organizational dimensions of sustainable tourism.

2 Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the in-group lexicon used by Indonesian cruise ship crew within their social and professional work environment. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed not only to identify lexical forms but also to understand their meanings, occupational contexts, communicative functions, and relationship to professional identity. The research process consisted of three main stages: identifying and collecting in-group lexical items, classifying the lexical items according to their language origin, occupational domain,

context of use, communicative function, and social meaning, and conducting thematic analysis to interpret the relationship between language practices, professional identity, and sustainable tourism communication. This approach is consistent with the research progress report, which identifies questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and documentation as the principal data-collection techniques.

The participants were 113 Indonesian cruise ship crew members with experience working in international cruise-ship environments. The respondents were distributed across Indonesia, consisting of 46 respondents from Bali, 34 from Java, 20 from Sulawesi, 6 from Nusa Tenggara, 4 from Kalimantan, and 3 from Sumatra. The study employed purposive sampling because participants were selected based on their direct experience as Indonesian cruise ship crew and their familiarity with occupational vocabulary used in daily shipboard communication. This sampling strategy was appropriate because the study required information-rich participants who possessed direct knowledge of the in-group lexicon under investigation. The sampling was not intended to produce statistical representation of all Indonesian cruise ship workers, but to obtain relevant and experience-based lexical information from participants who met the research criteria. Access to participants was also influenced by their work schedules and physical location at sea. As reported in the research progress report, many crew members were on active duty aboard ships, requiring part of the data collection to be conducted online and with adjusted schedules.

Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire was distributed through both online and offline modes because a substantial proportion of the respondents were working aboard ships. The questionnaire functioned as an open-ended lexical-elicitation instrument rather than a closed-ended survey. It allowed participants to independently provide occupational words, expressions, or terms that they encountered or used in their daily professional communication. The questionnaire covered four main areas: lexical identification, meaning, context of use, and occupational and linguistic information. Participants were asked to provide terms commonly used among crew members, explain their meanings or Indonesian equivalents, describe the situations or occupational contexts in which the terms were used, and identify the relevant department or functional domain and, where known, the language origin of the terms. These components corresponded to the structure of the lexical database, in which each entry was documented according to its lexical form, meaning, department or functional domain, and language origin.

All 113 questionnaire respondents also participated in the in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted to clarify and elaborate the lexical information obtained through the questionnaire, particularly the meaning, communicative function, context of use, occupational domain, and social significance of the reported terms. The interviews also served to verify the spelling and meaning of orally transmitted or linguistically adapted expressions and to clarify variations in terminology across cruise companies. This procedure was particularly important because many lexical items were adaptations transmitted through oral workplace interaction, while differences in terminology across cruise companies required additional clarification. The research report specifically notes that verification of lexical meanings and spellings required careful attention because many terms were oral adaptations across languages and that variations among cruise companies required additional clarification through interviews.

The participants came from six major geographical regions of Indonesia. The geographical distribution demonstrates that the dataset was not restricted to a single regional group, although the number of participants from each region reflects the accessibility of Indonesian cruise ship crew during the data-collection period.

Documentation was used as supporting evidence to strengthen the validity of information obtained from the participants. The documented materials included lexical lists, notes concerning contexts of use, and interview transcripts. The collected data were subsequently reduced, verified, and organized alphabetically from A to Z. The data analysis involved four sequential procedures: data reduction, lexical identification, classification, and thematic interpretation. First, duplicate or unclear entries were reduced and the lexical forms were checked against participant explanations and supporting documentation. Second, each lexical item was identified and recorded in the lexical database. Third, the entries were classified according to language origin, occupational domain, context of use, communicative function, and social meaning. Finally, thematic analysis was conducted to identify broader patterns concerning operational communication, social solidarity, professional identity, and the relationship between workplace language and sustainable tourism communication. The analytical process followed the research report's procedure of reduction, identification, classification, and thematic analysis.

The data collection and verification process produced a final database of 301 in-group lexical entries used by Indonesian cruise ship crew. The entries were systematically documented and arranged alphabetically, forming the empirical basis for the subsequent linguistic and thematic analysis.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Documentation of the In-Group Lexicon

Data collection and verification produced a database of 301 in-group lexical entries used by Indonesian cruise ship crew. The entries were systematically documented, verified, and arranged alphabetically. Each entry contains information concerning the lexical form, meaning, occupational or departmental domain, and language origin. The database therefore provides an empirical representation of the occupational vocabulary shared and used by Indonesian crew members in their daily professional communication. The 301 entries constitute the main dataset for the analysis of linguistic origin, occupational distribution, communicative function, and professional identity.

The size and diversity of the dataset indicate that the in-group lexicon is not limited to a small number of technical maritime terms. Instead, it represents a broader repertoire that includes borrowed occupational vocabulary, mixed-language expressions, department-related terminology, and internally developed ship slang. This finding is important because professional jargon is generally not restricted to technical efficiency; it can also function as a resource for social interaction and group solidarity within a workplace (Rebrina & Generalova, 2019). In multilingual professional environments, shared terminology can further contribute to the development of workplace identity and social relationships (Angouri, 2018; Lovrits, 2024).

The database also demonstrates that the in-group lexicon is a dynamic product of workplace interaction. Some terms are inherited or borrowed from established maritime

and tourism vocabularies, whereas others have acquired meanings that are specific to the cruise-ship community. The latter characteristic is particularly visible in the ship-slang category discussed below.

3.2 Classification by Language Origin

Analysis of language origin shows that the in-group lexicon of Indonesian cruise ship crew is strongly multilingual, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 indicates that Italian-derived vocabulary is the largest category, accounting for 175 entries (58.1%). Mixed-language forms represent 40 entries (13.3%), followed by English (36; 12.0%) and Spanish (22; 7.3%). Portuguese and Tagalog/Filipino occur in smaller proportions. The distribution demonstrates that the linguistic repertoire of Indonesian cruise ship crew is shaped by sustained multilingual contact rather than by a single source language.

Table 1. Distribution of Lexicon by Language Origin (n = 301)

No	Language Origin	Number of Entries	Percentage (%)
1	Italian	175	58.1
2	Mixed / more than one language	40	13.3
3	English	36	12.0
4	Spanish	22	7.3
5	Ship slang (internal crew terms)	19	6.3
6	Portuguese	5	1.7
7	Tagalog / Filipino	4	1.3
	Total	301	100

The dominance of Italian vocabulary is particularly noteworthy. The data include occupational terms such as Capitano, Cuoco, Ospite, Cabina, and Stipendio. Their continued use suggests that certain Italian-derived terms have become routinized within cruise-ship professional communication. This finding is consistent with research showing that maritime communication develops specialized registers in response to operational needs and the international character of seafaring work (Bocanegra-Valle, 2011). However, the present finding should not be interpreted as evidence that Italian is universally the sole working language of the cruise industry. Rather, the data demonstrate that Italian-derived expressions have become an important component of the shared lexical repertoire reported by the Indonesian crew participating in this study.

The mixed-language category (13.3%) further indicates that crew members do not simply adopt vocabulary from one linguistic source. Instead, lexical resources from different languages circulate within the same professional environment. Such multilingual practices are characteristic of international workplaces in which workers negotiate meaning according to situational and occupational needs (Piller, 2017). In this sense, the cruise-ship lexicon can be understood as a dynamic multilingual repertoire shaped by the mobility of workers, the international organization of cruise operations, and repeated workplace interaction.

The 19 ship-slang items (6.3%) are particularly significant because they represent the strongest evidence of internally constructed in-group language. Unlike borrowed occupational terms, these expressions are primarily meaningful within the crew community. Examples include Alibaba, Banana, Kapud, and Manjare. Their meanings

cannot be understood simply from their surface linguistic forms; they depend on shared workplace experience and social knowledge. This finding supports the argument that professional jargon can simultaneously perform communicative and social functions by facilitating interaction among members who share occupational experience (Rebrina & Generalova, 2019).

The indication of this finding is therefore twofold. First, the multilingual distribution demonstrates the adaptive nature of professional communication among Indonesian cruise ship crew. Second, the existence of internally developed slang demonstrates that the crew are not merely passive users of established maritime terminology but active participants in the creation of their own occupational linguistic repertoire.

3.3 Classification by Department / Functional Domain

Classification by functional domain of use is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Lexicon by Department / Functional Domain (n = 301)

No	Department / Functional Domain	Number of Entries	Percentage
1	General (cross-departmental)	224	74.4%
2	Deck	23	7.6%
3	Food & Beverage (F&B)	17	5.6%
4	Medical	10	3.3%
5	Safety	7	2.3%
6	Housekeeping	6	2.0%
7	Guest Services	6	2.0%
8	Engineering	4	1.3%
9	Entertainment	2	0.7%
10	Security	2	0.7%
	Total	301	100%

The most prominent finding is that 224 entries (74.4%) belong to the general or cross-departmental category. Only 77 entries (25.6%) are associated with specific departments. This distribution indicates that the in-group lexicon has a substantial shared linguistic core that extends beyond individual occupational divisions.

The large proportion of cross-departmental vocabulary suggests that the lexicon contributes to the construction of a collective occupational identity. Crew members from different departments may share a common set of expressions even when their specific professional tasks differ. In this respect, the lexicon functions as a linguistic resource that connects crew members as members of the wider shipboard community. This interpretation is consistent with the community-of-practice perspective, in which shared linguistic practices contribute to the recognition of membership and collective identity (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

The remaining 25.6% of entries are distributed across specific occupational domains. Deck has the largest departmental share (7.6%), followed by Food and Beverage (5.6%), Medical (3.3%), and Safety (2.3%). The concentration of terminology in these domains is meaningful because these areas involve specialized activities that require precise and efficient communication. Maritime communication research similarly emphasizes the

development of specialized registers according to operational requirements (Bocanegra-Valle, 2011).

The distribution therefore reveals a two-layer structure. The first layer is a shared cross-departmental vocabulary that helps unify the crew, while the second consists of specialized vocabulary associated with particular professional functions. This pattern suggests that the in-group lexicon operates simultaneously as a social code and as an operational resource embedded within the division of labor aboard the ship.

From the perspective of sustainable tourism communication, the finding is relevant primarily to the social and organizational dimension of sustainability. A shared vocabulary can facilitate coordination among employees who work in different departments and come from different linguistic backgrounds. Nevertheless, the present study does not directly measure accident reduction, productivity, or resource savings; therefore, the contribution of the lexicon to operational sustainability should be understood as an interpretive implication rather than a directly measured causal effect.

3.4 Examples of In-Group Lexicon in Professional Context

The quantitative classifications above demonstrate the distribution of the lexicon, but the numerical distribution alone cannot fully explain how the terms function in actual workplace communication. This section therefore provides selected examples to illustrate how lexical meaning is connected to occupational context. The examples below are illustrative utterances constructed from the meanings and contexts reported by participants; they are presented to clarify usage rather than as verbatim interview quotations.

Table 3. Selected Cross-Departmental Lexicon and Illustrative Use

Lexicon	Meaning	Domain	Origin	Illustrative use
Capitano	captain / senior authority	Deck	Italian	“Report it to Capitano first.”
Lifeboat	emergency boat / lifeboat	Safety	English	“Proceed to the Lifeboat station.”
Cabina	cabin / room	Housekeeping	Italian	“The guest is waiting in the Cabina.”

The examples demonstrate that occupational terms become meaningful through their use in situated communication. Capitano, for instance, is not simply a lexical equivalent of “captain”; within the reported workplace context, it can also be used as a concise reference to a senior authority.

The safety-related examples are particularly important. Terms such as Lifeboat occur in contexts where information needs to be transmitted quickly and unambiguously. This supports previous maritime communication research emphasizing the importance of intelligible and standardized communication in operational environments (Bocanegra-Valle, 2011). The present data, however, show that such communication does not occur exclusively through formal standardized terminology; borrowed and locally routinized terms are also incorporated into everyday crew interaction.

The examples also show that language origin does not determine the current social function of a term. Although Capitano and Cabina originate from Italian, their repeated

use within the crew community gives them a practical function within the contemporary occupational repertoire. In other words, borrowed vocabulary becomes integrated into the crew's shared communicative resources through repeated use.

Table 4. Selected Ship Slang and Illustrative Use

Ship slang	Meaning	Illustrative use
Banana	to get scolded	"He got Banana from the supervisor."
Caramella	late	"You are Caramella again."
Kapud	exhausted	"I'm Kapud after the night shift."

These expressions illustrate why ship slang represents a particularly strong form of in-group language. Their meanings are embedded in social interaction and cannot necessarily be predicted from standard lexical knowledge. The terms can be used humorously, critically, or affectionately depending on the relationship between speakers and the immediate situation.

The slang therefore performs an affective and relational function in addition to its lexical function. Expressions such as Kapud ("exhausted") can provide an informal way of expressing fatigue, while terms such as Banana ("to get scolded") and Caramella ("late") can frame workplace experiences through humor. The finding is consistent with the broader understanding of workplace jargon as a resource for solidarity and group identification (Rebrina & Generalova, 2019).

At the same time, these expressions should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of psychological well-being. The data demonstrate that slang provides a shared informal communicative resource, but the study does not directly measure psychological outcomes. Its strongest empirical implication is therefore that slang helps establish familiarity and shared identity among members of the occupational community.

3.5 The Lexicon, Professional Identity, and Green Tourism

This section discusses the findings in Sections 4.1-4.4 in relation to the study's two research questions: (1) the form, classification, and function of the in-group lexicon of Indonesian cruise ship crew, and (2) the relationship between the use of this lexicon and the formation of professional identity from a green tourism perspective.

The findings presented above indicate that the in-group lexicon operates through three interconnected dimensions: operational communication, social identity, and affective interaction. This section brings these findings together to address the second research question concerning professional identity and green tourism.

From a community-of-practice perspective, mastery of shared occupational vocabulary can function as an indicator of participation in a professional community (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). Crew members learn many of these terms through everyday interaction rather than through formal language instruction. Consequently, the ability to understand and appropriately use terms such as Emergenza,

or Banana can indicate familiarity with the communicative norms of the shipboard community. The process is therefore not simply the acquisition of vocabulary but participation in a shared professional culture.

The 74.4% cross-departmental vocabulary reinforces this interpretation. Because most of the recorded terms are shared across departments, the lexicon contributes to a broader collective identity as "cruise ship crew," while the 25.6% department-specific vocabulary simultaneously supports more localized professional identities. This finding suggests that occupational identity operates at two levels: a collective shipboard identity and specialized departmental identities.

The multilingual composition of the lexicon further demonstrates that professional identity is not necessarily tied to a single national language. Indonesian crew members participate in a multilingual professional environment in which terms from Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Tagalog/Filipino, and mixed forms are incorporated into everyday communication. The resulting repertoire can therefore be understood as an occupational identity resource that transcends national linguistic boundaries.

The relationship with green tourism is most appropriately understood through the social and organizational dimension of sustainability. Sustainable tourism encompasses not only environmental management but also the quality of employment, human resources, social relationships, and organizational practices. Within this framework, shared workplace terminology may support more efficient coordination and reduce the need for repeated clarification, particularly in a multilingual work environment. Previous research on tourism work and sustainable workforce practices similarly emphasizes the importance of organizational culture, human resources, and working conditions in sustainable tourism development (Ladkin, Mooney, Solnet, Baum, Robinson & Yan, 2023; Mahran, Ibrahim, Albarrak & Elamer, 2025).

The contribution of the present lexicon to sustainability should, however, be interpreted cautiously. The study did not directly measure whether the use of shared terminology reduced accidents, resource consumption, employee turnover, or environmental impacts. Therefore, the findings support an association between shared occupational communication and the social-organizational dimension of sustainability rather than a direct causal relationship. This distinction strengthens the analytical position of the study by avoiding the assumption that a linguistic practice automatically produces measurable environmental outcomes.

The documentation of 301 lexical entries also has a cultural dimension. These terms represent accumulated occupational knowledge transmitted through everyday interaction among cruise ship workers. Recording them systematically provides a form of documentation of an occupational linguistic repertoire that has received limited academic attention. In this sense, the database can contribute to preserving knowledge about the professional culture of Indonesian cruise ship workers while providing material for future research and professional communication training.

4 Conclusion

This study documents and classifies the in-group lexicon of Indonesian cruise ship crew, identifying 301 lexical entries collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The lexicon is strongly multilingual, dominated by Italian

borrowings (58.1%) alongside mixed, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Tagalog terms, together with a distinctive ship-specific slang category (6.3%) that most clearly demonstrates in-group character. Functionally, the lexicon clusters around a shared cross-departmental core (74.4%) alongside department-specific vocabulary concentrated in operational and safety-critical domains. These findings show that the in-group lexicon operates simultaneously as an operational efficiency tool, a marker of professional identity and community of practice membership, and an affective outlet for crew working under pressure in an isolated environment.

Viewed through a green tourism lens, the in-group lexicon contributes to sustainable tourism communication in two ways: by reducing miscommunication and thereby supporting operational and social-organizational sustainability, and by supporting crew psychological well-being, which is relevant to sustainable human-resource practices in the tourism workforce. The study positions workforce-internal language as an under-recognized contributor to the sustainability of Indonesia's tourism human resources, and its documentation contributes toward the preservation of an occupational cultural heritage that has so far received little academic attention. Future research is directed toward developing a conceptual model linking professional lexicon, work identity, and sustainable communication practice, as well as extending this line of inquiry to other segments of the global tourism workforce.

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