Visitors to Mauritius - Place Perceptions & Determinants of Repeat Visitation

By Girish Prayag

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Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management

Waikato Management School

University of Waikato

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has long been recognised as a vital element of the economic development and growth of island destinations. This has been no different for the island of Mauritius, whose appeal is predominantly based on a sun, sand and sea product anchored in resort-based experiences. At the maturity stage of its destination life cycle, the island has embarked on product development and market diversification strategies for growth. In this respect, this study investigates cultural differences in image perceptions for the key generating markets of Mauritius and the factors determining repeat visitation. The relationship among several constructs such as destination image, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement, satisfaction and future behaviour is explored. Understanding these relationships, can possibly improve segmentation, targeting, product development strategies and revisit intentions. Also, the role of interactions by visitors with hotel employees and how these influence other constructs such as place attachment and personal involvement have been of lesser interest to researchers. Therefore, a literature review on these relationships informs the construction of a theoretical model.

Adopting a post-positivist stance, the qualitative component of the research focuses on exploring visitors' perceptions of image and service interactions using social constructionism. Personal construct theory informed the choice of a convenience sample of 103 visitors. Broad questions were designed within a phenomenological approach to allow participants to narrate their "lived" experiences. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and supplemented by content analysis using CATPAC to improve credibility of interpretation. The findings revealed that images are linked to motives for choice and in the case of Mauritius, fulfilment of needs for relaxation and escape as well as socialisation and learning determine visitors' perceptions. Service interactions are imbued in values such as integrity and respect, mutual understanding and authenticity of display. Place attachment as a latent dimension was related to the affective image of the place while personal involvement and familiarity influenced perceptions of service interactions. Nationality, ethnicity and language spoken had some influence on perceptions.

These findings informed the design of a survey instrument that was administered to a quota sample of 1000 visitors, of which, 705 were useable. The method of data collection

was self- completion by hotel guests and self-completion in the presence of the researcher on beaches around hotels. Exploratory factor analysis was initially used to assess the dimensionality of the various constructs in the theoretical model, thereafter confirmatory factor analysis and structural equations modelling were undertaken to validate the model. Cluster analysis was used to identify different segments of visitors based on their level of personal involvement and place attachment. Regression models were developed to predict visitors overall image, satisfaction and loyalty as well as their propensity to be repeaters. The results indicated that destination image has both direct and an indirect influence over future behaviour. In particular, personal involvement and perceived service interactions are antecedents of destination image, while place attachment has motives for choice and personal involvement as antecedents. Given these relationships, important implications for destination image, product development as well as direction for destination marketing are offered. Implications for service providers are discussed and theoretical contributions of the study are highlighted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3S	Sun, Sand & Sea
AHRIM	Association Hoteliers et Restaurateurs de l'ile Maurice
AML	Airports of Mauritius Limited
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
IPA	Importance & Performance Analysis
IRS	Integrated Resort Schemes
MTPA	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
SEM	Structural Equations Modelling
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle

CHAPTER 1~ INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to assess differences in destination image perceptions by nationality, ethnicity, past visitation and other socio-demographic characteristics of international visitors to Mauritius. The relationship between destination image and other constructs such as place attachment, personal involvement satisfaction and future behaviour is explored. The influence of visitors' perceived service interactions with hosts on these constructs and their ability to predict repeat visitation are also investigated. Hence, this first chapter starts with an outline of the problem and the significance of the study along with the research questions. Thereafter, a description of the research setting is provided to contextualise the study. Following these, the introduction concludes with an outline of the forthcoming chapters in this thesis.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Destination image has been the subject of intense academic debate over the last three decades with a number of meta studies (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Govers *et al.*, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007) suggesting that it influences the destination choice process, evaluation of on-site experiences and determines post-purchase behaviour. It is well accepted that the construct comprises of three components – cognitive, affective and conative (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996c; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Tasci & Gartner, 2007) and that differences in image perceptions exist based on visitors'socio-demographics (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005). Therefore, understanding how socio-demographics influence visitors' perceptions of Mauritius can enable tourism authorities to improve segmentation and marketing. Specifically, differences in motives, attitude, socio-demographics and behaviour have been noted between first-time and repeat visitors in the literature (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Hence, such differences are of interest in this study as they can determine loyalty to a destination.

Whilst there is no agreement on the best way to measure the destination image construct (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002; Tasci & Gartner, 2007), the affective component seems to have almost exclusively been measured using Russell, Pratt and Ward's (1981) affective grid scale or variants thereof. This approach is particularly reductionist given that visitors develop emotional attachment not only in response to the physical environment, but also due to socialisation with local people (Relph, 1976; Kahn,

1996; Manzo, 2003; Stedman, 2003a,b) and exposure to local culture (Prentice *et al.*, 1998; Hou *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, at a conceptual level there is a need to understand how visitors develop emotional attachment to a tourist destination and its relationship with destination image. In essence, the conceptualisation of affection to tourist destinations needs to be broadened. Given that place attachment is an area that has been well researched in other fields such as leisure, recreation and environmental psychology and its application to tourist destinations is still in its infancy, this study will partially attempt to fulfil this knowledge gap. But also, there is a need to understand affective responses to the physical environment and its people in relation to the motivations guiding visitor choice, their satisfaction from experiences of the destination and how these influence their future behaviour. Therefore, the subject matter of this thesis explores these relationships in the context of an island destination.

Tourism experiences are not a phenomenon devoid of interactions and interrelations. Tourism brings into contact people who are not only strangers to one another, but who are also members of different ethnic groups (Hitchcock, 1999). For high contact services like tourism, interactions between service provider and customer are key to successful relationship building (Mattila, 1999). This concept of guest-host interaction and relationship building in the tourism literature has been termed as 'the service encounter' experience in the services marketing literature. While there are many studies on service encounter experiences (Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Rajpoot, 1994; Mittal & Lassar, 1996; Farell *et al.*, 2001; Grandey *et al.*, 2005), lacunas exist in terms of understanding these interactions from a cross-cultural perspective (Mattila, 1999; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Manzur & Jogaratnam, 2006; Tsang & Ap, 2007) in a tourist destination context using a social constructionist perspective. In particular, for resort based destinations like Mauritius, hotel employees can play an important role in shaping tourist experiences. They tend to influence visitors' service and destination quality perceptions (Kandampully, 2000; Sharpley & Forster, 2003). Hence, understanding the values that imbue interactions between guest and hotel employee and their relationship with place attachment, satisfaction and future behaviour can enable destinations to better understand tourist behaviour, enable segmentation of markets and positioning of products and services, and eventually build loyalty with existing visitors.

At the same time, in understanding service encounter experiences, knowledge gaps exist. For example, (i) for resort based destinations like Mauritius, there is no study that has evaluated visitors' interactions with hotel employees from a cross-cultural perspective; (ii) whether

these interactions can lead to meaningful emotional attachment to a place and induce repeat visitation; (iii) whether such interactions also have an impact on destination image and motives for choice for repeat visitors. Anecdotal evidence exists (Price *et al.*, 1995a,b; Mossberg, 1995; Winsted, 1997, 2000; Reisinger & Turner, 2002a,b; Kozak & Tasci, 2005) on how service providers' behaviours influence customers' evaluation of constructs such as service quality, satisfaction, perceived value and loyalty, but none of these studies consider the influence of emotional attachment in the process. This is where this study seeks to make additional contributions.

Likewise, despite a plethora of studies on the influence of personal involvement on product choice in the marketing literature, the concept is still under researched in the tourism literature (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Josiam *et al.*, 2005). Personal involvement influences destination choice (Josiam *et al.*, 2005), destination attractiveness (Hou *et al.*, 2005), place attachment (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; Gross & Brown, 2008) and specific behaviours such as satisfaction and loyalty (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b; Sparks, 2007). So far, there is no study that has simultaneously modelled all these constructs into one theoretical model and assessed direct and indirect relationships among these dimensions. This omission in the literature also informs the topic of this study.

Many tourism researchers (Pizam & Sussman, 1995; Pizam & Jeong, 1996; Calatone *et al.*, 1999; Kozak, 2002; Reisinger & Turner, 2002a,b; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Campo & Garau, 2008) have successfully used nationality as the key investigative variable in understanding cultural differences and have shown that visitors of different nationalities have different motivations and perceptions of destinations. Then again, others such as Dann (1993) have criticized this approach and argue for the inclusion of social class and other socio-psychological variables in understanding differences in perceptions. In line with such propositions, ethnicity and language spoken, together with nationality will be used to understand differences in perceptions across key generating markets for Mauritius. Ethnicity specifically remains a poorly understood aspect of tourism (Hitchcock, 1999) and may affect tourists' behaviour (Money & Crotts, 2003) while language determines the way we interpret and assign meaning to objects and experiences (Burr, 1995; Ryan, 2002). Hence, another contribution of this study is to assess the influence of nationality, ethnicity and language spoken on tourists' perceptions.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

As outlined above, the research problem is defined in terms of the relationships and inter-relationships among seven constructs namely destination image, motives for choice, place attachment, interactions with hotel employees, personal involvement, satisfaction and future behaviour. Hence, the significance of this study rests on both the theoretical and practical contributions it can make with respect to causal relationships among these constructs.

At a theoretical level, this study seeks to: (i) provide an empirical assessment of the relationships among the seven constructs identified above; (ii) it explicitly considers the influence of personal involvement and interactions with hotel employees on visitors' motives, image, satisfaction and future behaviour; (iii) it identifies the factors that generate place attachment for a tourist destination; (iv) it examines whether differences in perceptions exist on the basis of nationality, ethnicity and language spoken; (iv) the study shifts away from the emphasis placed on western countries as the generating market for Mauritius to include the perceptions of non-western markets such as South Africa and India; (v) the study makes use of importance and performance analysis, which has received growing attention in the literature as a technique to understand motives, images and perceptions; and (vi) a mixed methodology is used in recognition of destinations being viewed as social constructions. As a result, the qualitative component is grounded in social constructionism while the entire study adopts a post-positivistic approach. Finally, the theoretical basis of this study draws from an inter-disciplinary approach to researching the topic at hand. Thus, literature sourced from different disciplines such as tourism, marketing, consumer behaviour, leisure, recreation and environmental psychology is used to build a theoretical model.

In terms of its practical contributions: (i) the findings will enable tourism authorities and destination marketers to understand the cognitive and affective dimensions of the image of Mauritius, which can help in refining segmentation, positioning, advertising and promotion strategies; (ii) the findings will provide tourism stakeholders with an in-depth understanding of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the image of the destination from a cross cultural perspective, which can serve as an input in their branding process; (iii) the study can provide the relevant authorities with a framework for monitoring visitors' perceptions and attachment levels which is currently non existent. This study could also potentially serve as a benchmark to track changes in customers' perceptions of the destination over time thereby

highlighting effectiveness of marketing campaigns in creating a positive image for the destination.

Also, (iv) service providers such as hotels will be able to identify the broad dimensions and values that visitors use to evaluate their interactions with front-line staff, which can be useful in monitoring service encounter experience and devising training programs that will enhance customers' experiences; (v) the findings will enable service providers to identify new cultural features that can be added on to their core service/product or to customize their existing products to suit the needs of their German, British, French, Indian and South African customers; (vi) this study will provide some broad indications of what determines satisfaction levels and future behavioural intentions of visitors; and (vii) the findings can also enable the identification of factors that would potentially enhance customer loyalty and attachment levels.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the discussion above, the research questions for this study are:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between destination image, visitors' motives for destination choice and perceived interactions with hotel employees?

Research Question 2: Are these relationships influenced by place attachment and personal involvement?

Research Question 3: How are these previously mentioned constructs related to visitors' satisfaction levels and their future behaviour?

Research Question 4: Are there significant differences based on nationality, ethnicity and language spoken for these constructs (destination image, motives for choice, perceived interactions with hotel employees, place attachment, and personal involvement)?

These research questions are framed within a positivist approach. However, given the increasing recognition of tourist destinations as social constructions (Young, 1999; Crouch, 2000; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000; Espelt & Benito, 2005) and the use of mixed methodologies in researching destination image (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Jenkins, 1999; Pike & Ryan, 2004; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Govers *et al.*, 2007), this study adopts the approach discussed in chapter two. Hence, a qualitative phase is initially undertaken to identify broad dimensions of the various constructs informing this study. This preliminary phase adopts a social constructionism perspective to understand visitors'

perceptions of Mauritius and their perceived interactions with locals. The quantitative phase builds on these findings, which in effect, locates this entire study within a post-positivistic perspective. Next, the research context is presented to better contextualise the research problem and research questions.

1.5 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT – ISLAND TOURISM

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) Deputy Secretary General, Dr. David de Villiers, at the United Nations Conference on Small Islands in the year 2005, "…tourism has become the leading economic activity in many small islands and a key element of their development strategies" and it has been shown that their economic development is positively affected by tourism growth (Croes, 2006). This is because island destinations tend to have a comparative advantage in tourism related activities due to their unique eco-systems, culture, relatively large coastline in relation to the landmass, geographical isolation and political autonomy (Butler, 1993; Reid & Reid, 1994; Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996; Croes, 2006). For example, small geographic size and often specific cultural identity assist in the promotion of a sense of community and personal ties, which make it easier to preserve local culture and identity. These are important elements in giving island destinations distinctiveness and enable tourism planners to be selective in their choice of tourism development approaches and tourism markets for promotion. Geographic isolation leads to creation of unique ecosystems that shape the physical attributes of the place and these often have special appeal to travellers (Reid & Reid, 1994).

As a result, the study of island tourism has attracted an increasing amount of research over the last decade, much of which relates to the spatial structure of the industry (Lockhart, 1997; Andriotis, 2006), visitor patterns (Prideaux & Crosswell, 2006), tourism impacts (Archer, 1985; Wilkinson, 1989; Milne, 1992; Bramwell, 2003; McElroy, 2003), sustainability issues and tourism development (Sathiendrakumar & Tisdell, 1989; Wilson, 1994; Mitchell & Reid, 2001; Gil, 2003; Sharpley & Forster, 2003; Aguilo *et al.*, 2005; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Croes 2006), tourism planning and policy (Keane *et al.*, 1992; Batle, 2000; Gil, 2003; Bramwell & Meyer, 2007) and tourism marketing strategies (Yacoumis, 1989; Reid & Reid, 1994; Cohen, 1995; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Garcia *et al.*, 2004). While studies on tourism planning, policies, development and impacts abound, understanding tourism marketing strategies of island destinations seem to be the least researched aspect in comparison. Other areas of lacuna in the literature seem to include case studies on Indian

Ocean Islands and comparative studies across islands within the same region or across regions. The Caribbean, Pacific and Balearic Islands seem to have been the focus of most research to date. In this context, this study attempts to contribute in the form of a case study of Mauritius on its image and visitors' behaviour.

Of particular interest in this thesis, is the marketing strategy of island destinations but more specifically those associated with image management and loyalty as indicated by repeat visitation. An analysis of themes and images used to market the British Virgin Islands, for example, revealed that the notion of difference, natural beauty and sexual desire were dominant (Cohen, 1995). Island destinations typically use images of the 'exotic' associated with empty beaches, white sand, blue sea, brown skin, and colourful culture to attract western visitors (Lockhart, 1997). But criticisms levied at the 'sun' and 'sand' tourism model (Aguilo *et al.*, 2005) and the importance given to tourism as a form of economic diversification (Wilkinson, 1989), have led to many islands seeking diversification of their images and marketing strategies through the development of new products and generating markets. Despite these changes, many still use transactional marketing activities to attract visitors while the use of relationship-driven loyalty and retention strategies remains limited (Fyall *et al.*, 2003).

A key concern of islands in terms of visitor loyalty has been knowledge of repeat visitor characteristics such as visitation frequency, visit duration and period and market size (Reid & Reid, 1994). This issue of repeat visitation has galvanised scholarly attention, not only for island destinations, but for tourism destinations in general (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). This is because repeat visitation is regarded as a desirable phenomenon given that the marketing costs needed to attract repeat visitors are lower in comparison to those required for first timers. It is also considered a positive indication of tourist satisfaction, revisit intention and a source of recommendation to others (Oppermann, 1998). Hence, island destinations, which generally have limited funds for marketing purposes, would benefit from having a comprehensive visitor retention strategy to enhance destination loyalty (Fyall *et al.*, 2003).

A focus on repeat visitors in marketing island destinations is also part of the alternative approach recommended for sustainable tourism development in SIDS (Small Island Developing States). This approach is based on local control, small scale, community participation, local environment and heritage preservation, and comprehensive government involvement (Wilkinson, 1989). However, one important criticism levied at this approach is

that it suffers from insularisation given that it clearly restricts business opportunities in a highly competitive global tourism industry (Croes, 2006). Instead, Porter (1990) suggests a strategy of differentiation, uniqueness, and the creation of niche markets based on segmentation strategies would work best and that relational assets (visitors, suppliers, existing and potential competitors) are the most efficient competitive strategy to create value and improve receipts from tourism. These two alternatives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is well accepted that for islands to maintain their economic prosperity using tourism, they have to embrace sustainable development models while still remaining competitive using Porter's recommended strategies.

These strategies can also be understood in the context of Butler's (1980) TALC (Tourism Area Life Cycle) model. This model suggests that destinations evolve through seven stages (exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline and rejuvenation), each with specific characteristics, as they pass through time. Many studies have been published on the applicability of the model to different destinations (Cooper & Jackson, 1989; Douglas, 1997; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2008) but the focus seems to have been on mature destinations in the stagnation phase and their corresponding restructuring and rejuvenation strategies (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2008). Of relevance in this model, is that repeat visitation seems to be an indicator of a mature destination in its consolidation or stagnation phase. As a result, the prescription offered to destination marketers to prevent the decline stage from setting in is either a market concentration or market diversification strategy for further expansion. The first strategy involves focusing on existing markets with view of increasing visitors' length of stay, spending, and repeat visits, in effect, increasing the yield from each tourist. The market diversification strategy relies on developing destination attributes and benefits that are sufficiently distinct in character to attract a variety of tourist markets. It involves normally the development of new travel products/packages, intermediaries, networks, promotional channels (Reid & Reid, 1994) and major re-branding, re-positioning and re-structuring of the destination.

TALC has been criticised for its static nature amongst others. Consequently, Butler (2000) revisited its model and highlighted aspects such as dynamism, carrying capacity of destinations, and long term planning to avoid decline so that the model can have continued relevance. Further changes have been brought to the model (Butler, 2006a,b), but it still remains a prescriptive model. Instead, Rodriguez *et al.* (2008) offers a teleological model

applied in the context of an island destination (Tenerife- Canary Islands, Spain), which is complementary to Butler's model as this approach considers the evolution of a destination to be conditioned by a range of variables including institutional decision making, objectives, strategic planning and social construction. The combined effect of all these elements influences the internal logic of development inherent in each destination with the ultimate goal of sustainable development. This model however, treats the retention of key customers as part of its sustainability goal that can be achieved through yield management strategies (Weaver, 2000).

This approach fits in with Aguilo et *al.*'s (2005) argument that the 'sun' and 'sand' tourism model can persist if sustainable development policies are embraced, as in the Balearic Islands. They reported that for reorientation of the tourist industry, these islands focused on market restructuring by specialising and segmenting, renovation of urban infrastructure, local facilities and activities, use of yield management, reinforcement of destination image, hotel renovation, territorial planning and better quality in all experiences. In terms of employed marketing strategies were diversification of visitor nationalities, the use of images other than the typical sun, sand and sea, an increase in the number of leisure activities through the development of niche markets, and increasing the yield from market segments with greater purchasing power. But as Weaver (2000) argued, these goals are achievable only through the support of stakeholders. Prideaux and Cooper (2002) argued along the same line that destination marketing and tourism growth have a symbiotic relationship, and this can only happen if public and private stakeholder organisations work in tandem through a recognised destination marketing organisation (DMO), which is not always the case for island destinations.

Besides embracing sustainable tourism development, which is a complex task for island destinations, the short-term problems associated with tourism growth are numerous and complex. For example, McElroy (2003) in his study of 51 islands found that Indian Ocean Islands were characterised by small facilities, long stays and limited infrastructure which still had a negative impact on the environment. In particular due to tourism, unplanned urbanisation, sand mining, mangrove destruction and coastal pollution, the native plant species in Mauritius and Seychelles were endangered while some beach resorts were under threat from sea-level rise. In the case of Canary Islands, Gil (2003) highlighted some tourism development issues such as poorly paid jobs for hospitality and tourism employees as well as

a lack of future career paths, huge resort complexes which can be called 'concrete' tourism, lack of legislation and confusing regulations, and poorly trained staff and management.

As mentioned earlier, of particular interest in this study is visitor interactions with hotel employees, which is dependent on staff training. Poor language and communication ability of staff can be a significant dissatisfier among international visitors to islands (Juwaheer, 2006). In their study of perceptions of service quality in the Mauritian hotel industry, Juwaheer and Ross (2003) found that the largest gap between expectations and perceptions of customers were related to dimensions such as 'empathy' and 'staff communication skills.' In a later study, it was confirmed that perceptions of service quality in Mauritian hotels were driven principally by 'reliability factors' and 'staff outlook and accuracy' (Juwaheer, 2004), highlighting that interactions with hotel employees form an integral part of the service experience, which potentially impacts on revisit intentions. Therefore, for Mauritius to maintain its status as a 'hospitable nation', they concluded there is a need to understand to what extent interactions between hosts and guests are perceived as amicable or as staff 'doing just their job'. This problem could also be related to employee dissatisfaction with their employers or, as in the case of other islands, locals feeling overwhelmed by too many foreign visitors (an issue related to sustainability). These latter issues are not researched within the scope of this study. Next, Mauritius as a tourist destination is discussed in terms of its current marketing strategy, image and tourist generating markets.

1.6 MAURITIUS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Mauritius, located off the east coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, has a multi-racial population estimated at 1.2 million with a lineage of immigrants from India, Europe, China and Africa. The island is well known for its hospitality, inter-cultural harmony, and unprecedented economic success (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007; Soper, 2007). It is already a well established tourist destination and a highly competitive player in the Indian Ocean (Archer, 1985; Wing, 1995; Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007). Mauritius has, to date, been essentially a resort based destination with its sun, sand and sea offering (Soper, 2007) but lately the authorities have embarked on a product and market diversification strategy to maintain the appeal of the island to the increasingly discerning international traveller. The product development strategy has been similar to other island destinations such as Barbados (Potter & Phillips, 2004), the Caribbean (Croes, 2006), Balearic Islands (Aguilo, 2005) and Malta (Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996) which in their maturity phase of Butler's destination life

cycle went through an extensive upgrading of existing hotel facilities, especially at the luxury end of the market, increasing overall tourist capacity by building new hotels, and the development of niche markets such as golf and cultural tourism.

Mauritius has gone further by embracing sustainable tourism development policies as outlined in the National Tourism Development Plan for Mauritius and Rodrigues (2002). The plan emphasises the need to increase the average spending per tourist by positioning the destination further up-market in the luxury segment, delivering higher service quality, and developing new products (Juwaheer, 2006). In particular, a product development strategy is perceived as being one viable alternative for sustainable development (Hunter, 1997), given that sustainable tourism is an adaptive paradigm dependent on the circumstances of the broader nature, cultural environment and infrastructure of a destination. This author also suggests that sustainable development through 'Product-Led Tourism' is a weak interpretation of sustainable development but often it is the most viable and cost effective option in the short term.

This product-led tourism strategy is evidenced in the government's selective tourism policy, which emphasises the development of boutique luxury hotels, 4-5 star beach resorts and a multitude of golf courses, spas and beauty centers (Travel & Tourism Report on Mauritius, 2007). The hotel development strategy for 2008 by the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communication states "in order to have a varied investment portfolio, opportunities will be given to international brand names currently absent to invest in luxury hotel development and thereby benefit from their marketing networks, managerial skills and financial muscles as equity partners" (p.1). The report further states that "…so as to preserve the natural, exquisite and pristine characteristics of our seascapes, the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) for coastal development should be strictly adhered to" (p.1).

The Government of Mauritius is also attracting foreign capital through the availability of preferential tax treatments for potential investors and property buying through Integrated Resorts Schemes (IRS). IRS allows foreigners to purchase beach villas which are integrated in luxury resorts that incorporate golf courses, international brand hotels, marinas and wellness centres. This would enable further positioning of the destination in the luxury segment. Also, the government's new air access policy in the year 2006 allows for more international airlines to operate flights to and from Mauritius in order to increase visitor numbers. However, no

charter flights are allowed to maintain the up-market image. With the majority of tourists spending most of their money on hotel services, the government is hoping to improve Mauritius's travel retail segment by making the island a shopping paradise. Plans to give Mauritius duty-free status by 2010 and the removal of duty on luxury items effective since July 2005, are set to increase tourism receipts in this category (Travel & Tourism Report on Mauritius, 2007). The Government is also actively promoting the development of niche markets such as golf-tourism, eco-tourism and cultural tourism (Soper, 2007).

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) is the sole DMO responsible for marketing the island to international visitors. In terms of image, the advertising strategy of the destination tends to reflect the traditional sun, sand and sea product but new products such as eco-tourism, health tourism, golf tourism, and cultural tourism are featuring prominently. However, as clarified by Brown (1997), the past success of promotional campaigns at positioning Mauritius as an exotic beach destination may make it difficult to change the image in the short term. However, the current image is one of an up-market destination due to: (i) the government policy of attracting high spending visitors whose economic impact is believed to be more beneficial to the economy than low spending visitors (Wing, 1995; Brown, 1997); (ii) the maintenance of high quality hospitality standards and exclusivity of the destination; (iii) versatility in adjusting the country's marketing strategy and making use of tactical advertising campaigns and (iv) the shifting emphasis on safety and security of the destination (Tourism Trends Indian Ocean, 2004). In addition, the Government is in the process of creating a "Destination Mauritius" brand logo and slogan as part of its marketing strategy in an attempt to establish competitive positioning of the destination and for commercial enterprises. The branding exercise seeks to strengthen the image of the island in terms of all its industries, namely tourism, textile and sugar as well as emerging sectors like technology and financial services, and also the different facets of the island such as pluri-ethnicity of Mauritius, beautiful beaches, a great hinterland, an active culture and a strong economy (MTPA Newsletter, 2008).

It is evident from official tourist arrival statistics that tourism continues to be an important contributor to the economy and will remain so in the coming decades (Carlsen & Jaufeerally, 2003). For 2007, Mauritius had an outstanding year with 906, 971 international tourists visiting the island, which represented an increase of 15.1% from 2006 figures. As one of the main pillars of the Mauritian economy, tourism contributes approximately 11% to Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) while employing 5.4% of the country's formal workforce (Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications, 2006). For the year 2006, tourism receipts amounted to Rs. 31700 million. The structure of the industry is characterised by high levels of direct government regulation and facilitation, for example, substantial bureaucracy, regulations, incentives and government ownership of tourism facilities.

However, as a destination in its maturity phase of its life cycle for '3S' products, as expected, a few years back the number of tourist arrivals flattened for a period of four years (2000 to 2004), with single digit growth rates of less than 5% recorded on average. This promoted the Government of Mauritius and relevant authorities to embark on this product development strategy. At the same time, there has been a diversification of generating markets as well. Traditionally, Mauritius has relied on European markets for the success of its tourism industry. It has been able to attract affluent European tourists, but attempts at increasing visitor numbers from Asia have been largely ineffective (Brown, 1997). In 2007, France was still the leader generating country with 27% of total tourist arrivals, which represents a market share of 40.3% of the total European market for the island. The other major European traditional markets are Germany, Italy and United Kingdom, which have recorded growth rates of 13.8%, 0.1% and 4.9% respectively. However, non-traditional markets from Europe have recorded higher growth rates such as Sweden (55.2%), Belgium (18.8%) and Netherlands (14.6%). Among African markets, South Africa remains the leader in tourist arrival numbers (81,733) with a growth rate of 15.4% in tourist arrivals from 2006 figures. India is the leader in the Asian market (42,974) followed by China (7,739) with growth rates of 14.6% and 58.7% respectively (Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications, tourism statistics, 2008). New bilateral agreements between the country's own airline, Air Mauritius, with those from Eastern European and Asian countries and a more 'open sky' policy are slowly paving the way for market diversification by improving destination accessibility.

As far as the experience of visitors are concerned, the survey of outgoing tourists carried every two years by the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications indicated a number of trends for the year 2006. The survey is based on 16005 interviews of international visitors conducted at the international airport. The results showed: (i) a majority of visitors buy an 'all inclusive' tour package (71%); (ii) a significant number of repeat visitors (33%); (iii) a majority of visitors travel for holiday purposes (74%), honeymooners (14%), business (7%) and VFR (3%); (iv) high satisfaction levels of visitors- 96% indicated they were

satisfied with their holiday experience; (v) the length of stay was on average 9.8 nights in 2006, with Europeans staying longer (11.1 nights), while shorter stays by Africans (7.7 nights) and Asians (6.8 nights); (vi) the majority of visitors stayed in hotels (82%); and (vii) the highest spenders per stay based on average expenditure were British (Rs. 54, 077), Swiss (Rs. 53, 939) and Belgian (Rs. 53, 312) visitors.

The motivational factors that guided their choice of the destination include its 'island image' (67%), beaches (6%), accessibility (7%) and people (7%). The island image appealed mostly to European tourists (75%). These differences in motives reflect biases in destination choice arising from historical, cultural, and political links between Mauritius and these generating markets, which are formally represented in the presence of air and maritime transport services and travel intermediary networks. Repeat visitation was particularly high among French visitors (31%) and surrounding islands such as Reunion (83%), Seychelles (87%) and Madagascar (69%). As far as perceptions of tourism services were concerned, visitors on average rated service providers such as accommodation, airport facilities, and tour operators as 'good' but concerns were expressed for the quality of nightlife and entertainment by visitors from Italy (18%), Spain (15%) and Germany (11%) amongst others who rated this attribute poorly (poor to very poor). Indian visitors (9%) also expressed high level of dissatisfaction with the local gastronomy, while 9% of French visitors stated that the cleanliness of beaches around the island was poor and this figure was 15% for the same group for cleanliness of public places. Indian (56%) and Chinese (55%) visitors also rated food and accommodation as expensive. These negative perceptions are market and attribute specific, which suggest that fine-tuned market segmentation and positioning strategy are needed for these markets. More specific product development as well as more focused advertising and promotion campaigns are needed to maintain the destination appeal in these markets.

With respect to the competitiveness of the island, 48% of the sample had visited other island destinations. They rated Mauritius as either being on par or better than other island destinations. For example, when asked to compare hospitality of locals with those of the last island they had visited, 62% found Mauritians to be more hospitable. However, the figures do not indicate which markets in particular perceived Mauritians to be friendlier. The tourism product was rated of higher quality than other islands by 53% of visitors but on which dimensions are not known. These are only global evaluations. Of all tourists interviewed about their overall experience, 77% mentioned that their expectations were met, 19% found

the experience beyond their expectations and 4% found it to be lower than their expectations. In terms of suggestions for improvement to the island, visitors mostly mentioned transport, accessibility, signage, taxi fares, the environment and traffic congestion. Hence, these findings indicate the need for further research on market specific tourism perceptions but certainly, for international travellers the image of island life and landscapes continue to remain an attractive offer (Lockhart, 1997).

1.7 KEY TOURIST GENERATING MARKETS FOR MAURITIUS

Given the low tourism growth rates for traditional markets but substantial growth in non-traditional markets, it was decided to include the opinions of visitors from both types of market in this study. Consequently, three leading countries in terms of visitor arrivals from traditional markets (France, UK and Germany) and two leading countries in non-traditional markets (South Africa and India) were chosen to be the focus in this study. These countries offered a wide range of visitors in terms of nationalities, ethnicities and languages spoken. Also, the use of certain statistical techniques such as SEM rests on having a sufficient sub-sample size for meaningful analyses (Hair *et al.*, 2005) and these five nationalities enabled meaningful comparisons across markets to be made. Next, a summary of the main tourism statistics of these five markets from the survey of outgoing tourists (2006) are provided in Table 1.1.

The table below indicates that the behaviour of visitors from these five key generating markets is distinct. For example, honeymooners are more prominent from UK and India while all markets have a high level of packaged tour travel. Most visitors from these markets stay in hotels but a non-negligible amount from UK and France stay with family and friends. Interestingly, word-of-mouth is an important source of information for all markets while previous visit is more influential for the South African and French market. Internet and tour operator are more important sources for the German market in comparison to others. While the tropical image is a significant draw card for all five markets, the importance of factors such as people, safety and accessibility vary from one market to another. French and South African visitors tend to be repeaters while British and Germans tend to stay longer. Indian visitors spend the least on average while British visitors spend the most. These statistics clearly reflect differences in behaviour and motivation for choice, which supplement the argument that further research on these markets is needed for Mauritius. Having set the scene

for the problems to be investigated and the relevant industry data and academic theories to support these problems, next an outline of each forthcoming chapter is presented.

Tourism Statistics (%)	France	UK	Germany	South Africa	India
Package vs. Non-package	70/30	78/22	78/22	85/15	77/23
Main purpose of visit					
Holiday	77.5	71.1	85.4	73.8	52.3
Honeymoon	14.1	20.3	11.5	12.4	29.0
VFR	2.4	3.8	0.8	0.6	1.2
Type of accommodation					
Hotel	80.8	87.8	87.6	93.2	91.0
Friends & Family	7.2	8.2	2.6	2.8	3.9
Main source of information					
Publicity/promotion	12.7	16.6	13.8	14.7	20.1
Friends	38.2	33.3	23.7	31.7	47.4
Tour Operator	16.3	23.8	30.0	4.9	16.7
Internet	6.9	10.6	18.1	2.4	10.6
Previous visit	21.6	11.5	11.7	43.9	4.1
Main motivation factors					
Tropical image	71.1	73.8	75.3	65.3	62.5
History/Culture	1.4	1.5	4.3	0.8	2.5
Price	2.6	2.3	1.2	3.7	6.9
Accessibility	3.6	3.2	0.6	10.9	8.2
People	10.4	5.4	5.3	3.4	5.4
Safety	2.2	2.8	4.0	7.2	6.9
Shopping	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.2
Previous visit					
Yes	30.6	21.1	18.8	37.3	10.0
No	69.4	78.9	81.2	62.7	90.0
Avg. length of stay (nights)	10.9	12.3	11.9	7.6	6.6
Avg. exp. per tourist (Rs.)	41,804	54,077	46,866	33,720	24,499

Source: Survey of outgoing tourists (2006) by the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications

Table 1.1 Key statistics for the five generating markets

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis is structured into nine chapters. As described above, **chapter 1** identifies the problems that will be investigated as well as the theoretical and practical significance of the study. This introductory chapter also identifies the research questions and the paradigm that informs this entire study. Thereafter, relevant details pertaining to the research context is provided highlighting the nature of products offered and a description of key generating markets for Mauritius.

Chapter 2 is the first of two chapters discussing the theoretical background of this study. It begins with an overview of post-positivism as the research paradigm informing this study. The philosophical assumptions of this paradigm are discussed followed by a description of the

mixed methods approach. Thereafter, social constructionism and phenomenology are discussed as they form the theoretical background of the qualitative study.

Chapter 3 begins with a review of destination image literature and progresses to visitors' perceptions of interactions with host. This is followed by a review of place attachment and personal involvement literatures drawing from fields such as leisure, recreation, environmental psychology and geography. Thereafter, the theoretical model for this study is presented. The chapter also outlines the various research propositions for this study. The chapter concludes with a review of the major knowledge gaps in the literature.

Chapter 4 introduces the method of data collection and analysis for the qualitative study. The chapter begins with an overview of the use of interviews in a phenomenology-based methodology. This is followed by a discussion of personal construct theory which informs the choice of the appropriate sample size. Thereafter, the forms of analysis undertaken with the data collected are discussed.

Building on chapter four, **chapter 5** presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews of 103 international visitors to Mauritius. Thematic analysis and content analysis using CATPAC, the software program, enabled the identification of themes and relationships between the various questions asked of visitors. These findings are discussed in light of their theoretical contributions and the chapter concludes with some reflexivity on behalf of the researcher on the interviewing process and interactions with interviewees.

Chapter 6 outlines the steps undertaken to design the survey instrument, reports on the survey methodology which incorporates a discussion of sample design, sampling procedure, data collection method, and also the survey errors. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the various statistical methods employed to analyse the data.

Chapter 7 begins with a description of the sample in terms of demographic and travelling characteristics of visitors. Thereafter, the reliability tests pertaining to the various scales measured are performed. This is followed by the descriptive statistics for constructs measured. T-tests, ANOVA and IPA are used to analyse differences in importance and satisfaction scores on image, service interactions, and motives for choice. The influence of socio-demographics on these constructs as well as place attachment and personal involvement is also assessed. The analysis then progresses to the use of factor analysis to identify underlying dimensions in the data. Following these results, cluster analysis and multiple regression are

used to provide answers for some of the research propositions in chapter two. Logistic regression for example, is used to predict repeat visitation based on current perceptions of visitors. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings.

Chapter 8 focuses on the structural equations modelling to validate the theoretical model presented in chapter two. The relevant procedures before the model estimation such as confirmatory factor analysis are undertaken. The various hypotheses relating to the theoretical model are tested and the chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings derived from SEM.

Chapter 9 is the final chapter of this thesis. It starts with a summary of key findings for each of the eight research propositions informing this study and this is followed by a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications of these results. Thereafter, the research questions are revisited to assess to what extent they have been answered. Then, the limitations of the findings are discussed as well as the potential areas of future research in light of the findings. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2~RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first of two chapters describing the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The chapter begins with an overview of post-positivism, focusing on its philosophical assumptions. Thereafter, the epistemology and ontology guiding this study are presented. The ensuing discussion focuses on the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide answers for the research questions proposed in chapter one. This is followed by a discussion of social constructionism and phenomenology, which guides the qualitative study.

2.2 POST-POSITIVISM

Every research has a set of assumptions underlying the approach used to investigate and provide answers for the research questions. There are different approaches such as positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, post-modernism, and chaos theory (Jennings, 2001) and these have been described as 'paradigms' or 'world views' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Post-positivism is based on a scientific approach to research, which has elements of being reductionist, logical, empirical in data collection, cause and effect oriented, and deterministic based on a priori theories (Creswell, 2007). It is often associated with quantitative approaches (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Therefore, this study uses post-positivism as the overall paradigm that guides the research design.

Table 2.1 summarises the key philosophical assumptions of post-positivism. It shows that the choice of method is guided by the research question and can incorporate mixed methods, especially for triangulation. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) define triangulation as "the combination of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, and/or inferences that occur at the end of the study" (p.717).

Philosophical Assumptions	Post-Positivist Position
Determinism	Effects and outcomes are the result of a complex array of interactive causative and outcome factors
Reductionism	Experience can be described conceptually and tested, but the unpredictable and contradictory nature of human experience needs to be factored in
Objectivism	Reality is socially and culturally constructed and can be observed and measured. Researcher objectivity is impossible but is the aim of the process.
Theory verification	Theory remains open to verification through a process of supporting hypotheses
Role of evidence	Evidence establishes degrees of probability that something is "true"
Scientific method	There is not one method: choice of methods (qualitative and quantitative) is guided by the research question, but generalisation is commonly sought

Adapted: Giddings & Grant (2007)

Table 2.1: Key philosophical assumptions of post-positivism

As can be seen from Table 2.1, researchers using this paradigm believe in multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality, acknowledge that reality is only imperfectly apprehendable and employ multiple levels of data analysis for rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Post-positivists advocate a modified dualism/objectivism. This position acknowledges that the researcher may have some influence on that being researched, but objectivity and researcher-subject independence remain important guidelines for the research process (Ponterotto, 2005). It is based on the belief that qualitative methods have something to add to the findings of quantitative ones (Giddings & Grant, 2007). In particular in image research, a qualitative component is often undertaken to identify pertinent images of a destination and to understand holistic components of the image construct (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2000; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). This study follows a similar approach to identify the images of Mauritius as a holiday destination.

In terms of epistemology (how we know what we know), post-positivism holds that objectivism is ideal but can only be approximated (Riley & Love, 2000). There is some influence of the researcher on the research process. As for the ontology (the nature of reality), post-positivism holds that the human intellectual mechanisms are flawed and that life's phenomena are basically intractable, and therefore, one can never fully capture a 'true' reality (Ponterotto, 2005). This implies that truth exists but can only be partially comprehended (Riley & Love, 2000). Therefore, the phenomena being investigated will provide only a snapshot of a complex set of relationships but will attempt to establish cause and effect between the variables measured. Next, the methodology underpinning a post-positivism approach is briefly discussed.

2.3 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Methodology is a matter of considering the nature of the research question being posed and selecting that which might be the most appropriate approach or combination of approaches (Tribe, 2001). Post-positivism advocates the use of mixed methods as the research methodology (Ponterotto, 2005; Hanson *et al.*, 2005; Giddings & Grant, 2007). "Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. This methodological perspective on mixed methods research holds that one cannot separate methods from the larger process of research beginning with philosophical assumptions, through the questions, data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of findings (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and

qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p.5) (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). It enables the deficiencies of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to be overcome (Jennings, 2001). The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, and perspectives in a single study adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 1998). It may be considered as a legitimate stand-alone research design (Greene *et al.*, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007) where a research design has been described as the framework or detailed blueprint used as a guide to collect and analyse data (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005).

Mixed method research has been described as a component of methodological triangulation, which inherently attempts to secure in-depth understanding of a phenomenon by combining exploratory, descriptive, and causal research designs. "Methodological triangulation is not used as a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Flick, 1998, p.230), which then suggests that objective reality, can never be fully captured. Exploratory research emphasises the discovery of ideas and insights into a problem, while descriptive research is typically concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between two variables. Causal research establishes cause and effect relationships via experiments (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). This study adopts all three approaches in addressing the problems identified in chapter one. That is, exploratory research informs the construction of a quantitative data collection tool in the forthcoming chapters. The post-positivism stance adopted also leads to establishment of cause and effect between the variables identified in the theoretical model proposed in this chapter.

However, two important and persistent issues, the paradigm-method fit issue and the 'best' paradigm issue, have inspired considerable debate regarding the philosophical foundations of mixed methods research (Hanson *et al.*, 2005). On the one hand, some authors argue (Giddings & Grant, 2007; Riley & Love, 2000) that the ingredient that is most commonly mixed in mixed methods research is the methods and not the methodologies. These two terms are distinct, the former refers to the 'doing tools' for collecting and analysing data while the latter refers to the theoretical assumptions that underpin a particular research and can be viewed as the "thinking tool" that guides how a researcher frames the research question, what methods and forms of analysis to be used (Giddings & Grant, 2007).

Methodologies tend to belong to certain paradigms and researchers argue that mixing paradigms is problematic because the assumptions and values underpinning each paradigm are distinct (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Riley & Love, 2000; Jennings, 2001; Gilbert, 2006; Giddings & Grant, 2007). One cannot separate methods from paradigms and that data cannot be divided into a dichotomy of quantitative or qualitative data and cannot be conceptualised as just using two data types or two data collection techniques (Gilbert, 2006). However, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that researchers can use multiple paradigms in a qualitative research that are compatible but they also recognise that the borders and boundary lines separating the various paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur. Therefore, contradictions, tensions and oppositions between different paradigms reflect different ways of knowing about and valuing the social world (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Hence, this paradigm-method fit issue remains the most contested area in mixed methods research (Hanson *et al.*, 2005; Greene, 2008).

On the other hand, some authors (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Haverkamp *et al.*, 2005; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007) argue that mixed methods research encourages the use of multiple worldviews or paradigms rather than the typical association of certain paradigms for quantitative or qualitative research. In essence, the researcher becomes a 'bricoleur' drawing on various research paradigms and multiple inquiry methods as well as mixed methods to answer research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Ponterotto, 2005; Creswell, 2007). Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that the debate should not be about which paradigm is superior but rather what is the best means of achieving the research objectives. They went further by arguing that "whichever paradigmatic views of reality the researcher chooses to address, they are increasingly encouraged to make use of quantitative and qualitative methods in tandem" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105). Ryan (1995a) adds that the very act of selection of a research method is an act of judgement, and is related to the way in which a problem is being defined, which is another act of judgement by the researcher. Consequently, "the hope for a formal method capable of being isolated from actual human judgement about the nature of the world, and from human values seems to have evaporated" (Putman, 1981, p.192)

Therefore, researchers can use any paradigms they want because the qualitative and quantitative methods are not inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm (Greene *et al.*, 1989). It is possible to used mixed method research successfully given that not all quantitative procedures are always objective or qualitative procedures are subjective (Hanson

et al., 2005). It is 'practical' in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem. It combines inductive and deductive thinking (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

As for the 'best' paradigm, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) suggest that there is one 'best' paradigm that fits mixed methods research and that is 'pragmatism', where researchers employ 'what works', using diverse approaches and valuing both subjective and objective knowledge. This is only one of many perspectives suggested in the literature. For example, Hanson *et al.* (2005) suggest that mixed methods research uses competing paradigms intentionally, giving each relatively equal footing and merit. This 'dialectical' perspective recognises that using competing paradigms gives rise to contradictory ideas and contested arguments, features of research that are to be honoured and may not be reconciled (Greene & Carcelli, 1997). Therefore, the view adopted in this study is that a 'bricoleur' approach has the most potential of answering the research questions.

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) distinguish between four major types of mixed methods design: triangulation, embedded, explanatory and exploratory. This study is based on the embedded design given that one data set (qualitative) provides a supportive, secondary role to the other data type (quantitative). Researchers can use this design when they need to include qualitative and quantitative data to answer a research question within a largely quantitative study. When selecting this approach, researchers must also discuss the 'timing decisions' and 'weighting decisions'. The timing decision refers to the time when the data sets are collected and describes the order in which the researcher use the data. In this study, qualitative data is collected in the first phase of the research and the results subsequently inform the second phase which consists of developing and administering a survey instrument to a sample of international visitors. This approach is known as the sequential design in the tourism literature (Riley & Love, 2000). In addition to choosing timing, researchers need also to consider the relative weighting of the two approaches in a study. Weighting refers to the relative importance or priority of the qualitative or quantitative methods to answering the research questions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Given that this study is driven by a post-positivistic approach, the quantitative data is given more priority and the mixing of results happen in chapter nine where the results of both phases are integrated and discussed.

2.3.1 IMAGE RESEARCH & PARADIGMS

In general, tourism research has been predisposed to a positivist paradigm (Jennings, 2001). In particular, there is a debate in the literature on the most appropriate paradigm for image studies. Some researchers (e.g. Gartner & Hunt, 1987; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Bonn *et al.*, 2005) have adopted a positivist approach using quantitative methodologies to operationalise the image construct using list of attributes as measurements. However, in parallel many authors (e.g. Reilly, 1990; Mazanec, 1994; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Walmsley & Young, 1998; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Prayag, 2007; Prebensen, 2007) have relied on a purely qualitative approach using unstructured methodologies to identify underlying image constructs. Ryan and Cave (2005) argue that "there are few studies that commence from a position of addressing subjects to elicit descriptions of image unhindered or uninformed by prior notions of image construct, dimensions or content" (p.145). Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) confirm that there has been little use of open ended, unstructured, conversational, and textual material used in data collection and analysis of destination image. These approaches are deemed to identify possibly different and new insights to underlying destination image constructs that do not necessarily correspond to those derived from quantitative studies. Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) argue that qualitative methodologies are more conducive to measuring holistic components of destination image and capturing unique features and auras.

At the same time, a growing emphasis on the adoption of mixed methodologies can be seen in the literature with the works of O'Leary and Deegan (2005a), Jenkins (1999), Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), and Pike and Ryan (2004). This mixed approach is particularly relevant for image studies given that the qualitative phase enables attributes lists to be complete and relevant incorporating functional and psychological characteristics of the destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Jenkins, 1999). A mixed approach is also an attempt to put the tourist experience at the forefront of tourism research (McIntosh, 1998, 2004). The complementary nature of qualitative and quantitative methodologies allows the researcher to gain insight and capture salient dimensions of tourist thinking in the qualitative phase and therefater use these dimensions to derive categories that form opinion measures that can be tested on a larger sample in the quantitative phase (McIntosh, 2004). Also, quantitative studies alone do not allow researchers to learn how tourists themselves would define the nature of service encounters (McIntosh, 1998) while reducing a holiday experience to a few

ticks on a likert scale in a quantitative approach is obviously insufficient given that holidays can be cathartic experiences which have the potential to change people's lives (Ryan, 1995a).

It can therefore be concluded that if tourism research is to produce meaningful results in an era where tourism sites and activities are produced in different ways and for different purposes, and interpreted through perceptual filters shaped by race, social class, gender and sexual orientation, then empirical research practice must shift accordingly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative and quantitative approaches used together can highlight both the multiplicity of meanings that tourist settings carry as well as the interconnectedness between them (Squire, 1998). Hence, the benefits of combining qualitative and quantitative research in tourism studies focusing on understanding the nature of tourists experiences is well accepted (McIntosh, 1998; Jennings, 2001; Cohen & Amar, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). This provides further credence to the use of the mixed methods approach for this study.

2.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

There is also an increasing recognition in the tourism literature that destinations are social constructions (Iwashita, 2003; Saarinen, 2004; Espelt & Benito, 2005) based on the premise that 'reality' is socially and culturally determined (Giddings & Grant, 2007). This approach has been sparsely used in image and service encounter studies with a few notable exceptions (Riley, 1996; Young, 1999; Iwashita, 2003; McIntosh, 2004; Espelt & Benito, 2005; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). Research that is informed by a social constructionist approach is centred on both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meanings and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). It engages both the 'hows' and the 'whats' of social reality (Jennings, 2001).

The underlying foundation of social constructionism is that reality is not objective, single and divisible but socially constructed, multiple, holistic and contextual (Ozanne & Hudson, 1989). In this approach meanings come into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in the world (Crotty, 1998). There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning waits not to be discovered but rather constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, "it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same

phenomenon" (Crotty, 1998, p.9), which implies that cultural differences need to be acknowledged in understanding a phenomenon.

Burr (1995) adds that "our current accepted ways of understanding the world is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other" (p.4). This ontological premise implies the use of different methodologies to understand the meaning attributed to objects. Consciousness is directed towards these objects, which may be a place or the people, which hence suggest that these objects are shaped by consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionists seek explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participants as opposed to the observer action (Burell & Morgan, 1979). Hence, this approach does not suggest a separation but rather an interactive and co-operative relationship between the investigator and the object of investigation (Decrop, 2004).

There is no one feature that could be said to identify a social constructionist position. Instead, Burr (1995) recommends that this approach has as its foundation a number of assumptions. "First, social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world (including ourselves). Second, the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. This means that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Third, social processes sustain knowledge. It is through daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore, social interaction of all kinds and particularly language is of great interest to social constructionists. Finally, knowledge and social action go together, which imply that there are numerous possible social constructions of the world as knowledge is 'negotiated' understandings of a phenomenon" (p.3-5). This implies that social constructionists are concerned with the specificities of the experience, as is the case in the qualitative component of this study while some 'quantification' and 'generalisation' of these experiences are also made to fit within a post-positivistic approach.

2.4.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM & TOURIST EXPERIENCES

In using social constructionism, imagination is required as part of a creative process of place construction. Adorno (1977) described this as 'exact fantasy' (p.131). "There is exactness involved, for we are talking about imagination being exercised and creativity invoked in a precise interplay with something" (Crotty, 1998, p.48), which could be a leisure activity, a

destination, the image of a place, or interactions with other tourists. This interplay brings to forth Ryan's (2002) argument that "constructionism is like the individual tourist, both are concerned with the minutiae of the experience" (p.21). Understanding that experience requires an appreciation of the influence of cultural differences on the way the tourist sees himself or herself in relation to the tourist setting. As suggested by Ryan (1991, 1994), tourism is essentially about the experience that the tourist has within a place and with the attributes of that place and the people found there. Therefore to understand the tourist experience it is necessary to understand the context within which the tourist operates. The social constructionist approach does exactly that.

Ryan (2002) describes the tourist experience as a multifunctional leisure activity and argues that this experience is one that engages all the senses, not simply the visual. As Ryan explains, the social contexts of tourism are pluralistic in nature and provide many opportunities for the expression of different behaviours. Hence, "…[h]uman beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experiences…we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth" (Schwandt, 2000, p.197).

Social constructionism proposes that the legitimacy of consumption and consumer products exist only when people believe its legitimacy and keep to established consumption practices (Kimura, 2006). This implies that if tourists define or perceive their experiences as real, then they are real in their consequences as well regardless of other people's (re)construction or attempts at (re)presentation and evaluations. This perspective is supported by postmodern writings in regards to the use of the terms authentic or authenticity. The problem with such a concept is who is doing the deconstruction and (re)construction or interpretation, and therefore tourism experience is a self defined term and in order to understand its meanings, researchers need to interact with the person using the term in order to get an emic perspective (Jennings & Weiler, 2006). Ryan (2002) also raises the same question of who authorizes the 'constructive authenticity'- a projection of authenticity onto toured objects. The answer perhaps as suggested by Burr (1995) and Gergen (1999) resides in an understanding of the various discourses shaping tourism representations globally.

 "A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It

refers to a particular way of representing it or them in a certain light" (Burr, 1995, p.48). Foucault (1972) defines discourses as "practices which form the objects of which they speak"(p.49). We are surrounded by and immersed in discourses. "They inhabit all written and spoken material and are embedded in all systems of signification to the extent that human beings imbue them with social meanings that can be read as 'texts'" (Burr, 1995, p.141-142). We can make sense of nothing 'outside of text', it seemed, because it is only in text that sense is made (Gergen, 1999). The point is that numerous discourses surround any object and each strives to represent or construct it in a different way.

"Discourses are intimately connected to the way society is organized and run. These discourses that form our identity are intimately tied to the structures and practices that are lived out in society from day to day, and it is in the interest of relatively powerful groups that some discourses and not others receive the stamp of truth" (Burr, 1995, p.55). Therefore one can argue that the image of a place is a local and specific constructed reality shaped by powerful groups in a society to portray a place in a particular way to the outside world. As suggested by Shaw and Williams (2004), places do not exist as such but are actively constructed by social processes. In these social processes, the views of the more powerful individuals or group dominate at the expense of the less powerful. Hence, individual reconstructions of the world coalesce around consensus, that is, the discourse influences the way we see and interpret the world.

By extension, for others to understand the way we view the world around us, is therefore dependent on our culture and our ability to communicate. Ryan (2002) argues that culture "is constituted in language and thus nothing is knowable outside of language" "Language is a self-referent system. This means that any sign can only be defined in terms of other signs existing in the same language system" (Burr, 1995, p.61). "Signs by themselves can have no intrinsic meaning" (Burr, 1995, p.37). For example, what is meant by 'nationality' in the 'text' can be questioned using structuralism. Is it associated with race, ethnicity, and country of residence or language learnt or spoken? These definitions are arbitrary and coalesce around one's own interpretation of it. Hence, using nationality as a proxy for measuring cultural differences in this study requires the researcher to identify the various dimensions that surround the concept.

Burr (1995) elaborates further on this view and argues that concepts and categories are acquired by all people as they develop the use of language and are thus reproduced everyday by everyone who shares a culture and a language. This means "the way people think, the very categories and concepts that provide a framework of meaning for them, are provided by the language that they use. Language is a necessary pre-condition for thought as we know of it" (Burr, 1995, p.7). "Social constructionists stress the importance of language as the primary means of social constructions of the world, human activities and individuals because language is not only the medium in which meanings, descriptions or characterisations of things are configured but also the medium of communication between people" (Iwashita, 2003, p.333). Hence, the interest in languages spoken as a cultural proxy in this study.

2.4.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM & IMAGES

The social construction of tourism images particularly lies in an understanding that images help to demarcate and distinguish the ordinary from the extra-ordinary and the nature of this demarcation is cultural (Rojek, 1997). This means that the visual is central to the 'tourist gaze' as images entice people to travel to places and once there, they 'gaze' at that which initially drew them. This privilege of the 'eye' over other senses has been highlighted by Hollinshead (1999), who suggests that 'gazers' see, understand, and appropriate desired 'things' at the destination. These 'things' are constructed, named, framed and elevated, enshrined and reproduced mechanically and socially to attract visitors (MacCannell, 1976). Hence, the tourist gaze is directed at features of landscape with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements than normally found in everyday life (Urry, 2002). Then, by extension images are a form of place commodification, which means that they can be 'destroyed' or 'demarketed' and 'rebuilt' around new concepts. This is inherent in destination positioning, which is about reinforcing positive images, correcting negative images or simply the creation of a new image (Pike & Ryan, 2004). It focuses on presenting a unique identity of a place to various target audiences. This identity is thought to be given 'naturally' but in fact, it is socially and culturally created, maintained, modified or even recreated, whether as individual or group (Iwashita, 2003).

This gaze is also constructed through signs and structured by culturally specific notions of what is extraordinary and therefore worth visiting. "Tourism marketers through their marketing images create identities which represent certain ways of seeing reality, images which both reflect and reinforce particular relationships in societies" (Morgan & Pritchard,

1998, p.3). Ryan and Gu (2007) argue that the 'product' created by DMOs is not place but image of place, and these images must be congruent with other existing images and with place experience. In this way, place image becomes a commodity, a product in its own right constructed using images of people and landscapes to appeal to different groups. This means that "people and places are constructed in particular ways and in so doing the options for representations are limited and circumscribed" (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998, p.39). These images serve to project the attractiveness and uniqueness of the 'other' into the lives of consumers (Ringer, 1998) but the latter consciously choose which 'facts' to interpret or ignore. Also, destination image is produced and portrayed in discourses to create a 'sense' of place. This implies that images are created to influence motivations and preferences of different social groupings about places to visit and help to structure the effect of such visits upon host populations and the fashionability of different places and sites. Hence, there is no single tourist gaze as such, but instead these 'gazes' are constructed through differences (Urry, 2002) which are emphasized in marketing activities to create an appealing place.

Perhaps one should ask in the first instance, whether discourses have shaped a different identity or image of islands as tourist destinations before looking at how the people of such islands are perceived. The literature provides some illustrative examples of how islands have been immersed in images of 'otherness', 'escapism', 'romance and intimacy', 'fantasy' and so on. For example, Urry (2002) and Rojek (1993) noted that much has been written of holidays as compressed time-space experiences of fantasy and escape-realism that lie outside of 'normal' daily experience, and it is within this discourse that the appeal of beaches can be found, and it is that which makes islands and shores unique holiday destinations.

Another example is that of Ryan (1995) which has sought to explain the distinctive nature of the island as a holiday destination by a comparison of the *is*-land with the *in*-land, arguing that the distinctiveness of islands lies not in a geographical uniqueness but rather the culture that results from, the meanings imposed upon, a set of geographical attributes. Within such 'texts', language reflects a pre-existing social reality that is different from the so-called 'western social reality', and this difference builds the attractiveness of islands as tourist destinations. It can be argued that islands somehow are still portrayed in discourses as offering 'authentic' experiences to the western tourists. Destination marketing and more importantly destination marketers shape the image and reinforce the notion of 'otherness' for islands. Destination marketing can thus be viewed as "a rhetoric discourse using emotional

appeals and media to convince. The language of objective reality is essentially used as a means of generating hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion" (Gregen, 1999, p.73). Having discussed the social constructionist view of culture, tourist experiences and images, the next section discusses phenomenology as the ontological stance for the qualitative study.

2.5 PHENOMENOLOGY

Within this social constructionist approach, there are various ontological stances including symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology and structuralism (Gergen, 1999). The phenomenological stance is adopted for the qualitative component. The philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is described as one of the pioneers of phenomenology. At the heart of phenomenology is the notion of intentionality (Crotty, 1998). Husserl (1931) describes intentionality as "a concept which at the threshold of phenomenology is quite indispensable as a starting point and basis" (p.245). It denotes the essential relationship between conscious subjects and their objects. The object cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object. "In fact it might be said that we construct our own versions of reality as a culture or society between us" (Burr, 1995, p.6). Therefore, phenomenology allows the researcher to understand the subjects' own version of reality, within a framework that meaning is embedded in texts that are themselves immersed in specific cultures.

Husserl's successor, Alfred Schutz proposed that "our experience of the world is governed by a natural attitude. By this he means that our sense of the orderly and understandable world around us is a by-product not of the world as it is, but of what we take for granted. "Our natural attitude is largely composed of typifications, that is, assumptions about classes of events and for Schutz most of our typifications are implanted through language" (Gregen, 1999, p.128).

Schutz (1962) posits that individuals of a given social group understand each other because they share a common stock of knowledge as well as common language of typifications, which are used to make sense of objects and events. The term typification is synonymous to standardizations. These standardisations are mere representations of reality and are not only culturally framed but also historically based. The media for example, help to construct and maintain such reality (Beeton *et al*., 2006). Thus, as we learn language we come to experience the world in ways that effectively 'blind' us to its nuances. Our experiences are inevitably

coloured by the social, and most directly, the linguistic world in which we are immersed. These propositions highlight that constructionism and phenomenology are so intertwined that one can hardly be phenomenological while espousing either an objectivist or a subjectivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998).

Phenomenology suggests that if we lay aside, as best as we can, the prevailing understandings of those phenomena and revisit afresh our immediate experience of them, possibilities for new meaning emerge for us or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning (Crotty, 1996a). "Only through dialogue can one become aware of the perceptions, feelings, and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent" (Crotty, 1998, p.76). Husserl (1970) argues that the relationship between perception and its objects is not passive. Rather human consciousness actively constitutes objects of experience. Hence, for uncovering new dimensions in destination image and guest-host interaction research, this approach is particularly relevant as it requires the researcher to bracket out previous conceptualisations of constructs and start afresh.

As Husserl (1931) suggests, "phenomenology invites us to set aside all previous habits of thought, see through and break down the mental barriers which these habits have set along the horizons of our thinking…to learn to see what stands before our eyes" (p.43). The researcher has to bracket to the best of his or her ability and let the experience of phenomena speak to us at first hand (Crotty, 1996b). This return to phenomena as they are lived, in contrast to beginning with scientific preconceptions, is a methodological procedure and does not imply that such knowledge is false; it simply suspends received science (Wertz, 2005). The role of the researcher is to aid the holiday maker to re-construct their experiences and in doing so, "we necessarily draw on language and culture" (Crotty, 1998, p.82).

However, "phenomenology treats culture with a good measure of caution and suspicion. Our culture may be enabling but, paradoxically, it is also crippling" (Crotty, 1998, p.71). In this understanding of things, experience and culture come to be almost interchangeable terms. "Seeking the meaning of experience becomes an exploration of culture" (Crotty, 1998, p.74). This line of thought presumes that there are "things themselves" to visit in our experience, that is, objects to which our understandings relate. Indeed, there are objects such as places, spaces and relationships between people that can be understood using a phenomenological stance. For example, tourists essentially consume experiences at particular sites but also there is anticipation before the travel, and recollection afterwards as part of the total tourism

experience. Therefore, there is an element of temporality and spatiality involved in the experience (Shaw & Williams, 2004). Phenomenology specifically studies essences and clarifies the relationships between tourism and a socially constructed nature within a particular setting- which is temporarily and spatially fixed. "It seeks to delve into experiences and clarifies the very grounds of knowledge" (Burell & Morgan, 1979, p.233), where this knowledge is constructed through what the tourists wish to experience whether visually or in any other sensory form. In turn, tourists through their presence at these particular sites contribute to the signposting of valued natures.

Phenomenology also involves some reflexivity on behalf of the researcher and indexicality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). "As Schutz, one of the early developers of this school of thought, argued: consciousness is fundamentally an unbroken stream of lived experiences, which have no meaning in themselves. Meaning is dependent upon reflexivity – the process of turning back on oneself and looking at what has been going on. Meaning is attached to actions retrospectively, only the already experienced is meaningful, not that which is in the process of being experienced" (Burell & Morgan, 1979, p.245). Such reflexivity is not uncommon within the tourism literature given the elusive and unpredictable nature of the phenomenon of tourism itself with all its complexity and multiplicity of interactions, settings and participants (Jennings, 2006). "Indexicality signifies that the meaning of a word or utterance is dependent on its context of use" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.297). These two notions of reflexivity and indexicality are part of the means whereby social constructionists come to understand how social reality, everyday life, is constituted in conversation and interaction. These processes enable us to understand how knowledge is constantly being reframed, reconstructed and reinterpreted (Ryan, 2002).

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of post-positivism as the overall paradigm guiding this study. Thereafter, the use of a mixed methodology was justified followed by a discussion of social constructionism and its relevance to image studies. Following these, the phenomenological stance adopted for the qualitative study was discussed. Having set the theoretical foundations of this study, the next chapter reviews the literature surrounding the key concepts used.

CHAPTER 3~LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the second chapter that describes the theoretical background of this study. While the previous chapter focuses on the 'mixed methods' approach and social constructionism, this chapter reviews some of the key theoretical concepts in this study. The chapter begins with a review of destination image, destination choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement literatures highlighting the relevant knowledge gaps. Throughout these discussions, the influence of nationality, ethnicity and language spoken on these constructs are highlighted. The inter-relationships among these seven constructs (destination image, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement, satisfaction and future behaviour) are also discussed. The chapter thereafter progresses with a discussion of the theoretical model proposed and concludes with a summary of the main findings from the literature reviewed.

3.2 DESTINATION IMAGE AS A CONSTRUCT

A number of meta narratives on destination image formation and its role in destination choice and positioning exists (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002; Govers *et al.*, 2007, Tasci *et al.*, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Ryan & Gu, 2007). These studies suggest there is no agreed definition of destination image and it lacks a conceptual framework (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Deslandes *et al.*, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). For example, Barich and Kotler (1991) define image "as the sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that a person or group has of an object. These impressions may be true or false, real or imagined" (p.95). Ahmed (1996) suggests that image itself is "an internalised, conceptualised and personalised understanding of what one knows. It is the mental basis of a few selected impressions among a flood of few selected impressions" (p.44). Most definitions tend to relate to individual perceptions of a place (Crompton, 1979) or perceptions of groups of people (Jenkins, 1999). More recently, Tasci *et al.* (2007) suggested that "destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualisations, and intentions toward a destination" (p.200). These authors not only recognise the multiplicity of elements that destination image is made of, but also its influence on all phases of the purchase decision process. Hence, they offer a more holistic definition, 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).

Amid all these definitions, significant progress has been achieved on conceptualisation and measurement of destination image. Gallarza *et al.* (2002) proposed a theoretical model defining image in terms of four characteristics: complex, multiple, relativistic, and dynamic. The 'complex' concept refers to the discussion above where there is more than one interpretation of destination image and it can be applied to multiple objects such as area, city or country simultaneously. The 'multiple' concept relates to "the existence of a multiplicity of factors that make up the identity of a destination's image" (p.70). Hence, its measurement using multi-attributes but also this multiple nature of the term comes from its formation process which is staged, and where several elements influence and interrelate. The relativistic nature of destination image refers to its high level of subjectivity and comparability (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002). That is, perceptions of destination image vary from person to person and involve perceptions among various objects.

The 'dynamic' nature of the concept refers to the idea that destination image is not static and evolves with time and space. In particular, the greater the physical distance between consumer perceptions and the destination, the greater the distortion of reality, while the shorter the distance, the greater the meaning of details. This is of particular relevance for this study given that Mauritius is far from its European markets but close to its African markets. Hence, it would be interesting to see if there are differences in image perceptions based on country of origin. The model presented by Gallarza *et al.* (2002) has substantially improved our understanding of the construct but it has also highlighted the methodological challenges in measuring it. This will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

Nonetheless, researchers in several disciplines and fields agree the image construct has three components: perceptual/cognitive, affective and conative (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Tasci *et al.*, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008). "The perceptual/cognitive evaluations refer to the beliefs or knowledge about a destination's attributes and are formed by external factors, which include various sources of information such as symbolic stimuli (promotional effort of a destination) and social stimuli (word of mouth)" (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, p. 148).

Affective evaluations on the other hand, refer to feelings toward, or attachment to the object or destination (Pike & Ryan, 2004). The cognitive component is also an antecedent of the affective component (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). Kim and Yoon (2003) and Trauer and Ryan (2005) suggest that the affective has more impact

on building destination image than does the cognitive. The conative construct is considered "analogous to behaviour and evolve from cognitive and affective images" (Gartner, 1993, p.193). Hence, all three components are hierarchically related (Gartner, 1993; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Pike & Ryan, 2004) and an overall or composite image is formed as a result of this interaction (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Lin *et al.*, 2007). Ahmed (1991) suggests that the relationship between overall image and other components of destination marketing creates favourable or unfavourable perceptions about the destination.

Destination image has also been described in terms of attribute-based and holistic components (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993). The attribute based component refers to the perception of individual attributes or destination features and tend to correspond to cognitive images while the holistic components refer to mental pictures or imagery of a place (cognitive and affective images). These authors also suggest that attribute-based and holistic components possess functional (measurable) and psychological (abstract) characteristics (Lin *et al.*, 2007). Some of these attributes are common to all destinations such as scenery, weather, and climate while others are specific to a destination such as icons, local cuisine and friendliness (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Lin *et al.*, 2007). With these two frameworks described, next a discussion of how destination image is formed follows.

3.2.1 THE DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION PROCESS

Probably the best-known process of destination image formation is that of Gunn (1972), who established that destination image evolves at two levels, referred to as organic and induced/projected. The organic image is formed from an early age and based on what is learnt of a country from non-commercial sources, including word-of-mouth and actual visitation, while induced image is the result of promotion of that country as a tourist destination (Lubbe, 1998; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). The aim of induced images is to construct or modify existing images in the minds of consumers so that they have a favourable impression of the destination (Deslandes *et al.*, 2007). In essence, induced images influence destination positioning and ultimately tourists' buying behaviour (Govers *et al.*, 2007).

Gunn's original model was later expanded into seven phases of the travel experience, from pre-travel images to post-travel modification of images (Gunn, 1988). At each stage, a different image of the destination may develop or co-exist with other images. This modified or re-evaluated image upon visiting the destination is more realistic, objective, differentiated,

and produces a complex image of the place (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Selby & Morgan, 1996; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Chen & Hsu, 2000). However, discrepancies between organic and projected images can arise from unrealistic naïve images held by tourists or from a failure on the part of the destination to meet expectations. This gap between projected and perceived image has been studied by a few authors (Chon, 1990; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Andreu *et al.*, 2000) and the tourist's evaluation of that knowledge will affect his/her overall image of the destination (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Adding to this, Chon (1990) suggested that a primary image is formed when a tourist has made a decision to travel somewhere.

Image formation has also been described as the development of a few impressions chosen from a flood of information (Ahmed, 1996) created by media and Internet. Gartner (1993) suggests that this is a third source of information, which he calls 'autonomous agents', and refers to information from news articles, educational materials, movies and popular culture. Such information is outside the control of the marketer and creates general knowledge about the destination (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). However, these images tend to be either only positive or negative or reinforce stereotypical images of a place. Hence, "autonomous agents can change image quickly if the information received is considered credible and differs substantially from previously held images or gradually if the information is less overwhelming but received constantly over a period of time" (Tasci & Gartner, 2007, p. 415).

3.3 DESTINATION IMAGE & ITS INFLUENCE ON DESTINATION CHOICE

Many factors lead to tourists' choice of a destination but of great importance is the role of imagery in this selection process (Goodrich, 1978; Um & Crompton, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Meng *et al.*, 2008). This is despite many destination image studies not being undertaken as components of destination choice modelling but rather as separate studies that are assumed to have pertinence to choice (Prentice, 2006). But certainly, positive images are related to positive purchase decisions (Pearce, 1982; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), whereas negative images, even if they are unjustified, will deter potential visitors (Selby & Morgan, 1996). Also, imagery not only presents the product (destination) but can also communicate its attributes, characteristics, concepts, values and ideas that influence choice (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Hence, in this way tourism images form part of consumers' decision-making processes. Likewise, during the visit imagery can add value and increase satisfaction,

while after the visit it has a reconstructive role of the experience via memories and souvenirs (Jenkins, 1999). Hence, imagery pervades the whole destination consumption experience and whether right or wrong, images used to market a destination will guide and shape behaviour, influence attitudes, affect predispositions as consumers, and tends to change slowly.

3.3.1 PUSH & PULL FACTORS

Besides imagery, it is well recognised that other factors affect the holiday decision process and can be classified as push factors, pull factors and situational inhibitors (Hong *et al.*, 2006). Push and pull factors have been researched extensively (Mountinho, 1987; Lubbe, 1998; Jang & Cai, 2002; Kim *et al.*, 2003; Awaritefe, 2004; Andreu *et al.*, 2005; Hong *et al.*, 2006; Meng *et al.*, 2008). The underlying idea of push and pull is the decomposition of an individual's choice of a travel destination into two interrelated forces (Kim *et al.*, 2003; Lam & Hsu, 2006). On the one hand, push factors are internal to individuals and install a desire for them to travel (Mill & Morrison, 1985; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Lubbe, 1998; Rittichainuwat *et al.*, 2008). They are related to motivational factors such as need for relaxation, need for personal development, need for fulfilling emotional needs, and the need for new cultural experiences amongst others (Chon, 1990; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004).

Strong linkages between these travel motivations and destination choices have been well documented in the literature (Jang & Cai, 2002; Rittichainuwat *et al.*, 2008). Also, the literature establishes a positive link between these motivations and destination image (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996c; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Martin & del Bosque, 2008). Therefore, an understanding of these motivating factors along with their influence on other constructs such as post visit satisfaction levels can be considered as key elements for tourism planning and destination marketing (Prideaux & Crosswell, 2006).

In parallel, the Leisure-Motivation scale of Beard and Ragheb (1983) has been widely applied in leisure and recreation settings to understand the relationship between motives, behaviour and satisfaction. This scale derived from the work of Maslow (1970), argues that four motives determine satisfaction derived from leisure pursuits. The first is an intellectual motive, which is related to the extent to which individuals are motivated to engage in leisure activities that involve mental activities such as learning, exploring, discovering, thought or imagining. Second, a social motive, which refers to the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities for social reasons such as need for friendship and interpersonal relationships or the need for self-esteem from others.

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The third motive refers to individuals seeking to achieve, master, challenge and compete in a leisure pursuit. Fourth, there is a stimulus-avoidance motive which assesses the drive to escape and get away from routine. It is related to the need for individuals to avoid social contacts, to seek solitude and calm conditions, while others tend to seek to rest and to unwind (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). This scale has been sparsely used in the tourism literature to understand visitors' choice and behaviour (Fodness, 1994; Ryan & Glendon, 1998). Hence, in this study it is used as the theoretical framework for understanding the factors that lead to the choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination and its relationship with satisfaction and future behaviour.

On the other hand, pull factors are external to individuals, and affect when, where, when and how people travel, given their initial desire to travel (Dann, 1981). Mountinho (1987) suggests that there are three important components of pull forces: static, dynamic and current decision factors. Static factors include climate, distance to travel facilities, natural and cultural landscapes, and historical/cultural features. Dynamic factors include accommodation, service levels, entertainment/sports, political atmosphere and trends in tourism. Current decision factors include pricing and marketing strategies (Lubbe, 1998; Awaritefe, 2004), which acknowledge the influence of projected/induced images of a destination on choice. These factors explain the predominance of perceptions of destination attributes and motives as surrogates for the measurement of destination choice.

In particular, pull factors determine the attractiveness of a destination for visitors and it is usually accepted that push factors are present before pull factors can be effective (Mill & Morrison, 1985). Some pull factors such as climate and scenery have been recognised as being universally important in destination selection (Hu & Ritchie, 1993) while others such as local culture and cuisine are destination specific (Meng *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, destination choice depends on the relationships and interactions between push and pull factors, but the latter is grounded in imagery. Specifically, destination marketing and destination branding activities manufacture the image of a place and create the pull for travelers (Ryan & Gu, 2007). These images not only shape expectations, but also behaviour by shaping roles that the tourist wishes to engage upon at the destination and tend to be congruent with personal self-image (Trauer & Ryan, 2005). Hence, the construction of primary images is dependent on certain push and pull factors (Chon, 1990) as well as perceptions of the self in relation to the destination.

3.4 MEASUREMENT OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Destination image has been measured using a list of destination attributes that assess functional components such as scenery, climate, facilities, and attractions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Jenkins, 1999). This approach has been described as the 'tri-dimensionality' of image research (Mazanec, 1994). That is, relationships between variables are measured: firstly by assessing the subject's perceptions; secondly these are measured around objects or destinations; thirdly this is done with respect to certain attributes or characteristics. Increasingly, Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is being used as a means to assess destination attributes due to its simplicity and ease of application (Oh, 2001). This method of measuring destination image is discussed in more depth in the quantitative methodology chapter (chapter six). Broadly speaking, it enables identification of differences in visitors' level of importance they attach to an attribute and the corresponding satisfaction they derive from it. Hence, the first proposition for this study is:

> **Proposition 1:** There are significant differences in visitors' evaluation of the importance and satisfaction they derive from destination attributes.

However, "there is a lack of homogeneity with respect to the attributes which define an individual's perceptions" (Beerli & Martin, 2004, p.658). Almost all researchers have relied on the use of a piecemeal (or attribute based) approach via scaling methods (such as semantic differential scale, likert-type scale, and multidimensional scale) that capture only the individual attribute component of destination image but not the holistic component (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005b). "It cannot be assumed that destination attributes on their own and in themselves are motivationally adequate to explain why individuals or groups gravitate towards one place and not to another" (Dann, 1996c, p.42).

Also, in several instances, the validity and reliability of scales used were not established, which then cast doubt on their psychometric properties (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Deslandes *et al.*, 2007). Thus, the main concern of researchers has been with the more tangible physical components of place perception commonly associated with designative images (Pearce, 1982) with emphasis on physical qualities of places. The evaluative component of images appears to have been overlooked (Walmsley & Young, 1998). However, some recent works have studied both cognition and affect toward environments and destinations (Echtner & Ritchie,

1993; Baloglu 1997; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu, 1998; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Lin *et al.*, 2007). In particular, affection has been measured using Russel, Ward and Pratt's (1981) affective response grid, which uses four semantic differential scales, pleasant versus unpleasant, relaxing versus distressing, arousing versus sleepy, and exciting versus gloomy to measure affective images (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Lin *et al.*, 2007). But these still fail to capture holistic components of destination image.

As a result, an emerging research strand focusing either on mixed methodologies (Milman & Pizam, 1995; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike & Ryan, 2004; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a) or unstructured methods exclusively (Reilly, 1990; Dann, 1996c; Lubbe, 1998; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Prebensen, 2007; Prayag, 2007) have appeared to reinforce the complex nature of destination image and the hierarchical character of its structure. Many of these studies conclude that unstructured methods reveal similar results as structured methods (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002) but a non-quantitative or mixed approach is arguably richer and more meaningful for destination marketers as it pertains to specific place imagery.

But within a qualitative approach, there have been few interpretive destination image studies (Young, 1999; Iwashita, 2003; Espelt & Benito, 2005). These studies suggest that destination image is both a subjective and a social construction based on the idea of collective imagination. This interpretation of destination images is based on the grounds that reality is not objective, single and divisible but socially constructed, multiple, holistic and contextual (Ozanne & Hudson, 1989). Therefore, perceived images of a destination are embedded in the social and cultural make up of the visitor. This approach has been discussed in the previous chapter.

Nonetheless, this new strand of image conceptualisation suggests there is still a need for studies that conceptualise the construct without a priori notions of image construct, dimension, or content (Ryan & Cave, 2005). Hence, despite all these efforts, "tourism researchers have not been successful in reconciling conceptualisation and operationalisation of destination image" (Tapachi & Waryszak, 2000, p.38) and there is no conclusive evidence which method is better for any given purpose or whether differences between methods are significant (Tasci *et al.*, 2007). However, through the use of mixed methodologies, researchers are able to identify consensual truths about image perceptions and these are pertinent for that specific

destination, which is of relevance for segmentation, targeting and positioning decisions adopted by DMOs.

3.5 DESTINATION IMAGE, TOURIST SATISFACTION & FUTURE BEHAVIOUR

Similar to destination image, consumer satisfaction has been the subject of intense academic debate in the marketing and tourism literature alike and definition of the term remains varied (Oliver, 1980; Pizam & Milman, 1993; Danaher & Weiler, 1996; Weber, 1997; Petrick, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007). One of the more cited definitions is that satisfaction is the degree to which one believes that an experience evokes positive feelings (Rust & Oliver, 1994). The central tenet of satisfaction measurement has been the disconfirmation theory (Pizam & Milman, 1993; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Um *et al.*, 2006), whereby satisfaction arises when consumers compare their perceptions with their initial expectations. But in the tourism field, some researchers have claimed that satisfaction has been measured predominantly by summation of tourist evaluation of each destination attribute (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Kozak 2003; Meng *et al.*, 2008). This kind of measurement can also be regarded as an evaluation of the quality of destination performance, where tourists are satisfied not only with what they experience but also how they felt (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Um *et al.*, 2006). Thus, satisfaction is an overall affective response due to the use of the amenities and facilities at a destination.

Existing research on the influence of destination image on satisfaction suggests that image is an antecedent of satisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Petrick, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2005; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005b; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008). It seems that favourable destination images lead to high levels of satisfaction and unfavourable images lead to dissatisfaction (Kandampully & Suharatanto, 2000; Baloglu *et al.*, 2003; Cai *et al.*, 2003; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005b). A distinction is also made between satisfaction with individual components and overall satisfaction (Spreng *et al.*, 1996). Overall satisfaction has been regarded as a broader concept, which includes an evaluation of the accumulated experiences of a visitor's expectation, purchase, and consumption experiences (Andreassen, 1995). It is believed to be a function of satisfaction with each service encounter at the destination (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994), thus, implying a holistic impression after the purchase and consumption of a holiday (Fornell, 1992).

Likewise, revisit intention and willingness to recommend have been extensively used as predictors of future behaviour in the tourism literature (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005, Chi & Qu, 2008). Their relationship with destination image suggest that visitors having positive images of a destination are more likely to revisit and to recommend the destination to others (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Petrick, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, since destination images can predict visitors' behaviour, it can be argued that images are a determinant factor influencing customer loyalty (Joppe, 1996; Oppermann, 1998). At the same time, the relationship between overall image, satisfaction and future behaviour has been relatively less explored (Lee *et al.*, 2005). It can be argued that a positive relationship exists between them, that is, a favourable overall image is likely to result in higher satisfaction levels and more positive future behaviour. Also, satisfaction is closely related to the overall assessment of image attributes after the visit (Lee *et al.*, 2005).

Similarly, satisfaction has a positive influence on post-purchase behaviour (Oliver, 1980; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007). However, the impact of satisfaction on revisit intention and likelihood to recommend is not the same for all destinations, tourists, (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001) or in all situations (McCleary *et al.*, 2006). Most studies report a positive influence of satisfaction on favourable word-of-mouth communication (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Bigné et al. 2001; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008). However, other studies have shown that satisfaction has either relatively more or less influence (Kozak, 2001) or no influence at all (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Petrick *et al.*, 2001) on revisit intention. The latter case can be explained with reference to 'once in a life time experiences' where satisfaction levels with a holiday can be high but because of the nature of the holiday, visitors do not plan to repeat it. These differing conclusions suggest that more research is needed to generalise the impact of satisfaction on future behaviour.

3.6 DESTINATION IMAGE & CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

There is no universally accepted definition of culture, and there are no transcultural variables by which cultures could be completely distinguished and successfully compared (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). However, most research in tourism geared towards understanding the impact of culture on tourist behaviour have used the work of Geert Hofstede (1980) as the conceptual framework. His five cultural index constructs (power distance, individualism-collectivism,

masculinity-feminity, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamic of long term-short term orientation) have been used by many (Pizam & Sussman, 1995; Pizam & Jeong, 1996; Reisinger & Turner, 1999; Crotts & Edermann, 2000) to support culture as one of the many forces influencing consumer decision making. His work is not without critics, as many contend that his indices are overly broad and not a true representation of the national cultures from which they are derived (Chapman, 1997). Also, recent contributions suggest that tourism spaces, which include destinations, can be viewed as socio-cultural constructions and not simply as physical locations (Crouch, 2000; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). Therefore, how tourists experience these social spaces, and how they attach meanings to those spaces which are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed over their holiday (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) provide far more insight into the influence of culture on tourist behaviour than Hofstede's work.

Also, tourism is indeed not a phenomenon devoid of interactions and interrelations, as one would suppose from the cultural values index which provides no recognition of interrelationships between the various dimensions. Arguably, Hofstede has measured objective and measurable interrelationships but there is a need for "a more person-focused approach which takes account of individual's subjective experiences and perceptions" (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p.40). Hence, a 'social constructionist' approach offers a richer theoretical position for understanding destination image from a cross cultural perspective.

3.6.1 THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALITY ON DESTINATION IMAGE

In destination image research, nationality tends to be the key investigative variable in understanding differences in perceptions among visitors from different cultures (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kozak *et al.*, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Campo & Garau, 2008). However, Dann (1993) contests its use, given that "tourism is a global phenomenon…destination societies are no longer uniform…and it makes no sense to speak of national identification within many societies… many tourists possess multiple nationalities, and their country of birth may be different from their country of nationality" (p.108-109). Therefore, there are obvious limitations to using nationality and alternative factors such as personality, lifestyles, tourists roles, and social class are proposed as better predictors of cultural differences. Pizam and Sussman (1995) acknowledge this view, but argue that "in the process of globalisation and convergence of

cultures, national culture should not be discarded" (p.905) as evidence exists as to its role in explaining cultural differences.

A number of authors maintain that destination image literature is thin on cross cultural perspectives because of contradictory findings on the influence of national culture on image perceptions, destination choice and satisfaction (Calantone *et al.*, 1989; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Kozak, 2002; Kozak *et al.*, 2004). For example, Kozak (2002) found that tourist motivations varied by nationality with specific reference to 'pleasure seeking/fantasy based' motivations between German and British tourists visiting Mallorca and Turkey. Beerli and Martin (2004) demonstrated that motivations particularly influenced affective images. Therefore, these studies suggest a positive influence of nationality on destination choice, image and satisfaction.

Other studies have proved the contrary. For example, Joppe *et al.* (2001) found that irrespective of the origins of visitors to Toronto, essentially the same attributes were rated as important by all visitors. Their study was based on Canadian and American visitors' perceptions only. Master and Prideaux (2000) in their cross cultural assessment of vacation satisfaction of Taiwanese tourists in Australia, found that culture was an insignificant predictor of holiday satisfaction. Taiwanese visitors were found to be tolerant of cross cultural differences, and that service quality rather than multi-cultural awareness was key to satisfaction levels. These differing conclusions can be explained in terms of similar cultures having similar perceptions. Citizens of different countries sharing a common heritage, including religious orientation, possess attitudes that are congruent. Thus, similar image perceptions might be anticipated when comparing British and American tourists, and differences when comparing the Japanese to the Australians (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Therefore, in this study nationality is used as a surrogate of cultural differences in perceptions and it is expected that there will be differences in importance and performance ratings of destination attributes and motives for choice by nationality. Hence, a sub-proposition of this study is:

Proposition 1a: There are significant differences in importance and satisfaction ratings of image attributes based on visitors' nationality.

3.6.2 THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY ON DESTINATION IMAGE

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) suggest that, for products consumed primarily for pleasure purposes, significant image differences exist between cultural subgroups, especially when broken by ethnic background, social class and gender. The influence of variables such as age, gender, level of education and social class on destination image is well documented (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004) but the impact of ethnicity on the construct has attracted only limited scholarly attention (Hitchcock, 1999; Buzinde *et al.*, 2006). The overwhelming majority of tourism research has focused on Caucasians, reinforcing the notion that the white experience is the norm against which all other groups are measured and evaluated (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998, p.97). But Phillip (1994) showed significant differences in tourism travel preferences existed between whites and blacks in the US. Therefore, there is a need to assess destination image perceptions of ethnic groups other than Caucasians to provide conclusive evidence on the relationship between image, satisfaction and ethnicity.

Existing studies in tourism define ethnicity differently in terms of skin colour (Phillip, 1994) or being part of a minority group (Eastman, 1995; Jamison, 1999) or both (Teye & Leclerc, 2003; Buzinde *et al.*, 2006) while others associate it with distinct languages (Samovar *et al.*, 1981). Therefore, it is important to clearly define what is being measured and how. Defining and measuring ethnicity is also challenging given what the term embraces is constantly evolving. Hence, in this study, ethnicity is defined as "a collectivity within a larger population having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and a cultural focus upon one or more symbolic elements which define the group's identity, such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance. Members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to the group" (Schermerhorn, 1978, p.122). In particular, the focus is on race (e.g. Chinese, Arab) and skin colour (e.g.White, Black) but based on the visitor own self categorisation. Therefore, members of a similar ethnic group are believed to share similar perceptions and participate in similar activities. Hence it is expected, for example, that Caucasian visitors from different countries will have similar ratings for certain attributes but their ratings will differ to non-Caucasians on these same attributes. Hence, this argument informs the second sub-proposition of this study:

Proposition 1b: There are significant differences in importance and performance ratings of image attributes based on ethnicity of visitors.

3.6.3 THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE SPOKEN ON DESTINATION IMAGE

Likewise, image marketing is more than just imaging tourism products and attractions. It is also about the representation of whole societies or particular communities in societies. The tourist industry uses language to construct and define the tourist experience as well as destination images (Urry, 2002). In this way, language and visual imagery become ways of constructing and marketing identities (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). In particular, the language of tourism imagery has been described as one of rhetoric where the exotic is described as 'authentic', 'original', and 'real' (Cohen, 1989). This perhaps explains the attractiveness of islands as tourist destinations.

Language is also a media through which ideas, thoughts and feelings are represented and communicated in a culture (Hall, 1997). Hence, perceptions of similarity of languages spoken between visitors and hosts can arguably influence the destination choice but also the experience of the visitor at the destination. For example, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) confirm ease of communication as a factor of significant importance in assessing destination perceptions. Huisman and Moore (1999) found that similarity of languages spoken can either undermine or enhance enjoyment of the tourist experience. Bramwell (2003) suggests that language also provides one means for residents to create a social distance between them and tourists when the latter is seen as intruding on the privacy of locals. Therefore, similarity or dissimilarity in language spoken can be either an attraction or inhibitor of tourists' choice of a destination and the type of experiences they have at a destination.

Also, because tourist-host interactions are conducted across wide linguistic and cultural barriers, interactions are vulnerable to misinterpretation (Hitchcock, 1999). Dissimilarity in cultural background can distort the meaning of behaviour, leads to communication problems, loss of emotional well being and inhibits social interaction for visitors (Reisinger & Turner, 2002a). Therefore, restrained language and communication ability of visitors can have important effects on choice of destinations, scope and content of their interaction with locals, and the quality of their experience (Cohen & Cooper, 1986). In particular, it can be expected that languages spoken will have an influence on visitors' perceptions of their interactions with hosts which may influence rating of attributes such as level of service and quality of accommodation. Hence, the third sub-proposition for this study is:

Proposition 1c: Languages spoken have a significant influence on importance and performance ratings of image attributes

3.7 AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TOWARD UNDERSTANDING AFFECTION TO PLACES

The review of destination image literature above showed that most studies have adopted a positivist approach in measuring the construct with few studies embracing an interpretive approach. Likewise, many studies have used Russell *et al.*'s (1981) affective grid to measure affection toward places. Despite recognising the importance of interactions between host and guest as an element that contributes toward affection, the scale development of these authors was predominantly based on affection toward the physical environment. Hence, in an effort to extend conceptualisation of affection towards a destination, the influence of interactions with hotel employees as a factor contributing to visitors' affection toward a place for a resort-based destination is explored. The theoretical underpinnings for this aspect of the research is drawn from the services marketing literature and described in section 3.7.1 below.

Also, a few studies (McCabe & Stokoe, 2004; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Gross & Brown, 2008) have applied the concept of place attachment to tourist destinations. Place attachment has been widely applied in environmental psychology, leisure and recreation literatures as a means of assessing individuals' affections about particular sites and attractions. In particular, place attachment has been used to explain why some individuals choose to visit certain places multiple times, while others never return. Drawing from the literature in these two fields, the theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between place attachment and destination image is explored in section 3.7.2 below.

In addition, personal involvement as a construct influencing destination choice and image has received scant attention in the literature (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Josiam *et al.*, 2005; Sparks, 2007). But its influence on consumer behaviour has been well documented in the marketing, leisure and recreation literatures. Personal involvement seems to act as a moderator on the consumption process, given that it is a motivational state itself (Johnson & Eagly, 1989). Therefore, a high level of involvement by visitors will arguably result in a detailed examination of destination attributes and service interactions, and these will impact on place attachment, satisfaction and future behaviour. Likewise, a low level of personal involvement

would dampen attachment levels but not necessarily image perceptions and satisfaction levels. These relationships are further explored in section 3.7.3 below.

Hence, this study adopts an inter-disciplinary approach towards understanding visitors' affection about places. The arguments supporting the theoretical model presented later in this chapter are drawn from marketing, leisure, recreation and environmental psychology literature. The focus is particularly on the relationships and inter-relationships among constructs such as motives for choice, destination image, perceived service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement, satisfaction and future behaviour.

3.7.1 SERVICE INTERACTIONS

This section delineates the relationship between visitors' perceptions of service interactions with hotel employees and its influence on destination image, satisfaction and future behaviour. It is well accepted that the foundation of a successful tourism industry is dependent on visitors' positive perceptions of the guest-host interaction. In the services marketing literature, this interaction happens during the service encounter, which is defined as the time when the consumer interacts directly with the service provider (Shostack, 1985). Many (Normann, 1987; Bitner *et al.*, 2000) have termed this interaction as the 'moment of truth' or the human element of services (Czepiel *et al.*, 1985), and it is a dyadic interaction (Surprenant & Solomon, 1987) in which customers often develop unforgettable impressions of the service provider.

Winsted (1999) suggests that customers do not think about service encounters as general but instead think of them as industry specific and evaluate encounters for different industries quite differently. Specifically, service encounters in the tourism industry tend to involve a high level of human interaction, which require managers to understand these dynamics as they affect customers' assessment of their experiences (Stauss & Mang, 1999; Kandampully, 2000; Tsang & Ap, 2007). In evaluating service experiences, customers tend to compare their expectations with perceptions (Grönroos, 1984; Tsang & Ap, 2007), and expectations are either fulfilled or unrealised at the moment of truth depending partially on the quality of interactions. In fact, Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) suggest that personal interaction is the most important process dimension allowing companies to exceed customer expectations. Indeed, the critical time for customers to understand an organisation's service quality level is during one-to-one interaction (Brown *et al.*, 1991; Stauss & Mang, 1999). The nature of this interaction has been termed as 'personalisation' in the retailing industry and it intimately

influences customer perceptions of service quality. It refers to the manner in which service employees relate to customers as people (Mittal & Lassar, 1996).

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of service encounters in building a reputation for high service levels and achieving customer loyalty, there is still much to learn in terms of attributes used by customers to judge service providers' performance (Bowers *et al.*, 1994; Price *et al.*, 1995a,b; Tsang & Ap, 2007). Chandon *et al.* (1997) argue that service encounters have been analysed globally but more research is needed on the various components of the interactions and the ways in which they work together. Typically, multi-attribute models have been used to evaluate service encounters (Mossberg, 1995). One advantage of using such models is that attributes cover a wide range of factors related to service providers' performance, and can be easily and clearly measured. However, these models neither explicitly measure the perceived interaction quality of the experience nor acknowledge that cultural differences have an impact on service perceptions. As argued by a few authors (Bitner *et al.*, 1994; Mohr & Bitner, 1995), it is not only the functional outcome but also the meanings that consumers give to the social interactions taking place during the transaction that influence (perceived quality of interpersonal interaction) customer satisfaction with the transaction and the product itself.

These meanings are grounded in cultural differences between the service provider and service receiver. Tourism studies have recognised the importance of cultural differences and a few authors have focused their studies on the quality of the host-guest contact and its impact on perceptions of destinations, customer satisfaction and future behavioural intentions (Pizam & Sussman, 1995; Reisinger & Turner, 2002a,b; Butcher, 2005; Kozak & Tasci, 2005). Other studies have shown that service encounter interactions have an impact on perceptions of service quality as discussed above. Perceptions of service encounter interactions also influence customer satisfaction and future behavioural intentions (Farrell *et al.*, 2001). In particular, customer satisfaction depends directly and most immediately on the management and monitoring of individual service encounters (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Solomon *et al.*, 1985). Hence, it is this interpersonal relationship between service provider and customer which generates both positive (pleasure) and negative (anger, sadness) affective reactions that impact on satisfaction (Price *et al.*, 1995b).

However, this research is not aimed at assessing the service encounter experience as a whole. It is aimed at understanding tourists' recalled experiences of service encounter interactions

with contact personnel only, known as the 'personnel gap' in service encounter evaluations (Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Chandon *et al.*, 1997). This gap is the result of contact personnel of the service provider not showing or exceeding the level of competence, empathy, politeness or assistance that foreign customers expect (Solomon *et al.*, 1985). In particular, for this study contact personnel are defined as hotel employees given that visitors to Mauritius tend to be resort-based. Therefore, differing expectations, for example, might shape perceptions of what is considered to be polite, reliable and prompt service between visitors and the host (hotel employees). Consequently, the service receivers' perspectives are prioritised more than other perspectives in this research. As such, it focuses on the individual tourist role in the active construction and reconstruction of reality through interactions with others and the various meanings they attach to these interactions (Pillimore & Goodson, 2004). Hence, this study adopts a narrow definition of interaction in face-to-face encounters which has certain limitations (Svensson, 2006), and recognises that the latter encompasses more as Shostack (1985) suggests. This limited perspective is adopted because the focus of this study is not on service interactions in general, but interactions with a specific provider (the hotelier) in a holiday context and how these interactions influence other constructs.

3.7.1.1 Measuring Perceived Service Interactions

As discussed above, multi-attribute models have been used predominantly to evaluate the service encounter experience through a comparison of expectations and perceptions. But most of the existing dimensions have been interpreted differently in different cultures and industries (Mattila, 1999; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Svensson, 2006) with little consensus on a valid dimensional structure. The same applies to the measurement of perceived interactions with service providers. Traditionally, most studies have relied on the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985) as the conceptual framework for assessing the quality of interactions based on ten original dimensions. These dimensions were later refined to five (reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and all pertain to an evaluation of the human interaction element in service delivery (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Bitner *et al.*, 1990).

The model has been criticised for several deficiencies in its conceptualisation (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993, 1994) and operationalisation (Babakus & Boller, 1992). The main criticism with regards to dimensionality centres on the disconfirmation paradigm used by SERVQUAL. Carman (1990) suggests that "it is better to collect data in terms of the

perception/expectation difference directly rather than to ask about each separately" (p.44). It is also important to take into account the level of experience of the customer with the service and in the case of tourism destinations, the level of personal involvement of the visitor may influence importance ratings of dimensions. Also, the applicability of the SERVQUAL instrument to tourism services has been questioned (e.g. Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Teas, 1993; Ryan & Cliff, 1997; Ryan, 1999). The tourism experience is different from other experiences (e.g. retail) in the sense that tourists' have the opportunity of creating satisfaction by upgrading or downgrading experiences. They will engage in value displacement, that is, downgrading an unsatisfactory experience in terms of its contribution to overall holiday experience (Ryan, 1999). Arguably then tourism service encounters are different because of the nature of involvement of the tourist and a generic model like SERVQUAL is of limited value.

It seems that there is still no consensus in the services marketing and tourism literatures on the various dimensions that capture interactions between customer and service providers and there seems to be an overriding recognition that western or non-western customers conceptualise perceived interactions differently. In particular, Raajpoot (2004) identifies three sets of variables (personal values, national culture orientations, and sociodemographics) that seem to explain adequately why customers from non-western contexts attach more importance to one service interaction dimension over another. Other authors have sought to develop measurement of service interaction based on dimensions other than the SERVQUAL scale. In a restaurant setting, for example, Winsted (1999) found that customers use dimensions such as control, courtesy, formality, and promptness to evaluate service interactions. Price *et al.* (1995a,b) evaluated customer perceptions of interaction quality with tour guides on five dimensions, namely: mutual understanding, provision of extra attention, perceived authenticity, competency and meeting customer expectations. Chandon *et al.* (1997) identified four dimensions of interaction quality among French customers and service providers based on confirmatory factor analysis (competence, listening abilities, dedication, and effectiveness) from an initial pool of seventy-nine items. Mohr and Bitner (1995) proposed eight semantic differential scales to measure the construct (e.g. friendliness vs rudeness, attentiveness vs. inattentiveness, caring vs. disinterested, sensitive vs. insensitive, honest vs. dishonest, rigid vs. adaptive, right timing vs. wrong timing, extra information vs. no information).

Moreover, Farrell *et al.* (2001) came up with eleven dimensions from their review of the services marketing literature but incorporated the employees' perspectives in these dimensions. Their work is similar in conceptualisation to that of Winsted (1997, 1999, 2000) with added dimensions such as flexibility and spontaneity. Other key dimensions for measuring the construct include: expertise and competence of employees, service providers' positive attitude and demeanour (Czepiel et *al.*, 1985; Gronroos, 1990); friendliness, which is influenced by authenticity of the service providers' displays (Grandey *et al.*, 2005); and concepts such as conversation, generosity, politeness, and sincerity (Raajpoot, 2004). Many of these findings also suggest that the relative importance of these dimensions differed across nationalities and are mostly focused on positive aspects of the interaction. Negative experiences have been largely ignored except for Cronin (2003) who studied negative dimensions such as regret, resistance and equity in service quality evaluations.

In the tourism literature, the term 'social interaction' has been most often used to describe interactions between the host and guest in various settings such as hotels, group tours and restaurants. This conceptualisation has been broader than that of the general services marketing literature, given that hosts are defined as service providers and the general population. Nonetheless, authors have drawn from the service encounter literature. For example, Reisinger and Turner (2002a) define social interaction as 'the direct face-to-face encounters between tourists and hosts" (p.300). Reisinger and Turner (1997) accentuate the importance of understanding interactions between hosts and guests as it impacts on holiday satisfaction and ultimately the competitiveness of a destination. They highlighted that careful attention should be paid to patterns of personal relationships between host and guest in order to avoid tourists' perceptions of hosts not paying enough attention, not being respectful and not being interested in tourist affairs. However, measurement of social interaction has drawn upon literature from service quality, social rules and social contact.

Others have adapted the SERVQUAL dimensions to measure the various aspects of the tourism product. For example, Saleh and Ryan (1991) through the use of a modified SERVQUAL approach that focused on expressive service, found five dimensions (conviviality, tangibles, reassurance, avoid sarcasm, and empathy) defining service interactions. Similarly, Juwaheer (2004) identified five interactions related factors (reliability, assurance, staff communication, empathy, and staff outlook and accuracy) influencing tourists' perceptions of hotels operations in Mauritius. These findings suggest that there is no

standard model that can be applied either in tourism or services marketing literature to measure visitors' perceptions of employees' behaviour during service interactions. Arguably, a combination of dimensions from tourism specific studies and the broader dimensions of service encounter interactions might provide a better understanding of the construct.

3.7.1.2 Service Interactions & Cultural Differences

It has been noted that differences in perceptions of service interactions exist with respect to visitors' cultural background. For example, Tsang and Ap (2007) found significant differences between Asian and Western tourists on perceptions of relational quality service provided by guest-contact employees. The quality of interpersonal relationships in their study was a key determinant of Asian customers' service encounter evaluation, while western customers placed more emphasis on goal completion, efficiency and time savings. Differences across nationality groupings have also been documented. For example, Pizam & Sussman (1995) found that French visitors tend to keep to themselves and interact less with others while on holiday due to difficulties in communicating in English. They also tend to be more interested in commercial transactions than in people and tend to prefer their own cuisine. French customers also perceive relational qualities such as listening and dedication from service employees contribute more to an evaluation of the service encounter than functional qualities such as competence and reliability (Chandon *et al.*, 1997).

As for typical German tourists, they tend to prefer destinations which offer beautiful scenery, no mass tourism, familiarity, and good prices (Prebensen *et al.*, 2003). Germans tend to define customer service chiefly in terms of reliability but also place value on empathy and responsiveness from service employees (Witkowski & Wolfinbarger, 2002). Indian customers, for example, value functional elements such as competence, security, courtesy, responsiveness and how they feel during the service delivery (Keillor *et al.*, 2004). Radder and Wang (2006) found South African domestic business travellers' tend to value security and professionalism of staff when staying in guest houses. Indian and French business travellers have been found to value personalised service highly in their value judgements of luxury hotels (Mattila, 1999b). British and French customers tend to have different service expectations (Smith & Reynolds, 2001). British customers tend to be more courteous in comparison to Germans (Witkowski & Wolfinbarger, 2002). British and South African customers tend to have different service quality expectations and perceptions as far as airline

services are concerned (Prayag & Dookhony-Ramphul, 2006). Therefore, differences in expectations and perceptions of services exist across cultures.

3.7.1.3 Service Interactions & Destination Image

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between destination image and service quality (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Kotler *et al.*, 2003; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Castro *et al.*, 2005). Their findings seem to suggest that image is a direct antecedent of perceived quality of the destination given that destination image has a positive effect on evaluative variables such as 'perceived quality' and 'satisfaction'. However, none of these studies explicitly consider the interactive dimension of service quality, in particular when hotel employees interact with guests. Also, these studies measure service quality and destination image as an overall attitude as opposed to encounter specific perceptions. Another limitation is the use of only cognitive images in determining the relationship between these two variables. Castro *et al.* (2005) suggest that "it would be desirable to include an affective component…to achieve a complete picture of the relationship" (p.10).

However, the aim of this study is not to assess this relationship between service quality and destination image but rather to assess how interactions with hotel employees influence image, satisfaction and future behaviour of visitors. Many researchers allude to this relationship by incorporating attributes such as 'friendly people' or 'welcoming locals' in the measurement of cognitive images (Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Rezende-Parker *et al.*, 2003; Pike & Ryan, 2004; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005b; Lin *et al.*, 2007) but this is insufficient to establish any significant linkages. Similarly, perceptions of attributes such as 'quality of attractions', 'quality of accommodation' and 'quality of restaurants and excursions' are based on the tourist forming a favourable or unfavourable opinion of their interactions with service employees, thus influencing their ratings of certain image attributes but also the overall image of the destination.

It is expected that visitors' perceptions of hotel employees' behaviour will have an influence on destination image and this relationship will vary between first time and repeat visitors. For first time visitors, this influence will be based on expectations of the type of behaviour that hotel employees will display at the destination. These expectations can be shaped by word-of-mouth from other visitors, travel intermediaries or pull factors and may also influence motives for location and hotel choice. During visitation, visitors will experience these interactions and may consequently modify their image perceptions, which can influence satisfaction and future

behaviour. As for repeat visitors, their current visit may be due to previous positive interactions with hotel employees. Their current experiences will either reinforce positive image perceptions or modify their images of the destination. For example, Johnston (1995) found a positive relationship between interpersonal attributes such as attentiveness, care, friendliness and commitment of the service provider, and positive encounter experiences, which lead to positive repurchase intentions. Hence, hotel employees' perceived behaviour might influence destination image and motives for choice and in turn these may influence satisfaction and future behaviour. These relationships have not been explored in the literature and constitute a significant knowledge gap that this study will attempt to fulfil empirically.

Also, these relationships give recognition to the fact that service encounters are increasingly becoming understood by the experiential dimensions by which they are consumed (McIntosh, 1998). In particular, service interactions are emotionally laden experiences, where emotions act as an enhancer or amplifier of experiences, and these affect affective evaluation of the service encounter (Price *et al.*, 1995a). These interactions can also create intimacies within a place (Trauer & Ryan, 2005), which would explain why visitors return to the same destination. There is an element of emotional attachment that develops out of service interactions and this attachment not only stems from the people but also from the physical environment. Hence, this attachment that visitors develop with places and its people is discussed next.

3.7.2 ATTACHMENT TO PLACES

There is an ever growing body of literature in the environmental psychology, leisure and recreation fields exploring the nature and nuances of people's emotional relationships with places (Manzo, 2003). This relationship has been conceptualised in numerous ways and under various related terms (Moore & Scott, 2003), for example, 'sense of place' (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1980; Hay, 1998; Stedman, 2003a), 'place attachment' (Tuan, 1977; Low & Altman, 1992; Kaltenborn, 1998; Williams & Vaske, 2003; George & George, 2004; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2008), 'place belonging' (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Jones *et al.*, 2000), 'place bonding' (Hammitt *et al.*, 2006), 'place dependence' (Williams *et al.*, 1992; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993; George & George, 2004; Gross & Brown, 2008) and 'place identity' (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Lee, 2001; George & George, 2004; Gross & Brown, 2008). For example, sense of place has been described as "the meaning and importance of a setting held by an individual or group, based on an individual's and group's experience with the setting" (Stedman, 2003b, p.822). It is a "three component view that

weaves together the physical environment, human behaviours, and social and/or psychological processes" (Stedman, 2003a, p.671). A place therefore becomes a locus of selected meanings based on human experience, social relationships, emotions and thoughts (Tuan, 1977).

It is evident from these definitions of sense of place that visitors' emotional relationships to places could encompass a broad range of physical settings and emotions and that sense of place is not intrinsic to the physical setting itself, but resides in human interpretation of the setting, which are constructed through experience with it (Manzo, 2003; Stedman, 2003b). Also, underlying these conceptualisations is the idea that a sense of 'place' results from people attaching meaning to what otherwise would simply be 'space' (Moore & Scott, 2003). What begins as undifferentiated 'space' evolves into 'place' as we come to know it better and endow it with value (Tuan, 1977). Therefore, we turn space into place by imbuing space with meanings acquired through personal experiences we have had with places. These meanings are pluralistic and particularistic to that place and evolve over time as a result of continuous visitation or related experiences based on the intensity and quality of experiences (Hammitt & Stewart, 1996). Hence, people's relationships to places are an ever-changing, dynamic phenomenon, and as such, they can be a conscious process in which people are active shapers of their lives (Manzo, 2003).

People's emotional relationships to places also exist within a larger socio-political milieu (Manzo, 2003). Within this idea, sense of place develops as a result of social relationships embedded in the setting (Stedman, 2003b). "A place is essentially its people" (Relph, 1976, p.33) given that it is people who turn a 'blank' space into a 'meaningful' place against a backdrop of physical features of the environment. Kahn (1996) found that personal places are "continually created whenever meaningful social interactions take place" (p.194). Therefore, local people can represent the destination for some visitors and interactions with service providers, including hotel employees', can potentially inform the development of emotional attachments to a place. These give recognition to the social construction of places which will be discussed in the next chapter. Hence, as Fishwick and Vinning (1992) argued, "places are sensed as a combination of settings, landscape, ritual, routine, people, personal experiences, and in the context of other places" (p.61), where any of these elements may affect place related behaviours (Stedman, 2003b).

However, the relationship between sense of place and other constructs such as place attachment, and place belonging remains to be clarified given that these concepts are poorly articulated and often cannot be differentiated by their definitions (Stedman, 2003b). Some argue that sense of place, place dependence and place identity are forms of place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992; Williams *et al.*, 1992; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Brown & Raymond, 2007). Others suggested that sense of place is broader than place attachment and that the latter is a sub-dimension of the former (Hay, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2003a,b; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a). Still others argued that place attachment focuses on evaluation of places, while place identity is more concerned with the way in which places form identity (Moore, 2000). While recognising these conceptual disparities, in this study, place attachment which is defined as the emotional bond between an individual and a particular spatial setting (Williams *et al.*, 1992), is considered as the overarching concept. Place identity and place dependence are considered as two sub-dimensions of place attachment (Moore & Graefe, 2004; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; Brown & Raymond, 2007) and are discussed next.

3.7.2.1 Place Attachment as a Construct

In the environmental psychology, leisure and recreation literatures, the general consensus seems to be that places have both (i) functional meanings and attachments and (ii) emotional/symbolic meanings and attachments (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989). Therefore, place attachment has been defined as a "person-place bond that evolves from specifiable conditions of place and characteristics of people" (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983, p.221). It is "the extent to which a person values or identifies with a particular setting" (Moore & Scott, 2003, p.877). In this bond, symbolic meanings may range from the very personal to the publicly shared and may contribute to formation of attachment with that place. Similarly, emotional bonds may form with particular landscapes because their use has come to symbolise the users' sense of identity (Williams & Vaske, 2003). These bonds are generated through a variety of experiences and cognitions associated with individuals and/or groups (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002). But there is a growing recognition that recreationists may develop attachments to places that may be independent of site attributes or form attachments to a class of similar settings as well as to specific places (Williams *et al.*, 1992).

Existing models of place attachment are quite diverse and integrative, not only in method adopted but also in epistemology (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Kaltenborn, 1997; Hidalgo &

Hernandez, 2001; Lewicka, 2008) but at least two dimensions are almost consensually identified in the mainstream place attachment literature: place identity and place dependence (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle *et al.*, 2004b), thereby highlighting the complexity and multifaceted aspects of the construct (Kahn, 1996; Manzo, 2003; Pretty *et al.*, 2003). The literature also focuses on place as a source of rootedness, belonging and comfort, and the role of negative/ambivalent feelings and experiences are relatively less explored (McAndrew, 1998). The latter aspect could potentially explain why some visitors would not return to the same place. This is related to the possibility of a 'place indifference' dimension as suggested by some authors (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle *et al.*, 2003). Also, Tuan (1980) observed that respondents who were deeply attached to a setting held generational, social and cultural ties to a place while tourists and transients with limited residency were less inclined to report strong emotional ties. This is not necessarily true today where repeat visitation and 'second homes' in other countries could result in visitors developing strong affection for a destination despite short visits on each trip.

The application of place attachment theory to tourism is still in its infancy (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Some authors (Lee, 2001; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004; Gu & Ryan, 2008) make reference to place attachment or place and identity construction without explicitly acknowledging the nuances that exist for these terms. But only few studies (Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Alexandris *et al.*, 2006; Gross & Brown, 2008) apply the concept in a tourist destination context and use place identity and place dependence to measure place attachment. For example, Hwang *et al.* (2005), in the context of interpretation service in national parks in Taiwan, demonstrated that place attachment has a positive relationship with tourists' involvement and satisfaction. Hou *et al.* (2005) explored the relationship between enduring involvement, place attachment and destination attractiveness in the context of cultural tourist destinations in Taiwan. They found that involvement and destination attractiveness have a direct influence on place attachment but also an indirect influence of involvement on place attachment mediated by destination attractiveness.

Likewise, Alexandris *et al.* (2006) found that skiers' loyalty to a ski resort in Greece were significantly predicted by both place identity and place dependence and that place attachment was significantly predicted by the quality of interactions with employees and the physical environment. Gross and Brown (2008) examined the relationship between involvement and place attachment in the context of tourism experiences in South Australia. They found that

involvement was a positive predictor of place attachment but not all dimensions of involvement predicted either place identity or place dependence.

Altogether, these studies show that place attachment is closely related to personal involvement. In the leisure and recreation literature, involvement is perceived as an antecedent of place attachment (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b) while in the tourism field this relationship remains ambiguous with mixed findings. Nevertheless, place attachment in the context of a tourist destination, seems to involve an enduring commitment on the part of the visitor with regards to thoughts, feelings, and behavioural responses to a destination, probably arising from the perception that the destination meets important values and goals, fits the individual's personality and self-image, and offers him or her a pleasing and unique experience (George & George, 2004). Yet, the relative importance of place identity and place dependence may differ across individuals and across destinations, and may even influence the nature and scope of the experience sought. Hence, it can be argued that visitors develop different levels of attachment to a destination based on their experiences and their socio-demographic characteristics. Consequently, the second main proposition for this study is:

> **Proposition 2:** Different segments of visitors can be identified based on their attachment levels and socio-demographic characteristics.

It has also been argued that attachment levels may be influenced by certain motives. For example, potential visitors may seek nature as a temporary escape from the usual settings of their daily routines (Hartig *et al.*, 1991) and hence choose destinations that offer such products accordingly. Thus, visitors motivated by pull factors may develop place dependence while those motivated by push factors may tend to form place identity with a destination after their visit (George & George, 2004). Therefore, place attachment generally develops after one or more visits but it is possible to develop strong feelings for a place one has never visited (Moore & Graefe, 1994). Specifically, satisfactory experiences at each visit reinforce visitors' attachment to the place, which in turn might lead to revisit intentions and ultimately loyalty (George & George, 2004). Thus, it can be argued that first time visitors' attachment to a destination might be lower in comparison to repeat visitors. This is because the latter has more first-hand experiences derived from each visit, which 'thickens' such conceptualisations (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). Next, a discussion of place dependence and place identity follows.

3.7.2.2 Place Dependence

Place dependence (functional attachment) is defined as "how well a setting serves goal achievement given an existing range of alternatives" (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, p.234). It reflects the importance of a place in providing features and conditions that support specific goals or desired activities (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989). It is also a form of bonding associated with a particular place (Hammitt *et al.*, 2006) and places satisfying several needs typically lead to a more embedded, extensive or deep place dependence compared to places where fewer needs are met (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Hence, this functional attachment is embodied in the destination or area's physical characteristics (Williams & Vaske, 2003) and is strongly related to the perception that the setting possesses unique qualities (Williams *et al.*, 1992). Conceptually, it is a tendency to view the natural and social environment as a collection of attributes that permit need satisfaction, but place dependency puts more emphasis on the overall attachment to a specific place for enjoying a leisure or recreation pursuit than simply the suitability of setting attributes (Williams *et al.*, 1992).

In a tourism context, repeat visitors can be dependent on a destination or area because of its unique ability to facilitate desired experiences in terms of the physical environment but also in terms of the social relationships developed with people in that place. For example, George and George (2004) argued that satisfactory experiences along the cognitive dimension of service experiences may generate place dependency but also in course of time, the physical resources and attributes of a place due to their instrumental use value can lead to place dependency as well. Similarly, it can be argued that hotel employees' perceived behaviour can influence visitors' level of dependence to a place and repeated positive interactions eventually develops into attachment for that place or particular hotel.

However, functional attachment is not always necessarily positive (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Each alternative considered in the choice set can be negative yet the chosen option may be the best among the poor alternatives. This may not necessarily apply to a tourist destination where destination choice is made on the basis of perceived attractiveness and positive experiences expected. Nonetheless, negative functional attachment could potentially explain why first time visitors would not return to the same place.

3.7.2.3 Place Identity

Place identity often takes the form of place belongingness and is characterised by the "combination of attitudes, values, thoughts, beliefs, meanings, and behaviour tendencies reaching far beyond emotional attachment and belonging to particular places" (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983, p.61). It was originally conceptualised as a "cluster of positively and negatively valenced cognitions of physical settings" (p.62) but its operationalisation has focused on positive bonds. As such, place identity has been described as a component of self-identity that increases one's feelings of belonging to a place (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1980) and the setting enables individuals to both express as well as affirm their identity (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a). Its essence lies in the beholder's mind and is expressed through emotions, choices, and spatial behaviour (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002).

Place identity should not be confused with place identification given the latter is a sub-dimension of the former. Place identity is comparable to social identity that describes the person's socialisation with the physical world (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983) while place identification refers to a person's expressed identification with a place (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Place identity has also been described as an organic process in which "place is inextricably linked with the development and maintenance of continuity of self" (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, p.208). In other words, the person's construction of his or her self-identity includes that place or the place felt appropriate to one's self-identity. Hence, people choose environments that are congruent with their self-concept, modifying settings to better represent themselves and moving to find places which are more congruent with their sense of self. In this respect, identification with place is subsumed within place identity. This is conceptually similar to position involvement in the marketing literature, which refers to personal relevance of a brand name or geographical locale in choice decisions and is maintained when self-image is linked to brand preference (Pritchard *et al.*, 1999).

This aspect of the self in relation to place is receiving growing attention in the tourism literature (Chon, 1992; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Litvin & Goh, 2003; Beerli *et al.*, 2007). These studies suggest that there are multiple 'selves' and visitors choose destinations on the basis of the congruity between the destination's image and their self-image but this not the only choice variable. Previous experience and personal involvement can also influence this choice (Beerli *et al.*, 2007). However, it has been noted that self-congruity may be of lesser importance in choice decisions when visitors are familiar with the destination (Sirgy & Su, 2000), that is,

visitors may already have a sense of belonging to the place. Likewise, the affective dimension of service provision may also build up place identity (George & George, 2004). In other words, hotel employees' behaviour may contribute to position a destination as a place where visitors can expect high service and this may build place identity while influencing those seeking service excellence to revisit. Also, due to the socially constructed place, the expressive symbolic value of landscapes can build up to place identification (George & George, 2004) and a history of repeat visitation may also lead to place identity as well (Moore & Graefe, 1994).

3.7.2.4 Measurement of Place Attachment

As discussed above, place attachment has been measured using dimensions of place dependency and place identity predominantly in natural resources context (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000, 2002; Moore & Scott, 2003; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle *et al.*, 2004b), residential places (Kaltenborn, 1997; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2003a; Lewicka, 2008), and local communities (Hay, 1998; Pretty *et al.*, 2003; Hernandez *et al.*, 2007; Gu & Ryan, 2008). Researchers have found statistical relationships and common loadings of items on these different dimensions indicating a high degree of communality among dimensions (Pretty *et al.*, 2003). This can be expected when using a positivist tradition, where complex constructs are broken into precisely defined and measurable dimensions (Relph, 1976; Kaltenborn, 1997). These measurement issues are further discussed in the quantitative methodology chapter (chapter six).

3.7.2.5 Place Attachment & Destination Image

Except for the study of Hou *et al.* (2005) that assessed the relationship between destination attractiveness, involvement and place attachment empirically, no other studies in the tourism literature have assessed the relationship between place attachment and destination image. The discussion in the previous section leads to the argument that there is a great degree of conceptual similarity between place attachment and destination image given that both are attitude constructs. Both have cognitive and affective components and influence behaviour. In fact, Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) equate place identity with the cognitive component, place dependence with the conative component and place attachment with the affective component of attitude. Given that place attachment is an emotional reaction to a physical setting and that destination image is measured primarily through a list of attributes, it can be argued that destination image is an antecedent to place attachment. That is, the more favourable a

destination's image, the stronger will be place attachment, which would indicate a positive relationship between the two constructs. Also at a conceptual level, both constructs are complex, multi-faceted and dynamic. The same definitional problems that apply to destination image in the tourism and marketing literatures seem to hold true for place attachment in the environmental psychology, leisure and recreation literatures.

Another point of similarity between the two tends to be the relativistic nature of both constructs, in that place attachment can vary from visitor to visitor when exposed to the same destination, area, attraction or activity. But unlike destination image components that are hierarchically related, there is no evidence to suggest that the same holds true for place identity and place dependence. Both are also measured using multi-attribute models and the dimensionality does not always replicate itself across destinations. Hence, this relationship will be explored in this study.

3.7.3 PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AS A CONSTRUCT

The previous sections outlined the relationship between hotel employees' behaviour (hosts) and perceptions of the physical environment (destination image), which lead to feelings of attachment to a place. However, location itself is not enough to create a sense of place or to develop attachment to a place. It is through involvement between people, and between people and place that emotional bonds are formed (Pretty *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, related to the concept of place attachment is personal involvement. There are numerous and varied definitions and uses of the construct (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990). Most studies have conceptualised involvement in terms of personal relevance (Kyle & Chick, 2002), which implies that it reflects the degree to which a person devotes himself or herself to an activity or associated product (Zaichkowsky, 1985). It also refers to the strength or extent of the cognitive linkage between the self and the place. This is indicated by expressions emphasising the extent of a place's relatedness, connections or engagement to a visitors' self concept, needs, and values as determinants of involvement (Kyle & Chick, 2002).

Personal involvement is also based on the recognition that the same visitor may engage at various levels of involvement in social worlds related to their recreation and leisure pursuits (Scott & Godbey, 1992). This means that involvement as an attitude is formed and learned during interaction with the social environment (Sherif & Sherif, 1967) and shaped by individual differences and experiences (Madrigal *et al.*, 1992). Therefore, antecedents of involvement can be viewed as consisting of two general factors, individual characteristics and

social-situational influences (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998), which can be used to classify individuals and to predict attitudes and behaviours (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990, 1999). Hence, based on the above arguments, the third proposition of this study is:

Proposition 3: Different segments of visitors' can be identified based on their personal involvement levels and socio-demographic characteristics

Within the consumer behaviour literature, there is a distinction between three types of involvement. For example, Houston and Rothschild (1977) made a distinction between enduring and situational involvement. The former refers to a general attitude towards a product, service or activity, which for example, can be a low enduring involvement with wine. However, when placed in a situation of selecting a wine for a guest coming to dinner, the level of involvement with the wine purchase heightens substantially because of the importance and risk associated with that specific purchase decision. Vaughn (1980) distinguishes between rational and emotional involvement where the purchase of a holiday, for example, involves a higher level of emotional involvement as opposed to the purchase of groceries. A third distinction is personal involvement, which is associated with sign value. That is, in the purchase of a holiday, one is looking at the destination which best fits his or her personality. The destination purchased is a signifier that stands for much more than its intended use (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990). In this study, the focus is on personal involvement given its relationship with constructs such as place attachment and destination image.

Involvement in consumer behaviour, leisure, recreation and tourism fields has also been described as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal, or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product that is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation that possesses drive properties (Rothschild, 1984; Havitz & Howard, 1995; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003). It is a motivational state induced by an association between an activated attitude and the self concept (Johnson & Eagly, 1989). Therefore, individuals buying a holiday will tend to have a high level of involvement, and that they will spend greater amount of time and effort in the search, evaluation and choice of a destination. They will also compare selected destinations with their self-concept in reaching their final choice.

However, despite the recognition that involvement is an important motivator influencing tourists' decision making processes including destination choice, Gursoy and Gavcar (2003) highlighted that this aspect has received little attention. Of the few studies that exist, Josiam

et al. (1999) found that involvement levels are related to both push and pull factors, given that people who are motivated by the push and pull factors of the destination are more likely to be more involved with the concept of travelling to that destination. In another study, Josiam *et al.* (2005) confirmed that for tourist shoppers choosing shopping malls, involvement levels were consistently associated with both push and pull factors in a hierarchical manner. Respondents strongly motivated to shop by push and pull factors were consistently found to be highly involved shoppers and that involvement was a significant predictor of overall satisfaction with a shopping mall.

Evidence also suggests that different facets of involvement are likely to influence differently specific behaviours (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985) such as loyalty and satisfaction, but involvement does not systematically lead to expected differences in behaviour (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997). Hence, these relationships between the various facets and behaviours are not consistent and clear (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998). For example, Kyle *et al.* (2004a) found that there was a relationship between involvement and behavioural loyalty mediated by psychological commitment and resistance for change in the context of hikers. In their study psychological commitment was conceptually similar to place attachment, position involvement dimension was akin to place identity and resistance to change brand was arguably similar to place dependence.

Loyalty has historically been defined in attitudinal and behavioural terms, which indicates some similarity with personal involvement. Kim *et al.* (1997) suggests that this similarity in conceptualisation almost inevitably suggest that loyalty is subsumed within the notion of involvement. Therefore, visitors showing high levels of involvement should be more loyal towards a destination. This was also the case in Sparks's (2007) study of wine tourism vacation planning, where food and wine involvement significantly predicted intention to take a future wine trip. Hwang *et al.* (2005) found that involvement influenced satisfaction levels for interpretation service in national parks in Taiwan. Hence, these findings suggest that the degree of involvement, which can be viewed in affective terms, have behavioural consequences (Lehto *et al.*, 2004). Based on the above arguments, the fourth proposition for this study is:

Proposition 4: Loyalty levels of visitors are significantly influenced by motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, destination image, service interactions and overall satisfaction levels.

3.7.3.1 Measurement of Personal Involvement

It is generally agreed that the pioneering works of Zaichkowsky (1985) and Laurent and Kapferer (1985) have greatly contributed to the understanding of the involvement construct. The former developed the 'personal involvement inventory' (PII) while the latter devised the 'consumer involvement profile' (CIP) to measure personal involvement. However, the two scales differ in that the former argued that the construct is uni-dimensional, while the latter conceptualised it as multi-dimensional. Yet, Havitz and Dimanche (1997) concluded in their review of 50 leisure involvement studies that multifaceted scales have stronger content and face validity. But this multi-dimensionality remains the subject of much discussion and attention in the leisure and recreation literatures (Funk *et al.*, 2004). At the same time, there is growing recognition that the various components of involvement do not equally influence an individual's involvement profile and that different patterns of involvement exist according to activities, products, or individual characteristics but there is evidence of weaknesses in all instruments proposed and used to date (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997).

In leisure and recreation contexts, Dimanche *et al.*'s (1991) translation of the Consumer Involvement Profile (CIP) represents a benchmark with respect to dimensionality issues as this has been the most commonly used instrument. In particular, five dimensions are widely accepted as being representative of the construct. The first dimension "importance", refers to the interest in, or perceived importance of the activity or product. The perceived "pleasure" is the second dimension and refers to the value attributed to the activity or product. The perceived risk associated with the purchase or use of the product makes two sub-dimensions, risk probability and risk consequence. Risk probability refers to the perceived probability of making such a mistake (Dimanche *et al.*, 1991) while risk consequence refers to the perceived importance of negative consequences in poor choice. The fifth dimension "sign", refers to the symbolic or sign value attributed by the consumer to the product, its purchase, or its consumption (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985).

However, McIntyre (1989) and McIntyre and Pigram (1992) have shown the merger of the importance and pleasure facets into an attraction facet in leisure settings. That is, attraction does not necessarily indicate high involvement unless the enjoyable activities are also deemed important and meaningful to the individual (Kyle *et al.*, 2004b). Together these dimensions provide an insight into the overall relevance or meaning of an activity, product or experience in the context of an individual's life.

In the tourism field, previous research (Jamrozy *et al.*, 1996; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2005) indicates that the application of CIP at the destination level results in different number of dimensions. For example, Jamorzy *et al.* (1996) utilised both PII and CIP scales to determine each scale's multidimensionality and applicability to travellers interested in nature based tourism and found that only four dimensions of the original CIP scale was replicated and that the performance of the risk dimensions was poor suggesting that the construct is not captured in the scale. They also suggested that the importance/pleasure dimension of either scale might be sufficient to predict opinion leadership. Gursoy & Gavcar (2003) found only three dimensions (pleasure/interest, risk probability and risk consequence) to be relevant when international visitors considered the purchase of a vacation.

To the contrary, Hwang *et al.* (2005) found all five dimensions of the original scale to be applicable to national park visitors. However, recently a growing number of studies applying PII scale in tourism settings to predict information preferences (Cai *et al.*, 2004) or to segment tourist shoppers (Josiam *et al.*, 2005) have appeared along with studies using McIntyre's and Pigram (1992) involvement scale to measure attachment to cultural tourism destination (Hou *et al.*, 2005), to predict future intention for wine tourism (Sparks, 2007) and attitude towards tourism experiences (Gross & Brown, 2008). Hence, as many have suggested, there is a lack of a standardised instrument available for personal involvement measurement in the tourism literature (Dann *et al.*, 1988; Jamrozy *et al.*, 1996; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Lehto *et al.*, 2004).

2.9.3.2 Personal Involvement & Place Attachment

With regards to the relationship between personal involvement and place attachment, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that involvement is an antecedent of place attachment (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b). These authors hypothesised that each dimensions of personal involvement would have a positive and significant effect on the dimensions of place attachment. However, similar to others, they found that not all dimensions of involvement are related to place

attachment. For example, Moore and Graefe (1994) indicated that involvement was only related to place identity. Using McIntyre's scale (1989), Kyle *et al.* (2003) showed that there was no variation in the effect of involvement on place attachment for four groups of hikers but there was variation among the dimensions of involvement and place attachment. For example, place identity was predicted by attraction and self expression components while place dependence was only predicted by self-expression. In a later study, Kyle *et al.* (2004b) confirmed that for hikers, boaters, and anglers, the effect of involvement on place attachment differed. For example, for hikers place dependence was predicted by both attraction and centrality while for boaters, involvement was not a significant predictor of place dependence. Overall their results suggested that involvement was a better predictor of place identity than of place dependence.

In line with the above, Gross and Brown (2008) in their study of tourists experiences in South Australia found that attraction (importance & pleasure) was a negative predictor for place dependence, and had no statistically significant predictive relationship for place identity. In contrast, Hwang *et al.* (2005) found that all dimensions of the CIP scale had positive effects on place attachment, perceived service quality and interpretation satisfaction. Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) found that intensity of involvement is an excellent predictor of place attachment. Hence, these findings illustrate the complexity of using multi-dimensional constructs in predicting individual's attachment to places and activities and support the value of combining place attachment and personal involvement as a means to understand tourist experiences of a destination.

3.7.3.3 Personal Involvement, Place Attachment & Destination Image

Currently there is no study in the tourism literature that has examined concurrently the relationships between destination image, personal involvement and place attachment except for Hou *et al.* (2005) who use destination attractiveness for measuring core and augmented attributes of a destination and McIntyre's and Pigram scale for measuring personal involvement. Their results suggest that enduring involvement and destination attractiveness are two antecedents of destination attachment and that involvement also has an indirect effect on attachment through attractiveness. Specifically, Prentice *et al.* (1998) argued that highly involved cultural tourists appear to perceive more personal relevance from their experiences while low involvement might dampen enjoyment of the symbolic potential of the destination.

This suggests that visitors' with high involvement levels are more likely to rate favourably destination image in comparison to low involvement visitors.

There is also some support in the tourism literature that positive perceptions of destination attributes can predict place attachment (Lee & Allen, 1999; Lee, 2001) while in the context of a cultural destination both Prentice *et al.* (1998) and Hou *et al.* (2005) indicated that various dimensions of attractiveness had different impacts on visitors' attachment. It appears that some destination attributes may lead to increased place dependence, whereas others may lead to increased place identity. Therefore, it can be argued that the same relationships exist in a holiday experience context where involvement has a positive effect on destination image and both constructs have a positive influence on place attachment. Hence, the fifth proposition of this study is:

> **Proposition 5:** Overall image of a destination is significantly influenced by image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement.

However, the relationship between place attachment, personal involvement, destination image and overall satisfaction is less well defined in the literature. While Hwang *et al.* (2005) established a positive relationship between place attachment and overall satisfaction, the relative influence of other attributes in this study on overall satisfaction remains an area to be explored. Therefore, the sixth proposition of this study is:

> **Proposition 6:** Overall satisfaction with a destination is significantly influenced by destination image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement.

3.7.3.4 Repeat Visitation

Repeat visitation to a destination has been explained by various factors such as satisfaction levels (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Ryan, 1995; Kozak, 2003; Petrick, 2004; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007), personal involvement on previous trips (Lehto *et al.*, 2004), emotional attachment (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lee & Allen, 1999; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; Alegre & Cladera, 2006), destination image (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008), demographics and travelling characteristics of visitors (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Oppermann, 1997; Alegre & Cladera, 2006), familiarity (Oppermann, 1998;

George & George, 2004; Lau & McKercher, 2004), motivation factors (Lau & McKercher, 2004) and in terms of socialisation with others (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992).

Specifically, it has been argued that the behaviour of repeat visitors is different to those of first time visitors (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Oppermann, 1998; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Alegre & Cladera, 2006). For example, it has been argued that repeat visitors have higher levels of emotional attachment to a destination (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). This is because satisfactory experiences can reinforce visitors' attachment to a place, which in turn might cause more visits, ultimately leading to dedicated patronisation of the destination (George & George, 2004). But also, visitors emotionally involved with a destination are possibly more environmentally and socio-culturally responsible and might be less price conscious. They may complain less and recommend more irrespective of whether they revisit the destination themselves or not (George & George, 2004). Likewise, Sparks (2007) found that personal involvement influenced behavioural intentions to undertake a wine related vacation in the future. Therefore, it can be argued that current levels of personal involvement of first-time visitors can be used to explain whether they are likely to be repeat visitors.

Moreover, positive images of a destination have been shown to explain why visitors come back (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007). In terms of motivation, repeat visitors tend to come back for motives of relaxation and escape provided by a familiar environment while first time visitors are motivated by novelty and exploration (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lau & McKercher, 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that whether first-time visitors become repeat visitors can be explained by fulfilment of their motives for choice of a destination. However, Burns and Holden (1995) suggest that while tourists may return to a favoured location at a destination, the motives and experiences are never the same. That is, each visit generates new patterns of inter-tourist interaction and tourist-host relationship, making the experience different from previous ones. This arguably is the 'novelty' motive for repeat visitors. Nevertheless, visiting family and friends and interacting with local people have been found to be important motivating factors for repeat visitation (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992). Therefore based on the above discussion the following proposition is made:

Proposition 7: Whether current visitors would become repeat visitors can be significantly predicted by their current perceptions of destination image attributes, service interactions, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, overall satisfaction levels, demographic and travelling characteristics.

3.8 PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL

The literature review above informs the proposed theoretical model (Figure 3.1) for this study. The model describes 17 relationships among 7 constructs. These relationships and the relevant supporting literature are described below. All constructs will be measured as perceptions.
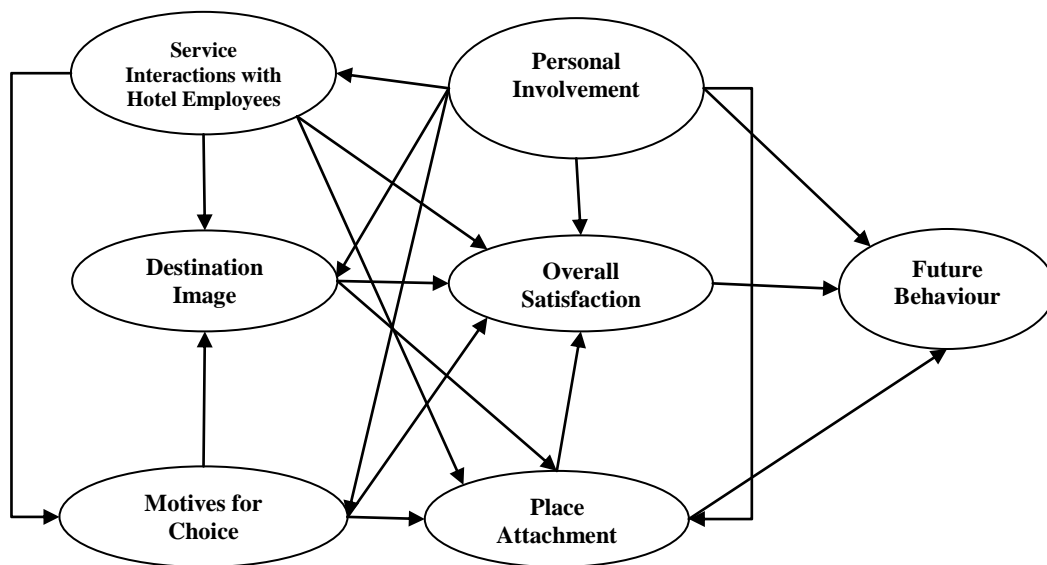
Figure 3.1 Proposed theoretical model

For resort based destinations like Mauritius, hotel employees often symbolise the 'local people' for international visitors. Therefore, international visitors' interactions with employees are expected to influence how they rate for example, friendliness of people and level of service. In this respect, the perceived behaviour of hotel employees during these interactions will influence perceptions of destination image and motives for choice in the case of repeat visitors. Farrell *et al.* (2001) suggest that these interactions also influence satisfaction. Hence, based on the arguments above the following three sequences can be established in the model: service interactions with hotel employees→ destination image, service interactions with hotel employees→ motives for choice, service interactions with hotel employees→ overall satisfaction. Also, Trauer and Ryan (2005) argued that interactions with

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service providers create intimacies within a place, which suggest some level of attachment to a place. Stedman (2000) found that intensity of social network involvement (number of others in the local setting considered as close friends) has a strong effect on attachment. By extension, another sequence that can be established is: service interactions with hotel employees→ place attachment.

The relationship between destination image, satisfaction and future behaviour is relatively well explored. The following sequence has been established in the literature (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008): destination image→ satisfaction→ future behaviour and therefore replicated in this study. Likewise, Hou *et al.* (2005) established a positive relationship between destination attractiveness and place attachment. Destination attractiveness was measured by a cognitive list of attributes. Arguably, destination image will have a similar influence on place attachment. Further support for this relationship can also be found in the environmental psychology literature where it is argued that place attachment is an emotional reaction to a physical setting (Stedman, 2000), and destination image being measured as a list of physical and psychological attributes would purport to have an impact on the construct. Lee and Allen (1999) and Lee (2001) also contend that destination attributes can predict place attachment. Hence, another sequence that can be established in the proposed model is: destination image→ place attachment.

The literature has also established that push and pull factors are important for predicting satisfaction and destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Although Yoon and Uysal's study used a small number of indicators to represent push and pull factors, their results suggested an important link between motivations and future behaviour. Likewise, Sparks (2007) also found evidence that push and pull wine tourism beliefs are related to future intention to partake in wine tourism. Therefore, another sequence that can be established is: motives for choice→ overall satisfaction→ future behaviour. Martin and del Bosque (2008) suggest that psychological factors (motives) influence image that individuals have of a tourist destination before visiting it. That is, image is often intertwined with the tourists' desired benefits from that destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Thus, another sequence that can be established is: motives for choice→ destination image. Destination perceptions together with motivations can result in the formation of affect towards a place (Prentice *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, an additional sequence that can be proposed is: motives for choice→ place attachment.

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As for the influence of personal involvement on other constructs, Dimanche and Havitz (1995) found that attraction, risk probability and risk consequences were all significant predictors of service quality. In particular, risk probability and attraction affected the interactive dimension of service (empathy and responsiveness) perceptions. Based on this evidence, it can be argued that personal involvement can influence perceptions of service interactions. Hence, another sequence that can be established is: personal involvement→ service interactions with hotel employees. Personal involvement in the consumer behaviour literature has also been described as an unobservable state of motivation (Havitz & Howard, 1995; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003). Therefore, it can be argued that it will influence motives for choice. Evidence of this relationship can be found in the works of Josiam *et al.* (1999) and Josiam *et al.* (2005) where these authors found that involvement were related to push and pull factors and was a significant predictor of overall satisfaction.

Hou *et al.* (2005) established a positive relationship between enduring involvement and destination attarctiveness. By extension a similar relationship is inferred between personal involvement and destination image. Likewise, Hwang *et al.* (2005) established a positive relationship between personal involvement and satisfaction in the context of interpretation service in Taiwanese national parks. However, Lankford *et al.* (1996) found that only sign dimension was significantly correlated with satisfaction scores for wave surfing Japanese tourists in Hawaii. Thus, there is no conclusive evidence on the relationship between personal involvement and satisfaction. As a result of these evidences, the following relationships can be formulated: personal involvement→ motives for choice, personal involvement→ destination image and personal involvement→ overall satisfaction.

Similarly, personal involvement can also be used to predict attitudes and behaviours (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990, 1997). Specifically, Kyle *et al.* (2004a) found that a relationship existed between involvement and behavioural loyalty in the context of hiking along a trail. Sparks (2007) found that food and wine involvement significantly predicted intention to take a future trip. However, Kim *et al.* (1997) in the context of bird watching, using the CIP scale found that perceived risk was negatively related to future intentions to go birding. Therefore, inconclusive evidence exists on the relationship between personal involvement and future behaviour, but the sequence is included in the theorised model (personal involvement→ future behaviour).

Likewise the relationship between place attachment and personal involvement is well established in the literature (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008). It seems that personal involvement is an antecedent of place attachment and based on the study of Kyle et al. (2004a) the following sequence can be established: personal involvement→ place attachment→ future behaviour. However, the relationship between place attachment and satisfaction remains ambiguous (Stedman, 2003b). George and George (2004) suggest that satisfactory experiences at each visit reinforce visitors' attachment to a place, which in turn affect future behaviour. Hwang *et al.* (2005) found that place attachment influences satisfaction with interpretation service at national parks. Given that the latter study confirmed this occurrence using structural equations modelling, this is the relationship adopted in this study (place attachment → overall satisfaction).

The discussion above establishes the direction of posited relationships among the variables in the theoretical model using the literature as the building block. There is currently no study that considers all of these relationships simultaneously. Hence, the eighth proposition for this study is:

Proposition 8: There are significant relationships among constructs such as destination image, perceived service interactions, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, satisfaction and future behaviour.

Therefore, a significant aspect of this research is to establish the validity of this model in a tourist destination context, which will also inform the theoretical contributions of this study to the broader literature.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The body of literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that there are four major gaps. First, for resort based destinations, the influence of the interactive dimension of service on visitors' perceptions of place, motives for destination choice and place attachment is lacking. Second, the influence of personal involvement and place attachment on visitors' motives and perceptions of places is relatively underexplored. Third, identifying cultural differences in perceptions based on visitors' nationality is well explored while the use of ethnicity and language spoken as indicators of cultural differences remain underexplored. Fourth, there is currently no study that has assessed simultaneously the relationship among these variables and their impact on satisfaction and future behaviour. Having established these knowledge gaps, the chapter thereafter progressed to model building where the direction of each posited relationship was described. In conclusion, the theoretical model devised in this chapter seeks to answer the research questions presented in chapter one and also informs subsequently the method of data collection as described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4~ QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN & ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the qualitative research design and methods of analysis. The first section provides the justification for choosing interviews as the method of data collection in this phenomenology-based methodology. This is followed by a description of the questions that were asked to visitors. Thereafter, personal construct theory as the basis for the choice of the relevant sample size is discussed. The final section of this chapter deals with the forms of analysis undertaken with the data.

4.2 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Given the great potential for interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing or bricolage, where borrowing seems useful, richness enhancing, or theoretically heuristic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), an issue that the researcher must address in the research design is the method. The social constructionist using phenomenology seeks an in-depth understanding of individual experiences and the resulting behaviours from the perspective of the tourists. Phenomenology offers a number of methods to gather data for example, participant observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews (Jennings, 2001). In-depth interviews along with participant observation or document analysis are favoured tools in an interpretivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study uses the in-depth interview as the method for data collection. The use of in-depth interviews in a phenomenology-based methodology relies on the ability of the tourist to articulate and recall the salient dimensions of their encounters and experiences during their visit (McIntosh, 1998). At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of the experience. Within in-depth methods, the semi-structured interview was adopted. Such interviews should start with holistic contextual questions in order to make interviewees comfortable and to set the context for the interview (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972; Jennings, 2001). Some of the advantages using this type of interview include:

(i) Multiple realities can be determined since it does not constrain the participant to follow the researcher a priori reasoning.

(ii) Detailed information regarding attitudes, opinions and values may be elicited.

(iii)Interview probes can be altered to follow the path the interviewee is focused on pursuing.

(iv) Verbal and non-verbal cues can be recorded for further analysis.

However the disadvantages must be acknowledged:

(i) Replication is impossible since the social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is a snapshot view of the interaction influenced by the type of day, the setting of the interview, and the social circumstances surrounding both the interviewer and the interviewee.

(ii) The researcher can undermine the quality of the data if interviewing skills are not good and does not probe or follow leads adequately, or bias the data by pursuing only one particular line of prompting. (Jennings, 2001, p.166-167)

(iii) There is also the danger of selecting only the articulate participants but the latter does not necessarily have the same views as the inarticulate ones.

In semi-structured interviews, the tourists are perceived as storytellers who reflectively narrate their heightened experiences through interactions with objects, places and people (Obenour *et al.*, 1996). Given the nature of the study, it was considered appropriate to conduct interviews in an environment conducive to respondent full participation that would minimise constrained answers and establish rapport. Consequently, respondents were interviewed in the departure hall (check-in) at Sir Sewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport, which is the only airport in Mauritius. Permission for access to the premises was sought from Airports of Mauritius Limited (AML), which specified the hall where the researcher could have access to. While recognising that this is not the most comfortable venue for interviews, the location was chosen because:

(i) At this stage, the experience of the destination for the visitor is almost complete. Therefore, data collected is not based on partial experiences.

(ii) Visitors are able to recall their experiences as they are still fresh in the mind and are able to give global evaluations of the place based on the previous point made.

(iii) Visitors have the time to allocate to the tasks required of them as there is no other urgent matter to attend.

(iv) The location provided a variety of respondents in terms of nationalities, ethnicities and languages spoken.

Respondents were approached on a random basis, on four days of the week including Saturday and were given an information sheet that outlined the nature of the study and sought their consent for participation. Respondents were screened on their nationality as the first step in the interview in order to get the targeted nationalities. If they were not part of the desired sample, the respondent was thanked and the interviewer proceeded to find the next respondent. If the respondent was of the desired nationality, his or her demographic and traveling characteristics were recorded. No incentive was provided for participation. The interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes on average.

Also, given time constraints available for respondents to participate in the study (international visitors are required to be at the international airport in Mauritius at least two to three hours prior to departure), the semi-structured interview was limited to five broad questions derived from the literature review, previous discussion of the social constructionist approach, and phenomenological research as a methodology. Bearing in mind that using phenomenology requires the interviewer to bracket out previous conceptualizations of constructs, the questions were broad in nature. In particular these questions were derived from the studies of Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), Ryan (2000), Ryan and Cave (2005), and Prebensen (2007). The open-ended questions were as follows:

(1) What made you choose Mauritius for holidays?

This question sought to identify the salient factors that led to the choice of Mauritius as a tourist destination and also the cognitive images of Mauritius. It was also aimed at identifying the social factors that informed the choice of the destination.

(2) How do you feel about the place?
This question was aimed at identifying visitors' affective images, in particular, auras and psychological attributes of a destination but also their emotional attachment to the place and its people.

(3) Have you had any positive or negative experiences dealing with hospitality employees (e.g. hotels, restaurants and tourists attractions)? If so, what were they?
This question sought to identify the salient dimensions that tourists use to evaluate the service encounter. This question also relates to the critical incident approach (Bitner *et al.*, 1990) that focuses on extremely positive and negative service experiences at the moment of truth to elicit dimensions of service experiences.

(4) Have you seen any example of good service interaction not just for yourself but for others as well? If so, what were they?

This question sought to identify the influence of ethnicity, language and nationality on evaluations of service interactions, as well as the influence of other tourists on perceptions, once answers were analysed with reference to these variables. It also directly obtained data as to what was perceived as good service interaction by asking a supplementary question as to the provision of examples.

(5) Have you seen any example of bad service interaction not just for yourself but for others as well? If so, what were they?

The same theoretical justifications as the previous question account for inclusion of the above question. This question focuses on bad service and the researcher expected to identify future behavioural intentions out of responses from participants in combination with responses from the previous questions.

These questions were translated in French by the researcher, who is also proficient in the language and the translation was checked by two academics from the University of Mauritius for its accuracy in meaning and context. Interviews were conducted in English and French.

4.3 PERSONAL CONSTRUCT THEORY & SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size was chosen based on personal construct theory. Basically, this is a set of techniques derived from clinical psychology that seeks to uncover how individuals view the world while placing as few constraints as possible on the way they communicate their views (Walmsley & Young, 1998). This method of choosing the sample size fits in the phenomenological research stance adopted in this study and further ties in with a social constructionist approach. Personal construct theory is built around the individual perspective, but it is not to say the social constructionist is lacking. Instead, personal construct theory evolves based on how the individual sees reality and constructs his or her social world. The two concepts are intertwined (Andereck *et al.*, 2006). It is assumed that tourist experiences are essentially individualistic but it is possible to capture the complexity of and the inter-linkages of so called real experiences, by discerning consensual realities that embrace these dimensions (Ryan & Cave, 2005).

Kelly (1955) is one of the pioneers of this method and he defines constructs as the qualities that people attribute to the objects to be considered in a study. "Essentially, the theory postulates that individuals in interacting with the people and places around them, generate expectations about what those people and places are like. They then make predictions about what will happen in people-people and people-place interaction" (Walmsley & Lewis, 1984, p.51-52). The theory argues further that "humans are able to communicate by reason of shared meanings and that for most part, the underlying dimensions of those constructs of understanding are few in numbers. Consequently, in any series of interviews, a researcher will find repetition of common ideas, and this is particularly true when the questioning comprises a common structure" (Ryan & Cave, 2005, p.145). The term repertory grid is used to describe the set of elements, and by implication, the scores ascribed to the elements for each construct in the grid (Anderson, 1989). This method has been successfully applied to destination image studies by various authors such as Walmsley and Young (1998), Walmsley and Jenkins (1993), and Pike (2003).

According to this method, sample sizes of 20 to 25 are sufficient for exploratory studies of this nature. Consequently, a convenience sample of 100 respondents, made of 20 British, 20 South Africans, 20 Indians, 20 French and 20 Germans, was initially targeted given that such a sample would offer a broad range of nationalities, ethnicities and languages spoken. These three variables being used as proxies for measurement of cultural differences in perceptions in this study. The eventual sample size was 103 respondents with two extra South Africans and one German being interviewed. The interviews lasted for two months from April to May 2007.

4.4 FORMS OF ANALYSIS

Initially, the plan was to tape record all interviews, but this was deemed inappropriate after the first few interviews given the high noise level in the check-in hall. Consequently, verbatim hand notes were taken by the researcher and supplemented by the researcher's own observations and mental notes. A two-pronged strategy was employed for data analysis. First, thematic analysis was carried out to identify pertinent themes in the data. This was to fit with the social constructionist approach discussed earlier on. Second, the data was coded to enable analysis using CATPAC - a neural network software. This was part of the triangulation approach to enhance the credibility of interpretation of the data. Triangulation limits personal and methodological biases and enhances a study's trustworthiness (Decrop, 1999). Also, this

'quantification' of the data using CATPAC fits within the realm of a post-positivistic approach.

4.4.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis involves writing thick descriptions and describing the data extensively while compiling them in an orderly way so as to give other researchers the opportunity to appraise the findings and also the extent to which they could be transferred to other settings (Decrop, 2004). In particular, analysis of phenomenological based data starts with identification of patterns of meaning which are then transformed into themes (Larkin *et al.*, 2006). Despite its widespread use as a technique to analyse qualitative data, there is still no clear agreement about what thematic analysis entails and how it is done (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These authors recommend mainly five broad steps in conducting thematic analysis.

STEP 1: Familiarize yourself with the data – reading and re-reading of the data, noting down initial ideas.

At this stage, verbatim notes were analysed directly within each individual and across individuals. Statements that were limited to individual cases were put aside and only those that were confidently based on the data and present in more than 25% of participants were maintained. It was found that choice factors were broadly similar to those reported in the literature but also broad categories of cognitive and affective images could be identified. Some commonality could also be identified in terms of good and bad service experiences reported by international visitors. This stage was simply to produce a coherent, third person and psychological informed description of participants' views of their choice factors and images of Mauritius as well as their interactions with hotel employees.

STEP 2: Generating initial codes – coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

After the crucial stage of familiarization and immersion within the data, the researcher used coloured markers to 'code' the verbatim notes into categories. These categories were devised both inductively and deductively. That is, categories were formed initially without any reference to the theoretical framework presented in previous chapters. Once these categories were formed, they were compared to existing literature to identify similarities and differences. It was evident that consensual truths existed on the various perceived image and service interactions dimensions.

STEP 3: Searching for themes – collating categories into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

For each category that was devised, the researcher once again immersed himself in the data and further scrutinised it to identify interrelationships and hierarchies among these categories (Thomas, 2004). This process led to the identification of potential themes and latent themes. For example, it was evident that level of interaction with hotel employees was dependent on the level of personal involvement of the visitor to the destination experience. This process also enabled the identification of interrelationships and hierarchies among the themes within the individual categories.

STEP 4: Reviewing themes – checking if themes work in relation to coded data and generating a thematic map of the analysis.

This step was undertaken and the results of which are presented in the next chapter. Of particular importance within this step, was to ensure that themes and latent themes made theoretical sense and that they were coherent with the notes taken.

STEP 5: Defining and naming themes – ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Building of the previous step, the themes and latent themes were refined to the extent that the linkages between the themes, sub-themes and latent themes were concise and clear. The direction of linkages between themes was also cross-checked with the original notes to ensure credibility of interpretation.

4.4.2 CATPAC

The original verbatim notes were then entered into an excel spreadsheet with each column representing a question and each row representing a participant. This tabulation of the data enabled them to be imported into CATPAC. This neural network software reads the text, uses an artificial neural network to develop relationships between words and produces a dendogram and/or a perceptual map of the main ideas in the text (Lockyer, 2005). While the dendogram describes the relationships between the most common occurring concepts and is derived using clustering algorithms, the perceptual map is a graphical representation of the derived relationships showing clusters of concepts in either 2D or 3D. CATPAC still remains

under-utilised as a software for textual analysis but its application in the tourism field is growing. Recent applications include analysis of tourist experiences (Ryan, 2000), hotel selection (Lockyer, 2005) and destination images (Ryan & Cave, 2005; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006, 2008; Choi *et al.*, 2007; Govers *et al.*, 2007).

Initially, the researcher and his supervisor independently analysed the data using CATPAC and met together with the two sets of results to establish consensus about the findings. This analysis attempted to understand the participants' experiences independent of any prior view of the researcher, focusing on experiences from the point of view of participants without considering how well they conformed or not to the researcher's preconceptions. CATPAC identifies the most frequent words used in the textual data and establishes relationships among them setting aside such auxiliaries as articles, prepositions, and pronouns by placing them in an 'exclude file' (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). The researcher can also specify excluded words (Govers *et al.*, 2007). The software uses a clustering algorithm to produce a dendogram showing these relationships. However, before the analysis was run a 'smoothing out' process was undertaken to ensure that spelling of key words such as 'friendliness and 'socialise' were consistent across all text files. Multi-word concepts such as 'value for money' and 'service level' were changed into a one-word format for further counting. Plural nouns were converted into singular form (e.g. 'beaches' into 'beach') and counting synonyms as one word (e.g. 'friendly', 'amicable' were counted as 'friendliness') to reinforce the concept.

The output generated by CATPAC is dependent on specifying parameters such as 'number of unique words', 'window sizes' and 'slide size'. The 'unique word' parameter sets the number of unique words that the researcher wants in the analysis and it is also the number of words that will appear in the dendogram. The 'window size' parameter indicates the number of words that CATPAC would read at a time. The 'slide size' parameter dictates how many words the window will skip prior to reading the text (Woelfel, 1998). The default starting parameters in CATPAC are: Unique Words 25; Window Size 7; and Slide Size 1.

In effect, there is a manipulation of these parameters by the researcher to obtain an easy set of words in the dendogram for interpretation. Like any software package, CATPAC does not produce answers, it produces frameworks set by responses evaluated by the researcher. Therefore manipulation of 'window size' for example, helps the researcher to evaluate and interpret the responses. These manipulations can also be justified in terms of language used by participants to describe their experiences. In some instances, participants use few words

while in other they use many. Therefore language itself is flexible and is a verbal organisation of symbols to convey meanings. Hence, to expect a 'one size, one solution' for every analysis of text in CATPAC would be simplistic. These parameters are manipulated to generate a comprehensive assessment of the text.

Based on the results, it was relatively easy to identify the relationships between the words that collated together in the dendogram but where it was more difficult to establish consensus on the results, the original data were scrutinised to get a better understanding of these relationships. The data were first analysed for the whole sample, then analysed by nationality, ethnicity and language spoken. This was followed by a more interpretative analysis which involved positioning the initial 'themes' and the results of CATPAC in relation to a wider social, cultural and theoretical context.

CHAPTER 5~ QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the findings of the qualitative research. The results are based on a sample of 103 international tourists. The chapter begins with a brief description of the demographic and tripographic profile of participants. Then, the results of thematic analysis and textual analysis using CATPAC are presented. Thereafter, the findings are discussed and the relevant implications are drawn. The chapter concludes with limitations of this phase of the study and some reflexivity on behalf of the researcher.

5.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The demographic and tripographic characteristics of the sample are as follows. The interviews polled on average older respondents given that the mean age of the sample was 40.3 years old. There were more males (56.3%) than females (43.7%). The nationalities of the 103 interviewees were: 20 British, 20 French, 20 Indian, 21 German, and 22 South Africans. The overwhelming majority of interviewees were Caucasian (70.3%) with the rest being either of Indian (26.2%) or Black (2.9%) ethnicity. These international visitors stayed on average 11.1 days in Mauritius and 96 out of the 103 interviewees could speak English. The other languages spoken by interviewees were: French, German, Hindi, Afrikaans, Spanish, Italian, Zulu, Xhosa, Tamil, and Punjabi. The British sample could speak the least number of other languages compared to participants of other nationalities.

5.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF DESTINATION IMAGE QUESTIONS

Thematic analysis was undertaken using the six-step approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) described in the previous chapter. Of the five broad questions developed in the previous chapter, two aimed at assessing image perceptions of visitors. The first question was aimed at uncovering motives and images that led to the choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination. The results indicated four dominant themes in the data: '3S Appeal of the Place', 'The Familiar Place', 'People of the Place', and 'The Romantic Place'. Each of these major themes had associated sub-themes described below.

5.3.1 SUN, SAND AND SEA (3S) APPEAL OF THE PLACE

Many visitors mentioned 'sun', 'sand' and 'sea' as being a significant motivator in their choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination. In particular, sunny weather, warm temperatures, quality of the beaches, and water based activities were major pull factors across nationalities and ethnicities. The destination's quiet and tranquil atmosphere also contributed to its choice,

which reinforces the 'exotic' appeal of the island. But when the data was further analysed, two sub-themes emerged with respect to visitors motives for choice – 'As a Place of Escape' for European visitors especially and 'As a Place for Relaxation', as shown by the following quotes:

"...the destination offers a warmer climate than Europe and [I] wanted to escape [need for escape] the winter there" German visitor

"...we like sunny destinations, we wanted guaranteed sunshine in the tropics [3S appeal of the place]" British visitor

"...it was a wonderful holiday and we liked the beaches, weather, sun [3S appeal of the place]" German visitor

"We wanted a break from the busy city [need to escape], we live in Mumbai, we wanted to come somewhere quiet [need for relaxation]" Indian visitor

"...I just wanted to go somewhere exotic, and it was [need for escape]" British visitor

It was also clear from the transcripts that need for relaxation and need for escape were related and that island destinations offered fulfillment of those needs by being geographically distanced and offering something different from home. These motives have been identified in the literature as influencing destination choice (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004).

5.3.2 THE FAMILIAR PLACE

The interview transcripts revealed that the island seems to attract a lot of repeat visitors, who come back for various reasons such as 'visiting family and friends', 'quality of hotels', 'friendliness of people', and 're-enactment of previous enjoyable experiences'. Of particular importance, is the motive 'visiting family and friends'. It seems that this motive is based on the historical and cultural ties of Mauritius with countries such as France, UK and India. Family and friends tend to offer accommodation, advice on places to visit and places to eat, and advice on safety. VFR seems to be more predominant among French visitors. The following quotes illustrate this theme in the data.

"....to spend time with relatives here [need for socialisation] and our daughter wanted to come here as well" French visitor

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"we have direct flights to here, so it's an easy place to get to, also my brother is married to a Mauritian, so we came to see how the place was [need for socialisation]" French visitor

"...we are here on holidays with the family/relatives who invited us to stay a few weeks in Mauritius [need for familiarity & socialisation]" French visitor

Therefore inherent in these quotes are for example, the need for familiarity and socialisation. These motives have been reported to influence destination choice (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Fodness, 1994).

Also, visiting Mauritius seems to be based on language and cultural similarities with countries such as France and India. Therefore, it seems that some visitors are not looking for 'novelty' of the experience but rather 'familiarity' of the destination. The sample being older could explain this occurrence. Also, 'attractive festivals', 'previous business trips', and 'incentive travel' seem to be significant factors influencing repeat visitation. The last two factors indicating the well established economic ties of the island with France, India and South Africa. The following quotes provide support for this theme:

"...we have been coming here for the last 5 years, we know very well the Mauritians [familiarity]...we have no problem communicating and relating to them" French visitor

"...we came here to see the Tamil New Year celebrations, we heard about it from friends and relatives in SA, so we wanted to come see it for ourselves" South African visitor

"I am here on an incentive travel package for the organisation I work for. I came here 15 years ago, it was nice to see how the place has evolved" French visitor

But of major interest within these motives is that current visit seems to be related to other previous visitors acting as 'ambassadors' for the country by spreading positive word of mouth. In particular, first time visitors mentioned that they chose Mauritius because of recommendations from others. This is illustrated in the following quotes:

"...recommendations from friends. It's our first time here, we have never been to this destination before. We have been to Caribbean islands before but never to Indian Ocean islands..." British visitor

"...we have heard about it so much and we saw a lot of it in movies, we always wanted to come here, so me and my husband came" Indian visitor

Hence, these findings seem to suggest a potential relationship between motives for choice and future behavior.

5.3.3 PEOPLE OF THE PLACE

The transcripts also seem to suggest that friendliness of people act as a significant push factor for both first time and repeat visitors. This is related to the social motive for engaging in leisure activities at the destination. Two related sub-themes of this social motive were 'need for self esteem from others' as indicated by visitors' positive interactions with hotel employees and 'need for meaningful interpersonal relationships' as indicated by the nature of the destination product, which is family-oriented.

Visitors across nationalities mentioned for example, that the 'smile', 'willingness to help', and 'warmth of welcome' of hotel employees and/or of the general population, accentuated by 'ease of communication with' and 'understanding by locals', attracted them to the island. Also, the advice given by family and friends and the accommodation they provided tend to reinforce these perceptions of 'friendliness'. The following quotes illustrate these points:

"...the kindness of Mauritians, conviviality, everything related to generosity of people, simplicity of the people...it's really the people before everything else [need for self-esteem from others]" French visitor

"....the hospitality of people, the welcome, the safety that the place offers [need for self esteem from others]" German visitor

"....the people are friendly and efficient....staff at the hotel...polite and courteous all the time [need for self esteem from others]" British visitor

As for the sub-theme 'family-oriented product', the transcripts revealed that the destination specifically attracts families with children as it is perceived as 'a safe heaven' with 'plenty of activities for children to do'. There are also opportunities for parents to spend time alone given that hotels are equipped with kids' club operated by professional staffs that take care of the children as shown in the quote below, indicating that parents are able to focus on interpersonal relationships during their holiday. This adds to the appeal of the destination and a perception that the local people are friendly and ready to help.

"...the hotel with the kids club, we went to Seychelles last year, so this year we tried Mauritius. me and my wife like Indian Ocean islands, ...spend some time alone...kids taken care of" British visitor

5.3.4 THE ROMANTIC PLACE

Mauritius is sold and positioned as a destination for weddings and honeymoon. This facet of the destination as a 'romantic place' was evident in the data. Many visitors mentioned that their destination choice was guided by the fact that the island offers good travel packages and an ideal '3S' location for a honeymoon and/or organisation of wedding. The island's 'exoticness' and 'exclusive appeal' tend to be favoured by Indian and South African visitors as they seem to be the main honeymooners in Mauritius. This theme is illustrated in the following quotes:

"..it's the paradise island like what they sell in South Africa...we came here on our honeymoon, it's the ideal honeymoon spot so they say." South African visitor

"...we came here on our honeymoon trip, we wanted to come because we have seen so much of Mauritius in Bollywood movies, it's a favourite location for film shoots, our parents have been here before too, so came to see for ourselves." Indian visitor

"...honeymoon trip,... the reputation of the island as a quality destination. we wanted somewhere exotic, where not many people go to." Indian visitor

This theme reveals that needs for interpersonal relationship, escape and relaxation are inherent in visitors' choice of the island as a honeymoon destination but not always expressed as the reason for choice. Therefore, the push factors guiding the choice of a holiday destination are often intertwined and the expressed motive is not always the real reason why a visitor chooses a place. This is where a phenomenological approach helps in the identification of 'untold' motives.

5.3.5 CATPAC RESULTS FOR DESTINATION CHOICE FACTORS

The original transcripts for this question were entered into CATPAC to provide more credibility to the themes derived above and for further analysis. The initial solution using Wards method of clustering showed only meaningful relationships among one cluster of words. To draw further meaning from the text, these parameters were changed, and a setting of 14 unique words, window size of 10, and slide size of 1 produced a meaningful result.

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WARDS METHOD

A D H T F F M I W P H P W Y
L E O R A R A S E E O L A E
W S N I M I U L A O L A N A
A T E P I E R A T P I C T R
Y I Y . L N I N H L D E E .
S N M . Y D T D E E A . D .
. A O . . S I . R . Y . . .
. T O . . . U . . . S . . .
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Figure 5.1 Dendogram for destination choice factors

As can be seen from Figure 5.1, two groups of words were identified. The first group on the far right (in orange) showed a relationship between words such as 'year', 'wanted', 'place', 'holidays', 'people', 'weather', 'island', 'Mauritius', 'friends', and 'family'. By taking these words and going back to the original text it is evident that international visitors chose Mauritius as a holiday destination for a number of reasons: (i) family, friends and people, which are indicative of the need for socialisation; (ii) Mauritius is an island, which is indicative of the appeal of the place due to its characteristics (geographical, culture etc.); (iii) weather and holidays, which is indicative of its '3S' appeal; (iv) a place they always wanted to come. The word 'year' in the transcripts had at least two meanings. First, it referred to the visitor being a repeater given that they had visited the island many 'year(s)' before. Second, the word is indicative of their motives for their visit this 'year'. The second group of words in the dendogram (in blue) showed a meaningful relationship among words such as 'trip', 'honeymoon', 'destination' and 'always'. Refering to the original transcripts, it was clear that visitors' choice of Mauritius was related to their honeymoon trip and they had always heard of Mauritius as a honeymoon destination. This indicates to some extent the influence of word-of-mouth and marketing on choices.

These findings confirm and reinforce the earlier derived themes of Mauritius chosen as a holiday destination for four major reasons: (i) its '3S' product; (ii) VFR related to repeat visitation; (iii) friendly people and; (iv) honeymoon. Combining the findings from thematic analysis and CATPAC, the following interrelationships can be identified and expressed graphically as shown in Figure 5.2.
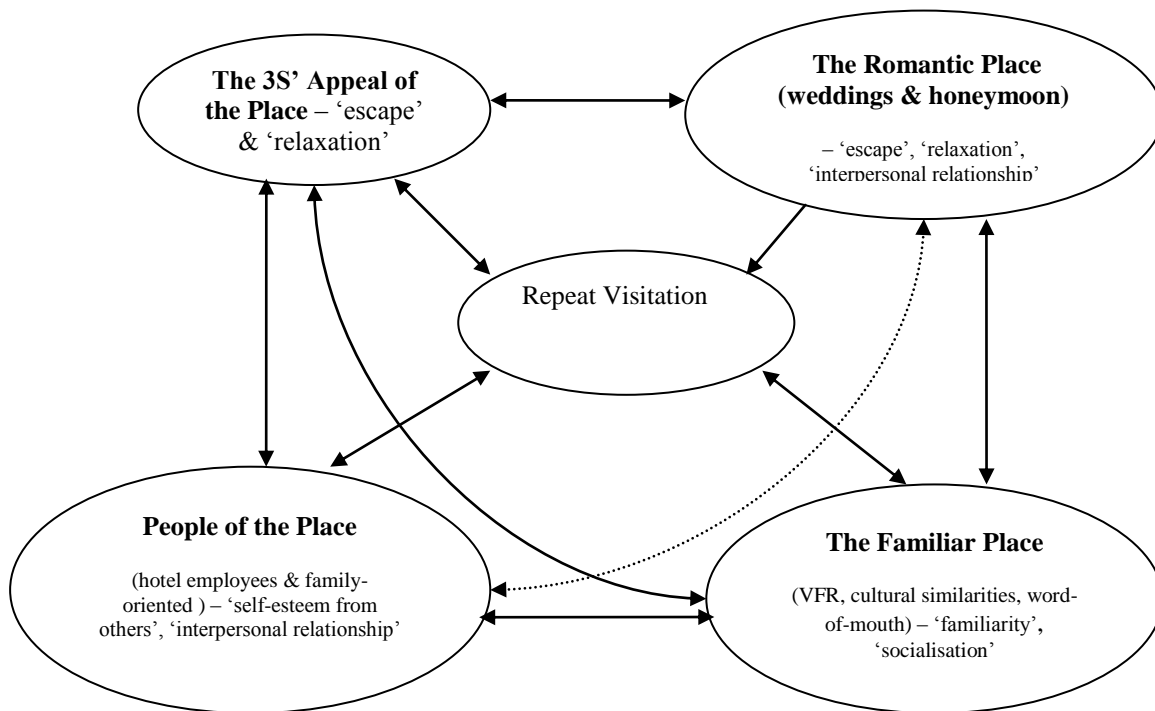
Figure 5.2: Graphical representation of themes and interrelationships

For example, Mauritius chosen for '3S' purposes fulfil needs of escape and relaxation and can result in repeat visitation. This relationship can be seen in this quote from a French visitor: *"...we come very often, we have been more than 20 times here before [repeat visitation]. We like the sun, sea, beaches, friendliness of people, the food, the fishing, the scenery [choice factors]....its different from home [need for escape] ...we like the whole place actually."* The destination can also be chosen for other factors such as 'people of the place' or 'honeymoon' and these will fulfill needs such as 'building interpersonal relationship' or 'self-esteem from others'. In this way, these four broad factors fulfill different needs and they all seem to be influencing repeat visitation to the island. Honeymooners, for example, can choose the place because of its sun, sand and sea appeal. Subsequently, they may return depending on the nature of the experiences during their stay such as perceptions of friendliness of the people. Other push factors influencing visitors' choice is familiarity of the place and social relationships that exist due to friends and relatives and positive word of mouth from other visitors. The recommendations received tend to focus on the '3S' as well as the friendliness of

the population. This very fact tends to reinforce the sun, sand, and sea positioning of Mauritius and its image of friendly people. Hence, these three factors- familiarity, '3S' and friendly people, become motives for repeat visitation as well. These relationships were confirmed by referring to the original text.

5.4 COGNITIVE IMAGES OF MAURITIUS

Within the first question relating to destination choice, visitors were asked what they like and dislike about the destination. Thematic analysis and CATPAC were used to identify themes and relationships among the words in the transcripts for these evaluative judgements.

5.4.1 POSITIVE IMAGES OF MAURITIUS

 Figure 5.3 illustrates some of the positive images that can be recalled by visitors. Thematic analysis revealed that ten dominant cognitive images of Mauritius can be identified namely: variety of sea based activities, safe destination, local cuisine, beaches, weather, people, scenery, hotels, value for money, and accessibility of the destination. Each of these dominant cognitive images has a number of specific dimensions to them. For example, if interviewees liked the beaches, they were asked what they liked specifically about these beaches and their answers were mostly, 'white', 'sandy', 'clean' and 'not crowded'. What they liked about the weather included 'sunny' and 'warm'. With respect to people they liked them being 'friendly', 'welcoming/hospitable', 'easy going/laid back', and 'kind/helpful'. In terms of scenery they liked the 'volcanoes', 'mountains', 'blue sea', 'combo of mountain and sea', and 'nature'. With respect to the hotels they were staying at, visitors seem to like 'service quality', 'hotel employees', 'swimming pool', 'kids club/activities', and 'room space and décor'. Those visitors who perceived the destination to offer value for money, particularly thought so because of the 'low prices' and 'favourable exchange rates'.
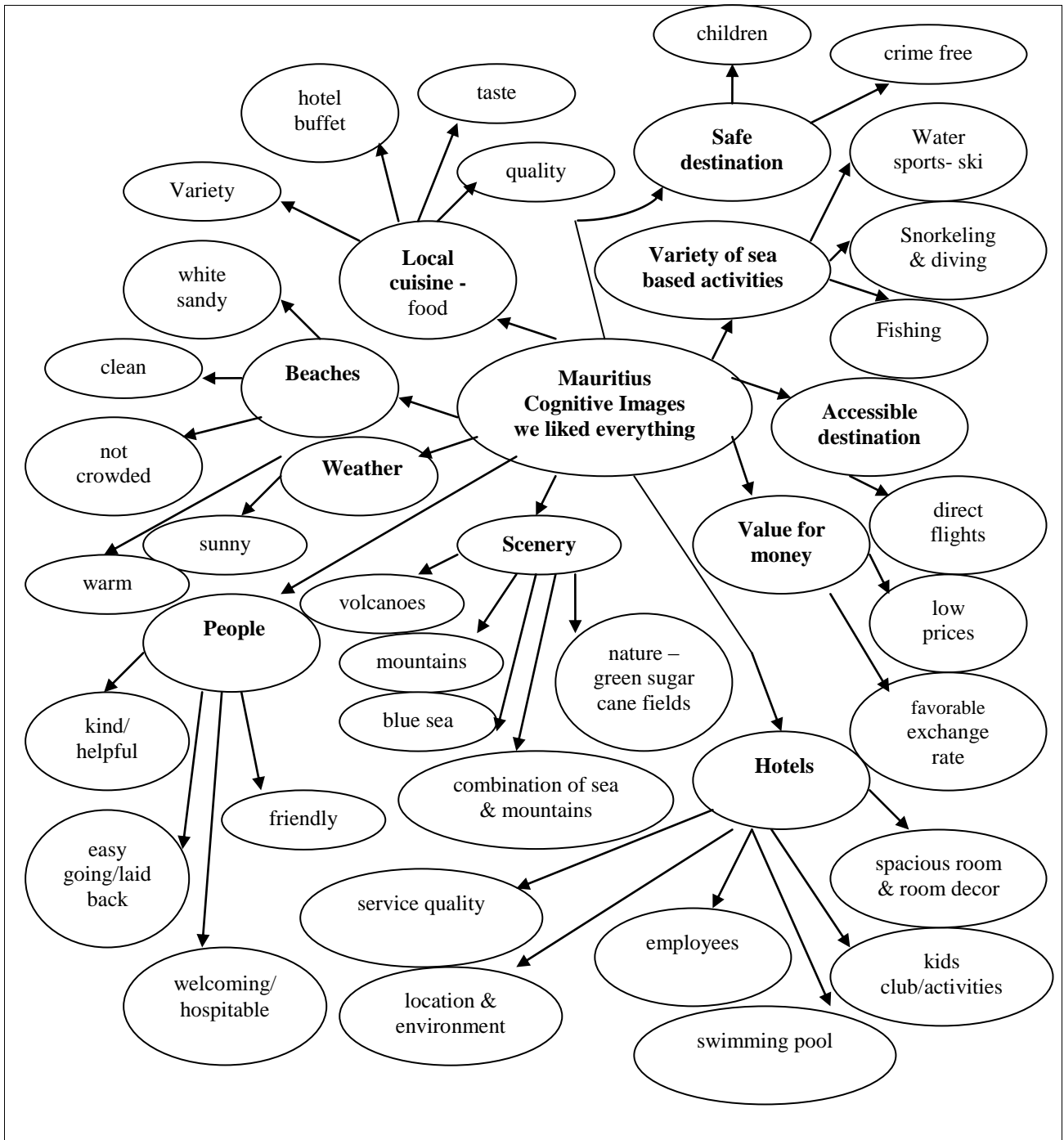
Figure 5.3: Cognitive images of Mauritius

Similarly, some of the visitors thought the destination was accessible because of 'direct flights'. As far as sea based activities are concerned, visitors associated them with diving, snorkeling, fishing, and water skiing. Likewise Mauritius is perceived as a safe destination because it is so for children especially and it is perceived as crime free. The local cuisine is appreciated due to its quality, taste, variety and because hotels offer buffet facilities. Quite a

few of the interviewees mentioned they 'liked everything', that is the entire destination experience, which is a combination of the dimensions identified previously.

For further analysis of cognitive aspects, the original transcripts were again loaded onto CATPAC, with the initial default parameters. Thereafter, these parameters were refined to provide the most appropriate and meaningful results. Given that answers for this question were shorter, the Unique Words parameter was set to 20 to identify as many unique words as possible, the Window Size was set to 4, and the Slide size was set to 1. The results revealed the existence of six distinct grouping of words as shown in the Figure 5.4.

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WARDS METHOD

A W E P F C W W L S S W B T H P N F G S
C A V L R L A E I E A H E I O E I O O E
T T E A I I R A K R N I A M T O C O O A
I E R C E M M T E V D T C E E P E D D .
V R Y E N A . H D I . E H . L L . . . .
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Figure 5.4: Positive images of Mauritius

Group one (in purple on the far left) showed a relationship between the words 'water' and 'activities' which indicated that visitors perceived they liked the water based activities at the destination. The second group of words (in brown) consisted of three words, 'friendly', 'place', and 'everything'. Reverting to the original text, this set of words indicated that visitors liked everything about the destination or they considered it to be a friendly place. The third group of words (in orange), 'service', 'liked', 'weather', 'warm', and 'climate' indicated that these attributes were closely related to what visitors 'liked' about the destination. Similarly, the fifth group of words (in red) indicated a close relationship between 'white' and

'sand', indicating their likeness for this attribute. The strongest relationhisp was among the words 'nice', 'people', 'hotel', 'time', and 'beach' (in blue). The original text revealed that in describing what they liked about the destination, visitors used the word nice in reference to the people of the place, hotel they stayed at, and beaches. They also used nice in conjunction with the 'nice time' they had. However, 'time' in this context from the transcripts also refered to 'spending time' with spouse or partner at the hotel, the last 'time' they visited what they liked, and this 'time' what they liked. The sixth group of words (in green) showed a close relationhsip among words such as 'sea', 'good' and 'food'. From the original text at least two interpretations of this association can be made. First, visitors mentioned they liked the 'good food' and second they liked the 'sea food'.

A comparison of the results derived from thematic analysis and CATPAC showed some similarities in terms of images and what visitors liked about Mauritius. Both forms of analyses reaffirm that Mauritius is liked for its beaches, weather/climate, scenery, local cuisine, hotel amenities and facilities as well as its water based activities. However, CATPAC did not reveal dimensions such as accessibility and safety due to its algorithm using frequency counts to cluster similar concepts and these dimensions were not mentioned as often compared to others. Nevertheless, they do indicate that these two dimensions influence visitors' experience of the destination. Also, CATPAC only identified the broader categories of responses and thematic analysis was better at identifying the sub-components of these dimensions. Overall, both data analysis techniques support each other.

5.4.2 NEGATIVE IMAGES OF MAURITIUS
While most visitors reported an enjoyable stay in Mauritius, a few reported negative experiences and these can be grouped in five broad categories using thematic analysis and CATPAC namely: infrastructure, hotel facilities, cleanliness and hygiene of public places, weather, and people as shown in the Figure 5.5.
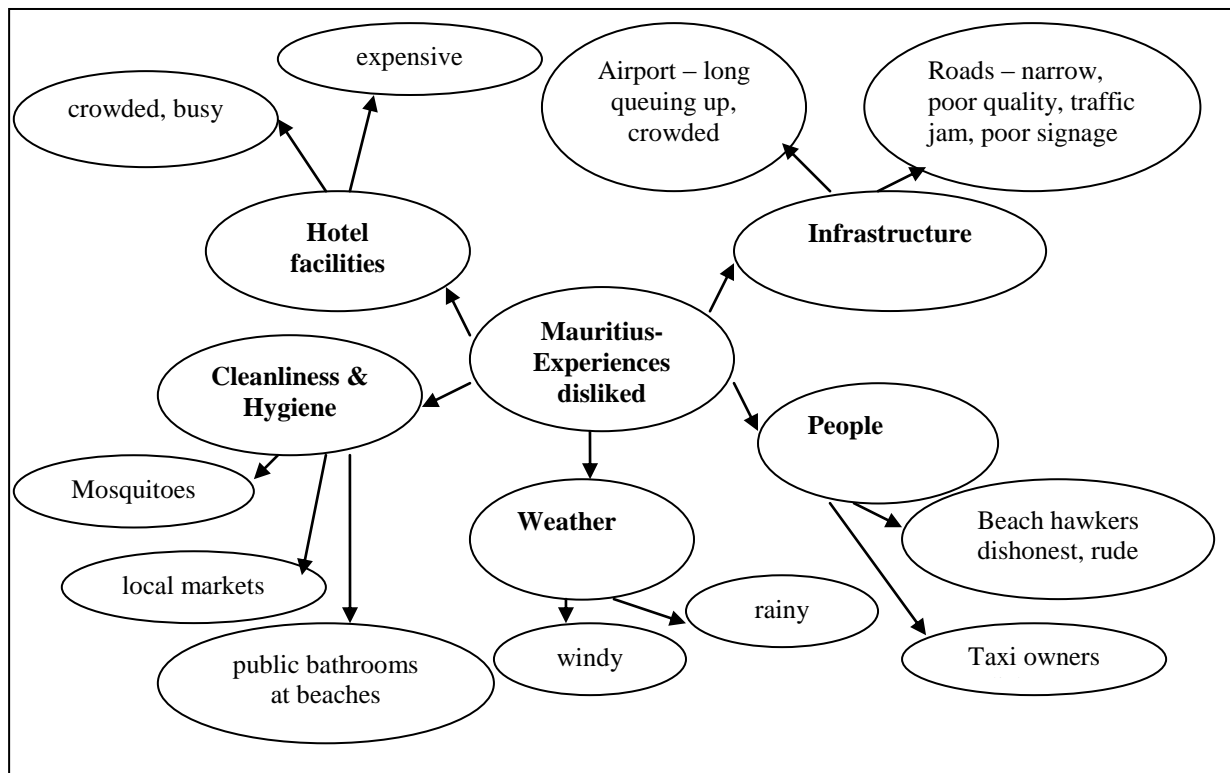
Figure 5.5: Negative images of Mauritius

From Figure 5.5 above, infrastructure seems to be the most problematic aspect of the destination, with perceptions of poor quality and narrow roads, traffic jam especially in the city, and poor road signage for access to places of interest. The airport is perceived as crowded given that visitors have to queue up for approximately 20 to 30 minutes and sometimes even longer to check in. In terms of hotel facilities, some visitors perceived them as being expensive and crowded. Cleanliness and hygiene is another factor that led to negative experiences, specifically with regards to cleanliness in local markets and hygiene of bathroom facilities on public beaches. The erratic fluctuations of the weather (rain and strong winds), which is an uncontrollable factor, was another source of discontentment. With regards to interactions with people, some visitors disliked the 'pushy' attitude of beach hawkers, which they thought was rude, and the fact that they charged higher prices to tourists compared to locals. Both beach hawkers and taxi owners were perceived as being dishonest in their dealings and negotiations with international visitors. CATPAC revealed findings of a similar nature by showing relationships among words such as 'hotel', 'expensive', 'place', and 'people', 'traffic' and 'beach'.

5.5 AFFECTIVE IMAGES OF MAURITIUS

A similar approach as above was used to identify the affective images of the destination, which were based on the second question (how do you feel about the destination). The findings from thematic analysis revealed that a variety of emotions relating to the destination could be identified and grouped in three broad themes namely: 'place of retreat', 'rejuvenating place', and 'place to revisit'.

5.5.1 MAURITIUS AS A PLACE OF RETREAT

This theme suggests that the destination evokes feelings such as 'peaceful', 'tranquil', 'calm' and 'relaxation'. Mauritius is perceived as a 'get away' from the routine or as a place that is different from home (country of origin of visitor) as illustrated by these quotes.

"... It [the place] makes us serene, relaxed, comfortable, [we do] not feel threatened at all. It is very nice to have spent holidays here." British visitor

"...Lovely place, there is a stark contrast of rural culture as opposed to commercialism, they try to keep it simple. I mean the way of life, it's very different from other countries ..." South African visitor

"...Very tranquil place, you feel peaceful and relaxed unlike busy London. It's more like a country side town. The people are chilled and laid-back." British visitor

"....It's very tropical and partly exotic." German visitor

"...It's one of the countries where I feel at ease, comfortable, very comfortable I must say, we come often, so I know the country. It's one of those countries were you feel welcomed the moment you get here, that's why I come back." French visitor

These affective images support the previously identified cognitive images that the island is perceived as an 'exotic' or 'tropical' place. These findings also suggest a potential relationship between motives for choice and affection generated by a place. For example, fulfilment of needs for escape and relaxation, leads to the choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination and the experience of it through a 'peaceful' and 'tranquil' atmosphere, make visitors want to come back.

5.5.2 MAURITIUS AS A REJUVENATING PLACE

The next theme that could be derived from the data set relates to feelings of 'happiness', 'friendliness', 'pleasant experience', 'beautiful and lovely place', and 'welcoming people'. This theme seems to suggest that the destination evokes a feeling of wellness and happiness among visitors and therefore it was labelled 'rejuvenating place' and can be identified in these verbatim quotes from visitors.

"...Very good feeling, we felt welcomed for each visit, plenitude, when you travel around in the villages, the people acknowledge your presence, they smile at you, they make head signs to you, and you don't see that in other countries." French visitor

"...It's a warm feeling that we had throughout our stay." South African visitor

"...It's beautiful, real paradise, it's even a lovers paradise, you have time to look after your couple, I mean spend time with my husband." South African visitor

"...Very positive [feelings], the fact that people are pleasing, they come towards you to talk, they come discuss things, ask us about our country, we ask them about theirs." French visitor

Within this theme, there is some indication of attachment to attributes of the physical environment and to people of the place. These would suggest a latent theme of place attachment which is related to affective images of a place.

5.5.3 MAURITIUS AS A PLACE TO REVISIT

Interestingly, many visitors mentioned that they would like to come back to explore other things about the island which they have not been able to do on their current visit or they would recommend the island to others when asked about how they felt about the destination. These revisit intentions and likelihood to recommend are indicative of some loyalty to the island but they also suggest the existence of the conative component of destination image, which is a predictor of behaviour. These quotes provide support for this theme.

"I am definitely coming back, we all loved it... save some more money and I will be back to see more and do more." British Visitor

"it's a very welcoming country... most probably we will come back again to see more without the use of a tour operator next time, I mean come back by ourselves". French visitor

"...it's a very warm country, it's a bit of a mixed feeling as well, it's not so different from other countries I have visited, but I would recommend it to all my friends to come." German visitor

"I like it very much… if I live to be 100, would certainly come back, but I am coming back in December with the kids." South African visitor

At the same time, these quotes reveal a latent dimension of place dependence, given that repeat visitation is explained by such a factor. However, there seems to be no guarantee that if visitors' develop feelings for a place, they will revisit in the short-term.

5.5.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AFFECTIVE IMAGES

To enhance the credibility of these findings, content analysis of the transcripts for this question was performed using CATPAC. Repeating the procedures used before, words such as 'relaxed' and 'relaxing', 'beach' and 'beaches' were merged as they conveyed similar meanings for the current purpose. The initial solution derived from the default parameters did not reveal a clear association of words within the text. Hence, the parameters were altered to: Unique Words 20, Window Size 4, and Slide Size 1. These settings generated six groups of words with the most comprehensive meaning for each group as shown in Figure 5.6.

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WARDS METHOD

B S C D N D L H D I B H F P R E N G P G
E E O I O E O O E S E O E E E X I R L O
A A U F T F V L S L A T E O L P C E A O
C . N F H I E I T A U E L P A E E A C D
H . T E I N L D I N T L . L X R . T E .
. . R R N I Y A N D I . . E E I . . . .
. . Y E G T . Y A . F . . . D E . . . .
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Figure 5.6: Dendogram for affective images.

From Figure 5.6 above, the first group of words (in purple) showed a relationship between two words, 'sea' and 'beach'. Refering to the original text, it was found that whenever participants refered to these two attributes, there were positive feelings such as 'paradise', 'magnificent', and 'beautiful' associated with them. The second group of words (in orange) showed a close relationship among words such as 'nothing', 'different', and 'country'. The original text indicated that some visitors did not feel anything special about the destination because there was nothing different to their home country. This potentially indicates low attachment to the destination and that perhaps positioning of the destination needs to be altered or differentiation attributes need to be more thoroughly emphasised. The strongest relationship was for the sixth group (in red) which comprised words such as 'good', 'place', 'great', 'nice', and 'experience'. These words indicated that visitors had positive feelings for the place and the experience they had. The other groups of words merely confirmed what was already found in thematic analysis.

5.5.5 NATIONALITY AND DESTINATION CHOICE FACTORS

Next, the data were analysed to identify any meaningful relationship between motives for choice and nationality. To allow for comparisons on destination choice factors across nationalities, the main starting parameters in CATPAC were maintained across all analyses, that is: Unique Words 21, Window Size 5, and Slide Size 1. Given the small sample size for each nationality, the number of Unique Words parameter was set higher to identify as many 'differences' between sub-groups. The same clustering procedure of Wards's Method was also maintained across all nationality sub-groups. The results are summarised in Table 5.1 below and show the words that are closely related from the dendograms. The interpretation that follows was in reference to both the results of CATPAC and the original text.

As can be seen from Table 5.1, Germans seem to choose Mauritius as a holiday base mainly for five reasons: (i) Previous visits which led to them 'always' 'wanted' to 'come' 'back' and the 'volcanic' 'eruption' in the neighbouring 'Reunion Island' provided them with such an opportunity; (ii) 'Reputation' of the 'place' and its 'hospitality'; (iii) The destination offers 'Mauritian' 'friends', that is, they made friends with the local population on previous visits, which provided an incentive for them to come back; (iv) They had visited the destination 'years ago' and 'liked' it, so their current visit was to renew that experience; (v) The 'holiday' was taken because the visitor was getting 'married'.

Nationality	1st group of words	2nd group of words	3rd group of words	4th group of words	5th group of words	6th group of words
German	'always' 'wanted' 'come' 'back' 'volcanic' 'eruption' 'Reunion Island'	'reputation' 'place' 'hospitality'	'Mauritian' 'friends'	'years ago' 'liked'	'holiday' 'married'	
British	'Mauritius' 'good' 'scenery' 'weather' 'family' 'friends'	'Indian' 'Ocean' 'Island'	'nice' 'place'	'always' 'come' 'people'	'wanted' 'liked' 'different' 'Easter' 'holidays'	
South African	'honeymoon' 'conference' 'wanted' 'come' 'back' 'family'	'company' 'travel'	'destination' 'South Africa'	'business' 'heard' 'agent'	'advertised' 'friends'	'wife' 'trip'
French	'chose' 'come' 'learn' 'people' 'place'	'direct' 'family'	'Mauritian' 'like' 'know' 'holiday' 'destination'	'incentive' 'travel' 'packages'	'sun' 'beach'	'everything' 'really'
Indian	'like' 'Mauritius' 'honeymoon' 'wanted' 'surprised' 'hotel'	'family' 'children' 'India'	'first' 'friend' 'back'	'come' 'heard' 'somewhere'	'exotic' 'culture'	'trip' 'parents'

Table 5.1: Nationality and motives

As for the British market, content analysis revealed again five major reasons for their choice of Mauritius, as can be seen in Table 5.1: (i) 'Mauritius' offers 'good' 'scenery' and 'weather' and because visitors have 'family' and 'friends'; (ii) The fact that it is an 'Indian' 'ocean' 'island', which is different from other places they had visited; (iii) It is a 'nice' 'place'; (iv) Repeat visitors who 'always' 'come' for the 'people', again referring to VFR; and finally (v) because they 'wanted' or 'liked' something 'different' for 'Easter holidays'. Likewise, South African visitors seem to choose Mauritius for six reasons namely: (i) Visitors either come for their 'honeymoon' or 'conference' in the first place and thereafter they 'wanted' to 'come back again' with 'family'; (ii) They come because of business (company travel) and combine it with holidays; (iii) Mauritius is chosen because it is a 'destination' close to 'South Africa'; (iv) 'Business' travel before and they 'heard' about the destination from travel 'agents'; (v) Visitors chose the destination because it is 'advertised' and because they have 'friends' in

Mauritius; (vi) Visitors' can also choose Mauritius because their partner or 'wife' wanted the 'trip'.

The French market seems to have six motives for their choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination as can be seen in Table 5.1 above: (i) Opportunities to 'learn' about the 'place' and its 'people'; (ii) Immediate or 'direct' 'family' is another reason; (iii) Visitors 'like Mauritians' and familiarity given that they 'know' about this 'holiday destination'; (iv) Their choice also results from 'incentive travel' 'packages' offered by French companies to their employees; (v) The 'sun' and 'beach' are other motivators for this market; (vi) Finally, the combo of 'everything really' motivates French visitors as well.

The Indian market also seems to be motivated by six factors in their choice of Mauritius: (i) Indians 'like Mauritius' as a 'honeymoon' destination and 'wanted' to be 'surprised' by the 'hotel'; (ii) These visitors seem to have 'family' or 'children' from 'India' that work in Mauritius, justifying their choice; (iii) Some of these visitors are on their 'first' trip because they have 'friends' or made friends in Mauritius and will come 'back'; (iv) Some visitors 'come' because they have 'heard' of Mauritius 'somewhere' but they cannot remember where; (v) Others come because the destination offers an 'exotic culture'; (vi) The last reason seems to be that some of these visitors are on a 'trip' with their 'parents'.

Clearly, these findings seem to indicate substantial similarities and differences in destination choice factors across nationalities. In comparison to the results based on the overall sample, nationality based results seem to suggest that: (i) Sun, sand, and sea are not necessarily the main motivators behind choosing Mauritius as a holiday base but this factor seems to be important for French visitors in particular; (ii) VFR seems to be important across all nationalities; (iii) Familiarity with the destination is particularly an important motivator for German, South African, French, and British visitors; (iv) Honeymoon or wedding trips are motivators for Germans, South Africans, and Indians only; (v) Previous business trips or incentive travel tours seem to be a significant motivator for South African and French visitors. These factors also reflect ways in which distribution channels operate and degrees of physical and cultural proximities.

5.5.6 NATIONALITY AND COGNITIVE IMAGES

In order to identify meaningful relationships between cognitive images and nationality, content analysis using CATPAC with the following set parameters were used: Unique Words 22, Window Size 3, and Slide Size 1. Using a Wards's method of clustering across nationality groups, the findings can be summarized as follows. For example, the sample of German visitors showed the existence of five groups of words. Group one comprised of eight words namely: 'beach', 'sea', 'people', 'nice', 'like', 'food', 'hotel', and 'climate', which suggested that Germans liked those attributes. Group two was made of five words namely: 'flight', 'good', 'package', 'destination', and 'Germany'. These words conveyed the idea that Mauritius offered good holiday package, including flights to Germans. While group three showed an association between three words which indicated that Germans liked the 'water' 'sports' 'activities', group four showed that three words 'sun', 'warm' and 'weather' were closely related. Group five indicated a close relationship among three words, which indicated that Germans perceived the 'place' to be 'friendly' and 'busy'.

Overall, the findings suggested similarity of cognitive images across nationalities for attributes such as 'white sand', 'warm sea', 'sunny weather', 'nice hotel', 'friendly people' and 'good food'. Differences in images were also evident based on grouping of words. For example, Indians seem to mention more than others attributes related to hotel amenities, facilities and service. Germans mentioned more often about the types of travel packages offered and flights than other visitors. British visitors described more attributes related to available tourist trips within the island and service while French visitors mentioned more the '3S' than any other nationality. South Africans reported positive experiences with local cuisine, service at hotel, scenery and variety of things to do.

5.5.7 NATIONALITY AND AFFECTIVE IMAGES

The affective images of the destination were subject to content analysis by nationality of visitors. Using a similar set of parameters as for cognitive images, CATPAC revealed a number of meaningful associations. For example, relationships were found among words such as 'country', 'hotel', 'people', 'good', 'place', 'nice' and 'beautiful' in the German sub-sample, 'experience', 'nice', 'pleasant', 'place', 'good', 'relaxed', and 'really' in the South African sub-sample, and 'like', 'people', 'laid-back' in the British sub-sample. Overall, these findings seem to indicate that all five nationalities display strong intentions to revisit. Except for Indians, all other nationalities mentioned local people as an important facet of the feelings

they have for the destination. In terms of differences, for example, Germans mentioned more often the safety of the destination when compared to the other four nationalities. South African and British visitors seem to describe feelings related to relaxation on their holidays. South African and French visitors seem to favour attributes that convey feelings of being different from their home country. Nationality based results also revealed that it was mostly French visitors who mentioned they felt nothing in particular about the destination experience. Likewise, only some Indian visitors felt that the destination was crowded and were more critical of local cuisine compared to other nationalities.

5.5.8 ETHNICITY AND DESTINATION CHOICE FACTORS

In order to assess the influence of ethnicity on destination choice and image, the different ethnic groups in the data set was condensed into two categories for more meaningful results namely: non-Caucasians and Caucasians. Each category had 30 and 73 visitors respectively. Using the default parameters in CATPAC, that is, Unique Words 25, Window Size 7, and Slide Size 1, the data revealed a number of relationships. For non-Caucasians, motives for choice can be summarised as follows: (i) Closeness of the destination to Africa; (ii) Visiting family and friends; (ii) Revisiting the destination; (iv) Incentive travel, implying that their company chose the destination; (v) A place for honeymoon; and (vi) Exotic culture. On the other hand, for Caucasians the following factors seem to motivate their choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination: (i) Beach, weather, and previous visit; (ii) Closeness to Reunion Island; (iii) Nice travel package and local people; (iv) Visiting family and friends; and (v) Familiarity and knowledge about the destination. These findings clearly highlight similarities and differences in motives. For example, geographical closeness and VFR are motives for both groups while '3S' tend to be more associated with the Caucasian group.

5.5.9 ETHNICITY AND DESTINATION IMAGE

A similar procedure was repeated with questions dealing with cognitive and affective images of the destination. Using set parameters of Unique Words 22, Window Size 3, and Slide Size 1, the following results were obtained. For non-Caucasians, Mauritius conjures images of: (i) Beautiful beaches and nice hotels; (ii) White sand and blue sea; (iii) Good food; (iv) Good location of hotels with nice room, facilities and gardens; (v) Good service; (vi) Nice people; and (vii) Good climate and nice variety of activities. Likewise for Caucasians, the images of Mauritius are similar to non-Caucasians albeit differences in strength of association between the two groups as indicated by order of group formation. For example, Mauritius conjures

images of: (i) White sand beaches, sunny weather, nice hotel, food and people; (ii) Sea and everything else together; (iii) Water based activities; (iv) Warm weather and climate; (v) Good and friendly service; and (vi) Different scenery.

As far as affective images are concerned, non-Caucasians felt: (i) Good because everything is beautiful in Mauritius, and it is a great place with nice hotels; (ii) They will come back; (iii) It has got blue sea; (iv) It has got nicer beaches compared to India; (v) There is not anything like Mauritius for a honeymoon experience. For Caucasians, their feelings and emotions for the destination are more pronounced compared to non-Caucasians. They felt that: (i) Mauritius is a good and pleasant place offering a nice experience; (ii) They will come back in the future; (iii) It is a country with good hotel for holidays; (iv) They felt relaxed; (v) They see the people as being relaxed; (vi) It is a beautiful island; (vii) They felt it was different from their home country; and (viii) They definitely think it is a lovely place.

Hence, these findings suggest that ethnicity has some influence over both cognitive and affective images but not in a way as pronounced as nationality of visitors. The findings also suggest that expression of feelings and emotions is dependent on ethnic background of visitors, with Caucasians being apparently more open to express feelings as opposed to non-Caucasians in this context. Also, the order in which images are recalled after an experience seem to vary along ethnic backgrounds, with non-Caucasians reporting more tangible aspects of the destination first, while Caucasians reporting more holistic images of the destination first. These findings also highlight similarities in perceptions.

5.6 THEMATIC AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS QUESTIONS

The remaining three questions asked visitors about their perceptions of interactions with the host. The next section reports these findings following a procedure similar to the previous section. Again, the data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) stepwise procedure for thematic analysis. First, the original transcript was analysed directly within each individual and across individuals to identify broad categories of perceptions. Statements that were limited to individual cases were put aside and only those that were confidently based on the data were retained. Then, the researcher used coloured markers to 'code' the transcript into categories. These categories were devised both inductively and deductively. That is,

categories were formed initially without any reference to the literature. Once these categories were formed, they were compared to existing literature to identify similarities and differences.

5.6.1 DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS

It was evident that consensual themes existed on service interaction dimensions. In particular, the following five dimensions were evident.

(1) Integrity & Respect

Participants perceived hotel employees to be delivering service with integrity and respect. This is indicative of the ability of the host to deliver service professionally, i.e., within a specific time frame and with a certain level of warmth. These quotes illustrate this dimension.

"... staff here are very causal compared to hotel employees in SA, it's a lot more formal there. They are friendly and not too casual as well. They are efficient and service oriented" South African visitor

"...they were nice and friendly; they are attentive to your needs and show respect. They always greet you wherever they see you in the hotel, this is why I said they are professionals" French visitor

"...the employees were wonderful, always ready to answer questions and attend to problems. It was very good service." British visitor

But also associated with this dimension is role expectation from visitors. They bring to the moment of truth an expectation of how the host will behave towards them and their satisfaction level is influenced accordingly. For example, visitors expect that in luxury resorts, service will be excellent and staff will be considerate and helpful. Both integrity and respect have been found as being influential in quantitative studies as well (Saleh & Ryan, 1991; de Ruyter *et al.*, 1997).

(2) Authenticity

The second dimension that could be identified was authenticity of display. As part of role expectations, international visitors expect hosts to be authentic in their emotional display towards guests. This is illustrated in the following two quotes:

"The employees do not feel like they are here to treat you as tourists, they are nice because they want to be nice" British visitor

"They come out as genuine, they are honest and helpful. They don't pretend unlike in SA, where sometimes people for their own benefits will act in a way that you will think they appreciate you, when they don't actually. Here the people are not like that. Everyone smiles at the hotel and they are ready to please." South African visitor

This value has been reported in the literature as being an important dimension of service interactions (Hochschild, 1983; Winsted, 1997; Mattila, 1999; Grandey *et al.*, 2005).

(3) Learning

The third dimension that seems to permeate interactions with hosts is the need for learning about the destination. That is, visitors consciously chose to interact with hotel employees to learn more about different aspects of the destination such as places to visit, things to do, culture, folklore, the economy and the life of the host. This value is illustrated in the following two quotes below.

"I did not know much about the place and I learnt a few things like recipes and new ways of cooking food from talking to employees at the hotel. I learnt more about the cultural diversity and religious diversity of the place by talking to them. I did not realise that there was so many Chinese people here, and that they drive on the same side of the road as us" British visitor

"...We enjoyed talking to the employees. It's an opportunity for us to learn more about the local life, places to visit and the economy of Mauritius" French visitor

Surprisingly, this value is not mentioned in the service literature, but it is an important motivator for visitors to choose a holiday destination (Fodness, 1994; Ryan & Glendon, 1998). That is, interactions with the host are an important source of learning about the destination and its people for international visitors. This forms part of their expectations and becomes an important part of fulfilling their need for socialisation as well.

(4) Safety

Given that holidays incorporate various activities whether land based or water based, it seems that of concern to international visitors were their ability to obtain correct information from

hotel employees about these activities and the accompanying safety measures, especially when children were involved. This value can be seen in the following two quotes.

"…they [hotel employees] explained everything about the hotel, activities carefully, the safety measures for water sports activities, they made the experience very enjoyable" French visitor

"We tried parasailing and that was fantastic, the experience and the feelings…the staff that helped us were excellent they explained everything, the safety, how to manage, it was good" German visitor

This value is reported as 'security' in the literature (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Chandon *et al.*, 1997) and is related to perceived risks during the service encounter. Hence, a conscious attempt on behalf of the employees to reduce customers' levels of worry, anxiety and feelings of intimidation (Chandon *et al.*, 1997). Hotel employees act as a significant reassurance factor for visitors.

(5) Mutual Understanding

Successful interaction is dependent on both parties understanding their role and being able to communicate effectively. The transcripts showed that mutual understanding between the host and the guest was evident as shown in the two quotes below. Mutual understanding was based on principles of effective communication and training of the host in delivering service.

"The interactions were very good, employees very very polite, very good at delivering service, they are courteous all the time. Everything was exactly like what the brochure about the hotel said. I did some search on the Internet myself, and everything is the same as mentioned" South African visitor

"The interactions were great, they could understand English very well, so made it easy to communicate with them. I think they are well trained as they could deal with guests that spoke other languages as well." British visitor

This value has been reported in other studies (Price *et al.*, 1995; Johnston, 1995; Chandon *et al.*, 1997; Mattila, 1999; Cronin *et al.*, 2000) as an underlying dimension of service interactions.

5.6.2 NATURE OF SERVICE EXPERIENCES

Further analysis of the transcript thematically revealed a latent dimension of personal involvement. That is, service experiences of visitors could be categorised based on their personal involvement levels. On the one hand, some visitors stayed within the hotel compounds and therefore had limited interactions with employees and locals. Their personal involvement level seems to be related to their motives for visitation, which were either to spend time alone or with family. Thus, these motives impacted on the quality and duration of interactions with employees. This category of visitors can be described as low involvement.

On the other hand, some visitors mentioned that they spent little time at their hotel, as they went outside to experience 'the real' destination, seeking to establish friendship with locals and getting a closer view of local life. These visitors can be described as 'high involvement' and they actively sought to fulfil needs of socialisation. The experiences reported by these two types of visitors are somewhat similar but the factors that went into the evaluation of their service experiences are substantially different with some overlap in certain cases. At this stage of the analysis, nationalities and ethnicities seem to have a minor influence on the reported experiences. The only discernible differences were that South African and Indian visitors tend to be more critical of service levels compared to other nationalities and French visitors' choice of words to describe perceptions of service interactions with employees tend to differ from other nationalities. However, most visitors reported positive service experiences with hotel employees, restaurants staff and tour guides in general, but first findings relating to the experiences of those visitors who stayed within hotel compounds are presented.

5.6.3 LOW INVOLVEMENT VISITORS

These visitors were satisfied with the level of service delivered by hotel employees in general. In particular, they enjoyed the helpfulness, hospitality and friendliness of staff as shown in the two quotes below.

"…We [visitors] had only good experiences, we did not go out of the hotel much, we spent most of the time on the beach, and the tours we went on were well organised. The tour guides were friendly and caring I must say, we did not have any problem." South African visitor

"We had positive experiences with waiters at our hotel. Our boat trip with the tour guide was excellent as he knew about the history of the places we visited. He was very proud of his country….He was friendly, incredibly helpful, very nice people" British visitor

The data also seem to suggest that there is minimal language barrier between employees and guests. This ease of interaction influences visitors' perceptions of service quality at the hotel and their evaluation of employees' performance. Hotel employees are perceived as a source of learning about the country and its people, as these guests do not have other opportunities of interactions with the local population. They tend to stay within hotel compounds to enjoy the '3S' as well as hotel based activities and amenities. In essence, these visitors are confined to the 'resort experience', which is a staged environment, where the experience itself is monitored and controlled to ensure that guests have a pleasant stay. These resorts can be described as 'enclaves' that cater for the luxury segment of the market where the entire service experience is controlled such that the guests perceive everything to be 'perfect'. This seems to explain why visitors report very positive service experiences and positive experience of the destination as a whole.

Figure 5.7 below diagrammatically represents the nature of the tourist experience with hotel employees within these resorts and its relationship with other identified variables in the data set. For example, interactions with employees seem to be an opportunity for the visitor to learn about the local economy, the people and culture of Mauritius. Interactions with employees also contribute to visitors learning about the various activities at the hotel, including activities for children. The fact that hotels offer activities for both adults and children lead to visitors reporting good experiences of their stay at hotels in Mauritius. Also, there seems to be no difference on the basis of nationality between those that stay within hotel compounds and those that tend to go outside of hotels. Hence, nationality and ethnicity seem to have no influence on the nature of experiences reported within hotel compounds.
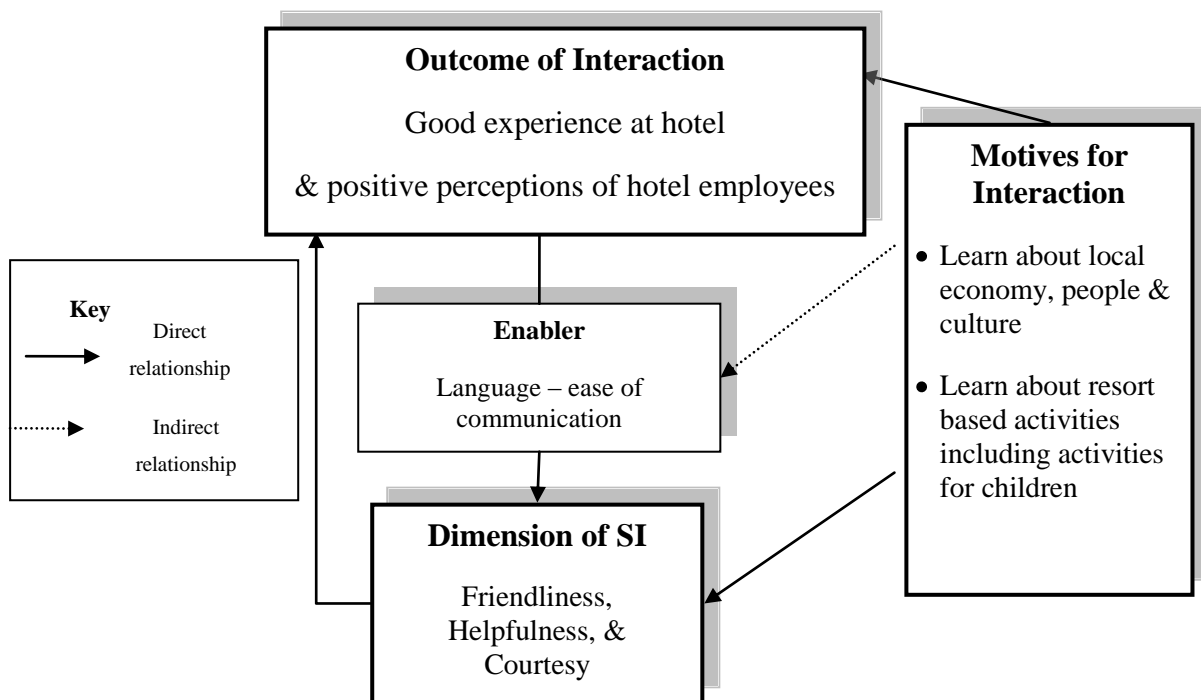
Figure 5.7: Low involvement visitors' experiences of service interactions

Also, as can be seen from Figure 5.7, the interactions with hotel employees seem to be enhanced by staff's language capabilities and this ease of communication tend to affect visitors' perceptions of their stay at the hotel. Visitors perceive that employees are friendly and helpful, which reinforce their assessment of a good experience. This perception is complemented by the fact that they learn about various things from hotel staff, in itself an indication of the friendliness and helpfulness of staff. This interaction seems to be made up of three dimensions, namely ease of communication, friendliness and helpfulness, and opportunities to learn from staff.

5.6.4 HIGH INVOLVEMENT VISITORS

In the case of 'high involvement' visitors, their reported experiences are somewhat different to their 'low involvement' counter parts. In general, they too reported positive service experiences. These visitors' perceptions of the quality of interactions with hotel employees seem to comprise the same three dimensions identified previously, that is, ease of communication, friendliness and helpfulness of staff, and opportunities to learn from them. These interactions also contribute towards visitors learning about sight seeing places and activities around the island as illustrated in the quote below.

"...We had good experiences only. It is so easy to talk to people here and we have made some very good friends here and each visit they [hotel employees] give us ideas of what to do, where to go, what to see, where to eat." French visitor

Their experiences are illustrated in Figure 5.8 below, which showed that a major difference in comparison to 'low involvement' visitors, is interactions with other people, which include service employees outside of the hotel and the general population. Their ease of communication with 'other people' tends to reinforce their perceptions that people in general are friendly and helpful, as illustrated in the following quote from a French visitor.

"...The employees were available, helpful, courteous...it seems it comes from the local culture here, the kindness of people. It's not only in the hotel but people you meet in markets, in the streets, they smile at you and are helpful." French visitor
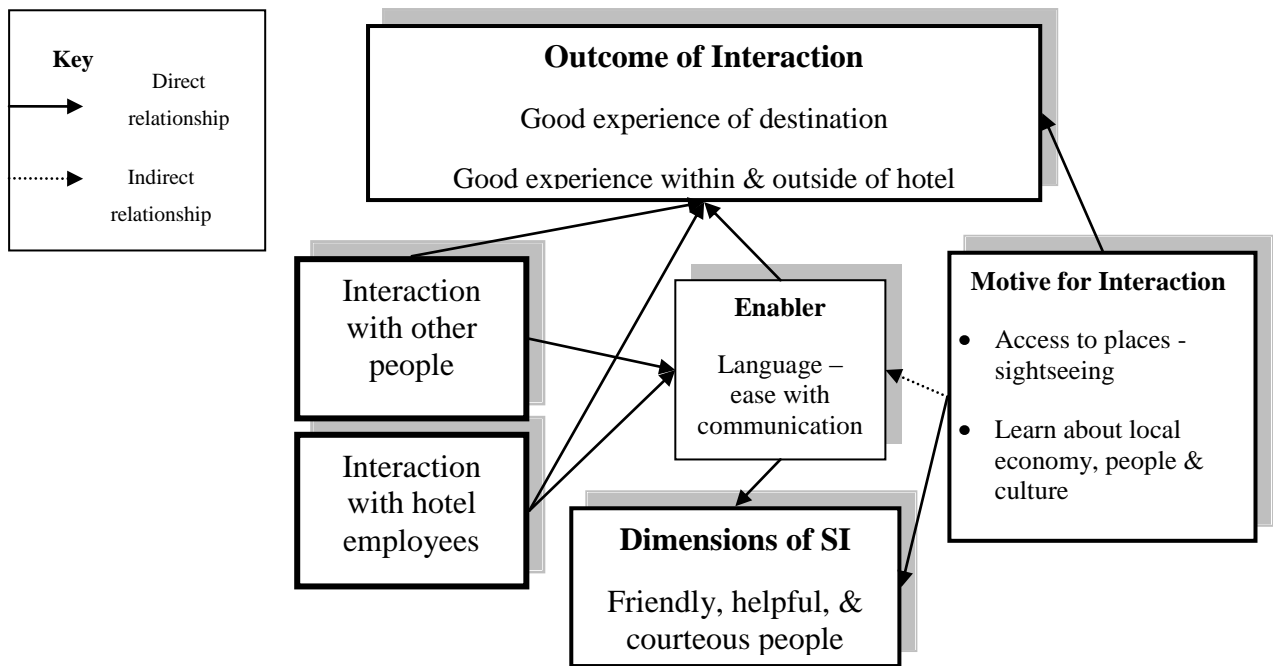
Figure 5.8: High involvement visitors' experiences of service interactions

Also, visitors seem to use the quality of interactions with hotel employees as an indicator of quality of interactions they can expect from other service employees and the general population. Both hotel employees and 'other people' are perceived as being friendly and helpful which contribute to positive experiences within and outside the hotel. These findings suggest a latent dimension of personal involvement in the data. Visitors seem to decide a

priori how much they want to get involved in the destination experience. This factor has been found to moderate perceptions of service interactions (Laws *et al.*, 2006).

5.6.5 OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS

Next, the raw data were analysed using CATPAC to provide support for the relationships described above. The original parameters were maintained in the first instance but the dendogram did not clearly explain the associations in the data set. Because the number of words in each response varied, it was deemed appropriate to change the original parameters to Unique Words 15, Window Size 3 and Slide Size 1. These settings led to four groupings of words as shown in Figure 5.9 below.

The first group (in brown) showed a close relationship among three words, 'everything', 'kids', and 'always'. Reverting to the original text, it was found that these words were related to visitors' perceptions that hotel employees were 'always' attentive to 'everything' their 'kids' needed during their stay. The second group of words (in green) showed an association between the words 'staff' and 'friendly'. The third grouping of words (in blue) indicated a relationship among words such as 'helpful', 'nice', 'employees', 'service', and 'bad'. The original text revealed that the word 'No' which is part of the exclude file in CATPAC in most cases preceded the word 'bad'. Therefore as thematic analysis revealed, visitors had very few bad service experiences. The remaining words just confirmed helpfulness of service employees. The fourth group of words (in red) showed a strong relationship among words such as 'hotel', 'positive', 'good', 'people', and 'experience'. These words confirmed earlier findings that most visitors reported positive experiences at the hotel and with people outside of hotels.

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WARDS METHOD

A K E F S B S E N H E P G P H
L I V R T A E M I E X E O O O
W D E I A D R P C L P O O S T
A S R E F . V L E P E P D I E
Y . Y N F . I O . F R L . T L
S . T D . . C Y . U I E . I .
. . H L . . E E . L E . . V .
. . I Y . . . E . . N . . E .
. . N . . . . S . . C . . . .
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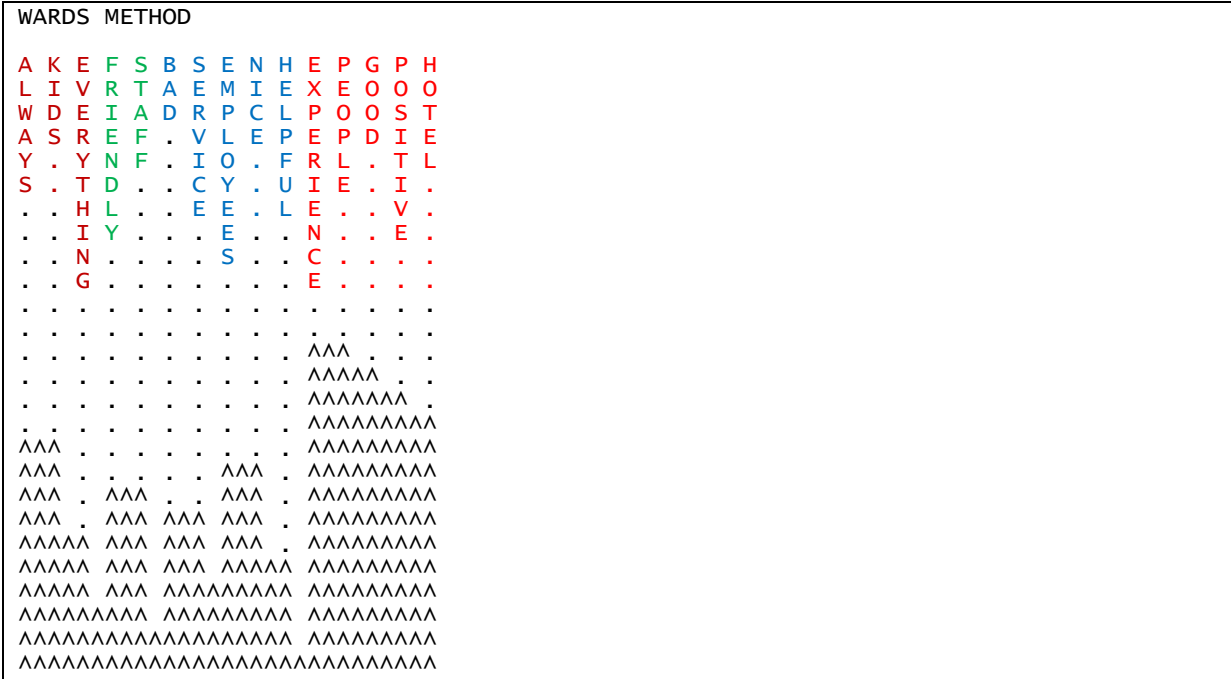
Figure 5.9: Visitors' overall perceptions of service interactions

5.6.6 POSITIVE SERVICE EXPERIENCES OF VISITORS

The responses to the question 'have you seen any example of good service interaction not just for yourself but for others as well during your holiday?' were entered into CATPAC to identify words that visitors associated with 'good service interaction.' Using the same parameters as before, that is, Unique words 15, Window Size 3, and Slide Size 1, the results showed a dendogram with four groups of words (Figure 5.10) that confirmed some of the prior relationships.

For example, the first group (in blue) confirmed that service employees were always ready to help guests. The second group of words (in green) when interpreted in light of the original text revealed that interactions were positive based on ability of the service employee to speak and know different languages. The third group of words (in purple) reinforced the perceptions of service employees being friendly and helpful while the fourth group (in brown) showed a close relationship among 'staff', 'nice' and 'hotel'.

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WARDS METHOD

A H G E I K S F G P S H H N S
L E U M N N P R O E E E O I T
W L E P T O E I O O R L T C A
A P S L E W A E D P V P E E F
Y . T O R . K N . L I F L . F
S . S Y A . . D . E C U . . .
. . . E C . . L . . E L . . .
. . . E T . . Y . . . . . . .
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Figure 5.10: Positive service interactions

5.6.7 NEGATIVE SERVICE EXPERIENCES OF VISITORS

As mentioned earlier, most visitors reported positive service experiences but a few had negative experiences. These negative experiences were related to three broad factors, namely hotel amenities and facilities, interactions with hotel employees, and interactions with others. The hotel amenities and facilities were a source of negative experiences particularly with respect to the crowding of facilities at dinner time, lack of facilities for families with babies as opposed to toddlers, lack of tea/coffee making facilities or charging for such services, and quality of food. The quotes below illustrate some of these problems.

"...may be they could improve food, it's not spicy enough for us, it's not real Indian food anyway, it's more European way of making it...service can be slow at dinner time" Indian visitor

"I felt the service was not always up to standard for a four star hotel, you had to ask 2 to 3 times before getting something. I felt the hotel was too full and the employees were not able to cope with the pressure, may be they have a shortage of staff, simple things like matches can take for ever, or coffee or tea refills." South African visitor

Service quality was perceived as low due to employees taking their time to serve and procedures not being followed properly as illustrated by these two quotes.

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"...with staff at the hotel, their mentality is that things are slow to get done, they're slower to do things compared to home, it's different from home, it's goes well with the island style that is on offering." French visitor

"...but once you check out, they don't treat you well...we asked them for a shampoo during our stay, it never came and the quality of the transit room at departure was dirty and inferior to the rest of the hotel." German visitor

Another factor that led to perceptions of negative service experience was interactions with members of the public, which include dealings with hawkers on beach and negotiation of prices in local markets. Visitors felt that sometimes the members of the public were rude, pushy and dishonest in their dealings as illustrated in the following quote.

"...but I think they [local people] have hypocritical relationships. People always want to help you and they promise a lot which afterwards they can't deliver...the hawkers here, they are like flies, they stick to you." German visitor

Some visitors felt that transport services, especially private taxis contributed to their perceptions of negative service experiences given that they felt ripped off by fares charged and the lack of metered taxis, as illustrated in the two quotes below.

"Negative experiences were sometimes bad manners with members of the public, they like to interfere in dealings for example negotiating price of taxis, sometimes they speak French when I am around, though I understand it, I prefer communicating and being communicated in English." British visitor

"we liked that the experience was rather good at the hotel, I think it's the outside experience that is a problem, the taxis don't have meters, you don't know how much you paying exactly when you negotiate fares, you don't know whether it is expensive or cheap." German visitor

The results from CATPAC confirmed these themes to some extent especially with regards to check out procedures at hotels but given that few visitors mentioned problems, the grouping of words were not always well defined when using similar parameters as in previous analyses. Yet, it was clear from the dendogram that visitors did not commonly have a bad experience with words such as 'bad', 'really', 'problem', 'good' and 'experience' grouping together. Also, they rarely had bad experiences because they 'know' 'hotel' 'staff', which was another group of words.

5.6.8 NATIONALITY & PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS

Questions four and five were asked to identify the dimensions of positive and negative service interactions that visitors had experienced or seen for others during their stay. Analysis of the data using CATPAC, Unique Words 28, Window Size 3 and Slide Size 1, seems to suggest that the choice of words used to describe the various dimensions of perceived service interaction vary by nationality. The findings can be expressed in a diagrammatic format as shown in Figure 5.11 below.
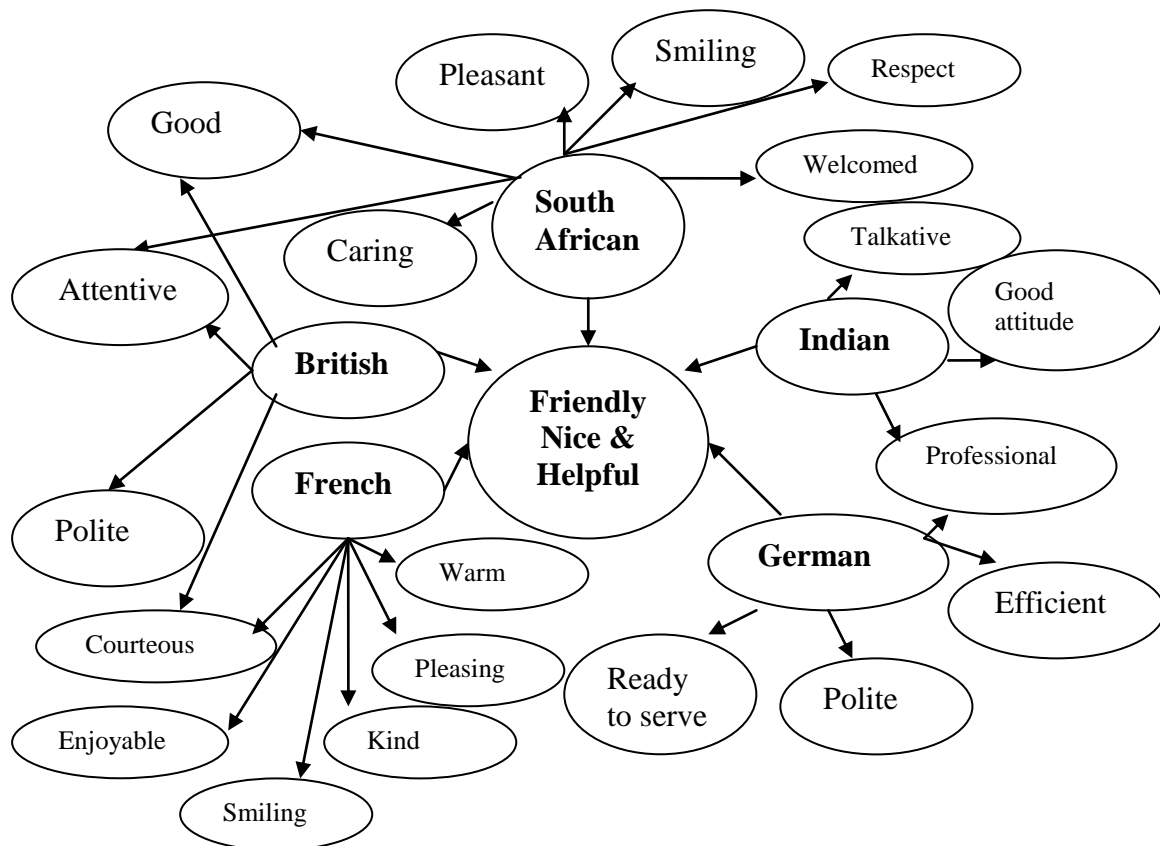
Figure 5.11: Nationality and perceptions of service interactions

While similarities exist, with words such as 'friendly', 'nice' and 'helpful' used by all visitors to describe the nature of their interactions, some words such as 'kindness' and 'professionalism' tend to be nationality specific. For example, British visitors tend to use words such as 'courteous', 'polite', 'good' and 'attentive' to describe their positive service interactions. German visitors were more pragmatic using words such as 'professional', 'efficient', 'polite' and 'ready to serve' to describe the outcome of their interactions with hotel employees. By far, French and South African visitors used the most variety of words to describe their perceptions of service interactions. While French visitors used words such as

'enjoyable', 'smiling', 'courteous', 'kind', 'pleasing' and 'warm' to describe their perceptions, South African visitors used words such as 'caring', 'attentive', 'respect', 'pleasant', 'good', and 'welcomed'. Indian visitors used words such as 'talkative' and 'good attitude' besides 'friendly', 'nice' and 'helpful' to describe their perceptions of service interactions, and displayed the same pragmatism as Germans. These findings tend to confirm certain stereotypes of visitors mentioned in the literature such as Germans being pragmatic and British visitors being courteous (Witkowski & Wolfinbarger, 2002).

5.6.9 ETHNICITY & PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS
In order to identify whether ethnicity had an influence on perceptions of service interactions, the data pertaining to Caucasians and non-Caucasians were analysed separately. Using parameters such as Unique Words 25, Window Size 4, and Slide Size 1, the two dendograms showed mostly similarities and only minor differences in relationships among words. In terms of similarities, both Caucasians and non-Caucasians perceived service interactions to be 'nice', 'helpful' and 'friendly', which contributed to an overall good experience at the hotel. Also, both groups perceived interactions that hotel staff had with their children as contributing towards a positive experience. The only difference between the two groups was that non-Caucasians seem to be more critical of service and hotel staff.

5.6.10 LANGUAGE & PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS
The influence of language on perceptions of service interactions was explored by dividing the sample into two groups. The first group consisted of those visitors who spoke English as their first language while the second group consisted of those visitors whose first language was anything other than English. This categorization led to 62 native English speakers and 41 who spoke other languages as their first language. A comparison of the two dendograms (Unique Words 28, Window Size 3, and Slide Size 1) revealed that both groups had positive experiences at the destination, more specifically related to their stay at the hotel. Hotel employees were perceived as 'courteous', 'friendly', 'helpful' and 'nice'.

However, three major differences could be identified between the two groups. First, those visitors who spoke English as their first language, were more articulate, that is, using far more words than the other group to describe their service experiences with respect to hotel employees. Second, fluent English speakers assessed more dimensions of service such as food, room size, and quality of beach in determining their experiences at the hotel. Third, visitors who did not speak English as their first language were more concerned about the quality of

interaction that hotel employees displayed with their children. Hence, these results seem to suggest that language has an impact on the ability of visitors to articulate their perceptions and to describe their experiences.

A similar procedure applied to the data on visitors' perceptions of good service interaction revealed that both groups perceived hotel employees as being 'friendly', 'always ready to help', and providing 'good service'. Yet, five main differences could be discerned in their perceptions. First, fluent English speakers perceived employees to be more attentive to their needs. Second, they perceived that employees were talkative and able to speak good English either with them or their children. Third, employees were of a different culture and hence they did not expect them to do things the way they would do it. Fourth, visitors that did not speak English as their first language, perceived their interactions with employees as an opportunity to learn about them and their country. Fifth, this same group perceived employees' job responsibility at the hotel to be different from employees working in the same position in their own country. Hence, these results tentatively affirm that languages spoken significantly influence perceptions of service interactions and dimensions that visitors consider relevant in those interactions. The finding is limited however by the nature of interviews with non-English native speakers being either in French (as appropriate) or in English as a 'second language' with its implications for a lack of verbal skill in explaining nuanced differences.

5.6.11 OVERALL RELATIONSHIP

Taking into account the previous results, it can be argued that positive service interactions inside and outside of hotels contribute significantly to positive perceptions of the destination. These perceptions are dependent on a myriad of inter-related factors, which include language, nationality, ethnicity, communication skills of both visitor and employees, friendliness of people including service employees and other people in the general population. This perceived friendliness and helpfulness of people in general is also based on visitors' impression of the quality of interactions they and their children have with hotel employees. Visitors are more likely to report positive service interactions, if they have seen and experienced good service interaction between hotel employees and their children. These relationships can be illustrated diagrammatically as shown in Figure 5.12 below.
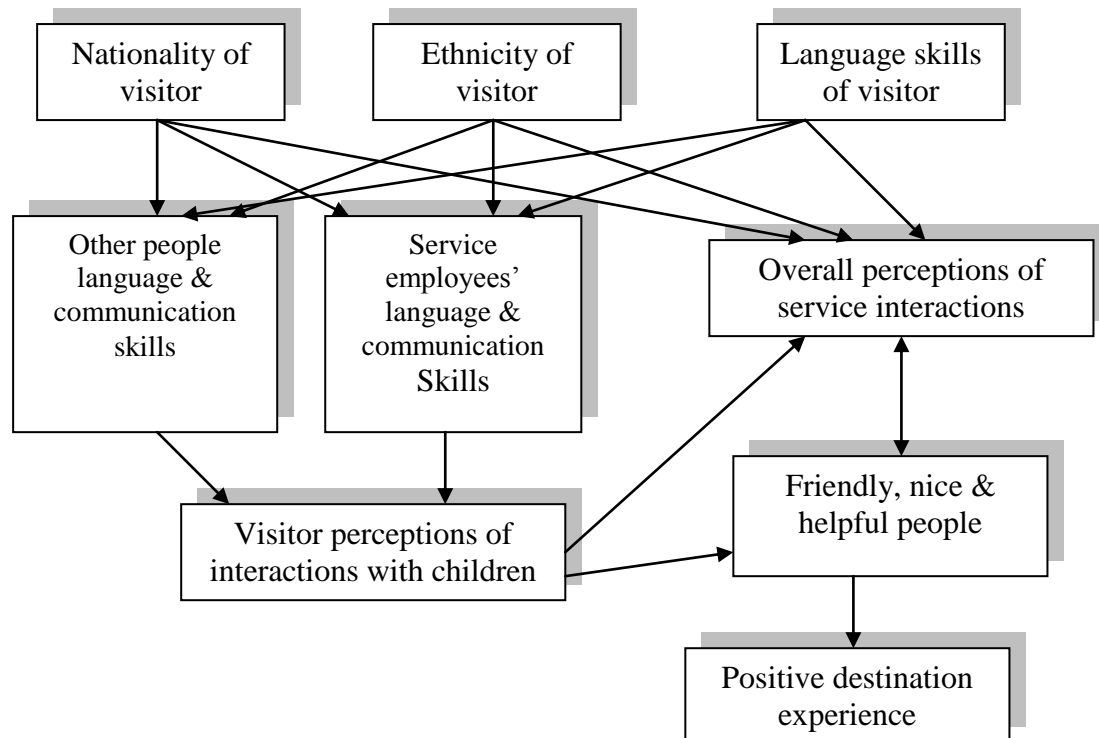
Figure 5.12: Overall relationship for service interactions

5.7 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

These findings have a number of theoretical and practical implications for the measurement of destination image, service interactions and cultural differences between tourists. Hence, this section discusses these findings in light of the social constructionist approach adopted for this study and compares them with the literature. Overall, a number of significant similarities and differences with the literature can be identified.

5.7.1 MEASURING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The first important implication of the findings is that 'cultural difference' is a measurable construct as suggested by Crotts and Pizam (2003) and that it conditions how visitors of different national cultures perceive images and interactions with others. Despite a number of suggestions in the literature on how to measure this construct, the findings in this study seem to provide adequate support for measuring it using the three proxies of nationality, ethnicity and language, given that all three seem to influence tourist perceptions as reported in other studies (Pizam & Jeong, 1996; Dann, 1996c; Lee & Sparks, 2007; Tsang & Ap, 2007). However, nationality seems to have the strongest impact on perceptions as indicated by Pizam and Sussman (1995), Crotts and Erdmann (2000), and Master and Prideaux (2000).

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Consequently, this finding partially supports Dann's (1993) argument that nationality can be solely used to explain differences in perceptions.

Nonetheless, content analysis using CATPAC also revealed the influence of ethnicity and language spoken on tourist perceptions. In fact, these two variables add richness to understanding similarities and differences in perceptions. As Douglas and Craig (1997) argued, ethnicity is an important factor that impacts upon attitudes and behaviours of different customer segments, and hence including this variable in the quantitative study can arguably enhance the identification of significant cultural differences among visitors to Mauritius. Likewise, inclusion of language spoken can contribute to a better understanding of similarities and differences in perceptions of service interactions and affective images. West and Graham (2004) concur with this approach, arguing that linguistic distance offers the advantages of being visible to the researcher, it discriminates well between national and regional borders, and it is easy to operationalise. Hence, using language spoken as another proxy for measuring cultural differences is a valid proposition.

5.7.2 DESTINATION CHOICE & CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

With respect to destination choice factors, this study confirms that island destinations have predominantly a sun, sand, and sea appeal, while also suggesting that relaxation, escape, and socialisation are significant motives. These push factors correspond to those depicted in the studies of Crompton (1979), Iso-Ahola (1982), Mill and Morrison (1985), Pearce (1993), Kozak (2002) and Ryan (2002). However, visitors of different nationalities seem to attach differing levels of importance to each motivator. For example, French, Indian and British visitors tend to choose Mauritius for VFR reasons indicating the socialisation component of motivations while honeymooners mostly tend to be from India and South Africa, indicating geographic closeness as an influential factor. Certainly the findings reinforce Kozak's (2002), Jang and Cai's (2002), Andreu *et al.*'s (2005) and Kim and Prideaux's (2005) proposition that nationality affects tourist motivations and can be used for effective market segmentation, and these motivations play a critical role in predicting future travel patterns. Briefly, these findings also correspond to Plog's (1974) psychocentric tourists given that the market is highly dominated by packaged tours for honeymooners specifically.

Additionally, the findings tend to support O'Leary and Deegan's (2003) view that the cultural aspect of a destination influences international travellers' choice of a location to visit. The findings seem to indicate that tourists looking for resort based experiences are more likely to

choose a destination if the culture of the host has some similarity with their home culture. For example, the use of French and English as mediums of communication tend to favour visitation from UK and France. The historical ties with these two countries due to colonization, and the ancestral ties with India certainly seem to account for the high proportion of tourists from these countries. Visiting culturally similar destinations seems to reduce the extent of cultural shock, which is likely to result in a positive experience (Ng *et al.*, 2007). Also, culturally similar destinations provide an environment in which it is easier to associate with the host community as shown by the very minimal language difficulties experienced by visitors within and outside of hotels. As a result, it seems that the need for familiarity is a dominant driver of destination choice for some of the markets investigated. However, seeking familiarity in one or more aspects of the holiday does not imply that visitors are not searching for novelty in others.

At the same time, it can be argued that differences in culture seem to act as travel motivators for Germans and South Africans. The concept of what is perceived as being 'different' is linked to visitors' own nationality, ethnicity, and physiological make up. For example, despite Mauritius having ancestral ties with India, Indian visitors tend to perceive cultural differences in terms of food. Then, it seems that the extent of cultural similarity or difference in perceptions stem from the level of involvement that the visitor wants with the host or how hard the visitor analyses the finer details of his or her experiences at the destination. For example, those visitors going outside of hotels seem to have more and better opportunities at assessing service interactions, while those confined within the environment of their hotel, tend to use interactions with hotel employees as surrogates for their understanding of the culture and the destination. Hence, in such a staged environment like the hotel, visitors are likely to perceive minimal cultural differences between them and the host, except may be for ethnic and physiological differences, and perhaps differences in behaviour based on the guest-host relationship.

For those who venture out of their 'environmental bubble', there are more opportunities to experience local food, traditions, festivals, and interact with local people. Such visitors seem to be driven by the need for socialisation, self-esteem from others and building interpersonal relationships. These highly involved visitors are in a better position to assess the cultural similarities and differences, which partly explains why the destination seem to have a high level of repeat visitation, as these visitors perceive the culture to be different and so come

back to explore these differences. Each visit seems to be focused on different aspects of the destination. Where initially the motivation behind the first visit could have been '3S', later visits seem to be motivated by culture, or friendship developed with locals, or pursuit of specific activities such as diving, water sports or combinations of these. In Trauer and Ryan's (2005) words, an intimate relationship develops between the visitor and the destination, and at same time, the visitor feels strong place attachment with specific activities (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2000), which then drives repeat visitation.

At another level, the findings seem to pinpoint whether, in seeking and/or seeing something different, first-time and repeat visitors are searching for their own perceived 'authenticity' in the tourist experience. This would explain their choice of island destinations and wanting to experience something different or out of the ordinary (need to escape from routine). Echtner (2002) in her analysis of verbal and visual components of 115 brochures showed sun and sea destinations as offering indulgence in paradise and exotic experiences within a tropical climate, which create a soft image around the natural aspects of island destinations. Perhaps for this reason, first-time German, French and British visitors choose Mauritius, as it offers the opportunity to relax, be laid back, eat something different, see people of different ethnicity and be pampered by hosts who are amiable, gentle and welcoming. To them, this seems to be the 'authentic' experience they are searching for and Mauritius is chosen from many alternatives, possibly due to word-of-mouth recommendations from others.

For repeat visitors, this concept of 'authenticity' is more loosely defined, as they are looking for familiarity with a place but still keen on discovering new facets of the destination. The repeat visit can either be over several years and the motivator being to see how the place and its people have evolved since their first visit, or it could be repeat visits year after year, staying at the same hotel and the likely motivator being a sense of attachment to the place. This type of behaviour, according to Urry (2002), indicates that MacCannell's (1976) argument that tourism is fundamentally about the search for authentic experience has receded, giving way to the argument that tourism itself has become dedifferentiated from other social activities. This 'ritual' of going to the same destination is, at least in part, a reflection of contemporary culture being characterised as post modern. This implies a dissolving of boundaries between high and low cultures and also between different cultural forms such as tourism, education, sport and shopping. Travelling to the same destination also reflects the need for pleasure oriented consumption in a 'safe' and 'familiar' environment.

5.7.3 DESTINATION IMAGE & CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The findings suggest that nationality, ethnicity and language spoken influence destination image perceptions. MacKay and Fesenmaier's (1997) argument that similar cultures have similar perceptions seem to hold true for cognitive images only. Even then, the importance attached to various facets of a destination seems to vary across nationality groups. Nevertheless, the findings lend support to the work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Calatone *et al.* (1989), Chen and Kerstetter (1999), Kozak *et al.* (2004) and Ryan and Cave (2005) that significant image differences exist between cultural subgroups. Also, the findings demonstrate that nationality has the strongest impact on affective images in line with Beerli's and Martin (2004) study. Likewise, ethnicity seems to have a moderate impact on cognitive images but a significant one on affective images given that ability to express feelings is culturally bound, with Caucasian visitors finding it easier to express feelings. Language spoken seems to have a particular influence on affective images as the expression of feelings and emotions is structured and communicated via language and the latter determines the way consciousness and tourism experiences are reported. In this study, German and Indian visitors seem to have the most difficulty expressing emotions, with the former finding it hardest to communicate the nature of their experiences in English. Overall, the findings suggest that differential tourism products can indeed be designed to satisfy the needs of visitors based on segmentation by nationality, ethnicity and language spoken.

From a theoretical point of view, the findings confirm a number of established relationships in the literature. First, the cognitive image component is an antecedent of the affective one and the latter is a more powerful antecedent to the conative component of destination image. Hence, the findings provide support to the hierarchical nature of destination image as suggested by others (Gartner, 1993; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Boo & Busser, 2005; Ryan & Cave, 2005). Second, respondents find it easier to recall cognitive images of a destination and indeed the cognitive attributes of Mauritius resemble items in Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) cognitive scale and Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) tangible attributes list. Third, the findings support Echtner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) and Jenkins's (1999) argument that qualitative methodologies are more conducive to measuring holistic components of destination image and capturing unique features and auras. Fourth, the findings suggest that it is possible for visitors to entertain both positive and negative components of image, while individual components such as cultural diversity can possess both positive and negative connotations. Hence, there is support for Baloglu and Brinberg's (1997) proposition that

tourism destinations have distinctive positive and negative affective associations with them, which leads to the fifth point that tourists of different cultures perceive and interpret their environment differently. Hence, a universal structure in destination image perception may be difficult to attain as each destination has a unique social and natural environment (Pearce, 1991; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002).

Sixth, visitors seem to develop compensatory attitudes towards a destination meaning that a negative attitude towards one aspect can offset positive feelings on others and vice-versa. Seventh, it seems that place image possess a central core from which is derived sub themes in a hierarchical pattern based on frequency of mention as suggested by Ryan and Cave (2005), which indicates the complexity of destination image as a construct. Eighth, destination image is a dynamic concept as suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1991), Gallarza *et al.* (2002) and Ryan and Cave (2005), and one that evolves with visitors' level of familiarity with the destination. The more familiar tourists are with a place, the more positive images they hold (Baloglu, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Prentice, 2004) thereby allowing for a more complex image of a place to be developed (Ryan & Cave, 2005). Finally, the findings of underlying dimensions in this study are consistent with those derived from quantitative studies.

Apart from confirming a number of relationships between the various dimensions of destination image, the findings derived from textual and conversational data seem to suggest that there are images within images, each perhaps linked with different motivator or consumption value (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). For example, an image of friendly people is a gestalt given that friendliness is associated with service employees, general population and the relationship visitors have with family and friends. These perceptions may be linked to the emotional value of fun given that visitors have family and friends who will allow them to have a good time in Mauritius or could be the motivator that made them choose the destination.

Another example is that an image of a nice hotel in Mauritius is associated with images of a good travel package, including hotel and activities for adults and children. For honeymooners, the same image can be associated with room size, good view of the sea or gardens, good food, nice swimming pool, sandy beaches and so on. In essence, this gestalt could be linked to both functional and social values such as good food at a hotel and being a reputable hotel respectively. Hence, qualitative methodologies illustrate linkages between a destination's salient attributes, holistic images, motivators and beneficial images. Thematic analysis allows

such relationships to be discerned effectively while CATPAC enables identification of destination image variables and clustering them into image themes of a more holistic nature (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006), thereby permitting specific place imagery to be developed. Also, CATPAC reveals that generic descriptors of image such as scenery, water and beaches are often associated with specific colours such as 'green' or azure 'blue' and 'white' respectively. As White (2005) suggested, adding colour to destination attributes could potentially signify some richer symbolic meaning. Perhaps for some tourists, destinations have a particular kind of colour or blend of colours associated with them and neural network software allow such associations to be identified.

From a social constructionist point of view the findings have a number of implications. First, places do not exist as such but are actively constructed by social processes (Shaw & Williams, 2004). This is particularly true for tourism destinations and can be seen from the historical, political and economic ties that Mauritius has with countries such as UK, South Africa, France and India. These relationships have enabled the development of tourism as a viable industry on the island and continue to act subtly as a motivator for visitors from these countries whether it in terms of language similarities with France or religious affinities with India or ancestral ties with South-Africa, Mauritius seems to generate many repeat visitors because of social ties with these countries and the significant VFR generated as a result.

Second, the findings lend support to Ryan and Cave's (2005) argument that tourist experiences are essentially individualistic, but nevertheless it is possible to discern consensual realities on various image dimensions. These image dimensions are subjective, temporally and culturally specific (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). Specifically, visitors tend to recall images that are linked to their own motives for choice. For example, culture combined with the traditional sun, sand, and sea appeal of island destinations can create what has been described as compressed time-space experiences of fantasy and escape-realism that lie outside of 'normal' daily experience (Urry, 2002) for visitors. This combination of personal motives and images of something different shape perhaps what makes islands unique holiday destinations. Hence, as Squire (1998) contends, destinations become cultural texts that invite a multitude of readings and interpretations, implying that multiple images of a destination can coexist in different people minds at the same time but only those images related to fulfilment of certain needs will be retained as being desirable.

Third, the findings suggest that a visitor's gaze tend to be place specific and dependent on characteristics of respondents. Visitors from different cultures seem to have different constructs of the self, others and place. This interdependence between the three seems to determine the nature of their experience at the destination. For some, as Urry (2002) correctly identified, they will gaze at those aspects of the destination that are signposted, where specific markers are used to identify the things and places worthy of their gaze. These visitors will choose to see and understand only what they intended to see and comprehend. As Hollinshead (1999) highlighted, these tourist 'gazers' tend to privilege the 'eye' over other senses as they see, understand and appropriate desired things. But for others, as Ryan (2002) argued, the experience is not simply visual but one that engages all the senses. The tourist is not merely a passive participant in the experience but an active seeker of knowledge about and understanding of the destination and the relationships within that place. Also, "the tourist gaze is structured by culturally specific notions of what is extraordinary and therefore worth visiting. This means that the services provided, which may be incidental to the gaze itself, must take a form which do not contradict or undermine the quality of the gaze, and ideally should enhance it" (Urry, 2002, p.59).

Fourth, given that a destination can be perceived as having both similarities and differences to one's own home country raises the question of whether visitors make choices that reinforce their perceptions or those that challenge their view of a particular place. The findings seem to suggest that both situations happen and influence future behaviour. For example, repeat visitors seem to choose Mauritius because of familiarity but they still want to discover new facets of the destination on each trip. They want to be challenged in their perceptions on each visit. However, there also seems to be a segment of visitors whose choices are driven by familiarity only. This is indicated by their behaviour, namely staying within the familiar environment of the hotel compounds. In such cases, hotel employees are a part of the gaze and guests expect them to be welcoming, helpful and attentive as part of their professionalism in service delivery, thereby maintaining the cultural distance between host and guest. Hence, the argument of who gazes at who or what and in which context. It seems that irrespective of first-time or repeat visit, both tourist and host gaze at each other albeit for different reasons.

For those seeking deeper insights into the destination experience through higher levels of involvement, their gaze seem to focus on more aspects and peculiarities of their interactions with hotel employees and significant others. In essence, their behaviour is aimed at reducing

the perceived cultural distance between the host and the guest. However, whether a visitor is highly involved or not, their gaze is still embedded in the more tangible aspects of the destination such as sea, beaches, service, hotel facilities and amenities, tours and local cuisine but their affection for the place seems to vary. Hence, these different 'gazes' and behaviours support Sirgy and Su's (2000) suggestion that places do not exist in isolation but need to be contextualised in a wider framework of experience, expectations, knowledge, culture, interests, and preferred activities. Positive perceptions of images and service interactions seem to be an outcome of how well both host and guest understand this framework and follow their scripted roles. Any deviations from the script can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings and dissatisfaction for both parties involved.

Fifth, this script is embedded in language and "language is a self-referent system. This means that any sign can only be defined in terms of other signs existing in the same language system" (Burr, 1995, p.61). As indicated by the findings language and communication skills become an enabler of positive perceptions of interactions and the destination. Guests seem to assess the competency of the hosts based on their communication skills and the latter based on their understanding of visitor expectations tend to learn different languages to appear competent. However, hosts at least in the case of resort-based experiences, also manipulate perceptions using signs by directing visitors gaze towards positive aspects of their experiences. For example, hotel employees are trained to appear friendly and helpful, hotel compounds and beaches are kept clean to appear beautiful, and hotels are designed to be visually appealing. Such measures indicate that the visitors' gaze is directed towards positive aspects of the destination in most cases. The negative aspects are silenced within the discourse and the hosts consciously direct visitors gaze away from these.

Hence, as Morgan and Pritchard (1998) suggest, images are created to represent certain ways of seeing reality and these images both reflect and reinforce certain relationship in societies. Hence, the destination becomes a locus of selected meanings (Ryan, 2002) constructed through a collection of signs (Hollinshead, 1999), mostly positive, and embedded in language. As Hall (1997) suggested, language structures representations and meanings that are inexorably intertwined in what he terms a 'circuit of culture', whereby language utilises representations to construct meanings which are then consumed, validated and recycled.

From a practical point of view, the findings have numerous implications. First, measuring visitors feelings about Mauritius alongside the traditional cognitive attributes can greatly

enhance destination planning decisions and provide unique insights into the way consumers view existing offerings and develop place attachment. For example, destination attributes that are perceived positively and negatively can be identified and linked to specific motivators. This understanding can enable destination products to be fine tuned, improved or developed to reflect the needs of different segments. Second, given that differences and similarities in image perceptions across nationalities and ethnicities exist, these variables can be used for effective segmentation and development of advertising and promotion campaigns for each sub-group. Third, the findings also pinpoint to the need for destination marketers, hoteliers and service businesses to understand the cultural orientation of newly emerging markets such as India and South Africa. The current products have a definite European flair and do not always correspond to the needs of these new markets given that visitors in certain cases perceive attributes such as local cuisine, hotel facilities and amenities not to be attuned to their needs.

Building on the previous point, hotels must become more flexible in product design and service provision in order for them to maintain and grow their share of the 'family market'. The negative experiences of visitors included families with babies and toddlers who currently felt their needs are not well catered. Fifth, the findings suggest that the traditional positioning of Mauritius as a '3S' destination persists and new products such as golf-course, spa and wellness and eco-tourism have not achieved the desired level of awareness as these are not currently part of the cognitive images associated with the island. Hence, perhaps a review of intended positioning and communication strategies is required. Finally, local culture can be used more effectively as a marketing tool if it can be translated into marketable commodities and spectacles, simulated instances, experiences and products for each target market based on their desired level of involvement in such products. The validity of these propositions will be tested by the results of the quantitative study as well.

5.7.4 SERVICE INTERACTIONS & CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The social constructionist approach posits that tourism is a social phenomenon (Urry, 2002) based on interrelations and interactions (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) that result in visitors' self-development and growth (Botterill & Crompton, 1996). The results of this study concur with this given that many visitors perceived interactions with hotel employees as a source of learning about places to visit, activities to do, and as an opportunity to learn about the host and culture of the place. While nationality seems to have the strongest impact on perceptions

of service interactions, the influence of ethnicity seems to be marginal while language spoken determines the ability of visitors to report their experiences. For example, the articulation of affective service dimensions seems to be entirely dependent on the language abilities of the visitor. This is because visitors tend to filter their gaze through the lenses of language, social class, gender and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and they represent their experiences to others by using concepts embedded in language (Burr, 1995). Hence, Indian, British and South African visitors were more articulate in describing their service experiences compared to Germans given the former group is more articulate in English than the latter. French visitors were particularly articulate in describing emotional experiences given that interviews were also conducted in French. These findings lend support to Trauer's and Ryan (2005) argument that tourism encounters are service relationships with emotional attachment, and that language can act as a barrier or create a comfort zone to allow for expression of affective components of service interaction and image perceptions.

Of interest is that the perceptions of visitors tend to vary based on whether they stayed within hotel compounds throughout the duration of their holidays or had interactions with people outside of hotels. On the one hand, those visitors who had interactions with hotel employees only tend to report very positive experiences of service delivery. As Olsen (2002) suggested, that 'experience' is fabricated to meet the visitors' expectations and can be described as 'inauthentic' based on Urry's (2002) argument that tourism employees are caught in the gaze since they work at producing them and coaching tourists in the right sort of gazing through both tuition and exemplification. These employees become part of the product being worked at and sold (Crang, 1997). Thus, it can be argued that these visitors stay within their environmental bubble and have a very superficial experience of the destination and its culture but their needs are still fulfilled given that their motives for choice are not particularly related to socialisation with others. They are not seeking an 'in-depth' experience of the destination. In such circumstances, the employees often embody and symbolise the different cultures of Mauritius.

On the other hand, visitors having interactions with other service employees and the general population seem to report both positive and negative service experiences. Their perceptions of the quality of interaction arguably can be described as 'authentic' given that it involved interactions in different settings with different employees over a period of time. But as role and script theories suggest, both hosts and guests overtime learn behaviours appropriate to the

positions they occupy (Biddle, 1979; Solomon *et al.*, 1985). The service encounter becomes a 'staged' setting for performance (Grove *et al.*, 1998) once service employees and general population understand the positive benefits of tourism, which seem to be the case of Mauritius. Both service employees and local population seem to employ impression management and emotional labour particularly vis-à-vis tourists. Clearly these arguments suggest that perceptions of authenticity will become context specific, associated with particular spatialities of display at specific points in time (Hoschild, 1983).

From a service encounter perspective, the findings suggest the following. First, positive service interaction seems to strengthen positive image perceptions and vice versa. Both constructs certainly have an influence over satisfaction and future behavioural intentions as suggested in other studies (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Farrell *et al.*, 2001; Castro *et al.*, 2007). Second, the dimensions of service interactions revealed in this study align with those derived from quantitative studies (Mohr & Bitner, 1995; Chandon *et al.*, 1997; Winsted, 2000; Rajpoot, 2004; Grandey *et al.*, 2005; Tsang & Ap, 2007). Third, level of interaction and extent of socialisation between host and guest differ between nationalities as suggested in the literature (Pizam & Sussman, 1995). It seems that French, South African and British visitors in this sample are the most talkative and sociable, which reinforce the earlier suggestion that language plays a dominant role in tourism experiences. Fourth, many service encounter experiences go unnoticed unless probed by the researcher or there is a 'critical incident' as suggested by Bitner *et al.* (1990). In this sample, visitors tend to recall mostly positive incidents with service employees, which could be related to cognitive dissonance, where visitors downgrade unpleasant experiences in reporting about their holiday and their overall evaluation of the experience.

Fifth, repeat visits seem to be influenced by visitors' perceptions of the quality of interactions they had with hotel employees and local population, familiarity with the place, image perceptions, motives for choice and to some extent attachment for the place. This has been confirmed by others (Greene, 1982; Beerli & Martin, 2004; George & George, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Alegre & Cladera, 2006). For example, Greene (1982) showed that repeat visits to hotels in particular have little to do with the physical features of the hotel but rather results from two-way recognition between staff and guests. Sixth, the findings lend support to Reisinger's and Turner (2002a,b) argument that tourists' perceptions of the service are influenced by their own nationality, ethnicity and gender and that of service delivery

personnel. Both have their own perceptions of what constitutes the socially and culturally appropriate service behaviour, and when language similarities exist, the possibility for inter-cultural misunderstandings is reduced while the opportunity for deeper understanding of the relationship between host and guest is enhanced. Finally, visitors seem to evaluate service employees both on their linguistic abilities and non-verbal behaviour, both of which seem to have been learnt effectively by hotel employees given the high level of positive experiences reported.

5.8 STUDY LIMITATIONS & RESEARCHER'S REFLEXIVITY

As with any qualitative research, certain limitations need to be acknowledged to contextualise the findings and discussions above. First, the results are based on interviewees' perceptions of the questions asked and researcher's interpretation of the answers. The potential for misunderstandings in a cross cultural research like this one is omnipresent. However, interpretation of the data has been based upon consensual or most frequent answers to limit such occurrences. Second, as with any qualitative research, reliability and validity of results cannot be established but certainly credibility of the findings has been established through triangulation of (i) methods of data analysis, in this case thematic analysis and the use of CATPAC; (ii) the researcher and supervisor working independently on deriving the CATPAC results and collating them thereof and (iii) backing findings with literature sources. Third, a relatively small sample size for each subgroup of visitors is used but nevertheless personal construct theory supports that such small sub-samples are adequate for exploratory studies.

Fourth, visitors were interviewed in the departure check-in hall of the international airport in Mauritius and the time available to interview each respondent was on average thirty minutes. This situational constraint had an impact on the richness of the data but as the results showed, they were adequate for identification of pertinent issues related to this research. Fifth, the role of the silent voice in interpretation must be acknowledged. Those visitors who did not feel comfortable with the language used for the interviews (English & French) did not participate and could have different views from this sample. The findings must therefore be interpreted with caution given that in all experiences there are those which are unconscious or unseen, and also sight is selective and directed. Finally, findings cannot be generalized beyond this sample and serve only as exploratory insights into understanding the broader relationships among a set of variables and the influence of cultural differences on these, but obviously a quantitative phase would enable confirmation of some of these relationships.

The social constructionist approach in qualitative research delves upon the "socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.13). So far, the researcher has discussed the social construction of destination image and service interactions and the constraints shaping this phase of the study. The next section outlines the researcher's reflexivity on the perceived relationship that he has with the visitor, who is the object being studied. A number of important variables have influenced this relationship and often they go unnoticed if not highlighted by the researcher himself. These are outlined below:

(i)   The researcher's own bi-lingual abilities has influenced the selection of participants. As discussed earlier, language can act as a barrier or create a zone of comfort between researcher and participant. With German participants, language was a barrier as many did not speak English or were not confident enough about their English to participate in this study. Hence, for the German sub-sample, it seems that only the most articulate respondents would volunteer for participation. For the French sub-sample, given that the researcher could speak their language perhaps indicated an effort on behalf on the researcher to understand them and their experiences and hence there was fewer refusals for participation. These observations lend support to Schwandt's (2000) argument that "we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth (p.197)"

(ii)   The researcher's own age and gender seem to have influenced participation rates. Older respondents and females were more willing to be interviewed in general. Hence, this observation indicates that the level of detail communicated depended largely on the cooperation and eloquence of respondents (Selby & Morgan, 1996) but more importantly on age and gender of both researcher and participant. This implies that participants need to feel comfortable with the interviewer and they make such choices based on physical appearance of the interviewer.

(iii)   Accents play a critical role in the interviewing process. The researcher's own observations indicate that his own accent influenced selection of South African respondents. This is because the researcher has stayed in South Africa for a number of years and hence picked up some of the accent. This improved the willingness of South African visitors to participate as it could have indicated to them once again that the researcher will understand their experiences as he knows

their culture. Based on this, the interviewing process turned out to be enjoyable and fruitful for both participant and researcher.

(iv)   Ethnicity of both researcher and participant influenced participation, duration of interview and level of detail that could be gathered through the interviews. For example, Black South Africans of either gender were the most difficult to interview given that they had the most negative perceptions of Indians due to cultural problems in South Africa between the two communities, and hence the researcher's own ethnicity (being Indian), was not conducive to a comfortable relationship being developed between researcher and participant. Likewise, ethnicity played an intervening role in the interview process for Indian visitors. Males in this sub-sample were more willing to be interviewed for cultural reasons given that females, specifically honeymooners, are not allowed to be interviewed or spoken by another Indian 'man'. Yet, the researcher's own ethnicity played a positive role for older Indian women in volunteering for participation and the quality of data gathered. It seems that they felt comfortable being interviewed by a younger Indian as they expected the researcher to show respect for their age and their thoughts. Hence, these observations seem to suggest that "our identity originates not from inside the person, but from the social realm, where people swim in a sea of language and other signs (Burr, 1995) and these signs influence the research process.

(v)   Given that the research was conducted at the international airport before visitors' departure, they perceived the interview itself as the last 'moment-of-truth' at the destination. That is, given that the subject matter was service interactions, they seemed to be drawing from their surrounding environment and the interactions they were having with the researcher to assess their perceptions of service interactions. Therefore, for some perhaps, the researcher was as part of the destination experience and part of the routine that visitors go through before leaving. In fact, some expected to be interviewed at the airport because it is the way things are done elsewhere.

(vi)   In a phenomenological study, the researcher needs to blanket out his or her ability and let the experience speak to us at first hand (Crotty, 1996). The very fact of asking a question seems to result in a recall of experiences that would otherwise not be recalled upon by visitors. Therefore, highlighting Burelland Morgan's

(1979) and Ryan's (1995a) proposition that meaning is attached to actions retrospectively, and the very act of asking a question influences the outcome, and the researcher is an active participant in this process.

(vii)   The influence of other 'tourists' on the research process needs to be acknowledged. Interviewing one member of a family does not mean that the others are passive on-lookers during the interview. Quite often it happens that other family members will add a comment or an idea that reinforces what the interviewee is saying or contradicts what he or she is saying. A smile or a nod from other tourists around listening to researcher and participant interaction potentially signifies similar or dissimilar experiences. The researcher needs to take these observations into consideration when interpreting the data. Also, the influence of children on destination, activity, hotel and food choices need to be acknowledged. Given that Mauritius attracts predominantly family oriented tourists, the children seem to have a significant influence on this choice.

Therefore, from a social constructionist perspective there is ample evidence to suggest that the researcher is an active participant in the interviewing process, willingly or unwillingly. It seems that both researcher and participant influence expectations and outcome of the interviewing process. In fact, the participant consciously decides on the extent of involvement and level of detail they want the researcher to know and chooses which experiences they want the researcher to understand. Also, the researcher's own physical appearance and demographic background (age, gender, ethnicity and language abilities) influence the type of experiences reported. Hence, the results reported in this chapter seem to conform to the constructionist approach where the researcher and participant voices are mixed but with a dominance of participants' voices.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The qualitative findings reported in this chapter suggest the existence of a hierarchical relationship between the different components of destination image (cognitive, affective and conative). The affective component in particular seems to have a latent dimension of place attachment related to it. The motives for choice seem to be related to both image and service interactions perceptions. Likewise, personal involvement seems to be an underlying dimension in the type of experiences visitors seek from their resort-based holiday. Nationality based findings suggest that it is the strongest proxy for measuring cultural differences, while ethnicity plays a less significant role in determining perceptions. Language spoken seems to be an enabler of experiences in terms of the level of detail, thoughts and feelings reported by visitors to the researcher. Having indentified some of the potential relationships suggested in the literature and in these findings, the next chapter reports on the process of designing the sample and survey instrument for the quantitative phase.

CHAPTER 6~ QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN & SAMPLE DESIGN

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the various steps followed in designing the survey instrument and elaborates on the sample design. The chapter begins with the scale development process. Then, a detailed outline of the measurement issues for each construct in the theoretical model is provided. Thereafter, the sample design process is reported and in this section details on the sample population, sample size, data collection method, and survey errors are provided. This is followed by an assessment of non-response bias, reliability and validity of the survey instrument. Details are also provided on the data cleaning process. Finally, a description of the various statistical methods employed to analyse the data are outlined.

6.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

There are no scientific principles that guarantee an optimal or ideal questionnaire but various authors (Churchill, 1979; Jennings, 2001; Malhotra *et al.*, 2006; Neuman, 2006) have presented broad guidelines to researchers in designing questionnaires. The essential outcome of this process should be a survey instrument that maximises reliability and demonstrates face, content, criterion and construct validity (Neuman, 2006). But most importantly, the questionnaire needs to collect data that fulfils the aim of the study (Jennings, 2001). Much of what is written about questionnaire design is about the development of appropriate scales to measure specified constructs. While criticisms abound with respect to this process, it is widely accepted that Churchill's (1979) approach is reliable and valid. Churchill (1979) suggests eight steps namely: specify the domain of the construct, generate sample of items, collect data, purify measure, collect data again, assess reliability, assess validity, and develop norms, which is only applicable to multi-item measures. DeVellis (2003) recommends a similar approach with eight steps, albeit with different terms used to describe each step. These steps can be combined in a seven stage approach as shown in Table 6.1, and is adopted in this study.

Stage	Scale Development Component
1	Construct framework and definition
2	Item generation
3	Item pool review
4	Pilot study
5	Scale purification
6	Data collection
7	Reliability & validity assessment

Table 6.1: Scale development process

6.2.1 CONSTRUCT FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITION

The importance of clearly identifying the constructs in the measurement process is critical if an appropriate level of specificity, distinctiveness, and accuracy is to be achieved in the generation of items (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003). In this study the construct framework and definition were derived from the literature review, the proposed theoretical model in chapter three and the qualitative study described in the previous chapter. The theoretical model seeks to identify and measure the relationships among constructs such as destination image, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement and future behaviour. The specific dimensions embodying each of these constructs were identified in the literature and further researched in the qualitative study to ascertain their relevance to international visitors and the destination under study.

Based on the aforementioned processes, the questionnaire was divided into three sections measuring each of these specified constructs as described below. Section A comprised three questions measuring motives for choice, destination image, place attachment and personal involvement. Section B comprised four questions, three of which measured future behavioural intentions and one question measuring overall image of Mauritius. Likewise, Section C comprised of fifteen questions measuring various demographic and travelling characteristics of visitors, including questions pertaining to nationality, ethnicity and language spoken to measure cross cultural differences in perceptions.

6.2.2 ITEM GENERATION & ITEM POOL REVIEW

The development of the questionnaire thus involved generation of items which would capture the specified constructs (Churchill, 1979). A number of good practices have been suggested in relation to item generation. First, items should be generated or created with the specific measurement goal in mind. Therefore, the content of each item should reflect the construct of interest. Second, at this stage it is better to be over inclusive of items because reliability is a function of how strongly the items correlate with one another and how many items there are on a scale. Hence, given that correlations among items is not known at this stage of scale development, having many items is a form of insurance against poor internal consistency (DeVellis, 2003). Third, items should avoid being lengthy, double barrelled, and should be written in simple language to be understood by respondents (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Malhotra *et al.*, 2006; Neuman, 2006). Fourth, the use of negative worded items should be avoided or used with caution (DeVellis, 2003). Both the literature review and qualitative

research provided a pool of items to measure destination image, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement, and the process for selecting the items to represent these constructs in the survey instrument is described below.

6.2.2.1 Measuring Cognitive Images & Motives for Choice

A review of items from the literature showed that most image studies have used different set of attributes for measuring the cognitive component of destination image. Pike (2003) in his review of 84 destination image studies found more than 100 attribute themes used. But there is still no agreement on a universally accepted valid and reliable scale for measuring the destination image construct (Beerli & Martin, 2004) given that imagery is place specific. As a result, the synthesis of attributes listed from previous studies (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2003; Beerli & Martin, 2004) was reviewed and compared to the list of attributes generated from the qualitative research. Also, given that the image study of Garcia *et al.* (2004) was focused on 'sun and beach' destinations, their cognitive list of attributes was deemed more relevant for items in this study but it was also used to eliminate generic items. An initial list of thirty-one destination items was retained at this stage. A panel of experts including the researcher's supervisors and two academics in the tourism field at the University of Mauritius were asked to review the items and to confirm their appropriateness. A final list of 25 image items was included in the questionnaire as shown in Table 6.2 below.

Attributes	Item Derived From
Friendliness of people	Qualitative research; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2005; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hallab & Kim, 2006
Nightlife & entertainment	Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Personal safety & security	Qualitative research, Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Kozak *et al.*, 2004; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Opportunities for adventure & new experiences	Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Konecnik, 2005; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Pike, 2003
Value for money	Qualitative research; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Beautiful scenery & natural attractions	Qualitative research; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Weather & Climate	Qualitative research; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins,

	1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Leisen, 2001; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Crowd levels	Qualitative research, Pike & Ryan, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Jenkins, 1999; Pike, 2003
Beaches & water sports	Qualitative research; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Konecnik, 2005; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Pike, 2003
Cultural & historical attractions	Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2005; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Pike, 2003
Culturally diverse country	Qualitative research, Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Leisen, 2001
Lovely towns & cities	Konecnik, 2005; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a
A variety and good quality of accommodation	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Kozak *et al.*, 2004; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallab & Kim, 2006
Level of service	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993
Convenient local transport	Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993
Good shopping facilities	Pike & Ryan, 2004; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Pike, 2003
Suitable for the family	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Jenkins, 1999
Appealing local cuisine	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Leisen, 2001; Hallab & Kim, 2006
A variety of restaurants & bars	Kozak *et al.*, 2004; Konecnik, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Pike, 2003
Easy access to destination	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a
Reputation of the destination	Qualitative research; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Chen & Tsai, 2007
No language barriers	Qualitative research; Jenkins, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993 ; Beerli & Martin, 2004
Exotic place	Qualitative research, Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Beerli & Martin, 2004
Signage (roads and places of interests)	Qualitative research

Table 6.2 List of cognitive attributes of Mauritius

Given also that the choice of Mauritius as a holiday destination seems to be based on motives such as 'learning about a new destination', 'socialisation with others' and 'getting away from routine', nine statements pertaining to tourists' motivations were added to the list of cognitive attributes. As can be seen from Table 6.3, these statements were related to four motives from the leisure-motivation scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1980, 1983; Ragheb & Beard, 1982). The first is an intellectual motive, which is related to the extent to which individuals are motivated to engage in leisure activities which involve mental activities such as learning, exploring, discovering, thought or imagining. Therefore, two statements pertaining to this motive were included in the list (statements 30 and 41). Second, a social motive which refers to the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities for social reasons such as need for friendship and interpersonal relationships or the need for self-esteem from others. Hence, two statements referring to this motive were included in the questionnaire (statements 17 and 26). The third motive refers to individuals seeking to achieve, master, challenge and compete in a leisure pursuit, but given that this motive did not arise in the findings of the qualitative

research, items pertaining to this motive were not included. Fourth, there is a stimulus-avoidance motive which assesses the drive to escape and get away from routine. It is related to the need for individuals to avoid social contacts, to seek solitude and clam conditions, while others tend to seek to rest and to unwind themselves (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). Therefore, five statements referring to this motive was included in the questionnaire (statements 3, 7, 10, 21, and 35).

Motives	Item Derived From
Learning Statement 30 – There are opportunities to learn things about a new place.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Statement 41 – There are opportunities to learn different ways of life.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Socialisation Statement 17 – There are opportunities to socialize with other tourists.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Statement 26 – There are opportunities to build friendship with others.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Escape & Relaxation Statement 3 – The destination is suitable for rest & relaxation.	Qualitative research; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Calatone *et al.*, 1989; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Li & Vogelsong, 2006; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a; Leisen, 2001; Pike, 2003
Statement 7 – I feel I am away from the routine of daily life.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Statement 10 - The place offers calm and peaceful atmosphere	Qualitative research; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005a
Statement 21 – There are opportunities to see things that I don't normally see.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996
Statement 35 – There are opportunities to spend time alone.	Qualitative research; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Manfredo *et al.*, 1996

Table 6.3 List of motives for choosing Mauritius

6.2.2.2 Measuring Service Interactions with Hotel Employees

Given that there is no consensus on the various dimensions perceived by visitors during their interactions with service employees, it was necessary to construct a pool of items to represent the most important dimensions. For example, Mittal and Lassar (1996) suggest that the dimension of personalisation, which is defined as the social content of interaction between service employees and their customers, is an important mediator of customer satisfaction and future behaviour. Winsted (1997, 1999) in an attempt to identify relevant behavioural measures across two cultures (US & Japan), found 8 dimensions (authenticity, caring, control, courtesy, formality, friendliness, personalisation and promptness) to be relevant in relation to service encounter perceptions.

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In comparison, Mattila (1999) uses five dimensions (mutual understanding, provision of extra attention, authenticity, competence and meeting customer expectations) in her assessment of Asians and Westerners evaluations of service encounter. These dimensions were derived from the study of Price *et al.* (1995a,b) which measured consumers' emotional responses to service encounters based on service provider performance. Farrell *et al.* (2001) in their extensive review of the literature on service encounter conceptualisations, found 10 dimensions namely adaptability, assurance, civility, empathy, recovery, reliability, responsiveness, spontaneity, tangibility and teamwork to be of importance if organisations want to enhance customers' perceptions of service. Raajpoot (2004) uses an initial pool of 72 items to measure service encounter quality in a non-western context and through confirmatory factor analysis, found 6 dimensions (tangibility, reliability, sincerity, formality, personalisation, and assurance) to be relevant.

Altogether these studies revealed an initial pool of 30 dimensions, some of which were overlapping, and was compared to the qualitative research findings. The main themes derived from the qualitative data on positive perceptions of interactions with hotel employees were: (i) Ease of communication; (ii) Friendliness and helpfulness of staff; (iii) Interactions with employees seen as an opportunity to learn about places of interest and things to do; and (iv) An opportunity to learn about the culture in Mauritius. Negative perceptions included: (i) Lack of good communication skills; (ii) Slow in service delivery; (iii) Not responsive to service requests; and (iv) Employees' attitudes towards guests. From the literature review and the qualitative data, the following nine items were retained as shown in Table 6.4. These items were a priori reviewed by the same expert panel as before to confirm their appropriateness for measuring perceptions of interactions with the host before inclusion in the survey. The wording of items were derived from the qualitative interviews and adapted from the literature as well.

All 43 items were integrated in questions one and two to be evaluated by visitors within an Importance-Performance framework (IPA), discussed later on in this chapter. Therefore, within this framework, Question 1 was aimed at assessing the importance of various attributes that visitors consider in choosing Mauritius as a holiday destination, while Question 2 was aimed at measuring visitors' satisfaction with these attributes. A 7-point likert scale anchored on '1'- Of No Importance and '7' – Extremely Important, was used to measure the items in the first question. Oh (2001) suggests that a unidirectional scale for measuring importance of

attributes within an IPA framework, makes more sense especially for interpretation. Similarly, a 7-point likert scale was used to measure satisfaction levels, anchored on '1'- Very Dissatisfied and '7' – Very Satisfied. Related studies on assessing destination images have also used a 7-point likert scale (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Boo & Busser, 2005; Martin & del Bosque, 2008) based on the premise that it affords greater degrees of discrimination than a 5-point likert scale while it is still easily understood by respondents.

Items	Items Derived From
Hotel employees deliver service professionally	Qualitative research; Surprenant & Solomon, 1987
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs	Qualitative research; Chandon *et al.*, 1997; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Dabholkar *et al.*, 2000; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Ryan & Cliff, 1997
Hotel employees are courteous	Qualitative research; Mittal & Lassar, 1996; Price, Arnould & Deibler, 1995; Chandon *et al.*, 1997; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Dabholkar *et al.*, 2000; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Ryan & Cliff, 1997; Gabbie & O'Neill, 1997; Brady *et al.*, 2001; Gountas *et al.*, 2007
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful	Qualitative research; Mittal & Lassar, 1996; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Dabholkar *et al.*, 2000; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Ryan & Cliff, 1997; Gabbie & O'Neill, 1997; Surprenant & Solomon, 1987
Hotel employees give advice on places to visit and things to do	Qualitative research
Hotel employees have good language and communication skills	Qualitative research; Winsted, 1997; Johnston, 1995; Brady *et al.*, 2001; Farrell *et al.*, 2001
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me/family/children	Qualitative research
Hotel employees shared information about their culture with me	Price *et al.*, 1995; Price, Arnould & Deibler, 1995; Mattila, 1999; Mattila & Enz, 2002
Hotel employees made me feel welcomed and respected	Qualitative research

Table 6.4: Items for evaluating service encounter interactions

6.2.2.3 Measurement of Emotional Response toward a Place

The literature revealed that most studies have used Russel, Ward and Pratt's (1981) affective response grid to measure affect towards a place in destination image literature. As argued in chapter two, this is a 'reductionist' approach, which is conceptually restrictive given that it emphasises only images developed out of emotional attachment with the physical environment/landscapes and ignores attachment that visitors develop with people, culture, social life of locals, communities and history of places. Also, affective images can be the result of an interaction between all these factors, which have been shown to influence visitors' own selves, overall image of the destination and future behaviour. Hence, affective responses towards a place was measured using three different and interrelated constructs namely place

attachment, personal involvement, and perceived interactions with hotel employees. The measurement of place attachment and personal involvement is outlined below given that statements measuring perceived service interactions are already included in questions one and two.

Place attachment is a complex and integrative phenomenon encompassing a wide range of concepts (Kaltenborn, 1997). As established by previous research, it is a concept that cannot be easily broken down into separate factors or dimensions given that it involves interrelated and inseparable aspects with complex origins (Low & Altman, 1992). A review of the literature on measurement approaches revealed that different conceptualisations and dimensions have been used as shown in Table 6.5. Place attachment is used either synonymously with sense of place or as a sub-dimension. The number of items used to measure the construct varies across studies depending on how place attachment is conceptualised and the setting in which it is being used. But overall it seems that place dependence and place identity are the two sub-dimensions most widely used. Hence, as suggested by Williams *et al.* (1992), "there is no standardised scale for measuring place attachment" (p.34).

Authors	Concept Measured	Setting	Items Used to Measure Place Attachment
Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson (1992)	Place attachment	Wilderness Settings	Place dependence & Place identity – 13 items
Moore & Graefe (1994)	Place attachment	Recreation Rail-Trails	Place dependence & Place identity – 15 items
Kaltenborn (1997)	Place attachment & Place attributes	Recreation Homeowners	Place dependence , Identity expression, Place attachment – 21 items
Bricker & Kerstetter (2000)	Place attachment	Whitewater Recreationists	Place dependence & Place identity – 15 items
Jorgensen & Stedman (2001)	Sense of place	Lakeshore Property Owners	Place identity, Place attachment & Place dependence – 12 items
Hidalgo & Hernandez (2001)	Place attachment	Residents of a Town	Social & Physical attachment to house, neighbourhood and city – 9 items
Lee (2001)	Destination attachment	Tourist destination	Destination attractiveness, past experience, satisfaction, familiarity with a destination, age of tourist, family holiday place
Kyle, Absher & Graefe (2003)	Place attachment	Scenic Area Visitors	Place dependence & Place identity – 7 items
Moore & Scott (2003)	Place attachment	Recreational Users of Metropolitan Park & Trail	Place dependence & Place identity – 8 items
Williams & Vaske (2003)	Place attachment	University Students	Place dependence & Place identity – 12 items
Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston (2003)	Sense of place	Residents in Rural Towns	Place identity, Place attachment, Place dependence & Sense of community – 41 items
Stedman (2003)	Sense of place	Property owners in a Lake-Rich Region	Place attachment – 9 items
George & George (2004)	Place attachment	Tourists	Place dependence & Place identity – 13 items

Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon (2004a)	Place attachment	Trail users	Place dependence & Place identity – 8 items
Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant (2004)	Place attachment	Subscribers to a Metropark Magazine	Place dependence, Place identity, Affective attachment & Social bonding – 14 items
Hou, Lin & Morias (2005)	Place attachment	Cultural tourists	Place dependence & Place identity – 12 items
Hwang, Lee & Chen (2005)	Place attachment	Visitors to National Parks	Place dependence, Place identity & Lifestyle – 15 items
Knez (2005)	Place attachment & identity	Households in a City	Place identity & Place attachment – 11 items
Kyle, Graefe & Manning (2005)	Place attachment	Trail Users	Place identity & Place attachment – 8 items
Alexandris (2006)	Place attachment	Skiers	Place dependence & Place identity – 8 items
Gross & Brown (2006)	Place attachment	Tourists Visiting Five Regions	Place dependence & Place identity – 8 items
Hammitt, Backlund & Bixler (2006)	Place Bonding	Trout Anglers	Place familiarity, Place belongingness, Place identity, Place dependence & Rootedness – 26 items
Brown & Raymond (2007)	Place attachment	Residents & Visitors to a Region	Place dependence & Place identity – 11 items
Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess (2008)	Place attachment & identity	Island Natives & Non-natives	Place attachment & Place identity – 12 items
Gu & Ryan (2008)	Place attachment & identity	Residents of a Community	Community impacts of tourism – 44 items

Table 6.5: Dimensions used to measure place attachment

Given a lack of consistency in number of items used and the length of the questionnaire being an important issue in achieving desired response rates for this study, a 12-item scale based on similarities of items among these studies (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Kyle *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2006) were used to design the scale. These items as part of question 3 in the survey instrument were measured on a rating scale, where '1' represented Strongly Disagree and '7' represented Strongly Agree to allow for sufficient discrimination among respondents.

Personal involvement was measured using a multifaceted scale given that such a scale has proved to be superior in content and face validity than a single faceted scale within a leisure and tourism context (Havitz *et al.*, 1993, Havitz & Dimanche, 1997). Specifically, the Consumer Involvement Profile (CIP) scale of Laurent and Kapferer (1985) was adapted for the purpose of this study given that the concept has been sparsely operationalised within a tourism destination context (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003). The CIP measures five dimensions

namely: Importance (4 items), Pleasure (5 items), Sign (4 items), Risk Importance (3 items) and Risk Probability (3 items), and the original scale was designed with these19 items. However, within a recreation and tourism context, there seems to be no consistency in the number of items used to measure each dimension as shown in Table 6.6. For example, Madrigal *et al.* (1992) used 14 items excluding one item from the risk consequence dimension by arguing that it did not fit a vacation-related context. Gursoy and Gavcar (2003) used 16 items in their study and add a further item to the risk probability dimension. Yet, most studies tend to use 15 items irrespective of setting in which it is applied. Hence, the 15 items proposed by Dimanche, Havitz and Howard (1991) were included in the questionnaire and these were reworded to fit the destination under consideration by using items from similar studies as guidelines (Madrigal *et al.*, 1992; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003).

The literature also revealed that some studies (Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2006) mix two different scales, namely CIP and McIntyre and Pigram's (1992) – Enduring Involvement (EI), in measuring the involvement construct. EI comprises of three dimensions (attraction, self-expression and centrality to lifestyle). This scale is very similar to CIP given that the 'Attraction' dimension is conceptualised as a combination of 'Importance' and 'Pleasure' while the 'Self Expression' dimension is similar to the 'Sign' dimension of CIP (Kyle *et al.*, 2004b). Hence, this scale was not used due to overlapping dimensions with CIP and it does not include a measurement of risk facets. As argued by Havitz and Dimanche (1990), "risk facets seem to be of relevance to recreational and tourist contexts" (p.183), given that visitors' level of involvement is a function of perceived risks (social, psychological, financial, time and effort, and physical) associated with participation in and purchase of a recreation/tourism product.

These 15 items were included in question 3 and measured using a 7-point likert scale anchored on '1'-Strongly Disagree and '7'- Strongly Agree. The order of items measuring place attachment and personal involvement were unsystematic so that respondents would not be forced into believing that the items were related to each other in any way.

Studies	Setting in which item was originally used	Number of items used in their survey instrument
Dimanche, Havitz & Howard (1991)	Golf	Importance – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 3 items
Madrigal, Havitz & Howard (1992)	Family vacation	Importance – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 2 items, Risk Probability – 3 items
McIntyre & Pigram (1992)	Vehicle based campers	Attraction (Importance & Pleasure) – 5 items, Self Expression – 4 items, Centrality – 4 items
Jamrozy, Backman & Backman (1996)	Nature based activities	Interest – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 3 items
Kim, Scott & Crompton (1997)	Bird watching	Importance – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 3 items
Kerstetter & Kovich (1997)	Women's Basketball	Importance – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 3 items
Gursoy & Gavcar (2003)	Vacation destination	Importance – 3 items, Pleasure – 3 items, Sign – 3 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 4 items
McFarlane (2004)	Camping experiences	Attraction (Importance & Pleasure) – 5 items, Self Expression – 4 items, Centrality – 4 items
Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon (2004b)	Hiking	Attraction (Importance & Pleasure) – 5 items, Self Expression – 3 items, Centrality – 3 items
Kyle, Bricker, Graefe & Wickham (2004)	Hiking, Boating & Angling	Attraction (Importance & Pleasure) – 5 items, Self Expression – 4 items, Centrality – 3 items
Hwang, Lee & Chen (2005)	National park	Importance & Pleasure – 9 items, Self expression & Symbolism – 6 items, Risk Consequence – 3 items, Risk Probability – 3 items,
Gross & Brown (2006)	Tourism experiences	Attraction (Importance & Pleasure) – 5 items, Self Expression – 5 items, Centrality (Lifestyle) – 10 items

Table 6.6: Items used in other studies to measure involvement construct

6.2.2.4 Measurement of Overall Image

The literature indicated two approaches to the measurement of overall image of a destination. The first approach consists of measuring visitors' overall image perceptions using a Likert scale anchored on 'very negative' to 'very positive' (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004) or 'very unfavourable' to 'very favourable' (Ahmed, 1996; Bigné *et al.*, 2001). The second approach consists of obtaining the overall image as an average or sum of attribute scores (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Joppe *et al.*, 2001), given that each attribute is made of cognitive and affective elements that form and determine it (Gallarza *et al.*, 2004). However, it must be recognised that such an approach has certain limitations given that image has been described as an overall impression greater than the sum of its parts. Attribute lists may be incomplete

and fail to capture salient destination image dimensions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The operationalisation of destination image must capture both attributes and holistic impressions of a place (Echtmer & Ritchie, 1993). Hence, the average or sum of attributes approach may not be an adequate measurement. Therefore overall image was measured on a 7-point scale (1=Very Unfavourable and 7=Very Favourable).

6.2.2.5 Measurement of Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been defined as the extent of overall pleasure or contentment felt by the visitor, resulting from the ability of the trip experience to fulfil expectations (Chen & Tsai, 2007). It is an overall affective response due to the use of a product or service (Oliver, 1980). Hence, as Vaske *et al.* (1986) and Petrick *et al.* (2001) argued, a single global measure of satisfaction may be a better measure than the use of disconfirming expectations. This is because a leisure service's performance may be the crucial determinant of repurchase intentions and good word of mouth instead of expectations or disconfirmation (Spreng *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, in accordance with previous research in the field (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Petrick *et al.*, 2001; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Weaver *et al.*, 2007) a single item was used to measure overall satisfaction on a 7-point scale (1= Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied) and worded as 'Overall I would rate satisfaction with my holiday in Mauritius as'.

6.2.2.6 Measurement of Future Behaviour

The construct of future behavioural intention has been measured using predominantly two dimensions, intention of repurchase and willingness to recommend (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007). In tourism, these two dimensions are indicators of loyalty (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Petrick, 2004) but they have been operationalised differently. A number of authors (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Um *et al.*, 2006; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Weaver *et al.*, 2007) have used a single item to operationalise intention to revisit while others (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996; Petrick *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005) have used multiple items. For example, Lee *et al.* (2005) made use of two items (revisit for pleasure trip and revisit again in the next five years) to measure intention to revisit a destination, while Petrick *et al.* (2001) used 3 items (visit the destination, visit a show, visit and book a package) to measure repurchase intentions. Similarly, willingness to recommend have been operationalised using a single item (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008) or multiple items (Lee *et al.*, 2005). For example, Lee *et al.* (2005) uses 3 items (recommend to

family and friends, say positive things to other people and recommend to those who want advice) in their measurement of the construct.

Likewise, Baker and Crompton (2000) suggest the use of five items to measure the entire loyalty construct (positive word of mouth, revisitation next year and year after, willingness to recommend to friends and relatives, get tired of coming back, and use of a substitute product for next visit). As a result of these inconsistencies in measurement items, it was decided to measure future behavioural intentions using two items, willingness to recommend the destination and intentions to revisit. The two items were measured on a 7-point scale anchored by 1, 'Very Unlikely', and 7, 'Very Likely'. In particular, intention to revisit was operationalised by asking respondents how likely they would be visiting the destination in the next 3 years. Within the next 3 years was chosen to more accurately correlate intentions to actual behaviour. As Eagly and Chaiken (1993) argued, the longer the duration from the intended behaviour to the actual behaviour, the less likely intentions will be correlated to actual behaviour.

6.2.2.7 Measurement of Demographic & Travelling Characteristics

The last section of the questionnaire measured international visitors' demographic and travelling characteristics. The demographic characteristics measured included gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, education level, marital status, average monthly household income, number of children and languages spoken. The wording and response categories in each question were derived from other studies in the field (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Bonn *et al.*, 2005; Li & Vogelsong, 2006). In particular, language was measured using a five-point scale (1=Know a Few Words and 5=Very Fluent) given that tourists' fluency or lack of fluency with language spoken at a destination can affect the scope and content of their interaction with locals (Basala & Klenosky, 2001). Travelling characteristics measured purpose of visit, first time or repeat visitation, length of stay, use of a holiday package or not, and person they were travelling with. Some of the response categories included in these questions were derived from the qualitative findings and/or the literature. For example, purpose of visit included holidays, VFR, business and honeymoon as these were the main categories identified in the qualitative component.

6.2.2.8 Overall Format of Questionnaire

Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendix A for questionnaires) identifying the purpose of the study, instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and where to return it (if not immediately returning it to the researcher upon completion), approximate length of time of completion, rights of respondents, how the information collected will be used and contact details of the researcher and his supervisor. The grid format was used in designing the survey instrument and a 'don't know' option was included in all questions except for the section measuring demographic and travelling characteristics. The inclusion or non inclusion of a non-reponse item has been much debated (Neuman, 2006), but as Schuman and Presser (1981) argued, on many issues it is likely that some people genuinely have no opinion. They found that the inclusion of explicit non-response options increased the proportion of respondents giving a non-standard response by as much as 25%. Ryan and Garland (1999) argued that an inclusion of such an option allows for an analysis of patterns of non-response, which might in itself yield useful information for the researcher. Hence, based on these arguments, a non-response option was included in the survey instrument. Also, the survey instrument included instructions for respondents to use the blank space at the bottom of the last sheet for any comments that they might wish to share with the researcher.

6.2.2.9 Translation of Questionnaires

The survey instrument was originally designed in English and then translated by the researcher in French and translated in German by a graduate native speaker of German at the University of Waikato. The French version was then back translated into English by a native speaker of French, who is a doctoral student in linguistics at the University of Waikato and proficient in both languages. Differences in meanings of words from the back translation were discussed and based on that the questionnaire was revised. The German questionnaire was back translated by a native speaker of German, who teaches hospitality courses at a technical institute in New Zealand. Based on the comparison between the original English version and the translated back-version, modifications were made to questions that were less accurately translated. This process improved the accuracy of a multi-language survey instrument.

6.3 PILOT STUDY

The questionnaire was pre-tested to identify potential areas of confusion for respondents, and errors or omissions on behalf of the researcher. As Jennings (2001) suggested, "most pilot studies should involve at least 50 participants in order to determine the effectiveness of the tool and its implementation, as well as its analytical capability" (p.253). Hence, 50 international visitors were selected for the pilot test on a convenience basis. Their nationalities were: 10 German, 10 Indian, 11 British, 9 French and 10 South African. They were interviewed face-to-face on various beaches in Mauritius. Reliability analysis on the different scales showed the following results (Table 6.7). All scales were reliable (Cronbach's alpha >0.7) except for place attachment scale which showed moderate reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2005; Malhotra *et al.*, 2006). Hence, no further purification of scales was done at this stage. The survey instrument was deemed to be reliable in measuring the hypothesised constructs. All 50 questionnaires of the pilot test were included in the final sample.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Cognitive images of Mauritius	0.881	25
Service interactions	0.899	9
Motives for choice	0.754	9
Place attachment	0.678	12
Personal involvement	0.813	15

Table 6.7: Reliability coefficients of measurement scales

6.4 SAMPLE DESIGN

Once the data collection instrument has been designed, the next step in the research process is to select those elements from which the information will be collected. Churchill and Iacobucci (2005) recommend a six-step procedure when drawing a sample of a population as shown in Table 6.8 and thus was adopted for this study.

Step	Sample Design
1	Define the target population
2	Identify the sampling frame
3	Select a sampling procedure
4	Determine the sample size
5	Select the sample elements
6	Data collection from designated elements

Table 6.8: Sample design process

6.4.1 SAMPLE POPULATION

The sample population for this study was defined as international tourists visiting Mauritius during the months of November and December 2007, as well as January and February 2008, from the targeted five countries (UK, Germany, France, South Africa, and India). The sample population includes all visitors staying at different hotels in Mauritius but excludes visitors staying with family and/or friends, and those staying in private bungalows.

6.4.2 SAMPLING FRAME

Given that a list of guests staying at the different hotels in Mauritius over these four months was difficult to obtain, the sampling frame was defined as all hotels fully operational in Mauritius in the year 2007. The latest figures from the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications showed that 99 hotels were operational in the year 2005. However, only 66 of these were registered with AHRIM (Association des Hoteliers et Restaurateurs de L'ile Maurice) in the year 2007. AHRIM is the sole organisation that represents and promotes the interest of hotels and restaurants in Mauritius. Hence, the sampling frame consisted of these 66 hotels and their guests.

6.4.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Given that the objective of the study was to seek representativeness of findings for the major geographic markets, and not generalisability of findings over the entire tourist population, a non-probability sampling procedure was adopted. Specifically, quota sampling was chosen because it attempts to ensure that the sample is representative so that the proportion of respondents possessing a certain characteristic is approximately the same as the proportion in the population (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). Nationality of visitors was the criterion used to determine the quotas. Quota sampling is an improvement over convenience sampling given it

ensures that heterogeneity in the population is accounted for on the basis of variables selected to form the quotas (Neuman, 2006). However, once the number of sample units has been calculated for each variable considered, the selection process is by convenience (Jennings, 2001). Quota sampling has been used successfully in destination image research using variables such as gender, age, and nationality (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

6.4.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The choice of an appropriate sample size is dependent on a number of issues such as the type of sample, the homogeneity of the population, the degree of accuracy required, the number of variables examined simultaneously in data analysis, time, budget and personnel available for a study (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005; Neuman, 2006). In tourism research, the accessibility of the population is another critical factor (Jennings, 2001) given that tourists are a very mobile population and are often pressed for time. Then, each of these factors has to be weighted against each other to determine the optimal sample size. Two alternative ways of estimating sample size have been proposed in the literature. First, is to make assumptions about the population and use statistical equations about random sampling processes. Second, is to use rule of thumb that are based on past experience with samples that have met the requirements of the statistical methods to be used (Neuman, 2006). Given that a non-probability method is employed in this study, the rule of thumb approach is favoured.

Neuman (2006) suggests that for population of 100,000 or more, researchers should sample 1% of the population. The forecasted figure for the number of international tourists visiting Mauritius in the year 2007 was 850,000 (Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communication, 2007), which would make a sample of 8500 using the rule of thumb. However, sampling such a large number of visitors would be impossible for the researcher due to budget constraints. Consequently, the number of variables to be used simultaneously in SEM approach (discussed later on) was used as a basis for determining the sample size.

Hair *et al.* (2005) recommend that SEM models containing five or fewer constructs, each with more than three items and with high item communalities (0.6 or higher), samples of 100-150 can be used. However, when the number of factors is larger than six and multiple low communalities are present, sample size requirements may exceed 500. Thus, given that the proposed theoretical model in this study contains 7 major constructs (destination image, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, perceived service interactions, satisfaction and future behaviour), a minimum sample size of 500 was considered relevant.

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Yet, given that visitors of five different nationalities were included in the sample, and the most common SEM estimation procedure (Maximum Likelihood Estimation) requires minimum sample sizes of 100 to 150 to provide valid results, it was decided to have sub-samples of 200 for each nationality. Hence, the sample size was estimated at a 1000 respondents based on a quota of 200 for each nationality. This approach fits well with Reisinger and Mavondo (2006) suggestion that a minimum sample size of five times more cases than the number of independent variables (5 nationalities in this case) should be used for SEM analysis.

6.4.5 SELECTION OF SAMPLING ELEMENTS

The sampling elements were international visitors staying at the different hotels in Mauritius for the period November 2007 to February 2008. Of the ten hotels contacted, four agreed (La Plantation Hotel, Le Maritim Hotel, Beachcomber, and Le Touessrok) to participate in the survey and self-completion questionnaires were given to the managers to be handed out by hotel staff to visitors. Although, it can be argued that these hotels might not be representative of the visitors' market being considered, the choice of the 10 hotels were essentially based on the clientele they attract. For example, La Plantation attracts predominantly Indian visitors while Le Maritim Hotel is favoured by German visitors.

6.4.6 DATA COLLECTION

The next step in the sampling process is the data collection method, which is a critical step in any survey based research. The choice of an appropriate method of data collection is dependent on a number of factors such as type of population, question form, question content, response rate, costs, available facilities, and duration of data collection (Aaker *et al.*, 1998). Given the length of the questionnaire and budget constraints, a self-completion survey was chosen as it offered participants the option of completing the questionnaire at their own pace and be completed at a time convenient to them (Jennings, 2001). The standardised cover letter accompanying all questionnaires indicated that completed questionnaires should be returned to the front-desk reception at their hotel before their departure. However, this method of administration of questionnaires has certain limitations. For example, the researcher can never be sure whether hotel staff have handed the questionnaire to every visitor concerned or made some judgement as to who will be an appropriate target based on gender, age, ethnicity etc. The respondent is also unable to seek clarification if the need arise, which may result in partially completed or non-completed questionnaires. Such a method of data collection tends

to lead to a lower response rate compared to face-to-face interviews (Jennings, 2001). Given these limitations, it was also decided to use self-completion in the presence of the researcher as an alternative method of data collection in order to improve response rates.

6.4.7 RESPONSE RATES

Initially 600 questionnaires were distributed among the four hotels that agreed to participate in the study (La Plantation – 100, Le Maritim – 200, Le Touessrok – 100, Beachcomber – 200). They indicated that they will be able to get them filled within two months. However, after the first two weeks of data collection, no questionnaires had been distributed to guests and the various contact persons indicated that they would be able to start distribution after Christmas and New Year due to staff being too busy during the month of December. As a result of this set back, it was decided to alter the method of data collection, the decision was made to sample international visitors on public beaches around hotels in Mauritius. In order to get a representative sample, the most frequented beaches by tourists in the north, south, east and west of the island were considered as sampling points. The north of the island has the highest number of hotels (31) followed by east (12), south (11) and west (9) (AHRIM, 2007). A further 800 questionnaires were printed and self completion in the presence of the researcher was used as a second method of data collection.

From the hotels, a total of 106 completed questionnaires were received after three months. Of these, 22 were discarded due to incompletion. In most of these cases only question one was completed. Hence, only 84 questionnaires were useable. The second method of data collection resulted in 627 questionnaires being collected from visitors on the beach. Of these, 6 had to be discarded because they were incomplete. The number of questionnaires obtained from each sampling point was as follows: North – 120, South – 70, East – 172 and West – 265. Therefore, a total of 733 questionnaires were obtained using both methods of data collection. Of these, 28 were unusable. Hence, the response rate for this study is calculated as follows:

Number of questionnaires received – number of unusable questionnaires

——————————————————————————————————   X   100

Number of questionnaires distributed

= {(733-28)/ (600+627)}*100

= 57.45%

Next, an identification of sources of survey errors is important within the research process to contextualise the findings in the forthcoming chapters.

6.5 SOURCE OF SURVEY ERRORS

There were a number of survey errors which need to be acknowledged. While the sample of visitors did not have any problem understanding the task required of them, it could be possible that there was some self-selection bias in the sample. This is due to the survey instrument being available in only three languages. Therefore, visitors who did not feel confident in their fluency in these languages automatically refused to participate in the study.

Also, it was noticed that for the self-completion in the presence of the interviewer, some respondents filled half of the questionnaire and asked their spouse or partner to fill the rest. While this can negatively influence the findings, it was thought that the holiday choice process is often a dual decision between couples and therefore having the views of both can only enrich the findings. Building on this issue, it was also noticed that in the case of couples with children, there was a gender bias in acceptance rates, males were more likely to volunteer to participate than females.

There is also the need to acknowledge that the visitor profile of the hotels that agreed to participate is not necessarily representative of the markets considered. However, the hotels chosen have the reputation of attracting more visitors of certain nationality such as Germans for 'La Plantation' than others. Also representativeness is not a key concern in this study as it does not seek generalisability of findings over the entire tourist population.

6.6 DATA PREPARATION & CODING

The raw data obtained went through preliminary preparation before it could be analysed using SPSS and AMOS. The quality of results obtained from performing statistical analyses is dependent on how well the data are prepared and converted into a suitable format for analysis. A field edit was undertaken to identify omissions, ambiguities and errors in the responses. Questionnaires that were more than half incomplete were discarded. This field edit was then followed by a 'central office' edit, which involved identifying inconsistencies and further scrutiny of the questionnaires to ensure that the data were 'clean' enough to proceed to data coding.

A code was developed for each of the response sets in the questionnaire, and numerical codes assigned for each response. For example, in the demographics section of the questionnaire,

question 9 relating to gender, was coded as '1' for male and '2' for females. For questions involving response sets (e.g. questions 1, 2,3, 4) each item in a response set was assigned a number and then coded on the basis of visitors' likert scale preferences. Thereafter, the data were directly keyed onto an excel spreadsheet. Items that were left unanswered by respondents were left blank in the excel sheet. Other languages spoken by visitors besides those in the questionnaire and open-ended responses for questions 11, 12, and 17 were coded.

Then, the spreadsheet was further scrutinised for coding errors as part of data cleaning. Finally, the excel spreadsheet was imported into SPSS for further analysis. Next, the different methods of analyses used are briefly outlined.

6.7 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Having discussed the preparation, coding, and cleaning of the raw data, this section introduces the descriptive and inferential statistics employed in this study as well as the multivariate analyses used. The first step before using any multivariate technique involves analysing each question or measure by itself. This was accomplished by using univariate analysis. It involves counting the number of cases falling into the various categories (frequency counts and distributions) and converting these counts into percentages. It also involves representing the data in a visual format through the use of bar charts, histograms and pie charts. Then, measures of central tendency such as mean, mode, median, and standard deviations were computed to assess the nature of frequency distributions. Distributions can be normal or skewed (Jennings, 2001) and they influence the type of inferential statistics that can be used on a data set.

Next, **bivariate analysis** involving cross tabulations and measures of association were used to identify relationships between pairs of variables. The Pearson Chi-square, the phi coefficient and Pearson's r were calculated to test whether there was a significant relationship between two nominal or interval variables at a 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis of no association between two variables was rejected if the p-level was less than 0.05.

Thereafter, multivariate analysis was undertaken. "Multivariate analysis refers to all statistical techniques that simultaneously analyse multiple measurements on individuals or objects under investigation" (Hair *et al.*, 2005, p.4). Multivariate techniques employed in this study include IPA analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis, ANOVA/MANOVA, multiple regression, and structural equations modelling (SEM). A brief description of each technique is provided below.

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is a technique for evaluating the elements of a marketing program. Introduced by Martilla and James (1977), the technique uses a three-step process either to develop a new marketing strategy or to evaluate an existing strategy. First, a set of product attributes or features is identified through a literature review or other qualitative methods. Second, consumers are asked two questions about each attribute: How important it is? (Question 1) and How well did the product or service perform on that attribute? (Question 2). Third, importance and performance scores are calculated for each attribute and these values are plotted as x and y coordinates on an IPA grid. By plotting the numerical results in this way, the components are effectively sorted in a matrix with four quadrants. Quadrant 1 features attributes that have been rated important but where the product is not perceived to perform strongly. This signals the need for the marketer to 'concentrate here' to improve perceptions of performance. Quadrant 2 features attributes rated as important and where the product performs strongly, which indicate that these attributes represent potential strengths for the company. This signals the marketer to 'keep up with the good work'. Quadrant 3 comprises attributes rated as being of low importance and whose performance is also rated low, indicating to the marketer that these are low priority features. Quadrant 4 comprised attributes that are held low in importance but on which the product or service performance is perceived to be high, indicating a 'possible overkill'. IPA has been successfully used in tourism research for understanding destination image, destination positioning and tourist satisfaction with destination attributes (Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Pike & Ryan, 2004; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005b).

Factor Analysis examines the associations among a large set of original measures and aims at reducing them to a smaller subset of explanatory factors for easier interpretations. It is used to identify underlying constructs or dimensions within a large set of observable measures. These groups of variables are by definition highly intercorrelated and are assumed to represent dimensions within the data. This technique was used to identify potential underlying image and service interactions dimensions along with dimensions of place attachment and personal involvement.

Cluster Analysis is a classification technique or segmentation tool that enables identification of visitors who behave similarly (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). Cluster analysis assumes unknown group memberships of objects and proceeds to separate the subjects into distinct groupings, each with its own identity. Cluster analysis is comparable to factor analysis in its

objective of assessing structure but differs in that it groups objects while factor analysis is primarily concerned with grouping variables (Hair *et al.*, 2005). This technique was applied in segmenting international visitors according to their place attachment and personal involvement levels and socio-demographic information.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is concerned with differences between groups. ANOVA is a univariate procedure due to its use on assessing group differences based on a single metric dependent variable (Hair *et al.*, 2005). For example, ANOVA was used first to assess the influence of each of these variables (nationality, ethnicity and language spoken) on image and service interaction perceptions.

Multiple Regression may be used to study how consumers make decisions or form impressions or attitudes. It is a general statistical technique used to analyse the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables (Hair *et al.*, 2005). This technique can be used for example, to understand the relationship between destination image, place attachment and service interaction; and to examine the relationship between overall image and independent variables such as cognitive and affective images. **Logistic regression**, which is a specialised form of regression that is formulated to predict and explain a binary categorical variable (Hair *et al.*, 2005), were used to identify for example, the most likely predictors of repeat visitation based on perceptions of destination image, service interactions, and place attachment etc.

Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) or confirmatory factor analysis was used to test hypothesised relationships in a theoretical framework. It is a procedure for accommodating measurement error in the estimation of a series of dependent relationships. It has been described as the best multivariate procedure for testing both construct validity and theoretical relationships among a set of concepts represented by multiple measured variables (Hair *et al.*, 2005). "In doing so, it examines the structure of interrelationships in a series of equations, similar to a series of multiple regression equations" (p.711). Its advantage over exploratory factor analysis is that having hypothesised latent variables, it allows for an examination of relationships between these variables, and permits a measurement of interaction.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the process used to design the survey instrument and sample. Based on a literature review and the qualitative research findings previously described, a 7-page questionnaire with multiple sections measuring constructs such as destination image, place attachment, service interactions, future behaviour and various demographic and tripographic information was designed. The survey instrument was translated in French and German and back translated. The final version was pilot tested among 50 international visitors and there were no significant problems revealed. These questionnaires were administered using two methods of data collection, self-completion by visitors in hotels and self completion in the presence of the researcher at various beaches in Mauritius. A response rate of 57.4% was achieved. The useable (705) questionnaires were entered onto an excel spreadsheet and then imported into SPSS, where various univariate, bivariate and multivariate techniques were employed. The results are discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 7~ QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS PART 1

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first chapter reporting the quantitative findings of this study. In structuring this chapter, the main considerations were prioritisation of results to answer the research propositions developed in chapter three and avoidance of duplication in reporting related findings. At this stage, a summary of the research propositions and corresponding analysis techniques are provided in Table 7.1 below. This chapter specifically report findings related to research propositions 1 to 7, while the next chapter presents the findings of research proposition 8. Given the overlapping analytical techniques for many of the research propositions, the following rationale was adopted in reporting findings.

First, the demographic profile of the sample and visitors travelling characteristics are reported to better contextualise the findings. This is followed by an assessement of reliability and consistency of scales used to confirm appropriateness of the constructs measured. Thereafter, the descriptive statistics are presented to provide a broad overview of results derived for the overall sample. T-tests, ANOVA and IPA are then undertaken to assess the influence of socio-demographic and trip characteristics on the various constructs measured and to identify similarities and differences in perceptions. Following these, factor analysis is undertaken to indentify underlying dimensions of the different constructs measured. Using these results, cluster and regression analyses are performed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings.

Research Propositions	Data analysis techniques
Research Proposition 1: There are significant differences in visitors' evaluation of the importance and satisfaction of destination attributes.	Importance-Performance analysis, Paired t-test
1(a) There are significant differences in importance and performance evaluations based on visitors' nationality.	Analysis of variance
1(b) There are significant differences in importance and performance evaluations based on visitors' ethnicity.	T-tests
1(c) Languages spoken have a significant influence on importance and performance ratings of destination attributes.	Analysis of variance
Research Proposition 2: Different segments of visitors can be identified based on their attachment levels and socio-demographic characteristics.	Factor analysis, Cluster analysis, Discriminant analysis
2(a)Demographic and travelling characteristics significantly influence place attachment	Analysis of variance, multi-nomial regression
Research Proposition 3: Different segments of visitors can be identified based on their personal involvement levels with the destination	Factor analysis, Cluster Analysis, Discriminant analysis
3(a) Demographic and travelling characteristics significantly influence levels of personal involvement	Analysis of variance, multi-nomial regression
Research Proposition 4: Loyalty levels are significantly influenced by destination image, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement, and overall satisfaction levels.	Multiple regression
Research Proposition 5: Overall image of a destination is significantly influenced by destination image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement.	Multiple regression
Research Proposition 6: Overall satisfaction with a destination is significantly influenced by destination image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement.	Multiple regression
Research Proposition 7: Whether first-time visitors become repeat visitors can be significantly predicted by perceptions of destination image attributes, perceived interactions with hotel employees, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, satisfaction levels and demographic and travelling characteristics of visitors.	Logistic regression
Research Proposition 8: There are significant relationships among constructs such as destination image, perceived interactions with hotel employees, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, overall satisfaction and future behaviour.	Structural equations modelling

Table 7.1: Summary of research propositions and analysis techniques

7.2 DEMOGRAPHIC & TRAVELLING PROFILE OF SAMPLE

The survey polled almost an equal number of males (49.1%) and females (50.5%) as shown in Table 7.2. Slightly less than half (48.9%) of the sample were aged between 20 to 40 years old. The nationalities of respondents were mainly, 17% German, 21.4% South African, 17.9% Indian, 21.8% French, and 19% British. A significant majority (91.8%) indicated their country of residence was similar to their nationality. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents were Caucasian (63.4%). More than 32% of the sample had a university degree while 30.9% had a professional qualification or diploma. The majority of respondents (63.5%) were married. In terms of average monthly household income, 36.4% reported high income levels, 28.4% classified themselves as moderately high income, and 18.9% reported neither high nor low income levels. Of those who reported having children, 16.8% had one child, followed by 22.2% having two children. Almost 11% of the sample had three children or more. Some demographic variables such as education level, marital status, gender, income and number of children were not reported by respondents as indicated by N in Table 7.2.

Demographics	Frequency Counts	%	Demographics	Frequency Counts	%
Gender (N=702)			**Highest Educational Qualification (N=692)**		
Male	346	49.3	Primary school	21	3.0
Female	356	50.7	High/secondary school	142	20.5
Age group (N=705)			Professional/diploma	214	30.9
<20yrs	27	3.8	University degree	223	32.2
20-30yrs	163	23.1	Postgraduate degree	92	13.3
31-40yrs	182	25.8	**Marital Status (N=699)**		
41-50yrs	163	23.1	Single	109	15.6
51-60yrs	122	17.3	Married	444	63.5
>=61yrs	48	6.8	Partner	102	14.6
Nationality (N=705)			Separated/divorced	33	4.7
German	120	17.0	Widow/widower	11	1.6
South African	151	21.4	**Average Monthly Household Income (N=640)**		
Indian	126	17.9	Very low	6	0.9
French	154	21.8	Low	12	1.9
British	134	19.0	Moderately low	13	2.0
Other	20	2.9	Neither low nor high	121	18.9
Country of Residence (N=705)			Moderately high	182	28.4
Germany	117	16.6	High	233	36.4
South Africa	144	20.4	Very high	73	11.4
India	115	16.3	**Number of children (N=417)**		
France	147	20.9	No children	64	9.08
UK	124	17.6	1 child	119	16.88
Italy	6	0.9	2 children	157	22.27
Sweden	12	1.7	3 children	58	8.23
Other	40	5.6	4 children	15	2.13
Ethnicity (N=705)			>4 children	4	0.57
Caucasian	447	63.4			
Black	22	3.1			
Sino-Asian	9	1.3			
Indian	128	18.2			
Mixed	99	14.0			

Table 7.2: Demographic profile of sample

One of the key issues in any research is the representativeness of a sample for the total population under study (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006). The demographic profile above reveals that Mauritius as a holiday destination attracts the 20-50 age bracket, predominantly of Caucasian ethnicity, who have achieved at least some secondary education level with an average monthly household income in the 'moderately high' to 'high' categories. They tend to be married and accompanied by children when on holidays. In comparing this profile with the qualitative study, it can be seen that the profiles are similar in age and ethnicity. However, the official statistics for Mauritius, which is based on the survey of outgoing tourists in the year 2006, showed that the average age of visitors was 40 and nationalities interviewed were: French (24%), British (14%), South African (12%), German (6%) and Indian (4.5%). In

comparison to these results, the profile of this study is different. But these official statistics relate to all visitors to the island and the differences can be accounted for by the differences in data collection methods. The sample for this study is based on data collected from hotels and departing guests while the official statistics are based on departure cards.

In terms of trip characteristics, Table 7.3 shows that for the majority of visitors (85.3%), their main purpose of visit were holidays, followed by VFR (8.7%) and honeymoon (8.7%). First time visitors made up almost half (49.3%) of the sample, and 57.3% of visitors did not buy a holiday package, while 51.4% were travelling with their husband, wife or partner on this trip. The average length of stay was slightly more than two weeks (15.4 days). The official statistics showed that 71% of visitors to Mauritius travelled on a package tour, 74% were on holidays, 14% on honeymoon, 7% on business and 3% VFR while 33% were repeat visitors. On average these visitors spent 9.8 nights in Mauritius. This tripographic profile of the official statistics is somewhat similar to the sample in this study based on purpose of visit and repeat visitation but different in terms of visitors travelling on a packaged holiday and length of stay.

Travelling characteristics	Freq. Counts	%	French %	German %	British %	SA %	Indian %
Purpose of visit							
Holiday	600	85.3	89.6	88.2	85.7	92.7	65.9
Visiting family and friends	61	8.7	5.8	9.2	9.8	7.3	13.5
Business	30	4.3	2.6	4.2	0.8	4.6	10.3
Honeymoon	61	8.7	7.8	0.8	6.8	2.0	28.6
Other	13	1.8	0.6	1.7	3.8	2.0	1.6
Number of previous visits (N=674)							
0 (No)	332	49.3	40.9	58.6	40.9	47.0	60.8
1(Yes)	156	23.1	59.1	41.4	59.1	53.0	39.2
2	84	12.5					
3	37	5.5					
4	23	3.4					
5	10	1.5					
>5	32	4.6					
Holiday package (N=703)							
Yes	300	42.7	24.0	37.0	49.3	48.3	58.4
No	402	57.3	76.0	63.0	50.7	51.7	41.6
Travelling with (N=703)							
alone	87	12.4	7.1	16.8	13.5	10.7	14.3
husband/wife/partner	361	51.4	62.3	57.1	57.1	38.7	44.4
family with children	177	25.2	22.1	14.3	21.1	38.0	25.4
relatives	77	11.0	8.4	11.8	8.3	12.7	15.9
Avg. length of stay (N=703) **days**	15.4		19.5	14.7	14.8	14.5	12.4

Table 7.3: Travelling characteristics of respondents

Consequently, given the importance of the holidaying motive, when comparing nationality based tripographic characteristics of this study with those of the official statistics (Table 1.1), a number of similarities emerged. These include a high proportion of holidayers in both samples, higher proportion of honeymooners in the Indian, French, and British sub-samples in comparison to German and South African sub-samples, and high levels of repeat visitation for the French, South African and British markets in comparison to the Indian market. The major differences were in terms of this sample having a higher proportion of packaged visitors and length of stay being longer across all five markets. Therefore, it can be concluded that this sample is not unwholly unrepresentative of the five key generating markets for holidays in Mauritius. Next, the reliability of scales used in this study is assessed.

7.3 RELIABILITY TESTS

The implications drawn from research findings are dependent on the reliability of the scales used to measure specified constructs. In this context, the split half model was used given that it splits the scale into two parts and examines the consistency between the parts. It is generally agreed that the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7, although it may decrease to 0.6 in exploratory research (Hair *et al.*, 2005). The results (Table 7.4) on the attributes importance scale showed that both parts of the scale were consistent. The first part of the scale (22 items) achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 while the second part (21 items) achieved Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 showed a high level of consistency for the entire scale.

Reliability Statistics	Importance Scale	Performance Scale	Place Attachment	Personal Involvement
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient	0.876	0.856	0.806	0.621
Total scale- Cronbach's Alpha	0.934	0.911	0.804	0.756

Table 7.4: Reliability assessment of scales

A further examination of Cronbach's alpha for each importance item and their corresponding correlation with total scale, if the item is not included, showed that most items had Cronbach's alpha of 0.9 and above (see Appendix B-Table 1). The item to total correlation, which is a measure of the relationship between individual items and the total scale, if the item is deleted, showed that items had correlations of 0.2 as lowest and 0.6 as highest. Smaller values of the correlation indicated that the given item is not well correlated with the total scale. In this case, nightlife and entertainment was the only item with low correlation.

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The same tests for the performance and place attachment scales showed high levels of consistency using the splif-half model and the entire scale as shown in Table 7.4. An examination of the consistency of individual items on the performance scale (Appendix B-Table 2) showed that all items had Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.9, indicating a high level of consistency in ratings. However, the item-to-total correlation values showed that 'safety and security' had the smallest correlation (0.28) with the total scale. The remaining 42 items had correlations ranging from 0.31 to 0.57. As for the place attachment scale, the same tests (Appendix B – Table 3) showed that all items met the minimum value of 0.7 while item-to-total correlation values showed that except for the items- 'I feel no commitment to this place' and 'The things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy just as much doing them at another sun, sand and sea destination', all remaining 10 items had good consistency with the total scale.

As for the personal involvement scale, the split half reliability test showed that the scale was moderately consistent (Table 7.4) given that Cronbach's alpha values just reached 0.6 for part one and 0.7 for part two. The Guttman splif-half coefficient reached a value of 0.621 confirming the above while the total scale achieved the minimum of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha for consistency. The Cronbach's alpha values for individual items (see Appendix B – Table 4) showed that all met the minimum requirement of 0.7. The item-to-total correlation, however, showed low values for five out of the fifteen items. The remaining ten items had correlations of between 0.33 as lowest and 0.57 as highest. Hence, of all the scales used, the personal involvement had the lowest consistency while the importance scale had the highest.

7.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Having established the reliability of the different scales, this section provides the descriptive statistics for the overall sample for each of the constructs measured (destination image, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachement and personal invovelment) in order to understand the patterns of ratings by respondents. The findings on the importance scale showed that except for the attribute 'nightlife and entertainment', all other destination image attributes were rated on average as either 'very important' or 'important' (Appendix B- Table 5 and Table 7.5). The relatively low standard deviations indicated that image attributes were rated similarly. Safety and security had the highest mean score (6.36) while nightlife and entertainment had the lowest (4.36). A similar pattern of rating was also evident for motives of choice and service interactions items (Appendix B- Tables 6 & 7). The motive 'destination is suitable for rest and relaxation' had the highest mean importance score (6.22) while

'opportunities to build friendship with others' had the lowest mean importance score (4.89). All nine service interactions items were rated on average as either 'very important' or 'important'. Altogether, these results indicate that all items on the importance scale were considered of importance (above the midpoint on the scale) by visitors. This is not surprising given that the questionnaire items were derived from the literature and the qualitative study.

As for the destination image items on the performance scale, the descriptive statistics (Appendix B- Table 8 and Table 7.5) indicated that 20 of the 25 attributes were rated on average as 'somewhat satisfied' and above. The attributes 'natural environment' (4.87), 'nightlife and entertainment' (3.77), 'local transport' (4.31), 'shopping facilities' (4.83), and 'signage' (4.65) had the lowest mean satisfaction scores. In terms of motives for choice items, mean satisfactions scores (Appendix B- Table 9) were highest for motives of 'Mauritius as a place for rest and relaxation' (6.14) and 'Mauritius as a place different to your daily routine' (6.07) and lowest for motives 'opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians' (4.92) and 'opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians' (5.03). This is not surprising given that the sample was resort-based and therefore it was expected that visitors will have fewer opportunities to interact with locals, except with hotel employees. The mean scores on the service interactions scale (Appendix B- Table 10) indicated positive perceptions of hotel employees as eight items were rated on average as 'somewhat satisfied' and one item 'information learnt from hotel employees about their culture' was rated on average as 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. The standard deviations were in general higher for items of the satisfaction scale in comparison to the importance scale, indicating that existence of differences in perceptions with regards to satisfaction levels.

As for the items on the place attachment scale, the descriptive results (Appendix B- Table 11) indicated that five items were on average rated as 'somewhat agree', six items were rated on average as 'neither agree nor disagree' and one item was rated as 'somewhat disagree'. The highest average score was for the item 'Mauritius is a very special destination to me' (5.73) while the lowest score as expected was for the item 'I feel no commitment to this place' (3.11). The relatively high standard deviations for items indicated that visitors had differing perceptions. Similarly, the descriptive statistics for the personal involvement scale (Appendix B- Table 12) indicated that visitors rated the items differently from the mean scores as indicated by the high standard deviations. Seven items were rated on average as 'somewhat agree', six items were rated on average as 'neither agree nor disagree' and two items were

rated on average as 'somewhat disagree'. The higest score in terms of agreement was for the item 'I get pleasure from being on holidays here' (5.94) while the lowest score was for the item 'it is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination' (3.08).

Having established the pattern of ratings for the different scales, the next section introduces IPA to identify significant differences between importance and performance scores for destination image, motives for choice and service interactions attributes. This test basically provides the answer for research proposition 1 in Table 7.1.

7.5 IMPORTANCE & SATISFACTION LEVELS

Consumer satisfaction has been defined as a function of both expectations related to certain important attributes and judgements of attribute performance (Martilla & James, 1977). In light of these considerations, a paired sample t-test was used to assess differences in mean scores between importance and performance items and the results revealed significant differences between 30 of the 43 items (Table 7.5). An examination of these results revealed that significant differences existed between 16 of the 25 image attributes. For example, the largest differences in mean scores were for the attributes 'clean and unpolluted natural environment', safe and secure', 'convenience of local transport' and 'good signage'. No significant differences were identified, for example, on attributes such as 'friendly people', 'beaches and water sports', 'cultural and historical attractions' and 'accessibility as a holiday destination', indicating alignment of importance and satisfaction levels on these attributes.

Also, significant differences existed on five motives for choice items. The largest differences in mean scores were for items 'opportunities to spend time alone' and 'learning about different ways of life'. These can be explained by the fact that only 12.4% of the sample is travelling alone and therefore fewer opportunities to spend time alone and being resort-based, these visitors have fewer opportunities to learn about different ways of life. As for the service interactions items, significant differences existed on all items, indicating that satisfaction does not align with importance level. The largest differences were for items 'professionalism of hotel employees', 'friendly and helpful hotel employees' and 'hotel employees' advice on places to visit and things to do.'

Destination Image Items	Mean Importance	Mean Satisfaction	t -value
1. Friendly people	6.05	6.14	-1.857
2. Clean and unpolluted natural environment	6.28	4.87	21.84**
5. Nightlife and entertainment	4.36	3.77	7.24**
6. Safe and secure	6.36	5.37	16.43**
8. Adventure and new experiences	5.52	5.43	1.84
11. Good value for money	6.06	5.47	10.30**
12. Beautiful scenery and natural attractions	6.17	5.96	4.39**
13. Good weather and pleasant climate	6.32	5.97	7.45**
15. Crowded level	5.49	5.36	1.94
16. Beaches and water sports	5.64	5.66	-0.21
18. Cultural and historical attractions	5.31	5.21	1.58
20. Cultural diversity	5.36	5.46	-1.67
22. Lovely towns and cities	5.49	5.06	7.00**
23. Variety and quality of accommodation	5.93	5.56	6.28**
25. Good level of service in general	6.14	5.76	7.73**
27. Convenience of local transport	5.34	4.31	12.64**
28. Good shopping facilities	5.55	4.83	10.39**
31. Suitable holiday destination for the family	5.83	5.84	-0.16
32. Appealing local cuisine	6.05	5.46	10.05**
33. Variety of restaurants and bars	5.63	5.05	8.51**
36. Accessibility as a holiday destination	5.62	5.58	0.93
37. Reputation	5.90	5.78	2.45*
38. Language barriers	5.41	5.71	-4.73**
40. Exotic place	5.68	5.66	0.28
43. Good signage	5.72	4.65	14.48**
Motives for Choice Items			
3. Rest and relaxation	6.22	6.14	1.77
7. Away from the routine of daily life	6.12	6.07	0.87
10. Calm and peaceful atmosphere	6.19	6.02	3.66**
17. Socialisation with other tourists and locals	4.99	5.04	-0.87
21. Things that I don't normally see	5.93	5.67	5.38**
26. Building friendship with others	4.89	4.92	-0.49
30. Learn things about a new place	5.59	5.40	3.46**
35. Opportunities to spend time alone	5.49	5.19	4.01**
41. Learning about different ways of life	5.49	5.03	7.33**
Service Interactions Items			
4. Professionalism of hotel employees	6.10	5.69	7.77**
9. Attentiveness to needs of hotel employees	6.05	5.79	5.02**
14. Courteous hotel employees	6.11	5.87	4.83**
19. Friendly and helpful hotel employees	6.11	5.79	6.69**
24. Hotel employees' advice on places to visit and things to do.	5.71	5.29	6.89**
29. Language and communication skills of hotel employees	5.74	5.55	3.25**
34. Hotel employees' attitude towards me, family and children	6.08	5.79	5.05**
39. Hotel employees information sharing about culture	5.06	4.80	3.84**
42. Welcome and respect from hotel employees	6.13	5.85	6.33**
	*= p < 0.05	****= p < 0.01**	

Table 7.5: Results of a paired sample t-test for importance and performance scores

7.5.1 IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Next, the mean scores of all attributes on the importance and satisfaction scales were plotted on an IPA grid to visually depict the relationships. IPA is a technique for evaluating the elements of a marketing program (Martilla & James, 1977). It provides a useful snapshot of how well a destination meets visitors' important concern in holiday choice on selected attributes, and at the same time, offers guidelines for future resource allocation decisions (Oh, 2001). The performance and importance scores are plotted as 'x' and 'y' coordinates respectively. In this way, the components are effectively sorted in a 4-cell category, in effect categorising importance and performance scores on a scale of high and low, which result in the four combinations depicted in Figure 7.1 below:
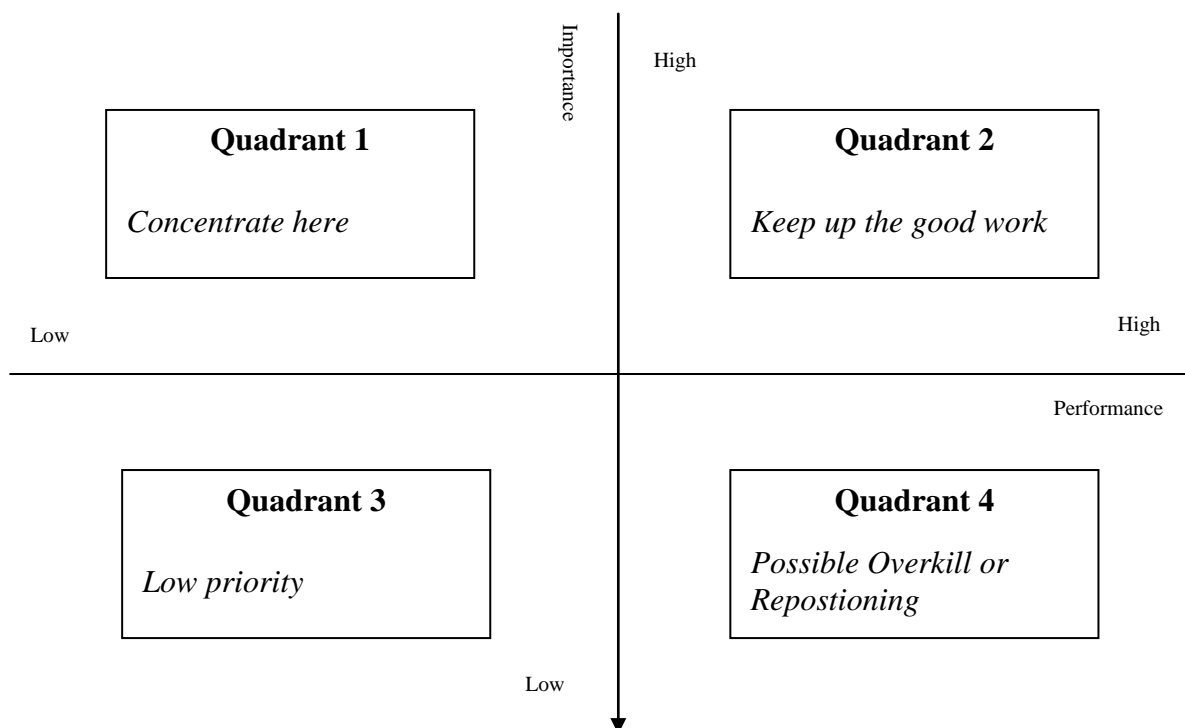
Figure 7.1: IPA framework

As Figure 7.1 shows, Quadrant 1 comprises of attributes that visitors hold high in importance but on which they rate the performance as low. This signals the need for the destination to 'concentrate here' to improve perceptions of performance. Quadrant 2 features attributes rated as important and where the destination performs strongly, which indicate that these attributes represent potential strengths for the destination and can be unique selling propositions (USPs). This signals the destination to 'keep up with the good work'. Quadrant 3 comprises attributes rated as being of low importance and whose performance is also rated low, indicating to the destination that these are low priority features. Quadrant 4 comprises attributes that are held

low in importance but on which the destination performance is perceived to be high, indicating a 'possible overkill' or the need for the destination to reposition itself on these attributes by increasing the perceived importance levels.

Figure 7.2 shows the IPA plot for the means scores in Tables 7.5. The cross over point (5.44, 5.75) was determined using the overall mean scores on each scale. Martilla and James (1977) notes that the placement of the crosshairs is a matter of judgement given that the value of IPA lies in identifying relative rather than absolute measures. Thus, the movement of the cross hairs to the overall mean scores can be a more powerful interpretation (Oh, 2001). Figure 7.2 shows where each of the 43 items falls in terms of the four quadrants. For example, a majority of items fall in the 'keep up the good work' quadrant. For a clearer interpretation, Table 7.6 summarises items for each construct measured falling in each quadrants. For example, two image items 'clean and unpolluted natural environment' and 'safe and secure' fell in Quadrant 1, suggesting that efforts should 'concentrate here' and focus on improving these attributes for the future. In Quadrant 2, 10 image items were found and IPA recommends 'keep up the good work', and these items could be used for positioning purposes as they are indicative of the strengths of the destination. In Quadrants 3 and 4, there were 8 and 5 image items respectively. Items such as 'culturall diverse' and 'no language barriers' can be used for repositioning purposes.

Importance–Performance Analysis

- Safe & secure
- Good weather & climate
- Clean & unpolluted natural environment
- Rest & relaxation
- Calm & peaceful atmosphere
- Level of service
- Scenery & natural attractions
- Service profesionally
- Feel welcomed and respected
- Courteous
- Away from routine
- Friendly & helpful
- Good value for money
- Right attitude towards guests
- Attentive to needs
- Friendly people
- Appealing local cuisine
- See things don't normally see
- Good reputation
- Variety & good quality of accommodation
- Suitable holiday destination for the family
- Advice on places to visit & things to do.
- Good language and communication skills
- 5.44; 5.75
- Good signage
- Exotic
- Variety of restaurants & bars
- Beaches & water sports
- Easily accessible
- Learn things about a new place
- Good shopping facilities
- Adventure & new experiences
- Spend time alone
- Learn about different ways of life
- Small towns & cities
- Not crowded
- No language barriers
- Culturally diverse
- Local transport
- Cultural & historical attractions
- Information about culture
- Socialise with others
- Build friendship with others
- Nightlife & entertainment

Performance

Importance

Figure 7.2: Importance-Performance Analysis plot of attributes

Items	Quadrant 1 Concentrate here	Quadrant 2 Keep up the good work	Quadrant 3 Low priority	Quadrant 4 Possible overkill or repositioning
Destination Image				
Friendly people		√		
Clean & unpolluted natural environment	√			
Nightlife & entertainment			√	
Safe & secure	√			
Adventure & new experiences			√	
Good value for money		√		
Scenery & natural attractions		√		
Good weather & climate		√		
Not crowded			√	
Beaches & water sports				√
Cultural & historical attractions			√	
Culturally diverse				√
Lovely towns & cities			√	
Variety & good quality of accommodation		√		
Level of service		√		
Local transport			√	
Good shopping facilities		√		
Suitable holiday destination for the family		√		
Appealing local cuisine		√		
Variety of restaurants & bars			√	
Easily accessible				√
Good reputation		√		
No language barriers				√
Exotic				√
Good signage			√	
Motives for Choice				
Rest & relaxation		√		
Away from routine		√		
Calm & peaceful atmosphere		√		
Socialise with others			√	
See things don't normally see		√		
Build friendship with others			√	
Learn things about a new place			√	
Learn about different ways of life			√	
Service Interactions				
Service profesionally		√		
Attentive to needs		√		
Courteous		√		
Friendly & helpful		√		
Advice on places to visit & things to do.			√	
Good language and communication skills			√	
Right attitude towards guests		√		
Information about culture			√	
Feel welcomed and respected		√		

Table 7.6: Items and their relative positions in each quadrant

As for motives of choice items, 4 items fell in Quadrant 2, indicating that Mauritius performs well in fulfilling needs for rest and relaxation and escape amongst others. The remaining items falling in Quadrant 3, which indicates 'low priority' for investment purposes. Mauritius seems to perform particularly well in terms of service interactions with guests given that six of the nine service interactions items fell in Quadrant 2. The remaining 3 items falling in Quadrant 3. These results indicate infrastructure development, safety and security as well as environmental management as areas of improvement for the destination and confirm the usefulness of the IPA plot as a visual snapshot for understanding the current satisfaction levels of visitors in relation to importance levels.

7.6 THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS & TRAVELLING CHARACTERISTICS

Research propositions 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a) and 3(a) in Table 7.1 sought to identify the influence of nationality, ethnicity, fluency of languages spoken and other socio-demographics on various constructs such as destination image, place attachment and personal involvement. To provide answers for these, t-tests and ANOVA were used. For interpretation purposes, composite scores were derived by summation of the number of items on a scale and calculating the average of these. In terms of demographic variables, 'age', 'gender', 'marital status', 'average monthly household income', and 'number of children' did not have any significant influence on importance and satisfaction ratings of image, motives for choice and service interactions as well as perceptions of place attachment and personal involvement. Travelling characteristics such as 'length of stay' and 'person travelling with' did not have any significant influence on those constructs as well. These results suggest that personal background of visitors do not always influence perceptions.

7.6.1 THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALITY

However, nationality seems to have an influence on importance ratings of image and service interactions items. For example, using Scheffé post-hoc comparison of means significant differences were identified on composite scores between visitors from Germany and South Africa, India and UK ($p < 0.01$). Differences in importance of image items also existed between Indian and French visitors ($p < 0.05$). As a result, ANOVA was run on the 25 image attributes to identify which specific attributes led to these differences. The results (Appendix B- Table 13) indicated for example, German and Indian visitors rated the attribute 'safe and secure' differently with the former rating it on average as 'important' while the latter rating it as 'very important'. Interestingly, some attributes such as 'friendly people', 'adventure and new experiences', 'beautiful scenery and natural attractions', and 'good weather and climate' were rated similarly indicating that some attributes are important in destination choice irrespective of visitors' nationality. Indian visitors have the highest mean importance scores while Germans have the lowest for image and service interactions attributes.

Altogether, these results indicated that the relative importance of some image and service interactions destination attributes varied by nationality. German, Indian and French visitors attached different levels of importance when compared to others. Specifically, German visitors rated all attributes as either 'important' or 'somewhat important', which showed their tendency to use only two points on the scale while the other four nationalities tend to use at least three points on the scale. The results also showed that South African and British visitors rated the importance of image and service interactions attributes similarly. One can only speculate that in a predominantly Caucasian sample for both South Africa and UK, similarities in importance ratings can be attributed to common cultural values influencing perceptions while significant differences among visitors from Germany, India, and France can be attributed to dissimilar cultural values influencing perceptions.

ANOVA by nationality on the composite performance scores for image, motives for choice and service interactions revealed that significant differences existed between Indian and British visitors ($p < 0.05$) on destination image and between German and British visitors ($p < 0.01$) on service interactions. Scheffé post-hoc comparison of means on individual items revealed for example, the attribute 'opportunities for adventure & new experiences' was rated on average by Indian visitors as 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' while British vistors rated it

as 'satisfied'. Likewise, the performance of Mauritius on the attribute 'hotel employees' attentiveness to my needs' was rated on average as 'somewhat satisfied' by Germans while British visitors rated it as 'satisfied'. The general trend in the data (Appendix B- Table 14) showed that the highest average satisfaction scores were for British visitors while the German and Indian visitors had the lowest. Similarities in ratings of satisfaction levels with attributes such as 'friendliness of people', 'professionalism of hotel employees', 'crowd level of tourists', and 'cultural diversity of the place' were also evident. These findings are consistent with other studies depicting differences and similarities in perceptions based on national culture (Reisinger & Turner, 2002a,b; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Manzur & Jogaratnam, 2006; Campo & Garau, 2008).

7.6.2 THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY

In the sample, 447 respondents were of Caucasian ethnicity followed by 128 of Indian origin, 99 of mixed race ethnicity, 22 of black ethnicity and 9 of Sino-Asian origins. These data were recoded into respondents of Caucasian ethnicity (447) and non-Caucasian ethnicity (258). T-tests revealed significant differences between Caucasians and non-Caucasians on composite scores for importance and performance of image, importance and performance of motives for choice, importance of service interactions and personal involvement. T-tests on individual items revealed (Table 7.7) significant differences existed on 14 importance and 12 performance image items.

Image Attributes	Mean Importance Ratings			Mean Performance Ratings		
	Cau.	Non-Cau.	t	Cau.	Non-Cau.	t
Friendly people	**6.13**	5.91	2.66**	**6.24**	5.95	3.83**
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	6.22	**6.38**	-2.25*	**4.98**	4.66	2.70**
Nightlife and entertainment	**4.38**	4.33	0.29	**3.83**	3.67	0.86
Safe and secure	6.30	**6.48**	-2.55*	**5.63**	4.93	6.62**
Opportunities for adventure and new experiences	5.46	**5.63**	-1.49	**5.50**	5.29	1.89
Good value for money	5.90	**6.33**	-4.96**	**5.58**	5.29	3.04**
Beautiful scenery and natural attractions	**6.18**	6.14	0.57	5.93	**6.02**	-0.99
Good weather and pleasant climate	6.32	6.32	0.10	**6.07**	5.80	3.24**
Not crowded with tourists	5.49	**5.50**	-0.17	**5.45**	5.21	2.67**
Beaches and water sports	**5.71**	5.53	1.77	**5.68**	5.61	0.58
Cultural and historical attractions	5.22	**5.46**	-2.17*	5.09	**5.40**	-2.63**
Culturally diverse	5.28	**5.48**	-1.78	5.42	**5.53**	-0.99
Lovely towns and cities	5.41	**5.64**	-2.33*	5.04	**5.09**	-0.39
Variety and good quality of accommodation	5.78	**6.20**	-4.72**	**5.60**	5.49	1.06
Good level of service in general	6.00	**6.37**	-4.38**	**5.78**	5.72	0.57
Local transport is convenient	5.22	**5.54**	-2.45*	**4.36**	4.22	0.91
Good shopping facilities	5.33	**5.95**	-5.88**	**4.98**	4.56	3.60**
Suitable holiday destination for the family	5.68	**6.08**	-3.46**	5.78	**5.95**	-1.34
Appealing local cuisine	5.98	**6.18**	-2.58*	**5.72**	5.00	7.13**
Variety of restaurants and bars	5.56	**5.76**	-1.93	**5.21**	4.77	3.60**
Easy access as a holiday destination	**5.68**	5.53	1.47	**5.59**	5.55	0.47
Good reputation	5.89	**5.93**	-0.37	**5.85**	5.66	2.17*
No language barriers	**5.46**	5.33	1.08	**5.76**	5.61	1.72
The place is exotic	5.60	**5.82**	-2.23*	**5.73**	5.54	2.03*
The destination has good signage	5.52	**6.06**	-5.22**	4.62	**4.70**	-0.62
	**=p<0.01, *=p<0.05					

Table 7.7: Mean ratings of importance & performance image items for Caucasians and non-Caucasians

For example in Table 7.7, visitors of Caucasian ethnicity on average rated the importance of the attribute 'friendly people' as 'very important' while non-Caucasians rated it as 'important' (p < 0.01). The table also showed on average Causians tend to rate the importance of image attributes lower in comparison to non-Caucasians while the reverse is true for importance items. Ethnicity did not influence ratings of attributes such as 'nightlife and entertainment', 'opportunities for adventure and new experiences', and 'beautiful scenery and attractions', indicating similarities in importance and satisfaction levels.

The t-tests results for motives of choice and service interactions items (Table 7.8) indicated on average 4 importance and 6 performance items were rated significantly different by Caucasians and non-Caucasians. Similar to image items, non-Caucasians consistently rated

the importance of motives for choice higher than Caucasians while performance items were rated lower by the former in comparison to the latter. Similarities in mean importance and performance ratings could be seen for motives such as 'see things that I don't normally see' and 'opportunities to learn about different ways of life'.

Attributes	Mean Importance Ratings			Mean Performance Ratings		
	Cau.	Non-Cau.	t	Cau.	Non-Cau.	t
Motives for Choice						
Rest and relaxation	6.11	6.41	-3.90**	6.14	6.15	-0.11
Away from the routine of daily life	6.07	6.19	-1.31	6.26	5.74	6.99**
Calm and peaceful atmosphere	6.14	6.26	-1.55	6.09	5.92	2.20*
Opportunities to socialise with other tourists	5.11	4.79	2.67**	5.21	4.75	3.81**
See things that I don't normally see	5.93	5.94	-0.13	5.70	5.63	0.83
Opportunities to build friendship with others	4.94	4.79	1.20	5.07	4.66	3.30**
Opportunities to learn things about a new place	5.47	5.80	-3.49**	5.49	5.24	2.56*
Opportunities to spend time alone	5.34	5.76	-2.98**	4.93	5.63	-4.28**
Opportunities to learn about different ways of life	5.46	5.54	-0.73	5.11	4.89	1.85
Service Interactions						
Hotel employees deliver service professionally	5.93	6.40	-5.06**	5.75	5.59	1.51
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs	5.89	6.32	-4.58**	5.80	5.78	0.29
Hotel employees are courteous	5.99	6.33	-3.84**	5.90	5.82	0.80
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful	5.99	6.33	-4.05**	5.81	5.75	0.59
Hotel employees' advice on places to visit	5.59	5.91	-3.10**	5.27	5.32	-0.42
Hotel employees' language and communication skills	5.75	5.71	0.45	5.69	5.30	3.82**
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me, family, children	5.99	6.23	-2.31*	5.71	5.92	-1.77
Hotel employees share information about their culture	5.15	4.90	2.11*	4.80	4.80	-0.03
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected	6.03	6.32	-3.19**	5.84	5.87	-0.31
	**=p<0.01, *=p<0.05					

Table 7.8: Mean ratings of importance & performance items for motives for choice & service interactions for Caucasians & non-Caucasians

Likewise, 8 out of the 9 importance items for service interactions were rated differently by the two groups (Table 7.8). The importance attached to these items was rated consistently higher by non-Caucasians while similarities in perceptions of interactions with hotel employees were evident given that only the attribute 'hotel employees' language and communication skills' was rated significantly different in terms of satisfaction levels.

As for personal involvement items, t-tests revealed that 5 items were rated significantly different by Caucasians and non-Caucasians. For example, non-Caucasians on average 'somewhat agreed' that 'you can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays' (5.05) while Caucasians 'neither agreed nor disagreed' to this statement (4.49). Caucasians were also less agreeable that 'my holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience' (3.23) in comparsion to non-Caucasians (4.02). The findings also suggested that two of the items were related to the risk consequence dimension suggesting more non-Caucasians agreed that they would be upset and annoyed if their choice of a destination for holidays proved to be wrong in comparison to Caucasians.

7.6.3 THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION LEVELS

Education levels had a significant influence on composite performance scores of motives for choice. In particular, differences were identified between those having an education at postgraduate level in comparison to those having a primary school education ($p < 0.05$) or a professional/diploma qualification ($p < 0.05$). ANOVA on the motives for choice items revealed, for example, the attribute 'opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians' was rated differently where on average, those having a postgraduate qualification rated this item as 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (4.42) while those with primary school level of education rated it as 'somewhat satisfied' (5.14). There were no significant differences on composite importance scores of image, service interactions, place attachment, personal involvement and performance scores of image and service interactions, indicating similarities in perceptions based on different education levels.

7.6.4 THE INFLUENCE OF PURPOSE OF VISIT

T-tests revealed that visitors on holiday had on average different satisfaction levels with service interactions and fulfilment of motives compared to those visiting for other purposes. Visitors on holiday had on average higher satisfaction scores for service interactions and motives for choice in comparison to the other group. Differences could be identified on items such as 'friendliness and helpfulness of hotel employees', 'advice of hotel employees on places to visit and things to do', 'opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians' and 'opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians' but most image and service interactions attributes were rated similarly by purpose of visit.

7.6.5 THE INFLUENCE OF VISITATION LEVELS

Whether visitors were first-timers or repeaters significantly influenced their satisfaction levels with image, motives for choice and place attachment. On average, first-time visitors had lower satisfaction scores for all three constructs. T-tests on individual items revealed these differences were on attributes such as 'safety and security', 'the cultural diversity of the place', and 'variety and quality of acommodation' for image scores, and 'Mauritius as a place different to your routine', 'opportunities for socialisation with other tourists and locals', and 'opportunities about way of life of Mauritians' for motives of choice scores. As for place attachment scores, significant differences could be identified on items such as 'Mauritius is a special destination to me', 'I identify strongly with this destination' and 'holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places'. These findings confirm earlier studies depicting differences in images (Gallarza et al., 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004) and attachment levels based on visitation levels (Lee & Allen, 1999; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2008). However, none of the importance constructs were rated significantly different by visitation levels, indicating that importance scores tend to be more stable as suggested by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1988).

7.6.6 THE INFLUENCE OF HOLIDAY PACKAGE

Whether visitors were travelling on a holiday package influenced their importance ratings of image, motives for choice, service interactions and their satisfaction ratings of service interactions. On average, importance scores were higher on all these constructs for those travelling on a holiday package. Significant differences could be identified on image attributes such as 'the place offers good value for money', 'the place has lovely towns and cities', and 'the place has a variety of bars and restaurants' while similarities were evident on attributes such as 'the destination has an appealing local cuisine', and 'the destination has a good reputation'. For service interactions items, differences could be identified for items such as 'hotel employees deliver service professionally', and 'hotel employees are attentive to my needs' while similarities in importance levels were evident for attributes such as 'hotel employees share information about their culture with me' and 'hotel employees have good language and communication skills'. As for motives of choice, differences existed on motives such as 'there are opportunities to build friendship with others' and similarities on motives such as 'feel I am away from the routine of daily life' and 'place offers a calm and peaceful

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atmosphere'. In terms of satisfaction levels, those travelling on a holiday package reported higher satisfaction levels when interacting with hotel employees.

Interestingly, whether visitors were travelling on a holiday package or not, led to significant differences on the composite scores of personal involvement. T-tests on individual items revealed that differences were evident on only two items 'I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here' and 'you can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays'. In both cases, levels of agreement were higher for those travelling on a holiday package. This suggests that personal involvement can be high within resort compounds in comparison to the qualitative findings that suggested personal involvement seemed higher for those who interacted with others outside of hotels.

7.6.7 THE INFLUENCE OF FLUENCY IN LANGUAGES SPOKEN

To identify the influence of fluency in languages spoken, analysis of variance was performed using the five main languages (English, French, German, Hindi and Afrikaans) spoken by the five nationality groups on all composite scores. The results indicated that fluency in language had an influence on composite importance scores of image, motives for choice and service interactions, place attachment as well as satisfaction scores of image and service interactions. However, these effects varied across all five languages. For example, differences in mean scores were found between visitors who were somewhat fluent and those who were very fluent in English on importance scores of image ($p < 0.05$) and service interactions ($p < 0.01$).

To investigate these relationships further, ANOVA was performed on individual items for each construct measured. The results indicated for example, that items involving interactions with hotel employees (e.g. 'hotel employees deliver service professionally', 'hotel employees are attentive to my needs', 'hotel employees are courteous', 'hotel employees are friendly and helpful', and 'hotel employees have good language and communication skills') were rated significantly different in importance by visitors who were very fluent in English in comparison to those who were less fluent. Destination attributes such as 'variety and quality of accommodation', 'level of service', 'convenience of local transport', 'shopping facilities', and 'variety of restaurants and bars', were rated significantly different in importance based on fluency levels in English. In particular, mean importance scores for these attributes were higher for visitors who were very fluent in English. These results suggest that attributes with an element of interaction with host are given more importance based on fluency levels for

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English speakers. This is not surprising given that ability to interact with hosts is dependent on ability to speak similar languages.

Similar findings were also evident for French and German visitors. For example, German visitors on average rated image attributes such as 'friendly people', 'variety and quality of accommodation', and 'level of service', motives for choice attributes such as 'opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals' and 'opportunities to build friendship with others', and service interaction attributes such as 'hotel employees delivering service professionally' and 'hotel employees are attentive to my needs' significantly different based on fluency levels in German. It was clear that visitors' inability to speak in their own language with hosts undermines the importance attached to attributes reflecting interactions with hosts. Fluency levels had the least influence on mean importance scores for image and service interactions attributes for Hindi speakers. This could be explained by the fact that many Indian visitors are fluent in English as well and this did not influence item importance ratings of attributes that involved interactions with the host. The same conclusion can also be inferred for those speaking Afrikaans. As for the place attachment scale, significant differences existed between mean scores of items such as 'Mauritius is a very special destination to me' and 'Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me' between those who were not fluent in English and those who knew a few words. The same mean differences were also noticed between those who knew a few words of French and those who were very fluent in the language.

Therefore, these findings suggest that language fluency levels have an impact on perceptions of all five nationality groups. In particular, the ratings of attributes that have an element of 'social interaction' are influenced by the fluency of language spoken for British, German and French visitors in particular. This suggests that ability to speak a language determines interpretation of the meaning of destination attributes and perceptions of interactions with host (hotel employees and other service employees). The more fluent the visitor, the more importance is attached to interaction components and vice-versa. Likewise, fluency in language influences place attachment levels. However, the findings also indicate that language fluency levels do not influence personal involvement, suggesting that involvement is not embedded in fluency of language per se given that it has been described as an internalised motive. In essence, the findings in this section give some credence to the existence of

differences in importance and satisfaction levels based on visitors' socio-demographics and therefore support the research propositions mentioned earlier.

7.7 FACTOR ANALYSIS

While the previous sections have attempted to identify the influence of demographics and trip characteristics on the various constructs measured in this study, this section focuses on factor analysis. The primary purpose of using factor analysis is to reduce the number of explanatory variables (Ryan, 1995a) and define the underlying structure among the items in the various scales (Hair *et al.*, 2005). It is a way of testing the validity of individual items and enables the uncovered dimensions to be compared to the literature. Also, the image and motive items show high levels of correlations among themselves indicating the likelihood of underlying factors and that respondents have replied the questions in a consistent and logical manner. Hence, factor analysis was applied to importance items of destination image, motives for choice and service interactions only. It was not applied to the performance scale given that satisfaction is considered a less stable attitudinal construct compared to importance. This is because satisfaction is time and situation specific while importance transcends these situational boundaries (Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1988). The place attachment and personal involvement scales were also factor analysed.

7.7.1 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF DESTINATION IMAGE ITEMS

The 25 image items were factor analysed to identify underlying constructs. The KMO measure of sample adequacy (0.897) can be described as 'meritorious' (Hair *et al.*, 2005) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2=5086.95, p<0.001) confirmed the suitability of the data for factorisation. Only four cases had missing values and replaced with mean values. Initially, both varimax and oblimin rotation procedures were used to extract factors with eigenvalues greater than one. A review of the component correlation matrix for the oblimin rotation showed correlations of less than 0.4, indicating low correlations (Ryan, 1995a) for all five factors extracted. Hence, a varimax rotation was used given that the factors were uncorrelated and percentage of explained variance was the same using both methods of rotation. The suitability of the five factor solution was also confirmed through an examination of the scree plot. These five factors explained 51.7% of total variance and as shown in Table 7.9, the Cronbach's alpha values for the factors ranged from a low of 0.523 for factor five to a high of 0.813 for factor one. The total percentage of variance explained fell short of the 60%

recommended while only most factors met the agreed lower limit of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha, although this may decrease to 0.6 in exploratory research as this one (Hair *et al.*, 2005).

These factors were labelled 'General Infrastructure & Amenities', 'Augmented Tourism Product', 'Reputation, Language & Accessibility', 'Cultural, Natural & Other Attractions', and 'Nightlife, Adventure & Beach' based on items that loaded on each factor and conform to some of the broader dimensions reported in the literature (Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin *et al.*, 2007). For example, the dimension of 'Cultural, Natural & Other Attractions' comprising five items 'cultural and historical attractions', 'cultural diversity', 'towns and cities', 'scenery and natural attractions' and 'crowdedness of the place', is similar to the study of Garcia *et al.* (2004) and Tasci *et al.* (2006). However, the literature (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Beerli & Martin, 2004) reports a different loading of items for the factor 'General Infrastructure & Amenities', where items such as 'variety of restaurants & bars', 'variety and quality of accommodation' and 'local cuisine' tend to form another factor labelled 'Tourism Amenities'. This implies that respondents' construction of image is complex and site specific as suggested by others (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Tasci *et al.*, 2007).

Destination Image Items	General Infrastructure & Amenities	Augmented Tourism Product	Reputation, Language & Accessibility	Cultural, Natural & Other Attractions	Nightlife, Adventure & Beach	Comm.
The place has good shopping facilities	**0.7037**	0.1641	0.1862	0.1402	0.1776	0.608
Local transport is convenient	**0.7026**	0.1430	-0.0296	0.1063	0.1419	0.546
The destination has good signage	**0.6145**	0.1713	0.0952	0.1600	-0.0221	0.442
The place is a suitable holiday destination for the family	**0.5029**	0.0482	0.3837	0.1388	0.1134	0.435
The place has a variety of restaurants and bars	**0.5028**	0.1000	0.1879	0.0628	0.4419	0.497
The place offers a variety of and good quality of accommodation	**0.4570**	0.3810	0.2104	0.1085	-0.0063	0.410
The place is exotic	**0.4520**	0.0457	0.3821	0.2747	0.1564	0.452
The destination has an appealing local cuisine	**0.4184**	0.2062	0.2968	0.2549	0.0846	0.378
Feel personally safe and secure	0.2293	**0.7268**	0.0614	-0.0144	-0.0224	0.585
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	0.3539	**0.6254**	-0.0449	-0.0015	-0.0813	0.525
The destination has good weather and pleasant climate	-0.0508	**0.5817**	0.0899	0.2479	0.1505	0.433
The place offers good value for money	0.3865	**0.5783**	0.2409	0.1110	-0.0104	0.554
Friendly people	-0.0413	**0.5294**	0.2227	0.1857	0.2454	0.426
The level of service is good in general	0.2983	**0.4917**	0.3321	-0.0089	0.1448	0.462
The destination has a good reputation	0.0572	0.2025	**0.7725**	0.0678	0.0450	0.648
There are no language barriers	0.1858	0.0464	**0.7598**	0.0324	0.0503	0.617
The place is easily accessible as a holiday destination	0.1456	0.1658	**0.7291**	0.1292	-0.0026	0.597
The place has cultural and historical attractions	0.2503	0.0190	0.0994	**0.7359**	0.0619	0.618
The place is culturally diverse	0.3355	-0.0521	0.0488	**0.6590**	0.2081	0.595
The destination has beautiful scenery and natural attractions	0.2013	0.3499	0.1292	**0.5564**	-0.0111	0.489
The place is not crowded with tourists	-0.2511	0.2670	0.2295	**0.4902**	0.2756	0.503
The place has lovely towns and cities	0.4552	0.2747	0.0249	**0.4760**	0.0754	0.515
Destination offers nightlife and entertainment	0.2203	-0.0509	0.0928	-0.1479	**0.7492**	0.643
Opportunities for adventure and new experiences	0.0271	0.1293	0.0043	0.2279	**0.7300**	0.602
The destination offers beaches and water sports	0.0983	0.0712	-0.0039	0.2863	**0.4913**	0.338
Eigenvalues	3.485	2.760	2.534	2.271	1.872	
% of variance	13.938	11.041	10.134	9.083	7.488	
Cronbach's alpha	0.813	0.742	0.740	0.703	0.523	

Table 7.9: Results of factor analysis for destination image items

7.7.2 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF MOTIVES FOR CHOICE ITEMS

A similar procedure as above was followed for the factorisation of the nine motives items. The KMO measure of sample adequacy (0.803) could be described as 'meritorious' while Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2=1557.24, p<0.001) showed the suitability of the data for factorisation. A principal component method with Varimax rotation procedure was used in this case as well given that correlation between the two factors was below 0.4. An examination of the communalities, which indicates the amount of variance accounted for by the factor solution for each item (Hair *et al.*, 2005), revealed that one item 'there are opportunities to spend time alone' could be deleted. Factor analysis was rerun and the total variance explained improved from 53.4% initially to 58.1%. Both factors met the minimum requirement for Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 as shown in Table 7.10.

Factor one contributed 30.8% to explained variance and five items loaded on this factor. An examination of these items revealed that they were all related to motives of socialisation and learning. Hence, it was labelled 'Socialisation & Learning'. Factor two explained 27.3% of variance and the items reflected the need to get away and relax. Therefore, this factior was labelled 'Escape & Relaxation'. These two factors are replicated in the Leisure Motivation Scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1983) and have been shown to influence destination choice (Beerli & Martin, 2004). However, the loading of different dimensions such as 'socialisation' and 'learning' on the same factor indicate the complexity of 'push' factors in determining destination choice and reflect differences in structures compared to the original scale that may be specific to the experiences being analysed. At least for respondents in this sample, it is not a clear cut decision, more a decision that reflects entanglement of different motives.

Items	Socialisation & Learning	Escape & Relaxation	Communalities
There are opportunities to build friendship with others	**0.819**	-0.035	0.661
There are opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals	**0.795**	-0.023	0.623
There are opportunities to learn about different ways of life	**0.673**	0.313	0.552
There are opportunities to learn things about a new place	**0.652**	0.353	0.547
There are opportunities to see things that I don't normally see	**0.490**	0.426	0.408
Destination is suitable for rest and relaxation	0.020	**0.821**	0.648
The place offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere	0.175	**0.753**	0.594
Feel I am away from the routine of daily life	0.122	**0.732**	0.508
Eigenvalues	2.467	2.181	
% of Variance	30.842	27.264	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.767	0.709	

Table 7.10: Results of factor analysis for motives of choice items

7.7.3 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SERVICE INTERACTIONS ITEMS

Employing the same procedure as before and for brevity sake, the preliminary steps are not discussed. Factor analysis on the nine items of service interactions showed the existence of only one underlying dimension explaining 57.5% of the variance. However, one item 'hotel employees share information about their culture with me' had a low communality and therefore was deleted. After rerunning the test, explained variance improved to 62.1%. As shown in Table 7.11, all items were related to how visitors perceived their interactions with hotel employees and hence labelled 'Hotel Employees Behaviour'.

Service Interactions Items	Hotel Employees Behaviour	Communalities
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful.	**0.847**	0.717
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs.	**0.846**	0.716
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected.	**0.819**	0.671
Hotel employees are courteous.	**0.819**	0.670
Hotel employees deliver service professionally.	**0.801**	0.641
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me, family, & children.	**0.752**	0.566
Hotel employees give advice on places to visit and things to do.	**0.734**	0.538
Hotel employees have good language and communication skills.	**0.669**	0.447
Eigenvalue	4.970	
% of variance	62.074	
Cronbach's alpha	0.911	

Table 7.11: Results of factor analysis on service interactions items

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These results indicate consistency in ratings across respondents in the importance attached to hotel employees' performance. This was expected given the low number of items to represent the construct and the qualitative findings that suggested participants had mostly positive perceptions of service employees. However, it needs to be mentioned that these items have loaded on different dimensions in other studies (Tsang & Ap, 2007). The result can also be explained by the fact that this analysis is constrained to a specific context, that of resort-based perceptions of hotel employees, and these employees are often trained to behave similarly, which would explain such perceptions.

7.7.4 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT ITEMS

The twelve items on the place attachment scale were factorised. The initial solution showed the existence of two underlying dimensions explaining 55.5% of total variance. Two items were problematic, 'the things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy doing them at another sun, sand, sea destination' had a low communality and 'I feel no commitment to this place' loaded significantly on both factors. These two items have been problematic in other studies as well (Williams & Vaske, 2003) and therefore were deleted, which improved percentage of explained variance to 62.1%. The items loading on each factor are shown in Table 7.12 below.

Items	Place Identity	Place Dependence	Comm.
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	**0.821**	0.153	0.698
Mauritius is a very special destination to me	**0.816**	0.151	0.689
I am very attached to this holiday destination	**0.806**	0.202	0.691
I identify strongly with this destination	**0.733**	0.199	0.577
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	**0.711**	0.310	0.602
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	**0.524**	0.444	0.472
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	0.145	**0.788**	0.643
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	0.231	**0.772**	0.649
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	0.313	**0.751**	0.662
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	0.131	**0.721**	0.537
Eigenvalues	3.498	2.721	
% of Variance	34.982	27.207	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.862	0.804	

Table 7.12: Results of factor analysis on place attachment items

These results indicate that items loading on each factor are different to Williams and Vaske's (2003) study. Four of the six items on their scale for place identity were replicated in this study (destination means a lot to me, special destination to me, I am attached to the destination, and I identify strongly with the destination) while only three items on the place dependence scale (got more satisfaction out of this destination, holidaying here is more important, and I would not substitute the destination) were replicated. This occurrence is not uncommon (Pretty *et al.*, 2003) and given that the essence of each dimension was replicated, factor one was labelled 'Place Identity' and factor two was labelled 'Place Dependence'.

However, the entanglement of items pertaining to place identity and place dependence suggest that place attachment is not a clear construct that visitors perceive. At least in this case, the loading of items on different factors do not conform to the literature and therefore the influence of 'context' of study needs to be highlighted. While most applications of place attachment has been to leisure and recreation contexts, where respondents assess their perceptions of a particular site or activity that can be described as being more 'tangible' in comparison to a destination. This very fact would explain the difficulty of replicating dimensions in a destination context. This has been foreshadowed by others (Lee & Allen, 1999; Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008) and is not unexpected given the similarities in measurement issues that were identified between destination image and place attachment in the literature review.

7.7.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT ITEMS

Initially, the factor solution for the 15 items on the place involvement scale showed the existence of five underlying dimensions as hypothesised by Dimanche *et al.* (1991), and explained 66.1% of total variance. One item 'it is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination' had significant loadings on three factors and therefore was deleted. As a result, total explained variance improved to 68.1%. As shown in Table 7.13 below, factor one was labelled 'Importance & Pleasure' given that all five items loading on this factor reflected Dimanche *et al.*'s dimensions of 'Importance' and 'Pleasure' but items loading were not as per the original scale of these authors.

Factors two and three were labelled 'Sign' and 'Risk Probability' respectively given that their items loading reflected the original loadings in Dimanche *et al.*'s study. As for factor four, the two items loading on this factor were similar to Dimanche *et al.*'s study and the essence of

this dimension was maintained, and hence factor four was labelled 'Risk Consequence' while factor five was labelled 'Indifferent' given that it showed the indifference of visitors to the destination experience. Other authors (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Gross & Brown, 2008) have also noted that items do not always load as per the scale used by Dimanche *et al.* (1991). Again, this highlights the influence of 'context' of study on visitors' perceptions and the complexity of the construct. While the eigenvalues and alpha coefficients indicate a statistical solution that has some validity, the interpretation has to be treated with caution. An aspect that will need to be considered afresh when considering SEM in the next chapter.

Altogether, the results of factor analysis on the different scales showed some consistency with the dimensions reported in the literature. Not all scales achieved the minimum of 60% of explained variance and not all factors achieved the minimum of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha. These could prove to be problematic for structural equations modelling later, but these results are not uncommon given the complexity of the constructs being measured and their application to a destination context. Next, based on the results of factor analysis, cluster analysis is used to identify different clusters of place attachment and personal involvement levels and these clusters are profiled.

Personal Involvement Items	Importance & Pleasure	Sign	Risk Probability	Risk Consequence	Indifferent	Comm.
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	**0.805**	0.002	0.018	0.123	0.139	0.702
I get pleasure from being on holidays here	**0.803**	0.069	-0.069	0.113	-0.099	0.669
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	**0.785**	0.030	-0.004	0.173	-0.028	0.647
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius	**0.753**	0.090	-0.037	0.109	0.200	0.627
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	**0.513**	0.262	0.277	-0.137	-0.039	0.451
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	0.070	**0.889**	0.113	0.049	0.026	0.81
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	0.065	**0.885**	0.123	0.064	-0.029	0.802
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	0.284	**0.547**	0.136	0.194	0.464	0.617
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	-0.037	0.184	**0.820**	0.085	-0.023	0.703
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	0.022	0.044	**0.774**	-0.152	0.126	0.636
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	0.025	0.083	**0.688**	0.346	0.038	0.601
It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	0.140	0.077	0.018	**0.804**	0.124	0.652
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	0.167	0.067	0.098	**0.787**	-0.029	0.603
My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience	0.034	0.007	0.079	0.043	**0.938**	0.86
Eigenvalues	2.881	2.009	1.891	1.551	1.202	
% of Variance	20.578	14.347	13.507	11.080	8.588	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.796	0.766	0.682	0.599		

Table 7.13: Results of factor analysis on personal involvement items

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7.8 RESULTS OF CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Two of the research propositions in Table 7.1 (research propositions 2 and 3) sought to identify different levels of attachment to and personal involvement with the destination. Hence, the aim of cluster analysis in this section is to identify different sub-groups of visitors based on similarities in attachment and personal involvement levels. The first step in using cluster analysis is to ensure that the data possess underlying psychometric properties which were tested using factor analysis in the previous section. The second step involves specification of the number of clusters to be extracted, in this case based on the number of factors identified. The third step is to ensure that the clusters are well formed and correctly classify respondents. The final step involves profiling of clusters to confirm whether demographics and travelling characteristics have some influence on them while also providing further confirmation of the results derived from ANOVA and t-tests before.

7.8.1 CLUSTERING RESPONDENTS BASED ON THEIR PLACE ATTACHMENT LEVELS

A K-means clustering procedure was adopted and initially the default 2 cluster solution was maintained. Only 10 items of the place attachment scale were used given that factor analysis confirmed that 2 items were problematic. The results revealed only marginal differences in socio-demographics between the two clusters. Other statistical solutions were considered but the optimal solution seems to be that of 4 clusters given that 2 factors were extracted earlier. An analysis of the cluster centres indicated there were much discrimination and this was further confirmed by the ANOVA results, which indicated a statistically significant difference between the four clusters ($p < 0.01$). Appendix C (Table 1) shows the cluster means for each item. The number of respondents falling in each cluster was, Cluster 1 (109), Cluster 2 (254), Cluster 3 (62) and Cluster 4 (266).

An examination of the cluster means revealed that cluster one consisted of all those respondents who on average 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to most items relating to the place identity dimension but 'neither agree nor disagree' or ' somewhat disagree' with most items of the place dependence dimension. That is, the destination aligned with their self-concept but they did not feel depedent on it. As a result, this cluster was named 'High Identity/Low Dependence'. Respondents falling in cluster two rated on average most items as 'neither agree nor disagree', except for two items related to the place identity dimension that were rated on average as 'somewhat agree'. This cluster showed mostly respondents that were on average

neutral in attachment levels and therefore it was named 'Neutral Attachment'. The third cluster consisted of respondents that on average mostly 'disagree' to 'somewhat disagree' to most items of place attachment and therefore, this cluster was named 'Low Attachment'. The fourth cluster revealed respondents that on average mostly 'agree' to 'somewhat agree' to all items on the place attachment scale. Consequently, this cluster was named 'High Attachment' given they had the most positive attachment levels.

To confirm the validity of these clusters, a discriminant analysis was performed with the four clusters as the grouping variable and the 10 place attachment items as independent variables. This enables the identification of items which discriminate between/among the different clusters and explains the degree to which respondents have been correctly classified in their clusters. From these results (Appendix C- Table 3), it was evident that a four cluster solution discriminated among respondents given that three discriminant functions were extracted and they explained 100% of the variance. However, discriminant function one explained most of the variance (75%) while the contribution of discriminant function three was marginal (0.7%). An examination of the standardised canonical coefficients (Appendix C- Table 2) revealed that discriminant functions one and two had loadings of items from both dimensions of place identity and place dependence. Yet, there seems to be more items of place dependence on the first discrimant function while the second consists mostly of place identity items. The territorial map (Figure 7.3 below) and the combined groups plot (Appendix C – Figure 1) indicated that all four clusters were clearly defined given that the group centroids were distinct and well spaced out.

```
                            Territorial Map
             Function 2
          -6.0      -4.0      -2.0       .0       2.0       4.0       6.0
        +----+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+----+
    6.0 +                                                          14         +
        |                                                          14
        |                                                          14
        |                                                         114
        |                                                         144
        |                                                          14
    4.0 +         +         +         +         +14      +         +
        |                                          14
        |  1                          High Identity  14
        | 311                         Low Dependence  14
        | 3311                                         14
        |  3311                            *          114
    2.0 +   3311  +         +         +  144    +         +
        |    3311                            14
        |     3311                          114
        |      3311                1111124
        |       3311      1111122222 24              High
        |        33111122222       24           Attachment
     .0 +         +       3222     + 24      *        +
        |                  32            24
        |                  32         *  24
        |        *         32               24
        |      Low         32               24
        | Attachment       32     Neutral   24
   -2.0 +         +        32+   Attachment  24 +         +
        |                  32               24
        |                  32                24
        |                  32                24
        |                  32                 24
        |                  32                 24
   -4.0 +         +        32        +        24       +
        |                  32                24
        |                  32                24
        |                  32                 24
        |                  32                 24
        |                  32                  24
        |                  32                  24
   -6.0 +                  32                  24       +
        +----+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+----+
          -6.0      -4.0      -2.0       .0       2.0       4.0       6.0
                        Canonical Discriminant Function 1
```

Figure 7.3 Territorial map for place attachment clusters

The classification matrix (Table 7.14) showed that 97.1% of original cases were correctly classified into their original clusters, confirming the reliability of these clusters.

	Clusters		Predicted Group Membership				Total
			High Identity/ Low dependence	Neutral Attachment	Low Attachment	High Attachment	
Original	Count	1	107	2	0	0	109
		2	4	245	1	4	254
		3	0	0	62	0	62
		4	6	3	0	257	266
	%	1	**98.17**	1.83	0.00	0.00	100
		2	1.57	**96.46**	0.39	1.57	100
		3	0.00	0.00	**100.00**	0.00	100
		4	2.26	1.13	0.00	**96.62**	100

Table 7.14: Classification matrix for place attachment clusters

These results also confirm the proposition in the literature (Kaltenborn, 1997; Pretty *et al.*, 2003; Stedman, 2003b) that it is not always easy to break place attachment into precisely defined dimensions. The high degree of overlap between the various items loading on the different discriminant functions suggest that in the case of holidayers, they are not always able to discern between dimensions of place identity and place dependence. Thus, the complexity and interrelationships within the dimensions of the construct are highlighted.

In order to identify the profile of each cluster, cross tabulations with socio-demographic variables were undertaken. However, inspection of the cross-tabulations indicated that many cells had frequency counts of less than five, which could explain the apparent statistical significance. Consequently, the categories defining some of these demographics were merged. For example, the initial six age categories were collapsed into three '18-30 years old', '31-50 years old' and 'greater than 50 years old'. As can be seen in Table 7.15 below, five demographic variables (age, nationality, ethnicity, education level and marital status) influenced cluster formation. For example, age had a significant influence on place attachment clusters in that the 'High identity/ Low dependence' cluster had a higher proportion of younger visitors while the 'High attachment' cluster had a higher proportion of older visitors.

Characteristics	Cluster 1 (N=109) High Identity/ Low Dependence	Cluster 2 (N=254) Neutral Attachment	Cluster 3 (N=62) Low Attachment	Cluster 4 (n=266) High Attachment	χ^2 test
Age categories	%	%	%	%	
18-30 yrs old	22.6	35.5	13.4	28.5	
31-50 yrs old	13.5	40.0	5.9	40.6	
>50 yrs old	12.7	31.5	10.3	45.5	χ^2=25.18, df =6, p < 0.01
Nationality					
German	9.4	29.1	11.1	50.4	
South African	16.1	35.6	4.7	43.6	
Indian	30.9	40.7	4.9	23.6	
French	7.3	44.4	15.2	33.1	
British	15.2	33.3	8.3	43.2	χ^2=66.02, df =21, p < 0.01
Ethnicity					
Caucasian	12.5	38.5	10.0	39.0	
Non-Caucasian	21.4	33.7	7.1	37.7	χ^2=10.57, df =3, p < 0.05
Education level					
Up to secondary	23.6	28.7	12.1	35.7	
Professional/diploma	17.1	35.2	8.1	39.5	
Tertiary	11.6	41.8	8.0	38.6	χ^2=17.19, df =6, p < 0.05
Marital status					
Single	23.6	25.5	12.3	38.7	
Married	14.6	41.8	5.3	38.4	
Partner	15.0	31.0	19.0	35.0	
Sep./divorc./widow	9.8	26.8	17.1	46.3	χ^2=37.15, df =9, p < 0.01
Language Spoken (English)					
Not fluent	7.6	36.4	11.9	44.1	
Fluent	17.7	36.9	7.7	37.8	χ^2= 9.22, df= 3, p < 0.05
Language Spoken (German)					
Not fluent	13.2	40.3	13.2	33.3	
Fluent	9.8	29.9	8.6	51.7	χ^2= 11.58, df= 3, p < 0.01
Language Spoken (French)					
Not fluent	17.2	34.8	8.0	40.0	
Fluent	8.2	42.7	13.6	35.5	χ^2= 13.37, df= 3, p < 0.01

Table 7.15: Place attachment cluster profiling by demographics

Slightly more than half (50.4%) of the 'High Attachment' cluster were German visitors while Indian visitors tend to be either in cluster 1 (High identity/Low dependence) or cluster 2 (Neutral attachment). More than half (55.1%) of Non-Caucasian visitors were either in clusters 1 or 2, indicating lower attachment levels in comparison to other nationalities. The 'Neutral attachment' cluster has a higher proportion of visitors who have at least a tertiary qualification while the 'High identity/ Low dependence' cluster has a higher proportion of

visitors who are single. This is not surprising given that earlier results showed this cluster as having a higher proportion of younger visitors. Those visitors who are either divorced or widowed tend to belong to the 'High attachment' cluster. In terms of language fluency levels, visitors who are not fluent in English tend to belong either to the 'Neutral attachment' or 'High attachment' clusters. The majority of visitors who are fluent in German (81.6%) and French (78.2%) belong either to cluster 2 (Neutral attachment) or 4 (High attachment). This is not surprising given that emotions are understood within the context of language, thereby influencing visitors ability to identify with the destination experience, which subsequently informs their level of emotional attachment to the place.

As for the influence of travelling characteristics on cluster formation, Table 7.16 shows that repeat visitation and length of stay had a significant influence. For example, a higher proportion of repeat visitors have high attachment levels in comparison to first-time visitors as suggested in the literature (Lee & Allen, 1999; George & George, 2004; Kyle *et al.*, 2003). It seems that the longer the visitors stay, the higher their levels of place attachment given that 52.9% of those staying for more than 22 days belong to the 'High attachment' cluster while a significant proportion (43.8%) of those staying between 1 and 7 days, belong to the 'Neutral attachment' cluster.

Characteristics	Cluster 1 (N=109)	Cluster 2 (N=254)	Cluster 3 (N=62)	Cluster 4 (n=266)	χ^2 test
	High Identity/ Low Dependence	Neutral Attachment	Low Attachment	High Attachment	
Repeat Visitation	%	%	%	%	
Yes	11.2	36.8	5.9	46.2	
No	21.4	37.3	11.8	29.5	χ^2 =29.46, df =3, p < 0.01
Length of Stay					
1-7 days	18.8	43.8	15.6	21.9	
8-15 days	14.6	38.4	8.0	38.9	
16-22 days	19.7	34.3	6.6	39.4	
>22 days	9.8	21.6	15.7	52.9	χ^2= 22.27, df=9, p < 0.01

Table 7.16: Place attachment cluster profiling by travelling characteristics

The next step in the analysis involved assessing the relative contribution of socio-demographics and travelling characteristics on cluster formation through the application of multi-nomial regression. The socio-demographics and travelling characteristics were specified as the independent variables while the cluster membership was specified as the dependent

variable. The Pseudo R-square coefficients (Cox & Snell =0.233) showed that the independent variables contributed marginally (23.3%) to explain variance in 'attachment level'. The percentage of correct classification for each of the cluster was, Cluster 1- 20.95%, Cluster 2- 53.55%, Cluster 3- 17.54% and Cluster 4- 61.63% with an overall correct classification of 48.14% only. In short, socio-demographics and travelling characteristics have some influence on the formation of place attachment, as reported in the literature (Lee, 2001; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a) but perhaps other factors such as attractiveness of a destination, enduring involvement (Hou *et al.*, 2005) and motives for choice (Prentice *et al.*, 1998) could explain more of the variance in place attachment as opposed to socio-demographics.

7.8.2 CLUSTERING RESPONDENTS BASED ON THEIR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT LEVELS

Following a similar procedure as before, a five cluster solution was specified and ANOVA reinforced that significant differences existed between these clusters at the less than 1% level of significance. Other solutions were specified but the optimal solution seems to be five clusters. The cluster means (Appendix C – Table 4) and Table 7.17 below showed that the first cluster comprised of 93 respondents who on average rated items of 'Importance', 'Pleasure' and 'Risk Consequence' dimensions on the higher end of the scale while rating items of 'Sign' and 'Risk Probability' on the lower end of the scale. These two dimensions of 'Importance' and 'Pleasure' merged into one factor from factor analysis and have been reported as the dimension of 'Attraction' in recreation and leisure literatures (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). As a result, these visitors were classified as the 'High Attraction/High Risk', that is, they consider the destination to be important in their life while deriving pleasure from on-site experiences but would be upset if the destination did not live to their expectations.

Clusters	No. of cases
1 –'High Attraction/High Risk'	93
2 – 'Unsure'	77
3 – 'Moderate Attraction/Moderate Risk'	199
4 – 'Moderate Attraction/ High Risk'	88
5 – 'High Attraction/ Moderate Risk'	217

Table 7.17: Cluster labelling and number of respondents

The second cluster comprised 77 respondents who on average rated all personal involvement items as either 'somewhat disagree' or 'neither agree nor disagree'. These visitors are mostly unsure about their level of personal involvement with the destination and therefore were labelled the 'Unsure'. Cluster three (199 respondents) are those who derive somewhat high

levels of pleasure from the destination and consider it to be of some importance in their life as a holiday destination. They also rated on average all items of 'Sign' and 'Risk Probability' as 'somewhat agree' while items of the 'Risk Consequence' dimension were rated as either 'somewhat agree' or 'neither agree nor disagree'. These visitors were labelled 'Moderate Attraction/Moderate Risk'. Cluster four (88 respondents) on the other hand, comprised visitors who on average 'somewhat agree' they derive pleasure from their experiences and consider the destination to be important in their life while being either 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'somewhat disagree' or 'disagree' with statements pertaining to other dimensions. This cluster contains respondents with the most diverse agreement levels with the different items on the scale. As a result, they were named 'Moderate Attraction/High Risk'. Cluster five comprised of 217 respondents who on average 'agree' to 'somewhat agree' to items on the 'Importance', 'Pleasure' and 'Sign' dimensions but they 'somewhat agree' to 'neither agree nor disagree' for the remaining two dimensions of 'Risk Probability' and 'Risk Consequence'. Thus, they were labeled the 'High Attraction/Moderate Risk'.

The validity of these clusters was verified using discriminant analysis which showed the existence of four discriminant functions, all significant at the 1% level (Appendix C – Table 5). The first three functions contributed 93.6% to explained variance. An examination of the standardized canonical coefficients (Appendix C – Table 6) revealed that discriminant function one to some extent revealed a combination of 'Risk Probability' and 'Risk Consequence' dimensions. Discriminant function two is a combination of 'Importance', 'Pleasure', 'Sign' and 'Risk Consequence' dimensions. Discriminant function three has only one item of 'Risk Probability'. These results confirm the findings of other studies (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Funk *et al.*, 2004) that reported consumers are unable to distinguish between the different facets clearly. It is thus not uncommon to see entanglement of items, which puts into question the applicability of the personal involvement scale to tourist destinations.

The territorial map (Appendix C – Figure 2) revealed that of the five clusters, only cluster four (Moderate Attraction/High Risk) was less well defined but all clusters had close group centroids. This can also be seen visually in Figure 7.4 below, which shows the combined groups plot.

Canonical Discriminant Functions
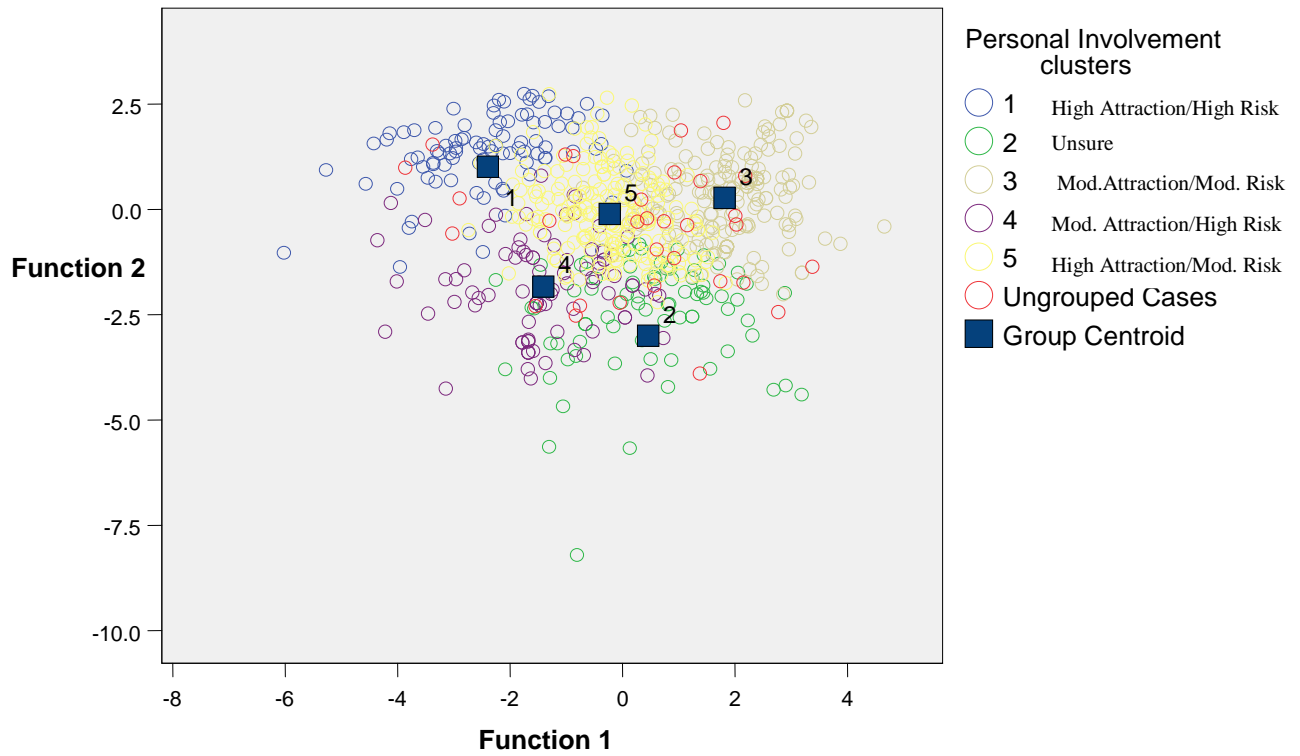
Figure 7.4: Combined groups plot for personal involvement clusters

The classification matrix (Table 7.18) showed that cluster 1 achieved the lowest level of correct classification (81.72%) while cluster 4 achieved the highest (89.77%). The overall percentage of correct classification was 85.8%. Surprisingly, cluster 4 is the 'lesser' well defined cluster compared to others but achieved the highest level of correct classification. This suggests that personal involvement is a complex construct with unclear dimensions for visitors as also suggested by factor analysis earlier. This can be problematic for the use of SEM later. Nonetheless, the results confirm the existence of different clusters of personal involvement among visitors to Mauritius.

		Personal Involvement Clusters	Predicted Group Membership				
			1	2	3	4	5
Original	Count	1-High Attraction/ High Risk	76	0	1	6	10
		2-Unsure	0	69	2	3	3
		3-Moderate Attraction/Moderate Risk	1	2	172	1	23
		4-Moderate Attraction/High Risk	5	0	0	79	4
		5-High Attraction/Moderate Risk	16	8	10	1	182
	%	1-High Attraction/ High Risk	**81.72**	0.00	1.08	6.45	10.75
		2-Unsure	0.00	**89.61**	2.60	3.90	3.90
		3-Moderate Attraction/Moderate Risk	0.50	1.01	**86.43**	0.50	11.56
		4-Moderate Attraction/High Risk	5.68	0.00	0.00	**89.77**	4.55
		5-High Attraction/Moderate Risk	7.37	3.69	4.61	0.46	**83.87**

Table 7.18: Classification matrix for personal involvement clusters

Each cluster was then profiled against demographic and travelling characteristics. The results indicated that except for age and number of children, all other demographic variables influenced cluster profiles. Travelling characteristics such as length of stay, holiday package and person travelling with also accounted for differences in cluster profiles. Table 7.19 shows that cluster 1 (High Attraction/High Risk) are mostly visitors of South African, British and Indian nationalities who are non-Caucasians, with education level up to secondary school. They are fluent in languages other than English, French and German. The 'Unsure' cluster has a mixture of demographics indicating no specific profile. Cluster 3 (Moderate Attraction/ Moderate Risk) has a large proportion of German visitors and almost equal number of Caucasians and non-Caucasians but they tend to have a low income. Cluster 4 (Moderate Attraction/ High Risk) suggests that visitiors are of a mixture of nationalities, mostly Caucasians, and neither high nor low income. The 'High Attraction/ Moderate Risk' cluster are mostly Indian, French, and British visitors, more educated and higher level of income than the other clusters, and fluent in languages they spoke. These results suggest that Cluster 5 fits the description of those visitors that the island wants to attract and maintain their loyalty based on their socio-demographic characteristics.

Characteristics	Cluster 1 (N=93) %	Cluster 2 (N=77) %	Cluster 3 (N=199) %	Cluster 4 (N=88) %	Cluster 5 (N=217) %	χ^2 test
	High Attraction/ High Risk	Unsure	Moderate Attraction/ Moderate Risk	Moderate Attraction/ High Risk	High Attraction/ Moderate Risk	
Nationality:						
German	1.82	12.73	52.73	15.45	17.27	χ^2=117.09
South African	22.97	12.84	27.70	13.51	22.97	df=28
Indian	27.97	9.32	19.49	7.63	35.59	p<0.01
French	2.00	14.00	24.67	14.67	44.67	
British	16.15	7.69	26.15	11.54	38.46	
Ethnicity:						χ^2=50.11
Caucasian	7.18	11.81	29.63	15.97	35.42	df=4
Non-Caucasian	25.62	10.74	29.34	7.85	26.45	p<0.01
Education level:						
Up to secondary school	29.80	11.92	23.18	10.60	24.50	χ^2=46.75
Professional/diploma	9.66	13.04	32.37	14.49	30.43	df=8
Tertiary level	8.91	10.23	28.38	13.86	38.61	p<0.01
Marital Status:						
Single	28.16	11.65	22.33	12.62	25.24	χ^2=30.38
Married	10.54	10.30	30.44	13.35	35.36	df=12
Partner	12.50	13.54	35.42	11.46	27.08	p<0.01
Sep./divorc./widow	11.90	19.05	21.43	16.67	30.95	
Avg. monthly household income:						
Low	3.70	3.70	59.26	14.81	18.52	χ^2=23.75
Neither low nor high	12.07	12.07	21.55	22.41	31.90	df=8
High	12.45	12.03	28.69	11.81	35.02	p<0.01
Language Fluency:						
English - Not fluent	3.62	16.67	28.99	14.49	36.23	χ^2=18.36
Fluent	16.42	10.07	29.66	12.69	31.16	df=4, p<0.01
French – Not fluent	16.99	9.80	29.41	13.29	30.50	χ^2=15.30
Fluent	6.98	14.88	29.77	12.56	35.81	df=4, p<0.01
German – Not fluent	16.73	12.01	25.00	12.80	33.46	χ^2=28.93
Fluent	4.82	9.64	43.37	13.86	28.31	df=4, p<0.01
Hindi – Not fluent	11.27	11.99	31.48	14.13	31.13	χ^2=24.40
Fluent	26.09	8.70	20.00	7.83	37.39	df=4, p<0.01
Afrikaans – Not Fluent	11.35	11.53	29.01	13.33	34.77	χ^2=20.63
Fluent	25.21	10.92	31.93	11.76	20.17	df=4, p<0.01

Table 7.19: Demographic profile of personal involvement clusters

As for profile of clusters based on travelling characteristics, Table 7.20 shows that cluster 5 tends to stay longer and cluster 3 has a large proportion of visitors travelling alone, while cluster 1 has the least number of visitors travelling with their spouse or partner. These findings reinforce the previous conclusion that cluster 5 would appear to be the most appropriate target market for the destination.

Characteristics	Cluster 1 (N=93) %	Cluster 2 (N=77) %	Cluster 3 (N=199) %	Cluster 4 (N=88) %	Cluster 5 (N=217) %	χ2 test
	High Attraction/ High Risk	Unsure	Moderate Attraction/ Moderate Risk	Moderate Attraction/ High Risk	High Attraction/ Moderate Risk	
Length of Stay:						
1-7days	11.29	17.74	20.97	22.58	27.42	
8-15days	13.24	10.40	32.15	10.87	33.33	χ^2=24.47
16-22days	19.71	8.03	27.74	14.60	29.93	df=12
>22days	2.00	22.00	24.00	16.00	36.00	p<0.05
Holiday package						
Yes	18.95	9.47	31.58	8.42	31.58	χ^2=20.08
No	10.08	12.92	27.91	16.54	32.56	df=4, p<0.01
Travel with:						
Alone	16.67	9.52	35.71	9.52	28.57	
Husband/wife/partner	9.28	12.17	31.59	12.46	34.49	χ^2=23.52
Family with children	16.57	10.65	26.04	16.57	30.18	df=12
Relatives	26.03	10.96	19.18	12.33	31.51	p<0.05

Table 7.20: Travelling characteristics of personal involvement clusters

As before, multi-nomial regression analysis was undertaken to identify which demographic or travelling characteristics contribute the most to explained variance in the five clusters. The independent variables in the model were specified as the demographics and travelling characteristics in Tables 7.19 and 7.20 while the dependent variable was the cluster membership. The results indicated (Appendix C – Table 7) nationality, ethnicity, length of stay, person travelling with, education level, average monthly household income and fluency in French were the only variables that contributed to explain approximately 32% of the variance in the clusters (Cox & Snell= 0.327). This indicates a reasonable level of explained variance by socio-demographics but was not supported by the classification matrix (Appendix C – Table 8), which showed that only 44.6% of respondents were correctly classified in their predicted clusters, with cluster 2 achieving the lowest percentage of correct classification (5.3%) and cluster 5 achieving the highest (53%). Hence, these results suggest that socio-demographic characteristics are not particularly good discriminators of visitors' personal involvement levels and perhaps other characteristics such as personality and social status, which are not measured in this study influence personal involvement levels.

7.9 REGRESSION MODELS

While the previous section sought to identify the explanatory power of demographic and travelling characteristics on place attachment and personal involvement, this section dwells on the explanatory power of destination image, service interactions, motives for choice, place attachment and personal involvement for global measures of image, satisfaction and loyalty. The dimensions previously identified for each construct through factor analysis are used to explain the variance in overall image, overall satisfaction and overall loyalty. These same factors are also used to predict whether visitors would become repeaters based on their current perceptions of the destination. These analyses will specifically provide answers for research propositions 4 (loyalty levels of visitors are significantly influenced by motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, destination image, service interactions and overall satisfaction levels), 5 (overall image of a destination is significantly influenced by image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment, and personal involvement), 6 (overall satisfaction with a destination is significantly influenced by destination image attributes, motives for choice, service interactions, place attachment and personal involvement) and 7 (whether current visitors would become repeat visitors can be significantly predicted by their current perceptions of destination image attributes, service interactions, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, overall satisfaction levels, demographic and travelling characteristics).

However, the use of regression models require four assumptions to be met (Hair *et al.*, 2005), linearity of the phenomenon measured, homoscedasticity, independence of error terms, and normality of the error term distribution. The results of these tests are shown in Appendix D. A forward stepwise procedure was used to identify the incremental contribution of each factor for each of the proposed regression models.

7.9.1 REGRESSION MODEL FOR OVERALL IMAGE

This regression model specified the dependent variable as overall image and the independent variables were the factors for image, motives for choice, service interactions, personal involvement and place attachment. However, a test of this overall relationship for assumption violations is also required before application of the technique. Hair *et al.* (2005) suggest that plotting the studentised residuals versus the predicted variables is a basic method of identifying assumption violations for the overall relationship. The studentised residuals

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correspond to t-values. The residual plot (Appendix D – Figure 1) showed that there were no specific patterns of the residuals as they seem to fall randomly. Hence, confirming no violation of assumptions for the overall relationship.

The results of the forward stepwise procedure indicated that six factors (importance & pleasure, nightlife, adventure & beach, place identity, indifferent, place dependence and risk consequence) predicted overall image. The overall regression model was significant (R^2=0.161, p < 0.01) and indicated that 16% of the variance in overall image was explained by these six factors. This relatively low percentage of explained variance is not uncommon in tourism research given that overall image is affected by a multiplicity of factors, not all accounted in this model. Nonetheless, it shows personal involvement (importance & pleasure, indifferent and risk consequence), place attachment (place identity & place dependence) and one destination image dimension (nightlife, adventure & beach) as significant predictors of overall image. As shown in Table 7.21, importance and pleasure entered the regression model first, explaining 11.8% of total variance. The remaining factors thereafter contributed marginally.

Factors	R^2	$R^2 \Delta$	Sig.	β	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Importance & Pleasure	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.174	0.390	2.562
Nightlife, Adventure & Beach	0.128	0.010	0.004	0.131	0.958	1.044
Place Identity	0.137	0.009	0.008	0.246	0.400	2.500
Indifferent	0.147	0.010	0.005	-0.135	0.943	1.060
Place dependence	0.156	0.009	0.007	0.119	0.906	1.104
Risk Consequence	0.161	0.006	0.030	-0.088	0.981	1.020

Table 7.21: Regression model for overall image

The regression model also showed that a one unit change in importance and pleasure will lead to an increase of 0.174 in overall image (β=0.174). That is, the more visitors perceive the destination to be important and derive pleasure from the experiences, the more important is overall image. Likewise, the more the destination is aligned with visitors' self- identity (β=0.246) and they feel dependent on it (β=0.119), the more favourable will be their overall image. However, as expected one unit increase in risk consequence will lead to a decrease of 0.088 (β=-0.088) in overall image, implying that increasing visitors' perceived risk of making the wrong destination choice will only negatively affect overall image perceptions. These findings confirm the importance of place attachment and personal involvement in determining

overall image of a destination but also highlight that motives for choice, service interactions and other dimensions of personal involvement and image have no effect on overall image.

A significant problem in multiple regression is multicollinearity. This can be assessed using Tolerance Values and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Relatively higher VIF values compared to ten and lower tolerance values compared to 0.1 indicate multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2005). From Table 7.21, it can be seen that Tolerance Values were greater than 0.1 and VIF values were less than 10, indicating low levels of multi-collinearity. This was also confirmed by the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.856, which is close to the value of 2 as recommended in the literature (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The results above already suggest potential relationships between image, place attachment and personal involvement. These will need to be verified using SEM.

7.9.2 REGRESSION MODEL FOR OVERALL SATISFACTION

The analysis for this regression model started with a test for the overall relationship (Appendix D – Figure 4), followed by tests for the four assumptions of regression (Appendix D). The forward stepwise procedure showed that six factors (Importance & Pleasure, Place Identity, Reputation, Language & Accessibility, Indifferent, Place Dependence, and Escape & Relaxation) significantly predicted overall satisfaction of visitors. The full model (R^2=0.246, $p < 0.01$) showed that 24% of the variance was explained by these six factors. As shown in Table 7.22, the first factor that entered the model was again importance and pleasure explaining most of the variance in the model (19.1%). Place attachment has a positive influence on overall satisfaction as indicated by the positive beta coefficients for place identity (β=0.231) and place dependence (β=0.091), with the former having a larger effect. As for personal involvement, two dimensions seem to have an effect on overall satisfaction. While importance and pleasure (β=0.190) has a positive effect, the indifferent dimension has a negative one (β=-0.098) suggesting that overall satisfaction would decrease as visitors feel more indifferent towards the destination. The more important motives of escape and relaxation are for visitors, the higher will be their overall satisfaction levels. Likewise, an increase in perceived importance of reputation, language and accessibility (β=0.064) of the destination, would lead to a 6.4% increase in overall satisfaction levels.

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These results suggest the existence of relationships between overall satisfaction, motives for choice, destination image, place attachment and personal involvement. However, service interactions with hotel employees do not seem to influence satisfaction. The collinearity statistics from the table below reinforced the reliability of these results by showing low levels of multi-collinearity (Durbin-Watson statistic =1.746).

Factors	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	Sig.	β	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Importance & Pleasure	0.191	0.191	0.000	0.190	0.391	2.555
Place Identity	0.211	0.021	0.000	0.231	0.397	2.519
Reputation, Language & Accessibility	0.225	0.014	0.000	0.064	0.886	1.129
Indifferent	0.232	0.007	0.010	-0.098	0.930	1.075
Place Dependence	0.239	0.007	0.011	0.091	0.867	1.153
Escape & Relaxation	0.246	0.007	0.013	0.083	0.837	1.195

Table 7.22: Regression model for overall satisfaction

7.9.3 REGRESSION MODEL FOR OVERALL LOYALTY

The literature established that loyalty of visitors is dependent on satisfaction levels, place attachment, and image perceptions. As a result, the dependent variable for this regression model was specified as loyalty levels and the independent variables were those used in the previous models as well as overall satisfaction. All assumptions were tested to assess whether they met the required conditions, which they did as shown in Appendix D (Figures 7, 8, & 9). The full model (R^2=0.332, p < 0.01) explained 33% of total variance, with dimensions of place attachment explaining most of the variance.

Factors	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
				β	Tolerance	VIF
Place Identity	0.242	0.242	0.000	0.561	0.777	1.287
Place Dependence	0.292	0.050	0.000	0.267	0.953	1.050
Overall Satisfaction	0.321	0.028	0.000	0.287	0.800	1.249
Cultural, Natural & Other Attractions	0.327	0.007	0.009	0.125	0.953	1.049
General Infrastructure & Amenities	0.332	0.005	0.028	0.102	0.947	1.056

Table 7.23: Regression model for overall loyalty

Table 7.23 shows that visitors' loyalty to a destination is likely to increase substantially (β=0.561) if they perceived their self-identity to be congruent to perceptions of the place. Likewise, visitors' loyalty levels would increase by 26.7% (β=0.267) if they are aware of the facilities and uniqueness of these and other forms of functionality dependence, and these met visitors' needs and goals (place dependence). These results are not surprising given the same effects have been noted in the literature (George & George, 2004; Alexandris *et al.*, 2006). As expected, loyalty levels would increase as satisfaction levels increases. Also, the perceived importance of cultural, natural and other attractions in determining loyalty levels can be seen from Table 7.23. Of interest, is that in all the regression models developed so far, different image dimensions act as predictors, suggesting that image influences global evaluative measures differently. Unlike the literature (Kim *et al.*, 1997; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a), neither motives for choice nor personal involvement are significant predictors of loyalty. The high tolerance values, low VIF values, and Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.867 indicated low multi-collinearity, thereby confirming the reliability of these results.

7.9.4 REGRESSION MODEL FOR REPEAT VISITATION

A central tenet of this research has been the noted differences in perceptions between first-time and repeat visitors. As a result, proposition seven from the literature stated: whether current visitors would become repeat visitors can be significantly predicted by their current perceptions of destination image, service interactions, motives for choice, place attachment, personal involvement, overall satisfaction levels, demographic and travelling characteristics. In order to evaluate this proposition, a binary logistic regression was estimated given that the dependent variable (repeat visitor) was dichotomous in nature (yes or no). This variable was created by coding actual repeat visitation in only two alternatives (0 if they are first-time visitors and 1 if they are repeat visitors). The explanatory variables were specified as above. A forward Wald model of estimation was used to identify the factors that discriminate the most between repeat and first-time visitors. This model of estimation selects first the independent variable likely to explain the highest level of variance and subsequently introduces other independent variables based on their additional contribution to explained variance. The estimation results of the logit model are shown in Table 7.24.

Factors	β	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Honeymoon	-1.524	13.522	0.000	0.218
Place Dependence	0.395	18.180	0.000	1.484
VFR	1.289	11.549	0.001	3.628
Place Identity	0.338	12.015	0.001	1.402
Cultural, Natural & Other Attractions	0.457	15.355	0.000	1.580
Socialisation & Learning	0.398	11.512	0.001	1.489
Age	0.447	5.841	0.016	1.563
General Infrastructure & Amenities	-0.233	5.203	0.023	0.792
Pseudo R^2	Cox & Snell=0.145			
Correct % of Classification	No: 57.49	Yes: 72.44	Overall: 65.41	

Table 7.24: Results of binomial logit modelling for repeat visitors

The model explained approximately 14% of the variance in the dependent variable as indicated by the Pseudo Rsquare coefficients (Cox & Snell= 0.145) which is a low explanatory power for the model. However, the variables that act as significant predictors are of interest given that they confirm earlier findings. The goodness of fit of the model was adequate given the non-significant value of the χ^2 test (χ^2= 7.325, df= 8, p > 0.05). The model achieved an acceptable level of correct classification for repeat visitors (72%) but was relatively poor at classifying first time visitors (57%). The results (Table 7.24) showed that place attachment, one motive for choice, two image dimensions, one demographic variable and two purposes of visit could be used to discriminate between first time and repeat visitors.

Visitors are more likely to become repeaters if they perceive the place to be aligned with their self-concept (place identity, β=0.338) and they feel dependent on it (place dependence, β=0.395). Assigning high importance to needs of socialisation and learning are more likely to be the motives for choice (β=0.398) of those who will be repeat visitors. Visitors attaching high importance to cultural, natural and other attractions (β=0.457) but low importance to general infrastructure and amenities (β=-0.233) are likely to become repeat visitors. This is not surprising because the qualitative data showed that repeat visitors did not consider of much importance tourist specific amenities when they are visiting friends and relatives. Age is a significant predictor of whether visitors will be repeaters. The probability of becoming repeaters increases with age (β=0.447) and if the current purpose of visit is VFR (β=1.289).

However, if visitors are honeymooners on this trip, they are less likely to become repeat visitors. This could be explained by the 'once in a life-time experience' reported in the

literature (Ryan, 1995a). Thus, these results confirm Beerli *et al.*'s (2007) proposition that familiarity seems to play a moderating role in consumers' attitude toward the expressive characteristics and functional attributes of an object. That is, the greater the familiarity with the place, the weaker the effect of symbolic features, and the greater the effect of utilitarian ones. This is shown by the fact that motives for choice, purpose of visit and place attachment play a significant role in predicting whether visitors will become repeaters based on their behaviour on this trip. The results provide some support to the research propositions described earlier in this section but will be dicussed in more depth in the final chapter (Chapter 9).

7.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter reported the quantitative findings of this study. In summary, the results indicated some support for the various propositions tested. Descriptive statistics showed that both differences and similarities in ratings existed for the various constructs. IPA indicated differences in importance and satisfaction levels on some attributes, with most differences noted in image items. ANOVA indicated that not all demographic and travelling characteristics influenced ratings, while nationality, ethnicity and fluency in languages spoken seem to have some impact on perceptions. Factor analysis revealed that all scales used had sub-dimensions except for service interactions, but these dimensions did not always replicate item loadings as per the literature. Different clusters of visitors based on their place attachment and personal involvement ratings could be identified. These cluster formations were to some extent influenced by demographic and travelling characteristics of visitors. Regression analyses showed that global evaluative constructs such as overall image, overall satisfaction and loyalty levels seem to be predicted by specific dimensions of image, place attachment, motives for choice and personal involvement. Repeat visitation can also be predicted by visitors' perceptions of place image, motives for choice, level of attachment, age and purpose of visit. With these findings in mind, the next chapter tests the last research proposition which is related to the theoretical model developed in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 8~ STRUCTURAL EQUATIONS MODELLING (FINDINGS PART 2)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the results from structural equation modelling that seeks to test the theoretical model proposed in Chapter 3. The chapter begins with a description of the technique and its application to image studies. Thereafter, the various hypotheses derived from the theoretical model are presented. In essence, these hypotheses reflect research proposition 8 described in the previous chapter, which sought to identify significant relationships among the various constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to identify the relevant indicators for each latent construct and to quantify these indicators. The measurement model is tested and modified using modification indices to arrive at a more parsimonious model. The resulting structural model is evaluated using goodness-of-fit indices and structural paths are identified. This final model is then used to provide support for the various hypotheses derived earlier. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings using SEM.

8.2 STRUCTURAL EQUATIONS MODELLING

Structural equation modelling is a multivariate technique that combines confirmatory factor analysis modelling and regression analysis (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). The primary aim of SEM is to assess series of interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously between a set of latent (unobserved) constructs, each measured by one or more manifest (observed) variables. When using SEM, latent constructs are termed exogenous (independent) constructs and endogenous (dependent) constructs. It includes one or more linear regression equations that describe how the endogenous constructs depend upon the exogenous constructs. Their coefficients are called path coefficients or sometimes regression weights (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). SEM should never be attempted without a strong theoretical basis for specification of both the measurement and structural models (Hair *et al.*, 2005).

SEM is usually viewed as a confirmatory technique using one of three approaches. First, a model is tested using SEM goodness-of-fit tests to determine if the pattern of variances and covariances in the data are consistent with a structural model specified by the researcher. However, as other unexamined models may fit the data as well or better, an accepted model is only a not-disconfirmed model. This is known as the strictly confirmatory approach or the confirmatory modelling strategy (Hair *et al.*, 2005).

The second approach involves testing two or more causal models to determine which has the best fit based on the assumption that the researcher does not find in the literature two well-developed alternative models to test. This is known as the competing models strategy. The third approach known as model development strategy combines confirmatory and exploratory purposes, where an initial model is tested, found to be deficient, and then an alternative model is tested based on changes suggested by SEM modification indexes. In practice, researchers more often adopt this approach, "which means that the analysis has a more exploratory tenor as revised models are tested with the same data" (Kline, 2005, p.10). The goal of this process is more to 'discover' a model with two properties: it makes theoretical sense, and its statistical correspondence to the data is reasonable (Kline, 2005). However, model respecification must always be done with theoretical support rather than just empirical justification (Hair *et al.*, 2005). It has been argued that this 'exploratory' approach of using SEM (Reisinger & Turner, 1999; Hair *et al.*, 2005; Kline, 2005) has become the favoured approach in the tourism literature. As a result, this study adopts a 'model development approach' to SEM, given that there are no other models in the literature that have tested the relationships for the theoretical model presented in this study. The AMOS 6.0 software is used for that purpose.

8.2.1 APPLICATIONS OF SEM IN IMAGE & PLACE ATTACHMENT RESEARCH

Currently in destination image research, there is a growing trend for the application of the technique to assess relationships between different image components and evaluative factors (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin *et al.*, 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008). Likewise, the relationship between place attachment and personal involvement has been tested using SEM in tourism (Hou *et al.*, 2005; Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008) and leisure and recreation (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b) literatures. Similar to these studies, SEM is used in this study to establish causal effects between the variables in the theoretical model.

It has also been argued that many important marketing and psychological constructs such as satisfaction, loyalty or cultural concepts are latent constructs with unknown reliability, measured by multiple observed variables. By using SEM, the reliability of each indicator used to measure latent constructs can be assessed, and unlike regression analysis, SEM eliminates the difficulties caused by unreliable measures. This is particularly true for the measurement of constructs such as perceptions, satisfaction and future behaviour using multiple regression,

which often reveals coefficients with unexpected signs or negative coefficients between the dependent and independent variables when a positive relationship is expected (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Therefore, SEM is a more rigorous technique for prediction of causal relationships and establishing reliability and validity of results.

8.3 STAGES OF SEM

According to Hair *et al.* (2005) six stages as depicted in Figure 8.1 below, must be followed when using SEM.

Stage 1 → Defining Individual Constructs

Stage 2 → Developing overall measurement model

Stage 3 → Designing study to produce empirical results

Stage 4 → Assessing measurement model validity

Stage 5 → Specifying the structural model

Stage 6 → Assessing structural model validity
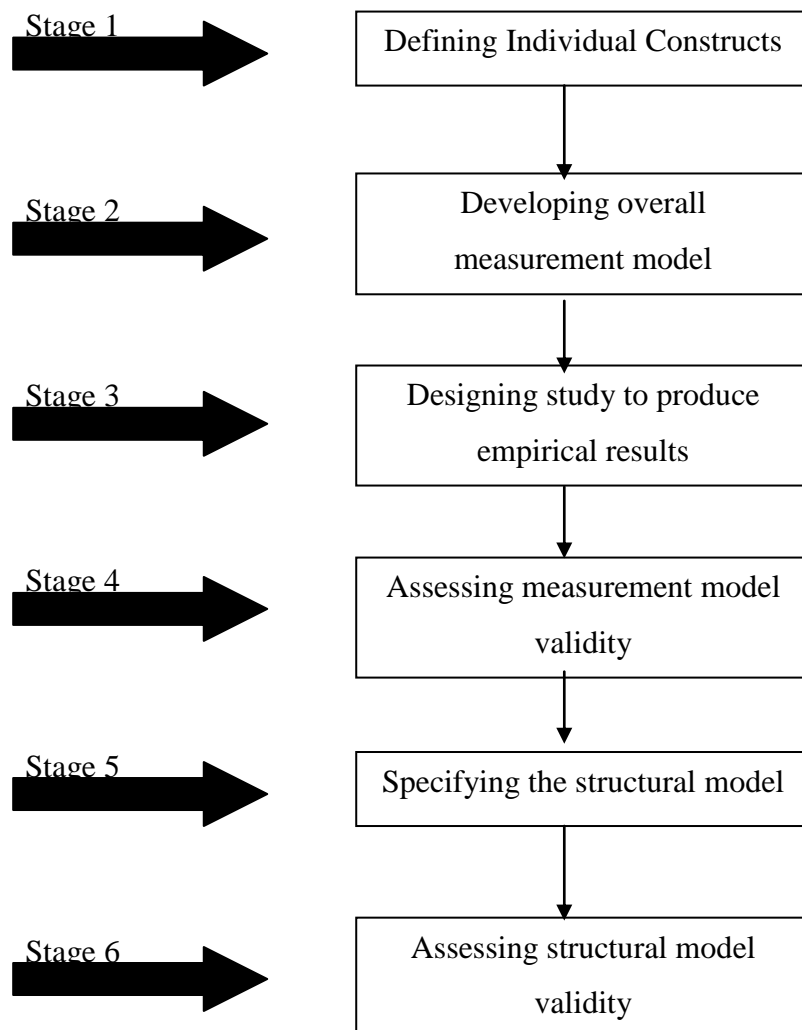
Figure 8.1: Stages in SEM

Stages one to three have already been described in previous chapters. For instance, stage one involves defining all individual constructs. This was done in Chapter 6 where the construction of the questionnaire was discussed and all scales operationalised in this study were derived

either from past studies or the qualitative component. These scales were pretested. As for

stage two, the latent constructs for this study were already specified in the theoretical model

presented in Chapter 3 and the relationships among them were also discussed. As a result, the

following 17 null hypotheses can be derived from the theoretical model (Table 8.1).

Relationship in Theoretical Model	Null Hypothesis
Service interactions with hotel employees → Destination image	H_1: There is no significant relationship between service interactions with hotel employees and destination image
Service interactions with hotel employees → Overall satisfaction	H_2: Service interactions with hotel employees are not significantly related to overall satisfaction
Service interactions with hotel employees → Place attachment	H_3: Service interactions with hotel employees are not significantly related to place attachment
Service interactions with hotel employees → Motives for choice	H_4: Service interactions with hotel employees have no significant influence on motives for choice
Personal involvement →Service interactions with hotel employees	H_5: Personal involvement has no significant influence on service interactions with hotel employees
Personal involvement → Destination image	H_6: Personal involvement is not significantly related to destination image
Personal involvement → Motives for Choice	H_7: Personal involvement has no significant influence on motives for choice
Personal involvement → Future behaviour	H_8: Personal involvement is not significantly related to future behaviour
Personal involvement → Overall satisfaction	H_9: Personal involvement is not significantly related to overall satisfaction
Personal involvement → Place attachment	H_{10}: Personal involvement has no significant influence on place attachment
Destination image → Overall satisfaction	H_{11}: Destination image has no significant influence on overall satisfaction
Destination image → Place attachment	H_{12}: Destination image has no significant influence on place attachment
Motives for Choice → Place attachment	H_{13}: Motives for choice is not significantly related to place attachment
Motives for Choice → Overall satisfaction	H_{14}: Motives for choice is not significantly related to overall satisfaction
Place attachment → Overall satisfaction	H_{15}: Place attachment is not significantly related to overall satisfaction
Place attachment → Future behaviour	H_{16}: Place attachment has no significant influence on future behaviour
Overall satisfaction → Future behaviour	H_{17}: Overall satisfaction is not significantly related to future behaviour

Table 8.1: Hypotheses derived from theoretical model

In terms of stage three of SEM, two important issues that need to be discussed include

missing data and sample size. The imputation method of missing observations with mean

scores was used (Kline, 2005), given that only 6 cases were incomplete for the various

constructs measured in the sample. As for sample size, various options exist within the SEM literature on the minimum requirement. For example, Thompson (2000) recommends that for stable Maximum Likelihood (ML) procedure, a sample size with a ratio of at least 10:1 or 15:1 to the number of observed variables. This minimum requirement was met given the sample size of 705 for 70 observed items. The next issue within stage three is to determine the estimation technique. ML is the most commonly used method (Kline, 2005; Hair *et al.*, 2005). It is based on the statistical principle that if the estimates are assumed to be population values, they are the ones that maximise the probability (likelihood) that the data (observed covariances) are drawn from this population (Kline, 2005). ML has proven to be a fairly robust technique with reference to violations of the normality assumption (Hair *et al.*, 2005).

8.3.1 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

Stage 4 involves assessing measurement validity through identification of construct validity for each latent variable. As a result, CFA was undertaken to identify, for example, whether the 25 items measuring the latent construct of destination image actually reflect the construct. The different scales used were assumed to possess content validity as they were derived from other studies and adapted to the scope of this research by means of qualitative techniques. The general rule of thumb for CFA is that standardised loading estimates should be 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher for scale reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2005) while Reisinger and Turner (2003) suggest a value of 0.4 is the minimum acceptable when the 'model development' approach is used. Also, image studies (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin *et al.*, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008) tend to use 0.4 as the cut-off point. Given the theoretical model also involves assessing relationships of other constructs with overall satisfaction, the satisfaction items for destination image, service interactions and motives for choice were used for CFA. In effect, the model is tested at least on one 'different' set of data in comparison to the data used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conforming to the more rigorous prescriptions made in the literature on the application of SEM .

Despite the *t* value associated with loadings for each of the image items being significant at the 1% level, only 15 of the 25 items had standardised loadings of 0.4 and above, as shown in Appendix D-Table 1. This can be problematic for model estimation when more than two indicators are deleted (Kline, 2005). However, it must be acknowledged that there is a multiplicity of elements forming destination image and that these elements influence and

interrelate with each other and can vary from respondent to respondent (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002), and so affect the construct validity. This explains why the measurement of the construct remains a challenge as suggested in the literature (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Ryan & Gu, 2007; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, it is not uncommon to see many image items not meeting the minimum requirements of explained variance in a latent construct. Of the 9 items of motives for choice, only one item 'Mauritius as a place to spend time alone' did not meet the minimum requirement, while all items of the service interactions scale had loadings of 0.45 and above (Appendix D-Table 1). CFA on the place attachment scale revealed only two items 'I feel no commitment to this place' and 'the things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy doing them at another '3S' destination' did not adequately contribute to define the construct. In terms of the personal involvement scale, 9 of the 15 items did not meet the minimum requirements and the results (Appendix D- Table 1) showed that mostly items depicting dimensions of 'interest', 'pleasure' and 'sign' were adequate in representing the construct. This is not uncommon given the literature (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Gross & Brown, 2008) reports that dimensions of this construct are problematic when applied to the destination context. Hence, of all scales used, the service interactions, motives for choice and place attachment scales had better construct validity.

The measurement model validity depends on goodness-of-fit for the measurement model and specific evidence of construct validity (Hair *et al.*, 2005).While the latter was achieved, goodness-of-fit indicates how well the specified model reproduces the covariance matrix among the indicator items. There are a number of measures to depict goodness-of-fit and each statistical software produce some or all of these measures. It is well accepted that there are three types of fit measurement: absolute fit measures, incremental fit measures and parsimonious fit measures (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Kline, 2005). Given that AMOS 6.0 is used in this case, the following goodness-of-fit statistics will be used to assess model validity:

Absolute fit measures – they assess the overall model fit, both structural and measurement together, with no adjustment for over fitting.

(1) χ^2 **statistic** – it provides a measurement of the resulting difference for a specified model. A large value of χ^2 indicates a poor fit of the model to the data. However this statistic is sensitive to sample size. Therefore, χ^2 / d.f. is recommended and a value of

less than four is considered acceptable (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and less than three is considered good fit (Kline, 2005).

(2) **Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)** – it is an indicator of the relative amount of variances and covariances jointly accounted for by the model. It shows how closely the proposed model comes to a perfect one. It takes values between 0 and 1, the closer to unity, the better the model fit. An acceptable level is 0.90 (Kline, 2005; Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

(3) **Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR)** – reflect the average amount of variances and covariance not accounted for by the model. The closer to zero, the better the fit. Values of less than 1.0 are generally considered favourable (Kline, 2005) while 0.08 is the desired level (Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

(4) **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)** – it is a measure of the discrepancy per degree of freedom, a value of less than 0.05 is recommended for good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999) while values between 0.5 and 0.8 suggest reasonable error of approximation (Kline, 2005)

Incremental fit measures – they compare the proposed model to a comparison model

(5) **Normed Fit Index (NFI)** - also called the Bentler-Bonett normed fit index, it assesses the incremental fit of the model compared to a null model. A value of higher than 0.90 indicates acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

(6) **Tucker-Lewis measure (TL)** – it measures the discrepancy between the model being evaluated and the null model. TL values close to one indicate a very good fit and. A minimum of 0.90 is acceptable (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Hair *et al.*, 2005).

Parsimonious fit measures – they adjust the measures of fit to compare models with different numbers of coefficients and determine the fit achieved by each coefficient.

(7) **Comparative fit index (CFI)** – it compares the existing model fit with a null model which assumes the latent variables in the model are uncorrelated. A value close to 1 indicates very good fit but 0.90 is acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2005).

(8) **Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI)** – it is an extension of GFI but adjusted by the ratio of the d.f. for the proposed model to the d.f. for the null model. A value close to one indicates good fit but 0.90 is acceptable (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Kline, 2005; Hair *et al.*, 2005).

8.3.2 THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Stage 5 in Figure 8.1 involves specifying the structural model by assigning relationships from one construct to another based on the proposed theoretical model and these relationships represent structural hypotheses of the researcher's model. These relationships and the corresponding hypotheses are shown in Table 8.1. Altogether, the structural model tests seventeen hypotheses.

8.3.3 THE STRUCTURAL MODEL VALIDITY

Stage 6 involves assessing the structural model validity. The goodness of fit statistics (χ^2=5228.57, d.f.=1159, χ^2/d.f.=4.511, GFI=0.726, RMR=0.151, RMSEA=0.071, NFI=0.681, TL=0.716, CFI=0.731, AGFI=0.698) showed that the initial model was unacceptable. As a result, modification indexes produced by AMOS were used to arrive at a more parsimonious model. An examination of the t-values (shown by c.r ratios in AMOS) for the initial model indicated that a number of paths could be deleted given that they were less than the critical value of 1.96 for the 0.05 significance level or 2.576 for the 0.01 significance level or they had negative beta coefficients. For example, the paths (destination image→ place attachment, personal involvement→ destination image, personal involvement→ future behaviour) were deleted as a result of the former while the path (personal involvement→ overall satisfaction) was deleted as a result of the latter.

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the resulting model based on modification indexes were as follows. The absolute fit measures (χ^2=1965.46, d.f.=916, χ^2/d.f.=2.146, GFI=0.894, RMR=0.097, RMSEA=0.04) showed an acceptable level of fit given that χ^2/d.f. statistic was less than the value of 3 recommended and RMR was less than 1 (Kline, 2005). As for GFI, the 'magic' 0.9 cut off (Hair *et al.*, 2005) was not achieved but other authors (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005) consider a value close to 0.9 as is the case for this model to be acceptable. The incremental fit measures (NFI=0.873, TL=0.914) and parsimonious fit measures (CFI=0.927, AGFI=0.870) were close to the minimum value of 0.9 indicating a model that has some validity. The fit of the structural model was also assessed by examining squared multiple correlation coefficients (SMC), which indicate how well the variables measure the latent construct, the largest amount of variance accounted for by the constructs, and the extent to which the individual indicators are free from measurement error. They also represent the convergent validity of these measures. These coefficients lie between 0 and 1, the closer to 1,

the better the variable acts as an indicator of the latent construct (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). For this model, the SMC were: motives for Choice (0.494), destination image (0.220), service interactions with hotel employees (0.065), place attachment (0.802), personal involvement (0.000) and future behaviour (0.363), which indicated low convergent validity for most of the latent constructs. This was not surprising given the earlier findings of CFA. The low convergent validity could be explained by the complexity of the constructs measured, the complexity of the theoretical model and the fact that some measurement items were borrowed from other fields of research, which might undermine their applicability to the tourism destination context.

This alternative model was determined to be the best fitting model based on the χ^2 difference test between the initial and competing models. This test assesses whether significant differences exist in estimated construct covariances between the two models by examining the null hypotheses of no significant difference (Hair *et al.*, 2005). The difference between χ^2 statistic values ($\Delta\chi^2$) for competing models was itself asymptotically distributed as χ^2, with degrees of freedom equal to the difference in degrees of freedom for the competing model (Δd.f.). The χ^2 difference test between the two models ($\Delta\chi^2$=3263.11, Δd.f.=243) suggested that the competing model was performing significantly better than the initial model. As another means of comparison, the goodness-of-fit statistics for the competing model were compared to those of the initial model with some major improvements in measures of absolute, incremental and parsimonious fit, thereby reinforcing the argument that the competing model was significantly better. Thus, the competing model was retained as a viable alternative.
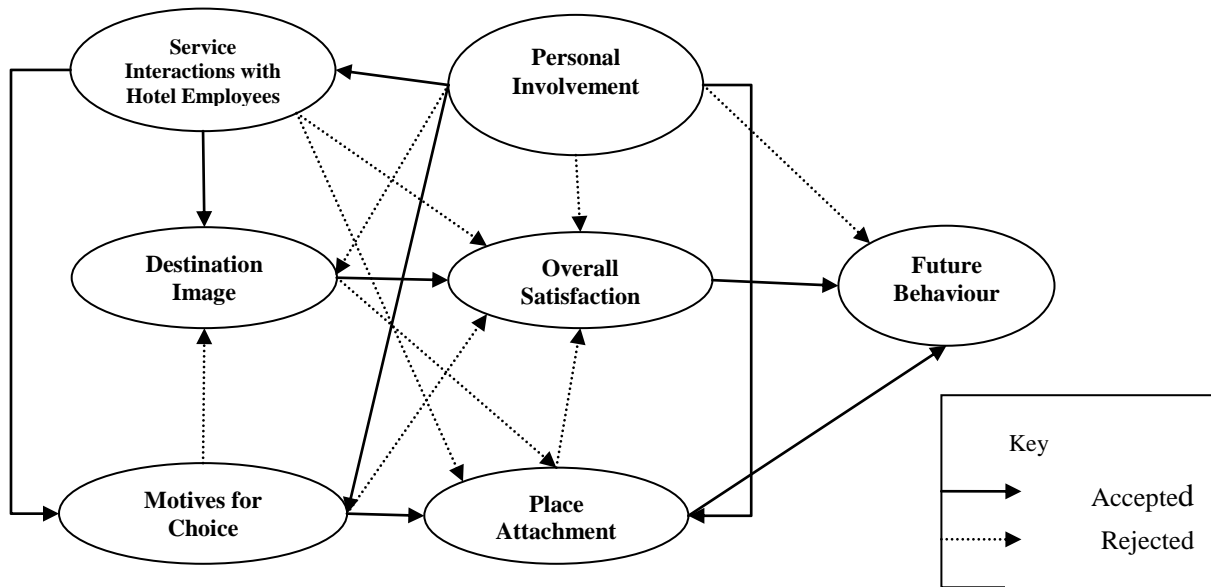
Figure 8.2: The structural model

Figure 8.2 shows that nine structural paths were confirmed and the standardised beta coefficients for these hypothesised relationships are shown in Table 8.2. For example, service interactions with hotel employees positively influenced destination image (β=0.0343, t=6.652, p<0.01). That is, the more positive are the perceptions of interactions with hotel employees by international visitors, the higher are their satisfaction levels with destination attributes. Likewise, motives for choice positively influenced place attachment (β=0.865, t=4.874, p<0.01) indicating that the stronger were motives for visitation, the more attached are visitors to the destination. Table 8.2 also shows that all t-values were significant at the less than 1% level, except for the path overall satisfaction→ future behaviour, which was significant at the 5% level. That all path coefficients were significant provide evidences of convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The strongest relationships are personal involvement → place attachment (β=0.757) and destination image → Overall satisfaction (β=0.652).

Paths			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Std.β
SI hotel employees	<---	Personal involvement	.289	.047	6.163	***	0.255
Destination image	<---	SI hotel employees	.196	.029	6.652	***	0.343
Motives for choice	<---	SI hotel employees	.188	.032	5.876	***	0.280
Motives for choice	<---	Personal involvement	.441	.049	9.064	***	0.578
Place attachment	<---	Personal involvement	.891	.059	14.979	***	0.757
Overall satisfaction	<---	Destination image	1.097	.127	8.637	***	0.652
Place attachment	<---	Motives for choice	.300	.062	4.874	***	0.195
Place attachment	<---	Future behaviour	.614	.069	8.864	***	0.525
Future Behaviour	<---	Overall satisfaction	.177	.063	2.826	0.005	0.141

Table 8.2: Significant paths in the structural model

The results also suggested a number of direct, indirect and total effects for the various constructs that helped in identifying significant paths. For example, personal involvement had both a direct and indirect effect on motives for choice (Table 8.3). Similarly all constructs had either a direct or indirect effect on future behaviour. A notable indirect effect is that of personal involvement on future behaviour.

Paths	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Personal involvement → SI hotel employees	0.255	-	0.255
SI hotel employees → Destination image	0.343	-	0.343
Personal involvement → Motives for choice	0.578	0.071	0.649
SI hotel employees → Motives for choice	0.280	-	0.280
Destination image → Overall satisfaction	0.652	-	0.652
Personal involvement → Place attachment	0.757	0.126	0.883
Motives for choice → Place attachment	0.195	-	0.195
Destination image → Future behaviour	-	0.092	0.092
Overall satisfaction → Future behaviour	0.141	-	0.141
Place attachment → Future behaviour	0.525	-	0.525
Personal involvement → Destination image	-	0.087	0.087
Personal involvement → Overall satisfaction	-	0.057	0.057
Personal involvement→ Future behaviour	-	0.472	0.472
SI hotel employees → Overall satisfaction	-	0.224	0.224
SI hotel employees → Place attachment	-	0.054	0.054
SI hotel employees → Future behaviour	-	0.060	0.060
Motives for choice → Future behaviour	-	0.102	0.102

Table 8.3: Direct, indirect and total effects of paths

To sum up the following three paths were evident from Figure 8.2 and Table 8.3:

(1) Personal involvement → Service interactions with hotel employees → Destination image → Overall satisfaction → Future behaviour,

(2) Personal involvement → Motives for choice → Place attachment → Future behaviour, and arguably

(3) Personal involvement → Service interactions with hotel employees → Motives for choice → Place attachment → Future behaviour

However, the last path was weaker in comparison to the other two paths given the lower total effect scores.

8.4 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Based on the results above and Figure 8.2, of the initial 17 null hypotheses, 9 were rejected due to insufficient evidence and the remainder accepted.

Null Hypotheses	Result
H_1: There is no significant relationship between service interactions with hotel employees and destination image	Rejected
H_2: Service interactions with hotel employees are not significantly related to overall satisfaction	Accepted
H_3: Service interactions with hotel employees are not significantly related to place attachment	Accepted
H_4: Service interactions with hotel employees have no significant influence on motives for choice	Rejected
H_5: Personal involvement has no significant influence on service interactions with hotel employees	Rejected
H_6: Personal involvement is not significantly related to destination image	Accepted
H_7: Personal involvement has no significant influence on motives for choice	Rejected
H_8: Personal involvement is not significantly related to future behaviour	Accepted
H_9: Personal involvement is not significantly related to overall satisfaction	Accepted
H_{10}: Personal involvement has no significant influence on place attachment	Rejected
H_{11}: Destination image has no significant influence on overall satisfaction	Rejected
H_{12}: Destination image has no significant influence on place attachment	Accepted
H_{13}: Motives for choice is not significantly related to place attachment	Rejected
H_{14}: Motives for choice is not significantly related to overall satisfaction	Accepted
H_{15}: Place attachment is not significantly related to overall satisfaction	Accepted
H_{16}: Place attachment has no significant influence on future behaviour	Rejected
H_{17}: Overall satisfaction is not significantly related to future behaviour	Rejected

Table 8.4: Results of hypotheses tested in structural model

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The implications of the rejected hypotheses (Table 8.4) are discussed in the next chapter while the ensuing discussion focuses on the implications of the identified relationships. In line with other studies that suggested competence (Czepiel *et al.*, 1985; Price *et al.*, 1995a,b), attentiveness (Mohr & Bitner, 1995), courtesy (Winsted, 1999), friendliness (Grandey *et al.*, 2005), and positive attitude (Gronroos, 1990) as essential characteristics of service providers that influence perceptions of customers, this study found that these items also influenced destination image, which in turn had a positive effect on overall satisfaction and future behaviour as evidenced by the structural path (Service interactions with hotel employees → Destination image → Overall satisfaction → Future behaviour) in Figure 8.2. As a result, hypothesis one was rejected.

Another antecedent to service interactions is the construct of personal involvement, which can be regarded as a motive (Dimanche *et al.*, 1991). This motive positively influenced interactions with hotel employees, which in turn influenced other motives (e.g. relaxation, escape, socialisation and learning), subsequently having a positive effect on place attachment and future behaviour. This structural path (Personal involvement → Service interactions with hotel employees → Motives for choice → Place attachment → Future behaviour) supports Stedman's (2000) research where he found that the intensity of social network involvement (number of others in the local setting considered as close friends) has a strong effect on attachment, but not necessarily satisfaction. These significant paths led to the rejection of hypotheses four, five, and seven. This implies that for international visitors to Mauritius, their perceived personal involvement levels with the destination are related to their motives for choice and interactions with the host (hotel employees). These can explain their levels of attachment to the place. They can identify with the destination through their meaningful interactions they have with the host (George & George, 2004).

Also, destination image exercises a direct influence on overall satisfaction and an indirect influence over future behaviour. This structural path (Destination image→ Overall satisfaction→ Future behaviour) reaffirms findings from other studies (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Petrick, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008) that destination image is an antecedent of satisfaction and future behaviour. As expected satisfaction with image had a direct effect on overall satisfaction (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Cai *et al.*, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007), which led to the rejection of hypothesis eleven. While, overall

satisfaction had a direct effect on future behaviour (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Kozak, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008) which led to the rejection of hypothesis seventeen. These results indicate that tourist satisfaction would improve if the destination has a positive image and the more favourable the image, the higher the likelihood of visitors recommending and revisiting the destination.

The results of SEM also indicated a positive relationship between motives for choice and place attachment. This led to the rejection of hypothesis thirteen. This finding corroborates with George and George's (2004) supposition that visitors' push factors may tend to form place identity with a destination after their visit. Especially, the motive for escape is reported as being an influential factor in the choice of a destination that is different from daily routine and if the experience matches or exceeds expectations, the visitor may develop place attachment (Hartig *et al.*, 1991). The structural path (Personal involvement→ Place attachment → Future behaviour) is not surprising given that other studies (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a; Hou *et al.*, 2005) have established personal involvement as an antecedent of place attachment. This leads to the rejection of hypothesis ten. However, these results do not support Moore and Graefe's (1994) findings that personal involvement is only related to place identity but rather support Alexandris *et al.*'s (2006) finding that place attachment is an antecedent of future behaviour and can be a predictor of loyalty. This evidence leads to the rejection of hypothesis sixteen.

Clearly, these results indicate some meaningful relationships between and among constructs such as destination image, service interactions, personal involvement, place attachment, satisfaction and future behavioural intentions. Nonetheless, a cautionary note must be added to the interpretations above given the low reliability and convergent validity of some of the indicators for these constructs. However, the results do indicate the complex nature of destination image, personal involvement and place attachment when applied to a tourism destination. The theoretical arguments following these findings and the practical implications of them are discussed in the next chapter.

8.5 CONCLUSION

The theoretical model that was developed in chapter two was tested using SEM. Based on the results of CFA, a modified list of indicators was used to represent the various constructs. This theoretical model did not perform adequately against the goodness-of-fit statistics suggested in the literature. As a result modification indexes suggested by AMOS were used to arrive at a more parsimonious model. This fits within the 'exploratory' approach to SEM. This revised model showed acceptable goodness-of-fit and was considered the 'best fit' based on a chi square difference test. Path analysis was then undertaken to identify direct, indirect and total effects of the various constructs. Subsequently, a number of hypotheses were tested, which resulted in the identification of some structural paths that are already established in the literature. For example, destination image→ overall satisfaction→ future behaviour while others that are new contributions to the existing literature (e.g. personal involvement→ motives for choice→ place attachment→ future behaviour) were also identified. Building on these findings, the next chapter brings together the 'mixing' component of this research, where the qualitative and quantitative findings are discussed in light of their theoretical and practical implications.

CHAPTER 9~ DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Building on the results of the two previous chapters and the qualitative research findings, this chapter discusses some of the main results and their theoretical and managerial implications. The chapter starts with a summary of the key findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases followed by a discussion of the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of these. Thereafter, the chapter progresses to review the research questions posed in chapter one and the corresponding findings. The chapter then discusses the limitations of this study and potential areas of further research in light of the findings. The chapter concludes with an overall view of the entire thesis and its achievements.

9.2 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS OF KEY FINDINGS

As part of the post-positivism perspective adopted in this study, the mixed methodology approach suggests that a critical component of this approach is the 'mixing' of results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Consequently, the key results of both the qualitative and quantitative phases are presented and discussed below. The theoretical and managerial implications of these are highlighted. The discussion starts with a review of the key findings pertaining to destination image and its influence on other constructs (Table 9.1).

9.2.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS FOR DESTINATION IMAGE

Table 9.1 shows that despite the prevalence of the sun, sand and sea images of Mauritus, the destination rates favourably on attributes such as friendly people, beautiful scenery and natural attractions and a good reputation as these had the highest mean satisfaction levels. Therefore, these attributes can be considered as strengths of the destination for marketing and positioning purposes. However, for positioning purposes the relative strengths of these attributes should be considered, that is, comparing the performance of these attributes with competing destinations. The latter cannot be assessed from the findings of the study but official tourism statistics (Survey of Outgoing Tourists, 2006) show that Mauritius rates better on attributes such as quality of the tourism product and hospitality in comparison to other Indian Ocean islands, thereby suggesting that some of these attributes such as service level and quality and variety of accommodation can be used for positioning purposes.

Research Issue: Destination image Qualitative Phase (103 visitors)	Quantitative Phase (705 visitors)
• Prevalence of images of sun, sand and sea • Image construct consist of cognitive, affective and holistic impressions. • Negative images are related to infrastructure, cleanliness and hygiene, hotel amenities, weather and local people. • Affective images seem to be closely related to motives for choice. • Affection seems to be related to place attachment and future behaviour. • Nationality has the strongest influence on image perceptions, but the relative influence of ethnicity and language spoken cannot be ignored.	• Differences in relative importance and performance scores exist with the IPA grid showing that most attributes either require a 'keep up the good work' or 'possible overkill/ repositioning' strategy. • Nationality, ethnicity and language spoken have some influence on both importance and performance scores but nationality by far has the strongest influence. • SEM showed a positive direct relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction. • Destination image influences future behaviour but this relationship is mediated by overall satisfaction. • Destination image is influenced directly by service interactions and indirectly by personal involvement.

Table 9.1: Summary of key findings related to destination image

(i) Negative Images of Mauritius

The lowest mean satisfaction scores were for attributes such as 'nightlife & entertainment', 'natural environment', 'local transport', 'shopping facilities' and 'signage'. These are similar to the qualitative findings and official tourism statistics thereby highlighting the weaknesses of the destination. These unfavourable ratings by visitors will require tourism authorities such as MTPA and Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communication to review destination development in terms of licensing of bars, night clubs, restaurants and other forms of entertainment. For example, themed bars and restaurants around the different cultures of Mauritius would be one alternative. Hosting of night markets as is common occurrence in East Asian countries (Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore) and India for example, would be another alternative to explore. This will be crucial if the destination wants to position itself as a leading shopping destination in the region as suggested by the Government in its tourism development plans.

Some other important practical planning and management implications also arise from these findings. There is an apparent need to pay increased attention to issues such as provision of

infrastructure, cleanliness and signage as these influence perceptions of the quality of the tourist destination as a whole. Another objective of the destination is to position further up-market by attracting those seeking luxury facilities and amenities, but this will require upgrading of infrastructure, improving cleanliness of beaches and public places, signing roads and places of interest for visitors. These are not easy tasks as these issues need to be addressed within a sustainable development paradigm. As suggested by one British visitor, "*I just hope that it does not get spoilt due to overdevelopment. They [the government] need to keep it natural.*" This may require greater control/regulation on behalf of the government as well as public participation in order to determine the types of tourism development that will maintain the appeal of Mauritius.

As revealed by the findings, environmental quality (beaches and scenery) and culture of the place are important drawcards for visitors, thereby, highlighting the need for conservation. Despite the existence of specific provisions and strategies to protect and preserve unique natural and cultural features of the environment, which are integrated into the existing tourism policy, the findings seem to suggest that these goals are far from being reached. It will require perhaps a change in mindset of planners, stakeholders and the general population with respect to the environment.

(ii) Cognitive Images of Mauritius

When comparing the results of importance and performance of Mauritius on cognitive images, as Garcia *et al.* (2004) suggested in the case of 'sun' and 'beach' destinations, it is not uncommon to find significant differences in the relative importance of criteria used to assess a destination's attractiveness. In this study, most image attributes were rated as important but highest mean scores were assigned to attributes such as 'friendly people', 'clean & unpolluted natural environment', 'safe and secure', 'value for money', 'beautiful scenery & natural attractions', 'weather & climate' and 'level of service'. This is not uncommon as some of these attributes have been reported as being the most influential in destination choice (Jenkins, 1999; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). Of relevance is that Mauritius performs generally well on attributes rated highly in importance expect for 'clean and unpolluted natural environment' and as the results of IPA suggest, there is room for improvement on most aspects.

Any branding initiative for the island should therefore capitalise on images of 'friendly people', 'safe & secure' place, and 'beautiful scenery & natural attractions'. However, from the qualitative findings it was clear that images of the destination in terms of its new products such as golf, wellness/health tourism, or cultural heritage did not feature prominently in visitors' motives for choice. These will need to be emphasised in promotion campaigns and the branding initiative to diversify the image away from the traditional '3S'. Yet, the destination has only recently embarked on marketing these products and therefore it can be expected that these 'new' image associations will take time to develop and be recalled by visitors. As suggested by Morgan and Pritchard (2001), a country's clichéd identity can be reshaped and given greater complexity through effective and consistent marketing.

(iii) Affective Images of Mauritius

With regards to affective images of Mauritius, the qualitative findings revealed that the place evoked feelings of escape, relaxation and happiness suggesting a potential relationship between motives and affect, and a latent dimension of place attachment. This relationship was confirmed structurally but no direct relationship was established between cognitive images, motives for choice and place attachment. Therefore, unlike other studies (e.g. Um & Crompton, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Dann, 1996c; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Lin *et al.*, 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008), no direct relationship between destination image and motives for choice could be established. An explanation for this is that previous studies have not considered the relative influence of personal involvement and service interactions on these constructs. It seems that both have a mediating effect as shown in the structural model. While the semantic affective scale of Russell *et al.* (1981) was not used to assess affective images, the findings of this study do indicate that affection felt toward tourist destinations is more complex and not limited to images only. In fact, affection needs to be understood within the context of motives guiding choice, personal involvement of visitors and place attachment levels. This is where this study makes a significant contribution by showing direct relationships between personal involvement and service interactions, motives for choice and place attachment, and personal involvement and place attachment.

The positive relationship between motives of choice and place attachment suggests that a destination has the potential of fulfilling certain needs and if these are fulfilled, it increases

the sense of belonging to the place. However, image has a role to play in this process as evidenced by place attachment being a significant predictor of overall image, which potentially suggests that affection to places goes beyond 'the affective image' scale used by many authors to establish such linkages. As such, these results indicate the complexity of visitors' emotional attachment to a place and the contributing role of image, motives, and place attachment. Hence, selling Mauritius on emotional appeals would require destination marketers to understand this complex relationship. For example, advertising messages depicting the need for relaxation and/or escape will be particularly effective in attracting visitors if they are associated with images of tranquil beaches, stress free lifestyle, laid-back atmosphere, while images of different sea and land based activities, cultural and historical sites, religious festivals and local people interacting with visitors will be particularly attractive to visitors seeking to fulfil needs for socialisation and learning but a priori marketers need to understand these visitors' personal involvement and attachment levels for these appeals to be effective. In short, these findings confirm traditional understandings of motives and images but extend them by identifying other antecedents and consequences of these relationships.

(iv) Conative Image Component

In this study, the conative component of destination image was evident in both the qualitative and quantitative findings. For example, one British visitor mentioned that "*...it is with anticipation mixed with joy that I look forward to visiting*", which suggest that the affective component is related to future intentions as suggested in the literature (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996c; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Konecnik, 2005; Ryan & Gu, 2007; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). The same conclusion can be inferred from the empirical findings given that SEM showed image as having an indirect effect over revisit intention. Therefore, enticing images of a destination enhance destination choice and revisit intentions. The findings also confirm the hierarchical nature of image components where the affective builds on the cognitive and the conative builds on both cognitive and affective components (Kim & Yoon, 2003; Boo & Busser, 2005; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Therefore, in line with other studies (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996c; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Tasci *et al.*, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008) and the qualitative findings, this study confirms a three-component structure for destination image.

(v) Destination Image & Future Behaviour

The results derived from SEM provide further empirical support for previous studies that established either a direct or indirect effect of destination image on visitors' future behavioural intentions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Hallab & Kim, 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008). In this study, destination image influences future behaviour mediated by overall satisfaction (Table 9.1). Therefore, for mature sun, sand and sea destinations like Mauritius, the success of destination marketing should be guided by a thorough understanding of visitors' behavioural intentions and its interplay with satisfaction and destination image.

Endeavours to build or improve destination image by either physical improvements to attributes such as road infrastructure and public transport or image manipulation through the emphasis of attributes such as 'friendly people' and 'scenic beauty' would facilitate visitors returning and recommending the place to others. Image manipulation can only be a short term solution while structural improvements need to be considered within a sustainable development paradigm given that the appeal of Mauritius also resides on the 'natural unspoilt' environment. Physical changes to the place would arguably change the destination experience. Therefore, how the destination should be perceived by future visitors as dictated by tourism policies and government stance will be critical for successful destination development and retention of current customers. This confirms traditional marketing that branding/image has to possess an inherent 'truth' if it is to achieve long-term success.

(vi) The Role of Nationality

Consistent with findings from other studies (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Joppe *et al.*, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Garcia *et al.*, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Prebensen, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008), this study establishes that the visitor's national culture plays a decisive role in image perceptions and formation. Cultural differences as indicated by nationality, ethnicity and language spoken had a significant influence on image perceptions (Table 9.1). These suggest the existence of complex images in relation to travel needs of various visitor groups. Understanding these would be vital to destination design, planning and promotion to attract different segments. Yet, sometimes attracting visitors of

different nationalities is not only dependent on developing images and new products attuned to their tastes, but also on marketing existing products better through a deeper understanding of motives as indicated in this quote from a French visitor "*...the tea route [in Mauritius as a tourist attraction] we did not know, did not know they grew tea ...only found out on this visit...but [we] did know about sugar [industry] but it was surprising as well to see that they made so much other stuff out of sugar. We went to L'Aventure du Sucre [tourist attraction showcasing products derived from sugar], was nice to learn more about the sugar industry here and its by-products.*"

Likewise, given the importance of nationality in shaping image perceptions, the study provides marketing implications for all five markets considered. Some attributes such as 'friendly people', 'beautiful scenery', 'cultural & historical attractions' and 'no language barriers' are considered important in destination choice irrespective of target markets. They can be considered as the 'core' image of the tourism offer for sun and sea destinations. For other attributes such as 'good value for money', 'clean & unpolluted environment' and 'feeling safe & secure', differences in importance exist across markets. Patterns of ratings indicated two sub-groups in the sample, German and French visitors as one group and South African, British and Indian visitors as the other. Similarity of importance ratings by the second group can possibly be explained by India and South Africa being colonised by the British and therefore, some similarity in cultural values would seem persistent while dissimilarity in cultural values would probably explain differences between groups.

Likewise, nationality seems to have an influence over satisfaction ratings of image attributes. These differences in ratings could be useful for international tourism promotion given that they provide very accurate criteria for targeting and positioning (Reisinger & Turner, 2002a,b). Specifically, brochures, posters, billboards, TV commercials and other communication materials can be designed to reflect images most identified with by these target markets. For example, Germans were mostly satisfied with 'value for money', 'beaches & watersports', 'level of service' and 'reputation' while expressing concerns about 'cleanliness & pollution', 'nightlife & entertainment', 'local transport' and 'signage'. These were the concerns of South Africans as well in addition to 'shopping facilities' and 'variety of bars and restaurants'. However, this market expressed high levels of satisfaction with other

attributes such as 'holiday place for the family' and 'accessibility'. Positioning the place as a 'family-oriented' destination would seem to be an effective option for this market.

The Indian market had the highest number of attributes rated less favourably, suggesting that the tourism product may not necessarily be attuned to their needs and therefore product development should ensure, for example, that 'local cuisine', 'shopping facilities', 'value for money' and 'level of service' are aligned with expectations as these attributes were also rated highly in importance for destination choice. The French market differentiates itself by rating favourably attributes related to interactive component of the holiday such as 'language & communication skills of hotel employees', 'ease of communication' as well as 'holiday place for the family' and 'exoticness'. Clearly similarity of language between host and guest contributes to a better experience for these visitors. The British market showed similar high satisfaction levels for 'level of service', 'holiday place for the family' and 'local cuisine'.

The fact that all markets expressed concerns with environmental and infrastructural facets of the destination support the earlier arguments of image manipulation in the short term based on images rated most favourably and a more systemic approach to tourism planning and development in the long term.

(vii) The Role of Ethnicity

Similar to the qualitative findings, significant differences were found on importance and performance scores for destination image attributes such as 'safety and security', 'friendliness of people' and 'value for money' based on visitors' ethnicity. This would indicate ethnicity as a segmentation variable for Mauritius, but it is of lesser importance in comparison to nationality. This possibly occurs due to countries such as UK, South Africa and France being culturally diverse and multi-ethnic. Therefore, interactions between different ethnic groups are prevalent creating a form of commonality of perceptions, which results in this personal characteristic having a lesser influence on image perceptions. Despite such findings, the fact that significant differences exist will perhaps require further research on this issue in other countries. This study can only confirm that ethnicity has an influence over image perceptions but its influence is secondary to nationality.

(viii) The Role of Language Spoken

However, this study establishes that fluency in languages spoken has an influence over image perceptions. Languages spoken and fluency levels seem to affect ratings of attributes that involve an interactive component such as 'friendliness of people', 'level of service', 'quality of accommodation' and 'variety of bars and restaurants'. Therefore, it can be useful as an additional segmentation variable besides nationality to improve tourism stakeholders' understanding of image perceptions and dynamics of the host-guest relationship. Different markets seem to require different levels of interactions with the host and these interactions influence image perceptions as confirmed by the results of SEM. Hence, training of front-line staff in understanding these differences and communicating in the appropriate languages with visitors can enhance image perceptions and this would positively feed into the overall destination experience.

9.2.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS FOR DESTINATION CHOICE & SERVICE INTERACTIONS

Table 9.2 summarises some of the key findings pertaining to motives for choice and service interactions and their relationships with other factors.

(i) Motives for Choice & Destination Image

Table 9.2 shows that the relationship between destination image and motives for choice identified in the qualitative findings does not replicate itself in the structural model. No significant paths between the two variables were identified. This can be explained in relation to the influence of cognitive and affective images on motives for choice. Previous studies (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004) have found only a weak relationship, while Dann (1996) and Gartner (1993) suggested that psychological motives are more related to affective images than cognitive ones, thereby explaining the findings in this study.

Nonetheless, some qualitative evidence to this relationship between affective images and motives can be found in the findings as shown by the following quote from a South African visitor, "*...it's fairly under developed but it is not a complete jungle as well [need for escape]... the people are nice. I made some good friends here, met some good people [need for socialisation] ...I liked the hotel, the people are very good, the exchange rate [cognitive image]... the place is wonderful ...I must say I was wowed by Mauritius [affective image].*"

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Hence, a mixed method approach arguably provides different insight into such a relationship. The qualitative component may be eliciting more holistic responses as above, where cognitive and affective components are 'blended', whereas the quantitative questioning structures them as separate components. Therefore, the results may just be reflecting different modes of questioning. The relationship between place attachment, motives for choice and personal involvement is discussed later on in the chapter.

Research Issues	Qualitative Phase (103 visitors)	Quantitative Phase (705 visitors)
Motives for Choice	• '3S' appeal of the place related to fulfilment of the need for relaxation and escape. • Familiarity of the place based on previous visits and the hospitality of locals which show fulfilment of the need for socialisation. • Romantic appeal of the place which shows the need for emotional fulfilment.	• Direct relationship between service interactions and motives for choice. • Direct relationship between motives for choice and place attachment.
Service Interactions	• Personal involvement seems to have an influence on visitors' perceptions of interactions with hotel employees. • Nationality, ethnicity and language spoken have some influence over perceived interactions but nationality seems to have the strongest influence.	• Service interactions have a direct influence on destination image. The more positive are perceptions of interactions with hotel employees by visitors, the more positive are the images of the place. • Service interactions have no relationship with place attachment.

Table 9.2: Summary of key findings related to motives for choice and service interactions

(ii) Service Interactions, Motives for Choice & Destination Image

The existence of a structural path between service interactions and destination image provides further evidence of a link between affection and images. The service interactions construct is indicative of the affective component of the service encounter, the more positive it is, the better are destination image perceptions. Therefore, hoteliers have to ensure that such interactions are memorable as they influence images, which in turn influences satisfaction and future behaviour. Hoteliers should actively invest in career and developing emotional skills of their staff as these have the potential of creating positive images, influence visitors' motives, generate revisitation and positive word of mouth. MTPA (the national tourism organisation)

should have a co-ordinator and guidance role in establishing the level of service quality to be delivered by hotels given that currently rating stars are self assigned. However, government policy of positioning the destination further upmarket provides an indication of expectations from hoteliers in terms of service delivery and this can subsequently inform the type of training programs developed by hoteliers for their employees.

Another managerial implication of these findings is that for destinations with 'sun' and 'sand' appeal, it is essential for hoteliers and tourism authorities to understand the extent to which visitors' motives such as 'relaxation', 'socialisation' and 'learning' are fulfiled by hotel employees behaviour. Such understanding provides some guideline as to what level of interaction guests expect and can be used for emotional appeals in marketing campaigns. For example, Indian visitors have the highest importance ratings for motives of rest and relaxation but lowest for socialisation. They also value highly hotel employees' 'courtesy', 'attentiveness to needs' and 'professional service' but in comparison to the other four markets, they assign lower importance to 'employees sharing information about their culture'. In such circumstances, hotel employees should perform their job within the boundaries of the service script without additional efforts to socialise with guests. For the Indian market, images of a peaceful place, lush green environment, empty beaches and service oriented hotel employees would be more effective than emotional appeals based on 'too friendly' hosts and busy street markets. Separate brochures for each market, selective advertising and training of travel intermediaries in recognising these differences would enhance visitors' pre-trip experiences and better shape expectations.

From a theoretical perspective, the eight items used to measure the service interactions construct are adequate to represent it, at least in the case of Mauritius. This explains the existence of so many multi-attribute models in the literature and confirms that perceived interactions are time, place and situation dependent. Therefore, generalisability of dimensions to other destinations and target markets is difficult.

(iii) Service Interactions & Overall Satisfaction

However, unlike other studies (e.g. Mohr & Bitner, 1995; Reisinger & Turner, 1997) there is no direct relationship between perceived service interactions and overall satisfaction in this study. A possible explanation for this occurrence is that repeat visitors consist 53% of the

sample. Therefore, this group is familiar with the level of interactions and have expectations from hotel employees that are attuned with service delivery. Consequently, their satisfaction level is not so much dependent on hotel employees' interactions but more on destination image perceptions. Alternatively, as indicated by the qualitative findings, repeat visitors may interact less with hotel employees and more with local people outside of the hotel. These two plausible explanations are evident from these two quotes below. As mentioned by one French visitor "*...we stay at the same hotel over the years [familiarity], we don't have any bad experiences there, we like the employees a lot [affection]. We go there because we know what kind of service we will receive and they know us also [expectations]*". Another French visitor said that the motives for choice was "*...I was here before for holidays so I know the destination [familiarity]... the knowledge I have about the destination, I have learnt a lot about the place [need for learning] from previous trips here... I don't like staying much at the hotel [limited interactions with staff], I tend to go out a lot, there is so much more to discover about this place. This time we went to a part of the island that we did not go last time, Le Morne Brabant. It was a geographical discovery for us [need for learning and discovery].*"

A third alternative explanation can be found in Grandey *et al.*'s (2005) argument that consumers' perceived authenticity and friendliness of service providers only influence overall satisfaction when associated tasks with the encounter were performed very well. That is, only critical incidents are remembered by consumers and have an impact on encounter evaluation (Bitner *et al.*, 1990). The more routine interactions in the encounter do not influence satisfaction levels while extreme behaviour determine overall evaluation and future behaviour. This would also explain why unlike studies of Juwaheer and Ross (2003) and Juwaheer (2006), which showed that visitors' communication with staff were a significant problem for Mauritius, this study showed that visitors rated interactions with staff favourably. Communication and language skills of hotel employees were perceived as adequate, neither standing out nor being particularly poor.

(iv) Service Interactions & Personal Involvement

Dimanche and Havitz's (1995) proposition of the existence of a positive relationship between personal involvement and service quality was confirmed as far as interactive dimensions are concerned. As indicated by a latent theme in the qualitative findings and a significant path in the structural model personal involvement has a direct influence on perceptions of service

interactions. This indicates the social nature of involvement in a tourism context (Kyle & Chick, 2002). Therefore, service providers must understand visitors' involvement a priori to invest in improving service interactions. As indicated by the qualitative findings, some visitors consciously choose limited interactions with hotel staff while others interact to fulfil needs for socialisation. Hence, it would be desirable to understand these differences in order to improve service delivery and the overall experience of the visitor.

Personal involvement is also an unobservable motivating factor (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003). Hence, visitors may choose destinations and hotels in similar way, that is, those having personal relevance to them. By extension, visitors may choose hotels on the basis of either past experience with hotel employees or expectations about service delivery thereby indicating their motives for choice. This would explain the positive and direct relationship between personal involvement and service interactions as well.

(v) Service Interactions & Place Attachment

The structural model indicated no significant relationship between service interactions and place attachment. This is not surprising given that Price *et al.* (1995a,b) suggested that consumers can have little or no emotional response to service encounters that are brief in nature despite reporting satisfied experiences. Due to limited interactions with hotel employees, first-time visitors may not be able to develop a sense of beloging to a particular hotel or destination, while repeat visitors may only develop attachment to the destination. This does not mean that interactions are devoid of emotions as suggested by this quote from a French visitor, *"…it's [experience of interactions with hotel employees] perfect, nothing must be changed but may be the government should do more for the people. They are not rich and earn low wages"*, which suggest that visitors are not passive role players in the guest-host relationship. Some are keen to know about the employees' lifestyle (an indication of their concern for them). However, developing strong emotional bonds would require high intensity in interactions, that is, the visitor will have to stay at the same hotel and interact more with the same people on other visits, which may be the case with repeat visitors. There is evidence of such relationships in the qualitative findings but this did not replicate in the quantitative sample.

(vii) Service Interactions, Nationality, Ethnicity & Language Spoken

Nationality seems to have an influence over perceptions of service interactions as indicated in both qualitative and quantitative findings. More differences existed across nationality groups on importance scores rather than performance scores. Therefore, unlike other studies (e.g. Mattila, 1999; Mattila & Enz, 2002) service values are not always important across nationalities. Differences were also identified on importance scores based on ethnicity and fluency of languages spoken by visitors. However, nationality seems to have the strongest influence as suggested by others (Mattila, 1999; Furrer *et al.*, 2000; Manzur & Jogaratnam, 2006). Therefore, segmentation of markets on the basis of nationality would enable service providers to understand the dimensions considered important by different markets. For example, South African and Indian markets consider professionalism of hotel employees of more importance in comparison to other markets. An understanding of this difference should enable hotels to advertise and promote more effectively. Positioning of hotels also can be based on features of personalised service that are most attractive to a particular market. Such personalised service helps individual hotels to maintain their individuality and competitiveness (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000).

The above findings also have implications for training and development of front-line staff as discussed before. The literature suggests that a degree of cultural awareness is necessary as part of training programs so that front-line staff can customise service delivery (Tsang & Ap, 2007). For example, mimetic responses to visitors' emotional cues might be particularly effective (Mattila & Enz, 2002) or hiring employees whose cultural values fit well with both organisational values and values of foreign markets targeted (Riddle, 1992). However, as suggested by Grandey *et al.* (2005), service providers' efforts to manufacture desired emotions often result in the unintended effect on front-line staff behaving unauthentically. Alternatively, rather than putting the onus on the hotel employee to create an authentic display, management would benefit from inspiring authentic positive emotions in them through positive leadership or increased autonomy. In larger hotels, employees are now encouraged to monitor and adapt to different customers under different circumstances rather than follow a 'tight' script (Butcher, 2005).

The qualitative findings showed that guests' satisfaction with their interactions with hotel staff were also dependent on staffs' attitude towards children. Therefore, being well informed

about how to adapt to children requirements can increase the potential for a positive impact on repeat visitation and recommendation. In particular, the authenticity of emotional display, integrity and respect, mutual understanding and safety as service values that front-line staff display in their interactions with guests may be stronger drivers of service outcomes than policies that require front-line staff to smile at any cost but do not provide them with the tools to create and display seemingly real emotions when they interact with visitors.

9.2.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS FOR PLACE ATTACHMENT

Table 9.3 provides a summary of findings related to the construct of place attachment and its relationship with other constructs. While some of these relationships have already been discussed earlier in the chapter, this section focuses on findings from the quantitative phase and their implications.

Research Issues	Qualitative Phase (103 visitors)	Quantitative Phase (705 visitors)
Place attachment	• A latent dimension related to affective image of the destination. • Attachment seems to be more prevalent among repeat visitors • Attachment seems to be related to specific aspects of the holiday	• Two dimensions of place attachment (place identity and place dependence) were identified albeit slightly different loadings in comparison to the original scale. • Five different clusters of place attachment levels were identified. Demographics and travelling characteristics of visitors influenced cluster formation. • Nationality and language spoken had a marginal influence on place attachment while ethnicity had no influence. • No significant relationship between place attachment and destination image. • Motives for choice have a direct influence on place attachment. • Place attachment has a direct effect on future behaviour. The more visitors' believed the destination was aligned with their self-concept, the higher their likelihood of revisiting and recommending the destination to others.

Table 9.3: Summary of key findings related to place attachment

(i) Place Attachment as a Construct

Similar to other studies (e.g. Moore & Graefe, 1994; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b; Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant, 2004; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Hwang *et*

al., 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008) two dimensions of place attachment were found. As suggested in Table 9.3, these dimensions had slightly different item loadings compared to Williams and Vaske's (2003) 12-items scale but the essence of these dimensions was replicated. It has been suggested that in some instances respondents might not be able to distinguish between both dimensions leading to items on one dimension loading onto another (Moore & Scott, 2003; Pretty *et al.*, 2003; Hernandez *et al.*, 2008). However, place identity was the strongest construct in defining place attachment as shown by CFA, suggesting that visitors are more able to develop a symbolic bond (emotional attachment) with the destination than functional attachment (place dependence). Given that place dependence is strongly related to the perception that a setting possesses unique qualities (Williams *et al.*, 1992), the findings would suggest that tourism authorities in Mauritius need to reinforce the positioning of the destination using its unique attributes as these are not currently clearly differentiating the place from other competing destinations. Regression models for global evaluations such as overall image, overall satisfaction and overall loyalty also indicated place identity as a better predictor of these variables. This occurrence can be explained by the fact that a majority of visitors in the sample were repeat visitors and therefore they are less likely to be influenced by the physical attributes of the setting itself but more by the symbolic relevance of the place to their self concept.

The quantitative findings also indicated that varying levels of attachment existed among visitors, as shown in Table 9.3. Therefore, place attachment can be used as a variable for segmentation purposes. For example, the cluster of 'high attachment' can be converted into opinion leaders for the destination as they feel the place is aligned with their self concept and they are dependent on it. Thus, they have the most positive bonds with the destination. This is useful for generating word-of-mouth for the place. However, some visitors had either neutral or low attachment. This is not uncommon given that in the leisure and recreation fields this occurrence has been noted and explained with reference to recreationists having a multitude of choices and one site in comparison to another does not engender any special relationship (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000), especially when the interaction between place and people is of short duration. The same argument can be formulated for tourist destinations such as Mauritius.

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The demographics of the various clusters indicated that German, South African and British visitors should be the opinion leaders as they form the majority of the 'high attachment' cluster. The clusters of 'neutral attachment' and 'low attachment' are predominantly French and Indian visitors. Altering the experiences of the latter two markets would be desirable to improve their emotional attachment to the place. This can be done by linking the desired motivation with the types of product/activities sold. There is also a need to increase the length of stay of visitors as those staying fewer days seem to have lower levels of attachment. This can be done by up-selling and cross-selling activities and attractions to maintain the interest of visitors but this would require clusters of attractions to be created and tailor made packages to be sold. 'Extra nights free' promotion for example, can also achieve the goal of lengthening visitors stay. Also, younger visitors were less attached to the place and this may require hotels to review the type of activities available for younger tourists and the destination to review its 'mix' of attractions. Nightlife and entertainment was rated less favourably in the sample and this may explain why younger tourists feel less attached and perhaps is an area of improvement for the destination.

(ii) Place Attachment & Destination Image

SEM showed no significant relationship between destination image and place attachment, while the literature (Lee & Allen, 1999; Lee, 2001; Hou *et al.*, 2005) points to a positive relationship. Prentice *et al.*'s (1998) argued in the context of a cultural destination that first time visitors tended to enjoy a fundamentally cognitive experience, whereas only more expert visitors were able to fully grasp the deeper and more meaningful symbolisms of the destination, and therefore destination attributes play a significant role in determining place attachment. This was not replicated in this study despite the sample comprising of more repeat visitors. A plausible explanation would be that island destinations are substitutable products especially in terms of their '3S' offer and therefore visitors feel less attachment to the physical attributes and more to the social relationships within that place as indicated in the qualitative findings and supported by the structural paths between service interactions and destination image and between motives for choice and place attachment.

However, it must be mentioned that both place dependence and place identity were significant predictors of the overall image of Mauritius. This somewhat contradictory finding may suggests that the antecedents of place attachment may not be stable across different settings

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thereby highlighting the complexity of the construct. The qualitative findings suggested a potential relationship between affective images and attachment and this would be given some credence by the quantitative findings in light of the relationship between overall image and place attachment. Nonetheless, these findings seem to suggest that the same operationalisation issues associated with destination image are also prevalent with place attachment. This leads to the conclusion that place attachment is unique to the type of destination and specific to the type of visitor the place attracts and therefore it may be impossible to identify a clear relationship between image and attachment that is generalisable.

(ii) Motives for Choice & Place Attachment

The structural path between motives for choice and place attachment confirms that social relationships are embedded within place attachment (Prentice *et al.*, 1998; George & George, 2004; Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant, 2004; Beerli *et al.*, 2007) and that visitors desire to satiate certain needs through interaction with the setting in such a way that it enhances their self-concept. Motives such as need for learning and socialisation for repeat visitors contribute to determine place attachment levels and a history of repeat visitation due to place dependence may lead to place identity (Moore & Graefe, 2004). This relationship has also been proven in the case of a cultural attraction in Taiwan where attractiveness of the place was based on needs for learning, awareness and understanding of other cultures (Hou *et al.*, 2005). In contrast, visitors can develop attachment to a particular hotel due to repeat visits but not necessarily towards hotel employees given that there was no significant direct path between service interactions and place attachment. The temporary nature of interactions between the two parties and varying levels of involvement of visitors can be used to explain this occurrence. However, there is anecdotal evidence from the qualitative findings that some visitors make friends with hotel employees and thereby develop attachment to specific people and a given hotel.

For Mauritius as a tourist destination, these findings imply that push factors are critical to understanding how place attachment develops among visitors. Visitors must be able to understand which needs would be fulfilled from the destination's marketing and promotion campaigns. This can improve the possibility of destination choice and influence visitors' post-trip place attachment levels. Hence, factors directly influencing place attachment for Mauritius seem to be motives for choice and personal involvement and indirectly service

interactions. The indirect influence of the latter can be explained by Kyle *et al.*'s (2005) argument that meanings individuals associate with settings can extend beyond the importance of physical characteristics and in some contexts, social bonds are the primary source of meaning. In these instances, the importance of the setting is tied to memories of experiences shared with significant others, which include interactions with service employees.

(iii) Place Attachment, Overall Satisfaction & Future Behaviour

Contrary to the literature (George & George, 2004; Hwang *et al.*, 2005) no significant relationship was found between place attachment and overall satisfaction in the structural model. This was expected given that satisfaction is related particularly to place dependence, that is, an area's physical characteristics (Williams & Vaske, 2003) and therefore the model did not support such a relationship due to lower reliability of the items representing this dimension. Nevertheless, multiple regression confirmed the relevance of place attachment in predicting overall satisfaction. Both place identity and place dependence contributed to explained variance in overall satisfaction albeit marginally. These findings suggest that for a destination to achieve a high satisfaction level among visitors, they must ensure that visitors feel functionally and emotionally attached. At the same time, the study results suggest that for those visitors who consider the destination to occupy an important place in their life, it is likely that an emotional bond with the destination will develop and this will influence their future behaviour. This was evidenced by the structural path between personal involvement, place attachment and future behaviour, as suggested in the literature (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a). Thus, predicting future behaviour of visitors is also related to understanding their involvement and attachment levels. The more they are involved and attached, the greater the likelihood for them to recommend and revisit the destination. This sheds some additional light on the factors that influence repeat visitation.

9.2.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT
Table 9.4 provides a summary of the qualitative and quantitative findings related to the construct of personal involvement. While, the qualitative findings indicated personal involvement as a latent dimension, the structural model showed that the items representing the construct are inadequate in explaining variance. Nonetheless, some meaningful relationships were identified with other constructs.

(i) Personal Involvement as a Construct

As hypothesised in the literature, five dimensions of personal involvement were identified (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Kyle *et al.*, 2004a). However, other studies have reported different factorial structure ranging from four (Dimanche *et al.*, 1991; Jamrozy *et al.*, 1996; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Hwang *et al.*, 2005) to three (Kim *et al.*, 1997; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003) with merging of dimensions such as risk probability and risk consequence and importance and pleasure. The place indifference dimension identified was similar to other studies (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle *et al.*, 2003). From these findings, it is clear that personal involvement remains a complex construct in a destination context.

The poor performance of many items in the confirmatory factor analysis stage indicates that the multi-dimensionality of the construct was not captured in the scale developed. Attraction (importance & pleasure) was indentified as the strongest and most reliable dimension as is often the case in leisure contexts (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997, 1999). This perhaps indicates that Zaichkowsky's (1985) uni-dimensional scale or McIntyre's (1992) scale might be more appropriate in a tourist destination context. Items measuring risks perceptions were plagued with reliability issues as suggested in other studies (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997). The inconsistent results in different settings as suggested in the literature (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003) reinforce the conclusion that the construct is sensitive to measurement issues as well as variation in settings. Therefore, there is perhaps a need to start afresh with the conceptualisation of the construct for tourist destinations. The current dimensions seem to be unable to capture the construct holistically and therefore relationships with other constructs such as place attachment and motives for choice still remains an area to be explored further.

Research Issues	Qualitative Phase (103 visitors)	Quantitative Phase (705 visitors)
Personal involvement	• Low involvement visitors' spend more time with family and interact less with others. • High involvement visitors interact more with locals • There seems to be a relationship between personal involvement and motives for choice.	• Five dimensions of personal involvement identified (importance & pleasure, sign, risk probability, risk consequence, & indifferent) but the loadings were not similar to the original scale. • Four clusters of visitors with different personal involvement levels were identified. • Nationality, ethnicity and language spoken had some influence on personal involvement levels. • Personal involvement has a direct influence on place attachment • Personal involvement has a direct influence on motives for choice • Personal involvment has no direct influence on destination image, overall satisfaction and future behaviour.

Table 9.4: Summary of key findings related to personal involvement

The findings of cluster analysis suggested that different levels of personal involvement exist in the sample and visitors exhibiting the highest levels of involvement tend to be older, better educated, married with high income level and of British and French nationalities. Thus, these visitors are likely to be opinion leaders for the destination as suggested by Jamrozy *et al.* (1996). Highly involved tourists would likely be more receptive to information concerning the destination and spread positive word-of-mouth. Hence, destination marketers should direct communication efforts to this segment and especially for new product diffusion such as wellness and spa products, golfing, and eco-tourism as this segment seems to have the appropriate demographic profile for such activities. However, messages should focus on the importance and pleasure domains rather than on self-expressive and no-risk dimensions given that the former was the most reliable dimensions.

(ii) Personal Involvement & Place Attachment

In line with the literature (Kyle *et al.*, 2004b; Hou *et al.*, 2005; Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008), this study confirms a positive relationship between personal involvement and place attachment. That is, as visitors get more personally involved in the destination experience, it seems they become more attached to the place. While Gross & Brown (2008)

found no relationship between attraction dimension of involvement and place identity, this study supports this relationship. This suggests that as visitors give more importance and derive more pleasure from the place experience, they perceive the place as being more attuned to their self-concept. Therefore, maintaining high levels of involvement by visitors to a destination constitute an asset in terms of developing attachment and destination marketers should seek to achieve this goal by ensuring that product and service provision are aligned with visitors' expectations. Maintaining interest in the place by showcasing different activities and attractions within the hotel compounds and outside of it would enable high levels of association with the place.

(iii) Personal Involvement & Motives for Choice

The positive relationship between personal involvement and motives for choice has been discussed previously but of further interest is that as involvement levels increase, so does fulfilment of needs such as socialisation, learning, relaxation and escape. This is indicative of visitors' involvement in interacting with others to learn about the destination, its people and the latter is indicative of visitors' involvement in activities that are relaxing and doing things that are different from home. These relationships exist in the literature (Josiam *et al.*, 1999; Josiam *et al.*, 2005) but were established using Zaichkowsky's scale. Hence, this study contributes to show that Laurent and Kapferer's scale has some validity in establishing similar relationships. Therefore, the involvement construct can be utilised to capture the psychological state of the visitor and such information can enable destination marketers to better segment markets.

(iv) Personal Involvement & Destination Image

However, this study does not establish any significant direct relationship between personal involvement and destination image as suggested in the literature (Hou *et al.*, 2005). While these authors established causality between the two constructs using the enduring involvement construct in the context of cultural tourism, this study provides no indication of such a relationship in a more general holiday context. This could be due to highly involved '3S' tourists not perceiving the physical environment as conferring more personal relevance to their holiday experience. This personal relevance seems to come more from social relationships as indicated by the direct positive relationship of the construct with service

interactions and motives for choice. Nonetheless, personal involvement had an indirect relationship with destination image mediated by the aforementioned two constructs. Also personal involvement dimensions such as importance and pleasure contributed significantly to explained variance in overall image. Therefore, some evidence exists on positive image perceptions being dependent on involvement levels, motives for choice and the interactive dimension of service. Hence, differentiating the experience of a destination from competitors is not simply a matter of re-imaging or changing positioning, it also involves understanding consumer behaviour with respect to the relevance of the destination to the individual and the motives guiding their choices. Only through such understanding can a destination build its competitive advantage.

(v) Personal Involvement & Overall Satisfaction

Also, no significant direct relationship between personal involvement and satisfaction was found, unlike the study of Hwang *et al.* (2005). However, this study provides support for Lankford *et al.*'s (1996) proposition that no conclusive evidence exists on this relationship. Intuitively, if a destination has more personal relevance to an individual, would not suggest that they will derive more satisfaction from the holiday experience. There are other factors such as destination experience which intervenes in this relationship. In this study satisfaction with image components, perceptions of service interactions and motives for choice mediate this relationship as indicated by indirect paths between these constructs and overall satisfaction.

(vi) Personal Involvement & Future Behaviour

Likewise, no significant relationship was found between personal involvement and future behaviour. While studies of Sparks (2007) and Kim *et al.* (1997) established such a direct influence, albeit negative in the latter case, this study confirms only an indirect relationship mediated by other variables such as service interactions, destination image, overall satisfaction and place attachment. This indirect influence is not uncommon (Kyle *et al.*, 2004a,b) given that the personal relevance of the destination in the choice process and the experience on site are likely to influence whether one recommends and returns to the same destination. Therefore, perceptions of Mauritius as an appealing destination by visitors are dependent on showcasing how certain needs will be fulfilled and marketing those using

images of friendly people, good service level, good amenities and facilities. Such perceptions will also depend on personal relevance of the destination to the individual and the type of attachment they develop with the place. Altogether these factors will influence revisitation and recommendation to others.

9.2.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS FOR SATISFACTION, LOYALTY & REPEAT VISITATION

As summarised in Table 9.5, this study provides empirical evidence for significant relationships among other constructs including overall satisfaction, loyalty levels and repeat visitation.

Research Issues	Qualitative Phase (103 visitors)	Quantitative Phase (705 visitors)
Overall satisfaction	• In general visitors were satisfied with the destination.	• Overall satisfaction of a destination can be predicted by visitors' personal involvement, place attachment, motives and destination image. • Overall satisfaction has a direct influence over future behaviour. That is, the more satisfied visitors are, the higher their propensity to revisit and recommend the destination to others.
Loyalty	• A high level of repeat visitors in the sample indicated some level of loyalty.	• Revisit intention and willingness to recommend are two sub-dimensions of visitors' future behaviour, which also indicate their loyalty to a destination. • Loyalty levels can be significantly predicted by place attachment, overall satisfaction, destination image & overall image
Repeat visitation	• Repeat visitation seems to be associated with the affective image.	• Future visit can be predicted by visitors' attachment levels, motives for choice, destination image perceptions, age and purpose of visit.

Table 9.5: Summary of key findings related to satisfaction, loyalty and repeat visitation

(i) Overall Satisfaction & Future Behaviour

Table 8.5 shows that tourists' overall satisfaction is a strong indicator of visitors' intention to return and willingness to recommend the destination to others. This finding is consistent with the literature (Fornell, 1992; Behoo & Prentice, 1997; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Baloglu *et al.*, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Castro *et al.*,

2007; Chi & Qu, 2008). However, contrary to other studies (Bigné *et al.*, 2001, Petrick *et al.*, 2001, Lee *et al.*, 2005) which showed that overall satisfaction was related only to likelihood of recommending, this study provides tenable evidence that overall satisfaction influences both likelihood to recommend and revisit intention despite the latter explaining more of the variance in behavioural intentions. Therefore, as satisfaction levels increases, the propensity to return and recommend increases. Word of mouth recommendations are especially important for marketing purposes for tourist destinations as they are often considered to be the most reliable source of information by potential visitors (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Nevertheless to increase tourist satisfaction levels for Mauritius, destination marketers and service providers should understand the antecedents of satisfaction which are personal involvement, service interactions, motives for choice and destination image. Hence, the destination must perform well on the aforementioned factors for visitors to feel satisfied with their experience. For example, motive for choice as a significant predictor of overall satisfaction has been suggested in the literature (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Hence, the major implication of these relationships is that satisfaction levels must be handled proactively by understanding the contribution made by each of these components. This understanding will enable destinations to develop lasting relationships beneficial to both suppliers of tourism products and repeat visitors. In this way, destinations can differentiate their products/services while maintaining or improving their competitiveness.

(ii) Visitors' Loyalty Levels

In this study loyalty levels were significantly predicted by place attachment, overall satisfaction, destination image and overall image. Therefore any attempt to improve loyalty of visitors will require the destination to excel on these dimensions. The structural model also confirmed that future behavioural intentions had two indicators, revisit intention and willingness to recommend. Hence, any loyalty programmes at hotels can target visitors who express the highest levels of satisfaction and most positive perceptions of image. Surprisingly, service interactions did not predict loyalty levels for the destination. This could be explained by the fact that visitors may or may not stay at the same hotel on future visits or that employees did not make enough of an emotional impact on visitors to influence their future behaviour. However, by building functional and emotional attachment for a place, visitors can become more loyal. This was confirmed in Alexandris *et al.*'s (2006) study which showed

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that skiers' loyalty to a particular ski lodge could be significantly predicted by place identity and place dependence.

(iii) Repeat Visitation

These findings were further reinforced by the results of the logistic model, which showed that place attachment, the motive of socialisation and learning, destination image, age and purpose of visit could significantly predict the likelihood of a visitor becoming a repeater based on their perceptions on this visit. For example, fulfilment of needs for socialisation and learning increases the probability that the visitor will be a repeater. Therefore, strengthening of social ties should make it less likely that repeat visitors will switch to other destinations (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992). However, if the visitor's main purpose of visit on this trip is related to honeymooning, they are less likely to revisit but if it is related to VFR, they are more likely to revisit. This occurrence could be explained by the fact that honeymooners tend to have a relatively shorter stay in comparison to VFRs and their trip could be 'once in a life time'. As a result, they are less likely to revisit, while the VFR market comes back for socialisation purposes and to explore other facets of the destination.

Place attachment as an explanatory variable for repeat visitation in this study is aligned with the literature findings (Lee & Allen, 1999; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; George & George, 2004; Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Gu & Ryan, 2008). This is due to satisfactory experiences along the instrumental dimension of service provision which may build up place dependence while those along the expressive dimension of service provision may build up place identity. Therefore, satisfactory experiences at each visit might reinforce visitors' emotional bond with the destination, which in turn causes repeat purchase, ultimately leading to destination patronisation (George & George, 2004). Hence, destination managers should actively seek to align products/services of the destination with the visitors' self-concept and promote the right type of activities and amenities to build place dependence.

This study also shows destination image as a significant explanatory factor in determining repeat visitation. This is in line with the findings from previous studies (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008). In fact, it can be argued that familiarity as indicated by previous visit (Konecnik, 2005), plays an important role in predicting repeat visitation and is influenced by destination image (Andsager

& Drzewiecka, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Prentice, 2004; Ryan & Gu, 2007; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). Given that visitors propensity to become repeaters was gauged based on their perceptions on their current visit, it can be assumed that they are familiar with the destination. This is a narrow interpretation of familiarity but it does seem to explain why destination image perceptions can significantly predict repeat visitation. Thus, destination image and previous visit (familiarity) can be used as key marketing variables in segmenting and targeting potential visitors for Mauritius. Age, purpose of visit, place attachment and motives for choice can be used as criteria to segment the repeaters market while potential visitors can be segmented on the basis of their images.

Also, to convert first time visitors into repeat visitors will require increasing their length of stay on the first trip which may require a different marketing mix. For example, strategies such as 'place-tiering' and 'activity-tiering' may be required. Place-tiering involves designing communication materials tailored to those who have already visited by having for example, specific pages on a destination website in terms of new products or activities, more in-depth information on places to visit or revisit, as well as cross-selling and up-selling of products. This also involves presenting new facets of the destination which may build place identity. Activity tiering involves segmenting on the basis of activity involvement (Lehto *et al.*, 2004), which may require increasing the intensity of the experience from the various activities available to build place dependence. Altogether these strategies increase the probability of a first-time visitor becoming a repeater. Next, the research questions for this study are revisited to outline what has been accomplished.

9.3 REVISITING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was based on four research questions that informed the construction of a theoretical model. The various items measuring the different constructs in the model were identified on the basis of a literature review and a qualitative study. This model was thereafter tested on a sample of international visitors to identify causal relationships. The theoretical and managerial implications of these findings were then discussed. This section outlines how each question has been answered and the relevant contributions made to the broader literature.

9.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

The first research question was: what is the relationship between destination image, visitors' motives for choice, and service interactions with hotel employees?

The findings suggest that positive service interactions with hotel employees are antecedents of positive destination image perceptions. Likewise, positive service interactions lead to fulfilment of needs for socialisation, learning, escape and relaxation. The path between motives for choice and destination image was not confirmed in the empirical study due to cognitive components of image being used to measure the construct. However, the interactive components of service delivery having a positive relationship with motives for choice indicates that 'affect' may be a stronger driver of choice and attitude in a tourist destination context. Therefore, these findings contribute to unravel the silence in the literature on the role of hotel employees in creating positive image perceptions through positive interactions with guests for a resort based destination and its association with push factors. Specifically, the findings reinforce the importance of the socialisation motive for visitors to travel to sun and sea destinations. The findings also add to the existing literature on the validity of a three component structure for destination image but highlight the inadequacy of representing affection using only Russell *et al.*'s (1981) affective scale.

9.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

The second question postulates: are these relationships influenced by place attachment and personal involvement?

The findings suggested that constructs of place attachment and personal involvement are complex and problematic when applied in the context of a tourist destination, suggesting their sensitivity to measurement and setting issues. Nonetheless, place attachment seems to mediate some of the above relationships while personal involvement is a significant antecedent. For example, place attachment mediates the relationship between motives for choice and future behaviour while personal involvement is an antecedent to service interactions and place attachment. These suggest that the personal relevance of a destination to a visitor influences how he or she perceives service interactions and how he or she thereafter develops a sense of belonging to the place. So far, few studies have confirmed such a relationship but none has specifically addressed it for resort-based destinations. The relationship between push factors and place attachment is relatively under explored in a tourist destination context. Therefore, these findings broaden the tourism literature on the role and influence of personal involvement and place attachment on constructs such as service interactions and motives for choice. These relationships extend the hospitality and tourism literatures on the indirect

influence of hotel employees' courtesy, professionalism, attentiveness to needs etc. on visitors emotional attachment to a destination.

9.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The third research question sought to identify: How are these previously mentioned constructs related to visitors' satisfaction levels and their future behaviour?

The results of the study indicated that antecedents of future behaviour include overall satisfaction and destination image. This positive relationship is already established in the tourism literature, albeit a minor contribution would be that this study confirms this relationship in a different setting. However, another substantial contribution of the results is that personal involvement and service interactions are also antecedents of destination image. Both these constructs had an indirect influence on overall satisfaction through destination image thereby extending the literature on the factors that would potentially explain why visitors have positive image perceptions and how these are related to their overall satisfaction and future behaviour. Also, an additional contribution of this study is that it establishes an alternative path to ensuring that visitors recommend and revisit a destination by providing evidence of a structural path between personal involvement levels, motives for choice, and place attachment. A positive relationship between these constructs and future behaviour was identified thereby confirming the relevance of applying theoretical constructs borrowed from other fields to the tourism context to find alternative ways of understanding a phenomenon.

9.3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

The fourth research question asked: Are there significant differences based on nationality, ethnicity and language spoken for these constructs (destination image, motives for choice, service interactions with hotel employees, place attachment and personal involvement)?

The results suggested that cultural differences measured by the three proxies (nationality, ethnicity and language spoken) can be adequate in identifying differences in visitors perceptions. By far nationality is the strongest discriminating variable among visitors, which has already been suggested in the literature. However, this study adds to the tourism literature on cross cultural differences by showing that nationality also influences tourists' motivations, place attachment and personal involvement levels, albeit the influence on the latter two constructs are not of the same magnitude when compared to their influence on destination

image. Another contribution of this study is that it highlights the relevance of including ethnicity and fluency in languages spoken as measures to understand cross cultural differences. The results indicated both of these variables had an influence on some image, place attachment and personal involvement items. Hence, they should not be discarded in cross-cultural studies in the tourism field.

9.4 LIMITATIONS & AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Highlighting the contributions and achievements of this study in the previous section lead to acknowledging that this study also has limitations that are discussed below. Like other mixed-methodology studies, this study has its limitations conceptually and methodologically. From a conceptual point of view, given the lack of studies relevant to tourist destinations as entities with respect to place attachment and personal involvement, the dimensions of these two constructs were borrowed from other fields of study. The results clearly indicated some reliability issues when applied to the tourist destination context. In particular, McIntyre and Pigram's (1992) enduring involvement (EI) scale would perhaps achieve better consistency in a tourist destination context as opposed to Dimanche *et al.*'s (1991) CPI scale. This is because tourist destinations are becoming increasingly recognised as indicators of a visitor's lifestyle. From the perspective of consumer involvement, this would suggest that the familiar destination becomes part of lifestyle formation (Prentice, 2004). There is a growing research strand on the applicability of EI scale to measure tourists' involvement (Hou *et al.*, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008) but equally others (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2005) have shown the applicability of the CPI scale. Therefore, a fruitful future area of research would be to test the applicability of both scales simultaneously in a tourist destination context. There are also few studies assessing the applicability of Zaichowsky's (1985) PII scale to measure tourists' involvement, which would contribute to identifying which scale is superior. An alternative view would be to use a phenomenological approach to identify dimensions of tourist involvement and place attachment.

Destination images are not based only on interpretation of the visual or verbal information (Tasci & Gartner, 2007) and in this study the verbal was prioritised through verbal accounts of what they perceived. Thereafter, these qualitative findings informed dimensionality of motives for choice and destination image in the quantitative study. The results of the qualitative study in themselves might be inadequate as discussed in the limitations section of

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chapter four and therefore do not completely capture the 'image' or 'motives' construct. There is also the possibility that the results do not completely capture the 'image', 'place attachment' and 'personal involvement' constructs as any quantitative approach leaves open the issue of what respondents understand of the questionnaire items. Nonetheless, every step was taken to ensure the constructs identified were reliable by using reliability tests and confirmatory factor analysis.

The same cautionary approach applies to dimensions of service interactions identified. Future research could include other service interaction items such as mutual understanding, reliability and responsiveness to fully understand the dimensionality of the construct and to provide a more comprehensive influence of the construct on others such as overall satisfaction, push factors and personal involvement. While this study focused on hotel employees, an area of future research would be exploring emotional attachment of visitors who stay with family and friends, or those staying in guest houses or boutique accommodations, where arguably there is a more intimate relationship between the guest and the host. Whether star ratings of hotels influence visitors' perceptions of service interactions, destination image and satisfaction could be an additional area to explore. Also, much of the personal involvement literature arises from leisure and recreation activities, experiences based on resort complexes represent a different environment and this needs to be assessed more carefully for future research.

Also, familiarity in this study was conceptualised as being indicated by previous visits but this construct is more complex as indicated by Prentice (2004). Therefore, the claims made with respect to prediction of repeat visitation based on current perceptions should be treated with some caution. It would be desirable in future studies to use alternative conceptualisation of the construct to predict behaviour. At the same time, while repeat visitation to Mauritius was asked, repeat patronage of a given hotel was not. Given the importance of hotel employees and their interactions with clients, this relationship may be a confusing variable in the assessment of destination loyalty, repeat visitation and motivations. This may explain some of the inconsistencies in the results. It is a factor that future research should consider in research design.

Another limitation of the study is that no generalisability of findings to the entire destination is claimed from the results but at least generalisability for the key generating markets for

Mauritius can be inferred based on similarity of results with the official statistics. Further, data collection from beaches around hotels may over-represent 'low involvement visitors'. Therefore, future studies should incorporate the views of 'high involvement visitors' and assess differences for the relationships measured in this study based on differing involvement levels. Also, what could be of interest to future studies is the applicability of these constructs and the relationships identified in the case of other island destinations in the Indian Ocean such as Seychelles, Maldives and Madagascar. Comparative studies with islands from other regions such as Pacific, Mediterranean and Caribbean would shed some additional light on these relationships and provide insights for destination differentiation, positioning and competitiveness.

The causal relationships inferred in this study must be treated with caution, since the research design follows a strictly non-probability approach and therefore does not allow for rigid compliance with conditions of causality. Also, the structural model assumed linearity in the causal relationships, which suggest a further limitation in cases where such relationships are not linear. The identified relationships were not replicated on new data but this was constrained by financial restrictions and this study uses SEM as an exploratory technique. As a result, the findings may capitalise on chance characteristics of the sample, and may have led to a final model that might not be generalisable to other samples. However, this study has tried to establish causal relationships that are theoretically justified, which gives credence to the findings. Insufficient number of respondents in the sub-samples did not allow for causal relationships to be established for each key generating market but other findings established that significant differences in perceptions existed across the five markets considered. Therefore, SEM on new data with sufficient sub-sample sizes for different generating markets could potentially be a future area of research to identify which of the causal relationships inferred in this study are valid for each generating market considered.

While the study attempts to develop and validate several factors which influence destination image, overall satisfaction and future behaviour, there are other personal factors such as social class and evaluative factors such as trip quality, perceived value and service quality which influence visitors' future behaviour as well. These relationships could inform future research in this area and provide further insights into the antecedents of destination image and future behaviour. It would also be desirable to carry out longitudinal studies on the evolution

of the image for Mauritius and other island destinations in light of the diversification strategies employed by them to rejuvenate and re-invent the destination. In this respect, this study could provide a bench-mark for Mauritius, in terms of the evolution of its image in forthcoming years.

From a methodological point of view, the use of a questionnaire itself has limitations such as length of the instrument, language capabilities of visitors to understand what is required of them and the reductionist approach that must be used with items. However, the mixed methodology approach complements these limitations by giving qualitative insights into the phenomenon and helps to understand the quantitative results better. The social construction of the place was evident from the qualitative findings and complemented by visitors need for socialisation as being a significant motive for choice in the results of the quantitative study. The method of data collection itself was constrained by the lack of responsiveness on behalf of hotels to participate in the research and therefore the results cannot claim to be representative of all hotel customers in Mauritius. However, sampling on beaches near hotels helped to overcome this issue by giving access to a potentially larger sample of holiday visitors enjoying the '3S'. In light of these limitations and areas of future research, the next section provides the overall conclusion for this thesis.

9.5 OVERALL CONCLUSION

Starting from the premise that island destinations are selling predominantly a sun, sand and sea appeal and that at the maturity stage of their destination life cycle various strategies are used to reinvent the place among which include image strategies, the image of Mauritius was researched and the relationship that this image has with other constructs such as place attachment, personal involvement and service interactions was investigated. Based on the literature, a theoretical was developed taking cognisance that places are social constructions as well. A mixed methodology approach was employed to identify the pertinent dimensions of some of these constructs and the model was tested empirically.

The findings provided useful insights into the relationships among seven constructs. In particular, the following are note worthy:

(i)   The theoretical model has some validity given that 9 of the 17 hypotheses developed were proved using SEM.

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(ii)   The study confirms a number of established relationships in the literature such as destination image→overall satisfaction→future behaviour and personal involvement→place attachment→future behaviour.

(iii)   The study establishes some significant paths among constructs not previously tested simultaneously in the literature such as personal involvement→service interactions→destination image and personal involvement→service interactions→motives for choice→place attachment.

(iv)   Repeat visitation as a phenomenon can be better understood in the context of resort based destinations when the influence of place attachment, satisfaction levels and motives of choice are considered.

(v)   Nationality, ethnicity, languages spoken (fluency levels) and socio-demographics have varying levels of influence on destination image, visitors motivations, place attachment and personal involvement levels.

In doing so, the study contributes to the literature and managerial practice:

(i)   It reveals the applicability and limitations of applying place attachment and personal involvement borrowed from other fields to the context of tourist destinations.

(ii)   It highlights the role of hotel employees in creating positive image perceptions through their service interactions with visitors.

(iii)   It details the intervening role of push factors in many of the relationships investigated leading to the conclusion that motivations can be a significant predictor of visitors' attachment levels and future behaviour.

The managerial implications of these findings were highlighted and now it is up to destination managers to make use of these findings in bettering the marketing strategies for Mauritius. To this end, it is hoped that the findings have provided adequate answers for the questions posed using post-positivism as the theoretical foundations. Also, this journey would be incomplete without an assessment of what could have been done differently.

(i)   Instead of borrowing constructs of place attachment and personal involvement from other fields, a phenomenological approach could have been used to identify visitors' personal constructions of these.

(ii)   Motivation as a valid proxy for destination choice is a simplistic view of the construct. This approach can be broadened to include other decision influencing factors such as stage in the family life cycle and other pull factors besides image.

(iii)   The choice of cultural proxies to measure cultural differences was driven by their use in the literature as in the case of nationality or lack of use in the case of ethnicity and languages spoken. There are other cultural proxies such as social class and religion that could be of substance in explaining differences for the generating markets considered.

(iv)   Fluency in the native language spoken by the visitor is of essence when exploring visitors' feelings towards an object. As for the German market, fluency in the language by the researcher would have enabled better comprehension of visitors attitudes and perceptions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
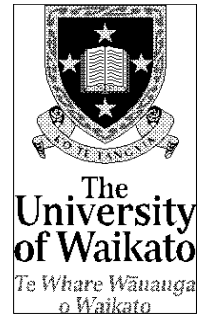
Dear Valued Guest

As part of my doctoral studies at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, I am researching international visitors' perceptions of Mauritius as a holiday destination. I would be grateful if you could take some minutes of your valuable time to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the reception desk at the hotel before your departure. Your name and address is not required.

The questionnaire will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete and if you take part in this study, you have the right to:

Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Ask any further questions about the study by contacting either myself or my supervisors on the email addresses below

Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

I will treat your answers with utmost confidentiality and use them to write my thesis and subsequently use the findings for conferences and publications in academic journals. Only aggregate findings will be reported.

If you have any queries about this questionnaire or the study I am undertaking, you can contact me at the University of Waikato, Tel: +64 (0) 7 838-4466 Extension 8244, or email me on gp19@waikato.ac.nz. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Tim Lockyer, on the following email address: lockyer@waikato.ac.nz

Thanking You.

Sincerely,

Girish Prayag

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SECTION A: Destination Choice & Image of Mauritius

Q1. Below are a series of statements. Can you please indicate the extent to which you feel that these items are **IMPORTANT WHEN SELECTING A HOLIDAY DESTINATION** using a 7-point scale where '7' represents the most positive response – e.g. This is extremely important to me, and '1' represents the most negative response – e.g. this is of no importance to me. If you have no opinion, then circle the '0'. The scale is:

'1' – Of No Importance,

'2' – Of Very Little Importance,

'3' – Of Little Importance,

'4' – Somewhat Important,

'5' – Important,

'6' – Very Important,

'7' – Extremely Important,

'0' – I have no experience/cannot answer/is not relevant to me

For example, if having nice beaches at the destination was VERY IMPORTANT to you, you would circle the number 7 as shown below.

Of importance to me when I am going on holiday is that the destination offers nice beaches   1 2 3 4 5 6 ⑦ 0

Statements – Of importance to me when I am going on holiday is that:								
People are friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The natural environment is clean and unpolluted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination is suitable for rest and relaxation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees deliver service professionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination offers nightlife and entertainment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I feel personally safe and secure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I feel I am away from the routine of daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

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There are opportunities for adventure and new experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place offers good value for money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination has beautiful scenery and natural attractions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination has good weather and pleasant climate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees are courteous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place is not crowded with tourists	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination offers beaches and water sports.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place has cultural and historical attractions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place is culturally diverse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to see things that I don't normally see.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place has lovely towns and cities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place offers a variety and good quality of accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees give advice on places to visit and things to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The level of service is good in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to build friendship with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Local transport is convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place has good shopping facilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees have good language and communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to learn things about a new place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place is a suitable holiday destination for the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination has an appealing local cuisine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place has a variety of restaurants and bars.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me/family/children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to spend time alone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place is easily accessible as a holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

The destination has a good reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are no language barriers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees share information about their culture with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The place is exotic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
There are opportunities to learn about different ways of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The destination has good signage (roads and places of interests).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

Q2. I would like you now to go through the same items, but this time to think about your holiday in Mauritius and to indicate the extent to which **YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH MAURITUS AS A HOLIDAY DESTINATION** where '7' represents the most positive response – e.g. I am very satisfied, and '1' represents the most negative response – e.g. I am very dissatisfied. If you have no opinion, then circle the '0'. The scale is:

'1' – Very Dissatisfied,

'2' – Dissatisfied,

'3' – Somewhat Dissatisfied,

'4' – Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied,

'5' – Somewhat Satisfied,

'6' – Satisfied,

'7' – Very Satisfied,

'0' – I have no experience/cannot answer/is not relevant to me

For example, if you were DISSATISFIED with friendliness of people, you would circle the number 2 as shown below.

Friendliness of people 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 0

Statements – State your satisfaction level with the holiday you had in Mauritius on the following factors:								
Friendliness of people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

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The natural environment (cleanliness and pollution free).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Mauritius as a place for rest and relaxation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Professionalism of hotel employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Nightlife and entertainment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Safety and security.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Mauritius as a place different to your daily routine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities for adventure & new experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Hotel employees' attentiveness to my needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Calmness and peacefulness of the atmosphere in Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Value for money of Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Scenery and natural attractions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Weather and Climate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Courtesy of hotel employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Crowd level of tourists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Beaches and water sports.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities for socialisation with other tourists and locals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Cultural and historical attractions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The culturally diversity of the place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities to see things I don't normally see.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The towns and city.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Variety and quality of accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Advice of hotel employees on places to visit and things to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
General level of service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Local transport.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Shopping facilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Language and communication skills of hotel employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities to learn new things about Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

Mauritius as a holiday place for the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Local cuisine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Variety of restaurants and bars.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Attitude of hotel employees towards me/family/children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Mauritius as a place to spend time alone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Accessibility of the destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Mauritius compared to its reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Ease of communication (language).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Information learnt from hotel employees about their culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Exoticness of the place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Welcoming and respect you received from hotel employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Signage (roads and places of interests)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Overall I would rate satisfaction with my holiday in Mauritius as…	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

Q3. I would like you now to think about your feelings for Mauritius as a holiday destination and indicate the extent to which **YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS**, where '7' represents the most positive response – e.g. I strongly agree, and '1' represents the most negative response – e.g. I strongly disagree. If you have no opinion, then circle the '0'. The scale is:

'1' – Strongly Disagree,

'2' – Disagree,

'3' – Somewhat Disagree,

'4' – Neither Agree nor Disagree,

'5' – Somewhat Agree,

'6' – Agree,

'7' – Strongly Agree,

'0' – I have no experience/cannot answer/is not relevant to me

Statements – In thinking about my holidays in Mauritius, I feel that…								
Mauritius is a very special destination to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I identify strongly with this destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I am very attached to this holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I feel no commitment to this place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I get pleasure from being on holidays here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
The things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy just as much doing them at another sun, sand, sea destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

SECTION B: Future Behaviour & Overall Image

Q4. How likely are you to recommend Mauritius as a holiday destination to family/friends/colleagues?

☐ Very Unlikely   ☐ Unlikely   ☐ Somewhat Unlikely   ☐ Neither Likely nor Unlikely

☐ Somewhat Likely ☐ Likely   ☐ Very Likely   ☐ Don't Know

Q5. How likely are you to return to Mauritius in the next three years?

☐ Very Unlikely   ☐ Unlikely   ☐ Somewhat Unlikely   ☐ Neither Likely nor Unlikely

☐ Somewhat Likely ☐ Likely   ☐ Very Likely   ☐ Don't Know

Q6. Overall, how would you describe your loyalty to Mauritius as a place for holidays?

☐ Very Low   ☐ Low   ☐ Moderately Low   ☐ Neither Low nor High

☐ Moderately High ☐ High   ☐ Very High   ☐ Don't Know

Q7. Overall, how would you describe the image that you have of Mauritius as a holiday place?

☐ Very Unfavourable   ☐ Unfavourable ☐ Somewhat Unfavourable

☐ Neither Unfavourable nor Favourable   ☐ Somewhat Favourable   ☐ Favourable

☐ Very Favourable   ☐ Don't Know

SECTION C: Demographics & Travelling Characteristics

Q8. Of the languages that you speak, rate your fluency level in each one of them, where '5' represents the highest degree of fluency – e.g. a language that you speak and understand very well or your native language(s), and '1' represents the language that you know only a few words. If you have no opinion, then circle the '0'. The scale is:

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'1' – Know a few Words,

'2' – Basic Conversation,

'3' – Somewhat Fluent,

'4' – Fluent,

'5' – Very Fluent

'0' – I have no experience/cannot answer/is not relevant to me

Languages						
English	1	2	3	4	5	0
French	1	2	3	4	5	0
German	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hindi	1	2	3	4	5	0
Afrikaans	1	2	3	4	5	0
Xhosa	1	2	3	4	5	0
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	0
	1	2	3	4	5	0
	1	2	3	4	5	0

In the following questions please tick the appropriate box
Q9. Are you ☐ Male ☐ Female

Q10. Which age group best represents your age?

☐ Under 20 years ☐ 20 – 30 years ☐ 31 – 40 years

☐ 41 – 50 years ☐ 51 – 60 years ☐ 61 years and over

Q11. What is your nationality?

☐ German ☐ South African ☐ Indian ☐ French ☐
British
Other (please specify) _____
Q12. What is your country of residence?
☐ Germany ☐ South Africa ☐ India ☐ France ☐
UK
Other (please specify) _____

Q13. What is your ethnicity?
☐ Caucasian ☐ Black African Descent ☐ Sino-Asian ☐ Indian ☐ Mixed

Q14. What is your highest educational qualification?
☐ Primary School ☐ High/Secondary School ☐ Professional/Diploma
☐ University Degree ☐ Postgraduate degree

Q15. What is your marital status?
☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Partner ☐ Separated/Divorced ☐ Widow/Widower

Q16. How would you categorise your average monthly household income?
☐ Very Low ☐ Low ☐ Moderately Low ☐ Neither Low nor High ☐ Moderately High
☐ High ☐ Very High

Q17. What is the *main* purpose of this trip? ☐ Holiday ☐ Visiting friends/relatives
☐ Business
☐ Honeymoon ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q18. If this is NOT your first visit, how many times have you previously visited Mauritius? ____
(exclude **THIS** visit in your count, e.g. if this is your first visit put a '0', if it is your second visit put a '1')

Q19. What is the duration of your stay in Mauritius on this trip? _____days

Q20. Did you buy a holiday package? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Q21. Who are you traveling with on this occasion?
☐ Alone ☐ With husband/wife/partner ☐ As a family group with children ☐ With relatives

Q22. If you have children, answer the following questions:

(i) How many children do you have? _____

(ii) What is/are their age/s? _____

THANK YOU!

If you have any comments that you might wish to share with us, please use the space below. Similarly, if you wish to receive a summary of the results, please contact us on the email addresses provided in the cover letter. Once data are placed within a computer the hard copies of these questionnaires will be shredded, and only the researcher and supervisors will have access to the computer files.

APPENDIX B

Attributes	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Friendly people	241.697	783.322	0.453	0.356	0.933
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	241.477	789.390	0.392	0.354	0.933
Destination is suitable for rest and relaxation	241.541	781.138	0.515	0.506	0.932
Hotel employees deliver service professionally	241.641	774.705	0.534	0.593	0.932
Destination offers nightlife and entertainment	243.407	775.430	0.293	0.341	0.935
Feel personally safe and secure	241.382	787.263	0.456	0.431	0.933
Feel i am away from the routine of daily life	241.641	781.439	0.418	0.395	0.933
Opportunities for adventure and new experiences	242.207	779.902	0.371	0.360	0.933
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs	241.699	766.447	0.652	0.705	0.931
The place offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere	241.559	777.948	0.587	0.514	0.932
The place offers good value for money	241.703	772.382	0.586	0.517	0.932
The destination has beautiful scenery and natural attractions	241.577	782.185	0.532	0.454	0.932
The destination has good weather and pleasant climate	241.440	792.265	0.360	0.306	0.933
Hotel employees are courteous	241.624	769.721	0.625	0.633	0.931
The place is not crowded with tourists	242.285	781.553	0.342	0.289	0.934
The destination offers beaches and water sports	242.128	785.554	0.316	0.233	0.934
There are opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals	242.778	777.092	0.371	0.513	0.934
The place has cultural and historical attractions	242.465	771.001	0.477	0.475	0.932
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful	241.624	772.865	0.612	0.688	0.932
The place is culturally diverse	242.429	767.705	0.499	0.494	0.932
There are opportunities to see things that I don't normally see	241.838	778.942	0.515	0.439	0.932
The place has lovely towns and cities	242.270	770.669	0.552	0.502	0.932
The place offers a variety and good quality of accommodation	241.808	776.356	0.527	0.435	0.932
Hotel employees give advice on places to visit and things to do.	242.022	763.326	0.631	0.539	0.931
The level of service is good in general	241.610	773.376	0.605	0.608	0.932
There are opportunities to build friendship with others	242.867	768.748	0.456	0.530	0.933
Local transport is convenient	242.425	764.284	0.476	0.438	0.933
The place has good shopping facilities	242.200	764.205	0.592	0.535	0.931
Hotel employees have good language and communication skills	242.010	775.640	0.496	0.511	0.932
There are opportunities to learn things about a new place	242.179	769.926	0.570	0.511	0.932
The place is a suitable holiday destination for the family	241.905	767.597	0.518	0.404	0.932

Attributes	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The destination has an appealing local cuisine	241.700	780.959	0.525	0.400	0.932
The place has a variety of restaurants and bars	242.115	771.684	0.495	0.394	0.932
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me, family, children	241.654	772.170	0.516	0.551	0.932
There are opportunities to spend time alone	242.255	775.954	0.323	0.239	0.934
The place is easily accessible as a holiday destination	242.128	772.942	0.495	0.456	0.932
The destination has a good reputation	241.854	777.853	0.460	0.474	0.933
There are no language barriers	242.356	773.137	0.454	0.465	0.933
Hotel employees share information about their culture with me	242.700	769.324	0.473	0.475	0.933
The place is exotic	242.076	768.679	0.560	0.457	0.932
There are opportunities to learn about different ways of life	242.270	766.699	0.579	0.550	0.932
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected	241.595	770.818	0.615	0.623	0.931
The destination has good signage	242.033	774.996	0.461	0.366	0.933

Table 1: Attributes' importance and correlations with the total scale

Attributes	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Friendliness of people	227.927	748.449	0.430	0.302	0.909
The natural environment (cleanliness and pollution free)	229.227	739.321	0.368	0.295	0.909
Mauritius as a place for rest and relaxation	227.924	745.979	0.469	0.521	0.908
Professionalism of hotel employees	228.375	733.253	0.513	0.641	0.908
Nightlife and entertainment	230.316	722.501	0.348	0.324	0.911
Safety and security	228.690	748.651	0.287	0.353	0.910
Mauritius as a place different to your daily routine	228.005	750.614	0.388	0.401	0.909
Opportunities for adventure & new experiences	228.664	735.942	0.448	0.386	0.908
Hotel employees' attentiveness to my needs	228.275	733.433	0.536	0.680	0.907
Calmness and peacefulness of the atmosphere in Mauritius	228.051	743.791	0.532	0.497	0.908
Value for money of Mauritius	228.626	745.731	0.375	0.297	0.909
Scenery and natural attractions	228.123	750.183	0.356	0.355	0.909
Weather and Climate	228.106	749.798	0.366	0.286	0.909
Courtesy of hotel employees	228.197	734.916	0.541	0.597	0.907
Crowd level of tourists	228.737	748.828	0.341	0.236	0.909

Beaches and water sports	228.425	744.721	0.317	0.362	0.910
Opportunities for socialisation with other tourists and locals	229.032	729.170	0.493	0.493	0.908
Cultural and historical attractions	228.887	731.201	0.466	0.463	0.908
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel employees	228.283	734.870	0.513	0.715	0.908
The cultural diversity of the place	228.634	733.666	0.502	0.473	0.908
Opportunities to see things I don't normally see	228.413	742.655	0.471	0.431	0.908
The towns and city	229.056	734.517	0.442	0.432	0.908
Variety and quality of accommodation	228.519	734.786	0.494	0.375	0.908
Advice of hotel employees on places to visit and things to do	228.779	725.554	0.534	0.533	0.907
General level of service	228.297	736.212	0.567	0.510	0.907
Opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians	229.177	733.282	0.418	0.457	0.909
Local transport	229.805	731.669	0.334	0.310	0.910
Shopping facilities	229.250	739.157	0.380	0.370	0.909
Language and communication skills of hotel employees	228.543	738.727	0.440	0.605	0.908
Opportunities to learn new things about Mauritius	228.691	740.150	0.459	0.457	0.908
Mauritius as a holiday place for the family	228.251	735.255	0.404	0.423	0.909
Local cuisine	228.625	747.368	0.321	0.357	0.910
Variety of restaurants and bars	229.036	736.580	0.395	0.361	0.909
Attitude of hotel employees towards me/family/children	228.283	730.382	0.487	0.612	0.908
Mauritius as a place to spend time alone	228.918	740.790	0.229	0.279	0.913
Accessibility of the destination	228.486	742.435	0.470	0.346	0.908
Mauritius compared to its reputation	228.298	739.846	0.525	0.420	0.908
Ease of communication (language)	228.380	751.551	0.333	0.356	0.910
Information learnt from hotel employees about their culture	229.263	713.218	0.578	0.593	0.906
Exoticness of the place	228.434	742.628	0.437	0.451	0.908
Opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians	229.089	728.960	0.493	0.491	0.908
Welcoming and respect you received from hotel employees	228.215	737.833	0.469	0.639	0.908
Signage (roads and places of interests)	229.437	737.156	0.352	0.286	0.910

Table 2: Attributes' performance and correlations with total scale

Place Attachment Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Mauritius is a very special destination to me	51.285	110.990	0.537	0.527	0.785
I identify strongly with this destination	51.726	107.676	0.519	0.450	0.784
I am very attached to this holiday destination	51.577	109.511	0.565	0.552	0.782
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	52.771	100.847	0.584	0.439	0.776
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	51.305	112.306	0.530	0.559	0.787
I feel no commitment to this place	53.912	120.539	0.052	0.215	0.832
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	51.867	106.662	0.558	0.485	0.780
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	52.334	105.664	0.523	0.389	0.783
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	52.526	101.478	0.531	0.353	0.782
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	52.407	102.274	0.653	0.497	0.771
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	52.558	103.273	0.594	0.448	0.776
The things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy just as much doing them at another sun, sand, sea destination	52.829	120.838	0.058	0.182	0.829

Table 3: Place attachment items correlation to total scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience	68.772	130.405	0.239	0.206	0.758
I get pleasure from being on holidays here	66.313	136.753	0.337	0.475	0.746
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius	66.818	132.039	0.396	0.455	0.740
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	68.254	129.970	0.297	0.296	0.750
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	66.593	133.944	0.408	0.517	0.741
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	66.556	133.781	0.351	0.455	0.744
It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination	69.185	133.453	0.203	0.259	0.761
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	67.120	131.916	0.402	0.249	0.740
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	67.582	118.805	0.578	0.405	0.719
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	68.013	128.388	0.374	0.399	0.741
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	67.749	125.127	0.453	0.530	0.733
It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	66.605	133.755	0.292	0.273	0.749
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	67.727	128.752	0.388	0.295	0.740
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	67.832	122.886	0.481	0.560	0.730
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	66.577	133.118	0.296	0.249	0.749

Table 4: Personal involvement items correlation to total scale

Destination Image	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Friendly people	705	6.05	1.05	-1.18	1.71
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	704	6.28	0.94	-1.73	4.40
Destination offers nightlife and entertainment	705	4.36	1.96	-0.52	-0.46
Feel personally safe and secure	702	6.36	0.91	-1.43	1.62
Opportunities for adventure and new experiences	705	5.52	1.43	-1.36	2.65
The place offers good value for money	703	6.06	1.14	-1.50	2.92
The destination has beautiful scenery and natural attractions	705	6.17	0.98	-1.80	5.90
The destination has good weather and pleasant climate	704	6.32	0.87	-1.76	6.11
The place is not crowded with tourists	703	5.49	1.43	-1.23	1.73
The destination offers beaches and water sports	702	5.64	1.33	-1.24	1.92
The place has cultural and historical attractions	703	5.31	1.42	-0.97	1.11
The place is culturally diverse	704	5.36	1.47	-1.10	1.53
The place has lovely towns and cities	703	5.49	1.26	-0.77	0.83
The place offers a variety and good quality of accommodation	705	5.93	1.15	-1.64	4.95
The level of service is good in general	701	6.14	1.10	-2.06	7.03
Local transport is convenient	703	5.34	1.66	-1.09	0.95
The place has good shopping facilities	703	5.55	1.37	-0.91	0.58
The place is a suitable holiday destination for the family	703	5.83	1.46	-1.64	2.72
The destination has an appealing local cuisine	701	6.05	0.99	-1.07	1.89
The place has a variety of restaurants and bars	704	5.63	1.35	-1.25	2.16
The place is easily accessible as a holiday destination	704	5.62	1.32	-1.10	1.50
The destination has a good reputation	704	5.90	1.23	-1.43	2.34
There are no language barriers	704	5.41	1.44	-1.07	1.15
The place is exotic	704	5.68	1.29	-1.27	2.21
The destination has good signage	705	5.72	1.34	-1.25	1.92

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for importance ratings of destination image attributes

Motives for Choice	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Destination is suitable for rest and relaxation	704	6.22	1.00	-1.47	2.72
Feel i am away from the routine of daily life	705	6.12	1.20	-1.90	4.89
The place offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere	704	6.19	0.99	-1.52	3.63
There are opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals	704	4.99	1.53	-0.80	0.54
There are opportunities to see things that I don't normally see	705	5.93	1.06	-1.17	2.41
There are opportunities to build friendship with others	704	4.89	1.58	-0.73	0.37
There are opportunities to learn things about a new place	703	5.59	1.24	-0.95	1.42
There are opportunities to spend time alone	702	5.49	1.78	-1.46	1.69
There are opportunities to learn about different ways of life	705	5.49	1.33	-0.97	1.26

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for importance ratings of push attributes

Service Interactions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Hotel employees deliver service profesionally	705	6.10	1.19	-2.12	6.68
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs	702	6.05	1.21	-2.01	6.03
Hotel employees are courteous	704	6.11	1.17	-2.19	7.33
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful	703	6.11	1.11	-2.03	7.09
Hotel employees give advice on places to visit and things to do.	705	5.71	1.34	-1.65	3.97
Hotel employees have good language and communication skills	703	5.74	1.24	-1.41	3.53
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me, family, children	705	6.08	1.31	-2.45	8.05
Hotel employees share information about their culture with me	703	5.06	1.51	-0.97	1.33
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected	705	6.13	1.17	-2.26	7.70

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for importance ratings of service interactions attributes

Destination Image	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Friendliness of people	705	6.14	0.99	-1.48	3.63
The natural environment (cleanliness and pollution free)	705	4.87	1.52	-0.63	-0.19
Nightlife and entertainment	703	3.77	2.36	-0.58	-1.04
Safety and security	704	5.37	1.40	-1.09	1.43
Opportunities for adventure & new experiences	703	5.43	1.40	-1.94	5.31
Value for money of Mauritius	705	5.47	1.22	-1.26	2.55
Scenery and natural attractions	705	5.96	1.06	-2.03	8.16
Weather and Climate	705	5.97	1.08	-1.71	5.15
Crowd level of tourists	703	5.36	1.17	-1.13	2.77
Beaches and water sports	703	5.66	1.46	-1.96	5.04
Cultural and historical attractions	705	5.21	1.51	-1.78	4.09
The cultural diversity of the place	704	5.46	1.35	-1.80	5.14
The towns and city	704	5.06	1.47	-1.30	2.48
Variety and quality of accommodation	702	5.56	1.33	-2.03	5.96
General level of service	705	5.76	1.15	-1.92	6.88
Local transport	705	4.31	1.99	-0.88	0.03
Shopping facilities	704	4.83	1.52	-1.17	1.87
Mauritius as a holiday place for the family	703	5.84	1.55	-2.34	6.12
Local cuisine	704	5.46	1.33	-1.31	2.42
Variety of restaurants and bars	703	5.05	1.56	-1.43	2.42
Accessibility of the destination	703	5.58	1.12	-1.31	3.53
Mauritius compared to its reputation	701	5.78	1.10	-1.70	5.56
Ease of communication (language)	704	5.71	1.09	-1.43	4.83
Exoticness of the place	700	5.66	1.19	-1.73	5.88
Signage (roads and places of interests)	703	4.65	1.71	-1.01	0.74

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for performance ratings of destination image attributes

Motives for Choice	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Mauritius as a place for rest and relaxation	705	6.14	1.01	-1.88	6.40
Mauritius as a place different to your daily routine	703	6.07	0.98	-1.48	5.32
Calmness and peacefulness of the atmosphere in Mauritius	704	6.02	0.97	-1.59	5.27
Opportunities for socialisation with other tourists and locals	704	5.04	1.54	-1.60	3.19
Opportunities to see things I don't normally see	705	5.67	1.11	-1.08	2.45
Opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians	704	4.92	1.61	-1.33	2.20
Opportunities to learn new things about Mauritius	702	5.40	1.22	-1.59	5.04
Mauritius as a place to spend time alone	704	5.19	2.11	-1.51	1.28
Opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians	703	5.03	1.52	-1.37	2.68

Table 9: Descriptive statistics for performance ratings of push attributes

Service Interactions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Professionalism of hotel employees	703	5.69	1.35	-2.22	6.65
Hotel employees' attentiveness to my needs	704	5.79	1.29	-2.29	7.49
Courtesy of hotel employees	704	5.87	1.22	-2.29	7.87
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel employees	704	5.79	1.29	-2.41	8.08
Advice of hotel employees on places to visit and things to do	702	5.29	1.56	-1.94	4.30
Language and communication skills of hotel employees	702	5.55	1.31	-1.89	5.66
Attitude of hotel employees towards me/family/children	699	5.79	1.50	-2.38	6.61
Information learnt from hotel employees about their culture	703	4.80	1.83	-1.40	1.56
Welcoming and respect you received from hotel employees	705	5.85	1.30	-2.26	7.25

Table 10: Descriptive statistics for performance ratings of service interactions attributes

Place Attachment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Mauritius is a very special destination to me	704	5.73	1.28	-1.62	3.51
I identify strongly with this destination	703	5.29	1.56	-1.33	1.90
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	704	4.69	1.70	-0.79	0.10
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	703	5.69	1.21	-1.36	2.56
I am very attached to this holiday destination	705	5.44	1.33	-1.03	1.28
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	703	5.14	1.56	-1.01	0.91
I feel no commitment to this place	701	3.11	2.03	0.36	-1.21
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	704	4.60	1.67	-0.68	-0.03
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	704	4.48	2.00	-0.85	-0.16
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	700	4.24	1.92	-0.58	-0.48
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	705	4.44	1.71	-0.60	0.01
The things I did in Mauritius, I would enjoy just as much doing them at another sun, sand, sea destination	702	4.18	1.91	-0.62	-0.47

Table 11: Descriptive statistics for place attachment items

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience	705	3.52	2.16	0.15	-1.38
I get pleasure from being on holidays here	703	5.94	1.14	-1.76	4.93
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius	703	5.45	1.40	-1.20	1.78
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	702	4.04	1.95	-0.26	-0.99
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	703	5.67	1.23	-1.21	2.48
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	701	5.70	1.39	-1.60	3.04

It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination	699	3.08	2.00	0.49	-1.10
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	705	5.14	1.42	-1.44	2.87
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	703	4.70	1.93	-0.88	0.10
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	704	4.25	1.82	-0.49	-0.72
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	700	4.52	1.82	-0.72	-0.19
It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	699	5.64	1.59	-1.55	2.17
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	704	4.53	1.73	-0.66	-0.22
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	705	4.44	1.91	-0.68	-0.39
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	703	5.67	1.64	-1.68	2.55

Table 12: Descriptive statistics for personal involvement items

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Attributes/ Nationality	Mean importance ratings					Scheffé post-hoc comparison of means									
	German	South African	Indian	French	British	G vs SA	G vs I	G vs F	G vs B	SA vs I	SA vs F	SA vs B	B vs F	B vs I	I vs F
Friendly people	**5.80**	6.05	6.08	6.05	**6.22**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Clean and unpolluted natural environment	**5.79**	6.42	**6.51**	6.31	6.34	**	**	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Rest and relaxation	**5.86**	6.38	**6.61**	5.90	6.37	**	**	n.s	*	n.s	**	n.s	*	n.s	**
Hotel employees deliver service professionally	**5.32**	6.46	**6.67**	5.75	6.27	**	**	n.s	**	n.s	**	n.s	*	n.s	**
Nightlife and entertainment	4.18	**4.63**	**4.14**	4.39	4.57	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Safe and secure	**5.80**	6.55	**6.62**	6.31	6.43	**	**	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Away from the routine of daily life	5.85	**6.36**	6.30	**5.83**	6.23	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities for adventure and new experiences	5.53	**5.69**	5.78	**5.14**	5.57	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees are attentive to my needs	**5.41**	6.43	**6.63**	5.64	6.17	**	**	n.s	**	n.s	**	n.s	*	n.s	**
Calm and peaceful atmosphere	**5.91**	6.32	**6.40**	6.06	6.23	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Good value for money	**5.47**	6.26	**6.60**	5.90	6.05	**	**	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	**
Beautiful scenery and natural attractions	**6.02**	**6.02**	6.46	6.11	6.25	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Good weather and pleasant climate	6.18	6.34	**6.54**	**6.15**	6.34	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees are courteous	**5.66**	6.37	**6.57**	5.84	6.17	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Not crowded with tourists	**5.81**	5.25	5.70	**5.05**	5.77	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	n.s	*
Beaches and water sports	5.83	**5.95**	5.23	5.54	5.65	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals	**5.20**	4.91	**4.71**	4.94	5.19	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Cultural and historical attractions	**5.03**	5.21	**5.67**	5.16	5.57	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees are friendly and helpful	**5.74**	6.38	**6.57**	5.81	6.09	**	**	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Culturally diverse	5.28	**5.17**	**5.55**	5.40	5.45	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
See things that I don't normally see	**5.74**	5.95	**6.00**	**6.00**	5.99	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Lovely towns and cities	5.38	**5.36**	**5.78**	5.55	5.46	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Variety and good quality of accommodation	**5.42**	6.25	**6.40**	5.65	5.97	**	**	n.s	*	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	**

Attributes/ Nationality	German	South African	Indian	French	British	G vs SA	G vs I	G vs F	G vs B	SA vs I	SA vs F	SA vs B	B vs F	B vs I	I vs F
Hotel employees' advice on places to visit and things to do.	**5.12**	5.99	**6.13**	5.42	5.87	**	**	n.s	**	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Good level of service in general	**5.52**	6.44	**6.66**	5.84	6.21	**	**	n.s	**	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Opportunities to build friendship with others	4.80	4.85	**4.67**	4.96	**5.16**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Local transport is convenient	**4.80**	5.61	**5.63**	5.53	5.08	*	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Good shopping facilities	**5.24**	5.77	**6.18**	5.39	5.37	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	**
Hotel employees' have good language and communication skills	**5.25**	5.93	5.88	5.63	**5.98**	**	*	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to learn things about a new place	5.43	5.61	**5.95**	**5.33**	5.73	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*
Suitable holiday destination for the family	**5.09**	6.22	**6.44**	5.66	5.76	**	**	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	**
Appealing local cuisine	**5.74**	**6.23**	6.20	6.03	6.07	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Variety of restaurants and bars	**5.10**	**5.98**	5.75	5.53	5.79	**	*	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees have the right attitude towards me, family, children	**5.17**	6.34	**6.52**	6.02	6.30	**	**	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to spend time alone	5.20	5.70	**5.98**	**5.14**	5.41	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*
Easy access as a holiday destination	**5.13**	5.62	5.63	5.76	**5.93**	n.s	n.s	*	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Good reputation	**5.55**	5.91	**6.30**	5.80	5.95	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
No language barriers	**4.98**	5.50	5.44	**5.51**	5.50	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees share information about their culture	**4.78**	5.00	4.95	5.27	**5.34**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
The place is exotic	**5.39**	5.81	**6.06**	5.62	5.62	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to learn about different ways of life	5.44	5.48	**5.62**	**5.42**	5.54	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Hotel employees make me feel welcomed and respected	**5.41**	6.39	**6.61**	6.00	6.19	**	**	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
The destination has good signage	**5.18**	5.87	**6.21**	5.55	5.81	**	**	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*
	n.s=not significant, **=p < 0.01, *=p < 0.05														

Table 13: ANOVA by nationality on importance items

Attributes/ Nationality	Mean performance scores					Scheffé post hoc comparison of means									
	German	South African	Indian	French	British	G vs SA	G vs I	G vs B	G vs F	SA vs I	SA vs F	SA vs B	I vs F	I vs B	F vs B
Friendliness of people	**5.93**	6.15	5.94	6.18	**6.39**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
The natural environment (cleanliness and pollution free)	4.98	4.80	**4.54**	4.78	**5.20**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Mauritius as a place for rest and relaxation	**6.03**	6.23	6.27	5.82	**6.35**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Professionalism of hotel employees	**5.40**	5.60	5.82	5.55	**6.02**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Nightlife and entertainment	**4.05**	4.03	**3.39**	3.88	3.69	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Safety and security	**5.64**	5.28	**4.76**	5.51	5.60	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	**	n.s
Mauritius as a place different to your daily routine	6.03	6.07	**5.78**	6.08	**6.32**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	n.s
Opportunities for adventure & new experiences	5.58	5.81	4.99	**4.93**	**5.87**	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	**	**	n.s	n.s	**	**
Hotel employees' attentiveness to my needs	**5.40**	5.71	5.98	5.72	**6.12**	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Calmness and peacefulness of the atmosphere in Mauritius	6.01	6.09	6.00	**5.70**	**6.29**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**
Value for money of Mauritius	5.70	5.68	**4.96**	5.24	**5.78**	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	*
Scenery and natural attractions	5.94	6.09	6.02	**5.64**	**6.18**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*
Weather and Climate	5.98	5.95	**5.67**	5.94	**6.26**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	n.s
Courtesy of hotel employees	**5.53**	5.90	6.05	5.68	**6.13**	n.s	n.s	*	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Crowd level of tourists	5.35	5.36	**5.15**	5.23	**5.68**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Beaches and water sports	5.71	6.00	5.29	**5.28**	**6.08**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	**	n.s	n.s	**	**
Opportunities for socialisation with other tourists and locals	5.13	5.17	**4.55**	5.14	**5.25**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Cultural and historical attractions	5.16	5.20	**5.48**	5.10	5.28	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel employees	**5.38**	5.76	5.90	5.68	**6.15**	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
The cultural diversity of the place	**5.21**	5.43	5.56	5.28	**5.84**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to see things I don't normally see	5.56	5.78	5.54	**5.51**	**5.90**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
The towns and city	**5.00**	5.01	5.10	5.10	**5.13**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Variety and quality of accommodation	**5.46**	5.55	5.63	**5.46**	**5.77**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s

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Attributes/ Nationality	German	South African	Indian	French	British	G vs SA	G vs I	G vs B	G vs F	SA vs I	SA vs F	SA vs B	I vs F	I vs B	F vs B
Advice of hotel employees on places to visit and things to do	**5.04**	**5.49**	5.24	5.17	5.48	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
General level of service	**5.38**	5.83	5.83	5.63	**6.06**	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to build friendship with Mauritians	4.86	4.99	**4.40**	**5.23**	5.10	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	n.s
Local transport	**4.89**	4.17	**3.98**	4.53	**3.98**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Shopping facilities	**5.20**	4.84	**4.27**	4.95	4.94	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Language and communication skills of hotel employees	5.34	**5.32**	5.39	5.73	**5.92**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	*	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to learn new things about Mauritius	**5.51**	5.34	**5.17**	5.49	5.49	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Mauritius as a holiday place for the family	**5.47**	6.01	**6.05**	5.69	5.97	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Local cuisine	5.72	5.25	**4.83**	5.71	**5.74**	n.s	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	**	n.s
Variety of restaurants and bars	5.07	4.93	**4.70**	**5.31**	5.24	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Attitude of hotel employees towards me/family/children	**5.13**	5.84	6.05	5.66	**6.16**	*	**	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Mauritius as a place to spend time alone	5.03	5.74	**5.75**	**4.48**	4.95	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	**	n.s	**	n.s	n.s
Accessibility of the destination	**5.46**	5.65	5.49	**5.69**	5.63	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Mauritius compared to its reputation	**5.61**	5.70	5.71	5.77	**6.14**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Ease of communication (language)	**5.50**	5.72	5.60	**5.94**	5.77	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Information learnt from hotel employees about their culture	**4.45**	**4.99**	4.81	4.95	4.83	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Exoticness of the place	**5.56**	5.64	5.57	5.61	**5.90**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Opportunities to learn about way of life of Mauritians	5.33	4.87	**4.75**	**5.18**	5.16	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Welcoming and respect you received from hotel employees	**5.38**	5.85	6.04	5.77	**6.13**	n.s	*	**	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
Signage (roads and places of interests)	**4.77**	4.65	**4.52**	4.55	4.75	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s	n.s
	G=German, SA=South African, I=Indian, F=French, B=British					n.s=not significant, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05										

Table 14: ANOVA by nationality on performance items

APPENDIX C

Place Attachment Items	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Mauritius is a very special destination to me	6.16	5.35	3.52	6.42
I identify strongly with this destination	5.83	4.58	2.94	6.28
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	4.40	4.30	2.05	5.76
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	6.09	5.32	3.73	6.36
I am very attached to this holiday destination	5.90	4.98	3.15	6.21
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	5.36	4.66	2.61	6.09
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	3.30	4.39	2.40	5.83
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	1.73	4.89	2.32	5.71
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	2.40	4.20	1.94	5.55
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	3.42	4.13	2.37	5.66

Table 1: Cluster means for each place attachment item

Place Attachment Items	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
Mauritius is a very special destination to me	0.181	0.175	0.511
I identify strongly with this destination	0.229	0.331	-0.589
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	0.309	0.101	0.119
Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	0.117	0.230	0.065
I am very attached to this holiday destination	0.121	0.331	0.188
Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	0.144	0.176	0.122
Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	0.268	-0.186	-0.319
I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	0.411	-0.705	0.257
Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	0.397	-0.309	0.145
I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	0.200	0.100	-0.489

Table 2: Standardised canonical discriminant function coefficients for place attachment items

Discriminant function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.
1	3.956	73. 930	0.893	0.082	1704.08	0.000
2	1.358	25.370	0.759	0.409	610.88	0.000
3	0.037	0.700	0.190	0.964	25.13	0.001

Table 3: Results of discriminant analysis for place attachment

Canonical Discriminant Functions
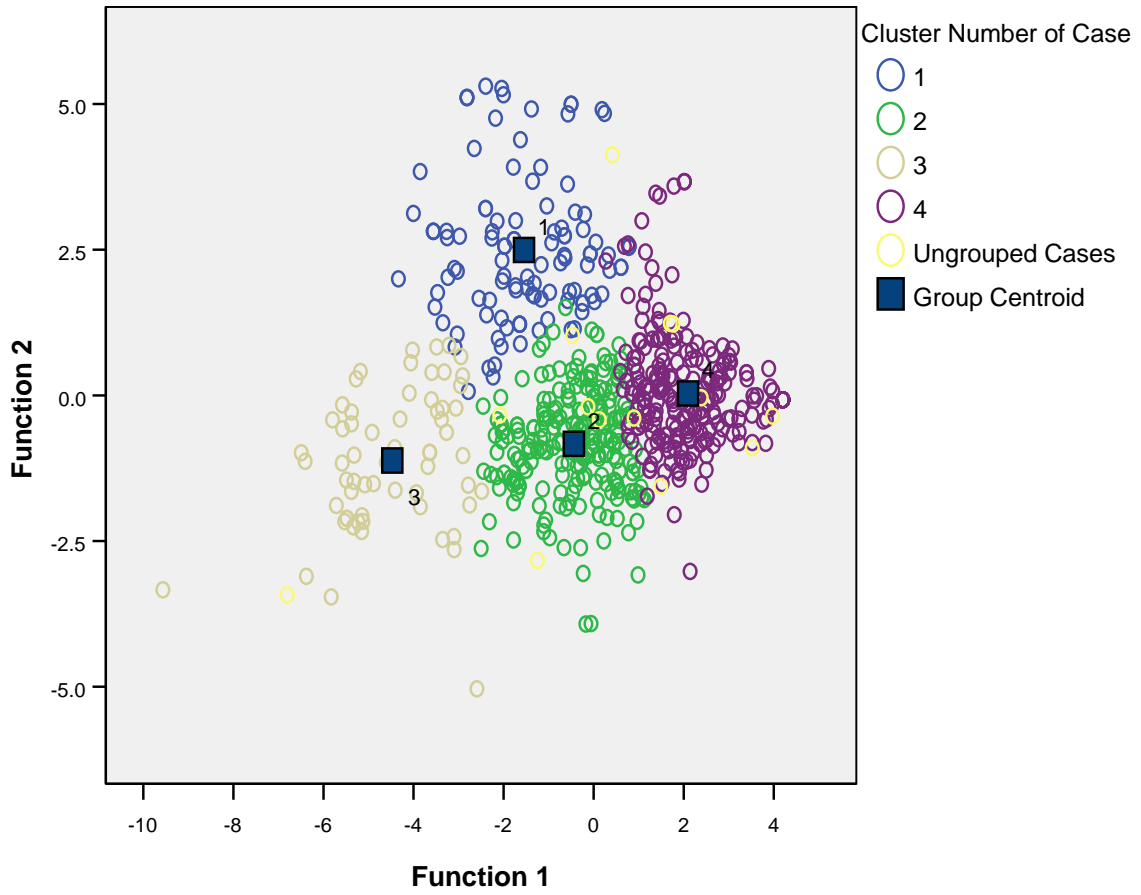
Figure 1: Combined groups plot for place attachment clusters

Personal Involvement Items	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience	6.04	4.01	4.73	1.70	1.81
I get pleasure from being on holidays here	6.66	4.45	5.89	6.30	6.09
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius	6.55	3.84	5.56	5.27	5.51
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	2.71	3.36	5.50	4.35	3.29
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	6.75	4.18	5.74	5.77	5.63
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	6.87	3.69	5.66	6.05	5.83
It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination	1.56	3.32	4.88	2.41	2.26
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	5.06	3.96	5.58	4.83	5.33
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	6.09	3.14	5.68	2.27	4.69
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	2.83	3.45	5.61	3.83	4.07
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	3.74	3.51	5.47	2.50	5.15
It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	6.75	3.95	5.82	5.19	5.83
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	3.85	3.26	5.69	4.08	4.41
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	3.54	3.23	5.66	2.00	5.10
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	6.60	3.97	5.83	5.24	5.95

Table 4: Cluster means for personal involvement items

Discriminant Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.
1	2.078	48.296	0.822	0.068	1783.499	0.000
2	1.366	31.749	0.760	0.209	1037.475	0.000
3	0.586	13.620	0.608	0.495	465.999	0.000
4	0.273	6.335	0.463	0.786	159.945	0.000

Table 5: Results of discriminant analysis

Personal Involvement Items	DF 1	DF 2	DF 3	DF 4
It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination	**0.509**	0.017	0.280	-0.386
It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	**0.395**	0.134	0.277	0.153
One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	**0.278**	0.255	0.268	0.110
You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	0.142	**0.664**	-0.257	-0.473
Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	-0.256	**0.486**	0.361	0.211
Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	0.440	**0.468**	-0.360	0.365
I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	-0.193	**0.441**	0.295	-0.058
It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	-0.100	**0.433**	0.072	0.040
I attach great importance to being on holiday in Mauritius	-0.140	**0.429**	0.167	-0.007
If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	-0.083	**0.396**	0.055	0.136
I get pleasure from being on holidays here	-0.209	**0.381**	0.330	0.298
Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	0.338	**0.368**	-0.310	0.353
I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	0.088	**0.266**	0.119	0.248
When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	0.351	0.045	**0.522**	-0.109

Table 6: Standardised canonical discriminant function coefficients

Territorial Map

(Assuming all functions but the first two are zero)

Canonical Discriminant

Function 2

```
        -6.0       -4.0       -2.0        .0        2.0        4.0        6.0
          ôòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòÔòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòÔ
    6.0 ô                                   13                              ô
        ó                                   13                              ó
        ó                                   13                              ó
        ó                                   13                              ó
        ó                                   13                              ó
        ó                                   13                              ó
    4.0 ô          ô          ô          ô13        ô          ô          ô
        ó                                   13                              ó
        ó                                  153                              ó
        ó                                  1553                             ó
        ó                                  1553                             ó
        ó                                 15   53                           ó
    2.0 ô          ô          ô        15 ô 53      ô          ô          ô
        ó                               15    53                            ó
        ó                      *       15    53                             ó
        ó                              15     53                            ó
        ó                             15      53    *                       ó
        ó                            15    *  53                            ó
    .0 ô          ô        ô 15      ô   53     ô          ô          ô
        ó                          1115         53                          ó
        ó                    1111444455         53                          ó
        ó                 111114444   44555    5553                         ó
        ó             111144444      * 4445555522223333                     ó
        ó 111114444                   422222    22223333                    ó
   -2.0 ô144444     ô          ô     42 ô        ô22223333 ô          ô
```

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```
      ó4                              42        *              22223333        ó
      ó                                42                         22223333     ó
      ó                               42                           222233336
      ó                              42                                22226
      ó                             42                                         ó
  -4.0 ô          ô              42        ô          ô          ô          ô
      ó                          42                                          ó
      ó                         42                                           ó
      ó                        42                                            ó
      ó                       42                                             ó
      ó                      42                                              ó
  -6.0 ô                    42                                               ô

      ôòòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòòôòòòòòòòòòòòô
     -6.0      -4.0      -2.0       .0        2.0       4.0       6.0

              Canonical Discriminant Function 1
```

c

Symbol Group Label

------ ----- --------------------

   1   1

   2   2

   3   3

   4   4

   5   5

   *   Indicates a group centroid

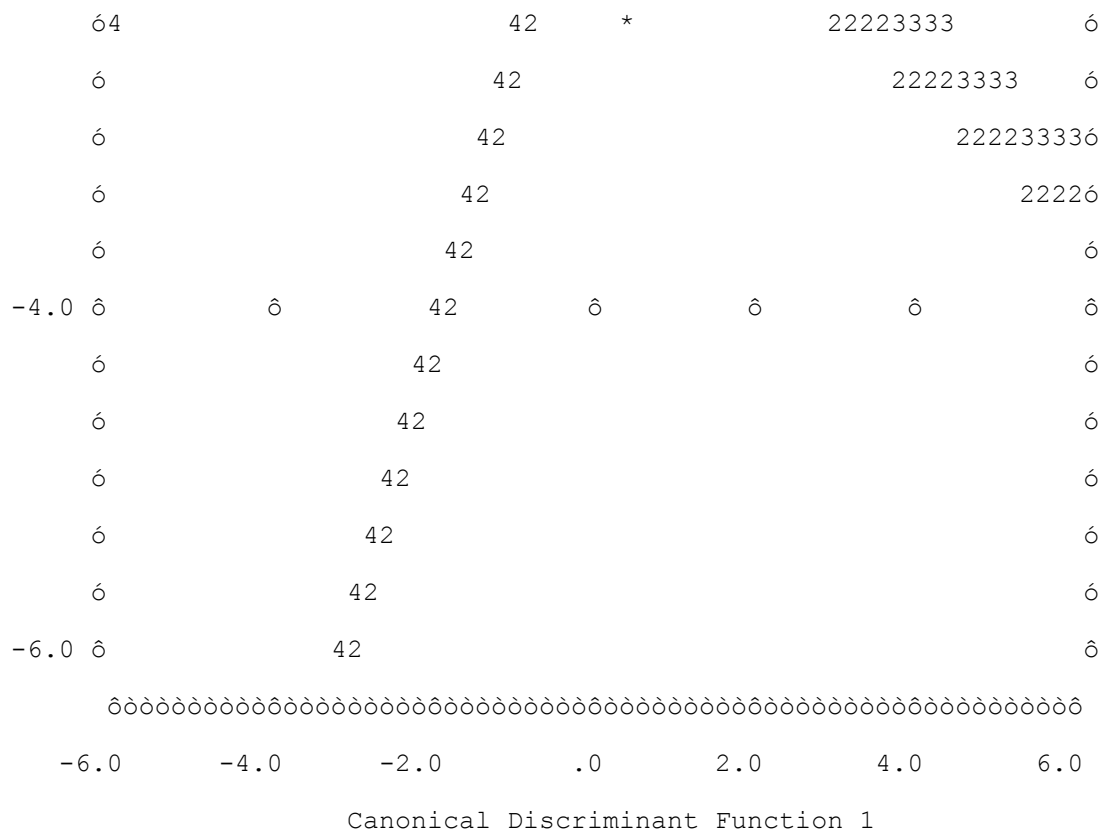**Figure 2:** Territorial map for personal involvement clusters

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Effect	Model Fitting Criteria -2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Likelihood Ratio Tests Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	1326.78	0.00	0	.
Nationality	1384.20	57.42	28	**0.001**
Ethnicity	1346.37	19.59	4	**0.001**
Length of stay	1353.49	26.71	12	**0.009**
Person travelling with	1348.98	22.19	12	**0.035**
Education level	1352.92	26.14	8	**0.001**
Marital status	1344.37	17.59	12	0.129
Avg. monthly household income	1344.49	17.70	8	**0.024**
Fluency in English	1330.04	3.25	4	0.516
Fluency in French	1337.11	10.33	4	**0.035**
Fluency in German	1333.52	6.73	4	0.151
Fluency in Hindi	1331.70	4.91	4	0.296
Fluency in Afrikaans	1335.98	9.20	4	0.056

Table 7: Likelihood ratio test

Observed	Predicted					
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Percent Correct
1	26	1	15	2	26	37.14
2	3	8	22	5	33	11.27
3	13	9	77	4	70	44.51
4	3	5	17	14	47	16.28
5	10	9	34	8	146	70.53
Overall Percentage	9.06	5.27	27.18	5.44	53.05	44.65

Table 8: Classification matrix

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APPENDIX D

Scatterplot

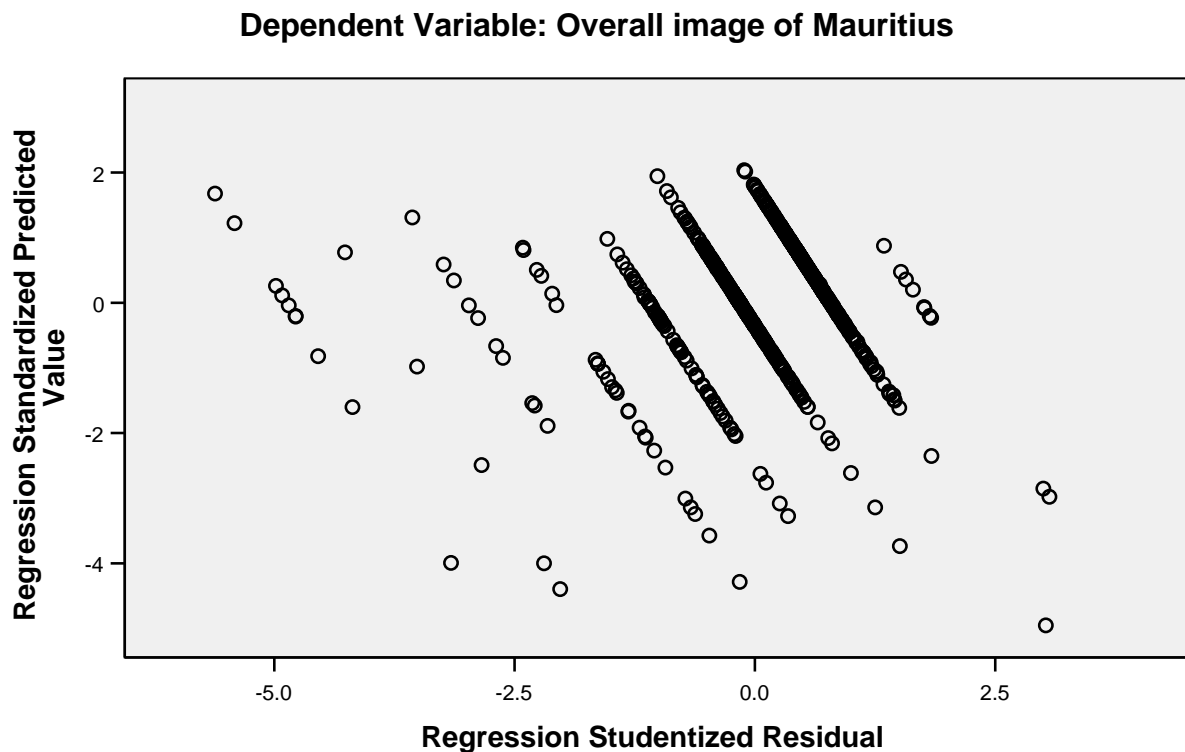**Dependent Variable: Overall image of Mauritius**

Figure 1: Residual plot for overall relationship

(1) Linearity of the Phenomenon Measured

The linearity of the relationship between dependent and independent variables represents the degree to which the change in the dependent variable is associated with the independent variables (Hair *et al.*, 2005). This assumption can be tested by examining the residual plots and the partial regression plots. The latter shows the relationship of a single independent variable to the dependent variable, controlling for the effects of all other independent variables. The partial regression plots indicated no distinct curvilinear patterns that would suggest a non-linear relationship. Hence, the assumption of linearity was considered met.

(2) Homoscedasticity – Constant Variance of the Error Term

This assumption detects the presence of unequal variances and can be checked by visual examination of a plot of the standardised residuals by the regression standardised predicted values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). As shown in Appendix D (Figure 2), the residuals were randomly scattered around zero, indicating that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

(3) Independence of the Error Terms

The third assumption deals with the independence of the error terms, which is the effect of carry over from one observation to another and can be tested using either a plot of residuals against the sequence of observations or the Durbin-Watson statistic, which is a measure of autocorrelation of errors over the sequence of cases. In this case, the Durbin Watson statistic was 1.85, which is slightly lower than the recommended statistic of 2.00. This indicates the presence of positive auto-correlation in the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) but was not deemed to be a significant problem as the value was close to two.

(4) Normality of the Error Term Distribution

This assumption can be tested using a normal probability plot. As can be seen in Appendix D (Figure 3), the residual line follows somewhat closely the diagonal line but some systematic departures existed in the data. This is not uncommon in multiple regression and therefore, the distribution of the error terms was considered normal. Hence, based on the above results, all four assumptions were met.
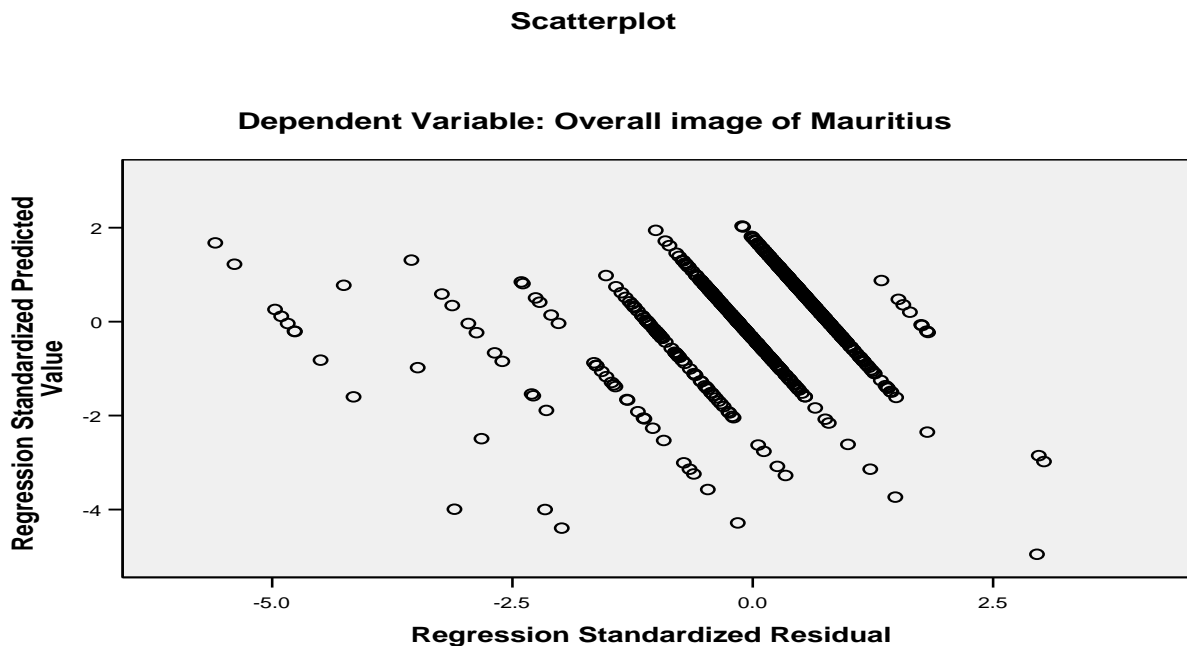

igure 2: Plot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
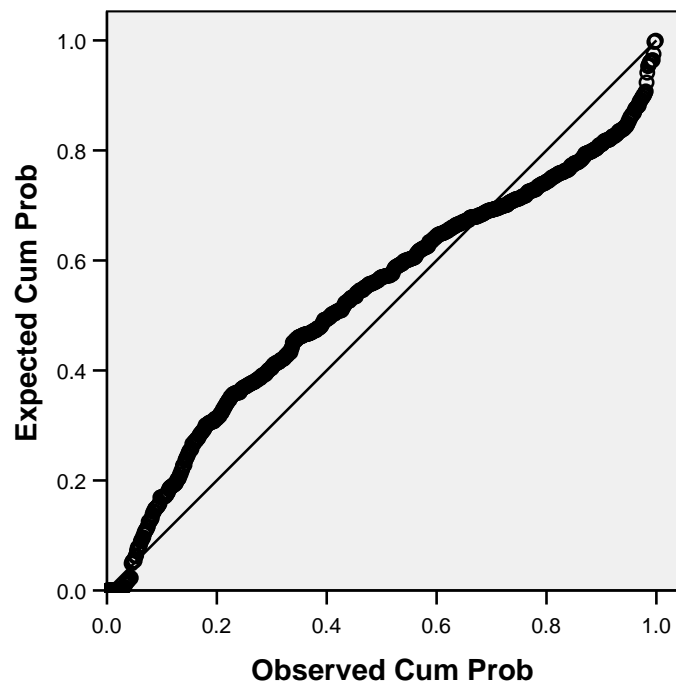
Dependent Variable: Overall image of Mauritius

Figure 3: Normal probability plot for overall image

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REGRESSION MODEL FOR OVERALL SATISFACTION

Scatterplot

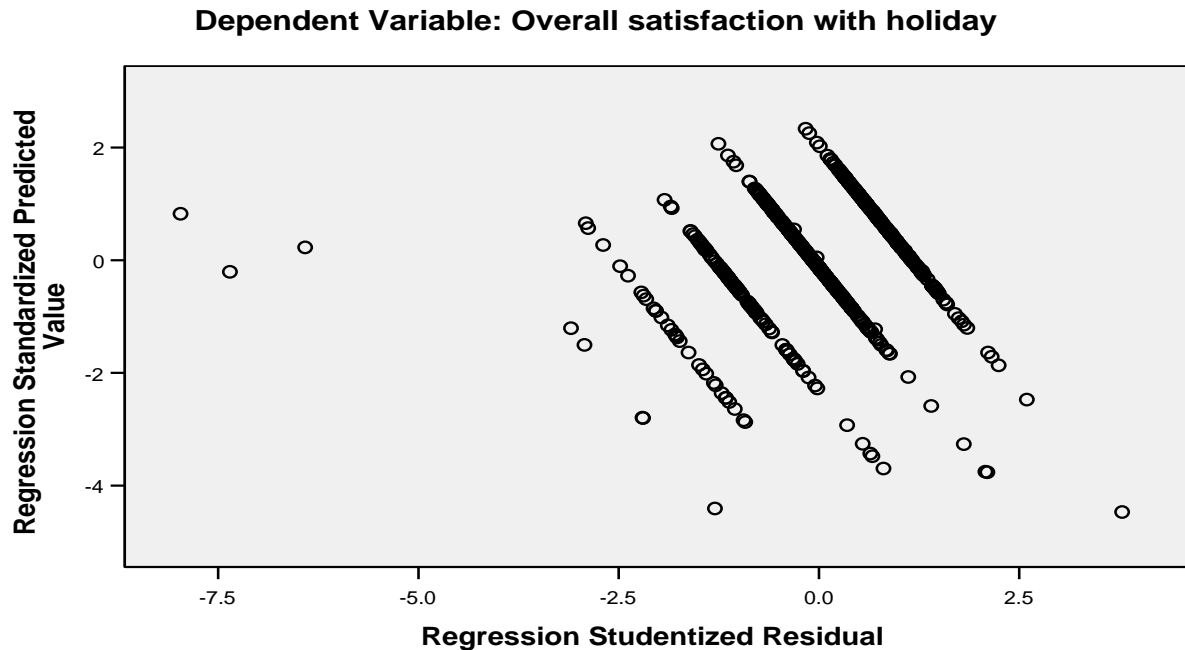**Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction with holiday**

Figure 4: Residual plot for overall relationship

The plot of the studentised residuals against the predicted values for the overall relationship showed no specific patterns of the residuals (Figure 4), indicating that assumptions for the overall relationship were met. Linearity of the relationship was confirmed by visual examination of the partial regression plots which indicated that no specific curvilinear pattern existed, implying linearity in the relationship. The plot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values (Figure 5) showed no specific patterns in the residuals. Hence, it was deemed that the data exhibited homoscedasticity. The Durbin-Watson statistic achieved a value of 1.746, which is close to 2, therefore indicating general independence of the error terms. The normal probability plot (Figure 6) showed that the standardised residuals followed the diagonal line for the normal distribution fairly closely indicating that the fourth assumption was met.
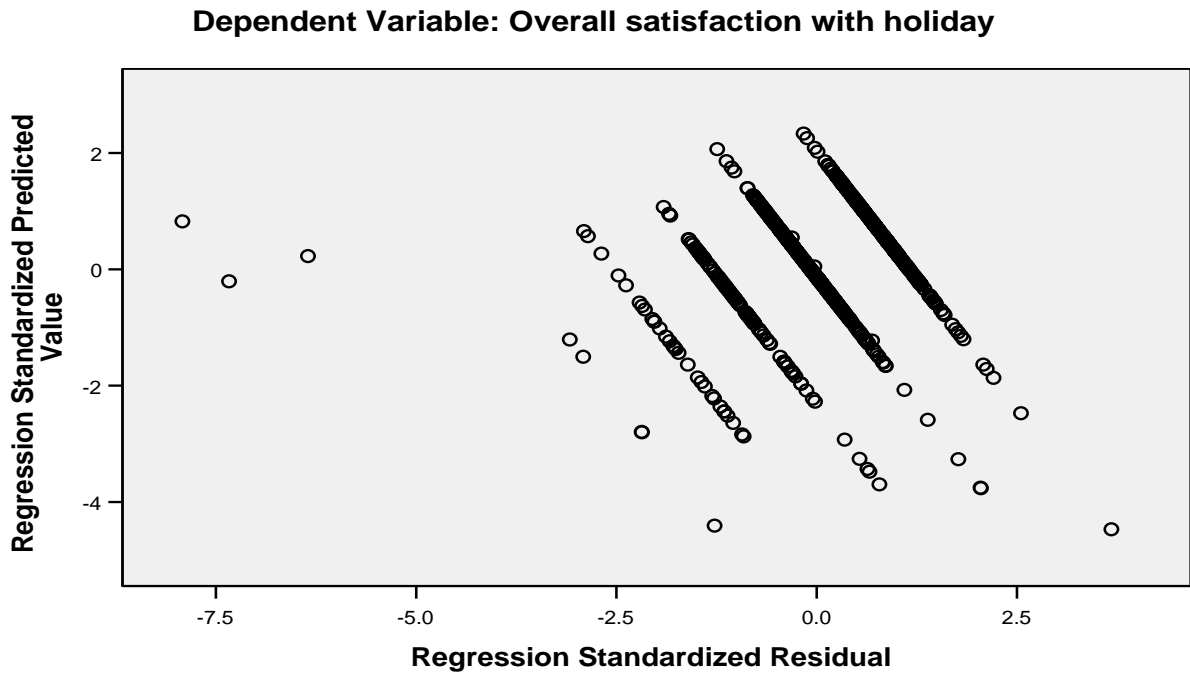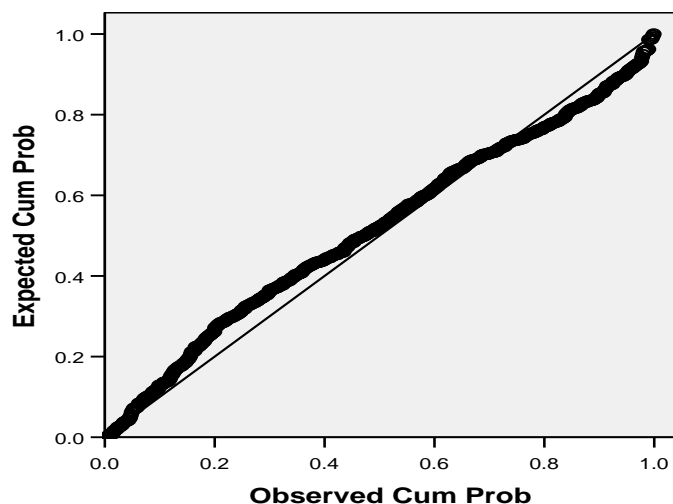
Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction with holiday

Figure 5: Residual plot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction with holiday

F

igure 6: Normal probability plot for overall satisfaction

REGRESSION MODEL FOR OVERALL LOYALTY

The overall relationship was tested for violations of regression assumptions but the plot of studentised residuals against the predicted values (Appendix D – Figure 7) showed no specific patterns of residuals, implying that the analysis could proceed with testing of the four major assumptions of regression. A visual examination of the partial regression plots confirmed linearity of the phenomenon while a plot of the standardised residuals against the standardised predicted values (Appendix D – Figure 8) confirmed homoscedasticity. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.867) was close to 2 implying independence of the error terms while the normal probability plot (Appendix D – Figure 9) showed that the plot of residuals followed closely the diagonal line indicating normality of the error term distribution.
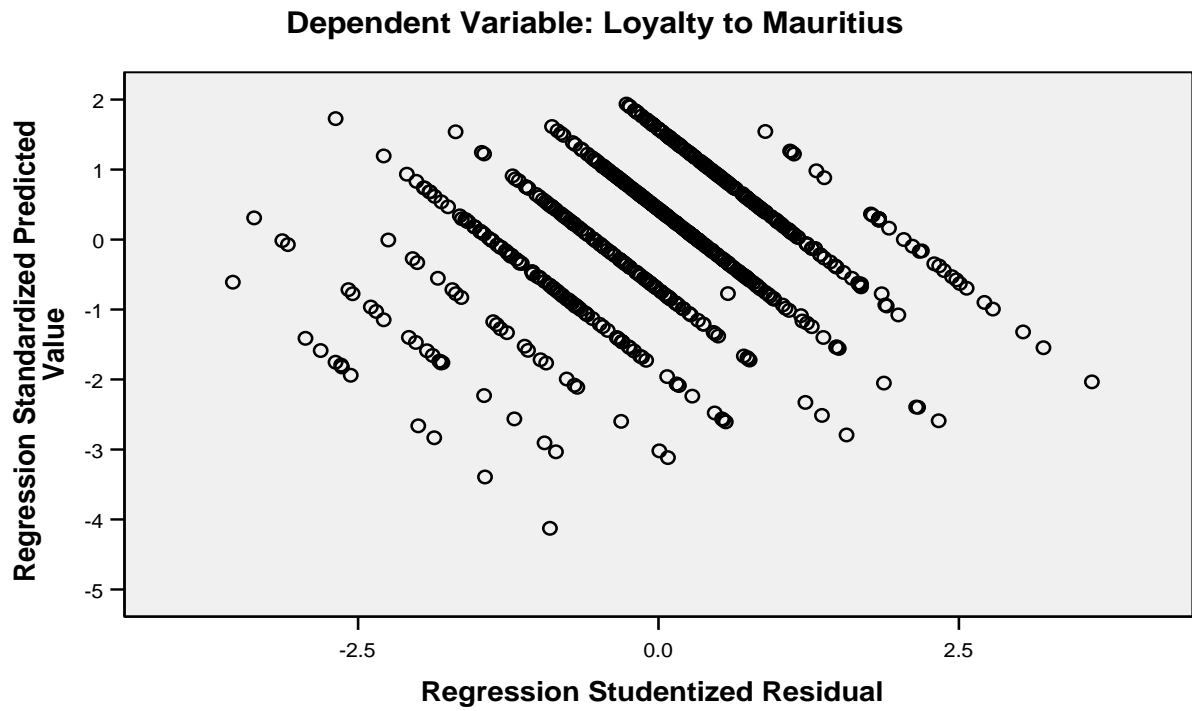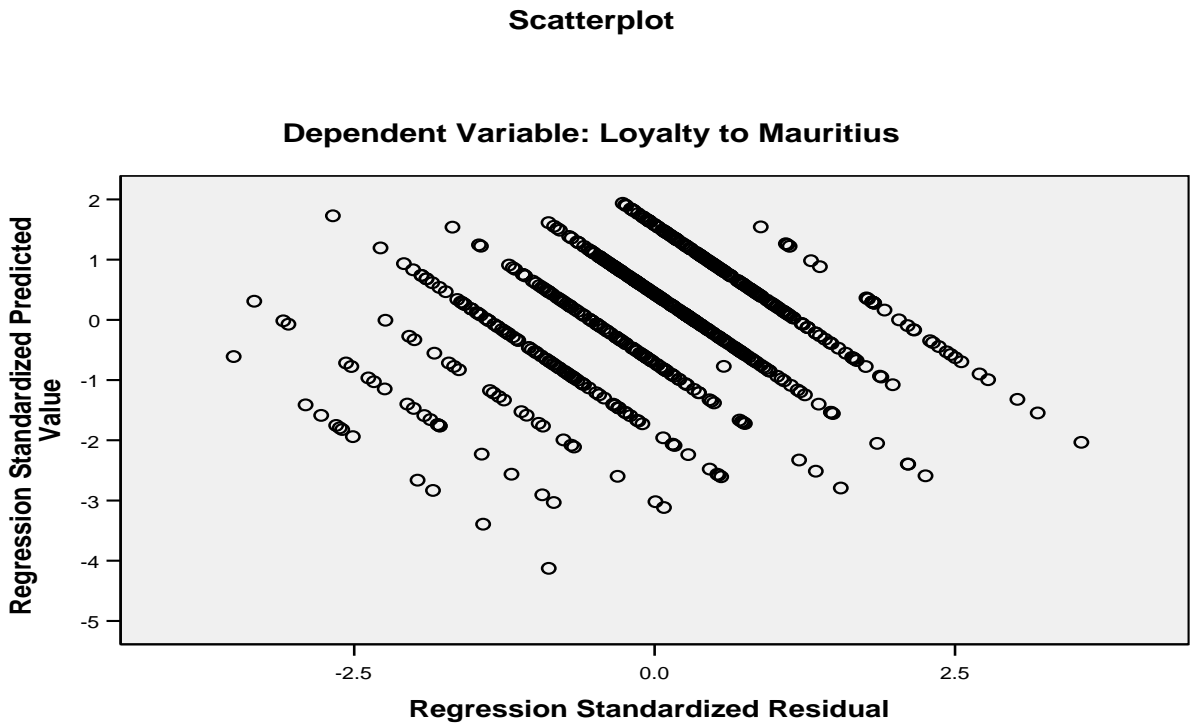
Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Loyalty to Mauritius

Figure 7: Residual plot for overall relationship

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Loyalty to Mauritius

F

igure 8: Residual plot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Loyalty to Mauritius
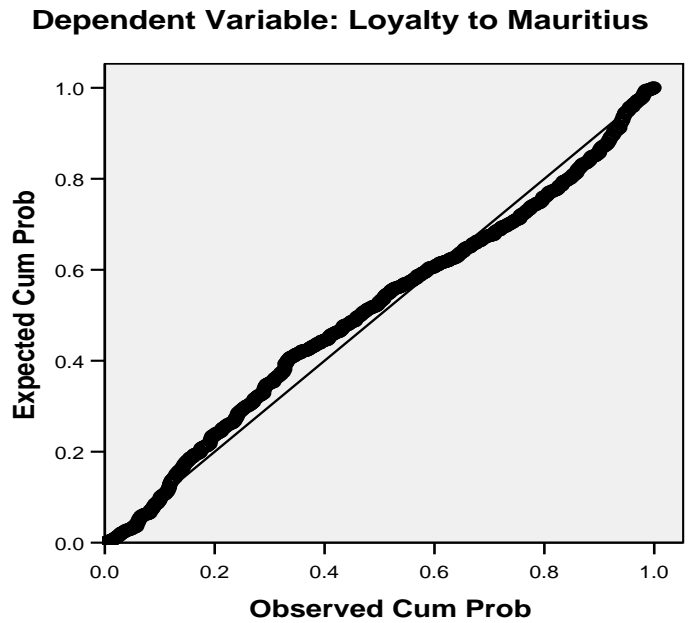
F

igure 9: Normal probability plot for loyalty levels

Construct	Squared Multiple Correlations	Std. β Coefficients	Construct	SMC	Std. β Coefficients
Destination Image			**Place Attachment**		
Item 1- Friendliness of people	0.177	0.421	Item1- Mauritius is a very special destination to me	0.550	0.742
Item 2- Natural environment	0.148	0.385	Item 2- I identify strongly with this destination	0.462	0.680
Item 3- Nightlife & entertainment	0.128	0.358	Item 3- I am very attached to this holiday destination	0.584	0.764
Item 4- Safety & security	0.097	0.312	Item 4- Holidaying in Mauritius says a lot about who I am	0.245	0.495
Item 5- Adventure & new experiences	0.225	0.475	Item 5- Holidaying in Mauritius means a lot to me	0.569	0.754
Item 6- Value for money	0.181	0.425	Item 6- Mauritius is the best place for what I like to do on holidays	0.532	0.729
Item 7- Scenery & natural attractions	0.155	0.394	Item 7- No other place can provide the same holiday experience as Mauritius	0.400	0.633
Item 8- Weather & climate	0.161	0.401	Item 8 - I got more satisfaction out of this destination than any other sun, sand, sea destination that I have visited	0.199	0.446
Item 9- Crowd level of tourists	0.120	0.347	Item 9 - Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other places	0.373	0.611
Item 10- Beaches & water sports	0.117	0.341	Item 10- I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in Mauritius	0.310	0.557
Item 11- Cultural & historical attractions	0.262	0.511	Item 11- I feel no commitment to this place	0.012	-0.108
Item 12- Cultural diversity	0.297	0.545	Item 12- The things I did in Mauritius I would enjoy doing them in another '3S' destination	0.008	-0.090
Item 13- The towns and city	0.202	0.449	**Personal Involvement**		
Item 14- Variety & quality of accommodation	0.271	0.521	Item 1- I get pleasure from being on holidays here	0.495	0.704
Item 15- Level of service	0.275	0.525	Item 2- I attach great importance to being on	0.512	0.716

			holiday in Mauritius		
Item 16- Local transport	0.142	0.377	Item 3- When faced with choosing among holiday alternatives, I feel a bit lost to make the right choice	0.005	0.074
Item 17- Shopping facilities	0.166	0.407	Item 4- I have a lot of interest in Mauritius as a holiday destination	0.567	0.753
Item 18- Holiday place for the family	0.207	0.455	Item 5- Being on holiday here is a bit like giving a gift to one's self	0.504	0.710
Item 19- Local cuisine	0.131	0.362	Item 6- It is not a big deal if I make a mistake when choosing a holiday destination	0.001	-0.036
Item 20- Accessibility	0.264	0.514	Item 7- I give myself pleasure by getting involved in the various things to do here	0.178	0.422
Item 21- Reputation	0.375	0.613	Item 8- You can tell a lot about a person/family by whether or not they go on holidays	0.218	0.467
Item 22-Ease of communication	0.135	0.367	Item 9- It is rather complicated to choose a holiday destination	0.009	0.096
Item 23- Exoticness of the place	0.264	0.513	Item 10- Where I/we go on holidays says something about me/us	0.076	0.276
Item 24- Signage	0.096	0.310	Item 11- It is extremely annoying to choose a destination that is not suitable.	0.120	0.346
Item 25- Variety of bars & restaurants	0.179	0.423	Item 12- One never really knows whether or not I/we are making the right choice when selecting a holiday destination	0.034	0.186
Motives for Choice			Item 13- Where I/we go on holidays give people an indication of the type of person/family I/we are	0.079	0.281
Item 1- Rest & relaxation	0.295	0.543	Item 14- If, after I have been on holiday somewhere, my choice proved to be poor, I would be very upset	0.120	0.346

Item 2-Away from routine	0.277	0.526	Item 15- My holidays in Mauritius left me totally indifferent to the experience	0.026	0.160
Item 3- Calm & peaceful atmosphere	0.326	0.571			
Item 4- Socialise with others	0.231	0.481			
Item 5- See things don't normally see	0.308	0.555			
Item 6- Build friendship with others	0.162	0.403			
Item 7- Learn things about a new place	0.249	0.499			
Item 8- Spend time alone	0.072	0.269			
Item 9- Learn about different ways of life	0.265	0.515			
Service Interactions					
Item 1- Service profesionally	0.633	0.795			
Item 2- Attentive to needs	0.684	0.827			
Item 3- Courteous	0.588	0.767			
Item 4- Friendly & helpful	0.743	0.862			
Item 5- Advice on places to visit & things to do.	0.318	0.564			
Item 6- Good language and communication skills	0.486	0.697			
Item 7- Right attitude towards guests	0.455	0.675			
Item 8- Information about culture	0.131	0.362			
Item 9- Feel welcomed and respected	0.567	0.753			

Table 1: Results of confirmatory factor analysis