

Article

# THE NATURE OF BRITISH MEDIA REPORTING OF HEDONISTIC TOURISM

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## Abstract

*This study examines the nature and extent of British media reporting of hedonistic tourism via a study of the resort of Faliraki, Rhodes. The nature of the tourism industry is discussed as well as image formation and its importance to a tourism destination. The role of the media in forming an image is considered and a content analysis of news articles from five British media sources is undertaken, which identified several reporting themes. The occurrence of keywords in the articles was also analysed. Results show how reports are amplified through the use of particular words, but show little difference between the reporting styles of the newspapers sampled. The importance of media in amplifying bad publicity resulting in subsequent reductions in tourism demand is discussed.*

## Keywords

tourism; media; crime; hedonism

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## Introduction

The tourism industry is said to be unique because of the nature of the product on offer (Smith, 1995). There are numerous factors that affect the decision-making process of buying a holiday, including



price, location and seasonality. In addition, tourists' previous experiences of destinations, the reputation of, or previous involvement with, travel companies, safety and fashion are also important elements (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999).

The decision to purchase a holiday is often emotionally significant. A large amount of money is spent and holidays may be a highlight of the year with "strong motivation for successful and satisfactory outcomes on the part of the client" (Ryan, 1999, p 369). Such factors may mean that a considerable amount of time is spent deciding which destination is selected before a final decision is made. The industry is also unique as tourism products cannot be "seen, touched, packaged and carried home" (Vellas and Bécherel, 1999, p 269). Consumers rely on travel brochures, friends and relations, and the media for information on possible destinations (Brayshaw, 1995). Discussions relating to holiday experiences with friends, relatives and colleagues "may have great bearing on future destination decisions, especially if the experiences were negative" (Page *et al*, 2001, p 250).

Research suggests that destination image is an "important influence in the selection of vacation destinations" (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999, p 868) and it "differentiates tourist destinations from each other" (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997, p 11). Although it is clearly important for destinations to create the right image, this can be problematic given that images are formed from a variety of components, and "different types of tourist will feel differently about the same destination" (Page *et al*, 2001, p 251). Gunn (1988, p 23) believes that images can "be sharp or vague, factual or whimsical, but in all cases they are indicative of likes and dislikes... [and] are always highly personal". Moreover, "image will influence a tourist in the process of choosing a stay, the subsequent evaluation of that stay and in his or her future intentions" (Bigné *et al*, 2001, p 607).

The term "tourist destination image" is difficult to define because it is used in numerous contexts: "those pertaining to the destination, images projected by tourism promoters, the publicly held or "stereotype" image of destinations, and destination images held by individuals" (Jenkins, 1999, p 1). A commonly used definition for tourist destination image is "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Crompton, 1979, p 18). Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) believe it is the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices and emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or place, whereas Bigné *et al* (2001) believe destination image is the result of the subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist.

The study of destination image is fairly recent, although it has gained popularity in tourism research (Pike, 2002). Glaesser (2003, p 26) suggests that "it is possible to distinguish four fundamentally significant types of image: product group image, brand image, company image and country, region or town

image". Such investigations have wide applications from the development of strategic image management plans and destination image improvement marketing programmes, to how image influences tourist behaviour. It is important to understand how image is formed as tourists' opinions of a destination can influence the success and viability of that location in terms of tourism demand (Brayshaw, 1995). Image, then, is vitally important in the decision-making process (Bigné *et al*, 2001).

There are, perhaps, two elements involved in image formation: perceptual/cognitive components, that is, knowledge or understanding of an object, and affective components, that is feelings about an object (Cavlek, 2002). Echtner and Ritchie (1993, p 3) believe "destination image should be envisaged as having two main components: those that are attribute-based and those that are holistic". However, one of the first authors to examine the image formation process was Gunn (1972), who believed it was possible to distinguish between two levels: organic and induced images. The first level – organic images – is "the result of readers' assimilation of material from newspapers, periodicals, and books" (Gunn, 1998, p 24). The mass media, including television and film, is responsible for the development of image and is also considered to be more influential than induced images as it is less biased (Brayshaw, 1995, p 8). Induced images are formed as a result of the promotion of destinations through advertising literature, magazine articles, guidebooks, television promotion and the overt promotion by travel businesses of images of tourist destinations (Gunn, 1998, p 11).

Another distinctive aspect of the tourism industry is its relationship with the media as it is "so strongly linked to advertising" (Brunt, 1997, p 5). As it is not possible to "test-drive" a holiday before it is purchased, information about destinations is sought from different forms of the media. When the media reports "outbreaks of disease, a swing in exchange rates, poor tour operators, poor accommodation, flight delays, acts of terrorism or a rise in tourism-related crime" (Brunt, 2001), it is easy to understand how tourists can be put off from visiting an area. Negative news reports of terrorism, violent events and crimes against tourists can result in the cancellation or postponement of their trips, or else tourists may find an alternative destination to travel (Bar-On, 1996). If negative news is repeated by the media, it can result in the destination gaining a negative image. This can then change the image of the destination in tourists' minds (Cavlek, 2002).

Traditionally the media "have highly publicised crimes against international tourists in a given destination" (Pizam *et al*, 1997, p 24), and there are several well-known examples of tourist destinations receiving negative press following serious incidents. Egypt (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998), Florida (Schiebler *et al*, 1996) and the Republic of South Africa (Pizam *et al*, 1997) are just a few examples where the reporting of crimes and incidents involving tourists resulted in a significant decline in tourism to these areas.

The tourism industry suffers greatly in times of crisis; indeed Leaf (1995, p 479) states “probably no other industry in the world can suffer more from crisis than tourism”. During these times the media often exacerbates the situation by “bombarding” viewers and readers with news as “people find negative reports far more interesting than positive” (Cavlek, 2002, p 483). Add to this the fact that tourists have such a wide choice of destinations to choose from, it is clear that there is no need to travel somewhere risky. Instead one destination can easily be substituted by a similar or even a completely different one elsewhere.

The power of the media and its effect on tourism can be seen in the case of Florida. Between 1992 and 1994 there were a series of violent crimes committed against tourists in the state. As a result of the negative press about tourism to Florida, the area suffered greatly. In 1993, bookings to the state fell by 9% and some tour operators reported a 50% decline in the number of British tourists buying holidays in the region. After two more murders in September 1993, the State of Florida commerce secretary reported that 25% of European packages had been cancelled (Brayshaw, 1995). There was only a small degree of risk to tourists visiting Florida; the actual threat had been greatly exaggerated by the press. It is interesting to note that other serious incidents were occurring in Europe at the same time, but the press coverage was minimal. Brayshaw (1995) believes one reason “Florida’s troubles had a greater news value” is due to the contrast of it being a “family paradise” and the violent incidents occurring as a result of a small number of criminals.

More recently, the tourist destination of Faliraki, Rhodes, gained notoriety and probable amplification within the British press as a location for hedonistic and “loutish” behaviour among tourists and for a number of crimes where British tourists were both the victims and the perpetrators. Following the traditions of previous research, the intention of this paper is to discover how a variety of incidents and issues associated with the tourism resort of Faliraki were reported and to consider the effect of these on the image of the destination. The paper will first provide some background on the destination itself and the nature of the incidents, before outlining the research methodology adopted and subsequent findings.

### **Faliraki and hedonism**

The Greek island of Rhodes is one of the Dodecanese Islands situated near the Turkish coastline in the Aegean Sea. It covers an area of 1,398 km<sup>2</sup> with 220 km of coastline. It has a resident population of approximately 100,000 and is home to many popular tourist resorts, including Rhodes Town, Lindos, Kolymia and Faliraki (Greek Islands Guide, 2003). The resort of Faliraki is located on the north-east part of Rhodes Island: 14 km away from Rhodes Town (see Figure 1). The resort gained notoriety in the summer of 2003 as a



Figure 1 Map of Rhodes Island (Greek Islands Guide, 2003).

result of the reporting of several incidents, including the murder of one tourist in a Faliraki night club. *A Guide to...Faliraki, Greece* (2004) describes the resort as “a large, lively resort with great beach life and plenty of amenities close at hand. Shops, bars, restaurants and nightlife abound, and there are also some good, traditional Greek tavernas”.

Swarbrooke and Horner (1999) describe hedonistic tourism as being “motivated by a desire for sensual pleasure” summarized by the four “S’s” – sea, sand, sun and sex. It is not a modern phenomenon and can actually be traced back to Roman times. In Victorian Britain the term “dirty weekend” was established as a result of Londoners visiting the resort of Brighton on the south coast with their partners, or somebody else’s partner “where they could behave in ways that were not acceptable in London” (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999, p 37).

Recently there has been a strong growth in “clubbing and party tourism” with “large numbers of young people from northern Europe taking vacations in Mediterranean destinations in the summer to party” (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2004, p 233). This type of tourism has added new elements to the traditional four “S’s”, including music and dance culture, the heavy consumption of alcohol and drugs, and daytime activities such as water sports. The growth in this form of tourism is seen as the result of several factors, including the growing independence of young people in northern European countries, the changing role of women (e.g. it is now more socially acceptable for so-called “ladettes” to drink and have casual sex), the growth and development of dance culture in Europe and the existence of specialist tour operators such as Club 18-30 (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2004). From May 2002 to the end of

2003, there were several incidents in Faliraki that received attention in the British media. Table 1 lists the principal events that formed the basis of subsequent analysis.

## Methods

The aim of this study was to assess the nature of the British news reporting of these incidents in Faliraki. Primary research was gathered from news articles from a combination of British daily newspapers, an online news service, and a travel and tourism website. The principal method of data analysis used was content analysis, essentially adopting a quantitative approach.

One of the many benefits of using archival data such as written records and mass-circulation newspapers is that they can span long periods of time and also allow the researcher to “look back in time”, something other research methods do not allow (Judd *et al*, 1991). A further benefit of content analysis is that it is an indirect and unobtrusive method of research as the nature of the document is not affected by the fact that you are using it for the enquiry (Robson, 1993). This method has often been used to analyse the content of newspaper and magazine articles (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

The process of content analysis for this project was adapted from Judd *et al* (1991):

1. The phenomenon to be coded must be chosen.
2. The media from which the observations are to be made must be selected.
3. Coding categories must be developed.
4. The sampling strategy should be decided.
5. The coders should be trained (N/A).
6. The data can be analysed.

To achieve a broad range of media styles, five different samples were identified for analysis of their reports (details in Table 2): three national newspapers (including their Sunday publications); the BBC News Online website (British Broadcasting Corporation); and Travel Mole, an online travel and tourism forum.

Data collection took place in three stages. First, articles featuring the word “Faliraki” were collected through Internet searches on the websites for each of the media sources. This search generated 235 articles. Each article was read to ensure it was suitable for analysis. The second stage involved recording the source of the article (i.e. from which publication), the date it was published and the word length (not including the headline). Content analysis took place in the third stage.

Initial reading of the articles revealed that not all contained relevant issues in the context of the aim of the study. Subsequently, decisions were made to iden-

tify those articles that were entirely about Faliraki (i.e. related to incidents in the resort), but if Faliraki was only mentioned as a passing reference the article was discarded. In all, 185 articles were deemed relevant and subsequently analysed.

Hutt and James (1987, p 10) note the distinction between a news article and a feature article: the news pages are defined as “the staple diet of a newspaper. It is the element that makes the reader reach out to see what is in the paper”. They also describe feature articles as “cover[ing] all those matters which are neither news nor sport” (Hutt and James, 1987, p 78). For this reason it was decided to code the articles in terms of their style: news article, feature article,

**Table 1** Incidents in Faliraki as reported in the British media 2002–2003

<i>Report</i>	<i>Details</i>
Greek doctors and Christopher Rochester death	Christopher Rochester, aged 24, died in June 2003 after falling from a balcony. He waited 40 min for an ambulance and bled to death in hospital <sup>a</sup> . Rochester’s family campaigned and the hospital staff were tried for negligence. A further enquiry took place to find out why his body was returned with a kidney missing. British coroners reported that he need not have died of his injuries, and questioned the standard of medical care. The three Greek doctors were convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment <sup>b</sup>
Indecent exposure	In July 2002 and August 2003 there were a number of arrests of British tourists for indecent exposure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon Topp, 20, was arrested in July 2002 for exposing himself to a coach full of people. £400 fine in lieu of a prison sentence<sup>c</sup></li> <li>• Matthew Maloney, 20, was arrested in August 2003 and received a £2,000 fine for “mooning”<sup>d</sup></li> <li>• Jemma-Anne Gunning, 18, was arrested in August 2003 after entering a “Eurovision Thong Contest” at a nightclub and removing her top. Fined £1,750<sup>e</sup></li> <li>• Steven Ireland, 19, arrested in August 2003 for mooning and fined £1,240<sup>f</sup></li> <li>• Max Delahundu James, 20, and Carrie Pritchard, 19, were arrested for ‘mooning’ in August 2003 and each fined £650<sup>g</sup></li> </ul>
Matthew Benney death	Matthew Benney, 29, died on 6 August 2003. He and his friends were returning to their hotel when he was hit by a dustbin lorry. It was believed the accident was the result of a dare <sup>h</sup>
Paddy Doran death	Paddy Doran, 17, was killed in a night club on 12 August 2003. He became involved in a fight with other British tourists and suffered a fatal stab wound. Eight males were charged with assault and one charged with his manslaughter <sup>i</sup>
Russell Anderson	Russell Anderson, 25, died on 20 August 2003 of a heart attack <sup>j</sup> . He and a fellow traveller were believed to have taken illegal drugs <sup>k</sup>
Rep behaviour	In August 2003 tour operator reps Thomas Battista, 31, Sarah-Louise Sharkey, Derek Celis, 24, Emily Dean, 20, and Claire Hullock, 20, were arrested on suspicion of carrying out “guided illegal trade” (bar crawls) that were banned by the Greek authorities. Released without charge <sup>l</sup>

Table 1 Continued

<i>Report</i>	<i>Details</i>
Greek & British police	This concerns the opening of a new police station manned by 20 English-speaking officers to reduce “loutish” behaviour by UK tourists <sup>m</sup> . Two British police officers visited in August 2003 to advise on dealing with the unruly behaviour of British tourists and initiatives to reduce drinking-related problems <sup>n</sup>
Rape	There have been several reports of rape in the resort, such as that of two holiday reps <sup>o</sup> . Five women were raped in 2002, four in 2001 and three in 2000 <sup>p</sup> . A report stated that there were a total of 11 rapes in 2002 <sup>q</sup>

<sup>a</sup>O’Neill, S. (2003). Greek Doctors Found Guilty Over Holiday Briton’s Death. [Online] (written 27 September 2003). [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F09%2F27%2Fwgreek27.xml](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F09%2F27%2Fwgreek27.xml). (accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>b</sup>O’Neill, S. (2003). Doctors “left British Tourist to Die in Excruciating Pain”[Online] (written 25 September 2003). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F09%2F25%2Fwcumm25.xml>. (accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>c</sup>Laville, S. (2002). Mr Topp’s Bottom Lands Him in Greek Police Cell. [Online] (written 2 June 2002). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2002%2F07%2F02%2Fntopp02.xml>. (accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>d</sup>Anon. (2003a). Trouser-Drop Tourist Avoids Jail[Online] (written 19 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/3164967.stm>. (accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>e</sup>Anon. (2003b). Faliraki “Bare Breasts” Girl Due Home[Online] (written 22 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/3169311.stm>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>f</sup>Anon. (2003c). Third Briton Jailed in Faliraki[Online] (written 21 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3169267.stm>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>g</sup>Anon. (2003d). News In Brief – Two Convicted by Greek Court[Online] (written 27 August 2003). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F08%2F27%2Fnbul27.xml>. (accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>h</sup>Anon. (2003e). Holidaymaker Killed by Bin Truck[Online] (written 06 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/3128637.stm>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>i</sup>Anon. (2003f). Victim Called Greek Resort “Too Wild”[Online] (written 27 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/northamptonshire/3186475.stm>(accessed 27 January 2003).

<sup>j</sup>Anon. (2003g). Tourist Dies on Holiday Island[Online] (written 22 August 2003). [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west\\_midlands/3173129.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west_midlands/3173129.stm)(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>k</sup>Anon. (2003h). Briton “on Drugs” Dies in Faliraki[Online] (written 22 August 2003). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/global/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fglobal%2F2003%2F08%2F22%2Fndrug.xml>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>l</sup>Anon. (2003i). Five Holiday Reps Released[Online] (written 18 August 2003). [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west\\_midlands/3159201.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west_midlands/3159201.stm)(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>m</sup>Anon. (2003j). New Rules for Faliraki Revellers[online] (written 09 December 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/eorup/3302911.stm>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>n</sup>Anon. (2003k). Blackpool Police Fly Out to Faliraki[Online] (written 29 August 2003). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3190263>. (accessed 27 January 2004)

<sup>o</sup>Anast, P. (2002a). Britiah Woman Tells of Rape on Greek Island[Online] (written 15 May 2002). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2002%2F05%2F15%2Fnrape15.xml>(accessed 27 January 2004)

<sup>p</sup>Anast, P. (2002b) British Blamed for Rise in Corfu Sex Attacks[Online] (written 21 September 2003). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/main.jhtml?xml=%2Ftravel%2F2002%2F09%2F21%2Fetnewscof21.xml>(accessed 27 January 2004).

<sup>q</sup>Skidmore, J. (2003). Travellers are Given Rape Alert[Online] (written 28 June 2003). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/main.jhtml?xml=%2Ftravel%2F2003%2F06%2F28%2Fetnewsforape.xml>(accessed 27 January 2004).

Table 2 Media sources

<i>Media sample</i>	<i>Media type</i>	<i>Daily circulation</i>
1 <i>Daily Telegraph</i> (and <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> )	Broadsheet daily newspaper Up-Market	891,257 673,814
2 <i>The Guardian</i> (and <i>The Observer</i> )	Broadsheet daily newspaper Up-market	337,487 404,464
3 <i>Daily Mirror</i> (And <i>Sunday Mirror</i> )	Tabloid daily newspaper Down-market	1,779,307 1,504,468
4 BBC News Online (British Broadcasting Corporation)	Public service broadcaster. Produces television and radio programmes	N/A
5 Travel Mole	Online travel and tourism industry forum	N/A

Communication, Cultural and Media Studies (2003a,2003b) and Audit Bureau of Circulations (2004).

travel article, sport article, newspaper opinion article, “News in Brief”, reader’s letters or other article.

The use of themes in content analysis is common (Hutt and James, 1987, p 103) to assess whether different news stories were determined to be more “newsworthy” than others. Thirteen article themes were identified:

- A general article about Faliraki
- Greek or British police in Faliraki (and related articles)
- Greek doctors’ involvement in tourist death
- Death of Paddy Doran (and related articles)
- Indecent exposure
- Tour representatives behaviour
- Tourist behaviour
- Rape
- “Club Reps” television programme
- Club 18-30 tour operator
- Russell Anderson death (and related articles)
- Matthew Benney death (and related articles)
- Other articles

Each article was read through and its themes identified and recorded. Robson (1993, p 63) states that the most commonly used sampling unit is the individual word and that all occurrences of the word should be treated as equal, and counts of them made and compared. Therefore, in addition to analysing the presence of particular themes in the articles, several keywords were also identified for analysis:

- Drunk (also drunken, drunkenly, drunkenness)
- Hooligan (also hooliganism)
- Indecent

- Yob (also yobbish)
- Lout (also loutish, loutishness)
- Lewd (also lewdness)
- Bar crawl
- Booze (also boozed)
- Alcohol (also alcoholic)
- Sex (also sexy, sexiest, sexual, sexually)
- Drugs
- Violent (also violence)
- Crime

The presence of each of these words was also recorded. This assisted in the determination of the nature of the reporting of incidents and the identification of differences in the reporting styles of the different media sources.

### Findings

Here the basic findings are described. The number of articles from each media source is shown in Table 3. There is less difference between the newspapers and the BBC News Online, but Travel Mole had fewer articles in total. The average word length is also shown. *The Guardian* had longer articles than the rest of the newspapers, BBC News Online and Travel Mole.

In terms of article publication dates, the reporting of incidents was most intense between June and September 2003. However, the earliest relevant article was published in May 2002, and the last in terms of the analysis for this paper was in December 2003. Thus the research covered a time period of 20 months.

Analysis of the content of the articles revealed that out of 185 articles, 128 were directly concerned with issues associated with crime and hedonism in

**Table 3** Number of usable articles generated and their average word length

<i>Media sample</i>	<i>Number of articles analysed</i>	<i>Average word length<sup>a</sup></i>
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> (incl. <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> )	48	429
<i>The Guardian</i> (incl. <i>The Observer</i> )	53	810
<i>Daily Mirror</i> (incl. <i>Sunday Mirror</i> )	32	443
BBC News Online	34	428
Travel Mole	18	196
Total	185	461

<sup>a</sup>Not including headline.

Faliraki and 57 were about other issues. Table 4 shows this by media source. *The Guardian* newspaper was the only media source to have published more articles not about crime and hedonism (28) than articles concerned with these issues (25).

A crosstabulation of article style and media source (Table 5) revealed that most articles were written as news articles. After this, there were similar proportions of feature articles (16), readers' letters (14) and opinion/comment articles (12). *The Guardian* was the only source to have written at least one article in all of the selected article styles.

Figure 2 identifies the "Paddy Doran" and "indecent exposure" themes to have been the most widely reported, whereas the "Greek doctors and tourist death" theme was the least reported. Crosstabulations of the article themes and media sources was undertaken to ascertain whether the publications differed in what they reported; the results are summarized in Table 6. *The Guardian* published more stories with regard to the Greek/British police theme, Greek

**Table 4** Media source and article content crosstabulation results

Media source	Article about crime and hedonism		Total
	Yes	No	
BBC News Online	31	3	34
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	36	12	48
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	22	10	32
Travel Mole	14	4	18
<i>The Guardian</i>	25	28	53
Total	128	57	185

**Table 5** Article style and media source crosstabulation results

Article style	Media Source					Total
	BBC News Online	Daily Telegraph	Daily Mirror	Travel Mole	The Guardian	
News article	28	29	16	15	18	106
Feature article	6	3	3	0	4	16
Travel article	0	2	0	2	2	6
Sport article	0	0	0	0	3	3
Opinion/Comment	0	3	4	0	5	12
News in Brief	0	4	0	0	2	6
Reader's letter	0	5	5	0	4	14
Other	0	2	4	1	15	22
Total	34	48	32	18	53	185

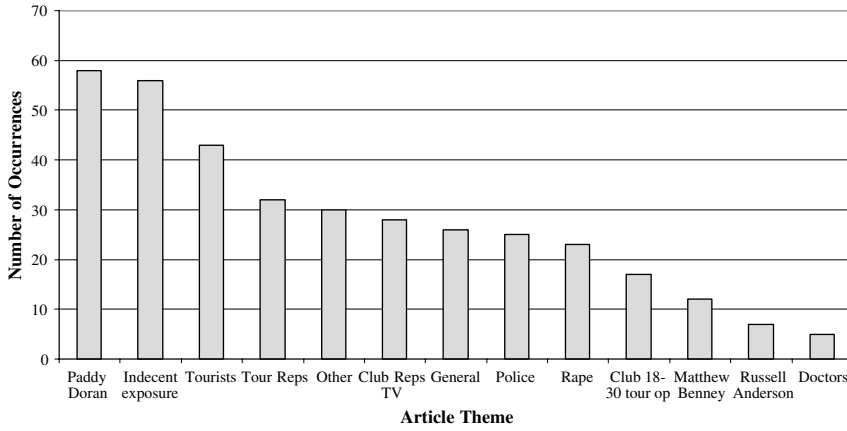


Figure 2 Number of occurrences of article themes.

Table 6 Summary of article theme reporting and media source crosstabulation

Theme	BBC News Online	Daily Telegraph	Daily Mirror	Travel Mole	The Guardian
General article	6	13	2	0	5
Greek/British police	5	5	3	3	9
Greek doctors and tourist death	0	2	0	0	3
Paddy Doran death	14	15	14	3	12
Indecent behaviour	12	15	10	0	19
Tour reps behaviour	8	10	4	1	9
Tourist behaviour	5	9	8	4	17
Club reps TV programme	7	6	7	1	7
Russell Anderson death	2	2	2	1	0
Club 18-30 tour operator	1	4	2	0	10
Rape	3	7	5	1	7
Matthew Benney death	8	1	1	2	0
Other articles	2	6	10	4	8
Total	73	95	68	20	106

doctors and tourist death, indecent behaviour tourist behaviour and Club 18-30 tour operators. *The Daily Telegraph* had more general articles about Faliraki, the death of Paddy Doran and tour rep behaviour. BBC News Online published more stories about the death of Matthew Benney than any other source. Travel Mole generally reported the least number of stories of the different article themes.

Figure 3 identifies the total number of occurrences of keywords across all reports. The three most used words from the selection were “drunk” (including drunken, drunkenly, drunkenness) (136), “sex” (including sexy, sexiest,

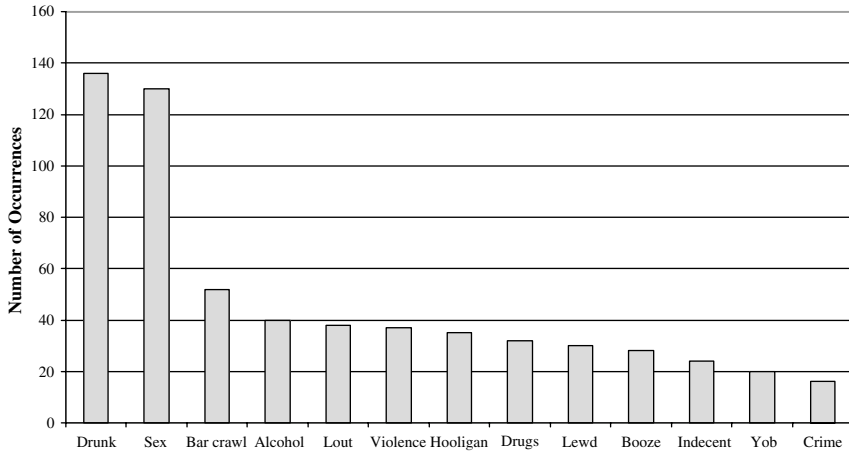


Figure 3 Summary of total keyword occurrence

sexual, sexually) (130) and “bar crawl” (52). The least used keyword was “crime” (16). “Alcohol” (including alcoholic), “lout” (including loutish, loutishness), “violence” (including violent), “hooligan” (including hooliganism), “drugs”, “lewd” (including lewdness) and “booze” (including boozed) were all used between 40 and 28 times.

The occurrence of keywords was also analysed in relation to the media sources in which they appeared. *The Guardian* (41) and the *Daily Telegraph* (39) use “drunk” considerably more than any other media source, whereas “sex” is used a similar amount of times by the *Daily Mirror* (41), the *Daily Telegraph* (38) and *The Guardian* (38).

- “Bar crawl” is used most by the *Daily Telegraph* (20), *The Guardian* (16) and BBC News Online (13).
- “Alcohol” is used by *The Guardian* 22 times, significantly more than the *Daily Telegraph*, which uses it only 8 times, and BBC News Online (6).
- “Lout” is used most by the *Daily Telegraph* (16) and BBC News Online (15).
- “Violence” is cited in articles by the *Daily Telegraph* 14 times, the *Daily Mirror* 10 times and *The Guardian* 9 times.
- “Hooligan” is most often used by the *Daily Mirror* (14) and the *Daily Telegraph* (13).
- “Drugs” was reported in BBC News Online articles 11 times, the *Daily Mirror* 8 times and the *Daily Telegraph* 7 times.
- “Lewd” was used a similar amount of times by three media sources: BBC News Online (8), the *Daily Mirror* (8) and *The Guardian* (7).
- “Booze” (14) and “yob” (11) were used considerably more by the *Daily Mirror* than any other media source.

- “Indecent” was used by the *Daily Telegraph* 10 times, and 5 times by both the *Daily Mirror* and *The Guardian*.
- *The Guardian* (9) cited “crime” more than any other media source.

Travel Mole and BBC News Online were the only media sources that did not use all of the keywords: BBC News did not use “yob” or “crime”, and Travel Mole did not use “alcohol”, “lout”, “drugs”, “booze” or “indecent”. Table 7 identifies the newspapers as citing the keywords more, with the *Daily Telegraph* using them the most, followed by *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror*. Travel Mole used the keywords significantly less in its articles than any other media source.

### Discussion and conclusions

This paper has considered the nature and extent of media reporting of a particular set of events in a single tourist resort as evidence from a sample of news articles. For this purpose, content analysis was felt to be the most suitable research method for the study. The selection of media sources and articles for the content analysis was somewhat limited owing to time and resources constraints. Moreover, language barriers also limited the range of media sources that could be used and limited the research to examining the reporting in the British media. Despite these limitations, a number of issues can be drawn from the findings.

Among the sample, *The Guardian* newspaper published the most stories concerning Faliraki and covered more of the themes than any other source, whereas Travel Mole had both the least amount of articles and reported the fewest number of themes. As *The Guardian* had published the highest number of articles it was not surprising that all the coded article styles were included. The articles from Travel Mole would have been expected to have more of a travel industry perspective, but the results show that just two of the articles from the source were “travel articles” and the rest “news articles” with one “other”.

It was interesting to note that of the three people who died on the island, the case of Paddy Doran received the most media coverage, and of the themes overall. It was reported almost equally between the newspapers and the BBC, but not by Travel Mole. The intense reporting of this event could be because

Table 7 Total use of keywords by media sources

<i>Media source</i>	<i>Total number of keywords used</i>
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	181
<i>The Guardian</i>	167
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	148
BBC News	97
Travel Mole	20

he was murdered, whereas Russell Anderson died from a heart attack reported to have been caused by drug taking, and Matthew Benney's death could have been the result of a dare. Paddy, aged 17, was also the youngest of the three to die and widely reported as being a born-again Christian who, as one headline stated, called the "Greek resort too wild" and was planning to return home early. Clearly, drama, sympathy, tragedy, age and conflict are several emotional aspects that determine the value of news (Pürer, 1991), and in these terms Paddy represented the "ideal" victim.

The second most highly reported theme was that of "indecent exposure" – the British tourists fined for exposing themselves in public. The *Daily Mirror*, as a tabloid newspaper, might have been expected to report this theme more than the other sources because of the sexual, sleazy and "fun" nature of the stories, but *The Guardian* actually reported it most. The stories comprising this theme were reported in a negative manner, with one headline from the *Daily Mirror* stating "Faliraki girl's strip of shame". Perhaps if the murder of Paddy Doran had not happened and the resort had not gained such a bad reputation for the behaviour of tourists there, this theme might have been reported in a different manner.

As the murder of Paddy Doran was the most widely reported theme, it could have been expected that the words "violence" or "crime" may have been used more. "Violence" was the sixth most used keyword whereas "crime" was the least used. "Drunk" and "sex" were cited significantly more than all of the other keywords. The *Daily Mirror* used colloquial terms such as "booze" and "yob" more than other sources. It also cited "sex" more than any other source. *The Guardian* used the word "alcohol" more than any other source, but was the second highest user of "booze".

The effect of negative media reporting on destinations is well documented: if a destination develops a negative image, this can greatly affect tourism demand to that area (Prideaux, 1996). The mass media is described by Glaesser (2003) as having two significant and different roles: (i) to communicate information and (ii) to change attitudes and opinions. This belief is confirmed by an American study which discovered that 95% of the American population used the mass media to obtain information about their wider environment (Kroeber-Riel, 1992). The daily circulation of the three newspapers analysed for this study is collectively 5,590,797 (including Sunday publications). However, as "readership figures for any given newspaper are generally around three times higher than the circulation figures", the actual number of people who read the newspapers could be much higher (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2004, p 39).

The implications of media reporting are therefore considerable. Crystal (1993, p 40) states "a favourite complaint among travel destination marketers is that the media can take relatively few crime incidents against tourists and through sensationalist reporting create a hysterical overreaction out of propor-

tion to the real level of risk". This can also be true in the case of tourist behaviour, as during August 2003 more than half of all news articles used in the analysis here were published by the five media sources. Travel Mole published one article titled "Tourist chiefs condemn Daily Mail Article" detailing how a report in the newspaper had suggested "drunks have made Greece a no-go" (Travel Mole, 2003). The Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) and the UK Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) were critical of the report as it stated that bookings to Greece for 2004 were down by 19% and bookings to Rhodes were down by 25%. The GNTO and FTO firstly questioned where the *Daily Mail* obtained the figures from as the FTO had been cited. Secondly, the director of the GNTO pointed out how there was a decline in all outbound bookings for destinations in 2004, and that some destinations had fewer bookings than Greece. He believed the fall in bookings was not attributable to incidents in Faliraki, but simply part of a downward trend (Travel Mole, 2003). However, it is not just the tourism destination that suffers as a result of negative publicity. Horner and Swarbrooke (2004, p 239) note how the behaviour of tourists can lead "to their country having a negative image in the destination countries".

As discussed at the outset, image is a vitally important element to the success of a tourism destination. However, the mass media, through newspapers and television, is considered to have an influential role in the process of image formation as it tends not to be associated with organizations promoting destinations and is therefore less biased. Clearly then the mass media plays a crucial role in the development of image. Kroeber-Riel (1992) believes there are three different approaches used by the mass media to affect public opinion: conviction, strengthening and agenda setting. Conviction assessment, though now rejected as an approach, assumes that the mass media is in a position to influence the recipient's attitudes and opinions contrary to his or her own views and in a direction desired by the media. The strengthening assessment suggests, as the mass media conveys information, it can both confirm and strengthen current attitudes and opinions as news presented through the media have especially an effect on attitudes if information is sought for opinion forming or opinions are formed the first time. The final approach – agenda setting – believes the media is responsible for deciding which events should be made a subject for discussion. This selection function applies where the topic concerned is outside the recipient's personal sphere of experience. Once the media has selected the topics, it structures the themes that are subjects of the discussion by assigning them preferences. It is interesting to note that in this study there was little difference between the reporting styles of the "broadsheet" and "tabloid" newspapers. Whereas within the literature Williams and Dickinson (1993) argue that the latter are more apt to sensationalize reporting, other studies looking at newspaper representations in a tourism and crime context have, as here, found little difference between the report styles of different British newspapers (Cousins and Brunt, 2002).

Of the 106 articles, 28 contained the theme “Club reps TV”. This TV programme was considered by many to have affected the image of the destination to tourists and subsequently affected their behaviour once in the resort. This behaviour was then widely reported by the media (the “tourist behaviour” theme was the third most reported). British Superintendent Andy Rhodes of Blackpool Police was one of the officers to travel to the Greek resort after the death of Paddy Doran and the incident involving Jemma-Anne Gunning. He believes the Club reps TV programme indicated to young people that “they could come to Faliraki and do what they want”, and though it had helped to increase trade to the resort it had also caused problems in terms of tourist behaviour (*The Guardian*, 2003). However, the makers of the programme, SMG Television, claim “Club Reps is a documentary series and as such its content has been wholly factual. The programme makers filmed what they saw, and the programmes that were broadcast were simply a reflection of what was already commonplace in the resort. Club Reps was not responsible for the actions of these holidaymakers” (*The Guardian*, 2003).

At the time of writing this paper, the incidents that occurred in the summer of 2003 do seem to have had an effect on subsequent tourism demand in Faliraki. Much effort was taken to try and reduce trouble in the resort, including new rules for bar crawls (BBC News Online, 2003). Following the murder of Paddy Doran and the incident involving Jemma-Anne Gunning, several bars and clubs were closed. It was also announced that Faliraki would get its own police station, be manned by 20 officers and law enforcement would be less tolerant. The British Foreign Office sponsored four Greek policemen, including two from Rhodes, to come to the UK and work with Blackpool police. The aim of the visit was to allow Blackpool police to share lessons learned from their “Nightsafe” initiative, which aims to tackle alcohol-related disorder (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2001). This was to ensure that “in 2004 Faliraki will still be a lively resort but will be safe and properly policed” (Association of British Travel Agents, 2004).

The steps taken by the Greek authorities have been criticized by some people who believe it would have a negative effect on tourism in the town (Travel Mole, 2003). Anna Aberly, area manager for the Federation of Tour Operators, was quoted as saying the new rules will result in Faliraki turning into a “ghost town” (Ananova, 2004). She states, “I’ve seen the same thing happen in Benitzes, in Corfu. The locals decided they didn’t want any trouble with tourists being too drunk and changed the laws. It became a ghost town”. She also believed that if the main holiday market of young people cannot participate in bar crawls and such, then they will simply holiday somewhere else.

Since this study, the Faliraki tourism market has been said to have “collapsed” (Travel Mole, 2004) as a direct result of the bad publicity over the crimes, bad behaviour and drunkenness of British tourists. The tour operator First Choice withdrew its youth brand “twentys” in 2004 from the resort due to lack of demand, and the number of rooms booked for the season by Club 18-30 was

300 (compared with 2000 in 2003). The *Daily Telegraph* (Travel Mole, 2004) reports that Greek police are now developing a more “softly softly” approach following arguments from the local industry that the heavy-handed “zero tolerance” approach in the aftermath of the publicity had dissuaded the youth market from returning to the resort in 2004. The newspaper also reports that the local industry is looking towards Germany and Austria to redevelop its tourism market in 2005. Evidence would therefore suggest that the media’s role in reporting incidents such as those here can have an important bearing on subsequent demand. Whether the media is completely responsible for reducing demand is, however, not completely clear.

Overall, the findings suggest that in terms of what was reported there is little difference between the newspapers, although the online news source and travel and tourism website did not report as much as the newspapers. There were slight differences in the language used between the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, and between the newspapers and online media source and travel and tourism website. The role of image in the success of a tourism destination has consistently been considered to be essential in the development of tourist destinations. Given the reactions of industry to the reporting of incidents here, this paper concludes that the mass media plays a crucial role in the development of image. However, further research into the decision-making process among consumers is required to confirm the potential of the media to “push” tourists away from specific destinations.

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