

Researching Hospitality and Tourism

Levent Altinay, Alexandros Paraskevas and Soo Cheong Jang
Routledge
2nd ed.

London

2016

Review DOI

10.1108/IJCTHR-12-2015-0144

Keywords *Teaching and learning, Research methodology*

Every student needs to write a dissertation at least once during their studies. Yet, it is always a big challenge for students to get to the point of a well-written and well-structured dissertation. For supervisors too, it is an experience to support and mentor each student through their dissertation. And yes, students have courses where they learn how to do research and to write up a dissertation, but it is difficult to get all the relevant information in one semester.

At this point, the book by Levent Altinay, Alexandros Parakevas and Soo Cheong Jang can play a crucial role. Their book is a perfect guide for students to complete their first dissertation. The book provides a detailed structure of each step of undertaking a literature review, designing a sample as well as compiling thoughts for a dissertation. Each step is clearly explained in several chapters and gives students and supervisors a great guideline to go through.

Like every good book, this one starts by clarifying basic questions. In this book, the beginning questions are, how to start a research project, how to formulate research questions and what is the role of a supervisor. It is important to clarify these questions because students can be quite confused when they start their research. A good example in this book is when it comes to the role of the supervisor. The authors provide key points for a

student to plan a meeting with their supervisor and what support students can get from their university and supervisors. In addition, the book provides questions students should consider before they meet their supervisor. This is an excellent guide by the authors because meetings between students and supervisors are sometimes wasted because of unstructured and unprepared meetings. In this way, students are prepared before they meet their supervisor and meetings become more fruitful and supportive.

The next step is to start the literature research and the writing of the literature review. Again the main focus is on the detail of each process, where the authors explain simple but somewhat important questions. One example is the question about which paper is worthwhile to read. In today's digital society, students tend to take every word for granted that they can find on the internet. Conversations with friends or information from blogs or social media provide really fast copy and paste to be used in dissertations. But again, is all this information relevant and objective? The book gives students a guide to address this issue and help them to find the right academic text to read. Furthermore, the book proceeds step by step through each stage of finding the right literature. Again the authors provide questions and hints for students on how to read through each paper and select the information they need.

After the clarification of the literature review and research philosophy, the book proceeds to the next big step of writing a dissertation, with six chapters covering data sampling, collection and analysis. Again each chapter explains every step in

detail, so that students are not lost in these processes. For example, the sampling chapter illustrates the different methods of sampling in theory and practice. The examples and small case studies are especially supportive of students and a clear way to help them to implement these methods in their own studies.

Moreover, in the chapters on analysis of data, excellent examples are given. Difficult theoretical guidelines are explained in a simple and visual way. A great point is made when the authors separate qualitative and quantitative research methods into separate chapters. Normally dissertation handbooks tend to combine both approaches in one chapter and confuse the reader more than help them. Again these two chapters are written in a really detailed way, so that students can understand the methods and can transfer them to their own data analysis. The textbook provides specific examples on how to calculate all analyses step by step. In addition, the book gives an overview on how to use SPSS for the calculation process and supports students to use the software correctly.

The final chapter is on how to combine all information and write up the dissertation. Again the focus lies in the detail. The authors introduce each step in writing each dissertation chapter, with examples and suggestions. In addition to this chapter, the book gives a short introduction on what can be done with the dissertation after successful approval by the university. Students are provided advice on how to transfer their dissertation to a journal paper and start their career as a researcher and scientist. However, as the book is written for students who have never written an academic

dissertation before, this information is more relevant for the student's supervisor or for postgraduate students. Also, as it is written in detail giving concrete guidelines, it would be difficult for undergraduate students to follow-up at this point.

A great and supportive part of each chapter is the rounding off of the topic with specific case studies. These are a useful support tool for students to obtain additional support in their progress through their dissertation writing. These case studies give detailed information and examples on how each research method can be used and implemented correctly in the research and writing process of every student.

As a conclusion, it can be said that this book is an excellent example of a support book for students who are beginning to write their dissertation and start their research. Students get detailed explanations with examples and guidelines that guide them through the difficult time of writing their thesis. Yet, the simplicity is really supportive for students of a bachelor's degree who are writing their first ever dissertation. For masters or PhD students, the book is too simplistic and lacks details, such as the methodology part, where the differences between qualitative and quantitative are brilliantly explained but not detailed enough to write a dissertation for postgraduate degree courses. Nevertheless, the book should be used in undergraduate dissertation writing courses as a guideline for lecturers, as well as a mentor to help students to write the first dissertation in their lives.

Christian Kahl

Graduate School Hospitality and Tourism Management, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia