





A felsőfokú oktatás minőségének és
hozzáférhetőségének együttes javítása a
Pannon Egyetemen

EFOP-3.4.3-16-2016-00009



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Practice of Problem Solving

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Introduction

In the present-day world, tourism plays a more and more important role in our life. The prospering sector results also in the growing interest for being part of the tourism landscape as a stakeholder. This way, tourism is among the most popular studies for higher education students.

Acknowledging its complexity, a wide range of researchers representing different areas (geography, economy, sociology etc.) are involved in analysing the actual problems. Although there is a very rich academic literature concerning tourism, the higher education dissertation does have its special requirements. Taking into account the knowledge of the students, and their available resources, this learning material has the main goal of providing a support for doing it.

This learning material is aimed at higher education students specialized in tourism. The material provides an easy-to-use guide to realize an own research that can be a base for a degree dissertation.

How to use this learning material?

The learning material consists of 12 main chapters. Following the research process, readers can get an insight into tourism context, research questions and hypotheses, secondary and primary research. Taking into consideration visitor satisfaction and image, the last two chapters deal with these topics. Both of them have their special characteristics that can be used by the higher education students, as well.

Within each chapter, readers can find a theoretical framework, examples and exercises.

We do hope that going through the learning material students can receive supports for a valuable dissertation that can further enrich the colourful world of tourism.

Judit Sulyok

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Chapter 1

In this chapter

- you will understand the requirements and the context of a higher education dissertation;
- you will get a short overview of tourism that helps you to put your topic into context.

Dissertation as a summary of your research

During your tourism studies, you meet a lot of different kinds of books, reports, journal articles etc. On the one hand, the dissertation is a summary of the learned theoretical bases, and on the other hand it is a comprehensive work of addressing a certain topic. It is fundamental to stress that the dissertation is the student's own work, with no doubt of plagiarism.

In order to provide a logical structure of the dissertation, it is advisable to put it into a spatial/geographical and temporal context. The spatial axe means one can begin with the 'big picture', which can lead to the selected – smaller – destination. *Figure 1*

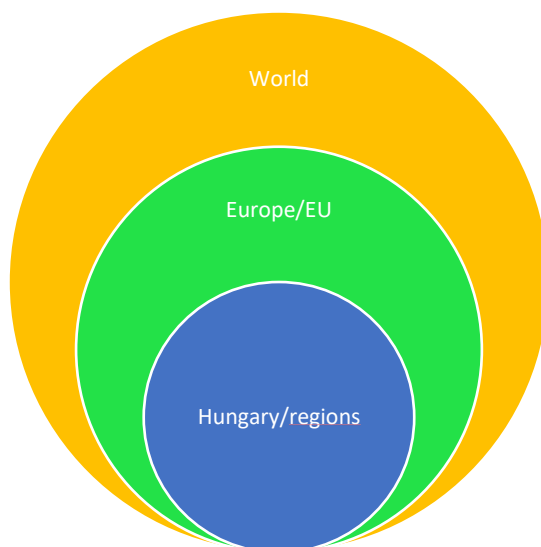


Figure 1 – Geographical focus of the dissertation

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

From the temporal dimension it is fundamental to be aware of short- and long-term thinking. This can support again the logical axe of the dissertation. *Figure 2*

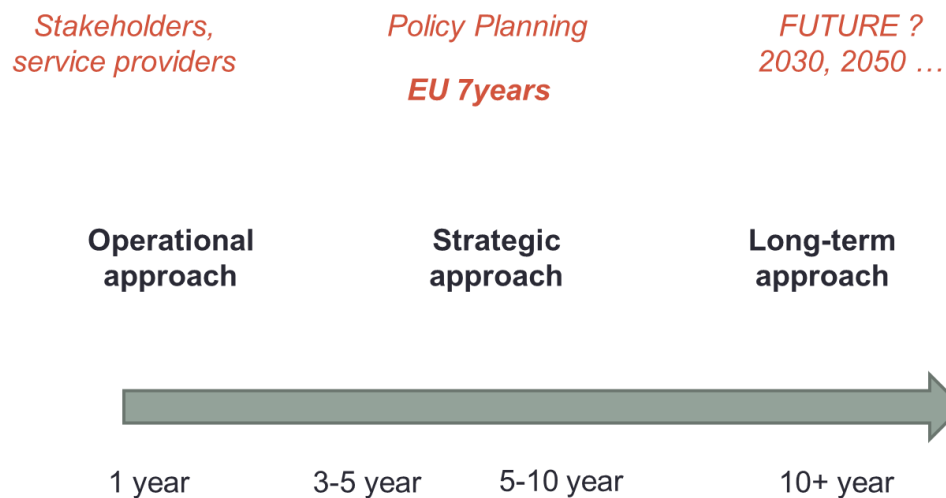


Figure 2 – Short- and long-term timeframes

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Understanding the tourism context

Bearing in mind the basics of the tourism sector, its special features are fundamental for a successful dissertation. Among the very rich and colourful knowledge, hereby we highlight only two important models: 1) the system of tourism, and 2) the customer journey. Thinking this way one can define realistic and complex research focus that can be realized also in a successful way. During the process, there are a lot of steps when this knowledge can be supportive (e.g. the introduction of the destination, the literature review can reflect the system of tourism; and the primary research can follow the customer journey/experience). *Figure 3, Figure 4*

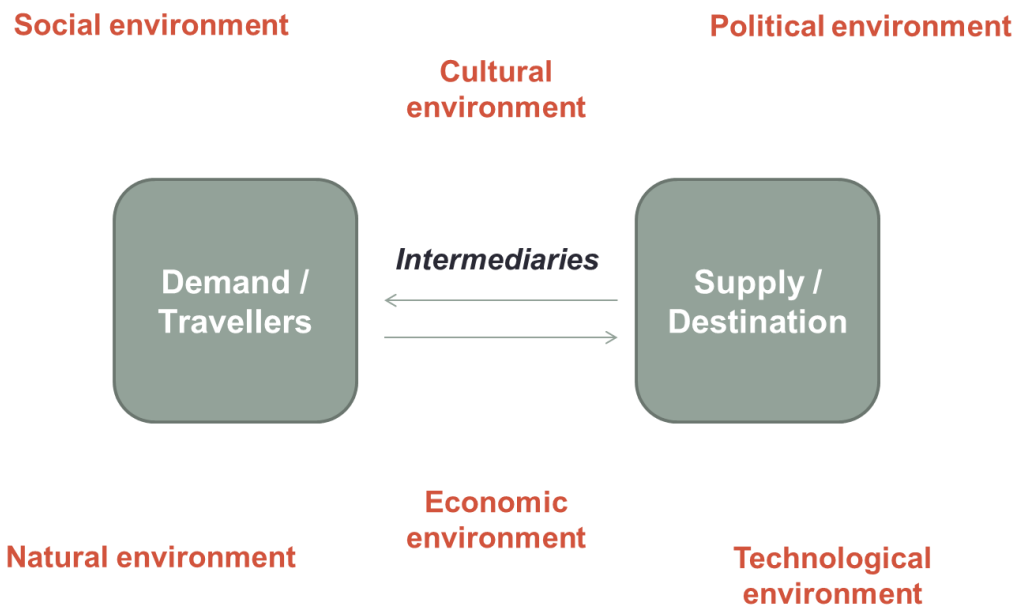


Figure 3 – System of tourism

Source: Michalkó, 2012.

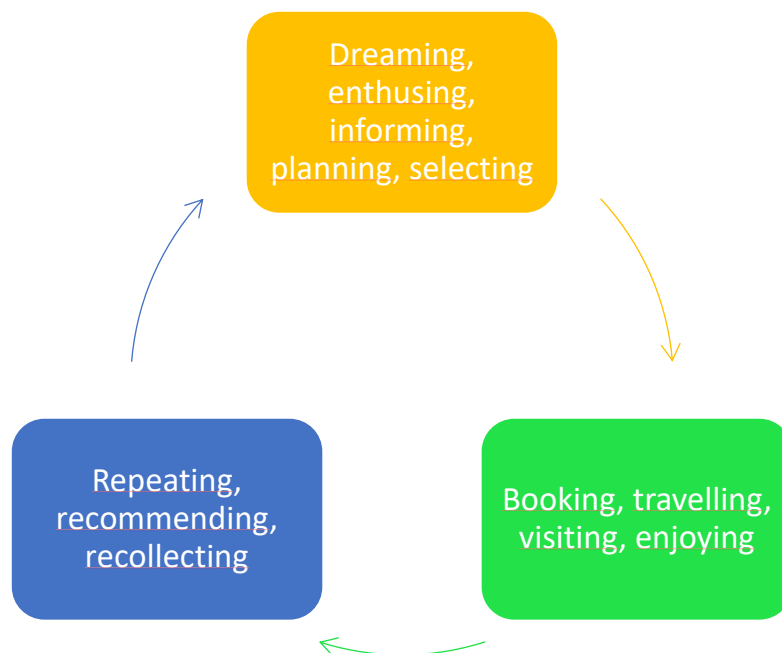


Figure 4 – Customer journey

Source: ETC–UNWTO, 2009.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Think about your favourite destination! What could you highlight regarding the elements of the tourism system related to the area?

Your destination:

.....

<i>Element</i>	<i>Your thoughts</i>
Demand side	
Supply side	
Intermediaries	
Social environment	
Cultural environment	
Natural environment	
Political environment	
Economic environment	
Technological environment	

2) What kind of changes, trends can be seen in the customer journey in the present-day world? What do you think, what is different in your behaviour compared to the behaviour of your parents, grandparents?

<i>Customer journey</i>	<i>Your behaviour</i>
Before travelling	
During travelling	
After travelling	

3) Being a tourism stakeholder, how would you react to a trend?

<i>Trend</i>	<i>Your reactions (management, tourism product development, marketing communication)</i>
People are more health conscious	
Technological innovations, increasing use of smart devices	

Chapter 2

In this chapter

- you will be able to select a relevant topic for the dissertation;
- you will get a short overview of the research plan;
- you will be able to formulate your research questions, and hypotheses.

How to choose a topic?

Once being familiar with the ‘tourism context’, the next step of the research process is to define a certain topic. Because tourism is quite a popular – and well researched – area, furthermore taking into account the colourful world (e.g. every destination is different, travellers are not the same either) of this sector, nowadays it is advisable to select a narrow(er) field to work with. From a practical point of view, there can be three fundamental pillars for your research, as shown in *Figure 5*. Besides your personal interest (e.g. you live in a certain tourism area, you go every year to the same destination, you have a tourism company in the family, you are doing your traineeship in a tourism company), you can highlight actual tourism trends (meaning that you ‘need’ to talk about the selected topic right now), and also you have to bear in mind your human and financial resources (consider whether you are able to do the research).

Once you have defined your topic, you can think about the right title. Nowadays, a lot of authors use a title and a subtitle, the main title itself is very short (can be also a question or a famous phrase), meanwhile the subtitle is more ‘official’. Some examples from the *Tourism Management* (Volume 67) issue:

- Decomposing the price of the cruise product into tourism and transport attributes: Evidence from the Mediterranean market
- When guests trust hosts for their words: Host description and trust in sharing economy
- Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalisation and New Tourism in the Third World.

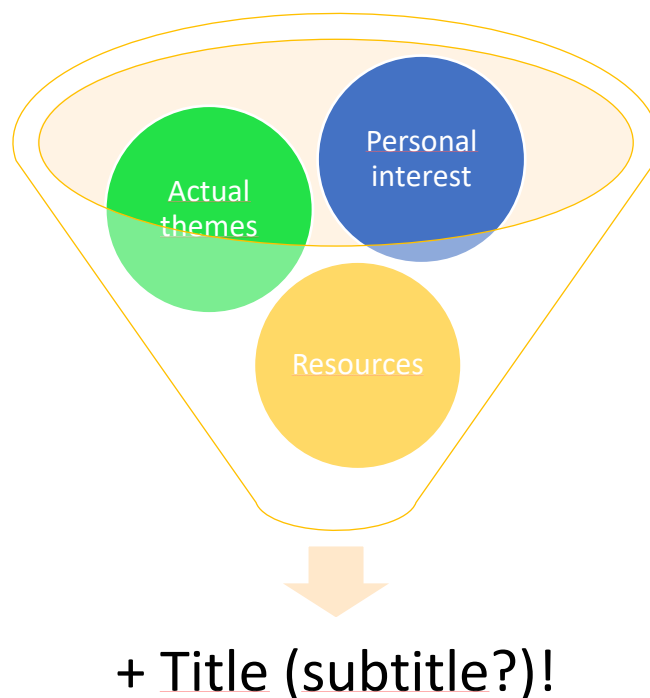


Figure 5 – Inputs for topic selection

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Dissertation structure

In line with academic writing, a tourism focused university dissertation follows the theoretical – practical line. The two fundamental pillars (with app. similar length) of the dissertation are the theoretical background, and the primary research. In order to have a full approach, the dissertation should have the following sections. *Table 1*

The introduction part contains reference to the importance of the selected topic. The research questions, the hypothesis/hypotheses can follow the introduction (or the literature review). After the theoretical chapter, the introduction of the destination provides an overview about the selected area (if there is a selected destination to be talked about). The chapter with the primary research has two main sub-chapters: 1) the methodology and 2) the results. The summary of the research results – in line with the literature accessed – is presented in the conclusion chapter. At the end of the dissertation, there should be a list about the used references, sources. The dissertation can be ended by the annexes (e.g. questionnaire, additional tables, and pictures).

<i>Option 1</i>	<i>Option 2</i>
Introduction	Introduction
Theoretical background, literature review	Research questions, hypothesis
Destination introduction	Theoretical background, literature review
Research questions, hypothesis	Destination introduction
Primary research – methodology	Primary research – methodology
Primary research – results	Primary research – results
Conclusions	Conclusions
References, sources used	References, sources used
Annexes	Annexes

Table 1 – Examples for dissertation structure

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Research plan

In order to have a comprehensive and full work, it could be very helpful to make an overview of the research plan. Research plans (approx. 3-5 pages document) highlight the main goals, background, methods and expected implications of research. Even if for a university dissertation you do not have to write a research plan, the following questions can take you closer to the solution:

- What is the main focus of your research?
- Is it based on available information? Is there a need to approach it?
- What kind of new information can be reached/developed by conducting the research?
- What kind of theoretical and practical implications can be seen at the end of the research process?

Examples/further information: OTKA research plans available at www.otka.hu

Research question & hypothesis

After having your certain research focus, and having consulted the literature, the next step is to formulate the research questions or the hypothesis. This is a fundamental point of the research work, as it will be reflected throughout the field work, and also there is a feedback on it in the conclusion chapter. The basic difference – not surprisingly – between the research question and the hypothesis is that the research question is a question (from a grammatical viewpoint), while the hypothesis is a statement. In case of the hypothesis, the statement can be proved or not (so you can reflect to the hypothesis with yes or no). It is important that after having the primary research results, the hypothesis will be explained in the conclusion chapter (even if it is not proved). Another aspect is that when formulating a research question or a hypothesis, the capability of researching should be also considered (e.g. if the hypothesis refers to differences between segments like age groups, all the relevant segments should be monitored/accessed during the primary research). *Table 2*

<i>Research question</i>	<p>What kind of push and pull factors motivate potential tourists to take a wellness holiday in Hungary?</p> <p>How do the young travellers (19-25 years old) use the smart devices for leisure travel?</p> <p>Who are the most important stakeholders in destination A?</p>
<i>Hypothesis</i>	<p><i>Demographics (age, gender) influences the visitor satisfaction.</i></p> <p><i>Previous experience has a positive effect on visitor satisfaction.</i></p> <p><i>Visitor satisfaction correlates with return intentions.</i></p>

Table 2 – Examples for research questions and hypothesis

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) What is it about? What comes to your mind when reading the title of an academic article?

<i>Title</i>	<i>First thoughts</i>
Residents' perceptions of wine tourism development	

2) How do your thoughts fit with the content of the article? (based on the abstract)

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Abstract: Wine trails have been studied insufficiently within the tourism literature despite of their recent rapid development worldwide. In response, this study examines residents' perceptions of wine tourism development in terms of personal benefits and community impacts. It also explores whether residents' socio-demographics and levels of wine enthusiasm, and wine trails' tourism characterization influence residents' perceptions. Following a stratified random sampling procedure, residents living along two wine trails in the Piedmont region of North Carolina (U.S.) were surveyed. Results indicate that residents are neutral in their perceptions of the Piedmont wineries in terms of both personal benefits and community impacts. Residents' socio-demographics and level of wine enthusiasm, as well as the comprehensiveness of wine trails' tourism amenities were significantly associated with residents' perceptions. Results also indicate that personal benefits mediate residents' perceptions of community impacts. In addition to the theoretical and methodological contributions, this paper outlines management implications for wine trails.

3) Identify a real focus of a dissertation!

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4) Formulate a research question and a hypothesis linked to the selected focus!

Research question

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Hypothesis

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Chapter 3

In this chapter

- you will be able to select relevant sources, literatures for the dissertation;
- you will get a short overview of the most relevant information sources;
- you will be able to do the right referencing in the text and at the end of the dissertation.

Types of information used

From a practical point of view, one can integrate ‘text’ type / qualitative (e.g. information originating in academic articles, research reports) or ‘data’ type / quantitative (e.g. statistical data about tourism performance, volume of demand) information. When summarizing the sources, it is fundamental to compare the same categories or to sum up the same kind of information. For example, a research conclusion can be that there is a correlation between age and return intentions – this is qualitative information. At the same time, the volume of outbound tourism in the world (over 1.1 billion tourists) can be integrated as quantitative information / data.

Table 3 gives an overview of the data most often used in tourism. The so-called dependent variables can be data about tourism performance, tourism flow. Depending on the unique characteristics of the selected destination (e.g. in the case of an island destination, the data about air traffic is relevant) and segment (e.g. in the case of hiking, it is difficult to measure the volume), different data should be highlighted. These variables can be analysed in the framework of time, space and external influences (e.g. GDP per capita as economic variable).

<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Independent variables</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrivals (total, international, domestic) • Overnight stays • Same-day visitors • Excursions sold • Passenger seats occupied • Visitor spendings • Tourism contribution to GDP • Hotel occupancy rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Economic variables • Demographic variables • Cost of travel • Tourist taxes • Market variables • Political variables • Climate

Table 3 – Variables often used in tourism

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Where to find information

The importance of the online sources and the ‘magic’ of the World Wide Web is unquestionable in tourism. However, in the case of a dissertation, you should follow a different way, because the academic sources are not listed in the google search results. The most important sources for doing your research are:

- International academic literature (journals, books)
 - Library
 - Online databases – www.sciencedirect.com, www.scopus.com, www.ebsco.com, www.tandfonline.com
 - Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research, Leisure Studies, Tourism Economics, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Tourism Geographies ...
- Hungarian academic literature
 - Online databases – www.mtmt.hu, www.matarka.hu
 - Turizmus Bulletin, Földrajzi Közlemények, Tér és Társadalom, Turisztikai és Vidékfejlesztési Tanulmányok ...
- Google books – www.books.google.com
- Google scholars – www.scholar.google.com

Regarding international and domestic tourism performance, the most important sources for your dissertation can be:

- UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) – unwto.org
- EUROSTAT - <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
- TourMIS – www.tourmis.info
- Hungarian Central Statistical Office KSH Tájékoztatási Adatbázis – www.ksh.hu

Last, but not least, do not forget to visit your library. Even if you think that paperback books are ‘old-fashioned’, the knowledge of the librarians (e.g. how to search for the right information) and the available resources (e.g. databases, international journals) there are not to be underestimated. Once you have gathered all the relevant information, you can enter your keywords into google – hopefully you can get some news or interesting information/data.

In order to find the right information, the right keywords are needed. Once having the focus of the research, you can define your keywords (app. 4-5, combined with each other). Table 4

<i>Research focus</i>	<i>Keywords</i>
Motivation of wellness tourists	motivation, driver, tourism, wellness, health, spa
Visitor satisfaction at festivals	tourism, visitor, satisfaction, experience, festival, culture / cultural, event

Table 4 – Examples for keywords

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Referencing

Referencing the sources used in the dissertation has a strict regulation. Here we highlight again that even if you have found and read a lot of literature online, in your work you have to be ‘old-fashioned’ this time. The most frequently used citation format is the APA (<http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide/apa/>). From a practical point of view, one can differentiate between:

- Journal article (academic)
- Journal, magazine, newspaper article
- Book
- Website
- Database
- Other (video, brochure...)

In the dissertation, you can cite your sources 1) in the text, and 2) in the literature list. In the text you can highlight the author’s family name, year of publication and – if it is a word-by-word citation – the page number (e.g. Sulyok 2014, ETC–UNWTO 2009). In case there are more than two authors, you can use the Sulyok et al. format. Regarding the tables, figures and pictures, you can refer to the author (if it is in the same format) or saying that ‘own editing based on XY Year’ (if you have provided an edited version). If you have found an interesting article online, you can add the direct link as a footnote in the text.

In the literature list, it is advisable to separate literature from websites, some examples are highlighted in *Table 5*.

Literature	<p>Aaker, D. A. (1996). <i>Building strong brands</i>. New York: Free Press.</p> <p>Bessie`re, J. (1998). Local development and heritage: Traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i>, 38(1), 21–34.</p> <p>Centre for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, 2007. <i>A simple user's guide to certification for sustainable tourism and ecotourism</i>. Handbook 1. Retrieved October 10, 2009, from Centre for Responsible Travel Web site: <http://www.responsibletravel.org/resources/documents/reports/Ecotourism_Handbook_I.pdf>.</p>
Websites	<p>TourMIS Database www.tourmis.info</p> <p>https://hellomagyarország.hu/</p>

Table 5 – Examples for referencing

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Identify 4-5 keywords linked to your selected research focus!

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2) Search 5 academic articles valuable for the literature review! List them using the appropriate reference style!

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Chapter 4

In this chapter

- you will be able to summarize the information found for the theoretical background chapter of the dissertation;
- you will be able to evaluate statistical data about tourism performance.

Literature review

The literature review provides the fundamental input for your research approach. The theoretical background forms a separate chapter in the dissertation, and is referred to also in the introduction and in the conclusion. The revised literature and desk information should be also presented in a structured way, for that the main focus and the keywords can be an initial point. For example, if you are interested in the motivation of cycling tourists, one pillar of the theoretical background is motivation in tourism, and the other one is cycling tourism. When summarizing the addressed information, it is very important that real synthesizing is more than just listing thoughts from different authors. More detailed information can be derived from research with a similar topic (e.g. motivation) or research dealing with similar types of destination (e.g. city, coastal area). If there is enough source for that, it is an added value to summarize the outcomes of similar research (like benchmarking). It can be very practical and valuable if there is a summary table about the relevant articles like shown in *Table 6*.

<i>Author (year)</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Target destination/segment</i>
Ahas et al. (2007)	Mobile positioning data	Estonia
Cuccia–Rizzo (2011)	Analysing the number of tourist nights	Sicily (focus on culture)
Dávid–Tóth (2009)	Analysing tourism performance	Mátra (mountain area in Hungary)
Fernández-Morales (2003)	Gini index (guest nights in hotels)	Spain (Almería, Granada, Malaga)
Fernández-Morales–Mayorga-Toledano (2008)	Gini index (guest nights in hotels)	Spain (Costa del Sol)
Figini–Vici (2012)	Interviews with tourists (discrete choice model)	Italy (Rimini)
Herman (2005)	Seasonal adjusted calculations	Hotel Kolping, Alsópáhok (Hungary)
Jang (2004)	Financial portfolio theory	French travellers to Canada
Koc–Altınay (2007)	Decomposition technique (expenditure)	Turkey (inbound tourists)
Nadal et al. (2004)	Gini index (air passengers)	Spain (Balearic islands)
Peggy et al. (2012)	Interviews with service providers	Australia (ski resorts)
Sulyok–Mester (2014)	Gini index (guest nights at commercial accommodation)	Hungary

Table 6 – Example for a summary table of relevant academic articles

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Evaluation of statistical data

Evaluation of the statistical data requires a different approach compared to literature review. In this case, you have to be careful with the quantitative information, and compare only comparable things. That is a challenge because every survey follows a different approach. Therefore, it is advisable to check the statistical databases whether they have relevant figures. Meanwhile the UN World Tourism Organization works with the published data (provided by the national statistical offices), for example the European Union – EUROSTAT in this case – defines the methodological requirements, as well. These databases provide comparable data.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Read the conclusion chapters of the selected academic article and identify some thoughts that you would use in your work!

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2) Summarize the following information in 3-4 sentences! (related to seasonality)

- The majority of tourism destinations are seasonal because of variations in climate and the fact that tourists' homelands have traditional holiday seasons and seasonal traditions (Higham & Hinch, 2002).
- Seasonality usually refers to a temporal imbalance in the demand, and may be expressed in terms of the number of tourists, their expenditure, and bed nights (Butler 1994).
- Seasonality reflects concerns with inefficient utilization of tourism resources and facilities during limited seasons (Sutcliffe and Sinclair 1980).
- It is widely recognized that the main causes of seasonality are natural and institutional (BarOn 1976). Seasonality is mainly perceived as a problem with serious implications for all aspects of supply-side behavior (Baum 1999).
- Butler (1994) mentions that the literature about this topic has been focused on the analysis of the demand patterns, the description of particular destinations' seasonality, the negative effects on employment and investment, and counter-seasonal policies and their implications.
- The basic unit for measuring demand is usually tourist numbers (Crouch 1994a).



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Chapter 5

In this chapter

- you will be able to evaluate the tourism performance of the selected destination;
- you will be able to adapt the theoretical background of tourism system to a certain destination.

Introduction of the selected destination – environments

In this section you can easily follow the tourism system that gives a clear and comprehensive structure. First of all, you can have a general introduction (geographical location, how to get there, administrative areas, history etc.). Then you can continue with the different environments of tourism:

- Natural environment (natural treasures, protected areas, rivers, lakes etc.)
- Social environment (volume and quality of inhabitants etc.)
- Cultural environment (history, traditions, famous personalities etc.)
- Political environment (administrative areas, decision-making and stakeholders etc.)
- Economic environment (main economic activities, GDP per capita, tourism's role in local economy etc.)
- Technological environment (use of technological advances, communication etc.).
-

The introduction of the selected destination can be extended with maps, pictures or screenshots, as well.

Introduction of the selected destination – supply side

In order to avoid the simple 'guidebook' style, there is a need for summarizing and evaluating the available information. For this section, you can rely on the official website of the selected destination, the attractions listed there can be a good initial point. In line with tourism theory, you can evaluate yourself the tourism supply structure (e.g. Is it mature? Are there enough infrastructural elements, service providers? What kind of experience is offered? What kind of tourism products are dominating?). *Figure 6* gives an example of health tourism destination.

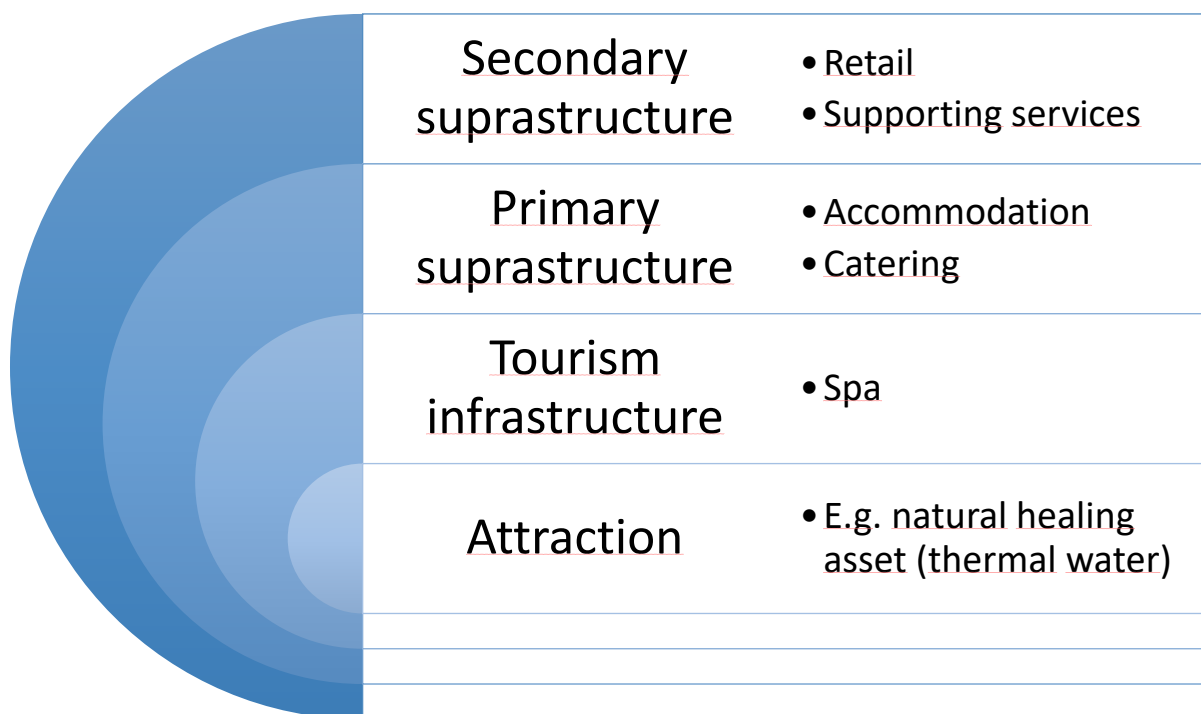


Figure 6 – Structure of tourism supply

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Regarding the individual attractions or experience elements, you can also summarize the information according to the following factors:

- *Type of the attraction*
 - Hub/route
 - Natural, cultural
 - Outdoor, indoor
 - Involvement of the visitor (active, passive)
- *Practical information*
 - Opening hours (seasonal or all year available)
 - Price (paid or free)
 - Visitor numbers (if this data is available)
 - Language versions of the website
 - Presence on social media.

Introduction of the selected destination – demand side

The evaluation of the demand side, namely of the tourism flow to a certain destination, has also some practical tips that give you a clear and logical structure. Consulting the national statistical offices' database (Hungarian Central Statistical Office / Központi Statisztikai Hivatal in Hungary), you can access time series data. It is important that you use the latest whole year available figures. A possible structure can be:

- Volume of guests and guest nights at commercial (paid) accommodation,
- Volume of guests and guest nights at hotels (higher quality facilities),
- Share of domestic and international guests, guest nights,
- Seasonal variation within the year,
- Spatial variation within the destination (e.g. in the case of a region, you can see the hot point settlements),
- Trends during the last years.

From a practical point of view, the time period covered by the trends can be adjusted to the available figures (e.g. time series published for 2008–2016). It is important that you also reflect on different other major influences/factors (e.g. natural disaster, closing or opening of hotels, new developments).

This section should be enriched by figures/diagrams and tables, as well.

If the destination has some special features (e.g. popular one-day excursion destination) that are not covered by the accessed data, you should mention it.

Introduction of the selected destination – other relevant information

Other relevant information can be general or tourism oriented strategies, development plans, or simply news referring to the tourism of the selected destination (e.g. opening of new hotel).

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Evaluate the main tourism attractions of a selected destination!

Destination:

.....

Name of the attraction	Natural	Cultural	Payment	Seasonality	Hub/route	Outdoor/Indoor

2) Analyse the tourism performance of Balatonfüred (Lake Balaton destination) according to the table below!

Year	Number of guest nights at commercial accommodation		
	Total	from which: international	from which: domestic
2008	578 088	350 606	227 482
2009	504 769	238 958	265 811
2010	458 797	211 995	246 802
2011	446 405	202 847	243 558
2012	479 711	232 046	247 665
2013	508 285	232 860	275 425
2014	543 500	234 859	308 641

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Chapter 6

In this chapter

- you will have a brief overview about frequently used methods in tourism;
- you will be able to select the right methodology for your dissertation that can provide answers to the research questions and hypothesis.

Research methodologies

The literature about research methods is very rich, including guidelines for tourism stakeholders. In this learning material, we are focusing on those methods that are commonly used by university students during their own primary research.

Besides the desk (or secondary) research – which is also a fundamental and valuable part of the research process –, one can differentiate between qualitative and quantitative methods. In line with the requirements of a dissertation, in most cases, the qualitative method means semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders. Focus groups and Delphi technique are also popular, but less used by university students. Not surprisingly, the quantitative method often covers an online survey. Printed questionnaires can be successfully used on site (e.g. on festivals). Acknowledging the complexity of tourism, it is advisable to have a mixed approach (e.g. online survey and 2-3 interviews with stakeholders). *Figure 7*

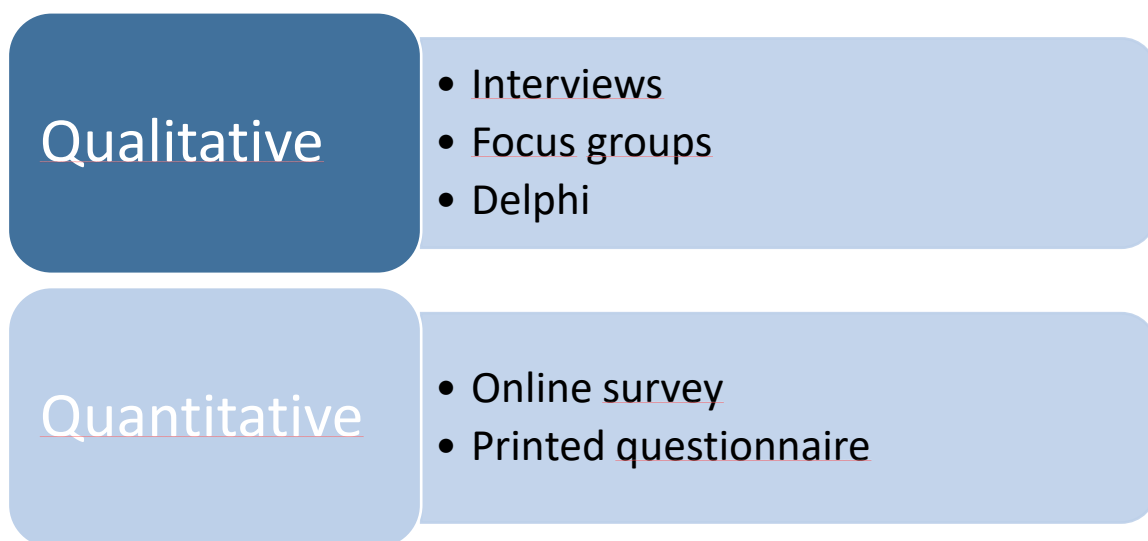


Figure 7 – Main methods used by tourism oriented dissertations

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

The general consumer and tourism trends are also reflected in tourism research. Although the following methods can be also grouped into qualitative or quantitative methods, still they are considered to be innovative and manageable by university students for the purpose of their own research: content analysis, including web content and social media content, diaries (in the case of tours) or analysing visuals (photos, promotion materials etc.).

Selecting the right methodology

The next step in the research process is finding the right methodology that can answer the research questions or hypothesis. Besides the available resources, important considerations are the aspects presented in *Table 7*.

Timing of the field work should consider the customer journey (e.g. visitor satisfaction can be measured during or after the trip). In case of festival tourism research, a good option can be to get to? the place (if it fits into the timeframe/deadlines). From a theoretical point of view, there is a difference in the attitudes and the opinions of travellers asked in the destination or outside (home) the destination. But, from a practical point of view, a dissertation research probably will not have these limitations. Regarding the sample, it is important to consider whether there is any need for filtering (e.g. special segment or visitors who have been to the selected destination). The 'how' question has mainly practical implications when designing questionnaires.

When	Customer journey (before – during – after the trip) During an event/festival Peak season – off season period
Where	In the destination At the place of residence
Whom	Population Travellers (travel activity) Visitors to a certain destination Segment (youngsters, families, seniors, university students...)
How	Online Personal

Table 7 – Issues to be considered when selecting the right methodology

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Another valuable input for the decision of the methodology can be the literature review. Taking a look at the methodology used in academic papers, you can decide the dissertation's method (e.g. visitor satisfaction is mainly measured by quantitative surveys, temporal concentration of tourism flows is often analysed with the help of the Gini index, brand image studies mostly take the customers' point of view, TripAdvisor is popular for content analysis).

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Select the appropriate research method for your topic! Would you use qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods? Whom would you ask, when and how?

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Chapter 7

In this chapter

- you will have a brief overview of frequently used qualitative methods/surveys in tourism;
- you will be able to prepare a semi-structured interview linked to your selected topic;
- you will have a brief overview about frequently used quantitative methods/surveys in tourism;
- you will be able to design a questionnaire linked to your selected topic.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is very valued also in the tourism sector as it allows a deeper insight into the researched topic. The other side of the coin is that every traveller (and also tourism stakeholder) is unique, so their views and opinions probably do not reflect the whole picture. The most frequently used methods are focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. From a practical point of view, in case of a tourism oriented dissertation, the interviews are the most manageable tools. The main steps of conducting this field work are:

- Select the relevant persons to be asked for an interview,
- Prepare a guide for the interview,
- Contact the interviewed person,
- Conduct and record the interview,
- Evaluate, summarize the results.

The guide of the semi-structured interview is a support, split by topic, and for each of the topics there are a few questions to help you.

It is advisable to record (voice) the interview, which makes the conversation itself easier (you do not need to type/write) and also the evaluation (you can have word-by-word citations). During the evaluation, you can also add some quantitative information (e.g. type of the stakeholder).

Quantitative research

Doing a survey is a very frequently used method in tourism oriented dissertations. With the aim of mapping travellers' characteristics and attitudes, researchers – including higher education students – like to access also the potential tourists. On the other hand, higher education students have more contact with the travellers (mainly with people from their age group) than with tourism stakeholders.

In this section we take an overview of how to design a tourism oriented questionnaire. Most of the questionnaires have the following sections:

- Introduction text
 - Length of the questionnaires
 - Questions with a compulsory reply
- (Open-ended question / Association)
- Basic information – stakeholders
- Research topic – can be structured
- Demographics – consumers
- Thanking the interviewed person/the respondent for the contribution

The target group can be travellers or tourism stakeholders. Note that the main goal of the questionnaire is to retrieve the necessary information in a structured format. The elaborated questions should have relevant outputs/results. It is also important to maintain the attention of the respondent, and minimizing errors. The needed information can be grouped into two main categories:

1. Respondents characteristics (demographics)
2. Questions related to the research question and hypothesis.

Depending on the field work – online, personal or even via phone – the topic can be reflected in certain questions. It is important that all the questions should be linked to the research focus. In order to reach the target group, consider the need of a filter question (e.g. only visitors to a certain destination should answer the questions). Regarding the earlier experience, trips taken during the last 1 or 3 years can be recorded well. The satisfaction can be measured only in the destination or after the trip. Some discrete information are income

level, religion and political affiliation. When putting the questions formulated into the final format of the questionnaire, there are some guidelines to be followed:

- Opening question (open-ended, filter)
- Demographics/identification (consumer, stakeholder)
- Question's effect on the following questions
- Logic (following the customer journey)
- Attitude statements: mixed (simply listed in alphabetical order).

To get the final version of your questionnaire, it is highly advisable to pre-test it (3-4 persons), and change it if needed.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Identify a filter question!

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2) Design a short visitor survey questionnaire (max. 10 questions) linked to your selected destination! What kind of information would you be interested to know?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer options</i>

3) In case you would conduct semi-structured interviews, whom would you ask? Who from the stakeholders in the tourism value chain could be relevant for your selected topic?

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4) Think about a semi-structured interview. What would you ask linked to your topic? (main areas, some questions you would ask)

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Chapter 8

In this chapter

- you will learn how to analyse the data of the primary research;
- you will be able to identify correlations within your research results.

Interpreting your research results

After having done the desk research and the field work for the primary research, the next step is to analyse the collected data. As you can see in *Figure 8*, you are getting closer to the end of the process.

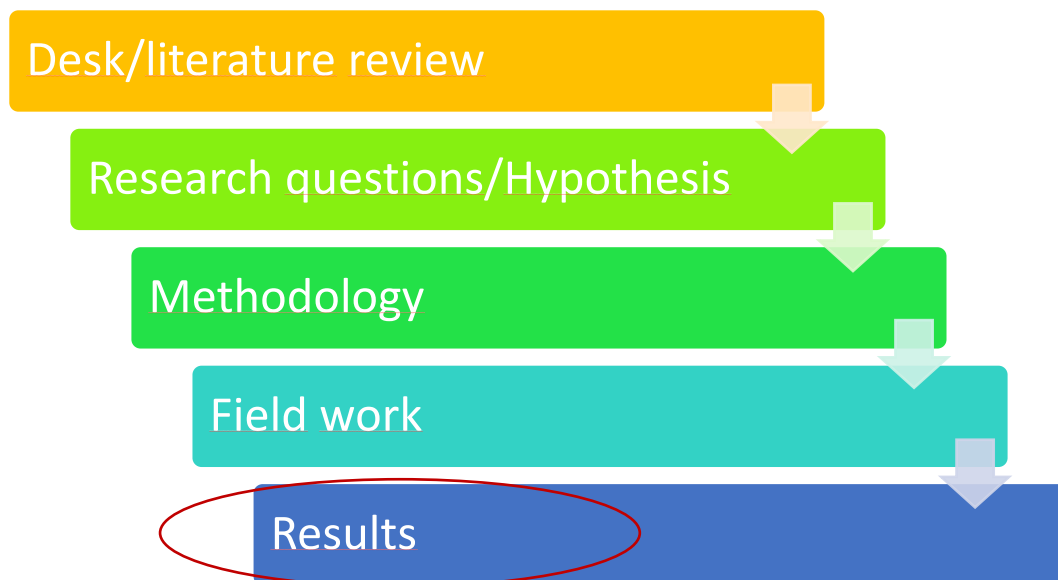


Figure 8 – Main steps of the research process reaching the interpretation of the results

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

The interpretation has two main parts: 1) methodology and 2) results. The methodology should highlight the used methods (here you have to mention desk research, as well), time of the field work (e.g. when the questionnaire has been filled out), circumstances (e.g. how could you access the sample). The collected results should be checked from the respondents' point of view, which means you have to identify the target group reached, and check whether this is relevant for the research focus (e.g. if you focus on seniors, and have a very small portion of respondents falling into this category, then the results are not appropriate). You can also refer

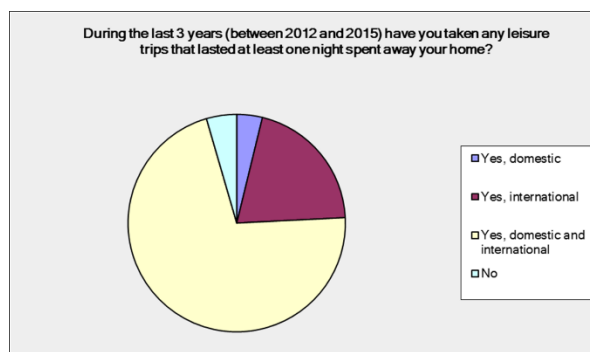
to the official statistical figures (e.g. there is a dominance of domestic guests in the destination, so asking the certain population is a good decision). A simple and frequently used characteristic is the tourism activity (e.g. those who have travelled with leisure purpose during the last 3 years). The methodology part could also contain a table about the sample (demographics).

Depending on the used methodology, there are solutions available for analysis. For example, if you have done an online survey, you can see the results / charts, and also download the responses. In the case of quantitative analysis, the most frequently used support is SPSS Software (there are various guides for learning the basics of it like <https://www.spss-tutorials.com/basics/>). For text analysis, you can use the ATLAS.ti solution. In case of a dissertation, a trial version could be also helpful, you do not need to invest big amounts of money.

During the analysis of the primary data, you can also follow the questionnaire structure (perhaps a few questions should be replaced, but if you have done a good job with the design, you do not need to do a lot of extra work). Once analysing the outcomes of each question, you can define crosstables (depending on the research focus, or simply just following your ideas). Below there are some examples of different question types.

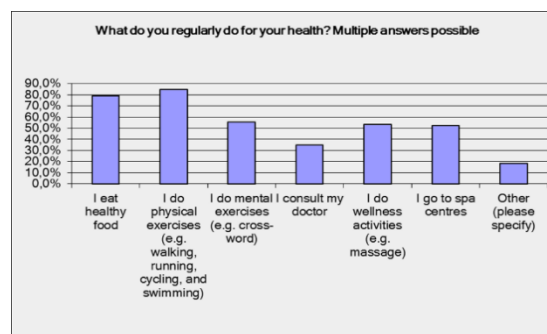
Structured question with alternatives

During the last 3 years (between 2012 and 2015) have you taken any leisure trips that lasted at least one night spent away your home?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, domestic	3,8%	6
Yes, international	20,4%	32
Yes, domestic and international	71,3%	112
No	4,5%	7
answered question		157
skipped question		13



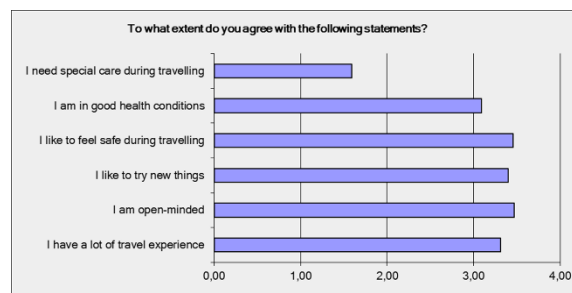
Structured question – multiple answers

What do you regularly do for your health? Multiple answers possible		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I eat healthy food	79,2%	126
I do physical exercises (e.g. walking, running, cycling, and swimming)	84,9%	135
I do mental exercises (e.g. cross-word)	55,3%	88
I consult my doctor	34,6%	55
I do wellness activities (e.g. massage)	53,5%	85
I go to spa centres	52,2%	83
Other (please specify)	18,2%	29
answered question		159
skipped question		11



Matrix

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?							
Answer Options	Don't agree at all	Don't agree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
I have a lot of travel experience	1	19	69	71	1	3,31	161
I am open-minded	1	4	74	81	1	3,47	161
I like to try new things	2	6	77	73	2	3,40	160
I like to feel safe during travelling	2	4	72	80	2	3,46	160
I am in good health conditions	2	28	82	46	3	3,09	161
I need special care during travelling	88	51	13	5	3	1,59	160
answered question							161
skipped question							9



Qualitative research results (e.g. semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions) should be also structured. It is advisable to record (voice) the field work because it makes easier to include word-by-word citations. If possible, you can also do some quantification (e.g. share of service providers and policy-makers), this can be also integrated into the interpretation of the results (e.g. non-profit organisations' view differ from profit-oriented stakeholders, younger age groups have different attitudes than seniors etc.).

The content analysis (especially the analysis of travellers' reviews, opinions) is a very popular method nowadays in tourism. In this case you can get inspired by academic articles that clarify the main steps of the process, namely:

1. step is to retrieve the data;
2. step is text analysis (computer-aided software);
3. step is coding if needed;
4. step is qualitative + quantitative analysis.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) What kind of cross tables would you analyse based on the questionnaires you put together for a visitor survey?

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2) Try to design an infographic figure/picture according the table below!

Main Data on Hungarian Tourism			
	2014	2015	2015/2014
Number and Expenditure of Tourists			
Number of inbound tourists (000s)	17,253	20,189	+17.0%
Same-day tourists	7,095	7,778	+9.6%
Overnight tourists	10,158	12,410	+22.2%
Expenditure of inbound tourists (million HUF)	1,070,284	1,235,096	+15.4%
Same-day tourists	75,230	90,555	+20.4%
Overnight tourists	995,054	1,144,541	+15.0%
Number of domestic overnight tourists (000s)*	14,854	15,254	+2.7%
Expenditure of domestic overnight tourists (million HUF)*	294,602	307,418	+4.4%
Number of outbound tourists (000s)*	8,933	9,705	+8.6%
Expenditure of outbound tourists (million HUF)*	454,733	507,336	+11.6%
Arrivals and Guest Nights at Commercial Accommodation**			
Domestic			
Arrivals (000s)	5,022 (3,478)	5,474 (3,822)	+9.0% (+9.9%)
Guest nights (000s)	12,082 (8,182)	12,925 (8,803)	+7.0% (+7.6%)
Average length of stay (nights)	2.4 (2.4)	2.4 (2.3)	-1.9% (-2.1%)
International			
Arrivals (000s)	4,617 (4,036)	4,929 (4,275)	+6.7% (+5.9%)
Guest nights (000s)	12,351 (10,274)	12,962 (10,704)	+4.9% (+4.2%)
Average length of stay (nights)	2.7 (2.5)	2.6 (2.5)	-1.7% (-1.6%)
Total			
Arrivals (000s)	9,640 (7,514)	10,403 (8,096)	+7.9% (+7.7%)
Guest nights (000s)	24,434 (18,457)	25,888 (19,507)	+6.0% (+5.7%)
Average length of stay (nights)	2.5 (2.5)	2.5 (2.4)	-1.8% (-1.9%)
Arrivals and Guest Nights at Other Accommodation			
Domestic			
Arrivals (000s)	892	1,043	+17.0%
Guest nights (000s)	2,726	3,161	+15.9%
Average length of stay (nights)	3.1	3.0	-0.9%
International			
Arrivals (000s)	472	618	+31.0%
Guest nights (000s)	1,752	2,201	+25.6%
Average length of stay (nights)	3.7	3.6	-4.2%
Total			
Arrivals (000s)	1,364	1,661	+21.8%
Guest nights (000s)	4,479	5,362	+19.7%
Average length of stay (nights)	3.3	3.2	-1.7%
Commercial Accommodation Gross Revenues			
Domestic accommodation fee (million HUF)	71,923	82,289	+14.4%
International accommodation fee (million HUF)	117,762	131,995	+12.1%
Total accommodation fee (million HUF)	189,685	214,284	+13.0%
Food & beverage (million HUF)	71,987	78,017	+8.4%
Other revenue (million HUF)	71,372	76,468	+7.1%
Total revenue (million HUF)	333,045	368,768	+10.7%

* In some cases, estimated data can be inaccurate due to the small sample size. Data referring to the years 2008-2014 were revised on the 5th March 2015, on the basis of the Census 2011.

** () from which in Hotels.

Source: HCSO

Chapter 9

In this chapter

- you will get to know the structure of a dissertation presentation;
- you will get some tips for being successful when presenting your research result.

Presentation of your research results

Even if the content of a dissertation is a very innovative, creative and valuable piece of work, the personal presentation of the outcomes should be also planned carefully. On the internet, one can find an enormous number of tips, guides and recommendations about preparing a good presentation, and how to talk about it, so this section will focus on the dissertation itself. The oral presentation should be logical and straightforward, following the structure of the dissertation. The emphasis is on your own contribution, and not on ‘repeating’ the accessed literature. The informative introduction could be followed by the main points, the conclusion and future suggestions.

Using visuals is a powerful tool for the dissertation presentation – even if the general suggestion is to keep the background simple, and use animations only where needed. Regarding the design, pay attention to colour (also harmonizing with the selected topic), text (at least 24 point size), and graphics/pictures. When summarizing information, use less text and try to visualize it (e.g. with a smart-figure).

An example for organizing the slides (15-20 minutes speaking):

Slide 1 – Cover slide (title, name, affiliation, date and location)

Slide 2 – Background for the research (why have you selected the topic?)

Slide 3 – Objectives, research questions and hypothesis

Slide 4 and 5 – Literature review

Slide 6 – Methodology

Slide 7, 8, 9 and 10 – Results of the research

Slide 11 – Conclusions (theoretical and practical implications, thesis)

Slide 12 – Own ideas, suggestions for the future

Slide 13 – Thank you!

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Think about your research proposal! What kind of information would you highlight in a 20-minute presentation?

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2) What would you do if the available time would be shortened to 10 minutes? What would you highlight then?

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Chapter 10

In this chapter

- you will be able to structure the main outcomes of the dissertation;
- you will understand the main features of the conclusion chapter.

Conclusions – theoretical and practical implications

The conclusion section of the dissertation summarizes the outcomes of the whole research process. In line with academic literature, it gives a much clearer result if the theoretical and practical implications are separated. For example, a theoretical implication can be that the emotional elements are important in the destination image, or that visitor satisfaction is influenced by the individuals' characteristics (e.g. demographics). A practical implication can be outcomes for the service providers, stakeholders, policy-makers.

The conclusion section provides also the feedback of the research questions and hypothesis set at the beginning of the research process. In this case, the hypothesis will be the thesis (irrespective whether the hypothesis was proved to be true or false.)

Furthermore, the conclusion chapter is the place for formulating your own ideas or suggestions. For example, a new product/service/experience, new communication tools, development needs can be identified – based on the research results and the author's view.

Summarizing, the conclusion chapter can be divided into:

- Theoretical implications
- Practical implications
- Feedback to research questions, thesis
- Own ideas, suggestions.

It is important to note that the conclusion is a separate entity, it is not copying statements from other chapters!

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Read the following conclusion! Highlight the theoretical and the practical implications!

In the Rimini back region, certain local food & wine products serve as material expressions of what is otherwise an intangible cultural heritage. They literally and metaphorically feed new forms of tourist consumption. Local food & wine shops become interfaces between tourists, actors and place, and in so doing actively contribute to place branding. With reference to these sites, this study has proposed a theoretical interpretation and elaboration of how place branding emerge though a set of material, bodily and discursive performances, in line with the emerging perspective of performativity (Cohen & Cohen, 2012b). This implies a shift from a policy-driven logic of conceiving and studying place brands (Ren, 2011; Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011), consistent with views of tourist places as “constantly crossed by a potential to perform that emerges from the convergence of mundane practices and actions” (Giovanardi et al., 2014, p.113). “Things” also play a major role (Franklin & Crang, 2001; Ren, 2011; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Drawing on these insights, the case study illustrated how material, discursive, and embodied performances staged at local food & wine shops enact a selective thematisation of place, to which I refer in this article as place branding. These performances might represent a frontier to be further explored, from where to arrive at theoretical and empirical implications. Firstly, it was claimed that this theoretical framework enabled a more open-ended, creative, complex and inclusive consideration of place branding. Place branding is actually enhanced and implemented through material, discursive and embodied performances that have the advantage of being susceptible to immediate reaction and reinterpretation from either shopkeepers and tourists, and other kinds of audiences/performers. The same element of, for instance, a cave (as in the episode described) can shift from interior decoration to a connective tool, to a whole set of other spaces, objects, and stories. Performances are subject to continuous implementation and distortion; this can modify the place branding script, to create one that otherwise seems flawed and patronising. This article however takes a step further than previous research, by questioning this assumption and showing this is only a partial truth. As has been shown throughout the article, the staging, performances, and enactment of place branding at local food & wine shops seems to include a very similar selections of themes, referring to Verucchio’s cultural heritage, such as the olive tree growing and other food traditions, or the past connected with the Malatesta family. While expanding

the content of the official Malatesta & Montefeltro place brand and opening up a space to bring it “to life”, place branding performances are still confined to a few commodified elements of its cultural heritage. A second and consequent issue, concerns the quality and the scope of the “inclusivity” of place branding in such an approach. I have focused the majority of my attentions on the hybrid performances brought about by both “things”, shopkeepers and tourists’, since they have emerged as the most affective performers of place branding. Still many elements and people remain excluded. For instance, elders comprise a major group of the population in Verucchio but they do not fall within place branding enacted at tourist local food & wine shops. Place branding unfolds in relation to dominant discourses and symbols (Johansson, 2012) also under such an approach. A critical account of who is not an affective performer needs to be considered and compensated through other approaches and self-reflexivity. Third, we have seen how the intrinsic performativity of place branding becomes more powerful in producing, reproducing and stabilising tangible and intangible cultural heritage. However, the heritage-making agency of performative place branding is rarely considered as a powerful resource in this process. A methodological change in dominant policy-making is essential to apply performative perspectives within problem-oriented work. Only by looking at multiple actors’ performances simultaneously and associated objects, logos, or documents can we establish a more integrated idea of the relationship between (and within) tourism and place. Instead of suggesting how to operationalise what has been described, this article suggests that a performative perspective is above all an invitation to move away from rigid positivist frameworks that fail to grasp the complexity of phenomena as they happen on the ground. (Source: Rabbiosi, Ch. (2016): *Place branding performance sin tourist local food shops. Annals of Tourism Research. 60. 154–168.*)

Chapter 11

In this chapter

- you will have a brief overview of the methodology of a visitor (satisfaction) survey used in tourism;
- you will be able to design questions about visitor satisfaction linked to the selected topic.

Visitor (satisfaction) survey

Like in other sectors, customers' satisfaction is a fundamental issue in tourism. Tourism destination managers, service providers and other stakeholders are keen on getting to know their guests and fulfil their needs and expectations. A satisfied traveller can recommend the destination, service to other potential guests, and can be a return visitor next time. In addition, a practical point is that visitors being in the destination are easy to reach/talk with.

The literature about visitor satisfaction is very rich, in this case there are a lot of examples and guides besides academic publications. A lot of tourism destinations (cities, regions, countries) publish not only the result of visitor (satisfaction) survey, but also provide free access to guidelines (explaining methodology and questionnaire) for conducting it.

The main topics included in visitor (satisfaction) surveys are:

- Profile and origin of visitors,
- Holiday behaviour once at destination,
- Level of satisfaction with local tourism services,
- Visitor loyalty and likelihood to recommend destination,
- Effectiveness of marketing activities.

A visitor (satisfaction) survey is always a quantitative survey in order to get measurable and comparable data. In case of the dissertation, the most popular method is – not surprisingly – an online survey. If the focus of the research is an event, it can be useful to have a personal field work, this way the researcher (student) may enrich her/his work with observation (own experiences, photos).

<i>Profile of visitor</i>	Age, gender, place of residence Household size, children in the household General tourism activity
<i>Holiday behaviour</i>	Trip planning Motivation Accommodation, transport, days spent, travel companions, activities engaged in
<i>Level of satisfaction</i>	Satisfaction with service elements Good and bad experiences Meeting expectations
<i>Loyalty and recommendation</i>	Return intentions Recommendation to friends, relatives
<i>Effectiveness of marketing activities</i>	Factors influencing decision-making Information sources used

Table 8 – Main topics for visitor survey

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) How would you address the effectiveness of marketing activities? Elaborate 2-3 questions for that (with answer options)!

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2) What kind of correlations could be interesting to know based on visitor (satisfaction) survey? Identify 2-3 hypotheses!

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Chapter 12

In this chapter

- you will have a brief overview about the methodology of image studies used in tourism;
- you will be able to design questions about image and awareness linked to the selected topic.

Measuring image and awareness

Image and awareness are well research issues in tourism, therefore there are lot of supporting materials for developing the methodology. Dealing with a destination, a tourism product or segment, probably you will address partly an image, as well. Here we provide a short overview how to map image in tourism, the outlined questions should be then tailor-made for the selected topic.

Without going deep in tourism image, it is fundamental to know that an image is a complex and changing phenomenon. As Crompton (1979) says, it is the ‘sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people associate with a destination’.

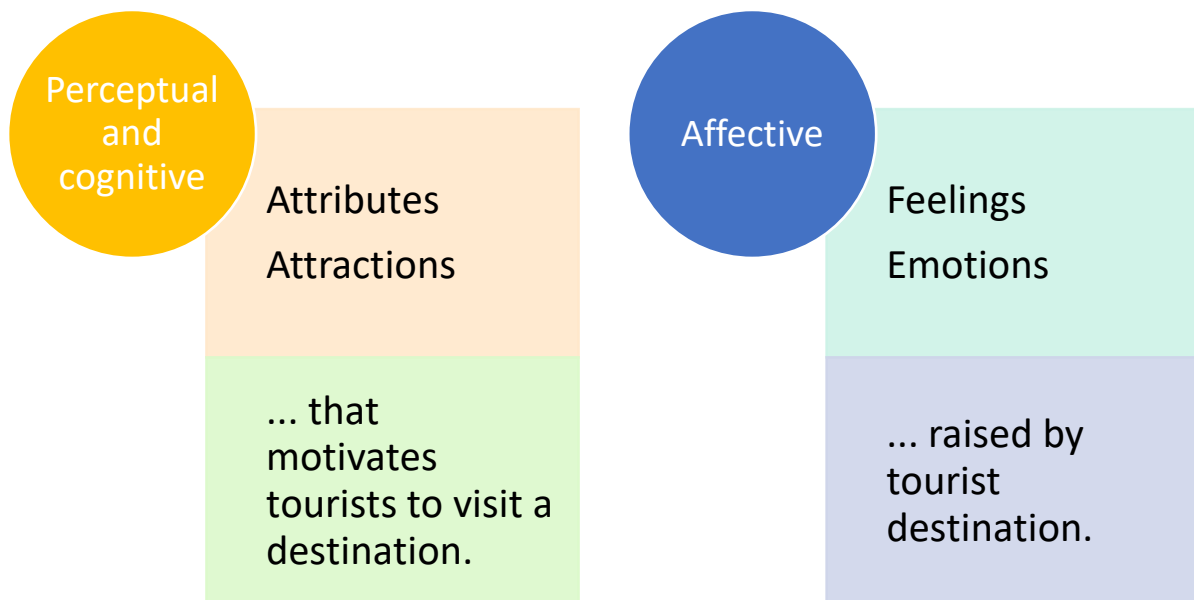


Figure 9 – Image as a combination of two main components

Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

Acknowledging its complexity, most of the image studies use a comprehensive approach. This means a combination of qualitative (e.g. interview, focus group) and quantitative (e.g. survey) methods, involving tourism supply (e.g. service providers, policy makers) and demand (e.g. travellers) side, as well.

From a practical point of view, the most frequently used questions are:

- Open-ended questions
 - Spontaneous associations
 - Associations (colour, car, drink, person etc.)
- Adjectives (opposite, on a 7 items scale)
- Agreeing with statements/image elements (5, 6 or 7 items scale)
- Attitude (statements) (5 or 6 items scale)
 - General
 - Personal
 - Towards the destination
- Structured (gap analysis can be done, as well)
 - Characteristics of the destination
 - Decision/motivation for visiting the destination

Some frequently used adjectives are:

- Friendly – Unfriendly
- Cheap – Expensive
- Nice – Ugly
- Traditional – Modern
- Exciting – Boring
- Clean – Dirty
- Funny – Sad
- Unsafe – Safe
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Image elements, attributes used for tourism purposes can be:

- Environment appropriate for relaxation
- Rich in natural attractions
- Good parking facilities
- Wide range of cultural programmes
- Shopping facilities
- Wide range of tourist information
- Accessibility
- Sporting facilities
- Good quality accommodation
- Good quality restaurants
- Good value for money
- Untacted nature
- Mass tourism
- Pleasant climate
- Entertainment
- Safety
- Wide range of attractions
- Hospitality
- Nice landscape
- Quietness

Figure 10 – Agreement with attitudes, examples



Source: Judit Sulyok, 2018.

SELF-CHECK & EXERCISES

1) Take a look at the Danube image film at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TiHfYWhDmo What kind of image elements could you find?

Rational elements, attributes

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Emotional elements, feelings

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