

Official Data on Tourism

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The aim of this paper is: (i) to analyze the role of statistics in tourism business and during the COVID-19 health crisis, (ii) to summarize the main sources of official data on tourism, (iii) to trigger the discussion about statistics on tourism

Statistics can solve real problems and data driven decisions can help us to take the right decision. Nowadays, the main challenge is the dissemination and communication of statistics.

Statistics is found everywhere (newspapers, work, TV, etc), but almost no one has knowledge of it. Having a basic knowledge of statistical visualization and elementary quantitate skill are very important today.

Statistics is not mathematics.

In some way, statistics is the rationalisation of our thinking.

Big Data has become fashionable nomenclature for enormous amounts of data (thanks to the internet and new computer technology) and is mostly under-used. For instance, the internet is an incredible source of data on tourism. All tourism business goes around the web in one way or another.

Open Data refers to data that is published openly and freely from all entities, companies and institutions that have a public interest. The aim of open data is transparency and accessibility of data.

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$$\frac{x - \mu}{\sigma} = \frac{50000 - 58200}{6750}$$
$$z = -1.21$$



Official statistics provide essential information to measure progress in society, the economy and the environment



Both open and big data, will stimulate research, business and public opinion. They provide an invaluable opportunity for the divulgation and communication of statistics. With graphs, charts and tables, statistics helps every presentation and field in the visualization of ideas, figures, and aggregations of data. These visualisations or percentages are often used as a tool to persuade public administrations and public opinion. But there is a lack of images and visualization to promote, divulgate and communicate statistics. For all these reasons, it is crucial that the tourism industry invests in statistical literacy, data-driven culture and in the production of trustable data.

OFFICIAL DATA ON TOURISM

Nowadays we have many sources of official data in Malta and outside Malta. The National Statistics Office of Malta produces a lot of data on tourism. It is free and accessible on the internet at <https://nso.gov.mt>. Here, there is a lot of interesting data: Outbound Tourism, Inbound Tourism, Regional Tourism, Collective Accommodation Establishments and Cruise passengers. All the data is combined together with a full explanation of the data sources and methodology used. Another source of information on the Tourism in Malta is the Malta Tourism Authority (www.mta.com.mt). Further information can be found in Attard (2019).

To compare tourism among European countries, Eurostat has data for all over Europe (go to - <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> > Eurostat > Data > Database > Data navigation tree > Database by themes > Industry, trade and services > Tourism).

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations focusing on tourism. It can provide a lot of interesting

information. In the webpage, there is numerous data (<https://www.unwto.org> > RESOURCES > Tourism data dashboard). This data is crucial for understanding tourism trends and comparing different situations. This data provides a framework for the production of surveys and microeconomic data on Tourism.

WHAT ARE THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS?

The media dedicates more space to figures of official statistics, than the best football player or singer. Every day, in the news, we listen to the employment rate, the GDP, mortality rate, car accidents and so on. All these statistics are collected, produced and then disseminated by the National Statistics Offices (NSOs) around the world. The irony of it all is that, at the same time, it is quite unlikely that the media dedicates time and space to explain the responsibility of such NSOs around the world.

Official statistics provide essential information to measure progress in society, the economy and the environment. It is important that they are communicated clearly and succinctly so that a broad range of audiences can understand and use the valuable information contained within.

National statistical offices focused the majority of their resources on collecting and producing statistics and less on analysing, disseminating and communicating the results.

To be relevant in the actual information age, statistical organizations are placing greater emphasis on publishing data and metadata in a variety of forms to reach a growing audience of data users.

Statistical indicators provide an overview of the social, demographic and economic structure of society. Moreover, these

indicators facilitate comparisons between countries and regions. The description of the indicators helps users find out more information about what they are measuring, the context in which they are used and possible differences between them and the European and international standards.

Social and economic statistics are the core of the modern NSOs, this is because the aim of the national accounts is to provide a comprehensive conceptual and accounting framework for compiling and reporting macroeconomic statistics for analysing and evaluating the performance of an economy. Policymakers depend on data produced by the NSOs. Macroeconomic data have become indispensable to economic policymaking and academic research.

From the social statistics point of view, the census is the pinnacle of social statistics. The word "Census" has a long history all over the world. For instance, in China and other countries, they started a systematic count of the population from 1600 -1700 B.C. according to Zhu (1987). The churches, historically, kept records of the births, marriages and deaths. Between 2005 and 2014 more than 6 billion people, more than 90% of the world's population, were enumerated by population census. Only 21 countries did not conduct a census (United Nations Fund for Population Activities (2016)). Every country has one NSO in charge of the decennial census, that is, the social statistics and the main economic statistics. Every 10 years, the census is implemented all over the world. Normally, the census is carried out when the year ends with the number "1" (e.g. 2001, 2011, 2021) and it is carried out during the first week of November.

COVID-19 AND DATA

For instance, to better understand COVID-19, it is useful to understand the elementary notion of statistics and the concept of data quality. Generally speaking, data quality is based on the usefulness,

accuracy, and correctness of data in its application and the need to satisfy the requirements of its intended use. COVID-19 had a great impact on the tourism industry, so it is useful to fully understand all the implications.

Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the aim of medical figures is not to describe the spread of COVID-19 or the overall socio-economic implications of the outbreak. Unfortunately, figures produced by health authorities cannot give crucial information (see Luca Di Gennaro Splendore, (2020)).

If you don't do any blood tests then you don't have high cholesterol!

The cases of COVID-19 depend on how many persons each country are tested and how they were tested (see Luca Di Gennaro Splendore, (2020, 2020a)).

So, how can we acquire information on COVID-19?

There are only two possibilities to obtain this information: either a census of the population or a random sample representative of the population. In most countries, a census is not practical, so a random sample representation of the population is taken. Different sample designs and different possibilities can be implemented. Every person in the sample who is tested for COVID-19 also needs to answer a questionnaire that includes questions about the clinical evaluation, socio-demographic characteristics, personal characteristics, housing characteristics, and lifestyle of the individual.

CONCLUSION

Without data, tourism cannot possibly be understood. Without data we cannot manage the industry which is so important for so many countries.

The prolonged lifespan of the COVID-19 pandemic provides a big challenge to the

tourism industry. Only the work of National statistics offices will be able to disseminate correct data on tourism.

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