RESEARCH METHODS FOR LEISURE AND TOURISM

A.J. VEAL

Fifth edition

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Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism

Fifth edition

A. J. VEAL
University of Technology Sydney

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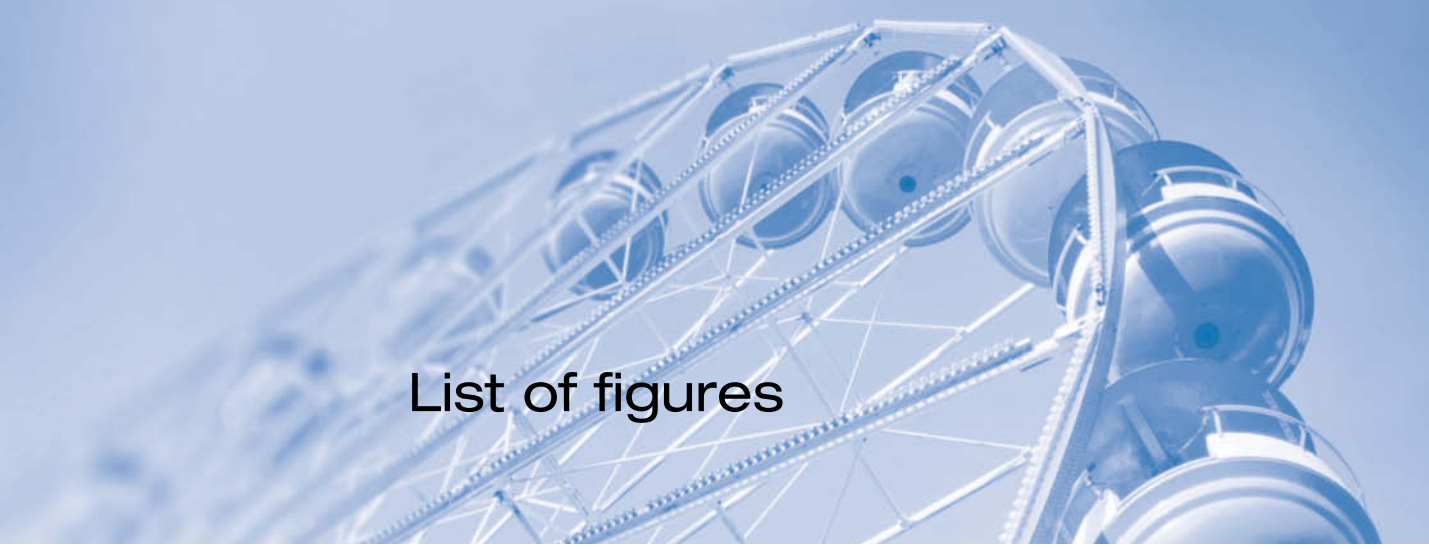

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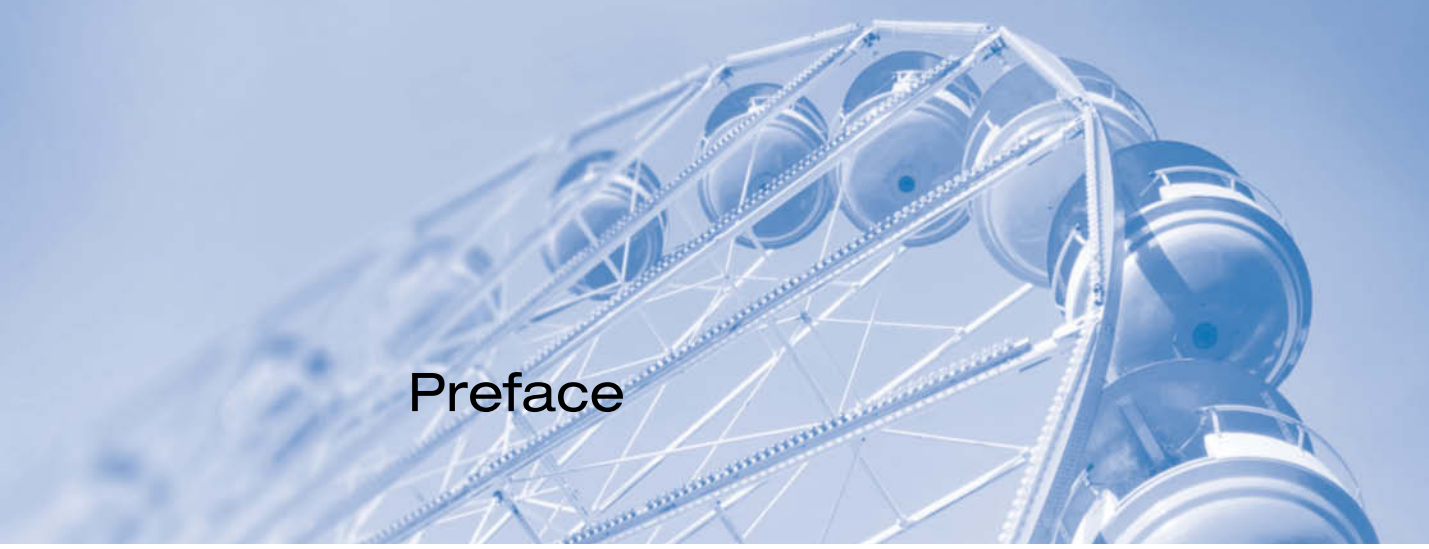
Contents at the time of publication; additions/changes may be made over time.

- *PowerPoint* files for each chapter: containing copies of graphics, tables and some dot-point lists.
- Consolidated list of references.
- Chapter 15: copy of NVivo files used.
- Chapter 16 and 17: copies of SPSS files used.



Preface

The first edition of *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism* was published in 1992, with subsequent editions in 1997, 2006 and 2011. In this fifth edition, in addition to a general updating of sources and versions of software packages, a number of changes have been made, including:

- A substantial expansion of the number of 'subsidiary and cross-cutting methods' in Chapter 5, from 24 in the previous edition to 34, and the addition of a number of policy/management-related research techniques. This reflects the continuing process of innovation apparent in leisure and tourism research.
- A step-by-step introductory guide to the *Endnote* bibliographic/referencing computer package.
- Further discussion of the question of measurement (Chapter 7) – although this remains 'unfinished business'.
- Arrangement of references by chapter rather than in one listing at the end of this text; this makes individual chapters more self-contained. A consolidated listing is provided on the text website.

As in the previous edition, I stress that the software packages used in the text were selected neither as a result of some exclusive arrangement with software publishers nor as a result of an evaluative 'consumer test' of available packages. They are simply the packages with which I am familiar and which have been available to the students in the universities where I have taught. I can vouch for the usefulness of the packages used but am not in a position to compare the packages used with others available.

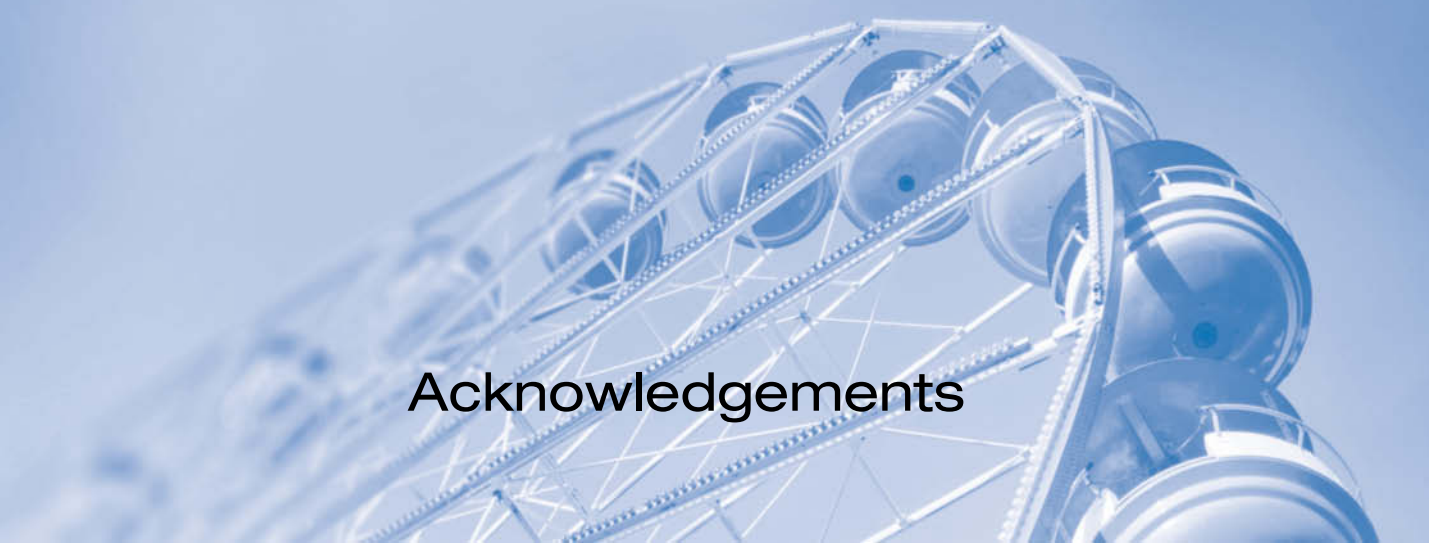
Efforts have been made to provide additional study materials online at the text website: www.pearsoned.co.uk/veal (see the list of contents).

The aims of the book remain unchanged: to provide a 'how to do it' text and also to offer an understanding of how research findings are generated in order to assist students and practising managers to become knowledgeable consumers of the research of others.

Two companion texts have recently been published: *Research Methods for Arts and Event Management* (A.J. Veal and Christine Burton, Pearson, 2014, ISBN 9780 27372 0829) and *Research Methods in Sport Studies and Sport Management* (A.J. Veal and Simon Darcy, 2014, Routledge, ISBN 9780 27373 6691). The three texts follow the same chapter structure, with much generic material in common, but with sector-specific references, case studies and exercises. In institutions where arts/events and sport studies students are taught together with leisure and tourism studies students, each group of students can use their own subject-specific version of the text with relevant examples and source material.

I am grateful to Professor Simon Darcy, UTS, for on-going support and to Barbara Almond, UTS, for assistance in updating the NVivo section of Chapter 15.

A. J. Veal
University of Technology Sydney
September 2017



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Case Study 11.1 from Managing the "commons" on Cadillac Mountain: a stated choice analysis of Acadia National Park visitors' preferences, *Leisure Science*, 30, 71–86 (Bullock, S.D., & Lawson, S.R 2008); Case Study 14.1 from Leisure, income inequality and the Veblen effect: cross-national analysis of leisure time and sport and cultural activity, *Leisure Studies*, 35(2), 215–240 (Veal, A.J. 2016); Case Study 14.1 from Volunteering and income inequality: cross-national relationships, *Voluntas*, 28(1), 379–399 (Veal, A.J., & Nichols, G 2017), With permission of Springer.

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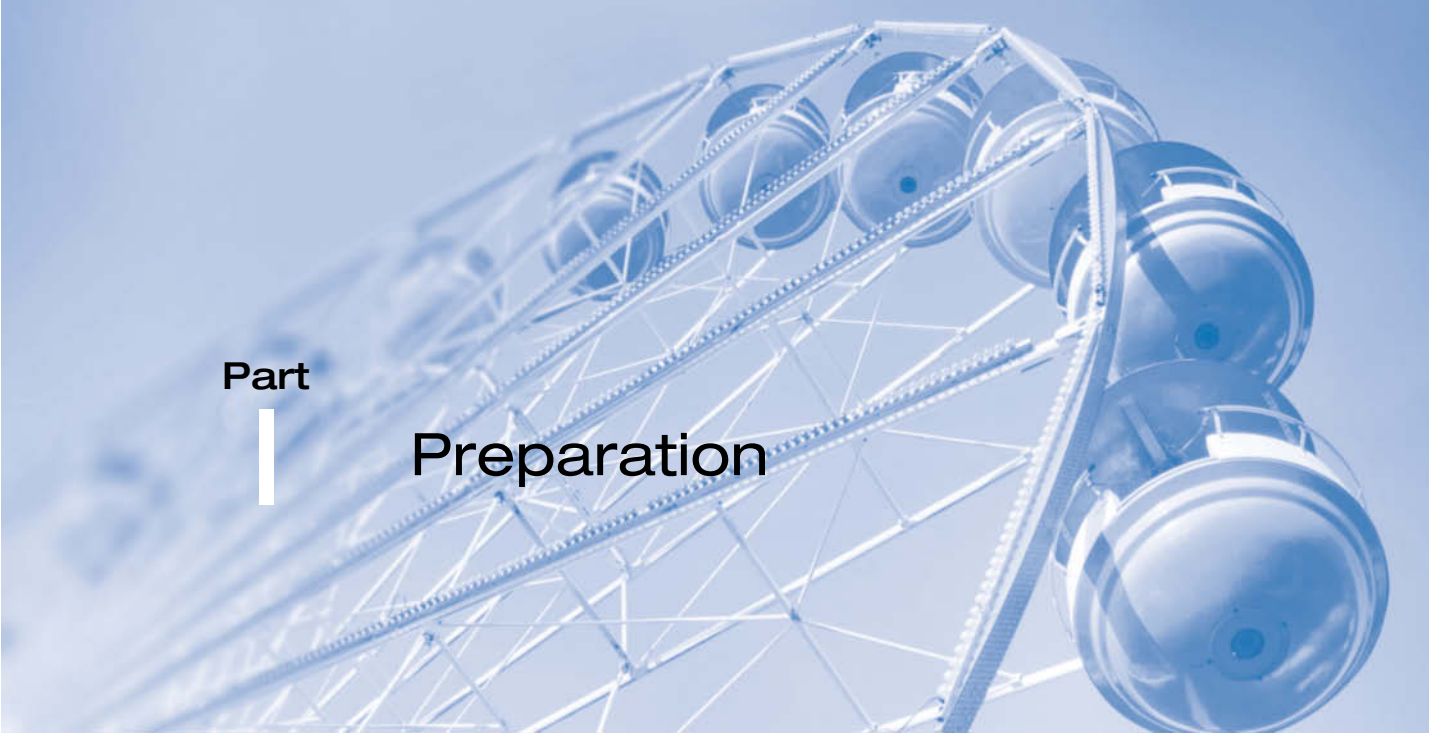
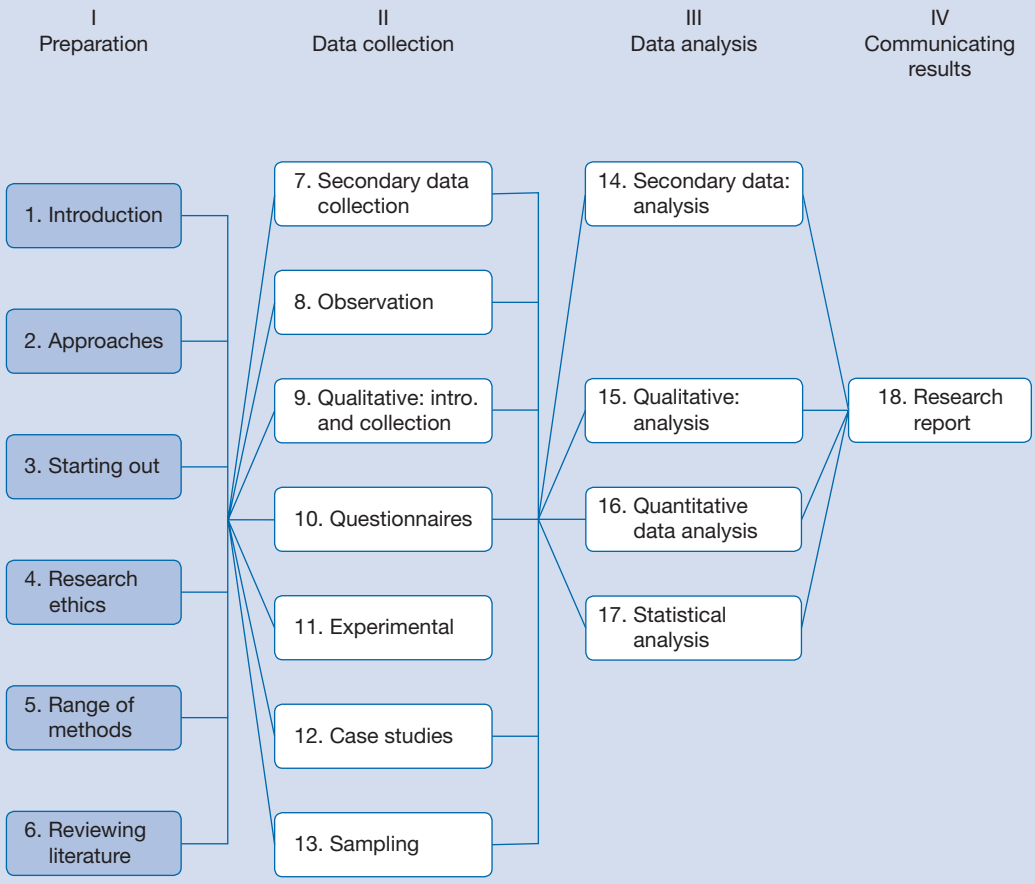


Part

I

Preparation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1 Introduction to research: what, why and who?

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1. Introduction

Data, 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. Controversies over the research basis of global climate change predictions offer a dramatic demonstration of this, as do discussions on crime, education, health and the economy. An understanding of how information and knowledge are generated and utilised and an ability to conduct or commission research relevant to the requirements of an organisation can therefore be seen as key skills for, and as significant components of the education of, managers and policy-makers in any domain. It goes without saying that they are also fundamental to those embarking on a research/academic career.

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 text is to provide an introduction to the world of social research in the context of leisure and tourism, as industries and public policy concerns and as fields of academic inquiry and reflection. The aim is to provide a practical guide to the conduct of research, an appreciation of the role of research in the policy-making, planning and management processes of the leisure and tourism sector and a basis for a critical understanding of existing theoretical and applied research.

Research methodology can be seen as universal, but various fields of research – including leisure and tourism studies – have developed their own methodological emphases and bodies of experience. For example, 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 fields of focus 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 cultures, the term *free time* is used in preference to the word leisure. In some definitions, *tourism* includes *business travel* and *day-trips*, while in others they are excluded. The aim in this study is to be *inclusive* rather than *exclusive*. Leisure refers to both a type of time and groups of activities. It is time relatively free of obligation, such as paid or unpaid work or personal maintenance activity, and activities which typically take place during such time, as indicated in Figure 1.1. There is sufficient overlap between leisure and tourism for them to be covered by a single research methods text like the current one; but in practice, two distinct fields of study exist with their own journals, conferences, institutions and academic courses. Tourism is seen primarily as a leisure activity involving travel away from a person's normal place of residence. Leisure and tourism overlap in activities such as attending cultural or sporting events and in visiting natural and cultural heritage sites. Tourism as an industry

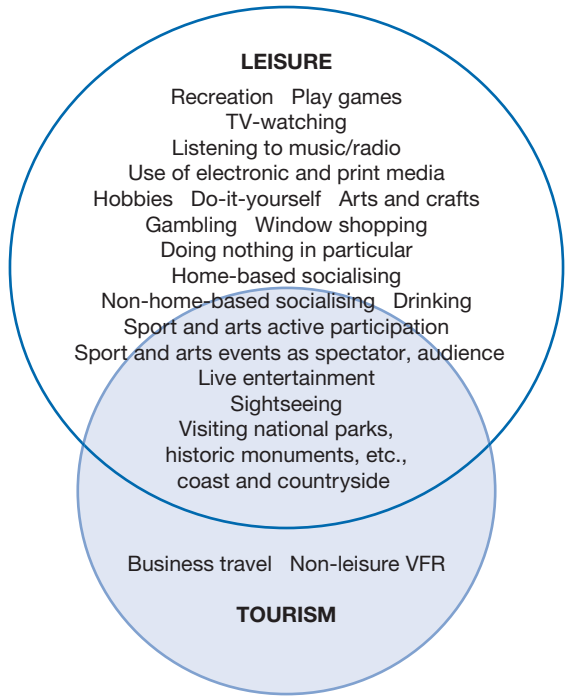

Figure 1.1 Leisure and tourism

also encompasses non-leisure activities, such as business travel or attending conventions, as shown in Figure 1.1, but such travellers invariably engage in leisure activities in addition to the business activity which is the prime motivator for travel. Travelling to visit relatives may also be partly leisure and partly family business. Since the text covers leisure *and* tourism, day-tripping is included, whether it is viewed as part of recreation or 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.

Most of the text is concerned with *how* to do research; 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. What is research?

2.1 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.

2.2 Scientific research

Scientific research 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 individuals and social beings with relationships to groups, communities and organisations, the pure scientific model must be adapted and modified, and in some cases largely abandoned.

2.3 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 the behaviour of *people* as social beings, 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. While the fundamental behaviour patterns of non-human phenomena are constant and universal, 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 produce exact replications of research findings at different times or in different places.

2.4 Descriptive, explanatory and evaluative research

Elias's 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 study, we are also concerned with a third function of research, namely *evaluating* – that is, judging the degree of success or value of policies or programmes. Three types

Table 1.1 Types of research

Descriptive research	Finding out, describing what is.
Explanatory research	Explaining *how* or *why* things are as they are (and using this to predict).
Evaluative research	Evaluation of policies and programmes.

of research can be identified corresponding to these three functions, as shown in Table 1.1. 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 relative newness of the field, the changing nature of the phenomena being studied and the frequent separation between research and action.

Newness of the field: Since leisure and tourism are relatively new fields of study, there is a need to map the territory. Much of the research, therefore, seeks to discover, describe or map patterns of behaviour in areas or activities which have not previously been studied. In some texts this form of research is termed *exploratory*, which is also appropriate; but the other categories of research, explanatory and evaluative, can also at times be exploratory, so the term *descriptive* is used here. Explanation of what is discovered, described or mapped is often left until later or to other researchers.

Change: Leisure and tourism phenomena are subject to constant change over time, including change in:

- the popularity of different leisure activities or travel destinations;
- the leisure preferences of different social groups (for example, young people or women);
- social and economic conditions in a community;
- available technologies, such as faster transport systems and digital devices;
- availability of built facilities/attractions; and
- policy/management practices, for example, loyalty or membership schemes or online access.

A great deal of research effort in the field is therefore devoted to tracking – or monitoring – changing patterns of behaviour. Hence the importance in leisure and tourism of secondary data sources – that is, data collected by other organisations, such as government statistical agencies – as discussed in Chapter 7.

A complete understanding and explanation of these changing patterns would be ideal, so that the future could be predicted, but this is only partially possible. So providers of leisure and tourism services must be aware of changing social and 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.

Separation: Research of a descriptive nature is often undertaken because that is what is commissioned. For example, a company may commission a *market profile* study or a local council may commission a *cultural needs* study from a research team. However, 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.

One role of descriptive research is in *classification* of phenomena in the field of study. This is discussed in Chapter 2.

Explanatory research

Explanatory research moves beyond description to seek to *explain* the patterns and trends observed. For example:

- A particular type of leisure activity or tourism destination experiences a decline in popularity: an explanation is called for.
- The hosting of an international sporting event gains approval from the government against the wishes of members of the local community: why or how does this happen?
- The arts are patronised by some social groups but not others: what is the explanation for this?

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. However, while it is one thing to discover that A has increased at the same time as, or just after, B has decreased, it is often a much more demanding task to establish that the rise in A has been *caused* by the fall in B. To establish causality, or the likelihood of causality, requires some sort of theoretical framework to relate the phenomenon under study to specific social, economic and/or political processes, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Once causes are understood, at least partially, 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. But this does not always happen because so many other factors are involved – such as variation in quality of the goods or services and 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, programmes or practices – 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. In the private sector, the level of profit is the main criterion used for such evaluations. In the public sector, where facilities or services are not usually intended to make a cash profit, research effort is required to assess community benefits and even, in some cases such as parks, to assemble data as elementary as levels of use. Evaluative research is highly developed in some areas of public policy, for example education, but is less well developed in the public-sector part of leisure and tourism.

Evaluation is based on the concept of *valuation* and implies a technical or *value-free* process. However, as we shall see, values are never absent from human affairs. When the process is more explicit with respect to values, particularly when research is involved with a process of seeking to change the status quo, it may be referred to as *transformative* (Stewart, 2014).

3. Why study research?

3.1 In general

Why study research? Research or research methods might be studied for a variety of reasons, as listed in Table 1.2.

- First, it is useful to be able to *understand* and *evaluate* research reports and articles encountered in an academic, professional or managerial context. It is advantageous to understand the basis and limitations of such documents.

Table 1.2 Why study research?

1. Understanding research reports, etc.
2. Conducting academic research projects
3. Management tool in:
   - policy-making
   - planning
   - managing
   - evaluating