The ‘Cruise Ship Railing Dance’: Conducting academic research in the cruise domain

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Dancing on the Railing...
Not optimal, but it is the only place to hold on!
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CRUISE RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Status Quo
Cruise Research
Following the Sector’s Growth Trend

Cubic Extrapolation of cruise-related published articles

Data Source: Papathanassis & Beckmann 2011

Cubic extrapolation of CLIA members’ passenger numbers.

Data source: CLIA (2010)
**Cruise Research Overview and Issues**

- **Purpose question:**
  - Applied research (problem-oriented)?
  - Pure research (knowledge-oriented)?
  - Convenience research (researcher-oriented)?

- **Originality question:**
  - Novel theories / hypotheses?

- **Relevance question:**
  - Improved understanding of cruise-related phenomena?
  - Impact on the development of the sector?
  - Educational impact?

- **Rigour question:**
  - Transparency & replicability?
  - Contributions to the methodological toolkit?
### Descriptive Statistics
- **Examples:** Marti, 1992; Teye & Lecrerc, 1998; Douglas & Douglas, 2004
- **Sampling Frame:** Mostly single cruise (or cruises of the same company)
- **Average sample size (primary):** 340
- **Secondary Data Sources:** Sector indicators, Incidents, Websites, Brochures
- **Data collection method:** Questionnaire Survey (primary), Content analysis (secondary)

### Comparisons (ANOVA, Ch-Square, Cluster Analysis, Z- & t-Tests)
- **Examples:** Moscardo & Morrison, 1996; Miller & Tam, 2000; Petrick, 2003; Sirakaya & Petrick, 2004; Cramer & Blanton, 2006; Brownwell, 2008
- **Sampling Frame:** Different voyages – same ship, secondary sources (e.g. GISS data, market research data)
- **Average sample size:** 1188 (primary), 15570 (secondary)
- **Data Collection Method:** Questionnaire Survey
- **Data recycling:** Petrick, 2003 – Sirikaya & Petrick, 2004

### Association / Modelling (Wald Test, Univariate Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis)
- **Examples:** Marti, 2004; Gabe & Lynch, 2006; Jones, 2007; Hung & Petrick, 2010;
- **Sampling Frame (Av. Sample Size):** Single port visitors (394), single cruise (300), undergraduates
- **Data Collection Method:** Questionnaire Survey & Semi-structured interviews
- **Data Recycling:** Hung & Petrick, 2010 x 2 (Journal of Tourism Management / Annals of Tourism Research)

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**Majority of Quant. Research (Turning funded market research into a published paper?)**

**Second Most Frequent Quant. Research (Data access opportunism?)**

**Rare Quant. Research (Lack of appropriate sampling frames?)**
Quantitative Research & Cruising
Main Issues & Implications

Absence of global sampling frames

Data availability determines research question / objectives

Novel research area

Under-developed research infrastructure

Cruising = Pre-paradigmatic field of research

Cruising = Fragmented field of research

Bridging the practice-research gap

- Academic practitioner journals (more focus on research relevance and discussion – wider audience)
- Closer involvement with professional associations (e.g. port alliances)
- Executive education for practitioners (brings them closer to academia)

Academic networking

- Data / access sharing
- Development of research agendas
- Long-term research projects (beyond the scope of a single paper)

Qualitative research requirement

- Identification / creation of testable models / theories
- Theoretical / research continuity

Potential of online research methods

- Internet as a global sampling frame
- Open access
- Population Representiveness?
Qualitative Inquiry in the Cruise Industry
Methods Applied, Strengths & Weaknesses

Interviews
(Tracy, 2000; Miller & Grazer, 2002; Toh et al., 2005; Stewart, 2006; Testa, 2007; Gibson, 2008; Szarycz, 2008)

Case studies
(Foster, 1986; Dwyer & Forsyth, 1998)

Secondary data analysis
(Douglas & Douglas, 1996; Dale and Robinson, 1999; Dev, 2006)

Critical incident analysis
(Petrick et al., 2008)

Observation
(Tracy, 2000; Thompson, 2002 & 2004; Jaakson, 2004)

Strengths

- ‘Grounded’ data collection and analysis
- Creates understanding of complex situations (exploration)
- Individuals can be studied in more depth

Weaknesses

- The role of the researcher
- Generalisability
- Risk of portraying research findings descriptively (oversimplifying)
- Data analysis is a time consuming process

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Obstacles to (Qualitative) Inquiry in the Cruise Industry & Recommendations

Consensual Issues
- Particularly for studies not primarily focusing on economic advantages for the cruise operator
- Ethical considerations regarding covert vs. overt research

The Objective Nature of Cruise Ships
- Geographic nature sets boundaries for research
- Fragmentation of the industry
- Population diversity

Qualitative studies that create an understanding of a variety of situations from a variety of perspectives

Innovative research approaches that help to overcome the identified obstacles

Research Resources (financially & time)
THE POTENTIAL OF EMERGING ONLINE RESEARCH METHODS

Data Mining Example – Cruise Critic
Online Content Analysis – Data Mining

Data Source

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Online Content Analysis – Data Mining Context

Carnival Liberty Cruise Review by endobaby
Member Name: endobaby
Cruise Date: July 2006
Embarkation: Miami
Destination: Eastern Caribbean
Cabin Category: IS
Cabin Number: 6306
Booking Method: Cruise Line

N = 33873. Source: CruiseCritic.com data set.
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. $N = 17066$. Source: CruiseCritic.com data set.
Thanks for your attention!