

**Module: Research Methods and Field Study
Experience**

Student Name: Benjamin Rhys Williams

Student Number: 2204839

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Lectures Name: Dr Emma Roberts

Royal Caribbean Fights for Sustainability

Introduction

The Royal Caribbean Group International is a highly esteemed organization that offers top-tier tourism services to individuals worldwide. Boasting a remarkable fleet of 28 cruise ships (Cruise Ships Overview, 2023) and access to over 300 ports, including coveted destinations like the Caribbean, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Bermuda (Destinations Hub, 2023). In 2023, the company's valuation stood at \$27 billion, cementing its position as a preferred choice for travellers. It is worth noting that the Royal Caribbean Group International has full ownership of CocoCay, an exclusive private island that further enhances the company's reputation. (COCA Cruise 2023)

The Royal Caribbean also supports destinations it travels to. (Hutton and Wilson, 2023) says, "The Cruise industry contributes £10 billion to the UK economy each year and supports more than 88,000 jobs". Royal Caribbean benefits from customers and impacts local businesses in areas they visit, highlighting the tourism industry's economic influence beyond direct revenue.

This case study endeavours to delve into qualitative data research on the Royal Caribbean International Group. The study will encompass academic research on various research methodologies that can aid in obtaining evidence on the group's sustainability positives and negatives. The findings and evidence will be presented in a table, featuring a SWOT Analysis and PESTLE analysis of the company's impacts. These analyses will be triangulated to conclude.

Methodology

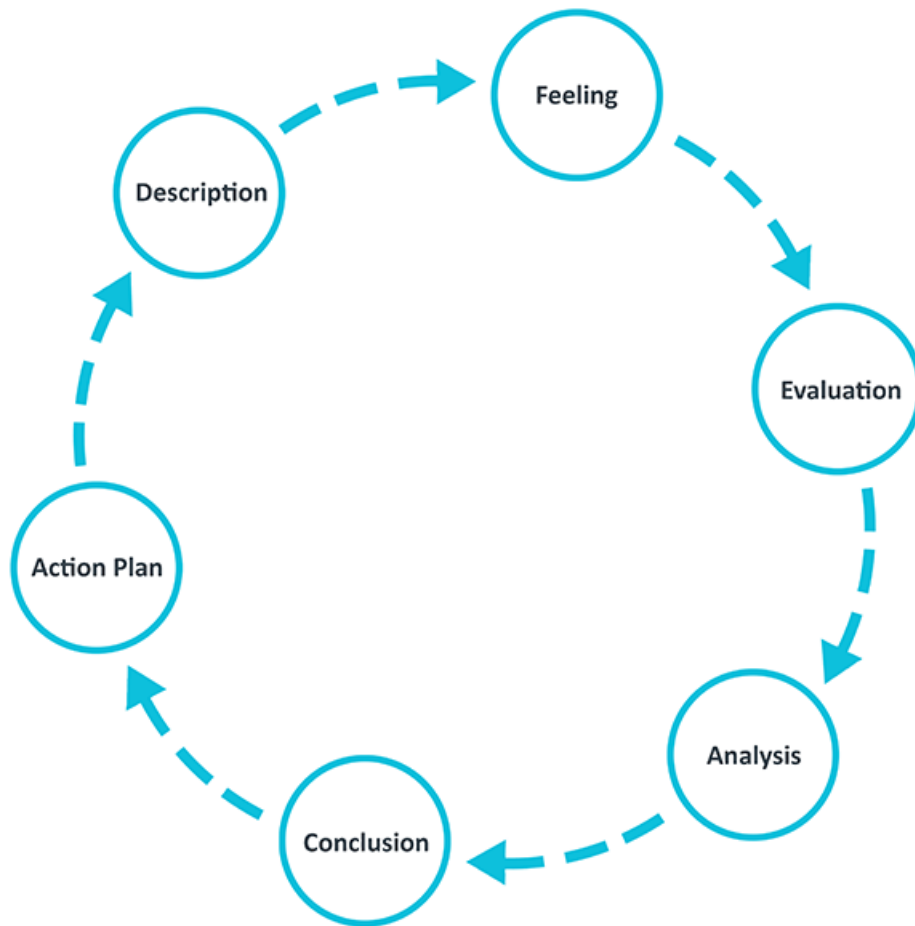
The objective of this case study is to assess the sustainability of Royal Caribbean through evidence-based approaches and principles. While primary research, such as interviews, would have been optimal, ethical approval from the university is unavailable for the researcher to carry out such research. Therefore, the researcher will rely on secondary data from reputable academic sources. Though this presents a

constraint, it is still adequate for a level 5 student. The analysis will primarily comprise qualitative data, while quantitative data from Royal Caribbean reports and data sheets will also be gathered. (Saunders, 2016) The target audience for this case study will be the current/future customers of Royal Caribbean Group that may be impacted by the decisions the company makes on how efficient they are on sustainability. The other target audience will be the local communities and wildlife the cruise line may impact.

A PESTLE analysis is a great way to see the sustainable impacts the royal Caribbean has on the world. This research method includes talking about the companies Political Factors, Vlereader.com (2023) posits that the PESTLE analysis framework provides a comprehensive approach to analysing the Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors that impact a company's operations. However, it should be noted that PESTLE analysis does not make predictions about the future. Nonetheless, it is a valuable tool for initiating proactive and constructive discussions regarding the future trajectory of the company. This case study will find out if the impacts of the PESTLE analysis are positive or negative.

Conducting a SWOT analysis can prove to be an invaluable tool for Royal Caribbean in assessing their areas of strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat. As Komoda (2006) eloquently puts it, "SWOT analysis is a well-established method for evaluating an organization's resources and surroundings across four critical dimensions: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats". The implementation of this technique will assist Royal Caribbean in developing a comprehensive plan.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle will be used in this case study as it is an effective research method. (The University of Edinburgh, 2020), explains the method as "One of the most famous cyclical models of reflection leading you through six stages exploring an experience: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan". The diagram below shows how you can use these stages to promote self-awareness, critical thinking and continuous learning.



(The University of Edinburgh, 2020)

Netnography is a highly effective research method that gathers data from online sources like social media, blogs, and other platforms to gain valuable insights into human behaviour and attitudes. (Villegas, 2022) It can be a powerful tool for Royal Caribbean to gather information and promote sustainability. Wine tourism is a great example of how businesses have successfully applied Netnography. (Kozinets, 2002) points out that the first step in this process is to identify the most relevant online communities to study the wine tourist experience, which allows companies to focus their marketing efforts and save money. By targeting customers who have previously enjoyed Royal Caribbean's tours and sending them personalised promotional emails about new deals on future holidays, the company can boost its sales and better serve its customers.

For the upcoming research, the case study method will be utilized. A case study involves an extensive investigation of a particular topic or phenomenon within its

real-life setting, such as management, employees, businesses, or annual general meetings (Yin, 2018). Yin argues that a case study is crucial for investigating real-life issues and emphasizes the need to consider multiple sources of evidence when making decisions (Burns et al., 2004, p. 41). This will involve Royal Caribbean's management team, led by CEO Michael Bayley, making crucial decisions for the future of the company and its 50,000+ employees, as well as the research methods he needs to use to make those decisions.

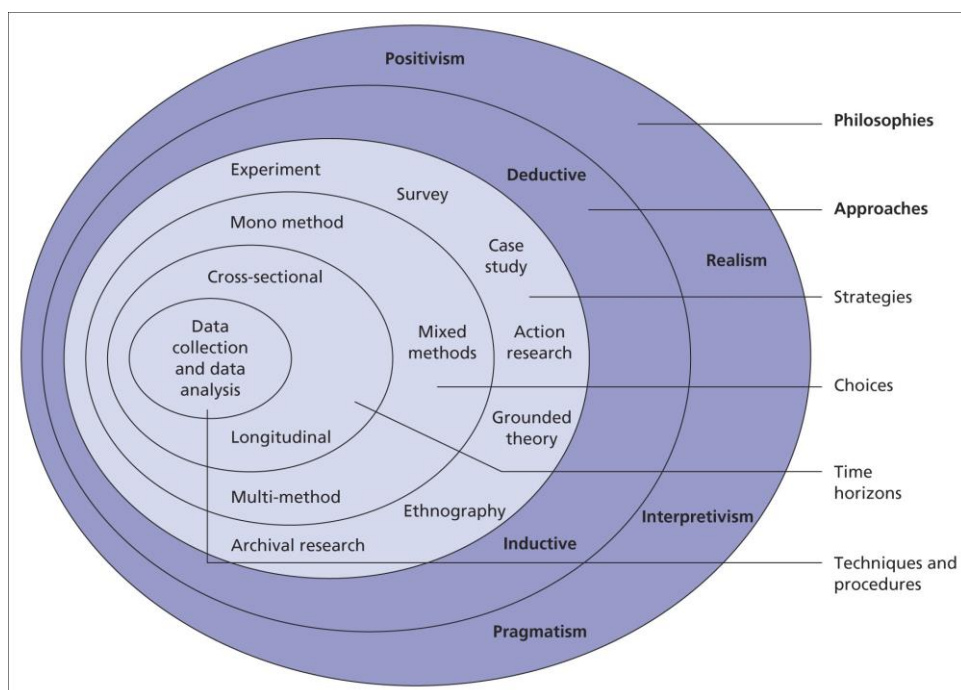
Triangulation is an effective method for gathering diverse research. (Patton, 1999) states that “triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. Triangulation has also been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources”. Triangulation is a valuable technique for verifying information by cross-checking it with multiple sources. To illustrate, let's consider the issue of Royal Caribbean's sustainability, where three distinct viewpoints exist. One individual may have read online evidence indicating that the company disposes of raw sewage into the ocean, whereas another person may have encountered information that contradicts this claim. The third person may feel unsure about which opinion to trust, as they have come across conflicting views. Therefore, it's essential to gather evidence from multiple sources and triangulate your research to reach a well-informed conclusion.

The case study at hand heavily relies on exploratory research, primarily conducted through secondary research methods such as online research and literature review. This approach is crucial in understanding the significance of exploratory research, as noted by (Bhat, 2018). Since ethical approval from the university is not secured, the study will mainly depend on secondary data.

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge, including acquisition, justification, and distinguishing justified beliefs from opinions. (Structural-learning.com, 2023) says “Epistemology is not merely about the acquisition of knowledge but also about understanding the process of knowledge acquisition”. Objective and subjective research relates to this. When it comes to research, objective research is generally considered to be more reliable than subjective research. This is because objective

research is verified by third parties, while subjective research is based on personal opinions and may not be true since it has not been evaluated by others. (Subjective vs. Objective, n.d.)

The research onion is a model that consists of six layers that researchers must peel away one by one to reach the core. These layers are research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, research choices, time horizons, and techniques and procedures. This model helps researchers understand the different components of research and how they are interconnected. (DR Hayley Stainton). All companies should implement this technique to ensure precise objective coverage. The diagram below shows the steps of the research onion.



(Saunders et al 2019)

Findings and Analysis

The subsequent phase of the case study will employ rigorous research methodology to evaluate the sustainability efforts of Royal Caribbean. This case study aims to ascertain the extent of their contribution towards preserving the environment and safeguarding the destinations they visit.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
• Royal Caribbean aims to reduce carbon intensity by double digits from 2019 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. • To achieve a circular economy, they aim to eliminate all single-use plastic by 2025. (Executive summary, 2022) • The Royal Caribbean group's President and CEO, Jason Liberty, has made a pledge to extend a helping hand to the local communities and promote a cleaner environment in the ocean. According to Liberty, "Through our Blue Green Promise, we are committed to protecting, inspiring, and empowering ocean communities" (Seastainability, 2022). This pledge is a testament to the company's dedication to environmental sustainability, and their efforts to create a positive impact on ocean communities.	• The Royal Caribbean has renewed its partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and committed an additional \$5 million to preserving ocean health under its Seastainability program in 2022 (Seastainability, 2022). • The Blue Green Promise is a commitment to support ocean communities worldwide. • The world's first net-zero cruise terminal was opened in Galveston, Texas by Royal Caribbean • Twenty ships equipped with shore power
Weaknesses	Threats
• One of the largest passenger cruise lines in the world, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., has reached a plea agreement for 21 federal felony counts and will pay a criminal fine of \$18 million - a record amount. The charges stem from the company's alleged illegal dumping of hazardous chemicals and waste oil into the ocean and providing false	• If Royal Caribbean fails to enhance its waste management practices, it may suffer a significant penalty, thereby leading to a tarnished image, and ultimately, revenue loss from customers across the globe. • The company's ship visits to certain ports are being restricted or denied due to the damaging impact they have on the local

information to the U.S. Coast Guard. The announcement was made by the Justice Department. (Justice.gov, 2023)	environment. As Royal Caribbean's ships continue to grow in size each year, their impact on the environment is becoming more significant. A prominent example of this is Venice, where large cruise ships are restricted to when they can enter due to the environmental issues they cause. (Benktander, 2023)
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This table will help the Royal Caribbean get an understanding of their potential risks and opportunities.

PESTLE analysis

Political Factors	Economic Factors
- Political stability- Which destinations is the company welcome - Ensuring adherence to global maritime regulations and policies for proper waste disposal. (Seasustainability, 2022).	- Currency exchange rates - Economic conditions such as Covid-19 - The cost of Fuel traveling to these long-distance destinations (Seasustainability, 2022).
Social factors	Technological Factors
- Growing people's knowledge of the impact big cruise ships make on the environment creates awareness - The change in demographics and preferences may indulge customers to travel more local to reduce the CO2 emissions they produce (Royal Caribbean Connect, 2023)	- The adoption of new technologies Royal Caribbean have for their circular economy to reduce waste such as their water system. - The newer ships come with a more eco friendly design (Seasustainability, 2022).
Legal Factors	Environmental Factors
- Ensuring adherence to global environmental laws and regulations. - Passenger safety and liability if something goes wrong - More charges may apply in the future if the company make an environmental mistake (Royal Caribbean Incentives, 2016)	- New technology Royal Caribbean has implemented is more environmentally friendly than previous technologies. - Adapting to climate change impacts on destinations and routes they travel to. (Royal Caribbean Connect, 2023)

This table summarizes key sustainability factors for Royal Caribbean across different PESTLE categories.

To triangulate the case study evidence, let's start with Royal Caribbean's Seastainability report. The company claims to have made significant improvements and has plans, such as partnering with WWF to develop new strategies for tackling climate change. (Net Zero Innovation, 2022) Another piece of evidence would be the Department of Justice giving evidence that the company has severely impacted the environment negatively. They stated, "Royal Caribbean used our nation's waters as its dumping ground". (Justice.gov, 2023) The final viewpoint on this concept will be the review left by (Corporateregister.com, 2015). This reviewer was on her travels, looking at eco tourism. The opinion was that she was concerned about how ships were allowed to dump untreated sewage twelve nautical miles out to sea.

In summary, these three points of evidence all suggest the company is far away from its goals but is doing its best to achieve them with the resources it has. This method would relate to the research onion, as it would be the second layer of the concept, as this research has a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

In conclusion, this case study has delved into various research methods and examples, shedding light on how Royal Caribbean is making positive changes for the environment and its employees. Due to the lack of ethical approval, we leaned on secondary data to understand techniques like triangulation and netnography from existing academic sources. The case study uncovered the company's missteps and its efforts to minimize its environmental impact. Looking ahead, we plan to include primary research once we get the green light for ethical approval, aiming to gather more firsthand evidence on the situation in the next report.

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Royal Caribbean Case Study

Introduction

For a case study assignment, qualitative research

Case study methodology, how I can triangulate the evidence, netnography then use consumer reviews from trip advisor, council website or government, field visit,

Case study is- an Indepth inquiry

If the researcher had time, they would carry out primary research such as interviews, but the researcher doesn't have access to Ethical approval from the university. Instead, the researcher will be carrying out the Case study with secondary data

Methodology

Epistemology

Case study-triangulation, exploratory research,

Netnography

SWOT Analysis

PESTLE

Pestle and swat can be used in the findings and can be put into a table

1st lesson

Task 1- It's basically a case study

Introduction

Methodology

Swot analysis

How many tourists in the area does it effect

Findings/analysis- use lots of techniques from class

Conclusions and limitations

References

20 sources

Basics of research methods

Epistemology- how do we know what we know?

Subjective feeling is my feeling

Objective feeling- is another opinion

What kind of evidence do we need

Triangulation- if we get three points of evidence, we can triangulate something if three points are similar. This gives us more knowledge if three sources are leading to the same place.

Exploratory research- To predict something that may happen/ we cannot be too accurate. What happens when we take the cruise to a new destination. What happens when we host a new show on the cruise ship.

Case study method- is a readymade method that you can use and red up about. Then use that to can plan the method you are. This is a good method which you can rely on and is good quality. And we can triangulate this.

A case study is an in-depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within its real-life setting (yin 2018). The 'case' in case study research may refer to

A person/manager

A group/work team

And organisation/business

A change process/restructuring a company

An event/an annual general meeting

Use the Saunders et al 2019p 196

2nd lesson

- Prove the cruise ships are significant
- Make sure my work is complete. So, someone understands my work after reading
- Look at alternative perspectives

- Display evidence in a professional manner.

The research onion- A way to help you with data collection methods

Quantitative- Numbers/ (questionnaire)

Qualitative- Words, images, audio, recordings and video clips

3rd lesson

Writing up your methodology

Justify what you're reasoning and work. Then find out what you can do better next time/acknowledge your weaknesses.

Mention the limited research you can gather as you can only use secondary data and not primary. Apparently, this gives you more marks.

What public data can I find for my case study?

Get the company report of royal Caribbean

Netnography- trying to understand what means and subjected of the world are online.

Get the company report for the assignment

Start with stating what methodology is about for the first 100 words in the assignment

Write about case study method/triangulation

Methodology is telling what I'm going to do

Findings is doing the research methods/principles

Use the journal paper called wine tourism/ its important to create memorable experiences/ use page 2 of this book

What makes an interesting case study? - Headlines, images, analyses

Sources, references, clarity, to the point, positives, negatives, regional, international, financial, psychological.

Use gibbs reflective cycle