

Chapter 4: Methodology

Reflecting in the experiences gained and lessons learned from the pilot studies a number of methodologies have been used in conjunction to address the research question in Phases One and Two.

4.1 Field Research

All three research sites were visited to conduct interviews with weavers.

For the Mosuo case study, the research was conducted in Walabei village, located in the Wengquen District of Yunnan Province in southwest China. The duration of the field mission was one month - October 2012. For the Bhutan case study, only weavers based in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, were considered for interview. Thimphu was selected because of its easy access while APIC and HAB facilitated the study. The field mission to Bhutan was undertaken between mid-November and mid-December 2012 as the study learned that weavers were more free to participate in such a study during the winter months. Regarding the Harris Tweed case study, weavers from both places - Harris and Lewis - were invited to participate in this study. The Outer Hebrides mission took three weeks to complete and was conducted in July 2013 as travel on the islands during winter months can prove to be challenging.

4.2 Case Study

This research adopted the case study methodology whereby each community-based textile group, the Mosuo, Bhutan and Harris Tweed, was considered as an individual case study. This enabled the analysis of authenticity from a holistic perspective within each community while also allowing comparisons to be made among the three cases.

4.3 Open and Closed Questionnaire

Closed questionnaires were used in the Phase Two of the research (with the exception of a small section of Open Questions employed in the Harris Tweed case study). Respondents were asked to reflect their opinions (either agreeing, disagreeing or stating that they did not know) on a number of single sentence statements. This enabled the study to articulate the meaning of authenticity in a precise manner while conclusively identifying the markers of authenticity.

4.4 Semi-Structure Interviews

The research employed semi-structured interviews during Phase One on all three case studies. This method was adopted because of the successes experienced during the pilot study.

4.5 Unobtrusive Observations at Interview Sites

As far as possible, interviews were conducted at the weavers' studios. However, under some circumstances such as when the weavers explicitly expressed the desire not to be interviewed at their studio or work place, other sites were considered including retail shops, village hall and an association's meeting room.

At the weavers' studio, conscious efforts were made to notice the looms and other types of equipment such as warping frames, types of yarns used, setting, space, types of textiles being woven, and examples of previous and current work.

4.6 Photography, Video and Audio Recording and Note Taking

These techniques were all employed during the research. Audio recordings became the back-up when video recordings were unclear. If and when necessary, photography was used to capture examples of weaving tools and textile samples for studies.

4.7 Use of Exemplars

The pilot studies demonstrated that it was essential to refer to exemplars during the interviews to provide accurate, credible and reliable information. Weavers were asked to show both their past work as well as their current or most recent piece of work. Historical hand-woven textiles, such as family heirlooms (especially from Mosuo and Bhutanese weavers) were often displayed and used as references during the course of the interview.

4.8 Interpretations

Non-professional interpreters were used in both the Mosuo and Bhutan case studies. For the Mosuo case study, it was, at times, necessary for two interpreters to be involved, one translating from English to Mandarin and another from Mandarin to the Mosuo language.

Some Bhutanese weavers could understand English well. Hence, interpreters were only used when weavers were not proficient in English. These were limited to about 30% of those interviewed.

No interpreters were used for the Harris Tweed case study.

4.9 Political, Social and Cultural Context

Personal experience of Asian culture has been a great advantage in comprehending the subtle nuances that may affect the accuracy and credibility of this study. For example, several methods to ‘break the ice’ and to ‘bridge the gap’ were devised including:

- Interviewer lightening the session with humor at the start of the interview.
- Offering a textile gift to the weavers at the beginning of the session which helped to establish an affinity between both parties while the gift itself served as a springboard to examine their own textiles.

Being sensitive to the gender issues, women interpreters were engaged wherever possible to put female (especially Asian rural) weavers at ease. These tactics engendered confidence for the weavers, creating a safe environment for them to express themselves freely. It also helped level the difference in status between the interviewer and the interviewees.

For the case of the Mouso, although the author is ethnically Chinese but from Singapore (and also being a consultant and not a project staff) enabled him to establish a different but significant relationship with the weavers. This apparent detachment enabled him to access important information which was not readily available to national Chinese project staff.

The UNESCO Bangkok Office has developed the ‘Cultural Diversity Programme Lens Toolkit’ (UNESCO, n.d. p6), and this system was employed to evaluate the cultural appropriateness of the interview questions. One of the techniques suggested was to have the interview questions and protocol assessed by cultural experts. Other cultural issues which were considered included reviewing the cultural calendar to ensure that the periods of the field missions were suitable for the interviewee participation in the study.

For the Mosuo case study, both the UNESCO culture officer based in Beijing and the

SEAC Project Officer who was in charge of the UNDP project reviewed the questionnaire. The questionnaire for the Bhutanese case study was evaluated by a local cultural expert from a local Bhutanese NGO, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy. The structure and protocol of Harris Tweed weavers were discussed and reviewed by a Scottish academic and a local weaver based in the Scottish Borders. These cultural experts found the interview questions to be culturally sound and the research protocols appropriate.

4.10 Individual Face-to-Face Interviews

No third party was engaged to conduct the interviews with the researcher personally conducting all the interviews with weavers. The duration of each interview was between one and a half hours (without translation) and two and a half hours (with translation for Mosuo and Bhutanese weavers).

4.11 Reflective Journal

Reflective journals were kept for each of the case studies. Upon completion of each day in the field, ‘thick descriptions’ (Geerts, 1973; Ponterotto, 2006) were used when reflecting on the day’s activities. The journal also served as a reminder of the context of the interviews together with the other details such as the emotions of the interviewees, important objects and settings.

4.12 Establishing Trustworthiness

Besides video and audio recordings of the interviews, notes were made on individual forms. In this way, three different types of recording were used for each interview.

One means of establishing trustworthiness is through triangulation of different methods, and therefore multiple phases of research were designed to satisfy this criterion. However, acknowledging that each case study is different from another, the methods of succeeding investigations also differs, dictated by the results of the first phase and the opportunities presented during the field missions.

4.13 Quantitative Data

In Phase Two of the research, simple qualitative data was used to determine whether the identified textile element was a suitable candidate as a marker of authenticity. As each case study is different, the threshold to determine (from respondents’ feedback) whether

an element could be considered as a marker of authenticity is also diverse. This will be discussed under each individual case study.

4.14 Documentation and Reflection

All photos, video and audio recordings were downloaded and reviewed at the end of each day. The audio and video recordings of interviews were compared to notes and any clarifications were followed up the next day. A daily journal of observations was also maintained (as stated in the section on reflective journal).

Opportunities to review notes and journal entries were seized during the field missions. These opportunities ensured that the data was checked and re-checked. If there were any questions, doubts or discrepancies (such as in the Mosuo case study during Phase Two), this allowed such issues to be clarified on site.

4.15 Transcribing

Transcribing all the interviews was done off site and no third party was engaged in this activity. When transcribing, the video was reviewed with field notes and the reflective journal as a reference. If and when the video recording or notes were unclear, the audio recordings were used.

Once all the transcriptions were completed, each case study was drafted as a complete stand-alone report.

4.16 Preparation

Preparation for the field research included:

- A case study protocol was drafted listing the sequence of activities, logistical needed, the justification of questions and the manner in which to conduct the interviews. These are listed in Appendix B.
- Identification of a suitable site to conduct the interview, the physical placement of tables and chairs, positioning of the camera with reference to light sources, testing of equipment and identification of exemplars.
- Preparation of interviewees for the interview by contacting the weavers in advance to make appointments and to introduce the purpose of the interview.

4.17 Logistics

A list of equipment used in conducting the interviews is attached in Appendix C. Experience from pilot studies showed that it was not always possible to charge batteries for electrical appliances in rural villages, as electricity supplies might be limited or unreliable. Hence, spare batteries were charged whenever possible and carried throughout the missions. In case of accidents and mishaps, spare and contingent items such as memory cards and batteries were purchased and included during the field trips.

4.18 Research Ethical Considerations

Based on the School's requirements, permission was granted by the School's Ethical Committee to conduct interviews (Appendix D).

A formal script was developed to explain the purpose and nature of this project, obtain consent from interviewees to record the interviews using audio and video, to quote their responses and to state that their participation in this study was voluntary. As a record of their agreement, each interviewee was asked to complete and sign a Consent Form for Field Research (Appendix E). All interviewees had agreed to the terms as stated. For Harris Tweed weavers, as they were literate, they wrote and signed on the forms. For Mosuo and Bhutanese weavers, the terms and conditions were explained to them verbally and it is only upon their agreement that interviews started with the audio and video recordings of the sessions. Confidentiality was observed at all times and no names of interviewees have been disclosed in this study.

4.19 Organisation Procedures

The organisation procedure for each case study was managed individually because of dissimilar requirements. For the Mosuo case study, permission was sought (and granted) from the UNDP/CICETE/SEAC (UNDP China, 2011) project management team. The project management team helped to facilitate the field mission and also requested access to the findings. Permission for the Bhutan field mission was granted, and assistance provided, by APIC, while HAB helped to facilitate interviews with weavers. Concerning the study's field mission to the Outer Hebrides, HTA was informed of this study. However, HTA were unable to either share their member list of weavers or to facilitate the interview process. A visit was made to their office during which a published list of independent well-known weavers was provided, with officials offering some resources about Harris Tweed (including books, exhibitions, newspaper

articles, etc.). HTA was more active in the Phase Two of the study when they helped to distribute the closed-question questionnaire to their members.

4.20 Sampling

In order for the sampling group to be credible and representative of the weaving community, weavers were identified by their skill level, age range and gender. They were categorised into beginners, intermediate skilled and highly skilled (or master) weavers. The most highly skilled or master weavers tended to be more senior while beginners were often younger persons. This approach also served to satisfy the study criteria to select interviewees from a wide age range. The self-identification approach was used to determine skills status. This was because in Mosuo and Bhutan, there was no formal certification of weaving skills (unlike the SVQ system in Scotland). Confirmation of their skill levels was also obtained through the snow-balling sampling method for which weavers recommended names of other weavers at similar skill levels.

In the Mosuo case study, a total of 15 weavers were interviewed, consisting of six expert weavers, six intermediate skilled weavers and three beginners. These weavers were all members of the newly established village weaving group and the name list was identified as the sampling frame. The weavers who were interviewed represented 15% of the sampling frame. For Phase Two, 23 Mosuo weavers participated (including some of the original 15 weavers from Phase One) which represented almost a quarter of the village weaving group.

For the Bhutan case study, a total of 14 weavers were interviewed. Among these, eight self-identified as masters, five said that they possessed intermediate weaving skills while one stated that she was a beginner, as she was still learning weaving from her mother. The sampling frame was sourced from both APIC and HAB but it is also acknowledged that some weavers were members of both organisations. Experience gained from Phase One demonstrated that expert weavers were most articulate and knowledgeable. Hence, only expert weavers (identified through HAB and APIC) were invited to participate in Phase Two. Although the invitation was extended to all expert weavers, only six master weavers participated.

In Scotland, HTA assisted in contacting a few independent weavers (whose names were in the public domain) and made appointments on behalf of the study. These initial

contacts provided a springboard from which the study contacted other weavers through the snowballing sampling method and requesting their participation.

In the Mosuo and Bhutan case studies, it was not possible to employ a gender balance approach in selecting samples for interviews. For the Mosuo case study, only women were allowed to weave and thus, interviews were confined to women weavers. As for the Bhutan case study, the only male weaver was unavailable during the research field mission.

Concerning the Harris Tweed case study, out of 17 weavers interviewed, 10 (59%) of the weavers were men while the remaining seven (41%) were women. This ratio reflected the current industry status (Section 2.4.1) where there are currently more male weavers than women. In terms of the geographical distribution of weavers, Harris Tweed weavers were spread across both islands – Harris (including Scalpay) and Lewis. However, according to HTA, there were more weavers in Lewis than in Harris. In order to reflect a similar geographical distribution ratio in this study, eight of the interviewees (47%) were from Harris while the remaining nine (53%) were from Lewis.

For the second phase of the Harris Tweed case study, the questionnaires were sent to 22 weavers. Twenty-one questionnaires were returned representing some 15% of the total weaving population of Harris Tweed textiles. Those weavers who participated in Phase One were included in this phase.

4.21 Phase 1

The study was divided into two phases. Phase One consisted of a semi-structured questionnaire, with both open and closed questions, to which the individual weavers were asked to respond. This semi-structured questionnaire was employed throughout all three case studies in order to standardise and systematise the study. A copy of the questionnaire is to be found in Appendix F.

The process adopted in Phase One was to isolate and examine one element at a time while holding all others constant. The proposition is that if this element is changed, compromised or absent (while others remain unchanged, uncompromised and present), it will jeopardize the intrinsic characteristics and nature of the textile and thus could be recommended for consideration as a marker of authenticity. If changes to this one

element do not affect the intrinsic characteristic of the cloth, it suggests that this element is not essential to the essence of the cloth and thus, cannot be proposed as a marker of authenticity.

Moreover, this element of the cloth has to be examined in the context of its history. Hence, if such an element is not present in textiles that were woven in the past (preferably those woven by an earlier generation of weavers) it cannot be proposed as a candidate marker of authenticity. On the other hand, if this element has always been present, in the past and in today's textiles, this element is worth considering as a marker of authenticity of the cloth.

Throughout Phase One, the line of questioning does not explicitly vocalise the concept or the specific word, 'authenticity', but rather, 'hints' and suggestions are included throughout the questionnaire to assist interviewees in thinking about and articulating the 'essence' of their textiles.

In order to confirm and triangulate the responses from the interviewees, it was felt necessary to repeat some questions in different parts of the questionnaire, but these were always worded differently.

Apart from the formal interviews with weavers, relevant information was obtained through opportunistic conversations with members of the communities; casual observations were also recorded in the reflective journals. Such information was also considered and included to understand the macro context of the community and later referred to in the analysis of the data.

This initial phase of study was very detailed so as to cover all aspects of hand-woven textiles.

Furthermore, depending on the data collected during Phase One, the study also seized other opportunities to enhance the quality of the data particularly in the case study in Bhutan.

- Bhutan Case Study: Phase 1 (a) – Visual Research

- Background and Justification

As seen in Chapter Two, there exists a wide diversity of kiras. The study needed to establish commonalities among the different category of kira in order to identify elements that could be candidates as markers of authenticity. To confirm a classification of the widest range of kiras in current usage required a sufficiently representative sample to be studied and photographed for subsequent analysis. A number of settings were examined which might yield this representative ‘real life’ sample. These included examining the range of kiras for sale in shops, observing people on the streets of Thimphu wearing kiras and attending an official event where traditional clothes are worn. Use of the kiras in the Textile Museum at Thimphu was ruled out as the context does not represent a ‘real life situation’; the textile exhibits are mostly arranged on the museum walls with only a few displayed on mannequins.

Other criteria for the setting was that collection of data should be as unobtrusive as possible, to offer as random a selection of kiras as possible, and with minimal influence by individuals who might offer a biased sample to the foreign researcher in the guise of what might be most pleasing – or notable – to him. In addition, shop keepers are often reluctant to allow photography of their goods – a requirement if these were to be studied later in the research.

Observation of people wearing kiras on the streets of Thimphu would also be difficult because of the researcher’s minimal knowledge of Thimphu streets and the routines of the city, and the selection of sites and timings which would generate a representative selection (as the city has changed since the author lived there from 2004 – 2009). Moreover, because of the popularity of Machey woven kiras worn as daily wear, it was anticipated that there would be few hand-woven kiras – the subject of research.

- The Setting: Tsechu

In order to confirm a classification of the widest range of kiras in current usage, an opportunity was sought to photograph a representative sample of kira for detailed examination. An invitation to the Dochula Druk Wangyel Festival (or Dochula Tsechu) on 13th December 2012 presented this opportunity.

Tsechus are annual religious festivals commencing the birthday of Guru Rimphoche (Guru Padmassambhava) on the 10th day of the lunar calendar month. However, the actual dates of tsechus vary from place to place and from temple to temple (Tourism Council of Bhutan, n.d.). Tsechus are important social, cultural and religious events where the entire community comes together to witness religious mask dances, receive blessings and to socialize. Those weavers interviewed confirmed that, as it is an important annual event, people attending tsechus usually put on their best clothes and often wear new or special kiras to mark the event, making it an appropriate setting for the research. Of particular significance for this study, the weavers who were interviewed were able to confirm that most of the kiras would be hand-woven as required for such an important and auspicious occasion. Also, as there would be a mixture of social classes attending the tsechu, ranging from royalty to rural farmers, there would be a wide range of kiras for study. People attending the event would have to dress appropriately because it is a formal occasion, and in ways befitting their social status, age, etc. Therefore, the likelihood of encountering a Machey woven kira is small.

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Although a tsechu is a formal event where performances (usually mask dancing, singing, dancing, etc.) are staged in front of an audience, it is also a social event where people mingle and have picnics. Hence, people were allowed to leave their seats and walk about. This provided the opportunity for kira to be observed and photographed. Key characteristics of the kiras were noted and visually analysed. These characteristics include:

- Colours. Background colours and colour combinations of motifs/patterns and design. Particularly, the tone, shade, tint, range and number of colours in a kira were observed.
- Yarns. These included yarns used to weave the background cloth and also the motif/patterns. Particular attention was paid to silk yarns (reeled and spun) with reeled yarns being more smooth, shiny and bright while spun silk yarns are heavy, textured with slubs and of a dull appearance. When used to weave motifs/patterns, reeled silk yarns produced more detailed and delicate designs while spun silk yarns motifs/patterns are larger and bolder. Wool

materials are characterized by the seam lines that run parallel to the body while cotton yarns are lighter without the shine of reeled silk yarns.

- Motif Technique. The means of differentiating thimah, sepmah or hor is described in Chapter Two. Interestingly, hor technique could be identified from the warp yarns seen on the fringes of kira (the fringe will have more than one type of colour) while for the sepmah technique, although producing similar effect as hor, the colour of the fringe colours will only reflect one colour which is the background colour of the textile.
- Fringes. Long fringes are floppy while short fringes are notably more stubby.
- Seams. Seam lines can be determined by the distinct fold line or by studying the manner which patterns are mis-matched on the kira.
- Borders. These design details can be see at the foot of the kira, parallel to the ground.
- Design of the kira. Patterns such as strips, checks, tartans are readily noticeable.

Examples of the observations were photographed to be reviewed and use as evidence. However, to align with the unobtrusive nature of the study, most of the photographs were of the back or side views of individuals, with many not featuring the faces of the subjects. The subjects of the photographs were both the general public as well as performers. The taking of the photographs was opportunistic but it is believed that these reflected and represented the wide range of kiras worn during the tsechu.

Once the photographs were downloaded to the computer, they were carefully coded and categorized according to the kira type. The photographs enabled kiras to be further examined in more detail. A total of 168 photographs were taken, with 54 successful images. These images were selected based on the clarity of the photographs, which showed details such as fringes, borders, seams, types of motifs, etc. and most crucially, a requirement that images had to be in focus with kiras featured prominently.

The first line of analysis aimed to identify common physical characteristics for all photographed kiras, as a precursor to identifying specific potential material markers of authenticity.

4.22 Testing of Phase 1 (Semi-Structured Questionnaire)

After drafting the interview protocol and developing the questionnaire, the questionnaire was piloted with a local weaver in the Scottish Borders. The interviewee was asked for feedback on the interview questions in order to improve and enhance the experience of the interviewees.

4.23 Mosuo Case Study: Phase 2

Phase Two consisted of a closed questionnaire where weavers had to tick their agreement or disagreement with statements prepared in a table format. If they were uncertain, they had the option to offer 'I don't know' as their reply. An example of the questionnaire and the results is attached as Appendix G.

This exercise took place at the village community hall. The statements were first drafted in English and then translated into Chinese by one of the UNDP trainers who acted as the interpreter. In order to check the accuracy of the translations, a second person translated the Chinese version back into English. The match between the original English and twice translated English versions was satisfactory and hence was deemed acceptable.

Questioning was conducted in groups with the statements read out in Chinese (and when necessary, translated into the Mosuo language) while each of the respondents ticked their answers on individual questionnaires without consultation. A total of three sessions were conducted, each lasting between 30 to 45 minutes.

In terms of the methodology employed to analyse Phase Two, the results of respondents agreeing to the statements are shown in the table below (Table 5). Upon analysing the results, one is able to see a pattern.

Percentage and Numbers of Respondents Replying in Affirmative to Statement	Numbers of Statements
100% (23)	4 (S/No: 1, 4, 12, 29)
96% (22)	13 (S/No: 2, 3, 5, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, #26, 27, 32)
91% (21)	6 (S/No: 6, 17, 24, 28 R, 31, 37)
87% (20)	3 (S/No: 8, 15 R, 23)
83% (19)	4 (S/No: 7, 10, 20, 34)
78% (18)	1 (S/No: 38)
70% (16)	1 (S/No: 30)
65% (15)	2 (S/No: 11, 36)
57% (13)	2 (S/No: 9, 5)
52% (12)	1 (S/No: 14 R)
48% (11)	1 (S/No: 33 R)

Table 5: Mosuo Phase 2 – Analysis of Responses by Percentage of Agreement to Proposed Statements (For S/No.: 14, 15 and 33 – ‘R’ indicates that the statement is reversed, i.e., the proposition is disagreed with by a majority.)

The pattern reveals several notable points after which the numbers of responses become insignificant. These are points at about 90% and at 80%. 80% of respondents agreeing (or disagreeing) with a statement was taken as the point indicating that there is strong support (or not) for a candidate characteristic of hand-woven textiles to be identified as a marker of authenticity for Mosuo textiles.

Hence, instead of proposing that degrees of probability are categorized into the equal division (Table 6) as conventionally designed, the more robust scale (Table 7) was used in alignment with the well-known Pareto principle (Narula, 2005).

Indication for Support (or Not) of Possible Markers of Authenticity	Range of Responses
Definite	100%
Strong Probability	99 – 76%
Probable	57 – 49%
No Agreement	Below 50%

Table 6: Conventional Probability Scale

The proposed schedule for consideration is as follows:

Indication for Support (or Not) of Possible Markers of Authenticity	Range of responses
Very Strong Evidence	100%
Strong Indication for Support (or Not)	80 – 99%
Inconclusive	55 – 79%
No Agreement or Comments	55% or below

Table 7: Proposed Scale for Establishing the Level for Support (or Not) of Candidate Markers of Authenticity

4.24 Bhutan Case Study: Phase 2

4.24.1 Context and Justification

The purpose of this phase was to confirm the characteristics within each category of kira with master weavers and to examine if it would be possible to identify common characteristics which were found in Phase One and One(a) as candidate markers of authenticity.

4.24.2 Methodology

Following consultation and with the assistance of the master weaver from the RTA, a listing of some of the main categories of kira was compiled. These included martha, sertha, pang-si, utham-jar dim-chem, adang martha, matha metho chem, kishuthara, kishuthara oshem, kishuthara jamsham, kishuthara pesar, aikapur, aikapur matese-matha, aikapur lung ser matha and aikapur dom chu-chem.

Kiras from each category were examined to identify their characteristic elements in accordance with the following schema:

- Types of Loom: Back strap or Tibetan horizontal frame loom;
- Materials: Cotton, poly-cotton, silk (filament), spun silk, wool or others;
- Designs on the kira: Border edge (jap-pang), fringe (rap), border at selvage (khacha), continuous band (jang-pai-pang) and main body (shepang);
- Motif Construction: Thimah, sepmah, hor or others;
- Motifs: Plaid, stripes, shinglo or others;
- Base Weave for the Textile Background: Plain, twill, birds eye or others;
- Colour of Background: White, green, blue, red, yellow, orange or multiple;
- Size of kira.

The kira categories and their elements were presented in a grid format. Each participant was given a blank form and was instructed to tick the boxes of elements appropriate to each category of kira.

The criterion used was that all six expert weavers had to identify the characteristic element for a kira category for it to be proposed as a candidate marker of authenticity.

As this phase was a follow-up from Phase Two, only those kiras identified at the Tsechu were considered for analysis and discussion.

4.25 Harris Tweed Case Study: Phase 2

Through the process of deconstructing Harris Tweed textiles and analysing the responses from Phase One, a closed questionnaire was formulated for Phase Two to identify markers of authenticity of Harris Tweed textiles. A variety of statements were offered to elicit respondent's agreement, disagreement or a 'don't know' reply. Often similar concepts were presented in several statements to triangulate and confirm the sentiments of the respondents. Further statements were proposed to elicit the intangible qualities of the cloth including the concepts of pride, labour, cultural practices and the meaning of the textile. The covering letter and closed questionnaire are attached as Appendix H.

A letter was composed to explain the nature and the objective of the questionnaire and a self-stamped and addressed envelope was enclosed. HTA was requested them to distribute to their members who might be interested to participate.

The convention threshold to determine weavers' opinion as a marker of authenticity is set at a majority of 51%. However, in order to present a more convincing and credible argument, this study will set the mark at 60% and above. Responses below 60% will not be considered as a marker of authenticity.

4.26 Discussion and Summary

The direction of the research investigation was guided by two factors. The pilot studies provided an excellent test bed to try out various research methods with the results laying the foundation for conducting the research. Secondly, the theories of authenticity

formed the backbone in shaping the methodology, addressing both the tangible and intangible aspects of authenticity.

There are several important principles that guided the formulation of this research method. One of the important factors was that each case study was different from the others and yet, it was necessary for each study to share commonalities with the others in order to deliver valid comparisons. Another important consideration was that this research is spread across communities with different cultures and hence, the methods employed needs to be culturally appropriate to yield credible results. The informal nature of hand-weaving industry, especially in Asia, was another factor that directed the course of the study. Finally, as the objective of this study was to elicit the stories of weavers from their perception of what constitutes the ‘soul’ of their textiles, a platform was needed for weavers to paint their story.

The study acknowledges that one of the challenges of such an ethnographic subject is the impossibility of totally understanding another person - ‘an ethnographer can never see life completely through another person’s eyes’ nor is the researcher able to divorce himself totally from the study (Reason, 1981.).

Yet, the results from these case studies are important as they explore the meanings of authenticity from the maker’s perspective. This research attempts to identify and translate Mosuo, Bhutanese and Harris Tweed weavers’ ideas relating to the authenticity of their textiles into concepts that others outside of the community may be able to understand. Therefore, the findings and discussion are cultural interpretations seen within the framework of weavers’ realities, juxtaposed against various theories of authenticity (Fetterman, 1989). Similar to Bruner’s proposal (1994), at best, the results of this study are hypothesis, open to further study and exploration, direction for which are suggested in the final chapter of this thesis.