



## Development of Tourism Industry in Papua New Guinea Facing Covid-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the development of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) tourism industry and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although PNG offers rich cultural heritage, biodiversity, and attractions such as festivals, diving, and hiking, the sector faces persistent challenges including poor marketing, high costs, weak infrastructure, and systemic corruption. The pandemic further reduced tourist arrivals, disrupted ICT systems, and exposed mismanagement of resources, intensifying these barriers. The research identifies three key constraints to growth: corruption, technological limitations, and ineffective marketing strategies. To address these, it recommends an integrated marketing approach that engages government, private stakeholders, and development partners to promote innovative, technology-driven solutions. Using qualitative and secondary data, supported by SWOT and PESTEL analyses, the study provides a roadmap for policymakers and investors to strengthen PNG's tourism sector. It concludes that coordinated efforts are essential for positioning PNG as a competitive destination in the Pacific region

## **INTRODUCTION**

The island nation of Papua New Guinea is located in the southwestern Pacific. It encompasses the eastern part of New Guinea as well as other small offshore islands. Its neighbors include the Solomon Islands to the southeast, Australia to the south, and Indonesia to the west. The nation's diverse culture and range of moral groupings make it special. Over 800 languages are spoken throughout the nation.

Despite being a small nation, PNG is rich in natural resources, including gold, copper, nickel, and agricultural products, as well as tourism resources. However, in order to use these resources effectively in competitive markets, capital, labor, and technology are primarily required. PNG's economy is underdeveloped, with low-middle-class incomes. Since the middle of the 2000s, real GDP growth per capita has averaged 4%, with the extractive industries driving PNG's GDP growth. With a World Bank-estimated GDP of \$27.49 billion, it is among the world's developing and expanding economies.

A popular tourist destination, Papua New Guinea is also a draw for Pacific-island nations and the rest of the globe due to its location in the Pacific and its deteriorating relations with nations like Australia and America. The tourist sector in Papua New Guinea is not growing and developing enough in foreign markets to make effective use of the goods and services. This has resulted in the growth and expansion of the industry to meet international demands at the global emerging markets. The PNG tourist industry need a well-thought-out plan and an international marketing strategy to sell its tourism products if it hopes to become a global player.

This study focuses on Papua New Guinea tourism and several obstacles that hindered the development of global marketing strategies. Marketing has been mentioned as a key component in achieving sales numbers since ancient times. Pressure from the economy, society, and corporate innovation of the generations has led to the establishment of marketing in research.

In many developing nations, the contribution of foreign tourism to economic growth has long been acknowledged (Jenkins, 1991; WTO, 1994). The public sector may have been hesitant to support the growth of tourism in the past, but times have changed, and governments' views on the industry have expanded over time to include broader participation as well as going beyond the limited emphasis on economic benefits to include environmental and societal concerns. All of this points to how developing nations view tourism.

One of the top and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, tourism has had steady growth and expansion over the years (Mihalic 2014; Rayel et al. 2014; SPTO 2018). A growing number of new locations are being created as tourist destinations, and modern tourism is closely linked to advancements in development. UNWTO 2016; Rayel et al. 2014; Mihalic 2014). PNG has a lot of promise as a travel destination because of its expansive and unspoiled natural environment (Rayel et al. 2014). In contrast to smaller Pacific Island nations, PNG has had relatively low levels of tourism in recent years (Rayel et al. 2014; Sumb 2017).

Papua New Guinea's tourist sector is still in its infancy. The industry draws more visitors even if it is still in its infancy. For tourists with specialized interests, the nation offers unparalleled outdoor experiences. Papua New Guinea's culture draws painters, photographers, and collectors. Tourists visiting more rural areas will encounter a village-like atmosphere, whereas major hotels are located in major towns.

It has been said that PNG's tourism industry is still in its infancy. Others claimed that this small and uncomparable industry is being led by the nation's dominating economy. The government's limited support and dedication to the tourism industry, as well as the general public's ignorance of the industry's importance in achieving sustainable development, are defined by the industry's inconsequential status. Large-scale resource projects and extractive industries, like as petroleum extraction, which bring in enormous sums of money for the government, have been the focus. The belief that tourism is not a pillar of economic growth or will not strengthen the PNG economy left many people at a crossroads (blind guiding the blind).

Between 2005 and 2007, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) started a project to develop a standard vocabulary for the travel industry. Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that refers to the migration of people for personal or professional reasons to countries or locations outside of their normal surroundings. These individuals are referred to as visitors, and tourism is associated with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008). They may be tourists or excursionists, inhabitants or non-residents.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the world's main nations, tourism has been recognized as one of the most important economic industries. The travel and tourism industry grew by 3.9% in 2018, surpassing the global economy's 3.2% growth for the eighth year in a straight, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2020). With one in five jobs generated in the last five years, the travel and tourism industry is the best partner for governments looking to create jobs. As a result, tourism is one of the biggest economic sectors in the world, accounting for 10.4% of global GDP and supporting one in ten employment (319 million) globally. Even while the tourism industry depends on the environment and human health, it frequently has a negative impact on both. Therefore, environmental issues of tourism development require special attention and were addressed by several important studies (Butler, 1999; Lu, & Nepal, 2009; Periodic et al., 2017; Waligo et al, 2013).

Both domestically and internationally, tourism has been recognized as a major economic and development opportunity for South Pacific countries. Organizations like the Asian Development Bank (Everett et al. 2018), the World Bank (2017), and the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2017) have highlighted the need for these smaller countries to develop sustainable tourism that builds upon their rich natural and cultural heritage (Scheyvens 1990; Rayel 2012). Tourism is frequently presented favorably as offering developing countries a number of advantages, such as boosting economic growth, generating

jobs and businesses, advancing infrastructure development, giving governments tax income, bringing in foreign exchange and possibly foreign investment, and, lastly, potentially expanding economic opportunities into local communities and rural areas (Cole 2006; Scheyvens 2015; Telfer and Sharpley 2016). Additionally, tourism that incorporates a community's cultural heritage can have positive effects including fostering cross-cultural interactions and possibly preserving traditional customs. It is recognized that poor management can harm communities, particularly when tourism is growing (Scheyvens 1999).

The unpredictability of choosing the determining variables to gauge the level of happiness among visitors from While recent trends view consumer emotions as the determining factors in certification, previous literature reviews focus on describing satisfaction by the evaluation consumers make of perceived quality from their expectations (De Rojas and Camarero, 2008). However, recent research highlights the significance of features like the lodging and hospitality provided (Nam, 2011; Regmi and Walter, 2016; Sati, 2018), the cost of admission (Badola et al., 2018), and the safety of visitors (Gstaettner, Kobryn, Rodger, Philips, Lee).

#### ***Tourism Sector Development in Papua New Guinea***

The complex and varied cultural histories of Papua New Guinea date back at least 45,000 years (Summerhayes et al. 2010). Some of the world's most significant archeological finds have taken place in Papua New Guinea since the first people arrived. One of the few internationally recognized "hearths" of domestication, the World Heritage-listed Kuk Archaeological Site is situated in the Western Highlands, close to Mount Hagen. It allows visitors to experience the actual location where ancestors independently invented agriculture at least 6,500 years ago (UNESCO 2019). There are 13 World Heritage Sites in the Pacific, including Kuk, the sole one in Papua New Guinea. One of the biggest business areas in the world today is tourism, which has continued to rise. Modern tourism includes an increasing number of new places and is intimately associated with development. Due to these factors, tourism is becoming a major force behind socioeconomic growth (UNWTO, 2015). In many countries around the world, the tourist sector plays a significant role in social and economic development (Holloway & Humphreys, 2012). In addition to creating job opportunities and boosting foreign exchange revenues and reserves, tourism may also aid in the preservation of natural environments and civilizations. PNG and other Pacific Island nations have benefited from these advantages (Hall, 1997; Rajotte, 1978).

Even though it is still in its early stages of development, the potential resources that draw tourists include the culture, markets, festivals, diving, surfing, hiking, fishing, and the distinctive flora and fauna. The number of tourists visiting Papua New Guinea is rising annually. However, there are a number of major obstacles that the sector must overcome, including those related to marketing, taxes, cost, security, and infrastructure. The government's top priority continues to be these issues. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a greater impact on the sector due to its severe effects on the national economy. As a result, COVID-19 restrictions cause a sharp drop in both local and international visitor numbers.

### *Cultural Tourism*

Some of the most intriguing tourist destinations in the world can be found in Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Bhanugopan 2001; Kau 2014; Milne 1991; Rayel et al. 2014; Sali 2018). In PNG, real, unforgettable experiences – which include cultural offerings from more than a thousand different tribes – are the foundation of marketable tourism adventures (George and Millett 1984; Pickford 2005; Sali 2018). A variety of trips offer these unique experiences, but the most popular ones include village visits and cultural festivals (Imbal 2009; Kau 2014; PNG TPA 2006). More than 850 different languages are spoken in PNG, demonstrating the country's extremely diversified culture (Pickford 2005). Styles of cultural expressions, such as carving, dance, singing, ornamentation, architecture, and more, differ significantly throughout the country and are recognized as belonging to the people of particular localities (Bhanugopan 2001; Kau 2014; PNG TPA 2006).

In the majority of Papua New Guinea, indigenous cultures are still practiced today, especially in isolated and rural settlements (Imbal 2010; Kau 2014). This is because of the sea, marshes, dense jungles, and incredibly rough mountains, which hinder the rapid spread of outside influences like infrastructure, education, and religion (Bhanugopan 2001; Douglas 1998; Imbal 2010; PNG TPA 2006). For generations, there were few connections between PNG's many societies, which hindered the development of a common language and interaction with the outside world. Many distinctive and lively cultures and traditions that have remained mostly unchanged for millennia have emerged as a result of this (Bhanugopan 2001; Pickford 2005).

PNG is viewed by tourists as the world's last great frontier (Basu 2000; PNG TPA 2006). The genuine indigenous culture is still upheld and conserved in various regions of the nation (Basu 2000; Bhanugopan 2001; Imbal 2010; Kau 2014). The nation has created dynamic, unique traditional lifestyles of its own. PNG is frequently seen as one of the last remaining locations on Earth where cultural authenticity can be found, although accepting the global diversity of cultures. PNG's people and traditional culture are its most iconic product when it comes to culture-based tourism (Bhanugopan 2001). The Potential of Cultural Tourism in Recent Years in Papua New Guinea. Approximately 70% of the vacationers engaged in cultural activities while in PNG. Only over half of those tourists, nevertheless, have been to Papua New Guinea purely for cultural reasons. Many did not expressly travel to Papua New Guinea for cultural events; instead, they were only "casual" viewers of the rich culture. About 10,000 authentic niche market cultural tourists spent approximately \$35 million in PNG in 2016. But there is still more that Papua New Guinea could do to attract cultural visitors.

### *Existing Literature in PNG Tourism Industry*

Other researchers in the same field have produced a great deal of literature on marketing and other aspects of the industry. The industry's growth and development have been greatly aided by the research that is currently available. For example, there was some literature about the challenges that both residents

and visitors experience. such as PNG's safety and law and order concerns. As far as I can tell, there has been some improvement, but the problems persist. People need to be educated to have a positive attitude and the correct mindset. People will act appropriately when they are in the proper frame of mind.

In a similar vein, PNG is the ideal place for tourism in the Pacific. Although PNG's unspoiled, virgin landscape has the most potential to attract foreign visitors, the government and those in positions of power have never acknowledged this region. For the locals and prospective customers to exchange items for cash, the industry needs establish a niche market. To draw tourists, the industry should have a well-thought-out plan for showcasing and displaying its tourism products at international marketplaces.

In order to place PNG on a global scale and assess the current state of the market, the industry must implement a suitable marketing plan by hiring a high-tech company to design and develop websites, as well as to develop marketing platforms, channels, and e-commerce to promote the products. Improved pricing guidelines and uniform prices for consumer items should be implemented so that buyers may make informed decisions. To use and showcase PNG items that draw in global customers, employ an internationalization marketing strategy for tourism products and reach out to overseas markets.

#### ***Tourism Development Analysis Amid Covid-19 Pandemic***

The globe was rocked by the Covid-19 outbreak in China. The illness had a negative impact on the nation's economy, particularly on Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Businesses (MSMEs). One of the sectors that has been severely impacted by the so-called COVID-19 pandemic is the tourism sector. as the illness severely damaged the nation's economy. There was a true depression across the nation. The PNG economy was said to have suffered as a result of the sudden worldwide pandemic. PNG was experiencing a global crisis in every sphere of life, just like other economies throughout the world. The epidemic had raised the cost of consumer goods and other commodities. In addition to closing its doors, local MSMEs have also laid off employees. The cost of the machinery and production materials was very high (expensive). However, PNG commodities saw a sharp decline in price. The resource sectors did not provide much cash for the government.

The illness has negatively impacted the growth of PNG's tourism sector as well as other industries. 90 percent of foreign books sent to PNG have been canceled as a result. Revenue for the industry dropped by millions of kina. The economy as a whole, as well as citizens and international residents, were also negatively impacted.

As part of the Covid-19 protocol, international flights have been limited and borders are still closed in an effort to stop the virus's spread. Because of the control limitations, the industry's cash flow is reduced. Furthermore, there has been a substantial decline in foreign reserves. The government finds it difficult to fulfill its international commitments and other requests because of the depreciating value of the currency. The controller should loosen the restrictions to reduce the virus's transmission, but new entrants should adhere to the COVID-

19 guidelines. At the very least, direct tourist transactions ought to boost PNG's tourism industry and productivity.

As a result, PNG's economy is recovering slowly after two years of the Covid-19 outbreak. Although the tourist sector is also anticipated to grow, the current tensions between Russia and Ukraine have had a greater impact on fuel prices and foreign travel. However, if the government's catchphrase, "Take Back PNG," is successful, both locals and visitors from other countries would reap the rewards once more.

#### ***Effects of Covid-19 on Economic Development in PNG***

The Covid-19 epidemic has had a significant impact on Papua New Guinea's expanding economy. This unanticipated worldwide epidemic has exacerbated the sustainability of energy, the information, communication, and technology (ICT) sector, and water service providers, caused a significant economic slowdown, and decreased corporate activity.

Additionally, PNG's food economy has been impacted by COVID-19. Decisions about household food consumption are significantly impacted by developments in PNG's food economy, which includes the livestock and agricultural sectors. Consequently, the capacity to produce food has decreased. On the other hand, it raises the cost of goods and services. For example, the price of imported rice has increased by 30%, the price of major PNG agricultural exports has decreased by 30% globally, and the cost of trade transactions has increased as a result of COVID-19's social distancing measures that restrict the movement of people and goods.

This alleged Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the growth of PNG's extractive industry. The mining and logging industries, as well as developers like ExxonMobil PNG and Oil Search, have suffered greatly. Commodity prices have dropped on international markets as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on energy demand. Offshore markets were seeing an increase in the cost of production inputs, such as machinery and other equipment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on Papua New Guinea's economy because of lower demand and unfavorable trading conditions. Restrictions on international and domestic travel brought on by the pandemic have reduced demand both domestically and abroad and impacted commodity prices. The global pandemic crisis had a negative impact on PNG's finance industry's development. As a result, COVID-19 reduced the amount of money flowing into the economy, and our government's ongoing hosting of major events, such as conventions and sporting events, is depleting the foreign reserves. Due to a shortfall in the foreign exchange markets, commercial banks are finding it difficult to conduct business. The foreign exchange crisis has caused significant setbacks for the PNG currency. Less amount of money is circulating in the economy of PNG.

The Covid-19 pandemic also has an impact on the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in PNG's domestic sector. Business operations suffered as a result of the government's containment measures, which were implemented to stop the epidemic from spreading throughout the nation. While some businesses were completely shut down, others were temporarily

closed, while yet others continued to operate. At the same time, companies reduced operating expenses by laying off workers and other company operations.

The effect of the coronavirus threatened to bring down PNG's health system because the medical institutions handling COVID-19 are nearly overburdened and unable to deliver basic healthcare on a regular basis. Community health workers, physicians, and nurses were outnumbered. PNG's health service had to deal with a shortage of medical supplies like medications and equipment in addition to serious issues with front-line staff. Major cities and towns have all of their hospital beds filled. The government does not provide the hospitals with much help. Research initiatives supported by the government were never finished, and ultimately turned into wastes of tax dollars. The support of funding received from foreign aid and the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations was mismanaged by people in authority. The local natives are suffered from basic health care services especially those in rural areas of PNG.

The research's theoretical framework recognizes and presupposes that the problems and difficulties identified as the "key concept" were the obstacles impeding the expansion and advancement of PNG's tourist sector. Furthermore, COVID-19 has had a greater influence on the growth of the tourism industry. These are a few of the fundamental problems that require attention. Accordingly, the research indicated that more foreign visitors and tourists would arrive in PNG if these problems were resolved. Both the tourism industry and the whole economy would undoubtedly benefit from this.

Over the years, its significance has never been acknowledged, and the government has focused a large portion of its efforts on extractive industries like gas, copper, and gold. However, the government would make more money and attract more foreign tourists if it keeps investing more in impact project areas and other industries and sectors that promote development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For this investigation, qualitative research was utilized. To address various research issues, qualitative data can be repeatedly analyzed (Schwandt 2001). In order to answer concerns concerning international marketing strategy and the amount of difficulties faced by the PNG tourism industry, this study employed qualitative approaches. Desktop research techniques, such as looking through websites, databases, and digital libraries to identify indications of marketing obstacles impeding advancement, have been used to extract the qualitative data.

The study's scope is centered on the difficulties encountered in PNG's tourism industry's international marketing strategy. The research employed internet-based and secondary data source methodologies in particular. Keywords and PNG's foreign marketing strategy were used in the searches. Research Gate, JSTOR, Google Scholar, Wiley Online Library, and other resources were used in the study.

The PNG Ministry of Tourism Industry, Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA), South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO), United Nations World Tourism Organizations, Business Advantage PNG, and other government websites are some other study areas. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis.

**RESULTS**

The results obtained in this research were based on secondary data collection. Thus,

1. The aim of this research is to find out the challenges that lack the progress of development of the tourism industry.
2. To identify some international marketing strategies and
3. To elevate the present status of the market to an international marketing level.

Three major points were found based on the research data. The first one is systemic corruption in the Public and Private Sectors. Second, is the lack of promotion/poor pricing policy. The third is the impediments that hinder e-Commerce channels.

Table 1. Coding of Points

Initial points	Finding points
Political Instability	Systemic corruption in most Private and Public Sectors
Promotion/pricing strategy And Internationalization strategy	Lack of promotion/ poor pricing policy Tourism goods and services do not reach int'l level
Internet, Technology Issues	PNG tourism industry needs better internet, better marketing strategy & e-Commerce platforms.
Infrastructure Issues	
PNG Government's tax policy	

Source: Author's Own Research and also taken from Business Advantage PNG and Developing PNG's Tourism Sector-ANU

**Systemic Corruption in PNG**

PNG is a small beautiful country with abundant natural resources like gold, copper, and nickel. Economically, it was rated (World Bank) as one of the underdeveloped countries in the world because of the systemic corruption that played in all government departments/public sectors and private sectors. It was discovered in the literature that political stability can be positive or negative. In PNG, political stability can lead to high-level corruption and the misuse of public funds. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2019 ranked PNG 137th out of 180 countries on their corruption rating level (2020). This kind of corrupt practice in both private and public sectors has led to the decline of tourism development in PNG. This indicates that corruption in the country is widespread and offenders are professionals within the government sector (Sali

2018). Members of parliament are mandated by their people to represent them on the floor of the parliament and bring services to them, but the abuse of this trust by politicians for their own personal benefit is disappointing, to say the least (Regan 2017; Sali 2018). This corruption may be partly due to 'weaknesses in the law and justice sector' (Sali 2018). Papua New Guinea is below the satisfactory levels set by the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), according to a report submitted by Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) in 2011. TIPNG's report found that in many cases, anti-corruption bodies in PNG were restricted by shortcomings in financial resources.

#### ***Lack of Promotion and Poor Pricing Strategy in the Tourism Industry***

Tourism has been identified domestically and internationally as a key economic and development opportunity for South Pacific nations, with entities such as the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2017), World Bank (2017), and the Asian Development Bank (Everett et al. 2018) focusing upon the need for these smaller nations to develop sustainable tourism that draws upon their rich natural and cultural heritage (Scheyvens 1999; Rayel 2012). Tourism is often positively portrayed as providing multiple benefits to developing nations, including the stimulation of economic growth; the creation of employment opportunities and enterprises; the promotion of infrastructure development; the provision of tax revenue to governments; the import of foreign currency and potentially foreign investment; and finally, the potential spread of economic opportunities into rural areas and local communities (Cole 2006; Scheyvens 2015).

Costs of promoting the main markets and access to distribution systems in the main markets, restriction on import of advertising materials, quotes or licenses for travel agencies, and taxes on import for promotional items are some of the main issues in marketing and promoting tourism which has been identified by APEC Tourism Impediments Study Stage III. Review and implement a comprehensive and ongoing research and statistics program to underpin marketing strategy and the evaluation of marketing activities as emphasized by PNG Tourism Sector Review and Master Plan (2007 - 2017).

#### ***Technological Issues Affecting Online Selling***

PNG tourism industry needs better internet, better marketing strategy & e-Commerce platform to market and showcase the tourism products at the global stage. Telecommunications Equipment and Services: PNG invested substantially in its telecommunications infrastructure over the years, but there is still much to do. It has embraced modern communications technologies, creating a substantial opportunity to draw regional and remote communities into the mainstream economy with profound implications for commerce, education, healthcare, and civil society. Although recently laid submarine cables have increased speed and capacity, the predicted lower price of internet connectivity in PNG is yet to materialize for most consumers (PNG-Market Opportunities- International).

## **DISCUSSION**

Findings from the analysis have indicated three major hindrances to the development of the tourism in PNG. The first and main one that is maintained at the top spot is corruption. In PNG corruption can occur at any time either stable

government or unstable government. Corruption is not only found in the tourism industry but in all other government departments as well as the private sectors. Corruption starts from the member of parliament/politicians to departmental heads and down the line and is deeply rooted in the nerves. This kind of practice has affected the development of marketing tourism products and services in the global innovative markets. Tanzi and Davoodi (2000) found that large firms are less vulnerable to the impacts of corruption than smaller firms because they often have the skills to bypass government regulations and tax laws. The World Bank (2018) found that corruption has a negative impact on firms' growth of sales in China. In the PNG context corruption is already happening and it's hard to diminish.

Second, lack of promotion and poor pricing policies have led to impending growth and development of marketing tourism products and services at the global emerging markets and attract demand. The industry should come up with some new skills and better promotional strategies such as advertising to promote tourism products and showcase what PNG has to offer the world. Set up some better pricing policies that will suit the increasing demand for tourists and inbound visitors. Use internationalization strategy to expand the industry to foreign markets. Use STP or Marketing Mix strategy to develop new skills.

Finally, the last obstacle is online selling/e-Commerce. Since we are in the digital world (21st century) with the increasing demand for Information, Communication, and Technologies (ICT) Industry. The tourism industry should do a business plan or well-integrated strategy to market the products online using e-commerce platforms to attract international demand. The industry should not continuously deny the fact that these technologies are at doorsteps. What is being needed is better internet, better marketing for the industry. But on the other hand, PNG has found it difficult to market its tourist attractions on the internet because of high costs and poor download speeds, but the advent of the Coral Sea Cable System may open up new possibilities and challenge the country endured. One of the first challenges will be the need to develop a new skill – digital marketing (Business Advantage PNG 2019).

Now the question is how to evaluate the present status of the market to the international level? The answer lies within the government. As alluded to earlier, all government sectors should work together with private sectors and other stakeholders to bring forth collective thoughts and innovative ideas that would work effectively and efficiently. Do up an organizational structure, revisit monetary and fiscal policies with the legislative framework. Set up a short to medium-term plan and work towards it to achieve milestones. Reduce excessive workload by cutting down/minimizing cost. Stop spending money on waste projects. Fund research projects and encourage teamwork. Do awareness of new products and promote them.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concludes that in order to promote, growth and development of tourism and to boost the industry amid Covid-19 pandemic, it needs collaborative efforts. The tourism industry should work closely with the

government and other stakeholders and departmental heads to market the tourism products at the international markets. In other words, private and public sectors should do a well-studied plan to work collectively in order to achieve any short to medium or long term organizational goals. Although, there are many past kinds of literature regarding the same topic or related to the topic. Which industry itself. There are some areas of study being unattended and need immediate action to fit the missing gaps. These are sad facts that crippled the progress and development of the tourism industry in Papua New Guinea. Some of these challenges include environmental factors, national policies, taxation, airfare, corruption and infrastructure issues.

Tourism in Papua New Guinea is faced with many significant challenges in development after Covid-19 pandemic and the industry needs to work in partnership with the government and other stakeholders to address these issues effectively and efficiently. Thus, this is a growing concern for all the citizens and inbound visitors. Since Papua New Guinea is a small Pacific Island country, more than 75 percent of the total population live in rural areas and only 25 percent live in towns and cities. All information from public and private sectors is kept privately and confidently and is inaccessible and not made readily available for public viewing and consumption. This research may deem progressive and is 'subject to change' in the coming months if substantial information is collected.

Government intervention is mostly needed to look into these issues seriously and address them accordingly. In order to do that, the government needs to set up better policy settings via fiscal and monetary systems and revisit the reform system. Introduce and adapt integrated marketing strategies and implement them so that it evaluates from the present status of the market to the next level and meets global demands. Law and order issues deemed the progress of influx of inbound tourists and visitors. That leads to the safety and security of tourists who intend to travel.

There needs to be a long-term improvement in government priorities. Reduce inefficiency and waste in government spending. Addressing fundamental infrastructure problems in an efficient and effective way. Improve the education system and research tourism outreach and training and fund tourism research. Stop providing excessive incentives to large resource projects. Make sure the taxation system is fair and equitable and that resource industries pay their share of taxes. Encourage foreign investment in areas that will provide benefits to PNG citizens- jobs, new skills, and technologies - and help local businesses become competitive in supplying to larger projects.

There as to be several measures taken by the law and justice sector the policymakers, and the government of PNG to at least minimize the impact of the law and order issues. The results obtained from the research and other associated problems have an indication of a further decline in the number of visitors. The government utilizes a number of strategies including having in place an appropriate legislative framework, policies, procedures, processes, and supervisory techniques. In addition, the tourism industry establishes an organizational structure (i.e. Departments and Units), recruits, and train officers

to ensure the risks which would threaten the stability of the tourism sector is detected and avoided or addressed to manageable levels.

### ***Recommendations***

In order to become an international exposé, tourism in Papua New Guinea should identify potential key pillars in the market economy.

#### *Marketing and Destination*

To increase tourism demand by enhancing market awareness of PNG as a destination and increasing product information and distribution.

#### *Tourism Policy Secretariat*

Establish a Tourism Policy Secretariat under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to be in charge of making tourism policy, planning, standards, HRD planning, and regulations. Implement the niche-based PNG five-year Marketing Plan based on a strong destination brand and try to focus resources in key target markets and product areas.

#### *E-Commerce and Technology*

Since we are living in the 21st century (digital world) create an online marketing platform for tourism products. Build capacity within the new 'Tourism PNG' and Provincial Tourism Bureaus online-based marketing and the organization of Provincial product databases.

#### *Product Development and Investment*

The Government needs to accelerate the growth of the sector by reducing the risks and increasing the potential returns on tourism investment, particularly those of a large scale nature. This will happen if the Government shows a long-term commitment to a well-defined plan of action as well as showing a willingness to be competitive with regional incentive programs.

#### *Partnership*

Develop a master plan for tourism in PNG and invite other government agencies, stakeholders, and private sectors to work in collaboration and collective to achieve a common benefit for the participants and the rest of the economy.

#### *Research and Development (R&D)*

The government needs to facilitate the growth of the tourism industry by funding key impact projects instead of funding over-due and waste projects. Such as investing in (R&D), building research facilities in tertiary institutions, and encouraging those institutions to offer tourism and hospitality courses.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research is only capable of addressing the opportunities and challenges endured by tourists, inbound visitors, and residents. The research also aims to address international marketing strategies that the tourism industry is lacking and intends to adapt well-integrated marketing plans to evaluate the present status of marketing to the international level and identify customer needs. Other areas of study within the department/industry would not be addressed due to the limitation of time and resources.

*Plan & Implement A Better Tourism Industrial Structure*

The tourism industry should do a well-integrated industrial plan and implement it. Engage other state agencies and stakeholders including private sectors. Increase productivity in areas where it is necessary and due.

*Create and Introduce International Marketing Strategies and Channels*

Come up with some good research and development (R&D) ideas and skills in line with today's digital world and create some innovative marketing strategies to showcase and market our tourism products on the global stage and make PNG a tourism destination in the world.

*Create Niche Markets for Tourism*

Create niche markets to sell their products. These products will attract the demand for international travelers who intend to travel to Papua New Guinea. If the government of PNG has captured a large-scale niche market for ordinary netizens to showcase and display products, I assume it will unlock the potential international visitors. Papua New Guineans are very creative and capable of producing goods and services and they are more into Micro Small and Medium Enterprise Business but they lack progress due to poor market conditions.

*Introduce Tourism Policing*

Tourism should have the maintenance of law and order by the police force. The enforcement of regulations or an agreement. The safety and security of the tourists are essential prerequisites for the sustainable long-term growth of this sector. Safety and security considerations become paramount for the tourists during their travel, their stay, and their visit to top tourist destinations. Thus, it has been felt that many states have not deployed Tourist Police due to budgetary constraints for a committed organization for tourist security. Therefore, there is a need for earmarked Police organization, the personnel of which can be deployed at important tourist destinations/circuits with all objectives of ensuring facilitation, guidance, safety, and security to the tourists visiting the place in all the provinces in Papua New Guinea.

*Reasonable Airfares* – being the only national flag carrier (Air Niugini) is suggested to have reduced its airfare prices to promote the influx of international tourists and visitors. The airfares should have been reasonable. Air Niugini extends its airlines services to overseas countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Fiji, and Australia. The national airline company should provide reasonable prices of airlines tickets whether domestically or internationally.

*Fair Tax* – tax component that is being charged for inbound tourists is very high. Higher tax is being charged or GST tax burden for international tourists and business travelers is of great concern.

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