

**Exploring the Potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary
Tourism Attraction in Auckland: Through the Eyes of
Operators and Tourism Professionals**

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Abstract

The notion of street food and mobile food vendors is not a new one. However, in recent years there has been an increasing international trend for food trucks situated in, either static locations or moving from location to location. Another recent trend is that of tourists focusing their activities on what has become known as food tourism – making culinary experiences a central part of their visit to a destination. With a history of good food and wine, which complements the landscape, New Zealand has a positive appeal for these food tourists. In Auckland, food trucks have evolved from the traditional pie cart. This raises the question as to whether they could become a tourist attraction, offering food that showcases the multi-cultural gastronomic identity of the city and the country as a whole. To investigate this potential, 19 interviews were undertaken with relevant stakeholders including the tourist organisation Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development (ATEED), food tour operators and food truck operators. The interviews with tourist authorities and tour operators suggested that the sector is not seen as an overall part of the food tourism industry. This is in contrast to the views of the food truck operators themselves who believe they are able to offer a strong tourist and cultural attraction. They are however hampered by tight regulations and inflexibility on the part of the Auckland Council. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of recommendations for future research and action.

Contents

Abstract	i
Attestation of Authorship	v
Ethics Approval	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Opening Remarks	1
1.2 Research Significance	1
1.3 Study Aims and Objectives	2
1.4 Scope of the Study	3
1.5 Structure of the dissertation	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part A: Food Tourism	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Food, Tourism and Tourists	5
2.3 Food Trucks and Tourism	9
2.4 Summary	10
Chapter 3: Literature Review – Part B: Food Tourism in Auckland	12
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 Auckland	12
3.3 Background to Food Tourism in New Zealand	13
3.4 Culinary Heritage and Tourism in New Zealand	14
3.5 Food Tourism in New Zealand	17
3.6 Mobile food Vending: Food Trucks	21
3.7 Summary	23
Chapter 4: Methodology	24
4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 Research Philosophy	24
4.3 Research Approach	24
4.4 Sampling and Data Collection	25
4.5 Semi-structured Interview Schedules	27
4.6 Data Analysis	29
4.7 Ethical issues	30
4.8 Summary	30
Chapter 5: Results and Discussion	31
5.1 Introduction	31

5.2 Stakeholder Responses	32
5.2.1 Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development (ATEED)	32
5.2.2 Food tour operators	35
5.2.3 Food truck operators	38
5.3 Summary	45
Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations	46
6.1 Introduction	46
6.2 Limitations of the Study	47
6.3 Summary of Key Conclusions	48
6.4 Implications	50
6.5 Recommendations for Future Research	52
6.6 Recommendations	53
6.7 Final Thoughts	55
References	57
Appendices	64
Appendix I - Mail to stakeholders.....	64
Appendix II - Participant Information sheet -ATEED	65
Appendix III - Participant Information sheet –Food tour operators	67
Appendix IV - Participant Information sheet –Food truck operators.....	69
Appendix V - Consent Form	71
Appendix VI – Interview Schedule - ATEED	72
Appendix VII – Interview Schedule – Food tour operators	73
Appendix VIII – Interview Schedule – Food truck operators	74

List of Figures

Figure 1 Structure of the Dissertation	3
Figure 2 Food tourism as a special interest sector	7
Figure 3 Map of North Island, New Zealand	13
Figure 4 Connections between food and tourism.....	16
Figure 5 Visitors to Auckland as a destination from 2012 - 2016	18
Figure 6. Food and tourism in New Zealand.....	19
Figure 7 Auckland's 2021 strategic plan	20
Figure 8 Role of pie carts/mobile food trucks in Auckland	22

List of Tables

Table 1 Visitor data for New Zealand.....	17
Table 2. Summary of food truck operator and code numbers.....	39

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgments), nor materials which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

Bonnie Idicula Thomas

12 July 2016

Ethics Approval

As this dissertation used interviews that included human participants, ethical approval was required from the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Approval was received from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13 April 2016 with AUTEC Reference number 16/76.

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*"Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!"
Luke 1:45.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Opening Remarks

Food is a key marketing element in selling tourism for a destination, and can be a motivating factor for tourists to visit a particular region (Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis, & Cambourne, 2004). As such, the sub-sector of food tourism can be an important component of tourism and a means of drawing people to a destination. The term “food tourism” refers to visitors whose main activity is to explore the food and drinks at a particular destination as it provides information about that destination’s people, culture and history. As knowledge of other cultures has increased, and tourists’ curiosity and desire for new culinary experiences has grown, so too has the food tourism sector. Hall and Sharples (2003) suggest that how and why we eat can be indications of who we are: an indication of national or social identity; and contribute to why individuals’ travel. Recognising this, it is clear that food is an important contributor to the overall experience that tourists may have of a destination. What this means is destinations need to ensure they are ready and able to meet the culinary challenges that increased competition for new and innovative food tourism products introduce so that the food element of a destination visit can enhance the overall experience, value and competitiveness of a tourist destination. In New Zealand, there has been limited exploration of how a focus on food tourism can contribute to the visitor experience.

1.2 Research Significance

Although food tourism has been growing in significance internationally, there has been relatively little research undertaken on food tourism (excluding wine tourism) in New Zealand. This research aimed to address this through exploring the potential for a specific type of food activity, that of food trucks, and the viability of these as a food tourism

attraction in Auckland. Food trucks, as a particular type of food experience, are very popular in destinations such as the US, Canada and Europe. Food trucks are expected to generate about US \$ 2.7 billion in revenue in the US alone by the year 2017 (Shankman, 2015). These are not just stand alone tourism attractions, but frequently form part of major events and festivals to increase awareness of local cuisines and enhance tourism experiences (Blichfeldt & Therkelsen, 2010). In Auckland this process of incorporating food trucks into the overall tourist offering is currently at a nascent stage. Therefore, understanding the opportunities that food trucks may offer to the area is both timely and pertinent.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this work was to identify the potential that food trucks may have as a contributor to food tourism in Auckland, New Zealand. In order to achieve this, the following sub-objectives were developed.

- Identify the views and perceptions of Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) about food tourism as an attribute of tourism in Auckland and specifically, the use and promotion of food trucks in the region as a part of it;
- Identify the views of food tour operators on the use and promotion of food trucks in the region as a part of food tourism;
- Identify the views and perceptions of food truck operators in Auckland; and
- Make recommendations for a cohesive approach to promoting food trucks as a part of a food tourism product for Auckland, New Zealand.

To meet these objectives, the following research questions were developed:

- What are the views and perceptions of Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) on the use and promotion of food trucks in the region?

- What are the views of food tour operators on the use and promotion of food trucks in the region?
- What are the views and perceptions of food truck operators in Auckland about their current and potential contribution to food tourism in Auckland?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The exploratory research was focused on three of the key stakeholder groups involved in food tourism in Auckland. These included food truck operators, food tour operators and ATEED staff. The intention was to gather viewpoints and opinions to identify if there were common perspectives and thus ways forward for the food truck industry to develop as a tourism product in the region.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

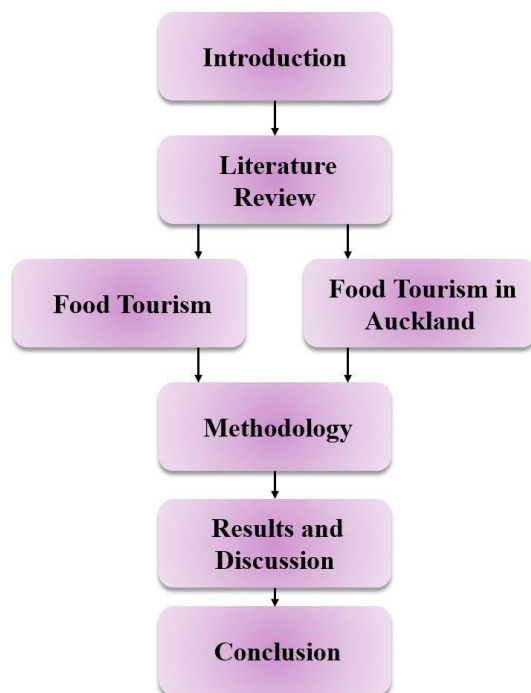


Figure 1 Structure of the Dissertation.
Source: Author's own.

This dissertation comprises five chapters. This introductory chapter has outlined the focus and scope of the work, whilst Chapter two and three provides a background to food tourism (Part A) and a literature review of the sector, including definitions of food tourism and the current situation in New Zealand and Auckland (Part B). The methodology for collecting primary data is provided in Chapter four and the results of this primary data collection are presented in Chapter five, along with a discussion of the major findings and outcomes. The final chapter reviews the overall work, including highlighting limitations and new directions for research, along with recommendations about optimising the potential for food trucks as a tourism product in Auckland.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – Part A: Food Tourism

2.1 Introduction

As noted in the introductory chapter, food tourism is a growing niche sector within the tourism industry. Therefore, understanding the overall nature of this sector is important for considering how food trucks may play a role in tourism in Auckland, New Zealand. Prior to considering the specific New Zealand context of food and tourism and food trucks in particular, this chapter considers the nature of food tourism overall, its development and any existing frameworks for the evaluation of the contribution of food tourism to destination attractiveness.

2.2 Food, Tourism and Tourists

According to Henderson (2004), and Quan and Wang, (2004), food and tourism have a very close relationship, and thus food is a vital element in any destination's tourism product. Not only do tourists need to eat when travelling, but as Tikkanen, (2007) indicates, it can also be a motivational driver for visiting a destination. Food provides pleasure, entertainment and insights into ways of life, essentially serving a social purpose, creating links or areas of interests between different cultural contexts (Hegarty & O'Mahoney, 2001). For example, activities such as sampling or learning about different foods may be the focus of a special interest's holiday, such as culinary tourism (Wolf, 2002), gastronomy tourism (Hjalager & Richards, 2002) or tasting tourism (Boniface, 2003), as well as food tourism (Hall, Mitchell & Sharples, 2003). These specialist tourism products frequently involve beverages, most commonly seen in the niche sector of wine

tourism (Hall et al., 2003). Wine tourism is particularly popular in New Zealand which has a thriving wine production industry.

At the same time, other tourists, whose focus is not confined to the food options of a destination, still enjoy trying national and local cuisine as part of their overall holiday experience. This includes outdoor and indoor markets, and traders such as street vendors and street trucks, which encourage new and unique tasting experiences for tourists (Henderson, 2009). Western tourists in particular are keen to try alternative foods, partly because of increased knowledge about other cultures, but also increasingly varied options being highlighted in their own home-town supermarkets (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005), which leads to them to want to try authentic cuisines.

In addition, the desire to challenge the globalisation of food that is created by the spread of fast food chains encourages tourists to try local and authentic cuisines whilst on holiday and to incorporate this into their overall evaluation of the holiday and destination experience (Neild, Kozak & LeGrys, 2000), including creating attachments to a culture or destination (Gross & Brown, 2006). At the same time, as Pendergast, (2006) and Henderson (2009) indicate, poor food experiences can taint the overall holiday experience leaving a negative impression of a destination. Food tourism can therefore be seen as a special interest tourism sector, identified in the section below, developed by Hall and Mitchell (2005).

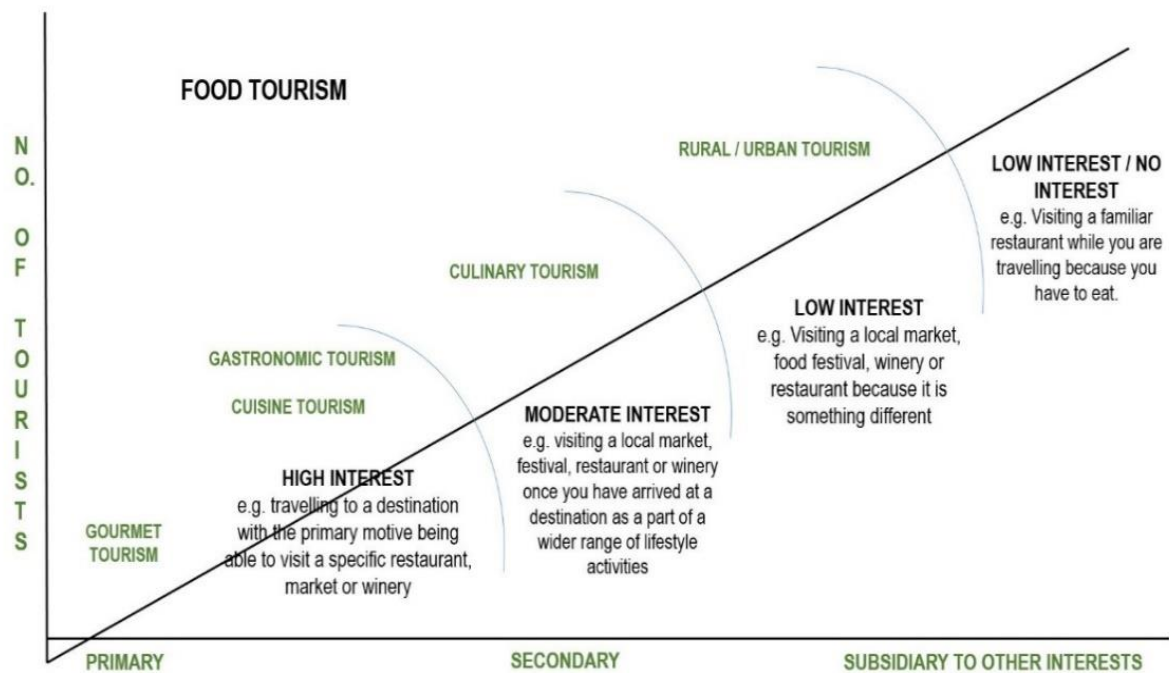


Figure 2 Food tourism as a special interest sector
Source: Based on Hall and Mitchell (2003, p.74)

What all this means is that food is a tourism product that offers commercial opportunities to a destination and its population. The eating facilities available to tourists may be those specifically created for tourists, or an extension of those that serve the local population. Food festivals allow local producers to showcase their products and attract tourists to an area. Given the increasing desire for locally produced food, this encourages visitors who want an authentic experience during their travel. Furthermore, incorporating food as part of the overall marketing of a destination by tourist services and other public sector organisations can lead to an increased desire to visit a particular region or city. However, there are also unofficial food vendors who trade in tourist areas, as part of the informal tourism economy, who, whilst not regulated, may also contribute to the overall experience of the visitor (Henderson et al., 2012). Therefore, food and food tourism is a growing area of interest and study (Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2006), with the Centre for Hospitality Research (2005) suggesting that it may overtake ecotourism as a focus for visitors in the future.

Much recent research on food and tourism has evaluated the construct from the perspective of a specialist tourist, the food tourist, who has a special interest. In this respect, Hall and Mitchell (2001) indicate that food tourism is considered as a visit to primary or secondary producers of foods, food festivals, and locations where tasting or experiencing certain foods are the primary motivation to visit. This does not however mean that a restaurant experience as part of a journey or visit is considered food tourism. Instead food tourism refers to the fact that a culinary experience is the primary reason for the visit. The distinction made by Hall and Mitchell (2001; 2005) is that activities are directed by an interest in food, rather than food being consumed as part of the experience. It is this motivation to try new food experiences that creates the special interest tourist and food tourism. An important facet of this is that the food, and the experience, combine to make the moment memorable. This can be because of the food itself but also the location, whether a gourmet restaurant, or street vendor of authentic food. The links created between good (or bad) food experiences can strongly influence the perception of whether a destination was memorable for positive or negative reasons.

Selling food to tourists is therefore potentially a vital element in the overall marketing and visitor experience of a destination. Whilst certain regions, such as France and Italy have a long history and association with fine foods and culinary experiences, there are increasing indications that other countries in Asia and the rest of the world, including New Zealand are recognising the value of a focus on food tourism (Hall & Gossling, 2016). Street food can be seen as a novelty for Western tourists, particularly in countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, which frequently deliver what are called fusion foods that combine diverse culinary offerings both formally and informally (Tourism Malaysia,

2010). It is not however just tourists who frequent these units, they are also visited by the local population and this needs to be recognised in any tourism marketing approach.

As Fox (2007) notes, a focus on culinary offering can convey a sense of place and image to a destination and thus should be a core part of the development of any destination. The reason for this is that food spending is a major part of any tourist's budget and thus food tourism offers strong economic advantages to a destination (Meler & Cerovic, 2003). At the same time, it delivers revenue to the food vendors, food producers and thus overall regional revenues and income streams, which can encourage growth in food sectors in a region (Plummer et al., 2005).

2.3 Food Trucks and Tourism

As Ruel, Garrett, Hawkes and Cohen (2010) note, there is a growing interest in the role of street food to local economies. Not only do these street vendors of food offer nutritious and easy to access food for less affluent local residents, but they also offer an opportunity for tourists to try local cuisine in an authentic way (Tinker, 2003). The notion of a street as public kitchen is not new however, as market spaces have always played a major role in the creation of an area (Newman, Dale, & Ling 2011) and vendors of food have always been integral to these spaces. Street food vendors and food trucks thus support the development of an environment in an organic and less formal way than the building of restaurants or other static eating establishments.

Indeed, as Franck (2005) indicates, the presence of street food vendors recognises the mobility of people today and the diversity that exists in many urban and even rural areas (Florida, 2005). The presence of food trucks creates a link between the communities in

an area and an attraction for tourists who want to sample local, traditional recipes in an authentic way and without the same stringent regulations necessary for a restaurant or café (Estrada & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2010). There is also the fact that street carts evidence a backlash to corporate, homogenous fast food so that residents or tourists can eat authentic, local food on a limited budget (Beato, 2012; Gunderson, 2012). Much of the evidence for food trucks and their expansion in tourism comes from the US where cities have been encouraging the re-introduction of food carts to cities such as Los Angeles and Portland (Smith-Bedford, 2011). In these areas, the vendors further underline their value to the tourist trade as they are often providers of information to the tourists visiting these regions, engaging in conversation whilst they wait for, and eat their food (Tsai & Wang, 2016). Such processes further promote the cultural aesthetic associated with such vendors and the connotations of authenticity that are regarded so highly across food tourism demographics (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2016b). Indeed, some of these cities have state-managed street food programmes that are co-ordinated by joint efforts from tourist authorities and local government. This is due to the recognition that local food helps create a sense of place and local identity, which supports their use as part of an overall tourist offering (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005), as well as a means of reducing local unemployment and encouraging regeneration of an area as Beresky (2011) points out.

2.4 Summary

Reviewing the existing literature on food tourism, and food trucks in particular, it is evident that globally food is being used to establish national identity and encourage tourists to experience local cuisine. At the same time, there is also an indication that the practice is growing, and that tourists value the local feel of these food trucks and roadside street eateries. To understand the impact of these on the Auckland tourism sector, the

following chapter examines the food tourism market in New Zealand, before considering the evolution of food trucks in the greater Auckland area.

Chapter 3: Literature Review – Part B: Food Tourism in Auckland

3.1 Introduction

Having considered literature in the general area of food tourism, and food truck development as part of an authentic experience, there is a need to understand how this manifests in the context of New Zealand, and Auckland in particular. In recent years, tourism has become increasingly important to New Zealand and is now the largest single export earner generating close to five percent of the country's GDP. For the most part, it is New Zealand's "clean and green" natural environment that is promoted (for example, New Zealand's 100% pure campaign). However, several niche markets are also gaining importance. Wine tourism for example, is now a significant activity for many visitors to the country. As a result, wine tourism is now well embedded as part of the New Zealand tourism product and as an area of academic inquiry. Food tourism in New Zealand however, has not enjoyed the same status and attention.

3.2 Auckland – Gateway into New Zealand

Auckland is New Zealand's largest city and is a major gateway into the country. It is also one of the country's major tourist destinations in its own right. As the largest city, Auckland is well serviced with tourism infrastructure, including numerous food and beverage outlets and experiences. Food tourism in Auckland has to date been primarily focused on wine tourism (Hall & Baird, 2014). However, there is a growing indication that food tourism, and particularly the use of food trucks, may be a source of tourist revenue and a motivator for visiting the city in the future (Bell & Neill, 2014). This

chapter therefore considers the tourism products in regard to food and food trucks in the region.

3.3 Background to Food Tourism in New Zealand

Auckland is one of the major cities in New Zealand, and is situated in the North Island (Figure 3). Auckland is often the point of arrival for many visitors to the country, but is frequently used as a stop-over rather than a destination. This is something that the current tourism strategy for the city wishes to change (Neill, 2009).



Figure 3 Map of North Island, New Zealand
Source: www.beautifulnz.com/new-zealand/maps/north-island.php

Food and beverage has been part of New Zealand's economic development and tourism product for many years, but in recent years there has been an increasing focus on specialist foods. The country already has a global reputation for exporting award -winning produce, but there is now a growing motivation for tourists to visit the sources of these foods and as a result there has been growth in the food tourism industry. As part of this process, there are now regular national and regional events hosted which highlight the production of a large range of both gourmet foods and speciality, premium wines (Hall & Gossling, 2016). These seasonal festivals, combined with regular farmers' markets and other events are all contributing to an increase in visitor numbers to the country (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2015). In particular, indigenous and ethnic foods, such as Maori cuisine with a modern flavour, are appearing on menus in restaurants along with a focus on locally produced foods (De Marco, 2015). In effect, the food tourism industry in New Zealand has identified that quality and originality will deliver better outcomes than high levels of production. This has been considered as particularly so when regarding current trends in cuisine appreciation and consumption throughout the developed world (Yeoman & McMahon-Beatte, 2016a). There is also an increasing focus on healthier options, including organic or pick-your-own options in many restaurants and hotels (Tourism New Zealand, 2016).

3.4 Culinary Heritage and Tourism in New Zealand

To understand what may influence the provision of food for tourists, there is a need to understand how New Zealand evolved from a 'meat and three vegetables' cuisine to one that offers a range of alternative and original tasting opportunities. The diet of the indigenous people, the Maori, was dominated by birds and fish, and was frequently cooked with locally available herbs and roots. However as New Zealand was colonised, the country's cuisine became more European in nature, including the use of pumpkins, wheat and sugar. Since the 1980's, the country has seen an influx of immigrants from

Asia, which has increased the types of food available in the country (Pearson & Kothari, 2007). This led to the development of the fusion school of cooking, blending elements from the wide ethnic groups into one that is Pacific in nature but unique to New Zealand. This has led to a connection between New Zealand and unique and varied food experiences that draw visitors from all over the world, and aligns with Everett and Aitchinson (2008) regarding the connection between food experiences and positive tourism outcomes and perceptions of a destination.

Identifying this culinary heritage and focus, there is a suggestion that food is, or could be, central to the development of the overall tourism product of the country. Colmar Brunton (2005) suggest that whilst the landscape of the country is the initial draw to tourists and should be maximised, tourist destinations in New Zealand should also focus on how the food and wine in an area complements the landscape with natural and unique offerings that show the personality of the country. This view is also held by the Food and Wine Network, (n.d.) who suggested that marketing for tourism should incorporate awareness of the food experiences available in the country. This includes promotion of food trucks in a city such as Auckland to support local economies.

A primary objective of this organisation is to differentiate and promote food tourism, supporting local economies and developing new reasons to visit regions such as Auckland. One in ten people work in the food industry, which accounts for 20% of the working population in the country. This demonstrates that food tourism is vital to the overall economy of both Auckland in particular, and New Zealand in general. The international reputation of New Zealand for producing high-quality, green products, which align with their unspoilt landscapes, is frequently a focus for visitors to the country who expect the cuisine to match their expectations. At the same time understanding how initiatives for tourism organisations can connect food and tourism is also important. In this respect, Hjalager's (2002) model, shown in Figure 4 highlights these connections.

	<i>First order</i>	<i>Second order</i>	<i>Third order</i>	<i>Fourth order</i>
<i>Main input resource</i>	Food production resources	Resources in the service sector	Entrepreneurial resources	Knowledge
<i>Expected tourist behaviour</i>	Enjoy the food	Understand the food	Experience the food	Exchange knowledge about the food
<i>Principal strategies</i>	Higher revenues through boosted production and marketing	Maintaining revenues through quality and reinvention of traditions	Offering new products and services to tourists	Selling know-how to professionals
<i>Collaborative structures or networks</i>	Unchanged	Enforced cooperation between existing organisations	Creating new structures and service organisations; still localised	Creating new structures in a global context
<i>Examples of initiatives to enhance value-added</i>	Culinary aspects in regional promotion Campaigns for particular products Regional food trademarks Marketing food fairs and food events	Quality standards Certification and branding. Reinventing and commodification of historical food traditions	Opening production plants and sites Routes and trails Visitor centres and museums New events based on tourism Cooking classes and holidays	Research and development Media centres Demonstration projects

Figure 4 Connections between food and tourism
Source: Hjalager (2002, p. 33)

Hjalager's approach defines four levels at which food can be used in tourism, with a focus on increasing levels of sophistication, complexity and the way that food may be used as a tourist product. According to Hjalager (2002) if this model is applied in a region there is added value that can be achieved through the links between food and tourism, benefiting communities, the region and individuals. In essence, the first layer is simply an enjoyment of the food made available, leading to the highest level, which is knowledge exchange about food and food experiences. From a tourism marketing perspective this means moving from simply marketing regional foods, to development of new products and initiatives related to food production and sales to exploit previously under-used or unexplored opportunities, for example a focus on food trucks in the Auckland area. However, as Hall, (2009) notes, there must be cohesion between the various stakeholders

in the region including operators of food trucks or other food outlets, tourism development offices and local government. Given this focus on food in New Zealand, the specific notion of food trucks in the context of Auckland needs to be considered.

3.5 Food Tourism in New Zealand

The New Zealand Tourism Strategy (2010 to 2015) recognised the potential of food tourism and indicated that proactive marketing of food in international tourism should be a priority for New Zealand destinations, in essence, recognising the value of an interactive traveller who combines culinary diversity with visiting the country's landscapes. (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2015). As a result of these initiatives some areas, including Hawkes Bay, Nelson and Marlborough formed committees comprising local stakeholders to combine regional potential in linking food and tourism. This again, may be a viable area where food trucks can maximise opportunities in Auckland.

Statistics New Zealand highlight the growth in overall tourist numbers over the last few years as Table 1 indicates.

Table 1 Visitor data for New Zealand

Year ended May	Number of Visitors	Change from previous year	
		Number of Visitors	Percent
2006	2,395,259	14,225	0.6
2007	2,452,187	56,928	2.4
2008	2,482,881	30,694	1.3
2009	2,418,647	-64,234	-2.6
2010	2,490,601	71,954	3.0
2011	2,515,859	25,258	1.0
2012	2,615,921	100,062	4.0
2013	2,628,485	12,564	0.5
2014	2,784,189	155,704	5.9
2015	2,977,015	192,826	6.9
2016	3,291,128	314,113	10.6

Source: Stats.gov.nz (2016)

In the case of Auckland particularly, there has been a steady growth in visitor numbers over the last four years as the figure below indicates.

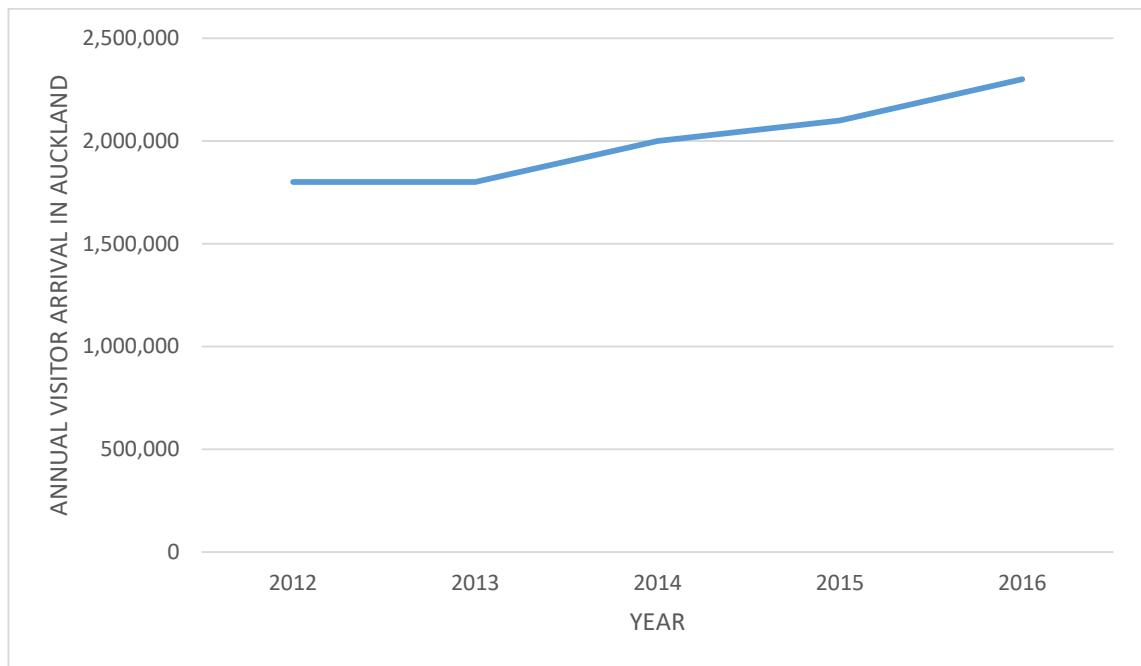


Figure 5 Visitors to Auckland as a destination from 2012 - 2016
Source: Stats.govt.nz (2016)

All of these visitors will need to eat once in the city but not all will want to eat either fast food or in restaurants. As already indicated, food trucks and mobile street vendors are increasingly popular with tourists as a means of trying local, authentic and traditional dishes in a destination. Understanding the evolution of the food truck in New Zealand could lead to an understanding of how they can contribute to the overall tourism offering of Auckland city.

In a 2010 study, Steinmetz examined how prominent food is as a tourism product in the marketing of a number of New Zealand destinations, and identified a number of themes in the promotion of food as part of the tourist offering as shown in the Figure 6.

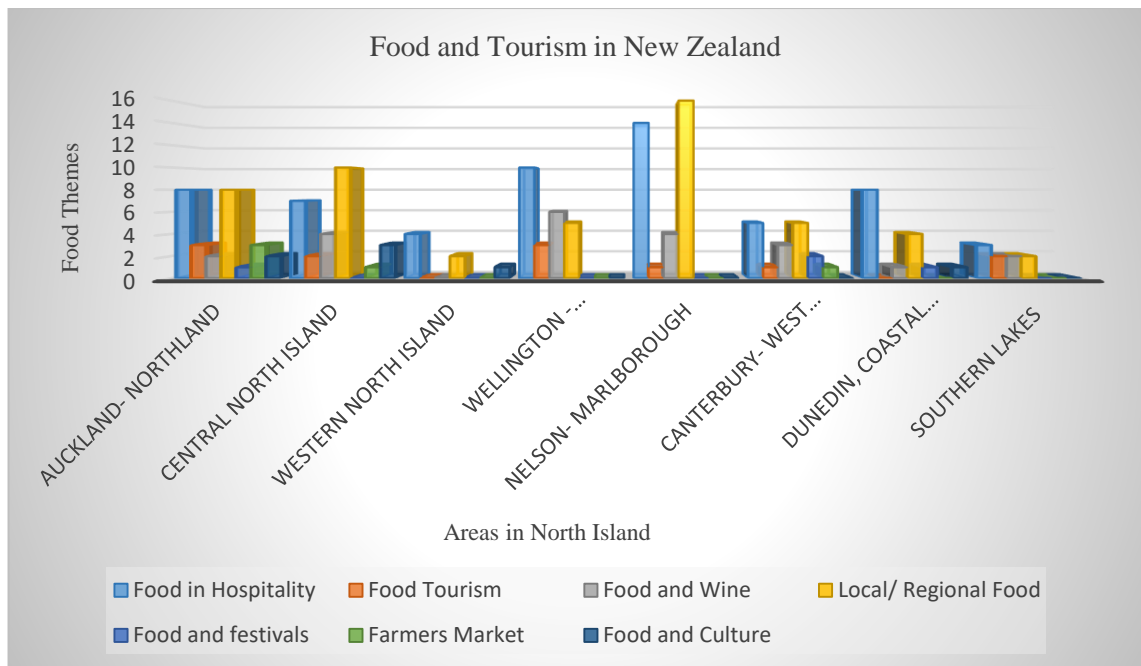


Figure 6. Food and tourism in New Zealand
Source: Steinmetz (2010)

According to Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009), tourists spend around one-third of their holiday funds on food and therefore are frequently looking to achieve value for money. This value may be in the form of low-cost eating, but is also related to the experiential nature of wanting to try different cuisines in a spirit of adventure. This therefore is potentially a market that can be optimised by Auckland's food trucks. In this regard, the concept of food trucks can be incorporated into the city's seven-year tourism plan developed by ATEED (2014). The plan's strategic framework (shown in Figure 7) indicates a desire for the city to grow demand, develop the Auckland brand, and increase attractions and motivators for tourists to visit the area.



Figure 7 Auckland's 2021 strategic plan
Source: Aucklandnz.com. (2014)

At the same time the strategic plan also recognises the unique nature of the food offerings in the Auckland area and the value this can bring as one of the sub-sectors of tourism. In addition, the potential developments of theme parks, and other specific tourist destinations offers further areas of opportunities for mobile food vendors to support the development of the tourist product and overall experience in the area. With a food heritage that comes from Maori roots, and influx of European, and Asian influences, Auckland has a unique opportunity to maximise the culinary experience of its visitors. Food trucks and mobile vendors are thus a potential facet of the forward planning of the area. Therefore, understanding the position and tradition of mobile food vendors in Auckland is pertinent.

3.6 Mobile Food Vending: Food Trucks

In Auckland there has been a dramatic rise in the number of food trucks, fuelled by a desire to emulate the success of food trucks in the US (Wilkinson, 2016). There are some areas where market licences and street trading permits are required, but there is also an informal movement where others set up quickly as pop-up stalls. The interest in these and their value is the originality, personal nature, diversity and authenticity of the foods being sold (Casini, Contini, Romano, & Scozzafava, 2016).

The notion of a food truck evolved from the New Zealand tradition of pie carts.

According to McGill (2003), these are caravans with a hinged side that dispense fast food, or as Orsman (1999) indicates a mobile eating place, set up nightly serving food to take away. These mobile eating sites first appeared in the 1930s during the Depression, selling economical food to those on low incomes who eat in public (Morales & Kettles, 2010). Indeed, the White Lady pie cart in Auckland, considered to be an icon of the Auckland food scene, has been in existence since 1948 and still continues to serve both the local population and tourists.

Across Auckland there are pie vending carts in operation throughout many urban areas, business sectors and other more remote areas of the region. In a similar vein, kai karts (traditional Maori food) carts, sell local produce cooked using traditional recipes, further underlining the potential value to the tourist revenues of the city and the aforementioned associations of authenticity that are of such critical importance in providing the desired cultural capital to the potential tourism demographics. This tradition of mobile vending carts in New Zealand accordingly provides potential customers with the prospect and experience of genuine local cuisine; a process that maintains cultural mores that are of great appeal to tourists, offering these groups a flavour of the country and delivering a unique gastronomic experience that can increase their positive evaluations of a visit to

the county (Tsai & Wang, 2016). Indeed, in a study of the White Lady, the oldest pie cart in the city, Neill (2009) identified that there was a cultural and social place for pie carts that encompassed all stakeholders and highlighted the importance of the mobile food vendor to Auckland's overall identity and feel, as illustrated in Figure 8.

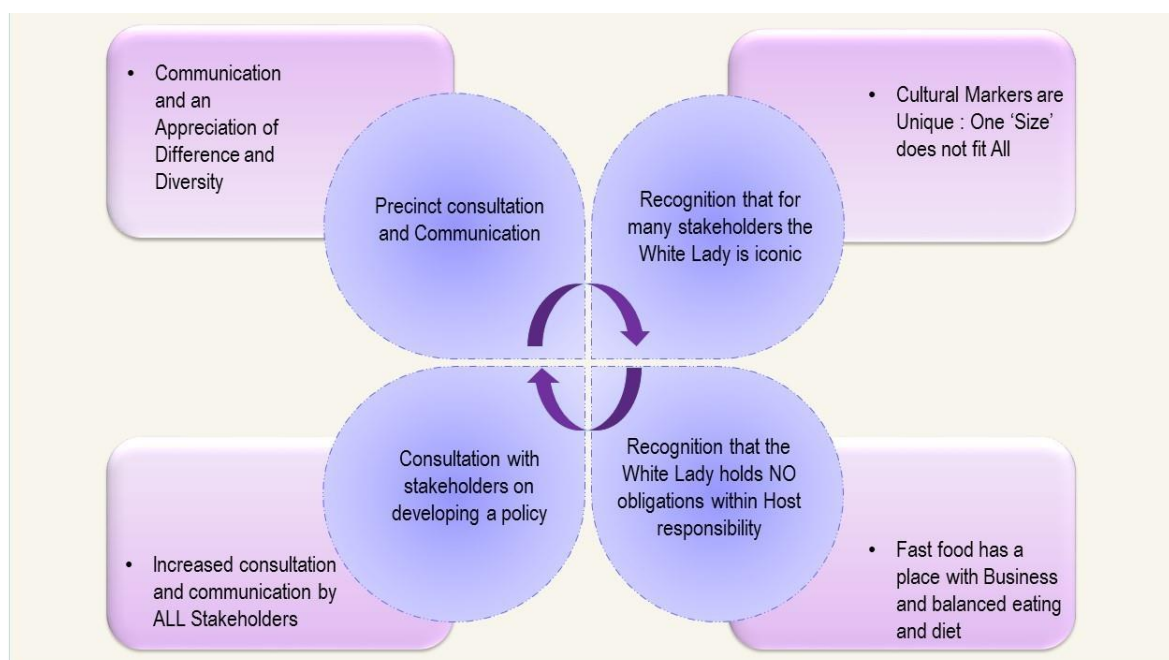


Figure 8 Role of pie carts/mobile food trucks in Auckland
Source: Neill, (2009) (p.48).

What this suggests is that the pie carts (and mobile food trucks/vendors) may be an integral part of the overall personality and visitor experience in Auckland and should be recognised as such by tourism organisations. In recognising this and incorporating the food trucks as part of a food tourism focus, the city can potentially increase revenue and visitor interest.

Furthermore, it can be seen that the development and use of food trucks is based on the notion that people are increasingly becoming busy in life/ immobile. As such, these trucks offer a good opportunity to serve persons that lack enough time to visit restaurants. Robinson and Getz (2014) assert that since travellers must eat at some point, food tourism

and food trucks in particular currently presents an opportunity for marketers and tourism operators across major tourist hotspots globally.

At present, the Restaurant Association of New Zealand noted 12 percent growth in the fast-food market, which has been made possible by food truck operators such as The White Lady and other independent operators (Neill, Bell, & Hemmington, 2012). This growth is likely to continue as tourists want to experience more authentic dining options during their visits to cities such as Auckland. Therefore, key stakeholders such as tourism authorities and local government need to ensure that they are working with street food vendors to encourage development and growth, but also effective management in terms of health and safety and environmental concerns that tourists may have.

3.7 Summary

After reviewing food tourism in the New Zealand context, it is clear that there is a connection between the country and its food products. Whilst the national cuisine has evolved and developed with the influx of immigrants from Asia, creating the now globally recognised “fusion” style of food, there remains a focus on natural, locally sourced, quality ingredients across many food operations. In the case of food trucks particularly, which evolved from units that began by serving less affluent local populations, the development into a wider range of ethnic cuisines may offer potential to the tourism industry in the city. In order to assess this potential, the perceptions of key stakeholders in the region were sought. The following chapter sets out the methodology used to explore the potential of food trucks in Auckland.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The literature review considered how food tourism and visitors' desire for authentic, culturally varied foods have increased in recent years. The reasons for this were expanding knowledge of different cuisines but also a desire to experience something new and adventurous. The literature suggested that food trucks could have a potential role to play in this as their street vendor nature may contribute to a sense of authenticity that may be lacking in some restaurants or other food outlets. In order to identify whether this approach to food cuisine has potential in Auckland, New Zealand, primary data from key stakeholders in the region is required. This chapter therefore sets out the methodology used in this research.

4.2 Research Philosophy

When considering the research philosophy, which as Webb (2002) indicated is the pattern and framework within which the work is conducted, it was felt that an interpretivist approach was the most appropriate. The rationale for this choice was the recognition that the data gathered would be from personal sources, and thus potentially subjective opinions. In addition, the research is exploratory and no cause and effect relationship was being investigated, nor was an explanation of connections being sought (Siyanova-Chanturia, 2011).

4.3 Research Approach

The research approach adopted is a qualitative research design employing a semi-structured interview schedule. A qualitative research method was chosen as the most suitable research approach as it seeks answers to how, why and what questions in relation

to a social situation. It was considered that this approach would be the most appropriate to adopt for the current study because it is used to gain in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The research explored the potential for food trucks to be a tourism attraction in Auckland. Qualitative research was the most appropriate method because it allowed participants to express their views and opinions in a meaningful way.

The interpretivist philosophy identified above, also aligns with the choice of an exploratory focus for the work. As the work was not intending to explain why food trucks are a draw for tourists, nor describe the process, it was considered that the exploratory focus would best allow the objectives to be met (Saunders et al., 2009). At the same time, there was a need to determine whether the research design would be deductive or inductive in nature. The deductive approach emanates from the top level, with theory identification followed by narrowing to specific hypotheses for testing with data collection and observation. The inductive approach rises from the bottom, using observations and data to generate hypotheses and theories. As this research is exploratory, an inductive approach was used.

4.4 Sampling and Data Collection

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research usually focuses on a relatively small sample size, deliberately selected to allow investigation, as well as an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. For this study exploring the potential for food trucks as a part of food tourism in Auckland, the researcher identified three stakeholder groups for inclusion: Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), food tour operators and food truck operators. Three non- probability sampling methods were utilised: purposive, convenience and snowball sampling.

A purposive sampling method was utilised in this study, through which the respondents were chosen based on preselected criteria (Cottrell, & McKenzie, 2010). This sampling

method is popularly used in qualitative interviews as it involves the deliberate selection of interviewees based on the criteria set for the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Clarke & Braun, 2014). Convenience sampling was also used by selecting participants based on their proximity and the ease in which they could be accessed (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2007; Altinay, Paraskevas, & Jang, 2015). This was applied by identifying food truck operators who worked in the vicinity of central Auckland. Finally, a snowballing technique was used, where the researcher relied on the participants who were already recruited through purposive and convenience sampling to identify additional participants who might consent to participating in the study (Jennings, 2010).

Specifically, one ATEED official was identified as the person who dealt with destination development in Auckland. The representative of the tourism organisation was important to the research because they were able to give information concerning the current positioning of tourism and food tourism in Auckland. Four food tour operators were approached after being identified based on a web audit of food tour operators in Auckland. Two of the four operators agreed to participate in the research. Finally, 16 food truck operators were approached using the following criteria: (1) that they do business in the greater Auckland area; and (2) that they sold food rather than beverages or speciality items such as gelato. As food truck operators, they were well placed to discuss food truck operations in Auckland in general, and to offer an informed opinion about the potential for food trucks to be included as an attraction in food tourism in Auckland. After undertaking a web audit of Auckland based food trucks, the following locations were identified as meeting the criteria: The Street Food Collective in Ponsonby, The Food Station in Mt. Albert, and the Food Truck Stop at 1 Queen Street and 340 Queen Street. All these locations are in well-known areas in Auckland and within a 10-12 minute' radius of the Auckland CBD. These locations were chosen because these are the main street food and food truck locations in Auckland.

The study was undertaken in the Auckland CBD and Ponsonby area in Auckland from April 11 to May 11, 2016. All interviews were undertaken face-to-face at locations arranged beforehand. For the most part, initial contact with the potential participants was made through an email introducing the researcher, explaining the purpose of study and presenting the core research questions. Following this email, the physical address of the participants was identified and an appointment to meet was made. A sample introductory email is appended in Appendix 1. Some food truck operators were approached directly as no email contact was available.

Before the start of each interview, the participants were advised of the purpose and objectives of the qualitative study, and the interview process. This briefing included asking permission whether or not the interviews could be audio recorded (Smith, 2010; Rakić & Chambers, 2011). One of the food truck operators indicated that they did not wish to be audiotaped, so notes were taken instead. The remainder of the interviews were audiotaped digitally using a smartphone. During the sessions, the researcher utilised the spaces on the interview schedules to write additional notes about the conversation. All of the participants were given a copy of the participant information sheet and consent form which can be found in Appendix 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

4.5 Semi-structured Interview Schedules

As discussed above, qualitative semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The purpose of the interviews was to provide general background about tourism and food tourism in Auckland, as well as the participants' perceptions of the role of food trucks as an attribute of the Auckland food tourism product. Interviews were based on three semi-structured interview schedules (can be found in Appendix 6, 7 and 8 respectively), which were developed based on the core questions for the three groups of stakeholders which

were to determine the potential for food trucks as a culinary tourism attraction in Auckland:

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED):

As the “author” of the Auckland Visitor Plan 2021, ATEED aims to maximise linkages across economic sectors by taking a whole organisation approach to enhancing the visitor economy, using tourism as a platform to promote other aspects of Auckland (ATEED, 2016). Given ATEED’s broad oversight, the ATEED representative was asked about tourism in Auckland, the role of food tourism and whether food trucks were, or could become an attribute of tourism in the city.

Food Tour Operators:

As operators within food tourism in Auckland, the food tour operators were asked how they believed food tourism was positioned in the Auckland tourism scene and if food trucks were considered as a part of the food tourism industry. Based on their knowledge and direct experience of food tourism in Auckland, they were asked if they saw any potential for food trucks to be positioned as attributes or attractions.

Food Truck Operators:

As food trucks are at the core of the research questions, the food truck operators were asked a range of questions about their operations and positioning. Questions included how they started their food trucks, and barriers and facilitators to operations. These were followed with questions about whether they considered themselves part of food tourism in Auckland, how they currently saw themselves positioned, and where they might be positioned in the future. Sixteen interviews were undertaken and each interview was approximately 25 - 30 minutes long and was digitally recorded, with supplementary handwritten notes taken by the researcher. All audio tapes were transcribed by the researcher into text files, which were read by the researcher to identify themes.

4.6 Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2014) thematic analysis approach, which is widely used by researchers was adopted as the method for analysing the qualitative information gathered from the interviews. Thematic analysis is defined as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Clarke & Braun, 2014, p.93).

The first step undertaken in the analysis was data familiarisation. Data familiarisation involved the verbatim transcription of the interviews by the researcher, thus transforming the verbal data into written data (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Okumus, Altinay & Roper, 2007). The next step involved was reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to identify themes (Knight, 2002). These themes were categorised into groups to create relationships that were later interpreted by the researcher based on the aims of the study and in relation to the research questions in line with recommendations from Stepchenkova, Kirilenko & Morrison, (2009) and Burnard et al. (2008).

This study used a two-stage process for analysing the data: "(1) coding the data and (2) developing and reflecting on the interpretations of the data" (Knight, 2002). In the coding stage, tags were assigned to similar themes, based on the research questions, and similar themes were placed together in the same categories. These categories were then used to create relationships for each theme. From these relationships, the second stage of developing the interpretations of the data was done and personal experiences of the participants were integrated to enhance the interpretations (Stepchenkova et al., 2009).

By using this method of analysis, the researcher analysed the data for particular themes, aggregating information into clusters of ideas, and providing details that supported the themes (Yin, 2015). The use of thematic analysis not only organises the data and provides

details, but at times goes further by interpreting the different aspects of the research topic. As a result, thematic analysis made it possible to generate more information.

4.7 Ethical Issues

To maintain confidentiality, in accordance with ethical guidelines from, the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTECH), each of the respondents was given an identity number and coded as such. Furthermore, all participants were provided with information about the aims of the work, what their participation would include and how their data would be used. This ensured that the respondents were able to provide fully informed consent.

4.8 Summary

In summary, this research utilised qualitative data collection comprising semi- structured interviews in Auckland, New Zealand. Thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes about the role of and potential for food trucks to be incorporated as an attribute of food tourism in Auckland. The results of this thematic analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to identify the potential for food trucks to be part of food tourism in Auckland. The examination of existing literature identified the important role that food plays in the overall tourism experience, as well as highlighted the traditional role that street food and mobile vendors have played in supporting this. In the Auckland context particularly, it was noted that food trucks have evolved from the original, traditional pie carts to become a feature of many areas of the city and are seen as part of the cultural and social fabric of the city. This suggested that there may be potential in the tourist offering for these food truck units. In order to evaluate how those involved in the tourist industry viewed the value of food trucks, 19 semi- structured interviews were undertaken with a non- probability sample of key stakeholders. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. It is acknowledged that the research comprises a small research exercise and as such, there are limitations. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data, with the limitation being discussed in Chapter six.

In the Auckland area there is a wide and diverse range of food truck cuisines available (discussed further in Section 5.2.3 and Table 2, below). This underlines the already highlighted ethnic mix within the region and the different traditions that have come together to create the overall food experiences that are available to visitors to the city. What is also notable is that of the 16 operators, only two had been in operation for more than one year. However, 75% were full time operations suggesting that business is both lucrative and growing. The next section of this analysis considers the overall responses by the participant groups to assess their views on the potential of food trucks as a tourist draw.

5.2 Stakeholder Responses

5.2.1 Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development (ATEED)

ATEED is an organisation that supports the growth of a vibrant and competitive economy by facilitating new investments and jobs in Auckland. ATEED operates in both the international and domestic tourism markets, hosts major events that contribute to the local GDP, and has identified investment opportunities in business growth sectors including food and beverage. In the context of Auckland tourism, the organisation is focused on developing the area's overall tourism product through engagement with the community, businesses and tour operators. At the same time, the organisation recognises the need to bring together, in a cohesive way the different needs and sectors to provide an overall positive tourism experience. In particular, it aims to encourage visitors to see the city as a place to stay, rather than as a "stop over" before visiting or leaving other areas of New Zealand. In this respect the value of collaboration with tour operators and food truck vendors is clear, as highlighting the potential culinary experiences can form part of the marketing to encourage the view that Auckland is a destination rather than a stopover (ATEED, 2016). A representative was chosen from ATEED as she was from the team who handled destination development in Auckland and was in a position to give information concerning the current positioning of tourism in Auckland.

To better understand the role of food tourism in Auckland, the ATEED representative was asked how the organisation viewed this sub-sector. One potential challenge was highlighted by the fact that whilst the organisation promotes food and beverage and it sits as one of ATEED's priority sectors, it is not considered as the main area of concentration in relation to tourism. ATEED provides financial support for many events where food is involved such as Lantern festivals and Diwali. However, food is secondary to the main focus of these festivals, as it is seen as a requirement of provision rather than a focus for the visit. This therefore is one area where food trucks could be given a higher profile in

the marketing of the festivals and other events. This view of food as not a primary focus for tourism marketing by ATEED was confirmed by the following comment by the ATEED representative:

As far as tourism goes, we would never use food and beverage on its own but it's definitely part of what we do.

What this suggests is that whilst ATEED recognises that food and beverage may be one element of a tourist's experience there is not currently a need to give it a primary focus. However, it was also identified that ATEED hosts many events such as the annual 'Restaurant month'. ATEED endorses the food and beverage industry by creating promotional videos with TV celebrities like Robin Malcolm (a New Zealand actor) to create awareness to the public and showcase food related attractions in Auckland. However, currently this does not incorporate food trucks as a specific tourist draw. To clarify, the ATEED representative was asked specifically about how they see food trucks positioned in Auckland. The responses indicated that whilst food trucks are recognised in the region as a part of food industry, they are not considered as a major tourist attraction or product in Auckland, as indicated by the following response:

I would say they make up for the larger food industry as they are a part of it but not a major tourism factor. Food trucks do sit as an important part of the industry but not on their own if that makes sense. If you look down at Queen Street, there is Queen Wharf, container mall.... right of the ferry building. You can see the container mall and its opening soon since Downtown Mall is coming down and we need to have some shops and food somewhere else so slowly the containers will be filling that gap. It won't be food trucks but the same genre.

Despite this somewhat dismissive view of the role of food trucks in tourism, there was also an indication that there is a slowly growing recognition of their potential value as a focus for identifying street culture within Auckland, evidenced by the following comment:

They are becoming funkier, cool and high quality, definitely. In the city on Queen Street, Ponsonby, well they have picked up the game on their own and are making a mark on their own. Even night markets have food trucks but they have been of low quality but they complement each other. Have you seen the Christchurch container mall? It's really cool and one part of it is food trucks and they are super popular. It's a perfect example of how we could use food trucks as an attraction, as the mall itself is an example of it.

This comment suggests that whilst at present food trucks are not officially part of any food tourism approach by ATEED there is a recognition that in the future they may be a viable means of encouraging tourism revenue. In particular, in terms of adding vibrancy and authenticity to the overall tourism experience, especially given the rise in these mobile vendors in the last few years, evidenced by the vendors indicated in Table 2, ATEED recognises the contribution to the area's economy as illustrated in the following comment:

Definitely there has been an increase in food trucks in Auckland and the whole cool feel of them is rising. I don't know the stats but they may be doing well. There are little food trucks sprouting here and there.

When asked about the potential future for food trucks in the city, there was an indication that at present they are still not being considered. However, the ATEED representative did indicate that there was an increasing recognition of the value of incorporating food tourism into the area's destination brand. They do not offer discounts to the food industry they do support festivals where food is a part of them. However, no direct marketing strategy currently exists for food trucks within the organisation, despite the recognition of their value to the New Zealand economy.

The final area considered from the perspective of ATEED was the issues of quality and promotion of good food. The representative indicated that from their personal perspective, the food trucks did promote good food, rather than junk food, and the fact

that there were a variety of culinary options, including fusion was good for both local residents and tourists. However, this was not an official view.

It was evident from the interview with ATEED that whilst there is a place for food trucks in Auckland, they are not currently considered to be integral to the tourism offering. As a result, support including marketing is limited in relation to incorporating these into the overall tourism product offering. This is despite an organisational commitment to encouraging recognition and promotion of the unique food and beverage offerings of the area. The implications of this area considered in the following chapter.

To examine whether this view was also the case for tour operators i.e. that whilst food trucks are recognised as being part of the overall culinary landscape in Auckland, as a tourist draw they are limited, two operators who focus specifically on food tourism were interviewed about food tourism in general and food trucks in particular. These are discussed, below.

5.2.2 Food Tour Operators

The two food tour operators who participated comprised the manager of a food tourism business and the franchise owner of another food tourism operation. They have been in the food tourism business for five and three years, respectively.

As noted in the literature review, the food tourism sector in New Zealand has a focus on wine tourism which incorporates food, rather than specifically food tourism. As one of the operators indicated when asked about food tourism in New Zealand,

I think ATEED is working on it to grow up more but the interest or focus is more on wine – wine at Waiheke Island. They would do a wine tour and that's the perception rather than food. More has to be done on the actual food.

Both of the food tour operators suggested that the awareness for food in the general public has been elevated so that people know about new ingredients, flavours and cuisines through television programmes like the MasterChef series and the Food Television network. At the same time, they both indicated that their focus in developing a food tourism business was based on the wider appreciation of food and how programmes such as My Kitchen Rules, Kiwi Living and Taste of a Traveller, encourage tourists to travel and try different food experiences. However, this does not appear to have developed into a wide enough recognition of the value of food tourism in the country. As one of the operators, who has been in the sector for three years indicated:

New Zealand tourism doesn't focus on it. It was never seen as a tourism activity or opportunity. There are things changing with Auckland tourism but as of now food is seen more as a necessity than activity but the potential is huge.

Although both operators felt that food tourism was not given the prominence they felt it deserved in New Zealand, they did however recognise that the sector had changed over the years and was growing in importance in the country as the following comments indicate:

We don't have a culinary culture when compared to Spain or France or Italy. We don't have a classic dish to define our cuisine. New Zealand is a melting pot of cuisine and from that point of view it's very unique.

I think food tourism has changed because of television. MasterChef and all food channels have come and people's awareness and interest of food has grown through that. People know about it now and so when they go to a new city they want to search for café with a particular coffee or poached eggs.

The common theme with both these comments is the growing awareness amongst tourists of different cuisines and food offerings, and the potential value of these to the tourism

industry. This again highlights the potential value of food trucks as a means for tourists to try local and authentic cuisines, which can be promoted in a variety of ways. Indeed, one food operator underlined this view by stating:

I think you need to use those tools for marketing and use more social media. So once again someone heading this business has to do that effectively and some of them do this quite well. You need to get the guest Facebooking and Instagramming everything and get it out there. Get the awareness out there. Like if you get a celebrity chef, or someone associated to it, things like MasterChef where they go to a different city they show they are in the city doing a challenge. The city gets shown off and when they do that in Auckland people will see it and they will be aware of our city.

When asked specifically asked about food trucks, both operators were highly positive about the potential that these offer, both as a part of a city tour but also in relation to their involvement in food festivals organised by ATEED and other tourism organisations, as the following comments indicate:

Occasionally we take tours to Truck # 01, and the ones in Silo Park, pop up markets rather than specific food trucks that are also trying to show a unique side of Auckland. There is no point in going to a food truck if it doesn't define something different. Anybody can get a taco from a truck. It is more about character and story than the end product.

We are asked to tailor tours for people coming to Auckland for a weekend and so we do tailor tours where we do an event manager's job. So when we get asked to do it, we ask the food truck people if they are interested and about their margin and how are we going about it. It would have to be arranged, like the timing and menu, etc. Not many know about food trucks in Auckland and once again it's about educating people and getting it out there.

These comments highlight the challenges for food trucks becoming an integral part of the food tourism product. Whilst recognising that they contribute to the overall feel of the city, neither operator felt that at present there was a cohesive focus or approach which

sets the Auckland food trucks apart from other food offerings or food trucks anywhere else in the world. This perspective will be considered in the final chapter.

In regards to how the food tour operators viewed food trucks in relation to the tourism industry directly, again there was a common theme that the movement and culture of food trucks was not yet big enough, or differentiated enough to be viewed as a specific tourist attraction as the comments below highlight:

If we take people on the tour in Ponsonby we say there are food trucks in there at certain timings. We do brief them on that as it's a part of the script.

Right now we don't have a big enough food truck culture but it is certainly coming on with great speed. They aren't the same manner as it is in the USA. Apart from a couple it certainly can be developed and should be developed because it is exciting.

The views from the food tour operators suggest that they believe there is potential to incorporate food trucks and food truck culture into the tourism offerings of Auckland. However, there is also a recognition that without definitive support from the tourism industry and development of the diversity and size of the food truck culture, this will be a difficult and challenging process.

5.2.3 Food truck operators

The final group of stakeholders in exploring the potential for food trucks as a food tourism attraction were the truck operators themselves. As already noted, 16 different truck operators were interviewed about how they viewed the challenges and potential of their business as a tourist attraction.

Table 2 provides a summary of their profiles

Table 2. Summary of food truck operator and code numbers

Truck #	Description of food served	Location of the food truck	Years of operation	Full time /Part time jobs
Truck # 1	Latin American fusion	Ponsonby	3 years	Full time
Truck # 2	Asian	Food Station	6 months	Full time
Truck # 3	European baked products	Street Food Collective	10 months	Full time
Truck #4	Caribbean	Street Food Collective	5 months	Full time
Truck # 5	Asian fusion	Street Food Collective	3 months	Full time
Truck # 6	East Asian	Food Truck Stop	2 months	Part time
Truck # 7	North American	Queen Street	4 months	Full time
Truck # 8	American Asian fusion	Street Food Collective	6 months	Full time
Truck # 9	French	Food Truck Stop	3 months	Full time
Truck # 10	French	Food Truck Stop	3 months	Part time
Truck # 11	Asian Latin American fusion	Street Food Collective	9 months	Full time
Truck # 12	Middle Eastern	Green Bays	9 months	Full time
Truck # 13	European snacks	Different locations	6 months	Part time
Truck # 14	European	Different locations	5 months	Part time
Truck # 15	Latin BBQ	Food Truck Stop	6 months	Full time
Truck # 16	BBQ	Food Station and pop ups	15 months	Full time

In the first instance, questions were asked to provide some background to the development and growth of food truck operators in Auckland. The length of time the operators had been in business ranged from two months to three years. The fact that the majority had been in business less than a year underlines the recent expansion and growth that the sector has seen. In terms of operations, some of the operators varied their locations, whilst others were static. There was also variation in the opening hours with some operating from 12pm to 10pm whilst others only focused on late afternoon/night trade. The variety of locations was because some trucks have their own permanent

parking spots, whereas others work collectively in community spaces under a roster system. Eight out of the sixteen participants were part of a relatively recent initiative called The Street Food Collective, which is a community space that offers temporary rental space for food trucks in Ponsonby which is an inner city neighbourhood in the CBD.

A common theme amongst all the respondents was that they considered the food truck scene to be a key part of the food tourism industry, typified by comments such as:

Absolutely yes! We have been featured in numerous tourism editorials – and a ‘must visit’ when in Auckland. And people travel to eat! I know we do. So it’s definitely a boost to Auckland’s economy to have a rocking street-food / food scene! (Truck 1)

You cannot exclude food trucks anymore, and I think it was a good sign last year when there were the Metro Mag Cheap Eats awards and quite a few of them were food trucks and not only restaurants. It’s more like people acknowledge food can be very good and of high quality from a mobile food store or food trucks and they are willing to award them. So I think there is a potential there. We got featured in the Air New Zealand inflight magazine last year. There was an article on food trucks and we were mentioned. Tourists read this on the plane and came along to our location and they wanted to check us out. So we were surprised and felt good. (Truck 2)

Auckland is a melting pot and has a diverse culture, and people are always looking for their food. At the end of the day they miss their own food. More people are aware of other food from other cultures through food trucks. (Truck 4)

Yes, they (food trucks) have become competitive and they are here to stay. Tourists are aware of food trucks from their countries. It’s a competitive market. Many companies hold food truck events with us (Truck 5)

These comments indicate the role that food trucks can play in increasing tourism revenues and interest in visiting Auckland. Clearly there is a high level of motivation amongst the operators to engage with tourists and position the food truck movement as a unique

feature of Auckland culture. However, not all respondents agreed, suggesting lack of support from the tourism industry and local government are inhibiting factors. The following comments reflected these concerns. When asked if they considered themselves part of the tourism industry, one operator replied,

Not really. It's a global movement but not as much as in the US. (Truck 13).

Another operator went on to say,

Auckland city should have a Council funded street food area and Council properties should have a certain degree of understanding. I pay half my profits to rent here and I don't make much money ... Here at Street Food Collective, Food Truck Stop, Silo Park- it's the same system of private landowner and rent. I am crossing my fingers and I wish I could be optimistic about this. Lucky Taco and White Lady are the only guys who have hit it off well. (Truck 8)

These less positive views of the food truck role in food tourism do however recognise that with support there could be a clearer position for them within food tourism in Auckland. To understand these limitations more specifically, the food truck operators were asked about the Auckland Council's and tourist office's attitudes to food trucks and how they believe this could be enhanced or re-evaluated. This was considered to be a key area in identifying how to maximise the potential of food trucks as a food tourism product due to the already highlighted need for a cohesive tourist board and operator approach to using food to encourage visitors to an area. This question produced the most detailed comments. The overall attitude can be summed up in the following comments:

I guess the Auckland Council has to be more flexible. We can't park anywhere and the licence fee is heavy. Places like Street Food Collective are heavy because it is like \$900 a year. We need to pay for a commercial kitchen too. (Truck 11)

It was very difficult in the beginning. We opened for business on May 14, 2013. We spent over half a year going through Council red-tape. It's not for the faint-

hearted. We were told that it would be a 99.9% chance of a big, fat 'NO' if we were to apply for a food stall licence in the Auckland CBD. The Council can be notoriously difficult to deal with. One arm doesn't know what the other is doing. In saying that, I think the Council are starting to see that the street food culture adds richness to Auckland's landscape. It's something that needs to be nurtured! (Truck 1)

It would be nice if we could park around central Auckland, near the Viaduct, Mt Albert Park, the Bays-Herne's or Blockhouse Bay (Truck 3)

As long as you comply with the rules and regulations, health and safety, it's great. Food truck operators should have support from Auckland Council to operate big or small. Because it's very difficult. (Truck 6)

I think there is lots to do with the Council. Just to give an example, the Melbourne Council has different zones like red, green and yellow zones. If we had this in Auckland and if they allowed us to park in different areas, it would be good. I wish the Council could help (Truck 5)

I think Auckland hasn't embraced food trucks at all really. Christchurch and Wellington are doing much better and in fact Christchurch has opened up areas and has lots of council support whereas we have the opposite approach here as the Council is not opening spaces and that's why I started my own street food event in January (Truck 12)

These comments suggest from the perspective of the food operators, they do not feel that they are receiving the necessary support to establish, grow their businesses or expand the overall food truck network and movement in the city. Participants' responses suggest that the Council is slow and laborious in granting licences, which they also charge heavily for. This also aligns with the indications from ATEED that the official perspective on food trucks is that they are not an integral part of the overall tourist product of Auckland. This however is refuted by some of the food truck operators as the following comment indicates:

Tourists love to talk and share different cultures. We have been to many markets and we look more for a

cultural experience. It's not a matter of having food in trucks it's about cultural exchange. (Truck 15)

This is a particularly important comment as it recognises, in the same way that the food truck operators already indicated that they believe food trucks are part of the food tourism industry, that there is a cultural facet to the food trucks. Given the indications already that culture is identified through food and visitors use authentic food experiences as a means of increasing the authenticity of their holidays, this further underlines the potential offered by food trucks in Auckland.

Food truck operators were also specifically asked about barriers and facilitators encountered whilst establishing their businesses. Many of the food truck operators found Auckland City Council regulations restrictive, indicating that if the rules and regulations of the Council were a little more flexible or relaxed they would have been able to operate with more freedom. The current restrictions of parking only at two locations per licence, which is imposed by the Council proves to be a barrier to operators reaching a larger customer base during their daily operation. The following is indicative of truck operators' responses.

I wish they were more flexible as not much parking space is there. Auckland Council is not offering many events and we need to go out and trade. But we don't have the licence to trade at more than two locations. Only two options to trade is difficult. There should be an option where we can choose and go to places to trade. I wish Auckland Council changed that thinking. (Truck 15)

It would have been nice if we could park at random places where there is more foot traffic. (Truck 11)

These comments are further indications of a feeling of lack of support from local government and tourism organisations such as ATEED, for increasing the profile of the food trucks in Auckland. Therefore, as a final part of the questionnaire, the food

truck operators were asked what they felt would be the key factors that could change this situation and make food trucks a successful tourism product. There were some clear indications, as already noted, that increased support and flexibility from the Council would improve the current situation as the following comment indicates:

Food trucks certainly have potential....surviving is bitter. If there was bit more of laws, we would turn into a big Auckland street food area where there is heaps of food all the time. (Truck 8)

I think Auckland hasn't embraced food trucks at all really... The regulations that you can't just trade in most spots which you think will be useful is sad. I don't think Auckland has still reached there yet, but certainly it's coming up. (Truck 12)

In addition to these views, there were also indications of other factors that were salient to the operators themselves. These included the provision of quality, diverse ingredients and a unique proposition to encourage visits from tourists who want to try new cuisine in a potentially unfamiliar way.

Overall, the perspectives from the food truck operators were that they believed the street food / mobile vendor movement within Auckland is growing and booming. It is meeting the demand of both locals and tourists for quality foods that embrace the multi-cultural nature of New Zealand and its food offerings. At the same time the operators feel somewhat restricted by a lack of Council support. What is notable as well is that none of the food truck operators indicated that they had any connections or relationships with tourism organisations such as ATEED or food tour operators. This suggests that there is a gap in the communication and embracing of stakeholders that is the core of ATEED's framework for tourism in the area. The exclusion of food truck operators is thus potentially ignoring a valuable source of tourism revenue and destination motivators.

5.3 Summary

After analysing the interview data from the three stakeholder groups in the area of food tourism in Auckland, and food trucks in particular, it is evident that the food truck movement is growing in the city. The food truck operators themselves feel that the sector is booming, and they are meeting a demand from both tourists and local residents. However, the operators also felt constrained by a lack of Council support and recognition for the value they provide. From the perspective of food tour operators there is a similar lack of frustration about the lack of recognition of food tourism overall in Auckland. There was not however a wide recognition of the food trucks as a specific tourist attraction, a view also held by ATEED, despite the organisation's commitment to a stakeholder approach in the city's current strategy. Overall, whilst food tourism in New Zealand in general, and Auckland in particular, is currently growing, the role of food trucks remains inconsistent and in need of re-evaluation. The implications of these outcomes and perspectives are thus considered in the final chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The notion of mobile street vendors and street food is not a new phenomenon. Vendors have sold food on the streets for millennia. With the rise of home cooking and restaurants however their presence diminished, at least in Western countries. However, in recent years there has been an increase of these in many global cities including Auckland, New Zealand (Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development, 2016). Research into the growth of street food and what are sometimes called pop up vendors has been primarily focused on the health, safety and quality aspects of these units and the role they play in community and urban spirit and regeneration (Lucan et al, 2013; Koch, 2015). In addition, studies have considered how they fulfil an urban need for residents as a backlash against the homogenous fast food presence of global offerings such as McDonalds, KFC and Starbucks (Bell & Neill, 2014).

Recognising the growth in this area of food provision, the intent in conducting this work was to identify whether food trucks in New Zealand, and Auckland in particular, had potential within the context of food tourism. This special interest tourism sector is of increasing interest to both researchers and practitioners within the tourism industry. This is based on the recognition that food is an important facet of any tourist's experience rating. Due to the cultural and social connotations of food tasting and sharing there is an increasing identification of the potential role of different types of food outlets in both being a motivation to visit an area and enhancing the value proposition of destination marketing approaches.

As a historical feature of the Auckland cityscape, in recent years there has been a growth of food trucks in many locations in the city. This research therefore aimed to investigate the food truck movement in Auckland and the tourism potential of these outlets in

particular. In order to achieve this and the core objectives of identifying the perceptions of those involved in the sector, 19 interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders, comprising: a tourism-focused representative from ATEED; two food tour operators; and 16 food truck operators in Auckland. The results were then analysed revealing emergent themes of understanding the position of food tourism in New Zealand, the role of food trucks within the food tourism sector and finally restrictions and challenges for food truck operators in Auckland. Before examining the main findings of the research however a number of limitations to the work need to be highlighted, as any conclusions drawn and recommendations need to take these into account.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation to note is that as an exploratory study, with only a small sample, the findings are limited in how far they can be generalised across the whole of the food truck sector in Auckland. However, despite this, it is felt that the indications from the various stakeholders do have both relevance and potential for inclusion in recommendations. In addition, the focus on qualitative data may also reduce the reliability of the work. Although all the interviews were semi-structured, it was noted that some of the participants, particularly the truck operators, were not as forthcoming with information as others, and it appeared that not all questions were understood in the same way across all the participants. This resulted in some inconsistencies between interviews in terms of the questions answered. In addition, qualitative research involves relatively small numbers of participants and the findings of this research are recognised to be from a small sample size. The data collected was restricted to central Auckland due to limitations of time, budget and available human resources. Whether the particularity of the central Auckland can be generalised to other areas in Auckland can be questioned, in which case the conclusions cannot be applied to the industry as a whole. The results should be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

A final limitation is that whilst the results have provided indications about the potential role of food trucks in developing the food tourism sector in Auckland, as a limited exploratory study, customers of food trucks were not interviewed as a part of this research. The food truck operators appeared, on the whole to believe that there was a place for them within the food tourism sector, a view endorsed by the food tourism operators, at least partially. However, without data to indicate whether there is in fact a clear consumer/tourist demand for the services offered by the food trucks, these indications cannot be definitively applied as a means of incorporating food trucks into the food tourism product of Auckland. Having identified the limitations, the key conclusions of the work are presented and discussed below.

6.3 Summary of Key Conclusions

Food tourism is growing as a special interest area of tourism. This encompasses tourists who wish to travel to an area specifically to try out new cuisines, as well as those who consider new food experiences as an integral part of their visit. This manifests as visits to food festivals or particular regions that have a reputation / brand identity that is closely connected with food (Blichfeldt & Therkelsen, 2010; Henderson, 2009). In New Zealand in general, food tourism is more closely associated with wine tourism but there is a growing movement to incorporate regional food and traditions into the area (Bell & Neill, 2014).

In Auckland there is intent to incorporate food and beverage as part of the overall tourist offering, recognising that the region has a tradition of Maori food and local food products and specialities. Unlike other New Zealand regions and cities however, food tourism is not given a primary focus in Auckland. Rather, the incorporation of food is focused on sponsorship and food events rather than a recognition of the potential value of specialist

food outlets such as food trucks as an attraction in and of themselves (ATEED, 2014, 2016).

Visitors to Auckland from all over the world are increasing. However, there is also a need to ensure that the city is seen as a destination, rather than a layover point. Therefore, ATEED is working to look at ways to increase the profile of the city and its destination branding and image. Food trucks are a traditional form of street food in Auckland, which commenced with pie trucks in the late 1940s. Indeed, one of those established – the White Lady is still in business today. Since their establishment, food trucks have evolved from being simply vendors of pie and mash to offering a diverse range of cultural foods and cuisines (Neill, 2009).

The two food tour operators who were interviewed in Auckland recognise the role that food trucks play in the local community and their potential for being supported as a tourist attraction. However, at present they do not consider that the vendors are a viable attraction as they are not seen as a cohesive movement. Food tour operators all identified that food trucks could be given a greater role in food tourism in Auckland through effective collaboration with councils and tourist offices using social media and destination branding.

Food truck operators have been growing in number in the Auckland area in the last year, evidenced by the fact that more than 80% of those interviewed had only been in business for 12 months or less. They consider that they are a viable and thriving addition to the food tourism product of Auckland, and a potential draw for visitors, provided their product is high quality, locally sourced and has a differentiation in the product delivery. Food truck operators feel constrained by a lack of Council support, red tape and high rents as well as a view that they are not a formal part of the tourism offering of Auckland.

The main themes that emerged from the data collection are that the food truck operators clearly feel they have a role to play in the food tourism offering of Auckland. However, they are limited by a lack of support from both the Council and tourism organisations. At the same time, the fact that the number of food trucks is growing year on year suggests there needs to be better collaboration between the vendors themselves and the tourism industry. The findings also have some specific implications in this respect.

6.4 Implications

The first implication of the research is that it is clear that food tourism is a growing sector worldwide and in the case of Auckland particularly, the number of food tourism visitors is growing. In addition, given the desire of ATEED to increase the view of Auckland as a place to visit and tour, rather than as a stopover, Auckland tourist associations and associated bodies such as ATEED and local councils need to recognise the potential food tourism to increase visitor numbers. The indications from the literature review that the fusion style of cooking which originated in New Zealand is becoming increasingly popular. Furthermore, the incorporation of a direct focus on food tourism in the industry would be in line with initiatives in other parts of New Zealand that have recognised the culinary heritage that exists within the Maori community and the recent influx of immigrants from Asia and the earlier arrival of immigrants from Europe which make New Zealand a unique culinary melting pot. In the case of Auckland particularly, there are specialities associated with the local landscape that are currently promoted through food events and food festivals. This indicates that the area does recognise of the value of food to the tourism experience.

What is also noted from these findings is that ATEED recognises that there needs to be a strategic plan for Auckland going forward if they (Auckland) are to maximise the current growth trends in visitor numbers. Promoting the landscape, heritage and cultural diversity

of the destination is a key focus of the strategic plan, combined with community collaboration and involvement with local businesses. This naturally encompasses food offerings, although the organisation does indicate that they do not have a specific focus on food tourism for Auckland, seeing food as just one part, rather than a special interest sector the area.

This is in contrast to the views of food tour operators who believe that food tourism in New Zealand in general and Auckland in particular is a growing area of potential revenue for the area. However, as the data suggested, gaining marketing support and involvement for specific food tourism can be challenging. Within the sector however, the recognition by the tour operators of the future potential for food trucks is a positive outcome of the findings.

A particular challenge is that despite community and regional recognition of the traditional value of these street vendors and the growing world-wide movement towards more authentic street food, the Auckland food trucks are not currently being considered as an integral part of the area's food tourism product. In particular, they are constrained by strict licensing regulations, high rents and an inflexible attitude from the council, based on the data collected. This perceived lack of vision from the council causes frustration to the truck operators, and to a lesser extent food tourism operator. A further difficulty is that many of the food truck operators have only been in business for a short time and thus are still establishing their presence in the locations in which they are allowed to operate. In effect, the food truck business in the area appears to be in a nascent stage, but without Council and tourist organisation support may stagnate and not deliver the potential that they could with a more collaborative approach.

These findings suggest that additional work needs to be undertaken on the potential of food truck operators in Auckland making a positive contribution to the food tourism sector, in particular, whether food trucks can be positioned as one of the tourist attractions in the area and how government and local bodies can support them.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Taking into consideration the findings, their implications and the research limitations, there are some recommendations for future research that should be considered.

The first of these is to undertake a research that evaluates the tourist demand and desire for food trucks in Auckland. Specifically, a survey of tourists who are and are not using the trucks, should be undertaken. This should be a questionnaire asking if they were aware of the trucks before visiting the city, whether the trucks were one of the reasons for the visit, and their perceptions of the product, quality and overall food truck experience in Auckland. If the outcomes indicate that there is a tourist desire and positive view of these vendors, this would provide stronger evidence for encouraging ATEED, local councils and tour operators to take a more collaborative approach with the food truck operators.

In addition, a more cohesive survey of the types and locations of the food truck operators in the area would also support a better understanding of the offerings. This would need to be done as an observational study, identifying the key locations for food trucks so that tourist companies could then work to create specific food truck areas that could be visited as a viable tourist attraction. In this way the areas could be developed by local businesses, the food truck operators and tourist organisations to make the food the focus of the visit, but also potentially offer other attractions to draw tourists to the area.

Finally, it is recommended that a wider survey of tour operators in New Zealand is undertaken as this study was focused only on food tour operators. It could be beneficial to undertake further research exploring the views of the broader tourism industry in Auckland regarding their knowledge of the food trucks and how they considered these might be incorporated into their tour product could be beneficial. This would provide indications of how to integrate the notion of food trucks into the overall branding of Auckland as a destination for tourists who may not have considered trying these unique food outlets.

These recommendations are designed to further knowledge in the area of both food tourism in Auckland and the development of tourism promotional strategies; particularly those which operate positively in relation to food trucks as a potential tourist attraction. By undertaking these studies, greater detail and information can be gathered to further the value that can be achieved by incorporating food tourism into a destination's overall offering. There are however some specific recommendations that can be made based on the findings of this work.

6.6 Recommendations

The first recommendation is one made by one of the food truck operators, that by working together they can enhance the reputation and focus of the overall sector. Their suggestion was that working as a co-operative whole, they can contribute to raising the profile of food truck operators within the Auckland tourism sector. Therefore, it is recommended that the food truck operators create an association, which can be formal or informal so that they can work together to deal with challenges and issues. This will also enhance the quality and types of food that are available for consumption and accordingly provide appealing points of interest to tourist which would consequently elevate the overall industry.

This then leads to the second recommendation, that as a co-operative whole, the food truck operators can then deliver requests to the council for specific, static locations that will maximise their profile within tourist areas. This will not only create a street food environment that will enhance the tourist experience but also demonstrates collaboration from the council. As part of this recommendation however, there is a need for the council to review its policies and practices in terms of the time it takes to grant licences. The recommendation is thus that the Council collaborates with food tour operators regarding what visitors may require and encourage licence applications from these types of food truck operators in particular, those that are selling authentic New Zealand, or traditional Auckland dishes. The reason for this is that it will help to embed the food trucks as part of the city's overall identity, from a culinary perspective, which will contribute to the overall personality of the destination and thus the perceptions in visitors' minds.

In addition, it is further recommended that tour operators, both those focused on food and more general operators, start to highlight and showcase food trucks and street vendors on their websites and other marketing information. This will increase tourist awareness of them and enhance the desire to visit to try out new cuisines and experience a different mode of eating during their holiday. By incorporating information about the history and evolution of street food in Auckland, particularly referencing the longevity of the White Lady pie cart and its diversification into other food items, this would add value to the Auckland destination brand. In effect, by positioning food trucks as a key part of Auckland heritage, and community feeling, they will then become embedded into the overall perception of the city and thus the tourist's experience.

The final recommendation is that ATEED consider the importance of the food tourism sector in a more specific way. Whilst the organisation already recognises that food is an integral part of the tourist experience, it does not have a current focus on food as a special interest area in Auckland. If the potential of food trucks is to be maximised, there needs

to be a greater recognition from ATEED of how to achieve this as part of its future strategic planning.

6.7 Final Thoughts

The primary motivation in undertaking this work was built upon the foundation of effectively identifying the potential that currently exists for food trucks to make a positive contribution to food tourism in Auckland, New Zealand. It has been broadly concluded that such strategic provisions can be achieved through the development of motivated strategies that can promote the virtues of such vendors whilst maintaining their authenticity to potential food tourists. The study has highlighted the growing trend of food tourists; those who make culinary experiences a primary or integral part of their travel plans. These tourists are composed of a demographic that can be broadly characterised by a motivated and asserted interest in culinary exploration, and highly regard authenticity, diversity and uniqueness of food experiences. Whilst there are promising indications that tourist organisations in Auckland are starting to understand the value of food tourism as a potential attraction and revenue generator, there remains a view from tour operators and organisations, such as ATEED, that food trucks do not currently form an important part of this growing trend. However, investigations of the growth of street food worldwide and food trucks in Auckland suggest that this is a short-sighted view. Food trucks are a recognised presence in Auckland and have a long history in the city. Therefore, taking into account the current positive growth trends identified in these and associated sectors, in addition to the wide diversity of cuisines available that recognise the multi-cultural nature of the city, it would appear viable to view food trucks as a potential tourist attraction. However, in order for this to happen it can be effectively argued from the current investigation that new and innovative marketing strategies are

required in the form of a more targeted approach towards suitable promotion. Such efforts should be guided under the provision of tangible and effective support from local councils, in addition to involvement of tour operators and organisations regarding the value of these culturally diverse vendors. From the position of the food truck vendors it has been identified that there also needs to be a pertinent focus on the development of structures and attitudes regarding the food on offer and assurances regarding its high level of quality, in addition to the promotion of its nutritional value and a reflection of the culinary traditions of Auckland in particular and many areas of New Zealand in general. Ultimately, it would appear that there is tremendous potential for these street vendors to become a vibrant and positive body of contributors to tourist revenues in the area, although it is recognised that further research may be necessary to further substantiate this with regards to the robust formulation of effective promotional strategies and the implementation of an effective and developing industry culture.

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Appendices

Appendix I Mail to stakeholders

Greetings!

I am a research student pursuing Masters in International Tourism Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). As a part of my studies I am required to do a dissertation on a subject of my choice.

The topic I have chosen to do my research is

“Exploring the potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary Tourism attraction in Auckland: Through the eyes of Operators and Industry Specialists”.

The research focuses on the following two questions:

- What are the potential contributions that food trucks could make to food tourism in Auckland?
- What are the perceptions of key stakeholders about the potential development of and potential market for; food trucks as a culinary tourism attraction in Auckland?

I would be deeply obliged if you could spare some of your valuable time to give me an insight into the above questions at your preferred time. I can send you the semi structured questionnaire in advance so that you can consider your answers in advance. Your contribution to my research will add valuable insights for the tourism and will also contribute to the completion of my Master's degree.

I look forward to your confirmation and to meet you soon.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Bonnie Thomas

Appendix II - Participant Information sheet - ATEED

Date Information Sheet Produced:

10 April 2016

Project Title

Exploring the potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary Tourism attraction in Auckland:
Through the eyes of Operators and Industry Specialists.

An Invitation

The research team for this study comprises Dr Tracy Berno, Senior lecturer in Gastronomy (Supervisor) and Bonnie Idicula Thomas a student pursuing Masters in International Tourism Management. This study will enable the student researcher to gain a Master's degree.

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential contribution of food trucks as a part of Auckland tourism. There are some important things to consider before you consent to participate in this study- which is entirely voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way. If anything makes you uncomfortable you should feel free to withdraw at any time, without consequence, prior to the completion of your questionnaire.

What is the purpose of this research?

Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance for food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

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

You have been selected from publically available information which was collected from the **ATEED** website.

What will happen in this research?

You are invited to participate in an interview. This will take approximately 30- 60 minutes, and with your permission, the interview will be audio taped. If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign an informed consent sheet before the interview commences. You will be able to review the interview transcription after it has been completed if u wish to.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no discomforts and risks anticipated as a result of participating in this research.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participation in this research is entirely VOLUNTARY and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the completion of the data collection. I would like to assure you that participation or non – participation will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way and that participation in the study will be confidential.

What are the benefits?

A better understanding of the positioning of food trucks as a part of food tourism in Auckland. Will be the main benefit of this research. Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance to food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

Risk of injury is negligible.

How will my privacy be protected?

Only my supervisor and I will have access to the raw data from this research. Pseudonyms will be used when writing the results and all attempts will be made not to disclose information from which participants can be identified. All practicable measures will be taken to minimise risk of disclosure of commercially sensitive information.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Your time is the only cost of participating in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have one week (7 days) from today to consider this invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form will be provided and upon completing the form it is considered to be an agreement to participate in the research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

The summary of the findings will be emailed to you upon request.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Tracy Berno, tracy.berno@aut.ac.nz and Phone number: 921 999 Ext 5289.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 Ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Appendix III - Participant Information Sheet – Food Tour Operators

Date Information Sheet Produced:

10 April 2016

Project Title

Exploring the potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary Tourism attraction in Auckland:
Through the eyes of Operators and Industry Specialists.

An Invitation

The research team for this study comprises Dr Tracy Berno, Senior lecturer in Gastronomy (Supervisor) and Bonnie Idicula Thomas a student pursuing Masters in International Tourism Management. This study will enable the student researcher to gain a Master's degree.

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential contribution of food trucks as a part of Auckland tourism. There are some important things to consider before you consent to participate in this study- which is entirely voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way. If anything makes you uncomfortable you should feel free to withdraw at any time, without consequence, prior to the completion of your questionnaire.

What is the purpose of this research?

Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance for food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

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

You have been selected as you have a **Food Tour Company** that caters for food tours rather than focussing primarily on beverage tours (such as wine tours). Your contact details were collected from information in the public domain specifically Facebook and your tour company's website.

What will happen in this research?

You are invited to participate in an interview. This will take approximately 30- 60 minutes, and with your permission, the interview will be audio taped. If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign an informed consent sheet before the interview commences.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no discomforts and risks anticipated as a result of participating in this research.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participation in this research is entirely VOLUNTARY and the participant has the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the completion of the data collection. I would like to assure you that participation or non – participation will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way and that participation in the study

will be confidential. You will be able to review the interview transcription after it has been completed if you wish to.

What are the benefits?

A better understanding of the positioning of food trucks as a part of food tourism in Auckland will be the main benefit of the research. Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance to food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

Risk of injury is negligible.

How will my privacy be protected?

Only my supervisor and I will have access to the raw data from this research. Pseudonyms will be used when writing the results and all attempts will be made not to disclose information from which participants can be identified. All practicable measures will be taken to minimise risk of disclosure of commercially sensitive information.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Your time is the only cost of participating in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have one week (7 days) from today to consider this invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form will be provided and upon completing the form it is considered to be an agreement to participate in the research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

The summary of the findings will be emailed to you upon request.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Tracy Berno, tracy.berno@aut.ac.nz and Phone number: 921 999 Ext 5289.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 Ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Appendix IV - Participant Information Sheet – Food Truck Operator

Date Information Sheet Produced:

01 May 2016

Project Title

Exploring the potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary Tourism attraction in Auckland:
Through the eyes of Operators and Industry Specialists.

An Invitation

The research team for this study comprises Dr Tracy Berno, Senior lecturer in Gastronomy (Supervisor) and Bonnie Idicula Thomas a student pursuing Masters in International Tourism Management. This study will enable the student researcher to gain a Master's degree.

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential contribution of food trucks as a part of Auckland tourism. There are some important things to consider before you consent to participate in this study- which is entirely voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way. If anything makes you uncomfortable you should feel free to withdraw at any time, without consequence, prior to the completion of your questionnaire.

What is the purpose of this research?

Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance for food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

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

You have been selected as you are a **Food Truck Operator** who focusses primarily on the preparation and sale of food products rather than primarily beverages. Your contact details were collected from the information in the public domain, specifically Facebook and your food truck's website.

What will happen in this research?

You are invited to participate in an interview. This will take approximately 30- 60 minutes, and with your permission, the interview will be audio taped. If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign an informed consent sheet before the interview commences. You will be able to review the interview transcription after it has been completed if you wish to.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no discomforts and risks anticipated as a result of participating in this research.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participation in this research is entirely VOLUNTARY and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the completion of the data collection. I would like to assure you that participation or non – participation will neither

advantage nor disadvantage you in any way and that participation in the study will be confidential.

What are the benefits?

A better understanding of the positioning of food trucks as a part of food tourism in Auckland will be the main benefit of the research. Food tourism is beneficial as it helps in destination development and enhancing economic performance. Given this, a more comprehensive understanding of the value of food tourism as a destination development strategy will make a practical contribution to Auckland's tourism industry. It is expected that participants' voices will be heard, and the research will provide guidance to food truck operators and food tour operators to understand the potential for this market and improve or enhance their productivity. It will enable me (the researcher) to complete my qualification.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

Risk of injury is negligible.

How will my privacy be protected?

Only my supervisor and I will have access to the raw data from this research. Pseudonyms will be used when writing the results and all attempts will be made not to disclose information from which participants can be identified. All practicable measures will be taken to minimise risk of disclosure of commercially sensitive information.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Your time is the only cost of participating in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have one week (7 days) from today to consider this invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form will be provided and upon completing the form it is considered to be an agreement to participate in the research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

The summary of the findings will be emailed to you upon request.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Tracy Berno, tracy.berno@aut.ac.nz and Phone number: 921 999 Ext 5289.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 Ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Appendix V - Consent form

Project title: **Exploring the potential for Food Trucks as a Culinary Tourism attraction in Auckland: Through the eyes of Operators and Industry Specialists**

Project Supervisor: **Dr Tracy Berno**

Researcher: **Bonnie Idicula Thomas**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 15 March 2016.
- ☐ 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 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 Détails (if appropriate) :

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

Date :

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

Appendix VI - Interview Schedule – ATEED

1. Where does food tourism sit in relation to Auckland's tourism development?
2. Is food tourism considered as a part of the Auckland tourism strategy?
3. How does ATEED promote food tourism and does ATEED work directly with industry to promote food tourism (through discounts and special offers for example)?
4. Do you feel food trucks are a part of the tourism industry?
5. How do you see food trucks in general positioned in Auckland? How do you think food trucks could be positioned?
6. What will be your marketing strategy to promote food trucks as a part of food culture in Auckland?
7. Have food trucks contributed to the economy of Auckland?
8. Do you think Food trucks promote a new junk food culture which nowadays countries like US are trying to get rid of?
9. Do you think food trucks pose threat to regular restaurants in cities taking into account the convenience of grabbing a bite on- the-go?
10. How would you ensure the quality of ingredients and production of food on food trucks? Will there be a dedicated council or organization to monitor these?

Appendix VII - Interview Schedule – Food tour operators

1. How long have you been in this business?
2. How and why did you take up this food tour operator business in Auckland?
3. Do you believe that food tourism contributes to tourism in Auckland?
4. Can you please explain how do you see food tourism positioned within the broader tourism scene in Auckland?
5. How do you think food tourism has changed over the years and what would be the long term plans to keep it alive and interesting?
6. What type of food do you promote on food tours? Who primarily are your customers?
7. Do you feel Food trucks are a part of the tourism industry?
8. Do you include visits to any food trucks as a part of your tour? Why or why not?
9. What potential do you see to include food trucks as a part of food tourism in Auckland?
10. Would you consider food trucks as a strategy to promote food culture in Auckland?

Appendix VIII - Interview Schedule – Food truck operators

1. How did you get involved in the food truck business?
2. What made you decide to go do the food truck versus a brick and mortar route?
3. How permissive is Auckland towards food trucks? Is there some aspect which you wanted to provide to enhance to the experience but were limited, by, say regulations or something similar?
4. What sorts of steps do you have to take to get your truck up and running?
5. Has there been one part of running your food truck business that you didn't anticipate or that has surprised you?
6. What has been your favourite part of starting and running your own Food truck business?
7. Do you feel food trucks are a part of food tourism industry?
8. How do you see food trucks positioned in Auckland in general?
9. What according to you would be the key factors in making food trucks a successful tourism product?
10. Do you think food trucks pose threat to regular restaurants in cities taking into account the convenience of grabbing a bite on- the-go?
11. Are there organizations mainly for Food Truck owners in Auckland?