

KINGDOM OF TONGA

International Visitor Survey

Visitor insights & COVID responses

Jan-Apr 2023

 **NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**
MANATŪ AORŪRE

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KINGDOM OF
TONGA
XXX THE TRUE SOUTH PACIFIC XXX


Background

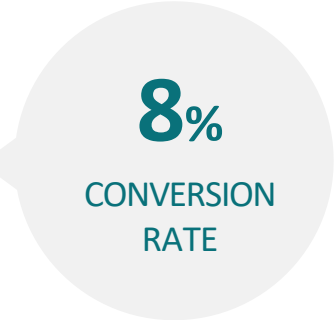
- IVS data from January to April 2023 is analysed to help us understand the visitor experience and gain insights into tourism recovery in Tonga after the border reopening in August 2022.
- The report includes key sections on visitor profiles and characteristics, information and decision-making, visitor expenditure, satisfaction, and COVID-related measurements.
- **N.B.** The January to April visitor emails were collected through the Health Declaration Forms for visitor arrivals into Tonga.
- **N.B.** All analyses are conducted based on the IVS respondents, which is unweighted to the actual arrival data.
- **N.B.** The estimated rate of prepaid expenditure flowing into local economy is 40%, however, this rate is an estimate based on data from other South Pacific Island countries. In the future research into visitor expenditure with tourism operators and related sectors in Tonga will be undertaken and this will be used to provide a more accurate estimate for Tonga.
- All reports from the IVS are available on [Pacific Tourism Data Initiative Resource Page](#).

IVS Respondents (January – April 2023)

RESPONSES RATE

 **4,241** TOTAL NUMBER OF EMAILS SENT

 **343** TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES



RESPONSES COVER

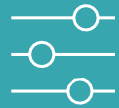
 **494** ADULTS **140** CHILDREN



Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making

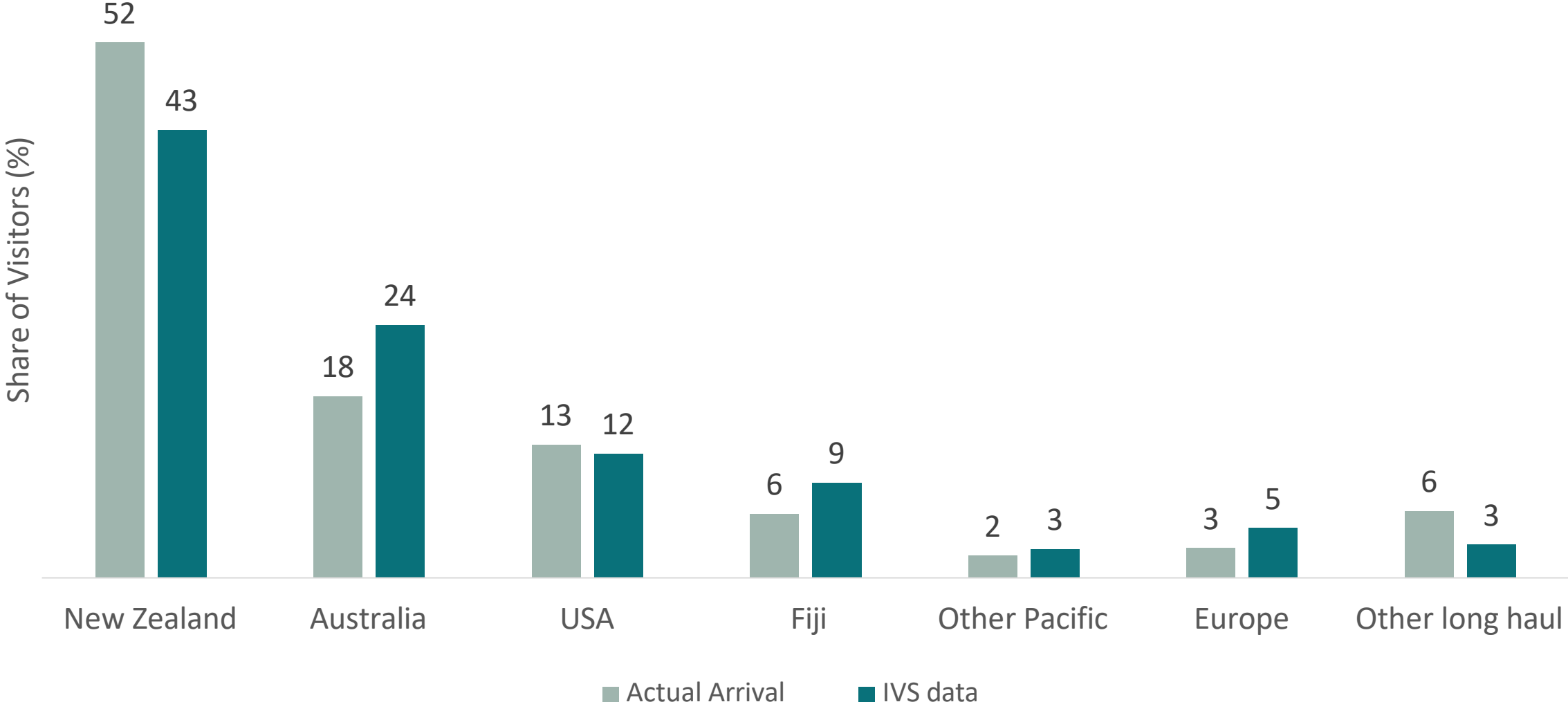


Visitor Spending
and Impact

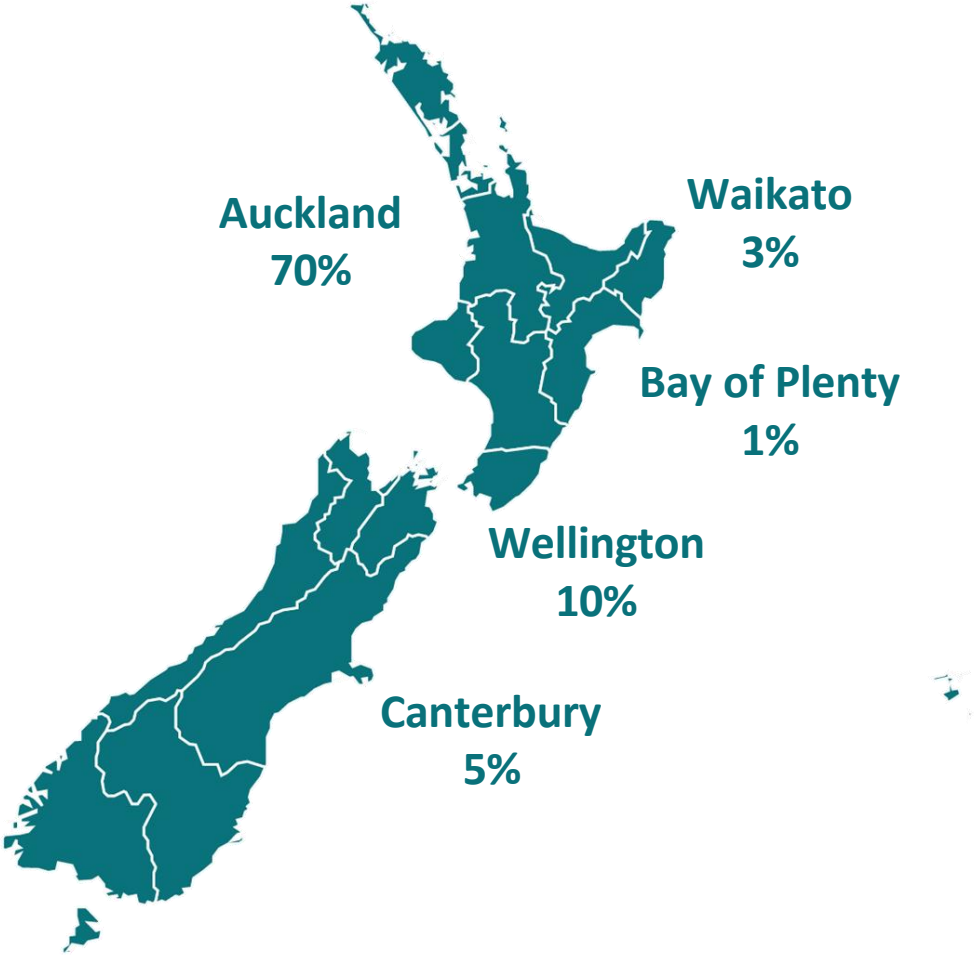


Visitor
Satisfaction

Country of origin: Actual arrival vs. IVS respondents



New Zealand respondents - IVS data Jan-Apr 2023

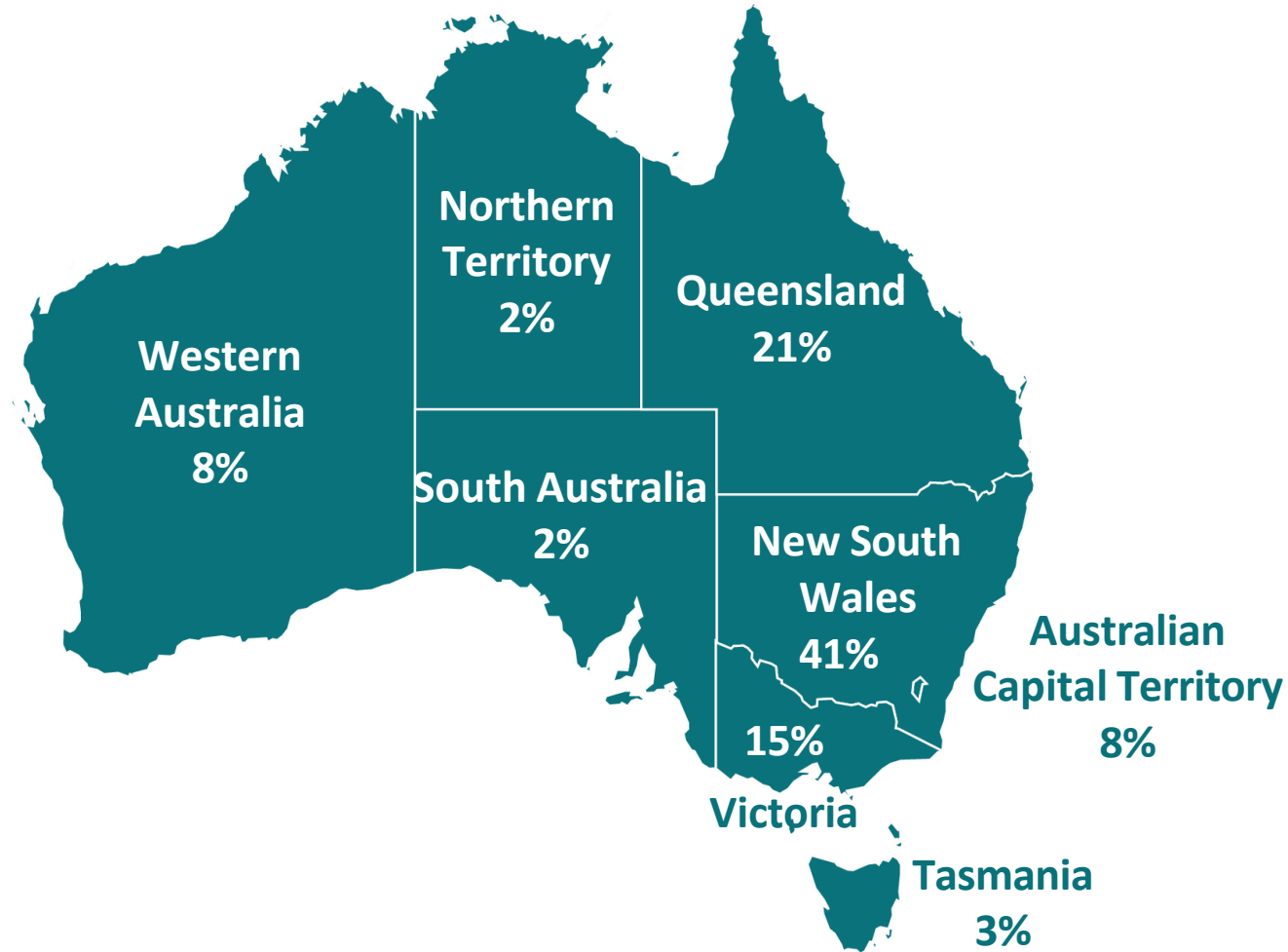


TOTAL
105
NZ VISITORS

Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury, and Bay of Plenty make up **89%** of all New Zealand visitor arrivals

Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

Australian respondents - IVS data Jan-Apr 2023

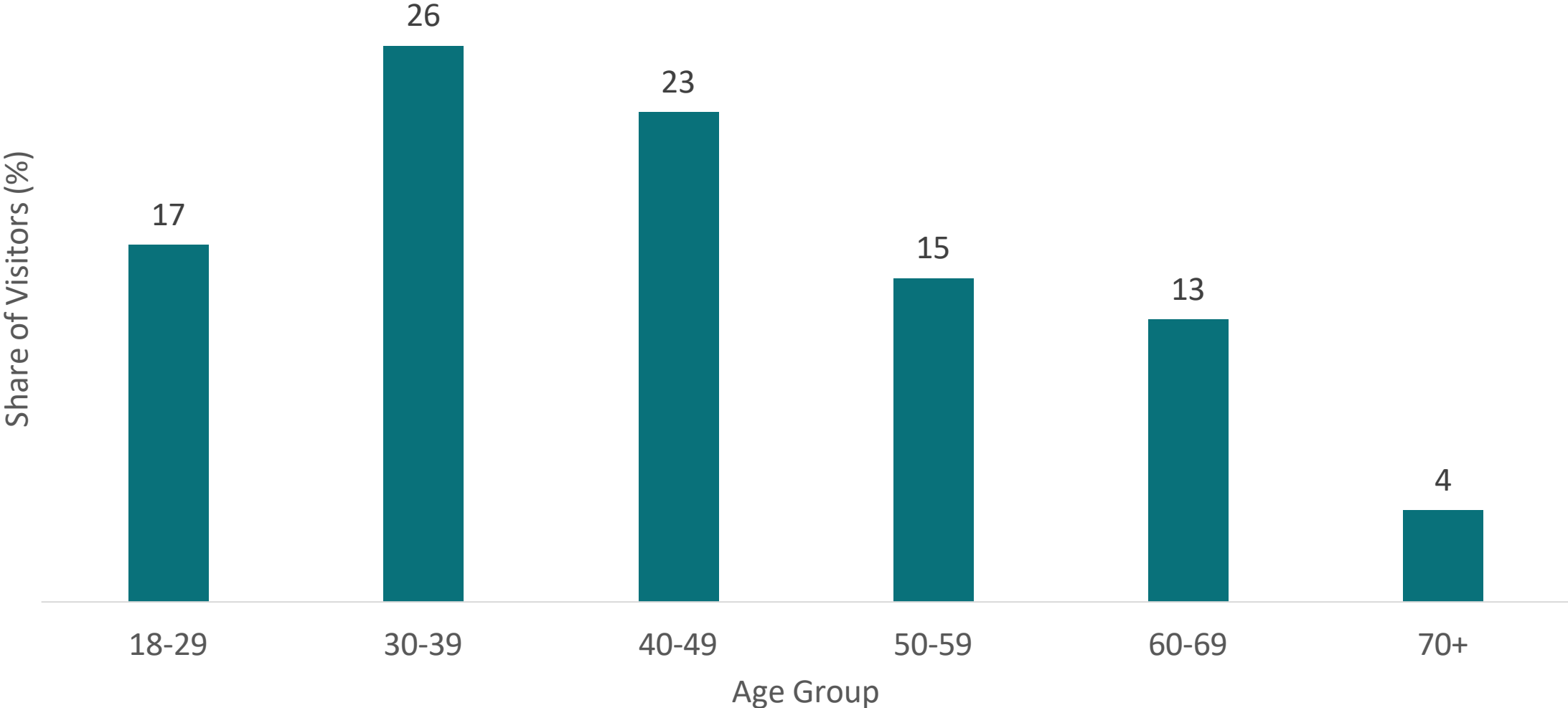


TOTAL
61
AU VISITORS

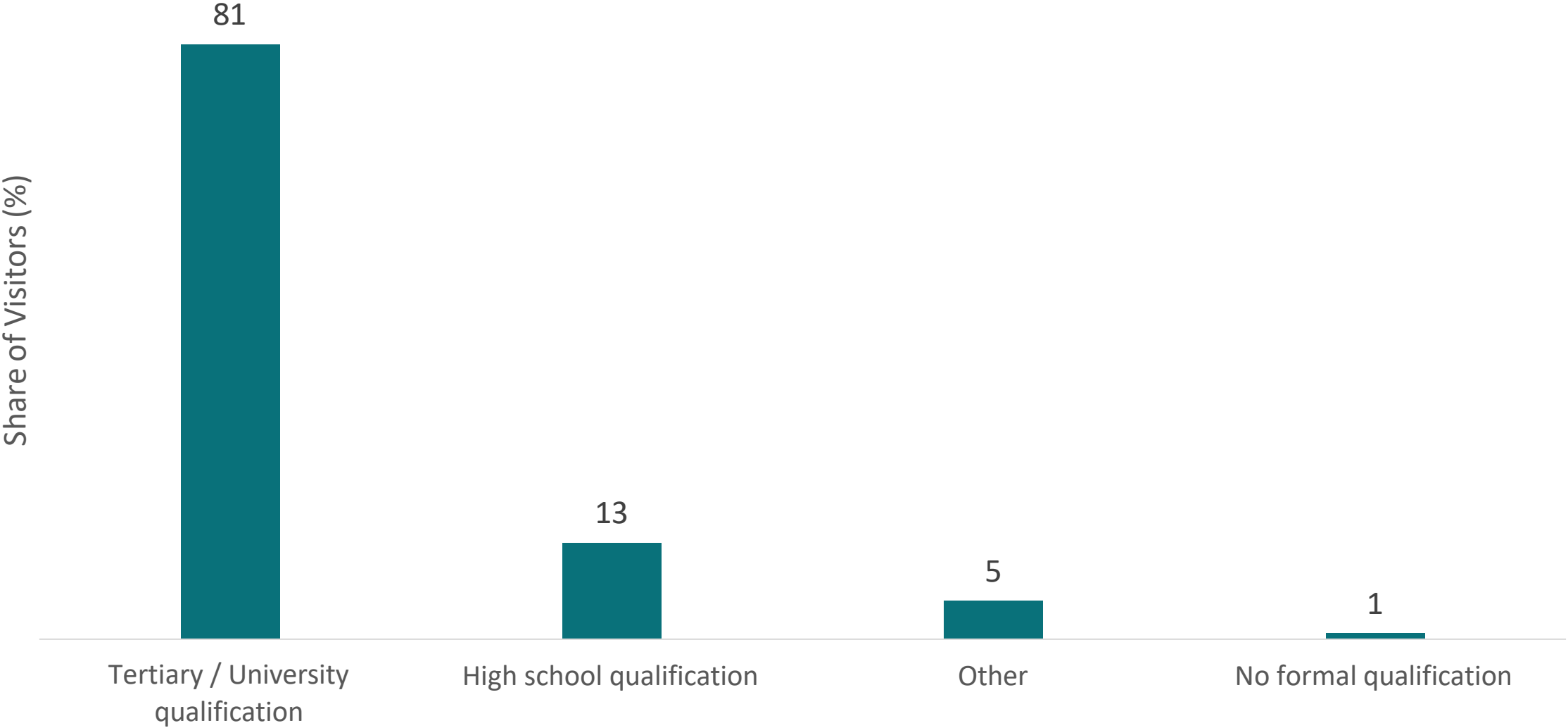
New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria make up **77%** of all Australian visitor arrivals

Note: due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

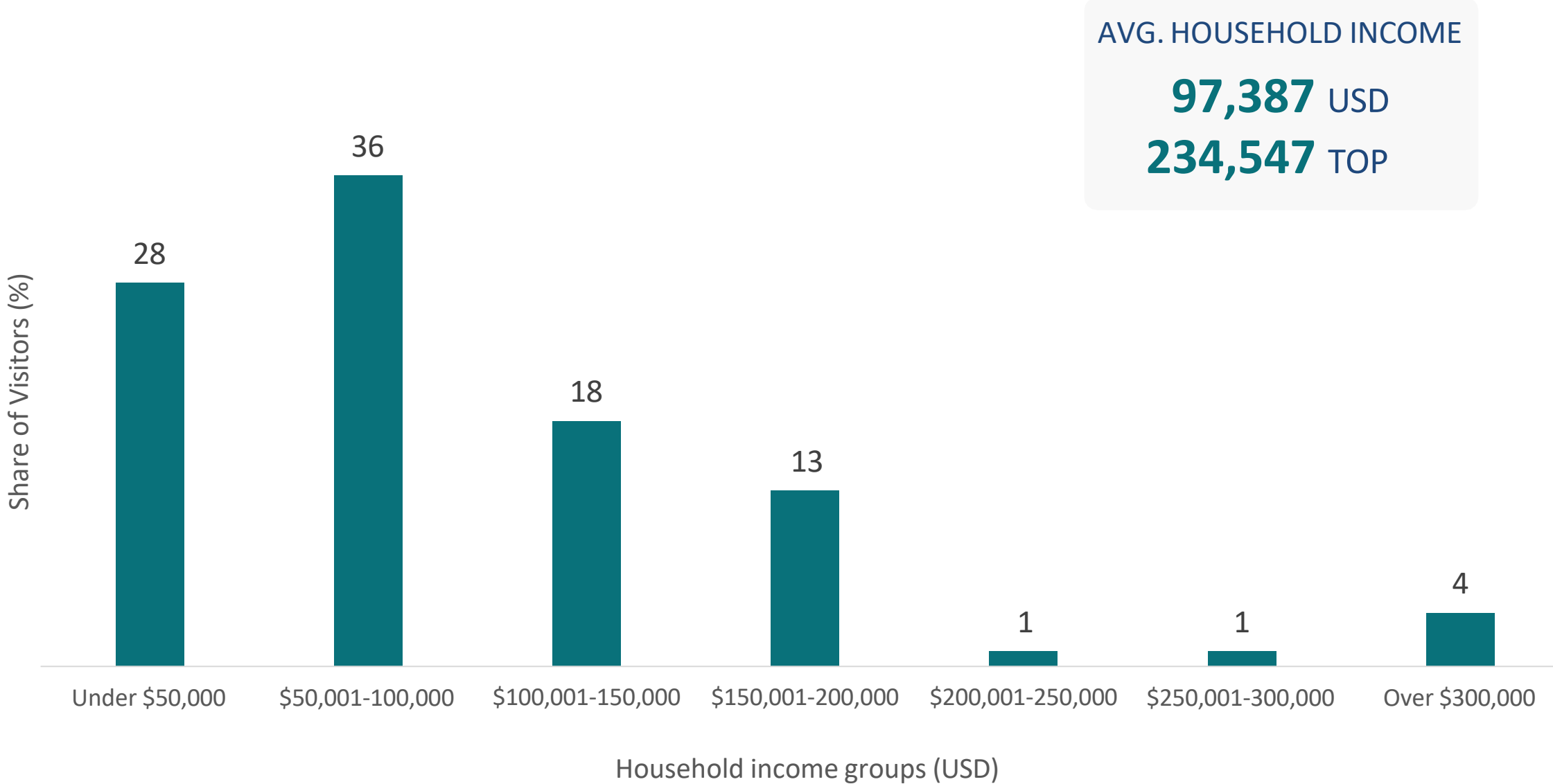
Age group



Education level



Annual household income



AVG. HOUSEHOLD INCOME
97,387 USD
234,547 TOP

Note: Percentage figures are rounded. The average exchange rate TOP-USD from Jan-Jun 2023 is applied.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making

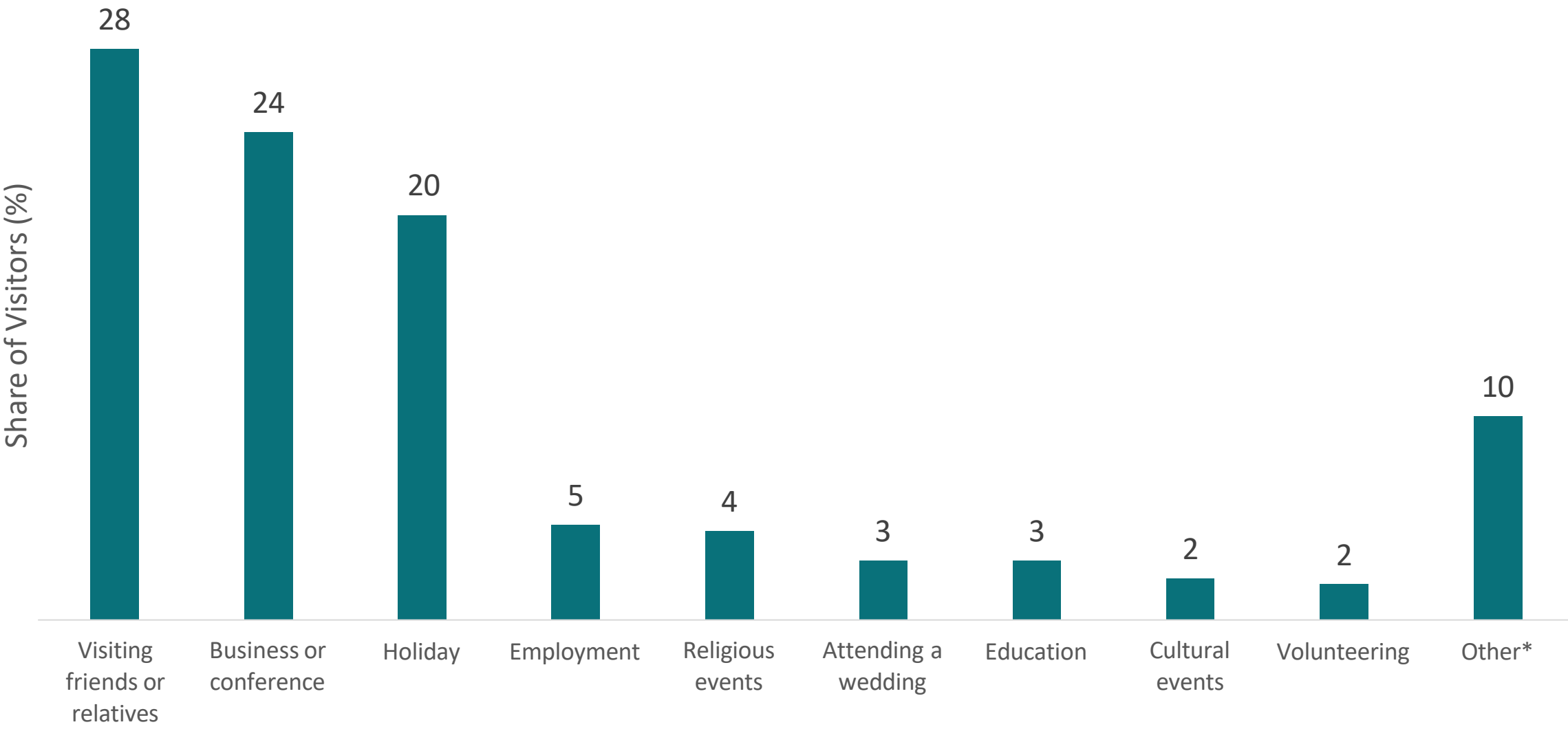


Visitor Spending
and Impact



Visitor
Satisfaction

Purpose of visit



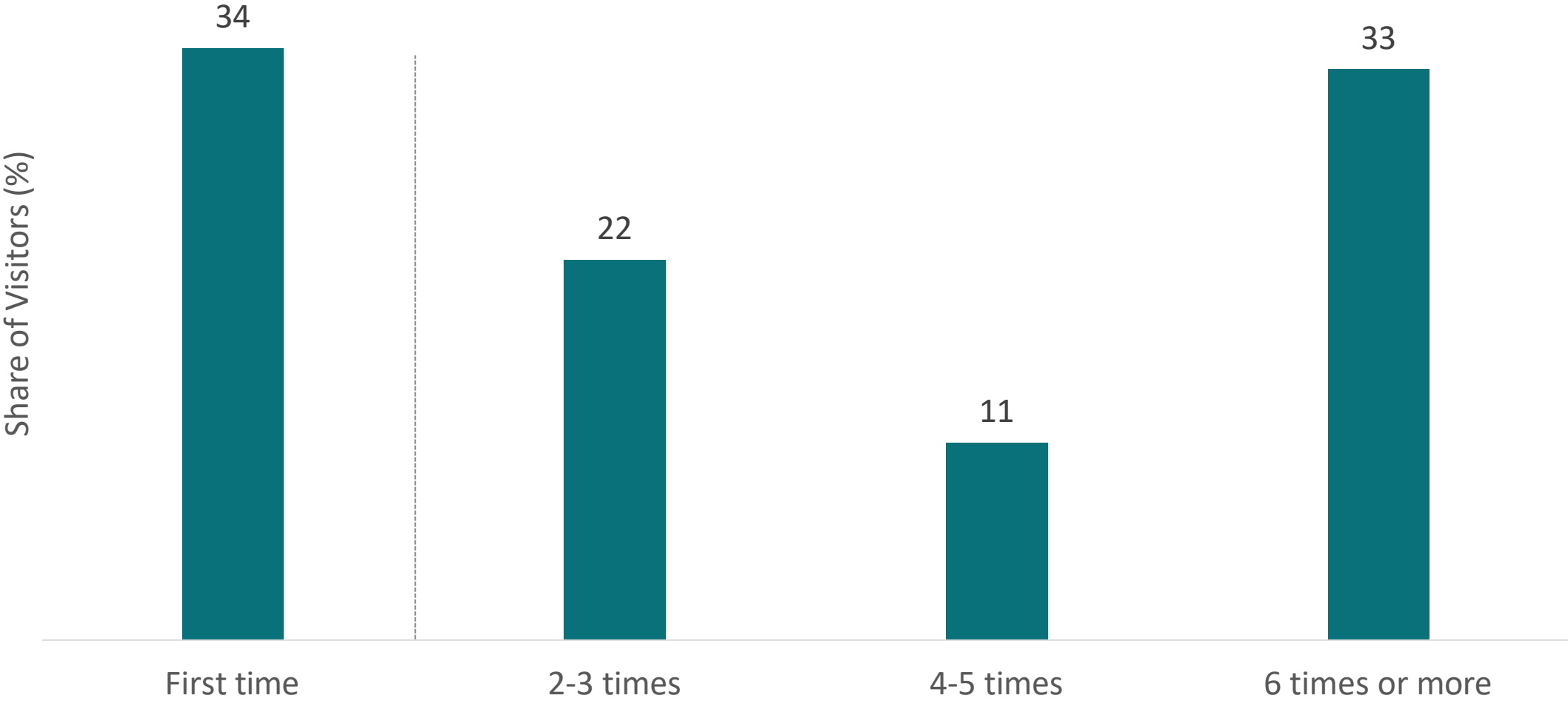
Note: due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%; *Other: including family reunion/funeral

Q Is Tonga the only country you visited on this trip?

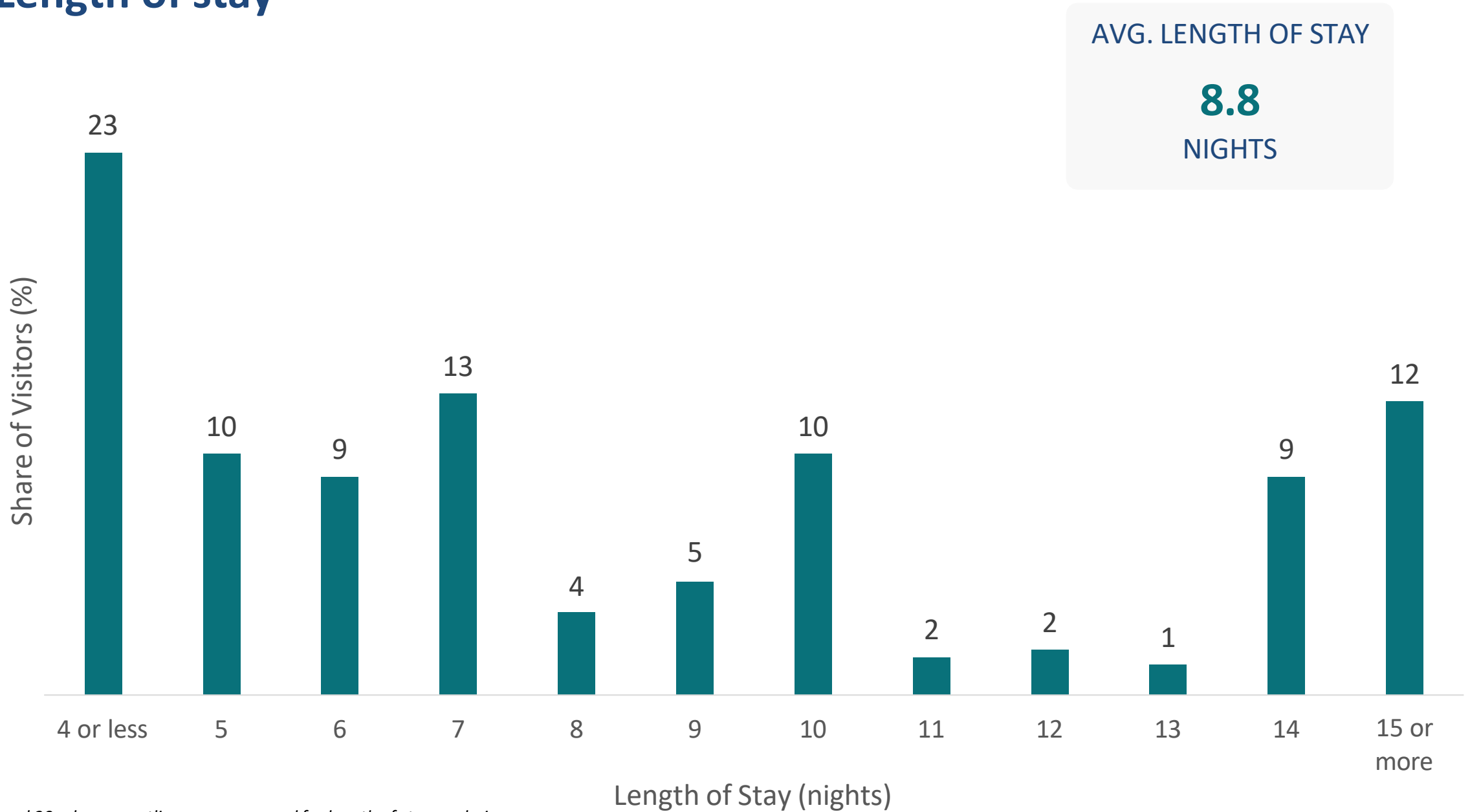


Note: Total valid responses for this question N=216.

Previous visits

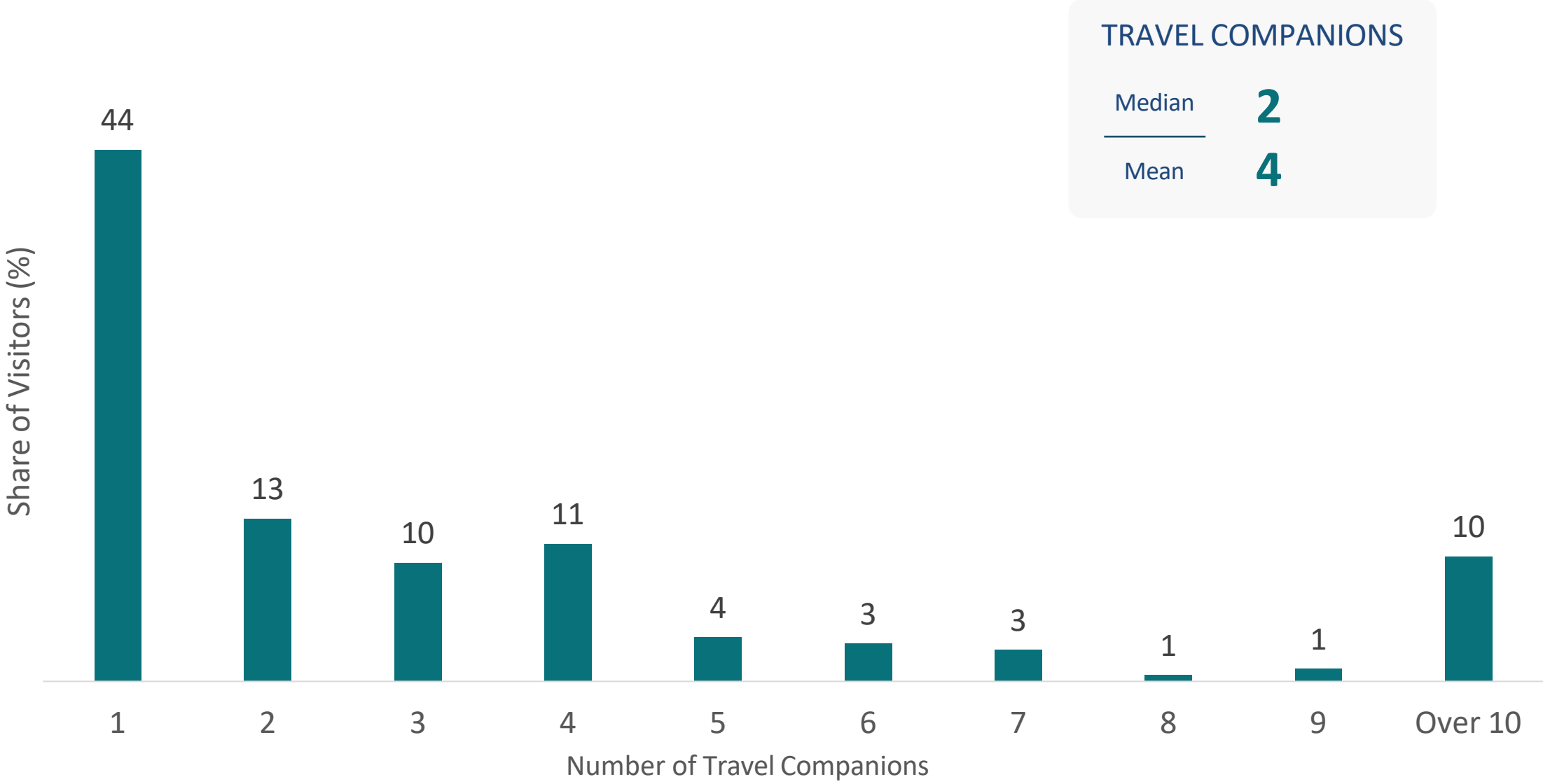


Length of stay



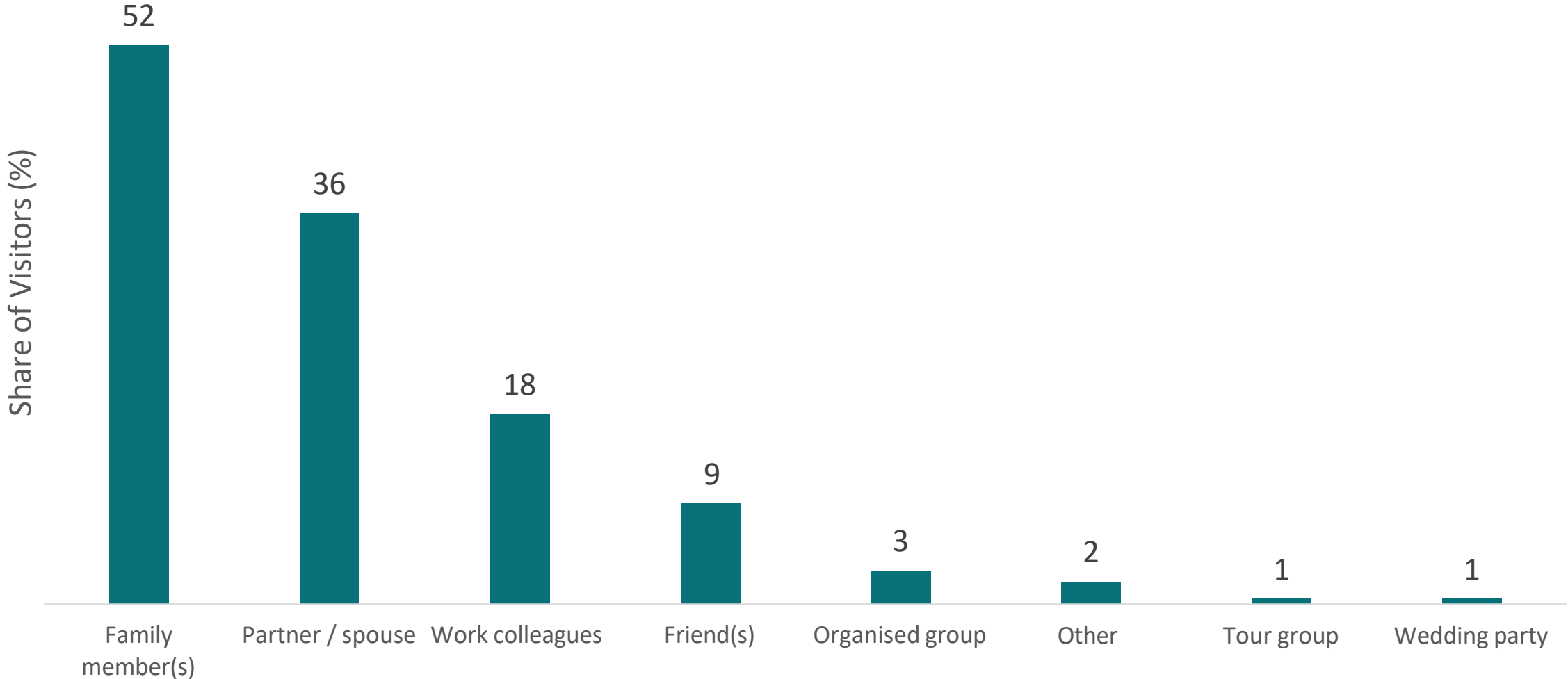
Note: 30 and 30+ days as outliers were removed for length of stay analysis

Travel group size



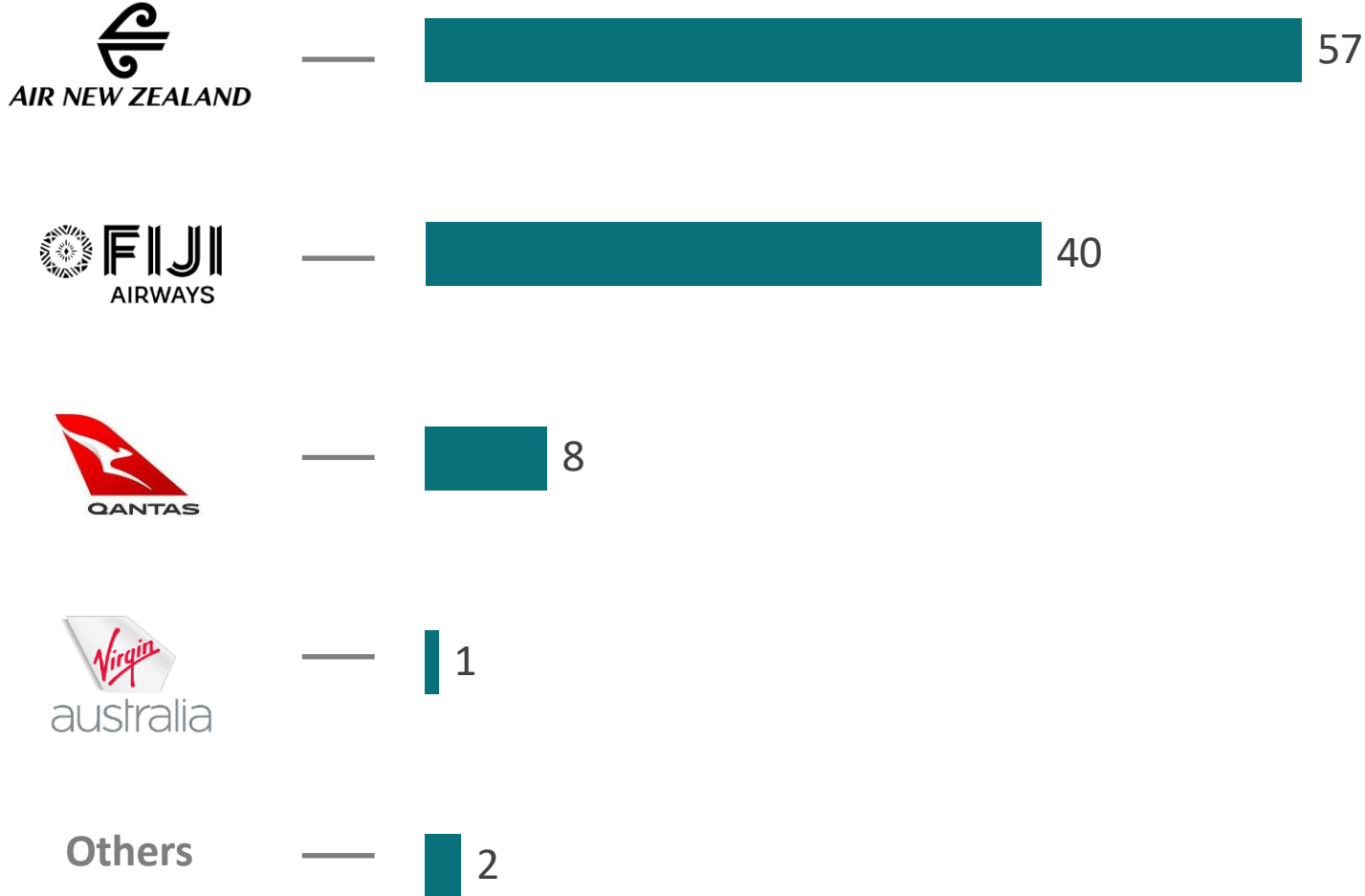
Note: Percentage figures are rounded. Total number of respondents having travel companion(s) is N=193.

Travel companions



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%. The total number of respondents having travel companion(s) is N=193.

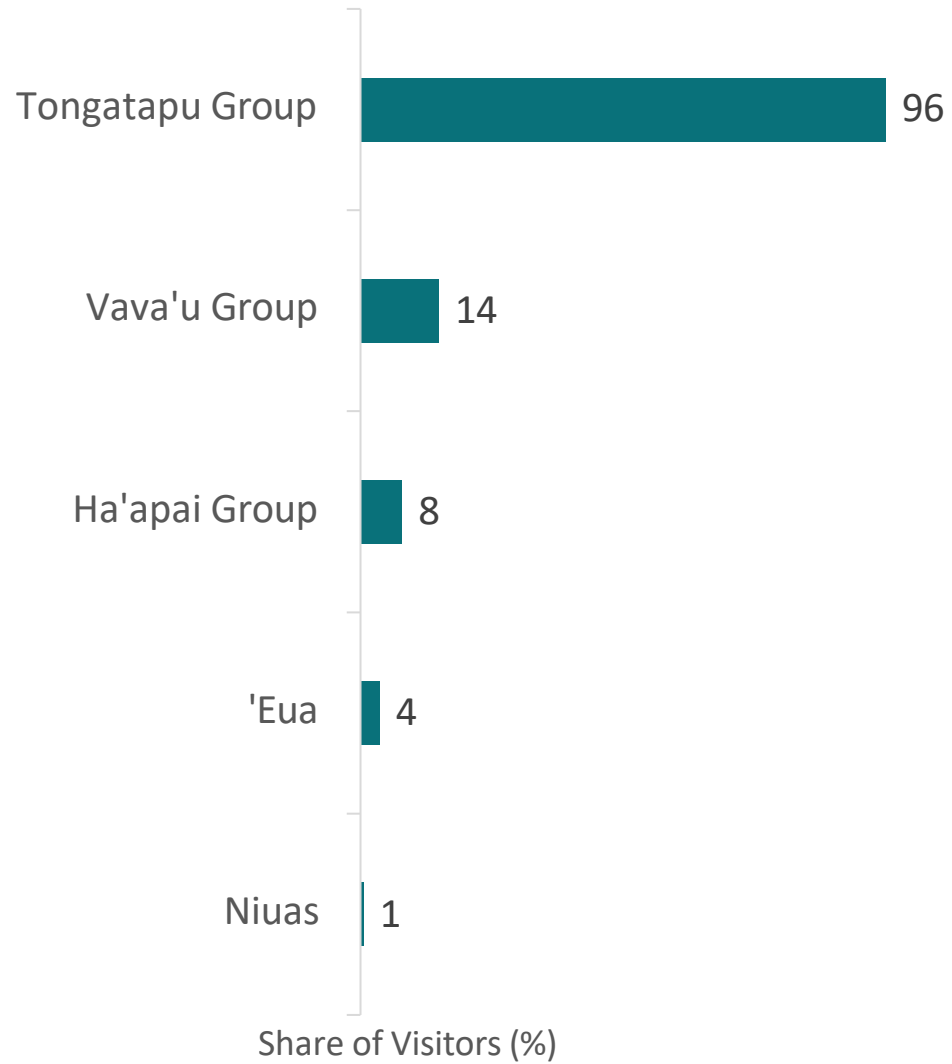
Airlines used for travel



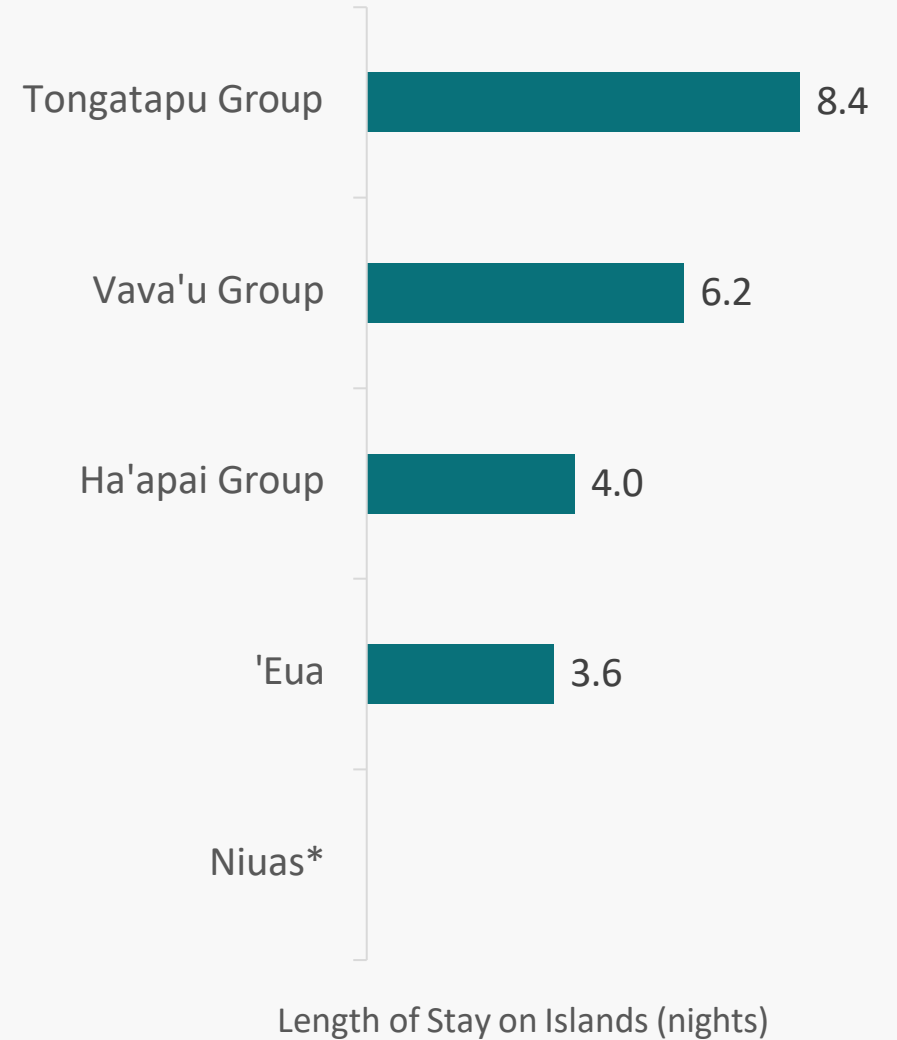
Share of Visitors (%)

Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Islands visited



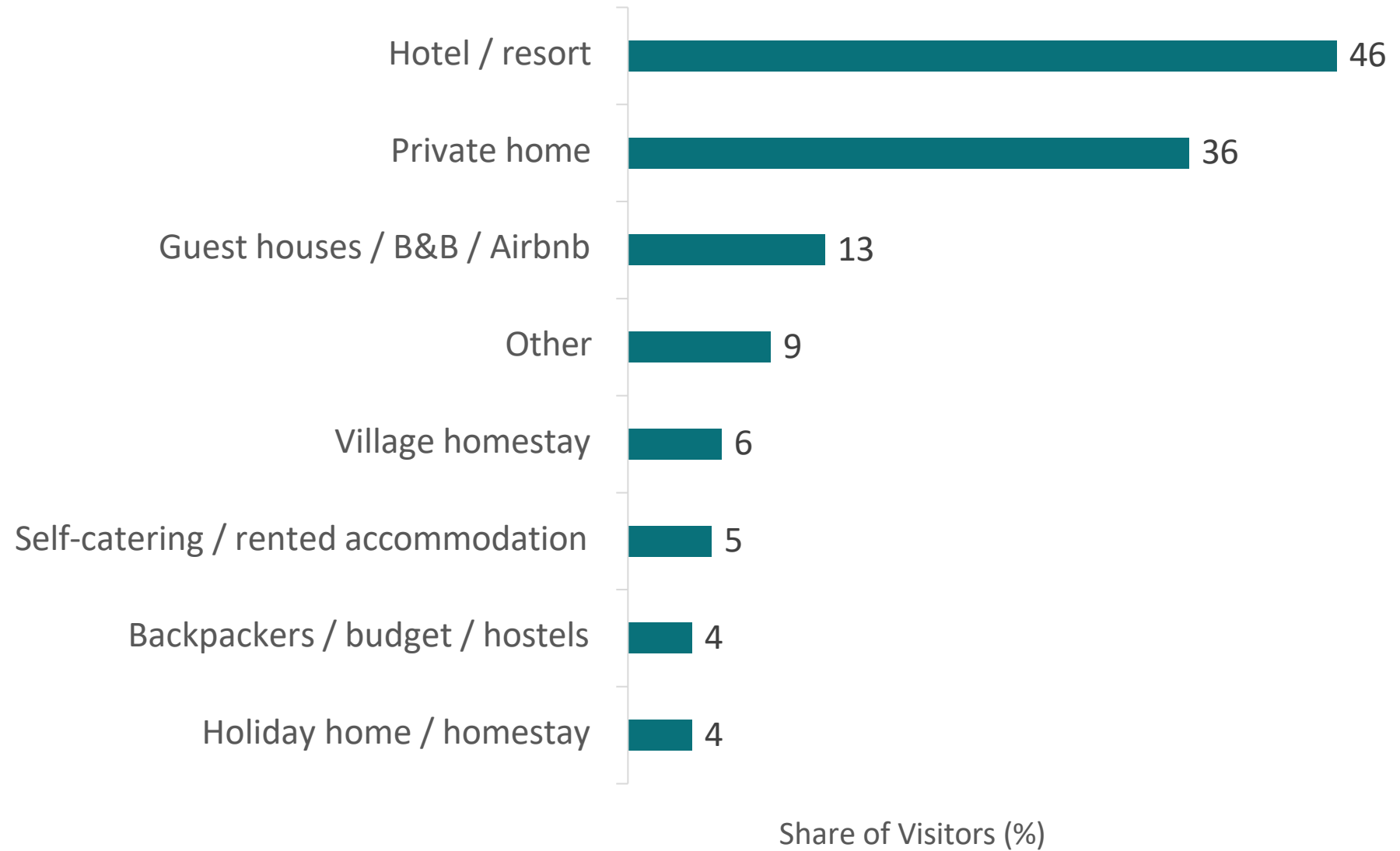
Length of stay on each island



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Note: * Sample size less than 10 was not included in the analysis.

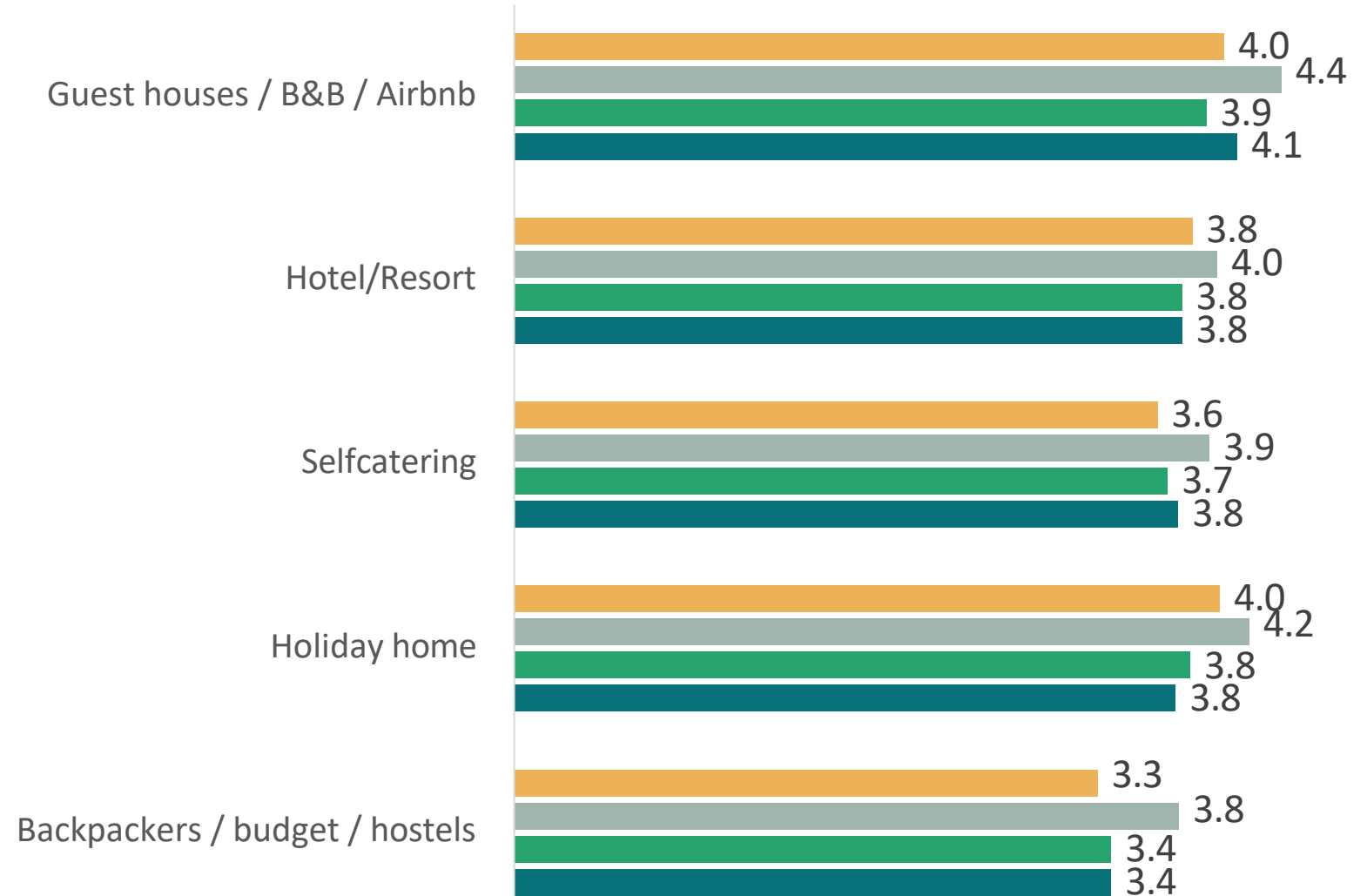
Accommodation



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Satisfaction with accommodations

- Health and safety measures (cleanliness, sanitiser)
- Level of service
- Quality, availability and maintenance of facilities
- Overall value for money



Scale: 1=very dissatisfied to 5=very satisfied

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making

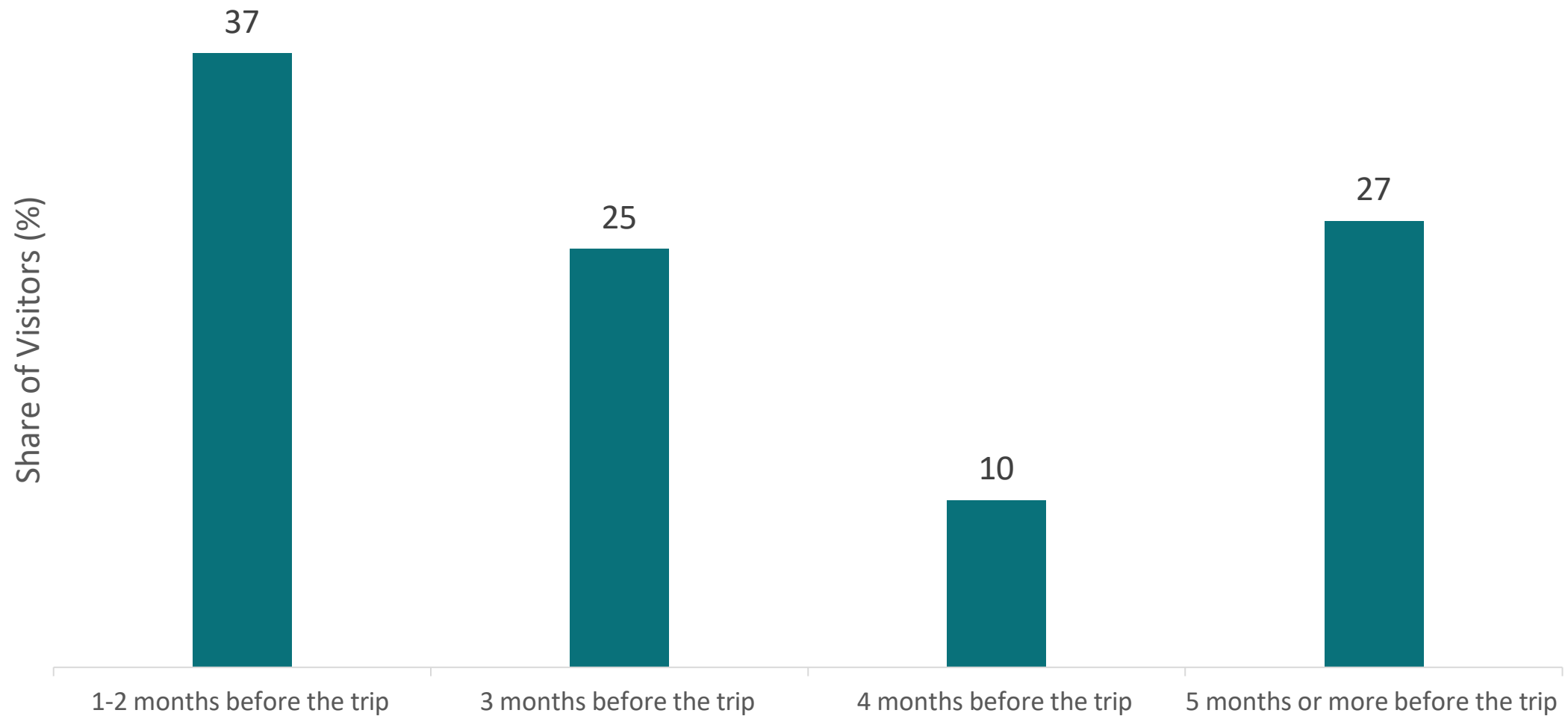


Visitor Spending
and Impact

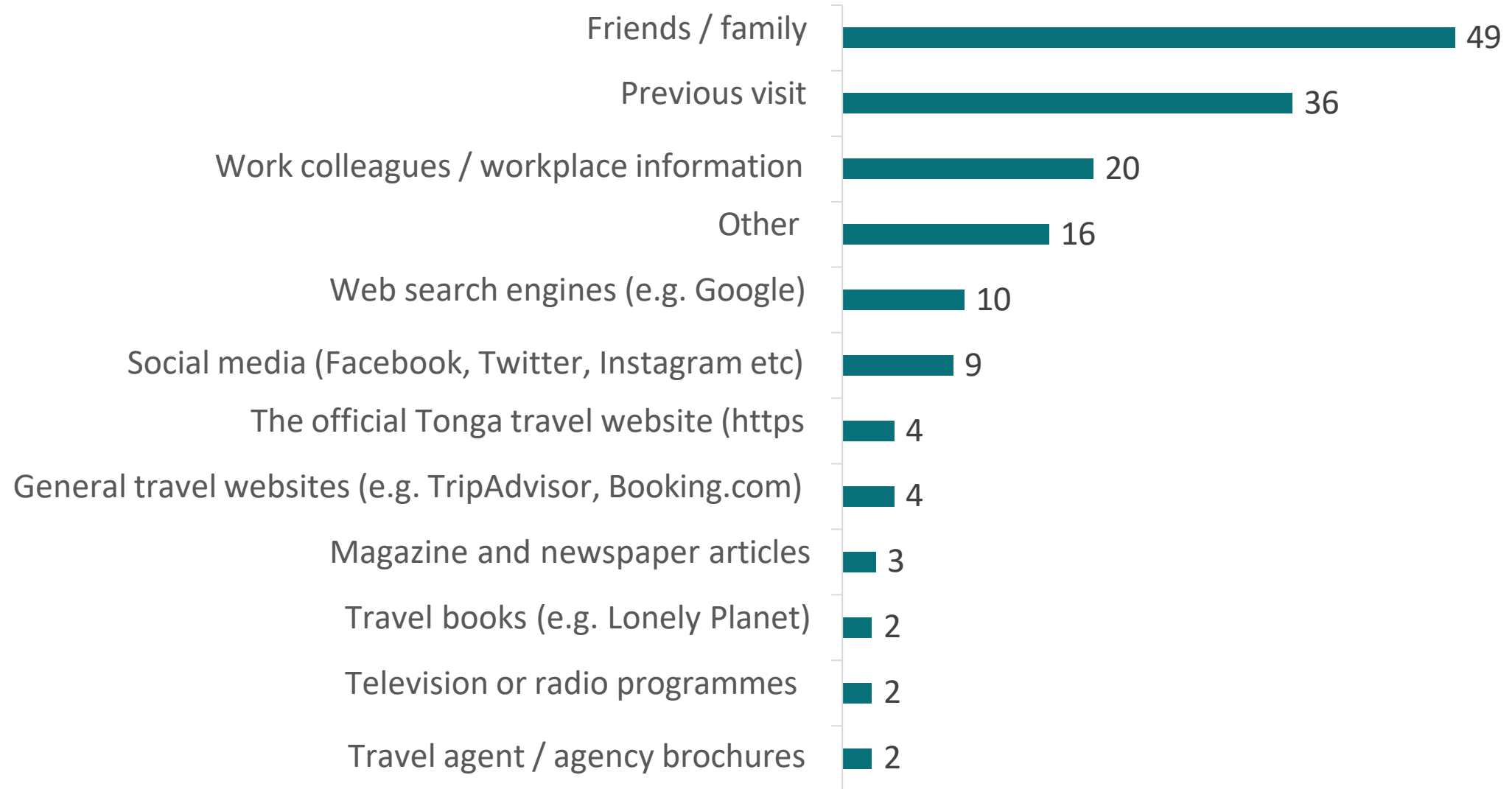


Visitor
Satisfaction

Q When did you start planning your trip to Tonga?



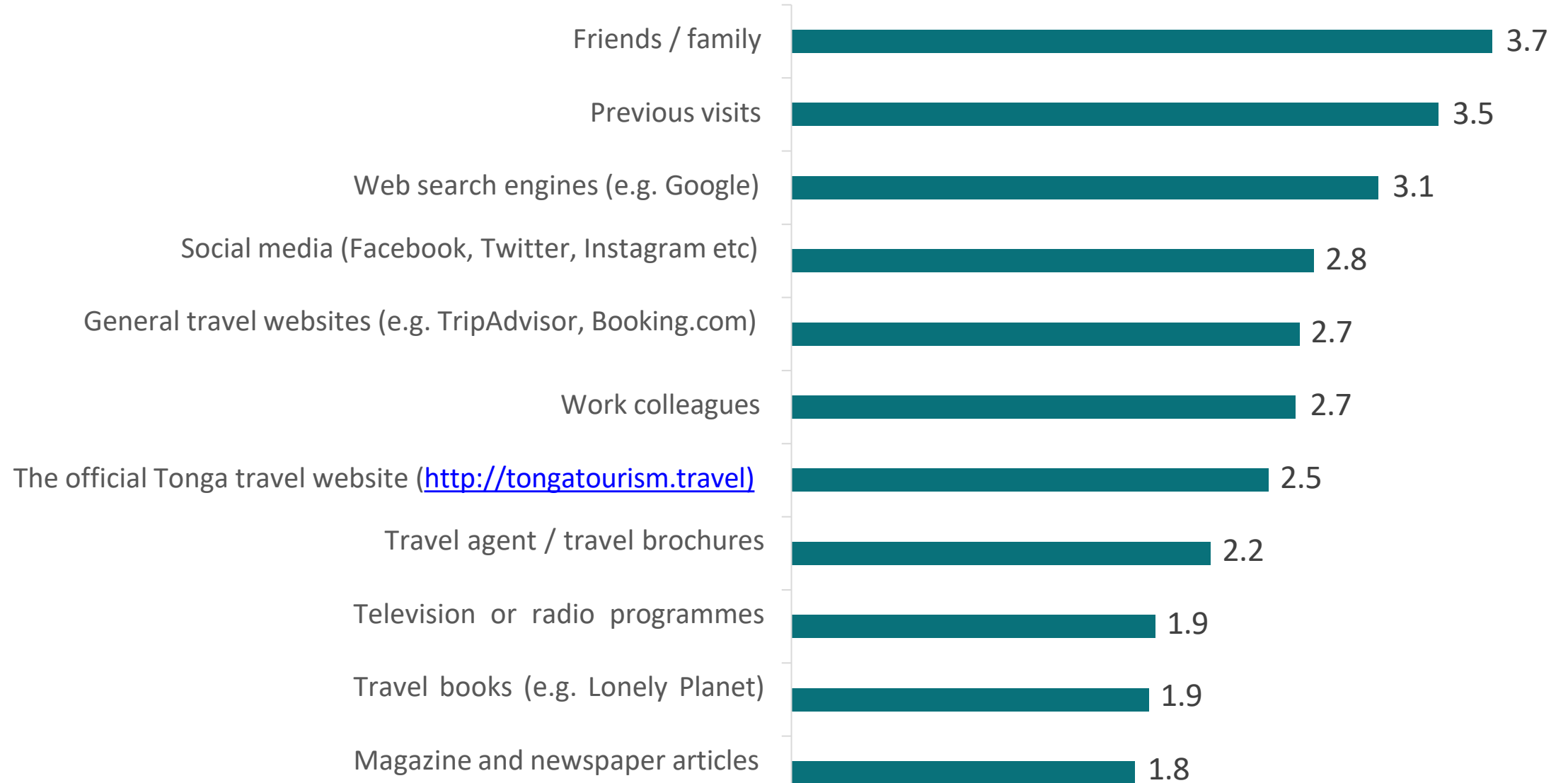
Q How did you find out about Tonga as a destination?



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

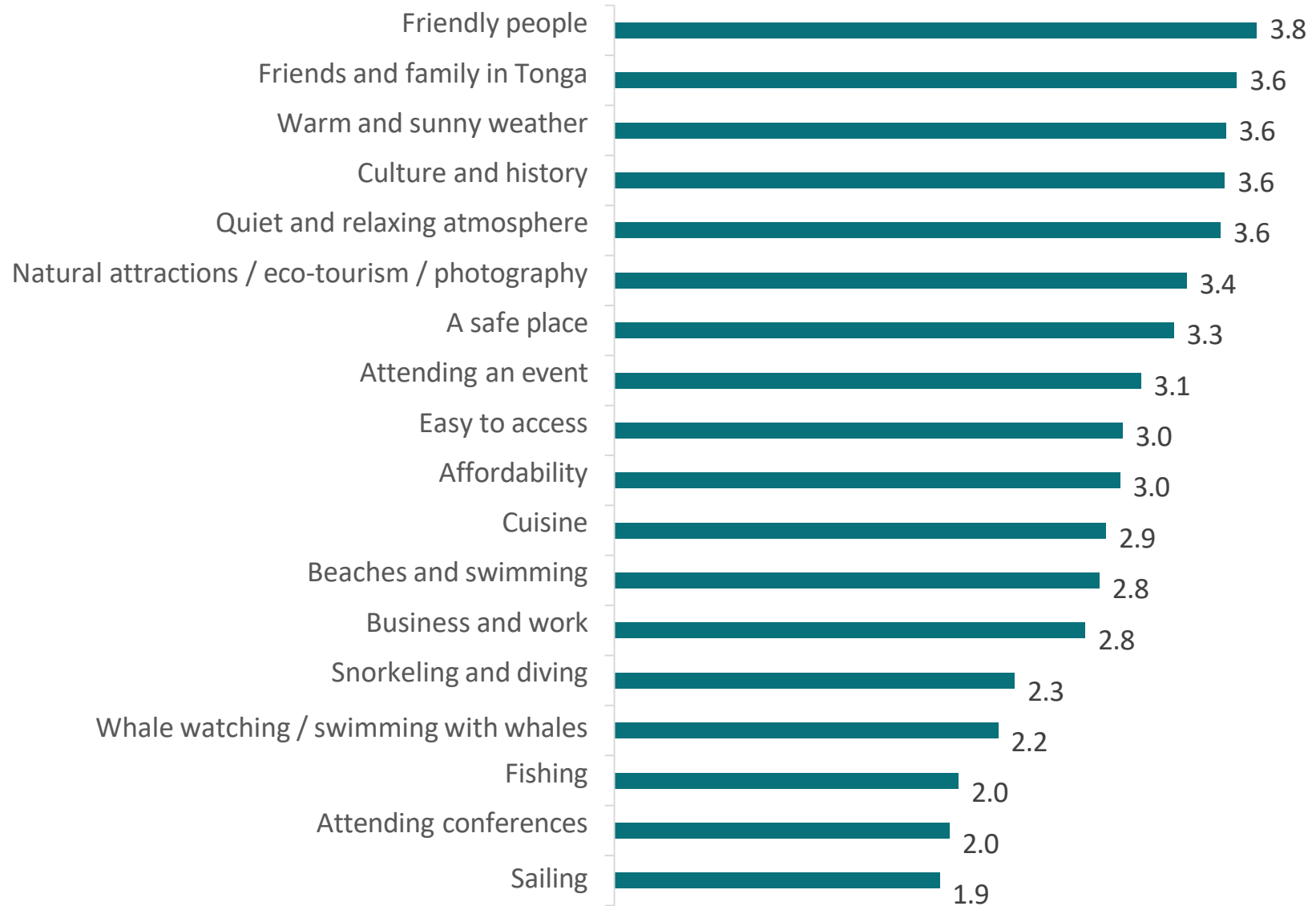
Share of Visitors (%)

Importance of information source



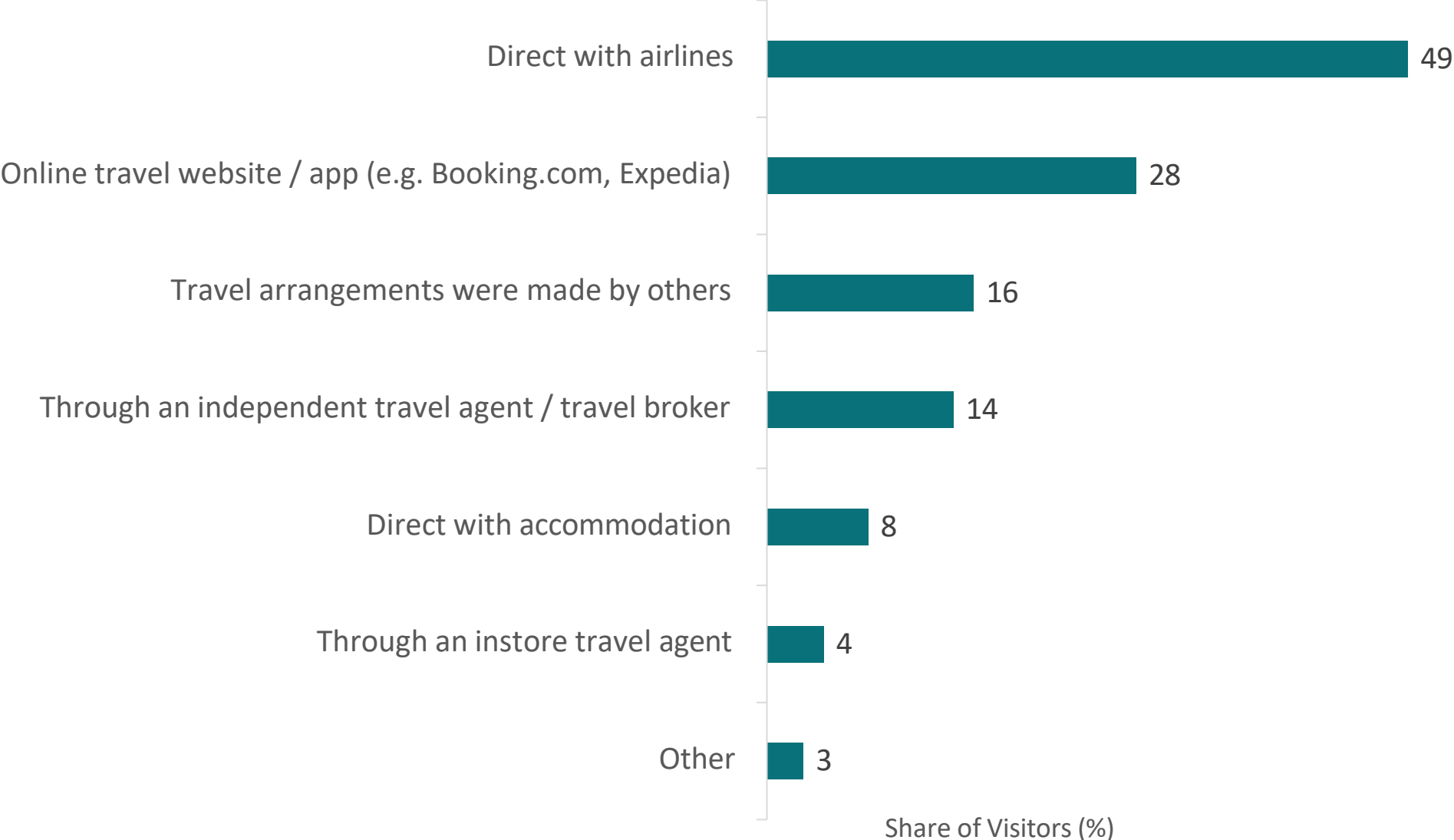
Scale: 1= Not at all important to 5= Extremely important

Influential factors in travelling to Tonga



Scale: 1= No influence at all to 5= Prime reason to visit

Methods of travel bookings



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making



Visitor Spending
and Impact



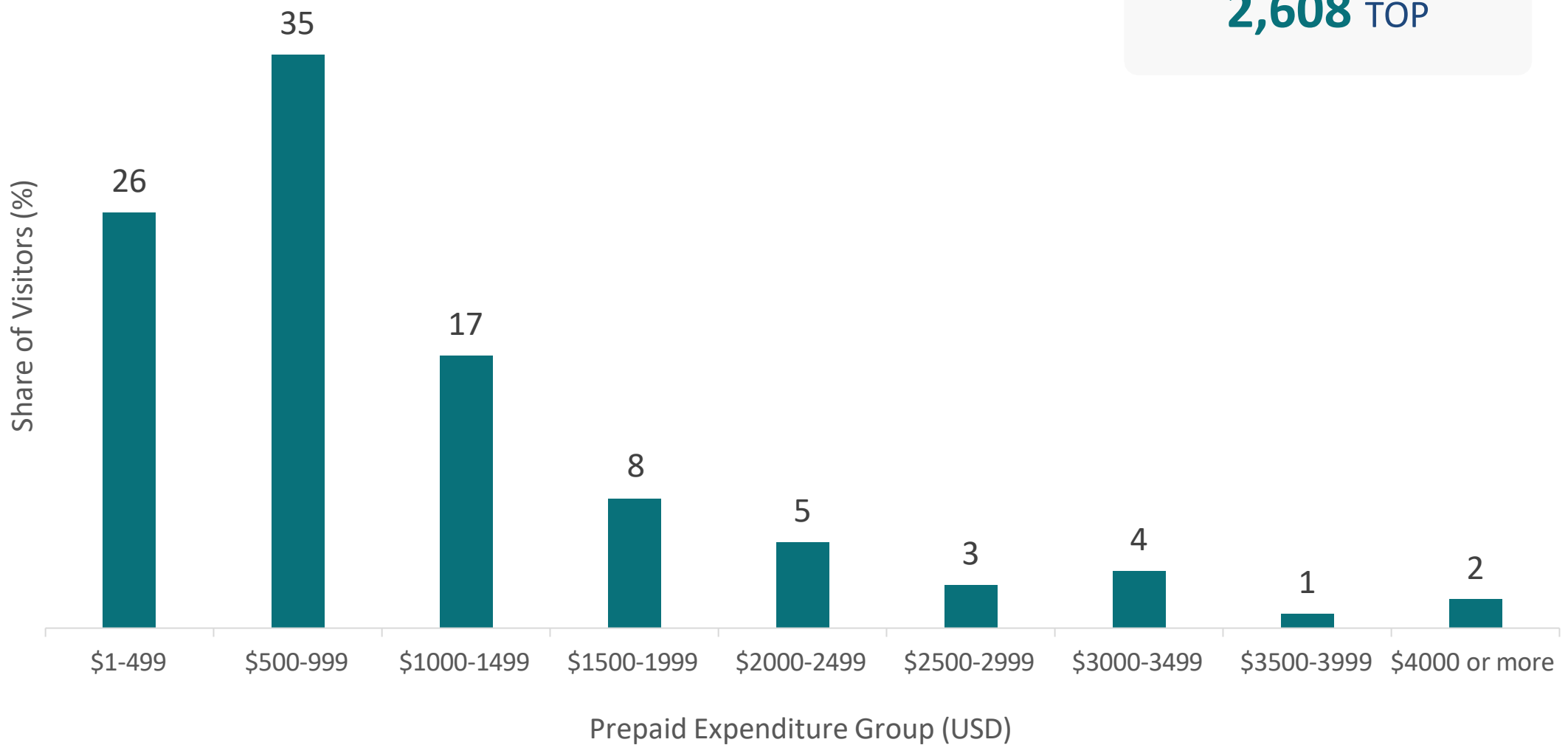
Visitor
Satisfaction

Prepaid expenditure per person

AVG. PREPAID PER PERSON

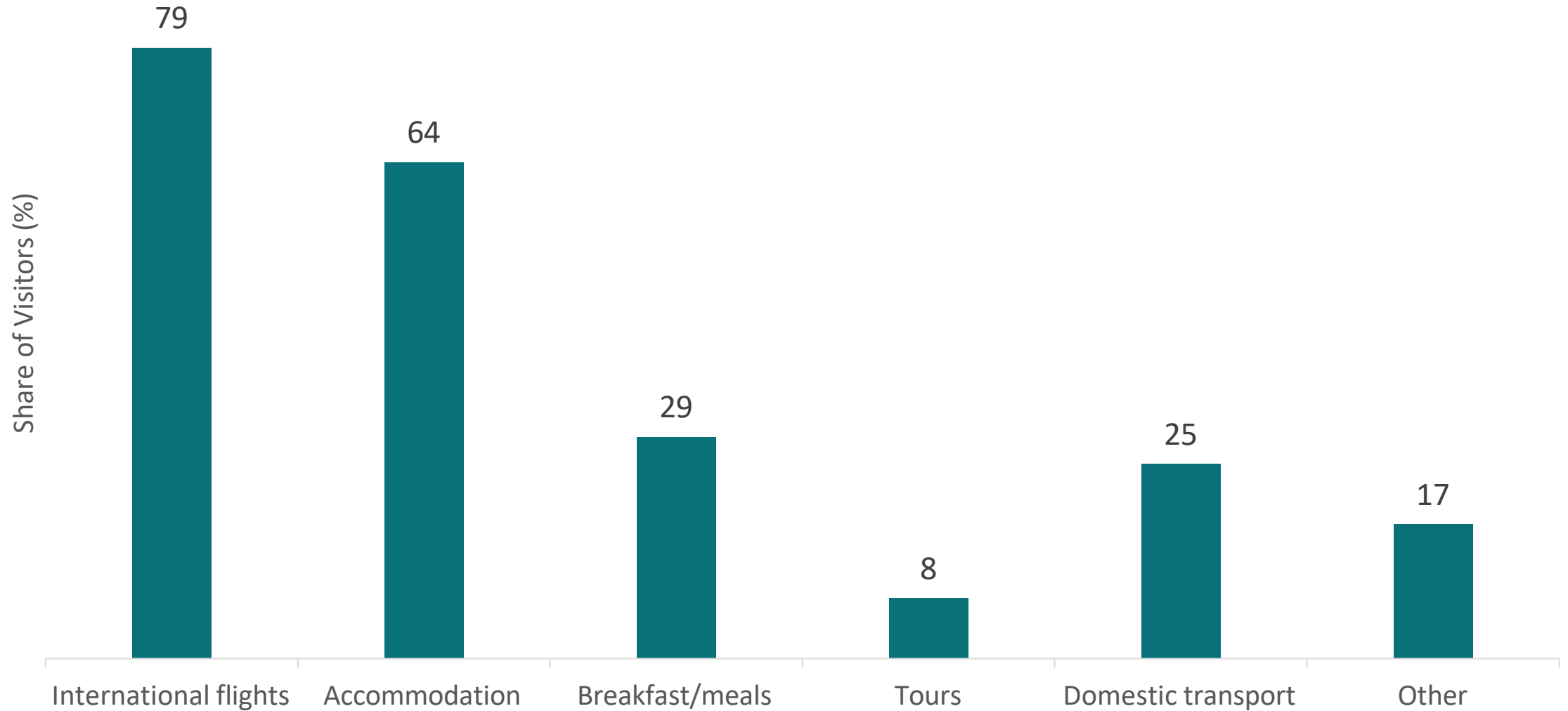
1,083 USD

2,608 TOP



Note: Percentage figures are rounded. The average exchange rate TOP-USD from Jan-Jun 2023 is applied.

Prepaid items



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

In-country spend per person per day

	Local Spend Per Person Per Day		
	<u>% of sector</u>	<u>USD</u>	<u>TOP</u>
Accommodation	19	16	39
Food and beverage	25	22	52
Donation	18	16	38
Local transfer (taxi/bus/ferry/rental/petrol)	10	8	20
Shopping	8	7	16
Souvenir/handicrafts	7	6	16
Domestic travel	5	4	11
Other	4	3	8
Tour	2	2	4
Internet/telecom/service	2	2	4
TOTAL	100	86	208

Note: Percentage figures are rounded. The average exchange rate TOP-USD from Jan-Jun 2023 is applied.

Economic impact – per person and total

Visitor Expenditure Per Person & Total		
	<u>USD</u>	<u>TOP</u>
Average Spend Prior to arrival		
Per Person Per Trip	1,083	2,608
<i>Flowing into local economy rate – estimated</i>	40%*	
Per Person Per Trip	433	1,043
Per Person per Day	49	119
Average Local Spend		
<i>Length of Stay (nights)</i>	8.8 nights	
Per Person Per Trip	760	1,831
Per Person per Day	86	208
Total Economic Impact-Per Trip	1,193	2,874
Total Economic Impact-Per Day	135	327

Note: The average exchange rate TOP-USD from Jan-Jun 2023 is applied. The flowing back rate from prepaid to local economy is subject to change based on further expenditure research among the regions.

Report Structure



Visitor Profile



Visitor
Characteristics
& Preferences



Information &
Decision Making

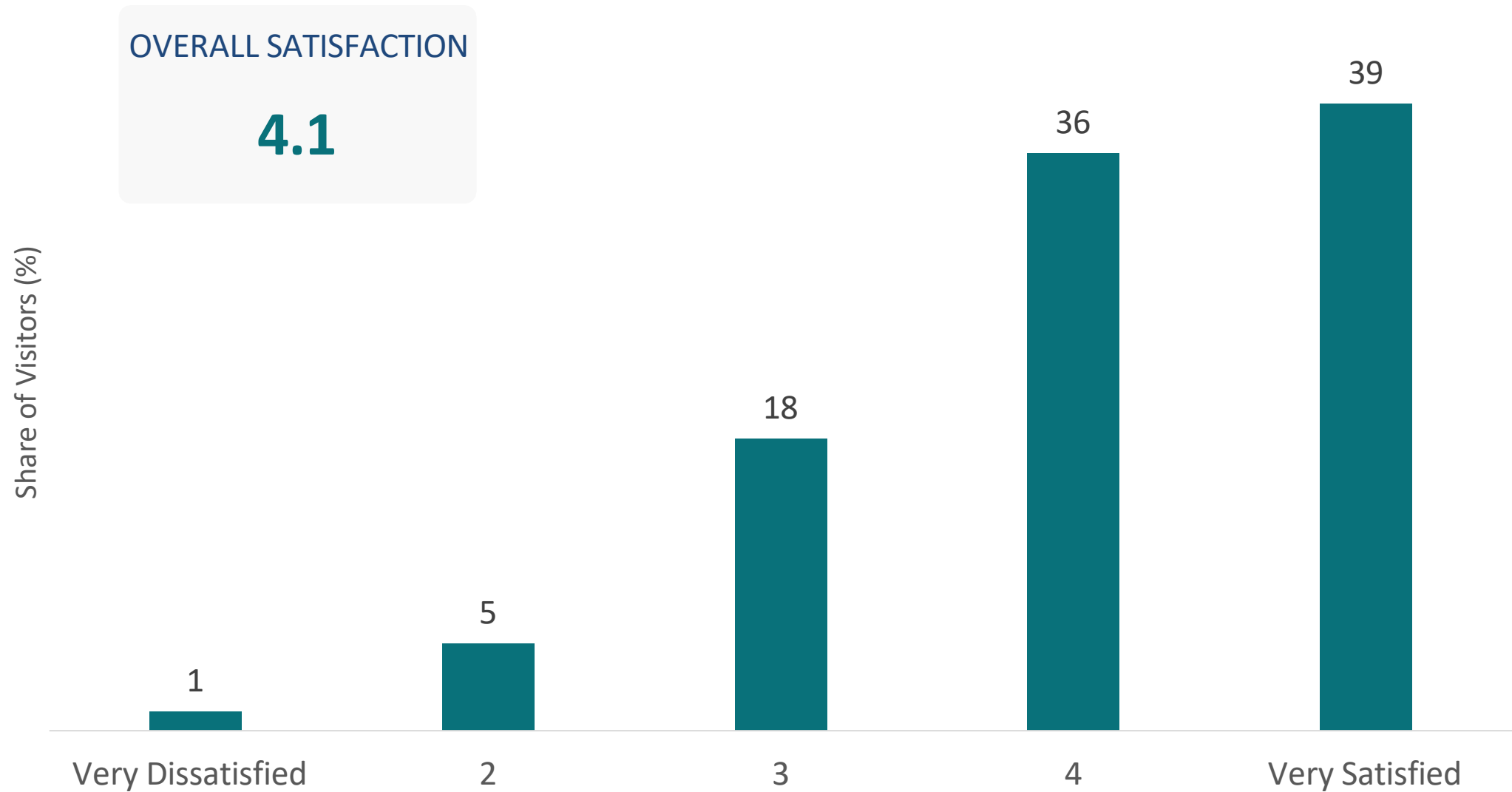


Visitor Spending
and Impact

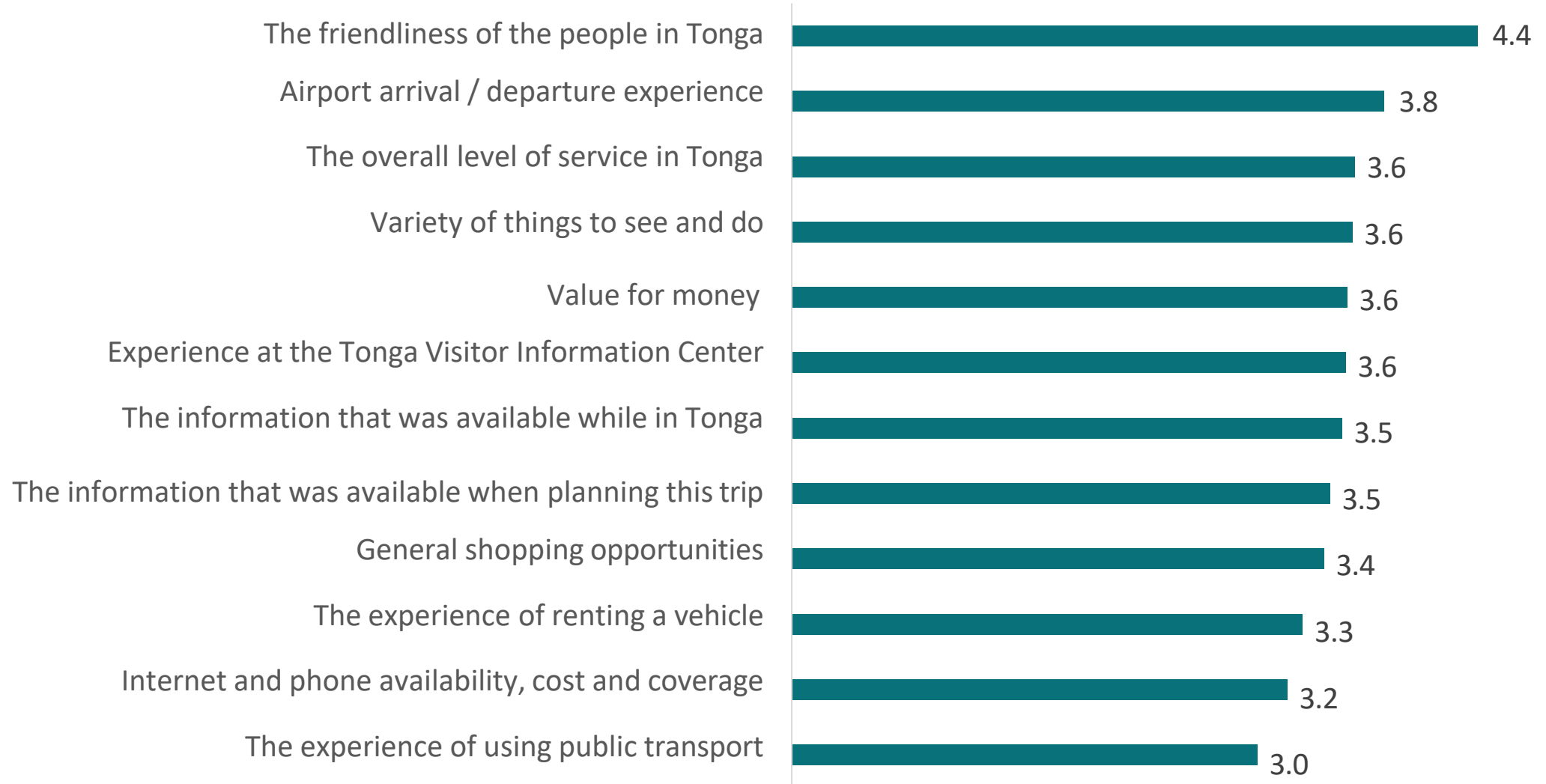


Visitor
Satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction



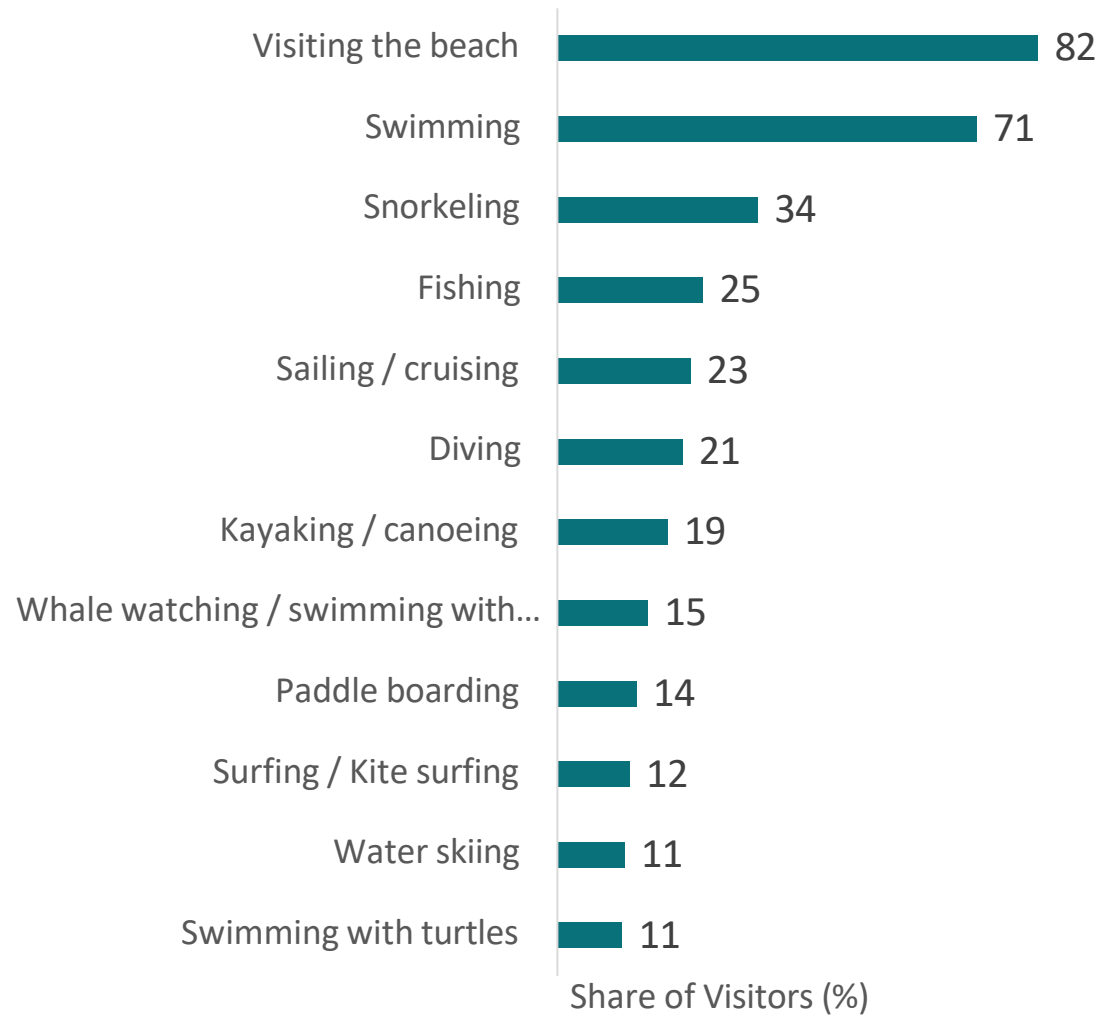
Satisfaction with travel experience



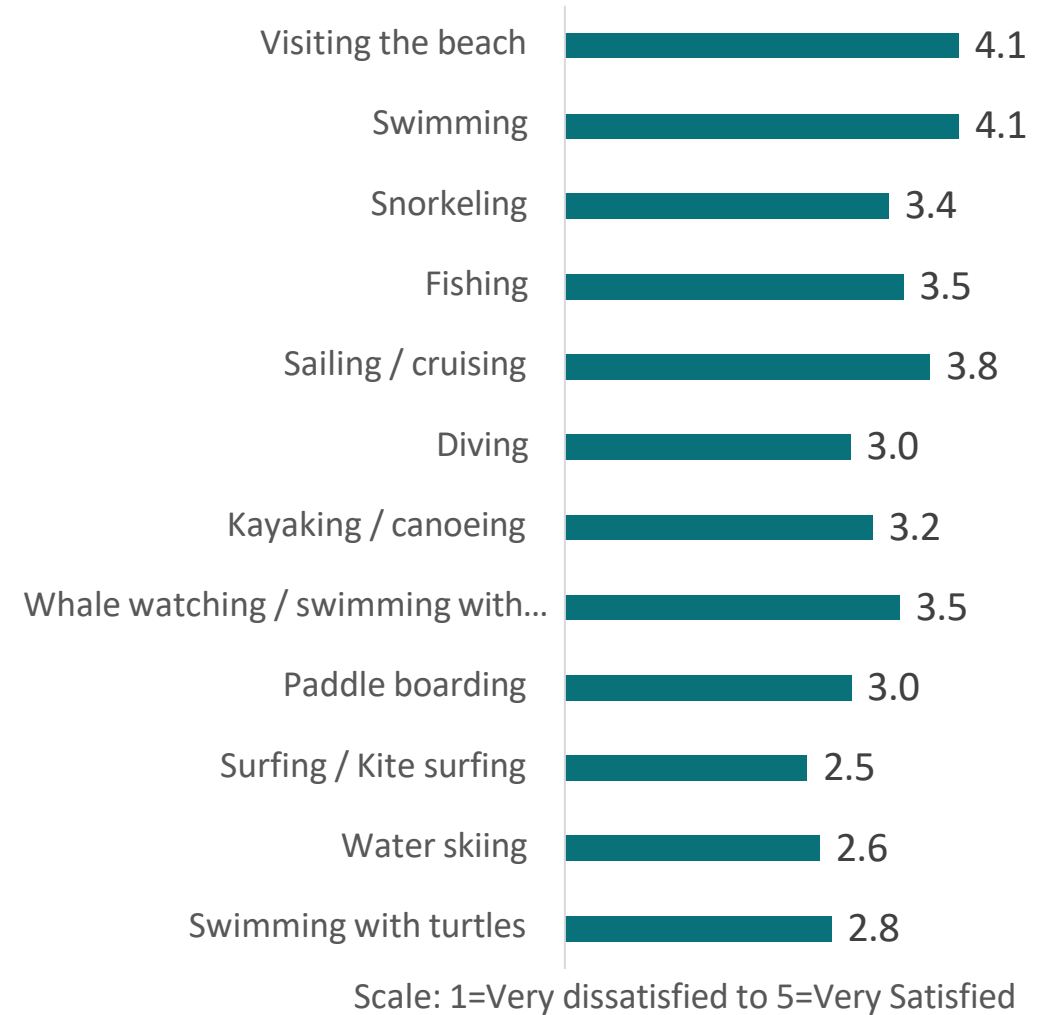
Scale: 1=Not satisfied at all to 5=Extremely satisfied

Water-based activities

Participation Rate

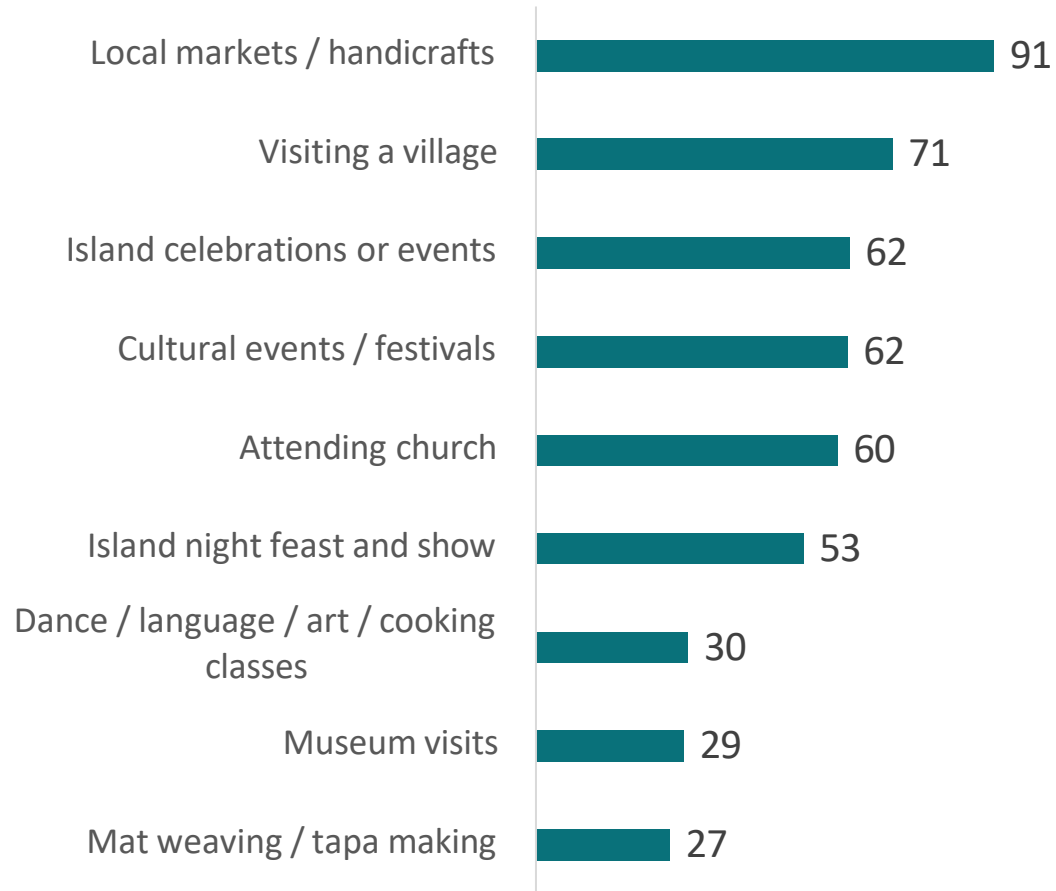


Satisfaction



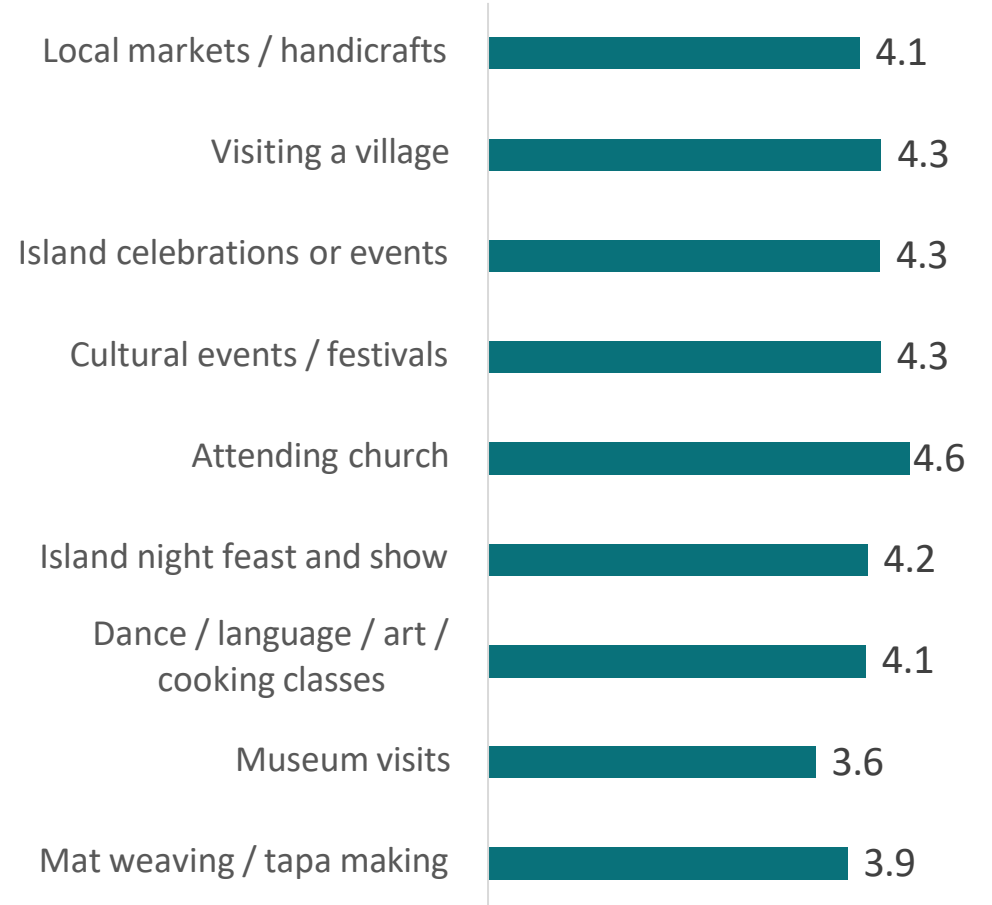
Cultural-interactions

Participation Rate



Share of Visitors (%)

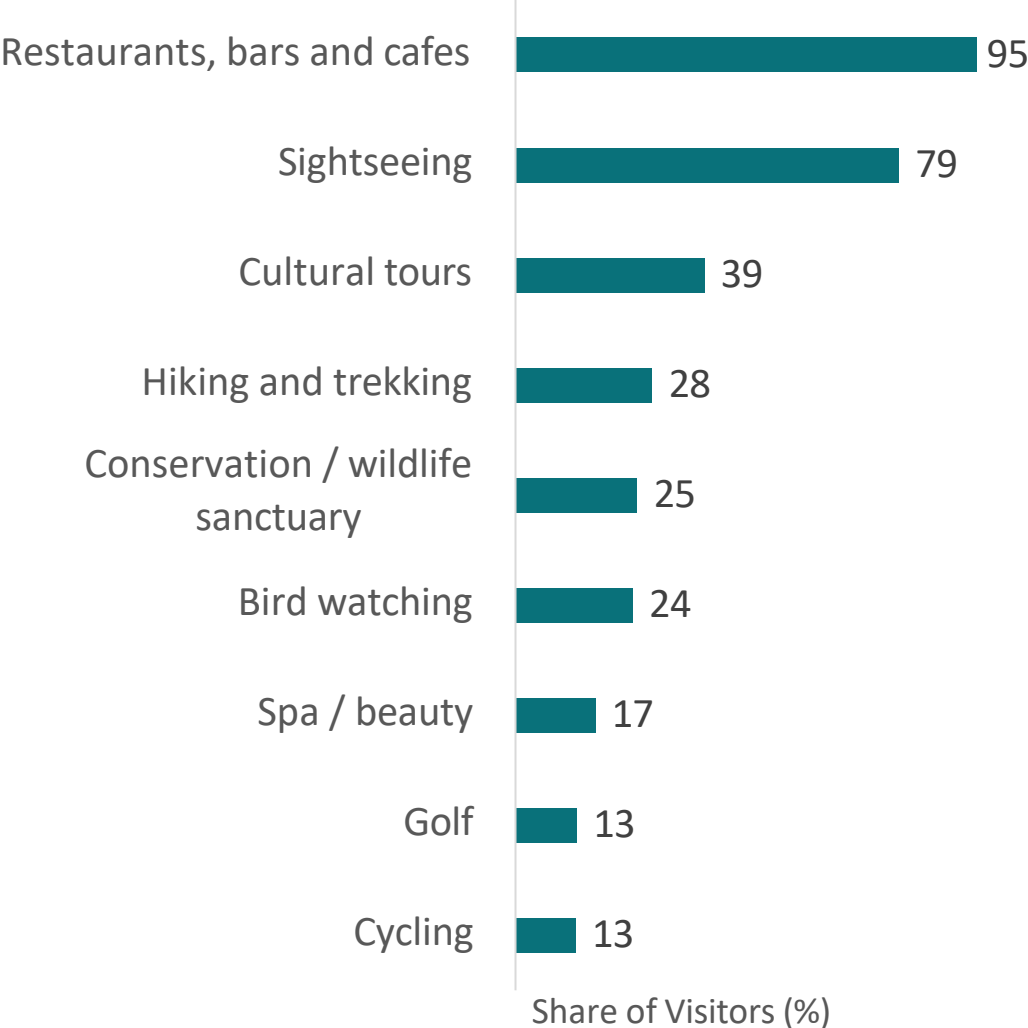
Satisfaction



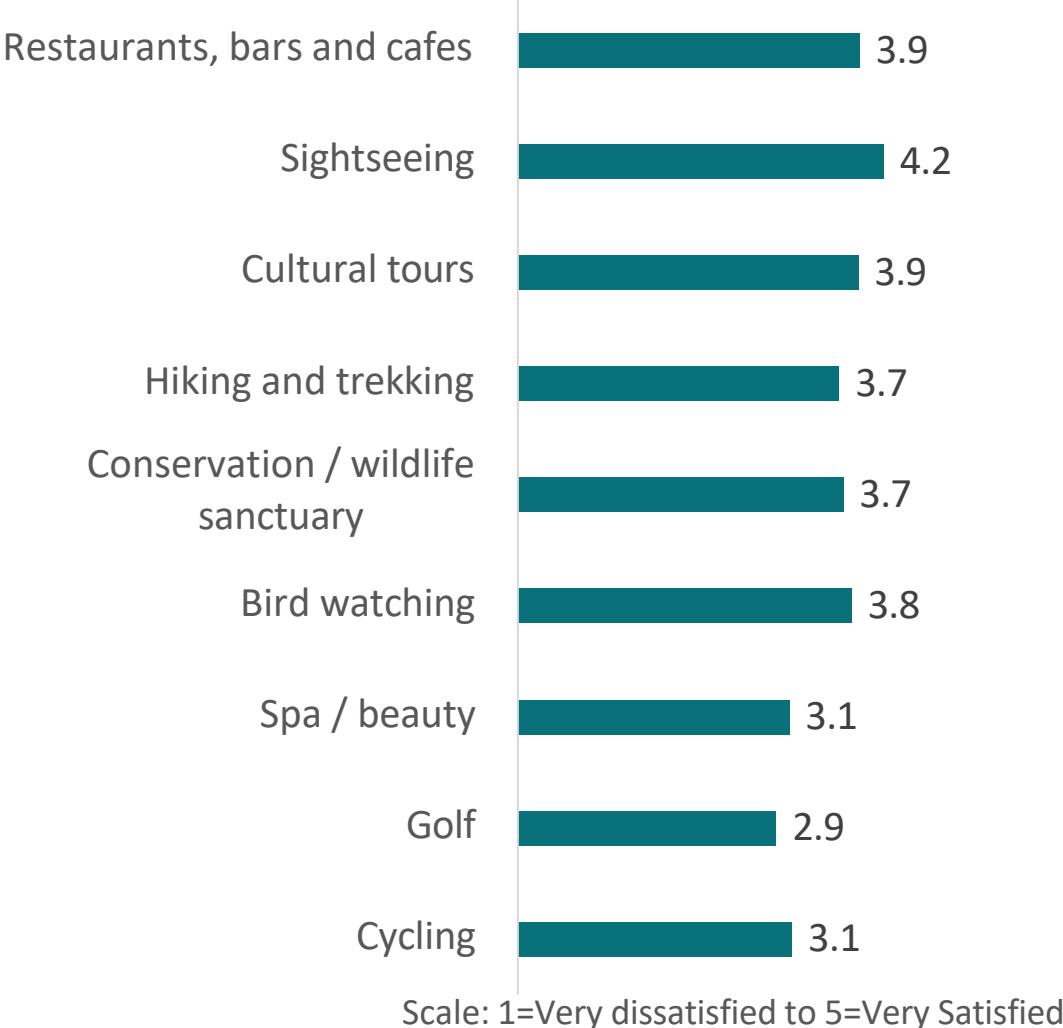
Scale: 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied

Land-based activates

Participation Rate

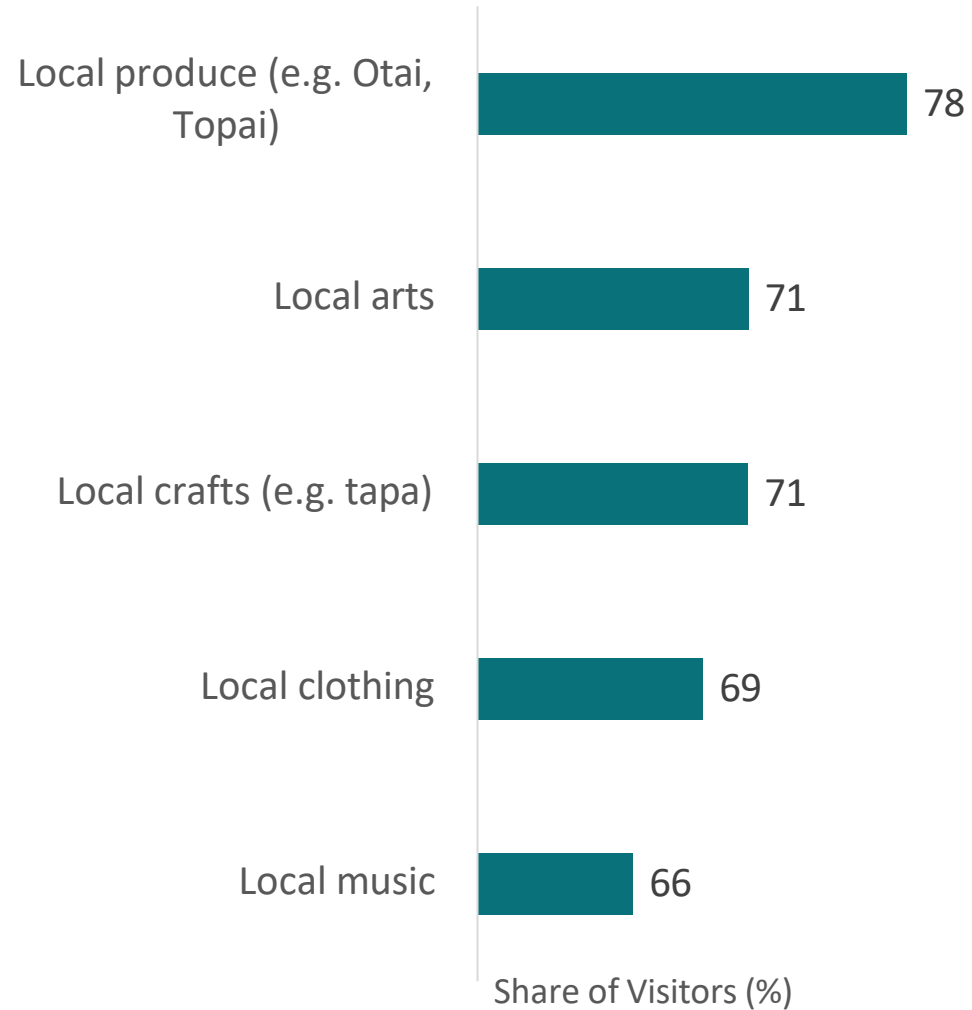


Satisfaction

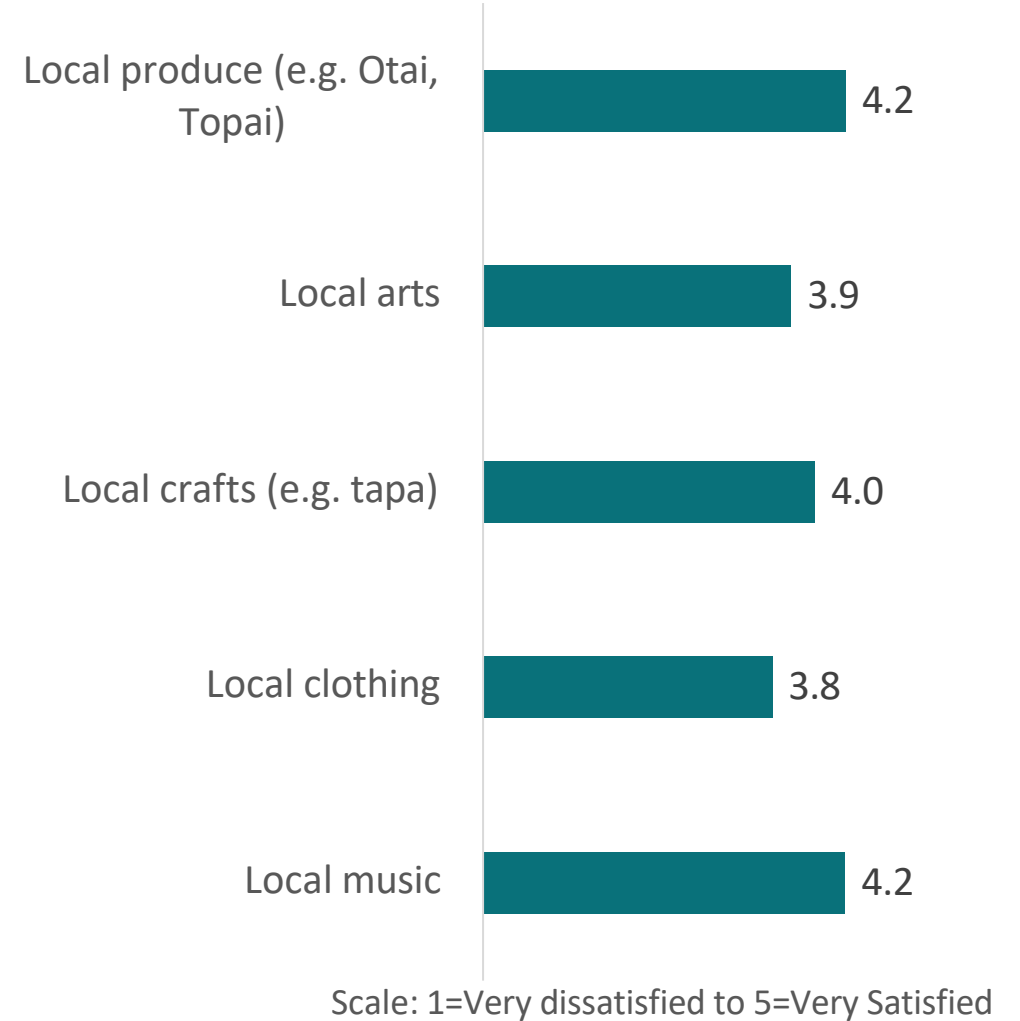


Shopping activities

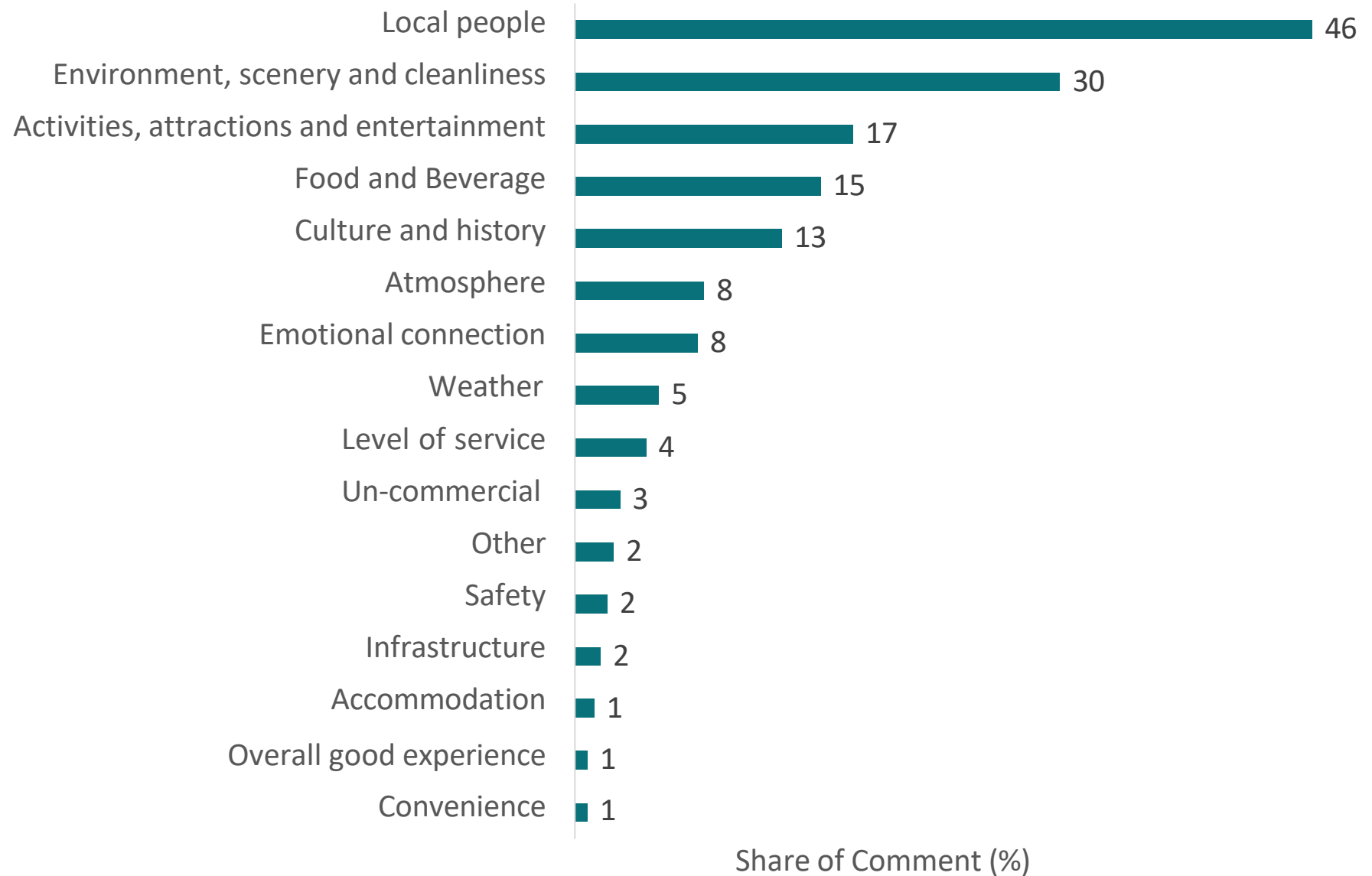
Participation Rate



Satisfaction



Most appealing aspects



Note: Total response N=250. Multiple response analysis, so total does not add up to 100%

Most appealing aspects: Local people

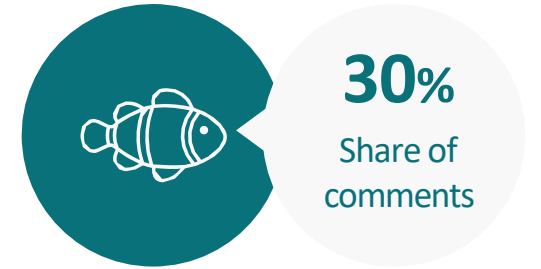


46%

Share of
comments

- + Warmth of people and exceptional hospitality.
- + Tongan people who were very friendly and helpful.
- + The vibes from the people. That feeling “Like Home” and everyone makes the trip easy by being friendly and welcoming 🥰🥰🥰🥰
- + I loved how friendly the people were in Tonga. The sunsets are beautiful and overall untouched beauty of the scenery of Tonga is stunning.
- + The people are so generous and genuine in their interactions with you. The hospitality is sincere and spontaneous, and it leaves me.
- + People's genuine smiles and greeting strangers, good beautiful manners with people saying excuse me as they pass you, people saying thank you and you're not sure that was deserved? People make Tonga beautiful,
- + The outstanding friendliness in Vavaú is always our highlight, the loyalty, love and friendship to us, shown by our friends on our island (Hunga) and the humility they show is absolutely wonderful.

Most appealing aspects: Environments, cleanliness, climate



- + Friendly people, clean environment, beautiful beaches, cultural heritage and seafood.
- + "Natural Beauty & beautiful views of 'EuaImprovement in fast foods"
- + The sunsets are beautiful and overall untouched beauty of the scenery of Tonga is stunning.
- + The cleanliness of Tonga: The people take care of their homes and attractions.
- + The beautiful beaches and the culture and traditions. The food was bussin. The singing was also lovely when we went to church.
- + The blowholes very beautiful attraction. Love the nature and just humble people.
- + The people are so happy and friendly and the beaches were beautiful-- we imagine they were moreso before the volcanic tidal wave.
- + The beautiful beaches and the culture and traditions. The food was bussin. The singing was also lovely when we went to church.
- + We went to a beach in Haatafu and where resorts were prior to the tsunami, there was nothing but just the miles of beach. It was quite beautiful and breathtaking

Most appealing aspects: Activities, attractions and entertainment



17%

Share of
comments

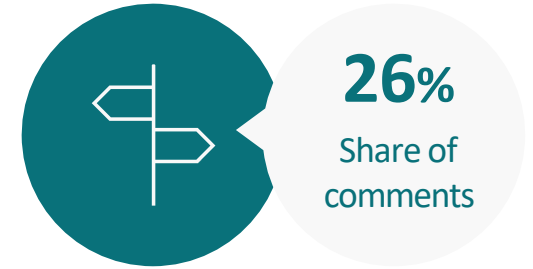
- + Scuba diving was great.
- + The cute town of Nuku'Alofa.
- + Swimming with whales.
- + Shopping at Talamahu market.
- + The arts and crafts local talents of the people showcasing in the markets.
- + "The longest part of our stay was at MOUNU ISLAND RESORT. Brilliant! Excellent service, wonderful setting, good food, peace and quiet and beautiful sea for swimming and snorkelling. "
- + Home made delicious food available everywhere and fruits to purchase on the side of the road. Beautiful beaches, handicrafts, friendly people, great singing at church and beautiful Mormon temple. I love that there are so many churches.
- + Swimming in the cave. Eating fresh fish and purple potatoes.
- + The beaches our in Hahake looking like they've been upgraded especially the wharf @ Afa. I enjoyed swimming at Touliki pool with the locals.

Least appealing aspects



Note: Total response N=243. Multiple response analysis, so total does not add up to 100%

Least appealing aspects: Public services, facilities and infrastructure



- + The rain it filled up the roads making it hard to commute in a car.
- + Not able to drink tap water.
- + The poor upkeep of surroundings and abandoned buildings.
- + Expensive internet services. Cafes do not have Internet and electricity ports for working. Cost of living is as high as compared to the level of average income.
- + The lack of clear information about ferries and transport options within the country, and the change of schedules and unreliability of those options. I was supposed to travel to Eua island but could not get a ferry and wasted a lot of time and energy trying to work out how to get there, but information online was lacking or unreliable.
- + Violence and night clubs in the heart of the city, Chinese products-shops taking over because of affordability, rubbish and public toilets very poor standard, rural area road lights, the ngotoumu on a lot of roads, careless drivers and irresponsible drunk people.
- + Traffic, lack of cleanliness in the city, overgrown plantations that limits access to outer villages on Eastern side of main Island, roads have so many pot holes.
- + Traffic in Nukualofa, a lack of quality shops to buy tourist goods, a lack of nice waterfront restaurants. The domestic airline was not operating reliably at the time I was in Tonga, this was a major reason why I was unable to visit the outer islands (Va'vau) which was disappointing... For a traveller coming to Tonga, I would want to know that there are reliable domestic flights operating. Tongatapu was fine, but I wanted to visit the other islands and was unable to do that.

Least appealing aspects: Customer service



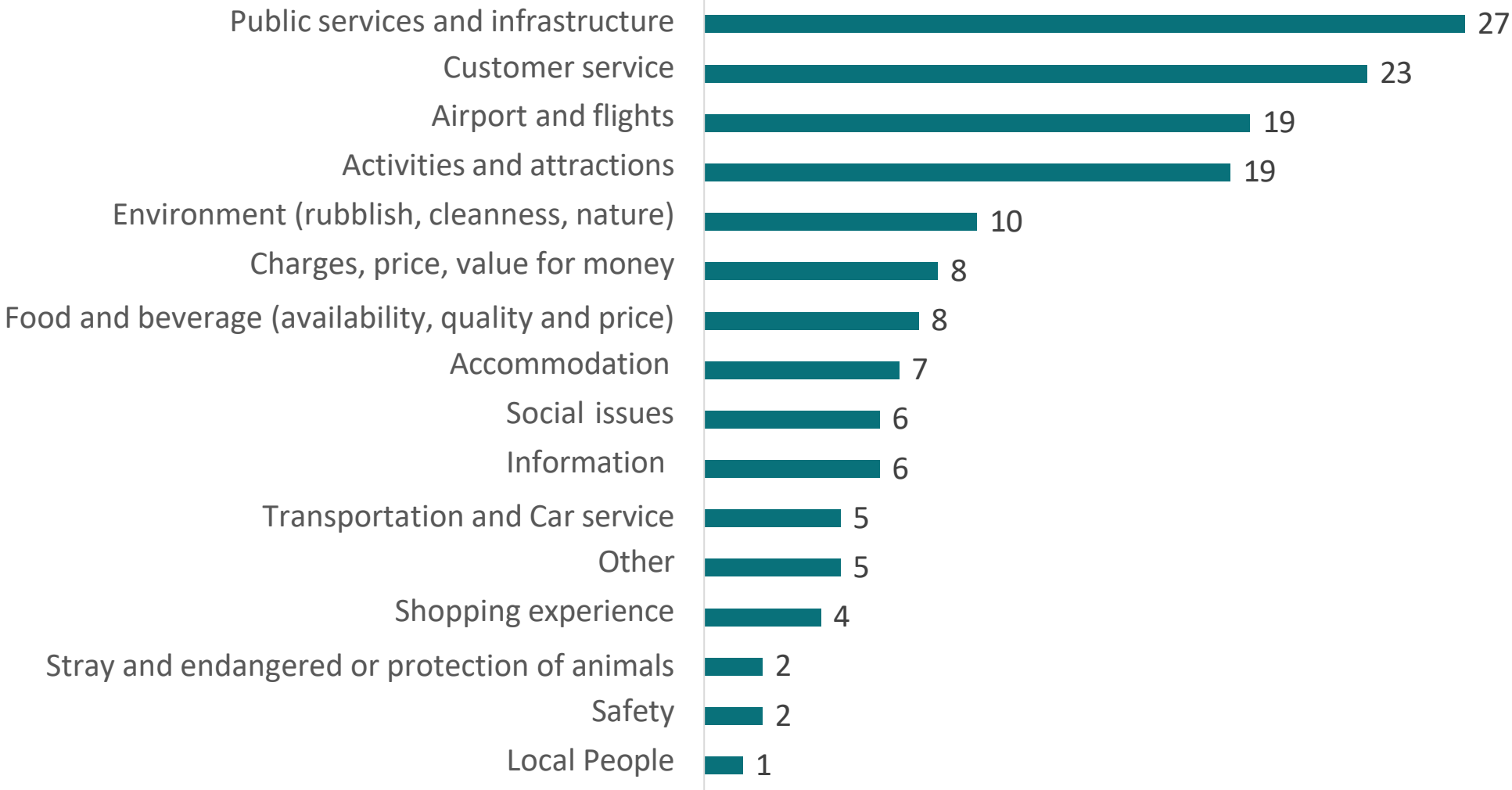
- + Customer service in Tonga very shocking.
- + Most of the taxi conditions are not acceptable
- + Not much just airport could do a little bit with a smile and a nice greeting and handled with care. Only some of the woman at the front desk.
- + The slow customer service at Tanoa Hotel. Many people working there but lack initiative to clean tables after our meals or provide towels after our swim.
- + The customer services provided at any place, some shops, when you enter the door, they smile at you but when they open their mouth to serve you, they can be intimidating!... including customer service at the international airport!
- + The hospitality and customer service. The customer service at the airport as you enter the country was appalling. No smiles just glares. Even had some people on their phones while we were talking to them. No so “Friendly Islands” of them.
- + Unfriendly shop assistants, rubbish & plastic everywhere just dumped at the beach, road side and all the waterways. Lack of support for local tourism areas like island resorts and others to help them rebuild for future quests to enjoy and would want to go to Tonga

Least appealing aspects: Rubbish, cleanliness and natural environment care



- + Rubbish bins on the verge at the Library as took 5 years to move it as dogs, rats, rubbish are getting into to the library. It had emptied for over 5 years...
- + The high amount of single use plastic containers, bottles, cans, etc.
- + Perhaps the streets in Neiafu could be cleaner, though we have noticed over the years they have improved, just the awareness of people dropping their rubbish or their lack of pride in their community with disposing of their rubbish. Education is the answer.
- + The litter that's left on the streets and the failure to pick it up deprives the streets of a look that is appealing as a streetscape.
- + Everything was dirty the roads the houses and lawns, the beaches were filled with rubbish and its water and sand were not looked after or set up for tourists, the level of cleanliness compared to all the other pacific Islands is extremely low.
- + The lack of cleanliness at public beaches and in Nuku'alofa. The beach would be an amazing tourist destination but there is rubbish everywhere you look which hinders the experience. The main city felt unloved and no sense of pride to clean when trying to shop in the streets.

Suggestions for improvement



Share of Comment (%)

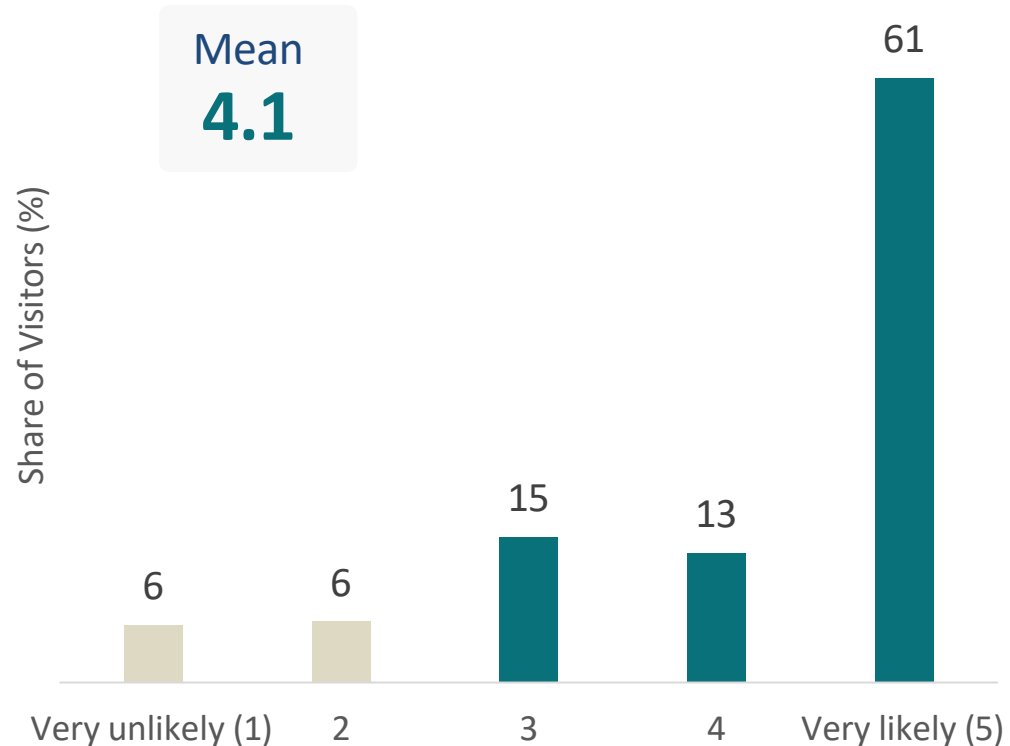
Note: Total response N=145. Multiple response analysis, so total does not add up to 100%

Indicated quotations for suggestions for improvement

- + More recycling and rubbish collection.
- + More possibilities for activities on Sundays.
- + Cleaner facilities, better customer service, more tourist activities.
- + Please create websites for transportation, lodging and food for tourists to look at.
- + Provide high level of customer service, Everyone deserved to be treated the same.
- + At the airport, there needs to be a better way to usher people when queuing for immigration, going through customs and quarantine, because the airport is the first place where tourists experience Tonga.
- + Always room for improvements even in first world countries. Car services rental cars. Perhaps offer to drop car off and pick up etc. No meter in some taxis. Taxi rips you off. Cleanliness of the beautiful beaches. A lot of alcohol bottles everywhere.
- + Rebuild something on the beaches. The resorts were devastated, but even a destination activity rental place would be great. There is no sailing, fishing, or diving on the main island. There is so much you could do! Traditional canoes, sailboats, or other activities would be great. A sailing trip around the islands would draw people if there is something to do at each island. Having to take a ferry or flight was not a great or convenient option.

Willingness to return

Willingness to return to Tonga

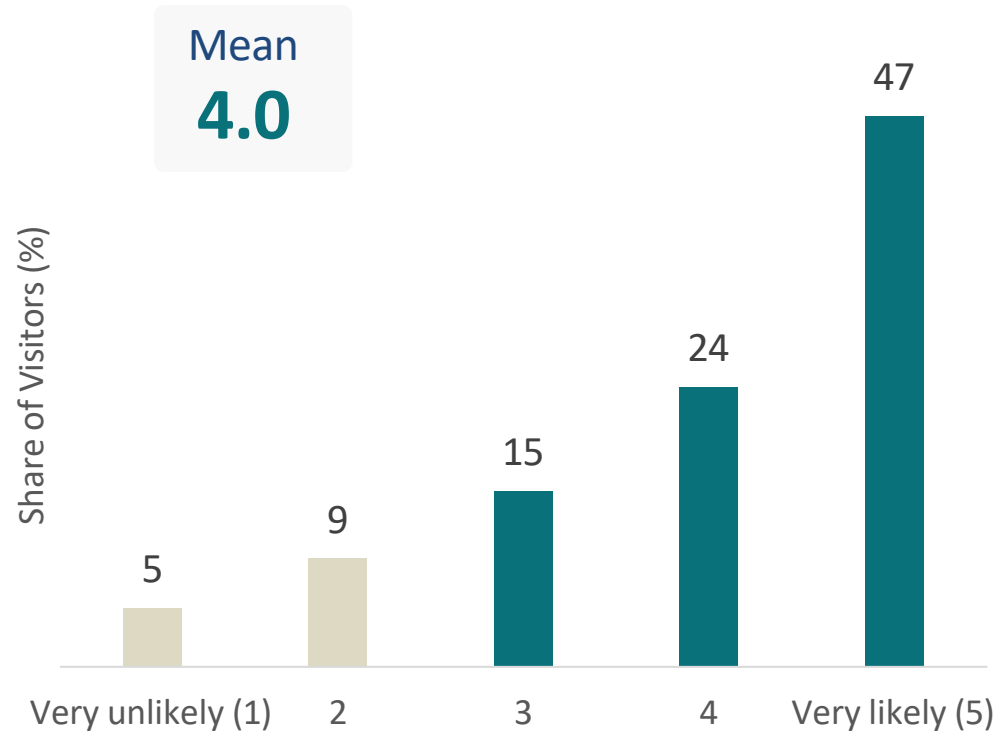


Quotes: Reasons for not return

- + Customer service.
- + Not great resorts.
- + Unreliable internal transportation. Not much to do.
- + Would only be for another family reason as there is not much from a tourist point of view.
- + It was expensive for normal groceries and it doesn't have clean beaches.

Willingness to recommend

Willingness to recommend to Tonga

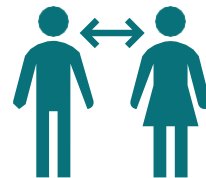


Quotes: Reasons for not recommend

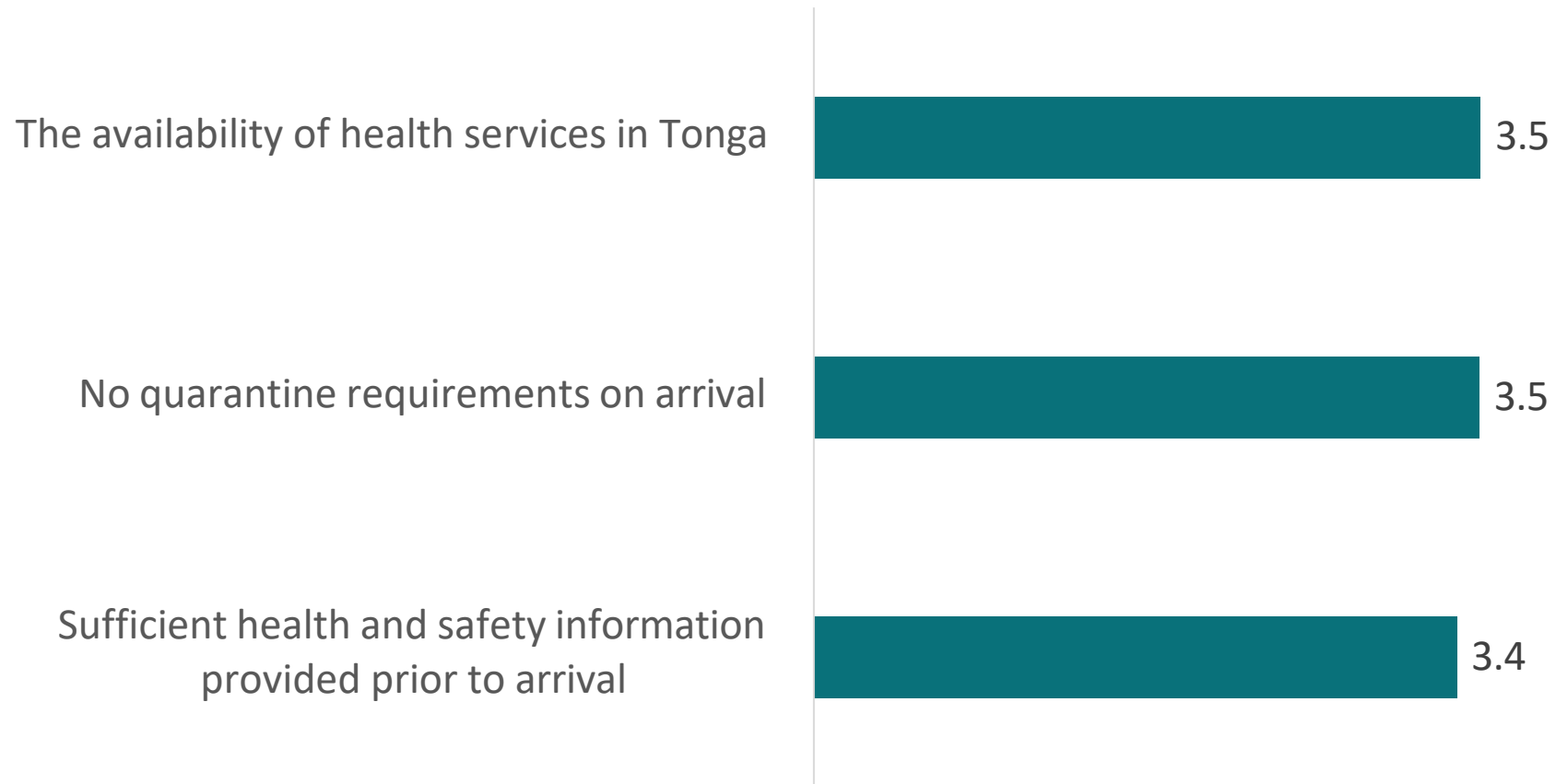
- + Not tourism ready yet.
- + Service is very poor.
- + Domestic airline and bad quality food.
- + expensive, hotels not great, not much to do in the capital.
- + Hotel (staff was nice but servicing room was poor, no AC except in room, wi-fi), as a tourist there was not much to do in Nuku'alofa except restaurants.

2023 JAN-APR VISITORS

COVID RESPONSES



Q How important were the following factors in your decision to travel to Tonga?



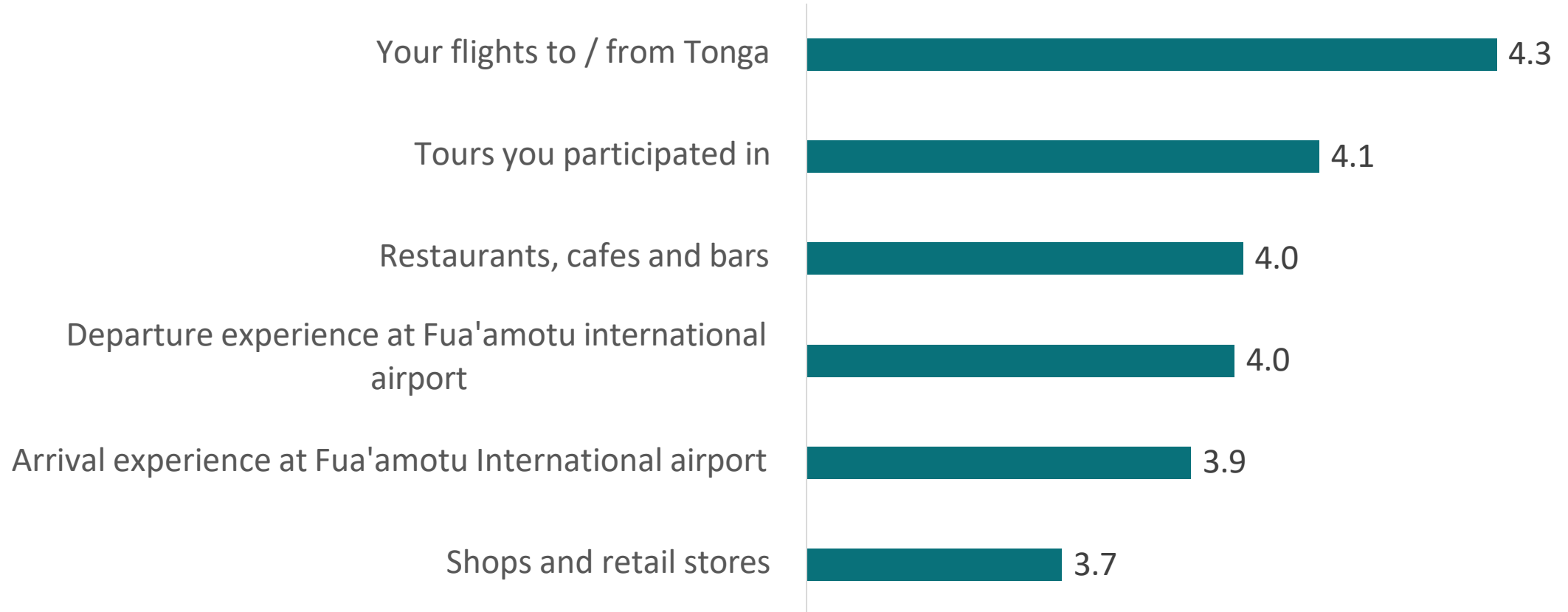
Scale: 1=Not at all important to 5=Extremely important

Q Satisfaction with COVID practices



Scale: 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied

Q Satisfaction with health and safety measures



Scale: 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied

Quotes on further feedback regarding COVID-19

- + It's a non-issue so didn't really take into too much detail the Covid practises.
- + I was surprised to see no mask wearing as my trip was in Feb and I was used to still wearing in NZ.
- + Tonga did their best to reduce the impact of covid during my stay.
- + It was at the Departure - when I visited the Toilet. There was no hand soap detergent in the dispenser and no paper towel.
- + The COVID-19 protocols were strictly followed. I did not have a concern about. It was a world wide pandemic so we were ready for any restriction.
- + Very happy with the clinics, they are the backbone for the Vaiola Hospital. Me and my niece got to see a doctor at the clinic in Fanga Tongatapu, and we also got medicines that was very helpful 😊.

Thank you

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