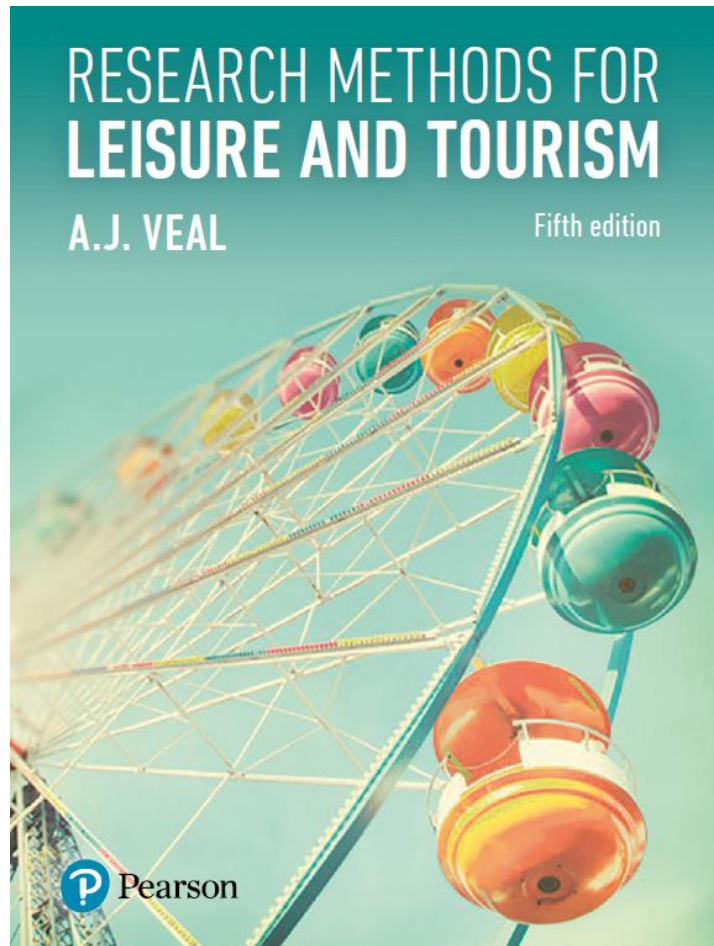


Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism

5th edition



Chapter 2

Approaches to leisure and
tourism research

1. Introduction

2. Disciplinary traditions

3. Approaches, dimensions,
issues, terminology

4. Validity, reliability,
trustworthiness

- 3.1 Ontology, epistemology, methodology
- 3.2 Positivist/post-positivist, interpretive/critical paradigms
- 3.3 Descriptive, explanatory, evaluative research
- 3.4 Qualitative and quantitative research
- 3.5 Pragmatism
- 3.6 Participatory research
- 3.7 Theoretical and applied research
- 3.8 Reflexivity
- 3.9 Experimental and naturalistic methods
- 3.10 Empirical and non-empirical research
- 3.11 Inductive and deductive
- 3.12 Objective and subjective
- 3.13 Primary and secondary data
- 3.14 Self-reported and observed data

Disciplines

- Main disciplines involved in leisure/tourism research:
 - sociology/cultural studies
 - economics
 - geography/environmental studies
 - psychology/social psychology
 - history and anthropology
 - political science
- Disciplines and research questions (Table 2.1)

Sociology (Table 2.1)

- **Descriptive**
 - What proportions of the population and of various age, gender, ethnic and socio-economic groups participate in specified leisure activities?
 - What are the trends in numbers of tourists visiting a particular destination over the last 10 years?
- **Explanatory**
 - Why do members of middle class, highly educated groups make greater use of cultural facilities than members of other groups?
 - What factors influence rises and falls in tourist visits to a particular tourist destination?
- **Evaluative**
 - To what extent have policies designed to boost women's participation in sport been successful?
 - How successful has a training programme been in increasing locals' employment in the tourism industry?

Geography/Environment

- **Descriptive**

- What is the spatial area from which most users of a particular leisure facility travel?
- What impacts does a particular island tourist resort have on the environment?

- **Explanatory**

- What is the relative importance of distance and travel time in affecting use of a particular leisure facility?
- How do the different styles of tourism (back-packer, package tour and touring) impact on the environment?

- **Evaluative**

- How effective is the local council in meeting the leisure demands of all neighbourhoods in its area?
- How effective is the tourism strategy in protecting the environment from the impacts of tourism?

Economics

- **Descriptive**

- What proportion of household expenditure is devoted to leisure/tourism goods and services?
- What proportion of the labour force works in the leisure and tourism industries?

- **Explanatory**

- What is the relationship between level of income and expenditure on leisure and tourism?
- What is the relationship between travel cost and level of visits to a leisure/tourism facility?

- **Evaluative**

- What are the costs and benefits of hosting the Olympic Games?
- What has been the economic impact of developing tourism at destination X?

Psychology/social psychology

- **Descriptive**

- What satisfactions do people obtain from engaging in a leisure activity or going on holiday?
- What is the level of stress among teenagers?

- **Explanatory**

- To what extent is Maslow's hierarchy of need relevant to leisure/tourism?
- Does leisure activity/going on holiday relieve stress? If so, how lasting is this?

- **Evaluative**

- How effective has a youth sports programme been in enhancing participants' self-esteem?
- How effective has a marketing policy been in enhancing visitor satisfaction?

History/Anthropology

- **Descriptive**

- How has the balance between work and leisure time changed since 1900?
- What is the history of the ‘Grand Tour’?

- **Explanatory**

- What was the influence of marketing and materialism on changes in the work/life balance since 1950?
- What has caused the growth in gambling over the last 20 years?

- **Evaluative**

- How successful have public policies to increase physical activity been over the last 30 years?
- Over the last 30 years have governments helped or hindered the development of tourism?

Political/policy science

- **Descriptive**

- What are the leisure/tourism policies of the major political parties?
- What proportion of publicly owned leisure facilities are managed by commercial contract?

- **Explanatory**

- How has changing political philosophy affected leisure and tourism policies in the last two changes of government?
- How is power exercise in leisure/tourism contexts?

- **Evaluative**

- How effective are policies directed at 'inclusion' in increasing leisure participation?
- How effective have joint public-private partnerships been in leisure/tourism development?

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Ontology	Way of looking at the work	Paradigm, philosophy
Epistemology	Relationship between researcher and the subject of research	
Method	Ways of gathering and analysing data	Techniques

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Positivist	Hypotheses are tested using objectively collected factual data which, if successful, produces scientific laws	Scientific method, logical empiricist, functionalist, objectivist
Post-positivist	Hypotheses found to be consistent (or not) with the data deemed to be 'not falsified', establishing <i>probable facts or laws</i>	
Interpretive	People provide their own accounts or explanation of situation/behaviour	Phenomenology, phenomenography, symbolic interaction, intersubjectivity, ethnography, subjectivist, intersubjectivity, ethnography

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Critical	Research influenced by beliefs/values critical of the status quo in society	Standpoint
Constructivist	People construct their own views of reality and the researcher seeks to discover this	Social constructivism

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Descriptive	Seeks to describe what is	Exploratory
Explanatory	Seeks to explain relationships between phenomena	Predictive
Evaluative	Seeks to test policy/ management outcomes against benchmarks	

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Qualitative	Research in which words (and possibly images, sounds) are the medium	
Quantitative	Research in which numbers are the main medium	

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Pragmatist	Located between positivist and interpretive/relativist position; often policy/management-focused	Mixed methods, <i>bricolage</i> , eclecticism
Participatory	Researcher and subjects jointly influence the pattern of research	Action research (see Chapter 5)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Theoretical	Research which results in general propositions about how things/people behave	Pure
Applied	Use of research to address particular policy/management issues	Evidence-based

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Experimental	Research where the researcher seeks to control all variables	Controlled experiment
Naturalistic	Research where subjects are researched in their 'natural' environment where the researcher's control is minimal	Real-life context

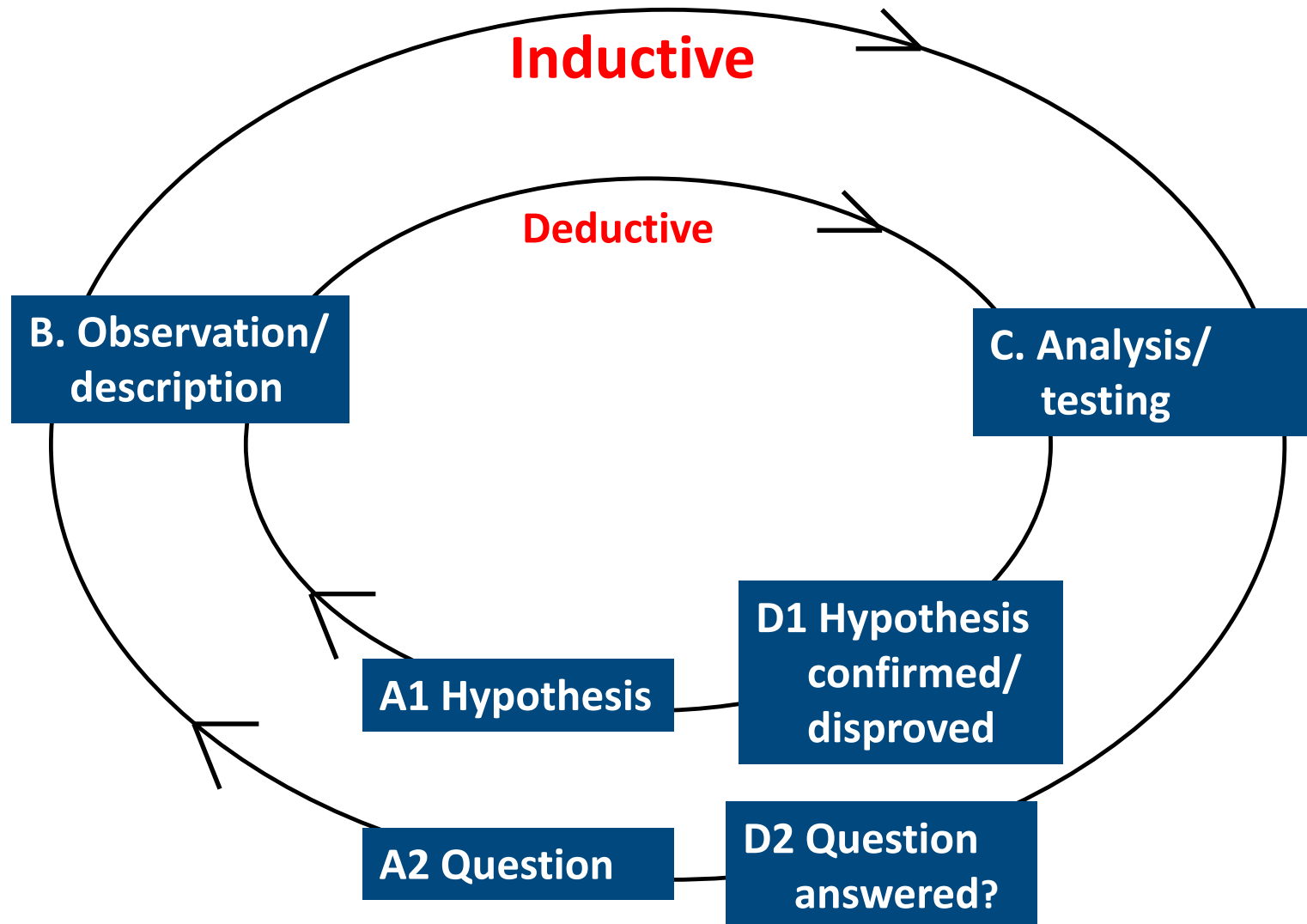
Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Reflexive	The process of examining the relationship between the researcher and the subject of the research	Intersubjective

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Empirical	Research involving data – quantitative or qualitative or both	
Non-empirical	Research involving only theory and the literature	Theoretical

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Inductive	Hypotheses/explanations/theory are generated from examination of the data	Exploratory
Deductive	Data collected to test a priori hypotheses	Hypothetical-deductive, confirmatory

Circular model of the research process (Fig. 2.1)



Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Primary data	Data gathered by the researcher for the current project	
Secondary data	Use of existing data gathered by other people/organisations for other purposes	
Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Self-reported	Subjects' own accounts of activity/behaviour	
Observed	Researcher's observation of subjects' activity/behaviour	Unobtrusive

Approaches/Dimensions/Issues/Terminology (contd.)

Pairs/groups of terms	Definition	Associated terms
Validity	The research accurately identifies/measures what is intended	
Reliability	Repetition of the research would produce similar findings	
Trustworthiness	Trust which can be placed in qualitative research	