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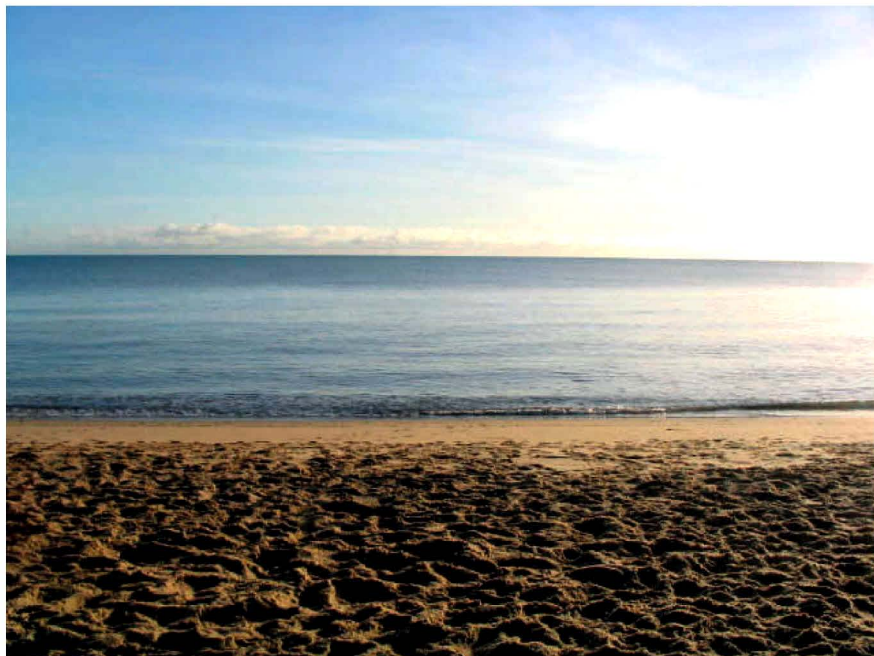


# Beach Images: Meaning, Measurement and Management

Thesis submitted by

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B. Admin (Tourism)



In September 2005

For the degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**

In the School of Business  
James Cook University  
Cairns

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## ABSTRACT

The beach is a tourism phenomenon. Images of beaches are prolific in tourism literature, and have existed throughout the ages. The literature review in this thesis documents these historic and contemporary images. Yet, despite their significance, research on beach images is scarce. An opportunity to add to the tourism literature was identified from this research review. Consequently, the theme for this thesis is – the meaning, measurement and management of beach images. Three studies were structured on the basis of these three particular elements of beach images. The first study focused on the physical characteristics of beach images and the meaning derived from these physical elements. International visitors representing four global culture groups – North America (n = 78) , Asia (n = 88), Europe (n = 108) and the United Kingdom (n = 143) – were asked to consider and sketch their favourite beach. The beach sketches obtained were predominantly of coastal, cove-like beaches, dominated by natural attributes. The spatial-geographic features included zones consistent with previous beach research but with emphasis on the shoreland (27.4%), beach (31.3%) and shallow water (30.0%). The culture groups differed in terms of their emphasis on attributes of their images. More specifically, the Asian visitors showed strong preferences for natural attributes such as mountains (n = 28) and all types of trees (n = 51), and two particular culture attributes – boats (n = 20) and umbrellas (n = 16), all of which were emphasised by their artistic rendering that resembled their culture's art and immediate surroundings. The United Kingdom showed preferences for the physical and spatial-geographic elements endemic to their beaches, such as

bay/cove (n = 49), rocks (n = 49), and cliffs (n = 17). The beach sketch maps, while useful for examining the physical elements, were limited in identifying the social, psychological and physiological characteristics of beach images.

Consequently, the second study – working with the same four culture groups – aimed to capture the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics, by using a questionnaire with largely open-ended questions. The level of familiarity that tourists had of their beaches was strong, with 84% of respondents having actually visited their favourite beach, and 44% having spent more than two days there. These results strengthened the forthcoming and more detailed questions in the study, since the characteristics of the beach images being described were of real beaches rather than ‘idealistic’ beaches. The subsequent image characteristics represented largely under-developed beaches (64.3%), with mainly nature attributes dominated by palm trees (17.1%), white sand (32.2%), clean/clear (25.7%) and blue water (20.0%). New dimensions were found – representing landscape-scenery and feelings-emotions. The feelings-emotions dimension represented 73.4% of the total culture attributes of favourite beaches described by respondents. Variations were found in the four culture groups. This implied that not one particular type of beach was prevalent to all culture groups, and, as such not all beach images are the same for these groups. The results pointed to the existence of various sub-groups and idiosyncratic beach images in all culture groups.

The final study examined images held by management and marketing organisations from five popular Australian beach tourism destinations located in the state of Queensland. The results indicated that each organisation selected and valued only the nature and culture attributes existing at their particular beach. Management problems/issues were directed primarily at maintaining the natural attributes of the beach. Socio-cultural management challenges were associated with the more developed beaches. The general level of agreement found between the promotional images, and to some extent, visitors' images, indicates that successful management requires an understanding of images from all of these points of view.

The research has provided new information on the images of beaches. In particular, the research revealed that combining measurement techniques could result in better understanding of images. The unique representations found in the different culture groups' images supports the concept of "imageability" of the beach. In other words, the beach produces a distinct and identifiable image in the minds of tourists. Consequently, the beach has a particular 'meaning' to tourists. It is culture that creates the meaning of the beach, but it is supplemented by the natural, social and psychological factors also found in beach images. The evidence from all three studies idealises the representation of the 'touristic paradise' as an organising framework that has permeated the tourist culture image of the beach. More over, evidence of this representation is presented in the feeling or emotion associated with beach images. Consequently, measurement of beach images requires attention to a combination of natural, physical,



psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and their respective measurement techniques.

It has been suggested that future images are built on past and present images, and that this is a dynamic and continuing process. Consequently, future beach image research is recommended in order to understand the current process of re-engineering and re-inventing the images of beaches. In particular, research using different types of beaches in varied locations, as well as different beach and tourist types can be suggested. The ways in which beaches are presented, images and experiences are important to existing and future tourism globally, and the framework presented in this thesis may be a contribution to these assessments and meanings.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

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*The coast has always produced strong visual images and emotional reactions. The natural landscape of sea, sky, cliffs and beach or the resort townscape of promenade, piers, pavilions, entertainment and exotic architecture, provide a distinctive sense of place: a holiday landscape that represents an escape from the ordinary routine of life (Towner, 1996, p. 211).*



## **1.1 Introduction**

The beach is a tourism phenomenon. Every day, people all over the world visit the beach and of those who do not, many probably daydream about it. Of the world's many tourist attractions, beaches are one of the most highly sought after locations for tourists. The primary appeal lies in the beach's ability to fulfil the variety of tourist experiences, such as leisure, fun, relaxation, romance, escape, adventure or indulgence. There are beaches to suit almost every individual tourist's needs, motivations and personal taste. The abundance of beaches and the demand for visiting them stimulates those charged with promoting beach tourism to use images of beaches to attract visitors to their destinations. The proliferation of such images has developed the phenomenon of beach tourism. It is the importance of the beach as a tourism destination and its associated images that drives this research.

## **1.2 The General Research Problem**

Despite their significance to tourism, research on the beach as a tourism destination or more specifically, research on the images of beaches, appears to be scarce. In 1997, Ryan stated, after reviewing the literature on beaches, "how little literature there was on the beach as a holiday site with the exception of past histories of the development of bathing and the impact of the railways" (1997, p. xiii). In broad terms, this author agrees. Prior to Ryan's statement, only one study

was found that specifically examines tourist behaviour at beaches (Passariello, 1983). Since Ryan's statement, however, a number of studies have been published that focus on tourists and beach experiences, with all but one concentrating on beaches in the United Kingdom. In these and just a few later works, various characteristics of beach experiences are examined, including - ratings, preferences and priorities of beach users (Morgan, 1999a, 1999b); opinions and perceptions (Morgan, et. al., 1993); experiences and values (Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998); perceptions and values (MacLeod, Periera da Silva, & Cooper, 2002). Although none deal specifically with beach images, they substantiate the existence of particular characteristics of beaches and beach visitors that, in turn, inspire more in-depth research. It would appear then, that the image of the beach has been partially neglected in the field of tourism studies, despite the significance of the beach and use of beach imagery in tourism. This situation raises a number of questions.

Firstly, what are beach images and what are the characteristics of these images? In order to study the phenomenon, it is perhaps best to begin with defining the essential components of beach images. Beaches can be considered as geographical locations, so they can be defined in terms of geographical boundaries, as well as other geographical factors namely, environmental and climatic conditions. Images, however, are more complex. It is generally accepted, that images do not have a universal definition that is appropriate for all disciplines. Therefore, in order to define beach images, it is crucial to evaluate the various types of image definitions, techniques for measuring these images and

applications of these methods. In doing so, a foundation is established for more in-depth study of beach images.

Secondly, having drawn these parameters of beach images, it is necessary to ask what are the particular environmental and human attributes that exist in tourist beach images? Generally, environmental attributes may be either natural such as vegetation, climate and topography, or human-related, such as buildings, roads, and other structures. Other human attributes include different cultures, age groups, numbers of people, and human activities. Since all of these attributes can be found at beaches, it can be assumed that they must, in some way contribute to the formation of beach images. Therefore, it is important to understand specifically what these attributes are, and how they contribute to beach images. This leads to further questioning regarding the significance of these attributes in tourism. In short, are attributes of beach images the same or different for individual tourists? Do attributes vary between cultures? Are some attributes more significant than others? These questions deal with beach image attributes from the perspective of the tourist. There is, however, also another important view to beach images. This is the view of the beach tourism destination manager, marketer and developer. Beach tourism destinations are subject to tourist trends, management and marketing issues, pollution and other environmental issues. In order to present a holistic view of beach images, it is necessary to take into account the perspectives of those who are responsible for creating and managing the images of beach tourism destinations. The management perspective on

beaches and beach images will form a supplementary part of the research in this thesis.

Additionally, the study will consider the future images of beaches that beach tourism destination managers and developers hold. Since such personnel and organisations are largely responsible for developing and maintaining many of the beaches, they also influence the images of these beaches. Therefore, it is important to review the types of images that managers and developers have of beaches and the problems and issues they have regarding beach tourism destination images. This line of questioning, along those previously established, will assist in reflecting on the future of beach images. That is, in studying beach images from the perspectives of the location, the tourist and the manager, some implications can be drawn about the future of beach images.

Together, these concerns establish the recurring theme for this thesis – **the meaning, measurement and management of beach images**. The study has been structured on the basis of these three elements of beach images. Firstly, it will address the identification of a meaning for tourist beach images by defining beach images and determining beach image components in relation to tourism. Secondly, methods of measuring beach images will be designed and tested. Finally, management of beach images will be addressed by understanding the relationship between images and the role of the beach tourism destination managers and developers. Integrated in the structure of the study, is a

contribution to the theoretical foundation for images in general, and beach tourism resources

### **1.3 The Existence of Beach Images**

Images of beaches have existed throughout history and have been manifested in many different ways. In ancient times, the beach was seen as nature in the raw; it was viewed as a place of survival against natural forces, as a staging ground for war and a way of colonising lands. To many, the beach was ‘the liminal space of encounters between Manichean forces of good and evil: between earth and water, man and nature, the civil and the savage, life and death’ (Lencek & Bosker, 1999). Later, during the period of the Industrial Revolution, the beach took on images of a therapeutic setting, with beach-based rejuvenation benefiting both the mental and physical ailments of all those who experienced it (Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Towner, 1996; Walton, 1983). In more recent times, the beach has been a refuge, a place of diversion and recreation. It evokes images of the exotic and the romantic. It has spiritual, natural, and cultural associations, and a place to escape from the everyday world (Urbain, 2003).

The changing images of beaches in the last few centuries are illustrated in the literature. For example, the following three passages present images of the French Riviera:

1. during the late 1800’s as written at that time;

2. during the early 1900's, also published at that time;
3. during the early 1900's, based on present day research on that era; and
4. the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The contrast in images is obvious, yet each passage is describing the same area. The first quote belongs to an English Romantic writer, and the second to a German tourist and noted travel writer of the day. Both of these images refer to the geographic characteristics of the place, namely the landscape and environment with descriptions of vegetation and topography. There is also the socio-cultural element, particularly in the first account, where emphasis is made on the lack of appeal for the native people. It is the perceiver, not the perceived that seems all-important in these accounts.

*...a calcined, scalped, tasped, scraped flayed, broiled, powdered, leprous, blotched, mangy, grimy, parboiled country WITHOUT trees, water, grass, fields, - WITH blank beastly senseless olive and orange trees like a mad cabbage gone indigestible; it is infinitely liker hell than earth and one looks for tails among the people. And such females with hunched bodies and crooked necks carrying tons on their heads and looking like Death taken asick (Algernon Swinburne, cited in Feifer, 1986, p. 205).*

*Along the whole Mediterranean shore, this beautiful stretch of coast between Marseille and Genoa has no peer in respect of its subtropical flora, its mild climate, its fine sheltered position and its magnificent natural scenery (von Helle-Wartegg, cited in Soane, 1993, p. 56).*

Another early 1900's description vividly describes images of architecture, vegetation and the types of people found at this beach resort town at this time. In particular, the following passage highlights the different socio-cultural aspects of beach images with descriptions of European and American tourists and the mention of 'other foreigners'.

*The year is 1928, and the place is a town on the French Riviera. Along the seafront there are handsome white hotels, outrageously cupolaed and flanked by tropical palms, pepper trees, and flowering mimosa: an exotic assemblage like nothing nature ever put together, but delicious. Various well-heeled northern European types in white linen suits and Panama hats - plus a few stylish Americans in striped jerseys and espadrilles - are gathered on the terraces, cool drinks at the ready, watching the other foreigners (Feifer, 1986, p. 201).*

A strong contrast is provided by present day images of the same locality, described by Lencek and Bosker (1999):

*Summer on the beaches of these (Cote d'Azur) seashores is the season of crowds, congestion, and pollution. Along much of the coast, the terrain is either too steep to offer new building sites or already filled to capacity with high-rise hotels, exclusive resorts, and luxurious villas. Existing sewage systems are overtaxed, so that untreated effluent washes up on the beaches...automobiles choke the narrow roads, filling the air with exhaust and noise. There is nowhere to park (Lencek & Bosker, 1999, p. 272).*

This description draws attention to the impacts of major developmental influences in this coastal tourist destination. The report is not only relevant for the French Riviera, but for many other developed and popular beach tourism destinations all over the world.

Over the decades, beach images have developed along with the changes in tourists trends, the environment and culture. While many beach images have evolved with unpleasant side-effects (such as pollution and overcrowding), other images have evolved to reveal the many and varied characteristics of tourists and tourist destinations today. For example, there are totally remote and exclusive nature-based beaches that represent tourists' images of nature and isolation or romance, seclusion and escape. There are beach images of extreme affluence and exclusivity held by tourists who visit the lavish, self-indulgent seaside resorts.



Other images exist of safety, fun and leisure activities held by families at popular seaside towns; and images held by particular sub-cultural groups, such as nudists, hedonists, gay, surfing, and body-building, that frequent their specialised beaches.

For these reasons, images of beaches are prolific in tourism, particularly in travel literature. Without actually visiting a beach, a potential traveller encounters images of beaches in travel brochures and guidebooks, in documentaries, from discourses with travel agents and from other people who share their beach experiences. Obviously, the aim of these beach images is to make the destination appealing to the traveller. On the other hand, those in charge of beach tourism destinations also go to great lengths to ensure the characteristics underpinning beach images that travellers seek are designed, developed and maintained. This process can vary from creating luxury seaside resorts to simply preserving the natural features of the landscape. None-the-less, high expectations and values are placed on images of beaches by both tourists and destination managers.

### **1.3 Beach Tourism Trends and Issues**

The previous section has produced some initial evidence of the existence of beach images. Their existence alone, however, is insufficient reason for embarking on the study of beach images. What is evident from their existence, is

that beach images today are extremely diverse because they reflect the multiculturalisation, globalisation and specialisation of contemporary tourism experiences. Whereas once the beach was developed, packaged and promoted to the masses as the 4 S's - sun, sea, sand and sex, (Lofgren, 1999) present day beach tourists are diversifying and becoming more sophisticated. Beach tourism destinations are also changing and developing in response to tourist needs. Today, beach tourism incorporates other characteristics such as art, culture and the environmental appreciation into the basic 4 S's (Poon, 1993; Sharpley, 1994; Urry, 1990). This 'new' form of tourism is, as Urry (1990, p. 14) explains, "segmented, flexible and customised", thereby suggesting that today's beach tourist is more discerning, selective and unique. This challenges both researchers and tourists alike to better understand the issues relating to beach tourism. For without this understanding, any research on the subject is irrelevant. Consequently, the following sections provide a brief overview of the issues and pertaining to beach tourism and images of beaches.

### **1.3.1 Changing Tourist Trends**

While the image of the 4S's still applies to tourists who value those characteristics, the 'new' tourism images of destinations and "new" kinds of tourists have far-reaching implications for all aspects of the tourism industry (Poon, 1993). These tourist trends also shape changes in the structure and image, demand for and use of beaches by tourists. Perhaps one of the best examples of this change

is at English seaside resorts. The traditional English seaside resorts that were established over a century ago, have experienced several trends over that time. The dominating features of piers, amusement parks and grand resorts that were originally visited by the elite, then the working class are today no longer the primary lure for seaside tourists. This is partially due to their lack of maintenance, but mostly because tourists are now seeking new and more diverse experiences in coastal and other areas (Urry, 1987, 1990). English beach visitor preferences for beaches have been shown to be varied and now include nature-based experiences as well as the traditional beach resort experiences and various types in-between (Morgan, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998).

European beach users are also changing on similar lines to their English counterparts. For example, a study conducted by Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary (2001) found diversity in coastal experiences in an examination of long-haul visitors from the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. In their pursuit to understand European coastal and marine tourism, they analysed over two thousand household surveys conducted in these three countries. From this, they established three groups of coastal tourists based on the levels of importance for various features of coastal experiences. These were "eco-coastal" - seeking mainly wildlife and ecological features; "active beach" - more inclined towards sunbathing, swimming and water sports, as well as the natural features; and "passive seaside" - who seek mainly escape and relaxation. Again, evidence is produced that tourists from countries with well-established beach tourism, exhibit new preferences for beach tourism styles.

Similarly, Gomez and Rebollo (1995) report that critical changes have emerged during the last decade in Mediterranean coastal tourism. The 'sun and sea' product has faced decline largely due to the environmental consequences of mass tourism and over-development on the region's coastline. Additionally, competitive destinations such as the Caribbean and Asia, which offer more diverse experiences, have been influencing Mediterranean coastal tourism (Gomez & Rebollo, 1995). While this is leading to a reshaping of Mediterranean coastal tourism, they suggest that changes will depend on "the ability to analyse the complex processes which are contributing to its reshaping" (Gomez & Rebollo, 1995, p. 125).

What these examples of trends are showing, is that beach tourism cannot be viewed as a static product, nor can the beach tourist be thought of as seeking only the sun, sea and sand experience with added 'bonus extras'. The diversity in demand for beach experiences requires careful scrutiny of beach tourist trends. Therefore, only by exploring contemporary psychological needs beach tourists, is it possible to establish the particular qualities they are seeking. Successful beach tourism destinations and high levels of tourist satisfaction are both important positive outcomes that can be formulated by further close analysis of tourist beach images.

### **1.3.2 Tourism Advertising and Image Promotion**

It is well documented that images play a strong role in tourists' preferences for holiday destinations (Baloglu, 1999; Gartner, 1996; Goodall, 1988; Gunn, 1988; Um & Crompton, 1999). Dann (1993a) argues that images are often more important than reality itself. He states that "an image is carefully compiled by selectively constructing those features of a destination that have the power to strike a resonant chord in the personalities of the target audience (tourists)" (Dann, 1993a, p. 897). Not surprisingly, images are an integral component in the promotion of beach holiday destinations. Images of beaches are used in many sources of information, be it brochures, guidebooks, television advertisements or newspapers, magazines, movies and documentaries.

It has been argued that images of tourist destinations (particularly those used in brochures) are often manipulated to achieve the desired results, so much so that these images are not always befitting the location they are advertising (Ashworth, 1991; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000). This is evident in beach image promotion, as illustrated by both Ashworth (1991) and Stabler (1988). They analysed images promoted to and received by tourists visiting the beach resorts in the Languedoc region on the French Mediterranean coast. Their studies suggest that while resorts promoted themselves with images associated with active beach sports, tourists visiting the resorts have contrasting views. Tourists perceive those resorts as more subdued places used for relaxation

and peaceful recreation. This discrepancy in images is partially attributed to the different information sources (mainly brochures) at regional and organisational levels and the degree of credibility placed on these sources by visitors to that region.

The popular islands and beaches of Southern Thailand are other locations where the discrepancies in images have been well documented. Cohen declares that the tourist brochure images portraying these Thailand destinations as remote, idealistic, tropical and unspoilt paradises are “patently unrealistic, and obviously distorted and falsified” (1982, p. 197). This is because they ignore the changes that have occurred in the environment, in local village social structure and their remoteness largely due to years of development and ever-increasing tourist numbers (Cohen, 1982a). The consequences of such an image anomaly is that while the more conventional tourists, at the time, were still attracted to the destination’s idealist image, the specialised tourists who sought the ‘real’ remote island paradises are either suspicious of what was portrayed in the tourist brochures or were not satisfied with their experience. While Cohen conducted this research over twenty years ago, the existence and importance of the issues raised in his study are still relevant today. As discussed previously, subsequent research has shown that there is a distinction between what is advertised to the tourists in the various paraphernalia and what exists at the tourism location (Ashworth, 1991; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000).

Consequently, it appears that great importance must be placed on correct image promotion since it is not only important in gaining the most effective results from destination advertising, but also for the satisfaction of the tourists visiting the destination. Ashworth emphasises this fact by stating that “image promotion that loses touch with changes in either the product or the market is at best futile and at worst counter-productive” (1991, p.140). As such, beach images have an important and continuing status in tourism research.

### **1.3.3 Pollution & Other Environmental Degradation**

Despite efforts in promoting beach holidays, many beaches today do not always have positive or lasting appeal to tourists. The demand for a diversity of experiences, combined with diminishing resources is providing enormous challenges in all countries. Beaches face a series of environmental issues and are subject to changing trends in development (Lencek & Bosker, 1999). Environmental issues such as pollution, extreme weather, degradation and overuse, overcrowding, and health and safety influence the structure, use and desirability of the beach.

Pollution is a key environmental issue that faces many of the world's beaches (Burton, 1995; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999). Pollution is largely a product of population growth and increased development of coastal areas. Many oceans, particularly around highly populated regions are

contaminated by sewage and land run-off resulting in major health risks to bathers. In some cases, beaches are closed for extended periods. On land, beaches are littered with paper, glass, plastics, cigarette butts, syringes, and other waste, which not only creates health risks but also destroys the more favourable image of the beach .

In an effort to improve the images of beaches and visitors' experiences, some countries have established rating systems for beach health and safety featuring information on pollution, availability of lifeguards and other facilities. One such system is the Blue Flag Campaign. The campaign started in Europe in 1987. The campaign involves compliance with not only water quality, but with the standard of facilities, which includes cleanliness, provision of public amenities, and parking (Walker, 1992). In 2004, the Blue Flag Campaign included 2312 beaches and 605 marinas in 25 countries spanning Europe, the United Kingdom and the Middle East, and with the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Morocco, Canada, Poland, Chile, Malta, New Zealand and Russia currently implementing the program (Blue Flag Campaign, 2004). The reputation and spread of the Blue Flag Campaign suggests that there is a need for and a commitment to managing these qualities at beaches worldwide. This indicates that beach visitors place a high value on these characteristics. Therefore, attributes such as cleanliness, high levels of safety and appropriate facilities are qualities that make a tourist beach either desirable or undesirable to visitors.




In comparison to pollution, many beaches also suffer problems with erosion and/or degradation. Natural processes such as hurricanes or fierce storms, or human impacts such as overdevelopment or unplanned development often cause this. These problems influence images of beaches from two angles. Firstly, severe environmental degradation and subsequent closure of a tourist beach destroys the image of the beach for tourists, forcing them to find alternatives. Secondly, if the beach is restructured, changed or modified in response to the degradation, so too is the image of that beach. Thus, the tourists who previously enjoyed that particular beach may not have the same image of the newly modified beach. However, it would appear that many countries are placing strong emphasis on restoring beaches based on their economic value, which largely supported by tourism.

The replenishment of beaches is being effected by using seawalls and groynes, and this process also refreshes their image (Burton, 1995). Some examples of the effects of this process can be found at England beaches. Tunstall and Penning-Roswell (1998) surveyed over 4000 visitors and found that they believed their beach experience would be severely diminished if erosion of the beaches were allowed to take its natural course. Moreover, they found that visitors were more accepting of human intervention, such as seawalls, groynes and replenishment, than for the managing bodies to do nothing at all to maintain or improve the beaches.

Consequently, whether there is pollution, erosion, or environmental degradation, it is clear that these environmental issues are important factors in creating and influencing the image of a beach. In essence, they can either positively or negatively influence the beach image. Therefore, it is important to investigate these characteristics of beach images in order to understand the tourists' ideal beach image.

#### **1.3.4 Artificial Beaches**

In some countries, where beach experiences are highly sought after, but often not available locally, the solution is sometimes provided by artificial beaches. These range from enormous indoor/outdoor complexes to simple artificial shores. For example, in Japan, Seagaia is an integrated resort complex comprising of various types of accommodation, facilities and activities, and one of the largest indoor water parks in the world. The Seagaia Ocean Dome (as shown in Figure 1) can accommodate up to 10,000 people offering them a man-made ocean with waves, beaches, tropical vegetation and a constant summer-like environment (Seagaia, 2002). The dome also offers many other water-based attractions as well as festivals, dancing, theatres and restaurants.



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**Figure 1: Seagaia Ocean Dome (2002)**

Essentially, Seagaia Ocean Dome offers Japanese people the best of the world's idealistic beaches under one roof and within easy access, all day ever day, and at a fraction of the cost of an overseas beach holiday. This type of theme park is not unique to Japan, nor is it the only form of artificial beach. In many other countries, beach-oriented theme parks and indoor resorts are being designed in response to the changing consumer trends in recreational and holiday attractions. Urry (1988) describes these attractions generally as "centres of play, spectacle and consumption". They are developing largely in and around urban areas and are in direct competition to traditional seaside resorts (Urry, 1988) and they are modifying the image of the beach.

European countries appear to be creating similar attractions. For example, Paris created the first "Paris-Plage" (Paris beach), an artificial beach on the banks of the river Seine. The beach, consists of clean, sifted sand, and includes 300

deckchairs, 22 cabanas, 150 beach umbrellas, and a 500-book free library (Hostie, 2004). It offers various activities such as dancing, concerts, sandcastle making, and roller-skating, all of which are free to the public during its one-month of existence in summer (Hostie, 2004). Since its inception in 2001, it has become an annual event, attracting over 2.3 million visitors and its success has inspired other countries, such as Hungary and Germany to create their own temporary artificial beaches (Hostie, 2004).

These artificial beaches appear to capture all the positive elements of the beach and offer them in a single package at the one location, convenient to the masses. Whereas natural beaches are subject to bad weather, overcrowding, overdevelopment, pollution and natural dangers (such as rips and currents, jellyfish and sharks), artificial beaches are generally not subject to these issues. Natural beaches also vary dramatically in colour and quality of sand and water, landscape features and climate. Artificial beaches are dependable, offering the ideal natural attributes, if enclosed in climate-controlled domes (such as Seagaia). The image remains constant. However, is an artificial beach an ideal beach to all tourists? Are artificial beaches to be the beach tourism destinations of the future? The answer to these questions can be found in understanding tourists' images of beaches.

## **1.4 Chapter Summary**

Images of beaches have existed throughout history and have been manifested in many different ways. The proliferation of such images has developed the phenomenon of beach tourism. Beach images, however, are evolving as a consequence of the diversity of tourism experiences emerging from multi-culturalisation, globalisation and specialization trends in tourism. Perhaps the best description of this evolution is as a process of 're-engineering' and 're-inventing' the beach experience. So, since beach images are an integral component of the beach experience, they too, are subject to this re-engineering and re-inventing process. Particular aspects of this process are–

- changing tourism trends (Urry, 1987, 1990; Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary, 2001; Gomez and Rebollo, 1995; Morgan, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998);
- environmental and development problems ((Burton, 1995; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998 );
- marketing issues (Ashworth, 1991; Cohen, 1982; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000; ); and,
- competition from artificial beaches (Hostie, 2004; Seagaia, 2002; Urry, 1988).

These development and dynamic issues suggest that a research program directed at tourist beaches should reflect the views of the beach tourist, beach management and marketing agencies. At the centre of each of these views are

beach images. Research on these images, however, appears to be scarce. Consequently, the theme of this thesis has been developed to address these parameters. The theme, “**meaning, measurement and management of beach images**” is reflected in the structure of the thesis. Firstly, the thesis identifies the meaning of tourist beach images. Secondly, methods of measuring beach images will be designed and tested. Finally, management of beach images will be addressed by understanding the relationship between images and the role of the beach tourism destination managers and developers. The structure of the study also presents a contribution to the theoretical foundation for images in general, and beach tourism resources.

## CHAPTER 2

### BEACH IMAGES: MEANING



*(Source: Kay Falco-Davis)*

*In this global history, some beaches occupy a limited stretch of sand but take up a huge mental space (Lofgren, 1999, p. 215).*

## **2.1 Defining Beaches, Beach Tourism and Culture**

### **2.1.1 Introduction**

The second chapter focuses on establishing the meaning of the beach. It begins by defining the beach, beach tourism and beach culture. The connections between these beach characteristics and beach images in society are explored in terms of social representations. The concepts of images are examined in depth, setting the parameters for conceptualising beach images. The literature review identifies key concepts in the development of images, with particular attention paid to the images of environments and tourist destination image. Culture is integrated into the literature review by identifying the meaning of culture and its possible connections with beach images. This literature review is fundamental in the establishment of the objectives of the research that are outlined at the conclusion of this chapter.

### **2.1.2 Defining the Beach – Specific Approach**

There is no universally established or accepted definition for the beach. Very few beach studies offer definitions, with the majority merely describing the beach in terms of attributes. A notable definition is given by Tunstall & Penning-Roswell (1998), who define the beach for the purpose of studying beach usage and issues associated with coastal locations. They define the beach as:



*...the intertidal zone and the area above high tide mark composed of beach material - sand, shingle or mud - in front of the sea wall, cliffs, sand dunes, and grazing or agricultural land. The term 'seafront' or coast describes the assemblage comprising the beach and those areas backing the beach, eg. the sea wall and promenade, and cliff top areas. The 'beach' also encompasses any facilities located on the beach, and the 'seafront' includes attractions associated with the promenade" (Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998, p. 319).*

Tunstall & Penning-Roswell's definition, however, is somewhat restricted in that it focuses on the land component of the beach, and neglects an important element of the beach - the ocean. Many beach activities are ocean-based (eg. swimming, sailing, surfing, and diving) and part of the experience. Therefore it is inadequate to merely describe the land component of the beach when the ocean is equally as important. Consequently, more comprehensive definitions are required.

In terms of developed coastal areas, Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) and Gunn (1972; 1988) both offer descriptions of beaches that divide the beach into more specific zones. Lawson and Baud-Bovy include the sea, strand (esplanade), beach, back beach (inland), coastal stretch, and country around and beach capacity as areas of the beach to be considered for beach surveys. Similarly, Gunn (1988, p. 88) describes components of beach as 'coastal zones' - namely

“vicinage, shoreland, beach and neretic”. These zones, when applied to an actual coastal image, as shown in Figure 2. provide a comprehensive view of this beach definition. The “vicinage” zone represents the marine coastal backland where closeness and access to the sea is more important than visual aspects, therefore tourist businesses, vacation homes, and the like are situated in this zone. The “shoreland” zone is the setting for activities such as camping, picnicking, hiking, and services such as beach hotels. The “beach” zone represents water and land and the meeting of the two. The “near shore zone” represents the area where beach-ocean related activities occur, such as fishing, cruising, sandbars, reefs, and travel to nearby islands. These zones are essentially defined by their location in physical environment and by their representation through human use and development. While the zones describe the geographic boundaries for beaches, they do not reflect all of the different attributes that exist at beaches, nor are they representative of all beach types. Since the zones rely mainly on structure and usage to define the beach, it would be difficult to use these zones to define say, a remote beach, where there are no structures and very little human activity. What is required then, is a method of defining the beach in more detail so it is applicable to all beach types and usage. Some studies have attempted this by basing their work on identifying individual attributes found at beaches. There are studies that acknowledge different components of beaches through research on activities, preferences, values and meanings of beach users.

One of the most useful is that of Morgan (1999a; 1999b), who developed a rating system in response to criticism of the current beach awards and appraisal

systems used in the UK (such as the European Blue Flag Award, Seaside Award and Good Beach Guide). He suggests that these awards which offer advice on 'good beaches', often confuse the beach user or are not taken seriously, and do not adequately represent different users' preferences and priorities for beach attributes (Morgan, 1999a). Moreover, he points out that very few beach studies focus on the user's needs or preferences Morgan (1999b). Consequently, he developed a comprehensive rating checklist of 49 factors used to rate attributes of 70 beaches and simultaneously, to identify and understand the preferences and priorities of 859 beach users at 23 of these beaches. The attribute checklist was divided into categories of "physical, biological, and human use" (Morgan, 1999a, p. 395) that reflected particular characteristics of beaches such as water, beach composition, climate, landscape, amenities, and access. Parts of these attributes are also human-related characteristics such as safety, cleanliness, odours, pollution, and personal amenities. Morgan concluded that these attributes vary in importance not only between users but also between different types of beaches. Therefore, while beach attributes cannot be standardised for any beach or beach user type, Morgan's studies show that they are indeed useful for defining beaches in terms of attributes and identifying user preferences.



**Figure 2: Adaptation of Gunn's (1988) Coastal Zones**

Leatherman (2002) similarly applies an attribute-based checklist for assessing the quality of beaches on behalf of the National Healthy Beaches Campaign in the United States of America. Using 50 criteria of physical beach factors, rated against 5 categories, Leatherman analyses 650 public recreational beaches on the USA coastline. This rating system is conducted annually, and used to designate titles of “best beaches” for different regions in the United States. This system, while although using similar attributes to Morgan, has two major

differences. Firstly, Leatherman includes other characteristics such as erosion conditions, sand softness, rips and currents, beach shape, presence of wildlife, maintenance, safety records and intensity of use in his checklist. Secondly, Leatherman does not take into account beach users' preferences and priorities as does Morgan's system. Leatherman's beach ratings are then perhaps more useful as a tourist guide advising different beach users of the range of beaches available, rather than as a tool for analysing beach attributes from a user perspective. This is a common issue regarding beach rating systems, as pointed out previously by Morgan (1999a; 1999b).

Essentially, what these attribute lists signify, is that there are many and varied characteristics that constitute the beach that include geographic, the physical environment and human characteristics. It is a location that can be designated by zones (Gunn, 1972, 1988; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998) that are made up of particular attributes consisting of both natural and some human-related factors (Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a, 1999b). These are appropriate for defining the beach as a geographical location or physical visitor destination, but what of the social and psychological factors of beaches? These attribute-based fail to recognise the particular needs, motives, and behaviour of beach users and their connection with such attributes. Aside from individual preferences, very little is known about how different beaches are viewed by visitors and what makes one attribute more desirable than another. In order to begin answering these questions, it is necessary to closely examine the human elements

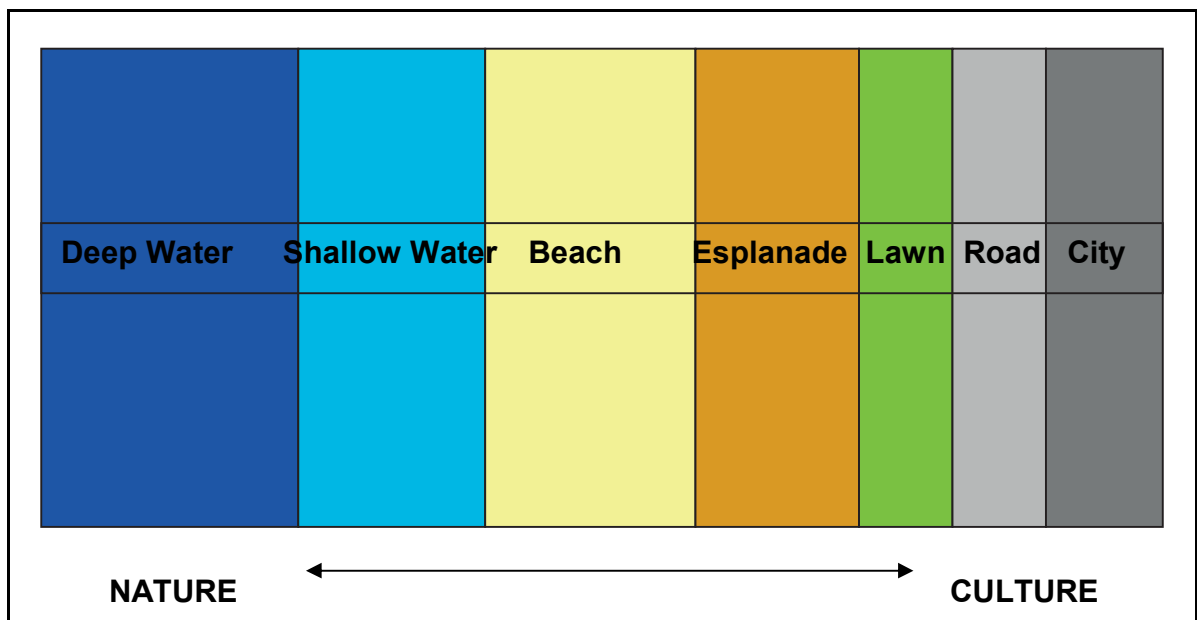
of beaches. This is possible by temporarily directing attention away from the physical or geographical, and focusing on the social and psychological characteristics of beaches.

### **2.1.3 Nature & Culture at the Beach**

One interpretation of the beach that connects that physical characteristics with socio-psychological is offered by Fisk (1989). He suggests that the beach can be viewed symbolically, where the physical characteristics of land and sea, can be overlapped with the social characteristics of nature and culture, resulting in a mediation of zones representing nature and culture. Through this symbolic meaning, Fisk (1989) is able to define the beach as “an anomalous category between land and sea that is neither one nor the other but has characteristics of both”. He elaborates this concept with the idea that because the beach also has meaning to people, there is a process of socio-cultural mediation between the two. Therefore, he is introducing the components of civilisation to the beach by defining it in terms of zones of nature and culture as illustrated in Figure 3.

In this illustration, Fisk (1989) signifies nature by the deep ocean, and the city or civilisation signifies culture. The progression from the civilisation (culture) is initiated through the ‘road’ representing the public transitional zone and a boundary for vehicles between the city and the beach. The lawn zone initiates nature, representing ‘controlled nature’, being a mediation between the indoors and

outdoors; a place where people can venture into the natural without leaving the security of the cultural. This is evident from the outdoor furniture, picnic blankets, tables, radios, etc. that exist in the zone. The esplanade represents a boundary between the sea and land, and is utilised by those who 'tread the line' such as walkers and joggers. Across the esplanade is the beach, closer to natural than cultural. However, the beach represents sub-zones of both, depending on purpose and meaning. For example, swimming is the closest to nature, a family on the beach is closest to culture, and sunbaking is a mixture of both (since the tanner is usually visiting from the city, aiming to return with evidence of an encounter with nature). Finally, the deep water, is the uncivilised and untamed zone, where only those who accept the challenges of nature go to test their strength through activities like swimming, surfing and windsurfing.



**Figure 3: Adaptation of Fisk's (1989) Beach Nature-Culture Concept**

Unlike the earlier definitions of beaches that focused mainly on the physical elements, Fisk's nature-culture concept represents a view of the beach that embraces the human elements of the beach experience. He achieves this easily by basing his concept on the typical constructed resort style beach where there is much evidence of human interaction. However, it is worth contemplating, if Fisk's beach example were to be a completely untouched, natural beach, would the zones of nature-culture still be relevant or is culture a quality that is brought with the beach user to the beach? Since people both influence the beach and are influenced by it, as is evidenced in Fisk's zones, the emphasis is therefore placed on the meaning of the beach, brought about by its utility to humans and representations of culture in its structure. Therefore, it is not necessarily always the physical structures of the beach and their representations, but the meaning and purpose given to the beach by the people who interact with it.

Shields emphasises the human elements when he suggests that, at the mere mention of the beach, people tend to think of "a particular *kind* of place, peopled by individuals acting in a specific manner and engaging in predictable routines" (1991, p. 60). Like Fisk, Shields is implying that the beach is not just a place for recreation, but somewhere that has specific meaning and purpose for human experiences. This is an aspect of beaches that cannot be overlooked, even when attempting to define the beach. People and their interactions with the physical components of the beach are integral components in defining the beach. This is stressed by Beattie (1981) who, in his observations of human behaviour at



the beach, asserts that people are important in creating a beach, since in their absence, the beach is merely a piece of the coast. Herein lies the essence of defining the beach. Aside from the natural elements of land and sea, the beach is a 'melting pot' of people's behaviours and a myriad of social activities that integrate to create different types of beaches regardless whether they are undeveloped natural locations or highly constructed coastal resorts.

This view is evident at beaches everywhere around the world. Recently, Laura Mansnerus, a New York Times journalist, produced an in-depth report on the socio-cultural similarities and differences at beaches along the Jersey Shore in the United States of America. Mansnerus declared, "that there are almost as many beach cultures along the 127-mile-long coastline as there are varieties of half-naked bodies on the sand..." (1999, p. 1). This aspect of beaches is not unique to the Jersey Shore. English beaches and their significance to English society are perhaps the best documented in the history of holidays in the Western world. The English seaside is a well-established holiday destination and has had many and varied roles in English society over time. Evidence of this exists in briefly reviewing the history of the beach in English society.

The Eighteenth Century English seaside represented a place where people visited only to gain the therapeutic benefits of ocean bathing and this led to the social practice of taking regular vacations to the seaside (Corbin, 1994; Cosgrove & Jackson, 1972; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Sharpley, 1994; Soane, 1993; Stansfield, 1993; Towner, 1996; Walton, 1983). It was only

the more affluent in society that participated in these seaside vacations, and their popularity led to an explosion of coastal development. By the late Nineteenth Century, however, the working class, enabled through better transport and paid vacations, began visiting the seaside in masses. Walton (1983) describes the beach at this time as a place where bathing became pleasure-related instead of purely therapeutic, where the sand was the children's playground as families gathered there on holidays; the beach had a more relaxed atmosphere; there were open air entertainers, dancing, concerts and exhibitions; and a great boom in competitive participant sports such as tennis, golf, cricket. Thus, a change occurred in the social significance of the English seaside. It went from being a destination for the more affluent seeking medical benefits and social status, to a mass tourist destination where working-class families frivolously enjoyed the many pleasures of the beach. The division between social classes became evident at developed beaches everywhere during this period. While the middle-class masses claimed the more affordable and easily accessible seaside towns, the wealthy escaped to the smaller, more remote places such as the French Riviera. This pattern of visiting the beach, along with the development of beach facilities, created the designation of specific tourist areas along the seafront (Stansfield, 1993). Many of these characteristics are still evident not only at today's English beaches, but also in Europe and North America (as described previously by Mansnerus, 1999).

What this evidence suggests is that people and their relationship with the beach, are integral components of the beach itself. In defining the beach, it is

insufficient to use only the physical attributes that make up the beach or to define it in terms of geographical zones. There are many and varied human elements that both describe the beach as a holiday place and signify its meaning to individuals and groups of people in society. The images of the beach are made up of such characteristics. People carry these images with them and are themselves part of the beach image that they have helped create. Fisk calls this 'culture', and it is indeed culture that requires further contemplation in order to fully appreciate the image of the beach. Culture too, however, has its own definitions, which must be explained in order to establish its significance in beach images.

#### **2.1.4 Culture & the Beach**

In defining culture for the purpose of this study, it is necessary only to understand the essential ingredients that have been established in theories of culture. Culture has been defined in many fields, namely anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. There are, however, certain definitions that have either withstood academic scrutiny or best serve the purposes for studying subjects such as beach images and it is these that have been selected as the background for the cross-cultural characteristics of this study. These definitions are then elucidated in their application to beach experiences and beach images.

One of the earliest definitions of culture was that of anthropologist E.B. Tylor who, in 1872, published that "culture, or civilization...is that complex whole

which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963, p. 81). Since Tylor, definitions of culture have been revised and expanded by other academics. A review of over 150 definitions of culture was conducted by Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1963). From this, they summarised culture into the following definition:

*Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963, p. 357).*

Hofstede (2001) supports this definition, but condenses it into “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (2001, p. 9). His definition appears to be oversimplified compared to Kroeber & Kluckhohn’s, however, he offers further explanation of culture by suggesting that there are four items manifested in culture. These are “values, symbols, heroes and rituals” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 10). Values, he suggests, are central to culture because they show *what* is important and *how*

it is important to people. In other words, how people act, why, when and where they act reflects these parts of culture. Thus, values and customs are revealed in behaviour (Hofstede, 2001). But values, customs and behaviour are only some of the items in culture. The symbols that exist in culture are, according to Hofstede (2001, p. 10) “words, gestures, pictures, and objects that carry often complex meanings recognized as such only by those who share culture”. That is, within almost every group of people, whether based on country, ethnic background, or other factor, there exists particular language, mannerisms, images that are significant often only to that group. Apart from these, there are also people who are significant to different groups. Hofstede calls these people heroes and defines them as “persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and thus serves as models for behavior” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 10). Today, heroes are as varied as the cultures that have them and reflect diverse groups represented by music, fashion, entertainment, sports and television programmes. Added to these heroes, are the many and varied rituals that exist in humanity. These are defined as “collective activities that are technically unnecessary to the achievement of desired ends, but that within a culture are considered socially essential” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 10). Rituals can include everything from daily routines to religion, ceremonies, and even holidays.

What these values, symbols, heroes and rituals imply, is that every aspect of human life is incorporated in culture. Since human life is complicated, this makes both the precise definition and study of culture also extremely complicated. Hofstede developed these culture characteristics for the purpose of studying

cultures in organizations, his definition offers a foundation for understanding the extent to which culture is relevant in studies of human experiences in diverse locations. Therefore, it is useful to consider other ways of describing culture. One study of culture that includes many of Hofstede's culture characteristics is that of Altman & Chemers (1980). In short, they suggest that culture essentially consists of "behaviours, beliefs, customs, cognitions, feelings shared by groups of people that are evident as values, symbols, rituals, heroes and represented in objects and the environment" (Altman & Chemers, 1980, p. 3-4). They define culture for the purpose of understanding relationships between people and the environment, which is perhaps most valuable for studying beaches.

Altman & Chemers offer a conceptual framework for viewing the relationship between culture and the environment. They propose that this relationship involves five classes of factors – the natural environment, environmental orientations and world views, environmental cognitions, environmental behaviours and processes, and environmental outcomes (1980, p. 10). The natural environment consists of topography, climate, flora and fauna. Environmental orientations and world views relate to cosmology, religion, values and norms. Environmental cognitions include perception, coding, memory and judgements. Environmental behaviours and processes refer to privacy, personal space, territoriality, and crowding. Environmental outcomes are represented by the built environment, including modifications to the natural environment, such as farms and dams. Each of these factors interplays as 'causes' and 'effects', thereby making the relationship between culture and the environment a complex social system, rather than a

simple linear association. Consequently, if beaches are viewed as representing the natural environment as in Altman & Chemer's framework, then all of the other factors must be considered when studying beaches and culture. Thus, evidence must be found of the existence of these factors in beaches. This can be achieved by reviewing the significance of beaches in terms of all the factors suggested by this framework.

For example, the beach experience is embedded in English culture. Research has shown that the beach is highly valued by English people (Morgan, 1999b; Towner, 1996; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). English tourists have lasting impressions, that are made over repeated visits to the similar locations, perhaps also reinforcing a particular image of the beach that they prefer over all other beaches (Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). They value not only its natural attributes, but also the feelings, activities and the memories of their traditional visits there. Tunstall and Penning-Roswell describe the meaning of the beach in English culture very well:

*The English seaside and its beaches are special because they are special places to play, to relax, to exercise and to enjoy. They bring back memories mainly of families and childhood. They are places of discovery and adventure, and contact with nature. Their meanings come from these imaginings and these activities, and from the repeated visits to the same familiar and reassuring locales. Their beaches have a coherence that derives from their enduring physical*

*character - waves, tides, sand and noise and from the assemblage of features that keeps them there: the sea-wall, the promenade and the groyne. Each is understood and valued, for their timeliness and familiarity (1998, p. 331).*

But, the beach is not monopolized by or within English culture alone. There is evidence throughout history and worldwide that such human relationships exist with the beach. The most obvious lays in the common expression “sun, sea, sand and sex” (commonly termed the four S’s) that is often used to describe beach experiences in tourism. These terms epitomize the elements of culture and the beach. For example, Feifer’s vivid description of a tourist’s beach holiday experience clearly involves the four S’s:

*Then, removing most of them, (clothing), the tourist rubbed his body with coconut oil and stretched out on the beach for a tan...Warmed by the summer sun, cooled by the bright blue sea, everybody taking their clothes off together, “Body and Soul” playing somewhere in the background: all the basics of happiness were provided - sea, sun and sex; sand, slightly uncomfortable but inevitable, was sprinkled in with the package too (Feifer, 1986, p. 216).*



Moreover, Feifer is describing the very elements of culture that exist in beach images. The actions of the beach visitor indicate a certain behavior associated with the four S's, and it appears to be shared with others, since they are all 'taking their clothes off together'. This removal of clothing can be seen as a symbolic gesture of shedding the constraints of modern living, and the sun tanning, which represents the value of having darker skin. The music playing is also a part of that person's culture. This is all happening at a location – on the sand, beside the ocean and in the sunshine. Therefore, it would appear that the sun, sea, sand and sex ingredients of the beach integrate to form this description of an image of the beach. This view can be explored further by reviewing these recurring elements in the historical literature concerning beaches.

### *Sun*

The sun and sun tanning, as portrayed in Feifer's description above, did not play an integral role in beach images until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As a matter of fact, earlier beach visitors were mostly "heliophobic" (feared sunshine). Class prejudices existed, since only working class people spent most of their time out in the sun, so in society's view, 'pale' meant 'elite'. This image still exists in some cultures today. For example, in Thailand, females are regarded as more beautiful if very pale, thus rarely visit the beach to sunbathe (Cohen, 1982). However, the sun and suntans are a strong element in Western beach images where they became attractive mainly through fashion and famous people. For example, Coco Chanel was notorious for her sun tanning on the French Riviera in the 1920's (Lencek & Bosker, 1999); she was a "hero" of beach culture at the time. These exploits of sun tanning dramatically increased the value of a suntan by associating

it with influence and wealth. People perceive a tanned body to be exotic and wealthy, and the practice of sun tanning became a ritual in many people's lives. Today, the sun and tans feature in beach images at different ends of the scale. While sunsets and sun tanning often still represent the exotic and even the romantic beach image, the increasing awareness of the results of over-exposure to the sun (such as skin cancer) represents the less appealing image. Therefore, on today's beach, both of these values can be seen, reflected in people who are unclothed and exposed to the sun and those that are covered in sunscreen or clothing and hiding from the sun under beach umbrellas.

### Sea

Historically, the sea has always played a part in beach images. People gazed at the ocean, saw it as therapeutic and played in its various depths. The sea was attached to rituals of therapeutic bathing established during the 18th Century. In particular, Europeans and the English strongly believed in the restorative and medicinal powers of being at the beach and bathing in the ocean (Corbin, 1994; Cosgrove & Jackson, 1972; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Sharpley, 1994; Soane, 1993; Stansfield, 1993; Towner, 1996; Walton, 1983). It was the combination of medical revolution, proclaiming the benefits of seaside holidays, and the increasing anxiety of busy city living that encouraged people to travel to the sea. The therapeutic image of the beach is still perceived by many today. The evidence exists not only in the millions of tourists who visit coastal resorts to escape, rejuvenate and relax, but in the growing number of these beach resorts and holiday homes. Thus, it could be said, that the sea has influenced not only the behaviour of people, but because of their

desire to be close to the sea the environment has been changed by development of such coastal tourist destinations. In turn, this development has changed the image of the beach.

### *Sand*

Burton (1995, p. 21) suggests, “a sandy beach is an attractive beach” to tourists. The sand is the connection between land and water, where a tourist may active or inactive, a territory that is ‘no person’s land’, but can still be claimed temporarily through various activities, such as sandcastles. The tradition of sandcastle building was established in 19th century Germany and possibly began as a method of establishing ‘one’s own’ beach territory (Lofgren, 1999). Later, tradition turned to competition and it has since become one of the most popular activities on the beach as well as an integral part of beach images. Similar to sandcastles, Beattie (1981) describes the use of towels and other personal items as a method of establishing territory on the sand. This image is strong in highly populated beaches such as the Mediterranean coast where private resorts claim much of the sand with their lounge chairs, umbrellas, and changing booths.

### *Sex*

The earliest sexual overtones in beach images were perhaps those experienced by the European explorers’ when they first encountered Pacific islanders (Lencek & Bosker, 1999). The resident islanders offering themselves as hospitable gestures brought an unusual social freedom to sober image of the beach that they were accustomed to in Europe. The dramatic differences represented by tropical climate, the suntanned, half-naked islanders, who appeared very ‘natural’ and relaxed with their sexuality, incited new and opposing

ideas of the beach (Lencek & Bosker, 1999). While these images were revealed in European publications of these traveller's experiences, it would be some time before the effects of this relaxed sexual attitude would be seen in the Western world. It was not until the late 1800's, when society accepted the reduction of beach bathing which eventually led to the modern day bikini, that sexuality truly entered the beach scene. From this, two characteristics became evident - the early vulgar but comical depiction of 'imperfect bodies' and the capitalisation of the 'perfect body'. Early 20th Century images included postcards depicted grossly overweight people in various comical beach scenes, often with sexual overtones (Lofgren, 1999). The public's acceptance of the bikini in the 1960's combined with the more permissive society brought as Lencek & Bosker explain: "a creeping relaxation in sexual mores - and a new candor about everything from the dimples and curves of one's anatomy, to snagging the attention of the opposite sex" (1999, p. 264). This acceptance opened the path to nudity and semi-nudity as a characteristic of beach culture and images today.

Nudity is an important margin that signifies what some tourists may find as their 'ideal' beach. Craig McGregor, a journalist, exemplifies this attribute in his description of an 'ideal' beach in Australia:

*A beach with no houses, no tents, no sandmining, no road and no way in except in bare feet, or maybe in thongs, bikini and sun visor...You can swim naked there. Only albino sand crabs and*

*occasionally, a gaggle of surfboard riders keep you company*  
(*National Times*, January 9-15, 1983, as cited in Fisk, 1989).

McGregor's description typifies the 'natural' beach with the absence of structures, limited people and the ability to be nude at the beach. The mention of visiting the beach in little clothing and swimming naked implies human nature in its non-cultured, uncivilised form rather than sexuality. Nonetheless, nudity and partial nudity as described here, are significant aspects of nature in beach images. They are also characteristics of culture, in that they represent particular values and behaviours of people who visit the beach.

What emerges from discussing the sun, sea, sand and sex elements of the beach experience, is that these characteristics they create different representations or 'images' of the beach. Variations of these images are associated with different groups of people, their values, behaviours, beliefs and traditions relating to the beach. Therefore, since these are elements of culture, there appears to be a relationship between such images and culture. Boulding (1956, p. 16), in his study of images, attested to this relationship and stated, "the development of images is part of the culture or sub-culture in which they are developed". It is, therefore, almost meaningless, to study images of beaches without understanding the cultures and sub-cultures that both possess and contribute to these images.

### **2.1.5 Tourist & Beach Culture**

As discussed in the previous section, culture is a complex attribute of the human relationship with the beach. Culture appears as characteristics accumulated during life, such as beliefs, values, perceptions, feelings, etc., and that is shared by groups of like-minded individuals (Altman & Chemers, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963). It is evident in the way beaches are valued and used, but more importantly, culture exists in the perceptions people have of beaches. Therefore, images of beaches are not only created by different aspects of culture but are influenced by culture. This relationship has been discussed so far, however, mainly from the point of view that of individual cultural characteristics. What has not yet been made clear is, that since culture is shared by groups of people, what groups of cultures exist and how are their images of beaches embodied by their shared cultural characteristics? In order to answer this question, it is best to begin by identifying the groups of people that possess these images.

Culture groups can be defined by a person's country of birth or residence (as in English people), often termed national culture, "nationality" (Dann, 1993b, p.88) or "national character" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 13). Groups, however, are not necessarily limited by geographic locations or ethnic backgrounds alone. Other factors may also define cultural groups. For example, occupation, lifestyle, recreation and sports represent groups with different cultures. In fact, culture can characterise almost any group that shares the same cultural attributes.

Consequently, people who travel or holidaymakers can form a cultural group. This has been termed “tourist culture” (Jafari, 1987; Reisinger and Turner, 2003).

Tourist culture is a unique type of culture. It is also particularly important to understanding beach images since tourists frequent most beaches. Reisinger and Turner (2003, p. 10) use the term “tourist culture” to describe the process, originally defined by Jafari (1987), that occurs within culture when a tourist is on holiday. Jafari (1987, p. 153) explained that when tourists are on holiday, their inherent culture (that is, their personal culture) falls to the background, becoming a “residual culture”, and a new tourist culture emerges. This ‘touristic culture’ results from interaction between the tourists’ own culture and the hosting destination’s culture. Furthermore, ‘touristic culture’ characterises the behaviour, attitudes, values, roles, rules and other socio-psychological aspects of the tourist in the tourism setting. Within the classifications of individual and touristic cultures, sub-cultures also exist. Reisinger and Turner (2003, p.14) suggest that sub-cultures (within ‘national culture’) “can be based on race, ethnicity, geographic region or economic or social class”. However, other characteristics can create sub-cultures as well. These include religion, education, social status or groups, to name but a few. Furthermore, sub-cultures exist within the ‘touristic culture’. There are specific characteristics that create these sub-cultures in tourism. For example, “backpacker” is a common label in the tourism industry used to identify young, independent travellers on flexible travel arrangements, staying in budget accommodation and engaging in informal activities (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995).

To date, research on culture and tourists' images is severely lacking. An assortment of studies that have been conducted on culture and tourism, however, are useful for understanding the significance of culture in tourists' mental processes, behaviours and in the development of images. Reisinger and Turner (2003, p. 30) offer a comprehensive list of tourism studies relating to cultural differences and attitudes, perceptions, values, and destination image, to name but a few (see p. 30 Reisinger and Turner, 2003 for full list of studies). From this list, the studies published by Dann (1993b); Pizam (1999); and Richardson & Crompton (1988) are perhaps the most valuable in supporting the study of tourist culture relating beach tourism.

Pizam (1999, p. 393), who defines culture as "an umbrella word that encompasses a whole set of implicit, widely shared beliefs, traditions, values, and expectations that characterize a particular group of people", explored tourist culture in Dutch, Israeli, British and Korean tour guide perceptions of European (French, Italian, German), American, British, and Asian (Japanese, Korean) tourist behaviour. He found that there are similarities and differences between national cultures, and that tour guides perceived a significant difference in behaviour among tourists of different nationalities, although the tour guides tended to make stereotypical judgements based on tourists' nationality. In his extensive studies of these cultural attributes, Pizam (1999) discusses various different cross-cultural research methods and finds consensus in the use of discretion in generalising and judging cultural variations. Additionally, he points out that cross-cultural



researchers must consider the risk of stereotyping based on nationality or cultural background in their methods. This warning is also clearly expressed by Dann (1993b). He states that since tourism is a global phenomenon and many destinations are multi-cultural, the explicit use of 'nationality' to stereotype tourists creates inadequacies and reduces the usefulness of the research. Similarly, Richardson & Crompton (1988, p. 128) suggest that cross-cultural studies "tend to stress either patterns of behaviour or an organized system of knowledge and belief." Their exploration of cultural variations between French and English Canadian's perceptions of vacation attributes in USA and Canadian locations revealed differences due to culture, mainly from language.

Many tourism-culture studies tend to use national culture only as the basis for examining cultural differences in tourism and this is an issue that has not yet been fully examined in tourism research. There is a need for widening the parameters of cultural research in tourism to include other factors that contribute to the development of culture. In an attempt to achieve this, Dann (1993b) offers a number of alternatives to using nationality alone in tourism studies. He suggests the use of 'personality', 'role', 'culture' (i.e. beliefs, norms, values, etc.), 'social class' and 'lifestyle' (Dann 1993b). It would appear that Dann's alternatives are somewhat influenced by Hofstede's (2001) views of the characteristics that are inherent to culture (i.e. symbols, heroes, rituals and values). Therefore, he is justified in making this suggestion. Pizam and Sussman (1995), however, while agreeing with Dann's general view on the use of nationality as a culture group, argue that these alternatives should not simply replace nationality in tourism-

culture studies. They insist that national cultures “have a moderating or intervening impact on tourist behaviour, and if properly controlled and/or used with other variables, would add significantly to one’s understanding of tourist behaviour” (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995, p. 905). This appears to have been achieved in a number of studies evaluating landscape preferences and local perceptions between different cultures. For example, Hull & Revell (1989) explored scenic beauty and landscape preferences between cultures defined by Western (English-speaking tourists) and Eastern backgrounds (native Balinese). They found that there are some similarities such as “perceptual/judgmental mechanisms” (1989, p. 189) in landscape evaluation, but also differences that were underpinned by the different cultures. Yang & Brown (1992, p. 471) also studied landscape preferences of Western and Eastern cultures with results pointing to “landscape style and landscape elements as the influencing factors on landscape preference, regardless of cultural differences”. However, they also found similarities and differences between groups.

A somewhat unique approach is used by Passariello (1983) who describes the cultural characteristics found in regional domestic and foreign tourists’ representations of a popular Mexican beach resort. She used micro-ethnographic techniques to describe and evaluate the cultural structures of Mexican middle-class tourism. Passariello (1983) found that the location’s culture was viewed very differently by foreign tourists (in general) as opposed to regional domestic tourists (Mexicans). Significantly, Passariello states that “to some extent, foreigners actually re-create Mexican culture in their own image and to suit their own

purposes...” (1983, p. 121). Similar attributes of tourist cultures have been found in studies of other locations and, particularly beach tourist destinations. For example, the Caribbean is a powerful illustration of the different socio-economic sub-cultures that exist in beach tourism. Wealth and social status largely dictates the style of accommodation, level of privacy, service and other facilities that the tourists use at those particular beach destinations. Patullo (1996) identified different groups that mainly visit the island of Barbados in the Caribbean as ranging from budget tourists to luxury tourists and those in-between. There are “South-coast cheap and cheerful” tourists, who tend to visit on budget package tours, stay in modest self-catering hotels and condos, hire vehicles to see the other beaches, sunbathe on the beach, and eat and drink at cheaper touristy bars and bistros (Patullo, 1996, p. 136). At the other end of the scale, there are the luxury-seekers who are represented by European aristocracy, American financiers, sports stars and celebrities. (Patullo, 1996) These tourists stay in either exclusive hotels or private homes that have specialised gourmet chefs, security guards and personal attendants on the beach to cater for their every need. (Patullo, 1996) In between, are the middle-class families or older people whose main aim is simply to escape winter at home, and are similar to the budget tourists.

Of the many and varied tourist cultures, the surfing sub-culture is a little more complicated than Caribbean beach tourism. Surfing became an active phenomenon in the 1950’s, beginning in Hawaii and spreading worldwide, and was supported by movies, music and the media (Davidson & Spearritt, 2000; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Lofgren, 1999). Essentially, the surfing sub-culture is embodied in

the younger generations, often called “surfies” that visit surfing beaches, speak surfié language, wear surfié-clothing, and have surf-based lifestyles. Living to surf, many constantly travel on “surfing safaris” in pursuit of the ‘perfect wave’. Some of the most popular surfing beach destinations today are in Hawaii, California, Australia and South Africa. The surfing sub-culture has been responsible for creating and changing the images of many beaches at these destinations. For example, before the surfing culture evolved in Hawaii, California and Australia, their beaches were largely visited by locals and tourists seeking the general beach holidays (that is, the sun, sea and sand). Tourists had little to do with surfing, except perhaps watching the few local residents ride the waves. However, when this subculture exploded in popularity, many beaches became surfing meccas. All over the world, surfers travelled to beaches that provided the ideal conditions for surfing and their lifestyles.

The surfing sub-culture has many elements akin to the ‘Backpacker/-Drifter/Traveller’ subculture. Where the surfer travels primarily with the simplistic aim of finding the best surf having little concern for packaged tours, specialised accommodation and personalised luxuries, ‘Backpacker/Drifter/Traveller’ are much the same. ‘Backpacker/Drifter/Traveller’ are ante-tourists. They travel, but not with the same patterns as regular tourists. ‘Backpackers’ are generally young, independent travellers, with flexible time and travel schedules, using budget accommodation and engaging in informal, often social activities (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). ‘Drifter/Travellers’ are very similar, however they avoid tourism structure...go right off the beaten track and abandon many of the accustomed

ways of life...immerse themselves in the host culture and are attracted to the pristine natural attributes of the location (Cohen, 1982a; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). 'Backpacker/Drifter/Travellers' have strong connections with beaches and beach tourism all over the world. The strongest and most established is that of Thailand, where the semi-remote tropical beaches and resorts have been highly favoured destinations for these travellers. Cohen describes this sub-culture in Thailand in great detail:

*The majority are young and unmarried... travelling either alone or in couples... the beaches are a station on a multiple-destination trip... they claim that they came to the beaches to recuperate physically and mentally from the efforts and strains of their usual occupations. (For many) the dominant pastime is lying, possibly naked, on the beach, sitting for hours in the small open restaurants, or smoking "ganja" (marijuana) (1982a, p. 207-209).*

Recently, Westerhausen (2002) conducted an extensive study on this sub-culture in Thailand. While many of the conventional characteristics are still present, he makes two important points. Firstly, that the subculture has become heterogeneous in nature, that is, "neither age, nor social background, nor prior outlook on life represent exclusive categories as to who becomes a 'traveller' anymore" (Westerhausen, 2002, p. 150). Secondly, that "the widening of the subcultures recruitment base and the increased affluence of those newcomers has

manifested itself in the emergence of separate tourism infrastructure and has led, over time, to changes in the ethos of the subculture itself” (Westerhausen, 2002:150). The significance of Westerhausen’s findings to beach tourism is, that apart from this sub-culture’s continuing association to beaches, it is changing the image of those beaches. For example, the popular islands of Koh Samui and Koh Phangan were once quiet typically third-world level, almost pristine natural locations. Over the years, the drifters, travellers and later, the mass tourists, contributed to the islands’ transformation into beach resort destinations. Moreover, the problems largely associated with this sub-culture’s use of alcohol, drugs and wild parties dramatically altered the local (native) culture (Cohen, 1982a; Westerhausen, 2002). Increased demand for accommodation and other development led to destruction of National Parks, and more traffic and excess waste also impacted on the environment and the local communities. In the end, Westerhausen suggests that most likely, these locations, fuelled by the recent world-wide success of “The Beach”, (a movie based on Alex Garland’s novel about this subculture in Thailand) will see these beaches commercialised and become “yet another pretty tourist trap” (Westerhausen, 2002, p. 240).

The process that Westerhausen is describing implies that while changes are occurring at the destination itself, the tourist culture is also changing. Add to this the different levels of culture and it becomes clear that touristic cultures and subcultures are not static. That is, they change over time and in response to changing conditions at destinations. Moreover, they also vary on the basis of the many attributes that contribute to culture. What is evident in these studies of

tourism sub-cultures is that culture is not a single characteristic derived from nationality alone and that it cannot be standardised for any particular group. Further, culture is found in tourists as individuals and groups and is also shaped by tourists. This poses several problems when studying culture, the most prominent being stereotyping and ethnocentrism. Stereotyping represents judgemental views of certain groups of people, with no regard for individual qualities (Hofstede, 2001). More specifically, Reisinger & Turner (2003, p. 169) describe stereotyping as “the attribution of certain traits, labelling, and perceptions of people on the basis of common characteristics”. For example, Cohen’s (1982a) description of ‘backpacker/drifter/travellers’ quoted on the previous page, could be seen as stereotypical if these characteristics were attached to ‘backpacker/drifter/travellers’ from different parts of the world. That is, not all of these tourist types would smoke marijuana and lay on the beach naked, since there is general evidence in tourism research that indicates otherwise. Stereotyping is therefore, an incorrect and/or misleading interpretation of these groups. This is also a problem when the research suffers from ethnocentrism. Similar to stereotyping, ethnocentrism is a form of judgement in that it encompasses the idea that one particular or one’s own culture is superior to others (Dimanche, 1994; Hofstede, 2001; Reisinger & Turner, 2003). This trait leads to the inability to appropriately study culture in an objective way. It can be avoided, however, by adopting a thorough understanding of cultural diversity and avoiding stereotyping (Dimanche, 1994).

These challenges aside, it is clear that the many and varied cultural and sub-cultural characteristics lead to the notion that there is no single attribute of

beaches or culture that specifically represents beach tourist culture. This section has shown that some beach attributes are designated by activities (such as surfing and diving), others by behaviours (such as romance, seclusion and escape), personal interests (such as art, architecture, and interaction with indigenous cultures) and levels of facilities and services (such as luxury resorts or budget hostels). Moreover, from a cross-cultural perspective, there are different levels of culture involved in beach culture itself. These levels are generated from many human attributes such as behaviours, beliefs, customs, cognitions, and feelings and these are evident as values, symbols, rituals, and heroes and represented within objects and in the environment. All of these characteristics create and shape the different beaches, beach experiences and beach tourist cultures.

The variations in beaches and experiences, leads to the notion that there are equally as varied images of beaches relating to beach cultures. The system that integrates beaches, tourists' beach experiences and their images is complex. Yet, it is inadequate to simply suggest that this relationship exists, without delving into the connections between beach cultures and beach images. The author proposes that one such way of examining this relationship is to introduce, to some extent, the theory of social representations into the study of beach images.



### **2.1.6 Social Representations**

Social representations are “complex meta-systems of everyday knowledge and include values, beliefs, attitudes, and explanations” (Pearce, Moscardo & Ross, 1996, p. 56), that assist with explaining how groups of people understand and communicate their knowledge and their reactions to reality or everyday life encounters (Moscovici, 1984; Pearce, et. al., 1996). They ‘conventionalise’ individuals’ encounters with objects, people and events; and when shared, these representations effectively become common between members of communities or social groups (Moscovici, 1984).

Social representations evolve in a two-part process – “anchoring and objectifying” (Moscovici, 1984, p.29). Firstly, anchoring involves naming and/or classifying an object, person or event (Moscovici, 1984), thereby making what is strange or unusual, into something that is familiar in their mind. Secondly, objectifying “saturates the idea of unfamiliarity with reality” which serves to produce a mental image or ‘iconic quality’ to the idea (Moscovici, 1984, p.31). Objectification is evidenced by the dominance of particular images (Pearce, et. al., 1996).

This process of anchoring and objectifying initially occurs at the individual level, but since such representations are communicated amongst others, they then become accepted within the communities that adhere to them. This results in

social acceptance of ideas and images at individual and group levels. Since not all individuals subscribe to the same social representations, the process results in different groups or types of social representations. Moscovici (1988) identified three types of representations signified by ideas that are:

1. hegemonic - most commonly shared and constant;
2. emancipated - those that are uncommon and only shared by sub-groups; and,
3. polemical - the idiosyncratic or alternative views.

Herein lays the connection between social representations and the nature of tourist beach experiences and beach culture as described in the previous section. Many of the characteristics of tourist beach experiences and beach tourist cultures are saturated with social representations and the history of the beach as a tourist destination is replete with examples of objectification. For example, the recurring beach culture elements – the sun, sea, sand and sex (as described in Section 2.1.4), are a testament to the social representations of the beach throughout history. Each of these elements has an ‘iconic quality’ that can be universally shared, such as the preference for a sunny day at the beach; shared by sub-groups, such as large waves in the sea for surfers; and idiosyncratic or alternative, namely nudity at the beach.

Another powerful example of social representations of beach tourism is the significance and historically sustained image of the ‘island paradise’ (where beaches are the focal point). The Pacific islands probably initiated such a

representation when the first Western explorers set foot on the beaches in this region in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Lencek & Bosker (1999) describe what these travellers encountered:

*The shores of the tropical islands were magical in the full sense of the word. The European seamen – starving, filthy, riddled with scurvy and sores, their senses dulled by the desperate monotony of survival at sea – saw rosy beaches ringed with turquoise and emerald waters. Verdant hills rose steeply from groves of feathery palms. Waterfalls sparkled in the distance and everywhere there were flowers in brilliant shades of red, violet, yellow and orange (Lencek & Bosker, 1999, p. 46-47).*

Initially, the tropical island landscape and native people would have been unfamiliar and strange to these explorers. They were accustomed to the temperate landscapes and the more 'reserved' societies of Europe and England. Following these initial experiences, reports publicised by subsequent explorers, travellers, artists and writers who visited these islands fuelled the images of paradise in the Western world (Cohen, 1982b). What was occurring in terms of social representations at this time was, that in their efforts to 'anchor' what they were seeing and experiencing, the island visitors associated the destinations with paradise. This was a notion that was familiar to them that represented what they believed they were seeing and experiencing. In Cohen's (1982b) review of these

historical events, he uses Eliade's (1969) words to explain the evolution of this social representation; the excerpt is worth quoting at length here:

*...the myth of the Earthly Paradise has survived until today, in adopted form as an 'Oceanic paradise'; for the last hundred and fifty years all the great European literatures have vied with each other in exalting the paradisiacal islands of the Pacific Ocean, havens of all happiness, although the reality was very different – "flat and monotonous landscapes, unhealthy climates, ugly and obese women' etc...But the image of this 'Oceanic paradise' remained proof against geographical or any other realities. What had objective realities to do with the 'Oceanic Paradise'? This was something of a theological order: it had received, assimilated and re-adapted all the paradisiac images repressed by positivism and scientism. The earthly Paradise still believed in by Christopher Columbus... turned into a South Sea island in the nineteenth century, but its function in the economy of the human psyche remained the same: over there, in the 'islands' in that 'paradise', existence unfolded itself outside Time and History; man was happy, free and unconditioned; he did not have to work for his living; the women were young, eternally beautiful, and no 'law' hung heavily over their loves. Even nudity, in that distant isle, recovered its metaphysical meaning – that of perfect humanity, of Adam before the Fall. Geographical 'reality' might give*

*the lie to that paradisiac landscape, ugly and corpulent women might confront the travellers' eyes; but, these they did not see; each one saw only the image he had brought with him (Eliade, 1969, pp. 11-12; as cited in Cohen, 1982b, p. 11).*

A key point in this passage is that the invention of the island paradise representation is that the characteristics of the representation are in direct opposition to reality. The concept of the island paradise was stronger than what reality was actually portraying, and despite the existence of this gap, the representation persisted. Over the centuries, the “the distance between image and reality grew progressively more and more acute” (Cohen, 1982b, p. 13) with the number of visitors and residents increasing, and finally tourism as an industry infiltrating these places. Eventually, the image was perpetuated in advertising literature to the point where not only the Pacific Islands represented paradise, but other such coastal or island locations where beaches are the central attraction. Today, the objectification of ‘paradise’ in the tourism industry, particularly in respect of beaches and island settings, is strongly connected with its opposing image – that of reality. Wang (2000) calls this representation of the tourist paradise as being the “other world” (p. 169), that offers the tourist an escape from their everyday lives.

This ‘other world paradise’ representation, however, has many facets in beach tourism that exemplify the different types of social representations of the beach. Beach tourism in Thailand and the Caribbean illustrate this well. As

discussed in the previous section (2.1.5), to the 'backpacker/drifter/traveller', the beaches in Thailand are places they can escape their everyday lives, lay around on the beaches at the unsophisticated beachside resorts, merging into the local native culture. To this particular type of tourist sub-culture, these beaches represent 'paradise – primitive'. On the other hand, in the Caribbean, it is 'paradise – contrived' that represents the 'other world' to these beach tourists. The brochures lure these visitors to the island beach resorts by concentrating on the 'heaven on earth' image with all of the luxuries and freedom included, as Patullo so aptly describes:

*Ordinary people are transported to luxury, to live 'like royalty' in a style they never experience at home...while everyone, whoever they are, leaves behind everyday life, 'adult' duties and professional labels, when they don their shorts and t-shirts, bikinis and sarongs, cameras and beach bags. They are far away from home, in an unfamiliar environment where no one knows them and where, so the brochures keeps telling them, hedonism is the key quality of the place (Patullo, 1996, p. 142).*

What these examples have shown is that beach tourism does have elements of social representations. This provides a foundation to their connection with images of beaches since social representations are built on images that individuals and groups have of these destinations. Images are indeed

central to social representations (Moscovici, 1984; Pearce, et. al., 1996). Moscardo (2005) suggests that social representations may be used for better understanding of the visual images that are so prevalent in tourism. Visual images, however, are only one aspect of images. The mental processes and resulting representations that are stimulated from visual encounters, as evidenced in much image research (Francescato & Mebane, 1973; Fridgen, 1987; Gould, 1973; Oliver, 2003; Pearce, 1977; Tuan, 1975; Walmsley, 1984; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992; Young, 1999) are equally as important. Consequently, further understanding of these processes and representations can be found by understanding the way in which images are constructed and exist in tourism, particularly in beach tourism. The subsequent section will focus on this concept of images.

## **2.2 The Concept of Images**

The previous section discussed the features of beaches in an attempt to define the beach and identify the meaning of the beach. In particular, two characteristics were found to be central to the identity of the beach – nature and culture. Both of these serve as essential elements that classify the beach as a particular place that has distinct meaning. That is, the beach is a specific environment, wherein natural, cultural, social and psychological factors interact to create the image of the beach.

The following section focuses on the concept of images. Initially, it is recognised that there is no single field of research responsible for the study of images. Present day image concepts owe their development to academics from psychology, sociology, and geography, and more recently, tourism. As such, the multitude of image concepts and studies that are available are as diverse as the academics that have studied the subject. In view of this situation, two approaches to images have been selected for the literature review. These are environmental images and tourism destination image.

Environmental image concepts are reviewed since beaches qualify as 'environments'. Environmental image concepts stem from connections between geography, sociology and psychology. The use of the term 'environment', although often implying the natural environment, also integrates the cultural, social and psychological aspects. Since these are also factors of beaches, then environmental image concepts are useful for identifying beach images. Alternatively, tourism destination image focuses specifically on tourist environments and tourists' images of those environments. Therefore, the combination of these fields provides a solid foundation for the study of beach images.

### **2.2.1 Development of Image Concepts**



To begin with, academic literature on images before the 1950's was extremely scarce. Amongst the few significant contributions of the time were Tolman's (1948) cognitive mapping of rats and Bartlett's (1932) investigation of human memory and perception. By the late 1950's, studies of image began surfacing in various disciplines. Kenneth Boulding, a social scientist, was one of the first to conceptualise image from his observations of people and social organization. Boulding (1956) described images in terms of a person's subjective knowledge and accumulated experience of the world. Whilst his work was primarily philosophical, Boulding helped launch the way for others to further the exploration of images outside the 'psychology laboratory'.

In 1960, Kevin Lynch published a groundbreaking piece of literature on images. Lynch (1960), an architect and planner, developed his concept of image based on the urban landscape and the processes occurring between a person and their environment. Although he does not draw specifically from Boulding's work, Lynch (1960, p. 6) suggests similar characteristics of images, in that an individual, for their own purposeful reasons, "selects, organizes, and endows with meaning what he sees" in the environment. The implications of Lynch's studies on image concepts are evident in several disciplines including geography (Gould & White, 1986), psychology and environmental planning (Pearce & Fagence, 1996). Primarily, Lynch rationalized the use of mental mapping (a previously under-developed psychological theory) for evaluating and understanding people's images of the environment. Consequently, Lynch's work was most utilised in the field of environmental psychology, in particular to study the images of environments. It is

for this reason, that the following sections focus on both Lynch and other closely related environmental image theoretical contributions.

### **2.2.2 Environmental Images**

Environmental images are generally discussed by geographers using a variety of terms, including mental maps, schemata, spatial images, cognitive images, and cognitive representations (Downs & Stea, 1973; Fridgen, 1987, 1991; Ittelson, 1976; Lynch, 1960; Pocock & Hudson, 1978; Tuan, 1975; Walmsley, 1984). Additionally, environmental perception is often linked to images, since both terms are relate to people's mental and physical interactions with the environment. There is, however a disparity between environmental perception and images. Perceptions rely on the immediate environment in order to be sustained mentally (Fridgen, 1987; Ittelson, 1976; Tuan, 1975) whereas images are mental concepts held without direct influence from the immediate environment, although the immediate environment may stimulate recall of the image (Fridgen, 1987; Tuan, 1975, Walmsely, 1984). Consequently, since the present study aims to identify the images of beaches held by tourists, not those immediately perceived, then it is best served by focusing only on environmental images.

As mentioned in the previous section, Kevin Lynch is one of the most prominent academics to develop the concept of environmental images. Lynch states that environmental images are "a two way process between the observer

and environment... in which the observer selects, organises, and endows with meaning what he (sic.) sees” (Lynch, 1960, p. 6). The image is identified by three components of image - “identity”, the identification of an object as distinct from another; “structure” - a spatial relationship between the individual, the object and other objects; and “meaning”, the ‘value’ of the object to the individual (Lynch, 1960, p. 8). Further, Lynch invented the expression “imageability” to distinguish “the quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer” and that facilitates the object to produce “vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images” (1960, p. 9). Lynch developed his environmental image concepts primarily for use in environmental planning of urban environments, in his case, based on three cities in the United States (Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles). In doing so, he established the link between characteristics of perception, knowledge, values, and meaning to people’s view of the urban environment. Lynch’s concept, however, emphasised a visual-based perception of the environment, thus stimulating other academics to extend the ideas focusing on more mental concepts. Consequently, there are various other definitions of environmental images offered, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Definitions of Environmental Images**

Author	Definition
Lynch (1960, p.6)	"a two way process between the observer and environment in which he observer selects, organises, and endows with meaning what he (sic.) sees"; based on three components – "identity", the identification of an object as distinct from another; "structure" – a spatial relationship between the individual, the object and other objects; and "meaning", the 'value' of the object to the individual
Pocock & Hudson (1978, p. 3)	"mental models of the environment...learned and stable mental conceptions...summarising individuals' environmental knowledge, evaluations and preferences and as having implications for their behaviour."
Shields (1991, p. 14)	"Images of particular environments or places serve both referential functions (as memory aids, or frameworks for restructuring events) and anticipatory functions (serving as a guide to future encounters at or in given sites and places)."
Tuan (1975, p.205)	"something we see when the environmental stimuli do not appear to justify it."
Walmsley (1984, p. 64)	"the end product of the act of perception and cognition"

Yi Fu Tuan, a geography professor and one of the early academics studying environmental images, defines image as "something we see when the environmental stimuli do not appear to justify it" (1975, p. 208). While Tuan refers to 'seeing', he is not implying the visual, but the mental view. This is somewhat in opposition to Lynch, who does imply a visual connection between the environment and the image. What Tuan is suggesting, however, is that an image can be a recall or memory of something that was originally seen, experienced or even created, in the mind. Therefore, perception or visual interaction is involved in the image, but is not the image. This relationship is also part of Walmsley's (1984) definition of environmental images discussed in his field of human geography. He states that environmental images are "the end product of the act of perception and cognition" (Walmsley, 1984, p. 64). Further, he maintains that perception and

cognition “are mediated by experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, and personality” to the point that images are subjective (Walmsley, 1984, p. 64). It is these attributes of environmental images that allow Walmsley to support Pocock & Hudson’s definition.

Pocock & Hudson describe environmental images as “learned and stable mental conceptions... summarising individuals’ environmental knowledge, evaluations and preferences and as having implications for their behaviour” (1978, p. 3). This reflects the concept that images are a construct that results from the process of perception, as defined by Lynch (1960), Tuan (1975) and Walmsley (1984). The process, they claim, is an “intervening filtering between man and the environment” resulting in the product that is the image (Pocock & Hudson, 1978, p. 29). This process generates responses from the individual that contains three aspects - “designative”, relating to the description and organization of the information; “appraisive”, referring to evaluation and preference; and “prescriptive”, that draws information from the designative and appraisive aspects combines with previous experience to give meaning and order to the image (Pocock & Hudson, 1978, p. 30).

In a similar pattern, Shields states that “images of particular environments or places serve as both “referential” functions (as memory aids, or frameworks for restructuring events) and “anticipatory” functions (serving as a guide to future encounters at or in given sites and places) (Shields, 1991, p.14)”. Here, Shields is essentially describing the appraisive, designative and prescriptive components as

described by Pocock and Hudson (1978) and Walmsley and Jenkins (1984). The common thread, however, reveals that there is an implication of 'motion' or a 'process' involved in the development and purpose of images, and, once established, has relevance in future images. The process involves firstly giving the image coherent structure, then endowing it with meaning and, finally, storing it in the mind. This allows the images to have "referential" and "anticipatory functions".

Overall, the process of perceiving the environment and forming mental images is analogous to an individual creating road maps in their mind in order to comprehend and move through their environment. In this process, the individual 'sees' and interacts with the elements in the environment, comprehends and evaluates this experience by using their mental skills (such as knowledge, experience, values, attitudes, and beliefs) and formulates an image that acts as a reference for past events and a guide for future experiences. The term most commonly used for describing such a process is mental (or cognitive) mapping.

### **2.2.3 Mental Maps and Images**

Since Tolman's (1948) cognitive mapping of rats and Bartlett's (1932) investigation of human memory and perception, mental mapping has received moderate attention from researchers studying images. Canter (1977), in writing the "The Psychology of Place", discussed the theoretical origins of mental maps, and pointed out Lynch's (1960) work, and earlier cognitive mapping studies of

Bartlett (1932, as cited in Canter, 1977), who examined perception and internal representations, and Boulding (1956) who discussed peoples' subjective knowledge of the world. Other researchers have subsequently either discussed and/or applied mental mapping technique for both geographical and tourism related studies (For examples see: Francescato & Mebane, 1973; Fridgen, 1987; Gould, 1973; Oliver, 2003; Pearce, 1977; Tuan, 1975; Walmsley, 1984; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992; Young, 1999). Few of these offer definitions of or explanations for mental maps, and while there is no universally accepted definition, there is congruence within the various reports on the subject.

Mental maps are defined by Downs & Stea (1973, p. 9) as “convenient sets of shorthand symbols that we all subscribe to, recognize, and employ” that vary at the individual and group levels. These mental maps are “a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in his everyday spatial environment” (Downs & Stea, 1973, p.9). This process occurs in a similar way to a person using a road map to navigate around a location. The road map acts as a guide, in that it organises information about that location using patterns, symbols, and pictures that are recognisable by the person using the road map. As the person moves about in the location, their senses gather information, and using the map as a guide, they create a coherent mental structure they understand which enables them to successfully navigate the location. The mental map is, therefore, a result of a process requiring significant input of information both sensory and from other sources (Downs & Stea, 1973).

This process is described quite simply by Walmsley (1984) as “the act of perception and cognition” (1984, p. 4). It is, however, better identified as a schemata or framework for interpreting the environment rather than an image that he suggests is more related to mental pictures (Walmsley, 1984). The orientation relationship is also identified in Fridgen’s (1991) definition of mental maps. Using the term ‘cognitive map’, he suggests they are “a mental representation of the world...a collection of information that one uses to orient one’s self within an environment or setting...(of which) emotions and feelings are an important part” (Fridgen, 1991, p. 165). Similarly, Pocock and Hudson (1978) refer to mental maps as “a spatial or skeletal framework, rather than the more rounded phenomenon of the image” that is drawn from a person’s structuring and rationalisation of place (Pocock & Hudson, 1978, p. 59-60).

Overall, these definitions are describing the result of a mental process that occurs from interaction with an environment that produces a framework of information from which an individual understands that environment and in turn, uses it to relate with that environment. The product is a mental road map of sorts. A mental road map, however, implies a structured representation of the environment that, for the most part, is created from visual perception of that environment. What has been identified in these definitions is that visual input is but one of the sensory characteristics used to create mental maps. Other senses are used in orientation. For example, Downs & Stea (1973) suggest that knowledge of the environment is gained through viewing, touching, smelling and



physical movements. The process involves not only sensory input, but also other input from the individual. Emotions, feelings and values are integrated as the individual constructs or modifies the image and these give meaning to the individual's mental representation. Additionally, the individual also processes information from outside sources. These sources may range from magazines, books, brochures to television, movies, advertising, photographs, art, other people, and so on. Part of creating the mental map then involves selectively processing this volume of information, which again, involves both sensory and other personal factors.

The output of this complicated process is the mental or cognitive map. As such, a mental map of a place can be seen as not only a mental picture of an environment, but the personal attributes that an individual sees as important in relation to that environment. Consequently, a mental map helps the individual to coherently understand that environment. Mental maps can therefore be used to identify images of a particular environment. They represent both cognitive and spatial characteristics, and can give insight into the their emotions, feelings and values related to an environment. The spatial and cognitive characteristics have been studied in various forms using different mental mapping techniques.

Lynch (1960) established a particular mental mapping technique by combining sketch maps, interviews and field analysis to understand people's environmental images of cities. Lynch's method involved asking a small sample of residents from three different cities in the United States of America (Boston, Jersey

City, and Los Angeles) to do a quick sketch map of their city as if they were describing the city to a stranger. Several questions were then asked of the resident, including their the symbolic view of the city, directions they use in navigating the city, emotional feelings, distinctive elements, descriptions of features, and location of features and boundaries. Additional studies were then conducted using photographic classification of the cities, field analysis of different parts and elements of the city and its structure.

In this study, Lynch established the term “legibility” for a landscape (in his case, a city). Legibility identifies visual quality, it is “the ease with which its parts can be recognised and can be organised into a coherent pattern” (Lynch, 1960, p. 2). This means that if a city’s physical elements can be easily identified, it is “legible”. The elements of legibility that Lynch classified were a city’s paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. These are described in detail in Table 2. Each of these elements are interrelated and, according to Lynch “they must be patterned together to provide a satisfying form” (Lynch, 1960, p. 83). Therefore, elements are grouped by their observer to form a coherent and organised image. Arrangement of image elements tends to occur on different levels depending on the scale and complexity of the environment. This would indicate that images of a city are not static, nor are they singular in nature. This, as discussed, is a result of the mental mapping process of individuals.

**Table 2: Lynch's Elements of City Images (Lynch, 1960, p. 47-48)**

Elements	Description
Paths	"the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves"
Edges	"the liner elements not used or considered as paths by the observer."
Districts	"are the medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters 'inside of', and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character"
Nodes	"are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci and from which he is travelling"
Landmarks	"another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external."

Although Lynch's study was limited to cities and the resident's view of these urban environments, it inspired subsequent research mainly exercised in psychological and planning studies during the 1960's and 1970's, usually with a focus on residents' views of buildings, cities and countries (Pearce & Fagence, 1996). Very few researchers have explored Lynch's technique with tourists or in tourism settings. Of these, some have studied visitor orientation (Pearce, 1977; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992), and investigated images through closer scrutiny of visitor sketch maps (Oliver, 2003; Young, 1999). These few studies have helped lead the way for adopting mental mapping techniques in a tourism context. It is therefore important to examine Lynch's technique and its applications in greater detail, so as to rationalise its use in studying images of tourism destinations.

Pearce (1977) was one of the first tourism academics to use mental maps based on Lynch's method, to study what he termed the "mental souvenirs" of tourists. The aim of his study was to understand tourists' behaviour and perceptions in an unfamiliar environment. Pearce asked 72 visitors to sketch the

city of Oxford, England (using more detailed instructions than used by Lynch). They were asked to include features that are of personal interest that will be remembered for some time, and without reference to official maps or guides. Pearce focused on only three of Lynch's elements – paths, landmarks and districts (nodes and districts being excluded as being difficult to translate into a tourist concept) and orientation scores in his analysis of the visitor maps. The results supported Lynch's notion that to begin with, visitors orienting themselves using landmarks more, but do also use paths and districts. Pearce's study revealed some gender differences in the spatial maps. More importantly, the results revealed that while more paths, landmarks and districts, and higher orientation scores were evident in those who stayed longer, the proportions of these elements did not change between short and longer staying visitors. Overall, this suggests that the images are formed quickly and become more complex over time.

A similar, but more detailed study was conducted by Walmsley & Jenkins (1992). They employed Lynch's mapping technique and a questionnaire to study how tourists learn about unfamiliar environments. The study focused on map elements, visitor and resident views, speed of learning, and demographic variations. The sample consisted of 115 tourists, and, as a comparison for results, a sample of 30 residents were also interviewed in Coffs Harbour (in Australia). The results were similar to Pearce (1977), since they found that visitors learn quickly, and early visitors focus more on landmarks than those who have stayed longer at the location. Additionally, they found differences in spatial content and learning speed between drivers and non-drivers. Walmsley & Jenkins' study

revealed that the significance of and connections between the different elements changes as visitors become more oriented to the location. The number of these elements did not necessarily increase proportionally as the visitor becomes more oriented with the location, but the use of each element changes over time.

More recently, Young (1999) adapted Lynch's techniques for mapping a large-scale natural environment. He interviewed 403 nature-based tourists with the aim of understanding their maps using socio-demographic factors. The spatial maps revealed that landmarks scored the highest, followed by districts, paths, edges, evaluative components, nature scores, social comments and orientation comments. Young (1999), like his predecessors Pearce (1977) and Walmsley & Jenkins (1992), found significant differences in the spatial maps between drivers and passengers, age groups, and gender. Young also found variations in the styles of maps produced in that some were not spatial representations but "symbolic impressions" of the place (Young, 1999, p. 822). There were also variations in the map elements representing more than physical characteristics, such as events, activities and evaluative comments.

Consequently, there appear to be a number of significant variables that contribute to the creation and transformation of images. A number of these factors were also identified by Oliver (2003). Adapting Lynch's mental mapping technique, Oliver (2003) used the method to gauge changes in tourist perceptions of destinations. Oliver's study involved surveying tourists who participated in organised cultural tours both pre- and post-tour. Maps were visually compared for

landmarks, paths, and districts, and non-spatial comments. The findings revealed that tourists' images reflected similar characteristics as those used in marketing the destination, thus indicating that visitors had a predetermined image of the destination. Comparison of pre-tour with post-tour images revealed that images were reinforced, not recreated as a result of touring the destination.

These studies have shown that Lynch's method can indeed be applied to tourism settings. There is, however, an apparent focus on using mental maps for investigating the learning characteristics of tourists, more so than understanding their images. While this is directly linked to the motives of most of these studies, generally being to discern images in terms of how tourists perceive the destinations they visit, there are other aspects of image that could benefit from the application of Lynch's method. In particular, the use of Lynch's elements in previous studies is limited mainly to scoring of landscape-related elements, with very little attention paid to the nature and structure of the elements or the particular mental significance of these elements to the visitor.

As such, further examination of the structure, organisation and relationship between these elements and the visitor could offer a deeper evaluation of tourists' images. This is necessary, particularly if the aim is to understand the images of a distinctive tourism destination, such as a beach. Beaches are often not unfamiliar environments to visitors; therefore, images of beaches may have been created and adapted over long periods of time and from different beach experiences. This implies a depth to the images, one that may not be adequately studied through

simple scoring of beach landscape elements. A more complex and detailed investigation is required, in order to more suitably capture the cognitive characteristics, and not merely focus on the spatial characteristics of the image.

An additional consideration derived from the use of mental map images revealed in many of these studies, is that the maps represent highly subjective views of the environment. Gould describes this subjectivity in detail:

*Man's view of geographic space is extremely varied, and the views of individual (men) are always in part unique. Entering into the particular outlook of a particular (man) are a host of experiences, prejudices, and desires, some widely shared, others quite specific to the individual (1973, p. 184).*

Therefore, the result of individual's unique and complicated views is that "every cognitive map is idiosyncratic...a partial and distorted version of reality" as found by Walmsley and Jenkins (1992, p. 275). Nowhere, perhaps, would be more subjective than the beach. As previously discussed, beaches are locations with complex natural and cultural characteristics. Beach visitors are as diverse as the beaches they visit, therefore, images would be equally variable. Consequently, categorising individual mental maps, particularly those of beach visitors, may prove difficult. This problem may also be exasperated by the fact that mental maps rely on the individual having a certain level of drawing skills and that such drawings may not represent all of the cognitive aspects of the person's image of that

environment. For example, factors such as the individual's purpose for specific elements in that environment, their feelings and appreciation for those elements are difficult to measure diagrammatically. This was reported in Francescato & Mebane's (1973) study on local residents' views of the two touristic cities, Rome and Milan. They found that while Lynch's elements were indeed present, the mental maps did not provide the opportunity for individual's feelings, attitudes, and use or purpose for the locations.

However, it is possible to at least partially overcome these issues. Pearce (1996), in his review of Kevin Lynch's work, suggested that tourism image studies could benefit from the combination of techniques that included cognitive (mental) mapping. For example, by combining mental maps and other forms of image evaluation methods, all of the image elements may be more thoroughly examined. Furthermore, applying other theories and techniques ensures more appropriate and in-depth interpretation (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992). This being the case, a complementary approach appears far more productive when studying images of environments. In particular, if the approach is to be oriented towards understanding images held by tourists, such as this study, there is need for awareness of the specific nature of tourists and tourist environments. One such field of study that qualifies is tourist destination image

#### **2.2.4 Tourist Destination Image**



Tourist destination image can simply be thought of as possessing two components - the 'destination' and the 'image'. The destination generally refers to a specified place or location. The destination varies according to the aims and type study (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002). This may be a city (e.g. example Lynch, 1960), a state (e.g. Hunt (1975) study four U.S. state images), a country (such as Echtner & Ritchie's 1993 study of images of Jamaica, Japan, Kenya and Switzerland), or a designated area (e.g. Coshall's (2000) study of London's museum and gallery images). However, it is the definition and structure of 'image' that is contested by many researchers. Depending on the researcher's perspective, 'image' can take on a whole host of meanings.

One of the earliest definitions of tourism destination image was established by Hunt (1975). Concerned with the lack of attention paid to investigating images used in primarily in marketing for the tourism industry, he embarked on a study of images that non-residents held of particular states in the North America. In this study, Hunt (1975) described images as impressions a person or persons hold of a state they do not reside in, largely due to the focus of his study. Later, Crompton (1979) extended on Hunt's definition and suggested that images are "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has" about a place. Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977, p. 10) echo Crompton's definition by including similar characteristics in their definition. They state that images are "the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group have of a particular object or place." Fridgen defines images in terms of environmental dimensions of tourism, emphasising the perceptual

characteristics of destination image. He suggests that “images sometimes result from cognitive maps” (1991, p. 166), thus limiting the definition of destination image to that of “the perceptions a person has of some thing, place, or event that is not directly before the observer”. He implies images are based on visual (observed) experiences and does not allow for images being formed during the experience. Milman & Pizam, however, include both, by stating that destination image is “the visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public” (1995, p.21).

These definitions, while helpful in understanding images, tend to be somewhat vague and lacking in composition. Definitions such as these are useful for understanding the broad ideology of destination images, but are not practical for identifying the particular characteristics and dimensions of images that actually conceptualise images. There are, however, other researchers that express images through more structured elements. For example, individuals’ attitudes, behaviours and motives are identified in the image development process described by Gartner (1996).

He classifies the key components of destination image as “cognitive” (evaluating or comprehending in an intellectual way), “affective” (relating to motives and feelings), and “conative” (relating to behaviour or action); which are distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated (Gartner, 1996, p.457). By extending the definition to include attitudes, behaviours and motives, Gartner (1996) is effectively establishing specific dimensions to the concept of image formation. Moreover, he

is identifying the components that are 'active' in the process of image development, that is, the cognitive and affective components. The conative components, however, represent the outcome of the previous two components. The behaviour or action, in this case, reflects the decision made following the processing of the information that occurred in the first two stages (Gartner, 1996).

These three components have been examined in the context of both pre- and post-travel images (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Dann, 1996; Gartner, 1996) and destination positioning (Pike & Ryan, 2004). For example, Baloglu's (2000) study of potential tourists to Turkey Egypt, Greece and Italy exemplified the three components. He designed and tested a model of destination image before actual visitation that included motives, as well as cognitive and affective components. In particular, the study demonstrated that the cognitive and affective components, together with information sources, are key components of pre-visitation image development. Dann (1996b) also successfully used all three components to examine pre- and post-visit images that tourists held of Barbados. He found these components existed in both images. Additionally, Dann suggested that while there is an interaction of the components, it does not necessarily occur on a linear basis, but as a continual process of interaction. What can be suggested from Dann's results then, is that while traditionally the conative component is seen as a result of the destination image choice process prior to visitation, they may also exist within the image at any point in time.

An alternative approach to destination images is offered by a number of academics who propose that they are defined both as images held by the tourist and those that are projected by the destination itself. Echtner & Ritchie (1991) demonstrated that destination image is defined as a combination of the destination's attributes and the impressions made by that destination. Echtner & Ritchie (1991; 1993) examined different types of research previously conducted on image in an attempt to clarify the meaning and measurement of the concept. Upon reviewing this research, they concluded that while many of the previous studies concentrated only on attribute-based, tangible images, other images, particularly those that are intangible or stem from the destination itself, warranted inclusion in destination image research.

Consequently, their research led to the development of a "conceptual framework" for destination image. This concept consists of three continuums labelled "attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique" that are best-envisioned three dimensionally. Attribute-based images and holistic images represent the first dimension. Attribute-based images consist of individual features of destinations, such as climate and scenery, while holistic images represent the total impression of a destination. Then, this dimension is viewed with two other dimensions. The functional-psychological, which refers to functional characteristics such as "price levels, infrastructure, types of accommodation, etc." and psychological characteristics namely "levels of friendliness, safety, quality of service and fame, etc." (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p.3). The third dimension, common-unique, refers to the notion that "destinations can range from more

common functional characteristics to those based on more distinctive and psychological characteristics of unique features, events, feelings and auras” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, p.3). Echtner & Ritchie’s framework serves to capture many of the destination image characteristics defined earlier. It allows for both the emotional thoughts (such as beliefs, ideas, impressions, values and behaviour) of the individual and the destination’s overall image. Therefore, destination image can then be regarded as a composite of those images held both by the individual and of those projected by the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993). This bipolar characteristic of destination image implies there is a connection between the tourists’ images and the images of the image-generating environment. This connection can be seen in the various other components of destination image examined by other researchers.

The role of information sources in the development of destination image has been of particular interest to many researchers (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1996; Gunn, 1972; 1988). Gunn (1972, 1988) was among the first to establish that images of a destination are formed from two levels, 'organic' and 'induced'. 'Organic' images are formed over time, as a "result of reader's assimilation of material from newspapers, periodicals, books and opinions of family and friends" (Gunn, 1988, p.24). 'Induced' images represent those provided by "advertising literature, magazine articles, guide books, television promotion, travel tour packages, and promotion by travel businesses" (Gunn, 1988, p.24). Further, 'induced' images, after assimilation by the reader, alter the existing 'organic' images. Whilst these images are mainly formed away from the destination over a

traveller's lifetime, overall images are modified by an actual experience at the destination.

Later, Gartner (1996) expanded Gunn's "organic" and "induced" images into eight stages as described in Table 3. Gartner, as opposed to Gunn, offers more details for the specific types of information that influence image formation prior to actual visitation. This is an important progression, in that it clarifies the significant contribution that information sources have in the creation of tourist images. Recent studies have found that the variety of information sources is a better predictor of images than the quantity of information (Baloglu, 2000; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This implies that each source of information that influences the tourist, also influences the image. Consequently, information sources are an important component in the creation and modification of destination images. Since information has a continual presence in the image formation process, it is imperative that they are acknowledged in studies of destination images. As Gartner (1996, p.462) suggests, "if we can isolate the different ways that images are formed, image change can be monitored, new attempts to change images can be initiated, and effective ways to project images can be undertaken".

**Table 3: Gartner's (1996) Eight Stages of Image Formation**

*(Adapted from Gartner's (1996, p. 472) "Image Formation Agents")*

Stage	Information Source
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Overt Induced 1	Traditional forms of advertising eg. brochures, TV, radio, print, billboard, etc.
Overt Induced 2	Information received from tour operators, wholesalers
Covert Induced 1	Second-party endorsement of products via traditional forms of advertising
Covert Induced 2	Second-party endorsement through apparently unbiased reports eg. newspaper travel section articles
Autonomous	New and popular culture eg. documentaries, reports, news stories, movies, television programs
Unsolicited Organic	Unsolicited information received from friends and relatives
Solicited Organic	Solicited information received from friends and relatives
Organic	Actual visitation

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Information sources, however are not the only factors that influence destination image. Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia (2002), in their extensive review of destination image research, identified several other factors that influence destination images. Time, 'movement' and distance are particularly significant. These appear in both Gunn's and Gartner's image formation stages. The destination image formation process occurs over time and is constantly changing. Firstly, the progression of image formation agents identified by Gartner is not necessarily linear, since the different types of information may influence images concurrently (1996, p.63). Moreover, once visitation to the destination has occurred, the information sources still continue to influence images. Therefore, regardless whether a visitor is potential, first-time or repeat visitor information sources are continually influencing images (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Consequently, there is 'movement' of destination images; they are not static but dynamic (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Distance, on the other hand, which is generally understood as referring to the physical distance between the visitor and the destination, has also been found

to influence image. Research suggests that the closer the destination is physically to a person, the clearer the image they have of it (Crompton, 1979; Gould, 1973; Hunt, 1971; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989). This could apply to the mental distance as well. For example, a tourist who has made many visits to the same destination should have a more in-depth knowledge of the destination, and in turn, a clearer and stronger image. Milman & Pizam (1995) found this to be true in their study of the role of awareness and familiarity with images of Central Florida. They interviewed 750 residents randomly selected from the United States who had previously taken vacations outside their state and asked various questions relating to image, including awareness and familiarity of the destination. They found that those tourists who were familiar with the destination (having made several prior visits) had more accurate images of the destination than those who were either simply just aware of it or had never visited it. Familiarity, in this case, also connected with the level of information received. Those tourists, who had visited the destination, were statistically different to those who were only aware of it or had never visited (Milman & Pizam, 1995). The reason being, those tourists who had visited the destination were exposed to significantly more advertising (information sources). As such, information would appear to increase familiarity with a destination, so much so, that the image of that destination is fortified not only by the actual visitation experience, but also by the information exposed during visitation. Therefore, one would expect that images are more solid and structured if a tourist has actually visited a destination. This indicates that familiarity, and distance influence both the structure and the strength of the image.



This section has reviewed some of the key characteristics of destination image (namely cognitive, affective and conative elements, selective vs. additive, multi-term vs. gestalt, static vs. dynamic, time, and distance). A recent attempt was made to consolidate the many and varied components of destination image into a conceptual framework. Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia (2002) created their conceptual model of tourist destination image, based on an extensive literature review and classification of research methodology on the subject. Their model presents a systematic review of destination image characteristics that includes those discussed in this section. The destination image model, presented in Table 4, has been condensed and adapted to reflect the characteristics discussed in the present literature review. Gallarza, et al., however, advise that the “conceptual delimitation of destination image is not unequivocal” (2002, p.68). The reason being, as noted previously, that definitions and concepts vary depending on the meaning and approach taken by the researcher. A review of 142 published papers spanning almost 30 years of destination image research, revealed that there is still no consensus on a particular working method for conceptualising destination images (Pike, 2002). Therefore, the challenge for researchers attempting to study images of a destination is equally as complex as the subject. Nonetheless, this framework provides the structural parameters for the study of tourists’ images.

**Table 4: Destination Image Structural Characteristics**

*(Adapted from Gallarza, Saura and Garcia (2002, p.69) “General Framework of Destination Image Formation”).*

Characteristics	Description
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Cognitive, affective and/or conative elements	Cognitive – an intellectual evaluation or comprehension Affective - relating to motives and feelings Conative - relating to behaviour or action
Selective vs. Additive images	Interaction of image components - can be selectively or additively viewed Eg. Overall visitor images vs. potential, first time or repeat visitor images
Time	Images are influenced by time – i.e. Past, present and future images
Distance	Images are influenced by the physical and mental distance of the person to the destination
Static and dynamic structure	Images are formed through a process (that includes information sources and experience) and changes occur at different stages
Image as a multi-item construct and/or as a gestalt	Images include many personal & destination-based attributes but may also be structured in terms of overall images
Variation across people (segmentation)	Images vary from person to person and group to group
Comparisons among objects (positioning)	Images vary from destination to destination, and are comparable
Collective vs. Personal impressions	Images exist individually or represented by a group
Need for a multidisciplinary focus	Images require study from psychological, physiological, social and other perspectives

## 2.3 Conceptualising Beach Images

### 2.3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on identifying the meaning of beach images. The literature review has served to establish that beach images have “meaning”. This was found in defining the beach and by examining the characteristics that identify the beach. Images have also been discussed with reference to three key approaches to studying images – environmental images, mental maps and tourist destination image. While each of these approaches stem from different fields of study and are applied to various settings, they are highly compatible. A brief review of each of these approaches establishes this compatibility that enables the conceptualisation of beach images.

### **2.3.2 Image Concept Integration**

The previous sections have examined how individuals image their environment (Downs & Stea, 1973; Frigden, 1991; Ittelson, 1976; Lynch, 1960; Pocock & Hudson, 1978; Tuan, 1975; Walmsley, 1984), and how they image tourism destinations in particular (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Coshall, 2000; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1996; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993; Gartner, 1996; Gunn, 1972; 1988; Hunt, 1975; Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). Environmental images reflect the identity, structure and meaning of a place (Lynch, 1960), are represented by mental conceptions (Pocock & Hudson, 1978) that are a result of the perception and cognition (Walmsely, 1984) and have referential and anticipatory functions (Shields, 1991). Mental maps are images, representing the cognitive process resulting from a person's interaction with an environment (Downs & Stea, 1973; Frigden, 1991; Lynch, 1960; Pocock & Hudson, 1978). They are individual's 'mental roadmaps' representing ideas, experiences and spatial concepts of environments. Environmental images and mental maps are a result of a process that requires input from senses such as vision, touch, taste and smell, combined with other information to create the image. The mental map varies over time and according to distance between the object and the individual. Both environmental images and mental maps are highly subjective. Tourist destination images are characterised by cognitive, affective and conative elements (Gartner, 1996); that are influenced by factors such as time, distance, and information.

Tourist destination images are not uni-modal. They can be selective vs. additive, multi-term vs. gestalt, static vs. dynamic, and time and distance (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002).

There are five common elements discussed in these conceptual approaches to images. First, images are created by interactions with an environment. This interaction, whether it is an actual physical experience or visual or verbal encounter, initiates the process of the image. Second, the information gained by the interaction is mentally processed, evaluated and affects behaviour and action. Mental processing is an intellectual evaluation that involves feelings, emotions, values, motives, and memories. Third, the process is influenced by factors of time, distance and information. Images are modified and restructured over periods of time as new and different information is processed by the individual. The distance, whether it is physical or mental distance, between the individual and the environment, also varies the strength and type of image. Information, in its various forms from different sources, is continually being processed and modifying the image. Fourth, images may be considered as overall or multi-termed. That is, images may be viewed as overall impressions of an environment or based on individual attributes of that environment. Finally, as a result of these previous elements, images are highly subjective. They are social representations, variable between individuals as well as different groups of people.

Integration of these image concepts is acceptable, when based on these common elements. This is applicable to the study of images of different

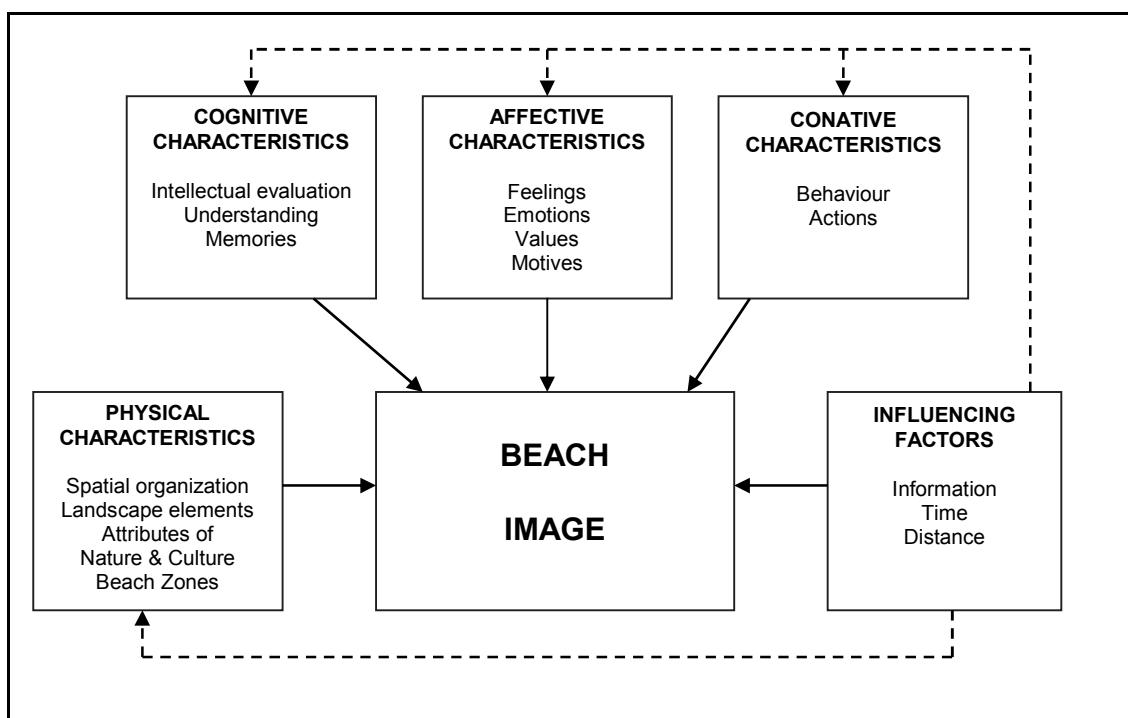
environments, including beaches. The integration of these image concepts, however, is important to the study of beach images since they form the foundation for the conceptualisation of beach images.

### **2.3.3 Beach Image Components**

As discussed, the integration of environmental image, mental map and tourist destination image concepts creates the foundation for the structure of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework as shown in Figure 4. The components of the framework have been explained in the various sections on images; however, it is necessary to examine the relationship between each component and beach images.

Overall, beach images are created through a non-linear process that combines physical characteristics, signified by both nature and culture; and, cognitive, affective and conative characteristics that include culture. All of these characteristics are influenced by information, time, and distance. The characteristics are assimilated in the mind of the tourist to create an image of the beach. The image represented in the concept may be created with or without an actual experience at the beach. For example, through assimilation of information from words, pictures or conversations about a beach, the tourist may form an image of that beach without ever having visited it. Alternatively, the same process of assimilation occurs before, during and after actually visiting the beach. In each

case, all of the beach image characteristics and influencing factors may be present all of the time, but the image will vary depending on these characteristics and influential factors that were assimilated to form the image. Therefore, the representation is applicable as a means of structuring beach images at any given point in time.



**Figure 4: Beach Image Conceptual Framework**

### *Physical Characteristics*

The physical characteristics include spatial organization, zones, landscape elements and natural and cultural attributes of the beach. The beach has been defined as a geographical location, consisting of different zones representing the water and land components of the beach (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Gunn,

1972,1988; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). These zones are also defined symbolically as attributed by nature and culture (Fisk, 1989). The elements that create a beach have been captured in studies of beach attributes (Burton, 1995; Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a; 1999b) that are also signified by both natural and cultural attributes. Natural attributes are physical characteristics represented by flora, fauna, water, topography and climate. Cultural attributes represent the human-related elements that include structures and development, activities, behaviours, feelings and other human elements. Cultural attributes are more complex than natural attributes. Therefore they require further explanation.

Culture, in particular, is central to the beach experience and plays an important role in developing beach images. The essential elements of culture are summarized as behaviours, beliefs, customs, cognitions, feelings shared by groups of people, that are evident as values, symbols, rituals, and heroes, and are represented in objects and the environment (Altman & Chemers, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963; Tylor, 1872 (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963)). These are manifested in representations of the beach. What appears in such representations is, that the beaches experiences and, in turn, beach images, vary according to the relationship between culture and the physical elements of the beach. A specific 'tourist culture' is also evident (Jafari, 1987; Reisinger and Turner, 2003). This 'touristic culture' results from interaction between the tourists' own culture and the hosting destination's culture. Furthermore, sub-cultures also exist, and can be based on many variables including geographic region, economic

or social class, religion, education, and social status. There is tourist subcultures also represented by different groups of beach tourists.

### *Cognitive, Affective and Conative Characteristics*

Culture reflects elements of the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics in beach images. The cognitive characteristics refer to intellectual evaluation or understanding that draws on, as well as creates memories of the beach. Tourists evaluate beaches for their potential to fulfil their physical and mental travel needs. Intellectual evaluation occurs every time information is presented, whether it originates from the physical characteristics of the destination or from other sources of information. Memories may be triggered in the process and these serve as referential and/or restructuring agents. This is evident in the English tourists' attachment to particular beaches that are valued for their childhood memories (Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). Therefore, cognitive characteristics present the reactions to physical characteristics, and the affective and conative characteristics.

The affective characteristics refer to feelings, emotions, values and motives are strong elements of culture. Beaches and beach tourists reflect an abundance of these characteristics. For example, motives and values were evident in characteristics of Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary's (2001) three groups of coastal tourists. Their coastal tourism profiles revealed that "eco-coastal" tourists were seeking mainly wildlife and ecological features; the "active beach" tourists were more inclined towards beaches where they could sunbathe, swim and



participate in water sports, but were also attracted to the natural features; while the “passive seaside” tourists sought out beaches to escape from everyday life and feel relaxed. Motives, values, feelings and emotions vary between individuals and groups, and they are highly variable according to different beach types. A remote, unpopulated and undeveloped beach, for example, may be valued for its natural attributes and attract visitors who seek to escape, enjoy solitude and peaceful relaxation in a natural setting. Yet, the same type of beach may also attract a more active type of visitor who seeks this beach for its natural attributes, but their experience will produce different emotions and feelings. It is these characteristics that the most subjective in beach images.

The conative characteristics represent behaviour or action of the beach tourist in relation to the previous characteristics. Although conative characteristics are considered as behaviour or action, as a response to the image information process, (usually the tourist’s decision to travel to the destination (Gartner, 1996)), the conative characteristics can be included as part of the image itself. As Dann (1996) demonstrated, the tourist can ‘project themselves’ into the image, regardless of whether they have previously visited or are visiting the destination. Therefore, in the case of beach images, it is considered that the inclusion of conative characteristics, as represented by behaviour at the beach, is not only applicable, but important to the image of the beach. As the literature has shown, beach behaviours vary at different beaches. For example, some beach tourists’ behaviour in Thailand, described by Cohen (1982) was dominated by lying around on the beach, usually naked, relaxing or sitting at beachfront restaurants for hours

at a time. Alternatively, different behaviours are seen at the English seaside resorts. English beach tourists have shown a tendency for taking regular trips to the seaside, often revisiting beaches from their childhood years, and include activities such as socialising with friends and family (Morgan, 1999 ; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998).

### *Influencing factors*

The key factors that influence images are information, time and distance. Information, as discussed, represents any input resulting either from assimilation of material such as books, magazines, and newspapers to travel literature and discussions with other people. Information constantly influences each of the components of images (Gunn, 1988; Gartner, 1996), it helps form new images, reconstruct existing images, and even terminate images. Information influences the image over time. Therefore, the image may not always be consistent in the mind of the tourist. Time also influences the strength of the image. Images may be reinforced through lengthy and/or repeated visits to the same beach. Conversely, images of beaches may also be restructured over time as is the case for many English seaside resorts where the same English tourists who once appreciated the historical seaside resorts in their childhood, now find those beaches less appealing so the images of these beaches are being reconstructed (Urry, 1987). Additionally, the mental and physical distance from the beach also changes the strength and structure of the beach image. For example, studies have shown that tourists that are located close to the beaches they visit have

different views, feelings and values than those of tourists who live further away from that beach (Passariello, 1983; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998).

The Beach Image Conceptual Framework has been structured as a result of integrating three key approaches to studying images - environmental images, mental maps and tourist destination image. This type of approach is generally known as multi-disciplinary or multi-method strategy. Hunter and Brewer (2003) state that a multi-method strategy calls for the “use of multiple methods with complementary strengths and different weaknesses in relation to a given set of research problems... (thus) by combining methods, one can both create or construct new theory and test it in the same piece of research” (2003, p. 580, 583). This suggests that in taking the multi-method approach, each method’s weakness may be overcome. Consequently, this represents the structure and directions of the research, based on the Beach Images Conceptual Framework.

## **2.4 Research Objectives**

The research objectives were initialised by the theme of this thesis – “meaning, measurement and management”. The previous chapters have shown firstly that beach images have meaning; and secondly that, while research on beach images is scarce, there are theories and concepts that can be adopted to measure beach images. This led to the development of the Beach Image

Conceptual Framework. The framework serves as the theoretical foundation from which studies can be designed to examine the components of images of beaches.

The general aim of these studies is to evaluate the suitability of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework for measuring beach images. Three studies have been formulated to address the measurement and management of beach images. The first two studies identify the individual components of the beach images. Additionally, a cross-cultural perspective is given to these studies, by examining the beach images of tourists from different countries. The third and final study integrates these components and examines beach images from the management perspective. The integration of these studies is represented in Table 5. The objectives for each of the studies are as follows:

**Study No 1: Measurement - Physical Attributes**

1. Identify the dominant physical characteristics of tourist beach images,
2. Describe the key attributes of nature and culture of tourist beach images, and
3. Capture the cross-cultural physical characteristics of tourist beach images.

**Study No. 2: Measurement – Cognitive, Affective & Conative Characteristics**

1. Identify the key cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of tourist beach images
2. Describe the attributes of nature and culture in tourist beach images,

3. Examine the factors influencing beach images, and
3. Capture the cross-cultural characteristics of tourist beach images.

**Study No. 3: Management**

1. Identify the dominant natural and cultural attributes of beach tourism destination managers,
2. Assess the level of importance placed on natural and cultural attributes of beach images by beach tourism destination managers, and
3. Identify the key issues influencing beach images recognised by beach tourism destination managers.

**Table 5: Integrated Structure of the Studies**

	<b>MEASUREMENT</b>		<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
	<b>Study #1: Physical Characteristics</b>	<b>Study #2: Cognitive, Affective &amp; Conative Characteristics</b>	<b>Study #3: Management of Beach Images</b>
Sample:	International Visitors	International visitors	Beach Tourism Destination Managers
Variables	Cognitive & spatial attributes Natural & cultural attributes in images      Cross-cultural characteristics	Cognitive, affective & conative characteristics Natural & cultural attributes Attributes like the most Reason/motive Activities Feelings Information sources People visit beach with Changes or improvements Cross-cultural characteristics	Natural & cultural attributes Attributes like the most Issues Future image  Comparison with visitor's cross-cultural characteristics

## 2.5 Directions of the Research

The significance of the beach as a tourism destination and the proliferation of imagery associated with the beach has inspired the study of this phenomenon. The research problem that has been identified is ***to establish the meaning, measurement and management of beach images***. Each chapter has been developed within the parameters of this research theme. All of the links between the chapters are summarised in the Chapter Flow Diagram (refer to Figure 5).

In this first chapter, the existence of images and the trends and issues surrounding beach images have been considered. The second chapter examines the theories relating to the study of images. It begins by establishing definitions of the beach and images. Culture is introduced to the research as an additional perspective relevant to images. A selection of academic theories and studies are discussed, with particular attention paid to the development of image concepts, images of environments, and tourist destination image. This literature review is fundamental in the establishment of the objectives of the research.

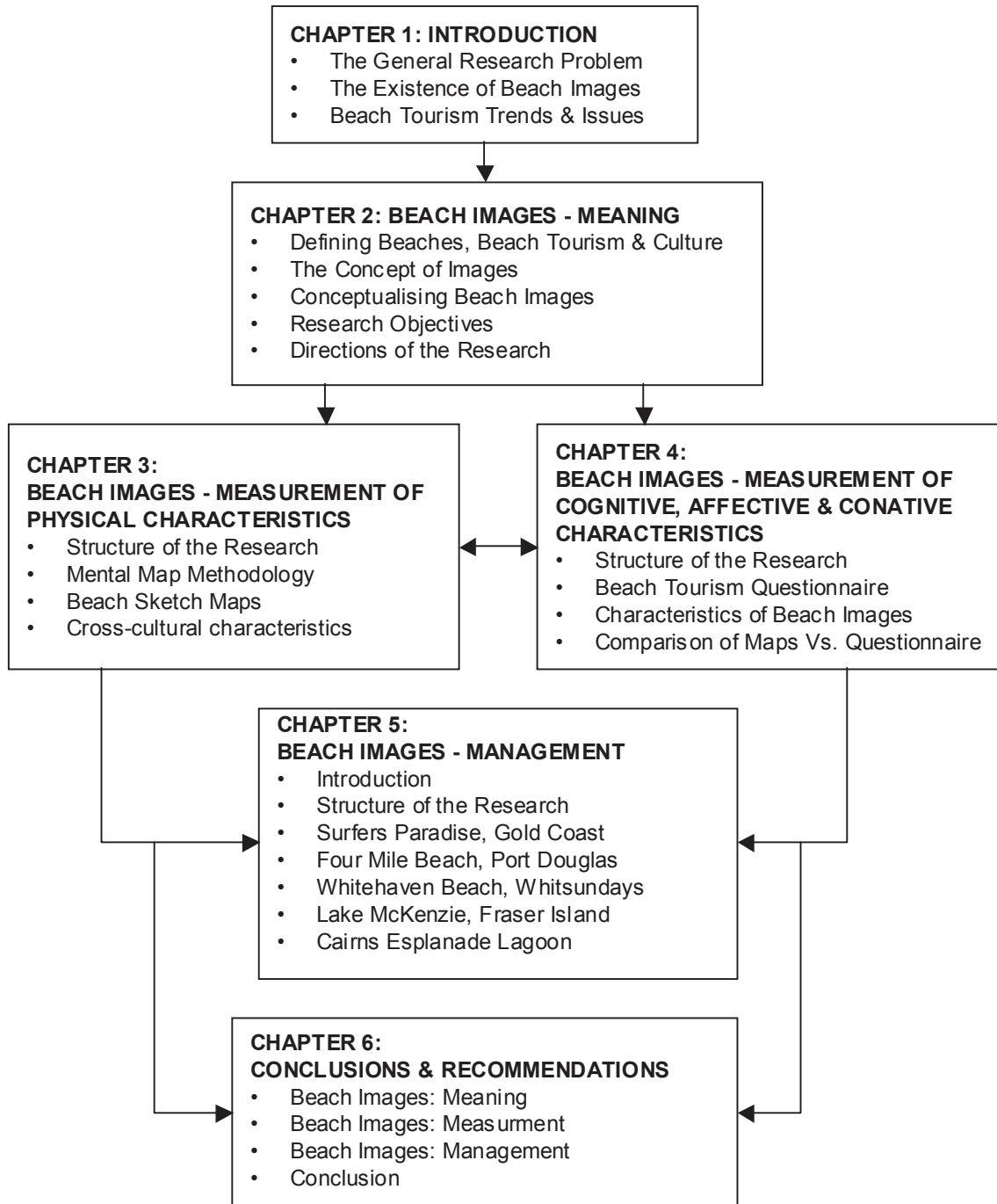
The third and fourth chapters are driven by the objectives of the research. Representing the “measurement” of beach images, these chapters discuss the application and results of two studies conducted on the images. The first study serves to identify the physical characteristics of beach images. The second study focuses on the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of these images.

Additionally, both studies examine the images that tourists from different cultures have of beaches.

The fifth chapter investigates the “management” of beach images. This involves the final study that examines the images held by managers and promoters of beach tourism destinations. Drawing from the results of the previous two studies, this alternative view completes the overall study of beach images. This allows for the contemplation of the future of beach images in the final chapter.

The sixth and final chapter concludes the research by discussing the findings in terms of the research problem. In particular, this chapter concludes with final contributions from the research. Finally, the research reflects on the future of beach image research and future images of beaches.





**Figure 5: Thesis Chapter Flow Diagram**

## CHAPTER 3

### BEACH IMAGE MEASUREMENT - PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



(Source: Fay Falco-Mammone, 2003)

*...the intertidal zone and the area above high tide mark composed of beach material - sand, shingle or mud - in front of the sea wall, cliffs, sand dunes, and grazing or agricultural land. The term 'seafront' or coast describes the assemblage comprising the beach and those areas backing the beach, eg. the sea wall and promenade, and cliff top areas. The 'beach' also encompasses any facilities located on the beach, and the 'seafront' includes attractions associated with the promenade (Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998, p. 319).*

## **3.1 Structure of the Research**

### **3.1.1 Introduction**

The literature review suggests that there is no single, universally accepted method for measuring images, particularly for images of beaches. Consequently, the key components of beach images were identified (see Chapter 2) using concepts and characteristics found in environmental images, mental maps and tourist destination image. These components serves as a foundation for the following study. This chapter describes the structure of the research, methodology and discusses the results of the study identifying beach images.

### **3.1.2 Aims of the study**

This study focuses on measuring beach images in relation to the first component of beach images – the physical characteristics. The physical characteristics were identified as spatial organization, zones, and landscape elements, natural and cultural attributes. Consequently, the aims of the first study are to:

1. Identify the dominant physical characteristics of tourist beach images,
2. Describe the key attributes of nature and culture of tourist beach images, and
3. Capture the cross-cultural physical characteristics of tourist beach images.

### 3.1.3 Methodological Structure

The methodological structure takes into consideration the limitations and criticism directed towards methods for studying images of tourism destinations. To begin with, many tourist destination image techniques are predominantly based on structured techniques, often not involving the tourist as the source of information, and tend to focus on destinations such as states, cities, or resort areas (Pike, 2002). The majority of destination image studies also rely on attribute lists to measure tourists' perceptions of destinations (Dann, 1996b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Pearce & Fagence, 1996). This often results in the inability of researchers to capture the "more holistic and unique components...and psychological characteristics of destination image" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, p. 10). Consequently, several researchers have expressed the need for combining structured and unstructured methodologies in destination image research (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), for supplementing qualitative methods (Dann & Phillips, 2000; Pearce & Fagence, 1996) and to bring the tourist 'back into the study' (Dann, 1996b).

This study acknowledges the need for more innovative methods. Therefore, incorporating measurement techniques from other fields, namely environmental images to complement destination image methods. Environmental image methods usually examine how people perceive, mentally model, cognitively map (Downs & Stea, 1973; Lynch, 1960; Pocock & Hudson, 1978; Walmsley,

1984), and interact with their environments (Zube, Sell, & Taylor, 1982). The environmental image is discussed in terms designative (knowledge of environment) and appraisive (evaluation and preference) and prescriptive (meaning and order) components (Pocock & Hudson, 1978). Mental or cognitive mapping, as discussed in the literature review, is one method used in environmental image measurement that has not been fully explored as a method for capturing images in the field of tourism. The mapping technique allows participants to freely express their representation or image of a location. Although the resulting image is highly subjective (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992), this information is not rendered useless, but adds depth to the image study.

An additional consideration for using destination image and cognitive mapping is the type of location. Beaches are a significant departure from the usual locations studied in destination image and mental mapping research. There has been a tendency to focus on towns or cities (Francescato & Mebane, 1973; Pearce, Philip L, 1977; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992) and regions (Fridgen, 1987), but none on specific tourism places, such as beaches. This is not surprising, considering there are only a few studies that have utilised this method in tourism research. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that the method is appropriate for beaches since the literature review shows that images of beaches do exist in tourists' minds and are defined in terms of the images measured by attributes and mental maps.

In respect of the global and multicultural nature of tourism and beach images, the study is strengthened by its focus on cross-cultural characteristics. As discussed in the literature review, culture includes beliefs, traditions, values, norms, perceptions, customs (Altman & Chemers, 1980; Pizam, 1999) that are shared by groups of people defined by common factors such as, but not limited to, race, geographic region, residence, language, social class, or lifestyle (Dann, 1993b; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995). Therefore, culture cannot be attributed to or measured by any single factor, which poses the question of measurement parameters for cross-cultural research. While it is difficult to include all the characteristics of culture in any one study for reasons of practicality, many cross-cultural studies have been conducted successfully using one or a few of these characteristics (for examples see Pizam, 1999; Pizam & Sussman, 1995; Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Richardson & Crompton, 1998). The proviso is in making it absolutely clear what parameters of culture are being measured. Consequently, this study includes two levels of distinguishing cultural characteristics.

The first level of culture is based on country of birth and residence. These are the simplest and easiest cultural factors to measure. This combination can, within certain limitations (see Limitations section for more details), give insight into the cultural influences on beach images. Since beaches in different countries hold certain attributes, uses, and cultural values, so too would images held by individuals and groups from those countries. The second level of culture is based on tourist cultures and subcultures. Particular characteristics of beach images

may be linked to specific tourist cultures such as 'backpackers' and beach subcultures such as 'surfing'. Additionally, tourist cultures may also be associated with the presence or absence of certain characteristics in beach images that define particular types of beach experiences, such as resorts, shops, bars and restaurants, as found in beach resort tourist destinations. These characteristics are evident in attributes of beaches preferred by tourists, as well as behaviours, meanings, values and uses for those beaches.

## **3.2 Mental Map Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Mental Map Design**

Using the multidisciplinary approach, a two-part survey instrument was designed for the first study (Refer to Appendix A). The survey instrument was designed specifically for self-administration by the respondent. Part A consisted of a mental mapping exercise relating to the respondent's favourite or ideal beach, and Part B investigated details of the sketched beach by asking 19 questions relating to this beach. The results of Part B are discussed in the next chapter. Due to the intricate nature of this method of inquiry, the following section describes these parts in greater detail.

### *Part A - Mental Map*

Following similar mental mapping directions used by Lynch (1960), Pearce (1977) and Walmsley and Jenkins (1992), respondents are asked the following:

1. Consider your favourite beach.

That is, a single beach you have either visited or has made a lasting impression on you and stands out most in your mind.

This beach can be any type of beach. It may be a beach at the ocean, a river, lake, resort or an artificial beach and it may be anywhere in the world.

2. Draw a simple sketch map of how you see your favourite beach.

We are not interested in your skills as an artist, but rather to understand all of the features that are part of your favourite beach.

There are 2 sheets of paper if you want to either practice your sketch or think you have messed up your first attempt.

You can use either diagrams, pictures, or codes and symbols to describe this beach. Some examples of the types of sketch maps of beaches are provided for you below.

The request for respondents to consider and sketch their favourite beach ensures they are sketching a familiar location. Fridgen (1987, p. 103) suggests that familiarity is a critical variable, in that it “increases the likelihood that one will be knowledgeable about the features and details of the setting”. Therefore, if an individual is asked to sketch the beach that has made a ‘lasting impression’ or



'stands out most in their mind'; they are more likely to provide accurate and detailed information, as opposed to sketching an unfamiliar or undesirable location.

This is also important factor in capturing both the "designative" (knowledge of environment) and "appraisive" (evaluation and preference) image components (Pocock & Hudson, 1978, p.30). Since visitors are asked to consider their 'favourite' beach, they are essentially being asked to think of and evaluate all the beaches they have encountered, and then choose only one that they prefer to sketch. The sketch then represents the designative images, in that it represents that visitor's understanding of the beach's image components. Moreover, there is an additional benefit in the respondent making this evaluation. The respondent is placing a value on this beach, and since values are central to culture (Altman & Chemers, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1963), then the characteristics of their sketched beach map can be used in cross-cultural analysis.

It was considered more appropriate not to supply the respondent with specific drawing dimensions or types of features sought after on the map (as per Pearce's (1977) methodology). Instead, three examples of different types of beach sketch maps were supplied (see questionnaire in Appendix A). These examples were created by three different people with various levels of sketching ability and images of beaches. These limited directions invoked the creative freedom for respondents to personalise their beach sketch. Additionally, respondents were supplied with 2 clean pages on which to sketch and were given

the opportunity to practice or repeat their sketch if they were not satisfied with their first attempt.

### **3.2.2 Sample & Location**

Several considerations were made in deciding the sampling procedure for this study. Young (1999) notes that the moderate sample sizes used in previous tourist cognitive mapping studies created difficulties in analysing multivariate relationships among independent variables. In order to avoid this problem, a quota sampling procedure of international visitors was chosen for the study with sufficient cases to enable such analysis.

Initially, since the part of the theme of this thesis is to measure beach images, it was decided that the sample should consist of a variety of tourist types in order to gain a broad cross-cultural perspective of beach images. Therefore, the variable for establishing the proportions was regions based on major global tourism markets - North America, Europe, United Kingdom and Asia. Overall, the study aimed for at least 100 visitors from each tourism market region. This type of sampling insured group representativeness within these variables, although not population representativeness (Sommer & Sommer, 1997).

The quota samples were selected from the population of international visitors to Cairns, Australia. Cairns is a node for international travellers to

Australia, with over 750,000 tourists per year, arriving mainly from Japan, North America, Europe and other Asia (Tropical North Queensland Regional Summary, 2003). It is noteworthy that over 60% of these visitors are most likely to visit the beach during their trip (Tropical North Queensland Regional Summary, 2003). While initial reactions may suggest that this characteristic creates bias in the sample, it is considered by the researcher to be more beneficial than bias. Visitors' predisposition to beach visitation assures that their images are based on more authentic perceptions as opposed to those of visitors who never experience or even dislike the beach.

In using these visitor types and groups, there were some limitations that require further explanation. The use of nationality alone as a basis for cross-cultural analysis has been cautioned by previous researchers (Dann, 1993b; Pizam, 1999; Richardson & Crompton, 1988), who suggest that there is the risk of stereotyping and ethnocentrism if using nationality to explain differences in results. The present study, acknowledges this risk by limiting the structure of the sample and analysis outcomes on the basis of two factors.

The first limiting factor consisted of utilising only visitors who were both born and currently reside in the same country. This sample parameter was considered appropriate since it is widely accepted that many of these people would most likely have visited a beach, perhaps even on a regular basis, that is situated in or near their own country of residence. Evidence of this domestic and regional beach tourism exists in much of the literature on the history and experiences of the beach

(see Feifer, 1986; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Lofgren, 1999; Morgan, 1999a, 1999b; Towner, 1996; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998; Urry, 1990). Therefore, it is to be expected that the local beach characteristics would have a strong influence on the images of beaches held by people who reside in these nationality groups. Secondly, with this in mind, the nationalities with relatively similar physical beach characteristics were able to be grouped under the four major global tourist market regions. Evidence of these regional similarities was explained by Burton (1995) who found distinct patterns of beach composition, climate and wave composition in the different latitudes of the world, consistent with such global tourist markets.

A further methodological decision was made to exclude domestic tourists (i.e. Australian residents) from the sample. This occurred for two reasons. Firstly, Australian beaches are popular domestic tourist holiday destinations, therefore, there is a strong possibility that these tourists may be biased towards beaches in Australia. This would be counter-productive in a study of overall beach images. Secondly, while it would be ideal to include domestic tourists in the study as a separate and comparable sample to the international visitors, this was not possible due to limitations of time and budget. Consequently, the sample consisted only of international visitors in Australia.

In order to achieve the desired quota sample from different markets, the most suitable locations were sites where tourists of varying nationalities congregated in high numbers. Additionally, locations had to be chosen so that

tourists could afford the time to complete the lengthy mapping exercise and questionnaire. Four major locations in Cairns were used - the Airport's domestic departure lounge, the Esplanade Pool, Sunlover Cruises and Big Cat Cruises (to the Great Barrier Reef). The majority of interviewing was conducted at these locations on weekdays during February to March 2003 and October to November 2003, with supplementary interviewing conducted in April 2004. These months represent the higher seasons for international visitors to Cairns (Tropical North Queensland Regional Summary, 2003).

A total of 491 international visitors were successfully interviewed from 844 (including domestic tourists) visitors who were approached to participate in the study. This indicates an overall response rate of 58.3%. Refusals were recorded, with 9.0% representing domestic tourists, 32.7% refusing largely due to language barriers or lack of time. Two filters were applied to the sample following initial evaluation of the data. Firstly, it was decided that cross-cultural analysis would be most beneficial if only the respondents that were both born and currently resided in the same country were selected for the study. Secondly, a significant proportion (22.2%) of Asian visitors, mostly older age groups, did not sketch their beach image, but indicated their favourite beach by selecting from the examples given at the beginning of the survey instrument. This condition was unexpected, but acceptable for this type of study for two reasons. Older people tend to refuse sketching but will complete other questions as Francescato and Mebane (1973) noted in their mental mapping study, and many Asian visitors on reef tour boats had a strong tendency for seasickness, hindering any type of interviewing.

Nonetheless, the map selections made by this group of respondents were eliminated from the sample, since the aim of the study was to identify cognitive and spatial characteristics and key attributes of beach images. Therefore, without actual personal sketches, this aim could not be accurately achieved.

Consequently, the overall total sample consisted of 417 sketch maps from international visitors (as shown in Table 6). Gender and age were recorded in order to maintain a balance in both of these sample characteristics. Gender of respondents showed even distribution between males (49.9%) and females (50.1%). Ages were recoded into groups in order to facilitate analysis of particular types of beach visitors. The dominant age groups were 25 – 29 years old (24.6%), 20 – 24 years old (24.4%), more than 50 years old (22.7%), and 30 – 39 years old (19.8%).

**Table 6: Tourist Market Group Profile of Sample (n=417)**

Tourist Market Group	Countries	Frequency	Percentage
United Kingdom	England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales	143	34.3
Europe	Germany, France, Italy & Greece, Spain/Portugal, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Finland, Other Western Europe, Other Eastern Europe, Israel	108	25.9
Asia	Japan, China, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Maldives	88	21.1
North America	United States, Canada	78	18.7
Total		417	100.0

### 3.2.3 Interviewing Procedure

The entire questionnaire was produced in three different languages in order to facilitate interviewing. These were English, for visitors from North America, the United Kingdom and Europe. It is generally accepted that the majority of European visitors to Cairns have English as a second language and comprehend it at a substantially high level. Therefore, Europeans and some English-speaking Asians (for example, Hong Kong, India and Singapore) were interviewed using English questionnaires. Conversely, very few Japanese and Chinese (Mandarin) visitors can speak or understand English, so questionnaires were translated into these languages. Translations were conducted by Chinese and Japanese postgraduate students who were studying at James Cook University, Cairns. The translated versions were pre-tested to check for accuracy of interpretation.

The majority of the English-speaking and Japanese-speaking interviewing was conducted by the author. On a number of occasions one undergraduate or postgraduate student provided assistance. All assistants were briefed on the study to ensure that they understood the requirements of the study and to provide uniformity of interviewing procedures. Interviewing with Chinese visitors was solely conducted by the visiting Chinese postgraduate student who was working with Chinese visitors on group tours to the Great Barrier Reef.

Visitors at each of the locations were approached by interviewers and asked firstly if they were international visitors. If so, they were explained the basis of the study, length of time to complete and asked if they were willing to participate. If they were not international visitors or refused to participate, the interviewer thanked them and went on to the next available person. The visitors willing to participate were given the questionnaire to complete. Only visitors over the age of 16 years were approached in compliance with ethical policy. Additionally, no restrictions were placed on separately interviewing members of the one family. This is believed to be acceptable since each sketch map-questionnaire is considered subjective and individualised (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992) and the main independent variables are nationality, residence and age groups. Upon completion, all visitors received a postcard as a 'thank you' gift.

### **3.2.4 Method of Analysis**

This study aims to identify the dominant physical characteristics, including the natural and cultural attributes of beach images. The physical characteristics are those that the respondent has assimilated and understood, that give structure as well as meaning to their beach image. The physical characteristics include spatial organization, zones, landscape elements and attributes. It should be noted, that, to some extent, cognitive characteristics are involved in the creation of physical characteristics, that is, the acquisition of physical characteristics in the



image involves an intellectual evaluation, understanding and memories. These characteristics, however, are not the focus or aims of this particular study.

Analysis of the physical characteristics in previous studies of urban landscapes have mainly focused on scoring of Lynch's elements - 'paths', 'edges', 'districts', 'nodes', and 'landmarks' (Lynch, 1960). Young (1999) has noted, however, that natural landscapes are somewhat different to urban landscapes, therefore, not all of Lynch's these elements are applicable. Moreover, the literature review has argued that beach images contain more or different landscape elements than those identified by Lynch. Therefore, other spatial characteristics were considered in the analysis of beach sketches. Additionally, natural landscapes may be perceived in a more artistic sense than other types of landscapes, therefore sketches may resemble more artistic-style drawings than the traditional cognitive 'roadmap' style, as Young (1999) also discovered in his work. Assistance is given, however, by the inclusion of text to such drawings. Pre-coding analysis of the beach sketch maps revealed that the majority of sketches did include text as well as pictures to illustrate their image. Consequently, analysis of the beach sketches was structured on different levels, representing physical and cognitive characteristics, thus achieving the aims of the study.

The physical characteristics in the study were designated as spatial-geographic and represented location, zones, shape and measurements, similar to those identified in other studies of beaches (Gunn, 1988; Fisk, 1989; Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; Leatherman, 2001; Morgan, 1999; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell,

1998). Firstly, the location of the beach was considered important since attributes of coastal beaches can vary dramatically from inland beaches such as lakes or rivers, and artificial beaches such as those found at resorts, aquatic tourist attractions or a artificially constructed in or near towns and cities. Secondly, beach zones represent both geographical (Gunn, 1988; Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; Leatherman, 2001; and Morgan, 1999) as well as symbolic (Fisk, 1989) sections of the beach. Thirdly, the shape and measurements of the beach reflects any limitations of size and structure of the beach that represent spatial organization of the location. That is, a semi-circular shaped beach is unlikely to span across a very large distance, as opposed to a straight stretch of coastline. The view has been included, since it gives insight to the type of orientation from which the respondent has developed the image and can vary the image depending on the individuals' orientation (Lynch, 1960). Each of the beach sketch maps were scored on the basis of these physical characteristics.

Some innovation in the analysis methods was required to examine the physical characteristics in the beach sketch maps. Firstly, the types of sketches necessitated a decision regarding the exclusion of some sketch maps based on their artistic differentiation and use of text. Young (1999) found it necessary to differentiate between sketches that were the traditional spatial sketch maps of locations and those that were symbolic impressions. He decided not to dismiss the latter as missing data, since all sketches were considered as representative of people's cognitive understanding of locations. Similarly, in this study, it was considered more useful to include these sketches in the analysis.

The landmarks represent the principle categories used for analysing the results to achieve the second aim of the study - *to describe the key attributes of nature and culture in the beach sketch maps*. Initially, each landmark presented in the sketch maps was recorded as a single item based on individual sketch maps. Analysis of these items, without some form of categorisation would be time-consuming. Therefore, early in the analysis, items were categorised into groups of similar attributes on the basis of the main groups, namely nature and culture. The category groups, seen as dimensions of nature and culture are shown in Table 7. Of interest, the dimension named “No...(as in the absence of...)” was included in the list since a significant number of respondents made written statements of this nature on their sketch maps. Consequently, it was considered to be an important element in their beach images.

**Table 7: Dimensions of Nature and Culture**

<b>Nature</b>	<b>Culture</b>
▪ Flora	▪ Structures
▪ Fauna	▪ Paths and Boundaries
▪ Geological	▪ Transportation
▪ Water	▪ Numbers of People
▪ Weather	▪ People & Personal Items
	▪ Activities
	▪ No... (as in, the absence of...)
	▪ Directions

Again, with some innovation, a categorical variable coding system was designed specifically for analysis of the beach sketch maps. Most importantly, in order to address the issues of reliability and interpreter subjectivity that is evident in analysis of mental maps (Young, 1999), and to ensure that the key physical

characteristics of the sketch maps were captured entirely, the coding system went through four levels of checking. Firstly, the list of variables was given to 4 academic and non-academic people (including an artist and an environmental architect) for comments. The outcome of this exercise ensured that the variables represented as many physical characteristics as possible that could be found in the beach sketch maps. Secondly, a reliability check was made by reviewing all of the sketch maps and item codes at the completion of data entry (Oliver, 2003). Thirdly, the list of variables, presented in Table 8 was drawn and this was used as the coding system for all of the sketch maps. The table also shows literature sources, where applicable, relating to use of these variables in previous research.

**Table 8: Coding Variables System for Beach Sketch Maps**

Variables	Description	Variable Items	Literature Sources (If applicable)
<b>Spatial-Geographic Characteristics</b>			
Beach Location	Different beach types based on location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal</li> <li>• Inland (river, lake, etc.) ocean</li> <li>• Island</li> <li>• Artificial</li> </ul>	N/a
View	Perspective taken by respondent for the sketch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bird's eye view</li> <li>• Facing the beach, from the ocean</li> <li>• Facing the ocean, from the beach</li> <li>• Looking down the beach from one end</li> </ul>	Lynch (1960)
Beach Zones	Zones of geographic division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep ocean</li> <li>• Shallow ocean</li> <li>• Beach</li> <li>• Shoreland</li> <li>• Coastal backland</li> </ul>	Gunn (1988) Fisk (1989) Tunstall & Penning-Roswell (1998) Leatherman (2001) Morgan (1999) Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977) Leatherman (2001)
Shape	Spatial geographic elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curved/Semi-circular</li> <li>• Straight line</li> <li>• Uneven/ unstructured line</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	
Measurements	Measurements of width, length, height, and distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurements =Yes/No</li> </ul>	Morgan (1999) Leatherman (2001) Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977)
<b>Other Related Physical Characteristics</b>			
Description	How the map is conveyed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictures/diagram only</li> <li>• Text only</li> <li>• Both</li> </ul>	N/a
Name	Name of beach sketched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name = Yes/No</li> </ul>	N/a
Colours	Colours of items specified on beach map (eg. white sand, blue water, blue sky)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colour = Yes/No</li> </ul>	Morgan (1999) Leatherman (2001)
Landmarks	Any object or person in the sketch, including both pictures and text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural items</li> <li>• Cultural items</li> </ul>	Lynch (1960) Morgan (1999) Leatherman (2001) Fisk (1989) Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977)

The final reliability check consisted of testing for accuracy in the coding system for individual attributes of nature and culture found in the beach sketch maps. One sample beach sketch map from each of the four culture groups was given to 3 post-graduate business students, along with the list of dimensions for nature and

culture attributes. The coders were given a background summary of how the beach sketch maps were originally produced by the respondents. Working independently, they were asked to categorise all of the attributes in the sketch maps following instructions provided on the general categorisation of the nature and culture attributes (i.e. the dimensions listed in Table 7), but not on how to code the specific attributes. The 3 coders' items were combined with the author's codes for each sketch map and the items were then analysed for intercoder reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (Young, 1999). The reliability for the sketch map coding was satisfactory as indicated by the Alpha levels for each sketch map respectively, which were 0.667, 0.8394, 0.8571, and 0.7974. Following these procedures, only the author coded the remaining sketch maps.

### **3.3 Beach Sketch Maps**

#### **3.3.1 Physical Characteristics**

The first aim of this study was to "identify the dominant physical characteristics of tourist beach images". The physical characteristics were identified as spatial organisation, zones, landscape elements and attributes of nature and culture. Spatial organisation represents the basic physical elements that define the beach. These were recognized by the beach location, zones, shape, measurements, and view. The landscape elements are attributes that exist

at the beach and are represented by nature and culture. Each of these characteristics were identified in the beach sketch maps and are discussed in the following section.

### *Beach Location*

Four categories for beach locations were identified – coastal (beside the ocean), island, inland (rivers, lakes, etc), and artificial (resort, attraction, human-made). The majority of sketched beach maps were identified as coastal beaches (91.6%) as shown in Table 9. These results show that the respondents strongly identify with the typical location of beaches, that being beside the ocean.

**Table 9: Beach Location (n=417)**

Beach Location Category	Frequency	Percentage
Coastal (beside the ocean)	382	91.6
Island	23	2.6
Inland (river, lake, etc.)	11	5.5
Artificial (resort, attraction, human-made)	1	0.2
Total	417	100.0

### *Zones*

Three dominant zones were found in the sketch maps. These are, the “beach” (31.3%), “shallow ocean” (30.0%), and “shoreland” (27.4) as shown in Table 10. These results support the concept of identifiable zones of the beach. Furthermore, they demonstrate that respondents perceive more than the immediate characteristics of the ‘beach’ identified by a section of sand. Therefore, in beach images, the zones extend further than the basic ‘inter-tidal zone’ or

‘seafront’ as defined by Tunstall & Penning-Roswell (1998). In beach images, the beach extends to include zones that are more distant, such as the shoreland and coastal backland.

**Table 10: Map Beach Zones (n=417)**

Zones	Frequency	Percentage
Beach	414	31.3
Shallow Ocean	396	30.0
Shoreland	362	27.4
Coastal Backland	109	8.3
Deep Ocean	40	3.0
Total	1321*	100.0

\* Total higher than 417 due to multiple response

### Shape

The dominant shape of beach maps is “curved/semi-circular” (54.7%) as shown in Table 11. This reflects clear boundaries exist in their ideal beach. They are the points that represent the ends of the curve. Furthermore, the cove-like shape reflects a ‘personalisation’ of the spatial beach area. That is, a curved shape implies a location that is ‘hidden’, ‘not out in the open’, it is a location that is limited in space by the size of the cove, and therefore limited in access by people and the number of people that the space can accommodate. The opposite is a “straight line” beach, which was the second most drawn type of beach (30.9%). This is consistent with many of the world’s most popular and larger coastal beach tourism destinations.



Measurements, primarily width and length of the beach, were described in text by very few respondents (8.2%). Nonetheless, their presence indicates that they are an important characteristic delineating the spatial variables of the beach in those respondents' images. The types of measurements given were length and width of the beach and shallow ocean sections, or distances to towns/cities or other significant landmarks. These measurements assisted in understanding those particular respondents' images, but since they were not a predetermined variable, have not been analysed as extensively in this study.

**Table 11: Shape of Sketched Beach Maps (n=417)**

Shapes	Frequency	Percentage
Curved/semi-circular	228	54.7
Straight line	129	30.9
Uneven/unstructured line	47	11.3
Other	13	3.1
Total	417	100.0

### *View*

The viewpoint, that is, the position from which the beach is sketched was an important factor in analysing the spatial and cognitive characteristics of beach maps. It represents the scope of perception for the location that is understood by the respondent. The key viewpoints that were identified in the sketch maps were "bird's eye view", "facing the beach, from the ocean", "facing the ocean, from the beach", "and looking down the beach from the end". In Table 12, the results show that over half of the respondents sketched their map from a "bird's eye view"

(54.4%) viewpoint, and a further 30.3% used the “facing the beach, from the ocean” viewpoint. While it is indeed much simpler for people to depict an image from either of these viewpoints, it is also an indication that respondents have a strong comprehension of the image. That is, their ability to ‘see’ their favourite beach from such viewpoints, suggests that respondents have a good overall perspective of that beach.

**Table 12: Map Beach View (N=417)**

View	Frequency	Percentage
Bird’s eye view	235	56.4
Facing the beach, from the ocean	121	29.0
Facing the ocean, from the beach	34	8.2
Looking down the beach from end	21	5.0
Other	6	1.4
Total	417	100.0

### 3.3.2 Other Expressions in Beach Sketch Maps

Other aspects of physical characteristics emerged from the analysis of the sketch maps. The way in which most of the sketch maps were conveyed, introduced factors such as text, names and colours as supplementary expressions of physical characteristics. In particular, the text provided by respondents was found to enrich the analysis of the physical characteristics. Almost all of the beach sketch maps consisted of drawing as well as text (92.3%). Text defined objects (eg. “beach”, “ocean”, “palms”, “mountains”, “hotel”, “bar”); people (eg. “me”, “my

wife”, “my girlfriend”); activities (“surfing”, “sailing”); locations and directions (eg. “Gulf of Mexico”, “town about 1 mile north”) and the absence of objects or people (eg. no mosquitoes, no people, no buildings). The use of text to actually name beaches and describe particulars of objects was an unexpected outcome revealed from the sketch maps. Colours were described using text, and indicate an appraisive context of beach image characteristics. Colours were described by over a quarter of respondents (26.6%) with sand and water being the main attributes appraised by colours. For example, sand was described as “white”, “silver”, or “golden”, and the ocean described as “blue”, aqua”, “turquoise”, or “green”. This result reflects the significance of colours as an attribute in beach images. Additionally, over a third (37.4%) of the maps included either the name of the actual beach or its regional location. Of these, beaches in Australia were the most noted, followed by beaches in Thailand, China (only Chinese respondents), Mexico, USA and Hawaii. This result also demonstrates that the favourite or ideal beaches chosen by these particular respondents do exist and are not a product of their imagination only. Furthermore, it is an indication that their beach has indeed made a strong impression in their mind.

### **3.3.3 Attributes of Nature and Culture**

The second aim of this study was “to describe the key attributes of nature and culture in tourist beach images”. In order to achieve this, each of the beach sketch maps were analysed for incidences of nature and culture attributes.

Attributes of nature were identified as any item that occurs naturally as part of the physical environment. These were categorised into dimensions and designated as “flora”, “fauna”, “geological - sand”, “geological - other”, “water” and “weather”. Specific map items for these dimensions, frequencies and percentage of cases are shown in Table 13. Most surprisingly, the results show that palm trees recorded the highest frequency (43.2%) for natural attributes. Other attributes of flora also appeared in the sketches. These included other type of trees (18.5%), other types of vegetation (17.7%) and grass (10.3%). Interestingly, coconuts were also a natural attribute that featured in 10.1% of the beach sketches.

The most diverse range of natural attributes was recorded in the geological dimensions. There was the high incidence of certain other geographical attributes of the beach. Almost a third (29.5%) of the respondents sketched “rocks” in their beach maps. These were mostly featured at either end of the beach or scattered on the beach and in the water. “Beach” or a sketched but unspecified beach material, that is, symbolic representation (39.1%), sand (21.1%) and white sand (24.0%) were also specific geographical items on the beaches, the latter indicating not only a natural attribute item, but a preference for a particular colour of sand. Additionally, the “bay/cove/harbour” shape that was included in 27.6% of maps supports the dominance of this spatial design of beach sketches as described in the previous section. Mountains (17.5%), headlands (9.8%) and hills (9.4%) were other geographical features that appeared on some of the sketch maps.

The majority of respondents sketched some form of water attribute. This was recorded from text indicated by the respondents as “sea/ocean” (32.9%). Alternatively, if water was drawn symbolically, such as wiggly or straight lines, shading or simply stated in text as being ‘water’ then these were recorded as “water - unspecified” (29.3%). While surf (10.6%) featured in some of the sketches, there were also water attributes that indicated preferences for particular types of water, namely blue/green/aqua (9.4%), clear (9.1%), shallow (4.6%), and gentle water (4.1%). These responses, when combined, show that apart from sand, water is a very dominant nature attribute in beach sketches. Other important beach attributes that were recorded included coral/reef (18.0%), fish (8.2%), and shells/crustaceans (4.6%). The sun (8.9%) and shade (5.0%) were the highest recorded weather features, albeit they only represented small percentages of the natural attributes.

**Table 13: Map Attributes of Nature (n=417)**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Map Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of Cases</b>
<b>Flora</b>	Palm Trees	180	43.2
	Other trees (not palm trees)	77	18.5
	Vegetation – other types, on hills, unspecified	74	17.7
	Grass/grassed areas	43	10.3
	Coconuts	42	10.1
	Rainforest/jungle	35	8.4
	Forest	22	5.3
<b>Fauna</b>	Corals and/or reef	75	18.0
	Fish	34	8.2
	Seashells & crustaceans	19	4.6
	Dolphins/turtles/whales	17	4.1
<b>Geological – Sand</b>	“Beach” or unspecified beach material	163	39.1
	White sand	100	24.0
	“Sand”	88	21.1
	Fine sand	21	5.0
	Long beach	17	4.1
<b>Geological - Other</b>	Rocks	123	29.5
	Bay/cove/harbour	115	27.6
	Mountains	73	17.5
	Rocky or unspecified headland/point	41	9.8
	Hills	39	9.4
	Cliffs/rock faces	31	7.4
	Sand dunes	27	6.5
	Beach is on an island	23	5.5
	Islands (on horizon or in view)	18	4.3
<b>Water</b>	“Sea/Ocean”	137	32.9
	Water – unspecified type	122	29.3
	Surf/larger waves	44	10.6
	Blue/green/aqua/turquoise water	39	9.4
	Clear water	38	9.1
	Shallow water	19	4.6
	Gentle water (small/negligible waves)	17	4.1
<b>Weather</b>	Sun	31	8.9
	Shade	21	5.0

*Note: Only the attributes that 4% or more of the total respondents indicated in their maps are listed in this table.*

The attributes of culture were categorised into dimensions and designated as “structures”, “paths/boundaries”, “transportation”, “numbers of people”, “activities”, “no”, and “directions” (see Table 14). Two of these categories warrant further explanation. Firstly, in analysing the sketch maps, it was considered important to record not only the presence of people, but also the absence of them. This was seen as appropriate since the sketch maps, as stated previously, often represent distorted versions of reality (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1992), therefore, an assumption cannot be made that if one or two people are depicted in the sketch, that they are the only humans at that beach. Conversely, if no people are included, then it cannot be assumed that the beach represents a completely remote location. By recording both, consideration is given to the possibility of the existence of both views. Secondly, a number of beach sketches included text stating “no” to particular items or people, such as “no stingers”, “no man-made features”, and “no boats/buildings/hotels/bars”. These are difficult to represent diagrammatically in sketches and respondents obviously felt strongly enough about these attributes to mention them, so they are taken to be evaluative aspects of the cognitive maps. Therefore, the “no” statements were recorded under attributes of culture.

Overall, the attributes of culture did not receive as high a number of responses as did the attributes of nature. The exception being that, the overwhelming majority of respondents’ sketch maps (82.0%) did not include people of any kind. The attribute dimensions of culture that recorded higher percentages were structures, paths/boundaries and transportation, all associated

with more developed beaches. Of these dimensions, the main items recorded were for food/café/restaurant (15.6%), bar/tavern (15.3%), resort/hotel/holiday apartment/lodge (13.2%), shops (11.8%), public amenities (11.5%), road/street (11.0%), paths (9.8%) and sailing boat/yacht (9.6%).

A diverse range of “no’s...” (10.6%) were recorded. None of the “no...” in particular recorded high frequencies; therefore they were grouped under one dimension. Of interest, were mentions of no dangerous and/or annoying animals, noted as - nasties or creatures in water, no aggressive insects, sea cucumbers or seaweed, stingers (as in marine stingers), no sharks, and no dogs. There were other human-related “no...” attributes, indicated as – no boats, buildings (high-rise), hotels, bars, fast food, jet skis, water sports, car access, easy (vehicular) access, sewage outfalls, children under 16 years old, vendors and tourists.



**Table 14: Map Attributes of Culture (n=417)**

Dimension	Map Item	Frequency	Percentage of Cases
<b>Structures</b>	Food/café/restaurant/bistro/snack bar/ice creams	65	15.6
	Bar/tavern (alcohol-related)	64	15.3
	Resort/hotel/holiday apartment/lodge	55	13.2
	Shops	49	11.8
	Public amenities	48	11.5
	Umbrella	36	8.6
	Carpark	29	7.0
	Beach huts/cabin/cabana	27	6.5
	Beach chairs/seating around table/chairs	26	6.2
	Esplanade/boardwalk/promenade	23	5.5
	House/cottage	19	4.6
	Swimming pool (fresh or salt water)	17	4.1
<b>Paths/Boundaries</b>	Road/street	46	11.0
	Paths	41	9.8
	Horizon	19	4.6
<b>Transportation</b>	Sailing boat/yacht	40	9.6
<b>Numbers of People</b>	No people	342	82.0
	1 person only	22	5.3
	2 people only	17	4.1
	3 or more people	22	5.3
<b>Activities</b>	Diving &/or snorkelling	20	4.8
<b>No... (as in, the absence of...)</b>	No...nasties/aggressive insects, stingers boats/buildings/hotels/bars, man-made features, dogs, seaweed/cucumbers, sharks, sewage outfalls, stones, car access	44	10.6
<b>Directions</b>	No directions recorded 4% or more cases	-	-

*Note: Only the attributes that 4% or more of the total respondents indicated in their maps are listed in this table.*

### 3.4 Cross-Cultural Physical Characteristics

#### 3.4.1 Attributes of Nature & Culture

The third aim of the study was *to capture the cross-cultural characteristics of beach images*. The cross-cultural parameters were derived from the cultural groups designated by respondents who were born and reside in the four global tourist market regions - North America, United Kingdom, Asia and Europe. Each of the nature and culture attributes was cross-tabulated with the four culture groups. This process involved recoding the attributes into dichotomous variables representing either the existence or non-existence of the attributes in the respondents' sketch maps. Since the focus of this study is on attributes that actually exist in the respondents' sketch maps, then only the results for the attributes that exist are shown in Table 15.

A Pearson chi square test of independence was performed on each item and the four culture groups. In order to maintain integrity of the test outcomes, only items with at least 80% of their cells containing expected frequencies of at least 5 were used in this analysis (Diekhoff, 1992). Additionally, standardised residuals, that is, standardised differences between observed and expected counts, were also calculated. Standardised residuals were used since they are calculated using a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.0, therefore if the standardised residual is greater than (the absolute value of) 2.00, then that cell

can be considered to be a major contributor to the overall chi-square value. In this case, standardised residuals disclosed specifically which culture group/s contributed to significant differences in the analysis. The results, shown in Table 15, revealed significant differences,  $p < .05$ , (shown in bold) for the majority of the nature and culture attributes. The Asia and United Kingdom culture groups were the largest contributors to these differences.

The Asian culture group returned less than expected counts for all of the significant attributes, except coconuts ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ) and sailing boat/yacht ( $R_{st} = 2.9$ ), which had higher than expected incidences in the sketch maps. This was reflected in the frequencies for sketch map attributes, where the Asian culture group were responsible for 50.0% of the overall sketches that included coconuts, and 43.0% included a sailing boat/yacht. Mountains also had higher than expected incidences in the Asian group's beach sketch maps ( $R_{st} = 2.0$ ). They are key geological features in the Asian culture group's beach landscape, with this group representing 38.0% of the overall sketches that included mountains. Interestingly, the expected counts were the lowest for two of the key natural attributes specified in many of the beach sketches, namely "beach/sand" ( $R_{st} = -4.1$ ) and 'white sand" ( $R_{st} = -4.3$ ) and rocks ( $R_{st} = -4.1$ ).

In the United Kingdom beach sketch maps, there were higher incidences of rocks ( $R_{st} = 2.0$ ), bay/cove/harbour ( $R_{st} = 2.5$ ), white sand ( $R_{st} = 2.5$ ), cliffs ( $R_{st} = 2.5$ ), clear water ( $R_{st} = 2.2$ ), food/café/restaurant ( $R_{st} = 2.8$ ), bar/tavern ( $R_{st} = 4.5$ ), and no people ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ). The dominance of geographical features, represented

by coves, rocks, sand, and cliffs, as well as the bar/tavern and food/café/restaurant are evident in many of the beach sketch maps belonging to this culture group. Other significant differences were found in the European and North American culture groups. The Europeans had higher counts of palm trees ( $R_{st} = 3.1$ ), corals/reef ( $R_{st} = 3.4$ ) and hills ( $R_{st} = 2.3$ ) than expected. The European group's favourite beach sketches showed the highest percentages for natural attributes represented by palm trees and other trees, rainforest/jungle, grass/grassed areas and reef/coral. Attributes of culture did not feature strongly in this group's images. Europeans had the highest incidences of "No... (As in the absence of objects or people)" in their sketches. The North American culture group tended to be more specific in sketching particulars of their beach, showing more than expected incidences of "beach/sand" ( $R_{st} = 2.7$ ) and less of "beach - unspecified material" ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ). There were significantly less incidences of bar/tavern ( $R_{st} = -2.1$ ) in the North American culture group's sketches.

Table 15: Cross-tabulation &amp; Chi Square of Map Items &amp; Culture Groups (N = 480)

Dimensions	Map Items	Frequencies: Observed and Expected Standardised Residuals <sup>a.</sup>				Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>b.</sup>		
		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe				
Flora	Palm Trees	$f_o$	23.0	57.0	34.0	66.0	26.988	<b>.000</b>	
		$f_e$	33.4	54.4	47.3	45.0			
		$R_s$	-1.8	0.4	-1.9	<b>3.1</b>			
		$t$							
	Other trees (not palms)	$f_o$	19.0	22.0	17.0	18.0	2.660	.447	
		$f_e$	14.1	23.0	20.0	19.0			
		$R_s$	1.6	-0.3	-0.8	-0.2			
		$t$							
	Other Vegetation	$f_o$	18.0	23.0	7.0	24.0	13.158	<b>.004</b>	
		$f_e$	13.4	21.8	18.9	18.0			
		$R_s$	1.3	0.3	<b>-2.7</b>	1.4			
		$t$							
Grass or grassed area	$f_o$	12.0	16.0	1.0	14.0	14.378	<b>.002</b>		
	$f_e$	8.0	13.0	11.3	10.8				
	$R_s$	1.4	0.8	<b>-3.1</b>	1.0				
	$t$								
Coconuts	$f_o$	5.0	6.0	18.0	13.0	10.445	<b>.015</b>		
	$f_e$	7.8	12.7	11.0	10.5				
	$R_s$	-1.0	-1.9	<b>2.1</b>	0.8				
	$t$								
Rainforest or jungle	$f_o$	5	15	0.0	15.0	17.094	<b>.001</b>		
	$f_e$	6.5	106	9.2	8.8				
	$R_s$	-0.6	1.4	<b>-3.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>				
	$t$								
Forest	$f_o$	3.0	7.0	3.0	9.0	4.051	.256		
	$f_e$	4.1*	6.6	5.8	5.5				
	$R_s$	-0.5	0.1	-1.2	1.5				
	$t$								
Fauna	Corals/ reef	$f_o$	9.0	28.0	4.0	33.0	31.524	<b>.000</b>	
		$f_e$	13.7	22.4	19.4	18.5			
		$R_s$	-1.3	1.2	<b>-3.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>			
		$t$							
	Fish	$f_o$	5.0	13.0	7.0	8.0	1.560	.668	
		$f_e$	6.1	10.0	8.7	8.3			
		$R_s$	-0.5	1.0	-0.6	-0.1			
		$t$							
	Geological	"Beach" or "Sand"	$f_o$	27.0	30.0	8.0	22.0	21.364	<b>.000</b>
			$f_e$	16.1	26.3	22.8	21.8		
			$R_s$	<b>2.7</b>	0.7	<b>-3.1</b>	0.1		
			$t$						
Beach - unspecified material		$f_o$	19.0	52.0	51.0	41.0	8.934	<b>.030</b>	
		$f_e$	30.2	49.2	42.8	40.8			
		$R_s$	<b>-2.0</b>	0.4	1.3	0.0			
		$t$							
Rocks		$f_o$	21.0	49.0	9.0	43.0	34.587	<b>.000</b>	
		$f_e$	22.6	36.9	32.0	30.5			
		$R_s$	-0.3	<b>2.0</b>	<b>-4.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>			
		$t$							
Bay/ cove	$f_o$	15.0	49.0	14.0	35.0	23.603	<b>.000</b>		
	$f_e$	21.0	34.1	29.7	28.3				
	$R_s$	-1.3	<b>2.5</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	1.3				
	$t$								
White sand	$f_o$	21.0	44.0	4.0	31.0	34.007	<b>.000</b>		
	$f_e$	18.5	30.2	26.3	25.0				
	$R_s$	0.6	<b>2.5</b>	<b>-4.3</b>	1.2				
	$t$								
Mountains	$f_o$	15.0	14.0	28.0	16.0	8.788	<b>.032</b>		
	$f_e$	13.5	22.1	19.2	18.3				
	$R_s$	0.4	-1.7	<b>2.0</b>	-0.5				

Dimensio n	Map Items	Frequencies: Observed and Expected				Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>b.</sup>
		Standardised Residuals <sup>a.</sup>					
	Rocky/ other headland or point	$f_o$	8.0	16.0	2.0	15.0	
		$f_e$	7.6	12.4	10.8	10.3	
		$R_{st}$	0.1	1.0	<b>-2.7</b>	1.5	11.383 <b>.010</b>
	Hills	$f_o$	5.0	14.0	3.0	17.0	
		$f_e$	7.2	11.8	10.2	9.8	
		$R_{st}$	-0.8	0.6	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	12.641 <b>.005</b>
	Cliffs/rock faces	$f_o$	7.0	17.0	3.0	4.0	
		$f_e$	5.7	9.4	8.1	7.8	
		$R_{st}$	0.5	<b>2.5</b>	-1.8	-1.3	12.354 <b>.006</b>
	Sand dunes	$f_o$	6.0	11.0	0.0	10.0	
		$f_e$	5.0	8.2	7.1	6.8	
		$R_{st}$	0.4	1.0	<b>-2.7</b>	1.3	10.428 <b>.015</b>
	Island/ Beach is on an island	$f_o$	3.0	9.0	5.0	6.0	
		$f_e$	4.3*	6.9	6.0	5.8	
		$R_{st}$	-0.6	0.8	-0.4	0.1	1.229 .746
Dimensio n	Map Items	Frequencies: Observed and Expected				Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>b.</sup>
		Standardised Residuals <sup>a.</sup>					
<b>Water</b>	"Sea/ocean"	$f_o$	18.0	51.0	40.0	28.0	
		$f_e$	25.4	41.4	36.0	34.3	
		$R_{st}$	-1.5	1.5	0.7	-1.1	8.375 <b>.039</b>
	Water – unspecified type	$f_o$	27	34	26	35	
		$f_e$	22.6	36.9	32.0	30.5	
		$R_{st}$	0.9	-0.5	-1.1	0.8	3.843 .279
	Surf/waves	$f_o$	11.0	15.0	5.0	13.0	
		$f_e$	8.2	13.3	11.5	11.0	
		$R_{st}$	1.0	0.5	-1.9	0.6	5.821 .121
	Blue/ green/ aqua/ turquoise water	$f_o$	7.0	15.0	6.0	11.0	
		$f_e$	7.2	11.8	10.2	9.8	
		$R_{st}$	-0.1	0.9	-1.3	0.4	3.049 .384
	Clear water	$f_o$	6.0	19.0	4.0	9.0	
		$f_e$	7.0	11.5	10.0	9.5	
		$R_{st}$	-0.4	<b>2.2</b>	-1.9	-0.2	9.435 <b>.024</b>
<b>Weather</b>	Sun	$f_o$	7.0	7.0	13.0	10.0	
		$f_e$	6.9	11.2	9.7	9.3	
		$R_{st}$	0.1	-1.2	1.1	0.2	2.966 .397
	Shade	$f_o$	5.0	8.0	1.0	6.0	
		$f_e$	3.7	6.0	5.3	5.0	
		$R_{st}$	0.7	0.8	-1.9	0.4	4.931 .177
<b>Structures</b>	Food/café/restaur ant/snacks	$f_o$	11.0	32.0	9.0	13.0	
		$f_e$	12.1	19.6	17.1	16.3	
		$R_{st}$	-0.3	<b>2.8</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	-0.8	14.270 <b>.003</b>
	Bar/tavern (alcohol-related)	$f_o$	5.0	39.0	3.0	17.0	
		$f_e$	11.9	19.3	16.8	16.0	
		$R_{st}$	<b>-2.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>-3.4</b>	0.3	40.820 <b>.000</b>
	Resort/hotel/ holiday apartment/ lodge	$f_o$	10	16	20	9	
		$f_e$	10.2	16.6	14.4	13.8	
		$R_{st}$	-0.1	-0.2	1.5	-1.3	4.304 .230
	Shops	$f_o$	12.0	20.0	9.0	7.0	
		$f_e$	8.9	14.5	12.6	12.0	
		$R_{st}$	1.0	1.4	-1.0	-1.4	6.975 .073
	Public amenities	$f_o$	9.0	31.0	2.0	6.0	
		$f_e$	8.9	14.5	12.6	12.0	
		$R_{st}$	0.0	<b>4.3</b>	<b>-3.0</b>	-1.7	34.105 <b>.000</b>
	Umbrella	$f_o$	6.0	8.0	16.0	6.0	
		$f_e$	6.7	10.9	9.5	9.0	
		$R_{st}$	-0.3	-0.9	2.1	-1.0	6.885 .076
	Carpark	$f_o$	8.0	16.0	3.0	2.0	
		$f_e$	5.4	8.8	7.6	7.3	
		$R_{st}$	1.1	<b>2.4</b>	-1.7	-1.9	14.750 <b>.002</b>

	Beach chairs/seating	$f_o$	4.0	5.0	12.0	5.0		
		$f_e$	4.8	7.9	6.8	6.5		
		$R_{st}$	-0.4	-1.0	2.0	-0.6	5.759	.124
	Beach huts/cabin/cabana	$f_o$	4.0	9.0	4.0	7.0		
		$f_e$	4.5*	7.3	6.3	6.0		
		$R_{st}$	-0.2	0.6	-0.9	0.4	1.552	.670
	Esplanade/boardwalk/promenade	$f_o$	7.0	9.0	3.0	4.0		
		$f_e$	4.3*	6.9	6.0	5.8		
		$R_{st}$	1.3	0.8	-1.2	-0.7	4.644	.200
<b>Path/ Boundary</b>	Road/street	$f_o$	13.0	13.0	8.0	12.0		
		$f_e$	8.5	13.9	12.1	11.5		
		$R_{st}$	1.5	-0.2	-1.2	0.1	4.201	.241
	Paths	$f_o$	9.0	18.0	2.0	12.0		
		$f_e$	7.6	12.4	10.8	10.3		
		$R_{st}$	0.5	1.6	-2.7	0.5	11.191	.011
<b>Transport</b>	Sailing boat/yacht	$f_o$	6.0	7.0	20.0	7.0		
		$f_e$	7.4	12.1	10.5	10.0		
		$R_{st}$	-0.5	-1.5	2.9	-0.9	12.987	.005
<b>People</b>	No people	$f_o$	70.0	125.0	65.0	82.0		
		$f_e$	63.4	103.3	89.8	85.5		
		$R_{st}$	0.8	2.1	-2.6	-0.4	42.495	.000

a. = 0 cells have expected count less than 5, unless marked with an asterisk (\*). b.= Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df =$

3.

### 3.4.2 Sketch Map Styles

An unexpected discovery was made during the analysis of the cross-cultural characteristics of these beach sketch maps. Each of the culture groups communicated differences in styles used for depicting the physical elements in the beach images. In other words, there were peculiarities in *how* the nature and culture attributes were sketched, not only in *what* was actually sketched. This warranted further investigation since initial observations showed there were inclinations towards particular culture-based aspects of these styles. Therefore, sketch style features were seen to enhance the cross-cultural analysis of favourite beach images.

The most obvious differences in sketch styles were found in the United Kingdom, Asian, and European culture groups. Firstly, the majority of sketches

from each of these culture groups used styles that corresponded to the dominant attributes. For example, the United Kingdom culture group's sketches were dominated by spatial-geographic features, such as bay/cove, rocks, cliffs, and sand. Therefore, their sketches reflected a diagrammatical method of sketching these types of attributes that was reminiscent of geographic maps more so than symbolic impressions of these beaches (see sketch map examples 1 and 2 in Appendix B).

The Asian culture group's sketch maps strongly featured natural attributes that were dominated by palm trees, coconuts, crustaceans/seashells, and other marine creatures (see sketch map examples 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix B). These items were depicted with a distinct Asian style, carefully detailed in ways that are synonymous with and endemic to Asian art. Additionally, other items such as umbrellas, fishing boats, and buildings were also sketched in a similar style. Two other items of cultural significance also appeared in many of the Asian Group's sketches. These were the sun, sometimes sketched as a sunrise/sunset over the horizon and mountains. Additional support for the strong Asian sketch style is found in names of the beaches in the majority of the Asian culture group's sketches. These were identified as beaches located in or near their own countries of origin, and represent popular nature-based beach tourism destinations.

The European culture group's high incidence of natural attributes featuring trees, other vegetation, mountains and rocks. The majority of this group's sketches depicted many trees in an obvious expression of their significance in



beach images. This is evident in the sketch map examples from three different European nationalities presented in Appendix B (see examples 6, 7, and 8). There is also an apparently deliberate expression of their 'impressionistic' artistic style to their sketches. This is indicative of the strong history of art in European nations.

## **3.5 Discussion**

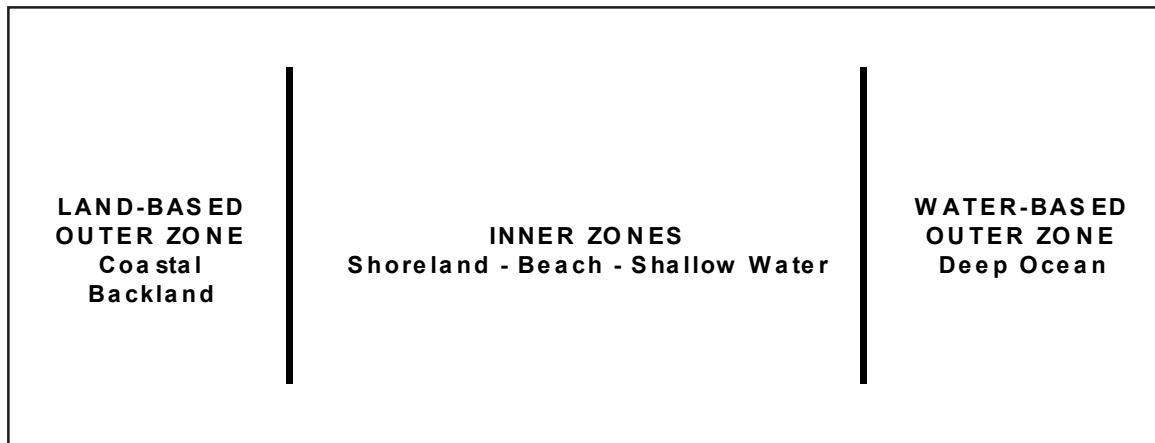
The purpose of the first study was to identify the physical characteristics of beach images. This was achieved by adapting measurement techniques used for environmental images and applying them to a specific tourist destination. International visitors from four global tourist market groups were asked to consider and sketch their favourite beach. From these sketches, the study examined the physical characteristics of beach images, identified the nature and culture attributes, and examined the cross-cultural characteristics.

### **3.5.1 Physical Characteristics**

The cognitive mapping technique proved useful in capturing characteristics of international tourists' images of their favourite beaches, albeit in a somewhat unique manner. Rather than gaining traditional cognitive map results from urban environments, that usually resemble conventional street or tourist maps, the cognitive maps of tourists' favourite beaches were mainly artistic-style drawings. This did not hinder the process, however, of examining the physical and cognitive characteristics and other attributes of these images. In fact, these characteristics were readily distinct and identifiable.

The level of detail found in tourists' sketches of their favourite beaches proved the beach has a high degree of "imageability" (as termed by Lynch, 1960, p. 9). In particular, the shapes, descriptions, measurements, and colours and even the naming of beaches (identified by through both text and drawings) shows that the beach is a location that unequivocally produces an identifiable image in the minds of tourists. That is, the beach is a location readily identifiable and discernable from other tourist locations. It has a particular structure and meaning in tourists' minds. This provides a solid foundation for in-depth analysis of physical characteristics.

In the spatial-geographical context, beach zones representing the deep ocean, shallow ocean, beach, shoreland and coastal backland were easily identified in beach sketches. This spatial zoning is consistent with previous research (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Gunn, 1972,1988; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). This study has shown, however, that although each of these zones is present to some degree in the beach sketches, the shallow ocean, beach and shoreland are the dominant zones in tourists' beach images. This implies that attributes beyond either the shoreland or shallow ocean do not tend to be perceived as part of the immediate image of the beach. Therefore, there appears to be a division of zones that can perhaps be distinguished as "inner and outer" zones of the beach. In this case, the inner zones represent the shoreland, beach and shallow ocean; and the outer zones represent the coastal backland and deep ocean. As shown in Figure 6, the outer zones identify with the land and water components of the beach.



**Figure 6: Representation of Beach Zone Divisions**

Apart from this geographical representation, the beach zones and the location of attributes in these zones, can also be considered in terms of Lynch's five elements – "paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks" (1960:47). The results of this study revealed that beach images consist of paths, edges, districts, and landmarks only. Nodes were not apparent in the images. The most significant of these elements were 'edges' and 'landmarks'. 'Edges' were identified in conjunction with zones or 'districts' of the beach. For example, the water edge was represented by the farthest extent of the shallow ocean, and the land-edge, defined by the farthest extent of the shoreland area. Within these edges, were the zones that represent 'districts' of the beach. When combined with the dominant shape and viewpoint of the beach sketches, an overall spatial representation can be made, as shown in Figure 7.

The spatial characteristics in Figures 6 and 7 are similar and comparable to those discussed in previous studies of other types of locations. Lynch (1960) found that city edges that were the strongest when they were visually identifiable, and showed continuity. The beach image edges reflected such characteristics. Additionally, the edges of beaches could also be seen as paths, as Lynch similarly found, where tourists would move along the beach or the shoreland. This was most evident when beaches included an esplanade, boardwalk or walking trail that ran along the line between the beach and shoreland. The entire beach, consisting of all three zones, can be thought of as a 'district'. According to Lynch, it is "thematic continuities" that define a district, and these were found in images of the beach (1960:67). A consistent theme appeared in the beach images, dominated by attributes of beaches, such as sand, ocean, vegetation (particularly palm trees), rocky headlands, and cove-like shapes. This beach theme defined the beach in a specific way that was distinguishable from all other locations, including those in the immediate surroundings, such as towns or cities.

Interestingly, Lynch's (1960) paths, that is were not only immediately as obvious as roads or streets. Paths are considered as routes for movement (Lynch, 1960), and two beach path elements were able to be identified - access and movement. Access to beaches can be simple walking tracks, streets or roads. Many of the beach images included such paths, some quite elaborate in description, others were either much less obvious or did not exist at all. Movement, on the other hand, was more implied than stated in the beach images. Symbolically, the beach itself was the path for movement in these beach images.

It was the area in which most of the beach 'traffic' existed that is, where people conducted most of their beach activities. This is a characteristic reflected in Fisk's (1989) representation of the beach, where the beach and the adjoining esplanade or promenade are areas containing the highest levels of activity.



**Figure 7: Spatial Representation of Dominant Physical Characteristics**

One of the stronger spatial elements found in the beach images were the landmarks. Lynch's (1960) city image landmarks were specified by their uniqueness, significance, or spatial prominence. In the case of beach images, landmarks consisted of both attributes that were synonymous with beaches, such as palm trees; or prominent features of the landscape, such as rocks, mountains, and buildings. Landmarks sometimes signified the beginning or end of the beach. For example, the rocky headlands sketched at either end of the beach (shown in

Figure 6) were what appeared to be the “cut-off point” landmark that defined the limits of the beach.

Landmarks also accounted for the type of beach in the beach image. Themes of landmarks were found in the sketches that identified beach landscapes with specific types of beaches. Beach images that were dominated by natural landmarks related to nature-based, often remote beaches; while, beach images depicting buildings such as hotels, resorts, shops, represented beaches that were constructed or resort beaches. Consequently, and to some extent, it could be said that landmarks are useful in classifying landscapes. They are also the elements that connect with the landscape to form the image. For this reason, landmarks were examined in great depth. Landmarks, in this study, were designated as nature and culture.

### **3.5.2 Attributes Nature & Culture**

The multitude of items representing both nature and culture displayed in the tourists' sketches suggests that that beach images do not merely consist of the clichéd ‘sun, sea, sand, sex and surf’. In fact, apart from the sun, sea and sand, other natural elements proved more distinguishable than ‘sex’ or ‘surf’. The high incidence of palm trees (amongst other vegetation), mountains and rocks suggests that these are very strong characteristics in tourists' beach images. Based on these results, it would perhaps be more appropriate to describe the ideal beach as

sun, sea, sand and scenery. The more elaborate version could be 'warm sun, clear blue sea, white sand, (swaying) palm trees, nestled in a remote cove surrounded by mountains, with picturesque views'.

Attributes of culture did not feature as strongly as they would appear to be in Fisk's (1989) representation of the beach. Whether this is a factor relating to the types of tourists interviewed (that is, preferences for natural environments) or an indication of an overall inclination towards the natural attributes, is not determinable by the beach sketches alone. Nonetheless, the dominant cultural attributes representing food, beverage, accommodation, shops, public amenities, roads and paths, do signify the typical characteristics of resort-style beaches. These are indeed popular types of beach destinations for tourists from all culture groups.

The absence of certain culture attributes was found to be equally important in the examination of the beach sketches. In particular, the absence of people and the specification of "no..." were of significance to beach images. It is reasonable to suggest that many of the beaches sketched would, in reality, have people, whether they are few in number or in crowds. Therefore, the absence of people in the majority of sketches implies this is an attribute that may actually be filtered from the image. This appears to be a process of cognitive evaluation of the image, however, it is difficult to confirm this relationship simply from analysis of beach sketches. Further investigation using other methods is required to establish this property of images.



Alternatively, the diverse range of “no’s” relating to dangerous and/or annoying animals and human-related characteristics that were recorded certainly signify that there are aspects of the image that cannot be sketched, yet are important enough to be mentioned about the images. Obviously, simple omission of some attributes is an insufficient method of conveying the image to the researcher, and since these attributes were important to the visitor, they found it necessary to express it in text. It can be said, therefore, that not only the presence of attributes helps to create an image, but the absence of attributes also form part of the image.

### **3.5.3 Cross-Cultural Physical Characteristics**

In this study, the cross-cultural characteristics of beach sketch maps were measured on the basis of culture as defined by tourists’ place of birth and residence (‘culture groups’), and attributes of culture at beaches. While the beach sketch maps did not specifically measure cultural cognitive characteristics (such as values, symbols, rituals, customs, and behaviour) there is some evidence of these in the physical characteristics. Additionally, since visitors were asked to sketch their favourite or ideal beach and not just any beach, their sketches are not only representations of their images, but are a significant output of their evaluation of beaches. Therefore, these images have connotations to cross-cultural preferences for particular beaches. Culture group differences and similarities

found in this study reveal that even sketches are sufficient to show culture in terms of physical characteristics of beaches. Culture is also evident in specifications of beach characteristics and even in methods of sketching. What is not clearly indicated, however, are the other aspects of culture such as feelings, values, emotions, motives, and behaviour. Further investigation, with additional methods, would give more insight into the cultural characteristics of images.

The natural attributes dominated in all of the culture groups' beach sketches. In particular, geological, water and flora dimensions represented the majority of natural attributes. This is a strong indication that, regardless of place of origin, the natural attributes were significant aspects of beaches. A possible explanation is that there is an overall inclination towards natural attributes as being more desirable to these tourists than cultural attributes (such as buildings, roads and other development) in all beach images. This is understandable, considering the definitions of the beach given in previous chapters that identify the essential elements of the beach as its natural features, such as sand, water, vegetation, topography and climate. Therefore, the beach can be seen as a more natural than cultural setting, and would generate corresponding images.

On the other hand, the inclination towards the natural could be attributed to visitors' predispositions towards nature-based tourism locations. The sample consisted of international tourists to Cairns, Australia, a destination known for its natural attractions, particularly tropical beaches. It could be argued, however, that this predisposition is more advantageous than limiting to the research. Beaches

are first and foremost natural locations. The very components that define the beach, such as sand, water, and sun, are all natural elements. Therefore, tourists who visit beaches could all be considered as nature-based tourists to some extent. Regardless if they are visiting a constructed beach or remote beach, they are experiencing nature in one way or another. It is the images that these tourists have of beaches that have been the focus of this study.

The variations found in each of the four culture groups, however, indicates that there is not one particular type of beach prevalent to all culture groups, but variations of beaches. This has three key implications for beach images. Firstly, just as not all cultures or beaches are the same, then not all beach images are the same. It appears that similar beach attributes may have different image qualities, depending on the culture the image belongs to. The study revealed that while the four culture groups showed an overall dominance of natural attributes, some beach images focused on particular natural attributes over others. For example, the Asian culture group had significantly more coconuts and mountains than all the other groups, and the European culture group had the highest occurrences of vegetation and marine life. This leads to the second implication.

The different levels of natural attributes, suggests there are various sub-groups and idiosyncratic elements of beach images. For example, the European culture group's images revealed two sub-groups based on different types of attributes. One of the sub-group's images consists of beaches that are highly vegetated, with corals/reef as a dominant feature, while another sub-group's beach

image is similar, but the bars, cafés and restaurants are the dominant feature. This also shows a tourist culture sub-group whose favourite/ideal beach is of a more developed or commercial style. The idiosyncratic elements were more obvious in the Asian culture group's images. Three attributes in particular - coconuts, umbrellas and sailing boats were more pronounced in this group's beach sketches.

The third implication involves the method of sketching. Beach sketches displayed characteristics inherent to particular culture groups' ways of seeing the landscape and expressing themselves. The Asian group showed very Chinese/Japanese artistic detail in their sketches, whereas the United Kingdom group displayed a very geographic map-like style, and the Europeans a more picturesque, impressionistic, or 'romantic' way of expressing their images. Artistic expressions are indeed part of culture (Tylor, 1872, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963) and social representations (Moscovici, 1984). Since the beach images were expressed as sketch maps, this artistic inclination is evidently a strong cultural attribute revealed in the images. Beyond the artistic revelation, is the close connection between the different culture sketches and beaches endemic to their country. Evidence of this connection was the strongest for the Asian culture group, where the idiosyncratic elements were clearly visible. The Chinese and Indian, in particular, sketched and named many beaches located in their homelands. While on the surface, this may be attributed to the fact that both of these nationalities are not considered as globally experienced travellers (as opposed to Europeans and North Americans), there may be other factors that

could be considered that reflect this connection in their beach images. This is however, difficult to establish, using sketch maps alone, therefore, requires further research to examine these parameters.

With all of this evidence, showing cross-cultural differences and similarities, it is clear that even sketches are sufficient to show culture in terms of physical characteristics of beaches. Culture is also evident in preferences for beach characteristics and even in methods of sketching. What is not clearly indicated, however, are the other aspects of culture such as feelings, values, emotions, motives, and behaviour. Further investigation, with additional methods, would give more insight into the cultural characteristics of images.

### **3.5.4 Limitations of this Study**

This study, has shown data analysis of sketch maps can be difficult, but not impossible. The majority of these types of studies utilise scoring of specific points and Lynch-based elements that occur in the mental maps (Francescato & Mebane, 1973; Lynch, 1960; Pearce, Philip L, 1977; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992). These methods were adapted for use in this study to examine the images of beaches. The results of this study revealed that mental maps are productive for identifying beach images in terms of spatial and cognitive characteristics and attributes. There are, however, other factors involved in identifying beach images that are not captured in mental maps. The sketch maps lack attention to the unique social,

psychological and physiological characteristics of beaches. These are essential elements of culture, and, as indicated in the beach images conceptual framework, are key characteristics that create the beach image.

Consequently, a more comprehensive investigation of these characteristics is required in order to successfully capture the images of beaches. Therefore, it is suggested that further studies combine other methods to examine these characteristics of images. Francescato and Mebane (1973) have suggested that better understanding could be gained from augmenting and measuring elements such as usage, feelings, attitudes, activities, etc. to the method. These represent the major ingredients of the second study.

## CHAPTER 4

### BEACH IMAGE MEASUREMENT - COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE & CONATIVE CHARACTERISTICS



*(Source: Martine Adriaanson, 2005)*

*A beach with no houses, no tents, no sandmining, no road and no way in except in bare feet, or maybe in thongs, bikini and sun visor... You can swim naked there. Only albino sand crabs and occasionally, a gaggle of surfboard riders keep you company (National Times, January 9-15, 1983, as cited in Fisk, 1989).*

## **4.1 Structure of the Research**

### **4.1.1 Introduction**

This study focuses on the measurement of the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of beach images. Initially, beach image components were identified in Section 2.3.3 as - physical, cognitive, affective and conative characteristics; and influenced by factors of information, time and distance. The previous study focused on measurement of only the physical characteristics of beach images by utilising beach sketch maps. There were, however some underlying issues identified in measuring beach images using the mental maps only, as in the previous study. The key issue was the inability of mental maps to fully capture the social, psychological and physiological characteristics that exist in images of beaches. These are the inherent qualities of the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of beach images. Consequently, the second study is structured so as to address this shortcoming by examining all of the components individually. This chapter will describe the structure of the research, methodology and discuss the results of the second study.

### **4.1.2 Aims of the Study**

The second study represents the second stage of measurement of beach images. This is achieved by focusing the study on all of the remaining



components in the Beach Images Conceptual Framework that bond with the physical characteristics to form images of beaches. Therefore, the aims of this study are to:

1. Identify the key cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of tourist beach images
2. Describe the attributes of nature and culture in tourist beach images,
3. Examine the factors influencing beach images, and
3. Capture the cross-cultural characteristics of tourist beach images.

#### **4.1.3 Methodological Structure**

In order to achieve these aims, the key to this study's structure is to complement and enhance the preceding study that utilised mental maps to examine images. In much of the image research conducted to date, the cognitive, affective and conative components of images have been measured, often independently, using semantic differential scaling and/or multidimensional scaling (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Reilly, 1990), or repertory grids (Coshall, 2000; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993). Tourist destination image studies, in particular, have shown a tendency to focus on attribute rating scales when measuring tourists' images (Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning Roswell, 1998; Dann, 1996b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Pearce & Fagence, 1996). Moreover, destination characteristics used in these rating scales are usually

generated by the researcher in order to decrease subjectivity and increase objectivity and reliability in the research (Dann, 1996). The method of analysis often reduces the image to a quantified list consisting largely of the destination's tangible attributes, while completely ignoring the intangible attributes and overall images (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Considering, however, that images are indeed highly subjective (Walmsley, 1984), this method of research may be too restrictive for examining images of beaches. On this basis, the present study required a somewhat novel approach to measurement.

Essentially, the key to the techniques selected for this study lies in recognising and adapting the appropriate analysis methods for the data. Mixed method studies such as this, call for measurement strategies that provide an in depth gathering and examination of the data. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) suggest that some of the ways this can be achieved is by conducting concurrent qualitative and quantitative analysis on the same data and/or sequential qualitative and quantitative (and vice-versa) analysis on the same or different data. This also serves to validate the data, particularly if comparison is made of overlapping images and between the different images examined in the data (Pocock & Hudson, 1978). In agreement with this line of thinking, the methods chosen for this study was a questionnaire that enabled concurrently quantitative and qualitative data analysis to be conducted on visitors' images of beaches. This method is explained in greater detail in the following section.

## **4.2 Beach Tourism Questionnaire**

### **4.2.1 Questionnaire Design**

The sketching exercise in the first study prepared respondents for the questions about their favourite beach in the Part B - the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Firstly, visitors were asked to consider their favourite or ideal beach. This could be a real or imagined beach, then to complete the questionnaire about this beach. A combination of structured questions - multiple choice, multiple response, 5-point Likert scales; and unstructured questions (open-ended) were used in the questionnaire (Refer to Table 16). Structured questions were used for characteristics such as time spent at beach, importance of beach, people visited the beach with, and basic demographics. Unstructured questions were used to elicit descriptions, feelings, emotions, impressions, purpose, and behaviours and to identify particular characteristics of beaches. Each question serves a specific purpose in relation to both the objectives of the study, conforming to components of images defined in the literature review, and to enable both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The questions are displayed in Table 19, however, only the key questions will be discussed in greater detail.

**Table 16: Questionnaire Items, Structure and Purpose**

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	QUESTION STRUCTURE	PURPOSE FOR QUESTION	RELATIONSHIP TO AIMS & IMAGE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	REFERENCES
Below is a list of different types of beaches. Which beach type do you consider best describes your favourite beach?	Multiple choice – Single Response	Evaluation and comprehension of beach	Cognitive Natural & cultural	Lawson & Baud-Bovy (1977) Morgan (1991a,b) Tunstall & Penning-Roswell (1998)
How did you discover this beach?	Open-ended	Information influence on image	Cognitive Information	Gallarza, Saura & Garcia (2002)
Approximately how many times have you visited your favourite beach during your lifetime?	Multiple choice – Single Response	familiarity	Information Time Distance	Echtner & Ritchie, (1991) Gallarza, Saura & Garcia (2002) Gartner (1996) Gunn (1988)
When you visit your favourite beach, how much time would you spend there (approximately)?	Multiple choice – Single Response	Familiarity Purpose of beach	Information Time Distance	Gallarza, Saura & Garcia (2002) Pearce (1977)
How important to you is visiting your favourite beach?	5 Point Likert Scale	Importance of beach Value of the beach	Cognitive Affective	Davidson & Spearritt (2000) Lencek & Bosker (1999) Lofgren (1999) Loker-Murphy & Pearce(1995) Pizam (1999) Sorensen (2003)
Please describe your favourite beach exactly as you see it. (Give as many details as you can to describe your beach)	Open-ended	Cognitive & spatial attributes Natural & cultural attributes Impressions	Natural & cultural Affective Conative	Echtner & Ritchie, (1991) Francescato & Mebane (1973)
Describe the characteristics of your favourite beach that you like the most?	Open-ended	Cognitive & spatial attributes Natural & cultural attributes Impressions	Cognitive Affective Natural & cultural	Echtner & Ritchie, (1991)
For what reason/s would you visit your favourite beach?	Open-ended	Motives Behaviour Actions	Cognitive Affective Beach culture	Davidson & Spearritt (2000) Lencek & Bosker (1999) Lofgren (1999)
Please list all the activities that you would you do at your favourite beach?	Open-ended	Motives Behaviour Actions	Conative Beach Culture	Loker-Murphy & Pearce(1995) Pizam (1999) Sorensen (2003)
Would you visit your favourite beach alone or with other people?	Multiple choice – Multiple Response	Motives Values Feelings Social characteristics	Conative Beach culture	
Describe how you feel when you are actually at your favourite beach	Open-ended	Feelings Emotions Impressions	Affective Beach culture	
Are there any changes or improvements you would like to see made to your favourite beach?	Open-ended	Attribute preferences	Cognitive Affective Conative	N/a
What changes would you least like to occur to your favourite beach?	Open-ended	Attribute preferences	Cognitive Affective Conative	N/a
Would you recommend your favourite beach to anyone else?	Multiple choice – Multiple Response	Strength of conviction Social	Familiarity Conative	N/a

		characteristics		
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The physical and cognitive characteristics of beach images are drawn from a number of questions. Respondents are asked firstly to select a type of beach that best describes their favourite beach. The different beach types were created by the author, based on different levels of construction found at beaches. These types represented the majority of beach types ranging from remote, natural beach to artificially constructed beaches. Explanations of each beach type were provided to assist respondents with their selection. The beach types also represent different levels of nature and civilisation that can characterise beach images on a broad level. This assists with categorising respondents images for more in-depth analysis.

Following beach types, visitors are asked to consider their favourite and/or ideal beach, the one they had previously sketched, and describe it in as much detail as possible. Then, visitors were asked to describe the characteristics they like the most about this beach. Eliciting a written description of a beach image, and describing preferred characteristics, serves several purposes. Firstly, this is an opportunity for those respondents who are not artistically proficient to express their beach image more effectively. There are image characteristics that may be neglected or difficult to sketch but can be given in written responses, and vice versa. Additionally, there are elements of images that are important, but cannot be expressed spatially. For example, sounds, smells, warmth, happiness, romance, fun, luxury, relaxation are feelings and actions that cannot be expressed diagrammatically. These characteristics are equally as important as the physical

objects in the image. Although they are much more difficult, if not impossible, to sketch and assess, they can be adequately measured in text (Francescato & Mebane, 1973). For this reason, respondents are also asked to describe their feelings, in separate question. This further ensures that the emotional components or affective images are adequately measured. The final purpose for eliciting a written description of the same image is that it addresses the issue of reliability in measurement of the image attributes, assuming that the question is clearly understood by the respondent (Babbie, 1986).

The level of familiarity was measured firstly in asking visitors to sketch a beach that is their favourite and/or ideal beach. This insured that visitors had already evaluated that beach, that it had already made an impression, therefore they had a high level of familiarity with that beach. They were also asked to indicate the number of times they had visited this beach and length of time spent at this beach. The level of familiarity that visitors' have of their favourite beach is an important factor in beach images for two main reasons. Firstly, images are influenced by the physical and mental distance of the person to the destination (Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002). Secondly, images are strengthened by actual experiences with the location (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1996; Gunn, 1988). Pearce (1977) noted that "the longer one stays (in an unknown city) the more one can report about its composition and spatial arrangement". Therefore, by measuring familiarity it is possible, to a certain extent, to gauge the depth of the image.

The purpose of the beach plays an important role in images and the cultural aspects of the meaning of beach images. 'Purpose' is measured by asking respondents for what reasons they would visit the beach and what activities they do at the beach. These assist in identifying the affective (motives, feelings, emotions and values) and conative (behaviour and actions) components of images. Behaviours and activities are also connected to national cultures (Pizam, 1999), subcultures (Davidson & Spearritt, 2000; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Lofgren, 1999) and to tourist cultures (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Sorensen, 2003).

#### **4.2.2 Interviewing Procedure, Sample & Location**

This study was conducted simultaneously with the study in Chapter 3. The same interviewing procedure, sample and location were used for the present study. Consequently, an abridged version of procedures is described here (for full interviewing methodology see Section 3.2.3). A quota sampling procedure was chosen for this study. Since the study has a cross-cultural perspective, the variable for establishing the proportions was regions based on major global tourism markets - North America, Europe, United Kingdom and Asia. Overall, the study aimed for at least 100 visitors from each tourism market region. This type of sampling insured group representativeness within these variables, although not population representativeness (Sommer & Sommer, 1997). The quota samples were selected from the population of international visitors to Cairns, Australia.

The questionnaires were presented in English for all nationalities apart from Japanese and Chinese. These two nationalities were given questionnaires that were translated into their respective languages. It is generally accepted that the majority of European, North American and United Kingdom visitors to Cairns have English as a first or second language and comprehend it at a substantially high level, however, fewer Japanese and Chinese (Mandarin) visitors can speak or understand English sufficiently to respond to the questionnaire. Translations were conducted by Chinese and Japanese post-graduate students who were studying at James Cook University, Cairns. The translated versions were pre-tested to check for accuracy of interpretation.

Four locations were selected on the basis of high visitor numbers, varying nationalities and places where tourists could afford the time to complete the lengthy questionnaire. These were the Cairns Airport's domestic departure lounge, the Esplanade Pool, Sunlover Cruises and Big Cat Cruises (to the Great Barrier Reef). The majority of interviewing was conducted at these locations on weekdays during February to March 2003 and October to November 2003, with supplementary interviewing conducted in April 2004.

A total of 491 international visitors were successfully interviewed from 844 (including domestic tourists) visitors who were approached to participate in the study. This indicates an overall response rate of 58.3%. Refusals were recorded, with 9.0% representing domestic tourists, 32.7% refusing largely due to language barriers or lack of time. The final quota samples were selected on the basis of



respondents who were both born and currently resided in the same country. This provided the most beneficial groups for analysing cross-cultural characteristics. Consequently, a total of 480 questionnaires represented the final total sample. The respondents were grouped into major global tourism markets as shown in Table 17.

**Table 17: Tourist Market Group Profile of Sample (N=480)**

Tourist Market Group	Countries Born & Reside	Frequency
North America	United States, Canada	89
Europe	Germany, France, Italy & Greece, Spain/Portugal, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Finland, Other Western Europe, Other Eastern Europe, Israel	120
United Kingdom	England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales	145
Asia	Japan, China , Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Maldives	126
Total Sample		480

Genders of respondents were recorded and showed even distribution between males (49.8%) and females (50.2%). Respondents' ages were recoded into specific age groups, rather than even distribution, in order to facilitate analysis of beach visitor profiles (see Table 18). The percentages for age groups reflected the typical visitor types for the region, with almost half of the sample falling into the 20 –29 year old group (46.4%).

**Table 18: Age Groups (N=480)**

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Under 20 years old	9	1.9
20 – 24 years old	107	22.7
25 – 29 years old	112	23.7
30 – 49 years old	88	18.6
40 – 49 years old	37	7.8
50 years old & over	119	25.2
Total	472	100.0

#### 4.2.3 Methods of Analysis

The questionnaire items were analysed using a variety of techniques and tests. The open-ended items were analysed using content analysis. It is worthy to note, at this point, that the researcher made a conscious decision not to use computer software packages for content analysis. Despite their numerous advantages, these programs do not allow for unusual or idiosyncratic expressions and implicit meanings (Bazeley, 2003). These are characteristics synonymous with beaches and images. Therefore, analysis using these packages would be contrary to the aims of the research, that being to give ‘meaning’ to and conceptualise ‘measurement’ of images of beaches. Consequently, the analysis was conducted on the basis of a classic content analysis method. This structure of analysis allowed for a direct connection to be established between the mental map variables and the questionnaire descriptive variables for comparison later. Simultaneously, it provided the opportunity to study the more ‘holistic’ and ‘unique’ components (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) of beach images.

Content analysis of the text in the questionnaire followed a simple but arduous process that occurred on different levels. Weber (1990) states there are a number of commonly used methods for classifying text. These are “word, word sense, sentence and theme” (Weber, 1990:22) and represent the initial step in content analysis. In this study, firstly key words were recorded with attention paid to the ‘sense’ of the word, that is, taking into account multiple meanings. A thesaurus (Fergusson, Manser, & Pickering, 2002) was used to check association of similar words. Secondly, sentences and phrases were examined for particular meaning. For example, ‘tropical beach fringed with palm trees’ indicates key words - tropical and palm trees; however, the entire phrase describes a type of beach (tropical) and palm trees are not only an object in the environment, but form part of the overall landscape panorama. Therefore, individual words were analysed in association with their meaning when applied to beaches.

There were additional considerations made when analysing the contents of the non-English questionnaires. The Chinese and Japanese questionnaire responses were translated into English by professional interpreters who were also from those nationalities respectively. Initially, the interpreters were directed to translate the responses directly into English, regardless of ‘cultural meanings’. Later, when analysing the text, unusual terms and phrases were clarified with the interpreter.

Dimensions and categories were defined from content analysis of the text. For ease of analysis, this data was quantified by means of numerical codes. A reliability check was performed to test the accuracy of the coding system for individual attributes of nature and culture found in the respondents' descriptions. Following similar procedures for the beach sketch maps (See Section 3.2.4), one sample description from each of the four culture groups was given to 3 post-graduate business students, along with the list of dimensions for nature and culture attributes. The coders were given a background summary of how the descriptions were originally produced by the respondents. Working independently, they were asked to categorise all of the attributes in the descriptions following instructions provided on the general categorisation of the nature and culture attributes, including the use of words and groups of words. The 3 coders' items were combined with the author's codes for each sketch map and the items were then analysed for intercoder reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (Young, 1999). The reliability for the description coding was satisfactory as indicated by the Alpha levels for each description, which were -0.667, 1.0, exactly the same (Alpha level not computed by SPSS 11.0 when all items match), and 0.7895. The descriptions and other variables were then coded by the author only.

The data was then entered into the SPSS Version 11.0 statistical package for further analysis. Due to the nature of this data, statistical analysis consisted of frequencies and percentages for each variable. The cross-cultural attributes, however, were analysed using cross-tabulation of the data. Since the focus of this

study is the existence of these attributes in respondents' beach images, only the results for the existing attributes are presented in this section.

Two statistical tests were calculated on this data, to identify differences in the culture groups' responses. A Pearson chi-square was calculated for cross-tabulated variables to ascertain differences in the four culture group's responses. In these, only values with at least 80% of their cells containing expected frequencies of at least 5 were used in this analysis so as to maintain integrity in the results (Diekhoff, 1992). Further analysis included standardised residuals, that is, differences between observed and expected counts, which were calculated in order to discuss specifically which culture group/s contributed to the significant differences, if found. Standardised residuals were used since they are calculated using a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.0, therefore if the standardised residual is greater than (the absolute value of) 2.00, then that cell can be considered to be a major contributor to the overall chi-square value. Additionally, and where applicable, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on particular variables, using an alpha level of  $p = .05$ .

### **4.3 Characteristics of Beach Images**

This study was structured so as to derive the cognitive, affective, and conative characteristics, and the factors influencing beach images from different elements in the questionnaire (see Table 19). The results of this study, therefore,

are presented in the following section in order of their appearance in the questionnaire, and not according to the order of the aims of the study. The aims, however, are incorporated and presented in the results as they appear. Additionally, each variable in this study has been analysed for cross-cultural characteristics and the results described in each section.

#### **4.3.1 Beach Types**

The opening question, asking visitors to identify the type of beach they have chosen as their favourite, purposely stimulated respondents to envisage their beach within the parameters of the overall environment. That is, the list of beach types from which respondents could choose, described varying levels of attributes, representing a range of beaches, from remote to constructed and artificial (for complete descriptions see Table 19). Overall, the main types of beaches favoured by visitors were semi-remote (31.8%), remote (31.2%) and low-construction beaches (22.6%) as described in Table 19. Artificial beaches attracted only 10 responses (2.1%), of which 7 were from the Asian culture group. These were removed from further analysis since they represented a very small percentage of the beach types. Overall, the results show there is a tendency for visitors to favour the more nature-based beaches as opposed to beaches with any form of construction. This was expected, since they reflect the types of beaches sketched in the mental mapping exercise in the previous study, where the majority of

favourite beach sketch maps had no people in them and very few buildings or other structures.

A Pearson chi square was calculated on the types of beaches that the respondents' from the four culture groups indicated best described their favourite beach. The analysis was significant,  $\chi^2 (9) = 50.18, p < 0.05$ . The standardised residual outcomes from the observed and expected frequencies, as displayed in Table 19, reveal which culture groups contributed to this significant difference (shown in bold). There were more incidences of constructed beaches ( $R_{st} = 2.4$ ) and less of remote beaches ( $R_{st} = -2.1$ ) in the North American culture group. The opposite was found for the European culture group, with more indicating remote beaches ( $R_{st} = 3.6$ ) and less constructed beaches ( $R_{st} = -3.1$ ). The Asian culture group also had more incidences of constructed beaches than expected ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ). Overall, it appears that North American and Asian visitors favour more constructed beaches, while the European visitors tend to favour beaches that are more remote.

**Table 19: Cross-tabulation of Beach Types and Culture Groups (n=480)**

Beach Types	Description		Frequencies - Observed and Expected & Standardised Residuals <sup>a</sup>				Total
			North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe	
Semi-remote Beach	No buildings/construction at all, very few or no people, few roads	$f_o$	29	51	35	37	152
		$f_e$	28.6	46.4	38.3	38.6	
		$R_{st}$	0.1	0.7	-0.5	-0.3	
Remote Beach	Very little construction - e.g. Public toilets, car park, few people	$f_o$	17	43	29	60	149
		$f_e$	28	45.5	37.6	37.9	
		$R_{st}$	-2.1	-0.4	-1.4	3.6	
Low-construction Beach	Small and/ or few buildings, roads, some people	$f_o$	23	38	28	19	108
		$f_e$	20.3	33	27.2	27.5	
		$R_{st}$	0.6	0.9	0.1	-1.6	
Constructed Beach	Many buildings, many people, shops and/or restaurants and roads	$f_o$	19	11	26	3	59
		$f_e$	11.1	18	14.9	15	
		$R_{st}$	2.4	-1.7	2.9	-3.1	
Total			88	143	118	119	468

*a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.09.*

#### 4.3.2 Familiarity of Beach

Levels of familiarity were measured by asking visitors three different questions. First, they were asked about the amount of time they would spend during visits to their favourite beach; second, how many times they had visited their favourite beach; and third, how important to them was a visit to their favourite beach. The expectation for the results from these questions is, that the longer the time spent, the more frequent the visitation and higher levels of importance



indicate that the beach is a familiar and highly regarded location for the respondent.

The results show that the beach appears to be mainly a holiday destination where visitors spend more than two days at their favourite beach (44.0%). It is secondarily a day-trippers destination (21.5%). The majority of visitors had actually visited their favourite beach (84.0%), indicating that respondents' favourite beach is indeed both an existing as opposed to imagined beach, and is a familiar environment. Overall, respondents indicated that visiting their favourite beach was important ( $M = 3.16$ ). The results from these questions were cross-tabulated with the four culture groups and a Pearson chi square test was performed on the data.

As shown in Table 20, the analysis was significant, presenting  $\chi^2 (9) = 52.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for time spent at favourite beach; for the number of times visited this beach ( $\chi^2 (9) = 79.69$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); and for the importance of visiting their favourite beach ( $\chi^2 (12) = 29.64$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The standardised residuals revealed that each culture group contributed to this significant difference.

The North American group showed that there were less than expected respondents who had never visited their favourite beach ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ). The United Kingdom group had more respondents spending less than one day at the beach ( $R_{st} = 3.2$ ) than expected, and less respondents spending a weekend there ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ). The Asian group had the most differences between observed and expected frequencies for each question. In particular, there were less Asian respondents

spending holiday time ( $R_{st} = -2.4$ ), or only a few hours ( $R_{st} = -2.3$ ) at their beach, however there were more respondents spending a weekend at their beach ( $R_{st} = 3.1$ ). They were also the main culture group who had either never visited their beach ( $R_{st} = 6.5$ ) or had more than 10 visits there ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ). The European group spent significantly more time at the beach, visiting it for more than 2 days ( $R_{st} = 2.4$ ) and were unlikely to spend less than one day there ( $R_{st} = -2.3$ ). Visiting their favourite beach was more important to the European group who had more responses for 'important' ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ) than 'not important at all' ( $R_{st} = -2.1$ ) and 'a little important' ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ).

**Table 20: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of Time at Favourite Beach & Culture Group (n=480)**

Variables for Familiarity of the Beach		Culture Group					Degrees of Freedom Pearson Chi Square Significance
		Frequencies - Observed and Expected <sup>a</sup> Standardised Residuals					
		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe	Total	
<b>Time Spent at Favourite Beach (N = 475)</b>							
Holiday (More than 2 days)	$f_o$	48.0	54.0	37.0	70.0	209	df = 9 $\chi^2 = 52.03$ p = .000
	$f_e$	38.3	62.9	55.0	52.8		
	$R_{st}$	1.6	-1.1	-2.4	2.4		
1 Day	$f_o$	18.0	34.0	32.0	18.0	102	
	$f_e$	18.7	30.7	26.8	25.8		
	$R_{st}$	-0.2	0.6	1.0	-1.5		
Less than 1 day (few hours)	$f_o$	11.0	42.0	21.0	11.0	85	
	$f_e$	15.6	25.6	22.4	21.5		
	$R_{st}$	-1.2	3.2	-0.3	-2.3		
Weekend (2 days)	$f_o$	10.0	13.0	35.0	21.0	79	
	$f_e$	14.5	23.8	20.8	20.0		
	$R_{st}$	-1.2	-2.2	3.1	0.2		
<b>Number of Times Visited Favourite Beach (N = 476)</b>							
1 – 4 visits	$f_o$	47.0	95.0	59.0	76.0	277	df = 9 $\chi^2 = 79.69$ p = .000
	$f_e$	51.8	83.8	72.7	68.7		
	$R_{st}$	-0.7	1.2	-1.6	0.9		
5 – 10 visits	$f_o$	15.0	21.0	8.0	12.0	56	
	$f_e$	10.5	16.9	14.7	13.9		
	$R_{st}$	1.4	1.0	-1.7	-0.5		
More than 10 visits	$f_o$	21.0	19.0	9.0	18.0	67	
	$f_e$	12.5	20.3	17.6	16.6		
	$R_{st}$	2.4	-0.3	-2.0	0.3		
Never visited	$f_o$	6.0	9.0	49.0	12.0	76	
	$f_e$	14.2	23.0	20.0	18.8		
	$R_{st}$	-2.2	-2.9	6.5	-1.6		
<b>Importance of Visiting Favourite Beach (N = 471)</b>							
Not important at all	$f_o$	6.0	16.0	12.0	3.0	37	df = 12 $\chi^2 = 29.64$ p = .003
	$f_e$	6.7	11.2	9.9	9.3		
	$R_{st}$	-0.3	1.5	0.7	-2.1		
A little important	$f_o$	11.0	40.0	37.0	16.0	104	
	$f_e$	18.8	31.4	27.8	26.1		
	$R_{st}$	-1.8	1.5	1.7	-2.0		
Somewhat important	$f_o$	29.0	36.0	36.0	37.0	138	
	$f_e$	24.9	41.6	36.9	34.6		
	$R_{st}$	0.8	-0.9	-0.2	0.4		
Important	$f_o$	25.0	32.0	28.0	44.0	129	
	$f_e$	23.3	38.9	34.5	32.3		
	$R_{st}$	0.4	-1.1	-1.1	2.1		
Very important	$f_o$	14.0	18.0	13.0	18.0	63	
	$f_e$	11.4	19.0	16.9	15.8		
	$R_{st}$	0.8	-0.2	-0.9	0.6		

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

An additional test was performed on the culture groups' levels of importance for visiting their favourite beach. A one-way analysis of variance was calculated using an alpha level of .05 in order to compare the sample means for the different culture group's level of importance for visiting their beach. The analysis was significant,  $F(3,467) = 7.086, p < .05$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD post hoc conditions for significance revealed differences in means for each of the groups. Visiting the beach was more important for Europeans ( $M = 3.49, SD = 0.994$ ) than the United Kingdom ( $M = 2.97, SD = 1.214$ ) and Asia group ( $M = 2.94, SD = 1.148$ ), and more important for the North American group ( $M = 3.35, SD = 1.120$ ) than the Asian group. These results indicate that the visiting the beach is significantly more important to North American and European culture groups than the Asian and United Kingdom culture groups.

#### **4.3.3 Information Sources**

In addition to the previous factors, information sources were also considered one of the most important factors in establishing the familiarity with the beach and the depth of respondents' images. While visitors gathered information at different stages of their trip, actual visitation is the strongest source that influences images (Gunn, 1988 Gartner, 1996). Therefore, visitors were asked how they had discovered their favourite beach. The highest responses to this question were recorded for discovering their favourite beach while travelling (52.7%) as shown in Table 21. The descriptive comments of how visitors found

their beach revealed that some found it while on organised tours and others by accident while travelling along coastlines. As expected, other sources including travel literature and travel agents (23.1%), and word of mouth (13.6%) also played significant roles in visitors' discovery of their favourite beach.

The information sources were cross-tabulated against the four culture groups and a Pearson chi square was calculated on each type of information (see Table 21). The results were significant (shown in bold) for discovering their beach while travelling/touring,  $\chi^2 (3) = 42.75$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; from word of mouth  $\chi^2 (3) = 10.76$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; and the Internet  $\chi^2 (3) = 17.44$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The United Kingdom group were more likely to discover their beach while travelling ( $R_{st} = 3.2$ ) and less likely through the Internet ( $R_{st} = -2.4$ ) and television ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ). Conversely, the Asian group showed more respondents than expected had discovered their beach through the Internet ( $R_{st} = 3.1$ ) and television ( $R_{st} = 4.5$ ), and less by travelling ( $R_{st} = -3.3$ ) or word of mouth ( $R_{st} = -2.3$ ).

**Table 21: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of How Discovered Favourite Beach (N=480)**

Frequencies - Observed and Expected <sup>a</sup> Standardised Residuals							
Method of Discovery		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe	Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>a</sup>
<b>While travelling/ touring</b>	$f_o$	45	99	36	57	42.75	<b>.000</b>
	$f_e$	43.9	71.6	62.2	59.3		
	$R_{st}$	0.2	<b>3.2</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	-0.3		
<b>Travel literature/ advertising/ agents</b>	$f_o$	18	23	29	34	6.26	<b>.099</b>
	$f_e$	19.3	31.4	27.3	26.0		
	$R_{st}$	-0.3	-1.5	0.3	1.6		
<b>Word of mouth/ locals word of mouth</b>	$f_o$	18	21	7	15	10.76	<b>.013</b>
	$f_e$	11.3	18.4	16.0	15.3		
	$R_{st}$	<b>2.0</b>	0.6	<b>-2.3</b>	-0.1		
<b>Friends and/or relatives</b>	$f_o$	15	12	14	9	5.82	<b>.121</b>
	$f_e$	9.3	15.1	13.1	12.5		
	$R_{st}$	1.9	-0.8	0.2	-1.0		
<b>Internet</b>	$f_o$	3	1	15	7	17.44	<b>.001</b>
	$f_e$	4.8*	7.9	6.8	6.5		
	$R_{st}$	-0.8	<b>-2.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	0.2		
<b>Television</b>	$f_o$	1	2	18	4	29.19	<b>.000</b>
	$f_e$	4.6*	7.6	6.6	6.3		
	$R_{st}$	-1.7	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	-0.9		

a. = 0 cells have an expected count of less than 5, unless noted with an asterisk (\*).

The results for familiarity of the beach have strong implications for the remainder of the study. The image that visitors have of their favourite beach is strengthened by influential factors such as information sources, actual visitation and the considerable time spent there by most visitors. The significant level of importance placed on visiting the beach also strengthens the image. Therefore, responses to subsequent questions about visitors' favourite beaches can be seen more as 'realistic' rather than 'idealistic' images of beaches.

#### **4.3.4 Impressions, Feelings and Behaviour**

The most important components of images are the impressions that destinations make on visitors and the attributes contained in these impressions (Echtner & Ritchie; 1991,1993; Hunt, 1975; Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Stabler, 1988). It is difficult to capture these impressions in a single question. Therefore, attributes were measured using several, mostly open-ended questions that encouraged visitors to consider and evaluate different characteristics of their beach images. Firstly, they were asked to describe their overall impression of their favourite beach in as much detail as possible, reflecting on the location, environmental features, atmosphere, people and surroundings. Then, visitors were asked to explain what characteristics they like the most about their favourite and/or ideal beach.

##### *Describe Your Favourite Beach*

Overall visitor impressions of their favourite/ideal beach were recorded by soliciting written descriptions of these beaches. Analysis of the results to this open-ended question revealed many dimensions and attributes in the descriptions. The dimensions were created by grouping attributes of nature and culture similar to those used in analysing the mental maps in the previous study, which had the added benefit of enabling comparison of map attributes against descriptive attributes. The addition of a new dimension – feelings and emotions, was required to acknowledge these attributes. Feelings and emotions can better be expressed

through written descriptions, as opposed to sketching. The final list of categories and dimensions were designated as shown in Table 22.

**Table 22: Categories & Dimensions for Most Frequent Described Words**

<b>Nature</b>	<b>Culture</b>
▪ Flora	▪ Buildings & Other Structures
▪ Fauna	▪ Paths and Boundaries
▪ Geological	▪ Transportation
▪ Water	▪ Numbers of People
▪ Weather	▪ People & Personal Items
▪ Landscape-Scenery	▪ Activities
	▪ Feelings & Emotions
	▪ No... (as in, the absence of...)

Analysis of the text also revealed the many and various ways in which to describe both individual attributes and overall impressions. Many of the nouns were embellished with adjectives that described the colour, texture, width, length, slope, and level of cleanliness or remoteness. For example, sand was described as white, golden, light, soft, and fine. Similarly, respondents also specified particular features of the natural attributes - water, landscape, and weather. This indicates that there is indeed an evaluation of each of the beach's attributes by the visitor, and that it is not simply the existence or acknowledgement of that specific attribute, such as sand, water or sun, that is part of the beach image. Consequently, care was taken in the content analysis of these descriptions, to distinguish attributes by their specifications.



The most frequent descriptive words visitors used to describe their favourite beaches are listed in Table 23 for attributes of nature and Table 24 for attributes of culture. The natural attributes were dominated by words describing white sand (32.2%), clean water (25.7%), blue/turquoise/green water (20.0), palm trees (17.1%), rocks (12.0%), trees (10.4%), and beach/sand (10.0%). These were attributes of nature that typify beaches that are popular tourist destinations, and were to be expected.

The words describing attributes of culture revealed dimensions that were of attributes not directly associated with constructed, or highly visited beach tourism destinations. In particular, the highest scores were recorded for few/very few people (27.1%), quiet/serenity/peaceful (20.4%), clean (14.0%), isolated/secluded (12.2%), relax/relaxing and (11.3%). All of these attributes, except the lack of people, described feelings or emotions, rather than physical characteristics of the beach.

**Table 23: Most Frequent Descriptive Words – Attributes of Nature (N=480)**

Dimension	Descriptive Word/s	Frequency	Percentage of Cases*
<b>Flora</b>	Palm trees/palms to shade//green palms/palms & coconuts	77	17.1
	Big trees/some trees/trees	47	10.4
	Thick bush/lots of vegetation	39	8.6
	Jungle	25	5.5
	Grass/green grass	18	4.0
<b>Fauna</b>	Reef/wade to corals/corals	42	9.3
	Marine creatures/ sea life (i.e. Crabs, fish, shells, crustaceans, turtles)	35	7.8
	Tropical fish/colourful fish/lots of fish	28	6.2
	Hear birds, insects/ chickens scratching /animals in rainforest/sounds	22	4.9
<b>Geological</b>	Sand-white/ semi-white/ nice, light coloured	145	32.2
	Rugged rocks/ rocky outcrops/surrounding rocks	54	12.0
	Beach/excellent sand/plain sand/good sand/beautiful sand	45	10.0
	Clean sand/sand is free of debris	29	6.4
	Large cove or bay/quite sandy cove/secluded by rocks (cove)	28	6.2
	Fine sand/fine grains/fine, soft sand	25	5.5
	Long sandy beach/stretching for long way	24	5.3
	Mountains/ hills	22	4.9
	Soft sand	21	4.7
(Beach is) on an island/ island/island bay/island beach	18	4.0	
<b>Water</b>	Clean & clear water/crystal/very clear clean sea/sparkling	116	25.7
	Blue ocean/clear blue/blue & white/turquoise/green-blue	90	20.0
	Surf/exhilarating waves/good waves/body surfing	31	6.9
	Warm water/warm Indian ocean/not freezing water	31	6.9
	Small waves/negligible surf/waves not overwhelming	26	5.8
	Shallow water/ low tides-shallow water	21	4.7
<b>Landscape-Scenery</b>	Spectacular view/ taken aback/beautiful//most beautiful I have seen/magnificent Scenery/view is of lighthouse on one side...	36	8.0
	Tropical/tropical flora/tropical location/tropical features	21	4.7
<b>Weather</b>	Shade/area under trees/getaway from sun/natural shade/shade tree	39	8.6
	Always sunshine on the island	35	7.8
	Warm/nice warm weather/temps at 85deg F	23	5.1
	Clear sky/blue sky, some clouds	20	4.4

\*Only items with 4.0% or more of cases are presented in this table.

**Table 24: Most Frequent Descriptive Words – Attributes of Culture (N= 480)**

Dimension	Descriptive Word/s	Frequency	Percentage of Cases*
<b>Structures</b>	Food/drinks/cafes/ice creams (food & drinks)	34	7.5
	Public toilets/showers/changing areas	32	7.1
	Restaurants/bistros/taverna (food only)	26	5.8
	Good facilities/all facilities/good amenities	25	5.5
	Bar/tavern/pub (alcohol-related)	21	4.7
	Resort area/tall hotels & buildings/hotels & rest	20	4.4
	Shops/small shops/shops for everything	18	4.0
<b>Access-Paths-Boundaries</b>	Access only gained by sea	23	5.1
	Path for walking/walking/walking area/path thru vegetation/nice walks	20	4.4
	Easy access/less than 2min stroll/easy access from parking	20	4.4
<b>People</b>	Few or very few people	122	27.1
	Not too crowded/not too many people/some people, but not many	26	5.8
	Friendly people/friendly locals	18	4.0
<b>Activities</b>	Snorkeling/scuba diving	36	8.0
	Swimming/inviting to swim/ opportunity to swim	19	4.2
	Activities - other (reading, fishing, watch storms, picnic, kayak, trek)	19	4.2
<b>Feelings-Emotions</b>	Quiet/serenity/comforting/peaceful calm/tranquil	92	20.4
	Clean	63	14.0
	Isolated/secluded/nobody/remote/privacy	55	12.2
	Relax/relaxing/relaxed atmosphere/chilled atmosphere	51	11.3
	Get away from civil/no urban stuff/remote/mid of nowhere	39	8.6
	Nature/natural/natural environment/feels untouched	31	6.9
<b>No...Buildings</b>	No inhabited buildings around	20	4.4
<b>No... Transport</b>	No (asphalt) roads/access via single track	18	4.0

*\*Only items with 4.0% or more of cases are presented in this table.*

The most frequent descriptive words were cross-tabulated with the four culture groups and a Pearson chi square was calculated for each descriptive word. Due to the sizeable amount of data resulting from this analysis, only the standardised residuals, Pearson chi square and significance for the occurrence of each word are presented in Table 25. A full table of results is available in Appendix C. The analysis produced significant differences (shown in bold) in many of the words used by the four culture groups to describe their favourite beach.

The Asian culture group's descriptions appear to have significantly less occurrences of descriptive words for most of the dimensions. In particular, less than expected occurrences were recorded for attributes that were actually the most frequent descriptive words used overall (see Tables 22 and 23). Of these, the strongest associations were for palm trees ( $R_{st} = -3.2$ ), white sand ( $R_{st} = -3.1$ ), rocks ( $R_{st} = -3.5$ ), beach/sand ( $R_{st} = -2.6$ ), blue ocean ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ), and quiet/peace/serenity ( $R_{st} = -2.1$ ). Conversely, the European culture group and United Kingdom were responsible for significantly higher occurrences of several descriptive words. Palm trees ( $R_{st} = 3.4$ ), reef/corals ( $R_{st} = 2.6$ ), marine creatures ( $R_{st} = 2.5$ ), and snorkel/scuba ( $R_{st} = 3.7$ ) were described more frequently by the European group, whereas the United Kingdom culture group had more descriptions of jungle ( $R_{st} = 2.7$ ), facilities ( $R_{st} = 2.7$ ), quiet/peaceful/serenity ( $R_{st} = 2.7$ ), and get away ( $R_{st} = 3.3$ ).

**Table 25: Pearson Chi Square for Cross-tabulation of Descriptive Words & Culture Groups (N= 480)**

Dimensions	Descriptive Words	Standardised Residuals				Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>a</sup>
		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe		
<b>Flora</b>	Palm trees	-0.9	0.6	<b>-3.2</b>	<b>3.4</b>	26.64	<b>.000</b>
	Trees	1.5	-1.1	-1.0	0.9	5.70	.127
	Bush/vegetation	-1.2	0.1	-0.4	1.4	3.75	.289
	Jungle	-0.3	<b>2.7</b>	<b>-2.2</b>	-0.5	13.07	<b>.004</b>
<b>Fauna</b>	Reef/corals	0.4	-0.8	<b>-2.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	13.27	<b>.004</b>
	Marine creatures	1.4	-1.1	<b>-2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	15.89	<b>.001</b>
	Fish	0.4	-1.2	1.0	0.0	2.65	.449
	Hear birds & insects...	0.0	0.9	-0.7	-0.2	1.49	.683
<b>Geological</b>	White sand	0.0	1.2	<b>-3.1</b>	1.8	20.44	<b>.000</b>
	Rocks	0.0	<b>1.9</b>	<b>-3.5</b>	1.5	20.40	<b>.000</b>
	Beach/Sand	0.9	1.2	<b>-2.6</b>	0.5	10.06	<b>.018</b>
	Clean sand	1.1	0.8	-1.3	-0.5	4.02	.259
	Bay/cove	0.4	1.6	-1.6	-0.4	5.60	.132
	Fine sand	1.1	0.5	-1.4	-0.1	3.61	.306
	Long beach	-0.2	1.4	-0.1	-1.2	3.68	.298
	Mountain/hill	1.9	0.1	-1.6	-0.2	6.60	.086
	Soft sand	0.6	1.5	-0.6	-1.4	5.07	.167
<b>Water</b>	Clean water	-0.3	1.0	-1.5	0.7	5.29	.151
	Blue ocean	0.3	0.7	<b>-2.2</b>	1.2	8.32	<b>.040</b>
	Surf	0.9	0.9	<b>-2.9</b>	1.2	11.89	<b>.008</b>
	Warm water	1.8	1.2	<b>-2.9</b>	0.1	13.57	<b>.004</b>
	Small waves	<b>3.3</b>	-0.3	-1.1	-1.4	14.63	<b>.002</b>
	Shallow water	-1.0	0.7	-0.6	0.8	2.45	.483
<b>Landscape - Scenery</b>	Views	-1.0	0.0	1.8	-1.0	5.76	.124
	Tropical	0.1	0.3	-0.6	0.3	0.62	.892
<b>Weather</b>	Shade	1.0	1.2	<b>-2.6</b>	0.4	10.18	<b>.017</b>
	Sunshine	0.2	<b>-2.3</b>	-0.1	2.5	12.37	<b>.006</b>
	Warm	1.3	-0.4	-0.8	0.1	2.71	.438
	Clear sky	0.2	0.0	1.2	-1.3	3.40	.333
<b>Structures</b>	Food/drinks/cafes	0.7	1.5	-1.3	-0.9	5.48	.140
	Public amenities	1.7	0.8	-1.9	-0.4	7.44	.059
	Restaurant/bistro	1.9	0.1	-1.5	-0.2	6.14	.105
	Resort/hotel	-0.4	0.0	1.6	-1.3	4.81	.186
	Facilities	0.2	<b>2.7</b>	-1.0	<b>-2.1</b>	13.48	<b>.004</b>
<b>Access - Paths - Boundaries</b>	Bar/tavern/pub	-1.5	1.5	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	14.71	<b>.002</b>
	Access by sea	1.8	-0.4	-0.4	-0.7	4.31	.229
	Paths	1.2	0.0	-1.9	0.9	5.90	.116
<b>People</b>	Easy access	0.7	0.0	-0.5	0.0	0.78	.854
	Few people/very few people	-0.1	-0.1	-1.6	<b>1.9</b>	8.30	<b>.040</b>
<b>Activities</b>	Not too crowded	1.0	<b>2.2</b>	<b>-2.2</b>	-1.0	12.39	<b>.006</b>
	Snorkel/scuba	-1.8	0.3	<b>-2.4</b>	<b>3.7</b>	24.55	<b>.000</b>
<b>Feelings - Emotions</b>	Quiet/peaceful/serenity	-0.7	<b>2.7</b>	<b>-2.1</b>	-0.2	14.99	<b>.002</b>
	Clean	0.7	0.9	-0.6	-0.9	2.95	.398
	Remote/isolated/secluded	-0.4	1.8	-1.7	0.1	7.11	.068
	Relax	-1.8	<b>2.4</b>	-0.1	-1.1	11.45	<b>.010</b>
	Get away	-0.5	<b>3.3</b>	<b>-2.3</b>	-0.9	18.26	<b>.000</b>
	Nature/natural environment	<b>-1.9</b>	-0.7	1.8	0.5	8.37	<b>.039</b>
<b>No...</b>	No inhabited buildings	<b>-1.9</b>	0.8	-1.4	<b>2.2</b>	11.84	<b>.008</b>

a. Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$

*Like Most about Favourite Beach*

Visitors were asked to describe the characteristics of their favourite beach that they like the most. While it was useful to simply have visitors describe their favourite beach, this additional question increased the level of evaluation of image components. The results were categorised under similar dimensions to descriptions of favourite beaches in order to facilitate comparisons. Table 26 reveals that the dimensions of “feelings/emotions”, “geological - sand”, and “water” had the highest responses.

Overall, the three attributes that respondents liked the most were the white sand (21.5%), clarity of the water (19.5%), and peace/quiet/tranquil (18.1%) attributes of their favourite beach. Other preferences with high responses were remote/seclusion (14.8%), cleanliness (14.2%), blue water (10.2%), and not too crowded (9.1%). While these results correspond with the most frequently used words in the descriptions of the beach (see Tables 22 and 23), there appear to be higher numbers preferring attributes belonging to feelings-emotions dimension.

**Table 26: Most Frequent Words used for Like the Most about Favourite Beach (N=480)**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Like the Most about Favourite Beach</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of Cases*</b>
<b>Feelings-Emotions</b>	Peaceful/quiet/tranquil/quietness/peace	82	18.1
	Remote/seclusion/desolation/sparsely populated	67	14.8
	Cleanliness/clean beach	64	14.2
	Relaxing/relax/ relax in shade	19	4.2
<b>Geological</b>	White sand/smooth white sand	97	21.5
	Soft sand/sand is fine, no rocks	35	7.7
	Sand/ sandy beach/nice sand	28	6.2
	Clean sand/clean silvery sand	23	5.1
<b>Water</b>	Crystal (clean) ocean/water good colour	88	19.5
	Blue water/aquamarine sea/blue sea	46	10.2
	Warm ocean/warm blue ocean/warm water	26	5.8
	Big waves/good waves/intense waves	18	4.0
	Gentle surf/ ride waves to shore	15	3.3
	Water - other	9	2.0
	Calm water/still water/negligible surf	8	1.8
	Colour of water	5	1.1
<b>Landscape-Scenery</b>	Picturesque/scenic/beautiful/spectacular views	38	8.4
<b>Weather</b>	Sun/sunny weather	18	4.0
<b>Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Palm trees	26	5.8
	Amazing coral reef/coral/coral reef	22	4.9
<b>Buildings &amp; Structures</b>	Good cheap food & drink/bar-refreshments	18	4.0
<b>No...</b>	No... infrastructure or development, dangerous animals in water, mobiles, videos, cameras, phones	30	6.6
<b>People</b>	Not too crowded	41	9.1

*\*Only items with 4.0% or more of cases are presented in this table.*

These results were cross-tabulated with the four culture groups and a Pearson chi square was calculated for each dimension. In Table 27, the results show that there were no significant differences found in what the culture groups liked the most about their favourite beach for many of the attributes. Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found, shown in bold, in only four of the attributes that these groups indicated as liking the most about their favourite beach. The differences were attributed to the Asian and European culture group's responses.

The Asian culture group had lower than expected responses for remote ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ), warm water ( $R_{st} = -2.6$ ), and palm trees ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ). The European culture group had higher than expected responses for remote ( $R_{st} = 2.0$ ) and palm trees ( $R_{st} = 2.9$ ), and lower than expected responses for scenic ( $R_{st} = -2.1$ ).

**Table 27: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of Culture Groups & Like the Most about Favourite Beach (n=480)**

Dimensions	Attributes	Frequencies - Observed and Expected & Standardised Residuals <sup>a</sup>				Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>b</sup>	
		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe			
<b>Feelings &amp; Emotions</b>	<b>Peace &amp; quiet</b>	$f_o$	12.0	34.0	16.0	20.0	6.686	.083
		$f_e$	15.2	24.8	21.5	20.5		
		$R_{st}$	-0.8	1.9	-1.2	-0.1		
	<b>Remote</b>	$f_o$	12.0	21.0	9.0	25.0	9.646	.022
		$f_e$	12.4	20.2	17.6	16.8		
		$R_{st}$	-0.1	0.2	-2.0	2.0		
	<b>Clean</b>	$f_o$	12.0	24.0	20.0	8.0	6.620	.085
		$f_e$	11.9	19.3	16.8	16.0		
		$R_{st}$	0.0	1.1	0.8	-2.0		
<b>Geological</b>	<b>White sand</b>	$f_o$	17.0	31.0	18.0	31.0	5.287	.152
		$f_e$	18.0	29.3	25.5	24.3		
		$R_{st}$	-0.2	0.3	-1.5	1.4		
	<b>Soft sand</b>	$f_o$	9.0	12.0	6.0	8.0	2.517	.472
		$f_e$	6.5	10.6	9.2	8.8		
		$R_{st}$	1.0	0.4	-1.1	-0.3		
	<b>Sand</b>	$f_o$	8.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	3.066	.382
		$f_e$	5.2	8.5	7.4	7.0		
		$R_{st}$	1.2	-0.2	0.2	-1.1		
	<b>Clean sand</b>	$f_o$	3.0	11.0	4.0	5.0	3.701	.296
		$f_e$	4.3	6.9	6.0	5.8		
		$R_{st}$	.6	1.5	-0.8	-0.3		
	<b>Clear ocean</b>	$f_o$	12.0	29.0	22.0	25	2.232	.526
		$f_e$	16.3	26.6	23.1	22.0		
		$R_{st}$	-1.1	0.5	-0.2	0.6		
<b>Water</b>	<b>Blue water</b>	$f_o$	6.0	19.0	13	8	4.160	.245
		$f_e$	8.5	13.9	12.1	11.5		
		$R_{st}$	-.9	1.4	.3	-1.0		
	<b>Warm water</b>	$f_o$	8.0	12.0	0.0	6.0	11.787	.008
		$f_e$	4.8	7.9	6.8	6.5		
		$R_{st}$	1.4	1.5	-2.6	-0.2		
<b>Landscape - Scenery</b>	<b>Scenic</b>	$f_o$	10.0	9.0	16.0	3.0	10.708	.013
		$f_e$	7.0	11.5	10.0	9.5		
		$R_{st}$	1.1	-0.7	1.0	-2.1		
<b>Flora</b>	<b>Palm trees</b>	$f_o$	1.0	10.0	1.0	14.0	18.227	.000
		$f_e$	4.8	7.9	6.8	6.5		
		$R_{st}$	-1.7	0.8	-2.2	2.9		
<b>Fauna</b>	<b>Coral/reef</b>	$f_o$	2.0	8.0	3.0	9.0	5.132	.162
		$f_e$	4.1	6.6	5.8	5.5		
		$R_{st}$	-1.0	0.5	-1.2	1.5		
<b>People</b>	<b>Not too crowded</b>	$f_o$	9.0	8.0	12	12.0	2.461	.482
		$f_e$	7.6	12.4	10.8	10.3		
		$R_{st}$	0.5	-1.2	0.4	0.5		

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

b. Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$



### *Feelings at the Beach*

Feelings are related to reasons for going to the beach and since they result from human interactions with the landscape, feelings are an important part of beach images. For this reason, visitors were asked to describe their feelings while visiting their favourite beach. The list of feelings given by respondents was grouped and categorised into dimensions of similar types of feelings, on the basis of individual word similarities. The dimensions were named 'relaxed-peaceful', 'happy-content', 'carefree-untroubled', 'meditative-spiritual', 'excited', 'comforted', 'escape', 'awe', 'romance', and other. The most frequent responses for each are displayed in Table 28.

The strongest feelings visitors identified were relaxed-peaceful (67.6%) and happy-content (39.9%). Other dimensions that appeared, although having fewer responses, were considered equally important, since they give insight into the many and varied feelings that are part of the image of the beach. The carefree-untroubled (18.1%) dimension, in particular, showed that the beach is a place where some visitors see it as an escape from their ever-day problems and pressures. The meditative-spiritual (15.4%) and comforted (8.1%) dimensions revealed that there are different levels of feelings produced by the beach than those ordinarily identified with holidays, such as escape and relaxation. An unexpected result is the existence of what appears to be three types of feelings. These have been named 'calm', 'excited', and 'free'. The 'calm' feelings include the relaxed-peaceful, meditative-spiritual, comforted, awe, and romance dimensions. The 'excited' feelings are represented by happy-content and excited

dimensions, and the 'free' are carefree-untroubled and escape. Of these, the 'calm' group of feelings had the most frequent responses.

**Table 28: Most Frequent Feelings at Favourite Beach (N=480)**

Dimensions	Feelings	Frequency	Percentage of Cases
<b>Relaxed-Peaceful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed/peaceful/calm/chilled/tranquil/rested</li> <li>Refreshed</li> </ul>	307	67.6
<b>Happy - Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Happy/content/kickback/joyful/wonderful/ pleased</li> <li>Good/good to be there/great/the best/positive</li> <li>Satisfied/pleased/satisfied with my life</li> <li>Lovely/rooted &amp; grounded in love/lovely feeling</li> </ul>	181	39.9
<b>Carefree-Untroubled</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free/freedom/carefree/at ease/unwound/lazy</li> <li>Anticipation of stress-free day/time off, no stress/distressed/stress-free/no worries</li> <li>Not many cares or worries/don't have to worry about anything/forget about troubles</li> <li>Not thinking about work or problems/not thinking of anything</li> <li>Completely away from everyday pressure/forget about everyday life/forget about everything</li> <li>No distractions/unfocused</li> </ul>	82	18.1
<b>Meditative-Spiritual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoughtful/contemplative/dreaming/place where you can think/solve problems/time to think about life</li> <li>Sense of well-being/very well</li> <li>Satisfied/fortunate/blessed</li> <li>At peace/at peace with earth/sense of peace/at peace with myself/at one with own self/peace of mind</li> <li>Appreciation for all world has to offer/sense of beauty of the world/just perfect moment in your life</li> <li>Next to nature/in harmony with nature/at ease with environment around me/a part of the nature of world/perfect communion with nature</li> </ul>	70	15.4
<b>Comforted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfort/comforting/comfortable/soothed/ relaxed with a sense of belonging</li> <li>Safe</li> <li>At home</li> </ul>	37	8.1
<b>Escape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like I've died &amp; gone to paradise/in heaven/like I'm in paradise/this is paradise</li> <li>Removed from world/away from reality/nothing else matters in world/in world of my own</li> <li>Alone/privacy/miles from anywhere/isolated</li> </ul>	35	7.7
<b>Excited</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excited/enthusiasm</li> <li>Exhilarating waves/exhilarated (after swimming) great/having great time/having fun/having laugh with friends/wicked/party atmosphere</li> <li>Alive! /refreshed/energised/invigorated/young</li> </ul>	24	5.3
<b>Awe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stopped in my tracks at beauty/completely in awe of beautiful unspoilt beach/amazed at beauty/ awestruck/in awe/enthralled by colours of sea</li> </ul>	7	1.5
<b>Romance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Romantic</li> </ul>	4	0.9
<b>Other Feelings</b>		17	3.7

Cross-tabulation of feelings with culture groups revealed significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in only two dimensions – relaxed-peaceful and excited (see

Table 29). The Asian culture group feels more excited at their favourite beach ( $R_{st} = 3.6$ ) and has less feelings of relaxed-peaceful ( $R_{st} = -2.9$ ) than expected. The United Kingdom group had higher than expected responses for relaxed-peaceful and lower for excited ( $R_{st} = -1.9$ ). Consequently, apart from these dimensions, it would appear that feelings at the beach are relatively similar across the four culture groups.

**Table 29: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of Culture Groups & Feelings (n=480)**

Frequencies - Observed and Expected & Standardised Residuals <sup>a.</sup>							
Feelings Dimensions		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe	Pearson Chi Square	Significance <sup>b.</sup>
<b>Relaxed – Peaceful</b>	$f_o$	65	111	52	69		
	$f_e$	55.1	89.7	78.0	74.3		
	$R_{st}$	1.3	<b>2.2</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	-0.6	41.589	<b>.000</b>
<b>Happy – Content</b>	$f_o$	28	55	44	47		
	$f_e$	32.3	52.6	45.7	43.5		
	$R_{st}$	-0.8	0.3	-0.2	0.5	1.599	.660
<b>Carefree - Untroubled</b>	$f_o$	10	21	21	26		
	$f_e$	14.5	23.6	20.5	19.5		
	$R_{st}$	-1.2	-0.5	0.1	1.5	4.580	.205
<b>Meditative – Spiritual</b>	$f_o$	13	15	19	17		
	$f_e$	11.9	19.3	16.8	16.0		
	$R_{st}$	0.3	-1.0	0.5	0.3	1.650	.648
<b>Excited</b>	$f_o$	3	2	15	3		
	$f_e$	4.3*	6.9	6.0	5.8		
	$R_{st}$	-0.6	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	-1.1	19.450	<b>.000</b>
<b>Comforted</b>	$f_o$	7	9	12	6		
	$f_e$	6.3	10.3	8.9	8.5		
	$R_{st}$	0.3	-0.4	1.-	-0.9	2.183	.535
<b>Escape</b>	$f_o$	4	15	5	11		
	$f_e$	6.5	10.6	9.2	8.8		
	$R_{st}$	-1.0	1.4	-1.4	0.8	5.712	.126

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

b. Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$

### *Reasons for Visiting Favourite Beach*

Visitors were asked for their reason/s for visiting their favourite beach. This question gave insight into the affective (motive) component of the image. It also enabled further investigation of the image through comparison with other aspects of the image such as descriptions, feelings, likes, and activities. Respondents in this open-ended question gave an extensive list of reasons. For ease of analysis, this was grouped and categorised into dimensions of similar types reasons, on the basis of word similarities. The most frequent responses in each dimension for reasons for visiting their favourite beach are displayed in Table 30.

The most remarkable outcomes from responses for this question are the low responses to two of the traditional beach activities. Swimming (13.3%) and sunbathing (9.6%) did not record very high responses. Instead, the reason for visiting the beach that had the highest frequency was relaxation. More than half of the respondents (50.1%) visited their favourite beach specifically to relax, and a further 9.8% to de-stress/unwind and 7.2% for peace and quiet. Other obvious reasons for visiting their favourite beach, namely for a holiday (13.9%) and to escape/get away (10.2%) were also revealed in the data. Overall, the diversity in these results suggests that there are more reasons to visit the beach than the traditional holiday activities such as sunbathing (sun and sand) and swimming (sea and surf). Some of the more diverse reasons are socialising, enjoying the landscape/vista and interacting with nature.

**Table 30: Most Frequent Reasons for Visiting Favourite Beach (n=480)**

Dimensions	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage of Cases
<b>Relaxation</b>	Relax/relaxing days/completely relax	230	50.1
	Chill out/de-stress/rest/unwind	45	9.8
	Peace & quiet/peace/silence/tranquility	33	7.2
<b>Water Activities</b>	Swimming	61	13.3
	Snorkel/dive	27	5.9
	Surfing/body boarding	17	3.7
	Water sports - various (including fishing)	12	2.6
<b>Land Activities</b>	Sunbathing/lay on beach	44	9.6
	Quiet activities - sit/sleep/drawing/photography/listen to music/collect shells/think	13	2.8
	Walking/walk dog/long walks	12	2.6
	Read	12	2.6
	Camp/campfire/bbq/picnic	13	2.8
	Doing sports/playing games/training	6	1.3
	<b>Interact with Nature</b>	Feel nature/enjoy nature/natural place/observe nature/breathe fresh air	25
	Other interactions with nature	10	2.2
<b>Landscape/Vista</b>	Take in natural beauty/ beauty/beautiful/simple stunning/enjoy beauty/ nice view/experience natural beauty	37	8.1
<b>Natural Features</b>	Water/ocean - colour, clarity, warm/cool, sounds	10	2.2
	Natural landscape - mountains, rivers, rocks, sand, sand dunes	10	2.2
<b>Holiday</b>	Holiday/vacation/holiday resort/resort	64	13.9
	A little recreation/recreation/day out	23	5.0
<b>Social</b>	Fun/enjoyment/pleasure/friendly	22	4.8
	Family outings/enjoy multi-generational family fun together/time with family/somewhere for children	21	4.6
	Catch up with friends/socialise	23	5.0
	Sheer delight/ enjoyment	16	3.5
<b>Escape-Spiritual</b>	Get away/escapism/time to myself...	47	10.2
	Contemplate future/reflection on life/replenishment of soul/get healing/enrich feelings/relax spirit	17	3.7
	Escape - other	5	1.1
<b>Remoteness</b>	Unpopulated/nobody there/secludes/not too crowded/get away from crowds	16	3.5
<b>Weather</b>	Sun/warm sunshine/summer	9	2.0
<b>Atmosphere</b>	Atmosphere/atmosphere is relaxed/well connected	6	1.3
<b>Other Reasons</b>	Other reasons	36	7.8

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

b. Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$

The reasons for visiting their favourite beach were cross-tabulated with the four culture groups and a Pearson chi square was calculated for each reason listed. The results show, in Table 31, that there were significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) found in only a few reasons why the culture groups would visit their favourite beach. The Asian culture group had less than expected responses for relax ( $R_{st} = -2.6$ ), swimming ( $R_{st} = -2.8$ ), snorkel/dive ( $R_{st} = -2.7$ ), and sunbathing ( $R_{st} = -2.8$ ). It appears, therefore that this culture group does not visit the beach for the traditional reasons of sun, sea and sand. Conversely, the European culture group had higher than expected responses for relax ( $R_{st} = 2.0$ ), snorkel/dive ( $R_{st} = 2.4$ ), and feel/enjoy/observe nature ( $R_{st} = 2.3$ ), and the United Kingdom culture group had higher than expected responses for sunbathing ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ).

**Table 31: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of Culture Groups & Reasons for Visiting Favourite Beach (n=480)**

Dimensions	Reasons	Frequencies - Observed and Expected & Standardised Residuals <sup>a</sup>				Pearson Chi Square	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	
		North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe			
<b>Relaxation</b>	Relax	f <sub>o</sub>	36.0	80.0	40.0	72.0	25.256	<b>.000</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	42.3	68.9	59.9	57.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-1.0	1.3	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>		
	Chill out /de-stress/unwind	f <sub>o</sub>	4.0	15.0	18.0	8.0	7.268	<b>.064</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	8.3	13.6	11.8	11.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-1.5	0.4	1.8	-1.0		
	Peace/silence/ tranquillity	f <sub>o</sub>	8.0	11.0	8.0	6.0	1.449	<b>.694</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	6.1	10.0	8.7	8.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.8	0.3	-0.2	-0.8		
<b>Water Activities</b>	Swimming	f <sub>o</sub>	17.0	17.0	5.0	22.0	15.504	<b>.001</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	11.3	18.4	16.0	15.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	1.7	-0.3	<b>-2.8</b>	1.7		
	Snorkel/dive	f <sub>o</sub>	7.0	7.0	0.0	13.0	14.657	<b>.002</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	5.0	8.2	7.1	6.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.9	-0.4	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>		
<b>Land Activities</b>	Sunbathing/ lay on beach	f <sub>o</sub>	8.0	21.0	2.0	13.0	14.018	<b>.003</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	8.2	13.3	11.5	11.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-0.1	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	0.6		
<b>Interact with Nature</b>	Feel nature/ enjoy nature/ observe nature	f <sub>o</sub>	1.0	3.0	9.0	12.0	12.438	<b>.006</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.6	7.6	6.1	6.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-1.7	-1.7	1.0	<b>2.3</b>		
<b>Landscape – Vista</b>	Take in natural beauty/ beauty/ enjoy beauty	f <sub>o</sub>	9.0	11.0	6.0	11.0	2.622	<b>.454</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	6.9	11.2	9.7	9.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.8	-0.1	-1.2	0.6		
<b>Holiday</b>	Holiday/ vacation/ holiday resort	f <sub>o</sub>	13.0	13.0	18.0	19.0	3.292	<b>.349</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	11.7	19.0	16.5	15.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.4	-1.4	0.4	0.8		
	Recreation/ a little recreation/ day out	f <sub>o</sub>	4.0	3.0	9.0	7.0	4.186	<b>.242</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.3	6.9	6.0	5.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-0.1	-1.5	1.2	0.5		
<b>Social</b>	Fun/ enjoyment/ pleasure/ friendly	f <sub>o</sub>	6.0	8.0	3.0	5.0	2.682	<b>.443</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.1	6.6	5.8	5.5		
		R <sub>st</sub>	1.0	0.5	-1.2	-0.2		
	Family outings/ enjoy...family fun together/ time with family	f <sub>o</sub>	6.0	7.0	7.0	1.0	5.280	<b>.152</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	3.9	6.3	5.5	5.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	1.1	0.3	0.6	-1.9		
	Catch up with friends/ socialise	f <sub>o</sub>	6.0	6.0	8.0	3.0	2.929	<b>.403</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.3	6.9	6.0	5.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.8	-0.4	0.8	-1.1		
<b>Escape – Spiritual</b>	Get away/ escapism/ time to myself...	f <sub>o</sub>	8.0	18.0	11.0	10.0	1.643	<b>.650</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	8.7	14.2	12.3	11.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-0.2	1.0	-0.4	-0.5		
<b>Other Reasons</b>	Other reasons	f <sub>o</sub>	5.0	12.0	8.0	6.0	1.322	<b>.724</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	5.7	9.4	8.1	7.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	-0.3	0.9	0.0	-0.6		

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

b. Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$

### *Activities at Favourite Beach*

A wide range of activities were conducted by respondents at their favourite beach. Analysis revealed several dimensions of activities that were categorised as “inactive land-based”, “active land-based”, “water-based”, “traditional”, and “other”. Of these, the activities grouped under “traditional” deserve further explanation. Firstly, this dimension was so-named for the types of activities that have a long-established history with the beach. The “traditional” activities include gazing, ‘ye olde beach’, meditation, and romantic-exotic. “Gazing” represents individual responses that include watching sea, observe, observe nature, sit and admire, people-watch, sightsee, and view sunrise/sunset. “Child’s Play/Exploration” includes the traditional sea and sand beach activities of shell collecting, building sandcastles, beachcombing, jumping waves and inspecting rock pools. “Meditation” represents activities such as daydreaming, thinking, yoga, writing in journal, and massage. “Romantic-exotic” refers to activities such as “naked swimming, nude sports, kissing, sex, chatting up women/men and getting close to loved ones”.

The most popular activities visitors would do at their favourite beach were swimming (66.7%) and sunbaking (38.4%) as shown in Table 32. This is consistent with the “sun, sea, sand” image of the beach. There are, however, other sedentary but typical beach activities, such as reading (23.3%), relaxing (19.2%), eating/drinking (20.7%), and lazing/napping (22.5%) that also had high responses. This is a reflection of the reasons that respondents gave for visiting their favourite beach (see Table 29). Recreational activities such as playing ball



sports (17.1%), walking (16.4%), exercise/recreation (12.7%) were also popular responses for land-based activities conducted at visitors' favourite beaches. The 'traditional' dimension of activities, although not representing high numbers of respondents, indicate that the age-old pastimes carried on at beaches all over the world, are still actively pursued at today's beaches.

Of interest was the mention of surfing (13.2%) and snorkelling/diving (29.2%) that are activities that do not usually occur at all beaches, but mainly where there is surf or coral reefs (respectively). The descriptions and sketch maps of each of the respondents indicating these two activities were inspected for evidence of connectivity. Of the respondents who described surf in both their sketches and descriptions, 61.1% included surfing as an activity. Similarly, of the respondents who described corals/reef, 86.7% mentioned snorkelling/diving as an activity. This connection is an indication of the existence of a tourist sub-culture that is characterised by these activities.

**Table 32: Most Frequent Responses for Activities at Favourite Beach (n=480)**

Dimensions	Activity	Frequency	Percentage of cases
<b>Inactive land-based</b>	Reading	108	23.3
	Lazing/nap	104	22.5
	Eating/drinking	96	20.7
	Relaxing	89	19.2
<b>Active land-based</b>	Sun/sunbathing	178	38.4
	Play ball sports	79	17.1
	Beach walking	76	16.4
	Exercising/recreational exercise	59	12.7
	Exploring/trek/wandering	23	5.0
<b>Water-based</b>	Swimming	309	66.7
	Diving/snorkeling	135	29.2
	Surfing	61	13.2
	Water sports	31	6.7
	Boating	27	5.8
	Fishing	22	4.8
<b>Traditional</b>	“Gazing”	35	7.6
	“Child’s play/exploration”	30	6.5
	Socialising	24	5.2
	“Fun”	17	3.7
	Meditation	12	2.6
	Romantic-exotic	11	2.4

Cross-tabulation and Pearson chi square calculations displayed in Table 33, revealed that there were many differences in activities undertaken by visitors at their favourite beaches. The significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) indicate that some activities are engaged in more by certain culture groups than others. The North American culture group had higher than expected numbers participating in exercise/recreation ( $R_{st} = 3.8$ ), exploration/trekking ( $R_{st} = 1.9$ ), surfing ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ) and “child’s play/exploration” ( $R_{st} = 2.4$ ) activities and less diving/snorkelling ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ) at the beach. Sunbathing ( $R_{st} = 2.3$ ) and ball sports ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ) had higher than expected responses in the United Kingdom group. The European culture group showed more participating in reading ( $R_{st} = 2.1$ ), relaxing ( $R_{st} = 1.9$ ), and diving

/snorkelling ( $R_{st} = 3.3$ ), but less using the beach for exercise/recreation ( $R_{st} = -2.2$ ). The Asian culture group were the highest contributors for significant differences in activities. This culture group was less likely to participate in reading ( $R_{st} = -3.6$ ), relaxing ( $R_{st} = -2.8$ ), ball sports ( $R_{st} = -2.8$ ), exploration/trekking ( $R_{st} = 2.0$ ), diving/snorkelling ( $R_{st} = -1.9$ ), and surfing ( $R_{st} = -2.0$ ).

**Table 33: Cross-tabulation & Chi Square of Culture Groups & Activities (n=480)**

Dimensions	Activities	Frequencies - Observed and Expected & Standardised Residuals <sup>a.</sup>					Pearson Chi Square	Sig. <sup>b.</sup>
			North America	United Kingdom	Asia	Europe		
Inactive land-based	Reading	f <sub>o</sub>	21.0	40.0	9.0	38.0	25.036	<b>.000</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	20.0	32.6	28.4	27.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.2	1.3	<b>-3.6</b>	<b>2.1</b>		
	Laze/ nap	f <sub>o</sub>	23.0	23.0	34.0	20.0	7.680	.053
		f <sub>e</sub>	18.5	30.2	26.3	25.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	1.0	-1.3	1.5	-1.0		
	Eat/ drink	f <sub>o</sub>	19.0	29.0	21.0	16	3.002	.391
		f <sub>e</sub>	15.8	25.7	22.3	21.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	0.8	0.7	-0.3	-1.1		
	Relaxing	f <sub>o</sub>	24.0	24.0	10.0	31.0	18.169	<b>.000</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	16.5	26.9	23.4	22.3		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>		
Active land-based	Sunbathing	f <sub>o</sub>	31.0	71.0	38.0	38.0	13.066	<b>.004</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	33.0	53.8	46.7	44.5		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>-1.3</b>	<b>-1.0</b>		
	Ball sports	f <sub>o</sub>	12.0	34.0	8.0	25.0	16.761	<b>.001</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	14.6	23.9	20.7	19.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>		
	Walk	f <sub>o</sub>	12.0	28.0	15.0	21.0	3.394	.335
		f <sub>e</sub>	14.1	23.0	20.0	19.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
	Exercise/ recreation	f <sub>o</sub>	21.0	18.0	7.0	5.0	24.397	<b>.000</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	9.5	15.4	13.4	12.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-2.2</b>		
Explore/ trek	f <sub>o</sub>	8.0	7.0	1.0	6.0	8.155	<b>.043</b>	
	f <sub>e</sub>	4.1	6.6	5.8	5.5			
	R <sub>st</sub>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>			
Water-based	Swimming	f <sub>o</sub>	57.0	98.0	70.0	77.0	4.410	.220
		f <sub>e</sub>	56.0	91.2	79.3	75.5		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>		
	Dive/ snorkel	f <sub>o</sub>	14.0	44.0	24.0	53.0	27.529	<b>.000</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	25.0	40.8	35.4	33.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-2.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>		
	Surfing	f <sub>o</sub>	18.0	15.0	8.0	19.0	11.049	<b>.011</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	11.1	18.1	15.8	15.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>		
	Water sports	f <sub>o</sub>	7.0	15.0	5.0	4.0	7.150	.067
		f <sub>e</sub>	5.7	9.4	8.1	7.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	<b>-1.3</b>		
Boating	f <sub>o</sub>	4.0	13.0	2.0	7.0	7.359	.061	
	f <sub>e</sub>	4.8	7.9	6.8	6.5			
	R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>			
Fishing	f <sub>o</sub>	6.0	6.0	8.0	2.0	4.246	.236	
	f <sub>e</sub>	4.1	6.6	5.8	5.5			
	R <sub>st</sub>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>-1.5</b>			
Traditional	Gazing	f <sub>o</sub>	7.0	5.0	15.0	8.0	7.248	.064
		f <sub>e</sub>	6.5	10.6	9.2	8.8		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>-0.3</b>		
	"Ye olde beach"	f <sub>o</sub>	10.0	8.0	6.0	2.0	9.285	<b>.026</b>
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.8	7.9	6.8	6.5		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-1.8</b>		
	Socialise	f <sub>o</sub>	3.0	7.0	9.0	5.0	1.900	.593
		f <sub>e</sub>	4.5*	7.3	6.3	6.0		
		R <sub>st</sub>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-0.4</b>		

a. 0 cells have expected count less than 5 unless indicated with an asterisk (\*). Significance level  $p = 0.05$ ;  $df = 3$

### *Other Beach Visitation Characteristics*

The beach has been identified as a highly social place in the literature review. It is therefore expected that visitors will experience their favourite beach with other people. The reasons for visiting the favourite beach included social aspects such as enjoying time with friends and/or family, socialising with other people and having fun. The results for people respondents visited their favourite beach with, strongly support this social nature. The majority (85.7%) of visitors stated they would visit their favourite beach with others and a further 11.1% said they would visit both alone and with others. Joining them on the beach are their husband/wife or girlfriend/boyfriend or partner (37.4%), friends (29.2%), children (14.2%) and other family (14.2%). The beach is, therefore, for all culture groups, an experienced shared with friends and family. This is a tradition that has been associated with beach visitation for many decades and represents the type of social interaction that occurs at the beach. The majority of visitors said they would recommend their favourite beach to other people (92.9%), namely friends (43.2%), family (37.3%) and other tourists (16.6%). Again, this reveals the social nature of the beach.

Visitors were also asked what changes they would most and least like to occur at their favourite beach. Changes reveal attachment and values relating to particular attributes of beaches. The list of changes that visitors suggested was varied, and the only significantly high responses were for “less people” (11.3%) and cleaning up rubbish/garbage (10.0%). Alternatively, the changes visitors

would least like to occur, revealed some high responses for certain changes. In particular, various levels and types of construction/development (44.0%), more people/crowds (27.1%), tourism development/commercialisation (23.6%) and pollution/environmental degradation (17.7%) scored the highest frequencies. All of these factors of change are directly comparable to the most desirable attributes of visitors' favourite beaches. That is, visitors described and liked most the lack of people, low levels of development and unpolluted attributes of their favourite beaches as described in the previous sections.

## **4.4 Discussion**

This study closely examined the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics that are the key structural components of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework. This study set out to both advance on and complement research that was conducted in the first study on beach images using mental maps. The aims of this study reflected the characteristics of the framework, as well as augmenting other aspects of beach images including influencing factors and cross-cultural relationships. The following sections discuss the outcomes of this study in relation to the Beach Images Conceptual Framework.

### **4.4.1 Cognitive, Affective & Conative Characteristics**

The first aim of this study was to identify the key cognitive, affective and conative characteristics of tourist beach images as defined by the Beach Images Conceptual Framework. The study found, as Gartner (1996) suggested, that these components of images are indeed distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated. The beach tourism questionnaire items revealed these characteristics in the different types of beaches, the levels of importance placed on visitation to the beaches, information sources, descriptions, what visitors liked the most, their reasons for visiting the beach and changes or improvements in visitors' favourite beaches.

The cognitive characteristics, representing an intellectual evaluation, understanding and memories were shown to be strong in all of the tourists' beach images. The first and most compelling evidence of this was found in respondents' selection of beaches that they identified as their favourite or ideal beach. The overwhelming majority of visitors chose to provide information about an existing beach; more so, it was a beach that they considered to be important to visit. As such, these results represented a strong initial evaluation of a beach. Further cognitive characteristics of beach images were reflected in, and directly related to, the other responses about their beach images.

The affective and conative characteristics were integral to the development of images (Downs & Stea, 1973; Gartner, 1996). They represent the feelings, emotions, values, motives and behaviour or actions of the beach visitor. Knowledge gained from affective and conative characteristics is integrated and modified by the individual, giving meaning to the image (Downs & Stea, 1973). Previous image research has examined these components individually (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Dann, 1996; Downs & Stea, 1973; Gartner, 1996). This study of beach images, however, examined the affective and conative characteristics as different, but interrelated components (Gartner, 1996) that also related to the cognitive characteristics. Therefore, in light of this connection, these three characteristics are discussed in combination.



The affective characteristics represent motives, feelings, emotions and values. They were identified mainly in the questions about visitors' reasons and feelings regarding their favourite or ideal beach. The strongest reasons and feelings identified were relaxation, de-stressing, happiness, for holidays and escape. There were many other reasons and feelings that, overall, revealed that the beach is not merely an ideal location for a holiday, but is a distinctive place where tourists seek out unique rewards. Thus, beaches have affective image components that support Baloglu & Brinberg's (1997) conclusions that tourist destinations have distinctive affective components. In particular, the evidence is provided in the classification of the strongest feelings identified by visitors. Three distinct groups of feelings were identified as – "calm" (relaxed-peaceful, meditative-spiritual and comforted); "excited" – happy, content; "free" – carefree, untroubled. These groups resemble elements of Mehrabian & Russel's (1974) dimensions of destination's affective qualities, that is, people's reactions to environmental settings. For example, the calm and excited groups could be viewed as bipolar elements that are comparable to the "arousing – not arousing" dimension (Russel, 1974). Interestingly, the "free" group does not appear in Mehrabian & Russel's dimensions. This feeling could represent an aspect of the "pleasant - unpleasant" dimension, however, since the "free" feelings can be thought of as pleasant. Consequently, the results of the feeling characteristics in view of the image that they are relating to, that is, a favourite or ideal beach, suggest exactly what Mehrabian & Russel have found in their studies – that individuals tend to favour more pleasant environments – in this case, it is their ideal beach.

Further support of the strength of these feelings in beach images is the evidence of feelings in the reasons that visitors listed for going to their beach. The strongest reasons for being at the beach were to relax, de-stress/unwind and for peace and quiet. Interestingly, while happiness/contentment did not appear as a reason for visiting the beach, it did show in the feelings. This is an indication that there are feelings derived from the actual experience of the beach that are perhaps not necessarily associated to the motive or reason for visiting the beach. This is consistent with the Gunn (1988) and Gartner's (1996) image formation variables, wherein actual visitation to a tourist destination produces different image characteristics than those of prior or later images that a visitor holds of that same destination.

Feelings and motives, however, are not the only affective characteristics in beach images. Values play a strong role in images as they are used in people's orientation with the environment (Altman & Chemers, 1980), and they show *what* is important and *how* it is important to people (Hofstede, 2001). The most significant evidence of values in tourist beach images was delivered within the methodology of the study. By asking tourists to sketch and discuss their favourite or ideal beach, they were in effect, evaluating all beaches and responding to only the one they valued the most. This provided a foundation for examining what they valued about beaches in greater detail. The beaches they elected to discuss were predominantly nature-based. The most desirable aspects of their beaches were the natural physical characteristics such as flora, fauna, topography and water. Additionally, the lack of cultural characteristics, namely, little or no construction or

development, cleanliness and uncrowded were highly valued. Equally, these were the qualities that the visitors did not want changed at their favourite beach. This was revealed in the contrasting question asking what they least liked to see occur at their favourite beach. The results showed significant responses for least liking different levels and types of construction/development to occur, more people or crowds, tourism development or commercialisation and pollution or environmental degradation. Similar results were found in previous beach visitor research (Morgan, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998) whose findings on English beaches demonstrated beach visitors had a strong preference to maintain the 'status quo' of the English beaches. The present research found the same preference, regardless of place of origin.

The conative characteristics, representing behaviours or actions that are part of the beach image, were found in visitors' descriptions, activities, changes or improvements and recommendations to other people. The beach is indeed a location that reflects many and varied behaviours. At their favourite beach, tourists participated in activities that were either active or passive, on land or in the water. Some activities related directly to the type of beach and the attributes available at that beach. For example, surfing and snorkelling/diving (on reefs) are activities synonymous with attributes of surf and reefs/corals, respectively. Additionally, differences were found in culture group's activities at the beach.

#### 4.4.2 Attributes of Nature & Culture

The second aim of this study was to describe the attributes of nature and culture in tourist beach images. These attributes were primarily measured in one question asking visitors to describe their favourite or ideal beach. Similar to the mental maps, the questionnaire revealed many more attributes than those identified in previous research of beaches (such as Burton, 1995; Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a; 1999b.) In particular, the intangible attributes could be examined in the written descriptions of visitors' favourite beaches.

The most significant attributes of nature were represented by descriptions of beaches. The dimensions of flora, fauna, geological and water features dominated the beach images. While these are common attributes found at many beach locations, there were variations found in these attributes. Merely the presence or absence of these attributes was not the only factor perceived in beach images. There were variations in colours, textures, spatial dimensions and climatic conditions that produced equally varied images of beaches. Although the elements of culture, such as buildings, furniture, and other structures, as identified by Fisk (1989), were found in the beach images, they were not as strong as he suggests they are at beaches. The natural attributes dominated even the images of beaches that were of constructed beaches. This is not to say that only the nature-based beaches dominated as visitors' ideal beaches, but the natural

attributes were significantly more evident, even in beaches that included culture attributes.

A somewhat unexpected result was that feelings and emotions were the most prominent attributes of culture in the beach image descriptions. There was a distinct theme of relaxation, peace, isolation and cleanliness in the beach images. This result, if viewed in context with the dominance of nature attributes and the small percentages of physical structures (e.g. resorts, hotels, shops), suggests that these beach images do not reflect the typical culture attributes as described in Fisk's (1989) beach definition. The attributes of culture resonate the types of beaches that are not highly constructed or popular beach tourism destinations. Moreover, the lack of people is another attribute of culture that at first appears contrary to what Beattie (1981) suggests, that in absence of people, the beach is merely piece of coast. According to the images of these visitors, beaches with few or no people appear to be the ideal places to visit. Perhaps it is the 'image' of the absence of people that prevails in this circumstance, more so than the actual lack of people at the beach. A possible explanation for this finding, however, may be found by delving into the social representations of these characteristics of beach images.

The key characteristics found in these beach images included the lack of people, the feelings and emotions as the most likable characteristics and the dominance of natural attributes such as palms, white sand, and clear, blue water. This combination of dominant characteristics supports the 'picturesque' and

'paradise' image in the social representation of the beach. The term used in 2.1.6 (Social Representations), for this type of beach is 'paradise – primitive". This image of the beach is created from the iconic qualities of the beach where nature is portrayed in its purest forms and where people are happy and free (Eliade, 1969; as cited in Cohen, 1982b, p. 11). This social representation of the beach has proven to be not only dominant, but persistent in beach tourism throughout the ages and across cultures (Cohen, 1982b; Feifer, 1986; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Passariello, 1983; Patullo, 1996; Wang, 2000). While this image of the beach is clearly evident in the results of the overall attributes of nature and culture, variations of this image, in terms of its social representation were found in the different culture groups results.

#### **4.4.3 Cross-cultural Characteristics**

It was the third aim of this study to capture the cross-cultural characteristics of beach images. Culture, summarized as behaviours, beliefs, customs, cognitions, feelings shared by groups of people, that are evident as values, symbols, rituals, and heroes, and is represented in objects and the environment (Altman & Chemers, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963; Tylor, 1872 (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963) and in the images of beaches. The presence of culture varied according to the relationship between the culture and the experience with physical elements of the beach.

Visiting beaches was considered more or less important to different culture groups. Although the overall image of beaches showed a dominance of certain attributes, as discussed in the previous section, each culture group displayed inclinations towards particular attributes, feelings, motives and activities relating to their favourite beaches. For example, the European culture group liked the remote/seclusion, peaceful/quiet, felt more carefree/untroubled and visited their beach for diving/snorkelling, lazing/napping. The United Kingdom group preferred beaches with basic facilities, a place to 'get away' and enjoy relaxing, and recreational activities. The North American group was more likely to visit their beach for exercise/recreation, exploring/trekking and surfing. The Asian group showed high preferences for picturesque/scenic, blue ocean, and cleanliness attributes, and visited the beach largely to chill out/de-stress and contemplate the future/reflection of life/replenishment of the soul. The evidence of similarities and differences in culture groups suggest that indeed culture is an important element that distinguishes beach images.

This study has shown that all of the characteristics in the Beach Images Conceptual Framework not only exist, but also contribute the structure of images on different levels. Each characteristic plays a specific role in beach images and relates to the other characteristics in an integrated and complex pattern. The influencing factors also contribute to the image, particularly in strengthening the image when information sources, time and distance relating to the beach are found in vast proportions. The elements of nature and culture are applicable to beach images and are useful for categorising the dimensions of beach image attributes.

Culture, in terms of both nationality and individual characteristics is an important variable in beach images. The variations shown in this study, based on culture, reflect the unique and equally complex qualities of beach images. Consequently, beach images are created by a combination of natural and cultural attributes.

#### **4.4.4 Comparison: Mental Maps & Questionnaire**

The two visitor studies presented in this and the previous chapter were structured so as to allow comparison of the data. Briefly, tourists from four different culture groups were asked to consider their favourite and/or ideal beach, then sketch this beach using as much detail as possible. This exercise was followed by a questionnaire that primarily asked the same respondent to describe this same beach, in greater detail. The responses to both of these exercises were categorised and examined using the same analysis methods so as to facilitate comparison of the data.

The results from the sketch maps provided detailed spatial organization with a focus on the physical characteristics of the beach image. Beach zones and shapes were readily identifiable in the sketch maps. These served as foundations for placing other physical characteristics in context so as to create the overall beach image. Intricate details of these physical characteristics, however, were not readily distinguishable in the sketch maps. For example, the colour and texture of the sand, the colour of the water, the length and width of the beach, and other



particulars of the physical characteristics could not be seen in the sketch maps. Therefore, analysis of these beach image characteristics could only present particular physical characteristics, without specifications.

Conversely, the questionnaire presented less spatial characteristics but more descriptive elements. These included the cognitive, affective and conative characteristics and factors influencing beach images. The physical attributes of beach images were described with details of each attribute. For example, sand was specified by colour, texture, and spatial dimensions; similarly, water, the sky, and other features of the landscape were expressed using colours, textures and dimensions. Therefore, not only were more physical attributes identified, but also more intricate information regarding these attributes existed in the questionnaire. This observation, however, does not diminish the fact that all of the beach images sketched and described by tourists had similar spatial organization, and included sand, sea, flora, fauna and constructed features endemic to coastal beaches. The key differences lay in the variations of these attributes found in the different culture groups image characteristics.

The most significant and comparable responses were the attributes of nature and culture supplied by both the visitors' cognitive maps and the questionnaire items. The dominant attributes were relatively similar, with only a few exceptions. Since the written descriptions provided an opportunity for visitors to be more expressive about their images, two new dimensions of attributes were found in the descriptions that did not appear in the beach sketches. These were

landscape-scenery (nature attribute) and feelings-emotions (culture attribute). Interestingly, these were attributes that were not idiosyncratic, but substantial elements of beach images as evidenced by the higher frequency of responses. These results support Echtner & Ritchie's image conceptual framework, suggesting that an important part of image measurement is the ability to capture emotional thoughts (Echtner & Ritchie 1991). This is an element of images that has often been underestimated or completely omitted from image measurement techniques.

#### **4.4.5 Evaluation of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework**

This study set out to complement and enhance the preceding study that utilised mental maps to examine primarily the physical characteristics images. These were the first characteristics in the Beach Images Conceptual Framework. The present study aimed to identify, describe and examine the remaining key characteristics of the framework. These included the cognitive, affective, and conative characteristics, and influencing characteristics, namely information, time and distance. Initially, beach images were found to be created by the process of perception and cognition (evaluation, understanding and memories) of the physical characteristics of the beach (attributes of nature and culture). These were strengthened by the affective (feelings, emotions, values, motives) and conative (behaviours and actions) characteristics, and influenced by information, distance

and time. The present research found strong evidence of these elements by asking tourists to sketch and describe their favourite/ideal beach in great detail.

Each of the characteristics in the conceptual framework was readily identifiable in the results of the questionnaire. Tourists' beach images consisted of characteristics that were distinctly different but interrelated, thus supporting Gartner's(1996) destination image formation concept. This combination of image elements also supports the structural framework for destination image research outlined by Gallarza, Saura and Garcia (2002) as described in Section 2.2.4.

Consequently, the combination of measurement techniques structured on the basis of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework reveals a number of key advancements on the study of tourists' beach images. Firstly, it has shown that the with some innovation, image measurement techniques may be combined to measure the key elements of images. In particular, the "more holistic and unique components", as described by Echtner & Ritchie (1991, p.10) are more evident when utilising unstructured questions and cognitive mapping. It is also productive to measure the images that individuals have of particular destinations, but this may be mediated by the level of subjectivity found in cognitive mapping (Walmsley, 1992; Young, 1999). Traditional responses to decreasing subjectivity have been to focus on measurement techniques using attribute rating scales, semantic differential scaling and/or multidimensional scaling, that are usually generated by the researcher (Dann, 1996). The present research indicates that these attributes may also be studied in detail if resulting from the tourist themselves. Moreover, unstructured questions and cognitive mapping enrich the ability to capture the

attributes of tourists' images and enable a broader level of evaluation of image characteristics.

The research so far, has measured the images that tourists from different cultures have of beaches. An aspect of images, however, that has often been overlooked in previous image research, is that of the manager and marketer. Considering that images play a strong role in tourists' preferences for holiday destinations (Baloglu, 1999; Gartner, 1996; Goodall, 1988; Gunn, 1988; Um & Crompton, 1999), and that images of tourist destinations are often manipulated to achieve the desired results (Ashworth, 1991; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000), it is important as well as necessary to understand and measure the images of beaches from this perspective. Consequently, the third and final study of the images of beaches is from that perspective of the manager.

## CHAPTER 5

### BEACH IMAGES: MANAGEMENT



*(Source: Fay Falco-Mammone, 2003)*

*... the virtues of the region's beaches will remain the same given proper management...a key benefit for the region will not be lost (Beach Management Organisation – Queensland, Australia)*

## **5.1 Introduction**

The research so far has investigated measurement of beach images and tested the components of the Beach Image Conceptual Framework (Chapters 3 & 4). These studies have also examined the images of beaches from a cross-cultural tourist perspective. It is the management of beach images, however, that is of particular significance to, not only those involved in developing these images, but to the understanding of the future of beach images. Consequently, this chapter focuses on the management of beach images in today's tourism industry and investigates elements that may influence the future of beach images.

## **5.2 Structure of the Research**

### **5.2.1 Background of the Study**

The present study has been structured on the basis of the literature reviewed and in light of the previous two studies. This study's focus is on beach image management. The study deals primarily with beach images from a beach tourism destination manager's perspective as opposed to a visitors' perspective. This was considered as being appropriate in order to maintain a balanced approach to the overall study of beach images. The aims and research design for

this study reflect similar components to the previous studies to enable comparison of the data.

### **5.2.2 Aims of the Study**

The third study focuses on the management of beach images. Therefore, the aims of this study are to:

1. Identify the dominant natural and cultural attributes of beach tourism destination managers,
2. Assess the level of importance placed on natural and cultural attributes of beach images by beach tourism destination managers, and
3. Identify the key issues influencing beach images recognised by beach tourism destination managers.

### **5.2.2 Research Design & Procedure**

A self-administered questionnaire was designed for this study (see the Beach Tourism Destination Survey in Appendix D). The aim of the questionnaire was to gather information from beach tourism destination managers and marketing agencies on their images of beaches and issues relating to these images. Due to time and budget limitations, the questionnaire method was considered the

simplest, least time consuming and most cost-effective method of gathering the necessary information. The structure of the research dictated that similar variables be used in the questionnaire as for the previous studies, so as to facilitate comparison of results. The first question asked the respondents to indicate what type of beach they thought best described their beach tourism destination. The types ranged from remote beach to constructed beach and artificial beach.

Subsequent questions asked respondents to indicate the level of importance they placed on the natural and culture features of the beach that they felt made their beach tourism destination attractive to international visitors. The natural and cultural variables represented only the main attributes established by visitors' mental maps and questionnaire results. These were rated on a 5 point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = Very Important to 5 = Very Unimportant. Additionally, the rating scale included a 6 = Does not apply to this beach, since not all of the beach tourism destinations contained all of the attributes. For example, Surfers Paradise is not located within rainforest, nor is the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, since it is an artificial beach, therefore rainforests would not be a natural attribute considered by respondents for these locations.

The beach tourism destination questionnaire also asked respondents to consider issues and problems relating to their destination. The beach image issues were drawn from those identified in the results of visitors' questionnaires. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which these issues and



problems identified with their beach tourism destination. A four-point scale was used that presented the following options:

1 = Minor Problem – does not occur frequently, or exists, but is easily managed

2 = Major Problem – occurs frequently, or exists, but is difficult to manage

3 = Potential Problem – may become a problem in the future, or is currently minor, but may become major in the future

4 = Not an Issue or Problem at all

Two additional questions were asked in the questionnaire. Beach tourism destination managers and marketing agencies were asked to describe what they thought were the three best features of their beach tourism destination, and it would be like in 5 to 10 years time. These questions assisted in gauging the images of their beach tourism destination.

For ethical reasons, the questionnaire was structured for voluntary self-completion and to maintain anonymity of the individual completing it. Additionally, for ethical reasons, there was no prior solicitation of respondents or contact with the agency individuals during the study. The type of beach, location and management agency were recorded, however, for the purpose of using the results in case studies and analysing management of beach images at specific destinations.

### 5.2.3 Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of beach tourism destination management and marketing organizations representing five Australian beach tourism destinations. These were selected on the basis of four deciding factors. Firstly, most of these locations were the main Australian beach tourism destinations that were sketched and discussed by significant groups of respondents in the first two studies. These included Lake McKenzie on Fraser Island (lake beach), Whitehaven Beach at Whitsundays (remote beach), the Gold Coast (constructed beach) and Port Douglas, North Queensland (low-construction beach). The only type of beach not described by tourists in the previous studies was an artificial beach. It was considered, however, it would be equally important to include artificial beaches in the present study, In order to examine all of the beach types. Therefore, the Esplanade Lagoon in Cairns was included in this study. Secondly, the sketched Australian beaches are considered as being the most highly sought after beach tourism destinations in Queensland. This makes them appropriate locations to focus on the management of beach images. Thirdly, each of these destinations has major organizations that are responsible for managing and marketing the locations. The local city council is usually responsible for all aspects of managing the attributes of the destination, and the regional, statutory tourism bureau is responsible for marketing the destination. Therefore, these organizations at each destination were selected as respondents to the questionnaire. Finally, due to time and budget limitations, the use of regional and local beach tourism

destinations allowed access to more detailed information than would be found for international beach tourism destinations.

In order to fully appreciate beach tourism destination's images, marketing information and strategies were gathered for each destination. This is presented in this section as descriptions of each beach location, focusing on their appeal as beach tourism destinations and describes key characteristics of their images. Tourist information is presented for each destination. This information is provided by the Government based major tourism organization, Sunlover Holidays, who are responsible for marketing the case study destinations. Sunlover Holidays is a commercial division of Tourism Queensland and is the largest and only wholesaler specialising in Queensland holiday destinations ([http:// www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/about.htm](http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/about.htm)). The Current international visitor characteristics, management plans and practices are also discussed in view of beach images. Literature on other image studies that may have been conducted on these locations is also reviewed for each study location.

## **5.3 Beach Tourism Destinations**

### **5.3.1 Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast**

Surfers Paradise is a significant beach tourism destination located on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia. The beach was named in early 1900's prior to any major development, because of its long white sandy beach and surf that was seen to attract surfers. Since then, Surfers Paradise has developed into major international tourist destination with the many seaside resorts, high-rise holiday apartments, shops, bars and restaurants, theme parks and other attractions. The main international visitor markets for the Gold Coast as a regions, and Surfers Paradise, are Asia (Japan, Taiwan, Korea and China), New Zealand, and United Kingdom, and increasing European and North American markets (Tourism Queensland, 2004 Gold Coast Regional Summary). The major attractions at Surfers Paradise are the beaches, shopping, bars and restaurants, nightclubs, family entertainment and nearby amusement/theme parks. The beach at Surfers Paradise is central to the image of the region and is used in much of the media and marketing campaigns for the region (see Figure 8). The Sunlover Holidays Gold Coast brochure includes a significant commentary on Surfers Paradise in the section on "Things to See and Do", that includes the beach and nearby attractions.

*“Beach and water activities are a must while visiting the Gold Coast! Walk along the pristine, sandy beaches, splash around in the surf, try catching a fish for dinner, or be adventurous and ride the waves on a jet ski. With 70km of coastline and over 40 sandy beaches, patrolled by surf lifesavers throughout the year, the Gold Coast is the perfect place for you to enjoy some holiday fun and relaxation...*

*...Surfers Paradise is vibrant and buzzing with bars, cafés and restaurants. Surrounding Cavill Avenue you’ll find a range of indoor and outdoor venues, from delightful Mexican and Italian restaurants to informal family bistros. Surfers Paradise has something for everyone, from authentic ethnic BYOs to chic hotel dining. Try Hard Rock Café, corner Cavill Avenue and Surfers Paradise Boulevard; Benihana Japanese Restaurant, Surfers Paradise Marriott; Four Winds at Crowne Plaza Surfers Paradise, Queensland’s only revolving restaurant, 26 storeys above the Gold Coast. Treat the kids to an ice-cream at one of the beachfront parlours” (<http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/brochures/index.asp>).*

This description emphasises firstly the characteristics of the beach, then the activities surrounding the beach that are available for visitors to participate in during their holiday. Similarly, the Queensland Holidays website describes Surfers Paradise with a focus on beach activities and other attributes surrounding the beach:

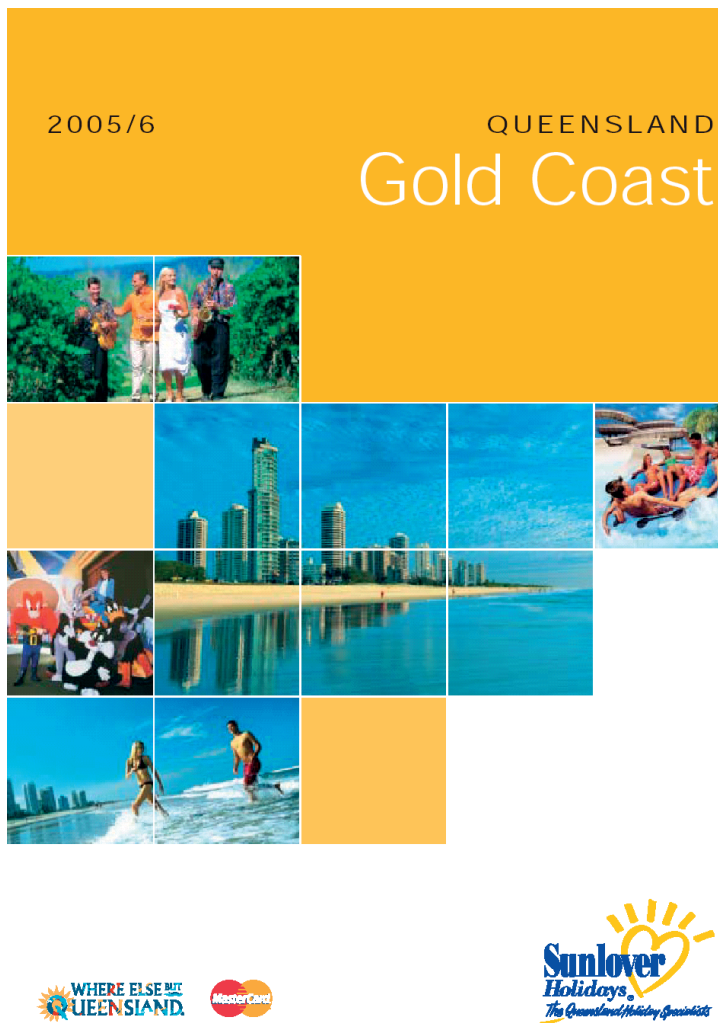
*“Along the busiest stretch of the Coast is Surfers Paradise, a great spot for families with its perfect swimming beach. Free beach volleyball competitions offer fun for all ages, while the nearby cafes and shopping areas make it easy to take a break with an ice cream or a cool drink. The huge Paradise Centre on the main shopping street Cavill Avenue has enough games and rides to keep everyone entertained. Every Friday night a craft market is set up along the beach esplanade where you can find quality handicrafts and gifts”*

*([http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/gold\\_coast/surfers\\_paradise.cfm](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/gold_coast/surfers_paradise.cfm)).*

The overall image of the beach at Surfers Paradise epitomises the four S's – sun, sea, sand and surf. This is reflected on the cover of the tourist brochure for Surfers Paradise as shown in Figure 8. It represents a “constructed beach” where there are many buildings located in the shoreland and coastal backland zones. The beach zone consists of a wide and long stretch of white sand, backed by low dunes that flow into the developed shoreland zone. The shallow ocean zone presents relatively clear water and ideal surfing conditions. Additionally, the region has a warm, pleasant climate all year round.

Surfers Paradise, however, along with the rest of the Gold Coast, is considered a “matured” tourism destination. The region has reached its peak as a

mass tourist destination and is currently undergoing a visioning program (Faulkner, 2003). The Gold Coast Tourism Visioning Project (GCTVP) aims to direct tourism development towards more sustainable environmental, social, economic outcomes, while ensuring satisfaction of its residents and visitors (Faulkner, 2003). The GCTVP has identified that the quality of the beaches are one of the key tourism attributes of the region and has included the re-development of Surfers Paradise in its plans. The marketing of the Gold Coast to the major international visitor markets is also part of the GCTVP strategy. This involves differentiating the Gold Coast as a destination with attributes, particularly beaches, which are attractive to different markets. The strategy suggests emphasising beaches to the Japanese, Korean, English, and German tourist markets (Gold Coast City Council, 2005).



**Figure 8: Sunlover Holidays “Gold Coast” Brochure 2005/2006**

(Source: <http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/brochures/index.asp>)



### 5.3.2 Four Mile Beach, Port Douglas

Four Mile Beach is the main beach adjacent to Port Douglas Township. The beach is aptly named, consisting of a wide stretch of sand that continues along the coastline for four miles. The beach is lined with palm trees and native bushland. Along some of the shoreland zone of this beach, are small resorts and some shops, although the majority are located in the coastal backland zone of the main beach. Other beaches in close proximity to Port Douglas are classed as remote and are largely vegetated by dense tropical rainforests, or semi-remote where small resorts are nestled away from the beach in the rainforest.

The image of Four Mile Beach is reflected as part of the beach resort-style atmosphere of the Port Douglas Township. The Queensland Holidays website describes Port Douglas as follows:

*“From glamorous Four Mile Beach to the wilderness of Dickson Inlet, picturesque Port Douglas has become an international holiday mecca – just 70 kilometres north of Cairns. With nothing taller than a palm tree, development is low-rise, low-key and relaxing. It is regarded as the most popular base from which to explore the northern areas of the reef and rainforest coast of Daintree and Cape Tribulation. Despite its popularity and sophisticated five star accommodations, it retains a close community atmosphere. Sharing the same tropical latitude as Tahiti,*

*Port Douglas still attracts visitors for its old fashioned charm; wide streets shaded by trees and superb holiday attractions. There are more than 100 day tour options which depart Port Douglas daily.”*

([http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/tropical\\_north\\_queensland/port\\_douglas.cfm](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/tropical_north_queensland/port_douglas.cfm))

This description identifies Port Douglas with images of the natural attributes associated with a tropical location, using terms such as “wilderness”, “picturesque”, “reef”, “rainforest”, and “tropical latitude”. Additionally, by including culture attribute terms such as “ development is low rise, low key, and relaxing”, and “sophisticated five star accommodation”, the image is completed for a semi-constructed beach tourism destination. These attributes are consistent with the types of domestic and international visitors the destination attracts, being the more affluent types who seek resort-style beach tourism destinations.

The Sunlover Holidays Tropical North brochure features bird’s eye views of Four Mile Beach within its accommodation guide (see Figure 9). The Sheraton Mirage Resort is the largest resort in Port Douglas and is situated within short walking distance to Four Mile Beach. Consequently, the brochure image of this resort includes Four Mile Beach in an aerial view of the resort (see image on left hand side of Figure 9).

**Sheraton Mirage** From \$366

**Location:** 39-41 Macrossan Street, Port Douglas

**PROPERTY FEATURES:**

- Golf course (18 holes) • Restaurants (3) • Bars (2)
- Pool (3) • Spa • Entertainment program
- Kids Club (0-12 years) • Concierge • Airport
- Gymnasium • 24 hr • Spa • Tennis

**ACCOMMODATION FEATURES:**

- Air conditioning • In-room movies (pay to view)
- Cable TV (flat) • Hair dryer
- In-house laundry facilities
- Room/Villa serviced daily

Room Type	1 Night	2 Nights	3 Nights	4 Nights
1 King (14 sqm)	\$366	\$732	\$1098	\$1464
1 King (16 sqm)	\$396	\$792	\$1188	\$1584
1 King (17 sqm)	\$426	\$852	\$1278	\$1704
1 King (18 sqm)	\$456	\$912	\$1368	\$1824
1 King (19 sqm)	\$486	\$972	\$1458	\$1944
1 King (20 sqm)	\$516	\$1032	\$1548	\$2064
1 King (21 sqm)	\$546	\$1092	\$1638	\$2184
1 King (22 sqm)	\$576	\$1152	\$1728	\$2304
1 King (23 sqm)	\$606	\$1212	\$1818	\$2424
1 King (24 sqm)	\$636	\$1272	\$1908	\$2544
1 King (25 sqm)	\$666	\$1332	\$2000	\$2664
1 King (26 sqm)	\$696	\$1392	\$2090	\$2784
1 King (27 sqm)	\$726	\$1452	\$2180	\$2904
1 King (28 sqm)	\$756	\$1512	\$2270	\$3024
1 King (29 sqm)	\$786	\$1572	\$2360	\$3144
1 King (30 sqm)	\$816	\$1632	\$2450	\$3264
1 King (31 sqm)	\$846	\$1692	\$2540	\$3384
1 King (32 sqm)	\$876	\$1752	\$2630	\$3504
1 King (33 sqm)	\$906	\$1812	\$2720	\$3624
1 King (34 sqm)	\$936	\$1872	\$2810	\$3744
1 King (35 sqm)	\$966	\$1932	\$2900	\$3864
1 King (36 sqm)	\$996	\$1992	\$2990	\$3984
1 King (37 sqm)	\$1026	\$2052	\$3080	\$4104
1 King (38 sqm)	\$1056	\$2112	\$3170	\$4224
1 King (39 sqm)	\$1086	\$2172	\$3260	\$4344
1 King (40 sqm)	\$1116	\$2232	\$3350	\$4464
1 King (41 sqm)	\$1146	\$2292	\$3440	\$4584
1 King (42 sqm)	\$1176	\$2352	\$3530	\$4704
1 King (43 sqm)	\$1206	\$2412	\$3620	\$4824
1 King (44 sqm)	\$1236	\$2472	\$3710	\$4944
1 King (45 sqm)	\$1266	\$2532	\$3800	\$5064
1 King (46 sqm)	\$1296	\$2592	\$3890	\$5184
1 King (47 sqm)	\$1326	\$2652	\$3980	\$5304
1 King (48 sqm)	\$1356	\$2712	\$4070	\$5424
1 King (49 sqm)	\$1386	\$2772	\$4160	\$5544
1 King (50 sqm)	\$1416	\$2832	\$4250	\$5664
1 King (51 sqm)	\$1446	\$2892	\$4340	\$5784
1 King (52 sqm)	\$1476	\$2952	\$4430	\$5904
1 King (53 sqm)	\$1506	\$3012	\$4520	\$6024
1 King (54 sqm)	\$1536	\$3072	\$4610	\$6144
1 King (55 sqm)	\$1566	\$3132	\$4700	\$6264
1 King (56 sqm)	\$1596	\$3192	\$4790	\$6384
1 King (57 sqm)	\$1626	\$3252	\$4880	\$6504
1 King (58 sqm)	\$1656	\$3312	\$4970	\$6624
1 King (59 sqm)	\$1686	\$3372	\$5060	\$6744
1 King (60 sqm)	\$1716	\$3432	\$5150	\$6864
1 King (61 sqm)	\$1746	\$3492	\$5240	\$6984
1 King (62 sqm)	\$1776	\$3552	\$5330	\$7104
1 King (63 sqm)	\$1806	\$3612	\$5420	\$7224
1 King (64 sqm)	\$1836	\$3672	\$5510	\$7344
1 King (65 sqm)	\$1866	\$3732	\$5600	\$7464
1 King (66 sqm)	\$1896	\$3792	\$5690	\$7584
1 King (67 sqm)	\$1926	\$3852	\$5780	\$7704
1 King (68 sqm)	\$1956	\$3912	\$5870	\$7824
1 King (69 sqm)	\$1986	\$3972	\$5960	\$7944
1 King (70 sqm)	\$2016	\$4032	\$6050	\$8064
1 King (71 sqm)	\$2046	\$4092	\$6140	\$8184
1 King (72 sqm)	\$2076	\$4152	\$6230	\$8304
1 King (73 sqm)	\$2106	\$4212	\$6320	\$8424
1 King (74 sqm)	\$2136	\$4272	\$6410	\$8544
1 King (75 sqm)	\$2166	\$4332	\$6500	\$8664
1 King (76 sqm)	\$2196	\$4392	\$6590	\$8784
1 King (77 sqm)	\$2226	\$4452	\$6680	\$8904
1 King (78 sqm)	\$2256	\$4512	\$6770	\$9024
1 King (79 sqm)	\$2286	\$4572	\$6860	\$9144
1 King (80 sqm)	\$2316	\$4632	\$6950	\$9264
1 King (81 sqm)	\$2346	\$4692	\$7040	\$9384
1 King (82 sqm)	\$2376	\$4752	\$7130	\$9504
1 King (83 sqm)	\$2406	\$4812	\$7220	\$9624
1 King (84 sqm)	\$2436	\$4872	\$7310	\$9744
1 King (85 sqm)	\$2466	\$4932	\$7400	\$9864
1 King (86 sqm)	\$2496	\$4992	\$7490	\$9984
1 King (87 sqm)	\$2526	\$5052	\$7580	\$10104
1 King (88 sqm)	\$2556	\$5112	\$7670	\$10224
1 King (89 sqm)	\$2586	\$5172	\$7760	\$10344
1 King (90 sqm)	\$2616	\$5232	\$7850	\$10464
1 King (91 sqm)	\$2646	\$5292	\$7940	\$10584
1 King (92 sqm)	\$2676	\$5352	\$8030	\$10704
1 King (93 sqm)	\$2706	\$5412	\$8120	\$10824
1 King (94 sqm)	\$2736	\$5472	\$8210	\$10944
1 King (95 sqm)	\$2766	\$5532	\$8300	\$11064
1 King (96 sqm)	\$2796	\$5592	\$8390	\$11184
1 King (97 sqm)	\$2826	\$5652	\$8480	\$11304
1 King (98 sqm)	\$2856	\$5712	\$8570	\$11424
1 King (99 sqm)	\$2886	\$5772	\$8660	\$11544
1 King (100 sqm)	\$2916	\$5832	\$8750	\$11664

For an explanation of 'From' prices, please refer to page 5. 57

**Villa San Michele** From \$149

**PROPERTY FEATURES:**

- Pool (2) • Spa
- Laundry
- Barbecue area
- Parking (undercover)
- Country borders (suitable for sheep or horses) • Fridge (2 per kitchen)

**ACCOMMODATION FEATURES:**

- Air conditioning • Fan
- Balcony
- In-house laundry facilities with ironboard
- In-room phone
- In-room fridge
- In-room TV (flat)

Room Type	1 Night	2 Nights	3 Nights	4 Nights
1 King (14 sqm)	\$149	\$298	\$447	\$596
1 King (16 sqm)	\$159	\$318	\$477	\$626
1 King (18 sqm)	\$169	\$338	\$507	\$656
1 King (20 sqm)	\$179	\$358	\$537	\$686
1 King (22 sqm)	\$189	\$378	\$567	\$716
1 King (24 sqm)	\$199	\$398	\$597	\$746
1 King (26 sqm)	\$209	\$418	\$627	\$776
1 King (28 sqm)	\$219	\$438	\$657	\$806
1 King (30 sqm)	\$229	\$458	\$687	\$836
1 King (32 sqm)	\$239	\$478	\$717	\$866
1 King (34 sqm)	\$249	\$498	\$747	\$896
1 King (36 sqm)	\$259	\$518	\$777	\$926
1 King (38 sqm)	\$269	\$538	\$807	\$956
1 King (40 sqm)	\$279	\$558	\$837	\$986
1 King (42 sqm)	\$289	\$578	\$867	\$1016
1 King (44 sqm)	\$299	\$598	\$897	\$1046
1 King (46 sqm)	\$309	\$618	\$927	\$1076
1 King (48 sqm)	\$319	\$638	\$957	\$1106
1 King (50 sqm)	\$329	\$658	\$987	\$1136
1 King (52 sqm)	\$339	\$678	\$1017	\$1166
1 King (54 sqm)	\$349	\$698	\$1047	\$1196
1 King (56 sqm)	\$359	\$718	\$1077	\$1226
1 King (58 sqm)	\$369	\$738	\$1107	\$1256
1 King (60 sqm)	\$379	\$758	\$1137	\$1286
1 King (62 sqm)	\$389	\$778	\$1167	\$1316
1 King (64 sqm)	\$399	\$798	\$1197	\$1346
1 King (66 sqm)	\$409	\$818	\$1227	\$1376
1 King (68 sqm)	\$419	\$838	\$1257	\$1406
1 King (70 sqm)	\$429	\$858	\$1287	\$1436
1 King (72 sqm)	\$439	\$878	\$1317	\$1466
1 King (74 sqm)	\$449	\$898	\$1347	\$1496
1 King (76 sqm)	\$459	\$918	\$1377	\$1526
1 King (78 sqm)	\$469	\$938	\$1407	\$1556
1 King (80 sqm)	\$479	\$958	\$1437	\$1586
1 King (82 sqm)	\$489	\$978	\$1467	\$1616
1 King (84 sqm)	\$499	\$998	\$1497	\$1646
1 King (86 sqm)	\$509	\$1018	\$1527	\$1676
1 King (88 sqm)	\$519	\$1038	\$1557	\$1706
1 King (90 sqm)	\$529	\$1058	\$1587	\$1736
1 King (92 sqm)	\$539	\$1078	\$1617	\$1766
1 King (94 sqm)	\$549	\$1098	\$1647	\$1796
1 King (96 sqm)	\$559	\$1118	\$1677	\$1826
1 King (98 sqm)	\$569	\$1138	\$1707	\$1856
1 King (100 sqm)	\$579	\$1158	\$1737	\$1886

For an explanation of 'From' prices, please refer to page 5. 59

**Figure 9: Sunlover Holidays “Tropical North” Brochure 2005/2006**  
 (Source: <http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/brochures/index.asp>)

### **5.3.3 Whitehaven Beach, Whitsundays**

Whitehaven Beach is a remote, 6-kilometre stretch of pure white silica sand situated on the eastern side of Whitsunday Island in the Whitsundays region of Queensland, Australia. The region offers easy access to the Great Barrier Reef, islands and many beaches, national parks, all of which exist in an outstanding natural environment offering diverse recreational opportunities ranging from swimming, snorkelling and diving to sailing, bush walking and viewing wildlife. A number of the islands in the Whitsundays group have a diverse range of beach resorts from backpacker-style to luxury exclusive retreats. Whitehaven Beach, however, is situated in a National Park and is one of the few islands where there is no development and visitors are only able to access the island on day trips by boat or sea plane from either the nearby island resorts or mainland.

The Sunlover Holidays “Islands and Whitsundays” Brochure 2005/2006 does not describe Whitehaven Beach in any great detail, except for identifying it as a destination to be visited while staying in the Whitsundays region. The region is marketed largely as an island holiday destination that includes many beaches, beach resorts on islands, and activities synonymous with these types of holiday destinations. The brochure offers two tours to Whitehaven Beach, only one of which includes images of Whitehaven Beach and a very brief description which suggests “Whitehaven Beach offers seven kilometres of white silica sand, truly one of the world’s most spectacular beaches” (see Figure 10).

# Explore and Discover

### Whitsundays Ocean Rafting



Raft the Whitsundays in a rigid inflatable boat, visiting Whitehaven Beach and pristine reefs.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- A guided tropical rainforest walk ■ Snorkelling equipment
- Travel with a maximum of 25 passengers per vessel
- Courtesy transfers from Airie Beach or Cannonvale accommodation

**Operates:** Daily from Airie Beach  
**Departs:** 10am  
**Returns:** 4:30pm  
 Choose from a 'Northern Exposure' or 'Southern Lights' adventure. Ask your travel agent for details.

**PRICE:**

Adult	\$82
Child 2-14 years	\$49
Family 2 adults and 2 children	\$242


Or try this great value **DOUBLE DEAL** which includes 'Northern Exposure' on one day and 'Southern Lights' on another day.

Adult	\$135
Child 2-14 years	\$94

Ask your travel agent about lower prices 1 Apr 05 - 30 Jun 05.  
 Lunch is available at an extra charge - please request when booking.  
 Environmental Management Charge is payable direct.

**OCEAN RAFTING** 854580 SLV

### Day Sail Whitsundays



Maxi Action offers quality day sailing, diving and snorkelling in the best locations of the beautiful Whitsundays aboard the race winning yacht, Maxi Ragamuffin.

**TOURS INCLUDE:**

- Delicious lunch, morning and afternoon tea
- At Blue Pearl Bay: snorkelling equipment, instruction and supervision
- At Whitehaven: Beach Activities ■ Courtesy transfers
- Environmental Management Charge and Jetty Tax

**Blue Pearl Bay Snorkelling Adventure**  
**Operates:** Mon, Wed and Sat from Shute Harbour  
**Departs:** 8:45am  
**Returns:** 4:15pm

**Whitehaven Beach Picnic Adventure**  
**Operates:** Tues, Thu and Sun from Shute Harbour  
**Departs:** 8:45am  
**Returns:** 4:15pm

**PRICE:**

Adult	\$108
Child 4-14 years	\$54
Student 15-18 years	\$98
Family 2 adults and 2 children	\$270

**MAXI ACTION** 419329 SLV

### Fantasea Day Cruise to Reefworld



Visit Reefworld - two unsurpassed adventure platforms on the Great Barrier Reef.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Coral viewing from a semi-submersible
- Use of underwater viewing chamber including interactive experience with underwater diver
- Snorkelling equipment ■ Reef appreciation talk
- Buffet lunch, morning and afternoon tea
- Fresh water showers and large sundeck
- Courtesy transfers from accommodation
- Environmental Management Charge

**Operates:** Daily from Shute Harbour. Pick-up from Hamilton, South Mollo, Daydream and Long Islands available  
**Departs:** 8am  
**Returns:** 5:15pm  
 Introductory and certified scuba diving available. Ask your travel agent for details. Certified divers must provide 'C' card and log book.

**PRICE:**

Adult	\$169
Child 4-14 years	\$91
Student 15-18 years	\$144
Family 2 adults and 2 children	\$434

**FANTASEA CRUISES** 156412 SLV

### Reefsleep



Experience the peace and tranquility of the Great Barrier Reef at night.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- 2 full days at Reefworld with 1 night's accommodation
- 2 dives, including dive equipment
- 1 dinner including wine, 2 buffet lunches and 1 breakfast
- Private lockers and showers ■ Snorkelling equipment
- Morning and afternoon teas
- Unlimited access to underwater viewing chamber
- Environmental Management Charge
- Courtesy transfers from accommodation

**Operates:** Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat and Sun from Shute Harbour. Pick-up from Hamilton, South Mollo, Daydream and Long Islands available  
**Departs:** 8am  
**Returns:** Following day 5pm

**PRICE:**

Twin share	\$424
Multi share	\$360

Certified divers must provide 'C' card and log book.

**FANTASEA CRUISES** 156412 SLV

### Whitehaven Beach 3 Island



Visit Daydream Island, Hamilton Island and Whitehaven Beach on a day cruise incorporating the very best of the Whitsunday Islands.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Gourmet barbecue buffet lunch
- Morning and afternoon tea
- Complimentary tea and coffee on board Fantasea vessel
- Use of resort day guest facilities on Daydream and Hamilton Islands
- Beach activities on Whitehaven Beach
- Courtesy transfers from accommodation

**Operates:** Daily from Shute Harbour  
**Departs:** 8:30am  
**Returns:** 5:15pm

**PRICE:**

Adult	\$93
Child 4-14 years	\$49
Student 15-18 years	\$80
Family 2 adults and 2 children	\$240

**FANTASEA CRUISES** 156412 SLV

### Whitehaven Beach Half Day



Whitehaven Beach offers seven kilometres of white silica sand, truly one of the world's most spectacular beaches.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Gourmet barbecue buffet lunch
- Beach activities
- Use of sun shelters
- Complimentary tea and coffee on board Fantasea vessel
- Courtesy transfers from accommodation
- Detailed commentary on the area

**Operates:** Daily from Shute Harbour. Pick up from Hamilton, South Mollo, Long and Daydream Islands available  
**Departs:** 11:40am  
**Returns:** 5:15pm

**PRICE:**

Adult	\$80
Child 4-14 years	\$44
Student 15-18 years	\$65
Family 2 adults and 2 children	\$209

**FANTASEA CRUISES** 156412 SLV

Figure 10: Sunlover Holidays "Islands and Whitsundays" Brochure 2005/2006

(Source: <http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/brochures/index.asp>)

The state tourism management organization, Tourism Queensland has developed a Destination Management Plan for this region. The “Tourism Queensland Destination Management Plan 2004 for Whitsundays Region” identifies the region as having the following images: “tropical climate, relaxed and casual, beautiful beaches, reef, dive, snorkel, close to nature and wildlife” (Tourism Queensland, 2004c). The main international visitor markets for this region are United Kingdom, Germany, Other Europe, North America who are mainly backpackers, active explorers and adventure travellers, and predominantly in the younger age groups (Tourism Queensland, 2004c). The destination competes with other major beach tourism destinations in the state of Queensland (Australia), island-based beaches in the South Pacific, Asia, Hawaii, and other exotic coastal destinations in world (Tourism Queensland, 2004c). The “Strategic Vision” in the plan, identifies the following images and experiences for this region – “fresh, friendly, confident, vibrant, relaxed/carefree” (Tourism Queensland, 2004c). Attached to this image are the benefits visitors gain from the beach experience - “escape, relaxation, refreshing, adventure and indulgence” (Tourism Queensland, 2004c).

A significant study of images held by visitors to Whitehaven Beach was recently conducted by Ormsby & Shafer (2000), in response to the revision of the Whitsundays Plan of Management. In this study, they interviewed 583 Australian (n=271) & international visitors (n=280), en-route, after their tour to Whitehaven

Beach. They used a questionnaire to measure visitors' expectations, values, experiences, images and perceptions. Additionally, they made on-site observations of weather, setting visited, time spent by tour operator, number & type of vessels in each setting, and aircraft activity in particular to study the effects of these conditions on visitor experiences. Ormsby & Shafer (2000) identified four main visitor groups to Whitehaven Beach. These are "passivists, socially active naturalists, relaxed sightseers, and nature escapists". The highest scoring factors identifying each of these groups are listed in Table 34. Of these factors, "scenic escape" and "experiencing nature" feature as the most dominant benefit factors visitors saw in visiting Whitehaven Beach. "Scenic escape" represented benefits such as "viewing outstanding scenery, see the beauty of Whitehaven Beach, to rest and relax, and escape from normal routine". The "experiencing nature" factor represented benefits such as "experience some solitude, be in a natural place, and experience an undeveloped environment".

**Table 34: Main Visitor Types to Whitehaven Beach (Adapted from Ormsby & Shafer, 2000)**

Passivists	Socially Active Naturalists	Relaxed Sightseers	Nature Escapists
▶ Scenic Escape	▶ Scenic escape	▶ Scenic escape	▶ Experiencing nature
▶ Experiencing nature	▶ Experiencing nature	▶ Experiencing nature	▶ Scenic escape
▶ New Excitement	▶ New excitement	▶ Socially active	▶ New excitement
▶ Socially Active	▶ Socially active	▶ New excitement	Socially active

The key images that visitors identified with Whitehaven Beach were – "beautiful/pretty, relaxing/calming, quiet/tranquil/peaceful, clean beach, pure white sand, crystal clear water and unspoilt environment" (Ormsby & Shafer, 2000:25).



These were reflected in what visitors indicated they received the most enjoyment from – natural and scenic qualities, relaxation, escape and not a physically or socially active place. Overall, visitors valued Whitehaven Beach for its “natural and ecological processes, conservation, recreation and educational opportunities” (Ormsby & Shafer, 2000). The main activities that visitors participated in at the beach were mainly water-based, namely, swimming, snorkelling, enjoying beach & water, relaxing, sunbathing.

Ormsby & Shafer (2000) also examined conditions that could influence visitor’s experiences. In particular, they asked visitors about their impressions of conditions such as noise from aircraft and boats, the number of people on the beach, human-made structures, aircraft activity and weather and biophysical conditions. Their results showed that 88.0% of visitors said that these conditions did not influence their enjoyment of the beach (Ormsby & Shafer, 2000). Only small percentages of visitors found crowding and noise from aircraft or boats to be negative conditions influencing their experience. Most of visitors indicated they would like Whitehaven Beach to remain in its present state - natural and undeveloped.

#### **5.3.4 Lake McKenzie, Fraser Island**

Lake McKenzie is a freshwater lake situated on Fraser Island, which lies close to the coast in Southern Queensland, Australia. Fraser Island is the world’s



largest sand island and was World Heritage listed in 1992 due to its valued unique natural and cultural features, as well as economic, recreational, scenic and other benefits. The entire island and surrounding region is regulated under the Great Sandy Region Management Plan 1994–2010. The guidelines in this plan, however, apply to the various government bodies involved in managing the island. These include the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Maryborough and Hervey Bay City Council, Department of Environment and Heritage, as well as representation from the region's traditional Aboriginal inhabitants.

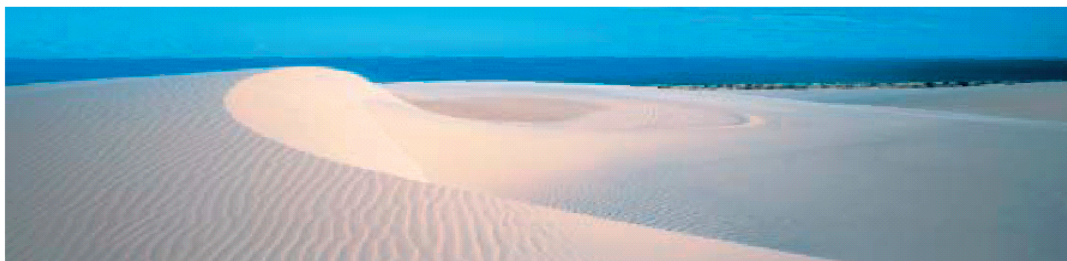
Lake McKenzie is a primary tourist destination for all visitors to the island, with the main attraction being the fine white sand beach, crystal clear, blue water and pristine environmental conditions (see photograph in Figure 11). These attributes are most evident in the Fraser Island tourist brochure where Lake McKenzie features as one of the primary destinations to visit on the island as shown in Figure 12. The infrastructure existing around the lake area is limited to car parking, picnic tables and chairs, toilets, and walking tracks all of which are carefully placed within the natural bushland to maintain low visual impact. This reflects the consideration under the island's management plan where visual impacts of all developments are assessed in respect to their impact on the landscape.



**Figure 11: Lake McKenzie, Fraser Island**

(Source: Fay Falco-Mammone, 1995)

# Fraser Island and Hervey Bay

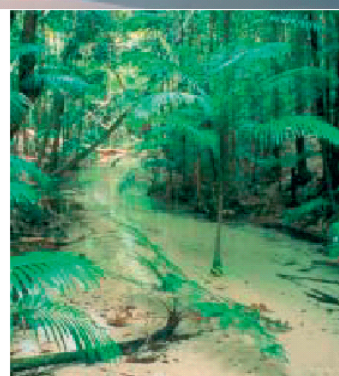


Queensland's Fraser Coast and South Burnett regions are truly Perfect by Nature.

Hervey Bay's sheltered waters are fringed by sweeping stretches of sandy beach... ideal for a relaxing seaside holiday. It's also a playground for majestic humpback whales from August to November each year.

The area is rich in history and authentic Queensland architecture. Inland, you'll find the rich agricultural areas of the South Burnett and the spectacular Bunya Mountains National Park.

World Heritage Listed Fraser Island is a paradise of pristine rainforests, unspoilt beaches and beautiful lakes. Explore magnificent cliffs of coloured sands, rocky headlands and refreshingly cool creeks.



**Fraser Island Exclusive Tour**

Travel in a modern air-conditioned 4WD coach and enjoy personalised service on this Fraser Island adventure. Visit Maheno Shipwreck, Eli Creek and Coloured Sands.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Modern air-conditioned 4WD coach
- Personalised service – maximum 16 passengers
- Courtesy transfers from Hervey Bay accommodation
- Transfers across the Great Sandy Straits
- Rainforest walk through Yidney Scrub
- Lake Allom – home to freshwater turtles
- Visit Maheno Shipwreck, Eli Creek and Coloured Sands
- Gourmet barbecue lunch (beer and wine included)
- Morning tea
- National Park fee
- Use of binoculars and wildlife library

Operates: Daily from Hervey Bay Marina  
 Departs: 8:30am  
 Returns: 6pm

<b>PRICE:</b>	
Adult	\$145
Child 4-14 years	\$105

FRASER ISLAND EXCLUSIVE TOURS 885665 SLV

**Self Drive Fraser Island**

Experience Fraser Island with the freedom of Aussie Trax wide range of reliable vehicles. The package includes all camping equipment and 4WD hire.

**INCLUDES:**

- 3 days selected vehicle hire
- Camping equipment including tent, mattresses, ice box, gas cooker, utensils, water container, groundsheet
- In-car commentary and driver instructions (6 languages)

**DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- Camping permit/fees
- National Park fees
- Ferry/Barge transfers
- Food and petrol

<b>PRICE PER PERSON:</b>	
Suzuki Jimmy max 2 persons	\$225
Suzuki Sierra max 2 persons	\$203
Kia Sportage max 3 persons	\$185
Landrover Defender max 4 persons	\$169
Landrover Defender max 5 persons	\$141
Landrover Defender max 6 persons	\$123

\*Extended packages available. Ask your travel agent for details.

AUSSIE TRAX 345619 SLV

**Fraser Island Cool Dingo Tour**

A three day, two night adventure tour of Fraser Island specifically designed for 18 to 35's.

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Lake McKenzie
- 75 Mile Beach
- Eli Creek
- Central Station
- Indian Head
- Coloured sands
- Maheno Shipwreck
- Lake Wabby
- Champagne Pools
- Rainbow Gorge

**PRICE INCLUDES:**

- Wilderness Lodge accommodation
- Buffet breakfasts, dinners and picnic lunches
- Ranger-guided tours by experienced guides
- Return fastcat transfers from Hervey Bay

Operates: Daily from Hervey Bay Marina  
 Departs: 8:45am  
 Returns: 5:45pm

<b>PRICE PER PERSON:</b>	
Adult quad share	\$312*
Adult twin share	\$364*

\* National Park Permit Levy payable direct.  
 † 2 Day option available. Ask your travel agent for details.

KINGFISHER BAY RESORT 296673 C00L

**Figure 12: Sunlover Holidays “Sunshine Coast - Fraser Coast” Brochure 2005/2006**

(Source: <http://www.sunloverholidays.com/slvhtml/brochures/index.asp>)

The 2002 Fraser Island Visitor Surveys (Tourism Queensland, 2002a,b) reported that Fraser Island attracts predominantly domestic visitors, however, international visitors mainly from the United Kingdom, Europe and North America represent approximately one third of visitors to the island. The majority of international visitors are the more affluent, young or mid-life singles and couples travelling either as a couple or with friends/relatives. When visiting the island, they stay in tent accommodation and their activities are mainly related to sightseeing of the many natural features on the island. The most appealing aspects that international visitors considered about the island were its lakes & creeks (29%), scenery/nature/environment (24%), wildlife (20%).


These visitor characteristics are supported in a recent study of visitors to Lake McKenzie. Hadwen & Arthington (2003) conducted 154 surveys of domestic and international visitors at Lake McKenzie to gain understanding of the importance of perched dune lakes as recreational sites. Their research examined visitor activities, expectations & experiences in these types of lakes. The study found that 70% of the visitors preferred swimming in a clear lake as opposed to the ocean, while other primary activities they visited the lake for were relaxing and reading, sunbaking, sightseeing, photography (Hadwen & Arthington, 2003). The attracting features of the lake were the clarity of water and being in a natural setting, that is, one that did not have constructed attributes (Hadwen & Arthington, 2003). They found that while the absence of facilities was more of an attraction than an issue to visitors, the high public awareness of its existence and the ease of

accessibility, created the potential threat of pollution in the lake. These were identified in the study as key management issues for Lake McKenzie.

### **5.3.5 Cairns Esplanade Lagoon**

Cairns city is a major tourism destination in North Queensland, Australia. The city is situated between the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage tropical rainforests, which are the main drawcards for the region. The Esplanade Lagoon is situated on the waterfront adjacent to the city centre and in the city's main tourism district. It is an artificial beach area that was largely created to provide both local residents and visitor a safe recreational area close to the city centre. The Esplanade Lagoon precinct offers a 4800 square metre saltwater swimming lagoon, parks and gardens, walking and exercise circuit, BBQ facilities, children's playground, boardwalk along the waterfront and interpretive information displays (as shown in Figure 13). The Cairns City Council's aim for the Esplanade Lagoon is "to provide aquatic and entertainment facilities and parklands that are well maintained and presented in a safe environment that can be enjoyed by the local residents and visitors to Cairns" (Cairns City Council, 2004a). The lagoon has one additional benefit, in that it provides a safe location for swimming, as opposed to the beaches, which are subjected to deadly marine stingers during summer. The Esplanade and Foreshore Promenade precinct have received a number of planning and architectural awards and commendations in 2003 and 2004.

In 2004, the CCC Inner City Facilities Management commissioned on-going studies on public perceptions of the Esplanade Lagoon precinct and city centre. This included both visitor and local residents' perceptions of the features at those locations. The Esplanade Lagoon is enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike, who use the free facilities mainly to rest and relax, undertaking activities such as sun tanning, swimming (under lifeguard supervision), BBQ's, walking, exercising and bird watching. The swimming lagoon was regarded as the best feature of the Esplanade and all visitors to the location were highly satisfied with the swimming lagoon, cleanliness, gardens and landscaping, the walking/ fitness circuit and free BBQ facilities (Cairns City Council, 2004b).



THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE  
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

**Figure 13: Cairns Esplanade Lagoon**

(Source: <http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au>)

The Esplanade Lagoon is not a primary attraction for visitors to the city of Cairns, therefore it does not appear as a feature in the main holiday brochures. It is, however, a supplementary attraction for the city and its close proximity to the central business district, hotels and motels, and other tourist centres ensures that it is visited by tourists as well as local residents. One of the main features of the Esplanade Lagoon area is its unique bird life, which attracts avid birdwatchers to the location. The Queensland Holidays website for Cairns describes the Esplanade Lagoon in detail:

*“A focal point for the city is the Cairns Esplanade. Almost two kilometres of landscaped parkland fringes a busy thoroughfare and restaurant strip on one side, and a natural harbour inlet on the other. Each year, thousands of visitors flock to the Esplanade to relax on the grass, eat at sidewalk cafes, meet new people, to walk under the trees, and to watch the many bird species which come to feed on the tidal zone.”*

*([http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/tropical\\_north\\_queensland/cairns.cfm](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/tropical_north_queensland/cairns.cfm))*

## **5.4 Beach Tourism Managers' Views**

The aims of the Beach Tourism Destination Survey were to examine the level of importance placed on the dominant natural and cultural attributes, and to identify the beach image issues held by beach tourism destination managers. The following section presents the results of this study.

### **5.4.1 Beach Tourism Destination Attributes**

The beach tourism destination's attributes were measured in two questions. Firstly, the management and marketing organisations for each of the destinations were asked to indicate the level of importance they placed on the natural and culture features of the beach that they felt made their beach tourism destination attractive to international visitors. Secondly, they were asked to indicate what they considered to be the three best features of their beach tourism destination.

The importance of nature and culture attributes of the beach were measured on scale of 1=Very Important to 5=Very Unimportant, and 6=Does not apply to this beach. In particular, managers were asked to indicate the level of importance they placed on the list of nature and culture features of the beach that they felt made their beach tourism destination attractive to international visitors. The responses from both management and marketing agencies of the beach



tourism destinations are shown in Tables 35 and 36 (respectively). As expected, initial analysis of the results revealed that the attributes that managers considered as important at their destination were directly associated with the attributes endemic to that location. For example, Surfers Paradise is the only beach in the sample with surf, therefore, surf was considered important at this beach, whereas it was either not applicable or not important at other beach tourism destinations.

The Surfers Paradise management and marketing organizations agreed with the level of importance for more than half of the nature and culture attributes. In particular, they considered the gardens, sand, bay/cove shape, fine and white sand, clean sand, rocky headland, sand dunes, surf, blue/aqua coloured water and sunshine as very important nature attributes; and the resorts/hotels, shops, public amenities, Carpark, esplanade, roads, and walking paths as important culture attributes. Conversely, there were a number of attributes that recorded vastly different responses. The most notable were rainforest/jungle, corals/reef, fish, crustaceans, bars (alcohol service) near beach, and sailing boats. This indicated that management and marketing organizations have different views over the importance of certain attributes that exist at Surfers Paradise

Both organizations at Four Mile Beach indicated that the majority of natural and cultural attributes were either important or very important. Some differences, however, were found in a number of these attributes. The management organization allocated high levels of importance to fish, dolphins/turtles/whales, seashells/crustaceans, island on the horizon, and rainforest/jungle, whereas the

marketing organization indicated these attributes were neither important/unimportant. The rainforest/jungle was not considered relevant to Four Mile Beach according to the marketing organization. The marketing organization also showed higher levels of importance for availability of beach activities and water sports than the management organization.

In analysing the results for Whitehaven Beach, consideration was made of its location within the Whitsunday Islands region and its status as a remote island beach, only accessible as a day trip destination by sea or air from the mainland or other islands within the region. With these characteristics in mind, the marketing organisation appears to have responded to the questions with respect to Whitehaven Beach and the surrounding islands as well, rather than Whitehaven Beach alone. This does not diminish the results, however, but shows the relationship of Whitehaven Beach's image in relation to the entire destination's image. This is consistent with the nature of the marketing material as well as the management plan discussed in the previous section.

The marketing organisation for Whitehaven Beach indicated that almost all of the natural attributes are important or very important. Only the sand dunes were neither important/unimportant to them; and the bay/cove shape, surf/waves and calm water were somewhat important natural attributes. The marketing organisation's levels of importance for culture attributes were somewhat unusual for Whitehaven Beach; however, they appear to reflect the location in terms of its nearby culture attributes. The beaches and islands surrounding Whitehaven

Beach, from which visitor would embark on their trip to the location, are regarded as island resort beach tourism destinations. Therefore, the higher levels of importance to the culture attributes associated with these types of destination, reflected in the results, are indicative of the Whitsundays region. Interestingly, the marketing organisation did not see few or no people and the absence of marine stingers as applying to this beach.

The most important nature attributes of Lake McKenzie were identified by both organisations as being the white, clean and fine sand, the calm and blue water, rainforest/jungle/forest, shade and sunshine. Of the very few culture attributes relating to Lake McKenzie, both organisations indicated that public amenities, absence of annoying insects were important attributes. There were, however, differences in levels of importance for a number of the other culture attributes. The family-oriented atmosphere is considered somewhat important to management, but somewhat unimportant to marketing. The absence of marine stingers is also somewhat important to management, but marketing suggests it does not apply to this beach. Additionally, the feature of no people on beach is neither important/unimportant to management, but is considered very important to the marketing organisation.

For the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, the management organisation regarded many of the nature attributes as being important to the image of the location. In particular, the water, sand, gardens and landscaping, other vegetation, shade and

sunshine were important nature attributes of the beach. The attributes that were considered as not applicable to the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon are not attributes that exist at the location. The culture attributes of the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon that management considered as important were mainly related to the structures found at constructed beaches, but also included the absence of insects and marine stingers, and the family-oriented atmosphere. Interestingly, the number of people was neither important/unimportant, as were the shops near the beach. Bars near the beach were considered somewhat important, possibly due to the fact that alcohol is prohibited by law in or near the Esplanade Lagoon. Additionally, beach activities, sailing boats and umbrellas are not culture attributes found at that beach.

**Table 35: Levels of Importance placed on Attributes of Nature**

Attributes of Nature	Beach Tourism Destinations Management & Marketing Levels of Importance							
	Surfers Paradise		Four Mile Beach		Whitehaven Beach	Lake McKenzie	Cairns Lagoon	
	Management	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Management
Palm trees	1/5*	2	1	1	2	6	6	2
Coconuts (on palm trees)	5	5	3	2	2	5	6	6
Rainforest/jungle/forest	1	6	1	6	2	2	1	6
Other trees (not palm trees)	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
Other vegetation	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
Gardens/landscaped areas	1	1	1	2	2	6	6	1
Grass/grassed areas	1	2	1	2	2	5	6	1
Corals/reef	2	6	1	2	1	6	6	6
Fish	2	6	1	3	1	5	6	6
Dolphins/turtles/whales	1	2	1	3	2	6	6	6
Seashells/crustaceans	2	6	1	3	2	6	6	6
Bay/cove-like shape of beach	1	1	1	2	4	5	3	6
Cliffs/rock faces	1	3	1	2	2	6	6	6
Sand (i.e. not pebbles)	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Clean (unpolluted) sand	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
White sand	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Fine sand	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Islands on the horizon	4	-	1	3	2	6	6	6
Mountains/hills	2	1	1	2	2	5	2	3
Rocks (as features)	1	2	1	2	2	6	6	2
Rocky/other headland	1	1	1	2	2	6	2	6
Sand dunes	1	1	2	3	3	4	1	6
Blue/green/aqua coloured water	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Surf/waves	1	1	6	1	4	5	6	6
Calm water	1	2	2	1	4	2	1	1
Clean (unpolluted) water	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Shade (natural &/or constructed)	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1
Sunshine	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1

*\*This respondent indicated that if "palm trees" represented their native pandanus, then the response would = 1 Very Important, but if they represented imported palms, then the response would = 5 Very Unimportant.*

**Table 36: Levels of Importance placed on Attributes of Culture**

Attributes of Culture	Beach Tourism Destinations Management & Marketing Levels of Importance							
	Surfers Paradise		Four Mile Beach		Whitehaven Beach	Lake McKenzie	Cairns Esplanade Lagoon	
	Management	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Management
Bars (alcohol service) near beach	1	5	1	2	1	6	6	4
Cafés/restaurants/snack bars near beach	1	2	1	2	1	6	6	2
Resort/hotel/holiday apartments/ cabins near beach	1	1	1	2	1	6	6	2
Shops near beach	1	1	1	2	1	6	6	3
Public amenities (e.g. toilets, showers)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Umbrellas on beach	4	3	2	1	3	6	6	6
Car park near beach	1	1	2	1	2	4	3	1
Beach chairs/other seating on beach	4	3	2	1	4	5	6	1
Esplanade/boardwalk beside beach	1	1	1	2	2	6	6	1
Roads/streets near beach	1	1	2	2	2	6	6	1
Walking paths to & around beach	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	1
Sailing boats/yachts moored in the water in front of beach	5	3	3	3	2	6	6	6
Many people on beach	1	2	3	2	2	5	4	3
Few people on beach	1	2	3	2	6	2	3	3
No people on beach	2	3	3	2	6	3	1	3
Absence of annoying insects (e.g. Mosquitoes, sandflies)	1	3	2	1	2	2	1	1
Absence of marine stingers	2	1	2	1	6	2	6	1
Availability of beach activities (volleyball, gym equipment)	2	2	3	1	2	6	6	6
Availability of water sports (e.g. Jet skiing, surfing, windsurfing, canoeing)	2	2	3	1	4	6	6	6
Family-oriented atmosphere	1	2	2	1	2	2	4	1

#### **5.4.2 Best Features of Beach Tourism Destinations**

In addition to providing the level of importance of particular attributes at the beach tourism destinations, the management organisations were asked to describe what they thought were the three best features of the destination. While it is understood that these management organisations would indeed, as part of their responsibilities, be able to recognise the outstanding features of their destinations, this question provided additional support in examining the attributes of the destinations. The results showed that this was indeed the case for each destination.

In Surfers Paradise, the best features were slightly different between each organisation. The management organisation suggested the clean water and sand; accessibility (footpaths, car parks, public transport, bikeways) and affordable accommodation were the best features. The marketing organization also suggested accessibility and cleanliness, and that the beach expands over a long distance were its best features. Similarly, all of these features were rated as very important attributes of this destination.

The three best features that the Four Mile Beach management organisation described were “the long picturesque expanse of sandy beach, the close proximity of northern end of beach to Port Douglas facilities, and the overall tropical setting and clear blue sea water. The marketing organisation listed the “proximity to

population centres, pristine tropical conditions, and uncrowded” as the best features. Both organizations described Four Mile Beach’s proximity to the township as one of the best features. The other features, including the length of the beach, the tropical setting, uncrowded and clear blue sea were given high levels of importance by both organizations.

Whitehaven Beach’s marketing organisation indicated that the best features of the region were its islands, activities and accommodation. These are three of the main aspects of the images relating to the Whitsundays that are more consistent with the overall image of the region, than of Whitehaven Beach itself. The features are, nonetheless all of the attributes of the region that are included in the brochure and support international visitors at the location.

The management organisation of Lake McKenzie described them as being white sand, clear blue water, and safe swimming. The marketing organisation described Lake McKenzie’s best features as being a pristine location, with scenic value, and ease of swimming. Most of these best features are nature attributes, and are consistent with the key features of the destination that attract international visitors.

The best features of the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, according to the management organisation were the lifeguard supervision, the water quality/cleanliness, and the parklands and shade trees.



### 5.4.3 Beach Issues & Future Images

The organizations were asked to rate how certain issues or problems identified with their beach tourism destination. The list of problems and issues was drawn from the results of the beach tourism questionnaire in the previous studies. The responses for both organisations at each of the destinations, shown in Table 37, revealed many differences in opinions about the issues or problems.

In Surfers Paradise, both of the organizations thought that water pollution, seaweed and marine stingers were only a minor problem at their beach. While management indicated that litter, other pollution, noise and the number of commercial tourism operations were only a minor problem, the marketing organization thought they were potential problems. The major issues or problems at Surfers Paradise appear to be erosion, high rise development, social problems, parking (management only) and impacts on flora and fauna (management only). These issues were mentioned in the beach management and marketing organisation's descriptions of where they see their beach destination in 5-10 years time. The marketing organization wrote:

*“Sustainable and clean beaches. Although there would be more hotel and accommodation, high rise development.”*

While the management organization's comments reflected more of towards the future that includes the Gold Coast Visioning changes:

*“Surfers Paradise is changing again...becoming a CBD lifestyle area.”*

Four Mile Beach's marketing organization saw marine stingers as a major problem, whereas their management organization only saw them as a minor problem. While the management organisation identified the number of commercial tourism operations and motorised beach activities as a minor problem the marketing organization viewed these as not being an issue at all. The management organization also identified erosion, high rise development, parking and impacts on flora and fauna as potential problems at Four Mile Beach. Both of the organizations described Four Mile Beach in 5-10 years in terms of its relationship with the management of the beach. The management organization suggested:

*“that the virtues of the region's beaches will remain the same given proper management...a key benefit for the region will not be lost.”*

The marketing organization similarly indicated that the beach would remain “unchanged (subject to the continuation of current council controls).” It would appear that these organizations believe that management controls and plans will be responsible for maintaining the qualities of the images of Four Mile Beach.

**Table 37: Identification of Beach Problems or Issues**

Beach Problem or Issue	Beach Tourism Destination Management & Marketing Identification of Problem or Issue							
	Surfers Paradise		Four Mile Beach		Whitehaven Beach	Lake McKenzie		Esplanade Lagoon
	Management	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Marketing	Management	Marketing	Management
Crowding on beach	3	1	1	1	4	1	2	4
Erosion	2	2	3	4	4	2	1	4
High rise development	2	2	3	4	1	4	4	4
Impacts on flora and fauna	2	3	3	-	3	2	3	3
Insects (e.g. Mosquitoes, sandflies)	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	4
Litter on beach	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	1
Marine stingers	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	4
Noise from motorised vehicles (incl. Motor vehicles, jet skis, and motorboats)	1	3	1	1	4	4	4	4
Number of commercial tourism operations	1	3	1	4	3	2	3	4
Number of motorised beach activities (e.g. Jet skis, boats, etc.)	4	3	1	4	3	4	4	4
Other pollution on beach	1	3	1	1	4	4	4	1
Parking	2	3	3	4	3	2	1	3
Seaweed	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	4
Social problems (e.g. Public drunkenness, loutish behaviour, crime)	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	1
Water pollution	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1
Other - carrying capacity	3							
Other - unsupervised children								2

\* Numbers signify extent indicated by respondents that are scaled as:

1 = Minor Problem – does not occur frequently, or exists, but is easily managed

2 = Major Problem – occurs frequently, or exists, but is difficult to manage

3 = Potential Problem – may become a problem in the future, or is currently minor, but may become major in the future

4 = Not an Issue or Problem at all

Interestingly, for Whitehaven Beach, the concerns for potential issues/problems identified by the marketing organisation were reinforced in their

vision of the region. They described that “tourism infrastructure will have significantly increased and development will be substantial.” While this may not occur on Whitehaven Beach itself due to its current protected status, the increased development in close proximity to Whitehaven Beach will indeed impact on the destination.

The issues indicated by both organisations responsible for Lake McKenzie as being problems were crowding, erosion, and parking. The potential problems identified by the management organisation were litter on the beach and water pollution. The marketing organisation, however, saw impacts on flora and fauna, the number of commercial tourism operations, litter on the beach, and water pollution as potential problems. These issues were related to the descriptions for the future images of Lake McKenzie, where both organisations responded with comments on the natural environment. The management organisation stated that Lake McKenzie, in 5-10 years time, would be “similar, more site hardening required to minimise impact of increased visitor numbers”. The marketing organisation stated it “will not appeal as a pristine, unspoiled destination if potential problems (as identified) are not addressed within this time period...will be overcrowded if not managed properly, leading to social problems and environmental concerns.” These comments reflect the issues and problems identified in the previous table.

The management organisation responsible for the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon indicated that the minor problems were litter and other pollution on the

beach, water pollution, and social problems. A major problem identified with the beach that was not listed in the questionnaire, but offered by the management organisation, was unsupervised children in or near the lagoon. Obviously, safety is clearly an issue when considering a public amenity that is provided by the Cairns City Council. The Cairns Esplanade Lagoon's management organisation regarded the future image of the location as "suffering major impacts on parklands from overuse, suffering from conflicts over facility use."

## **5.5 Discussion**

This study focused on the images of beaches from management's perspective and examined the issues relating to images of beaches. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the dominant natural and cultural attributes, the management issues relating to images of beach tourism destinations, and to determine the key characteristics of future beach images. This was achieved by using a mixed methodology that incorporated tourist marketing information, management and marketing plans and a self-administered questionnaire. The study revolved around specific beach tourism destination in Queensland, Australia. These represented different types of beaches from remote to constructed, a lake beach and an artificial beach.

### **5.5.1 Manager's Beach Images**

The results of the study revealed that different beach manager's and marketer's value attributes in direct relation to their beach's key image attributes. That is, only the nature and culture attributes that are found at the beach tourism destination are valued by the managers and marketers of that destination, albeit at different levels of importance. The significance of this finding is inherent to the management of beach images at all beach tourism destinations, regardless whether they are remote or constructed, a lake or artificial beach.

### **5.5.2 Surfers Paradise Images**

The management and marketing images of Surfers Paradise have been examined in this section. The beach is central to the image of Surfers Paradise. The natural attributes of the beach represented by fine, clean sand, colour and clarity of the water, surf, shade, and sunshine; as well as the nearby culture attributes, namely, resorts/hotels, shops, public amenities, car park, esplanade, roads and paths, are reflected in the tourist brochures, and highly valued by the management and marketing organizations. Therefore, there is conformity in the image of Surfers Paradise.

The major issues identified with Surfers Paradise by the management and marketing organizations are consistent with a constructed beach. Therefore, it is expected that issues relating to beaches situated in or near a city would relate to buildings and other structures, social problems, and parking. The re-visioning of the Gold Coast appears to be focused on changing the image of the beach from its previous fast-paced, busy atmosphere to that of a relaxed lifestyle-related beach. This would appear to be the only option for Surfers Paradise, considering the level of construction presently at that beach, and the strong beach culture that exists there.

### **5.5.3 Four Mile Beach Images**

The images of Four Mile Beach appear to be consistent with those of typical semi-constructed beach tourism destinations. The marketing literature indicates that it is highly regarded for its low-key resort development, tropical beach setting, a relaxed atmosphere and its proximity to both the Great Barrier Reef and tropical rainforests. Surprisingly, the management organisation placed higher levels of importance on the natural attributes that produce this image of Four Mile Beach than the marketing organisation. While to both organisations the basic natural features of palm trees, other vegetation, sand, cleanliness, and sunshine were of the utmost importance, the discrepancy rested in the other nature attributes, particularly those that existed in the shoreland and coastal backland areas of the beach. The marketing organisation appeared to have a more highly focused image that consisted mainly of the attributes immediately offered by the beach

tourism destination, such as the sand, water, palm trees and other vegetation, amenities, activities, atmosphere.

Another inconsistency found in the images of Four Mile Beach was the significance of issues relating to the beach. The management organisation identified more issues than the marketing organisation. This is to be expected, since it is the management organisation that inherently deals with such issues at the beach. There were, however, conflicts in identifying issues relating to the number of commercial tourism operations and motorised beach activities, where the management organisation found these to be minor problems and the marketing organisation did not consider them to be problems at all.

#### **5.5.4 Whitehaven Beach Images**

The image of Whitehaven Beach is grounded primarily in its natural attributes that signify a remote beach. In Ormsby and Shafer's 2000 study of Whitehaven Beach's images, visitors identified Whitehaven Beach as "beautiful/pretty, relaxing/calming, quiet/tranquil/peaceful, clean beach, pure white sand, crystal clear water and unspoilt environment" (2000:25). Similar attributes are recognized in the "Tourism Queensland Destination Management Plan 2004 for Whitsundays Region" (Tourism Queensland, 2004c). The marketing organisation also supported these attributes by indicating them as important to the image of the beach.



The culture attributes of Whitehaven Beach, however, are not immediately apparent in the image of this beach. Since Whitehaven Beach is a day tour destination only, and there are no significant structures on the beach. These culture attributes do not appear in the images of the beach in either the visitor study or the tourist information. Culture attributes, however, are included in the image of the general region that consists of many islands and beaches, of which Whitehaven Beach is one of only few without any structure at all. Therefore, the marketing organisation signified some of these culture attributes to be important to the image of the destination. Essentially, it could be said that without these attributes in the general vicinity of Whitehaven Beach, visitors would not be able to access the beach.

The issues relating to Whitehaven Beach, identified as either minor, major or potential by the marketing organisation included some that were also identified in Ormsby & Shafer's (2000) visitor study. These included the number of commercial tourism operations and number of motorised beach activities. The marketing organisation stated these were potential problems, however, only a small percentage of visitors stated these were influencing their experience at the beach (Ormsby & Shafer, 2000). Other issues or problems, such as high rise development, parking, litter, and social problems, indicated by the marketing organisation are related more to the surrounding beaches and island tourism destinations.

### **5.5.5 Lake McKenzie Images**

Lake McKenzie, on Fraser Island, represents the epitome of an ideal lake beach. It contains all of the attributes identified by visitors as being ideal (see Chapters 3 & 4) including fine white sand beach, crystal clear, blue water and pristine environmental conditions. The tourist brochure images display these attributes of Lake McKenzie, and they are highly regarded by both the marketing and management organisations responsible for the destination. It is not surprising, therefore, that the issues and problems identified by both marketing and management organisations relate to the natural attributes of Lake McKenzie.

### **5.5.6 Esplanade Lagoon Images**

The Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, is an artificial beach developed and managed by the Cairns City Council who's aim is "to provide aquatic and entertainment facilities and parklands that are well maintained and presented in a safe environment that can be enjoyed by the local residents and visitors to Cairns" (Cairns City Council, 2004a). The image of the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon is directed towards recreation and relaxation in an environment that provides pristine sand and water, landscaped gardens, located in close proximity to all of the facilities provided by the central business district of Cairns.

The management organisation views all of these attributes as important to the image of the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon. It is the combination of ideal nature and culture attributes that forms the image of this artificial beach. The main issue identified with the location is unsupervised children. While this may not have an impact on the image of the beach to visitors, this issue is obviously impacting on the ability of the Cairns City Council to manage the beach experience.

### **5.6.7 Management Implications**

Essentially, the beginning of successful management of the images of these beaches is the identification and agreement of the important nature and culture attributes of the beach by both management and marketing organisations. Following this agreement, both organisations can combine efforts to manage the images that lead to the satisfaction of the tourists who visit these beaches. The case studies revealed that this method is, to a certain extent, currently in place. Most of the beach tourism destinations had either management and/or marketing plans that both identified the key attributes of the destinations, and the relationship of these attributes to the images of each destination.

It would appear that these results are in direct contrast with arguments made by other researchers who state that images (particularly those used in brochures) are not always befitting the location they are advertising (Ashworth, 1991; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000). While the images

produced of these tourism destinations in brochures are somewhat more idealised, the importance placed on attributes, and the consideration of the best features, suggests that there is indeed consistency in image portrayal.

The key issues that were identified by beach tourism destination management and marketing organisations were largely concerned with social problems including overcrowding, and pollution. The constructed, semi-constructed and artificial beaches were also concerned with problems relating to development, pollution, and particular social problems. Interestingly, more development and increased pollution were changes that tourists least wanted to occur at their favourite/ideal beach. Pollution is a key environmental issue that faces many of the world's beaches (Burton, 1995; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999). It is therefore, also expected to appear in these beach tourism destinations as an issue. Pollution, and the other issues identified in this study, are generally associated with beaches that are in or near towns and cities. The remote, semi-remote and lake beach were largely concerned with impacts on the experience and natural attributes from increased numbers visiting those beaches. Obviously, since the images of these types of beaches rely on the nature attributes as well as lack of people and other human-related problems, the popularity of these beaches is of greatest concern for the future of these beach tourism destinations. It was clear from the descriptions of the future of each beach tourism destination, that showed concerns for overdevelopment, overcrowding and environmental degradation, that these issues are strong elements of the images held by these organisations.

This study has shown, by using the attributes identified by international visitors to each destination, that management and marketing organisation also carry similar or the same images. Moreover, the management and marketing organisations share the same concerns for beaches as do the tourists who visit them. There is a distinct relationship between the destination, the visitor, and the management and marketing organisations that associate with the images of beach tourism destinations. This relationship is complex, yet significant, therefore cannot be ignored in beach image studies. Consequently, any future study of beach images would benefit from research based on visitors, and management and marketing organisations.

## CHAPTER 6

### BEACH IMAGES: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



*Sunset on remote Cape York Peninsula beach*

*(Source: Fay Falco-Mammone, 2003)*

## **6.1 Introduction**

The present research has provided new information on the images of beaches. Firstly, a meaning for beach images was established. Secondly, the meaning of beach images provided the foundation for the structure of the Beach Images Conceptual Framework, from which beach images were measured. Finally, the management of beach images was studied in context with the meaning and measurement, to establish the connections between tourists' and managers' images of beaches.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the implications of this research conducted on beach images. This is achieved by drawing conclusions from the results of the beach image studies, in context with the research problem and literature reviewed. The discussion focuses on the theme of this research - the meaning, measurement and management of beach images. In discussing the research implications, this section also includes the directions for future research.

## **6.2 Research Implications**

### **6.2.1 Beach Images: Meaning**

This thesis commenced by raising a proposition that beach images exist and they have meaning to those who visit it. The lack of research on the subject of beach images inspired the search for the meaning in the combination of traditional and established research themes and subjects relating to images. Environmental and destination image concepts, connecting geography, sociology and psychology, were useful in informing the study of the meaning of beach images.

The background literature showed that, for the purpose of studying beach images, the beach could be defined geographically. The beach consists of spatial characteristics representing particular coastal zones (Lawson Baud-Bovy, 1977; Gunn, 1988) that consist of various measurable attributes (Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a, 1999b). This suggests that that the beach is place containing very specific characteristics, having its own identity, and is discernable from other tourist locations. Beaches have a high degree of “imageability”, thus possessing the combination of “identity, structure and meaning” (as termed by Lynch, 1960, p. 8). Imageability demonstrates that the beach can produce a distinct and identifiable image in the minds of tourists. Initially, the image is represented by the physical attributes, such as the sand, and the ocean, that are located within the geographical zones of the beach. These attributes are the foundation of the



image of the beach. It is, however, the 'meaning' of the beach, that people attach to the physical attributes – such as the sun, sea, and sand – that generates the “imageability” of the beach. 'Meaning' can be found through understanding the socio-cultural characteristics associated with the experience at the beach. The literature reviewed concerning beach experiences led to the association of the socio-cultural characteristics with the meaning and, in turn, the image of the beach.

To begin with, the notion that the beach is “a particular kind of place, peopled by individuals acting in a specific manner and engaging in predictable routines” (Shields, 1991, p.60) is indeed representative of the meaning of the beach. Beattie (1981) also suggested, that, it is people who give meaning to the beach. These statements do not imply, however, that every image of an ideal beach necessarily contains people, but that it is the people themselves and their own socio-cultural characteristics that create this image of the beach. Essentially, there is a connection between people and the beach that moulds and shapes the image of the beach. This connection is generated by tourists' perceptions and cognition (intellectual evaluation) – the very elements that define images (see Section 2.2.2 for definitions of image). Moreover, while perception and cognition define the beach, they are then “mediated by experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, and personality” (Walmsley, 1984, p. 64). These represent the socio-cultural characteristics of beach experiences and images.

The literature review on beach experiences also revealed that there are many variations of socio-cultural characteristics relating to the beach (Cohen, 1982a,b; Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary, 2001; Passariello, 1983; Patullo, 1996; Urry, 1987; 1990). In each case, the physical attributes of those beaches defined the location for the experience, but, it was tourists' perceptions and cognitions that defined the experience. More over, individual, as well as nationality-based culture groups were found to be diverse in their perceptions and cognition of the beach and in how they use the beach. This was further substantiated in the investigation of tourists socio-cultural representations of the beach.

As has been stated, it is tourists' socio-cultural representations of the beach that frame the meaning of beach images. Social representations that give an 'iconic quality' to the beach (Moscovici, 1984), are revealed in tourists' beach images. For example, the most obvious social representation organising beach images is that of the 'touristic paradise'. The evidence from the literature review supports the 'touristic paradise' concept that has permeated the tourist image of the beach and has maintained beaches as prime tourist destinations. In particular, the physical characteristics of sun, sea, sand and swaying palm trees, combined with the tourist's 'other world' ideology, are the strongest elements of the ideal beach image (Cohen, 1982b; Lencek & Bosker, 1999 ; Lofgren, 1999; Wang, 2000; Westerhausen 2002 ).

The strength of this beach image quality is supported in other research. As Moscardo (2005) found, most of these beach attributes were core elements in the tourists' social representations of 'tourism' itself. The literature review drew similarities to these results in tourists' images of beaches. In Moscardo's (2005) study, groups from different nationalities sketched generic images of tourism and frequently used either developed or undeveloped beaches, regardless of nationality (Moscardo, 2005). It is apparent that beachers are a constant iconic core in tourism images and that these images are common across cultures, irrespective of whether the study derives the images from questions about beaches or from investigations of tourism itself.

Additionally, groups of tourists, also demonstrated the structure of social representations in the beach image literature. The literature review established that variations of meanings attached to beach images were shaped by the socio-cultural elements of different nationalities and beach culture groups visiting the beach. Two examples of this illustrate this diversity in meaning. Patullo (1996) found that Caribbean beach experiences ranged from tourists seeking budget-based, "cheep and cheerful" experiences, to tourists seeking the 'luxury-exclusivity' experience. Both tourist groups visited the Caribbean, yet each group held different images of the location. Westerhausen (2002) also determined the existence of a variety of sub-culture groups based on different beach experiences desired by the tourists who visited Thailand – these were primarily the backpacker/drifters and the resort tourists. The core representation of the beach for all of these groups was the 'touristic paradise' and 'other world' image. Yet,

these types of tourists represented sub-groups of the core representation. The sub-groups represented 'paradise – primitive' on the one hand - to those tourists desiring to escape to unsophisticated beachside locations; and 'paradise – contrived' on the other hand, to those tourists seeking the luxuries and freedom at exclusive beachfront resorts. The two examples alone, serve as illustrations of the extent to which the social-cultural groups present diverse meanings of the beach.

Consequently, the meaning of the beach is found in the melting pot of physical, social and cultural characteristics that are superimposed over the natural attributes of the beach. Primarily, the beach is natural attraction, consisting of the basic elements of sun, sea, and sand. It is not, however, limited to these natural elements to create the image of the beach. The beach also reflects all of the elements of socio-cultural representations imported from human interactions with the beach. The meaning of the beach is, exactly as Fisk (1989) conceptualised – essentially that of nature and culture. The meaning of beach images, however, has complex characteristics that are difficult to list in a concise and conventional model. This implies that that any measurement of beach images requires attention to a combination of natural, psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and their respective measurement techniques.

### **6.2.2 Beach Images: Measurement**

The Beach Images Conceptual Framework was designed to examine the various characteristics of beach images. The framework incorporated measurement techniques primarily from two established fields of image research – environmental images and tourist destination images. It has been argued that combining measurement techniques can result in better understanding of tourists' images (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Francescato and Mebane, 1973; Pearce, 1977). The blending in this study of cognitive mapping, structured and unstructured techniques based on the Beach Images Conceptual Framework achieved results that support this mixed methodology.

The combination of techniques was successful in reducing some of the limitations previously identified by image researchers that are inherent to each of the measurement techniques. The inability of mental maps to fully capture the social, psychological and physiological characteristics that exist in images of beaches prompted the use of a questionnaire. The open-ended questions solicited more information than could be provided in the cognitive mapping exercise. The questionnaire also offered an opportunity for those who do not have artistic inclinations or are not able to spatially depict their images of beaches, to explain their image in greater detail. Consequently, a combination of the two techniques, not only overcame these limitations, but served as a method for increasing the strength of the image, and in turn, validating the data.

To begin with, the spatial representations, shown in Figures 6 and 7 (in Section 3.5.1) have major implications for future beach image research. As this

research has shown, the combination of Lynch's (1960) elements and Gunn's (1988) beach zones can result in a comprehensive spatial representation of the beach. As such, in response to the lament of previous image researchers on the limitations of image measurement techniques (Dann, 1996b; Dann & Phillips, 2000; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Pearce, P. L. & Fagence, 1996; Pike, 2002), the present research offers an alternative method for measuring images. The significance of the spatial elements of images requires further consideration as a foundation for establishing images particularly those of natural locations, such as beaches. It is the spatial representation characteristics that are, according to Lynch (1960, p.9) "the quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer". Consequently, image measurement benefits from the inclusion of spatial representation parameters.

The image of the beach was also distinguished as a synthesis of the symbolic representations of nature and culture (Fisk, 1989). While some of the natural and cultural characteristics of beach images were consistent with those identified in other studies of beaches (Burton, 1995; Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Leatherman, 2002; Morgan, 1999a; 1999b) the beach images obtained in these studies revealed many more attributes of nature and culture than are usually found in attribute lists. The most notable were the natural attributes represented by different types of flora, fauna, and geographical features. These are important characteristics of beach images that would appear to be underestimated in attribute check lists of other beach studies. In particular, there are specific types of physical attributes that make a beach ideal; therefore, attention should be paid to

these when measuring beach attributes. For example, both Morgan (1999) and Leatherman (2002) measured only the existence, variety and quantity of flora and fauna. The results of this study show, however, that it would be more beneficial to be specific about such measurements and perhaps qualify the types of attributes in more detail. This would produce parameters more specific to the different types of beach environments that exist.

Another significant core element found in these studies was the feeling or emotion associated with the beach. The dominant feeling or emotion in the beach images was described in terms such as peace, quiet, serenity and relaxation. These feelings were present in the beach sketches, in the descriptions, in the activities, and in the memories of the beach, as well as in the reasons for visiting the beach. There are implications stemming from the existence of this core element. The existence and more over, the dominance of these feelings in the beach images implies that it is not only the physical characteristics of the beach that define the 'iconic' quality of the beach, but the psychological characteristics as well. In fact, the evidence in the studies suggests that tourists' feelings associated with the beach and those derived from the beach experience, are crucial elements in creating the overall image of the beach. This supports the arguments raised in previous image research, suggesting that it is important to capture these psychological and unique components in destination image measurement (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Furthermore, image research can be enhanced by bringing the tourist 'back into the study' (Dann, 1996b) rather than focusing on the reproduced promotional images of the destination only. Studying tourists'

responses has arguably increased the insights into the totality of the beach imagery.

### **6.2.3 Beach Images: Management**

The findings of this research prompt a number of recommendations for the future management of beach images. Firstly, there is an emphasis on changing tourism trends and beach images associated with the present research. From the research literature, it was clear that beach visitors were seeking new and different experiences (Urry, 1987, 1990, Moscardo, Pearce, Green and O'Leary, 2001; Gomez and Rebollo, 1995; Morgan, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998). In particular, it would appear from the results of the first and second studies, that there is a trend towards favouring the natural attributes as opposed to the constructed attributes of beaches. Interestingly, however, as Morgan (1999b) found, there are beach visitors whose image is dominated by natural attributes, but also includes the attributes of culture found at resort-style beaches. Whether these results are due to the ease of access to these types of beaches or emerging tourist preferences is not clear from the present research.

Secondly, it has been suggested that future images are built on past and present images, and that this is a continual process (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1996; Gunn 1972; 1988; Powell, 1977). Consequently, future images of beaches may reflect the qualities of those found in



the present research. Nonetheless, the process of re-engineering and re-inventing the beach will continue, and it is this ever-changing image that will require constant vigilance. Particular attention should be paid to the issues regarding images that are reflected as environmental and development problems (Burton, 1995; Gomez & Rebollo, 1995; Lencek & Bosker, 1999; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998); and marketing issues (Ashworth, 1991; Dann, 1996a; Dilley, 1986; Stabler, 1988; Wang, 2000; Ashworth, 1991; Stabler, 1988; Cohen, 1982). Additionally, while the present research did not find artificial beaches in tourists' images, the popularity and ease of access to urban artificial beaches, suggests that they may indeed prove to be competition for natural beaches. There is some indication of this in the third study that included the evaluation of management and marketing of the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, a city-based artificial beach. While this beach is not marketed as a primary tourist attraction in the city of Cairns, it is one of the most popular beach destinations for city-based tourists because of its close proximity to the central business district, city hotels and motels, and other tourist centres.

Thirdly, at the actual beach tourism destinations, there is need to emphasise the preservation of the natural attributes in the beach landscape. These were dominant attributes in all of the tourists' beach images in the first two studies and a part of the iconic representation identified in the literature review. More over, in the third study, the management and marketing organisations also highly valued the natural attributes at their Queensland-based beach tourism destinations. This, along with other studies of beaches that found similar outcomes (Morgan, 1999b; Tunstall & Penning-Roswell, 1998), suggests that the

natural attributes are the most significant in the structure of beach images. In particular, the dominance of natural attributes in these beach images was found across all of the culture groups. Variations in the natural attributes occurred only in the preference for particular natural attributes. Consequently, not only should this be considered by beach managers, but by beach marketing organisations as well.

Finally, it would perhaps be more appropriate to describe ideal beach images in terms of their dominant natural attributes - namely sun, sea, sand and scenery. The results of this research have shown that these four main dimensions are dominant in tourists' beach images. More elaborately, tourists' ideal beach image consists of "a warm sun, clear blue sea, white sand, (swaying) palm trees, nestled in a remote cove surrounded by mountains, with picturesque views", assuming these attributes exist at the particular beach. In light of the management organisations' views, and changing trends in beach tourism (Poon, 1993; Sharpley, 1994; Urry, 1990), it would be beneficial to consider variations of this type of description, depending on the attributes of nature and culture endemic to their beach within promotional literature of these beaches.

These directions in the management of beach images derive from Study Three, where particular Queensland beaches and their representations were discussed in detail.

### **6.3 Limitations and Research Directions**

The current study was specifically designed to address the meaning, measurement and management of beach images. The structure of the study was restricted by a number of parameters incorporated in the objectives and methodological structure. The following section discusses the structural limitations only, since limitations relating to the samples used were already discussed in each study's methodology. In doing so, this section identifies possible research directions evolving from the present study.

To begin with, the conceptual structure of the study limited methodology to examining the suitability of the beach image characteristics as identified in the Beach Image Conceptual Framework. Each component in the framework was identified and examined in both the mental mapping exercise and the questionnaire items. This study, however, did not investigate the relationship between these beach image characteristics or the strength of the tourists' conviction towards these characteristics. Modification of the methodological approach, such as using specific questions and measurement scales could provide further insight into image component relationships.

The research focused on the structure of overall beach images by identifying and examining the beach image characteristics of tourists' favourite or ideal beaches only. In reality, there are many types of beaches that represent a

diverse range of locations, beach characteristics and images. Additional understanding of the images of beaches could be gained from specifically targeting different beach and tourist types. The present study could be replicated using alternative beach locations as the focus of tourists' images. For example, tourists located on actual beaches that are the focus of the study may produce different images than those found in the present study. Alternatively, tourists at non-beach locations could be used to study images of predetermined and more specific beach locations. The types of tourists may also have implications on the characteristics of the images resulting from this line of research. The current study's sample consisted of visitors to an predominantly nature-based destination (Cairns, Australia). This factor perhaps flavoured their images with more dominant nature characteristics. Although some contrasts were instituted here by having respondents describe their favourite beach which could be anywhere and of any type. A replication of the study using tourists seeking a more diverse range of experiences could produce supportive or slightly different results.

The unique structure and methodology adopted in this research has been proven valuable in identifying tourists' images of beaches. A similar structure could also prove useful for studying images of other existing as well as hypothetical tourist locations or environments. For example, the images of popular tourist destinations such as mountain tops, parks, river-scapes, scenic lookouts and natural icons could be examined in greater detail. Moreover, images of potential destinations could be structured using similar methods. As the research has shown, the characteristics of tourists' images relate directly to management

and marketing strategies, particularly those that rely on natural attractions. It is clear that management and marketing research of such tourist destinations could benefit from greater understanding of the image attributes of these destinations that both exist at the destination and are desired by the tourists who visit them.

The current research has shown that social representations are useful in providing a deeper understanding of the development and strength of images. To date, the role of social representations in both tourism and tourist image research has been largely under-developed. Yet, as discussed in this study, social representations theory provided a complementary method of examining tourists' images. Apart from the structure of tourists' images, it is important to also understand the ways in which tourists develop and communicate their experiences, of which images play an essential role. While the social representations theory was utilised in limited capacity in this research, future research specifically focusing on social representations and their association with images of tourist destinations could improve the depth of image research.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

The research presented in this thesis has served to expand the field of image research, particularly with a focus on beach images. The objective of this research were to identify the "meaning, measurement and management" of beach images. The Beach Images Conceptual Framework was instrumental to fulfilling

the objectives of the studies that examined the components of beach images. The research supported the existence of beach images, suggesting they have meaning and can be measured using a variety of techniques. Management of beach images requires such an understanding in order to achieve an appropriate connection between actual beach image characteristics, managers' images and beach visitors' images.

Future research is encouraged in theoretical approaches as well as for practical needs. Since beach images have been shown to exist, and are restructuring and re-engineering, this research is essential in maintaining an understanding of beach images. Furthermore, since beaches appear to be highly sought after, strongly valued and imaged, the advancement of beach image research should reflect such public interest. It is the qualities of beach images found in this research that should fuel future research.

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