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Lecture: Jacqui Jones

Global Destination and Resort Management BMTP6003

Deadline: 06.05.2026

Critical Travel Review

Introduction

- Introduce Snowdonia National Park
- Natural destination (mountains, heritage)
- Yr Wyddfa
- Tourism important to Wales (£4.98bn)
- Weak international performance
- Aim: evaluate + propose wellness strategy

Current Performance

- Millions of visitors annually
- 85–90% domestic
- Seasonal (summer peaks)
- Low spend / short stays
- Butler TALC - stagnation
- Stevens - need for adaptation

Existing Strategy

- “Welcome to Wales 2020–2025”
- Focus: sustainability + value not volume
- Snowdonia still adventure-focused
- Gap - no wellness positioning

SWOT

- Strengths - landscape, brand
- Weaknesses - access, international reach
- Opportunities - wellness growth
- Threats - overtourism, competition

PEST

- Brexit - workforce + travel
- Inflation + Ukraine war - costs

- Covid - demand for wellness
- Tech - social media influence

Key Issues

- Domestic reliance
- Seasonality
- Environmental pressure
- Doxie - irritation risk
- Stevens - repositioning needed

Strategy

- Wellness tourism
- Growing global market (\$600bn+)
- Nature + wellbeing
- Addresses key issues

Theory

- Experience Economy
- Push–Pull factors
- Sustainable tourism

Case Studies

- Iceland - nature wellness
- Swiss Alps - premium tourism

Implementation

- Wellness retreats / forest bathing
- Eco accommodation
- Branding - “wellness destination”
- Stakeholder collaboration (Stevens)

Target Market

- International (EU, US)
- 20–65
- High income
- Motivations - wellbeing

KPIs

- International visitors
- Spend per visitor
- Length of stay
- Off-season growth
- Sustainability measures

Evaluation

- Benefits - higher value tourism
- Challenges - cost, over-commercialisation

Conclusion

- Strong destination but challenges
- Butler - stagnation
- Wellness - rejuvenation
- Sustainable future

Presentation slides:



Visit Wales
Croeso Cymru

Developing a Wellness Tourism Strategy



**Snowdonia National
Park**- Attract
International Visitors







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About

Snowdonia National Park

is a major UK natural destination known for its mountainous landscapes, cultural heritage, and outdoor recreational opportunities (Snowdonia National Park Authority, 2023). Despite its strong domestic tourism base, it underperforms in attracting international visitors compared to destinations such as the Swiss Alps (Visit Wales, 2022)..

Tourism contributes approximately **£4.98 billion** annually to the Welsh economy (Visit Wales, 2024)



Location

North Wales

Area

823 square miles, UK's 3rd largest national park

Key attraction

Yr Wyddfa

Visitors

4–5 million visitors annually (majority domestic)

(Snowdonia National Park Authority, 2023)

Current Performance

- Strong domestic tourism demand
- High seasonal concentration in summer months
- Limited international visitor penetration
- Pressure on key natural sites and infrastructure
- Economy heavily dependent on low-spend day tourism (WTTC, 2023)
- Snowdonia receives around 4 million visitors annually
- Around 87% are domestic visitors
- Average stay in North Wales is approximately 3.4 nights

(Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2007; Visit Wales, 2022)

According to Stevens (2013), many mature destinations face challenges of product stagnation when they fail to adapt to changing tourist demands.

Snowdonia is approaching the stagnation stage, characterised by high visitor numbers but increasing pressure on resources (Butler, 1980).



Existing Strategy Review

"Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020–2025"

Focuses on:

- Sustainability
- Cultural branding
- Quality tourism
- Increasing visitor spend, not volume

(Welsh Government, 2020)

Weaknesses of current strategy:

- Snowdonia not specifically positioned internationally
- Limited wellness tourism focus
- Heavy concentration on traditional outdoor tourism

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- High-quality natural landscapes attracting nature-based tourism
- Strong domestic tourism demand and established destination brand
- Diverse outdoor activities including hiking and adventure tourism centred around Yr Wyddfa

Opportunities

- Growth of the global wellness tourism market (Global Wellness Institute, 2023)
- Increasing demand for sustainable and nature-based tourism experiences
- Potential to reposition the destination towards higher-value, year-round tourism
- Opportunities to attract international visitors seeking wellness and slow tourism

Weaknesses

- Limited international marketing and weak global brand positioning (Visit Wales, 2022)
- Poor transport accessibility, particularly for international visitors
- Overreliance on seasonal, low-spend domestic tourism
- Limited availability of high-value tourism products such as wellness infrastructure

Threats

- Environmental degradation due to overtourism and visitor pressure
- Competition from established mountain destinations
- Climate variability affecting visitor experience and seasonality
- Economic uncertainty reducing international travel demand (UNWTO, 2022)



PEST Analysis

Political

- Welsh Government tourism and sustainability policies (Welsh Government, 2020; European Travel Commission, 2022)
- Brexit impacting EU travel flows and tourism workforce availability (Visit Wales, 2022)
- Welsh Government elections may influence tourism funding priorities

Economic

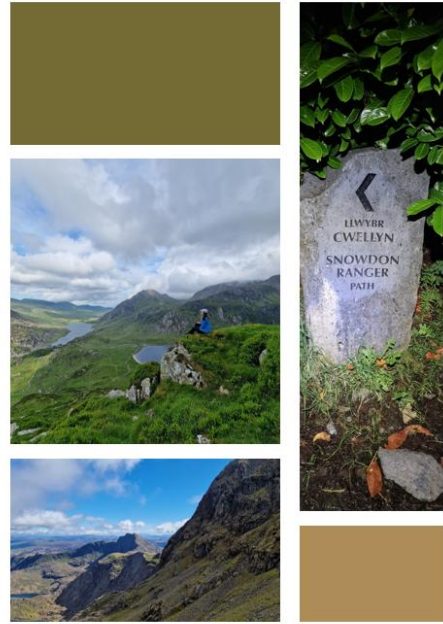
- Exchange rate fluctuations influencing inbound tourism demand
- Rising cost of living reducing discretionary travel spending
- Inflation increasing travel and accommodation costs
- Ukraine & Iran wars contributing to higher fuel and transport costs (UNWTO, 2022)
- Snowdonia relies on English airports for international access (Manchester airport)

Social

- Increased demand for wellness and nature-based tourism post-Covid
- Growing focus on mental health, wellbeing, and slow tourism experiences
- Changing tourist preferences towards sustainable travel

Technological

- Growth of digital booking platforms and online travel agencies
- Social media influencing destination awareness and decision-making (Buhailis, 2000)



(Author's own photos, 2024 & 2025)

Key Issues Identified

- Overreliance on domestic tourism
- Seasonal overcrowding at key attractions
- Limited international branding strategy
- Environmental pressure on sensitive landscapes
- Low average tourist spending

Destination repositioning is necessary when destinations become overdependent on existing markets (Stevens, 2013). According to Butler (1980), destinations at this stage require strategic repositioning to avoid decline.

Increasing visitor pressure may lead to resident irritation, moving from euphoria to apathy or annoyance (Doxey, 1975).

(Author's own photos, 2024 & 2025)

Recommended Strategy

Wellness Tourism Strategy

Wellness tourism focuses on travel experiences that improve physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

- Global wellness tourism worth **\$651 billion**
 - Expected to grow by **16.6% annually**
- (Global Wellness Institute, 2023; McKinsey (2021))

Why Snowdonia?

- Natural environment supports relaxation and recovery
- Increasing global demand for wellness experiences
- Opportunity to diversify tourism beyond adventure travel

(Global Wellness Institute, 2023)



(Author's own photo, 2025)

Academic Justification

Experience Economy

tourists seek meaningful, transformative experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999)

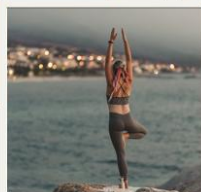
Push-Pull Theory

stress pushes tourists to travel; nature pulls them to destinations
(Dann, 1977)

Sustainable Tourism Theory

encourages low-impact, high-value tourism development

(UNWTO, 2021)
(Crouch & Ritchie, 1999)



Case Studies



Iceland

- Strong positioning as a nature-based wellness destination
- Geothermal spas and landscape immersion tourism

Tourism contributes roughly 8% of GDP (OECD, 2022)

- Geothermal spa tourism (e.g. Blue Lagoon)
- Strong nature + wellbeing branding
- Government-led destination marketing
- Year-round tourism development



Swiss Alps

- High-end wellness resorts integrated with mountain tourism
- Year-round tourism model

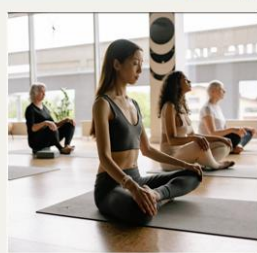
In 2024, Switzerland welcomed **21.5 million** international visitors.

(RG, 2025)

- Luxury wellness resorts
- High-value international tourism
- Year-round tourism (ski + wellness)
- Strong premium destination image

Strategy Implementation

Effective destination management requires stakeholder collaboration between government, businesses and local communities (Stevens, 2013)



Product Development

- Wellness retreats (yoga, mindfulness, nature therapy)
- Forest bathing and guided wellness walks

Infrastructure Investment

- Eco-friendly accommodation
- Improved sustainable transport links

Branding Strategy

- Position Snowdonia as a "natural wellness escape"

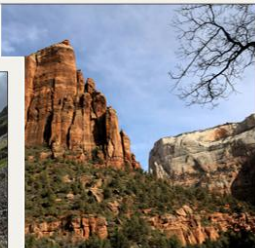
Partnerships

- International wellness brands
- Travel influencers and tour operators

Strategy Implementation

UNIQUE to Snowdonia

- Mountain-based wellness (not spa-only)
- Nature immersion experiences
- Welsh culture integration (heritage, language, identity)



HOW it attracts international visitors

- Package deals (wellness retreats + accommodation)
- International marketing campaigns
- Partnerships with airlines / tour operators

SEASONAL STRATEGY

- Winter wellness retreats
- Off-season pricing
- Year-round tourism

(Smith & Puczkó, 2014; Bramwell & Lane (2011))

Target Market

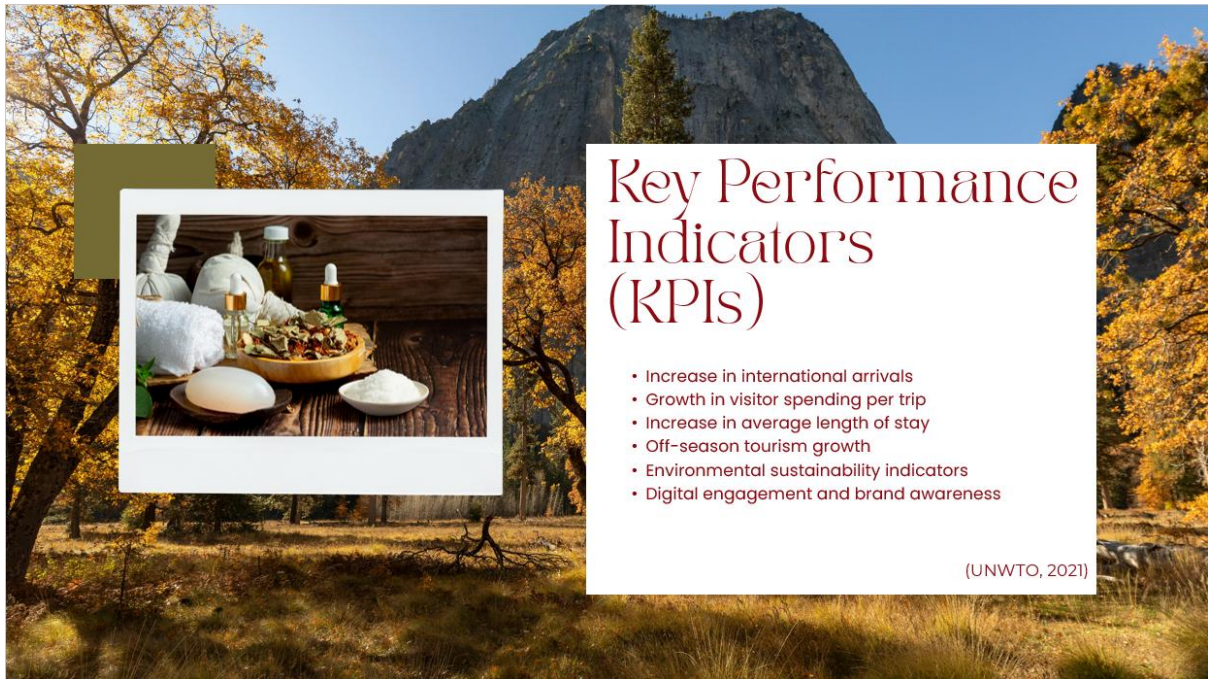
- International visitors from Europe, USA, and Asia
- Age group: 20–65
- High to medium income, experience-focused travellers

Motivations:

- Stress reduction
- Nature immersion
- Mental and physical wellbeing

(Visit Wales, 2022)

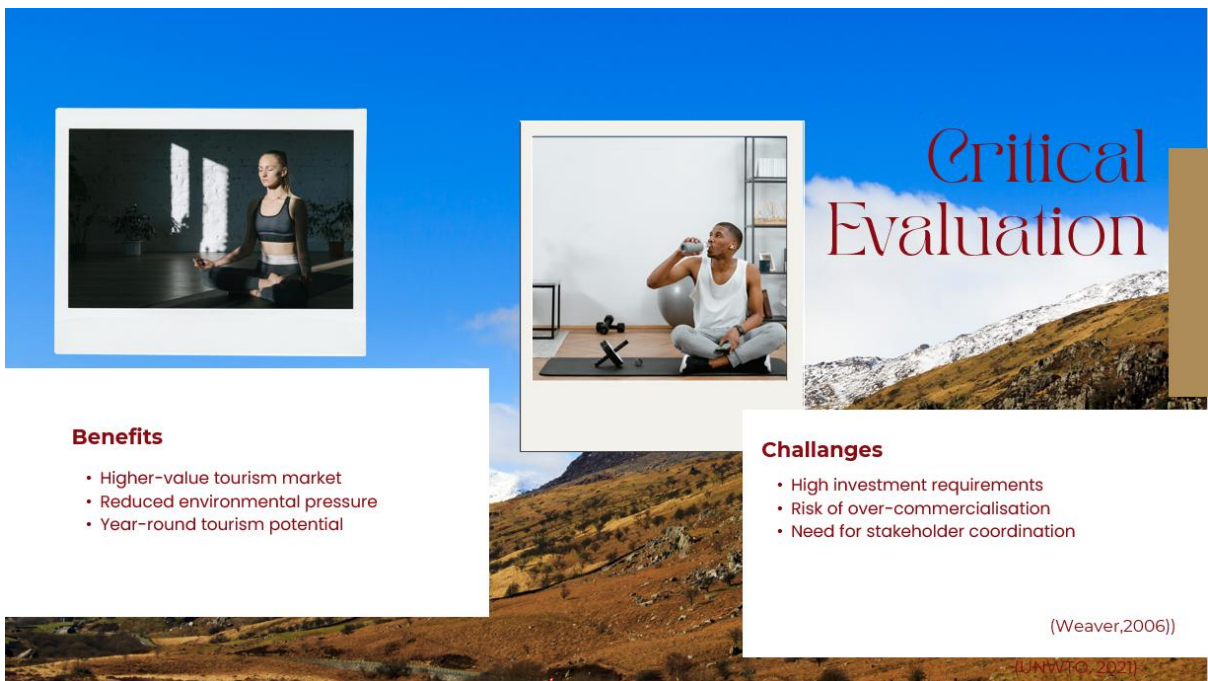




Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Increase in international arrivals
- Growth in visitor spending per trip
- Increase in average length of stay
- Off-season tourism growth
- Environmental sustainability indicators
- Digital engagement and brand awareness

(UNWTO, 2021)



Critical Evaluation

Benefits

- Higher-value tourism market
- Reduced environmental pressure
- Year-round tourism potential

Challenges

- High investment requirements
- Risk of over-commercialisation
- Need for stakeholder coordination

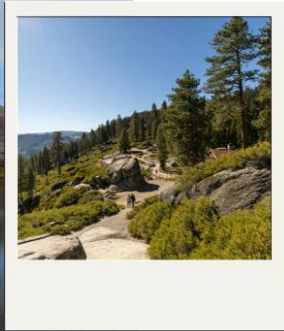
(Weaver, 2006)

(UNWTO, 2021)

Conclusion

Snowdonia National Park has strong natural tourism assets but faces challenges in international competitiveness and sustainability. A shift toward a wellness tourism strategy offers an opportunity to reposition the destination, increase economic value, and support long-term environmental protection.

(Butler, 1980)



Thank you for
listening!

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AI Statement:

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT to support proofreading and checking clarity, grammar, and academic tone within this assignment.