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Comparative study between Fiji and Papua New Guinea tourism development: Lessons to learn from Fiji

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Abstract

Tourism has become a major economic contributor to island nations. Yet the main question is ‘why has some island nations progressed successfully in tourism development while others are still gradually developing? A comparative analysis between Fiji and Papua New Guinea tourism development reveals how Fiji is capitalizing on tourism in the Pacific region. The comparison focuses on the tourism resources, demand and supply and policy implementation in the two respective countries. The diversity in Fiji’s tourism investment opportunities, advertisement and policy implementation are some of the success factor behind its development. Lessons learnt from Fiji can be used to guide others pacific island nations including Papua New Guinea on its road to invest and develop tourism.

Key words: Tourism development; Tourism policy; Tourism products; Island nations.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the main economic contributors to developing nations. The island nations in the Pacific region are no exception. The direct contribution from tourism to the national income of countries such as Fiji and Cooks Island’s national is exponential high. That is, according to report by the commission of sustainable tourism in 1996, Fiji’s gross domestic contribution to the national income was 56 percent and Cook Island was 50 percent. Papua New Guinea likewise is an island nation with the natural and cultural resources that are marketed to promote tourism. The World Bank Economic indicator of Papua New Guinea (2003) revealed that 37 percent of Papua New Guinea Gross domestic Product comes from the industry sector of which tourism is accounted for. There has not been any work thus far written on the comparison regarding tourism development between Papua New Guinea and Fiji, hence this paper aims to examine the development of tourism in the Pacific region by specifically comparing Fiji tourism and Papua New Guinea tourism development. It aims to investigate the following questions;

- What are the supply and demand of tourism in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, its similarities and difference?
- Why has Fiji Tourism developed more exponentially compared to Papua New Guinea’s tourism?
- What lessons can Papua New Guinea learn from Fiji tourism development in order to improve its tourism sector?

This report presents the tourism product analysis in Fiji and Papua New Guinea and the supply and international demand for the tourism products. It reveals Fiji’s strength in tourism development in which Papua New Guinea can learn and improve its tourism industry.

2. Methodology

A combination of both primary and secondary data collection was used to obtain information on tourism development in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Primary data includes Government reports on tourism policies and statistics while the secondary data sources include websites information on tourism development in both countries

3. Tourism product analysis of Papua New Guinea and Fiji

The concept of tourism emerged as people travelled to new locations to partake activities and experiences. These

gave rise to economic opportunities by capitalizing on the resources available in the destination. Tourism products are the central attraction in tourism development. The four main identified tourism products in a destination are nature, culture and heritage, community and leisure.

An overview of the tourism products and investments available in Fiji and Papua New Guinea will assist in understanding the level of tourism development in both countries. Table 1 shows the main products available in both countries. It provides an in-depth comparison on the current attractions, investment opportunities and attraction opportunities.

Table 1: The main tourism products in Fiji and Papua New Guinea

Tourism Products	Fiji	Papua New Guinea
<i>Current Attractions</i>	Natural and cultural attractions, cruising, water sports and resort activities, yachting, surfing, diving, weddings and honeymoons, shopping, sports, eco-tourism and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Expositions)	Culture, markets, festivals, diving, surfing, hiking/trekking, fishing, MICE, sports, eco-tourism and the unique flora and fauna
<i>Investment Opportunities</i>	Agro-tourism, spa tourism, health tourism, sports tourism, nautical tourism, retirement resort tourism, integrated hotels and villas and indigenous tourism.	MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conventions and Expositions), sports tourism and integrated tourism model provinces.
<i>Attraction Opportunities</i>	Farm stays, bicycle tours, more natural and cultural interpretive tours, trekking, kayaking, river cruising, archeological tourism, hot air balloons, skydiving, and parasailing and local art galleries.	Bicycle tours, whale and dolphin watching, bird watching, adventure tours, trekking, kayaking, river cruising, WWII archeological tourism and local art galleries

(Investment Fiji & Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authorities; 2012)

3.1.1 Analysis of the tourism products

An analysis of the tourism products in both Fiji and Papua New Guinea revealed that both countries have almost similar tourism products on offer. However, it also revealed that Fiji has invested in niche tourism products such as health tourism, weddings and honeymoon, spa tourism and so forth that gave it an advantage over Papua New Guinea.

3.1.2 Tourism supply in Fiji and Papua New Guinea

Tourism demand and supply is an important indicator of tourism growth in the country. Firstly, tourism supply is the fundamental requirement in tourism development. Tourism supply can be classified into four basic components, and they are;

1. Natural resources and environment;
2. The built environment;
3. Transportation; and

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