

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title of research:

Strategic analysis for the development of a waterplane network in Greece

I. Introduction

The completion of the Postgraduate program of Master in Business Administration in General Management, in the University of Wales Trinity St. David, requires the preparation and submission of a research dissertation thesis (15000 words). The thesis aims to deepen further and combine all the knowledge acquired in term one and two at both a theoretical and practical level, in the field of General Management.

The choice of this topic is a personal desire and interest towards an important and emerging business sector in Greece. Waterplanes excited my childhood imagination and therefore I found them impressive and stimulating from a young age. The first time I got into a waterplane cockpit was at the age of ten when my uncle was a pilot on a firefighting jet. I was instantly amazed with the combination of the celestial and water element in transportation.

Greece is characterised as a region with more than a hundred inhabited islands and one of the world's largest coastal regions (Danforth *et al.*, 2021). The waterplane can be an important means of transportation that will connect them throughout the year (emergencies, supplies etc.) and contribute further in their touristic development.

By taking into account all the aspects and implications of this emerging business, the dissertation will be an organic continuation of the courses held in the previous two terms, combining all the knowledge and techniques acquired. The thesis will, therefore, include a business analysis that will investigate the individual key areas of the business: financial analysis, strategic planning, human resource management and entrepreneurial models. The analysis of the above will give us insight about the operation and viability of such an endeavour and why not be a guide for future entrepreneurs.

In the tourism market of Greece there is a business gap; waterplane companies are not yet active, so the present work can be a springboard and inspiration for such a venture.

II. Background

The transport sector is a very important sector both for Greece and for the rest of the world. It is not an end in itself but is used as a "tool" to support other industries such as tourism, trade, logistics, etc (EU, 2019). Therefore, transport is directly affected by the decline or growth of

some of these sectors of the economy. It is worth noting that it constitutes 5% of the total GDP in Greece.

Greece as a predominantly islandic country, but also due to its strategic location favours the development of this sector, either for trade or tourism. Therefore, the development of a transport network in Greece that has the sea as its main element is rather advantageous both for the country and for the companies that intend to invest in it. In the present work and in the following chapters we will analyse how feasible and interesting it is to develop a network of waterplanes in Greece.

The waterplane is a special type of aircraft, which has the ability to sail and move on water surface such as lake, river and sea, to start its flight from it and end it there (FAA, 2018).

The commercialization of waterplanes in both Greece and EU is critical because it is a method of tackling the complicated problem of transportation. The licencing issues that waterplanes and waterways confront are not exclusive to Greece; other European nations face comparable issues to varying degrees. Other regions with comparable topographical characteristics, such as the Maldives, have already built a highly successful network of waterplanes (Tsoni, 2021).

The timetable for the future shows the technological improvements of the different types of waterplanes to be made during the century. Such improvements must be made with care in view of the obvious disadvantages of the waterplanes, despite its improved designs (Leyva et al., 2012).

III. Aims and objectives

The aim of this dissertation project is to design a comprehensive business analysis for the development of a waterplane network in the Hellenic area. This will be done through the outline of the steps and decisions that will allow such a business to achieve its goals and gain its position in the tourism market.

This will be done through an extensive strategic management and financial analysis to examine the feasibility of this venture.

The specific objectives of the dissertation are:

- Conduct an extensive literature review in the field of the waterplane business.
- Highlight the importance of such a business in the tourism market.
- Discuss the regulations.
- Collect and evaluate data from questionnaires and think tank.
- Implement all the strategic management models.

- Investigate the financial feasibility of the business.
- Evaluate the viability of this venture.

IV. Methodology

The dissertation will begin by providing a comprehensive literature review based on existing research from a variety of physical or digital resources. Apart from making a gathering of relevant references on the topic, the review aims to spot potential knowledge gaps in the field of waterplanes investments. Therefore, this dissertation may form the basis of similar analysis in the future. To the authors knowledge the findings of this research are unknown and the feasibility of such a project is yet to be found. Furthermore, the international and Greek legislative framework for waterplanes will be explained and evaluated.

Firstly, we will look at the history of these planes, their variety and the locations that have already been implemented; South east Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean. The dissertation will include a discussion on the role of waterplanes in tourism and local communities there, with a further projection in the Hellenic area. The chapter will conclude with a in depth analysis of waterplanes' prospects, limitations, benefits and drawbacks.

Overall, the dissertation will include both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the waterplane business opportunity in Greece (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2006). Since, the dissertation requirements include a quantitative analysis of the topic, I will also design and distribute an investigatory questionnaire concerning the market of waterplanes. Examples of questions to be posed through the survey are:

- Reasons to use a waterplane.
- How much would you spend for a trip in a waterplane.
- Are you willing to travel with a waterplane, etc.

The plan is to distribute the questionnaire to a statistically homogenous sample of 50 male and female adults, between 18 to 108 years old people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The type of questions to be posed are primarily demographic, list and category questions (Davies and Hughes, 2007). The data collections will result in an informative database that will be further analysed with the statistical software package of SPSS (Field, 2013). The data analysis will hopefully give us important insight on the target groups that maybe interested and will support such a business. It will also provide valuable information on the business aspects that may deter customers, and therefore to design the business investment in a proactive way. Time permissible, the data collection will go even further with the organising of think tank sessions with people that have experience in the aviation and tourism sector.

The actual questionnaire, data analysis steps as well as the minutes of the think tank discussions, will be enclosed in full in the dissertation appendices.

After the data analysis, the design and assessment of the business plan will commence. This will include a market investigation and financial assessment together with a strategic management analysis, to fulfil the qualitative analysis of the project. Namely, we will start with the market analysis using the categories of waterplanes already active in the existing market (Europe and the world), examples of successful companies and the Porter model of five forces. The waterplane market is not currently existing yet in Greece, but there is a market gap opportunity that will potentially flourish in the near future. In the effort to conduct an informative business plan, the dissertation will also include the assessment of the external and internal environment models (e.g. PESTEL, VRIO and Ansoff matrix analysis etc.) (Barney and Hesterly, 2019).

Moreover, the business plan will refer to the use of waterplanes, waterways, and water airplanes that can be built in Greece to develop an efficient network. Key to this is the financial analysis where we will evaluate the flight, operation and maintenance costs of a waterplane that will lead us to the ticket cost. All the above will illustrate the financial feasibility of the idea, based on a specific seaplane model (DHC-6). In addition, we will compare the water plane trip with the other existing means of transport using examples. Finally, we will discuss the services that waterplanes may offer in Greece, the possible jobs that will arise and the S.W.O.T. analysis for the market (Lynch, 2018).

In the last chapter, we will present the conclusions that emerged from the present work, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and give some recommendations for further research.

V. Ethical Approach

The answers that will be given, through the questionnaire, for the analysis of the data will be used only for the needs of the elaboration of this specific work. The data will remain strictly confidential and private. There will be absolute confidentiality regarding any sensitive information or data that will come to my knowledge in the context of people participation in the above process. Participants will have the opportunity to withdraw their questionnaire/ sessions at any time. I will finally make sure not to disclose the gathered information to third parties without the subject's prior written permission. For ethical purposes, minors will be excluded from this procedure.

VI. Timescale

The following is the Gantt chart prepared for the intermediate tasks of the dissertation, supervising meetings and thesis writing up.

Month/ Weeks	June		July				August				September	
	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd
Tasks												
Research methods sessions												
Research Proposal												
Meetings with supervisor			09	16	23	30	06	13	20	27	03	10
Literature review												
Questionnaire design												
Data collection												
Think tank sessions												
Data analysis												
Financial analysis												
Business plan												
Recommendations												
Write-up												
Corrections - modifications												
Final submission												

VII. References

Barney, J. B. and Hesterly, W. S. (2019) *Strategic management and competitive advantage: concepts and cases*. 6th Global. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Danforth, L. et al. (2021) *Greece*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Available at: www.britannica.com/place/Greece (Accessed: 6 July 2021).

Davies, M. B. and Hughes, N. (2007) *Doing a Successful Research Project: Using Qualitative Or Quantitative Methods*. 1st edn. London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

EU (2019) *Transport in the European Union Current Trends and Issues*. Brussels, Belgium. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/default/files/2019-transport-in-the-eu-current-trends-and-issues.pdf>.

FAA (2018) *Seaplane Bases*. U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration, Washington DC, USA. Available at: https://www.faa.gov/documentlibrary/media/advisory_circular/150-5395-1b-seaplane-bases.pdf.

Field, A. (2013) *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. 4th edn. CA, USA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Leyva, C. and Leonel, A. (2012) *Seaplane conceptual design and sizing*. University of Glasgow, UK.law.

Lynch, R. (2018) *Strategic Management*. 8th edn. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2006) *Research Methods for Business Students*. New Jersey, USA: Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Tsoni, P. (2021) *Seaplane service set to make Greece "The Maldives of Europe"*, *Greek Reporter*. Available at: <https://greekreporter.com/2021/04/21/seaplane-service-set-to-make-greece-the-maldives-of-europe/> (Accessed: 7 July 2021).