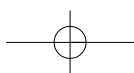
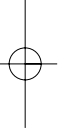
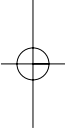


CHAPTER 2

Research Methods



Unit 3: Research Methods for Sport and Exercise Sciences

Unit code: H/601/1862

QCF level: 4

Credit value: 15

Aim

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' understanding of and skills and techniques for sport and exercise science related research.

Unit abstract

Have you ever thought about what the different government guidelines relating to diet and exercise are based on? Or where the advice that we give to athletes within sport to help them improve their performance comes from? These are just some of the benefits of using research methods within sport and exercise sciences.

Research methods is the branch of sport and exercise sciences that aims to enhance human knowledge on a given topic. It is essential for all elements of sport and exercise sciences and without it there would be very little credibility to any of the applied work that is conducted within each of the different disciplines within sport and exercise science.

This unit will introduce learners to each of the different areas of understanding within research methods, starting with being able to find and read journal articles to develop subject knowledge in a given area and culminating with to having an applied knowledge of the different quantitative and qualitative techniques that are commonly used within sport and exercise science research.

The knowledge and skills gained from this unit will be ideal for learners wanting to progress to further study and/or sports related careers such as sports science, sports therapy, physical activity, personal training, strength and conditioning or research.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit a learner will:

1. Be able to search for and summarise research articles in sport and exercise sciences
2. Understand key issues in research methods in sport and exercise sciences
3. Understand quantitative research within sport and exercise sciences
4. Understand qualitative research within sport and exercise sciences.

Unit content

1. Be able to search for and summarise research articles in sport and exercise sciences
Searches: manual searching, search engines, journal databases
Reading articles: how to read a research article eg read it at least twice – once to get a general understanding and once to get a more detailed understanding; how to summarise a research article eg identifying the aims of the study, identifying the research methods used, identifying the key findings, identifying the strengths and limitations
2. Understand key issues in research methods in sport and exercise sciences
Research: definitions and characteristics (research, quantitative, qualitative, mixed modal / method approaches)
Key issues: validity (internal, external, face, construct, ecological), reliability (test / re-test reliability, inter-observer reliability), objectivity, trustworthiness, accuracy, precision,
Ethical and legal issues: British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) Code of Conduct; issues eg informed consent, confidentiality and data protection, competence
3. Understand quantitative research within sport and exercise sciences
Research Designs: experimental designs, non-experimental designs
Quantitative data collection: techniques eg laboratory versus field-based, surveys, observations, methods of recording data

Quantitative data analysis: organising and displaying data effectively; measures of central tendency; measures of variability; selecting appropriate statistical tests eg type of data, number and type of variables, number of groups; parametric tests eg t-tests, Pearsons Product Moment Correlation Coefficient; non-parametric tests eg Chi Square, Mann-Whitney U, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Ranks; interpreting levels of significance; one-tailed vs two-tailed, type 1 errors, type 2 errors

Use of ICT-based analysis techniques: eg Microsoft Excel, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)

4. Understand qualitative research within sport and exercise sciences

Research designs: eg case study, longitudinal

Qualitative data collection techniques: interviews (structured, semi-structured, unstructured), focus groups, questionnaires, use of probe questions within interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, observations (participant and non-participant), methods of recording data

Qualitative data analysis: transcription techniques; stages of data analysis, (data reduction – types of coding and purposes, displaying data – types of diagrams and purposes, drawing conclusions and verifying data – triangulation and member checking).

ICT-based techniques: eg ATLAS.ti

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria for pass
On successful completion of this unit a learner will:	The learner can:
LO1 Be able to search for and summarise research articles in sport and exercise sciences	1.1 use literature searching techniques to find research articles in sport and exercise sciences 1.2 summarise a research article in sport and exercise sciences
LO2 Understand key issues in research methods in sport and exercise sciences	2.1 discuss the different approaches to research used in sport and exercise sciences 2.2 discuss the key issues in research in sport and exercise sciences 2.3 discuss the ethical and legal issues associated with research in sport and exercise sciences
LO3 Understand quantitative research within sport and exercise sciences	3.1 discuss quantitative research designs in sport and exercise sciences 3.2 discuss quantitative data collection techniques in sport and exercise sciences 3.3 discuss quantitative data analysis techniques in sport and exercise sciences 3.4 justify appropriate quantitative research methods for a sport and exercise sciences research example
LO4 Understand qualitative research within sport and exercise sciences	4.1 discuss qualitative research designs in sport and exercise sciences 4.2 discuss qualitative data collection techniques in sport and exercise sciences 4.3 discuss qualitative data analysis techniques in sport and exercise sciences 4.4 justify appropriate qualitative research methods for a sport and exercise sciences research example

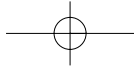
Guidance

Links

This unit has links the following units in the BTEC Higher Nationals in Sport and in Sport and Exercise Sciences:

- *Unit 5: Research Project*
- *Unit 8: Field-based Fitness Testing for Sport and Exercise*
- *Unit 19: Laboratory and Experimental Methods in Sport and Exercise Sciences.*

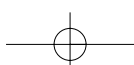
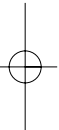
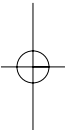
This unit gives learners who have not previously studied research methods the chance to develop their understanding and skills. Although direct links should be made to the research project unit, there is scope for integration with all other units for both delivery and assessment. This will provide learners with a contextualised approach to research methods.

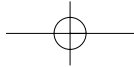
**216** BTEC Level 4/5 HNC in Sport and Exercise Sciences**Essential requirements**

Centres must make sure there is access to appropriate testing equipment and consider the ethical implications as well as health and safety issues that may need to be in place when undertaking experimental methods. The availability of sufficient computers and the specialised computer software (spreadsheet, SPSS, ATLAS.ti) is necessary for learners to successfully complete this unit.

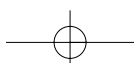
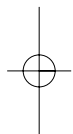
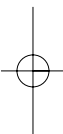
Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners would benefit from the input of guest speakers who work as researchers for organisations such as the NHS, Youth Sport Trust and National Governing Bodies so that learners can grasp the role and position of research within different types of organisation.





Introduction to Research: What, Why and Who?



Introduction

Information, knowledge and understanding concerning the natural, social and economic environment have become the very basis of cultural and material development in contemporary societies and economies. An understanding of how information and knowledge are generated and utilised and an ability to contribute to that information and knowledge base through research can therefore be seen as key skills for managers in any industry sector and a key component of the education of the modern professional. Research is, however, not just a set of disembodied skills; it exists and is practised in a variety of social, political and economic contexts. The purpose of this book is to provide an introduction to the world of social research in the context of leisure and tourism, both as industries, public policy concerns and fields of academic inquiry and reflection. The aim is to provide a guide to the conduct of research, a critical understanding of existing theoretical and applied research and an appreciation of the role of research in the policy-making, planning and management processes of the leisure and tourism industries. This first section therefore addresses the preliminary questions of what research is, why it is done and who does it.

The focus of the book is leisure and tourism. While research methodology can be seen as universal, various fields of research – including leisure and tourism studies – have developed their own methodological emphases and bodies of experience. In some fields of enquiry scientific laboratory experiments are the norm, while in others social surveys are more common. While most of the principles of research are universal, a specialised text such as this reflects the traditions and practices in its field and draws attention to examples of relevant applications of methods and the particular problems and issues which arise in such applications.

The field of leisure and tourism is a large one, encompassing a wide range of individual and collective human activity. It is an area fraught with problems of definition – for example, in some contexts the word *recreation* is used synonymously with *leisure*, while in others recreation is seen as a distinct and limited part of leisure or even separate from leisure. In some countries the term *free time* is used in preference to the word leisure. In some definitions *tourism* includes *business travel*, while in others such travel is excluded. In some definitions *day-trips* are included in tourism, while in others they are excluded. The aim in this book is to be *inclusive* rather than *exclusive*. Leisure is taken to encompass such activities as: recreation; play; games; involvement in sport and the arts, as spectator, audience member or participant; the use of the electronic and printed media; live entertainment; hobbies; socialising; drinking; gambling; sight-seeing; visiting parks, coast and countryside; do-it-yourself; arts and craft activity; home-based and non-home-based activity;

commercial and non-commercially based activity; and doing nothing in particular. Tourism is seen primarily as a leisure activity involving travel away from a person's normal place of residence, but also encompassing such activities as business travel, attending conventions and visiting friends and relatives, if for no other reason than that they invariably engage in leisure activities in addition to the activity which is the prime motivator for travel. Since this chapter covers leisure and tourism, day-tripping is included, regardless of whether or not it is viewed as part of tourism. Leisure and tourism are seen as activities engaged in by individuals and groups, but also as service industries which involve public sector, non-profit and commercial organisations.

The aim of this opening chapter is to introduce the 'what, why and who' of research. What is it? Why study it? Who does it?

2-1 What is research?

Research defined

What is research? The sociologist Norbert Elias defined research in terms of its aims, as follows:

The aim, as far as I can see, is the same in all sciences. Put simply and cursorily, the aim is to make known something previously unknown to human beings. It is to advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting . . . The aim is . . . discovery.

(Elias 1986: 20)

Discovery – making known something previously unknown – could cover a number of activities, for instance the work of journalists or detectives. Elias, however, also indicates that research is a tool of 'science' and that its purpose is to 'advance human knowledge' – features which distinguish research from other investigatory activities.

Scientific research

Scientific research is research which is conducted within the rules and conventions of science. This means that it is based on logic and reason and the systematic examination of evidence. Ideally, within the scientific model, it should be possible for research to be *replicated* by the same or different researchers and for similar conclusions to emerge (although this is not always possible or practicable). It should also contribute to a cumulative body of knowledge about a field or topic. This model of scientific research applies most aptly in the physical or natural sciences, such as physics or chemistry. In the area of *social science*, which deals with people as social beings and as members of communities, the scientific model

must be adapted and modified, and in some cases largely abandoned.

Social science research

Social science research is carried out using the methods and traditions of social science. Social science differs from the physical or natural sciences in that it deals with *people* and their social behaviour, and people are less predictable than non-human phenomena. People can be aware of the research being conducted about them and are not therefore purely passive subjects; they can react to the results of research and change their behaviour accordingly. People in different parts of the world and at different times behave differently. The social world is constantly changing, so it is rarely possible to replicate research at different times or in different places and obtain similar results.

Three types of research

Elias' term *discovery* can be seen as, first, the process of *finding out* – at its simplest, therefore, research might just *describe* what exists. But to 'advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting' requires more than just the accumulation of information, or facts. The aim is also to provide *explanation* – to explain *why* things are as they are, and how they might be.

In this book, we are also concerned with a third function of research, namely *evaluating* – that is judging the success or value of policies or programmes. Three types of research can be identified corresponding to these three functions, as shown in **Figure 2–1**. In some cases particular research projects concentrate on only one of these, but often two or more of the approaches are included in the same research project.

Descriptive research

Descriptive research is very common in the leisure and tourism area, for three reasons: the newness of the field, the changing nature of the phenomena being studied, and the frequent separation between research and action.

Since leisure and tourism are relatively new fields of study there is a need to *map the territory*. Much of the descriptive research in the field might therefore be described as

1. Descriptive research	finding out, describing what is
2. Explanatory research	explaining <i>how</i> or <i>why</i> things are as they are (and using this to predict)
3. Evaluative research	evaluation of policies and programmes

Figure 2–1 Types of research.

exploratory: it seeks to discover, describe or map patterns of behaviour in areas or activities which have not previously been studied. Explanation of what is discovered, described or mapped is often left until later or to other researchers.

Leisure and tourism phenomena are subject to constant change. Over time, for example: the popularity of different leisure activities changes; the leisure preferences of different social groups (for example young people or women) change; and the relative popularity of different tourism destinations changes. A great deal of research effort in the field is therefore devoted to tracking – or monitoring – basic patterns of behaviour. Although a complete understanding and explanation of these changing patterns would be ideal, the providers of leisure and tourism services must be aware of, and respond to, changing market conditions whether or not they can be fully explained or understood; they therefore rely on a flow of descriptive research to provide up-to-date information.

There is often a separation between research projects and the policy, planning or management activity which gives rise to the commissioning of the research. So, for example, a company may commission a *market profile* study or a local council may commission a *recreation needs* study from a research team – but the actual use of the results of the research, in marketing or planning, is a separate exercise with which the research team is not involved: the research team may simply be required to produce a descriptive study.

Explanatory research

Explanatory research moves beyond description to seek to explain the patterns and trends observed. *Why* is a particular type of activity or destination falling in popularity? *How* do particular tourism developments gain approval against the wishes of the local community? *Why* are the arts patronised by some social groups and not others? Such questions raise the thorny issue of *causality*: the aim is to be able to say, for example, that there has been an increase in A because of a corresponding fall in B. It is one thing to discover that A has increased while B has decreased; but to establish that the rise in A has been *caused* by the fall in B is often a much more demanding task. To establish causality, or the likelihood of causality, requires the researcher to be rigorous in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It also generally requires some sort of theoretical framework to relate the phenomenon under study to wider social, economic and political processes. The issue of causality and the role of theory in research are discussed further in later chapters.

Once causes are understood, the knowledge can be used to *predict*. This is clear enough in the physical sciences: we know that heat causes metal to expand (explanation) – therefore we know that if we apply a certain amount of heat to a bar of metal it will expand by a certain amount (prediction). In the biological and medical sciences this process is also

followed, but with less precision: it can be predicted that if a certain treatment is given to patients with a certain disease then it is *likely* that a *certain proportion* will be cured. In the social sciences this approach is also used, but with even less precision. For example, economists have found that demand for goods and services, including leisure and tourism goods and services, responds to price levels so that, if the price of a product or service is reduced then sales will generally increase. But this does not always happen because there are so many other factors involved – such as quality or the activities of competitors. Human beings make their own decisions and are far less *predictable* than non-human phenomena. Nevertheless *prediction* is a key aim of much of the research that takes place in the area of leisure and tourism.

Evaluative research

Evaluative research arises from the need to make judgements on the success or effectiveness of policies or programmes – for example whether a particular leisure facility or programme is meeting required performance standards or whether a particular tourism promotion campaign has been cost-effective. Evaluative research is highly developed in some areas of public policy, for example education, but is less well developed in the field of leisure and tourism (Shadish *et al.*, 1991).

2-2 Why study research?

In general

Why study research? Research and research methods might be studied for a variety of reasons, as indicated in **Figure 2–2**. First, it is useful to be able to *understand* and *evaluate* research reports and articles which one might come across in an academic or professional context. It is therefore advantageous to understand the basis of such reports and articles. Second, many readers of this book may engage in research in an academic environment, where research is conducted for its own sake, in the interests of the pursuit of knowledge – for example for a thesis. Third, most readers will find themselves conducting or commissioning research for professional reasons, as managers. It is therefore particularly appropriate to

- Understanding research reports, etc.
- Academic research projects
- Management tool in:
 - policy-making
 - planning
 - managing

Figure 2–2 Why study research?

consider the role of research in the policy-making, planning and management process.

Research in policy-making, planning and management processes

All organisations, including those in the leisure and tourism industries, engage in policy-making, planning and managing resources to achieve their goals. A variety of terms is used in this area and the meanings of terms vary according to the context and user. In this book:

- *policies* are considered to be the statements of principles, intentions and commitments of an organisation;
- *plans* are detailed strategies designed to implement policies in particular ways over a specified period of time;
- *management* is seen as the process of implementing policies and plans.

Although planning is usually associated in the public mind with national, regional and local government bodies, it is also an activity undertaken by the private sector. Organisations such as cinema chains, holiday resort developers or sport promoters are all involved in planning, but their planning activities are less public than those of government bodies (Henry and Spink, 1990). Private organisations are usually only concerned with their own activities, but government bodies often have a wider responsibility to provide a planning framework for the activities of many public and private sector organisations. Examples of policies, plans and management activity in leisure and tourism contexts are given in **Figure 2–3**.

CHECKPOINT

1. What is the difference between research and journalism?
2. Outline the differences between *descriptive*, *explanatory* and *evaluative* research.
3. What are the broad differences between policy-making, planning and management, as presented in this chapter?

Both policies and plans can vary enormously in detail, complexity and formality. Here the process is considered only briefly, in order to examine the part played by research. Of the many models of policy-making, planning and management processes that exist, the *rational-comprehensive* model, a version of which is depicted in **Figure 2–4**, is the most traditional, 'ideal' model. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the many alternative models which seek to reflect more accurately real world decision-making, but guidance to further reading on this issue is given at the end of this section.

Level	Leisure Centre	Tourist Commission	Arts Centre	National Park
Policy	Maximise use by all age-groups	Extend peak season	Encourage contemporary composers	Increase non-government revenue
Plan	Two-year plan to increase visits by older people by 50 per cent	Three-year plan to increase shoulder season visits by promoting new festivals	Three-year plan to commission new work by contemporary composers	Three-year plan to implement user-pays programme
Management	Implement daily morning keep-fit sessions for older people	Choose festival themes, and implement	Select composers and commission and produce works	Implement user pays programme

Figure 2-3 Examples of policies, plans and management.

Suffice it to say here, that these alternatives are often 'cut-down' versions of the rational-comprehensive model, emphasising some aspects of this model and de-emphasising, or omitting, others. Thus some reflect the view that it is virtually impossible to be completely *comprehensive* in assessing alternative policies; some reflect the fact that political interests often intervene before 'rational' or 'objective' decisions can be made; while others elevate community consultation to a central rather than supportive role. In nearly all cases the models are put forward as an *alternative* to the rational-comprehensive model, so the latter, even if rejected, remains the universal reference point.

In most of these models a research role remains – sometimes curtailed and sometimes enhanced. It is rare that all of the nine steps shown here are followed through in the real world. And it is rare for research to inform the process in all the ways discussed below. The nine steps depicted in Figure 2-4 provide an agenda for discussing the many roles of research in policy-making, planning and management processes. Two examples of how the process might unfold in leisure and tourism contexts are given in Figure 2-5.

- 1. Terms of reference/brief:** The 'terms of reference' or 'brief' for a particular planning or management task sets out the scope and purpose of the exercise. Research can be involved right at the beginning of this process in assisting in establishing the terms of reference. For example, existing research on levels of sports participation in a community may result in a government policy initiative to do something about the level of sports participation; or research on environmental impacts of tourism growth may prompt a government to develop a sustainable tourism plan.
- 2. Environmental appraisal:** An environmental appraisal involves the gathering of all information on the context of the task in hand. Information may relate to the organisation's internal workings or to the outside world, includ-

ing actual and potential clients, and the activities of governments and competitors and physical resources. Such information may be readily to hand and may just need collation, or it may require extensive research.

- 3. Mission/goals:** Statements of the missions or goals of the organisation may already be in place if the task in hand is a relatively minor one, but if it is a major undertaking,

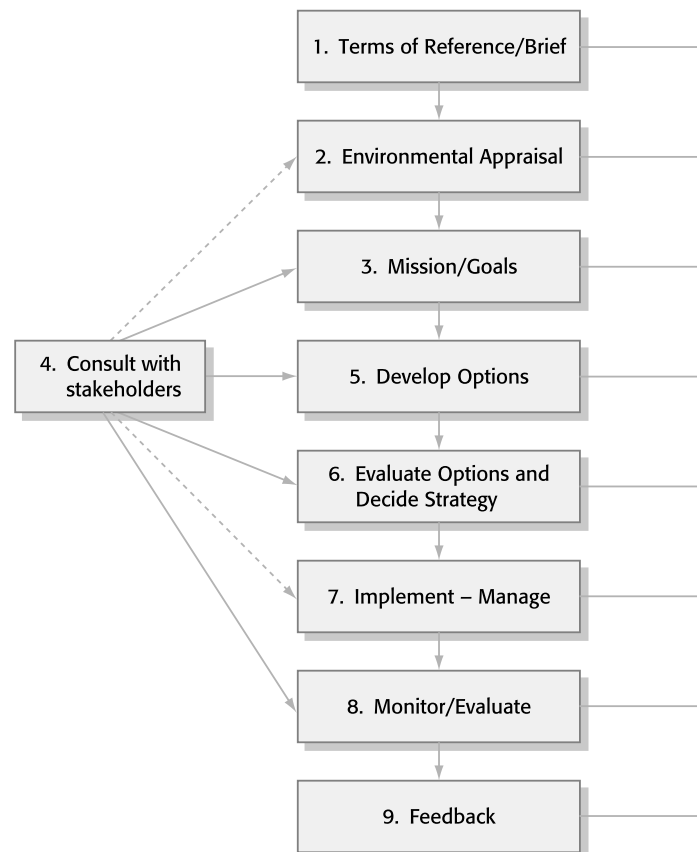


Figure 2-4 The rational-comprehensive model of planning/management.

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Steps in the Planning/ Management Process (See Figure 2–4)	Young people and sport in a local community		Sustainable tourism in a tourism destination	
	Policy/Planning/management	Associated Research	Policy/Planning/management	Associated Research
1. Terms of reference	Increase young people's participation in sport	Existing research indicates 40 per cent participation rate	Develop local sustainable tourism strategy	Physical survey indicates road capacity reached
2. Environmental appraisal	Consider existing supply – demand	Existing programmes and infrastructure fully used	Examine current environmental impacts of tourism and future scenarios	Extensive physical surveys (traffic + other environmental issues) + development of future tourism demand scenarios
3. Set Mission/goals	Increase participation level to 60 per cent over 5 years	–	Develop policy to increase tourism volume by 50 per cent over 10 years within acceptable environmental impact parameters	Study of likely increases in tourism demand over 10 years
4. Consult stakeholders	Consult sporting clubs, schools, young people	Survey indicates support among all groups and confirms feasibility	Consult community and tourism industry provider groups	Survey + meetings with community and tourism industry provider groups
5. Develop options	1. Publicity campaign 2. Free vouchers 3. Build more community facilities 4. Provide support to clubs/schools 5. Train leaders/coaches/teachers	Review of experience of each option in other regions, based on published accounts and a survey	1. Road-building/traffic management programme 2. Local public transport solution 3. Alternative accommodation development strategies	Survey of experience of similar destinations in similar stages of the tourism lifecycle
6. Evaluate options/decide strategy	Evaluate options 1–5 Options 3 and 4 adopted	Each option costed; on basis of survey evidence, estimate made of cost-effectiveness of each option Options 3 and 4 recommended	Evaluate options 1 and 2 against range of options in 3 Options selected in light of evaluative research	Options 1 and 2 costed and evaluated against a range of accommodation development strategies (3) Options ranked in order of effectiveness and net environmental impact
7. Implement – manage	Implement options 3 and 4	–	Implement public transport and 3-star accommodation option	–
8. Monitor/evaluate	Assess success in terms of increased participation	Survey indicates participation increase to 45 per cent after 1 year, but shortage of coaches/leaders	Assess success in terms of tourism numbers and traffic congestion	Annual surveys of traffic conditions and tourism numbers undertaken. Persistent peak public holiday congestion problems noted
9. Feedback	Continue programme: increase resources for training coaches/leaders	–	Develop peak public holiday traffic management plan	–

Figure 2–5 Examples of planning/management tasks and associated research.

such as the development of a strategic plan for the whole organisation, then the development of statements of mission and goals may be involved. It is very much a task for the decision-making body of an organisation (such as the board or the council) to determine its mission and/or goals, research may be directly involved when consultation with large numbers of stakeholders is involved, as discussed under step 4.

4. *Consult with stakeholders:* Consultation with 'stakeholders' is considered vital by most organisations and, indeed, is a statutory requirement in many forms of public sector planning. Stakeholders can include employees, clients, members of the general public, members of boards and

councils and neighbouring or complementary organisations. Research can be a significant feature of such consultation, especially when large numbers of individuals or organisations are involved.

5. *Develop options:* In order to develop a plan or strategy, consideration must be given to what policies options are available to pursue the goals of the organisation, their feasibility, their likely contribution to the achievement of the goals and the best way to implement them. Research can be involved in the process of *identifying* alternative policy or planning options, for example, by providing data on the extent of problems or on stakeholder preferences.

6. *Evaluate options and decide strategy*: Deciding on a strategy involves selecting a course or courses of action from among all the options identified. This choice process may involve a complex process requiring a research to *evaluate* the alternatives. Typical formal evaluation techniques include cost–benefit analysis, economic impact analysis and environmental and social impact analysis (see Shadish *et al.*, 1991; Veal, 2002: 185–210), and the use of the *importance-performance* technique (Martilla and James, 1977; Harper and Balmer, 1989) or *conjoint analysis* (Claxton, 1994).
7. *Implement – manage*: Implementing a plan or strategy in the field of management. Research can be involved in day-to-day management in investigating improved ways of deploying resources and in providing continuous feedback on the management process – for example in the form of customer surveys. However, the line between such research and the monitoring and evaluation process is difficult to draw.
8. *Monitor/evaluate*: Monitoring progress and evaluating the implementation of strategies is clearly a process with which research is likely to be involved.
9. *Feedback*: The process comes full circle with the feedback step. The data from the monitoring and evaluation step can be fed back into the planning or management cycle and can lead to a revision of any or all of the decisions previously made. The monitoring and evaluation process may report complete success, it may suggest minor changes to some of the details of the policies and plans adopted, or it could result in a fundamental re-think, going ‘back to the drawing board’.

Research formats in different contexts

Research for leisure and tourism planning/management is presented in many forms and contexts. A number of these are listed in **Figure 2–6** and discussed briefly below. The formats are not all mutually exclusive: a number of them may arise in various aspects in a single research project.

-
- Position statements
 - Market profiles
 - Market research
 - Market segmentation/lifestyle studies
 - Feasibility studies
 - Forecasting studies
 - Leisure/recreation needs studies
 - Tourism strategies/tourism marketing plans
-

Figure 2–6 Research report formats.

Position statements are similar to the *environmental appraisals* discussed above. They are compilations of information on the current situation with regard to a topic or issue of concern, and are designed to assist decision-makers to become knowledgeable about the topic or issue and to take stock of such matters as current policies, provision levels and demand. For example if a local authority wishes to develop new policies for heritage conservation in its area, a position statement might be prepared listing what heritage currently exists, its ownership, quality, nature and state of preservation, existing policies, rules and regulations and types of use.

Market profiles are similar to position statements, but relate specifically to a *market*, particularly actual and potential consumers, but also suppliers. If an organisation wishes to start a project in a particular tourism or leisure market it will usually require a ‘profile’ of that market sector. How big is the market? What are its growth prospects? Who are the customers? What sub-sectors does it have? How profitable is it? Who are the current suppliers? Such a profile will usually require considerable research and can be seen as one element in the broader activity of market research.

Market research is a more encompassing activity. Research on the actual or potential market for a service can take place in advance of a service being established but also as part of the on-going monitoring of the performance of an operation. Market research seeks to establish the scale and nature of the market (the number of people who use or are likely to use the product or service and their characteristics) and consumer requirements and attitudes (the particular requirements or tastes of users or potential users of the product or service).

Market segmentation/lifestyle studies are also referred to as *psychographic* studies. Traditionally marketers attempted to classify consumers into sub-markets or segments on the basis of characteristics such as age, sex, occupation and income. Later they sought to classify people using not only these background social and economic characteristics but also on their attitudes, values and behaviour, including leisure activities and holiday behaviour. The best-known of such studies, the VALS typology (Values, Attitudes and Life Styles, – Mitchell, 1985), classified Americans into nine lifestyle groups: Survivor, Sustainer, Belonger, Emulator, Achiever, I-Am-Me, Experiential, Socially Conscious and Integrated. This system has been widely used in market research, including tourism research (e.g. Shih, 1986). Other lifestyle ‘systems’ include the ACORN, census-based system developed in Britain (Shaw, 1984) and the Australian Age lifestyle typology (*The Age*, 1982).

Feasibility studies investigate not only current consumer characteristics and demands, as in a market profile, but also

future demand and such aspects as the financial viability and environmental impact of proposed development or investment projects. The decision whether or not to build a new leisure facility or launch a new tourism product is usually based on a feasibility study (Kelsey and Gray, 1986b).

Leisure/recreation needs studies are a common type of research in leisure planning. These are comprehensive studies, usually carried out for local councils, examining levels of provision and use of facilities and services, levels of participation in leisure activities, and views and aspirations of the population concerning leisure provision. In some cases a 'needs' study also includes a leisure or recreation 'plan', which makes recommendations on future provision; in other cases the plan is a separate document.

Tourism strategies/tourism marketing plans are the tourism equivalent of the recreation needs study. Recreation and leisure *needs* studies refer to the requirements of the local population, which are largely met within the local area, often with the emphasis on the public sector; tourism strategies or marketing plans refer to tourism *demands*, generated in a potentially wide range of regions and met within the destination region within which the host area is situated, by a mixture of public and private sector providers. Such tourism studies usually consider the capacity of the local area to meet the demands of growing numbers of tourists, in terms of accommodation, transport, existing and potential attractions and environmental impacts.

Forecasting studies form a key input to many plans. They might provide, for example, projections of demand for a particular leisure activity or for a particular type of tourist accommodation over a ten-year period. Forecasting is intrinsically research-based and can involve predicting the likely effects of future population growth and change, the effects of changing tastes, changing levels of income or developments in technology. Leisure and tourism forecasting have become substantial fields of study in their own right (Veal, 2002: 154–84; Archer, 1994).

2-3 Who does research?

This book is mainly concerned with how to conduct research, but it also aims to provide an understanding of the research process which will help the reader to become a knowledgeable, critical consumer of the research carried out by others. In reading research reports and articles, it is useful to bear in mind *why* the research has been done and to a large extent this is influenced by *who* did the research and *who paid* for it to be done. Leisure and tourism research is undertaken by a wide variety of individuals and institutions, including academics and students, government and commercial research

-
- Academics
 - Students
 - Government and commercial organisations
 - Consultants
 - Managers
-

Figure 2–7 Who does research?

units, consultants and managers of leisure or tourism facilities and services, as listed in **Figure 2–7**. The respective roles of these research actors are discussed in turn below.

Academics

Academics, members of the paid academic staff of academic institutions, include professors, lecturers, tutors and research staff – in American parlance: 'the faculty'. In most academic institutions professors and lecturers are expected, as part of their contract of employment, to engage in both research and teaching. Typically a quarter or third of an academic's time might be devoted to research and writing. Promotion and job security depend partly (some would say mainly) on the achievement of a satisfactory track record in published research. Publication can be in various forms, including: refereed journals, un-refereed journals (such as professional magazines), books, reports/monographs (published by academic institutions or other agencies) and conference papers.

Publication of research in refereed journals is considered to be the most prestigious form in academic terms because of the element of 'peer review'. Articles submitted to such journals are assessed (refereed) on an anonymous basis by two or three experts in the field, as well as the editors. Editorial activity is overseen by a board of experts in the field. The main refereed journals in the leisure and tourism area are: *Journal of Leisure Research* (USA), *Annals of Tourism Research* (UK), *Leisure Sciences* (USA), *Tourism Management* (UK), *Leisure Studies* (UK), *Journal of Travel Research* (USA), *Society and Leisure* (Canada).

Some research conducted by academics requires little or no specific financial resources over and above the academic's basic salary – for example theoretical work and the many studies using students as subjects. But much research requires additional financial support, for instance, to pay full-time or part-time research assistants, to pay interviewers or a market research firm to conduct interviews, or to cover travel costs or the costs of equipment. The main sources of funding are university/college funds; government research councils; trusts/foundations; government departments or agencies; commercial companies; and non-profit organisations.

Universities tend to use their own funds to support research which is initiated by academic staff and where

the main motive is the 'advancement of knowledge'. Most universities and colleges have research funds for which members of their staff can apply. Governments usually establish organisations to fund scientific research – for example the UK Social and Economic Research Council or the Australian Research Council. Many private trusts or foundations also fund research – for example the Ford Foundation and the Leverhulme Trust. Funds may come from the world of practice – for instance from a government department or agency, from a commercial company or from a non-profit organisation such as a governing body of a sport. In this case the research will tend to be more practically oriented. Government agencies and commercial and non-profit organisations fund research to solve particular problems or to inform them about particular issues relevant to their interests.

Generally academics become involved in funded research of a practically oriented nature when their own interests coincide with those of the agency concerned. For instance an academic may be interested in ways of measuring what motivates people to engage in certain outdoor recreation activities and this could coincide with an outdoor recreation agency's need for research to assist in developing a marketing strategy. Some academics specialise in applied areas – such as marketing or planning – so they are very often in a better position to attract funding from the 'practical world'. Academics may use funds to employ one or more research assistants who may also be registered for a higher degree – usually a PhD. This leads to the second academic source of research, namely students.

Students

PhD and Masters degree students are major contributors to research. Journals periodically publish lists of theses and dissertations completed in the area (Van Doren and Stubbles, 1976; Van Doren and Solan, 1979; Jafari and Aaser, 1988). Theses from most USA and UK universities are available on microfiche and, increasingly, on-line. In the science area research students often work as part of a team, under the direction of a supervisor who determines what topics will be researched by individual students within a particular research programme. In the social sciences this approach is less common, with students having more freedom of choice in their selection of research topic.

PhD theses are the most significant form of student research, but research done by Masters degree and graduate diploma students and even undergraduates can be a useful contribution to knowledge. Leisure and tourism are not generally well endowed with research funds, so even, for example, a small survey conducted by a group of undergraduates on a particular leisure activity or in a particular locality, or a thorough review of an area of literature, may be of considerable use or interest to others.

Government and commercial organisations

Government and commercial organisations often have their own in-house research organisations – for example, the Office of National Statistics in the UK, the former Bureau of Tourism Research in Australia and the US Forest Service Experiment Stations. Commercial organisations in leisure and tourism tend to rely on consultants for their social, economic and market research, although equipment manufacturers, for instance in sport, may conduct their own scientific research for product development.

Research conducted by commercial bodies is usually confidential but that conducted by government agencies is generally available to the public. Research reports from these organisations can therefore be important sources of knowledge, especially of a more practically oriented nature. For example, in nearly every developed country some government agency takes responsibility for conducting nation-wide surveys of tourism patterns and leisure participation rates (Cushman *et al.*, 2005a). This is descriptive research which no other organisation would have the resources to undertake.

Consultants

Consultants exist to offer their research and advisory services to the leisure and tourism industries. Some consultancy organisations are large, multi-national companies involved in accountancy, management and property development consultancy generally, and who establish specialised units covering the leisure and/or tourism field. Examples are Coopers and Lybrand and Price Waterhouse. But there are many other, smaller, specialised organisations in the consultancy field. Some academics operate consultancy companies as a 'side-line', either because of academic interest in a particular area or to supplement incomes or both. Self-employed consultancy activity is common among practitioners who have taken early retirement from leisure or tourism industry employment.

Managers

Managers in leisure and tourism who recognise the full extent of the management process should see research very much as part of their responsibilities. Managers may find themselves carrying out research on a range of types of topic, as indicated in **Figure 2–8**. Since most of the readers of this book will be actual or trainee managers, this is a most important point to recognise.

Successful management depends on good information. Much information – for example sales figures – is available to the manager as a matter of routine and does not require

-
- Research on customers
 - Research on potential customers
 - Research on staff
 - Research on performance
 - Research on competitors
 - Research on products
-

Figure 2-8 Managers and research.

research. However, the creative utilisation of such data – for example to establish market trends – may amount to research. Other types of information can only be obtained by means of specific research projects. In some areas of leisure and tourism management even the most basic information must be obtained by research. For example, while managers of theatres or resorts routinely receive information on the level of use of their facilities from sales figures or bookings, this is not the case for the manager of an urban park or a beach. To gain information on the number of users of this type of facility it is necessary to conduct a specific data gathering exercise. Such data gathering may not be very sophisticated and some would say that it does not qualify as *research*, being just part of the management information system, but in the sense that it involves *finding out*, and sometimes *explaining*, it qualifies as research for the purposes of this book.

Most managers need to carry out – or commission – research if they want information on their users or customers, for example, where they come from (the ‘catchment area’ of the facility) or their socio-economic characteristics. Research is also a way of finding out customers’ evaluations of the facility or service. It might be argued that managers do not themselves need research skills since they can always commission consultants to carry out research. However, managers will be better able to commission good research and evaluate the results if they are familiar with the research process themselves. It is also the case that few managers in leisure and tourism work in an ideal world where funds exist to commission all the research they would like; often the only way managers can get research done is to do it themselves.

Academics and the world of practice: the relevance of published research to planning and management

Who does research is important because it affects the nature of the research conducted and hence has a large impact on what constitutes the *body of knowledge* which students of leisure and tourism must absorb and on which leisure and tourism managers draw.

Academic research and publication is, to a large extent, a ‘closed system’. Academics referee other academics’ book

proposals for commercial publishers; they are the editors of the refereed journals and serve on their editorial advisory boards and referee panels. They therefore determine what research is acceptable for publication. Practitioners therefore very often find published academic research irrelevant to their needs – this is hardly surprising since much of it is not designed for the practitioner but for the academic world. The student training to become a professional practitioner in the leisure or tourism field should not therefore be surprised to come across scholarly writing available on leisure and tourism which is not suitable for direct practical application to policy, planning and management. This does not mean that it is irrelevant, but simply that it does not necessarily focus explicitly on immediate practical problems.

Some research arises from academic interest and some arises from immediate problems being faced by the providers of leisure or tourism services. Much published academic research tends to be governed by the concerns of the various theoretical disciplines, such as sociology, economics or psychology, which may or may not coincide with the day-to-day concerns of the leisure or tourism industries. In fact part of the role of academic research is to ‘stand apart’ from the rest of the world and provide disinterested analysis, which may be critical and may not be seen as particularly supportive by those working in the industry. However, what some see as overly critical and unhelpful, or just plain irrelevant, others may see as insightful and constructive.

There are nevertheless applied disciplines which focus specifically on aspects of the policy, planning and management process, such as planning, management, marketing or financial management. While academic research in these areas can also be critical rather than immediately instrumental, it is more likely to be driven by the sorts of issues which concern the industry. In each of these theoretical and applied disciplines there is a distinctive body of leisure and tourism research. In addition there is research which draws on more than one discipline (multi-disciplinary) and research which occupies a niche somewhere between two or more disciplines (inter-disciplinary). Further, in the areas of *leisure studies* and *tourism studies* there is research which recognises no disciplinary allegiance. The disciplinary aspects of leisure and tourism research are examined in the next section.

Summary

This chapter addresses the ‘What?’ of research in defining and introducing the concept of research and describes three types of research with which this book is concerned: descriptive research, explanatory research and evaluative research. The ‘Why?’ of research is discussed primarily in the context of policy-making, planning and management, since the majority of the users of the book will be studying for a vocational qualification. The links between research and the various

stages of policy-making, planning and management are discussed using the rational-comprehensive model as a framework, and attention is drawn to the variety of forms that research reports can take in the management environment. *Who* conducts research is an important and often neglected aspect of research: in this chapter, the respective research roles of academics, students, governmental and commercial organisations, consultants and managers are discussed.

CHECKPOINT

4. Summarise the potential role of research in three of the nine steps in the 'rational-comprehensive' model of the policy-making/planning/management process presented in this chapter.
5. Name three of the six formats which research reports might take, as put forward in this chapter, and outline their basic features.
6. Outline three of the six topics, as put forward in this chapter, on which managers might conduct or commission research.
7. Why does academic research often appear to be irrelevant to the needs of practitioners?

Exercises

1. Choose a leisure or tourism organisation with which you are familiar and outline ways in which it might use research to pursue its objectives.
2. Choose a leisure or tourism organisation and investigate its research activities. What proportion of its budget does it devote to research? What research has it carried out?

How are the results of the research used, by the organisation or others?

3. Take an edition of a leisure or tourism journal, such as *Leisure Studies* or *Annals of Tourism Research*, and ascertain, for each article: why the research was conducted; how it was funded; and who or what organisations are likely to benefit from the research and how.
4. Repeat exercise 3, but using an edition of a journal outside the leisure/tourism field, for example a sociology journal or a physics journal.
5. Using the same journal edition as in exercise 4 above, examine each article and determine whether the research is descriptive, explanatory or evaluative.

Further reading

Models of planning and policy-making: introductory discussions: Parsons (1995: 248ff); Veal (2002: 76–86); for a more advanced discussion, see Treuren and Lane (2003).

Tourism research methods: see Smith (1989) for a quantitative, geographical approach; Ryan (1994) for coverage of similar ground to this book; Dann, Nash and Pearce (1988) and Pearce and Butler (1993) for a number of methodological papers and, for a mine of information on all aspects of tourism research, see the comprehensive collection of papers edited by Ritchie and Goeldner (1994).

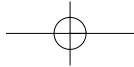
Leisure and tourism forecasting, see: Archer (1994); Veal (1987, 2002); Kelly (1987b); Martin and Mason (annual); Henley Centre for Forecasting (Quarterly).

Research in the planning process: Kelsey and Gray (1986a); Marriott (1987); Veal (1994).

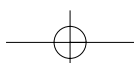
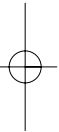
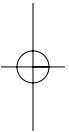
Feasibility studies: Kelsey and Gray (1986b).

Psychographics/lifestyle: Wells (1974); Veal (1989a, 1993a, 2000); Chisnall (1991).

Evaluative research: Loomis (1987); Henderson and Bialeschki (1995); Pollard (1987); Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991); Veal, 2002: 185–210.



Approaches to Leisure and Tourism Research



Introduction

The aim of this section is to introduce a range of disciplines and paradigms within which leisure and tourism research is conducted. The section examines:

- *Disciplinary traditions*: reviews of a number of academic disciplines and their approaches to leisure and tourism research, including sociology, economics, geography, psychology, social psychology, history and philosophy.
- *Cross-disciplinary dimensions*: examination of a number of dichotomous research issues, including:
 - theoretical and applied research;
 - theoretical and empirical research;
 - induction and deduction;
 - descriptive and explanatory research;
 - experimental and non-experimental methods;
 - positivist and interpretive approaches;
 - quantitative and qualitative methods;
 - primary and secondary data and self-reported and observed data.

2-4 The disciplinary traditions of leisure and tourism research

Introduction

The bulk of published leisure and tourism research has arisen, not from the demands of the leisure and tourism industries, but from the interests of academics who owe allegiance to a particular discipline. Here we examine, very briefly, the contributions made to leisure and tourism research by academic disciplines that have been particularly significant in the field.

Disciplines are characterised by the particular aspect or dimension of the universe with which they are concerned, the theories which they develop for explanation and the techniques they use for research. Leisure and tourism studies is a multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary field of study:

- *Multi-disciplinary* means that research from a number of disciplines is used – for example the economics of leisure/tourism *and* the sociology of leisure/tourism.
- *Cross-disciplinary* means that issues, theories, concepts and methods which are common to more than one discipline are involved – such as the *cross-disciplinary dimensions* listed above and discussed in the second half of this chapter.

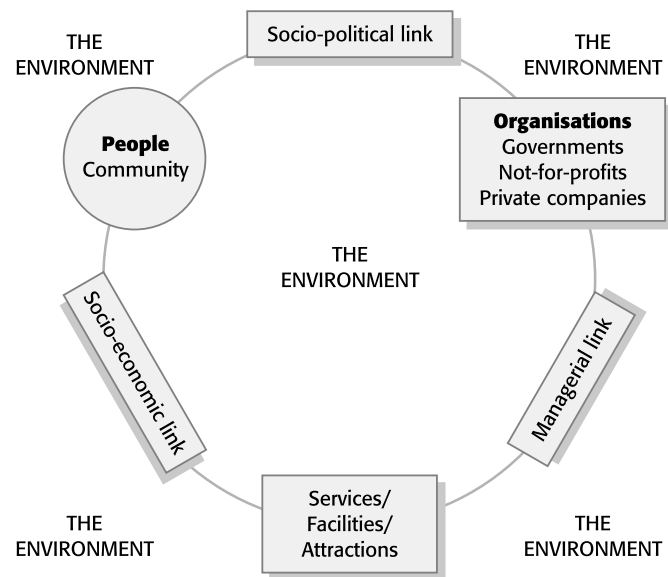


Figure 2-9 A leisure/tourism studies framework.

- *Inter-disciplinary* means that sub-fields of research which do not fit neatly into any particular discipline are involved – for example time-budget research.

An inter-disciplinary framework

Figure 2-9 provides a very simple, inter-disciplinary, conceptual representation of the world within which leisure and tourism exist, and which may assist in placing the various disciplinary approaches into perspective. It consists of five main elements:

- people;
- organisations;
- services/facilities/attractions;
- the linkages between these three; and
- the physical environment within which everything takes place.

The linkages between people, organisations and services/facilities/attractions consist of processes such as:

- Link A – market research and political activity;
- Link B – marketing, buying, selling, employing, visiting/using services;
- Link C – planning and investment.

The (physical) environment is all-pervasive and affects, and is affected by, all of the other elements in various ways. The boxes enclosing the elements are deliberately depicted with dotted lines to suggest that the elements should not be seen as hermetically sealed – indeed, the same people who make

up organisations are also among the users of services/facilities/attractions, so most people play a role in, and move between, more than one of the elements of the system.

Disciplines in leisure and tourism studies

Disciplines vary in terms of their primary focus of attention within this system:

- psychology and social psychology are focussed primarily on the *people* element, with some concerns with links A and B in **Figure 2–9**;
- political science is concerned mainly with *organisations* and with link A to the people;
- history can cover the whole system – but much of historical research in leisure studies has also had the same focus as political science;
- economics at the macro-level is concerned with the whole system, while microeconomics is located around Link B, where the market process is at work;
- sociology is concerned primarily with the people and with Link A and with organisations;
- applied disciplines, such as planning, management and marketing, are based in organisations, then move along links A and C to the other elements of the system;
- geography's basis is the interaction between the human parts of the system and the environment;
- comprehensive social, economic and political systems of thought, such as Marxism or liberalism, encompass the whole system.

While much of this may seem fairly obvious, it is not always made explicit in the disciplinary literature, so that research is often criticised unfairly for ignoring phenomena which are outside its disciplinary scope. The above framework can be seen as an example of a *systems* model, a form of inter-disciplinary model which has been used particularly in tourism studies, and is discussed further below.

It is, of course, impossible to gain a complete appreciation of the research contribution and methods of any discipline without understanding the discipline as a whole. The student of leisure or tourism faces the daunting challenge of having to grasp the essence of a wide range of disciplinary contributions to the field. The discussions below, which relate to the academic disciplines of sociology, geography, economics, psychology and social psychology, history and anthropology and political science, are therefore inevitably somewhat superficial – some more than others – but references to more detailed reviews are given in the guide to further reading.

2-5 Sociology

Why do men tend to play sport more than women? How are the relationships between wealthy Western tourists and impoverished host populations in some tourist destinations to be interpreted? Why do middle-class, highly educated people make greater use of arts facilities and outdoor recreation areas than other groups? To what extent do people freely choose leisure activities and holiday destinations and to what extent is their choice limited by economic and social constraints or commercial manipulation? Who is involved and who is excluded when major decisions are made on leisure or tourism investment in local areas? Why do some groups in society engage in leisure activities which are viewed as 'deviant' or 'anti-social' by others and how do such activities come to be viewed as deviant or anti-social? These are the sorts of questions which sociological research in the field of leisure and tourism attempts to answer.

Sociologists have arguably been the most significant contributors to the field of leisure studies, but less significantly to the specific field of tourism studies. Although there is some overlap between the two fields, they are discussed separately below, and the sociology of leisure is discussed in three sections: first, the empirical tradition of surveys and quantitative models, second, the first wave on non-quantitative theorising, and third, the critical tradition.

Sociology of leisure I: social surveys and quantitative models

Much of the early research on leisure, and some current research, which appears to be 'sociological' has, in fact, not been carried out by sociologists trained in the discipline. This is true, for example, of many of the major leisure participation surveys which provide much of the basic factual information about patterns of participation (Cushman *et al.*, 1996; 2005a). Much *apparently* sociological research might therefore more aptly be called *social* research, since it is often somewhat pragmatic, and lacking in the theoretical framework which many formally trained sociologists would like to see.

Sociology is concerned with explaining or understanding social behaviour – particularly the behaviour of groups or classes of people. Early survey evidence on leisure participation from the 1960s was generally descriptive (e.g. BTA/Keele University, 1967; Sillitoe, 1969) – the aim was, in Elias' words quoted in the previous section: 'discovery'. Some of these early findings nevertheless fed directly into public policy debates: if participation in sport was low, should something not be done about it? If certain leisure activities were participated in primarily by the more well-off groups in society should

efforts not be made to provide for the less well-off? In the context of rapidly rising populations, there was also concern about planning for the future.

The surveys were able to contribute to this policy process since, while they showed that some aspects of leisure behaviour exhibited uniform features across virtually all sections of society (for example, the importance of home-based leisure), others (for example engagement in the arts or sport) varied considerably between different groups in the community, depending on such social characteristics as family status, age, gender, educational level and ethnicity. Despite claims by some later commentators that these issues had been ignored in leisure studies, in fact they were very much at the heart of early leisure studies, as far back as the 1930s in the United States (Lundberg *et al.*, 1934: 92–3) and the 1960s in the UK (Sillitoe, 1969: 42–50). Researchers therefore pursued the idea that if only these relationships could be clearly identified, and provided that they were stable over time, it should be possible to develop *models* of leisure behaviour which could be used to 'predict' the patterns of participation of different social groups and therefore of society as a whole.

This research approach was *quantitative*, being highly statistical and concerned primarily with predicting numbers of participants and visits. It generally involved the construction of mathematical *models* of human behaviour (Christensen, 1988), with regression equations used to represent the relationships between leisure participation and *causal variables*, such as age, gender and income. The research can be seen as part of the *functionalist* tradition in sociology, which is based on the premise that elements in social systems can be studied in terms of the structure of the system and the functioning of its various interacting elements. It was also *normative*, in that it was largely embedded in the public policy process: the research undertaken was designed to assist in the process of planning for the sorts of leisure activities which the public sector provided for – such as sport, outdoor recreation and the arts. Most of the high-profile early American research was in this structural-functionalist-normative mode, much of it was of the quantitative/modelling type. But the highly quantitative approach held less sway in Britain where, for example, Stanley Parker's (1971) early influential work on the relationships between work and leisure, while being empirically based, was not markedly quantitative and did not involve quantitative modelling.

The modelling/prediction approach was eventually rejected by many sociologists, mainly because it did not work well in its own terms. In America, as John Kelly (1980) has pointed out, the models did not perform well, although in Britain more success was obtained (Settle, 1977; Veal, 1987: 152–4). But the main concern of later sociological commentators was that the approach lacked a framework of sociolog-

ical theory: it was too pragmatic and in some cases it failed to answer the key questions.

Sociology of leisure II: explaining why

Methodologically the 'surveys and modelling' approach was challenged by sociologists who were not interested in quantitatively modelling and forecasting, but instead believed in the value of more sociological theory and in the use of qualitative as well as quantitative evidence. They wanted to know not just *what* people did with their leisure time but *why* and what leisure, and lack of leisure, meant to them. These more pragmatic and eclectic approaches had always been present in leisure studies, but had been somewhat overshadowed by the quantitative trend. While they came to the fore in the 1970s and 1980s and were later overshadowed by the critical trend discussed below, they continue as a significant element in leisure studies.

In Britain Rhona and Robert Rapoport epitomised this shift to a more qualitative, explanatory approach, while in the USA it was championed by John Kelly (1983). The Rapoports indicated the new trend with their book, *Leisure and the Family Life Cycle* (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975), which was based on in-depth interviews with only about thirty people altogether; and in which detailed case studies of the motivations and feelings of individuals were reported. In fact their research was so individually oriented that it overlaps with the area of social psychology.

In the United States, a number of other areas were explored, including existential approaches to leisure, the benefits approach and leisure constraints. John Kelly's (1987a, 1994) *existential* and *symbolic interaction* approach explored leisure as a process of negotiation by the individual in the context of personal, social, community and professional relationships, commitments and ties. The development of the *benefits* and *constraints* approaches to leisure research in the 1980s continued the normative tradition discussed above. Benefits research sought to identify, evaluate and quantify the satisfactions individuals and communities gained from leisure as an input to planning and providing leisure services to maximise such benefits (see Driver *et al.*, 1991; Driver and Bruns, 1999). Constraints research focussed on the social, physical, psychic and economic factors which prevented individuals from gaining access to leisure benefits (Jackson and Scott, 1999). Empirically these approaches were supported by relatively small-scale social surveys, often with a psychological dimension.

The continuing value of the pragmatic tradition in leisure studies has been defended by Kenneth Roberts (1999: 221–6) against a number of the critical developments discussed below and also against some of the more experiential perspectives which have emerged from psychology, also discussed below (Roberts, 1999: 153–5).

Sociology of leisure III: critical approaches

In the 1980s the research traditions which had developed up to that point were attacked from a critical, neo-Marxist standpoint – typified by John Clarke and Chas Critcher's (1985) *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain*. On one hand this work relied on a broader, often historically based, analysis of society and on the other hand it relied heavily on the findings of the *ethnographic* style of research which was emerging from the area of *cultural studies* and involved in-depth interaction with usually small groups of, often marginalised, individuals – such as members of youth gangs, ethnic minority groups and young working-class mothers. The intellectual sweep of the neo-Marxists was broader than that of earlier theorists, even though the contemporary empirical basis was, in some senses, a narrow one.

The neo-Marxist research introduced the *agency/structure* debate into leisure studies – that is the question of the extent to which individuals are *free agents*, exercising free choice in their lives, including their leisure choices, and the extent to which such choice is constrained and manipulated by the capitalist, economic and political *structure*, which is beyond the control of the individual (Rojek, 1989). Empirical research on relatively disadvantaged groups in society sought to demonstrate how such groups were exploited or marginalised by the system but often themselves sought to 'resist' such tendencies, thus demonstrating the neo-Marxist thesis of a deeply divided society.

The critical approach also raised questions about the role of the state (government and its associated agencies) in contemporary society. Traditionally leisure research had reflected the view that leisure services provided by the state provided for people's needs in response to democratic demands and this process should be supported and assisted, as in the case of the normative traditions mentioned above. The alternative view was that the state was merely a tool of the capitalist system, providing it with an acceptable 'human face' by providing those services which are not profitable but are necessary for a civilised society – research should therefore be critically focussed on revealing these 'contradictions' of the system. This debate led to a considerable growth in research on the state and public policy in leisure (Coalter, 1988, 1990; Moorhouse, 1989; Henry, 1993; Bramham *et al.*, 1993), involving interviews with policy-makers, analyses of government policy statements and legislation, and case studies of policy-making in individual cities. Explicit critiques of the neo-Marxist approach in leisure studies have been few (Moorhouse, 1989; Veal, 1989a), but it became less fashionable during the course of the 1990s, with the decline of Marxism as a political force in the world.

The 1980s also saw an attack on existing leisure research by *feminist* sociologists, who noted that much of the empirical work to date had been based on samples of men and, in focussing on factors such as occupation and work/leisure relationships, had ignored the day-to-day experience of women and their traditional responsibilities for child-care and unpaid domestic work. Further, it was argued that leisure research to-date had taken for granted the existence of freedom of choice in leisure and had therefore ignored the power relationships in society which limited or negated the range of choice for some groups, particularly women (Anderson, 1975; Deem, 1986; Wimbush and Talbot, 1988; Henderson *et al.*, 1989; Green *et al.*, 1990; Scraton, 1994). Much, but not all, of the empirical research underpinning the feminist contribution was qualitative in nature, concerned as it was to explore meanings and experiences of leisure among women.

The critical perspective in the sociology of leisure has, in recent years, been assumed by the idea of *postmodernism* (Rojek, 1995) and poststructuralism (Aitchison, 2000). The *modern* era of Western civilisation dates from the seventeenth century when science, rationality and the idea of *human progress* displaced traditional, largely religion dominated, values. Postmodernists argue that Western societies – and indeed most other parts of the world – are entering a new era, when values are becoming uncertain and the modern idea of progress no longer seems valid; the basis of modern economies and contemporary culture is becoming dominated by the ephemeral, fast-moving, world of the electronic communications media and the cultural 'products' which they purvey. One implication of this is a shift in the focus of the sociology of leisure to examine popular cultural forms, such as television (O'Connor and Boyle, 1993) and the world of Disney (Rojek, 1993), although there is also a tendency to add the term 'postmodern' to research on a wide variety of more mundane topics, such as the fun run (Wilson, 1995), rock climbing (Morgan, 1994) and social history (Seaton, 1994). The effect of these tendencies is to move parts of leisure sociology closer to a humanities approach, in which *the text*, or cultural artefact, rather than people, becomes the empirical focus and *cultural criticism* and *hermeneutics* (the interpretation of texts) are the research techniques deployed (e.g. Hultsman and Harper, 1992). Empirical research related to this approach therefore generally involves qualitative research, encompassing interviews, observation and the analysis of 'texts' as well as involvement with human subjects.

More recently, there have been calls for leisure sociology to embrace the ideas of *poststructuralism*, which rejects *structural* theories of society – be they functionalist, critical, neo-Marxist or feminist – but seeks to focus on the micro-level of human existence and the ways individuals and groups

interact to create social environments and power relationships (Aitchison, 2000; Kelly, 1997; Wearing, 1998).

Space precludes examination of a number of other developments in the sociology of leisure, including Robert Stebbins' idea of *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 1992), the potential of *figurational sociology*, as propounded by Elias and Dunning (1986; see Maguire, 1988), the revisiting of *play* as a focus for research and theorising (Hamilton-Smith, 1994; Rojek, 1995, ch. 9) and the concept of *lifestyle* (Veal, 1993a).

The culmination of this brief history of the sociology of leisure is that the field is now characterised by a wide range of *social* or *sociological* research conducted within what Rojek (1985) refers to as *multi-paradigmatic rivalry* – that is alternative, competing traditions, with different ways of looking at the world. In addition an enormous range of research approaches is now deployed by sociologists studying leisure: quantitative methods are still used (see any edition of the *American Journal of Leisure Research*), major surveys continue to be conducted (mainly for government/policy purposes – see Cushman *et al.*, 2005b), and a variety of qualitative and experimental methods are also used. In short, anything goes.

Sociology of tourism

It is notable that, although leisure encompasses the major tourism activity of 'going on holiday', the general leisure literature rarely refers specifically to tourism or going on holiday. A further oddity in the leisure/tourism research tradition is that a great deal of North American research on leisure, which is concerned primarily with outdoor recreation, in fact involves studies of people who are staying away from home, often camping, while visiting major attractions such as national parks. So a great deal of what is recognised as *recreation research* in North America could in fact equally be seen as *tourism research* – but this is rarely, if ever, acknowledged. So research on the *sociology of tourism* is conventionally seen as separate from research on the *sociology of leisure*.

Dann and Cohen (1991: 157) point out that there is 'no single sociology of tourism', instead 'there have been several attempts to understand sociologically different aspects of tourism, departing from a number of theoretical perspectives'. They indicate that leisure is only one of the contexts in which tourism is studied; it is also viewed in the context of the sociology of migration and in the context of research on travel. Tourism research has been driven by private industry demands to a greater extent than leisure research; as a result tourism research is characterised by a predominance of economic and marketing and related psychological research, rather than sociological research. Indeed, John Urry has remarked that: 'There is relatively little substance to the sociology of tourism' (Urry, 1990: 7).

Erik Cohen (1984) divides sociological research on tourism into four 'issue areas': the tourist; relations between tourists and locals; the structure and functioning of the tourist system; and the social and environmental consequences of tourism. Reflecting the situation in leisure research, he concluded, in 1980:

While a variety of often intriguing conceptual and theoretical approaches for studying the complex and manifold touristic phenomena have emerged, none has yet withstood rigorous empirical testing; while field-studies have proliferated, many lack an explicit, theoretical orientation and hence contribute little to theory building.

(Cohen, 1980: 388)

Dean MacCannell's (1976) seminal work on tourism as a 'quest for authenticity' linked tourism research to the area of *semiotics*, involving the study of symbols and signs, and this is reflected in John Urry's (1990) *The Tourist Gaze*. Such studies focus on tourism involving travel to strange places to 'see things', as opposed to the mass of tourism which is domestic and quasi-domestic (for example trips by northern Europeans to the Costa Del Sol) and involves going somewhere for 'sand, sea and sex'. The emergence of postmodern perspectives in sociology has affected tourism research as it has leisure research generally. The implications for research involve a similar shift towards areas previously the preserve of the humanities.

The paucity of theoretical sociological writing on tourism has been remedied in part in recent years by the collection of papers edited by Graham Dann (2002), entitled *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, and Adrian Franklin's *Tourism; An Introduction* (2003). Paralleling developments in theory has been the development of empirical research on tourism to encompass a spread of methodologies, from the highly quantitative and deductive to the full range of qualitative and inductive approaches.

One of the main focuses of empirical research in the sociology of tourism has been on the social interaction between tourists and host communities and its effects (see Ryan, 1991 for summary). In recent years there has also been a tendency to move away from consideration of the phenomenon of mass tourism and to examine the behaviour patterns and motivations of smaller, more specialised groups, engaged in 'special interest' tourism, centring on such developments as 'eco-tourism' and activity-based holidays (see Weiler and Hall, 1992).

2-6 Geography

What is the relationship between where people live, their access to leisure facilities and their patterns of leisure participation?

How do people's perceptions of and appreciation of different landscapes affect their leisure travel behaviour? How are the leisure and tourism trips of the population of a region accommodated and distributed within the region? How do people make use of outdoor recreation areas – how do they view crowding and congestion? What is the capacity of various environments to absorb visitors? These are the sorts of questions which geographical leisure and tourism research addresses.

Geographers have been very prominent in leisure research (Coppock, 1982) and have not generally restricted their interests to the formal confines of their discipline. For example, the Tourism and Recreation Research Unit of Edinburgh University was a creation of the Geography Department of the university and was at the forefront of the development of the modelling techniques discussed under sociology above (Coppock and Duffield, 1975). 'Social modelling' was extended to 'spatial modelling' with the aim of predicting not just levels of participation in activities in general, but levels of trips to particular recreation sites. This research was based on data gathered by interview surveys of the population in general and the users of particular recreation sites.

Of course geographers can be expected to be concerned primarily with spatial and environmental issues and also with large-scale natural and man-made phenomena such as the coastline, wilderness and human settlement patterns. Geography has indeed contributed a great deal of insight into these aspects of leisure research. Thus, for example, a considerable amount of research has been completed on the catchment areas of different kinds of leisure facilities – that is, surveys which ask people how far they travel to use facilities and which therefore establish the area which the facilities serve (Cowling *et al.*, 1983). Much of this research also included tourism sites. Traditionally geographers have focussed on recreation in 'green' areas, such as urban and national parks (e.g. Pigram, 1983), but a later text by Williams, entitled *Outdoor Recreation and the Urban Environment* (1995) indicates the contemporary range of the geographer's interest, covering environments as diverse as the domestic garden, urban thoroughfares, children's playgrounds, parks and sports facilities.

Tourism is of course quintessentially a geographical phenomenon and geography has made major contributions to research in that field (Mitchell, 1994; Smith, 1983; Pearce, 1987; Mitchell and Murphy, 1991), including studies of travel patterns and their modelling using the 'gravity model', tourism/recreation carrying capacity studies and regional development studies.

More recently geographers have embraced postmodern and poststructural perspectives, as exemplified by the volume *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*, by Cara Aitchison *et al.* (2000) and *Leisure/Tourism Geographies* edited by David Crouch (1999). These studies overlap into sociology and also

bridge the gap between leisure and tourism. As with sociology, they also mark the arrival of a full range of qualitative and quantitative research methods into the field.

Geographers have been at the forefront of various types of observational research (Burch, 1964; Tourism and Recreation Research Unit (TRRU), 1983). In particular they have demonstrated the use of aerial photography in examining the spatial distribution of recreational resources and utilisation and they have examined the way visitors make use of dispersed sites such as parks (Van der Zande, 1985; Glyptis, 1981a, 1981b). Geographers have also linked the concept of lifestyle with census information to create 'lifestyle maps' based on the common social characteristics of neighbourhoods; such characteristics being closely associated with leisure behaviour (Bickmore *et al.*, 1980; Shaw, 1984). A mixture of geography and psychological research has been responsible for a large amount of research on 'landscape perception' – that is, what it is that people find attractive about different kinds of landscape (Patmore, 1983: 212).

2-7 Economics

How do increases in incomes affect leisure expenditure and behaviour? How can an annual subsidy of £10 million to an opera company or a sports centre be justified? What is the impact in terms of business turnover and jobs, of an event such as the Olympic Games? How significant is tourism, the arts or sport, in the economy? How will a change in the exchange rate affect international tourist arrivals? These are the sorts of question which economic research on leisure and tourism attempts to answer.

Economics is the discipline concerned with the 'allocation of scarce resources between competing ends' – that is, with what is produced by a society and with the distribution of what is produced – who gets what. Since leisure and tourism products and services now account for between 20 and 30 per cent of consumer spending in modern Western societies, the economics of leisure and tourism is of increasing importance. Most of the economics of leisure is, however, concerned with the public sector, where the free market forces with which economics is so concerned, are constrained or inoperative (Veal, 1989b). In the case of tourism, economists have drawn largely on macro-economics, that part of economics which is concerned with economies as a whole, including levels of economic output, multipliers, unemployment, international trade and so on.

The major focus of research in the economics of leisure has been on the public sector, particularly rural outdoor recreation and the arts. One of the major concerns of this area of research has been the economic valuation of the recreational, natural and aesthetic values of public recreation lands

and wildernesses or of arts facilities, where entrance is often free or subsidised. Information on the users' willingness to pay is therefore not immediately available as a measure of their evaluation of the experience, as it is, say, with a commercial facility such as Disneyland. This therefore has spawned a great deal of research on 'cost-benefit analysis' – ways of measuring both the full costs and the full benefits to society of these publicly provided facilities.

As governments moved to the right in the 1980s and began to examine critically many areas of public enterprise with a view to expenditure cuts or privatisation, there was a burst of 'economic impact' studies – in which economists were engaged to establish the economic significance of the arts (Myerscough, 1988; Casey *et al.*, 1996) or sport (Henley Centre for Forecasting, 1986; DASETT, 1988a, 1988b). The general political/economic environment has also stimulated some research on the effects of pricing on demand (Coalter, 1993; Gratton and Taylor, 1995, 2000).

Another distinct area of the economic study of leisure has been the work on the economics of professional sport. Professional sport is a 'peculiar' – and fascinating – industry sector to economists because of the nature of competition, which is unlike that in other industries (Cairns *et al.*, 1986).

Of a more practical bent is the work of forecasters such as Martin and Mason, Sports Industries Research Centre, (annual) and the Henley Centre for Forecasting (quarterly), who produce regular forecasts of consumer expenditure on leisure products and services as a service to the leisure industries. Demand forecasting has been a major focus of tourism research (Eadington and Redman, 1991). In most countries, at least one organisation exists to produce forecasts of domestic and overseas tourist trips and such forecasts are often based on primarily economic models (Archer, 1987). In terms of research techniques, economists have tended to use similar methods to other social scientists, including household and site interviews, but they tend to have access to more government-collected data, for example on consumer expenditure, and tend to make use of quantitative methods, such as regression.

2-8 Psychology/social psychology

What satisfactions do people obtain from their leisure? How do people's perceptions of tourist destinations affect their decision to travel? What motivates people to engage in one form of leisure activity rather than another? How do people's relationships with family and friends affect their leisure behaviour? These are the sorts of question which psychological and social psychological research addresses.

In discussing sociological research, we have already referred to the work of the Rapaports and Kelly as social-psychological

in nature, based as it is on attempts to understand the underlying motivations of individuals as well as their social interactions.

In a review of the contributions of psychology to leisure research, Roger Ingham (1986) classified the body of work into four main categories: motivation and needs ('why individuals do what they do'), satisfactions (the idea that 'particular types of leisure behaviour and experience lead to differential levels of satisfaction'), leisure as a state of mind (including Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'flow'), and individual differences (including gender, age, personality and cultural differences). The field is divided into two general approaches, the 'experiential' approach of Neulinger and Csikszentmihalyi and the broader approach dealing with reported motivations, satisfactions and attributions typified by the work of Iso-Ahola. Ingham pointed out that:

By far the majority of psychological research has relied on the use of self-report questionnaire-derived data . . . Alternative methodological approaches are relatively rare: these could include detailed case studies, direct physiological recording, open-ended self-reporting, field experimentation, and careful observation and analysis of behaviour in different settings. (Ingham, 1986: 258)

In the second part of his review Ingham commends for the future the sociopsychological work of Kelly (1983), which involves viewing leisure as a medium in which individuals develop their identities, styles and social roles.

In the area of tourism Pearce and Stringer (1991) divide psychological research into five types: physiological and ergonomic (e.g. jet-lag and travellers' health problems); cognition (e.g. the use of maps and tourists' 'mindfulness' of areas visited); individual differences approaches (e.g. relationships between personality types and types of touristic experience sought, and links with motivation, psychographics and need); social psychology (including intra-individual, inter-individual and group processes); and environmental studies (e.g. perception of crowding). Pearce and Stringer argue that the psychology of tourism is not well developed but that: 'In the absence of a broad psychological thrust in tourism, geographers, sociologists, and leisure and recreation researchers are doing much work which at heart is psychological' (Pearce and Stringer (1991: 150).

Pearce's text, *The Ulysses Factor* (1988) includes a diverse collection of papers on visitor behaviour and attitudes in a variety of settings, including theme parks, museums, and natural environments. Ryan's (1995) *Researching Tourist Satisfaction* considers the psychology of the tourist from a market research point of view. In his theoretical review he reveals that research on tourist attitudes and satisfaction draws extensively on the same psychological basis as leisure research, including Maslow, Csikszentmihalyi and Iso-Ahola.

There is clearly a link between psychology, consumer research and market research and this is reflected particularly in the growing body of research on tourism markets and marketing, exemplified by two volumes of papers on the *Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure* edited by Woodside *et al.* (1999) and Mazanec *et al.* (2001).

The methods of leisure and tourism psychology-related research are dominated by the small-scale self-completion questionnaire survey, sometimes of tourists in the field and sometimes of 'captive' groups, such as students, and typically involving Likert scales. The influence of psychology means that, more often than in other areas of research, the basic research model is traditionally positivistic and deductive.

2-9 History and anthropology

What are the historical roots of the practices, attitudes and institutions involved in contemporary leisure and tourism? To what extent has leisure time increased since pre-industrial times? How is change constrained by the effects of past actions and events? Historians, in addressing such questions, have been influential in the development of leisure research. For instance, Huizinga's classic work on play, *Homo Ludens* (1955), is largely historical and Young and Willmott's study of *The Symmetrical Family* (1973) has a firm base in historical analysis, as has Clarke and Critcher's *The Devil Makes Work* (1985). More recently, historians and theorists have produced histories of leisure, particularly in the nineteenth century (Cunningham, 1980; Bailey, 1978), which show how leisure has been an integral part of the development of the cultures and economies of Western capitalist societies. In fact one of the claims of the 1980s critics of earlier leisure research was that it was ahistorical, or at least that its view of history was naive.

A comprehensive history of leisure has, however, yet to be written. The available historical writing tends to jump from ancient Greece, with a brief dalliance in medieval Europe to observe the concept of 'carnival' as described by Bakhtin (see Rojek, 1985: 85), to the industrial revolution in Europe. There is little material, in the English language literature, on history outside of Europe and North America. And there is virtually no reference to periods before the first millennium BC, even though it is clear that most leisure forms, such as music, dance, art, sport, gambling and drinking, have their origins in pre-history. By and large, anthropology has been ignored in leisure research, despite the wealth of leisure or play-related material in works such as Sahlins' *Stone Age Economics* (1972).

Most textbooks on tourism (e.g. Burkart and Medlik, 1981) provide an historical overview of the development of travel and tourism. Tourism is traced back to classical Greek

and Roman times, to the emergence of the 'grand tour' in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the development of spas and resorts. In Britain historical research has addressed some of the theoretical issues on social structure and change which have been addressed by sociologists (Urry, 1990), but in America studies have tended to be more descriptive case studies (Towner and Wall, 1991).

Some attention has been given to the anthropology of tourism in an historical sense (Nash and Smith, 1991), taking the history of tourism back beyond the classical period, but the 'anthropology of tourism' is also seen as a more contemporary phenomenon, drawing on the particular research approaches of anthropology in the study of (often clashing) relationships between cultures which arise as a result of tourism (Graburn and Moore, 1994).

While reviews of the contributions of history to leisure and tourism research tend not to discuss techniques, in fact one of the major contributions of historical analysis is to illustrate the use of secondary data sources, such as diaries, official records and reports and newspaper reports. Anthropological research methods, however, emerge through such areas as 'cultural studies' in the form of *ethnographical* methods.

2-10 Political science

Despite the importance of public policy matters in leisure and tourism, the political dimension of the subject was neglected for many years. Important contributions began to be made in the 1980s and 1990s, including studies by Bramham and Henry (1985), Wilson (1988), Coalter (1990) and Henry (1993, 2001) in relation to leisure generally, and by Richter (1989, 1994) in relation to tourism. Case studies of the politics of local decision-making have emerged as an important contribution to this field in recent years (e.g. Henry and Paramio Salcines, 1998; Long, 2000; Jenkins and Stolk, 2003). While leisure studies research has focussed on the relationships between political ideology and leisure policy, in tourism the focus is less ideological and more to do with the role of tourism in political behaviour (Matthews and Richter, 1991). Typically, any empirical work in the area of the politics of leisure and tourism tends to draw on the historic record; however, being related to recent history, studies are often also supplemented with interviews with eyewitness political figures.

2-11 Approaches and dimensions

A number of alternative approaches to and dimensions of leisure and tourism research cut across the disciplines; some of them, as listed in **Figure 2-10**, are discussed here in the form

-
- Theoretical/applied
 - Empirical/non-empirical
 - Induction/deduction
 - Descriptive/explanatory research
 - Positivist/interpretive
 - Experimental/non-experimental
 - Primary/secondary data
 - Self-reported/observed
 - Qualitative/quantitative
 - Validity and reliability
-

Figure 2–10 Approaches/dimensions/issues.

of dichotomies. These are terms and ideas which recur in the literature and discourses on research; a basic understanding of them is therefore necessary if the literature and the discourses are to be understood. In general these themes arise in pairs – X and Y – so in many discussions they are presented as X *versus* Y. But X and Y are not always opposed to one another, they are often complementary, so here the form X *and* Y or the form X/Y is used.

Theoretical and applied research

Theoretical research seeks to draw general conclusions about the phenomena being studied. *Applied* research, however, is less universal in its scope: it seeks not necessarily to create wholly *new* knowledge about the world but to apply existing theoretical knowledge to particular problems or issues. Such problems or issues may arise in particular policy, planning or management situations. Policy studies, planning and management are themselves fields of study which have developed a body of theory. Because they are related to areas of practice they can be seen as *applied disciplines*. In these fields, therefore, there can be such a thing as *applied theory*. The rational-comprehensive model of management portrayed in Figure 2–4 is an example of applied theory: research which sought to develop or elaborate the model in general would be theoretical whereas research which simply used the model as a framework for examining a problem in a particular organisation would be called applied.

Empirical and non-empirical research

The dichotomy here should probably be between *purely* empirical research, if such a thing exists, and *purely* theoretical research. Empirical research involves the collection and/or analysis of data – quantitative or qualitative, primary or secondary. The research is informed by observations or information from the ‘real world’. It is, however, rare for any research project to be *purely* empirical – it is usually informed by some sort of theory or conceptual framework, however implicit.

It is possible to become ‘carried away’ with data and their analysis and to forget the theory which should make them *meaningful*. In such cases the disparaging term ‘mindless empiricism’ is sometimes used. Similarly, theoretical research with no reference to information about the ‘real world’ is likely to be of limited value. Typically – and ideally – theoretical and empirical research coexist and enhance each other; most research projects have complementary theoretical and empirical components.

A review of the contents of one or two editions of the main leisure or tourism journals will reveal the existence of both sorts of research – and the contributions which each can make. While the empirical studies provide some of the ‘building blocks’ of a great deal of research and knowledge, non-empirical contributions are needed to review and refine ideas and to place the empirical work in context. A book like this inevitably devotes more space to empirical methods, because they involve more explicit, technical processes which can be described and ‘taught’. It cannot, however, be too strongly stressed that a good review of the literature or a thoughtful piece of writing arising from deep, insightful, inspirational thinking about a subject can be worth a thousand, unthinking, surveys!

Induction and deduction

Induction and deduction refer to alternative approaches to explanation in research. It has been noted that research involves *finding out* and *explaining*. Finding out might be called the ‘what?’ of research – what is happening? What is the situation? Explaining might be called the ‘how?’ and the ‘why?’ of research – how do things happen? Why do they happen the way they do? What are the causes of different phenomena?

Finding out involves description and gathering of information. Explaining involves attempting to understand that information: it goes beyond the descriptive. Research methods can facilitate both these processes. Description and explanation can be seen as part of a circular model of research as illustrated in **Figure 2–11**.

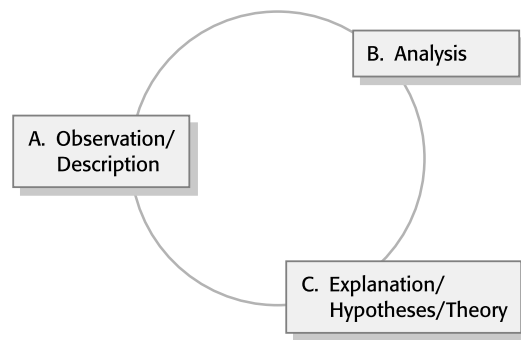
The research process can work in two ways:

Inductive

- begin at point A, *observation/description*
- proceed to point B, *analysis*
- arrive at point C, *explanation*.

Deductive

- begin at point C, with a *hypothesis*
- proceed to point A, *observation/description*, gathering data to test the hypothesis
- proceed to point B, *analysis*, to test the hypothesis against the data.



Based on: Williamson *et al.*, 1982, p 7.

Figure 2–11 Circular model of the research process.

A *hypothesis* is a proposition about how something might work or behave – an explanation which may or may not be supported by data, or possibly by more detailed or rigorous argument. A hypothesis may arise from informal observation and experience of the researcher or from examination of the existing literature. The term *theory* is also included at point C since, when more elaborate hypotheses or a number of inter-related hypotheses are involved, the term theory may be used. A theory can be similar to a hypothesis, in being propositional, or it may have been subjected to empirical validation – that is, testing against data.

A research project may involve a single circuit or a number of circuits of the process, possibly in both directions. If

CASE STUDY

Tennis vs golf: inductive and deductive approaches

Inductive

An inductive approach to researching and explaining the relative popularity of tennis and golf could proceed as follows.

A descriptive survey shows that more people play tennis than play golf. This is just a piece of information; we cannot explain why this is so without additional information and analysis. If the research also reveals that it costs more to play golf than to play tennis then we could offer the explanation that relative popularity is related to price.

However, qualitative information from the survey might also indicate that more people consider tennis as being fun to play than consider golf to be fun. This suggests that tennis is intrinsically more attractive than golf for many people and its popularity is not related to price but to intrinsic enjoyment.

On the other hand, the research might indicate that there are more tennis courts available than golf courses in the particular community being studied, suggesting that, if there were more golf courses available, then golf would be more popular – implying that popularity is related to availability of facilities.

In this example, a series of possible explanations is being *induced* from the data. In its most fully developed form the explanation amounts to a theory. In this case a theory of sports participation might be developed relating levels of participation to costs of participation, intrinsic satisfactions

and supply of facilities, perceived attractiveness of the activity and facilities, and so on.

Deductive

A deductive approach to the topic would proceed as follows. On the basis of reading and existing theory on leisure activities generally, the following two hypotheses are put forward:

- Hypothesis 1: if sport A is more expensive to play than sport B, then sport B will be more popular than sport A.
- Hypothesis 2: if more facilities are available for sport B than for sport A then sport B will be more popular than sport A.

To test these hypotheses a research project is designed to collect information on:

- the levels of participation in the two sports – tennis and golf
- the costs of participating in the two sports
- the availability of facilities for the two sports in the study area

The two hypotheses would then be tested using the data collected. The data collection and outcomes are limited by the hypotheses put forward. In this example the idea of 'intrinsic motivation', which featured in the inductive approach, was not identified. In this case the research is guided from the beginning by the initial hypotheses. The process is deductive.

the research process begins with description, at point A, and moves from there to explanation, the process is described as *inductive*. The explanation is *induced* from the data – the data come first and the explanation later. If the process starts at point C then it is *deductive*; it involves *deduction*, where the process is based on prior logical reasoning. Case study 2–1 illustrates these ideas using an example on the relative popularity of two leisure activities.

In practice data are rarely collected without some explanatory model in mind – otherwise how would we know what data to collect? So there is always an element of deduction in any research. And it is not possible to develop hypotheses and theories without at least some initial information on the subject in hand, however informally obtained; so there is always an element of induction. Thus most research is partly inductive and partly deductive.

Whether hypotheses or theories containing the explanation are put forward at the start of a research project or arise as a result of data analysis, they represent the key creative part of the research process. Data collection and analysis can be fairly mechanical but interpretation of data and the development of explanations requires at least creativity and, at best, inspiration!

CHECKPOINT

1. What are the basic differences between theoretical and applied research?
2. What are the basic differences between empirical and non-empirical research?
3. What are the basic differences between the inductive and deductive approaches to research?

Descriptive and explanatory research

Earlier in the chapter the difference between descriptive and explanatory research was discussed and it is appropriate to raise the issue again here. *Descriptive* research aims to describe, as far as possible, what is. The focus is not on explanation. *Explaining* the patterns in observed or reported data usually involves establishing that one phenomenon is caused by another. For example, descriptive research might show that a tourism destination is losing market share. Explanatory research would seek to establish whether this was caused by, for example, price movements or ineffective marketing. This raises the question of *causality*: whether A is caused by B. Labovitz and Hagendorn (1971: 4) state that there are ‘at least four widely accepted scientific criteria for establishing causality. These criteria are association, time priority, nonspurious relation and rationale.’

Association is a ‘necessary condition for a causal relation’ – that is, A and B must be associated in some way – for example, A increases when B decreases.

There are two characteristics of an association that generally strengthen the conclusion that one variable is at least a partial cause of another. The first is magnitude, which refers to the size or strength of the association . . . The second . . . is consistency. If the relation persists from one study to the next under a variety of conditions, confidence in the causal nature of the relation is increased.

(Labovitz and Hagendorn, 1971: 5)

Time priority means that for A to be the cause of B then A must take place before B.

Nonspurious relationships are defined as associations between two variables that ‘cannot be explained by a third variable’ (Labovitz and Hagendorn, 1971: 9). This means that it must be established that there is no third factor, C, which is affecting both A and B.

Rationale means that statistical or other evidence is not enough; the conclusion that A causes B is not justified simply on the basis of an observed relation; it should be supported by some plausible, theoretical or logical explanation to suggest how it happens.

Positivist and interpretive research

The positivist/interpretive dichotomy refer to schools of thought or traditions – or *paradigms* – in the social sciences. *Positivism* is a framework of research, similar to that adopted by the natural scientist, in which the researcher sees people as phenomena to be studied from the outside, with behaviour to be explained on the basis of facts and observations gathered by the researcher, using theories and models developed by researchers. Some sociologists are highly suspicious of such attempts to translate natural science approaches into the social sciences (e.g. Rojek, 1989: 70). They believe that it is inappropriate to draw conclusions about the causes and motivations of human behaviour on the basis of the type of evidence used in the natural sciences. In the social sciences the term ‘positivist’ has almost become a term of abuse (Giddens, 1974: 2).

The *interpretive* model places more reliance on the people being studied to provide their own explanations of their situation or behaviour. The interpretive researcher therefore tries to ‘get inside’ the minds of subjects and see the world from their point of view. This of course suggests a more flexible approach to data collection, usually involving qualitative methods and generally an inductive approach.

In the 1990s numerous commentators, in calling for more interpretive and qualitative research, frequently referred to the positivist approach as dominant in leisure and tourism studies (e.g. Godbey and Scott, 1990; Howe, 1991; Hultsman and Harper, 1992; Glancy, 1993; Hemingway, 1995; Wearing, 1998). Since the 1990s, with the wide range of research approaches evident in published research, particularly outside North America, this has become more difficult to substantiate (Veal, 1994).

Experimental and non-experimental methods

The popular image of the scientist is someone in a white coat in a laboratory, conducting experiments. The experimental method of research involves the scientist attempting to control the environment of the subject of the research and measuring the effects of controlled change. Knowledge based on the experimental method progresses on the basis that, in a controlled experimental situation, any change in A must have been brought about by a change in B because everything except A and B has been held constant. The researcher therefore aims to produce conditions such that the research will fulfill the requirements for causality discussed above.

In the world of human beings, with which the social scientist deals, there is much less scope for experiment than in the world of inanimate objects or animals with which natural scientists deal. Some situations do exist where experimentation with human beings in the field of leisure or tourism can take place. For instance it is possible to experiment with variations in children's play equipment; it is possible to conduct experiments with willing subjects; and it is possible to experiment in management situations, for instance by varying prices or advertising strategies in relation to leisure or tourism services. But many areas of interest to the leisure or tourism researcher are not susceptible to controlled experiment.

For example, the researcher interested in the effect of people's level of income on their behaviour cannot take a group of people and vary their incomes in order to study the effects of income on leisure participation or tourism behaviour – it would be difficult to find people on executive salaries willing voluntarily to spend a year living on a student grant in the interests of research! Further, unlike the scientist experimenting with rats, it is not possible to find two groups of humans identical in every respect except for their level of income. Even more fundamentally, it is of course not possible to vary people's social class or race. In order to study these phenomena it is necessary to use *non-experimental* methods, that is, it is necessary to study differences between people as they exist.

So, for example, in order to study the effects of income on leisure participation patterns or touristic behaviour it is necessary to gather information on the leisure and travel behaviour patterns of a range of people with different levels of income. But people differ in all sorts of ways, some of which may be related to their level of income and some not. For example, two people with identical income levels can differ markedly in terms of their personalities, their family situation, their physical health, and so on. So, in comparing the behaviour of two groups of people, it is difficult to be sure which differences arise as a result of income differences and which as a result of other differences. The results of the research are therefore likely to be less clear-cut than in the case of the controlled experiment.

Some areas within the broad field of leisure and tourism do lend themselves to experimental research: these are the areas which are closest to the natural sciences, namely psychology and the human movement aspect of sports research. Thus in the case of psychological research, it is possible to set up experiments in which people are subject to 'stimuli' – for example the viewing of photographs or videos – and to study their reactions. In the case of human movement, subjects can be asked to engage in particular forms of physical exercise and their physical and psychological reactions can be measured. Although some of the techniques and approaches described in this book are applicable to experimental as much as non-experimental research, the experimental method is not dealt with specifically here.

Primary and secondary data

In planning a research project it is advisable to consider whether it is necessary to go to the expense of collecting new information (*primary* data, where the researcher is the first user) or whether existing data (*secondary* data, where the researcher is the secondary user) will do the job. Sometimes existing information is in the form of research already completed on the topic or a related topic; sometimes it arises from non-research sources, such as administration. A fundamental part of any research project is therefore to scour the existing published – and unpublished – sources of information for related research. Existing research might not obviate the need for the originally proposed research, but it may provide interesting ideas and points of comparison with the proposed research.

Even if the research project is to be based mainly on new information it will usually be necessary also to make use of other, existing, information – such as official government statistics or financial records from a leisure or tourism facility or service. Such information is generally referred to as *secondary data*, as opposed to the *primary data*, which is the new data to be collected in the proposed research.

CHECKPOINT

4. What are the basic differences between descriptive and explanatory research?
5. What are the basic differences between the positivist and interpretive approaches to research?
6. What are the basic differences between experimental and non-experimental research?
7. What is the basic difference between primary and secondary data?

Self-reported and observed data

The best, and often the only, sources of information about individuals' leisure or tourism behaviour or attitudes are the individuals' own reports about themselves. Much leisure and tourism research therefore involves asking people about their past behaviour, attitudes and aspirations, generally using interviews or respondent-completed questionnaires. There are some disadvantages to this approach, mainly that the researcher is never sure just how honest or accurate people are in responding to questions. In some instances people may deliberately or unwittingly distort or 'bend' the truth – for instance in understating the amount of alcohol they drink or overstating the amount of exercise they take. In other instances they may have problems of recall – for instance in remembering just how much money they spent on a recreational or holiday trip some months ago – or even yesterday!

The alternative to relying on people to tell the researcher what they do, is for the researcher to use an alternative source of evidence. For instance, to find out how children use a playground or how adults make use of a resort area or a park it would probably be better to watch them than to try to ask them about it. Patterns of movement and crowding can be *observed*. Sometimes people leave behind evidence of their behaviour – for instance the most popular exhibits at a museum will be the ones where the carpet is most worn, and the most used beaches are likely to be those where the most litter is dumped. Generally these techniques are referred to as *observational* or *unobtrusive* techniques.

Qualitative and quantitative research

Much leisure and tourism research involves the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical information. Sometimes the information is innately quantitative – for instance the numbers of people engaging in a list of leisure activities in a year, the number of tourists visiting a particular holiday area or the average income of a group of people. Sometimes the information is qualitative in nature but is presented in quantitative form – for instance numerical 'scores' calculated

from asking people to indicate levels of satisfaction with different services, where the scores range from 1, meaning 'very satisfied', to 5, meaning 'very dissatisfied'.

The *quantitative* approach to research involves statistical analysis. It relies on numerical evidence to draw conclusions or to test hypotheses. To be sure of the reliability of the results it is often necessary to study relatively large numbers of people and to use computers to analyse the data. The data may be derived from questionnaire surveys, from observation involving counts, or from secondary sources.

In fact there can be said to be two approaches to quantitative research, which we will refer to as type A and type B research. Type A research makes use of statistical methods and tests. Type B research is also based on numerical data, but makes little or no use of statistical tests: its most sophisticated statistical measure is usually the percentage. Type B research is very common in the British tradition of leisure and tourism research. For example, in reading the British journal *Leisure Studies*, it is notable that, whereas there are many articles which present numerical information, very few utilise statistical tests and techniques, such as the chi-square tests, t-tests, analysis of variance, correlation or regression. This is in marked contrast to the leading American *Journal of Leisure Research*, where a substantial proportion of the articles include numerical data which make use of such tests. Type B research is more informal than type A and is closer in approach to qualitative methods.

The *qualitative* approach to research is generally not concerned with numbers. It involves gathering a great deal of information about a small number of people rather than a limited amount of information about a large number of people. The information collected is generally not presentable in numerical form. It is used when a full and rounded understanding of the leisure or tourist behaviour and situation of a few individuals, however 'unrepresentative' they may be, is required, rather than a limited understanding of a large, 'representative' group.

The methods used to gather qualitative information include observation, informal and in-depth interviewing and participant observation. Research studying groups of people using non-quantitative, anthropological approaches, is referred to as ethnographic research or ethnographic fieldwork. Such methods were initially developed by anthropologists, but have been adapted by sociologists for use in their work.

While the debate between protagonists of qualitative and quantitative research can become somewhat partisan, it is now widely accepted that the two approaches complement one another (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Thus quantitative research is often based on initial qualitative work. It is even possible that the two approaches are moving closer together, as computers are now being used to analyse qualitative data (Miles and Weitzman, 1994; Richards and Richards, 1994).

Validity and reliability

Validity is the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied. Leisure and tourism research are fraught with difficulties in this area, mainly because empirical research is largely concerned with people's behaviour and with their attitudes, and for information on these the researcher is, in the main, reliant on people's own reports in the form of responses to questionnaire-based interviews and other forms of interview. These instruments are subject to a number of imperfections, which means that the validity of leisure and tourism data can rarely be as certain as in the natural sciences. For example, data on the number of people who have participated in an activity at least once over the last month (a common type of measure used in leisure research) covers a wide range of different types of involvement, from the person who participates for two hours every day to the person who accidentally engaged in the activity just once for a few minutes. So the question of what is a *participant* can be complex. More detailed questioning to capture such complexity can be costly to undertake on a large scale.

Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects. Again it can be seen that the model is taken from the natural sciences where, if experimental conditions are properly controlled, a repetition of an experiment should produce identical results wherever and whenever it is conducted. This is rarely the case in the social sciences, because they deal with human beings in differing and ever-changing social situations. While an individual person's report of his or her behaviour may be accurate, when it is aggregated with information from other people, it presents a snap-shot picture of a group of people, which is subject to change over time, as the composition of the group changes, or as *some* members of the group change their patterns of behaviour. Further, identical questions asked of people in different locations, even within the same country or region, are likely to produce different results, because of the varying social and physical environment. This means that the social scientist, including the leisure and tourism researcher, must be very cautious when making general, theoretical, statements on the basis of empirical research. While measures can be taken to ensure a degree of generalisability, strictly speaking, any research findings relate only to the subjects involved, at the time and place the research was carried out.

CHECKPOINT

8. What is the basic difference between self-reported and observed data?
9. What are the basic differences between qualitative and quantitative research?
10. What are validity and reliability?

Summary

The aim of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the disciplinary context and traditions of leisure and tourism research and to introduce some general dimensions of social science research. It begins with a conceptual framework for studying leisure and tourism as a whole, within which the partial perspectives of individual disciplines can be located. This is followed by a brief overview of the contributions of individual disciplines to leisure and tourism research, covering: sociology, geography, economics, psychology/social psychology, history and anthropology and political science. The review indicates that most of the disciplines contributing to leisure and tourism research now make use of a wide variety of research methods. The final part of the chapter covers a range of generic, dichotomous social science issues which arise in the literature and with which the leisure and tourism researcher should be familiar. They are: theoretical and applied research; empirical and non-empirical research; induction and deduction; descriptive and explanatory research; positivist and interpretive research; experimental and non-experimental research; primary and secondary data; self-reported and observed data; qualitative and quantitative research; and validity and reliability.

Exercises

1. Examine any issue of either *Leisure Studies* or *Annals of Tourism Research* and classify the articles into disciplinary areas. Contrast the key questions which each article is addressing.
2. Using the same journal issue as in exercise 1, determine whether the articles are: a. empirical or non-empirical; b. deductive or inductive; c. positivist or interpretive.
3. Using either *Leisure Studies* or *Annals of Tourism Research*, take an issue of the journal at two-yearly intervals over 10 or 12 years and summarise the apparent change over time in the topics addressed and methods used in the articles.
4. Select one of the following topics and examine it from the point of view of three different disciplines:
 - a. the impact of tourism on the host community;
 - b. inequalities in sports participation;
 - c. inequalities in participation in the arts;
 - d. the rise of 'special interest' tourism;
 - e. the effects of recreation/tourism on the environment;
 - f. the role of leisure/tourism in the urban environment.

Further reading

The journal *Leisure Studies*, has published a number of articles which review the contributions of various disciplines to leisure research; these are by: Coppock (1982) on geography; Parry (1983) on sociology; Vickerman (1983) on economics; and

Ingham (1986, 1987) on psychology. And in 1989 it published an analysis and review of the contribution of historians to leisure studies in Britain by Bailey (1989). These reviews are now somewhat dated but provide useful historical introductions to the field.

Books edited by Barnett (1988) and Jackson and Burton (1989, 1999) provide disciplinary reviews of leisure research in more detail than those presented above.

For contributions and overviews on the sociology of leisure, see Jarvie and Maguire's (1994) *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*; Wearing's (1998) *Leisure and Feminist Theory*; Aitchison's (2003) *Gender and Leisure*; and Roberts' (1999) *Leisure in Contemporary Society*. On cultural studies, see During (1993) and McRobbie (1994). On the geography of leisure, see: Williams (1995) *Outdoor Recreation and the Urban Environment*; Crouch (1999) *Leisure/Tourism Geographies*; and Aitchison *et al.* (2000) *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*. On economics, see: Gratton and Taylor (2000). On psychology, see: Kleiber (1999).

The journal *Annals of Tourism Research* devoted a special issue to 'Tourism Social Sciences' in 1991 (Graburn and Jafari, 1991),

covering such disciplines as: sociology (Dann and Cohen, 1991); geography (Mitchell and Murphy, 1991); history (Towner and Wall, 1991); psychology (Pearce and Stringer, 1991); political science (Matthews and Richter, 1991); and economics (Eadington and Redman, 1991). As with the reviews of leisure studies mentioned above, these are now dated, but provide useful historical introductions.

Tourism research is discussed from an interdisciplinary perspective and from the point of view of sociology and psychology in Pearce and Butler (1993) and Dann (2002), while Ryan (1995) and Pearce (1982, 1988) address the psychology of tourism particularly as it affects motivation and satisfaction. Edwards (1991) provides a discussion of the reliability of tourism statistics.

For discussion of qualitative versus quantitative research see: Kelly (1980); Kamphorst *et al.* (1984); Borman *et al.* (1986); Krenz and Sax (1986); Godbey and Scott (1990); Henderson (1990); Veal (1994); and Bryman and Bell (2003), chs. 21 and 22.

For a discussion of the experimental method in leisure research see Havitz and Sell (1991).

