

Ecotourism in Peru and the Relationship to Community Health: An International Qualitative Research Study

Christina S. Hoppe

Faculty Sponsor: Robert Jecklin, Department of Health Education and Health Promotion

ABSTRACT

From the perspective of Community Health Education, this research aims to qualitatively show themes and categories that define the experience of being part of an ecotourist community at Manu Wildlife Center (MWC). The defined categories are: Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as part of the Ecotourist Industry, Ecotourist activities at the Manu Wildlife Center and The effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health. Four groups were identified within the community at MWC: international tourists, American volunteers with Peru Verde, the Peruvian staff of MWC and the Peruvian tour guides. A total of twelve interviews were conducted, six with international tourists, one with an American volunteer, two with Peruvian tour guides and three with the Peruvian staff. This research illustrates the challenge of creating and sustaining a balance of convenience and environmentalism, the need for environmental education and the difficulty of maintaining a social network in a remote location.

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism, a growing industry, aims to preserve natural habitats, protect native wildlife, ensure visitors' travel responsibility and contribute to the well being of local communities. (<http://www.conservation.org>) The aims of ecotourism correspond to aspects of health within the communities that arise out of this growing industry. This research focuses on one community created by ecotourism at the Manu Wildlife Center (MWC) in the Madre de Dios region of Peru. The community is the direct result of ecotourism. This research draws out categories of concern on the basis of which people identify themselves as part of an ecotourist community. The three distinct categories discussed in this research are as follows: Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as part of the Ecotourist Industry, Ecotourist activities at the Manu Wildlife Center and The effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health.

The members of the community at the MWC share both a geographic location and the common characteristic of participating in ecotourism. The members of the community can be described in four distinct groups with unique characteristics defining each group. All of the groups are necessary for the community to function and contribute to the culture that exists at the MWC. The groups are international tourists, American volunteers with Peru Verde, the Peruvian staff of MWC and the Peruvian tour guides. The Manu Wildlife Center draws ecotourism from countries including The United States, Canada, Holland, Germany, England, Australia, Spain, Russia, Mexico France, Japan and Israel. This research describes the community created by ecotourism at the MWC from June 28th to August 4th 2008.

The Researcher's Personal Disclosures

The researcher is an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, originally from a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, majoring in Community Health Education and Philosophy with plans to pursue further education in the Health field. An interest in Latino health trends influenced the researcher's desire to travel to Peru to conduct this research.

A connection to Nexos Voluntarios, a Peruvian organization, gave the researcher access to the setting and populations involved in ecotourism at MWC. According to their website, "Nexos Voluntarios promotes social development in Peru through impact-driven voluntary activity in projects related to public health, education, human rights, the environment, and business and development, that involve the participation of a range of social agents (universities, companies, multilaterals, students and professionals) ensuring volunteers have an integral and well-supported experience of social immersion," (www.nexosvoluntarios.org).

Nexos Voluntarios aligned the researcher, as a volunteer, with a conservation organization called Peru Verde. This organization "...seeks to conserve Peru's wildlife and wildlands through field research, habitat protection, and

eco-friendly economic alternatives for local communities,” (www.peruverde.org). Volunteering with this organization provided the context to conduct research in an ecotourism destination. The journey to Peru, which allowed this research to occur, started on June 4th 2008 with a return date to the United States on August 21st of the same year.

During the summer of 2008, when this research took place the government of Peru created a new position within the cabinet, The Minister of Environment, showing a new concern for impact of resource usage on the environment. An indication of this concern was the conflict that arose between the Minister of the Environment, Antonio Brack, and the Minister of Agriculture, Ismael Benavides.

The Minister of Agriculture planned to turn to genetically modified crops, GMOs, without consensus in the government or among farmers. His argument was that he wanted more effective crops to provide more food for the increasing population of Peru. The Minister of Environment took the position that the agricultural industry of Peru would become dependent on countries like the United States if they turned to GMOs and that Peru has enough biodiversity not to be a dependent country. The cultural norms of the indigenous populations would be altered or destroyed if forced to grow GMOs. The President, Alan Garcia, agreed with the Minister of Environment and the agriculture industry did not implement GMOs. Since then the Minister of Agriculture was asked to leave his position and the new Minister does not support Peru turning to GMOs (Ramírez, 2008). This event influenced the researcher’s understanding of the relevancy and urgency of environmental issues in Peru during the time of the research.

METHOD

This study is qualitative and ethnographic in nature. Questions of values, beliefs and practices of a specific group of people are explored (Denzin & Yvonna, 1994). The sources of data include field notes, observations and unstructured interviews. The interviews functioned like conversations giving the interviewing process a breadth and providing qualitative data. The questions and points of interest developed and emerged through the course of the interviews. The responses were taken down with pen and paper during the interview. Immediately following the interview the researcher recorded additional notes regarding the interview.

Participants

The interviewees were selected from the populations existing at MWC. The sampling method was a convenience sample. The researcher interviewed members of the community created by ecotourism she was in contact with during the time of the research study (Denzin & Yvonna, 1994). Upon data analysis four groups were identified within the community: international tourists, American volunteers with Peru Verde, the Peruvian staff of MWC and the Peruvian tour guides. A total of twelve interviews were conducted, six with international tourists, one with an American volunteer and five with Peruvians working in Ecotourism. Within the population of Peruvians working in Ecotourism, two interviews were conducted with tour guides and three with Peruvian staff at MWC. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place in the main lodge at the MWC. All but one interview was conducted in English; the other was conducted in Spanish.

Approval from the IRB at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was obtained prior to the research study. It was determined that the research was exempt from review. All the interviewees signed a release form providing informed consent to use their responses as part of this research study. The release form stated that all the information disclosed would be anonymous.

Data Analysis

Upon returning to La Crosse, the responses to the interviews and field notes were transferred from handwritten notes to word-processed documents and stored as Word documents. The process of data analysis began with the open coding of interview responses and field notes and was followed by closed coding. The data was analyzed using strategies from Auerbach & Silverstein’s *Qualitative data: an introduction to coding and analysis* (2003). Their strategies describe the coding procedure as the use of raw data to identify emerging themes and trends relevant to the research study (Auerbach, & Silverstein, 2003).

RESULTS

During the coding process eleven themes emerged which were then grouped into three distinct categories: Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as part of the Ecotourist Industry (Table One), Ecotourist activities at the Manu Wildlife Center (Table Two) and The effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health (Table Three).

*Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as Part of the Ecotourist Industry***Table 1.**Category: *Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as Part of the Ecotourist Industry****Themes in Characteristics***

 Development of Ecotourism and MWC
 Travel to MWC
 Native Communities
 Perceived Impact of Ecotourism in Peru

Development of Ecotourism and the Manu Wildlife Center. Two relevant issues emerge within this theme: ecotourism's place within the tourist industry and the balance of conveniences and environmentalism within the development of the lodge. Peru Verde allows for-profit tourist agencies to utilize the lodges that it owns. The capital that is gained from tourism goes back into conservation efforts. This is one of the principles on which ecotourism is based according to an American volunteer, who was educated on ecotourism during her undergraduate course work. Allowing tourists agencies to use MWC offers an advantage to tourists who want to engage in other tourists attractions Peru has to offer. All of the international tourists interviewed traveled to other tourist destinations during their time in Peru. The most common attraction mentioned was Machu Picchu, an abandoned city from the Incan empire. The ruins that sprinkle the landscape serve as a destination to many tourists. Ruins, markets, traditional ceremonies and celebrations were stated as attractions that drew international tourists to Peru besides ecotourism. Learning about the history, culture, food and music of the Peru were also stated at points of interest.

It is a commonly held view that ecotourism has been steadily growing for the last ten years in Peru. According to the interviewees the growth has been experienced in the number of people participating in ecotourism, the number of ecotourist destinations that have been built and, within the destinations, the size of the structures and services provided to guests. MWC itself has gone through many changes to provide convenience and charm. The main lodge, where the Peruvian guides, international tourists and American volunteers eat meals, offers a hammock lounge, a full bar, a dining area, flush toilets, running water and several seating areas. All twenty-two individual cabins, called bungalows, have private bathrooms, for some this is the most important convenience. One ecotourist, in her sixties, had an accidental fall during the night at a different ecotourist destination where the sleeping quarters did not have the bathrooms attached.

During the time of the research the lodge had no electricity. There is talk among influential people at Peru Verde about installing electricity for the convenience of guests. When the sun goes down the main lodge is lit by candles. Flashlights and torches are used to illuminate the outside paths. None of the ecotourists interviewed feel installing electricity is an absolute necessity at the lodge. "Having electricity would be nice but it would take away from the mystique of the lodge." Reading at night by candlelight was the most frequently stated concern for the ecotourists regarding the absence of electricity, but many nights the ecotourists were tired from the days activities and were ready to sleep as soon as they got into bed.

One goal of ecotourism is to create an opportunity for tourists to experience wild animals in their natural habitat. This requires a balance of conservation and development. Conservation around the MWC aims to allow the natural patterns of animals to continue with the least human interference as possible. The location for the lodge was selected, in part, because of its proximity to the world largest known Tapir Clay lick. The lick is approximately a three km walk from the main lodge. Other appealing features of the area include the Macaw clay lick and two ox bow lakes containing giant sea otters and two canopy tower for viewing birds and mammals.

Travel to MWC. Among the ecotourists their travel to MWC was sited as an important aspect of the ecotourist experience. Tours typically last four to seven days and may include anywhere from one to four ecotourist destinations. There are two ways to get to MWC, both begin in Cuzco and were described in a positive light by the ecotourists that experienced them. The first way starts with a bus ride from Cuzco into el Bosque Nublado (the Cloud Forest). When the clouds run into the side of the mountain they become trapped, this the reason for the forest's name. Visitors are able to see the trapped clouds from above on one stop of the bus trip. The day's travel ends at the Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge, also owned by Peru Verde, for an overnight stay. The lodge is set in the Bosque Nublado and many tours spend more than one night at the lodge visiting the areas natural beauty. The next stop after an early morning bus ride is a small town called Atalaya. The town lies on the bank of the Rio Madre de Dios, from there – an eight-hour motorcanoe ride takes the tour groups to Yeni Lodge, near Boca Manu. Here most groups spend the night. In the morning an hour and a half on the motorcanoe and the tour groups arrive at MWC.

One ecotourist who had this experience said, "I am glad I did this, I enjoyed seeing the culture of the people that live on the river and the scenery through the Andes was the best I have ever seen." The other travel option is to take a 12-passenger plane from Cuzco to Yeni Lodge, near Boca Manu, then an hour and half motorcanoe ride to MWC.

These modes of entrance to MWC are the only way supplies can get to the lodge. All the bottled water, soda, juice, alcohol, food, cleaning supplies and bedding traveled to MWC through one of these routes. Often the plane brings the necessary supplies from Cuzco and the guides bring the supplies with the tour groups when they travel from Yeni Lodge to MWC.

Native Communities. One goal of ecotourism is to involve local communities with industry in manner that benefits them and does not exploit or destroy their way of life. One of the guides interviewed had previously been the manager of an ecotourist destination and shared that "ecotourism helps make it possible to educate the locals (in) how to preserve land and teaches them that it is better show the animals than kill them. The locals will make more money this way." Many ecotourist lodges sell handmade crafts, handcrafts, purchased from indigenous communities. The following ways local communities are involved in ecotourism were stated in an interview with a guide. Peru Verde works with indigenous people, more specifically indigenous women, to improve the quality of handcrafts through workshops. Most of the handcrafts that are produced from the workshops go to lodges to be sold. An example of what has been taught at past workshops is seed selection. The women were taught to only use the best seeds or seeds from a specific plant to make the highest quality product possible. Although this practice may take longer and be initially more expensive the end product is more appealing to the customers and brings more profit to the native community. Other relationships with native communities include the Puerto Azul community from whom Peru Verde buys bananas and hires to construct the motorcanoes. The roofs of the bungalows and the main lodge were purchased in sections from local communities. The sections of roofs were made by weaving leaves found in the Amazon using a traditional technique. The technique requires the leave to be woven in to panels than woven together. When the panels are woven together to process creates a waterproof roof made completely from resources found in the jungle.

Amante, a native community was involved with construction of the airstrip at Yeni Lodge. Peru Verde and the community came to an agreement about payment for the ownership of the land and the labor of the men in the community to help with its construction. This is an example of a partnership that developed because of ecotourism.

A native man showed the location of the Tapir clay lick to Peru Verde, he knew of the lick because he had used the area for hunting Tapir. The lick is approximately a three km walk from the main lodge. Peru Verde asked the man if he wanted to continue to work with them, he did and the relationship between the two has continues for ten years.

One ecotourist discussed her feelings about current and potential impacts the ecotourism industry on communities that surround the destinations, she said "there is already a problem with fake ecotourism." One of the river communities she passed on her motorcanoe ride to MWC had a hand written cardboard sign reading 'Ecotourism.' She felt it was more likely that the young children in the communities would want to live differently than past generations. She said, "Who are we to say keep the native communities unchanged? They like electricity and education for their children"

Perceived Impact of Ecotourism in Peru. Many of the ecotourists, the American volunteer and some Peruvians agreed that the future of ecotourism rests in its ability to generate money for Peru. Tourists wanting to visit the area to see its beauty were repeated in interviews with ecotourists as a strong motivator for Peruvians to continue conserving natural lands. "If tourists want to see the rainforest then Peruvians will not want to cut it down to keep people coming to the area for financial gain."

Peruvians working in Ecotourism see the industry as only one piece of the entire economy. Overall ecotourists consider ecotourism to have a much larger impact on the Peruvian economy than the Peruvians working in ecotourism do. One guide stated, "People in Lima and other cities do not go around talking about biodiversity. There are so many other things going on in Peru. Ecotourism is only a part of the tourism industry." He also said well managed ecotourism is important to Peru and possibly in the future it may have a more important role.

The creation of jobs was a repeated positive aspect noted by the Peruvian populations. Also noted was the potential harm. "With any increased number of people there could be an increase in trails and damage to habitats and fauna." Among the positive aspects of ecotourism, education about the natural habitat was emphasized by the ecotourists. One tourist feels and hopes ecotourism is good for Peru and another stated that the negative impacts on the environment are mild. All four populations cited other factors affecting the Amazon as having larger negative impact on the area than ecotourism. These factors include logging, agriculture, farming and natives hunting animals. "Of the possible industries that could utilize the resources of the area, ecotourism is the least harmful to the environment, as opposed to logging and farming," said a guide.

*Ecotourist Activities at the Manu Wildlife Center***Table 2.**Category: *Ecotourist Activities at the Manu Wildlife Center****Themes in Activities***

Bird Watching

Interaction Between Ecotourists and Guides

The Tapir Clay Lick

Bird Watching. Manu is known for its biodiversity worldwide. One ecotourist stated she was able to see more birds, by half, in six days in Peru than she did during her bird watching trip to Costa Rica. She said that she had a good guide in Costa Rica; there is just more biodiversity in Peru.

Most tourists that chose to participate in ecotourism at MWC had a general and genuine interest in the rich biodiversity of the area. Some have an interest in one specific class of animal, Aves, more commonly known as birds. One of the most predominant reason couples traveled to MWC is one of the partner's desire to see the Peruvian bird endemics. One ecotourist described her and her husband's trip to Peru as "one avid bird watch and one groupie." The coined term used to describe a serious bird watcher is a "birder." Many birders in Peru are not new to the experience of traveling to a remote location in hopes of catching a glimpse of the native species of birds. Peru is home to nearly 1,800 species of birds (Schulenberg et. al, 2007). A Macaw clay lick near the lodge is a highlight for many birders.

Interaction Between Ecotourists and Guides. Birders and other international tourist rely on their guides to take them to hot spots for observing animal activity. The ecotourists acknowledged having a good guide as an essential part of ecotourism. Trip reports of past ecotourist experiences with guides are available online, for an interviewed birder it is unthinkable to go on a bird watching trip without reviewing other's experiences with the guide to ensure their quality and expertise. The guides use a variety of ways to increase the likelihood that ecotourists will see the animals. In the area that surrounds MWC there are several locations where it is common to see certain species of animals. The guides take tour groups to these areas regularly. Some guides also use recorded sounds of the animals, specifically the sounds of birds, to call the animal for tourists to view. This works well with birds because they are typically timid around humans, but by nature are territorial and want to define their territory to other birds.

In the city of Cuzco there are higher education training programs available for people who want to become guides. The education includes learning about the species native to the area. Many of the guides who frequent the Manu area have completed these types of training to be guides. Most Peruvians working at the MWC during this study were from Cuzco.

Having a guide that is knowledgeable also provides a space for environmental education to occur. Currently, at MWC there is not an education program that specifically addresses the environmental impacts of ecotourism. So, it is left to the guides to inform ecotourists. There is a worry that if ecotourism continues to expand and there is not an obligation to environmental education there is a risk that the natural beauty will be destroyed.

One ecotourist discussed the relationship between the tourist companies, ecotourists and nature. She wonders if ecotourism becomes more popular, increasing the number of people who frequent an area, who will be the gatekeeper to preserve the natural habitat. She thinks there is a risk of tourist companies trying to please and satisfy peoples' requests for a hands-on experience with the animals instead of thinking of the good of the environment. She runs an environmental education program in the United States, there her motto is "love it and leave it." She also adds "Tourists keep pushing the envelope, putting pressure on places that are in high demand. There needs to be boundaries between tourists and creatures. The tourist companies need to have the highest ethical attitudes. They need to say not to touch anything and explain why."

The Tapir Clay Lick. Tour groups visit the Tapir clay lick most frequently in the evening because this is when there is the most animal activity. The structure to view the lick is called a blind and consists of a platform raised thirteen feet off the ground with mosquito net enclosures to wait and hope a Tapir will make a showing. The process of building the blind started with a much smaller blind that was farther away from the actual clay lick. Slowly additions were made to the blind to make it closer and larger. One guide said that the Tapirs know there are people around, but they are used to it. The slow process of building the blind allowed some of the animals to become accustomed to the presence of humans. At the blind people are allowed to take pictures of the creatures. With the nightly visitors at the lick the Tapirs have also grown accustomed to flash photography.

*The Effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health***Table 3.**Category: *The Effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health****Themes in Health***

Health Precautions

Communication

Stress

Physical Activity

Health Precautions. Prior to traveling to Peru all of the international tourists interviewed and the American volunteer visited a Travel Clinic to address recommended health precautions. Malaria pills, the Yellow Fever vaccine and anti-diarrhea medication were among the most common health precautions administered to the populations that traveled from another country to Peru. Common safety recommendations from the various travel clinics mentioned by the ecotourists include only drinking bottled water, introducing new food items slowly, not eating food from street vendors, eating fruit that can be peeled, using sunscreen and bug repellent. Both guides preferred not to use bug repellent because of the deet, which is poison, they opted to wear long sleeves to protect against insect bites. No Peruvian interviewed took malaria medication as a preemptive protection against the disease. Most had received the vaccination for Yellow Fever.

A vaccine for Typhoid fever is strongly recommended when traveling to the Amazon by most travel clinics, but it is not required to enter the country, so some travelers opt out. Reasons for not receiving the vaccine included preferring to receive as few vaccinations as possible and being prescribed immune suppressing medication that prohibit active vaccines in the body.

Several ecotourists experienced altitude sickness when traveling from Lima to Cuzco. Common treatments for the ailment included rest, water and drinking matte de coca, a traditional Andean remedy made from the leaves of the coca plant native to the Amazon.

Communication. Isolation, including a lack of contact and communication with people and places outside of the MWC, appeared as an issue. At MWC there are not newspapers, televisions, or radios widely accessible. MWC does have Internet access, but there is limited access to Peruvian staff, guides and American volunteers. The ecotourists do not have access to the Internet. For some this was viewed as a positive aspect of ecotourism. Being without access to phones and the Internet allowed some ecotourists to remove themselves from the responsibilities and demands that are present when they are not actively participating in ecotourism. Examples of responsibilities include checking and responding to emails, answering phone calls and other work related tasks.

When isolation is talked about in regards to personal relationships, such as intimate partner relationships, it is not discussed as a positive aspect, but rather as one of the hardest aspects of being at MWC. All four populations had individuals that struggled with some aspect of isolation in regards to communication.

An international tourist in his early twenties traveling with his mom discussed the lack of communication with his girlfriend back home in the United States as the hardest part of his travels. "Some of the hotels we have stayed in had the internet so we (he and his girlfriend) could communicate, but here (at MWC) there is no way to get a hold of her and that is the hardest part."

After approximately three weeks in the jungle, an American volunteer said in her interview she felt "really disconnected from her social network." She also stated that this was the most challenging part of her experience, much more challenging than not having electricity. In regards to her mental struggle with the disconnection from her social network she said, "In the long run this struggle will make me mentally more sound and strong. Here I am able to step away from everything and examine who I am and get a better understanding of myself as a person." Because of isolation from her previous social networks she placed a high degree of importance on her relationships with the Peruvians working in Ecotourism, "They are all I have now."

The Peruvians working in ecotourism identified the isolation from their families as a hard aspect of working in a remote location. One staff member has a son who lives with his aunt and other family members while he works at MWC. He overwhelmingly enjoys working in ecotourism and the location he is in. Not having contact with his son was the only drawback he discussed regarding his work. An older staff member also expressed how much he missed his wife, children and grandchildren when he was away from his home in Cuzco. He has been working in the tourism industry in Peru for all of his professional life. "It is hard to be away from my three year old son and family,

but I am working to give them food and a good life.” One Peruvian staff member said he experienced a little depression from the isolations he experienced.

Issues of communication came up in a married couple who are both guides working for the same company in the same region of the Amazon. They met working as guides and both expressed that their relationship works as well as it does because they have contact with each other while they are working. They often lead tour groups to MWC at the same time, when this happens they spend the small amount of free time they have during the day together, stay in the same cabin at night and occasionally will join their groups together for meals.

She said, “If we were not working together so our relationship could work, then I would probably not be getting married or thinking about getting married.” Due to the fact that this couple works together, they do not experience the same isolation from their intimate partner that others who work in ecotourism do.

A biologist working for Peru Verde that often stays at MWC discussed the impact of his travel on communication with his wife. His job requires him to be away from his home in Cuzco where his wife lives. When phones were available he uses them for communication, but often he is in locations, such as MWC, where there is no phone access. He said, “When you travel all the time, there is a moment that it becomes normal to your relationship to be away from each other.”

The Peruvians involved in ecotourism at the MWC during the time of the study stated the importance of being able to communicate with people from different parts of the world and the value of knowing languages to contribute to communication. In the interviews and conversations with the international tourists this concern was never acknowledged. Meeting and working with people from all over the world was one guides favorite thing about ecotourism, “I feel I am an ambassador of Peru, I represent my country to an international audience.” All three of the Peruvian staff members said working with the ecotourists is their favorite or the most rewarding aspect of their work.

Stress. Stress, or the reduction or lack of stress while participating in ecotourism appeared as an important mental health component in the populations. Many ecotourists expressed a reduction in stress at MWC as opposed to their lives away from the jungle. When the ecotourists come to MWC they are on vacation with a guide that has their day structured for them, their meals are prepared and served to them, and their bungalows are cleaned while they are out observing the rich biodiversity that surrounds MWC. As previously discussed, there is no communication outside of MWC for the ecotourists, meaning no phone calls or emails. Eliminating these elements could have been a source of stress reduction.

The guides did not express the stress that often accompanies other jobs. Both guides stated that they have no control over when the animals show up, “If I go to the Tapir clay lick and no tapir comes, what can I do?” This perception of not having control over what happens on the job contributed positively to the freedom from stress both related to their work. One Peruvian staff member, when questioned of about the challenging aspect of being at MWC, answered, “there are not hard things here, everything is wonderful in the jungle. I like the jungle too much.”

Physical Activity. Many of the sites around the MWC require a hike to the location. The Tapir clay lick, walking paths and canopy towers offer a unique experience of the area and require a walk. Being able to be physically active was sighted in all four populations as a health benefit of participating in ecotourism. The staff and guides regularly play soccer and swim at the MWC. The guides identified walking and breathing clean air as contributing to good health.

CONCLUSIONS

From the perspective of Community Health Education, this research aims to qualitatively show themes that define the experience of being part of an ecotourist community at MWC. Through data analysis the categories identified are: Characteristics of the Manu Wildlife Center as part of the Ecotourist Industry, Ecotourist activities at the Manu Wildlife Center and The effect of Ecotourism on Individual Health.

The first category illustrates the challenge of creating and sustaining a balance of convenience and environmentalism within all populations, including native communities, involved in ecotourism. The second category shows the need for environmental education and environmentally conscientious practices. The third category reveals the tension between the necessary isolation that occurs when traveling to a remote location and the need to communicate and preserve a social network.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the UW-L Undergraduate Research Grants Program and the Meisal Scholarship Grant Program for funding this research. Also, the researcher would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Robert Jecklin, Dr. Omar Rivera and her parents for supporting this research.

REFERENCES

- Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: an introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: New York University Press.
- Conservation International* (n.d.). Retrieved May 29, 2009, from <http://www.conservation.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Denzin N. K., Yvonna L. S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Nexos Voluntarios. (n.d.) Retrieved February 7, 2008 from <http://www.nexosvoluntarios.org/v02/>
- Ramírez, M. O. (2008, June). Los transgénicos no son el camino, resalta Brack. *El Comercio*. Retrieved May 28, 2009, from <http://www.elcomercio.com>
- Peru Verde. (n.d.) Retrieved February 7, 2008 from www.peruverde.org
- Schulenberg, T. S., Stotz, F., Lane, D. F., O'Neill, J. P., & Parker III, J. A. (2007). *Birds of Peru*. Princeton: Princeton Press.