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Perceptions of rural tourism development and sense of pride as a form of community resilience

Introduction

Although past research focused on the role of pride in the relationship between destination residents and travelers (Boley & McGehee, 2014), there have been calls to conceptualize pride as a more encompassing socially constructed meaning (Sullivan, 2017) that impacts the relationships between destination residents, elected officials, and tourism entrepreneurs. We investigated this contingency through a creative multi-methods approach that combined picture collages with group discussions and personal interviews to investigate the meanings destination stakeholders assign to pride. We applied Hume's Theory of Pride to investigate how pride was expressed in the destination stakeholders' discourse about their community. Fifty-one stakeholders from rural tourism destinations shared their perspectives on pride relating to tourism development. These stakeholders reveal deep and powerful meanings associated with pride based on prestige, caring, and honor through their interpretations.

Hume's Theory on Pride

Pride is an emotional reaction to internally attributed success in a valued domain (Tracy & Robins, 2004). When developing a more nuanced conceptualization of this complex construct, scholars have suggested the multidimensional nature of pride, demonstrating two separate aspects that could be distinguished both theoretically and empirically (Dickens & Robins, 2020; Tracy & Robins, 2007). The bright side of pride, namely 'authentic pride' (Dickens & Robins, 2020), reflects feelings of accomplishment and confidence following success. On the other hand, the dark side of pride, or 'hubristic pride' (Tracy & Robins, 2007), concerns more generalized or self-aggrandizing feelings regardless of context (Tracy, Mercadante, Witkower, & Cheng, 2020) which is, at times, characterized by feelings of conceit and arrogance. Through meta-analysis, Dickens and Robins (2020) showed that unlike fragile self-esteem from hubristic pride that was linked to higher anxiety or depression, authentic pride reflected the genuine experiences of pride and was associated strongly with self-esteem, status, and power.

David Hume, a philosopher, contributed to the discussion on pride, agreeing that it was a fundamental element of human nature (Galvagni, 2020). Hume (1854), in Book 2 of the *Treatise*, distinguished between the object and the cause of pride/humility. If individuals felt proud of something they had done, the object of the pride was themselves (Baier, 1978). Hume also presented an additional element in his explanation: the cause. The possible causes of pride and humility were very diverse, and the discussion therefore benefited from a distinction in the causes between the quality and the subject. Hume used the instance of individuals who took pride in their beautiful house to explain the three main foundational components in the structure of pride. In this case, the object of pride was themselves (as individuals), and the cause was composed of the house (the subject) and its beauty (the quality) from which pride arose. A significant number of articles and books in psychology have been devoted to Hume's theory of pride (Galvagni, 2020). However, to the authors' knowledge, it has yet to be discussed in the field of tourism studies and community development. We posited that Hume's account for the threefold structure of pride could be a useful guideline in investigating how pride was expressed in the destination stakeholders' discourse about their community.

Pride in Tourism and Community Development Literature

In the tourism literature, the concept of pride has often been regarded as a positive result of tourism development (Strzelecka, Boley, & Strzelecka, 2017) or a significant predictor of residents' attitudes towards tourism (Phillips & Schofield, 2007). Previous research has indicated that tourism development has enhanced a sense of pride among community members (Butler, Szili, & Huang, 2021; Strzelecka et al., 2017; Xue, Kerstetter, & Hunt, 2017). Local people could reaffirm the importance of their own culture by observing outside interest in their local culture through tourism development (Butler et al., 2021). In a rural context, Xue and colleagues (2017) found that tourism development has changed residents' view of their own local rural culture from being ashamed to being proud.

While pride is a self-conscious emotion determined by self-evaluation and self-reflection (Tangney, 2015), it is also an interpersonal and social construct (Sullivan, 2007) and the interpersonal aspect of pride has been relatively neglected in both social psychology and tourism literature. The emotion of pride has been described as a personal sense of achievement, but it works based on a social valuation that made individuals pursue socially valued acts or characteristics (Szyner & Cohen, 2021). Therefore, pride involves social interactions where significant others (e.g., family, friends, or colleagues) publicly recognize those achievements (Bagozzi, Sekerka, & Sguera, 2018). While interactions with tourists were found as one of the possible sources of pride for local people (Butler et al., 2021), other types of social dynamics within the community that generates community pride are underexplored such as their relationships with other residents and elected officials. Although Strzelecka et al. (2017) mention that residents can experience pride in their culture as a result of tourism development, the specific cause (e.g., having a thriving tourism business) and the subject of this pride (e.g., being creative in developing new tourism experiences) have not been explored.

Therefore, we apply Hume's Theory on Pride to investigate how pride is expressed in the destination stakeholders' discourse about their community. More specifically, Hume's Theory of Pride is used as a theoretical lens to understand the cause and interpersonal aspect of pride within four rural communities that recently experienced a spur in tourism development.

Methodology

As researchers, we adhere to a participatory paradigm that ontologically acknowledges the importance of the participants' race, gender, and class in constructing their perception of reality (Creswell & Báez, 2020). Epistemologically, we view research as a collaborative process between participants and researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). We also adhere to the ontological belief that research and participants' values influence the theoretical underpinning of a study, the success of a methodology, and the interpretation of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2016). We included participants in the design, data collection, and interpretation of the findings. In accordance with our positionality, we followed an appreciative inquiry process in which researchers and participants co-create knowledge by reflecting on positive actions and thoughts individuals can take to envision solutions and sustain positive change happening in their communities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2011).

Participants

Participants were destination stakeholders of four rural communities in the Midwest of the United States who recently experienced the development of rural tourism activities in their

community. They included tourism business owners, elected and public officials, and destination residents. These four communities were purposefully selected (Creswell & Báez, 2020) because of their similar geographical settings (i.e., rural location and near a main river route) and interest in developing rural tourism. These communities were also selected in partnership with four University Extension collaborators, who are part of a specific branch of our university that is regrouping experts on community development. These Extension collaborators live in these communities, are in direct and frequent contact with rural communities to identify their needs, and work in field offices where they offer programs that match these communities' needs. We started by conducting a one-day 'meet-and-greet event' in each community to present the research project to destination stakeholders. Next, we combined purposive and snowball sampling to schedule interviews with participants. Extension collaborators suggested an initial list of participants. This list was expanded by asking participants to recommend other individuals to interview who might hold similar or different views about tourism development. We interviewed 51 participants and continued to contact participants until we reached data saturation (Masson et al., 2016). For the next phase, we held a community workshop in each community, during which participants created photo collages about their view of the community and took part in group discussions about tourism assets and strategies for tourism development. The contact roster created for the interviews was employed to email invitations to attend the workshop. Information about the participants was shared in Table 1 (See Table 1 in the Appendix).

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Design

The appreciative inquiry process invites participants to take part in activities and share their thoughts in a manner that centers on positive features of an experience (e.g., hope, dreams, goals, and achievement) (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). We used a multi-method approach to appreciative inquiry that includes in-depth interviews, picture collages, and group discussions. Data collection occurred from April to September 2021. We opted for semi-structured interviews so that participants were presented with the same central questions, which created consistency and allowed them to freely expand on emotions they perceived as more relevant to their lived experience (Creswell, 2016). The interview guide was co-created with our Extension collaborators and fine-tuned based on the feedback of participants. Interviews were conducted in-person when we were in the communities, as well as on the phone or via video conference to adapt to the schedule of participants, and lasted between one and two hours (The list of interview questions is included in the Appendix). Each participant received a transcript of the interview and was invited to check it for accuracy (Creswell, 2016).

In addition to the 51 in-depth interviews, 37 participants created two picture collages during the community workshop. Picture collages offered a complementary medium to investigate pride as individuals used different parts of their brain to process verbal and visual information (Bates, McCann, Kaye, & Taylor, 2017). To stimulate creativity without leading answers on specific emotions (Mesías & Escribano, 2018), we employed a prompt that asked participants to develop one collage depicting what they think best represented the current tourism situation in their community, and another one showing what they would like their community to become in the future in terms of tourism development (in the next 10 to 20 years). Based on Richard & Lahman's (2015) recommendations and in accordance with our ontology, we provided participants

with a large selection of travel magazines and brochures. The objective was to empower participants to select images that resonate the most with their emotions and give them the freedom to create visual metaphors by cutting and associating them. Participants spent 40 minutes on average creating their picture collages.

Once their collages were completed, participants interpreted their pictures by engaging in group discussions. Each participant described their collage to their group, sharing the associated emotions they attached to the pictures and explaining how these emotions relate to their community (Shepard & Guenette, 2010). This interpretation process also reinforced validity because participants were the ones signaling emotions that were important to them rather than researchers assigning meaning to the picture collages (Mesías & Escribano, 2018). Each group included five to six participants to allow for new perspectives to emerge while making it possible for every member to be heard and contribute (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006).

The workshop was recorded and transcribed into text for data analysis, and the picture collages were scanned (Caretta & Vacchelli, 2015). All data were analyzed using Nvivo. Our coding approach followed the one of Bailey (2007), which is based on open and axial coding. For open coding, we read several times the transcript of the interviews and workshop sessions and made notes as initial code emerged from the data. The next phase was axial coding, in which we gather emerging codes into subcategories before merging these subcategories into main themes covering connecting concepts (Bailey, 2007).

Trustworthiness and validity

We enhanced trustworthiness via the use of Decrop's (2004) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened by using member checks and sending interview transcripts to participants for them to review and by having them directly report key images and associated emotions found by their group during workshop discussions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transferability was reinforced through prolonged engagement in the communities to understand the specificities of the local context as well as using thick descriptions. (Maxwell, 2012). Dependability was consolidated by keeping a method trail to identify and keep track of the methodological challenges and solutions implemented by our team (Pavesi, Denizci Guillet, & Law, 2017). Confirmability was enhanced by engaging in discussion with our research collaborators about our theoretical approach, methodological choice, and data interpretation (Creswell & Báez, 2020).

Validity was reinforced via data, method, and investigator triangulation (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Data triangulation was manifested by employing different types of data (i.e., visual and textual data). Method triangulation emanated from the use of multi-methods to collect data (i.e., photo collage, group discussion, and in-depth interviews). Investigator triangulation took place as several research and community partners took part in data analysis and reviewed the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Three main themes emerge from the multi-method analysis where participants shared picture collages and narratives based on 1) prestige, 2) caring, and 3) honor. For the purposes of this study, we are focusing on the first two themes.

When investigating the impact of community pride on the residents' perceived empowerment, Strzelecka et al. (2017) identified that destination residents could develop pride in their culture when tourists came to experience it. Here, the novel finding concerned the presence of pride at the individual levels under the form of prestige which has until now been given scarce attention in the tourism literature. Participants expanded on the conceptualization of pride by explaining that a subject of pride was their personal ability to rally others to support rural tourism development and be visionary. For example, Anthony mentioned being proud of his reputation as a successful business planner, which allowed him to rally people to the proposed plan for preserving the historic buildings. His testimony also expanded Hume's theory of pride by linking authentic pride with prestige, which relied not only on one's expertise but also on the trust individuals gained in their community through honesty and a strong sense of ethics.

“I don't want to sound like I have an ego. I think my reputation is good. And to the extent that you have a good reputation, and then you support something, I think that makes it easier for other folks to also lend their support to it. If you've established a good track record of telling people the truth, being candid with them about things, that they will believe you when you speak, and that you just have to be completely transparent and honest.”

Anthony (M), 60s, County Administrator, Community HA

As hinted in Anthony's testimony, participants also expressed connections between prestige, hubristic and authentic pride. A novel discovery concerned the way participants negotiated the social threat posed by hubristic pride by underscoring in their discourse that there was still work to be done to develop their business, revitalize their community, and give back to others. In his picture collages (Figure 1- See Appendix for larger version), Quintin acknowledged that under his mayoral term, the community successfully combined rural tourism experiences with the niche market of bikers. Yet, he interpreted his collages based on the need to keep innovating in terms of tourism experiences:

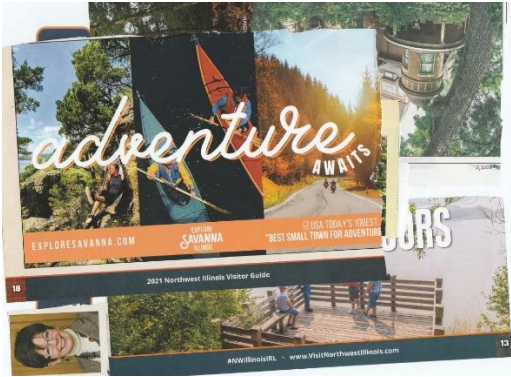
“I just think that we've got a lot of work ahead of us. We do have a lot of power. So right now, you see a lot of motorcycles coming through. We're starting to transform to broaden our horizons [by targeting] the younger Chicago area. [These pictures of the future] centers on a place that energizes welcomes, amazes, and inspires.”

Quintin (M), 40s, Mayor, Community SA

Figure 1. Quintin's collage

Community's present

Community's future



Similarly, Charlotte expressed that although her community has been successful in revitalizing part of its downtown area, there were still opportunities for progress:

“I think the city has assisted in the completion of something like 32 projects, which is just is phenomenal. But there are definitely some areas where I see a lot of potential still, I see a lot of buildings that I would love to see put back into use in the downtown, and a lot of potential for businesses that we don't have yet. I also see as many that still need to be completed and we still have a lot of those. A lot of those businesses that are just kind of missing from that whole.”

Charlotte (F), 50s, Business Owner, Community HA

When looking specifically at community pride, Butler et al. (2021) suggested that residents' expression of pride is tied to the way tourists behave. We built on their work as participants revealed that pride expanded beyond the social interactions with tourists to include pride in the caring and supportive attitude residents had toward each other. Participants expressed that they had pride in the contributions they made to their community, becoming sustainable employers, and sharing their knowledge with others to help their tourism business thrive. For Example, Benjamin shared his pride in being acknowledged in the community as an employer who cared about his team:

“People that have been with us (name of employees) that have been with us just through the years, and made it not just a vacation spot but we are their home away from home. And we're proud of that.”

Miles (M), 80s, Business Owner –Ice cream shop, Community GT

Similarly, Naomi (Figure 2) highlighted in her collage that she took pride in her community being renowned for being caring:

Being welcoming really stood out to me, no matter if it's in future or present. [in the collage about the present] I have peaceful family, hometown relaxation. For my future, I have community bonding friends and gathering families making memories."

Naomi (F), 50s, Travel Agent, Community SA

Figure 2. Naomi's collage

Community's present



Community's future



Thus, destination stakeholders' narratives of pride that tap into their aspiration for powerful connections with their fellow destination residents and desire to take concrete actions and implement their new value system. The next section discusses theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and opportunities for future studies.

Conclusion

Hume's Theory on Pride provided a solid theoretical ground to investigate the connection between tourism development and residents' power relations. An important finding concerned the importance of investigating pride at the individual level as well as the community level to develop a richer understanding of its role in rural tourism development. Hume's Theory on Pride suggested that pride was a social concept and that when others acknowledged our success, we were likely to feel a boost in self-esteem. While past research overwhelmingly focused on community pride and the role of the residents' interaction with tourists (Xue et al., 2017), participants revealed the importance of focusing on interactions between residents as a source of pride.

The findings also had critical hands-on implications for elected officials and tourism planners. Because a high level of pride in one's community was likely to lead to higher support for tourism development, it was crucial to understand the role that authentic pride plays in rallying residents around a form of tourism that is inclusive and sustainable (Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014). One key strategy identified during the workshop was to organize a one-day annual tourism planning event to celebrate the community's reaching its tourism development goals and determine together what the next annual goals and strategies will be.

We acknowledge that our study faced limitations. While picture collages provided diverse and rich interpretations, we faced some challenges as a team when developing our methodological approach. One area that triggered discussions was whether to provide participants with stacks of magazines or let them browse and select pictures in their own time before attending the workshop. After a try-out including both options, we discovered that few participants had the time to search before the workshop and that the informal chat between them as they browsed the magazines fostered creativity and allowed them to break the ice. While there are some limitations, future studies can expand on our findings by examining the role of inclusivity and diversity (Chatkaewnapanon & Kelly, 2019) in fostering pride in the residents' view of their community using innovative methodologies such as art-based activities and filmmaking.

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Appendix

Table 1. Participants' Descriptive Information

A. In-depth Interview Participants' Descriptive Information

Alias	Age	Community	Gender	Occupation
Abby	40s	GA	Female	Co-owner of a Shop
Alexander	70s	SA	Male	Director- Learning Center
Anthony	60s	HA	Male	County Administrator
Benjamin	60s	HA	Male	Owner of a winery
Blaire	40s	GA	Female	Resident
Brody	70s	SA	Male	Owner- Bar
Caleb	30s	HA	Male	Director - Economic Development
Camila	50s	SA	Female	Resident
Charlotte	50s	HA	Female	Business Owner - Chamber President
Connor	40s	GT	Male	Director DMO
Daisy	40s	HA	Female	Elected Official - Economic Development
Dakota	50s	GT	Female	Co-owner, restaurant
Daniel	60s	GA	Male	Director of Sales and Marketing- Resort
Dean	60s	GT	Male	Owner of a Winery
Eleanor	80s	GT	Female	Alderman and Chair of Tourism Committee for City
Emily	30s	GA	Female	Manager- Attraction
Ethan	40s	GT	Male	Former DMO Director
Evan	70s	HA	Male	Resident
Felix	40s	HA	Male	Glamping Business Owner
Fiona	40s	GA	Female	Resident
Frederick	40s	GT	Male	Restaurant and Attraction Owner
Freya	60s	GT	Female	Resident
Gavin and Daniela	30s	GA	Couple	Owners of a Winery
Genevieve	50s	HA	Female	Shop Owner
George	50s	GT	Male	Owner - Waterpark
Harrison	40s	GT	Male	Superintendent - State Park
Helena	70s	GA	Female	Resident
Henry	30s	HA	Male	Natural Resources Coordinator
Ian	30s	HA	Male	Deputy Director - Nature Conservancy
Isla	30s	GA	Female	CEO/President Destination Management Organization
James	70s	GT	Male	Mayor
Jonathan	30s	HA	Female	Boutique Owner
Josephine	40s	HA	Female	Newspaper reporter
Karter	50s	HA	Male	Fire chief
Kevin	70s	GT	Male	Resident
Kylie	30s	SA	Female	Marketing Director for The City
Leo	30s	HA	Female	Resident
Logan	50s	GT	Male	Tourism Council Member

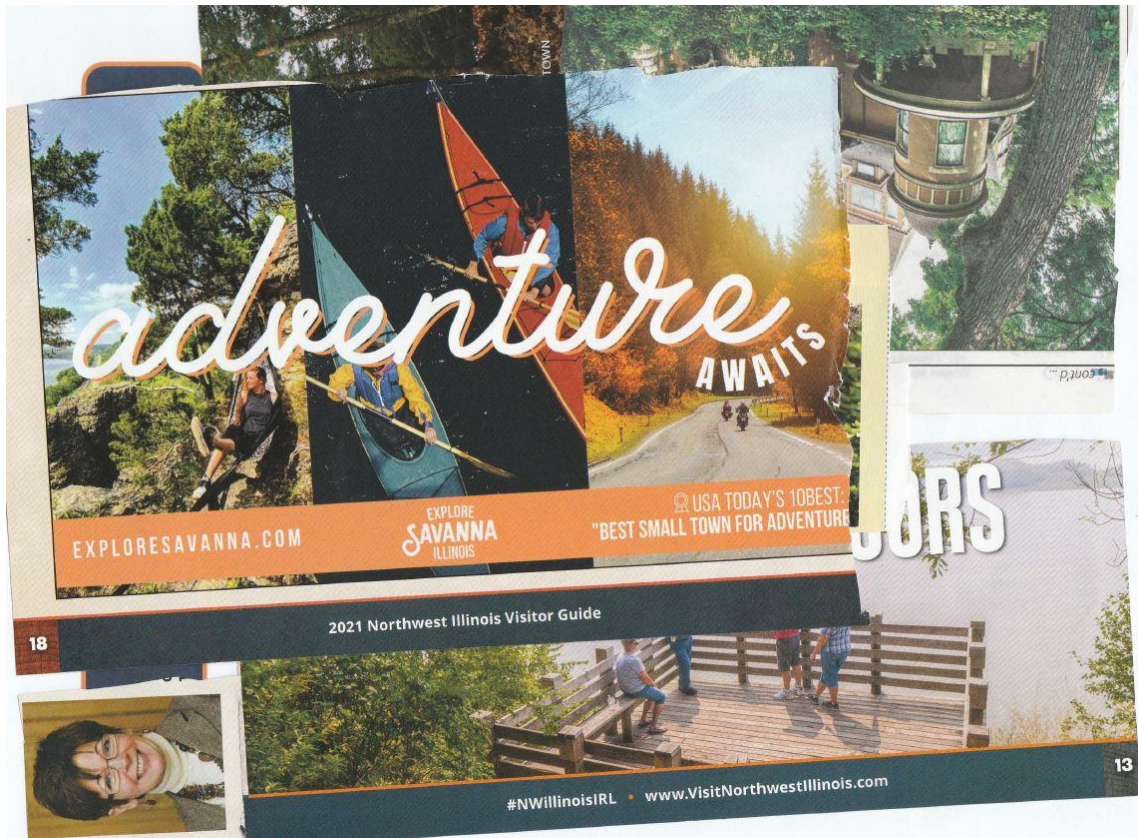
Table Con't.				
Alias	Age	Community	Gender	Occupation
Luna	60s	SA	Female	Owner – Ice Cream Shop
Mason	60s	GA	Male	Manager of Resort and Attractions
Mila	60s	SA	Female	Manager - Museum and Cultural Center
Miles	80s	GT	Male	Owner - Ice Cream Shop
Nathan	50s	GA	Male	City Administrator
Nathan	50s	GA	Male	Owner of a Guest House
Nora	40s	SA	Female	Resident
Owen	30s	GA	Male	Outdoor outfitter
Preston	40s	HA	Male	Consultant - Downtown revitalization
Quintin	40s	SA	Male	Mayor
Reuben	60s	SA	Male	Campground Owner
Scott	50s	SA	Male	IDNR Manager
Tristan	30s	SA	Male	AirBnB and Attraction Owner

B. Workshop Participants Descriptive Information

Alias	Age	Community	Gender	Occupation
Abby*	40s	GT	Female	Co-owner of shop
Austin	80s	GT	Male	Shop owner
Beatrice	50s	GT	Female	Co-owner lodging
Charles	50s	HA	Male	Manager- Wildlife Refuge
Charlotte*	50s	HA	Female	Business Owner
Connor*	40s	GT	Male	DMO Director
Cora	60s	SA	Female	Manager- Museum
Daisy*	40s	HA	Female	Elected Official
Dakota*	50s	GT	Female	Co-owner, restaurant
Damien	60s	GT	Male	City Clerk
Dolores	60s	GA	Female	Director of Sales- Hotel
Emilia	70s	HA	Female	Mayor
Eric	60s	HA	Male	Director - Theater in the Park
Fabian	60s	HA	Male	Artist
Florence	70s	GA	Female	Director- Center for the Arts
Grace	70s	GT	Female	Social Media
Heidi	60s	SA	Female	CVB Director
Henry*	30s	HA	Male	Natural Resources Coordinator
Iris	50s	SA	Female	Shop owner
James*	70s	GT	Male	Mayor
Josephine*	40s	HA	Female	Newspaper Reporter
Josie	40s	GT	Female	Director - Waterpark
Katherine	40s	SA	Female	Shop Owner
Kylie*	30s	SA	Female	Marketing Director
Leah	50s	GT	Female	Owner- Restaurant
Maya	40s	GA	Female	Manager- Museum
Naomi	50s	SA	Female	Travel agent
Nathan*	50s	GA	Male	City Administrator
Ophelia	70s	GT	Female	City Council Member
Penelope	40s	GT	Female	Shop Owner Downtown Revitalization
Preston*	40s	HA	Male	Consultant
Quintin*	40s	SA	Male	Mayor
Riley	30s	HA	Female	University Extension
Rueben*	60s	SA	Male	Campground Owner
Scott*	50s	SA	Male	IDNR Manager
Sophie	20s	SA	Female	Chamber of Commerce
Tessa	60s	GT	Female	Owner- Restaurant and Attractions

Note : * denotes participants who took part in both the interview and workshop.

Figure 1. Quintin's Collage
Community's present



Community's future



Figure 2. Naomi's collage
Community's present



Community's future



Interview questions

- Where do you live? How long have you lived in your community? Why did you or your family move here
- What are some examples of things related to tourism development [visitor education] that you are proud to have accomplished as a [business owner/elected official or govt. employee/DMOs/ natural resources specialist]?
- What about things that your community has done related to tourism that you feel are great and that you are proud of?
- What about things that your community has and that you are proud of (e.g., downtown area, friendly people)?
- What is one of the greatest challenges/difficulties that you have [your community has] overcome as a [business owner/elected official or govt. employee/DMOs/ natural resources specialist] What happened? How did you come up with a solution? How has this experience impacted you?
- How about challenges faced by your community in terms of tourism development? What happened? How did your community come up with a solution? How has this experience impacted you?