

# **Trouble in Paradise: Experts' opinions on the current touristic situation in French Polynesia**

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## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.0 Research context.....	2
Chapter Two: French Polynesia-The myth unraveled.....	9
2.0 Introduction.....	10
2.1 The discovery of Paradise and its colonization.....	10
2.2 Tahiti and her islands.....	13
2.3 Social, cultural and economic background of French Polynesia.....	20
2.3.1 Population.....	20
2.3.2 Employment, income and tourism.....	21
2.3.3 French financial support.....	22
2.4 The French government.....	23
2.5 Tourism and its wastelands.....	25
Chapter Three: Literature review.....	30
3.0 Introduction.....	31
3.1 Destination competitiveness theory.....	31
3.2 Tourism marketing mix.....	35
3.3 Strategic planning.....	37
3.4 Strategic implementation.....	38
3.5 The C.O.S.T strategic plan (Conseil d’Orientation Stratégique du Tourisme).....	40
3.6 The implementation of the C.O.S.T strategic plan.....	44
Chapter Four: Methodology.....	46
4.0 Introduction.....	47
4.1 Research methodology.....	47
4.2 Data Source.....	50
4.3 Semi-structured interviews.....	50

4.4 Data analysis.....	52
4.5 Participant characteristics.....	53
Chapter Five: Findings and discussion.....	56
5.0 Introduction.....	57
5.1 French Polynesia: why it is a unique destination.....	57
5.2 Application of the 7P's model to tourism in French Polynesia.....	65
5.3 Politics.....	85
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	91
References.....	97
Appendices.....	109

#### **Table of Tables:**

Table 1: Number of visitor arrivals for 2007 and 2011.....	5
Table 2: Hotels closures in French Polynesia since 2003.....	6
Table 3 French Polynesia population census 2007-2012.....	20
Table 4: Budget per department of French Polynesia.....	22
Table 5: Research participants' characteristics.....	54
Table 6: B&B rates in Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine, Bora Bora and Fakarava.....	71
Table 7: Rate comparison of over-water bungalows at Intercontinental Hotels and Resorts.....	74

#### **Table of Maps:**

Map 1– World map.....	14
Map 2 – Tahiti and her islands.....	15

#### **Table of Images:**

Image 1– Lagoon of Bora Bora.....	16
Image 2 – Mountain view from Rurutu.....	16
Image 3– Pearl farm in Mangareva.....	17
Image 4 – Cliffs-Marquesas islands.....	18

Image 5– Pink sand beach in Tikehau.....	19
Image 6 – Club Med Moorea- event center before the fire and after.....	27
Image 7– Club Med Moorea-road entrance.....	27
Image 8 – Cook’s Bay hotel left, Moorea Village right.....	28

### **Table of Figures:**

Figure 1– Multidimensional strenghts of a tourism destination.....	33
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### **Table of Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Hawai’i statistics from 2007-2011.....	109
Appendix 2: Fiji statistics from 2007-2011.....	109
Appendix 3: French Polynesia statistics from 2007-2012.....	110
Appendix 4: Cook islands tourists arrivals.....	110
Appendix 5: Tonga tourists arrivals.....	112
Appendix 6: Samoa tourists arrivals.....	112
Appendix 7: Participant invitation in English.....	113
Appendix 8: Participant invitation in French.....	113
Appendix 9: Participant information sheet in English.....	114
Appendix 10: Participant information sheet in French.....	117
Appendix 11: Consent form.....	120
Appendix 12: Interview questions in English.....	122
Appendix 13: Interview questions in French.....	123
Appendix 14: Tahiti vacation front page brochure.....	124
Appendix 15: Tourists’ satisfaction card.....	126
Appendix 16: Event calendar.....	130

### **Attestation of Authorship**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Céline Perelli

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I dedicate this thesis to my father.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the main contributors to the decline in tourist numbers in French Polynesia as seen by tourism and hospitality professionals. Tourism being the main source of revenue for the French territory, a serious analysis of the current situation needs to be undertaken in order to analyse the potential contributors to that drastic decline. Opinions of hospitality and tourism experts are the foundation of this thesis. It is believed that they know better than anyone else what is the reason or reasons why tourism is doing poorly since the past seven years as they are dealing on daily basis with tourists and other tourism and hospitality organisations.

The research uses a literature review based on the theory of destination competitiveness, tourism marketing mix and tourism strategic planning. Semi-structured interviews are used to interview the participants that agreed to take part in the research. Points of discussions are used to guide the interview between the researcher and the interviewee, which leaves room for other potential points of interests raised by the participants.

The results show that the provision of air servicing seems to be the main problem within the tourism industry in French Polynesia. According to the participants, it is the main issue that needs to be addressed before anything else. Other issues identified include the poor level of advertising in the main markets, the lack of training for hospitality and tourism employees and the incongruity between price and product to name a few.

The small sample size of participants may appear to be an issue, however the participants chosen have been working in the industry for more than ten years and are experts in their fields. Opinions ranging from the Assistant to the Minister of Tourism to five-star hotel managers to travel agency managing directors are presented, which reflects the high level of expertise of the participants. Their opinions are supported by the strategic plan presented in 2010 by the Ministry of Tourism of French Polynesia known as the C.O.S.T. Online travel forums such as the Lonely Planet and Tripadvisor have also been used to support ideas presented in this thesis.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**



## **1.0 Research context**

Tahiti and her islands are seen as paradise for many tourists. Images of tropical beaches, cocktails and bungalows come to mind when mentioning the exotic destination. However, growth trends in tourist arrivals portray a diametrically opposite image. According to the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia (2012), the number of tourist arrivals has dramatically decreased since 2007. A closer look at the market segmentation arrivals reveals the following:

Since 2007, tourists arriving to Tahiti from:

Africa dropped by 18.8%.

Central America dropped by 46.8%.

North America dropped by 48.2%.

South America dropped by 47.2%.

Asia dropped by 33.9%.

Europe (excluding France) dropped by 32.2%.

France dropped by 45.9%.

Pacific dropped by 49.3%.

Middle East dropped by 41.4%.

Overall, tourist arrivals to the French territory dropped by 42.9% between 2007 and 2012. These are concerning figures. The world economic crisis hit in 2007; however is the drop in tourist numbers solely due to the economic crisis?

Tourist arrivals to Fiji have therefore been analysed and compared to Tahiti's as both destinations offer similar scenery, i.e. tropical beaches, crystal clear lagoons, bungalows, and sunsets. The total tourist arrivals for Fiji have increased by 1.25% since 2007 to 2011 (statistics for 2012 not provided at the time the research began). It is a slight increase; however Fiji is still doing better than Tahiti, even though both destinations offer similar attractions. When analysing the number of tourists arriving, it can be observed that Fiji welcomes a larger amount of tourists. For instance, in 2007 Tahiti and her islands welcomed 218,241 visitors while Fiji welcomed 539,881 visitors, and in 2011 Tahiti and

her islands received 162,776 visitors while Fiji received 675,050 visitors. It is a fairly large difference considering both destinations are located in the same area of the globe and as mentioned earlier offer similar products (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

A comparison between Hawaii, which is also located in the Pacific Ocean and offers similar scenery, and Tahiti has been made. Hawaii welcomed 7,496,820 visitors in 2007 and 7,174,397 visitors in 2011 (statistics for 2012 not provided at the time the research began). This is a slight decrease of 0.95% since 2007. However, these figures show that Tahiti attracts roughly the same number of tourists in one year that Hawaii attracts in only 10 days (Hawai'i Tourism Authority, 2013). Full tourism statistics report from Hawaii (years 2007 and 2011), Fiji (years 2007 and 2011) and French Polynesia (from 2007 to 2012) are provided in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

This research has also investigated Cook Islands tourist arrivals, however only statistics from 2005 to 2009 are available. Looking at the figures from 2007, total tourist arrivals were 97,316 and reached 101,164 in 2009, which is an increase of 3.95%. Refer to Appendix 4 for the full report on tourist arrivals in the Cook Islands (Cook Statistics Office, 2013).

Tonga tourist arrivals were 65,657 in 2007 (air arrivals only) and reached 72,592 in 2011, which shows an increase of 10.56%. Statistics for 2012 are not available. Refer to Appendix 5 for the statistics arrivals in Tonga (Tonga Department of Statistics, 2013).

This research has additionally examined Samoa tourist arrivals. The total tourist arrivals in 2007 were 122,356 and reached 127,410 by 2011. Statistics for 2012 are not available. This is an increase of 4.25%. Appendix 6 provides the arrivals statistics for Samoa (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Lastly, New Caledonia's tourist arrivals were analysed. The total tourist arrivals in 2007 were 103,363 and reached 112,204 in 2012, which reflects an increase of 8.55% (Institut de la Statistique et des études économiques, 2013).

A comparison of the figures presented above is presented in table 1: Number of visitor arrivals for 2007 and 2011.

*Table 1: Number of visitor arrivals for 2007 and 2011.*

<b>Islands</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>French Polynesia</b>	<b>218,241</b>		<b>162,476</b>
<b>Fiji</b>	<b>539,881</b>		<b>675,050</b>
<b>Hawai</b>	<b>7,496,820</b>		<b>7,174,397</b>
<b>Cook Islands</b>	<b>97,316</b>	<b>101,164</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Tonga</b>	<b>65,657</b>		<b>72,593</b>
<b>Samoa</b>	<b>122,356</b>		<b>127,410</b>
<b>New Caledonia</b>	<b>103,363</b>		<b>112,204</b>

Therefore it can be implied that the global economic crisis is not solely to blame for the decrease in tourist numbers in French Polynesia as other similar destinations such as Tonga, Samoa, and New Caledonia have had an increase in tourist arrivals since 2007.

Hotels in French Polynesia, especially in Tahiti, are rapidly closing. For instance, the Hilton Tahiti closed its doors in March 2010, with 140 people losing their jobs (La Depeche de Tahiti, 2010; Les Nouvelles de Tahiti, 2010). The Sofitel Maeva Beach also closed its doors in November 2012 with 1,253 billion Pacific Francs (or NZD\$16,818,363.17) of debt and 105 people losing their jobs (La Depeche de Tahiti, 2012; Les Nouvelles de Tahiti, 2012). The Club Med Moorea closed in 2001 with 150 people losing their jobs followed by the Club Med Bora Bora in 2009. The Bora Bora Lagoon Resort also closed in September 2010. The hotel had been opened since 1993 and had 106 employees at the time of closure (Les Nouvelles de Tahiti, 2012).

In addition, Le Mandarin Hotel in Tahiti closed in 2011 not long after the Hilton, making 24 employees redundant. Le Mandarin Hotel was one of the oldest hotels in Tahiti's central area (La Depeche de Tahiti, 2011; Les Nouvelles de Tahiti, 2011). The table below shows the chronological order of the hotels that have closed on the islands of French Polynesia since 2003.

*Table 2: Hotels closures in French Polynesia since 2003.*

(Source: La Depeche de Tahiti, 2013, online source).

Hotel	Closing date	Island
Sofitel Heiva	2003	Huahine
Club Med d'Anau	2004	Moorea
Fare Nana'o	2004	Tahiti
Moorea Village	2005	Moorea
Ferme de Toovii	2006	Nuku Hiva
Prince Hinoi	2007	Tahiti
Hilton	2008	Tahiti
Hotel Bora Bora	2008	Bora Bora
Kia Ora	2009	Rangiroa
Club Med d'Anau	2009	Bora Bora
Bellevue	2009	Huahine
Bora Bora Lagoon Resort	2010	Bora Bora
Relais de la Maroto	2010	Tahiti
Viapoe Farm	2010	Tahaa
Novotel Rangiroa	2010	Rangiroa
Maeva Beach	2012	Tahiti

The aim of the project is to determine and analyse the main contributors to the decline in tourist numbers in French Polynesia.

This raises questions as to why are tourists coming to Tahiti and her islands in reduced numbers. What are the obstacles to tourism development in French Polynesia—a destination that has something to offer for everyone? One of the reason may lie in poor marketing plans of both public and private organisations.

The following research questions were originally formulated in order to address the previously discussed issues:

1. To what extent do the classic theories of destination competitiveness and the marketing mix provide an explanation for the decline in tourism numbers in French Polynesia?

## 2. What other factors may explain the drop?

The findings of each research question will be analysed and discussed in one dedicated chapter.

Chapter two introduces French Polynesia from its colonisation to today's economy and socio-cultural background. The discovery of French Polynesia is firstly presented. An overview of the islands is then introduced along with an overview of the socio-cultural background of French Polynesia, its population census, employment rate and the importance of the hospitality and tourism sector for Tahiti and her islands. The budget per department is also presented. Chapter two also presents the French government structure and provides a list of the Presidents elected in French Polynesia since 2004. The chapter concludes with a presentation of tourism "wastelands" that seem to affect potential investors in French Polynesia.

Chapter three introduces the literature used in the research project. The thesis uses the theory of destination competitiveness, tourism marketing mix also referred to as the 7P's, strategic planning and strategic implementation. Chapter three introduces the C.O.S.T strategic plan to boost tourism in French Polynesia and how it has been implemented so far.

Chapter four introduces the research methodology. Semi-structure interviews are used in the interview process. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the information gathered during the interviews. The participants who agreed to take part in this project are also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter five presents the findings and discussion. The attractive features of French Polynesia are firstly presented and is then followed by the possible problems that tourism and hospitality experts think are the reasons why French Polynesia is having difficulties boosting its tourism industry. The marketing mix model, strategic planning and strategic implementation theories are applied in context.

Chapter six finishes with the conclusion of this project, summarising the main issues identified during field study and answers the two questions raised at the very beginning of the research: 1) to what extent do the classic theories of destination competitiveness and the marketing mix provide an explanation for the decline in tourism numbers in

French Polynesia and 2) what other factors may explain the drop.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**FRENCH POLYNESIA-THE MYTH**  
**UNRAVELLED**



## **2.0 Introduction**

The second chapter introduces the myth of French Polynesia. Its discovery and colonisation is firstly introduced. Then general facts about Tahiti and her islands today is presented such as its location, its different island groups, and its features. The chapter later presents statistics such as the current population, its employment and unemployment rate, its consumer price index and its most important economic sector: tourism. The chapter concludes by an overview of the French government in French Polynesia and how it works. The current political situation is portrayed and is very important for the rest of this research paper.

### **2.1 The discovery of Paradise and its colonisation**

The secluded islands of French Polynesia were amongst the last places on earth to be colonised by the Europeans. Legends say that Polynesians migrated from the Philippines and Indonesia travelling by canoes. The reason for their migration is still unclear (Ieroutard, 2013).

The first islands of French Polynesia were discovered by the Spanish Captain Álvaro de Mendaña y Neyra on July 21st, 1595. The Spanish Captain discovered the Marquesas Islands, which he then named them “Las Islas Marquesas de Mendoza”. On February 4th, 1606, another Spanish Captain Pedro Fernández de Quirós discovered the Tuamotu islands. Bora Bora was discovered 116 years later on June 6th, 1722 by the Dutch Captain Jacob Roggeveen. The Tuamotu islands were rediscovered by the British Captain John Byron on June 7th, 1765 and named them the “Isles of Disappointment”. The island of Tahiti was actually discovered by the British Captain Samuel Wallis who named Tahiti “King George III’s Island”. The “Dolphin” anchored at Matavai Bay in Tahiti’s lagoon on July 24th, 1767. Back in these days, the fleet’s travelling conditions were extremely difficult with a quarter of the crew down with scurvy, which is a disease caused by a deficiency of vitamin C. Months at sea in cramped and squalid quarters and malnutrition, Captain Wallis himself was deprived of strength during most of his visit (lonelyplanet 2013).

Initially, hundreds of canoes surrounded the “Dolphin”. The locals approached,

fascinated by the ship, greeting them to the sounds of drums. However, their fascination quickly turned into fear and the locals attacked the “Dolphin”. Wallis retaliated by firing at the Tahitians and then sent some of his crew ashore to destroy homes and canoes. Following the incident, the crew desperately needed fresh supplies from the land and a trade relationship developed. The locals, who had not yet discovered metals were given knives and nails in exchange. The Captain stayed a few weeks in Matavai Bay, long enough to claim the island for Britain.

Less than a year later on April 2nd, 1768, the French Captain Louis-Antoine Bougainville visited Tahiti. At this stage, Wallis was still on his journey back to Britain and therefore Bougainville was not aware that the land had already been claimed. Bougainville thought he was the first European to set eyes on the island. His visit lasted nine days. As the French Captain was a more cultured man than Wallis, he had no unfriendly encounters with the locals. On the contrary, Bougainville’s journals explain that the Tahitians “pressed them to choose a woman and come onshore with her”. Bougainville further reported of “Venus-like” women with the “celestial form of that goddess” and of locals uninhibited attitude towards sexual matters. Bougainville claimed Tahiti for France but was soon overshadowed by the greatest Pacific explorer of all times, Captain James Cook (lonelyplanet, 2013).

Captain James Cook was sent to the Pacific for two purposes. One was for the Royal Society and consisted of the observation of the transit of Venus as it passed across the face of the sun. It was expected that the distance between the earth and the sun could be calculated from three different places and Tahiti was selected as one of the three measuring points along with Norway and Canada. Cook’s second objective was to hunt for the mythical great continent of the south. Captain Cook’s first objective could not be fulfilled as the instruments of the time proved to be not accurate enough. However, Cook’s expeditions did achieve some impressive scientific work. Cook was supported by associates and most notably the wealthy botanist Joseph Banks. Cook was a brilliant navigator, an inspiring leader, an expert at sea and an indefatigable explorer. His journey communicated wonders not only to Tahiti but also New Zealand and Australia to his European audience (lonelyplanet, 2013).

There had been some colourful chapters in the history of European exploration in the Pacific, but none captured the imagination like the mutiny of the Bounty. This event made the HMS Bounty one of the most famous ships in the history. This event inspired three Hollywood movies (lonelyplanet, 2013).

Lieutenant William Bligh was an expert navigator who had learnt his trade under Cook and had already visited Tahiti. At that time, he was sent off to convey uru (or breadfruit) from Tahiti to the Caribbean. It was believed that breadfruits would make a fine food source for African slaves. His expedition started late in 1787. After a difficult journey, Bligh arrived to Tahiti only to find that the uru tree saplings could not be transplanted. The crew therefore remained in Tahiti for six months. When the uru trees were loaded onto the ship, the Bounty set sail for the Caribbean. On April 28th, 1789 only three weeks later when passing by the islands of Tonga, the crew led by master's mate Christian Fletcher mutinied and took over the Bounty. Bligh and eighteen crew members were pushed onto the Bounty's launch and were set adrift. Bligh sailed his boat across the Pacific and arrived in Timor an island at the southern end of Maritime Southeast Asia after a 41 day journey. His journey was recorded in the record books. Bligh got back to England in early 1790. An investigation cleared him of negligence and a ship was dispatched to carry British naval "Vengeance" to Tahiti (lonelyplanet, 2013).

Vengeance arrived to Tahiti in 1791 with Captain Edward Edwards. Edwards found the 14 surviving mutineers and were informed that they were going back to Britain to serve justice. By that time Fletcher had already left Tahiti sailing off to find a more remote hideaway. Fletcher left with the Bounty with a small group of mutineers to the Pitcairn Island where a settlement was successfully established. Today, the Pitcairn Island is one of the last vestiges of the British Empire. Bligh sailed back to Tahiti in 1792 with the "Providence" to pick up his breadfruit saplings and transported them to the Caribbean. Ironically, the slaves never developed a taste for breadfruit.

In the late 18th century, the missionaries arrived to Tahiti bringing their religion and believes. Their arrival saw the censorship of many Polynesian cultural and religious practices. Thirty members of the London Missionary Society were sent to bring Christianity to the Pacific. In March 1797, 25 missionaries landed at "Point Vénus" and

started forcing their practices over the locals' own beliefs. The missionaries made no effort to combine the traditional Polynesian beliefs with Christianity. Soon dancing was forbidden, clothing that would fully cover the body was decreed, tattoos were banned and silence on Sunday was put into practice. However, other practices such as polygamy, human sacrifice and sex were difficult to suppress (lonelyplanet, 2013).

In the 1790's, British whalers and traders began frequenting Tahiti, buying supplies, introducing alcohol to the locals and spreading diseases. These men, who tried to escape their harsh shipmen life were rough, heavy drinkers and looking for sex. Traders coming from Australia exchanged weapons for food supplies, encouraged prostitution and started producing alcohol on land. The Polynesians having no immunity against diseases such as the plague saw its population plummet. In the late 1760's, the population of Tahiti was estimated to be around 40,000 inhabitants. However in 1800 the population was estimated around 20,000 and around 6,000 by the 1820's. At that time, the French Catholic missionaries were in control of the Gambier Archipelago and the Marquesas islands. Then in 1842, Rear Admiral Dupetit-Thouars arrived aboard of "La Reine Blanche" and pointed his guns at Papeete, the capital city of Tahiti and took power. Queen Pomare, who ruled over Tahiti for more than 50 years was forced to yield to the French. Catholic missionaries arrived on the island of Tahiti with soldiers. The French soon arrested the British missionaries and were forced to leave the island. By 1846, the French had control over Tahiti and Moorea. In 1881, Mangareva and Gambiers islands were annexed by France. Bora Bora, Raiatea, Taha'a and Huanine were annexed by France in 1888. Rurutu was annexed to France in 1900. Rimatara in the Austral islands was annexed by France in 1903. On October 27th, 1946, the group of islands became a French territory and became "French Polynesia" in 1957 (leroutard magazine, 2013).

Today the standard of living is relatively high. Access to adequate health care, education, accommodation, transportation and fresh water are in place.

## **2.2 Tahiti and her islands**

Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, French Polynesia spreads across four million square kilometres of sea area, which is approximately the size of Europe. The 118 islands

are spread over 4,000 square kilometres and are made up of five archipelagos each with their own unique attributes:

The Society Islands (which includes the Winward and Leeward islands)

The Austral Islands

The Gambier Islands

The Marquesas Islands

The Tuamotu Islands

The first map below (Map 1: World Map) shows the location of French Polynesia on a world map. The second map (Map 2: Tahiti and her islands) shows the five archipelagos.

*Map 1: World Map* (Source: ETahiti Travel, 20010)

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*Map 2: Tahiti and her islands* (Source: The Tahiti Traveller, n.d.)

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The Society Islands are made up of the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands. These islands are mountainous and surrounded by lagoons. They are made up of Tahiti, which is the biggest and most frequented island of French Polynesia, as this is where the only international airport is located. Papeete is its capital. Seventeen kilometres away from Tahiti is its “sister island” Moorea with its turquoise lagoon and pineapple plantation fields. Located 175 km northwest of Tahiti is Huahine, an island with a strong culture and long-lasting traditions; Raiatea and Tahaa, sacred islands with fertile grounds; Bora Bora, certainly the most popular island with its renowned beauty, and lastly Maupiti with its jade-coloured lagoons. Image 1 shows one of many breathtaking lagoons of the Society Islands.

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*Image 1: Lagoon of Bora Bora* (Source: <http://www.fourseasons.com/borabora>)

The Austral Islands are located south of the Society Islands and are made up of Rurutu, Tubuai (its capital), Rimatara, Raivavae and Rapa. The population totals 6,300 people. These islands are not frequented by tourists as much as other islands but have beautiful sceneries to offer. Image 2 shows a mountain view of Rurutu.

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*Image 2: Mountain view from Rurutu* (Source: Travel Blog, 2011, <http://www.travelblog.fr/>)

The Gambier Islands are located at the far east side of French Polynesia. They are comprised of 14 islands including Mangareva, which is often called “High Mangareva” due to its high mountains. Because the Gambier Islands are relatively far from Tahiti, they are not commonly frequented by tourists, although there is a strong history that is worth the trip. Mangareva is home of the most popular pearl farms and its lagoons are famous for its highest quality black pearls. Image 3 shows a pearl farm in Mangareva.

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*Image 3: Pearl farm in Mangareva* (Source: Tahiti Vacances, 2011,

<http://www.travelblog.fr/>)

The Marquesas Islands consist of a dozen of mountainous islands and are only 1,500 km away from Tahiti. Only six of these islands are inhabited: Nuku Hiva, Hiva Oa, Ua Pou, Ua Huka, Fatu Hiva and Tahuata. This island group is often called “Terre des hommes” or the land of men. With its gigantic cliffs and steep relief, the Marquesas Islands offer vast valleys where pigs, horses, goats and sheep can be observed in the wild. These islands are home of the popular painter Paul Gauguin’s grave as he was once enchanted by these islands. The lack of coral reefs is another unique characteristic of the Marquesas Islands. Image 4 shows the prestigious cliffs of the Marquesas Islands.



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*Image 4: Cliffs-Marquesas Islands* (Source: AuFeminin, 2013, <http://voyage-bons-plans.aufeminin.com/>)

The Tuamotu Islands are unique as they do not have any mountains, which is why they are usually referred to as the “low islands”. The Tuamotu Islands are made of 77 atolls. They offer a unique connection between the earth and sky because of the different shades of turquoise lagoons, pink-sand beaches and purple coral reefs. The most visited islands are Rangiroa, Tikehau and Fakarava, which mainly attract tourists for scuba diving. The Tuamotu Islands are also popular for their black pearls. The economy relies heavily on tourism, fishing, pearl farms and copra plantations (an essential ingredient in the famous Monoï of Tahiti mythical body oil). Image 5 shows a pink-sand beach on the island of Tikehau.

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*Image 5: Pink-sand beach on Tikehau* (Source: Tikehau Polynesia, 2012,  
<http://www.tahiti-tourisme.com/islands/tikehau>).

French Polynesia has something to offer for most tourists, with its high mountains to its turquoise lagoons and culture. It would seem that this is the perfect holiday destination whether someone is travelling with their family or with their loved one. However, for the past few years, tourism has declined in Tahiti and her islands.

## 2.3 Social, cultural and economic background of French Polynesia

### 2.3.1 Population

As at 22 August 2012 the population in French Polynesia equaled 268,270 inhabitants, which is a 3.3% increase since 2007 (Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, 2012). Table 3 shows the results of the latest population census per archipelagos conducted in August 2012.

*Table 3 French Polynesia population census 2007-2012*

*(Source: Tahiti Tourisme, 2010).*

ARCHIPELAGOS	POPULATION IN 2007	POPULATION IN 2012	DIFFERENCE 2007-2012
Winward Islands	194,623	200,881	3.22%
Leeward Islands	33,184	34,622	4.33%
Marquesas Islands	8,632	9,264	7.32%
Austral Islands	6,310	6,839	8.38%
Tuamotu-Gambier Islands	16,847	16,664	-1.09%
FRENCH POLYNESIA	259,596	268,270	3.34%

Since 2007, the population has increased by 0.6% per year or by 1,700 inhabitants per year. However, its migration is in deficit. The difference between the number of people leaving French Polynesia and the number of people arriving is 7,700 persons over a five year period. Every year, more than 1,500 persons leave the French Polynesian territory (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynesie Francaise, 2012).

### **2.3.2 Employment, income and tourism**

Tourism, pearl farming, aquaculture, arts and crafts, and construction are the main economic sectors in French Polynesia (Tahiti Tourisme, 2010).

As at March 2013, the overall employment rate has decreased by -1.8%, with the employment rate specifically in hospitality decreasing by -0.7% in the past 12 months along with a decrease of -6.8% in construction and -1.4% in retail (Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, 2012). Overall employment rate in hospitality and tourism has not dropped much. The opening of a few hotels like the Hotel Kia Ora and Kia Ora Sauvage in 2012 in the island of Rangiroa, the Maitai Lapita Village in 2012 in the island of Huahine, the Moorea Golf Resort in 2007 and the Moorea Legend Resort is probably linked to this, however the opening of five hotels between 2007 and 2013 cannot explain why the employment rate decreased by -0.7% while a larger amount of hotels closed. It is most likely that people shift to different industries such as pearl farming, construction or opened their own businesses.

Since 2007, 8,800 jobs have been cut from the public and private sectors. For the year ending December 2013, 61,000 people lost their jobs.

The average income has increased by 0.6% in 2013 with an average monthly salary of 316,500 F.CFP (or \$4279 NZD).

The natural environment of Tahiti and her islands is the foundation of the islands' tourism development which generates a significant income for the French territory. 80% of tourists come from the United States, Japan, France, Italy and Australia. Even though tourists have a positive experience in French Polynesia, the destination suffers because in general tourists do not tend to come back.

In 2013, international arrivals have dropped by 2.7% which resulted in a total of 164,393 tourists for that year. According to the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, this drop is due to a reduction of 2.7% hotels overnight stay.

### 2.3.3 French financial support

Tahiti and her islands rely heavily on France's financial support. In 2010, 178,940 billion Pacific Francs (XPF) were spent by the French government in French Polynesia. This equals to NZD \$2,507,542,348.76 (xe.com as at June 2013). This sum was shared amongst government departments as follows:

*Table 4: Budget per department of French Polynesia.*

(Source: Bourse interministérielle de l'emploi public en Polynésie Française, 2010).

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT SPENT IN XPF
National education/ Higher education/ Training/ Research and Culture	66.34 billion
Civil and military pensions/ High commission/ Customs/ General treasury	36.03 billion
Justice/ Security	33.33 billion
Development of the economy	30.24 billion
Operations and development of towns and municipalities	9.87 billion
Social cohesion/ Health	3.12 billion

As can be seen from the figures above, French Polynesia has a reasonably fair budget for its sustainability however it is surprising that there is no distinct budget for the tourism sector. Tourism may fall into "Development of the economy", but knowing that tourism is the primary source of revenue of the country, it would be only fair to have a dedicated budget for that particular sector.

Tourism is indeed the primary resource of the country (COST, 2010). As at 2009, the tourism industry generated 40 billion Pacific Francs (XPF) per year (precisely 37.7

billion Pacific Francs in 2009) and was expected to exceed 40 billion in 2012 (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynésie Française, 2010). Additionally, the industry provides 10,000 jobs. As a comparison, the black pearl exportation industry generates 7.4 billion Pacific Francs and 220 million Pacific Francs in vanilla exportation (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynésie Française, 2010). Even though the tourism industry represents only 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it generates 77% of the revenue of the economy (COST, 2010). The tourism industry is therefore a vital source of revenue for the whole country. Efforts regarding its sustainability should be a primary concern.

## **2.4 The French government**

The French Republic government is a semi-presidential system determined by the French Constitution of the fifth Republic. The nation declares itself to be an "indivisible, secular, democratic, and social Republic" (Assemblée Nationale, 2013). The constitution offers a separation of powers and proclaims France's "attachment to the Men Rights and the principles of national sovereignty as defined by the Declaration of 1789" (Assemblée Nationale, 2013).

The national government of France is divided into an executive, a legislative and a judicial branch. The President shares executive power with his or her appointee, the Prime Minister. The cabinet globally, including the Prime Minister, can be revoked by the National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, through a "censure motion"; this ensures that the Prime Minister is always supported by a majority of the lower house (which, on most topics, has prominence over the upper house). The censure motion is commonly used in French Polynesia and explains the 13 elections between 2004 and 2013.

Parliament comprises the National Assembly and the Senate. It passes statutes and votes on the budget. It controls the action of the executive through formal questioning on the floor of the houses of Parliament and by establishing commissions of enquiry. The constitutionality of the statutes is checked by the Constitutional Council, members of

which are appointed by the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, and the President of the Senate. Former Presidents of the Republic also are members of the Council (Assemblée Nationale, 2013).

The independent judiciary is based on a civil law system which evolved from the Napoleonic codes. It is divided into the judicial branch (dealing with civil law and criminal law) and the administrative branch (dealing with appeals against executive decisions), each with their own independent supreme court of appeal: the Court of Cassation for the judicial courts and the “Conseil d'Etat” for the administrative courts. The French government includes various bodies that check abuses of power and independent agencies.

France is a unitary state. However, the administrative subdivisions: “the régions, départements and communes” have various legal functions, and the national government is prohibited from intruding into their normal operations.

The members of the Assembly of French Polynesia elect the President by secret ballot for a period of five years. He establishes his own government by appointing his Vice President and Ministers that he may dismiss at any time. The President represents French Polynesia and manages government actions. He is the budget organiser and manages French Polynesia’s administration. There are 57 representatives that are elected for a period of five years and represent the five archipelagos of French Polynesia.

Since 2004, the government in French Polynesia was as follows

Gaston Flosse: Tahoera’a Huiraatira elected from February 2004 to 14 June 2004.

Oscar Temaru: Tavini Huiraatira elected from 14 June 2004 to 22 October 2004.

Gaston Flosse: Tahoera’a Huiraatira elected from 22 October 2004 to 3 March 2005.

Oscar Temaru: Tavini Huiraatira elected from 3 March 2005 to 26 December 2006.

Gaston Ton Sang: Tahoera’a Huiraatira elected from 26 December 2006 to 13 September 2007.

Oscar Temaru: Tavini Huiraatira elected from 13 September 2007 to 23 February 2008.

Gaston Flosse: Tahoera'a Huiraatira elected from 23 February 2008 to 15 April 2008.

Gaston Ton Sang: To Tatou Ai'a elected from 15 April 2008 to 11 February 2009.

Oscar Temaru: Tavini Huiraatira elected from 11 February 2009 to 24 November 2009.

Gaston Ton Sang: To Tatou Ai'a elected from 24 November 2009 to 1 April 2011.

Oscar Temaru: Tavini Huiraatira elected from 1 April 2011 to 17 May 2013.

Gaston Flosse: Tahoera'a Huiraatira elected on 17 May 2013.

Clearly there has been a significant amount of political instability since 2004 with 13 elections and three changes of presidents. It appears from the above list that there was a presidency change with each election. (La D  peche de Tahiti, 2013; Les Nouvelles de Tahiti, 2013).

The country therefore suffered from its political instability and perhaps deterred potential investors.

As presented earlier on, such changes in political parties and Presidents occurs because of the "motion de censure" or censure motion. In the French law, a censure motion is a process in which members of a parliament vote in order to officially criticise the government for something. It is a system commonly used in French Polynesia and this will be explained above.

A vote of censure in the French law serves as a function of control which is exercised by the lower house Parliament.

## **2.5 Tourism and its wastelands**

Hotels closure were earlier discussed, but what is more interesting is what actually happened after the hotels closure. Have they been bought by other hotel chains? No. Have they been demolished? No, although this would have created jobs and land to build houses, shops or other infrastructure. Did the government come up with a new project using the current infrastructure? No. A study conducted by Bachimon (2012) called "Tourist wastelands in French Polynesia: the examination of a destination in crisis and manner of resistance to international tourism" will be used to present how severe the



situation is in French Polynesia regarding the inactivity of the government in regards to the tourism industry.

In Tahiti itself, the Bel Air Hotel in Punaauia is the oldest tourism wasteland of French Polynesia. On the east side of Papeete lays the former Holiday Inn Matavai Hotel, also a wasteland. Since the Matavai Hotel closed in 1988, the hotel is home of local 4x4 car owners who consider themselves the sole owners of the property. In downtown Papeete, the Prince Hinoi Hotel (Ibis Hotels) closed in 2007 and is to this day a wasteland as well. The Royal Papeete, a mythical hotel that was built in 1930 and closed in 2009 is also to this day a wasteland. Ten kilometres east of Papeete lays the Tahaara Hotel (Hyatt Regency) which overlooks the sea and covers 8 hectares of land. It is now deteriorating since its closure in 1998 along with the Beach Club Hotel that closed in 2009. On these sites, locals squat in the abandoned rooms and dispose of their rubbish in the wasteland for everyone to see. Famous touristic sites are also nearly closed. For instance, the Botanical Garden in Papearii is partly abandoned. The wooden bridge that enables the access to the forest is home to termites, which makes the bridge extremely dangerous. The orchid greenhouse is destroyed. Security is another major problem. In 2009, there was an incident regarding dogs attacking the only two Galapagos giant tortoises, aged 200 years old, leaving one of them in serious conditions. Another incident relating this time to Gaston Flosse, former president at the time, who illegally built a helicopter landing pad on that particular site, a landing pad that was never used (La Depeche de Tahiti, 2013).

On the island of Moorea, three hotels Club Med Moorea Resort, the Moorea Village and the Cook's Bay hotel are now closed and have never been demolished. Since its closure, a fire broke out at the Club Med in March 2011 and burnt the nightclub and the event center (Tahiti Infos, 2014). The fire was caused by an unsupervised waste disposal fire. However, its remains are still part of the Polynesian "décor". Indisputably, this has a high impact on the landscape of Moorea, one of the most touristic island of French Polynesia. The Club Med spreads across 14 hectares. The Moorea Village and the Cook's Bay hotel

also cover a large amount of land and all three are located by the lagoon side and are visible from the road. It is believed that the closure of these hotels resulted in a poor tourism condition in Moorea. For instance, “20% of local businesses located outside of the hotels closed following the hotels’ closure” (La D peche, 2014). All three properties are squatted and vandalised by locals, while the remaining infrastructures are slowly being damaged by nature. The images above show the remains of the Club Med Moorea.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

*Image 6: Club Med Moorea-Event center before the fire (left) and after the fire (right)*

(Source: <http://www.viatourismreview.net>)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

*Image 7: Club Med Moorea-road entrance*

(Source: <http://www.enfants-autour-du-monde.fr/tahiti/>)

The Club Med’s land belongs to various owners who disagreed at the time regarding the lease, which is why the hotel closed (La D peche de Tahiti, 2014). To this day, some owners took back their land and started building little *fares* or traditional huts and enjoy them during the weekends or school holidays (Tahiti Infos, 2014). The image above shows the current conditions of the Cook’s Bay hotel and Moorea Village.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

*Image 8: Cook's Bay hotel (left), Moorea Village (right)*

(Source: <http://www.viatourismreview.net>)

In Bora Bora, a similar situation takes place. In fact, it is difficult to find one single island that does not have any tourism wastelands. Bora Bora, the most luxurious island of French Polynesia, the “crème de la crème” is a succession of tourism wastelands with hotels closing one by one, such as the Club Med Bora Bora, the Bora Bora hotel and the Lagoon Resort (La Dépêche de Tahiti, 2014). An interesting point is that Bora Bora is the island that benefited most from tax exemption, which is why it has the most luxurious resorts in French Polynesia, but that did not help.

According to Bachimont (2012), tourism wastelands reflect and amplify the instability of a tourist destination. The magnitude of tourist wasteland must be accurately measured in order to understand how it affects the tourism industry in a particular region.

While tourism wastelands are visible, no introspective or retrospective analyses are made. Tourism wastelands result in unsightly, precarious housing conditions and obstructions due to numerous lawsuits.

Moreover, according to Gay (2009, as cited in Bachimont, 2012), a territory that has a successful tourism development strategy should welcome approximately five to ten tourists per year per inhabitant. This means that French Polynesia should welcome approximately two million tourists a year. However, the reality is that only about 200,000 tourists visit the French territory a year. To its current stage, French Polynesia would not be able to account for two million tourists a year. Tourism wastelands do influence potential investors, neighbourhood businesses and tourists opinions, therefore why has nothing being done to fix this? Perhaps the land could have been subject of cultural tourism. Preservation measures could be undertaken to develop current tourism wastelands into Polynesian heritage sites or plantation fields. Mc Kay (2008, as cited in

Bachimont, 2012) believes that tourism wastelands could be part of the tourism “identity” and heritage. Mc Kay further explains that this could be introduced as a way to prevent vandalism in tourist-zones.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.0 Introduction**

At the beginning of this research project, it was suspected that the small number of tourists and lack of repeat visitors coming to French Polynesia was due to an incongruity between tourists' expectations and product delivery. In fact, in the year ending in 2012, the number of repeat visitors decreased by 11.8% in three years (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynesie Française, 2012). However, after conducting a series of interviews with hospitality and tourism experts, the responses collected portrayed greater complexities. Issues regarding marketing decisions and strategic planning were identified, which relate to the concept of destination competitiveness.

The literature review will firstly discuss the theory of destination competitiveness and then discuss the marketing mix, strategic planning and implementation concepts in separate sections.

#### **3.1 Destination competitiveness theory**

A destination is described as a geographical region “serving integrated services to tourists and [is] composed of the combination of the tourism products or the places with distinct natural attractiveness and properties that may be appealing to tourists” (Buhalis, 2010). A tourist destination can be anything from an island, city, region, town, continent, or any place that attracts people to visit (Kozak et.al, 2010). According to Kozak and Rimmington (1999), the features of a tourist destination can be classified into two groups: the primary features that include the culture, climate, and ecology, and the secondary features that are comprised of infrastructures developed specifically for tourism purposes such as hotels, transport, activities and entertainment. The overall attractiveness of a destination is based on these two groups.

Tourists' perception of quality and overall performance play an important role in determining repeat visits as they gain experience of other destinations, whether these destinations are in direct competitions or not. Tourists tend to compare facilities, attractions and service standards of the destinations that they have visited, but perhaps some destinations cannot be compared to one another (Laws, 1995). For example, it is inappropriate to compare Auckland with San Francisco, Paris with Beijing or Tahiti with Hawaii. They are all touristic destinations but offer different primary and secondary features. Thus, it is important to determine which destinations are in direct competition.

Competitiveness in tourism is usually defined as the strength or ability of a destination to provide quality experience to the visitors and quality of life to the local people by developing sustainable advantages and market share (Enright & Newton, 2004; D’Hauteserre, 2000; Kozak, Baloglu, & Bahar, 2010; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). The significant number of studies regarding destination competitiveness have typically focused on comparing two destinations, however Kozak et al (2010) argued that a more valid assessment of tourist destination competitiveness should be developed and include the perspectives of multiple nationalities rather than only two of them. Tourism competitiveness is a concept that encompasses exchange rate fluctuations, productivity levels of various components of the tourism industry, and qualitative factors which affect the attractiveness of a particular destination (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Rao, 2002).

A destination competitiveness can be evaluated both using quantitative and qualitative methods. For instance, the quantitative performance of a destination can be measured using statistics such as tourist arrivals, which are known as hard data. The relative qualitative aspect of destination competitiveness also needs to be taken into consideration as this drives quantitative performance (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Attributes or features of a destination that tourists most liked and most disliked during their holidays are the aspects of qualitative competitiveness.

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) applied the competitiveness of the service industry to the context of tourism destinations on the basis of countries, industries, products and companies. According to these authors, when a destination provides a high standard of living for its citizens, it represents the competitiveness of that destination.

However, the authors also mentioned that tourism competitiveness has not only one, but various dimensions (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). The ability of a destination to compete involves its environmental, social, economic, political, technological and cultural strengths as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Multidimensional strengths of a tourism destination.* (Source: Ritchie & Crouch, 2003)

Ritchie and Crouch stated that what makes a destination competitive is:

its ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations. (p. 2)

All of the multidimensional strengths of a tourism destination are important, however the political competitiveness will be the main focus of this research because 1) other aspects such as the economy, the technology, the culture, social and the environment are discussed in separate sections and 2) there is a sense that something is not quite right in regards to politics. There are ways to analyse a country's societal well-being and they include but are not limited to Gross Domestic Product (or GDP), corruption, unemployment rates, press freedom, inequality of income distribution and consumer price index (UNDP, 2002 as cited in Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). The authors commented on the lack of consideration of political competitiveness when conducting analyses of destination competitiveness, although it appears that the stability and political strength of a destination is critical to its tourism. This aspect will be discussed and applied to French Polynesia in the findings and discussion chapter.

The theory of destination competitiveness aims to diagnose the competitive position of a specific destination, however it sometimes focusses on particular aspect of destination competitiveness which includes but is not limited to destination marketing (sometimes known



as tourism destination marketing), strategic planning and management, strategic implementation and price competitiveness (Buhalis, 2000; Dwyer, Forsyth, & Rao, 2000; Jamal & Getz, 1996, as cited in Crouch, 2007). Destination tourism marketing and strategic planning and implementation will be discussed in this chapter. Only these three aspects will be analysed because:

any general model of international trade must encompass an extraordinarily large number of causal variables...a single theory of international trade...cannot hope to account satisfactorily for all of the kinds of international trade which is undertaken in this world. What is needed, then, is a more flexible body of analysis that will allow studies of specialist sub-categories. (Gray, 1989, pp. 98-99, as cited in Crouch, 2007)

The two authors explained that destination competitiveness is based upon two aspects: a destination's resource endowment, which is also known as the comparative advantage and a destination's capacity to deploy resources, also known as competitive advantage. The impact of global macro-environmental forces, such as terrorism and the global economy, and competitive micro-environmental circumstances that may interfere with the well-being of a destination are also taken into consideration in this model. Thirty-six destination competitiveness attributes were identified in this model, however only the ten most important attributes will be discussed in this chapter. The attributes are listed in order of importance:

- 1) Physiography and climate
- 2) Culture and history
- 3) Tourism superstructure
- 4) Mix of activities
- 5) Awareness and image
- 6) Special events
- 7) Entertainment
- 8) Infrastructure
- 9) Accessibility
- 10) Positioning and branding

Although a destination's natural qualities (i.e. physiography and climate) cannot be influenced by humans, the remaining nine attributes are considered to be the ultimate features of a

destination that influence tourists and the way they perceive the destination in comparison to others. It can be suggested that a destination that does not offer a wide variety of tourism superstructures (e.g. restaurants and touristic facilities) or is difficult to access may not be able to compete in the tourism marketplace.

Some of these features are found to be linked with each other. For instance, a destination's image tends to be influenced by its branding and positioning activities. It can also be implied that for a destination to be competitive, it has to have a strategy in place to develop its tourism along with a marketing plan. This is discussed below.

### **3.2 Tourism marketing mix**

The marketing mix model is considered by some researchers to be the best available tool to help marketing professionals develop an effective marketing plan (Baker, 2012). In regards to marketing mix, Doyle (1994) writes: “there are two key decisions which are central to marketing management: the selection of target markets which determines where the firm will compete, and the design of the marketing mix which will determine its success in these markets.”

Today, the marketing mix model is known as the 7P's model, however it used to have only 4P's. They were: Product, Price, Promotion and Place. In simple terms, “product” indicates customer value. This includes the benefits perceived by the customer, the quality of services received and the value for money against other competitors. “Price” implies cost and is an aspect of the P's that is a supply-side decision that a customer will assess against competition. “Promotion” is a way of communication between the producer and the customer. “Place” relates to convenience—the customer's ease of access to the product (Middleton & Clarke, 2000).

The product in tourism relates to the basic design that is put together and offered to customers, such as packages. Products are continuously adapted to match the needs and expectations of the targeted customers. Nowadays, tourism organisations such as travel agencies, provide a range of different products in their brochures. Hotels might also offer different products and packages ranging from business meetings to honeymoon deals.

In tourism, it is common to see prices advertised in travel agencies or hotels and airlines' websites. Pricing is usually based on the cost of running a business, the competitors' prices and how much people are willing to pay for the product or service (Edgell, 2002).

Promotion in tourism includes advertising such as brochures, travel shows, mailings, sales promotions and Internet promotions. Promotional tools are used to make customers aware of a product as well as re-enforce product knowledge.

Place does not refer to the location of a touristic facility or attraction. Place relates to the point of sale that provides customers with access to a particular product. For example "place" for Sea World in Australia is not only the Gold Coast, but also numerous travel agents in Australia and around the world who sell the product.

The four P's model was restructured by Booms and Bitner in the 1980s, and people, process and physical evidence were added to the original list. People in tourism vary from the tourists, employees, and local community. Tourists are most likely to interact with each other, which tends to affect their overall satisfaction. Employees, both front-line and non-contact employees play a crucial role in tourists' overall satisfaction. The community, or the residents of a destination, play a role as they interact with tourists. Their friendliness or hostility surely affects tourists' experience of a destination. "People" could be considered one of the most important P's of the 7P's framework as tourism is a human interaction industry.

The service delivery process in tourism consists of both process and outcomes. For a tourist, the outcome is usually intangible such as a sense of well-being or satisfaction, or the development of personal interest. In travel and tourism, the outcome depends on the quality of the service delivery as perceived by the tourist. Customers move through a series of encounters during their tourism experience. Whether it is a face-to-face encounter with a hospitality or tourism employee, a member of the community, a website, a telephone service or even an automated check-in machine at a hotel, if one of them goes wrong, it is likely that the tourist will have a negative experience, and therefore a negative service delivery process. This is why most tourism and hospitality organisations have service recovery in place. This enables the company to rectify their mistakes and create a more positive image in the customer's mind. In a way, it is an opportunity to convert a dissatisfied customer into a satisfied one.

The last P of the 7P's framework relates to physical evidence. Unlike a product, a service

cannot be experienced before it is delivered, which makes it intangible (Middleton & Clarke, 2000). Therefore the customer is present during the production process. This is because tourism products are characterised by the concept of inseparability. According to Middleton and Clarke (2000), physical evidence is “rooted” in the five senses of sight, scent, sound, touch and taste. In traditional marketing, physical evidence refers to packaging, however in tourism marketing is relates more to the overall ambiance of a destination or attraction. Music, decorations, smell and sights of a dinner being cooked in front of a guest are examples of physical evidence that enhances an experience.

### **3.3 Strategic planning**

In order to develop an effective marketing plan, strategic planning must be considered. Planning is the essential element of tourism marketing. According to Djurica & Djurica (2000) “planning helps consistency of marketing activities of a tourist destination with its goals and the abilities and needs of its market” (p. 4). Efficient planning is a three-stage process that includes the determination of goals, the time period identification, and indication of the way these goals can be achieved. Implementing an effective strategic plan will have a positive outcome on the business of the tourist destination. Being able to understand what tourists want from a destination and understanding the competitors will increase the value of the tourism product. Strategic planning enables a tourist destination to retain its current visitors but also to attract new ones. Thus, business profitability of the tourist destination will increase.

Strategic planning is therefore the idea of improving performance of a tourist destination and understanding the changing market environment which will provide a certain degree of value to its tourists. A destination is most likely to be superior to its competitors by having an effective strategic plan in place.

It is suggested that a ‘mission of the tourist’ should be formulated. This is the purpose of a tourist destination—the goal that the tourism development organisations are trying to achieve in a specific tourist destination.

It can be suggested that tourism development strategies such as the “New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015” or the “Cook Islands Annual Plan” are indeed strategic plans as they incorporate marketing concepts, branding, goals and visions, current statistics, the economy,

and the purpose of the destination.

The evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats represent the SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is one of the main tools to monitor the environment and find potential opportunities (Djurica & Djurica, 2010). In tourism, a SWOT analysis gives the opportunity to identify key areas where the destination competitiveness could be strengthened.

A SWOT analysis of French Polynesia will be presented in chapter six.

### **3.4 Strategic implementation**

In order to put a strategy into practice, two aspects of strategic implementation must be addressed. They are: 1) resource planning, where the emphasis is on the identification of resources needed to support a strategy and 2) designing an organisational structure that can support a particular strategy (Tribe, 2010).

An analysis of the feasibility of an option in terms of finance and resources availability is involved in the evaluation stage of the strategy process. Resource planning is involved with the identification of resources, the resource fit and the formulation of a co-ordinating plan. According to Tribe (2010), the identification of resources can be separated into four categories: financial resources which relates to the budget, sources of finance and the logistics of finance, physical resources which relates to consumables, machineries and plant, human resources which relates to the quantity and quality of the future workforce, and information and technology resources which relate to reduced costs, creating barriers against competitors, improving competitive positioning and improving products and services.

The design of an organisation structure is “the framework which describes how an organisation’s activities are arranged” (Tribe, 2010, p.198). It presents how its personnel are grouped together and the reasons of the grouping. Mintzberg (1979, as cited in Tribe, 2010, p.198) defines organisation structure as “the way in which its labour is divided into distinct tasks and then its co-ordination achieved amongst those tasks.” The author adds that organisational structure is key in determining the success of an organisation in achieving its aims (Tribe, 2010). Other authors such as Chandler (1962), Child (1977) or Sloan (1990) explain that if there is a change in strategic direction, the structure of the organisation will also

need to be changed in order to implement that strategy. However, Mintzberg (1998, as cited in Tribe, 2010) note that any strategy will be influenced by the existing organisational structure.

There are six main types of organisational structure. They are: 1) simple structure, where there is an absence of formal structure and is usually found in small businesses, 2) functional structure, where groups are arranged according to functional areas and typically applies to sectors such as finance, marketing, research and development. This structure is usually used in single-market organisation. 3) multidivisional structure, where groupings are arranged according to an organisation's products or services or geographical areas, 4) matrix structure, where workers are grouped by both function and product, 5) holding company, which is an umbrella type of structure for the ownership and co-ordination of a number of separated business units and 6) experimental and organic structures, which is a flexible and fluid network of people and communication

When the appropriate organisational structure is selected and implemented, a monitoring strategy must be implemented as well to measure the success of the strategy. Quality indicators and financial indicators are often used to monitor the strategic success of the performance targets. Quality indicators is a system that control standards. For example, satisfaction surveys, number of repeaters, number of complaints are performance indicators used to control and monitor the tourism industry. Financial indicators use quantitative techniques to evaluate the success of a strategy as opposed to quality indicators that use both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Financial indicators measure the efficiency of a strategy using data on return on capital employed, earnings per share, turnover, profit before tax, or dividends paid to shareholders. The figures may be interpreted based on specific targets that may have been discussed and stated in the organisation's mission.

However, obstacles to reach an effective strategy implementation may arise. For example, Hrebiniak (2006), states that 1) managers are trained to plan rather than to execute. The author emphasizes that there is an incongruity in training managers. 2) Implementation does not benefit from the best management as managers tend to delegate the task of implementing a strategy even though they are actively participating in the strategic planning process. 3) Planning and execution are seen as interdependent. Even though there seems to be a logical distinction between the two in theory, in practice there is a gap between strategy formulation

and implementation. The author notes that there is a need to connect thinkers and doers. 4) Implementation is a process that takes longer than formulation. 5) More people are involved with execution than strategy formulation, which can make communication and coordination difficult.

Pettigrew and Whipp (1992) concluded that there are five key success factors commonly found in organisations where change has been implemented successfully: 1) Monitoring the external environment and adapt to it, 2) change is addressed as an important issue, 3) translation of strategic plans to operational outcomes, 4) integrating effective human resources management into the strategy process and 5) consistency and coherence of strategic planning to avoid conflict between different parts of the strategy. The 7 S framework summarizes the above. Effective organisational change results from a successful relationship between the structure, strategy, systems, style, skills, staff and superordinate goals (Waterman, 1980 as cited in Tribe, 2010).

All strategies should be reviewed regularly. A strategy review entails the assessment of the success of a new strategy. In general, companies produce an annual report and these often include an evaluation of the current strategy (Tribe, 2010). An annual report displays extensive financial information about the company during the year along with the company's activities. The success of a strategy is usually based on the financial performance of the company (Tribe, 2010).

To conclude, the theories of destination competitiveness, 7P's of marketing mix, strategic planning and implementation will be carried forward and applied to the research questions. The next chapter will introduce the methodology chapter which discusses the methods used to collect information regarding this research topic.

### **3.5 The C.O.S.T strategic plan (Conseil d'Orientation Stratégique du Tourisme)**

This section introduces a strategic plan developed by the French Polynesian government. The project well known by hospitality and tourism professionals proposes ideas to boost the tourism industry keeping the Polynesian values and involving all types of accommodation (i.e. resorts, bed and breakfasts, smaller hotel categories etc...), airlines, the government, the education center, all type of tourism activities and cruise ships.

The proposed action plan encompasses ten key ideas that were ideally aimed to be achieved between 2011 and 2013. These objectives were created in order to restructure Tahiti's tourism and its products. After these initiatives would be implemented, a plan with an even greater vision could be put into action. The cost to achieve each action is approximate and is classified into three categories: low (less than NZD \$135,156.69), moderate (between NZD \$135,156.69 and NZD \$675,783.47) and high (more than NZD \$675,783.47). The C.O.S.T. plan includes the following objectives:

**1) To make tourism a priority in French Polynesia**

By including a module regarding tourism in primary and secondary school. This would be coordinated by the Ministry of Education at a low cost.

By educating the <25-year-old generation about tourism using conferences, forums and workshops. This would be coordinated by the Ministry of Education at a moderate cost.

By establishing an annual campaign to educate the community about tourism. GIE Tahiti Tourisme would coordinate the project at a moderate cost.

**1) To enhance French Polynesian's culture and value**

By adopting a new position in the market, larger and inimitable by other destinations through the Tahitian culture, the tattoos, handicraft, the dances, the gastronomy and by highlighting French Polynesia's natural beauty, calm and safety. GIE Tahiti Tourisme would coordinate the project at a low cost.

**2) To protect the natural environment**

By implementing a green team. The ministry responsible for matters of the environment would carry out the project at a high cost.

By managing marine and land space and the coastline. The ministry responsible for planning and construction would carry out the project at a high cost.

**3) To sell the destination differently and more aggressively**

By redefining Tahiti as a brand.



By allowing a larger budget dedicated to the promotion of French Polynesia in major markets.

By using more images in marketing.

By being more present on the Internet.

All the above would be coordinated by GIE Tahiti Tourisme at a moderate cost.

#### **4) To improve the provision of air servicing and in-land travel flow**

By introducing a taxi company. The ministry responsible for inland transportation would carry this out at a low cost.

By introducing a shuttle between Tahiti's west and east sides. The ministry responsible for inland transportation would coordinate this at a moderate cost.

By using Air Tahiti Nui as a touristic development tool, coordinated by Air Tahiti Nui at a high cost

#### **5) To sustain touristic organisations' profitability, to attract investors and generate their interests to work with French Polynesia**

By finalising laws and regulations such as cruise ship activities and small hotels' government help. This would be coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture at a high cost.

#### **6) To make Papeete the cultural and recreational capital of French Polynesia**

By planning a new layout of Papeete's seafront. The Ministry of Tourism would coordinate this project at a moderate cost

#### **7) To manage, highlight and make profitable French Polynesia's touristic sites**

By identifying all touristic sites. The Ministry of Tourism would be carry out the project at a moderate cost.

By restoring the main touristic sites such as "Pointe Venus", the Faaroa's tropical garden and the Tahiamanu site in Moorea. This project would be managed by the Ministry of

Tourism at a high cost.

By categorising touristic sites by themes such as cycling, bush walking, etc. This project would be managed by the Ministry of Tourism at a low cost.

By carrying out a study in regards to the creation of a touristic zone in Punaauia (Tahiti) that would include a white-sand beach. This project would be coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism at a moderate cost.

#### **8) To create, plan and sustain events in French Polynesia**

By creating an annual list of events, mainly focusing on the Heiva. This project would be managed by the Ministry of Tourism at a moderate cost.

By organising an event related to cruise ships. This project would be coordinated by both the Ministry of Tourism and GIE Tahiti Tourisme at a low cost.

#### **9) To guarantee a high quality and consistent service through training**

By developing a list of occupations related to tourism in order to highlight the professions available. This project would be managed by the Ministry of Tourism at a low cost.

By developing a label system to identify hospitality organisations that have undertaken the trainings. This would guarantee the service quality of the hospitality organisation that displays the label. This project would be conducted by the Ministry of Tourism at a moderate cost.

By creating a ranking system for bed and breakfasts. This project would be coordinated by GIE Tahiti Tourisme at a moderate cost.

By optimising the training of overseas travel agents. This project would be managed by GIE Tahiti Tourisme at a moderate cost.

Source: Stratégie de développement touristique de Polynésie Française, 2010

### **3.6 The implementation of the C.O.S.T strategic plan**

It is difficult to evaluate the success of this action plan as there is no evidence of any achievements or realisation process made available to the public. The literature suggests that annual reports and financial information are used to evaluate the success of a strategic implementation, however as none of the above was presented it is difficult to present a success rate. As the researcher is from French Polynesia, she can confirm that Papeete's seafront was indeed re-built, however other projects mentioned above did not appear to take place. An event calendar was created and can be found on the "Tahiti Tourisme" website and at the "GIE Tahiti Tourisme" office (Refer to Appendix 16 for the full event calendar). Upon successful completion of the above projects, a bigger action plan, one with a greater vision would have been able to be developed. The details regarding this action plan are not made available to the public.

The above action plan sounds exactly like what the Tahitian tourism industry needs. It is achievable, concrete, follows thorough and comprehensive budgets and focuses on the principle attributes of French Polynesia in regards to its tourism (i.e. its culture, history, authenticity etc...). Being so perfect, the action plan also aims to educate the population and train the workforce regarding the importance of the hospitality and tourism industry for the economy.

As perfect as it sounds, the C.O.S.T project was never carried out to its full capacity. A few projects were indeed achieved such as the renovation of the seafront and the event calendar but what about the other ten key projects? What happened to the C.O.S.T project? Why hasn't it been executed?

As presented earlier, the government did in fact change at the time. The TAVINI political party led by Mr Temaru Oscar took over (once again) and appointed another Minister of Tourism, Mr Bopp Roland, a very qualified person for the job as he studied in the prestigious "School of the Economic War of Paris". It could only be presumed that this person would lead a great "battle" to solve the problems that French Polynesia faced in the tourism sector. This was in fact what he did. Mr Roland who was previously the Head

of Department at Faa'a's City Council, decided to re-name or 're-brand' the well-known "G.I.E Tahiti Tourisme" to "Tahiti Tourism Authority". Now that the main tourism establishment has been renamed with an English name, the tourism industry can improve. Essentially, we had a local city council Head of Department converted to an 'expert' in tourism to manage an organisation that had been existing for years, re-branding it "à la sauce Anglaise", and trying to find solutions (that had already been presented by Mr Hamblin in March 2010) regarding the issues that French Polynesia faced in the tourism sector. The C.O.S.T. project had already presented concrete solutions, incorporating Polynesian values, sustainable tourism, ease of access to French Polynesia, development of French Polynesian products, etc. into its strategies but has not been implemented.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **METHODOLOGY**

## **4.0 Introduction**

This section will outline the methodology used to collect information regarding this research topic. First of all, research methodology will be explained. The reason why qualitative research was used instead of quantitative research will be outlined in this chapter. Secondly, the data source will be discussed. This study uses a similar framework as the Delphi study in a way that it is based on experts' opinions. This will also be explained in this chapter. Thirdly, this chapter discusses the semi-structured interviews used during the interviews. Fourthly, the way that the information was analysed will be described and discussed. This research study is based on thematic analysis. The reason why Nvivo was not used will be explained.

### **4.1 Research methodology**

Research is defined as the “intellectual work undertaken with the objective of advancing the frontiers of human knowledge and abilities” (Phophalia, 2010). Research is undertaken using modern statistical techniques such as surveys or focus groups. It can also be defined as the “art of investigation” (Phophalia, 2010) and can lead to the development of theories, principles or generalisations. There are various definitions of the term, however it can be concluded that research is the pursuit of truth through study, observation, comparison and experimentation. It is a contribution to the existing knowledge.

According to Phophalia (2010) there are nine important types of research. They are:

- a) Pure research of fundamental research
- b) Applied research
- c) Action research
- d) Empirical research
- e) Quantitative research
- f) Qualitative research
- g) Policy research
- h) Comparative research

i) Longitudinal research.

As this study mainly focusses on understanding how hospitality and tourism experts perceive the current touristic situation in French Polynesia, a qualitative research approach was used, which analyses opinions and ideas instead of analysing statistics as used in quantitative studies. Quantitative research was not considered to suit the purpose of this research because this study seeks a range of opinions, and a quantitative approach would not have allowed us to understand the experts' point of views.

Qualitative research within social sciences has been highly criticised in the past. This method has been seen rather simplistically and considered a “soft”, “non-scientific” approach to study social sciences (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). As opposed to quantitative studies, qualitative studies do not produce quantified findings or measurements as part of the research process, which is why this method has been seen as an inferior approach to research. Guba and Lincoln (1998) argued that qualitative studies are only useful when combined with quantitative techniques. This view was also maintained by Riley and Love (2000, cited in Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Silverman (2000, cited in Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) found that researchers who used qualitative approaches to research were accused of having an “oversimplified view”.

However in the past 20 years, qualitative studies have become increasingly more popular in social sciences, especially in the tourism field. Even though there is a need for quantification and statistical insights in tourism studies (when looking at market trends and the economy), a qualitative approach can offer a significant advantage when trying to understand processes. A qualitative approach focusses on studying things in their natural settings and interpreting people's ideas, however this approach can be combined with quantitative studies. It has become increasingly popular to combine both techniques of research to gain a better insight into a particular issue. Although combining both techniques has become popular in research, this study only used a qualitative approach because the researcher was seeking experts' opinions on specific topics. Statistical information such as tourists' arrivals, population censuses, budgeting and employment rates were only used to analyse French Polynesia's economy (refer to the introduction).

A researcher's set of beliefs is known as a paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). A

paradigm is “a human construction which represents simply the most informed and sophisticated view that its proponents have been able to devise” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 202). In other words, a research paradigm relates to concepts and patterns of a particular subject. Ontology, epistemology and methodology are the three main elements of a paradigm. The term ontology is derived from Greek and means “being” (onto) and “science, theory and study” (logia). Ontology in philosophy describes the study of the nature of reality, of what is and what is not. Ontology deals with issues regarding entities that exist or could exist. Epistemology is derived from the Greek “epistēmē”, meaning “knowledge” and “understanding”, and “logos”, meaning “the study of”. It is a term frequently used in philosophy to describe the nature and origins of knowledge (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Methodology simply refers to how we collect knowledge about various subjects. Therefore, the ontology of the researcher (or their definition of reality) relates directly to the production of knowledge, and their epistemology depends on what they want knowledge about. The knowledge researchers seek determines their methodology (Jones, 1993, as cited in Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Research is influenced by either four of the following paradigms: positivist, post-positivist, critical and interpretive. The following section will outline the interpretive paradigm.

Researchers who are influenced by an interpretivist view believe that there is more than one truth and reality. They believe that different people have varying perceptions and views based on their life experiences. This research consisted of a collaborative approach between the researcher and the interviewee, predicated on the researcher’s belief that reality is socially constructed. All findings were generated through arguments and discussions between the two parties and the information generated is interpreted by the researcher. As opposed to the positivist paradigm, interpretive studies explore the ethical, political and epistemological dimensions of research (Marcus, 1998). Researchers with an interpretivist view usually pursue qualitative studies.

This study follows an interpretive approach to qualitative research because understanding and analysing experts’ point of views are the main focuses of this study. Experts who were interviewed had their judgments influenced by both internal and external factors in French Polynesia along with their own life experiences. This is why it is important to keep in mind that there is more than one truth or reality and there is a no right or wrong



answer to this research question. The next section will introduce the Delphi study, as this research uses a similar model in that the participants were all experts in their own fields. The steps taken to conduct a typical Delphi study will be discussed followed by the aim of this technique.

#### **4.2 Data Source**

The Delphi technique is widely used in business and health sciences, and it is “a series of sequential questionnaires or rounds interspersed by controlled feedback that seek to gain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts” (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). This technique of research is used in qualitative studies as it relies heavily on the opinions of individuals presumed to be experts in their field. The Delphi technique was developed in 1950 by researchers from the RAND Corporation in the United States (Garrod & Fyall, 2005; Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000). Although this method is more popular in health sciences, tourism studies also use this type data gathering as it is a very flexible method of research. Experts’ opinions and judgments enable the researcher to dig beneath the surface and discover insights that would have been otherwise unavailable to the researcher without their participation (Garrod & Fyall, 2005). A Delphi study was not conducted however it followed the concept as hospitality and tourism experts were consulted.

#### **4.3 Semi-structured interviews**

This research consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews with hospitality and tourism professionals who have a solid level of expertise regarding the destination. An interview is defined as a qualitative data collection method where the researcher (or the interviewer) asks questions to a respondent (or the interviewee). Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or by telephone (Polit & Beck, 2006). There are different types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews use questionnaires, however this method tends to generate quantitative rather than qualitative data and is therefore not the focus of this research. Unstructured interviews do not use any set of predetermined questions and are more like a conversation

between two parties in which the interviewer guides the conversation.

Semi-structured interviews use a set of predetermined questions, however other questions tend to emerge as the interview proceeds. These types of interviews usually take between 30 minutes to several hours depending on the depth of the conversation (Whiting, 2008).

Participants were asked to participate via e-mail. Refer to Appendix 7 for the invitation in English and Appendix 8 for the French version. In the invitation, the aim of the study was described along with the process of the interviews and other issues that the participants may have, such as how long is the interview going to take, why is it being recorded etc...A copy of the Participant's Information Sheet was attached to each invitation. Refer to Appendix 9 for the Participant's Information Sheet in English and Appendix 10 for the French version.

Participants who agreed to take part in the study were then sent a consent form, which they were required to date and sign and return to the researcher. Refer to Appendix 11 for the consent form. A time and place to conduct the interviews were arranged privately with each participant and were scheduled within a two-week period. The researcher flew to French Polynesia on 19 May 2013 to conduct the interviews herself within the two-week timeframe. Prior to each interview, a verbal checklist of points of explanation was presented to the interviewee. The following points were discussed:

The purpose of the interview

Clarification of the topic under discussion

The approximate length of the interview

Permission to use the audio recorder

The researcher gave the interviewee a chance to ask for clarification prior the start of the interview and assured the participant that he or she may also ask for clarifications during the interview. Refer to Appendix 12 for the interview questions in English and Appendix 13 for the French version. A summary of the findings was made available to each respondent upon request.

#### **4.4 Data analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the information gathered during the interviews. This is a method widely used in qualitative studies for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). This method of analysis is very flexible but is often criticised by academics because there is no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how to go about doing it. In addition, it is seen as a “poorly branded” method because it does not have a “named” analysis in the same way that other methods of analysis do such as ‘Grounded Theory’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Despite having similar traits to Grounded Theory, thematic analysis was chosen because this research does not aim to develop a theory that explains the data, as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Braun & Clarke (2006) propose a step-by-step guide on conducting thematic analysis that was used for this research. They suggest that the researcher should first familiarise herself with the data by transcribing the interviews. Then, the researcher should generate initial codes, collating relevant data to each code. Thirdly, the researcher searches for themes, collating codes into potential themes. Mind maps are usually needed in order to visualise the themes. Fourthly the themes should be reviewed and then defined and named. Only after following these steps can the researcher begin writing her report.

NVivo, which is software used to analyse qualitative data, was not used for three reasons: 1) a computer cannot analyse qualitative data, only the researcher can (Roberts & Wilson, 2002), 2) understanding data cannot be carried out by a computer (Kelle, 1995), and 3) the price to download the software was cost prohibitive. Although the software is time saving as the software would generate trends and themes between the information provided, the researcher chose to spend the additional time necessary to analyse and understand the data using thematic analysis.

The following chapter includes the findings collected during the interviews. A discussion

of the results is also included.

#### **4.5 Participant characteristics**

Most participants have agreed to be represented by their surname and professional status except for four who required anonymity. These participants were therefore assigned the following pseudonym “Benjamin”, “Paul”, “Hiriata” and “Josephine”. The non-governmental companies where these participants work will not be named and will be called Company W, X, Y and Z. Table 4 summarises key information about the participants such as their surnames, their roles, and the companies and organisations for which they work. All interviews were conducted in French, therefore the quoted material used in this thesis has been translated into English by the primary researcher, who is a native French speaker.

Two interviews were conducted in Auckland: Mrs Carter from Tahiti Vacations and Paul from Company X. All other interviews were conducted in French Polynesia.

As mentioned earlier, the interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the researcher began the interviews with specific questions and then gave the opportunity to the interviewees to say what they felt was important. The interview questions were decided into 3 themes: Tourist satisfaction where the focus was on tourists’ expectations, intent to revisit and satisfaction rates, Push and Pull factor, where the focus was on what attracts tourists to French Polynesia and what is the product actually offered in the destination, and the 7P’s of service marketing where the focus was on branding, tourism strategies, competition from other destinations and value for money. No set of questions were formulated prior of the interviews but the above points of interests were used as conversation starters. A section regarding politics was formulated but only used if the interviewees started talking about it. 100% of them talked about politics. Refer to Appendix 12 for the points of interests used during the interviews (English version).

Participant	Role	Current workplace	Category
Mr Christophe Bergues	Assistant of the Minister of Tourism	Ministry of Tourism-Papeete	Government department
Mrs Lola Carter	Managing Director	Tahiti Vacation-Auckland	Travel agency
Benjamin	General Manager	Company W-Moorea	Hospitality and tourism
Mrs Corinne Lacalmanti	Manager	Fare Vaihere-Moorea	Bed and Breakfast
Mr Philippe Guery	Manager	Fare Vaihere-Moorea	Bed and Breakfast
Mrs Dany Panero	Former Managing Director	GIE Tahiti Tourisme-Papeete	Economic interest group
Josephine	Head Bartender	Company Y-Papeete	Hospitality
Mr Jérôme Guedj	Director of Sales and Marketing	South Pacific Management-Papeete	Hotel management company
Mr Hiro Damide	President of "Committee of Tourism of Moorea"	Committee of Tourism of Moorea	Tourism association
Mrs Nathalie Perelli	Managing Director	Hotel Hibiscus-Moorea	2-star hotel
Paul	Former Managing Director	Company X-Auckland	Tourism
Hiriata	Restaurant Manager	Company Y-Papeete	Hospitality

*Table 5: Research participants' characteristics*

All participants were contacted on 29 April 2013 by e-mail that included an invitation and the Participant's Information Sheet. Out of the 29 invitations sent, twelve agreed to participate, which is a response rate of 41.38%.

As shown in Table 5, twelve participants agreed to participate in the research project. The interviews were conducted both in New Zealand and French Polynesia over a three-week period. The interviews started on 16 May 2013 and ended 2 June 2013. The participants were selected based on the following criteria: they required considerable knowledge about French Polynesian tourism and needed to be experts in their fields. As can be clearly seen in Table 4 most participants had management roles and came from both the tourism and hospitality fields. From travel agencies to five-star hotels and government departments, the interviews covered experts' opinions from various fields.

Out of the 29 potential participants, 12 were general managers or assistant general managers of five-star hotel chains in Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora or Tikehau. Most of them refused to participate on the basis that this research topic was "too political" and that it was a "very sensitive issue" due to its political involvement. Many politicians tend to stay in particular resorts when they are travelling, the general managers of these specific resorts were the ones to decline participating in the interviews. Some of them even suggested to change the research topic. Therefore, questions regarding how is the local government actually involved in the development of tourism began to rise in the researcher's mind: Is the government a factor that influences tourism in French Polynesia? Is the government the reason why tourism has declined?

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

## 5.0 Introduction

This section introduces firstly the attractive features of French Polynesia according to the respondents. It is important to understand why Tahiti and her islands is a unique destination that is worth visiting and worth developing because it has a lot of potential and could attract a larger amount of tourists every year if the right strategies were implemented.

### 5.1 French Polynesia: why it is a unique destination

Before analysing what experts say about the current touristic situation, French Polynesia's unique features according to the respondents are presented.

#### **Tahiti: a Paradise...**

The name "Tahiti" has a strong connotation in people's minds. When the name is mentioned, people automatically think of beautiful white-sand beaches, coconut trees and over-water bungalows, and the term "paradise" is frequently associated with the name "Tahiti".

*"Tahiti and her islands are the most beautiful islands in the world."*

Mr Guedj

*"French Polynesia is paradise on Earth!"*

Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery

*French Polynesia is in fact seen as having the "most beautiful islands in the world"*

Mrs Carter, Mr Guedj, Mrs Perelli, Paul, Josephine, Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery



*“Tahiti and her islands are beautiful. Tour operators that visit the destination usually say that it is better than a postcard.”*

Mrs Carter

*“It is as if you were in a postcard.”*

Mrs Perelli

All experts agree that the natural beauty that makes French Polynesia so re-known around the world is actually a product offered to the tourist.

*“No other islands can compete against Tahiti...These islands take your breath away...the landscapes are wonderful, the sunlight, the colours, the nature are just unique in the world.”*

Mr Guedj

“No other islands can compete against Tahiti” might sound a little bit exaggerated for someone who has not visited French Polynesia; nevertheless it seems that other tourist destinations such as Fiji or the Cook Islands can compete against French Polynesia and do in fact attract more people, as explained earlier. However, Bora Bora was nominated TripAdvisor’s “Traveler’s Choice 2013” and is in the Top 25 South Pacific destinations on TripAdvisor. Additionally, Moorea won the ‘Traveler’s Choice 2013’ award in the island category.

### **The myth...**

“Tahiti” is a myth that most people still fantasise about.

*“Tahiti is a myth, it is far, it is exotic...this idea is still very strong in people’s minds.”*

Mr Bergues

The first explorers arriving to the island of Tahiti and discovering a world like no other, with half-naked “vahines” (women) and muscular tattooed men are strong images that people still have in their minds (Mr Guedj, Hiriata, Paul, Mr Damide, Mr Bergues).

*“Everyone has a certain image of Tahiti...whether it is the myth of the Tahitian, the tattoos or the myth of the Vahine...it all comes from its strong history”.*

Mr Guedj

*“Tahiti is perceived as a heavenly island lost on the other side of the world. This comes from the movies such as “The Bounty” or the “Mutiny of the Bounty”. It is a very cliché image.”*

Mr Damide

*“The mythic image of French Polynesia influences people’s choice when choosing an exotic holiday destination.”*

Mrs Panero

As mentioned by a few experts, Tahiti is indeed a myth in people’s heads—it does not really exist (because it is a myth). However this mythical idea has to change because Tahiti and her islands are made available to tourists, and planes and cruise ships travel to the islands. Moreover, the myth of the half-naked women living on a wild island is surely demystified when tourists arrive in Papeete and come face-to-face with tall buildings, motorways and other modern infrastructure.

### **The authenticity...**

The authenticity of the Tahitian culture is another renowned aspect of French Polynesia. The locals are dynamic, friendly, outgoing and peaceful, which are appealing attributes for tourists.

*“Our tourists are happy about their holiday because they met a welcoming population and it is an important factor for us.”*

Mr Damide

Their strong traditions and cultural ways of living attract tourists from all over the world. From the “Tamure” (Tahitian dances) to its food (such as “Ma’a Tahiti”, a traditional meal cooked in the ground) and its wild landscape, French Polynesia is a destination that appeals to many.

*“What tourists like about our islands is the warm welcome and kindness of the locals, the beauty of our culture, the serenity...and our gastronomy.”*

Mr Bergues

Of course, the island of Tahiti itself is very busy as Papeete is the business district of the country, but other islands have learned to preserve their natural beauty. Tall buildings, motorways, and even traffic lights are only seen in Tahiti. The other islands do not have any of the above features, which is why they appeal to many tourists, because they have preserved their natural beauty, the “postcard” experience, the “myth”.

*“When a travel agency sells our destination they should sell most of all the remote and therefore unique and rare aspect of our destination. They should sell the natural beauty*

*over the overrated luxury, the kindness and simplicity of the people over the sumptuousness that you can find everywhere else. We need to explain our guests that we have a beauty and authenticity that you can almost not find in other destinations which is the reason why they need to come so far and pay so much to discover it.”*

Benjamin

This implies that perhaps the general public should be educated about French Polynesia. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

*“The exceptional natural and cultural asset of French Polynesia is definitely an attractive feature of the destination.”*

Mrs Panero

*“The kindness of the locals is highly appreciated by our visitors.”*

Mrs Perelli

The kindness and the culture of Tahitians make French Polynesia a unique and unbeatable destination in the Pacific.

### **Garden of Eden...**

Moreover, French Polynesia benefits from an outstanding natural environment. In simple words, it is a Garden of Eden. Because of its variety of islands, French Polynesia offers various landscapes unique in the world. Its abundant marine life, exotic flora and landscapes are usually cited as the most unique traits of Tahiti and her islands. Such comments are commonly posted on various online travel forums, e.g. TripAdvisor or Lonely Planet, as seen below:

*“The world's largest coral reef eco-system actually consists of 3,000 separate reefs. The island of Moorea serves as the perfect base camp for snorkelers and scuba divers seeking to come face-to*

*face with the diversity of life that darts among the coral. Non-swimmers can enjoy the same parade of astounding creatures from the dry perch of a glass-bottomed boat. Formed when half of a monolithic volcano crumbled to the blue-green sea, Moorea is an achingly exquisite heart-shaped island that is simply paradise found.”*

Tripadvisors (2013)

*“The epitome of the Pacific dream, this is one Garden of Eden so damn beautiful it's hard to believe it really exists.”*

Lonely Planet (2013)

The above comments are general descriptions taken from TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet to introduce French Polynesia to potential travellers. Tourists who have visited Bora Bora for instance mostly agree on the unique beauty of the lagoon.

*“On a scale of 1-10.... if Hawaii is a 5.... Bora Bora is 10.”*

Tripadvisors (2013)

*“Bora Bora wins hands down for us. The beaches and water color are incomparable and Bora Bora is a LOT less crowded than destinations like Hawaii.”*

Tripadvisors (2013)

During the interviews, participants were asked what they thought are the most unique attributes of French Polynesia. All of them commented on the beauty and natural richness of the islands.

*“The fruits, the flowers, the sun, the lagoon, the blue sky are the attributes that make French Polynesia unique.”*

Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery

*“Tourists come here to look at the nature.”*

Mrs Perelli

*“It’s a real Eden! We have mountains, valleys, and beautiful lagoons perfect for snorkelling, shark watching, sting rays, whales and dolphin sightseeing.”*

Mr Guedj

*“The natural beauty is the strongest attraction of the destination.”*

Mrs Panero

*“Our islands have far more to offer than any other destination from the quality of our waters, the rich variety of our lagoon fauna and flora to our mountains and valleys. It only takes a few days for our tourists to realise that this destination has globally more to offer than its competitors. As a matter of fact, the Maldives and the Seychelles islands do have lagoons, yes, but that’s it. There are no mountains, no valleys, no pineapple plantation fields, no bush walking.”*

Benjamin

This implies that the natural beauty is the main attribute and the main feature attraction of French Polynesia. Participants commented on the fact that other destinations have lagoons, fruit, sunsets and fish in the sea, however they are not at the same level of

“beauty” as Tahiti and her islands. Although beauty is perceived differently by individual people, which makes it difficult to judge this aspect. What a person may find unique and beautiful may not be the same to another.

### **A safe destination...**

Lastly, French Polynesia is considered a “safe” destination. There are no major venomous insects (apart from the scolopendra), no dangerous animals on land or in lagoons, and no dangerous plants. There are no major diseases and tourists are not required to be vaccinated prior to their arrival, as opposed to many other destinations. In this aspect, it is a perfect family destination. It is a safe destination not only because there are no deadly animals but also because there is a high-quality medical infrastructure in place. This aspect was taken into consideration in the strategic plan of French Polynesia; the C.O.S.T. project also found that it is indeed a safe destination compared to others.

French Polynesia may be a peaceful and safe destination, but a lot of work and effort is required in order to increase tourism. Various studies have been conducted such as the C.O.S.T. (Conseil d’Orientation Stratégique du Tourisme), a study undertaken by Mr Hamblin Steeve, the former Minister of Tourism in 2010, but it seems that despite all the research, nothing has changed. This particular project was well prepared, well thought out and seemed promising, but it stayed on paper. Its objective was to attract 700,000 to one million tourists in the next 30 years (lesnouvelles.pf, 2013). It sounds like a promising initiative, so the questions arises: why was the project not implemented? Mr. Hamblin said during the presentation of the project in March 2010 that “if the government changes again, the project would never take place” (Les Nouvelles, 2010).

The next section will present the possible main contributors affecting tourism in French Polynesia. As stated previously, these are experts’ opinions on the issue.

## **5.2 Application of the 7P's model to tourism in French Polynesia**

Extensive interview analysis revealed that there are many problems related to tourism in French Polynesia but the main problem is the provision of air services. Other minor problems cannot be dealt with if this issue is not resolved first. This section will present the possible main contributors to the touristic problems using the traditional tourism marketing mix strategy (7P's model) discussed in the literature review. They are place, price, product, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.

Every single participant told me that the main problem in French Polynesia is the accessibility. Tahiti and her islands are far from the main markets (i.e. Europe and the United States of America) and the different archipelagos are also far from each other. They cover a sea area the size of Europe. It is likely that a tourist will visit more than one island and the distance between the islands is a significant constraint. There is only one airline flying within French Polynesia: Air Tahiti, not to be confused with Air Tahiti Nui. Air Tahiti operates exclusively in French Polynesia whereas Air Tahiti Nui operates internationally. Air Tahiti is a privately owned company and has a market monopoly. Because they do not face any competitors they can set very profitable airfares.

Most tourists want to visit Bora Bora, however a return air ticket from Papeete to Bora Bora in January 2014 costs 42,282 XPF or \$582 NZD (xe.com as at 29 July 2013). Note that the flight is only one hour and twenty minutes from Papeete to Bora Bora and fifty minutes from Bora Bora to Papeete. The airline company prides itself for being the “market leader” in French Polynesia, which is true because there is no other company to compete against. As it has no competitors, Air Tahiti can set whatever prices they want.

Both Air Tahiti and Air Tahiti Nui faced difficulties in 2012 when their employees went



on strike in July and August 2012 and disrupted the trips of many tourists and locals. Flights were rescheduled or sometimes cancelled, and because Air Tahiti Nui is the main airline, a lot of disappointed tourists had their trips modified. According to LeMonde.fr, around 1,000 tourists, mainly Europeans and Americans, were stuck in Papeete. Air Tahiti Nui benefits from a near-monopoly in the provision of air service between Tahiti and France, and Tahiti and the United States. These flights represent two-thirds of the activity of the international airport. It was a serious situation as there were not enough hotel rooms in Tahiti to accommodate all of the visitors stranded on the island. The employees on strike demanded the reinstatement of the '13<sup>th</sup> month' and the support of a 10<sup>th</sup> air hostess or steward in each flight. The strike resulted in the cancelation of 105 Tahitian athletes travelling to Calgary, Canada to compete in the world va'a (canoe race) championship, a sport led by Polynesians. The strike adversely affected the local economy as it occurred during the high season and we need to keep in mind that tourism is the main source of income in the economy. Moreover, Air Tahiti's employees also decided to go on strike in July 2012 because of dangerous work environments and other working conditions (air-journal.fr, 2013).

The inflight services provided on board of Air Tahiti are very limited. According to their website, Air Tahiti offers a "welcome juice" on all Air Tahiti routes. Passengers flying before 9 am are served complimentary coffee and tea. Drinks and snacks can be purchased during the flight, however only Pacific Francs are accepted, no credit cards or other currencies are accepted on board (<http://www.airtahiti.aero/faq.php?cat=On+Board>). This means that if a tourist arrives to Tahiti on a Friday night and takes a plane to another island the next day, and as the banks are closed on weekends, they would not be able to purchase anything during the flight—a flight that lasts less than 1.5 hours and which costs \$582 NZD has no inflight services. Welcome to paradise! This may sound slightly melodramatic but it is important to reinforce the fact that French Polynesia is promoted and sold as a luxurious destination, a once in a lifetime experience. It may be suggested that a once in a lifetime service should therefore be provided on board.

Tahiti has its own airline, Air Tahiti Nui, proudly owned by the government of French Polynesia who owns a majority of the shares. Air Tahiti Nui was created in 1996 by Gaston Flosse and began operating in 1998 with its first route from Papeete to Los Angeles. At the time, two low-budget airlines: Corsair and Air Outre Mer (also known as AOM) were successfully operating in French Polynesia. Their low fares made French Polynesia more affordable to families, young couples and backpackers. For example, during the high season of 2002 (from June to August), a return ticket from Paris to Papeete was 210,000 XPF or \$2,913 NZD (xe.com as at 30 July 2013) and in the following year with Air Tahiti Nui, at the same time of the year and the same route, a return ticket was 290,000 XPF or \$4,023 NZD (xe.com as at July, 30<sup>th</sup> 2013). This was a 38% increase in airfare. AOM decided to stop servicing French Polynesia in 2002, followed by Corsair in 2003. The real reasons behind the cancelation of the two major airlines were never published, however a few articles published in the local newspapers suggest that Air Tahiti Nui pushed Corsair to make the decision to stop servicing the French territory by paying them 300 million XPF or \$ 4,205,341.93 NZD as a sort of persuasion (xe.com as at August, 1<sup>st</sup> 2013).

To this day, Air Tahiti Nui is the main airline servicing French Polynesia, however the company only flies to a small number of destinations (i.e. Paris, Los Angeles, Auckland, Tokyo and Sydney) and does not seem to consider other potential destinations such as South America or Asia.

*“It is not difficult; everything has to be done to decrease the air fares. Whether it means to restructure the airlines, change the taxes, maybe change the airplanes, modify the routes. There is a major effort that needs to be done in this area in order to put the prices down but it is the key to the solution. Without this, everything will remain the same. I am already very surprised that tourists come to our islands with all the difficulties we put in their ways with the visas, the stopovers, etc.”*

Mr Guedj

The airlines and frequency of stopovers are as below:

Air Calin with one stop per week (flying to Nouméa)

Air France with three stops per week (flying to Los Angeles)

Air New Zealand with two stops per week (flying to Auckland)

Air Tahiti with two stops per week (flying to Rarotonga)

Air Tahiti Nui with six stops from Los Angeles, five from Paris-Charles de Gaulle, three from Auckland and two from Tokyo each week

Hawaiian Airlines with one stop per week (flying to Honolulu)

Lan Airlines with one stop per week (flying to Easter Island and Santiago)

(Aéroport de Tahiti, 2013)

*“The major problem in French Polynesia is the provision of air services. There is only one problem and this is it. We cannot start solving other problems such as building more infrastructures, making the city more beautiful etc...until this problem is solved. We made so many mistakes in the past regarding the routes, the planes, that now we are in big trouble. Prices for air tickets keep rising. As air ticket prices increase, the type of clientele also increase and attracts mostly a high-end type of clientele. As more high-end visitors come to French Polynesia they tend to stay in 4-5 star resorts, therefore the hotels that are not top category struggle.”*

Mr Guedj

*“Airfares increase, the type of clientele also increases and obviously wants to stay in resorts. But the truth is, we are not even qualified to provide 5star service...”*

Hiriata

*“Everything is linked to the provision of air services. If we do not change this there is no*

*point to start looking at other ways to promote our islands and other minor issues.”*

Mr Damide

*“I don’t think our airline stop to enough destinations.”*

Mrs Perelli

*“Air tickets are expensive and it surely affects people’s decision when deciding whether to go to Tahiti or no, but other factors are taken into consideration such as the distance, prices of accommodation, service quality, product quality and the consistency and strength of the destination image.”*

Mr Bergues

The following section will use tourists coming from South America as an example to discuss the difficulty of travelling to French Polynesia. South Americans could serve as a potential market, however it is very difficult for them to come to Tahiti. Mr Guedj said that South Americans should be awarded a medal at their arrival in Papeete. For instance a tourist that wants to come from Buenos Aires must travel the following route: Buenos Aires to Santiago, Santiago to Easter Island and lastly Easter Island to Tahiti. The only airline that flies to Tahiti is Lan Chile, which is not the most reliable airline according to Mr Guedj who mentioned that its flights are usually delayed. If French Polynesia really wants to attract more tourists they need to restructure the provision of air services.

*“Prices for air tickets need to decrease, they are too expensive and play a major role in the current situation.”*

Mrs Panero

*“The airport taxes need to be revisited as well, they are way too high.”*

Mr Benjamin

The above comments reflect on the role of politics in the development of tourism in French Polynesia. Taxes are controlled by the government, which implies that they could set more attractive airport tax rates. This would lower the price of air tickets and therefore attract more visitors.

*“Our taxes at the airport are really high, if we would diminish them the air fares would automatically be reduced and make the air ticket more affordable.”*

Mr Damide

*“When you purchase an air ticket you have to pay taxes, which considerably increases the price of the ticket. I think something has to be done with the airport to diminish the taxes.”*

Mrs Perelli

Airport taxes are indeed another factor that increases the prices of air tickets. The following shows airport taxes during the low season from 2003-2010 for an Air Tahiti Nui economy class ticket:

2003: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 1,481 (base fare) + NZD\$ 60 (tax) = NZD\$ 1,542.54

2004: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 1,481 (base fare) + NZD\$ 62.56 (tax) = NZD\$ 1,544.29 or a **0.11% increase since 2003**

2005: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 1,527.81 (base fare) + NZD\$ 265.46 (tax) = NZD\$ 1,793.17 or a **16.24% increase since 2003**

2007: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 1,619.79 (base fare) + NZD\$ 351.04 (tax) = NZD\$ 1,970.49 or a **27.74% increase since 2003**

2009: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 2,012.19 (base fare) + NZD\$ 621.20 (tax) = NZD\$ 2,633.50 or a **70.72% increase since 2003**

2010: Papeete-Paris-Papeete = NZD\$ 2,257.31 (base fare) + NZD\$ 623.30 (tax) = NZD\$ 2,880.66 or an **86.74% increase since 2003**

The taxes listed above include the airport taxes, which are added onto the base fare when someone purchases a ticket. Airlines transfer the tax collected to the government. The amount of tax charged varies from international airport to international airport. The government then transfers the tax collected to the airport which will be used for maintenance and security measures in the airport.

As for accommodation, there are hotels for every budget, however it still remains expensive. French Polynesia is famous for its “Pension de famille” or bed and breakfasts, which are usually owned and managed by families or couples and tend to be small with a maximum of 25 rooms available. The owners take care of the cleaning, reservations, prepare the guests’ meals and even organise activities. This type of accommodation is best suited for tourists looking to connect with the locals and their culture. However, bed and breakfasts in French Polynesia are usually expensive. Prices of bed and breakfasts in the five most visited islands in French Polynesia were extensively analysed. The findings are summarised below.

The currency exchange rate as at 6 August 2013 was NZD \$1 = 70.49 XPF. Bed and breakfasts have been selected on the basis of popularity, meaning that the top-listed sites on Google were analysed.

*Table 6: B&B rates in Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine, Bora Bora and Fakarava*

Tahiti: Current bed and breakfast rates

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/ night
Relais Fenua	9,500	134.75
Pension Otaha Lodge	12,500	177.21
Pension Chayan	14,150	200.66

Moorea: Current bed and breakfast rates

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/ night
Fare Miti	15,000	212.70
Fare Vaihere	16,000	226.89

Huahine: Current bed and breakfast rates

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/ night
Pension Tupuna	12,000	170.22
Pension Ariitere	7,500	106.40

Bora Bora: Current bed and breakfast rates

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/ night
Chez Nono	13,100	185.86
Chez Robert & Tina	7,800	110.66

Fakarava: Current bed and breakfast rates

**\*\*Note:** Rates are for two nights.

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/ night
Fakarava Dive Lodge	21,500	305.05
Raimiti Fakarava**	99,045**	1,405**

Rates at bed and breakfasts vary from NZD \$106 to NZD \$1,405. This is relatively expensive as similar rates are found in three-star hotels. It seems that bed and breakfasts try appear exclusive, which therefore becomes expensive and does not fit the type of clientele that such accommodation attracts. People with a high budget typically stay in four or five-star hotels such as the Hilton or Intercontinental.

*“Bed and breakfasts are becoming more and more expensive and there is always something missing in them. It’s way too expensive for what you get.”*

Mrs Carter

This section will discuss rated accommodation such as two, three, four and five-star hotels and resorts. The Ministry of Tourism awards stars to hotels that fit all the required criteria, which is why they are considered to be “classified hotels” as opposed to bed and breakfasts that do not currently have a rating system. There are not as many two and three-star hotels as there are four and five-star hotels

Tahiti has only two two-star hotels, which are the Tahiti Airport Motel and the Hotel Tiare Tahiti and cost on average NZD \$216 a night. Moorea has two popular two-star hotels, which are the Hotel Hibiscus and Les Tipaniers and cost on average NZD \$200 a night. A similar rate applies for two and three-star hotels on other islands. The most popular type of accommodation in French Polynesia is the over-water bungalow. However, the prices are so high that not all tourists can afford them. The Intercontinental Hotels and Resorts offer prices as follows:



*Table 7: Rate comparison of over-water bungalows at Intercontinental Hotels and Resorts*

	Price in XPF/ night	Price in NZD/night
Intercontinental-Tahiti	62,435	885
Intercontinental-Moorea	43,065	610
Intercontinental-Bora Bora	71,080	1,008.31

*Table 7: Rate comparison of over-water bungalows at Intercontinental Hotels and Resorts*

The Intercontinental Hotels and Resorts were chosen for a base rate comparison because it is the only luxurious hotel chain on the three most visited islands. Hilton and Accor are only on Bora Bora and Moorea. Rates were taken from the Intercontinental website.

As can be seen from the table above, prices are considerably high for a single night. However most interviewees maintained that it is the appropriate price to pay for a night in paradise. Most of them confidently stated that high-class tourists were more than happy to pay that price and were rarely disappointed.

*“I have tourists going to the Four Season in Bora Bora, they pay a fortune, but trust me they are 100% satisfied about their holidays. They got what they paid for.”*

Mr Guedj

*“Our tourists return satisfied if the travel agents that arranged their trips properly did their jobs and made sure the tourists have a big enough budget to fully enjoy their exotic holiday.”*

Benjamin

French Polynesia is expensive, as was clearly shown in the many examples listed above,

however the price matches the destination in its remoteness, its beauty, and its authenticity.

*“Tahiti is far, therefore expensive, and the trip is tiring but it makes our islands exclusive.” Benjamin*

People know that it is an expensive destination and they know this destination can only be enjoyable if they have a proper budget.

*“I strongly doubt that someone would go to the Rolex store and comment on the high prices. If you cannot afford a Rolex watch, then you should probably go to the Swatch shop. If you cannot afford a Louis Vuitton bag then you should probably shop at the Guess store.”*

Mr Guedj

This same logic applies to a holiday destination. Upon looking at the airfare it is easy to determine that this will be an expensive holiday. French Polynesia is a high-end type of destination.

However, it appears that the interviewees contradicted themselves. On one hand they state that French Polynesia is expensive and that prices should be reduced in order to attract more tourists, but on the other hand they maintain that it is the price to pay to spend a night in paradise. Participants also stated that prices for air tickets should be considerably reduced. However, how can French Polynesia provide cheap airfares but charge NZD \$885 per night in a five-star hotel or NZD \$200 in a two-star hotel? The prices between airfares and accommodation should be relative.

Food and beverage outlets are also considered expensive; however little cafés and

“roulottes” (traditional places to eat) offer reasonable prices.

*“I can confidently say that a burger at the Four Seasons in Bora Bora costs the same price as a burger at the Four Seasons in Paris. But then nobody complains about the price of the burger in Paris right? This is something to think about.”*

Mr Guedj

Experts declared that French Polynesia is indeed an expensive and exclusive destination and tourists should understand this before purchasing their holidays. However they stated that tourists with the appropriate budget fully enjoy their luxurious holidays and are usually satisfied. This implies that tourists who do not have a reasonable budget do not enjoy their holidays in the same way as those who can afford to spend more money. Experts agree that taxes should be lowered in order to make the destination more affordable.

Furthermore, they acknowledge that French Polynesia needs more tourists and the way to attract more tourists is to put the prices of air fares down. Perhaps low-cost airlines should be brought back. However if the destination attracts more low-end and middle-end type of clientele this means that French Polynesia would not be an exclusive destination anymore and would lose its perception of “paradise”, as everyone would be able to afford it. However, is it better to increase the number of tourist arrivals and therefore increase the statistics or to encourage tourists’ spending. Would it be better to have two couples that each spend NZD \$200 per day or one couple that spends NZD \$600 per day? This is something to consider.

As stated earlier, the provision of air services seems to be the major problem in French Polynesia; however other minor problems also affect the current situation in the tourism sector such as the product. The product that is being sold to tourists is a luxurious romantic destination best suited for honeymooners. What is being sold first and foremost is the over-water bungalows in five-star resorts. However the consistency between the

product and the service quality is often criticised by tourists and hospitality experts. There is a certain difference between the image sold—the “dream”—and the reality experienced by tourists. The service quality is often seen as inadequate for the high prices charged.

*“I do not think that tourists are fully satisfied by their holidays in our islands.”*

Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery

Yet, participants stated earlier that tourists are “100% satisfied about their holiday.”

*“The image that is being sold by touristic services is the image of luxury tourism, however I am not entirely sure that this type of tourist is interested in French Polynesia. There are other types of tourists that would love to come but can’t afford it.”*

Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery

*“Tourists are put straight away in five-star resorts, but for many it is not what they are looking for. A lot of them would rather go to a bed and breakfast or smaller hotel.”*

Mr Damide

The above comments imply that there is an inconsistency between the distribution channel and the product. Trips to Tahiti and her islands are sold mainly in travel agencies, which according to the comments seen earlier do not sell the right product to the right type of travellers.

*“People complain a lot about the service quality, they are not satisfied.”*

Mr Bergues

*“Tourists are usually disappointed because the product was not properly explained to them by their travel agent. They tend to think that even in a two-star hotel they will get an over-water bungalow, but unfortunately for them it is not the case.”*

Mrs Perelli

Again, this highlights that there is a problem in the distribution channel.

There is therefore an effort that needs to be made in regards to the promotion of the destination as part of the distribution channel. Experts tend to think that French Polynesia is not just a luxurious destination but also has the potential to satisfy a middle-end type of tourist. They believe that tourists do not necessarily want to stay in an over-water bungalow but would rather stay in bed and breakfasts or smaller types of hotels. Experts say that there is an inconsistency between what is being promoted and what is being experienced once on the islands. Prices appear to be too high for the service quality received in some hospitality and tourism organisations. Perhaps French Polynesia does not have the right marketing strategies. Perhaps Tahiti and her islands are more suited for a middle-end type of tourism rather than an exclusive or elite type of tourism.

Bora Bora is the island that most tourists want to visit but it is also the island that most tourists are disappointed by (personal communication with tourists during the researcher's trip to French Polynesia, May 2013). We should not forget that Bora Bora is the “treasure” or “gold mine” of French Polynesia because it is very expensive and tends to be rather exclusive compared to other islands such as Huahine or Moorea. As explained earlier most islands tend to be closed to culture and nature whereas Bora Bora is excessively luxurious and does not seem to please clientele. During this research, there was connection that became clear through the interviews and Internet travel forums. Indeed the resorts are breathtaking, but the island itself is disappointing. Most experts said that the natural aspect of the islands should be put forward when promoting the

destination rather than the luxury, as that is not necessarily the feature that attracts people to French Polynesia.

Promotion is another aspect of the tourism marketing mix that appears to be deficient. The French territory promotes an image that does not necessarily match the product and as a result generates a certain expectation in people's minds that begins in the brochures used overseas. Mostly five-star resorts are represented because they can afford to have an ad in travel brochures. Smaller hotels or bed and breakfasts do not have the budgets or government support, therefore cannot advertise their hotels in the brochures. The perception of the luxurious destination is created in people's minds as they browse the brochures. The Tahiti Nui Vacations brochure's front page has been included in Appendix 13.

Tourist coming to French Polynesia often book their flights with Air Tahiti Nui. As soon as they board the plane they are shown a promotional video that advertises French Polynesia. Having travelled with this airline more than once, I know what is being advertised in the promotional video: five star resorts. Most of the shots show over-water bungalows in Bora Bora, romantic dinners on the beach, cruises and Tahitian dances. What about smaller hotels? What about other activities? What about the cultural aspects? Mr Damide said during his interview that many tourists tell him that they did not even know that French Polynesia had mountains because most of the images they saw before arriving only showed a lagoon view.

*“We do not advertise enough the mountain side of our islands, we accentuate the lagoon side with the over-water bungalows. But I think nowadays people know that Tahiti has lagoons. We need to show other things, promotional videos or pictures taken from the mountains, showing people walking up the mountain with a lagoon as a background. I’ve had people telling me that they were surprised to find out that they could do bush walks in the mountains. They did not know that French Polynesia had mountains.”*

Mr Damide

*“The promotion is made in a way that people perceive Tahiti [and her islands] as an exclusive honeymoon destination. Other thematic holidays (cultural, pearl watching etc...) need to be advertised as well.”*

Mrs Panero

*“The destination image is a compromise between what the destination wants to be and what tourists want it to be. Every single market advertises Tahiti [and her islands] differently than what the destination actually is. For example in the United States of America: Privacy, the ultimate luxury; in Italy: Crazy about Tahiti; in France: Tahiti, the authentic holiday. We are currently working on a project to reposition the global marketing strategy of the destination.”* Mr Bergues

*“We need to change the promotion as it only advertises resorts and unfortunately there is not much about small hotels. It is important because some people with a smaller budget are afraid to ask a travel agent about cheaper accommodations.”*

Mrs Perelli

*“Of course we are not represented enough overseas. This is a serious problem along with the level of expertise. We are not represented in Northern Europe, we are very badly represented in the United States of America, which is our biggest market.”*

Benjamin

*“I can't remember the last time I saw Tahiti on TV.”*

Mrs Carter

The promotion is poor because tourism the budget decreases every year. As the number of tourists decreases, the budget also decreases therefore the promotion reduces.

*“It is a downward spiral. Of course as the number of tourists decreases there is less money available to advertise Tahiti. I would say that to this day the promotion is well done for the resources available. But we are not represented enough overseas, that’s for sure.”*

Mr Guedj

To summarise, other aspects of French Polynesia should be promoted to attract other types of tourists, such as pearl watchers, culture lovers, nature enthusiasts, scuba divers, food connoisseurs, etc. For example, July is the perfect time of the year for those who are interested in learning about Tahitian culture as Heiva is held for the entire month. Heiva is an artistic contest held in Tahiti that attracts performers from every single archipelago in which dancers, singers and other performers compete against each other. Tourists have the unique opportunity to attend the event and watch French Polynesia’s top dancers and singers gathered in one place. It is a wonderful cultural experience, however it is not promoted overseas.

Secondly, more funds should be raised for promotional budgets. However if the number of tourists does not improve, the budget is unlikely to improve either. Perhaps this is linked to the provision of air services: if air tickets prices were more appealing, more tourists would come and therefore more money would be spent.

Do people obtain the maximum benefit from the services available in French Polynesia? It appears that tourists do not have enough activities available to them, which affects the overall ambiance, attraction of the destination, and the physical evidence aspect of the tourism marketing mix.



*“I had some tourists telling me that their family had offered them their honeymoon to Tahiti, but ten days on the beach is not how they wanted to spend their holidays.”*

Mr Damide

According to the interviewees, tourists tend to complain about the lack of things to do at night. It appears that tourists are looking for bars and nightclubs however they are only able to experience the local nightlife in Tahiti itself. Other islands have bars but only in hotels and resorts and are not opened late at night. Most nightlife activities outside of Tahiti tend to end around 9 pm.

*“I don’t think people are looking for a holiday destination where there are many tourists. For example Huahine is a wild island and sold this way but you can’t expect to be on a wild island and have a nightlife.”*

Mr Damide

*“French Polynesia is not a destination for those looking for a nightlife.”*

Mr Guedj

*“I don’t think our islands fit the type of clientele looking for a modern type of fun. There are very few bars, very few nightclubs, no casino.”*

Benjamin, Josephine

*“We have many tourists asking us where they can go clubbing but I don’t think our destination attracts this type of tourists. At night we go out for dinner and that’s about it.”*

Mrs Perelli

The participants all seem to agree that French Polynesia does not attract fun travellers (i.e. those looking for entertainment) however a lot of them mentioned that tourists often ask them where they can go for a drink or to dance. This implies that tourists are indeed interested in some sort of night entertainment. Perhaps this should not be overlooked.

Other activities are available during the day such as 4×4 safaris, jet ski tours, bush walks and scuba diving. There are activities to suit most types of travellers, whether they are light adventures such as snorkeling, kayaking or horse riding or more extreme activities such as trekking, surfing or scuba diving. The only problem is that most activities are expensive. For example the 18-hole circuit at de Green Golf in Moorea costs \$247 per person. A discovery dive with Scubapiti Moorea dive club costs \$90 per person. A jet ski tour in Bora Bora with Moana Tours costs \$357 per jet. For those with a more restricted budget, snorkeling gear is usually free at hotels and resorts, kayaks are very affordable (about \$13/hour), and bicycle and scooter rentals are very popular activities, offering an easy and affordable way to explore an island.

To summarise, tourists have a variety of activities to do on the islands, and interviewees did not say at any time that tourists were bored or unhappy about the choices of activities available to them. The only problem tourists usually comment on is in regards to the nightlife, however the interviewees did not seem to believe that this is what tourists are looking for in French Polynesia. Although, the fact that people ask about this could suggest a gap between what the destination offers and what people want.

Process in the 7P of the tourism marketing mix relates to the service delivery. How a service is delivered is linked to the local organisation of a destination such as public transport, hospitals, etc. and the public services in French Polynesia are inadequate. In Tahiti it is relatively easy to catch a bus or a ferry, however this is not the case on other islands. For example in Moorea, the second most visited island in French Polynesia, there are no bus stops. Buses pick up both tourists and locals from the ferry and stop wherever they want. If a tourist wants to catch a bus to go to the ferry they simply have to wait anywhere they want by the road and signal a bus driver to stop. However locals cut

branches from trees and place them on the side of the road to indicate for bus drivers to stop. Tourists also have to do this in order to take a bus. This could be considered to be authentic and tourists generally seem to like it as it is convenient and traditional. There is therefore a positive service encounter.

As for taxis, they do not run on meters. Prices are determined by the drivers and depend on the time of the day, the number of suitcases, the number of people, the destination and the physical appearance of the customer. The lack of standard fares is a typical complaint of tourists.

Other inadequacies of French Polynesian services include most services and shops being closed on weekends, a lack of clean drinking water, no hot water on some islands and a limited number of ATM machines.

*“People don’t understand why nothing is opened on weekends. They find it difficult to understand why the water is not drinkable, that ATM machines are hard to find and usually empty towards the end of the week, that there is no hot water on some islands.*

*That’s a reason why people won’t come back.”*

Mrs Lacalmanti and Mr Guery

*“We must be the only touristic destination to have everything closed on weekends.”*

Mrs Perelli

To summarise, there is poor local organisation in terms of public transport, taxis and the retail industry. The fact that souvenir shops, banks, grocery stores and administration offices are closed on the weekend might play a role in the low number of repeat tourists coming to French Polynesia.

“People” could be considered one of the most important P’s in the 7P’s framework as tourism is a human interaction industry. In French Polynesia, tourists usually comment on the warmth and friendliness of the locals. However, it was mentioned in the interviews that there is insufficient training given to hospitality employees. Mr Damide believes that hospitality employees should be given various trainings so they can explain to tourists what activities are available to them, the history of their respective island, and its myths and legends.

*“Training in regards to tourism is nonexistent. Every two years we should train hospitality and tourism employees to polish their knowledge. This will lead to more motivated and competent employees.”*

Mr Damide

This is a promising idea to implement. Being able to train hotel staff, restaurant staff, retail employees and other tourism workers about their respective islands, the legends, the activities, etc. would surely encourage tourists to try various activities, which would lead to a higher productivity for some businesses. However the question is, are people willing to help each other for the good of French Polynesia? Or would they rather work for themselves? Why should a hotel care about the survival of a tropical garden or a whale watching tour?

The place, price, product, promotion, physical evidence, process and people all play a major role in developing and sustaining a destination. However, the 7P model does not seem to fully elucidate what is happening to the current situation regarding the tourism industry in French Polynesia.

### **5.3 Politics**

However, it seems that the traditional model of the 7P’s does not support the findings as

there is something missing. An 8<sup>th</sup> P will therefore be added: Politics. Politics have been present in the entire research project as it is the strongest influence of French Polynesia. The traditional model of the 7P's is not successful at picking this up because it does not include Politics. If it did, it would be a better model and would support the findings.

In the French territory, everything is linked to the politics. After all, the main tourism developing tool Air Tahiti Nui—belongs mainly to the government, which means that it has a say in how the company is managed. The government has influence over the choices of routes to open, sustain or close or if Air Tahiti Nui presents unsatisfactory results.

*“The problem with Air Tahiti Nui is that it belongs to the French Polynesian government and should be used as a tool to develop the tourism industry. I used to work in New Caledonia and at the time the government decided that its airline would be used to develop New Caledonia. They decided to decrease their air fares to attract more tourists, which meant that the company would earn less money however the government would financially support the airline. This works in New Caledonia and I don't see why it would not work here.”*

Mr Benjamin

It is in fact logic to think that the government would use its own airplanes to promote French Polynesia. After all, the government has power with the airlines and the airport (therefore airport taxes). It is important to mention that the airport is publically owned and 56.81% of it is owned by the French Polynesian government. In the case of the Emirates airline, if the government had a genuine interest in developing tourism it could have offered lower airport taxes. All participants answered yes to the question “Do you believe that the government is responsible for the current touristic situation?” This is not suprising, however what is suprising is that everybody agrees that the government is not doing its best to come out of this difficult situation but still nothing is done.

*“If the government is unstable, investors won’t come. I’ve heard a project regarding the Emirates airline. They had considered opening a route from Australia to Papeete once or twice a week, but as they have large planes the company was offered unappealing airport taxes, which discouraged the Emirates airline—a big mistake from the airport executives.”*

Mr Damide

*“We had ten years of political incompetency, with idiots who didn’t understand anything. It was deplorable. I’m glad they are out now.”*

Mr Guedj

*“We have no help from the government, there are no clear goals as to where we are going and how are we going to get there.”*

Mrs Perelli

*“We’ve had about 13 government changes since 2004 so they had no time to work on the development of our economy.”*

Mr Guery

*“Tourism in French Polynesia is the main industry, the one that generates most of the direct and indirect employment and therefore most of the country’s revenue. The tourism industry is indeed linked to the politics.”*

Mr Benjamin

*“Our country needs to elect someone who can develop our islands and play his role as he should.”*

Mrs Panero

*“Of course that politics play an essential role in the development of our islands! They hold all the strings: Air Tahiti, Air Tahiti Nui and the airport! Even the ferries!.”*

Mr Bergues

*“We need to have someone in charge who is passionate about our islands and about tourism in French Polynesia.”*

Mrs Carter

The government instability and lack of clear communication between tourism representatives and tourism/hospitality employees has all played a role in the current situation in French Polynesia. Perhaps if a clear strategic plan like the C.O.S.T.(Conseil d’Orientation Stratégique du Tourisme) was implemented, the French territory could further develop its tourism industry. What exactly was the C.O.S.T strategic plan? The following section will present the strategic plan developed by Mr. Hamblin in order to boost the tourism industry.

The following section presents a SWOT analysis of French Polynesia.

The strategic C.O.S.T. plan for French Polynesia included a SWOT analysis, which is presented below. The SWOT analysis presents the strengths of French Polynesia, its weaknesses, opportunities the country should take advantage of, and the threats facing the country. This should be used for future research in relation to a strategic plan for the development of tourism in French Polynesia.

### **STRENGTHS**

A strong destination image-Bora Bora, Tahiti, Moorea, etc.

Unique natural attributes (beauty and variety of the landscapes)

A culture that is open minded and unique (Polynesian dances, sense of welcoming, shows)

Well-known luxurious hotels with international standards and other independent hotel types.

Environmental regulations and health to French standards

Favourable investment conditions: double tax exemption

Market-oriented

Increase in domestic travel by locals

High level of cruise ship traveller satisfaction

Development in the yachting market

### **WEAKNESSES**

Low level of repeaters as French Polynesia is seen as a 'once in a lifetime trip'

Lack of branding

The distance and jet-lag for visitors

A complex and expensive international and domestic air service

An unstable political situation, which reduces long-term government actions and vision, along with reducing the number of investors in the French territory

Over-water bungalows offered in closer and less expensive destinations

Papeete is not attractive and lacks in cultural sites

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

A crisis that forces French Polynesia to work towards an effective strategic plan (C.O.S.T.)

An increase in tourists worldwide

Exchange rate fluctuation



Opening doors to potential markets such as Brazil, China and Australia

Potential investments on the island of Tetiaroa

New regulations on foreigners wanting to get married in French Polynesia

Softer conditions of visa acquisitions

A new strategy in terms of transportation (international and domestic air-service, airport taxes)

### **THREATS**

The non-realisation of potential projects

Closing of family-run hotels and activities due to the lack of training and expertise

Lack of help from the government to protect and enhance natural sites and landscapes, no strategies to develop the accommodation sector, no community awareness regarding tourism, lack of consideration of tourism needs when carrying out town planning

No destination brand

Increased popularity of competitors (Fiji, Vanuatu, Maldives)

The SWOT analysis confirms some of the comments that have been discussed in the findings chapter. Problems regarding branding, non-realisation of projects, lack of government help, complex and expensive air-service, the distance, the jet-lag, the lack of repeaters and the product (over-water bungalows) being duplicated in other islands stress the need for a strategic plan to be implemented. The C.O.S.T. project has presented realistic solutions, however it needs to be executed.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **CONCLUSION**

The research project aimed to find the main contributors to the constant decline in tourist number since the past few years in French Polynesia. The thesis is based on hospitality and tourism experts' opinions. The research project started by analysing the current situation of French Polynesia, presenting statistics of the tourists' arrivals since 2007. The trend showed a constant decrease in the number of international tourists' arrivals. One could jump into the conclusion that such decrease was due to the world economic crisis however statistics of other similar tourist destinations were analysed and presented. As was shown, Fiji, Hawai'i, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Tonga and Samoa's international tourists' arrivals were improving every year since 2007. Therefore, the implication that the world economic crisis was the solely reason that tourists are not visiting French Polynesia was eliminated. People are still travelling, but they are not travelling to Tahiti and her islands. Why? This is what the research project tried to discover.

Two key questions were therefore formulated to help solve this issue:

1. To what extent do the classic theories of destination competitiveness and the marketing mix provide an explanation for the decline in tourism numbers in French Polynesia?
2. What other factors may explain the drop?

Four key theories were used to support the thesis. The concept of destination competitiveness was firstly analysed and divided into three sub section. They were: the 7P's of the marketing mix, strategic planning and strategic implementation. The stated theories were the foundation of the research project and were incorporated in the questionnaires used to interview the participants.

The questionnaires were semi-structured, which allowed room for discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer and the participant started engaging in a formal interview. The interviewer developed an interview guide based on the four key theories presented earlier, where a list of questions and topics that needed to be covered during the interviews was used in a way to guide the interviews. This allowed the interviewer to follow the guidelines but also allowed room for topical trajectories during the interviews. The interviews took place both in New Zealand and French Polynesia

from May to June. All interviews were audio-taped and partially transcribed for analysis purposes. A snowball sample was used in some cases, where one participant referred the researcher to another potential participant.

According to hospitality and tourism experts, the major issue that contributes to the decline in tourists' numbers in French Polynesia relates to the prices of airfares. According to the participants, other issues such as infrastructures, transportation etc...cannot be addressed until this particular issue is resolved. Every single participants stated that airfares are too high. However, they later stated that French Polynesia is a luxurious destination, worth the price that is set by airlines and that it is high-ended type of destination, not suited for people with a budget. There, a major contradiction between their statements is presented. Participants do agree that airfares are too high, yet it is the right price to pay to visit "paradise".

Participants also added that the provision of air services is a major problem, linked to the prices obviously. The situation is a vicious spiral. As was presented in the findings chapter, airfares keep increasing every year. As airfares increase, the type of clientele increases as well and therefore attracts high-ended type of tourists who are already used to travel and are already used to stay in resorts. As a result, smaller hotel categories like 2\* hotels struggle. Participants also mentioned that service quality in resorts is lacking. Therefore, the destination attracts relatively wealthy tourists but cannot fully satisfy them as there is an inconsistency in service quality and an incongruity between the prices set and the service delivery. This could be a reason why the level of repeaters is low.

One interesting point raised by participants during every single interview relates to politics. The last topic of discussion related to the politics however, participants raised that point way before the interviewer started discussing the topic. Participants stated that politics played a major role in the development of tourism (or lack of development). Air Tahiti Nui, the main airline of the French territory is not used to its full potential. As presented earlier, the airline is government-owned. The airline should be used as a tool to develop the country. However, presented with facts, it seems that it is not the case and that incompetency is one crucial issue. Airport taxes, which are incorporated in the

airfares, are decided by the government. If the government actually wanted to develop its tourism industry, it could first of all propose attractive airfares by reducing the airport taxes and second of all it could find new strategic routes to open French Polynesia to new markets such as South America and Asia.

The C.O.S.T (Conseil d'Orientation Stratégique du Tourisme) strategic plan was a plan developed by Steve Hamblin to boost the tourism industry in French Polynesia. It proposed an effective plan of action incorporating Tahitian values. The project was presented, published, made everyone excited but was never implemented properly. Instead, because of the endless government changes, the new President at the time decided to involve someone else to produce exactly the same project. It is difficult to believe that the government actually wants to develop its tourism. Perhaps the current number of tourists is satisfactory to the government. Essentially, with the financial help of the French government, focusing on ways to make money and lift the standard of living of the Tahitian residents is not a priority. As presented earlier, a territory that has a successful tourism development strategy should welcome approximately five to ten tourists per year per inhabitant. This means that French Polynesia should welcome approximately two million tourists a year. However, the reality is that only about 200,000 tourists visit the French territory a year. However, to its current stage, French Polynesia would not be able to account for two million tourists a year. A strategic plan must be implemented in French Polynesia in order to recover from the poor tourism performance experienced in the past few years. Other issues such as the promotion of Tahiti and her islands overseas, the development of the actual product (a romantic destination), and the development of things to do cannot be resolved until the problem of provision of air services is solved.

The contradictory statements emerging during the interviews reveals that everyone is blaming everyone and that no one actually knows what is causing the decline in tourism. French Polynesia has the most beautiful islands, they cannot be compared to other islands like Fiji or Samoa, but the destination is too expensive. Yet it is the price to pay to visit the most beautiful place on earth. Therefore, it is too expensive but airfares and accommodation prices should not be changed because they reflect the product and

services provided to tourists. Such contradictions make it difficult to point at a specific problem, however the C.O.S.T supports the theory that the accessibility is the main problem of French Polynesia. The question now is do we need more planes, more routes, new routes or do we need to keep the number of planes and keep the same routes but decrease the airfares? If the government would financially help Air Tahiti Nui, it would be possible to decrease the airfares and therefore attract more tourists. This means that the company would make less money but the government would financially help the airline. This system works in New Caledonia, why wouldn't it work in French Polynesia?

Earlier, two key questions were formulated and are now being answered”

1. To what extent do the classic theories of destination competitiveness and the marketing mix provide an explanation for the decline in tourism numbers in French Polynesia? And
2. What other factors may explain the drop?

The classic theory of the 7P's does not explain the fall in tourism numbers in French Polynesia and is not efficient at picking up the main problem which is politics. The classic model partially explains what is happening but the model is not successful because it does not include politics. If it did, it would be a better model and would fully explain what is happening in the French Polynesian tourism industry.

The classic theory of destination competitiveness does seem to fit in the context of this research because the literature revealed that for a destination to be competitive it has to have a strategy in place to develop its tourism industry and a valid marketing plan, which French Polynesia does not have yet. This reflects the current situation in French Polynesia. Other destinations such as Fiji, the Cook Islands and Samoa are indeed competitive because they do have a current strategy in place. The strategies are published, some on an annual basis, other on a longer term basis and the fact that they have strategies in place could be a reason why these destinations attract more tourists than French Polynesia and are competitive.

The small number of participants may seem to be problematic however some of the best hospitality and tourism experts have been selected to participate in the research project. It is not believed that new evidence would have emerged from additional interviews. The

thesis is based on professionals' opinions but the researcher does not imply that participants' opinions are right and justify the current tourism situation in Tahiti and her islands. The thesis relies on professional opinions that are presumed to be the best in their fields and sought to gain a reliable consensus of opinions from these experts. It would have been interesting to gain expert opinions from professionals located in other countries such as the United States or Europe, just to have more information regarding the distribution channel and point of sales.

Future research could concentrate on a SERVQUAL study, where tourists' perceptions of French Polynesia's service quality would be measured. This would enable us to have further understanding regarding the incongruity between service quality and price, presented in this research. Exclusive luxurious destinations do exist and do extremely well, such as Monaco. If tourists are fully satisfied paying the price that they pay in French Polynesia, this would mean that they were provided with excellent service. Therefore, French Polynesia could brand itself as an exclusive luxurious destination, attracting high-ended type of tourists and could focus on developing an absolute luxurious destination.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Hawaii statistics from 2007 to 2011

1	STATE 2007 FINAL													
2	(Arrivals by Air)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
3														
4	TOTAL VISITORS	577,232	574,793	674,532	597,478	586,546	672,586	711,263	733,025	558,431	570,647	576,371	663,948	7,496,820
5	Domestic	408,564	417,888	496,703	454,007	454,683	525,746	547,065	544,100	400,581	427,632	421,896	483,557	5,582,530
6	International	168,668	156,775	177,829	143,471	131,863	146,840	164,198	188,925	157,850	143,015	154,475	180,391	1,914,290
7	VISITOR DAYS	5,973,248	5,471,362	5,958,199	5,360,108	5,155,343	6,292,456	6,603,837	6,553,918	4,829,060	5,074,036	5,106,662	6,757,081	69,135,310
8	AVERAGE DAILY CENSUS	182,685	195,406	192,200	178,570	168,301	209,749	213,027	211,417	160,969	163,679	170,222	217,970	189,412
9	TOTAL AIR SEATS (EST)	920,682	792,857	915,822	872,712	848,675	869,827	937,950	938,473	775,699	788,812	811,777	929,562	10,403,828
10														

1	STATE 2011 FINAL													
2	(Arrivals by Air)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
3														
4	TOTAL VISITORS	586,671	579,030	615,745	567,693	549,005	607,507	667,890	651,756	553,187	568,211	557,587	670,116	7,174,397
5	Domestic	400,657	397,384	443,298	425,044	411,758	460,883	500,313	458,572	376,827	399,660	389,667	463,229	5,127,291
6	International	186,014	181,646	172,447	142,649	137,247	146,624	167,577	193,184	176,360	168,551	167,920	206,887	2,047,106
7	VISITOR DAYS	6,383,050	5,581,323	5,750,058	5,126,414	4,910,126	5,794,445	6,325,403	5,882,997	4,909,527	5,150,045	5,111,206	6,901,275	67,825,671
8	AVERAGE DAILY CENSUS	205,905	199,333	185,486	170,880	158,391	193,148	204,045	189,774	163,651	166,131	170,374	222,622	185,824
9	TOTAL AIR SEATS	804,269	725,659	824,419	776,561	752,931	797,496	845,198	817,221	733,525	744,800	729,542	840,670	9,382,291
10														

### Appendix 2: Fiji statistics from 2007 to 2011

Visitor Arrivals Statistics Summary of Visitor Arrivals and Departures		
Year	Arrivals	Departures
1999	409,955	404,510
2000	294,070	294,286
2001	348,014	342,067
2002	397,859	395,118
2003	430,800	424,058
2004	504,075	461,907
2005	545,145	535,063
2006	548,589	546,247
2007	539,881	535,190
2008	585,031	578,962
2009	542,186	536,889
2010	631,868	625,779
2011	675,050	667,729
Source: Embarkation and Disembarkation Cards - Department of Immigration		

### Appendix 3: French Polynesia statistics from 2007 to 2012

Type de voyage ▾	Mode hébergement ▾						
	⊕ 2007	⊕ 2008	⊕ 2009	⊕ 2010	⊕ 2011	⊕ 2012	⊕ 2013
⊕ Afrique	764	338	278	275	272	288	76
⊕ Amérique Centrale	1 602	1 308	880	948	1 170	1 242	426
⊕ Amérique du Nord	72 850	62 633	45 045	46 488	56 843	59 892	25 645
⊕ Amérique du Sud	6 993	6 565	5 791	5 902	5 534	6 078	2 492
⊕ Asie	25 597	21 226	18 990	16 715	15 971	16 505	6 729
⊕ Europe (hors France)	42 044	40 464	33 601	30 017	28 437	26 763	7 254
⊕ France	43 161	42 374	39 256	36 544	35 835	35 898	11 708
⊕ Pacifique	24 887	21 406	16 405	16 799	18 513	22 044	7 381
⊕ Proche et Moyen Orient	343	182	201	231	201	268	82
Grand Total	218 241	196 496	160 447	153 919	162 776	168 978	61 793

Unité : Nombre

Source : ISPF - Enquête de fréquentation touristique

### Appendix 4: Cook Islands tourist arrivals

Period	Total			Visitors		
	Arrivals	Departures	Excess (1)	Arrivals	Departures	Excess (1)
<b>YEAR</b>						
2005	100,360	99,667	693	88,405	86,832	1,573
2006	104,422	103,470	952	92,328	90,392	1,936
2007	109,431	108,160	1,271	97,316	95,136	2,180
2008	106,521	107,234	-713	94,776	94,356	420
2009 <sup>(b)</sup>	112,104	111,671	433	101,164	99,455	1,709
<b>QUARTER</b>						
<b>2008</b>						
Mar	22,132	25,750	-3,618	18,814	22,468	-3,654
Jun	26,140	24,829	1,311	23,356	22,087	1,269
Sep	30,779	30,442	337	28,086	27,364	722
Dec	27,470	26,213	1,257	24,520	22,437	2,083
<b>2009</b>						
Mar <sup>(1)</sup>	22,447	24,683	-2,236	19,089	21,485	-2,396
Jun <sup>(2)</sup>	28,247	26,933	1,314	25,542	24,178	1,364
Sep <sup>(3)</sup>	33,244	32,151	1,093	31,114	29,772	1,342
Dec <sup>(3)</sup>	28,166	27,904	262	25,419	24,020	1,399
<b>MONTH</b>						
<b>2008</b>						
Jan	7,467	10,521	-3,054	6,113	9,477	-3,364
Feb	6,415	7,026	-611	5,516	5,874	-358
Mar	8,250	8,203	47	7,185	7,117	68
Apr	8,283	7,997	286	7,335	6,843	492

## Appendix 5: Tonga tourist arrivals

 <b>International Arrivals</b>				
<small>DETAILS</small> <small>Last Updated on Tuesday, 05 February 2013 02:34</small>				
 <a href="#">Download Migration Bulletin 2011</a>				
International Arrivals by Mode of Transport, 2005-2011				
Year	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total Arrivals
2005	63,503	11,840	943	76,286
2006	66,975	10,809	868	78,652
2007	65,657	8,790	1,140	75,587
2008	74,701	14,599	1,828	91,128
2009	70,845	27,641	1,317	99,803
2010	71,582	16,265	1,659	87,506
2011	72,592	20,519	1,849	94,960
<b>Source:</b> Immigration Department, Customs.				

## Appendix 6: Samoa tourist arrivals

Visitors Arrival	
2002	88,971
2003	92,486
2004	98,155
2005	101,807
2006	115,882
2007	122,356
2008	122,202
2009	129,305
2010	129,500
2011	127,410

## **Appendix 7: Participant invitation in English**

*Invitation to participate in the research project titled: "Trouble in paradise: Experts' opinion on the current touristic situation in French Polynesia". Dear Madame, Sir, I am conducting a series of expert interviews as part of a research study that aims to understand why French Polynesia is currently having difficulties in the tourism sector. As a INSERT JOB TITLE that promotes Tahiti and her Islands, you are in an ideal position to give me valuable information from your own perspective. The interview will take between 40 minutes to 1 hour and will be audio-taped. I am simply trying to capture your thoughts and perspectives regarding the current touristic situation in French Polynesia. The interview will be on an one-on-one basis, meaning that only you and me will be attending. Please find attached a copy of the "Participant Information Sheet" that explains in more details what will happen during this project. If you are willing to participate, please let me know by simply replying to this e-mail. A "Consent Form" will then be e-mailed to you which you will be required to date, sign and send back to me. The interviews will start in 2 weeks time (from the 13th of May), please let me know a day and time that will suit you and I will do my best to be available. If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to ask. Thank you very much for your time, Céline Perelli E-mail address: perelliceline@yahoo.fr Phone number: 0064 212173853.*

## **Appendix 8: Participant invitation in French**

*Invitation à participer au projet de recherche intitulé: "Trouble in Paradise: l'avis d'experts sur la situation touristique actuelle en Polynésie française".*

*Chère Madame, Monsieur, Je mène une série d'entretiens avec des professionnels du milieu de l'hôtellerie et du tourisme dans le cadre d'une étude qui vise à comprendre pourquoi la Polynésie Française est actuellement en difficultés dans le secteur du tourisme. En tant que INSERT JOB TITLE, vous êtes dans une position idéale pour me donner votre opinion au sujet de la baisse de la masse touristique en Polynésie Française. L'entrevue durera entre 40 minutes et 1 heure et sera enregistrée sur bande audio. J'essaie simplement de capturer vos pensées et vos points de vue sur la situation touristique actuelle en Polynésie Française. Seulement vous et moi seront présent pendant l'entrevue.*

*Vous trouverez ci-joint une copie de la «Feuillet d'Information», qui explique en détail ce qui se passera au cours de ce projet. Si vous désirez participer, merci de répondre à cet e-mail. Un «Formulaire de Consentement" vous sera alors envoyé par e-mail. Vous devrez le lire, dater et signer et me le renvoyer par e-mail*

*Les entrevues débiteront dans 3 semaines (à partir du 23 Mai). Si vous avez d'autres questions, n'hésitez pas à me contacter. Merci beaucoup pour votre temps, Céline Perelli Adresse e-mail: perelliceline@yahoo.fr Numéro de téléphone: 0064 212 173 853.*



# Participant Information Sheet



## Date Information Sheet Produced:

...23/...02.../...2013...

## Project Title

Trouble in paradise: Experts' opinion on the current touristic situation in French Polynesia.

## An Invitation

I am Céline Perelli, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project about tourism in French Polynesia. I am from Moorea Island and I have been studying in New Zealand since 2006. I am currently studying at Auckland University of Technology and I am writing my Master's thesis regarding tourism in Tahiti.

This research will contribute in me receiving a Master in International Hospitality Management upon successfully completing this project.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time prior to the completion of data collection. Whether you choose to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you.

## What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of the project is to determine and analyse the main contributors to the decline in tourist numbers to French Polynesia.

This research might result in an academic publication in the coming years.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been selected based upon your experience in the tourism industry in French Polynesia. Your contact details have been obtained through your company's internet website. Only a few participants have been recruited for this project and you are one of them because I believe that you have a strong expert opinion regarding the current touristic situation in French Polynesia and that your input in this project is valuable in order to complete the project.

### **What will happen in this research?**

You will be invited to a semi-structured interview with me where you will be presented with figures and data regarding the touristic situation in Tahiti and her islands. You will then be asked specific questions of which your expert opinion will be noted. The interview may take between 40 minutes to 1 hour of your time depending on the length of your answers. The interview will be audio taped and later partially transcribed. The location of the interviews will be designated in consultation with you. Prior to the interview, you will be required to sign a consent form. You may keep a copy of the consent form if you wish.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

This research is unlikely to generate any risks or discomfort to you.

### **What are the benefits?**

The findings of the research may assist in providing strategies to mitigate the decrease in tourist numbers to French Polynesia and it will also allow me to graduate with a Master in International Hospitality Management.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

In the final report, you may be identified by your surname if you approve. However, if you do not wish to be identified a pseudonym can be used. Limited confidentiality is offered to you.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The interview process will require between 40 minutes to 1 hour of your time depending on the length of your answers.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will have approximately 2 weeks to consider this offer.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in this research, please respond to my email and a consent form will be sent to you which you will be required to read, date and sign. You may keep a copy of the consent form if you wish.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

You will be able to see a draft of your responses that may be presented in the completed thesis. A summary of the findings will be made available to you by e-mail upon request. You will not be expected to review the transcript of your responses.

### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

If you have any further questions or concerns about this research you may contact the Project Supervisor or the Executive Secretary:

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Hamish Bremner, PhD., [hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921-9999 ext. 5898.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr Rosemary Godbold, [rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz](mailto:rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext 6902.

## Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

### **Researcher Contact Details:**

**Name:** Perelli Céline

E-mail: [perelliceline@yahoo.fr](mailto:perelliceline@yahoo.fr)

### **Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

**Name:** Bremner Hamish

**E-mail:** [hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz)

Office phone number: +64 9 921-9999 ext. 5898.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*,  
AUTEC Reference number *type*

## Appendix 10: Participant information sheet in French

# Feuille d'Information



### **Document fait le:**

...23./...02.../...2013...

### **Titre original du projet:**

Trouble in paradise: Experts' opinion on the current touristic situation in French Polynesia.

### **Une invitation:**

Je me présente, Céline Perelli, je suis de l'île de Moorea et je fais actuellement mes études en Nouvelle Zélande à Auckand University of Technology. Je suis en Nouvelle Zélande depuis 2006. Je suis en dernière année de Master en gestion international d'hôtellerie où je dois compléter une thèse portant sur l' hôtellerie ou le tourisme. Etant donné la situation actuelle en Polynésie, j'ai donc décidé d'écrire ma thèse sur le tourisme en Polynésie Française.

Je voudrais vous inviter à participer à ce projet qui contribuera en partie à obtenir mon Master une fois le projet complété. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et vous pouvez vous retirer du projet à tout moment avant la fin de la récolte des données. Votre décision de participer ou pas ne vous causera ni tort ni avantages.

### **Quel est l'objet de cette recherche:**

Le but de ce projet est de déterminer et analyser les principaux contributeurs au niveau de la baisse de la masse touristique en Polynésie Française.

Cette recherche pourrait être publiée dans des journaux académiques dans les années à venir.

### **Comment ai-je été recrutée et pourquoi ai-je été invitée à participer à ce projet?**

Vous avez été sélectionné par rapport à votre expérience dans le milieu du tourisme en Polynésie Française. Seulement quelques participants ont été recrutés à participer à ce projet et vous avez été choisi par rapport à votre niveau d'expérience sur le tourisme à Tahiti et ses îles. Votre opinion professionnelle m'est indispensable pour compléter ce projet.

### **Que va-t-il se passer durant ce projet?**

Vous serez invité à un entretien avec moi où je vous présenterai les données récentes sur le tourisme en Polynésie Française depuis 2007 jusqu'à 2012. Je vous poserai ensuite des questions spécifiques où votre opinion sera notée. L'entretien prendra entre 40 minutes jusqu'à

1 heure et dépendra de vos réponses. L'entretien sera enregistré avec l'aide d'un enregistreur et sera par la suite partiellement transcrit. La date et l'emplacement de l'entretien seront désignés sous consultation avec vous. Si vous choisissez de participer à la recherche, un formulaire de consentement vous sera envoyé. Vous devrez le dater et signer et me le renvoyer par scan. Vous pouvez garder une copie du formulaire de consentement si vous le désirez.

### **Quels sont les risques?**

Ce projet n'engendrera aucun risque pour vous.

### **Quels sont les bénéfices?**

Les résultats de la recherche pourraient assister la Polynésie Française à mettre en place une stratégie pour rebooster le tourisme dans nos îles. Une fois ce projet complété, j'obtiendrais mon Master en gestion international d'hôtellerie.

### **Comment est-ce que mon intimité sera protégée?**

Dans le rapport final, vous serez identifié par votre nom de famille. Si vous ne désirez pas être identifié un pseudonyme sera utilisé. Une confidentialité limitée vous est offerte.

### **Combien de temps durera l'entretien?**

L'entretien prendra entre 40 minutes à 1 heure.

### **Combien de temps ai-je pour accepter ou refuser de participer à ce projet?**

Quelques jours.

### **Comment faire pour participer?**

Si vous choisissez de participer au projet, répondez à ce email et je vous enverrai un formulaire de consentement que vous devrez lire, dater et signer. Vous pouvez garder une copie du formulaire de consentement si vous le désirez.

## Vais-je recevoir une copie des résultats?

Vous aurez l'opportunité de voir une copie de vos réponses qui seront intégrées dans la version finale de la thèse. Un résumé des résultats vous sera envoyé par email si vous en faites la demande. Vous n'aurez pas à vérifier la transcription de vos réponses.

## Que dois-je faire si j'ai des questions au sujet de ce projet?

Si vous avez d'autres questions à propos de ce projet vous pouvez contacter le Directeur de Thèse ou Secrétaire Cadre:

Les questions ou renseignements sur ce projet devront être adressés en premier lieu au Directeur de Thèse, Hamish Bremner, PhD., [hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hamish.bremner@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921-9999 ext. 5898.

Les questions ou renseignements au sujet du déroulement de ce projet devront être adressés au Secrétaire Cadre, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold, [rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz](mailto:rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext 6902.

## Appendix 11: Consent form

### Consent Form



*Project title:* Trouble in Paradise: Experts' opinion on the decline in tourist number in French Polynesia

*Project Supervisor:* Hamish Bremner, PhD.

*Researcher:* Céline Perelli

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated ...../...../.....
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and partially transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes○  
No○

Participant's

signature.....  
.....

Participant's

name:.....  
.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **type the date***



*on which the final approval was granted AUTECH Reference number type the AUTECH reference number*

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## **Appendix 12: Interview questions in English**

### **Interview Questions**

Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself (background)

#### **Theme 1: Tourist satisfaction**

Tourists' satisfaction about their holidays

Tourists' expectations

Tourists' intent to revisit

#### **Theme 2: Push/pull factor**

Attributes that make French Polynesia a desirable holiday destination

Perception versus real product

Tahiti and her Islands-the images

A destination for family travellers? Fun travellers? Adventurous travellers?

Tahiti well marketed?

Airfares

#### **Theme 3: 7P's of Services Marketing**

Enough advertising overseas?

Re-branding French Polynesia

Is French Polynesia competing on the same level as other pacific destinations?

Do we have more to offer?

Value for money

Ministry of tourism-deeper studies?

Politics

Foreseen drop in tourists' arrivals?

Strategies to boost tourism

### **Appendix 13: Interview questions in French**

#### **Interview Questions**

Pouvez vous me dire quelques mots sur vous (niveau d'expérience dans le tourisme)

##### **Thème 1: Satisfaction touristique**

11) Satisfaction touristique

12) Attentes satisfaites?

13) Intentions de revenir

##### **Thème 2: Push/pull factor**

2) Attributs qui attirent

3) Perceptions versus realities

4) Images de la Polynésie

5) La Polynésie: une destination familiale? Voyageurs à la recherche d'aventures? De divertissement?

6) Marketing

7) Prix des billets d'avion

##### **Thème 3: 7P du marketing des services**

10) Publicités à l'étranger

- 11) Image de la Polynesie Francaise
- 12) La Polynesie Francaise rivalise t-elle avec d'autres destinations du pacifique?
- 13) Avons nous plus a offrir?
- 14) Rapport qualite/prix
- 15) Ministere du tourisme-plus de rechercher?
- 16) Politique
- 17) Chute anticiper?
- 18) Strategies en place pour remonter le tourisme

**Appendix 14: Tahiti Nui Vacations front page brochure**

Air Tahiti Nui

Tahiti  
TOURISME

# TAHITI NUI *Vacations*

2013 - 2014



YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO TAHITI INCLUDING  
ACCOMMODATION, WEDDINGS, CRUISES & TOURS

honeymoon  
WORLDWIDE HOLIDAYS

## Appendix 15: Tourists' satisfaction card

	<b>Institut de la Statistique</b> de la Polynésie française B.P. : 395 - 98713 Papeete. Tél. : 47 34 34	Vague : <input type="text"/> Rang : <input type="text"/> Vol n° : <input type="text"/> Date : <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Nom de l'enquêteur : <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		

### Enquête de satisfaction 2008

auprès des touristes internationaux en Polynésie française

Questionnaire anonyme et confidentiel destiné à l'ISPF

**Filtre**

**Personne interviewée**

1. Touriste ☐ Date d'arrivée en Polynésie française :  /  /

2. Résident ☐ ☒ Poser les questions jusqu'en **V 2** Durée du séjour hors Polynésie française :  jours

**TOUS PASSAGERS**

**R 1** Nombre de personnes du ménage

1. De moins de 2 ans  4. De 18 ans à moins de 36 ans  7. Plus de 65 ans   
 2. De 2 ans à moins de 12 ans  5. De 36 ans à moins de 46 ans   
 3. De 12 ans à moins de 18 ans  6. De 46 ans à moins de 65 ans

**R 2** Pays de résidence

1. Allemagne <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Belgique <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Espagne <input type="checkbox"/> 4. France (y compris DOM) <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Italie <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Suisse <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Royaume-Uni <input type="checkbox"/>	8. Scandinavie (Norvège, Suède, Finlande, Danemark) <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Autres pays d'Europe <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Polynésie française <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Australie <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Nouvelle-Zélande <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Nouvelle-Calédonie <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Japon <input type="checkbox"/>	15. États-Unis <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Canada <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Mexique <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Chili <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Autre pays <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Préciser : _____ ➤ préciser le code zip : _____
---	--	---

➤ préciser le département : \_\_\_\_\_

**R 3** Lieu d'achat de votre billet d'avion

1. Agence de voyage ☐ 4. Compagnie de croisière ☐ 5. Autre ☐  
 2. Internet ☐  
 3. Compagnie aérienne ☐ ☒ Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_ ☒ Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

**R 4** Classe de transport (plusieurs réponses possibles)

1. 1ère, business, affaires, le club, opale ☐ 3. Abonnés ☐  
 2. Économique ☐ 4. GP (gratuits et personnel compagnies) ☐

**R 5** À l'issue de ce vol, avez-vous une correspondance vers une autre destination ?

1. OUI ☐ 2. NON ☐

Si OUI ☒ Préciser : Le pays de destination finale \_\_\_\_\_ La ville de destination finale \_\_\_\_\_

**R 6** Catégorie professionnelle du chef de ménage

Indiquer la profession : \_\_\_\_\_

et cocher le statut, ☒

1. Agriculteurs, pêcheurs exploitants <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Artisans, commerçants, chefs d'entreprises <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Cadres et prof. intellect. supérieurs <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Professions intermédiaires <input type="checkbox"/>	5. Employés <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Ouvriers <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Retraités, retraités des affaires <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Autres personnes sans activité <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---

**R 7** Budget global pour les vacances

Montant :  Devise : \_\_\_\_\_

## VOYAGE

### V 1 But principal du voyage et nouveau but

1. Voyage d'affaires ☐ 1 2. Tourisme de vacances ☐ 2 3. Visite de la famille ou d'amis ☐ 3  
 Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Famille ☐  
 Activité sportive terrestre ☐  
 Activité sportive maritime ☐  
 Croisière ☐  
 Si OUI : Pourquoi avoir choisi la Polynésie française ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

### V 2 Vous voyagez

1. En famille ☐ 1 3. Seul ☐ 3  
 2. En couple ☐ 2 4. En groupe organisé ☐ 4

Fin du questionnaire pour résidents

## TOURISTES UNIQUEMENT

### T 1 S'agit-il de votre premier séjour en Polynésie française sur les 24 derniers mois ?

1. OUI ☐ 1 2. NON ☐ 2  
 Préciser le nombre de séjours antérieurs : \_\_\_\_\_

### T 2 En dehors de la Polynésie française, avez-vous déjà effectué un séjour touristique (préciser le nombre de séjours sur les 3 dernières années) :

1. Aux Seychelles ☐ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours 3. À l'île Maurice ☐ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours 5. Aux îles Fidji ☐ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours  
 2. Aux îles Maldives ☐ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours 4. Aux îles Hawaï ☐ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours 6. Sur une autre île ☐ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ séjours  
 Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

### T 3 La Polynésie française est

1. La seule destination du voyage ☐ 1 T 5 2. L'étape d'un circuit ☐ 2 T 4

### T 4 Les 4 pays principaux déjà visités ou à visiter au cours du voyage

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 1 3. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 3  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 2 4. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 4

### T 5 Îles de Polynésie française visitées au cours du voyage (plusieurs réponses possibles)

1. Bora-Bora ☐ 1 8. Australes\* ☐ 8  
 2. Huahine ☐ 2 9. Marquises\* ☐ 9  
 3. Moorea ☐ 3 10. Rangiroa ☐ 10  
 4. Raiatea ☐ 4 11. Maupiti ☐ 11  
 5. Tahiti ☐ 5 12. Autres Tuamotu\* ☐ 12  
 6. Tetiaroa ☐ 6 13. Gambier\* ☐ 13  
 7. Tahaa ☐ 7  
 Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

## SÉJOUR

### S 1 Modes d'hébergement (hôtel, pension, croisière, famille, amis, autres) et aspect qualité

Préciser le(s) nom(s), le(s) lieu(x), le type d'hébergement, le type de repas, la durée du séjour ainsi que le sentiment du touriste sur l'accueil, le service et le coût.

#### Caractéristiques de l'hébergement payant

Nom de l'hébergement	Lieu (île)	Nombre de nuitées	Type de repas	Type d'hébergement	Qualité accueil	Qualité service	Coût du produit
1. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. ....		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total des nuitées :		<input type="text"/>					

#### Code qualité

1. Excellent  
 2. Bon  
 3. Moyen  
 4. Médiocre  
 5. Nul  
 6. Sans objet

#### Type de repas

1. Pension complète  
 2. Demi-pension  
 3. Petit déjeuner  
 4. Sans repas

#### Type d'hébergement

1. Chambres Standard (single ou double)  
 2. Bungalow sur pilotis  
 3. Bungalow sur plage  
 4. Bungalow jardin  
 5. Dortoir  
 6. Maison...

**S 2** Avez-vous pris vos repas? (plusieurs réponses possibles)

a) « DANS » un restaurant d'hôtel

1. Tous les jours ☐ 1

2. Souvent ☐ 2

3. Quelquefois ☐ 3

**S 3** a)

b) Dans un restaurant à l'« EXTÉRIEUR » d'un hôtel

4. Tous les jours ☐ 4

5. Souvent ☐ 5

6. Quelquefois ☐ 6

**S 3** b)

c) Dans un autre lieu

➡ Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

**S 4**

**S 3** Sentiment sur : (plusieurs réponses possibles)

a)

1. Qualité des repas ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. Diversité de la carte ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. Accueil et services ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

b)

1. Qualité des repas ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. Diversité de la carte ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. Accueil et services ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Code qualité : 1. Excellent 2. Bon 3. Moyen 4. Médiocre 5. Nul

**S 4** Activités pratiquées au cours du séjour et localisation (plusieurs réponses possibles)

Activités	Tahiti	Moo-rea	Bora-Bora	Hua-hine	Raiatea Tahaa	Autres ISLV	Rangiroa	Autres T-G	Marquises	Aus-trales	Indéfinis
1. Plongée sous-marine autonome	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
2. Plongée avec tuba	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
3. Excursion en pirogue ou bateau à moteur	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
4. Safari 4X4 ou quad	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. Tour de l'île organisé	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. Randonnée pédestre ou à cheval	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
7. Activités sportives nautiques	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
8. Autres activités sportives*	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
9. Location de voiture, scooter ou vélo	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
10. Activités culturelles (musée, site, spectacle)	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
11. Spa ou relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
12. Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
13. Autres	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13

➡ \*Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

## PRÉPARATION DU SÉJOUR

**P 1** Temps de préparation du séjour avant le départ pour la Polynésie française

1. Moins d'une semaine ☐ 1

2. 1 à moins de 2 semaines ☐ 2

3. 2 semaines à moins d'un mois ☐ 3

4. 1 à moins de 3 mois ☐ 4

5. 3 mois et plus ☐ 5

**P 2** Importance des facteurs dans la motivation du séjour en Polynésie française

a) Caractéristiques du pays

1. Réaliser un rêve ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

2. Climat ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

3. Paysages naturels ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

4. Plongée, sports nautiques ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

5. Culture polynésienne, patrimoine ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

6. Gentillesse des gens ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

7. Langue française ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

8. Facilité du transport aérien ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

9. Tarifs raisonnables ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

10. Sentiment de sécurité ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

11. Authenticité ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

12. Destination unique ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

13. Autre ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

➡ Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

b) Source d'information

1. Agence de voyage ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

2. Magazines, journaux ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

3. Télévision ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

4. Amis / famille sur place ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

5. Bouche à oreille ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

6. Internet ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

7. Support multimédia (K7, CD ROM, DVD...) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

8. Compagnie aérienne ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

9. Salon, foire, exposition ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

10. Autre ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

➡ Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

Modalités : 1. Très important 2. Important 3. Peu ou pas important

**P 3** Les 3 principaux facteurs de motivation dans votre venue en Polynésie française

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 1

2. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 2

3. \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ 3

**P 4** Avez-vous effectué un voyage en forfait ?

1. OUI ☐ 1

2. NON ☐ 2



## APPRECIATION DU SÉJOUR

### A 1 Aspects du séjour

#### a. Qualité du transport et accueil

1. Accueil et services en vol ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 2. Accueil à l'aéroport ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 3. Réception des bagages ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 4. Taxi ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

5. Transfert hôtel - aéroport ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 6. Transports intérieurs aériens ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 7. Renseignements (Votex bureau) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

#### b. Qualité des produits et services

1. Hébergement ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 2. Croisière ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 3. Restaurant ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 4. Site culturel ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 5. Transport collectif ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 6. Excursions, tours ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 7. Plage (beauté) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 8. Plage (propreté) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 9. Artisanat traditionnel ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

#### c. Coût des produits et services

1. Hébergement ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 2. Croisière ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 3. Restaurant ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 4. Site culturel ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 5. Transport collectif ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 6. Excursions, tours ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 7. Plage (beauté) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 8. Plage (propreté) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 9. Artisanat traditionnel ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Code qualité : 1. Excellent 2. Bon 3. Moyen 4. Médiocre 5. Nul 6. Sans objet

#### d. Qualité des activités

1. Plongée sous-marine autonome ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 2. Plongée avec tuba ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 3. Excursion nautique ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 4. Safari 4X4 ou quad ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 5. Tour de l'île organisé ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 6. Randonnée pédestre ou à cheval ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 7. Activités sportives nautiques ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 8. Autres activités sportives\* ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 9. Location de voiture, scooter ou vélo ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 10. Activités culturelles ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 11. Spa ou relaxation ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 12. Shopping ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 13. Autres ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

#### e. Coût des activités

1. Plongée sous-marine autonome ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 2. Plongée avec tuba ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 3. Excursion nautique ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 4. Safari 4X4 ou quad ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 5. Tour de l'île organisé ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 6. Randonnée pédestre ou à cheval ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 7. Activités sportives nautiques ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 8. Autres activités sportives\* ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 9. Location de voiture, scooter ou vélo ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 10. Activités culturelles ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 11. Spa ou relaxation ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 12. Shopping ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6  
 13. Autres ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

\*Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

\*Préciser : \_\_\_\_\_

Code qualité : 1. Excellent 2. Bon 3. Moyen 4. Médiocre 5. Nul 6. Sans objet

### A 2 Le séjour a-t-il répondu à votre attente ?

1. Tout à fait ☐ 1 2. En partie ☐ 2 3. Pas du tout ☐ 3

### A 3 Reviendrez-vous ou recommanderez-vous la Polynésie française à vos amis ou à votre famille ?

1. Je reviendrai ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 2. Je recommanderai ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Modalités : 1. Sûrement 2. Probablement 3. Probablement pas 4. Sûrement pas

### A 4 Indiquer ci-dessous ce que vous avez particulièrement apprécié

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### A 5 Ou ce qui vous a particulièrement déplu durant votre séjour en Polynésie française

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Maururusoa  
Merci beaucoup



## Appendix 16: Event calendar

Dates and events are subject to change. For more details, check with your hotels or your host.

### January

- 19) **“Tere ‘A’Ati”**. Cultural and historical event in Rurutu featuring a long walk with stops at ancestral sites, the three villages and a visit to various homrs where guests receive this island’s traditional greeting, a shower of thrown talcum powder.
- 20) **3rd PacificRock Festival** A show with international artistes especially The rock star Marco MENDOZA at the “Le Méridien Tahiti”.
- 21) **Charles Bravi’s High Level Recital**. The recital takes place at the Pirae city hall, in Tahiti. Website: [www.conservatoire.pf](http://www.conservatoire.pf).
- 22) **Chinese new year festivities**. The French Polynesian Chinese community celebrates the beginning of the Year of the Water Dragon. All the cultural and folk wealth of the country will be highlighted during these festivities through especially in dancing, cooking, ancestral arts and rites.

### February

- 23) **Moorea great Prize**. Experienced golfers will compete against each other on the Temae golf course in Moorea. Website: [www.mooreagreenpearlgolf.com](http://www.mooreagreenpearlgolf.com)
- 24) **9th FIFO – Pacific International Documentary Film Festival Tahiti**. Documentary film showings, Pacific television conference, digital encounters and round table discussions, international pitch, workshops for amateurs and professionals, “Short film night” at the Cultural Center “Te Fare Tauhiti Nui”. Tahiti Nui Marathon. Website: [www.fifotahiti.org](http://www.fifotahiti.org)
- 25) **Young talents and St Valentin’s classical concert**. At the Radisson Plaza Resort Tahiti hotel, Arue. Website: [www.conservatoire.pf](http://www.conservatoire.pf)
- 26) **24th Tahiti-Moorea Marathon**. Experts consider this marathon, which is held in Temae on the island of Moorea, as one of the finest in the world with over 600

entrants from many countries. First Aid, refreshment and sponge stations located every 2.5 km and Tahitian music will be provided along the different ways (42, 21 and 5 km), and at the finish line. This event also offers participants and the public the opportunity to enjoy the island's exceptional setting.

- 27) **5th Tahiti Festival Guitare.** Encounter of all the guitar fans and professionals as well as the curious at the Le Meridien Tahiti hotel. Some of the world's leading guitarists as well as experienced local guitarists will perform during these three nights. Website: [www.tahitifestivalguitare.org](http://www.tahitifestivalguitare.org)

### **March**

- 28) **The coming of the Gospel.** Commemorative celebration of the 215th anniversary arrival in Matavai – Tahiti, of the first English Protestant missionaries.
- 29) **Moorea Golf PRO/AM** On the golf course of Moorea.
- 30) **Tahitian International Bullfish Tournament – TIBT.** In Tahiti (Taina Marina, Punaauia), international deep-sea fishing competition preceding that of Raiatea.

### **April**

- 31) **3rd Raid “Vanira”** A 15km foot race in the nature of Tahaa island. Departure from Ha'amene, arrival at Pahure stadium with musical entertainment, fruit tasting, and several stands of handicraft, catering and vanilla products.

### **May**

- 32) **Great Groups Classical Concert** At the Cultural Center “Te Fare Tauhiti Nui”, Papeete – Tahiti.
- 33) **9th TAPS Junior Surfing** Two days of juniors surfing competition of ages 16-18 at the Taapuna coral reef pass in Punaauia, Tahiti.
- 34) **18th Taapuna Master Surfing.** Big surfing competition for amateurs taking place over 4 days at the Taapuna reef pass (Punaauia). Competition in the categories of: surfing, body-boarding, “drop knee” and Stand-Up Paddling.

- 35) **9th Tahiti Pearl Regatta.** Sailing-race between Raiatea, Tahaa and Bora Bora, opened to all types of sailboats for all nationalities and combines ocean courses with lagoon competitions, accompanied with friendly and festive evenings on “motu” or in major hotels. Website: [www.tahitipearlregatta.org.pf](http://www.tahitipearlregatta.org.pf)
- 36) **“MATARI’I I RARO” Festival.** This festival marks the end of the period of abundance, the beginning of the Austral winter and the dry season when the soil produces less food and there is less to eat.
- 37) **10th Ari’imatatini Race** A single-man outrigger canoe race throughout the Tuamotu Archipelago, primarily on Rangiroa. At the same time, there will be a village crafts and traditional sport competitions (fruit carriers’ races, coconut leaf or “ni’au” weaving contests, local cooking competitions, etc.) to enliven these 2 days.
- 38) **Heiva or ‘Ori Tahiti Dance Schools** On To’ata Square, Papeete – Tahiti. All the traditional dance schools of Tahiti, Moorea and other French Polynesian islands come together for this yearly show with expert performances in the traditional Polynesian arts (fire dancing, drums etc.). The participants range from the ages of 3 to 70 years old, making for a dynamic and convivial setting as these budding artists shine, demonstrating the essence of Polynesian “joie de vivre”. Website: [www.heivanui.com](http://www.heivanui.com)
- 39) **“TIFAIFAI” Exhibition** A Papeete City Hall exhibition of Polynesian design patchwork sewn bed and cushion covers and wall hangings.
- 40) **35th Marquesas Islands Exhibition.** Exhibition and sale of artisan creations from the Marquesas Islands in the Aora’i Tinihau Hall at Pirae, Tahiti.
- 41) **Great Harmony Concert.** At the former French Polynesia Hospital.
- 42) **Stand Up Paddle World Tour – Sapinus Pro.** A World Championship Tour in Tahiti that showcases the very best athletes in the world battling it out in the most challenging, spectacular and awe-inspiring conditions, in Punaauia, Tahiti. Website: [www.standupworldtour.com](http://www.standupworldtour.com)

- 43) **130th Heiva I Tahiti** (Cultural Heiva). The largest cultural festival in all of Tahiti taking place at beautiful To'ata Square in Papeete, Tahiti. This year's Heiva will feature the biggest-ever assembly of dance troupes. In addition to the dance competitions there are sporting events, cultural demonstrations, cuisine and artisans. [Full 2011 program](#)
- 44) **The transit of Venus** This is an exceptionally rare event, which happens in pairs only once a century. The event will be celebrated at Venus point through a number of organized activities, such as a dance show, exhibitions and observation of Venus...). Website: [www.venus-tahiti2012.org.pf](http://www.venus-tahiti2012.org.pf)
- 45) **Tahiti Vanilla Week** Come and discover or rediscover the Tahiti Vanilla and its by-products, learn about how vanilla is produced, prepared and transformed. Rejoin the agents of the vanilla channels at the French Polynesia's Assembly Hall in Taraho'i, Papeete, as well as in participating restaurants and hotels. The public, the agribusiness and cosmetic professionals, the researchers or students will be able to appreciate the wealth of the world's highest quality vanilla, its unique flavor and its various uses. Website: [www.vanilledetahiti.com](http://www.vanilledetahiti.com)
- 46) **Prize Winners' Classical Concert** At the Pirae city hall, Tahiti.
- 47) **Tahiti Toa Va'a** A race of 6-paddler outrigger canoes over a course including the towns located between Tautira and Papeete in Tahiti. The race starts in the morning on the beach at Tautira, a 62 km course along the east coast, and finishes in the Papeete channel at the end of the day. Website: [www.tahiti-toavaa.com](http://www.tahiti-toavaa.com)
- 48) **The "AITOMAN" triathlon on the sacred island.** Two kilometers swimming, 96km by bike and 20km running at Uturoa on Raiatea.
- 49) **Gala party of French Polynesia artistic conservatory " TE FARE UPA RAU**  
" On To'ata Square, Papeete – Tahiti.
- 50) **7th Tahiti – Moorea Sailing Rendez-vous(TMS).** Designed as an interactive event between tourists, sailors and residents, the TMS takes place over three

days: one day in Tahiti with welcoming events, a day of sailing rally and one Polynesian day on Tahiti's sister Moorea with a variety of Polynesian-style competitions, such as outrigger canoe races, fruit carrying races, stone lifting, coconut husking contest, etc. Website: [www.latitude38.com](http://www.latitude38.com)

51) **6th Taputapuatea Festival.** Named “Te Ana Iva Pu Fe’e Ma’ohi Tere Moana”, which means “The Octopus’ Nine Tentacles that Glide on the Ocean”, this event traces the history of Polynesian migrations and the uniting of South Pacific islands to Raiatea, the sacred island, by presenting various ceremonies and ancestral customs.

52) **HEIVA “RIMA’I”** A big artisan’s exhibition organized by the committee “Tahiti ite Rima rau” in the Aora’i Tinihau Hall at Pirae (Tahiti), using traditional and local handicraft as theme, bringing together artisans from French Polynesia’s five archipelagos.

53) **5th ‘Ukulele Festival.** This musical contest in Tahiti’s Commune of Hitia’a, on the East coast, is open to all musicians at all levels.

## July

54) **29th Tahiti International Golf Open** The Olivier Bréaud International Golf Course in ‘Atimaono, Papara, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Papeete (Tahiti), hosts the annual Tahiti International Golf Open, a stop on the Pacific Tour organized by the Australian PGA and supported by the Polynesian Golf Federation.

55) **Heiva Tu’aro Ma’ohi** This contest allows athletes from French Polynesia’s five archipelagos, and sometimes from the entire Pacific region, to demonstrate their talents in ancient Polynesian sports. Workshops, demonstrations and initiation classes are on the program. The aim of the event is to develop traditional sports and encourage and recruit younger generations into these ancient Polynesian sports.

56) **Heiva Va’a i Tahiti** Great outrigger canoe racing in Papeete Harbor and the channel between Tahiti and Moorea featuring nearly 1,500 men and women

paddlers, all dressed in traditional pareos and flower head crowns. These top athletes compete in the junior, senior and veteran categories in one paddler, three-paddler, six-paddler and 16-paddler canoes. Website: [www.ftvaa.pf](http://www.ftvaa.pf)

57) **25th “Te Aito Va’a”**. One-day outrigger canoe race for individual paddlers over approximately 10 kms (6 miles). The best 100 paddlers qualify for the “Super Aito” race.

58) **Heiva i Bora Bora** The annual singing, dance and traditional sports competition along with crafts demonstrations at Moto’i Place in Vaitape.

Website: [www.borabora-tourisme.com](http://www.borabora-tourisme.com)

## August

59) **Te Vai ari’i Marathon: The Super Aito Va’a** Three days of outrigger canoe races for individual paddlers featuring the Top 100 qualified paddlers from the “Te Aito” race. The Super Aito races cover distances of 5, 10, 15 and 20 kms (3, 6, 9 and 12 miles).

60) **Air Tahiti Nui / Von Zipper Trials**. Qualifying surf competition of Teahupoo at Tahiti’s peninsula, prior to the famous Billabong Pro that brings together foreign and local surf pros. Website: [www.surf.pf](http://www.surf.pf)

61) **BILLABONG PRO SURFING** An international competition amongst the world’s best surfers on Teahupoo’s mythical waves of Tahiti’s peninsula.

## September

j) **11th raid Painapo** On Moorea, a 20-km foot race for experienced runners and 8-km foot race for amateurs, in the mountain for three-person teams (men, women or mixed). Website: [www.mooreamarathon.com](http://www.mooreamarathon.com)

k) **World Tourism Day** This day is designated to celebrate the tourism in the world, it takes place in Tahiti and Her Islands. Website: [www.tahiti-tourisme.pf](http://www.tahiti-tourisme.pf)

## October

**10th Austral Island Exhibition** Exhibition and sale of artisan creations organized by the Organizer Committee of Handicraft Exhibitions from the Austral Islands in the

French Polynesia Assembly's exhibit hall, Papeete.

## **November**

**21st Hawaiki Nui Va'a** The traditional “va'a”, or outrigger canoe, race of more than 100 canoes between the Leeward Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, Tahaa and Bora Bora. The finish line is foreseen on the beach of Matira Point (Bora Bora). Website: [www.ftvaa.pf](http://www.ftvaa.pf)

**6th Monoï Here, Week of monoï** Exposition stands – sales, conferences, massages, demonstrations, film projections, documentaries, etc. at the “Maison de la Culture” Cultural Centre. Website: [www.monoiaaddict.com](http://www.monoiaaddict.com)

**“Matari'i i Ni'a Festival** In Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine and Raiatea. Day return in abundance under the sign of the constellation Pleiades. A festival focusing on products from the land and sea and activities by men and women. For more informations: [Matari'i i Ni'a](#)

**8th “HURA TAPAIRU”** Traditional dance competition at the Cultural Center “Te Fare Tauhiti Nui” in Papeete. For more informations: [Hura Tapairu](#)

## **December**

**50th Edition of Tiare days** This event – which is focused on the theme: “wreaths and bunches of tiare Tahiti” – is a special tribute to Tahiti's national emblematic flower, the tiare Tahiti. There will be various events related to the tiare flower, such as competitive decorations in Papeete's businesses and public institutions. More informations about [Tiare](#).