
A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Business

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Cover Photo: Example of destruction in Thailand caused by the Tsunami
Source: The Age Website (2004)
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Abbreviations
CDMF Crisis and Disaster Management Framework
DIRE Disaster Incident Response Evaluation
ICO04 Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)
TDMF Tourism Disaster Management Framework
TICDMF Tourism Industry Crisis and Disaster Management Framework
Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness of both Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) and Ritchie’s Crisis Disaster Management Framework (CDMF). It assessed and adapted both frameworks, and applied them to Australian based tour operators in the context of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004). Both frameworks propose six phases of crisis management: Pre Event; Prodromal; Emergency; Intermediate; Long-term recovery; and Resolution.

Research to date has suggested Faulkner’s framework requires further testing and analysis of specific crisis such as natural disasters. This relates directly to the continued need for the tourism industry to understand and apply the optimal approach to dealing with a crisis, an understanding of which is still lacking. Although significant research has been completed in the field of crisis management for destinations, limited research has focused on tour operators. This study focused on tour operators as a specific sector of the industry, and aimed to identify what form of crisis management strategies were utilised during a large scale natural disaster.

To successfully identify these management strategies, 24 specific questions were developed adapting Faulkner’s Tourism Disaster Accident Response Grid. This response grid originated from the research completed by Faulkner and Vikulov on the Katherine Floods in 2001. The questions explored all six phases of the framework which considered crisis management responses and strategies in detail. These included Risk Assessment, Disaster Contingency Plans, Crisis Communication and Stakeholder Management, all key attributes explored in depth in the study. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with a selection of Australian based Tour operators. These operators were identified as conducting tours in one or more of the affected regions of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004).

The use of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) and Ritchie’s (2004) frameworks permitted an exploration of the challenges, actions and strategies employed by these operators. The results from these interviews identified a range of recommendations for tour operators, who were found to be deficient in appropriate crisis management measures. Of these recommendations, one of the key suggestions was for tour operators to develop a formal crisis management plan and complete a risk assessment on the destinations where tours are offered. This should consider a variety of different types of crisis, as each requires a different response and management approach.
Declaration

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis or any other degree or diploma.

No other person’s work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Signed:

Dated:
Acknowledgments

To begin, I would firstly like to acknowledge the time, effort, guidance and most importantly encouragement, provided to me throughout this journey from my primary supervisor Mr Gary Best, and supporting supervisor Dr Warwick Frost. I would also like to thank Dr Dale Sanders and Dr Sue Beeton, who both acted in supervisory roles in the early stages of my research. I am fortunate to have been supported over the last four years by such talented academics, all whom have inspired me to complete my Master of Business and feel proud of what I have accomplished. I would also like to thank all the tour operators who participated in this study; without their involvement and support, this research would not have been possible. I appreciate the time you spent with me to share and recall your experience of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004).

One outcome of this research is to provide you with some recommendations, which may be of use to you in future crisis or disaster situations. I would like to thank La Trobe University for providing me the opportunity to engage with students studying the tourism industry. My position as an Associate Lecturer at the University has allowed me to appreciate the role and benefits of educating others. This would not have been possible had it not been for my own studies which has lead me to this role.

There are many staff at La Trobe I would like to thank, all whom have assisted me in some way throughout my Masters. These include Lisa Melsen and Paul Willard, both of whom have kindly offered their support at different stages of my research. I would like to thank Nina Hasic who acted as my research assistant in my time of need. Thank you, too, to Kiera Staley for keeping me sane at some of my most stressful moments, sharing an office with you made it a delight to come to work. Special thanks to my post-graduate supervisors, Dr Russell Hoye and Dr Emma Sherry, for all their support and encouragement to finish my Masters of Business.

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keep going and never give up on the challenges I set myself. Thank you to Chris Smith for offering to be my ‘final eye’ to my thesis: your time and efforts are very much appreciated. To my cousin Travis Beck, thanks for keeping my spirits high at times when I was going to walk away. An extended ‘Thank you’ to my partner Reuben Smith for being so patient and, most importantly, for believing in me. To Janice and Lisa, thank you for caring for me as a daughter and sister and, finally to my late father Richard Derham; thank you for watching over me.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father, Mr Richard Derham. Thank you for being my sole inspiration in life, your memory lives on in me.
1.1 Introduction to this thesis

The tourism industry is regularly faced with disaster situations, a reality that indicates the necessity of crisis management practices by both destinations and stakeholder groups. Faulkner notes that research into how the industry adjusts to a disaster situation has not received significant attention in the literature, “even though it is arguable that all destinations face the prospect of either a natural or human-induced disaster at some time in their history” (2001:332).

Ritchie (2009) has made a significant contribution to the field of crisis management and argues that research to date on the issue lacks a theoretical and conceptual focus, with more work required on developing and testing models within the tourism field. In particular he notes that only few researchers have tested Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF), and encourages researchers to develop and test the model (Ritchie 2009).

Disaster and Crisis Management frameworks have been developed by a number of researchers including: Murphy and Bayley (1989); Smith (1990); Santana (1999); Faulkner and Vikulov (2001); Ritchie (2004); Paraskevas and Arendell (2007); Hystad & Keller (2008); Lyon and Worton (2007); Armstrong 2008; and Murphy (2008). Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) model has received significant attention in the literature with researchers testing the model on different disasters including the 1998 Katherine Floods, the 1999 Avalanche Disaster in the Tyrol, the 2001 Foot and Mouth Outbreak in the UK and the 2003 SARS epidemic. Tourism Queensland has also adapted the model as part of their crisis management planning. The framework was used to develop Tourism Queensland’s first tourism crisis management plan (Anderson 2006), which was used to respond to Cyclone Larry in 2006 (Tourism Queensland 2007).
Chapter 1: Introduction

Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) developed the TDMF to be applicable to a variety of disasters, and is substantiated through the variety of testings to date. Prideaux states “The ability of the TDMF to be employed in a wide range of disaster situations is a major strength of the framework” (2003: 296) This study will use an adapted version of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s TDMF and Ritchie’s Crisis Disaster Management Framework (CDMF) (Appendix One), to test its applicability to the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004 (IOT04), a disaster which has not been tested. The Tsunami experience is discussed in the sections that follow, justifying why the IOT04 was selected as the case study for this thesis, and also discussing the impact of this on the tourism industry.

1.2 Study focus: the Tsunami experience

The IOT04 has been acknowledged by Francesco Frangialli, the Secretary-General of the WTO as "the greatest catastrophe ever recorded in the history of world tourism" (World Tourism Organisation 2005a). It is estimated that up to 225,000 people lost their lives (Henderson 2005), with eight countries affected (Figure one).

Of those countries Thailand, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka suffered extensive damage to their tourist destinations (Robertson, Kean and Moore 2006). The Tsunami was reported to have created waves up to 17 metres high, with an earthquake magnitude of 9.0. The financial cost of the disaster is predicted to reach $US 11 billion dollars, which considers short-term relief and long-term reconstruction, as well as humanitarian needs (Walls 2005).

![Figure 1 Nations affected by the 26th of December Indian Ocean Tsunami](image)

Source: Centre of Excellence In Disaster Management (2005)

** Text highlighted indicates death toll and numbers missing as of December 29th, 2005
Chapter 1: Introduction

Thailand was the "tourism epicentre of this tragedy" (World Tourism Organisation, 2005a), affecting a range of Thai coastal destinations. In these regions, 5000 people were reported to have lost their lives; of those, 2000 were tourists (Henderson 2005). Table 1.1 details the decreases in the number of International Tourism Arrivals to Phuket in 2005; overall, arrivals were down 62.4% in 2005, from 2004. Table 1.2 outlines the changes in tourist numbers, average length of stay, average expenditure and revenue. The figures for 2005 demonstrate a downturn in visitor numbers, which impacts upon other variables. What can also be noted is the increase in tourism numbers by 20% in 2006, which is a strong indicator of destination recovery.

### Table 1-1 International Tourism Arrivals to Phuket

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### Table 1-2 Tourism Statistics in Thailand 1998-2007

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Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand Website (2007)
As Thailand is highly dependent on tourism, these alarming statistics presented problems for much of the regions damaged by the Tsunami. For example, revenue from foreign tourists declined by 99.4% in Phang Nga, a major tourism province in Thailand, and 79.2% in Phuket. As the region of Phang Nga was almost completely destroyed, the significant downturn in foreign tourism revenue was to be expected, however Phuket only sustained a limited amount of infrastructural damage, with reports 90% of hotel rooms in Phuket were available for tourists (Birkland, Herabat, Little and Wallace, 2006).

As Phuket was not largely affected by the Tsunami in terms of infrastructure damage, the decline can only be associated with the tourist perception that Phuket was in fact badly damaged by the Tsunami and is unsafe to travel to (Birkland, et al 2006). Rittichainuwat (2006) research found that negative travel advisories were responsible for influencing tourists to stay away from destinations in Thailand affected by the Tsunami, including Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga, even though business was returning to normal, with both infrastructure and facilities resorted. As a result of both the travel advisories and media attention, destinations were perceived to be unsafe to travel to (Rittichainuwat 2006). The Phuket situation demonstrates that perceptions of danger may themselves have serious consequences for a destination.

The Tsunami experience is discussed in detail in the literature review in Chapter Two, which investigates destination vulnerability and recovery efforts following the disaster. This introduction has provided a justification for selecting the IOT04 as the case study for this thesis, through providing a descriptive analysis and relevant statistics of the direct impact the event had on tourism.
1.3 Purpose, research question, aim and objectives

1.3.1 Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to examine how Australian based tour operators prepared and responded to the tsunami, and explores what disaster management strategies were both in place and their perceived effectiveness. Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF (Appendix Two) and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF (Appendix Three) were used as the conceptual frameworks to guide the research. The Tourism Disaster Incident Response Evaluation (DIRE) grid, used by Faulkner and Vilkulov (2001) in a previous study, was adapted to develop the interview schedule.

1.3.2 Research question
What strategies, consultation and collaboration did Australian based Tour Operators employ to prepare and respond to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)?

1.3.3 Research aim:
To adapt and test Faulkner and Vikulov’s TDMF (2001) and Ritchie’s CDMF (2004) in the context of Australian based tour operators and a large scale natural disaster. The research outcomes from this will provide a contribution to the existing disaster and crisis management literature, through adapting two well known conceptual frameworks. It will also provide recommendations to tour operators on relevant disaster management practices.
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1.3.4 Research objectives:
In order to achieve the above aim, the following research objectives were developed.

(1) Examine the disaster management measures implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)

(2) Explore the challenges, actions and most effective crisis communication strategies implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)

(3) Examine the level of consultation and collaboration Australian based tour operators had with internal and external stakeholders in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)


1.4 Crisis and Disaster management definitions
When researching crisis management a mutual understanding of the terminology in the literature is imperative, particularly when defining the terms ‘emergency’, ‘disaster’ and ‘catastrophe’ (Richardson 1994). What is common in the literature is that researchers draw on their own conclusions as to what a crisis is based on using their empirical studies, rather than a definition. Ritchie (2010) notes the commonalities between a crisis and disaster causes confusion, as the former can cause the latter. Faulkner also believes “the distinction between crises and disasters is often somewhat blurred and it is for this reason it has been suggested that they represent opposite poles of a continuum, rather than a dichotomy” (2001, 146).
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There are **key characteristics** which link both disasters and crisis and include a triggering event, a high threat environment with short response times, the perception of an inability for those who are directly affected by the crisis/disaster to cope with it and finally a turning point where the situation is responded to (Faulkner 2001). This is characterised by a ‘*fluid, unstable, dynamic*’ situation (Fink 1986, cited in Prideaux 2003, p.284). These characteristics were established through extensive research by Faulkner (2001) in the disaster management literature drawing upon the likes of Fink (1986), Keown-McMullan, (1997) and Weiner and Kahn (1972). Pauchant and Douville provide a clear definition of a crisis which they believe is the most acceptable to apply in diverse fields:

> “Crises are disruptive situations affecting an organization or a given system as a whole and challenging previously held basic assumptions; they often require urgent and novel decisions and actions, leading potentially to a later restructuring of both the affected system and the basic assumptions made by the system’s members”
>
> (1993: 46)

On the other end of the continuum, Faulkner provides a simplistic definition of a disaster as one which is “triggered by events over which the victim has little control and their impacts are, therefore, to some degree unavoidable” (2001,146). Prideaux, Laws and Faulkner expand on this, describing disasters as “*unpredictable catastrophic change that can normally only be responded to after the event, either by deploying contingency plans already in place or through reactive response*” (2003, 478). Such changes are likely to have a negative impact on the tourism industry.

In tourism, a range of definitions have been used to describe this impact. Scott and Laws (2005) describe a disaster as a catastrophic event, causing only negative effects on a system. Similarly, Anderson (2006) describes a disaster as a major negative event which has the potential to impact the tourism industry causing a downturn in visitation. Faulkner (2001) focuses on the differences between a crisis and a disaster, suggesting that a crisis is caused by problems throughout an organisation i.e. practices, failure to adapt to change,
and inept management structures, where as a disaster is when the organisation is confronted with an unpredictable catastrophic change which cannot be controlled.

Although numerous researchers have attempted to distinguish between a crisis and a disaster, others believe there is no agreed upon definition of a crisis (McConnell 2003). Further to this, Laws and Prideaux (2005) argue for the need to provide a consistent definition in the literature which distinguishes the differences between a crisis and a disaster. This then would ensure a uniform approach by all researchers when studies of specific crises are undertaken (Laws and Prideaux 2005).

However, McConnell (2003) proposes it is not the facts which defines a crisis, but the perception which people have of the scale and importance of the problem encountered, that is, the crisis, or disaster itself. What adds further complexity is the view that an event can be classified as both a disaster and a crisis (Miller and Ritchie 2003). So whether you are discussing a crisis or disaster, both require effective planning and management strategies to deal with the consequences, as described by Santana (1999) and Evans and Elphick (2005) four ‘rs’ approach.

Santana defines Crisis Management (1999) as:

> ‘an ongoing integrated and comprehensive effort that organizations effectively put into place in an attempt to first and foremost understand and prevent crisis, and to effectively manage those that occur, taking into account in each and every step of their planning and training activities, the interest of their stakeholders’

(Cited in Santana 2003:308)

Similarly, Evans and Elphick 4 ‘rs’. Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery (2005:140 approach takes prior planning into consideration, allowing stakeholders to be better prepared to respond to a crisis and providing the training and resources to assist with the destination recovery process. However, the management of a crisis or disaster can only be as effective as the prior planning which has been completed, and according to Henderson and Ng
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(2004), this is the responsibility of the tourism industry. Ritchie (2008) expresses the need to move away from disaster management to disaster reduction. This move would reduce damage to economies and potentially save lives, and emphasises the need for prior planning, a focus which this research study will investigate.

From this discussion it is evident that further research is required to understand crisis and disaster management, a phenomenon which is becoming more complex as globalisation increases. As a result of this increase, tourism is becoming more susceptible to external factors including political instability and conflict caused by war. This is due to growing global interdependency, which consequently has the potential for a crisis to reduce tourism visitation to a number of countries, beyond the region the crisis initially occurred (Ritchie 2004).

To limit these negative impacts, crisis and disaster management is noted as a key requirement for both tourism destination managers and business managers (Ritchie 2004). Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) Crisis Disaster Management Framework (CDMF) are two key examples of the recognition disaster management has received in the literature, and this study argues the need for them to be implemented by both tourism managers to minimise the negative impacts of both crisis and disasters.

1.5 Research design
This research utilised Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF framework, elements of which had been used later in Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF framework. The epistemology is informed by the constructionist perspective in order to understand how tour operators engage in crisis management. Tour operators were selected using a purposive sampling method to test the framework, using the IOC04 as a single case study.

Veal (2006:109) argues that “a case study can be used to test the applicability of an existing theory” which validates the application of an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (CDMF). Semi-structured
in-depth interviews were completed with senior management from six tour operators in Australia, using an interview guide adapted from Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) DIRE grid. The interview guide addresses the six crisis management stages of the framework, ensuring its applicability to tour operators. The data was then analysed using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) three stage process: Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusions Drawing and Verification. The research outcomes from this study have provided a contribution to the existing crisis management literature.

1.6 Contribution of this research

This study makes a contribution to the tourism crisis and disaster management literature, by providing an insight into tour operators’ preparation for and responses to, the IOT04. This was identified as a research gap in the literature, with researchers noting the need to test crisis and disaster management models within the tourism field (Faulkner and Vikulov, 2001, Ritchie, 2009), with only a limited number of researchers applying Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF (Ritchie 2009).

Armstrong (2008) further notes “there have been few detailed case studies on individual businesses and how they have ‘lived’ through a crisis or disaster” (2008:198). She recommends researchers undertake case studies, which may then inspire other operators to prepare for a crisis, through the provision of guidelines to assist in responding to and recovery after a crisis (Armstrong 2008).

This research is aimed at assisting both the tour operators in this study and others through sharing the knowledge of how the participants lived through the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004). As the study analyses the preparation, response and recovery of the crisis, it provides a detailed examination, the results and recommendations of which can be used by other researchers to complete further testing of the adapted model on other tour operators or individual businesses. Other tour operators can also use the knowledge to assist in the development of their own crisis management plans.
1.7 Thesis structure

The thesis consists of six chapters. This introductory chapter has outlined the background to crisis management and the Tsunami experience, which provides justification for the case study selection. It further provides the aims, objectives and research question, and details the research design applied, which validates the application of Faulkner and Vikulvo’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF. Finally, it details the contribution this research will make to the existing literature, and the knowledge it will offer the tourism industry.

Chapter Two provides an analysis of the relevant literature and reviews the various processes relevant to Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s CDMF, which includes the classifications of crisis and disasters, crisis preparedness, planning, response, recovery and crisis communication. It then provides a discussion on ten crisis and natural disaster management frameworks, including Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s CDMF. As the focus of the case study for this thesis was the IOT04, the Tsunami experience is analysed, focusing on issues of destination vulnerability and the tourism industry impacts and recovery.

Chapter Three outlines the research design, in which justification for the approach is provided. The epistemology is discussed; with both the qualitative nature and case study approach being validated. The conceptual framework applied to the case study is then outlined, and the data collection method and analysis used to test this framework is explained. The chapter concludes with a justification of the validity and reliability of the research, whilst also acknowledging the limitations.

Chapter Four provides a detailed report of the case study findings, using Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF to guide the overall structure of the chapter. The chapter is divided into six key sections, as used in the TDMF and CDMF frameworks: Pre Event stage; Prodromal stage; Emergency stage; Intermediate stage; Long Term Recovery.
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stage and the Resolution stage. In each of the six sections, relevant headings are used to categorise and report on the participants’ responses.

Chapter Five discusses the research findings, drawing from the literature to make conclusions on the participants (tour operators) responses, and compares these to Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and where relevant Ritchie’s CDMF. To ensure consistency, the same structure as the results chapter has been used to discuss the results.

Chapter Six revisits the aims and objectives set in this study, addressing each objective separately and discussing the extent to which each was met. The chapter further highlights the limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for future study. A reference list follows this chapter as do the relevant Appendices which are cited throughout the thesis.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
This literature review will analyse and critique previous research, including industry documents relative to this thesis topic. It is important to examine the literature available to date on crisis management; as it provides the scope for the research and helps identifies the objectives for this case study. As Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF were both adapted as the conceptual framework in this case study, a descriptive analysis is provided on the different crisis and natural disaster management frameworks applied and developed by researchers, which also identifies their limitations. The review has a focus on literature relative to Faulkner and Vikulvo’s (2001) TDMF, and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF including different classifications of a crisis and the approaches taken to prepare, plan, respond, communicate and recover from a crisis. It concludes both with a review on the IOT04, and a justification for the research.

2.2 Classifying crises and disasters
In reviewing the literature on crisis and disaster management, a number of different types of crises and disasters that have challenged the tourism industry become apparent. These have been categorised by various researchers into: (i) internal organisational issues, (ii) natural disasters (iii) terrorist attacks,(iv) environmental changes, (v) health outbreaks, and (vi) market changes, including economic disasters and system failures (Ritchie 2009, Glaesser 2006, Santana 2003).

McKercher & Hui (2004) describe disasters as either natural events, such as a tsunami, or human induced events, such as terrorism. It is argued in the literature that due to the unpredictable nature of a disaster, lack of control is a key feature (Faulkner, 2001). Cioccio and Michael (2007) argue that control requires the necessary resources to adequately manage a disaster, which many organisations, particularly small businesses, do not have access to.
A number of disasters, including the Black Saturday Bushfires (2009), South Pacific Tsunami (2009), Cyclone Larry (2006), Hurricane Katrina (2005) and Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004) fall into the classification of a natural event. Various studies to investigate such disasters in detail, exploring the crisis management strategies implemented include: Gurtner (2006); Lenungboon, Charoenngam and Sunindijo; (2005), Prideaux, Coghlan and Falco-Mammone, (2007). Table 2.1 and 2.2 provides a typology of disasters and crisis, identifying some key characteristics and examples which has been adapted from Ritchie (2009: 28-29).

Of these, natural disasters in particular have received significant attention in the literature, with various studies completed to examine the impacts and consequences on the tourism industry including: Prideaux, Coghlan and Falco-Mammone (2007), Leungboon, Charoenngam and Sunindijo (2005), Gurtner (2006), Cioccio and Michael (2007), Ritchie (2004) and Faulkner and Vikulov (2001). More than 50,000 natural catastrophes have been reported worldwide over the past one hundred years, with a total of four million lives lost (Glaesser 2006), which equates to an average of 40,000 lives lost per year. The IOT04 as a single event accounted for more than 250,000 lives lost (Burnie, Coyne, Gilpin and Simons, 2007), and has been described as the worst on record (Ichinosawa 2006 and Margesson 2005).

Glaesser (2006) notes that large scale natural disasters are often hitting unprepared populations. This is associated with misleading consumer confidence of technological advances, such as the construction of buildings which have been designed to protect populations against flooding and earthquakes. Such measures do not provide protection against disasters, such as tsunamis (e.g IOT04) and hurricanes (e.g Hurricane Katrina) which also require additional planning measures in place. These measures include access to resources, however as Cioccio and Michael (2007) argue, a lack of resources available to small businesses is a limitation to formal crisis management planning. What has assisted destinations in their planning is the development and application of various crisis and disaster management frameworks, which is discussed in the section to follow.
Table 2-1: Typology of disasters and crises:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of crisis/disaster</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Natural or physical disasters | • When a building is damaged as a result of the weather or human influence  
• Includes earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, avalanches, fires, severe storms, biosecurity threats or technological hazards  
• Maybe as a result of natural processes such as climate change or the result of human processes or action such as deforestation, forest burning, pollution | • Black Saturday Bushfires 2009  
• Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004  
• UK Foot and Mouth Outbreak in 2001  
• SARS epidemic 2003  
• Forest fires in southern France 2003  
• European Floods 2002  
• Thredbo avalanche disaster 1999  
• Katherine Flood (Australia) 1998  
• Asian fires and smog haze in 1997  
• Kobe Earthquake 1995  
• Hurricane Hugo 1989 |
| Political crises/disasters | • The tourism industry and tourists are often an indirect victims, but can be specifically targeted in some cases.  
• Includes international wars, civil war, terrorism, riots and political and social unrest | • Thai Political Crises 2008/2009/2010  
• Gulf War 1991 and Iraq War 2003  
• September 11th terrorism attacks (USA), 2001  
• British handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997  
• Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia political instability  
• Fiji coups  
• Opposition by locals towards tourism development |
| Economic crisis | • Includes international recessions, regional currency crisis, national recessions and monetary crisis. | • Global Financial Crisis (2007-2009)  
• Slow down after September 11th, 2001  
• Asian economic crisis 1997-1998  
• Stock market crash 1987 |

<table>
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| **Malevolence**          | • When some outside actor or opponent employs extreme tactics to express anger toward the organisation or destination to force the organisation or destination to change  
  • Includes product tampering, kidnapping, terrorism and espionage | • Basque separatist group ETC bombing campaigns in Spanish resorts  
  • Muslim extremist attacks in Egypt in the 1990’s to force change in government |
| **Challenges**           | • When the organisation or destination is confronted by discontented stakeholders. The stakeholders challenge the organisation because they believe it is not operating in an appropriate manner and does not meet their expectations  
  • Includes boycotts, strikes, lawsuits, government penalties and protests | • Unofficial strike by British Airway check-in staff in July 2003  
  • Domestic air pilots strike in Australia in 1989  
  • Jet Airways pilot strike 2009 |
| **Mega damage**          | • When an accident causes significant environmental damage  
  • Includes oil spills and radioactive contamination | • Chernoboyl 1986  
  • Exxo oil spill 1989 |
| **Organisational misdeeds** | • When management takes actions, it knows will harm or serve to discredit or disgrace the organisation in some way  
  • Includes favouring short-term economic gain over social values, deliberate deception of stakeholders and illegal acts by management | • Bribery or price fixing  
  • Enron and Worldcom fraud |
| **Workplace Violence**   | • When an employee or former employee commits violence against other employees on organisational grounds  
  • Includes killing or injuring co-workers | • Sexual harassment by staff  
  • Rape or violence against hotel guests |
| **Rumours**              | • When false information is spread about an organisation or its products. The false information hurts the organisation’s reputation by putting the organisation in an unfavourable light  
  • Includes rumours linking the organisation to radical groups or stories that their products are contaminated | • Rumours of second terrorist attack after American Airlines plane crashes after September 11th, 2001 |

2.3 Crisis and natural disaster management frameworks

Heath (1998) argues there are two approaches to managing a crisis, firstly the crisis management approach which begins when the actual crisis occurs, and does not consider any pre-crisis planning (Cited in Miller and Ritchie 2003), where as “the risk management approach follows on from the traditional crisis management approach as it starts where the other finishes and is concerned with assessing and managing risk before a crisis begins (pre-crisis)” (Heath 1998, cited in Miller and Ritchie 2003:11). As the tourism industry faces the challenges of falling visitor numbers, lower employment numbers and a decline in profits (Laws and Prideaux 2005), research is showing the importance of both pre-planning and managing a crisis throughout all its stages. As a result, theoretical frameworks have been developed which examine the various stages of a crisis.

To date, a number of crisis and disaster management frameworks have been developed, each outlining mechanisms and strategies to manage each stage of a crisis. The frameworks outlined in this literature review were developed to examine tourism industry crises and are referred to in Table 2-3. Ten crisis management models are outlined, with the limitations clearly identified based on Armstrong’s (2008) and Evans and Elphick (2005) previous critiques.

The first to be examined is Murphy and Bayley’s (1989) four stage disaster planning model, the earliest noted to be adapted to a tourism crisis. Both the 1980 Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption (Washington State, USA) and the East Kootenay Fires (British Columbia) (1985) were examined and tested using Murphy and Bayley’s (1989) model. Armstrong describes the model as “a fairly simple assessment of the disaster cycle” (2008:19), whilst Ritchie (2009) acknowledges the research to be one of the few studies which considers the effectiveness of tourism disaster planning at a regional level.
Following this, Smith’s (1990) crisis management model, later modified by Smith and Spipika (1993), was applied by Evans and Elphick (2005) to a medium sized tour operator, following the terrorism events of 9/11. A key limitation of their research was that the tour operator selected for the study had no clients in the crisis affected region. The authors do however acknowledge ‘lessons to be learned’ in the wake of 911, contributing to the existing crisis management literature.

A further model to be developed pre 911 was Santana’s (1999) crisis management model. His model was based on Pearson and Mitroff’s five stage model: 1) signal detection, 2) preparation/prevention, 3) containment/damage limitation, 4) recovery, and 5) learning. Santana (1999) expanded on this, developing a tourism destination prescriptive based model. The framework outlines three key phases: crisis knowledge, crisis implementation and crisis resolution. Santana’s (1999) inclusion of planning systems at both the strategic, stakeholder and organizational level is a notable strength; however the recovery stage is limited and requires further development (cited in Armstrong 2008).

Following Santana’s (1999) model, Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) was the first tourism specific framework developed in the late 1990’s, and is one of the most frequently quoted in the literature (Henderson 2007a). It explores the various stages of a crisis which includes; Pre-event, Prodromal; Emergency, Intermediate, Recovery and Resolution (Faulkner 2001). The framework has been adapted and tested on a number of crises. These include the 1998 Katherine Floods (Faulkner and Vikulov 2001), the 2001 Foot and Mouth Outbreak in the UK (Miller and Ritchie 2003), Australia’s response to major tourism disasters in 2001 (Prideaux 2003), the 1999 Avalanche Disaster in Tyrol (Peters and Pikkemaat 2005), and the 2003 SARS epidemic (Henderson and Ng 2004) and the restoration of tourism after the 1999 Taiwan earthquake (Huang, Tseng and Petrick 2007). It has also been used to design a strategic framework for terrorism prevention (Paraskevas and Arendall 2007).
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Ritchie (2004) expanded on Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) (TDMF) utilising a strategic and holistic approach for both the planning and management of tourism crisis/disasters. The CDMF outlines three core stages: prevention and planning, implementation, evaluation and feedback. Each stage provides specific strategies which can be implemented with flexibility, a core advantage of the framework. Paraskevas and Arendell (2007) identifies a weakness of the framework is that it is quite generic; whilst Armstrong (2008) highlights that it does not distinguish between individual businesses and Destination Marketing Organisations.

A further contribution, which has built upon and synthesized the contributions of Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) and Ritchie (2004), through both the methodology approach and framework developed was developed by Paraskevas and Arendell (2007). The framework takes an anti-terrorism approach. As noted with other crisis management frameworks, there is a need for further testing to access its applicability on the three levels it proposes.

Lyon and Worton’s (2007) crisis management framework also expands on the work of Faulkner (2001). The framework outlines four key stages although provides minimal detail in the review/recovery stage, which is a key limitation. Ritchie (2004) notes further research is required on the recovery and resolution stage of a crisis, which is a further gap identified through this examination of crisis management models. This includes effective crisis communication, which is further noted by Ritchie (2009) as one of the most important elements when dealing with a crisis or disaster.

More recently, Ritchie’s (2004) framework has been tested by Armstrong (2008) on the recovery after the 2003 Canberra Fires. From her research findings she developed the Tourism Industry Crisis and Disaster Management Framework (TICDMF). The stages in this framework were developed from the case study findings, and still require further testing to assess its applicability to other tourism related crises at a destination/industry level.
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Murphy’s (2008) recent research into crisis management takes a resort focus, and considers natural disasters as those which frequently trigger crisis within the tourism industry. He combined both Ritchie’s (2004) three stage strategic management stages, Faulkner’s (2001) earlier crisis stages and their principal ingredients with a focus on resort orientated issues and actions. Murphy’s (2008) adapted framework ensures practicability for resorts in the tourism industry, to be able to clearly identify the actions and responsibilities of different stakeholders/individuals in each stage: Pre-crisis (crisis/ disaster prevention and planning), Actual crisis (strategic implementation) and Post Crisis (resolution, evaluation and feedback). The strategic framework requires testing to assess its applicability to a resort at a time of crisis.

Another recently developed framework on a natural disaster is Hystad & Keller’s destination tourism disaster management framework (2008). The framework is primarily based on a case study of the 2003 Kelowna forest fires in British Columbia, Canada. It draws attention to stakeholder roles throughout the different stages, which include ; Pre-Disaster, Disaster, Post-Disaster and Resolution. In each phase the primary, secondary and tertiary support roles are clearly outlined, detailing the communication channels and responsibilities required by the various stakeholders. Hystad and Keller (2008) propose that this framework can be applied to any tourism destination in the event of a crisis or disaster but this claim however is yet to be substantiated through further applications (Armstrong 2008). This is still a major limitation of many of the crisis management frameworks developed to date.

The discussion above identifies a need for a disaster response mechanism to be developed for both destinations and individual businesses. It is only in recent years however that the tourism industry has adapted such frameworks. In 2004 Tourism Queensland, utilised Faulkner’s (TDMF) and developed their first tourism crisis management plan. The plan ensures a joint government and industry response to the impacts on the tourism industry to a crisis (Tourism Queensland 2004).
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The Queensland Tourism Crisis Management Plan (QTCMPP), utilising the Cyclone Scenario Planning summary was implemented to respond to Cyclone Larry in 2006. In 2007, a ‘Regional Tourism Crisis Management Plan Template: A Guide to Preparing a Regional Tourism Crisis Management Plan’ assisted in regional areas to developing appropriate crisis management plans (Tourism Queensland 2007).

Table 2.3 provides an overview of each of the frameworks discussed above, outlining the model, year developed, stages and limitations. The section to follow then discusses crisis preparedness and planning from both a destination and individual business perspective.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tourism Crisis Management Model</strong></th>
<th><strong>Crisis Management Stages</strong></th>
<th><strong>Year</strong></th>
<th><strong>Limitations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Murphy and Bayley’s four stage model | 1) Assessment  
2) Warning  
3) Impact  
4) recovery | 1989 | • Emergency and restoration periods are today combined into an emergency phase and recognised in more recent models as separate from recovery  
• Its applicability was only tested on natural disasters |
| Smith’s Crisis management model, later improved by Smith and Spipika (1993) (adapted to tour operators by Evans and Elphick 2005) | 1) Crisis of management  
2) Operational crisis  
3) Crisis of legitimation | 1990 | • Too general and descriptive  
• Has only been tested on a individual tour operator who did not have visitors in New York at the time of 9/11, and therefore not directly affected by the crisis |
| Santana’s crisis management model (based on Pearson and Mitroff’s five stage cycle) | 1) Crisis management knowledge  
2) Crisis management Implementation  
3) Crisis Management Resolution | 1999 | • Focuses on human-induced crisis and disasters, with limits its applicability to other tourism related crisis  
• Takes a destination perspective, difficult to apply to individual organisations |
| Faulkner’s Tourism Disaster Management Framework | 1) Pre Event,  
2) Prodromal,  
3) Emergency  
4) Intermediate  
5) Long-term recovery  
6) Resolution | 2001 | • Has not been tested on large scale disasters or in a long term study |
| Ritchie’s Crisis and Disaster Management Framework | 1) Prevention and planning,  
2) Implementation  
3) Evaluation and feedback | 2004 | • Does not distinguish between businesses or Destination Marketing Organisations  
• Has only been recently tested in 2008 following the ACT bushfires (Australia) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism Crisis Management Model</th>
<th>Crisis Management Stages</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyon and Worton’s crisis management framework</td>
<td>(1) Pre-event (2) Warning signs, (3) Action (4) Review</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>• Recovery section of the framework is undeveloped and requires further advancement to add to the existing knowledge on recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parakskevas and Arendall Framework for destination anti-terrorism strategy development</td>
<td>(1) Formation of destination anti-terrorism group, (2) Destination terrorism exposure analysis (3) Destination anti-terrorism strategy formulation (4) Strategy implementation and management and (5) Strategy monitoring and maintenance</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>• Limited to terrorism events • Is a proposed framework and requires further testing and refinement for its validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hystad and Keller’s destination disaster management framework</td>
<td>(1) Pre-disaster (2) Disaster, (3) Post-disaster (4) Resolution</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>• Is limited in its testing and on its focus on communication, and does not consider other important aspects of recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong’s tourism industry crisis and disaster management framework</td>
<td>(1) Crisis/disaster management planning (2) Response and recovery management (3) Resolution, evaluation and feedback</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>• Is limited to destination or industry level concerns and not individual operators • Findings are based on a single case study and requires further testing to explore it’s adaptability to other types of crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy’s Strategic Management Framework</td>
<td>(1) Pre-crisis (crisis/ disaster prevention and planning), (2) Actual crisis (strategic implementation) (3) Post Crisis (resolution, evaluation and feedback)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>• Requires testing on resorts at a time of crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Crisis preparedness and planning

Crisis management for any organisation requires a degree of preparedness as well as planning strategies to be able to cope with an impending disaster. As Faulkner (2001) notes, neither natural nor human induced disasters are predictable or avoidable, which makes the development of effective disaster management strategies all the more important. Ritchie (2004) emphasises that a proactive approach to crisis management is required by the tourism industry, and argues for developing proactive scanning and planning as critical components. Ritchie (2009) also developed a variety of crisis preparedness and planning tools to utilise in destination and organisational level crises which are outlined in Table 2.3 below. These tools help assist an organisation to respond more effectively to a crisis (Richie 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination Level Crisis</th>
<th>Organisational Level Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of emergency plans</td>
<td>Contingency plans and the development of manuals and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning systems</td>
<td>Crisis management teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities to aid in the management of a disaster</td>
<td>Staff training and simulation exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ritchie 2009

Heath (1998) recognizes both the traditional approach to crisis management and the risk management approach. Implementation of the former approach commences when the crisis hits and the latter prior to the crisis (i.e crisis planning) (Cited in Ritchie 2009). Heath (1998) further notes that the development of any future crisis management plan relies heavily on the implementation of strategies from the feedback and learning component of a crisis (Cited in Ritchie 2009). Supporting this component, Ritchie’s (2004) Crisis and Disaster Management Framework includes a Resolution, Evaluation and Feedback stage, which allow for organisations and/or destinations to make
changes to their organisational structure and update their contingency plans. More relevant to this study, Ritchie (2004) also considers natural disaster specific proactive planning to include risk analysis, hazard mapping and integrated emergency planning. However, other research studies suggest, these tools are not always considered a priority, especially by small business operators. In a study after Hurricane Katrina, Runyan identified a lack of planning by small business operators, as demonstrated by one of his participants “My disaster plan was to get out! Get myself out as soon as possible” (2006:17). This was a common response from small businesses located in the region affected by Hurricane Katrina (2005), with other research studies identifying the need to prepare for a crisis.

Case study research findings on the Bali Bombings, and the Indian Ocean Tsunami, support the need for destination stakeholders to be better prepared for a crisis. They acknowledge these communities were particularly vulnerable to any type of hazard, particularly as no formal proactive planning strategies had been developed (Gurtner 2006). However, as Cioccio and Michael (2007) found in their research study on the 2003 bushfires in northeast Victoria (Australia), practical experience is valued much more highly than pro-active planning by small tourism operators.

Cioccio and Michael (2007) also argue that small tourism operators lack the training, skills and resources to initiate any form of preliminary planning, which most larger tourism organisations consider a priority in order to reduce disaster impacts. Their findings suggest that smaller tourism operators do not see pro-active planning as a cost effective measure, unless they are required to do so to comply with government/business legislation. Runyan’s (2006) research findings were similar to those of Cioccio and Michael (2007) and argue a lack of capital in small business is a key obstacle to crisis management planning.
Small businesses’ attitude to planning appears to be the result of the operating demands of small businesses, with only the most probable risks addressed by some of the survey group (Cioccio and Michael 2007). Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) also note one of the key challenges of tourism disaster management is developing strategies for events which have a lower probability of occurring. This is considered a major barrier to disaster preparedness in the tourism sector (Faulkner and Vikulov 2001). To overcome this, Hystad and Keller (2008) and Ritchie (2004) suggest crisis management planning is more commonly completed through a collaborative approach by governments and destinations, rather than individual businesses.

In Australia, Tourism Queensland was the first state to adopt a Tourism Crisis Management Plan, collectively developed by the government and the tourism industry following the events of September 11th (cited in Anderson 2006). These plans can only be useful if the required stakeholders are involved in the initial development stages (Quarantelli 1984, cited in Faulkner 2001), which can pose limitations, should the involvement not be inclusive of all stakeholders at risk of a crisis.

Some researchers have argued the limitations of contingency planning and highlight the need to be flexible in a crisis response (Evans and Elphick, 2005, Tse, So and Sin 2006). This flexibility can only be enhanced through shared skills, knowledge, resources and ideas amongst stakeholders (Gurtner 2006). Overall, many others conclude that there is a significant lack of crisis management planning (Hystad & Keller 2008, Prideaux 2003, Faulkner and Vikulov 2001). As Quarantelli argues poor planning will only encourage poor management: “even the very best of planning cannot eliminate a great number of management problems” (Quarantelli 1986:10). This highlights the importance of collaboration and coordination between stakeholders in responding to a crisis, which is equally as important as planning. Just as important is the response and recovery stages, which are examined in the section to follow.
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2.5 Crisis response and recovery

Beirman (2003) notes that the field of destination recovery and restoration requires further research within the tourism discipline. He focuses on issues providing eleven case studies which detail the responses by the tourism industry to a variety of crises including those relating to terrorism, war, massacres, natural disasters, diseases and political unrest. A significant body of literature on tourism crisis management is dedicated to case study research, all of which provide details of either a destination’s or group of stakeholder’s response to a specific crisis, and are outlined in Table 2.5.

| Natural Disasters | Sanders, Laing and Houghton 2008; Armstrong and Ritchie 2007; Chacko and Marcell 2007; Prideaux, Coghlan and Falco-Mammone 2007; Rittichainuwat 2006; Gurtner 2006; Higgins 2005; Cioccio and Michael 2007; and Faulkner and Vikulov 2001 |
| Disease | Kuo, Chen ,Tseng, Ju and Huang 2007; Irvine and Anderson 2005; Cooper 2005; Page, Yeoman, Munro, Connell and Walker 2005; Au, Ramasam and Yeung 2005; Kim, Chun, and Lee 2005; Tse, So and Sin 2004; and Henderson and Ng 2004; Miller and Ritchie 2003 |
| Financial | De Sausmarez 2007 |
It is vital to have a strong understanding of stakeholders roles and needs in times of a crisis, and co-ordinate them appropriately to ensure an effective response (Ritchie 2009). The significant number of case studies completed by researchers demonstrates the diversity of crises and the different approaches taken to prepare and respond to them, as Beirman states “each situation is very different, and there is no universal response to a crisis nor a contingency plan applying to every destination crisis” (2003: 22).

The case studies discussed in Table 2-6 provide details of both recommended and actual responses to a crisis from both a destination and industry perspective. These studies focus primarily on destinations, rather than individual business operators which identified a gap in the literature. Only a limited number of studies focus on tour operators and their crisis management response and planning (Evans and Elphick (2005), Standbury, Pryer and Roberts 2005, Cavlek 2002, Klemm and Parkinson 2001). Evans and Elphick (2005) applied a crisis management model to a tour operator, testing and adapting Smith’s original model. Their research findings were limited, as the selected participant had no clients in the affected region at the time of the crisis (9/11). To date, no study has applied Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s CDMF to tour operators and a large scale disaster, two key identified gaps this study will address.

Following Table 2.6, a critique of the literature on crisis communication is provided. This section considers strategic communication by both internal and external stakeholders, and highlights the role that the media plays after a crisis or disaster. It also considers the concepts of consumer risk perception and destination image following a crisis/disaster, and how the combination of all these factors can then influence the consumers selection of a destination.
## Table 2-6 Evaluation of Crises Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Crisis Response</th>
<th>Adequacy/Problems with Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Tourism in Victoria, Australia: Cooperative, Proactive Crisis Management. Beeton (2001)</td>
<td>A cooperative response from stakeholders in the adventure horseback tourism industry, which includes the operators, insurance agencies and government assisting with the development of crisis management tools</td>
<td>Not having the necessary insurance cover or established emergency procedures to handle a crisis</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>VTOA increased their requirements, including the need for an accident report form, first aid kit and staff competency certificates, which addressed some crisis management areas</td>
<td>Risk management procedures are reactive, rather than proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Restaurant Industry: Strategic Responses to September 11, 2001 Green, Bartholomew and Murrmann (2003)</td>
<td>Re-assuring employees of the security of their income and job. Owners took a reduction in profit and their own salaries to keep existing employees. Made changes in menu format and prices, focus attention on ambiance. Menu changes included offering less expensive items, cheaper wines, reducing portion sizes. Offered meals only available to locals ($25 vs $85). Restaurants opened for breakfast and closed for late night dining Focused marketing efforts on non-print advertising, word of mouth, reviews and the internet.</td>
<td>Lack of ability to predict business Lack of response models developed to forecast how long the impact of 9/11 will be felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia’s Response to the Asian Financial Crisis: Implications for Tourism and Sectoral Crisis Management (De Sausmarez 2003)</td>
<td>Malaysian government called for retrenchment and reduction in spending Promoting domestic tourism to support hotel sector Increased promotional budget for Tourism Malaysia of 39.5 million (US dollars), which was spent partially on emerging markets</td>
<td>Delay of two years in commencing Malaysian tourism campaigns after the crisis Lack of co-ordination, planning and strategy development prior to and after the crises Lack of commitment from tourism businesses to contribute to the development or funding of a crisis management strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Farming Crisis or a Tourism Disaster? An Analysis of the Foot and Mouth Disease in the UK (Miller and Ritchie, 2003)</td>
<td>Cancellation of the Cheltenham festival Managers were dealing with the crisis in the best way they could as limited proactive strategies were available for implementation Additional funds provided to marketing to promote tourism Introduced plans for a crisis management unit with the national government, with the aim of providing an early warning system for future disaster</td>
<td>Small tourism businesses were uninsured by the losses the FMD caused them Disagreement between different communities on the most appropriate course of action The perception from the media reports that the whole of the UK was closed due to the disease No pre-determined disaster management planning</td>
</tr>
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## Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Crisis Response</th>
<th>Adequacy/Problems with Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The Need to Use Disaster Frameworks to Respond to Major Tourism Disasters: Analysis of Australia’s Response to Tourism Disasters in 2001** Bruce Prideaux (2003) | **HIH collapse:**  
  - Established a Royal Commission of Enquiry | **HIH collapse:**  
  - Little done to assist small and medium size tourism operators who were faced with substantial increases to public liability insurance  
  - Failure of regulatory watchdogs to monitor the market and undertake preventative actions to avert a collapse |
| **Collapse of Ansett Airlines**                                            | **Established the Tourism Industry Working Group (TIWG, 2001, cited in Prideaux 2001). This included both surveys with tourism businesses around Australia and consultations with 1000 members in regional areas**  
  - Government partially funded workers entitlements  
  - Negotiations with foreign corporation, governments, unions, potential purchasers of Ansett and the tourism industry | **Collapse of Ansett Airlines**  
  - Demand for airline seats on other domestic carriers outweighed supply  
  - Collapse of the Tourism Council of Australia reduced governments ability to assess the industries reaction to any policy proposals  
  - Response mechanisms lack a clearly defined Pre-Event stage, including no consideration of risk assessment |
| **Hazard or disaster: Tourism management for the inevitable in Northeast Victoria** Cioccio and Michael 2007 | **Government implemented a variety of community support programs, with specific responses to restore tourism infrastructure in the affected regions.**  
  - Implementation of a regional marketing campaign to assure domestic visitors of the availability of services  
  - Government funding provided to assist tourism businesses  
  - Tourism businesses diversifying their product range (e.g winery exporting product beyond local regions) | **Residents didn’t consider scenario planning for living in a fire prone region**  
  - Insurance premiums for public liability  
  - Lack of appreciation by tourism operators of fire safety plans  
  - Limited resources to formalise a crisis management strategy and identify potential scenarios and responses |
2.6 Crisis communication

Strategic communication plays a dominant role through the recovery process following a crisis (Fall and Massey 2006). This is integral when considering both internal and external stakeholders needs and roles through the various crisis management stages (Ritchie 2009), and most importantly the customers “Crisis communication is mainly concerned with providing correct and consistent information to the public and enhancing the image of the organisation or industry sector faced with a crisis” (Ritchie, Miller, Dorrell and Miller 2004:8).

Poor communication strategies can magnify a crisis (Marra 1998). Evidence suggests that the lack of control of information being circulated to an organisation’s various stakeholders, combined with the media sensationalism of a crisis leads consumers to form a perceived travel risk of a destination (Simpson and Siguaw 2008, Pearlman and Melnik 2008, Dolnicar 2005). Control does, however, require some elements of flexibility from organisations, which would vary depending on the nature of the crisis and stakeholder’s response (Ritchie 2009).

Many research studies have investigated perceived travel risks and image of destinations affected by crisis (Chen and Noriega 2003; Eitzinger and Wiedemann; 2007, Floyd and Pennington-Gray 2004; Law 2006; Lepp and Gibson 2003; Lepp and Gibson 2008; Pearlman and Melnik 2008; Ready and Dobie 2003; Reisinger and Mavondo 2005; Simpson and Siguar 2008; Smith 2006; Sonmez and Graefe 1998; Meheux and Parker 2004; Valencia and Crouch 2008). Of these studies only one considers tour operators perceptions following September 11th (Ready and Dobie 2003). This provides an identifiable gap in the literature and an opportunity to explore operator’s perceptions following a natural disaster, such as the IOT04.

Sonmez and Graefe’s (1998) findings concluded that information search was a strategy which greatly reduced consumers’ perceived risk of a destination. This ‘information’ is reliant on correct up to date information from government agencies, tourism organisations and the media, a source which
Chapter 2: Literature Review

can strongly influence risk perception. It has been noted that the media provide mis-leading information on the severity of a disaster (Murphy and Bayley 1989), whilst tourism organisations and government have been reported as providing inconsistent messages, which confuse both tourists and the tourism industry (Ritchie, Miller, Dorrell and Miller 2004).

Research has also suggested personality needs to be considered as a key factor when marketing destinations at a time of crisis. As Lepp and Gibson (2008) found, high sensation seekers (those with the need of novelty and stimulation) are attracted to destinations perceived as risky, whereas low sensation seekers require safety, security and familiarity. The notion that tourists’ characteristics can affect the level of risk perceptions is further acknowledged by Reisinger and Mavondo (2005), who recommend marketers to target segments which are less sensitive to risk. Effective communication and managing public relations would assist is dealing with perception issues.

It is recommended that crisis/disaster management models develop a communication and public relations plan as part of the pre-event stage (Ritchie 2009), however research studies have found immediate reactive strategies by organisations to be the most common approach (Fall and Massey 2006). Part of any public relations plan should consider media as playing an important role in communication, a medium which people become more dependant upon in times of crisis (Fall and Massey 2006).

According to Hall (2002), the media plays a key role in determining interest and selection in a travel destination. It is also renowned for encouraging the flow and intensity of a crisis (Keown-McMullan, 1997). One research study found that media sensationalism of Hurricane Katrina created a negative image of the region, thus causing great distress to the New Orleans tourism industry (Pearlman and Melnik 2008). Murphy and Bayley (1989) reported similar findings in a study on the 1980 eruption of Mount St Helens, where the media was accused of exaggerating the decline in tourism through the recovery stage.
Image, however, does not always reflect the real situation in times of a crisis (Cavlek 2002), as perception is rarely the factual reality of a destination. In Gunn’s (1972) examination of image formation, he makes the distinction between induced and organic image levels. He refers to induced images as being controlled by the destination or individual organisation, whilst describes organic images as partially created by mass media, which tourists are more susceptible to. These images then encourage tourists to form their own perceptions of the crisis or disaster.

McConnell (2003) believes it is not the facts which define a crisis, but the perception which people have of the scale and importance of the problem encountered, i.e. the crisis or disaster itself. A study on Hurricane Katrina found targeting return visitors to New Orleans post Hurricane Katrina was recommended as a re-marketing tool, as return visitors tended to have more favourable impressions of the destination than first time visitors (Pearlman and Melnik 2008). A number of case studies have recommended recovery strategies following research completed on specific crisis/disasters, including IOT04.

The Tsunami experience will now be analysed, including an analysis of the crisis management plans developed by both government and other organisations in response to the Tsunami. In addition the recovery following the crisis which be considered, including the tourism industry impacts.

2.7 Indian ocean tsunami experience

2.7.1: Risk management planning and strategies

Sharpley (2005) suggests it is unlikely that any form of established crisis management procedures would have adequately prepared a destination for the impact of the Tsunami. However, in response to the devastating impacts of the Tsunami, various risk management plans and strategies have been developed to assist in recovery and rebuilding of those regions affected. These documents are summarised in Table 2.6 which details the aims and objectives of each plan.
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### Table 2-7 Risk Management Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan/Strategy</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Aims/Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phuket Action Plan</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation (2005c)</td>
<td>• Assist destinations resume operations through maximising existing tourism infrastructure and assisting small businesses survive recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Main action areas of the plan are:</strong> Marketing-Communications, Community Relief, Professional Training, Sustainable Redevelopment and Risk Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Risk Management: An Authoritative Guide to Managing Crises in Tourism</td>
<td>APEC International Centre for Sustainable Tourism (AICST)</td>
<td>• Provides a guide on the processes associated with developing a risk management strategy for a tourism destination or business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Robertson, Kean and Moore, 2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Details how to implement and maintain these plans over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To provide a framework within which tourism destinations and individual businesses/ organizations can prepare for, and manage the effects of, crises, through applying crisis management strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Risk Management for Coastal Tourism Destinations responding to Climate Change</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
<td>This Handbook acts as an important tool for planners and managers requiring tailor-made guidance for improving the resilience of coastal tourism destinations to climate induced disasters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A practical guide for decision makers</em></td>
<td>(United Nations Environment Programme, 2008)</td>
<td><strong>The aims of the handbook are to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Increase the capacity of coastal tourism communities to better prepare for and respond to natural disaster emergencies;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) To mainstream disaster risk reduction into coastal tourism destination planning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) To support local climate change adaptation efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Plan/Strategy

(Cited in United Nations Environment Programme, 2008)

### Publisher

Royal Thai Government – Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Office of Tourism Development, in association with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, the APEC International Centre for Sustainable Tourism and the Australian Government

### Aims/Objectives

- To unify, educate and improve cooperation and resilience of the tourism industry;
- Integration of the Risk Management Strategy into other operational plans
- To develop a culture of prevention and preparedness in the Phuket tourism industry involving well established partnerships and working relationships between the public and private sector.
2.7.2 Destination vulnerability to the tsunami:

A vulnerability perspective has been studied by numerous researchers, focusing on coastal destinations’ exposure to a tsunami (Levy and Gopalakrishnan 2005, Larsen, Niller and Thomalla 2008, Ingram, Franco, Rio and Khazai 2006, Calgora and Lloyd 2008). It is argued in the literature that human, economic and environment impacts were the main consequences of the IOT04. Children, women and tourists have been noted as the groups made most vulnerable by the Tsunami, with women particularly, as many were looking after children in the coastal areas at the time it struck (Levy and Gopalakrishnan 2005).

Three main infrastructure systems were affected by the Tsunami; utilities and lifelines; transportation networks; and communications (Levy and Gopalakrishnan 2005). The fair allocation of funds to assist in recovery of these systems, including those provided by large scale hotel operators, was impaired due to political factors (Henderson 2007b). In addition a lack of financial support from the government to both foreign owned and operated businesses in Phuket placed those employed in these enterprises in a very vulnerable position (Ichinosawa 2006). Calgora and Lloyd (2008) note financial assistance from the government was impaired due to application delays, bureaucratic issues and corrupt policies. Funding was also limited to many businesses, as they lacked the documentation required to obtain it. In some cases this was due to the changes in business registration requirements and, in others, the documentation was swept away.

The deliberate destruction of coral reefs in the Indian Ocean allowed for further development in coastal areas. As a result those populations were left in a strong vulnerable position to the Tsunami events, as there were no forests to absorb some of the force of the waves (Levy and Gopalakrishnan 2005). Srinivas and Nakagawa (2008) note a lack of understanding by locals in some of the Tsunami affected countries, about environmental degradation and how it can consequently intensify the negative impacts of a disaster.
Henderson (2007b) further supports this theory, and stated the crisis opened up an opportunity for upgrading the tourism infrastructure in Phuket, where inadequate planning and uncontrolled growth had lead to brutal environmental degradation. However, in regions where eco-systems were protected and communities were aware of coastal hazards, the Tsunami was found to cause less impact (Srinivas and Nakagawa 2008). What is required to combat these issues is education, so stakeholders are aware of the long term impacts of their decisions on the environment and future crises.

2.7.3 Tsunami recovery and tourism industry impacts:
Empowering stakeholders, as well as consultation and participation with communities located in Tsunami vulnerable regions, is recommended for future recovery plans to be effective. In addition, education and Pacific Ocean Tsunami warning systems are noted as essential tools as part of an effective Tsunami disaster plan (Levy and Gopalakrishnan 2005). However, planning and preparation are required for a warning and evacuation system to be effective (Birkland, Herabat, Little and Wallace 2006), as well as consideration of corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility is discussed by Henderson (2007b) as an opportunity for both direct, indirect companies and the private sector to aid the environments and economies damaged as a result of the Tsunami. Henderson’s research findings revealed that a number of hotels in Phuket acted in a responsible manner, with operators having genuine concerns for both the environment and the promotion of recovery. She further argues the vulnerability of hotels to a crisis, as unlike tour operators, airlines and travel agents, they can not simply substitute their product or make alternative arrangements and “must deal directly with the catastrophe and strive to survive” (2007:236). This becomes a challenge for a hotel after a disaster, as they must deal with the issues of consumer risk perception.

A case study which investigated motivations for travelling to Phuket post-tsunami. findings found travel advisories and negative publicity contributed to discouraging travel to Tsunami affected regions (Rittichaiunwat’s 2006), while
Birkland, Herabat, Little and Wallace (2006) found perception of safety was one of the main deterrents. Derham’s (2005) study on the “Motivations for Travelling to Disaster Affected Destinations: A Case Study of Phuket” also identified the media and government travel advisories to be two key influences which framed risk perception of Phuket. Derham’s (2005) research surveyed the student market, and revealed these influences reduced consumer confidence to travel to Phuket. Interestingly the study also revealed that positive media coverage and low prices would motivate participants to return.

To regain consumer confidence, Calgora and Lloyd (2008) noted a heavy reliance on the marketing strategies of international tour operators, which left little control to smaller locally operated businesses over recovery of the market. The Tourism Authority of Thailand post-Tsunami strategy focused on attracting new target markets, with a focus on medical tourism, spa holidays and tsunami volunteer vacations (Hoontakul and Laitamaki 2006).

A lack of disaster planning was identified as a key problem in post-tsunami research. Kelmen, Spence, Palmer, Petal and Saito (2008) study on international tourists found a need for disaster awareness information to be readily available to both the local population and visitors in locations affected by the Tsunami. Ingram, Franco, Rio and Khazai (2006) partially agrees noting a need to address pre-existing vulnerabilities, however considers reactive policies to be understandable in post disaster situations, due to the urgency required at a time of crisis.

Calgora and Loyd’s (2008) findings concluded that the lack of insurance from small business operators and limited capacity for regional officials to oversee implementation of tourism planning strategies were key issues for effective recovery. They recommend incorporating vulnerability assessments into any tourism development strategy prior to the strategy’s implementation.

Leungbootnak’s (2005) findings concluded that investors were a problem in tsunami disaster management, as their focus is on a positive business cycle, and less on understanding the process and problems in construction. Their
study found that unclear information was a notable problem during reconstruction. Defined goals, top management support, sufficient resources, client consultation and adequate communication are all noted to be fundamental during reconstruction effort, and were not all evident during the tsunami recovery.

Hoontakul and Laitamaki (2006) urge researchers to address the depth of crisis pre-planning and management actions, and should also consider communication and organizational learning. This study will address these issues, whilst providing a contribution to the existing literature in the crisis management field.

2.8 Justification for my research
Richardson (1994) makes a valid point that “As managers, we should not afford the luxury of waiting for the crisis to happen - such a stance is dangerous because in adopting it, we risk an outcome where our world, our society, our organizations and ourselves might not be around in the aftermath of the crisis to pick up the pieces and recreate success” (1994:7). For this reason, he supports Fink’s (1986) advice that ‘managers should understand that anytime you’re not in a crisis, you are instead in a pre-crisis or prodromal mode’ (cited in Richardson, 1994:7).

The pre-crises stage includes actions such as the establishment of a crisis management team, development of crisis management strategies and an assessment of the capacity to manage the impacts of a crisis (Henderson 2007a). As this literature review has established, the capacity of the tourism industry to implement such strategies, especially small businesses, is limited. This literature review has also identified a lack of research on crisis management frameworks applied to individual organisations, especially those which have survived a crisis (Armstrong 2008). Some of the key researchers in the field also suggest there is a need for case study approaches to test models in the tourism industry (Faulkner 2001, Ritchie 2009).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Prideaux (2003) discusses Faulkner and Vikulov’s TDMF, highlighting its applicability to both the public and private sector in developing contingency plans, and states “The ability of the TDMF to be employed in a wide range of disaster situations is a major strength of the framework” (Prideaux 2003:296). The lack of research into what measures individual operators have taken applying Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) framework has also revealed an obvious gap. More specifically, there is a lack of research on tour companies and the crisis management procedures utilised by these operators.

Based on the research gaps above and identified throughout the literature review, this thesis will adapt and then apply Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF to the IOT04. The study will have as its focus six individual businesses (tour operators). Through an investigation of the most relevant crisis management material and with a focus on research relating to the tourism discipline, this discussion has explored the key areas, providing an overview of key crisis management definitions, classifications, the importance of planning, response, crisis management frameworks and recovery. Further to this, it has synthesized the experience of the IOT04 and identified significant research gaps in the crisis management literature. As a result the research question, aim and objectives were developed (refer to 1.3.4, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3).

The chapter to follow will discuss the methodological process used to undertake the research, providing a detailed discussion justifying the approach taken, whilst also outlining any relevant limitations.
Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to address an identified gap in the knowledge to date on crisis management, as described in Chapter Two. To address this gap, an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF (Appendix One). The adapted model utilises the additional contributions of Ritchie’s (2004) Crisis and Disaster Management Framework to guide the research design and address the research question and objectives (Please refer to 1.3.4, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3).

This chapter will discuss and justify all elements of the research design, including:

- The Epistemology
- The Theoretical Perspective
- The Qualitative Approach
- Case Study Design
- The Data Collection and Data Analysis
- The Validity and Reliability of the Research

A qualitative case study approach was selected and deemed the most appropriate for this research study to answer the research question and objectives effectively. This approach uses a rich in depth investigation, utilising a number of data gathering sources including the analysis of documents and in-depth interviews (Jupp 2006; Berg 1989). The research is grounded in an interpretive paradigm, which attempts to get an ‘insider’s perspective’ (Jennings 2001; Mason 2002) or as Veal (1997) suggests, to get inside the minds of the people being studied and see the world from their point of view. The research question and sub-objectives were developed to explore this insider’s perspective (the tour operator participants), and were used to report on the applicability of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) adapted framework within the context of a natural disaster.
3.2 Justification for research approach

3.2.1 The epistemology

Epistemology is primarily regarded as “the relationship between the researcher and the participants/subjects/objects” (Jennings 2010:36). It is also associated with “philosophical concerns about the justification of knowledge claims” (Goodrick 2009:7). Crotty (1998) identifies three epistemology stances: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. This study adapts the constructionist perspective, which seeks to understand how a group of people interpret and engage in their world within a particular social context. In this study the social context is the case of the IOT04 and how the participants (tour operators) and researcher collectively understood and interpreted crisis management of a natural disaster.

The constructionism epistemological approach is used for this research to understand complex human phenomena. This positions the researcher as the interpreter rather than a more traditional approach, which include the research as the translator which aims to predict and generalise research findings (Objectivism) (Jones, Torres and Arminio (2006), cited in Goodrick, 2009). This aims not to generalise the research findings, but rather to provide an interpretation of how a selection of tour operators in Australia view and apply crisis management in the case of a natural disaster. The research findings from this case study will contribute to the existing crisis management literature, as well as providing an insight to the tourism industry, and can be transferred to suit the needs of individual tour operators.
3.2.2 Theoretical perspective: justification for interpretive social science paradigm

Jennings considers there to be seven different paradigms which methodologies are governed by, which are: post/positivism, critical theory, chaos theory, interpretive social sciences, feminist perspectives, postmodernism and participatory (2010:20). Guba (1990) provides a useful definition of a paradigm as “a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry” (cited in Jennings, 2010:20). As this research was informed by a qualitative methodological approach it is considered to be grounded in an interpretive social sciences paradigm (Jennings 2010).

An interpretive approach sees people and their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings, as the primary data source. Interpretivism does not have to rely on total immersion in a setting and therefore can support a study which uses interview methods for example, where the aim, as in this study, is to explore people’s individual and collective understandings, reasoning process and social norms (Mason 2002:56). This approach allows the researcher to understand the world from those being studied through collecting data from an insider’s perspective, is subjective and open to multiple explanations and realities (Jennings 2010). In this study, the insider’s perspective is that of the tour operators, which was established through conducting semi structured in-depth interviews to ascertain the different viewpoints of crisis management after the IOT04. These factors justify using an interpretive social science paradigm in this research study, which requires applying a qualitative approach to address the research objectives (Jennings 2010 and Veal 2006).
3.2.3 Qualitative approach

Creswell defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (1998:15). This clearly describes the approach taken in this study; however, it is important to outline the merits and benefits to justify why a qualitative method was applied.

One clear benefit of selecting a qualitative approach is the collection of rich information (Veal 1997), information which is difficult to obtain through standard quantitative measures which instead “tends to impose the researcher’s view on a situation” (Veal 1997:193). Key merits of a qualitative approach are argued to be flexibility, whilst generating insights from the phenomena studied (Parasuraman, Grewal and Krishnan 2007 and Veal 2006). Such flexibility allows the researcher to be creative and provide an in-depth detailed analysis when discussing the research findings, which in this study resulted in emerging themes and insights to how tour operators understood and applied crisis management strategies. It is argued that such insights would not have been reported if a quantitative approach was applied, as it does not allow for rich data to emerge.

These benefits are likely to be supported by the growth and validity of qualitative research, with Berg (2004) acknowledging the expanding literature now available on the topic, including books which were exclusively quantitative now including whole chapters dedicated to qualitative research methods. Berg’s distinction between the two methods provides a clear contrast, supporting this research studies qualitative approach: “Qualitative research, thus, refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things” (2004:3).
Chapter 3: Research Design

An investigation of crisis management procedures requires describing the meaning and descriptions reported by the participants, as measurement of the procedures would not answer the research question and objectives presented at the start of this chapter. An examination of the individuals who participated in the study (tour operators) through a qualitative approach, allowed the researcher to share their understandings and perceptions of the Tsunami experience (Berg 2004), contributing to the existing literature.

This examination and contribution was achieved through the application of a framework (theory) which tested its validity to a large scale disaster, whilst allowing for themes to emerge. This approach is considered deductive as it commenced with theory and gathered data to analyse and answer the objectives (Jennings 2010); alternatively, an inductive approach to research allows the analysis of research findings to formulate theory (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). It is argued this study takes both an inductive and deductive approach, a choice which has been supported in the literature.

Patton (2002) argues it is a paradigm of choice, which allows the researcher to mix and match assumptions and methods to suit the requirements of a particular study (cited in Goodrick 2009). In this study, the application of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF framework and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF were used to guide the design of the study, which is considered a deductive research approach (Neuman 2006, cited in Jennings 2010), however the emergent themes and contribution to crisis management research are inductive. Combining these two approaches has been noted to have advantages over simply applying one, as it allows for a more conclusive and convincing answer to the research question and objectives (Saunders et al 2003). To gather the data required to address these effectively, a case study approach was selected as the most appropriate framework to be applied in this study.
Chapter 3: Research Design

3.2.4 Case study approach
Case studies approaches allow the investigator the opportunity to provide a meaningful interpretation of a real life event, including organisational and management processes (Yin 1987:14). A ‘case’ can be an individual person, an event, social activity, group, organisation or institution (Jupp 2006:20). The case applied to this study was the IOT04 experience.

Yin (1987) outlines five components of a research design for case studies:

1. A study’s questions;
2. Its propositions, if any;
3. Its unit(s) of analysis;
4. The logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. The criteria for interpreting the findings.

The research question: *What strategies, consultation and collaboration did Australian based Tour Operators employ to prepare and/or respond to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)?* also acknowledges the “how” and “why” as key foci of this study. That is, the research is considered both descriptive and explanatory by nature, as it aims to not only describe how the participants responded to the Tsunami, but why they used selected strategies. Due to the explanatory nature of the study, Veal argues that “*a case study can be used to test the applicability of an existing theory*” (2006:109). This validates the application of an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) framework.

Ritchie further notes that researchers need to test models of crisis management which “*examine why crises were managed (in)effectively in the tourism industry*” (2004:681) This further supports the explanatory nature of this research, whilst the case study approach is justified, as the theory has not been tested on tour operators previously, which provides the opportunity to confirm the application of the theory or suggest that modifications are required (Veal 2006).
Chapter 3: Research Design

The proposition, or purpose, of this study is to adapt Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF in the context of Australian based tour operators and a large scale natural disaster. The framework provides guidance and an operating framework for the case study to follow, the tourism Disaster Incident Response Evaluation (DIRE) grid to formulate the questions asked of the participants.

The unit of analysis defines the problem and focus of the study (Yin 1987). In this study, the single unit of analysis (embedded) design is the application of the Tsunami experience to find what crisis management strategies were effective. Yin (1987: 41-42) outlines four types of designs based on single and multiple case studies, these are:

(1) Single-case (holistic)
(2) Single-case (embedded) designs
(3) Multiple-case (holistic) designs, and
(4) Multiple-case (embedded) designs

Miles and Huberman (1994) highlight that single cases are most common in qualitative research, and consider their research potential as being both vivid and illuminating. This supports the use of a single-case (embedded) design being applied to this research study. Although the primary unit of analysis (the Tsunami) is considered a single case, it required an embedded element, that is the support of other units of analysis (the tour operators), to address the research aim and objectives. As the objective is not to make generalizations, but rather to investigate an unexpected event and test an existing well-formulated theory, a single-case design was considered the most appropriate choice (Clark, Riley, Wilkie and Wood 1998). This is further supported by Yin (1987) who also considers a rare event as an opportunity to test existing theory through applying a single-case design. These views support the design applied to this research study, and justifies using the Indian Ocean Tsunami as the key unit of analysis, due to its consideration as a rare event (Harinarayana and Hirata 2005).
Chapter 3: Research Design

The final two stages of Yin’s (1987) research design are linking data to propositions; and criteria for interpreting the findings. As the analysis in this study was primarily guided through the application of the TDMF, it provided a guideline of the explanations to be examined and what data to focus on. The reliance on a theoretical proposition is recommended by Yin (1987) to guide the analysis of a case study. Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) previous research study on the framework and those which have followed since all provide sufficient justification of its adaption capabilities and provide the criteria to interpret the findings from the case study. This will be further discussed in the section to follow on the Research Design.

3.3 Conceptual framework

The aim of this research was to adapt Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF in the context of Australian based tour operators, to the IOT04. A qualitative research method was selected as the most appropriate to address this research aim as it allows the researcher to focus on depth and understanding, whilst providing a detailed interpretation of the case study (Jupp 2006). Scholars argue that selecting a qualitative approach over a quantitative research method in research is neither good or bad, and rather stress the importance to select the most suitable method to answer the research question (Jennings 2010 and Veal 2006).

As this study applied a qualitative research approach, Goodrick (2009) argues the importance of applying a conceptual framework, as it provides a useful guide to the research. Veal agrees, stating that “indeed, an existing framework from the literature might well be used and merely adapted for application in a new situation” (2006:55). Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF has been applied by numerous scholars as a case study approach within the field of crisis management in tourism (Faulkner and Vikulov 2001, Miller and Ritchie 2003, Prideaux 2003, Henderson and Ng 2004, Peters and Pikkemaat 2005, Huang et al 2007, Paraskevas and Arendall 2007). The findings from this case study will provide an understanding of the complex issues surrounding crisis management of one particular stakeholder group (tour operators), an identified gap found from the literature review, which has not been tested on previously.
A conceptual framework is described as “concepts involved in a study and the hypothesised relationships between them” (Veal 2006: 54). Miles and Humberman (1994:18) expands on this description, providing a clear definition: “a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied- the key factors, constructs or variables-and the presumed relationships among them”.

Miles and Humberman (1994) further highlight that a framework allows multiple researchers to study the same phenomena, which is a key advantage and allows cross-case analysis in future studies.

Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF (Appendix 2) provides the key factors and variables to be studied, which is supported through the criteria outlined in the six crisis management stages described in the framework, those being: Pre-Event, Prodromal, Emergency, Intermediate, Long Term Recovery and Resolution. As discussed in the literature review, the framework has undergone numerous testings in the past, first by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) on the Katherine Floods disaster 1998.

The research findings from this initial testing resulted in changes being made to the framework:

“The revised version of Fig. 1 contains details that are particularly relevant to disaster situation produced by flooding. The extent to which these changes are potentially applicable to other types of disasters needs to be tested through the examination of more case studies” (Faulkner and Vikulov (2001: 343)

Changes to the model based on its initial testing by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) included, a reappraisal of any planning, marketing and policy systems of the destination. In the revised model, this was included as part of the resolution phase. It is important to note, Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) revised model was primarily used in this study, as was the DIRE grid to formulate the interview guide.
Chapter 3: Research Design

The development of the DIRE grid in Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) study proved a useful tool to analyse and test the framework’s validity to a natural disaster. The use of the DIRE grid was therefore also adapted to assist this research study, due to its application to natural disasters.

Researchers including the late Bill Faulkner recommended the framework be tested and refined on cases of tourism disasters, to determine its applicability. He confirms that his research on the Katherine floods was at a destination level, and does not provide a focus on the measures implemented of individual operators (Faulkner and Vikulov, 2001).

Ritchie’s (2004) development of his Crisis and Disaster Management Framework (CDMF) was an extension to Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) work, however taking a strategic level approach. Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) six stages can still be clearly distinguished, and forms part of the model, however Ritchie’s (2004) framework was developed primarily to be adapted at the destination level, rather than by individual operators. His research was still considered valuable to this study, and for this reason, questions relating to some of the CDMF components, including; strategic implementation and resolution, evaluation and feedback were added to the interview schedule (Appendix Four).

This then provides a sound justification for adapting the TDMF, components of the CDMF and associated methodology to this research study. The selection of tour operators to test this adapted framework to the Tsunami was the key supporting element of this case study. It is therefore important to now detail the population and sampling method, which explains and justifies how these tour operators were selected for this study.
3.4 Population

Veal defines a population as “the total category of subjects which is the focus of attention in a particular research project” (2006:284). Miles and Huberman further state that “Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth-unlike qualitative researchers, who aim for larger number of context-stripped cases and seek statistical significance” (1994:27). The population and focus in this study was a small sample of six Australian based Tour Operators, who at the time of the Indian Ocean Tsunami were operating or selling tours to one or more of the affected destinations. It is important to note that not all participants in the study had tours operating on the day the Tsunami hit, but all offered tours in the countries affected by the IOC04.

3.5 Sampling

Sarandakos, in Veal (2006:137) refers to sampling as “the means by which subjects or study units from the target population are included in the research project”. The qualitative sampling approach in this study was theory-driven (Miles and Huberman 2004), that is the operators were not selected to form a true representation of all Australian Tour Operators, but to provide an in-depth insight into the crisis management procedures used by individual operators in the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami. An adapted version of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF was an ideal theory to guide the study, as its application to tour operators is yet to be tested by other researchers. To apply Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s model to Australian tour operators, a purposive sampling method was used to determine what study units were most appropriate to include in this study (Jennings 2010).

Kuzel (1992) and Morse (1989) acknowledge that qualitative samples are usually purposive, rather than random (cited in Miles and Huberman 1994). Purposive sampling is when “the researcher uses their knowledge to determine who or what study units are the most appropriate for inclusion in the study based on the potential study units’ knowledge base or closeness of fit to criteria associated with the study’s focus (Jennings 2010: 39-140). This
study’s focus was to establish the crisis management strategies used by Australian based tour operators, in response to the IOT04. CEO’s and Senior Managers were specifically targeted, due to their knowledge of the company’s operational strategies and those used to prepare and respond to the IOT04. All operators who agreed to be interviewed for the study acknowledged they operated tours in the Tsunami affected regions. The interview process will be discussed in-depth in the section to follow, which also details the data collection method used to address the research questions and objectives of this thesis.

3.6 Data collection method: semi structured in-depth interviews

The data collection method applied in this study to address the research questions and objectives was qualitative interviewing. Qualitative interviewing can be either “in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing” (Mason 2002:62), or as Berg (2004) describes them; standardised, semi standardized, or unstandardized. A simple definition of interviewing is also provided by Berg (2004:75) “as a conversation with a purpose”. For this study, the collection of data was facilitated through conducting semi structured or semi standardized in-depth interviews with six different tour operators in Australia, to test the application of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) and Ritchie’s (2004) conceptual framework. Each interview took approximately 30-60 minutes, and was dependent on the responses provided by each participant.

Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) DIRE grid was adapted to form the interview schedule, which included questions addressing each stage of the conceptual framework (Refer to Appendix Four for a copy of the interview schedule). The DIRE grid was originally used in a previous study by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) on the Katherine Floods, and was adapted to relate to tour operators and the Tsunami to address the research question in this thesis. For an interview to be effective and consistent with the research questions, Mason highlights the importance of flexibility and planning “a qualitative interviewer has to be ready to make on-the-spot decisions about the content and sequence
of the interview as it progresses, and to keep everything running smoothly” (2002:67)

The grid provided flexibility due to the open-ended nature of the questions, which allowed the researcher to make quick judgements on follow up questions to ask, without referring to the interview schedule (Mason 2002). The use of open ended questions is considered to be an important aspect of the interviewing process whilst also listening and encouraging the participant to talk (Veal 2006). All these skills were applied when conducting the interviews, to ensure rich data was collected to address the research questions and test the applicability of the TDMF framework to tour operators.

Many advantages of using interviews as a data collection method have been acknowledged by researchers. In particular, Jennings (2010:175) identifies the advantages of semi-structured interviews as the determination of multiple realities, allowances for detailed information to be collected regarding attitudes, opinions and values, the fact that follow up questions can be framed to expand on responses and the semi structured schedule provides a relaxed interview setting. Further to this, Veal provides a valid point, which supports the use of in-depth interviews in this study: “rather than just asking a question, recording simple answer, and moving on, the in-depth interviewer typically encourages participants to talk, asks supplementary questions and asks participants to explain their answers” (2006:97)

It was important to consider the advantages listed above when selecting semi-structured interviews as the data collection method in this study, as it provided the research support that it was the most appropriate tool to test the conceptual framework. What is also important is selecting the right recording tool, which can be either tape-recording or simple note taking. To ensure the results of the interviews could be analysed in a methodical and complete manner, each interview was tape recorded using a Dictaphone (Veal 2006).

This section has detailed how the data was collected to address the research questions and objectives of this study. How the data was then analysed, which
tested the applicability of the conceptual framework to tour operators and the IOT04, will now be discussed in detail.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis

The richness and holism of well collected qualitative data allows for “thick descriptions” to be analysed (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). Saunders, Lewis and Thornill discuss four set of processes in qualitative analysis; categorisation, unitising data, recognising relationships and to develop and test hypotheses to reach conclusions (2003:380-381). Similarly Miles and Huberman outline three stages to include; Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusions Drawing and Verification (1994:10-11). The following section will discuss the data analysis steps taken in this study, which considers the above processes.

This research study has utilised an interpretivist approach to analyse the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that phenomenologists are careful when condensing material from interview transcripts, and instead focus on gathering a deep understanding and interpretation of meaning of the data (Miles and Huberman 1994:8). In this study, the interview transcripts were carefully analysed to ensure a deep understanding of the material could be established, however this required the completion of the three stages as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994).

The first process, data reduction, allows conclusions to be drawn from the research findings, which will contribute to the existing literature on crisis management and address the research questions accordingly. Data reduction is defined as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions” (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). It allows conclusions to be drawn and verified or in this case study, a verification of the adaptability of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) conceptual framework to tour operators and the tsunami. Jennings (2010:206) states that through the reduction stage the rich materials
Chapter 3: Research Design

can then be placed into categories, themes and concepts. In this study, the data was then displayed “in an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (Miles and Huberman 1994:11). The prescribed conceptual framework developed by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) (refer to Appendix Two) and Ritchie (2004) was used throughout this second stage of analysis to develop relationships with what people in the interviews said and did, using the interview schedule as a guide (Appendix Four) (Veal 2006).

Using the six stages outlined in the framework above (Appendix Two), and interview schedule as the collection tool (Appendix Four), the data was labelled and organised within each of the following six categories; Pre Event, Prodromal, Emergency, Intermediate, Long Term Recovery and Resolution. As noted by Strauss and Corbin (1990), one of the main sources to derive the names for categories are found through existing theory (cited in Saunders et al 2003:381). From these categories the data needed to be unitised that is to “attach relevant ‘bits’ or ‘chunks’ of your data, which we will refer to as units of data, to the appropriate category” (Saunders et al, 2001:381). The decision then needed to be made whether to use a manual approach, or a computer, to process the data.

Veal discusses a variety of manual methods of analysis, including that of mechanics where the analysis is completed by hand on hard-copy transcripts (2006:211). This was found to be the best method to use in this research, which was supported through the small sample size. The emerging themes and categories established from the analysis of the transcripts were easily grouped and addressed under the six crisis management stages identified by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001). According to Jennings (2010), this type of analysis to interpret and analyse qualitative data is considered to be ‘Ideal Types’.

An ideal type is defined as “models or mental abstractions of social relations or processes. They are pure standards against which the data or ‘reality’ can be compared. An ideal type is an artificial device used for comparison, because no reality ever fits an ideal type’ (Neauman, in Jennings 2010: 215).
Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF are considered ideal models which can then be tested and compared to reality situations, which then assesses its suitability to different events and stakeholders. In this study, the data was organised according to the layout of this framework, which allowed for comparisons to be drawn and themes to emerge.

Some of these themes which were identified are considered to be inductive, that is they emerged beyond what the prescribed framework referred to as ideal, however this research commenced through a deductive process where the “codes to analyse the data are derived from theory and your predetermined analytical framework” (Saunders et al 2003: 379). Refer to Table 3.1 for an example of the coding process completed in this research.

The participants have been labelled using alphabetic codes (A through to F), whilst each script was coded using numbers, to identify and separate each paragraph. These codes have been used throughout the results and discussion chapters. To ensure the confidentiality of participants is maintained, a complete copy of the coding tables will not be provided as an appendix.
### Table 3-1: Coding of the Pre Event Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access probability and impact of crisis (Tsunami)</th>
<th>Develop contingency plans/proactive measures taken</th>
<th>Problem recognition through environmental scanning and issue analysis</th>
<th>Strategic Plans formulated from scanning and risk analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) &quot;Yes. We have had for many years a crisis manual&quot;</td>
<td>(a) &quot;We have offices everywhere that we operate and the manual spells out what the local office has to do in terms of contacting clients on the ground and informing other offices who might have set clients&quot;</td>
<td>(a) &quot;The crisis manual does spell out actions in response to different events. It has natural disasters, accidents, political or civil incidents&quot;</td>
<td>(a) &quot;The crisis management plan&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) &quot;We had probably not considered a tsunami as such because that's a very specific type of crisis&quot;</td>
<td>(b) &quot;We have a 24 hour emergency phone&quot; - We decided to set up a unit here with people answering phones&quot;</td>
<td>(b) &quot;It was a general plan for a crisis&quot;</td>
<td>(b) &quot;Just one general plan in its entirety&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) &quot;We had our first crisis two years before the tsunami which was a landslide. That was the first incident we'd had since our operation started before we hadn't really thought about our response to any incidents&quot;</td>
<td>(e) &quot;We hook up with senior management to deal with things as they happen&quot; &quot;Most proactive stuff is in the design of the business and the products and those sorts of things&quot;</td>
<td>(c) &quot;The manual goes into what is classed as an emergency or a crisis. The notification procedures, who's going to represent …………………., the evaluation and response team but it doesn't break down specific crisis&quot;</td>
<td>(e) &quot;No changes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/e/f) No</td>
<td>(f) &quot;Nothing formal&quot;</td>
<td>(d) &quot;As far as putting measures in place we represent suppliers who probably have the most up to date intelligence on the regions and at all times we would never put anyone in danger so we have no real reason prior to Boxing Day to make it a priority but we had looked at some history of the region and we knew that the plates in that region are volatile&quot;</td>
<td>(d) &quot;No not in the regard&quot; &quot;We work very carefully with our suppliers/tour operators and they have their own emergency procedures in place&quot; &quot;And we're looking at DEFAT warnings and that sort of thing&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | | (e) "The accumulated knowledge and experience has alerted us to most of the broad scale risk but most of our understanding of broad scale risk is associated with national disasters whether political, earthquakes or floods and never have we considered such a global disaster as the tsunami" | (e) "We deal with most things on a situational basis. We find that with hard procedures, the moment you have a crisis, those procedures are inappropriate for it because of the diversity of the things that we're dealing with" "You deal with it as it happen."

The analysis of the data required search for meaning, and allowed for new insights to be gained, through the emergent themes (Saunders et al 2003). This then provided conclusions to determine the validity of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) Conceptual framework, which is considered the final stage of analysis according to Miles and Huberman (1994). As Saunders et al states: ‘if the pattern of your data matches that which has been predicted through the conceptual framework you will have found an explanation, where possible threats to the validity of your conclusions can be discounted’
Chapter 3: Research Design

(2003:390). The validity of this research will be discussed in the section to follow.

3.8 Validity and reliability
In all research studies, it is important to ensure that both validity and reliability have been considered when selecting the appropriate qualitative methodology. Jennings states that “in qualitative research, researchers must ensure that the processes used for empirical material collection and interpretation/(re) construction are ‘trustworthy’, ‘authentic’ and/or ‘fit’” (2010:149) The following section will discuss how both the validity and reliability of this research have been addressed.

3.8.1 Validity
Validity is defined by Veal as “the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied” (2006:41). Veal (2006) further notes that one test of validity can be through the design of the questionnaire. For this study, the questionnaire was designed based on the tool used previously by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) on the Katherine Floods (1998) to test the TDMF. To ensure the framework was tested appropriately for this thesis, the same method of data collection and survey tool were adapted which ensured an authentic application, this assisted in validating the research findings.

3.8.2 In depth interviews and validity
Mason (2002) argues that semi-structured interviews enhance validity, as it allows for greater flexibility. This was relevant in this study, as Crisis Management is a complex phenomenon. Through using a semi-structured survey tool, deeper, more meaningful responses were obtained from participants, as they were encouraged to expand on their responses through using open ended questions. Gorden (1992:3) considers there to be twelve skills involved in an interview, which are grouped under three headings: Planning, Doing and Analysing.
Chapter 3: Research Design

First the planning process involved formulating relevant questions, motivating participants and establishing a communicative atmosphere. As discussed previously, the questions developed for the questionnaire were adapted from Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) previous application of the TDMF on the Katherine Floods (1998). To ensure the questions in this study were relevant to this study, Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) DIRE grid was adapted to apply to the IOT04 and Tour Operators.

The interviews were conducted to ensure participants were motivated to answer the questions and completed at a time designated by the participant, with the researcher travelling to each participant’s office. This allowed the establishment of a communicative atmosphere, which enhances the likelihood of obtaining the required information from the interview (Gorden 1992). To ensure participants felt comfortable with addressing the interview questions, it was clearly stated in the Information Sheet and Consent Form (Appendix Five) that no names would be recorded at any time, ensuring participants privacy and confidentiality.

The second skill phase according to Gorden (1992) is Doing, which includes the delivering of questions, listening to the participant, observing the participant and evaluating the response. Care was taken to consider the participants’ silences, pacing and tone of voice, as it allowed the identification of meaningful data in relation to the research objectives.

It is important to consider these nonverbal cues when conducting interviews, as they provide the meaning and validity of what was verbally said (Gorden 1992). Probing of some of the participants’ responses was required, to ensure the research objectives were being addressed. This improved the validity of the interviews, as it allowed for more relevant responses to be obtained (Gorden 1992).

Probing questions, a common form of validity checking in in-depth interviewing are commonly used to “elicit information more fully than the original questions which introduced a topic” (Minichiello, Aroni and Hays
Probing, or follow up questions were used in each interview, especially in circumstances where the responses were vague and incomplete (Minichiello et al 2008). This allowed richer data to be extracted from the interviews and used in analysis to test the conceptual framework.

The final interview skill phase is Analyzing (Gorden 1992), which considers the analysis of the interview data, and the process of how the data is recorded and coded. After the completion of each interview, the notes were re-read and the recorded tape was played. The information from these sources was then analysed to ensure relevant responses were obtained from the questions asked. If one of the Probing questions provided valuable information, it was then added to the survey tool to use in the next interview.

As Faulkners and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF has previously been tested, the recording and coding of this information was relatively straight forward. The questions were separated under each of the six crisis management phases and recorded in order. This simplified the coding process, and ensured the ease of making comparisons between each of the six interviews. The six phases of the model were used to present the research findings in the results and discussion chapters. This allowed “conclusions to be followed and tested” (Sarantakos 2005:86) which is referred to as argumentative validation. To ensure the accuracy of this data, communication validation needs to be confirmed (Sarantakos 2005).

Communication validation, which is also referred to as member checking (Minichiello et al 2008) was employed to ensure participants are provided the opportunity to “examine the documents for accuracy and clarity of the meanings they intended to convey” (Minichiello et al 2008:187). This involved sending a copy of the transcripts to the interviewees with an accompanying letter (Appendix Six). The letter invites the participants to raise any concerns they may have with the transcripts. No concerns were raised, which in turn verified the accuracy of the data in the transcript; however the reliability of the data to test the conceptual framework still needs to be confirmed.
3.8.3 Reliability

Reliability is defined as “the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects” (Veal 2006:41). Mason (2002) argues that due to the non-standardisation of data collection in qualitative studies, a simple test of reliability is not feasible, however it is important to ensure that both the data collection tool and analysis have been considered according to the best fit to address the research question. The use of semi-structured interviews for this study has previously been justified.

Sarantakos (2005) argues that qualitative researchers do consider reliability, however they use terms such as credibility, applicability and auditability, often avoiding the generalisability of the data. Generalisability is ‘the probability that the results of the research findings apply to other subjects, other groups, and other conditions” (Veal 2006:117). Minichiello et al considers replications of studies are “regarded as less creative and interesting than new discoveries, and are more difficult to publish” (2008:183). Veal (2006) further highlights that research findings should only relate to the subjects involved in a study at the time the research was completed.

This study’s aim is not to generalise its findings to the wider population, but to provide a deep interpretation of how tour operators address crisis management in their businesses. As every crisis requires a different management approach, it would be impractical to expect identical results if this study was applied to other subjects. The credibility and applicability of the data is supported through the interview techniques discussed in the previous section on Validity. As Minichiello et al (2008) highlights, the researcher must document the procedures used in the research method, which includes details on how the data was collected and analysed. These procedures need to be able to be understood clearly by any reader, and should also provide ample justification of the decisions made throughout the research process (Minichiello et al 2008). Throughout this chapter, the decisions made with regards to the research process have been clearly outlined and explained, satisfying reliability requirements.
Chapter 3: Research Design

3.9 Limitations
As this study was applied a qualitative methodology, it is important to outline the associated limitations. As discussed in the previous section, this research does not aim to make any generalisations about the data to the wider population. It is not representative of all tour operators’ attitudes and management decisions relating to the crisis management strategies employed to plan and respond to the IOT04. The small sample size was therefore an identified limitation to the study, and did not allow assumptions to be generalised. What it did provide was an in-depth insight to the application of Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF framework to a niche group of tour operators, satisfying the aim of the study and contributing to the existing literature on the topic.

3.10 Ethics
Ethics Approval was granted by the Faculty of Law and Management’s Human Ethics Committee (FHEC) on the 19th of June 2008 (Appendix Seven).

3.11 Conclusion
This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the research design applied to this study. It has outlined the epistemology, which adapts the constructionist perspective in order to understand how tour operators engage in crisis management. Faulkner’s and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF framework has been adapted as the conceptual framework, which offers some of Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF strategic management components. Tour operators were selected using a purposive sampling method to test the conceptual framework, using the IOT04 as a single case study. Semi Structured in-depth interviews were completed with senior management from six tour operators in Australia, using an interview guide adapted from Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) to address the six crisis management stages of the framework. The data was then analysed using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) three stage process; Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusions Drawing and Verification. The research outcomes have provided will be detailed in the results and discussion chapters to follow.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction to results
This chapter outlines the results which were obtained from the six semi-structured in-depth interviews completed for this thesis. The applicability of the Disaster Management Framework, adapted from Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) and Ritchie (2004) to Australian based tour operators is proposed. The coded interview data will be presented in this chapter under the following six headings, which have been drawn from Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) and Ritchie’s (2004) frameworks: Pre-Event, Prodromal, Emergency, Intermediate, Long-Term Recovery and Resolution phases.

4.2 Pre-event stage:
The first phase of the TDMF, according to Faulkner and Vikulov (2001), includes any action taken by the industry to minimise the impact of a potential crisis. Four questions, which considered pro-active planning approaches implemented into the business previous to the IOT04 were asked of all six tour operator participants. The probability and likely impact of a tsunami is considered, whilst the development of contingency plans, issue analyses and strategic management strategies are reviewed. These questions were:

- Before the Tsunami, had your organisation considered what crisis management strategies would be required in the event of such a disaster? (If no, go to question 3)

- Could you elaborate on what pro-active measures your organisation had in place to deal with the Tsunami?

- Had your organisation conducted any environmental scanning, forecasting or risk analysis assessments of your business in case of a crisis? If yes please elaborate (If no, go to question 5)

- Did you then develop any strategic plans from your scanning and risk analysis? If yes, please elaborate
When operators were asked if they had considered the probability and/or impact of a tsunami, only one participant answered yes (A1), with the remaining five operators not considering a tsunami specifically in their crisis management plans. This is highlighted by Participant B: “We had probably not considered a tsunami as such because that's a very specific type of crisis” (B1).

Half of the operators interviewed specified they had developed a crisis manual that provided some detail on how to respond to a crisis, whilst the remaining half did not have such a manual, as highlighted by Participant F: “Not really. In a very small way our plans are limited to maintaining active relationships and communication with our overseas suppliers and staying in touch with Department of Foreign Affairs” (F1). No specific reasons were offered as to why some operators chose not to have a formal crisis management plan, however Participant E did indicate that their experience allowed them to have an understanding and approach to dealing with individual crises (E1).

Following consideration of the possibility of a tsunami, participants were then asked what pro-active measures they had in place. From the responses it was evident that minimal pro-active measures had been developed by operators, however those that were implemented are worth noting:

- “We have a 24 hour emergency phone so that started ringing on Boxing Day and that ran hot very quickly” (B2)

- “We use the manual. We have offices everywhere that we operate and the manual spells out what the local office has to do in terms of contacting clients on the ground and informing other offices who might have sent clients” (A2)

- “We do have very strong risk management strategies in terms of how we design our itineraries and our systems so we know where our clients are and we know what they’re doing and we know what we’re selling to our clients, so we know what general risk they’re in for” (E2)
Chapter 4: Results

The attitudes of operators towards proactive planning according to the research findings differed significantly. One operator viewed having a crisis manual as of high importance, "We have offices everywhere that we operate and the manual spells out what the local office has to do in terms of contacting clients on the ground and informing other offices who might have set clients" (A2) whilst another considered the experience of senior management of greater value, "We don't have a crisis management manual because all the senior management have been in their role for decades and we've got tested experience rather than a need to refer to a manual" (E2).

Interestingly, one operator did specify that they had previously produced a manual in response to another natural disaster which occurred prior to the Tsunami. Regrettably this crisis had resulted in the death of a passenger, thus warranting the production of a manual to deal with future crises. The manual produced was of a general nature and didn’t specify how to deal with different types of crisis, however it demonstrated a pro-active approach (of sorts) to crisis management. This manual, however, was not utilised to manage the IOT04 as the operator was not directly affected.

From the research findings, it appears there were mixed responses to the types of pro-active measures each organisation had in place to deal with the Tsunami. Alarmingly, some tour operators provided no response when asked this question. The following area of questioning details the environmental scanning carried out by participants.

Environmental scanning examines the economic, political, technological and social environment. From this information, trends are then identified and an assessment is carried out on the potential risks these may impose for an organisation (Ritchie, 2004). Tour operators are then able to identify any potential issues/risk associated with running their tours, and develop relevant strategies/plans.

Overall it was found that the majority of tour operators gave little consideration to carrying out any specific environmental scanning. This was a surprising finding, given that almost all of the operators interviewed operated
Chapter 4: Results

tours in high risk regions, prone to tsunamis and other natural disasters, including Thailand (A9,B6,C8) Burma (B6), China (C8) and India (A9,B6, and E6) and Sri Lanka (E7,F12). It was reported by Participant D to discontinue travel to Sri Lanka due to political instability; however they do not undertake any risk analysis assessments for natural disaster (D4).

Risk analysis was considered by some operators through the development of crisis manuals, however only one specified different types of responses in the manual. The actions required to respond to a crisis depends on the type of crisis, although the research findings establishes that other variables also need to be considered, including the local office locations.

Other operators identified the risk of a crisis on a broader scale. For example one operator considered notification procedures, such as who will act as a spokesperson. Another operator stated their suppliers had the most up to date intelligence on the regions affected by the Tsunami, and therefore did not undertake any independent risk analysis themselves, or consider it a priority (D3).

The importance of knowledge and experience was regarded more highly by tour operators than having formal crisis management plans in place, "...the accumulated knowledge and experience has alerted us to most of the broad scale risk but most of our understanding of broad scale risk is associated with national disasters whether political, earthquakes or floods and never have we considered such a global disaster as the tsunami’ (E3). Consistent with this, neither Participant B nor F had conducted any specific risk assessments of potential natural disasters, although Participant B did state they had a general plan for a crisis.

When operators were asked if any plans were developed from risk analysis and environmental scanning, two operators acknowledged their crisis management plans (A6 and B4). As the remaining operators didn’t conduct any scanning or risk analysis, they had not developed any plans to deal with the crisis. As Participant E stated, “We deal with most things on a situational
basis. We find that with hard procedures, the moment you have a crisis, those procedures are inappropriate for it because of the diversity of the things that we’re dealing with (E4). Similarly, Participant D noted “No, not in that regard, financially, but not natural disasters. We work very carefully with our suppliers and tour operators and they have their own emergency procedures in place” (D4). These views highlight the diversified nature of tour operators and different procedures used in crisis management planning.

4.3 Prodromal stage

The second phase of the TDMF is the immediate response taken by the operators to prepare for an imminent disaster. This includes the activation of warning systems and communication tree, relocating resources and securing facilities. Four questions were developed for the semi-structured interviews to ascertain whether or not the operators received prior warning of the Tsunami. If warning was provided, operators were then questioned on the strategies that were implemented directly after the warning. These were:

- Were you provided any warning of the Tsunami previous to it hitting the affected destinations? (If yes Q6, if no Q9)
- If yes how did you find out?
- What were the strategies your organisation implemented after having being warned of a Tsunami hitting?
- Were those strategies implemented from any plans that were already developed? If yes, please elaborate

The results found that none of the participants received any warning of the Tsunami, therefore, strategies could not be implemented to manage the onset until the Emergency phase.

Communication of when the Tsunami hit varied amongst participants, with news reports being the most common type of media informing the operators of the crisis (E5 and D7). Participant D stated they only learned of the Tsunami
on the evening of Boxing Day, hours after the crisis had hit, and once again this was through local media reports.

4.4 Emergency stage
The third phase of the TDMF includes the action taken once the crisis has hit and emergency procedures that need to be implemented. This includes the communication strategies employed, methods taken to control public relations and most importantly ensuring the safety of any tourists in the region/s affected by the crisis. These were:

- The Tsunami affected various countries in the Indian Ocean region. To your knowledge, what countries did you have tours operating in at the time?
- When learning of the Tsunami, what type of crisis communication strategies did you implement and what did they include? Were there any difficulties in accessing up to date information?
- Did you appoint a spokesperson to speak on the crisis on behalf of the organisation? Did you use any other control mechanisms in your crisis communication strategy? (Such as all information coming from head office etc)
- What other action was taken by your organisation after the immediate impact of the Tsunami?

When asked what regions participants had passengers in at the time of the Tsunami, the most common areas were Thailand (A9, B6 and C8), Burma (B6) and India (A9,E6) . It was reported that there was no loss of life or injuries in any tour group due to the Tsunami. Of those who did have passengers in the countries affected, up to date communication on the specific regions affected was required.

The development of a crisis communication strategy should have the potential to provide the tools required for an organisation to cater to the specifics of the crisis (Ritchie 2004). Flexibility is required as each crisis has different attributes which require specific actions to be taken to deal with it effectively. As most of the tour operators employed sub-contractors to undertake their
tours in the regions they operate in, the research findings found that up-to-date communication on what regions were affected was difficult to obtain.

Various reasons were identified from the research findings as to why it was difficult to receive up-to-date information of the crisis. Participant C stated the difficulties experienced were partially due to the reliance on receiving information from sub-contractors and hotels: “relying on getting the information from hotels, that didn’t have the means to send him information or were dealing with the crisis themselves” (C10).

As no prior warning was provided of the imminent crisis, it was found that the majority of tour operators took a reactive approach. Therefore, similar findings were reported from other operators who stated that communication lines were down with heavy reliance on the media for correct information.

Although challenges were faced by some operators with obtaining correct up to date information (A11, C10 and D9) others reported there was no need to put out any communication as they didn’t have passengers travelling in the affected regions (Participant F).

Control mechanisms provide the most up to date, correct and consistent information to the public (Ritchie 2004). The most effective techniques used, according to the research findings were; (i) employing one person as the spokesman to speak on behalf of the company in relation to the current situation of the crisis (A14, B11, C10, D13, E11 and F6) and (ii) having a worded script which is then distributed to all staff at the organisation (C11).

The research findings indicated that managers most commonly acted as the spokesman for each organisation “Our spokesperson is always our CEO” (E8). Another responded, who was in senior management also noted that they acted as the representative to talk to the media and undertake interviews if required: “I was interviewed 5 times a day for the first week from ABC radio to local media to whoever because we were one of the few companies known to have a lot of product in Sumatra” (D13).
Participants reported different approaches to accessing the situation in the affected destinations, with some relying on communication through telephone and email, whilst others made the decision to travel to the affected destinations to view first hand the extent of the damage, “She went up to Thailand in the following weeks to try and get some information herself on the hotels to see what was the extent of the damage and what we can and can’t sell in the future” (C11). Other operators decided to use alternative forms of communication to access the damage “We didn’t fly out to Sri Lanka straight away. That’s not what we’re going to do but we’re on the phone to them” (E7).

Although these operators took different approaches, all were acknowledged by the participants to be effective. Of those travelling to the affected regions in the following months only one operator reported that clients were contacted to be advised if their itinerary would be affected in anyway. Other operators set up a hotline for concerned travellers and their families and friends.

One of the most common actions taken by operators to assist in the emergency recovery of the destinations included philanthropic gestures. Different techniques were employed “And here we started a fundraiser called Recipes for Disaster and everyone put together and produced a little book and set up a fundraising appeal” (A16). Other companies took a different approach, providing large sum donations to various aid organisations: “We basically pledged part commissions from every client to Surfaid and to Oxfam” (D15), “Our biggest action was of charity and concern so we made some early and very significant donations to the appeals. $30,000 to World Vision, $8,000 to Unicef and $5,000 to Red Cross in aid of the recovery and rescued efforts globally” (E10).
4.5 Intermediate stage

The fourth phase of the TDMF/CDMF focuses on the marketing recovery of the destination or, in this case, the tour operator affected by the crisis. Four questions were developed to address the main challenges operators faced, both internal and external to the organisation, which affected their recovery. As a result of these challenges, post-Tsunami, participants were asked to address any changes that may have occurred to its structure, as well as discussing the various forms of collaborative techniques they may have employed with their stakeholders to assist in the restoration of normal business activity. These were:

- What were the main challenges in the short term with restoring business operations to normal condition and how did you address these challenges? i.e. did you have to make alterations to the route your tours took in the affected regions? Were subcontractors affected in the regions you operated in? etc

- How did you manage your resources (human, financial etc) to restore services back to normal?

- Did you have to change your organisational structure and leadership styles within your organisation? If so, what types of changes did you make?

- Was there any form of collaboration with any other stakeholders to assist in the restoration/maintenance of your organisations tour operations?

There were a number of organisational challenges noted by participants following the Tsunami. Re-arranging tours was one of the most common (A17,C13 and F10) “You have to re-route tours and possibly cancel some tours because people didn’t want to travel” (B16), whilst other operators had extreme difficulties in obtaining a clear picture of the infrastructural damage. As a result one participant noted deferring bookings to the affected regions (F9).

As the majority of the participants interviewed operate tours through subcontractors, limited changes were made to manage their resources. This is supported by Participant B who stated “the tsunami wasn’t such a big deal for
Chapter 4: Results

us” (B19). Some participants did report that there was a need for consultants to take on additional work duties (A23, B19) “We had people from the areas that had been affected by the tsunami who were occupied significantly in handling the issues that arose. So the other consultants had to be a bit flexible about the calls that they took” (A23).

Others participants stated that clients were still willing to travel to these regions, so they were still willing to send them “The product was still in demand so we could supply it” (D17). One of the benefits noted with sending clients shortly after the crisis was for aid purposes, as Participant D stated “We were encouraging them to take clothing and provisions with them so they could contribute to the locals” (D17). An emergent research finding was identified by Participant E who noted the contribution of the company in assisting the regions in the recovery process, through developing specific Aid Tours (E27), these were aimed at assisting in the recovery process.

No structural organisational changes were reported by any of the participants following the Tsunami. These results may have been attributed to the fact that participants had alternative destinations they were operating in at the time and therefore had a wider target market, and little need to make permanent structural organisational changes at the time. Senior management experience was noted by Participant E as a key reason for not requiring any permanent changes “Senior management have been in their roles for decades and we’ve seen our fair share of crisis and, so while this was a big crisis, it didn’t affect us a great deal..” (E13).

Collaboration with other stakeholders to assist in the restoration of normal business operations was noted by all participants. Primarily these stakeholders were their suppliers located in the affected Tsunami regions, hoteliers, tourism bodies and to a lesser degree competition.

As the majority of participants don’t own any of the products they offer their clients in the affected regions, they relied on accurate and up-to-date information from their suppliers who had greater knowledge of the regions.
level of infrastructural damage (D19). Hoteliers were also closely communicated with, to ensure operators were kept up to date with the restoration process and to distinguish which hotels they were able to continue marketing as part of their tours (C17).

Collaboration with other stakeholders was noted by all participants as part of the business restoration process, as the following statements support “Once we’d resolved the immediate issues we started to realize that areas that had been bit by the Tsunami were really struggling because tourism wasn’t coming back. So there was a lot of involvement with stakeholders at the stage” (A25). Other forms of collaboration included communicating with direct competitors, asking them if they required any assistance, “Hey guys, what are you doing? Have you been affected? How can we help each other?”(B21).

4.6 Long-term recovery stage
The fifth phase of the TDMF and CDMF focuses on the long term recovery of the tour operators. Four questions were developed which address the consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, the main challenges which confronted these operators, and the action taken to address the recovery. These were:

- What type of consultation did you have with external stakeholders to assist in the longer term recovery of your organisation? (Media, industry sectors, tourists, other businesses)
- What type of consultation and collaboration did you have with your internal stakeholders to assist in the long term recovery? (e.g. employees, managers, shareholders)
- What were the main challenges confronting your tour operation in the long term recovery from the Tsunami?
- What action did your tour operation take to address this recovery?

It was found that there was little consultation with external stakeholders, as minimal recovery was required. A number of participants did consider some level of consultation. The media was the most commonly identified
Chapter 4: Results

stakeholder used throughout the re-marketing of the affected destinations and assisting with promoting special offers to encourage travellers to take tours to those regions. Working with the media was noted by one participant as a key forum for encouraging travellers to return to the crisis affected regions.

Providing up to date information to clients on the safe areas to travel was noted by various participants, and each used different methods including client events, email and telephone communication. As the following quote demonstrates, communicating with the operator’s client base was imperative for effective business operations: “Communicating with our customers would be the main thing, existing or prospective, and letting them know that we’re on top of things and our suppliers are on top of things and have emergency procedures in place” (D21).

Interestingly other stakeholders, including government bodies such as DFAT, were noted by one participant as a blunt instrument for providing safe travel advice (E17). The participant referred to their organisation’s own real life experience on the ground, and would travel to the regions affected by the crisis to ascertain what areas were affected by the Tsunami, and were therefore not safe for travel: “... uses its real experience on the ground to flesh that advice out and say that this particular area is going to be devastated, but you only need to get a kilometre back from the beach and you’ll have a fully functioning community and economy and you want to support those people by travelling there”(E17).

Similar to this, another participant noted “Some people went on the tours before the travel warnings were lifted but they knew there were areas that we couldn’t take them in to” (F,21). Contradicting this action taken, other participants decided the best approach was to wait until it was safe to start processing bookings again: “If the government travel advice says “Do not travel” or says “reconsider whether you need to travel” we might not return so we rely on that advice first of all” (B25). However, there was consultation and collaboration noted with internal stakeholders by some of the participants.
The internal stakeholders operators consulted with, throughout the long term recovery process included their business partners (E19), collaboration with international offices (A31), the marketing department of the organisation and staff members (A32 and B24) and regular meetings to ensure up to date information was provided (B27, C20, D25). One participant noted that the advantage of having suppliers located in the regions affected by the crisis, was being able to ascertain what was required to get business back on the ground, as the business partners understood the local operating conditions: “We understand the Australian travelling market and they understand the local operating conditions and we come together and work in partnership to get it back to a sustainable level for all of us.” (E19).

Staff training was also an integral part of internal consultation for some participants, with staff informed on the extent of damage to hotels and infrastructure affected by the Tsunami (C19 and E20). One participant noted the importance of staff training, in relation to hotel knowledge: “As soon as they got any information it was fed out to everyone so everyone knew what was going on. Making sure that if we were trying to push a hotel that the staff was trained on the property in being able to sell it” (C19). This hotel knowledge then assists with both perception and consumer confidence.

Restoring business and consumer confidence is noted by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) as one of the key disaster management response elements. This was consistent with the research findings, which indicated that perception was recognised by at least half of the participants as a challenge which hindered return visitation to the affected regions (A21, C21 and E21): “Not only were we re-routing to avoid specific towns that had been affected but people wanted to avoid vast areas so you’d be making some quite dramatic changes in their itinerary” (A20). This perception was not directly linked to consumers, as the results indicated it was a combination of both business and consumer perceptions which may affect return visitation to regions affected by the Tsunami: “We might have a travel agent who had that perception so you had to combat that as well” (A21).
A widespread result was the perception of consumers believing that entire destinations were devastated by the Tsunami, this is illustrated by the following quote “The perception that entire destinations had been irrevocably trashed despite the fact that we knew all the boats in the Maldives were fine and hadn’t been affected” (E21). Tour operators found that clients did not want to travel to countries affected, even though only a limited region may have had infrastructural damage.

Interestingly, the perception of some operators was that both the Australian and Adventure travellers, who are recognised as the most common target markets, were more resilient to the crisis (E21). In light of this perception, no post-crisis surveys were completed with clients, with the most common action taken by participants to offer re-routing options and putting together products in what they considered safe travel regions.

The media was another stakeholder which presented operators with challenges to continue marketing destinations. As one participant noted “anyone watching television couldn’t tell the difference between seeing what a wave did in Phuket and what a wave did in the Maldives” (E21). A similar opinion was noted by another key operator “they are not interested in talking about things when they are restored to normal so you have all the hype in the media about a disaster and then suddenly it cuts off and turns to another disaster somewhere else” (B28).

Although a limited number of participants had strategies to deal with the adverse media attention, one operator did highlight that it was important to work closely with the media, especially the travel media: “You’ve got to talk to the different kinds of media such as the headline new media, and the warm and fuzzy traveller section of the media in the tourism section” (B28). The travel media may include the travel section of newspapers and television shows such as Getaway and The Great Outdoors, as the headline news was not recognised as an effective medium to promote return travel: “You will never get it on headline news” (B29).
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4.7 Resolution:
The sixth and final phase of the TDMF/CDMF is the point when routine operations have been restored, or a new improved state has been established (Faulkner and Vikulov 2001 and Ritchie 2004). To test the framework, four questions were developed. These questions were:

- Did the impact of the Tsunami bring about any permanent changes to the operating environment of your organisation?
- How has your organisation responded to the changes?
- How did you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies and responses to the Tsunami?
- After the evaluation were any changes made to your Crisis Management prevention and planning tools?

No participants reported any permanent changes to the operating environment of their businesses as a result of the Tsunami, other than a heightened awareness of the impacts a tsunami can cause. One operator did comment that the reason for not having to make any permanent changes was due to their business’ approach of offering a diversified product package: “When one destination’s down, another destination can pick up the slack” (E23), offering a diverse product range was a common finding amongst the operators interviewed. Although there were no noted permanent changes to the operating environment of the tour operators, the subcontractors or suppliers in the affected regions were noted to be affected by one participant: “We had to lay off staff so they are very strongly financially affected” (B26).

As previously indicated, the only permanent change noted by any participants was heightened awareness of such a large scale crisis. As a result, the participant became a member of the Safe Travel Charter, which commits the organisation to ensuring safe travel for all their customers (Participant F).

Other than a strategic review of the crisis manual and staff meetings, the majority of participants didn’t use evaluation techniques, as the Tsunami was reported as having minimal impact on business operations for most of the operators. It is important to note that only one participant reported reviewing a
crisis manual, as the majority of operators had no manual to review. This could be due to the perception and size of the business, as the following quote highlights: “We’re a big small business so we don’t have to have an official review and audit to see how we’re going” (E24).

The majority of participants reported no changes to their crisis management tools, however minor changes were made to Participant A’s crisis management manual. It is interesting to note here that this operator’s policy is to contact every single client who is affected by a crisis within 24 hours. This is a key policy in the manual which has proved to be successful, as the following demonstrates: “One of the elements in our crisis manual is that you have to be able to contact every single customer in 24 hours. We’ve found that this is the most important thing you can do” (A39).

Another research finding was the suppliers of tour operators forming their own associations. These associations included the Boat Owners Association in Sumatra where various topics relating to managing a crisis are discussed including learning from the experience of the Tsunami: “They have formed associations and communicate regularly on the topics whether it is the Boat Owners Association in Pudang in Sumatra or the government tourist association in the Maldives” (D29).
4.8 Conclusion:
This chapter has outlined the research findings which were obtained from the six semi-structured interviews completed for this thesis. Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s CDMF were both adapted as the framework and were tested on Australian based tour operators. Each of the six phases has been detailed, with in-depth reflections provided in each section discussing how each operator prepared and responded to the IOT04. It was found that only a limited number of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF considerations were implemented. The following chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the results of these research findings.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction to discussion:
This chapter will discuss the research findings of the case study in relation to an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF framework, which also takes account of Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF framework. Each stage of the TDMF will be addressed in detail, comparing and contrasting the research findings outlined in the previous chapter. The research aim and objectives will be first presented in Table 5.1, highlighting the significance of each objective in relation to each phase of the TDMF and CDMF.

5.2 Research aim and objectives
The purpose of this research is to adapt Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF in the context of Australian based tour operators and a large scale natural disaster. Table 5.1 outlines the relevance of each research objective in relation to the TDMF/CDMF phases.

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<tr>
<th>Research Objective</th>
<th>TDMF/CDMF relevant Phase</th>
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<td>Examine the pro-active crisis management measures implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)</td>
<td>Phase One and Two Pre Event Stage and Prodromal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore the challenges, actions and most effective crisis communication strategies implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)</td>
<td>Phase Three and Four Emergency and Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examine the level of consultation and collaboration Australian based tour operators had with internal and external stakeholders in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)</td>
<td>Phase Four and Five Intermediate and Long Term (recovery)</td>
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5.3 Pre-Event Stage

5.3.1 Probability of the crisis

The importance of assessing for potential disasters and the probability of their occurrence is recognised by Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) as a principal element in the pre-event stage. From the case study results it can be argued there is a gap between what the framework is suggesting for effective crisis management planning, and what some tour operators are implementing. As only one of the participants considered the probability of a tsunami in their crisis management planning, the research findings supports Glaesser’s (2006) conclusion that large scale natural disasters are hitting unprepared populations. The findings also support the findings of Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) who note, that one of the key challenges in crisis management for the tourism industry is the development of strategies for events which have a lower probability of occurring. From the evidence in this study, this appears to be a key challenge for Australian based tour operators.

5.3.2 Pro-active measures

Santana (2003) argues it is the level to which management prepares an organisation which then determines how well it will respond to an imminent crisis. From the research findings, it appears a very limited number of participants implemented Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) recommended pro-active measures to assist in effective management of the Tsunami. This is consistent which similar studies which have investigated the level of crisis preparedness of tourism related enterprises (Runyan 2006, Anderson 2006, Ciocci and Michael 2007, Ritchie and Miller 2004, De Sausmarez 2003, Prideaux 2003, Faulkner and Vikulov 2001). Participants who didn’t report any formal pro-active planning still continued operating using various reactive measures, which included withdrawing some affected destinations from their itineraries, following government travel advisories, preparing press releases and appointing a spokesman for the crisis. These measures are similar to previous crisis management studies which focused on tour operators (Cavlek
2002 and Stanbury et al 2004). These reactive measures are thought to be associated with the unpredictable nature of such a large scale disaster, which has been noted by other academics to be beyond the capabilities of contingency plans.

As Beirman argues, “there are cases where the scale of a natural disaster is so vast it is beyond established emergency contingencies” (2003:10-11). Henderson (2007a:10) further notes “certain tourism crises unfold in ways which can’t be forecast”. Acknowledging these views, some may argue that the extreme unpredictable nature and size of the Indian Ocean Tsunami could not be forecasted, and was beyond emergency contingencies tour operators may have had in place. This is debatable, as the lack of contingencies in place to begin with makes it difficult to evaluate the true effectiveness of strategies which are reactive as opposed to proactive.

5.3.3 Contingency plans, risk analysis and environmental scanning

The importance of developing contingency plans to assist in crisis management preparedness has been noted by a number of researchers (Ritchie 2009, Murphy 2008, Henderson 2007a, Faulkner and Vikulov 2001, Quarantelli 1986). However, as reported in the results, only half the operators interviewed acknowledged having a developed crisis management plan. Tested experience of senior management was noted by one operator as a more effective tool to respond to a crisis. This is consistent with Cioccio and Michael’s (2007) findings on the 2003 bushfires in northeast Victoria (Australia), where the tourism operators in the affected bushfire region considered practical experience more valuable than contingency planning measures.

There is much debate over the usefulness of having a formal contingency plan, with the financial cost acting as a key barrier for businesses to invest in the plan’s development (Irvine and Anderson 2004 and Stanbury, Pryer and Roberts 2005). Although the operators interviewed did not highlight this as a barrier, it certainly is an issue to be considered, as small businesses frequently
have a lack of available capital (Runyan 2006). Further to this, the lack of training, skills and resources also needs to be considered, as these may further limit the capability of businesses to consider crisis management planning (Ciccio and Michael 2007).

Another barrier to developing adequate contingency plans and risk analysis assessments, is that many of the participants interviewed outsource their tours to locally based operators on the ground. The countries identified included Thailand, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka, all of which were affected by the Tsunami. The issue then lies with the lack of control the tour operators have to gauge the level of training, skills and resources required by these suppliers to prepare for and to manage a crisis. In a case study on small scale tourism on an island of Gili Air in Indonesia, Cushnahan’s (2003) research found that no owners or employees of the businesses they examined had any formal knowledge or skills in crisis management, due to a limited education and lack of formal business or tourism industry qualifications. Similar problems are likely in the destinations affected by the Tsunami, as quite often access to such resources is limited.

As acknowledged by Gurtner (2006), tourism-associated risk management requires significant investment in time and money by tourism enterprises. What raises further concern is that there was no regional or destination crisis management plan in place in Southern Thailand prior to the Tsunami, a region which was greatly affected by the crisis. Gurtner (2006) further notes the negative impacts of the Tsunami in Thailand could have been reduced through better stakeholder awareness, and competent knowledge of appropriate preparation and responses. This is especially important for tour operators on the ground, as they are one of the key stakeholders who were particularly vulnerable to the impacts caused by the IOT04. These operators would not have experienced such a significant tsunami prior to December 2004, and therefore had not seen the need to develop any form of a crisis response plan.
Heath (1998) highlights that development of any future crisis management plans relies on implementation of strategies from the feedback and learning component of a crisis (cited in Ritchie 2009). There was evidence to suggest from one operator interviewed that the need to develop a crisis response manual came after the company’s first experienced crisis, two years prior to the Tsunami. This resulted in senior management developing an emergency response procedure manual to deal with impending crises (A1). Supporting this, the literature search revealed that the response to the Tsunami by the Royal Thai government was to facilitate the development of the Phuket Tourism Risk Management Strategy in collaboration with both tourism, local and community based organisations post the Tsunami, “the main objectives of which are to unify, educate and improve cooperation and resilience of the tourism industry” (United Nations Environment Programme, 2008:24).

Other researchers note that there are limitations to rigid contingency plans, and highlight the need to allow for a flexible approach to responding to a crisis (Evans and Elphick, 2005 and Tse, So and Sin 2006). More specifically Tse et al argues that “contingency measures must remain flexible and adapt to changing conditions of the crisis” (2006:9). This was supported in the research findings, with Participant A stating that each local office has its own crisis management manual, which outlines procedures covering a variety of different crises. Some of the procedures are standardised, regardless of the crisis, and others reflect the country’s local requirements. Developing crisis management manuals which are adjusted to the local requirements and conditions allows for flexibility, and avoids the more common prescriptive measures approach, which has been noted to cause problems and panic (Stanbury, Pryer and Roberts 2005).

Tour Operators emergency responses to the Tsunami were primarily focused on the safety of their clients. Cavlek (2002) argues that tour operators should assess the safety of a destination more critically than any individual would, due to their liability relating to the service they provide to their clients. This was supported through the research findings, as some operators reported travelling to the affected destinations to assess the risk for their clients.
Chapter 5: Discussion

By checking the places after the event the operators were addressing a real responsibility. This information could then be used to make decisions on what regions were safe for clients to travel to soon after the Tsunami. Interestingly, however, this liability is released if they result from *force majeure*, meaning from a war, flood or a natural disaster which is beyond control of the operator. The findings from this study found that operators took responsibility beyond their liability requirements, as the Tsunami resulted from *force majeure*. However, although the tour operators may not be liable for the immediate effects of the Tsunami on their clients in the area, they could be liable if they continued to take bookings and sent clients to places which were dangerous, or not ready for visitors after the event.

5.3.4 Testing of the framework

Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) research findings from their case study on the Katherine Floods (1998) found operators had considered evacuation plans, but not tourism specific disaster management plans. These findings were similar to this case study, as some participants noted the development of emergency related procedures, as discussed previously. Only one operator however noted identifying the different potential risks, and then developed a manual which details the actions in response to specific crisis, which is supportive of the TDMF framework.

The barriers to developing pre-event measures are thought to be associated with the outsourcing of tours to locally based ground operators, which reduces the control of the head offices in Australia. In addition, the unprecedented size and scope of the IOT04 is argued to be difficult to prepare for, and therefore might not be an appropriate case study to assume the applicability of the elements of the TDMF/CDMF.
5.4 Prodromal stage

5.4.1 Pre-warning of tsunami

From the research findings, it was found that no warning was provided of the Tsunami to the participants of this study. Prior to December 2004, no warning systems had been developed for the IOT04 (Synolakis, Okal and Bernard 2005). For obvious reasons, the lack of warning system acted as a barrier to alert destinations and other tourism stakeholders, including tour operators, of an impending tsunami. The reactions, however, of operators on the ground one hour after the Tsunami hit Phi Phi Island in Thailand have been highlighted by Synolaki et al (2005) as irresponsible.

It was reported that day trippers on the island of Phi Phi were transported back to the Island of Phuket, the hazard zone, an hour after the wave hit, even though experience in previous tsunamis around the world demonstrates that waves in a tsunami can persist for several hours (Synolaki et al 2005). This demonstrates the lack of experience and understanding by some locally based operators of the necessary disaster management procedures to follow in a crisis situation. This is alarming, as the operators in this case study all use locally based suppliers for their tours.

5.4.2 Communication of crisis hitting

Media reports were found to be the most common type of communication to inform the participants of the Tsunami. As Ritchie et al (2004) notes, crisis communication is concerned with providing consistent and up to date information, however as Murphy and Bayley (1989) highlights, the media has a reputation in providing misleading information on the severity of a disaster. In their case study on the Mount St Helens volcanic eruption in 1980, it was found the “media coverage intensified the confusion during the fire-fighting period” (Murphy and Bayley 1989:43). This included the media making false reports on the regions where driving was allowed and the extent of damage as a result of the fires (Murphy and Bayley 1989).
Chapter 5: Discussion

Hall (2002) argues that the public understanding of the severity of a disaster is for the most part constructed by how the media reports it. Without the correct up to date information provided on the Tsunami, it was difficult for the participants, who are all based in Australia, to make informed decisions. The media was therefore relied upon for providing timely information. This is supportive of Hall’s (2002) argument, as the operators could only identify the severity of the Tsunami through the media’s reporting.

5.4.3 Testing of the framework

Although the results do not support the framework, it is important to note that “The 2004 tsunami was the biggest natural disaster the Indian Ocean region has ever seen” Ichinosawa (2006:113). Ichinosawa (2006) further highlights that such a catastrophic disaster could not be predicted by anyone. It could therefore be concluded that Phase 2 of the TDMF/CDMF was not relevant to this study.

5.5 Emergency stage

5.5.1 Communication strategies

From the research findings, more than half the operators confirmed they had clients in the affected countries at the time of the Tsunami, however due to the lack of communication through the emergency stage, concerns are raised as to when contact was made with these clients. One operator noted it took five days to get in touch with sub-contractors on the ground (F8). Similar responses were reported from other participants “Yes, there were definitely difficulties at the time in obtaining up to date information in terms of the specific areas the tsunami had hit, because it was difficult to get news out of there as communication lines were down” (A11). From these findings, it can be assumed there were difficulties in ascertaining which tour groups were affected. It also raises doubt to the effectiveness about some of the communication strategies in place.
Due to the lack of communication with some sub-contractors, specific regions affected by the Tsunami could only be verified through the information provided by the media, tourism organisations and the government, all of which have a reputation for providing inconsistent messages (Ritchie et al. 2004). The research also found that the participant’s ability to make contact with their on-ground operators varied significantly. While some participants noted they were able to contact ground staff immediately: “The first thing we always do is to account for people and that was quite quick, just two phone calls” (B10), others had great difficulty for a number of days, making any form of communication: “A couple of times I tried calling and it took a little while to get through to anyone – about 5 days I think” (F8). Reliance on local operators for information was a key research finding “We rely on our local operators on the ground to give us the up to date information” (B8): “It was up to them (Suppliers) to give us timely information on what was going on on the ground” (C9).

From these findings, reliance on communication between tour operators and sub-contractors is established and supports the need to develop a crisis communication strategy. The development of a crisis communication strategy should have the potential to provide the tools required for an organisation to cater to the specifics of the crisis (Ritchie 2004). The research findings from this study support Ritchie (2004), as Participant F did not have any developed crisis strategy, and therefore lacked the tools to deal with the communication problems they faced with their locally based operators.

### 5.5.2 Communication to travellers

Difficulties with communication was identified in the research findings to be a key issue for the tour operators in this particular study: Participant C noted problems with contacting passengers on the ground “Our product manager also tried to contact our passengers on the day but wasn’t able to get them so I think she spoke to them the day after” (C10). However, only a limited number of the tour operators interviewed reported the need to communicate to affected travellers, as they didn’t have clients in the Tsunami regions. Of those
operators who did have clients in the Tsunami affected regions, Thailand was found to be the most common destination.

Thailand is a popular tourism destination which was featured extensively in the Tsunami news reports world-wide, however only 20% of Phuket’s hotels were severely damaged (Henderson 2007b). As McConnell (2003) argues, it is not the facts which define the crisis, but the perception of people. This was proven in a study completed by Miller and Ritchie (2003), whose research found consumers perceived the whole of the UK to be closed due to the 2001 foot and mouth disease. This case study found similar research findings, with clients having the perception the whole of Thailand was affected by the Tsunami. To overcome this perception, communicating with clientele was a high priority for some operators, so clients could be kept well informed of the facts of the crisis. Other operators decided to delete whole destinations from their itineraries, which has dramatic consequences for the viability of those regions.

5.5.3 Control mechanisms

It is the control mechanisms according to Ritchie (2004) which provide correct and consistent information to the public, however due to the communication difficulties noted earlier, the effectiveness of such mechanisms is questionable in this case. The core challenge found in this study was being able to communicate effectively with each individual sub-contractor, to assess the damage and risk for clients. Having offices based locally in the Tsunami affected countries did allow some participants to be provided with more accurate information on the crisis, whilst some of the participants who didn’t have locally based offices chose to send staff to the affected regions to assess the situation. For one operator, a worded script was then developed and provided to all staff members, to ensure a consistent message was conveyed to clients making phone enquiries: “We gave our staff a worded script to reassure our clients which was given by the Thailand product manager” (C11).
This supports Ritchie’s (2004) view of the need for consistency. The development of this script had some merit, as the product manager had travelled to Thailand to access the damage, and was therefore well equipped to provide accurate information for concerned travellers to the region. Other operators (E and F) interviewed didn’t feel this was a necessary strategy: “We didn’t fly out to Sri Lanka straight away. That’s not what were going to do but we’re on the phone to them” (E7). All of these operators had clients in the Tsunami affected countries, used subcontractors and had one key spokesman to speak on behalf of the company. The main differences found were that Participants E and F had not developed a formal crisis management or communication strategy, and instead took a reactive approach, making executive decisions as the crisis unfolded.

Numerous other case studies have also found that reactive strategies to crisis are common in the tourism industry including those focusing on Natural Disasters (Hystad and Keller 2008, Cioccoi and Michael 2005) Terrorism (Henderson 2003), Economic (Henderson 1999), however none of these studies specifically considered tour operators. This case study’s research findings identify a need to travel to the crisis region and meet with subcontractors for control mechanisms to be effective and accurate.

5.5.4 Testing of the framework
From the results, it can be concluded that the participants were not well prepared in any sense for such a large scale disaster, with the reactive measures identified and supporting this finding. Therefore, the application of Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) recommended crisis management measures were minimal, as few of those recommendations had been implemented by these members of the industry. However, there was consideration of aspects of Ritchie’s (2004) additional input to the model. As discussed, the majority of participants did appoint a spokesperson to speak of the crisis on behalf of their company. This was identified by Ritchie (2004) as an integral part of a successful communication strategy.
5.6 Intermediate stage

5.6.1 Challenges to the organisation

Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) model suggests recovery after a crisis through the Intermediate stage requires an effective media communication strategy, along with restoring facilities and conducting an audit of any damage. Although the TDMF was designed to be tested on a destination, there was evidence in this case study to suggest a need for individual tour operators to develop a media communication strategy: “I was interviewed 5 times a day for the first week from ABC radio to local media” (D13). Problems were identified with operators not being able to conduct informed damage audits. This poses issues, on the reliability of information operators might have communicated to the media, on how they are affected by the crisis.

As tour operators in this case study primarily used subcontractors, conducting an audit of the damage in the affected regions was only feasible for those operators who either sent representatives into the regions, or had locally based offices. Obtaining a clear picture of the infrastructural damage, including what hotels and airports were still operational, was noted by some tour operators in this study as a challenge: “Basically the biggest difficulty we had was getting a clear picture of the infrastructure ... what was still operating, what wasn’t – airports, hotels, railways that sort of thing. And because we weren’t getting a clear picture we were just deferring any bookings to the region” (F9). From the analysis of the research findings these difficulties may have been linked with communication barriers with suppliers, or simply the suppliers themselves unsure of what the situation is.

Such barriers resulted in deferred bookings to a number of destinations. This doesn’t necessarily have a direct impact on the business, as the tour operators are able to shift their marketing efforts to other destinations, however it does have a strong negative impact on the sub-contractors: “We had to lay off staff so they are very strongly financially affected. They’re not ...... employed staff they’re sub-contractors” (B26). This was an interesting research finding which suggests the risk for tour operators in a crisis situation is easily transferable to the suppliers. Klemm and Parkinson (2001) argue the need for collaboration...
and local empowerment “Tour operators are powerful intermediaries whose profit seeking policies can conflict with the sustainability of the tourist destination” (2001:374). Some of the difficulties experienced by local tourism suppliers are caused by the short term economic pressures of large tourism international companies (Klemm and Parkison 2001), such as tour operators. Pressures for local suppliers are considerable at a time of crisis, which was found in this case study. When tourism does recovery however, new contracts will have to be negotiated with suppliers, which is a financial cost possibly not considered by the tour operators in the long term.

5.6.2 Management of resources
The Indian Ocean Tsunami has been regarded as the worst on record (Ichinosawa 2006 and Margesson 2005). The tour operators in this study, therefore, did not have previous experience of a large tsunami upon which to base decisions, including the management of resources. Strategic management decisions by each tour operator did however eliminate some of the negative impacts of the crisis. Glaesser (2006) identifies five strategic actions businesses can use as preventative measures, diversification, transfer, cooperation, insurance and self bearing. In this study, both diversification and transfer were found to be the two most common strategies used.

All the tour operators interviewed provide a diversified product through marketing tours to different destinations around the world. If a crisis manifests in one destination, operators are able to focus their marketing efforts on other destinations: “We’re not just marketing the destinations affected by the tsunami, we’re marketing 560 trips worldwide” (E22). Most of the case studies examined by researchers in crisis management are confined to one country or region (Faulkner and Vikulov 2001, Cioccio and Michael 2007, Peters and Pikkemaat 2005, Sanders et al 2008).
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As the Tsunami affected eight countries, it could be assumed that this case study would reveal that relying on having a diversified product would not be a sufficient preventative measure, however the evidence indicates otherwise: “We have quite a diverse portfolio and the areas hit by the tsunami were not a very large chunk of our business, so I don’t think there were any serious challenges other than getting people to go back into those destinations” (A34).

A further strategic action, according to Glaesser (2006), is transferring the risk of a crisis to others. As the tour operators in this study use various suppliers to provide the final product to their client, transferring the risk or consequences of the crisis to these suppliers limits the operator’s liability and responsibility (Glaesser 2006). Although the risk and financial consequences may be shared between suppliers, it is likely if a problem was to occur on a tour the customer would seek the advice, support and solution from the tour operator, not the supplier, as was found in the case of the Tsunami: “Most customers did want to speak with us” (A21).

Effective re-allocation of resources, or in this case deferring travel and offering alternative itineraries to clients was the most common approach taken by the tour operators in the intermediate stage to manage the crisis situation: “You have to re-route tours, and possibly cancel some tours because people didn’t want to travel. We would offer them their money back out of compassion or ask them if they want to do another trip in a different area” (B16). This demonstrates the decision of some operators in this study to offer compensation or alternative arrangements is one of good will, rather than legal responsibility. Customers are, of course key stakeholders for tour operators, as they rely upon them for business (Tanja and Akram 2007). To maintain a client base at a time of a crisis, consideration must be given to their needs and wants, which included altering the standard cancellation policies in this case.
There were limitations to this for some operators: “If people were just freaking out and saying they didn’t want to go to Thailand any more we didn’t refund, but if they were going to affected regions we were giving refunds” (C14). Another operator made the decision to avoid South Thailand altogether: “We avoided South Thailand for about 3 months before we got an indication that people wanted to go back there” (F10). From the analysis, conclusions can be drawn that some operators in this case study had more effective communication and marketing strategies than others. It also further highlights the power of perception, however as Cavlek (2002) states, perception is rarely the factual reality. As was the case with the Tsunami: “Not only were we re-routing to avoid specific towns that had been affected but people wanted to avoid vast areas so you’d be making some quite dramatic changes in their itinerary” (A20).

The importance of the customer stakeholder group to the tour operators in this case study was further demonstrated by the law of demand. Some participants found that customers still wished to travel to affected areas: “The product was still in demand so we could supply it” (D17). This was an interesting research finding as government travel advisories at the time advised against travel to a number of regions affected by the Tsunami. Cavlek (2002) argues that tour operators must follow government travel advisories, which was the case in Croatia when the country was affected by war. However, evidence from this case study suggests this was not the case for the Tsunami: “DFAT advice is a very blunt instrument and .......... uses its real experience on the ground to flesh that advice out” (E17). From a risk management perspective, concerns are also raised if the tour operators who made these decisions are at risk of legal liability, if physical injury to a client or improper performance was to occur, as proposed by Cavlek (2002).

Beeton explores the issues of accident prevention and operators’ ‘legal duty of care’ (2001:437) in a study investigating the adventure horseback tourism industry in Australia. She provides a key example of the potential consequences to tour operators following a crisis which resulted in a lengthy legal investigation. In 1999 a canoeing disaster resulted in the deaths of 21
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tourists, which sent the company Adventure World into liquidation (Mann 2000 cited in Beeton 2001). Beeton (2001) further states that no rules exist for canyoning operators, although in this case liquidation should raise concerns to other tour operators of the penalties. Premium reductions are available for operators if they became a member of tourism industry bodies, including Tourism Alliance. Their membership offers an insurance premium reduction for the Tourism and Recreation Insurance Program (TRIP) (Tourism Alliance website, 2010). Beeton recommends that the success of the cooperative approach taken by the adventure horseback tourism industry, including both operators and the insurance agencies to develop a tourism accreditation program “needs to be taken on by other areas of the tourism industry in general, and the experiential tour operations segment in particular” (2001:438).

5.6.3 Organisational changes

When participants of this case study were asked “Did you have to change your organisational structure and leadership styles?” it was reported that no changes were required. The researcher, however, would argue that changes were made, based on other responses provided throughout the interviews with each tour operator. At a time of crisis, standard operating procedures need to be flexible and adapted to meet the needs of all stakeholders, including customers and suppliers. Ritchie (2004), Evans and Elphick, (2005) and Tse, So and Sin (2006) further highlight the importance of flexibility, with Ritchie (2004) suggesting a need to empower frontline staff and movement away from bureaucratic organisational structures.

The evidence from the research found that itineraries needed to be changed, deferred travel to affected regions, infrastructure damage caused touring to be cut short, and communication barriers existed with locally based suppliers and customers. Meetings and phone calls were required with these suppliers and other key stakeholders to discuss the course of action for the long term recovery of the region. All these issues were required to be dealt with accordingly, and as there was a lack of formal crisis management plans for a
number of the tour operators interviewed, organisation changes would certainly be required to manage the issues listed above.

Armstrong’s (2008) research on the Canberra Bushfires found disruption to her participants workplaces and workloads was significant, and contributed to human resource issues. This case study also identifies disruption to both the workplace and workloads at the time of the Tsunami: “Consultants had to be a bit flexible about the calls that they took” (A23). It is argued that flexibility was required within the formal organisational structures and leadership styles, which is further substantiated through previous discussion on the management of resources.

5.6.4 Collaboration with stakeholders
Ritchie (2004) argues collaboration with key stakeholders is required to manage a crisis in the tourism industry due to the interdependency between some stakeholder groups and the need for emergency plans to be integrated. In this case study, the stakeholder groups included suppliers (including sub-contractors, airlines and hoteliers), customers, the media, local tourism bodies and government departments.

Collaboration was especially important for locally based sub-contractors. Their future is highly dependent on the decisions made by the tour operators in this study. Although sending clients shortly after the crisis is arguable from a risk management perspective, the benefit of aid to the affected Tsunami regions and employment of sub-contractors assists in the recovery of the tourism destination as a whole. Further support was provided with the development of aid tours by one participant, which financially benefit both local tourism businesses and the local communities in the disaster affected regions.

From a business perspective, collaboration was also important for the tour operators in this study, as they relied upon accurate and up to date information from their local suppliers. This included information from sub contractors and hoteliers on the level of infrastructural damage, and what accommodation
facilities were open for business. For this collaboration to be effective, it was important for some tour operators in this study to meet with their sub contractors in the affected region. Collectively, decisions could be made on marketing to encourage tourism back to the regions, as well as consolidating any contingency plans the sub-contractors had in place.

This demonstrates the need for mutual dependency between both the suppliers and the tour operators for information, as even the local stakeholders operating in Southern Thailand underestimated the risks, and the implications such a crisis would have on the local tourism industry and destination image (Gurtner 2006). Further education on crisis management strategies should therefore be made available to local suppliers, to ensure they have the tools and knowledge to make executive decisions at a time of crisis, especially if there are communication barriers between tour operators and their local suppliers, which was evident in this case study. Such tools are available through the CRC website, which include authoritative Tourism Risk Management guides to managing a crisis in tourism and the supporting training programs for destinations, trainers and individual tourism operators. These are readily available in different languages to cater for international tourism businesses (CRC tourism website 2010). The tour operators, however, need to take responsibility and provide this tool to their suppliers, which is a step towards a consistent and collaborative approach to crisis management.

Collaboration with the media was not noted as an issue by the majority of tour operators in this study, although two of the operators acknowledged collaboration on some level if the media approached them. The media has already been argued in providing mis-leading information on the severity of a disaster (Murphy and Bayley 1989) and from the evidence in this case study, this practice may be attributed to the media not having access to accurate and up to date information from key tourism industry stakeholders, including tour operators.
Crisis management literature has also noted a need for tourism operators to have a detailed communication strategy (Ritchie 2009). Providing correct and consistent information to key stakeholders, including the media, should therefore form part of this strategy (Ritchie 2009). As tourists are likely to trust the media for information at a time of crisis, they are also likely to make their decisions to travel based on this information (Lexow and Edelheim 2004). One operator in this case study also acknowledged: “The media can affect people’s opinions very strongly so you, as an operator, if it’s safe to travel again, you need to influence them and paint positive pictures again with positive stories” (B22). Developing a communication strategy as part of a detailed crisis management plan may have benefited some operators in this study to address the perception issues clients obtained as a result of the media.

5.6.5 Testing of the framework

Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) notes the intermediate stage as the point where the short-term needs of people have been addressed, with the focus primarily on restoring key services to the community. As this study is not focussing on whole communities, restoring key services was considered in terms of restoring business operations to normal conditions and investigating the challenges faced in this phase.

As part of the management strategies, it is recommended that a media communication strategy is developed and in addition to this a damage audit or monitoring system is also completed. Contingency plans would form part of this process, however to be effective such plans would need to have been developed prior to the crisis, which as previously discussed wasn’t common for the tour operators interviewed.

As Ritchie (2004) notes, if management is aware of a crisis through proactive scanning, they are in a position to implement their contingency plans in order to limit the impact of the imminent crisis. If these assumptions are compared to the results, the results do not support the model. Although participants did note that there was collaboration with other stakeholders to assist in the restoration process, only a limited number of businesses had completed any
form of proactive scanning. Collaboration with stakeholders was on a reactive basis, making key decisions as information was presented, rather than utilising developed disaster specific strategies, which was noted by Faulkner (2001) and Ritchie (2004) as a integral part of the intermediate phase.

5.7 Long-term recovery stage

5.7.1 Consultation with external stakeholders

Beirman (2009:207) considers “a vital element in any successful tourism recovery campaign is the formation and implementation of a recovery alliance between the major tourism stakeholders”. The evidence from this case study found collaboration between stakeholders: “Once we’d resolved the immediate issues we started to realize that areas that had been hit by the tsunami were really struggling because tourism wasn’t coming back. So there was a lot of involvement with stakeholders at that stage” (A25). A recovery alliance includes all levels of government, destination marketing authorities, airlines, transport carriers, accommodation operators, attractions and other service industry providers.

Although some of the stakeholder groups were noted to be used throughout the crisis management stages, government and destination marketing organisations (DMO’s) were not highlighted by any participant through the long-term recovery stage. This may be because the operators did not feel a responsibility to promote the destination at a time of crisis: “Our approach to what we do is based on having a more globally diversified product package and strategy so that, when one destination’s down, another destination can pick up the slack” (E23). In a similar study Hystad and Keller (2008) found that 72% of businesses interviewed felt that it was the responsibility of the DMO to conduct recovery marketing after a disaster. The question of responsibility was not asked in this case study, however the use of providing a diversified product would assume limited responsibility of the tour operators’ participation in destination marketing recovery.
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Destination marketing may not be considered a primary responsibility of tour operators in this case study, however restoring consumer confidence was. Perceptions were noted by a number of participants to be a key challenge throughout the long-term recovery stage: “Getting our reservation guys to reassure everyone and making sure they had the correct information to give the clients so their perceptions aren’t Don’t go to Thailand” (C21). The media are considered one of the most important stakeholders for restoring consumer confidence when a crisis enters the long-term recovery stage (Ritchie 2004). The media were also found to be one of the most common stakeholder groups thought to influence consumer confidence: “if the media doesn’t turn around the people won’t go back” (B22), although only a selective number of participants considered using the media to assist in rebuilding confidence: “We didn’t actively canvass the media” (A29).

Consultation with clients was a major priority for the majority of tour operators in this case study: “Communicating with our customers would be the main thing, existing or prospective, and letting them know that we’re on top of things and our suppliers are on top of things and have emergency procedures in place” (D21). In a study on the Victorian Bushfires, Sanders et al (2008) found participants did have formal emergency plans, however less were prepared once the emergency stage was completed, with very few businesses contacting their customer database. This case study found limited evidence of formal emergency/crisis management plans, however the majority of operators did contact their customers, offering the option to cancel or change their bookings: “You have to re-route tours, and possibly cancel some tours because people didn’t want to travel” (B16). Carlsen and Hughes (2007) revealed similar research findings in their case study on the Maldives, in which tour operators had allowed clients to cancel or change bookings after the Tsunami at no cost. They further stress the need to prevent cancellations in the short term and recommend increased presence at tourism trade shows.
Operators in this study did not highlight their presence at tourism trade shows, although they did confirm client and agent events: “We have regular client events so we might get fifty clients together here and it’s usually talking about products so we talked about the areas that were affected by the Tsunami” (A30). Cancellations were not prevented, although limited by some operators: “…..cancellation policy as a result of the Tsunami is as follows: that we will refund any future bookings to affected regions but, if you’re travelling to Chiang Mai there are no refunds” (C23). Preventing cancellations in the short term is especially important for the economies in the affected destinations; this is achieved through a collaborative effort between stakeholders, to minimize consumer mis-perceptions and strengthen their confidence through the long term recovery stage. This will hopefully ensure tourism returns to the crisis affected regions promptly, whilst also maintaining sales for tour operators.

Hystad and Keller (2008) noted an effective strategy in their case study findings was to contact clients to inform them of the limited areas of Kelowna which was actually affected by the bushfires in 2003. This keeps the clientele informed and reduces the reliance for these clients to use the media as a key source for information. This strategy was also used by some of the operators in this case study: “One of the elements in our crisis manual is that you have to be able to contact every single customers in 24 hours. We’ve found this is the most important thing you can do” (A39).

Websites were a particular source some operators used to inform consumers of the most up to date information available: “We had a constant update on our website as well showing the impact of the tsunami in all the regions we operate” (D24). Volo (2007) considers the internet as a powerful and equitable source of information at a time of crisis, although not all the operators in this study utilised this tool to its full potential: “On our website we had a notice that said ‘Scheduled tours have been suspended – contact us for any updates or when tours will commence.’ So it was just a very brief notice” (F17). Although it is recommended that tour operators should utilise the internet as a tool for providing information in the form of a consistent message to consumers, it is important to consider that the internet is not accessible and
convenient for all, therefore a variety of different mediums need to be considered to ensure updates are available to the wider population.

Ritchie (2008) has suggested that urgent research is required on disaster information strategies for different target markets, as each requires separate messages and different sources of information to ensure a consistent message is understood. In this case study some operators considered one of their main target markets to be adventure travellers: “Fortunately the adventurous nature of our market tends to be pretty resilient” (D14). This management perception may have contributed to unnecessary client cancellations and alternative travel arrangements which could have been avoided if a different source of information was provided to these travellers. Interestingly client perception was considered a main challenge for one of these tour operators: “The perception that entire destinations had been irrevocably trashed despite the fact that we knew all the boats in the Maldives were fine and hadn’t been affected” (E21). From this case study, it can be then argued that the adventurous market may not be as resilient as management perceived, and therefore the products may need to be targeted to other market segments.

Pearson and Clair (1998) argue that the perception of executives who believe their organisation is immune from a crisis can also hinder the development of a crisis plans. The development of crisis management plans was a key finding from this study, as such it was found that experience and a reactive flexible approach is preferred: “Our people have been in the industry for a long time and when something happens we ride with it and we just work out what we do at the time in communication with our partners and sometimes as directed by the industry”(F27). From this, it is evident that management perceptions in this study may have deterred the development of any form of crisis plans.

5.7.2 Consultation with internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are fundamentally important for tour operators through the long term recovery stage after a crisis. Staff can assist through providing a consistent message to clients and subcontractors are able to report on the destination operating conditions. Through being vertically integrated with sub
contractors, the operators in this case study were able to consult with these contractors, to ascertain important information on the local operating conditions in the affected regions. This information can then be communicated to all departments of the operator, and then relayed to all potential clients.

As some of the operators had offices on the ground in the affected regions, regular updated information was then relayed to the Australian based office. Partnerships were noted by one operator through the long term recovery which provided mutual benefits to both the suppliers and the operator:

“So when we tell them we want to get their business back and running they tell us what needs to be done and we would work it out. We understand the Australian travelling market and they understand the local operating conditions and we come together and work in partnerships to get it back to a sustainable level for all of us” (E19).

Santana argues: “It is impossible to learn about crisis management in the heat of a crisis and, worse, it is virtually impossible to respond adequately to the demands of a major crisis without having previously established support mechanisms” (1999:12). From the evidence presented in this case study it has been established that whilst some operators identified support mechanisms, others revealed they had to lay off suppliers. For the benefit of all, partnerships with suppliers are recommended, especially through the long term recovery stage of a crisis.

5.7.3 Long term challenges and action taken to address recovery

As indicated in the results, consumer perception was noted by the majority of participants as a key challenge for recovery. As consumers are known to utilise the media as a key source for information at a time of crisis, it is imperative for individual operators to utilise other sources to provide information on the current situation of a crisis. This may limit the number of itinerary changes required, providing they inform consumers of the safe areas to travel. It was noted that significant changes were required to itineraries after the Tsunami, which in some cases were based on perception rather than facts.
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As has been previously discussed, it is important to provide the most up to date information available to all consumers, which ensures a more speedy recovery for both the destinations and tourism suppliers directly and indirectly affected by a crisis.

Smith (1990) notes that communication flows need to be both a bottom and top down approach. He further notes that communication after a crisis has attracted significant attention in the literature, which has provided management with key information on procedures to “avoid trial by the media” (Smith 1990:273). In this case study, the media were noted to be a key challenge for recovery, however it was found that only a limited number of participants noted collaborating with the media to assist in marketing efforts after the IOT04.

5.7.4 Testing of the framework

Chacko and Marcell (2007) noted a limitation of Faulkner’s TDMF was the lack of marketing communication strategies, which Ritchie (2004) addressed in his CDMF. To ensure an adequate adaption of both frameworks, (TDMF and CDMF), questions were asked in this study on the topics of: crisis communication and stakeholder consultation and collaboration. All of these strategic implementations are identified by Ritchie (2004) to resolve a crisis or disaster.

Faulkner and Vikulov (2001) notes the long term recovery stage as a continuation of the previous stage (Intermediate), addressing items which couldn’t be attended to, including the restoration of business and consumer confidence. Continued consultation with both internal and external stakeholders should also still be present. As this framework was tested on tour operators and not a destination, consideration of repairing the damaged infrastructure and rehabilitation of the environmentally damaged areas was not discussed.

From the research findings it was established that no surveys were completed by participants post-tsunami, therefore it was difficult for operators to verify
the perceptions they believed clients had regarding destinations. No strategic profile for the action that should be taken in the long-term recovery phase was specifically noted by operators, as it was a common perception that the adventure tourism and Australian tourism market were resilient to crisis situations. In line with Faulkner’s model, consultation with both internal and external stakeholders continued, which included regular in house meetings.

Various challenges were identified by participants. As Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) framework highlights, a key response to any challenge should be to debrief and promote the revisions of disaster strategies. The results agreed with the framework, as some participants noted that there was debriefing amongst staff. The discussion, however, of pre-developed disaster strategies, which the framework implies, was only noted by one of the tour operators; with reactive strategies being the more common approach.

5.8 Resolution

5.8.1 Permanent changes to operating environment and response to changes
It was found that none of the tour operators reported any permanent changes to the operating environment in light of the IOT04, although greater awareness was acknowledged. Through offering a diversified product, operators were able to shift marketing efforts to other destinations unaffected by the Tsunami, which limited the need to make any permanent operating changes. Long term experience was noted by some operators as more beneficial than formal crisis management procedures, this perception is thought to further limit the need to make any permanent changes.

In light of the heightened awareness noted by one operator, they decided to become a member of The Charter for Safe Travel after the Tsunami crisis. The charter is a formed partnership between the Australian Government and the tourism industry, developed to encourage travellers to consult travel advisories and take out the necessary travel insurance (Smart Traveller Website 2010). As it has been reported that some tour operators in this study did not always
consider the government travel advisories when advising clients on travel, such a charter is likely to not be taken on board in the future by those operators, limiting the partnership opportunities between government and tour operators.

5.8.2 Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies

Evans and Elphick (2005) and Hystad and Keller (2008) both argue that knowledge after a crisis can only be gained through staff de-briefing to change and update current strategies. This ensures effective management for future crises, however this can only be done through utilising the knowledge of individuals who have experienced a crisis before. De-briefings were found to be common, however not on a formal basis, reviewing current strategies. One participant did note they decided to travel to both Phuket and Maldives to have discussions with their suppliers: “I just had a meeting with all our tour operators that were in Phuket at the time. I did the same in the Maldives and we discussed what we would have done if we had had boats in the region at the time when it hit” (D11), which supports the argument of Evans and Elphick (2005) and Hystad and Keller (2008).

As only a limited number of operators interviewed had an existing formal crisis management strategy, for the majority there was no strategy to update. The experience of the staff for one operator was noted as an asset, however the knowledge up until this point has not been transferred into a formal crisis management plan: “We find that with hard procedures, the moment you have a crisis, those procedures are inappropriate for it because of the diversity of the things that we’re dealing with” (E4). The same operator was reported to consider themself as a small business, and therefore did not see a need to have an official review of their strategies: “You deal with it as it happens” (E4). This was similar to Anderson’s (2006) research findings on the response of small operators to the crisis events of 2001, including the collapse of HIH insurance Company, the World Trade Centre and the collapse of Ansett Airlines. When the participants of Anderson’s study (2006) were asked questions relating to existing organisational policies, to guide the responses to
the crisis, a common response with small businesses was: “No, no, we’re a small business...” (Lachlan, transportation, A:300, in Anderson 2006:1294).

It is recommended that all operators should develop crisis management strategies, so they are able to make formal evaluations and make the necessary changes, based on the experience of the crisis. In the absence of a strategy, it is recommended to have de-briefings between all staff members throughout the stages of each crisis and keep a record of the decisions and strategies used. The knowledge of staff cannot be relied upon in the long term for crisis control, especially at a management level, as staff may be on sick leave, decide to leave their position or retire. It is, therefore, important to have some form of record keeping for future staff members to access.

5.8.3 Changes made to crisis management tools

Only minor changes to existing crisis management tools were required by the operators in this study. This is likely to be associated with the lack of formal crisis management plans in place, however having a plan has been found in other studies to not always be useful. In Anderson’s research (2006) on crisis management in the Australian tourism industry, one tour operator reported their current plans had not been of value to respond to the events of 2001 and reported a need for more relevant policies. The findings from this case study were similar, as one of the operators who reported having a crisis management plan did not utilise it through the IOT04, as the plan was of a general nature, and not specific to natural disasters. Developing a plan which considers a variety of different types of crisis, including disasters, political instability and accidents would be a recommended approach, as Participant A reported. This supports Tse et al (2006), research findings on how restaurants in Hong Kong responded to SARS, who argue the importance for recovery measures in contingency plans to cover a variety of different crises.

In addition to crisis management plans, the formation of associations after the Tsunami was also found to be beneficial for both the suppliers of the tour operators and the operators themselves. One participant noted they were in the process of developing a travel safety association which outlines a set of criteria which suppliers need to meet to work for the operator. This supports
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Beirman’s (2009) recommendation of developing a tourism recovery campaign through alliances with various stakeholders.

5.8.4 Testing of the framework

Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) final phase in the TDMF highlighted the need to have routine restored, through reviewing crisis management policies and plans and assessing their effectiveness. Overall, the research found that the Tsunami caused minimal disruption to normal business operations of the interviewed operators, therefore only a limited number of operators reviewed the effectiveness of their crisis management tools. Only one operator reported making any changes to their crisis management plan. This operator was also the only organisation to report using a formally developed plan to respond to the crisis.

Ritchie (2004) notes that a crisis can cause permanent changes to the operating environment of an organisation as well as the creation of crisis management teams and updating contingency plans. As discussed previously, no permanent changes were reported from any of the participants, besides a heightened awareness of the potential impacts of a crisis. It was concluded that none of the operators interviewed for this study created a new or improved business environment, as a result of learning and reflecting from the Tsunami.

Debriefing from staff members is noted by Ritchie (2004) as an effective tool for assisting managers with collecting data, which could then be integrated into their crisis management plans. Although some of the operators did report that there was a number of debriefing sessions between staff members and management, this information was not reported to be used in the updating or development of a crisis management plan/strategy, with the exception of Participant A. These sessions were reported to be an effective tool, which allowed staff members at all levels to provide feedback and recommendations to effectively respond to future crisis.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.9 Conclusion
This chapter has discussed the research findings of this case study, exploring the crisis management procedures implemented by Australian based tour operators in relation to the Indian Ocean tsunami experience. The discussion was presented using an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) six stage TDMF, which includes features of Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF. Throughout the discussion a range of academic sources were used to compare the results from this case study, to previous studies. The testing of the adapted framework was discussed at the end of each stage, which highlighted how the tour operators in this study compared to the recommendations of the TDMF/CDMF.

In this discussion it was reported that parts of the framework were applicable to tour operators, with others not relevant in this particular case study. It is important to highlight that the TDMF and CDMF were both originally designed to test on destinations, which poses limitations in relation to this study. There are notable differences between testing a model on a destination and tour operators; however the questions in this study were carefully constructed to adapt the application of the TDMF to tour operators. This limitation, including others will be further discussed in the chapter to follow, whilst also addressing the research objectives, implications, recommendations for future research and concluding comments.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Introduction
The intention of this research was to examine how Australian based tour operators prepared for, and responded to, the Tsunami, through an investigation of what crisis management strategies were in place and effective. This chapter will discuss the research outcomes in relation to the four objectives set. It will then discuss the research implications, limitations and provide recommendations based on the research findings and Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF. Further research opportunities will then be highlighted and finally concluding comments will be made.

6.2 Research objectives
The aim of the research was to adapt Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) and Ritchie's (2004) CDMF in the context of Australian based tour operators and a large scale natural disaster. The research objectives developed are reflective of the gaps identified through the literature review, with consideration provided of the six crisis management stages outlined in the TDMF/CDMF, in order to ensure the research aim was fulfilled.

6.2.1 Objective 1
The first objective of this study was to examine the proactive crisis management measures implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), which relate to Faulkner and Vikulov's/Ritchie’s first two crisis management stages, Pre-event and Prodromal. As revealed in the literature review, a number of studies have found both destinations and organisations have limited proactive measures in place to manage a crisis (Runyan 2006, Anderson 2006, Cioccio and Michael 2007, Ritchie and Miller 2004, De Sausmarez 2003, Prideaux 2003, Faulkner and Vikulov 2001).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Beirman (2003) argues some natural disasters are beyond proactive contingencies. As the Tsunami was unexpected and considered the largest natural disaster the Indian Ocean region has experienced (Ichinosawa 2006), proactive measures may have not been appropriate to deal with the magnitude of this crisis. In the case of the Tsunami, the lack of a warning system acted as a barrier to alert participants, consequently reactive strategies were more commonly used by participants, with few considering pre-existing strategies. Precautions including withdrawing some affected destinations from their itineraries, following government travel advisories, and appointing one key spokesperson to speak to the media, were all reported measures which assisted participants in responding to the Tsunami.

The TDMF and CDMF both recommend the use of proactive measures, including the development of a contingency plan, assessment of potential disasters and their likelihood of occurring. Half of the operators did acknowledge having a crisis management plan, however only one reported conducting risk assessments for potential disasters and using the manual to guide their response to the Tsunami. These findings reveal that the development of proactive measures and risk assessment was not considered for the majority of the participants. The findings further identified that generalised plans were more common, rather than specific policies produced based on identified risks.

It is suggested the outsourcing of tours to locally based operators limits the ability of participants in this study to develop crisis management plans. It is often difficult for Australian based operators to gauge the level of training, and resources, required by their suppliers to prepare for and manage a disaster. Further barriers exist for comprehensive risk assessments to be completed, as this requires the knowledge of locally based operators to advise the participants on potential risks, and strategies to manage them effectively. The research identified that, overall, these operators were relied upon to provide up-to-date information to the participants, however a lack of training, education, and resources available to businesses is argued by Ciccio and Michael (2007) to limit crisis management planning. Further to this, Gurtner
Chapter 6: Conclusion

(2006) highlights that tourism associated risk management requires significant investment, which some tour operators may not be able to justify.

6.2.2 Objective 2

The second objective of this study was to explore the challenges, actions and most effective crisis communication strategies implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), which relates to phases three and four of the TDMF, the Emergency and Intermediate phases. The key challenge identified in this study was the lack of communication through the emergency stage. This was more common with those operators who used sub-contractors and therefore relied on contact for up-to-date information on the Tsunami disaster. These problems are suggested to have made it difficult for the operators to identify the regions and tour groups affected.

A further challenge was the perception of consumers who believed whole countries were affected by the Tsunami, in particular Thailand. The participants reacted to this perception in different ways; some focused on communicating to their clientele factual information, whilst others decided to delete destinations. Although this was reacting to the demand of their clients, in turn it would have consequences for the regions removed from itineraries.

The crisis communication strategies used to manage the Tsunami varied amongst the tour operators. Some of these actions included having a worded script provided to all staff which ensured a consistent response when clients made enquiries, and having one key spokesman to speak on the crisis to the media. Another key finding was of some operators travelling to the affected region to meet with their suppliers. This ensured accurate information was passed on to management, other staff and clients, on the actual impact of the Tsunami, rather than the perceived impact the public were receiving through the media coverage. Murphy and Bayley (1989) argue that the media are renowned for providing misleading information on the severity of a disaster. This information is powerful in influencing consumers when making travel
decisions, and needs to be considered through a developed communication strategy.

Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF identifies the need for a media communication strategy, combined with contingency plans to minimise the impacts at each stage of a crisis. Ritchie’s (2004) CDMF includes the appointment of a spokesman as a control mechanism to manage a crisis. Although reactive measures were more common in this study, there was evidence supporting the responses recommended in the adapted framework, as discussed above, with only a limited number of contingency plans. It is important to note that the TDMF and CDMF was developed to be tested on destinations, rather than individual operators, therefore had this study considered other stakeholders at the destination level, the results are likely to have been varied and more consistent with the framework.

6.2.3 Objective 3

The third objective of this study was to examine the level of consultation and collaboration Australian based tour operators had with internal and external stakeholders in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004). This was relative to stage four and five of the TDMF/CDMF: the Intermediate and Long Term recovery stages. Ritchie (2004) argues the need for collaboration between key stakeholders at a time of crisis. In this study, it was found consultation with sub-contractors was imperative for participants to receive up-to-date information, and make decisions to achieve long term recovery. For some operators this was achieved through meeting with the sub-contractors, and identifying the businesses that did not sustain significant infrastructural damage, and were therefore safe for clientele.

Discussions on how to return tourism to a sustainable level were held between some suppliers and Australian based operator’s to further aid recovery, while other participants noted they had to lay off suppliers. Santana (1999) argues the need to have established support mechanisms to be able to respond to a crisis. For some suppliers this support was turned away, which is damaging
through the long term recovery stage, at a time when they rely on established relationships to assist in recovery.

In this thesis, it was identified that the participants considered consultation with their clients as a priority, which assists with resorting consumer confidence, as noted in the TDMF. Further to this, one operator noted holding regular client and agent events, which aided in keeping clientele informed. Understanding and collaborating with stakeholders is noted in Ritchie’s CDMF to resolve a crisis (Ritchie 2004). Debriefing amongst staff and clients was a key research finding which supported the TDMF. However, as this study was focused on individual operators, rather than a destination, aspects of the framework including the repair of damaged infrastructure was not tested.

6.2.4 Objective 4

The fourth objective was report on the effectiveness of the strategies and evaluation tools implemented by Australian based tour operators in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), which relates to the Resolution stage in the TDMF and CDMF, Evans and Elphick (2005) and Hystad and Keller (2008) argue the importance of learning from a crisis, through updating current strategies and staff de-briefing. A key research finding identified limited operators had formalised contingency plans, so therefore it was difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies employed to manage the Tsunami disaster. However, many participants did note staff de-briefings, which also included travel to the affected destinations to meet with the suppliers directly. This was found to be beneficial for one operator, as is promoted discussion on contingencies, should a Tsunami occur again in the same region.

A further finding recognised long term management experience as an asset, which was not transferred into the development of a disaster management plan. It was reported that mandatory procedures were inappropriate for this operator due to the diversity of crises. Evans and Elphick (2005) and Tse et al (2006), argue the need to be flexible in a crisis response, however, this flexibility is only enhanced through shared skills, knowledge and resources.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

(Gurtner, 2006). Documenting management skills through contingency plans can only enhance and preserve knowledge, and is therefore argued to provide benefits to all concerned. Most importantly, it provides disaster management guidelines for new staff to review and consider should they be placed in a management role.

The formation of associations between suppliers and tour operators was noted by one participant. Through consultation, they were working towards developing a travel safety association which outlines specific criteria suppliers need to meet to be contracted to the tour operator. This is a key example of organisation learning from the disaster experience, which supports the resolution, evaluation and feedback component in Ritchie’s CDMF.

6.3 Research implications

The tourism industry is vulnerable to the external environment, especially to natural disasters, which are often unpredictable and uncontrollable. As a result, significant research has utilised case studies which explore the crisis impacts on both destinations and various stakeholders. These stakeholders may include, but are not exclusive to, accommodation operators, airlines and tour operators. This case study has further contributed through its investigation of the effects and impacts of the IOT04 on Australian based tour operators. It has provided information on how such operators survived the Tsunami disaster potentially benefitting the wider tourism industry as well as other key stakeholders.

The tour operators interviewed for this study must be thanked for sharing their experiences. The IOT04 is considered to be one of the worst natural disasters in history. From such an event, an opportunity emerged to learn from the impacts it had on the operators, and the measures and decisions made by the participants to respond to the disaster. The literature consistently confirms the need for further research to be completed within the crisis and disaster management field. This thesis has contributed through using two recognised disaster management conceptual frameworks (TDMF and the CDMF), and adapting them to test on a well documented disaster, which received a great
Chapter 6: Conclusion

deal of media attention. The outcomes of the research have addressed the identified gap noted in the literature through the testing of a framework on tour operators.

6.4: Limitations of Research

No research is without limitations, and it is important to clearly identify and discuss these in order to ensure the data is not misinterpreted. Firstly, Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) TDMF and Ritchie’s (2004) were both designed to be tested on destinations, and although the framework has been adapted to ensure it can be tested on tour operators, it is not without its own limitations, and requires further testing by other researchers to confirm its suitability. This fact further limits the capacity of the research findings to be generalised to the wider population, as it is the only study to date which has adapted and tested the TDMF and CDMF specifically on Australian based tour operators. The findings from this research are therefore limited to this case study of the Tsunami, and the information should not be generalised to other operators or stakeholders.

In addition to these, a further limitation was the time lag between when the interviews were completed for this study and the Tsunami crisis. To overcome this, senior management were targeted who had been in their positions prior to the crisis. Although this assisted with the reliability of their responses, it is accepted that the results may have differed if the study was completed at an earlier date. As all the participants have experienced a number of disasters and crises since the Tsunami, it poses challenges to recall the management decisions made in 2004/2005. The information letter sent to participants outlined the criteria required to take part in this study (refer to Appendix Five). This ensured only those operators who were comfortable in recalling and sharing their experiences were interviewed. From all the information letters sent out, six relevant individuals confirmed their preparedness to participate.

The small cohort of participants included in the study is certainly not in any way representative of Australian based tour operators. However, as a result of having fewer participants, this study has provided an in-depth insight into how
Chapter 6: Conclusion

A group of tour operators managed the Tsunami disaster. Emergent recommendations can now be made and shared with the tourism industry, including relevant tourism organisations, government and the wider community with an interest in, or connection to, disaster management.

6.5: Recommendations

A key outcome of this research is being able to provide recommendations, based on the experiences shared by the participants. They are encouraged to be considered by those who are concerned with, or involved in, crisis management, but especially tour operators who are seeking guidance to improve their current practices. The IOT04 was a major regional crisis, and supports Beirman’s (2003) argument that some natural disasters are beyond established contingencies. For the tour operators in this study, this experience was unique, and has provided an opportunity to learn from the crisis. Their efforts in ensuring the safety of their clients, and collaborating with others, ensured they protected the interests of their key stakeholders.

Recognition also needs to be given to the suppliers of their products, as such businesses are particularly vulnerable to the external environment, especially those who were operating in the disaster affected regions. The recommendations that follow are suitable to be considered by all stakeholders, including those suppliers. To ensure simplicity, they have been separated into three categories: Pre Event, Emergency and Post Event.
Pre Event

- It is strongly recommended that tour operators develop a formalised crisis management plan, which specifies different types of crisis and disasters. The plan should outline the response measures, and who is directly responsible. This ensures a formalised approach, and limits confusion when action is required at the time of the crisis/disaster.

- As part of developing a crisis management plan, a risk assessment needs to be completed on the destinations where tour operators offer tours. These need to be regularly and consistently updated in order to ensure that strategies are current and relevant.

- Both risk assessments and disaster management strategies are recommended to be completed in consultation with all suppliers who have knowledge of local operating conditions and can provide useful information. The consultation process will have beneficial outcomes for all concerned, especially as responsibilities can be shared between stakeholders.

- Tour operators are encouraged to utilise Tourism Risk Management guides and training programs available through the CRC website, see: http://www.crctourism.com.au/Page/Tools+and+Products/Tourism+Risk+Management+Guide+AICST.aspx. These guides are useful for destinations, trainers and individual tourism operators, and are available in different languages.

- When developing crisis management manuals, such manuals must be modified to both consider and meet local requirements and conditions if offices are located in different countries, and at all costs avoid a prescriptive measures approach.

- Ensure the development of a crisis communication strategy as part of, or in addition to, a formalised crisis management plan. This will ensure past communication problems can be overcome in the future. The
strategy should outline all the relevant stakeholders’ roles at a time of emergency, and methods which will be used to communicate to such groups as the media, suppliers and other staff members. This will ensure a consistent approach to dealing with a crisis or disaster. A copy of this strategy should be provided to all stakeholders who would take an active role in its implementation.

Emergency:

- The implementation of a communication strategy will provide some reassurance to tour operators though the provision of up-to-date information at a time of crisis or disaster. For this to be effective, communication problems from the Tsunami or other disasters, need to be detailed, and measures outlined on how to overcome these. One key problem identified from this study was of some operators being unable to make contact with their suppliers on the ground. It is critical to make contact with suppliers as soon as possible at a time of crisis or disaster. As they are based at the affected destination, they are a valuable source in providing the most up-to-date relevant information on a crisis situation and information concerning the safety of clientele.

- Rather than delete whole destinations from an itinerary, consult suppliers, relevant tourism organisations and refer to government travel advisories to make decisions. Making a decision based on the perception of clients has the potential to cause long term negative consequences for the destination, its local operators and future tourism viability.

- The development of a worded script to deal with media enquiries has merit throughout the emergency phase. From the research findings, it was identified as a valuable tool, and should be adapted by all other operators. The script should be provided to all staff that may have contact with, or from, the media, thus ensuring a consistent business response.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

- If tour operators are not able to make contact with locally based suppliers to gauge the situation of a crisis or disaster, an effective option is to send staff representation to the affected destination. This was found to be effective for some operators in this study, as they were able to make business decisions based on reliable information, rather than relying solely on media reports and government travel advisories. It also provides a good opportunity to meet with suppliers and to ascertain their needs, and consider what facilities are safe to continue to send clients to. This is particularly advisable to operators who do not have locally based officers and only have an Australian based office.

Post Event:

- The development of a recovery alliance, which includes airlines, transport carriers, accommodation operators, attractions and tour operators, is strongly recommended. It should be the responsibility of local government, and tourism organisations to initiate commencing such proceedings, however operators are encouraged to contact their local destination marketing organisation to enquire about any existing alliances they could join.

- Membership of organisations such as Victorian Tourism Alliance or relevant state peak bodies/tourism industry council can provide significant benefits to tour operators relative to managing a disaster or crisis, as well as wider benefits including:

1. Access to resources, including relevant guides, reports, presentations and research
2. Business programs and assistance through providing workshops, and crisis management preparation information
3. Providing information relevant to individual tourism businesses (tour operators)
4. Networking and professional development opportunities
Chapter 6: Conclusion

- Using the internet is a valuable tool for tour operators, especially throughout the long-term recovery stage. By providing timely information on the recovery of destinations, operators are ensuring they can target inaccurate perception issues their clients may have of the disaster affected regions. Other media also need to be considered, as not everyone will have access to the internet. These include hosting client events, attending tourism trade and travel shows, or contacting clients directly through phone or mail to inform them of the progress of recovery.

- The formation of partnerships between tour operators and their suppliers was identified to be beneficial through the research findings. De-briefings to consider how operators may have managed things differently are important after a disaster, informed with the benefit of hindsight. All the information from these briefings should be documented, for it to be valuable and used to manage future disasters. These briefings are recommended to be completed with relevant stakeholders, including suppliers and staff, which provide the opportunity for feedback and recommendations to be voiced by all concerned.

- The development of a travel safety association which details the criteria suppliers need to meet to work for an operator is a key recommendation, and was identified through the research findings. This would ensure a consistent approach is taken by operators and suppliers, whilst also assisting when managing a crisis. If an association was developed, it would be beneficial for operators to promote it to their client base, and to the wider community, as it provides assurance and peace of mind to those considering selecting the operator when booking a tour.
6.6: Further Research Opportunities

The outcomes of this research have identified a number of further research opportunities, which would contribute to the ever growing literature on crisis management. These are outlined below:

- This case study has tested an adapted version of Faulkner and Vikulov’s (2001) (TDMF) and Ritchie’s (CDMF) on the IoT04, specifically with tour operators. It is recommended the TDMF be tested on other disasters, in order to further test its applicability to tour operators.

- Comprehensive studies specifically relating to one of the six stages (Pre Event, Prodromal, Emergency, Intermediate, Long Term Recovery and Resolution) could be undertaken to further investigate the research findings of this study. More specifically, studies are required to examine the barriers to crisis communication and control identified through this research.

- As the media was identified as a source for tour operators and clients to gain up-to-date information on the disaster situation, further research is required to gain a deeper understanding into the true impact the media can have on consumer perception. The outcomes of these studies could then provide the tourism industry with recommendations on how to most effectively work with the media at different stages of a crisis.

- Research directed at the suppliers of tour operators, and the complex issues they face throughout a crisis would provide acknowledgement of these stakeholders in the disaster and crisis management literature. Studies into the level, and type, of disaster and crisis management education these operators have, and strategies they have used to overcome barriers in the past would offer a valuable insight. Tour operators who use suppliers as their sub-contractors could strongly benefit from such research findings, as the decisions made by the suppliers have direct impacts on their business operating environment.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

- The TDMF and CDMF are both recommended to be tested on other sectors of the tourism industry, including accommodation operators, airlines and travel agents. Studies are then able to be compared from sector to sector, to identify the management strategies which are viable versus those which are lacking.

6.7: Conclusion

This thesis has provided a contribution to the body of research that investigates means of understanding the complexity surrounding a disaster, and the multiple variables which have to be considered by tour operators in order to deal with the different disaster management stages. The recommendations outlined in this chapter are intended to provide tour operators and the tourism industry with relevant information on understanding and dealing with these complexities. It is hoped the future research directions are considered by the wider academic community, as these studies would provide knowledge and greater insight into the management problems faced within different sectors of the tourism industry.

In the long term it is believed that further research will contribute to a wider acceptance of implementing disaster management strategies into all tourism operations. In turn, this could reduce the impacts a disaster may have on a destination, and any stakeholder groups who rely on related tourism income. This case study on the IOT04 experience has fulfilled the aim “To adapt Faulkner and Vikulov’s Tourism Disaster Management Framework (2001) and Ritchie’s Crisis Disaster Management Framework (2004) in the context of Australian based tour operators and a large scale natural disaster” and has met each of the four objectives set. Its contribution to an understanding and appreciation of disaster management is reliant on the implementation of such strategies in the future.
Appendices

Appendix One: Adapted Framework used for this Study
Source: Faulkner (2001:144) and Ritchie (2004:674)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRISIS STAGES</th>
<th>PRINCIPLE INGREDIENTS OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TOUR OPERATORS</th>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR TOUR OPERATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Pre Event:**  When action can be taken to prevent the effects of a disaster | • Develop, document and communicate Disaster Management Strategy and Contingency Plans  
• Identify relevant stakeholders required to be involved  
• Educate stakeholders | • Assessment of potential disasters and probability of occurring  
• Pro active planning and environmental scanning |
| **Prodromal:**  When it is apparent that a disaster is imminent | • Disaster contingency plans  
• Decide on what to prioritise from the strategic actions required | • Warning systems  
• Activate communication tree  
• Articulate the objectives of contingency plans  
• Strategy evaluation and strategic control |
| **Emergency:**  The effect of the disaster is felt and action is necessary to protect people and property | • Disastert contingency plans  
• Decide on what to prioritize from the strategic actions required  
• Rescue/evacuations procedures  
• Identify likely impacts and tour groups at risk | • Implementation of crisis communication and control strategies  
• Appointment of a spokesman  
• Control over crisis communication  
• Collaborating with stakeholders (internal and external)  
• Action taken to minimise impacts |
| **Intermediate:**  A point where the short-term needs of people have been addressed and the main focus is to return business to normal | • Disaster contingency plans  
• Decide on what to prioritize from the strategic actions required | • Restoration  
• Media communication strategy  
• Changes in organisation structure/personnel  
• Collaboration with stakeholders  
• Resource management (e.g changes in leadership styles, financial, employee empowerment) |
| **Long-term (Recovery):**  Continuation of previous phase, but items which couldn’t be attended to quickly are attended to in this stage. | • Disaster contingency plans  
• Decide on what to prioritize from the strategic actions required | • Action taken to address recovery and challenges  
• De-briefing with staff  
• Restoration of business and consumer confidence |
| **Resolution:**  Routine restored or new improved state established | • Feedback to Pre Event Planning and update contingency plans | • Review of organisation structure  
• Reappraisal of planning regime  
• Evaluate effectiveness of strategies and responses |
Appendices
## Appendices

|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| **Pre Event** | • Develop, document and communicate Disaster  
• Assessment of potential disasters and probability of occurring  
• Develop disaster contingency plans | • Pro active planning and environmental scanning  
• Development of contingency plans | (1) Before the Tsunami, had your organisation considered what crisis management strategies would be required in the event of such a disaster? (IF NO GOT TO Q3) |
|              |                                   |                       | (2) Could you elaborate on what pro-active measures your organisation had in place to deal with the Tsunami? |
|              |                                   |                       | (3) Had your organisation conducted any environmental scanning, forecasting or risk analysis assessments of your business in case of a crisis? If yes please elaborate - IF yes (IF NO Q5) |
|              |                                   |                       | (4) Did you then develop any strategic plans from your scanning and risk analysis? If yes, please elaborate |
| **Prodromal** | • Warning systems  
• Activate communication tree  
• Articulate the objectives of contingency plans | • Strategy evaluation and strategic control | (5) Were you provided any warning of the Tsunami previous to it hitting the affected destinations? (If Yes Q6, IF NO Q9) |
|              |                                   |                       | (6) If yes how did you find out? |
|              |                                   |                       | (7) What were the strategies your organisation implemented after having been warned of a Tsunami hitting? |
|              |                                   |                       | (8) Were those strategies implemented from any plans that were already developed? If yes, please elaborate |
| **Emergency** | • Rescue/evacuations procedures  
• Identify likely impacts and groups at risk  
• Action taken to minimise impacts | • Implementation of crisis communication and control strategies:  
• Appointment of a spokesman  
• Control over crisis communication  
• Collaborating with stakeholders (internal and external) | (9) The Tsunami affected various countries in the Indian Ocean region. To your knowledge, what countries did you have tours operating in at the time? |
<p>|              |                                   |                       | (10) When learning of the Tsunami, what type of crisis communication strategies did you implement and what did they include? Were there any difficulties in accessing up to date information? |
|              |                                   |                       | (11) Did you appoint a spokesperson to speak on the crisis on behalf of the organisation? Did you use any other control mechanisms in your crisis communication strategy? (Such as all information coming from head office etc) |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>(12) What other action was taken by your organisation after the immediate impact of the Tsunami?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Restoration, Media communication strategy, Changes in organisation structure/personnel</td>
<td>Collaboration with stakeholders, Resource management (e.g. leadership styles, financial, employee empowerment)</td>
<td>(13) What were the main challenges in the short term with restoring business operations to normal condition and how did you address these challenges? I.e did you have to make alterations to the route your tours took in the affected regions?, were subcontractors affected in the regions you operated in? etc</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(14) How did you manage your resources (human, financial etc) to restore services back to normal?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(15) Did you have to change your organisational structure and leadership styles within your organisation? If so, what types of changes did you make?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(16) Was there any form of collaboration with any other stakeholders to assist in the restoration/maintenance of your organisations tour operations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Action taken to address recovery and challenges, De-briefing with staff, Restoration of business and consumer confidence</td>
<td>Collaboration and consultation with stakeholders</td>
<td>(17) What type of consultation did you have with external stakeholders to assist in the longer term recovery of your organisation? (Media, industry sectors, tourists, other businesses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(18) What type of consultation and collaboration did you have with your internal stakeholders to assist in the long term recovery? (e.g. employees, managers, shareholders)</td>
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<td>(19) What were the main challenges confronting your tour operation in the long term recovery from the Tsunami?</td>
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<td>(20) What action did your tour operation take to address this recovery?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Review of organisation structure, Reappraisal of planning regime</td>
<td>Evaluate effectiveness of strategies and responses, Feedback to Pre Event Planning</td>
<td>(21) Did the impact of the Tsunami bring about any permanent changes to the operating environment of your organisation?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(22) How has your organisation responded to the changes?</td>
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<td>(23) How did you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies and responses to the Tsunami?</td>
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<td>(24) After the evaluation were any changes made to your Crisis Management prevention and planning tools?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendices

Appendix Two: Faulkner and Vikulov (2001:338) Tourism Disaster Management Framework
Appendices

Phase in disaster process

1. Pre-event
   When action can be taken to prevent or mitigate the effects of potential disasters.

2. Prodromal
   When it is apparent that a disaster is imminent.

3. Emergency
   The effect of the disaster is felt and action is necessary to protect people and property.

4. Intermediate
   A point where the short-term needs of people have been addressed and the main focus of activity is to restore services and the community to normal.

5. Long-term
   (Recovery)
   Continuation of previous phase, but items that could not be attended to quickly are attended to at this stage. Post-mortem, self-analysis, healing.

6. Resolution
   Routine restored or new improved state establishment.

Elements of the disaster management responses

Precursors
- Appoint a Disaster Management Team (DMT) Leader and establish DMT.
- Identify relevant public/private sector agencies/organisations.
- Establish coordination/consultative framework and communication systems.
- Develop, document and communicate Disaster Management Strategy.
- Education of industry stakeholders, employees, customers and community.
- Agreement on, and commitment to, activation protocols.

Mobilisation
- Warning systems (including general mass media);
- Establish disaster management command centre;
- Activate communication tree;
- Secure facilities and office files;
- Switch communication systems;
- Relocate mobile resources;
- Relocate perishable food stocks.

Action
- Rescue/evacuation procedures;
- Emergency accommodation and food supplies;
- Medical/health services;
- Monitoring and communication systems.

Recovery
- Damage assessment/monitoring system;
- Clean-up and restoration;
- Office facilities and communication support;
- "Buddy System"/task force for operator counselling/support;
- Media communication strategy;

Reconstruction and Reassessment
- Repair of damaged infrastructure;
- Rehabilitation of environmentally damaged areas;
- Counselling victims;
- Restoration of business/consumer confidence and development of investment plans;
- Debriefing to promote input to revisions of disaster strategies.

Principal ingredients of the disaster management strategies

Risk Assessment
- Assessment of potential disasters and their probability of occurrence.
- Development of scenarios on the genesis and impacts of potential disasters.
- Develop disaster contingency plans.

Disaster Contingency Plans
- Identify likely impacts and groups at risk.
- Assess community and visitor capabilities to cope with impacts.
- Articulate the objectives of individual (disaster specific) contingency plans.
- Identify actions necessary to avoid or minimise impacts at each stage.
- Devise strategic priority (action) profiles for each phase.

- Prodromal;
- Emergency;
- Intermediate;
- Long-term recovery;

- On-going review and revision in the light of:
- Experience;
- Changes in organisational structures and personnel;
- Changes in the environment.

Review
Reappraisal of marketing, planning and policy regime.
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Appendix Three: Ritchie’s (2004:674) Crisis and Disaster Management Framework
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CRISIS/DISASTER PREVENTION AND PLANNING
- Proactive planning and strategy formulation: environmental scanning; issues analysis; scenario planning; strategic forecasting; risk analysis.
- Scanning to planning: developing plans from scanning and issues analysis; contingency and emergency planning.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION
- Strategy evaluation and strategic control: formulation of strategic alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, selection of appropriate strategies; making effective decisions quickly; influence or control over crises/disasters.
- Crisis communication and control: control over crisis communication; development of crisis communication strategy including use of a public relations plan; appointment of a spokesperson; use of crisis communication to recover from incidents; short versus long term crisis communication strategies.
- Resource management: responsive organizational structures; redeployment or generation of financial resources; leadership styles and employee empowerment.
- Understanding and collaborating with stakeholders: internal (employees, managers, shareholders) and external (tourists, industry sectors, government agencies, media) stakeholders; need for collaboration between stakeholders at different levels to resolve crises or disasters.

RESOLUTION, EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK
- Resolution and normality: resolution and restoration of destination or organisation to pre-crisis situation; reinvestment strategies and resourcing; crises/disasters as agents of change.
- Organisational learning and feedback: organisations or destinations may reassess and take ‘stock’ of themselves; evaluating effectiveness of strategies and responses; feedback to prevent planning; levels of learning depend on single or double loop learning.

CLASSIFYING/UNDERSTANDING CRISIS AND DISASTERS
1. Pre-Event Stage
   - Action taken to prevent disasters
2. Proximal
   - Apparent a crisis/disaster is about to hit
3. Emergency
   - Incident hits; damage limitation and action needed
4. Intermediate
   - Short term needs dealt with; restoring services
5. Long term (recovery)
   - Longer term clean up; repair; reinvestment; post mortem
6. Resolution
   - Normal or improved state created
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Appendix Four: Interview schedule
4) **Pre Event Stage - action taken to prevent disasters**

Q1) Before the Tsunami, had your organisation considered what crisis management strategies would be required in the event of such a disaster? (If no, go to q3)

Q2) Could you elaborate on what pro-active measures your organisation had in place to deal with the Tsunami?

Q3) Had your organisation conducted any environmental scanning, forecasting or risk analysis assessments of your business in case of a crisis? If yes, please elaborate - (If no go to q5)

Q4) Did you then develop any strategic plans from your scanning and risk analysis? If yes, please elaborate

5) **Apparent a crisis/disaster is about to hit**

Q5) Were you provided any warning of the Tsunami previous to it hitting the affected destinations? (If yes q6, if no q9)

Q6) If yes how did you find out?

Q7) What were the strategies your organisation implemented after having been warned of a Tsunami hitting?

Q8) Were those strategies implemented from any plans that were already developed? If yes, please elaborate

6) **Emergency - Incident hits; damage limitation and action needed**

Q9) The Tsunami affected various countries in the Indian Ocean region. To your knowledge, what countries did you have tours operating in at the time?

Q10) When learning of the Tsunami, what type of crisis communication strategies did you implement and what did they include? Were there any difficulties in accessing up to date information?

Q11) Did you appoint a spokesperson to speak on the crisis on behalf of the organisation? Did you use any other control mechanisms in your crisis communication strategy? (Such as all information coming from head office etc)

Q12) What other action was taken by your organisation after the immediate impact of the Tsunami?
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7) **Intermediate - Short term needs dealt with; resorting services**

Q13) What were the main challenges in the short term with restoring business operations to normal condition and how did you address these challenges? i.e Did you have to make alterations to the route your tours took in the affected regions? Were subcontractors affected in the regions you operated in?

Q14) How did you manage your resources (human, financial etc) to restore services back to normal?

Q15) Did you have to change your organisational structure and leadership styles? If so, what types of changes did you make?

Q16) Was there any form of collaboration with any other stakeholders to assist in the restoration/maintenance of your organisations’ tour operations?

5) **Long term (recovery) Longer term clean up; repair; reinvestment; post mortem**

Q17) What type of consultation did you have with external stakeholders to assist in the longer term recovery of your organisation? (e.g Media, industry sectors, tourists, other businesses)

Q18) What type of consultation and collaboration did you have with your internal stakeholders to assist in the long term recovery? ( e.g. Employees, managers, shareholders)

Q19) What were the main challenges confronting your tour operation in the long term recovery from the Tsunami?

Q20) What action did your tour operation take to address this recovery?

6) **Resolution - Normal or improved state created**

Q21) Did the impact of the Tsunami bring about any permanent changes to the operating environment of your organisation?

Q22) How has your organisation responded to the changes?

Q23) How did you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies and responses to the Tsunami?

Q24) After the evaluation, were any changes made to your crisis management prevention and planning tools?
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Appendix Five: Information sheet and consent form
TOUR OPERATOR PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Jessica Derham. As part of my Masters Degree being completed at the School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at La Trobe University, I am conducting a study which is investigating the effectiveness of the crisis management strategies used by Australian based tour operators/wholesalers after the Indian Ocean Tsunami with a focus on Thailand as a destination. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Mr Gary Best and Dr Dale Sanders at La Trobe University. You have been selected as one of the key Australian based tour operators/wholesalers who offers tours in one of the Tsunami affected regions and therefore may have been severely affected. I would appreciate your help by taking the time to take part in the following interview.

The interview to follow will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation in this interview is completely voluntary, with the opportunity provided to you to review the transcript of the interview prior to any publication of its contents. You have the right to withdraw from participation in this at any time and, further, to demand that data arising from your participation are not used in the research project provided. That right must be within four weeks of the completion of participation in the study for it to come into effect.

No names will be recorded at any time, ensuring your privacy and confidentiality. Your responses will be coded. The interview will be recorded and you will receive a transcript of the tape for your approval through registered post within fourteen days after the interview. Data from this interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the School of Sport Tourism and Hospitality Management La Trobe University completion of the research. The data will be kept for five years and then destroyed in accordance with University regulations. The data from this research will be used in a thesis, and may be presented at conferences and published in journals. If you have any questions regarding any of the above or interview, please don’t hesitate to ask the investigator Jessica Derham, before commencing the interview.

Researcher: Jessica Derham
Phone: +61402202529

Email: jlderham@students.latrobe.edu.au

Supervisors: Gary Best
Dale Sanders
Email: g_best@latrobe.edu.au
Email: dale.sanders@latrobe.edu.au

If you have any complaints or queries that the investigator has not been able to answer to your satisfaction you may contact the Secretary, Dr Deirdre Frappell, Faculty Human Ethics Committee, Faculty of Law and Management, Room 347, Martin Building, La Trobe University, VIC 3086, Telephone: 03 9479 1603, Email: FLM_ERGS@latrobe.edu.au
TOUR OPERATOR/WHOLESALER CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Jessica Derham
Email: jlderham@students.latrobe.edu.au

Supervisors: Mr Gary Best and Dr Dale Sanders
Email: g.best@latrobe.edu.au   dale.sanders@latrobe.edu.au

“I (the participant) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understood the participant information sheet and consent form, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. As a representative of the organisation I am employed by, I understand that I will be speaking on behalf of the organisation. I understand that the information I provide will be referred to as that provided by the organisation and that my identity will remain confidential.

I agree to participate in the project, realising that I may physically withdraw from the study at any time and may request that no data arising from my participation are used by signing the Consent to Withdraw form up to four weeks following the completion of my participation in the research. I agree that research data provided by me or with my permission during the project may be included in a thesis, presented at conferences and published in journals on the condition that neither my name nor any other identifying information is used”

Name of the participant  ……………………………………………

Signature   ……………………………………………

Date ……………

Name of investigator   ……………………………………………

Date ……………

Name of supervisor   ……………………………………………
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Appendix Six: Follow up letter sent to participants
Dear ....................,

Thank you for taking the time out recently to be interviewed on your company’s approach and strategies in managing the Tsunami Crisis in 2004. I have attached a copy of the interview transcript for your information. If you have any concerns please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Please be aware that any identifying data relating to your company will not be published in the final thesis. I will be sure to keep you updated throughout the research process, and provide you with a copy of my thesis upon completion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for assisting me with my research. Your contribution was very valuable and will certainly assist me in developing recommendations for effective crisis management strategies.

Yours sincerely

Jessica Derham
Associate Lecturer/Masters Candidate
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Appendix Seven: Ethics approval
To: Jessica Derham, School of Sport, Tourism & Hospitality  
From: Deirdre Frappell, Secretary, Faculty Human Ethics Committee  
cc: Gary Best; Dale Sanders  
Date: 19/06/08  
Subject: Approval Ethics Application 09/08R  
Title: To investigate the Crisis Management strategies utilised by Australian based tour operators in response to the Tsunami (2004).

Dear Jessica, Gary & Dale,

The Faculty Human Ethics Committee (FHEC) has assessed your application as complying with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and with University guidelines on Ethics Approval for Research with Human Subjects.

The FHEC Committee has granted approval for the period 17/06/08 to 31/10/08.

Please note that the FHEC is a sub-committee of the University’s Human Ethics Committee (UHEC). The decision to approve your project will need to be ratified by the UHEC at its next meeting. Consequently, approval for your project may be withdrawn or conditions of approval altered. However, your project may commence prior to ratification. You will be notified if the approval status is altered.

The following special conditions apply to your project: Nil

The following standard conditions apply to your project:

Complaints. If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, researchers should advise the Secretary of the FHEC by mail or email: FLM_ERGS@latrobe.edu.au

Limit of Approval. Approval is limited strictly to the research proposal as submitted in your application, while taking into account the conditions and approval dates advised by the FHEC.

Variation to Project. As a consequence of the previous condition, any subsequent variations or modifications you may wish to make to your project must be notified formally to the FHEC. Please submit to the FHEC secretary an Application for Approval of Modification to Research Project form (download from the UHEC website https://www.latrobe.edu.au/rgso/ethics/HEC-application.htm). If the FHEC considers that the proposed changes are significant, you may be required to submit a new Application Form.

Progress Reports. You are required to submit a Progress Report annually (if your project continues for more than 12 months) and/or at the conclusion of your project. The completed form (download from UHEC website https://www.latrobe.edu.au/rgso/ethics/HEC-application.htm) is to be returned to the Secretary of the FHEC. Failure to submit a Progress
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Report will mean that approval for this project will lapse. An audit may be conducted by the FHEC at any time.

**Your FINAL progress report is due by 31/11/08.**

If you have any queries, or require any further clarification, please contact me at the Faculty of Law and Management on 9479 1603, or by e-mail: FLM_ERGS@latrobe.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Dr Deirdre Frappell
Secretary, Faculty Human Ethics Committee
References


References


References


References


References


References


References


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References


