A STUDY OF THE REGENERATION PRACTISES OF TRADITIONAL WELSH SEASIDE RESORTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PORTHCAWL & BARRY ISLAND

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April 2016
Declaration

“I declare that this Dissertation has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except where otherwise stated”

Signed:…………………………………

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyse the regeneration practises of traditional Welsh seaside resorts, comparing Barry Island and Porthcawl as case studies.

The project consisted of five chapters, an introduction that provided relevant background information surrounding seaside tourism and highlighted the research aim and objectives. A literature review which explored the existing literature including tourism life cycle theories, destination management, destination regeneration, motivational theories and regeneration at seaside resorts. The methodology chapter discussed the choice of research methods and justified why quantitative, qualitative and case study approach methods were implemented. The next chapter presented the results of the quantitative and qualitative data for the researcher to complete analysis to identify patterns or similarities between the two destinations. Finally, the last chapter presented conclusions by reviewing the key findings and then make recommendations for future research.

For the research aim and objectives to be fulfilled, the researcher collected the primary data via quantitative and qualitative methods. These consisted of 121 online self-administrated questionnaires and two semi-structured interviews. The results of the questionnaires were presented in graphs and pie charts to complete statistical analysis which allowed the researcher to explore the trends of visitors’ experiences at Barry Island and Porthcawl. In addition, the two semi-structured interviews were transcribed and key statements was compared in the context of destination challenges and destination regeneration. From this, the researcher used thematic analysis to highlight and compare important themes that emerged from the interviews. From the findings of the literature and primary research, the researcher created a conceptual framework that can be applied to seaside resorts as a tool to plan regeneration strategies.

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List of Abbreviations
**BCBC:** Bridgend County Borough Council

**VOGC:** Vale of Glamorgan Council
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1.0. Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction
The first chapter will provide an overview of the dissertation including the historical background of seaside tourism within the UK, exploring the changing trends of visitors and the importance of Barry Island and Porthcawl as case studies for the project. Also, it will explore the significance of this topic in relation to the tourism industry. Finally, the aim and objectives for the research project will be identified.

1.2. Context of the study
The seaside tourism industry has an important history especially within the UK and it has helped to create iconic resorts such as Bournemouth and Blackpool. The foundations for seaside tourism developed in the 18th century when the seaside was perceived as ‘a health-giving, romantically alluring and aesthetically pleasing location’ (Walton, 2000, p. 122). This played an integral part for the development of the UK’s tourism industry, ‘The seaside resort and beach holiday, in their various guises, played a central role in the development of tourism as a great international industry’. (Walton, 2005) In addition, record numbers of tourists to seaside resorts occurred during the late 1940s-early 1950s as ‘post-war evolution of tourism was buoyant, with 75% of the domestic holiday market captured by seaside tourism’. (Agarwal, 1997, p. 65)

However, the decline of seaside tourism became prevalent, particularly in the UK as seaside tourism was the ‘summer destination for many working-class families’ (Glancey, 2015), but the decline began during the 1960s. Research has suggested that this was due to the introduction of low cost flights to European destinations such as Spain (Glancey, 2015).

Although, in order to change or improve a resort, ‘successful tourism development requires that local authorities have to be involved with supporting the visitor experience’. (Lickorish, 2012, p. 164) This will be interesting to note when completing the primary research as it will cover the role local authorities play when implementing tourism development.

Although the seaside sector has suffered from a decrease in visitor numbers over a number of decades, there is evidence to suggest that it may start to recover. For example, seaside holidays within the UK accounted for 32% of all holidays in 2015, a 6.5% increase from 2014. (Worthington, 2016) In addition, with the development of Brexit, much uncertainty is
surrounding holidays, which may be contributing with the growth of staycations by UK residents. (Worthington, 2016)

Consequently, with the understanding of the historical knowledge of seaside tourism, this leads onto the key theme of the study; regeneration practices within seaside resorts. This study will explore different themes within the seaside tourism sector and investigate specifically, Porthcawl and Barry as two key seaside resorts for South East Wales. As a result of the study, it can help identify what and why seaside resorts have regeneration strategies and what proves to be a success.

1.3. Personal Perspective

The topic area is an appropriate theme as it is relevant to the researcher’s studies of a BA(Hons) International Tourism Management. Seaside tourism is a very interesting sector to explore as it has a long-standing history, particularly within the UK. This presents many opportunities for the researcher to evaluate the decline and regeneration of seaside tourism. It gives the researcher the opportunity to be able to expand her knowledge of a key tourism sector. The location for both case study resorts, Porthcawl and Barry Island, are in South East Wales which are easily accessible for the researcher to visit the sites. Also, the researcher has many years of experiences at both destinations, so has chosen to investigate Porthcawl and Barry Island because of their personal interest to the destinations. Furthermore, there is a lack of academic literature that explores these resorts in detail, therefore, the researcher aims to provide new and relevant research to the industry.

Throughout the course of university, the researcher has enjoyed the marketing and niche tourism aspects of the course. These influenced their choice to choose a topic area exploring regeneration practices. In addition, the researcher’s hopes that her interest and knowledge of destination management will develop and increase by completing this study. Furthermore, by completing the dissertation process, she aims to gain as many skills that will help for the future and within the workplace. For example, the researcher will benefit from completing interviews as it will be a new experience and their communication skills will develop. Also, by using a questionnaire for primary research, it will improve both written and I.T skills as it will be created online and will need to be logical and understandable for respondents to answer.
The researcher feels that she will gain valuable knowledge and experience by completing the research project which will benefit greatly in relation to employment within the industry.

1.4. Working Title and Research Question

‘A Study of the Regeneration Practises of Traditional Welsh Seaside Resorts: A Comparative Case Study of Porthcawl and Barry Island’. This is supported with the research question, ‘Has seaside tourism declined and what are Porthcawl and Barry Island doing as regeneration practises for their area?’

1.5. Aim and Objectives

1.4.1. Aim

To analyse and compare Porthcawl and Barry Island’s regeneration practises and evaluate if they are appealing to their target markets.

1.4.2. Objectives

1. To critically review the literature surrounding tourism regeneration theories, UK coastal and seaside tourism and day visitor markets.
2. To evaluate local councils’ regeneration strategies for South Wales’ main traditional seaside resorts.
3. To explore day visitors’ expectations of and reactions to the resorts during and after their visit.
4. To compare the primary research findings to the literature in order to develop recommendations for best practises for local tourist authorities.

1.4.1. Dissertation Structure

The dissertation will be structured by several chapters as shown below:

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Methodology
4. Results, Analysis & Discussion
5. Conclusion & Recommendations
1.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a summary of seaside tourism and its importance to the study. It has outlined the aim and objectives of the study to show what it hopes to achieve. Also, it has specified the structure of the project to provide clarity.

The next chapter will outline and critically analyse relevant literature surrounding seaside tourism, tourism regeneration practices and the day visitor market in order to support the study’s objectives.
2.0. **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

2.1. **Introduction**

A literature review is a vital piece of writing that is needed for a dissertation as it provides a key framework for the development of the study by exploring literature relevant to the topic area. As suggested by Brotherton (2008), it is crucial that when carrying out the research into the existing knowledge and evidence concerning the subject area, that the findings are not simply regurgitated but rather critically analysed. This process allows for similarities or weaknesses to be identified within the existing knowledge and fulfil the hope that the results of the study will add to the gaps that may exist within the current literature (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). In addition, by becoming familiar with the current literature, the study can achieve a focus in the sense of what field of the topic needs investigating more.

This chapter will examine the literature surrounding the topics of seaside tourism, tourism regeneration practices and the day visitor market. This will contribute to meeting the study’s objectives as these are the key themes throughout the study.

2.2. **Life Cycle Theories**

When looking at theoretical concepts applicable to the tourism industry, there are two key theories that are relevant in explaining the rise and decline of tourist destinations. These are Butler’s Tourism Area Life Cycle Model (TALC) and the Restructuring Thesis.

Firstly, Butler’s (1980) model was developed and used to provide an explanation to the rise and decline of tourist destinations. As seen in *figure 1*, the model consists of six stages and characterises the development and growth of a destination through stages 1-4 where the destination is established, marketed and a range of facilities are developed. Then a destination reaches the stagnation stage where the highest number of tourists are attained. This leaves the final ‘post-stagnation’ stage whereby the destination has two options, ‘rejuvenation’ or ‘decline’. (Lundtorp & Wanhill, 2001)
Butler offers a solid explanation for the trend of how tourist destinations become what they are and how they may suffer from the eventual ‘stagnation’ period. Although, the model has been criticised by Williams & Shaw (1997) as being dismissive to individual qualities of different destinations such as the factor of the resort size. However, it is useful tool to reiterate the importance of destination planning in order to avoid decline after the stagnation stage. Furthermore, Butler emphasises the idea that decline is characterised by the loss of product competitiveness and the uniqueness of place rather than specifically the decline of tourism numbers.

However, Butler’s model is over-simplistic as it implies that all destinations follow the pattern of his model and all stages are met when a new tourist destination joins the industry. With this in mind, Cole (2012, p. 1129) states that the TALC model sees destinations as ‘singular, evolving products’. Therefore, the complexity of destinations such as investments, tourists, residents and facilities is ignored by the model and instead considered much more broadly. Nevertheless, the simplicity of Butler’s model does have its advantages as found by Diedrich & García-Buades (2009), that the TALC model uses the number of tourist arrivals as the variable that drives the life cycle over time, allowing all destinations to be able to apply the model in terms of tourist numbers.

Despite this, a flaw in the model is that although it highlights the significance of decline/rejuvenation, it does not offer solutions as to why or how destinations should do this. This can be explained by examining and applying the Restructuring Thesis founded by Agarwal (2002) which considers the internal and external factors that affect a destination.

Figure 2.1: Butler’s Model (Lansky, 2014)
Agarwal emphasises the importance of addressing resort decline as she states, ‘the premise that decline will continue unless corrective measures are initiated’ (2002, p.32). Therefore, in contrast to Butler’s model, it considers decline but focuses on methods as to how the destination can regenerate. This is provided in four strategies which apply to different sectors of the industry;

- Product Reorganisation – investment and economic focus
- Labour Reorganisation – flexibility between labour supply, cost and hours
- Product Transformation – change of product including marketing, enhancement or use
- Spatial Relocation – commodification or internalisation of services

Upon observing the thesis, the crucial foundation for the restructuring theory is that destinations should focus on developing the different sectors that construct their tourism industry. However, it is important to consider that both models fail to separate the causes of decline from the consequences of decline which raises the questions whether consumption patterns change to cause decline or whether consequences of decline causes consumption to change, (Agarwal, 2002). Although, Gordon & Goodall (1992) states that the restructuring thesis supports the idea that new tourism products can be substituted before the exiting products reach decline. By applying this, the destinations can avoid the extreme decline stage that Butler identified.

2.3. Destination Management

The literature provides a variety of interpretation of the term ‘destination management’. Pike (2012), raises the question as to whether a DMO is a destination marketing organisation or a destination management organisation. Heath (2003, quoted by Pike 2012, p.101) states that a DMO is primarily a body for the public and private sector organisations with an interest in tourism. Although neither disputes the need for a DMO, questions are raised over what the role of a DMO entails and how the roles can be construed differently. One dominant aspect within the literature is that a DMO is needed to develop a destination sustainably. A key aspect to destination management is that resources throughout a destination is be considered at all times. As stated by Pike (2012), a DMO should take a proactive interest in the social, cultural and environmental features of a destination. in addition to considering existing resources, Laws (1995), says that during the management
phase, authorities need to make decisions that anticipate the demands and changing tastes of tourists, in turn influencing tourist’s decisions and experiences. However, another crucial aspect to destination management is that when development occurs at a destination, although the tourist experience is paramount to the decision-making process, the residents needs also must be considered. This is vital to the success of a tourist destination so that both locals and tourists have a working and pleasant relationship.

A key theory to apply to destination management is the Modernisation theory. Rostow (1960, quoted by Sharpley 2000, p.4) found that economic growth is the core where destinations can develop from ‘traditional’ to ‘mass consumption’. Therefore, it can be said that development of tourism products encourages the growth of the economy. However, Sharpley (2000) argues that development is assumed to occur as a result of the economic benefits that stem from the tourism sector. Furthermore, the danger with focusing purely on the economic aspects of a resort, it ignores the social and environmental components of the destination which are crucial to the visitor experience. For example, MacCannell (1976) stated that tourists can become locked into resort compounds and encounter a fake experience. Thus, leading to friction between residents and tourists. Additionally, Goffman (1959, quoted by Laws, 1995, p.63) says, ‘tourists seek an authentic experience when really they face a staged facsimile’. Therefore, in the process of destination management, it is crucial to ensure that all sectors within the destination consider social, economic and environmental components.

2.4. Destination Regeneration

Destination regeneration is a key theme for this study. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2004, quoted by Smith, 2007, p.Xiii) defined regeneration as ‘the positive transformation of a place that has previously displayed symptoms of physical, social and/or economic decline’. In terms of theoretical explanation, this definition supports the TALC and Restructuring Models. Butler’s model states that that the rejuvenation stage is crucial in order to encourage new visitors (Agarwal, 2002). Additionally, the Restructuring thesis provides a structure for destinations to apply regeneration strategies to the area.

Transport infrastructure provides a vital catalyst for regeneration at a tourist destination. For example, with the expansion of the railway, especially in the UK, it can be said that it played a major role of starting tourism growth. As stated by (Page, 2015), ‘transport is a vital facilitator of tourism’. However, on the other hand, transport development can create
negative issues for some sectors of the industry. For example, low cost budget flights grew during the 1960s, which saw the increase of UK holidaymakers taking summer trips to Spain, in turn adding to the decline of UK seaside resorts (Glancey, 2015). Although this was a major blow to the UK tourism industry, it provided the UK access to a worldwide market of tourists.

When examining the literature concerning destination regeneration, it is possible to class it as the destination ‘rebranding’ as marketing plays a key role in the success of a regeneration. For example, Williams (2003, p. 74) states, ‘professionalism is linked to the increasing sophistication in the marketing of tourism services’. With tourism becoming a competitive industry in many areas such as facilities or prices, destinations have adapted to these needs. For instance, market segmentation has allowed destinations to adapt to suitable markets, improving their destination to suit tourist demands. Therefore, with the importance of marketing growing, Williams (2003, p. 74) observes that this ‘allows for travel services to be tailored to particular needs and actively targeted at the segments concerned’.

Williams’ knowledge is relevant to the tourism industry as there has been a growth particularly with niche markets. Sectors such as adventure tourism, activity tourism and heritage tourism emerging, this supports the idea that more destinations want to target specific markets as part of their regeneration plans. For example, Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Betws-y-Coed, North Wales have capitalised on the landscape and developed a substantial market for adventure tourists (Zip World, 2016).

However, although regeneration can be useful for destinations, in some cases it can be detrimental due to the encouragement of mass tourism. De Kadt (1979, p. 62) explains, ‘goods or services that used to be part of people’s social lives have now been commercialised and are offered as commodities’. This can be supported by Sharpley’s (2000) findings concerning Modernisation theory, whereby traditional values of a destination can be lost. Therefore, it raises the question that although tourism does encourage beneficial improvements to a destination such as employment and infrastructure, but it can affect authenticity of the tourist experience. Therefore, destination regeneration plays a key role in what affects the residents as well as tourists when implementing regeneration strategies. MacCannell (1976) highlights authenticity as a key motivator and feature of the tourism industry and suggests that it reveals the patterns of why tourists choose certain destinations and activities. However, Urry (1991) argues that this is a simplistic view to be able to apply to modern tourism as it overlooks tourist activities such as visiting family/friends and hobbies whereby authenticity cannot be considered as a motivation to the destination.
Therefore, when reflecting on destination regeneration, it is important to note that there are many factors to be considered when looking at the strategies for the revival of a location and different consequences depending on the approach the destination takes.

2.5. Customer Motivations

When applying destination regeneration, customer motivations should also be considered in order to attract visitor markets. Graburn (1983) found that tourists engage in tourism for the need to escape the norm. He explains that when on holiday, tourists undertake, ‘behavioural inversions’, whereby people adopt behaviour that is opposite of what their normal day-to-day life would consist of. Additionally, it is suggested that seaside resorts could have been the ‘real pioneers in the changing of attitudes of the swinging sixties’ because of behaviour undertaken by tourists on holiday, Lickorish (2012, p. 53). Behavioural patterns are vital to a destination’s image as it can impact positively or negatively on the visitor markets. For example, Spanish destinations like Ibiza, have become known as a ‘party’ island. However, unruly tourist behaviour and tensions with residents has pushed the destination into renewal as a family friendly location to attract the family and luxury tourist market Greenwood (2013). Similarly, with UK resorts like Brighton, has seen a variety of market changes, shifting from ‘Regency pleasure, the gay Victorian resort to Bank Holiday riots’, Morgan & Pritchard (1999, p. 60).

Furthermore, motivations can stem from the attachment visitors have with a place. This links with MacCannell’s (1976) findings of authenticity in that visitors also create a ‘sense of place’ by connecting emotionally with a destination, Stokowski (2002). Trauer & Ryan (2005) developed the concept of the Intimacy theory to highlight how destinations can have importance for tourists. He found that the meaning of place recaptures memories of shared behaviours that reinforce personal intimacies, which suggests why destinations receive repeat visits. This concept can be applied to seaside resorts as they are often associated with childhood holidays and a place of play (Morgan & Pritchard, 1999), allowing relationships to the resort to be established. This concept is still relevant for the resorts as a Mintel report showed that 31% of adults would revisit a childhood destination, typically being a seaside resort (Worthington, 2016).
2.6. Regeneration of Seaside Resorts

The traditional idea of an 18th century seaside resort is now becoming non-existent as the tourism industry develops and tourists themselves have changing attitudes. For example, Morgan & Pritchard (1999) highlighted that the heart of many UK seaside resorts, promenades and swimming pools, were specifically built to provide work for the unemployed compared to recent times where investment has slowed down or become non-existent. Therefore, it has been paramount that a variety of factors are considered when applying regeneration to seaside resorts.

A suitable starting point for looking at seaside regeneration is to understand why they became a popular attraction in order to highlight key aspects that could be used as a focal point of regeneration. The concept of ‘place’ is crucial for destinations as this can be the major motivation for visitors.

Firstly, as a general theory to apply to the tourist experience, the intimacy theory explains how places can hold meaning for people through the relationships and memories created during their time at a particular location, in turn, creating importance of the place to the tourist (Trauer & Ryan, 2005). This is an important concept that can be applied to seaside resorts as they are often associated with childhood holidays, tourists can have repeat visits to the relevant destination with their children as found by a Mintel report, 31% of adults would revisit a childhood destination, typically being a seaside resort (Worthington, 2016).

As previously mentioned, the intimacy theory can be a beneficial concept for seaside regeneration as it applies to the connection that visitors have with the resort. However, fond memories alone, may not be strong enough to encourage new visitors, therefore, consideration of new developments is needed. Mintel found that interactive innovation such as ‘edutainment’ (educational entertainment) mixed with nostalgic aspects can be a vital for improving tourist numbers (Worthington, 2016). This supports the concept of the intimacy theory whereby sense of place is an important attraction for tourists.

Furthermore, for seaside resorts to achieve successful redevelopment, the emphasis of using only local amenities has shifted to encompassing the regional resources (Williams, 2003). This has been accomplished through a variety of factors such as the development of road links and the ownership of cars has grown. In addition, features of resorts have shifted to become stand-alone attractions, such as theme parks (Williams, 2003). For example, it has allowed the foundations of the traditional funfair at the seaside to grow into a theme park. This has allowed tourists to take their holiday at a seaside resort, but use the surrounding
areas for day trips and activities. For example, Tenby, West Wales is popular for holidays whereby the nearby theme park, Oakwood, is used for day trips. Therefore, it is important for the surrounding area to be incorporated with the resort in order to enrich the tourist experience further.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.2 is a conceptual model that the researcher has developed to show what they believe are the key stages of destination decline and regeneration. The researcher has concluded that by incorporating the TALC Model and Restructuring Thesis in one model, it highlights the importance of when a destination should recognise the need for regeneration and how it should be applied. Therefore, in order to test the validity of the conceptual model, the researcher will consider its application to their primary research.
2.8. Conclusion

The researcher has critically reviewed a variety of literature that is relevant to the research aim and objective. This has allowed the researcher to identify key theories and concepts concerning destination management and regeneration. As a result, it has provided the researcher with knowledge to construct a model in order to assess destination decline and regeneration. As the study is specific to seaside resorts, the researcher aims to apply the key findings of the literature to their primary research in order to assess their relevance to seaside resorts.

The following chapter will discuss the methodological approaches the researcher will use to obtain primary research and achieve their objectives.
3.0. Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

‘Research is an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement’, Kothari (2004, p. 1).

Kothari’s definition of research can be used to explain the purpose and importance of completing research. The research process requires research methods to be selected in order to establish a research methodology. Selecting the appropriate research methods for a study is key for its success. This chapter will explore a range of data collection methods including qualitative, quantitative and a case study approach. When considering research methods, crucial factors such as validity and reliability of the results will be questioned unless the methods that are chosen are justified as the most appropriate methods to generate the findings (Brotherton, 2008).

3.2. Case Study Approach

‘The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events’, Yin (2009, p. 4).

Yin states that the case study approach can be used as a preliminary research tool method. For example, by using this approach, it presents the opportunity of exploring an issue in depth within a specific context as well as the possibility of testing the applicability of an existing theory to the chosen case study, (Brotherton, 2008). The key aspect to consider when using a case study approach is to remember both advantages and disadvantages of using case study research. For example, Woodside (2010, p. 1) finds the approach ‘focuses on describing, understanding, predicting and/or controlling the individual’. Therefore, it means the findings are unable to be applied to a wider scale as they can be case specific. However, other research methods can be used in conjunction with the case study approach in order to achieve well-rounded results.

Furthermore, the researcher has chosen to use the case study approach because they can apply a multiple case study design. Also as the study is focusing on two destinations, Barry Island and Porthcawl, a comparative method is needed. Therefore, this provides an appropriate and ideal design for the researcher to employ throughout the study.
3.3. Qualitative vs Quantitative Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of data</td>
<td>Phenomena are described numerically</td>
<td>Phenomena are described in a narrative fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Descriptive and inferential statistics</td>
<td>Identification of major themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of inquiry</td>
<td>Specific questions or hypotheses</td>
<td>Broad, thematic concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary advantage</td>
<td>Large sample, statistical validity, accurately reflects the population</td>
<td>Rich, in-depth, narrative description of sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary disadvantage</td>
<td>Superficial understanding of participants’ thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>Small sample, not generalizable to the population at large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.3: Quantitative versus Qualitative Research (VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008)*

*The debate between qualitative and quantitative researchers is based upon the differences in assumptions about what reality is and whether or not it is measurable*, Newman & Benz (1998, p. 2)

Newman & Benz highlights the consideration that researchers must undertake to choose whether to use qualitative or quantitative research methods. Although both are productive methods, figure 3.1 shows the different process and different findings they methods use and produce.

Quantitative research concerns itself with numerical data and its ‘purpose is to make valid and objective descriptions on phenomena’, Taylor (2005, p. 91). Glesne & Peshkin (as quoted by Thomas, 2003) argue that quantitative research seeks explanations and predictions that will generalise to other persons and places. In other words, by securing quantitative data, it presents the opportunity to apply the research to a wider sample. This is an important method for the researcher’s study as it allows statistical data to be collected and the findings to be analysed for wider comparison.

On the other hand, Kumar (2008, p. 8) states that qualitative research ‘is specially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour’. This is another important method for data collection. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, as quoted by Newman & Benz, 1998), qualitative research is defined by ‘multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter’. This is crucial for the results as it allows the researcher to be impartial when collecting the interpretive data but also gather vital findings which may not be found from quantitative collection alone.
3.4. Mixed Methods Approach

Teddie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 7), defined the mixed methods approach ‘as a type of research design in which Qualitative and Quantitative approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and/or inferences’.

Other writers have defined this approach in a simpler way, for example Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007), said the approach ‘attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives and positions including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research’.

The literature concerning the mixed methods approach agree that qualitative and quantitative methods must be used in order to fulfil the requirements of this method. Furthermore, by using this approach, the quantitative and qualitative methods can either be integrated as their original form or be adapted to fit the research. The advantage to implementing the mixed methods approach is that it can obtain results that produce a fuller picture and a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Wilson, 2013).

The key points highlighted supports the researcher’s choice to use the mixed method approach as she feels that the use of qualitative and quantitative methods will produce a fuller understanding of tourism practices at both destinations.

3.5. Quantitative Data Collection

A simple definition for quantitative research methodology is that it is concerned with raw numerical data that needs to be processed and analysed for the results to have meaning (VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008). Figure 3.1 shows that a quantitative research design is based around a statistical theme because of the numerical results this type of research produces.

Therefore, a quantitative approach has been chosen by the researcher in order to achieve numerical and statistical results from creating and distributing a questionnaire.

3.5.1. Survey Design

Fowler (2014) observes that using self-administrated questionnaires, it is beneficial for the researcher to use a closed question set to avoid confusion by the respondents hence maximising returns. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to use an online self-administrated
questionnaire using Qualtrics software, to collect quantitative data in relation to visitor’s experiences and tourism practises at Barry Island and Porthcawl. When designing the questionnaire, the researcher considered Fowler’s findings and chosen to employ closed question set. Although open ended questions produce useful anecdotal data, this would not be relevant for this study as this would be difficult to present as statistical data due to the qualitative nature that these answers would produce. See appendix A/B for a sample questionnaire.

3.5.2. Sampling

The researcher has decided to employ a convenience sampling method for the completion of questionnaires to have easy access to a wide range of respondents and Bernard (2013) highlights that convenience sampling is beneficial for exploratory research. Although there are criticisms to using this type of sampling, for example, some writers have said that convenience sampling is weak as the researcher does not make any effort to know the population and have no control over the representation in terms of bias, (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016). However, to combat these issues, the researcher will ensure that the sample will be taken from visitors that have had experience of Porthcawl or Barry Island and will include both positive or negative experiences at either destination.

3.5.3. Implementation

In order to reach and achieve the maximum number of relevant respondents, the researcher used online software, Qualtrics and distributed an anonymous link via social media. This included Facebook and Twitter accounts that are relevant to either destination, such as Bridgend Tourism Association, Vale of Glamorgan Tourism Association, Visit the Vale and Bridgend Bites. The researcher felt this is the most appropriate way of distribution as the use of social media gives access to respondents that are not from the local areas of Porthcawl and Barry Island. Also, the researcher aims for a response rate of 100 questionnaires (50/50 between Barry Island and Porthcawl).

3.5.4. Analysis

Analysis is an important stage in research, 'Analysis finds questions where there seemed not to be any and it makes connections that might not have been evident at first' (Rosenwasser & Stephen, 2014, p. 3).
The researcher will use statistical analysis by collating the data results from the questionnaires and present it via graphs and pie charts in order to establish patterns and relationships from the responses. By using this, statistical significance from the data can be highlighted (Connolly, 2007). By using this form of analysis, it will provide a way of condensing the data into a simple format to understand. Although there are arguments against using pie charts that say that precision is lost in terms of statistics (Minter & Michaud), which is why the researcher has chosen to use a mix of analysis methods.

3.6. Qualitative Data Collection

It is important to note that when carrying out qualitative research, the researcher must consider the ‘key purpose of the data, whether it is to build a theory or test a theory’, Brotherton (2008, p. 208). Therefore, the researcher has chosen to use a qualitative approach in order to collect data in a social context and identify key themes relevant to the study.

3.6.1. Interview design

To complete the qualitative data collection, the researcher has chosen to use semi-structured interviews. Bailey (2007) said that this type of interview is ideal for researchers who prefer some flexibility in their interviews but still want structure in terms of what will be discussed. The researcher felt that this is the best form of interview to use as she will be able to use an interview guide that will allow the interview to flow but still cover topics and gather information that the researcher requires for the research collection. See Appendix C/D for interview structure.

3.6.2. Sampling

The researcher has engaged in purposive sampling in order to fulfil her quota of two semi-structured interviews with industry experts. Patton (1990) highlights the key to purposeful sampling is to selecting cases that are information rich. This supports the researcher’s choice in conducting an interview with Nia Hollins, the Principal Tourism and Marketing Officer for VOGC and Alice Brown, the Destination Management Officer for BCBC, two participants that will be the most knowledgeable in this field of research.
3.6.3. Implementation

The semi-structured interviews will take place at the offices of the participants and to take place during March 2017. Both participants will be interviewed using a structure created by the researcher to gain data relevant to the topic area. The interviews will be voice recorded in order to aid the researcher in the analysis stage.

3.6.4. Analysis

The data from the interviews will be analysed through thematic analysis allowing the researcher to identify key themes that have emerged from the interviews (Bailey 2007). The interviews will be transcribed to highlight patterns and differences in order to analyse emerging patterns. Therefore, the analysis stage will prove important in terms of answering the research questions and the evaluation of the regeneration strategies at the destinations. However, it is crucial that both transcripts will be analysed separately to allow attention to detail. See Appendix E/F for full transcripts of interviews.

3.7. Reliability and Validity

When considering research, ensuring reliability and validity is crucial so that the research can be classed as objective and measurable (Brotherton 2008). It is simpler to achieve reliability and validity with quantitative research than qualitative as it is concerned with statistical data. Therefore, the data can be carried out objectively as the researcher has no influence on the respondents as it is completed online and anonymously. Furthermore, the researcher ensured there was no bias in the questionnaire that did not allow the respondents to answer truthfully. For example, it did not discriminate against negative or positive experiences of visits to either destination.

Bailey (2007) says that reliability implies consistency. Therefore, although an interview and its results is difficult to replicate, reliability associated with qualitative research is concerned with the reliability of the participants instead. Furthermore, validity is an important factor to consider for the interviews, particularly, content validity which concerns itself the logical consistency and coverage of a topic.

The researcher feels that the methods of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach research are ideal for the study. Also by implementing these methods, the
researcher can employ triangulation to confirm and verify data in different ways thus reducing the individual weaknesses from each method and increasing reliability and validity of the results.

3.8. Ethical Issues

‘Ethics is concerned with moral values, principles and actions, responsibility and trust’ (Brotherton, 2008, p. 55)

Ethical issues are a crucial aspect to completing any form of research and has been an important factor for the researcher when planning the research process. As highlighted by Brotherton, ethics is vital for the completion of a study as it is needed to build trust between the researcher and participants.

As part of the University protocol, an ethical application has been submitted in order to highlight key ethical issues and how to combat these. See Appendix G for full ethics approval. In addition, a consent form for both interviewees were completed to inform them of confidentiality, informed consent and the option of anonymity. For the online questionnaire, a summary of the study and an over 18 consent box was used as informed consent and the acknowledgement of anonymity.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted and discussed the choice of research methods implemented and the design and analysis process of the questionnaires and semi structured interviews. Furthermore, the researcher has acknowledged the importance of reliable and valid research methods and the significance of ethical issues within a research process. The research results will be discussed and analysed in the following chapter.
4.0. **Chapter Four: Results, Analysis and Discussion**

4.1. **Introduction**

The researcher will combine the Results, Analysis and Discussion into one chapter. It will discuss and analyse the results of 2 semi-structured interviews taken with Alice Brown (BCBC) and Nia Hollins (VOGC) and the 121 questionnaires concerning visitors’ experiences of Porthcawl and Barry Island. For the remainder of this chapter, the interviewees will be referred to as Alice and Nia.

The qualitative and quantitative data will be compared and discussed in relation to existing literature. This will fulfil the researcher’s objectives:

- ‘To evaluate local councils’ regeneration strategies for South Wales’ main traditional seaside resorts’
- ‘To explore day visitors’ expectations of and reactions to the resorts during and after their visit’
- ‘To compare the primary research findings to the literature in order to develop recommendations for best practices for local tourist authorities’

Also, the achievement of these objectives will fulfil the research aim:

‘To analyse and compare Porthcawl and Barry’s regeneration practises and evaluate if they are appealing to their target markets’.

By comparing the quantitative and qualitative data, this uses triangulation which increases the credibility and validity of the results. As defined by O'Donoghue & Punch (2003, p. 78), ‘triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data’. The results will then be analysed by identifying key themes from the data. Then, links can be established between the literature and the primary findings in order to construct suitable recommendations for the market area.
4.2. Visitor Trends

4.2.1. Demographics of visitors

Firstly, it is important to highlight the demographic of the respondents in order to achieve clarity for the analysis. Therefore, the opening section to both questionnaires consisted of profiling questions including age. From figures 4.1 and 4.2, it is clear the age group 18-24 was the most popular, 32% for Barry Island and 39% for Porthcawl and the lowest responses was from 55+ age groups which combined only totalled to 17% and 13% for Barry Island and Porthcawl respectively. This may be due to the questionnaire being accessed online and older age groups having less opportunity to online access.

![Figure 4.4: Age of respondents to Barry Island questionnaire](image)

![Figure 4.05: Age of respondents to Porthcawl questionnaire](image)
From this, the researcher could establish how often the different age groups visited either destination.

Figure 4.06: Regularity of visit based on age (Barry Island)

Figure 4.07: Regularity of visit based on age (Porthcawl)
Figure 4.3 shows 50% of 18-24 year olds visit yearly and 44% chose ‘other’ which consisted of qualitative answers ranging from ‘once every 3 months, every 4 years or rarely’. In contrast, the older the age group, yearly visits decrease but regularity of visits increase. For example, daily visits appear in every age group apart from 18-24. These results link with findings from the interview with Nia where she said the demographics of visitors tend to include

‘families and the older generation. In terms of semi-professional or recently retired’.

This is supported in the quantitative results whereby 63% of the 55-64 group visits Barry Island at least once a week and 100% of 65-74-year-old respondents visit daily.

Furthermore, figure 4.4 shows the highest figures of yearly visits to Porthcawl was 88% of the 35-44 age group. The remaining respondents of this group chose ‘other’ which generally consisted of ‘once every 3-4 years’. It is interesting to note that yearly visits contributed as the most popular answer for all age groups except 75+. This is crucial to Porthcawl’s visitor numbers as the interview with Alice revealed that their demographic of visitors tend to be

‘a lot of repeat visitors, very loyal customers who come year after year’.

This supports the questionnaire results of yearly visits in the sense that many tend to take their annual holiday at Porthcawl as Alice says that

‘Trecco Bay (Holiday Park) accounts for the biggest volume of staying visitors’.

In comparison, the 18-24 age group varies greatly between both destinations. Although, for both destinations, 50% take yearly visits, Porthcawl tends to have more regular visitors from this age group as 22% compared to 6% for Barry Island visit at least once a month.

Furthermore, as both destinations include families as their target market, it is important to consider the regularity of visitors from both the 25-34 group and the 35-44 group. The results show that daily visitors within the 25-34 group are represented as 25% for Barry Island and only 9% for Porthcawl. In addition, daily visitors of 35-44 are non-existent for Porthcawl but account for 21% of this age group for Barry Island. The interview with Nia explains this difference,

‘housing has increased on the island and has brought a new type of people’.

Therefore, it can be argued that residents are contributing significantly to Barry Island’s visitor numbers.
4.2.2. Purpose of Visit

Another key factor to consider is the purpose of customers’ visits. The questionnaire specified ‘Day Visit’ or ‘Short Break/Holiday’. From this, the researcher could analyse the purpose of respondent’s visits.

Figure 4.5 shows that Barry Island is predominately used as a day visit destination as only 4% visited for a Short Break/Holiday. This is a major issue for Barry Island and has been identified by the VOGC to be improved in terms of encouraging staying visitors. Furthermore, this can be linked with figure 4.3, which highlights the regularity of visitors. Although Barry Island does not receive many visitors for a holiday purpose, the day visitors use Barry Island regularly with all age groups visiting Barry Island at least once a month, if not more. Therefore, it is possible that if facilities for staying visitors were improved, the regularity of visits may increase as well as the number of visitors staying longer.

In comparison, Porthcawl had a quarter of respondents that said they visited for a Short Break/Holiday, with figures showing that 36% stayed for 1-3 nights, 28% stayed for 3-7 nights and 36% stayed for 8+ nights. This is a positive sign for Porthcawl as Alice highlighted the importance of Trecco Bay in the interview.

‘Trecco Bay, the caravan park accounts for the biggest volume of staying visitors’
Furthermore, unlike Barry Island, yearly visits are higher across the age groups but more regular visits are low, for example, weekly visits only equate to 13%. Therefore, it is evident that although BCBC could encourage more staying visitors, they do have more than Barry Island but the issues emphasised by Alice is whether

‘they are spending enough or staying long enough.’

However, it can be argued that visitors that use Porthcawl as a holiday destination are actually staying long with 64% staying for 3-8+ nights, showing that there are positive signs for Porthcawl’s tourism, particularly within the holiday market.

4.3. Challenges

From quantitative and qualitative data, a variety of challenges affecting the destinations was identified. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to discuss the key themes that emerged to complete the analysis. The themes will be discussed by using key quotes from the interviews and relevant results from the questionnaires.

4.3.1. Perceptions & Expectations

In order to assess how great the impact of perceptions and expectations can be to destinations and their visitor numbers, the researcher has highlighted the key statements from Nia (Principal Tourism & Marketing Officer for VOGC) and Alice (Destination Management Coordinator for BCBC) concerning this issue.

| What is the biggest challenge faced when working with a seaside resort? | ‘It is the way they have declined over the years and people’s expectations of holidays are so much more different than what they were in the seaside resorts’ heyday. It’s keeping up with what visitors want and expecting and giving people something new that is relevant.’ (Alice – Porthcawl) | ‘How do you encourage all year visitors? You have to strike a balance between promoting what is actually accurate, you can’t inflate people’s expectations when you recognise that there’s still work to be done.’ (Nia – Barry Island) |

Although the statements reflect issues faced by seaside resorts generally, the challenges mentioned are applicable to Porthcawl and Barry Island. Particularly the subject that Alice
emphasises whereby it is crucial to keep up with what visitors expect and want their visit. In support of this, Butler (1980) makes change within a destination explicit in the TALC, whereby once a destination reaches the stagnation stage, resorts are left with the option to rejuvenate or face decline, something that is prevalent for both destinations in terms of updating the destinations to change and meet perceptions and expectations of visitors. In comparison, Nia focuses on the matter of expectations regarding this as an important aspect for a destination to maintain. As mentioned in the literature review, destination regeneration is ultimately rebranding the area which is relevant to both tangible aspects such as facilities as well as intangible aspects such as perceptions of the area.

The impact of perceptions exists for Barry Island as Nia observes,

‘there is still this preconception of Barry Island being the cheap and cheerful, bucket and spade, candyfloss and probably a bit naff and a bit cheesy’.

This suggests that even though the traditional seaside resort has faced decline nationally, the ‘cheap and cheerful, bucket and spade’ image is still prevalent today. Therefore, it can be argued that rather than battling to change this dominant image, it is better to embrace it and focus on other ways to attract visitors as she emphasises that it is essential to have a destination where its focus is that it,

‘pleases people when they do get here and they keep coming back more and more’.

Furthermore, another key point that was raised when considering expectations, is that when marketing a destination, it has to

‘strike a balance between promoting what is actually accurate.

This is critical for Barry Island and Porthcawl as it can be more harmful than helpful to a destination if it attracts visitors on false marketing. This is extremely important to avoid because even if visitors increased due to new marketing of the resorts, visitors would leave disappointed, causing repeat visits to decline and breaking the barrier of perceptions would then become more difficult. In addition, avoiding false marketing links to MacCannell’s (1976) findings, of authenticity being a key motivator, further supporting the idea that being honest with customers and embracing the ‘bucket and spade’ image would be beneficial.

In comparison, Porthcawl does not face the challenge of perceptions to the same extent of Barry Island, as Alice explains,
‘lots of people had never heard of Porthcawl. In our key marketing areas, there was a low recognition of the name, Porthcawl’.

Although awareness of Porthcawl is poor, this can be an advantage for rebranding the area as the marketing is

‘starting with a blank canvas, you’re not trying to dispel negative views’.

Therefore, unlike Barry Island, Porthcawl faces a barrier of expectations rather than perceptions, which can be difficult as it has to predict the needs and wants of visitors. Laws (1995) highlights the need that authorities have to make decisions that anticipate the demands and changing tastes of tourists which is what Alice also recognised in relevance to customer’s expectations of holidays and accommodation. Furthermore, in relation to the traditional seaside image, for Porthcawl it is something that is not seen with the same importance as it is in Barry Island. Instead it is recognised as an aspect that has to

‘strike a balance between to look forward and being nostalgic’.

This is an important point as seen in the literature review, the Mintel report found that innovation mixed with nostalgic views was a crucial factor for improving tourist numbers. However, having said that, it is important to note that Barry Island and Porthcawl are at different stages of planning and regeneration and are considered very different destinations as seen in the previous section (day visit or short break) so perceptions and expectations will vary.

Moreover, the results from the questionnaires also provide an insight into perceptions and expectations. The following graphs show whether visitors believe facilities/amenities need improvements based on the satisfaction from their visit.
Figure 4.8: Improvements based on Satisfaction (Barry Island)

Figure 4.9: Improvements based on Satisfaction (Porthcawl)
The graphs reveal crucial information in terms of what visitors want from their visit. For example, although 32 people agreed that they were satisfied with their visit, 26 of these gave a definitive ‘yes’ for improvements to be made to Barry Island’s facilities. However, it is positive for the destination that only 2 people said they were ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ and there were no respondents that were ‘extremely dissatisfied’. In comparison, Porthcawl had 50 respondents agree that they were satisfied with their visit with 2 respondents saying ‘no’ to the need for improvements. In addition, there were more respondents that were not as decided as to whether improvements need to be done, with 20 answers of ‘maybe’. However, there were 25 satisfied visitors that agreed that improvements need to be done.

Although the results can show a negative picture of both destinations, as many agreed that improvements are needed at Barry Island and Porthcawl. It is important to consider that the majority that answered ‘yes’, were satisfied with their visit. Nevertheless, even with visitors recognising the flaws at either destination, they were happy with their experiences and figures 4.3 and 4.4, support the idea that visitors are happy to come back regularly as well. Furthermore, another crucial factor is that both authorities recognise the improvements and changes that needs to be completed to fulfil their current visitor market and attract new markets too.

4.3.2. Facilities

The data from the interviews and questionnaires indicated that the availability and standard of facilities presented itself as a common and major challenge for both destinations.

Firstly, to illustrate the importance that facilities have on seaside resorts, the interviews provide an insight into the principal challenges that they face.
The table shows how both destinations are suffering from the challenge of improving accommodation availability. However, both are focused on different aspects of improvement.

For example, Porthcawl is concerned with updating and improving the quality of the current availability of accommodation stock in order to improve their position within the accommodation market. Whereas Barry Island is focused on the aspect of acquiring accommodation stock to fulfil the needs of the current visitor market and be able to access the market of staying visitors.

To support the findings from the interviews, two vital and relevant questions that was used to identify respondent’s impressions of the facilities at the destinations, was to assess the choice and assess the quality of a range of facilities with 1 being the worst and 5 being the highest. The following figures, show the worst and best choices of facilities at Barry Island and Porthcawl.
Figure 4.10: Ratings of Barry Island’s Choice of Facilities

Figure 4.11: Ratings of Porthcawl’s Choice of Facilities
It is evidently clear that in Barry Island, the choice of accommodation is rated the lowest with a 24% response rate of 1 unlike Porthcawl where this was represented only by 3%. In comparison, Porthcawl scored lowest for their public transport links (19%) something that is a strong factor for Barry Island as it did not get a score of 1 from any respondents. Instead, public transport was the highest scoring facility with 20% of respondents rating it as 5. In addition, the highest scoring facility for Porthcawl was shops represented by 16% of the responses.

Furthermore, the results of the quality ratings of facilities happened to echo the results of the choices. For example, Barry Island’s accommodation quality was the highest proportion of lowest rating (19%) and their best facility based on quality was again, public transport links with a quarter of people rating this as 5. Although in comparison, Porthcawl’s results did not follow the same trend. The best rated facility based on quality was shops (15%), the same as in figure 10 but the lowest rated facility based on quality was public toilets (21%) not public transport links.

Therefore, relating the findings from the interviews to the results of the questionnaire, the researcher found patterns emerged between what visitors feel about the destinations and what issues the authorities have recognised. For example, although accommodation was highlighted as an issue for both destinations, it was only in Barry Island that visitors felt and recognised this as an issue for the destination. This suggests that because figure 4.6 shows that Barry Island is predominantly used for day visits, this illustrates the need for accommodation as the day visitors recognised the gap in the market and then these could potentially become overnight visitors for Barry Island. In contrast, the authorities for Porthcawl highlight their weakest aspect to be accommodation but visitors do not feel the same. For example, only 3% rated the choice as 1, 14% rated it as 5 (the second highest representation). Similarly, these figures emerge as a pattern in the results for the quality of the facilities where they score the same. Then again, this can be positive for Porthcawl because even though the authorities have highlighted the flaws in their accommodation sector, the questionnaire results suggest that visitors are satisfied with the current availability and standard. However, by recognising the improvements needed, accommodation stock can be improved before it begins to have a negative impact on visitor numbers and instead focus on appealing to new markets also.

Furthermore, within the interviews, other challenges aside from accommodation were discussed. In order to assess the severity of the challenges that the destinations face, the
interviews provided key information that highlights key areas where development issues occur.

‘It’s getting the right developers in because it’s very easy to put housing in but housing doesn’t always achieve what you want for a destination in terms of visitors’ (Alice, 2017)

‘a lot of the attractions are in private ownership but ultimately private investors can do what they want as long as it’s in line with planning control’ (Nia, 2017)

As seen in the above statements, a recurring theme for both destinations are the influence that external developers have on planning and improvements. Although, external developers can bring improvement and in turn, further investment to a destination, it can be difficult to align private ownership plans with projections for a destination, as emphasised in Barry Island whereby quality is an issue for the destination.

‘people’s perceptions of quality are a little bit different to ours which is really difficult trying to raise the standard if not everybody is on board’ (Nia, 2017)

In addition, Alice underlines the importance of ensuring that basic amenities are invested in because depending on their state, these can have either a positive or negative impact on the visitor experience.

‘amazing toilets is not going to bring people flocking but if you got rubbish toilets, people might not come back’ (Alice, 2017)

This is echoed in the questionnaire results whereby visitors rated the choice and quality of public toilets as the poorest. Therefore, when considering any form of development, it is important to focus on all aspects within a destination, as supported by Pike (2012) that said, DMO should take an interest in social, cultural and environmental dimensions of a destination.

Furthermore, it is widely recognised that transport is a crucial infrastructure for tourism to grow, Page (2015) reiterated this by stating that transport is a vital facilitator of tourism. This is supported by the findings as one of Barry Island’s key facilities and rated very highly, is public transport links because of the positioning of the train station is at the centre of town. However, for Porthcawl, public transport and road links has been acknowledged as a significant challenge,

‘Porthcawl on a busy summer day and its queuing back up to the motorway’
This reveals that the need for road improvements exist but again, it hits the struggle that destinations face with private developers.

4.3.3. Funding

For any type of project or development, funding plays a massive role in the success or failure and this is relevant to both Barry Island and Porthcawl. From the interviews, it revealed the barrier that private investors can create.

<table>
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<th>Challenges from Private Investors</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘there was plans to try and get a major supermarket so Morrison’s were at one stage a possibility and then another one was but in both occasions, they’ve fallen through for whatever reason such us the financial crash’</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Alice – Porthcawl)</td>
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These accounts show the difficulties that the destinations have faced when preparing and planning for development. Also, it emphasises the issue that destinations face when being dependant on external investors. For both destinations, the plans mentioned would have been ideal for the further development and regeneration of the areas unfortunately, the focus has had to shift to other means of regeneration.

Furthermore, it was made clear that funding provides the biggest challenge, whether it is attracting investors or securing funding. As Pike (2016, p. 5) states, ‘DMOs are at the mercy of political masters and stakeholders for continuity of funding.’ Firstly, the Welsh Government has been key for Barry Island and Porthcawl as funding providers for projects. It was highlighted that the EU has been vital for providing money as this is passed through the Welsh Government to divide between different types of project funding. Furthermore, the necessity of EU funding has been highlighted by the number of projects it has funded. For example, for both destinations, the importance of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been crucial for the success of projects within the areas. However, because of the dependency on the EU funding, both destinations are now facing major uncertainty over
future projects because of the imminent issue of Britain leaving the EU suggesting that funding may become scarce. Therefore, with funding issues existing within the public sector, this forces destinations to rely even more on private investments. However, there is a false belief concerning the private sector filling the financial void of the decreasing public sector funding (Fyall, 2011).

However, there are other sources of funding which was mentioned by both interviewees. These include the Coastal Communities Fund which is delivered by the Big Lottery Fund on the behalf of the UK Government and the Heritage Lottery which provides grants for a variety of projects. The Coastal Community Funds have been crucial for Porthcawl as it has supported numerous developments for the destination.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that preparation is key for securing funding as,

‘no funding is ever guaranteed’ (Nia, 2017)

Although, it is ideal for the destinations to have project plans ready for when funding does become available.

4.4. Regeneration

Regeneration is a crucial subject area for this study so the researcher has chosen to focus on the key themes that emerged from this area. To highlight the central aspects of the results, important statements from the interviews and the relevant results from the questionnaires will be analysed.

4.4.1. New Attractions/Facilities

As found by Agarwal’s (2002, p. 32) theory of Restructuring, she found that ‘the premise of demise will continue unless corrective measures are initiated’. This is essential to show the necessity of regeneration at Barry Island and Porthcawl. The following table shows the principal regeneration plans for both destinations as discussed in the interviews.
When considering the regeneration of both destinations, it is important to remember that Barry Island and Porthcawl are at different stages. It is highlighted that Barry Island has undergone some regeneration (Phase 1) prior to this study so are focusing on their next stage of regeneration and what facilities that will include. Whereas Porthcawl have numerous projects that are either currently being implemented or reaching the final stages of planning.

Butler’s model provides a useful insight into the process of regeneration and is clearly applicable to both destinations. For example, both destinations have passed through the Stagnation stage where they have become well-established destinations and visitor numbers reached at a high but the destinations were no longer relevant, meaning facilities and the area became rundown. Thus, reaching the Decline stage and where investment for current and new businesses became non-existent, the area became unable to compete and tourism facilities were lost.

For Barry Island, the biggest impact for the destinations was the loss of Butlins Holiday Park in 1986 where they had lost their fundamental source of accommodation stock.

### Key Aspects of the Regeneration Plans

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<th>Barry Island</th>
<th>Porthcawl</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘the marina that’s getting developed. Then currently underway is the Jennings Buildings [derelict warehouse] being redeveloped. That’s going to have a couple of really nice restaurants... really nice eateries, waterside dining and get some new businesses in’</td>
<td>‘Phase 1 is done [Eastern Promenade regeneration; 12 beach huts, a traversing wall, water mist feature and new toilets], we are now looking at what will be phase 2... bringing as much as we can up to the high standards’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the harbourside development... it’s a community interest company... interesting facility that’s going to do lots of things, meeting community needs as well as being for tourists.’</td>
<td>‘Nell’s Point [site for previous Butlins Holiday Park site] which is a big car park on the top of the island... is 100% earmarked for tourism and leisure purposes.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘wider Porthcawl regeneration that’s currently underway is the Rest Bay Water Sports Centre’</td>
<td>(Nia – Barry Island)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the cycle path at Porthcawl which its footprint corresponds with the coastal path’</td>
<td>(Alice – Porthcawl)</td>
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‘After the Butlins closed on Barry Island, it is absolutely fair to say tourism hit a decline.’ (Nia, 2017)

However, as emphasised by Nia, Nell’s Point has been devoted to tourism/leisure facilities and this is where the aim of new accommodation facilities will be based. On the other hand, Porthcawl has a vast accommodation provider, Trecco Bay [Caravan Park]. However, they are limited to relying on only these facilities as they suffered from losing accommodation stock as housing.

‘we’ve lost a significant amount of accommodation as that perhaps been converted into flats’ (Alice, 2017)

Also, as previously mentioned, most of the other accommodation stock is dated, further supporting Butler’s ideas that the competitiveness of the area has been lost.

In comparison to the findings from the interviews, respondents to the questionnaires were asked what they believe needs improving at Barry Island or Porthcawl.

*Figure 4.12: Improvements for Barry Island*
Although both destinations have recognised and addressed the need for regeneration, it is important to consider whether it is meeting the needs of the visitors. For example, at Barry Island ‘the number of shops’ received the highest representation of votes for improvements and when asked about the choice of facilities, ‘shops’ was in the top three for ‘worst choice’. Furthermore, ‘restaurants’ are rated highly for improvements and this also received very low ratings for the choice of facilities available. Similarly, for Porthcawl, although ‘public toilets’ was rated the highest to improve, it followed the same pattern as being in the top three worse rated choice of facilities. In addition, although Porthcawl is marketed for families because of facilities such as Trecco Bay, ‘attractions for families’ was the second highest choice of facilities to be improved. Furthermore, interestingly accommodation has been highlighted as a key area for improvement for both destinations by both councils but it was not voted as an important issue for visitors as the ‘choice of accommodation’ received a relatively low number of votes.

The findings from the questionnaires provide evidence to evaluate the proposed regeneration plans. Barry Island are on ‘Phase 2’, so are focused on bringing all quality standards in line with the finished Phase 1, instead of addressing specific facilities, they want
to create an attractive environment for visitors and businesses and combat the issue of the loss of product competitiveness that Butler highlighted. In contrast, Porthcawl is concerned with the creation of new facilities and increasing the availability of tourism activities for visitors, which can address the issue that respondents felt about ‘attractions for families’.

With the range of regeneration plans at both destinations, it can be concluded that the destinations are experiencing aspects of the Restructuring Thesis. For example, Barry Island is applying Product Transformation to its projected accommodation facilities as family-friendly, self-catering accommodation is the preferred servicing method as this would fulfil the needs of their current market. In contrast, Porthcawl is experiencing Repositioning through their expansion of attracting different visitor markets and by shifting to new and innovative facilities such as the Harbourside project. Also, Diversification is happening through the new promotion of their natural resources such as making use of the cycle path and promoting the beaches around Porthcawl.

4.4.2. Visitor Markets

As a result of the regeneration, both destinations have target markets to identify the visitors that would benefit the most from the plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of new visitor do you expect as a result of the regeneration?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Linking in with who Visit Wales sees as their target market is the independent explorer type’ (Alice – Porthcawl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Any further regeneration has to attract more staying visitors so by that people spend more’ (Nia – Barry Island)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By identifying target markets, it allows the destinations to have focus as to what they want to achieve as a destination. There are clear contrasts between the destinations visitor markets, which can be advantageous as they would not necessarily be in direct competition for the same demographic of visitors.

As found by Williams (2003), during regeneration, it allows for travel services to be tailored to particular needs and therefore, targeted at segments concerned. It is apparent that Porthcawl has adopted this, as the destination is starting to incorporate more activity/adventure based tourism through attractions like the footpath, cycle path and water
sports centre, with the aim to attract, the ‘independent explorer’. However, there is no emphasis on ‘independent’,

‘the sub-categories under the independent explorer... families then people without families’ (Alice, 2017)

It was made clear that staying visitors are the crucial market for Barry Island to move into. However, plans for accommodation are not set. Therefore, the focus for Barry Island is to fulfil the needs of their current visitor market in addition to encouraging new visitors. Moreover, the possibility of accessing the evening market was highlighted.

‘help us develop into the evening economy... change further the demographic to the young, the couples’ (Nia, 2017)

By moving into this market, it further expands potential customers as well as offering the visitor a rounded experience and further encourage staying visitors as evening activities and facilities would be available.

Furthermore, given the contrast between the two destinations in terms of facilities and markets, there is the significance of the different strategies that the destinations are using to tackle regeneration. A clear definition of Porthcawl’s target market is ensuring that until further investment and development is put into the area, the destination is not locked into one specific market. Whereas Barry Island’s projected visitor markets such as staying visitors and evening visitors are dependent on the long-term plans of the development of accommodation and the investment of new businesses relevant to the evening economy.
4.5. Revised Conceptual Framework

By applying the conceptual framework (figure 2.2) to the primary research, the researcher has adapted the framework to create a model that specifically applies to regeneration at seaside destinations.

Stages 1–4 are now amalgamated to create Stage 1 because although the establishment, growth and marketing of a resort is important, they are relevant for destination growth rather than regeneration which is the model’s focus.

The Stagnation stage has great relevance to seaside resorts because this is the first phase where the need for regeneration is highlighted as tourism numbers begin to decline. In addition, the loss of product competitiveness begins and the literature and results reveal that this is a vital aspect to a destination’s image and attraction.

The researcher felt that the period of ‘Post-Stagnation’ should be created as a stand-alone stage because this is the when improvements to areas/facilities can be identified and incorporated into regeneration plans.

*Figure 4.14: Revised Model for Seaside Resort Regeneration*
The final ‘Regeneration’ stage has been modified to shift from Agarwal’s four strategies of Restructuring to four regeneration approaches applicable to seaside resorts. The 4 elements which contribute to Regeneration have been created from findings from the literature and primary research.

As identified from the primary research, it is crucial for the destinations to move into new visitor markets to expand the competitiveness of the resort, e.g. Porthcawl: adventure tourists and Barry Island: staying visitors.

‘Re-Branding’ has been included as a contributor to regeneration as the literature and results recognised the importance of changing or promoting aspects of the resorts to encourage new visitors.

Furthermore, ‘Adapting Facilities/Products’ develops on Agarwal’s idea of Product Transformation. However, the new stage establishes the link that the adaption of facilities/products are dependent on the ‘Economic Capabilities’ of the resort. As found in the interviews, the availability of funding either public or private, holds massive power over the approval of developments.

Lastly, the Decline stage has been removed as although the new model provides a structure for regeneration, success is not guaranteed as competitors and motivations change. Therefore, resorts can apply and use the model as a constant process to avoid the complete decline of the resort.
5.0. **Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations**

5.1. **Introduction**

This chapter will provide a conclusion for the project by summarising the findings from the primary and secondary research in order to evaluate whether the aim and objectives were achieved, determine the success and limitations of the research and present recommendations for future research.

5.2. **Evaluation of Aim and Objectives**

*To analyse and compare Porthcawl and Barry Island’s regeneration practises and evaluate if they are appealing to their target markets.*

The research aim was achieved by completing the four objectives outlined by the researcher. Firstly, Objective 1 was completed by critically reviewing a variety of literature in order to establish the key theories and findings of Destination Management/Regeneration, Seaside Tourism and Customer Motivations. This provided the researcher the foundations of regeneration practises and how to apply theory to practice.

Through primary research, Objective 2 was achieved by collating the results from the two semi-structured interviews. However, the evaluation of the regeneration practises at Barry Island and Porthcawl had to have different approaches. As Barry Island had completed Phase 1 of their regeneration strategy, this had allowed them to establish their visitor markets. Whereas Porthcawl is at the start of their regeneration process, meaning that they are targeting a specific market in hopes of increasing visitor numbers. Having said that, the regeneration plans at both destinations are relevant and specific to the facilities and amenities available to them, making them ideal for success.

Objective 3 was also fulfilled through primary research from the results of the 121 questionnaires. The results allowed the researcher to gain an insight into the expectations and reactions of visitors to Barry Island and Porthcawl.

Finally, the 4th objective will be addressed in the development of this chapter as section 5.9 will discuss recommendations for future research in relation to seaside tourism and regeneration.
5.3. Limitations

Although the researcher had a positive response rate to their questionnaires (121), the researcher felt that the age range of respondents was narrow as the 50+ age groups had a low response rate. The researcher would have preferred a more balanced response rate of all age groups to obtain a more accurate representation of the population. However, due to the timing of data collection, factors such as poor weather and low visitor numbers during the winter, the researcher relied entirely on online responses. This could be a cause of the low response rate of over 50s as internet usage is lower than those 18-49. Additionally, it was difficult for the researcher to obtain a strong connection with relevant social media accounts in order to share the questionnaire links to reach a wider population.

Another limitation for the study was the lack of academic literature regarding Barry Island or Porthcawl. The researcher found that the area of seaside tourism is not widely covered and the existing literature focuses mainly on either resorts within the South-West Coast of England or well-known resorts such as Brighton and Blackpool.

5.4. Summary of Key Findings

Despite these limitations, the researcher has identified the following as the key findings from the academic literature and primary results:

- Barry Island is a strong day visit destination but to expand into other visitor markets, they need to develop accommodation facilities.
- Porthcawl is an established holiday destination but need to develop new facilities to fulfil their current visitor needs and be able to attract new visitors.
- Funding plays an integral role in regeneration strategies as it can affect the implementation and scale of the proposed plans.
- To avoid the complete decline of a seaside resort and encourage development, authorities need to monitor and react to changes within the market, whether it is new competitors, facility essentials or visitor attitudes/expectations.
- It is crucial for seaside resorts to strike a balance between the traditional/nostalgic qualities and the introduction of new facilities.
5.5. Contributions to Theory

The researcher has contributed to academic literature by developing a model that relates specifically to the regeneration of seaside resorts. The model builds on Butler’s (1980) TALC model and Agarwal’s (2002) Restructuring Thesis. However, rather than focus on the decline of the resort, the researcher has chosen to concentrate more on the process of regeneration. This is displayed through the outline of the four key aspects which the researcher felt was the most important and relevant stages for successful regeneration.

The researcher was able to create this model by analysing their primary research results and concluding the key features of seaside resorts and regeneration in order to provide a valuable model for the literature concerning seaside tourism.

5.6. Contributions to Industry

The researcher has contributed to the seaside tourism sector as the research has highlighted the significance of the quality of basic infrastructure such as toilet facilities, transport links and accommodation choices has on the destinations. It has been identified that for resorts to have a successful tourism economy, it is vital for authorities to recognise the needs of their visitor markets and to always consider new ways to keep up with changing demands.

Therefore, the model created by the researcher can be applied to actual destination regeneration to aid in the development of their strategy.

5.7. Contributions to Methodology

As the researcher used triangulation, this achieves reliability and validity which encourages the methodology to be repeated at other relevant destinations in the future. For example, the researcher ensured that the same topics of interest was covered in both interviews at Barry Island and Porthcawl to ensure comparisons or similarities could be identified. Additionally, the questionnaires were structured similarly as they also covered the same questions for both destinations to identify the comparisons or similarities of visitor responses.

Therefore, by applying either the interview or questionnaire structure to similar destinations, it creates the ability to have an increasing comparative study of UK seaside resorts and their regeneration strategies.
5.8. Researcher’s Reflection of Process
After completing the dissertation process, the researcher has developed important skills including their critical thinking and analytical writing which has allowed them to present a project highlighting the key themes of seaside tourism and regeneration strategies at Barry Island and Porthcawl. In addition, their knowledge of destination management has grown allowing the researcher to be able to apply this to other destinations in the future.
Furthermore, the professional aspects of the project, conducting interviews and collecting questionnaires on a large scale, has provided the researcher with improved communication and I.T skills. Collectively, the acquired enriched skills and knowledge allows the researcher to undertake future research projects.

5.9. Recommendations for Future Research
To extend this study, it would be useful for future research to extend the interview sample to achieve a representative sample of all age groups. Additionally, it would be interesting to repeat the questionnaire at different times of the year, summer and winter to compare whether visitors’ responses alter depending on the season and activities that are available to them at the different times.

Moreover, it would be beneficial to conduct another comparative study of Barry Island and Porthcawl at a future date when both destinations have implemented and finished their regenerations strategies. The researcher believes that an evaluation can be completed of whether the strategies are successful, further building on the findings of this study.
Furthermore, as there is little literature surrounding the application of regeneration particularly around the sector of seaside resorts, further research at other seaside resorts can be carried out in order to establish whether there are trends in the planning and application of regeneration strategies.

5.10. Summary
From undertaking this study, the researcher has fulfilled the project’s aim and objectives throughout. It has explored themes within destination management and regeneration and has successfully applied them to seaside resorts, Barry Island and Porthcawl. As a result, the regeneration strategies of both destinations have been identified and examined in order to assess their applicability and success for the resorts. Furthermore, the research has
contributed to the creation of a conceptual model that is relevant for destination regeneration and seaside tourism literature and applicable for destinations to use in order to create and apply a regeneration strategy.


[Accessed 3 January 2017].


