

Title

Visitor Attraction Management: A critical review of research 2009-2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Focus and structure of the article

Visitor attractions (VAs) are recognised as an under-researched field of study within the tourism system (Weidenfeld, Butler & Williams, 2010; Leask, 2010; Connell, Page & Meyer, 2014). The value of VAs individually and within destinations is clearly observed in government national outcomes, key assets for tourism strategies and destination development proposals. Research is often management orientated and applied in nature. This is a valid area of research due to the significance of the role of VAs within a destination, with recent expansion in the volume and range of the relevant literature, increasing opportunities for sub and cross disciplinary research created by globalisation and technological advances, and the increased volume of tourism contexts for PhD study.

Leask (2010) provided a critical review of the literature relating to visitor attraction (VA) management prior to 2009 and identified limitations in the existing academic research and the key challenges facing both VA practitioners and academics researching in the sector. The key findings of Leask (2010) were that academic research in the area of visitor attractions was evident and that the individual nature of VAs and multiple stakeholders, with resultant multiple measures of effectiveness and objectives, had led to development of research across a broad range of disciplines and fields of study. Whilst positive in some respects, this had led to a lack of quality research specifically within the tourism literature, and a heavy reliance on case study based research of a qualitative nature. The agenda for research concluding the article called for the development of “robust methodologies and research methods and the development of an integrated community of scholars with sustained interest in the sector (Leask, 2010:163)”.

This article offers the opportunity to synthesise avenues of discussion, and to develop a critical review of the publications relating to VA management in the last five years. Development of the definition and categories associated with the term visitor attraction will be discussed in detail in a later section, however, for the purposes of this stage of the article, the key working definition is “a permanent resource, either natural or man-made, which is developed and managed for the primary purpose of attracting visitors (Hu & Wall, 2005:619)”.

The structure of the article is as follows – a conceptual introduction to VA Management and a brief discussion of the changing environment within which the VAs have been operating and researchers working in the period 2009-2014; a critical review of the publications themed by type, management issue and research methods used including

a discussion of the contribution of this literature to the development of tourism research; with the article concluding with a future agenda for visitor attraction research. Tables are used to provide clear representation of the basis of the structure of the discussion.

1.2 Methods

A thorough, directed review of available research literature in relation to visitor attraction management was conducted for the period 2009 - 2014. A rigorous content analysis process was undertaken with articles drawn from quality tourism focussed and associated management journals, only including articles where the focus of the research is on the management of a visitor attraction. The author took the decision to base this analysis purely on peer-reviewed journals to define the population of textual materials as these were considered most relevant to answer the research question (Stepchenkova, 2014).

In order to determine the sampling frame, various sampling principles were set. One critical aspect of this initial research stage related to defining what VAs are, which in turn determined whether or not an article was to be included within the review. The decision was taken to include articles focussing on sites with a permanent resource that has been developed in a manner that is of interest to visitors, where visitor engagement and interaction with the resource is the focus of the management, and where the research is based at a site within a fixed boundary, designated area or managed as a single unit. In order to maintain the focus of the article, those relating to general tourism policy have not been included, though it is recognised that this might impact on the management of VAs, as this would dilute the focus of this article. Following much discussion, the author has decided to include articles relating to designated sites (such as National Parks and World Heritage Sites), recognising that it is difficult to distinguish between individual VAs and destinations, but considering that the single ownership, fixed boundaries, experience provision and common management objectives in place via one management body offers sufficient justification to support their inclusion (Xu & Fox, 2014; Kang & Gretzel, 2012). The overall aim of this process was not to exclude relevant articles, more to allow sufficient focus on the research publications in relation to management issues encountered at core and secondary VAs, rather than diluting this into coverage of wider destination and tourism policy wide articles.

Over 450 articles were sourced using the above sampling rules. The next stage of the research process involved content analysis to identify thematic domains. Using key literature as a guide, first round coding rules were determined to initially organise the data around the broad variables established by Swarbrooke (2001), Page and Connell (2009) and Leask (2010). The data were then coded using keywords, with data further interrogated to detect significant themes. These emergent themes then formed the

basis of a second round of data coding, facilitated by the use of NVIVO software package (see Table 1). The contents of each Index node were studied to identify the common themes that arose in the data pertaining to the management of visitor attractions. Where appropriate, data were allocated to more than one node for analysis to enable full exploration of the themes and development of visitor attraction management research. Queries were used to offer broad outcomes and to develop a model to show the connections. The author recognises certain limitations associated with this process as there is likely to always be elements of subjectivity in this type of research article.

1.3 Research and sector context

As identified by Laws and Scott (2015:48), tourism as a field of study is “challenged to identify a theoretical core and disciplinary boundaries” resulting in a mosaic of knowledge. Early discussion of VAs and their role within the broader tourism system emerged in the academic literature in the 1970s and 1980s (Gunn, 1972; MacCannell, 1976; Pigram, 1983), mainly within geographical planning and spatial contexts and in relation to their composition and functional categorisation by, for example, ideographic, organisation or cognitive perspectives (Lew, 1987). Such frameworks suggested the opportunity to develop tourism typologies to reflect the differences in places and to enable researchers to communicate in the same ‘language’. By the 1990s authors such as Leiper (1990) and Pearce (1998) were developing this by calling for a multi-disciplinary research effort to explore the individual aspects of this increasingly prominent sector of the tourism field of study. However, Leask (2010) noted that key authors in the sector (Richards, 2002; Benckendorff & Pearce, 2003; Hu & Wall, 2005) were still commenting on the lack of theoretical underpinning and depth evident in research within this sector. This article will explore the progress of such theoretical underpinning evident in VA research in recent years.

Visitor attractions operate within dynamic operating environments that naturally influence their development and management. These influences also impact on the range and nature of research as academics and practitioners seek to explore the implications and trends encountered. In recent years, these have included (Connell, et al. 2014; Sheng & Chen, 2012; Jang, 2012; Shetawy & Khateeb, 2010; Hughes & Carlsen, 2010; Brida et al., 2012b):

- The acknowledgement of the role of VAs as key mechanisms to differentiate and develop competitive destinations;
- External influences in the operating environment – the development of ICT, increased use of social media, growth of new audiences, and increased competition with other leisure pursuits and home entertainment systems;
- Declining public funding sources leading to increased commercial imperative resulting in diversification and new product development;

- Broadening of the scope of VA categories to potentially include products such as shopping and markets.

2 Visitor attractions within the research literature

2.1 Defining and categorising VAs

Leask (2010) discussed the key issues in the need for, and development of, a definition for VAs and established that it all depends on the purpose of the activity in hand. The features forming the basis of the debate to determine the scope of the sector included permanence, primary purpose, the inclusion of events and the key purpose of the site. Setting a clear definition of VAs may be relevant for comparison of data and establishing management practices, though authors such as Fyall and Garrod (1999) dispute this need. It is difficult in some respects to separate the analysis of visitor attractions from a broader analysis of tourism as a whole and, secondly, such is the diversity of products, places and experiences that may be defined as visitor attractions that to consider them in their totality is a difficult, if not impossible, task (Sharpley, 2008:145).

While this debate has continued with regards to the inclusion or otherwise of events and festivals (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013; Connell, et al. 2014) and the differentiation from the term destinations (Mayer et al, 2010; Prebensen, 2014), many articles based on research within VAs make no attempt to define the term (Henderson, 2010; Porto, Leanza, & Cascone, 2012), instead they simply include a type of tourism product within a discussion of VA. In general the literature indicates that there may have been a broadening of the various categories that lie below the set definitions, where new terms such as event attractions, the inclusion of events within the VA definition and the differences between destinations and VAs are discussed (Iorio & Wall, 2011); McKercher, Shoval, Nga, & Birenboimb, 2012; Wu, Wall, & Pearce, 2014).

Established definitions of a visitor attraction include Hu and Wall's (2005:619) 'a permanent resource, either natural or human-made, which is developed and managed for the primary purpose of attracting visitors' and VisitEngland's (2014:3) visitor attraction lengthy definition "...an attraction where it is feasible to charge admission for the sole purpose of sightseeing. The attraction must be a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest, or education and can include places of worship (but excludes small parish churches); rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances. It must be open to the public, without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents. In addition, the attraction must be a single business, under a single management, so that it is capable of answering the economic questions on revenue, employment etc". While the latter one is prescriptive for statistical purposes, it remains valid within the debate, demonstrating the relatively general and then very specific

type of definition respectively. Some latitude in the use of the definition is observed, particularly with regards to visitor attractions keen to meet the definitions in order to enable participation in destination marketing and quality assurance schemes. The requirement of primary purpose, or, perhaps more appropriately, a core purpose amongst several, has become increasingly blurred at sites that have diversified their product offering or where visitor motivation has led to the need to develop more formalised visitor facilities, for example at religious sites, farms and sites associated with film tourism (Connell, 2012; Domenico & Miller, 2012; Rodriguez & McIntosh, 2014). Benckendorff and Pearce (2003) determined not to include festivals, wineries and retail establishments in their study of Australian sites, due to their temporary and sporadic nature, in common with similar decisions taken by Garrod, Leask and Fyall (2007) and Leask (2010).

As stated, the very process of sourcing articles for this article raised the issues in defining VAs – what are at the core of the definition or along the continuum to extremes on either side, and, for example, where the distinction lies between individual sites and destinations. In tackling this question, some authors take a supply driven approach (Leask, Fyall, & Garrod, 2013; Connell, et al., 2014) to determining the definition, while others (Poria, 2009) have approached it from a demand perspective and motivations (Brida et al., 2012c; Fullerton et al., 2010). Likewise the definition of heritage tourism and resultant sub-sections of industrial heritage, where research by Palau-Saumell et al. (2012) and Otgaar (2012) take broad views of definitions to include residents and tourists with regions' industrial companies. In addition, the distinction is made between cultural attractions and tourist attractions (Brida, 2012a).

For the purposes of this paper, it became essential to define the scope of the sector in order to determine whether or not to include an article in the literature review. Otherwise the article could have potentially become too broad in scope, and therefore limited in terms of studying the sector and establishing principles for management practice. That said, it was important not to narrow the area of study too far. One approach to defining VAs involved the identification of common features observed in sites. These were then used to establish categories which subsequently determined their inclusion or exclusion with the definition and ultimately this article. The features in this debate included sites where:

- the management focus of the site is on developing and managing visitor engagement and interaction with a natural or built resource;
- there is a fixed, permanent resource within a set geographic or management boundary;
- it is managed as a single unit or by one management body and not, for example, a destination;
- the primary or core purpose of managing the resource is to enable visitor access, possibly in conjunction with conservation and not, for example, retail or gambling;

- sites where visitors are motivated to access and appreciate the resource and not, for example, as a venue for an event;
- sites offering a visitor experience or products designed specifically to entertain, interpret, educate and/or service the needs of the visitor about the resource and not, for example, accommodation;
- there is the potential ability to charge via fixed points of entry for visitors;
- the objectives of the organisation or site designation include the management of visitors.

Therefore for the purposes of this article the decision was taken to include National Parks, World Heritage Sites, geoparks, forests and marine parks, as they share common characteristics with other visitor attraction categories. These include that they are all usually managed by one organisation, provide place-based visitor experiences in need of management attention (Wolf, et al., 2013) and seek to provide enjoyable, educational and inspirational experiences to visitors (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). Originally discussed by Gunn (1972) and Lew (1987) early visitor attraction literature, national parks are generally considered to be visitor attractions (Xu & Fox, 2014; Leask, 2010; Page, 2009), as enabling visitor access is a core purpose of their operation, though it is recognised that conservation is more usually their primary purpose. Increasingly these sites are having to respond to changing funding and consumer demands and expectations, requiring more commercial and visitor focused responses to demonstrate value (Rodger, Taplin & Moore, 2015). Articles in relation to national parks and other designated sites are only included where there is a strong visitor and or management focus.

The decision was taken to exclude those covering casinos, resorts, destinations, events, niche tourism (for example, whale watching), island destinations, heritage villages, general heritage assets across destinations, railways, sports stadia, beaches and retail markets. While there is no question that products such as events and markets are attractive to visitors in their decision-making regarding destination choice, their lack of permanence and fixed location means that they do not meet the general principles of a VA, as previously discussed. This results in a lack of management focus on the management of a resource for visitor use, and a broadening of their management focus, resulting in different objectives and management issues (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). While the principles of managing retail may cross over to managing VAs, many aspects such as the drive for pure commercial profit and market share, transferability and ability to relocate and lack of resource focus, create significant differences in their management approach. It is therefore unclear in terms of the relevance of this area of research subject in the specific VAs research field, though it is clearly of use in dimensions of destination development and visitor experience. The term VA is used in this paper in preference to tourist attraction, “as this emphasises the role of the day visitor market in the successful operation of attractions, rather than simply focussing on the overnight tourist” (Leask, 2010:155).

2.2 Research by type of VA

As can be seen in Table 1 below, based on categories of VAs identified by Leask (2010), the breakdown of research publications in the period 2009-2014 into the management of VAs 'by type' shows the majority to be in the Heritage and Natural areas. If the Museums & Galleries sector is then added to Heritage then this further focuses the research output on built heritage attractions. A number of articles related to a range of VA types and are thus shown under that type.

Visitor Attractions Types	Number of articles by VA type (n=455)
Theme parks or amusement parks - water parks, amusements, themes	25
Museums and galleries - art, cultural, historical, collection-based, virtual, open air museums	67
Natural - gardens, national parks, forests	103
Animals - safari, farms, zoos, aquariums	37
Visitor centres - cultural, industrial, transport	5
Religious sites	19
Heritage - castles, forts, historic houses, visitor centres, monuments, industrial, dark, archaeological, military, music	167
Various types	32

Table 1 Visitor attraction article by type of visitor attraction (source: author)

Further analysis of the above results indicate that there are both established and emerging areas of research activity, though many articles often cover a range of VA types within a destination or across the world, and could not therefore be allocated to one individual category.

Heritage covers a broad range of VA types, particularly if museums and galleries are added in to the category, with a considerable number of articles published in relation to their management. Dark tourism featured clearly, with over 20 articles (see Chronis (2012a); Kang, Scott, Lee, & Ballantyne (2012); Podoshan & Hunt (2011)). As will be discussed later in this article, the focus of these works is often in relation to the challenges of providing authentic experiences for visitors to these sensitive sites, such as West African Slave Castles in Ghana (Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011) and the value of including tourists' perceptions of a site in the conceptualisation of the tourist experience at a site such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011). Another theme is the resolution of conflict between the various stakeholders, for example Brown (2013) investigating the conflicting aims of the museum shop to ideologically and economically support dark tourism and Braithwaite and Leiper (2010) in relation to balancing the commercial and interpretative elements of the experience

at the Thai-Burma Railway sites. Lemelin et al. (2013) demonstrated how some battlefields and sites of conflicts have attempted to address dissonant heritage by diversifying interpretation strategies and implementing elements of collaborative management approaches, in order to attempt to preserve indigenous knowledge and practices.

Many articles investigate management issues encountered in the Museum and Galleries sector, with issues such as generating revenue via donations (Jaffry & Apostolakis, 2011); dual pricing for domestic and international visitors (Sharifi-Terahi et al., 2013); and factors in museum failure (Leiper & Park, 2011). Product diversification to appeal to new audiences (Davidson & Sibley, 2011; Leask et al., 2013; Camarero et al., 2014) featured, alongside trying to provide a deeper understanding of the image formation process in relation to museums by comparing and contrasting tourists and residents (Gill & Ritchie, 2009) in recognition of the increasing need to appeal to a broader range of audiences. Research on interpretation, a key feature of the museum experience as identified by (Wolf et al., 2013), was prevalent (see Christensen, 2011) with particular reference to living history interpretation (Chittenden, 2010; Van Dijk & Weiler, 2013) and ways to encourage personal heritage experiences and meaningful relationships between community members and the museum (Bulger, 2011).

Religious heritage sites (Poria et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2013) featured, in particular interactions between visitors and congregations (Griffiths, 2011; Olsen, 2012) and issues surrounding visitor satisfaction and authentic experiences (Rivera, 2009; Hughes, Bond, & Ballantyne, 2013), attracted research attention. As did heritage sites featuring in pilgrimage tourism, not necessarily for religious purposes (Wong et al., 2012) but also sports heritage (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2010) and battlefields (Hyde & Harman, 2011) for example.

World Heritage Site management featured heavily in the literature, with over fifty articles relating to issues such as the impact of World Heritage inscription; conservation of the resources; and stakeholder management (including Jimura (2011); Suntikul & Jachna (2013); Shetawy & Khateeb (2010); Conway (2014); Yang et al. (2010)). Zhang et al. (2014) observed an increase in the volume of research into the conflicting relationship between heritage and tourism in the developing world, with their work identifying the diversity of stakeholders as being significant in the successful nature of relationship between partners involved in World Heritage Site management.

In the Natural category national parks played host to many projects with in the region of forty articles relating to issues such as stakeholder management (Coghlan & Castley, 2013), monitoring visitor movement around parks (Orellana, Bregt, Ligtenberg & Wachowicz, 2012) and interpretation (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). Forests, too, featured (Che, 2010; Catibog-Sinha, 2011) with research in natural sites often being large-scale surveys either making use of GPS and GIS as methods of data collection or as features of the interpretative experience at the sites (Wolf et al., 2013;

Dai, 2013; Brown & Weber, 2010). Articles included in this study were only those with visitor orientation, rather than resource management, for example tree dendochronology.

Research interest in Zoos occupied nearly twenty articles in relation to specific aspects of the zoo experience, impact of visitors on animals (Taplin 2012a; Taplin, 2012b; Choo, Todd & Li, 2013; Ross, Melber, Gillespie & Lukas, 2012) and the visitor experience (Nowacki 2009).

Theme Parks, too, with over twenty articles covering issues such as visitor experience (Milman, 2009), who researched the relative importance of 41 attributes and park characteristics in the evaluation of theme parks to find that the safety and cleanliness of the site was more important to visitors than the quality of rides and friendly staff; visitor behaviour (Heung, Tsang & Cheng, 2009); employees (Milman & Dickson, 2014) and economics and pricing (Braun & Soskin, 2010).

In addition to categories of visitor attractions attracting substantial researcher focus, several quite individual areas have featured, such as investigating experiential authenticity amongst family members and identities in attempting to diversify farms into visitor attractions (Domenico & Miller, 2012) and the conversion of traditional rural buildings into heritage attractions (Porto et al., 2012). Likewise Otgaar's (2012) investigation into factors influencing the successful development of industrial heritage for tourism use, identified as being dependent upon the characteristics of visitor flow, co-branding and image features and the potential for the development of industrial heritage tourism products.

As a final observation in this section on types of visitor attractions, consideration of the articles on a geographical basis reveals that there were over fifty articles based on VAs in Australia, over forty in China (in addition to over ten in both Macau and Taiwan), over thirty in the UK, over sixty in USA, with pockets of research on sites in Finland, Israel, Spain and South Africa. Over thirty articles featured research on VAs across multiple countries, alongside some direct comparison papers between destinations, for example, Chinese and European National Parks (Ma, Ryan & Bao, 2009) and vom Lehn's (2010) comparison of UK and European art galleries.

2.3 Research method

Analysis of the articles indicates a balance of research methods used in articles published on VA management in recent years, see Table 2. Previous work has commented on the suitability and reliance on qualitative case studies (Leask, 2010; Rodrigues & McIntosh, 2014) but these findings show that the articles published over the period 2009-2014 have used a relatively balanced variety of methods, with in the region of 200 being predominantly qualitative in nature, 140 predominantly quantitative, 50 theoretical or conceptual, and 50 using mixed methods. It is worth noting that many articles used a variety of research methods, often, for example, interviews and observation, and some didn't specify one dominant method, so this

discussion is based on an indication of the key method and approach that each article author recorded.

Quantitative methods	140
Surveys	120
Statistical modelling	> 20
Qualitative methods	200
Formal/informal interview	> 100
Participant/visitor observation	> 50
Qualitative case study	> 20
Ethnography	> 20
Focus groups	20
Theoretical/conceptual	50
Mixed methods	50

Table 2 Visitor attraction article by research method used (source: author)

As regards the use of quantitative methods, there is an observed reliance on surveys (120), by telephone, face-to-face or online. Rookey (2012) comments that while mail based surveys may seem outdated, response rates to mailback surveys at national parks remained high at 76% over time, even with increasing number of questions, unlike telephone survey response rates where it was increasingly difficult to get respondents to engage.

Statistical modelling (over 20) was a popular research feature, with structural equation modelling (Nowacki, 2009; Chung, Kyle, Petrick, & Absher, 2013) featuring in several articles, with 7 making use of panel data analysis, often in relation to World Heritage Sites (Su & Lin, 2014; Huang, Tsaur & Yang, 2012). Choice modelling was used to investigate and compare the consistency of visitor choices in relation to VA experiences (Orellana, Bregt, Ligtenberg, & Wachowicz, 2012; Choi, 2011; Nowacki, 2009) ranging from relatively small scale surveys of 500 visitors up to 3685 museum visitors (Burke, Burton, Huybers, Islam, Louviere, & Wise, 2010). Carey, Davidson and Sahli (2013) used time series analysis to investigate a variety of potential outcomes in

relation to the relationship between museum visitors and other sectors of the tourism destination in New Zealand.

The use of technological methods such as GPS and GIS have been used, particularly in relation to VAs covering large areas of land such as national parks and World Heritage sites (Wolf, Stricker, & Hagenol, 2013; Tchetchik, Fleischer, & Shoval, 2009). Versichele et al. (2014) made a contribution to methodological development in the field of spatiotemporal tourism behaviour research, in the analysis of the movement patterns of different visitor segments and developing these into 'visit pattern maps' to inform visitor planning.

In terms of qualitative methods, interviews dominate the approaches used with over 100 articles using a combination of formal or informal interviews as a basis for the research. Participant and visitor observation formed the basis of over 50 articles (Pacifico & Vogel, 2012; Hede & Thyne, 2010; Wolf & Croft, 2012), often in conjunction with interviews with managers or focus groups. The development of qualitative case studies (over 20) was popular. In the region of 20 articles used ethnographic approaches (Chronis, 2012a; Rakic & Chambers, 2012), while 7 used photo elicitation (Lin, Morgan & Coble, 2013; Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011; Dearborn & Stallmeyer, 2009; Lin et al., 2013) and focus groups (20), with methods such as appreciative inquiry and data envelopment analysis being adopted in a small number of articles. The use of reflective journals is seen in 2 papers attempting to gather the often difficult to obtain perspective of children's visits (Dockett, Main, & Kelly, 2011; Leach, 2011).

Interestingly there appear to be few articles that have used netnography, with the exception of Podoshen and Hunt (2011); Delphi, with the exception of Cheng et al. (2011); or action research, although they were previously identified as offering good opportunities for VA research. Over 50 articles were based on one case study site, with only a few recording multiple case study development. Very few are longitudinal in nature, with Leask, Fyall and Garrod (2013) and Catlin and Jones (2010) being exceptions. So the quantitative research methods predominate and appear to be increasing in volume.

Many articles made use of mixed methods to allow for one approach to offer a frame of reference within which the other approach can yield richer data. This creates a foundation that indicates a maturing of research in this sector of tourism where processes are studied systematically and not only for their direct results but also their interaction with other disciplines or fields of study. This is seen as a necessary step for the development of the field of study, as called for by Lew (1987) and Pearce (1998), indicating a methodological development through techniques such as triangulation to arrive at the development of models that are both dynamic and systemic. Evidence is seen of the adoption and application of research concepts and methodologies from areas such as revenue management, co-creation and consumption, however, continued calls are made by Puhakka et al. (2014) and others (Sharpley, 2014) for the greater use of inter-disciplinary research.

2.4 Overview of the development of research on VAs

The volume of research into the management of visitor attractions has increased overall in recent years and specifically into clear areas of expertise in visitor experiences, motivations and satisfaction. World Heritage sites have been seen to feature significantly as case studies for the exploration of the value of designations and associated issues such as authenticity and resolution of stakeholder conflicts. As identified in the earlier analysis, there is a greater use of quantitative approaches, methods and analysis (Taplin, 2012) though the majority of the articles still focus on the applications and investigations in relation to a singular case study site. Far greater use of statistical analysis methods such as structural equation modelling is observed in the articles in relation to both management approaches and visitor perspectives (Nowacki 2009; Palau-Saumell et al., 2012). The published research has established VAs as key drivers for development of destination (Frost et al., 2014; Henderson, 2010).

There is a clear set of committed scholars and researchers in the field, with particular expertise and focussed investigation on key issues such as authenticity, heritage and visitor experience. It is, however, difficult to determine the drivers that determine the researchers' choice of topics – are they identified by previous researchers suggesting gaps, by individuals identifying potentially viable areas for research on the basis of their own agendas or by broader influencers. For example, the various international research excellence and quality schemes are likely to have determined the progression of studies in aspects and approaches likely to meet individual high-rated journal requirements and thus institutional requirements of academics. Likewise some aspects that might be relevant for investigation, for example the lack of articles featuring child and youth audiences may be due to the tight ethical and integrity regulations in force in relation to conducting research with under-18s in many academic institutions. While this can be overcome, see Tchetchik et al. (2009) who overcomes the issues by conducting family focus groups and Weaver (2012a) regarding under 18s use of National Parks conducted via GPS tracking systems, it is likely to have narrowed the range of research into this demographic group. The increasing need to demonstrate the value of research and associated outputs in terms of relevance to universities and industry sectors is also evident, for example, seen in the growth of previously underexplored aspects that are likely to be of relevance to industry, for example museum visitor voluntary contributions (Jaffry & Apostolakis, 2011), product diversification (Hughes & Carlsen, 2010) and visitor engagement (Taheri et al., 2014). Research outcomes that are suited to broader knowledge exchange opportunities, for example research into particular management issues that influence and change management practice, see Rix and Lowe (2012) regarding the use of sites by those with learning difficulties and Connell et al. (2014) regarding the

complex relationship between VAs and the potential role of events to combat seasonality, may become more prominent.

3.0 Management issues

Table 3 offers a classification of the publications arranged by key areas - **Visitor Management, Resource Management, Product Management** and **Site Management** - identified on the basis of the significant issues encountered in managing VAs as identified by Connell and Page (2009), Swarbrooke (2001) and Leask (2010). As previously detailed in Section 2.3 Research Methods, this provided a structure within which the articles could be coded, in order to identify the *themes* emerging from each area of VA management, which were then divided further into related sub-themes. Some adjustment to the individual sub-themes was made following the original sweep and where few articles were found within that area, for example, product development, management practice and enhancing loyalty and repeat visitation, even though they had not previously been identified in models. Each article was then read and coded into a *theme* and sub-theme within each key area. Naturally many articles covered more than one aspect of management, so they may be shown in a maximum of two sub-categories in Table 3. Likewise only high quality articles are listed within the table, where the most relevant have been selected to provide an indication of the key debates and most valuable contributions.

Table 3 Classification categories of articles by management **key areas**, *themes* and sub-themes (source: author)

Visitor Management	Resource Management	Product Management	Site Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Visitor Demand</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motivations ○ Preferences ○ Expectations ○ Segmentation • <i>Visitor Experience</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experience ○ Behaviour ○ Perceptions ○ Satisfaction ○ Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sustainability</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental ○ Sustainable management ○ Conservation • <i>Designations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inscription ○ Impact • <i>Interpretation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Authenticity ○ Learning ○ Narratives ○ Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Product development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development ○ Diversification • <i>Financial</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenue management ○ Spending & willingness to pay • <i>Marketing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marketing activity ○ Image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stakeholder management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community participation ○ Conflict ○ Partnership • <i>Staff</i> • <i>Transport</i> • <i>Research & management practice</i> • <i>Technology</i> • <i>Role within destinations</i> • <i>Impacts</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic ○ Community ○ Visitor

The classification shown in Table 3 is then used as the basis for the discussion of each *theme* and sub-theme and links directly to Table 4 where example articles are identified alongside observations regarding the content of articles.

Table 4 shows the key articles in each section by management *theme* and sub-theme

Table 4 VA research articles by theme, sub-theme and focus (source: author)

Key area / Theme	Study examples	Focus
Visitor Management		
<i>Visitor demand</i>		
Visitor motivations	Moussouri and Roussos (2013); Okello et al. (2012); Griffiths (2011); Brida (2012b); Ryan et al. (2009); Lloyd (2013); Raine (2013); Ryan and Hsu (2011); Raadik et al. (2010); Bigley et al. (2010); Falk (2011); Rowe (2011); Breakey (2012); Phau et al. (2013); Saayman & Saayman (2009); Hyde & Harman (2011); Dunkley et al. (2011); Shuo et al. (2009); Guichard-Anguis (2011); Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013); Wong et al. (2013); Lawton and Daniels (2009); McIntosh and Wilmot (2011).	Investigating visitor motivations for visiting visitor attractions and their relations with visitor characteristics, behaviour, experience, intention to revisit and decision making.
Visitor preferences	Kontogeorgopoulos (2009); Poria et al. (2009a); Willis (2010); Vong and Ung (2012); Haukeland (2010); Colombino and Nese (2009); Yamada and Knapp (2010); Pettebone et al. (2011); Catlin and Jones, (2010); Jin and Pearce (2011b); Orelana (2012); Choi et al. (2010); Rivera (2009).	Investigating visitor preferences on factors that they consider fundamental in enhancing their experience when visiting visitor attractions.
Visitor expectations	Sheng and Chen (2012); Davidson and Sibley (2011); Puhakka (2011); Francis et al. (2010b).	Examining visitor expectation on their experience and practices at visitor attractions.
Visitor segmentation	Tchetchik et al. (2009); Cang, (2009); Hardiman and Burgin (2011); Choi (2011); Burke et al. (2010); Dawson and Jensen (2011); Suckall et al. (2009); Le and Pearce (2011); Weber and Sultana (2013); Francis et al. (2010a); Arnberger et al. (2012); Sheng and Chen (2012); Lee et al. (2013); Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013); Lawton and Daniels (2009); Leask et al. (2013b); Dockett et al. (2011); Jensen (2013); Wu et al. (2010); Farmaki (2013); Sutcliffe and Kim (2014).	Identifying visitor segments and profile based on factors such as demographic characteristics, psychographic characteristics, cultural differences, motivations, behaviour and personality.
<i>Visitor experience</i>		
Experience	Io (2013); Kang et al. (2012); Kim (2012a); Kang and Gretzel (2012); Calver and Page (2014); Hughes et al. (2013); Dong and Siu (2013); Dunkley et al. (2011); Chen and Chen (2010); Poria (2013); Kim (2012b); McNamara and Prideaux (2011); Braithwaite and Leiper (2010); Massara and Severino (2013); Ma et al. (2013); Schwarz (2013); Chen and Chen (2013); Wang et al. (2012); Biran et al. (2011); Rantala (2009); Andriotis (2009); Brida et al. (2012a); Slåtten et al. (2011); Cheal and Griffin (2013); Bulger (2011); Milman (2009); Winter (2009); Vong and Ung (2012); Yang (2011); Kim (2012c); Su and Hsu (2013); Raadik et al. (2010); Hall et al. (2011);	Investigating visitor experience at visitor attractions; factors that enhance and influence visitor experience; and measuring methods.

	Su (2010); Breakey (2012); Hallo and Manning (2009); Leach (2011); Packer and Bond (2010).	
Behaviour and crowds	Cang (2009); Zwinkels et al. (2009); Chui et al. (2010); Birenboim et al. (2013); Podoshen and Hunt (2011); Schwartz et al. (2009); Pettebone et al. (2013); Orellana et al. (2012); Lyon et al. (2011); Wolf et al. (2013b); Yalowitz (2009); Joo et al. (2014); Weaver (2012); Palso et al. (2009); Smith et al. (2012); Ramkissoon et al. (2012); Arbuthnott et al. (2014); Heung et al. (2009); Chen and Chen (2010); Palau-Saumell et al. (2012); Kim (2012c); Su & Hsu (2013); Wyles et al. (2013); Shen et al. (2009); Yamada and Fu (2012); Wu et al. (2010); McNamara and Prideaux (2011); Chen and Phou (2013); Tsai and Chung (2012).	Investigating visitor and crowd behaviour and behaviour intentions at visitor attractions, factors that influence behaviour and behaviour monitoring methods. Visitors forming emotional relationships with destinations.
Perceptions and attitudes	Brown and Weber (2011); Coghlan and Castley (2013); Jin and Pearce (2011a); Guichard-Anguis (2011); Rickly-Boyd (2012); Yang (2013); della Dora (2012); Stylianou-Lambert, (2011); Lin et al. (2013); Yang et al. (2013); McIntyre (2009); Yang (2011); Vong, (2013); Suckall et al. (2009); Comănescu and Nedelea (2010); Hui and Ryan (2012); Shen et al. (2014); Wray et al. (2010); Wyles et al. (2013); Ballantyne et al. (2011); Slåtten et al. (2011); George (2011); Randall and Rollins (2009); Zhang et al. (2009b).	Examination of visitor perceptions and attitudes on visitor attraction practices and offerings and factors that influence them.
Satisfaction and evaluation	Taplin (2012b); Taplin (2013); Rivera et al. (2009); Nowacki (2009); Hui and Ryan (2012); Veasna et al. (2013); Martín-Ruiz et al. (2010); Chen and Chen (2010); Shuo et al. (2009); Yang (2012); Palau-Saumel et al. (2012); Chen et al. (2011); Krešić et al. (2013); Okello and Yerian (2009); Ramkissoon et al. (2012); Trinh and Ryan (2013); Vong (2013); Kim (2012c); Su and Hsu (2013); Crilley et al. (2012); Arabatzis and Grigoroudis (2010); Ryan et al. (2010); Dwyer et al. (2013); Castellanos-Verdugo et al. (2011); D'Antonio et al. (2013); Calver and Page (2014); Wan and Cheng (2011); Chen et al. (2011); Tsang et al. (2012); Pearce and Wu (2014).	Investigation of visitor satisfaction and evaluation at visitor attractions, their determinants, their relationship with other factors and measuring methods. Quality. Analysing and measuring quality at visitor attractions and its relation to factors such as visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions.
Engagement and interactions	vom Lehn (2010a, 2010b); Markwell and Cushing (2009); Mowatt and Chancellor (2011); Ross et al. (2012); Braswell (2012); Rahimi (2014); Siu et al. (2013); Moss et al. (2010); Neuvonen et al. (2010); Hashim and Said (2013); Taplin (2013); Shen et al. (2014); Slater (2010); Olsson (2010); Brida et al. (2012a; 2012b); Wang and Wu (2011); Overskaug et al. (2010); Sievänen et al. (2011); Novaki (2009); Wang et al. (2012); Taheri et al. (2014); Sutcliffe and Kim (2014); Weaver and Lawton (2011).	Exploring pre and post engagement with specific audiences to enhance visitor loyalty and factors influencing repeat visitation. Exploring the interactions between visitors and visitor attraction facilities, exhibits, service and environment during their visit.
Resource management		
Sustainability		

Environmental and ecotourism	Catibog-Sinha (2011); Shani and Pizam (2010); Reddy (2009); Wyles (2013); Morgan et al. (2011); Banerje (2012); Zeppel (2012); Cheng et al. (2013); Lin (2010); Horng et al. (2012).	Assessing environmental sustainability at visitor attractions and visitor attraction contribution to ecological sustainability.
Sustainable management	Darlow et al. (2012); Munanura et al. (2013); Pacifico and Vogel (2012); Landorf (2009); Hawkins et al. (2009); Larson and Poudyal (2012); Smith (2013); Mitchell et al. (2013); Henderson (2010); Adams (2010); Gu et al. (2013); Ma et al. (2009); Ballantyne et al. (2011); Poudel and Nyaupane (2013); Xu and Fox (2014).	Exploring sustainable management practices at visitor attractions and their challenges.
Conservation	Shetawy and Khateeb (2010); Che (2011); Hughes (2011, 2012); Xu and Dai (2012); Suntikul and Jacha (2013); Firth (2011); Wijeratne et al. (2012); Ballantyne et al. (2011); Ballantyne et al. (2009); Sebele (2010); Hughes et al (2012); Gillespie (2012).	Exploring challenges of conserving visitor attractions; funding, urban development, biodiversity, policy, educating visitors and enhancing their awareness of conservation messages.
Designation		
Inscription	Jones and Shaw (2012); Silverman (2011); Suntikul and Jachna (2013); Ludvigsen (2013); Poria et al. (2013); Guichard-Anguis (2011); Rao (2010); Hazen (2009); Santos and Zabler (2012); Nichols and Thapa (2013); Shetawu and Khateeb (2010); Reddy (2009); Cheng et al. (2013).	Investigating the criteria, contestation and perception of the WHS inscription and NP designation.
Impact	Jimura (2011); Su and Wall (2011); Yang and Lin (2014); Dearborn and Stallmeyer (2009); Svets (2011); Huang et al. (2012); Gillespie (2009, 2012); Shepherd et al. (2012); De noronha Vaz et al. (2011); Nyaupane and Timothy (2010); Azman et al. (2011); Yan et al. (2010); Van Blarcom and Kayahan (2011); Dear et al. (2012); King and Halpenny (2014) Henderson (2011a); Dewar et al. (2012); Poria et al. (2011) Wilson et al. (2011); Ryan and Silvanto (2010); Conway (2014); Chirikure et al. (2010); Okech (2010); Landorf (2009); Kaltenborn et al. (2013); Smith (2013); Piccolo et al (2012).	Investigating the impact of the WHS or National Park designation on visitor attractions on the management, development, protection, economy, stakeholders, conservation, regulations, land usage and ownership.
Interpretation		
Authenticity	Wall (2011); Van Dijk et al. (2011); Guttormsen and Fageraas (2011); Wong (2013); Domenico and Miller (2012); Hall et al. (2011); Rickly-Boyd (2012); Metro-Roland (2009); Andriotis (2011); Cohen (2011); Kidd (2011); Alivizatou (2012); Zhang and Shelton (2012); Shen et al. (2014); Yang (2011); Hede and Thyne (2010); Kolar and Zabkar (2010); Mkono (2013); Firth (2011); Dueholm and Smed (2014); Rodrigues and McIntosh (2014).	Evaluating different concepts and creation of visitor attraction authenticity such as experiential, emotional, heritage, historical, constructive, and existential and its relations to factors such as interpretation, identity, image, perceptions, loyalty, involvement, attitudes, motivation and experience.
Learning	Moss et al. (2010); Hong and Song (2013); Van Winkle and Backman (2011); Ballantyne et al. (2011); Oren and Shani (2012); Cohen (2011); Falk and Gillespie (2009); DeWitt and Hohenstein (2010); Barriault and Pearson (2010); Stern et al. (2012); Sanford (2010); Dockett et al. (2011); Hughes (2011); Pattison and Dierking	Exploring learning and educational process, promotion, benefits, motivation, activities, experience, techniques and outcomes at visitor attractions.

	(2013); Hauser et al. (2009); Io (2013); Io and Hallo (2011); Kang et al. (2012); Weiler and Smith (2009); Io and Hallo (2012); Weiler and Ham (2010); Van Dijk et al. (2011).	
Narratives	Gelbman and Maoz (2012); Ramshaw and Gammon (2010); Braithwaite and Leiper (2010); Lemelin et al. (2013); Taylor (2012); Chronis (2012b); Gijanto (2011); Chittenden (2010); Hodge (2011); Porto et al. (2012); Christensen (2011).	Analysing the construction and exclusion of narratives by different stakeholders at visitor attractions. Also the selected interpretation at visitor attractions.
Identity	Chronis (2012a); Waterton and Dittmer (2014); Olsen (2012); Weidenfeld (2010); Catalani and Ackroyd (2013); Mowatt and Chancellor (2011); Poria et al. (2009b); Cheal and Griffin (2013); Gordon (2009); Chan (2011); Frew (2012); Stefanou (2012); Taylor (2012); Benton (2011); Van Dijk et al. (2012); Park (2010); Daugbjerg (2009); Lockstone-Binney et al. (2013); Podoshen and Hunt (2011).	Exploring the construction, interpretation and dissonance of visitor attraction identity.
Product management		
<i>Product development</i>		
Development	Knight (2010); Cornelis (2010a); Munanura et al. (2013); Hughes et al. (2013); Xie and Sohoni (2010); Gelbman and Timothy (2010); Haukeland et al. (2010); Wray et al. (2010); Draper (2012); Small (2013); Frisch (2012); Ramshaw (2011); Ramshaw et al. (2013); Poria and Ashworth (2009); Choi et al. (2010).	Exploring the process of developing and managing products at visitor attractions such as animals, relics exhibition and theme park rides.
Diversification	Weidenfeld et al. (2010); Mathisen (2012); Domenico and Miller (2012); Brown (2013); Weidenfeld and Leask (2013); Marr (2011); Whitfield (2009); Mkono (2013); Coglán and Castley (2013); Hughes and Carlsen (2010); Camarero et al. (2014); Connell et al. (2014); Leask et al. (2013b); Shuo et al. (2009); Alonso et al. (2010).	Investigating innovation and knowledge transfer between visitor attractions and diversification into additional products – retail, events, food.
<i>Financial management</i>		
Revenue management	Schwartz et al. (2012); Leask et al. (2013b); Ahebwa et al. (2012); Santhakumar (2009); Apostolakis and Jaffry (2013); Heo and Lee (2009); Sharifi-Tehrani, 2013; Dong et al. (2011); Chung et al. (2011); Park et al. (2010); Song et al. (2009); Braun and Soskin (2010); Leiper and Park (2011).	Evaluating revenue management practices. Assessing different pricing strategies at visitor attractions.

Spending and willingness to pay	Çela et al. (2009); Brida et al. (2013); Jaffry and Apostolakis (2011); Steckenreuter and Wolf (2013); Chung et al. (2011); Khodaverdizadeh et al. (2009); Griffiths (2011); Lee et al. (2013); Tapsuwan et al. (2010); Weaver (2012a); Weaver (2012b); Poria et al. (2014).	Investigating visitor spending patterns and willingness to pay.
Marketing		
Marketing activity	Clark (2009); Fullerton et al. (2010); Chen and Phou (2013); Veasna et al. (2013); Tsai et al. (2010); Dewar et al. (2012); Poria et al. (2011); Cornelis (2010b); Cheng et al. (2010); Chhabra (2009); Donohoe (2012); Zhong et al. (2013); Chung et al. (2014).	Exploring the implementation, effectiveness and impacts of marketing activities such as branding, co-branding promotion and outreach at visitor attractions.
Image	Chen and Phou (2013); Ron and Feldman (2009); Cini and Saayman (2013); Gill and Ritchie (2009); Cheng et al. (2013); Siano and Sigioccolo (2011); Müller (2013); Wearing and Whenman (2009); Veasna et al. (2013); Ryan and Silvanto (2010); Palua-Saumell et al. (2012); Huang et al. (2012); Sheng and Chen (2012), Poria et al. (2011).	Exploring the construction of visitor attraction image.
Site Management		
Stakeholder management		
Community participation	Farrelly (2011); Wang et al. (2011); Sebele (2010); Xu and Dai (2012); Ferreira (2011); Conway (2014); Chirikure et al. (2010); Agbe-Davis (2010); Ween (2012); Strickland-Munro and Moore (2013); Spencer and Nsiah (2013); Alonso et al. (2010); Staiff and Bushell (2013); Banerjee (2012); Garrod et al. (2012); Puhakka et al. (2014); Jimura (2011); Azman et al. (2011)	Exploring issues related to the involvement of community in managing visitor attractions, such as participation, co-management and challenges.
Conflict	Jones and Shaw (2012); Sirima and Backman (2013); Poria and Ashworth (2009); Nyaupane (2009); Beaumont (2009); Parks (2010); Silverman (2011); Suntikul and Jachna (2013); King and Flynn (2012); Cohen-Hattab (2010); Ahadian (2013); Lai et al. (2013); Zhang et al. (2014); Otgaar (2012).	Investigating different conflicts caused by the need to balance the variety of stakeholder needs and objectives in the designation and management of visitor attractions.
Partnership	Wall (2011); Farrelly (2011); Garrod et al. (2012); Coghlan and Castley (2013); Pacifico and Vogel (2012); Croke (2010); Assi (2012); Dong et al. (2011); Landorf (2009); Bramwell and Cox (2009); Eagles et al. (2013); Wilson et al. (2009); Su and Wall, Irimias (2014); Mitchell et al. (2013) Haukeland et al. (2011); Wong et al. (2012); Haukeland (2011).	Evaluating issues surrounding the partnership between the management of visitor attractions and other stakeholders such as engagement, representation, stakeholder role and decision-making.
Staff		

Employees and volunteers	Van Dijk et al. (2011); Imon et al. (2011); Milman and Dickson (2014); Kelly (2009); Wijeratne et al. (2012); Palau-Saumell (2012); Smith and Holmes (2012); Rhoden et al. (2009).	Investigating the characteristics, retention perceptions, emotional labour and training of visitor attraction employees and volunteers.
Transport		
Transport and accessibility	Smallwood et al. (2012); Lin (2010); Zhang et al. (2009b); Hallo and Manning (2009); Pettebone et al. (2011); Lawson et al. (2011); Horng et al (2012); Pettebone et al. (2010); Rix and Lowe (2010); Poria et al. (2009b); Jamaludin and Kadir (2014); vom Lehn (2010a); Walters (2009); Rantala and Valkonen (2011); Oh and Hammitt (2011); Poudyal et al.(2013b).	Investigating management, options, perceptions and impacts of transportation at visitor attractions.
Research and management practice		
Research	Taplin (2012a, 2013); Ma et al. (2009); Tlili (2014); Hassan (2013); Cornelis (2010a); van der Merwe and Rogerson (2010); Sheng and Lo (2010); Choi et al. (2010); Moore and Taplin (2014), Versiche et al. (2014), Prebensen (2014); Leask (2010).	Researching management issues such as benchmarking, productivity, performance and supply and demand.
Technology		
Technology	Dai (2013); Brown et al. (2013); Joo et al. (2009); Kang and Gretzel (2012); Tsai et al. (2010); Chittenden (2010); Makkonen and Hokkanen (2013); Carreras and Rius (2011); Tsai and Chung (2012); Lin et al. (2014);); Hsu et al. (2012); Wolf et al. (2013a); Perdue et al. (2012); Yoon et al. (2012); Versicheke et al. (2014).	Evaluating the adoption of technology at visitor attractions to improve management efficiency and visitor experience. GPS tracking use in natural sites. Several related to use of technology to enhance engagement interpretation.
Role within destinations		
<i>Role within destinations</i>	Clavéa et al. (2010); Henderson (2011b; 2010); Veasna et al. (2013); Iorio and Wall (2011); Johanson and Olsen (2010); King and Flynn (2012); Ryan et al. (2011); Dearborn and Stallmeyer (2009); Su and Lin (2014); Weidenfeld et al. (2011; 2010; 2010; 2014); Pritchard and Lee (2011); Xu and Dai (2012); Waterton (2009); Piccolo et al. (2012); Ahebwa et al. (2012); Wang and Bramwell (2012); Hui and Ryan (2012); Siderelis et al. (2012); Colombino and Nese (2009); Nicholas and Thapa (2013); Petkova-Campbell (2009); Silverman (2011); Ryan and Silvanto (2010); Yap and Saha (2013); Croke, 2010; Hui and Ryan (2012); Frost et al. (2014).	Investigating the role of visitor attractions within destinations. Assessing clustering and exploring the effects of destination policy on visitor attractions. Exploring how politics affects the management and development of visitor attractions.
Impacts		

Economic	Pascoe et al. (2012); Czajkowski et al. (2014); Choi et al. (2010); Farreras and Riera (2013); Spencer and Nsiah (2013); Van Blarcom and Kayahan (2011); Chang and Chen (2013); Brida et al. (2012b); Saayman et al. (2009); Ryan et al. (2011); Ha and Grunwell (2011); Mayer et al. (2010); Poudyal et al. (2013a); Wang et al. (2009); Carey (2013); Mayer (2014); Sela et al. (2009).	Investigating different impacts of different economic issues on visitor attractions and how the attractions have impacts on the destination economic development.
Community	Nyaupane (2009); Reimanna et al. (2011); Shepherd et al. (2012); Staiff and Bushell (2013); Su and Wall (2010); Jimura (2011).	Evaluating the impacts of community on visitor attractions and how the attractions have impacts on community.
Visitor	Lobo et al. (2013); Siderelis et al. (2012); Sebela and Turk (2014); Collins-Kreiner et al. (2013); Wolf and Kroft (2012); Fernandez et al. (2009); Choo, Todd and Li (2011); Stevens et al. (2013).	Assessing the impacts of visitors on visitor attractions.

The key themes and sub-themes in Table 4 are now used to structure the discussion of the articles in relation to each area.

3.1 Visitor Management – visitor demand and visitor experience

3.1.1 Visitor demand

- Motivations for visits - the relationship between film and other media exposure at VAs featured in several articles, for example, Kim (2012a) researched tv audience involvement in sites related to a Korean tv drama series, establishing that the more emotional the viewers' involvement in the drama then the more likely they were to visit and that this could be further segmented by nationality. Connell (2012), also focussing on film tourism, established the range of potential impacts for the management of VAs associated with film exposure in relation to potential issues with authenticity, mis-representation of the resource feature, interpretation, visitor management and changing visitor expectations. Authors also focussed on the influencers on visitation for either specific types of sites, such as religious sites (Rodriguez & McIntosh, 2014) or types of visitors, such as residents as non-visitors (Lawton & Daniels, 2009). Pilgrimage was a strong theme to emerge for a variety of VA types, such as Guichard-Anguis (2011) investigating WHS forests in Japan; Hyde & Harman (2011) regarding pilgrimage to battlefields; and Wong et al. (2013) for religious heritage. Likewise, dark tourism, such as Bigley et al. (2010) regarding the Korean DMZ; Kang et al. (2012) regarding a prime motivator for visits as being a feeling of obligation; and Stone (2012) suggesting that dark tourism offers a potential social filter between life and death. It is observed that there appears to be little published work on the future varying types and needs of visitors in terms of ageing populations, increasing ageless society, burgeoning middle classes in developing countries and expanding cultural diversity. It is noted that research into visitor motivations links closely, and often directly, to published work on other sub-sections in this article, for example segmentation, experience, engagement and interpretation, where investigations into how VAs are adapting and developing their experience or interpretation in response to greater knowledge of visitor motivations.
- Preferences – several discussions focus on the relevance of the type of interpretation in accordance with the visitor segments in achieving successful VA demand management. For example, Orelanna et al. (2012) used GPS to research visitor preferences in Dutch National Parks to establish their preferences in a natural setting, while Choi (2012) examined visitors with different characteristics and their preferences for temporary exhibitions in cultural heritage sites via a choice modelling study. Catlin and Jones (2010) researched the changes in visitor demand and preferences over time for whale shark tourism, finding increased tolerance to crowding and a greater focus on the non-wildlife components of the experience. Frost et al. (2014) also

established increasing demand for nature-based experiences, but noted the risk to destination and resources that might follow.

- Expectations – Davidson and Sibley (2011) investigated the changing nature of museums and the effects of their attempts to attract more diverse audiences and meet new museology expectations. Similarly Sheng and Chen (2012) investigated how museums try to meet the expectations gap by using content analysis of museum visitor diaries. Linking to visitor perceptions, the need for innovative methods to research these changing and highly individualised viewpoints is clear.
- Segmentation – articles explored various ways to segment markets to VAs, for example, Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013: 501) regarding motivational differences between male and female Italian visitors to Medjugorje sanctuary, with results showing that ‘motivation is focused prevalently on the need for discovery in men and socialisation in women’. Tchetchik et al. (2009) used choice modelling and GPS systems to investigate segmentation on the basis of visitors’ decision-making processes at Old City of Acre, Israel and to then suggest management techniques that could be adopted to improve demand management approaches. An emerging theme of research related to engaging specific groups such as children (Sutcliffe & Kim, 2014) and Dockett et al. (2011); socially excluded young mothers via outreach programmes (Jensen, 2013); and families (Wu et al., 2013).

3.1.2 Visitor experience

- Experience – articles covered all types of VAs and market groups, with large-scale quantitative studies such as Nowacki’s (2009) use of 1770 visitor surveys to investigate relationships between motivations, product and behavioural intentions, focussing on the visitors’ viewpoint of the overall experience and suggesting that segmentation of the visitor market should be on the basis of benefits to the visitor rather than on their motivations. Dunkley et al.’s (2011) battlefield research that found that a visitor’s prior interest in warfare was a key influence on the experience at battlefields, while Dong and Siu’s (2013) work in Hong Kong theme parks found that a visitor’s predisposition to fantasize influences the ability of elements of the servicescape to shape a positive visitor experience. Shen and Chen (2012) suggest research into the gaps between experience expectations and actual perceptions to establish the causes for those gaps to even exist. Several articles focus on one market segment to explore their experiences, for example Gen Y (Leask et al., 2013), or on one type of VA such as natural heritage (McNamara & Prideaux, 2011), built heritage (Chen & Chen, 2010) or amusement parks (Slatten et al., 2011). Other articles explore a specific feature of the visitor experience, such as interpretation, for example, Kang and Gretzel’s (2012) investigation into the use

of podcasts to enhance tourist experiences and mindfulness and Io's (2013) research on the role of effective interpretation via tour guides in Macau, where four factors were identified as being crucial to delivering effective interpretation - heritage and tourist information and knowledge, service attitude, communication competence and emotional intelligence.

- Behaviour and crowds – the use of various forms of visitor monitoring were researched by Wolf et al. (2012; 2013b), who concluded that GPS tracking was a reliable form of data gathering as more traditional visitor surveys were subject to diminishing visitor memories and recall. In terms of research into actual behaviours, many articles selected a specific market segment or more than one to allow for comparison. As with Catlin and Jones' (2010) observation of the increased tolerance of crowding, Hueng et al. (2009) researched queuing behaviour on theme parks rides and observed differences between Western and Chinese visitor queuing tolerances and associated priorities for the ride experience. The Western visitors attributed more to the value of the ride while Chinese visitors gave higher priority to the comfort of the waiting environment. Palso et al. (2009) researched the information sourcing behaviour of locals and non-locals, finding that locals were more likely to be younger and to make more use of advice from acquaintances and previous experiences, while non-locals were older and more likely to use impersonal sources. These insights into the variety of visitor behaviour and responses is vital to inform future VA management planning.
- Perceptions and attitudes – articles related to the differing perceptions of visitors and residents by motivations, experience, age (George, 2011) and possible management implications. Vong (2013) investigated the relationships between the visitors' perception of quality at a destination level and observed a significant association between this and visitor satisfaction in the site experience. At a site level, Wyles (2013) established that leisure visits to an aquarium lead to changes in visitor attitude and intentions towards marine sustainability, while printed booklets only influenced changes to intentions. Della Dora (2012) found that while motivations for visiting Mount Athos and Meteora in Greece varied between pilgrims and tourists, their gaze converged to enable a spiritual dimension for non-pilgrim visitors and a natural environment dimension for pilgrims.
- Satisfaction and evaluation – a large number of articles sought to explore satisfaction and possible relationships with visitor views on issues such as value, experience and likelihood to recommend, and how these evaluations might impact on the development and management of visitor attractions. Pearce and Wu (2014) investigated how tourists with different overall

evaluations of their experiences and from different origins respond to the attraction, in addition to their use of concepts and phrases to report their experience. The findings could contribute to the development of more expressive use of language to record visitor experiences, moving away from more traditional behavioural and mechanistic styles. The extent to which visitors accept packaged versions of culture were explored by Yang (2012), where some visitors expressed their lack of satisfaction with regards to the commercial practices and service components offered within an ethnic tourism context. This ongoing issue of balancing authenticity with the need to satisfy visitors and achieve economic sustainability is also discussed by Taplin (2012), Weidenfeld (2010) and Chen and Chen (2010). Palau-Saumell et al. (2012) found that tourist perceptions of the heritage building itself and positive employee emotions during the experience had clear links to the development of emotional experiences for tourists, which in turn was shown to be a predictor of satisfaction.

- Visitor engagement and interactions – Taheri et al.'s (2014) research emphasised the importance of understanding visitor engagement in the achievement of successful heritage management. By developing a scale to investigate the relationship between drivers of engagement and levels of engagement at museums, they noted that there were relationships between aspects such as visitors' prior knowledge of the attraction theme and recreational motivation, specifically past experiences, thus suggesting the potential significance of targeting the repeat visitor. Likewise, though in a National Park context, Schwartz (2013) developed a tool to explore the relationship between visitors' cultural capital and their engagement level, while Weaver (2014) found a small core of potential engagement with conventional volunteer tourism activity, but more widespread support for unconventional and convenient activities that may serve as a platform for higher engagement with site enhancement. Olsson (2010) researched members and the use of volunteers at VAs, finding extensive willingness of members to volunteer and actively interact and participate over long periods of time. Engagement and interactions by individual consumer groups, generations and perspectives explored the general issues and then individual nuances and their potential impact for management decision-making. Braswell (2012) and Sutcliffe and Kim (2014) investigated the differences between adults and children interactions at museums, while Wu et al. (2010) and Sanford (2010) explored the family market and role of children in the decision-making. Residents' perspectives as potential stakeholders and community beneficiaries were discussed Garrod et al. (2013) and Weidenfeld (2010) but rarely as potential visitors. Mowatt and Chancellor (2011) used photo elicitation to investigate the nuances of visitor interactions with an interpretation of a West African Slave Castle, acknowledging the need for careful consideration of such overlooked sites via encouragement for participation with authorities enhanced by involvement of international

organisations such as UNESCO. Slater (2010) used repertory grids to investigate the relationships and involvement of members across a range of heritage supporter groups, finding this method to be suited to investigation of complex relationships within an arts setting. Loyalty, most usually in the form of repeat visits, and satisfaction are very closely related and, according to Taplin (2013), more successfully predicted when measured in relation to competitors. Weaver and Lawton (2011) segmented their loyal visitors and established significant differences in their willingness to donate and referrals to other potential visitors. Brida et al. (2012) found that while loyalty towards an arts centre could be clearly seen in referrals to others to visit, it rarely extended to broader referrals for the destination as a whole and that those with a lower probability to repeat visit have stronger intentions to recommend to friends and relatives, suggesting that managers could do more to provide tangible incentives to encourage this. The issue of authenticity reappears in relation to loyalty and observed links to cultural motivations to visit (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), also in terms of the potential of religious tourism (Shuo et al., 2009) due to religious devotion and the search for authentic experiences. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Nowacki (2009) linked the quality of performance at the VA to visitor satisfaction, perceived benefits and recommendations.

The majority of the published articles fall into this key area, with particularly high volumes of research on visitor experience, behaviour, perceptions and attitudes towards the visitor attraction experience. Several articles discussed that increasing competition between visitor attractions is driven by the greater choice of VA experiences and alternative leisure pursuits now available to visitors. Engagement with potential new audiences in the form of residents is touched on in some papers, though in little detail, as with VFR. Notable gaps in the research were in areas such as the development or experiences of new audiences, the impact of social media and the use of technology as information sources for driving visitor demand.

3.2 Resource Management – sustainability, designations, interpretation

3.2.1 Sustainability

- Environmental and ecotourism – the use of nature based resources by visitors is often unpredictable and highly dependent upon local environmental conditions such as weather and concerns regarding visitor safety. As a result communication of conditions and availability of specific resources for use by potential visitors becomes increasingly important. Morgan et al. (2011) investigated the effects of media exposure in relation to red tide algae blooms and the negative impact that media releases can have on park attendance. Several articles focus on the need to minimize negative impacts within the natural context and the lack of opportunities for natural sites to capture revenue from visitors that can then be used in management practices (Banerjee, 2012;

Catibog-Sinha, 2011). However, these authors also highlight the opportunities for tourism activity to support forest management and the retention of indigenous community skills, with high participation on the part of local communities being key in the adoption and implementation of successful practices.

- Sustainable Management – identified as a key challenge facing society, sustainable management of heritage resources is often hampered by a lack of surplus revenue to invest in sustainable management practices that might in turn lead to greater financial viability (Munanura et al., 2013; Hawkins et al., 2009; Ma et al., 2009; Gu et al., 2013). Darlow et al. (2012) call for heritage managers to focus on capacity building alongside tackling institutional factors that govern heritage management, such as a lack of strategic leadership and ineffective funding structures. Adams (2010:103) study of models of tourist development in a variety of sites determines that one of the central tenets of sustainable management – the equitable distribution of tourism benefits – is often not in place in less developed countries, mainly as a result of a lack of understanding between “developed country assumptions and developing country reality” and systemic power imbalances. Pacifico et al. (2012) suggest using individuals, such as archaeologists, to act as facilitators in conversations on the consequences of tourism development as they can be dispassionate about the circumstances and disputes such as ownership and focus on the resource. However, Hawkins et al. (2009) argue that the critical players in implementing successful sustainable management is via engagement with local stakeholders.
- Conservation – many articles have conservation at the centre, specifically the challenges in conserving natural (Xu & Fox, 2014; Ma et al., 2009; Sebele, 2010; Ballantyne et al., 2009; Hughes, 2012) or built heritage (Shetwawy & Khateeb, 2010; Xu & Dai, 2014; Firth, 2011) and the difficulties in balancing the conservation of material and non-material resources with tourism use. Several authors argue that this can be achieved through the enhancement of conservation messages delivered via education and innovative interpretation (Wijeratne et al., 2012), though the need to balance entertainment and conservation to deliver meaningful experiences is stated (Camarero et al., 2014; Firth, 2011). Ballantyne et al. (2011) remark on the need to enlist individual tourists as conservation partners so that they clearly see how they can contribute, for example the communication of why areas are unavailable to visitors during a visit. Others (Sebele, 2010; Sirima & Backman, 2013; Xu & Dai, 2012) argue more on the importance of engaging and empowering local communities in the conservation planning and implementation, to enable wider benefits within the destination.

3.2.2 Designations

Much of the research in relation to designations refers to UNESCO World Heritage (WH) inscription, though while WH is in the title often this is little more than a vehicle or location for the study, rather than research into the value of the resource or implications of the designation. So in this section only articles with a focus on the WH management and not just on activity based at a WHS were included.

- Inscriptions – investigations into the drivers for seeking designation, such as increased visitor numbers, improved management systems and increased national profile, were the focus of several articles. Yang et al. (2010) and Yang and Lin (2014) observed that the WH designation did have a tourism enhancing effect at WH sites in China, most strongly seen at cultural sites. While conservation is a key driver, Shetawy and Khateeb (2010) question the value of the designation in relation to the Pyramids at Giza, when there appears to be no support to implement conservation plans post-inscription. Indeed Hazen (2009) and Suntikul and Jachna (2013) suggest that inscription may in fact be a constraint to sustainable development in USA and Laos respectively. Santos and Zobler (2012:485) highlight the “incompatibilities between the recognition of Outstanding Universal Value, heritage protection and tourism development” in relation to the city of Dresden, where the city eventually considered the benefits of a new bridge to outweigh the advantages of WH status, resulting in the delisting of the city.
- Impact – likewise, articles researching the actual impact of designation featured strongly, with many articles on WH status in Asia. Huang et al. (2012) found there to be no effect on visitor numbers to the Historic Centre of Macau as a result of WH listing. Poria et al. (2011) found that many visitors are unaware of the UNESCO designation at Caesarea, Israel, though, where they were aware, it did impact on visitor understanding and experience. While it may have a negative or no effect on the intention to visit, they also found that future demand was positively influenced by the designation, particularly where there were a number of designated sites. Local community perspectives and potential conflicts between balancing the global priorities of designations with local needs for tourism development featured (Su & Wall, 2012; Azman et al., 2011; Piccolo et al., 2012). Jimura (2011) identified both positive and negative impacts for local communities in Japan, calling for the development of a comprehensive tourism management plan for the destination as a successful place to live and visit, as do Gillespie (2009) in relation to Angkor, Conway (2014) in Mexico and Kaltenborn et al. (2013) in Norway. Disappointment in the implications of the designation and failure for local communities to benefit from the designations are seen, see Chirikure et al. (2010) in relation to Zimbabwe, though several authors suggest that incorporating local communities in the identification of relevant discourses, genuine engagement and development of mutually

beneficial priorities could effectively overcome the challenges (Conway, 2014; Okech, 2010; Landorf, 2009).

3.2.3 Interpretation

- Authenticity - discussion relates to the need to balance the historical and practical aspects of VAs in an authentic manner, with arguments made that concerns of authenticity cannot be balanced with the growing need for entertainment (Van Dijk et al. 2012; Wall, 2011). Calver and Page (2013) researched the issues associated with visitor perceptions of heritage site experiences in relation to a comparison of the hedonistic and service components of experience, establishing that authenticity is not the primary driver for visitors and calling for more ambitious use of interpretation and technology to engage and involve visitors in the co-creation of their experiences. Several articles focus on this theme in relation to religious sites, (Cohen, 2011; Andriotis, 2011), with Rodrigues & McIntosh (2014) exploring how the use of technology and interpretation could be combined to help manage both the monastery and the devotional experience for the visitors. Indeed, Dueholm and Smed (2014) demonstrate how new technologies are being used to strengthen heritage sites in their role as VAs in addition to developing the authenticity of the experience.
- Learning – discussion related to themes of how to achieve learning outcomes, meaningful learning encounters and educational outcomes during visitor experiences. At dark tourism sites, Oren and Shani (2012) suggested the advantages of theming to attract larger and more emotionally engaged visitors, while Cohen (2010:193) questioned the authenticity of such sites and advocates *in populo* experiences, those based at a ‘population and spiritual center of the people to whom a tragedy befell’. Linking learning and engagement for children visits, with families (Sanford, 2010) or in formal education programme visits (Kang et al., 2012; DeWitt & Hohenstein, 2010) was discussed with on-site experiences not necessarily providing positive learning outcomes, as previously raised by Braithwaite and Leiper (2010). Sutcliffe and Kim (2014) suggest the use of play as a mechanism to engage children, with Moss et al. (2010) and Weiler and Smith (2009) recommending the development of layers of interpretation to enhance the learning outcomes.
- Narratives – articles highlighted the often discordant narratives that visitors access during visits to VAs, particularly heritage sites, dependent upon the commercial, political or nationalistic goals of those determining and delivering the experience (Gijanto, 2011; Lemelin et al., 2013; Gelbman & Maoz, 2012). The importance of the role of tour guides was observed, whereby narratives and messages varied from the stated aim of the site (Gelbman & Maoz, 2012)

or focussed on tangible aspects at the expense of the intangible (Gijanto, 2011; Christensen, 2011) leading to the omission of important narratives entirely. Indeed Braithewaite and Leiper (2010) argued that learning the 'truth' is better at home without the distractions of tourism. Hodge (2011) however, suggests that involving the visitor in the interpretative process is a solution to bridge between new and existing narratives, which would support the development of co-creative experiences as previously discussed. Poria et al. (2009a) state that the mission of a heritage site is to attract visitors and be economically sustainable, therefore that the interpretation should be mass customized as visitors are interested in different experiences. For example, some visitors are interested in only enriching their knowledge, while others are also looking for an emotional experience. Moreover, as different visitors are interested in different narratives, heritage site management should present information relevant to the visitor. It is suggested that management adjust the interpretation to the meaning assigned to the site as well as to the experience sought by the visitor, as linked to knowledge of the visitor motivations, as previously mentioned.

- Identity – many challenges exist in interpreting heritage sites, particularly sensitive sites that may be emotionally charged with historical memory (Catalani & Ackroyd, 2012; Chronis, 2012a; Frew, 2012). While sites attempt to enable visitors to connect with their past and build identity, visitor experiences are often personal and emotive (Cheal & Griffiths, 2013) and require a balance to be achieved between the imaginary and the real (Chronis, 2012a). In researching dark tourism sites, Podoshen and Hunt (2011;1132) question the value of using visual and physical evidence in “maintaining identity and facilitating remembrance”, while Chan (2011) and Catalani and Ackroyd (2012) expound the use of alternative forms of interpretation, such as soundscape, to explore the intangible aspects of inheritance and objects.

This section considered articles published in relation to the management of the resource that forms the basis of the visitor attraction experience. Sustainability was viewed in relation to articles focussing on the specifics of environmental sustainability, followed with more general sustainable management practices and then, finally, consideration of articles relating to conservation strategies adopted to enhance visitors awareness of conservation messages. Achieving designations can be seen to be used to improve resource management, with several articles covering inscription processes and the impacts of designations. The final section considered interpretation articles and the various practices to manage the authenticity of the presentation of the resource and construction of the VA identity from a resource perspective. This is a theme that occurs in several papers, where the challenges in meeting the visitor desire for authenticity needs to be balanced with their desire for innovative experiences. For example, where site managers and

curators view visitor contact with objects as being the authentic aspect of the visit, while the visitors seek more immersive and varied experiences that might be considered to detract from the authenticity.

3.3 Product Management – product development, financial and marketing

3.3.1 Product development

- Development - key themes emerging from the literature relate to the need for VAs to adapt and develop their products to respond to changing consumer demands, whilst remaining focussed and in balance with their original and primary purposes. This is particularly the case for religious sites, museums and dark tourism sites, where conflicts can arise between a growing reliance on tourism, the need to accommodate a broad range of stakeholders and consideration of sustainable management of fragile resources (Johanson & Olsen, 2010; Munanura et al., 2013; Tlili, 2014). Challenges arise from the nature of the resource, for example, Knight (2010) regarding wild monkey parks and the change of focus from wildlife study to tourism venue, and their suitability for conversion or adaptation. Also challenges arising from the desire to develop cultural and economic capital and the impacts that may have on host communities (Wray et al., 2010; Ramshaw, 2011). That said, opportunities arise for VA development to make important contributions to help strengthen cooperation and achieve social goals in places of contested heritage such as borders (Gelbman & Timothy, 2010). In a practical sense, VA experiences are difficult to test prior to investment. Choi et al. (2010) demonstrate how academic research can contribute to business practice in their study of cultural heritage sites. Quality visitor surveys should contribute to the developments on site (Hughes et al., 2013; McIntyre, 2009) as design implications may surprise managers and improve overall satisfaction if adhered to. As Calver and Page (2013) state, product development is not mutually exclusive and it is possible to balance entertainment and conservation. Postma (2014) recommends the use of scenario planning to allow VA managers to not only react to current issues, but rather to anticipate future uncertainties.
- Diversification of product offerings has been seen as a management tool to increase revenue streams, maintain competitiveness and encourage repeat and loyal visitors. While there can be some reluctance to radical diversification on the grounds of compromising authenticity (Domenico & Miller, 2012; Alonso et al., 2010) or conflicts between the move to generate profit in not for profit sites (Brown, 2013) there is some recognition of the view that it may be inevitable and manageable (Marr, 2011; Whitfield, 2009). Shuo et al. (2009) state that even devout religious visitors need recreational activities, and that religious sites are like other tourist destinations in being multiple product places.

Likewise Camarero et al. (2014) in their research on innovation versus custodial approaches in European museums that established that the link between visitor orientation and performance innovation has a positive impact on revenue and economic performance, while custodial is negative. Part of the challenge lies in communication of the product innovations to local communities to encourage engagement (Coghlan & Castley, 2013; Leask et al., 2013). Several articles consider the potential and actual difficulties in achieving a balance between product diversification, resource conservation and authentic visitor experiences.

3.3.2 *Financial*

- Revenue management – identified as a possible management tool for managers to tackle the commercial imperative, several articles discuss the suitability of revenue management within the VA sector (Leask et al., 2013b; Heo & Lee, 2009; Park et al., 2010). The advantages of using potentially increased revenue to support conservation work and maintain the quality of the site (Park et al., 2010; Santhakumar, 2009) are countered by arguments that different pricing structures can mean that those willing to pay get access to resource features while it means exclusion for others (Schwarz et al., 2012; Ahebwa et al., 2012) and that this undermines other policies of social integration and engagement. Potential solutions to overcome this with regards to inclusion of local communities could potentially involve dual pricing systems for international/national/local visitors (Sharifi-Tehrani et al., 2013) or the introduction of government policies to enable free access to heritage sites (Hui & Ryan, 2012), where they also found that the spend in some consumer groups generated a surplus beyond what would have been the entry fee.
- Spend and willingness to pay – several articles explored the degree of willingness to pay fees to access natural heritage, with Weaver (2102b) finding that visitors to national parks are willing to pay fees to support park management but expect higher standards of management in exchange for their cash. Looking into the individual responses to user fees rather than relationships between fees and income, several studies (Chung et al., 2011; Steckenreuter & Walk, 2013) found that while also willing to participate in broader unconventional participation and higher engagement, the visitors want detailed information and clear explanation of expenditure use and communication of the benefits for the site in order to encourage engagement. Encouraging voluntary donations has also increased for both visitors and non-visitors (via direct Donate Now webpages links), with the potential for this to be a significant revenue generator within the not for profit sector seeking to overcome government funding cuts (Apostolakis & Jaffry, 2013). Poria, Ivanivc and Webster (2014) highlight the importance of the individuals' perception of a

heritage site when discussing their willingness to donate to heritage restoration. Having to pay an entry fee for access to religious sites is contentious with neither visitors nor congregation found to be in support (Griffiths, 2011; Khodaverdizadeh et al., 2009) despite recognition of the potential revenue. Given the growing importance of the need to generate increased revenue, few articles consider funding, visitor spend or product diversification such as retail or catering, perhaps due to reluctance on the part of VAs to disclose commercial information.

3.3.3 Marketing

- Marketing activity –few articles focussed on the mechanics of marketing activity, with the exception of the role of electronic sources and the importance of their credibility in contributing to destination satisfaction. This formed part of several articles with most concluding that there is an immediate need for investment and improvement of the accuracy of the site contents in order to support effective and authentic site management (Chung et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2010; Hede & Thyne, 2010; Zhong et al., 2013). Many articles concluded with the view that marketing activity was required to achieve the desired management outcomes of attracting more visitors, specific targeting of visitor segments (Leask et al., 2013) or developing brand awareness (Dewar et al., 2012). Heritage VAs attracted research attention with Fullerton et al. (2010), Donohoe (2012) and Chhabra (2009) discussing the need to integrate management and marketing strategies in order to achieve sustainable heritage VA management. Particular reference was given to the use of demarketing as a proactive management tool, as opposed to reactive management in response to potentially damaging high visitor volume. Heritage VAs have the advantage that they are often very individual in nature, offering opportunities for managers to encourage potential visitors to build not only images of the site but also of distinct personalities that have been shown to assist in building long term relationships between visitors and sites (Chen & Phou, 2013).
- Image – developing brand awareness and brand image was considered to be a positive factor in the sustainable management of VAs, with subsequent links to encouraging visitors to form emotional relationships with destinations to enhance long lasting support and referral to other parties (Chen & Phou, 2013). The role of naming the site has also been shown to be significant in both the protection and promotion of sites by offering markers to link tourists to a site and enable image formation (Clark, 2009; Wilson et al., 2011). While brand development is mostly seen as positive in differentiating between VAs and destinations, the dangers of co-branding with weaker partners is discussed by Cornelis (2010b). Research on the effectiveness and value of World Heritage status formed the basis of several articles (Dewar et al., 2012; Palau-Saumell

et al., 2012; Ryan & Silvanto, 2010), where its value was indeterminate and required integration of marketing plans within the broader site management and holistic visitor experience to achieve positive gains in brand equity. WH listing was found to have no significant effect on promoting tourism other than short term impact (Huang et al., 2012), though a cumulative effect was found where there were multiple WH sites within one country resulting in positive impacts on visitors' willingness to revisit (Poria et al., 2011).

The articles listed in this key area were lower in volume than those in previous key areas, despite the increasing profile of these activities within the sustainable future of VAs. Practitioners seek solutions to the need to diversify their product offerings in order to attract greater visitor numbers, broader visitor profiles or generate a higher spend, but little academic research appears to be being published in these themes and sub-themes. Perhaps this is an indication of the constraints and lack of the academic freedom mentioned by Moscardo (2010), meaning that more practical aspects of VA management are overlooked in favour of more 'academic' topics? In addition academic researchers can find it difficult to engage VAs in management research that requires disclosure of potentially commercial data, thus limiting participation.

3.4 Site Management – stakeholder management, staff, transport, research and management practice, technology, role within destinations, impacts

3.4.1 Stakeholder management

As a result of the complex nature of managing VAs many articles consider stakeholder management mainly in terms of partnership, accommodating various stakeholder perceptions and managing community participation. The ongoing issue of how to balance potentially conflicting tourism activities and resource management features significantly in many articles (Hughes & Carlsen, 2010; McIntyre, 2009), though Calver and Page (2013) clearly state that these do not need to be an exclusive alternative. Camarero et al. (2014) argue that the adoption of a consumer orientation, and use of innovative approaches to heritage management, would make heritage more accessible to visitors in the future.

- Community participation – this was a particular focus of several articles, for example Garrod et al. (2012) investigating the involvement of residents in the management of VAs, which basically found that managers say they are willing to engage and involve stakeholders in management, but only really provide information rather than two-way interaction or substantial involvement. Farrelly (2011) investigated the difficulties in introducing democratic decision-making systems in community-based ecotourism businesses in Fiji, determining that the empowerment of local community was part of a process rather than an end

outcome. Agde-Davies (2010) considered the manner in which communities are formed and their importance of how this influences perceptions and archaeological research. Generally observed as an essential characteristic of sustainable tourism, community participation often struggles to engage communities, for example Wang et al. (2011) observed low levels of participation in their study of minority community participation. However, Banerjee (2012) established that the use of innovative approaches to involve local communities can bring significant positive change, where the use of low-impact activities can encourage high participation levels from local communities and build support for conservation practices.

- Conflict – articles raise the difficulties in managing VAs where the often contradictory needs of the various stakeholders need to be balanced in order to provide authentic, meaningful and safe experiences for visitors (see Cohen-Hattab (2010) and Cohen (2010) regarding Jerusalem and the Holocaust Museum respectively; and King and Flynn (2012) regarding Constitution Hill, South Africa). Difficulties exist in achieving a balance of tensions that arise from the testimonies, historical record and perspectives of those associated with the site. For example Beaumont's (2009) paper on the Australian Government's opposition to the demolition of the Changi Prison in Singapore, on the basis of WW2 prisoner of war associations. Zhang et al. (2014) used content analysis to investigate the role of media in the resolutions of conflict at World Heritage Sites in China, where antiquated management structures and the inefficient use of legislation caused conflict between heritage and tourism.
- Partnership – many of these articles were based in designated national parks or World Heritage Sites where the issues of accommodating various stakeholder needs are observed. For example, Irimias (2014) regarding the conservation of Great War heritage in Italy, where effort has been invested in heritage and conservation development but international tourist needs are neglected leading to a lack of understanding of the area and theme beyond the local area. Likewise, Panzeri et al.'s (2013) paper on the neglected role of porters in achieving the primary partnership objective of improving management of the Himalayan site to reduce poverty and enhance biodiversity conservation. Public-private partnerships, often lauded as the way to future success, are explored in a range of articles, see Wilson et al. (2009) and Eagles et al. (2013) investigating the difficulties in achieving commercial outcomes and the need for managers to recognise tourism operators as more than simply temporary lease relationships but long-term, valued partners.

3.4.2 Staff

- A gap in research in relation to staff and management personnel exists. Despite their key role in development and delivery of the experience it is either rarely

investigated or rarely published. Where it is, it relates mostly to volunteers and their motivation to engage, with Smith and Holmes (2009) identifying the dominant rationales for VAs involving volunteers include the enhancement of community involvement and the personal qualities and motivations of the volunteers. At an individual site level Van Dijk et al. (2011) advocate a focus on managing the perceptions of emotional authenticity to enhance visitor outcomes, while Imon et al. (2011) advocate the establishment of training programmes at national and regional levels, with training being delivered in the local language as a key feature, to enable the enhanced visitor experience. A study of US state parks (Siderelis et al., 2012) found that investment in facilities was unlikely to influence park utilisation, whereas future investment in staff and qualified labour was key to increasing use.

3.4.3 Transport and accessibility

- Often overlooked, a key aspect of the visitor experience is the journey to and from a site and the associated movement patterns of visitors around a VA. The very nature of many natural and built heritage sites is their rural or less-accessible location, with managers attempting to encourage visitors to use public transport to access and move around sites to reduce their environmental impact and safety (Lawson et al., 2011; Lin, 2010; Rantala & Valkonen, 2011; Zhang et al., 2009b). Smallwood et al. (2012) comment on the high dependence of visitors on road traffic networks for both access to and within the site and call for increased research on 'within destination' visitors' patterns to enable more efficient use of limited resources. Similarly, Pettebone et al. (2011) investigated visitor travel mode choices and found that, while poorly planned services such as shuttle buses that aim to reduce congestion and protect resources can have unintended consequences and constrain visitor experiences, visitors were willing to use alternatives, particularly in the younger age groups. Accessibility in terms of both physical and intellectual aspects was researched in few instances, though Rix and Lowe (2010) and Jamal and Kadir (2014) evaluate VA approaches to improving the accessibility, without compromising authentic experiences for visitors with learning and physical disabilities respectively. Poria et al. (2009) found that the most significant obstacles to accessibility were the non-physical elements, such as staff attitude and interactions with other visitors.

3.4.4 Research and management practice

- Researchers increasingly seek to understand and communicate the significant successful management practices used to forecast and contribute to effective business practice (Connell et al., 2014; Leask, 2010; Yocco, 2009). Various methods have been adopted to overcome the stated lack of research in this sector and to tackle challenging issues such as demonstrating value for products and services offered in exchange for ongoing public funding support. While Hughes and Carlsen (2010) argue that there is a need to keep cultural

heritage management within the public sector, due to the high capital costs and limited revenue potential, Choi et al. (2010) suggest that the use of choice-modelling as a valuation method would be appropriate to assist managers in identifying the products not only with the most economic value but also the broader educational and societal impacts within the destination. Difficulties in the use of benchmarking to research VAs have been observed due to the individual nature of sites, though Prebensen (2014) and Taplin (2012a) both identify the opportunities afforded by the use of importance performance analysis to identify the attributes that contribute to visitor satisfaction and the gaps between performance and importance, in order to provide superior service to that offered by competitors, not just comparable service.

3.4.5 Technology

- Technology in the form of mobile computing has the capacity for a 'profound effect on tourism and location-based entertainment' (Brown et al., 2013: 434) and as an integral part of visitors accessing curated spaces (Chittenden, 2010). Researchers demonstrate clear links to opportunities for improved management practice via utilisation of technology to enhance the visitor experience via interpretation (see Kang & Gretzel (2012) on the use of podcasts to enhance mindfulness); visitor management (see Tsai & Chung (2012) on the use of personalised route recommendation systems in theme parks); and visitor data collection (see Wolf et al.'s (2013) comparison of types of media (GPS/GIS/traditional) to track visitors in natural areas, that established that GPS tracking was the most effective. While Yoon (2012) and Perdue (2012) research found visitor learning and experience was enhanced by the use of video technology and ICT, Makkonen and Hokkanen (2013) and Carreras and Rius (2011) found limited benefits to visitor learning and greater need to integrate the technology into the overall visitor experience including settings, usability and site image. So while authors such as Calver and Page (2013) state a need for more themed interactive exhibitions, this needs to be integrated in more dynamic visitor experiences overall, including more people orientated, conversation-based interpretation alongside the technology. As visitors' willingness to share information and engage personally online is greater, opportunities for the use of technology to engage and enhance visitors via search engines, social media and visitor monitoring increase. Greater research and communication of relevant findings would be welcomed by researchers in the VA field, given that many ICT specialist researchers tend to publish via conference proceedings to increase the immediacy of their work being communicated.

3.4.6 Role within destinations

- Tourism development is often the prominent driver that determines the priorities of the government interventions for VA development and heritage protection within destination settings (Wang & Bramwell, 2012). Political dimensions are

thus the focus of several articles that explore the role of politics and government influences on VA development, mainly to explore the issues surrounding capital investment (Siderelis et al., 2012), VAs as a catalyst for development (Iorio & Wall, 2011) and broader social inclusion (Waterton, 2009). Findings suggest that heritage is often used as a tool for not only touristic experiences but to encourage civic engagement, as Waterton (2009) found in her review of New Labour policy initiatives. Destinations can cluster and use VAs to develop longer length of stays and to attract different audiences, for example investment in cultural centres in the Middle East and investment in natural VAs in Singapore (Henderson, 2010; Weidenfeld et al., 2010). Research has found that if visitors form an emotional attachment to a destination then they are likely to take more satisfaction from the experience (Chen & Phou, 2013; Veasna et al., 2013), likewise engaging with local residents has been seen to contribute positively to developing pride and greater involvement in destinations. Equally, individual sites can impact significantly on a destination as a whole, Ha and Grunwall (2011) found the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad had helped to diversify the regions' tourism offering and revitalized its tourism industry. World Heritage and other designations are often linked to political ambitions, particularly in less developed countries seeking to raise their profile and attract international visitors, though political instability and the lack of funds can discourage nominations (Zhang et al., 2014; Ryan et al., 2011). However, Ryan and Silvanto (2010) found that it was the greater degree of democracy (not political stability) that encouraged the promotion of WHS. King and Flynn (2012); Nicholas and Thapa (2013) and Piccolo et al. (2012) demonstrate that such designations do not always deliver on the ambitions due to the difficulties of integrating systems and other tensions that focus attention on solving issues rather than taking advantage of opportunities.

3.4.7 Impacts

While many articles already discussed have considered impacts, the following articles directly focus on the specific impacts of VAs – economic, community and visitor – as a part of the management of the site.

- Economic benefits are often the driving force behind the development and ongoing support for VAs, for maintenance of the site itself, community benefits such as job creation and enhancements for the wider destination area. Challenges exist in keeping the benefits within local areas and communities and in gaining continued support for VAs in declining public funding environments and conflicting policy goals (Mayer, 2014; Mayer et al., 2010; Pascoe et al., 2014). Czajkowski et al. (2014) and Pascoe et al. (2014) discuss these aspects in relation to natural sites, often considered not to generate as much economic benefit as built sites, though they each found that the stork village and recreational fishing activities brought in significantly more economic

benefits than anticipated. However, Mayer et al. (2010) did find the expenditure of visitors to natural sites to be considerably lower than national tourist averages and argue that economic benefits could be enhanced through regional policy with a focus on investment, also proposed by Sievanen et al. (2011) and Choi et al. (2010) on an individual site basis via the use of choice modelling techniques to establish the most profitable avenues.

- Local communities are often those who experience the impact of VA developments and management most keenly (Garrod et al., 2013; Nyaupane, 2009) and not always positively. Jimura (2011) and Xu and Dai (2012) observed positive impacts on local communities as a result of WH designation, while Nyaupane (2009) observed more negative impacts at the religious site of Lumbini, Nepal. Reimann et al. (2011) investigated the impacts of visitors to national parks in Estonia and found that residents were broadly tolerant of visitors and that while there were potentially negative impacts such as noise disturbance, their quality of life was improved by their presence. The situation is more complex where a 'living' religious site is also expected to function as a preserved heritage site, as is the case in Wutai Shan, China (Shepherd et al., 2012). UNESCO's vision to open the site as an open air museum may increase the existing conflict between heritage preservation and tourism development, whilst specifically raising further issues of conflicts with religious and local community practices.
- Visitors are considered in the majority of the articles contained within this article, though a small number of articles deal specifically with the impact of visitors at individual sites. Collins-Kreiner et al. (2013) investigated the impact of visitors on birds and established a cyclical integration where the increase in birds increased visitors, which in turn led to a decrease in birds. The article proposes setting 'limits of acceptable change' rather than more traditional carrying capacities (Sebela & Turk, 2014). Fernandez et al. (2009) and Choo, Todd & Li (2011) focussed on zoos and how exhibit design and visitor education can increase positive impacts of animal-visitor interactions alongside animal welfare and conservation policies.

Articles relating to Site Management covered a broad range of topics that often overlapped with other key sub-themes. Few related specifically to impact studies, although this is a key area for practitioner reports and statements. One theme that was well documented was stakeholder management, perhaps an indication of the complexity of management structures within many VA contexts. As stated by Nyaupane (2009: 157) "differences in values, interests, expectations and priorities among stakeholders, a major source of dissonance, may create conflict in heritage and can be a challenge for its preservation and management". A key feature of many of the articles on impacts relates to the difficulties in balancing these stakeholder

needs and in having effective conservation policies in place, with adequate collaboration and communication mechanisms to enable them to be effective.

The significance of the role of VAs within destinations and associated marketing activity is not well documented and offers the potential for valuable research for both academics and practitioners. The sector suffers from a lack of recognition at destination level, even though VAs are often one of the key motivators for visits. Further research into their role could provide support and information for future strategic policymakers at destination level, as opposed to more limited site specific research.

4 Future research agenda

This section considers the opportunities for cutting edge research that exist in areas that have not, as yet, received much attention, although they have been identified by authors as being of relevance. The challenge in developing and structuring this agenda is that any potential ranking or prioritisation depends significantly upon the perspective and purpose of the researcher or funder commissioning the research. As previously discussed, while VA managers and decision-makers may seek further research on management practices and current market conditions, the researcher may not be able to respond within the relevant timeframe or may be unable to garner funding to support such applied research. Likewise, the availability of funding routes may dictate the format and nature of research that may not adequately engage the practitioner audience or be considered to compromise commercial sensitivities. However, the discussion prior to this section clearly shows that there are extensive opportunities for academic and industry to engage and demonstrate their value and relevance via a range of knowledge exchange activities. Therefore, the following section is not prioritised but instead uses the themes from Table 3 to offer some structure to this discussion, in addition to a section on future approaches and methods. It should be noted that some potential routes for research overlap across the areas, for example, the use of technology and visitor experience, so while they are considered in accordance with the themes and sub-themes in Table 3, they have broader relevance.

4.1 Visitor management

If we accept that the provision of authentic experiences is key to the successful future of VAs then there is a clear need for research to move from the descriptive and beyond the explanatory. This would enhance the development of relevant theories and encourage the development of rigorous methodologies for measurement of key aspects that contribute to the development of the visitor experience. While there have been clear changes in the type and approach to visitor attraction research in recent years, there is still a clear need for a more conceptual and theoretical framework to be adopted, particularly if the experience

is to be the key aspect for differentiation and effective management of visitors, employees and resources. For example, the use of co-creation theory in the development of experiences has the potential to balance entertainment and conservation at heritage attractions (Calver & Page, 2013). However, research is needed into how service encounters can improve conductivity from the intellectual core to the visitor imagination within new evolving media and mobile technology context (Pan, 2015). Opportunities exist in the development of the criteria for measuring quality to develop the visitor experience, as opposed to the facility based approach often adopted, including the role of employees in the delivery of the experience. The increasing relevance and importance of social media for engaging visitors and sharing tourism experiences, and associated issues for the provision of technology as part of the visitor experience require research to explore and inform the challenges with, for example, authenticity in immersive interpretation environments.

There is limited research being conducted on the growing cultural diversity of visitors within a VA setting. Previous research tends to focus on specific generational or market segments (Edelheim, 2015), which, while relevant, often doesn't explore the nuances in, for example, varying visitor needs. Yankholmes and McKercher's (2015) research in Ghana demonstrated the value of the use of personal connections and visitor profiling to distinguish between visitor types and how the visitor experience could then be developed accordingly. Further research on the changing visitor needs created by changing social environments, such as 'helicopter parenting', are discussed by Schanzel and Yeoman (2015), who identify children as increasingly sophisticated consumers and future family markets requiring adaptations in the visitor experience and management. Likewise, Vong (2013), Jarvis, Stoeckl and Liu (2016) and others highlight the need for future research into the levels of engagement and development of the experience for distinct visitor groups - casual and incidental tourists and the relatively small numbers of purposeful cultural tourists. One type of potential visitor market receiving little attention is VFR, though their advantage is that they still draw visitors to destinations in low economic times and prompt local resident visits to VAs too (Backer & King, 2015).

Further consideration of the implications for VAs of broader challenges facing society; social impacts and quality of life (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012); contradictory needs of visitors due to religion, influence of the state or gender (Cohen-Hattab, 2010); balancing local community discourses within tourism narratives (Conway, 2014); choice overload (Park & Jang, 2013) and future demographic changes (Yeoman, 2012) such as ageing populations, future ageless societies and changes in work and retirement patterns, are suggested as relevant future topics of research. Recognition of the rapidly changing audiences, visitor needs and increasing cultural diversity needs to occur both in research and management practice.

4.2 Resource management

The development of an increasingly diverse variety of perspectives to provide a rounded view of VA management would assist in achieving long term sustainability for VAs. For example, engaging local residents as visitors (Connell et al., 2014); members and enhancing their loyalty and engagement; residents and volunteers as employees and managers (Garrod et al., 2013); and consideration of the perspective of the non-visitor as potential new audiences (Sheng & Chen, 2012) could all contribute to the long term viability of audiences. Provision for some individual markets is currently under-researched due to ethical restrictions e.g. children (Sutcliffe & Kim, 2014); families (Sanford, 2010); under-represented groups in heritage conflict situations (Poria & Ashworth, 2009; Zhang, Fyall & Zheng, 2014); and access to competitor information (Taplin, 2013). Yet these are all aspects where research could inform practice that could enhance the range of potential visitors and better informed business practices.

Research could be conducted into specific groups that might offer potential development opportunities, such as Cavagnaro and Staffieri's (2015) study of independent youth travellers that identified particular interest in sustainability by women, potentially worth investigation in terms of development of special packages linking meaning, escapism and relaxation. Taheri et al. (2014) specifically call for more research on visitors' object-based authenticity across cultures, engagement and loyalty.

Sustainability is predicted to become a major area of interest to potential audiences, particularly in destinations with scarce resources, with Yeoman (2012) predicting a scenario that all VAs will be indoor experiences by 2050 due to increasing temperatures. An extreme suggestion but perhaps with implications for those destinations, such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, currently investing heavily in the development of resource-intensive VA development and associated leisure activities.

While interpretation is covered in terms of the increased use of technology and challenges with maintaining authenticity, there is still little work conducted on the management of the interpretative process and use of this to meet visitor needs, as determined by their motivations and expectations, with future research that takes account of the rapidly changing mobile technology and social media context (Calver & Page, 2013).

4.3 Product management

Connell and Page (2014), Hughes and Carlsen (2013) and Leask (2010) all highlight the importance of visitor numbers and the need for a diversified portfolio that seeks to meet VA operational objectives, specifically maximising revenue.

They suggest a variety of research directions to inform VA managers and decision-makers, for example, Connell and Page (2014) suggest the use of a series of propositions to establish the relevance of particular product developments, for example, the use of private events to tackle seasonality.

The implications of the growing importance of the commercial imperative and associated consequences for authenticity, management practice and future product development offer a range of future research routes. Likewise, the development of a better understanding from the specific discipline of marketing, with the purpose of improving managerial decision-making and enhancing the match between products/services and potential consumers to achieve the increasingly commercial requirements of VAs, offers research opportunities. Specifically there appears to be a gap in the knowledge relating to the use of social media for marketing and visitor engagement purposes.

Yeoman et al. (2015) and Postma (2015) discuss how the commoditisation of communities and destinations drives an increased search for authentic visitor experiences, where visitors seek escape from urban environments, and propose the use of scenario planning to develop narratives and stories to inform future visitor experiences.

4.4 Site management

While individual site research is valuable in isolation, a more holistic destination approach might be worthwhile and to allow for highly targeted experiences to be developed, with the principal aim of better understanding the broader socio-political purpose of heritage and VAs. That said, there is a need to understand the individual nature of VAs and their individual contribution within a destination – each VA has a set of individual constructs and circumstances that require individual management, which may in turn rather justify a case study approach.

Stakeholder management plays a crucial role in the future of VAs, with authors such as Uysal, Sirgy, Woo and Kim (2016) and Deery et al. (2012) calling for research into the holistic development of destinations for host community, employees and visitors' quality of life benefit. Further research into the investigation of the relationships between tourism impact and community residents, the importance of social impacts and the development of tools to measure these are all avenues for future work (Jarvis, Stoeckl & Liu, 2016; Deery et al., 2012), with a call that there is a layered approach to the research involving ethnography and phenomenology to allow for consideration of this complex area.

There is an observed lack of research on management practice, as seen in the low volume of publications in this area. As Pearce and Butler (2010) state, academics are well placed to respond and research the changing business environments and

to achieve a range of outcomes of value to practitioners and academics alike. The existing close relationships between the two groups allow for exploration and consolidation of research that can contribute to future issues for VAs and to contribute effectively to research and society at large. Some authors suggest that future research should be extended and conducted in other countries to investigate the extent to which their findings can be generalised (Connell et al. 2014; Taheri et al., 2014) and there are clear instances where research approaches could be adapted and contribute to a far greater understanding of specific and common management practice issues facing VA managers internationally (Postma, 2014), for example in the use of technology to enhance site management practice.

Marrocu and Paci (2013) use evidence from spatial interaction models for natural, cultural and recreational attractions, stating that destinations are unique and versatile places to meet differentiated visitors' preferences and increase appeal by increasing the number of cultural and recreational attractions. However, if recognition of the value and contribution of the VA sector is to be achieved then managers, planners and destination decision-makers need robust, reliable and comparable market intelligence data to inform the process and to use in support of policy decisions. Ideally longitudinal research would track and establish trends impacts over time, as opposed to snapshot research investigations.

4.5 Approaches and methods

Butler (2015:16) comments that tourism research is an ongoing process with "varying emphases and foci at different times". It could be said that this is also true of VA research, where researchers have recently focussed on specific aspects such as World Heritage sites and stakeholder engagement research. However, overall progress can be seen in the volume of research in the VA sector, the increased range of methods used to research phenomena, and in the quality of the research outputs, as observed by their increasing prominence in high quality tourism and related discipline journals. In terms of theoretical development in VA research there is some evidence of maturation and conceptual development. If theory is seen as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions and propositions that seek to present a systematic view of a phenomena or series of phenomenon, then there are key contributions made to this in articles such as Taheri et al. (2014), Weidenfeld and Leask (2013) and Connell et al. (2014) amongst many others. These articles explore conceptual relationships between related management aspects and influences, to then develop models and propositions for application within a variety of VA settings. Admittedly these may be in the form of theory that requires further testing to explore their generalisability, but if they help to explain and predict ways to manage realities that present themselves at VAs, then this ultimately offers a broader range of approaches that could be adopted for further study or management adoption. In 1987 Lew suggested that consistency in the general categorisation of VAs would be beneficial and it can be seen in recent

literature that there is commonality in 'language' used in VA research, with greater understanding of research commonalities and exploration of relationships between disciplines and fields of study. While authors do have contested views, this is perhaps another sign of growing maturity in this area of study.

Sharpley (2014) and Puhakka et al. (2014) both call for multi-dimensional approaches and research teams to investigate the multiple, and often individual, aspects of VA management and to reflect diverse interests and methodological approaches. The use of new research methods may be appropriate for research in specific areas, see Tchetchik et al. (2009) and Orellana (2012) regarding the use of GPS to understand visitor consumption in natural VAs, while traditional methods such as paper-based mailback surveys were still found to be good data sources (Rookey, 2014). Richards and Munster (2010) argue for the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods to enable further complementarity in cultural heritage research, so researchers can move beyond trying to define aspects and instead to focus on how cultural heritage research can meet the needs of researchers and practitioners.

In common with other sectors of tourism research such as host/residents' perceptions (Sharpley, 2014), progress in the development of valuable research is certainly present, whilst there needs to be acknowledgement that certain limitations exist and the field still offers a broad range of opportunities for innovative research projects. Laws and Scott (2015:48) suggest that further tourism research should focus attention on the core aspects of tourism that relate to the "consumer's pursuit of difference in their travel" with the study of VAs offering extensive opportunities to offer insights into the contribution that they can make to differentiating between destinations and enhancing visitors' associations and engagement with their location.

Moscardo (2010) observes that tourism researchers operate in academic environments that impose certain performance and quality measures that might impact on their freedom of choice for research and their ethical approaches, meaning that some aspects of research remain under-researched. However, Pearce and Butler (2010) and Verbeke and McKercher (2010) observe that academics have such broad remits, contemporary outlooks and multi-national networks that they can examine a range of complex issues to develop definitive sets of knowledge and to engage and contribute to these wider debates.

5 Conclusion

The value of this article is in the investigation and critical review of recent research in VA management leading to the proposed future research agenda for the sector. The period from 2009-2014 saw a significant number of journal publications in relation to VA management and these have contributed to building a greater academic

understanding of VA management, although the dominant local context and case study nature of many studies means that the outcomes are often only relevant to their own individual context. The very individuality of the VAs separates them from each other and almost prevents conceptual development. This is, however, perhaps not a negative point, given that the whole nature of the VA sector, and particularly the heritage sector, is based on the very individual and, at times, unique nature of the resource feature. In addition, the significant growth of more quantitative studies and statistical analysis methods adopted should contribute to the development of more robust methodologies to complement the qualitative work.

While many of the critical gaps in knowledge that were previously identified (Leask, 2010) have been addressed (such as the value of benchmarking, visitor motivations and visitor perspectives), there continue to exist perspectives and viewpoints that would be a value in the effective management of VAs, for example, the non-visitor, repeat visitors and under-18s.

A direct relationship between research and business practice is required to enhance the currency and value of research outcomes and the speed of the response to changing environments, specifically in areas such as technology and social media. Academics are well placed to lead and develop this relationship in order to make viable and valuable contributions through the combination of practice and theory.

This is an emerging area of study, with increasing numbers of researchers investigating in the area, so further empirical work to evaluate the nature and role of visitor attractions and the implications for the destination is required to meet growing consumer demands and changing operating environments. Growing opportunities for inter and multi-disciplinary work might enhance the research base of the VA context and enable development of a greater conceptual awareness. The 'experience' has been seen to be central to the future development of the VA, with implications that VA managers and decision-makers need to meet growing visitor demands and to have a greater awareness of visitor motivations and satisfaction. This therefore requires researchers to have a greater conceptual and theoretical focus, based on empirical work, in order to evaluate the role that VAs play within the individual site and broader destination environment.

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