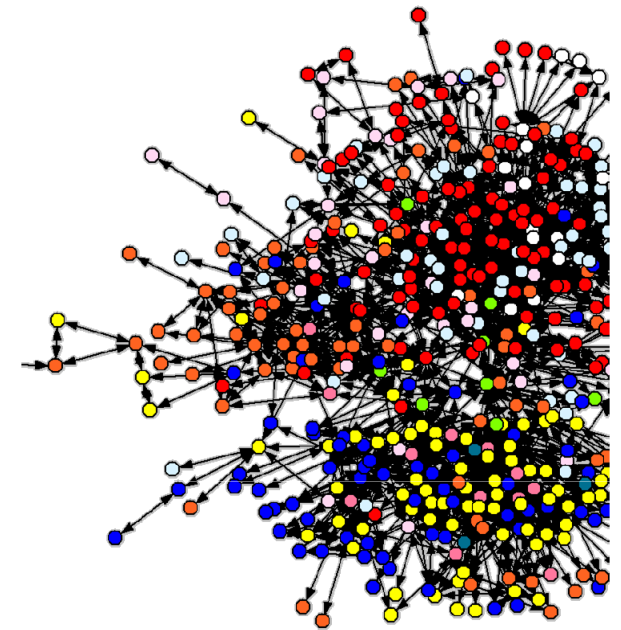


# The role of knowledge-based networks in sustainable tourism development

— *A conceptual framework*

Ehsan Ahmed & Larry Dwyer





## ***Objectives of the study***

**This study will investigate the concepts and processes of knowledge creation, use, and transfer within a regionally bounded network of destination organisations. In essence, the objectives of the study are:**

- ▶ To enhance our understanding of effective knowledge management process (production, use and transfer) of sustainable development that might possibly take place in destination network management and operations.**
- ▶ To identify significant managerial and theoretical implications of knowledge management process within the destination network to promote sustainable development and to avoid strategic drift.**



# ***Research methodology***

## ***The research context***

**The unit of analysis considered in the study is a tourism destination composed of a collection of organisations (directly and indirectly related to tourism) and their common relations. In other words, the destination is the network whose actors are the single organisations and whose links are the connections established among them.**



**Correspondingly, the destination chosen for the study is ‘Katoomba’. It is the chief town of the City of Blue Mountains in New South Wales and the administrative headquarters of Blue mountain city council.**



## ***Research methodology (Cont.)***

### ***Reasons for selecting “Katoomba”***

- ▶ **Recommended by practitioners (TNSW);**
- ▶ **Significance of the economic dimension – the economy of the area depends almost entirely on tourism;**
- ▶ **Significance of environmental dimension – Katoomba offers nature based tourism;**
- ▶ **Significance of socio-cultural dimension – eccentric culture comprising aboriginal population and alternative subculture.**
- ▶ **Proximity;**
- ▶ **Dual seasonality;**
- ▶ **Estimated size of the destination network.**

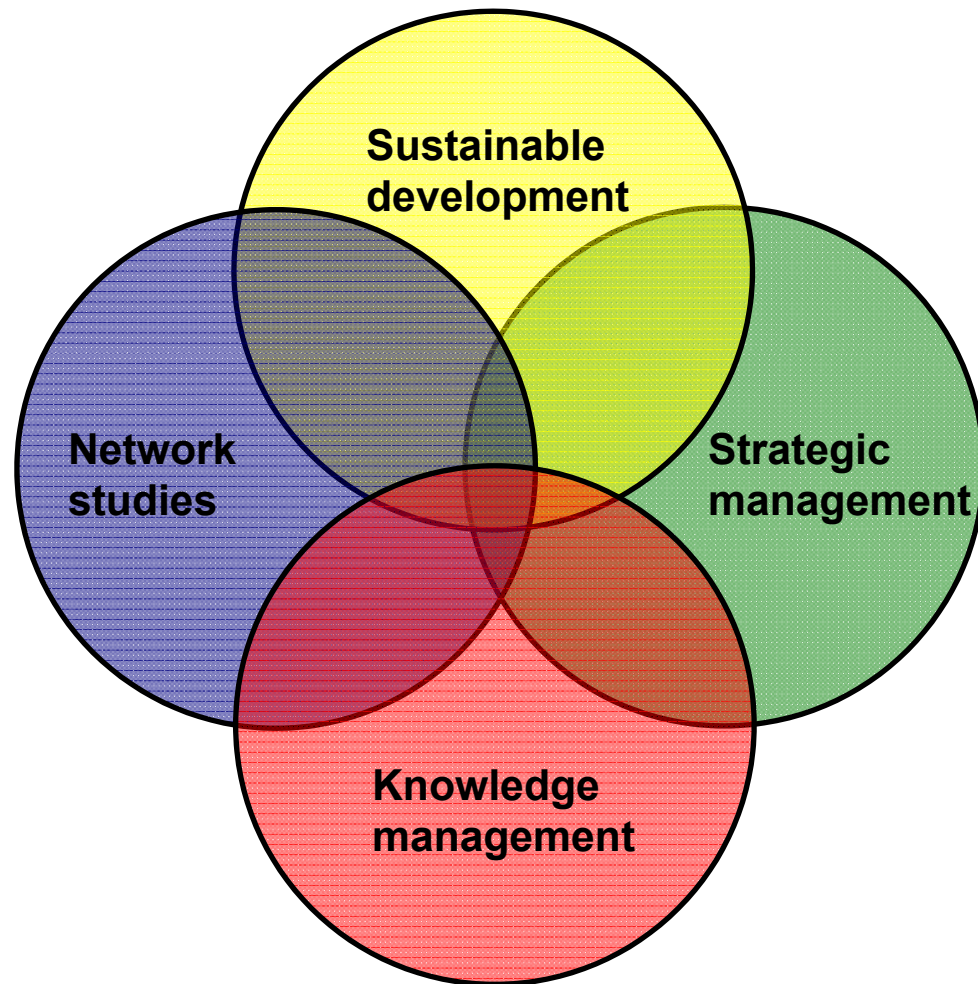


## ***Keywords***

- ✓ Sustainable Tourism Development
- ✓ Strategic Development and Drift
- ✓ Knowledge Management
- ✓ Networks

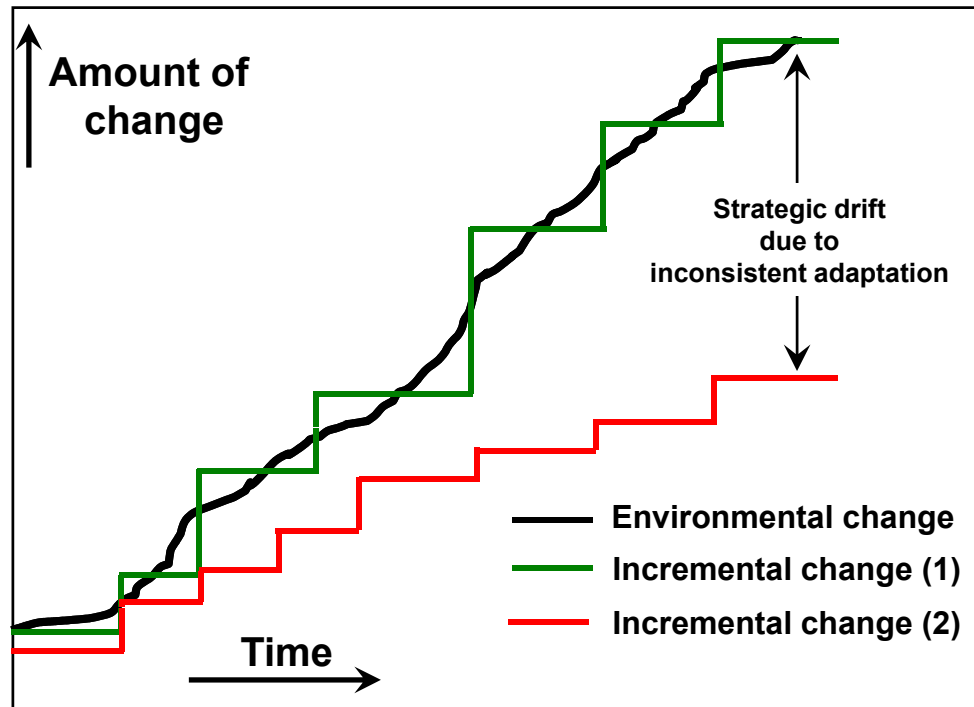


# *Literature review*





## ***Strategic development and drift (cont.)***



Adapted from: *Johnson and Scholes, 2008*

Accumulation of strategic 'fit', developed stepwise from a series of strategic moves each of which makes sense in terms of previous steps gradually lead to quite significant strategic shift.

Nevertheless, inconsistent strategic fit, over time, may as well give rise to a quite significant frustration.



## ***Research questions***

The main research question this study addresses is **‘How can a network study enhance the knowledge management processes within a destination network to promote sustainable development and avoid strategic drift?’** Sub-questions are:

- ▶ How can we visualise regionally bounded destinations as networks of organisations?
- ▶ How does a network of destination organisations behave individually and collectively and therefore promote complex behaviours such as sustainable development?
- ▶ How can a network approach simplify and communicate the complex behaviours of destination networks?

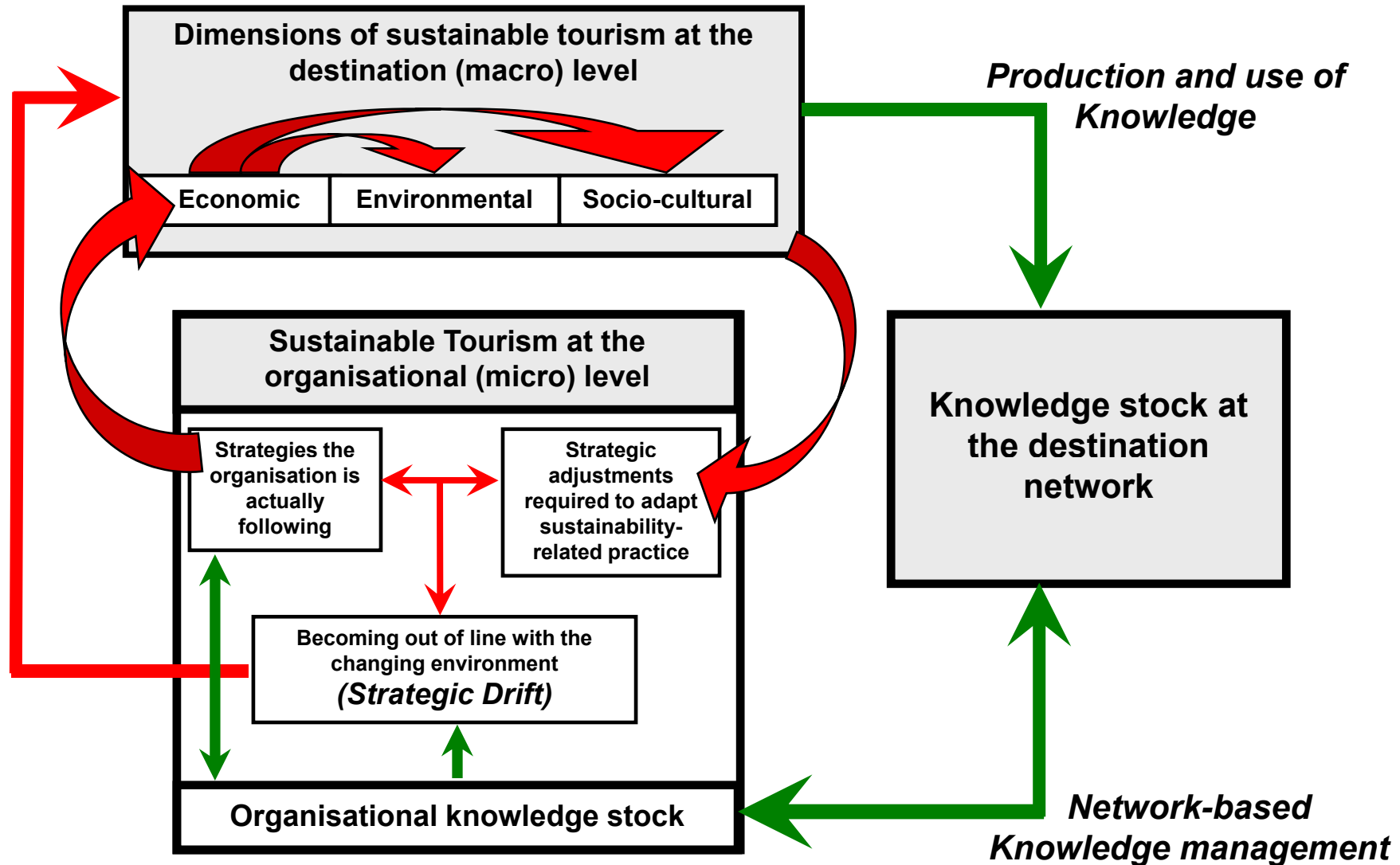


## ***Research questions (cont.)***

- ▶ **How can destination organisations source, share and use knowledge individually and collectively within the network environment?**
- ▶ **How can a network approach provide meaningful insights and implications to conceptualise the process of effective knowledge management (production, use and transfer) for the destinations willing to develop in a sustainable way?**
- ▶ **How can a network approach help firms to avoid strategic drift? And, thereby promote and articulate the knowledge of sustainable development.**

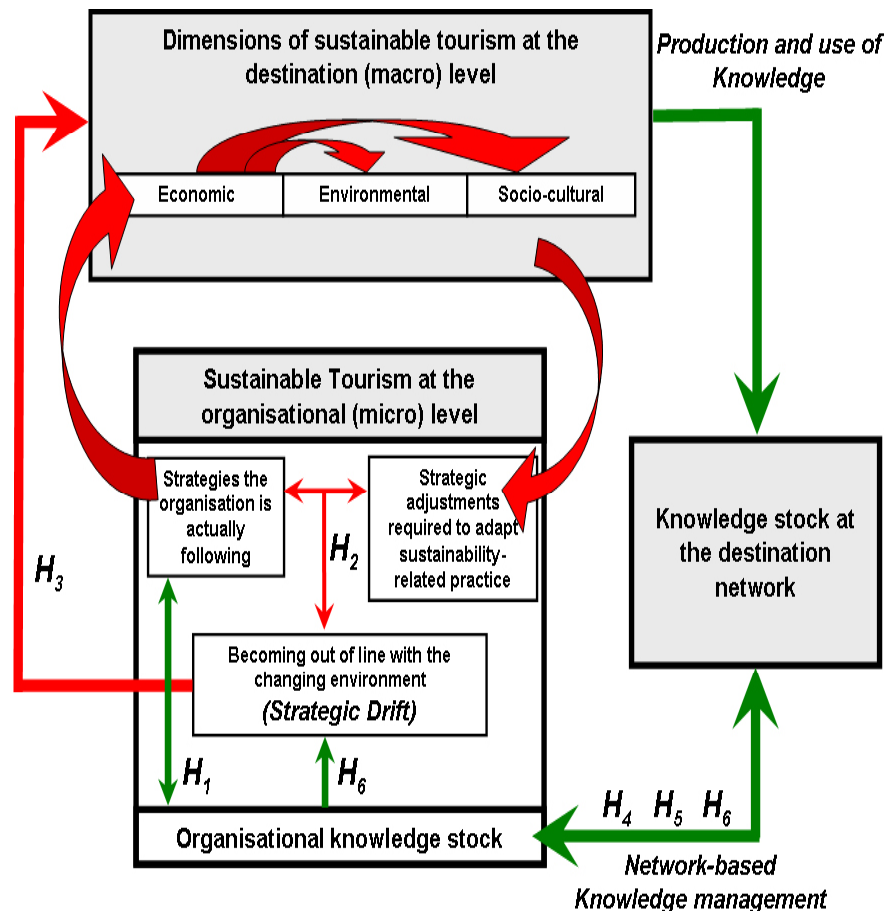


# Conceptual framework





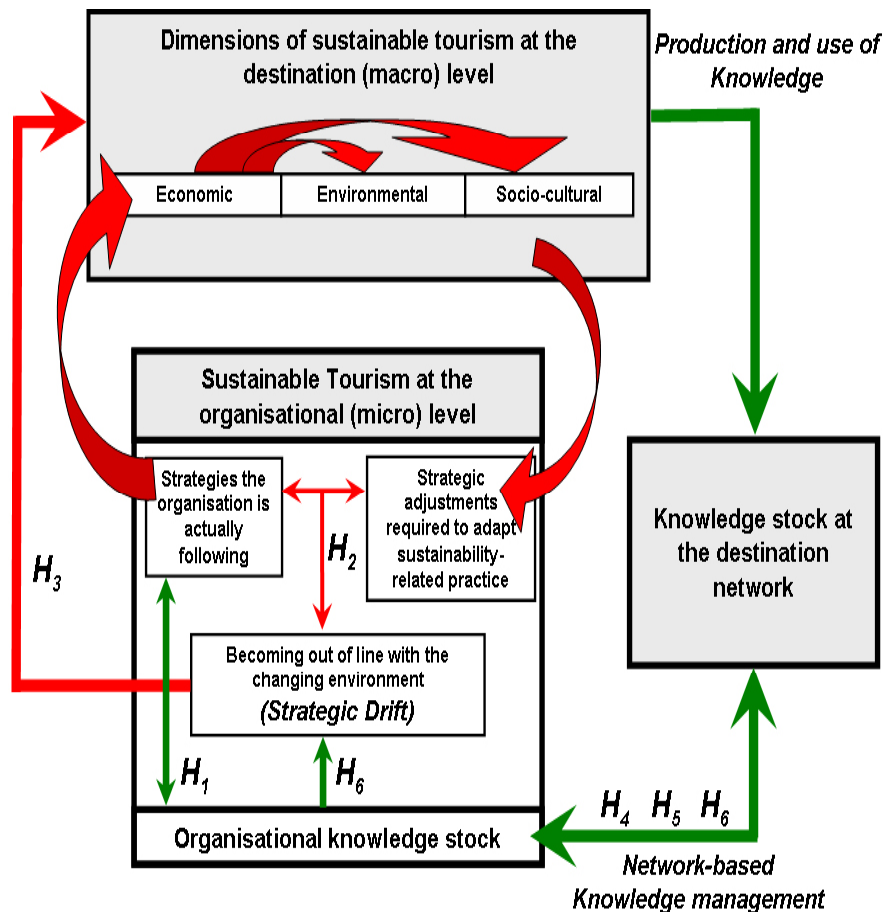
# Research hypotheses



- ▶ **Hypothesis 1:**  
*The adaptation of sustainability-related measures at the organisational level depends on the overall knowledge stock of that organisation. The greater the knowledge stock the greater the adaptation capability.*
- ▶ **Hypothesis 2:**  
*Unsustainable tourism practice may initiate strategic drift for the tourism organisations.*
- ▶ **Hypothesis 3:**  
*The greater the amount of unsustainable tourism practices at the organisation level, the greater the amount of unsustainable tourism practices and strategic drift at the destination level.*



## Research hypotheses (Cont.)



### ► Hypothesis 4:

**Organisational knowledge stocks of sustainability-related measures are positively associated with the effective knowledge transfer process.**

### ► Hypothesis 5:

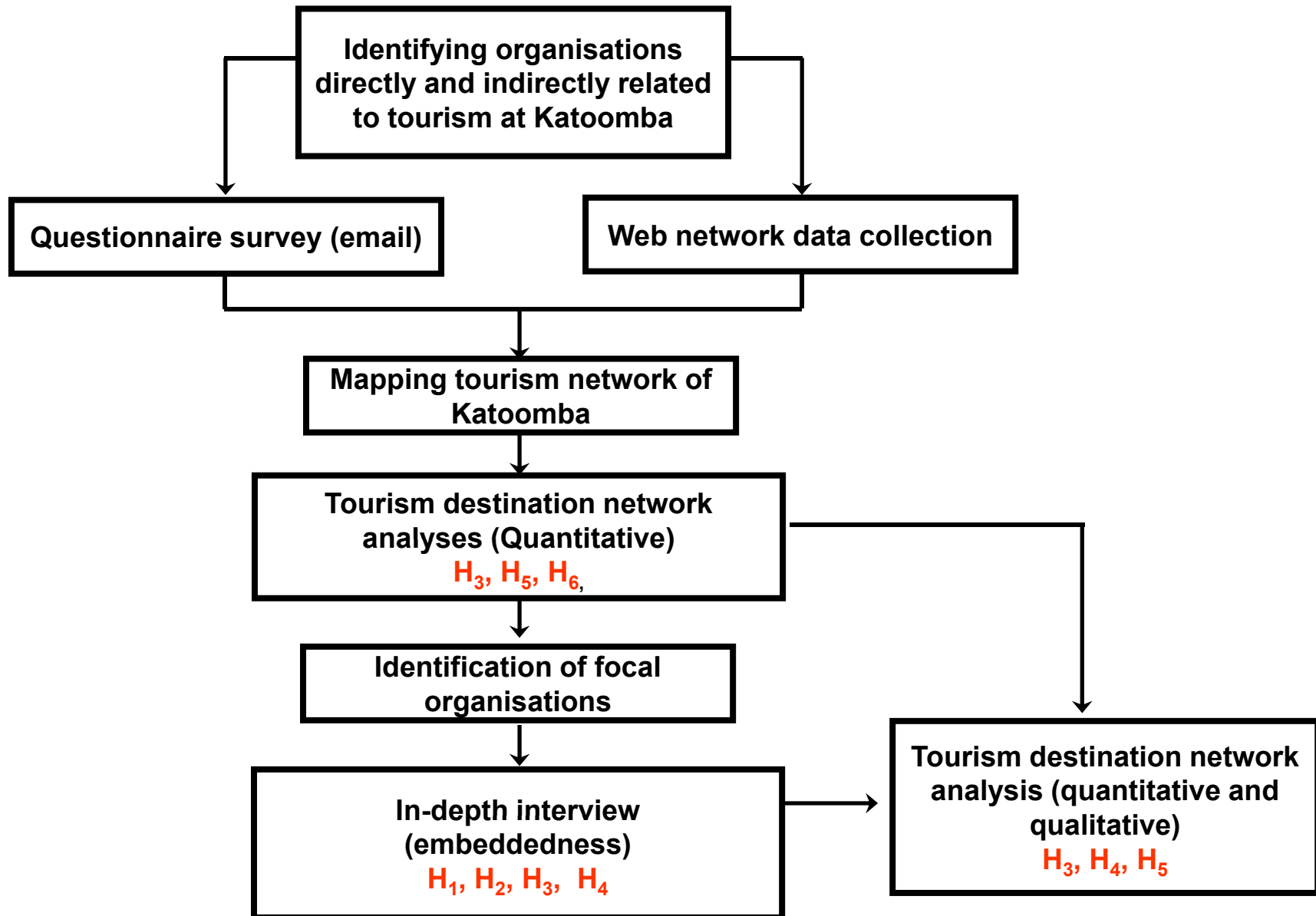
**Effective knowledge transfer process depends on the structure and nature of destination network.**

### ► Hypothesis 6:

**Destination network analyses can identify the nature and structure of relationships among the destination tourism organisations and therefore complements effective knowledge transfer within the destination network to promote sustainability-related practice and avoid strategic drift.**

# Research methodology (Cont.)

*Schematic depiction of the proposed methodology for the study*





## ***Expected outcomes***

- ▶ **The study will provide a graphical display (network map) depicting corresponding pattern and nature of relationships and linkages among the destination's stakeholders. This will provide a preliminary view of the different types of linkages within the destination.**
  
- ▶ **By using the network analytical tools, the study will inform us as to how individual stakeholders acquire knowledge within a destination bounded network and integrate composite behaviour such as sustainable development. This may provide valuable managerial and theoretical insights to articulate sustainability-related practice and avoid strategic drift.**
  
- **Enhance our understanding on how destination organisations are connected (or not connected) and how these connections influence collective behaviours such as effective knowledge management process, sustainable development, and strategic drift.**
  
- ▶ **Policy development at the regional and state level.**



Thank You  
**Danke schön!**



Questions?

Comments

Suggestions