THESIS

ATTITUDE FORESTRY FACULTY'S FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS TOWARD ECOTOURISM

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GRADUATE SCHOOL, KASETSART UNIVERSITY

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THESIS

ATTITUDE FORESTRY FACULTY'S FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS
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SUPATCHA NGONRATH NA AYUDHYA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
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This research aims to study the attitude, experience, as well as access to sources of information regarding ecotourism. It also focuses on the relationship between the demographics, sources of information, and attitude of 170 fourth year students of the Kasetsart University Department of Forestry, academic year 2006. The questionnaires were used for collecting data. The percentage, mean, standard deviation, and weight calculations were statistically used to analyze data including Chi-Square technique for hypothesis testing. The testing result of the research instrument of this study was acceptable. ($\alpha = 0.7$)

Hypothesis of the study includes 1) there were relationships between student's demographics and their attitude towards ecotourism and 2) there were relationships between students' access to source of information and their attitude towards ecotourism.

Results indicate that less than a half of students of the study have experienced on ecotourism, and they accessed to sources of information through various media just at a moderate level. Nevertheless, results of the hypothesis testing suggest that there is significant evidence that there were relationships between both students' backgrounds or demographics or their access to sources of information and their attitude toward ecotourism at 0.05 significant levels. In fact, the more students receive interesting knowledge or information related ecotourism through TV, newspaper, magazine, and Internet as well as from conversation or participating in training, seminar, and other ecotourism related activities, the more they will have high or positive attitude toward ecotourism or ecotourism concept. All concerned parties should directly promote, publicize, and give more interesting information or knowledge via direct activities concerned ecotourism in order to make students realize its importance and goal through various types of sources of information. Furthermore, public and private units should also play an importance role to stimulate and encourage students, who will finally be a part of society outside university, to participate more on ecotourism programs by considering appropriate methods which can mostly suit and correspond to their needs and interests.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recent records show that the tourism industry has become the major, if not the main, revenue generating for industries of Thailand. It has continuously propped up or supported the Thai economy since the announcement of the 'Visit Thailand Year" almost two decades ago. Thus, it is just essential for the government to realize the important role of Thai people in supporting and promoting tourism industry as a sustainable source of revenue for Thailand

One of the factors in the success of Thai tourism industry is the geographical location of the country. According to Lieutenant General Chalermchai (36 years of Tourism Authority of Thailad) when compared to other countries in the Southeast Asia region, Thailand becomes already one of the most attractive countries for tourist from around the world to visit. It is also an aviation hub in Asia, apart from its outstanding location naturally supported Thai tourism industry. It connects to most world cultural heritage sites in the Mekong Region.

Moreover, Thailand advantageously has abundant and beautiful natural tourism resources, with a wide variety of attractions in its four regions (the North, the South, the Northeast and the Central region). Due to the regional geographical differences, Thailand maintains wonderful and attractive natural resources and sites for tourism. To illustrate, the attractions of the Northern region are forests and waterfalls, whereas the south offers spectacular coastal scenery. The beaches along the Andaman Sea in the South are known all over the world offering wonderful undersea scenery. Thailand's tourism attractions do not only come in terms of environmental and natural recourses, but also in its long history and historical epics that are reflected through the lifestyles of the local people.

As the tourism business becomes popular and generates more income to many people in the communities where there is a thriving tourist industry, the government and business sectors became eager to develop more tourism sites to distribute income generation to more communities. It is obvious that the tourism businesses in Thailand have continuously recorded rapid growth bringing sizable mount of foreign currency into the country (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1996).

The "Visit Thailand, 1987" campaign program of Thai government was successfully attract many foreign tourists by visiting the country during the period of 1987-1992. This result ranked the tourism industry as one the highest revenue-generating sector as compared to the other industries. This period also jumpstarted high growths for economy of Thailand.

Statistics show that tourism industry topped all industries in Thailand for several decades (www.businessthai.co.th/content.php?data=406752_Special%20 Report). It has been on the rise since 1960 when there were only 81,380 foreign tourists visited the country generating revenue of 196 million Baht. This number steadily increased over the years and in 1982 the number of foreign tourists 2,218,429 generating total revenue amounting to 23,879 million Baht. A decade later, in the year 1995 the number of foreign tourists dramatically increased to 6.9 million, creating the total revenue of 339,658 million Baht in the year 2002.

The figures above show the plusses of tourism; however, Thai people and the government seem to neglect the negative effects of tourism expansion especially to the environment. The growth of tourism industry can cause some problems to the environment and community if Thai people lack understanding, knowledge and responsibility on natural resource conservation and management.

There are two major negative effects on tourism industry concerned the environment and the natural resources.

1. The increasing number of tourists and businesses as well as the extensive construction can pollute the environment.

2. The tourism industry consumes and causes damages to the natural resources and the environment to waste by, for example, releasing garbage or wastes to the environment.

Suriyon (1993) stressed on the pollution problems that caused damage to Pattaya. Many years ago, Pattaya was one of the most famous traveling places in Thailand, but now it becomes "Decayed Pattaya". This can be attributed to the rapid growth of tourism businesses together with the increasing number of travelers visiting Pattaya leaving tons and tons of garbage. Many hotels and other businesses release wastewater to the sea. These same problems are also occurring at Patong beach in Phuket province. Patong which use to have the most beautiful and clean beaches in Thailand, is now declared as a pollution control zone.

Even though tourism industry generates a lot of revenue to the economy of Thailand, it could also damage nature and the environment that will have a relative to the tourism industry. The destruction of the environment, especially the beaches, can lead to decrease in number of tourists visiting Thailand in the future. Thus, there is a need for good or appropriate natural resource management strategies for sustainable tourism.

At present, there are three major strategies concerning the world environment and natural resources that Thailand is trying to follow for the future development and sustainability of the tourism industry.

1. Strategy to protect the environment and natural resources

2. Strategy to inform and educate tourists on environmental and natural resources protection and conservation.

3. Strategy on human resource development, to focus on people's participation to environmental and natural resource protection and conservation.

Recently, Thailand has launched a brand-new campaign to promote tourism, so called "Green Tourism or Ecotourism". The main concept of this campaign is to foster tourism businesses that would not have negative effects to the environment. Hence, both government and private sectors concerning tourism industry should manage their own businesses in the ways that support this campaign policy (Dowling, 1995).

Panda (2001) defined the ecotourism as the new idea of travel or journey for nature lovers, with no intention to disturb the nature at all.

Boehlert (1997) emphasized that the ecotourism apparently started to become popular to many organizations and businesses. Hotels and traveling agencies picked up this theme as their concepts to attract the market. Many programs relating to ecotourism were launched.

However, in the level of national planning, the government also set up objectives of ecotourism and put them into the National Economic and Social Development Plan, Eighth Edition (1997-2001). It was briefly stated in the edited plan that to support "ecotourism" the natural resources in tourism industry must be used carefully and efficiently in responding to the needs of tourists, including the minimizing of negative effects to the environment.

In the National Economic and Social Development Plan, Ninth Edition (2002-2006), the idea behind the concept or content of this plan was influenced by an economic philosophy presented by His Majesty the King, so called "sufficiency economy". Following this philosophy, it could bring a balance to our community that will lead to sustainable and strong development. Moreover, within this plan, the focus is on human, family, and community development, including the enforcing of well

management to the natural resources and the environment as well as the emphasizing that people are considered as the heart of development.

Statement of Problem

The concept of "sustainable tourism" was introduced by Thai government through the Tourism authority of Thailand to assist the community in maintaining natural resources, culture, and people lifestyles, whereas its major objective is to fulfill the necessities economically and socially by utilizing the natural resources wisely and beneficially in long-term. (Kaewsurita, 2000)

Sustainable tourism includes "ecotourism" which broadly means traveling without destroying the nature. Its main concept is that while traveling, tourists should have the feeling of being close to the nature and protecting the environment; as a result, ecotourism would help establish good traveling behaviors among tourists that ultimately leads to sustainable tourism.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand has put its efforts in disseminating information to educate Thai people about sustainable tourism. It also supports tourism activities that conserve the natural resources and the environment such as ecotourism.

This study aims to find out how ecotourism information disseminated by the Tourism Authority of Thailand as well as presented or written through various types of media that affects attitudes of the study groups.

In this study, the researcher specifically to aims to study the attitude of the fourth year students in Forestry Faculty, Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, for the academic year 2006 toward ecotourism since this faculty provides most of the courses that are related to the areas of natural resources and environmental knowledge. Students graduated from this faculty are usually hired for the jobs concerning such areas by the government and private agencies, namely National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, Department of Marine and Coastal

Resources, The Botanical Garden Organization, and other environmental and natural resources-related companies. Therefore, those students from the Forestry Faculty, who will very soon graduate to play an important role in the community in the management and conservation of environment and natural resources, are expected to have the ability and deeper understanding in order to apply such knowledge for preventing the environment and developing environmental systems in accordance with their positive attitude on what they do toward ecotourism.

Objective

1. To study the demographics and source of information on ecotourism among the fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus for the academic year 2006

2. To determine the attitude toward ecotourism of the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty, Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus for the academic year 2006

3. To determine the relationship between demographics, source of information and the attitude toward ecotourism of the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty, Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus for the academic year 2006

Expect Outcome

1. Results of the study could be use for the improvement of academic courses related to environment preservation

2. Useful information resulting from the study could be used as a guide or reference in developing teaching instrument that could shift students' attitudes on environmental preservation from negative to positive

3. Results could also be used as a reference when making recommendations regarding natural resource management to the government and private agencies

Limitation of the Study

The researcher has focused the study on attitudes toward ecotourism of 170 fourth year students for the academic year 2006 in the Forestry Faculty, Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, comprising of six departments: Department of Forest Management (30 students), Department of Forest Biology (22 students), Department of Forest Product (40 students), Department of Silviculture (20 students), Department of Forest Engineering (18 students), and Department of Conservation (40 students).

Operational Definition of Terms

Student:

Fourth year, Forestry Faculty students, for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, who major in 6 departments including Forest Management, Forest Biology, Forest Product, Silviculture, Forest Engineering, and Conservation

Demographics:

General information of the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, including age, sex, department, and experience on ecotourism

Ecotourism:

Environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed areas, to enjoy and appreciate nature and accompanying cultural features as well as to become aware of the need for preserving natural and cultural capital

Source of information:

The channels of ecotourism information are disseminated through media received by the students. Sources of information in this study are classified into two types: mass media and people media. Mass media that are specially focused in this study include television, radio, newspaper, magazine, and Internet. People media are referred to family, friends, as well as colleagues and teachers. Regarding both media, they are most likely to have significant effects on the attitudes of the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus.

Mass media:

Mass media is the channel for message transfer to mass of people. Mass media is a tool of communication easy to access in large groups of people. In this study, the mass media is a type of media used for transferring ecotourism information to the fourth year students in the Forest Faculty for academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, as follows:

1. Television program or advertising spot concerning ecotourism
2. Radio program or advertising spot having ecotourism contents
3. Newspaper and magazine providing information and news about ecotourism.
4. Internet providing information and news about ecotourism

People Media:

People media is the communication process among two or more people in such a topic. In this study, people media include friends, family, as well as colleagues and teachers who share idea, knowledge and attitudes on ecotourism information with the fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus, as follows:

1. Friend: a person or a group of people and who have a friendly relationship with Forestry's students

2. Family: the member of the student's family, such as father, mother, brother, and sister, etc.

3. Colleague: a person or a group of people in a job or a project having a participation to share ideas, attitudes and information with the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty

4. Teacher: a person or a group of people teaching a class or a course to the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty

Attitude:

A relational mental state that connects a student to a position concerning ecotourism, and that also influences people's behavior. In this study, the attitudes of the forth year students in the Forestry Faculty for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus are evaluated as indicators of their knowledge on ecotourism and environment conservation.

CHAPTER II

LITTERATURE REVIEW

A study of the demographics, ecotourism concepts, sources of information and attitudes of the students in the Faculty of Forestry for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University toward ecotourism involves concepts and researches as follows:

1. Concepts of communication
2. Concepts on ecotourism
    2.1 Concept of ecotourism
    2.2 Concept of sustainable ecotourism
3. Concepts of attitude
4. Media exposure
5. Sources of Information
6. Related researches

Concepts of Communication

Communication is a part of human's daily life. They use communication to transmit their ideas or information to other people for the same levels of understanding. An attitude is a part of the evaluation of understandings among groups of people when they communicate. The researcher would like to define the concepts of communication as the followings:

Pranuda (2001) stated that communication is not an objective that humans can hold in their hands; it is the activity that participation needs to be involved. Communication can be divided into 3 levels as follows:

1. Intrapersonal communication which involves communication with oneself
2. Interpersonal communication which is face to face communication

3. Mass communication which means communication with large groups of people at one time through the use of media such as radio, newspaper, television, etc

Berlo (1960) stated that we accept the concept of communication process when we view events and relationships as dynamic, ongoing, ever changing and continuous. If we label something as a process, we also mean that it does not have a beginning, an end, or a fixed sequence of events. It is not static. It is moving. The ingredients within a process interact; each affects all of the others (Figure 1).

S $\longrightarrow$ M $\longrightarrow$ C $\longrightarrow$ R $\longrightarrow$ E

FEEDBACK
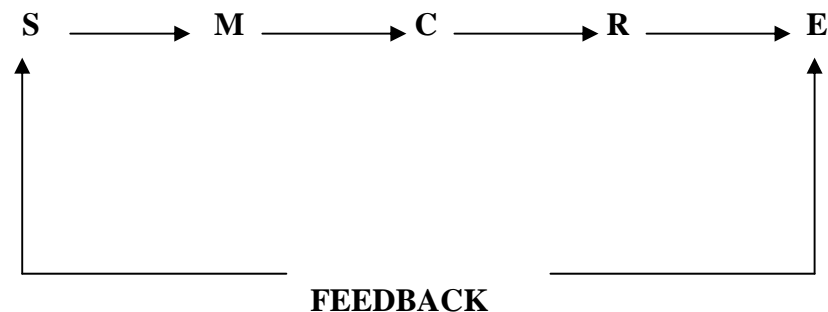
Figure 1 Communication process
Source: Felix Marlo (2003)

In conclusion, communication is a process to transmit information, knowledge, and experience to the same levels of understanding and sharing together. In this study, communication is the most important tool to change behavioral performance in a bid to share the same understanding of the word "ecotourism".

Concepts on Ecotourism

Megan (2002) showed a report by The World Tourism Organization (WTO) that the revenue from international tourism was increased by an average annual rate of 9% during 1988-1997. The number of international tourist arrival reached more than 664 million in 1999 (over 10% of the world's population), and it is expected to reach 1 billion by 2010. The increasing economic growth on tourism has captured the attention of most countries. However, the global growth of tourism significantly poses

cultural and biological diversity. Ecotourism is a growing niche market in the large tourism industry, with the potentiality of being an important sustainable development tool. Ecotourism is a real industry that seeks to take advantage of market trends.

At the same time, it frequently operates quite differently than other segments of the tourism industry. Ecotourism is defined by its sustainable development results: conserving natural areas, educating visitors about sustainability, and benefiting local people.

Definition

Simmons (1999) pointed that ecotourism is one of those terms during a bit more than 20 years around. Nobody has been able to define it yet.

Merg (1999) viewed that it is not only the government having tried to tackle the challenge of ecotourism, but also the academics, commercial tour operators, conservation organizations, and non-governmental units. People tend to define things that are beneficial to themselves; hence a variety of definitions.

Ceballos and Lascurain (1991) questioned who was generally accepted as the first person to define ecotourism. Tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with specific objectives of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery of wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestation (both past and present) found in these areas.

The International Ecotourism Society (2003) gave the definition of ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well- being of local people.

The Green Globe 21 International Ecotourism Standard was adopted from Australia's (2004) definition of ecotourism, which means ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas to foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, and conservation.

Fennell (1999) reviewed 15 definitions of ecotourism and provided his own definition of ecotourism as a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism, primarily focusing on experiencing and learning about nature. Also, it should be ethically managed under low-impact, non-consumptive and locally oriented (control, benefits, and scale), typically with the contribution to conserve or preserve natural areas.

Ceballos and Lascurain (1996) illustrated ecotourism as defined by IUCN's ecotourism program that it is an environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed natural areas for the enjoyment and appreciation of nature (as well as any accompanying cultural features – both in the past and present), which promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and beneficially provides active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

Dowling (1995) mentioned that ecotourism is based on natural environment, with a focus on its biological, physical and cultural features. Ecotourism depends on natural settings and may include cultural elements. The conservation of natural resources is essential to the planning, development, and management of ecotourism.

Concept of Ecotourism

1. Ecotourism as a concept, Megan (2002) stated that ecotourism is a sub-component in the field of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism aspires in all cases to achieve sustainable development results. However, it is important to clarify that all tourism activities are geared to holiday, business, conferences, congresses or fairs, health, and adventure, or ecotourism should aim to be sustainable. This means that the planning and development of tourism infrastructure, its subsequent operation and also

its marketing should focus on environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability criteria.

Figure 2 illustrates a reflection of where ecotourism can be placed within the process of developing more sustainable forms of tourism. This figure also provides a demonstration of how ecotourism is primarily a sustainable version of natural tourism, while including rural and cultural tourism elements.
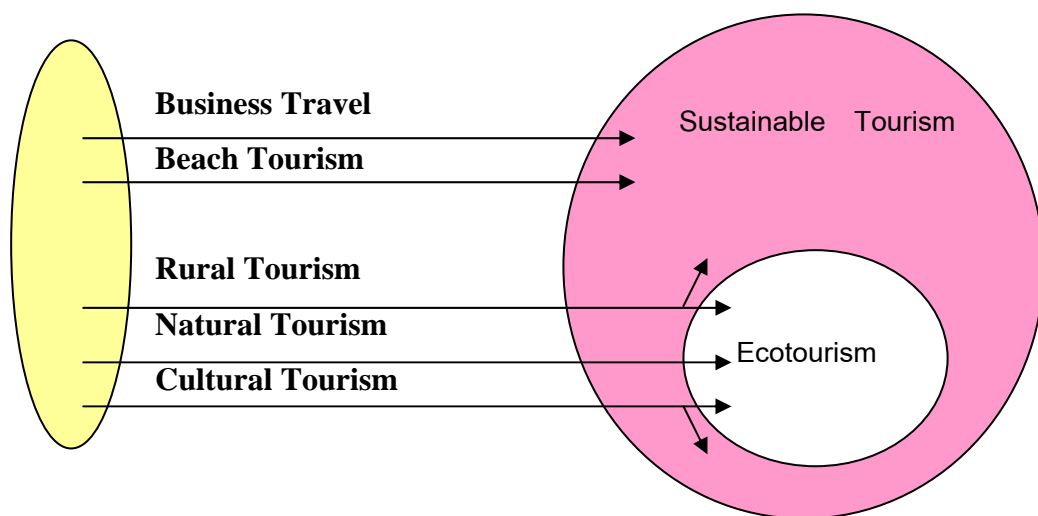
Figure 2 Ecotourism as a sustainable development concept
Source: Wood (2002)

2. Ecotourism was explained as a market segment that it could be a small but rapidly growing industry working within a niche market that is governed by market forces and regulations. Ecotourism is also primarily advertised as being equivalent to natural tourism in the marketplace. Some countries, companies, and destinations have social and environment policies and programs, while others do not.

Figure 3 provides a reflection of how ecotourism fits into the larger tourism marketplace. Both adventure tourism and ecotourism are shown subcomponents of nature tourism, while ecotourism has strong links to rural and culture tourism than adventure tourism. In ecotourism the prim motivation is the observation and

appreciation of natural features and related culture assets; whereas, in adventure tourism it is rather the physical exercise and challenging situation in natural environments. From a functional viewpoint, ecotourism in the marketplace is mostly individual or small-scale tourism that is operated by small and medium size companies in natural areas.
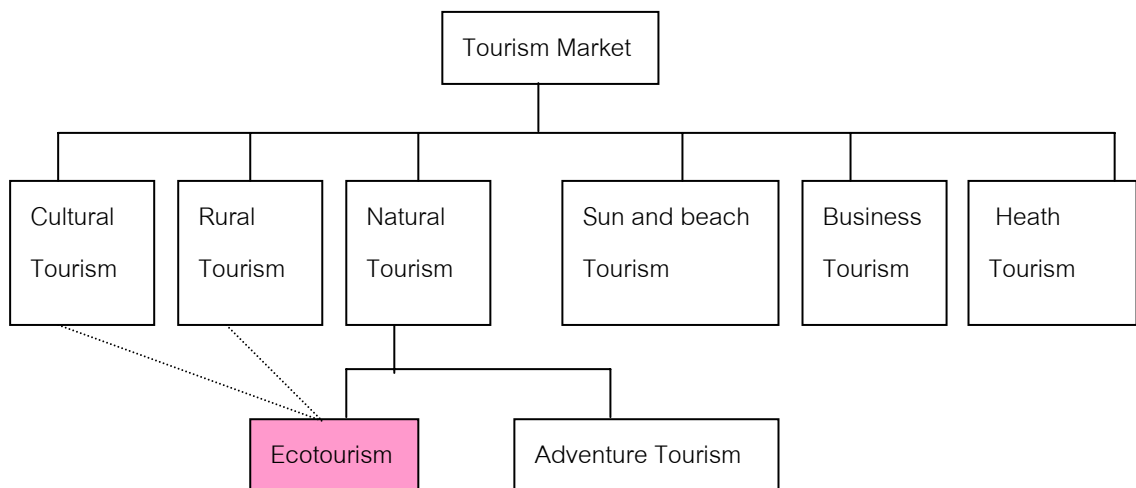
Figure 3 Ecotourism as a Market Segment
Source: Wood (2002)

3. The Components of Ecotourism the Components of Ecotourism can be divided as follows:

3.1 Contributes to conservation of biodiversity

3.2 Sustains the well being of local people

3.3 Includes an interpretation / learning experience

3.4 Involves responsible action on the part of tourists and the tourism industry.

3.5 Is delivered primarily to small group by small-scale businesses.

3.6 Requires lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources.

3.7 Stresses local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural people.

4. Principles of Ecotourism are a business that can be profitable, but it should be responsible businesses that aim to meet higher social and environment goals. Many travel and tourism businesses have found it is convenient to use the term " ecotourism " in their literature, and the government have used the term extensively to promote their destinations, all without trying to implement any of the most basic principles explained in this document. The principles underlying the concept of ecotourism include:

4.1 Minimize the negative impacts on nature and culture that can damage a destination

4.2 Educate the traveler on the importance of conservation

4.3 Stress the importance of responsible business, which works cooperatively with local authorities and people to meet local needs and deliver conservation benefits.

4.4 Direct revenues to the conservation and management of natural and protected areas

4.5 Emphasize the need for environment and social base-line studies, as well as long term monitoring program to assess and minimize impacts

4.6 Strive to maximize economic benefit for the host country, local business and communities, particularly people living in and adjacent to natural and protected areas

4.7 Seek to ensure that tourism development do not exceed the social and environmental limits of acceptable change as determined by researchers in cooperation with local residents.

4.8 Rely on infrastructure that has been developed in harmony with the environment. Minimize the use of fossil fuels, conserve local plants and wildlife, and blend with the natural and cultural environment

5. Ecotourism activities stated by Beeton (1998) that "Ecotourism includes many activities that are common to other forms of tourism. They are differentiated by the underlying philosophy and education components. When tourism activities combined with information and opportunity to experience the environment, it becomes an ecotourism activity".

Forestry Research Center (1997) indicated that there are different kinds of recreation activities that could be considered as ecotourism activities. However, all of these activities depend on the natural and local culture as the basic resources, emphasizing knowledge and experience gained in relation to nature and culture. Ecotourism activities would include hiking, nature study, nature photography, video taping and sound-of-natural audio taping ,bird watching, cave exploring, sky interpretation ,boat sightseeing ,canoeing ,kayaking ,row boating , sailing, snorkeling , skin or scuba diving, and cultural viewing or studying the traditional ways of life of the local communities within the tourism areas. They are some types of the tourism activities that also depend on nature of undertaking the activity, but do not emphasize the educational elements of the experience. These activities are considered as appreciative recreational activities and adventurous recreation activities, as well as such activities as relaxing, terrain / mountain biking, rock/ mountain climbing, etc. These many activities cloud be included in ecotourism, depending on individual suitability.

6. Ecotourist, Beeton (1998), identified that the tourists who spend part of their holidays for ecotourism activities are still considered as "ecotourists" because they undertake the activities and show an interest in the ethics and concepts of ecotourism. Kusler (1991) typified ecotourists into three main groups as the follows:

6.1 Do-it-yourself ecotourists. Despite their relative anonymity, this group comprises the largest percentage of all ecotourists These individuals stay in a variety of different types of accommodations, and have the mobility to visit any numbers of settings. Their experience, therefore, is marked by high degree of flexibility.

6.2 Ecotourist on tours. This group expects a high degree of organization within their tour and travel to exotic destination.

6.3 School group or scientific groups. This group often becomes involved in scientific research of an organization or individual, often stays in the same region for extensive periods of time, and is willing to endure harsher site conditions than other ecotourists.

Conversely, Lindberg (1991) emphasized the importance of dedication and time as a function definition of different types of ecotourists, including what tourists wish to experience form ecotourism, where they whish to travel, and how they wish to travel. Lindberg identified four basic types of ecotourism as follows:

1) Hard-core natural tourists : scientific researchers or members of tours specifically designed for ecotourism, removal of litters, or similar purposes

2) Dedicated nature tourist : people who take trips specifically to see protected areas and understand local natural and cultural history

3) Mainstream natural tourists : people who visit the park or other destinations primarily to take the unusual trips

4) Casual natural tourists : who experience natural incidentally as part of a broader trips

7. Tourism Resources Fennell (1999) pointed out that people use resources to accomplish ends in a variety of work and leisure setting.

Pearce (1992) identified some factors influencing the location of tourism projects or tourism potentiality of an area, which can be grouped into seven broad categories including climate ,physical conditions, attraction , access , existing, facilitates, land tenure and use, as well as other considerations such as the availability of regional development incentives.

Fennell (1999) showed the environmental elements that structure the tourism experience, which include geographic location, climate and weather topography and landforms, surface materials, water, vegetation and fauna. It should be noted that these resources may act either as catalysts in facilitating and drawing people to a tourist region or as constraints to visitation.

Concept of sustainable tourism

The concept of sustainable tourism is inextricably linked to the ethic of sustainable development. In theory, it is advocated that people strive to meet their present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, presumably measured against the standard of living currently enjoy (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Sustainable tourism is a tourist's way of balancing among "quality of life", "income", "conservation", and "modernization". Natural resources should be preserved. Sustainable tourism does not focus on the number of tourists, but emphasizes on "human" or types of tourists. Sustainable tourism should not only satisfy tourists' needs but also consider the potentiality of tourism business, services, and local people. This type of tourism takes full responsibility by the local people in

managing and handling the knowledge of local to tourists. Development of tourism activities and operations by local people is a key of sustainable tourism. (Research Digest, 1998)

Tourism Authority of Thailand has defined the concept of ecotourism as the pathway to "Sustainable Development". Most of the tour or travel activities support the idea of natural conservation and create income to the communities (Pongpanit, 1999).

Components and objective of ecotourism:

1. To bridge awareness of environmental and natural conservation
2. To bring tourists' satisfaction
3. To encourage participation within a community and income distribution

Objective of sustainable tourism:

1. To develop awareness and understanding of tourists in order to be benevolent toward environment and economic

2. To enhance experience, values and quality of journey to tourists

3. To adjust and leverage quality of life where a community inhabits

4. To preserve and maintain natural and environmental quality of tourists attraction (Workshop on Ecotourism in Andaman, 1998)

Concepts of Attitude

Definition

Allport (1935 cited in Victor, 1988) defined attitude as a mental state of readiness, organized through experience, which exerts a directive influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1996 cited in Oskamp, 1977) stated that most of major concepts are the learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a given object. The main characteristics of attitude are indicated by the key words in the definition such as learned, predisposition, behavior, consistent and object as follows.

1. Attitude is learned form personal experience, information provided by others, and market controlled sources, in particular exposure to mass media.

2. Attitude is predisposition. A predisposition is an inclination or tendency toward something; attitude has motivational qualities.

3. Attitude has a relationship with behavior. For marketers, the behavior of primary interest is product purchase. Remember, however, that we are not suggesting or assuming a causal relationship.

4. Attitude is consistent .However, this does not necessarily mean that attitude is permanent; attitude can change.

5. Attitude is directed toward an object and it is a very specific reaction to that object. For example, you like "X" but you do not like "Y". The term "object" includes specific consumption or marketing-related concepts, such as product, product category, band, services, possessions, product use advertisement, price, medium, or retailer.

Forms of attitude (Pranuda, 2001) include:

1. Personal point of view or own experience

2. Mental ability within oneself

3. Stability of own thinking, education program or background thoughts which might change as time passes by or environment effects.

- Cognitive component
- Affective component
- Behavioral component

The attitude toward ecotourism of the students in the Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University will indicate their feeling and thinking reaction to the community. In this study, it can be concluded that the attitude has both positive and negative effects to change behaviors. The positive attitude toward ecotourism of the students will support the sustainable tourism and sustainable environment.

Media Exposure

Definition

Mass Communication is defined as transmission process of message from the mass communication organization as the source to the receiver via the mass media as channels or transmitters.

Kalpper (1960) mentioned that in term of media exposure, people are likely to expose to media by selective process.

Peason and Paul (1997) viewed that selective attention or exposure, selective perception, and selective retention are highly interrelated psychological characteristics that explain how people confront and cope with the content of the mass media.

In Lasswell's function, later cited by sociologist Charles Wright in 1995, media exposures are identified as surveillance, correlation and transmission of culture. According to Lasswell, these functions are basic and exist in all societies. (Merrill *et al.*, 1990)

1. Surveillance of Environment - The first function is the most obvious of the three. It refers to the journalistic service of media - collecting and disseminating information. Lasswell calls it a surveillance role, in which media specialists survey the environment, interpret the signs and report their findings to society. In effect, media fill the role of sentries, standing guard to warn of imminent danger to the community.

2. Correlation of the Parts of society - More than just reporting dangers and providing useful day-to-day news, Lasswell says media must also offer explanations, interpreting the news to help member of the community understand the sense of what is being said. Reporting offers only information. The interpretation or correlation provides knowledge, which is essential if a society is to function smoothly.

3. Transmission of the social Heritage - Transmission of culture is basically educational. It refers to the passage of social and cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Media not only report the news to the community or interpret the meaning of the news, but also transmit information about the society itself – its history as asocial unit, its mistakes and successes, its norms and values. By providing cultural guidelines, media can help teach the citizens of society how to lie, how to act, and what is expected of them.

Processes on compass:

1. Selective Exposure of Selective Attention is defined as receivers selected or exposed to message from any sources in which receivers explore message to support their previous existing attitude and avoid message conflicting their own previous integrity on the basis that the message received is not in conformity to their own understanding or the previous attitude, which would initiate mental imbalance or worries called "Cognitive Dissonance".

2. Selective Perception of Selective Interpretation occurs when an individual receives interesting message and interprets according to the understanding, attitude, experience, needs, belief, expectation, motivation, physical conditions, emotional and metal conditions, and etc.

3. Selective Retention means that individuals select to remember message specifically directed to their own interest, needs and attitude.

However, individuals definitely open to receive message by nature, depending on how to receive message with the following determined factors:

1. Personality and personal psychology - Each individual was drastically different in personal psychological structure resulted from different nurturing and living in different social environment, which later impacts levels of intelligence, ideas, and attitude including perception process, learning, and motivation.

2. Social relation – This is resulted from people and rather social dependent with reference groups. In decision to express any behaviors, people have the tendency to follow group's ideas, attitude and behaviors in order to be accepted.

3. Environment external to communication process - It is believed that gender, occupation, educational levels and income draw similarity in receiving contents of communication, including the same reactions to the contents.

Sources of Information

Ila and Alexander (2003) explained that a source refers to a person or a group of persons "with a purpose, a reason for engaging in communication". The source initiates the communication process. In some models of communication, the source is also referred to the ender, sender, information source, or communicator.

Dominick (2002) mentioned that the source initiates the process by having a thought or an idea that he or she wishes to transmit to some other entity. Naturally, sources differ in their communication skills. The source may or may not have knowledge about the receiver of massage. The source can be a single individual, groups, or even organizations.

Related Researches

Forest Research Center (1995) studied on a project of tourism for conserving the ecosystem: a case of Southern. The result revealed that from 109 tourism destinations, there were 16 destinations with high potentiality to be ecotourism destination, including Phang-nga, Krabi, Satun, Pattalung, Surat Thani, Songkla, Narathiwat, and Nakorn Srithammarat. Most of them were in protected or conserved areas such as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctions, and Wildlife non-hunting areas. There were 54 and 39 destinations with medium and low potentiality.

Sangarun (1998) studied the potentiality and National Park Management Guidelines for ecotourism: a case study of Phang-nga National Park in Phang-nga province. The results revealed the site characteristics and natural resource components of Phang-nga National Park were of high potentiality (3.93). The ecotourism services provided by tour operators and local people were in high potentiality (3.43), while the environment impact was in medium level (3.09).

Prangnomsub (2001) studied the ecotourism management potentiality of local community: a case study of Ban Thung Soong Community, Krabi Province. It was found that there were four groups of factors determining ecotourism management potentiality at the community levels, namely site characteristics, environmental management, activities and tourism management, as well as community organization. The results also revealed that Ban Thumg Soong Community had an average level of potentiality in managing ecotourism, with community organization factor as the highest, and activities and tourism management factor as the lowest.

Pranuda (2001) studied the demographics of respondents, media exposure that influenced the knowledge and attitude of Krabi's tour guides toward the sustainable tourism. In addition, the demographic factors of the respondents had also been studied. The results of this study recommended arranging seminars, training courses, workshops or any short courses in related topics as the first priority tool to communicate with the tour guides and to bring in deeper knowledge on sustainable in Thailand. Whereas, identifying related contents and sufficient information to be broadcasted or published in other media was also highly recommended.

Assawin (2003) studied the attitude and behaviors on ecotourism among young children in Bangkok and nearby districts. The children with ecotourism experience mostly preferred journeys to natural tourism sites such as waterfalls or natural water sources, followed by beaches, small islands, mountains, and valleys, respectively. Their primary aims of traveling to these places were to get close with natural resources, to rest or relax, and to feel the beauty of tourism sites, respectively. The popular time of their journeys included during school break in March-April, holidays, and weekends, respectively.

Karada and Urai (2003) conducted a survey study on the correlation between media access behaviors and positive awareness on ecotourism among young children in Bangkok. The most popular mass media access included TV, newspapers and radio. While, the most common peer media were friends, parents and teachers. Types of information access included entertainments, sports and tourism. In term of tourism

information access, the most popular mass media were TV, newspapers and movies. The most common peer media for tourism information included parents, friends, and actors/actresses. The most effective mass media for ecotourism awareness were TV, newspapers, and Internet. The most effective peer media for ecotourism awareness included parents, friends, and actors/actresses. The most effective mass media for the remembrance of ecotourism awareness were TV, newspapers, and Internet. The most effective peer media for the remembrance of ecotourism awareness included parents, friends, and actors/actresses. Moreover, children with different age and education background had different attitude toward ecotourism. Meanwhile, sex and family monthly income showed no effects to children's awareness of ecotourism.

Sunisa (1997) studied the opinions of the chief monks toward the promotion of Buddhism temples in Chiang Mai District, as part of tourism. The chief monks with longer years of monkshood and higher Dharma education, who lived in Chiang Mai for a long period of time and had best awareness on tourism, were likely to have more positive attitude toward the promotion of Buddhism temples as part of tourism.
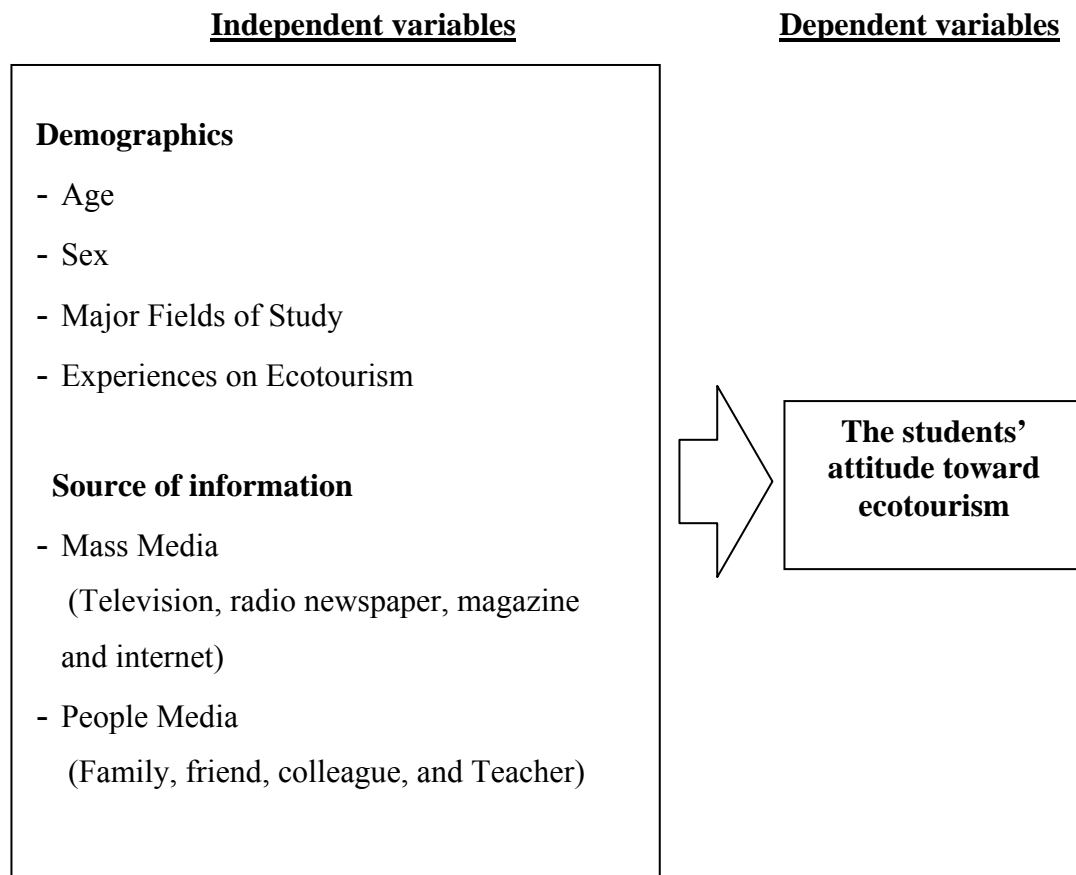
Hypotheses Testing

The following hypotheses were set up to test the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables.

Hypotheses: Hypotheses of this study were to find out the relationship between following variables.

1. Student's demographics and the attitude towards ecotourism.
2. Source of ecotourism information and the attitude toward ecotourism.

Conceptual Framework

This study could be shown by the following conceptual framework to explain the link between independent variables and dependent variables.

<u>Independent variables</u> **<u>Dependent variables</u>**

Demographics

- Age

- Sex

- Major Fields of Study

- Experiences on Ecotourism

Source of information

- Mass Media

(Television, radio newspaper, magazine

and internet)

- People Media

(Family, friend, colleague, and Teacher)

**The students'
attitude toward
ecotourism**

Figure 4 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study designed as a survey research was aimed at studying the attitude of the fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry during the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen Campus, as well as focused on their understanding and reaction toward "ecotourism" or ecotourism projects.

Population

The target population was the 170 fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry during the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen Campus, and come from 6 departments. These departments are the Department of Forest Management by 30 students, the Department of Forest Biology by 22 students, and the Department of Forest Product by 40 students, the Department of Silviculture by 20 students, the Department of Forest Engineering by 18 students, and the Department of Conservation by 40 students.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions was used for data collection. It was originally prepared in Thai and then translated into English. It was divided into 3 parts, with the criteria for score interpretation as follows:

1. Demographics

The first part included questions regarding the background information of the fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry during the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen Campus, such as sex, age, departments, and

ecotourism experience. The percentage calculation was used to evaluate on this sections.

2. Sources of Information

This section was divided into two parts:

2.1 The first part included questions regarding the different types of media that the students accessed for information about ecotourism. The questions were to find out which type of media mostly accessed by the students for ecotourism information. The answers were grouped into two types of media: mass media and people media as shown below.

Mass media	**People media**
Television	Friend
Radio	Family
Newspaper	Colleague
Magazine	Teacher
Internet	

According to the evaluating method for this section, the weighting system was designed to indicate what the three most popular choices of the ways of access on ecotourism information will be. Students must orderly rank the most three media which they access to ecotourism information. The weighting method will be scored as the following.

The number of a media chosen at the first order will be multiplied by three.

The number of a media chosen at the second order will be multiplied by two.

The number of a media chosen at the third order will be multiplied by one.

After calculation all the data, the top three of the highest total score weighted (the sum of the weighting score in each order for each media) will be the top-three rank of the sources of information that the most student accessed on ecotourism, respectively.

2.2 The second part focused on the frequency of access to ecotourism information among the students within a week. There were 4 answers provided, with the scores given as follows:

Never	= 0
Low (1 -2 times per week)	= 1
Medium (3 -4 times per week)	= 2
High (> 4 times per week)	= 3

The mean score in each level were relating as following:

Mean	Level
2.34 - 3.00	high
1.67 - 2.33	medium
1.00 - 1.66	low

3. Attitude of students' Toward Ecotourism

There were 10 questions developed to test the attitude of students toward ecotourism. The criteria for score interpretation of students' attitude level were as follows:

Lowest Level	1.00 – 1.80
Low Level	1.81 – 2.60
Medium Level	2.61 – 3.40
High Level	3.41 – 4.20
Highest Level	4.21 – 5.00

Method of Data Collection

The data were collected from the fourth year students in the Faculty of Forestry for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen Campus. The researcher distributed questionnaires directly to the students and collected the questionnaires as soon as the students completed.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine students' attitude toward ecotourism. The Chi-square was used to test the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, with statistical significance at 0.05 levels.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results are presented in the following parts:

Part 1   Demographics of Students

Part 2   Source of Information on Ecotourism

Part 3   Attitude of Students toward Ecotourism

Part 4   Hypothesis Testing

Part 5   Recommendations from the Questionnaires

Part 1 Demographics of Students

As presented on Table 1, there were more female students (62.4%) than male students (37.6%), with the average age of 22 years (21-24 years). According to major field of study of the students, the results show that there were 23.5% of students majoring in both "Forest Product" and "Conservation". The next highest percentage, "Forest Management" was at 17.6%. "Forest Biology" was only at 12.9%. About a half of the students (49.4%) had experienced on ecotourism through trainings or seminars with the average frequency of 3 times.

Table 1 Demographics of the fourth year students of the Kasetsart University
Department of Forestry, academic year 2005

N = (170)

Data	No. of Students	Percentage
Sex		
Male	64	37.6
Female	106	62.4
Age		
21 years	37	21.8
22 years	110	64.7
23 years	20	11.8
24 years	1	0.6
N/A	2	1.2
Mean age at 22 years (21-24 years)		
Major subject		
Department of Forest Management	30	17.6
Department of Forest Biology	22	12.9
Department of Forest Product	40	23.5
Department of Silviculture	20	11.8
Department of Forest Engineering	18	0.6
Department of Conservation	40	23.5
Experience on ecotourism		
Ever	84	49.4
Never	86	50.6

Table 1 (Continued)

N = (170)

Data	No. of Students	Percentage
Frequency of experience on ecotourism (from 84 experienced students)		
1 time	13	15.5
2 times	21	25.0
3 times	27	32.1
4 times	2	2.4
5 times	3	3.6
9 times	3	3.6
10 times	1	1.2
15 times	1	1.2
N/A	13	15.5
Mean frequency at 3 times		

Note: N/A (Not available) means the number of no answer on a specific question on
    the questionnaire of the study.

Part 2 Source of Information on Ecotourism

Mass Media

As revealed in Table 2, the first top 3 sources of information on ecotourism accessed by the students were television, internet, and newspaper respectively.

Table 2 Ranking of the students' access to mass media as sources of information on ecotourism

(N = 170)

Information source	chosen order			Weight	Rank
	1	**2**	**3**		
TV	100	23	24	370	1
Radio	3	16	16	57	5
Newspaper	21	48	30	189	3
Magazine	17	23	34	131	4
Internet	28	56	43	239	2

According to the results presented in Table 3, the value of 1.72 of the total mean was representing the medium level of the total students' access to the source of information on ecotourism from various types of mass media. Moreover, as considering to each type of mass media, the level of students' access on ecotourism from TV and Internet was medium (1.90 and 1.87 respectively), while the level of students' access on ecotourism from magazine, newspaper, and radio was low (1.66, 1.66 and 1.49 respectively).

Table 3 Students' level of access to mass media as source of information on
ecotourism

(N = 170)

Media types	Levels of access			never	Mean	σ	Results
	High	Medium	Low		(µ)		
TV	54	32	69	15	1.90	.89	medium
	(31.8%)	(18.8%)	(40.6%)	(8.8%)			
Radio	20	8	69	62	1.49	.82	low
	(12.6%)	(5.0%)	(43.4%)	(39.0%)			
Newspaper	29	43	80	12	1.66	.78	low
	(17.7%)	(26.2%)	(48.8%)	(7.3%)			
Magazine	21	41	63	38	1.66	.75	low
	(12.9%)	(25.1%)	(38.7%)	(23.3%)			
Internet	41	50	60	18	1.87	.81	medium
	(24.3%)	(29.6%)	(35.5%)	(10.6%)			
			Total (mean)		1.72	.59	medium

Note: The values shown in the blanket represents the percentage of response from
students for each item in each type of media.

People Media

The top-three sources of information on ecotourism in term of people media
accessed by the students were friends, teachers or instructors, and colleges or co-
workers respectively (Table 4).

Table 4 Ranking of students' access to people media as sources of information on
ecotourism

(N = 170)

Information Sources	Chosen Order			Weight	Ranks
	1	2	3		
Friends	113	45	9	438	1
Family	3	14	44	81	4
Colleges/co-workers	6	29	39	115	3
Teachers/instructors 45	63	28	28	9	2

The results from Table 5 show that the most popular way of sourcing information on ecotourism via people media that access by the students were conversation (75.9%), organizing or participating in activities (55.9%), and education (54.7%) respectively.

Table 5 Students' ways of access to sources of information on ecotourism via
people media

(N = 170)

Ways of Access to Sources of Information	No. of Student	Percentage
(more than one answer)		
Conversation	129	75.9
Training/meeting/seminar/observation	61	35.9
Organizing/participating in activities	95	55.9
Education	93	54.7

In terms of ways of souring or accessing information on ecotourism, the results from Table 6 indicate that the sourcing information through conversations was at the medium level (Mean = 1.83). In addition, the level of students' access via the rest of the sourcing ways such as education, training, meeting, seminar, observation,
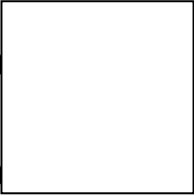
as well as organizing or participating in activities was low. Therefore, as a result, the total mean represented the overall students' access on ecotourism information though people media was low at 1.50.

Table 6 Students' level of access to source of information on ecotourism by peer media

(N = 170)

Ways of Access to Sources of Information	Levels of Access			Never	Mean (μ)	σ	Results
	High	**Medium**	**Low**				
Conversation medium	42	45	69	13	1.83	.83	
	(24.9%)	(26.6%)	(40.8%)	(7.7%)			
Training/Meeting/ Seminar/Observation/	11	12	72	71	1.36	.68	low
	(6.6%)	(7.2%)	(43.4%)	(42.8%)			
Participating in activities	5	22	84	55	1.29	.55	low
	(3.0%)	(13.3%)	(50.6%)	(33.1%)			
Education	22	30	91	23	1.52	.75	low
	(13.3%)	(18.1%)	(54.8%)	(13.9%)			
			Total mean		1.50	.59	low

Part 3 Attitude of Students toward Ecot

The figure from Table 7 shows that most student [ ] st level of attitude on both the information that the exhaustibility of tourism resources effected by inappropriate uses (Item # 2), and the idea that the cooperation between government and private sectors was required to support stable ecotourism (Item # 10), with the mean value at 4.34 and 4.28 respectively. While, the lowest level of the students' attitude towards ecotourism (Mean = 3.14) was medium or moderate on the information that ecotourism management was a kind of investment with chances of

losses like others (Item # 3). However, statistically, the overall students' attitude towards ecotourism was high at 4.01 mean values.

Table 7 Percentage and Mean of students' attitude toward ecotourism

(N = 170)

Items	Attitude					Mean (μ)	σ	Results
	Highest	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Lowest**			
1. Ecotourism is responsible for tourism sites, environment and community.	57 (33.5%)	65 (38.2%)	40 (23.5%)	7 (4.1%)	1 (.6%)	4.00	.89	high
2. Tourism resources can be used up in case of inappropriate use.	94 (55.3%)	47 (27.6%)	24 (14.1%)	3 (1.8%)	2 (1.2%)	4.34	.87	highest
3. Ecotourism management is a kind of investment, with chances of losses like others.	8 (4.7%)	44 (25.9%)	87 (51.2%)	26 (15.3%)	5 (2.9%)	3.14	.84	medium
4. Participation between local administration, private sectors and community is essential for eco-tourism management.	38 (22.4%)	91 (53.5%)	32 (18.8%)	8 (4.7%)	1 (.6%)	3.92	.81	high
5. Ecotourism management should be done in appropriate areas.	41 (24.4%)	86 (51.2%)	38 (22.6%)	2 (1.2%)	1 (.6%)	3.98	.76	high

Table 7 (Continued)

Items	Attitude					Mean (μ)	σ	Results
	Highest	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Lowest**			
6. Ecotourism activities at any tourism sites need to be related to characteristics of each community and area.	51 (30.0%)	81 (47.6%)	33 (19.4%)	4 (2.4%)	1 (.6%)	4.04	.80	high
7. Management of facility in ecotourism sites should be done in the appropriate environmental areas.	69 (40.6%)	58 (34.1%)	38 (22.4%)	3 (1.8%)	2 (1.2%)	4.11	.89	high
8. Ecotourism is a a way to promote tourism with the stress on environment and ecology of the community.	64 (37.6%)	70 (41.2%)	33 (19.4%)	3 (1.8%)	--	4.15	.79	high
9. Ecotourism, if being developed in the right way, will lead to stable tourism management.	68 (40.0%)	65 (38.2%)	34 (20.0%)	3 (1.8%)	--	4.16	.80	high

Table 7 (Continued)

(N = 170)

Items	Attitude					Mean	σ	Results
			---			(μ)		
	Highest	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Lowest**			
10. The cooperation	83	55	28	4	--	4.28	.82	highest
between government	(48.8%)	(32.4%)	(16.5%)	(2.4%)				
and private sectors								
is required to support								
stable ecotourism.								
			Total mean			4.01	.57	high

Part 4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 There were relationships between student's demographics and their attitude towards ecotourism

According to the Chi-Square testing from Table 8, there was one demographic factor, major field of the students, that "p" value was less than 0.05 (p = .000). Therefore, only major field of the students had a significant relationship to their attitude toward ecotourism at 0.05 significant levels. In contrast, other students' demographics such as sex, age, and their work experience had no relationship to their attitude on ecotourism.

Table 8 Relationships between student's demographics and their attitude towards
ecotourism

Demographic factors	χ^2	df	p
Sex	5.638	4	.228
Age group	1.255	4	.869
Major	56.542	20	.000 ***
Work experiences	4.996	4	.228

**Hypothesis 2 There were relationships between students' access to source of
information and their attitude towards ecotourism**

Mass Media

Results from Table 9 indicate that the students' access to ecotourism
information from radio had no significant relationship to their attitude toward
ecotourism. Whereas, other types of media such as TV, newspaper, magazine, and
internet that the students accessed ecotourism information had a statistically
significant relationship to their attitude toward ecotourism at 0.05 significant levels.

Table 9 Relationships between students' access to sources of information
(Mass Media) and their attitude towards ecotourism

Mass Media	χ^2	df	p
TV	85.251	42	.003 **
Radio	35.667	30	.241
Newspaper	85.775	44	.005 **
Magazine	73.261	40	.004 **
Internet	98.827	44	.001 ***

People Media

By using the Chi-square testing, the results from Table 10 explain that from people media perspective, there was no statistical significant relationship between students' ways to access ecotourism information by having a conversation and their attitude toward ecotourism at 0.05 significant levels. However, the students' ways to access ecotourism information via people media by training or seminar, organizing or participating activities, and education had statistically significant relationship to their attitude toward ecotourism at 0.05 significant levels.

Table 10 Relationships between ways to access ecotourism information via people media and their attitude towards ecotourism

Ways to Access Ecotourism Information via People Media	χ^2	df	P
Conversation	80.504	44	.001 ***
Training and Seminar	53.810	36	.028 *
Organizing / Participating Activities	83.178	38	.001 ***
Education	49.941	40	.135

Part 5 Discussion

Hypothesis 1 There was a relationship between students' demographics and their attitude toward ecotourism.

Demographics of the fourth year students in the Forestry Faculty for the academic year 2006 at Kasetsart University, Bangkhen campus included sex, age, major field of study, and their experience. According to results of the study, the only demographic factor significantly related to attitude toward ecotourism was the major field of study.

It was found that the students majoring in Forest Product and Conservation were likely to have more positive attitude toward ecotourism than the ones with other major subjects. This could be due to the fact that those major subjects (Forest Product and Conservation) mainly focus on the importance of a variety of natural resources and their best usage, together with natural resource and environmental development and restoration. Whereas, other major subjects significantly stress on other factors; for example, Forest Management focuses on management of forests especially the protection of forest invasion; Forest Biology focuses on management of living things in the nature; Silviculture focuses on new innovation and technology for forest management; Forest Engineering focuses on forest survey; Forest Product focuses on the usage and processes of forest products while Conservation focuses on the importance of natural resource and environmental conservation and restoration. Hence, the students majoring in Forest Product and Conservation were more likely to realize the importance of natural resources and other related activities than the ones with other above majoring subjects

However, the factors of sex and age that were found not related to attitude toward ecotourism could be due to the fact that both male and female students, of similar ages, received the same types of knowledge and experience from their class studies and activities. Thus, these factors showed no relation to attitude toward ecotourism among the students. According to a study by Karada and Urai (2003), the

sex of young children was not related to attitude toward ecotourism. Children of different ages had different awareness on ecotourism.

Ecotourism experience or exposure included the participation in trainings, meetings, seminars, observation studies, and other activities on ecotourism. According to the survey study, ecotourism experience was not related to attitude toward ecotourism. This was due to the fact that the students have less chance to get an interesting or exciting ecotourism experience during their academic years. Even though, they experienced ecotourism from various trainings, meetings, seminars, observation studies and other ecotourism activities, they still show no more interest on ecotourism issues. However, it is expected that more exciting and attractive ecotourism experience with a wide variety of contents, activities and methods, especially the one supporting direct experience, can promote more positive attitude toward ecotourism. In a study of Assawin (2003), it was stated that children with direct ecotourism experience were likely to have better attitude toward ecotourism.

Hypothesis 2 There was a relationship between the students' access to sources of information on ecotourism and their attitude toward ecotourism.

The access to the source of information on ecotourism included the access to mass media and peer media was related to attitude toward ecotourism.

The access to mass media such as TV, newspaper, magazine and Internet was related to attitude toward tourism. The ones who accessed information from TV > 4 times/week were likely to have more positive attitude. While, the frequency of access of information from newspaper, magazine and Internet for 1-2 times/week was in accordance to the study by Karada and Urai (2003), which found that children's behaviors on media access were likely to have positive relation to awareness on ecotourism. The most popular media among children included TV and newspapers. Whereas, the most effective mass media to promote awareness on ecotourism were TV, newspapers and Internet. The students maintained highest frequency of information access from TV. This was due to the fact that the presentation on TV is

more interesting and attractive via moving pictures and sounds, as well as more convenient and easier to access, than other kinds of mass media. "Dry information" such as newspapers and magazines is limited to only the ones who can read, and it is not as effective as TV in term of distribution of message or information. Meanwhile, Internet is limited in terms of computer capability although it can show pictures and sounds like TV.

People media perceived by the students was introduced in the form of conversation, trainings, meetings, seminars, and activities. There was, in some point, a relationship between these ways to access ecotourism information and the students' attitude toward ecotourism. The ones who never received trainings, meetings and seminars were likely to have more positive attitude. While, other related activities and education for 1-2 times / week were likely to promote more positive attitude. The trainings, meetings and seminars on ecotourism were considered as some experience. However, repeated and boring or non-attractive experience could lead to boredom. Hence, the students who never participated in any trainings, meetings, and seminars, but received knowledge and awareness on ecotourism from their direct experience and other related activities or conversation could also possibly have positive attitude toward ecotourism.

Part 6 Recommendations from the Questionnaires

Problems of Ecotourism in Thailand

The students believed that the urgent problems of ecotourism in Thailand are as follows:

1. Most tourists lack knowledge, understanding and awareness on ecotourism. They show no respect with some inappropriate or irresponsible manners/behaviors to tourism sites, such as not keeping them clean, destroying nature/environment, smuggling of illegal forestry products, etc.

2. There are fewer numbers of natural resources, clearly due to high environmental destruction and deterioration with lack of awareness on long term effects of inappropriate uses and management of natural resources.

3. Management of ecotourism system is poor and inefficient, with more focus on numbers of tourists rather than original ways of local life styles and too much concern on material development as well as business profits.

4. There are inappropriate uses of tourism sites, with no concern on the potential of each area to support higher numbers of tourists and lack of awareness on environmental conservation and restoration for ecotourism.

5. There is poor public relation on ecotourism. Most tourists don't know much about ecotourism sites and misunderstand on their behaviors and manners in those places.

6. There is not much support and cooperation from related working units for the success and progress of ecotourism due to a wrong belief that ecotourism is not their main job responsibility.

7. There is not much participation on ecotourism management from local people, except government units, travel agencies and hotel business, which leads to opinion conflict between insiders and outsiders.

8. Most officers lack knowledge and understanding of ecotourism, which leads to environmental effects due to wrong management of various activities.

Suggestions on Ecotourism

The students suggested the following for the proper promotion of ecotourism.

1. Tourists should maintain adequate knowledge, understanding and awareness of ecotourism for their appropriate behaviors and manner.

2. Local people should be encouraged to participate in every process of ecotourism management for them to clearly understand the benefits or limits/problems of ecotourism for real problem solving.

3. There should be more cooperation from all concerned sectors to attain the main objectives and goals of ecotourism management.

4. Rules and regulations on ecotourism should be seriously enforced. The separation between ecotourism areas and conservation areas should be clear. (16.0%)

5. Appropriate management of ecotourism is required, with clear job responsibilities for each working unit.

6. Ecotourism management and activities should mainly focus on whole community in terms of the environment and culture. Tourists should be encouraged to get real close to the nature without destruction of the community's culture and environment.

7. There should be a regular evaluation of the effects of ecotourism to the community together with proper environmental management and concerns.

8. The concept of "Sufficiency Economy" should be applied to ecotourism management.

Suggestions on Ecotourism Promotion

The following are some of the suggestions for ecotourism promotion:

1. Knowledge and understanding of ecotourism should be promoted to local people, authorized agencies and tourists for safer management of tourism to natural resources and environment in the community.

2. A variety of interesting and attractive media should be used for effective promotion of ecotourism to people of all ages and groups in every area.

3. Local people in the community should be encouraged to assist in every process of ecotourism promotion for equitable sharing benefits and income.

4. There should be the studies on potential and capability as well as effects of ecotourism in each area to prevent troubles or problems.

5. Rules and regulations for each ecotourism area should be clearly and severely imposed for sustainable tourism sites in the community.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Using a questionnaire survey method, this research aims to study the attitude, experience, as well as access to sources of information regarding ecotourism. The study also focuses on the relationship between the demographics, sources of information and attitude of 170 fourth year students of the Kasetsart University Department of Forestry, academic year 2006, who were target population of the study. The questionnaires were used for collecting data. The percentage, mean, standard deviation, and weight calculations were statistically used to analyze data including Chi-Square technique for hypothesis testing. The testing result of the research instrument of this study was acceptable. ($\alpha = 0.7$) According to the study, results of the survey research were as follows:

Demographic of the Students

The students of this study were female at 62.4% and male at 37.6%. The mean age of them was 22 years old (from 21 to 24 years old). The percentage of each major subject of the students were 23.5% from the Department of Forest Product, 23.5% from the Department of Conservation, 17.6% from the Department of Forest Management, 12.9% from the Department of Forest Biology, 11.8% from the Department of Silviculture, and 10.6% from the Department of Forest Engineering. Moreover, 49.4% of the students received trainings, seminars, or related activities or projects on ecotourism, but 50.6% of them did not. The mean of frequency of their overall experience on ecotourism by training, seminar, or related activities or projects was 3 times (from 1 to 15 times).

Access of Source of Information on Ecotourism Information

1. Mass Media

The 3 most popular mass media to access ecotourism information among students included TV (weight = 370), followed by Internet (weight = 239), and newspaper (weight = 189).

However, the information access via mass media among responders was medium level (μ = 1.72). When considering types of mass media, most students could access information via TV and Internet in medium level (μ = 1.90, 1.87), followed by radio, newspaper and magazine were low level (μ = 1.49, 1.66 and 1.66), respectively.

2. People Media

The 3 most popular people media to access ecotourism information among students included friends (weight = 438), followed by teachers/instructors (weight = 289), and co-workers (weight = 115), respectively.

However, the information access via people media among students was low level (μ = 1.50). When considering ways of information access, most students could access information via conversation under medium level (μ = 1.83), followed by education, training/meeting and participation in various activities, and under low level (μ = 1.52, 1.36, 1.29), respectively.

Attitude Toward Ecotourism

Most students had attitude toward ecotourism under high level (μ = 4.01).When considering the overall issues, students mostly had highest attitude that tourism resources could be used up in case of inappropriate use or management, and both government and private sectors should cooperate to promote stable ecotourism (μ

= 4.34, 4.28). Whereas, the students had medium attitude that ecotourism management was a type of investment with chances of losses like others (μ = 3.14).

Relationships of the Demographics of Ecotourism and the Access to Sources of Information on Ecotourism to Attitude toward Ecotourism.

1. Demographic in term of sex age and experience of students showed no relation to attitude toward ecotourism. Meanwhile, major subjects were related to attitude toward ecotourism. (p = .000) The students with major in Department of Forest Product were likely to have positive attitude toward ecotourism, followed by the ones with major in Department of Conservation**.**

2. Ecotourism knowledge was related to attitude toward ecotourism, with statistical significance (0.5). Students with high knowledge on ecotourism were likely to have more positive attitude toward ecotourism than the ones with low knowledge on ecotourism. **(p=.000)**

3. The access to ecotourism information from mass media including Internet, TV, magazine and newspaper was related to the attitude toward ecotourism, with statistical significance (.05) and the Chi-square < .05 (p = .001, .003, .004, and .005 respectively), hence acceptable to the hypothesis. Meanwhile, the Chi-square was > .05 (p = .241) for the access from radio, thus against the hypothesis. However, the ones with the access from TV, newspaper, magazine, and Internet were likely to have more positive attitude toward ecotourism than other groups. This was due to the fact that these types of media could show pictures, as a result the image or knowledge can be perceived clearer, whereas the access to ecotourism information from radio could only be heard.

4. The access to ecotourism information from conversation, activities and training/meeting/seminar was related to the attitude toward ecotourism, with statistical significance (.05) and the Chi-square < .05 (p = .001, .001, and .026, respectively), hence acceptable to the hypothesis. Meanwhile, the Chi-square was > .05 (p = .135)

for the access from education, thus against the hypothesis. However, the ones with the access from training/meeting/seminar, activities, and education were likely to have more positive attitude toward ecotourism than other groups. This was due to the fact that conversation, activities, and training/meeting/seminar could promote new knowledge on ecotourism at all times. In contrast, the access from education could only be just the exchange of the same experience in class or the same old knowledge.

Recommendations

Recommendations from the Survey Research

1. The universities should promote or give more direct ecotourism experience to the students who major in related fields of study. There are some useful activities such as co-organizing of ecotourism activities with the community, observation studies, and providing longer period of time for job training, so that the students can learn from their direct experience for effective ecotourism managements and problem solving. According to the study, it was found that student's background on ecotourism had a significant relationship to their attitude. Other than from education, there should be many ways to promote more awareness, understanding, and positive attitude toward ecotourism.

2. Public and private units should also play an importance role to stimulate and encourage children, students, and tourists to participate more on ecotourism programs by considering appropriate methods which can mostly suit and correspond to their needs and interests. In addition, they should perceive more information or knowledge and awareness on ecotourism as well as problems and effects of inappropriate behaviors or manners to ecotourism. According to the study, it was found that there were some points that the students lack of direct experience or information about ecotourism. Hence, the right awareness and knowledge on ecotourism through various types of interesting programs and activities should be promoted among them for their future experience at work or other related matters on ecotourism.

3. There should be more public relation via a wide variety of media to promote the concepts of ecotourism to all people in our society by all parties concerned. The ecotourism information or knowledge via media should also be attractive, comprehensive, convenient, and interesting enough to be accessed by the public. According to the study, it was found that the most effective media to reach the target groups were TV, newspaper, magazine, and Internet, since these types of media could provide both contents and pictures to promote clearer image and awareness on ecotourism more than the others. Also, the more students can access to sources of information o ecotourism, the more their attitude on ecotourism will be**.**

Recommendations for Further Study

1. A comparative study is recommended to compare the effectiveness of ecotourism information access between mass media and people media, as well as to identify which media can promote more positive attitude toward ecotourism. This will be helpful as a guideline to organize other related future activities on ecotourism.

2. A comparative study is also recommended to compare the attitude toward ecotourism among different groups of people such as university students and school students to identify factors affecting different attitudes.

3. The types of activities should be studied and explored to promote and encourage the awareness of ecotourism together with appropriate behaviors and manners to support natural resource and environmental conservation.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Attitude of fourth year, Forestry Faculty's students toward ecotourism

Please check x in the box or fill in the blank for tour answer

Part 1: Demographic of the student

1. Sex   ( ) 1 Male   ( ) 2 Female

2. Age ....Year

3. Major Subject   ( ) 1 Forest Management   ( ) 2 Forest Biology

                              ( ) 3 Forest Product   ( ) 4 Silviculture

                              ( ) 5 Forest Engineering   ( ) 6 Conservation

4. How many time you have been taking part for any training/seminar/experience concerning ecotourism

                              ( ) 1 None   ( ) 2 Ever……..Time

Part 2: Source of information on ecotourism

2.1 Mass media

1. Which are the types of mass media that you get the information of ecotourism?
   (Select the most 3 respectively)

     ( ) Television   ( ) Radio

     ( ) Newspaper   ( ) Magazine

     ( ) Internet   ( ) Other.....................................

2. How many times that you get the information of ecotourism from the following mass media in a week?

Mass media	> 4 time	3-4 time	1-2 time	None
1. Television				
2. Radio				
3. Newspaper				
4. Magazine				
5. Internet				
6. Other.................................				

2.2 People media

3. Which are the types of people media that you get the information of ecotourism?
   (Select the most 3 respectively)

   ( ) Friends   ( ) Family

   ( ) Colleges / Co- worker   ( ) Teacher / Instructor

   ( ) Other ....

4. How can you get the information of ecotourism on people media?

   ( ) 1 Conversation

   ( ) 2 Training /meeting /seminar /observation

   ( ) 3 Organization / participation in activities

   ( ) 4 Education

   ( ) 5 Other ....

5. How many times that you get the information of ecotourism from the following people media in a week?

People Media	> 4 time	3-4 time	1-2 time	None
1. Conversation				
2. Training /meeting /seminar /observation				
3. Organization / participation in activities				
4. Education				
5. Other				

Part 3: Attitude of student toward ecotourism

Statement	Attitude				
	lowest	low	medium	high	highest
1. Ecotourism is responsible for tourism sites, environment and community					
2. Tourism resources can be used up in case of inappropriate use.					
3. Ecotourism management is a kind of investment, with chances of losses like other					
4. Participation between local administration, private sectors and community is essential for ecotourism management.					
5. Ecotourism management should be done in appropriate areas.					

Statement	Attitude				
	lowest	low	medium	high	highest
6. Ecotourism activities at any tourism sites need to be related to characteristics of each community and area.					
7. Management of facility in ecotourism sites should be done in the appropriate environmental areas.					
8. Ecotourism is a way to promote tourism with the stress on environment and ecology of the community.					
9. Ecotourism, being developed in the right way, will lead to stable tourism management.					
10. The cooperation between government and private sectors is required to support stable ecotourism.					

Part 4: Recommendations

1. What do you think about the problem of ecotourism in Thailand?

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....

2. Do you have any recommendation to solve the ecotourism problem in Thailand?

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....

3. Please, give us any idea to promote and support ecotourism in Thailand?

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....

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Thank you