

# Promoting Wales as The Land of Dragons and Legends

Research briefing by **Professor Dorothy Yen**

**Policy Context:** Tourism in Wales is strategically important: £6 billion per year, 8% of the Welsh economy and 12.7% of employment in Wales. International tourists are an attractive market for Wales. Although only 1% of visitors to Wales were international, they accounting for 15% of the total tourism spending (Visit Britain, 2019).

**Research:** Tourist destinations need to have a unique point of differentiation to stand out amongst the competition. Wales has so much to offer as a visitor destination, from rich culture and history, dynamic cities and scenic landscapes to its beautiful coastline. However, what is truly unique to Wales is the Welsh language, its legends and folklore and the Welsh Red Dragon - Y Ddraig Goch. These should be communicated strongly when promoting Welsh tourism internationally.

## Advice

1. Wales' dragon and the connection to well-known legendary figures present a unique and attractive selling point to brand and differentiate Wales from other UK nations when promoting tourism to international visitors.
2. The Welsh Red Dragon, as the national symbol could be better capitalised upon to promote Wales, to boost international tourism.
3. Such a proposal needs to be communicated and receive local buy-in and support first. Successful destination branding needs good support from the local population. Great tourism experience is co-created and co-delivered by all, including both residents and tourists
4. Our research shows that international tourists scoring higher fantasy proneness are more likely to want to visit Wales. Their fascination with mythical creatures can also strengthen their intention to visit Wales, regardless of their attitude towards Wales as a tourist destination.

5. There are many opportunities for Wales to capitalise on its existing association with dragons and legendary figures by speaking to people's fantasy and fascination. This can be in various sectors: tourism, creative media, and gaming and technology industries.
6. For the creative media industry, Welsh legends and folklore provides a rich source for creating new story plots and new imagination.
7. For gaming and technology, gaming and community-building platforms could be developed tapping into the Welsh dragon.
8. For Welsh people, interacting with the national symbol will strengthen their association with the nation, promote stronger emotional bonds and national pride.

## Work with me

**Dorothy A. Yen** is a Professor in Marketing and the Director of Research at Brunel Business School. Her expertise is in tourism, destination marketing and nation branding, including how visitors evaluate tourism destinations and interact through social media and new technologies. Her recent work involve branding Wales as [the land of dragons and legends](#) in order to maximize its tourism appeal to international tourists. Her [work was published](#) by the Welsh Select Committee in May 2022, followed by invitation to give [evidence to Parliament](#) in July 2022. She also led the Brunel team in preparing and submitting evidence to the call about the Discretionary visitor levy for [local authorities | GOV.WALES](#).

**Contact** Professor Dorothy Yen at [Dorothy.Yen@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:Dorothy.Yen@brunel.ac.uk), if you would like to learn more about her research, invite her to speak at your event, or collaborate with her to discuss how to capitalise on unique destination assets to boost nation branding image, as well as tourism activities.

