Community Attitudes and Tourism: Cook Islands Insights and Approaches

Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST): Symposium on Country Experiences and 3rd Meeting of the UNWTO Expert Group, Madrid 14-16 December

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The Cook Islands Case: Cook Islands / NZTRI partnership 2012 – 2022 >>

THREE RESEARCH PILLARS OF THE TOURISM DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (DSS)

Visitors

DSS

Business

Community Impacts Awareness & Attitudes

Links with and supports other vital research activity – environment, climate change


IVS BCI CAS

www.nztri.org.nz/tourism-research/pacific/
Community attitudes – a cost effective approach

• The *Cook Islands Community Attitudes Towards Tourism Survey* explores the relationships between community and tourism from a number of perspectives including: economic, cultural, environmental, and in terms of general quality of life (including health).

• The survey runs annually (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) with a fifth survey set to run in December 2022

• Online data collection is run with the support of Cook Islands Tourism and Vodafone. Text blasts sent every week, weekly prizes to encourage participation. Hard copies available if required.

• 2021 - 1,381 responses were collected. Based on the total population aged over 15 of 13,138 (2016 census) the sample size is estimated to be approximately 12% (NB for ethical reasons the survey only targeted those aged 18 and over).
Which age group are you in? - 2021

- 18-29: 21%
- 30-39: 21%
- 40-49: 20%
- 50-59: 20%
- 60-69: 13%
- 70+: 5%
Where do you live in the Cook Islands? - 2021

- Rarotonga: 81%
- Aitutaki: 12%
- Atiu: 2%
- Other: 5%
### Which village do you live in? - 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arorangi</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikao</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupapa</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titikaeveka</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngatangiai</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matavera</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takuvaine</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avatiu</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaimaanga</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avarua</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atupa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rarotonga (n=1,107)
Do you work in or own a business in the tourism sector?

Cook Islands - 2021

Family members who work in the tourism industry?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 32%
Do you think that tourism is good for the Cook Islands?

Time Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourism as a source of pride and direct benefit - 2021
CI Māori / Non-CI Māori

- I feel proud to live in a place that can attract many visitors
  - Mean rating: CI Māori = 4.3, Non-CI Māori = 4.4
- I benefit directly from tourism
  - Mean rating: CI Māori = 3.2, Non-CI Māori = 4.0
Tourism is good for the Cook Islands economy

Tourism creates more jobs for local people

It is a challenge to find long term rentals as property owners are opting to rent short term for more money

New foreign owned tourism businesses should be restricted

House and rental prices have increased due to tourism

My standard of living has improved because of tourism

Everyday life is more expensive because of tourism

Mean rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarotonga</th>
<th>Aitutaki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism is good for the Cook Islands economy</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism creates more jobs for local people</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a challenge to find long term rentals as property owners are opting to rent short term for more money</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New foreign owned tourism businesses should be restricted</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and rental prices have increased due to tourism</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My standard of living has improved because of tourism</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday life is more expensive because of tourism</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourism and economic dimensions - 2021

Tourism / Non-tourism

- Tourism is good for the Cook Islands economy: Mean rating 4.2 (Tourism) vs 4.4 (Non-tourism)
- Tourism creates more jobs for local people: Mean rating 4.2 (Tourism) vs 4.3 (Non-tourism)
- My standard of living has improved because of tourism: Mean rating 3.3 (Tourism) vs 4.0 (Non-tourism)
- It is a challenge to find long term rentals as property owners are opting to rent short term for more money: Mean rating 3.9 (Tourism) vs 3.9 (Non-tourism)
- House and rental prices have increased due to tourism: Mean rating 3.6 (Tourism) vs 3.5 (Non-tourism)
- New foreign owned tourism businesses should be restricted: Mean rating 3.6 (Tourism) vs 3.9 (Non-tourism)
- Everyday life is more expensive because of tourism: Mean rating 3.1 (Tourism) vs 3.1 (Non-tourism)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A visitor environment tax should be imposed to assist with the additional waste and damage caused by the increase in visitors</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cook Islands needs more tourists</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our environment is damaged because of tourism</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My island is overcrowded because of tourism</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our roads and infrastructure are kept at a higher standard because of tourism</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean values:

- 2018: 3.1
- 2019: 3.1
- 2020: 3.2
- 2021: 3.2
Should tourists should be allowed back in the Cook Islands - 2021

Gender

Yes, but only New Zealand tourists
Yes, everyone should be allowed in
Not sure
No

Percentage

Yes, but only New Zealand tourists
Yes, everyone should be allowed in
Not sure
No

Male | Female
--- | ---
40 | 37
35 | 27
15 | 27
10 | 9

Gender
Key Takeaways

• Build close relationships with stakeholders and co-develop research tools
• Focus on innovative approaches that can cut costs and be sustained
• Build capacity to conduct research but also the ability to use it
• Ensure community dimensions are factored in to tourism decision support systems and statistics.
• Mix methods where possible, ensure there are open ended questions
• Disseminate and involve media
COOK ISLANDS RESOURCES AND OUTPUTS

NZTRI facilitates an online Visitor Survey for the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC), (2012 - present). A summary of the results from each year is available below. This research was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the characteristics of visitors to the Cook Islands including their expectations and expenditure. Feedback from visitors to the Cook Islands enables Cook Islands Tourism to improve the visitor and host experience of tourism as well as support it to make good decisions about future tourism development. This research evolved from previous work undertaken by NZTRI in the Cook Islands from 2005 to 2007.

In 2016 NZTRI also commenced a business confidence index survey to provide a supply side perspective on the industry. These reports are completed twice a year and reflect low and high season periods. The information provided give insights into the challenges and opportunities facing tourism businesses and enables useful feedback on government policy initiatives.

In 2018 NZTRI completed the first ever national community-focused tourism awareness survey and this was again repeated in 2019. This work provides insights into how the residents of the Cook Islands feel about tourism and the various costs and benefits associated with the industry.

Together these three bodies of research allow us to develop a decision support system that can help guide tourism strategy, policy development and support the design and use of effective indicators of tourism’s contribution to sustainable development.

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY

Cook Islands Visitor Survey - Report - Apr 2022 to Jun 2022
Cook Islands Visitor Survey - Report - Jan 2022 to Mar 2022
Ngā mihi / Thank you

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