

EARTHQUAKE RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE EXPERIENCES IN NEPAL

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Abstract: This report aims to describe and evaluate the overall immersive learning experience to those who were not part of the J-Term Nepal Team but want to know a completely personal and biased perspective on the trip.

INTRODUCTION

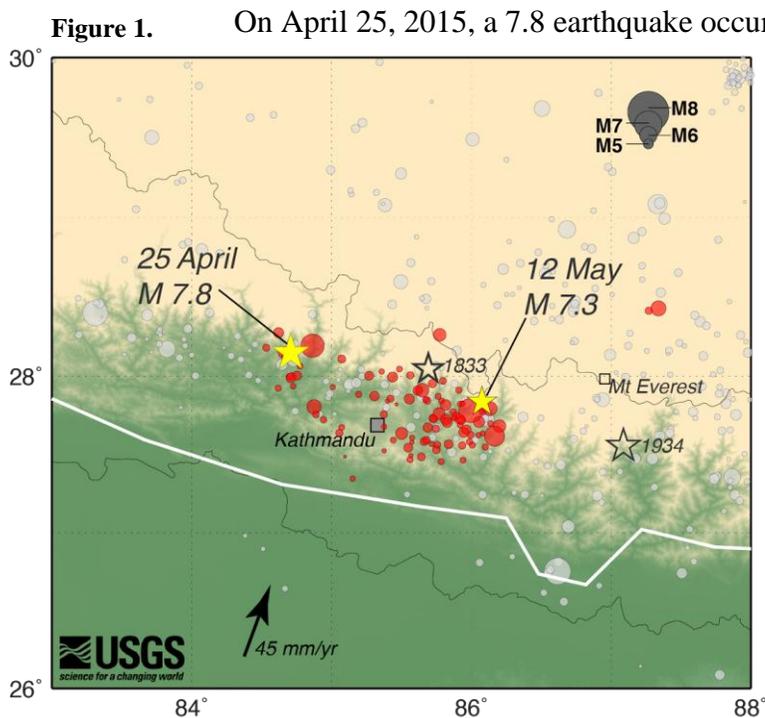
During the 2015 fall semester, I took Introduction to Policy and Data Analysis with Professor DePaolis and followed that class with Field Methods taught by Professor Murphy. These courses are sequential and necessary for preparation of field work in Nepal. Over these courses, my classmates and I researched problem areas and policies related to the 2015 earthquake within Nepal. The Local Interventions Group and Accountability Labs, were our local partners and client organizations in Nepal. We primarily worked with Accountability Labs, which is an NGO that looks into governmental financial accountability and transparency. Our objective was to assist this organization in their work by developing a research question to be answered through our survey which is, how does information dissemination impact recovery efforts in post-earthquake Nepal. With this question and the responses we receive we will have a better understanding of effective communication methods that Accountability Labs can use to promote their programs. After forming the research question we created a 36 question survey focused on information sharing and earthquake relief and recovery efforts.

Taking a statistical approach to analyze the significance of my overall Nepal experience and its association to my education level, I have formed hypotheses. Below is the null hypothesis (H_0) and the alternate hypothesis (H_A):

H_0 : There is no significant difference with my academic development.

H_A : There is a significant difference with my academic development.

Gorkha Earthquake



information Accountability Labs posts on their website.

Table 1. QUICK FACTS

People:	8,750 deaths
	22,300 injured
	8,000,000 impacted
Economy:	\$153 million received from the United Nations
	\$4.4 billion international pledges (loans & grants)
Geology:	31 affected districts
	14 districts declared “crisis zones”
Infrastructure:	602,257 destroyed houses
	503 destroyed health facilities
	2673 destroyed government buildings

RESEARCH

The purpose of the Fields Methods class was to construct a survey and learn how to apply it in the field. While creating the survey is critical, there are some elements involved with conducting surveys we had to learn. For instance, knowing how to give semi-structured interviews (SSI’s) in order to fill in the gaps the survey doesn’t account for, applying randomization for the survey sample for the purpose of being unbiased, and completing the NIH certification so as to remain ethical throughout the survey process.

Collectively my team and I practiced and pre-tested the survey with each other about 105 times. The mean for each person was 12 times. All this was necessary before finalizing our survey and using it in the field. The first four days spent in Nepal were used to debate over words and adjusting questions to accommodate the variety of responses we would receive. Once this first phase was done, we moved on to giving the surveys in the villages for about 10 days that spanned over two weeks. When the last survey was given we headed back to our workspace (Pilgrims Guest House) in Kathmandu; however, the work didn’t stop there. From that point, we worked tirelessly since we had one day to create a presentation to give to our clients; therefore, we spent 12 hours at a coffee shop (Himalayan Java) entering and double blinding our data, going over the presentation topics, and creating charts and graphs of our preliminary findings. In the end, our clients were impressed with the amount of data we collected and how much information we were able to provide them in our short amount of time. It was satisfying to be able to receive their appreciation for our work and to contribute their program, as well as see an entire project through to the analysis portion. As a whole, I felt the research structure and academic approach to the entire project was very practical for my program of study and career interests.

CULTURE

The other component to the trip was learning and adapting to the Nepali culture. Southeast Asian culture is very rich and diverse from the variety of cuisine to religion. Throughout the time spent in Nepal, I visited at least three temples and one monastery. Our interpreters were constantly on the job by answering all of our questions and teaching us songs and exposing us Nepali music. To turn food into figures, below is a table of my team's

	Plates of Momos	Plates of Dhal Bhat	Cups of Tea
Total:	118	73	636

favorite foods that were consumed and the

quantity of tea we drank. If I wanted to determine if there is a relationship between the amount of momos we ate and the number of surveys conducted I would run a t-test. Additionally, after running a correlation test, I can state that there is a strong correlation between cold showers and the gas crisis they are enduring which we subsequently experienced. Lastly, in regards to the survey, I would apply the linear regression test to the hours spent on practicing the survey and

	Survey Practice (times rehearsed)	Survey Practice (hours)	Surveys Conducted	Voided Surveys	Fake Surveys
Total:	104	162	162	7	1

how many people were able to memorize the survey questions in order.

In general, I learned that Nepali's are resilient and remain compassionate despite their circumstances. Daily life in Nepal and especially in rural areas was difficult before the earthquake, and after it became even harder. Day after day, people make the most of their situations because that is within their control. I witnessed a level of acceptance that is both heartbreaking because it is their reality, but also there is a lot of positiveness to keep moving forward and overcoming challenges they face which makes Nepali's strong and inspiring. Even our research was received positively by the respondents in an intrinsic way in the sense that the process of the interview gave them a feeling that they were able to contribute to a worthwhile effort. It was uplifting to be able to give them a voice with the intension of improving their situation through future policies.

TAKEAWAY

Three weeks in Nepal taught me about the politics involved in disaster response, and it gave me a different perspective on emergency management. I previously worked for FEMA so I was in a unique situation to apply and compare my emergency management knowledge and their process to our research. I learned a lot about myself on a personal level and even discovered a possible future career endeavor. Additionally, I was able to gain practical skills surrounding surveys, interviews, and data analysis. At the end of the day, I was able to form lasting relationships with my cohort and other Nepali students that will have bright and adventurous futures.

Based on the research question posed earlier, the results show that p-value is less than .05 ($p < .05$) therefore there is less than 5% chance that there is no difference. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted, which means there was a statistically significant difference to my academic development after the trip.



Team Nepal:

- Amanda Bensel (Field Manager)
- Molly McKeon (Field Manager)
- Victoria Blel
- Rachel Dickinson
- Shafqat Manir
- Steven Perle
- Mario Romero
- Meredith Rupp
- Monique Takla
- Shalin (Interpreter)
- Samikshya (Interpreter)
- Santosh (Interpreter)
- Namrata (Interpreter)