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Developing A Sustainable Ecotourism Foundation In Indonesian National Parks Using Cross-Cultural Adaptation And Communication Framing

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DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION IN INDONESIAN
NATIONAL PARKS USING CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND
COMMUNICATION FRAMING

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family whose love, support, and constant push to persevere through the difficult times has led me to where I am today. I especially want to thank my husband who has lovingly encouraged me to continue to follow my dreams and who has dedicated himself to helping me make my dreams a reality. Finally, I dedicate this paper to our son who will be entering this world very soon. I wanted to prove to you that anything is possible and that no imaginable goal you will ever have will ever be out of reach for you.

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NATIONAL PARKS USING CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND
COMMUNICATION FRAMING

by

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Abstract

Previous research on ecotourism in Southeast Asia has focused on its positive and negative effects for conservation. However, the focus in this particular study is to look at what it takes to run a successful ecotourism site in four diverse areas in Indonesia using communication elements like cross-cultural adaptation and communication framing. Communication should be used as a baseline for a successful site and should be used as the most useful tool to address issues and challenges in ecotourism project development.

A successful ecotourism site must carefully look at how their ideas and programs are framed. Ecotourism must also create a sense of value within the community and an acceptance of other cultures by creating cross-cultural adaption among the local community, organizers, and tourists themselves. A successful ecotourism site should not be determined by the influx in revenue alone, but it should also be graded based on the positive effects for local people and positive environmental practices. I specifically address how ecotourism sites in Indonesia can have positive impact on the environment and local culture through communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Indonesia is full of breathtaking and unique hideaways that are not commonly visited by the everyday world tourist. Several sites within Indonesia can help to serve a dual purpose of a providing a relaxing getaway while also giving tourists a look into how and why it is important to preserve these unique hideaways, in an adventurous and entertaining manner. This dual form of tourism is known as ecotourism and has become widely popular around the world in recent years. There are four sites within Indonesia in particular that I have been working with that are in the beginning stage of their ecotourism venture. Ecotourism in an area like Indonesia can prove to be beneficial to not only sustain the local environment but also to provide a sustainable way of life for the local residents in the area. Setting the foundation for a positive ecotourism site where both the local economy and environment can thrive in a country like Indonesia is the main goal for this project. In order to do so, I found that it was important to focus ecotourism sites on two key processes. When an ecotourism site uses communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation when creating rules and guidelines for the site, based on prior research, the site is more likely to succeed.

The process of communication framing allows for individuals to validate an idea based on how they perceive the idea to positively affect them. Through framing one can help sell the idea of ecotourism to local people and tourists alike. Through cross-cultural adaptation the ecotourism site ensures that the local culture is not negatively affected by the influx of different cultures and ideas that may come to the site, especially as both foreign and domestic tourism increases through various means of promotion. The implementation of cross-cultural adaptation also allows for the local culture to prepare for an increase in ecotourism. Cross-cultural adaptation enables local citizens who wish to be a part of ecotourism to understand the

importance of enculturation in order to avoid feelings of inferiority towards the tourists (Lin, 2012). The same is also important and should be used to prepare ecotourists for their visits. An understanding and acceptance of cultures is essential in order to implement successful changes.

The challenge is to shape the communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation process based on each ecotourism site's needs. For example, Bali is predominantly Hindu whereas the majority of Indonesia is predominantly Muslim. To determine what is most important in each particular area and the distinct culture of each region is time consuming but also essential in order to determine how the ecotourism site will be run. Taking the time to understand each site's unique points of views and local issues can help create a sustainable environmental change within each site.

In order to be able to create a strong foundation for these sites that are hoping to improve their ecotourism sites, my study will attempt to answer the following research question: How can an ecotourism site, within these diverse environments in Indonesia, be run in a way that would obtain the most economic gain and a positive impact on the environment and local culture, using the tools of communication framing and cross cultural adaption?

In the following chapters I will address past research that has been conducted within this field of study. I will look at what has made ecotourism sites successful and what kinds of challenges arise in ecotourism for local communities. I will also examine how some ecotourism sites emerged and what type of connection tourists need to make to the site in order for their visit to be successful in that emphasis was placed on the importance of the site and its role in our current ecosystem. I will also discuss how the interaction with any wild animal must be carefully considered prior to implementing a standard within a site. Overall, I offer suggestions for how the local communities can get involved, how the environment can be successfully placed at the forefront, and what roles site employees need to take to ensure the success of their site.

1.1 ECOTOURISM SITES

Three of the four areas I focused on for this study were visited throughout the month of July in 2012 as part of an environmental conservation project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development in Indonesia. We spent about two to three days in each site with the exception of Taman Nasional Bali Barat. Due to the remoteness of the site, we were only able to stay there for almost the entire portion of the day. The fourth site, Bukit Bangkirai was added after having been discovered in a follow-up trip that I was not able to attend.

1.1.1 Taman Nasional Karimunjawa

The first site that was visited was Karimunjawa National Park located in the center of the Java Sea (Wildlife Conservation Society). One must travel on a two hour boat ride in order to get to this national park. The nearest city on the mainland is Jepara in Central Java province. The map in Figure 2 depicts the distance between Jepara and its location in relation to the Java Sea. According to the Wildlife Conservation Society's webpage on Karimunjawa National Park, Karimunjawa is one of seven national marine parks within Indonesia and is made up of 400 square miles of coral reefs (Wildlife Conservation Society). One of the website's homepages, Karimunjawa Island Info described Karimunjawa as a 27 island chain with only five of the islands being inhabited (Karimunjawa Island info). There is a small population that lives within the main island and a couple of local markets that sell goods as well as souvenir shops.



Figure 1. Map of Karimunjawa Island

The black arrow highlights the location of the islands

Neither of the online sites that I found advertised the island's unique mangrove forest, which houses one of the rarest mangrove species in the world (Indonesia Fascination). The mangrove forest is located just a few miles away from the small town and has facilities that would be suitable to accommodate a large group of tourists visiting the area. The island currently has an ecotourism program called "Karimunjawa Explore" spearheaded by Yusuf Syaifudin, who is employed by Karimunjawa National Park. During our short time in Karimunjawa he and the tour guides expressed an interest in reaching out to a greater public in order to increase their ecotourism program (field notes, July 13, 2012).

1.1.2 Taman Nasional Kutai

Taman Nasional Kutai is located in the island of Borneo and the nearest largest cities are Sangatta and Bontang. The park is made up of 198,629 hectares (Wonderful Indonesia). The

website for the national park is very well developed and has several different links for information; however the entire site is written in Indonesian (Taman Nasional Kutai info). On the website the park is described as one of the oldest areas for conservation within Indonesia. The park is separated into three different tourist sites, Prewab, Sangkima, and Muara. Prewab focuses on late night nature walks around the forest, and nature walks during the day to search for orangutans in their natural habitat. Prewab also allows for tourists to plant their own trees with a plaque besides the tree that allows tourists to write their name and their hometown. The Muara site mainly focuses on Proboscis monkeys.



Figure 2. Map of Kutai National Park

The location of the park is highlighted using a red square

The Muara site offers boat tours of the surrounding communities and tourists are able to spot local wildlife along the route. Sangkima is geared towards local tourists and focuses on a short walk on a board walk in which tourists can learn about different forest species. Unlike several other sites that focus solely on selling the tour to the visitor, the national park's official website touches, briefly, on the importance of the national park to the ecosystem. The website

talks about the park being a “life support system” for the surrounding areas (Taman Nasional Kutai info).

1.1.3 Taman Nasional Bali Barat

The last stop during our visit to Indonesia was the Taman Nasional Bali Barat located in West Bali, Indonesia. From Bali, one must travel up a winding road for four hours from the capital city of Denpasar to get to the site. However, during the drive one gets a view of Bali that not many tourists get the opportunity to visit. An entry about the national park on the Frommer's website described the size of the national park as 770 sq. kilometers of forest and 1,000 meters of beach (Intro to Taman Nasional Bali Barat). There is a small community in the village of Sumberklampok that lives within the area we visited and several support the idea of inviting ecotourism in order to obtain a steady livelihood. The main attraction to the national park is the Balinese Starling reintroduction program. The park is described as a conservation area and advertises itself with having several different nature based activities, related to science and some related to tourism (Bali Barat info). A map in figure 3 describes the location of the site as ideal for tour destinations given its proximity to the ocean.



Figure 3. Map of Bali Barat National Park

The site is highlighted in green

The site is run by a local community leader who is in charge of the reintroduction of the Balinese Starling. The site representative wishes to begin an ecotourism program in the area. Along with working for the national park, the site representative also works with the Rare program and moved to the Bali Barat area in an attempt to create a community ecotourism site where local residents not only help with current the current rehabilitation program but also participate in a steady ecotourism project that would allow for a stable livelihood. Currently, the site representative has local residents working as part of the reintroduction program by housing the Starlings and their newborns prior to their release. The site representative said that he hopes the site can benefit the local community and showcase their achievements and successful program (field notes, August 1, 2012).

1.1.4 Bukit Bangkirai

This park is located between the major cities of Samarinda and Balikpapan in the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan. It is described as being known for its wide variety of orchids, variety of animals, and its 150-year-old bangkirai trees (Bukit Bangkirai). According to Sadjad (2013) the site was created by the Ministry of Forestry in 1998. According to a 2013 article in The Jakarta Post the park is described as a 1,500 hectares “journey through nature’s beauty.” The area’s array of wild animals includes 113 bird species, wild boar, flying squirrels and sambar deers (The Jakarta Post). Figure 4 shows the location of the park in relation to Kutai National Park, located 150 kilometers from Samarinda and 58 kilometers from Balikpapan, where the nearest airport is located (The Jakarta Post). This site has potential to grow as an ecotourism site and contained the positive values found in all four sites that is necessary to have a successful ecotourism site.



Figure 4. Map of Bukit Bangkirai

Bukit Bangkirai is highlighted using a yellow dot

These four sites cover a wide range of Indonesia's vast ecosystems and animal wildlife. Each site offers a uniquely diverse look at what Indonesia has to offer. From unique mangroves, to the endangered Balinese starling, each site promises an experience unlike any other that will prove to be memorable for the tourists. The memorable experience can translate into learned information that can help create awareness for the issues that plague Indonesia's ecosystem.

The next chapter will look at past research that has already been conducted on ecotourism in preservation sites. The chapter has been broken down into major topics that widely affect the success of ecotourism. The topics that are covered are media advertising, the importance of physical presence, the importance of local traditions, the perception of animals in captivity, the importance of local economic development and community involvement, and finally the negative effects of ecotourism. The chapter also gives a brief overview of communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation. Chapter three looks at how the research was carried out and provides a brief description of the four sites the research focused on. Chapter four provides the results of the research and the analysis in Chapter five describes what was done with the data that was obtained from the research. In chapter six I will discuss the shortcomings of the research and what can be done for future studies to help progress the area of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Ecotourism has been described as a way to focus on the appreciation for the natural environment through such activities like wildlife watching, hiking, trekking, scuba diving and several other outdoor activities (Sowards, 2012; Buckley, 2004; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Ecotourism was first introduced to provide a more environmentally conscious form of travel while also providing the economic incentive necessary to help sustain a community (Lima & d’Hauteserre, 2011). A successful ecotourism site entails not only providing the revenue needed to sustain a livelihood but also to provide a positive effect for conservation and the culture of the community. Based on past research, the foundation of an ecotourism site determines whether the site will in fact be environmentally conscious and create the revenue the local communities are seeking without adversely affecting local culture. An ecotourism site cannot function properly without ensuring that proper communication, self-sustaining initiatives, and community involvement are at the core of the ecotourism site (Fennel, 1999; Mulder et. al., 2006; Lima & d’Hauteserre, 2011).

As Lin (2012) suggests, a successful ecotourism site must carefully look at how their ideas and programs are framed. Aside from framing, ecotourism must also create a sense of value within the community’s culture and acceptance of other cultures by creating cross-cultural adaptation for not only the local community and the program organizers but the tourists as well. Kim (2001) argues that interpersonal communication combined with cross-cultural adaptation creates a successful adaptation for individuals dealing with foreign cultures. Interpersonal communication can be characterized as a form of communication framing in that strangers participate in interpersonal activities and learn the cultural practices in order to be able to engage in what Kim refers to as “corrective exchanges” (Kim, 2001):

Through personal contacts in their relationship networks, strangers observe and learn from native-born acquaintances and friends the standards of verbal and nonverbal communication practices, the underlying tacit assumptions, and the subtleties of the aesthetic and emotional sensibilities of the local people. (Kim, 2001, p. 122)

Kim also argues that by looking to local leaders for guidance, outsiders can identify what is culturally acceptable and in what language to help convey a message that will prove to have cultural value in order to fit in with the culture (Kim, 2001).

The concept of ecotourism has grown increasingly in popularity over the past couple of years. The popularity has increased due to green global initiatives that have only recently become popular and have made several appearances in the mainstream media. Weaver (1998) outlined two types of ecotourism, an active and a passive ecotourism. With active ecotourism, tourists are encouraged to change their lifestyles and behaviors and participate in environmental practices. Passive ecotourism's main criterion is to leave as little impact as possible to the environment (Weaver, 1998). In order to create a successful form of ecotourism, both active and passive forms of tourism must be combined to increase the spectrum of participants (Weaver, 1998). Weaver (1998) describes ecotourism as the most valid solution to limit the zones for agriculture, hunting, and forestry through ecotourism's economic incentive (Weaver, 1998).

Though ecotourism has been described as a viable option for creating environmental change with an economic incentive, there are several issues that arise. Some of the most common issues vary from a loss of local economic gain, a loss of cultural identification, and a negative environmental impact leading to degradation. The intentions for the site must be communicated thoroughly prior to creating it, ensuring that conservation, and local economic and environmental gains are at the forefront of the project.

2.1 MEDIA ADVERTISING

A tourist can create a higher expectation for their visit based on the research they conducted on the site prior to visiting. Their expectations may not be met with the high quality photos and picturesque promises that they initially became enamored with. According to Sowards (2012), an ecotourist prepares for travel prior to taking part in an ecotour. Such preparation might involve reading websites, books, travel magazines, and brochures that inevitably create anticipation for the ecotourist which in turn creates a set path as to how their experience will be perceived prior to taking part in it. Sowards (2012) separated an ecotourist's desire to be a part of an ecotour into three rhetorical themes; sublime, exotic, and the dangerous adventure. These same concepts that lure the ecotourist to an ecotourism site also lead to disappointments and false expectations when not faced with the same images the photos and literature described (Sowards, 2012).

Lin (2012) also argues that proper framing of media communication is necessary in order to help provide the baseline for the success of the a site. Lin (2012) focuses her study on the works of Sangduen Lek, a local resident who founded the Elephant Nature Park in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1995 (Lin, 2012). Lek singlehandedly managed to rescue 27 abused elephants and implement a sustainable ecotourism site with a 15 percent annual elephant rescue increase (Lin, 2012). Lek's story became internationally known through documentaries, media reports, online information and storytelling. Lin (2012) argues that it is important to have the information dispersed throughout different forms of media in order to create a "frame bridging" effect, where different media outlets can reach different types of audiences therefore creating several types of impacts (Lin, 2012). Having Lek's journey disseminated throughout several different forms of

media created a sense of uniformity and understanding of the particular frame that was intended to reach the local audience and will now reach the global audience (Lin, 2012).

According to Lin (2012), any form of media advertising can be turned into a positive experience for the site itself. Lin (2012) contends that online participation creates a borderless community, and face-to-face interaction is the most successful in creating frame transformation. Films and documentaries are the most effective means of introducing the audience to a park or natural attraction and creating an interest to continue to find out more information about the park (Lin, 2012). Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) argue however, that there is some communication that can be difficult to repair through media framing. The framing through media advertisement should depend on the type of ecotourism site one is trying to advertise. Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) argue that there is an implication of the site being morbid or would only invite a certain type of person to travel to the ecotourism site, as they illustrate in their discussion of dark tourism, or sites that are associated with death or suffering especially related to environmental pollution or degradation.

2.2 PHYSICAL PRESENCE

It is important to look at how communicative events and experiences shape the way of thinking towards conservation efforts not only for the ecotourists but for the local community involved in ecotourism as well (Sowards, 2012). A recurring theme in Sowards (2012) is the idea that presence is the strongest tool to help create that connection between the importance of conservation and preserving the local culture for tourists:

Presence allows the ecotourist to experience beyond expectations, in that the experience itself cannot be fully described in words or images; experiences exceed expectations

through astonishment, disappointment, or surprise. It is these moments when our expectations are not met that possibilities exist for new consciousness, transformations and identities as mismatched expectations and experiences create opportunities for self-reflection and awareness about the world. (p. 183)

Similarly, Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) look at how dark tourism affects the frame of mind of participants when they are placed in uncomfortable situations. According to Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) an uncomfortable situation for a tourist can simply be deprivation or a lack of control over biological needs like sleeping and eating. These types of deprivations allow them to change their frame of mind because it undoes the sense of humanity they have always known (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). Bowman and Pezzullo's (2010) study demonstrates that cultural norms which include views on environmental degradation and other taboo subjects, are intertwined with their sense of humanity and it is not until an individual is forced into an uncomfortable situation that they can begin to comprehend the issues that plague the area (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010).

2.3 LOCAL TRADITIONS

A site's local traditions may also provide specific challenges in the creation of a successful ecotourism site. An area's local traditions may clash with the ideals of ecotourism, for example the treatment of an animal for a religious purpose or the use of a piece of land for the purpose of a common ritual. For example, the major issues that needed to be tackled at the elephant rescue center, were the local people's way of thinking, passed down from generation to generation (Lin, 2012). According to this study, it was not difficult to get the local community on board with tourism since logging, transport, and warfare had been made illegal in the recent

years (Lin, 2012). However, domesticated elephants were also being used for the benefit of the locals by teaching the elephants to do tricks and perform for tourists. Lek believed that the law, framing, and cultural adaptation would be most powerful in creating a positive frame for ecotourism and aid in reducing the exploitation of animals (Lin, 2012). Lek's ideas and continuous efforts have created one of the most successful elephant conservation sites and her story is known around the world. Lin (2012) proved that though the process towards creating a successful ecotourism site may be gradual, the benefits and positive framing will continue to stay with the community. The effect it leaves on a community creates positive and lasting changes within the community.

However, years of passed down beliefs on how these animals should be treated are ingrained into new generations from birth. For example, for many years elephant handlers would deal with elephants using a sharp hook. Lek's approach was to handle them with her hands. The way she convinced the handlers to try her approach was by framing in terms of masculinity and femininity. Once the predominantly male handlers saw a small female using the approach they had no choice but to try it (Lin, 2012). This serves as one example of cultural shift in relating to animals and forests through ecotourism activities.

2.4 INTERSPECIES INTERACTIONS

It is vitally important to consider the culture of the local community but it is also equally important to consider the placement of the animals in an ecotourism site when they are being housed or rehabilitated as in some of the sites in Indonesia. Animals in their most natural settings can provide the greatest impact for tourists when visiting a particular site. An interaction with an animal in its natural settings creates a deeper understanding of the space and presence of the

animal within its ecosystem. For example, Milstein (2008) looked at tourist reactions to whales during a whale watching tour in Washington. She concluded that the experience was so significant for most individuals that they not only were left speechless but also felt as if the value of the experience would be cheapened if they spoke of it (Milstein, 2008). When these tourists make these connections they can better relate to the animals and make a conscious effort to care for the animal in a non-superficial way (Milstein, 2008).

Milsten (2009) also looked at the effects of how the display of animals in a zoo can affect the frame of mind of the tourists. Milstein argued that when animals are placed in cages the tourists feels a sense of superiority to the animal and therefore they cannot make that connection towards the animal that is essential for rethinking human-non-human relationships (Milstein, 2009). Milstein (2009) observed that the most successful approach in getting tourists to connect to the animals is by displaying the animals in a glass enclosure to make the visitors feel like they are getting a glimpse of the animal in their natural habitat (Milstein, 2009). She also added that in zoo-like settings, tourists are given a glimpse of what the issues are but are not given any tools on how to combat them or how they can assist. Another major issue was the idea of sacrificing some animals for the many. Milstein (2009) argued that according to conservation views the good must outweigh the bad in order to hold an animal captive, and for most all zoos it does. The good outweighs the bad in that the animals in captivity help guide the tourists to understand the issue and consider a change in their consumer lives. Milstein (2009) said a healthy alternative to combat this issue is to have animals on display that are being rehabilitated to return to the wild, that could not survive in the wild due to human interaction, or that may be endangered (Milstein, 2009).

2.5 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In order to get the community involved in a local ecotourism site they must first be able to understand the economic benefits that can come from ecotourism development. Residents can then understand the importance of preserving their natural ecosystem and reducing the degradation from tourism. Lima & d’Hauteseree (2011) describe ecotourism as one of the platforms necessary to create a call to action. They looked at the negative effects that come with ecotourism and argued that ecotourism serves as an economic developmental tool for local communities. A transformation in caring for nature can occur through economic development within a community (Lima & d’Hauteseree, 2011). The sites suffer when they bring in an outsider to spearhead the project. Local residents or those living within the community are often more able to understand the capacity of the community and therefore would be the best decision makers for the community (Lima & d’Hauteseree, 2011). It is essential that the community come together during the beginning process because, according to Roddick (2000), when a community shares a task the community is able to accomplish larger tasks that they did not feel they could undertake before (Roddick, 2000).

There are several issues that arise when lack of community involvement or the community losing the desire to participate occurs at an ecotourism site. If the site is not managed properly, several of the community members may not be able to see the economic incentive and can become discouraged due to the lack of positive feedback and positive economic growth. According to Zambrano et. al. (2010), one issue that arose when involving the members of the community was that the funds that were created through ecotourism were not being distributed

evenly among community members. Community members also needed to be taught how to save their earnings since there was a peak and slope in tourism throughout the year (Zambrano et. al., 2010). When residents did not save, there were times where they could not afford to care for their families based on the frequency or infrequency of tourist visits. Another potential issue was the distance between the lodge and the employee's home. The distance caused most employees to be away from their families for long periods of time (Zambrano et. al., 2010). The situation was not ideal for those who had to travel to work for a week and then return home for a week or two. Moving their family to the ecotourism site was often not possible due to the remoteness of the land and lack of resources that would make it ideal to raise a family.

Not only is community involvement necessary for a successful ecotourism site, but it is also essential to include what Lima & d'Hauteseree (2011) describe as "community capitals," where the community has created communal assets, hence a sense of commonality. These shared assets enable the community members to foresee and address any problematic issues rather than being left unattended and creating instability within the community (Allen, 2001). In essence, creating "community capitals" for a community to grow then leads to a self-sustaining community.

Aside from building "community capitals," Lima & d'Hauteseree (2011) found that ecotourism helped local community members expand their knowledge and helped them gain more confidence when interacting with foreigners (Lima & d'Hauteseree, 2011). The study found that when presenting their culture, artwork, and folklore to tourists, the local people's identities were enhanced. The feelings of inferiority the local residents once had were reduced, and new traditions were revived:

When cosmopolitan people come and share space and time with the locals and show interest in their culture, lifestyle and environment, a new paradigm takes place: Amazonians in remote areas gain an inner feeling of social ascension and importance, enhancing both social and human capitals. (Lima & d'Hauteseree, 2011, p. 200)

However, once a community is immersed in the ecotourism culture, community members soon realize that new skills must be learned in order to be better prepared for their new way of life in the ecotourism culture (Jones, 2005). Because a new culture of ecotourism and tourists of different cultures and backgrounds emerges, the sacred lifestyle and traditions of the local community may be affected (Lima & d'Hauteseree, 2011). The idea of losing traditional values is also a sentiment shared by Byczek (2011) in a case study based on the ecotourism in Bali. Byczek (2011) argues that ecotourism has been said to contribute to social instability, a loss of traditional values, a transformation of cultural customs, and even crime (Byczek, 2011).

2.6 NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Like Lima & d'Hauteseree (2011), Byczek (2011) contends it is important to localize ecotourism within the community. In Bali's case the leaders in the ecotourism projects and lawmakers were based in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital which is located hundreds of miles away. The disconnect between what leaders in Jakarta thought Bali needed and what leaders in Bali tried to communicate was problematic. The elites in Jakarta were criticized as solely benefiting from the site while Bali bore the ecological costs (Howe, 2005; Picard, 2003; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Byczek, 2011).

Along with the disconnect between Jakarta and Bali, Byczek (2011) argued that the sudden boom in ecotourism created an onslaught of issues that had already existed and grew to

be larger problems through the influx of ecotourism. Waste management, lack of freshwater, traffic, poor air quality, and noise in urban areas are just some of the issues Bali continued to face (Byczek, 2011). Since a large amount of the land was taken up by a premature boom of controversial mega-projects to accommodate a tourist population that was actually lower than expected, the agricultural land suffered as did self-sufficiency (Utama, 2007; Byczek, 2011).

On the surface it may appear that some sites are running a successful ecotourism site; however, on several occasions local residents have sacrificed their way of life in order to benefit the tourist industry. Since this is the case in several areas like in Bali, it is important to understand what local residents value as important in their daily lives and respect those values in order to obtain consensual participation within the local community. Zambrano et. al. (2010) illustrate the importance of such community participation in their study of employees from a tourist resort who directly benefited from ecotourism in Costa Rica. These participants were interviewed in an attempt to understand how tourism had changed their daily ways of life and helped improve the economy. The study looked at how and if the company created opportunities to become more involved within the local community and implemented greener practices. Though the local residents agreed that a greater environmental awareness was created through tourism, the statistics showed an increase in drug addiction, alcoholism, and prostitution (Zambrano et. al., 2010). However, several local residents reported a willingness to put up with the negative effects in order to secure a way of living and a way to provide for their families (Zambrano et. al., 2010).

When there is a sudden boom in tourism and guidelines and standards are not set, the local residents are the ones who take on most of the burden and backlash. The standards for the site should be placed to ensure the cultural and economic well-being of the local residents and

should be put in place well before an ecotourism site is even advertised to the public. A study conducted by Horton et. al. (2009) looked at the negative effects of ecotourism in Costa Rica. They argued that the sudden influx of tourism created an economic loss and a cultural loss for the local community. The community also lost economically because foreigners were not only taking the jobs related to tourism because they were more qualified but they were also taking the locals' land because the land prices increased significantly to the point that the only individuals who were able to afford the land were foreigners (Horton et. al., 2009). Although ecotourism did help do away with environmentally damaging activities like mining, new issues like solid-waste disposal and agrochemical runoff arose (Horton et. al., 2009).

The issues related to ecotourism that have plagued Bali and Costa Rica can be attributed to the fact that there is no clear cut global definition for ecotourism (Cater & Lowman, 1994; Norajlin et. al., 2012). Norajlin et. al. (2012) found that ecotourism is sometimes misinterpreted as a nature-based form of tourism set in the natural environment like a hike in the woods or mountain climbing (Mader, 2002; Lascurain, 2006). Norajlin et. al. (2012) blames this lack of understanding on the lack of measures that are implemented to control ecotourism activities in a national level.

Rather than being used for purposes of maintaining the environment, several site representatives may just be using the term ecotourism as a way place their site in a better light and create more attention for their site in terms of being environmentally friendly. Since being environmentally friendly has grown increasingly popular over the last couple of years, several sites may be taking advantage of the situation and deeming their site an ecotourism site. Cater & Lowman (1994) contend that adding the term 'eco' to an activity in order for it to gain more popularity is often done, but does not mean that such activities are really environmentally

friendly. Environmental opportunism is then at the core of ecotourism rather than a quest for a more sustainable form of tourism (Carter & Lowman, 1994). Ecotourism has grown to become nothing more than a large business handled by individuals only interested in economic growth regardless of whether or not the environment can sustain itself (Carter & Lowman, 1994).

When used correctly, ecotourism can serve its purpose to both the community and the environment. In order to do so, those that are in charge of the site hold the highest power in placing the community members at the forefront of everything that is created for the site from policies to site standards. Though Norajlin et. al. (2012) mainly argue that ecotourism can be damaging when not practiced correctly they also state that, when implemented correctly, it serves to help combat economic hardship within the community and create sustainable practices (Norajlin et. al., 2012). Once the government and stakeholders place local community members and environmental elements at the forefront of ecotourism, rather than tourists and the economy, a successful and self-sufficient form of ecotourism can emerge (Norajlin et. al., 2012).

2.7 FRAMING

Communication framing plays a major role in an ecotourism site. How an idea is framed to the community will determine how willing a community will be to accept the new concepts and ideas for the site. A community may not be willing to back the concept of an ecotourism site and without full support of the site both the local culture and land will inevitably suffer. According to Benford & Snow (2000), frames not only serve as a way for individuals to label an occurrence but it also serves as a way to help develop a meaning to the occurrence and to help guide actions to their intended results (Benford & Snow, 2000). Collective action frames are mainly intended to help support social movements in that the process involves the understanding

of an issue, understanding the need for change, finding the source of the problem, creating a solution and encouraging others to work towards the direction of the solution (Benford & Snow, 2000). Benford & Snow (2000) refer to the framing process as set of “collective action frames” separated by two types of characteristics. “Collective action frames” contain both “core framing tasks” and the processes that join the tasks to the frame. The “core framing tasks” are defined as diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. For the purpose of this study, the issue (diagnostic task) is the lack of economic incentive in the national parks in Indonesia and environmental degradation. The source of the problem (prognostic task) would be the acceptance of the way of life and not being recognized for their financial need. The solution (motivational task) for these issues would be to develop a successful ecotourism site.

2.8 CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

An adaption to cultures is essential for a positive form of ecotourism and a sense of pride and identity within the local community. Lin (2011) and Lima & d’Hauteseree (2011) argue that it is important to highlight the local culture to not only build a sense of community pride but to also prevent loss of cultural practices when making the transition into a tourist site. Not only is it important to adapt to the cultures of the local community but it is equally important for the local community to understand the cultures and customs of the ecotourists themselves to create a balance between traditional community practices and tourists who disrupt those practices.

It is important to understand how ecotourism or any form of tourism for that matter, affects the state of minds of the local residents. When two cultural views meet, the differences in cultures become apparent. The individual who has had less experience traveling outside of his or her local community may feel like their culture only serves the purpose of a “cultural

experience” for the visiting tourist. Kim (2001) claims that when individuals cross cultures a gap is developed between the familiar and unfamiliar which affects the individual’s ability to function in an effective manner. Kim describes individuals who are crossing cultures to experience existential alertness which brings out feelings of inadequacy and frustration (Kim, 2001). The individual either resists the change or attempts to live with the new culture and does not deal with it emotionally (Kim, 2001). In order to successfully enter into a cross-cultural setting, one must essentially engage the process of enculturation (Kim, 2001). It is important to partake in the cross-cultural adaptation process not only for locals but for tourists as well because a change in familiarity or scripts can create a new self-concept or collective ethnic identity for the individual (Kim, 2001). Though the word de-culturation comes with a negative connotation, it can also be looked at as a positive experience. A meshing of cultures can combine the uniqueness of both cultures and create a greater sense of understanding between individuals.

Past research indicates that there are several circumstances to consider when attempting to start up an ecotourism site. Simple things like how animals are cared for and displayed and how the community is incorporated into the program can make the difference between a successful ecotourism site and a site created solely for monetary gain. Every past study talked about the importance of immersing the community in the project in order for the project to be successful for both the community and organizers. Though there is an abundance of past research on the subject, my research is unique in that it looks at how ecotourism can succeed when incorporating communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation. Most of the research that has been conducted on ecotourism looks at the success of an already established ecotourism site by looking at the beginning steps of project and how that has led to its modern day status. This project is different in that it will not only help guide site representatives to create a successful

ecotourism site from the beginning but it is also documenting the successes and failures of the beginning stages of the site. This thesis can prove to be beneficial as a reference to those who see the importance of communication when creating their site.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I approached this study qualitatively using a research method based on the interpretive paradigm. I used a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative approach because my study was focused on how to build community relations in order to develop a successful organization. The ethnographic approach appeared to be the best fit for my project. In deciding to use an ethnographic approach I have widened the angles I could take to address the issues that arose within my research because as Lindlof & Taylor (2002) argue, ethnographers turn to several different methods to help them achieve success. Since the idea and basis for this research resulted from a summer program in Indonesia it is only fitting to approach the study in an ethnographic manner. By definition, Lindlof & Taylor describe the process of ethnography as a “lengthy written account addressing the theoretical significance of observations” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 17).

My study is based largely on community based relationships and by choosing to work with cross-cultural adaptation and communication framing, the qualitative ethnographic approach proved to be the best and only fit for the study. According to Lindlof & Taylor (2002) the ethnographic approach is usually used by researchers who want to focus on the consequences communities face when modern social, political, or economic changes occur. This is precisely what the study does through its focus on implementing change through cross-cultural adaptation and communication framing.

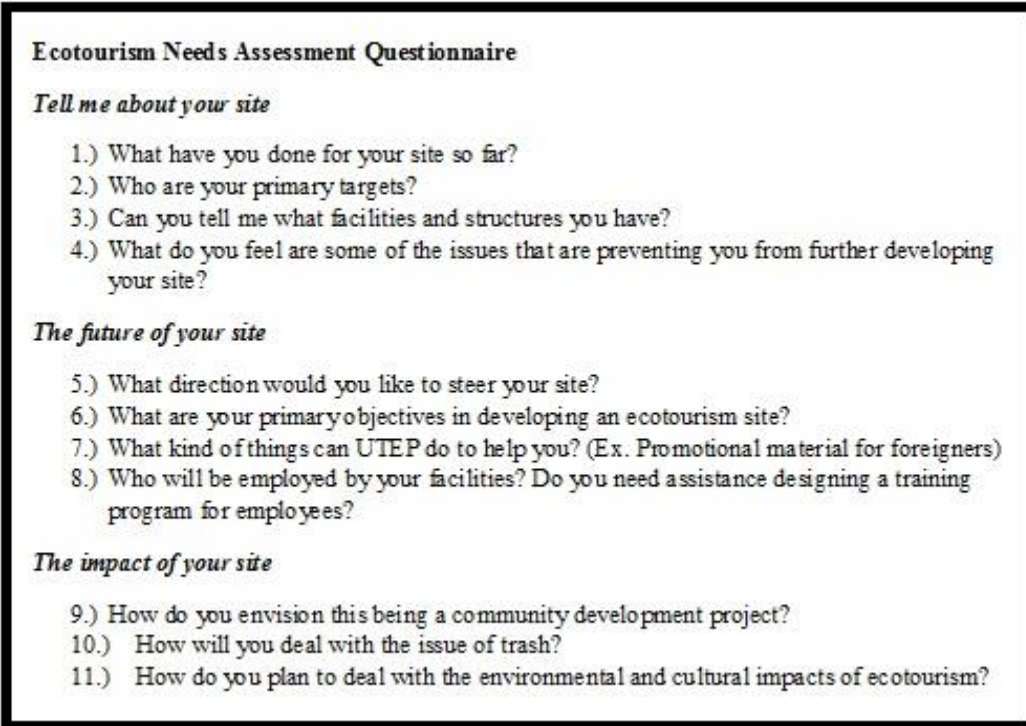
The way I implemented an ethnographic approach for this study was by using the field research I conducted while visiting almost every site. There were several observations I made while I was there and the uniqueness of each site helped me to clearly identify the issues each site faced. I obtained my field notes through participant observation of the local cultures and

environmental issues. In Kutai National Park, we stayed in the forest for three days, observed the orangutans and participated in the religious practice of Ramadan while we were there. In Karimunjawa National Park we visited the mangrove forest, we participated in snorkeling and visited several different islands, and we also spoke to tour guides who provided a more well-rounded view of tour guides within the parks. We also visited Bali Barat National Park and we met with most everyone from the local village who played a role in what they wished to develop into an ecotourism site. We also met directly with the site representatives to discuss issues that they felt were important. I wrote field notes each day during the trip and focused primarily on the local culture, religion and way of life of the local people and the field trips to national park areas.

Though I was able to get a basic overview of what I felt the sites needed in order to run more efficiently and successfully, I wanted to ensure that there was not something I had overlooked or something that I merely assumed the sites needed while visiting. In order to determine what each site felt was necessary to run a successful ecotourism site and what I could provide, I developed a needs assessment survey based on my field research as a preliminary research tool. I divided the survey into three different sections. I developed a section that asked for a site description another that looked at the future of the site, and a final one that looked at the impact of the site.

The first two sections contained four questions and the last section contained three. The questions were developed to understand what I could provide to the representatives and issues that we thought were important. The questions in the survey helped to determine where the site representatives would like to see their site go and for what reasons. It also served as a guide to help determine if they were aware of the cultural and environmental impacts of ecotourism. In section one I asked the representatives what has been done to the site so far, who their primary

targets are, what facilities structures they currently have available, and what they felt were some of the issues they face when attempting to develop their site. In the second section I asked what direction they would like to see their site go, what their objectives were, how UTEP could help, who would benefit from employment and if assistance was needed to help train the employees. In the final section I asked the representatives how they envisioned their site being a community development project, how they will deal with the issue of trash, and how they plan to deal with the environmental and cultural impacts of ecotourism.

The image shows a questionnaire titled "Ecotourism Needs Assessment Questionnaire". It is divided into three sections: "Tell me about your site", "The future of your site", and "The impact of your site". Each section contains numbered questions. The first section has four questions, the second has four, and the third has three. The questions are about current site status, future goals, and the impact of ecotourism.

Ecotourism Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Tell me about your site

- 1.) What have you done for your site so far?
- 2.) Who are your primary targets?
- 3.) Can you tell me what facilities and structures you have?
- 4.) What do you feel are some of the issues that are preventing you from further developing your site?

The future of your site

- 5.) What direction would you like to steer your site?
- 6.) What are your primary objectives in developing an ecotourism site?
- 7.) What kind of things can UTEP do to help you? (Ex. Promotional material for foreigners)
- 8.) Who will be employed by your facilities? Do you need assistance designing a training program for employees?

The impact of your site

- 9.) How do you envision this being a community development project?
- 10.) How will you deal with the issue of trash?
- 11.) How do you plan to deal with the environmental and cultural impacts of ecotourism?

Figure 5

The needs assessments, shown in Figure 5 were dispersed both electronically and in person. The survey was presented in interview format to the representatives from Bukit Bangkirai and Taman Nasional Kutai by Dr. Stacey Sowards, the project director for the research program in Indonesia (and thesis advisor for this project). The other two surveys were presented

through a Facebook group page. The group page consisted of a translator, Dimas Wijaya, Karimunjawa site representative, Yusuf Syaifudin, Bali Barat site representative, Istiyarto Ismu, and myself. I was able to converse with the two representatives and advise them of my intentions with the survey with the help of the translator. After the initial surveys were returned back to me and translated, I followed up with some of the park representatives for further clarification on some key points through the use of e-mail and Facebook.

After the needs assessments were reviewed I determined what needs I would be able to fulfill by incorporating cross-cultural adaptation or communication framing. The needs assessment touched briefly on the idea of communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation in order to determine where the sites were on those topics. The results of the needs assessment established the necessity of communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation in ecotourism development. It was not until the needs assessments were fully reviewed that the idea of placing cross-cultural adaptation and communication framing at the forefront of the sites was decided and therefore the needs assessment was not focused on either two theories.

Chapter 4: Needs Assessment Results

The needs assessment surveys not only provided a look at what park representatives felt was necessary in order to have their ecotourism site grow into a successful site but they also provided insight into how they felt about other important aspects of ecotourism. The assessment also helped to understand how developed each site was and what their main focus was in creating an ecotourism site. The results from the needs assessment indicated that several site representatives expressed more of an interest in caring for their local environment and animals than creating a steady income. Though they did express importance in creating the stability for local residents, there was more of a genuine interest to conserve the areas.

4.1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Several revelations came about in the ‘tell me about your site’ portion of the needs assessment. The needs assessment indicated that several sites had been working diligently to help improve their sites and have a set path as to where they would like to take their site and the work it would take to get there. Ismu Istiyarto from the non-governmental organization, Seka in West Bali National Park, said he is currently looking for prospective habitats for the reintroduction of the endangered Balinese Starling in surrounding areas. He reported that 12 local community members have been participating in breeding activities throughout the village. He said he has also been working on promotional material that highlights the area’s natural resources.

Yusuf Syaifuddin, who works for the Karimunjawa National Park office said he is currently working on both conservation efforts and ecotourism promotion. He said one of his duties is also working to help tourists with travel plans, boat ticketing, hotel reservations, and so

on. During our visit to Karimunjawa National Park, he also shared his conservation campaign which entailed having designated areas to fish and increasing the size of the holes in the fishing nets in order to allow for smaller fishes to escape the nets and help reduce overfishing.

Pak Ating and Pak Supiani of Kutai National Park only discussed the facilities that are available in each of the three sites within the park. The site of Sangkima has a 1 kilometer boardwalk trail, basic accommodation facilities, and an office for staff. All of the structures for Sangkima are located on the roadway between Bontang and Sangata, two major cities in East Kalimantan province, and is therefore very convenient for local tourists. Preval, the site we visited in the summer of 2012, has basic facilities as well as a boardwalk that was being restructured during our visit.

Pak Tamrin of Bukit Bangkirai said their facilities are very well maintained. Among the facilities is a canopied bridge forest walk that was visited by our research team in January 2013. The site is very well maintained and has accommodation facilities and a restaurant nearby.

4.1.1 Primary Targets

Each park representative agrees that they are looking for more foreign and domestic tourists alike. However a couple of the parks have specific groups of tourists that they would like to introduce to their site. The site representatives wish to not only bring in the standard tourist but to also introduce student researchers and conservation activists, especially if those activists are interested in environmental protection. The Kutai site representatives would also like to bring a special group of local tourists, like teachers, elementary school kids, and residents of neighboring areas. They hope to do so in order to teach the local community about the uniqueness of their ecosystem and the importance of caring for it.

4.1.2 Current facilities and structures

At the West Bali National Park site, the representative provided a description of several sites that would prove to be beneficial for a sustainable ecotourism site. In his site he has access to an office building, breeding cages for the Balinese Starling, and home stays. He said the office was loaned to them by the national park office in order for his organization to have a permanent address that can also serve as an information center, and a meeting center. The term “home stay” is used frequently within ecotourism sites in Indonesia and probably in other areas of the world as well. A “home stay” is when tourists can stay in a host family’s home throughout the duration of the trip. A tourist usually chooses to stay in a “home stay” in order to fully immerse him or herself in the local culture and obtain that deeper understanding that they were seeking. In total, he said there are 12 cage groups that are spread throughout 12 homes where 15 Balinese Starling couples and 30 chicks are housed. There are 7 homes that can be used as home stays; those homeowners also participate in the breeding program. Aside from the structures, he said he has also created village tourism development plan that is based on information for their conservation efforts. The plan also provides a map location for the tour packages being offered.

The Karimunjawa Explore representative described the facilities at Karimunjawa National Park as fairly completed. Among their facilities are home stays, hotels, resorts, and a small airport that is currently under construction. The only thing he felt was necessary to further expand his site was a swift steamer to ferry tourists from Semarang and Jepara, on Java, to Karimunjawa. He described the living arrangements as hotels and resorts; however, based on our trip and the two hotels we stayed in, these accommodations are more like basic facilities by Western standards (field notes, July 14, 2012). The only ferry that is currently available is very turbulent and caused several of the passengers to become nauseated (field notes, July 14, 2012).

At Kutai, the site representatives said there were facilities in both the Prevab and Sangkima site. We only visited Prevab during our stay and the facilities consisted of two structures, the structure we stayed in had two small rooms, a deck, a kitchen, and two restrooms. Because of the lack of space, several of us had to set up our mosquito nets on the deck rather than in a room. The deck leading to the facility was under repair while we were there. The second structure had beds, but no shower facilities (field notes, July 24, 2012). They also said that there was a possibility for a hotel stay in Sangata or the closest village to the Prevab site (Kabo). The home stay in those areas would be beneficial for tourists because they do not have to stay in the nearest city which is Sangata, approximately an hour away by car and boat (field notes July 23, 2012). It would also be benefit the community by providing income.

In a brochure available at the Bukit Bangkirai facility, there is a section that lists the facilities that are available for tourists. The section lists: cottages, a house, a restaurant, a swimming pool, an orchid exhibit, a jungle adventure trail, and a sports facility (Pt. Inhutani, 2013). The cottages also contain an air conditioning unit, a television and a refrigerator (Pt. Inhutani, 2013). The site is mainly known for its canopy bridge which is connected by four posts and 30 meters above land and 64 meters long (Pt. Inhutani, 2013). According to the brochure, the bridge and the posts that connect the bridge were built from a sustainable wood called, bangkirai wood (Pt. Inhutani, 2013). Their structures are fairly well preserved and the site is owned and managed by PT Inhutani, an Indonesian logging company that operates concession forests in this area.

4.1.3 Issues preventing further growth

When asked what issues they felt prevented further growth in the ecotourism sector, the West Bali National Park site representative said there were several human resources issues as well as issues in advertising. As far as human resources, he said there were issues such as the lack of guiding skills and training in foreign languages, English in particular. He was also frustrated in the lack of advertising for not only the Balinese Starling breeding program but also literature on the issues involving Balinese Starling. As far as the structures go, he reported that they are struggling with a lack of pre-release cages and showroom cages. There are no pre-release cages that can be used to help facilitate the release of the Balinese Starling from the breeding program. The pre-release cages can also allow tourists to participate in that portion of the breeding program as well. There are also no showroom cages that can allow tourists to view the Balinese Starling without having to disturb their breeding activities. He also said a particular type of tree seedling was necessary to continue the preparation of the habitat and is currently difficult to obtain. He said the Balinese Starling prefer trees like the Kayu Pahit, Pilang, Dadap, Besaran, and so on. He said those trees are the most favored by the few Balinese Starling that still live in the wild.

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative said what is holding him back from further developing his site is the unpredictable form of transportation from Semarang and Jepara to Karimunjawa. The travel to the site, if traveling from Semarang, consists of a two hour car ride to the docking station and a four hour boat ride to Karimunjawa or a three hour ferry ride. Though the ferry ride is the cheapest option, it may not be the safest option (field notes, July 14, 2012). He also said the lack of electricity was a problem since that type of power is only generated through a diesel engine on the island.

For the Kutai representatives, much as with Karimunjawa Explore site representative, transportation is a definite barrier for tourists, especially local tourists. As previously mentioned, Preva is only available by boat and can be expensive for locals who wish to visit the site. When a large group of tourists wishes to visit the site the site representatives must make sure to plan in advance since the only boats that are available are owned by local residents. The Kutai site representative said this is the main reason why the local tourism has been so low for the Preva site. According to them, most tourists visit a neighboring location within the park at Sangkima because it is easily accessible. Several structural improvements also need to be made in order to be able to bring in the amount of tourists they would like. They would also like to develop a home stay in Kabo, from where the boat launches, in order to reduce the accommodation logistics issues for tourists. However, before a home stay can be offered, a training for the community would need to be offered. They also mentioned Preva in the improvements as well, as the facilities are limited in the number of tourists who can visit at one time. Aside from the transportation issue, the Kutai site representatives also said the lack of English language skills among tour guides is also an issue. According to them, to get to where they would ideally like to be they would need at least five park staff to develop their English language skills in order for the park to be a success.

As with the West Bali site, Bukit Bangkirai wants to develop advertising. The site does not have a webpage or any promotional material. The site is mainly advertised through word of mouth and signs that are placed throughout the roads between Balikpapan and Samarinda, the city with the main regional airport and the capital, respectively. The site is also featured in *Lonely Planet* where the author talks briefly about the site location, what the site is known for, and the prices one would pay if one would want to visit (Ver Berkmoes et al., 2010).

4.2 THE FUTURE OF THE ECOTOURISM SITE

This section of the needs summary looked at what direction site representatives wanted to take their sites. The three questions that were asked within this section looks at what site representatives are doing to plan ahead and what their long term plans are.

4.2.1 Direction of Site

Only the West Bali site provided a response to the question of what direction they would like to steer their site. The question may have not been understood by the participants or deemed irrelevant considering the prior questions they had already answered. This was the only question that did not get a good response from the participants. The representative at West Bali said that the direction he would like to steer his village tourism is on the Balinese Starling breeding and release program. In order to do so, he said he would need to prepare the Balinese Starling habitat regulation and prepare the offspring that are to be released.

4.2.2 Primary Objectives

The site representatives were also asked what their primary objectives for their sites would be. Surprisingly, most representatives provided fairly similar responses to the question. The community was of great importance to all of the representatives and being able to assist them in some way was also of top priority for them. The West Bali National Park representative stated that his primary objective was to be able to combine the community's economic interest

with conservation. In order to create a relationship between the two, he said it is important that the community see an economic gain from conservation. For him the answer to creating an economic gain for an entire community through conservation would be to establish a successful village tourism site within the small community. The Karimunjawa Explore site representative's primary objective for the site was to create what he called prosperity through the community located within the Karimunjawa National Park borders. The community prosperity would need to go hand in hand with the preservation of natural resources. He said that in order to do so, several improvements within the community would need to take place. He said community involvement would need to be improved starting with the local school children. The prosperity of the site would also depend on the guide training to which tour guides would have access.

4.2.3 Requested assistance

Site representatives were asked how the UTEP Communication Department could directly assist them in what they feel is necessary to improve their sites. Again, the responses were very similar. Several alluded to the fact that the English language is very necessary in order to be able to communicate with their tourists or bring the type of tourists they are seeking.

The West Bali site representative requested assistance with publicizing the site and with funding for the site. As far as publicity goes, He asked if UTEP could promote their tourism program to students who were interested in conducting research on the Balinese Starling conservation efforts. The assistance in funding would help further develop their research on the Balinese Starling that is currently being conducted as a community effort.

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative answered this question with just one word, promotion. In the follow up questions I had for him he explained that he needed assistance in promoting his site through several different venues to get people interested in visiting the site. Currently, he only has the ability to promote through Facebook and other organizations like Rare. However, all of the information about the site is in the Indonesian language.

The Kutai site representatives referred us to other points of contacts to see how UTEP could assist their program. It was determined that the development and implementation of a short training program for tour guides could assist them in knowing basic elements of the English language to help further develop their relationships with tourists. It would also be beneficial to create a set of guidelines for tourists on what they can and cannot do in the presence of wild animals since Kutai is one of the few sites where tourists can see wildlife.

The Bukit Bangkirai site, like the first two sites, asked for assistance in terms of communication and reducing the language barrier amongst themselves and the tourists. The site requested assistance with promotional material in both Indonesian and English. According to observations made by the research team who visited the site in January, their only source of promotion are road signs leading to the site and most of their tourists come from the local area, a brochure, and other limited materials. There is limited promotional material outside of the site itself. Most of the advertising that does take place only reaches the local residents and individuals within the country. Ver Berkmoes et al. (2010) provides a brief paragraph on the site in the popular travel book *Lonely Planet*, the paragraph describes the size of the site and the cost of admission.

4.2.4 Primary Employees

The next question on the survey was two-fold; it asked site representatives who their primary facilitators and guides would be from within the community and if assistance was needed in developing a training program for the guides. The question about a training program was asked because all sites that were visited had guides to lead tours; however, it was difficult to communicate with them and several expressed an interest in teaching the guides a new language. It was also an opportunity to have the guides learn more sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of conducting a tour and relaying that information to the tourists themselves. The West Bali representative said the site would be run by members of the local village. He also agreed to the offer for assistance in designing a training program for employees. In his response he said assistance would be necessary because, as a community, there are not sufficient skills to manage and train guides for an ecotourism sites.

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative said the site would employ the community members in order to help them provide a sustainable source of income. He also agreed to the idea of assistance when it comes to training their tour guides. He said he would specifically like assistance in translation training in that he does not want his site to be overlooked. He also wants tourists to be well informed with correct information about the site.

4.3 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT

This section of the needs assessment asks site representatives to look at the impact an ecotourism site would make on the site itself and the surrounding communities. The questions

asked in this section require site representatives to explain how they would address these issues and if they believe these issues would truly make an impact.

4.3.1 Community Development

Only the West Bali representative and the Karimunjawa Explore representative addressed the idea of their sites being community development sites. Each park representative has a clear goal as to how they will accomplish the task of being a community development site.

The West Bali representative said the site will consist of at least 20 employees from the surrounding village who will receive benefits from the fees associated with the site visit. One of the fees he said he hopes to associate with the site is selling an opportunity to be able to release a Balinese Starling to the wild. The starlings that will be released will have a tracking device. Community members will also receive incentives from tracking and monitoring the Starling. Aside from benefiting from the release of the Balinese Starling, he said that there are also products that local residents can sell that will bring about additional income. Local residents can provide wild honey, local food and drinks, and cultural souvenirs that can be prepackaged for tourists. The selling of these products would benefit those residents who are not directly related to the release program.

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative said he already considers his site a community development site because it allows for an alternative source of income for the people of Karimunjawa. The site allows for local residents to have a venue where they can increase their income while reducing the pressures of natural resources at the same time.

4.3.2 Trash

When asked what would be done about the issues of trash and environmental and cultural impacts both the Karimunjawa and West Bali representatives addressed the issue in a very forward thinking way. West Bali and Karimunjawa representatives displayed a greater concern for the effects and impacts ecotourism would bring to their local community.

The West Bali representative addressed the issue by requesting more physical resources like trash cans and labeled recycle areas to combat the problem. He said the issue can be tackled if trash cans are placed in each conservation site and through working with trash collectors. The trash collectors purchase inorganic trash like plastic, glass, and cans. The added income could also benefit the park greatly.

When asked about how he would combat the issue of trash, the Karimunjawa Explore site representative said that local campaign must be started to educate people on separating their trash into organic and inorganic piles. However, he did not address how the trash would be disposed and if the inorganic pile would be recycled.

The representative from Kutai National Park had a different approach with the issue of trash, instead of providing tools and resources to make recycling and cleaning debris easier he posed another solution. The representative suggested that tourists stay in home stays rather than camping out in the forest because it would eliminate the need to bring packaged food from outside sources.

4.3.3 Cultural and environmental impacts

Both the West Bali representative and the Karimunjawa Explore site representative presented ideas for cultural and environmental preservation. They had a different view of the impacts and how the impacts could be dealt with. Even with the immense amount of time they dedicate to the area, things like language barriers and cultural differences still play a role in fully understanding the issues at hand. In order to combat cultural and environmental impacts, the West Bali representative said he has already started training local residents on why it is important to care for and respect the land. He said he did so by starting a cleaning campaign that was instilled in the local people through community meetings and counseling. He said that with the adults caring about conservation and cleanliness it would resonate with their teenagers and children. Though his response was geared towards conservation and cleaning efforts, his response is something that could also be implemented to preserve culture. Since he has not had to deal with the cultural impact because he has not received an influx of visitors, he only theorized about what he would do to conserve the local region's culture. He said he will follow the example of the two main religious groups located in the village, one group is Muslim and the other is Hindu. He also said he noticed that the people within the village have a high regard for their religion and an even higher regard for their religious leaders. He said he plans to meet with both religious leaders to have them reinforce a sense of pride in their religion which will help them to keep their cultures intact when faced against those that they feel are not be suitable for them or consistent with their way of life.

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative talked about providing environmental education early on for children in order to instill concern and care for the environment. As far as

cultural impact, he agreed that it is important to preserve in the areas surrounding the park, especially because religion is so important to them. However, he did not provide steps as to how to go about combating the issue. He did state that a way to ameliorate the issue of cultural impacts is to develop strong religious character.

The representatives from Kutai National Park had a view that coincided with the research literature on ecotourism in that most of their visitors are researchers who are known to respect the land and the culture. However, the Kutai site representatives did not address how the influx of foreign tourists would affect the local population in seeing new cultures and different ways of life.

The needs assessments provided an overview as to what every park felt they needed and how they felt about certain issues. Primarily, the needs assessment was intended to be the main focus of the study; however, once the data was collected I realized that several of the sites were asking for much the same things and by taking the extra step and creating the tools to assist them would benefit not only the research but the sites themselves. The evaluation of the needs assessment found that though the focus of each site is wildly diverse, what they need in order to succeed is surprisingly similar. The same struggles seem to translate from site to site. The initial focus of the research was to find what unique issues each site was facing in their journey to take their site to the next level but the similarities allowed me to take my research to the next level. In creating a plan to assist the sites using the answers from the needs assessments, the various tools can be implemented with ease, from site to site. The needs assessment did however provide the perfect baseline in order to determine what the next step would be in order to be able to assist the representatives with their sites. The assessment opened the doors of communication and got the representatives thinking about issues that they maybe would have never considered in the past.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Each of the four sites essentially asked for the same resources when asked what UTEP could do for them. Each site expressed an interest in having their tour guides learn the English language to a greater extent and having more promotional material in English. The promotional material they were seeking was to be dispersed within the local area and in more global terms. Both the desire to learn English and the desire to create a more global form of a brochure indicates that communication framing was of vital importance to all of the site managers. The representatives also expressed a strong desire to have the surrounding community play a role in their sites. Some even added that their role could be that of cultural awareness and providing a unique view into their ways of life for tourists. Along with communication framing, representatives also desired a cross-cultural adaptation upon further growth. Though there were several other maintenance issues that were brought up by some parks, my focus as far as assistance was on the communication aspect of the ecotourism site. In this section I will break down what was most important section to address from the needs assessments that were filled out. For each site, I address how I catered the assistance based on the site itself and what was done to assist the site.

5.1 TAMAN NASIONAL BALI BARAT

At the top of the list for the West Bali representative was being able to greet guests in foreign languages and having brochures in English in order to advertise in different areas outside of West Bali. He also requested assistance with a detailed plan in order to start a successful

village tour within his site and that data be collected in order to be able to disperse that information during the village tour.

Outside of the realm of communication, he requested assistance in obtaining tree seedlings to accommodate to the Balinese Starlings in the area. Planting trees for the Starlings could be considered a good communication tool because it could help emphasize how something as important as one single tree could make such an impact to the Balinese Starling bird community. The physical act of planting a tree also makes the tourists feel like they have accomplished something during the trip and have helped to plant something that will have a presence in the area long after they leave. He also requested pre-release cages for the Starlings and additional funding for local research.

After the initial needs assessments were answered, I kept in contact with the West Bali representative and the Karimunjawa site representative through Facebook. I asked follow up questions about their requests through the use of an translator to gain a clearer perspective on what it was they felt they needed. Upon further questioning, I found that the West Bali representative's main focus was on village tours and interpretation of material from Indonesian to English. He was also very interested in bringing students from UTEP to study the birds on site. The studies would prove to be beneficial not only to the student but to continuing research as well. The national park is located in a more remote area of Bali with less readily available access to the internet, so a web presence has not been fully developed for this program. The park itself is poorly advertised in that there is an official website where they advertise the park's features; however, the reintegration of the Balinese Starling is not mentioned on the site. The Balinese Starling reintegration program in West Bali is the only park program in my study that does not have an online presence. Since the site representative was interested in inviting students and

promotional material in English, I created something for both students who would be interested in these types of studies for tourist who wish to visit; the brochure can be found in Figure 5. Once the promotional material for that event was created, it could be tailored as a type of year-round promotional material.



Figure 6 (Front)



A Balinese Starling
perched on a branch at
the

The Balinese Starling population is in critical condition. There is only a small number of the exotic birds, that were once considered the pride of Bali left in existence. Drought and wild fire have proven to be the main culprits in the reduction of number of the unique bird. Poachers only add to the continuing problem.

The Indonesian government has stepped in and created a collaboration between international conservation agencies to help save the starlings from extinction. One of the most successful methods is conservation through breeding activity.

The breeding activity is done by the people of Sumberklampok, one of villages located at the border of Taman Nasional Bali

Barat area. The small community is attempting to help create community awareness, pride, and help the community create a sustainable way of life through the breeding program.

On December 21, 2010, the Sumberklampok village hall, in collaboration with village officers from Balai Taman Nasional Bali Barat and Yayasan Seka



A young Balinese Starling rests in a handmade warming nest

— Seka Foundation, established a breeding program under the name of Manuk Jegeg, meaning beautiful bird. Since its inception in 2010 Manuk Jegeg has released a significant amount of starlings into the wild and continues to increase the bird's numbers through the breeding program. Currently, Manuk Jegeg has 20 community members participat-

ing in the program. Community leaders and members hope to increase awareness of their program by inviting tourists to not only visit the area but to stay in the area to get a feel for how the conservation program works.



A photo of Kaya Puhit, Piliang, Dulaan, Seranam, friends that Starlings live in.

Tourists would stay with one of the 20 members to gain a unique cultural experience and understand the roles that each community member plays within the program. Tourists would also be given the opportunity to release an endangered animal into the wild and participate in other program events.

Figure 6 (Back)

A basic sheet to assist tour guides, found in Figure 7, and to help them understand and speak English was created using the Indonesian to English worksheets we were given prior to visiting the site. Aside from the cheat sheet, through further research, it is absolutely vital for a successful ecotourism site to have their tour guides take professional English courses. According to Skanavis and Giannoulis (2009), it is recommended that each tour guide attend a vigorous training program that will aid them in creating a closer relationship with the tourists and making more connections to conservation while providing a tour.

Bahasa Indonesia to English

Haiyaa

Apa kabar?	How are you? (Howe r yu)
Terima kasih!	Thank you (Thank yu)
Terima kasih banyak!	Thank you very much (thank yu bery mu-ch)
Saya baik-baik saja, terima kasih!	I am fine, thank you! (Ayam phine, thank yu)
Sama-sama!	You're welcome! (Yur welcom)
Tidak masalah!	No problem (No problem)
Permisi	Excuse me (Xcuze me)
Maaf	Sorry (Sore)
Selamat datang!	Welcome! (Welcom)
Selamat tinggal!	Goodbye! (Goodby)
Sampai jumpa lagi!	See you next time! (Se yu nex-t tiem)
Sampai besok!	See you tomorrow! (Se yu to-mo-roh)
Selamat pagi	Good morning (Good mor-ning)
Selamat siang/Selamat sore	Good afternoon (Good after-nun)
Selamat malam	Good evening (good iv-ning)
Di mana?	Where? (Wer)
Siapa nama Anda?	What is your name? (Wat is yur naim)
Nama saya	My name is (Mi naim is)
Saya berasal dari	I am from (I am frum)
Senang berkenalan dengan	It is nice to meet you (It is niec to meit yu)
Iya	Yes

Tidak	No
Belum	Not yet (Not yeit)
Sudah	Already (Al-rei-de)
Apa?	What? (Wat)
Tidak bagus	Not good (Not gud)

Memberikan Arah ke tempat-tempat

Kiri	Left (lef-t)	Belok kiri	Turn left (Torn lef-t)
Kanan	Right (Reit)	Belok kanan	Turn right (Torn reit)
Putar balik	Turn around (Torn aro-u-nd)		
Di depan	In front of (In fro-nt of)		
Satu kilometer dari sini	One kilometer from here (Won kilo-meiter frum heir)		
Sua ratus meter dari sini	Two hundred meters from here (Tu hon-dred meiters frum heir)		
Jalan terus sampai bertemu...	Straight ahead until you meet... (Streit aheid until yu meit)		
Terletak di sebelah kiri...	Is located on the left side of... (Iz locaited on th-e left seid of)		
Terletak di sebelah kanan...	Is located on the right side of... (Iz locaited on th-e reit seid of)		
Ada disebelah sana	It is over there (Et iz ovir th-er)		
Toilet	Toilet		

Lingkungan dan hewan

Hutan	Forest (For-est)	Rawa	Swamp (Swamp)
Sungai	River (Rivar)	Pohon	Tree (Tri)

Pantai	Beach (Beech)	Hujan	Rain (Rein)
Laut	Sea (Sei)	Rumput	Grass (Gras)
Bunga	Flower (Flouer)	Kebun	Plantation (Plantaishun)
Pengunungan	Mountains (Mauntens)	Bukit	Hill (Hil)
Gunung	Mountain (Maunten)	Kota	City (Citee)
Padang rumput	Savana (Savana)	Semak	Bushes (Buches)
Pasir	Sand (Send)	Batu	Rock (Rok)
Ular	Snake (snaek)	Tokek	Gecko (Geko)
Semut	Ant (an-t)	Celeng	Boar (Bor)
Kupu-kupu	Butterfly (Booterflai)	Nyamuk	Mosquito (Moskito)
Buaya	Crocodile (Krokodiel)	Kura-kura	Turtle (Toortal)
Monyet	Monkey (Monkai)	Penyu	Sea turtle (Si toortal)
Rusa	Deer (Deir)	Serangga	Bugs (Bogs)
Lintah	Leech (Leach)	Cicak	Lizard (Lizard)

Makanan

Anda lapar?	Are you hungry (Ar yu hoongri)		
Anda sudah makan?	Have you eaten (Hav yu iten)		
Selamat makan!	Enjoy your meal (Enjoi yur meil)		
Enak!	Delicious (Delisious)		
Pedas	Spicy (Spaise)	Manis	Sweet (Sweit)
Asin	Salty (Salti)	Pahit	Bitter (Biter)
Sarapan	Breakfast (Brekfest)	Makan malam	Dinner (Diner)
Makan siang	Lunch (Lonch)	Jajanan	Snack (Snak)

Nasi putih	Rice (Reis)	Nasi goreng	Fried Rice (Fried Reis)
Roti tawar	Bread (Bred)	Roti bakar	Toast (Tost)
Mi	Noodle (Noodel)	Mie goreng	Fried noodle (Fried noodel)
Kue	Cookies (Kookies)	Tahu	Tofu (Tofu)
Pangsit	Dumpling (Dompling)	Bubur	Porridge (Poridge)
Ikan	Fish (Fish)	Ikan Goreng	Fried fish (Fried fish)
Ikan bakar	Grill fish (Gril fish)	Udang	Shrimp (Shrimp)
Kepiting	Crab (Krab)	Kerang	Mussels (Musels)
Cumi-cumi	Calamari (Kalamari)	Ayam goreng	Fried chicken (Fried Chiken)
Ayam bakar	Grill chicken (Gril chicken)	Bebek	Duck (Duk)
Daging sapi	Beef (Beif)	Daging kambing	Mutton (Mutton)
Daging babi	Pork (Pork)	Daging domba	Lamb (Lam)
Babat	Tripe (Triep)	Iga	Ribs (Ribbs)
Bakso	Meatballs (Meetbals)	Sosis	Sausage (Sausej)
Telur	Egg (Eg)	Telur ayam	Chicken egg (Chicken eg)
Telur rebus	Boiled egg (Boild eg)	Telur dadar	Omelet (Omelet)
Telur aduk	Scrambled egg (Scrambold eg)		
Telur rebus setengah matang		Half-boiled egg (Half boyld eg)	
Mentega	Butter (Buhter)	Yogurt	Yogurt
Susu	Milk (Milk)	Susu bubuk	Powder milk (Pauder milk)
Mayones	Mayonnaise (Mayoneis)	Keju	Cheese (Cheis)

Apel	Apple (Apel)	Alpukat	Avocado (Avokado)
Stroberi	Strawberi (Straberi)	Semangka	Watermelon (Huatermelon)
Pisang	Banana (Banana)	Kelapa	Coconut (Coconut)
Jagung	Corn (Korn)	Nangka	Jackfruit (Jakfruit)
Anggur	Grapes (Greips)	Jambu	Guava (Guava)
Mangga	Mango (Mango)	Jeruk	Orange (Oranj)
Pepaya	Papaya (Papaya)	Kacang	Peanuts (Pehnuts)
Kubis	Cabbage (Kabaj)	Durian	King of Fruits (King of Fruts)
Timum	Cucumber (Qkumber)	Letus	Lettuce (Letus)
Bayam	Spinach (Spinash)	Tomat	Tomato (Tomato)
Jamur	Mushroom (Mushroom)	Nanas	Pineapple (Painapel)
Panas	Hot (Hat)	Botol	Bottle (Botol)
Kaleng	Can (Kan)	Air putith	Water (Water)

Figure 7-Indonesian to English Cheat Sheet

5.2 TAMAN NASIONAL KARIMUNJAWA

The Karimunjawa Explore site representative requested assistance with transportation from surrounding cities, Semarang, and Jepara and a form of electricity that does not require diesel fuel. Like the West Bali representative, he also requested assistance with promoting his site through various kinds of media and interpretation training for his guides.

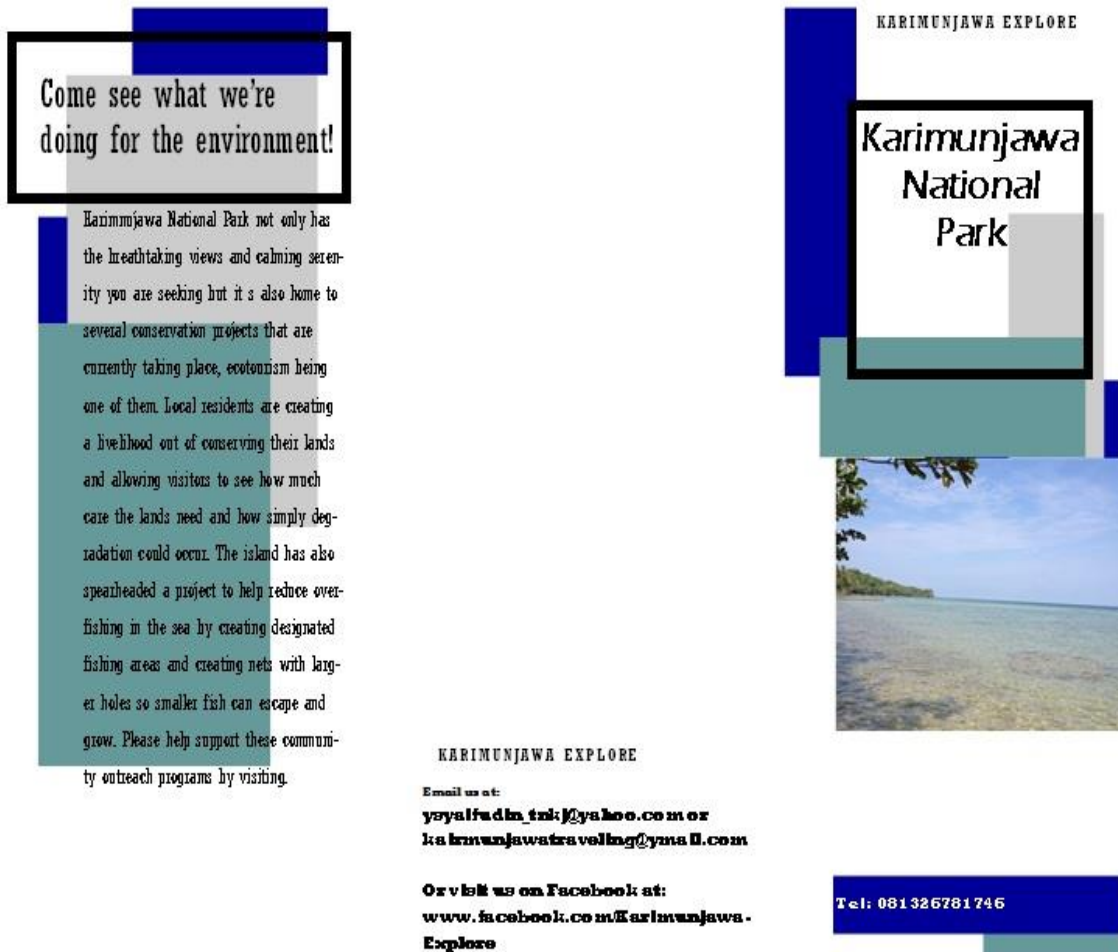


Figure 8 (Front)



Figure 8 (Back)

For the Karimunjawa Explore site representative, I also created promotional material, found in Figure 8 that can be dispersed and promoted as is useful for the park office. Upon further research of advertising for ecotourism sites, I found that sites are more successful once they are combined with a common conservation interest (WWF). When a site has an environmental seal of approval like The International Ecotourism Society or the Rainforest Alliance, they then become a part of a bigger, more highly advertised group that has access to

several ecotourist networks who visit these sites to plan their next vacation. However, enrollment into programs like these costs a considerable amount of money and would not be beneficial for sites like the ones in my study that are just starting up. I decided to do what I could within my realm and create a link between all four sites within the Wordpress account that was created for the UTEP, RARE, and USAID partnership. On the website, I created a short write-up of what each site consisted of along with a group of photos. The site also includes a link to a Facebook page that I also created for each site. Figure 9-1 through Figure 9-4 show the Facebook sites that were created with a link to the website entries that were made for each site.

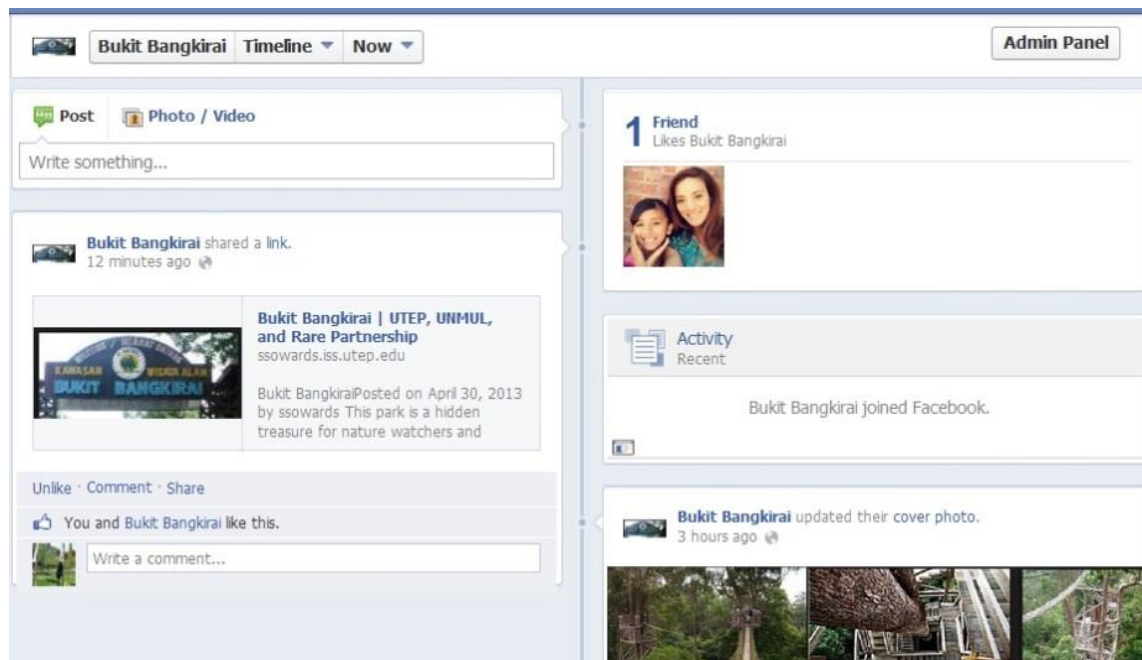


Figure 9-1. Bukit Bangkirai

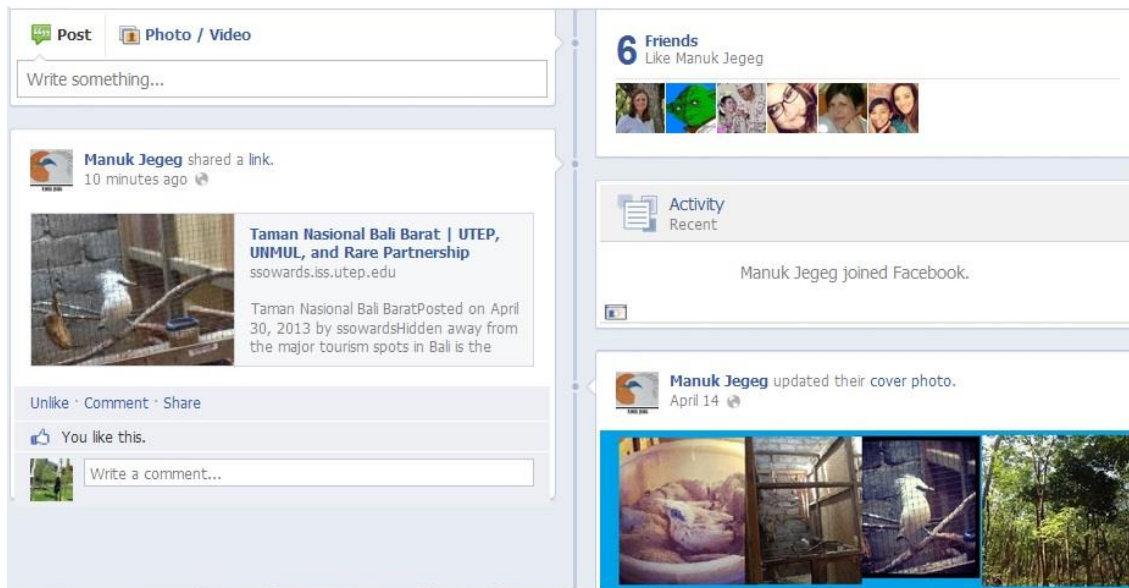


Figure 9-2 Manuk Jegeg

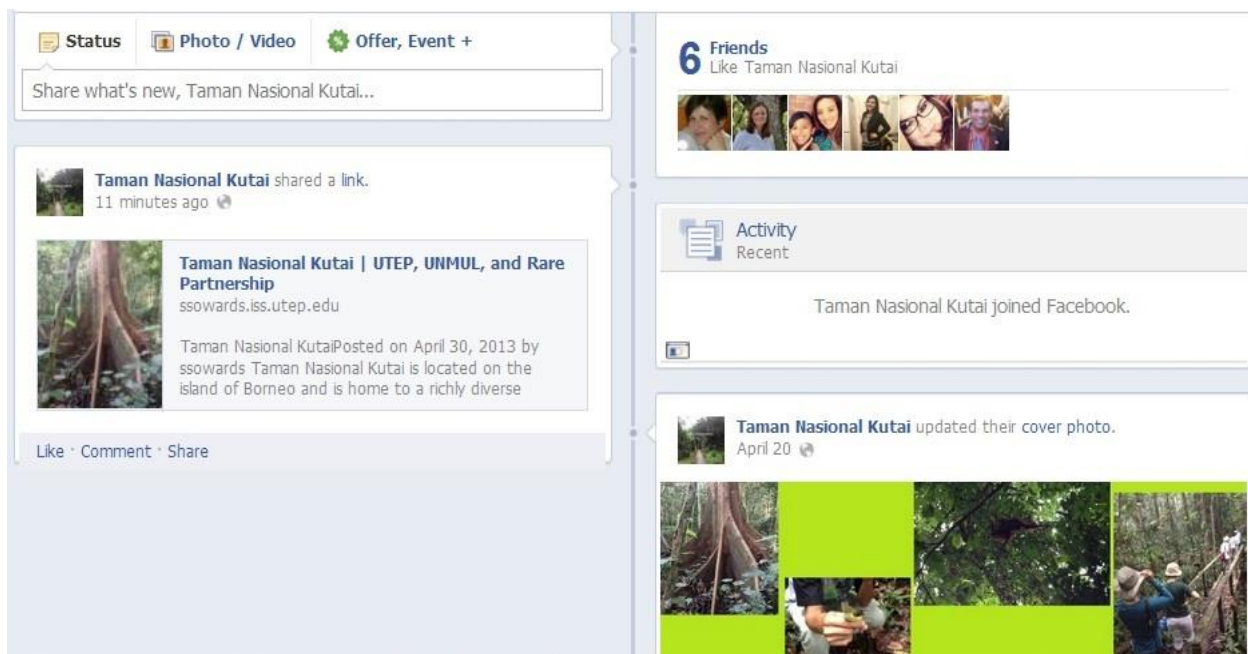


Figure 9-3 Taman Nasional Kutai

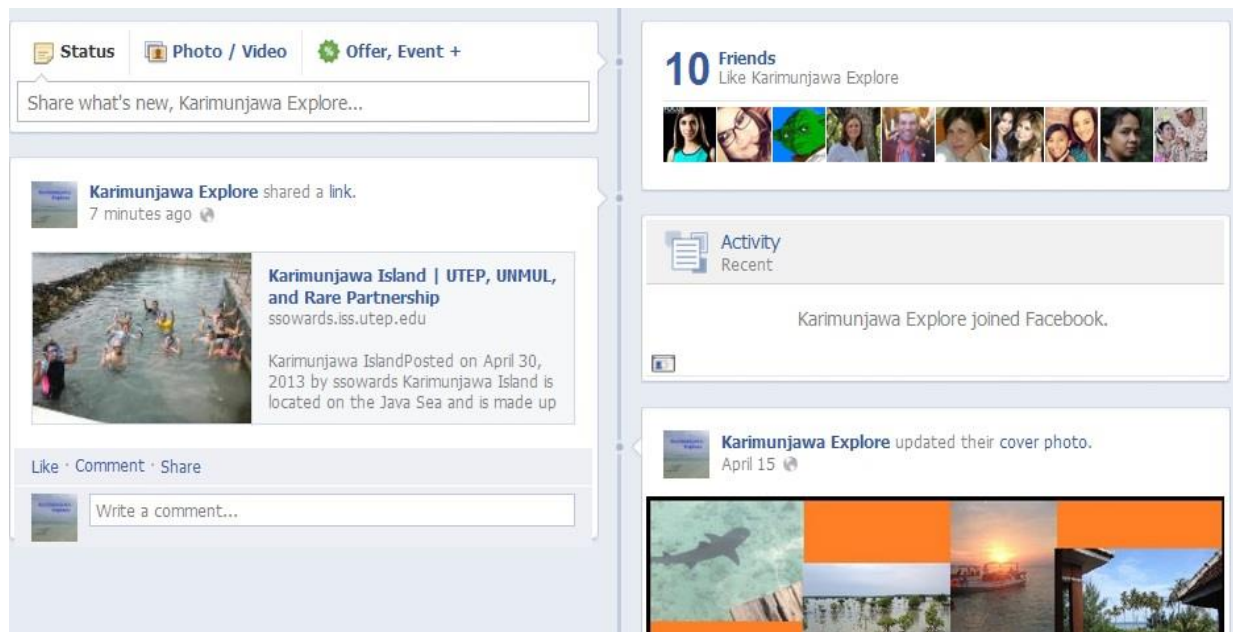


Figure 9-4 Karimunjawa Explore

5.3 BUKIT BANGKIRAI

Pak Tamrin of Bukit Bangkirai also requested promotional material in English in order to increase their numbers of foreign visitors. The only promotional material the site has is a few road signs between Balikpapan and Samarinda and a brochure. The brochure presents information about the area's unique canopy bridge and lists the facilities that can be found at the ecotourism site. They also have a section on the brochure where they cater to companies that wish to use the facility for team building activities. There is no online presence for the site and most visitors are either locals or foreigners who live near the area. Sadjad (2013) provided additional information about the site which created a better overview of the site. Since 2006 on average the site sees no more than 550 foreign visitors per year and close to 20,000 local visitors (Sadjad, 2013). The cottages that are available for tourists are rented out on average about 110 times a year (Sadjad, 2013). Since 2009 the site's annual income has been steadily increasing

from 183,000,000 rupiah to 400,000,000 and their annual expenses fluctuate yearly by almost 200,000,000 rupiah (Sadjad, 2013). Like the other sites, I incorporated Bukit Bangkirai into the website and I also created a Facebook presence for them based on the information I was able to research. Based on observations from the research team who visited the site earlier in the year, the site was in need of road signs that would direct tourists to the location. Due to the difficulty of contacting them directly, I contacted a graduate student who visited the site as part of the research team and who provided her feedback on the type of road signs she felt the site needed. She said she only remembered seeing one road sign on her way to the site and not very many signs once at the actual sites. The student recommended there be several road signs from the airport to the site, especially because Bukit Bangkirai is the nearest ecotourism site from the local airport. She also recommended there be more signs within the site explaining some of the information that is already in the brochure.

5.4 TAMAN NASIONAL KUTAI

Pak Ating and Pak Supiani, guides for Kutai National Park, expressed several issues with the site but did not know how a university would be able to help them resolve those issues. Among the issues was a lack of boats that would take tourists to the sites, as most are boats borrowed from locals. The boats are small and are based on availability so pre-planning must take place prior to a tour. Aside from structural issues, the Kutai site representatives also requested at least five tour guides who knew English well enough to be able to work with foreign tourists and in turn further develop their English. They were also very interested in creating home stays in surrounding cities that are located near the two sites. They already have tour guides on hand that they hope will be able to learn some English through our assistance.

Though it was difficult to obtain a line of communication between the site representatives during the research portion of this study, a second visit to the site proved to be more promising. A meeting held with the new head of the national park office, Erly Sukrismanto and the UTEP research team on June 30, 2013, revealed that the site was still supportive of continuing to develop ecotourism within the national park. During that meeting, the site representative also requested assistance in relaying the importance of the park to the local community. He also wished to educate local stake holders, church and mosque leaders on conservation. Unfortunately, the tools that were created did not reflect the site representatives comments because the meeting was held after the tools were created, however, some of the tools do require further follow up where his concerns can then be addressed. Kutai was also incorporated into the Wordpress website and a Facebook page was created for it. An additional resource the site would benefit from was a set of guidelines created for site tourists that would outline what they can and cannot do while visiting the site. The guidelines were adopted from the Indonesian Samboja Lestari project and can be found in Figure 10.

Taman Nasional Kutai Guidelines

Welcome! Your unforgettable adventure awaits! During your stay at our national park we ask that you keep in mind the following guidelines when out exploring.

- Always go out into the forest with a tour guide and at least one other person and please stay away from dangerous or restricted areas
 - Do not steer away from the pre-set trails and pathways
 - If you encounter an animal along the way, do not engage with them
 - Only smoke in designated areas, do not smoke when out on a walk
 - Always let the staff know when you are leaving the dock area
 - Bring enough water to drink when you are out on a trail, do not bring snacks and do not litter
 - Wear light long sleeve shirts and pants that provide protection against insects and comply with our dress code
 - Please remove your shoes before entering the dock
 - Follow directions given by the staff
 - No drugs are allowed within the facility
-
- We can only ensure that our visitors are safe if they follow our guidelines adhere to our staff's daily guidelines. **TNK** is not responsible for any lost or damaged items during your visit.
 - **TNK** and those who visit the site are encouraged to promote a healthy image of orangutans and other wildlife living freely in their natural environment. The goal of the site is to have visitors understand the importance of maintaining a healthy habitat for orangutans to thrive in by giving our visitors a glimpse at their natural beauty and the effect their presence makes on the local ecosystem.

Figure 10. Guidelines for Taman Nasional Kutai

Samboja Lodge is an orangutan survival foundation and sun bear sanctuary that hosts group tours (Samboja Lodge). The guidelines that are provide for the site outline what tourists can and cannot do to the land and the animals while visiting (Samboja Lodge). The guidelines for Kutai would serve as key towards placing conservation and animal rights first before the tourist's experience.

5.5 ADDITIONAL TOOLS

After receiving requests for tour guide training, I conducted further research on tour guide training to develop a training program specifically designed for these four sites. Upon further research, it became clear that tour guide training plays a vital role in the success of the ecotourism site. The lack of communication between the tour guide and the tourist could prevent tourists from forming an interest for the cause and the site (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2009). In order to properly train a guide they must go through years of training in order to obtain the proper certification, learn English well enough, and be able to convey the message of conservation and local culture to the tourists (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2009; WWF). There are several sites that recommend and produce tour guide training, however, they stem from organizations like TIES and Rainforest Alliance and the funds are not available to be able to send the tour guides from Indonesia to these training programs. A book titled, *Menjadi Pramuwisata Profesional* [Becoming a Professional Tourist Guide] written by Ketut Ardhana can prove to be a vital tool for several of the tour guides, particularly because it is written in Indonesian.

The idea of conservation is already present in some of the tour guides that I encountered during my trip. During our snorkeling experience at Karimunjawa National Park, there was one scuba diver in particular who would collect trash from the reefs when escorting tourists on a scuba dive (fieldnotes, July 13, 2012). Even if he did not explain his actions, by seeing him pick up trash during their tours, tourist can be made to understand that the reef is a living thing and objects like trash can greatly affect its environment. However, some other tour guides would allow their tourists to do whatever they wished in order to make their experience more memorable, to include sitting on the reefs themselves for a good photo opportunity (fieldnotes, July 13, 2012).

Ecotourism Training Workshop Schedule	
Day 1: Workshop for site managers	
9-9:15	Introduction (Introduce yourself, your line of work and your hopes for this workshop)
9:15-9:45	Question and answer session on what site managers feel they can improve on and what they feel makes a successful site. What do they feel are some of the issues?
9:45-10:30	A look at what tourists are looking for from an ecotourism site
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12 p.m.	How to involve the local community in a successful manner
12-1 p.m.	Lunch
1-2 p.m.	Promoting your site to tourists
2-3 p.m.	What sort of tours should I offer?
3-4 p.m.	What can I do to make tourists feel more comfortable?
4-5 p.m.	Dinner
Day 2: Workshop for tour guides	
9-9:15 a.m.	Introduction (Introduce yourself, your line of work and your hopes for this workshop)
9:15-9:45 a.m.	Question and answer session on what tour guides would like to improve on and they feel makes a more successful tour guide?
9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Have tour guides think of their most successful guide and why they felt it was most successful. (Create a list of common traits for success)
10:30-11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.	Understanding the importance of your role as a tour guide for the success of ecotourism and the economy for the community
12-1 p.m.	Lunch
1-2 p.m.	A brief English course
2-3 p.m.	What do tourists expect from me?
3-4 p.m.	Incorporating ecotourism into every tour you give
4-5 p.m.	Dinner

Figure 11-Ecotourism Training Schedule

In order to have a more streamlined experience for tourists, I decided to create a two-day training program. The schedule can be found in Figure 11 would be implemented during the 2014 summer study abroad program by fellow students with the assistance of the professor. In July 2013, a modification of this workshop was given at the West Bali National Park office, and

included park staff as well as participating community members from Sumber Klampok village. Seeing as how this would probably be the first time several students act as trainers, I created a training guide for the trainers that can be found in Figure 12. The training program would be implemented at each of the four sites and would not be required however would be open to both tour guides and site representatives. The training was scheduled much like a conference, with two coffee breaks in each day, a lunch, and a dinner and is typical in format of Indonesian workshops.

Guide for Workshop Trainers

Day 1: Workshop for site managers

9-9:15 a.m. **Introduction** (Introduce yourself, your line of work and your hopes for this workshop) List the hopes for the workshop and ensure every item on the list gets addressed before the end of the day. If you do not know the answer please provide them with a good reference or let them know that you will follow up once some research is conducted on the subject.

9:15-9:45 a.m. **Question and answer session** Make three rows with the following titles: How can I Improve?, Issues, and Successes. Categorize topics using the three rows. (Refer to the three rows throughout the presentation, whenever applicable)

9:45-10:30 a.m. **A look at what tourists are looking for from an ecotourism site.** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide and emphasize the importance of fulfilling a tourist's expectation. Use personal experiences whenever possible)

10:30-11:00 a.m. -Coffee break

11:00-12 p.m. **How to involve the local community in a successful manner?** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on the importance of creating a role for each member of the community)

12-1 p.m. Lunch

1-2 p.m. **Promoting your site to tourists** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on self-promotion and cost effective forms of promotion that will keep the money within the local community.)

2-3p.m. **What type of tours should I offer?** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on creating a concrete tour that will convey the conservation message, keep both the tourists and animals safe and create the experience tourists are seeking.)

3-4 p.m. **What can I do to make tourists feel more comfortable?** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on meeting the tourist's expectation as far as sanitation and creating that same respect between tourists and local residents as well.)

4-5 p.m. Dinner

Day 2: Workshop for tour guides

9-9:15 a.m. **Introduction** (Introduce yourself, your line of work and your hopes for this workshop) List the hopes for the workshop and ensure every item on the list gets addressed before the end of the day. If you do not know the answer please provide them with a good reference or let them know that you will follow up once some research is conducted on the subject.

9:15-9:45 a.m. **Question and answer session** on what tour guides would like to improve on and they feel makes a more successful tour guide? Make three rows with the following titles: How can I Improve?, Issues, and Successes. Categorize topics using the three rows.

9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Have tour guides think of their most successful guide and why they felt it was successful. (Create a list of common traits for success)

10:30-11 a.m. Coffee break

11 a.m.- 12 p.m. **Understanding the importance of your role** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on how important their role is to the site and how their actions throughout the tour affect the success of the site.)

12-1 p.m.-Lunch

1-2 p.m. **English 101** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide. Pass out handouts to each tour guide and assist with pronunciation as needed.)

2-3 p.m. **What do tourists expect from me?** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with an emphasis on remaining professional throughout the tour and providing accurate and cultural information to the tourists.)

3-4 p.m. **Incorporating ecotourism into every tour you give** (Use the PowerPoint presentation as your guide with a strong emphasis on the importance of incorporation conservationism throughout every aspect of the tour.)

4-5 p.m. Dinner

Figure 12- Guidelines for tour guide trainers

The first day of training is geared towards site representatives; a copy of the PowerPoint slides can be found in Figure 13, and addresses an array of topics that were deemed important from prior research: the tourist's expectations during the trip, how to involve the local community, how to promote the community, what types of tours would be most beneficial for the site and the tourists, and what can be done to make tourists feel more comfortable while staying at the site. Each topic focused heavily on the theories of either cross-cultural adaptation or communication framing. When developing the training for site representatives I focused on the cross-cultural adaptation theory. The main message I was trying to convey to the site representatives was the importance of incorporating the surrounding community and how to go about that. When developing the training tour guides I also focused on communication framing because I wanted tour guides to understand how important their jobs are in relation to the success

of the site. The entire training is framed in such a way as to create a sense of pride within tour guides and a desire to be a better guide.

Much of the information for the training was based on the information I obtained from the literature review and from the research that was conducted after the needs assessment. The last portion of the site representative training focuses on observations that were made during the visit to the sites. For the last portion of the training I wanted to focus on what Westerners felt were acceptable sanitary and housing standards and the simple steps that could be taken to help reduce issues in this area.

The idea of cross-cultural adaptation was implemented in the “What are tourists looking for?” section of the training. The section focuses on explaining to site representatives what it is that tourists expect when visiting an ecotourism site. In explaining the expectations that tourists have for the site to the site representatives, the foundation is set for a successful cross-cultural adaptation. The site representatives now have an expectation for the type of culture that will be populating their site and can properly prepare themselves for the change in culture. The topic, “What are tourists looking for?” also covers the communication framing aspect in that site representatives are able to properly frame their site based on what tourists wish to learn from their site. In the “How do I involve the local community?” section I again implemented ideas based on the cross-cultural adaptation theory. In this section of the training, site representatives are asked to incorporate the local community with their site. Through the incorporation of the local community, tourists can understand the importance of culture throughout the site and local residents would not feel ignored or neglected from the entire process. Also, when the local community plays a role in the site, there is a greater chance for success.

Ecotourism Training Workshop for site managers

What are tourists looking for?

- ▶ When a tourist visits an ecotourism site they are looking for three things
 - A rich nature experience
 - Reliable and comfortable accommodations
 - An efficient way to handle business

(World Wildlife Fund International. (2001). *Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development*. United Kingdom: Richard Denman. p. 20)

What are tourists looking for? (contd.)

- ▶ As a site manager you must ensure these three expectations are met by:
 - Ensuring that what you are providing is delivered at its most highest potential
 - Providing accurate information throughout the tour
 - Incorporating a cultural and traditional value to their visit

(World Wildlife Fund International. (2001). *Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development*. United Kingdom: Richard Denman. p. 20)

What are tourists looking for? (contd.)

- ▶ Tourists want to find a way to get involved
 - It is important to train your tour guides on respecting the land, the importance of conservation in the area, and providing a set of guidelines before the tour begins.
 - Several tourists are willing to give donations once they see what their contributions will go towards. If properly informed, several will endorse the site through word of mouth.

(World Wildlife Fund International. (2001). *Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development*. United Kingdom: Richard Denman.)

What are tourists looking for? (contd.)

- ▶ Tourist want to learn during their visit
 - Create signage throughout your site that will allow tourists to read about the uniqueness of the site for themselves. Many tourists will take a picture of the signs and read about them later when they have more time to take it in.
 - Aside from what the tour guides know about the land and its inhabitants, encourage the tour guides to learn about their land in a more global setting. What makes their area unique to any other area in the world?
 - If the resources are not available to research the information find a way to create a sheet with the information already available for the tour guides to learn or carry with them.

Why is it important to involve the community?

- ▶ Involving the local community will not only make for a more successful site but will give the tourists the sense of culture and tradition they are seeking.
- ▶ The issue with several of the ecotourism sites that do not involve the community is that the profit usually does not stay within the community leaving travel companies to gain all the profit and the local and local culture to suffer .

How do I involve the community?

- ▶ Ways to include the local community is by:
 - Purchasing only local products
 - Controlling advertising and reducing a purchase of a package deal through a travel company.
 - Incorporating kids art into the site
 - Provide jobs only to the local community and find unique ways other community members can profit (For example, some may want to take the time to separate the tourist's trash in order to be able to sell their recyclables and make a profit.)

How do I involve the community? (Contd.)

- ▶ Since tourists want to feel a cultural experience as well, invite community members to perform cultural rituals or how-to demonstrations on crafts to provide that unique experience for tourists.

Promoting your site to tourists

- ▶ Look for any avenue to be able to promote your site to tourists. A very easy and successful is through Facebook.
 - If you do not have the funds to be a part of such an organization like the Rainforest Alliance and TIES, then friend them on Facebook.
 - The connections you will make from that site will ensure that you get in contact with the right people in order to be able to further promote your site.
 - Be sure to talk about the uniqueness of your site and why it would benefit them to help you promote it.

Promoting your site to tourists (contd.)

- Another avenue would be through youtube or other social media sites that are globally accessible.
- ▶ A Facebook page has been created for each of the sites and we could allow any site managers to have administrative power on the site.
 - The purpose of the site is to have an English presence of the site to be able to advertise to a greater audience.
 - If you wish to have something translated please send it as a message on the page and we will translate it before adding it to the site.

What type of tours should I offer?

- ▶ The main focus of a tour should be to convey the message of conservation and current environmental issues to the tourist.
 - In order to do so, as a site manager you must:
 - Ensure that recurring message is being conveyed throughout the tour with every tour guide
 - For example, during an orangutanwatch the tour guide could talk about the issue of palm oil plantations reducing the size of the orangutans homes and therefore reducing the number of orangutans.

What type of tours should I offer? (contd.)

- Ask tourists to conduct their own research on the issue but highlight some key points for them
- For example: Talk about the degradation that palm oil and coal mining companies are creating within Indonesia and mention just a few of the product that contain palm oil or is powered by coal.
- If tourists are not given a brief overview of the issues of the land they will go away with the tour thinking it was nothing more than a nature walk and not truly grasping the issues that the sites are trying to reduce or do away with all together.

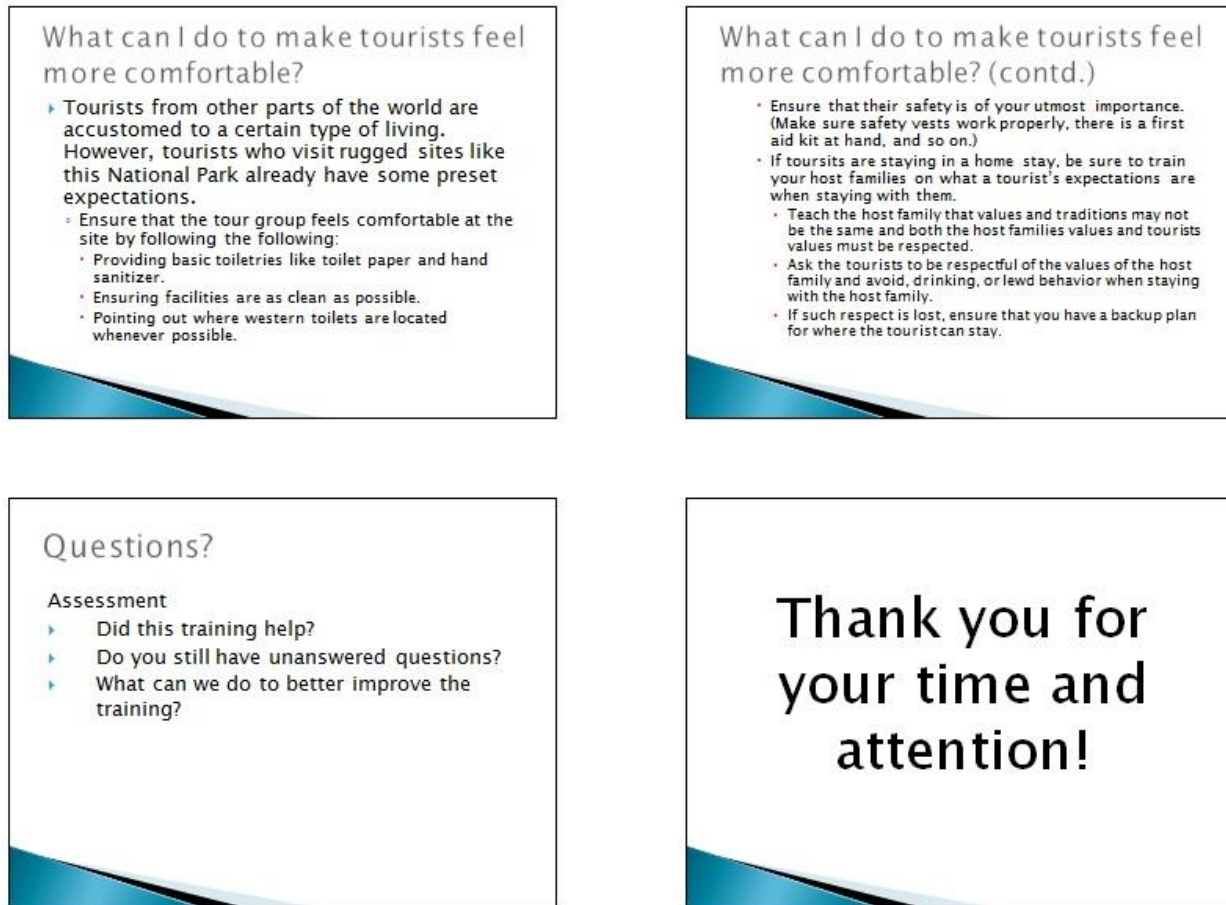


Figure 13 - PowerPoint Presentation for site representative training

The tour guide training would be held on the following day, site representatives would also be welcome to attend the second portion of the training as well. Both day one and day two trainings would begin with opportunity to allow participants to state what they hope they will get out of the workshop and what questions they hope the workshop can answer. After that brief session the tour guide training will continue with a roundtable discussion on what they felt were some of their most successful guides and what practices they feel have worked best for them, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation can be found in Figure 14.

The second session attempts to teach tour guides the value in their role within an ecotourism site. The training itself is framed in a way to help tour guides understand the importance of their role and how big of a part it plays in the success of the site. The training is meant to create a sense of pride within the tour guides in order to create a greater motivation to change their daily practices. The session relies on research literature to attempt to convey the message of the relationship between being a successful tour guide and greater community economic gain (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2009; WWF). After lunch the workshop will continue with a brief English session where I have provided handouts or cheat sheets for tour guides to carry that contain words that they most commonly use; like particular trees, animals, insects, and basic information that tourists may ask for.

The second to last portion of the workshop will cover what type of information tourists expect to obtain from their tour guides, and what they hope to take away from the tour itself. The last portion of the workshop will go over the importance of ecotourism and how every message that is conveyed should include the conservation message. If the message of conservation is strongly conveyed it will benefit both the local community with an increased amount of tourists with limited degradation and the local land as well (Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2009).

Ecotourism Training Workshop for Tour Guides

How important are we to our site?

- ▶ VERY!
- ▶ The site depends on your expertise and knowledge to strive and become more successful.
- ▶ According to tour research, a tourist bases their experience on what they learned and what they took away from the tour. You are the only interaction the tourist has aside from the site itself. Take pride in your line of work!

How important are we to our site? (contd.)

- ▶ As a tour guide it is your job to express the importance of the site and its value to the surrounding areas.
- ▶ The major role that you hold in the ecotourism site and how well you deliver in the role will determine the success of the site.
- ▶ A recurrently successful site will ensure a steady income and job security.

English 101

- ▶ One of the ways to be successful in your line of work is to learn basic phrases in English.
 - ▶ A separate sheet will also be provided for you to carry while on tours.
 - ▶ First we will start with greetings:
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▶ Selamat datang! | Welcome! (Welcom) |
| ▶ Selamat tinggal! | Goodbye! (Goodby) |
| ▶ Apa kabar? | How are you? (Howe r yu) |

English 101 (contd.)

- › Basic Conversational phrases:
- › Terima kasih banyak!
• **Thank you very much (thank yu bery mu-ch)**
- › Saya baik-baik saja, terima kasih!
• **I am fine, thank you! (Ayam phine, thank yu)**
- › Sama-sama! **You're welcome! (Yur welcom)**
- › Tidak masalah! **No problem (No problem)**
- › Permisi **Excuse me (Xcuze me)**
- › Siapa nama Anda? **What is your name? (Wat is yur naim)**
- › Nama saya **My name is (Mi naim is)**
- › Saya berasal dari **I am from (I am frum)**
- › Apa? **What? (Wat)**

English 101 (contd.)

- › Basic Conversational phrases (Contd.)
- › Senang berkenalan dengan
It is nice to meet you (It is niec to meit yu)
- › Maaf **Sorry (Sore)**
- › Sampai besok! **See you tomorrow! (Se yu to-mo-roh)**
- › Anda lapar? **Are you hungry (Aryu hoongri)**
- › Anda sudah makan? **Have you eaten (Hav yu iten)**
- › Selamat makan! **Enjoy your meal (Enjoi yur miel)**

English 101 (contd.)

- › Nature terms:
- › Lintah **Leech (Leach)**
- › Pohon **Tree (Tri)**
- › Kebun **Plantation (Pantaishun)**
- › Hutan **Forest (For-est)**
- › Sungai **River (Rivar)**
- › Pantai **Beach (Beech)**
- › Celeng **Boar (Bor)**
- › Laut **Sea (Se)**
- › Batu **Rock (Rok)**
- › Bunga **Flower (Fouer)**
- › Nyamuk **Mosquito (Moskito)**
- › Ular **Snake (snaek)**
- › Hujan **Rain (Rein)**
- › Buaya **Crocodile (Krokodiel)**
- › Monyet **Monkey (Monkee)**

What do tourist expect from me?

- › Tourist expect extensive knowledge on the area they are visiting. They expect all of their questions to be answered and they wish to come out enlightened about the area they visited.
- › Tourist want to learn facts about the land but they also want to learn tidbits about the area's culture and history.
- › For example: When we visited Kutai National Park we were told that orangutan was directly translated to "people of the forest". We had not only learned something new, we also learned how highly regarded these animals once were, having the direct translation of people in their name.

What do tourists expect from me? (Contd.)

- ▶ Every tourist wishes to have a unique experience when participating in a tour.
- Ways to make the experience unique are:
 - Making the most of every opportunity that arises.
 - For example: staying as long as it is safe for the animal and the tourist whenever a wild animal makes itself visible for pictures.
 - Creating different sets of tours and trails for groups of tourist so that neither group can say they experienced the same trip.
 - Providing a personal touch to the tour by incorporating some of your personality while on the tour.

How can I incorporate conservationism into every tour?

- ▶ The idea of conservationism does not have to be forced into the tour. It should be naturally implemented through your normal actions.
- Remember the environment and all of its natural beauty holds your livelihood and it is up to you and those who are invited to visit to ensure that the land and animals face as little degradation as possible.
- Look back at how you usually conduct tours. Does care for the environment play a major role in the tour? Why or why not?

How can I incorporate conservationism into every tour? (contd.)

- ▶ Do not allow tourists to do as they please when visiting the site.
- Ensure that guidelines are understood before visiting the site.
 - For example: When going out on a dive or snorkeling, be sure to brief the tourists on what they can and cannot do when underwater.
- The guidelines can be given either verbally or on a sheet.
 - If the guidelines are on a sheet, ensure that you explain the reasoning why certain things cannot be done.
 - For example: One cannot touch the coral because such an action would kill the coral and its inhabitants.

How can I incorporate conservationism into every tour? (contd.)

- ▶ By creating guidelines and setting boundaries tourists can begin to understand how sensitive the ecosystem is and hopefully put more thought to their actions in the future.
- ▶ Setting the guidelines and boundaries alone is not enough. Tourists must see tour guides implementing the same care and concern for the local ecosystem and wildlife as is requested in the guidelines.

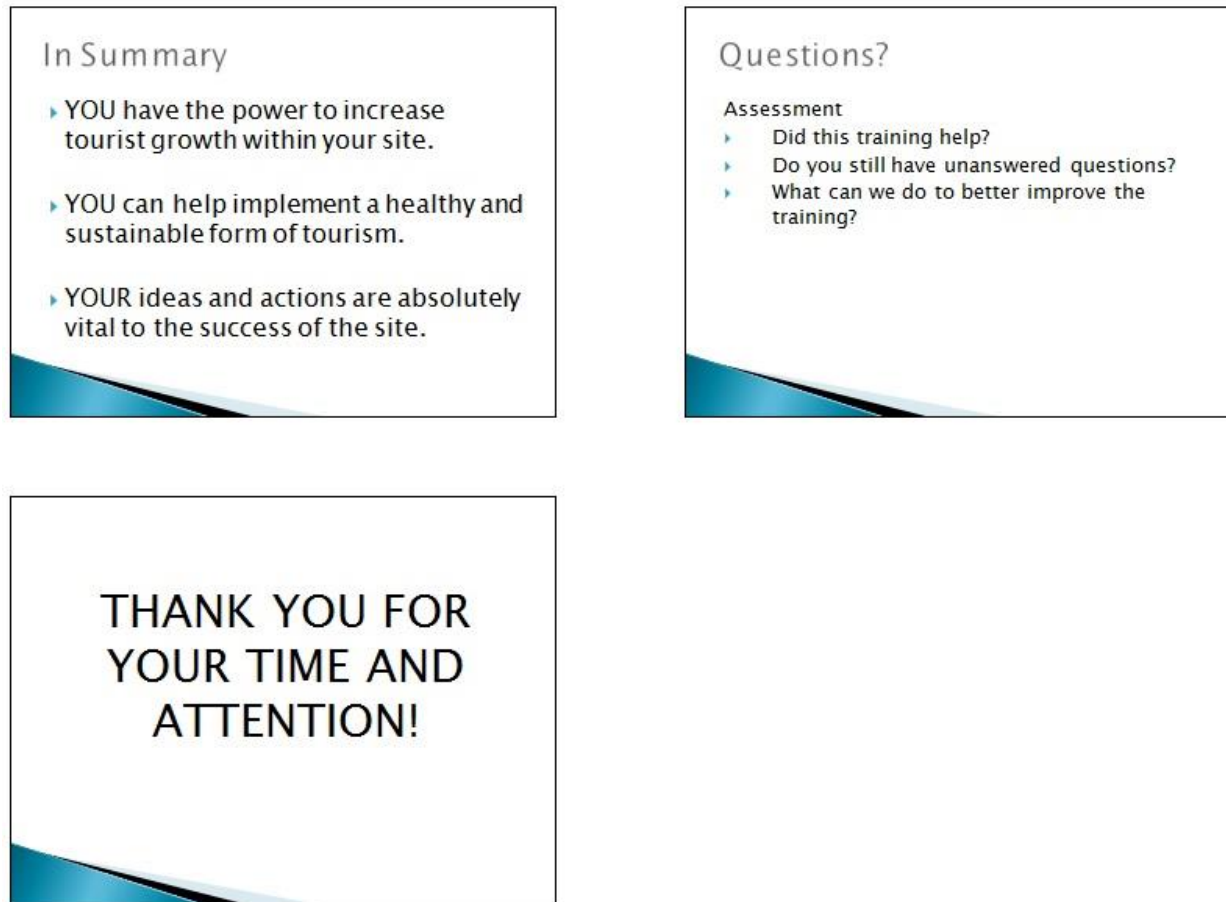


Figure 14 - PowerPoint for Tour Guide Training Program

Site representatives would benefit greatly by attending the tour guide training in order for them to truly understand how tour guides are essentially the main attraction for the site. If this message is conveyed site representatives may be more willing to provide the type of extensive training necessary in order for the tour guides to learn everything they need to know to succeed in their field. Both trainings will be facilitated by an individual who knows both English and Indonesian. However, since several residents can get by with some English, English speaking trainers can assist in several portions of the training as well.

The tools that were created have since been sent to the sites they were meant to assist. The West Bali National Park site manager and Karimunjawa site manager have also received the brochures that were created for the sites. During a July 2013 visit to the West Bali National Park site, a training was implemented by the UTEP team using the format created in this study. The needs assessment served as a key tool to help understand that what these sites needed were training programs, brochures, websites, social media presence, and English language training. The tools that were created are meant to create an exposure for these sites in order to obtain a more global audience. Currently, each of the site's largest clientele is the local public. In order to have their ecotourism sites grow to be success it must attract a more global audience. By attracting a more global audience, the issues that plague the sites, as far as conservation, can then also be made more global. It is difficult to ignore an issue once it has been placed under the limelight. Though these tools alone may not fully create the perfect form of ecotourism for these sites, it will at the very least help the local community understand the importance of their role and the complexities of ecotourism. These tools will help steer local community members and site representatives in the right direction when working towards helping improve their national parks and local way of life.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Ecotourism has been described as the potential answer to both natural resource conservation and community development (Lai & Nepal, 2006). As ecotourism is a valid choice to combat both the local issues of income and land use and global issues of environmental conservation, it seems only fitting to focus on the idea of ecotourism for the national park sites in Indonesia. However, what is equally important to ecotourism is the way in which the new concept is introduced to the local community. If implemented correctly, these ecotourism sites could help the area grow in terms of tourism and cultural awareness.

By avoiding foreign takeover of ecotourism sites, relying on the power of local leaders, and creating detailed guidelines for visitors, a successful ecotourism site is possible (Sowards, 2010). Because every community varies in their way of life and local culture it is important to cater the ecotourism format around the local culture and belief system. Also, by implementing ecotourism sites, an opportunity arises to work with the local government and education facilities to help relay the message of conservation through other formats than the ecotourism sites alone (Sowards, 2010). Communication framing and cross-cultural adaption are therefore absolutely vital in order to achieve the goal intended in these ecotourism sites and reduce the negative effects that previous studies have shown to have come from ecotourism. Framing and adaptation could help avoid the issues of land degradation, loss of jobs and land for the local community and loss of cultural identity.

However, upon analyzing my needs assessment, it is clear that there are several other issues that pose challenges to the success of the site. Though communication framing and cross-cultural adaption are essential tools to help implement a successful site, there is much more that needs to be done before referring to the aforementioned tools. How tour guides are trained to

interact with tourists and how the sites are promoted are just some of the ideas that also play an integral role on the success of the site. If the tour guide, who represents the site for the tourists, does not link ecotourism with the visit then the concept of an environmentally friendly site has failed. If tourists are left with questions unanswered because of language barriers then they will most likely not research their questions on their own. Tourists may even deem the site as not worthy for conservation because the message was obviously not that important to the tourist in the first place. If the idea of conservation and greening their daily practices is not communicated to the tourists then the tourists will assume that there is no issue with conservation in that area and that their contributions are not needed.

I initially began this study assuming that communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation were the keys to a successful ecotourism site and just needed to be perfected through time. However, as I continued to do research for this project I learned that ecotourism sites are like fine-tuned machines in that there are several parts that must fit and work together in order for it to function properly. There must a strong willingness from all members involved in order to have the site run successfully. Though I still believe that communication framing and cross-cultural adaptation do play a major role in the success of the site other factors like learning English and perfecting the tour guide trade should be addressed first.

Through my research I was able to determine however that communication framing does affect how involved a local community is in their local ecotourism site. Of all the representatives, West Bali's was a more hands on representative and invited community members to be a part of the conservation process. Several members began to participate in the process because they were able to see results and benefits from being a part of such a unique process. Aside from involving the local community in the conservation project, the West Bali

representative also created a tree planting project in order to help reduce the number of community members poaching into the forest to collect firewood illegally. He framed the idea in such a way that he made community members understand that it would be more convenient to grab their firewood from one particular site and from a tree that will mature in less than five years (field notes, August 1, 2012). If, like the West Bali representative, site representatives can help community members see the importance of preserving their site and welcoming others to see the uniqueness of their sites on a regular basis they will gain a strong foundation to further pursue their site and have the backing of the local community.

Each representative in this study agreed that cross-cultural adaptation is an important communication concept to consider when involving the local community interacting with tourists. Through the needs assessment and the training module that I created, I ensured that I instilled a sense of importance of community involvement within their site. With community involvement being at the forefront, and really the only feasible action for most of these sites, the site representatives were also forced to understand the complexities of cross-cultural adaptation. In its simplest form, site representatives must ensure that the identity of the local culture is not lost and that community members understand the frame of mind tourists have when visiting. Through the guidelines developed for Kutai National Park, found in Figure 10, I am also ensuring that tourists understand the frame of mind of not only the tour guides but the animals inhabiting the land as well.

My contribution to the field of communication and ecotourism studies, unlike Milstein and Lin, more directly merges theory with practice through the design of materials and workshops for these park representatives and their local communities. Site representatives and representatives have a strong willingness to incorporate their local community with their sites in

order to not only create a more successful site but to have the site continue to grow and persevere throughout each family generation. Through this study, it was also determined that several site representatives welcome change and welcome the opportunity to work with others to better their site. On a personal level I have learned that creating a successful ecotourism site is not that easy, and like everything else in the world, there is a range of politics that come into play in order to have sites noticed on a global level. One cannot simply add their name to a global initiative; they must have the funds to join the organization.

Though my research has only scratched the surface for these developing sites, I hope that it has opened the door for other researchers to study and determine a successful formula for the sites located within Indonesia. I hope that in my future studies I can further my research within Indonesia and develop a more prominent ecotourism plan for the site, having already learned their strong points weaknesses and necessities. For future studies I would like to look more deeply into the policies that are set for ecotourism sites and how residents living on the land are affected. I would also like to further research where they get their funding from and how the funds they raise from the site are spent.

It seems that in areas surrounding the country of Indonesia there is an abundance of global awareness on their environmental issues. For example, when visiting the TIES site and entering their Borneo tours link the site takes you to the area of Borneo that is in Malaysia instead of addressing the over 75 percent of land that is in Indonesia (TIES). Perhaps another area to research would be to determine why the environmental issues in Indonesia are not made more global when several of the larger countries play a major role in it.

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Vita

Adriana Salas was born in El Paso, Texas. The youngest daughter of Francisco and Alicia Salas, she graduated from Montwood High School, El Paso, Texas in the spring of 2004 and entered The University of Texas at El Paso in the fall. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in print media, she interned with the school newspaper, The Prospector. After receiving her bachelors of Arts degree from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2008, she was offered an accepted a position for White Sands Missile Range as a Public Affairs Officer. She published *Hydraulic fracturing and environmental effects: Understanding media communication strategies through groupthink theory* in 2011 in the Proceedings of the Eleventh Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment. Her current research was also accepted to be presented in the 2013 International Environmental Communication Association Conference in Uppsala, Sweden. She entered the Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso in the fall of 2010 and attended a summer program in Indonesia in the 2012 summer semester.

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