

Chapter 2:

Research Design and Methods.

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2. Research Design and Methods.

2.1 Assessing Outcomes, Impacts and Causation.

This study relies heavily on the conceptual framework provided by (Roche 1999) to assess outcomes, impacts and causation. In his text on Impact Assessment for Development Agencies (Roche 1999) defines impact assessment as the “ systematic analysis of the lasting or the significant changes- positive or negative, intended or not- in peoples lives brought about by a given action or a series of actions. “(p121)

This definition has been refined for this study to reflect the purpose and stakeholders involved. Impact assessment for this study therefore is defined as the *‘evaluation of the effects of outcomes- positive or negative, intended or not for village communities of visits by Intrepid Travel groups’*.

The identification of outcomes for this research were split into categories identified by (Mathieson and Wall 1982) namely economic, social, cultural and physical impacts. While the study adopts this procedure it recognises that such a classification is a simplistic representation of a complex collection of interrelated outcomes.

For this study economic outcomes refer to the financial benefits accruing to the community from Intrepid trips. Inevitably when discussing economic outcomes the focus is on the generation of employment and income and the ramifications of these outcomes for other spheres of life within the communities such as the rises in land and food prices or the distribution of tourism income. The distribution and effect of these outcomes for households is a key process in identifying the financial impact of Intrepid’s trips.

In identifying social impacts this study follows the broad definition provided by the International Association for Impact Assessment who define social impacts as the:

consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society. The term also

includes cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values, and beliefs that guide and rationalise people's cognition of themselves and their society.

(Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles 1994, p107)

The case studies included in this research focus on the more explicit social impacts of Intrepid trips such as their effect on arts and crafts practiced; roles of women and youth; daily lifestyles of local people; political and management systems; intra village relationships. Household perceptions of Intrepid trips are also a major feature of this section. The short period of time spent in each community and the explicit focus on the present-day impacts of Intrepid trips limited the opportunity to identify their deeper cultural impacts.

The physical impacts of Intrepid trips were also assessed. The physical outcomes identified in the case studies "involved an examination of the effects of tourism on the elements of the natural environment." (Mathieson and Wall 1982, p95) This rather narrow focus is perhaps not surprising given the geographic location of many of the villages in remote but fragile rural environments. Again the rapid form of evaluation limited this assessment to identifying any forms of pollution created by Intrepid trips and their effect on the physical environments within and surrounding village communities.

Another major objective of this study was to identify the causal factors that determined the outcomes that local people obtained from Intrepid trips. This was a key objective for Intrepid. Determining causation however is very difficult due to the myriad factors involved. As (Wall 1997) suggests it is difficult to separate the changes which are attributable to tourism from those caused by other factors.

In a practical sense (Roche 1999) demonstrates that identifying causation is very complex because, "not only is change contingent on the specific events, people and conditions present in a given situation...but that the interaction of all of these factors don't necessarily lead to the same outcomes over time or in different places". (p25)

This non-linear notion of change and the critical importance of context are essential elements of this study. Each case study attempts to cover these elements by describing in detail the

villages visited by Intrepid (see chapter 1, Table 1.1) and the characteristics of Intrepid's trips to that community. However, even accounting for this level of description it should be noted that the causal statements and inferences made in this study are what (Patton 1987)describes as “data based speculation and conjecture”. (p158)

Nevertheless the comparative and applied nature of this study makes the identification of these causal factors a major feature of the study. As (Ragin 1994) highlights the “typical goal of a comparative study is to unravel the different causal conditions connected to different outcomes.” (p108)

2.2 Research Methodology.

The comparative and applied nature of this study meant that only a period of three weeks could be spent in each of the five communities included in this study. Given these limitations and the general characteristics and locations of the communities involved it was decided to employ research methods used by development practitioners to monitor and evaluate projects and programs. (Kumar 1993)

These techniques are collectively known as rapid rural appraisal methods and have been used by researchers in areas such as natural resource management, agriculture, poverty and social programs and health and food security (Chambers 1994). Although not prolific there are examples of tourism researchers using these techniques as part of a coherent research strategy. See (Hampton 1998; Bartsch 2000) and (Wilkinson and Pratiwi 1995)

In describing rapid appraisal methodologies (Towner and France 1992) suggest that the methodology falls somewhere in between the “contrasting approaches of academics and development practitioners.” (p48) In this sense (Kumar 1993) believes that rapid appraisal methods are “neither highly informal nor fully formalised, and require more than just robust common sense and understanding on the part of the investigator.” (p12)

The advantages of using this methodology for this study, was that it rapidly generated information with a relatively low level of investment, and that it provided an in depth understanding

of the relationships between critical elements of Intrepid's visits to the community. (Beebe 1995) suggests that this 'systems perspective' is a basic element of any rapid appraisal.

However, like all research methods the use of rapid appraisal methods also has limitations. These limitations, identified by (Kumar 1993) and (Finan 1999) include time limitations which "often impose a severe schedule on the research routine and make it difficult to develop among local community representatives the bonds of trust upon which successful communication is built." (Finan 1999, p306).

These limitations were present during this research although they were offset to some degree by the relationship Intrepid personnel had developed with influential members of the communities visited.

The use of interpreters within the communities helped with communication although their use could also be considered a severe limitation of the study. By not having a full grasp of the language in each of the five communities the researcher was resigned to the fact that they would miss "the subtleties in respondents answers and the additional information that is picked up by understanding conversations" (Heyer 1993, p203). However, the comparative nature of the study and its focus on five different communities left no other option but to accept this weakness in the research design.

The study uses a range of research techniques and a relatively structured research design to address these limitations. (IDDS Workshop 1998). Key aspects of this design are the focus on households as the unit of analysis and the use of purposively selected samples.

2.3 Research Design.

Although "far from being a straight forward unit of analysis" (Pratt and Loizos 1992, p22) the household was chosen as the unit of analysis as it still remains the primary social and economic institution where resources are organised and allocated to meet basic needs. (Wilk 1996) In all of the communities visited the household remained the most important social and economic grouping, even in communities such as Skandis where families live in a communal longhouse.

The study used a stratified sampling strategy to determine which households would be interviewed as part of an informal survey. (Patton 1987) This strategy stratified the households in the village according to their level of involvement with Intrepid groups. Three groups were identified these included:

- Those that were directly involved with Intrepid groups. Households in this group had members who were directly involved in each Intrepid trip and received a direct monetary payment from Intrepid for their services.
- Those that were indirectly involved with Intrepid groups. The economic benefit to households in this group were variable and dependent on purchases made by Intrepid travellers for goods such as arts and crafts or for services such as traditional massages. Participation of local people in activities was also variable.
- Those that had no involvement with Intrepid trips. This group contains households whose members have no involvement with Intrepid groups and therefore receive no economic benefit from having Intrepid travellers in the village.

The sample of households chosen for interviewing in each grouping was determined by a household's geographical position within the community. In this approach every effort was made to choose households for each category from all geographical sections of the community. This method was adopted to overcome the natural bias created by the spatial arrangements of households according to social, wealth or religious reasons.

The development of a community map highlighting the geographical location of all households and their level of involvement with Intrepid groups therefore became a key research method used in this study. Other methods used included semi structured interviews, informal surveys, participant observation, ranking exercises, historical time lines and basic seasonal calendars. Questionnaires were also given to travellers to assess the outcomes they received from their visits to the village communities. The following format was used in each study.

1. **Review of secondary information on the community.** This information predominantly came from a review of internal documentation at Intrepid including leader and passenger feedback reports.
2. **Participant observation of several Intrepid trips to the community.** This provided information on the key members of the community who were involved, type of activities completed by Intrepid groups, type and level of local involvement, roles of each of the stakeholders involved in the visits, outcomes obtained by local people.
3. **Key informant interviews.** These were held with influential members of the community who were involved in Intrepid trips, Intrepid leaders and community leaders. This provided a broad assessment of tourism within the village and general background information on the village.
4. **Development of a community map.** The map was used to highlight the geographical location of all households and their level of involvement with Intrepid groups. A household's level of involvement was determined by simply asking each household 'what involvement do they had with Intrepid groups'. This information was backed up by observation of Intrepid groups in the community and key informant interviews.
5. **Development of an informal open-ended survey.** Information gathered from participant observation of several Intrepid visits and key informant interviews of local and Intrepid leaders was used to develop a broad series of questions. The focus of the informal survey was on the contribution that outcomes obtained from Intrepid visits made to household livelihood strategies and on household perceptions of Intrepid visits. These were trialed with key informants to assess their suitability before being administered to households.
6. **Administration of an informal survey.** This was given to the three categories of households identified. Being open ended it allowed household respondents to answer questions in their own words. The informal surveys were held towards the end of the researchers time within the community.

7. **Administration of questionnaires to Intrepid travellers.** This was given to all Intrepid travellers who visited the community during my stay. The focus of the questionnaire was on outcomes obtained by travellers and the factors that determined these outcomes.

The following table highlights the research methods used in each community, including the numbers of interviews and questionnaires completed for each case study.

Table 2.3 Research methods used in the five communities.

	Kiau Nulu	Skandis	Khun Puai	Van	Baka
Community map detailing location of households and their level of involvement with Intrepid groups.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key informant interviews with village leaders, individual members involved with Intrepid groups, Intrepid leaders.	N=5	N=4	N=6	N=6	N=4
Informal surveys of households. These surveys were open-ended questionnaires that allowed respondents to answer questions in their own words.	N=16	N=14	N=26	N=7	N=9
Participant observation of Intrepid trips within the community.	N=2	N=2	N=4	N=3	N=4
Impact ranking exercises held with households interviewed.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seasonal Calenders to determine busy periods within the community.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Applicable
Questionnaires on travellers' outcomes.	N=12	N=20	N=26	N=15	N=34

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques.

In analysing data this study uses processes and techniques commonly used by qualitative researchers. Although the focus of the study was on a comparative analysis of five case studies it

was necessary firstly to “pull together the data relevant to each case and write discreet, holistic case studies.” (Patton 1987)

The process of analysing data to develop ‘stand alone’ case studies involved several phases. In the first phase the study used a method known as the constant comparative method. (Bogdan and Taylor 1998) Developed by (Glasser and Strauss 1967) this method “combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all other units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorised and coded) with similar units of meaning.” (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, p134) This phase therefore involved identifying categories and the subsequent linking of these categories into themes and concepts. Categories were organised according to the dual objectives of the study to identify the outcomes obtained by local people from Intrepid trips and the factors, which determined these outcomes.

The second phase of this process involved the exploration of relationships and patterns across categories. In doing this, the study develops matrices, which highlight the link between processes and outcomes. These matrix are similar to the causal/ outcomes matrixes identified by (Miles and Huberman 1994) The purpose of developing such a matrix is to “help articulate program processes, program impacts, and the linkages between the two.” (Patton 1987, p155)

Once the data analysis for each case study was completed then the formal process of comparing cases for similarities and differences began. However, it should be noted that the inductive approach to data analysis meant that this process was occurring during the data collection phase of the research.

This study uses the basic principles inherent in the comparative methods developed by (Ragin 1994) to examine patterns of similarities and differences amongst the five case studies. The key “focus of this approach is on *diversity*- patterns of similarities and differences.” (Ragin 1994) p107) This method appeared particularly well suited to the applied focus of this study as its explicit aim is to identify the different causal conditions that determine different outcomes. As (Ragin 1994) highlights “to assess causation, comparative researchers study how diversity is patterned.

They compare cases with each other and highlight the contrasting effects of different cases.

Comparative researchers view each case as a combination of characteristics... and examine similarities and difference in combinations of characteristics across cases in their effort to find patterns.” (p112)

However it should be stated that this study applies these principles in a very simplified way. The small number of cases and the variation in degree of outcomes limits the full application of this approach as outlined by (Ragin 2000). Nevertheless the focus on viewing each case as a combination of characteristics is a feature of this study.

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