



# Strategies to Limit the Impact on Tourism Numbers in the Aftermath of Earthquakes

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**Supervisor:** Dr. Rico Lie  
**Name:** Vanity Bletterman  
**Student number:** 951119071110

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## BSc Tourism author statement

**Full thesis title:** Strategies to Limit the Impact on Tourism Numbers in the Aftermath of Earthquakes

**Author's name:** Vanity Bletterman

**Bachelor degree programme:** BSc Tourism

**Educational Institutes:** Breda University of Applied Science and Wageningen University, NL

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## Abstract

In the past few decades, the frequency of crises has increased. Crises can bring great destruction, death and injuries. For a tourism destination it can cause even more impact as it damages the destination image and heightens risk perception, which can result in a decrease of visitor numbers. To attempt to limit the impact of a crisis on the tourism industry, crisis management is of importance. This paper aims at contributing to this literature by attempting to fill the gap on tourism management strategies in the context of a natural disaster. The following research question is of central focus for this study: "In what way are management strategies, aimed at limiting the decreasing tourism numbers, reported on to the wider public during the post crisis phase of an earthquake?". To answer this question, newspaper articles, reports and conferences for three destinations have been analysed through a content analysis. The destinations are in Nepal, Indonesia and Japan and are thus all situated in Asia. The results of this research show that multiple strategies have been used: promotion has been employed in multiple ways, events hosted, neighbouring countries targeted, information provision emphasized and discounts, quality improvement and rehabilitation were focused on. The three destination all had their own approach, pace and choice of management strategies, however overall there are also quite some similarities to be found in the different contexts.

**Keywords:** crisis, natural disaster, earthquake, tourism destination, crisis communication, management strategies, tourism recovery.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism has quickly become one of the most important sectors of the global economy (Lopes, 2011). Many destinations depend on the industry's economic resources and have become dependent on it (Ritchie, 2004). When thinking about tourism, it is uncommon to associate this with disasters and/or crises. While tourism provokes feelings of joy, relaxation and enjoyment, disasters are connected to fear, uncertainty and trauma (Santana, 2004). However, the growing influence of crises on tourism demand has been recognized in recent years (Faulkner, 2001) and the more economically dependent a destination is on the tourism industry, the more vulnerable it will be to a potential crisis (Santana, 2004). Added to that, the frequency of crises has increased in the past few decades (Hystad & Keller, 2008). According to Ritchie, Dorrell, Miller and Miller (2004) it is no longer the question if a destination will get hit by a crisis, but when it will get hit and with what type of crisis.

Crises can do great damage to a destination. Although the consequences differ per case, most crises cause for a certain death toll, injured people and destruction of infrastructure, buildings and land. Added to that, people can become homeless and disasters can cause for severe aftershocks. However, when a crisis hits a tourism destination, it can do even more harm. Crises can cause damage to the image tourists have of the destination, which can negatively influence the buying behaviour of tourists (Lopes, 2011). Added to this, consumers are spoilt by choice of available destinations, which makes them easily substitutable (Pike & Page, 2014). Moreover, the destination image can be damaged because of a heightened risk perception, which is another key determinant for tourists to make travel decisions (Hasan, Ismail & Islam, 2017). As a crisis can raise feelings of uncertainty, worry and anxiety, this thus negatively influences the tourists' intention to visit. (Perpiña, Camprubi & Prats, 2017). A crisis can thus cause for less visitors to a destination.

There are several ways to attempt to reduce the impacts a crisis has on a tourism destination. First of all, it is of importance to try and manage the crisis. Prideaux, Coghlan and Falco-Mammone (2008) state that crisis management and rebuilding consumer confidence are essential recovery strategies. Another important aspect in the recovery phase is crisis communication. Crisis communication can reduce negative media attention and can be a way to bring together public and private stakeholders (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008). Poor communication strategies can often make the crisis worse than it already is. Furthermore, researchers tend to agree that decisions taken before the crisis has hit results in more effective management. (e.g Penrose, 2000; Ritchie et al., 2004). There are thus multiple aspects of the recovery of the tourism industry in a destination that should be kept in mind while dealing with the consequences of a crisis. Overall it becomes clear that recovering from a crisis

in a tourism destination is not only concerned with resolving the crisis situation physically but also implies dealing with tourist perceptions of the situation.

While there is a lot of information available on the need for crisis communication and management in the tourism sector and the impact a crisis can have on tourism in a destination, there seem to be very limited studies that focus on the recovery of tourism and crisis management combined. There is thus little research done into strategies with regards to limiting the impacts on the tourism industry which is implemented in the management of a crisis. This can result in crisis managers taking on an “ad hoc” approach to the post-disaster actions (Walters & Mair, 2012), which in turn can lead to a less effective way of managing the crisis. Thus, while the execution of management strategies aiming at tourism recovery is acknowledged in the existing literature, there seems to be a gap between the need for strategies and the implementation of these strategies during the management of a crisis.

Based on the research gap identified in the literature, the objective of this paper is to identify which management strategies are employed during the recovery phase of a crisis. Added to that, to explore in what way they are used. This will be examined by conducting a case study into three different destinations. As more research into this field has been done on crises like terrorism, wars and political conflict, this research paper will focus on natural disasters. Furthermore, Avraham and Ketter (2008) have noted that there is need for research into a set of places with similar characteristics. Therefore, the choice has been made to analyse three destinations in the continent Asia which have all three experienced the same disaster: an earthquake. To obtain this information a qualitative analysis will take place in the form of a content analysis.

For the analysis of this paper, the choice has been made to focus on analysing multiple publically shared documents. These are newspaper articles, online reports and conference meetings. While it would make sense for the objective of this research to conduct interviews with the crisis teams of the countries, it would be very hard to gain access to the people that implement the management strategies. Therefore, as online documents in the form of reports and news opinion are much more accessible, these publically shared documents have been used as an alternative to conduct research on the objective of this paper. In this way, this research will focus on the management strategies employed during the recovery phase of a crisis, which have been communicated to the wider public. This will thus be done through a content analysis.

For this research, the different concepts relevant to this paper will first be explored in a literature review. This will be done by revising the research into the field of this study that has previously been

conducted by others. Based on this, the positioning of the research will be explained, after which the research question for the paper will be presented. The methodology will then provide further detail into the research method, data collection and eventual data set. After this, the findings of the analysis will be presented and a discussion will take place based on these results and linked back to the existing literature. Based on the results, an answer will be given to the research question of this paper before finalizing with the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Literature review

In this section of the paper, research that has already been conducted by others on the different subjects of this paper will be discussed. Specifically certain concepts will be zoomed into and explored further. To start with, the concept of a crisis will be looked at, by exploring the different perspectives that researchers have on the concept. After this, research into the impacts a crisis can bring will be discussed before going in to more specific consequences a crisis can cause to the tourism industry of a destination. Additionally, literature on crisis management will be explored. Lastly, research on managing crises with regards to limiting the impacts on tourism is presented. Based on this literature review, the gap in the literature will be discussed, which will become the focus for this paper and will result in the presentation of the research question for this study.

### 2.1 What is a crisis?

Multiple authors have attempted to define a crisis to get a better understanding of the implications of the concept, but so far there is no agreement on the exact meaning. According to Sellnow and Seeger (2013) for example a crisis is a specific, unexpected, non-routine event or series of events that causes uncertainty and a significant threat to high priority goals. Ritchie et al. (2004) state that crises are “indefinite, numerous, unexpected and unpredictable” (p. 202). Other authors make categorizations of crises. For example the distinction between crises and disasters. The difference lies in the extent to which an event comes from outside sources or is attributable to the destination itself (Faulkner, 2001). A *crisis* can then be defined as an event which is to some extent self-inflicted because of actions (or inactions) of the organization, while *disasters* imply events caused by external factors, consisting of natural phenomena over which it has little control (Faulkner, 2001). Yet other authors have made even more elaborate categorizations which differentiates between epidemics, political crises, natural, man-made and financial crises (Bhati, Uphadayaya & Sharma, 2016).

So far there seems to be no consensus on what a crisis is precisely. In practice, a crisis can also imply many different things. From an economic crisis to a disease outbreak to a terrorist attack, they all fall under the category of a crisis (Faulkner, 2001). According to Sellnow and Seeger (2013) however, there are three aspects in which crises correspond to each other, which is that they are unexpected, a threat to normal practices and require immediate action. In the literature so far, there also seems to be a broad amount of research into different crises. Amongst others, these are health diseases like the foot and mouth disease in the UK (E.g. Miller & Ritchie, 2003); natural disasters like hurricanes/ cyclones (E.g. Chacko & Marcell, 2008; Prideaux, Coghlan & Falco-mammone, 2009), earthquakes (E.g. Ketter, 2016; Tucker, Shelton & Bae, 2016), and tsunamis (E.g. Fukui & Ohe, 2019; Ghaderi, Mat Som & Henderson, 2012). Furthermore, research has been done on terrorism (Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008; Hitchcock & Putra, 2005) and political conflicts and war (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Avraham, 2013; 2016). It thus seems like a lot of different crises have been covered in the literature.

## 2.1 Crisis impacts on tourism destinations

Crises can bring huge consequences to the destination in which it occurs. What these consequences entail differs per case and are thus contextual to the crisis. The Bali bombings (2002) for example caused for 191 victims and over 300 people were injured. Added to that, 450 buildings were damaged as a consequence of the enormous destruction caused by the explosion of the bombs (Henderson, 2007). Furthermore, an earthquake in Taiwan caused for 2400 casualties, 8000 injuries and an additional 100.000 people to become homeless (Huang & Min, 2002). Also this crisis caused for severe damage to infrastructure like roads, bridges and electricity grids. The foot and mouth disease in the UK did not only impact human lives, but further caused that over four million animals had to be put down (Miller & Ritchie, 2003). Moreover, natural disasters can cause for several post-storms like avalanches, rock/mud flows and landslides. It thus becomes clear that crises can bring huge losses of life and physical damage to a destination.

Next to the direct damage that crises cause to a destination, it can also hugely impact the tourism industry. The Bali bombings (2002) for example caused for such a downturn in visitors that workers had to be laid off or re-employed part time (Hitchcock & Putra, 2005). The shock did not only reach people working in the tourism industry, but also related sectors like taxi services and shops suffered economically (Hitchcock & Putra, 2009). Research by Prideaux et al. (2009) on a cyclone further showed the destruction of multiple tourism products like heritage buildings, walking tracks and road signs. Also this disaster resulted in a cancellation of bookings and a downturn in visitors (Prideaux et al., 2009). Ghaderi et al. (2012) add to this that crises cause for chaos in a tourism destination



which can result in fear and anxiety amongst tourists. All in all, crises can have great negative consequences on the tourism industry.

Sonmez, Backman and Allen (1994) have created a definition for a crisis in a tourism destination, according to them a tourism crisis is “any occurrence which can threaten the normal operation and conduct of tourism related businesses; damage a tourist destination's overall reputation for safety, attractiveness, and comfort by negatively affecting visitors' perceptions of that destination; and, in turn, cause a downturn in the local travel and tourism economy, and interrupt the continuity of business operations for the local travel and tourism industry, by the reduction in tourist arrivals and expenditures” (as cited in Sonmez, 1998, p. 18). The consequences of a crisis on the tourism sector can be as harmful on the sustainability of the tourism destination as the crisis events themselves (Sonmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow, 1999). These statements seem to indicate the huge impacts that a crisis can potentially have on a tourism destination.

Tourism is more vulnerable to disasters than other industries and is often unable to get back on track quickly (Mair, Ritchie & Walters, 2016). An important reason for this is that a crisis can cause serious damage to the image of a destination (Zhang, Li & Xiao, 2009). After a crisis has hit a destination, a considerable amount of media attention will be paid to it and media has the tendency to focus on negative news (Avraham, 2004; Prideaux et al., 2009). This thus results in the fact that a crisis is not only demolishing for tourism infrastructure, facilities and attractions, but also has a negative impact on the destination image. As perception is reality in the tourism industry, a negative image can influence tourists' visit intentions, even if this image is unjustified (Santana, 2004). For instance, the foot and mouth disease in the UK did not impact tourism infrastructure, yet a negative image emerged, which affected tourism for a long time (Miller & Ritchie, 2003). Added to this, destinations are easily substitutable as there are many available options (Souiden, Ladhari & Chiadmi, 2017; Pike & Page, 2014). This creates a challenge for tourism destinations to recover from a disaster and can result in the services of a destination being back to normal long before tourism recovers (Khazai, Mahdavian & Platt, 2018).

The concept destination image can be defined as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination” (Crompton 1979, p. 18). This image is thus a mental construct based on impressions chosen from a broad range of information (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). When looking at research into destination images, consensus can be found on the influence of the perception of an image on the buying behaviour of tourists (Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Lopes, 2011). Whether this image is positive or negative is important for the tourism choice and a

positive image would result in a higher chance to be chosen by tourists (Lopes, 2011). Research by Binter, Ferjan and Neves (2016) also states that the destination image is the tool for a destination to position itself in the market and gain competitive advantage over other destinations. Thus, it becomes evident that the destination image is an important element for tourism destinations to attract tourists and is therefore an essential part of tourism destination marketing.

A distinction can be made between primary and secondary destination images (Beerli & Martin, 2004). While primary images are formed through actually visiting the destination, the secondary image implies information perceived before experiencing a destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Secondary images are acknowledged to be influenced by three formation agents: organic, induced and autonomous sources (as developed by Gartner, 1994). *Organic sources* are non-commercial information sources like word of mouth, which are not controlled by destination marketers (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). *Induced sources* entail the images formed by destination promoters, which is mainly promotional material (Lopes, 2011). *Autonomous sources* are independently produced like educational materials, news articles and movies (Gartner, 1994). Most influential on the destination image are the autonomous sources, as these are seen as credible sources with a massive public reach (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Govers et al., 2007). These sources have been found to have an even greater impact when covering a dramatic event like a crisis (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Induced sources have been found to have great influence only when tourists are unaware of the involvement of promoters. These could thus be seen as three potential ways to shape the perception of destinations.

While destination image is always essential in the marketing of a tourism destination, during a crisis it becomes even more important to consider, since crises can create a shift of the perception for a period of time or even permanently (Kim and Chen, 2015). This shift happens as the information on the destination suffering from the crisis is widely broadcasted. The information can create “flashbulb memories”, meaning that every time new damaging events about the destination are shared, detailed and enduring memories are created which can last until long after the crisis has taken place (Kim & Chen, 2015). This could thus imply a negative image long after the destination has recovered. Alvarez and Campo (2014) agree with this line of thought by stating that the existing knowledge of tourists may change as they become more knowledgeable through exposure of information on the incident. Also Prideaux et al., (2008) emphasize the considerable amount of media attention after the occurrence of a crisis in a tourism destination.

Crises and disasters can also play a role in changing the level of risk perception for tourists (Hasan et al., 2017) which in turn can influence the destination image and the behaviour of tourists (Lehto,

Douglas & Park, 2007). Risk perception can be defined as “perceptions of uncertainty that a person who is vulnerable to misfortunes and/or dangers of any nature may be exposed to when travelling to a destination” (Perpiña et al., 2017, p. 4). Risk is tied to tourism in such a way that tourists get influenced by perceptions of security, risk and safety (Lehto et al., 2007; Xu & Grunewald, 2007). According to Qi, Gibson and Zhang (2009), it is aspects like peace, calmness and safety that are prerequisites to attract tourists to a destination. As a crisis can raise feelings of uncertainty, worry and anxiety, this can discourage tourists from travelling to a destination where a crisis has occurred (Perpiña et al., 2017). Risk perception is thus closely tied to the perception of a destination and also has influence on the tourist decision process, being another impact that disasters bring with them.

## 2.2 Crisis management

Crisis management implies the ongoing, integrated and extensive effort that destinations undertake to effectively manage crises, while taking into account the interest of their stakeholders in each step (Pforr & Hosie, 2008). The idea that crises have an identifiable life cycle is a recurring theme in the literature on crisis management. Focussing on crises as having a life cycle consisting of certain stages could aid in understanding crisis events and could assist in developing a proactive crisis management (Richardson 1994; 1995). According to Coombs (2012) the three most influential approaches for crisis life cycles are Fink’s four stage model, Mitroff’s five stage model and the basic three stage model.

Fink’s four stage model is one of the earliest approaches on the crisis life cycle and also one of the first to treat crises as extended events (Coombs, 2012). The first phase of this model is the *prodromal stage*, when hints of a potential crisis emerge. The second phase is the *breakout stage*, which is the actual crisis and its resulting damages. The third phase, the *chronic stage*, refers to the lasting effects of a crisis before arriving at the final *resolution stage*. The model by Mitroff consists of five phases and has strong similarities to Fink’s model in its order of phases. The five stages are 1) signal detection, 2) probing and prevention, 3) damage containment, 4) recovery and, 5) learning. The biggest difference between the two is that Mitroff puts more emphasis on what crisis managers should do at each phase (Coombs, 2012). Thus while Fink is more concerned with describing how a crisis develops, Mitroff is concerned with the crisis management processes.

The three stage model is different from the previous two as it is not associated with any theorist in particular, rather it has emerged as a general framework from several research efforts (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 2003). The three stage model comprises of various sub-stages which can change based on certain variables like the type and impacts of the crisis (Seeger et al., 2003). According to

Coombs (2012), both Fink and Mitroff's models fit into the framework of the basic three stage model. The three phases of this model are: the pre-crisis, crisis events and post-crisis (Seeger et al., 2003) (See Fig. 1). The *pre-crisis* focusses on preventing the crisis and creating a plan for a potential crisis. During the *crisis events*, it is of importance to try to reduce the impacts and start communication. *Post-crisis* events include the evaluation of management actions, adjusting future crisis plans where needed, following up on communication with the public and to monitor issues. Understanding the different phases makes it easier for crisis managers to identify which actions are needed for each stage in the lifecycle of a crisis.

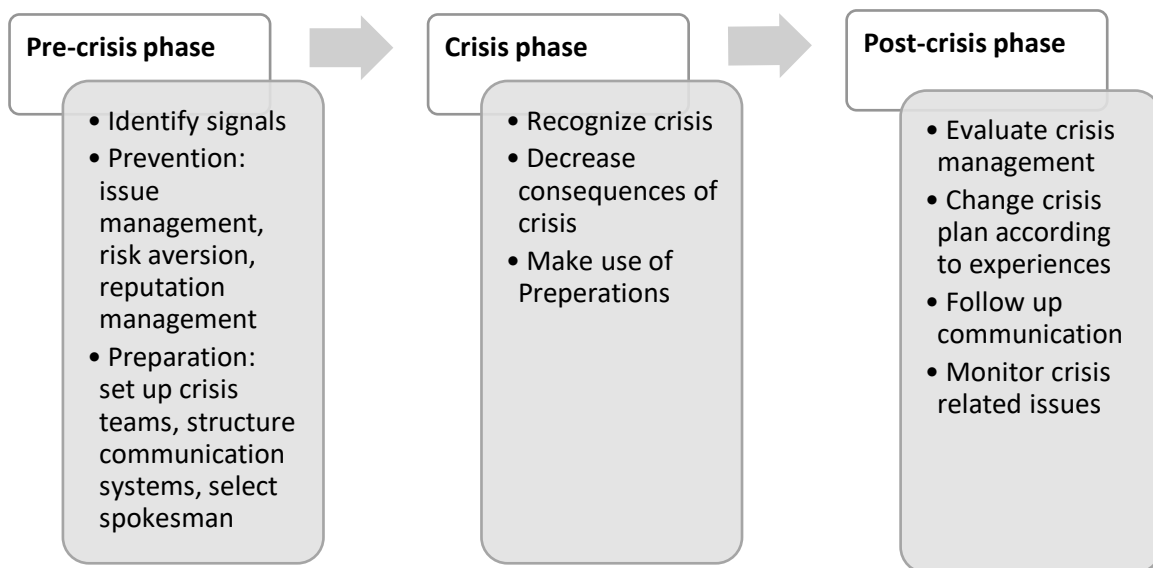


Figure 1: Basic three stage model

As said before, both Fink and Mitroff's models seem to fit into the framework of the basic three stage model (Coombs, 2012). This would mean that the structure of the models have great similarities (see Table 1 for comparison). To compare them, firstly the prodromal stage corresponds with the two first phases of the five stage model; signal detection and probing and prevention. All three of these are focused on the first signs and prevention of a potential crisis. This also corresponds to the pre-crisis phase of the basic three stage model, what this phase adds to it is the preparation for a potential crisis. Furthermore, the breakout stage, damage containment stage and crisis events stage correspond as they all entail the trigger event, when the crisis hits. The recovery and chronic phase are similar in the fact that they both focus on restoring to normal operations. Moreover, the learning and resolution stages both signal the end of the crisis. However, the learning stage puts more emphasis on the management of the crisis. Lastly, the post-crisis phase of the basic three stage model corresponds to the last two phases of both models as this also focusses on the recovery and

learning aspects of a crisis. All things considered, the three models greatly correspond to each other and the framework of the three stage model can be seen as covering both Fink's and Mitroff's model.

*Table 1: Crisis lifecycle models*

Three stage model	Four stage model	Five stage model
1) Pre-crisis	1) Prodromal stage	1) Signal detection
		2) Probing and prevention
2) Crisis-events	2) Breakout stage	3) Damage containment
3) Post-crisis	3) Chronic stage	4) Recovery
	4) Resolution	5) Learning

### 2.3 Crisis communication strategies in tourism destinations

The literature discussed so far makes it clear that crisis events have negative impacts on tourism destinations, with the consequence of a decreasing amount of tourists visiting the area. Researchers also seem to agree on the devastating effect a crisis can have on the perception of the destination for tourists (E.g. Santana, 2004; Zhang et al. 2009; Hystad & Keller, 2008). Thus to integrate strategies to limit the impact of a crisis on the destination image seems like an important marketing strategy for tourist destinations in the face of a crisis. According to Avraham (2018), these strategies should be developed specifically for a destination in crisis, as many tactics used for marketing destinations are not guaranteed to work for crisis situations. Thus, specific strategies aimed at tourism destinations in crisis would be important to attempt to limit the impacts on the tourism numbers in a destination.

Even though there is a need to understand and examine strategies to limit crisis impacts, this is not a simple task because of the time pressure, loss of control and uncertainty that a crisis situation causes (Ritchie, 2004). To prevent the need to make hasty decisions during the outbreak of a crisis, proactive crisis management should become an integral part of destination management (Pforr & Hosie 2008). Ritchie et al., (2004) also stresses this by stating that decisions taken before the crisis will create a more effective management. Well planned strategies can also limit potential "ripple effects" which is when a crisis fans outwards, causing further crisis events (Ritchie, 2004). However, not all situations can and should be planned, because every crisis is different. Therefore, managers should tailor their planned responses to the situations (Pforr & Hosie, 2008) and not plan out every possible situation. All in all, one could conclude that the literature is in agreement on the need for strategies set up during the pre-crisis resulting in a proactive crisis management strategy.

After a crisis has hit, the destination can expect considerable media attention. The degree of media attention will depend on the severity and impact of the crisis (Prideaux et al., 2008). Because of the quick reaction of media to cover the incident, recovery should be started as soon as possible (Prideaux et al., 2008). An important strategy to handle this recovery is by making use of crisis communication as it is seen as a way to reduce the negative media image (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008). Poor communication strategies could make the crisis worse than it already is. Another outcome of crisis communication is that it can bring together public and private industries. As tourism is a very complex industry with many stakeholders, this can cause for more knowledge on the situation across all actors involved. Research by Ritchie (2004) has also found that cooperation between these stakeholders is needed to achieve recovery during the post-crisis. Souiden et al. (2014) agrees with this by saying that to be able to spread a consistent message, stakeholders should coordinate and blend their communication strategies. Thus, it becomes evident that crisis communication could result in a more coordinated recovery.

A definition for the concept of crisis communication has been produced by Sellnow and Seeger (2013) who state that crisis communication can be seen as “The ongoing process of creating shared meaning among and between groups, communities, individuals and agencies, within the ecological context of a crisis, for the purpose of preparing for and reducing, limiting and responding to threats and harm” (p. 13). For crisis communication to be effective, several elements are important. For this, Ritchie et al. (2004), have created the “*Five point crisis communication plan*” (as adapted from Coombs, 1999). This plan emphasizes five key considerations for communication: 1) responding quickly to provide accurate information; 2) providing correct and consistent information on the event and precautions to be undertaken; 3) consistency of responses to the public; 4) openness and accessibility and; 5) expressing sympathy. Santana (2004) also emphasizes the significant role that the media plays. In particular with regards to the destination image it is regarded as critical to have a positive relation with mass media (Beeton, 2005).

According to Durocher (1994), the speed of recovery will depend on three factors: 1) the damage caused by the crisis, 2) the efficiency of bringing the facilities back to life and, 3) an effective marketing message stating that the destination is available to the public again. While the first two factors are short term practices, the third factor can be seen as a way to restore the confidence of tourists in the destination in the long term. Also Lehto et al. (2007) mention the importance of sending a message that will restore confidence by persuading tourists that the destination is safe to visit again. Before focusing on this kind of marketing however, Prideaux et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of first restoring the services and facilities of the destination. Also Avraham (2004) states

that the real life situation is the most important. The destination should be recovered and ready to receive tourists before starting to market it as safe and available. All in all, both renovation and marketing seem to be important for the recovery of the destination.

Even though every destination would like to recover completely from a disaster, Zhang et al. (2009) emphasize the complexity of getting to the pre-crisis level of the destination. Usually there will be some kind of lingering effect of the disaster. However, a crisis can also be seen as an opportunity for new innovations (Zhang et al., 2009). In this way, a crisis can be used to improve and change certain products and services in the tourism sector. Furthermore, a crisis can be seen as a learning opportunity as it produces new knowledge, relationships and policies during the disaster response (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008). Better crisis communication and recovery plans could be created for a future disaster through asking questions, identifying and challenging values and beliefs, reflecting and collecting data (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008). Thus, the impacts of a crisis are not solely negative, but can also be an opportunity for a destination to change and learn.

Research into management strategies specifically used to limit the impact on tourism numbers of a destination seems to be limited. However, Avraham and Ketter (2017a) have created a framework, the “*multistep model for altering place image*”, which is suitable for analysing tourism destinations. This model has been created to conceptualize the most important strategies when attempting to restore the negative image of a destination that suffers from long term crises like terrorism and wars. In total, twenty-four strategies are used, which are divided into three broad categories of strategies a destination could employ (See Table 2) and focus on: Source, Audience and Message (SAM) (Avraham, 2018). *Source strategies* imply the effort of the destination marketer to influence or replace the source that is perceived responsible for the destination’s image. *Audience strategies* concentrate on specific audiences by focusing on the audience’s values, perceptions and dreams. These strategies are concerned with showing the values that are common between the audience and the country. *Message strategies* imply the tackling of negative news spread about the destination.

Table 2. Management strategies of the SAM approach (Avraham, 2018)

Broad categorization	Specific strategies
Source strategies	“Come see for yourself”, using celebrities as alternative source, buying news space, establishing rapport with news people, exploiting background similarity, blocking media access and applying physical/economic threat

Audience strategies	Similarities to target audience, patriotism and nationalism, changing target audience
Message strategies	Ignoring the crisis, acknowledging a negative image, hosting spotlight events, hosting opinion leaders, reducing scale of the crisis, tackling the crisis, using films, TV and books, engaging celebrities, delivering a counter-message, spinning liabilities into assets, ridiculing the stereotype, branding contrary to the stereotype, geographic isolation, changing the place's name, slogan or logo

While the multistep model above has a focus on long-term crises, which has been researched by Avraham and Ketter in different case studies, research on natural disasters seems to be more scarce. So far, research has been done by Zhang et al. (2009) for an earthquake in Sichuan, China. This had been done by looking at three disaster cases to find out which strategies they had adopted to overcome the disaster. In this particular case, six measures with the goal to alleviate damage and restore tourism had been found which are: 1) support from the government, 2) marketing on the availability of the destination, 3) developing new tourism products, 4) focus on key generating markets, 5) communicate through media and, 6) cooperate with industry partners (Zhang et al., 2009). These measures also seem to be in agreement with the literature discussed so far in this section of the research. Additional research into natural disasters has been done by Walters and Mair (2012) on the Australian bushfires. For this study, a summary of the most employed tourism disaster recovery messages across research into this field has been created.

*Table 3: Commonly employed tourism disaster recovery messages (Walters & Mair, 2012)*

<b>Type of message</b>	<b>How employed</b>
Business as usual	"We are open and ready for business"
Community readiness	"We are ready to welcome you"
Solidarity messages	"By visiting you are helping us recover"
Celebrity endorsement	Inviting celebrities
Restore confidence and change misperceptions	"We were never better!"
Spinning unsafe image into assets	"See us in a new light", "transformation" etc.
Curiosity enhancement	"Come see for yourself"
Short-term discounts/ price reductions	Offering discounts and deals
Guest/visitor testimonials	Word of mouth, blogs etc.



## 2.4 Positioning and research question

Current literature has defined how a crisis can be understood (Faulkner, 2001; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013) and has created models in which stages of the life cycle can be distinguished (Coombs, 2012). The impact of a crisis on a tourism destination has also been thoroughly researched by multiple researchers in different contexts (E.g. Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Ghaderi et al., 2012). A consistent theme in the literature on tourism crises seems to be the immense impact it can have on not only the physical attributes of a tourism destination, but also the long term effects on the destination image (Kim & Chen, 2015; Mair et al., 2016). To limit the impact of a crisis on the destination, crisis communication is one of the key recovery strategies (Lehto et al., 2007; Ritchie et al., 2004; Xu & Grunewald, 2009). However, literature going into more specific strategies to limit the impacts on the tourism numbers in the destination seems to be limited (Avraham, 2018; Walters and Mair, 2012). Therefore, this research will take a closer look into the employment of these management strategies.

While limited, some literature is already present on tourism recovery strategies. Avraham (2004) has for example found six strategies that have been used by countries that have successfully changed the negative image associated with their destination. Avraham and Ketter (2008) have also created the “multi-step model for altering place image” which acknowledges 24 strategies to restore the destination image (as mentioned in Avraham, 2018). These strategies have been used in several case studies (Avraham, 2013 & 2015 in the middle east, 2016 in Egypt; Avraham & Ketter, 2017a in Asia, 2017b in Africa). However, all these case studies are focused on either terrorism attacks and war or on prolonged violent conflicts. Research on natural disasters seem to be much more scarce. Walters and Mair (2012) and Zhang et al. (2009) are the only ones to the researcher’s knowledge who have conducted research into this field. Thus there still is a lack of information on the implementation of tourism recovery strategies in the context of a natural disaster, which will therefore be the focus of this research. To conduct this research, the following research question (RQ) has been formed:

RQ: *“In what way are management strategies, aimed at limiting the decreasing tourism numbers, reported on to the wider public during the post crisis phase of an earthquake?”*

The goal of the research question for this study is to provide new information for crisis management practices of earthquakes in tourism destinations. The results of this study could be used to improve the consideration of the tourism industry in the management of a crisis. This in order to achieve integration of strategies in the crisis management plan to be able to limit damage on destinations as tourism hotspots.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research design

This paper will be set up as a multiple case study into three different destinations. These will be in Nepal; Lombok in Indonesia; and Hokkaido in Japan. The three destinations have been chosen because of four reasons. Firstly, all three destinations are situated in Asia. Secondly, all three of them have experienced the same natural disaster, namely an earthquake. Added to that the disasters have hit the destinations quite recently. Nepal has suffered from an earthquake in April of the year 2015 and both Lombok and Hokkaido have experienced an earthquake in the year 2018 in August and September respectively. Lastly, the disasters all had a great impact on the tourism industry in the three different places, which would make implementation of destination strategies focussing on tourism recovery during the post-crisis phase of great value.

Using case studies is an appropriate form of research when a question is asked about a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 1994). Case study research focuses on an individual or a phenomenon which will be researched in its natural context and is grounded in deep and varied sources of information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In the context of this research paper, a case study can be defined as a problem to be studied, revealing an in depth understanding of a bounded system, which involves understanding an event (Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Doing research on multiple cases enables the researcher to explore differences and similarities between the different cases (Yin, 1994). Choosing three different destinations will give the opportunity to compare and provide insights into the differences in approaches adopted in the post crisis phase of these countries. It can thus provide insights into the kinds of strategies used during the three different earthquakes.

The method used for analysing the data is a content analysis. This is a method of analysis which can be used for communication messages. Content analysis can be defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 1980, p.24). The goal of a content analysis is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The type of content analysis used is called a directed content analysis approach. This is when a deductive content analysis is conducted, which is useful when prior research about a phenomenon already exists but is incomplete or would benefit from further description (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Thus, previously relevant research findings and predetermined categories are guiding. In this research, content

analysis will be used to systematically examine themes in different new articles, reports and conferences, related to destination image strategies.

### 3.2 Data collection

This research will look into the strategies to limit impacts on the tourism industry on the destination in the aftermath of earthquakes in Nepal, Hokkaido and Lombok. To do this, data will be collected from multiple sources. To start with, news reports from four different news outlets will be used to gather data from. One regional news outlet has been chosen and three national papers. The regional news outlet will be the *Straits Times* from Singapore. This outlet covers world news, East Asian news and Southeast Asian news. Furthermore the three national news outlets are the *Nepali times* from Nepal, *Japan times* from Japan and *The Jakarta Post* from Indonesia. For every country, data will be sought from two different news outlets: the *Straits times* and the national paper of the country under study. The choice to focus on one national paper per country has been made because data collection showed that while regional papers covered a lot of negative news and only few positive stories, national news outlets were more interested in the recovery of the destination

Data from the different news outlets will be sought via their websites: [straitstimes.com](http://straitstimes.com), [nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com), [japantimes.com](http://japantimes.com) and [thejakartapost.com](http://thejakartapost.com). For the collection of the different articles, the keywords for this search will be the three names of the destinations, “quake” and “tourism”/ “tourist” (e.g. “Hokkaido quake tourism”). During the search for relevant news articles, it became clear that the articles in the first months mainly covered devastation, death tolls and rescue missions. Only in later months did articles come up about ways to start the recovery of the tourism industry in the area. Therefore, the period for the news articles has been set at 7 months. Thus from the day that the earthquake has hit the destination until 7 months later. As the research time for this paper is only limited and the amount of data to analyse gets quite large with a period of 7 months, only three national and one regional paper will be used.

The newspaper articles will be the main source of information for this research paper. This will be supported by the use of multiple other documents. One of these are disaster reports. For Nepal, several reports already exist which are amongst others two disaster reports (NDR) and a Post disaster recovery framework. Reliefweb and Preventionweb will be used to obtain these situation reports, updates and activity summaries. ReliefWeb is an information source on global crises and disasters, a service of the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (ReliefWeb, n.d).

Preventionweb is a knowledge platform for disaster risk reduction managed by the UN office for

Disaster Risk Reduction (Preventionweb, n.d). Lastly, press conferences, press releases and council meetings will be sought to use as a source of data. Through these different data sources, themes will be sought corresponding with management strategies with the aim to limit the impacts on tourism that occur as a consequence of a disaster.

The complete data set gathered from news outlets exists of a total of 30 newspaper articles (See table 3). Of this data set, ten articles have been used for the analysis of Nepal, eleven for Lombok and nine for the Hokkaido earthquake. As for the reports and conferences, in total eleven documents have been used (see table 4). For Nepal three reports have been used: the Nepal Disaster Report 2017; the Post disaster recovery framework (PDRF) and the Post Disaster Needs Assessment. For Lombok, one situation report will be used which is gathered through Reliefweb. Furthermore, a document has been provided by the tourism crisis team of the Tourism Ministry in Indonesia on the tourism crisis management for the Lombok earthquake. Lastly, the data set for Japan consists of four press conferences and two council meetings.

Table 4: Data sample from news outlets

Destination	News outlet	Time period								Total
		Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Apr 14, 2015 <b>Nepal</b>										
	Nepali times	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	6
	Straits times	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	4
Aug 5, 2018 <b>Lombok</b>		<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	
	Jakarta post	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	9
	Straits times	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Sep 6, 2018 <b>Hokkaido</b>		<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	
	Japan times	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
	Straits times	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2

Table 5: data sample from reports and conferences

Destination	Document
<b>Nepal</b>	Nepal Disaster Report 2017
	Post Disaster Recovery Framework
	Post Disaster Needs Assessment – executive summary
<b>Lombok</b>	Emergency plan of action
	Tourism Crisis Management in Indonesia
<b>Hokkaido</b>	Press conferences by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Sept. 13, 14, 21 and 28
	Tourism Strategy Promotion Council, Sept 21
	Joint Meeting of the Ministerial Council on the Earthquake and Typhoon No. 21 and the Tourism Strategy Promotion Council, Sept 28

### 3.3 Data analysis

For the analysis of the data sample for this research paper, the main focus will be on the management strategies that have been employed by both public and private industries at the destinations. Thus, the data will be searched for management strategies aimed at limiting the impact on the tourism industry. For this, the strategies mentioned in Table 2 and 3, illustrated in the literature review, will be used as a guideline for identifying management strategies for the recovery of tourism. Other strategies mentioned in the data set which are not covered in these tables will also be added. Furthermore, from the data set it became clear that much emphasis has been put on crisis communication aimed at tourists. This implies the emergency response that the destination has adopted with regards to the tourists at the destination at the time of the disaster. Therefore, this aspect of crisis management has become the second focus for the data analysis.

The content analysis has been done by firstly coding the entire text of the different articles and documents. This was done through highlighting the pieces of texts relevant for this research paper and providing a short description to them. With this strategy, information corresponding to the crisis communication during the emergency response period and information on management strategies executed by both private and public industries were highlighted. Furthermore, basic information provided on the occurrence of the earthquake and the overall impacts on the tourism industry has been sought as to be able to provide information on the situation per destination. This form of a content analysis is a qualitative analysis. In this way it is possible to explore in what way and what context the different strategies have been employed. The specific codes that have been used can be found in Table 6 below.

*Table 6. Codes used for content analysis*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Coding</b>
General impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Impact on destination</li> </ul>
Tourism impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consequences on tourism numbers</li> <li>● Consequences to tourism facilities</li> </ul>
Emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emergency aid tourists</li> <li>● Information provision to tourists</li> </ul>
Management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deals and discounts</li> <li>● Promotion</li> <li>● Hosting events</li> <li>● Target audience</li> <li>● Availability message</li> <li>● Information on situation</li> <li>● Earthquake as opportunity</li> <li>● Reconstruction</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Structuring the results

For the structure of the results, the basic three stage model (Coombs, 2012) will be made use of. As this model focusses on a chronological order of the situation, this order will also be used for the presentation of the findings for the data analysis. Furthermore, as mentioned before, both the SAM approach of Avraham (2018) and the model by Walters and Mair (2014) illustrated in the literature review will be used as guideline for the management strategies that have been employed. Added to that, other management strategies that have been reported on will be implemented in the result section. Thus, these theoretical frameworks have been used for the development of the results.

The overall structure of the results will be based on the codes that have been found in the data set. First, information will be given on the general impacts experienced at the destination as a result the earthquake. Secondly, information regarding the impact on the tourism industry will be provided. After this, the focus will be on the emergency response towards the tourists that were at the destination at the time of the disaster. Although this might not seem relevant to management strategies specifically, the documents have put emphasis on this aspect. Added to that, crisis communication has been found to be an important aspect of tourism recovery. Therefore it could be a relevant aspect to include in management strategies aimed at limiting the impact on the tourism industry and has thus been added to the results. Lastly, the result section will focus on the management strategies that have been found in the data set. This information will be presented in a chronological order in the time after the earthquake has hit.

## 4. Results

In this section of the paper, the results of the data analysis will be presented. The data for the three countries will be discussed separately going in a chronological order of the occurrence of the disaster. Thus first Nepal will be discussed, then Lombok and lastly the earthquake in Hokkaido. The structure of the findings will be as described in the previous section. For every country there will be a brief explanation on the general impacts, after this the impact on the tourism industry is presented. Then the emergency response is discussed before finishing with the management strategies. However, while there was emphasis on the emergency response for both Lombok and Hokkaido, there was no mention of this aspect in the documents for Nepal. Therefore, for the results of Nepal, the section on emergency response is not included.

## 4.1 Nepal

On April 25<sup>th</sup> in 2015, Nepal got hit by a 7.6 magnitude earthquake. This was followed by more than 450 aftershocks, of which one magnitude 7.3 earthquake, causing for additional consequences on the destination. The earthquake shook almost the whole country, causing for human casualties, suffering and damage to environment, infrastructure and buildings. In total, 8,970 people died and more than 23 thousand were injured. Added to this, more than 500,000 houses and buildings were destroyed, causing for a large amount of people that were left homeless. Of the total of 75 districts, 31 were badly hit and 14 were declared 'crisis hit' by the government. The earthquake had severe consequences on the agricultural industry, as well as the tourism industry and other services. All in all, the national economy was severely weakened by this massive blow.

### 4.1.1 Tourism impacts

The earthquake caused for a devastating impact to the tourism industry. Hotels got damaged, trekking routes were wiped out and heritage sites were left in ruins. Added to that, the earthquake hit during the peak spring season of Nepal. In total, the earthquake has caused a loss of 81,242 NPR (Nepalese Rupee) for the tourism industry. In the first weeks after the earthquake tourists were all flying out, after which cancellation of bookings occurred, not only for the month after but for a longer period of time. For example in Pokhara, arrivals dropped by almost 95 percent. Krishna Prasad Pandey of Hotel Landmark states "We had 100 per cent pre-booking for May and June, all of which got cancelled within a week of the quake" (Dolker, 2015). Other worries concern the travel advisories on going to Nepal. During the first two months, all but necessary travel to Nepal was advised against. This came with the consequence that insurance companies would not cover the trip or would make it a lot more expensive. All in all, the tourism industry in Nepal experienced a heavy blow.

Many people inhabitants of Nepal also seemed to be concerned about the messages about Nepal in the international media. Most of this media footage is aimed at the negative impacts, showing photos of death and destruction. This gives the impression that Nepal is completely destroyed. Ann Young, director of Trekking Adventures in New Zealand for example said that "TV in New Zealand only shows the worse-hit areas, but a lot of places like Mustang are just fine" (Rai, 2015).

Furthermore, it is said that the 14 worse hit districts are all not tourism destinations in Nepal. Still the negative media attention has the consequence of keeping tourists away. As a lot of people in Nepal seem to be dependent on the tourism industry, it is of importance for the recovery of the destination to lure visitors back at the right time. A survey done by the Nepali times has also found that the majority of tourism stakeholders identified the need for international marketing and promotion for

the revival of the tourism industry. This is in agreement with a statement made by the administrative chief of the Nepal Tourism Board saying “We have to save the tourism image of Nepal” (Hui, 2015).

#### 4.1.2 Management strategies

Public documents started to mention different tourism strategies at the end of May, thus about a month after the occurrence. At this time, a tourism recovery committee was set up consisting of the government, the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) and trekking agencies with the aim to repair tourism infrastructure and facilities like trekking routes and heritage sites. Thus there seems to be a focus on the restoration of the different tourism buildings and infrastructure to help revive tourism in Nepal. At the same time, the committee promoted the safe areas of Nepal to the tourists, thus already in early stages they tried to send the message that parts of Nepal were still safe to visit. Furthermore, the Nepali Times had started a social media campaign, #VisitNepalAtumn2015, with the intention of promoting tourism as a way to help Nepal. Overall, these strategies aim at rebuilding, promoting certain areas of the destination and marketing the potential for tourism to aid the country.

Apart from the public management strategies put into action, there were also some strategies that private industries have executed one month after the disaster. These strategies were also focused on getting across the message that Nepal is still safe to visit. For example, the director of Shanti Travel has started his own promotion, by focusing on the destinations that have not been hit by the earthquake. Also the owner of the trekking company Adventure Challenge Centre said that “If you want to help Nepal, you don't need to donate. You have to come and see it. Come and see for yourself that Nepal is fine.” (Rai, 2015). Another strategy of private industries is marketing the different hotels by offering attractive deals to tourists. One of these hotels is the Dwarika's hotel, which designed a special promotion for visitors coming from South Asia. Furthermore, the Western Hotel Association of Nepal offered discounts varying from 20 to 50 percent (Dolker, 2015). From May until the end of September discounts were planned on room tariffs, restaurants, trekking packages, bus fares and trekking gear.

In June, two new strategies were reported on in the documents aimed to inform the wider public. One of the strategies was to compile a list of ambassadors consisting of well-known climbers and mountaineers. The whole list was made public by the Ministry of Culture together with the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation during the international Mount Everest day. This with the hope that the ambassadors would promote international tourism and help revive this industry for Nepal. The second strategy mentioned occurred halfway through June, on the 15<sup>th</sup>. On this day, Nepal organized



the official opening of Kathmandu's world heritage monuments. This as a way for the media to carry the message to the international public to ensure them the safety and restoration of the heritage site. Both strategies illustrate how Nepal has been doing their best to put themselves back on the map as a safe tourism destination.

A bit more than two months after the earthquake, in the beginning of July, countries started to ease their travel advisories for Nepal. New Zealand, the US and the UK all changed their advice to a specification against certain districts instead of the whole of Nepal. For potential further relaxation of the advice, Nepali group Samarth commissioned a study by an independent third party to assess the safety of the two most popular trails. If the report would ensure the safety of the treks, this could result in the further revision of travel advisories. This assessment can also be seen as a management strategy as it causes for a more safe impression of Nepal to the public, which can have a positive impact on tourism. Furthermore, the Samarth set up a checklist of strategies to focus on for the revival of the tourism industry. Amongst others these consisted of the setting up of online knowledge bases by third parties with up-to-date information on the safety of treks, disseminating positive messages on the overall safety of Nepal and to relaunch the Nepal brand in target markets, especially India and China. Thus, the focus seemed to change to improving the image that tourists have of the destination.

During the same period, the importance of improving the overall quality of the tourism industry came to surface in the form of the term "Build Back Better". In this way, the earthquake can be seen as a chance for a paradigm shift, not just for the affected districts, but for the whole country. Apparently tourism numbers were stagnant, spending's went down, duration of visits got shorter and repeat visitors rarer already before the earthquake hit Nepal. Thus, this earthquake could also be seen as an opportunity to "Build Back Better". To make this possible, the government wants to clean up the airport, streamline visas and make it generally easier for potential visitors to travel to Nepal. Furthermore, a big change in this direction is their focus on improving the safety and quality of services instead of reducing prices. This implies making the destination overall safer, for example by making buildings earthquake-resistant. Even though there seems to be a big interest in improving the quality of tourism, a survey done by Nepali times has found that only 28% of 342 interviewees see the earthquake as opportunity to improve products and services (Siddarth Inc., 2015). Thus whether private industries have the same goals, is questionable.

In August, four months after the occurrence of the earthquake, the government was still focused on requesting international visitors to "visit the magnificent and bustling country of Nepal, and support

by visiting it as she stands to stand proudly on her feet once again” (Your holiday, 2015). Added to that, making clear to the public that only 14 of the 75 districts were heavily affected by the earthquake. To conclude from this, the promotion makes clear that tourism is still needed as an aid for the destination and is still convincing international tourists that Nepal is safe to visit.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, Nepal organized the World’s highest marathon with the goal to send a positive message to the world. The Organizer of this event says on this that “Everest represents Nepal. We want to tell the world that Nepal is safe by successfully organising an event like this” (World’s highest, 2015). In the months from October on, the Nepal Tourism Board planned to focus on three activities for the recovery of tourism: marketing and promotion; reconstruction of heritages; and development of human resources. All in all, even though there is no more mention of strategies after October, it seems like Nepal was far from done with the recovery of the tourism industry.

## 4.2 Lombok, Indonesia

Lombok island, West Nusa Tenggara, got hit by several moderate and strong earthquakes in July and August of the year 2018. In total, five major shocks with magnitudes between 6 and 7 have hit the island. These have caused for more than a thousand aftershocks. The first big earthquake hit on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July with a magnitude of 6.4. The earthquake with the highest magnitude, one of magnitude 7, occurred on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2018. The earthquakes were not only felt on Lombok island, but reached as far as Bali and the Sumbawa islands, which are situated to the left and right of the island of Lombok. Altogether (Aha centre, 2018), the number of fatalities hit 561, 431.416 people have been displaced and 74.361 houses got damaged which has resulted in an overall economic damage and loss of 7.7 trillion IDR (Indonesian Rupee) (US\$ 528 million).

### 4.2.1 Tourism impacts

Lombok is a popular tourism destination, visited by both domestic as well as international tourists. As this is the fact, Lombok faces a complicated situation when a disaster hits. Added to that, the series of earthquakes occurred at an especially cruel time for Lombok, as it struck during the time of the tourism season in which most businesses earn the majority of their annual revenue. The powerful quakes have caused for many visitors to flee the island, with the consequence that thousands of tourists gathered on the Gili islands situated at the West coast of Lombok, waiting to depart from the islands by boats. Only a small amount of tourists decided to stay on the island, causing for awfully empty tourism facilities. The manager of Holiday Resort Lombok said “it might be a month before they could start taking guest bookings again. Just 19 of the resort’s 189 rooms were occupied by

hardy tourists who decided not to leave after the quake” (Lombok tourism, 2018). As so many tourists have fled the island, questions can be raised as to how the tourism sector of Lombok will bounce back.

When looking at data from the Ministry, numbers show that there were up to 10,000 foreign tourists arriving at the airport of Lombok every month. After the earthquake this number dropped to just 3,000 foreign visitors a month. The negative consequences on the amount of tourism arrivals in Lombok was not only limited to the time directly after the earthquake, but held on for a longer period. Taking a look at the overall tourism numbers arriving in Lombok after the earthquake, the Ministry of Tourism reported that the number of tourists between September and December 2018 had dropped by 66 percent compared to the same period of the previous year. Even later after the earthquake, in January and February of 2019, the number of international visitors was still down by 38 percent compared to the numbers in 2018. Thus it becomes clear that the earthquake has had a considerable negative impact on the number of tourists going to Lombok.

#### 4.2.2 Crisis communication

The tourism ministry of Indonesia divides the post-crisis phase into two sections: the emergency response phase, in which it is important to distribute information and aid tourists; and the recovery phase in which the destination needs to recover and destination marketing needs to be implemented (Regional TCMC Forum, 2018). Thus the Tourism Ministry not only puts focus on the marketing strategies, but also greatly emphasizes the emergency response with regards to the tourists in the country. For the earthquake in Lombok, several responses have been put into action for this phase, with the most emphasis on providing accurate information and helping the tourists evacuate from the island.

Regarding the information provision, several statements and press releases were put out; social media and the Tourism Ministry website were used; and tourist information centres were put into action. Furthermore, an application, called Inarisk, was made available to tourists which can provide factual information on any potential disaster in the country. The National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNBP) started to promote this app for tourists to gain access to the correct information during the post-crisis, not only about the disaster itself but also on the response to the occurrence. The BNBP’s director of community empowerment said that this “app will provide instructions on what to do, where to go to and what sort of preparations are needed in case of a disaster” (News Desk, 2018a). All in all, it seems as though both domestic and international tourists were provided with different opportunities to obtain accurate and timely information.

On the evacuation of the tourists from the island of Lombok, also multiple services were executed by the Ministry of Tourism. The tourism crisis centre was put into action to monitor the 3A's; amenities, accessibility and attractions, with their main focus on the accessibility to support the movement of foreign tourists. Tourism Minister Arief Yahya stated about this that "People tend to move to a safer tourist location, hence we must provide more access to offer the safety and convenience" (News Desk, 2018b) Regarding the movement to a safer location, the Tourism Ministry has put into action several services for the tourists. First of all, free food, shelter and first aid was provided to the tourists stranded on the island. Furthermore, busses, boats and shuttles were provided to transfer tourists to seaports and airports from where they could travel to different locations in Indonesia. Lastly, extra flights were scheduled for the tourists to be able to be transported to another location. Concluding from this, the Tourism Ministry has put all efforts into helping tourists around the island in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Even though great emphasis has been put on, and much effort has been put in, the emergency response phase with regards to the tourists, there is also still some criticism to be found in the data sample. Apparently, the situation for the tourists on the Gili islands did not run as smoothly as projected by the Tourism Ministry of Indonesia. Thousands of tourists were waiting for rescue boats without a clue what would happen and without any basic facilities. As the number of boats was very limited for such a large evacuation, there were still tourists stranded on the island after 24 hours. Added to that, tourism staff on the island were not equipped with the knowledge and skills on what to do in the situation of a disaster. Thus, even though much effort has been put into helping the tourists by providing different services and necessities, the response seems to have been quite uncoordinated and in need of improvements in certain areas.

#### 4.2.3 Management strategies

For Lombok, the strategies to limit the impacts of the earthquake on the number of tourists started already in August, which is still in the same month that the heaviest earthquake hit the destination. One of the first messages to the public was shared in the beginning of August, stressing the fact that Bali and the Southern part of Lombok are still safe to be visited. The pace of management strategies seemed to be very important for the tourism minister Arief Yahya, who stated that "Although Lombok is still in the emergency response period since the first earthquake, its tourism has to recover immediately since we will not see the results of our promotion today right away. Since Lombok is also one of our priority tourist destinations, the ministry has to conduct special monitoring" (News Desk, 2018b). Thus for Lombok, promotion and marketing seems to be highly important and immediately set into action. Added to that, the government encourages to start the

renovation of damaged facilities as soon as possible to get services back to normal. Thus, the focus in the beginning for Lombok seems to be on reconstruction and promoting safe areas.

Further in the month of August, the Regional Tourism Promotion Agency (BPPD) already planned the “Great Sale” for different packages (tours, hotels, restaurants etc.) for early 2019, as a form of tourism recovery efforts for Lombok. Also, different tourism packages for both Bali and Lombok were constructed for the IMF – world bank meeting in Bali scheduled for October. Not only the public industry started to execute these strategies, also some hotels started to offer their own attractive deals to “lure” tourists to their facilities. For example, tourists could stay for multiple nights, while only paying for one. These discounts were available until the end of 2018. Another strategy at this time is the goal of the Ministry of Communication to focus on providing accurate information on the situation, to prevent and rectify any misinformation. Concluding from this, the focus seems to have shifted to planning and offering discounted deals and providing information.

From October on, two months after the disaster had struck on the island of Lombok, the focus of the reported management strategies had seen a shift again. In these months, multiple events had been planned to promote tourism and to show the recovery that the island had already achieved. The first event mentioned in the different news articles is the Muslim Travel Pavilion where Lombok’s position as one of Indonesia’s top halal destinations was showcased. With this, the government wanted to “inform the world that Lombok is back, with many events scheduled for October and beyond” (News Desk, 2018d). Another event which was planned on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of November is the 2018 Lombok Tourism Rally, which is the fourth time this event was held. Also this event was a strategic promotional tool to increase the pace of tourism recovery after the earthquake. Organizers for this event said that “We hope the participants would enjoy the beauty of Lombok and take wonderful stories back to their home areas” (Nugraha, 2018b).

In December another event was held, a music festival. “The Sound of Humanity”, was planned for the beginning of the month December. This event was planned to promote Lombok as a safe destination to visit. Further reasoning behind this festival was to entertain volunteers and help survivors with the trauma that they have experienced. Thus this festival was held both for the inhabitants of the island as well as for the tourism industry. The last event reported on in the articles was announced to be held on the island of Lombok in February 2019, the MotoGP street race. Also this project is “intended to help Lombok, a beauty spot adjacent to Bali, recover from the quakes that killed more than 500 people in July and August” said a senior official of the event (Moto cycling, 2019). All in all, it seems

like the government of Indonesia sees hosting events as a highly strategic tool for the promotion of tourism recovery.

Seven months after the earthquake, in the month March of 2019, the Tourism Ministry said to have developed different measures to promote the island. Examples of these strategies are: offering all-in-one tourist packages, maximizing promotion across the world and encouraging neighbouring countries to visit. Nia Niscaya, the assistant of international marketing, stated about the last measure that “people in neighbouring countries have geographical and cultural proximity to us, so it is far easier for us to reach out to them and it is cheaper for them to visit our destinations” (Aisyah, 2019). The last strategy mentioned in the articles was by the Indonesia Tour and Travel Agency Association (ASITA) which was sending out the message that Lombok was safe to visit again. Furthermore, the head of ASITA had asked to reduce the price for domestic flights as the rising costs of flights also contributed to declining tourism numbers. All in all, different promotion and marketing strategies seem to have been set up during the seven months after the earthquake hit the island of Lombok.

### 4.3 Hokkaido, Japan

In the morning of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 struck Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan. The earthquake caused for a death toll of in total 41 people and more than 700 injured people. Next to this, it provoked bursting water pipes, damaged gas pipes and triggered an island-wide power outage. As water supply and power had stopped in many places on the island, most businesses, hotels and companies were down, firms stopped operations and stores closed. The first week after the earthquake, these aspects, together with the search for survivors, was priority for the Japanese government. Furthermore, a lot of damage was done to infrastructure, causing for disruption in transportation, rivers and forest lands. When looking only at the amount of direct damage done by the earthquake, this would already exceed 150 billion yen (US\$ 1.8 billion). To be able to realise the post-earthquake restoration, it is essential to rebuild the industries.

#### 4.3.1 Tourism impacts

Hokkaido, being a popular tourism destination, got hit by a great amount of hotel cancellations from tourists as a consequence of the natural disaster. In total, 1.14 million people cancelled their accommodation bookings for the month of September and 4.000 reservations for sightseeing buses were cancelled (Swift assistance, 2018). Especially the cancellations of large groups, like school excursions were a heavy setback for the tourism industry of Hokkaido. Furthermore, the power outage caused by the earthquake caused for extra inconveniences. A front desk clerk of a hotel in the

Sapporo stated that “all of the systems are down and we can’t process reservations” (Tanaka & Suk, 2018). Restaurants also suffered from the power outage as refrigerators and freezers stopped working and food had to be thrown out. Added to that, some touristic attractions had to close because of the earthquake. In total, this has created losses in tourism expenditures reaching up to about 35.6 billion yen (\$432 million). As tourism is an important industry for Hokkaido, it is of importance to try and restore this sector. Attracting fewer tourists would come as a dual blow to their economy.

#### 4.3.2 Crisis communication

For the emergency response, first of all different private industries did their best to provide tourists with their needs. For example hotel Royton in Sapporo (the capital of Hokkaido), checked the safety of all its guests by going around the rooms and providing information on the situation in four different languages. Moreover, some inhabitants helped out as translators for foreign tourists. However, this was not the case throughout the whole island. A man from South Korea for instance stated that at his place “The hotel staff only responded in Japanese” (Kyodo News, 2018a). Added to that, most information posted on signs in public areas were in Japanese and English, leaving other foreign tourists guessing. It has been reported that many overseas tourists were seen wandering around without knowing what to do as they were not able to obtain the essential information due to the language barrier. Thus it seems that more information provision was needed in different languages.

The government has attempted in multiple different ways to offer services for foreign tourists for them to be able to obtain the information about the earthquake. Firstly, the municipal government of Sapporo set up an evacuation centre where there was staff present whom were able to speak in multiple languages. However, an official in charge said that “we were so busy with the response effort at the evacuation centre that we were unable to supply information in other languages” (Kyodo News, 2018a). Furthermore, an application with the ability to deliver information on the disaster in different languages was present. Notices were put up at tourist counters and embassies to call on foreign tourists to download this app for accurate information provision. Lastly, a phone hotline was put into place for English, Korean and Chinese visitors. All in all, much effort was put into providing emergency response towards tourists. However, improvements are still needed into certain aspects in this field.

The central government of Japan has taken the concerns of foreign tourists with regards to the limited availability of information in foreign languages very seriously and is planning on developing some improvements for this matter. At the end of September, a tourism related council meeting was set up during which measures were discussed on improving the arrangements for foreign tourists during times of crises. Prime minister Shinzo Abe spoke about the matter that “We will take every possible measure to ensure that foreign tourists can travel throughout Japan with peace of mind” (Prime Minister Office Japan [PMO Japan], 2018a). Improvements that the government has planned for future emergency responses are to open call centres in multiple languages, to provide information for foreign visitors on transportation disruption and to help airports bring in more multilingual staff. Overall, the government seems to put a high level of importance on improving the communication for the emergency response.

#### 4.3.3 Management strategies

The first mention of strategies for the recovery of the tourism sector in Hokkaido was already on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2018, one week after the earthquake had hit. During a press conference, the Chief Cabinet Secretary mentioned that measures had been taken to address the reputational risks that a crisis can bring with regards to the tourism industry. Further detail into the measures was not yet provided at this time. A day later however, more clarification was given into some strategies the government was already planning on implementing. Firstly, they were planning to expand information internationally by making use of tourism agencies, media and other necessary routes. Furthermore, to provide information on the safety of the area that has been hit by the earthquake and disseminate accurate information about transportation in Hokkaido. Lastly, starting a week later, group visits to Hokkaido were planned with international tourists. Overall, the government seems to have quite some strategies planned out in a rather short period of time after the earthquake.

By mid-September the government made clear that they were planning to act fast and that efforts to promote safety and revive tourism were already underway. These measures would target domestic as well as foreign visitors. Overall, the central government tried to emphasise the fact that Hokkaido could already be visited by tourists and stated during a news conference that “there is no problem with transportation and accommodation to accept tourists in most areas, except for the epicentre, so Hokkaido is safe now” (Nagata, 2018). To be able to attract more tourists, two more strategies were planned on. First of all, the government is planning to offer discounts to all tourists who intent to visit the quake-hit Hokkaido. This implies that the government will subsidize discounts on hotel stays. The details of the plan were at this time of the month not decided on yet. The second strategy is



aimed at dispelling misinformation that might be going around as a result of the earthquake. By using traditional as well as social media, the message would be spread that it was again safe to be visited.

Not only the government started to implement tourism management strategies, also private industries did their best to attract tourists to come back to Hokkaido. For example in Joze Onsen, a district at the border of Sapporo, nine facilities offered discounts by halving the fees for single-day travellers. Other businesses were more focused on the visualisation of Hokkaido's safety. One city in Hokkaido, Hakodate, has for example created a YouTube video in which it becomes clear that business is already back to normal there. Also a tour bus company based in Sapporo has taken this more creative path, but instead of video, uses pictures to show how safe it is to visit Hokkaido again. This tour bus company sends out guides to different tourist spots and posts pictures on social media to spread the message. Concluding from this, both public and private industries are putting great effort in adopting management strategies to limit the impacts on the tourism numbers.

At the end of the month September, the details on the implementation of discounts were decided on and shared with the wider public. With the implementation of the discount, called the "Hokkaido Fuku Wari" discount, up to 70 percent of the travel and lodging fees would be subsidized by the government. From the beginning of October on, discounts would be offered to both domestic and foreign tourists, with the discounts for foreign tourists being slightly higher than those for domestic tourists. Also, the government had by then officially approved of 15.3 billion yen to support the recovery efforts, of which 11.2 billion would be provided to the tourism industry. With that, also a new message was spread to the world that Japan is a safe and secure tourist destination. Thus, by the end of the first month after the earthquake already quite some actions were put into place for the recovery of the tourism industry of Hokkaido.

Halfway through October, a diverse set of strategies had been adopted by the government. To start off with, during this time a message was delivered to the world again, this time in six different languages: "Hokkaido is safe and has recovered already" (NNA business news, 2018). Another strategy with a similar focus is the setting up of the "We are Genki" campaign. Genki is the Japanese word for healthy and full of spirit, which aims at spreading the news that Hokkaido is back in business and ready to receive tourists. Furthermore, special attention was being paid to tempt back overseas tourists by focussing on vibrant Asian economies like Hong Kong. A strategy that is aimed at executing this, is by hosting the event "Hokkaido Showcase: Food, Tourism and Investment". The vice governor of Hokkaido explained that their "prefecture is placing importance on Hong Kong, where people already have deep knowledge of Japanese food and culture" (NNA business news, 2018). All

in all, Hokkaido seemed to be fully promoting themselves as a safe destination by this time and is focussing on countries in proximity to the Japanese culture.

By the end of the year 2018, the last strategies in the data set are mentioned. During this time, the tourist spots themselves are coming up with solutions to attract foreign tourists. According to an official from the municipal government of the previously mentioned city of Hakodate, the infrastructure and facilities were “fine” and thus the city was ready to receive tourists again. To achieve this, they had invited three popular bloggers from South Korea to the city, which is a popular tourism destination among South Korean people. During this trip, the bloggers would go on tours to see the markets, the view at night and the overall situation in the city. Through this way, the municipal government hoped that the word would be spread to the citizens of South Korea, which could convince them on the safety and beauty of Hakodate. Furthermore, from November 1<sup>st</sup> onwards, different events would be set up around the tourist spots. Thus not only the central government put forward strategies, also municipal governments adopted different strategies.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The last section of this paper will focus on a reflection and discussion of the results and the overall research. First there will be a discussion in which the results of the three destinations will be compared and linked back to the existing literature. Furthermore, a reflection on the theory discussed in the literature review will take place. After this, a conclusion will be drawn in which the research question will be answered and clarification on achieving the research objective of this paper will be presented. Lastly, this section will conclude with a reflection consisting of the limitations of the results of this paper and the possibilities for future research into the field of this paper.

### 5.1 Discussion

This part of the conclusion and discussion section will focus on putting the three destinations next to each other and seeing for which aspects they overlap and for which aspects they might differ. This comparison will occur based on the different findings discussed in the results. Thus the general impacts, tourism impacts, emergency response and management strategies will be discussed. After this comparison, a reflection will take place on the theories used to conduct this research. Specifically the crisis lifecycles and management strategies will be reflected upon.

### 5.1.1 Interpretation of results

The results make it clear that tourism destinations indeed suffer from massive consequences from earthquakes. All three destinations have experienced casualties, injuries and damage to physical attributes, the severity differing per context. In Nepal, a total of 8,970 people died, while the death toll in Lombok and Japan was lower with 561 and 42 people respectively. In Nepal, a large amount of people were left homeless because of the severe damage to buildings. Lombok suffered in total from more than a thousand aftershocks, including five major shocks. The biggest problem for Hokkaido was the fact that the earthquake caused water and power outage. As discussed in the literature review, crises can bring severe impacts, which differ from case to case.

When looking at the impact that the earthquakes had on the tourism industry, all three destinations experienced a decline in visitors. The earthquake caused for tourists to leave the disaster-hit area immediately and for further cancellation of future bookings. For Lombok, the effect was reported on to last for a longer period of time, with tourism numbers still being down by almost 40 percent a half year after the occurrence. The people in Nepal, with regards to tourism, also had much concern for the media attention that they got in response to the disaster. Multiple people seemed to voice concerns for the focus on death and destruction resulting in the misinformation that the whole country had been destroyed. All three destinations also executed strategies aimed at providing accurate information and rectifying misinformation, which could indicate the awareness of the negative media coverage after a disaster for all three destinations.

With regards to the crisis communication towards tourists in the form of emergency response, the destinations all performed differently. In the case of Nepal, no information was available on this aspect. However, in the first weeks after the earthquake, tourists were all flying out from Nepal, which indicates that they were present during the time of the earthquake. Thus an emergency response with regards to the tourists in Nepal has probably been executed, even though not reported on. Furthermore, differences between Hokkaido and Lombok can be found in the fact that in Japan the main focus was on information provision, while the disaster in Lombok also asked for evacuation of the island. The difference might lie in the fact that the Hokkaido airport was still operating, while in Lombok this had been disrupted at the time. The importance of the emergency response was already mentioned in the existing literature, for which Ritchie (2004) made a five point crisis communication plan. Both destinations seem to have put much effort into the crisis communication. Firstly, they reacted as quickly as possible to provide help. Also, both places tried to provide information through press releases, tourism websites, conferences, signs and providing

applications. In this way, the information was also open and accessible to the tourists. Japan will even further focus on improvements towards foreign tourists for any future crisis.

Another interesting result of this research can be found in the amount of months in which management strategies were implemented. In Nepal, the first management strategy was mentioned around a month after the occurrence of the disaster and lasted in total for a half year. For Lombok, the management strategies lasted for seven months in total, with most strategies mentioned already in the first four months. After this there was a short pause, before continuing in the seventh month after the earthquake. In Japan, the management strategies only lasted for three months, with most strategies already implemented in the same month of the earthquake. Added to that, the strategies in the last month were focused on specific cities on the island of Hokkaido. As no research has been done on any crisis management plans, it cannot be said with certainty, but it seems like for Hokkaido a proactive management has been implemented which, according to existing literature, would be most efficient (Ritchie, 2004; Pforr & Hosie, 2009).

When looking at the management strategies executed by the destinations, both differences and similarities can be found (see Table 7 for an overview). Some strategies have been adopted and reported on for all three destinations around the same time after the disaster, thus creating great similarities. For example, all three destinations in the first month focussed their promotion and marketing on the unaffected and safe areas. In this way trying to keep tourism going in these areas. Furthermore private strategies were also mentioned for all three destinations in the first month after the disaster. These private strategies almost all focused on offering deals and discounts to tourists. Only in Hokkaido did they also use media sources to spread videos and photos to show that business was back to normal. The use of discounts and price reductions was also included in the commonly employed strategies mentioned by Walters and Mair (2012). However, previous research does not seem to make a difference between private and public industries. Thus, the association that most strategies by private industries adopt these strategies, seems not to have been found before.

There were also strategies adopted by all three destinations which were different in execution or time. One of these strategies is the hosting of events as a way to promote the tourism recovery. While Lombok hosted four different events, Nepal and Hokkaido both only organized one event. Hosting events aligns with the multistep model for altering place image (Avraham, 2018). This is a strategy tackling the negative news spread about the destination. Furthermore, as it is a way to show the world that the destination is safe and ready to handle organizing such an event, it can also be seen as a “business as usual” strategy (Walters & Mair, 2012). The event in Hokkaido differed from

the others because it had a special focus on Asian countries. As these have a cultural proximity, this could make it easier to persuade them to come and visit. This is however also a similarity with the other two destinations, as both Nepal and Lombok also focussed on neighbouring countries, just not specifically with the events they hosted. Also this aligns with previous research as it aims at similarities to target audience (Avraham, 2004), which is an audience strategy.

Lastly, three strategies were found that were reported on for two of the three destinations. One of these is the focus on repairing and renovating. While this was mentioned in the first month after the disaster of both Nepal and Lombok, for the Hokkaido data set this has not been mentioned as a strategy to recover tourism. However, in the existing literature reconstruction is also emphasized by stating that services and facilities should be restored before bringing back tourism (Prideaux et al., 2009). Moreover, in Hokkaido and Lombok, the central governments started to plan on offering discounted prices and deals already soon after the earthquake. Nepal however, did not want to focus on discounts, but on improving the overall quality of the tourism industry. For Hokkaido and Lombok there was no mention on improving the quality. Some previous research already highlighted that reaching a pre-crisis level is very complex (Zhang et al., 2009). Thus improving the overall quality of the tourism industry would then be a good intention. Lastly, for both Lombok as well as Hokkaido there was a message spread internationally that the destination was safe to visit again. For Nepal however, this message was not spread in the seven months yet. Thus it seems like they were not done with the recovery yet. The “availability” message is mentioned in previous research to be of importance (Durocher, 1994; Lehto et al., 2008).

Table 7. Overview of management strategies

Strategy	Nepal	Lombok	Hokkaido
<b>Promote safe areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on safe areas for tourism</li> <li>“Only 14 districts were hit”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bali and South Lombok are safe to visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Only the epicentre is unsafe”</li> </ul>
<b>Private strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering deals to South Asia</li> <li>Offering 20 to 50 percent discounts on rooms, restaurants, bus fares and trekking gear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering hot deals to all tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Halving fees for one-day travellers</li> <li>YouTube: business as usual</li> <li>Social media photos</li> </ul>
<b>Hosting event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World’s highest marathon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcase as Halal tourism</li> <li>Lombok Tourism Rally</li> <li>Music festival</li> <li>Moto GP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcase: Food tourism and investment</li> <li>Municipal events at tourist spots</li> </ul>
<b>Target audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China and India</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage neighbours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vibrant Asian economies like Hong Kong</li> </ul>
<b>Information provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online knowledge base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rectify misinformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand international information</li> <li>Info on safety of areas hit</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Info on transportation</li> <li>• Dispel misinformation</li> </ul>
<b>Solving problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>• Reconstruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovating of damage</li> </ul>	X
<b>Offering discounts</b>	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All-in one packages</li> <li>• Great sale 2019</li> <li>• Tourism packages for IMF world bank meeting</li> <li>• ASITS asking for airfare price reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hokkaido Fuku Wari discounts</li> </ul>
<b>Improving quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean up airport</li> <li>• Streamline visas</li> <li>• Easier access to Nepal</li> <li>Safety and quality first</li> </ul>	X	X
<b>Message on overall availability</b>	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASITA: Lombok is safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six languages: Hokkaido has recovered and is safe</li> <li>• “We are Genki” campaign</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #VisitNepal → Aid Nepal</li> <li>• Ambassadors for tourism</li> <li>• Reopening world heritage</li> <li>• Reports to ease travel advice</li> <li>• Visit and support us</li> <li>• Positive message spreading</li> <li>• Marketing and promotion focus for further months</li> <li>• If you want to help, you have to come and see it yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start tourism promotion as soon as possible</li> <li>• Intention to maximize promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to promote and revive domestic and international tourism</li> </ul>

### 5.1.2 Reflection on theory

In the following section of the paper, the theoretical frameworks identified in the literature review as relevant to this study will be reflected upon. To start, the basic three stage model has been used to identify the different phases that a destination goes through while in crisis, with specific relevance of the post-crisis stage for this study. Furthermore, the phases have been used for this research to support the chronological order of managing a crisis. The use of this model over the other two models has also proven as fitting to this study. Fink’s model for example only described the development of the crisis, while this research is specifically interested in the active management of the crisis. Furthermore, while the five stage model goes more in depth on managing a crisis, communication is not mentioned as an aspect, which is actually of great importance for the execution of the management strategies.

Overall, the basic three stage model covers all aspects mentioned in the other two models. Added to that it covers extra aspects like setting up a preparation plan for a potential crisis, which is important

for proactive management of a crisis . However, when looking at the model by Mitroff, there is a specific aspect after the crisis has occurred which focusses on getting business back to normal. This aspect seems to be missing from the basic three stage model. While the three stage model mentions the monitoring of crisis-related issues, there seems to be more emphasis on evaluating and changing crisis management and communicating to the public. However, in the case of a tourism destination it is of importance to secure the safety of the area to attract back tourists. The basic three stage model covers all sorts of crises and is said to be able to have varying sub-stages based on variables as the type of crisis (Seeger et al., 2013). Thus for the lifecycle of an earthquake in a tourism destination, a more specific phase during the post-crisis stage aimed at reconstruction would be suitable.

When reflecting back on the SAM (source, audience, message) approach (Avraham, 2018) on management strategies, certain categorizations were found to be more useful for this study than others. Based on the results of this study, there was one clear audience strategy for all three destinations, which was to focus on neighbouring/cultural proximate countries. Especially the event hosted in Japan with a focus on Asian countries, since they have more understanding of the culture and food of Japan, is a clear strategy aimed at the values of a certain target audience. When looking at the message and source strategies, the distinction is more blurry. One strategy that is a clear source strategy is the list of ambassadors which was employed in Nepal, as it is trying to replace the source responsible for the image of the destination after the disaster. Strategies such as the provision of information however, can be seen as both a source and message strategy, as it aims to be a source of knowledge but also tackles negative news by providing accurate information.

The last category, message strategies, seems to cover most of the management strategies employed in the three contexts, for example promotion and event hosting. Next to these three categories, there also seem to be some strategies that are not covered in the SAM approach, like offering deals and reconstruction of facilities. All in all, as most strategies are part of one category and others are not covered in the SAM approach, the distinction made by Avraham (2018) does not seem to suit this study. However, as this framework has mostly been used for cases into long term crises, it could be that the framework is more suitable for these types of crises than for natural disasters. A model as provided by Walters and Mair (2012) which looks at the most commonly employed strategies without making a distinction in categories seems to be more suitable for the results of this study. Furthermore, the data set seemed to put more emphasis on the distinction between public and private strategies, which could be another consideration for categorizing management strategies for a natural disaster.

## 5.2 Conclusion

As described in the introduction in the beginning of this section, the conclusion will focus on answering two aspects of the research paper; the research question and the objective. The research objective for this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge on which management strategies are used during the recovery of a crisis and in what way these are being used. To achieve this objective, the following research question has been formulated “In what way are management strategies, aimed at limiting the impact on decreasing tourism number, reported on to the wider public in the post-crisis phase of an earthquake?”. Thus a specific focus of this research is on public documents. These have been analysed for three destinations: Nepal, Lombok and Hokkaido.

Overall, the results suggest that all three destinations have both employed and also found importance in employing strategies with the aim to limit the impacts on tourism numbers. In all three destinations, the earthquake has had quite the impact on the tourism numbers, which also emphasizes the need for such management strategies. The findings also suggest that there are quite some similarities between the management strategies employed in the three destinations. Amongst others these are promoting the destination or certain areas of the destination, reconstructing damaged buildings, offering deals and hosting events. This regardless of the difference in the amount of months in which the strategies have been employed. Especially Hokkaido differs from the other two, with their strategies employed only in the first three months. Still, quite some similar strategies can be found in this short period as in the longer periods of both Lombok and Nepal.

As the results have shown that similar strategies can be found while the period of employment differs, this suggests that the management strategies also depend on the pace of recovery. This implies that some strategies are best executed at certain times in the post crisis phase. For instance to offer deals and packages would best be executed by the public industries when the destination is ready to receive tourists. Another example can be found in the marketing message that the destination is available again, this can only be executed when the destination has overall been recovered. This strategy has not been employed yet by the Nepali government, which does not imply that they have not spread this message at a later time. Thus in answer to the research question, although every destination had their own approach, generally there seems to be some kind of common thread through the strategies employed.

The results of this paper are specific to the context of the three destinations under study; Nepal, Lombok and Hokkaido and can be seen as a significant foundation for future research into this field.



All in all, the findings have provided some valuable insights into the employment of management strategies aimed at limiting the impacts of tourism during the post crisis phase of an earthquake. This also contributes to the overall knowledge into crisis management practices of earthquakes in tourism destinations. These findings can provide a basis for integrating management strategies in the crisis management plan developed in the pre-crisis phase, which could improve the management of the crisis with regards to the tourism industry.

### 5.3 Reflection

This last part of the paper will describe the limitations of this study. In other words, the focus will be on the consequences that are bound to conducting research as has been done for this thesis. For instance, limitations with regards to the research design, data gathering and data sample will be discussed. After this, based on the results of this study, a reflection will take place on opportunities for future research in the field of management strategies employed during a natural disaster.

#### 5.3.1 Limitations

Like any other research, also this paper is subject to certain limitations. First of all, a limitation can be found in the study design for this research paper. "A case study attempts to understand the significance of particular factors within the context of the whole case rather than by screening out this context" (de Vaus, 2001). This results in the fact that the findings of this paper are specific for the context of the cases in which they are researched. Thus the results are specific for the three destinations under study. Although it is possible to use the results as an indication, overall it is not generalizable to other contexts. Even though all three of them are in Asia, all countries are very different, even per city or area in a country it could be different. Thus the findings of this research cannot be generalized to other countries or even the continent of Asia.

Other limitations can be found in the data sample used for this research. As the research time for this paper was rather short, only four different papers have been chosen to collect data from. Added to that, the qualitative nature of this research also has the consequence that the sample size is rather small. Therefore, external validity is low for this study. If more papers would have been chosen for the collection of data, other articles might have been found which could have contained different and more information. Another limitation of the data set is the fact that all documents were in English, as this is the language that the researcher can understand. If documents in the native language of the destinations would have been used, this might have resulted in more detailed information. The documents in English might concentrate on certain aspects of the recovery of the

destinations, which would maybe be different for documents in other languages. Lastly, the pieces of text in the data sources found relevant for the focus of this paper, could differ between researchers. The qualitative nature of the content analysis that has been conducted on the data sample, results in a level of subjectivity.

Furthermore, the results of this research paper are based on the management strategies and crisis communication that are reported on in publically shared documents. Thus the results do not represent all aspects of the tourism recovery. Other measures, strategies and improvements might have been implemented which have not been reported on and have therefore not been discussed in this research. Moreover, the choice has been made for the data sample of newspaper articles to cover seven months of the recovery period. As the crisis communication is covered soon after the disaster, this information is probably mostly covered. However, for the management strategies this might not be the case. The post-disaster phase of Japan does seem to cover the full tourism recovery, as the reporting stopped already three months after the disaster had occurred. For Lombok and Nepal however, there could have been more information in later articles as it seems like these destinations were still planning future strategies. This is especially true for Nepal, as they had not employed an overall availability message yet. This results in findings that might not cover the full post-crisis phase with regards to the tourism recovery.

### 5.3.2 Future research

Overall, this paper has contributed to the literature gap that can be found in the field of tourism management strategies during the post crisis of a natural disaster. For future research it would be interesting to go more into depth into the subject. While this research has only looked at publically shared text documents in a certain time period, for future research it would be interesting to go beyond these types of materials as this could result in finding yet other strategies and thus gives the ability to obtain a more complete set of management strategies employed. Furthermore, while this research has specifically chosen to focus on strategies of three destinations on one continent, research into destinations that have experienced an earthquake and are situated on different continents could contribute to yet new knowledge. The strategies analysed in this research seem to have great similarities. Thus it would be interesting to see if this differs between countries that are culturally and geographically more different. Whether very different or similar, this could give insight into a more complete picture of which management strategies are chosen to be employed during the post-crisis phase of an earthquake. This could contribute to integrating these management strategies into the crisis management plan made during the pre-crisis.

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## Appendix A. Nepal data sample sources

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## Appendix B. Lombok data sample sources

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