ADOPTED RESEARCH DESIGNS BY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY POSTGRADUATES IN THE LIGHT OF RESEARCH ONION

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ABSTRACT

Background: Research design is the explicit techniques used to identify, choice, process, and analyze data about a research topic. All researchers must adopt and justify a specific research design and methodology.

Aim: This study aims to explore the adopted methodologies by tourism and hospitality postgraduates, in order to shed the light on the importance of teaching a comprehensive research methods modules for postgraduates.

Methodology: A qualitative research design based on an interpretivist philosophical worldview was adopted to analyze the methodological contents of tourism and hotel-related theses (N=188) undertaken at Fayoum University.

Findings: While most theses (94.2%) did not consider/refer explicitly or implicitly to the adopted philosophy, only 5.8% (n=11) of them mentioned their philosophy, including Positivism and pragmatism. In addition, 100% of the theses adopted the cross-sectional as a time horizon while data collection.

Implications: The findings of this study may be valuable for teaching comprehensive and effective modules on research methods for tourism and hospitality postgraduates.

Limitations: This study was limited to theses conducted at the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University. The future research may extend the sampling process to include a wider range of the postgraduates' theses.

KEYWORDS: Postgraduates, Theses, Methodologies, Approach, philosophies, tourism, and hospitality, Fayoum.

1. INTRODUCTION

The research design has been defined as ''the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose…'' (Selltiz et al., 1959:25). It involves the choices regarding the types of questions that need to be asked to generate the required data, the methods of data collection, sampling, data

analysis, as well as piloting and revision of research questions (Cooper and Schindler, 1998). In addition, a research design deals with different aspects of the research procedure, from philosophical assumptions to data analysis (De Lisle, 2011). Creswell (2009: 5) defined research design as, "the plan or proposal to conduct research, involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods."

So, it is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem since it defines the study type (e.g., descriptive) and sub-type (e.g. systematic review), research question, hypotheses, variables, data collection methods, and a statistical analysis plan (Gorard, 2013). Hence, the key purpose of all research designs is to obtain accurate and trustful evidence for answering the research question. This role is emphasized by De Vaus, (2001: 9) stating, *''the function of the research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible.''*

In social science, research designs fall under three major categories: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method (Creswell, 2009). However, classifying social research design into sequential stages is a debatable issue amongst many social science research methodologists, e.g. (Tashakkori and Taddlie, 1998, 2010; Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009; Cooper and Schindler, 2008; Creswell, 2009). To rationalize the general research design of this study, three examples of social research design models are discussed.

The first model of social research design is proposed by Crotty, (1998) who separated epistemology and theoretical perspectives by identifying four chronological stages. These stages are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. According to Crotty (1998), the choice of epistemology leads the researcher to choose the appropriate theoretical perspective, which will, in turn, inform the methodology and finally the related set of methods, which include both data collection and data analysis.

The second model proposed by Saunders et al. (2019) argued that research design involves six layers of the "research onion" as a research design model (see Figure 1). The layers of the research onion are philosophies (e.g., positivism), approaches (either inductive or deductive), strategies or methodologies (e.g., case study), choices or the type of methods used (e.g. mono method), time horizon (e.g. longitudinal) and techniques and procedures (these include data collection and data analysis techniques).

Finally, Creswell, (2009) suggested a three-component framework for designing any research. Creswell's framework considers the interconnection of worldviews or philosophies (e.g., constructionism),

strategies or methodologies of inquiry (e.g., mixed methods strategies, i.e., sequential), and research methods (e.g. data collection, i.e. questionnaire). To summarize, there is substantial overlap between all research designs. Regardless of this, the research design stages and phases are primarily reliant upon the type of research required whether it is qualitative or quantitative, or mixed methods. This study adapts by Saunders et al. (2016) framework research design as its general framework design as shown in Figure 1.

In recent decades, tourism and hospitality research has been deloped increasingly in developing countries. Many studies were conducted within Egyptian tourism and hospitality context (see, for example, Sobaih & Jones, 2015; Wafik, et al., 2017). Some studies have established in a scientific approach. In addition, several methods build a theoretical base to study the future. Nevertheless, new approaches were not added to these studies. There is a gap in the adopted research methodologies and design by tourism and hospitality postgraduates and researchers. So, the research onion model if it is used for the futures studies, it can serve as an empirical approach to build up methodology and develop the future research design. Consequently, this study aims to analyze the adopted methodologies by tourism and hospitality postgraduates. The main research question guided this study was:

To what extent have tourism and hospitality postgraduates adopted clear research deigns/ methodology for their theses?

This question can be answered using content analysis. Content analysis can be effectively used as a tool for qualitative as well as quantitative research (Graneheim & Leman, 2004). Content analysis in tourism and hospitality research has been applied to a variety of data and various depths of interpretation (e.g., Cheng & Edward, 2017). This study will contribute to the theory on the research methods in tourism and hospitality in developing and emergent contexts, including Egypt. It is also expected to underline the significance of teaching comprehensive courses or modules on research designs and methodologies for postgraduates.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy outlines the research, allows researchers to clarify the used methods, and understands the expectations that support the research techniques. It varies with the research goals and the way to attain these goals (Masadeh, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Many studies used dissimilar categorizations, descriptions, and categorizations of research philosophies concerning the research methods like ontology, epistemology,

and axiology (Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012). The study philosophies start in the tourism research from its proposal phase to conclusion (Altinay et al., 2015). Based on Saundras onion model (2016) there are five philosophies as follows:

2.1.1 POSITIVISM

Positivism appeared in the 19th century by French philosopher Auguste Comte (Bergin et al., 2008). Then, Whitehead and Russell outspread the conception of traditional Positivists (Downward & Mearman, 2004). Downward & Mearman, (2004) and Rubin & Rubin (2012) agreed that the Positivist claims impartial realism, which is observed and measured without prejudice. It embraces concepts and theories that institute world understanding with the basis of truth . Rubin & Rubin (2012) and Nunkoo (2018) previewed that Positivist implies fixed reality which is measurable, and there is just one truth, one external reality. Positivists presuppose that knowledge is neutral, inductive, and can be obtained by quantitative methods, which are independent of human perception. Accordingly, positivists excluded non-experimental methodologies from being scientific because they have insufficient observations (Downward & Mearman, 2004). Positivists assess their research success by measuring how their findings match several researchers to minimize qualitative human practices into quantified statistical figures (Majeed, 2019). In tourism and hospitality research, the quantitative approaches popularity can be expounded that research appeals to various notions, concepts, and theories from many fields such as marketing, sociology, and management, which are affected by the positivistic paradigm (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

2.1.2 CRITICAL REALISM

Critical realism (CR) developed from the term's transcendental realism and critical naturalism (Bergin et al., 2008). It is an applicable comparatively philosophical paradigm to be an alternative to positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism paradigms (Lawani, 2020). It appeals to combine and resolve 'ontological realism, epistemological relativism, and judgmental rationality (Bergin et al., 2008). Wikgren (2005) and Gorski (2013) agreed that CR assumed that outside realism occurs in both natural and social science, and their relations are seen as complex phenomenon analysis Critical realists consider the social world ontology to explain a conceptual framework to be discussed and afford suitable principles (Kemp, 2005). In this vein, Easton (2010) and Fletcher (2017) assumed that CR looks for measuring the fundamental causal relationships between social actions to get an improved understanding to propose strategic recommendations for

the social problems. Ontologically, CR supposes that realism is stratified into three fields: the real, the actual, and the empirical (Lawani, 2020).

2.1.3 INTERPRETIVE

The German sociologist Max Weber is the promoter of Interpretivism (Chowdhury, 2014). Interpretivism is based on studying behavior as it exists naturally (Gale & Beeftink, 2005a). It emphasizes people's character nature and their contribution to both cultural and social life (Chowdhury, 2014). Gray (2014), Saunders et al. (2019), and (Ma, 2020) agreed that interpretivist aims to have several explanations and understandings about social life from different human views. It is mostly used in qualitative research that encompasses interpretive descriptive research, description review, and case study (Addis & Podestà, 2005). As the interpretive inquire, watching, listening, feeling, asking, recording, and examining (Gale & Beeftink, 2005). It is described as an umbrella term including numerous diverse schools of thought (Dean, 2018). Accordingly, interpretive researchers not simply explore the attendance or nonattendance of a causal relationship but also the ways to be manifested. Hence, it goes beyond what has happened to get how it has happened (Chowdhury, 2014).

2.1.4 POSTMODERNISM

In the second half of the nineteenth century, philosophers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger began to doubt the absolute truth. They have reviewed the development idea, depending on whether it results from a theory that can be historicized and dubitable, undoubtedly not absolute (Addis & Podestà, 2005). Kroeze (2012) and Forghani et al. (2015) asserted that postmodernism is one of the mental currents that had tremendous significance in and impact on numerous areas, including education. Hence, postmodernism is a philosophical trend that rejects modern western philosophy, handling the denial, destruction, deconstruction, and devastation of all the current concepts and beliefs. In epistemology, postmodernism is deprived of any signifying activities, believing that everything is just a language game (Zhang & Hui, 2016; Farhan, 2019). Postmodernism became a noticeable philosophy in Literature, Art, Philosophy, and Architecture. Postmodernism is concerned with the collective consciousness democratization of and also postmodernism signifies the triumph of individuality (Packwood & Sikes, 1996; Forghani et al., 2015; Farhan, 2019).

2.1.5 PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism arose out of the carnage of the Civil War as an approach of suspicion toward absolutist ideologies (Maddux & Donnett, 2015). It is an alternative to abstract and rationalistic science (Goldkuhl, 2004). It affirms that the individual is mainly active in the creation of their world (Maddux & Donnett, 2015). Goldkuhl (2004), Lincoln et al. (2011), and Kaushik & Walsh (2019) affirmed that paradigm is used to apply the philosophical assumptions in social research and to set the fundamental beliefs that control the research actions, which appears as fundamental something to study. Pragmatism also refuses to be engaged in metaphysical concepts like truth and realism. As a substitute, it consents that sole or numerous authenticities can be open to empirical inquiry (Creswell et al., 2007). Accordingly, Pragmatists have a deep sense of justice (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

2.2 APPROACHES TO THEORY DEVELOPMENT

The theory is defined in numerous ways reliant on dissimilar philosophical attitudes. As it is a systematic customary of statements about a common performance or structure expected to grasp through a considerably wide range of detailed examples. In other words, it is a hypotheses network of progress to be conceptualized and explained on a particular social or natural spectacle. Hence, every hypothesis grants a declaration about the link between two or more variables as being the building blocks of theories (Gill and Johnson, 2002; Pathirage et al., 2008). Saunders et al. (2016) differentiate three core approaches to theory development which are inductive, deductive, and abductive.

2.2.1 DEDUCTIVE APPROACH

The deduction is the unidentified specific identification, comes from its similarity to a set of identified evidence (Rothchild, 2006), by testing hypothesis, which starts with a traditional concept and checks if this can be applied to cases. Accordingly, Hyde (2000), Pathirage et al. (2008), Soiferman (2010) and Bergdahl & Berterö (2015) asserted that deductive research initiates with the general and finishes with the specific. In other words, it goes ahead from theory to data.

Hence, the deductive approach involves conceptual or theoretical structure development by applying practical observation (Ali & Birley, 1999; Pathirage et al., 2008). Though, the quantitative approach is a detective and depends on phenomena reality (Aslam et al., 2012). This may be difficult for articles with no research debating or discussing strategy but diverge from assumption (Kovács & Spens, 2005).

2.2.2 INDUCTIVE APPROACH

Inductive is constructing process, initiating with cases observations, and looking for establishing generalizations about the phenomenon under examination (Hyde, 2000). Hence, Pathirage et al. (2008), Soiferman (2010), and Bergdahl & Berterö (2015) agreed on inductive research starting from data to theory or specific to the general. Induction mainly uses qualitative methods (Kovács & Spens, 2005) which begin from observations to generalizations (Butnaru, 2015). The inductive method creates theories instantaneously; hence it cannot rationalize knowledge and cannot be used in theories and hypothesis formulation (Haig, 2005; Hibbert et al., 2014; Bergdahl & Berterö, 2015). Preliminarily, tourism appeals to practical studies or investigation to raise the phenomena interpretation and analysis to extract the hypothesis or theories (Aslam et al., 2012).

2.2.3 ABDUCTIVE APPROACH

Charles Saunders Peirce presents many fundamental abduction descriptions (Reid, 2018) as abduction is an alternative to scientific implication judgment (Brandt & Timmermans, 2021). It is a process of creating a descriptive proposal with a new idea (Tan et al., 2018), a review of an existing theory, or a new theory development (Brandt & Timmermans, 2021). The abductive approach rises from the vision that the most outstanding science progresses neither tracked the outline deduction nor pure induction (Kovács & Spens, 2005). Hence, it generates a hypothetical proposal which is then explained by deduction and empirically proved through induction beliefs through continuous review of the deduction and induction process (Kaiser et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2018). Abduction initiates with an unexpected, irregular, or unexpected observation in the shed of current theories and then regulates the implications of discovery (Haig, 2005; Brandt & Timmermans, 2021). Briefly, conception integration is a significant portion of abduction as it does not happen in the context of a steady language because the new hypotheses formation relates with the new theoretical development (Yu, 2006).

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE

The qualitative research origins start from social and cultural anthropology, history, psychology, philosophy, and sociology (Haradhan, 2018). It is designated as a naturalistic or explanatory approach (Mogensen et al., 1998). Hence, Qualitative research has been a distinctive approach in social science as it offers a clear realization of human behavior, feeling, attitudes, and capabilities. Accordingly, the positivist, interpretivism, and critical paradigms are used in it (Haradhan, 2018; Bowen et al., 2017;

O'Cathain, 2019). Its nature is to be inductive, and its hypotheses are from data analysis instead of stating it at the outset (Mogensen et al., 1998; Haradhan, 2018).

Qualitative research contains an extensive variety of methods (Mogensen et al., 1998) concerned with 'what' 'why' and 'how' questions to have in-depth interpretation. Hence, observational, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, focus groups, logic, ethnography, comparative study, and open-ended questionnaires (Mogensen et al., 1998; Polkinghorne, 2005; Njie & Asimiran, 2014; Haradhan, 2018; Vizcarguenaga-Aguirre & López-Robles, 2020). While as Quantitative research explains a phenomenon issue by data gathering in numerical form and analyzing with mathematical systems, particularly statistics (Apuke, 2017).

Quantitative research is designed with allocated variables and hypotheses. The collected data supports or rejects the allocated paradigms (Maxwell, 2004). It also shows which tool is efficient for the study purpose to propound rules and facts that can stand on their own regardless it is true or not (Daniel, 2016). Cohen (2011) debates that quantitative research is used in epistemology and ontology regarding human behavior which can be controlled (Yap & Wong, 2007). Accordingly, quantitative approaches use theory to generate data (Daniel, 2016).

Saunders et al. (2016) delimit research selections to the quantitative and qualitative research methods, in addition to the simple or complex mix of both or mono methods use (Melnikovas, 2018). The Mono method is chosen when the research is dedicated to qualitative or quantitative data gathering (Melnikovas, 2018); while mixed methods have been crossbred, and combined (Bowen et al., 2017). As mixed methods are chosen when quantitative and qualitative methods are utilized in the same research to attain different aims and offset the mono method limitations. It can be either mixed-method design or mixed model design (Jorgenson & Vesaas, 1962; Mik-meyer, 2020). While multi-method choice requires the usage of qualitative or quantitative methods, although the research is focused on one of them (Saunders et al., 2007; Melnikovas, 2018).

2.4 RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Research strategies are collecting data systems of the research projects or, either practical or hypothetical research (Hernández et al., 2016). Each one can be used for investigative, explanatory, and descriptive research. It may also be used for either the deductive approach or the inductive approach (Yin 2003). Several methods and techniques adopted are according to the problem, objectives research (Kapur, 2018). It also faces numerous challenges because of the methodological limits for the

strategy's examination and analysis (Hernández et al., 2016). According to Saundras (2016), there are various strategies such as:

2.4.1 EXPERIMENT

The experiment strategy has remained exempt from paradigm changes in knowledge psychology during the past century (McDonough, 2017). An experiment is an examination where a hypothesis is tested methodically (Buchanan, 1981). The simplest experiments are attentive to a relation among two variables (WEBB, 1949). An independent variable (the reason) is operated, and the dependent variable (the result) is deliberated; any extra variables are controlled (Buchanan, 1981). While complex experiments consider the changing size and the comparative importance of two or more independent variables. Therefore, Experiments is usually used in exploratory and explanatory research to get the answer to 'how' and 'why' questions (McDonough, 2017).

2.4.2 SURVEY

The survey strategy is mostly used in the social sciences to empirically study the individualities and interrelations of psychological and sociological variables (Roberts, 1999). It collects information from some individuals over their responses to several questions. The sampling goal is to get an adequate sample that represents the population of interest (Ponto, 2015). Accordingly, survey studies small and large populations by choosing the samples chosen from it to find out the relative prevalence, interrelations, and distribution of psychological and sociological variables (Roberts, 1999; Kapur, 2018). Hence, surveys can be used in quantitative research by using numerically rated items questionnaires or in qualitative research by using open-ended questions, or both strategies by using mixed methods (Ponto J, 2015).

2.4.3 ARCHIVAL DATA

Archival data strategy is concerned with data gathering and storing for later planned use (Das et al., 2018). It does not contain direct interaction with alive objects and moral subjects (Subotić, 2021). Archival data may contain count data, office records, histories, educational archives, company annual reports, personnel files, and survey responses which are carried out at diverse times (Das et al., 2018). Accordingly, it depends on the obtainability and access of its methods and the competence and support of the archival staff (Hodder, 2017; Subotić, 2021). Hence, an archival data strategy permits answering research questions that are concerned with the past and fluctuations over time (Gilliland & McKemmish, 2004). In the

social sciences, archival data techniques have been considered a noninvasive technique of collecting mandatory data (Das et al., 2018).

2.4.4 CASE STUDY

In the social sciences, case study strategy has been mostly used and it is also valuable in practical fields (Starman, 2013). It is used to explore practical phenomena in real-life situations. It can be used to describe and explain compound fundamental relations in real-life involvements. (Yin, 1994; Starman, 2013; Hernández et al., 2016). It is also limited to a solo setting, subject, or occasion. Accordingly, there are diverse types of case studies which are life-history case studies, interview case studies, observational case studies, organizational case studies, and multi-site and relative case studies (Kapur, 2018).

2.4.5 ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology strategy describes and explains the social world over the first field study (Wacquant, 2002). As it presents social life narratives which is complex and based on a static variable and another socially constructed one (Tavory & Timmermans, 2009). The anthropologist exists with the local community and gathers life detailed accounts of the traditions and local people behaviors (Palmer, 2001). Anthropology is engrained in the inductive approach. It emanates from the field of anthropology (Wacquant, 2002). Ethnographic research has a flexible ability to cover a wide extent of Topics (McGranahan, 2015). Nash (1996) states that the first tourism study was by Nunez of weekend tourism in a Mexican village, in the 1960s. Since, then, tourism has grown from an activity to a severe business which is both academically and commercially (Palmer, 2001).

2.4.6 ACTION RESEARCH

Action research strategy is concerned with the resolution study of significant social or administrative subjects together with those who practice these subjects directly (Grogan et al., 2007). Hence, action research is a correlation amongst three discourses which are on theory, on practice, and an intermediating discourse on connecting those (Young, 2006). Accordingly, action research concentrates on, to some extent, "actions", rather than "about action", and their condition explanation of this (Bowes, 1996; Grogan et al., 2007). Accordingly, it moves social analysis from a linear reason and result framework to a participating outline that is inserted in the empirical complications of the research difficulties (Young, 2006). Action research supports the applicants to choose n the research

agenda, endorse the research, assess the process, and benefit from the outcome (Arrowsmith, 2006; Grogan et al., 2007).

2.4.7 GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory is concerned with gathering a logically reliable set of data and investigating actions to discover theory or develop it (Reiter et al., 2011). It begins with a methodical, inductive, comparative, and interactive approach to collect and analyze data and contains developing categories of examination which has emerged from successive analysis over theoretical and deductive reasoning (Biles & Biles, 2010). This entails that the researcher does not have to be attentive to hypotheses testing which is taken from prevailing theoretical frameworks, but rather improves a new theory (Dunne, 2011). Accordingly, it will answer the "What was going on" question by making substantive or formal theory (Samik-ibrahim, 2000).

2.4.8 NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Narrative inquiry is extensively recognized as a practical strategy to guiding qualitative research (Coulter et al., 2007). In social sciences narrative inquiry is considered as a philosophical and theoretical approach that turns the researcher to live stories, and as a practical strategy that emphasizes the stories to gather data (O' Toole, 2018). Biography, autobiography, life story is considered as understanding experience tools (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). In narrative inquiry, the data analysis process encompasses the data synthesizing into clarification that needs actions from the data to the developing plan, continually testing the story with the database (Coulter et al., 2007). Accordingly, it is suitable for positions when researchers target is to understand in combined and temporally intelligible methods, complex social practices, and life as it is existed (McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013).

2.5 TIME HORIZONS

Research Time horizons mean the periods to be studied or sequential horizon of changing extent. The research time horizons design is independent of research strategy or method. Saunders et al., (2007) distinguish two basic time horizons:

2.5.1 CROSS-SECTIONAL

Cross-sectional research usually uses the survey strategy. They try to define the prevalence of a phenomenon to clarify its related factors. However, they similarly use qualitative methods. Numerous case studies are focused on interviews that have been conducted over a short period .

2.5.2 LONGITUDINAL

The main strong point of longitudinal research is that it the capacity to study any changes or improvements. However, the researcher can measure control of the studied variables and assure that they are not impacted by the research procedure itself (Hernández et al., 2016).

2.6 TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

It contains the data collection and analysis, the used data either primary or secondary, selecting sample, designing questionnaire, interviews making, etc.

3. METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

This methodological study aimed to analyze the adopted methodologies by tourism and hospitality postgraduates. It also explores the main motivations and reasons for adopting a specific research methodology/design. To achieve its aim, this study adopted a pure qualitative research design based on "research onion" presented by Saunders et al (2007). This research onion has main layers description which are important to formulate an effective methodology especially in social sciences. Therefore, it is obvious the layers of the research onion guided the different sections of the paper. The adopted philosophy is interpretivism, inductive approach, the methodological choice is mono
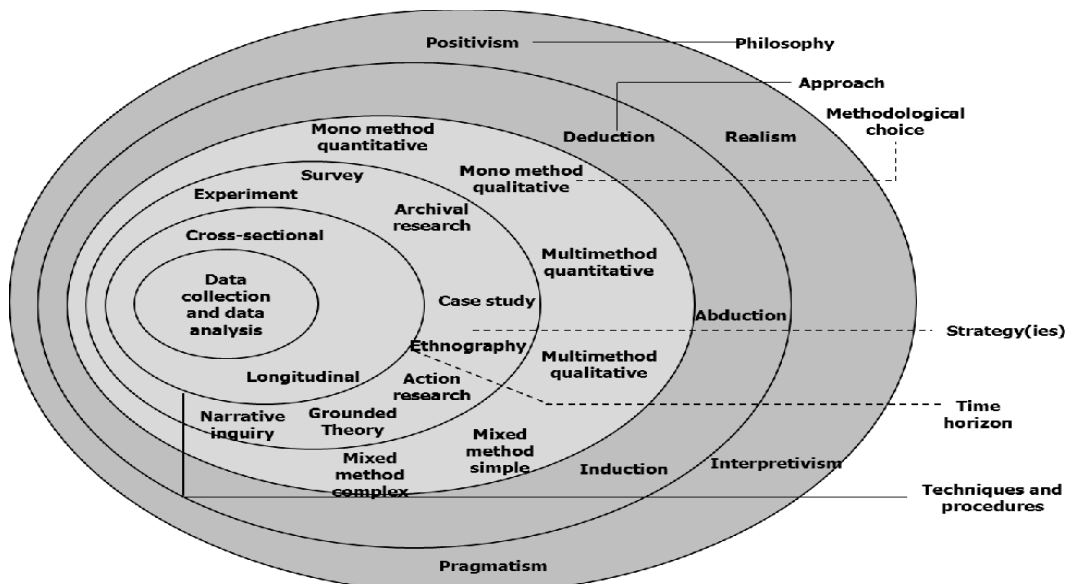

Figure 1. Research onion model (Saunders et al., 2016)

method qualitative (document analysis), cross-sectional case study strategy (Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University), and data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (See Figure 1).

STUDY SAMPLING

Although there are 9 governmental faculties that offer tourism and hospitality postgraduate programs in Egypt, we purposefully chose the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University. Specifically, we surveyed, and documentary analyzed all Master and Ph.D. theses awarded by Tourism Studies and Hotel Studies departments. According to the statistics of the postgraduate's office, 188 Masters and Ph.D. theses were examined awarded from 2003 to 2020 (Table 1). Theses awarded by Tourism Studies and Hotel Studies departments at Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University were chosen due to pragmatic reasons and access of documents (theses) as well as a timeline of the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Generally, Denscombe (2007: 133) emphasized that there are main four methods used for data collection in social research (e.g., tourism and hospitality. These are ''questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documents''. This study employed mono qualitative method (documents,). This study used document analysis (DA), which is occasionally identified as, *''documentary research method''* or *''the use of documentary sources in social research''* (Mogalakwe, 2009: 221). From a research methods point of view, DA is a social research method used mainly in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). DA as a research technique has many advantages, including information that already exists; rare biases about information; presented different periods (historical data), and cost-effective. In contrast, DA has some disadvantages, such as time-consuming; incomplete information; might need to be clear; data restricted to what already exists, and may not provide insight into participants' thinking. In this study, a range of 188 theses were considered.

Ethically, we considered the ethical issues. The access to the theses were approved by Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research. The investigation and analysis of the theses were carried out at the library, and no photocopying was permitted. In addition, the analysis excluded any authors' names or these topics. Therefore, there are no associations between the authors of theses and their responses.

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data of this study included documents and structured transcripts. For analyzing data, the content analysis (CA) technique was adopted. This technique is commonly used to analyze non-statistical data systematically. The main objective of CA is, "*to provide knowledge and understanding for the phenomenon under study*" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992:314). In addition, a word cloud was also used for visualization of the topics of theses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENTS (THESES) PROFILE

The analysis of these (documents) started with numbers per degree and department. As it can be seen in table 1, most of the theses (56.9%) were undertaken and awarded at tourism-related studies, and the minority (43%) of them were conducted concerning the hotel/hospitality department. Based on the level of degree, 68 % of the theses were masters (51.5% tourism studies and 48.5% hotel studies), and 32% (n=75) of them were Ph.D. theses (54.7% Tourism Studies and 45.3% Hotel Studies). These findings exposed the increase of tourism and hospitality research in the last decades. Many researchers have referred to the progress in tourism and hospitality research worldwide (see, for example, Faulkner & Goeldner, 1998; Seyfi et al., 2019) and in Egypt as well (Wafik, et al, 2017). This is an expected result due to the development of tourism and hospitality education in Egypt (Abou-Shouk, et al., 2014).

Table1: An overview of the included theses.

Criteria		Tourism Studies				Hotel Studies			
		MSc.		Ph.D.		MSc.		Ph.D.	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Degree	MSc.	66	100	-	-	47	100	-	-
	Ph.D.	-	-	41	100	-	-	34	100
Author's gender	Male	24	36.4	15	36.6	36	76.6	26	76.5
	Female	42	63.6	26	63.4	11	23.5	8	23.5
Languages of thesis	English	4	6	10	24.4	43	91.5	30	88.23
	Arabic	62	94	31	75.6	4	8.5	4	11.8
Total		66	100	41	100	47	100	34	100
		188							

In addition, and according to the gender of authors, 53.7% of them were males and mainly (60%) from hotel studies, and female authors were the minority (46.3%) and mainly (78%) from tourism studies side. These findings are important since gender equality is one of the highlighted issues in tourism, including research (Boonabaana, 2014; Koseoglu, et al., 2019; Morgan, & Pritchard, 2019; Wen, et al., 2020).

When it comes to the used academic language, although English is the main academic language worldwide, most of the theses were written in Arabic. Specifically, while the majority (93%) of the theses were written in Arabic the tourism studies, the opposite in the case of hotel studies as 90 % of them were written in English. This may be due to the nature of topics, level of English, available references, and aspiration of the students and supervisors. In addition, Arabic is one of the on the rise language in tourism (Zin, et al., 2013). Furthermore, all these (documents) investigated in the study were conducted between 2003 and 2020.   While the fist master's thesis was awarded in Hotel Studies in 2003, the first in the tourism department was awarded in 2004.
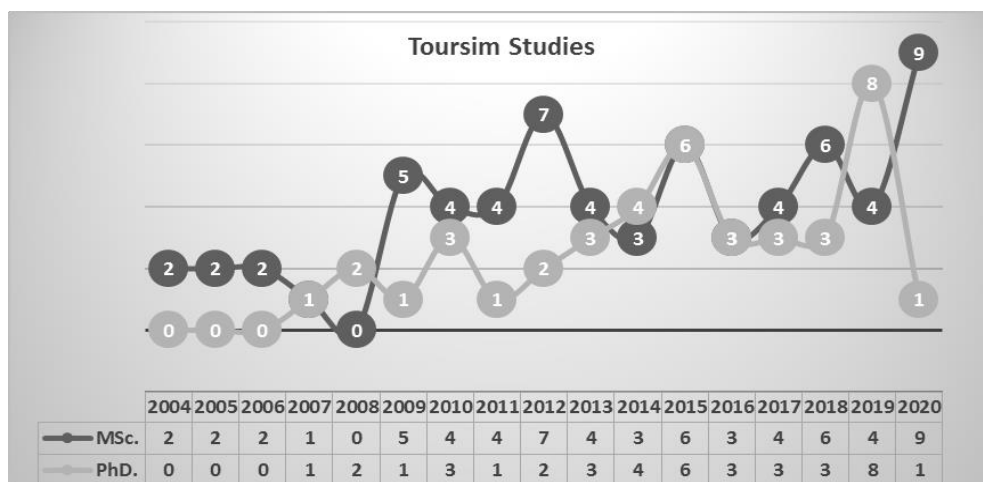
Figure 2: The timeline of theses awarded by the tourism studies department

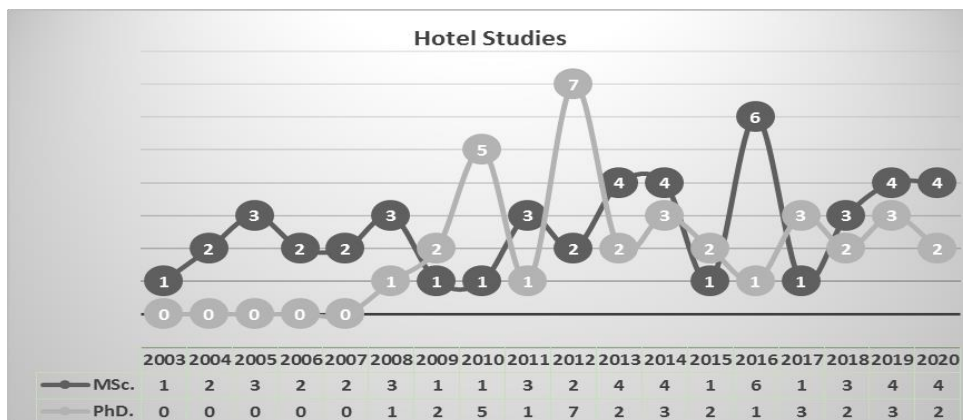|	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
MSc.	2	2	2	1	0	5	4	4	7	4	3	6	3	4	6	4	9
PhD.	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	1	2	3	4	6	3	3	3	8	1

Figure 3: The timeline of theses awarded by the hotel studies department

In the case of Ph.D., while the fist Ph.D. Theses were awarded in the tourism department in 2007, the first in Hotel Studies was awarded in 2008. Additionally, there is understandable variation in several theses per year as well as the degree. For example, while the maximum number of tourism-related MSc theses was awarded in 2012 was 7; the same number (n=7) of hotel studies MSc theses was awarded in 2012. The number depends on the number of postgraduates per year and the duration between registration and awarding the degrees (MSC and Ph.D.). It is worth mentioning that the Fayoum faculty of Tourism was embellished in 1995 and the postgraduates' studies started in 2001. Moreover, generally, there is an increasing demand on conducting a postgraduate study in tourism and hospitality in Egypt (Abou-Shouk, et al., 2014).

4.2 THE WORD CLOUD OF THE THESES TOPICS

A word cloud is an image made of words that together resemble a cloudy shape (McNaught & Lam, 2010; DePaolo& Wilkinson, 2014). The significance and implication of a word depends on its size in the word clouds, e.g., how repeatedly it appears in topics of theses — its frequency. In this study, we used word clouds to easily show immediate ideas of 188 topics of the theses as an image.

Figure 4: Word cloud of MSc topics in Tourism Studies

Figure 5: word cloud of Ph.D. topics in Tourism Studies

Figures 4 and 5 represent the word clouds of topics of MSc and Ph.D. conducted in the tourism studies department. From first sight the main words, including tourism Egypt, impact, study, Fayoum, analytical, governorate. This word reflected that the main idea bound the topics studies. Similarly Figures 6 and 7 represent the word clouds of topics of MSc and Ph.D. conducted in the hotel studies department. The important words in the topics, including hotel, star- Five, Service, Food, impact,

Cairo, Fayoum, Catering, Luxor, HACCP, Evaluation, Hospitality, Comparative, System. Methodologically, the word clouds showed few words, including case study, analytical, exploratory. All these are Methodological reflective words.

Figure 6: Word cloud of MSc Hotel/hospitality theses

Figure 7: Word cloud of Ph.D. Hotel/hospitality theses

4.3 THE ADOPTED METHODOLOGIES BY POSTGRADUATES

Table 2 summarizes the content analysis of documents (theses). In this section of the results, we present the findings considering the "research onion" as developed by Saunders. At the first layer of the research onion is the "philosophy". While most theses did not consider/refer explicitly or implicitly to the adopted philosophy, only 5.8% (n=11) of them mentioned their philosophy. Exactly, 10 theses in hotel studies present explicitly their philosophy (9 theses used positivism and 2 theses used pragmatism).

On approach level to the theory, 14 theses used the induction approach, 8 theses used the deduction approach and only 3 theses used the abductive approach. The choice of the "approach" mainly depends on the research design and the worldview of the authors. In the third layer "methodological choice", the analysis exposed that the authors had different methodologies. In more than three-quarters (76.5%) of the theses, mono method quantitative (Questionnaire) was used, followed by mixed-method simple (9%; n=17). The mixed-method simple included questionnaires and observation or questionnaires and interviews.

When it comes to the fourth layer "strategy", 93% (n=175) of the theses adopted the survey as strategy, followed by case study (9.6%, n=18), and then Archival research (5.3%). The fifth layer is "Time horizon" where 100% (n=188) of the theses were conducted on the cross-section where data were collected from respondents at one specific point in time. None of the studies collected data on a longitudinal basis.

The final "sixth" layer is the "data collection and data analysis" where 100% (n=188) of the theses used a quantitative data approach, using SPSS software. Different descriptive, inferential statistics analyses were used. In addition, minority of the theses used complex and sophisticated statistical analysis, including factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM). Surprisingly, although the 4 theses used in-depth semi-structured and structured interviews, the analysis of the qualitative data was done as quantitative data. For example, one author reported that he conducted 100 interviews for collecting data from managers, however, the results did not include any analysis related to that huge number of interviews.

Table 2: The adopted methodologies by postgraduates

Criteria	Tourism Studies				Hotel Studies			
	MSc.		Ph.D.		MSc.		Ph.D.	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Philosophy								
Positivism	0	0	1	2.4	5	1.6	3	8.8
Critical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interpretivism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Postmodernism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pragmatism	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5.9
Approach to theory development								
Deductive	0	0	0	0	5	1.6	3	8.8
Abductive	0	0	2	4.9	0	0	1	2.9
Inductive	12	18.2	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.9
Methodological choice								
Mono method quantitative	61	92.4	28	68.3	27	57.4	28	82.5
Mono method qualitative	1	1.5	3	7.3	0	0	0	0
Multi-method quantitative	0	0	0	0	10	21.3	0	0
Multi-method qualitative	0	0	2	4.9	0	0	4	11.8
Mixed method simple	4	6.1	9	22	2	4.3	2	5.9
Mixed method complex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strategy(ies)								
Experiment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Survey	63	95.5	36	87.8	46	97.9	30	88.3
Archival research	5	7.6	5	12.2	0	0	0	0
Case study	5	7.6	8	19.5	1	2.12	4	11.8
Ethnography	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Action research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounded theory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Narrative inquiry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Time horizon								
Cross-sectional	66	100	41	100	47	100	34	100
Longitudinal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Techniques and procedures								
Data collection and data analysis	66	100	41	100	47	100	34	100
Total	**188 (100%)**							

5. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is the first in the Egyptian context to address the adopted methodological issues by tourism and hospitality postgraduates in their theses. This study contributes to the theory by providing a glance at the research methodology in tourism and hospitality research. It also shed the light on the importance of teaching comprehensive research methods modules for postgraduates in different faculties of tourism and hotels.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, it was conducted on the theses undertaken in faculty of tourism and hotel, Fayoum University. Secondly, it used only mono qualitative "document analysis" in a pure qualitative research design. Although the number of the documents (theses) achieved the aim of the study, the future researchers may consider a wider range of faculties and theses. In addition, the future researchers may prefer to use multi-method quantitative (e.g., document analysis and interviews). We trust that conducting interviews with postgraduates and supervisors may enrich the argumentations on the motivations and barriers to adopting a specific research methodology or design.

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