

Chapter 2

Research Framework and Methodology

Introduction

In order to meet the objectives of the study, the researcher implemented a research strategy of triangulation. Thus, a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and a wide range of data sources were used in the research. The research process was divided into three main stages: literature review, general study and specific case studies. The research and theoretical frameworks were established to guide and control the review of the literature and the empirical studies. The empirical studies were organised in two steps, general study and case studies. An analysis and synthesis of the information gained was carried out progressively at all stages of the research. The sources of primary and secondary data are referenced in the discussion. However, in some cases the information presented is a product of my own experience and observation prior to and during the study, and as such it is not specifically attributed by source. More detailed discussion of the research process and methodology are included in this chapter.

The theoretical framework of the research included tourism systems and development models, the political economy and political ecology of tourism and community participation in tourism development. The different components of the framework helped to identify the propositions to be tested and also guided the analysis and geared the research to answer the research questions. Another significant issue that may influence the argumentation and analysis throughout the thesis is the way the terms are used by the researcher, particularly those terms that are contested in human geography generally and tourism geography specifically.

It should be noted that my official role in tourism (before and after this thesis was conducted) is as a planner and policy analyst, which may affect and confuse the practice of the research in terms of my connection and relations to the people in the case study communities, and their perception of me. Therefore, I limited my role in the field to that of outside researcher, observer or participatory observer. As mentioned earlier, the research aim was to learn about people's experiences in managing ecotourism, thus the researcher scrupulously avoided making suggestions about the management activities being observed. In fact, I had to constantly remind myself through self-reflection that my purpose was to record and not to advise.

2.1 Research Framework

2.1.1 Research Questions

The research questions provide the main themes and direction of this study. An exploration of the experiences of local communities, both in the overall study and in specific cases, highlights the differences between general and local experiences and answers many of the questions raised by this study.

Ecotourism can play a meaningful role in community development, but the capability of local people for managing and developing ecotourism has been questioned by various developers and scholars. The development of ecotourism is related to the village-level structures of power and authority, particularly on issues surrounding the utilisation of natural resources, distribution of wealth, and the conservation of culture and social values. Some communities have been successful in developing ecotourism while others have not. It has been interesting to learn how some rural people, whose primary occupation is farming, have been able to embrace a new economic activity sustainably while still maintaining the community's identity and way of life.

The broader question of the study is: *Can ecotourism be applied to a community's development and how should it be applied?* Therefore, the research questions are:

- 1) How do rural people manage tourism activity, which requires them to understand and implement a new business practice quite different from the traditional economy of the community? How and to what extent do they combine their own experiences, local knowledge and culture with the tourism development guidelines provided by outside supporters to manage ecotourism?
- 2) What are the constraints that affect ecotourism management by local communities and what is their potential to manage ecotourism successfully? To what extent are both potential and constraints shaped by or embedded in specific aspects of Thai culture, economy and society?
- 3) Is ecotourism a viable alternative to conventional tourism within rural Thai communities and can it assist in solving local problems? Are there any adverse affects of ecotourism practice at the community level? How do local people deal with these issues?

2.1.2 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the practice of ecotourism in ‘destination communities’ in rural Thailand and emphasises the issues of participation and cooperation in destination management. According to the research focus, there are three main components or themes that constitute the scope of the study. The study examines *(eco)tourism* [WHAT] as an economic and conservation tool for: *rural communities* [WHERE] practice of *sustainable development* [WHY or FOR WHAT REASON]. These three components have their own functions and development concepts. When integrated, they create a frame for *community-based ecotourism* (CBET) development [HOW] as illustrated in **Figure 2.1**. The link between any pair of these components can be explained or analysed by the theories or approaches of tourism development, political economy and political ecology, and community participation.



Figure 2.1 Scope of the study in term of research components

To develop ecotourism, the main aspects¹ to be considered are:

- *Sustainable tourism development* (the theme of ecological goals [ENVIRONMENT]);
- *Community empowerment* (as needed to ensure the conservation of resources and local identity, and local benefits [SOCIAL]); and
- *Community ecotourism business* (as an economic opportunity for locals to be involved in the tourism industry [ECONOMIC]).

2.1.3 Definitions of Terms Used

Several terms are often used to explain a certain situation or meaning by different writers and this can give rise to confusion. To avoid this, the terminology used throughout this study is defined below and then used consistently.

Terms related to Language of Tourism

Since “tourism studies is constantly renewed by developments in social and cultural theory and theory from other disciplines” (Franklin and Crang 2001:6), many terms are problematic or have multiple meanings, particularly those that are debated in human geography generally and specifically in tourism geography. Although this thesis deals with the terms as generally understood in the tourism sector, the thesis recognises that from a post-structuralist perspective “language is seen as the medium for defining and contesting social organization and subjectivity” (Pratt 2000:625) and does not simply treat the terms as unproblematic givens.

Tourism and travel research is usually policy-led and industry-sponsored and generally not carried out by researchers who are familiar with cultural and social theories. It has been fetishised: tourism is treated as a thing, a product, a behaviour, a set of economic activities (Franklin and Crang 2001:6-7). This research addresses some of the relevant issues raised by social and cultural theorists although the main focus is on social and environmental issues. Indeed, some of the conceptual terms central to the main argument of the thesis have been critiqued by post-structuralist writers and some of these critiques are addressed later in the thesis. In general, post-structuralists see many of the terms used in tourism studies as contested categories having multiple meanings. Some of them are used in particular ways, as defined below.

¹ It is called a ‘holistic approach’ that is often used by community developers. This is similar to the ‘triple bottom line’, which is the concern of many responsible companies. This approach holds that firms should work toward meeting not just economic goals, but also social and environmental goals. The link with the concept of “sustainable development” is very clear (Allenby 1999:BV31).

Nature, natural attractions and environment: Although humans and human behaviour are part of nature, most tourism research, typically, deals with the term nature as non-human nature, but may classify it as the social or cultural environment. Natural attractions, therefore, include natural features and biological substance. The environment, then, is used often in this thesis in combination with other words, as in ‘natural environment’, ‘physical environment’ and so on.

Culture, and community: Culture, initially, referred to skilled human activities through which non-human nature was encompassed and transformed, --- and then was applied to the activities themselves deemed necessary or helpful in producing this cultivation of human sensibility and conduct (Cosgrove 2000). Even though the boundary between nature and culture cannot be sustained and the opposition of culture and nature is challenged, particularly in human geography, this research deals with culture as activities and performances that represent the local and community identity. ‘Community’ in this research focuses on community (*chumchon*) in the bounded sense of physical location (in rural areas) such as village (*Mu Ban*), sub-district (*Tambon*) or district (*Amphoe*). It also includes people and social systems, which mostly are also tied with the social structure and cultural behaviour (see 3.2.3).

Many terms in tourism research draw upon binary concepts. This is usually done to make it easier for the reader to understand, particularly as many of our beliefs are built through a series of unequally valued binaries (Pratt 2000) In tourism terms such as host/guest, positive/negative, origin/destination are widely used and taken to be self-explanatory. But in the context of globalisation tourism is more complex and these simple binaries seem less helpful in describing the reality of tourism or they may reveal the underlying values of the writer. This has been explained in **Chapter 3**.

Generally terms such as ‘the negative and beneficial impacts of tourism’ are not controversial in the tourism industry and in tourism studies and simply refer to the effects of or changes caused by tourism development on environmental, social and economic conditions of the destinations. In reality, all development creates both negative and positive impacts according to different points of view or the stakeholders involved (Smith 1989:3-4). If not indicated specifically in this thesis the term always refers to the impacts on the stakeholders in destination areas.

Specific Terminology Used in this Study

Tourism in the Community (TiC): Several terms related to tourism that occurs in the community have been used in the study. Although their meanings are very similar, the terms are

not synonymous. Such terms include ‘Community Tourism’ (CT), ‘Community-based Tourism’ (CBT), ‘Community-based Ecotourism’ (CBET or CBE) and Tourism in the Community (TiC). *TiC* covers all forms of tourism that take place in the community. CT may refer to CBT or CBET or means tourism that is run by the community. To avoid confusion, this study uses TiC to refer to a non-specific form of tourism at the community level. (see also 6.1), while CBT refers to all forms of tourism that are managed or run by a group of people in the community. CBT also refers to a new approach towards *new TiC*.

Ecotourism (ET) & CBET: The concepts and definitions of ecotourism vary according to the users. **Chapter 5** reviews and discusses this term. The term ecotourism is debatable even in the Thai context. In this thesis the term ecotourism is defined as *responsible travel to the ecological sites to create conservation awareness as well as the provision of a joint learning experience among all concerned parties under sustainable tourism and environmental management, which is oriented towards community participation* (adapted from TISTR’s definition, 1997).

However, since the participation of the local community is of great concern to Thais, the community-based concept has been applied to tourism and ecotourism practice. For ecotourism, many practitioners prefer the term Community-based Ecotourism, which refers to ecotourism services that are owned and managed by the community. It also implies that a community is taking care of its natural resources in order to gain income through operating tourism activities. CBET also frequently includes other forms of tourism that are managed by the community (see the discussion in **Chapter 6**). Therefore, ET mostly indicates the concept of ecotourism and CBET indicates the practice at the community level and sometimes, in this thesis, they are combined into one acronym as ET/CBET.

Actor: The study uses the term ‘actor’ to represent the stakeholders that have direct and indirect roles in ecotourism management. The term ‘stakeholders’ may also be used to refer to those who are affected by tourism without necessarily having a direct influence on it or benefit from it; while ‘participant’ refers specifically to those who are involved in a particular activity.

2.1.4 Theoretical Framework

There are three main theoretical frameworks that have been used as tools for analysis in this research. These are tourism systems and development models, political economy and political ecology of tourism, and community participation in tourism development. These theoretical

frameworks are used to help our understanding of past experiences (mostly from other countries), to help set up propositions and test them empirically in the case studies in Thailand.

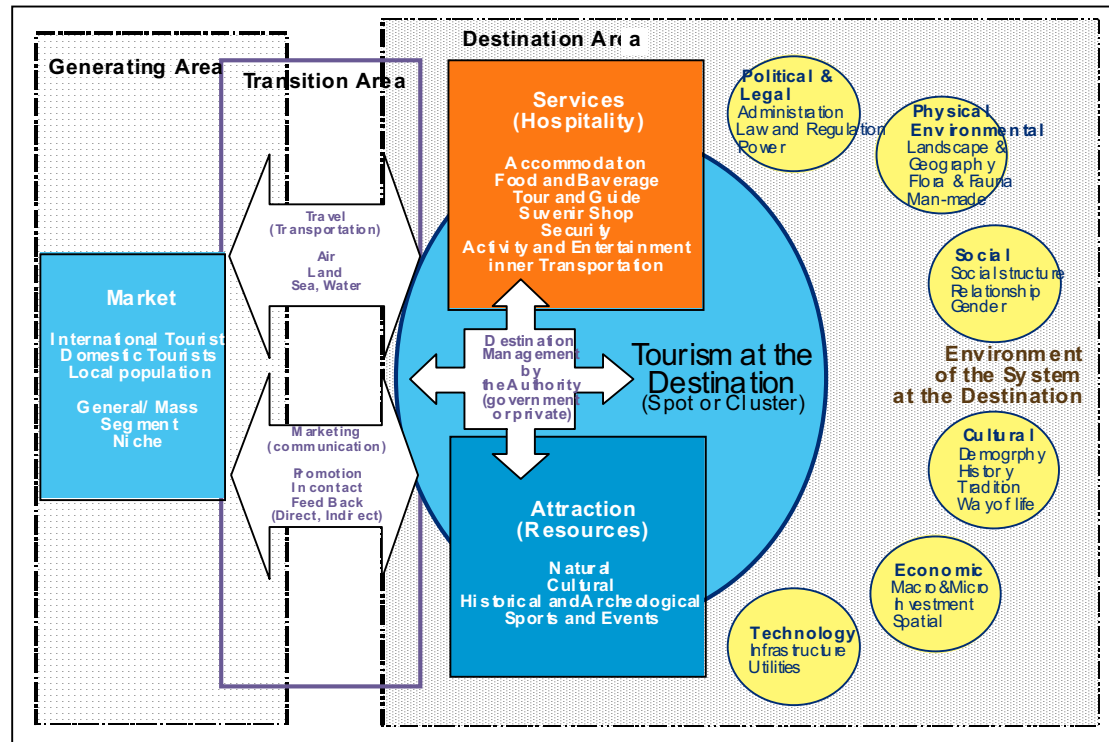
Tourism Systems and Development Models

Tourism is defined as “*the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited*” (WTO 2001). Using the systems approach, the tourism system has components and environments that may be classified differently from one to another. Geographically, tourism incorporates three regions which are 1) the tourist (market) generating area, 2) the transit area, and 3) the destination area (Hall 2000; Leiper 1995; Weaver and Lawton 2002b). This identifies the flow of tourists from their home through transit areas, then on to the places they are going to visit. Economically or commercially, the tourism system consists of the market, marketing, travel and the destination (Mill and Morrison 1985). However, Blank (1989) simplifies this by combining communication and travel as a linkage between market and destination, while TISTR (1997a) is concerned mainly with the destination area and classifies the tourism system into three components: market (tourist), tourist attractions and tourism services.

Furthermore, the tourism system has its environments, which include political and legal, socio-cultural, economic and investment, institutions and cooperation, infrastructure, and physical and ecological (see Keyser 2002; Weichard 1992) components. In order to explain tourism development on several levels in the community the study draws on a combination of tourism systems at the destination, their components and environments, and linkages between them as illustrated in **Figure 2.2**. This system of tourism will be the basis for analysis, and particularly the tourism system of the destinations in the case study areas. Understanding the system helps us identify development in the community and the actors who support or do not support the development.

There are at least four tourism development models that set the theoretical framework for analysing, comparing, and forecasting the communities’ tourism development in this study. These models are the development of tourism planning and policy paradigm (Hall), the process of physical or spatial development (Miossec), community participation in the stages of tourist development (van Doorn and Gormsen) and tourism life cycles (Butler) (see more in **3.2.2**). These models reflect the development of conventional tourism that often creates negative impacts on a community or environment, particularly those that are poorly planned and

managed. The study incorporates these experiences by focusing on the ‘tourism life cycle’ and the ‘role of the local community’ in tourism development. In a world of global flows, it also argues that conceptualising tourism as an evolutionary cycle may not be adequate for contemporary tourism, particularly post-modern tourism. However, most tourism practices in Thailand, including those geared to alternative tourism, still maintain conventional practices. This has to be tested.



Sources: Derive from a combination of many authors (e.g. Blank 1989; Hall 2000; Keyser 2002; Mill and Morrison 1985; TISTR 1997a; Weaver and Lawton 2002a; Weichard 1992).

Figure 2.2 Tourism system at the destination

The study is concerned with ecotourism development methods, especially in Thai communities, that oppose conventional tourism. It is interesting to determine if alternative tourism can develop by following or diverging from the evolution of *linear tourism development models* as described in conventional development models. Of particular interest is the question: Do the results comply with or deviate from the models?

The proposition that can be raised here is: In the new era of tourism development, maintaining and increasing the communities’ roles, powers and opportunities to be involved in the

development of their regions via ecotourism will increase profits, maintain local identity and reduce environmental impact. Thus, the study will compare the results of new paradigms of tourism development in community-based tourism with linear tourism development

The Political Economy and Political Ecology of Tourism

Tourism is an economic activity that can easily make profits through the consumption of natural and cultural resources with or without any facilities or supporting utilities. Tourism is a fairly new phenomenon for rural communities in Thailand and consumes resources which are used by and available for the whole community. Tourism also involves wider actors, including state authorities and private investors. It also creates new relationships among members of an existing community. In this regard, tourism can give returns to the investors while exploiting resources and cultures of local communities or countries on a global level.

Similar to other economic sectors, tourism relates to and relies on the power of different 'actors' within society, and relates to the role of public policy in influencing the economic and social welfare of stakeholders. A tourism development policy may favour the interest of only some social actors (states or private investors) at the expense of others (communities or individuals) and cause an uneven development. In order to deal with political issues, especially power management, most actors at the local level take a close interest in how power struggles are played out at national and regional levels.

Political ecology, is "an approach to, but far from a coherent theory of, the complex metabolism between nature and society" (Watts 2000:590). It specifically concerns environmental or ecological issues, and can be used to explain the development of tourism. Thus, in a study of ecotourism in the community, the concepts and theories of political economy and political ecology will be used as one approach to analyse the interaction of the components of tourism development in the communities.

Using political economy and political ecology approaches in the study of tourism (see 3.2.4). provides an integrated explanation of human-environmental interactions and the relative power of various stakeholders involving access to, and management of natural resources (Stonich 1998:29). Stonich states that the essential elements of political ecological analysis encompass *ideologies, international interests, global economy, role of the state*, the relationship of *class and ethnic structures*, the interrelationship among local *resource users* and *diversity* in the decisions of local resource managers. Historical and gender issues are also included in some analyses (see Britton 1982; Pleumarom 1994; Williams 2002). These elements are concerned

with the nature of the context of ecotourism development, and are issues which have not commanded much attention in mainstream tourism development.

Therefore, the political ecology approach can help to prove the following propositions of community-based ecotourism: The human impoverishment and environmental destruction stemming from aggressive tourism development can be avoided by balancing the relationship between local, state and private operators in the use and access to resources. Equitable distribution of profits and the sharing of resources must be maintained while still maintaining social structures of groups within the community. A high level of participation and empowerment of local people in the decision making process is essential.

Community Participation in Tourism Development

Development theorists in the last several decades have given much attention to the role and opportunity of local communities. Several issues have been raised regarding the role of community in the basic concept of sustainable development, namely the participatory process (Brundtland and WCED 1988:115-6), the role of women (Reid 1995:188), and community control (Burns and Holden 1997). All of these concepts are included in the components of sustainable tourism development, including ecotourism. In the case of Thailand, community participation has been emphasised as one of the key elements of ecotourism. (TISTR 1997b). However, there are some difficulties in practice in terms of political relationships (at national and local levels), the perceptions of bureaucrats and the private sector, and conflicts within different social groups.

The participation of stakeholders, particularly local people, in development is essential. Many studies have explored and proposed models of community participation, mostly based on the work of Arnstein (1969), for example the work of Deshler and Sock (1985 cited in Selener 1997), Pretty (1995), Choguill (1996), Borrini-Feyerabend (1997 cited in Selin 1999) and Wilcox (2000). They classify the levels of participation into several rungs, which initially begins with non-participation and graduates to partial participation and finally arrives at the empowerment of people. Although these models are not specifically about tourism, they can be used as a theoretical basis for the study. Details of these models are given in 8.1.3. This includes the TISTR (1998) work on the classification of community participation in ecotourism.

The principle of community participation, which is classified as a 'ladder' of those models and TISTR's work have been incorporated into a framework for the exploration and analysis of the

role of communities in managing (eco)tourism in the case study areas. The several forms of community participation in tourism in Thailand may be described in a similar manner to the ladder of public participation model (see 8.3.1). However, as the model was developed outside of Thailand, the patterns and levels of participation may be different depending on the socio-cultural, economic and community environments within Thailand. This is explored in this study.

2.2 Research Process and Methodology

The research was designed using both local experience as well as theoretical knowledge. The following section provides an explanation of the processes and methodology used throughout this study.

The research follows the process of theory-based research (Dooley 1995), which focuses more on ‘theory-then-research’ than ‘research-then-theory’ (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). The research pays attention to the qualitative processes that seek in-depth understanding of the issues and attempts to portray phenomena without testing for causal patterns. It describes a social process as asked by the research questions from the point of view of particular actors (in this case mainly local people in the communities).

The process constructs an explicit theory and model and then sets up a number of propositions derived from those theories or models for empirical investigation. These propositions will be rejected or proved by empirical data. The results will then determine whether changes reflect the theory or models in terms of confirmation, improvement or change. However, some investigation of a phenomenon may result in a new idea or proposition, which will be integrated with the main analysis. It should be noted that the research focuses on rural communities and uses case studies of local areas which have experience of ecotourism development. Thus, the outcomes will be specific rather than general. However, some outcomes may provide lessons that can be generalised for application to other communities.

2.2.1 Research Methods

In order to meet the target of the study, ‘multiple operationism’² was applied during the research process. At least two types of methodology were combined in the study of the same

² The idea of ‘multiple operationism’ was developed by Campbell and Fiske (1959) in the 1950s. “They argued that more than one method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the trait and not of the method” (Jick 1983:136)

phenomenon – known as methodological triangulation³; – mixing qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Jick 1983) and data were obtained from a wide range of sources – referred to as *data triangulation* (Arksey and Knight 1999). These methods were useful in ascertaining information both at a general level and specific case study areas. Four specific areas were used in the study for the purposes of obtaining an in-depth understanding of local peoples' practices.

The study consists of four main parts: a review of the relevant existing literature, the general study of community tourism, case studies of rural communities involved in tourism, and analysis (as illustrated in **Figure 2.3**). The review of the literature covered both theories and practices within tourism and ecotourism in the global and Thai contexts. The findings were compared with the empirical studies both at national and local levels. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used where applicable. The information gained can be used for analysis in the form of quantified data, and an explanation of the situation and positions of the case studies can be used for synthesis and analysis which will describe the phenomenon of development in rural communities.

2.2.2 Literature Review

The literature review covers tourism development around the world, tourism development in Thailand, and the emergence of ecotourism on a global level and its introduction to Thailand. The review includes impacts of tourism and other relevant issues at global and national levels. The main topics of the review are:

- 1) Travel and tourism evolution, and tourism development in the global and Thai contexts and its impacts and solutions; the changing of the tourism development paradigm and the contesting of different parts of society, particularly the struggle of local communities.
- 2) The new wave of tourism and the emergence of alternative tourisms including ecotourism;

The review also covers approaches to development and components that are relevant to the study, for example, community development, community participation, the relationship between humans, culture and nature, and environmental and resources management. These issues are discussed and debated throughout the review and the study.

³ Denzin (1978 cited in Jick 1983:135).

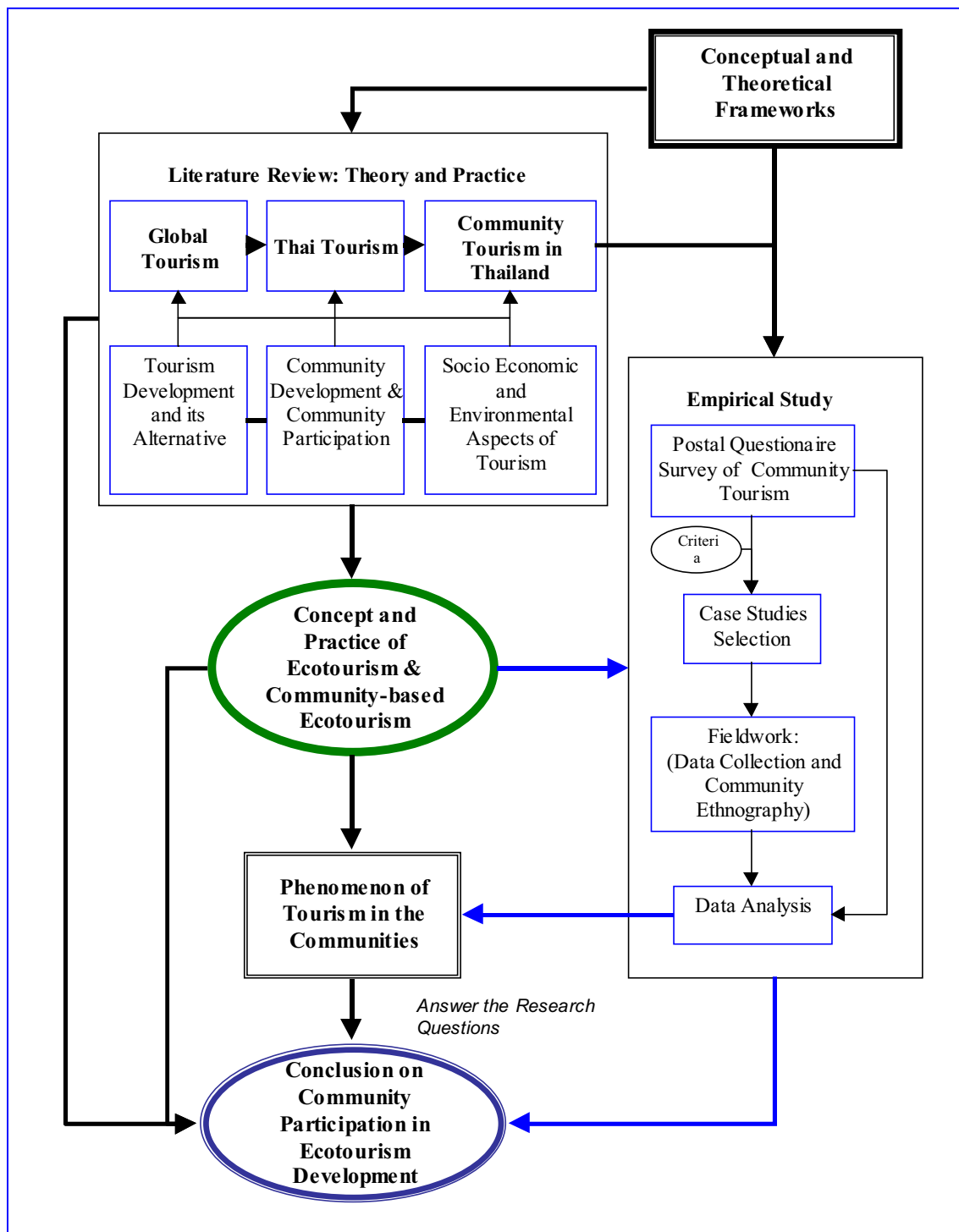


Figure 2.3 Flow of the research process

2.2.3 The General Community Study

Survey Method

A general study of recent community tourism experiences in Thailand (a source of secondary information) and interviews with various stakeholders have added to the understanding of the role of people's participation in eco- and other forms of tourism. Much of the information regarding tourism within rural communities was collected from a variety of documentary sources before a '*postal questionnaire*' was distributed to over eighty villages and groups of communities who are involved in tourism. Many involved communities available at the time are listed in **Appendix 5** (Table A5.2).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to collect the relevant information from the target community in order to understand its tourism development situation. The information required comprised: overview of community, tourism supply and demand and its management, actors and organisations involved in tourism and support from outside. Questions also covered personal information about the respondent and their opinion of CBT.

Some questionnaires were sent directly to the villages but some were sent via the development organisations that support, promote or are involved in tourism in the target communities or elsewhere. Thirty-one (with twenty-nine totally completed) questionnaires were received from different parts of the country with different levels of experience. A short field visit to some of those communities was made in June 2000. The purposes of the visits were 1) to confirm the information received or fill in missing information, 2) to investigate the level of participation in a 'real' situation, and 3) collect other figures necessary to the analysis and philosophical interpretation.

Representation of Respondents

The respondents, who answered the questions, are both insiders and outsiders that are mostly working closely with or are involved to some degree in the tourism development of the communities. They range from villagers to government officers, including NGO developers, academics and private operators. Government officers are district administrators, forestry officers, Hill Tribal Welfare Division officers and TAT. They have a role in tourism as community tourism actors (61.29%), coordinators (25.81%) and supporters (12.90%). Most

respondents have positions as villager leaders for example, village headmen (*phuyai-ban*), sub-district chiefs (*kamnan*) and project workers. Another group of actors is community organisation committees (12.90%), who are informal leaders working directly in community tourism. Coordinators and supporters mostly are outsiders who joined the community tourism development as project workers. Some of them have become embedded in the communities for one to five years and up to 10 years. This to ensure that they can be the representation of the communities to provide an information in the questionnaire.

The information gained from postal questionnaire and communities visitation survey has been analysed and presented in **Chapter 6**. A general study on community tourism have provided the important information and some significant experiences of many communities in Thailand, which help the study to understand the general practice of new economic activities at the community level. It not only enhanced the understanding on how communities became involved in tourism, but was the basis for the selection of four communities for in-depth case study. An in-depth study is still needed because the secondary information and general postal community surveys limit the research to looking at the specific issues.

2.2.4 Specific Case Studies

The study on specific case studies aims at exploring and learning from the experiences of rural community practising ET in Thailand. Four communities had been selected as specific case study areas. They were the representatives of different forms and locality of CBET. The process of selection consists of setting the criteria and making comparison matrix before choosing the communities that practise closely ecotourism (ET) or community-based ecotourism (CBET). To explore and learn from their experience in many dimensions, the study concentrated on different concepts of promoting and different levels of development. Therefore, the final selection is based on the factors as the main focus of the study. Those are the level of participation and solidarity of the community and the differentiation of ET concept (identified by type of outside supporters) which is justified by subjective and qualitative information.

Selection Process

Steps of the Selection

In brief, the selection process had three steps. The first is a selection of some communities from the respondents to a postal questionnaire. The second is a comparison and weighting them with

some factors (i.e. ecotourism experiences, CBT experiences, environmental concern, community solidarity and the degree of focusing on ET Concept) and ranking them into several levels. The last is a selection of the case studies by considering ecotourism concept support via the group type of outside supporters. It should be noted that the reason to study several case-study communities is to learn from the different experiences of different communities. The *diversity* of their experiences and practice will help learn the potential paths of such development. Although the results of the study may not totally represent all communities in rural Thailand, the study will clarify and identify the factors that might be common or specific for the other communities.

Criteria

The study set up criteria for selecting the case studies is based on ET definition (stated in **2.1.3**) and the propositions of the study (raised in **2.1.4**). The selected communities were expected to have experience in participating in ecotourism and express a high level of environmental awareness. Community solidarity is one of the main criteria that may support propositions about community participation and the possibility of the community to maintain and increase people's role in tourism development. However, this criterion has emphasised not only tourism related issues but also all environmental concerns, which include forest utilization and management, preservation and conservation of environment, coastal protection, local wisdom on bio-diversity and the beautiful and attraction of natural features. Therefore, an environmental protection skill or the nature related way of life is worth a consideration. These ensure that the research can learn from the experiences of communities on environmental conservation.

Type of outside support is also very important, because every communities obtain support from outsiders to develop their socio-economic and physical environment. The outsiders support the community in socio-economic development, environmental conservation, study, research and training and bring in a new concept of community and tourism development. The different types of outside ecotourism supporters are government agencies, academic institutions, NGOs and private operators. The outsiders help and support communities on socio-economic development, environmental conservation, study, research and training and bring in new concept of community and tourism development. Some may support or cooperate on tourism business and tourism marketing promotion.

There are other factors which are not used as criteria in this stage, e.g. race, religion, types and sizes of community, including the features of natural environmental relationships, which do not mean they are unimportant. These issues will come up during the study in The Cases.

Candidates

The study had initially chosen eight communities from the respondent communities of the postal survey to be the candidates for selection. Choosing process uses the criteria above and selects the communities which provided clear information on what they are already involved in regarding tourism and ecotourism. Each community is strengthened on community development and spends some times in tourism participation. Then the information of these communities had been compared. Lists and brief information of those community groups are summarised as following.

- 1) Amphoe Umphang has an ecotourism practice at district level that was well known in Umphang. The local people of this community have an opportunity to manage ecotourism, while government agencies, particularly TAT and Province, help them to solve the management problems. They got two international awards on ecotourism. Natural attractions in Wildlife Sanctuary and Karen villages attracted both domestic and international tourists. Local operators set up Umphang Tourism Promotion and Conservation Club (UTPC) and are totally responsible for ecotourism in this area.
- 2) Ban Khiriwong is the well-known self-reliant community in the country. They established subsistent occupation groups to strengthen their community unity and increase an income for its members. Khiriwong Ecotourism Club (KEC) is a group dealing with tourism in the village particularly the trekking tour to the top of mountain in Khao Luang National Park. They have 10 years of experiences in ecotourism and village tourism. They also co-operated with the National Park and TAO. This village began ecotourism in order to raise awareness of villagers and outsiders after they suffered from the mudslide and flood due to the degradation of the environment.
- 3) Settled by only 29 families, Ban Ko Taen is a small island yet is wealthy in terms of natural resources. The coral reef around island is the attractions for Ko Samui tourists. They established Ko Taen Conservation Club to protect a small forest, mangrove and coral reef. Then they practise managing the island ecotourism under the support from TAT and TISTR.
- 4) Ban Prasat is the historic community that TAT supported and promoted as the community tourism management site. They established the local group to serve tourists in

accommodation (homestay type) and historical tour guide. They became one of the practice in cultural tourism for other community to learn from their ten years of experiences.

- 5) Ban Sasom is one of the villages of Tambon Na Pho Klang, which organise tour guide to Pa Dong Natham in Pha Taem National Park. Ecotourism had been promoted by co-operation of Nature Care Foundation (NC), TAT, Pha Taem NP and Regional Army. Since 1997 the Na Pho Klang TAO took this responsibility. TAO strongly supports all villages to deal with tourism. However, due to the scattered location of the villages, Ban Sasom established an Ecotourism Club separately to serve tourists in smaller area of Pa Dong Natham and their community forest.
- 6) Ban Sila Laeng is the well-known community forest development community. They want to promote ecotourism in order to make benefit from natural conservation and community development. They receive support from local NGOs and Sila Laeng TAO. There are few tourists visit the village due to the location and the limit of tourist attractions, but some who wants to learn from their experiences in community forest development have frequently visited this community.
- 7) Ban Tha Madua is a small village evacuated from the flooding area after the dam project being built. They presented the natural features around the village, particularly Three-Colour Crab and the culture of their life to the tourists, which bring in by international tour operator. They established ecotourism club and managed the services on their own with the support from International Volunteer Association Inc (IVI) and International Volunteer Thailand (IVTH). They are able to secure some certain number of international tourists at least once a week.
- 8) Ban Um-yom is a Lahu tribal village that is involved in the 'Upland Ecotourism Development Project' of Social Welfare Department (SWD). The Project established a Village Cultural Centre at this village to be a demonstration of art, cultural and way of life of Lahu people in order to show the real life of cultural and natural atmosphere of the village (1998). This village was chosen as a training place for Hill Tribe Welfare Division Officers and Lahu people to practice an ecotourism development by local community in 2000.

Selection

Basically, all eight pre-selected cases meet the criteria mentioned earlier, but the difference among them is the degree of involvement in ecotourism. **Table 2.1** illustrates a transformation of the information into scores, processing and selection. The scoring and justification use not only quantitative information but also conceptual qualitative information. From the ranking,

when taken into consideration with outside supporter groups and the number of tourists, it can be justified that the ranked A and B (four communities) are the most fitting to the aims of the study. Those are Ban Khiriwong, Amphoe Umphang, Ban Sasom and Ban Tha Madua.

Table 2.1 Selection of the communities for case studies

Method		Pre-selected Communities							
Criteria/ process	weight	Ban Tha Madua	Ban Sila-laeng	Ban Umphang	Ban Umyom	Ban Prasat	Ban Sasom	Ban Khiriwong	Ban Ko Taen
Information transformation									
• Ecotourism experiences		2	1	3	1	1	2	2	2
• CBT experiences		2	1	3	1	3	2	3	1
• Environmental concern		3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
• Community solidarity		2	3	3	1	2	2	3	1
• ET Concept									
- Cultural-based		1	1	1	1	3	1	3	0
- Natural-based		2	2	3	1	1	3	3	3
- Service-based		3	1	2	1	3	2	3	0
• Group of outsider									
- GO				##	##	###	#	#	#
- TAO			##	#			##	##	
- NGO		#	#		#		##	###	#
- Individual (Private)		###							
- Business sector		#		##		#			
- Academic						#		##	#
Weighting									
• Ecotourism experiences	(3)	6	3	9	3	3	6	6	6
• CBT experiences	(1)	2	1	3	1	3	2	3	1
• Environmental concern	(2)	6	6	6	4	4	6	6	6
• Community solidarity	(3)	6	9	9	3	6	6	9	3
• ET Concept									
- Cultural-based	(1)	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	0
- Natural-based	(3)	6	6	9	3	3	9	9	9
- Service-based	(2)	6	2	4	2	6	4	6	0
Weighting results		33	28	41	17	28	34	42	25
Rank # 1		4	3	5	2	3	4	5	3
Final decision									
• Main ET outside supporter		IND	TAO	GO, BUZ	GO	GO	TAO, NGO	NGO, TAO, ACD	GO
• Size of Tourists		medium	low	very high	high	low	low	high	medium
Rank # 2		B	C	A	D	C	A	A	C
Top of the region									
• Identified the scale of ET development		OK		OK			OK	OK	
		Small		Large			Small	Medium	

Sources: secondary data and postal questionnaire survey.

Notes: IND = Individual, GO = Government agency, NGO = None Governmental Organisation, TAO = Tambon Administrative Organisation, ACD = Academic, BUZ = Private operator

An explanation of information transformation is shown below.

- 1) All communities have the same level of experiences on TiC, while only two of them (Ban Prasat and Ban Khiriwong) do promote general TiC than ET. This is because the cultural tourism is a big part of tourism in those communities. Umphang focuses mainly on ecotourism, while Ban Ko Taen, focuses only on ET, because it is a small community and can be dominated by a few local people.
- 2) Most communities give much concern on environmental issue in the community and the natural environment and resources around the community such as community forest, national parks and coastal area.
- 3) Community solidarity differs from one to another. This is justified by the number of local organisations and their activities which concerned on the participation of the members and the active of the committees. Some of them were just established, while many have good outcome of its activities. Ban Khiriwong, Umphang and Ban Sila-laeng are the most strong and united communities. This also included some communities that have been used ecotourism to strengthen their solidarity i.e. Ban Tha Madua, Ban Sasom Ban Umyom and Ban Ko Taen
- 4) The type of ecotourism adopted differs in the communities studied i.e., it may focus on nature-based tourism or culture-based tourism or both at different levels. Some communities may concentrate more on local tourism services such as homestays, tour guides, interpretation and selling local products. Group of outside supporter is one of the importance factors. Government organisation (GO), Tambon Administrative Organisation (TAO), non-governmental organisation (NGO), individual or private, academics and business operators are those outsiders who are involved in TiC. Level of support (before the year 2000) has been marked. The outside agencies that mainly supported the communities in ecotourism are classified as follow.
 - TAT supported Umphang, Ban Prasat, and Ban Ko Taen.
 - Other government agencies supported these communities: Ban Umyom (Hill Tribe Welfare Division); Umphang (Provincial Office and Wildlife Sanctuary Office); Ban Sasom (Forestry Regional Office, Ubon Ratchathani and the Regional Military), Ko Taen (TISTR).
 - The communities that supported by their TAO are Ban Sila Laeng, Ban Sasom, Ban Khiriwong, and Umphang.

- NGOs also supported the communities i.e. Ban Sila Laeng (Klum Hak Muang Nan); Ban Sasom (Nature Care, Ubon Ratchathani); Ban Tha Madua (IVTH); Ban Khiriwong (Bowon Nakhonrat Foundation, TVS-REST) and Ko Taen (WFT)..
- Private Operators supported the community in terms of sending tourists to the villages were only two places those are Umphang (UTPC) and Ban Tha Madua (IVI and Intrepid Australia).
- Academic Institutions took part in supporting Ban Sasom (TRF); Ban Prasat (AIT) and Ban Ko Taen (TISTR)

All of the transformed information, except group of outside supporter, have received its weight i.e. three for ecotourism experiences; one for TiC experiences; two for environmental concern; three for community solidarity. ET Concept has separated as one for culture-based; three for nature-based and two for service-based. These weights had multiplied the scores transformed above. Results of weighting are sequenced as follow Ban Khiriwong (42), Umphang (41), Ban Sasom (34), Ban Tha Madua (33), Ban Prasat and Ban Sila-laeng (28), Ban Ko Taen (25) and Ban Umyom (17).

From the ranking above, when considering outside supporting group and number of tourists, it can be justified that the first four communities are properly fitted for the aims of the study. Those include:

- 1) Ban Khiriwong, Amphoe Lansaka, Changwat Nakhon Sri Thammarat.
- 2) Amphoe Umphang, Changwat Tak.
- 3) Ban Sasom, Amphoe Khong Chiam, Changwat Ubon Ratchathani.
- 4) Ban Tha Madua, Amphoe Thong Pha Phum, Changwat Kanchanaburi.

Locations of these four communities are displayed in the **Figure 2.4**.

Case Studies Field Survey

The fieldwork combined qualitative (QL) and quantitative (QT) methods to collect information from the communities and their experiences of tourism. The relationship between the methods, sources of information and outcomes are illustrated in the **Table 2.2**. Physical surveys, visits to tourist attractions, engagement in tourist activities, participant observation, unstructured and semi-structured interviewing and household questionnaires were the methods used for collecting data. There are several research tools used in the data collection methods. Those included semi-structured interview forms, questionnaire forms, hand sketches, still

photography, video footage, and tape recordings. Being in the communities – at least one to two months per community – and staying with the villagers and being involved in the communities' activities allowed for a deeper and extremely valuable understanding of the local context. Visual observation, discussions with villagers, confidential and anonymously reported discussion and casual observation were also part of the fieldwork methodology.

Data analysis and interpretation were carried out using theoretical and other sources of information. Quantitative information was processed manually and using computer software (SPSS), while qualitative information has been used to synthesise and analyse where applicable.

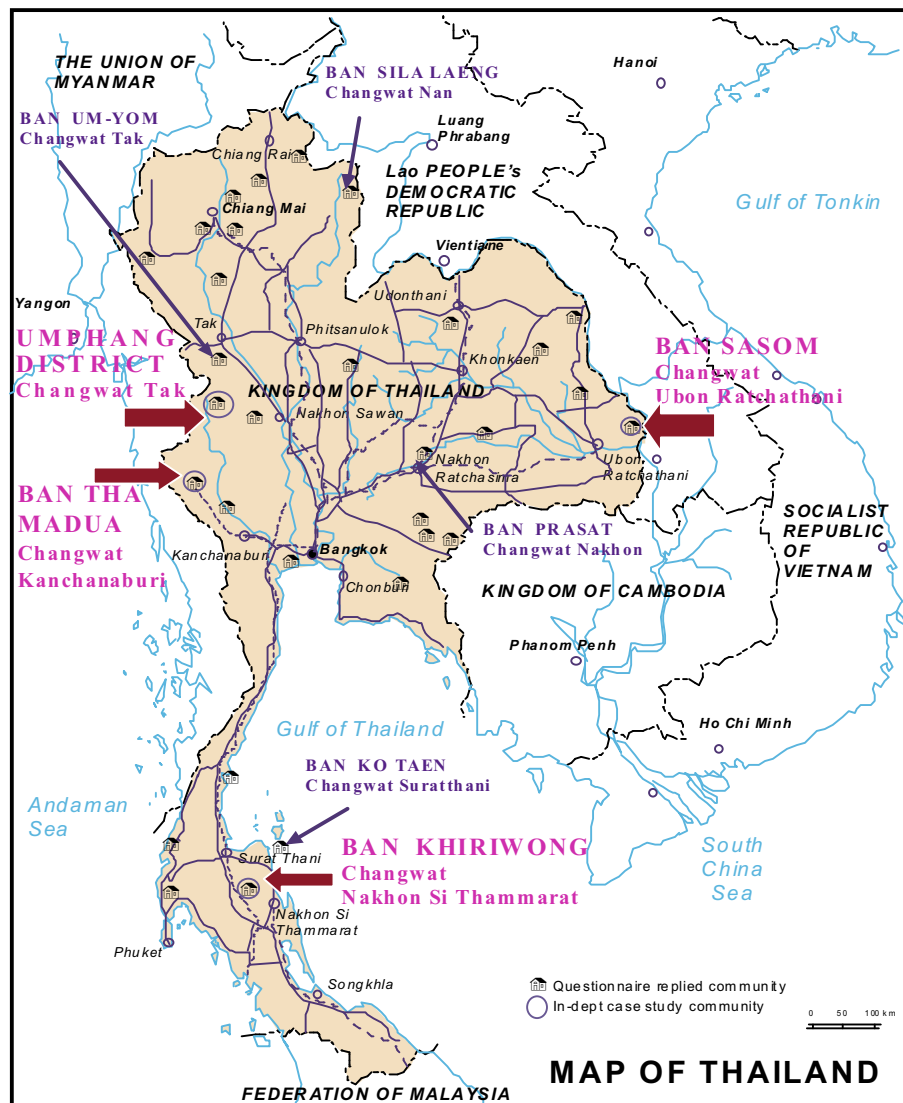
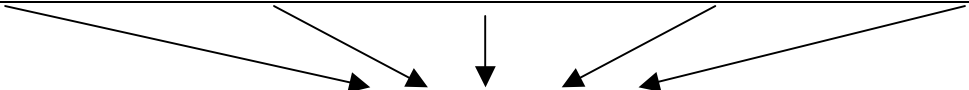


Figure 2.4 The location of the candidate and selected communities for the case studies

Table 2.2 Methods of empirical study

Empirical study (methodologies and data triangulation)					
Methods	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWING	SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING	STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING	DATA COLLECTION
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> way of life activities groups/organisations tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> group members people tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> officers leaders (formal/informal) operators/service owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> official statistics previous studies reports groups/organisation's data and records
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hand sketches still camera video recorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tape recorder notebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> semi-structured interview forms tape recorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> questionnaire forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> notebook photocopy still camera video recorder
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding the history, characteristic, culture and attitude of the local development phenomenon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general information and impacts opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general and specific information of community-based ecotourism management vision and attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> qualitative results to support the finding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trending the profile of communities or groups/organisations figures for analysis
Outcomes	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of development Exploration of behaviour/ attitude/ perception on community development and tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability of the community to manage tourism Problems, constraints and power relationships vis á vis the development Trends and direction of CBET 				

Note: These methods may be used for both general and specific communities survey.

The outcome of the field surveys were beneficial to the study, particularly in terms of helping the researcher to understand local communities' practices in tourism management, not only community-based tourism, but also other types of tourism. Those outcomes concern, for example, the history of development, exploration of behaviour/ attitude/ perception on community development and tourism, capability of the community to manage tourism, problems, constraints and power relationships vis a vis the development, and trends and direction of CBET.

2.2.5 Strengths and limitations of the Method

Methodological triangulation (mixing qualitative and quantitative methods) and data triangulation (from a wide range of different sources) enables us to understand the complexity of issues and contexts and to feel confidence in the trustworthiness of the results. The strengths of this methodology were to ensure that the researcher had access to as many sources of information as was necessary — this includes both qualitative and quantitative information. However, there are some limitations of the study both due to this method and other factors. The researcher was based in Australia during the study period. Therefore, the time used to conduct the fieldwork was somewhat limited. As four communities were selected as case study areas this also limited the length of stay in each community. The limited amount of time spent in the field might have limited the researcher's perception and understanding of the dynamic nature of ecotourism and of the deep conflicts that may occur during the development process, particularly in terms of power relations that have a strong influence on the tourism development process. Nevertheless, the analysis of the changes in Thai society, both at the policy and the practical levels, that affect the perceptions of local people in rural communities and ecotourism development help to overcome to some extent this limitation. However, close contacts with the various stakeholders and following the reality of the gradually unfolding ecotourism development in the case studies suggests that the information obtained and the results of this study show that the researcher has achieved the aims and objectives of the study.

It should be noted that, one of the crucial issues of community participation in any development process is gender relations. Although the study was concerned with this issue, the thesis has not dealt with it as a focal point. The information and analysis, therefore, touched this issue in a general and somewhat superficial manner. Although this issue is not focused on, the results of the study clearly showed that the limited analysis of gender issues in the thesis was nevertheless beneficial to the study and did not weaken the degree to which the researcher achieved the study's aims.

Excluding user-oriented studies can be said to be another limitation of this study. The study was mainly concerned with local community management of the destinations rather than the perceptions of ecotourists, and therefore the preferences and opinions of ecotourists have not been systematically addressed. Nevertheless, because most case studies still have a small number of tourists, and this was particularly so during the survey period, such a limitation was not a crucial issue. However, exploring and learning about the attitude of ecotourists with regards to the management of local people was pursued only by informal observations, and

informal and semi-structured interviewing. Participating in the tours and activities with other tourists provided not only a chance to learn about local services management but also about tourist attitudes and the interactions between guests and hosts. Therefore, the lack of focus on issue should have no significant effect on the main theme of the research.

Conclusion

Ecotourism and community-based ecotourism are dynamic and they deal with a diversity of local cultures and social structures in rural communities, thus they cannot be viewed from a single perspective. Reviewing the literature related to this new and alternative tourism is essential to the study as well as to the understanding of global and local trends of ET/CBET. The empirical studies of general communities as well as of specific case studies, are the focal points of the study that explain the introduction of tourism and ET/CBET into the rural communities and the ways it is practiced by different communities.

Although the theoretical frameworks used in this study are based on the experiences of other countries, this can be an efficient way of analysing the adoption and evolution of ecotourism development of local communities. Therefore, arguments derived from such theories are directly and indirectly employed throughout the thesis.