



Testing Video as an Awareness Tool: Does Urban Youth Care for Customary Practice in Avoiding Tiger Conflict?

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Abstract

Potential wildlife conflict can be reduced by enhancing tolerance towards tigers in daily life, and in West Sumatra, this is most often performed through customary practices. This study aims to examine the traditional ecological knowledge among respondents after they watch videos and receive education on Sumatran tiger conservation through traditional and cultural approaches. The method uses a mixed method by using a quantitative visual anthropological approach using the video elicitation technique and qualitative research: starting with in-depth interviews with informants and community leaders at a customary village, Nagari Sarik Alahan Tigo, researchers recorded the customary best practices of how to live harmoniously with tigers. The video production was then shown at a seminar. The respondents were predominantly youth (88.6%) and were asked to answer a questionnaire (yes/no) after watching the video to assess their level of understanding and change in knowledge and perceptions, as well as their opinion regarding an effective cognitive trigger for increasing understanding and its practical impact. The study found that understanding increased after watching the video. This research suggests that acceptance of positive knowledge about dealing with wild tigers is not limited to members of the Minangkabau ethnic group or to those who adhere to their specific traditional culture and worldview; it can also be expanded to include new segments of society.

Keywords: culture, human, nature, Minangkabau, tolerating-tigers

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Introduction

Conservation of endangered species increasingly relies on approaches that integrate ecological science with social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of human life. The Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*), the only surviving tiger subspecies in Indonesia, remains critically endangered due to habitat loss, poaching, and human–wildlife conflict (St. John et al., 2018). Beyond ecological interventions, conservation outcomes are also influenced by community knowledge, attitudes, and cultural values that shape coexistence with wildlife (Struebig et al., 2018).

In West Sumatra, these dimensions are embedded within *adat* (customary practices) and local spiritual beliefs that recognize the tiger as a sacred or symbolic being—sometimes regarded as a guardian of the forest or the moral enforcer of community norms (McKay et al., 2018). Understanding how these cultural and spiritual beliefs affect conservation awareness is essential for developing context-

sensitive outreach and education strategies.

Recent advances in conservation education demonstrate the potential of audiovisual media, particularly video, to enhance public understanding of endangered species and promote pro-conservation attitudes. Educational videos allow viewers to visualize ecological processes, empathize with wildlife, and connect emotionally with conservation narratives. Studies have shown that audiovisual media can effectively increase environmental knowledge and awareness across age groups (Harness & Drossman, 2011). Immersive or narrative-based videos have been found to improve retention and emotional engagement, potentially leading to stronger conservation intentions (Fokides & Kefallinou, 2020). In addition, online video sharing platforms such as YouTube have amplified the reach of conservation messages, enabling communication with global audiences and educating about conservation-themed wildlife content (Vins et al., 2022).

Studies have examined the intersection between traditional ecological knowledge, spirituality, and digital media in influencing conservation awareness, particularly in the Indonesian context. While data-based conservation practices have been documented in various regions (Asrawijaya, 2024), there remains a limited understanding of how urban communities—who are increasingly detached from rural customary environments—perceive and respond to such cultural narratives when presented through video media. Bridging this gap is crucial, as urban populations increasingly shape public opinion, policy, and support for conservation funding, including the potential effort to increase the support through crowdfunding scheme (Suhardono et al., 2024).

Sanderson et al. (2023) observed that closed habitats primarily host tigers. They do not leave the forest if they have enough food and therefore remain far from human reach. However, as the size and health of forest habitats decrease across their range, their behavior is changing. Extensive clearing of forests and reduction of viable sumatran tiger habitat has been recorded through observations within and outside protected areas. The IUCN records that 70 percent of tigers' roaming habitat is already outside conservation areas (Goodrich et al., 2015). As a result, the increasing number of conflicts is a threat signal not only to tiger life but also to human safety and well-being.

Efforts to address tiger conflict and conservation have been undertaken by examining aspects of tolerance and local perspectives (McKay et al., 2018; St. John et al., 2018; Struebig et al., 2018), as well as customs and spirituality (Praharawati, 2024; Mangunjaya et al., 2025). Levels of human tolerance for coexistence with tiger habitats have been identified as crucial. Efforts to reduce conflicts with tigers often require profound knowledge of the traditions and customs of local communities, as these communities possess the awareness and understanding of how to live in harmony with tigers and believe that tigers are creatures deserving of appreciation and respect (McKay et al., 2018; Syahrul et al., 2023).

Customary and cultural approaches to conflict mitigation in communities of West Sumatra hypothetically provide significant value as a model for avoiding human–tiger conflict. Within these communities, understandings of tigers are deeply embedded in customary rules and cultural narratives that are conveyed and reinforced by indigenous leaders. These norms include traditions associated with entering forest areas, prohibitions against using pathways frequently crossed by tigers, and taboos against leaving the house at dusk times believed to increase encounters with wildlife. Drawing from the lived experiences of forest-edge communities, such traditional knowledge systems represent a patterned form of communication and behavioral guidance that communities believe enables coexistence with wild Sumatran tigers. In everyday practice, people refer to tigers respectfully as “Inyiak,” meaning elder, grandfather, or ancestor, reflecting a worldview rooted in Minangkabau customary wisdom and taboo-based ethics that regulate appropriate conduct in forest landscapes (Mangunjaya et al., 2025).

Despite its potential importance, this cultural approach remains under-researched as a strategy for conservation

awareness and conflict mitigation. To explore this dimension, the present study introduces these cultural narratives through a video derived from interviews with community members and local leaders from Sariak Alahan Tigo, which was then presented to participants at UIN Imam Bonjol. The participants, who largely come from diverse urban backgrounds, were asked to respond to the video presentation. The research specifically aims to examine whether the customary wisdom and traditional knowledge related to living alongside wild tigers are understandable, acceptable, and meaningful to contemporary audiences—particularly youth and educated urban communities in West Sumatra. Through this approach, the study seeks to generate new insights into how traditional ecological knowledge and culturally embedded perceptions of wildlife can inform conservation awareness among urban communities that typically approach environmental issues from a more modern and rational perspective.

Methods

Video production and process The research began with the creation of a video elicitation mechanism in visual anthropology (Henry & Feters 2012). The disseminated video content is sourced from trusted key informants and provides information regarding local wisdom practices, such as taboos and prohibitions for use in the forest or in tiger habitat.

Before the video data was used as research material, we confirmed the data for each other's informants, comparing them with documents or journals as well as field observations. Interviews are recorded in detail, including who told the story, their age, social background, and relationship to the event. The data is then recorded, field notes are made, and a verbatim transcription is made.

Respondents who are video sources are asked to fill out informed consent to be approved as a source of knowledge. The video was analyzed and reviewed by a team of experts, then approved for dissemination.

Respondents were interviewed, and 42 recorded videos were produced through a snowball sampling approach using structured interviews. The key respondents were *adat* leaders, with the additional ones selected through snowball sampling, prioritizing individuals with extensive knowledge and long-standing experience within the village community. The interview participants included *adat* leaders, *nagari* leaders, traditional shamans, village elders with a profound understanding of tigers, and members of the local community who have reported spiritual or experiential encounters with tigers.

The finished video was produced by the creative video team in a duration of 1 minute with the thematic subjects: 1) naming of tigers, 2) ten prohibitions and taboos in the forest, 3) five tiger foods, 4) three ways to honor tigers, 5) marindu, and two long videos with a duration of 2 minutes with the theme 6) the role of the sumatran tiger, and a duration of 6 minutes with the theme 7) prohibitions and taboos.

Video dissemination The dissemination of the seven video themes was carried out at UIN Imam Bonjol. The location is 102.3 km from Nagari Sariak Alahan Tigo, West Sumatra (Figure 1). The next video was used as an educational

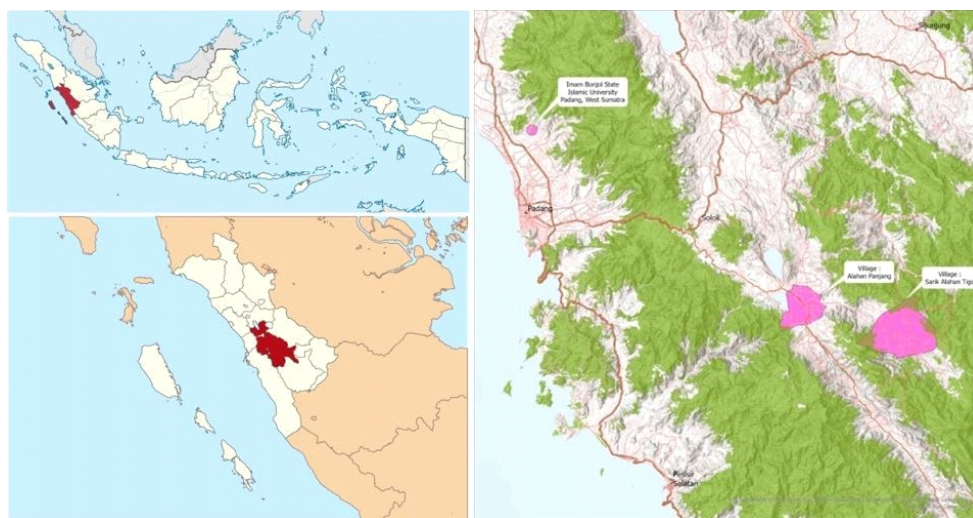


Figure 1 Research location.

intervention tool for 157 people from UIN Imam Bonjol Padang students, Andalas University students, West Sumatra Provincial Forestry Service, MAN 2 Padang City students, Qbar associations, and women's communities such as PKK Padang City, who are generally those with secondary and higher education. The video screening coincided with a talk show commemorating National Nature Conservation Day (HKAN) and Indonesian Independence Day, with the theme "Cultural Dialogue & Independence: Spiritual and Cultural Values for Sumatran Tiger Conservation" at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang on Thursday, August 28, 2025.

There are two methods for collecting respondent data related to their responses to the video: 1) Participants are asked to fill out a questionnaire before the video is shown and have not received education from the speaker (expert); and 2) they fill out a questionnaire after the video is aired and have received education from the speaker (expert) at the seminar.

The analysis of respondents' response data to the video before and after watching was tabulated into Yes (1) and No (0). The respondents who filled out the questionnaire before and after were different people, so the data were not paired (independent) before statistical tests were carried out using SPSS, such as the validity test, the reliability test, and the Chi-square test with crosstabs.

Results

The research participants were invited as guests through purposive sampling as they attended the seminar. There were 157 participants who attended the seminar in total. Before the seminar, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on custom, culture-based tiger conservation videos. There were up to 7 topics of videos related to tigers. However, 89 participants volunteered to complete the questionnaire. After the seminar and viewing the video, participants were asked to complete it again. However, there are only 68 respondents left, a 12.7% decrease, or about 23.6% attrition relative to the pre-test sample. The reason was because the students who then should entering their class. The correlation test between the pre- and post-assessments for the seven video topics revealed strong associations. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant relationships between each thematic

topic and the corresponding pre- and post-question responses, with all comparisons showing p -value < 0.005 (Table 1). This finding indicates that exposure to the video materials contributed to measurable improvements in participants' comprehension of the issues presented.

The reliability test showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.897 before and 0.881 after. Both values are above 0.6, indicating that the data is reliable. In the validity test, the Spearman correlation for respondents' responses to 7 themes of video topics was strong. The relationships among the themes show a strong correlation, with correlation values above the r -table values (pre: $r \geq 0.173$ and post: $r \geq 0.198$), and a p -value < 0.01 . The p -value was less than 0.05, and the r coefficient was greater than 0.3 (Table 1).

Respondents who filled out the questionnaire were found to come from 47 ethnic groups, respectively dominated by the Minang, Chaniago, Malay, Batak, Javanese, Sikumbang, Pasaman, Koto, and Mandailing tribes (Figure 2).

The strategic geographical location of West Sumatra is a trade route and has opened interaction with other cultures, for example the Minangkabau tribe as an indigenous ethnic group with a unique matrilineal system, the existence of the Mentawai tribe, as well as immigrants from the Javanese, Batak, and Mandailing ethnicities who then assimilated and created a rich cultural diversity that coexisted with strong customs such as the *Adat basandi syara'-syara' basandi kitabullah* - Customary law based on sharia - and sharia based on the Holy Qur'an. Referring to the opinion (Gusti et al., 2021) that among the people of West Sumatra, oral culture also has an important role in traditional events, learning, information media, and entertainment. Although each region has a wide variety of oral traditions, this does not dissolve into a unity but rather creates a new one. Ever-evolving technological advances can also help explain cultural concepts visually and contextually, making learning more engaging (Hartatiana & Wardani, 2024).

The respondents' ages were divided into three groups: youth (15–30 years), adults (31–50 years), and old (>50 years). Both pre- and post-data were obtained from more than 90% of the youth and adult groups (Figure 3).

Table 1 Correlation result to all video topic

Video topic	Code	Calculated <i>r</i> -value	<i>r</i> -table	Chi-square	Calculated <i>r</i> -value	<i>r</i> -table	Chi-square	Decision
		Pre			Post			
Pronunciation of tiger names	P1	.744**	0.173	0.000	.489**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P2	.769**	0.173	0.000	.859**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
Ten prohibitions and taboos in the forest	P3	.806**	0.173	0.000	.861**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P4	.806**	0.173	0.000	.605**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P5	.444**	0.173	0.000	.580**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
Five tiger foods	P6	.792**	0.173	0.000	.816**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P7	.391**	0.173	0.000	.418**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P8	.701**	0.173	0.000	.690**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
Three ways to honor tigers	P9	.644**	0.173	0.000	.894**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P10	.908**	0.173	0.000	.647**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P11	.515**	0.173	0.000	.627**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
Marindu	P12	.676**	0.173	0.000	.405**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P13	.760**	0.173	0.000	.512**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P14	.733**	0.173	0.000	.901**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
The role of the sumatran tiger	P15	.683**	0.173	0.000	.712**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P16	.757**	0.173	0.000	.100**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
Prohibitions and taboos	P17	.857**	0.173	0.000	.701**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P18	.800**	0.173	0.000	.577**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant
	P19	.480**	0.173	0.000	.857**	0.198	0.000	Valid and significant

Note: ** = correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); n = 89 (Pre) and n = 68 (post)

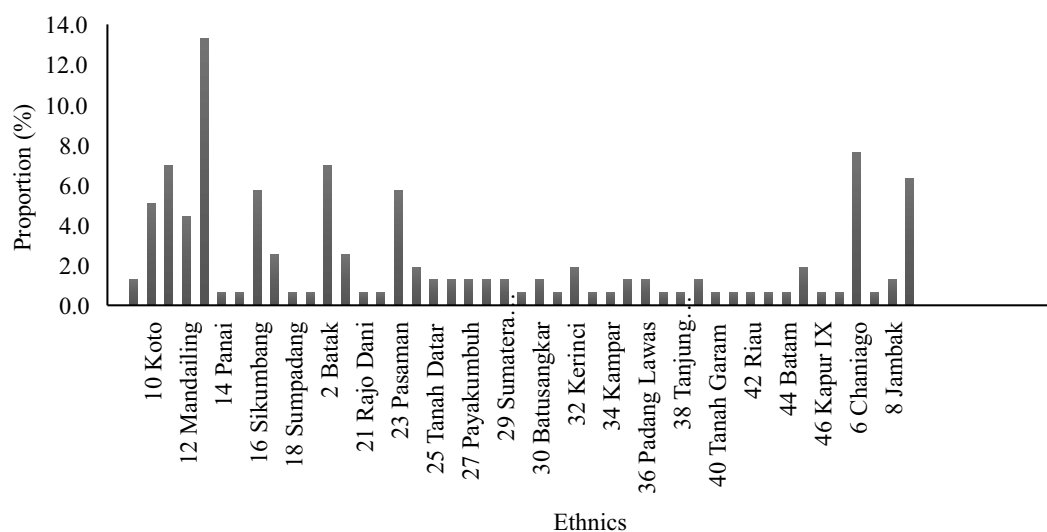


Figure 2 Diversity graph of *Asplenium nidus* in 2018.

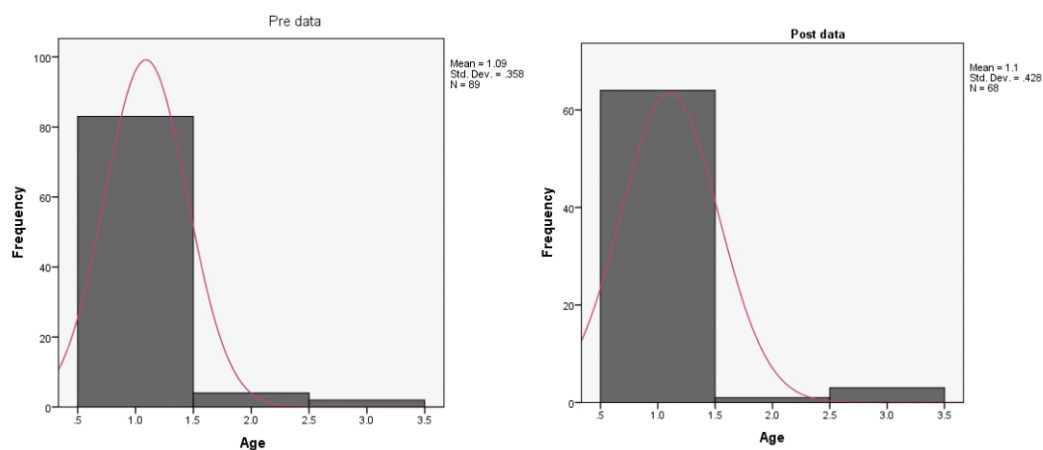


Figure 3 Age respondent.

The majority of respondents were university students (86.7%) and high school students (1.9%). Other occupations were civil servants (2.5%), private sector employees (1.9%), NGO staff (0.6%), practitioners (0.6%), self-employed individuals (2.5%), and lecturers (1.3%). Respondents represented Mantagi Ins., al-Hakimiyah Society, Qbar Association, TPPKK, UIN IB, UNAND, HMI UIN IB, PKK, UNAS, University of Muhammadiyah, West Sumatra Forestry Service, and MAN 2. Most respondents with high school or college backgrounds fell into the middle group (pre: 65.2%, post: 66.2%), while the remainder were in the high group (pre: 34.8%, post: 33.8%).

The percentage of respondents' responses to the seven video themes was grouped into two parts: 1) respondents' responses before watching the videos, and 2) respondents' responses after watching the video. There is a difference between respondents who fill out before and after the broadcast. Before the broadcast, they did not know at all what would be conveyed in the video, and they had not yet received enlightenment from the presenter. Respondents who filled out questionnaires after the video aired also received enlightenment from the presenter.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of "Yes" answers has increased. This can reinforce the trend of increased knowledge among respondents after they watch videos and receive education on traditional and cultural approaches to sumatran tiger conservation. In the Crosstabs test, a descriptive statistical method used to analyze the relationship between variables such as gender, age, education, and occupation in relation to video responses grouped as positive or negative, percentages increased but the Chi-square value—which measures whether differences between groups are statistically significant—was not significant. This indicates that the increase did not differ significantly between groups, suggesting a positive response occurs evenly without a specific relationship pattern forming.

Figure 4 shows the participants' responses after watching the video. They were asked whether the seven videos would be effective tools for the general public in raising awareness of tiger conservation through traditional and cultural approaches. If the percentages of "effective" and "very effective" are combined, 89% found the videos will be effective tools for raising awareness of tiger conservation. The answer may indicate more understanding of participants who respond well to the video. The positive percentage

Table 2 Respondents' responses before and after watching the video

Video topic	Variable descriptions	Participants before video show (%)		Participant after video show (%)	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Pronunciation of tiger names	a. Knowledge of traditional beliefs that tigers are respected and protected in the village.	80.9	19.1	99.5	1.5
	b. Knowledge of tiger folklore is passed down from parents.	80.9	19.1	95.6	4.4
Ten prohibitions and taboos in the forest	a. Knowledge of traditional leaders providing advice on taboos and prohibitions regarding tigers or forests.	71.9	28.1	89.7	10.3
	b. Are there customary rules related to forest and tiger protection in the village	95.5	4.5	94.1	5.9
	c. Can traditional values help to conserve tigers?	76.4	23.6	95.6	4.4
Five tiger foods	a. Knowledge of tiger habitats around the habitat	89.8	10.1	94.1	5.9
	b. Knowledge of the role of tigers in maintaining ecosystem balance.	75.3	24.7	97.1	2.9
	c. Knowledge of tigers' existence is limited to Sumatra and nowhere else in the world.	93.3	6.7	94.1	5.9
Three ways to honor tigers	a. Knowledge that tigers are animals that are respected and protected.	80.9	19.1	92.6	7.4
	b. Knowledge of customary regulations about respecting tigers when going to the forest.	74.2	25.8	95.6	4.4
	c. The community's belief in the forest plays a role in preserving tigers.	36.0	64.0	97.1	2.9
Marindu	a. Knowledge of conflicts between tigers and cattle.	94.4	5.6	97.1	2.9
	b. Knowledge of the practice of residents who hunt tigers.	87.6	12.4	97.1	2.9
	c. Knowledge of livestock losses due to tiger predation.	95.5	4.5	86.8	13.2
The role of the sumatran tiger	a. Knowledge that the belief in preservation can benefit future generations.	82.0	18.0	98.5	1.5
	b. Knowledge of the large number of tigers in nature	94.4	5.6	97.1	2.9
Prohibitions and taboos	a. Knowledge of traditional leaders providing advice or prohibitions related to tigers or forests.	84.3	15.7	95.6	4.4
	b. Knowledge of indigenous values can help protect tigers and the surrounding forest.	94.4	5.6	98.5	1.5
	c. Can traditional values help protect tigers?	89.9	10.1	95.6	4.4

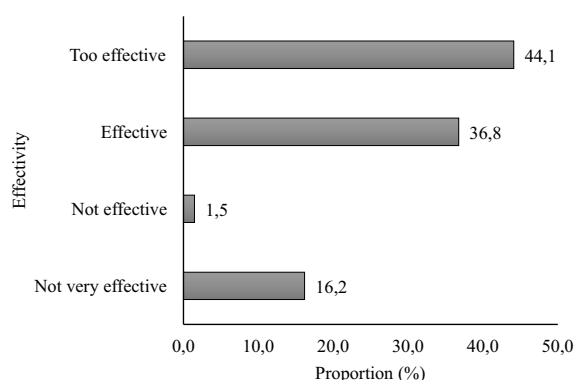


Figure 4 Respondents' responses after watching the video.

suggests a generally positive impact. However, no differences in influence were observed across demographic groups, so the increased response is general and not linked to a specific pattern.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate a generally positive and statistically meaningful trend in the observed outcomes. The findings indicate a strong tendency among community members to demonstrate a high level of understanding regarding the potential role of customary norms and traditional prohibitions (*pantang larang*). These cultural mechanisms are widely perceived as significant, and many respondents expressed confidence that such approaches could contribute effectively to strategies for living alongside wild tigers. Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample size, and the use of an independent sample design may reduce the robustness of the conclusions and arguments derived from the analysis. Furthermore, there is a potential sampling bias among seminar participants, as many of them were already familiar with conservation concepts and environmental issues prior to participating in the seminar. This prior exposure may have influenced their responses and contributed to more favorable outcomes.

However, our research prioritizes understanding not only animals and habitats but also humans by exploring local wisdom rooted in indigenous culture and religion, particularly through people's knowledge of their relationships with tigers. Using a 'local wisdom' approach alongside religious engagement can enhance community knowledge, especially when religious leaders help raise awareness about wildlife conservation (Praharawati et al., 2022).

The significance of tigers in Nagari Sariak Alahan Tigo, West Sumatra, arises from both the area's unique geography—where the Baling-Betabuh Rimbang and Batanghari Landscape intersect—and the cultural beliefs of its people. This region is frequently visited by tigers, animals regarded as symbols of ancestral presence and possessing important spiritual, cultural, and traditional values. While tigers may be viewed as a threat, they are also deeply embedded in the community's identity (Mangunjaya et al., 2025). Emphasizing these perspectives supports conservation efforts, with the aim of increasing tiger populations

and reducing human-tiger conflicts.

In Figure 2 there are 47 ethnic groups that are found to be inspired by the influence of the geographical location of West Sumatra, which is strategically a trade route. Their blended interactions with other cultures show the example of the Minangkabau tribe as an indigenous ethnic group that is inclusive to immigrants from the Javanese, Batak, and Mandailing tribes, which then assimilated and created a rich mixed culture. Interestingly, each of these cultures can both appreciate and acknowledge the importance of customary practices; however, they are highly distinct. Cross-cultural transmission of indigenous Minangkabau customary practices relating to their interaction with the natural environment is likely to take place only at certain events, through presentations, video, and other multimedia channels. Although each ethnicity and region has a wide variety of oral traditions, this does not dissolve into a unity; rather, it creates one. We assume evolving communication technologies can help explain cultural concepts visually and contextually, making learning more engaging (Hartatiana & Wardani, 2024).

The results in Table 1 show responses before (pre) and after (post) viewing videos with seven thematic contents, both short and long. Overall, the relationships among the themes show a strong correlation, with correlation values above the r -table values (pre: $r \geq 0.173$ and post: $r \geq 0.198$) and a p -value < 0.01 . These videos narrate experiences from Sariak Alahan Tigo, with 42 respondents interviewed in depth. The information is summarized and sorted to avoid repetition. Tigers are seen as "Inyia" or ancestors (42 respondents), as sacred wild animals (28 people), and as supernatural creatures with special knowledge (27 people). In addition, 9 people describe tigers as wild creatures.

The video, used as information material, shows tigers as part of the Minangkabau cultural and spiritual landscape. Its traditional narrative offers a potential ecological education system. Respondents who watched the video responded positively, showing an increasing trend. Videos between themes also have strong correlations and have a significant value of < 0.05 . The increased response illustrates that information can be understood by intellectuals. Respondents included 47 ethnicities that responded positively. This means that stories sourced from the people of Sariak Alahan Tigo village can enrich the knowledge of diverse individuals.

The video presents core spiritual values that form the basis for religious conservation and unexpressed cultural traditions. Community members act by practicing behaviors rooted in a value system built and tested over generations. This is why the Minangkabau system is known as "adat basandi syarak," where Islamic teachings blend with customs to form social ethics grounded in religion. Ninik Mamak, a tiger silat (martial arts) figure from West Sumatra, explains, "As far as the Minang shout 'ouw' in the forest, from when it is first heard to when it fades, that is how far the forest is protected" (special interview—Ninik Mamak).

The video about naming tigers examines how people in West Sumatra relate to these animals. They make efforts to "humanize" tigers, portraying them as humans or human-like. Treating tigers as humans places them on the same level as people, both in society and in terms of basic rights. The

people of West Sumatra have four ways of humanizing tigers. This humanization shapes how humans and tigers interact daily. This shows that people view nature as part of human culture and that human culture is part of nature. In many areas, local communities have united nature and culture (Deplazes-Zemp et al., 2024; Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2025).

Another humanization process carried out by the people of West Sumatra toward tigers is treating them as both teachers and students. Tigers serve as teachers in the context of martial arts skills developed in West Sumatra, from which some informants admitted they learned directly. These lessons extend beyond martial skills to insights about life, as informants describe tigers teaching meanings behind reality. Gaining this understanding, they say, helps them appreciate life and the broader forest ecosystem. In addition to viewing tigers as teachers, some informants claim to have tiger 'disciples'—tigers who live with them daily and whom they teach Islamic religious sciences.

Through the humanization of tigers, the relationship between humans and tigers becomes one of mutual respect: humans respect tigers and their existence, while tigers "respect" humans who act appropriately. Rather than being categorized as simply wild or non-wild, tigers become integrated into the community's social fabric. In West Sumatra, the human–tiger relationship is not just resonant but also inherent and unified (Belz & Wittek, 2025).

People see tigers not as "the other" but as part of themselves and their family. In West Sumatra, just as community members share everyday life, tigers also appear in this space—particularly regarding the "scramble" for food resources. The boundaries between humans and tigers are minimal, leading to frequent "competition" over fruits like *durian*. Anyone can enjoy *durian*, and the rule is simple: whoever finds the fruit first gets to keep it. Thus, people compete not just with one another, but also with tigers. During *durian* season, tigers often wait beneath trees for fruit to drop. Through this close relationship, people experience nature's resonance (Belz & Wittek, 2025).

This article contributes to the debate on the relationship between humans and tigers by examining the processes through which sumatran tigers enter human culture and humans enter natural life. This is based on a local perspective of the relationship between humans and nature, positioning tigers as an important factor in this relationship. For the people of Sumatra, tigers "occupy" an important position in their cultural system. Tigers should be respected (McKay et al., 2018).

The community's recognition of tigers through a call of honor raises the question of how tigers "enter" society's cultural system and gain the right to live in a decent and honorable manner through various human actions. This has implications for a form of equality between humans and tigers, suggesting that human involvement in the ecosystem reflects the interests of non-humans, such as tigers. The various needs and interests of tigers, which continue to enable them to coexist with humans, are reflected in the community's views. In efforts to reduce human-tiger conflicts and support tiger conservation, it is important to consider the local biocultural context. Considering the interests of tigers, who also have the right to life, when we

talk about the local situation in Sumatra, especially community life, or also the so-called community, it is necessary to include tiger communities that also live in local, national, and even international ecosystems (Strang, 2021).

Community-based conservation in Minangkabau relies on the key roles of local leaders, or locally called "*ninik mamak*," as guardians of tradition; religious figures as conveyors of ecological values; and the government as a facilitator rather than a replacement. This approach demonstrates the central argument that successful conservation comes from empowering communities and honoring their leadership and cultural values.

Coexistence and harmony with nature, a central principle of conservation in West Sumatra, have long shaped the community's relationship with animals. Even species regarded as dangerous, like tigers, are seen as partners: humans provide food and space, and tigers, in turn, protect crops and guide people in the forest.

The relationship is built not only on resonance but also on mutual understanding. This occurs because people in West Sumatra treat nature, including tigers, as "humans." They also view humans as part of nature or 'as tigers.' Through these processes, both sides gain understanding and can coexist. Tigers play an important role in the ecosystem—not as enemies, but as part of an ecological family that deserves respect. They also serve as cultural symbols of courage and wisdom in local customs.

Like any community, conflict occurs, often due to misunderstandings between tigers and humans. Such friction arises when tigers, for instance, enter villages and encounter livestock. Some interpret these events as a "reprimand," while others view them as the tiger's fault. Similarly, conflict results when humans enter forests and disregard environmental taboos.

Encounters between humans and tigers, resolved through customary mechanisms, illustrate locally based spiritual conservation. When a tiger is considered guilty, its group delivers it to human settlements for punishment; similarly, humans may receive punishment from nature for their actions. This relationship demonstrates that humans both protect and respect the tiger, uniting ecological care with cultural values.

This study reinforces the argument that conservation strategies should not depend exclusively on habitat-based management or law enforcement mechanisms. Instead, incorporating customary wisdom and culturally embedded knowledge systems can serve as a crucial component in fostering community-based attitudes and practices that support long-term wildlife conservation.

Conclusion

Tiger conservation, when understood as both an ecological and socio-cultural endeavor, necessitates an integrative framework that recognizes the interconnected roles of science, spirituality, customary institutions, and community participation. This study shows that conservation practices are not merely technical interventions aimed at species protection but are deeply embedded within moral values, intergenerational responsibilities, and culturally

grounded systems of knowledge that shape human–tiger coexistence. The findings of this study demonstrate that local ecological wisdom continues to function as a living body of knowledge, transmitted through narratives, rituals, customary prohibitions, and everyday practices that reinforce respect toward wildlife and forest ecosystems. Importantly, the research indicates that younger generations remain receptive to these conservation values, suggesting the continued relevance and adaptive resilience of customary knowledge. Further, this evidence indicates the potential important role of digital media, particularly video-based communication that may be disseminated through social media platforms, in expanding public engagement with Indigenous conservation ethics. Media can serve not only as instruments for awareness raising but also as mechanisms for translating localized knowledge into broader educational and policy contexts.

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