The characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia

Farwa Alkhalaf

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Primary supervisor: Professor Mark Orams

Abstract

Half Moon Beach is one of the popular beaches in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and is located on the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). Literature and knowledge regarding Saudi recreation and tourism, particularly marine and coastal recreation and tourism, is very limited. There is no published research or studies on recreation and tourism at beaches in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this exploratory case study is the first to examine the recreational use of beaches in Saudi Arabia and provide empirical data on coastal and marine recreation and tourism in the country. A self-reply questionnaire-based study was undertaken between 20 December 2014 and 27 February 2015. The study investigated beach visitors' ($n=280$) demographics, characteristics, motivations and activities. Results revealed that visitors were predominantly Saudis (95%) from the Eastern Province who visited Half Moon Beach for the purpose of enjoying the beauty of nature, the sea and sand and mainly came to the beach to relax. In this study, visitors (39%) were mostly satisfied with the overall experience of the beach visit but other visitors (23%) expressed negative comments about their beach visits. They were dissatisfied (23%) with a number of aspects, primarily the low level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities, lack of services and facilities and the limited number of sea and beach-related activities. Furthermore, visitors mostly (79%) supported more development of coastal and marine activities at the beach. They favoured development of additional activities for a number of reasons such as encouraging local and domestic tourism in the area, increasing the level of enjoyment for visitors and allowing visitors to discover the sea and enjoy nature. However, a number (3%) of visitors disagreed with more development for a number of reasons; primarily they were concerned with effects of these developments on the relaxing and quiet nature of the beach. They were also concerned with the effects of these developments on the natural environment. Furthermore, visitors (47%) suggested that activities should carefully target families and

children and provide options that engage the whole family. Visitors (37%) also suggested that females are an important segment. They should be targeted with activities that respect their cultural and religious limitations and give them more chances to enjoy the beach visits. Respondents (35%) suggested that development of new activities at the beach should be accompanied by clear safety regulations and professional and educated operators that ensure high quality and safe activities for visitors. Understanding visitors' characteristics, motivations and satisfaction with the activities of one the popular coastal areas in Saudi Arabia will help inform future development plans that take into consideration visitors' needs and wants and ensure careful improvements of the area based on the specific aspects described and explained by visitors around the beach experience.

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another, nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Worldwide, beaches and coastal areas have always been key attractions for people (Orams & Carr, 2008). This attraction has generated the development of coastal and marine tourism as travel to these areas for recreational purposes has grown rapidly through the latter part of the 20th and early part of the 21st centuries (Higham & Lück, 2008). While the global growth has been relatively recent, the interest in visiting coastal destinations for recreational and leisure purposes during the 18th century led to the growth of seaside resorts along the European coasts. Subsequently, this led to the development of transportation infrastructure during the 19th century to make the coast more accessible (Orams, 1999). With continued development and the invention of a wide range of means of using the sea for recreation, coastal and marine tourism has developed remarkably and become accessible for millions of people (Jennings, 2007). The increase in opportunities created as a consequence of these developments has, in turn, increased the demand for marine tourism and water-based activities all over the world (Jennings, 2007). Globally, coastal destinations now host a wide range of recreational activities (Orams, 1999). Worldwide, increasing numbers of tourists are participating in these activities and many coastal destinations are popular for the variety of coastal and marine activities offered in these areas (Needham & Szuster, 2013).

There is a variety of motivations that drive tourists to visit coastal and marine destinations. Understanding these motives is important for the coastal and marine tourism industry as it can lead to more informed and better planning and management for these areas (Needham & Szuster, 2013). Tourism motivations are a set of wants and needs that affect tourists' choices and cause them to travel to particular destinations and partake in certain activities (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). Research into coastal and marine tourism has identified a diverse range of motives that underlie tourists' decision

making regarding destination choices. The main motivations of coastal and marine tourists that are revealed in the literature include relaxation, destination beauty and characteristics, socialisation, escape, family togetherness, enjoyment, activities and exploration. Understanding these motivations can help tourism brokers and providers to develop offerings of products and services that meet the wants and needs, and satisfy the expectations of tourists (Van der Merwe, Slabbert, & Saayman, 2011).

Saudi Arabia has two coastlines; the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). The Gulf is a semi-enclosed inland sea located in a semi-arid area of the Middle East with a limited exchange of water with the Indian Ocean (Al-Otaibi, Ait Belaid, & Abdu, 2010). The length of the Saudi Arabian coast on the Gulf is approximately 1200 km and it has a width of about 450 km (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). The Gulf hosts some important natural habitats such as coral reefs, marine terraces, bogs and mangrove bays (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). The Gulf is also popular for its many sandy beaches which stretch along the coasts and is distinguished by huge coastal sand dunes ("Beaches and coasts," 2013).

Half Moon Beach is one of the popular sandy beaches in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, located on the Gulf coast with a length of about 25 km^2 ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). Half Moon Beach is characterised by shallow, clear, hyper-saline protected water and a sandy bottom with occasional rocks and shells ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). Half Moon Beach has an average water depth of 7 m and the deepest spots are about 15.3 m ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). The number of visitors to this beach is unknown as well as their characteristics and demographics. The beach in general has limited recreational activities, particularly marine and water-based activities (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). The main recreational activities offered at this beach include boat riding, sand dune riding and horse and pony riding.

Literature and knowledge regarding Saudi tourism is limited and it has not received much attention from researchers. In particular, there is no published research or empirical studies examining coastal and marine recreation and tourism at beaches in Saudi Arabia. Thus, little is known about coastal and marine recreation and tourism in Saudi Arabia. The research reported in this thesis explores the demographic characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach during the period between 20 December 2014 and 27 February 2015. More specifically, the research examines the following issues:

- Visitor demographics.
- Visitor characteristics.
- Visitor motivations.
- Visitor satisfaction.
- Visitor activities
- Visitors' current view of activities at the beach.
- Visitors' future view of developing more sea and beach-related activities at the beach.

This research makes an important contribution to our understanding of the characteristics and activities of visitors at one of the popular beaches in Saudi Arabia. This information will be valuable to the tourism industry in the country and contribute to a wider understanding of beach visitors in Saudi Arabia. The study provides an increased understanding of the importance of coastal areas in the country. The study may benefit local, domestic and international visitors and provide increased knowledge and understanding of their needs, wants and motives.

Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Coastal and marine tourism

2.1.1 Coastal areas and beaches

Coastal areas are considered a very important aspect of many people's lifestyles, particularly for people living close to these areas. "Today, as in the past, the vast majority of the global human population lives in close proximity to coastal areas" (Higham & Lück, 2008, p.6). The coast or areas within the coastal zone are home for about 40% of the world's human population (Ghosh, 2011). Needham and Szuster (2013) state that by 2015, half of the world's population will be living within 100 km of the coast. For example, in south-east Asia, more than 350 million people reside within 50 km of the coast (Burke, Reytar, Spalding, & Perry, 2011). The beach in particular is a key attraction of many coastal areas and for people living in these areas (Orams & Carr, 2008). Beaches are considered one of the world's most important natural attractions hosting millions of visitors all around the world every year (Schlacher et al., 2007). For example, in the United States of America, beaches are considered the main attraction for many tourists and due to this great popularity, coastal areas obtain about 85% of U.S. tourist related revenue (Orams, 1999).

The beach is defined as "the transition zone, usually between an ocean or a lake and the land" (Orams & Carr, 2008). Popular beaches are typically sandy in nature but may include other features such as shells, small rocks, coral and pebbles (Orams & Carr, 2008). The different types of beaches and their unique features result from the dynamic influences of water substrate and other natural forces (such as wave action, near shore sediment run-off, coastal currents and coastal geomorphology) (Ghosh, 2011). The action of waves, currents, tides and climate (especially wind) help in the formation of beaches as these elements organise and reorganise the sediments from either the water

or the offshore area (Orams & Carr, 2008). Furthermore, natural formed coasts are very diverse in nature and come in a very wide range of shapes such as pocket beaches, sedimentary capes and spit beaches, bay and barrier beaches (Orams & Carr, 2008). Moreover, artificial or human-made coasts can be found in some parts of the world such as urban beaches in Paris and coastline beaches in Dubai (Orams & Carr, 2008).

The pattern of human settlement in coastal areas or within the coastal zone indicates the importance of the coast in people's lives and also is indicative of the importance of coastal regions and beaches for recreation (Higham & Lück, 2008). This pattern of human settlement also contributes to the significant increase in the demand for coastal and marine recreation and tourism (Higham & Lück, 2008). In terms of beach and marine activities, the geographical features and location of the beach such as water, air temperature, waves, tides, marine life and currents determine the type of activities that are suited to specific beach destinations (Orams & Carr, 2008). A wide range of recreational activities take place on the coasts, including land-based activities such as sun-bathing, walking, picnicking/barbecuing, sand-castle making, and beach sports (e.g. volleyball, football, cricket), and water-based activities such as swimming, surf-riding, snorkelling, scuba-diving, fishing, wildlife watching and boating (Orams & Carr, 2008). Thus, coasts and beaches are important recreational resources.

2.2   Coastal and marine tourism/activities

Coastal and marine tourism is considered one of the fastest growing sectors within the wider tourism industry and there are many islands and coastal destinations that have become dominated by this type of tourism (Orams, 1999). Marine tourism is defined as "those recreational activities that involve travel away from one's place of residence and which have as their host or focus the marine environment (where the marine environment is defined as those waters which are saline and tide-affected)" (Orams,

1999, p. 9). The ocean and sea have been major attractions for people for thousands of years, as a source for food and transport, however their attraction for recreational activities such as swimming, relaxing, socialisation, shellfish collection and fishing has been more recent (Orams, 1999). Jennings (2007) states that visiting the seaside and participating in water-based activities and experiences can be traced back to early Romans, as wealthy Romans built second homes by the seaside to escape the heat, normal routine and the city during the summer.

In 2001, Hall claimed the following:

> While tourism development has been spatially focussed on the beach for much of the past 50 years, as witnessed for example, in the slogan of the four 'S's' of tourism - sun, sand, surf and sex - the ocean and the marine environment as a whole has become one of the new frontiers and fastest growing areas of the world's tourism industry (p. 601).

The development of infrastructure was influential and helped shape the historical growth of marine tourism during the 20th century, however, despite the sea-side location the great majority of the recreational activities that took place in the coast were land-based and there were limited marine-based activities until the latter part of the century (Orams, 1999). Since the 1950s, the invention and availability of a wide range of boats, vessels, machines, equipment and other technology has totally changed the history of marine tourism to make it more sea-based rather than land-based and increased the range of marine-based activities (Orams, 1999). These developments were also a result of the increased discretionary income of citizens of the developed world, the development of transportation technology and the global growth of travel for recreational purposes (Jennings, 2007). Moreover, the major developments in technology and the increase in international travel trend made marine areas more accessible to tourists and resulted in a remarkable growth in the demand for marine tourism and activities-based on the marine environment (Orams, 1999).

Coastal areas host a wide range of marine-based activities (Orams, 1999). Higham and Lück (2008) state that while the traditional beach holiday as a mass tourism in the contemporary world remains strong, the vast development in marine tourism has been driven by the invention of a wide variety of technology-based activities such as scuba-diving, jet skiing, and motor yachting. These inventions and other new equipment has allowed tourists to access the marine environment safely and reasonably cheaply (Orams, 1999).

More and more tourists all around the world are participating in different marine tourism activities (Needham & Szuster, 2013). The growth in popularity of marine and coastal tourism activities in particular are drawing the attention of researchers (Needham & Szuster, 2013). For example, research by Needham and Szuster (2013) showed that more than 80% of visitors to Hawaii considered marine activities as an important highlight of their visit. Australia also experienced an increased demand for visitation to the Great Barrier Reef almost 10-fold between the early 1980s and late 1990s (Needham & Szuster, 2013). Another example is the increase in visitor numbers visiting coastal southeast Alaska from 85,000 in 1980 to over one million in 2007 (Needham & Szuster, 2013).

There are many popular recreational activities that are water-based including; surfing, sailing, fishing, swimming, scuba diving, boating, kite boarding, kayaking and snorkelling, and many land-based but sea-focused activities, such as beach walks, shell collecting, sand castle building, bird watching, socialising and sightseeing (Race, 2011). Furthermore, there are many commercial activities related to marine tourism such as diving trips, fishing trips, whale-watching and dolphins tours, cruising and boat-based tours and ship-based cruises (Race, 2011).

2.2.1 The motivation of marine and coastal tourists

Understanding why individuals undertake certain activities or behave in certain ways is important as it can lead to better planning and management to satisfy the wants and needs that lead to these activities and behaviours. Motivations are the driving force that leads to certain behaviour or action (Solomon, 2004). Solomon (2004) states that people do everything for reason but it is not easy to specify or express these reasons. Orams (1999) also confirmed that motivations "can only be inferred from observing behaviour" and he stated that to find out and determine motivations "subjects must be asked for their reasons for actions, and these are usually complex and are seldom fully understood by the actors themselves, so even asking people about their motivations is problematic" (p.31). So, human motivations are complex, however, getting a general understanding of these motivations is important to gain insights into why travellers participate in a certain activity or visit certain place. For example, complex and contrasting motivations such as both relaxation and excitement have been shown to be important motives of marine tourists (Orams, 1999). Travel motivations are a set of wants and needs that affect tourists' choices and cause them to partake in certain tourism activities (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). Furthermore, motivations are the essential reasons for a particular travelling behaviour and play a critical role in understanding the tourists' decisions to travel to a certain destinations or participate in certain activities (Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006). The study of travel motivations is an essential starting point into understanding the psychology of the travel behaviour of tourists (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). Park, Reisinger and Kang (2008) stated that "a desire to meet a need for relaxation triggers a decision to engage in a certain behaviour to meet that need" (p.162). However, this is complicated by the common situation where tourists typically have more than one motive that causes them to engage in certain action. Park et al., (2008) stated that individuals may have more than one desire that they seek to satisfy,

for example, the desire for cultural enrichment and another for socialisation, therefore, "different individuals engage in different behaviours because they want to satisfy different needs" (p.162).

There is a wide range of travel motivations including common drivers such as relaxation, socialisation, family togetherness and escape (Park et al., 2008). Some motivations are more reliant on the travel destinations characteristics such as nature, climate and culture (Park et al., 2008). Additionally, when looking at coastal and marine tourism, the limited research literature has identified different motives related to marine destinations. For example, Molera and Albaladejo (2007) describe five important travel motives to Murcia in Spain in the Mediterranean Sea including quietness of nature, activities (physical and cultural), family, trip characteristics and rural life. Escape and relaxation, destination beauty, socialisation and site characteristics were the main motives for tourists visiting Jeffreys bay and Hartenbos Bay in South Africa (Saayman, Slabbert, & Van Der Merwe, 2009). Furthermore, a study of tourists to Northern Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea identified number of push motivations such as relaxation, family togetherness, away from home, excitement and knowledge as well as some pull motivations such as activities, climate, natural beauty, cleanness, water activities, local cuisine and wide space (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Kozak (2002) also studied travel motivations of tourists to Mallorca in Spain and identified motives such as culture, enjoyment, seeking, relaxation and physical activities while Kruger and Saayman (2010) identified motives such as knowledge seeking, escape, relaxation, photography and nature for tourists visiting Tsitsikamma National Park in the Indian Ocean in South Africa. Van der Merwe et al's, (2011) study identified number of similar marine travel motivations including destination attractiveness, escape, relaxation, personal attachment and time utilisation through exploring, spending time with family and friends and attending events.

Understanding why tourists visit certain destinations or why they engage in certain activities is important to any tourism industry including coastal and marine tourism. Understanding tourists' motivations help marketers in the tourism industry to develop and promote tourism products that satisfy and meet motives (Van der Merwe et al., 2011). Orams (1999) also confirms that understanding these motives is important to help manage needs and plan to satisfy expectations. Park et al., (2008) stated that "Understanding consumers' motives is a key prerequisite to designing and tailoring offerings to particular target markets and creating favourable experiences and satisfaction for these markets" (p.162). Therefore, tourism marketers should study and understand the needs that tourists are seeking to satisfy and design tourism products/activities that meet these needs and satisfy them.

2.3   Impacts of the development of coastal and marine tourism

The overall trend of the marine tourism industry is one of significant increase, which raises concerns about the impacts of this growth and its commensurate development. The rapid growth in the development of coastal and marine tourism can create both positive and negative outcomes for the marine environment. Orams (1999) stated that "as the growth of marine tourism has become widespread, an increasing number of reports show that significant environmental, social, cultural and even economic damage can result", on the other hand, he stated that "there are also success stories, where the development of marine tourism has, on balance, improved things" (p. 57). Tourists close interaction with nature and their activities can affect marine ecosystems and in most cases impact negatively on the health of marine life. However, some advantages may arise from the growth of marine tourism (Orams, 1999). The main environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism development and activities can be summarised as follows:

2.3.1 Environmental impacts

Environmental impacts are predominantly seen as negative for most forms of tourism including coastal and marine tourism. This is particularly because coastal and marine tourism directly depends on natural resources as the basis for its activities. Tourism can damage the main resource (environment) by the heavy and unbalanced growth and extensive use of the marine environment. Over the last 20 to 30 years, the commercial and recreational activities of humans in coastal and marine areas have raised concerns about pollution and environmental disturbance and the future health and viability of these areas in the future (Byrnes & Warnken, 2003). For example, boating and sailing activities have been shown to produce a range of negative impacts to the marine environment, particularly bigger vessels that carry large numbers of tourists (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003). Warnken and Byrnes (2003) stated that "boat operations have the potential to cause environmental impacts, including both the release of chemical pollutants and physical habitat disturbances" (p. 105). For example, the growing number of boating operations in the Caribbean islands has imposed serious threats on the natural and environmental resources there (Allen, 1992).

Coastal and marine tourism development, particularly human built infrastructure such as land reclamation, dredging, wharves, ports, resorts, and other permanent structures, which alter coastal systems, can result in long-term detrimental changes to ecosystems. Ghosh (2011) stated that "land degradation and land-use change, results habitat and biodiversity loss, directly from the construction of tourist facilities and infrastructure through the clearing of mangroves, wetlands, and beaches, and the extraction of building materials" (p. 68). Unregulated and uncontrolled construction for the purposes of creating more attractions and facilities for tourists have been shown to be the primary reasons for the destruction of the unique value and physical beauty of coastal areas (Ghosh, 2011).

In addition, tourists' behaviour and activities such as through fishing and marine-life gathering practices, wildlife disturbance, waste water discharge, litter/debris and anchor damage can also lead to negative impacts to coastal and marine environments (Moscardo, Pearce, Green, & O'Leary, 2001). Furthermore, the marine and coastal zones that are used for boating activities are frequently environmentally vulnerable areas that can be easily affected by such activities (Byrnes & Warnken, 2003). For example, many recreational boats use antifouling paints on their immersed hull areas, particularly those vessels that stay in the water for long periods (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003). The toxic elements in this paint can affect and harm marine species especially those species inhabiting places close to those vessels (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003).

Another increasingly important impact is noise pollution produced by human activities (Codarin, Wysocki, Ladich, & Picciulin, 2009). The significant increase of human activities creating under-water noise is raising many new issues around the potential negative effects on marine ecosystems where for many animals, sound is a critical aspect of their ability to forage, navigate, find mates and breed successfully (Codarin et al., 2009). Furthermore, yachts and boats that offer services and facilities such as toilets, bathroom basins and small kitchen produce sewage, rubbish and dirty water (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003).

Marine tourism activities can have a direct impact on the behaviour of marine species causing unnecessary disturbances and stress to these species (Dobson, 2008). Feeding marine wildlife in order to attract them to tourist areas can cause significant impacts on the natural behaviour of these animals such as growing reliance on food sites and increased aggressive behaviour (Dobson, 2008).

The Hawaiian Islands attracts millions of tourists annually which led to a remarkable growth in the participation in marine tourism activities (Wiener, Needham, &

Wilkinson, 2009). In 2005, more than 80% of travellers to Hawaii chose to participate in marine activities and there were more than 1000 ocean tourism companies operating in the islands (Wiener et al., 2009). Tourists' activities in the islands caused many impacts such as coral crushing and harm from standing, sitting or touching the coral reefs by visitors and tour operators (Wiener et al., 2009). Moreover, harassing marine wildlife in the Hawaiian islands from tour operators for the purpose of satisfying tourist' curiosity and interests were also one of the main detrimental impacts of tourism in the area (Wiener et al., 2009). A further example of a growing impact of marine activities is from the increasingly popular use of underwater cameras, particulary from inexperienced users during diving and snorkeling activities (Wiener et al., 2009). This has been shown to cause increased contact with sensitive coral and other benthic marine organisms and an incentive for larger numbers of divers and snorkellers to pursue marine animals in order to try and capture high quality close-up photographs (Wiener et al., 2009).

There are some positive impacts that can be observed from marine tourism development and activities. Marine tourism may improve the local environment in a number of ways (Orams, 1999). Tourism may enhance tourists' awareness of the importance of the marine environment and encourage them to be responsible tourists and pay greater attention to conservation issues (Orams, 1999). Furthermore, close interaction with the marine environment and increased understanding of its fragility and importance may raise visitors' willingness to engage in conservation work and support protection of endangered species (Zeppel & Muloin, 2008). Orams (1994) also found that tourists' interaction with marine wildlife when accompanied by a structured environmental education programme can encourage positive behaviour towards conserving the environment and motivate participants to participate in future conservation activities. Similarly, Zeppel and Muloin (2008) claimed that there are positive benefits arising

from participating in marine wildlife tourism experiences because these experiences increased visitor's understanding of the importance of marine wildlife and marine environmental conservation.

2.3.2 Social impacts

Marine tourism also drives some negative and positive social impacts. The main negative social impacts that are discussed in the literature were associated with "displacement of locals from sites of tourism interest, little flow-on benefit from large resorts to the local communities, and undesirable social impacts on indigenous culture" (Harriott, 2002, p. 14). Widespread tourism development along coastal areas may result in an inaccessibility for locals to these areas which may lead to many negative social consequences (Ghosh, 2011). The most obvious example can be observed in the Caribbean Islands as tourist resort development adjacent to popular beaches has forced locals from those beaches as resorts claimed exclusive rights to these areas (Orams, 1999). Additional negative impacts such as an increase in crime and prostitution, the loss of cultural identity and an increase in drug use were also observed in the Caribbean Islands and associated with the massive tourism growth in the islands (Orams, 1999).

There are also some potential positive social impacts of marine tourism development for locals where the value of marine ecosystems for recreation provides an incentive for their conservation. In addition, tourism can contribute to the education of the community about the importance of their marine sites and enrich their sense of belonging and association with their local (Harriott, 2002). Furthermore, marine tourism experiences and the interaction with the marine environment can drive many personal and social benefits to visitors such as enjoyment, relaxation, learning, knowledge and socialisation. Zeppel and Muloin (2008) stated that "watching humpback whales at Hervey Bay provided personal benefits for visitors such as thrills and excitement

(whales), tranquillity and peacefulness (nature), inspiration, learning and relaxation" (p. 27). Finally, where tourism is associated with marine protected areas, associated conservation initiatives and programmes provide opportunities for both locals and visitors to expand their knowledge about the marine environment and enhance awareness of support for marine conservation (Lück, 2008).

2.3.3 Economic impacts

Coastal and marine tourism has a range of economic impacts, which are mostly viewed as positive (Lück, 2008). For example, marine tourism businesses can financially support the costs of management of marine areas, particularly by providing fees to support conservation initiatives, as in the case of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia where the fees for the Marine Park collected by tourism operators support the reef management plans (Harriott, 2002). Tourism businesses can also provide 'in-kind' support such as through transport, monitoring, and as a platform for research (Harriott, 2002).

Coastal and marine tourism businesses can create a large number of jobs, from part-time jobs for students to highly paid jobs and such employment opportunities can be extremely important for remote coastal or island communities where there are few other commercial activities (Lück, 2008). The development of this type of tourism can attract job seekers from outside the local community and contribute to immigration induced growth (Ghosh, 2011).

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in Australia is a good example of a significant marine tourism attraction that supports significant commercial activity (Harriott, 2002). "About 1.6 million visitor days are spent on commercial marine-based activities in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) each year" (Harriott, 2002, p.12). A further Australian example is from the Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, where whale shark

tourism has been estimated to generate a revenue of US$7.8 million during the peak season (Dobson, 2008). This economic input has contributed significantly to the development of the local community and the conservation work of sharks (Dobson, 2008).

The development of tourism can also stimulate the development of infrastructure, services and facilities at the areas where tourism development takes place and this can be beneficial for locals (Lusseau, 2008). For example, the case of Kaikoura in New Zealand has shown where marine tourism development has generated economic benefits to the area and improved the well-being of locals (Orams, 1999).

Despite numerous examples of positive economic impacts arising from the development of coastal and marine tourism, there are also potential negative impacts. Tourism development has been shown to lead to an increase in the prices of local services increasing the cost of living for locals and placing pressure on the host community (Orams, 1999; Ghosh, 2011). In addition, although the economic benefits of coastal and marine tourism can be significant, many examples show that most of the benefits and profits go to people from outside the host community (economic leakage) (Ghosh, 2011). Ghosh (2011) stated that the "absence in equity in benefits within the local community may sometimes result in financial losses and increased local poverty" (p. 68). Furthermore, damage to the local environment resulting from the development of marine and coastal tourism can cost the local population and government more than they gain from the industry (Ghosh, 2011). The highly seasonal nature of coastal and marine tourism can create a seasonal boom – bust cycle resulting instability caused by seasonal mass unemployment leading to negative social impacts and economic loss (Ghosh, 2011).

Overall, therefore, the above summary of impacts of coastal and marine tourism development raises a number of concerns and emphasises the importance of careful planning and sustainable development to ensure the balance between negative and positive impacts.

2.4   Saudi Arabia

2.4.1   Brief overview of Saudi Arabia

Figure 1: Saudi Arabia location.

Source:("Saudi Arabia map and Saudi Arabia satellite images," 2014). Retrieved from
http://www.istanbul-visit.com/en/saudi-arabia-map.asp

Saudi Arabia lies in the Arabian Peninsula, in the far south-west of the continent of Asia (Figure 1). It is the largest Arab State in the Arabian Peninsula with a land area of about two million square kilometres (km2) covering about 70% of the Peninsula (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). The nations bordering Saudi Arabia are; to the north Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, to the east Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, and to the south Oman and Yemen (Figure 2) (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). The maritime coast of Saudi Arabia is the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf) to the east and the Red Sea

and the Gulf of Aqaba to the west (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). The coasts of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf) are located within the Eastern region while the coasts of Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba are located within five administrative regions, namely Tabuk, Medina, Mecca, Asir and Jizan (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012).

Figure 2: Map of Saudi Arabia

Source: ("Saudi Arabia map and Saudi Arabia satellite images," 2014). Retrieved from http://www.istanbul-visit.com/en/saudi-arabia-map.asp

2.4.2 Tourism in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a geographically large country distinguished by its desert climate. This is strongly influenced the settlement of people over thousands of years as the availability of water and arable land is scarce (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). Travel has a long history in the area and early inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula were

nomads who used to travel in search of food and shelter (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). For hundreds of years, different examples of tourists' activities have been found in the area. For example, the Okaz market and the old movement of Mecca inhabitants to Taif resort (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). Okaz market (Figure 3) was one of most popular cultural activities for Arabs coming on pilgrimages in pre-Islamic times (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). Pilgrimage is a type of religious tourism and Wiederkehr (2001) defined pilgrimage as spiritual and meaningful journey aiming at sacred purposes. He believed that pilgrimage is a "transformational journey" where the pilgrims experience major changes, gain new perceptions and deeper understandings, and receive blessings and forgiveness (Wiederkehr, 2001). The importance of this market lies in its historic symbolism as the original source of Arabic central culture as a destination for ancient Arabs where intellectuals and poets and people passionate about culture and literature gathered in this market to participate in a wide range of cultural activities (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). Additionally, on the coasts, ports were established that connected the Arabian Peninsula with the rest of the world which led to increased travel to and from the Arabian Peninsula (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011).

Figure 3: Okaz market.

Source: ("Video: Report on the activities of 'historical market Okaz' in Taif," n.d.). Retrieved from http://alziadiq8.com/41285.html

With the advent of Islam and its spread outside the Arabian Peninsula, significant shifts in the field of travel occurred. The stability and security that resulted from the spread of Islam encouraged people to travel freely inside and outside the Arabian Peninsula (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). Furthermore, the expectation of followers of Islam to undertake a pilgrimage to the holy land of Mecca and the encouragement of other religious trips to Mecca and Medina after the spread of Islam was a major driver of the growth of religious and cultural tourism in the region (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011).

The most significant growth of tourism in Saudi Arabia and its emergence as an important economic sector for the country occurred after the end of World War II as a result of increased security and stability. In addition, the discovery and development of the petro-chemical oil industry resulted in rapid growth of the country's economy and associated improvements in infrastructure (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). In particular, the development of transportation and communication were factors that led to the flourishing of tourism in the country and the opportunity for and encouragement of people to travel for recreational purposes (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011).

The tourism sector developed remarkably in the latter part of the 20th century after the major development and improvement in different sectors and industries that relate indirectly to the tourism sector (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). For example, the opening of Asir National Park in 1980 located in the southwest of Saudi Arabia was one of the first efforts of the Saudi authorities to encourage domestic and international tourism in the country (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). The exceptional environmental and natural conditions of the area were the main reasons for establishing the park (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). It is a mountainous region with moderate temperatures year round which make it an attractive destination for Saudis, foreigners who work in Saudi Arabia

and citizens of other Gulf states (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). An on-site survey was conducted at Al-Sawdah resort in 1989, the largest resort in Asir National Park, to examine tourists flow to the park and it was one of the first empirical studies to study recreational travel in Saudi Arabia (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). The survey was designed to collect demographic characteristics of visitors such as nationalities of the resort visitors, places of residences, duration of stay and number of visits and other characteristics (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992).

The park was established to attract domestic and international visitors, however, the results of the survey indicated that the park in general, and the Al-Sawdah resort in particular, has failed to attract visitors from far areas (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). The study showed that the majority of the visitors of the resort came from Asir and neighbouring provinces of Mecca and Riyadh. Eighty nine per cent of visitors were Saudis, seven per cent were foreign residents who worked and lived in Saudi Arabia and only four per cent were foreign visitors from other Gulf States (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). It also indicated that the group size was mostly large with the average of seven people per vehicle and most of those visitors were using a private car or van (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). Furthermore, the findings showed that most of those visitors visited with family members or groups of families driving together which indicated the strong family ties in Saudi society (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). Children under 15 years were primary members of most groups visiting the resorts and both sexes of males and females were observed in most groups (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). Most visitors indicated that they came to the resort directly from their homes or from nearby areas (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992). The findings also suggested that regardless of the level of educational achievements of the Saudi people, they would still make trips to resort areas to enjoy their leisure time which indicated that these areas are considered an important

market for the development of domestic tourism in the Saudi Arabia (Paul & Rimmawi, 1992).

Literature and knowledge regarding Saudi tourism is limited and restricted with academics focusing on the religious tourism as an important market in Saudi Arabia (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). In 1999, a study was conducted to examine Saudi citizens' tourism patterns and attitudes (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). Two hundred and two questionnaires were collected from different areas of Saudi Arabia such as Mecca, Medina, Al Jouf, Qassim, Hail, Riyadh, and Eastern Province (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). The responses was not a representative sample of the Saudi Society, upper-class Saudis and nomadic herdsmen were under-represented while the middle-class Saudis were over-represented in this study (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). Furthermore, Saudi females were excluded from this study because of social restrictions (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). The result of this study showed that the most popular domestic destinations were mountains (33%), coasts (26%) and holy cities (16%) (Seddon & Khoja, 2003).

Another study carried out by Bogari, Crowther and Marr (2004) investigated the travel motivations for domestic tourism in Saudi Arabia and collected the data from two cities in Saudi Arabia: Jeddah and Abha (Bogari et al., 2004). This study concentrated on the relationship between the motivation of Saudi tourists to travel in relation to push and pull factors set within the agenda of Islamic and Arabic cultures (Bogari et al., 2004). It revealed nine push motivations as reasons for the desire to travel domestically including cultural value, knowledge seeking, social and economical values, family togetherness, enjoyment and relaxation (Bogari et al., 2004). The study results of pull motivations included safety, activities, beach sports/activities, nature, historical/cultural, religious, leisure and budget (Bogari et al., 2004). The most important push and pull factors for Saudi tourists were cultural value and religious motives (Bogari et al., 2004).

Tourism developments in Saudi Arabia have received little attention in the past for a variety of religious, social, economic and political reasons (Al-Saleh & Hannam, 2010). Until 1999, Saudi Arabia tourism lacked a unified structure and there was no formal agency devoted to this sector in the country (Johnson, 2010). However, tourism in the country has started to gain more importance in recent years as the government decided to diversify its economy away from reliance upon oil (Al-Saleh & Hannam, 2010). The formation of specific policies and frameworks as well as the establishment of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in 2000 (Figure 4) helped in promoting tourism and developing a solid framework for its development (Johnson, 2010). The establishment of SCTA was for the purpose of facilitating tourism development in the country (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). Furthermore, travelling to Saudi Arabia was closed for all types of visas for non-religious visitors for many years (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). Paul and Rimmawi (1992) stated that even after the starting of issuing different type of visas to the country such as for business, work or family visit visas for foreign workers, pleasure travel was strongly discouraged due to the cultural and religious values of Saudi society. These strict regulations on entrance visas have affected and limited the development of tourism in the country (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013).

Figure 4: The logo of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA)

Source:("Our logo," 2015) http://www.scta.gov.sa/en/AboutSCTA/Pages/OurLogo.aspx

Nevertheless, the tourism sector has grown in Saudi Arabia. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was Saudi Arabian Riyal (SAR) 119.8bn (US$ 31.95 bn) (4.3% of GDP) in 2013, and is forecast to rise by 4.9% in 2014, and to rise by 4.6% pa to SAR197.7bn which is equivalent to US$ 52.72 (4.6% of GDP) in 2024 (*Travel & tourism: Economic impact 2014 Saudi Arabia*, 2014, p.1). The general trend in the country is moving towards mass tourism particularly in sites of natural beauty and milder climate (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). However, the main motives of visitors to Saudi Arabia continue to be religious as Saudi Arabia is home to the two holiest cities of Islam (Mecca and Medina) (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Religious tourism represents a very strong market and this is strongly supported by the Saudi government and continued growth is forecast in both tourists' arrivals and expenditure (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013).

Saudi Arabia was expected to attract 14,407,000 international tourist arrivals in 2014 and according to this forecast, this figure is expected to increase to a total of 20,652,000 by 2024 (*Travel & tourism: Economic impact 2014 Saudi Arabia*, 2014). Al-Saleh and

Hannam (2010) state that Saudi Arabia has over 5,000,000 international tourists annually coming predominantly for religious purposes or motives such as participating in religious festivals or making Hajj or Umarh pilgrimages to the holy Islamic cities of Mecca and Medina. The largest of inbound tourism flow in Saudi Arabia by region is the Middle East market, accounting for 61% in 2013 (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). The total forecast for 2017 showed that the figure of 61% will fall slightly to 58% from the Middle East market (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Forecasting for 2017 also shows that arrivals from the Asia Pacific region will rise by 59% reflecting higher numbers of Muslims travelling to Saudi Arabia for religious purposes and this is becoming a more important market for Saudi Arabia (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). The forecasting also predicts that arrivals from the European region will rise by 27.8% by 2017 (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). However, the Middle East and Asian regions will remain the main nations for inbound tourism flows in Saudi Arabia. This is largely due to the continued strict entrance visa regulations for non-Muslim tourists (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013).

In terms of the key source markets for Saudi Arabia, the northern neighbour Kuwait is the largest providers of tourists' arrivals to Saudi Arabia, followed by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Travellers from these markets are predominantly either same-day visitors or visitors coming for business trips of short duration (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Arrivals from India and Pakistan are also important for the Saudi Arabia inbound tourism market. These arrivals are more likely to visit Saudi Arabia as holiday makers, as workers based in

neighbouring Gulf countries taking vacations in Saudi Arabia or for religious reasons (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013).

In terms of outbound tourism departures from Saudi Arabia, forecasting shows that there is a predicted further 24% increase between 2013 and 2017 to reach 12.1 million (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). The vast majority of outbound tourism is to other Middle Eastern destinations (86% in 2013) reflecting long-standing cultural and business ties that Saudi Arabia has with other Middle East countries (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). The most visited countries by Saudi tourists are Bahrain and Kuwait as these destinations are easy to travel to by road or air (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Jordan and the United Arab Emirates are also important and popular destinations for Saudi tourists (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Egypt and Qatar follow the above destinations in popularity as tourism destinations for Saudis, followed by Yemen, the United States of America, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Malaysia (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013).

Domestic tourism is important in Saudi Arabia and the government is keen to further develop this market to attract the millions of Saudi citizens that travel abroad each year (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). In 2000, the demand for domestic tourism was estimated to be around 14.5 million trips (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). The purposes of domestic tourism in Saudi Arabia mainly included leisure, visiting friends and relatives, religious and business purposes (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). In 2000, domestic leisure tourism was estimated at 6.4 million trips and the main motives of domestic leisure tourists were visiting coastal areas (Red sea in the west and the Gulf in the east)

and visiting mountains areas around Asir and Taif (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). Furthermore, domestic tourism tends to be largely family based and domestic tourists are more likely to travel during public holidays, Islamic vacations and to a certain extent, at weekends (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). The overall trend of Saudi Arabia tourism and tourism developments particularly in the domestic market is showing an increase and growth. The focus on religious tourism is clear in the country due to the country's religious status among Muslims all over the world and among citizens of the country. However, there are efforts to diversify the Saudi tourism market to be attractive for domestic tourists in particular.

2.4.2.1 Government regulations and Islamic perspectives effect on tourism in the country

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state based upon the principles prescribed by the Islam Holy Book (The Qur'an) and Islamic law (Shari'a) (Johnson, 2010). The tourism development and activities in the country are always related to and consider the Islamic values and perspectives (Johnson, 2010). The vision of SCTA follows the same Islamic vision of the country (Johnson, 2010). SCTA aim to develop and offer tourism products that ensure the careful following of this vision set within the framework of Islamic values (Johnson, 2010). There are many examples that reflect this approach in the country. Notable examples include the prohibition of the use of alcohol, prostitution or gambling and restrictions on wearing revealing clothing for both men and women in public (Johnson, 2010). Restricting the number of entry visas for non-Muslim travellers is also due to matters of cultural sensitivity and a result of the country's concerns over protecting the social and religious identity of the residents (Johnson, 2010). The differences between the Islamic and western worlds may deter many tourists and could create some uncertainties and tensions negatively affecting residents and their social values (Johnson, 2010). In recent years, the restrictions on non-Muslim visitors have

been eased to some extent; however, the rules are still inconvenient for foreigners who wish to visit certain remote locations in the country (Johnson, 2010). SCTA has certified tour operators to work with regions that are interested in promoting Saudi Arabia as a tourism destination (Johnson, 2010). SCTA has agreed that non-Muslim tourists, "who are interested in visiting the country, can organize trips through these accredited tour operators who liaise with travel agents in 65 countries including the United States, Europe, Asia, South Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, South Africa, among others" (Johnson, 2010, p.97).

2.4.3 The coastal plain of the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf) in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, there are two coastlines stretching along the coasts of Saudi Arabia: the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). The Gulf is semi-enclosed inland sea and there is a limited exchange of water with the open Indian Ocean and located in a semi-arid area of the Middle East (Figure 5) (Al-Otaibi, Ait Belaid, & Abdu, 2010).

Figure 5: Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf) map

Source: ("Persian Gulf," 2007). Retrieved from

http://www.persiansarenotarabs.com/page/persian_gulf/persian_gulf.html

The length of the Saudi coasts on the Gulf reaches about 1200 km and width of about 450 km, and covers a total water area of about 235,000 km^2 (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). The Gulf is characterised by low tidal movement, warm, shallow waters, and a geographical headland – sandy beach pattern ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). The Arabian Gulf is very shallow with an average depth of no more than 35 m (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). The deepest point in the Arabian Gulf located near the entrance of Strait of Hormus, depth of about 120 m (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). These influences and features have resulted in the formation of many important natural phenomena, particularly fringing coral reefs ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). The Arabian Gulf is home to about 60 species of corals that stretch from Al-Khafji, from the north, to Ras Abu Qamis, in the south ("Beaches and coasts," 2013). Furthermore, there are many natural phenomena that appear along these coasts such as marine terraces mixed with gravel and sand, such as the coasts of Al-Qali'ah, Al-Khafji, Mish'ab, and Tannuorah, bogs (a flat plain consisting of a mixture of sand and silt), Dakkakat (swallowing sand holes), mangroves bays, creeks and capes (Encyclopedia Saudi Arabia, 2011). There are also many sandy beaches stretching along the coasts and these are distinguished by huge sand dunes that extend inland for many kilometres and form a distinctive background for recreation activities on the beach ("Beaches and coasts," 2013). For example, Al-Uqair beach is one of the most significant tourism and heritage sites in Alhassa ("Beaches and coasts," 2013). There are several beaches like Menifah, Al-Jubail, Half Moon, and Al-Aqeel. In addition, lack of strong tidal flows and sea currents make swimming and other marine sports relatively safe here ("Beaches and coasts," 2013).

There are many islands in Saudi Arabia waters including 135 in the Arabian Gulf group which is about 11% of the total number of Saudi Arabia islands. Most of these Arabian Gulf Islands have a flat surface with a height of no more than 13 m above sea level

(Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). The largest island in Saudi Arabia in the Arabian Gulf is Abu Ail Island (about 59 km^2), followed by Island Batinah (about 34 km^2) and then Tarot (about 20 km^2) (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). Most of these islands are close to the coast with the furthest Arab island located about 50 nautical miles from the coast (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012).

The Gulf has a number of distinctive natural dynamic coastal ecosystems but the discovery of oil resources and the following socio-economic development has impacted significantly in the ecosystems of the sea (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). The discovery of oil in the area generated unparalleled coastal development and growth in coastal population which brought large scale of land and coastal reclamation, particularly along the coastal areas of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). The vast developments and human activities in the area put heavy pressures on the coastal ecosystems and environment of the Gulf (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). Many wildlife habitats and wetlands have been degraded causing the loss of marine habitats, reductions of fish catches and damage to coral reefs (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). Oil exploration, production, processing and transportation has also led to increased pollution levels (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). Moreover, the wars that the area went through (the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, the first and second Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003) have caused devastating effects to coastal and marine ecosystems in Saudi Arabia (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010).

Al-Otaibi et al., (2010) conducted a study that aimed at investigating the natural resources and assessing the environmental changes brought by human activities including industrial, socio-economic and recreational activities and related impacts. The study was conducted on two coastal areas located in the north of Dammam city in eastern Saudi Arabia (Manifah and Tanagib) and situated on the western coast of the Gulf (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). The results of the study showed that oil extraction

processes and oil spill are the main factors affecting the ecosystems of the area and leading to increased levels of pollution (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). The process of land reclamation, land filling, solid and liquid waste discharge, and over-fishing activities have also caused general degradation to fragile coastal ecosystems and habitats (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010).

The results of the Seddon and Khoja (2003) study on Saudi Arabian tourism patterns and attitudes showed that tourism in Saudi Arabia is tending toward a mass tourism type. The developments of the tourism sector have proceeded without assessments of the environmental impacts which led to the degrading of the natural resources upon which the tourism industry and its activities depend (Seddon & Khoja, 2003). Although literature around coastal and marine development impacts is limited for the country, the above studies clearly raise the concerns around the sensitivity of the marine environment and the importance of conducting more studies to assess impacts. These studies also indicate the importance of assessing the impacts of future developments in the area to limit negative impacts and improve or enhance positive impacts.

2.5   The study site: Half Moon Beach, East of Saudi Arabia

Half Moon Beach, the location for this study is situated on the Gulf coast and is one of the most popular beaches in eastern province of Saudi Arabia ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). The name "Half Moon" is derived from the bay's semi-circular shape ("Half Moon bay kite beach (Saudi Arabia)," 2014). Half Moon Bay is characterised by shallow, clear, hyper-saline protected waters and a sandy bottom with occasional rocks and shells ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). Half Moon Bay has an average water depth of about 7 m with some of the deepest spots about 15.3 m ("Beaches in Dammam," n.d.). There are some important marine species that are found in the Half Moon Bay such as the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin and blubber jellyfish ("Birds of Saudi Arabia,"

2011). The specific marine geographic features for this beach are not known but the researcher is assuming that the beach in general shares the same features of the Gulf which have been explained above.

Half Moon Beach is divided into five entrances namely: Loulou Beach, Murjan Beach, Sadaf Beach, Mahar Beach and Amwaj Beach. Each one of these entrances includes about five to nine circles and in each circle there are about 10 sunshades (in total, there is about 600 sunshades in this beach) (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). There are also toilets and water tanks and a children's playground in each circle (Figure 6). In addition, there are grass areas near the children's playgrounds, some football fields and about 20 sunshades specifically created for praying (Figure 7). Furthermore, about four private beaches (access is restricted and not available to the general public) can also be found along the bay; Saudi Aramco Beach (Oil Company), King Faisal University Beach, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals Beach and King Fahad Military City Beach (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). King Fahad Coastal City is also located on the bay and this area is restricted for males only and includes a range of sport, beach, coastal and marine activities. A number of resorts can be found along the beach such as Holiday Inn Half Moon Bay Resort, Boudl Half Moon Resort, Golden Tulip Resort and Movenpick Beach Resort. However, these charge relatively high prices which are not attainable for the majority of the population (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). These resorts have private sandy beaches and include a variety of water and sport activities for their clients.

Half Moon Beach is freely accessible to the public and not restricted by gender, religious affiliation or socio-economic status (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). The recreational activities offered at this beach include boat riding, riding the sand dunes with all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), pony riding, horse riding and other special recreational activities which are offered during special Islamic events and public holidays.

Figure 6: Circles of one of the entrances of Half Moon Beach and their sunshades.

Source: (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.borsaat.com/vb/t590822.html

Figure 7: A side of the beach (playground, praying sunshade and sitting sunshades).

Source: (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.borsaat.com/vb/t590822.html

Half Moon Beach has become an increasingly popular recreational location where both local residents and visitors to the area visit the beach and adjacent bay (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.). The beach also attracts domestic tourists, especially from Riyadh and the eastern regions of Saudi Arabia (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). It is an example of the growing interest in and use of the coast and, more specifically, sandy beaches for Saudis. So considering the importance of marine and coastal tourism and the global increase in the demand for marine activities, Half Moon Beach is an interesting case study to explore beach users' motivations, perspectives and thoughts about coastal and marine recreational activities on the beach and the adjacent near-shore sea.

2.6 Conclusion

There has been no published research into beach recreation and tourism in Saudi Arabia to date. More specifically, there has been no empirical research into the use, motivations or characteristics of beach users at Half Moon Beach. It is, however, clear that beaches are growing in popularity in Saudi as venues for recreation and Half Moon Beach is a good example of this. Half Moon Beach is a popular beach in eastern Saudi Arabia and an important recreational location for visitors and locals. Thus, there is a significant gap in our knowledge and understanding of this kind of recreation and tourism in this area. This study seeks to address this gap and provide, for the first time, data on such activities for coastal and marine tourism in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3. Research design and methods

3.1   Overall goal and objectives

The overall objective of this study was to provide an understanding of the characteristics, motivations, and activities of visitors involved in coastal and marine tourism in Saudi Arabia, specifically, visitors to Half Moon Beach. There is no published tourism research or studies on beaches in Saudi Arabia as a recreational attraction. Therefore, this research aimed to explore beach visitors' characteristics, motivations, and activities at this popular beach. The main research question explored was: What are the characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia? From this main research question, the following primary objectives were set:

- To identify the demographic characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach.
- To understand visitors' motivations.
- To understand visitors' views of the current activities available at the beach.
- To consider visitors' level of interest in developing marine and coastal activities and introducing more recreational activities.
- To consider the future of Half Moon Beach with regards to introducing new marine and coastal activities.

Finally, in order to achieve these research objectives and provide insights relevant to the main research question the following six specific research questions were developed.

Question 1: What are the demographics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 2: What are the characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 3: What are the motivations of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 4: What are the activities undertaken by visitors at Half Moon Beach?

Question 5: What is the level of satisfaction with the visit to Half Moon Beach?

Question 6: What are the views of visitors to Half Moon Beach with regards to the future development of coastal and marine activities?

3.2   Research design

The researcher conducted descriptive research as an exploratory study. Such an approach is appropriate where the research investigation focuses "on a relatively unstudied topic or in a new area, to become familiar with this area, to develop some general ideas about it, and perhaps even to generate some theoretical perspectives on it" (Adler & Clark, 2008, p. 12). This type of research aims at discovering, describing or marking out types of behaviour in areas or activities which have not previously been studied or explored (Veal, 2006). Descriptive research helps in providing up-to-date information or tracking any changes in certain behaviours or activities (Veal, 2006). Ercan (2011) stated that descriptive research is "to simply describe a recreational behaviour, experiences, a setting or a phenomenon" (p. 21). The researcher's aims in conducting this descriptive research were to describe Half Moon Beach visitors' demographic characteristics and motivations that motivate them to visit the beach, to identify visitors' marine and coastal activities at this location, to explore the experiences of visitors and look at views and opinions of visitors with regards to beach-related activities.

3.3   Research paradigm

A research paradigm guides the way research is conducted within a social research context and should be consistent with the way reality is understood (Feilzer, 2009). Paradigms are like 'belief systems' where researchers shape and design research through these paradigms (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Through paradigms, social reality can be observed differently by different people in a variety of ways (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

The most common paradigms used in social science research can be categorised as positivist, post-positivist, interpretive and critical (Neuman, 1997). For the purpose of this descriptive and exploratory study, the researcher adopted the positivist paradigm.

Veal (2006) stated that in the positivist paradigm "the researcher sees people as phenomena to be studied from the outside, with behaviour to be explained on the basis of facts and observations gathered by the researcher, using theories and models developed by researchers" (p. 37). The positivist paradigm is considered as the predominant approach in tourism and leisure studies (Veal, 2006).

Positivism has led to the belief that knowledge formation should be limited to observation and measurement (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Positivism aims at identifying causes and effects to understand and study the social reality (Walliman, 2006). This approach studies the world and people in it as objective things (Guthrie, 2010). Furthermore, Walliman (2006) stated that the positivism approach "looks at society as the focus for research, and through understanding its internal laws and establishing relevant facts, we can in turn understand how and why individuals behave as they do" (p. 10). Using a positivist approach is linked to quantitative studies and to methods in which quantitative data are collected through research instruments such as surveys (Guthrie, 2010).

3.4 The study methods

3.4.1 The self-reply questionnaire

The mobile nature of tourists makes it difficult for social scientists to gather data on tourists (Orams & Page, 2000). There are many techniques that can be employed to help social scientists study tourists. Researchers argue that questionnaires are the most commonly used method in leisure and tourism research (Veal, 2006). Veal (2006) refers to this survey method as a 'respondent-completed questionnaire' where the

questionnaire should be read and filled out by respondents while Orams and Page (2000) term this research instrument as a 'self-reply questionnaire'. Questionnaires are used in many types of studies, particularly in descriptive research "where the purpose is to generate a profile of the characteristics of the sample" (Rowley, 2014, p. 311). For the purpose of the descriptive and exploratory study, a self-reply (respondent-completed) questionnaire was used to gather data from Half Moon Beach visitors (18 years of age and over).

The questionnaire was presented in Arabic (Appendix B) as it was assumed that the majority of visitors would be from Saudi Arabia or from Arab countries near eastern Saudi Arabia and that Arabic would be their first language. The researcher translated the questionnaire from English to Arabic. In addition, English questionnaires were provided to visitors who were not able to read in Arabic. The questionnaire consisted of four sections to address the research questions outlined above. Section A looked at beach visit-related information. Section B explored the visitors' activities and satisfaction with their trip to Half Moon Beach. Section C focused on visitors' current and future views around developing beach-related activities on Half Moon Beach. Finally, Section D explored the general demographics of the visitors.

Both closed and open-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. With closed questions, the researcher provides a set of options from which the respondents can select (Veal, 2006). In an open-ended question the researcher allows respondents to write their own answers (Veal, 2006). Both closed and open-ended questions have advantages as well as disadvantages. "Open questions give respondents a greater freedom to answer the question because they answer in a way that suits their interpretation" (May, 2011, p. 110-111). Closed questions limit the freedom of respondents to choose from a number of possible answers given by the researcher,

which makes the analysis of these questions quicker and cheaper (May, 2011). However, combining both closed and open-ended questions in a questionnaire helps in providing more reliable data (Oppenheim, 1992). Adler and Clark (2008) stated that this combination helps in obtaining efficient responses in a short time from respondents. This survey used various types of closed questions including categories, checklists, ranked and scaled responses (Guthrie, 2010).

Five-point Likert-scale type questions were used in this study to measure different aspects associated with the beach visit experience. Likert-scale type questions are a common type of scaled responses (Guthrie, 2010). Veal (2006) states that with the scaling technique, respondents are asked to choose from a standard set of answers to show the level of importance or agreement they attach to a certain factor. May (2011) defines scaled questions as 'attitude scales' where the researcher can test respondents' attitudes regarding a particular subject. In this study, these types of questions were used in the questionnaire to ask respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with their beach visit and with the existing activities available at the beach (1 = extremely dissatisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied). These types of questions were also used to obtain responses on the importance of participating in marine and coastal activities during their beach visit (1 = not at all important, 5 = extremely important). Furthermore, scaling questions were used to ask respondents to indicate their level of interest in developing more beach/sea-related activities on the beach (1 = not at all interested, 5 = extremely interested). Negative choices were presented first and an answer option of "not sure/do not know" was available to give respondents the opportunity to express different answers if the given options did not express their attitude or opinion.

The layout of the questionnaire was very important in this study. The researcher tried to develop the questionnaire in a way that helped in answering the research questions

using certain rules and guidelines. To improve the validity and reliability of a questionnaire, questions should be written in simple, short, specific, unambiguous and neutral way (Guthrie, 2010). The questions should move from easy to hard questions and from general to more personal questions, which should result in a higher completion rate (Orams & Page, 2000). "To achieve the best response rates, questions should flow from the least sensitive to the most sensitive, from the factual and behavioral to the attitudinal, and from the more general to the more specific" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 79).

Futhermore, the length of the questionnaire should be as short as possible and limited to the necessary requirements of the research questions (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The researcher understood that beach visitors would not be willing to spend extensive time completing the questionnaire, therefore, the length of the questionnaire was limited to four pages and timed at eight to ten minutes to ensure careful consideration of visitors' time and a high completion rate.

3.4.1.1   Onsite field notes

Gray (2014) states that field notes are one of the most common ways used by researchers to gather data and collect additional information that support quantitative research. Onsite field notes were taken while the researcher was waiting for respondents to complete the questionnaires or after the completion from gathering the questionnaires on the day. The researcher was recording general notes of the site and mainly focusing on collecting notes around visitors' activities and behaviours at the beach. The researcher also recorded information about the weather. The possible reasons for refusing to participate in the study were also noted by the researcher. Eisenhardt (1989) stated that the key to gather a useful field notes is "to write down whatever impressions

occur, that is, to react rather than to sift out what may seem important, because it is often difficult to know what will and will not be useful in the future" (p. 539).

3.4.1.2 Reliability and validity of the study instrument

Ensuring the reliability and validity of the methods used in research is an important issue in any research type (Jennings, 2010). Reliability refers to "the ability to replicate the same results using the same techniques, that is, to provide results that other researchers could repeat" (Guthrie, 2010, p. 11). To ensure reliability, the study findings should be the same if the study were repeated at a different time or if the sample changed (Veal, 2006). Ercan (2011) believed that reliability is a sign of the consistency and stability of measurement. To help create reliable measurements in this study, the researcher used a questionnaire as the study method to collect information about the visitors. Bhattacherjee (2012) believes that data collection methods such as respondent-completed questionnaires are less subject to researcher bias, so they help in producing measurements that are more reliable. Furthermore, to improve reliability, the researcher should ask participants questions that are straightforward, interesting and these questions should discuss issues that are familiar to the participants being sampled (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The researcher used a pilot study to estimate the reliability of the instrument. A pilot study is an example of inter-observer reliability and is one of the methods used to help estimate the reliability of the instrument (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Inter-observer reliability is defined as a "measure of consistency between two or more independent raters (observers) of the same construct" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 59).

Validity refers to the level of accuracy of the data collected (Guthrie, 2010). Veal (2006) defined it as "the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied" (p. 41). Therefore, the researcher should ensure that the instrument used is accurately measuring what is set out to measure

(Guthrie, 2010). There are different types of validity measures used to assess the performance of the research instrument such as content validity (Litwin, 1995). Content validity "is a subjective measure of how appropriate the items seem to a set of reviewers who have some knowledge of the subject matter" (Litwin, 1995, p. 4). This measurement assesses the content of the research instrument to ensure that it includes everything needed for a valid research instrument (Litwin, 1995). Validity is a complicated issue in tourism research as these studies are mainly dependent on people's personal views and usually study people's behaviour and attitudes (Veal, 2006). Therefore, the researcher used a pilot study to test whether the respondents understood and interpreted the questionnaire consistently and, thus, that the instrument had validity.

3.5 Ethics

Ethics are defined as "the rules of conduct in research" (Walliman, 2006, p. 4). Walliman (2006) stated that research ethics are primarily "concerned with the effects of research on people, and, importantly, on those people who get involved in the research process in one way or another" (p. 9). Researchers can view ethical considerations in research through the perspective of the values of truthfulness and honesty. Another perspective is that ethical responsibilities in research, such as respect and confidentiality, also represent important ethical issues and considerations (Walliman, 2006). Researchers must consider ethical perspectives when conducting research.

A participant information sheet was attached to the front of self-reply questionnaire and provided to the participants (Appendix A). This sheet consisted of two pages that included information about the research such as the purpose of the study, the reasons and benefits of participating in the study and the suggested time to complete the questionnaire. The sheet also included information that advised the potential participants of the confidentiality of the data that would be collected and explained that

personal information would not be required. Moreover, the researcher explained verbally to each participant that the questionnaire was anonymous. The researcher also explained to each respondent that participation in this study was voluntary and there was no harm if they chose not to participate. The AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC) reviewed and approved the research instrument and the methods of data collection and data analyses. Approval was given on 25 November 2014 (AUTEC reference number 14/357) (Appendix C).

3.5.1 Participant culture

Understanding the ethical responsibilities of the researcher is an important issue in any research. One of these responsibilities is respect for people's cultural, moral, religious and legal principles and perspectives (Guthrie, 2010). This ethical responsibility is a critical point in this study. The researcher is an adult married female Saudi Arabian national and Muslim faith follower and aware of and sensitive to the vulnerability and expectations of potential study participants. Furthermore, the researcher has a full understanding of the relevant laws, safety rules and regulations followed in Saudi Arabia. This understanding helped the researcher in considering and understanding the tendency of people in Saudi Arabia to distrust questionnaires. For example, the researcher avoided approaching participants during prayer or meal times, as this would have been considered inappropriate. Furthermore, the researcher understood the cultural limitations in Saudi Arabia regarding women approaching men; therefore, the researcher used her husband as a research assistant to distribute the participant information sheet and questionnaires to male participants. The researcher also obtained verbal and written agreement from the Eastern Province Municipality in Dammam and from the Supreme Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) for collecting the data from visitors at Half Moon Beach. Some of the visitors ($n=21$) who were selected

to participate in the study asked the researcher to provide these agreement documents for verification.

3.6 The study sample

3.6.1 Sample size

Determining the sample size of a study relies on a number of aspects, including the aim of the study, the size of the population and the research instrument (Guthrie, 2010). The goal of this study was to collect information on a population that had not been studied before, and therefore there was no published research or studies on the use of beaches in this area as a tourism attraction. A questionnaire as a research instrument was used to collect data on this population (beach-visitors users) and the research relied on data and results drawn from the visitors. The exact number of visitors to Half Moon Beach was unknown; therefore, the researcher aimed to collect at least 300 completed questionnaires assuming that the population is large. The assumption of the large population was based on the researcher personal knowledge of the beach and on a number of newspaper articles and news about Half Moon Beach. The articles mainly describes the visitation of the beach as large and some articles states that the beach visited by thousands of visitors annually.

Sample size for the thesis was determined using the sample size formula $n=Z^2 p\ (1-p)/e^2$ ("Determining sample size," n.d.). This formula is used for populations that are large and particularly for population where the total population is unknown ("Determining sample size," n.d.). A confidence level of 95% was used, Z=1.96 and p=0.5 for the unknown population Moreover, Veal (2006) states that larger sample sizes are standard for researchers collecting quantitative data. "It is extremely important to choose a sample that is truly representative of the population so that the inferences derived from the sample can be generalized back to the population of interest" (Bhattacherjee, 2012,

p. 67). This sample size was set to ensure data were as representative as possible and to enable the researcher to draw valid conclusions that represented the population.

3.6.2 Simple random sampling

Sampling refers to "the statistical process of selecting a subset (called a 'sample') of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and statistical inferences about that population" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 67). Simple random sampling was used in this study. Using this method allows an equal probability of selection of the sample from the target population (Neuman, 1997). Moreover, this approach is considered as the appropriate method when dealing with a study that lacks previous information on the target population (Neuman, 1997). Furthermore, simple random sampling is one of the straightforward techniques amongst all probability sampling techniques and this straightforwardness is considered an advantage (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Veal (2006) believes that random sampling helps in achieving representativeness and reduces bias in the data.

3.6.2.1 Participant selection

The participants in this study were selected randomly using simple random sampling in the following way: Visitors were approached in an arranged way from all entrances to the beach (named Loulou, Murjan, Sadaf, Mahar and Amwaj) (Figure 8). At each entrance, there are many sunshades (approximately 600 in total) (Al-Ghamdi, 2012). Visitors usually sit either in these sunshades or on the sand near the water or on the grass areas a little further from the water. The researcher approached the visitors by randomly selecting the sunshade that was closest to the place where her husband parks the car. The researcher introduced herself to the participants, explained the reasons for the approach and explained the topic and purpose of the questionnaire. The researcher identified participants by asking visitors in the group 18 years and over who had next

birthday and then asking them to complete the questionnaire. If the selected visitor refused to complete the questionnaire, the researcher thanked them and noted those people and any reasons that were mentioned for the refusal.

Figure 8: The sign showing names of the beach five entrances and direction of each entrance.
Photograph: Alkhalaf (2015).

3.6.2.2   Data/day selection

The specific days and time for collecting the study data were selected to be representative of different days of the week. The collection of the data took place in December 2014 and continued until February 2015 as these months are considered a busy time for beach visitation in Saudi Arabia. Days chosen for collection of data were a range of weekends (weekends in Saudi Arabia are on Friday and Saturday), weekdays and some days during school holidays. Furthermore, the researcher approached visitors

during different times of the day but mostly between 11am to 3pm or 3pm to 6pm. The researcher made two visits after 6pm but noticed that this time was not appropriate for approaching visitors. Weather at night got colder and visitors were more likely to stay inside their sunshades or inside tents, which involved some embarrassment and discomfort for both the researcher and visitors to be approached during this time. Weather conditions during these days were mostly sunny with some clouds and light winds. Weather at night was colder and the wind was stronger. (Table 1 below provide a profile of air temperature during the study period).

Table 1: Profile of air temperature (high and low) during the study period

Date	Air temperatures maximum and minimum*
20 December 2014	High (23°C) Low (11°C)
26 December 2014	High (14°C) Low (8°C)
09 January 2015	High (19°C) Low (11°C)
16 January 2015	High (22°C) Low (11°C)
21 January 2015	High (19 °C) Low (9°C)
25 January 2015	High (22°C) Low (10°C)
30 January 2015	High (27°C) Low (16 °C)
05 February 2015	High (26°C) Low (16°C)
06 February 2015	High (26°C) Low (14°C)
11 February 2015	High (31°C) Low (20°C)
14 February 2015	High (25°C) Low (18°C)
20 February 2015	High (31°C) Low (18°C)
21 February 2015	High (22°C) Low (15°C)
27 February 2015	High (25°C) Low (10 °C)

- Source: The Weather Channel App on the researcher's cell phone.

3.7   Piloting the self-reply questionnaire

3.7.1   Pilot study

The self-reply questionnaire was tested prior to the actual process of data collection using a pilot study at the study site. Veal (2006) defines a pilot study as "small-scale 'trial runs' of a larger survey" (p. 276). The pilot study helped in pre-testing the usefulness and validity of the questionnaire (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). By pre-testing the instrument, the researcher may be able to reveal uncertainty, misunderstanding, lack of simplicity or biases in question phrasing (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Testing the questionnaire can help in uncovering any issues or problems with the language, layout and to check the length and structure of the instrument (Guthrie, 2010). "Piloting aims to see if the questionnaire works and whether changes need to be made" (May, 2011, p. 108). Furthermore, Veal (2006) summarises the purposes of pilot study as shown in (Figure 9) and states that piloting is important in testing all characteristics of the survey. One of the important purposes of a pilot study is to test the 'familiarity with respondents', which "refers to role of the pilot study in alerting the researcher to any characteristics, idiosyncrasies or sensitivities of the respondent group with which he or she may not have been previously familiar" (Veal, 2006, p. 276).

a. Test questionnaire wording
b. Test question sequencing
c. Test questionnaire layout
d. Familiarity with respondents
e. Test fieldwork arrangements
f. Train and test fieldworkers
g. Estimate response rate
h. Estimate interview, etc. time
i. Test analysis procedures

Figure 9: Pilot survey purposes (Veal, 2006, p. 276).

The pilot study was conducted at the study site (Half Moon Beach) by the researcher and her research assistant (husband) on Saturday, 20 December 2014 (the second day of the weekend). The study was conducted at one entrance (Loulou beach entrance) of the beach (five different entrances in total). The air temperature on the day was 23°C and mostly sunny with light wind.

The beach was not very busy on the day of the pilot study, and according to the researcher's family, who visited the beach about three weeks prior, the beach was quieter than usual. All picnic areas in the area near the Loulou entrance were full with families and their children or groups of adults. However, the sand areas close to the sea were almost empty with only two or three families sitting on mats near the sea. Some visitors were sitting on the grass areas a little further from the beach. Some visitors were swimming or playing on the beach and in the water. Others were picnicking, cooking or relaxing. Some children were playing with kites, playing in the playgrounds or running around with their balls.

The researcher approached 12 randomly selected people in total to conduct the pilot survey at the Loulou entrance of Half Moon Beach between the hours of 1:30pm and 4:30pm. Two people refused to participate stating that they were too busy. The researcher approached the visitors by randomly selecting the sunshade that was closest to her sunshade to the right. The researcher identified four different locations at the entrance to approach visitors where there were small sunshades over water taps used for washing for praying and washing dishes. Questionnaire participants were identified by asking people in the group 18 years and over who had the closest date of birth and asking them to complete the questionnaire, (all participants were within a group of two or more). The participants were asked to be critical of the survey and to ask questions and offer comments during or after completion of the survey.

The 10 participants completed the questionnaire within the suggested time (less than 10 minutes), and they appeared to be able to complete the questionnaire without any difficulties. Despite the researcher explaining that the questionnaire is a self-reply questionnaire and that it should be individually completed, some participants were clearly sharing comments about the questionnaire amongst others in their groups.

The result of the pilot study suggested that no additional amendments of the questionnaire were required and that the data to be collected from the questionnaire would be representative of the population and should help in answering the research questions. The 10 completed questionnaires were included in the overall sample of this study.

3.8   Research data collection

Research was conducted on 14 days (Table 2) between 20 December 2014 and 27 February 2015. Weather during these days was mostly sunny, partly cloudy with light wind during the day and colder at night. Data collected from the pilot study on Saturday 20 December 2014 was also included in the sample. Research was conducted mostly during the weekends, twice on weekdays, twice during school holidays and once on a public holiday.

Table 2: Research days at Half Moon Beach, 2014-2015 (Research days = 14).

Day of the week	Date	Detail
Saturday	20 December 2014	Weekend
Friday	26 December 2014	Weekend
Friday	09 January 2015	Weekend
Friday	16 January 2015	School holiday
Wednesday	21 January 2015	School holiday
Sunday	25 January 2015	Public holiday
Friday	30 January 2015	Weekend
Thursday	05 February 2015	Weekday
Friday	06 February 2015	Weekend
Wednesday	11 February 2015	Weekday
Saturday	14 February 2015	Weekend
Friday	20 February 2015	Weekend
Saturday	21 February 2015	Weekend
Friday	27 February 2015	Weekend

Visitors aged 18 years and over were selected using simple random sampling to complete the self-reply questionnaire. Visitors were approached during different times, between 11am to 3pm, 3pm to 6pm and between 6pm to 8pm. There were only two night visits during the study period due to cultural limitations.

At each beach visit, the researcher visited different entrances of Half Moon Beach during the data collection period and randomly selected a different starting point during each visit. The selection of the starting point was based on where the researcher randomly parked during each visit. The researcher identified a number of points at each entrance from which to approach visitors randomly from the right or left. The marker in these points were small sunshade areas that contained water taps for visitors to wash for

praying or for washing dishes. After reaching each marker point, the researcher walked a random number of steps either to the right or left to approach visitors either sitting under the sunshades, on the sand near the water or on the grass areas. The researcher decision on the random number of steps and direction was based on visitors' random sitting areas around the beach and the random distances between them.

3.9   Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the methodological aspects that were used to guide the thesis. This study is a descriptive study that was guided by the traditional and conservative positivist method. This method is widely practiced in tourism studies and linked to researchers that collect quantitative data. Conducting a descriptive study is suitable when studying and researching a new area that has not been studied before such as the case of Half Moon Beach in this study. This study is the first to be carried out at Half Moon Beach and the first study to examine beach recreation and tourism in Saudi Arabia. A self-reply questionnaire was used as a research instrument and distributed among beach visitors aged 18 years and over using simple random sampling. The findings are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Results

4.1 Self-reply questionnaire

4.1.1 Questionnaire completion rate

The researcher approached 323 people to participate in the study and complete a self-reply questionnaire, of which 43 refused to participate. The study's total sample size was therefore 280, representing an 87% completion rate. Visitors were approached in an arranged way from all entrances to the beach (named Loulou, Murjan, Sadaf, Mahar and Amwaj). The researcher approached the visitors by randomly selecting the sunshade that was closest to the place where her husband (researcher assistant) parks the car and during different times of the day but mostly between 11am to 3pm or 3pm to 6pm.

However, a higher number of questionnaires were collected during weekend days between 11am to 4pm, as there were more beach visitors during this time (see Figure 10). (Because the researcher considered it culturally inappropriate to take photographs at the beach and explicit consent was not obtained to do so, the researcher did not take photographs. As a consequence, Figure 10 shows an example of a busy day at the site taken during the same period chosen from the internet). Visitation during weekdays was very low (see Figure 11). Additionally, between 5-8pm, the rate at which people refused to participate was higher. Of the 43 people who refused to participate during the data collection period, 25 were between the time 5-8pm (58%) and 18 during other times of the day (42%). The researcher did not notice any gender differences in these refusals.

Forty-three people declined to participate in the study, mostly without explanation. The researcher noticed that people who seemed busy with their children or cooking were more likely to refuse participation. Moreover, the researcher noticed that some people who refused to participate in the questionnaire seemed uncomfortable with the invitation.

As explained in the previous chapter, weather conditions during the study period were mostly sunny with some clouds and light winds during the day. Weather at night was colder and the wind was stronger (see Table 1 in Chapter 3).

Figure 10: Photo used as an example to show size of visitation during weekends.

Source: Al-Ghamdi (2012). Retrieved from http://www.alriyadh.com/704493

Figure 11: Part of Mahar entrance in Half Moon Beach on a weekday. Photograph: Alkhalaf (2015).

4.2   Visitor demographics at Half Moon Beach

4.2.1 Gender

Of the 280 respondents that completed the questionnaire, 54% were male and 46% were female (Table 3).

Table 3: Gender demographic profile

Gender	*n=*	*%*
Male	151	53.9%
Female	129	46.1%
Total	280	100%

4.2.2 Age

An analysis of the age of the 280 respondents shows the majority (42%) were between 25-34 years, with the median age range of 25-34 years. Approximately 24% of respondents were in the 35-44 age group, 24% in the 18-24 age group and 9% in the 45-54 age group. There were lower numbers of visitors' aged 55-64 age group and no participants were 65 years or older (Table 4).

Table 4: Age demographic profile

Age	n=	%
18-24 years	66	23.6%
25-34 years	118	42.1%
35-44 years	67	23.9%
45-54 years	25	8.9%
55-64 years	4	1.4%
65+ years	0	0%
Total	280	100%

4.2.3 Primary occupation or profession

In question 3 in section D (see Appendix A for a copy of the self-reply questionnaire) respondents were asked to state their primary occupations. They were given some examples (government employee, private sector employee, student, seeking work, retired etc.) of the sort of answers expected for this question and they were given a free space to write down their occupation if it was not within the range of examples given in the question.

The question was not asking participants to specify their exact occupation, but just to give the general description of their main occupation. Table 5 below outlines the range of occupations provided by the respondents.

Results indicated that of the 280 participants, 29% were private sector employees and 27% were government employees. In Saudi Arabia, most people work in the private or government sectors, which is why these occupations were suggested as examples for the respondents.

A Pearson's chi-square test showed a highly significant difference between the proportions of males and females over occupations (n=280, df 8, p=0.000), indicating that males were more likely to have an occupation than females.

Table 5: Demographic profile of participants' occupations

Occupations	n=	%
Private sector employee	80	28.6%
Government employee	75	26.8%
Student	58	20.7%
Housewife	45	16.1%
Looking for a job	11	3.9%
Retired	7	2.5%
Freelance job	2	0.7%
Entrepreneur	1	0.4%
Volunteer worker	1	0.4%
Total	**280**	100%

4.2.4 Education

The majority (45%) of respondents had a university undergraduate degree. Almost 27% of respondents' highest educational attainment was a high school qualification and almost 17% had a post-school certificate/diploma. University postgraduate qualifications accounted for 8% whilst other post-high school qualifications accounted for 2% of respondents. Three of the respondents answered 'other' for this question, of which two had an intermediate school certificate and one respondent had only a primary school certificate (Figure 12).

A Pearson's chi-square test showed there was a highly significant difference in the proportions of age over education levels (n=280, df 20, p=0.013), indicating that respondents in the 25-34 year age range were significantly more likely to have a university undergraduate degree.
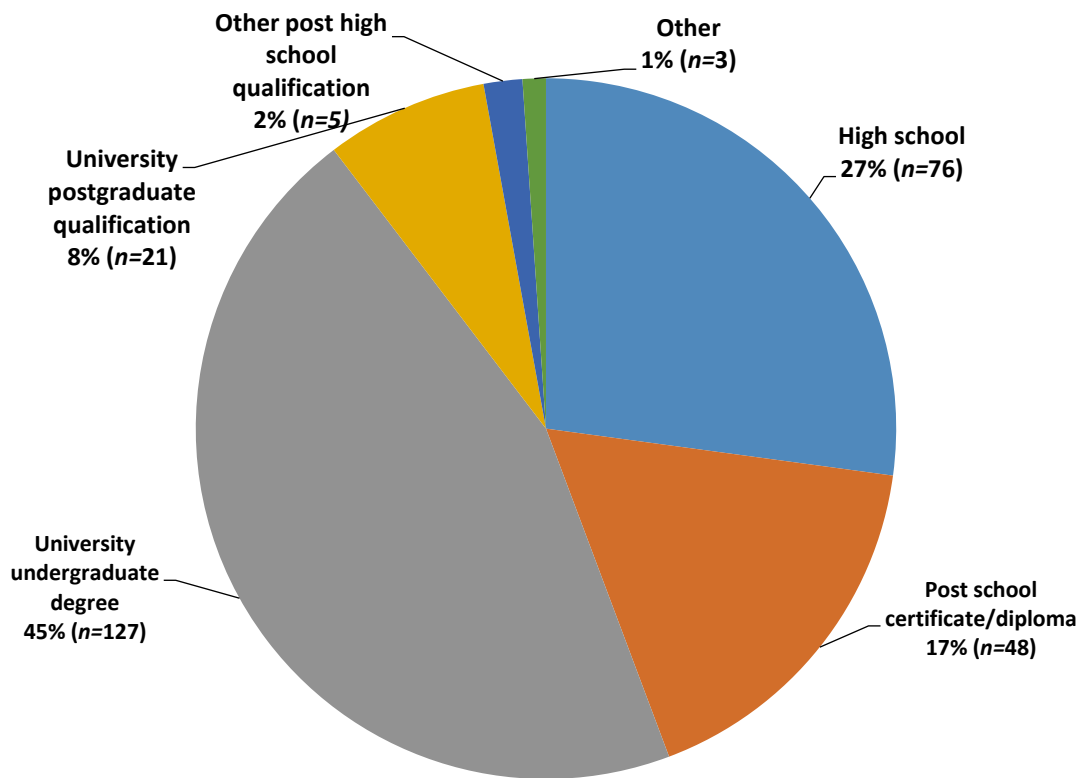
Figure 12: Respondents' highest educational achievement.

4.2.5 Place of residence

The majority of respondents were Saudi citizens (95%), whilst 3.2% of the respondents were Saudi permanent residents and 1.8% had their primary place of residence outside of Saudi Arabia. The general patterns of results are skewed (skewness 2.259) towards respondents who lived in Dammam (41%). Twenty percent resided in Alhassa and 15% resided in Al Khobar. Seven percent of people resided in Qatif, 6% resided in Riyadh and 4% resided in Hafar Al-Batin. Several respondents resided in other cities such as Jubail, Daharan, Abqaiq, Alnuayreayh, Buraidah and Jeddah (Table 6). Furthermore, three of the five visitors who visited the beach resided in Bahrain and two visitors resided in Yemen (Table 6).

Overall, the majority (*n*=256, 91%) of the Saudi citizens and permanent residents who visited the beach lived in cities located in Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (Dammam,

Alhassa, Al Khobar, Qatif, Daharan, Abqaiq, Jubail, Alnuayreayh, Hafar Al-Batin). Five of the most 10 most frequently identified cities are located within an average distance of 26.8 km of Half Moon Beach (Dammam, Al Khobar, Qatif, Daharan, and Abqaiq) whilst the two of the 10 most frequently stated cities are located within an average distance of 99.5 km (Alhassa and Jubail). Table 7 presents a list of Half Moon Beach visitors' places of residence and distances from the beach. Furthermore, Figure 13 shows a map of Saudi Arabia and indicates the locations of these cities in relation to Half Moon Beach. Table 8 shows a demographic profile of Half Moon Beach visitors.

Table 6: Demographic profile of place of residence

Place of residency	*n=*	%
Dammam	116	41.4%
Alhassa	55	19.6%
Al Khobar	42	15.0%
Qatif	20	7.1%
Riyadh	16	5.7%
Hafar Al-Batin	11	3.9%
Jubail	7	2.5%
Dhahran	2	0.7%
Abqaiq	2	0.7%
Jeddah	2	0.7%
Buraidah	1	0.4%
Alnuayreayh	1	0.4%
Non-Saudi residents (visitors)		
Yemen	2	0.7%
Bahrain	3	1.1%
Total	**280**	**100%**

Table 7: Places of residence for Half Moon Beach visitors and distance from the beach

Place of residence	Distance (Km)*
Dhahran	13
Al Khobar	16
Dammam	21
Qatif	38
Abqaiq	46
Bahrain	53
Alhassa	97
Jubail	102
Alnuayreayh	280
Riyadh	368
Hafar Al-Batin	471
Buraidah	601
Yemen	1177
Jeddah	1191

*Source: Google Maps (2015). Retrieved from
http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/science/article/pii/0964569193900668
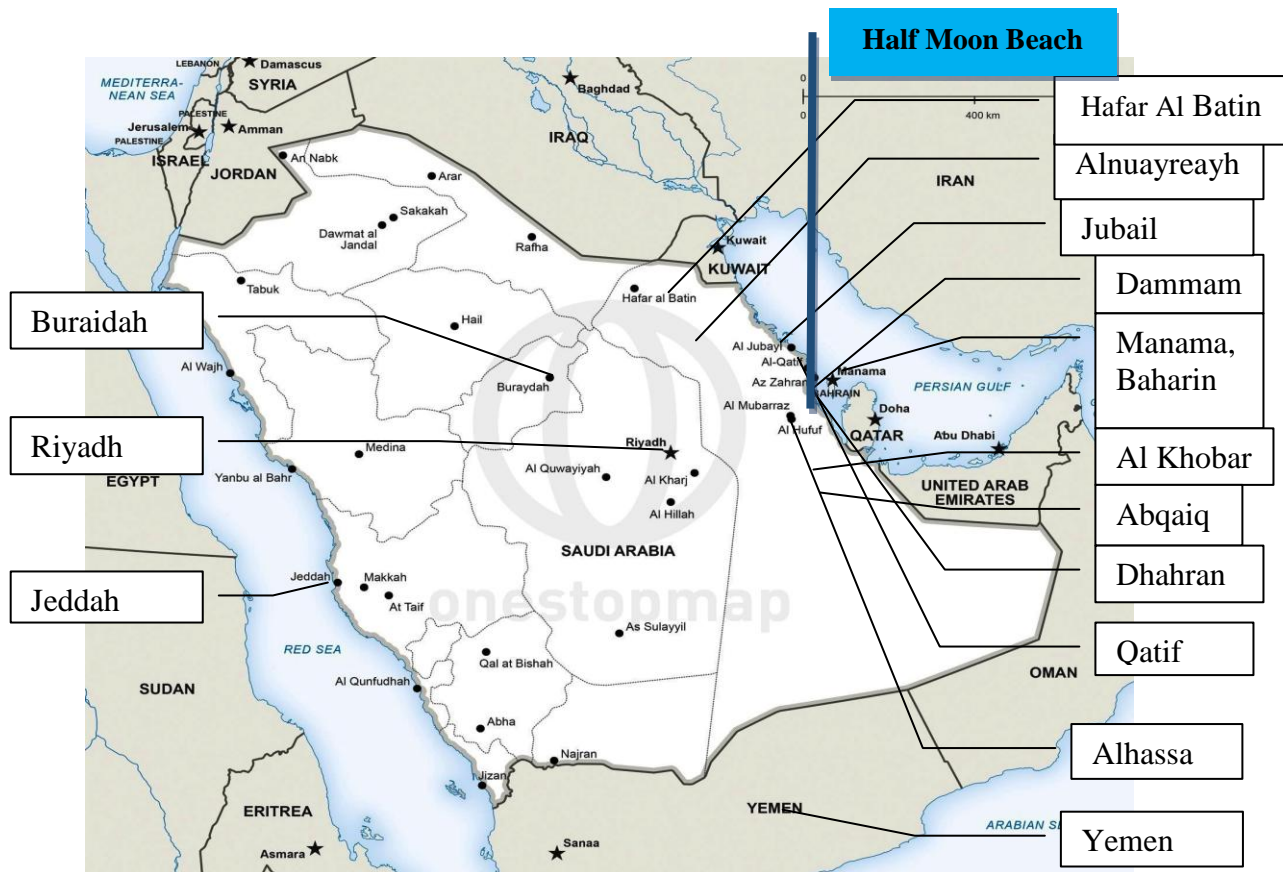
Figure 13: Map of Saudi Arabia showing the locations of Half Moon Beach and the location of visitors' places of residences

Table 8: Profile of visitor demographics

Profile of respondents	%
Gender	
Male	53.9%
Female	46.1%
Age	
18-24 years	23.6%
25-34 years	42.1%
35-44 years	23.9%
45-54 years	8.9%
55-64 years	1.4%
65+ years	0.0%
Occupation	
Private sector employee	28.6%
Government employee	26.8%
Student	20.7%
Housewife	16.1%
Looking for a job	3.9%
Retired	2.5%
Freelance job	0.7%
Entrepreneur	0.4%
Volunteer worker	0.4%
Education	
High school	27.1%
Post-school certificate/diploma	17.1%
University undergraduate degree	45.4%
University postgraduate qualification	7.5%
Other post-high school qualification	1.8%
Other	1.1%
Place of residency (Saudi Arabia)	
Dammam	41.4%
Alhassa	19.6%
Al Khobar	15.0%
Qatif	7.1%
Riyadh	5.7%
Hafar Al-Batin	3.9%
Jubail	2.5%
Dhahran	0.7%
Abqaiq	0.7%
Jeddah	0.7%
Buraidah	0.4%
Alnuayreayh	0.4%
Non-Saudi residents (visitors)	
Yemen	0.7%
Bahrain	1.1%
N=280	

4.3 The characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach

4.3.1 Length of visit

The estimated length of a visit to Half Moon Beach, by 280 respondents, ranged from 2-24 hours. The average length of visit was slightly longer than seven hours (Skewness 1.785 and standard deviation 4.621). The majority of respondents (*n=122, 43%*) suggested they may stay at the beach for 4-6 hours duration. Forty percent (*n=111*) would stay for a longer visit of more than six hours and 17% (*n=47*) would stay for a shorter visit of 2-3 hours duration (Figure 14).

A Pearson's chi-square test shows there is no significant difference between the place of residence and length of visit.
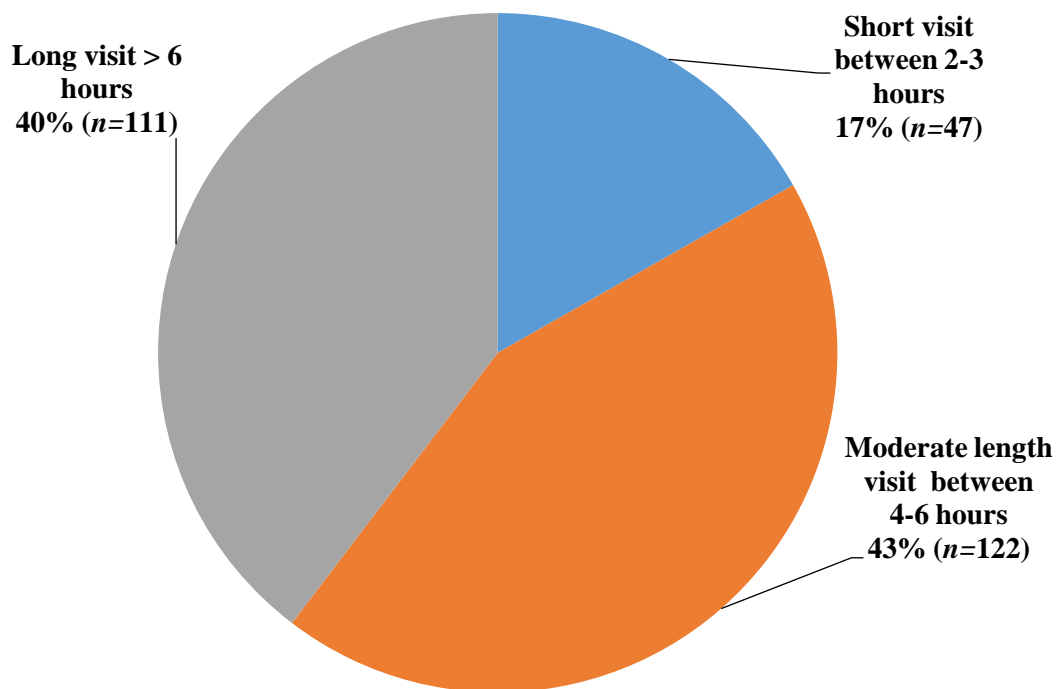
Figure 14: Visitors' estimated length of stay.

4.3.2 Place of overnight stay

Of the 280 respondents, only 40 respondents (14%) were likely to stay overnight in a nearby area or city. The majority of the 40 respondents who answered this question

were likely to stay in Al Khobar (n=22, 55%) and 38% were likely to stay in Dammam (n=15). Two of the 40 respondents suggested they were likely to stay in resorts near Half Moon Beach (Boudl Resort, Holiday Inn Resort), and one respondent did not mention the name of the resort.

4.3.3 Place of origin before visiting Half Moon Beach

Question 4 in section A of the questionnaire asked respondents to specify from which town/city they had come from on the day they visited Half Moon Beach. Of the 280 respondents, the majority travelled from cities and towns located in eastern Saudi Arabia. The majority of those respondents travelled from Dammam (n=130, 46%), followed by 21% who had travelled from Al Khobar (n=59). Seventeen percent travelled from Alhassa (n=47), 7% travelled from Qatif (n=20) and 3% travelled from Riyadh (n=8). A small number of respondents travelled on the day from other cities such as Hafar Al-Batin, Jubail, Abqaiq, Dhahran and Alnuayreayh. Two respondents travelled from Manama, Bahrain (Table 9).

Table 9: Characteristics of a visit based on respondents' place of stay prior to the visit

City	Country	n=	%
Dammam	Saudi Arabia	130	46.4%
Al Khobar	Saudi Arabia	59	21.1%
Alhassa	Saudi Arabia	47	16.8%
Qatif	Saudi Arabia	20	7.1%
Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	8	2.9%
Hafar Al-Batin	Saudi Arabia	5	1.8%
Jubail	Saudi Arabia	4	1.4%
Abqaiq	Saudi Arabia	2	0.7%
Dhahran	Saudi Arabia	2	0.7%
Manama	Bahrain	2	0.7%
Alnuayreayh	Saudi Arabia	1	0.4%
Total		280	100%

4.3.4 Transportation

Of the 280 respondents, the majority arrived at Half Moon Beach by private vehicle (*n=276*, 98.6%). Only four (1.4%) respondents drove to Half Moon Beach in a rental car. Two were visitors who lived in Yemen, one respondent lived in Riyadh and one lived in Jeddah. Thus, visitors who live in areas far from the beach were more likely to rent a car.

4.3.5 Group size

There was a positive skew (skewness +1.288) towards visitation in large groups (standard deviation 9.146). Group size ranged from one person to 40 people, with a mean group size of 11. Of the 280 respondents, 31% visited in a group of 2-5 people (*n=87*), 29% (*n=82*) visited in a group of 6-10 people, 26% (*n=72*) visited in a group of more than 16 people and 13% (*n=35*) visited in a group of 11-15 people. Only four respondents (1%) visited the beach alone on that day (Table 10).

There was no significant difference between the proportions of age and over group size. There was also no significant difference between place of residence and group size.

Table 10: Characteristics of a visit based on group size

Group size	*n=*	%
1 (alone)	4	1.4%
2-5 people	87	31.1%
6-10 people	82	29.3%
11-15 people	35	12.5%
16 or more people	72	25.7%
Total	280	100%

4.3.6 Companions during the beach visit

Of the 280 respondents, 276 respondents who answered this question visited with companions of friends, partners/spouses, children, family and/or other family members (Table 11). As previously mentioned, there were only four respondents visited the beach

alone. With regard to the respondents' companions during the beach visit on the day, most respondents visited with two companions ($n=105$, 38%) and three companions ($n=87$, 32%). Twenty percent visited with only one companion, 8% visited with four companions and only 2% visited with five companions. The most popular companions selected by 276 respondents were children (76%), family (55%) and partners/spouses (48%). Thirty percent of the 276 respondents selected friends as a visit companion and 21% selected other family members.

Table 11: Characteristics of a visit based on visit companions

Beach visit companions	*n=*	%
With friends	85	30.4%
With partners/spouses	134	47.9%
With children	213	76.1%
With family	153	54.6%
With other family members	59	21.1%
Other	0	0

The 76% respondents who visited with children were mostly visiting with 3-4 children ($n=58$, 21%), 1-2 children ($n=45$, 16%) and 5-6 children ($n=34$, 12%) (Table 12).

Table 12: Characteristics of a visit based on number of children

Number of Children	*n=*	%
1-2 children	45	16.1%
3-4 children	58	20.7%
5-6 children	34	12.1%
7-8 children	21	7.5%
9-10 children	27	9.6%
11+ children	28	10.0%
None	67	23.9%
Total	**280**	**100%**

4.3.7 Previous visits to Half Moon Beach

The majority of the 280 respondents ($n=263$, 94%) had previously visited Half Moon Beach. First-time visitors accounted for only 6% ($n=17$) of respondents. Considering

the different expressions given by the 243 (87%) respondents who answered the question asking to specify the number of previous visits, the researcher assigned common categories to reflect the answers. Figure 15 shows that the majority of respondents that had previously visited Half Moon Beach (*n=101, 42%*) had done so between one to 10 times. Twenty-one percent (*n=50*) suggested they had visited 'many times'. Fourteen percent (*n=35*) described themselves as 'regular visitors' of the beach and 14% suggested they had previously visited the beach between 11 to 20 times (*n=35*). Nine percent (*n=21*) of the respondents suggested they had previously visited the beach more than 21 times. One respondent commented that he was 'not sure' of the number of visits.
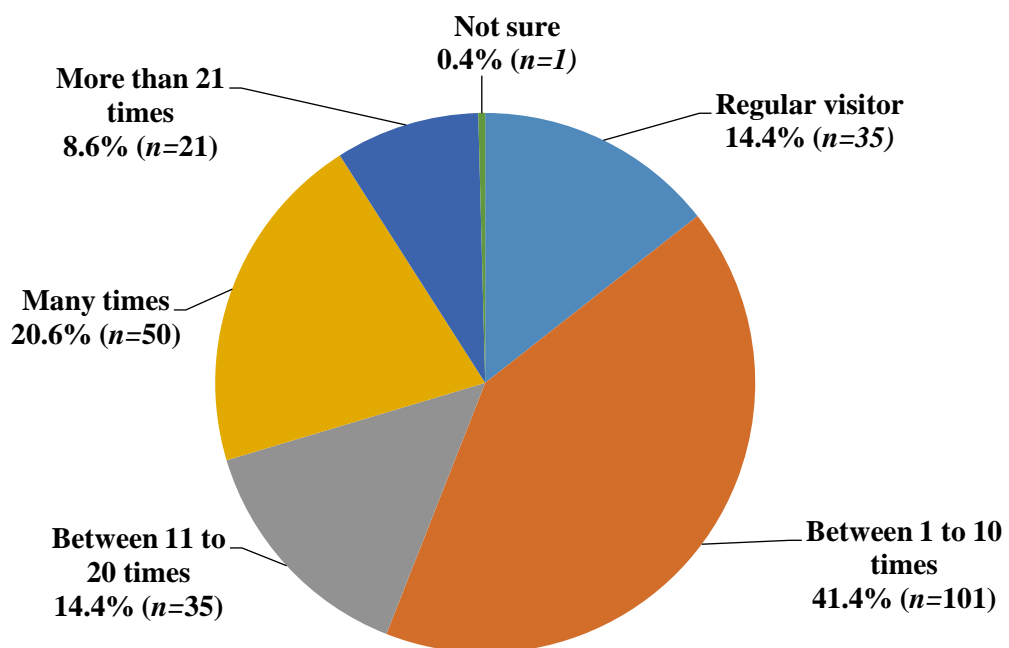
Figure 15: Characteristics of a visit based on the number of previous visits.

4.3.8   Most recent visits to Half Moon Beach

Respondents who had previously visited Half Moon Beach recorded their most recent visit (Table 13). The researcher again assigned a number of categories that reflect respondents' different responses and expressions. Of the 196 respondents, 37% (*n=73*)

suggested that their last visit was between two to five years ago whilst 33% (*n=56*) suggested that it was between two to five months ago. Fourteen percent (*n=28*) of the respondents suggested that their last visit was between one week to one month ago and 6% (*n=11*) suggested that it was more than six years ago. Two respondents stated that their last visit was the previous day and two respondents stated that they could not remember when their last visit was. One respondent stated that their last visit was the previous night and another person commented that the last visit was when they were a child.

Table 13: Characteristics of a visit based on the time of previous visit

Time of previous visit	*n=*	%
1 week - 1 month	28	14.3%
2 - 5 months	65	33.2%
6 - 12 months	13	6.6%
2 - 5 years	73	37.2%
6 years +	11	5.6%
Previous day	2	1.0%
Previous night	1	0.5%
Cannot remember	2	1.0%
When I was a child	1	0.5%
Total	**196**	**100%**

4.4 Motivations, activities and satisfaction of visitors to Half Moon Beach

4.4.1 Purpose of visit

A variety of reasons and motives to visit Half Moon Beach was offered by 272 respondents (Table 14). The researcher referred to studies such as Orams (1999) and Van der Merwe et al., (2011) to help with allocating the appropriate categories to the different purposes and motives given by respondents. These categories were family togetherness, weather conditions, entertainment, recreation, and relaxation, participation in recreational activities, socialisation with friends, change from home, curiosity and

escaping everyday routines. The researcher used the label of 'other' for the visitation reasons that did not fit under the defined categories.

Entertainment was the main reason for visiting Half Moon Beach for 53% ($n=148$) of respondents. Other prominent reasons included recreation ($n=87$, 31%), family togetherness ($n=30$, 11%), change from home ($n=27$, 10%), enjoying nature (sea) ($n=26$, 9%), weather condition ($n=24$, 9%), relaxation ($n=22$, 8%) and participation in recreational activities such as sand dune riding, swimming , fishing, diving, playing football and other sport activities ($n=20$, 7%). There were lower percentages for socialisation with friends ($n=12$, 4%), escaping everyday routines ($n=7$, 3%) and curiosity ($n=2$, 3%). The other category ($n=14$, 5%) included passing by, having a barbecue, sitting on a sandy beach and not having access to the sea where they lived.

Table 14: Profile of reasons and motives for visiting Half Moon Beach

Purpose of visit	$n=$	%
Family togetherness	30	10.7%
Weather conditions	24	8.6%
Entertainment	148	52.9%
Recreation	87	31.1%
Relaxation	22	7.9%
Participation in recreational activities	20	7.1%
Socialisation with friends	12	4.3%
Change from home	27	9.6%
Enjoying nature	26	9.3%
Curiosity	2	0.7%
Escaping everyday routines	7	2.5%
Other	14	5.0%

4.4.2 Activities during visit to Half Moon Beach

Respondents participated in a variety of activities during their visit to Half Moon Beach (Table 15). The most popular activities were relaxing ($n=241$, 86%), walking on the beach ($n=232$, 83%), barbecuing ($n=204$, 73%), playing on the beach ($n=180$, 64%), swimming ($n=151$, 54%) and taking photographs ($n=151$, 54%).

Boating ($n=69$, 25%) and sand dune riding ($n=60$, 21%) had some popularity whilst visiting King Fahd Coastal City ($n=21$, 8%) and fishing ($n=19$, 7%) had limited popularity amongst visitors. Only one of the 280 respondents selected windsurf/kite-surf as an activity. Eight percent of the respondents ($n=23$) mentioned other activities that they participated in during their visit to Half Moon Beach under the 'other' category. These activities included looking at the sea, playing football, building sand castles, collecting shells, and meeting with friends, playing with children, playing with kites, sleeping on the beach, volleyball, riding bikes, diving, watching the sunset and listening to the sound of waves.

Results from a Pearson's chi-square tests indicated that there were no significant differences between the proportion of gender and age over the activities of relaxing. There were a significant difference between the proportion of age over the activity of boating ($n=280$, df 4, $p=0.088$) and visiting King Fahad Coastal City ($n=280$, df 4, $p=0.097$), indicating that the 25-34 age range were more likely to participate in these activities.

Question 2 in section B asked the respondents to rank their three favourite activities from the list of activities they selected in question 1 (Table 16). Of the 267 respondents who stated their most favourite activity, relaxing ($n=75$, 28%) was the most favoured activity followed by swimming ($n=57$, 21%), barbecuing ($n=42$, 16%) and walking on the beach ($n=41$, 15%). Furthermore, of the 261 respondents who stated their second favourite activity, walking on the beach ($n=56$, 21%) and barbecuing ($n=54$, 21%) were the second favoured activities by most participants. Of the 257 respondents who stated their third favoured activity, barbecuing ($n=65$, 25%) was the most favoured one, followed by playing on the beach ($n=42$, 16%), relaxing ($n=34$, 13%), walking on the beach ($n=33$, 13%) and taking photographs ($n=31$, 12%).

Table 15: Activities undertaken during visit to Half Moon Beach

Activities	*n=*	%
Swimming	151	53.9%
Relaxing	241	86.1%
Fishing	19	6.8%
Walking on the beach	232	82.9%
Photography	151	53.9%
Sand dune riding	60	21.4%
Windsurf/kite-surf	1	0.4%
Boating	69	24.6%
Visiting King Fahd Coastal City	21	7.5%
Barbecuing	204	72.9%
Playing on the beach	180	64.3%
Other	23	8.2%

Table 16: Profile of respondents' first, second and third favourite activities

Activities	First favourite *n=*	%	Second favourite *n=*	%	Third favourite *n=*	%
Swimming	57	21.3%	21	8.0%	15	5.8%
Relaxing	75	28.1%	44	16.9%	34	13.2%
Fishing	3	1.1%	7	2.7%	3	1.2%
Walking on the beach	41	15%	56	21.5%	33	12.8%
Taking photographs	12	4.5%	20	7.7%	31	12.1%
Sand dune riding	12	4.5%	11	4.2%	13	5.1%
Windsurf/kite-surf	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Boating	4	1.5%	21	8.0%	16	6.2%
Visiting King Fahd Coastal City	2	0.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Barbecuing	42	15.7%	54	20.7%	65	25.3%
Playing on the beach	15	5.6%	26	10.0%	42	16.3%
Other	3	1.1%	1	0.4%	4	1.6%
Total	267	100%	261	100%	257	100%

4.4.3 Visitors' levels of satisfaction with the visit to Half Moon Beach

Question 3 in section B evaluated respondents' levels of satisfaction with their visit to

Half Moon Beach on the day of the study (Figure 16). Response categories ranged from

'extremely dissatisfied', 'dissatisfied, 'neutral', 'satisfied' and 'extremely satisfied'. A

'not sure/don't know' choice was offered for respondents. The categories were allocated numerical values from 1 to 5: extremely dissatisfied= 1, dissatisfied= 2, neutral= 3, satisfied= 4 and extremely satisfied= 5. The category of 'not sure/don't know' was not given a numerical value.

Of the 278 respondents, results suggested that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the visit to Half Moon Beach on the day of the study ($n=109$, 39%). Twenty-three percent ($n=65$) of the respondents were dissatisfied, 19% ($n=52$) were neutral and 13% ($n=37$) were extremely satisfied with the beach visit on the day.

Results of a Pearson's chi-square test indicated that there are no significant differences were found when testing gender, age, education, occupation and place of residence over satisfaction levels.
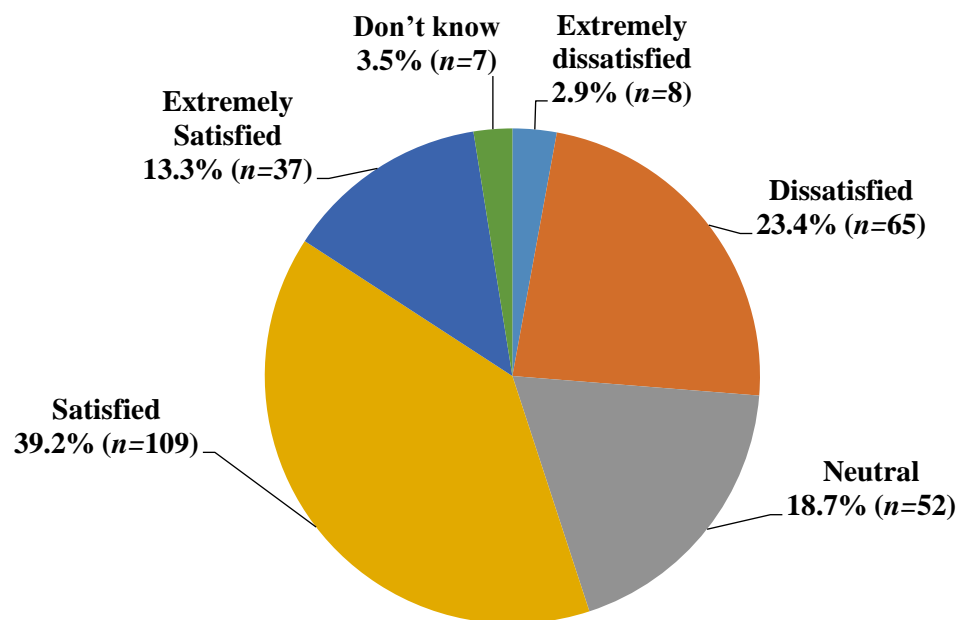
Figure 16: Respondents' satisfaction levels of their visit to Half Moon Beach.

Question 4 in section B was an open-ended question that asked the visitors to explain the main reasons for their dissatisfaction/satisfaction with the beach visit on the day.

Common expressions and responses were given by a 172 respondents to explain their satisfaction levels.

<u>'Extremely satisfied' on the satisfaction scale:</u>

Of the 37 respondents who selected the option 'extremely satisfied' with the beach visit, 21 respondents (57%) answered the open-ended question. Various reasons were mentioned by respondents who expressed a high level of satisfaction. They were highly satisfied with:

- The beauty of the natural environment and the sea view (n=9, 43%).
- The good weather conditions (n=6, 29%).
- The feeling of relaxing and quietness by sitting close to the sea, listening to the sound of waves and walking on the sand (n=8, 38%).
- Family gathering at the beach (n=1, 5%).
- The amount of good facilities and services available for visitors (n=3, 14%).
- The good level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities (n=6, 29%).

<u>'Satisfied' on the level of satisfaction scale:</u>

Of the 109 respondents who noted that they were 'satisfied' with the beach visit, 47 respondents (43%) answered the open-ended question. Of the 47 respondents, 27 respondents (57%) expressed positive reasons. The most common positive reasons mentioned were:

- The natural environment and beauty of the sea and the sandy beach (*n*=17, 63%).

Respondents were satisfied with the beauty of the sea, sand and the peaceful environment.

- The site itself, including facilities available and overall level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities (*n*=12, 44.4%).

Respondents were satisfied with the facilities available and the level of cleanliness of the beach generally and the facilities provided such as toilets, sunshade areas, mosques and a children's playground.

- Overall level of quietness and lack of congestion (*n=6, 22%*).

Respondents were satisfied by the level of quietness at the beach.

- Family and friends gathering at the beach and children enjoyment (*n=4, 15%*).

Gathering with family and friends and watching the children enjoying their time at the beach were satisfying factors for some respondents. One respondent commented, "Gathering with family makes me happy and satisfied".

- Good weather conditions (*n=2, 7.4%*).

The good weather conditions were a factor that affected the satisfaction levels of some respondents because the weather conditions made the experience more enjoyable and relaxing for those respondents.

Of the 47 respondents who were satisfied and answered the open-ended question, 11 respondents (23%) expressed negative reasons despite their satisfaction rating scale, which included the low level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities. Other reasons included not enough services and facilities, especially commercial facilities (restaurants, cafes etc), lack of good activities for children and adults, not enough first aid centers, poor quality football fields, no lights inside the sunshades for night visitors and no areas to barbecue.

Of the 47 respondents, nine respondents (19%) selected 'satisfied' and expressed reasons in the open-ended question that were in-between positive and negative reasons. They were satisfied with the natural environment, beauty of the sea and the good

weather conditions but not satisfied with the low level of cleanliness of facilities available and the lack of good commercial services close to the sea such as restaurants and cafés.

'Neutral' on the satisfaction scale:

Of the 52 respondents who indicated that their satisfaction level was 'neutral' 34 respondents (65.4%) answered the open-ended question. Various reasons were mentioned by the respondents who were satisfied with some elements of the beach experience and dissatisfied with other elements. Some respondents expressed positive reasons such as the beach view ($n=3$, 9%), relaxation and enjoyment near the sea ($n=2$, 6%), good weather conditions ($n=1$, 3%) and gathering with family and friends ($n=1$, 3%). However, some of these respondents also expressed negative reasons such as low levels of cleanliness of the beach and facilities ($n=20$, 59%), and a lack of services and facilities particularly commercial services and facilities ($n=16$, 47%). They were also dissatisfied with the lack of good recreational activities at the beach especially marine and coastal activities ($n=6$, 18%). Two respondents commented that they were dissatisfied because of the noise being made by some young people.

'Dissatisfied' on the satisfaction scale:

Of the 65 respondents who selected the option 'dissatisfied' with the beach visit, 59 respondents (91%) answered the open-ended question. Various reasons were mentioned by some of the respondents who were dissatisfied with the beach experience.

- The site itself, the lack of good facilities and services and the bad quality of existing facilities ($n=35$, 59%).

Respondents were dissatisfied with the overall lack of preparation for visitors particularly during busy days and for visitors staying for long visits such as issues

related to bad lighting at night and not enough number of sunshade areas, lack of commercial services and poor quality football fields. Some respondents commented that the sea and beach were "neglected" and more care and improvements were needed.

- The bad level of cleanliness and care of the beach and facilities (*n=43, 73%*).

Respondents were dissatisfied with the level of cleanliness of the toilets, especially during busy days, and the level of cleanliness of the beach, particularly the amount of rubbish in the sand and near the sea.

- Lack of good activities, particularly marine and coastal activities that suit different age groups especially children and families (*n=20, 34%*).

Respondents were dissatisfied with the existing activities, as some of them believed that these activities were limited, expensive and of poor quality. Respondents suggested that more marine activities should be provided that make visitors engage more with the sea, like the activities offered in other countries such as Dubai and Qatar.

- Other issues mentioned by respondents (*n=17, 29%*).

Respondents were dissatisfied with other issues including annoying cats, not enough safety for swimmers, unsafe proximity of the drivers of all-terrain vehicles to people in sitting areas, overcrowding, cold weather and noise from young people and four-wheel drivers.

'Extremely dissatisfied' on the satisfaction scale:

Of the eight respondents who selected the option 'extremely dissatisfied' with the beach visit, seven respondents (88%) answered the opened-ended question. Various reasons were mentioned by the respondents who were highly dissatisfied with the beach experience. These reasons included overcrowding, overall bad preparation for visitors,

lack of good facilities and services, especially commercial services such as cafes and restaurants, poor lighting at night and low levels of cleanliness.

4.5 Visitors' current and future views of coastal and marine activities

4.5.1 Opportunity to participate in marine and coastal activities

Question 1 in section C evaluated respondents' levels of importance to participate in marine and coastal activities during their visit to Half Moon Beach. Of 274 respondents, the majority ($n=156$, 57%) stated that it was 'important' or 'extremely important' they had the opportunity to participate in marine and coastal activities during the visit to Half Moon Beach, whilst 24.5% ($n=67$) were 'neutral' and 16% ($n=44$) stated that it was 'unimportant' or 'not at all important'. A small number ($n=7$, 3%) answered 'not sure/don't know' (Figure 17).
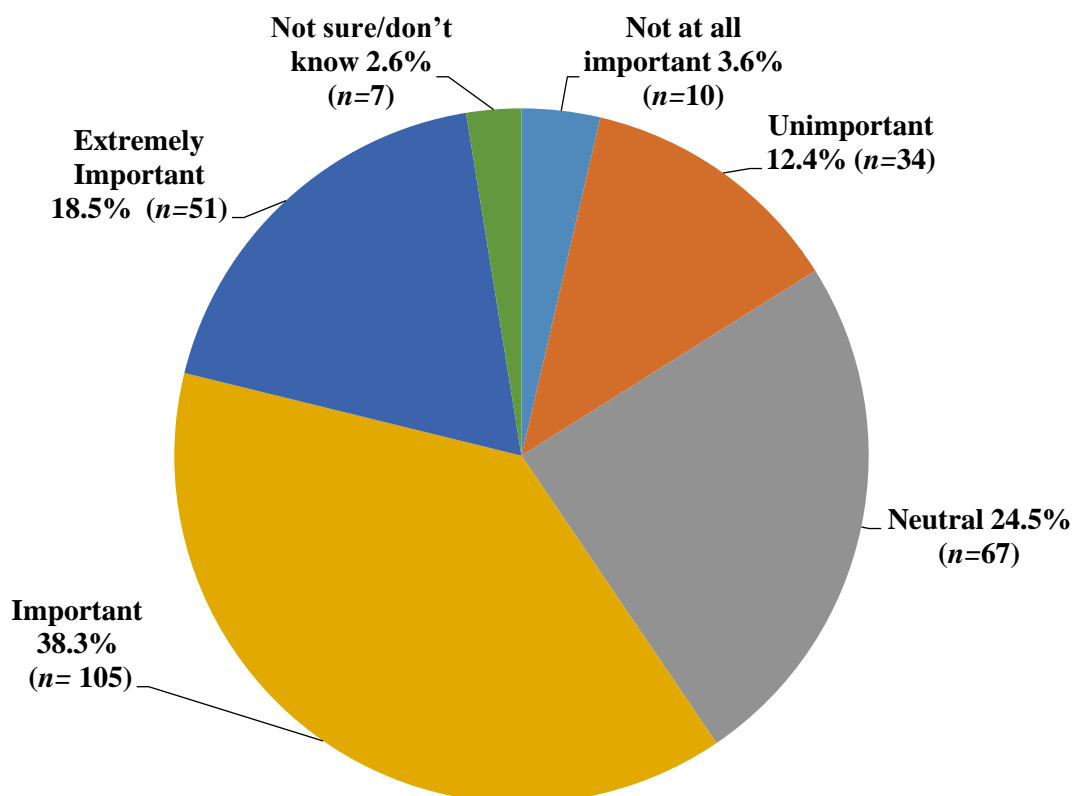
Figure 17: Indication of the importance of participating in coastal and marine activities during the visit to Half Moon Beach.

4.5.2 Visitors' satisfaction with existing activities

Question 2 in section C evaluated respondents' levels of satisfaction with the existing activities available for visitors at Half Moon Beach. Of the 273 respondents, results suggested that the majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the existing activities available at the beach (*n=105, 38%*). Twenty-six percent (*n=71*) of the respondents were 'neutral', 22% (*n=59*) were 'satisfied', 7% (*n=19*) were 'extremely dissatisfied' and only 3% (*n=9*) suggested that they were 'extremely satisfied' with these activities (Figure 18).
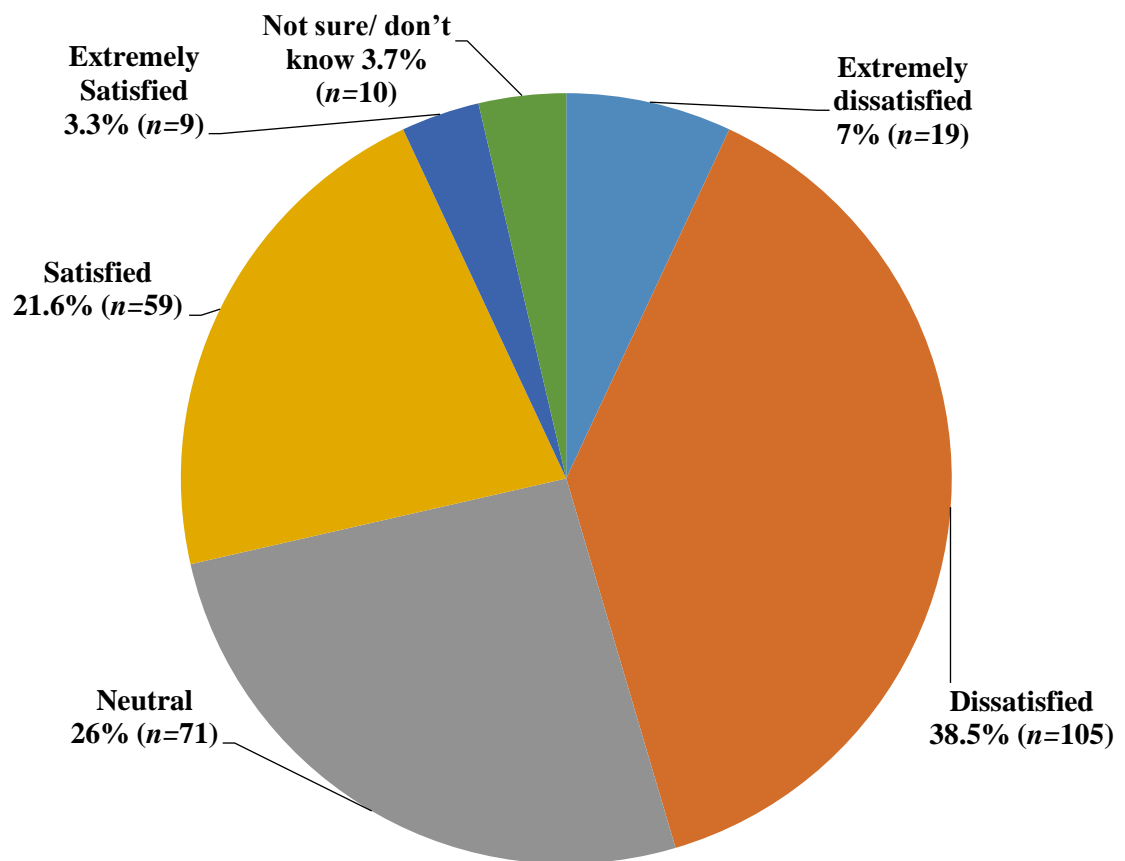
Figure 18: Satisfaction level of existing activities available at Half Moon Beach

4.5.3 Visitors' level of interest in having more beach/sea-related activities available

Question 3 in section C evaluated respondents' levels of interest in having more beach/sea-related activities on Half Moon Beach. Of the 274 respondents, the majority

(*n*=210, 77%) answered that they were 'interested' or 'extremely interested' in having more marine and coastal activities on Half Moon Beach, 13% (*n*=36) were 'neutral' and 8% (*n*=22) answered that it is 'unimportant' or 'not at all important' to have more beach/sea-related activities at the beach. A small number (*n*=6, 2%) answered 'not sure/don't know' (Figure 19).
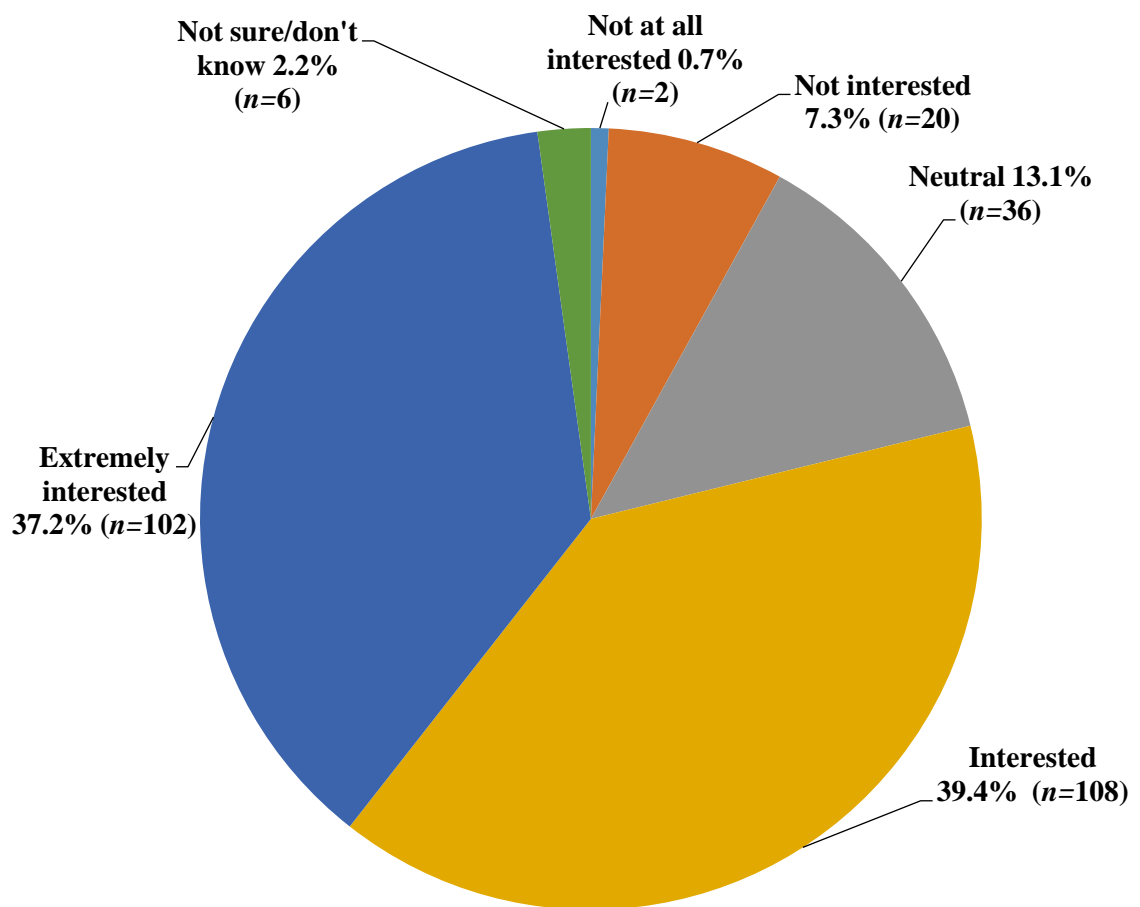
Figure 19: Indication of the level of interest in having more coastal and marine activities available at Half Moon Beach.

4.5.4 Visitors' future views on increased development at Half Moon Beach

Question 4 in section C asked the respondents to suggest activities that they would like to be offered at Half Moon Beach (Table 17). Out of the 280 respondents, 203 answered

this question. Fifty-nine percent (n=119) suggested that they would like more sports activities and fields. Examples offered by respondents included football fields and competitions, motorcycle competitions and races, horse riding and races, volleyball, car racing and general sport activities and competitions involving water that suit the nature of Half Moon sea. Ninety-six percent (n=194) suggested they would like to have different sea/beach-related activities such as jet boats, jet skiing, diving centres and courses, swimming courses particularly for children, snorkelling, yachting, cruising and boat racing. Other examples included a water theme park, kite boating, fishing courses and trips, windsurfing centres, trips to nearby islands and areas, and trips to discover the nature of the sea and its creatures.

A number of respondents (n=12, 6%) suggested they would like to have some educational activities related to the marine environment that help in raising the awareness of the importance of the sea and its environment and creatures especially for children. Some examples offered by respondents included beach painting and drawing competitions on the beach, sand games and art, shell art and children theatres.

Some respondents also suggested that they would like more activities to be offered during special events and holidays (n=11, 5%) such as festivals, firework celebrations and sand art shows and celebrations. In addition to the activities suggested by respondents, 8% (n=16) suggested that they would like more commercial facilities and services such as cafes, restaurants, specifically floating restaurants, and more supermarkets in different locations of the beach. Six percent (n=12) suggested that they would like more facilities and services at the beach in general and more improvements and care to existing ones such as first aid centres in every entrance of the beach, special areas for barbecuing, more rubbish bins, more sitting areas and sunshades and increase the spaces of green areas and improve children playgrounds.

Table 17: Suggested activities to be offered at Half Moon Beach

Activity	*n=*	%
Sports activities	119	58.6%
Coastal and marine activities	194	95.6%
Educational activities	12	5.9%
Special events and holidays activities	11	5.4%
Commercial services	16	7.9%
More facilities and services at the beach	12	5.9%

An open-ended question accompanied question 4 in section C and asked those respondents who believed that no additional activities were needed at Half Moon Beach to specify the reasons behind their thinking. Seven percent (*n=19*) of the respondents answered this question.

These 19 comments after translation from Arabic to English were as follows:

"It is enough for me to calm and relax on the beach."

"It is better to keep the beach as it is, like 30 years ago—simple and beautiful."

"Clean the beach first."

"If they will provide activities with expensive prices, we do not need them and there will be no benefit from them."

"It is enough for me to enjoy and look at the sea."

"Because of the inability of those people responsible for the beach to provide care and organise these activities"

"Enjoying the nature is the only thing I need from coming to this beach."

"I think the beach is a place for relaxing and resting so I think it is better to avoid more development and activities because it may be accompanied by many problems such as more rubbish and damage to the sea environment."

"I do not want activities at the beach."

"I think it is not important to have more activities or development if there will not be enough care and responsibility for these activities."

"Because I do not visit the beach a lot, I do not care."

"It is enough for me to enjoy the beach, sea and weather."

"I do not care about activities."

"I visit this beach because I want to relax and spend time with my family, so activities and developments are not my concern."

"This beach is not like a beach inside the city, it is better to keep it just like a sandy beach with the basic facilities and services to avoid smoke smells coming from marine activities and more rubbish or sewage and other problems that may result from these developments and activities."

"I love the peace and quietness of the sea and I do not need to have activities and developments that affect these elements."

"Only some developments and activities that do not create noise or affect visitors' relaxation are what we need at this beach"

"I do not care about activities; I visit the beach to relax."

"I just enjoy the calm sea and I do not really want activities or developments that ruin this enjoyment."

Question 5 in section C was an open-ended question that asked the respondents to explain their personal views around developing more beach/sea-related activities in the future. Respondents' responses were classified by the researcher into four categories: strongly agree, agree, limited agreement and disagree with developing and increasing beach/sea-related activities on the future (Figure 20). Sixty-eight percent (*n*=189) commented on this question, however, not all of these respondents specified the reasons for their opinions. Many respondents only indicated their strong agreement, agreement, limited agreement or disagreement with the having more marine and coastal activities without specifying any reasons.

The majority of the 189 respondents showed agreement with developing marine and coastal activities at the beach ($n=149$, 79%). Fifty-two percent ($n=77$) provided reasons for their agreement, which included:

- It would increase the level of entertainment and enjoyment of visitors during beach visits.
- It would improve the image of the area, increase number of visitors and attract more visitors from outside the eastern regions and the country.
- It would support and improve local and domestic tourism.
- It would improve tourism in the area in general and improve coastal and marine tourism in particular.
- It would help the country compete with neighbouring countries such as Qatar.
- It would help improving other services and facilities as a result of the development in activities on this beach.
- It would give local visitors better options for entertainment, so they do not have to seek these options from other countries.
- Middle class people will be able to enjoy these activities inside their country, rather than travelling outside the country, which is expensive.
- It would help visitors learn about the sea and discover its marine nature and creatures, which is especially important for children and young people.
- Activities and developments of the beach will draw visitors' attention towards the importance of the sea and for caring for its environment.
- Beach visits will be more interesting and will provide visitors with a better experience away from home and routine.
- It would help with the problems of unemployment and provide jobs for young people.
- It would help in satisfy visitors' demands, needs and wants.
- The beach has very beautiful nature and attractive environment and worth more development and care.

Twenty-three percent ($n=23$) showed a strong agreement with increased development and activities at Half Moon Beach. These respondents explained that this would attract more visitors, increase their levels of enjoyment and entertainment, and make their visits to the beach more interesting, and increase visitors' attention and care towards the sea and its environment. They also believed that Half Moon Beach is a tourism destination that deserves more care and significant development and improvement.

Six percent ($n=11$) showed a limited agreement with the need for the development of sea/beach-related activities. Some respondents who showed limited agreement explained that they agreed to some extent with some developments and activities that do not affect the element of relaxation, quietness and peace of the beach. Some respondents suggested that they agree with the addition of some coastal and marine activities, but these activities should be offered in specific parts of the beach so people who seek relaxation and quiet can sit away from these activities. Furthermore, some respondents showed limited agreement as they stated that it is important to ensure high-quality care, responsibility and safety before any development of activities on the beach. They insisted on the importance of addressing the issues of professional supervision and maintenance before having increased development or activities at the beach. These respondents explained that if these elements were not considered, then they would not preferred further developments at this beach.

Three percent ($n=6$) disagreed with any development or increase of activities at Half Moon Beach. These respondents explained that development would lead to overcrowding, noise and families' dissatisfaction on particular. One of the respondents explained that development at the beach would limit public use of the beach as large spaces would be owned and controlled by private business operators, and visitors would only have limited spaces to sit and enjoy their personal activities.
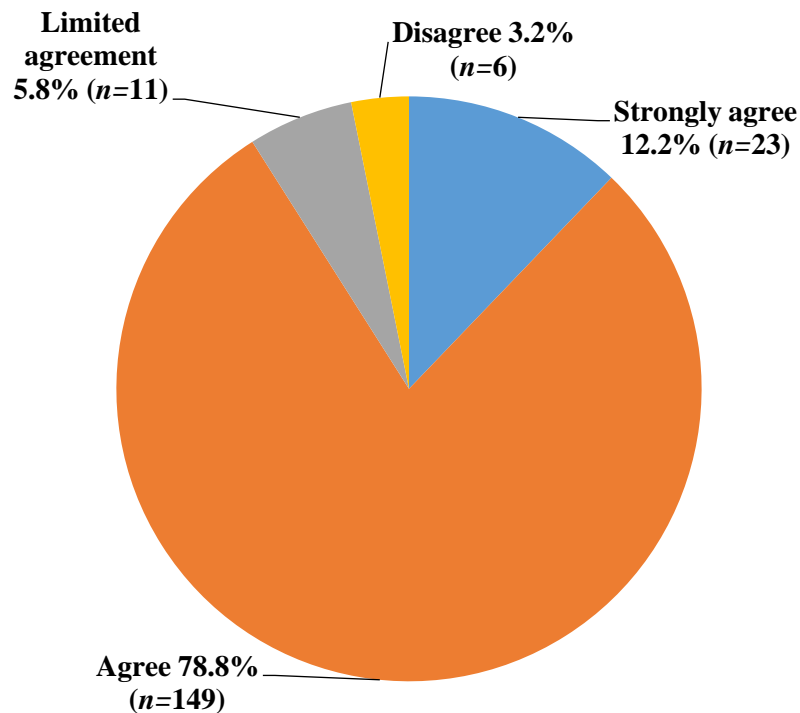
Figure 20: Respondents' views on increased beach/sea-related activities at Half Moon Beach.

Some respondents provided important suggestions when answering this question. Many respondents suggested that activities should suit different age groups and should particularly target families with children and adolescents ($n=88$, 47%). Others suggested that activities also should target females and provide them with private options to participate in water and sports activities that take into account religious and cultural considerations ($n=70$, 37%). Many respondents suggested that safety, trained staff and professional care should be available alongside beach/sea-related activities such as diving and fishing to ensure safety for visitors ($n=66$, 35%). They insisted on the importance of providing extra care and maintenance that should accompany any development as well as a high level of safety regulations. Some suggested that a high level of cleanliness and improvement of commercial services should accompany the development of coastal and marine activities in the beach ($n=50$, 26%). Reasonable

prices for the different activities were also a suggestion offered by many respondents (*n=48, 25%*).

4.6   Researcher's overall observations

In addition to the data gathered from the self-reply questionnaire, the researcher kept a field notebook in which general observations of visitors' activities and behaviours relevant to the research questions were recorded.

Regarding beach/sea-related activities, the researcher observed adults playing football or volleyball with each other or with children, and children playing with sand and making sand sculptures or digging holes, running near the water, looking for shells or playing with kites. The researcher also observed that most visitors swam between 11am to 3pm. Many groups of adults were jet skiing and one group was kite surfing. Some young adults and teenagers rode all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) near the beach and close to sitting areas despite several signs posted that made it clear this was not allowed. Riding sand dune with the all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) is located on the other side of the beach main road near the sand dunes (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) used for driving on sand dunes, photo was taken during weekday. Photograph: Alkhalaf (2015).

Most visitors were observed cooking on fires, setting up barbecues, picnicking and drinking tea and Arabic coffee during their visit. Many visitors were observed setting on mats or in small tents near the sea, especially when the sunshades were full with visitors (Figure 22). At night, some groups of young adults were observed listening to loud music. Many visitors were observed leaving rubbish and unwanted food inside their sunshades or on the beach after packing up their mats and tents.

Figure 22: Visitors sitting near the sea on mats or small tents.
Source: (Usaimi, n.d.). Retrieved from http://ahsaweb.net/vb/showthread.php?t=262164

The researcher also observed the Saudi Border Guard boats being driven around in different locations during weekends. Saudi Border Guard cars were also observed during weekends at some time of the day during the study period.

4.7   Conclusion

The data presented and analysed in this chapter answered the six research questions posed in Chapter 3. To reiterate, these were:

Question 1: What are the demographics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 2: What are the characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 3: What are the motivations of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 4: What are the activities undertaken by visitors at Half Moon Beach?

Question 5: What is the level of satisfaction with the visit to Half Moon Beach?

Question 6: What are the views of visitors to Half Moon Beach with regards to the future development of coastal and marine activities?

The important findings of this study are:

Demographics: Visitors were mostly Saudi citizens living in cities located in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The majority of visitors lived in Dammam. There were more male survey participants than female, the majority of visitors were in the 25-34 year age range, and most visitors had a university undergraduate degree. The majority of the visitors were private sector employees.

Characteristics: People visited in large groups, mainly with children, family and partners/spouse, and stayed for four to six hours. The majority of visitors had previously visited the beach.

Beach visit: The main reasons for visiting were entertainment, recreation and spending time with family. Visitors' main activities consisted of relaxing, walking on the beach, barbecuing, playing on the beach, swimming and taking photographs. The majority of visitors were satisfied with the visit with the main reason for this being the natural environment and beauty of the sea.

Visitors' views of marine activities at the beach: The majority of visitors considered the opportunity to participate in coastal and marine activities during the beach visit important. The majority of visitors were dissatisfied with the existing activities available at the beach. The majority of visitors were interested or extremely interested in having more coastal and marine activities at the beach. Sports activities and sea and

beach-related activities were the main activities suggested by visitors to be offered at the beach. The majority of visitors agreed with developing coastal and marine activities at the beach for a variety of reasons including increasing tourists' levels of enjoyment and improving local and domestic tourism.

These findings are discussed in more detail in the next chapter with reference to the six primary research questions for this study.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Summary of the study

5.1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors involved in coastal and marine tourism in Saudi Arabia, specifically, visitors to Half Moon Beach located in eastern Saudi Arabia. As no published empirical research exists on this subject, these results are an important contribution to increasing our understanding of visitors to one of the most popular beaches in Saudi Arabia.

5.1.2 Data collection

The study achieved an 87% completion rate (280 self-reply questionnaires), with 43 participants refusing to participate, largely without providing their reasons for refusal. The completion rate was acceptable for this study. Some scholars suggest a minimal responses rate level of 50% and considered it as appropriate response level (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Rowley (2014) argued that "20 percent can be regarded as a good response rate" for surveys and he stated that "many surveys suffer from much smaller response rates" (p. 231). Respondents completed the questionnaire onsite and within the specified time.

5.1.3 Nature of data collection

Quantitative data, assisted by the qualitative data from open-ended questions, collected from the self-reply questionnaire gave a clear description of the characteristics and insights into the motivations of visitors to Half Moon Beach. Some field notes were collected by the researcher, which included observations of visitors' activities and behaviours that were relevant to the research questions.

5.2   Analysis of findings

5.2.1   Visitor demographics

Males (54%) were slightly more represented in the sample than females (46%). In this study, most groups surveyed included both genders, which is similar to the results from Paul and Rimmawi's (1992) study of Asir National Park visitors. However, the slightly higher percentage of males may be due to the fact that males are able to drive cars and could therefore visit the beach alone or with a group of other males, whilst females are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia (a government rule that forbids women from driving).

The majority of the respondents were between 25-34 years old (42%) followed by 18-24 years old (24%) and 35-44 years old (24%). This may reflect the fact that Saudi Arabia has a young and growing population (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). The lower number of visitors in the 45-54 year range (9%) and the 55-64 year range (1.4%) suggest that the beach is more popular with younger people and may indicate that beach recreation is not favoured by older citizens. A survey conducted by the Saudi General Tourism and Antique SCTA in 2000 showed that the majority of respondents believed that tourism facilities in the country do not meet the needs of older citizens (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). (Note: the Supreme Commission for Tourism (SCT) was changed to the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in 2008). In addition, the majority of visitors were private sector employees (29%), followed by government employees (27%), and most had a university undergraduate degree (45%).

The beach was mostly visited by Saudi citizens (95%), whilst 3.2% were Saudi permanent residents and 1.4% were visitors from outside of Saudi Arabia. It is not surprising that the large majority of the Saudi citizens and permanent residents (91%)

resided in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia including Daharan, Al Khobar, Dammam, Qatif, Abqaiq, Jubail, Alnuayreayh and Hafar Al-Batin. They mostly lived in cities located within an average distance of 26.8 km from Half Moon Beach (Daharan, Al Khobar Dammam, Qatif and Abqaiq) or cities located within an average distance of 99.5 km (Alhassa and Jubail). The majority of respondents lived in Dammam (41%) (population 903,312), a city located 21 km from the beach, whilst 15% lived in Al Khobar (population 219,679) a city located within the boundary of Half Moon Beach (16 km from the beach) (Saudi Geological Survey, 2012). Visitors from Alhassa accounted for 20%, which is a city located 97 km from the beach. Another beach, Uqair Beach is closer to the city of Alhassa, but Half Moon Beach is also popular and attracts many visitors from this city even though it is further away. Some respondents from Alhassa commented to the researcher that they preferred Half Moon Beach despite it being far from home because it has better facilities for visitors than Uqair Beach. These results are similar to Paul and Rimmawi's study (1992) that surveyed visitors at Asir National Park in southwest Saudi Arabia. They found that most visitors to the park were Saudis living in the Asir Province or neighbouring provinces.

It is worthy to note that in this study of Half Moon Beach, 0.4% of respondents resided in Alnuayreayh located 280 km from the beach, 6% resided in Riyadh located 368 km from the beach, 4% resided in Hafar Al-Batin located 471 km from the beach and 0.4% resided in Buraidah located 601 km from the beach. These results may indicate that while these cities are far from the eastern coastal areas like Half Moon Beach, they are still closer than the Western beaches on the Red Sea and, as a consequence, travel to Half Moon Beach is the closest option for coastal recreation for these people. The SCTA report in 2000 stated that domestic tourism "has tended to focus on the Red Sea (western coast), in particular Jeddah and the mountains around Asir and Taif. The Arabian Gulf (eastern coast) also attracts some domestic tourists, especially from

Riyadh and the eastern regions of the Kingdom" (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000, p. 16).

A small number of visitors (1.8%) resided outside of Saudi Arabia: 1.1% in Bahrain and 0.7% in Yemen. The small number of visitors from neighbouring countries may indicate that residents of these countries were not attracted to Saudi Arabian beaches. Residents from these countries may be attracted to other coastal destinations that are closer or those with more liberal tourist/recreation policies. When looking at the reasons why people visited from outside Saudi Arabia (1.8%), mainly meeting with friends and family members was the main purpose of the visit, which indicates that the purpose of the visit was not mainly to visit the beach. No visitors to Half Moon Beach came from Western countries, which was likely due to the strict entrance restrictions for non-Muslim visitors to Saudi Arabia (even though Half Moon Beach is not restricted to Muslims). Paul and Rimmawi's study (1992) also showed the same result due to the restrictions on issuing of visas to non-Muslims.

5.2.2 Characteristics of visitors

The average length of the beach visit was slightly longer than seven hours with the majority of visitors staying for 4-6 hours (43%), however, a high number (40%) stayed for longer than six hours. The beach attracted large groups of people with a mean group size of 11. Thirty-one percent of the respondents visited in a group of 2-5 people, 29% visited in a group of 6-10 people and 26% visited in a group of more than 16 people. Most groups travelled with children (76%), family (55%) and partners/spouses (48%). Most groups included children under 18 years old, and the groups consisted of 3-4 children (21%), 1-2 children (16%), 5-6 children (12%) and over 11 children (10%). These results are comparable to Paul and Rimmawi's study (1992) that indicated that "families who came to the resort were large in size and composed primarily of children

under 15 years old" (p. 505). In Paul and Rimmawi's study (1992), the average group size was seven people per vehicle. The results may indicate the importance of family and children as tourism segments for recreational and leisure tourism. The results also reflect the strong family ties in Saudi society and also refer to the fact that domestic tourism in Saudi Arabia tends to be largely family based (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000).

The majority of visitors used private vehicles (98.6%) to visit Half Moon Beach because the beach is a destination that mainly attracts one-day visitors, as the beach is close to a number of cities and there is no public transport available. There were only four respondents (1.4%) who used a rental car to drive to Half Moon Beach, and these visitors lived in areas far from the beach—two lived in Yemen (1177 km from the beach), one lived in Jeddah (1191 km from the beach) and one lived in Riyadh (368 km from the beach). Thus, visitors who lived in areas far from the beach were more likely to rent a car. This result is comparable to Paul and Rimmawi's study (1992) that indicated that most of the visitors to the park used a private car or van.

The majority of visitors (86%) suggested that were not likely to stay overnight in the nearby area. This result indicates that the majority of visitors visit the beach from their places of residence and return home on the same day. Furthermore, the location of the beach close to many cities in the Eastern Province makes it accessible for short trips. Only 14% of the sample suggested they were likely to stay overnight in the nearby area. The majority of these visitors were likely to stay in Al Khobar (55%) and Dammam (38%). These visitors lived in cities or countries far from the beach such as Jeddah (1191 km from the beach) and Yemen (1177 km from the beach). These visitors most likely came to see relatives or friends in these cities or for recreational and entertainment purposes because of the popularity of Al Khobar and Dammam for

domestic tourists seeking recreational and entertainment purposes (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000). Only three respondents suggested they were likely to stay in resorts near the beach. The relatively high prices of resorts near the beach may be the reasons for this low demand (Khalil & Al-Ali, n.d.).

A high number of repeat visitors responded to the survey (94%), which may indicate that a high level of loyalty to the destination has developed. The number of visitations varied between the respondents. Of the 243 respondents (87%) who specified the number of previous visits, the data indicated that most respondents who had previously visited Half Moon Beach (42%) had done so between one to 10 times and 21% indicated they had visited the beach many times. Fourteen percent described themselves as regular visitors, whilst 14% suggested they had previously visited the beach between 11 to 20 times. Some respondents (9%) indicated that they had previously visited the beach more than 21 times. In addition, responses varied on the question regarding the time since their previous beach visit. Of the 196 respondents (70%) who recorded their most recent visit, the majority of the respondents indicated that their previous visit was between two to five years ago (37%) whilst 33% suggested that it was between two to five months ago. Fourteen percent of the respondents suggested that their last visit was between one week to one month ago and 6% suggested that their last visit was more than six years ago.

The high level of repeat visitation may reflect a strong sense of loyalty and may indicate that a high level of visitors' expectations have been satisfied (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). This can be reflected from the high level of repeat visitation to Half Moon Beach. However, repeat visitation may not always be an indication of destination loyalty, and questions may arise to obtain further understanding of why visitors return to certain destinations, "do repeat visitors return there because they have been well satisfied on

previous occasions or merely as a result of inertia" (Alegre & Cladera, 2006, p. 288). The percentage of respondents who indicated that they had previously visited the beach between one to 10 times (42%) as well as the percentage of respondents who suggested that their previous visit was between two to five years ago (37%) may raise some questions over loyalty as a result of repeat visitation. The data indicate that most of those respondents were not regular visitors despite being repeat visitors. Alegre and Cladera (2006) state that repeat visitation is considered a positive indication of tourist satisfaction or indication of the high quality of the product being offered.

However, in regards to the data discussed above regarding number of previous visits and most recent visit, repeat visitation may not reflect visitors' satisfaction or the quality of the recreational products and services offered at the beach. Odin, Odin and Valette-Florence (2001) suggest that repeat visitation can be the result of a feeling of inertia, which refers to purchasing the same product or service without a real motive towards the choice made. A routine of going to the same place may be the reason for a group of tourists to repeatedly visit the same destination (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). Moreover, visitors may repeatedly visit the same destinations because they feel there are no differences between the destination and any other alternatives or because of the preference to choose the familiar to avoid the uncertainty that may result from making new choices (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). Repeat visitation may be an indication that visitors' motivations are always satisfied by visiting the same destination or a sense of emotional attachment to the place resulting in repeat visitation. Considering the Half Moon Beach study, a high percentage of the respondents were repeat visitors. The behaviour of revisiting the beach may be an indication of loyalty particularly for respondents who described themselves as regular visitors (14%). However, this may also be an indication of different attitudes that result in repeat visitation such as the feeling of inertia (lack of real motives) and routine towards making the decision to visit

the beach repeatedly or finding no difference between visiting this beach or another beach. Some repeat visitors to the beach may do so because the beach visit usually satisfies their specific motivations or because they have personal or family attachment to this beach, or simply just to avoid making new choices. (Figure 23 provides a summary of the main characteristics of Half Moon Beach visitors).
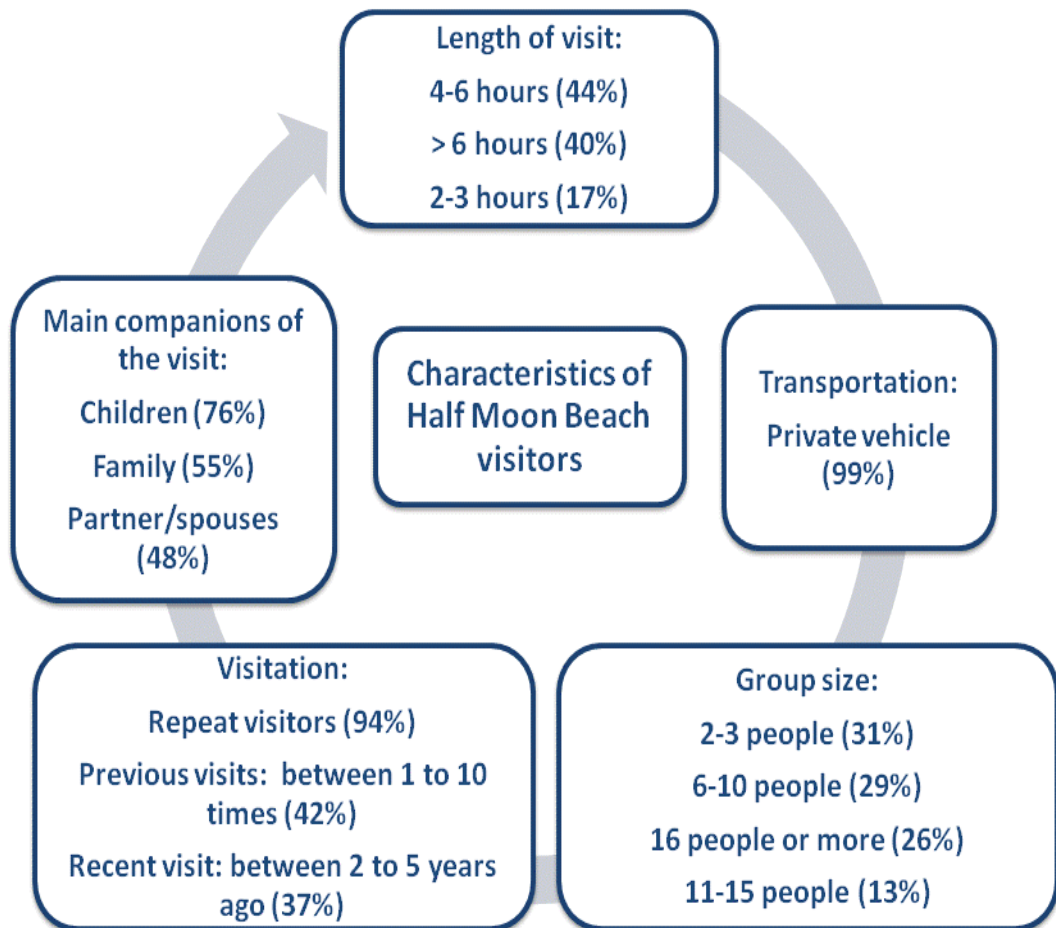
Figure 23: Main characteristics of Half Moon Beach visitors.

5.2.3 Motivation, activities and satisfaction of Half Moon Beach visitors

5.2.3.1 Purpose of visit and motivation of visitors

Understanding tourists' motivations is important to gain insights into answering the question of why tourists travel to a certain destination or why tourists participate in a particular activity. Travel motivation studies play a crucial role into understanding the

psychology of the travel behaviour of tourists (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). The understanding of tourists' motivations is important to the tourism industry, including coastal and marine tourism, as it enables the industry to produce and market tourism products and services that satisfy the needs and demands of tourists (Van der Merwe et al., 2011). Respondents provided a variety of reasons why they visited Half Moon Beach. Understanding why visitors came to Half Moon Beach can help in understanding visitors' needs and wants and provide insight into the best way to meet these needs and wants and understand the best way to satisfy the expectations of visitors.

The literature review (Chapter 2) identified a range of motivations related to marine and tourism destinations. Amongst the studies of marine travel motives presented in the literature review chapter, there were similar and common motivations that were found. In most studies, nature and destination beauty, activities (water and physical activities), escape, relaxation, socialisation, family togetherness, time away from home, enjoyment and climate were the most common motives found (see Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Saayman et al., 2009; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Kruger & Saayman, 2010; Kozak, 2002; Van der Merwe et al., 2011).

According to the results of the Half Moon Beach study, visitors came to the beach for a variety of reasons, which were consistent with other marine travel motivation studies. It is not surprising to see that entertainment (53%), recreation (31%), change from home (10%) and relaxation (8%) were amongst the main motives of Half Moon Beach visitors as these drivers were found in most of the studies about marine tourism mentioned above. Furthermore, the importance of strong family ties in Saudi Arabia was reflected in the importance of family togetherness (11%) as one of the motives of the respondents. Additionally, enjoying the beach's nature and the beauty of sea (9%) as well as the good weather conditions during the time of year (9%) attracted many visitors

to the beach. Participation in recreational activities (7%) such as sand dune riding, swimming, fishing and playing football were also motives mentioned by a number of respondents. The limited recreational activities particularly marine-based activities offered at Half Moon Beach may explain the reason behind the lower percentage of this motive. Overall, these results were similar to Bogari et al.'s study (2004) of the motivations of domestic tourists in Saudi Arabia who found that activities, nature, socialisation, leisure, relaxation and family togetherness were some of the common reasons that motivate them to travel.

5.2.3.2   Visitor activities

Visitors to Half Moon Beach identified a variety of activities in which they participated during their visit to the beach. Relaxing was the main activity undertaken at Half Moon Beach for 86% of the visitors, whilst visiting King Fahd Coastal City (8%), fishing (7%) and windsurfing/kite surfing (0.4%) were the least mentioned activities amongst visitors. The high percentage of relaxation as an activity for the majority of respondents may reflect the high percentage of repeat visitors. Oppermann (1997) states that repeat visitors tend to seek relaxation by visiting familiar places. The beauty of the sea and sand as well as the location of the beach away from the crowded cities make it different from other urban beaches inside cities and may indicate the importance of seeking relaxation for most of the respondents, regardless of their demographic characteristics. Orams (1999) stated that the sea has been a major attraction for people for thousands of years for the purposes of relaxing and socialising.

Furthermore, fishing and windsurfing may not be popular amongst visitors due to the lack of equipment and operators at the beach for these activities and visitors interested in these activities would have to bring their personal equipment or hire them from elsewhere (Ahakhuri, 2011). An additional explanation for the low levels of wind-

surfing activity could be related to the light wind conditions experienced during most of the study days, thus that appropriate conditions for this activity were not available.

Visiting the King Fahd Coastal City is not very popular amongst visitors. This coastal city is restricted for men (women are prohibited from visiting), which means that women, who consisted of 46% of the study sample, were excluded from this activity. The low popularity of this activity may also indicate that Saudis may prefer activities that allow the participation of the whole family (55% of the respondents visited with their family).

Walking on the beach (83%), barbecuing (73%), playing on the beach (64%), swimming (54%) and taking photographs (54%) were also popular activities for visitors. Boating (25%) and sand dune riding (21%) had some popularity amongst visitors. The researcher also observed that they were many visitors playing football and volleyball, and children making sand sculptures or digging holes, playing with kites, looking for shells or running near the water. Swimming was a popular activity amongst visitors as the results above indicate. The researcher observed that most visitors swam between 11am to 3pm, as the weather was warmer during this time. A study of first-time and repeat visitors to New Zealand by Oppermann (1997) found that first-time visitors are more active than repeat visitors in terms of participation in vigorous activities. This may explain the reasons behind the relatively high percentages of non-vigorous activities such as relaxation, taking photographs and barbecuing or relatively non-vigorous activities such as walking on the beach compared to more vigorous activities such fishing, windsurfing.

The researcher observed that most visitors cooked on fires, set up barbecues, had picnics, and drank tea and Arabic coffee during their visit, which also indicates some examples of relaxation near the beach and are examples of non-vigorous activities. The

results showed that swimming and boating were the most popular water activities amongst visitors. During the study period, the researcher observed many groups of adults jet skiing and one group was kite surfing. The rest of the activities were mainly land based rather than water based, which indicates that water-based activities undertaken at this beach are very limited. Furthermore, Saudis are increasingly travelling to other Middle Eastern destinations such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates for recreational and leisure purposes. Travelling to these destinations is easy and accessible by road or air. One of the main motives to visit these destinations is to visit coastal areas that provide a wide range of recreational and water-based activities with better quality, reasonable prices, fewer government restrictions and less cultural sensitivity than Saudi Arabia. These factors may indicate that visitors to Half Moon Beach may not be attracted by the limited activities offered at the beach as they have other options that are easy, affordable and more well established.

5.2.3.3 Visitor satisfaction

Tourists visit certain destinations or participate in certain activities to satisfy certain needs and fulfil specific desires (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). The extent to which tourist destinations or activities meet the wants and needs of visitors can be understood through measuring visitors' satisfaction (Arabatzis & Grigoroudis, 2010). Evaluating visitors' satisfaction may give an indication of the level of performance of the products and services offered at a tourism destination and should be a fundamental parameter used to assess and enhance the performance of these products and services (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). This understanding also allows tourism mangers to provide products and services that match visitors' expectations and allows them to understand the specific aspects of the tourism experience that satisfies or dissatisfies visitors (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007). Yoon and Uysal (2005) stated that "tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the

consumption of products and services, and the decision to return" (p. 47). Measuring the level of satisfaction of visitors helps in encouraging both new and repeat visitors to revisit the destination as well as encouraging a positive 'word of mouth' recommendation amongst tourists (Shahrivar, 2012). It is important to understand specific factors that may affect visitors' satisfaction to help enhance and improve the performance of the destination (Shahrivar, 2012).

The respondents were asked to evaluate their levels of satisfaction with their visit to Half Moon Beach and were asked to provide the main reasons for their dissatisfaction or satisfaction. The results showed that the majority of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied (53%) with the whole experience and some expressed attributes that contributed positively to their overall satisfaction of the beach experience. However, some respondents expressed attributes that they considered negative or both positive and negative but still did not affect their satisfaction rating level. The majority of the respondents were satisfied and expressed positive reasons to justify their satisfaction (57%) indicating that the natural environment, beauty of the sea and the sandy beach (63%) and the site itself with the facilities available and the overall level of cleanliness (44%) were the main attributes that contributed to their satisfaction. A small number of respondents indicated that the level of quietness and lack of congestion (22%), family and friends gathering (15%) and good weather conditions (7%) were the main reasons for their satisfaction. Moreover, respondents who were extremely satisfied (13%) with the beach visit expressed similar attributes including beauty of the beach, good weather, relaxation, quietness and family gathering.

A number of respondents (23%) expressed negative reasons despite their satisfied rating scale such as a low level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities, not enough commercial services and facilities, lack of good recreational activities, and lack of first

aid centres. Alegre and Garau (2010) stated that "the presence of certain factors generates satisfaction, yet their absence does not necessarily generate dissatisfaction" (p. 53). These negative attributes did not affect the respondents' satisfaction during this visit, however, these factors may affect their willingness to revisit or it may affect their satisfaction levels in the future. Moreover, respondents who were extremely dissatisfied (3%) or dissatisfied (23%) with the beach visit expressed similar negative attributes that contributed negatively to their satisfaction with their beach visit experience. The majority of the dissatisfied respondents (73%) indicated that the low level of cleanliness and care of the beach and facilities were the main reason for this dissatisfaction. These respondents were dissatisfied with the dirty toilets and the amount of rubbish in the sand and near the sea especially during busy days.

Furthermore, many respondents (59%) indicated that the overall lack of preparation for visitors on the site through the poor quality of existing facilities and the lack of good facilities and services to meet the needs of visitors were the reasons for their dissatisfaction. The lack of commercial services and facilities, bad lighting at night, particularly in the sunshades, and the limited overall improvements and development of the beach were the main examples raised by some respondents. Hui et al. (2007) state that providing high-quality services that ensure that satisfaction of the customer is one of the important factors that can lead to the success of the tourism industry and develop a long-term relationship with tourists and more importantly bring destination loyalty. Moreover, a number of respondents (34%) indicated that the lack of recreational activities, particularly marine and coastal activities, negatively affected their beach visit. Many respondents commented that existing activities were limited, expensive and of poor quality. They suggested that it is important to offer a range of recreational and sea-based activities like the activities offered in other countries such as Dubai and Qatar that suit different age groups and target families and children in particular. Other issues

mentioned by respondents (29%) included annoyances from cats, unsafe swimming facilities, dangerous proximities of all-terrain vehicles to people in sitting areas, overcrowding, cold weather and noise from young people. Alegre and Garau (2010) stated that "negative experiences at a destination might not determine overall satisfaction, yet they nevertheless make the destination less attractive, and thus reduce the probability of a return visit" (p. 69).

A number of respondents (19%) were satisfied with the beach visit indicating that the beauty of the natural environment and the good weather conditions contributed positively to their satisfaction. These respondents also indicated that the low level of cleanliness and the lack of good commercial services such as restaurants and cafés were negative aspects of their beach visit experience; however, these factors did not affect their overall satisfaction ratings during the visit. Respondents who were neutral (19%) on the satisfaction rating scale also indicated that they were satisfied with the beach visit for a number of reasons including beach view, relaxation, enjoyment, good weather and gathering with family and friends. Some negative elements of the beach visit expressed by these respondents included low level of cleanliness, lack of good facilities and services, lack of good recreational activities, particularly marine and coastal activities, and noise from young people.

When evaluating the overall satisfaction of the beach visit experience, respondents were mainly satisfied. However, when respondents provided specific reasons to justify their satisfaction and dissatisfaction, negative attributes were generally given more emphasis. The natural environment, beauty of the sea, good weather and socialisation with family and friends were the main reasons for respondents to be satisfied. However, when looking at the specific attributes relating to services and facilities at the beach, comments were mostly negative. For tourism destination operators it is important to

understand the level of satisfaction that visitors place on the services and facilities offered to determine whether they meet the needs and expectations of the target market (Shahrivar, 2012). Satisfaction with specific attributes of the tourism destination is important in attracting loyal visitors, not just repeat visitors (Alegre & Garau, 2010). Visitors to Half Moon Beach are mainly repeat visitors but not regular visitors. The negative aspects expressed by respondents about their beach visit may indicate why many respondents were not regular visitors. Tourism operators in the country may understand the specific reasons that affect visitors' satisfaction and work on enhancing the positive ones and improving the negative ones. Figure 24 shows a summary of the main satisfaction and dissatisfaction attributes of visitors to Half Moon Beach.

Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with Half Moon Beach visit

Satisfied or extremely satisfied (53%)
•Beauty of natural environment, sea and sandy beach
•The site with the facilities provided and overall level of cleanliness
•Overall level of quietness
•Family and friends gathering and enjoyment at the beach
•Good weather conditions

Neutral (19%)
Positive attribute
•Beauty of natural environment and sea
•Good weather conditions
•Gathering with family and friends
•Enjoyment
Negative attribute
•Low level of cleanliness of facilities
•Lack of good services and facilities particularly commercial services
•Lack of good activities
•Noise

Dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied (26%)
•Low level of cleanliness of the beach and facilities
•Not enough facilities at the beach (e.g. commercial facilities)
•Lack of good activities
•Not enough first aid centres
•Poor quality football fields
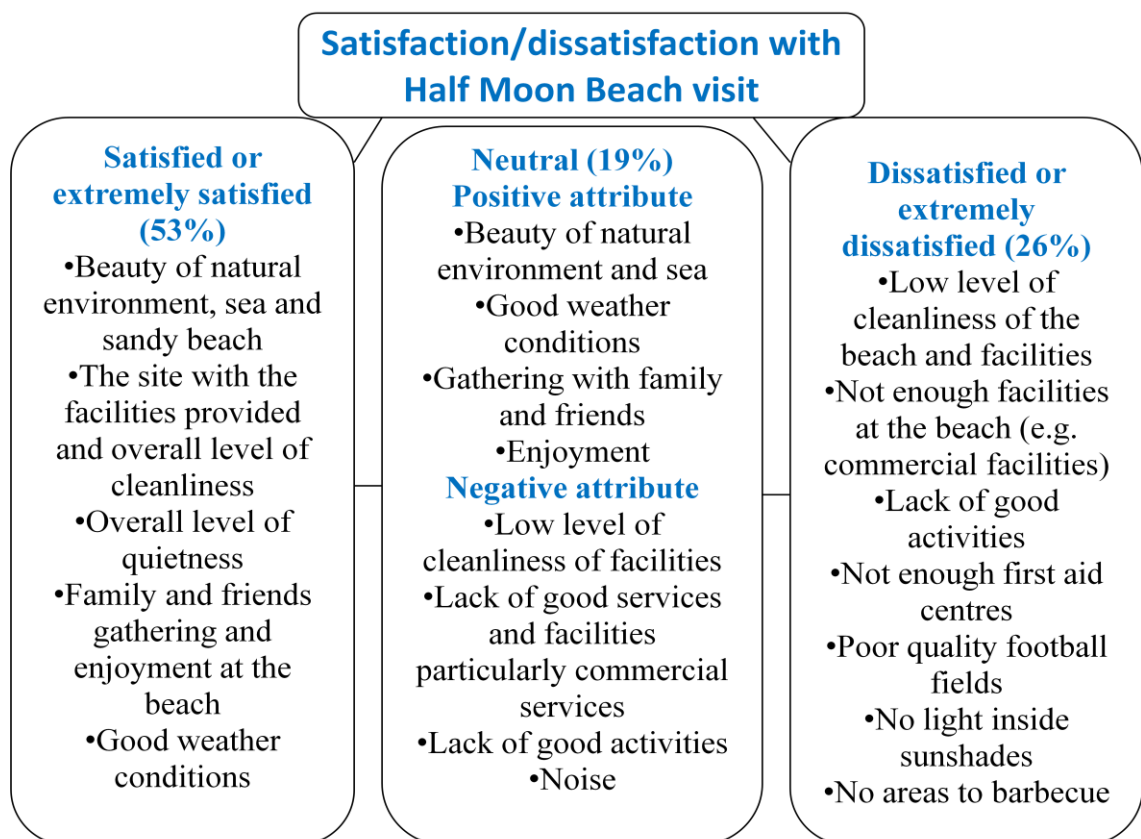•No light inside sunshades
•No areas to barbecue

Figure 24: Satisfaction and dissatisfaction attributes for Half Moon Beach visitors.

5.2.4 Visitors' current and future views of coastal and marine tourism

5.2.4.1 Current view of coastal and marine activities at Half Moon Beach

Half Moon Beach visitors placed a high level of importance on participating in coastal and marine activities during their beach visits with the majority of respondents indicated that it was important (38%) or extremely important (18.5%) to have the opportunity to participate during their visits. Worldwide, the participation in coastal and marine activities has gained popularity amongst tourists (Needham & Szuster, 2013). An increasing number of tourists visit coastal destinations mainly for the purpose of participating in sea and beach-related activities (Needham & Szuster, 2013). Therefore, coastal and marine activities are a major pull factor that attracts tourists to visit coastal and marine destinations all over the world.

In this study, just over one third was dissatisfied (38%) with the existing activities, facilities and services available at the beach and 7% were extremely dissatisfied. The existing activities at the beach include recreational and leisure activities such as boating and sand dune riding. Existing facilities and services include commercial facilities and services such as restaurants and cafes and include football fields, children playgrounds and first aid services. The existing activities and facilities at the beach are very limited and Al-Otaibi (2013) in his article explained that the lack of recreational activities and the scarcity of services/facilities at the beach lead to the visitors unwillingness to visit the beach (Al-Otaibi, 2013). Some of the providers of activities and services at the beach explained that some of the reasons for the low demand and visitation of the beach visitors are the failure of providing coastal and marine activities that satisfy the expectations of visitors and the failure of providing rrecreational projects and services at the beach that attract visitors (Al-Otaibi, 2013).

The majority of respondents were interested (39%) or extremely interested (37%) in having a wider variety of beach and sea-related activities on offer. In terms of activities, the results indicate that visitors' wants are not currently being satisfied. Visitors have a high desire to participate in an expanded range of beach and sea-related activities. However, the limited offerings of activities as well as the low quality of existing activities limit the participation in active beach and sea activities. Visitors have suggested a variety of recreational activities that they would like to be offered at the beach so they can have the opportunity of participating in these activities (these suggestions are discussed in the next section). Most visitors came to the beach to relax and attracted by the beauty of the sea, sand and the nice weather. This indicates that the traditional reasons for beach visits (sun, sea and sand) remain strong amongst beach visitors in eastern Saudi Arabia (at least as evidenced by those who visited Half Moon Beach). This is consistent with beach-based recreation and tourism in the rest of the world (Higham & Lück, 2008).

The global development of coastal and marine tourism as well as the wide range of new technologies and opportunities for marine recreation have increased the interest in discovering and exploring the sea more than ever (Needham & Szuster, 2013). Most visitors to Half Moon Beach expressed a similar interest and desire to explore the sea and to enjoy a wide range of water-based activities. Currently however, for Half Moon Beach visitors, participating in water-based activities was limited mainly to swimming with very small numbers participating in other water-based pursuits such as fishing and boating. Al-Otaibi (2013) states that many neighbouring Gulf countries succeed on developing many coastal areas, despite its distance from the city centre. Many neighbouring Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar attract Saudis particularly during holidays and weekends (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). According to the country tourism

forecasts, the number of Saudis travelling outside the country will increase from 9.2 million in 2013 to 12.1 million in 2017 (*Saudi Arabia tourism report Q4 2013: Includes 5-year forecasts to 2017*, 2013). Overall, given the results of this study and the wider global trends in marine recreation, it is likely that if opportunities for expanded and more diverse marine recreation activities were made available at Half Moon Beach, they would likely prove popular. Developing the recreational opportunities at the area may help in attracting Saudis travelling outside the country and may support the further growth of domestic tourism.

5.2.4.2   Views of Half Moon Beach visitors regarding future development

The respondents suggested a variety of activities that they would like to be offered at Half Moon Beach. The majority said that they would like to have a wide range of sea and beach-related activities (96%) including jet boats, jet skiing, diving centres and courses, snorkelling, yachting, cruising and boat racing. Other suggestions included a water theme park, kite surfing; fishing trips, windsurfing centres, and trips to nearby islands. Furthermore, many respondents suggested that they would like to have more sports fields and activities (59%). Respondents offered many examples including football fields and competitions, motorcycle races, horse races and volleyball. A number of respondents suggested that they would like to have some educational activities (6%) related to the coastal and marine environment and to have special activities during events and holiday (5%). In addition to activities, some respondents suggested that they would like to have more commercial facilities and services (8%) such as cafés and restaurants, specifically floating restaurants.

The results indicate that the majority of Half Moon Beach visitors were in favour of having general development and improvements in terms of facilities, services and activities at the beach. The majority of participants agreed (79%) or strongly agreed

(23%) with developing coastal and marine activities and provided reasons to justify their agreement. Respondents indicated that the development of more activities at Half Moon Beach would increase levels of entertainment, improve the destination image, increase the number of visitors, attract more visitors from outside the eastern regions of the country and provide jobs for young people. These reasons that respondents provided were mainly focusing on the social and economic benefits of coastal and marine tourism development. One of the social benefits of the development of marine tourism and its related activities is enjoyment benefits that visitors gain from the interaction with marine environment (Zeppel & Muloin, 2008). Furthermore, development of coastal and marine tourism drives high financial benefits, increase employment opportunities by creating jobs and attracting jobs seekers as many respondents indicated above (Ghosh, 2011). Other respondents also indicated that such developments would improve and support coastal and marine tourism in the country in general, and domestic and local tourism in particular.

Some respondents believed that the development of activities would help with the improvements and development of other facilities and services at the beach and as a result would help the area compete with the neighbouring countries. Lusseau (2008) states that development of coastal and marine tourism encourages the development of infrastructure, services and facilities at these coastal areas, which drives many benefits to locals. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that in-water activities would help visitors learn about the sea, discover the marine environment and provide people with a better experience away from home and routine. Learning about the coastal and marine environment and expanding the marine knowledge of visitors are one of the significant social benefits of coastal and marine tourism (Lück, 2008). Through coastal and marine activities, visitors of Half Moon Beach may have a better opportunity to learn, explore and expand their knowledge of the marine environment and species found in this bay.

Generally, respondents believed that the beauty of the sea and its nature would be seen differently after developing more activities at the beach and visitor demand would be satisfied.

Some respondents showed limited agreement (6%) with increasing the development of coastal and marine activities at the beach. These respondents indicated that activities and developments at the beach should not affect the elements of relaxation, quietness and peace of their beach visit. They suggested that activities should be offered in specific parts of the beach so people who seek the elements of relaxation and quietness can sit away from these activities. Relaxation and peacefulness of the marine and beach nature are important social benefits driven from being close and interacting with this nature (Zeppel & Muloin, 2008). Furthermore, some respondents believed that any offerings of new activities should be delivered with high-quality care, responsibility and safety. They explained that supervision and maintenance should be offered with any new activities.

Only 3% of respondents disagreed with offering or developing any activities at the beach and 7% of respondents believed that no additional activities were needed at Half Moon Beach. These respondents gave similar reasons for their opinions. Most of these respondents believed that the main reasons to visit this beach are relaxation, quietness and enjoying the beauty of the nature; therefore, activities would negatively affect these characteristics by bringing noise, damage to the sea environment, rubbish, smoke or sewage from marine activities, and overcrowding. Development of coastal and marine tourism particularly uncontrolled development would drive many disadvantages to the marine and coastal environment and would negatively affect the marine species (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003). For example, a massive development of boating and sailing facilities (such as marinas and wharves) and activities could produce a large amount of

pollution and may cause physical disturbance for the marine species (Warnken & Byrnes, 2003). The relaxation and peacefulness elements of Half Moon Beach valued by many existing visitors would be negatively affected as a result of the overcrowding and increased noise brought by uncontrolled development of marine tourism (Ghosh, 2011). Any future development of tourism at Half Moon Beach should carefully consider the potential environmental and social negative impacts of development on the fragile environment and the visitor experience.

The respondents expressed their doubts around the safety of visitors when introducing new marine activities that they believed will not be accompanied by clear safety rules, instructions, education for visitors as well as for operators of activities. They thought that developments at the beach would limit the public use of the beach. Large spaces would be occupied and controlled by activity operators and visitors would only have limited spaces to sit and enjoy their personal activities, therefore, these respondents disagreed with any developments at the beach. The respondents believed that avoiding these activities would be better than facing the new problems that would be introduced to the area as a result of these activities. (Ghosh, 2011) states that massive development of coastal and marine areas may result in displacing locals from their favoured coastal areas and make these areas inaccessible by locals. Development of marine and coastal activities at Half Moon Beach may result in displacing existing local visitors from their favoured areas.

Most of the respondents viewed developments of coastal and marine activities in the area in a positive light. Respondents were mainly focused on social and economic benefits. They considered that developments at the beach would bring many social advantages such as an increased level of enjoyment for visitors and improvements to the area to be more attractive for locals as well as domestic visitors. Furthermore,

development would bring many economic advantages such as improving domestic tourism, increasing the number of visitors and creating job opportunities. Respondents who disagreed with the developments were concerned about the effects on quietness and relaxation at the beach for visitors. The natural sea and beach environment was also a concern as they believed that developments would cause negative impacts to this fragile environment and in turn would damage an important motive that attracts many visitors to the beach. Visitors were also concerned about the freedom of public use of the beach and the possibility of being dislocated from their preferred areas if massive tourism development takes place.

According to visitors' perspectives, the results of this study may give tourism operators in the area a clear indication of the importance of developing new services and products that attract new visitors as well as encourage repeat visitors. However, the literature around the impacts coastal and marine development provides a clear indication of the importance of considering the implications of tourism development in the area. The study results indicate that visitors want to explore new things and discover the special characteristics of this coastal destination through activities as well as spend time with their family, children and friends. Any new developments of activities at the beach should strive to engage the whole family as this is very important amongst Saudis. The elements of learning and enjoyment as social benefits should be considered carefully when planning for a new development at the beach. Visitors at Half Moon Beach would like to interact with the beach and the marine environment through activities, however, visitors should understand the implications of this interaction on the environment. They should know the appropatie and acceptable level of interaction with the marine and coastal environment. Positive and negative impacts should be carefully assessed and the main goal of the marine and coastal development should focus on enhancing positive impacts and limiting negative ones. Furthermore, the results give a clear indication of

the importance of developing the area in way that creates a careful balance between the desires of all respondents and consider the natural environment of the beach and sea. The natural coastal and marine environment of the Gulf has been significantly altered since the discovery of oil and the Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars (Al-Otaibi et al., 2010). This highlights the importance of considering the appropriate level of development of activities in Half Moon Beach, which is part of the Gulf. It highlights the importance of developing sustainable marine attractions that do not cause further damage and negative impacts to the area.

5.2.4.3 Important suggestions from respondents

There were some suggestions that have emerged from the results of this study, which have a significant contribution to the respondents' perspectives around the development of activities. Respondents indicated the importance of offering activities that would suit different age groups and should particularly target families, children and adolescents and young adults (47%). Families with children are an important segment that should be targeted carefully when developing and improving domestic tourism.

Furthermore, many respondents (37%) explained that cultural and religious regulations would limit the participation of females in many activities; therefore, it would be important to provide private options at the beach for females that take into account these regulations and at the same time meet their needs and wants. In the survey conducted by SCTA in 2000, half of all respondents thought that tourism facilities in Saudi Arabia did not meet the needs of women (The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 2000).

The results of the Half Moon Beach study also presented the importance of safety of visitors when introducing new activities (35%). Respondents believed that operators of any new activities should carefully consider safety regulations and educating visitors before introducing visitors to any activities. Adventurous and water-based activities

impose some level of danger and risk, particularly for inexperienced people (Mier & Kegeles, 2002). Therefore, ensuring the safety of visitors is an important factor that would help in making the destination attractive.

Another important issue raised by many respondents was the significance of ensuring a high level of cleanliness and quality for any services and recreational facilities that may be introduced at the beach. Furthermore, respondents raised the importance of improving and developing commercial facilities to accompany any new development of coastal and marine activities at the beach.

5.3   Conclusion

Half Moon Beach is one of the popular coastal destinations in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia because of its location, beauty of the natural environment as well as providing a good place to gather with family and friends. However, a low level of cleanliness, lack of good services and facilities, a limited number of coastal and marine activities, and safety issues caused dissatisfaction amongst respondents. These issues may reduce repeat visitation in the future, create more negative feelings amongst visitors and fail to attract new visitors, which in turn may negatively affect the tourism industry in the area.

The results showed an interest amongst participants towards developing Half Moon Beach and marketing it as a coastal destination to compete with other countries. Visitors believed that local and domestic tourism would increase and the area would be able to attract more visitors from outside the eastern region. Although, the majority of visitors were in favour of development in the area, there were still some respondents who disagreed with these developments. Therefore, any development plan should take into consideration the various needs and demands of visitors as well as consider the impacts that may be placed on the beach and sea environment as a result of these developments.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1   Research questions and objectives

This study used a self-reply questionnaire to consider the following six research questions:

Question 1: What are the demographics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 2: What are the characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 3: What are the motivations of visitors to Half Moon Beach?

Question 4: What are the activities undertaken by visitors at Half Moon Beach?

Question 5: What is the level of satisfaction with the visit to Half Moon Beach?

Question 6: What are the views of visitors to Half Moon Beach with regards to the future development of coastal and marine activities?

The five primary research objectives (as noted in section 3.1) were:

- To identify the demographic characteristics of visitors to Half Moon Beach.

- To understand visitors' motivations.

- To understand visitors' views of the current activities available at the beach.

- To consider visitors' level of interest in developing marine and coastal activities and introducing more recreational activities.

- To consider the future of Half Moon Beach with regards to introducing new marine and coastal activities.

The findings provide knowledge of coastal and marine tourists at a coastal destination in Saudi Arabia. These findings provide an explanation of the demographics, characteristics, motivations and activities of the visitors of this coastal destination. The

findings provide an understanding of the importance of developing coastal and marine activities based on visitors' perspectives, opinions and views. This study focused on visitors' needs and wants, and provides some understanding around their satisfaction and dissatisfaction and the factors that affect the level of visitors' satisfaction.

The findings indicate that Half Moon Beach is popular mainly because of its beautiful nature and the beauty of the sea and sand. However, the findings also confirmed that Half Moon Beach lacks many important facilities and services and existing ones are of low quality and low level of cleanliness. The beach also lacks coastal and marine activities that satisfy visitors' expectations. All of these negative elements reduce the attractiveness of the destination and in turn fail to attract new and loyal visitors and may affect visitors' overall experience of their beach visit.

The research indicates the high level of importance that most visitors place on participating in coastal and marine activities at the beach and offers initial insights into the dearth of activities available for visitors at the beach. It also explains the low level of visitor satisfaction with these activities and their interest in new sea and beach-related activities and improving existing offerings. Visitors viewed these developments as a way of enhancing the enjoyment of beach visits, improving local and domestic tourism, and attracting visitors to the area.

6.2   Review of significant findings

This exploratory research is significant because there has been no published research on tourism at beaches in Saudi Arabia. The aim of this research was to explore beach visitors' characteristics, motivations and activities at Half Moon Beach. Reviewing visitors' responses and suggestions are critical to expanding our knowledge and understanding regarding beach visitors and their desires as well as understanding their views regarding the development of activities at Half Moon Beach.

The important findings of this study are:

Demographics: Visitors were mostly Saudi citizens living in cities located in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The majority of visitors lived in Dammam. There were more male survey participants than female, the majority of visitors were in the 25-34 year age range, and most visitors had a university undergraduate degree. The majority of the visitors were private sector employees.

Characteristics: People visited in large groups, mainly with children, family and partners/spouse, and stayed for four to six hours. The majority of visitors had previously visited the beach.

Beach visit: The main reasons for visiting were entertainment, recreation and spending time with family. Visitors' main activities consisted of relaxing, walking on the beach, barbecuing, playing on the beach, swimming and taking photographs. The majority of visitors were satisfied with the visit with the main reason for this being the natural environment and beauty of the sea.

Visitors' views of marine activities at the beach: The majority of visitors considered the opportunity to participate in coastal and marine activities during the beach visit important. The majority of visitors were dissatisfied with the existing activities available at the beach. The majority of visitors were interested or extremely interested in having more coastal and marine activities at the beach. Sports activities, sea, and beach-related activities were the main activities suggested by visitors to be offered at the beach. The majority of visitors agreed with developing coastal and marine activities at the beach for a variety of reasons including increasing tourists' levels of enjoyment and improving local and domestic tourism.

In summary, this study provides detailed information about visitors at Half Moon Beach during December 2014 to February 2015. It also indicates the importance of developing activities at the beach whilst taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic impacts of development as well as taking into consideration the benefits of these developments on visitors and on the coastal area. The results emphasise the importance of considering visitors' desires for more development of activities at the beach as well as considering the long-term implications of these developments. The study indicates the importance of establishing a development plan that takes into account the importance of limiting the negative consequences of these developments as well as enhancing the positive impacts and increase benefits.

6.3   Limitations of the study

This study focused on several days between 20 December 2014 and 27 February 2015 in which weather was partly cloudy with light winds during the day and colder at night (the highest air temperature during the study period was 31°C and lowest was 8°C). Despite being representative days and revealing some significant results of visitors to Half Moon Beach, the results should be interpreted carefully. Visitation at Half Moon Beach during other times of the year is likely to be very different.

The self-reply questionnaires have the possibility of collecting inaccurate data. Veal (2006) states that even if the questions and their design were carefully chosen and pre-tested, there might be limitations because respondents tend to misjudge or overstate answers or they do not recall information correctly.

Children under the age of 18 were not invited to participate in this study, thus the research lacks a representation of their views and opinions. As the majority of visitors (76%) visited with their children, a study of this important segment may reveal very different results.

The idea of collecting data via a self-reply questionnaire was relatively new to many visitors. The cultural limitations and sensitivity of talking to strangers may affect to some extent the validity of the responses and may be the reason for the number of refusals to participate in the study.

6.4   Suggestions for further research

This research is the first empirical study of coastal and marine tourism at Half Moon Beach. As a result many questions have been raised, which provides an opportunity for additional research in the future. This study was targeted at beach visitors and mainly considered their perspectives, views and opinions around coastal and marine developments in the area. Therefore, it is important to conduct further studies that examine tourism providers in the area and understand their perspectives and views around developments of activities in the area. Moreover, further studies should be carried out at other times of the year, such as during holidays, to obtain further knowledge of the places of residency of Half Moon Beach visitors, particularly visitors from outside the country.

The study was conducted in months when weather is cooler than the rest of year. These months were during school terms, so it would be important to conduct another study on visitors all year around and particularly during school holidays. Another study should be conducted to determine visitors' satisfaction levels with specific attributes that cover all aspects of the beach experience.

A general assessment and clear profile of the environmental and natural characteristics of this area are needed to help tourism providers as well as beach visitors have better knowledge of the area and the best activities that can be developed based on these characteristics. Moreover, the environmental aspects at the beach should be carefully studied and the impacts that developments of coastal and marine activities would place

on the natural environment should be carefully considered in future research. Overall, social, economic and environmental impacts should be studied to help plan for sustainable development of this coastal area.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant information sheet and self-reply questionnaire in English

The following self-reply questionnaire appears as it was used during fieldwork at Half

Moon Beach.

Participant Information Sheet

AUT
UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced: 09/09/2014

Project Title: The characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia

An Invitation:
My name is Farwa Alkhalaf and I am studying a Master of International Tourism Management at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). You are kindly invited to participate in a study about the characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach in Saudi Arabia.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you will in no way be disadvantaged should you choose not to take part. Attached to this information sheet is a self-reply questionnaire. Completion of the attached questionnaire will be taken as indicating your consent to participate. Answering the questions and completing this questionnaire should take you approximately 10-12 minutes.

Thank you for your willingness to consider this invitation.

Best Regards
Farwa Alkhalaf

What is the purpose of this research?
This study will be used to complete a thesis, which is a requirement of the Master of International Tourism Management at the Auckland University of Technology. The main purpose of the study is to get an overall idea about the characteristics, impressions, and future views of the visitor to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia, with regard to the beach-related activities. The study will also provide some basic and important information about the users of this beach in particular and Saudi Arabian beaches in general.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You have been identified as a visitor to Half Moon Beach. We are inviting visitors to the beach to take part in the research by completing a written questionnaire.

How do I participate in this study?
This study involves self-reply questionnaires, which are administered to a sample of people visiting Half Moon Beach. You are kindly invited to participate by completing the attached questionnaire. This questionnaire focuses on your motivations to visit the beach and on your activities during the visit.

Your participation in this study is valuable, as it will help provide a better understanding of beach visitors' perspectives and needs.

Is there any discomfort/risk for participating in this research?
Participants in this research will not be exposed to any kind of discomforts or risks. Participation in the questionnaire is optional and contact details will not be required. Data and information will be kept confidential and secure.

What are the benefits from participating in this study?
The beach visitors will benefit from having an in-depth study that discusses their perspectives around a beach visit and how this visit can be made more comfortable and entertained through potentially developing marine and coastal activities. Information on visitors' characteristics and motivations will be useful when evaluating the importance of developing coastal and marine activities around the beach in the future.

The researcher will benefit from the knowledge gained from this study. Academically, new skills will be obtained in research and the data gained will be used to write a thesis. Personally, I will benefit from having the opportunity to understand beach visitors and the effects of interaction with beach and sea.

How will my privacy be protected?
Participants contact details are not required for this research. All participants will not be known to the researcher. The participants will not be identified and the questionnaire is anonymous.

What are the costs of participating in this study?
There is no cost to participate in the research apart from approximately 10-12 minutes of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?
Participants can take about 5 to 10 minutes to consider the invitation to complete the questionnaire before accepting or declining to participate.

How do I agree to participate in this study?
To participate in this research, simply provide a verbal agreement to the researcher to take the forms. Completion of the attached questionnaire will be taken as indicating your consent to participate.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this study?
The final thesis reporting on this research will be available online on the AUT Scholarly Commons URL http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/so participants may access the final thesis if they are interested.

What do I do if I have concerns about this study?
Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Professor Mark Orams, email:mark.orams@aut.ac.nz, and phone +64 9 921 9999 ext 6410.*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz,* 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this study?
Researcher Contact Details: Farwa Alkhalaf
Researcher Email: farwa20@hotmail.com, and phone +64 21 077 0746
Project Supervisor: *Professor Mark Orams*
Project Supervisor Email: mark.orams@aut.ac.nz, and phone +64 9 921 9999 ext 6410

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24 November 2014, AUTEC Reference number 14/357

Please turn page over

The characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia

Self-reply questionnaire

(By completing this questionnaire, you are indicating your consent to participate in this research.
Please answer all questions; your answers are completely confidential. Thank you.)

A) ***This section is about your visit to Half Moon Beach.***

1. How long will you stay at Half Moon Beach today? _____ hours
   If you are staying overnight in the nearby area, please name the area
   _____

2. Who did you visit with today? (Please tick/check as many as apply).
   ☐ by myself   ☐ with friends   ☐ with partner/spouse

   ☐ with children   ☐ with my family

   ☐ with other family member   ☐ other (please specify) _____

3. How many people are in the group you are visiting with? _____ adults
   _____ children (under 18 yrs)

4. Where did you travel from today? City/Town: _____ Country: _____
   If Dammam, please name the suburb? _____

5. How did you get here? (please tick one option only) (coded as 1-2-3)
   ☐ private car   ☐ rental car   ☐ other (please specify)_____

6. What is the main purpose of your visit to Half Moon Beach today?
   _____

7. Have you visited Half Moon Beach before?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
   If yes, how many times approximately? _____ Please state when you last
   visited. _____

B) ***This section is about your impressions and satisfaction with your experiences at Half Moon Beach.***

1. Please indicate the activities you have undertaken during your visit to Half Moon
   Beach (tick/check as many as apply).

   Please turn page over

	Swimming	Relaxing	Fishing	Photography
	Walking	Boating	Barbecue	Windsurf/Kite-surf
	Sand dune riding	Playing on the beach	Visiting King Fahd Coastal City	

☐ Other (please specify):_____

2. Among the activities listed above, please rank your favourite three.

First Favourite: _____

Second favourite: _____

Third favourite: _____

3. Please rate your level of satisfaction with your visit to Half Moon Beach today (Please tick/check one option only).

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not sure/ don't know

4. Please explain the main reasons for your dissatisfaction/satisfaction with your beach visit today?
_____
_____

C) **This section focuses on your current and future view of Half Moon Beach marine/coastal activities.**

1. How important is the opportunity to participate in marine/coastal activities during your visit to Half Moon Beach?(Please tick one option only)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not at all Important	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Extremely Important	Not sure/ don't know

2. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the existing activities available for the visitors on the beach? (Please tick one option only)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not sure/ don't know

3. Please rate your interest in having more beach/sea-related activities on Half Moon Beach?(Please tick one option only)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not at all Interested	Not interested	Neutral	Interested	Extremely Interested	Not sure/ don't know

4. If you would like to have more activities offered at Half Moon Beach, please indicate your top three activities? (E.g., boat trips, snorkelling, water games, kayaking, etc).

First Activity: _____

Second Activity: _____

Third Activity: _____

If you believe that no more activities are needed on Half Moon Beach, please specify your main reasons?
_____
_____

5. Please explain your personal view around developing more beach/sea-related activities on the beach on the future, do you agree/disagree and why?

_____
_____
_____

D) ***This section is about your personal information.***

1- Please indicate your gender. ☐ Male ☐ Female

2-   Please indicate your age group:

[ ]   [ ]   [ ]   [ ]   [ ]   [ ]

18-24 yrs   25–34 yrs   35-44 yrs   45-54 yrs   55–64 yrs   65yrs& older

3-   Please state your primary occupation or profession
         (Student, government employee, private business employee, seeking work, retired,
         other: please specify):

         _____

4-   Please indicate the highest educational qualification that you have obtained (or
         your current stage of schooling):

         [ ]   High school   [ ]   Post school certificate/diploma
         [ ]   University undergraduate degree
         [ ]   University postgraduate qualification
         [ ]   Other post high school qualification
         [ ]   Other (please specify): _____

5-   Are you a citizen, a permanent resident or only a visitor of Saudi Arabia?
         _____If you are a citizen or

         permanent resident of Saudi Arabia, where do you stay? Please specify town/city.

         _____

6-   If you are only a visitor to Saudi Arabia, which country do you stay in?

         _____

         Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
         Please return this completed questionnaire, the clipboard and pen to the researcher.

Appendix B: Participant information sheet and self-reply questionnaire in Arabic

The following self-reply questionnaire appears as it was used during fieldwork at Half

Moon Beach.

معلومات للمشارك/المشاركة

عنوان البحث: صفات ودوافع وأنشطة زوار شاطئ نصف القمر في المملكة العربية السعودية

دعوة المشاركة:

أنا الطالبة فروة الخلف، أدرس مرحلة الماجستير في جامعة اوكلاند للتكنولجيا في نيوزلندا تخصص إدارة السياحة الدولية. أنت مدعو للمشاركة في بحث دراسة الماجستير الذي يتناول دراسة صفات و دوافع و أنشطة زوار شاطئ نصف القمر في المملكة العربية السعودية. هذا الاستبيان مخصص لمن هم بعمر الثامنة عشر و ما فوق. المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية بالكامل و لك كامل الحرية في قبولها و لن تكون معرض لأي ضرر لو أخترت عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. مرفق بورقة المعلومات إستبيان شخصي. إكمال الاستبيان المرفق يشيرالى موافقتك على المشاركة في البحث. إجابة ألأسئلة و إستكمال الاستبيان سيأخذ من وقتك من 10 الى 12 دقيقة.

أشكرك على قبول المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.
أطيب التحيات.
فروة الخلف.

ما هو الهدف من هذه الدراسة؟

الهدف من الدراسة الحالية أتمام اطروحة الماجستير و التي تعتبر متطلب رئيسي من متطلبات دراسة برنامج الماجستير في أدارة السياحة الدولية في جامعة أوكلاند للتنكلوجيا.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تكوين فكرة عامة عن صفات وانطباعات زوارشاطئ نصف القمر في المملكة العربية السعودية، و تكوين فكرة حول الأنشطة المتوفرة في الشاطئ وكيفية تطويرها. هذه الدراسة أيضا سوف تساعد على توفير بعض المعلومات الاسياسية و المهمة حول مرتادي شاطئ نصف القمر بشكل خاص و شواطئ المملكة العربية السعودية بشكل عام.

كيف تم تحديدي أنا شخصيا و لماذا انا مدعو/مدعوة للمشاركة في هذا البحث؟

لقد تم تحديدك كزائر لشاطئ نصف القمر. الدعوة للمشاركة في هذا البحث تشمل زوار الشاطئ و ذلك يتم بتعبئة الاستبيان المرفق كتابيا.

كيف أشارك في هذه الدراسة؟

هذه الدراسة تشتمل على أستبيان شخصي موجه الى عينة من زوار شاطئ نصف القمر. أنت مدعو/مدعوة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة عن طريق إكمال الاستبيان المرفق. هذا الاستبيان يركز على دوافعك و أهدافك من زيارة شاطئ نصف القمر و على الانشطة التي تقوم/تقومين بها خلال تواجدك في الشاطئ.

مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة قيمة جدا لانها سوف تساعد على إعطاء فهم أفضل لاحتياجات ومتطلبات ووجهات نظر زوار الشاطئ.

هل يوجد أيّة مخاطر من المشاركة في هذا البحث ؟

المشاركين/المشاركات في هذا البحث لن يكونو عرضة لاي نوع من المضايقات او المخاطر. المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان إختيارية و المعلومات الشخصية غير مطلوبة في هذا البحث. المعلومات و البيانات التي سوف يتم الحصول عليها ستبقى سرية و آمنة.

ماهي الفائدة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟

سوف يستفيد زوار الشاطئ من وجود دراسة متعمقة تناقش وجهات نظر هم و ارائهم حول زيارة الشاطئ و كيف نطور او نحسن هذه الزيارة لجعلها أكثر راحة ومتعة من خلال تطوير النشاطات الساحلية و البحرية على شاطئ نصف القمر. المعلومات حول خصائص الزوار و دوافعهم سوف تكون مفيدة لتقييم أهمية تطوير النشاطات الساحلية و البحرية حول الشاطئ في المستقبل.
من فضلك أقلب الصفحة

الباحثة سوف تستفيد من المعرفة التي سوف تكتسبها من هذه الدراسة. من الناحية الاكاديمية، الباحثة سوف تكتسب مهارات جديدة في طرق البحث بالاضافة الى الاستفادة من البيانات التي سوف يتم الحصول عليها لكتابة أطروحة الماجستير. شخصيا، أنا كباحثة سوف احصل على فرصة جيدة لفهم زوار الشاطئ.

كيف سيتم حماية خصوصيتي؟

المعلومات الشخصية و معلومات الاتصال للمشاركين/للمشاركات غير مطلوبة في هذا البحث. كل المشاركين/المشاركات سوف يكونون غير معروفين/معروفات للباحثة و الاستبيان لا يتطلب أسم المشارك/المشاركة.

ماهي تكاليف المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟

لا يوجد أي تكاليف مترتبة عليك من المشاركة في هذا البحث ما عدا عشر الى أثنى عشر دقيقة من وقتك.

كم لدى من الوقت للنظر في هذه الدعوة؟

لديك من خمس الى عشر دقائق للنظر في الدعوة و الموافقة على إستكمال الاستبيان المرفق أو رفض الدعوة للمشاركة.

كيف أقرر الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟

للمشاركة في هذا البحث فقط أعطي موافقة شفهية للباحثة لاستكمال الاستبيان المرفق. أستكمال الاستبيان المرفق سيعتبر أشارة رسمية على موافقتك على المشاركة.

هل سوف أطّلع على نتائج هذه الدراسة؟

الاطروحة النهائية سوف تكون متاحة على الانترنت في موقع جامعة أوكلاند للتنكولجيا فيمكن للمشاركين او المشاركات الاطلاع عليها.

(AUT Scholarly Commons URL: http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/)

ماذا أفعل أذا كان لدى أي مخاوف أو استفسارات عن هذه الدراسة؟

يجب أن يتم إخطار أي مخاوف أو أستفسارات بشأن طبيعة هذا المشروع في المقام الأول إلى المشرف على المشروع، البروفيسور مارك أورمس.
البريد الإلكتروني mark.orams@aut.ac.nz
الهاتف: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6410

يجب أن يتم إخطار أي مخاوف أو أستفسارات بشأن إدارة و سيرة البحث الى السكرتير التنفيذي في لجنة الاخلاقيات بجامعة أوكلاند للتنكولجيا، كيت أوكونور.
البريد الالكتروني: ethics@aut.ac.nz
الهاتف: 006499219999ext 6038

من الذى يمكنني الاتصال به لمعرفة معلومات أكثر عن هذه الدراسة؟

معلومات الاتصال بالباحثة فروة الخلف
البريد الالكتروني: Farwa20@hotmail.com
الهاتف: +64 21 077 0746/ 0545508047
معلومات الاتصال بالمشرف عن البحث البروفيسور مارك أورمس
البريد الالكتروني: mark.orams@aut.ac.nz
الهاتف: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6410

مصدقة من لجنة الاخلاقيات في جامعة اوكلاند للتنكولجيا بتاريخ 2014/11/24، رقم المرجع: 357/14

من فضلك أقلب الصفحة

صفات و دوافع و أنشطة زوار شاطئ نصف القمر في المملكة العربية السعودية

أستبيان شخصي

(أستكمال هذا الاستبيان يشير الى موافقتك الرسمية على المشاركة في هذا البحث.

من فضلك أجب على كل الاسئلة: إجاباتك كلها سرية و أمنه، شكرا لك)

أ‌- *هذا القسم يختص بزيارتك لشاطئ نصف القمر.*

1- كم ستستغرق زيارتك لشاطئ نصف القمر اليوم؟ _____ ساعات.

أذا كنت ستقيم حتى صباح اليوم التالي في مدينة/منطقة قريبة، يرجى تسمية المدينة/المنطقة _____ .

2- من قام بزيارة الشاطئ معك اليوم؟ (يرجى أختيار كل ما ينطبق).

لوحدي [ ]   مع الاصدقاء [ ]   مع الزوج/الزوجة [ ]   مع الاطفال [ ]

مع عائلتي [ ]   مع أفراد عائلة أخرى [ ]   آخر (حدد من فضلك) [ ] _____ .

3- كم عدد الاشخاص الذين يزورن الشاطئ معك في هذا اليوم؟

البالغين: _____   الاطفال (تحت سن 18): _____ .

4- من أين جئت الى الشاطئ في هذا اليوم؟ المدينة/البلدة: _____   الدولة: _____

اذا كنت جئت من الدمام، فضلا أكتب أسم الحي/الضاحية؟ _____ .

5- بأي وسيلة نقل جئت الى الشاطئ اليوم؟

سيارة خاصة [ ]   سيارة مستأجرة [ ]   آخر (حدد من فضلك) [ ] _____

6- ما هو الهدف/الغرض الرئيسي من زيارة شاطئ نصف القمر اليوم؟

_____

7- هل زرت شاطئ نصف القمر من قبل؟   نعم [ ]   لا [ ]

اذا كانت إجابتك بنعم، كم مره تقريبا زرت الشاطئ من قبل؟ _____ من فضلك حدد متى كانت آخر زيارة؟ _____

من فضلك أقلب الصفحة

ب‍- **هذا القسم يختص بإنطباعاتك ومستوى رضائك عن زيارتك لشاطئ نصف القمر.**

1- من فضلك وضح النشاطات التي قمت بها خلال زيارتك لشاطئ نصف القمر (يرجى أختيار كل ما يناسب):

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
التصوير	المشي على الشاطئ	الصيد	الاسترخاء	السباحة

☐	☐	☐	☐
ركوب الكثبان الرملية زيارة مدينة الملك فهد الساحلية	ركوب القارب	ركوب الامواج	

☐	☐
الشواء	اللعب على الشاطئ

أخر (حدد من فضلك):

2- من بين النشاطات التي ذكرت في السؤال السابق، من فضلك اذكر الثلاثة المفضلة لديك.

الاول --

الثاني --

الثالث --

3- من فضلك قيم مستوى رضاك عن زيارة شاطئ نصف القمر اليوم (يرجى تحديد خيار واحد فقط).

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
غير راضي بتاتا	غير راضي	محايد	راضي	راضي جدا	غير متأكد/لا أعلم

4- من فضلك وضح الاسباب الرئيسة لعدم رضاك/رضاك من زيارة الشاطئ اليوم؟

ت‍- **هذا القسم يختص بوجهة نظرك الحالية و المستقبيلة حول النشاطات البحرية و الساحلية في شاطئ نصف القمر.**

1- بالنسبة لك , مامدى أهمية المشاركة في الانشطة البحرية/الساحلية خلال زيارتك لشاطئ نصف القمر ؟ (يرجى تحديد خيار واحد فقط).

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
غير مهم بتاتا	غير مهم	محايد	مهم	مهم جدا	غير متأكد/لا أعلم

من فضلك أقلب الصفحة

2- من فضلك قيم مستوى رضاك عن الفعاليات والأنشطة التي تقام في شاطئ نصف القمر (يرجى تحديد خيار واحد فقط).

غير متأكد/لا أعلم	راضي جدا	راضي	محايد	غير راضي	غير راضي بتاتا

3- من فضلك قيم مستوى اهتمامك بتوفير مزيد من الفعاليات والأنشطة في شاطئ نصف القمر (يرجى تحديد خيار واحد فقط).

غير متأكد/لا أعلم	مهتم جدا	مهتم	محايد	غير مهتم	غير مهتم بتاتا

4- إذا كنت ترغب في زيادة الفعاليات و الأنشطة التي تقام في شاطئ نصف القمر ، من فضلك اذكر أهم ثلاثة لديك (أمثلة: جولات القوارب , تنظيم رحلات الغوص أو التجديف , انشاء ملاعب, العاب مائية, قوارب سريعة, غير ذلك) ؟

الاول --

الثاني --

الثالث --

إذا كنت لا ترى ضرورة لتوفير مزيد من الفعاليات والأنشطة في شاطئ نصف القمر , رجاء أذكر الاسباب .

_____

5- من فضلك اشرح وجهة نظرك الشخصية حول تطوير وزيادة الفعاليات التي تقام على الشاطئ . هل تؤيد أوتعارض ولماذا؟

_____
_____
_____

ث- *هذا القسم يختص بمعلوماتك الشخصية .*

1. من فضلك ضع اشارة على النوع: ذكر ☐   أنثى ☐

2. من فضلك ضع اشارة على الفئة العمرية :

65 سنة فما فوق	55 – 64 سنة	45 – 54 سنة	35 – 44 سنة	25 – 34 سنة	18 – 24 سنة

من فضلك أقلب الصفحة

3. من فضلك اذكر مهنتك الرئيسية (امثلة :طالب , موظف حكومي ,موظف قطاع خاص , باحث عن عمل , متقاعد)

_____

4. من فضلك ضع اشارة حول أعلى مؤهل دراسي حصلت عليه أو مرحلتك الدراسية الحالية

	ثانوية عامة		دبلوم عالي
	مؤهل جامعي (بكالوريس)		دراسات عليا (ماجستير)
	دراسات عليا (دكتوراه)		
	أخرى، أذكرها من فضلك -----------------		

5. هل أنت مواطن سعودي أم مقيم في السعودية أم زائرفقط ؟-------------------- .إذا كنت مواطنا سعوديا أومقيما في السعودية , فما مقر إقامتك؟ أذكر اسم المنطقة/المدينة من فضلك --------------------

6. إذا كنت في السعودية للزيارة فقط , ففي أي بلد مقر إقامتك؟

....

شكرا جزيلا لاعطاءنا جزء من وقتك

من فضلك أعد هذا الاستبيان إلى الباحث المعني.

Appendix C: Ethics approval

AUT UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

A U T E C
S E C R E T A R I A T

25 November 2014

Mark Orams
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Mark

Re Ethics Application: **14/357 The characteristics, motivations and activities of visitors to Half Moon Beach, Saudi Arabia.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 24 November 2017.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 24 November 2017;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 24 November 2017 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Farwa Alkhalaf farwa20@hotmail.com

A u c k l a n d   U n i v e r s i t y   o f   T e c h n o l o g y   E t h i c s   C o m m i t t e e
WA505F Level 5 WA Building City Campus
Private Bag 92006 Auckland 1142   Ph: +64-9-921-9999 ext 8316 email ethics@aut.ac.nz

| P a g e   140