Littering and its Impact on Tonga’s Destination Image

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in recent years and has been recognised as the key sector that lifts the economies of an island destination. This is also applied to the South Pacific Islands including Tonga. Tourism provides opportunities for employment, foreign exchange and better infrastructure for the country. The South Pacific Islands are perceived by most of international visitors as paradise, peaceful places, timeless and romantic destinations for couples. The Kingdom of Tonga itself, sells and is positioned in the typical island images and its unique attributes that differentiates from other islands such as whale watching/swimming and the only remaining Kingdom in the South Pacific.

Littering and waste management issues are common problems in any developing countries and the Pacific Islands, due to lack of resources, infrastructure and the local attitudes. According to the International Visitors Survey (IVS) (2012, 2013), the majority of the visitors’ negative comments on their holiday were based on littering. In this respect, this study investigates images that visitors’ have upon arrival and before departure, how they perceived littering in Tonga and whether littering has a negative influence on visitors’ future behaviour, such as willingness to recommend to friends and families and revisiting. No research had looked at the impact of littering on South Pacific Island/Tonga’s image or any other developing country. This makes the findings of this research relevant for the academic literature and for Tonga’s tourism industry.

This study adopts a qualitative approach involves in-depth interviews and open ended questions. Two types of participants in this research: 1) twelve visitors 2) four operators and were chosen through the use of convenient sample.
This research finds that although Tonga has a problem with littering, all visitors are still willing to recommend Tonga to friends and family. Six of them have positive intentions to revisit while the other six, mostly from Europe does not intent to revisit Tonga due to cost and distance constraints. The results indicated that visitors’ images before departing from Tonga were more holistic than their pre-visit images.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction
This research explores Tonga’s destination image, visitor and tourism operator perceptions, towards littering and its impacts on Tonga as a destination, in terms of visitors’ future behaviour such as recommendation to friends and families, and intention to revisit. Chapter one begins by stating the purpose of this research and discussing the problem statement. This is followed by the justification of this research’s significance and its contribution to both the destination image literature and the Tonga tourism industry. This is followed by an overview of the Tonga tourism industry in order to gain a wider perspective of this research within the tourism context. The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Purpose of this study
The purpose of this research project is to assess visitors’ perceptions and images of Tonga. One attribute of destination image, littering, was the focal point of this study to examine its impact on the overall destination image of a place. Littering and poor solid waste management are common and challenging factors in the developing countries (Guerrero, Maas & Hogland, 2013). Tonga, an Island in the South Pacific Ocean does face the problems of littering and poor management of waste, both of which have an impact on the sustainability of its tourism development. This research explores how visitors perceive littering and the influence it has on their overall experience and the image of Tonga. This study also examines the relationship between visitors’ overall image of Tonga, their level of satisfaction and their behavioural intentions such as positive word-of-mouth to their friends and families and their willingness to revisit.
1.3 Background

Destination image has been the subject of intense research in travel and tourism disciplines over the past four decades with a number of meta analyses (Hunt, 1975; Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike, 2002; Gallarza, Saura & García, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Chi & Qu, 2008; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Tavitiyaman & Qu (2013); Alvarez & Campo (2014). It is universally acknowledged that destination image affects the attractiveness of a place, tourist choice process, on-site evaluations and determines future behaviour such as recommendations to friends and family and revisiting (Jenkins, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Prayag, 2009). Images are formulated from a variety of information such as advertising, news, reports, on-site and post-purchase behaviour. It is well accepted that the images comprise three components: cognitive, affective and conative (Beerli & Martin 2004; Gallarza et al., 2002; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013). According to Pike (2002) the most popular region for studies of destination images was North America with almost 60 papers, followed by UK / Europe with 45 papers, Asia, 23, Australasia, 19, and five in the South Pacific. No studies have been done on destination image specifically to Tonga as a tourism destination. This study investigates the cognitive and affective images that visitors have of Tonga as an island in the South Pacific. Understanding the images that visitors have will help tourism authorities to identify the areas that need to improve in terms of product development and marketing activities. In addition, this research will also contribute to the body of destination image studies of the South Pacific Islands.

Many tourism researchers have studied a wide range of interests in relation to destination image such as customer loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014; Chi & Qu, 2008) personal involvement (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chen & Tsai, 2007), destination personality (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006), images difference between groups (Baloglu, 1997), positive images (Chen & Tsai, 2007;
Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Chi & Qu, 2008), and geographical location (Crompton, 1979). While the existing literature gives an insight into different factors that have an influence on destination image, there has been some empirical research on negative images or the influence of a country challenging issues on destination image such as terrorism (Sonmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow, 1999) natural disasters (Kozak, Crotts & Law, 2007), political conflicts (Alvarez & Campo, 2014), diseases and health (Law, 2006), and environment (O’Leary & Deegan, 2005). Of the limited research discussed about the impact of a deteriorating environment such as from littering and pollution (Chon & Singh, 1994; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005) has on a country destination image, none of the destination image research has taken the single attribute of littering and further explored it to gain an in-depth understanding of how it influences a destination’s overall image and its correlation to visitors’ behavioural intention. It is understood from some tourism researchers’ findings that images are of a subjective nature and each individual has different perceptions towards a country (Gallarza et al., 2002). Images can be rated differently by visitors where some images can be treated as very important while others remain less important.

This study looks at the impact of littering on Tonga’s destination image and identifies whether it has an impact on visitors’ views of Tonga and overall experience and how they reacted to this situation.

The findings of this research will be useful and contribute to both the body of academic literature as well as to the Kingdom of Tonga’s tourism industry.

1.4 Significance of this research
The significance of this study can be found in both theoretical and practical contributions.

At a theoretical level, this study seeks to provide an empirical understanding among the constructs explained above.
i. It contributes to the research of negative images or challenging issues that a country faces by identifying the influences it has on its overall destination image and visitors’ future behaviour.

ii. It examines how much impact that environmental issues, such as littering can have on a country image in comparison with other images of the destination.

iii. The study was conducted in Tonga, an island in the South Pacific so it is a different context from the western countries where most studies have been conducted.

iv. The study tests a theoretical model by Wang and Hsu (2010) in their study of destination image in China to see if it can be replicated in other places such as a small island state.

The practical contributions of this study are the following:

i. Understand the types of cognitive and affective, and pre-visit and post-visit images visitors have of Tonga. The findings of this study will be useful for the tourism authority.

ii. Identifying the images that will enable destination marketers to provide robust positioning, advertising and promotion strategies that fits the target market.

iii. Highlight the negative images, and strengths and weaknesses of Tonga tourism so that responsible authorities and related sectors can undertake product development, increase tourism awareness, policy formulation and reinforce existing regulations.

iv. Provide an indicator of what determines visitors’ satisfaction and future behaviour so that destination marketers will look after the images that plays the major role on a visitor overall experience through enhancing, maintaining and effective marketing campaigns.
1.5 Personal Background
I first became interested in this topic while working in the Ministry of Tourism in 2011–2012. Handling the International Visitors Survey (IVS) was part of my job. What shocked me the most was over 50% of surveys I put into the computer every week, had negative comments on the environment, littering and poor waste infrastructure in Tonga. The majority of the positive comments were about the friendly people, being a relaxing place, and the beaches and sun. Since then I became curious on to what extend could littering damage Tonga’s reputation and image as a tourism destination and this topic therefore became the interest of my Master’s research.

1.6 Research Context: Kingdom of Tonga as a tourism destination
The Kingdom of Tonga is located in the South Pacific Ocean, between the longitudes 173°W and 177°W and latitudes 15°S and 23.5°S. Tonga is the only remaining constitutional monarchy in the Pacific and has a population of approximately 103,000 (One World Nations Online, 1998). It consists of 176 islands, 52 of which are inhabited. The islands are in an area of 700,000km² of ocean near the Tonga trench, a north-south oceanic valley that reaches a depth of over 5.5 nautical miles. There are five main island groups known as the Tongatapu group which contains the capital Nuku’alofa in the south, nearby ‘Eua, Ha’apai in the central region, Vava’u in the north and the Niuas, a trio of volcanic islands 320 nautical miles from Tongatapu. The Tongan cultures are centred on family and Christianity. Tongan society is guided by four core values: mutual respect, sharing and fulfilment of mutual obligations, humility and generosity, and loyalty and commitment. The elderly are respected, and each family member knows their role. Christianity plays a major role and influences Tonga’s life. Sunday is a taboo day in Tonga and is devoted to church, family and rest. No flights are scheduled, shops and businesses are closed and even sports are not played. However, a few restaurants are open, especially for
tourists. The Kingdom of Tonga is also known as the “Friendly Islands” so named by James Cook in the 1870s because of the people’s welcoming nature.

The Tonga Tourism Authority (TTA) is the sole destination marketing organisation (DMO) responsible for marketing the island kingdom to international visitors. Tonga’s advertising has been ad-hoc until the New Zealand government provided funds of about T$1,000,000 to assist with the marketing of Tonga overseas in 2011. In terms of image, all of the advertising strategy of the destination has featured sun, beach, friendly locals, landscapes and whales. Tonga as a tourist destination was first branded as the “The friendly islands: 176 Islands” and it was rebranded in 2010 as the “Kingdom of Tonga: The True South Pacific”. The new brand was tagged with five slogans of “True Romance, True Adventure, True Culture, True Beauty and True Family Fun (http://www.thekingdomoftonga.com/discover-the-true-south-pacific). This rebranding was necessary because of the vigorous competition from other pacific destinations, offering similar products and services, the image of paradise. The first brand of Friendly Islands was seen as not competitive enough in the market because other islands such as Fiji also featured friendly and hospitable locals. Morgan and Pritchard (2002) argued that services and products offered by a destination are no longer differentiators. Potential tourists’ choice of a destination is based on feelings and emotions about the destination and its values. This highlighted the importance for destination marketers to identify a place’s uniqueness that can differentiate it from competitors because destinations are becoming increasingly substitutable and difficult to differentiate (Pike, 2005).

One of the significant sectors that help to differentiate Tonga from its neighbouring islands and a huge contribution to the Tongan tourism industry is whale watching. Tonga is one of only three places in the world that provides a programme of swimming with humpback whales and this attraction has helped Tonga to become a popular destination (Kessler & Harcourt, 2012). This industry attracts more than 9,800 whale-watching trips representing 3,200 individuals who take multiple trips
and annually contribute approximately USD$2.1 million to the Tongan economy (O’Cornor, Campbell & Knowles, 2009). The whale watching sector has grown from a single operator in 1993 to nineteen licensed operators in 2009 with nine of these operators are 100 per cent Tongan owned (Kessler & Harcourt, 2010).

The tourism industry in Tonga has been identified by its government and the private sector as the major economic development opportunity with potential to boost employment and income generation (Trip Consultants, 2013). Tonga has recognised the importance of tourism in its economic development. In Tonga, tourism is the only sector that has not declined in recent years. By comparison to the agricultural exports have fallen by 30 per cent since 2006. International tourists receipts were increased by 13.8 percent in 2011 – 2012 to T$70.1 million in 2012 – 2013 (Trip Consultants, 2013). This figure has more than doubled since 2002 –2003, from 3.0 to 7.7 percent of GDP in 2011 – 2012. Visitors in 2012 – 2013 were spending approximately T$1,450 per head. The long-term objectives of the tourism sector is to be the main source of income for Tongans and generating T$100million for the economy, increase the number of employment with in the sector by 4,000, increase the number of international arrivals to 80,000 per annum, increase Tonga market share in the region and improving visitor experience and level of satisfaction (Trip Consultants, 2013). As such, Tonga Tourism Authority developed strategy that will assist small tourism business such as accommodation and restaurants. Another product development that the Tonga Tourism Authority implemented was the accommodation standard. This was first conducted in the year 2011, by using a star rating system under four categories, namely hotels, resorts, apartments and guest houses. Each establishment was rated and advised about improvements for the next round of assessment. A second product development was tourism sites, selected for their cultural significance. These sites were developed and maintained in a way that suited both their communities and cultural attractions.
Despite the recognition of tourism sector because of its contribution to the economy, the sector remains relatively underdeveloped compared to the neighbouring destinations in the South Pacific. Tonga is currently ranked eighth out of the thirteen for visitor arrivals, while Fiji remains the most established destination in the region (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour (MCTL), 2013). The total international visitor arrivals to Tonga has increased at a very slow pace of just over 50,000 visitors in 2013, which is an increase of only 1.9\% compared with 2012 figures. To date 2008 remains the year with the highest number of arrivals, when 6,828 visitors arrived during the month of July for the coronation of King George Tupou V. This was approximately 2000 more visitors than the normal number of arrivals for the month of July. Year 2013 Tonga welcoming 8,188 air visitors, 932 cruise ship visitors and 2,045 yacht visitors (MCTL, 2013). These results highlighted that air transportation remains the most favoured way of getting most of the visitors in to Tonga. Half (50.5) of all air visitors to Tonga were New Zealand residents. Australia is the second with one fifth (20.9) of total visits and USA with 12.1\% of visits. The UK and Europe market accounted for 6.5\% while other Pacific islands represented 5.2 percent of visitors (MCTL, 2013). These results reflect the study of (Crompton, 1979; Gallarza et al., 2002) where distance, cost and ease of getting to a destination had an influence on potential tourists when they are choosing a place to visit. Although, other Pacific Islands are located close to Tonga the low rate of visitors can be affected by the costs of travelling. For example, it is more expensive to go from Fiji to Tonga than to New Zealand, there is no direct flight from other islands except Fiji and perhaps the similar nature of places and the desire of seeking different experiences. This argument supported the results of country of residence by purpose of visit where the majority from other Pacific islands were travelling for business and conference. Other important figures arising from Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour statistics (2013) showed that the majority of visitors length of stay was seven nights, and almost 40\% spent at one night in resort-style accommodation.
The motivational factors that triggered visitors to choose Tonga as their holiday destination for holiday and leisure included quiet and relaxing atmosphere (73%), unspoilt and uncrowded (73.5%), swimming and beaches (75.4%), snorkelling (67.8%) and whale watching (46.9%). These reflect the image and expectation they have of Tonga as a tropical island destination. Repeat visitation was relatively low (30%). Visitors’ experiences of Tonga were generally satisfying. Their expectations of Tonga were rated 3.8 of a five-point scale and after they visited they rated their overall experience as 4.1 (MCTL, 2013)

The Ministry of Tourism (2010) Impediment diagnostic report, suggested that Tongan tourism has a significant potential for further growth, but is currently being constrained by a number of barriers. These barriers are the following:

i. Inadequate tourism prioritization and sector-wide focus by government

ii. Limited institutional capacity to lead tourism development and ineffective legislation to support sector development

iii. Regulatory barriers to generating tourism investments

iv. Inadequate tourism investment planning and promotion

v. Poor management of the visitor experience in-terms of standards, consistency and quality

vi. Insufficient human resource capacity to meet current and future needs,

vii. Inadequate destination marketing

viii. Transportation barriers in the form of inadequate marine and roads infrastructure and the high cost of domestic air transport

ix. Lack of facilities, systems and adequate resources for sustainable environment management.
For tourism to be further developed and be competitive in relation to other Pacific Islands, the government and related sectors need to address the constraints highlighted above. This will require commitment, long term planning and action by developing the Tonga Tourism Action Plan.

1.7 Thesis structure
This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the existing literature on destination image. It begins by defining the concept of destination image. This is followed by a review of image construct and its components, image formation process, measurement of destination image and roles it plays towards a place. Thereafter, the relationships between destination image and satisfaction, future behavioural and environmental challenges are discussed. This chapter also presents Wang and Hsu’s (2010) conceptual model in their study of “The relationships of destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: An integrated model” in China. The model is chosen because it is closely related to this study and to confirm its credibility in a different context.

Chapter 3 introduces the method of data collection and analysis adopted by this study. The chapter begins with the justification of why secondary resources were part of this research. This is followed by an overview of the use of in-depth interviews and open-ended questions. Sample size and methods, study sites and data analysis are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the outline of the chosen methods’ limitations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings that resulted from the interviews of 12 international visitors to Tonga and 4 local tourism operators. These findings are discussed under each theme to answer the research questions and also in light of their theoretical contributions.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of this thesis. It begins with a summary of key findings and conclusions of this research. Alongside conclusions, limitations of the findings
are discussed, and in light of the findings, recommendations are made for potential areas of future study.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
Chapter two will focus on the theoretical background of this study based on a review of relevant literature associated with this research. The chapter begins with a review of destination image definition, destination image construct, the component of destination image, image formation process, image measurement and role of destination image. The relationship between image and tourist future behaviour and satisfaction are also discussed. The figure below illustrates major topics that will discuss in this chapter. This chapter will conclude with a theoretical model by Wang & Hsu (2010) that is applied in this study.

![Figure 1: Literature Review Framework](image)

2.2 Destination Image Definition
Destination image has been the subject of considerable research in the last three decades with a number of meta-studies (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike 2002, Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). The study of destination image was first done in the early 1970s by Hunt (1975), and he concluded that image is a critical factor in a destination success. The research of this concept is not limited to the field of tourism but has also been conducted in
several other disciplines such as psychology (Downs & Stea, 1977), environmental planning (Saarinen, 1976), marketing (Ashworth, 1988) and geography (Lynch, 1960). Images in tourism literature are very important because tourists’ imaginations images rather than reality are what influence their destination choice, how they evaluate on-site experiences and how they decide future behavioural intention (Gallarza et al, 2002; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Travellers use images and perceptions of a destination to form their destination awareness sets (Sirakaya, Sonmez & Choi, 2001). Marketers also show great interest in destination image research because of its relationship with decision-making process, level of satisfaction and tourist post-purchase behaviour (Jenkins, 1999; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Martin and Bosque (2008) reviewed the definitions of destination image from 1977 – 2003 which indicated that each scholar who studies image tends to come up with their own definitions of the concept. Table 1 below showed the definitions of destination image.

Despite the long history and the significance of this research line, there is a lack of conceptual framework for studying destination image and no agreed definition to date (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza et al, 2002; Tasci et al., 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007, Martin & Bosque, 2008). Scholars in this field tend to provide their own definition of the concept. Most definitions of destination image are described in two ways. Firstly, individual perception is defined by Compton (1979, p. 18) as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impression that a person had of a destination”. Secondly, that image consists of perceptions of groups of people. Jenkins (1999, p 2) defined destination image as “the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place”. He argues from a marketing point of view that images can be shared among groups of people and that it is important to understand those aspects of images because it helps destination marketers to effectively segment the markets and facilitates the formulation of marketing strategies. This project adopted Jenkins understanding and definitions of
destination image that images can be shared among groups of people but not limited to oneself only. Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) contributed to the marketing body of knowledge by defining destination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977)</td>
<td>An experience of knowledge, impression, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crompton (1979)</td>
<td>Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assael (1984)</td>
<td>Total perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phelps (1986)</td>
<td>Perception of impression of a place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gartner and Hunt (1987)</td>
<td>Impressions that persons hold about a state in which they do not reside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moutinho (1987)</td>
<td>An individual’s attitude toward the destination attributes based on their knowledge and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calantone et al. (1989)</td>
<td>Perceptions of potential tourist destinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embacher and Buttle (1989)</td>
<td>Ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination under investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chon (1990)</td>
<td>Result of the interaction of a person’s beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echtner and Ritchie (1991)</td>
<td>The perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992)</td>
<td>Overall impression or attitude that an individual acquires of a place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milman and Pizam (1995)</td>
<td>Visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997)</td>
<td>A composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pritchard (1998)</td>
<td>An visual or mental impression of a specific place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baloglu and McCleary (1999a)</td>
<td>An individual’s mental representation of knowledge, feelings and global impressions about a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosshall (2000)</td>
<td>The individual’s perceptions of the characteristics of destinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000)</td>
<td>A sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)</td>
<td>Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigne’, Sanchez and Sanchez (2001)</td>
<td>The subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim and Richardson (2003)</td>
<td>Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations and feelings accumulated towards a place over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Destination Image Definitions (Martin & Bosque, 2008 p. 264)
image as the expressions of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place. Echtner and Ritchie (1991, p. 41) reviewed the definitions used by destination image researchers and found that the definitions of the concept are quite vague. This is due to the complexity, subjectivity and elusive nature of the concept (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). There is a need for better understanding of destination image and its dimensions (Gallarza et al., 2002), but as Pearce (1988) suggests, it “is one of those terms that will not go away, a term with vague and shifting meanings” (p.162).

The study of Gallarza et al. (2002) significantly contributed to the conceptualising and defining of the term destination image. They proposed a theoretical model of defining image in terms of four characteristics: complex, multiple, relativistic and dynamic. The complex nature of image refers to the discussion above that it has more than one definition and interpretation and can be referred to multiple objects such as place, area or a country. The multiple characteristics of image relates to the multi-dimensional factors that make up the identity of a destination’s image. As such, multiplicity requires different measurements: holistic image measurement via qualitative techniques (Reilly, 1990) and functional common attributes with a quantitative approach (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The multiple nature of destination image also comes from the formation process where images tend to modify on each stage with the influence of other factors. The relativistic nature of image refers to it subjective nature; that is, everyone has their own perceptions of image towards a place and it is dissimilar from person to person (Bigne’ et al., 2001; Gallarza et al., 2002). Last is the dynamic nature of image. According to Gallarza et al. (2002) “image is not static but changes, depending essentially on two variables: time and space” (p.72). The influence of time on image has been widely confirmed by researchers on tourism destination whereby its formation is a process that changes with time (Selby & Morgan, 1996; Chon 1991). Space refers to the idea that
“the greater the distance, the distortion of reality, and the shorter the distance, the greater the meaning of the details (Gallarza et al., 2002, p. 72). This is of interest to this study to see if there are differences in image perceptions based on country of origin. Overall, Gallarza et al. (2002) conceptual model of tourism destination image has helped to shed some light on comprehending the concept of destination image.

This study adopted Jenkins (1999) definition of destination image. She defined destination image as “the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place (Jenkins, 1999, p2).

Following the discussions of destination image constructs is a detail explanation of the destination image dimensions.

2.3 Dimensions of Destination Image
Earlier studies by Mayo (1973) found three dimensions of destination images: scenery, congestion and climate. His dimensions were focused on physical and functional characteristics of a destination. In addition to these characteristics MacInnis and Price (1987) suggested that image consists of other components such as holistic impressions and psychological. Martineau’s (1958) article “The personality of the retail store” emphasizes the differences between functional (measureable) and psychological (abstract) components, for example, prices, while the latter cannot be easily measured such as the atmosphere or locals’ friendliness.

Further analysis on this topic by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) contributed greatly to this body of research by developing a destination image framework. In their assessment of the destination image component they employed Dichter’s (1985) definition that image does not lie solely on individual traits and qualities but also on the total impression that a destination has on the minds of the people. They described destination image in terms of attribute-based and holistic components.
Attribute-based refers to an individual perception towards the destination features while the holistic components refer to the imagery of a place.

Echtner and Ritchie’s (1991) framework consists of functional/psychological axes as well as the holistic components/attributes. Some of these attributes are common to all destinations such as scenery, weather, and climate, while others are specific to a particular destination such as local cuisine and friendliness (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Li et al., 2010). In their framework they include an additional dimension ranging from common to unique. The common dimension denotes the features a country has which can be compared with others, such as climate, price, landscape and friendliness, while the unique dimension describes an icon or special event that partly forms a destination image, for example, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and feelings developed by an individual based on a religious or historic event. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) stressed the importance of the unique continuum because of people’s desires and nature to go somewhere exclusive and different, but Jenkins (1999) argued that it is still often overlooked by the researchers. A common problem of destination image research is that holistic attributes of a place are difficult to measure and researchers are compelled to look at attributes singly (Jenkins, 1999). Echtner and Ritchie’s (1991) framework model overcame this problem by adding more components of destination image, and in this way those parts of destination image can be broken down into attributes.

It should be recognized that there are certain overlaps between the divided sections of the model. The holistic impressions are combinations of other attributes influenced by overall impression and feelings. Moreover, the line between functional and psychological is still vague given that it is still difficult to classify image, such as perceived cleanliness as a complete functional or psychological attribute, as it would mostly be a combination of both (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).
2.4 Nature of Destination Image
Scholars from diverse disciplines such as environment, psychology, tourism and marketing agree that image has three components (Gartner 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Tasci et al., 2007). They find that image is composed of affective, cognitive and conative evaluations. Cognitive evaluation is a knowledge or belief associated with destination attributes that can be functional/tangible, landscape for example, or physiological/abstract such as atmosphere (Martin & Bosque, 2008). These images are formed by several sources such as promotions material from the destination and word-of-mouth of others (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). It is argued to be more stable and long lasting, whilst affective images are considered to be unstable because of its changeable emotional conditions (Xie & Lee 2013). Affective evaluation refers to the evaluation stage; it concerns the feelings and emotions such as relaxing, exoticism, relaxation and romanticism that an individual has towards the visited place (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Agapito et al., 2013; Kim & Yoon, 2003). Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Ryan and Cave (2005) and Tasci et al. (2007) argued that these two natures of destination image are distinct but are interrelated because cognitive component is an antecedent of the affective component. Affective component has
more impact on building images towards a destination than does the cognitive component Kim and Yoon (2003). Their findings were supported by Baloglu and McCleary’s (1999) study in which they discussed that affective components constructed more of the overall image than the cognitive aspects. Tourists take into consideration these impressions and use them to assist with their destination decision process.

The third dimension known as conative is considered similar to behaviour given its action nature such as intention to revisit, positive word of mouth and recommending to friends and families (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Prayag, 2009, Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Tasci et al., 2007). The findings of the empirical study of Agapito et al. (2013) were similar to those of Gartner (1993) and indicate that cognitive image has a higher effect on conative image via affective images and that all three components are hierarchically related (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Kim & Yoon, 2003). Bringing together these three components forms an overall image (Lin et al., 2007).

These three image evaluations have been studied by various scholars (Agapito et al., 2013; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Tasci et al., 2007; Gartner 1993) while other researchers studied either one or both cognitive and affect images (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Yoon, 2013). The analysis of Pike (2002) showed that most of the studies measure the cognitive and affect components using a quantitative approach with a structured list of destination attributes. Kim and Yoon (2003) and Gallarza et al. (2002) criticized the use of quantitative method because it may not generalize because images tend to differ from one destination to another. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) argued that because of the subjective nature of affective components it is vital to employ unstructured methodologies by allowing respondents to describe their own feelings and emotions because one person experience is different to the other. Lastly, conative evaluations measurement includes willingness to recommend and intention to revisit to the destination (Agapito et al., 2013). Recommendation and
word of mouth are considered as the most credible source of information (Gartner, 1993). Destination marketers should keep in mind that providing a pleasant experience for their tourists has a major impact on the development of positive images for non-visitors. Further analysis by Gartner (1993) reveals that in order for a better understating of these three components, it is recommended to study them individually to enhance the understanding of how people think, feel and act towards a destination. This was also supported by Agapito et al. (2013).

The three components of destination image are common to the features of attitude. According to the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) people behavioural intention is affected by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls toward behaviour (Lee, 2009). Ajzen (1991) and Lee (2007) argued that the intention behind an attitude can influence behavioural intentions. The theory of planned behaviour has been used to study tourist attitudes to predict their choice, intentions and behaviour (Lam & Hsu, 2006) Two major arguments in the study of theory of planned behaviour in the tourism context is that attitude does not have any impact of visitors behavioural intention (Ajzen & Driver, 1992) while Lam and Hsu (2006) found no significant between these constructs.

2.5 Destination Image Formation Process
The formation of a destination image provides opportunities for destination marketers in developing the destination’s competitive advantage and to portray positive images which are very important in attracting potential tourists. A place with more positive images has more chance of being chosen by tourists and it also plays a role regarding their travel decision process in destination selection (Yoon & Kim, 2000). Visitors’ image formations are often depending on information generated by tourists, suppliers and residents (Llodra’-Riera et al., 2015). Chon (1992) highlighted the importance for destination marketers to first understand how tourists form images of a destination and what factors influence this formation.
process. A better understanding of this phenomenon will provide direction and help to improve the attractiveness of a tourist destination (Yoon & Kim, 2000).

According to Reynolds (1965), destination image formation is defined as the development of a mental construct based on a few impressions chosen from a flood of information. In his definition, information floods from many sources including travel brochures, posters, word of mouth from friends/family, books, newspaper, televisions and movies. These impressions are taken in and embellished in the individual’s mind. Each person has his or her own image of a particular destination based on their perception, information acquired and or experiences. MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997, p.559) define this concept as a “composite of individual inputs and marketer inputs”. Information has both a supply-side and a demand-side. There is a need to be understood that the projected images by the destination marketers are not always the same as the images received by the consumer. This modification can be due to alteration and modification of the message either by the source of communication or by the receiver. It is also important to note that the destination-originated messages are not the only ones reaching the recipient, given that images can be formed from sources other than personal experience.

The best known process of destination image formation is that of Gunn (1972) who suggested that destination image is formed in two stages namely organic and induced. He then later expanded his original model into seven phases. This is presented on Figure 3.
Gunn (1988) suggests that image changes over these seven stages. He names the destination image formed in Phase 1 as organic image. At this stage, people’s images are from information stimulated from non-touristic information such as mass media, education or books and the word of mouth from friends/family. Phase 2 is labelled as the induced image. This refers to the commercial sources such as travel brochures, travel agents and other promotion resources from a destination. The organic image or Phase 1 may be changed because of accessing these additional sources of information. The final stage of Phase 7 describes that the actual experience modifies...
the destination image. This modification upon visiting the destination creates more complex and realistic images of the place (Chon, 1990, Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Selby & Morgan, 1996, Chen & Hsu, 2000). It reduces the stereotyping and leads to a change in image, shifting from vague to more realistic. The process of image formation highlights two important things. First, an individual can form an image even if he or she has not visited the destination and before being exposed to commercial information (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Secondly, Chon (1990) suggested that there is a gap between organic images and projected images when the destination fails to meet the tourists’ expectations. Those discrepancies cause an impact on tourists’ overall image of a destination (Hu & Ritchie, 1993).

2.5.1 Image formation agents
Gartner (1993) shows that the formation of a destination image is based on many influential factors at different stages of the travel experience. In order to better comprehend the formation of a destination image, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) designed a general framework of destination image formation.

![Framework of destination image formation](image)

Figure 4: Framework of destination image formation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999 p. 870)

This framework clearly illustrates the differentiation and interrelationships between personal factors and the stimulus factors. In addition to these two factors, other researchers suggest that distance factors and cultural background of tourists are two
other factors that can also determine an individual’s choice of a destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner 1993; Baloglu & McCleary 1999). Having access to information regarding both of these factors will provide advantage to the destination marketer to influence and to change for the better an individual’s image of a destination. Stimulus factors and personal factors are explained below.

2.5.2 Personal factors
Researchers in this field recognize that an individual’s personal characteristics influence the image formation (Stabler, 1990; Um & Crompton, 1990). It is believed that an individual develops an image of a destination through exposure to external stimuli but that the nature of the beliefs and images will be different among individuals based on internal factors (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The field of consumer behaviour recognise personal factors as socio-demographic characteristics of the individuals such as age, gender, education, occupation, income, marital status, size of the family and place of residence, as well as the psychological nature of an individual including their motivations, values, personality and lifestyle (Sheth, 1983). The personal factors have an impact on an individual’s cognitive evaluation of a place environment, thus images can be formed. Baloglu (1997) found that age is the most significant variable influencing the image formed. Individual psychological variables such as motivation influence the image forming process and the choice of destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) and also the affective component (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997)

2.5.3 Information sources
According to Gartner (1993) information sources or image forming agents are the forces that influence the formation of perceptions and evaluations. Woodside and Lyonski (1989) discovered that the influence of information has an impact on the cognitive evaluations but not the affective component of image. Similarly, Um and Crompton (1990) find that cognitive evaluation of attributes is formed by external factors, which include various information sources and friends/family
recommendations. Gartner (1993) proposed a framework and typology of eight image formation agents. These were categorised according to the degree of control by the destination promoter and credibility with the receivers. Gartner believes that the image forming process can be regarded as a continuum of different agents that act independently to form an image in the mind of the individual. The framework consists of these agents:

- **Overt induced I agent**: traditional forms of advertising such as television, print media and brochures.
- **Overt induced II agent**: information received from tourism operators
- **Covert induced I agent**: information projected by a second-party endorsement via traditional advertising
- **Covert induced II agent**: endorsed by a celebrities
- **Autonomous agent**: image formation agents that are produced independently and have no association with the destination promotion efforts. films, news, and documentaries
- **Unsolicited organic agent**: information requested from unbiased sources
- **Solicited organic agent**: information given by knowledgeable others
- **Organic agent**: actual visitation to the place allowing an individual to modify a pre-visit image and form a new one; this result in a complex image.

Framework and typology of eight image formation agents (Beerli & Martin, 2004, p 661-663)

Beerli and Martin’s (2004) studies differentiate the image formed through exposure to these information sources. The image can be either primary or secondary. Primary image is formed from personal experience of visitation to the destination. They also suggested that the image formed through this information source is much more realistic and complex than the one formed through secondary information. In contrast, secondary image is formed by organic, induced and autonomous sources to
which consumers are exposed and it is formed before they experience the destination (Gallarza et al., 2002). This image is considered vague in comparison with the image formed through personal experience. This was also supported by the work of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) in which they point out that individual who are familiar with the destination hold a more holistic image than those less familiar.

2.6 Measurement of Destination Image
Due to the complex nature of destination image and its multiple dimensions, researchers in tourism have often failed to employ the most suitable measurement of destination image. Stepchenkova and Mills (2010) realised that the measurement of destination image is greatly affected by how it is conceptualized and the way it is operationalized and various image aspects of destination image are measured with different instruments. Previous studies measured destination image with a list of functional attributes such as scenery, climate, infrastructure and attractions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Jenkins, 1999). These attributes were formed and created based on secondary resources such as brochures, general literature and by interviews with tourism authorities and then used to develop lists of attributes.

Two methods widely used by researchers to measure destination images are quantitative or structured and qualitative or unstructured. According to Pike’s (2002) analysis, the majority of destination image studies favoured structured technique over unstructured. Although there is a preference of structured method over the other method, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) argued that this technique falls short of capturing the unique features and holistic components of destination image. The most complete measure of destination image should include both types of methodologies but not exclusively structured or unstructured (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). There is no conclusive evidence for which method is better for any given purpose or whether differences between methods are significant (Tasci et al., 2007).
The following sections examine the methodologies and techniques adopted by this study.

2.6.1 Qualitative/Unstructured technique
Echtner and Ritchie (1993) were among the first researchers in the field of destination image using qualitative methodologies. They argued that this method can assess the holistic component of destination image. It reveals true images people hold of a destination by allowing them to freely describe their impressions of a product in their own way. This interpretation differs from that of a structured methodology in which they use a pre-analysed set of attributes for respondents to choose from. The images listed are common attributes but can fail to fully cover a respondent’s image associated with the destination.

Different methods are used to gather information from the sample such as focus groups (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997), free elicitation and open-ended questions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Dann, 1996; Reilly, 1990), in-depth interview and discussions with experts (Selby & Morgan, 1996; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). A few studies employed content analysis as described in Gallarza et al. (2002). This technique allows a researcher to capture projected images portrayed in promotional booklets, brochures, and websites of a destination (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Unstructured methodologies can measure the holistic components of destination image as well as the unique features and auras (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).

Despite the contributions made by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) other researchers suggested that some relevant issues were not investigated, those that still affect the measurement of the destination image construct (Tasci et al., 2007). These issues are sample size leading to the questions of credibility and validity. The nature of data provided by qualitative methodology is highly variable as it does depend upon the respondents’ responses and their knowledge base of the products (McDougall & Fry, 1974) and it tends to be more time consuming and costly (Jenkins, 1999). Statistical
analyses of the results are limited (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) but qualitative research method is essential in capturing a complete image of a destination.

2.7 Roles of Destination Image
One of the significant discussions about the concept of destination image in tourism studies is its role in tourists’ selection process of a place (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004). Image has the power to influence the process of choosing a place, to evaluate trip experience as well as to influence future behaviour (Chi & Qu, 2008). The question of why a potential traveller chooses one destination over others and the understanding of traveller behaviour have been studied in order to understand image’s influence (Um & Crompton, 1990, Selby & Morgan, 1996). They argued that tourists choose one destination over others only when its positive image aspects exceed its negative image. Another study was conducted to determine how far images can predict the chance of a destination being chosen as the next vacation destination (Sirakaya et al., 2001). The study concludes that people can compartmentalise their mental images and make an evaluation of each image according to its importance for the decision-making. This finding highlighted that some images maybe important over others and is need to be managed more carefully than others (Sirakaya et al., 2001).

Chen and Tsai (2007) indicated that destination image plays two important roles in tourist behaviours. Firstly, destination image has an impact on tourist decision process and future intentions. Scholars have studied this aspect and suggest that the image is highly important because it is not only represents the products or the destination but can also reflect its attributes, characteristics, and values that influence travellers choice of a place (McKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). In addition, image is considered vital because tourists choose destination based on the images they have constructed about a destination rather than reality or real experience (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Chon, 1991). Consequently, this emphasizes the significance of
effective tourism marketing strategies by identifying the image that its potential visitors have in mind towards the destination (Echtner & Ritchie 1991; Chon 1991). Positive images are related to positive purchase intention (Peace, 1982), whereas negative images discourage potential visitors (Selby & Morgan, 1996). Secondly, image forms part of tourists’ decision-making process. That includes participation (on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and future behavioural intentions, which are the intention to revisit and willingness to recommend to friends and family. Imagery associates with the whole destination consumption experience whether positive or negative. Images are also used to market a destination and shape tourists’ attitudes and behaviours towards a destination before, during and after visiting. Although the relationship between images and tourist choice of a destination and future behaviour are of important roles of destination image, there had been little attention paid to it in previous studies in the 80s and 90s until Binge et al. (2001) and Lee, Yoon & Lee (2007) whose studies on these perspectives has contributed to a growing body of literature on the subject.

2.8 Destination Image and its Influence on Tourist Satisfaction and Future Behaviour
Consumer satisfaction is a subject that has been well documented in marketing and tourism literature, and its definition varies among researchers (Oliver, 1980; Weber, 1997; Chen & Tsai, 2007). One of the most cited definitions is that satisfaction is the degree to which a person believes that an experience evokes positive feelings (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Another definition is from a tourism perspective defining satisfaction as the “emotional state of tourists after exposure to the opportunity or experience (Baker & Crompton, 2000, p.785). An essential business goal is to provide high quality service and ensure tourist satisfaction thus gaining a source of future revenue that leads to a successful tourism industry (Stevens et al., 1995). It is assumed that positive images leads to a consumer satisfaction with positive future behavioural while negative image caused dissatisfaction then tourist could avoid
visiting the same destination again and consider other alternative destination to visit (Baloglu et al., 2003, Cai et al., 2003; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005) and they will communicate unfavourable WOM (Andreu, Bigne’ & Cooper, 2001).

The combination of quality service and tourist satisfaction develops a long-term relationship with tourists, which leads to destination loyalty (Hui, Wan & Ho, 2007). The most applied measurement of satisfaction has been the disconfirmation theory (Weber, 1997; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001; Lee, Graefe & Burns, 2004) whereas satisfaction arises when consumers make a comparison between their actual experiences with their initial expectations. If their perceive values exceed expectations, the consumer is satisfied (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). But few researchers in the field of tourism claimed that tourist satisfaction has been measured by the summation of tourist evaluation of each destination attribute (Kozak, 2003; Meng et al., 2008). This measurement evaluated the destination performance and tourist’s level of satisfaction not only with what they experience but also feeling about the destination (Um et al., 2006). Measuring tourists’ satisfaction is a complex process (Assaker & Hallak, 2013) because tourism products comprise facilities, amenities, environment, infrastructure, weather, the local people, and many more (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). The tourists’ overall satisfaction is based on their evaluations of each product and service offered at the destination, their expectation and their consumption experiences (Kozak, 2003).

It is argued that image is an antecedent of tourist satisfaction (Kozak, 2003; Binge et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Favourable destination images lead to high levels of satisfaction and unfavourable images lead to dissatisfaction (Baloglu et al., 2003). The relationship between destination image and satisfaction were first developed in the study of Chon (1991). He found that destination image attributes were significantly correlated to the satisfaction with a destination’s product. This was a similar finding to Kozak (2003) and Prayag (2009). The results also supported
the argument that satisfaction has an influence on consumer’s behavioural intentions such as intentions to return to the destination (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). There is a mediating effect between the relationship of overall satisfaction and behavioural intention. Rittichainuwat, Gu and Brown (2001) argued that the greater the number of positive destination images and the fewer the negative images, the more likely are tourists to return to that destination.

Few studies have examined the relationship between satisfaction and negative/positive word of mouth. Anderson and Gerbing (1998) noted that highly dissatisfied/satisfied customers actively engage in word-of-mouth activity but that dissatisfied customers engage slightly more than the former. Word-of-mouth recommendations play a major role in the tourism context because they are considered to be more reliable and are one of the most sought-after information sources for potential tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005)

Chen and Tsai (2007) found in their study that destination image appears to have the most influence on future behaviour than satisfaction. This finding is similar to that of Binge et al. (2011). A more favourable image will lead to a higher likelihood to return to the same destination (Chi & Qu, 2008). Satisfied visitors are likely to revisit a destination (Milman & Pizam, 1995) and are willing to recommend it to their friends and family (Bigne’ et al., 2001). In tourism literature, future behavioural intentions of tourist have been measured by using of willingness to recommend or WOM and revisit intentions (Bigne’ et al., 2001; Baloglu et al., 2003). In order to motivate and encourage consumers to revisit or spread positive WOM, destination marketers must ensure that their products and services meet the tourist expectations (Chi & Qu, 2008)

Satisfaction itself also has a positive influence on post-purchase behaviour (Oliver, 1980; Fornell, 1992; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Still, the impact of satisfaction on revisit intention and likelihood to recommend varies among destinations and tourists
There is debate about this topic in tourism research because some scholars argue that positive satisfaction influences positive WOM (Bigne’ et al., 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008) while others disagree and argue that satisfaction has relatively little or no influence at all on positive WOM and revisit intention (Bigne’ et al., 2001; Kozak, 2001). Empirical research is needed to explain the impact that satisfaction has on tourists’ future behaviour.

2.9 Destination Images and Environmental Challenges

Researchers in the tourism discipline examine images that tourists have of a particular destination, city and place (Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013; O’Leary and Deegan, 2005; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Identifying these place images helps destination marketers to develop and maintain positive images while promptly responding to negative ones. There is little research attending to negative images or travel inhibitors that affect a tourist’s decision-making process or cause an undesirable travel experience. Travel inhibitors are identified in the literature as natural disasters (Kozak et al., 2007), political conflicts (Alvarez & Campo, 2014), terrorism (Sonmez et al., 1999), diseases and health (Law, 2006; Lepp & Gibson, 2003) and environment (O’Leary & Deegan, 2005).

Environment refers to “the physical environment that includes natural and man-made components “(Mihalic, 2000 p. 66). Hofels (1991) argued that tourists are well aware of the environment and that in turn has led them to strengthen their interests in quality destinations and untouched environments. Environment is considered important in enhancing tourists’ experiences and destination attractiveness but can be problem if human activities degrade a destination’s natural settings such as beautiful scenery, water and fresh air (Mihalic, 2000). Kirillova, Lehto and Cai (2014) in their study of what makes a destination beautiful noted that visible trash on the ground is considered as the least beautiful aspect of a beautiful destination. Such challenges have an impact on tourist choice and intentions, for example, by not
revisiting but instead choosing to visit another destination with similar products and attributes (Tavittiyaman & Qu, 2013; O’Leary & Deegan, 2002). This can be understood in the Hofels (1991) study in which he argued that tourists nowadays are very sensitive to environmental problems. In addition, tourists also consider environments when choosing a place and will change their plan if standards of environmental quality are not met (Inskeep, 1987). This is because tourists do not expect litter in such natural settings that are highly promoted as untouched beautiful paradises. It is the responsibility of the destination marketers and policymakers to maintain and sustain the environment and to also support the continuous development of the tourism industry. From a destination manager’s perspective, tourism products are complex and expensive to manage thus, they have very less control over it (Mihalic, 2000).

It is believed that solid waste management and littering are challenging issues in the developing countries (Guerrero, Mass & Hogland, 2013). These problems exist in public places such as along the streets, in public transportation facilities, in parks, on beaches and other public compounds. Al-Khatib, Arafat, Daoud & Shwahneh (2009) indicated that a number of factors can contribute to an increase in public littering rates such as lack of social pressure to avoid littering, failure to enforce the regulations, and lack of understanding of the environmental consequences of littering. In addition to these, as discussed by Hazra and Goel (2009), are insufficient financial resources, absence of appropriate facilities and lack of technical skills within the authorities. Poor solid waste management is a major threat to sustainable development in the Pacific islands.

Meta-analysis by Pike (2002) found that only a few researchers, such as O’Leary and Deegan (2002) and Chon and Singh (1994) took note of the subject of negative images such as littering towards a destination. These studies where based on examining overall images tourists have of a destination, and relatively underexplored research
to date takes the single attribute of littering to study the impact it has on a
destination image, tourist’s perceptions and the place tourism industry as a whole in
terms of the country economic development. Pike (2002) also discovered destination
image researchers favoured countries such as Australia, North and South America
and those in Europe, Asia, and Africa, with very few studies conducted in the South
Pacific. This research will contribute to the destination image body of literature in
adding more knowledge to the research on negative images and the impact if has on
a destination. Hence, another contribution of this study is it asses of images of and
the South Pacific Island or small island state.

2.10 The Relationships of Destination Image, Satisfaction and Behavioural
Intention: An Integrated Model
The study of consumer satisfaction in the tourism context began in the 1960s with
many studies using integrated models to explore satisfaction. Earlier models of
satisfaction were formulated by Oliver (1980) and Fornell (1992) and more recently
by Wang and Hsu (2010), Hui et al. (2007), Chen and Tsai (2007), Lee (2009) and
Tavitiyaman and Qu (2013). A number of empirical studies conducted in different
places indicate that destination image positively affects future behaviour of tourists

Wang and Hsu (2010) conceptual model in their study of “The relationships of
destination image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions: An integrated model” is
adopted by this project because of this study interests. Their model was grounded
from previous studies of Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Beerli and Martin (2004).
Wang and Hsu (2010) indicated that their model is the first to combine destination
image, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. This model is chosen to confirm its
credibility and whether its arguments can replicate in a small island context. Their
findings reveal that cognitive and affective images determine the overall destination
image, and affective image partially mediates the relationship between overall
images and cognitive images. Secondly, overall destination image indirectly
influences behavioural intentions through tourists’ satisfaction while other researches of Prayag (2009), Chen and Tsai (2007) and Bigne’ et al (2001) argue that destination image directly influences future behavioural while satisfaction indirectly influence future behavioural (Baloglu et al., 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Baker & Crompton, 2000).

![Conceptual Model](image)

**Figure 5: Conceptual Model (Wang and Hsu (2010, p. 833))**

The first findings of Wang and Hsu (2010) confirmed the studies of Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Beerli and Martin (2004) and Lin et al. (2007). There was no detailed information about which functional and psychological attributes of cognitive image and affective image were highly dominant and which of them had the strongest influence on the overall image. The value of individual image varies among visitors and one image may be more important or have a stronger influence on overall image over another. This calls for destination marketers to identify the important images, to treat them specially and to look after them well. Another findings of Wang and Hsu (2010), similar to those of Assaker and Hallak (2013) and Chi and Qu (2008), where they find that overall destination image is the only component that has a direct impact on tourists’ future behavioural intentions such as revisiting and conveying positive WOM to friends. These differences are explained by Assaker and Hallak (2013) as being due to the variations in the time frame of revisiting. The study of Bigne’ et al. (2008) also discovers that psychological
attributes of cognitive image have a great influence on intention to recommend the destination to friends and family. This result simply explains that although tourists neither have positive images nor are satisfied with the destination, many of them desire new places with new experiences. This is similar to the findings of Assaker and Hallak (2013) in which they argue that satisfaction and a positive image are insufficient to predict tourist return intentions. Although they are not revisiting, their positive word of mouth will attract more potential visitors to the destination.

Given the important contributions of the model in identifying the relationship between destination image, satisfaction and future behavioural, it is the interest of the researcher to use it for research on a small island state to confirm whether it can apply in a different context.

2.11 Research Questions
Following the reviewing and discussion above, the research questions for this study are:

Research Questions 1: What images that visitor’s hold of Tonga on arrival and departure?

Research Questions 2: To what extent does littering influence visitors’ image of Tonga as a holiday destination, in comparison to other attributes of their overall experience?

Research Questions 3: How does littering influence visitors’ future behavioural intentions?

2.12 Summary
It is apparent that destination image consists of different aspects and has many issues that ‘need to address in order to have a clear understanding of the destination image concept. It is important to note that destination image plays a major role in tourist choice of a destination and their future behavioural such as revisiting and recommend to friends and family. Tourist images of a destination are very
complicated and they are modifying in every stage involving pre-visit, during visit and after visit stages. Each tourist perceives and responds differently to a destination image. These differences can be the result from the sources of information they obtained or because of tourist social and demographic backgrounds.

Many scholars have studied images of a particular destination perceive by people of a specific place or by its visitors. More favourable and positive image of destinations the greater the likelihood that potential traveller will visit, revisit and/or recommend to friends and families. There are very few studies examine travel inhibitor and risks in relation to tourist experience in a destination. Risk and inhibitors that have been study are terrorism, natural disaster, political, disease, safety and a very fewer mentioned the impact of littering on a destination image. It is understood that each tourist perceives image differently from one another and one image may be highly important while others remain less. This study will analyse the impact of littering on tourist experience and images they have of Tonga in comparison to other attributes of the destination. This is to identify whether littering has major, minor or no impact on Tonga’s destination image and to identify why it is impact on that way. The relationship of littering and tourist future behaviour will also explore. In conclusion, the theoretical model used in this chapter seeks to answer the research questions presented in chapter three. Next chapter is a description of the method of data collection.
Chapter three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction
This chapter outlines and justifies the research design and methods of analysis adopted by this study. The first section provides the importance of secondary resources used in this research. This is followed by the justification for choosing open-ended questions and in-depth interviews as the methods of data collection used to address the aim and the research questions of this thesis. Thereafter, sampling size, study sites, and data analysis are discussed. The final section of this chapter outlines the limitation of the chosen methodology.

3.2 Research Aim
The research aims to investigate visitors’ and tourism operators’ perceptions of the impact that littering has on Tonga’s destination image by pursuing depth understanding of the following research questions as described above.

3.3 Secondary Sources
Secondary sources were considered important to collect in order to identify key issues that need to be further addressed in the primary research. To ensure that this is a problem worth to further exploring, the researcher collected necessary reports from the Tourism department in Tonga. Ministry of Tourism (2010) noted that poor waste management is a significant concern and represents a major constraint in relation to sustainable tourism planning. Out of the main group of six islands in Tonga, only Tongatapu the main island has regulations relating to waste management and a suitable land fill facility. Overall levels of waste management are poor and continue as a major threat to the sustainability of the tourism product (MCTL, 2013). Other reports, such as IVS (2011, 2012, 2013) support this argument by providing evidence of some tourists being concerned about littering and the
The cleanliness level of Tonga. Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour (2013, p.103) IVS final report clearly stated that “Litter, rubbish and general cleanliness have been the key area of discontent for visitors over the total period of IVS reports and there is little evidence that any improvement has been achieved. In the final question on whether visitors would return or recommend Tonga as a holiday destination this problem has been given as a reason not to do either of these. The reputation of Tonga as a desirable destination is at risk if this is not addressed in the near future”.

The utilization of these reports provided a wider breadth of information; develop a more comprehensive understanding, and insights relevant to the research problem. Direct quotes from the IVS reports concerning littering listed below;

- “Very disappointed with the Litter and Rubbish strewn around areas of travel, and the prices of simple cost of living items expensive”
- “The other issue is the amount of rubbish lying around in Tonga. It really detracts from the feel of a tropical island paradise”
- “The gov’t needs to put far more time and money into setting up and educating Tongans to clean up and not put rubbish in street. The rubbish everywhere, including waterways was the worst thing”
- “King of Tonga should encourage people to clear up litter and not leave litter behind”
- “Tonga is a beautiful country spoiled by too much litter. This seems to be a common problem in the Pacific Island countries. Tonga could be the first country to address this by cleaning up the public areas and educating people to stop littering”
- “Effort needs to be made to clean the streets and environment, too much rubbish is disposed of in the street. Additionally there needs to be more attention to public health issues in accommodation and tourist activities”
- “Clean up public areas street & parks very dirty until Saturday clean up & then clean...need to discourage dumping of rubbish otherwise excellent experience”

3.4 Method of Data Collection
This research seeks an in-depth understanding of individual experiences, perspectives and behaviours toward littering and the images they have of Tonga. The decision to utilize a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to this study was based on few reasons. Strauss and Corbin (1990) noted that qualitative research
methods enable the researcher to explore and in-depth understanding of situation, of which little is known. Qualitative research methods also provide greater advantage for researchers to develop a personal relationship with the participants that are likely to gain more meaningful information than through the usage of quantitative research approach (Daly, 1992).

In the destination image literature, researchers disagree on the most appropriate paradigm to measure destination image. A review of 142 papers by Pike (2002) showed that most researchers favour quantitative methodologies to operationalise the image construct by using a predetermined list of attributes as measurements. However, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) argued that tourists’ images of a destination are based on both the individual attributes as well as a holistic impression. Qualitative methodologies are more constructive to measuring holistic components of destination image and capturing unique features and auras.

Qualitative methodologies also provide opportunity for participants to freely describe their experiences in their own words. Various techniques can be used for qualitative in data collection of destination image such as open-ended questions, free elicitation, in-depth interviews, observation, discussions with experts, and textual material.

This study comprised of two phases. The first phase was to gain an understanding of the fresh images and expectations that tourists have of Tonga upon their arrivals at the airport. In conjunction with the literature review, tourists have images of the visiting destinations before they actually have a physical contact with the destination because of various sources of image formation (Martin and Bosque, 2008). Information from this phase helps the researcher to compare with the information obtained from follow-up interviews to identify the changes in image and tourists level of satisfaction. The follow-up in-depth interview was the second phase of this study. This phase went into detailed with tourists’ overall experiences, feelings,
thoughts, and perspectives of Tonga as a tourist destination and tourism operators’ with their views on Tonga tourism industry development.

3.4.1 Procedures
Prior to conducting the fieldwork, the researcher sent an email to several accommodations in Tonga for permission to approach their guests for this research. Two accommodations responded as mentioned above. Emails were also sent to six tourism operators in Tonga, and two operators responded, Ezi World Holidays & Travel Limited and Scenic Hotel Tonga. The other two were contacted by phone when the researcher was in the study site. These operators were Sunrise Travel & Tour and Deep Blue Diving. The researcher did not require permission from the Government of Tonga given that she is a Tongan citizen.

The accommodation owners were first approached to identify their guests’ arrival times before the research was taken on. This was discussed and noted in the researcher’s diary. Both accommodation providers were asked if the researcher could get into their shuttle to distribute the questionnaires when picking up their guests from the airport. The Accommodation one pick up shuttle did not agree as they felt the research would disturb tourists on their arrival and that they would prefer to have a look around on their way to the accommodation rather than completing questionnaires.

Accommodation two, on the other hand, was willing to offer a seat to the researcher every time they picked up their guests. The guests of each accommodation were approached differently. Accommodation two, guests were first approached upon arrival at the airport. On the way to the accommodation the researcher greeted the guests with a brief explanation of the research background before distributing the Consent form and Information sheet. Questionnaires were then handed to those who were willing to take part. The questionnaires were collected once they finished, or when arrived at the accommodation.
Accommodation two guests were approached at the accommodation after they checked in at the reception and before heading to their rooms. The researcher greeted them, introduced herself and described the background of the research before handing them the Consent form, Information sheet and questionnaires. Few of the tourists were willing to promptly complete the questionnaires, while others took it with them and asked to pick it up later in the evening. The researcher also discussed with the participants the most suitable time and place for the follow-up interview prior to the participants leaving Tonga.

In regards to the interview, some were unable to be interviewed because they had moved accommodation without informing the researcher: most of them left for outer islands and returned to a different accommodation or taken connecting flights. Tourism operators on the other hand were first approached by giving out information sheets and consent forms before the actual interview took place, allowing them to digest the background of this study. The interview was later conducted after agreeing on the most suitable time and place mostly at their office..

### 3.4.2 Method of recruitment
The participants of this research were divided into two categories. These participants were tourists and tourism operators. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants. Participants group 1 were the guests of two accommodation providers in Tonga. Accommodation two, is a backpacker accommodation and the Accommodation one, which targeted high end visitors. Email communication was sent to the accommodation providers in Tonga and these were the only two who showed interest in this study and were willing to assist. Twelve guests were selected, six from each establishment. Participants group 2 were four experienced tourism operators. Emails were sent to a few operators in Tonga and two of the four operators were interested in participating. The other two operators were recruited after interviewing the first two operators. The reason for this was to gain a broader variety of perspectives from the tourism operators’ side because the first two
tourism operators were interviewed were non-Tongan. One of the two has been in Tonga for many years and has family there, while the other is the manager of an international hotel in Tonga. These operators had similar thoughts about littering problems but had different views on the effect on tourists’ future behaviour. Based on that, the researcher decided to obtain two Tongan operators to represent the Tongan operators’ population and to explore more from the tourism operators’ perspectives. The researcher approached by phone call six Tongan tourism operators who have been in the industry for years but only two showed interest to participate.

As a qualitative study, this research established inclusion and exclusion criteria for choosing its participants. The criteria for the visitors were aged have to be 18 above and should be visiting Tonga for five days or more. Tourism operators on the other hand have to be actively involved with tourists’ activities and have been in the tourism industry for at least two years.

A purposeful convenience sample was chosen because of time limitations and costing issues. The researcher chose two different establishments with which to conduct the research in order to gain some control over the participants’ population. These establishments, as described above, contained backpacker visitors and high-end visitors. This approach helped to reduce the limitation of generalisation of the chosen sampling technique.

In terms of participants, twenty six visitors did stage one, fifteen from Accommodation two and eleven from the Accommodation one, only twelve visitors completed stage two due to move accommodation and were unavailable to interview.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operators</th>
<th>Segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operator 1</td>
<td>Hotel, Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator 2</td>
<td>Travel agent, Tour operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator 3</td>
<td>Travel agent, Tour operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator 4</td>
<td>Whale watching, Sea activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Tourism operators’ profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation One Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Visitors’ profile
3.4.3 Phase one – Self-completion questionnaires with open-ended Questions

Few researchers have adopted open-ended questions in image measurement to capture the components of a destination image, with the focus on the holistic and unique images (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Reilly, 1990). Participants were provided a set of attributes in order to gain an understanding of common and functional images that Tonga has, along with open-ended questions to identify unique images. The lists of images used were taken from Echtner and Ritchie (1991) and O’Leary and Deegan (2005) studies. Two other images, whale watching and royal family were included because of their prominent used in Tonga’s marketing activities such as brochures, websites and, billboards. Based on a review of literature and the effectiveness of open-ended questions technique, this study employed this approach to capture visitors’ fresh image of Tonga upon their arrival. The questions were designed almost similar to those of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) and O’Leary and Deegan (2003).

A series of opened-ended questions were developed and presented in the form of a questionnaire. These questionnaires required self-completion. Open-ended questions were used to capture the pre-visited images and expectation visitors’ have of Tonga, which is similar to the study of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) study on the measurement of destination image. The questionnaire was designed in English and it contained nine questions. Five questions were constructed according to the research topic and the other four were social-demographic questions such as to whom they were travelling with, the country they came from, and gender and age.

3.4.4 Phase two – Interviews with visitors and tourism operators

Interviews are amongst the most chosen means to collect data for qualitative research (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). The used of in-depth interviews relies on the ability of the tourist and tourism operator to recall the salient dimensions of their experiences during their visit for tourist and within the tourism industry for operators. This method’s purpose is to get into someone’s head to find out things like feelings and memories that cannot be observed or revealed in any other way.
In-depth interviews seek a deep understanding of the visitors’ and local tourism operators’ impressions, feelings and thoughts towards littering and the impact it has on their overall experience and the image of Tonga as a holiday destination. I chose to administer in-depth interviews to provide an environment that generate meaning from the information provided by the participants. This study focused mainly on each individual’s experiences and perspectives on littering and its association with their experiences. In-depth interviewing is treated as the most suitable framework for exploring the research questions, and that is why it was used over the other qualitative methods such as focus group. In addition, few other key researchers in the field of destination image conducted their research with the same approach that this study adopted (Haahti, 1986; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

Within in-depth methods, the semi-structured interview was used. Such interviews should provide sufficient flexibility and welcoming new perspectives of enquiry that may arise during the interview (Jennings, 2001). Moreover, this method started with holistic contextual questions in order to make interviewees comfortable and to set the context (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). The advantages of using this type of interview include detailed information regarding respondents’ attitudes, opinions and impressions toward a particular subject (Jennings, 2001). This approach allowed individual to talk and discuss a phenomena in their own terms while interviewer had the opportunity to probes if sense uncertainties from the interviewees. This method had disadvantages to it that must be acknowledged. The researcher can undermine the quality of the data if interviewing skills are not good and does not probe accordingly for further clarification, or bias the data by pursuing only a particular line of prompting (Jennings, 2001). In addition, this type of interviews obtained vast amount of data that took lots of time to transcribe and analyse.
The general line of questions included tourists’ overall experience, images that they have of Tonga and towards the end if it had not come up already prompts about littering. Tourism operators’ on the other hand were asked on how Tonga is doing as a holiday destination, what needs to be improved or changed and questions about littering were asked towards the end. The study employed an in-depth interview approach in which a cultural research approach known as talanoa was used. Talanoa is “referred to as a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal” (Vaioleti, 2006, p.23). He also, argued that using talanoa for Pacific research issues will provide more trustworthy, valid and authentic information than other methodologies, because people feel they have had significant engagement in the research process. The validity and success of talanoa is based on a trust relationship that has been built between the researcher and the participants (Prescott, 2011).

Interview guides were prepared with key topics that were needed to be covered during the interviews. There were two sets of interview guides: one was designed for visitors and the other designed for tourism operators. These questions were designed differently to suit the information that needed to obtain from these groups as described in the above sections. All interviews were conducted in English, except for one operator who preferred Tongan for ease of conversation.

The follow-up interview was mostly conducted the day before they left Tonga and a few on the actual day of their departure. The interviews took place at the chosen accommodations. A few interviewees had moved accommodation and interviews were conducted at their new places. Other tourists were interviewed on the actual day of departure, which was mostly done at the airport and a few at their accommodation when the flights were at night time. Airport interviews were conducted because of connection flights on their way back from the outer islands. Most of the actual interviews took 30 to 40 minutes. While the researcher followed
the pre-design questions, some of the questions were crossed out without asking because participants had covered them in previous questions. The researcher also had the opportunity to probe for more clarification if responses were too vague and participants were also welcomed to ask questions if they needed to. Incentives were provided as a form of thank-you gift for taking their time to participate in this research. Each participating tourist was given a choice of Tongan handicrafts and souvenirs. Operators interview were conducted. These interviews were mostly conducted at the operators’ office. New Zealand chocolates were given as a form of appreciation.

3.5 Response Rates
Primarily 28 questionnaires were distributed among visitors of both establishments. Seventeen questionnaires for Accommodation two guests while Accommodation one only acquired eleven. Questionnaires were required to be filled on their way from the airport to the accommodation or either at the reception once arrived. However, few of the quests requested if can be picked up after a few hours. All 28 questionnaires were collected. When collection questionnaires, the researcher seeking their availability of when and where to conduct the in-depth interview as a follow up before they leave Tonga. As a results of this survey only six from both establishments were able to interview.

A total of eight tourism operators were invited to participate at this study and only four were willing to take part in this study. Questionnaires were not required to distribute to the operators, hence an in-depth interview were the only method used for the tourism operators.

\[
\text{Number of visitors and operators interviewed} \times 100
\]
\[
= \left( \frac{12+4}{28+8} \right) \times 100
\]
\[
= 44.44\%
\]
3.6 Instruments Used
A voice recorder was used to record the interviews with both visitors and tourism operators. This was the most appropriate way to capture every word during the conversation and to make sure nothing was missed out. This allowed the researcher to listen to the conversation after to aid in further developing the path of conversation and what needed to be addressed in the following interviews.

3.7 The Study Sites and Time Frame
Tonga’s tourism sector is relatively undeveloped compared with other destinations in the South Pacific, ranking ninth out of fifteen countries in the region based on total visitor arrivals (Tonga Impediment Diagnostic report, 2010). Whilst tourism is not as developed as other neighbouring countries, the sector has been identified by the government’s ministers, the private sector and many communities in Tonga, as the sector of hope that will lift the economy of Tonga. It is believed that if tourism increases, there is a high potential of providing broad based employment and income generation, as well as support for the retention of cultural traditions and the sustainable management of the nation’s environment assets (Trip Consultants, 2013). According to the Ministry of Tourism’s summary of the tourism arrival reports (2010), the total tourism expenditure in Tonga was estimated to be worth approximately 56 million TOP in 2011 which is equivalent to approximately TOP$1,200 per visitor. This information reflects the need for tourism in Tonga to be accelerated, as the growth rate has been relatively low compared with Fiji, Samoa and other Pacific countries. According to the Tong Tourism Roadmap (TTR) report (2013) Tonga’s market share of the South Pacific arrivals has decreased from 3.5 percent in 1994 to less than 3 percent in 2011. The growth rate of visitor arrivals into Tonga over the last five years has been only 1.2 percent per annum.
According to the Trip Consultants (2013) report, the visiting friends and families (VFR) market remained the major market segment for visitation and there has been a slight growth in this market. This was aligning with the information given by the tourism operators during the interview. This market primaries influenced are families and social commitments such as church conferences. New Zealand is still the major target market for holiday visitors to Tonga while the Australian market has become the second most important. High season in Tonga for holiday visitors is June to October mainly because of the whale season and the weather especially given that it is winter in New Zealand. Tonga is mainly known for whale watching/swimming, lively culture and for the only remaining monarchy in the South Pacific.

The research took place in the main island of Tonga called Tongatapu. The reasons for choosing Tongatapu were because the researcher was more familiar with the context and had connections within the industry from her previous experiences. Secondly, it was to meet the scholarship condition that the study had to be undertaken in the researcher’s country of residence. Lastly, Tonga had identified that litter and waste management are issues concerning tourists and the sustainable development of tourism in Tonga. The main island of Tongatapu was chosen.
because the international airport is located there. This was important for this study because upon arrival, participants had to complete questionnaires.

A map of Tongatapu, the research site, is also provided for ease of reference. The map shows the main locations where the research was conducted, especially the two accommodation providers and the airport. Other locations are also identified here such as tourist attractions sites.

![Map of Tongatapu](image)

Figure 7: Map of Tongatapu
(Tonga Planning Urban Management Agency)

The fieldwork was conducted during the course of two and a half months. This was from July to the second week of September 2014 the high season in Tonga because of its weather, local festivals, and the whale-watching season.
3.8 Qualitative Data analysis Method

Qualitative data analysis involves the “non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (Babbie, 2007, p. 378). Data analysis requires researchers to distil data into small group of core categories and interpret it in a way that leads to the construction of a portrait of the phenomenon that is understandable to the reader. The data collected from both interviews were analysed by using the Braun and Clarke (2006) method of thematic content analysis. They suggested that this method commonly utilized in the identification, analysis and reporting of common groups, or themes within data. Each interview was transcribed in view that researchers will find it comprehensible to identify themes, commonalities and patterns to make sense of the collected information. Researcher also had the opportunity of familiarizing with the data during the process of transcribing. The second step was to generate preliminary codes by coding data systematically based on a word, a sentence, or a paragraph that identified important features of the data that might be relevant to answer the research questions. The next step was data reduction by merging related codes and removed similar codes. The codes were then tabulated, one table for the visitors and the other for the operators. Tabulating the data made it easier for the researcher to view the codes and search for themes. The codes were then categorized into similar groups; for example, the snorkelling and whale watching were all in the sea activities group. These results were then compared with the operators’ data to identify similarities and differences in the discussions. The next phase involved reviewing themes and checked if themes related to coded extracts. Themes were then revised and assigned them names.

The self-completion questionnaires with open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis, the same technique used in the study of Echtner and Ritchie (1993). Content analysis as defined by Krippendorff (2004, p.403) “is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”. Creswell
(2002) points out that the advantage of using content analysis is that the researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of the language and words of the documents under investigation. For that reason, content analysis was adopted to analyse questionnaires because of the relatively small amounts of data compared with the amount of data obtained by the interviews (Krippendorff, 2004). Open-coding was first used to explore the data and allowed the researcher to gain meaning of what the data was trying to say. Some open-ended questions were answered with just one or two words, the actual answer also become the code.

3.9 Limitations
For the most comprehensive results of tourists’ perspectives of Tonga’s destination images, the ideal would be to conduct interviews before, during and after their visit with the same samples. This method was supported by Gallarza et al, (2002) study in which they proposed that image studies should conducted in a longitudinal sampling, although this kind of research is difficult in tourism. As such, this method was impossible to undertake because of time, resources, tourists availability, and as well as of privacy constraints. Questions about pre-visit image as well as post-visit image and behaviours were addressed in the open-ended questions as well as the interviews so that all possible data could be collected in Tonga.

The samples of this study overlooked the potential visitors or the group of people have heard of Tonga but they do not considered Tonga on their lists of destinations to visit. These groups of people could have been more informative; to find out why they are not choosing Tonga as a holiday destination.

Other difficulties faced by the researcher are listed below:

- It was difficult to follow up participants for the interview prior to leaving Tonga because of changed accommodation or connecting flights from the domestic airport as most of them were going to outer islands.
• There was uncertainty and delays of the flights, causing the researcher delays either at the airport or at Accommodation one while waiting for the visitors’ to arrive.

• Some participants asked if they could take the questionnaires with them and that the researcher pick them up later that day. A few of participants either did not return the questionnaires or took much longer to complete them.

• Time was also a problem as tourists tended to forget the arranged interview times.

3.10 Summary
This chapter justified the adopted of qualitative approach in this study. The research aims were described and focused on tourist and operator perspectives of Tonga as a tourist destination and their behavioural intentions and reactions based on their overall experiences. The used of in-depth interviews and open-ended questions were discussed and justification of why were utilized. The recruitment of enough participants were also described in order to make this research meaningful. Overall, this method proved as the most appropriate approach in gaining a better understanding of these groups of participants as it related to this topic of research.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the findings of this research project. The chapter is divided into three main sections reflecting three part of the research questions: 1) What images visitors’ hold of Tonga on arrival and departure? 2) To what extent does littering influences visitors’ image of Tonga as a holiday destination in comparison to other attributes of their overall experience? 3) How does littering influence visitors’ holiday experiences and future behavioural intentions? The results are based on a sample of 12 visitors and 4 operators. Taken together, these three sections will explain images that visitors have of Tonga and the impact that littering has on their overall experience and Tonga’s destination image. Chapter 4 concludes by summarising the key areas of the research findings.

4.2 Images Visitors Hold of Tonga on Arrival
The first question is in two parts. The first part was aimed at discovering the images that visitors have of Tonga that led them to pick Tonga as a holiday destination. The results of this finding indicated six prominent themes in the data. These themes are Destination appeal, Friendly and helpful people, swimming with the whales, desire to experience something new, undiscovered place and cheap to get to from New Zealand.

4.2.1 Beach, sand, sun and warm weather: Destination appeal
All of the visitors mentioned beautiful beaches, sunshine, warm weather, paradise as expectations and reasons for choosing Tonga as a holiday destination. These images of Tonga were also found to be closely related to their desire of relaxing, tranquillity and peacefulness. Through a detailing analysis of the data two major sub-themes emerged with respect to visitors motives of choice was South Pacific Island getaway and Relaxation atmosphere’. Quotes below illustrate this theme in the data.
“And off-course the landscapes the palm trees, the blue waters, white sand sunshine are something that is very unusual for me because I have never been to any tropical island before so I was very overwhelmed” (Visitors Interview Respondent 1(VIR))

“...the beaches are beautiful and the weather... I considered myself lucky to be here because it is cold back at home” (VIR4)

“This is my first experience in the Pacific Islands...relax on the beach, warm weather, sun” (Visitors Open-ended Questions Respondent 8 (VOR))

“I love the place that has beautiful beaches, sunshine and warm climate...just the right atmosphere to chill out and relax” (VOR10)

“The whole environment of a South Pacific Island...fell in love with the pace of life, amazing beaches with blue waters...it’s truly a paradise” (VIR6)

“This place looks like paradise, it’s exactly what we don’t have in Europe...beautiful places and amazing beaches” (VIR8)

It was clear from the visitors’ comments that they in need of a Pacific Islands getaway and relaxing atmosphere. These needs are associated with their choice of an island destination because South Pacific is referred to a “tropical paradise” (Pratt, 2013). The Islands are also portrayed as timeless (Sturma, 1999) because of their needs of relaxation and to experience the Island life are something that is offered in the Pacific Islands. This theme is supported by the studies of (Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Pratt, 2013) as prime reason for choosing a destination.

4.2.2 Friendly and helpful local people
The friendly and the welcoming nature of the people was the second most prominent images that visitors have of Tonga. Eleven of the twelve visitors noted on the questionnaire forms that they perceived local people as friendly, genuine and helpful people. This was also confirmed when conducted the interviews that all visitors confirmed that Tongan people, the staff at the accommodation and restaurants are: friendly, warmth, kind, helpful, smiling face and welcoming. They
said that Tongans are willing to help with no cost. There were few visitors’ who find difficulty with communication, especially with those that could not speak and understand English. This happened as a problem with communication when given direction. Overall, friendly locals were find to strongly contribute to visitors positive experience and the labels of the “Friendly Island/ Isles is still the key. The following quotes illustrate this theme in the data.

“The positive side was that the people are really friendly and they welcomed you like as soon as they saw you they waved at you... so that was really nice.” (VIR7)

“The people are very friendly which is true. This was good when I often needed to ask for directions because there weren’t many signs around to help me... but some people I talked to and I asked if they understand me and they said yes and sometimes I don’t think they do understand me but they said yes anyway... It happens in the directions to friend’s cafe so I got lost in town the other day because they point this way but it was a wrong way” (VIR3)

“...very interesting for me to see how friendly the people were and when we drove pass the village everyone was just waving and saying hello. So this is something that I am not used to. So everybody was just friendly and very nice” (VIR8)

“...so the experience here is great the people are friendly and the places I stay is quite good” (VIR9)

“...just very nice people and helpful. For example we went for a tour on a scooter so we stop to take pictures and this car stop by asking if we are alright and is our scooter break or what so yeah... lots of people asked if we need help but they did not want anything. When I was in Asia people needed money but not here so here is more friendly and advised for nothing” (VIR12)

These quotes revealed that visitors admired the friendliness of the people. Two main reasons for that are that the local friendliness and willingness to help are something that is absence or not common to visitors country of belong and because they
compare Tonga to other destination that they have previously visited. Friendly locals and relaxation are holistic and leading psychological images of Tonga.

4.2.3 Swim with the whales
Tonga is one of the three places in the world that provide swimming with the whales (Kessler & Harcourt, 2012). Tonga positioned them through marketing activities as the only place in the South Pacific that does these sorts of activity. Swimming with whales is strictly seasonal between the months of July to October but it draws in lots of visitors during this time who visited especially for whale watching and swimming. Nine out of twelve participants already have the images that Tonga has this unique product but only six of the tourists’ prime reasons for visiting Tonga is to swim with the whales.

“I mean... I came here to see the whales, so my expectations are confirmed. So that's was the reason why I booked the flight and everything to come here...” (VIR7)

“We did swimming with whales and that was absolutely fantastic that is probably the best thing we did” (VIR12)

”Amazing, exciting, rare opportunity that Tonga offers more than typical beaches” (VOR6)

“Amazing experience by whale swimming could be something to remember forever” (VIR3)

“I want to swim with the whales and I think it can be the best experience of my life” (VOR11)

“Whales, the incredible wow factor of these mighty creatures the possibility of actually seeing one” (VOR4)

Swimming with the whales is a unique activity that attracts many visitors to Tonga during its season from July to October. It shows from the transcripts that this activity plays the major part in their overall experience. It is understood that this activity is only once in a lifetime experience that they only pursue once with no intentions of revisiting for the same reason. This revealed the importance for whale operators to
make sure they provide visitors with experience expected in order for them to spread positive word of mouth.

4.2.4 Natural environment and Culture
Natural environment and culture are considered to be on the top of visitors’ primary motivation for travelling to the islands. The Pacific Islands including Tonga are positioned and sell for its historical sites, scenery, and culture and people way of living. Visitors choice of holiday does not limited to relaxation and escape but also a place with a difference experience to what they have at home. The destinations nature and culture have the potential to develop visitors’ emotional attachment to the place. Seven out of twelve visitors find it interesting and unique to see different sites, sceneries and the way people live. This uniqueness appears to be their first time to experience in comparison to their previous experience and to their home country. This point is illustrated by the following quotes.

“We wanted a beach getaway but also a change of culture” (VIR6)

“Because Tonga is still not widely known in Malaysia or even in Asia. I wanted to explore a different culture...Polynesian culture” (VIR9)

“Tonga have beautiful landscapes and exotic scenery such as the blow holes and royal tombs, it’s truly a paradise for me” (VIR10)

“I was interested that Tonga is the only island in the Pacific that have never been colonised and I was like Oh yeah that’s where I want to go” (VIR8)

Eight out of twelve visitors were impressed of how religious the locals are. These visitors also attend church on Sunday and they were amazed with the singing and bells ringing. Sunday in Tonga is a taboo day, as everything is shut down apart from a few restaurants. Although they found Sunday in Tonga unique and beautiful but one visitor had a difficult time in finding a place to eat. This shows that the Sunday law in Tonga is not in favour with the developing of tourism. Quotes below illustrated the problem.
“…other problem is where will I eat on Sunday? So I found a bakery and I bought a meat pie, a cake and a drink…some people said that he Chinese restaurants are open but it’s quite a long walk, I’ve walked to town but it’s too tiring. I understand why everything is shutting on Sunday which is good but what about us tourists that do not have relatives here? So if you want more tourists than you might think of having more restaurants open because it is a bit difficult” (VIR4)

4.2.5 Cheap and convenience to get to Tonga
Five out of twelve visitors wanted to experience the South Pacific islands lifestyle, culture, sun, and beach and were only chose Tonga because of the cheapest flights from Auckland. These budget travellers focus more on financial issues than what each islands can offer. This indicates a competitive advantage for Tonga over competitors. In addition, tourism Tonga should maintain the image that they are the cheapest to get to from New Zealand to maintain and attract this segment of visitors. This theme is illustrated in the following quotes:

“I choose Tonga because it is close to NZ, good prize of fly tickets” (VOR12)

“Because the fly ticket is cheap” (VOR9)

“Cheapest place to fly to from Auckland” (VIR2)

“So one of my flat mates in Christchurch recommended me to go to one of the islands before I go back home (Germany) so I checked out which island is available but to be honest I was a bit on budget so I thought oh maybe Fiji then I looked again and I was like Oh no! it is way too expensive then I picked Tonga because it was the cheapest…” (VIR8)

This framework clearly illustrates the differentiation and interrelationships between personal factors and the stimulus factors. In addition to these two factors, other researchers suggest that distance factors and cultural background of tourists are two other factors that can also determine an individual’s choice of a destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner 1993; Baloglu & McCleary 1999).
4.2.6 Non-touristic and undiscovered destination with authentic experience

Five out of twelve visitors preferred Tonga because it is not crowded like Fiji or Cook Islands. Low numbers of tourists around Tonga even on high season was more appealing to them. They also mentioned that they like Tonga as it is because it is not like other places that are making up things for tourist. Such places created much more authentic experience. This theme is aligning with three operators’ comments that Tonga is still underdeveloped, adventures destination and that is why tourists choose to come to Tonga. Quotes listed below illustrated this theme.

“Because I thought it will be one of the least touristic destinations in the Pacific Islands so I thought it will more of authentic kind of experience than going to Cook Island” (VIR10)

“Tonga is not very touristic. People are not used to have tourists around which I found it really nice actually…I really like it because I think when I go to some places in Europe I know and you find yourself in a resorts or a hotel and they are all artificially making up for you. Where in here this is actually how people live but it is not making up for tourists to show but this it is just the way it is “(VIR8)

“Tonga is not so touristic I think as if you go to Fiji or Cook Island. So that’s nice but off-course you need tourists but I mean lots of Germans around but it’s not so much because it’s high season. So I like it in that way, really nice... so stay where you are” (VIR3)

“…but generally I was surprised that not too many people coming here but it is a very nice place for vacation, nice beaches and nice hotels and it was empty and I surprised because the quality of the restaurants and accommodations is good...so I did not see many tourists around given its peak season here”(VIR12)

“…if I was a tourist I’ll come to Tonga because it is not crowded and that is what differentiate us from other islands like Fiji and Samoa… other Pacific Islands you see a lot of tourists but not in here and when tourist go for a swim they can have the beach all to themselves not crowded like other popular islands” (Operator Interview Respondent 2 (OIR))
4.3 Images Visitors hold of Tonga on Departure
The second part of the question, intended to identify the images visitors had after their holiday and are heading home. As discussed in Chapter three the images visitor’s hold of Tonga on arrival was gathered by the used of self-completed open ended questions upon visitors’ arrivals at the airport and the accommodation reception. In-depth interviews were later conducted before the visitors’ departed to uncover their overall images of Tonga.

4.3.1 Littering
Eight out of twelve participants believed that Tonga does have a problem with littering. Majority of the tourists mentioned that this problem is mostly occurred in town area where rubbish are scattered along the road, public areas and around the bus station. Visitors were also worried about the local people attitude towards littering because they show no sense of care towards the environment by throwing rubbish around. This theme also suggested that this problem ruined the beautiful and nice setting of the place. Two out of four tourism operators also supported this theme that Tonga is littered mostly in the city. This theme is illustrated by the quotes below.

“The disappointing part was that the environment, the rubbish that scattered in Nuku’alofa. You have a nice setting and then you look outside the boundaries are just full of rubbish” (VIR1)

“Off-course a lot of rubbish on the streets lying around but not over the whole island its only in some places…I think it is more around the beach area like this beach I went to at Ha’atafu” (VIR10)

“…and the littering people need to put the litter into the bin because it’s so filthy so why can’t they take it to their home or put it in the rubbish bin. Because you have such a beautiful place that you should show it off” (VIR4)
“…when I went on the island tour some sites where not very clean I was thinking why they can’t pick their litter up…” (VIR3)

“…There is quite a lot around here, we kind of think that we have just have to ignore it but definitely a lot of litter around. It's something that is not nice to look at” (VIR5)

“…it is just that some area especially in town that is quite filthy” (VIR2)

“Littering is a big problem I think people need to understand that it just an ugly side seeing people throw rubbish and doesn’t care it is a big problem and I think Tonga has to be very strict on littering” (OIR2)

“…rubbish is frustrating me, you know you driving in a car and out the windows here come the papers and the rubbish and its annoying... I also walked every day from here to Fua’amotu and I can see cans, plastic bags, nappies... and Nuku’alofa is just filthy ... and every blank area in town is littered with can, beer bottles and plastic bags...yeah downtown is just dusty and filthy” (OIR1)

Visitors and the two operators also agreed that the littering has to do with the Tongan culture, lifestyle and locals way of living. They also mentioned that this lack of knowledge and such behaviours are happened because of not told at home to stop throwing rubbish around Such behaviour can argue that is considered to be common in the Tongan society. Quotes below supported this argument.

“But I think littering is also due to the culture it’s hard to change especially if that’s part of the culture I mean... it’s the same as obesity...”(VIR10)

“This is how locals live and I cannot change it” (VIR7)

“Yeah! It is very unsightly. It’s a culture thing am afraid to say.” (OIR1)

“I think it just a habit that people have and not being told at home or school” (OIR2)

Apart from culture and locals lifestyle, visitors and operators recognise that poor waste infrastructure also contributed to this problem. This lack of infrastructure are
mostly has to do with few rubbish bins around town where visitors find it hard to see a bin close by so they have to walk for a long time to find one. Another problem is that some bins are overflow and are sits there for some times before they get it empty. This theme is illustrated in the following quotes.

“We separate boxes, class… some area especially in town that is quite filthy I mean we are strict in recycling so yeah... Germany has more money to do it. Off-course it will be better if people will not throw rubbish around but into the bin that will be the first thing.” (VIR3)

“…and in the street I was looking for a rubbish bin and there was just basically none. See I went to the market the other day and I bought an ice-cream and it has a paper wrapping so I walked and walked and walked looking for a cabbage bin and I didn’t saw a cabbage bins so dropped it but I’ll never do that if I was in Australia” (VIR3)

“…because there are not many rubbish bins out there. I have something in my hand and I have to really look for one but in New Zealand and even in Europe every bus station they have rubbish bins and streets are often clean the government maybe doesn’t want to spend a lot of money on that.” (VIR10)

Visitors and operators discuss the issue of littering, they also provide a solutions of how Tonga should go about to reduce this problem. Most of the visitors who had an issue with littering comments that Tonga should provide more rubbish bins along the road and public areas, educate younger generations and to enforce regulations by proving penalties to those who littered. Operators added that the problem of littering still exist because of locals lack awareness of how important tourism is to the country. They said that if the locals understand and well aware of the benefits gain from tourism together with the responsible stakeholders and ministry long term plan for reducing litter and beautification of Tonga littering will not be a problem anymore. When visitors discussing of ways of reduce this problem they discuss it by comparing to their home and how they handle their littering. While some visitors commented on educating of younger generation they also raised their concern that it
is important to educate younger ones but what if the parents or older ones are not a
good role model for their kids. These quotes provide support for this sub-theme.

“…another thing is they should encourage the younger children or the next generation to do
something about it. The elderly are the role model but that’s not happening … it is sad…”
(VIR1)

“…you know Australia they have what’s called Clean up Australian day. And in the
Cleaning up Australia day, every person in the country goes out there and pick up rubbish
and I think Tongans could learn from that. So that is about education n rubbish” (VIR3)

“…I think it can, because for Australians see in Asia they have peoples who go around and
collect plastics and sell it and even cans and inn a lot of Asia there is no rubbish that is people
job and I think that yeah... Australians don’t like to litter you get fine; if you throw
something you’ll get a fine. So I think maybe there should be a program that you’ll try to
educate the people to stop throwing rubbish around…” (VIR3)

“So maybe having more rubbish bins around town and encouraging people to use them”
(VIR5)

“It starts from home where you can educate your kids that littering is not nice… it is just
something that haven’t been brought into education yet. … I mean they trying to do all these
cleaning campaign and they colour the rubbish bins along the road I mean it looks good but
still people cannot put their litter inside the bin… it should be taught from the beginning at
home and it should be carry on but it is not happening” (OIR2)

“…it’s the government responsibility they need to stand up and say will pay something or
people to walk around town and pick up the rubbish. They need to pay people to go around
with a broom and sweep those areas and make them proud of what they are doing. Give them
a nice gear, uniform and teach them what tourists is all about and keep the town tidy”
(OIR1)
“I think the locals and public most of them do not understand the important of tourism but it’s important so people can wake and work together in order to embrace tourism. Fiji now maybe have 4th generation of tourism and here you’re probably 1st generation so it’s not really in their mind set” (OIR1)

4.3.2 Tonga is better than expected
Six out of twelve participants mentioned the lack of tourist information availability both domestically and internationally. The main problems that identified by these visitors is that they do not really know what to expect from Tonga. Visitors from Australia mentioned that they do not have any knowledge of Tonga before they travelled because of no information or any form of promotion available in Australia. They also mentioned that Australians know of Fiji and Asia but not Tonga. Quotes below illustrated the lack of information in the overseas market especially Australia.

“Well, I did not expect it to be that beautiful, I thought oh yeah there must be some nice beaches and stuff but when you’re actually there and you see it…yeah it was more that I was expected it to be” (VIR8)

“It is probably better than my expectation. I did not really know what to expect especially for Tonga I did not really know much about it. Our friends was here on working purpose so we decided that it will be nice to come here so we can all hang out together but we were plan to go Fiji instead” (VIR5)

“I had such a great time because this is so much than what I expected of Tonga” (VIR1)

“When I talk to the people in my hostel when I was in Australia they did not even know where Tonga is. Everyone knows Fiji because it is more popular especially for the backpackers because the travel agencies have kind of cheap flights going to Fiji” (VIR7)

“Tourism I’m surprised that Australians don’t come here because most of them go to Thai or Bali but I don’t think and realise how beautiful Tonga is” (VIR3)

“I do not have much expectation of Tonga but am expect it to be similar to Fiji” (VOR10)
It is obvious from tourists responds that Fiji is much more popular and known than Tonga. These tourists have identified that because they have less information of what Tonga is like, they prefer to have more information available on the internet and expected that information of what to experience will be more accessible in Tonga. They expect to have information available at the airport so they can collect it while on their way through the custom. This lack of information confirmed when most tourists comment that there is not much to do in the main island and they travel to the outer islands. Three out of four operators disagreed and said that Tongatapu offered the same activities that are available in the outer islands but lack of information available is the main constraint. This can be identified by these verbatim quotes from visitors and operators.

“Yeah, you know maybe I missed it but many airports when you arrived in to their country there is a lot of pamphlets and I did not see anything in Tonga but maybe I missed it. You just as you get off the aeroplane I got in at 3 in the morning and all I know that I have somebody picking me up from the airport and I stayed one night there but it will be good, coz I did not even have a map I did not know where ‘Eua was so I did not know even. I got a booklet on Eua even that they could have put more advertising at the airport for when people arrived because people don’t know” (VIR3)

“I looked through the internet for some information about Tonga before I came here but there was not enough information until I get here. … I never heard of that island called ‘Eua before I came until I get here. So it’s a problem if I have to do last minute booking because I need more time there but I already book my return” (VIR9)

“There is not much activities to do here in the main island compare to outer island” (VIR5)

“Lots of tourists do not realise that we do the same things here in Nuku’alofa the main island. So most of the activities that are done in Vava’u are in Nuku’alofa as well like swimming with the whales” (OIR2)
“I always wanted to have an information centre at the airport… we used to before but not anymore because the airport charged too much… but I wished that the tourism authority will soon have some information available at the airports like a flat screen TV with ads and information about Tonga so when tourists comes out they have fare idea of what to do and expect of Tonga” (OIR3)

4.3.3 Tonga infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped
The level of infrastructure in Tonga is viewed as a barrier to the growth of tourism sector. Based on the findings, ten out of twelve visitors raised their concerns with the inadequate transport infrastructure in Tonga. These attributes are poor signage, few good quality accommodations, not much range of accommodation and restaurants, poor road infrastructure, and domestic transportation are unreliable and poorly maintained, insufficient and unclean public toilets. In terms of signage, visitors who took a tour by themselves found it difficult to find the sites as shown on the map of Tonga because there were no signs to direct visitors to the tourism sites. This problem makes it difficult for adventurous tourists who prefer to travel of themselves but not relying on tour operator. Three out of four operators agreed that Tonga have poor signage. These quotes illustrated the problem of signage to tourist.

“Another thing that I realised was that they don’t have much signage you know... it’s not... it’s like... if you don’t have a guide with you, you do not know where you going, you wouldn’t be able to find it yourself” (VIR8)

“When we were driving we hired a car and we drive around pretty much the whole island the signage to some of the site like the blow holes and then we went to different spots as we just following the map but we kind of go oh... you can actually know of it when you ride on top of it you know you don’t know are we heading in the right direction... so there was no signs” (VIR6)

“…if the tourists are out to explore, they really have to find their way around because of no signage around...signage is huge problem here and we need good efficient signage” (OIR1)
According to the comments from the tourism operators, signage is a big problem for Tonga because majority of the tourists who travel to Tonga are more independent and prefer to go of their own. Tourism authority needs to work along these things to enhance future visitors’ experience.

Majority of the visitors were pleased with the accommodation in Tonga. The only problem mentioned from about two visitors that Tonga does not have much range of accommodations and very few of luxury accommodation. These points were supported by three out of four operators. This is not a surprise because Tonga does not have high-end accommodation or international hotel apart from the Scenic group hotel that was recently established two years ago. This issue highlighted the lack of support and effective tourism investment planning in place to encourage and persuade investors to Tonga. Such restriction and insufficient supporting loose potential investors to competing destinations. One problem highlighted by one of the operators is the huge amount of tax they need to pay to the Government of Tonga which is very depressing. Quote showed below supported this argument.

“If you had lots of tourists from America they wouldn’t be happy. Tonga needs a few more quality facilities” (VIR4)

“…but I think there is a gap between a hotel like this and Toni’s Guesthouse…the main thing that I want is somewhere clean, safe, cheap and off-course communication… but here it’s either this place very expensive or a place like Tony… I think would prefer something in the middle range” (VIR3)

“Fafa Island Resort is excellent” (VIR6)

“I think the quality of accommodations and restaurants are good” (VIR12)

“The New Zealand and Australia you looked at 60’s to 70’s years old. They need somewhere like Fiji where they can go to a big resorts, sits beside the beach and everything is ready for them…the infrastructure is still not yet there. So for Tonga to get them we need to lift the game. We need more hotels and people to embrace tourism here...” (OIR1)
“We don’t have the infrastructure and I kept telling the tourism Tonga to don’t oversell us because if all these people coming and there is nowhere to stay and they ended up staying somewhere they don’t like” (OIR3)

“…some rooms here in Tonga still have cockroaches and those insects. The standard and level of cleanliness is poor, so what’s going to happen when they return to their home country? “Off-course they will tell all the negative stories of their experiences to friends and families” (OIR4)

Transportation is one of the destination aspects that seem to be a problem for few of the visitors while in Tonga. Four out of six visitors who travel to the outer islands have difficulties with the domestic airlines. Visitors mentioned that local airline is unreliable and expensive. The problem with the domestic airline has affected the tourism industry especially the outer islands. The findings of this project proved that both the visitors and operators are disturbed by this service. While a few comments on the domestic transportation, two other visitors’ mentioned the lack of public transportation such as bus and taxi.

“Flight from Christchurch to Auckland to Nukualofa is like NZ$300 and flight from here to Vava’u is NZ$200 so it’s very expensive because it is only an hour flight…it’s nice if it could be cheaper. The transport in the islands is ok, I saw bus everywhere but could not find the direction so I always asked the locals and they give me advise of which bus I should take but I wasn’t able to find any information on time and where is the final destination so that could be a problem for visitors”(VIR12)

“The domestic airline service is very poor and unreliable…they delayed our flights three times but lucky we got here on time to catch our flight back home” (VIR11)

“We did find pretty disorganised the flight when we went over to Vava’u , they change the flight into an hour earlier without telling us so it was only by chance that we went there the day before our flight to check and they told us that it was an hour earlier. So we ask them why they haven’t informed us and they said oh yeah maybe you should have got an email but
none of us received an email so we were lucky to check it before. So that is probably the most disappointing experience” (VIR5)

“I think it’s the public transport... you know... you got taxi but it just people’s car with the sign on top. So that is probably the only thing really that need to be improved” (VIR2)

“Last year I had groups from Dive Adventures from Australia planning to go ‘Eua, we had everything all booked up. The airline stuffed it up last year and this year no one comes except one group and this group wanted to use the local ferry they arrived last night, I took them to the wharf and the ferry is not going. I have to rent an aircraft to take them because it was within me that doing all these things...so I charter a plane just for them to fly over” (OIR3)

Two other visitors’ commented on how poor and uncomfortable the road is and suggested that Tonga need to improve their road infrastructure. This was against by one of the operators given that Tonga is a developing country, if it is something to expect. The overseas operator on the other hand agreed with the visitors’ that Tonga’s road infrastructure is poor.

“The road is not comfortable when ride on a bike even a car it’s like shaking, so it’s better to get it fix because there are lots of potholes” (VIR9)

“The road is not that fantastic” (OIR1)

“...potholes on the road are normal as we’re a developing country...” (OIR4)

The tourism sector in Tonga suffers from lack of scale which results in a low level of critical mass to support the required infrastructure investments, transport operations and other supporting services. The overall local transport infrastructure is apparently a constraint to tourism development and competitiveness. The major concerns mentioned in this finding as discussed above are unreliable and costly domestic air services, poor road infrastructure and signage and inadequate public transport. This call for the Government of Tonga and tourism industry to collaborate to develop a better and ease transport infrastructure which will not benefit the
tourism alone but for the social benefits of the locals as well as the support of the economic growth.

Less range of accommodations and relatively shortage of quality accommodations were also mentioned by few of the visitors but majority are the operators. This reflects the absence of international brand name hotel due to lack of investors in Tonga. This shortage in quality and suitable accommodation create less appeal and awareness of Tonga as a destination, less international credibility, recognition and confidence of high end potential travellers to choose Tonga as their next stop holiday destination. The largest property in Tonga was the International Dateline Hotel with 125 rooms but is now closed down because it requires a substantial refurbishment. The largest property that is currently in the market now is the Scenic hotel with 75 rooms. The quality big size hotels are in need of the industry to facilitate the market demand and the appealing of Tonga as a destination.

“The dancing with fire and traditional dancing was just graceful and beautiful…you know I had never seen it before…I took a video of it so that I can show it to my friends and families back home” (VIR1)

“I think Tongans really appreciate their families much more than a lot of Australians so I think that was very unique…and that does not happen in Australia” (VIR3)

“Well I saw them in Eua the fishing pigs I could not believe and have never seen a country with so many pigs” (VIR3)

“We went to church on Sunday… so here everyone is going to church on Sunday, everything is closed and people here do nothing on Sunday that is a really good habit” (VIR12)

“…on Sunday, I was surprised about everything from going church to the singing and choir… and heaps of church, almost in every village has more than one church so that was unique for me” (VIR8)
4.4 To what extent does Littering Influence Visitors’ Image of Tonga as a Holiday Destination

Eleven out of twelve visitors did not list littering as something they expected from Tonga as their holiday destination. As discussed on their images of Tonga upon arrival, most of them picture Tonga as ‘paradise’ and ‘unspoilt’. According to the interviews all visitors mentioned that they notice littering and it is a problem in Tonga (as mentioned under the ‘Littering’ theme). The influence of littering on visitors experience and image they have of Tonga varies based on their previous experience, how they please with their other experiences and their general view of littering in Tonga.

4.4.1 Tonga is not the only place in the world with littering problem

Seven of twelve visitors mentioned that yes Tonga has a problem with littering but it does not have a major impact on their overall experience thus remains positive image towards Tonga. But when the data was further analysed two sub-themes emerged with respect to this theme were ‘Visitors previous experience’ particularly for visitors that have visited other places and found their littering to be worse than Tonga. The second sub-theme is ‘Visitors general knowledge’ were they mentioned that littering happens everywhere. The quotes below supported this theme.

“You mean the trash? ... I mean for me ... it is not a shocked anymore because I was in South East Asia for eight months and they look even worst. I mean I recognised it here but off course it is not something that I like but for example Indonesia rubbishes were also in the marine park, they drink water out of a bottle and they just throw it into the water and that is something I hate. But yeah... I mean that is not something I like but I am used to it already because of my trip so far... so for me it is alright even to see pigs, dogs walking around. So it was not a concerned” (VIR7)

“What I love about Tonga is that I travel a lot but I never been to any Pacific Island before and particularly last month I was in Indonesia and there are lots of rubbish in the water, people littering and that is not here. So I think that is fantastic for Tonga. I think that Tonga
could... I mean they throw rubbish on the land just throw rubbish down so I think that is bad so I think that should be improve. But overall I am very very happy!” (VIR3)

“I noticed it but that doesn’t worry me! I’ve been somewhere which are lots worst …yeah because I was raised in South Africa…and actually on the two days before we came we met some people that have been here but not so many people that know of Tonga so we start to talk, and he said he’s been here and it’s a little bit dirty but I don’t think it’s dirty because I’ve been somewhere worst so I was also prepared but it hasn’t been bothered me.” (VIR6)

“Well when I went passed it I said eww…I came because it was look so much nicer without it but … well it’s there but it did not have any influence on my whole experience here … no not really. It’s not that much so every place is a little bit littered… Not only that I have been in many places where is really bad so yeah… and in Germany there is the same to be honest in some places” (VIR8)

“No not at all. I saw heaps on the streets and in town but no did not affect me at all. Because it is a local habit so I don’t have trouble for that. Because it is also hard to say because i travelled 20 – 25 countries and even I don’t like too much tidy country like everything have to be in the right place this is more like you see people live in here I don’t care if the locals people don’t mind about that I don’t mind as well. Example in Montarika is a small country in Europe it is much worst. And I was travelled Switzerland I think that is the most untidy place in the world and to be honest I’ll never want to go Montarika again because I know the rubbish is not a nature, generally I don’t want to tell local people to clean their place and if there are happy with how they live its ok am ok with it because that’s how they live. Off-course it could be less rubbish everywhere but I don’t mind” (VIR12)

4.4.2 Only some areas that are spoiled with rubbish but not everywhere in Tonga
Again, the majority of the visitors noticed the littering in Tonga. Five out of the twelve visitors’ comments when asked their view on littering and how it affects their image of Tonga said that littering would have been major concerned and negatively impact their experiences if it is around the accommodation and tourists sites. They also
added not everywhere in Tonga is dirty only in some as shown by the following quotes:

“This place is beautiful and a lot cleaner than other places...if the littering was around the place I stayed it will be a different story... so yeah its only dirty in some places...you’ll get there in any time soon” (VIR2)

“...the place I live is clean it is just that some area especially in town that is quite filthy” (VIR10)

This theme was strongly supported by three of the operators. These operators mentioned that Tonga is not that dirty and that littering is only worst in the town area and some villages are clean. Other operators added that Tonga now is much cleaner than Tonga in ten years ago he also added that littering is a common thing you to Fiji it is littered apart from Samoa because they have regulations on plastic. The perception that Samoa is cleaner than Tonga from one of the operator was similar to a comment from one of the visitors that had been in Samoa. She mentioned that “I was also in Samoa and it is not that dirty as here”. The third operator comments that Tonga is not that bad with littering and that it’s a developing country. If they want to go somewhere clean they would have not come to Tonga but they come to Tonga because of what Tonga is. This is supported by the quotes listed below.

“People are coming to Tonga because of what Tonga is like, if they want to go to a cleaner area they’ll go to New Zealand but they know Tonga and they want to come to Tonga...littering is everywhere I mean you go to Fiji they have problems you go around the Pacific it’s the same problems except Samoa they’ve stop plastics” (OIR2)

“Tonga is not that dirty...some places are filthy and dirty but it’s not everywhere, the villages especially the West district are clean the waterfront here is looking really pretty so yeah it just around the market area that is dirty” (OIR2)

“The rubbish is normal for a developing country but if I have to compare it with previous years it is much cleaner now than before” (OIR4)
This theme reveals that littering does not have a major negative impact on tourists’ image of Tonga and their overall experience because they see it as not something new to them based on their previous experience and that only some parts in Tonga have this problem but not the whole of the island.

4.5 How does littering influence visitors’ future behavioural
The future behavioural of visitors was measured using predominantly two dimensions, intentions of revisiting and willingness to recommend to friends and family. When asked these questions to visitors, all of them were willing to recommend Tonga to friends and family while only six of them have the positive intentions of revisiting Tonga. These visitors mentioned that their images of friendly islands, exotic culture and nature, whales swimming, the beach, warm weather, safe, less tourists, authentic experience and cheap from New Zealand and Australia are more important to them than having to focus on littering.

4.5.1 Positive experiences exceed negative ones
All visitors mentioned either expectation confirmed or what they have experienced was better than expected. When asked how to describe their overall experience some mentioned it as great, fantastic, love it, glad I came, beyond my wildest dream and it is a dream came true. Based on the data analysis, visitors’ positive images exceeded the negative images of littering and inadequate infrastructure. This theme can be seen in these following quotes.

‘It is not the litter that I am here for, it is the people, culture and the island… yeah and it’s the fact that is only three hours trip from home” (VIR1)

“Litter won’t discourage me because I’m a bit surprise of how it safe to walk around here, cheap, beautiful and it’s not that far away” (VIR2)

“I mean we can look over litter for how nice everything else… the experience I have here is way nicer than having to focus on litter …” (VIR3)
4.5.2 Willingness to recommend Tonga

All visitors have positive intentions to recommend Tonga to their friends and families regardless of littering and inadequate infrastructure because what they experience in Tonga was better than what they expected. The quotes listed below illustrated visitors’ comments on why they will recommend Tonga to their friends and family.

“I will recommend Tonga because it is a difference experience coming here…the fare to Tonga is pretty cheap” (VIR1)

”…no not at all I will recommend Tonga for sure because there are other beautiful things to experience here and the place I live is clean it is just that some area especially in town that is quite filthy” (VIR8)

“…overall litter won’t discourage me from recommending Tonga. I mean for me it is not a problem and I don’t think that the other people will say oh no I don’t want go there because it is trash everywhere. I think I can get some of my friends over for whale swimming” (VIR7)

“I will still be recommending it because it’s an authentic experience but I will also say things like there’s a lot of rubbish around and lots of dog around. But will certainly recommend it” (VIR10)

“No no no I would like to recommend especially the whales, nice people very helpful also it’s not too expensive here nice weather nice spot for snorkelling nice beaches” (VIR12)

4.5.3 Revisiting

Six out of the twelve visitors’ mentioned that they will visit Tonga again. Three of them assured that are planning already to visit Tonga again and are bringing friends and family as well. These visitors’ have different motivations of revisiting Tonga, some are for whales, the people, the place, cheap flights are to visit the outer islands, which shown in the following quotes.
“Litter won’t discourage me from recommending Tonga to friends and families in fact I will bring some friends with me next time am coming here” (VIR1)

“I have been talking about coming here for a holiday again with my girlfriend” (VIR2)

“I would like to do the whale swimming again with my children. I’ve got two daughters and I will bring them next time but as for now I need to go back and work because it will cost us a lot to do swimming with the whales” (VIR3)

“I mean no off course I did not know that beforehand but it’s not that it will stop me from coming back …I will still be coming back nothing change but maybe for a holiday in ‘Eua” (VIR10)

4.5.4 Not intending to revisit Tonga
The other six visitors who do not intend to revisit Tonga do have positive images and enjoyed their holiday in Tonga but two major points of why they are not revisiting. Firstly, is the constraint of distance and cost particularly for European, Asia and UK visitors and the other point is the visitors’ desire of going to new places. The following quotes supported this theme.

“…distance will be an issue because I am going back home after one week in New Zealand. So there is nothing to come all the way from there to here just for the islands it has to be combined with going to Australia or other places so it wouldn’t become especially to the outer islands... it a thirty hour flight” (VIR8)

“No I’m not that person I tend to go to new places so I will probably go somewhere else.” (VIR6)

4.6 Discussions of Findings
These findings have a number of marketing and theoretical implications. The findings indicate the importance of pre-visit images which will motivates them to travel to Tonga. Secondly, if positive images exceeded negative one, the visitors overall images remain positive which also lead to visitors’ future behavioural.
Lastly, visitors’ positive image does not always indicate they will revisit the destination but they will definitely recommend the place to friends and families.

4.6.1 Important of pre-visit images

South Pacific Islands have typical images of sun, sand, beaches, warm weather, relaxation and friendly local people. Morgan et al (2002) suggested in their studies that these similar images are no longer competitive enough to survive in the market. They emphasise on the importance of being able to sell and positioned differently in a way they can be differentiate from its competitors. For example, if visitors from New Zealand wanted to go for a holiday in the South Pacific, in terms of relaxing and different environment to their home country, such desire can be obtained from any of the Islands. That is where the destination uniqueness comes up that will motivate the visitors to pick one island over the other. It is so much important to create not only positive image but more holistic ones that will increase the potential visitors’ intention and motivation to travel to Tonga.

As Gunn (1988) discussed in his seven-phase model of travel experiences that the first three phases are considered as the most crucial in the visitors travel decisions process. Given the importance of this stage in influencing visitors’ decision process, numbers of researchers had examined these aspects (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Gartner, 1993). Similar ideas indicated from their studies the need to create positive images for people who are planning to travel. Based on the findings of this research, off-course positive images are highly recommended but it is of the researcher’s belief that positive images are not sufficient in the context of the South Pacific Islands because of their typical similar images. It has to be beyond positive images by including a differentiating factor. Based on this research finding, other from the Islands typical images, visitors choose Tonga because of whales swimming, less touristic destination, cheap from New Zealand and Australia and friends recommendation while few others had very vague images of Tonga by mentioning that they do not have much expectation and some say they’ve expected in be like
Fiji. Due to the lack of awareness and availability of tourism information, images play a major role of choosing the place and destinations with the most appealing and positive images had the highest opportunity of being picked by visitor’s (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

Chon (1992) discussed that it is first important for destination marketers to know of the images that potential visitors have towards the place and what factors influence this formation. It is also important for marketer to keep in mind that it is not only their information through advertising that reaches the visitors. To promote a destination successfully and to on top of other sources, is to constantly reminding the market about the place and use as many channels as possible to reach potential travellers. According to this research finding, it is obvious that the absence of advertisements about Tonga in the Australian market because none know about Tonga but they know Fiji and Asia.

4.6.2 Favourable and unfavourable images
The destination image literature makes it very clear that positive images are related to visitors’ future behavioural (Pearce, 1988) while negative images discouraged potential visitors. According to the research findings, visitors’ negative images of Tonga was the littering, inadequate infrastructure such as roads and signage, public transportation, transportation from the main islands to the outer island, not enough public toilets and the inconvenience of very less restaurants open on Sunday. Visitors favourable images of Tonga was its exotic culture, sun, sand, beach, weather, people, whales, relaxing, less tourists destination, good customer service, good food and nice place for snorkelling. When asked if their negative experiences will influence their future behavioural the majority say no. This result indicated that the more the favourable images on the unfavourable ones, the higher the likelihood of visitors recommending and revisiting the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Rittichainuwat et al, 2001). Tonga has a problem with littering and majority of the visitors noticed it but only a few were concerned about it because of
its impact on the environment and it’s spoilt the natural environment of Tonga. The other visitors who were not at all affected by the image of littering were based on their previous travel experiences to places that are far worse than Tonga. This construct revealed the study of Wang and Hsu (2010), found that the value of images are varies amongst visitors. Some visitors will value one image highly importance in determining their overall experience while other images remain low. Such ideas are of relevance to destination marketers to be aware of which attributes and images of their places that holds the highest value so that they can maintain and enhance those images to balance the very negative ones.

4.6.3 Future Behaviour
Researchers’ on destination image found in their study that destination image appears to have the most influence on future behaviour (Chen & Tsai, 2006; Binge et al, 2011). As mentioned previously this concept are measured with willingness to recommend to friends and families and intention to revisit the same destination. This study finding reported that all visitors were happy with their experiences in Tonga and is willing to recommend Tonga to their friends and families. Out of these twelve visitors only six of them that are said to plan already or are making plans to revisit Tonga while the other six had a problem with costing and distance and others desired new places. This result simply explains that although tourists neither have positive images nor are satisfied with the destination, many of them desire new places with new experiences (Bigne’ et al, 2008). This is similar to the findings of Assaker and Hallak (2013) in which they argue that satisfaction and a positive image are insufficient to predict tourist return intentions. Although they are not revisiting, their positive word of mouth will attract more potential visitors to the destination. In order to motivate and encourage consumers to revisit or spread positive WOM, destination marketers must ensure that their products and services meet the tourist expectations (Chi & Qu, 2008)
This theme is similar to other study that the more the favourable images the higher the likelihood of visitors’ recommending and revisiting the destination (Prayag, 2009). As mentioned above all of the visitors are willing to recommend Tonga to friends and family but only half are intend to revisit Tonga. This finding is similar to Bigne’ et al (2008) study that not all visitors are pleased with their overall experience will go back to the same destination. Assaker & Hallak (2013) also argued that satisfaction and positive images are not sufficient to predict tourist return intentions. This indicates the importance for the destination marketers to ensure that their products and services will meet visitors’ expectations and that they are pleased with their overall experience in order for them to positively recommend Tonga.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction
This research project has questioned visitors of how littering in Tonga influences their overall image and examines whether it impacts visitors’ future behavioural. This chapter elaborates on chapter four by drawing conclusions from the findings and suggesting what their implications to the academic literature and the tourism industry of Tonga.

5.2 Positive Images of Tonga
Visitors’ favourable images of Tonga as a holiday destination are its; friendly people, beautiful beaches, nice weather, exotic culture, beautiful natural resources, whale swimming, and non-touristic destination with an authentic experience. All visitors’ were confirmed to be satisfied with their overall experience in Tonga because what they have experienced was more than what they expected. These images can be considered as strengths of the destination for marketing and positioning purposes. In terms of selling and positioning of Tonga, destination marketers should look closely to the strength of each image whether it is competitive enough in comparison with competing destinations. Based on this research findings, the sun, beach and weather were considered to be the typical South Pacific images by visitors. Whale swimming and non-touristic destination were found to be the most attribute that visitors describe as different from other islands. These two images should be well maintained and look after because of their highly valuable in comparison to other attributes of images. Such images should be in bold on advertising and positioning purposes.
5.3 Negative Images of Tonga
The lowest satisfaction attributes for Tonga are the littering issue, no signage, lack of public transport, unreliable local airline, poor roads, insufficient public toilets, not much variety of accommodation and the Sunday law in terms of no eating places to for tourists. These unfavourable images of Tonga require the Government, Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, Tonga Tourism Authority, Ministry of Police, Waste Management Authorities, tourism industries to collaborate by reviewing and implementing regulations that will improve the cleanliness of the place and the unreliability of the domestic airlines. Tourism Tonga should also facilitate and promote opportunities to investors in order to improve the accommodation infrastructure and for Tonga to have luxury facilities and amenities. The lack of investors in Tonga will result in restricted developments and opportunities may be lost to competing destinations. According to the Trip Consultants (2013) Tonga remains relatively low in terms of number of visitors’ arrivals, in comparison to other Pacific Islands. These unfavourable images can be identified as the constraints to the development of tourism in Tonga. For Tonga to position further up in marketing, these issues need to be addressed with sustainable developments.

5.4 Destination Image and Future Behaviour
The results of this research further support the previous studies that revealed indirect effect of destination image on visitors’ future behavioural (Chi & Qu, 2008, Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, Bigne’ et al, 2001, Lee et al., 2004, Chen & Tsai, 2007). In this study, destination image indirectly influence future behavioural, mediated by the overall satisfactions. This arguments supported Chi & Qu theoretical model of destination images $\rightarrow$ satisfaction $\rightarrow$ behavioural intentions. Destinations like Tonga that has both negative and positive images, should ensure that positive images are always higher than negative ones in order for visitors’ level of satisfaction to remain positive. Although visitors have positive behavioural intentions and positive overall images but when asked for their opinions whether littering affects tourism in Tonga,
the majority responds that it will affect in the long run. The success of destination marketing of Tonga should be relied on visitors’ behavioural intentions, and the images they have of Tonga and satisfaction.

All of the visitors to Tonga were pleased with their experience and remain positive towards Tonga although there were negative ones. All visitors are willing to recommend Tonga to their friends and families and only six of the visitors mentioned their intentions to revisit. These points can be supported from the further analysis of the data because all of the visitors were their first time to visit Tonga and five of them were friends recommended. This result further supported the previous study of Assaker and Hallak (2013) in which they argued that satisfaction and positive images are insufficient to predict tourists’ return intentions. These can possibly explain that although they have positive images of the place but they rather try new places. In addition, costing and distance were factors too to revisit Tonga by the European, Asian and UK visitors. This indicated strong message to destination marketers to always make an effort to impress and satisfy visitors because even though they will not revisit but their word of mouth will attract more visitors if it is positive and loosing few with negative recommendations.

5.5 Managerial Implications
Island destinations today are getting more competitive than ever and getting greater in the years to come. Because South Pacific Islands share some similar images, it is therefore difficult for destination marketers to come up with something unique that will outshine them from the rest of the islands. A better understanding of travellers’ images of Tonga and why they choose Tonga will help with the destination marketer’s positions, improvements and selling of Tonga. Based on the findings, two unique images of Tonga that destination marketers should emphasize are swimming with the whales and non-touristic destination/ undiscovered which also lead to an authentic Island experience.
The results provided by this study reveal visitors’ pre-visit images, on-site images, positive and negative images towards Tonga as a tourism destination. These findings will help tourism in Tonga to identify which images hold the highest value, which influence overall satisfaction and which determines positive future behaviour. Such understandings of what is positive and what is negative will help Tonga’s destination marketers in identifying products and services that are in need of improving and maintaining to accommodate tourists’ needs and wants. Therefore, the findings of the research should take in to consideration for reviewing tourism products and practical implications to increase satisfaction, positive images and future behavioural.

Another managerial implication arises from these findings is the need to pay more attention to infrastructure, signage and the level of cleanliness in Tonga. These three components were perceived by visitors as relatively low quality. For Tonga to position further up in the South Pacific Island regions will require to upgrade infrastructure such as accommodation and transportation, improve the level of cleanliness of public places and facilities such as bathroom and provide more signs to tourism sites for ease of access. All these should include in the tourism sustainable development report.

5.6 Policy Implications
The policy implications of this findings lies on the problem of littering which highlight the weaknesses of the destination. These unfavourable images will require the Government of Tonga, Tonga Tourism Authority and related ministries to review waste management’s regulations in terms of applying penalties to individuals who throw rubbish around, improve recycling infrastructure and policies of using plastics in Tonga. The government should also look to adopt waste management as form of education to primary schools so that younger generation will grow up with different attitude towards littering. As revealed by the findings,
beaches and scenery are considered important in attracting visitors to Tonga thereby highlighting the need for conservation and keeping these areas clean.

This study also highlighted the need for Tourism and Government to review investors’ policies and the process of doing business in Tonga. One of the negative images of Tonga, that it does not have sufficient infrastructure to support tourism development. Tonga is lack on good quality accommodations; big name hotels and transport infrastructure are relatively poor. These problems can be due to very low number of international investors in Tonga. As discussed by one of the operators that they are struggling as investors because of the amount of tax they need to pay while they are still on their early stage of their business. He compared Tonga to Fiji in terms of taxation and he described that Fiji government waver tax on early stage of starting businesses and that is why many of big name hotels are investing in Fiji. This calls for the government of Tonga to review investors’ regulations, in order to attract more investors to Tonga to improve the level of infrastructure and to support the further development of tourism in Tonga.

5.7 Limitation and Future Research Recommendations
The results of this study needed to be qualified in light of several limitations. Firstly, Tonga is a seasonal destination from July to October. This research was conducted during this time and findings are limited to summer and whale swimming travellers. Seasonality restricted the generalizability of tourism research findings. Hence, conducting the same research at a different time will help validate the findings of this research.

Secondly, image studies are best to study longitudinal which means it will be three stages, one at the visitors’ destination, one during their time in Tonga and the last one later when they return home. But due to time and resources constraints, longitudinal study was unable to conduct.
Lastly, this study did specifically take into considerations the nationality, ethnicity or age factors to identify similarities, differences or even to differentiate visitors comments based on their demographic factors. Addressing this issue on the future will help better the understanding of Tonga’s destination marketers of its target markets and what each markets’ images towards Tonga. Studying these factors in association with destination image will also help Tonga to better segments its market.

5.8 Summary
This research questioned the impact of littering on Tonga’s destination image and it affect visitors’ future behavioural. Interviews with twelve visitors and four tourism operators in Tongatapu the main island of Tonga, suggest that what they have experiences were better than what they expected, there are lots of better things they experience and they tend to ignore the littering in Tonga. Overall littering attribute did not have any impacts on visitors’ future behavioural, both on willingness to recommend and revisiting. Most of the tourists suggest that the cleaner the destination the better for the future of tourism in Tonga. Visitors’ images of Tonga are the South Pacific Islands images, together with Tonga unique images of whale swimming and watching and that is undiscovered destination with very less number of tourist arrivals compare to competing destinations and that is associated with an authentic experiences. These findings are useful to both academic literature and the tourism in Tonga and perhaps other neighbouring islands that also faced the challenging of poor waste management. However, images are something that is change over time and more research is still needed to better understanding the image of Tonga in the realm of the South Pacific Ocean.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Visitor Information Sheet
Appendix 2: Tourism Operator Sheet
Appendix 3: Visitor Consent Form
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Appendix 5: Open-ended questions
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Appendix 1: Visitors Information Sheet

TONGA’S DESTINATION IMAGE
Information Sheet for tourist visitors

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

The aim of this project is to investigate tourists’ positive and negative experiences in Tonga. This project is a requirement for a Master of Commerce degree in Marketing Management at the University of Otago.

What Types of Participants are Being Sought?

Tourists have to be aged of 18 or above and visiting Tonga for a minimum of five days. Tourists selected for this study are guests of two accommodations providers. These accommodation providers are the Waterfront Lodge and Toni’s Guesthouse. Twelve tourists’ are required for this study, six guests from each establishment. A souvenir will be provided as a form of thank you gift for participating.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire upon arrival. This can be done in the pick-up shuttle on the way from the airport to the accommodation and it will probably take 15 minutes of your time. The second part of the project is to conduct an in-depth interview to examine experiences and perceived image of Tonga as a holiday destination. Interviews will be conducted in a cultural research approach by using talanoa technique. Talanoa means talk, tell stories or relate experiences. Talanoa aimed at reaching understanding and building positive relationships, which can allow openness and authentic information. Our discussion will take half an hour of your time and it will be recorded using a voice-recording device.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.
What Data or Information will be collected and What Use will be Made of it?

The project is in two parts. First is the questionnaire that will be given upon arrival. Questions asked will be about the image you have of Tonga, your expectations, understanding and emotional connection to Tonga as a holiday destination. Personal information gathered is for the purpose of describing participants’ demographic profiles. Please note that your first name is only required to match up your responses to the questionnaire and the interview. Once the two data sources are matched any identifying information will be erased and all questionnaires and interviews will be anonymous. No information on personal identity will be recorded or stored.

The second part of the study consists of an interview that is more like a conversation than a set of questions. The general line of the questioning includes your positive and negative experiences during your holiday in Tonga. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked has not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project if you are interested. Data obtained from questionnaires and interviews (hard copy and digital) as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage and will be destroyed afterward. Any personal information held on audio tapes after they have been transcribed will be destroyed. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

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This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (phone +643479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 2: Tourism Operators Information Sheet

TONGA’S DESTINATION BRAND IMAGE
Information Sheet for tourism operators

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

The aim of this project is to investigate tourism operators’ perceptions on Tonga as tourist destination. This project is a requirement for a Master of Commerce degree in Marketing Management at the University of Otago.

What Types of Participants are Being Sought?

Participants sought are two tourism operators who are highly experienced in international tourism. A box of chocolate will be provided as a thank you gift for participating.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked questions about how is Tonga doing as tourist destination. Interviews will be conducted in a cultural research approach by using talanoa technique. Talanoa means talk, tell stories or relate experiences. Talanoa aimed at reaching understanding and building positive relationships, which can allow openness and authentic information. This will take place in a location and at a time convenient to you and should take about half an hour of your time. Our discussion will be recorded using a voice-recording device.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?
The interview will be more like a conversation than a set of questions. The general line of the questioning includes your perspectives on how Tonga is doing as a tourist destination. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked has not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable, you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project if you are interested. Data obtained from questionnaires and interviews (hard copy and digital) as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage and will be destroyed afterward. Any personal information held on audio tapes after they have been transcribed will be destroyed. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

**What if Participants have any Questions?**

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

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Appendix 3: Visitors Consent form

TONGA’S DESTINATION BRAND IMAGE
Consent form for tourist visitors

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information (audio tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years and they will be destroyed after.

4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes your overall experiences in Tonga. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. There will be no risk or harm to myself as result of this research study of any kind.

6. A souvenir from a selection will be provided as a reward for participating.

7. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

............................................................................. ..........................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

.............................................................................
(Printed Name)
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (phone +643479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 4: Tourism Operator Consent Form

TONGA’S DESTINATION BRAND IMAGE
Consent form for tourism operators

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. Personal identifying information (audio tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years and they will be destroyed after.

4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes your perceptions on how is Tonga doing as tourist destination. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. There will be no risk or harm to myself as result of this research study of any kind.

6. A box of chocolate will be given as a reward for participating in this study.

7. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.............................................................................

..........................................................................................

(Signature of participant) (Date)
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (phone +643479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 5: Open-ended Questions

TOURIST EXPECTATIONS OF TONGA
Questionnaire Form

1. How many times have you visited Tonga?
   Please specify: ________________

2. Why did you choose to visit Tonga?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________ _________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. What do you expect to experience while visiting Tonga?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________ _________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. What images come to mind when you think of a holiday in Tonga? (Please check
   all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendly people</th>
<th>Lively Culture</th>
<th>Whale watching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unspoiled</td>
<td>Kingdom – royal family</td>
<td>Scenery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun &amp; beautiful beaches</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Warm climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you see these brand advertising of Tonga?
6. Who are you travelling with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On my own</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner / spouse</td>
<td>Family and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (<em>Please specify</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Which country do you come from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA or Canada</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (<em>Please specify</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. What is your gender?

| Male | Female |

9. What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18 – 24</th>
<th>35 – 44</th>
<th>55 – 64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 – 34</td>
<td>45 – 54</td>
<td>65 or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Visitors Interview Guide

Thank you very much for taking part in this questionnaire survey. I look forward to meet you again to discuss on your overall experience during your holiday in Tonga.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TOURIST VISITOR

1. How would you describe your overall experience in Tonga?

2. How well did your experiences match your expectations?

3. What sorts of changes could improve your experiences?
   (List of different issues to tick if the participants tend describe and to prompt if participants failed to describe while responding to the question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Unprompted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation standard</td>
<td>Accommodation standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food quality</td>
<td>Food quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road infrastructure</td>
<td>Road infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist information</td>
<td>Tourist information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbish recycling and disposal</td>
<td>Rubbish recycling and disposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What do you think Tonga should do to improve the problem?

5. What will be the memories of your visit to Tonga?

6. Was littering concerned you? Why/why not?

7. Does littering problem harm Tonga’s as a destination for tourists? Why/why not?

8. What would deter you from visiting Tonga again? Why/why not?

9. Will littering discourage you from recommending Tonga as a holiday destination to family or friends? Why/why not?

10. Do you have any other comments about Tonga as a holiday destination?

11. Are there any other issues that concerned you during your visit?

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. There are contact numbers provided in the Information Sheet, so please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about this project. Thank you for time.
Appendix 7: Tourism Operator Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TOURISM OPERATOR

1. How is Tonga doing as tourist destination?

2. What images should Tonga communicate to potential tourists?

3. Do you think littering is a major problem for tourism in Tonga?
   - What do you think is the main factor causes littering?
   - Who do you think is responsible to fix this issue?

4. How would you compare littering to other factors of concern for tourists?
   (List of different issues to tick if the participants tend describe and to prompt if participants failed to describe while responding to the question)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Unprompted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation standard</td>
<td>Accommodation standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food quality</td>
<td>Food quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road infrastructure</td>
<td>Road infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist information</td>
<td>Tourist information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How does littering impact on the image of Tonga as the “True South Pacific Experience”?

6. How does littering affect tourists’ overall experience during their visit?

7. What needs to improve on littering and how?

8. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. There are contact numbers provided in the Information Sheet, so please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about this project. Thank you for time.