This part of the book contains six chapters;

- Chapters 1 and 2, Introduction to research: what, why and who? and Approaches to leisure and tourism research, set the context for research generally and for the background to research in the fields of leisure and tourism.
- Chapter 3, Starting out: research plans and proposals, considers the all-important process of designing a research project and provides a framework for the various components of research discussed in the rest of the book.
- Chapter 4 introduces the topic of the ethical conduct of research, which relates to moral as well as legal and administrative issues.
- Chapter 5, The range of research methods, provides an overview of the range of social science research methods and techniques used in leisure and tourism contexts, which are discussed in more detail in the rest of the book.
- Chapter 6 discusses the fundamental task of reviewing the literature, that is, examining existing published and unpublished research relevant to the project in hand.
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. The recent controversies over the research basis of the global climate change predictions offer a dramatic demonstration of this. 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 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, as industries, public policy concerns and fields of academic inquiry and reflection. The aim is to provide a practical guide to the conduct of research and an appreciation of the role of research in the policy-making, planning and management processes of the leisure and tourism industries and to foster a critical understanding of existing theoretical and applied research.

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 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 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; sightseeing; 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 such travellers invariably engage in leisure activities in addition to the business or personal activity which is the prime motivator for travel. Since the book 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 book is concerned with *how* to do research, so 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?

### 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 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 and communities, the pure 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. 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 at different times or in different places and obtain similar results.

**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 book, 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
of research can be identified corresponding to these three functions, as shown in Figure 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.

1. 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.

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 the field or for which information needs to be updated on a regular basis. It might therefore be described as descriptive. In some texts this form of research is termed exploratory, which is also appropriate, but because the other categories of research, explanatory and evaluative, can also at times be exploratory, the term descriptive is used here. 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 – 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 are therefore reliant on a flow of descriptive research to provide up-to-date information.
Descriptive research 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 *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.

2. *Explanatory research*

Explanatory research moves beyond description to seek to explain the patterns and trends observed, for example:

- A particular type of activity or destination falling in popularity and an explanation is called for.
- Particular tourism developments gain approval against the wishes of the local community: why or how does this happen?
- The arts are patronised by some social groups and 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. 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, at least partially, 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: 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 variation in 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.
3. 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. In the private sector the level of profit is the main criterion used for such evaluations, although additional ratios may also be used. In the public sector, where facilities or services are not usually intended to make a cash profit, research 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 field of leisure and tourism (Shadish et al., 1991).

Why study research?

In general

Why study research? Research and research methods might be studied for a variety of reasons, as summarised in Figure 1.2:

- 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 also advantageous to understand the basis and limitations 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 consider the role of research in the policy-making, planning and management process.

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

Figure 1.2  Why study research?
Of course, for many readers of this book, the immediate challenge is to complete a research-related project as part of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme of study. This book should, of course, assist in this task, but it is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Research projects conducted as part of a curriculum are seen as a learning process to equip the student as a professional consumer, practitioner and/or commissioner of research in professional life.

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 processes 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, typically set out in a document, 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. 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 1.3.

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 1.4, is the most traditional, ‘ideal’ model. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the many alternative models which seek to more accurately reflect real-world decision-making, but guidance to further reading on this issue is given at the end of the chapter.¹ 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;

¹Earlier editions of this book contained a different version of the rational-comprehensive model with nine steps: the current version arose out of work presented in Veal (2010a, Chapters 7–8).
## Figure 1.3 Examples of policies, plans and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Leisure centre</th>
<th>Tourist commission</th>
<th>Arts centre</th>
<th>National park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Maximise use by all age groups</td>
<td>Extend peak season</td>
<td>Encourage contemporary composers</td>
<td>Increase non-government revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Two-year plan to increase visits by older people by 50 per cent</td>
<td>Three-year plan to increase shoulder season visits by promoting new festivals</td>
<td>Three-year plan to commission new work by contemporary composers</td>
<td>Three-year plan to implement user-pays programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Implement daily morning keep-fit sessions for older people</td>
<td>Choose marketing themes</td>
<td>Select composers and commission and produce works</td>
<td>Implement user-pays programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Figure 1.4 The rational-comprehensive model of planning/management

1. Terms of reference/brief
2. Values/mission/ vision/goals
3. Decide planning approach
4. Environmental appraisal
5. Consult with stakeholders
6. Develop options
7. Evaluate options
8. Decide strategy/goals/objectives
9. Implement/manage
10. Monitor/evaluate/feedback
some reflect the fact that political interests often intervene before ‘rational’ or ‘objective’ decisions can be made; while others elevate community/stakeholder 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 steps shown in Figure 1.4 are followed through in the real world. And it is also rare for research to inform the process in all the ways discussed below. The steps depicted 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 1.5.

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. State values/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, 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 5.

3. Decide planning approach: Like research, a range of different methodologies and approaches is available for policy-making and planning. In Veal (2010a: Chapter 7) a range of such methods and approaches is discussed, including: adopting fixed standards of provision; providing opportunity; resource-based planning; meeting demand; meeting the requirements/requests of stakeholders; meeting unmet needs; providing benefits; and increasing participation. The method/approach selected will determine the type of research to be carried out during the policy-making/planning process: for example, a needs-based approach will require a definition of need and a method for collecting information on needs, while resource-based planning will require identification of the range of heritage, cultural and/or environmental resources to be included and processes for data gathering and evaluation.

4. Environmental appraisal: An environmental appraisal involves the gathering of relevant information on the context of the task in hand. Information may relate to the organisation’s internal workings or to the outside world,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in the planning/management process (see Figure 1.4)</th>
<th>Young people and sport in a local community</th>
<th>Sustainable tourism in a tourism destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy/Planning/management</td>
<td>Associated Research</td>
<td>Policy/Planning/management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Terms of reference</td>
<td>Increase young people’s participation in sport</td>
<td>Existing research indicates 40 per cent participation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Set values/mission/goals</td>
<td>Increase participation level to 60 per cent over five years</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Decide planning approach</td>
<td>Needs-based, demand-based, etc.: for discussion, see Veal (2010a: Chapter 7)</td>
<td>As below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Environmental appraisal</td>
<td>Consider existing supply – demand</td>
<td>Existing programmes and infrastructure fully used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Consult stakeholders</td>
<td>Consult sporting clubs, schools, young people</td>
<td>Survey indicates support among all groups and confirms feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Develop options</td>
<td>1. Publicity campaign</td>
<td>Review of experience of each option in other regions, based on published accounts and a survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Free vouchers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Build more community facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Provide support to clubs/schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Train leaders/coaches/teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.5** Examples of planning/management tasks and associated research
### Steps in the planning/management process (see Figure 1.4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in the planning/management process</th>
<th>Young people and sport in a local community</th>
<th>Sustainable tourism in a tourism destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Evaluate options/</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate options 1–5</td>
<td>Evaluate options 1 and 2 against range of options in 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each option costed; on basis of survey evidence, estimate made of cost-effectiveness of each option.</td>
<td>Options 1 and 2 costed and evaluated against a range of accommodation development strategies (option 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Decide strategy/goals/objectives</strong></td>
<td>Options 3 and 4 adopted</td>
<td>Options selected in light of evaluative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Options 3 and 4 recommended</td>
<td>Options ranked in order of effectiveness and net environmental impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Implement – manage</strong></td>
<td>Implement options 3 and 4</td>
<td>Implement public transport and three-star accommodation option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Monitor/evaluate/feedback</strong></td>
<td>Assess success in terms of increased participation. Continue programme: increase resources for training coaches/leaders</td>
<td>Survey indicates participation increase to 45 per cent after one year, but shortage of coaches/leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess success in terms of tourism numbers and traffic congestion. Develop peak public holiday traffic management plan</td>
<td>Annual surveys of traffic conditions and tourism numbers undertaken. Persistent peak public holiday congestion problems noted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.5 (continued)**

Including 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.

5. **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, visitors, 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.

6. **Develop options:** In order to develop a plan or strategy, consideration must be given to what policy 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.

7. **Evaluate options**: 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 procedure requiring 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, 2010a: Chapters 12, 13), and the use of the *importance-performance* technique (Martilla and James, 1977; Harper and Balmer, 1989) or *conjoint analysis* (Claxton, 1994).

8. **Decide strategy/goals/objectives**: Evaluation processes rarely produce a single best solution or course of action. Thus, for example, option A may be cheaper than option B, but option B produces better outcomes. Final decisions on which strategy to pursue must be taken by the governing body of the organisation – the board or council – based on political and/or personal values. A strategy should involve clear statements of what the strategy is intended to achieve (goals), with measurable outcomes and time-lines (objectives).

9. **Implement – manage**: Implementing a plan or strategy is 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.

10. **Monitor/evaluate**: Monitoring progress and evaluating the implementation of strategies is clearly a process with which research is likely to be involved. 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’.

### 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 reports of research, 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. 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 which leisure and tourism managers draw on.

Leisure and tourism research is undertaken by a wide variety of individuals and institutions, as listed in Figure 1.6. The respective roles of these research actors are discussed in turn below.

**Figure 1.6** Who does research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Motivation/purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Part of the job description. Knowledge for its own sake and/or to engage with industry/profession and/or benefit society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Coursework students: projects as learning medium and/or part of professional training Research students: adding to knowledge and training/qualification for a research/academic career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government, commercial and non-profit organisations</td>
<td>Research to inform policy, monitor performance and aid in decision-making. Relevant to the idea of ‘evidence-based policy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Research to inform practice, monitor performance and aid in decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>Research under contract to government, commercial and non-profit organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academics

Academics are members of the paid academic staff of academic institutions, including professors, lecturers, tutors and research staff – in North 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, as discussed under ‘outputs’ below.

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 the academic researcher 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, manage-
ment, 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. Generally
academics become involved in funded research of a practically orientated
nature when their own interests coincide with those of the agency concerned.
For instance an academic may be interested in ways of measuring what moti-
vates 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 industry sources.

Students

PhD and Master’s degree students are major contributors to research. In the
past, theses (or dissertations to use the term more common in North America)
were available only in hard copy at the library of the university which pro-
duced them. Later a photocopy service became available notably from the
University of Michigan, followed by micro-fiche copies, but increasingly in
recent years they have become available in digital form and university libraries
generally subscribe to various thesis databases (see Chapter 6).

In the science area research students often work as part of a team, under the
direction of a supervisor who may determine 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 a wider scope
in their selection of research topic.

PhD theses are the most significant form of student research, but research
done by Master’s degree and graduate diploma students and even undergrad-
uates in the form of projects and honours theses 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 under-
graduates 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, commercial and non-profit
organisations

Government, commercial and non-profit organisations conduct or commission
research to inform policy, monitor performance or aid in decision-making.
A term coined to describe this relationship between policy and research is *evidence-based policy* (Pawson, 2006). Some large organisations have their own in-house research organisations – for example, the Office of National Statistics in the UK, the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Australia and the US Forest Service Experiment Stations in the USA. 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 reports from these organisations can 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, as shown by Cushman *et al.* (2005a). This is descriptive research which few other organisation would have the resources or incentive to undertake.

**Managers**

Professionals in leisure and tourism who recognise the full extent of the management, policy-making and planning process see research as very much part of their responsibilities. Managers may find themselves carrying out research on a range of types of topic, as indicated in Figure 1.7. Since most of the readers of this book will be actual or trainee managers, this is an 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*. 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, sometimes explaining, and the deployment of specific techniques and skills, 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 about 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 for them. 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 using their own and colleagues’ ‘in-house’ skills and time.

Consultants

Consultants offer their research and advisory services to government and commercial and non-profit organisations. Some consultancy organisations are large, multi-national companies involved in accountancy, management and project development consultancy generally, and who often establish specialised units covering the leisure and/or tourism field. Examples are PricewaterhouseCoopers and Ernst and Young. But there are also many 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.

Who pays?

Most research requires financial support to cover the costs of paying full-time or part-time research assistants, to pay for research student scholarships, to pay interviewers or a market research firm to conduct interviews, or to cover travel costs or the costs of equipment. Research is funded from a variety of sources, as indicated in Figure 1.8:
Unfunded: 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.

University internal funds: 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.

Government-funded research councils: Governments usually establish organisations to fund scientific research – for example, the UK Economic and Social Research Council or the Australian Research Council. These or similar bodies often also provide scholarships for research students.

Private trusts: Many private trusts or foundations also fund research – for example, the Ford Foundation and the Leverhulme Trust. Trusts have generally been endowed with investment funds by a wealthy individual or from a public appeal.

Industry: 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.

Research for leisure and tourism planning/management is presented in many forms and contexts. Some of these are listed in Figure 1.9 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.
Academic journal articles

Publication of research in academic journals is considered to be the most prestigious form in academic terms because of the element of refereeing or 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, whose names are listed in the journal. Some of the main refereed journals in the leisure and tourism area are:

- *Journal of Leisure Research* (USA),
- *Leisure Sciences* (USA),
- *Society and Leisure* (Canada),
- *Annals of Leisure Research* (Australia),
- *Annals of Tourism Research* (UK),
- *Tourism Management* (UK),
- *Leisure Studies* (UK),
- *Journal of Travel Research* (USA).

Academic research and publication is, to a large extent, a ‘closed system’. Academics 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 thus 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 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.

**Professional journal articles**

Journals published by professional bodies for their members rarely publish original research, but may publish summaries of research of immediate relevance to practitioners.

**Conference papers/presentations**

Some academic conferences publish the papers presented in a hard-copy or online set of *proceedings*. In some cases such papers have been peer reviewed and have a similar status to academic journals but this is rare in leisure and tourism. Typically research presented at conference, will also be published in journals or book form.

**Books**

Academic books can be divided into *textbooks*, like this one, and *monographs*, which may present the results of a single empirical research project or research programme, may be largely theoretical or may be a mixture of the two. Textbooks are not expected to present original research but may provide summaries and guides to research. Edited books with chapters contributed by a number of authors may be closer to the textbook model, or, if they contain original research, may be closer to the monograph model.

**Policy/planning/management reports**

Research conducted by commercial bodies is usually confidential but that conducted by government agencies is generally available to the public, increasingly via the Internet. Such reports can invariably be found on the websites of national agencies, such as sports councils or tourism commissions and government departments, and local councils. Such reports can take a variety of forms:

- *Position statements*: are similar to the *environmental appraisals* discussed above in relation to the rational-comprehensive planning model. They are compilations of factual 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 council wishes to develop new policies for heritage conservation in its area, a position statement might be prepared listing what actual and potential heritage properties and attractions currently exist, their 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 current and potential consumers and suppliers of a product or service. 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 product or 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 current market – the number of people who use or are likely to use the product or service and their characteristics and expenditure – and actual and potential customer requirements and attitudes.

- **Market segmentation/lifestyle/psychographic studies**: traditionally market researchers attempted to classify consumers into sub-markets or segments on the basis of their product preferences, including leisure activities and holiday behaviour, and their socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation and income. Later they sought to classify people using not only these background social and economic characteristics but also their attitudes, values and behaviour. Such lifestyle segments may be developed as part of any survey-based research project, but there are also commercially developed systems which survey companies may apply to a range of market research projects. Examples are discussed in Chapter 5 (p. 138).

- **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, 1986).

- **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 leisure facilities and services, levels of participation in leisure activities, and views and aspirations of the population concerning their own leisure preferences and desired 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. It has been argued that so-called leisure needs studies are not *needs* studies at all, since they do not investigate what
people need, but what they want, would like to do or might do in the future (Veal, 2009).

- **Tourism strategies/tourism marketing plans**: are the tourism equivalent of the leisure/recreation needs study, but rather than referring to the needs of the local population, tourism strategies or marketing plans refer to the tourism demands of non-local populations to be accommodated in a destination area. Such tourism studies usually consider the capacity of the host area to meet the demands of a projected volume of tourism, in terms of accommodation, transport, existing and potential attractions and acceptable levels of 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.

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**Terminology**

Like any field of study and practice, research methods has its own distinct terminology, some of which is familiar to the wider community and some of which is not. Most terms and expressions will be introduced and defined in the appropriate chapters which follow; but some are common to the whole research process and some key ones are described here.

- **Subject** is used to refer to people providing information or being studied in a research project. For example, if a social survey involves interviews with a sample of 200 people it involves 200 subjects. Some researchers prefer to use the term participant, believing that subject implies subjective, suggesting a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched. The term case is sometimes used, particularly when the phenomenon being researched is not individual people – for example, organisations, countries, destinations, sports.

- **Variable** refers to a characteristic, behaviour pattern or opinion which varies from subject to subject. Thus, for example, age, income, level of holiday-taking or music preferences are all variables. An independent variable is one which is controlled by forces outside the context of the study, and influences dependent variables within the scope of the study. Thus, for example, in a study of outdoor recreation the weather would be an independent variable while the number of people who visit a park is a dependent variable. In another context, such as the study of climate, the weather could be a dependent variable influenced by such independent variables as the behaviour of the sun and the temperature of the oceans.
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, explanatory and evaluative. 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, govern-
mental and commercial organisations, consultants and managers are discussed.
Finally, there is an introduction to the various formats in which research results
may be published, from academic journal articles to a variety of management-
related reports.

Test questions

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 manage-
   ment, as presented in this chapter?
4. Summarise the potential role of research in three of the ten steps in the ‘rational-
   comprehensive’ model of the policy-making/planning/management process
   presented in this chapter.
5. Name three of the 12 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?
Resources

- **Tracking change in leisure participation**: Veal (2006).
- **Models of planning and policy-making**: introductory discussions: Parsons (1995: 248ff), Veal (2010a: Chapter 7–8), for a more advanced discussion, see Treuren and Lane (2003).
- **Tourism research methods**: see Smith (1995) for a quantitative, geographical approach. Ryan (1995) 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 aspect of tourism research, see the comprehensive collection of papers edited by Ritchie and Goeldner (1994).

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 3 above, examine each article and determine whether the research is descriptive, explanatory or evaluative.
Introduction to research: what, why and who?

- **Feasibility studies**: Kelsey and Gray (1986).
- **Leisure/recreation needs studies**: Veal (2009, 2010b).
- **Tourism strategies/marketing plans**: Middleton *et al.* (2009: Chapter 10).