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Book Review

Handbook of Research Methods for Tourism and Hospitality Management, R. Nunkoo (Ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Cheltenham, UK (2018). p. 584 pp (Pbk.), £45.00 ISBN: 9781785366291, (Hbk.), £195 ISBN: 9781785366277

The boom in tourism and hospitality research calls for a book that evaluates methods in a manner accessible to academics and practitioners in the field. This handbook addresses this need well, and sets out: (a) to provide a theoretical and practical guide to the many research methods suitable for tourism and hospitality management; (b) to outline specific methods and their unique advantages and disadvantages; and (c) to describe the key steps required for execution. The handbook comprises 43 chapters authored by 60 individuals from diverse educational and research backgrounds and geographical locations. Such heterogeneity has created a volume that thoroughly reflects modern industry research methods and corresponding debates.

The handbook is divided into five parts, providing an overview of various quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches along with pertinent issues in contemporary tourism and hospitality research. Part I, 'Foundations of Tourism and Hospitality Research', spans Chapters 1–9. This section offers a solid theoretical foundation in methodology by reviewing relevant philosophical paradigms. Part II, 'Qualitative Research Methods' (Chapters 10–21), covers ethnography, meta-theory, grounded theory, participant observation, narrative analysis, Sensory Quasi-Q-Sort, audio research methods, projective techniques, photo elicitation, repertory test technique, archival research, and netnography. Part III, 'Quantitative Research Methods' (Chapters 22–29), follows a similar structure, where experimental research, regression techniques, partial least squares structural equation modeling, and other approaches are presented. In Part IV, 'Mixed Methods Research', semiotics, structuralism, and content analysis (Chapter 31) are discussed along with specific project applications (Chapters 32–38). Part V 'Other Research Issues' closes the volume by considering specific methodological concerns such as sampling design, cross-cultural studies, research ethics, ethical challenges in child-centered research, and knowledge transfer.

Part I explores relatively abstract concepts that frame general research (e.g., positivism, constructionism, postmodernism, critical inquiry, and phenomenological research methods). This section also outlines several basic research-related issues, such as the roles of theory and meaning in theoretical contributions and the use of fieldwork in tourism and hospitality studies. One may argue that this section is not necessary in a methods handbook, particularly because obscure philosophical concepts may confuse readers or diminish their interest in later parts of the book. However, it is important because later chapters refer to the theoretical basis and philosophical background associated with specific methods. Thus, the context provided in Part 1 will make these ideas more readily understandable for new or less experienced researchers. It

is also worth noting that while a research paradigm represents how some scholars perceive the world, there is no right or wrong so two ambiguities in Part I of the handbook may benefit from clarification. First, some contributors considered a certain research approach as subjective, whereas others found it objective or a mix of both (e.g., Chapters 2 and 4). These disparate views could confuse readers. Second, although the editor concedes that "All knowledge is theory laden, while all methods are theory driven" (p.4), they discuss method and theory in isolation. The relationship between these concepts is not fully addressed and deserves further exploration.

The sections on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are well structured and explained. In addition to detailed theoretical discussion of statistical principles, the authors offer practical guidance and cite examples from tourism settings and studies. For instance, in Chapter 18, Bill draws upon the work of [Berger \(1992\)](#) and [Harper \(2002\)](#) in defining photo elicitation as the inclusion of photographs in a research interview. Based on his work involving tourists' gastronomic experiences, Bill presents the advantages and mechanics of using photo elicitation as a technique. He further describes how photo elicitation has enhanced his research and clarified misperceptions he held as a chef regarding individuals' gastronomic experiences. The contributors also operationalize each method clearly throughout the handbook. In Chapter 12, authors refer to vacation-related decision making to illustrate major activities in the grounded theory approach (i.e., coding, memoing, integrative diagrams, and computer assistance). The benefits and pitfalls of each method are also summarized in each chapter. Chapter 26 identifies the greatest advantage of experimental research as its assurance of high internal validity, namely because scholars can rule out rival explanations for their findings ([Schulz, 1999](#)). Partial least squares structural equation modeling and covariance-based structural equation modeling are differentiated in Chapter 29 to guide readers in choosing between them. A noteworthy gap in the handbook involves social desirability response bias, which is common in qualitative studies (Part II) but not given attention here. Several new methods, such as those involving big data and machine learning, are similarly overlooked.

The chapters falling under "Other Research Issues" provide valuable insights into potentially controversial topics. Undoubtedly, sample design is an integral part of the research process (Chapter 39). Cross-cultural research represents a major arm of tourism and hospitality scholarship (Chapter 40). Ethical considerations are inherent to all research investigations and greatly influence how studies are conducted (Chapters 41 and 42). Lastly, scholars have long been concerned about the missing link between research production and industry applications (Chapter 43). Part V of the handbook thus directs readers' attention to contemporary issues in tourism and hospitality research to improve understanding of how such topics may be navigated. However, compared with other sections of this volume, the unstructured nature of these chapters is a potential weakness.

Overall, *The Handbook of Research Methods for Tourism and Hospitality*

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Management makes a timely contribution to the discourse on tourism research and is indeed “essential reading for students, academics and researchers in tourism.” By and large, this book achieves its objectives. It offers a fresh perspective through methodological discussion on contemporary themes, such as how to perform research related to climate change and children. Similarly refreshing is the space devoted to philosophical principles underlying various methods. The handbook’s editor should be commended for including a vast range of research approaches from diverse contributors. The book’s parts, taken as discrete entities, introduce readers to specific methods and their applications in tourism-related fields. This usefulness is enhanced by applied examples. Most sections are well-written and well-referenced, offering content appropriate for the volume’s intended readership. Readers who engage with the book in its entirety will gain rich insight into various methods to be incorporated into tourism and hospitality management studies. The editor has thus compiled a welcome resource to promote the field’s development by raising awareness and encouraging adoption of a diverse suite of research approaches.

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