The Role of the Internet in Enabling Linkages between Tourism and Local Food in Vanuatu

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For Jordi, Maür and Celma, one more step in our amazing journey

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Attestation of authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission 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 acknowledgements), nor material 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".

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACTIV	Alternative Communities Trade in Vanuatu
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication and Technology
MICE	Meetings Incentives Conferences Events
NTDO	National Tourism Development Office
PIPSO	Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation
PITIC	Pacific Islands Trade and Invest
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMTE	Small Medium Tourism Enterprises
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TTC	Tafea Tourism Council
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
VHRA	Vanuatu Hotels and Resorts Association
VIBTA	Vanuatu Island Bungalows and Tour Operators Association
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
VSA	Vanuatu Hotels and Accommodation
VTAP	Vanuatu Tourism Action Plan
VTO	Vanuatu Tourism Office
WTEC	Wantok Environment Centre

Abstract

The Internet enables communities in developing countries to directly communicate with potential visitors at a relatively low cost. The Internet also plays a significant role in the development of a sustainable tourism industry and can enhance the consumption of local food in destinations. The rise of culinary tourism and the demand for participatory experiences offer the opportunity to strengthen linkages between tourism and local food; such developments cannot, however, occur without effective dissemination of information.

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of the Internet in enhancing the use of local food in the tourism industry in Vanuatu. The study presents a conceptual framework to explore and create links between tourism and local food through the use of the Internet. The study identifies 500 tourism organisations and businesses, of which 190 have a website. An audit of the 190 tourism websites − 39 destination and 151 business sites − is conducted from an interpretivist perspective. Content and discourse analyses are used to analyse images, texts and hyperlinks to ascertain the way local food is promoted by the Vanuatu tourism industry and the importance placed on it. The study also includes the analysis of 346 online reviews of tourists' feedback about their experience of local food when staying in local bungalows.

This research reveals that the potential of the Internet to link tourism to local food in Vanuatu is not being maximised. Although there is an increasing presence of local food in tourism websites, the analysis of text descriptions and images shows that the key features promoted are related to ocean views and marine activities. A limited number of tourism businesses have a menu in their websites and fewer still promote their restaurants' local cuisine as a valuable tourist experience. There is also a lack of internal and external hyperlinks to enhance relevant food information and guide visitors to other websites of communities' interests, such as local producers, events and festivals. Low local Internet presence appears as a major challenge to linking local tourism businesses' websites to potential food networks. The lack of local tourism businesses' websites also constrains the promotion of authentic local food experiences to provide a sense of place to visitors.

The study shows that the way food is promoted in tourism websites varies across the different islands: familiar "Western" food is depicted in websites of businesses based on

Efate, whereas the authenticity and uniqueness of local food is shown in the websites of businesses on the outer islands. Promoting a greater variety of food experiences has the potential to make Vanuatu more attractive as a tourism destination. Tourism websites can still promote and integrate local food-related activities to improve visitor yield. The examination of tourists' online reviews shows there is tourist demand for local food experiences, but that this demand is not being fully met. A meaningful use of the Internet to promote diverse and distinctive food-related tourism activities would enhance visitors' experiences and benefits for local residents; however, in Vanuatu, such potential remains largely untapped.

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Tourism has the potential to generate substantial income and be a stimulus for economic development in South Pacific island nations through the creation of linkages to other productive sectors, including agriculture (AUSAID, 2006a; Berno, 2011; SPTO, 2003). Milne (In press) states that direct flows of money from visitors to tourism businesses are essential to generate income and create employment. Indirect flows between the tourism sector and surrounding sectors of the economy are also vital to spread tourism benefits and generate sustainable growth (Milne, In press; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). The agriculture sector in South Pacific nations operates below potential in terms of productivity, although there are domestic opportunities for supplying urban and tourist markets (AUSAID, 2006a). The potential to boost agricultural productivity can be reinforced by the rise of culinary tourism and the demand for more participatory forms of tourism as visitors search for fulfilling and broader experiences (Richards & Wilson, 2007; Richardson-Ngwenga & Momsen, 2011). AUSAID (2006a) and Berno (2011) highlight the need for further studies on how backward linkages can be improved in the South Pacific region. The creation of linkages between tourism and the food sector is vital in developing countries whose economies are based on agriculture (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012; Torres & Momsen, 2004).

Food and cuisine play an ever more important role in the differentiation of specific tourist destinations, and local food experiences are an important way to experience the culture of a country and its people (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Povey, 2011). An increasing interest in food tourism has motivated promoters organisers of tourist destinations to develop their marketing strategies using food as a main resource to attract tourists (Kim, Yuan, Goh, & Antun, 2009). Pacific countries are little known as culinary destinations and recent studies show that their marketing initiatives do not embrace the potential of food as a cultural tourism resource (Berno, 2011; Milne, 2009b; Singh, 2012b). The failure to consider local food when marketing tourism leads destinations to miss potential socio-economic benefits and to fail to gain a competitive edge (Horng & Tsai, 2012; Timms & Neill, 2011).

The Internet is the main marketing tool and source of knowledge about local food opportunities in destinations used by tourists (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Beyond a marketing tool, the Internet can play an important role in the development of a sustainable tourism industry in small island developing states (SIDS) through, for example, enabling linkages with the agriculture sector (Berno, 2011; Milne, In press). Information on the Internet about local food experiences increases tourists' spending opportunities and builds good will between tourism operations and the surrounding communities (Singh, 2012b). In the South Pacific SIDS, the ability of the Internet to enhance sustainable development outcomes for tourism remains hampered by access, costs and skills issues (Milne, In press; Network Strategies, 2010). These countries, however, are embracing regional and national strategies to provide affordable and reliable Internet connectivity to any rural and remote area (Horne, 2011; Network Strategies, 2010). In Vanuatu, as in other South Pacific island nations, tourism organisations and businesses have engaged in the use of the Internet to remain competitive in the industry (Kumar & Kumar, 2012; Republic of Vanuatu, 2008).

Vanuatu is an island nation located in the south-west region of the Pacific Ocean (Horne, 2011). The country is a Y-shaped archipelago of 83 islands spread over an ocean area of 612,300 square kilometres, with a total land area of 12,280 square kilometres (VNSO, 2009b). These islands are of volcanic origin, with fertile soil which is beneficial for local agriculture production, and unique natural and cultural environmental features such as unspoiled beaches, coral reefs and a wide diversity of indigenous cultures, all of which are attractive to the tourism industry (AUSAID, 2006b; Craig-Smith, 1996) . The economy of Vanuatu, like many other South Pacific nations, is small, isolated and dependent on international aid, which produces economic wealth for a period of time but fails to develop sustainable economies (Bertram, forthcoming; Bertram & Watters, 1986; Cheer & Peel, 2011). The country is divided into six provincial councils which have the authority to regulate economic development initiatives, in accordance with the government policy (Hassall & Tipu, 2008). The names of the six provincial councils – Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea – are derived from the initial letters of their constituent islands (Hassall & Tipu, 2008; VNSO, 2009b) (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Map of Vanuatu

Source: Vanuatu Paradise (2011)

The Vanuatu tourism industry is well positioned for further growth but adequate advertising and marketing is required to increase tourism demand, particularly on the outer islands (Cassidy & Brown, 2010; Milne, In press). The Internet plays an important role in shaping travellers' plans and activities in tourism destinations (Jeong, Holland, Jun, & Gibson, 2012; Milne, 2009b). Effectively deployed tourism websites can provide benefits to the rural communities in developing countries by enhancing the consumption of local food (Akca, Sayili, & Esengun, 2007). Greater use of local food reduces the

amount of imported food used by the tourism industry, thus minimising leakages of tourism earnings while sustaining the cultural and social values of the islanders (Berno, 2011; Lansing & De Vries, 2007). The primary goal of the tourism industry must be to minimise leakages and develop employment because these gains will contribute to the eradication of poverty and hunger in the country (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008).

An increasing number of studies highlight the potential of food as a sustainable tourism resource, although links between food and tourism still remain weak and unexplored (Sims, 2009). Specific Internet studies examining the relationship between food and tourism have recently become an area of interest among researchers (Boyne & Hall, 2004; R. Huang, 2009). Internet studies report that food appears promoted as a secondary attraction, although research into food tourism is still in its infancy and limited in its scope (Kim et al., 2009). Specific Internet studies seldom include the potential of the Internet to promote local food-related experiences and to integrate tourism with the local economy in developing countries (Akca et al., 2007). Most research on tourism websites has been based on destinations in developed countries, and there has been little attention paid to those in developing countries where infrastructure and skills are limited (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Levinson & Milne, 2004; Surenkok, Baggio, & Corigliano, 2010). Despite existing challenges, the Internet is a chance for local residents to integrate their tourism businesses into the global market and for them to portray themselves as they would like to be seen by the outside world (Deuchar, 2012; Kumar & Kumar, 2012; Milne, In press).

1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of the Internet in enhancing the use of local food in the tourism industry in Vanuatu. For the purpose of this research, "local food" will refer to the produce grown in Vanuatu and also traditional cuisine available for tourists' experiences.

The objectives of this research are to:

i.   describe how local food in Vanuatu is promoted in tourism websites, with a focus on information that is available about the types of produce grown locally and local recipes and dishes

ii.   determine whether and how tourism websites use the relationship between food, culture and place to promote local food

iii.   identify and examine how tourism websites create linkages and networks with the agriculture sector, by analysing information and links to other sites

iv.   determine how tourism websites can strengthen local communities' participation in the industry, by examining the promotion of local food-related tourism attractions, and

v.   examine tourists' feedback on their experience of local food in Vanuatu through the analysis of their online reviews.

An audit of the major tourism websites in Vanuatu is conducted using content and discourse analyses. The audit is from an interpretivist perspective, as illustrated by a proposed conceptual framework for this research (see Figure 1.2). The audit includes regional, national, community, private and tourism businesses' websites which can play an important role in the promotion of local food experiences for visitors. Images, texts and hyperlinks on the tourism websites are analysed according to their context and the way that they provide a sense of place and identity of the country. The analysis of visitors' feedback includes reviews of food experiences, which provide a better understanding of tourism demand for food in Vanuatu. A meaningful use of the Internet provides both tourists and destinations with the tools to empower their communications and interactions, mutually benefiting both (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). This research aims to provide a good understanding of the current and potential roles of the Internet to link tourism with local food in Vanuatu. Its findings will have implications for the development of the tourism industry

Figure 1.2: The framework used in this research to explore the links between local food and tourism on the Internet

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│  │                        INTERNET                         │  │
│  │  Local Food ◄─────────────────────────────► Tourism     │  │
│  └────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│              ╭────────────────────────────╮                  │
│              │   Literature search and    │                  │
│              │   understanding the gap    │                  │
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│  │ Tourism        │ │ Content and Discourse │ │ Tourists  │  │
│  │ organisations  │ │      analyses         │ │           │  │
│  │                │ │                       │ │ Search for│  │
│  │ Hotels, cafes  │ │   Tourism websites    │ │ information│ │
│  │ and Restaurants│ │ Images, texts,        │ │           │  │
│  │                │ │ hyperlinks  ═════════►│ │ Provide   │  │
│  │ Tour operator  │ │                       │ │ feedback  │  │
│  │ businesses     │ │ ◄═════ Tourists'      │ │           │  │
│  │                │ │ online feedback       │ │ …on the   │  │
│  │ … Promote food │ │ on their food         │ │ Internet  │  │
│  │ experiences    │ │ experiences           │ │           │  │
│  │                │ │                       │ │           │  │
│  │ Meals, events, │ │                       │ │           │  │
│  │ local producers│ │                       │ │           │  │
│  │ activities     │ │                       │ │           │  │
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│              │        Meanings,           │                  │
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│              │         themes             │                  │
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│  ┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │   THE POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET IN ENABLING LINKAGES    │  │
│  │       BETWEEN TOURISM AND LOCAL FOOD                    │  │
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1.3 Structure of the thesis

Chapter Two provides a review of relevant literature and concepts that underpin this research. Current trends and reasons for including local food as an essential element within the tourist experience are discussed. Then the Internet is presented as a major tool to enhance the promotion of local food in tourism experiences and so enable linkages between the tourism and agricultural sectors. Opportunities and challenges that characterise the use of the Internet in the South Pacific region are identified next, and the chapter finishes with the conclusion that South Pacific SIDS cannot overlook the potential of the technology if they are to remain competitive in the global tourism industry.

Chapter Three discusses the research design, methodology and analysis used in this thesis. The chapter commences with an overview of the research methodology in order to understand the basis of the philosophical foundations of the study. With a descriptive and exploratory purpose of study, a case study is developed under the interpretivism paradigm. A brief theory of content and discourse analyses justifies why such methods have been relevant for this research. Specific processes of data collection and analysis are explained, emphasising challenges and ways that these have been overcome to ensure trustworthiness of the research.

The research findings and discussion from the content and discourse analyses are presented in the following two chapters. Chapter Four presents evidence on how the Vanuatu tourism industry uses the Internet to promote local food experiences as a main tourist attraction. The chapter starts with an overview of the websites included in the study; this overview sets the scene and enhances understanding of the findings. Images, written descriptions and the use of hyperlinks in tourism websites are analysed to describe how local food is promoted and the extent to which it is used. The third part of the chapter includes findings about the promotion of local producers on tourism websites to enhance linkages between tourism and local food.

Chapter Five discusses the potential of the Internet to link tourism and local food. As links between local food and tourism need to be stimulated by demand, the chapter starts with an examination of tourists' feedback on their experiences of local food. An analysis of tourism websites is conducted to determine how the Internet is used to strengthen local participation in the industry by the promotion of local food experiences. Findings are discussed by identifying constraints and opportunities to achieve better linkages between tourism and local food through use of the Internet.

Chapter Six presents the conclusion of this research. The chapter reviews the key findings and presents an evaluation of this study's contribution to the literature. This chapter also provides recommendations and implications for further study based on issues that arise from the research. The rapid increase in the use of the Internet in the tourism industry opens a substantial research agenda, particularly in understanding how visitors use websites and the attitudes of tourism businesses towards the technology. This understanding can then be used to make more efficient the promotion of local food experiences on tourism websites.

Chapter 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter opens with the rationale for enhancing linkages between local food and tourism by presenting local food as an essential cultural element in the development of tourism destinations. It is essential, at all destinations, to link tourism demand for food to local produce; however, the discussion in this chapter will focus particularly on developing countries. The second section of this chapter addresses the potential of the Internet to link the tourism industry with local food in tourism destinations. The chapter describes the Internet as a marketing and development tool that promotes the growth of the tourism industry in a sustainable way. Challenges that constrain the potential of the Internet are then identified with a particular focus on the Pacific SIDS. The opportunities and challenges identified set the basis for an exploration of the role that the Internet can play in creating linkages between tourism and local food in Pacific SIDS.

2.1 Local food in tourism: Trends, authenticity and sense of place

Food is an essential component of and critical resource for the tourism industry (Berno, 2011; Henderson, 2009). For tourists, food is vital for physical sustenance and food purchases represent approximately one-third of visitors' total expenditure at destination (Henderson, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Rogerson, 2012a; Torres, 2003). Dining in restaurants is described as the most frequent leisure activity of tourists and represents their second largest daily expenditure (Berno, 2011; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Food-related activities also create, enhance and fulfil the tourist's experience, by offering them a "sensorial pleasure" (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Sims, 2009). Eating is the unique form of tourist activity that gratifies all five senses: vision, touch, taste, sound and olfaction (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). The pleasure of food is not only based on its taste but on sharing the feelings, emotions and sensations of it with others (Buiatti, 2011). Food consumption is also recognised as a collection of evolving social practices which allow tourists to relate to other people when travelling (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012).

From the host residents' perspective, food in tourism is a social marker (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Hillel, Belhassen, & Shani, 2013). Through their food domain, communities demonstrate their identities and ethnicities, which have an impact on eating habits (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Eating habits can also provide insights into ways of life and help tourists understand differences between their own culture and

those with which they come in contact (Henderson, 2009). The consumption of food in tourism has significant implications for the local economy. Local food plays an important role in enhancing tourism benefits for the host communities through the expansion of backward linkages (Rogerson, 2012b; Telfer & Wall, 1996; Torres, 2003). The stronger the linkages between local food and tourism, the greater the possibilities for import substitution to meet visitor needs (Berno, 2011; Dwyer, 1989).

The extensive use of imported food in the tourism industry leads to leakages of tourism earnings from local communities (Telfer & Wall, 1996; Torres, 2003). The degree to which tourism in a country relies on imported foods can significantly affect the social and economic impacts of tourism (Berno, 2011; Telfer & Wall, 1996). Importing foods results in a loss of foreign exchange earnings and opportunities to expand and modernise local food production and processing, as well as a loss of local income and employment (Berno, 2011). The absence of linkages leads to tourism having only a limited impact on the local economy, and this may foster resentment towards the industry among the local residents (Lacher & Nepal, 2010).

There are three key pathways by which the benefits of tourism can be transmitted to local economies: direct impacts, indirect impacts and induced effects (Lejárraga & Walkenhorst, 2010; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010) (see Figure 2.1). Direct impacts accrue from initial tourist spending in the tourism industry, such as on hotel accommodation, restaurants and entertainment (Lejárraga & Walkenhorst, 2010). Indirect impacts are generated when tourists' expenditure impacts on the non-tourist economy through purchases of goods and services; an example of this would be food sales to restaurants (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Finally, induced effects are attributable to the increased income of wage-earners related to the tourism economy, such as waiters, tours operators and chefs, who in turn buy goods and services in the general economy (Lejárraga & Walkenhorst, 2010). Tourism's indirect contribution to the local economy ranges from 66% of the direct effects in low-income countries, to 77% in low- to middle-income countries, and 120% in developed countries (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010).

Figure 2.1: Effects of tourism: Direct, indirect and induced
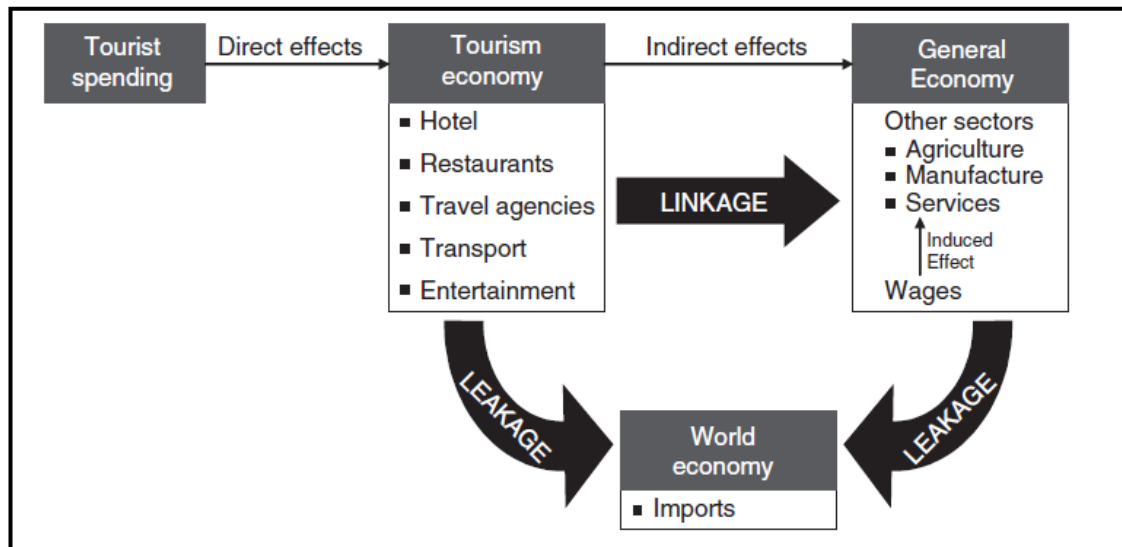
Source: Lejárraga & Walkenhorst, 2010

In developing countries, agriculture is a key sector to link with tourism because, in addition to the more obvious direct benefits obtained from tourism, linkages between the tourism and agriculture will generate indirect benefits (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Rogerson, 2012a). The fact that agriculture is the principal source of livelihood for most local people in developing regions brings potential to create inter-sectoral linkages (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012; Torres & Momsen, 2004). Agriculture is able to integrate with tourism to generate growth and development in rural areas. Indeed, one of the key benefits that the tourism sector can offer in the developing world is the income and development generated by the sector sourcing local agricultural products and other tourism products (Cloke, 2007; Rogerson, 2012a). For many developing countries, the food sector represents one of the highest areas of economic leakage in tourism (Berno, 2011). In Niue, for example, the purchase of imported food by cafe and restaurant operators represents more than 90% of their total food costs, thus reducing the economic benefits of the tourism industry to the island's economy (Singh, Milne, & Hull, 2012).

There are a variety of terms used in the literature to express the linkage between food and tourism: food tourism, culinary tourism and gastronomic tourism (Horng & Tsai, 2010). According to Hall and Mitchell, as cited in Lin, Pearson and Cai (2011, p. 32), "food tourism involves the visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the motivating factor for travel."

Hall, Kirkpatrick and Mitchell (2005) state that within food tourism it is possible to distinguish between culinary and gastronomic tourism. In culinary tourism, local food appears as a moderate motivating factor when selecting a tourism destination; however, to tourists involved in gastronomic tourism, local food and the gastronomy of a country is a highly important motivating factor for travelling (Hall et al., 2005; Steinmetz, 2010).

The term "gastronomy" is often referred to as the art of cooking and good eating, although this is only part of the discipline (Londoño Leal, 2011). Gastronomy is the study of the relationship between culture and food, by recognising relevant factors related to the consumption of food and beverages consumed by a group in a locality, region, or even a nation (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Those interested in gastronomy are usually involved in tasting, preparing, experiencing, researching, discovering, understanding and writing about food (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

The concept of culinary tourism is defined as participation in the unique food experiences related to a tourist destination; this may include, but is not limited to, the consumption or presentation of food or cuisine (Horng, Liu, Chou, & Tsai, 2012a; Long, 2004). According to Long (2004), culinary tourism involves tourists' experiencing food in a way that has them step outside their normal routine in order to appreciate not only the difference but also the power of food to represent that difference. Therefore, culinary tourism is about individuals exploring new foods as well as using food to explore new cultures and ways of being (Long, 2004). These three concepts are often interchangeably used by tourism professionals and travellers, and some commentators even argue that they have the same meaning because food, culinary and gastronomy tourism refer to people travelling for the purpose of finding food (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Karim & Chi, 2010; Povey, 2011). This research seeks theoretical support from the culinary, gastronomic and food tourism literature to understand trends and characteristics of local food in tourism, yet differences between the terms are not considered.

The importance of food in tourism has been clearly manifested in the growth of visitors interested in local food experiences (Mkono, 2011). Although tourists' preferences for food in a destination can play a significant role in affecting their destination choice, tourists that travel with food as their primary reason or motivation are still a minority group, albeit a growing one (Buiatti, 2011; Mak et al., 2012). There is a higher interest

in organic and natural products, food traceability and, as a consequence, an increasing demand for more locally sourced food (Buiatti, 2011). Visitors seek and value food taste, freshness, quality and experience, with an emphasis on the "slow food movement" (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005).

The slow food movement is an international movement that promotes and protects different local food cultures and agricultural biodiversity by enhancing and developing links between all the stakeholders in the production and consumption of food (Buiatti, 2011; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; Heitmann, Robinson, & Povey, 2011). It appears to counteract the disappearance of local food traditions, and it also influences debates on how food choices affect the world economy due to increasing mass food-production processes (Buiatti, 2011; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; Wilhelmina, Joost, George, & Guido, 2010). Standardised mass food-production processes lead to an increase in global food consumption patterns through imports and, correspondingly, less domestic support for agriculture (Mak et al., 2012; Wilhelmina et al., 2010). Many food cultures are becoming subcultures as consumers develop a "global palate": this, in turn, affects the demand for local products in the tourism industry (Mak et al., 2012).

The internationalisation of food demand and supply is illustrated by how people in developed countries can easily access a wide range of ethnically diverse food in supermarkets and restaurants (Henderson, 2009). Many people travel to eat, but many also eat to travel by consuming foreign foods at home (Mkono, 2011). People look for genuine and authentic dishes, which are believed to be found in ethnic restaurants (Henderson, 2009). Therefore, knowledge of food from other cultures is growing amongst Western societies, which comprise the majority of the outbound tourism market (Henderson, 2009). Montanari and Staniscia (2009) argue that ethnic restaurants in various cities of the world do not seem to operate as a tool of cultural mediation because the authenticity of their meals is often questioned or debatable. Authenticity, however, is a social process open to change and an outcome of the relationship between tourists and their interaction with other cultures and environments (Sigala & Leslie, 2005).

While aspects of local food authenticity can be legislated, with standards being set, the subjectivity of the individual and what society defines as an "authentic meal" makes it difficult to define authenticity in food culture (Mak et al., 2012; Povey, 2011). The growth in tourist consumption of local foods is attributable to the globalisation of diet

and visitors' greater familiarity with international cuisine (Richardson-Ngwenga & Momsen, 2011). It has been argued that exposure to the local cuisine of a different culture tends to increase preference for it because familiarity increases with repeated exposure (Mak et al., 2012). Familiarity with foreign or exotic foods has become an indication for sophistication in some cultures and a distinction that raises the tourist's status back in their country of residence (Mkono, 2011).

Local food experiences can elicit a variety of feelings in tourists when visiting destinations. A local food experience may be fascinating, but tourists can also have unpleasant and uncomfortable reactions to the unknown food (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2009). Issues relating to hygiene and health, culturally acceptable food experiences, including table manners, and communication gaps are common reasons for tourists avoiding local culinary establishments (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Povey, 2011). While many tourists purport to want to eat local food, the vast majority rarely consume their meals in establishments that are used extensively by local people, gaining reassurance from the presence of other visitors (Povey, 2011). Therefore, local food is an experience that, for visitors, can represent both a physical and intellectual openness to difference and a certain willingness to risk (Mkono, 2011). Sometimes "local food becomes acceptable only if it is to some extent transformed" to tourist tastes or filtered through tourism-oriented culinary establishments (Cohen & Avieli, 2004, p. 756). Therefore many dishes are transformed in different dimensions and in various ways to suit tourists without impairing their authenticity (Berno, 2011; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Foreign dishes are also introduced by the tourism industry into the local cuisine and transformed to suit local tastes (Mak et al., 2012). In this encounter, new dishes and cuisines emerge and others are reshaped (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Povey, 2011). Thus, cuisines are never static but are constantly changing and evolving, thereby influencing the perception of authenticity in visitors (Bentley, 2004; Mak et al., 2012; Sigala & Leslie, 2005).

Central to the study of gastronomy and culinary tourism is the concept of "the meal experience". A meal experience includes all the variety of aspects in the consumption of a meal that create a "sense of place" to the visitor (Povey, 2011). Haven-Tang and Jones (2005) state that a sense of place embraces everything that is unique and distinctive about a place, including all material and non-material characteristics that create the "soul" or "spirit" of a place. Therefore, aspects such as the surroundings, decoration, food service and music being played have a significant contribution in the creation of a

meal experience (Povey, 2011). One of the interests among tourists searching for local food experiences is how the cultural heritage of the destination influences its cuisine (Povey, 2011). A sense of place also embraces the embedded body of knowledge about a place, such as its history, legends, geography, geology, flora and fauna, by providing a feeling that communities are special and different from anywhere else (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005). These unique attributes of a destination can be used to exploit and highlight the destination from competitors, such as the story of the local food (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; Sims, 2009). Environmental factors, such as geography and climate, influence available agricultural products and impact on traditional recipes, flavours, cooking and preservation methods (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Therefore local food is full of the cultural, social and environmental elements of a territory, and becomes a contemporary cultural and social-exchange practice by showing the traditions, culture and feelings of a region (Londoño Leal, 2011). Many regional culinary customs are characterised by distinctive cultural inputs and particular ingredients; for example, in Vanuatu:

> Tanna soup is ni-Vanuatu soul soup. … A basic chicken, yam and island cabbage soup. But when you know all that goes into each part of the recipe – the tending of the land, the reverence for the yam, the generations that have made this same dish – it gives the soup the extra dimension. Through kastom, the healing and nutritive properties of the foods are known and incorporated in the dish. In this context, even the word "organic" seems weak. Kastom is the unlisted ingredient in the recipe for Tanna soup (Oliver, Berno, & Ram, 2010, p. 209).

The growth of interest in local food experiences in tourism is aligned with a change of trends in tourism preferences from tangible to intangible tourism resources (Figure 2.2). In the early stages of mass tourism, the essential value of holidays was the aspect of "having" but as holidays became more normal, the emphasis shifted to "did"; recently, the source of distinction lies in "becoming" (Richards & Wilson, 2007). The new tourists in the present era seek to become a part of the local community and have direct contact with the everyday lives of others, and they do this by seeking distinctiveness and differentiation in their experiences, visiting foreign places and participating in local food-related experiences (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; Richards & Wilson, 2007). The approach of these new tourists in experiencing destinations is more active, experiential and celebratory than mass tourists' (Armesto Lopez & Gomez Martin, 2006). Therefore local food can be appreciated as a potential tourism resource due to its compatibility with the new trends of cultural consumption, trends that lead to commercialised new

food-tourism products, such as thematic routes, specific trips to destinations, festivals and events (Armesto Lopez & Gomez Martin, 2006).

Figure 2.2: The evolving drivers of tourism
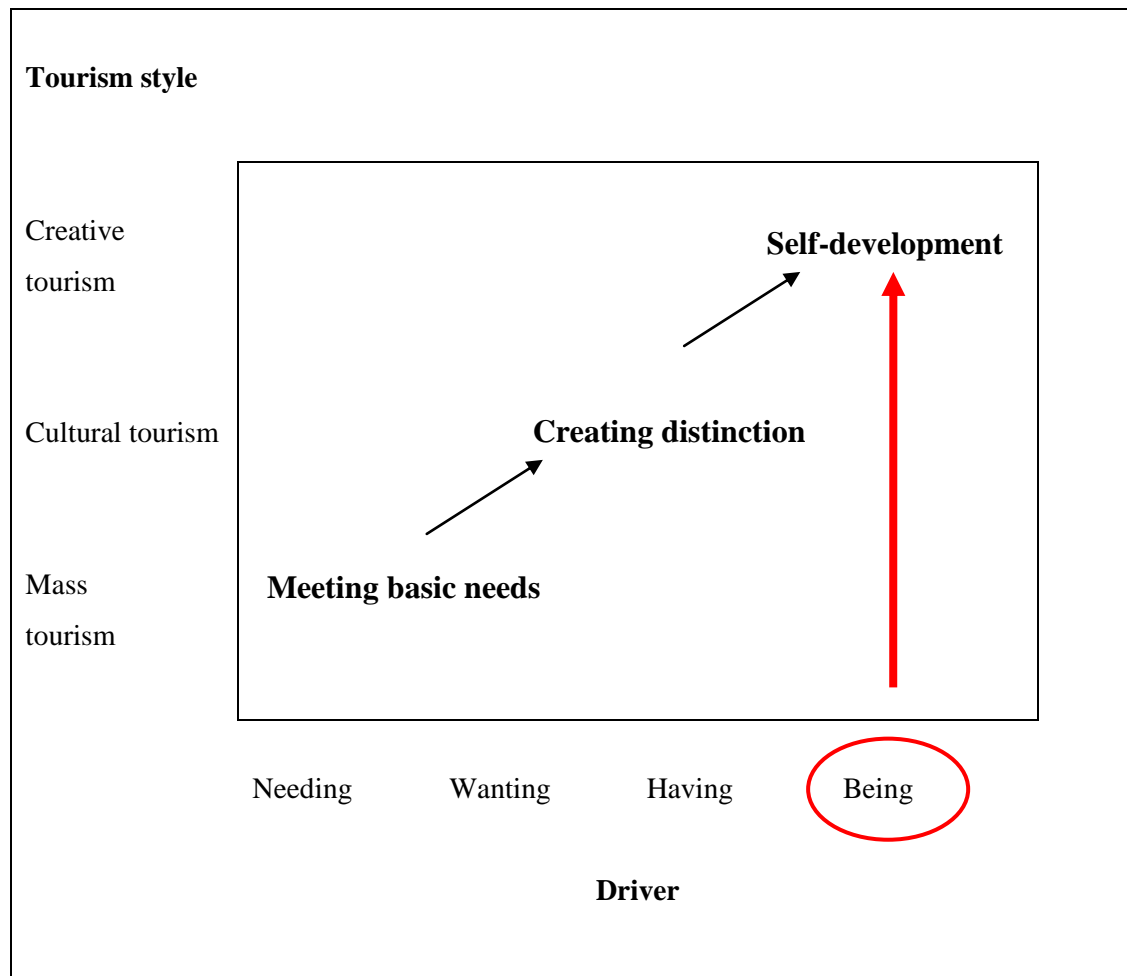
Source: Richards & Wilson, 2007

The increasing focus on local food in tourism offers a wide range of possibilities for both tourism businesses and local communities within destinations (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Karim & Chi, 2010). Cuisines that are well known for their taste and quality, such French and Italian, can be developed into tourist products (Karim & Chi, 2010). Other destinations where cuisine is not the main attraction, such as Croatia, have turned to food as a way to create a new identity, rejuvenate their image and increase market share, while countries such as South Africa and Canada are using food to provide a supportive function for the consumer experience (Horng et al., 2012a; Lin et al., 2011). Canada's natural scenery has always enjoyed an established image, but its recent marketing strategy attempts to introduce local food as a new way of branding the country and promoting tourism (Lin et al., 2011). Kivela and Crotts (2006) state that

local food is a viable alternative attraction for destinations that cannot benefit from "sun, sea, and sand" or natural or cultural experiences, while Londoño Leal (2011) notes that through the promotion of local food initiatives, some destinations, such as Spain, have been able to escape from solely having a sun, sea, and sand identity.

Food experiences are all-year-round activities, and offer all destinations the opportunity of a unique competitive advantage by creating a positive connection between food and particular national and local traits (Chang et al., 2011; Horng & Tsai, 2010). The importance of food in tourism is not about combining tourism with food; rather, the food consumed by tourists should be produced locally as much as possible (Montanari & Staniscia, 2009). Increasing the consumption of local food at a tourism destination should be one of the goals of sustainable tourism development. It will only be achieved by maintaining tourism resources, improving the welfare of the local population involved in the sector, and ensuring the tourists enjoy quality experiences during their stay. (Armesto Lopez & Gomez Martin, 2006; Sims, 2009).

The promotion of local food experiences is a key element in building an image of a tourism destination (Armesto Lopez & Gomez Martin, 2006; Lin et al., 2011). Although marketing strategies can motivate tourists to purchase local food, specific marketing strategies are needed to target potential tourists (Horng & Tsai, 2012b). Lin et al. (2011) state that destinations need to establish a clear and consistent identity that can easily be understood by tourists, and one that properly promotes them to intended markets. The challenge that remains for destinations whose local food is not well known, is how to promote an identity to make their food more appealing to tourists but, at the same time, without losing its authenticity (Amira, 2009; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The rise of culinary tourism and the recognition that food experiences can provide new ways to explore the authenticity of a destination are factors that motivate demand for new foods and cuisines (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Karim & Chi, 2010; Sims, 2009). Governments need to play a critical role in both assisting local communities to develop local food experiences for the tourism sector and marketing their nations to increase the number of tourists so that linkages between the tourism sector and local agricultural operations can be developed and sustained (Singh et al., 2012).

2.2 The role of the Internet in linking local food to the tourism industry

The Internet has revolutionised the organisation and structure of the tourism industry by changing its entire value chain of creation, marketing, distribution and consumption

(Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). The number of tourism businesses connected to the Internet is constantly increasing, and the world's Internet usage grew in the period 2000–2011 by 528.1% (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012). Tourism and travel has become the largest single category of products and services sold on the Internet (Abou-Shouk, Lim, & Megicks, 2012). The volume of total European online sales generated by the travel and tourism sector rose from 5 billion euros in 2001 to 62.5 billion euros in 2009 (Fuchs & Höpken, 2011). Of all European online sales generated in 2009, 25.7% correspond to the tourist sector (Fuchs & Höpken, 2011). Thus, the Internet provides a vital competitive advantage for tourism businesses and destinations because it represents an opportunity to link their goods and services, such as the provision of local food, to travellers (Abou-Shouk et al., 2012; R. Huang, 2009; Polo Peña & Frías Jamilena, 2010).

Tourism as an information-intensive industry gains important synergies from the use of the Internet (Garin-Munoz & Perez-Amaral, 2011). Travel products and services appear to be well suited to online selling because they possess the characteristics that can function in the electronic environment (Garin-Munoz & Perez-Amaral, 2011). Tourism as a social phenomenon is explained and transmitted through multiple narratives, images and representations that contain values and elements of a destination's identity (Marine-Roig, 2011). Tourism is characterised by an intangible and heterogeneous nature and is dependent on the images and visual representation that the Internet is able to display (Lepp, Gibson, & Lane, 2011). The Internet, therefore, becomes a most suitable medium to conduct marketing and promotion in tourism destinations (Horng & Tsai, 2010; R. Huang, 2009).

The Internet can enable users to quickly access information of interest in a pleasure-generating process by the use of hyperlinks (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady, & Beal, 2011; Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006; Sigala & Leslie, 2005). Hyperlinks are defined as the essence of the Internet because they enhance a visitor's participation by providing them with the autonomy to explore and move back and forth between web pages (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009; Sigala & Leslie, 2005). Hyperlinks also provide social links between individuals and businesses that own websites (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009). The Internet can provide an interactive one-way communication from marketer to consumer as well as transmit information in two directions, from the website to the user and the user to the website (Inversini & Buhalis, 2009; Ray, Banerjee, Ghosh, &

Das, 2011). This form of two-way interactive communication is named as second-generation web-based communities or Web 2.0 (Inversini & Buhalis, 2009).

Web 2.0 is a new trend in online communication, and it aims to facilitate collaboration and information sharing between users (Inversini & Buhalis, 2009). Social media applications available on Web 2.0 or the Internet, such as blogs and online reviews, create a platform for participants to collaborate and share information, thus providing an "electronic word of mouth" (Czinkota et al., 2011; Wang, 2011). The Internet's social media allows companies to understand their individual customer needs without asking them what they are (Strauss & Raymond, 2009). Restaurants' online reviews can highlight areas of improvement for restaurateurs to consider in order to offer a better quality service (Pantelidis, 2010). Blogs and online reviews are becoming new forms of communication; they are used as a reading material to exchange and publish information as well as to establish relationships (Cateora, Gilly, & Graham, 2011; Wang, 2011). Internet social media is becoming an integral tool to conduct research and marketing in the tourism industry (Czinkota et al., 2011).

Tourism businesses can improve their performance by using the Internet as to provide information and to facilitate interaction and integration between themselves and customers (Nieto, Hernández-Maestro, & Muñoz-Gallego, 2011; Servais, Madsen, & Rasmussen, 2007). An effective website is vital for a hotel to strengthen its relationship with customers and foster online sales (Hashim, Murphy, & Law, 2007). The main impact of the Internet in the tourism industry has not been as a global sales or distribution channel, but as a communications network and important source of information (Inversini & Buhalis, 2009; Servais et al., 2007). Research conducted in Spain showed that 92.6% of the Spanish tourists who used the Internet for travel-related purposes used it for gathering information, 65.6% for making reservations, and just 28.2% for making purchases (Garin-Munoz & Perez-Amaral, 2011).

Tourism websites as a source of travel information can play an essential role in enhancing linkages between tourism and local food in destinations (Singh et al., 2012). Information disseminated to visitors before they arrive at their destination is vital in shaping their expenditure (Milne, 2009b). Without effective information "to explore the experiences that underpin linkage formation, enhancement of these links will not occur" (Milne, 2009b, p. 21). Through up-to-date information on websites, small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTE) will significantly influence the formation of a positive

destination image as well as the type of visitor (Jeong et al., 2012). The potential interactivity of a website can provide a competitive advantage as customers compare alternative websites (Czinkota et al., 2011). Customers who look for online reviews of restaurants are likely to also search the web for the restaurant's website, and they will often expect to see a menu and pictures, even a video relating to the restaurant's meal experience (Pantelidis, 2010).

The Internet can also help to integrate tourism businesses, customers and communities by facilitating the flow of information between multiple parties and stimulating relationships (Galloway, Sanders, & Deakins, 2011; Milne, In press; Servais et al., 2007). Berno (2011) states that the participation of a broad range of stakeholders is needed to successfully conduct initiatives that develop linkages between local food and tourism. In many developing countries, weak and limited communication between the tourism industry and agricultural sector has been identified as a key barrier to enhancing the consumption of local food (Rogerson, 2012a). Linking tourism and SMTE websites to local producers' websites can enhance communication – for example, by providing information about local food availability and seasonality – and increase social networks between both sectors, thus building direct relationships (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Strengthening networks and communications between tourism enterprises and other local sectors, such as agriculture, is vital to allow the benefits of tourism to spread throughout the local economy (Milne, Clark, Speidel, Nodder, & Dobbin, 2009).

An example of where the use of the Internet is being used to enhance linkages between food and tourism is in the promotion of the local gastronomy in Spanish tourism websites (Londoño Leal, 2011). A Catalan tourism website uses internal hyperlinks to provide information regarding where to "Buy", "Taste" and "Visit" local food. Also there is a "Gastronomy Tourism Club" hyperlink that opens a window to a network of tourism associations and local restaurants (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Hyperlinks on a Catalan tourism website indicate where to taste and buy local food

Source: Turisme de Catalunya (n.d.)

Community participation is critical in allowing the host population more control in tourism development decisions and in maximising local economic benefits (Ali & Frew, 2010). The Internet can create community initiative and integrate the local business community in the local development social network, promoting and distributing economic growth (Milne, In press; Touray & Jung, 2010). The common practice of top-down tourism development leaves local communities at many destinations with little opportunity to meaningfully engage in the industry (Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2011). The Internet offers the potential to change the structure of communication from hierarchical top-down exchanges to "flattened" relationships that link together multiple players (Milne et al., 2009). Tourism websites can act as a portal to local producers and surrounding community interests (Levinson & Milne, 2004) by providing information about rural areas, village life and local products. Thus, destinations that are less well known for their local food can provide information on their websites, giving travellers a better understanding of the local products available and increasing their awareness of local menus.

The diffusion of the Internet in the tourism sector also presents opportunities for less-developed countries to improve productivity, support development and participate in the world economy (Abou-Shouk et al., 2012; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). The Internet has allowed SMTE in developing countries to advertise their products online, alleviating challenges associated with tourism marketing, such as the power of intermediaries in the marketing chain (Levinson & Milne, 2004; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Prior to the Internet, most small companies only had access to their local market; now every business is a multinational business in a global market (Servais et al., 2007). Lower transaction costs enable small companies to work together to develop a global reach (Cateora et al., 2011). Therefore the Internet is a major tool in developing tourism as a sustainable industry in destinations. Tourism businesses and communities that are not represented on the Internet will fail to bridge the distance with their existing and potential customers, and will suffer competitive disadvantages as a result (Au & Ekiz, 2009).

2.3 Challenges in utilising the potential of the Internet to link local food to tourism

The use of the Internet has significant implications for the relations between the global and local tourism markets (Cetin, Akpinar, & Ozsayin, 2004; Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2011). The Internet affects a number of globalisation drivers such as global convergence of tastes, branding and standards, as well as systems that encourage demand for common products or services worldwide. Wider access to the Internet brings about a greater commonality in tastes and demand for certain products as the exchange of ideas and information increases across destinations (Chen, 2007; Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2011). The content of tourism websites is very important for promoting a tourist destination's unique culinary and cultural identity (Horng & Tsai, 2010).

The information communication and technology (ICT) sector continues to be extremely limited in the South Pacific SIDS compared with developed countries (Network Strategies, 2010). Tourism is an information industry and relies "on the availability of and access to information in order to attract potential customers" (Maurer & Lutz, 2011, p. 205). Therefore inequalities faced by SMTE and communities affect tourism development in a destination (Milne, Speidel, Goodman, & Clark, 2005; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). The precondition for widespread social and economic enrichment through the Internet is a high level of Internet participation (Network Strategies, 2010). Research states that the level of Internet participation in Pacific island countries has

been limited compared with that in other developed countries, such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States (Network Strategies, 2010) (Figure 2.4). Fiji is one of the most industrialised developing countries in the Pacific region and heavily dependent on the tourism sector, yet it is constrained by a lack of infrastructure which, in turn, holds back development in its ICT sector (Kumar & Kumar, 2012). Even so, Fiji's ICT sector is relatively well established when compared with other Pacific island countries (Kumar & Kumar, 2012). The disparity in Internet usage across all the regions is called the "Global Digital Divide" (Czinkota et al., 2011).

Figure 2.4: Percentage of local residents using the Internet
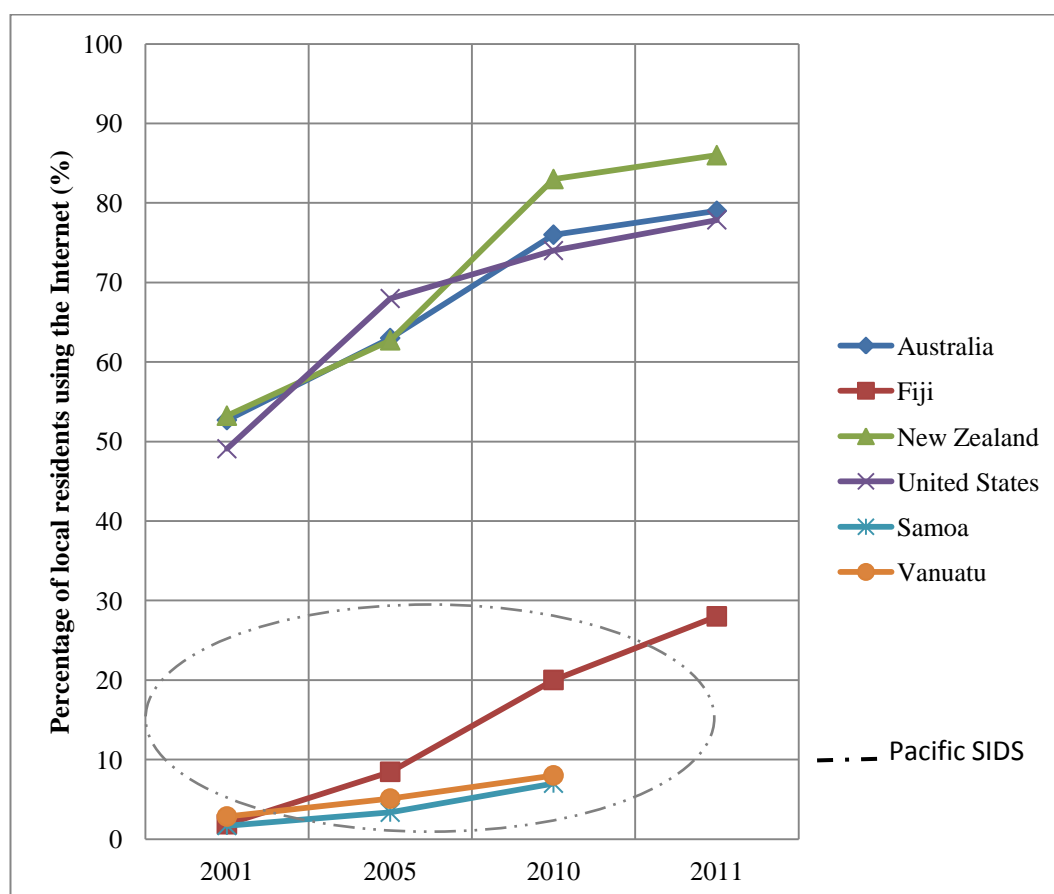
Source: The United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2012)

Unequal access to the Internet can affect the growth and development of a society by empowering some people with access to information while depriving those without access; this can be termed "first-order digital divide" (Moon, Hossain, Kang, & Shin, 2012). Rural and remote areas face challenges of geographic dispersion and low subscriber density, which reduce incentives for tourism businesses and communities to make investments in broadband networks (Akca et al., 2007; Ali & Frew, 2010).

Technical and market solutions available in urban areas do not work in rural or remote areas because the large distances from the central provider of the digital line mean higher access costs (Akca et al., 2007; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). While submarine cables provide the highest bandwidth at the lowest cost in developed regions, in Vanuatu and most of the Pacific SIDS, the only form of international electronic communication is via satellites, and these have traditionally been expensive and subject to high latency (Horne, 2011). Although Internet access in Vanuatu is expected to improve between 2012 and 2013 when national networks are connected to a submarine cable, access via satellite will remain the only practical and cost-effective solution for many of the outer islands (Horne, 2011).

Even when communities do have access to digital technology, there are inequalities in their ability to use it; this results in "second-order digital divide", which also influences a community's development (Moon et al., 2012). Inequalities in the ability to use digital technology include a lack of training and capital, and limited understanding of the potential of technology (Maurer & Lutz, 2011; Milne et al., 2005). Digital abilities comprise the ability to search for information and operate digital equipment, as well as people's aptitude for strategically using acquired information to position themselves within their social networks (Maurer & Lutz, 2011). In the Pacific SIDS, initiatives to strengthen Internet skills need to ensure that training is provided to the wider community because there is difficulty in retaining ICT trained professionals – they frequently leave the country to obtain work overseas (Network Strategies, 2010).

A lack of advice and government support contributes to SMTE being reluctant to make use of the Internet (Abou-Shouk et al., 2012). The spending of government funds on ICT policy may simply reinforce existing power structures and inequalities, leading to increased social discord, individual isolation and limited economic opportunity (Milne et al., 2005; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Such inequalities increase with the rapid expansion of Internet usage in developed regions: this expansion leads to more integrated environments and provides a challenge for SMTE to be able to afford the expertise to maintain a global efficiency (Czinkota et al., 2011; Pantelidis, 2010; Servais et al., 2007). Inequalities in Internet access can challenge the potential of the Internet to link tourism with local food. The promotion of the local food on tourism websites has been identified as critical to stimulate tourism demand for food (Singh et al., 2012; Timms & Neill, 2011), yet the success of marketing local food highly depends on an active participation of the local communities and SMTE (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005).

In Vanuatu, many local bungalows do not have telephones or computer access, and the reliability of the telecommunication service is also an issue. Thus it is a challenge for these SMTE to be able to promote their businesses on the Internet (Gay, 2007).

Milne et al. (2005) argue that constraints to Internet usage can be mitigated by effective implementation of government policies. However, businesses can only take full advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT if governments implement policies that ensure availability of the relevant infrastructure. According to Ali and Frew (2010), the use of the Internet in the tourism industry depends on the stage of tourism development, and during early stages of development, Internet use is related to promoting tourism experiences rather than to attaining sustainable tourism development. Research conducted in China indicates that tourism sites show an increasing proficiency in delivering basic tourist information, but fail to facilitate relationships between stakeholders, such as linking to suppliers' websites, to provide best value to visitors (Du, Xin, Xu, & Zhou, 2011). Ali and Frew (2010) argue that making use of all the advantages of the Internet from the beginning of the process of tourism development can help destinations to grow their industry in a sustainable manner, preventing problems that can occur later on in the destination's life cycle.

Despite the potential of the Internet and its revolution in the tourism industry, very little academic research has been carried out on its contribution to the sustainable development of the industry (Touray & Jung, 2010). Ali and Frew (2010) reveal that sustainable tourism development can become an effective concept in destination management through the application of ICT. Relevant research in the Pacific SIDS identifies the Internet as a means of enabling linkages between the tourism industry and the local economy (Berno, 2011; Milne, 2009b; Singh et al., 2012). However, there is still very little research conducted in the Pacific SIDS examining the nexus between ICT and tourism (Kumar & Kumar, 2012).

Specific Internet studies examining the relationship between food and tourism have recently become an area of interest among researchers. Some studies have examined culinary and food tourism content on the websites of tourism destinations, analysing hyperlinks and food information (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Boyne, Hall, & Williams, 2003; R. Huang, 2009; Kim et al., 2009), while other studies have analysed websites' usability, information and interactivity in regards to the destination's culinary attraction (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Most research on tourism websites has been in developed

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countries and with little consideration to SIDS, where telecommunications, infrastructure and human capital are limited (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Levinson & Milne, 2004; Surenkok et al., 2010).

Akca et al. (2007) highlight the advantages that the Internet provides to rural areas and focus on how the tourism industry uses the Internet to advertise local food-related experiences. Through the Internet, local communities can also transfer their local food knowledge to potential visitors as well as integrate tourism with the agriculture sector to facilitate the sale of agricultural products (see Figure 2.5). Furthermore, rural communities can gain knowledge from urban areas by visiting other websites and social networks to increase their awareness of new trends and tourists' food needs and expectations.

Figure 2.5: Using the Internet to promote local food-related experiences
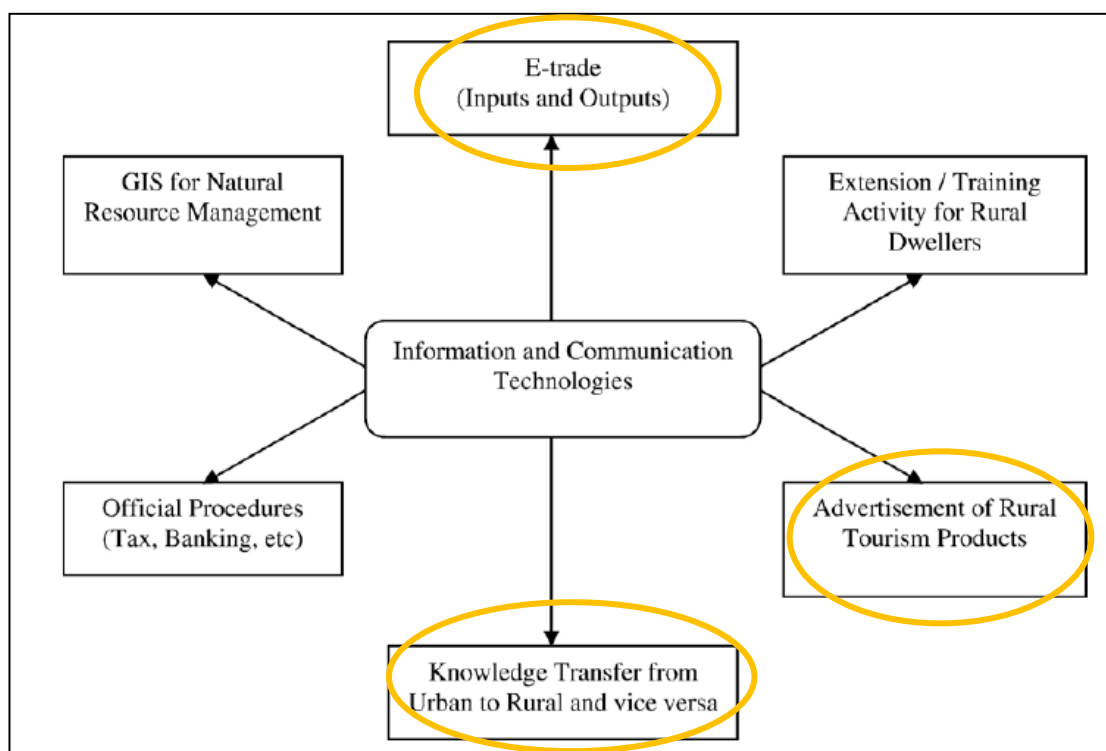
Source: Akca et al. (2007)

The Internet can play a critical role in linking local food to tourism in developing countries. Despite all the challenges that the Pacific island SIDS face to take full advantage of the Internet, these countries are undertaking development plans to exploit the use of the Internet. Many challenges are expected to be overcome in the near future, although the potential of the Internet in Pacific SIDS will still be constrained as other

challenges, such as the cost and expertise required to maintain global efficiency will remain.

2.4 Summary

Food has been defined as a social marker and, therefore, a critical cultural resource in developing sustainable tourism. Tourists seek authenticity and the experience of new cultures through the consumption of local food, and destinations are able to showcase their local identity and traditions by the supply of their food. As interest in food-related experiences becomes more evident, local food has the potential, more than ever, to strengthen linkages between the tourism sector and the local economy. The consumption of local food distributes direct, indirect and induced tourism benefits to local communities and generates economic growth.

The Internet has the potential to enable linkages between tourism and local food by facilitating information, interaction and integration between tourism businesses, customers, suppliers and communities. The South Pacific SIDS are engaged in embracing the Internet as a priority in their development plans, but they still face important constraints that impede their taking full advantage of the technology. Nevertheless, although there are challenges, Pacific SIDS need this technology in order to remain competitive with other tourism destinations and they cannot afford to overlook the benefits of the Internet. There is a lack of research on the role of the Internet in developing countries in linking local food to tourism, particularly into the challenges these countries face and the way forward. Relevant research in the area would contribute to the promotion of tourism and enhance its links to the local food sector, increasing the sustainability of the industry in developing countries.

Chapter 3 : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a description and justification of the research design and specific methods employed to meet the study's aims and objectives. The chapter opens with a brief description of interpretivism as a theoretical perspective and how it is suited to the nature of this exploratory and descriptive qualitative research. The case of Vanuatu is presented to provide some context for the study and a better understanding of the rationale for this research. The chapter then turns to an outline of the content and discourse analyses that form the research methods applied to collect, analyse and interpret data.

3.1 Methodological approach

Methodology is the way of thinking or plan of action lying behind the choice and use of particular methods for research, and it links the choice of such methods to the desired outcomes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Crotty, 1998). The definition of methodology is also subject to philosophical foundations that provide the context and the theory of knowledge in the research process (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2006). The philosophical foundations of research are concerned with the issue of what exists and the nature of being, namely ontology, and with the creation of knowledge and how this knowledge might be investigated, namely epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Neuman, 2011). Epistemology includes what is needed to produce knowledge and what knowledge looks like once it has been produced (Neuman, 2011).

There are two major positions when approaching ontology and epistemology that delimit the research methodology. These two basic positions, known as paradigms, appear recognised in the literature by different names, such as positivism or empiricism on the one hand and interpretivism or rationalism on the other (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Seale, 1998; Smith, 2010). An empiricist or positivist epistemology claims that knowledge and scientific theories of the world can be derived only from empirical experience or observation (Seale, 1998; Smith, 2010), whereas a rationalist or interpretivist advocates that knowledge is a product of the mind, and therefore depends so heavily on interpretative-cultural factors that experiences make no sense without these factors (Neuman, 2011; Seale, 1998). Interpretivism describes meanings and understandings of a particular situation and explores nature with a subjective perspective on knowledge by acknowledging multiple realities (Jennings & Nickerson, 2012; Smitho, 2010).

Tourism is a complex intellectual field because it is constituted by different disciplines, such as marketing, geography, anthropology, behaviour, business, human ecology and political science (Darbellay & Stock, 2012; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of tourism needs to be contemplated with a holistic approach rather than being regarded as reducible and exclusive to any of the paradigm approaches (Darbellay & Stock, 2012). Therefore tourism studies may be conducted applying either interpretivist or positivist paradigms (Pansiri, 2005; Rakic & Chambers, 2012). The selection of a particular paradigm will guide the research question, purpose and methods of research (Smith, 2010). Interpretivist approaches are associated with the use of qualitative methods and positivist perspectives with quantitative methods (Bazeley, 2002).

This research adopts an interpretive paradigm and employs qualitative methods to explore the Internet's role in enhancing the linkages between tourism and local food in Vanuatu. The goal of interpretivist research is to develop an understanding of how people construct meanings and interact in a particular setting (Neuman, 2011). Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Berg, 2009). The Internet is a scene of social construction where people create networks, interact and give meaning to their spaces (Silverman, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The main focus of qualitative research is to explore how humans arrange their social settings – for example, tourism websites – to make sense of their culture, surroundings and social roles (Berg, 2009). According to the perspective of the interpretive paradigm, texts or contents transmit meanings, experiences, beliefs and values (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, within the context of the interpretive paradigm, this research seeks to understand how the local food sector and local communities interact on the websites that promote tourism in Vanuatu.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that qualitative studies are conducted for three different purposes: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. This research is exploratory because it seeks to explore an area that is not well understood in the literature. The role of the Internet in enhancing the use of local food in the tourism industry in Vanuatu, as in other South Pacific nations, has been little contemplated in the literature (Milne, 2009b; Singh et al., 2012). It is, therefore, essential to identify categories of meaning, understandings and salient themes that help draw conclusions about the potential of the Internet to increase tourism benefits for the village communities in Vanuatu through the promotion of local food for visitors' experiences.

This research also seeks a descriptive purpose because it is important to describe the actual role of the Internet in order to detect its potential strengths and actual challenges (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To meet the purpose of this exploratory and descriptive research, a case study approach is undertaken.

A case study is defined as an in-depth investigation of a location, organisation or social setting to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions (Berg, 2009; Daymon & Holloway, 2011). The case study is a detailed and descriptive approach that focuses on real events in their life context, while providing a holistic overview by exploring relationships and connections (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Some critics of the case study approach raise questions over its validity as findings are specific to the case and, therefore, results cannot be generalised to other cases (Singh et al., 2012). As a methodology, case studies have been considered less systematic and rigorous than other forms of research, and they are also time consuming because of the massive amount of information that is obtained (Berg, 2009; Singh et al., 2012). Yet, despite these disadvantages, a case study approach is suitable for tourism research when a "How" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has no control (Singh et al., 2012). For this research, the case of Vanuatu is examined in order to understand how tourism websites can enhance linkages with the local food in SIDS.

3.2 The case of Vanuatu

Vanuatu, formerly known as the New Hebrides, has a population of approximately 234,000 (Cheer & Peel, 2011; VNSO, 2009b). Port Vila, the capital, is located on the island of Efate (in the province of Shefa), which accounts for this province having the largest population (see Figure 3.1) (VNSO, 2009b). Vanuatu is a less-developed country and 80% of ni-Vanuatu (Melanesian people of Vanuatu) live in rural areas and practise subsistence or small-scale agriculture (Regenvanu, 2010) (see Figure 3.2). The country is experiencing social and economic challenges in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and this situation is further exacerbated by young adults having to

leave their island for higher education and to seek employment (Horne, 2011; UN Development Programme, 2012).[1]

Figure 3.1: Vanuatu population size by province and census year
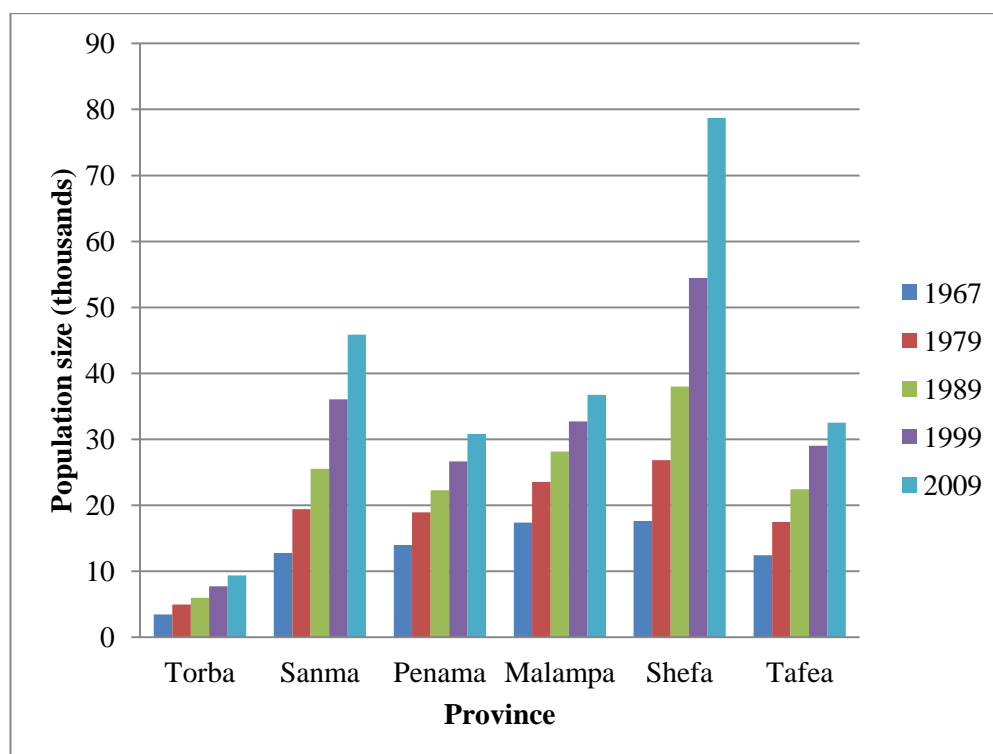
Source: VNSO (n.d.) Census Summary Report

The agriculture sector is an important component of the country's economy, contributing 20% of its GDP (World Bank Group, 2011). Agricultural activities include producing copra, beef, cocoa and kava for export, and food and vegetables for subsistence and the local market (AUSAID, 2007). Vanuatu is experiencing a rapid increase in economic growth, driven primarily by the tourism industry which generates 40% of the country's GDP (Government of Vanuatu, 2011; Shareef, Hoti, & Mcaleer, 2008) . In 2011, tourism directly contributed 18.9% of the country's GDP and directly generated 16.4% of the country's total employment (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2012).

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[1] The United Nations Development Programme aims to create a global partnership to end poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education and environmental sustainability, improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and combat diseases.

Figure 3.2: Employed population by urban or rural residence and industry, 2009
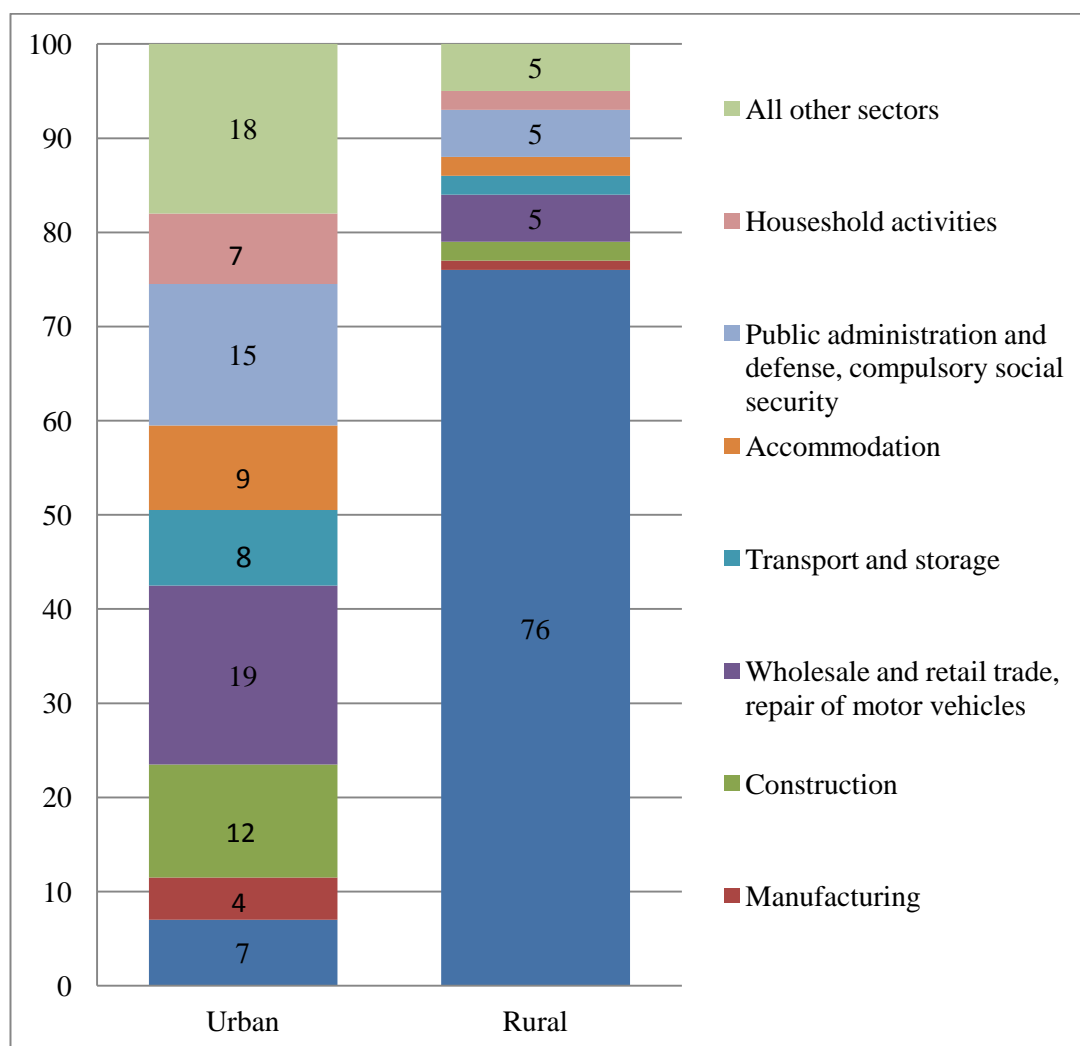
Source: VNSO (2009b)

Agriculture and tourism are the two key productive sectors of Vanuatu, with tourism also the key foreign exchange earner (Klint et al., 2012). In 2011, Vanuatu received 93,960 international visitor arrivals (VNSO, n.d.) (see Figure 3.3). Of these, 80.38% arrived in Vanuatu for holiday purposes and 10.57% for meetings, conferences or other business (VNSO, n.d.). To date, tourism development in Vanuatu is centred on the main island of Efate, particularly in its capital, Port Vila (Cassidy & Brown, 2010). For example, while Port Vila received 96.96% of the international visitor arrivals in 2011, Luganville received only 3.04% (VNSO, n.d.). Cassidy and Brown (2010) state that 89.19% of the international visitors who arrive at Port Vila do not travel to an outer island.

Figure 3.3: International visitor arrivals by air and by cruise ship

Source: VNSO (n.d.)

The tourism industry in Vanuatu, as with other South Pacific nations, relies heavily on imported food, resulting in leakages of tourism earnings (Berno, 2011; Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). Leakages from foreign-owned hotels in Vanuatu are estimated to be as high as 80% of total costs (AUSAID, 2006b). Although the region is prone to natural disasters, such as cyclones, earthquakes and flooding, there is an abundance of locally produced foods and food products (Berno, 2011; FAO, 2012) (see Table 3.1). In Vanuatu, local dishes show the country's robust culture, with lively links to the past by the use of local ingredients and traditional agricultural and cooking processes that have not changed for centuries (Oliver et al., 2010). The local cuisine in Vanuatu has also merged with the French food culture, due to colonial influences (Oliver et al., 2010). In Port Vila, a large number of restaurants, bistros and cafes provide high-quality food, representing a potential attraction for visitors looking for food experiences (Milne, 1990; Oliver et al., 2010).

Table 3.1: Top agricultural production in Vanuatu in 2010

Rank	Types of produce	Production ($1000)
1	Coconuts	42,571
2	Roots and tubers	7634
3	Indigenous cattle meat	6754
4	Indigenous pig meat	5253
5	Bananas	4506
6	Vegetables, fresh	2224
7	Fruit, fresh	1990
8	Indigenous chicken meat	1598
9	Groundnuts, with shell	1308
10	Cow milk, whole, fresh	1030
11	Hen eggs, in shell	829
12	Fruit, tropical, fresh	531
13	Cocoa beans	125
14	Indigenous goat meat	103
15	Spices	70
16	Coffee, green	22
17	Indigenous horse meat	19
18	Maize	2

Source: FAO (2012)

Milne (In press) identifies the need for economic linkages between the tourism and local food sectors and the use of the Internet as some of the key issues that face the tourism industry in the region. The use of the Internet and computers is not widespread in Vanuatu: there are only 9,290 Internet users, which represents just 6.7% of the population (VNSO, 2009b). The highest use of Internet is in the province of Shefa,

where almost 14% of the population use the Internet, while the province with the lowest use is Torba, where Internet use is less than 1% (VNSO, 2009b). The Vanuatu Tourism Action Programme emphasises the importance of ICT, and especially web-based marketing tools, to increase both visitor numbers and their length of stay (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). The use of the Internet to promote available tourism products has the potential to enhance the industry's benefits and increase the development and productivity of other economic sectors, such as the food sector (Network Strategies, 2010).

3.3 Research methods and analysis

The data collection and analysis has been conducted according to two qualitative approaches to analyse texts: content and discourse analyses.

3.3.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is recognised as a well-established research method commonly used to analyse communication and promotion in tourism. A number of studies have explored the ways that tourism destinations use the Internet to promote their local food cultures and tourist attractions (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Kim et al., 2009; Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, & Morrison, 2009). A content analysis study involves the gathering and analysis of texts (Krippendorff, 2013; Stepchenkova et al., 2009). Content can be words, pictures, symbols or any communicated message, while text can be anything written, visual or spoken that serves as a medium for communication (Neuman, 2011).

Researchers have long debated the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches to content analysis (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). Quantitative content analysis advocates the use of an objective and systematic counting and recording procedure to produce a numerical description of the content in a text, using statistical techniques (Neuman, 2011; Stepchenkova et al., 2009). Quantitative content analysis offers the possibility of obtaining more precise, objective and reliable observations about the frequency with which given characteristics occur singly or in conjunction with one another (Neuman, 2011). Some content analysis researchers have made quantification a component of their definition of content analysis, thereby excluding qualitative approaches (Neuman, 2011; Stepchenkova et al., 2009).

Qualitative content analysis is defined as a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material (Berg, 2009). The primary aim of qualitative content analysis is to identify emergent patterns, themes, biases, meanings and overlooked categories (Berg, 2009; Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Some commentators question the validity of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative content analysis, assuming that all readings of texts is qualitative even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers (Krippendorff, 2013). According to the purpose and objectives of this research, the content analysis is undertaken from a qualitative perspective, considering the following features (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Krippendorff, 2013):

- Texts have no objective as their meanings are always brought by someone. A text does not exist without a reader, a message does not exist without an interpreter, and data does not exist without an observer.
- Texts do not have unique meanings that could be "found", "identified" and "described" for what they are. Text can be read from numerous perspectives, and data can be subjected to various analyses.
- The meanings conveyed by texts need not be shared. Since different stories can be constructed from data, agreement as to what an author meant to say or what a given text means rarely exists.
- Texts have meanings relative to particular contexts, discourses or purposes.

As texts convey more than explicit messages, there are two types of coding in qualitative content analysis: manifest and latent. (Huang & Lee, 2009; Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). Manifest coding involves the visible surface structure present in a text, while latent coding is comparable to the deep structural meaning conveyed by such text (Berg, 2009). Latent analysis, also named semantic analysis, aims at underlying implicit meanings in the content of a text (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). To conduct manifest content analysis, it is necessary to first create a comprehensive list of relevant words and phrases to locate in the communication medium (Neuman, 2011). Manifest analysis is highly reliable because the phrase or word either is or is not present; however, it does not consider the connotations of words or phrases when these can take on different meanings (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009; Neuman, 2011). The possibility that there are multiple meanings of a word limits the measurement validity of manifest coding in qualitative analysis (Neuman, 2011). Therefore this research includes the use of latent

and manifest coding to collect, analyse and interpret content in tourism websites and tourists' online reviews.

3.3.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis emerges as a qualitative approach to content analysis and offers alternative protocols for exploring texts systematically (Krippendorff, 2013). The analysis of discourse is defined as the analysis of language in use, considering language as an element for social action (Brown & Yule, 2004; Renata, 2010). Discourse analysis explores characteristics of manifest language and word use, describes topics in media texts, looks for consistency and connection of words to theme analysis of content and establishes central terms (Neuendorf, 2002). Discourse analysis is not, however, limited to the description of linguistics – it is a broader discipline which includes other perspectives in its scope (Alba-Juez, 2009; Brown & Yule, 2004). Discourse analysis is defined as analysis of text above the level of sentence because it refers to a set of meanings that produce a particular version of events (Krippendorff, 2013; Mutch, 2005).

Texts are said to be polysemic because they embody the potential for a number of different meanings to be constructed for them (Barker & Galasinski, 2001). Discourse analysis situates texts in their social, cultural, political and historical context, (Mutch, 2005; Taylor, 2010), which is relevant to meet the purpose of this research. The analysis of the context in which local food appears promoted in tourism websites is fundamental to provide character, identity, authenticity and a sense of place in destinations (Taylor, 2010). Texts within their contexts are understood as mediators of social concerns and of social action in response to those concerns (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010). One such context is tourism discourse when promoting local food on the Internet, which affects the creation of linkages between the tourism sector and the producers of local food. According to Renata (2010), a tourist destination's promotional discourse is much more than a testimony of a tourist destination because it also conveys an invitation to consumption. A successful interaction between tourism websites and tourists builds community and commonality, contributing to the social construction of both the destination's and the tourist's identity (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010).

The application of discourse analysis tends to focus on how particular phenomena are represented, which makes this research method suitable for a wide range of disciplines, including tourism studies (Krippendorff, 2013). Within tourism promotion,

communication and discourse play a leading role, and there has been a growing awareness among tourism researchers of the complex relationship between discourse and tourism (Nnamdi, 2011; Renata, 2010). There are specific Internet tourism studies that have researched how a particular phenomenon is represented on tourism websites and how these websites can foster social action (Gretzel, 2012; Sigala, 2011). The consensus among discourse analysts is that the approach both reflects and creates people's world views (Johnstone, 2008). Johnstone (2008) also states that discourse is shaped by six characteristics:

1. the world, and discourse shapes the world
2. language, and discourse shapes language
3. participants, and discourse shapes participants
4. prior discourse, and discourse shapes the possibilities for future discourse
5. its medium, and discourse shapes the possibilities of its medium
6. purpose, and discourse shapes possible purposes.

Texts and visual representations on websites play a major role in the construction and consumption of tourism (Sigala, 2011). This research argues that the way that local food is presented on tourism websites, by displaying information, images and hyperlinks to other local businesses' websites, will affect its consumption in destinations.

3.4 Data collection methods

The primary data that underpins this research has been collected through an audit of tourism websites that promote Vanuatu as a tourism destination. The aim of the web audit is to identify characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of the role played by Vanuatu's tourism websites to: 1) create linkages with local food and 2) increase participation by the local population in the tourism industry through the promotion of local food. The contents of tourism websites have been audited by analysing their content and describing and interpreting their written, visual and spoken elements (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Neuman, 2011). Audited tourism websites include regional, national, private and community destination sites as well as tourism businesses' websites and tourists' reviews. Destination websites are created by government and private organisations to promote tourism and act as a portal of information with multiple links to regional and national partners and local businesses (Richmond & Keller; Wober, 2003).

The process to identify destination websites started with a stratified purposeful type of sampling to illustrate subgroups and facilitate comparison (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Purposeful sampling aims to select cases that are especially informative (Neuman, 2011), such as the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (www.south-pacific.travel/) and the Vanuatu Tourism Office (www.vanuatu.travel.com). Then, a snowball type of sampling was used to increase sampling units. Snowball sampling is a non-random approach in which the researcher starts with one case, and based on the information that the case provides, identifies other cases (Neuman, 2011). Search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MetaCrawler were also used to find relevant websites for auditing.

The sample of destination websites for study comprises 10 regional, 17 national, seven private and five community websites that promote tourism in Vanuatu. Berno (2011) states that a broad range of stakeholders must be involved to successfully enhance linkages between tourism and the local food. At a strategic level, interrelationships between tourism and food are being built upon by policymakers and planners engaged in regional economic development (Boyne & Hall, 2004). The Pacific islands' governments have formed a network of subregional organisations to pool their resources for development; for example, the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and The Secretariat of The Pacific Community (SPC) (UNESCAP, 2013). The SPTO aims to assists member countries with the sustainable promotion of tourism in the region (SPTO, 2008), while the Pacific Islands Forum aims, with the technical support of the SPC, to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific islands (UNESCAP, 2013). Any attempt to understand the economic and social factors in the Pacific region must take into account the role of tourism (Milne, In press).

Six of the regional and two of the national websites belong to organisations that do not have tourism as the primary aim of their activity; for example, the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisations (PIPSO) and Pacific Islands Trade and Invest (PITIC). These websites provide general but relevant data for this research; however, they have been only considered when analysing the potential of the Internet in creating linkages between tourism and local producers as well as increasing community participation by the promotion of events. For the promotion of local food experiences for visitors through, for example, links to restaurants and food images on home pages, only websites with a primary tourism focus have been considered (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Audited regional websites

Name of tourism organisation	Website	Type of data
Foundations of the Peoples of the South Pacific	http://www.fspi.org.fj/	General
Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations	http://www.piango.org/	General
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	http://www.forumsec.org.fj/	General
Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisations	http://www.pipso.org/	General
Pacific Islands Trade & Invest	http://www.pacifictradeinvest.com/	General
Secretariat of the Pacific Community	http://www.spc.int/	General
Pacific Asia Travel Association	http://www.pata.org/	Tourism
Pacific Islands Tourism Guide	http://www.pacifictourism.travel/	Tourism
Responsible Tourism Code for the Pacific	http://www.responsibletourism.org.nz	Tourism
South Pacific Tourism Organisation	http://www.south-pacific.travel/	Tourism

There are two main government institutions responsible for tourism at the national level: the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) and the National Tourism Development Office (NTDO) (Australian Government & AUSAID, 2009) (see Figure 3.4). The VTO and NTDO are monitored by the Vanuatu Tourism Council, which is led by the Minister of Tourism. While the role of the VTO is to focus on marketing strategy, the core focus of the NTDO is to create provincial tourism plans and develop the tourism industry for ni-Vanuatu entrepreneurs, by liaising with relevant funding agencies, government and the private sector (Cheer & Peel, 2011; Gay, 2007). There is a lack of industry awareness of the NTDO, and this could be enhanced by effectively improving its coordination and cooperation with the VTO (Cheer & Peel, 2011; Gay, 2007). The VTO has a website (http://vanuatu.travel/) which has been included in the sample to be audited. A website belonging to the NTDO has not been found, despite searches being applied through several different search engines.

Figure 3.4: Organisations responsible for the development of tourism in Vanuatu

Source: Republic of Vanuatu (2008)

The Ministry of Tourism identifies other relevant organisations and partners for the development of tourism in Vanuatu: the Vanuatu Island Bungalow and Tour Operators Association (VIBTA), the Vanuatu Hotels and Resorts Association (VHRA), and the six provincial tourism associations (Government of Vanuatu, 2011). The VIBTA was established in 1996 to assist the smaller ni-Vanuatu-owned bungalows by improving their marketing, and hence developing businesses opportunities, and improving quality, service and skills (Gay, 2007). The VIBTA website was created during the time of this research, and its new website includes relevant hyperlinks with information for every provincial council.

In June 2011 the *Vanuatu Daily Post* announced the launching of the Penama Tourism Plan to increase tourism in the outer islands ("Penama tourism plan launched", 2011). The Plan highlighted the creation of new websites for each provincial tourism association by July 2011. However, these websites had not been launched by the end of this research, and so have not been included in the audit. Currently, the Tafea Tourism Council is the only provincial tourism association with a website, and it has been audited. Another important fact concerning Internet marketing in Vanuatu's tourism industry is the creation of the Malampa Call Centre website. This website aims to reduce difficulties of telecommunications, bookings and marketing while allowing visitors interested in the island of Malekula to gather more information. The project is initially starting with Malekula but aims to expand to Ambrym and Paama (Garae,

2011). The expansion to other islands has not occurred yet; however, the Malampa Call Centre website has been audited.

All tourism organisations with a website have been included in the sample to be analysed (see Table 3.3), but many other tourism organisations – for example, the Vanuatu Council and five of the provincial tourism associations - still do not have their own websites. Online information regarding the Ministry of Tourism can be found on the website of the Government of Vanuatu, which has been included in the audit. Gay (2007) identifies the Vanuatu Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) as an organisation with potential to enhance backward linkages with the tourism industry; however, it does not have a website. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been identified as a government organisation that has strong links to the tourism sector and its website has been audited (Gay, 2007) (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Audited national websites

Name of tourism organisation	Website	Type of data
Air Vanuatu	http://www.airvanuatu.com/home.aspx?locationID=1109	Tourism
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vanuatu	http://www.vcci.com.vu/	General
Destination Pacifique Sud Vanuatu	http://www.vanuatuparadise.com/	Tourism
Espiritu Santo Tourism Association	http://www.espiritusantotourism.com/	Tourism
Government of Vanuatu	http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/	General
Malampa Call Centre	http://www.malampa.travel/	Tourism
Port Vila Municipality	http://www.pvmc.gov.vu/	Tourism
The Tafea Tourism Council	http://www.tafea-tourism.com/	Tourism
Vanuatu Chefs & Food Handlers Association	http://www.vanuatuchefs.com/	Tourism
Vanuatu Cultural Centre	http://www.vanuatuculture.org/	Tourism
Vanuatu Hotels & Resort Association	http://www.vanuatuhotelsandresortsassociation.com/	Tourism
Vanuatu Hotels Accommodation	http://www.vanuatu-hotels.vu/	Tourism
Vanuatu Island Bungalow and Tour Operators Association	http://www.vanuatuislandtravel.com/About-Us.htm	Tourism
Vanuatu Tours	http://www.toursvanuatu.com/	Tourism
Vanuatu Tour Operators Association	http://www.toursvanuatu.com/	Tourism
Vanuatu Tourism Office	http://vanuatu.travel/	Tourism
Wantok Environment Centre	http://www.positiveearth.org/	Tourism

During the search for tourism websites, several sites were identified that have been established by people highly interested in delivering relevant tourist information about Vanuatu and the South Pacific region. Two such sites are the South Pacific Organizer (http://www.southpacific.org/), established by David Stanley, and South Pacific

Adventures (http://www.travel.vu), established by John Seach. These websites are not official or governmental tourist sites, but appear in the search engines when seeking information about different islands of Vanuatu as destinations (see Table 3.4). The Pentecost Island Vanuatu website (http://www.pentecostisland.net/) by Andrew Gray is the only website that appears in the search engines when seeking tourism information about the island of Pentecost. Other tourism websites, such as South Pacific Travel (http://www.pacific-travel-guides.com/) and Vanuatu Vacations (http://www.vanuatu-vacations.com/), are published on the Internet as travel guides for visitors. Jasons' website (http://www.jasons.co.nz/) and the website for Wrecks to Rainforest (http://www.wreckstorainforest.com/) also provide relevant information, at the regional and national level respectively, to guide visitors to Vanuatu.

Table 3.4: Audited private tourist sites

Name of tourism organisation	Website
Jasons	http://www.jasons.co.nz/
Pentecost Island Vanuatu (Andrew Gray)	http://www.pentecostisland.net/
South Pacific Organizer (David Stanley)	http://www.southpacific.org/
South Pacific Travel	http://www.pacific-travel-guides.com/
South Pacific Adventures (John Seach)	http://www.travel.vu/
Vanuatu Vacations	http://www.vanuatu-vacations.com/
Wrecks to Rainforest	http://www.wreckstorainforest.com/

The audit also included five community websites that feature local communities of Vanuatu as an initiative to promote tourism. Of the five community websites, four belong to community development projects dedicated to ensuring the sustainability of environmental and cultural resources and/or promoting local tourism initiatives. The fifth website is a blog designed by a ni-Vanuatu with the aim to promote the island of Espiritu Santo and the communities who live in it to future visitors (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Audited community websites

Name of tourism organisation	Website
Moso Island Tours	http://mosoislandtours.wordpress.com/
Nguna - Pele	http://www.marineprotectedarea.com.vu/
Pele Island	http://www.pele.org.nz/
Santo Today Undiscovered Adventure	http://www.santotoday.com/
Sanma Online	http://santo-online.blogspot.com/

The sampling process to identify tourism businesses' websites started with the identification of tourism businesses operating in Vanuatu and advertised in destination websites. Krippendorf and Bock (2009) state that the large number of pages available on the Internet can challenge the selection of adequate websites to form the sample for research; however, because of the low Internet usage in Vanuatu, the number of tourism businesses' websites available has not been a problem for sampling in this research. It has been a challenge, though, to identify up-to-date and reliable information regarding tourism businesses on the Internet, particularly local tourism businesses in Vanuatu, because many have similar names, others appear to have closed and reopened with a different name, while others have closed yet are still being promoted on the Internet. Reading information across different tourism websites has proved a successful method to ensure consistency and reliability in the data collection. It has been determinately important to select appropriate destination websites as sources for collecting information about tourism businesses and their websites. Three types of sources were used to identify tourism businesses operating in Vanuatu:

1. A regional destination website: The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) is the mandated intergovernmental organisation for the tourism sector in the South Pacific (SPTO, 2008).
2. Two national destination websites: Vanuatu Travel, the website of the VTO, and the Wantok Environment Centre (WTEC) website, which is aimed at supporting rural people in Vanuatu (WTEC, 2011).
3. Two online travel guides for updated information: TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet.

Audited destination websites do not indicate which tourism businesses have a website as external hyperlinks are not always provided. It has been necessary to check in search engines whether those businesses advertised in destination websites have a website.

After searching in different search engines, 447 tourism businesses were identified; of these, 151 have a website, and all of these websites have been audited. The sample of tourism businesses' websites for study includes sites of accommodation providers, cafes and restaurants, and tour businesses operators based in Vanuatu (see Table 3.6 and Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). Some of the tour operators identified have bases at different sites, offering tourism in the outer islands of Vanuatu as well as in other tourism destinations.

Table 3.6: The number of tourism businesses based in Vanuatu that have a website

Type of tourism businesses	Number of tourism businesses	Tourism businesses' websites	Percentage
Accommodation	276	97	35%
Cafes & restaurants	64	5	8%
Tour operators	107	49	46%
Total	**447**	**151**	**34%**

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted in four stages (see Figure 3.5). The process started with an analysis of hospitality businesses' websites because these businesses are the main deliverers of local food experiences for tourists. Dining in restaurants has been identified as the most frequent activity undertaken by visitors in some tourism destinations (Berno, 2011; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Analysing hospitality business websites at the beginning of the process provides a meaningful and in-depth understanding of the research problem, which is enhanced with the analysis of the destination websites. Tourism websites have become a significant means of advertising the local cuisines of culinary tourist destinations and they have the potential to enhance the promotion of tourism businesses at such destinations (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Tour business websites were the third group to be analysed, and the research process ended with an analysis of visitors' feedback on their experiences of local food.

Figure 3.5: Stages in the research process

Exploring links between local food and tourism on the Internet	Tourism websites promote the supply of local food experiences			Visitors explain local food experiences on the Internet
	1 Hotel and restaurants	2 Destination websites	3 Tour operator business	4 Analysis of visitors' online reviews of local food
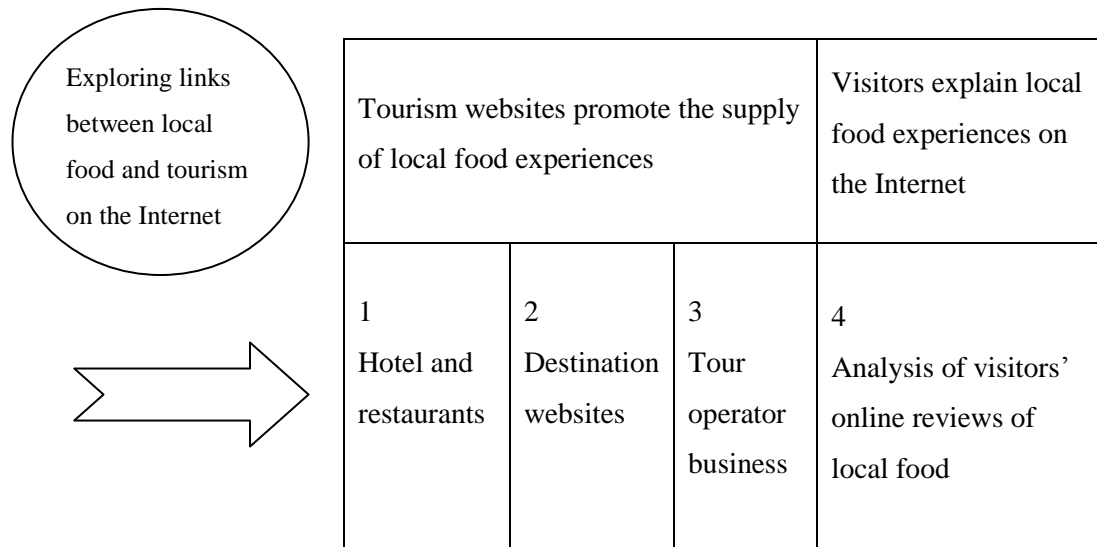
The web audit began with an extensive research of tourism home pages by applying content and discourse analyses. Tourism studies that have looked at website usability found that the home page is decisive in establishing the relationship with the user because it gives the initial impression of the organisation (Duggan & Lang, 2010). The main features of tourism home pages, such as images, written descriptions, and other structural features such internal hyperlinks, were analysed to examine the use of the Internet to promote local food as a significant tourist attraction. Internal hyperlinks send the visitor to a website to another part requested on the same site (Amichai-Hamburger, Fine, & Goldstein, 2004). Relevant internal hyperlinks found on a home page that might provide useful information about the promotion of local food are "Restaurants" and "Activities". To identify potential linkages between food and tourism as well as opportunities to strengthen local community participation in the tourism sector, it was necessary to explore other web pages on each site, analysing relevant information based on images, texts and external hyperlinks (see Table 3.7). External hyperlinks send the visitor to a website to an external source of information on another site (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2004).

Table 3.7: Features analysed in each website

Tourism websites	The home page		Hyperlinks to restaurants	Hyperlinks to activities	Other hyperlinks	
	Images and texts	Internal Hyperlinks	Images and texts	Images and texts	Images and texts	External Hyperlinks
Hotels and restaurants	√	√	√	√	√	√
Destination websites	√	√	√	√	√	√
Tour businesses				√		√

The exploration of every web page can be time consuming, leading to a loss of focus and less reliable results. Krippendorff and Bock (2009) highlight that it is fundamental to develop appropriate coders and apply them to the same segment of data on every site, because this process will help the researcher to remain focused even when there is a large amount of information within every website, and so ensure trustworthiness in content analysis. Therefore all data was collected and classified in an Excel spreadsheet, with three major coding schemes used to meet the research objectives: promotion of local food, linkages with local producers, and community participation. Recording findings in a spreadsheet allows the researcher to quantify results, "eyeball" the collective range of findings, and explore general themes and issues (Levinson & Milne, 2004). The content analysis procedure of this research adopted both a manifest and latent content analysis approach. The manifest content has been translated by asking questions such as: What kind of environment is shown or described in the website? and What kind of environment/surroundings is/are shown/described when food is depicted? The latent content analysis asked: What is the focus and emphasis of the website? The procedures to analyse the data followed a qualitative approach (Berg, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011):

1. Data is collected and made into text.

2. Codes are analytically developed or inductively identified in the data.

3. Codes are transformed into categorical labels or themes.

4. Materials are sorted by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, relationships, and commonalities or disparities.

5. Sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful patterns and processes.

6. Identified patterns are considered in light of previous research and theories.

Every coding scheme has included the calculation of frequencies and written observations and comments (see Table 3.8). The calculation of frequencies has allowed an evaluation of the extent to which local food experiences and local producers are promoted on tourism websites. In order to increase the objectivity of the content analysis, frequencies have been calculated by a "Yes/No" approach, with "Yes" indicating the presence of content and "No" that the content is not present (Kim et al., 2009). Written observations and comments have been included. This reflects the significant "flexibility" that qualitative content analysis brings to research and allows emergent themes to be identified while still not overlooking particular cases (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009).

The discourse analysis looked at the context and background in which texts and images related to the local food were presented (Alba-Juez, 2009). The context displayed by tourism websites provides a sense of place of visitors to that website. The main question that was asked when applying discourse analysis to the raw data was: What can be learnt about place and identity from this [image/text/information]? (Taylor, 2010). The use of local recipes, stories linking culture with food, and relevant local food information were all considered essential in defining an identity of the place.

Table 3.8: Coding schemes and procedures for the analysis

Coding schemes	Frequencies ("Yes/No")	Emerging themes	Context
Promotion of local food – Images and texts – Internal hyperlinks	Food images Food descriptions Restaurants Menus Food ingredients Restaurant hyper-links Other Hyperlinks	1. Particular features 2. Types of information of local food and cuisine	• Ingredients and recipes • Use of *Bislama* (the local language) to name dishes • Village and rural landscapes; surroundings • Stories told
Linkages between tourism and local food – Images and texts – Internal and external hyperlinks	Local producers Hyperlinks	1. How linkages are developed 2. Strengths and challenges to develop potential linkages with local producers	• Destination websites' links with local producers
Community participation – Images and texts – Internal and external hyperlinks	Food tours Food images Food descriptions Events Internet presence	1. Type of food tours 2. Type of events 3. Opportunities and weaknesses to enhance greater participation	• Destination websites' links with local tourism websites • Village, rural landscapes • Local stories

Milne (2009b) and Telfer and Wall (1996) emphasise that linkages between food and tourism need to be stimulated by demand. The analysis of visitors' feedback provides a way to gain understanding of such demand and the potential of Vanuatu as a food tourism destination. Experienced tourists write their experiences in social networks such as TripAdvisor, which are used by visitors planning their future trips (O'Connor, 2010; Touray & Jung, 2010). Due to the increasing number of online reviews and limited time frame and scope of this research, the analysis focused on online reviews of local bungalows. Three hundred and forty-six online food reviews were collected from TripAdvisor and the Wantok Environment Centre website, the organisation that promotes the largest number of local bungalows in Vanuatu (see Table 3.9). Food reviews from visitors staying in local bungalows located in Port Vila were analysed separately to enhance the credibility of the findings. Data was analysed through thematic analysis, the most common qualitative way of analysing texts (Mutch, 2005).

Thematic analysis allows the researcher to perceive, compare, contrast and aggregate data, as well as establish linkages and relationships (Mutch, 2005).

Table 3.9: Sample of online food reviews from visitors staying in local bungalows

Islands	Number of bungalows		Number of food reviews		Total food reviews
	TripAdvisor	WTEC	TripAdvisor	WTEC	
First sample bungalow reviews					
Ambae	1	6	2	1	3
Ambrym	-	16	-	7	7
Aneytium	1	3	-	4	4
Aniwa	-	1	-	-	0
Banks and Torres	-	23	-	30	30
Efate (except Port Vila)	2	19	8	36	44
Shepherds	1	5	2	14	16
Erromango	-	2	-	-	0
Maewo	-	4	-	0	0
Malekula	3	12	3	9	12
Pentecost	-	6	-	9	9
Santo	2	14	11	17	28
Tanna	10	27	91	69	160
Second sample bungalow reviews					
Port Vila	1	0	33	0	33
TOTAL	**21**	**138**	**150**	**196**	**346**

Content analysis has become an important research technique within the fields of tourism and communication. It is argued, however, that the main weakness of this method is the potential researcher's influence: this may lead to researcher's bias, and

hence delimit data collection and analytical processes (Ritchie, Burns, & Palmer, 2005). The use of discourse analysis and searching for inconsistencies can help to overcome researcher bias and enhance trustworthiness of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Chapter 4 : THE USE OF THE INTERNET TO PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD FOR TOURISM IN VANUATU

An audit of tourism websites, including destination and business websites, through content and discourse analyses, has been conducted for this thesis. This chapter presents the findings of the audit and discusses their implications for tourism. Specifically, it discusses if and how the Vanuatu tourism industry uses the Internet to promote local food as a main tourist attraction.

The chapter starts with an overview of the tourism websites included in the study, indicating how destination sites facilitate access to the promotion of local food and provide links to tourism businesses. The second part of the chapter discusses the content of destination websites when promoting local food, by examining images, written descriptions and types of information. The third and final part of the chapter discusses the promotion of local producers in destination websites to enhance linkages between tourism and the local food.

4.1 Overview of tourism websites in Vanuatu

The Internet is the main source of knowledge about local food opportunities in destinations used by tourists, being used more than other sources of information, such as travel agencies' advertisements and brochures (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). The positioning and use of hyperlinks in websites plays an essential role in providing access to relevant information and links to business networks (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009). Destinations websites of Vanuatu provide limited information about local food – indeed, direct hyperlinks from home pages to information regarding types of locally grown produce and the national cuisine are non-existent. The number of destination websites providing hyperlinks to tourism businesses is higher for hotels and tour operators than for cafes and restaurants. Only two websites out of 32 have a hyperlink on their home page to promote "Restaurants" (see Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1: The number of destination websites using internal hyperlinks

Type of hyperlink	Regional *n = 4*	National *n = 16*	Private *n = 7*	Local *n = 5*	Total *N = 32*
Accommodation	2	8	4	1	15
Activities	2	5	4	2	13
Restaurants	**1**	**1**	**–**	**–**	**2**
Local food/cuisine	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Vanuatu	2	8	6	4	20
Travel information	-	8	5	1	14
Contact us	4	12	5	4	25
About us	3	8	5	5	21

The audit has raised a concern about accessibility of information to local food experiences. This difficulty in accessing information from the websites might be a constraint to visitors searching for food information when selecting their tourism destination. In some websites, local food information can be found under the link "Travel information" (Figure 4.1). For example, although the Vanuatu Paradise website (2011) does provide information about food, this is alongside other types of information such as health regulations and history; there is no specific place on the website to find detailed descriptions about the local food.

Figure 4.1: Food information under the "Travel Information" hyperlink

FOOD :
Dining out is a highlight of Vanuatu. Fresh local fish, beef, fruit and vegetables are in plentiful supply. Top class restaurants offer Melanesian, French, Polynesian, Indian, Chinese, Thai-Vietnamese, English, Mediterranean, European and Japanese specialities.

HEALTH REGULATIONS :
No vaccinations are required but anti-malarial precautions are recommended for visits to outer islands.

HISTORY AND POLITICS :
Independent since July 1980, Vanuatu is a self-governing Republic and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations. The President is the Head of State. The government is based on the Westminster system.

LANGUAGES :
Bislama, English and French. The 115 "mother-tongues" are still in common use.

Discover Vanuatu | Island by island | Travel infos | Investment: Tax haven

Home page | page 1 | page 2 | page 3 | page 4 >>

Source: Vanuatu Paradise (2011)

Some of the audited websites have potential to provide quality information about local food; however, what little information could be found is currently scattered across all different web pages of the sites, making it challenging and time consuming for the user to find the information. Davidson and Yu (2005) state that Internet users scan rather than read, and so information about local food has to be well indicated in order not to be missed. For example, the website of the Vanuatu Island Bungalow and Tour Operators Association (VIBTA) displays information about the six provinces of Vanuatu. For Malampa, the website says, "Vanuatu's biggest cocoa producing estate is also situated on the island and Malampa contributes much of the country's economic growth through its cocoa, vanilla and copra exports" (VIBTA, 2011), yet within the discourse of the website, information dedicated to the local food is very difficult to locate.

The VIBTA website, in different hyperlinks, indicates information for tourists interested in local food experiences. For the province of Shefa, the website highlights that "the township is small enough that [tourists] will easily discover the hidden gems whether they be gourmet food or local kaekae" (VIBTA, 2011), while for Torba, relevant food information appears hidden in another hyperlink:

> A TORBA delicacy is the endangered coconut crab. These can be requested though the laws are quite strict on catching the crabs based on size and

maturity. TORBA is also famous for its preserved breadfruit dish, which is prepared months in advance, dried and preserved for rationed future consumption (VIBTA, 2011).

A unique hyperlink focused on promoting the local food and cuisine of the country would enhance tourist food information. A study conducted in Texas showed that 60% of tourism websites provide a "Restaurant" hyperlink or a directory to provide information about local food (Kim, Yuan, Goh, & Antun, 2009), yet Steinmetz (2010) found in her study that it was necessary to "hunt" for the link to dining in Rotorua. The very different results from these two studies indicate that food in tourism is developing at different stages in different countries. At the regional level, only the Pacific Islands Tourism Guide has a direct hyperlink ("Cuisine & Dining") on its home page to local food. Even then, there are only two non-local restaurants advertised for visitors to Vanuatu and the external hyperlinks to these businesses do not work efficiently (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Regional website with a hyperlink to promote restaurants
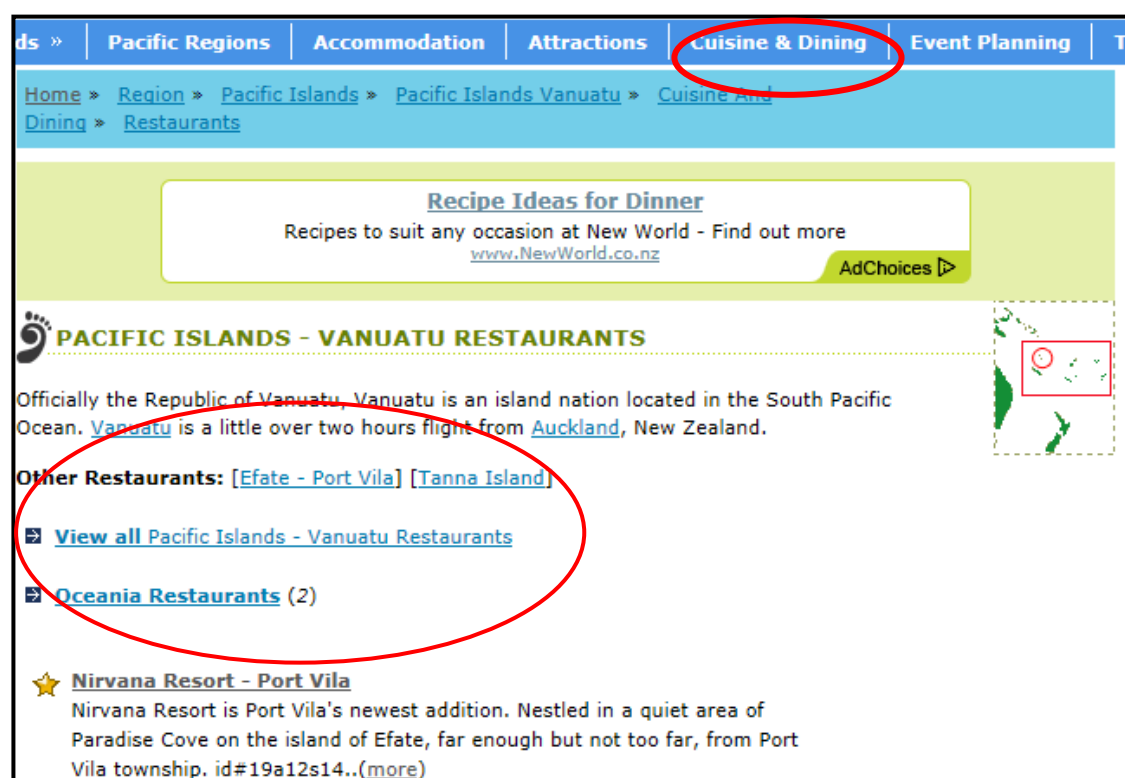
Source: Pacific Islands Tourism Guide (2011)

At the national level, the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) provides the internal hyperlink "Dining & Entertainment". This hyperlink informs the viewer about eating-out possibilities under three different categories: "Cafe & Takeaway" (three businesses),

"Dine Out" (12 businesses) and "Hotel & Resort" (24 businesses). The VTO displays information about what it is offered by each of the establishments with some pictures depicting dishes, facilities, contact details and, when available, external hyperlinks to these businesses. Most of these businesses are foreign-owned hotels and located on the island of Efate; there is little promotion of local restaurants located on the outer islands (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Internal hyperlinks to restaurants in the VTO website
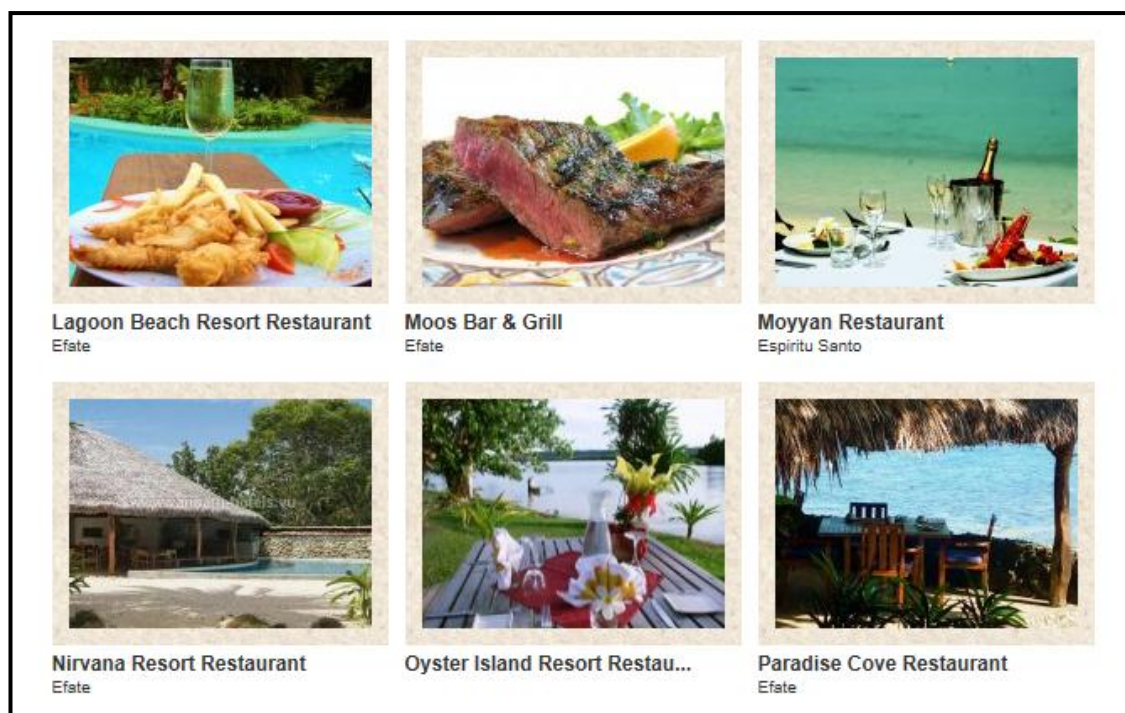
Source: VTO (2009)

The number of tourism websites increased during the time of the research, indicating that destinations are realising the importance and necessity of the Internet. The growing number of tourism websites indicates the high level of interest that governments are taking, fostering their marketing efforts to be competitive in the industry (Au & Ekiz, 2009). Horng and Tsai highlight (2010) the importance of promoting local food experiences in tourism websites to parallel recent culinary tourism trends. Although successful promotion of local food in tourism will depend on the content quality of the tourism websites, it is also fundamental to provide adequate access to the relevant information (Kim et al., 2009). The audit of destination websites in Vanuatu has found that it is still a challenge to be able to easily access information about local food experiences.

Two hundred and seventy-six accommodation businesses have been identified operating in Vanuatu, and of these, 97 (35%) have their own website (see Table 4.2). The rate is higher on the main island, with 59% of the 100 accommodation businesses located on Efate having Internet presence; however, this presence is dominated by international companies and foreign investment rather than local businesses. Conversely, accommodation businesses located on the outer islands have a much lower Internet presence: only 38 out of the 176 businesses (22%) located out of Efate appear to have a website. Of the outer islands, it is Espiritu Santo and Tanna, where tourism is starting to be more developed, that have the highest number of tourism businesses with websites. Forty-three per cent of the accommodation businesses on Espiritu Santo have a website; this can be explained by the dominance of foreign investment in the area of Luganville. The presence of the Internet in Tanna is also relatively high (37%), even though many of these businesses say on their websites that they are operated and owned by locals.

The audit of the accommodation businesses' websites highlights how uneven the presence of the Internet is across the different islands of Vanuatu. None of the businesses located on the less-developed islands of Ambae, Ambrym, Aniwa, Banks, Erromango, Maewo, Paama, Pentecost, the Shepherds Group and Torres have a website. Consequently, these islands are not represented in the web audit of this study, and this may influence the research results. More importantly, however, the lack of an Internet presence on these outer islands has important development implications, not only for these accommodation businesses, but also for the communities and economies of these islands. A local hotel website may act as a portal to surrounding community interests and food suppliers (Milne, Clark, Speidel, Nodder, & Dobbin, 2009). Therefore, islands that do not have any businesses with their own website reduce their chances to reach the global market and attract visitors.

Seventy-eight per cent of accommodation businesses on the outer islands do not have a website and must rely on other tourism websites to promote their commercial activities. This phenomenon was also highlighted in a study conducted in Niue, where only 27% of the SMTE operators in the study had an Internet presence (Singh, 2012b). The audited destination websites from Vanuatu show a clear focus on promoting accommodation businesses located on Efate, where tourism is most developed. Lack of marketing of businesses located on the outer islands reduces their opportunities and ability to take advantage of tourism (Cassidy & Brown, 2010). However, if the focus

was to be purely on promoting businesses located on the outer islands, the predicted visitor numbers would not be sufficient to sustain the industry (Gay, 2007).

Table 4.2: The number of accommodation businesses promoted by destination websites

Islands	VTO	SPTO	WTEC	Total number of businesses	Number of websites
Efate	50	62	18	100	**59**
Outer islands					
Ambae	4	1	6	7	–
Ambrym	9	5	16	17	–
Aneytium	1	3	3	3	1
Aniwa	1	1	1	1	–
Banks	9	8	21	23	–
Epi	3	3	3	4	2
Erromango	–	1	2	2	–
Maewo	–	–	4	4	–
Malekula	6	4	11	18	1
Paama	1	–	–	1	–
Pentecost	1	1	6	6	–
Santo	18	24	10	46	20
Shepherds Group	–	–	2	2	–
Tanna	19	19	29	38	14
Torres	–	3	2	4	–
Total for outer Islands	72	73	116	176	**38**
TOTAL	**122**	**135**	**134**	**276**	**97**

The findings support Slatter's (2006) statement that local bungalows are not being promoted, either abroad or domestically on destination sites, as much as other tourism businesses. One website does, however, stand out from other websites in the promotion

of local accommodation on the outer islands: the WTEC website aims to promote rural tourism outside the area of Port Vila and advertises the largest number of local bungalows in Vanuatu. The WTEC website is a good example of the potential of the Internet to alleviate the challenges associated with intermediaries in the marketing chain (Berne, Garcia-Gonzalez, & Mugica, 2012; Levinson & Milne, 2004).

Of the 97 websites for accommodation businesses, 54% of those on Efate indicate a restaurant service while 87% of those on the outer islands do. The higher percentage offering a restaurant service on the outer islands is understandable, because there are many restaurants in Port Vila while on the outer islands tourists may depend more on accommodation places for their meals. The Restaurant hyperlink is, however, only used by accommodation businesses' websites located on islands where tourism is more developed. The audited accommodation businesses' websites are proficient in using hyperlinks to "Accommodation", "Activities" and "Photo gallery" (see Table 4.3). The lower use of a Restaurant hyperlink suggests that restaurants are considered less important in contributing to the tourism experience in Vanuatu.

Table 4.3: The number of accommodation websites that use hyperlinks

Type of hyperlinks	Efate ($n = 59$)	Outer islands ($n = 38$)	Total ($n = 97$)
Accommodation	48	23	**71**
Activities	38	24	**62**
About us	20	18	**38**
Vanuatu	20	16	**36**
Photo gallery	31	20	**51**
Restaurant	**13**	**11**	**24**

The analysis of hyperlinks on accommodation websites shows that the Restaurant hyperlink appears under several different names. Websites of accommodation businesses located on the island of Espiritu Santo tend to display names that highlight food as an important attribute within the tourism experience; for example, links bear names such as "Be delighted" or "Enjoy". In contrast, restaurant hyperlinks in websites of businesses located on Efate usually use names related to international travel, such as

"Restaurant" and "Dining", while businesses located on Tanna provide modest names to their hyperlinks, such as "Service" or "Food and Drink". Many accommodation businesses do not promote their restaurants and provide minimum information. Sometimes information about restaurants can only be found by reading very carefully through the entire website, and this can be taken as an implicit statement about the value given by the business to food as a tourist attraction.

Of the 107 tour businesses identified, at the time of this research, only 49 had a website (see Table 4.4). Most of the tour businesses operating in Vanuatu are concentrated on the island of Efate. Tour businesses that operate tours from Efate to the outer islands mainly offer cruises and scenic flights. Most of the websites identified seem to belong to foreign-owned tour businesses; nevertheless, foreign-owned businesses can still strengthen local participation in the industry by promoting local food.

Table 4.4: The number of tour operators with a website, by location

Tour businesses	Efate	Efate and outer islands	Outer islands	Total tours
Number of tour businesses	59	17	31	107
Number of websites	22	13	14	49

The third group of SMTE promoted by destination websites is cafes and restaurants that operate separately from hotels. The Internet presence of cafes and restaurants in Vanuatu is very low: only five restaurants have been identified with website and all of these are located on the main island of Efate (see Table 4.5). Four of these businesses are advertised on destination websites and one has been found in the VTO catalogue. Cafes and restaurants on the outer islands appear to be promoted very little in destination websites, and usually belong to hotels and resorts.

Table 4.5: The number of cafes and restaurants with a website

Location	Total number of restaurants	Restaurants with website
Efate	52	**5**
Espiritu Santo	9	**0**
Tanna	3	**0**
Total	**64**	**5**

The WTEC website, which focuses on the promotion of ni-Vanuatu-owned bungalows in rural areas, does not provide a list of restaurants. The website does, however, dedicate a space to describe when local food is available when visiting local bungalows. Local bungalows in rural areas, and thereby their restaurants, have difficulties promoting their businesses, and hence remaining competitive in the industry. This is because they do not use the Internet and also because they are not often promoted by destination websites.

The Vanuatu Tourism Action Plan (VTAP) includes as a "medium" priority the provision of training and support to SMTE in marketing, Internet access and distribution (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). The web audit finding that few SMTE have their own websites is consistent with other studies in developing countries (Au & Ekiz, 2009; Singh, 2012b). A higher presence of international tourism businesses' websites will certainly influence the degree to which local food is promoted, impacting tourists' consumption of local food. Small local businesses are embedded within broader community structures and networks which contribute to a "bottom-up" approach in tourism development (Deuchar, 2012). Therefore, an increase in the number of SMTE that have websites encourages the development of communicative relationships and enhances linkages between tourism and local food (Deuchar, 2012; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010).

4.2 Online promotion of local food in Vanuatu

The content of tourism websites is vital to promote a tourist destination's cuisine and food culture (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Tourism websites are the key way visitors can plan and develop opportunities for exposure to local cuisine; they also impact on a destination's culinary and cultural image and create a virtual experience for culinary tourists (Horng & Tsai, 2010). By applying content and discourse analyses to the

websites chosen for the audit, initiatives undertaken by the tourism industry to promote local food online are examined.

4.2.1   Initiatives of destination websites to promote local food

The analysis of tourism initiatives to promote local food includes the description of the portrayal of local food on destination home pages as well as types of local food information provided throughout the sites. In the analysis on how local food is portrayed on destination home pages, occurrences of images and written descriptions have been recorded and emerging themes examined. Very few of the audited destination websites show food as a tourism attraction and none of the regional and private websites displays any food or food-related image on the home page (see Table 4.6). This does not only happen in the presentation of main pictures where the most highlighted attractions are advertised, food is also totally ignored in the display of small pictures. Images involving water landscapes are the dominant features of the home pages of destination sites, followed very closely by the display of local people. The low frequency of food images in destination websites shows that local food is not considered as an important resource for promoting tourism.

Table 4.6: The number of destination websites showing emerging themes in images

Home page images	Regional n = 4	National n = 16	Private n = 7	Community n = 5	Total N = 32
Main pictures					
Sea, beaches, island view	2	6	1	2	11
Local people	1	7	1	1	10
Cultural artefacts	0	5	1	1	7
Tourists	0	4	1	1	6
Water activities	0	3	1	0	4
Bush	0	2	1	0	3
Food – latent	0	1	0	0	**1**
Food – manifest	0	0	0	1	**1**
Small pictures					
Sea, beaches, island view	2	5	0	2	9
Local people	2	8	0	3	13
Cultural artefacts	1	4	5	1	11
Tourists	2	4	4	1	11
Water activities	2	3	0	2	7
Bush	1	2	3	0	6
Food – latent	0	0	0	0	**0**
Food – manifest	0	0	0	1	**1**

Only one of the websites at the national level shows a food-related image, according to the latent content analysis. The image on the Vanuatu Chefs Association website does not show food (see Figure 4.4), but it does convey meanings that raise the importance of food, gastronomy and cuisine in Vanuatu. This website could have considerable potential in the promotion of food tourism, by acknowledging local produce, fostering a gastronomic image of the country, and developing effective local networks. The promotion of the national team (see Figure 4.4) might contribute to forming a proud culinary identity based on the traditional cuisine and local products of the country, enhancing issues of sustainability (du Rand, Heath & Alberts, 2003). However, the discourse of the website relates to international thematic events such as Oktoberfest and no events have been updated from 2010 to 2012.

Figure 4.4: An image in the website of the Vanuatu Chefs Association

Source: Vanuatu Chefs & Food Handlers Association (2010)

The VTO has a vital leadership and coordinating role in promoting Vanuatu overseas and has developed a website to brand and position Vanuatu according to its marketing strategy (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). One of the aims of the Vanuatu Marketing Strategy includes the promotion of natural attractions, beyond just sand and sea, as well as cultural attractions to attract more adventurous independent travellers in addition to "the traditional package tourist" (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). The home page of the VTO presents three scrolling main pictures. The three pictures convey the aim of promoting tourism beyond Port Vila and increasing the number of tourists to the outer islands; however, none of the three pictures relate to the consumption of local food (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: The Vanuatu Tourism Office home page
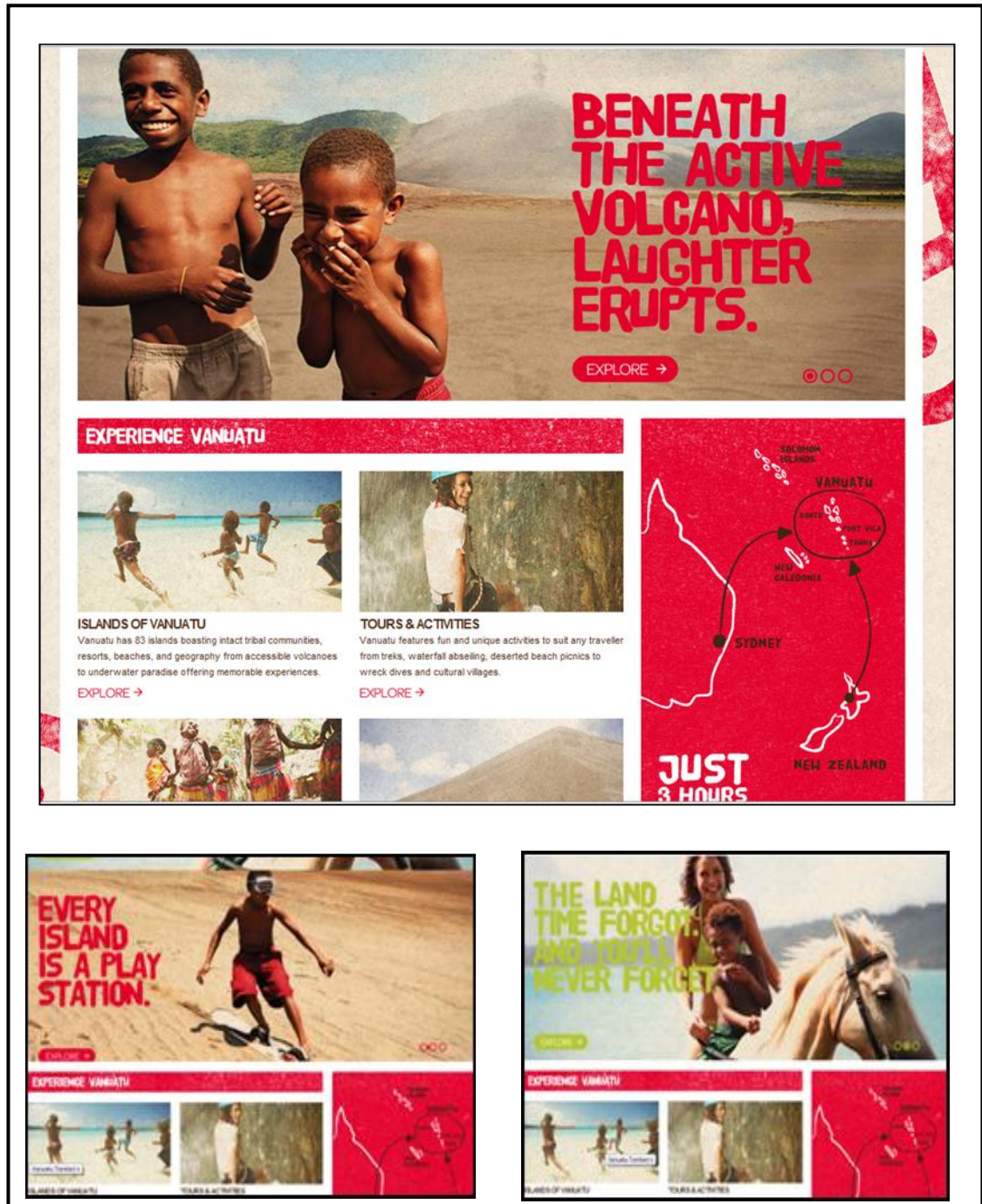
Source: VTO (2009)

The VTO home page does not highlight food as an important cultural tourism resource, although the VTAP (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008) emphasises that Vanuatu has a wealth of history and culture which is being poorly displayed with a lack of substantial information. Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) argue that food is an extremely part of the culture of a region and through its consumption is the best way to see and experience destination's heritage. One of the key strategic initiatives in the Vanuatu Tourism

Development Master Plan 2004–2010 is about enhancing visitor yield to enable economic benefits to be maximised and sustained while minimising leakages from the economy (Gay, 2008). In the era of the Internet, the display of quality information provides a basis for improving yield in destinations (Gay, 2008).

The audited destination websites also mention local food in the form of written descriptions promoting Vanuatu as a tourism destination (Table 4.7). Latent analysis has been an appropriate technique to identify implicit food meanings in the content of the text (Neuman, 2011). Latent analysis is important to consider because the word "food" was not always explicitly visible within the home pages that were analysed. Of the 32 tourism websites, only one website explicitly mentions food, stating that "food is fresh and organic" (VIBTA, 2011). Although the purpose of such description is to promote food for tourism, it is very difficult to find it as appears without any emphasis within the discourse (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Description of local food on a home page
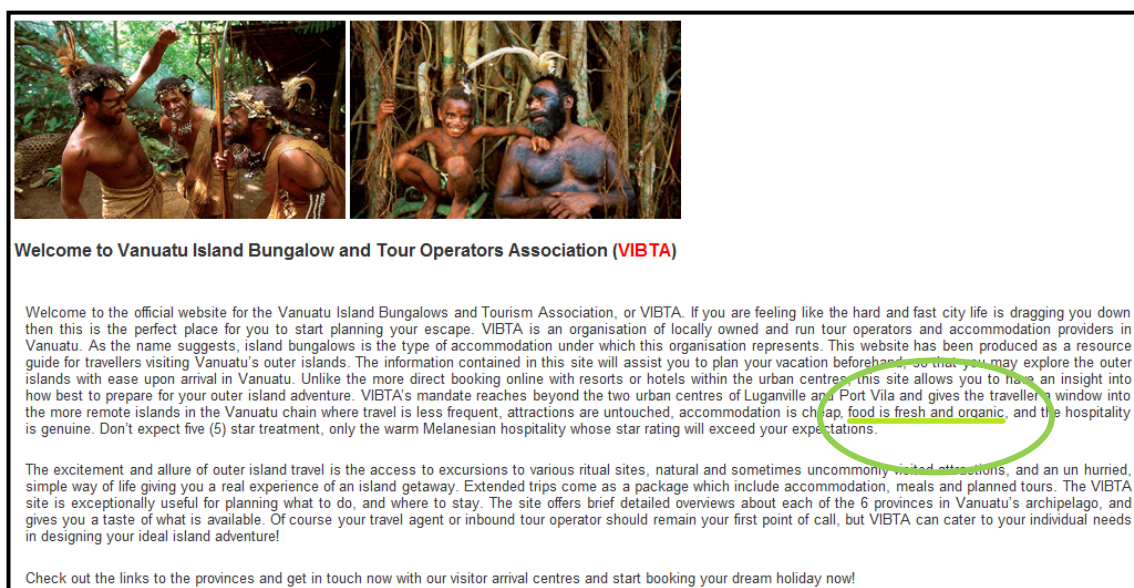
Source: VIBTA (2011)

The VTO website implicitly mentions food on its home page, with the word "picnic" in a sentence on tourism experiences: "Vanuatu features fun and unique activities to suit any traveller from treks, waterfall abseiling, deserted beach picnics to wreck dives and cultural villages" (VTO, 2009). In this example, however, food is supporting another tourist attraction – namely, a trip to a "deserted beach" – rather than being used to create connections with the local communities. Also the use of the word picnic for promoting

food in Vanuatu does not give a sense of place and identity of the country, because picnics are not typical of the local cuisine. Research conducted in the Maldives shows that phrases such as "picnic lunches" may give the impression of local food-related activities, but when subjected to discourse analysis, they have limited connection to the local food of the destination (Amira, 2009). According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), picnics are also promoted to increase familiarity and comfort for tourists visiting tourism destinations.

Table 4.7: The number of destination websites featuring written food descriptions

Food categories	Regional *n = 4*	National *n = 16*	Private *n = 7*	Community *n = 5*	Total *N = 32*
Food is fresh and organic	-	1	-	-	**1**
Food events	-	1	-	-	**1**
Food as a subsistence item	-	-	1	2	**3**
Food related to culture, feasts and rites	-	-	2	-	**2**
Food supporting other tourism activities	-	1	-	-	**1**
Total	**0**	*3*	**3**	**2**	**8**

Recent studies argue that despite the growing importance of food for destinations, not all destinations maximise the potential opportunities food can provide by using it in marketing activities (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). In a study conducted in New Zealand, 10 out of 16 destinations provided food images in the regional websites but only five destinations mentioned food in the text on the home page (Steinmetz, 2010). In Vanuatu destination websites, food images and text descriptions are even less present, and are seldom promoted as a tourist attraction. Food is one of the most important elements used by potential tourists when choosing a destination and adds extra value to the image of the destination (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). Therefore, the lack of images and descriptions about food on the home pages of tourism destinations can lead to a loss of competitive advantage.

The audit of the destination websites revealed that few websites display images and quality written descriptions about local food, and that this is true not only for just the

home pages, but through all the other pages of the sites. Of the 32 audited destination websites, only eight provided images and 17 explanations of local produce, and even then, information was limited to just mentioning the most common products available (see Table 4.8). For example, the Tafea Tourism Council (TTC) website stated that "the island is one of the most fertile in Vanuatu and produces kava, coffee, coconut, copra, and other fruits and vegetables" (2011). A study conducted in Texas showed that although nine out of 16 websites had a directory of information for local food, they did not have any information regarding the level of food tourism, indicating that the promotion of food in websites is still in its infancy (Kim et al., 2009). Research in Tonga also reveals a lack of information about local food on tourism websites, which is vital to create linkages between local food and tourism (Milne, 2009b).

Table 4.8: The number of destination websites showing local food images and descriptions

Websites	Local food		Local cuisine	
	Text	Pictures	Text	Pictures
Regional (*n* = 4)	1	0	0	0
National (*n* = 16)	10	5	4	3
Private (*n* = 7)	3	2	3	1
Community (*n* = 5)	3	1	0	0
Total (*N* = 32)	**17**	**8**	**7**	**4**

The local cuisine is largely absent from most of the destination websites and it is promoted even less than the local produce: of the 32 destination websites, only seven provide some kind of explanation about the local cuisine. Furthermore, only four sites display pictures of the local cuisine, and the pictures are usually small and without supporting information such as notes that specify the background of the image, or identify the local produce or ingredients and cultural traditions that involve the dish. According to Berno (2011) and Wright (2012), Pacific SIDS, including Vanuatu, are not considered as destinations for culinary tourism, and therefore the local cuisine is less likely to be promoted as an interesting attraction to potential tourists than, for example islands' scenic features. Historically, there has been little promotion of Pacific cuisine, although this has changed in recent years with food-promotion initiatives such as the

book *Me'a Kai* (Oliver, Berno, & Ram, 2010) and the South Pacific Food & Wine Festival celebrated in Fiji (South Pacific Food & Wine Festival, 2012).

The Tafea Tourism Council website does not show any pictures of food, although it provides interesting videos for every island (Figure 4.7) which include images about the local food and cuisine; however, the information about the local food appears alongside other tourist information and without any particular emphasis. Some of the videos and text descriptions indicate that local food is locally prepared for visitors from cruise ships: "when cruise liners visit Mystery island for day visits, the market place springs into life with stalls offering many locally made trinkets and lobsters cooked right before your eyes" (TTC, 2011). It is odd then that the website alerts tourists who plan to visit the island to bring their own food as "no meals are provided and food cannot be readily purchased so they need to provision in Tanna before arriving" (TTC, 2011). The question must be asked why local produce can only be supplied to tourists who arrive from cruise ships, but not to tourists who are staying on the island?. This is an emerging issue already identified in other studies in the Pacific islands (Berno, 2011; Milne, 2009b). Studies conducted in Tonga and Fiji highlight that despite an abundance of local produce, a lack of consistency and irregular availability of local products challenge the supply of food to the tourism industry (Berno, 2011; Milne, 2009b).

Figure 4.7: Videos showing local food and cuisine supplied to tourists from cruise ships

Source: TTC (2011)

To meet the purpose of this study, it is important to highlight frequencies in order to evaluate the extent to which local food is promoted by destination websites and analyse salient themes that describe what is happening when frequencies occur (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The audited websites report low frequencies across all the themes identified, with not much detailed information about food – often just a couple of sentences – and little emphasis on food as a tourist attraction (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: The types of information about local food given in destination websites

Types of information	Regional *n* = 4	National *n* = 16	Private *n* = 7	Community *n* = 5	Total *N* = 32
Cultural aspects	1	1	–	–	**2**
Produce from their land and natural resources	–	1	–	3	**4**
Agriculture is part important of the economy	–	2	–	2	**4**
Enhances community awareness	–	1	–	1	**2**
Local produce information	–	3	–	2	**5**
Local food guide	–	3	–	–	**3**
Local dishes and traditional recipes	–	2	1	–	**3**
To bring your own food, *kae kae*	–	1	1	–	**2**
Food events	1	2		–	**3**
Broad selection of international restaurants in Port Vila	–	3	4	–	**7**
Local market	–	3	3	–	**6**

At the regional level, the only website that refers to the local food is the SPTO. Even then, this should be more considered as simple mention of food rather than giving information about food. Near the bottom of the home page, there is a "Culture" hyperlink with extensive information about the Pacific culture and several links to highlight interesting characteristics of the culture, such as magic, dance and song, religions, festivals, customs, artistic expressions, tattooing, medicine, and speech (see Figure 4.8). However, there is no specific link to food, and the only mention of food is under the link to festivals: "This is the very best way for visitors to learn about the rich local culture and to see, hear and taste the traditions in the form of songs, dances and feasts held throughout the festivities" (SPTO, 2008). While the website acknowledges a wide range of aspects of Pacific culture, there is a clear lack of promotion of local food and traditional cuisine. This provides further evidence that food is not contemplated as a potential tourism resource to be advertised as main tourist attraction.

Figure 4.8: Internal hyperlinks to describe the Pacific culture

Source: SPTO (2008)

The SPTO website also provides a section for each Pacific country to give further information to the visitor. Under the hyperlink of Vanuatu, the website indicates that "[the country] is like stepping back to another place and another time. A time when water was pure and food was from the village" (SPTO, 2008). While the website provides connections between food, place and community, information given to the visitor regarding what types of food are available and what it looks like is non-existent.

The audited national websites provide the broadest range of food themes. The private websites enhance promotion of restaurants and other food attractions, and community websites relate food as part of their livelihood and community. The most recurrent category in Table 4.9 highlights international and ethnic restaurants as important attractions in the context of gastronomy and food in Vanuatu. Henderson (2009) states that ethnic restaurants bring intercultural encounters and awareness in many cities; however, they can delimit the development of the cultural identity if they are the only or main focus when promoting food on tourism websites. For example, the VTO provides an example of this category:

> The potpourri of expatriate cultures is reflected in food styles served in over forty restaurants and cafes – French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Mexican, Thai, Melanesian and Mediterranean. You can buy an Aussie meat pie or American chili dog, sip cappuccino in one of the many outdoor cafes or purchase pates and salads from a patisserie in a supermarket to fill your picnic hamper (VTO, 2009).

Of 32 destination websites, only three – the WTEC, the Vanuatu Hotels Accommodation (VSA) and the VIBTA – provide a local food guide for tourists'

information. The WTEC website displays a table where terms in *Bislama* are translated into English to help travellers when visiting the outer islands. The list mainly includes information related to the local food, culture and environment of Vanuatu. It also includes a very brief description of typical dishes, such as *lap lap*, *tuluk*, *nalot* and *simboro*, information which is very difficult to find in other tourism websites (Figure 4.9). The discourse of the website provides the visitor with knowledge about what to expect, facilitating the new cultural tourism encounter within an appropriate sense of place.

Figure 4.9: Local food information provided in a destination website

Bislama	English
Aelan kabis	Island cabbage. A staple leaf vegetable comparable to spinach or silverbeet.
Alean kaekae	Island food / Melanesian food.
Aelan taro	A variety of taro grown at higher altitudes and widely accepted to be the tastiest taro.
Blong	Belong.
Bus kabis	A leaf vegetable comparable to spinach or silverbeet (more so than aelan kabis).
Breadfruit	A starchy fruit from the breadfruit tree that is cooked before eating.
Copra	Dried coconut flesh. Vanuatu's biggest agricultural export. Used for making coconut oil etc.
Copra Boats	Small coastal ships which travel all over the islands delivering cargo and picking up copra.
Envaeromen	Environment.
Gato	A fried dough, similar to a donut.
Haos blong cook	Kitchen house.
Haos blong swim	Bathing house / shower .
Kastom	Custom (traditional). More broad, it is everything that has to do with the life of the indigenous Ni-Vanuatu.
Kava	An intoxicating drink made from the roots of the Kava plant *Piper methysticum*. Many Ni-Vanuatu men like a few "shells" of kava in the evening.
Kumala	Sweet potato.
Lafet	Festival (e.g. 30 July, Vanuatu's Independence Day)
Lap-lap	A staple pudding-like dish, made from grated starchy root vegetables (and also banana) with coconut cooked wrapped in leaves in a 'ground oven' of hot stones.
Manioc	A starchy root vegetable. Foreign names include Cassava and Tapioca.
Namba	Penis sheath - a traditional dress for men in much of rural Vanuatu and still worn in Kastom Villages
Nalot	The end result is similar to plain lap-lap but nalot is made by pounding roast breadfruit - a Santo specialty.
Nakamal	Communal building, traditionally a meeting place for men only.
Natsaro	A dancing ground used for ceremonies. Also called a nasara.
Ni-Vanuatu	"of Vanuatu" - native people of Vanuatu.

Source: WTEC (2011)

The WTEC website also displays one picture (out of 64) of two local people in a village cooking local food (see Figure 4.10). The picture emphasises how "locals" act around their food, offering an impression to visitors about what an authentic food experience may look like (Hillel, Belhassen, & Shani, 2013). Focusing on the "local" represents an opportunity for the tourism industry to promote a region's identity as well as to endorse the concept of the sustainable tourism (Telfer & Hashimoto, 2013).

Figure 4.10: A local preparing a typical Vanuatu dish, *nalot*

The Vanuatu Protected Areas showcase is an initiative to promote nature tourism in Vanuatu. We hope these photos will surprise and inspire prospective visitors. Your visit will help support community-based conservation areas in Vanuatu. Wantok Environment Centre.

Source: The Wantok Environment Centre (2009)

There are other food-related descriptions on the WTEC website, although these are limited to providing tourists with information rather than promoting local food as an attraction. The website does not mention any of the local markets except for the Bon Marche Supermarket on the island of Efate, and this is only mentioned to indicate where to meet the local transport. The website does highlight the potential of Vanuatu for ecotourism, from which village communities can earn tourism benefits when tourists stay at local bungalows. In this context, the role of local food in the tourism experience should not be missed. Village communities can also increase their tourism earnings through the supply of local food to their visitors (Milne, In press).

The VSA website provides relevant information regarding local food on Vanuatu. The website explains different uses that coconuts have as a main food staple of the country. It also recommends the local market as the place to taste produce and local dishes and, even though it cautions that some dishes may appear quite bland, it promotes the experience as worthwhile. The website is the only one that provides reviews of restaurants and information on how to make traditional recipes, although it states that the recipes have been adapted for Western palates.

Even though some destination websites are starting to develop initiatives to promote local food, the web audit shows that the importance placed on food compared with other

tourist attractions is very basic. Therefore, potential benefits that local food experiences can bring to the visitor and the industry are being missed.

4.2.2 *Initiatives of tourism businesses to promote local food*

The majority of tourism businesses identified in this study as having a website are accommodation places. An in-depth analysis of 97 accommodation websites shows that these businesses are proficient at using the Internet to promote their activity, particularly on Efate. Hotels on Efate, particularly in Port Vila, are foreign owned and, therefore, have more financial resources to invest in their websites. On the outer islands, except for Luganville, Santo and some overseas-owned operators on Tanna, accommodation is bungalow based and owned by ni-Vanuatu. Some of the bungalows' websites are blogs that display modest features with little "usability".

The web audit shows that the majority of hotels, either on Efate (90%) or the outer islands (82%) display main pictures on the home pages of their websites to advertise their businesses. Of the 232 main pictures analysed, only one food and 14 food-related pictures were found (see Table 4.10). Many of these websites enhance their information by scrolling a sequence of pictures of different services and facilities, while others provide smaller pictures to add support and more information to the main feature. Even so, local food receives little attention on the home pages of these websites.

Table 4.10: The number of pictures showing food on the home pages of accommodation businesses

Accommodation businesses' websites and type of picture		Efate (*n* = 59)	Outer islands (*n* = 38)	Total (*n* = 97)
MAIN PICTURES	Number of websites	53	31	84
	Total main pictures	167	65	232
	Main food pictures	1	0	1
	Main food-related pictures	9	5	14
SMALL PICTURES	Number of websites	41	29	70
	Total small pictures	189	200	389
	Small food pictures	4	3	7
	Small food-related pictures	10	3	13

The only website that features food (a dish of sushi) as a main picture on its home page is that of a foreign-owned resort located in Port Vila, on the island of Efate. The picture appears at the centre of the website in a sequence with five other pictures, including the swimming pool, kids' club and a couple of tourists. The dish includes the following products, all of which are very likely to be imported: nori sheets, tobiko, ginger wasabi, surimi sticks and sushi rice (Figure 4.11). The discourse involved in the background of the image does not express any association between food and the local destination, reflecting the homogenising force of tourism which can result in a "global palate" (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012). A study of the role of local food in the promotion of tourism in the Maldives shows that dishes of sushi are commonly displayed in marketing materials; although portraying the use of fish (a local product), the discourse of the pictures is not local in nature (Amira, 2009).

Figure 4.11: An image on an accommodation business's home page promoting sushi

Source: Warwick Le Lagoon Resort (n.d.)

The content analysis also identified some food-related pictures that do not directly show food in their images; for example, pictures of empty restaurants showing location, and views of and from the place. These contexts are similar to pictures analysed in research conducted in Tonga (Milne, 2009b) and the Maldives (Amira, 2009). Images on the Internet were also focused on hotel restaurants and dining ambience rather than on local produce and cuisine, once again reflecting the lack of importance placed of local food as a tourism resource.

Smaller pictures on a home page are a way of providing and highlighting further information about a business. Seventy businesses, 41 on Efate and 29 on the outer islands, use small pictures on the home pages of their websites. Of the 389 images analysed, only seven food and 13 food-related pictures were recorded. The food pictures belong to four businesses from Efate and three businesses from the outer islands. The seven small food pictures correspond to "international" dishes, a table setting with some produce, the local market of Port Vila, and local people serving food in a local bungalow. Most of these images are too small to provide much detail so their role in the website is more as a supportive feature than a highlight. Small pictures featuring dishes of international cuisine are common in websites of foreign-owned properties and resorts (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: Small food and food-related pictures on an accommodation business's home page
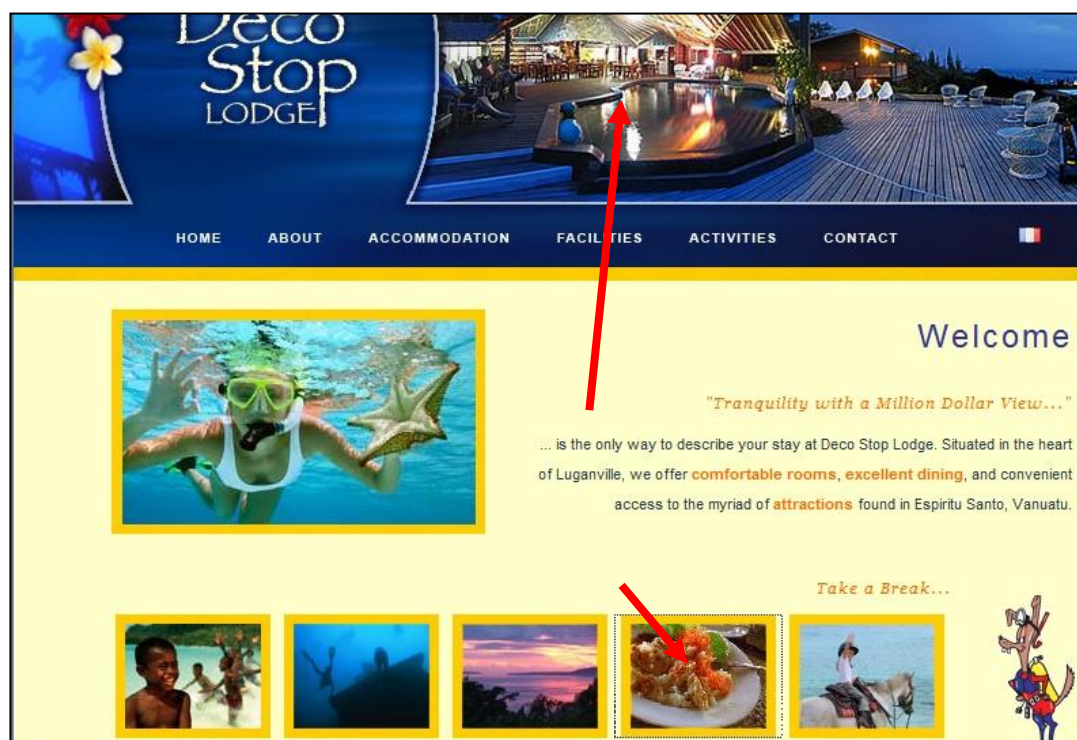
Source: Deco Stop Lodge (n.d.)

Local bungalows' websites tend to highlight distinctive features of the destination, such as typical decorations, which also contribute to provide authenticity and a sense of place to the visitor (Povey, 2011). None of the audited local bungalows' websites displays the local food and cuisine of Vanuatu as a main feature of the picture (see Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Food-related pictures in a local business's website

Source: Sunrise Bungalows (2010)

Text descriptions on accommodation' home pages (see Table 4.11), from businesses located either on Efate or the outer islands, tend to highlight views and location as a primary element of their business. The promotion of beaches, business facilities and water sports also appear to be a main category. Descriptions of food-related aspects, such as restaurants or supermarkets, or even general mentions of food are common in

accommodation businesses' websites. Acknowledgements of whether foods are locally grown or prepared record the lowest number of frequencies. For example, the website of a resort located on Efate says: "Come join us every Sunday for our family BBQ in the Beach Hut on the sand. Good selection of Australian and New Zealand wines are available" (Nirvana Resort, n.d.). The website does not promote local food nor does it link food with place because beach barbecues are not a traditional meal experience in Vanuatu. Studies conducted in other SIDS state that barbecues is food activity held in and promoted by resorts to suit tourists (Amira, 2009).

Table 4.11: Rank of food themes displayed on home pages, in text form

Themes in descriptions	Efate			Outer islands		
	Rank	*n*	Percentage	Rank	*n*	Percentage
Location and views	1	46	78%	1	32	95%
Beaches and sea	2	35	58%	3	17	43%
Facilities of the hotel	3	30	50%	3	17	43%
Leisure and water sports	3	30	50%	2	20	50%
Food and food-related	4	22	**37%**	4	16	**40%**
Culture and people	5	18	30%	5	14	35%
Vanuatu	6	13	22%	7	5	13%
Local food	7	9	**15%**	6	9	**23%**
Local cuisine	8	4	**7%**	8	2	**5%**

A local bungalow website shows the link between food and place when promoting the Vanuatu national dish *lap lap*. The website also provides a sense of community when it says "see traditional lap lap being made" alongside other community activities, such as attending a church service or a kava bar (see Figure 4.14). The promotion of the local cuisine, however, appears hidden in the text with other information, being difficult to identify. With the growth of culinary tourism and the number of visitors searching for authentic experiences, promoting local cuisine is a way to attract visitors and increase yield.

Figure 4.14: Promotion of local cuisine in a local business's website

Source: Jabsina Guesthouse (2010)

Local food is a powerful influence on a traveller's experience, it develops feelings of place attachment, and is essential to enhance the sustainability in tourism (Henderson, 2009; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). The use of local ingredients in restaurants' menus enhances backward linkages between the tourism industry and agriculture sector (Berno, 2011). Of the 70 audited websites of tourism businesses that have a restaurant, only nine have their menu on their website. Three of these menus belong to restaurant businesses on Efate while the other six businesses are hotel restaurants, four located on Efate, one on Santo and one on Malekula.

The menus on the audited websites reveal that the restaurant operators have limited willingness to provide typical dishes of the region, with most of the ingredients used to create the dishes being imported. The first menu display 11 dishes, yet only four of them include ingredients likely to be local (these are highlighted in Figure 4.15). Some of the ingredients are acknowledged to be local in the menu, such as the Santo Scotch Fillet Steak, "local veggies" or *Poulet* fish. Other ingredients such as "mussels in a half shell", scallops and Parmesan cheese are clearly imported.

Figure 4.15: Menu on an accommodation business's website

Entrees

Spicy Tomato Mussels in half shell served with crusty garlic bread

Honey Prawns coated in sesame seeds

Chilli & Lime Butter Scallops

Main Course

All served with your choice of local veggies, salad, chips, kumula chips, kumula mash, or steamed rice

Poulet Fish coated with sesame seeds, lime, ginger, coriander (when seasonal), served on top of a light soy, ginger, & honey bok choy

Crumbed Chicken Thigh Schnitzel served with lemon wedges or with mushroom sauce

Prawns, sundried tomatoes, pinenuts tossed with a spicy Napoli sauce with Linguine noodles topped with parmesan cheese

Santo Scotch Fillet Steak topped with creamy mushroom sauce

Dessert

Death by Chocolate Mud Cake served with whipped cream & ice-cream

Sticky Date Pudding served with butterscotch sauce whipped cream & ice-cream

Banana Split served with your choice of topping & ice-cream

Source: Deco Stop Lodge (n.d.)

Another menu displays 14 dishes of which only eight show ingredients likely to be local (see Figure 4.16). The menu, except for the "Fresh Melanesian Fish Salad with Coconut Milk", seems to be designed with a Western focus and imported items, such as calamari, chorizo sausages and Parmesan cheese. Restaurant menus from the audited websites show little of Vanuatu's unique identity and, therefore, do not promote the culture of the location. Only one local bungalow from Malekula very modestly states that *lap lap* is given for dinner – but does not explain what it consists of.

Figure 4.16: Menu on an accommodation business's website

Sample Menu Items

Golden calamari with Chorizo sausage and Citrus Aioli Dressing
Home Made Gnocchi with Mushrooms, topped with Parmesan Cheese
Fresh Melanesian Fish Salad with Coconut Milk
Homemade Thai Crab Tortellini with Crisp Salad and Beurre Blanc Sauce

Pan Seared Poulet Fish with Kumala Mash & Citrus Beurre Blanc
Slow Roasted Pork Belly with Pea Puree & Caramelized Apple with Parmesan Biscuit
Curry Beef Madras with Rice, Green Pawpaw Salad & Cucumber Yogurt
Vanuatu Beef (Entrecote) Served with Potato Gratin, Slow Roasted Tomato & Mushrooms served with a Red Wine Jus
Garlic Prawn Penne Pasta with Island Cabbage and Parmesan Cheese
Chilli Crab with Coconut Rice and Side Salad
Seafood Lasagne made with Fresh Local (seasonal) Seafood & Crisp Salad

Grand Marnier Soufflé with Vanilla Ice-Cream
Deep Fried Snickers Bomb with Chocolate Lava Sauce on a Coconut Island
Crème Caramel with Coconut Crumbed Ice-Cream

Source: Tamanu on the Beach (n.d.)

Seventy of the tourism business restaurants had a website, with the majority of the websites being hotel and resort restaurants'. Most of the local bungalows with a restaurant do not have a website, and therefore they are not included in the recorded frequencies. These bungalows are, however, promoted by WTEC, and pictures and descriptions displayed by the WTEC website show that the local bungalows emerge as potential places to taste local food. Although information provided is usually very basic – or not given at all – there are good descriptions and pictures regarding food and cuisine for some bungalows, showing the website's visitor an appropriate identity of the place. For example, the WTEC website provides the following information for a local bungalow located on Torres Islands:

> Are there any other island bungalows in Vanuatu where you can eat fish, coconut crab and lobster for lunch and dinner every day? Meals are prepared in a simple local style with rice and aelan kaekae (yam, lap-lap, pumpkin with coconut cream, nalot breadfruit, cucumber salad, aelan kabis and fruits (paw-paw and watermelon). If the stores have flour you can have bread for breakfast with tea or instant coffee and fruit. Otherwise you'll get aelan kaekae like fried lap-lap, yam chips or fried banana (WTEC, 2011).

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Although the food images are often very small, they provide evidence that local food and cuisine is provided in local bungalows (see Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.17: A tourism website showing that local cuisine is supplied in local bungalows


Source: WTEC (2011)

Of 70 reviewed websites of tourism businesses with a restaurant, 37 promote the use of local ingredients while only 20 the local cuisine (see Table 4.12). Local ingredients promoted are the meats from the island of Santo, vegetables, fruits and seafood. Restaurants promote the local beef for its tenderness and succulent flavour and for being organic and locally grown, while "fresh", "daily" and "locally caught" are some of the expressions used to promote fish and other seafoods. Local fruits and vegetables are said to be locally grown from the garden, the freshest organic produce, or supplied from the local market. Only one restaurant used the Internet to give further information about the local food: the Beef House Grill & Bar website indicates length of maturation of and more specific details about the local meats, such as beef, lamb and pork, by highlighting that Vanuatu is a "famous cattle-rearing country" (Beef House Grill & Bar, n.d.). Tourists can gain more in-depth knowledge about a destination through information about local food (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011); therefore, providing information about food through images or descriptions can enhance the tourist's experience.

Table 4.12: The number of tourism business restaurants' websites with images and texts

Type of restaurants in islands	Businesses with website	Local food promoted		Local cuisine promoted	
		Text	Pictures	Text	Pictures
Restaurants					
Efate	5	2	1	0	0
Hotel & bungalow restaurants					
Efate	32	17	20	11	2
Aneytium	1	1	0	0	0
Epi	2	2	1	0	0
Malekula	1	0	0	1	0
Santo	16	10	5	4	1
Tanna	13	5	3	4	0
Total	**70**	**37**	**30**	**20**	**3**

Many restaurants, particularly on Efate and Santo, acknowledge the usage of both local and imported ingredients; for example, the restaurant of a resort located on Efate promotes a "menu [that] is a fusion of the freshest local produce, with a select range of up-market imported ingredients, creating a combination of unique flavours from various parts of the culinary world" (Warwick International Hotels, n.d.). The promotion of local and imported elements might be intended to provide authenticity along with familiarity to the visitor; however, it does not provide a sustainable tourism experience.

Seafood is the food item that appears most advertised in the websites of tourism businesses, particularly lobster (Figure 4.18). Fruit, vegetables and meat are also widely promoted, except on the island of Malekula. Foods such as pizza, pasta, pies, cakes, hamburgers and cocktails are typical from websites of businesses located on Efate and Espiritu Santo. Likewise wines from Australia and New Zealand and champagnes from France are more likely to be found promoted on the websites of resorts and foreign-owned properties.

Figure 4.18: Food items promoted in tourism businesses' websites
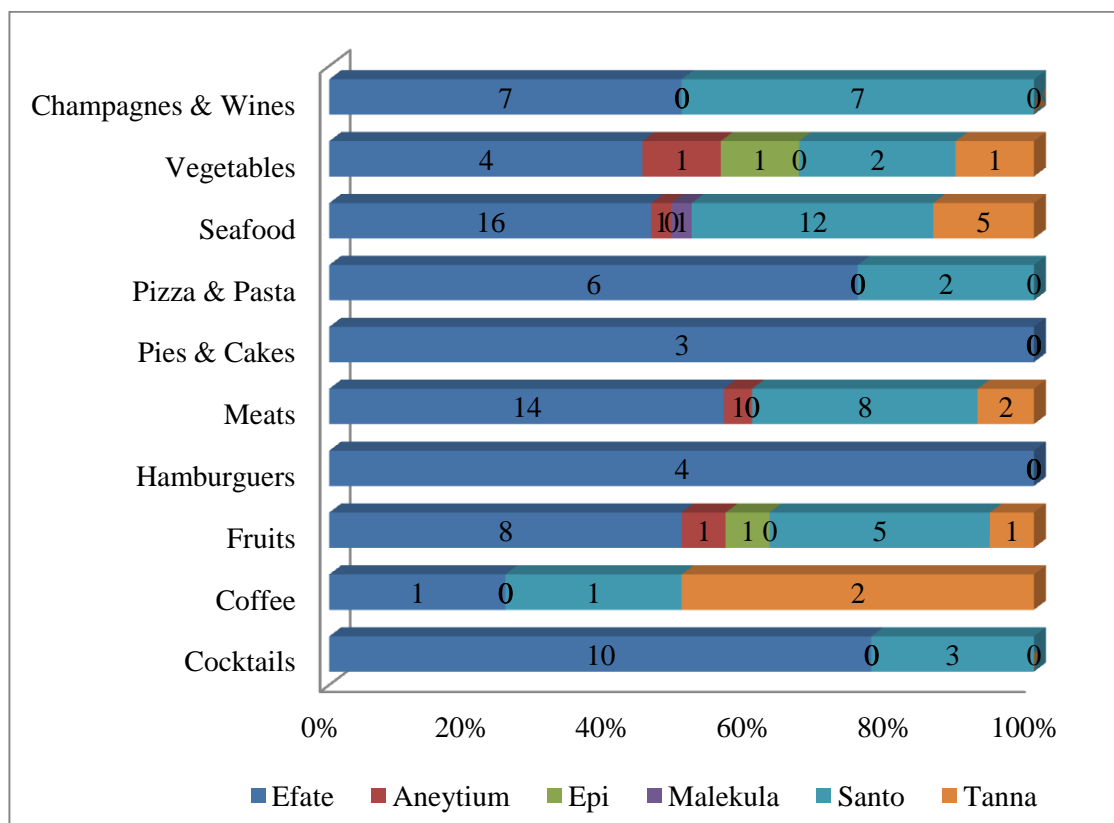
Tourism businesses' websites also show different web content when promoting local produce, depending on the region and the size of the business. Local bungalows located in less-developed islands do not add much detail to the basic listings on the menu except to say that all the food used is local and organic. For example, a local bungalow located in Aneytium informs that "[tourists] can source fruits/vegetables or arrange to have fresh fish caught for … a small fee. All our food is organic and from the local environment, even our cows are fed all-organic food. As we have no refrigeration, all fish and meat is served fresh" (Mystery Island Bungalows, 2010). Some boutique hotels, usually foreign-owned, which grow their own food, also promote themselves by saying they use only local produce. Berno (2011) states that these type of businesses are aligned to the concept of sustainability but that, due to their low number and remoteness, their effect in developing linkages is very low. One example is provided by a boutique business located on Ratua Island, near Espiritu Santo:

> Menus are based on a simple philosophy of the best quality local ingredients. We use 100 per cent fresh organic ingredients, mostly fruits and vegetables cultivated in the island's Kitchen Garden – from pineapples, oranges and grapefruit, to coconuts, tarot, tomatoes and leafy greens. These are supplemented by local meats from the island's own cattle ranch and the catch of the day from local anglers (Ratua Private Island, 2010).

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Tourism businesses may not be promoting local food on their websites for one of two reasons: first, the restaurant may not be using local food, i.e. its meals are prepared with imported food; or second, the restaurant might be using local food but not promoting its use because the operator does not see the importance of food as an essential part of the tourist experience. The lack of importance placed on the use of local food is highlighted by Cassidy and Pegg (2011) who revealed that local residents do not feel that tourists would be interested in restaurants. For example, a local bungalow on Tanna island provides a restaurant service but with minor attention to the promotion of local food and cuisine: "The Tanna Lava View Bungalow Restaurant provides breakfast, lunch, and dinner including soft drinks, Lava Cola – Vanuatu's own Kava Cola and Vanuatu's Tusker Beer. Meals from 750Vt to 1,200vt" (Tanna Lava View Bungalows, 2009).

Of the 70 websites of tourism businesses with a restaurant, 20 mention the local cuisine and three display pictures to promote it. Important categories emerge in the analysis of the 20 restaurants that promote the local cuisine (Table 4.13).The promotion of the local cuisine as a "blend of international and traditional dishes" is the most frequent category and reflects tourism's impact on food consumption and production in destinations. By supplying a "blend of international and local cuisine", culinary establishments change and modify local menus and certain dishes to meet tourists' demands (Mak et al., 2012). Modification of local dishes is also acknowledged by Berno (2011) in her study conducted in Fiji; she even argues that "parodies" of local dishes may create threats against sustainability and the local identity. This category is particularly characteristic of foreign-owned hotel restaurants located on Efate and Santo, which try to bring familiarity and comfort to the visitor experience.

The local cuisine also appears promoted as part of an Island Night or Melanesian Feast. This category also emerges among up-market and international hotels that provide a (usually weekly) themed buffet with a local band as a way to create an island ambience experience. However, little information about the food is provided, and information and pictures are more focused on dances and the string band.

Table 4.13: The types of information about local cuisine given in the websites of tourism business restaurants

Categories	Efate	Malekula	Santo	Tanna	Total
A blend of international, local and traditional	5	-	3	1	9
Fresh delicious island food served with beautiful Melanesian style	1	-	-	1	2
Island Nights, Melanesian Feasts	3	-	1	-	4
Attempts to be Westernised	-	-	-	1	1
Island food, without describing details	-	1	-	1	2
Promotes local cuisine as a valuable experience	2	-	-	-	2
Total	**11**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**20**

Local bungalows, in particular, promote local cuisine or "Island food' on their websites, yet local dishes are mentioned only in passing and any descriptions there are contain very little detail. For example, a local bungalow on Tanna says only that the "menu at the restaurant is mainly local cooked in a delicious Melanesian style" (Port Resolution Yacht Club, n.d). This information could be enhanced by pictures and explanations of local stories and traditional methods involving the dishes on offer, as such supplementary information would meet tourists' interest for knowledge and provide a sense of place. Only two of the 20 tourism business websites that promote local cuisine emphasise the food as a valuable tourism experience; for example, a local business website invites visitors to try the local food by displaying pictures of local women cooking local dishes (see Figure 4.19). The example supports the potential that the Internet brings to remote communities to acknowledge their identity and culture (Dyson, 2011), while confirming the importance of local businesses' websites to enhance links between tourism and local food.

Figure 4.19: Local cuisine in Bethel Village's website

Source: Bethel Village Adventure (2011)

"Westernisation" of authentic flavours is another category that appears in a website of a tourism business when promoting local cuisine. This category has been recorded in a locally owned business's website; however, it might be occurring in other businesses, yet not expressed on the Internet. According to the discourse, this category emerges when ni-Vanuatu think that tourists might prefer the Western flavours over the local and authentic ones.

> Food here is all organic and locally-grown. ... Just as a side note, however, the ni-Vanuatu will often try to cook to their idea of the Westerners expectations so if you want the fresh natural flavours please let our cooks know in advance not to use any flavour additives (Sunset Guesthouse Bungalows, 2010).

Of the six categories that describe the promotion of local cuisine in tourism businesses' websites, two categories are about adapting local flavours to Western palates: "Westernisation" and "blend of international and traditional". Different approaches have been taken to this issue. Du Rand, Heath and Alberts (2003) argue that if food is changed only to suit the taste of foreign tourists, then traditional foods of the region can be lost, which has wider implications regarding the sustainability of the community. There are travellers, however, who are more reluctant to taste new types of food, and sometimes local food only becomes acceptable if it is to some extent transformed (Berno, 2011; Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011). The challenge is to find the degree of transformation that allows local food to be more appealing to tourists while not, in the process, losing its authenticity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Tourism businesses that promote international and local meals in their websites may do so to provide comfort and familiarity to visitors; however, they still can provide a more sustainable and "local" experience by using local produce: "The menu is a blend of

Traditional and International cuisine celebrating the organic flavours of Vanuatu. This includes local daily catch from the sea, the fresh seasonal produce as well as the famous organic Vanuatu beef" (Paradise Cove, n.d.). International tourism may pose a threat to the identity and image of local gastronomy; however, it also increases the visitors' exposure to a wider variety of ethnic dishes and products, encouraging and stimulating greater demand for local products and indigenous cuisines in destinations (Mak et al., 2012).

4.3 Online linkages between the tourism industry and local food producers in Vanuatu

In this study, few (*n* = 14) destination websites promote local food producers in Vanuatu. Only five local producers, including the local market, have been identified (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: The number of destination websites promoting local producers

Type of website	Number of destination websites	Name of local producers
Regional (*n* = 10)	1	–Venui Vanilla
National (*n* = 17)	6	–South Pacific Nuts –Teouma Prawns –Local market
Private (*n* = 7)	3	–ACTIV Community –Local market
Community (*n* = 5)	4	–Villages

The promotion of local producers on destination websites is very limited. All of the sites only briefly mention the producer(s), and there seems to be little intention on the sites to encourage the consumption of local food. For example, Teouma Prawns only appears promoted in the Vanuatu Chefs Association website as a sponsor of a national event, yet Teouma Prawns Ltd is the largest aquaculture facility in Vanuatu, with potential to

provide valuable food fish for both the domestic market and high-end hotel and restaurant market (SPC, 2011). Likewise, audited destination websites do not detail the types of shrimps and fish available. Another example is South Pacific Nuts, which is advertised in the destination website Pacifique Sud Vanuatu alongside other information related to the handicraft sector: the website has a phone number for South Pacific Nuts, but does not specify whether its product can be bought as a gift or souvenir or for immediate consumption.

The use of hyperlinks is essential to facilitate and enhance information in websites (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009). None of the destination websites presents an internal hyperlink that could provide further information about the local producers of Vanuatu (see Table 4.15). Only one of the audited websites provides an external hyperlink to promote the sale of kava which link to other website. Looking carefully throughout the new website, it is possible to find the name of the kava producer, and by searching in Google, it has been found out that this kava producer also appears in a community website of Vanuatu. The community website, named Alternative Communities Trade in Vanuatu (ACTIV, n.d.), shows a product catalogue with all the products available to be sold. The website attempts to promote small growers, but most of the products are focused on arts and craft. Nevertheless, there are four advertised food products – Nangai Oil, Roasted Nangai Nut, Coconut Jam, and Nui Dark Chocolate – and these appear with a recipe and information about the properties of the products. This community website, however, is not linked to any of the audited tourism websites for the purpose of food tourism, and therefore information is not properly disseminated to stimulate tourism demand.

Of the five local producers that are, directly or indirectly, mentioned in destination websites, only two have a website: Venui Vanilla and ACTIV Community. None of these local producers' websites appear linked to the audited websites by an external hyperlink, and so the opportunity to increase interaction and visibility between stakeholders is being missed (Reino, Frew, & Albacete-Saez, 2011).

Table 4.15: The use of the Internet to promote local producers in tourism

Local producers	Information provided	Internal hyperlink	External hyperlink	Local producers with website, but not linked
Venui Vanilla	√	-	-	Yes
South Pacific Nuts	√	-	-	No
ACTIV Community	-	-	√	Yes
Teouma Prawns	√	-	-	No
Local Market	√	-	-	No

Venui Vanilla is a local spice producer which has its own website. Its products are also acknowledged in the PITIC regional website but, although the PITIC website provides detailed information, it fails to provide an external hyperlink to connect the visitor to the producer's website (Figure 4.20). An external hyperlink would allow the flow of information and create a better integration of networks. The regional website PITIC promotes local producers as successful export initiatives undertaken by the organisation, yet the site is missing the opportunity to link local producers with the tourism sector for the purpose of enhancing linkages and reinforcing culinary tourism.

Figure 4.20: Links to a local producer in a regional website but the links are not related to tourism
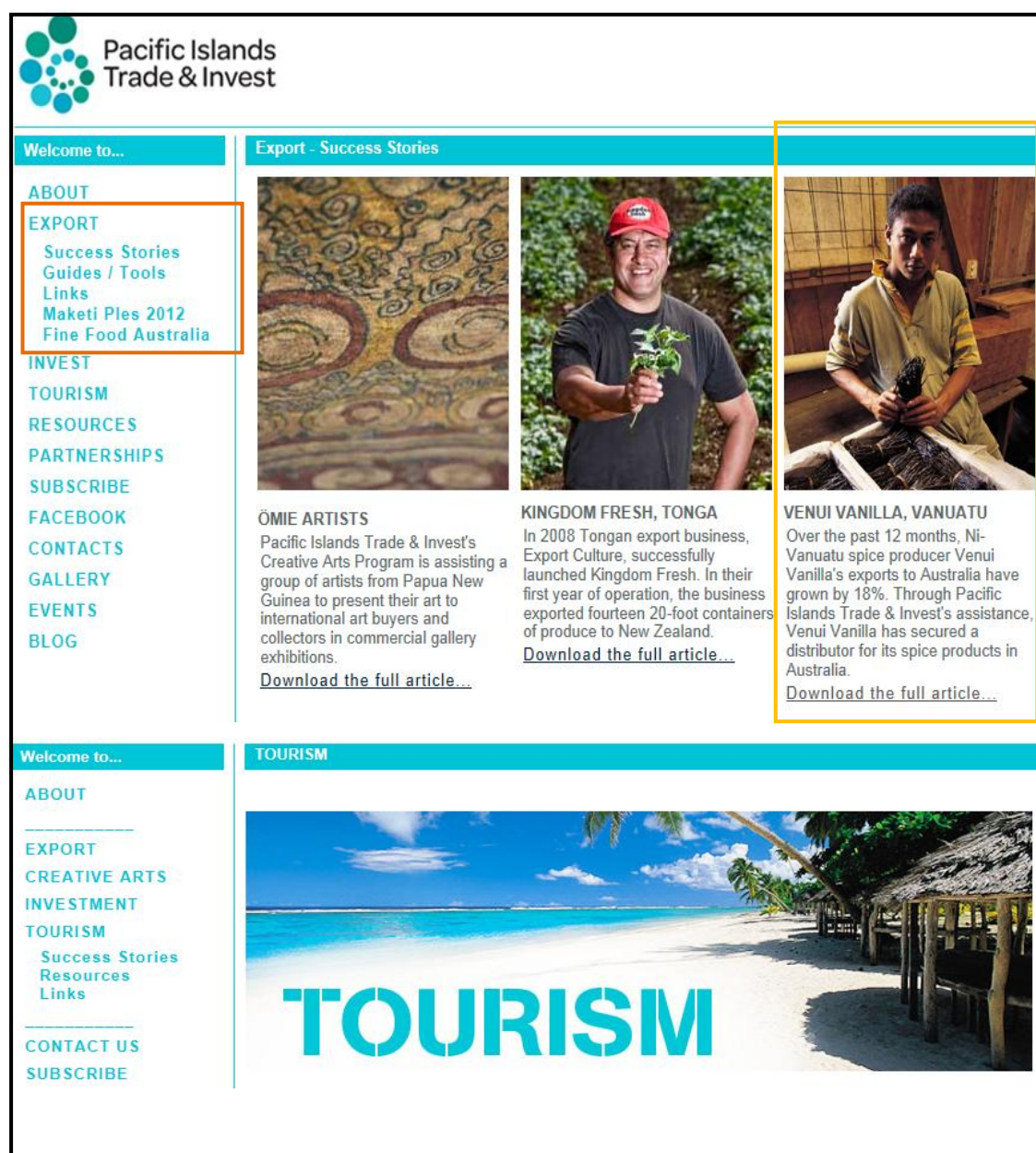
Source: Pacific Islands Trade & Invest (2012)

During the research two other local producers with websites were identified: Tanna Coffee and Tanna Island Coffee. Neither of these websites appears mentioned in any of the audited destination websites. The Tanna Island Coffee website promotes the re-development project undertaken by the community of Tanna to grow coffee. The website provides detailed explanations about the process, product, history and people involved in the project (see Figure 4.21). Under the hyperlink "About", the website promotes local tours and a local bungalow with potential to enhance visitor yield, but

because the website is not linked with tourism websites, chances for it to be viewed by visitors are being missed (Baggio, Corigliano, & Tallinucci, 2007).

Figure 4.21: A local producer's website
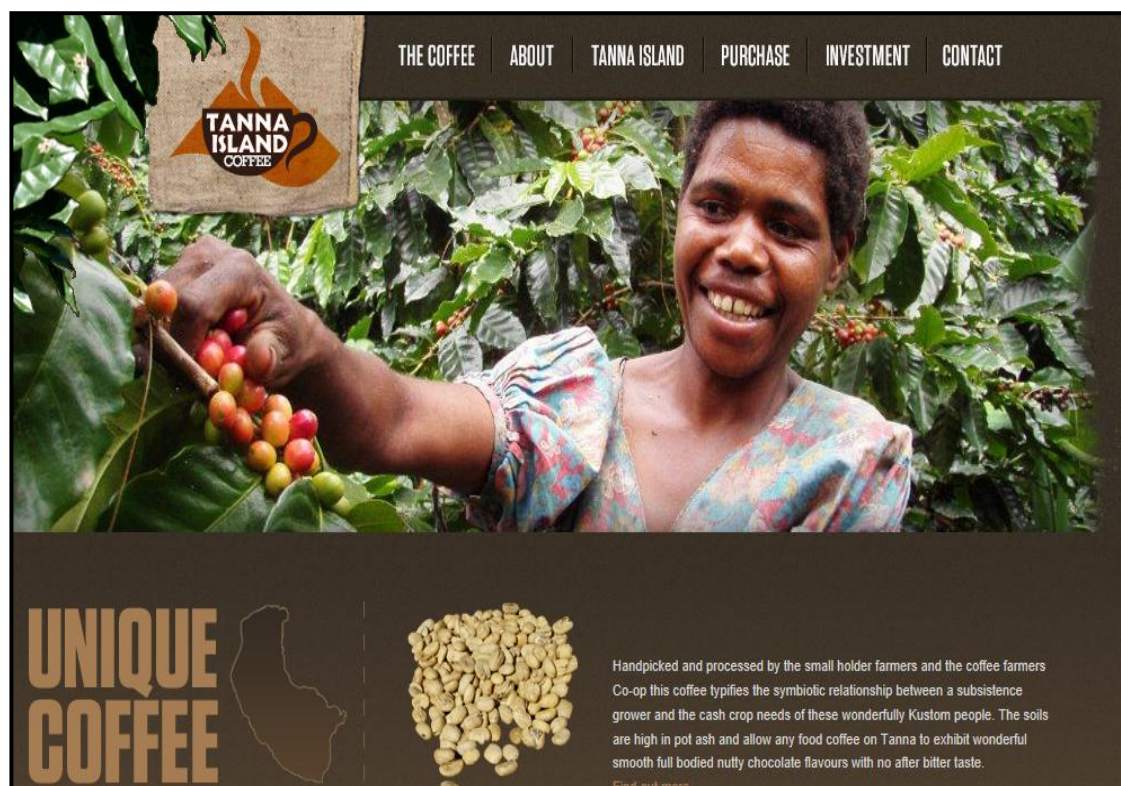
Source: Tanna Coffee Island (2010)

The promotion of the local market in tourism websites is another way that the tourism industry can enhance linkages with the agriculture sector. Local producers in Vanuatu sell farm-grown produce from their stalls inside the market (Oliver et al., 2010). The local market of Port Vila is the place most often mentioned in the audited destination websites to try local food, but information is very limited regarding the availability of the types of produce that could be of interest to culinary tourists. Moreover, information about the local market is often difficult to find in the destination websites, it usually appearing alongside other types of information. The market of Port Vila is acclaimed by many Pacific Islanders as the best in the South Pacific for the variety and quantity of produce available, and also for the locally prepared food such as *lap lap*, Vanuatu's national dish (Oliver et al., 2010). Other markets, such as the Luganville market on Espiritu Santo, are less well promoted in the tourism websites, and no mention could be found at all of the Lenakel market, on Tanna.

The audited destination websites show proficiency in the use of the Internet: they inform by the use of links such as "About us", "News" and "Publications", and provide opportunities to interact with the use of "Contact us" and the "Email" (see Figure 4.22). The email option can play an important role as a strategic distribution channel and can aid in the planning of sustainable tourism development (Touray & Jung, 2010), although the current study does not contemplate the extent to which it is used in that capacity. The Internet also has the potential to integrate businesses and networks and to build collaboration to enhance enterprise performance, which can be achieved by the use of external hyperlinks (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009; Milne et al., 2009). Destination websites audited in this study do not provide external hyperlinks to local producers and, therefore, do not facilitate and enable the dynamic of online linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors.

Figure 4.22: The number of websites that use the Internet to link tourism to local food
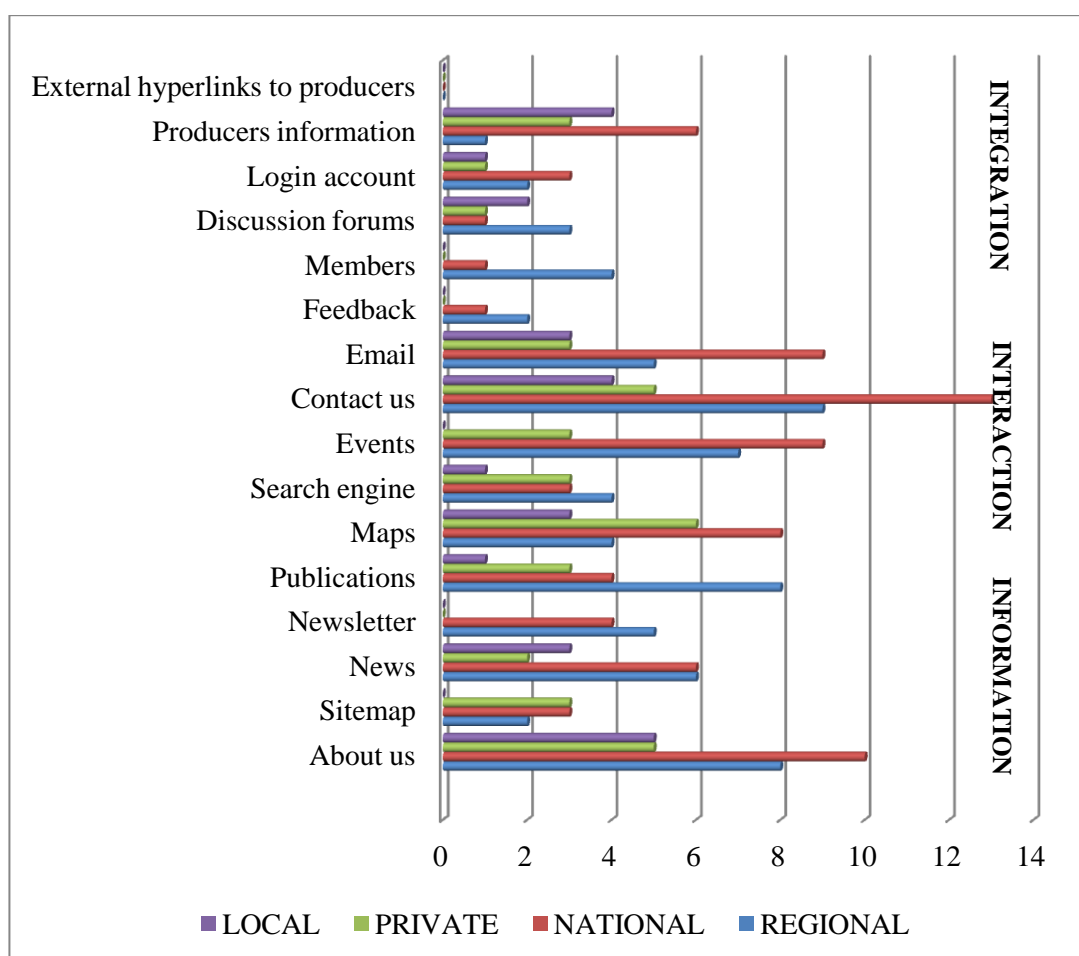
Destination websites in Vanuatu are more proficient in providing information and interaction than integration. Even so, audited destination websites show constraints as a

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source of information to develop linkages between local food and tourism. Information about local producers is more focused on art work and other cultural aspects than on food, while food information is given for export purposes rather than tourism. Many of the links available, such search engines, are ineffective to find local food or cuisine information and direct the reader to hotel restaurants and resorts. Similarly, there are links to online news and publications, but these are focused on other issues rather than promoting local food. Thus, the audit shows that the potential of the Internet in Vanuatu is not being maximised, a finding that is also reported by other researchers in the Pacific (Singh, 2012b). For example, Milne (In press, p. 1297) states that "local levels of information technology acumen must be enhanced" to upgrade tourism websites in order to expand local development in the region.

4.4 Summary

The audited tourism websites show few attempts to undertake tourism initiatives that would promote the local food of Vanuatu. Images, written descriptions and internal hyperlinks are used to enhance other tourist attractions rather than the local food. There is a clear lack of information about local food and cuisine, information which is vital to enhance the visitor's experience and increase Vanuatu's competitive edge over other destinations. Local businesses show potential to promote their local food, but they still lack a presence on the Internet and have yet to appreciate that food is an essential cultural tourism resource.

The potential of the Internet to enable linkages between tourism and local producers is not being maximised in Vanuatu. The Internet is little used to inform and interact with the purpose of promoting local food, and fails to integrate the tourism sector with local producers. Online linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors appear weak, with information about local producers difficult to find on destination websites – information which could enhance the consumption of local food, and thereby extend the benefits of the tourism sector into local communities.

Chapter 5 : THE POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET TO LINK LOCAL FOOD TO TOURISM IN VANUATU

As links between local food and tourism need to be stimulated by demand, the chapter starts with the analysis needed to understand tourists' feedback on their experiences of local food. The analysis provides an understanding of the usefulness and impact of these reviews to other tourists and to the host communities of Vanuatu. The analysis of tourism websites shows how the Internet can be used to strengthen ni-Vanuatu participation in the industry by the promotion of local food-related tours and activities and creation of networks to encourage local food consumption.

5.1 Tourists' feedback on food-related experiences in Vanuatu

Tourists' feedback over the Internet, including information associated with local food and cuisine in destinations, can be viewed as one of the most important resources for potential visitors to a destination (Wang, 2011). The analysis of tourists' feedback on food-related experiences in Vanuatu examines the content of two online social networks that provide reviews about local bungalows in Vanuatu: TripAdvisor and the WTEC. The WTEC is the national website that provides the most extensive list of local bungalows and the possibility to write a review, whereas TripAdvisor is the largest online network of travel consumers, according to O'Connor (2010).

The WTEC website provides information and host reviews for 138 local bungalows located in Vanuatu while TripAdvisor only for 21. Even so, TripAdvisor has a larger scope of influence as it also provides 196 reviews for 21 local businesses, most of which are located in the islands with the most extensive tourism development: Efate, Espiritu Santo and Tanna. The WTEC website provides information and reviews for local businesses located across all Vanuatu, except for Port Vila. In order to enhance accuracy in the understanding of the tourists' feedback, the results of the audited reviews are presented in two different groups. The first group includes reviews for local businesses throughout Vanuatu, except for Port Vila (see Table 5.1). The second group includes one local bungalow located in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, and where tourism development has mainly been centred (Cassidy & Brown, 2010).

Table 5.1: Reviews for businesses located outside Port Vila

Online social networks	Number of local bungalows	Number of bungalows with food reviews	Total number of reviews	Total food reviews
WTEC	138	96	375	196
TripAdvisor	20	16	137	117
Total			**512**	**313**

From the 512 reviews analysed, 313 are related to food, and relevant categories have emerged in relation to tourists' food experiences in local bungalows. In reviews of bungalows located outside Port Vila, the category with the highest number of occurrences (41% on the WTEC website and 48% on TripAdvisor) refers to tourists showing enthusiasm for the food that they have tried (see Table 5.2). This category disregards whether the food provided is local fare or traditional cuisine; it simply shows that tourists had a good experience regarding food when staying in local bungalows. Reviews (14% in WTEC; 28% on TripAdvisor) describe local food as "simple", "basic", "plentiful" and "interesting". Such descriptions of local food were used by travellers to indicate their satisfaction with experiencing the challenge to taste unknown food (Long, 2004; Mkono, 2012), rather than indicating a pleasant experience of the food's tastiness. This way of viewing new and culturally different food encounters also appears in a study conducted in Zimbabwe (Mkono, 2011) where the local cuisine is not very familiar to tourists. A review on TripAdvisor provides an example:

> Food was plentiful, to be honest the kids really only ate the kumara but we tried everything else with only one meal a struggle (TripAdvisor, 2011a)

Local food experiences may constitute a problem for some tourists, but there are visitors who are passionate about trying food of other cultures (Karim & Chi, 2010). Reviews show that 12% of tourists enjoyed food activities that allowed them to participate in ni-Vanuatu's daily lives. The fact that most reviews are of local bungalows located on the outer islands suggests that these islands have potential to provide authentic and valuable food experiences to travellers. Percentages calculated might not be very high due to a lack of a variety of entertainment and activities in the outer islands of Vanuatu, which has been highlighted by Cassidy and Brown (2010). For tourists, the opportunity to participate in and experience the rural communities' everyday lives means an authentic experience (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005). Such opportunities cannot be missed by tour

operators when developing and promoting local tourism food initiatives. The WTEC website provides an example where visitors to the local guesthouse on the island of Ambrym feel they have lived an authentic experience by participating in local food and cultural activities:

> Friendly, welcoming families are happy to show you around the village, encouraging you to join them with their day to day activities – tending their vegetable gardens, cooking lap-lap over hot rocks, weaving grass mats and trying your hand at wood carving. There is a store at Lalinda that stocks basic products – matches, batteries, sugar, rice, tinned fish, biscuits, etc. Overall, a fantastic opportunity to immerse yourself in village life in a friendly, picturesque and peaceful setting (WTEC, 2009).

Twenty-five per cent of the 117 food reviews on TripAdvisor and 9% of the 196 on the WTEC website provide valuable information to fellow travellers about types of produce grown locally. The differences in these percentages might be related to local food supply challenges common in remote areas of Vanuatu, where tourists are recommended to bring their own food. The WTEC site, which promotes local businesses across all the islands of Vanuatu, shows that 12% of visitors who provide food feedback note that there is little supply of local food on the outer islands. A review indicating a shortage of local food supply in a destination can impact negatively in two different ways: first, it may deter tourists who read reviews from selecting that destination, or second, even if the tourists still choose to go to there, they may decide to bring their own food, thus making it less likely that they will consume local food. Audited reviews also provide valuable information regarding tourist attractions that can enhance the consumption of local food, such as the local markets. The market of Lenakel, for example, is rarely promoted in tourism websites yet potential visitors are made aware of it by tourists' feedback:

> I also got up early and went on the regular staff shopping trip to the Lenakel market. It was interesting to see the range of produce, and some very different items – tobacco leaves twisted into ropes, homemade graters for root vegetables … items for custom dances made from feathers, and a whole lot of fruit and vegetables I didn't know existed (TripAdvisor, 2011b).

Audited reviews show visitors' disappointment when there are not many options on offer in the menus and when meals provided are "Westernised" to suit their palates; this highlights that authenticity still matters (Mkono, 2012). Online reviews are written by people who have different experiences and thoughts, and therefore may have different opinions about the same place, authenticity and quality of food offered (Sims, 2009).

For example, two reviews of the same local bungalow show different perspectives on their experience of local food in Vanuatu: the first reviewer states that the "food was simple and the same for three days", whereas the second reviewer recommends the place and highlights "excellent fresh food" (WTEC, 2009). Although reviews will vary, Arsal, Backman and Baldwin (2008) reveal that food and beverages online postings are one of the most important travelling topics that influence travellers when planning their trip.

Table 5.2: Tourists' food experiences in local bungalows located outside Port Vila

Categories of tourists' feedback on their food experiences	WTEC $n = 196$	TripAdvisor $n = 117$
We enjoy the hearty meals, great hospitality; She/he is an excellent cook	41%	48%
Lovely island food and traditional meal	8%	11%
The food is local fare with lots of maniocs, yams and chicken/bananas cooked in different way	9%	25%
The food was simple, basic, filling, and interesting	14%	28%
Enjoyment of food-related activities	12%	12%
Enjoyment of event	0%	3%
To avoid problems of supply, bring your own food; No shops or small shops with little supply.	12%	8%
Meals not really exciting and not many options on offer	8%	9%
Disappointed with or found meals boring because Westernised	2%	4%
Meals uninspiring because canned food was given	4%	3%

A study conducted by Karim and Chi (2010) states that the impact of online reviews is greater in destinations where the local food is less familiar to visitors. Therefore tourists' food experiences published in these reviews will significantly influence other tourists' interest in travelling to Vanuatu, as the country is little known as a culinary destination (Berno, 2011). The audited reviews show some constraints in the supply of local food; however, they also show that there is a demand for local food from tourists visiting Vanuatu, even though that demand is not being fully met yet.

Since the WTEC website only provides reviews for locally owned businesses located outside Port Vila, the only local bungalow promoted that is operating in Port Vila is analysed separately (Table 5.3). It should be noted, though, that this business has more visitors' reviews than other bungalows. Of the 59 visitors' reviews, 26 did not say anything about food. Yet after analysing the 33 reviews that did mention food, other relevant categories appear from this bungalow in Port Vila, and these are compared with the reviews already discussed.

Table 5.3: Tourists' food experiences in a local bungalow located in Port Vila

Categories of tourists' feedback on their food experiences	TripAdvisor ($n = 33$)
Food is excellent	36%
Food is basic and tastes good	15%
Food is local and fresh	18%
Fresh tropical fruit for breakfast	18%
Thursday Melanesian Night feast and show was great	30%
Guests enjoy food-related activities: market, coconut performance	12%
Food is not very high standard, or average quality	12%
Disappointed with meals because they are Westernised	3%
Meals are uninspiring and looked frozen	3%

Reviews concerning a rewarding food experience are frequent in the website of the local bungalow located in Port Vila, just as they are in the reviews of bungalows located outside Port Vila. Food aspects such as quality, freshness and being local appear as relevant factors that satisfy tourists, regardless of the local bungalow's location. These

food characteristics also appear as important attributes that satisfy tourists in a study conducted in Costa Rica by Lu and Stepchenkova (2012), highlighting the importance of considering local food in the tourism experience. Reviews for businesses located outside Port Vila provide more information about local fare and show enthusiasm for any type of meal, whereas the reviews for the business located in Port Vila usually refer to breakfast when describing local food and the information presented is not as extensive. Food-related activities appear to be a rewarding tourism experience in all the cases, with the Melanesian Feast being the most common and enjoyable activity relating to food in Port Vila. Disappointment with the lack of quality and offers of Westernised meals emerge as categories to consider.

The research provides evidence regarding the potential of reviews as valuable sources of information for travellers preparing in advance for their trip, which is consistent with the literature (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zhang, Pan, Smith, & Li, 2009). The audited reviews provide different and relevant types of information about local food experiences in Vanuatu, and this is particularly important because there is a clear lack of such information in the tourism websites. Many of these reviews are of local bungalows that do not have their business website; therefore online sources have the potential to provide information not covered by the tourism websites. Pictures of local food, particularly locally made dishes, are difficult to find in websites, but reviewers on TripAdvisor can upload them along with their explanation. For example, a picture on TripAdvisor shows a range of typical dishes from Vanuatu (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Local food displayed in an online review of a local bungalow

Source: TripAdvisor (2011c)

Xiang and Gretzel (2010) also highlight online reviews as potential sources of information due to their connectivity with other sites on the Internet. It is still unclear what effect these reviews can have on local bungalows at present when most of them do not have a presence on the Internet (Mkono, 2011). Online sources can contribute to a better understanding of consumers' needs (Strauss & Raymond, 2009) and findings reported by Cassidy, Brown and Prideaux (2006) show that local residents in Vanuatu need to have a greater awareness of visitor needs. The potential of online sources in distributing travel and food-related information should not be overlooked by tourism marketers and businesses (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Local bungalows in Vanuatu have received an increased number of reviews in recent years (see Table 5.4)

Table 5.4: The number of online food reviews of local bungalows

Dates	Reviews in WTEC	Reviews on TripAdvisor
2005	13	0
2006	67	0
2007	34	4
2008	41	14
2009	60	42
2010	70	66
2011	90	70
Total	**375**	**196**

The number of online reviews of local bungalows is very likely to continue to rise and will be fundamental to learning about businesses' strengths and weaknesses from the traveller's perspective (Wang, 2011).

5.2 The participation of the local economy in the tourism industry

The Internet can strengthen rural communities' participation in the industry by promoting food-related tours and activities as well as by creating direct relationships between consumers and local food suppliers (Milne, In press; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010; Timms & Neill, 2011). Some of the local businesses, particularly those located on the outer islands, are exclusively owned by ni-Vanuatu (Slatter, 2006). The promotion of local tourism businesses and activities on the Internet has potential to generate a sustainable livelihood for ni-Vanuatu.

5.2.1 Local tours and activities promoted by tour operators

The audit of tour operators' websites includes 49 businesses which promote a total of 264 tours. Tour operators' websites promote cultural, natural and water-related activities, although a specific category for local food or culinary tours has not been identified (see Figure 5.2). From the total number of tours, water sports are the best promoted activity on the Internet for tourists to enjoy across all the country. Tours involving water sports include activities such as kayaking, snorkelling, diving and fishing, and are primarily related to show the attractiveness of the location such as pristine beaches and marine life (Jaafar & Maideen, 2012). By promoting tours with a

primary focus on water sports, important trends of tourism demand are being missed, such as more participatory cultural experiences and the rise of culinary tourism. Overlooking these trends could lead to a possible loss of the destination's competitiveness (Richards & Wilson, 2007; Richardson-Ngwenga & Momsen, 2011).

Although culinary or local food tours are not promoted as a main category in tour operators' websites, there are food-related experiences promoted as part of cultural tours, particularly within tours developed on the outer islands. Cultural tours usually offer visits to local villages where food-related activities, such as food preservation and food preparation, are shown among other activities, such as local performances and dances.

Figure 5.2: The types of tours and activities promoted
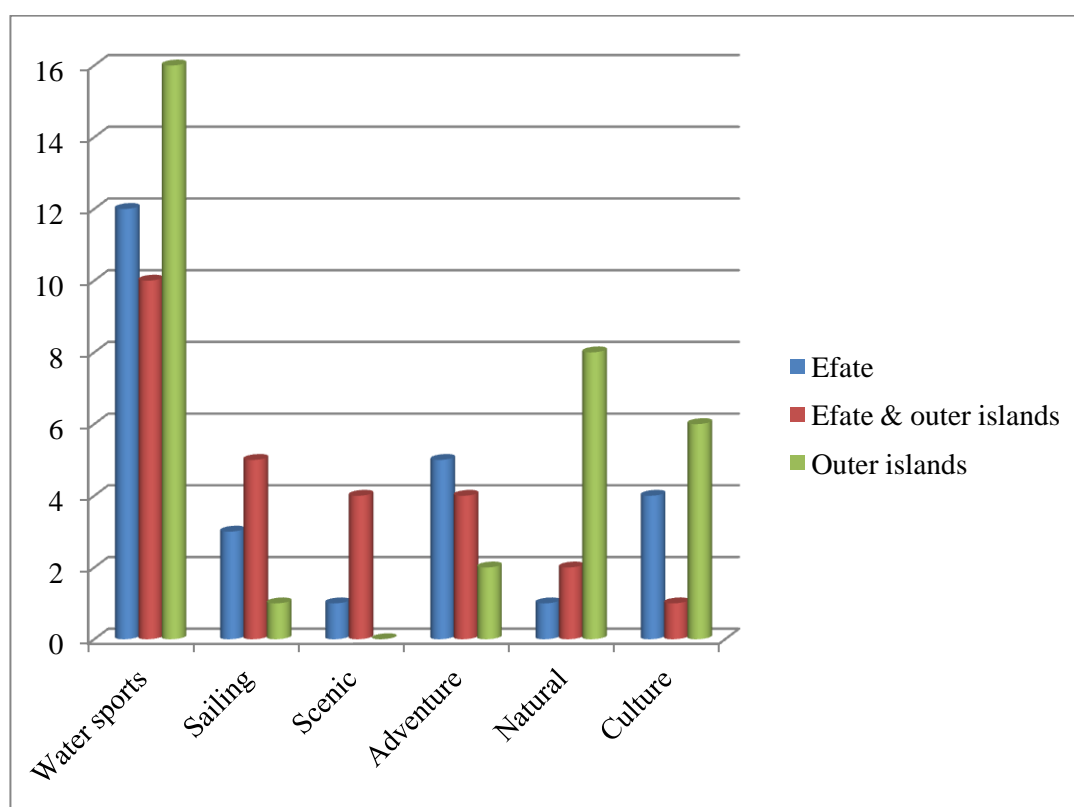
Local food experiences are mainly promoted in cultural tours; however food-related activities also appear in all type of tours. Of the total number of tours ($N = 264$) promoted by tour operators' websites, 34% are somehow related to food. The integration of food in tours is more frequent (40%) in those businesses that develop tours between Efate and the outer islands (see Table 5.5). Tours between Efate and the outer islands usually provide scenic and sailing trips, involving a day trip or longer. This type of tour has the potential to enhance the use of local food as they have to cater

for travellers during the length of the trip. They can also integrate tourism with local food producers by involving tourists in agricultural activities when visiting the outer islands. Up to 80% of all visitors to Vanuatu arrive in Port Vila, and so tours to the outer islands are urgently needed to increase tourism activity throughout the region (Cassidy & Brown, 2010) in order to distribute tourism earnings to the rural communities. For example, tour operators can take tourists to remote islands and villages and have local food experiences:

> We're welcomed into the village of Asanvari, which is situated above a beautiful lagoon at the southern end of Maewo. ... You can watch a custom dance, chat with the locals, learn how to cook lap lap, walk to the village gardens, and visit a beautiful waterfall or snorkel in the protected lagoon (Island Escape Cruises Limited, 2010).

Of 71 tours promoted in websites of tour businesses located on Efate, 37% include food-related activities, whereas in websites of tour businesses located on the outer islands, the promotion of food-related activities is found in only 25% of the tours. Local food is seldom acknowledged in all websites of tour operators, and local cuisine is promoted even less, a finding which has been emerging during the research (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Frequencies showing the promotion of food in tour businesses' websites

Name of island	Number of tours promoted	Food-related tours promoted	Websites promoting local food	Websites promoting local cuisine
Efate (*n* = 22)	71	26	5	2
Efate and outer islands (*n* = 13)	97	39	5	3
Outer islands (*n* = 14)	96	24	5	3
Total (*N* = 49)	**264**	**89**	**15**	**8**

The number of tour operators' websites promoting food-related tours and local food and cuisine will have a significant impact on tourism demand for local food and, therefore, the extent to which rural communities benefit from tourism. The way that tour businesses integrate local food as part of their tours will also be essential to increase local communities' tourism earnings as well as strengthen their participation in the industry (see Figure 5.3). An important factor that emerges from the review of tour

operators' websites is that barbecues and buffet lunches are the most common way to provide food in tours, although these are happening only on the main island of Efate. Food-related tours on the outer islands tend to include food as part of a village experience, encouraging local participation and the consumption of local produce. Village tours add authenticity and a sense of place to the tourism experience; however, food activities are little promoted and always appear as a complement to the tour rather than its main focus. Indeed, many tour operators' websites do not indicate if food is offered in tours to local villages. Tours between Efate and the outer islands integrate food through picnics, meals at the resort, and by providing morning and afternoon tea, as well as by taking visitors to local bungalows or restaurants.

Figure 5.3: Types of local food-related tours and activities promoted
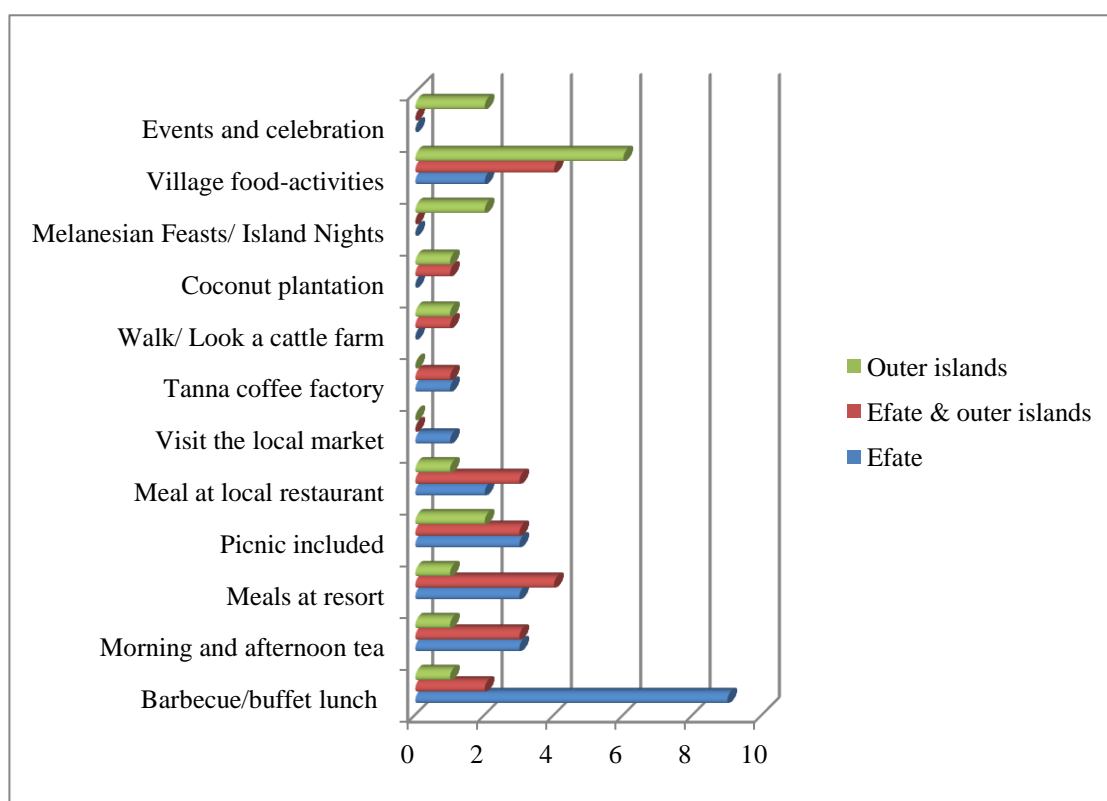
The provision of food in most of the tours appears as a complement to the main purpose or activity of the tour. Providing food in tours may support the notion that tours should cover a large spectrum, such as transport, hotel, food, natural and man-made attractions (Jaafar & Maideen, 2012). The offer of different activities within the same tour is an opportunity to attract tourism earnings; however, the way that food is integrated into tours relates more to the idea of "food in tourism" rather than the concept of "food tourism" where the consumption of food is considered as a primary activity (Kim et al.,

2009). Since food is more than just dishes to eat, culinary tourism involves eating and also exploring a range of different activities such as the local market, villages and other agricultural activities (Long, 2004). Food-based tours and activities such as a visit to a coconut plantation, the Tanna coffee factory or even the local market are the least-promoted activities, suggesting a lack of consideration of food as a culinary experience. The local market in Port Vila is the only one promoted, while food markets on other islands are not acknowledged at all in tour businesses' websites.

Although the audit has found that culinary tours are promoted only occasionally in Vanuatu, it has also found that tour businesses are willing to integrate food into their other tours. However, because the businesses do not acknowledge if the food is local, they cannot be said to be promoting local food. The example provided by Figure 5.4 shows picnic lunches and barbecues being offered as part of water activities, but without specifying whether the food provided is local and whether there is any participation by local people in its production or preparation. The example also shows how a cultural tour, with potential to enhance the use of local food, does not mention anything about food. Thus, in terms of the food on offer, the discourse of this website does not provide a context of the Vanuatu identity, nor does it attempt to increase rural participation in the tourism industry.

Figure 5.4: A tour business website promoting barbecues and picnic lunches
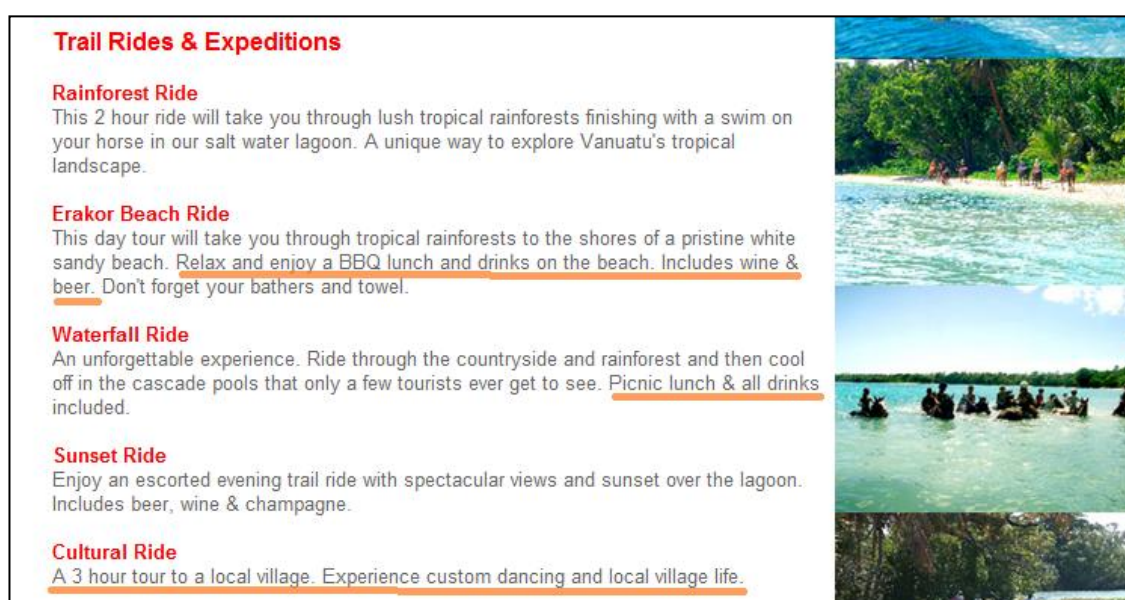
Source: Club Hippique adventure park (2010)

Village experiences are common tourist activities promoted within cultural tours, yet many village experiences promoted by tour operators' websites do not include local food. The website shown on Figure 5.5 promotes a village experience; it highlights local performances and dances – but indicates that lunch is provided in a foreign-owned resort. This tour is an example of how local operators are not considering food as a potential cultural tourism resource, with a resulting loss of opportunities to spread tourism earnings to the local communities. This example may also reflect common reasons for visitors' avoiding eating in local places and challenges faced by tour operators in developing countries, such as lack of access to suitable quality food, hygiene practices and local training (Povey, 2011). Food-related experiences at cultural and village events are strongly connected to a sense of place and local community pride in their agricultural produce, something that can allow visitors to understand and appreciate the destination (Singh, 2012b).

Figure 5.5: Promotion of a village experience without including local food

Source: Atmosphere Transfers and Tours (n.d.)

The lack of presence and integration of local food in tourism activities is aligned with the lack of display of food pictures in tour businesses' websites. Of the 49 tour operators' websites in the audit, only ten show pictures about food. Tour operators on

the outer islands show more pictures of food on their websites than do operators running tours elsewhere in Vanuatu (see Table 5.6). Pictures shown in tours developed on Efate display small pictures of a tray of fruit as well as tourists having a barbecue in a village (see Figure 5.6). Although the promotion of a barbecue on the beach does not show the local identity of the country, by acknowledging the use of local produce, authenticity and local dimensions are added to the visitor experience while increasing possibilities to improve visitor yield (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Milne, 2005).

Figure 5.6: Tourists having a beach barbecue at a village
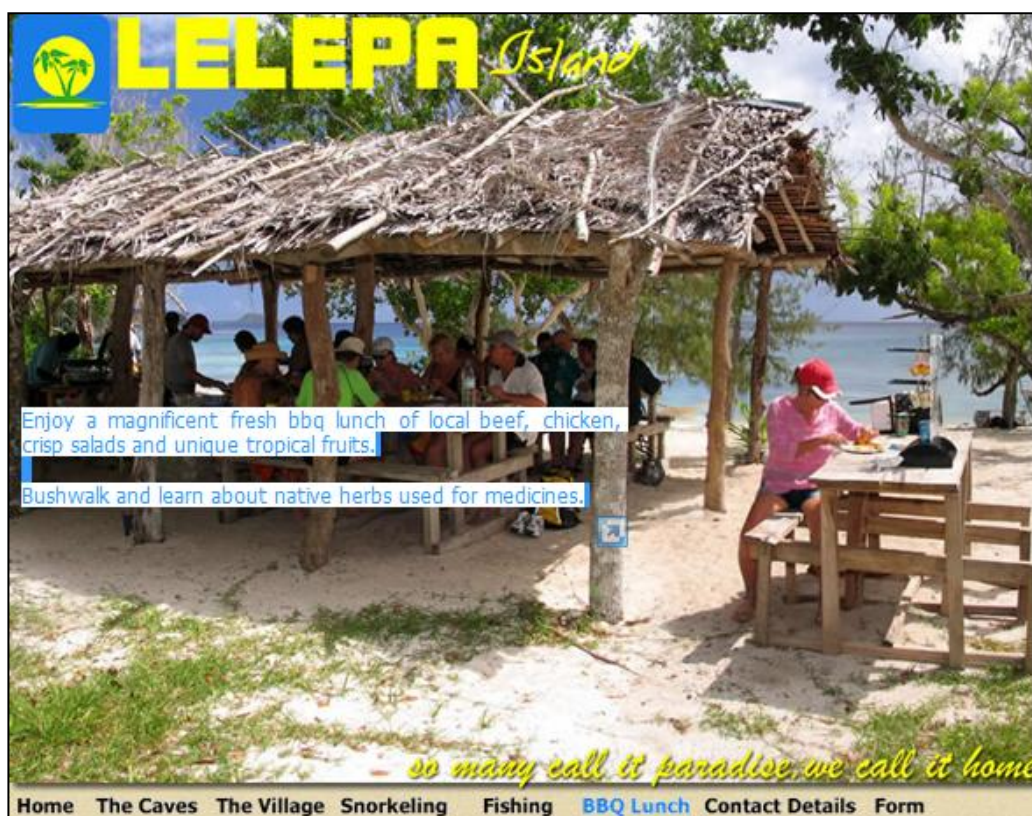
Source: Lelepa Island Tours (n.d.)

Websites that promote tours between Efate and the outer islands show pictures featuring the local market, pastures and cattle farms, which portray the relationship between food and place (see Figure 5.7). The promotion of pastures has the potential to reinforce the relationship between tourism and agriculture (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Agriculture can be seen as being more than a source of food and contribute positively to tourism experiences through the landscapes that visitors observe. Tourism can stimulate agricultural demand of products and services (Saxena, Clark, Oliver, & Ilbery, 2007; Telfer & Wall, 1996). Successful gastronomic destinations are those that provide

authentic experience to visitors by offering products that communicate the links between food, place and community (Hillel et al., 2013).

Figure 5.7: A cattle farm
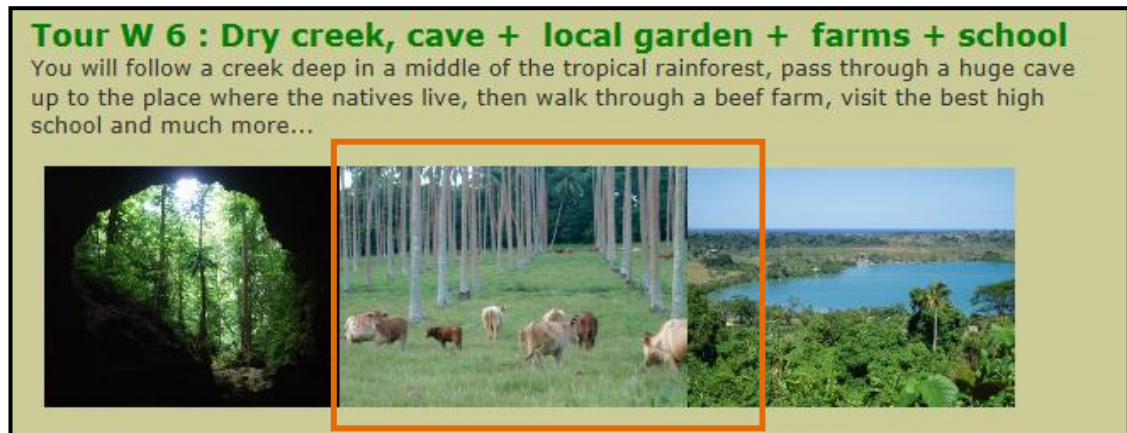
Source: Vanuatu Ecotours (2012)

Websites of tour operators based on the outer islands show the largest number of pictures of local people cooking local food. These websites also display pictures showing local people with tourists and types of produce, encouraging not only the consumption of local food but also local participation in the tourism industry. As visitors' exposure to local food increases, it is more likely that they will feel more confident to try new local food and cultural experiences (Mak et al., 2012).

The research reveals a clear absence of pictures showing typical dishes. Berno (2011) argues there are strong linkages between cuisine and culture in the Pacific islands, and this relationship could be used to enhance promotion of food in business and destinations websites. Tours to villages could display food pictures and give information about what the dish is made of and the cultural traditions involving that dish, conveying authentic and traditional characteristics of the local cuisine (Stockebrand, Sidali, & Spiller, 2011). One of the ways to enhance visitor experience is to develop storytelling and connections to the local communities because these connections facilitate future cross-cultural interactions (Milne, 2005).

Table 5.6: Features of food pictures displayed in tour operators' websites

Pictures	Efate	Outer islands & Efate	Outer islands
Tray of fruit	X		X
Local produce	X		X
Tourists having a barbecue	X		
Local market		X	
Cattle farm		X	
Gardens			X
Seafood platter		X	
Locals cooking			X
Local people with island food			X
Melanesian buffet with tourists			X
Festivals with food			X

Although tour operators based on the outer islands show more pictures of food on their websites than do operators based on Efate, local food is still little displayed compared with the promotion of other attractions, such as water activities. Many tours that promote a village experience show pictures of all aspects of ni-Vanuatu culture – except food. The website of Santo Safari Tours proudly states the business is "100% locally owned operated", and therefore this operator has the potential to strengthen local participation by the promotion of food-related activities. Yet while the website displays a picture featuring tourists drinking *kava*, a local beverage, which is relevant for culinary tourists (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010), it fails to provide pictures of local dishes and does not encourage tourists to taste the local cuisine (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: A tour operator's website promoting a village experience

Source: Santo Safari Tours (n.d.)

Most of the tour businesses audited (34 out of 49) appear to be foreign owned and have international links in their websites to other tourism destinations, and this is particularly true of cruise operators. Local businesses' websites appear to have low levels of interactivity; i.e. they have few external and internal hyperlinks which could strengthen their community networks. These businesses seem to be using the Internet to create a market presence, but if a site is not interactive, its business might miss opportunities that other businesses with more interactive websites can take advantage of (Sangpikul, 2010). The use of external hyperlinks can be a challenge when there is low local usage of the Internet in Vanuatu, and so low local Internet usage is a constraint to linking websites. Those businesses that are already linked, and hence potentially benefitting from the interactions, usually are foreign owned. Even these businesses, though, could still do more to enhance the promotion of local food-related activities on their websites.

5.2.2 Local tours and activities promoted by accommodation

Hotels in developing countries can use the Internet to promote their products and services and compete with their counterparts in developed countries (Au & Ekiz, 2009). The audit of accommodation websites shows that these businesses promote two types of tourism activities: those that take place on the business property and those that operate off the property. Both types of activities have potential to enhance local participation in the industry by the supply of local food. Of the 97 accommodation businesses websites,

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27 promote food-related activities on their business properties, and 17 state that the food or cuisine supplied is local (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: The number of accommodation websites promoting activities on their properties

Type of activity	Efate $n = 59$	Aneytium $n = 1$	Epi $n = 2$	Malekula $n = 1$	Santo $n = 20$	Tanna $n = 14$	Total $N = 97$
Pool and beach	29	1	2	-	14	6	**52**
Snorkelling	14	1	2	-	10	6	**33**
Water sports	21	-	1	-	10	4	**36**
Cultural	7	-	-	1	2	4	**14**
Food	**17**	**1**	**1**	**-**	**6**	**2**	**27**
Local food	**6**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**3**	**-**	**10**
Local cuisine	**5**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2**	**-**	**7**

Accommodation businesses promote external tourism activities, such as diving, fishing and other water sports, on their websites more often than activities that take place on their property. A corollary of this is that food-related activities are more often promoted within an external activity rather than at the accommodation place. However, the role of local food and cuisine is still low considering the total number of businesses websites. Of the 97 accommodation businesses' websites, fewer than a half ($n = 43$) promote food-related activities within activities operating outside the property, and fewer than one-third ($n = 31$) state that the food or cuisine supplied is local (see Table 5.8)

Table 5.8: The number of accommodation websites promoting tours

Type of tours	Efate *n* = 59	Aneytium *n* = 1	Epi *n* = 2	Malekula *n* = 1	Santo *n* = 20	Tanna *n* = 14	Total *N* = 97
Diving	30	–	1	–	15	1	**47**
Fishing	22	1	1	–	14	3	**41**
Water sports	20	–	1	–	10	6	**37**
Cultural	13	–	–	1	10	11	**35**
Hiking	9	1	1	1	15	9	**36**
Food	**26**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**4**	**43**
Local food	**10**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**20**
Local cuisine	**7**	**-**	**1**	**-**	**1**	**2**	**11**

Eighty-three food-related tours and activities are being promoted from 97 accommodation businesses' websites (see Table 5.9). Of the 83 food-related activities, 58% are promoted by accommodation businesses on Efate, 24% on Espiritu Santo Island, 10% on Tanna, 5% on Epi, 2% on Mystery Island and just 1% on Malekula. Within tourism activities offered by accommodation businesses on their property, barbecues, Island Nights and restaurants and resort restaurants are the most promoted activities, particularly in larger properties on Efate and Espiritu Santo. Local bungalows' websites tend to promote food-related activities such as visiting the gardens, village experiences or catching fish for dinner for a small fee which increases ni-Vanuatu participation in the industry and their tourism earnings. These tour activities, however, are less frequently promoted than other activities also offered on accommodation businesses' websites. Only one resort's website on Efate promotes an activity in which local people provide a local food demonstration inside the resort's property. This activity is a good example of how local participation in the industry can be enhanced by the promotion of food-related activities on the Internet.

Table 5.9: **Accommodation businesses' websites promoting food in tours and activities**

Tourism activities in hotels or bungalows		Efate *n* = 59	Santo *n* = 20	Other islands *n* = 1	Total *N* = 97
Activities on the property	Barbecue	6	–	1	**7**
	Restaurants	1	3	2	**6**
	Food in village experience	1	-	-	**1**
	Catch fish for dinner	–	–	1	**1**
	Cooking classes	1	–	–	**1**
	Local food demonstration	1	–	–	**1**
	Events for business lunches	1	–	–	**1**
	Gardens	1	–	1	**2**
	Island Night	2	3	1	**6**
External activities	Restaurants	17	2	–	**19**
	Barbecue	–	1	–	**1**
	Local market	11	2	–	**13**
	Island Night at other resorts	3	-	1	**4**
	Picnicking	1	4	2	**7**
	Supermarket stores	2	-	–	**2**
	Village experience	–	2	2	**4**
	Vegetable gardens	–	1	3	**4**
	Fishing	–	1	–	**1**
	Tour of a vanilla plantation	–	1	–	**1**
	Tour of a coffee plantation	–	–	1	**1**
Total		**48**	**20**	**15**	**83**

Restaurants and the local market are the external food activities most often promoted by businesses on their websites, particularly on Efate and Espiritu Santo. Picnics are well promoted on Espiritu Santo and Tanna as a support activity included in other tours. While tours on the most developed islands have the broadest scope for providing food in tours, other outer islands tend to concentrate on agricultural activities. Rural activities have the potential to strengthen local participation in the tourism industry and create development in rural areas (Rogerson, 2012a), but they are little promoted.

The audit of the websites shows that accommodation businesses are proficient in displaying pictures to promote tourism activities, but the role of food is very low compared with other activities (see Table 5.10). Pictures of activities developed on the property tend to show tourists enjoying a meal that could be anywhere; the images do not provide any sense of identity of Vanuatu as a unique tourism destination.

Table 5.10: The number of accommodation websites with pictures of activities in their property

Images in pictures	Efate n = 5	Aneytium n = 1	Epi n = 2	Malekula n = 1	Santo n = 20	Tanna n = 14	Total N = 97
Pool / beach	24	1	2	1	11	3	42
Water sports	11	–	–	–	5	1	17
Total Food	7	1			2		10
Tasting	1						1
Preparing	1						1
Cooking	2						2
Locals	3						3
Tourists	5	1			1		7
Barbecue	1						1
Fish		1					1
Dish	1				1		1
Melanesian Feast	1						1

A hotel on Efate shows a picture of tourists at a Melanesian Feast along with an explanation of the local fare provided during the experience (see Figure 5.9): "Try delicious local foods such as tuluk, kumala and lap lap and enjoy coconut milk from a freshly cut coconut. During the meal your host will describe the dishes being served and methods used for cooking them" (Hideaway Island Resort, 2004). Melanesian Feasts are cultural experiences held by hotels. Yet, despite the word "Feast", it is the dances and other performances that are promoted more than the food. The picture and description of the cultural experience prepare the tourist for their encounter with new food, bringing familiarity and knowledge.

Figure 5.9: An Island Night or Melanesian Feast

Source: Hideaway Island Resort (2004)

Pictures promoting tourism activities and tours outside the businesses' property centre on water sports and cultural features rather than food (see Table 5.11). Only the islands most developed for tourists, Efate and Santo, show food in pictures when promoting tours. Outer islands, such as Aneytium and Malekula, do not show pictures of food when promoting tourism activities, suggesting that the tour operators on these less-developed islands do not consider food as a potential tourism resource. And herein lies the challenge: while those islands more developed for tourists may be more aware of international tourism trends, they also have fewer links to the local communities.

Table 5.11: The number of accommodation websites displaying pictures of tours

Images in pictures	Efate n = 59	Aneytium n = 1	Epi n = 2	Malekula n = 1	Santo n = 20	Tanna n = 14	Total N = 97
Water sports	18	–	1	–	–	2	**28**
Diving	14	–	0	–	10	1	**25**
Culture	8	–	1	1	6	6	**22**
Total Food	6	–	–	–	4	–	**10**
Tasting	1	–	–	–	–	–	**1**
Preparing	0	–	–	–	–	–	**0**
Cooking	0	–	–	–	–	–	**0**
Locals	2	–	–	–	1	–	**3**
Tourist	2	–	–	–	3	-	**5**
Local market	4	–	–	–	1	-	**5**
Dish	1	–	–	–	-	-	**1**
Fish caught	-	–	–	–	2	-	**2**
Picnic	-	–	–	–	1	-	**1**

Pictures depicting food tend to display tourists or the local market. Pictures of the local market are small but provide a sense of place, showing agricultural products and local people (see Figure 5.10). Pictures showing tourists picnicking on the beach, however, promote Vanuatu as a sun, sea and sand destination rather its potential for culinary tourism.

Figure 5.10: Pictures showing different discourses of food experiences

Source: Oyster Island Resort (n.d) and Village de Santo (n.d.)

While the promotion of local food in businesses' websites can create demand for local food experiences, the Internet can also enhance community participation through the use of hyperlinks. The use of hyperlinks can facilitate local development by transforming a tourism website from being merely a virtual brochure to a virtual community of networks (Levinson & Milne, 2004). In Vanuatu, though, the potential of external hyperlinks is not been fully exploit (see Table 5.12). External hyperlinks are used in websites of accommodation businesses located on Efate and Santo to link to diving and cruising activities as well as to other tourist information. Two of these businesses provide a link to a word document about Ekasup village, as the village does not have its own website.

Table 5.12: The types of external hyperlinks found in accommodation websites

Hyperlinks to websites	Efate n = 59	Espiritu Santo n = 20	Tanna n = 14	Total N = 97
Destination websites	3	1	0	**4**
Diving, cruising and water sports	3	5	0	**8**
Ecotours	1	2	0	**3**
Tanna tours	2	0	0	**2**
(Brochure about) Ekasup cultural village	2	0	0	**2**
Golf	1	0	0	**1**
Travel agents, airlines	0	3	0	**3**
Other destinations	1	0	0	**1**
Tanna Island Coffee	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**

Two websites of foreign hotels use external hyperlinks to link to other businesses that are owned by their company but located in different islands of Vanuatu. External hyperlinks create linkages between websites and increase the possibilities of the websites being viewed by tourists searching for tourism information (Baggio & Antonioli, 2009). Local businesses without a website not only reduce their chances to advertise themselves and their community, but also miss opportunities to be linked to other websites; this increases the inequality of opportunities of local businesses compared with internationally owned large business, which are exploiting all the advantages that the Internet can offer (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Of the 97 audited accommodation websites, only one business has an external hyperlink to a local food producer and activity. And even then, the hyperlink "Tanna Island Coffee" is placed among 24 other external hyperlinks to weather sites, journal articles, and YouTube videos, and therefore it can easily be missed.

Although there is a lack of external hyperlinks to link accommodation businesses to local producers' websites when promoting tourism activities, two internal hyperlinks appear that have potential to contribute to the development of the community: "About us" and "Vanuatu" (see Table 5.13). Accommodation businesses located on the outer islands appear keener on using these internal hyperlinks in their websites, and they

usually use them to provide information related to food. The acknowledgement of food in the hyperlink "About us" might relate to the importance of food within Vanuatu culture and community life. In Vanuatu, as in other South Pacific island nations, people feel strong and emotional bonds with their natural environment. These strong ties are the focus and basis of communities' traditions and values (Fennell, 2008). Oliver, Berno and Ram (2010) state that *kastom* ceremonies are food-based, linking community, culture and the natural environment, yet very few of these links and stories and traditions relating to food are shown on the Internet. The hyperlink "About us" emerges as a potential link where local residents, through their businesses' websites, can express their aims and activities within the community. The websites of local bungalows on the outer islands tend to acknowledge nearby villages, background of the family, or mention any nearby local stores whereas larger properties on Efate use the "About us" link to give a more general idea about their businesses.

Table 5.13: The number of accommodation websites using internal hyperlinks

Links	"Vanuatu" hyperlink			"About us" hyperlink			
	Y/N	General information	Food	Y/N	Presentation	Community	Food
Islands							
Efate	20	16	8	20	19	8	5
Outer islands							
Aneytium	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Epi	1	0	0	2	2	2	2
Malekula	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Santo	11	10	4	6	7	4	3
Tanna	3	2	0	9	7	4	1
Total	**36**	**29**	**13**	**38**	**36**	**18**	**12**

The audit of accommodation businesses' websites also shows differences in their use of the "Vanuatu" hyperlink. Most of the businesses located on Efate use this hyperlink to provide basic information about geography, climate or time differences; such information usually comes with a map. Maps have great potential for not only providing basic information but also showing linkages with local communities, yet most of the

maps displayed only show the location of Vanuatu in the South Pacific, highlighting Port Vila on the main island of Efate. Some businesses provide a map of Efate, highlighting attractions outside of Port Vila; however, information regarding tourist routes, nearby villages and possibilities to promote and enhance the use of food are overlooked.

Accommodation businesses located on the outer islands provide more specific information in their websites about their location, with eight showing a more detailed map that includes nearby villages and local attractions. The role of local food in those maps could be enhanced by highlighting the local market, such as the market of Lenakel on Tanna (see Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: Map showing the western part of the island of Tanna

Source: Sunset Guesthouse Bungalows (2010)

Websites of accommodation places located on Efate show a greater level of proficiency in the use of internal and external hyperlinks than do businesses located on the outer islands (see Figure 5.12). Internal hyperlinks are used to enhance information of other businesses facilities than local food. There is a lack of using external hyperlinks to local producers' websites that could contribute to better integrate the agriculture sector with

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tourism. Although these findings support that businesses in rural settings tend to adopt less technology, or use the same one but less effectively, than those located in urban settings (Reino et al., 2011), there are some issues regarding the potential of the Internet to enhance linkages between tourism and the local food in rural areas.

Figure 5.12: The use of the Internet to link tourism with local food by accommodation places
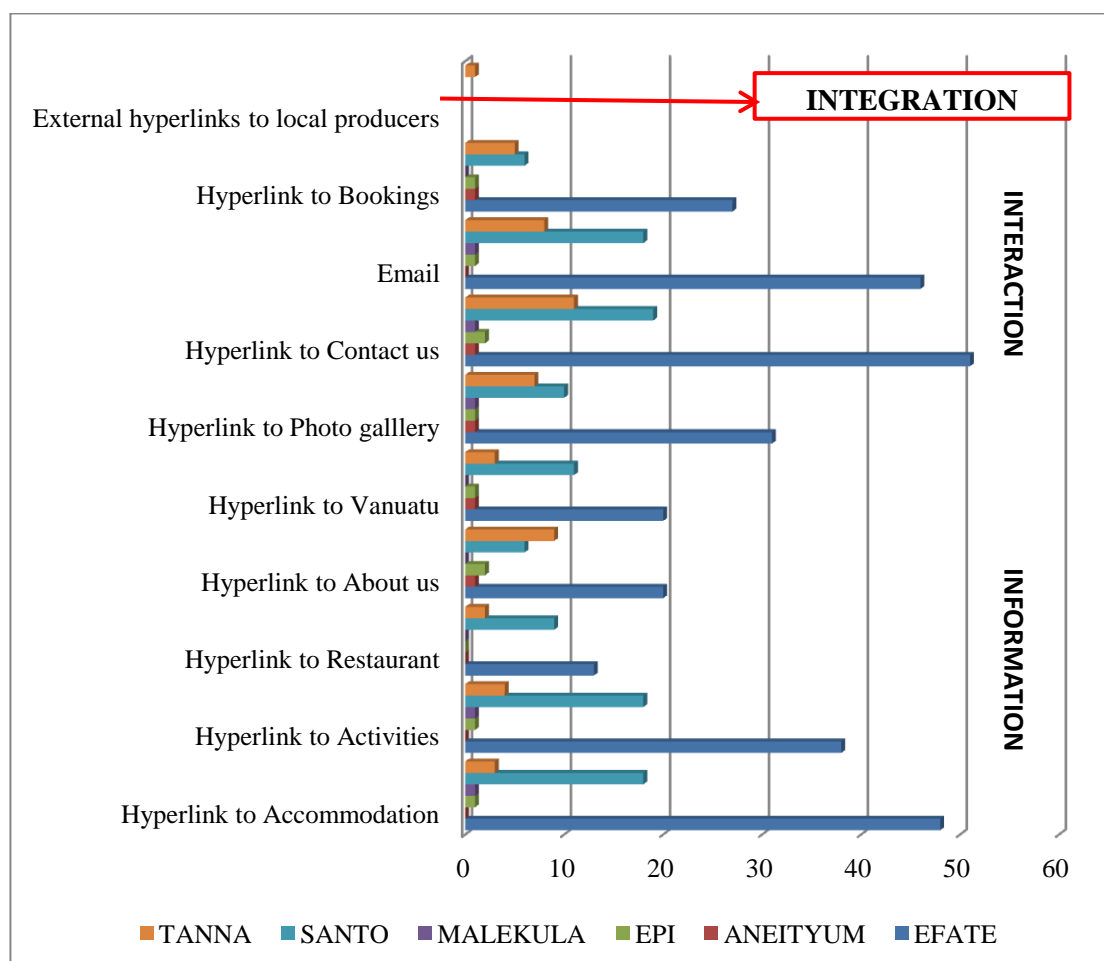
Accommodation businesses located on the outer islands have more information on their websites about agricultural activities and their communities than do those located on the main island. Therefore businesses located on the outer islands demonstrate more potential in creating linkages between the tourism industry and the rural communities of Vanuatu. Even so, the audit of accommodation websites shows there is little promotion of food-related activities, while water activities are the most frequently promoted. Maximising the role of the Internet implies taking full advantage of websites as a marketing medium (Sangpikul, 2010) and as a development tool (Milne, In press). At the moment the role of the Internet in enabling linkages between hospitality businesses

and local producers in order to enhance community participation in the industry is not being exploited in Vanuatu: accommodation businesses' websites contain little information about local food and integration with local producers is non-inexistent.

5.2.3 Local events and festivals

The promotion of local food in events and festivals can benefit local producers and businesses as they attract tourists and bring positive economic impacts to a region (Lee & Arcodia, 2011). The audit of destination webites shows how tourism can strengthen participation by ni-Vanuatu in the industry by the promotion of local food at events and festivals. The analysis examines the type of events promoted on destination websites, the promotion of food at those events, and the use of hyperlinks to enhance such food promotion.

The analysis of type of events indicates that national and regional destination websites show more willingness to promote events and festivals in Vanuatu than do private and community websites. Cultural, sports and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) are the most promoted events (see Table 5.14). Community websites do not appear to be actively promoting local events, despite their potential to do so; indeed, none of the audited community websites mentions any local events. Of the 39 audited destination websites, only three promote a food event – one at the regional level and two at the national level. The PIPSO, at the regional level, is the only reviewed destination website that promotes the South Pacific Food and Wine Festival, which was in Fiji in March 2012; the event was not promoted in the SPTO website or other relevant destination websites. One of the aims of the Festival is to encourage sustainaibility in the industry by helping farmers to supply local produce to resorts (Wright, 2012). The lack of promotion of this important food event suggests that at the regional level there is a lack of support of initiatives that consider food as essential tourism resource (Berno, 2011).

At the national level there are only two destination websites that promote food events in Vanuatu: the Vanuatu Chefs Association website promoted a food event that was held in 2010 but with no recent updates, while the Destination Pacifique Sud Vanuatu website still promotes a culinary art show without specific dates or characteristics for the event. Food events are an important promotional tool for local food culture and thereby a vital part of culinary tourism, a subsector of the tourism industry that is increasing in demand (Horng & Tsai, 2010). A study conducted by Horng and Tsai

(2010) includes the analysis of government websites of six Asian countries; the study found that all of the government websites offer information regarding food culture festivals to attract international visitors. In contrast, national-level destination websites of Vanuatu do not promote future food festivals that tourists can take into account when planning their trip, and thereby the country is not maximising its opportunities to market itself as a desirable destination for tourists in general, and for culinary tourists in particular.

Table 5.14: The number of destination websites promoting events and festivals

Type of events and festivals	Regional $n = 10$	National $n = 17$	Private $n = 7$	Community $n = 5$	**Total** $N = 39$
Sports events	1	5	-	-	**6**
MICE	5	1	-	-	**6**
Weddings	2	1	1	-	**4**
Food events	1	2	-	-	**3**
Cultural events	1	6	1	-	**8**

Findings from Smith (2009) report that when an event is allocated to a peripheral area, promotional benefits can accrue that contribute to the sustainable development of the area. Therefore, although most destination websites tend to promote cultural and sport events rather than food, such events could also increase the consumption of local food. The marketing is a key factor in delivering such economic benefit (Wood & Thomas, 2009) and the reviewed destination websites provide limited information about the promoted cultural and sport events, including whether local food is provided during the event. Most of the promoted sport events, such as the Vanuatu Open Ocean Swim and Vanuatu Marlin Classic, are concentrated in Port Vila (see Figure 5.13), leaving little opportunity for rural communities to participate in and hence gain economic benefit from these events.

Figure 5.13: Sports events in Vanuatu

Date	Title	Venue	City	Type
24.05.2012 - 24.05.2012	Adventure Race – Millennium Cave, Espiritu Santo	Espiritu Santo	-	Sports
25.05.2012 - 02.06.2012	Vanuatu Marlin Classic 2012	Vila Harbour, Efate	Port Vila	Sports
27.05.2012 - 27.05.2012	Adventure Race 2, courtesy of Holiday Inn	Port Vila, Holiday Inn grounds	-	Sports
09.06.2012 - 12.06.2012	Vanuatu Open Ocean Swim	Vila Harbour, Efate	Port Vila	Sports
12.07.2012 - 12.07.2012	Kiwanis Race Ball	Warwick Le Lagon Vanuatu Resort	-	Sports
13.07.2012 - 13.07.2012	Kiwanis Race Calcutta	-	-	Sports
14.07.2012 - 14.07.2012	Kiwanis Charity Cup Horse Race	Efate, Port Vila	Port Vila	Sports
21.07.2012 - 21.07.2012	The Wilco Relay	Efate, Port Vila	Port Vila	Sports
14.08.2012 - 19.08.2012	Tusker Golf Open	Mele Golf Course, Efate	-	Sports
01.11.2012 - 01.11.2012	Melbourne Cup Day, Port Vila	-	-	Sports

Source: VTO (2009)

Cultural events show more potential to strengthen the participation of ni-Vanuatu in the industry as most of them are held on the outer islands where 80% of the rural people live. Some of these cultural events, such as the Port Sandwich Art and Cultural Festival in Malekula and the Back to my Roots Festival in Ambrym, are held for several days which enhances the potential of local food being consumed and tourism benefits spreading to the local communities. Little information is provided about food and, for some events, the VTO website only provides an online brochure indicating that lunch is provided every day. The online brochure does indicate that there is a cooking demonstration, but gives no further details that would encourage tourists to try the new food and cultural encounter. The promotion of local food at festivals and in villages would increase tourists' knowledge and familiarity with the local food (Mak et al., 2012) and enhance tourists' culinary experiences.

Public holidays, such the Independence Day celebrations, can also increase the consumption of local food. Festivities are held throughout the country with food stalls set up by the local people (see Figure 5.14). These festivities present a good chance to increase awareness of the area as a food tourism destination. By showcasing the region's food in a traditional way, the tourist is offered both food and a cultural experience (Lee & Arcodia, 2011). The destination websites note that Independence

Day is a public holiday in Vanuatu, but do not promote the festivities or give any details about what is offered on that day.

Figure 5.14: Food stalls at the Independence Day celebrations in Luganville

Source: Photograph taken by the author

The analysis of the use of hyperlinks to promote events reveals some significant findings: only one-half of the destination websites (19 out of 39) have an "Events" hyperlink on their home page; only one-fifth (eight out of 39) provide internal hyperlinks for some of the events, directing the user to another web page with further information; fewer still (just 7 out of 39) provide emails or a phone numbers; and only two websites have external hyperlinks that direct to the event website (see Table 5.15). The promotion of an event on the Internet allows information to be widely disseminated, but the lack of hyperlinks reduces the potential that the Internet can provide. A study conducted by Dickson and Milne (2009) in New Zealand revealed that 60% of business respondents agreed that they could receive greater benefits from hosting events if their businesses were provided with more information prior to the event.

Table 5.15: The number of destination websites using hyperlinks

Use of hyperlinks	Regional *n* = 10	National *n* = 17	Private *n* = 7	Community *n* = 5	Total *N* = 39
Events hyperlinked on the home page	7	9	3	0	19
Internal hyperlink to further event information	6	5	0	0	8
Contact details (email/phone)	2	6	0	0	7
External hyperlink	2	0	0	0	0

The SPTO website provides an example on how events are promoted by destination websites. The website lists important events held during the year, but only larger events, involving international and national sport competitions, have an external hyperlink that directs the user to the event website (see Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15: List of events and public holidays in Vanuatu

Source: SPTO (2008)

Events websites can serve as a portal to existing community websites and should be redesigned to promote the destination and its tourist attractions (Dickson & Milne, 2009), such as the local food. The following quote is an example of how local food is little acknowledged in the website of a cultural event held in Port Vila:

> There will be environmental awareness activities on the site. Stalls will be set up on the festival grounds to sell food and kava as well as items bearing the LGSF message. All food & drink will be served in biodegradable containers (Fest'Napuan, 2012).

The Internet can play an important role in building closer relationships and linkages between communities in the promotion of events (Dickson & Milne, 2009). In Vanuatu, events' websites are difficult to find and, even when available, have few links to the local communities of Vanuatu. Through their websites, the tourism industry can play an important role in promoting events in Vanuatu in a way that contributes to the sustainability of the area. However, the audit has shown that destination websites are currently not providing local food information when promoting events, nor are they not making use of hyperlinks to direct the user to more relevant information. Therefore potential opportunities that events and the Internet can offer to the rural communities are being missed.

Creating a programme of festivals and events is seen by local policymakers as an imaginative response to creating distinctiveness (Wood & Thomas, 2009). Destinations will be affected by the image of the events being hosted, and so need to think about what aspects of their image they want to develop, staging events to assist their objectives (Smith, 2009). The promotion of local food and cuisine when marketing an event can enhance the culinary scene of the destination (Wood & Thomas, 2009). Increasing the promotion of local food provided at local events and of local food-related events, particularly on the outer islands of Vanuatu, would result in more opportunities for ni-Vanuatu to participate in the tourism industry.

5.2.4 Community initiatives

One way to stimulate linkages between tourism and local food is to promote rural tourism on the Internet (Milne et al., 2009). This would be a challenge for the communities of Vanuatu because they have low presence on the Internet and, like other remote and rural communities, face challenges of geographic dispersion and the low subscriber density associated with difficult access and high costs (Akca, Sayili, & Esengun, 2007; Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Constructing village and community

websites can present its own challenges, though, such as disagreements within the community (Milne, Speidel, Goodman, & Clark, 2005). Nevertheless, if consensus can be reached, the creation of a community/village website can bring to these communities the benefits of the Internet (Dyson, 2011).

The Internet can create opportunities that strengthen the local community by stimulating collective action, economic conditions and the expression of local identity (Haythornthwaite & Kendall, 2010). The five audited community websites promote tourism initiatives, acknowledging tourism as a potential resource to increase economic benefits to their communities. In the audited community websites, internal hyperlinks, such as "About us" or "Aims", are visible on the home pages, and these links are used to explain the community's philosophy. Expected outcomes of tourism initiatives are also explained on the websites (see Figure 5.16). Yet, once again, the role of food as an essential tourism resource appears absent – local food is not mentioned as a medium through which sustainable tourism initiatives can be developed nor as resource for enhancing cultural experiences for visitors.

Figure 5.16: A community website showing their aims for tourist initiatives
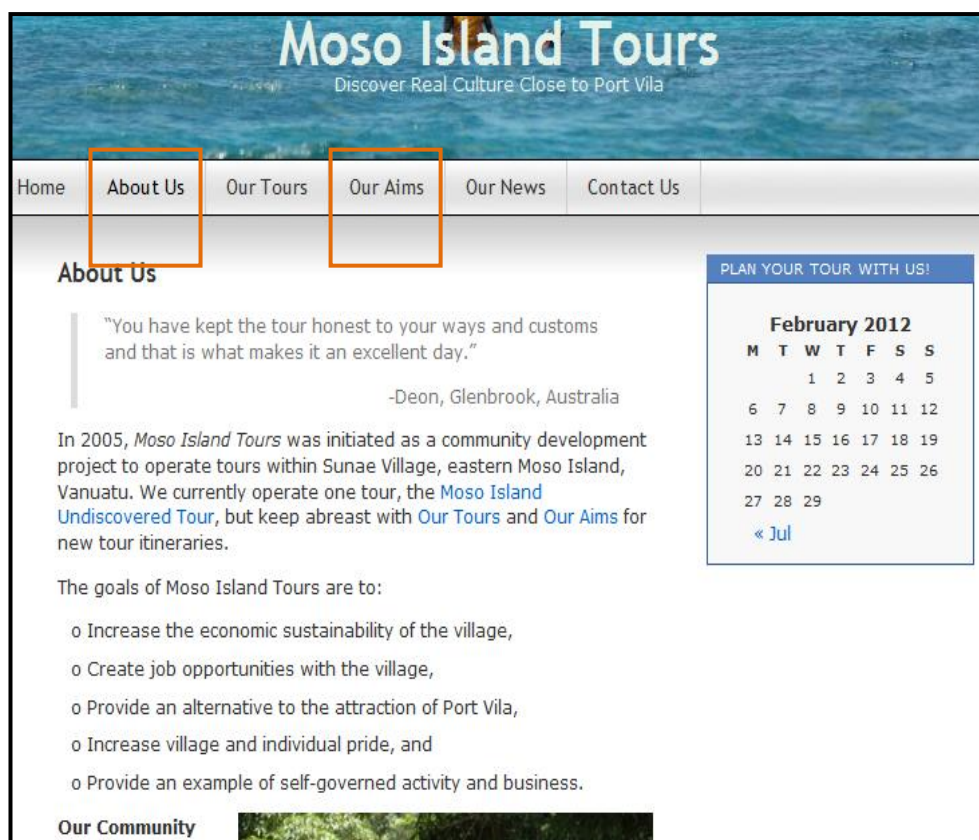
Source: Moso Island (n.d.)

The reviewed community websites mention local food when explaining subsistence within village life (see Table 5.16), so providing the visitor with a discourse about ni-Vanuatu's identity and lifestyle. However, the information in the websites does not extend to promoting local food experiences for the visitors, reflecting that the communities do not yet consider food as a potential tourism resource. Rather, explanations about local food mainly appear to highlight the importance of ni-Vanuatu maintaining their natural resources. There is passing mention of some local produce as a result of agricultural activity, but stories and unique information involving the local cuisine and ni-Vanuatu's food culture are not mentioned in the audited websites The fact that four out of five of the audited sites are a community development project initiated by an NGO might also affect the communities' identify displayed on the Internet (Dyson, 2011).

The Internet can help in strengthening linkages between visitors and the local economies by the use of hyperlinks from the community website to other relevant community interests (Deuchar, 2012; Singh, 2012b). Only one of the five audited

community websites provides a list of restaurants, missing opportunities to link with local businesses; however three non-local restaurants appear promoted.

Table 5.16: Categories of local food information in community websites

Local food and cuisine information	Number of community websites N = 5
Sustainable use of their land and natural resources	3
Agriculture as part important of the economy	2
Enhancement of community awareness	1
Local produce information	2
List of restaurants	1

Community websites show proficiency in the use of images on their home page to highlight features such as the water environment and local people, but local food does not appear as an important element when displaying images on home pages (see Table 5.17). Yet, although local food is not shown as central attraction for tourism experiences, there is certain presence of local food in community websites, which has important implications for this research.

The content analysis indicates that the only website that shows large images featuring food is a local blog (Figure 5.17). Images and contents are provided by a ni-Vanuatu who gives detailed explanations of the island of Espiritu Santo and how people live there. The front page of the blog shows the very important rural aspect of Vanuatu and how important agriculture and natural resources are for the subsistence of the community. There are pictures of local people working the land, local products and villages very rarely seen in other tourism websites. These types of images stimulate the sale of local products, agricultural services such as farm tours, or even farm holidays (Saxena et al., 2007; Telfer & Wall, 1996). Also the blog contains feedback from people of the community, grateful for the display of pictures and information about their island. While the majority of the tourism websites mainly focus on the eastern part of Santo, the blog provides a hyperlink to up-to-date information about the west of Santo, although information has not been included yet. This blog shows the independence that the Internet provides to remote and local communities, enabling them to express and present themselves in the international marketplace; it also shows the potential of the

Internet to build community initiative and strengthen networks (Deuchar, 2012; Milne, In press).

Figure 5.17: Students harvesting vegetables on the island of Espiritu Santo

Source: Sanma Online (*Sanma Online*, n.d.)

Community websites also display smaller pictures to supply further information. However, in the set of smaller pictures, food is one of the categories with the lowest frequencies. One community website presents two small images of food: one of large number of paw-paws, and the other of a local person climbing a palm tree for a coconut. Both pictures convey meanings related to organic and fresh produce while providing authenticity and sense of place. While appearing only as a small feature in the website, these pictures represent an important source of community livelihood, showing links with the natural environment.

Table 5.17: The types of images shown on the home pages of community websites

Images on home page	Main pictures	Small pictures
Sea, beaches, island view	2	2
Local people	1	3
Cultural artefacts	1	1
Tourist	1	1
Water sports activities	0	2
Local food	1	1

The audit of community websites shows that the local communities of Vanuatu are doing their best to promote tourism experiences on the Internet to attract international visitors. The use of the Internet is starting to be an essential tool to market communities' tourism initiatives with images and explanations to show their identity as a community. The promoted tourism initiatives, however, lack culinary experiences which would enhance their tourism earnings and also attract more visitors. The Internet can contribute to strengthening the relationship between local communities and visitors; however, it is still being used as a static marketing tool rather than an effective mechanism to create development and change.

5.3 Summary

The analysis of online food reviews show that these are valuable sources of information as they meet information gaps not covered by the tourism websites. Online reviews also provide evidence that local bungalows can be good places to taste local food and live authentic and culinary experiences. With low local Internet usage, though, there is no evidence that online reviews are valuable sources of information for the local businesses, who could use them to better understand costumers' needs. Thus the Internet in Vanuatu has untapped potential for enhancing interaction between the remote local businesses and their global customer base.

The Internet is playing an important role in the development of the tourism industry in Vanuatu. This role could further increase the sustainability of the industry by contemplating how local food should be managed as a tourism resource and by using Internet attributes to better link tourism with the local food. Tourism business and community websites, with potential to strengthen the participation of ni-Vanuatu in the

industry, primarily promote water-based activities. Community websites highlight local food as an important element of their identity but do not link food into tourism activities. Tourism operators' websites promote food in all kind of tours but more as a supportive activity to meet the tourist's physical need to eat rather than offering tours that promote a local food experience. Websites of local businesses on the outer islands and community sites show potential in enhancing linkages between tourism and local food, but show little understanding about the potential that local food experiences can bring.

Chapter 6 : CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Recapitulation

Tourism in the South Pacific has been predicated on the sun, sea and sand images associated with large-scale tourism (Berno, 2011). The industry has been characterised by a high degree of economic leakages and a poor multiplier effect (AUSAID, 2006b; Republic of Vanuatu, 2008). The need to increase linkages between tourism and local food has been well identified among researchers as a way of retaining tourism revenue in the region (AUSAID, 2006b; Berno, 2011; Milne, In press). The rise of culinary tourism, and the recognition that food experiences provide new ways to explore authenticity and showcase the cultural and national identity, represents a vital opportunity for developing countries to strengthen linkages between tourism and local food sectors (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Karim & Chi, 2010; Richardson-Ngwenga & Momsen, 2011). Linkages between tourism and local food need to be stimulated by demand, and one way is by promoting the use of local food as an attraction, emphasising the local identity of the region (Hall, Kirkpatrick, & Mitchell, 2005; Milne, 2009b; Timms & Neill, 2011). The Internet is a powerful driver to grow food tourism and enhance linkages between tourism and local producers in destinations (Milne, Clark, Speidel, Nodder, & Dobbin, 2009; Surenkok, Baggio, & Corigliano, 2010). Despite the recognised importance of the Internet in tourism, in developing countries the Internet does not offer much help to visitors interested in local food experiences (Surenkok et al., 2010). Research conducted in Tonga and Niue reveals that tourism websites contain very little information on local food and cuisine to assist travellers when planning their trip (Milne, 2009b; Singh, Milne, & Hull, 2012).

This research has explored the potential of the Internet to increase and create linkages between local food and tourism using the case study of Vanuatu. A web audit of 190 tourism websites was conducted; the audit comprised 39 destination and 151 tourism business websites. The study also includes the analysis of 346 online reviews of tourists' feedback on their experience of local food when staying in local bungalows. Under an interpretivist perspective, content and discourse analyses report findings consistent to existing tourism research into the development of linkages between local food and tourism in SIDS.

6.2 Summary of the research findings

A low level of Internet presence of local tourism businesses is highlighted as a challenge in the development of linkages between food and tourism. The research identified that 78% of local bungalows on the outer islands do not have a website, and therefore depend on destination websites to promote their activity. Destination websites seem more willing to promote tourism businesses located on Efate, which are usually foreign-owned, than those located on remote islands, which are more often owned by ni-Vanuatu. The WTEC website has stood out during the research process as a potential website to link tourism with the local economy. The WTEC website advertises the largest number of bungalows on the outer islands, providing information with a sense place, including interactive maps with walking tracks and villages. However, even on the WTEC website, there is little promotion of local food.

The research has identified how local food in Vanuatu is promoted by the tourism websites. Although local food as an attraction is starting to appear in destination websites, it is not promoted as a main attraction of the country. Information provided in the form of images and written descriptions is aimed at featuring or describing attractions involving the water environment. Efforts to promote cultural experiences and tourism beyond Port Vila have been identified, but local food does not appear to be considered as an important cultural tourism resource. There is a lack of information about the types of produce available and places where local food can be found and tasted. This lack of food information means that one of the country's key points of difference from other sun, sand and sea destinations is not considered, a finding that is consistent with research conducted in Tonga (Milne, 2009b). The local cuisine of Vanuatu is not promoted as a major tourist attraction despite it being a resource that can showcase local identity and add authenticity to the tourist's experience. Opportunities to explain local stories and display images that could show the links between local food, community and place are missed.

Destination websites could enhance the promotion of local food by the use of internal hyperlinks, although the audit of the Vanuatu websites shows that these are rarely used. Instead, the small amount of local food information displayed usually appears scattered throughout the web pages, making it difficult to find. An internal hyperlink could gather together all the information about locally grown food, indicating geographically which types of produce are typical of each island. The hyperlink would make information

more visual and facilitate access to tourists keen to taste local food when visiting an island. Other studies have also suggested that food-related internal hyperlinks in tourism websites to enhance linkages between food and tourism (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Kim, Yuan, Goh, & Antun, 2009).

Tourism businesses in Vanuatu do not take advantage of the Internet to promote the local food of the country. Out of the 70 audited tourism businesses with a restaurant, only nine attach a menu to their website –six are on websites of businesses located on the main island of Efate, three on the outer islands. Audited websites of tourism business with restaurants rarely promote the use of local products for their meals. The use of local produce usually appears in businesses' websites that also promote the use of imported ingredients. The local cuisine of Vanuatu is even less promoted than the local produce, being largely ignored by the websites. Only 20 tourism businesses promote local cuisine on their websites, to varying degrees. Nine tourism businesses promote dishes that are a blend of international and local cuisine, while only two promote exclusively the local cuisine as a valuable tourist experience. Images of and information about local dishes and traditional recipes are scarce, making it difficult for tourists searching for the local cuisine of Vanuatu to know what to expect and what it looks like. Berno (2011) states that Vanuatu, like other South Pacific nations, is not known as a destination for culinary tourism, and therefore tourism websites may prefer to promote other tourist attractions. This research argues that an increased promotion of local food in tourism websites would only contribute to foster visitors' knowledge, familiarity and interest in searching for new food experiences.

This study also showed that the promotion of local producers in destination websites is very limited, and thereby the potential role of the Internet in creating linkages with local food and tourism websites is not being maximised. The destination websites that do promote local food producers mention them only briefly and with little purpose of enhancing the consumption of local food. Destination websites do not use structural features, such as internal or external hyperlinks, to link with local producers' websites and supply further information. This lack of external and internal hyperlinks does not enable the potential of the Internet to interact and be more integrated with local food networks, which could stimulate communication and relationships between both sectors.

The examination of tourists' feedback on their experiences of local food shows that there is a demand for local food experiences and – just as importantly – that this

demand is not being fully met. The category with the highest number of occurrences shows visitors' enthusiasm for the food that they had tried when staying in local bungalows. Audited reviews also show visitors' enjoyment of participating in local food experiences that involve experiencing ni-Vanuatu people's daily lives, particularly on the outer islands. Reviewers staying in local bungalows, regardless of location, said quality and freshness are factors essential to their satisfaction when eating local food. The reviewed online feedback also showed tourists' disappointment when meals are Westernised or not many options are given, with some reviews even advising future visitors to bring their own food. The research shows that there is a potential demand to increase the consumption of local food, and hence benefits to local communities from tourism in Vanuatu. Such demand for local food can be stimulated by displaying relevant information on tourism websites, increasing their interactivity and linking, when possible, to local producers', businesses' and communities' websites.

The study argues tourism websites have potential to strengthen rural communities' participation in the tourism industry by promoting food-related tours and activities. The study showed that tour operators' and accommodation businesses' websites are very focused on promoting water activities, with their primary aim being to show attractiveness of the location, such as pristine beaches. While tour operators show willingness to include meals as part of the tour package, there is little acknowledgment of the local food and cuisine on most tours, with local food experiences being mainly promoted on cultural tours. The current offer of food in tours relates more to the idea of "food in tourism" than the concept of "food tourism" where the consumption of local food is embraced as another primary activity (Kim et al., 2009). The most promoted food activities by tourism businesses involve barbecues and buffet lunches, picnics, visits to the local market and non-local restaurants. Except for the local market, these activities limit rural communities' participation in the industry and provide little sense of place when promoting Vanuatu as a tourism destination.

The analysis of events promoted in destination websites shows that opportunities to strengthen local residents' participation are being missed. There is only a small number of food events, and very limited information about local food when promoting other types of events. The use of hyperlinks could enhance the participation of the local communities; however, the audited websites do not present external hyperlinks to local communities' websites. The audit of community websites shows that the local communities of Vanuatu are trying their best to promote tourism experiences to attract

international visitors. Local food is presented as an important source of the communities' livelihood, but the audited community websites do not display and promote their local food within tourist experiences. This suggests that local communities do not consider food as a potential tourism resource or appreciate its potential for linking their local agricultural economy into the tourism sector.

6.3 Contributions of this research

This study contributes to existing tourism research in SIDS, especially on enhancing the sustainability and economic performance of the tourism industry by the consumption of local food in destinations. The study explores the potential of the Internet to enable linkages between tourism and local food, and therefore specific Internet focused research has been conducted. This study draws attention to two different yet complementary roles of the Internet in food tourism: how the Internet is used to promote local food on tourism websites, and how the Internet can be used to enhance such promotion to benefit the rural communities of destinations. The research presents the Internet as more than just a marketing tool to promote tourism – the Internet has the potential to also spread development by increasing linkages with local economies. Qualitative content and discourse analyses of tourism websites have been conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the current role of the Internet, concluding that the Internet's potential to link tourism to local food is not being realised in Vanuatu. Little research on this topic has been conducted in the South Pacific region, and thereby this research represents an important step towards a better understanding of the links between local food, tourism and the Internet in the development of the tourism industry.

This study presents evidence of the use of the Internet to promote local food experiences in Vanuatu, addressing a major gap in existing knowledge of outer-island tourism in that country (Cassidy & Brown, 2010). The study examines the promotion of local food experiences in tourism websites and how this varies across the different islands of Vanuatu. Websites of tourism businesses located on the outer islands show potential to attract visitors searching for local, unique and authentic food experiences; such experiences are important for local communities because they underpin linkage creation. Websites of tourism businesses located on the islands that are most developed for tourists, particularly Efate, show a greater willingness to depict types of food and meals that are familiar to the visitor in order to promote a comfortable tourism experience. Although websites of tourism businesses on Efate assist in attracting

consistent numbers of visitors to the country, they have the unrealised potential to also promote and integrate local food experiences as part of the tourist activities, which could increase visitor yield. This study reinforces previous literature that highlights that the outer islands of Vanuatu have the potential to offer a broader range of tourism experiences, thus making the country more attractive as a destination (Cassidy & Brown, 2010). A meaningful use of the Internet to promote diverse and distinctive types of local food experiences can enhance visitors' experiences and result in increased benefits from tourism for local residents.

The study also shows how the Internet can enhance the promotion of local food experiences in destinations. A conceptual framework for exploring links between tourism and local food on the Internet has been employed which could be useful for rural and remote communities in developing and developed countries (see Figure 6.1). By the use of the Internet, local communities have the chance to present themselves to future visitors on their terms (Deuchar, 2012), providing a sense of place. The Internet also allows local communities to understand tourism trends and customers' needs by reading visitors' online reviews (Strauss & Raymond, 2009). The study and research framework highlight that the potential of the Internet to promote food at a destination is not only based on displaying images and written descriptions; the Internet can also enhance food promotion and linkages between food and tourism by the use of internal and external hyperlinks.

Hyperlinks between destination, tourism businesses and community websites enhance communications and networks between the food sector and tourism as well as connect "local stories" of the destination to visitors. Lessons learnt from this research highlight that providing information in tourism websites about local producers and events not only benefits visitors but also members of the community. The initiative of tourism websites to provide links to local businesses and community is critical to facilitate links between tourism and the local economy (Singh, 2012b). External hyperlinks that link tourism websites with local websites might be difficult to find due to a low Internet usage among local residents in Vanuatu. The research provides awareness about challenges that developing countries face to take full advantage of the technology.

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Figure 6.1: Evolved conceptual framework for this research
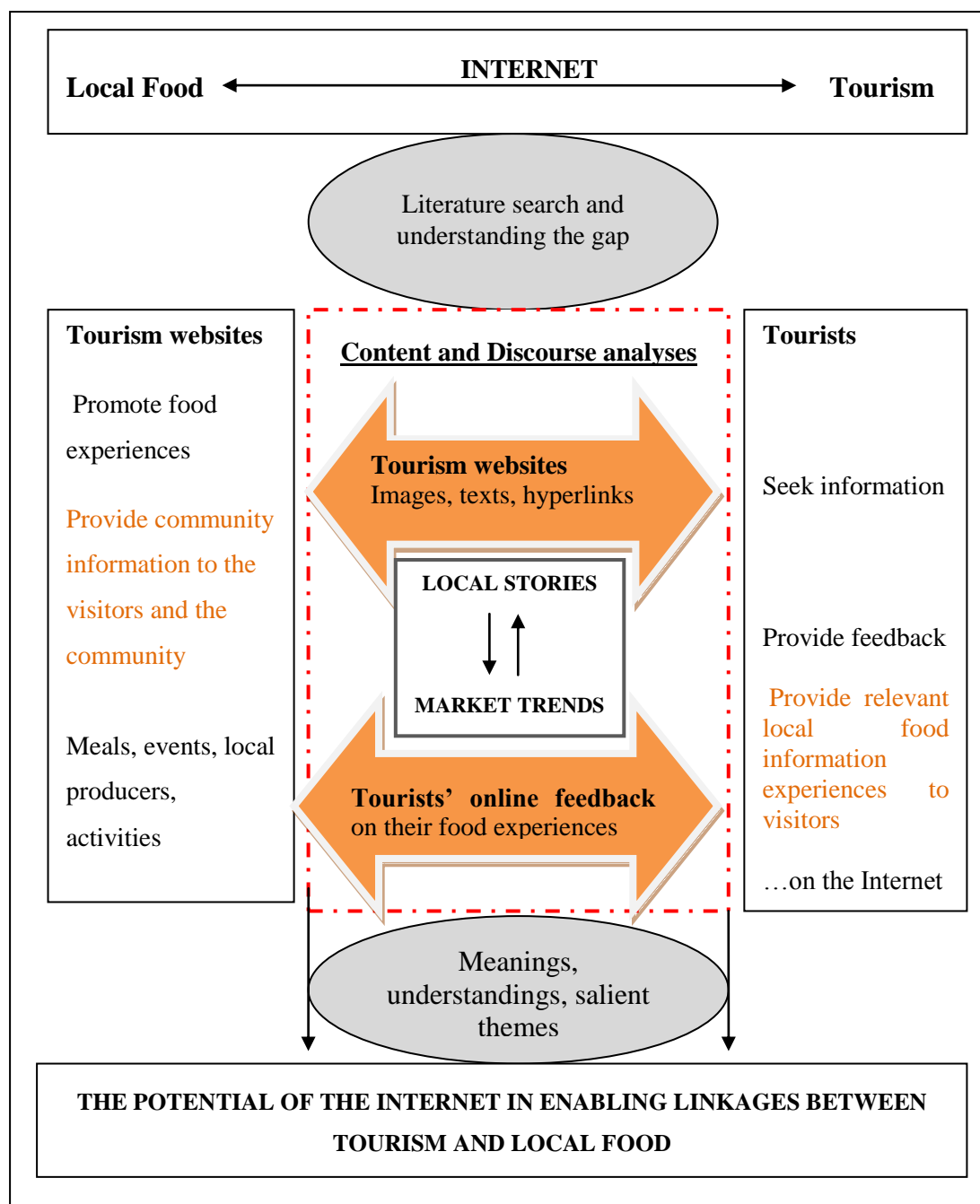
Pacific SIDS experience constraints in the use of the Internet such as lack of computer literacy, availability of hardware, and poor connections. Therefore, aspects of the research framework, such the impact of visitors' online reviews on local operators and the use of external hyperlinks to link local businesses' websites, may vary between developing and developed countries. The research provides evidence regarding the potential of visitors' online reviews and social networks as valuable sources of local food information to other tourists. Online reviews are a particularly important information source for visitors to Vanuatu because the audited tourism websites lack

such relevant information. Online reviews can also be a potential medium for tourism business operators to understand customers' needs and receive information about market trends. However, due to the low Internet usage, particularly on the outer islands of Vanuatu, it is unclear how much the online reviews contribute to the knowledge of owners of local bungalows.

Local communities can use community-controlled and developed websites to overcome challenges that constrain individual businesses from creating their own websites and so improve their use of Internet (Dyson, 2011; Milne, In press). For example, stallholders at a local market could set up a community-controlled website, linked to relevant tourism websites, as a cost-effective way to disseminate information about local food producers to future visitors. This research suggests the design of a local market website following the example of another market's website. La Boqueria Market is the largest market in Spain and Europe, and travel guides promote it as a "must see" when visiting Barcelona. The market's website includes information regarding its history and associations, as well as a map showing all the stallholders (see Figure 6.2). A click on one of the stallholders leads to further information about that business, including types of food and contact details.

Figure 6.2: The website of La Boqueria Market
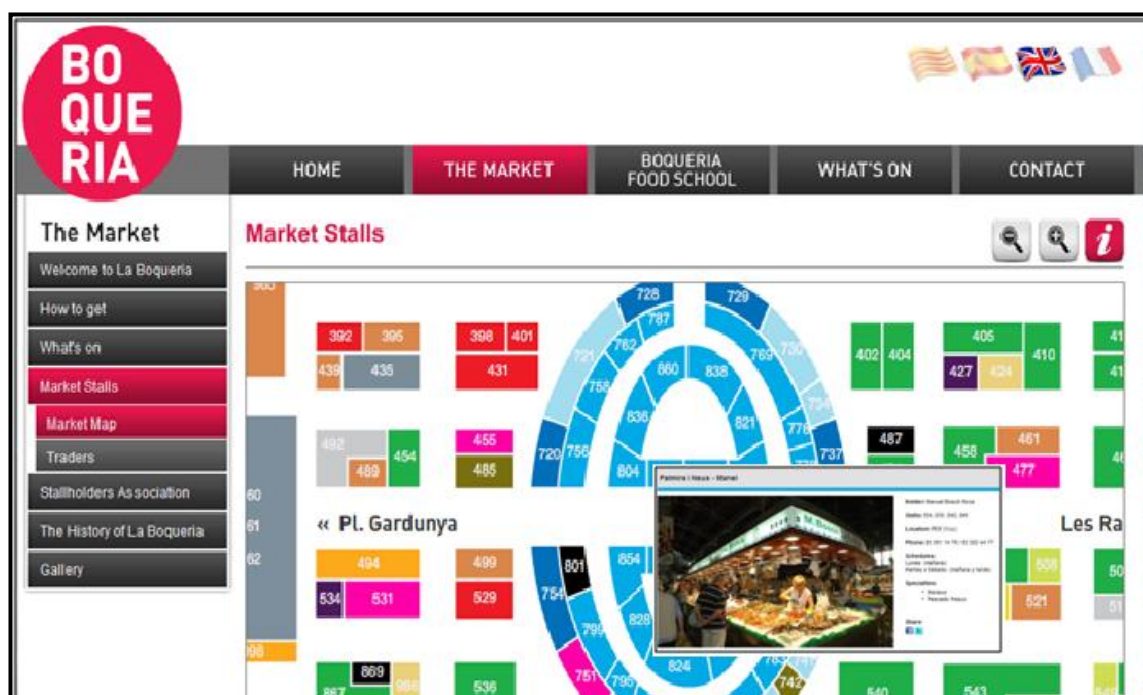
Source: Associacio de comerciants de La Boqueria (2012)

The La Boqueria website provides an example of the potential of the Internet to enhance linkages and networks between tourism and the agriculture sector. A similar website could be constructed in the context of Vanuatu indicating all stallholders with their types of produce available. That information could be enhanced further by providing an external hyperlink to the local village which tourists could also visit. A local market website should be linked to relevant tourism websites, such as the VTO's, to maximise the benefits that the Internet and the tourism industry can offer.

The research shows that rural communities, particularly in the outer islands of Vanuatu, have potential to provide authentic local food experiences to tourists. The research brings understanding about the need of these rural communities to embrace the Internet as a way to be competitive in the industry as well as being in charge of their own development and identity. Marine-Roig (2011) states that those that hold the power will influence how a tourism destination's image is constructed. In Vanuatu most of the tourism businesses promoted in tourism websites are foreign owned and their websites are linked to other foreign tourism websites, and this influences the destination's image. Local communities have the potential to make their food marketable and develop a tourist image in which they feel identified by providing their discourse on their websites (Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011).

This study also is an example of the advantages of conducting specific Internet research in tourism marketing. Internet studies can be developed without the need to conduct field work, allowing the researcher to focus on certain features and particular practices that Internet experiences bring (Silverman, 2004). The researcher has identified strengths and weaknesses in destination, accommodation, restaurant and tour operator websites, and developed an overview of how the Internet is used by the tourism industry in Vanuatu to promote local food.

6.4 Implications for further research

This research has analysed a little understood phenomenon but further research is needed to better understand the potential of the Internet in creating linkages between food and tourism and how it can be used to increase benefits to the village communities of Vanuatu. Research in the Pacific identifies the need for data about tourism demand for local food experiences, perceptions and preferences (Milne, 2009b). Visitors' responses to tourism websites and the relationship between website utilisation and its impact on food tourism are important elements to developing food tourism (Cox &

Wray, 2011). Further research to understand tourism demand for local food and the use of the Internet as a source to gather relevant food information will facilitate accuracy in the promotion of local food in tourism websites.

In tourism, the role of the Internet goes beyond being just a promotional tool – it can also contribute to the sustainable development of destinations (Milne, In press). Ali and Frew (2010) state that successful development of tourism will not be effective without the participation and involvement of the local communities. As this research shows that there is low local Internet usage in Vanuatu, it is essential to investigate local businesses' willingness to use the Internet as a tool to promote local food experiences to tourists as way to expand growth in their communities. Little acknowledgment of local food, particularly local cuisine, was found in the audit of the websites of tourism businesses with restaurants. There are two possible explanations for this: first, restaurants might not be promoting local ingredients in the menus because they use imported food items, and second, the restaurants might be providing local food but not promoting it because the restaurateurs do not see local food as an important tourist attraction. To improve the promotion of local food and local cuisine in tourism businesses' websites, further research is needed to explore why it is currently not being promoted.

Due to the time frame and scope of this research, the examination of visitors' feedback on their local food experiences was limited to visitors' online reviews of local bungalows. Other studies could embrace larger samples and include other type of businesses in order to bring broaden understanding of demand. As a specific Internet study, this research has gained an understanding of tourists' food demands by analysing visitors' online reviews. Interviews and surveys could also be conducted in the future in order to develop a deeper understanding of tourists' food demands.

Despite the low Internet usage in Vanuatu, the research found that the number of tourism websites is growing and the use of social media increasing. During the sampling process of tourism websites, it was observed that some tourism businesses and organisations without a website have a Facebook account. It would be useful to investigate the role and use of Facebook in the promotion of tourism in developing countries, whether it encourages or discourages the creation of tourism websites, and how it affects the links between local communities and tourism.

The natural beauty of Vanuatu, as with other South Pacific islands, conveys images of pristine and remote locations which are linked to the Western world's idea of paradise, and so attract international visitors (Zurick, 1995). Local food experiences form part of those natural landscapes as well as a destination's cultural heritage, and so have the potential to bring sustainability in tourism and enhance visitors' experience in the country (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). This research is only one small step towards realising the potential of the Internet to increase the consumption of local food in SIDS when promoting tourism. Despite current challenges that constrain taking full advantage of the technology, the use of the Internet is vital if small and remote communities are to construct their identities for and become competitive in a more globalised world.

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Appendix 1: Accommodation businesses' websites audited

Name of island	Website	Date Audited
Efate		
Anabru Pacific Lodge	http://www.anabrupacificlodge.com/	Sep-11
Beachcomber Lodge	http://www.beachcomberlodge.com/	Sep-11
Benjor Beach Club	http://www.benjor.vu/	Sep-11
Bethel Village Adventure	http://www.bethelvanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Blue Water Island Resort	http://www.bluewaterisland.com/	Sep-11
Bluepango Motel	http://www.bluepango.com/module.php?cugno=2	Sep-11
Chantilly's on the Bay	http://www.chantillysonthebay.com/	Sep-11
City Lodge	http://www.citylodge.com.vu/	Sep-11
Coconut Palms Resort	http://www.coconutpalms.vu/	Sep-11
Coral Motel	http://newcoral.coralmotel.com/CORAL_MOTEL/HOME_PAGE.html	Sep-11
Crystal Blue Lagoon	http://crystalbluelagoon.com/	Sep-11
Erakor Island Resort	http://www.erakor.vu/	Sep-11
Eratap Beach Resort	http://www.eratap.com/	Sep-11
Fatumaru Lodgen	http://www.fatumaru.com/	Sep-11
Grand Hotel & Casino	http://www.grandvanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Havannah (The)	http://www.thehavannah.com/	Sep-11
Havannah Eco Lodge	http://www.havannahecolodge.com/	Sep-11
Hideaway Island Resort	http://www.hideaway.com.vu/	Sep-11
Holiday Inn Resort	http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/6c/925/en/hd/vlitp	Sep-11
Holiday Motel	http://www.holiday-motel-vanuatu.com	Sep-11
Hotel Olympic	http://www.hotelolympicvanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Iririki Island Resort	http://www.iririki.com/	Sep-11
Island Magic Resort	http://www.islandmagicresort.com/index.htm	Sep-11
Jabsina Guest House, Pango	http://www.jabsinaguesthouse.webs.com/	Sep-11
Kaiviti Village Motel	http://www.kaivitimotel.com/	Sep-11
La Maison du Baniam	http://www.lamaisondubanian.com/	Sep-11
Lagoon Beach Apartments	http://www.lagoonbeachvanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Mangoes Resort	http://www.mangoesresort.com/	Sep-11
Melanesian Hotel (The)	http://www.melanesianportvila.com/	Sep-11
Mele Beach Retreat	http://www.melebeach.com.vu/index.html	Sep-11
Moorings Hotel	http://www.mooringsvanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Nakie Women's Guesthouse, Taloa	http://www.nakie.info/	Sep-11
Nirvana Resort & Spa	http://www.nirvanaresortportvila.com/	Sep-11
Ocean Shores Port Vila	http://port-vila-vanuatu.com/	Sep-11
Pacific Lagoon Apartments	http://www.pacificlagoon.com/	Sep-11

Pandanus Holiday Apts	http://pandanusbay.com/	Sep-11
Paradise Cove Resort	http://www.paradisecoveresort.net/	Sep-11
Poppy's On the Lagoon	http://poppys.com.vu/	Sep-11
Ramada Resort Breakas Beach	http://www.ramadabreakas.com/	Sep-11
Sanddollar	http://www.sanddollar.co.nz	Sep-11
Sandalwood Apartments	http://www.sandalwood.com.vu/	Sep-11
Seachange Lodge	http://www.seachangelodge.com/	Sep-11
Starfish Cove	http://www.starfishcove.vu/	Sep-11
Sunset Bungalows	http://www.sunset-bungalows.com/	Sep-11
Tamanu on the Beach	http://www.tamanuonthebeach.com/	Sep-11
Tradewinds Resort	http://www.tradewinds.com.vu/	Sep-11
Tranquility Island Resort	http://www.tranquillityislandecoresort.com/	Sep-11
Tranquility Island Resort Camping	http://www.tranquillitydive.com	Sep-11
Traveller's Budget Motel	http://www.thetravellersmotel.com/	Sep-11
Tropicana Lagoon Beach Apartments	http://www.tropicana-lagoon.com/	Sep-11
Vanuatu Holiday Hotel	http://www.vanuatuholidayhotel.com/	Sep-11
Vat-Vaka Bungalows, Taloa	http://www.vat-vaka.blogspot.com/	Sep-11
Vila Chaumieres	http://www.vila-chaumieres.com/	Sep-11
Villa 25	http://www.vanuatuaccommodation.vu/	Sep-11
Warwick Le Lagon Resort Vanuatu	http://www.lelagonvanuatu.vu/	Sep-11
Waterfront Quays	http://www.waterfront-quays.com/	Sep-11
Waves on Bukura	http://www.wavesonbukura.com/	Sep-11
White Sands Resort	http://wsvanuatu.com/index2.php	Sep-11
Woravia Holiday Haven	http://www.worawia.com/	Sep-11
Outer islands		
Aneytium		
Mystery Island Bungalows	http://www.mysteryislandbungalows.com	Sep-11
Epi		
Epi Guesthouse	http://epi-island-guesthouse.net/	Sep-11
Paradise Sunset Bungalows, Lamen Bay	http://www.paradisesunsetbungalows.com/	Sep-11
Malekula		
Tam-Tam Bungalows, Vao mainland	http://www.malekulatamtambungalows.com/	Sep-11
Espiritu Santo		
Aore Island Resort	www.aoreresort.com/	Sep-11
Apex Garden Hotel	http://www.apex-garden.com/	Sep-11
Barrier Beach House	http://www.barrierbeachhouse.com.au/	Sep-11
Beachfront Resort	http://www.thebeachfrontresort.com/	Sep-11

Bokissa Private Island Resort	http://www.bokissa.com/	
Coral Quays Resort	http://www.coralquays.com/	Sep-11
Deco Stop Lodge	http://www.decostop.com.vu/	Sep-11
Hotel Santo	http://www.hotelsanto.com.vu/	Sep-11
Lonnoc Beach Bungalows, Hog Harbour	http://www.lonnocbeachbungalows.com/	Sep-11
Lope Lope Adventure Lodge	http://lopelopeadventurelodge.com/	Sep-11
Moyyan House - By the Sea	http://www.moyyan.com/	Sep-11
New Look Motel	http://www.newlook.com.vu/	Sep-11
Oyster Island Resort	http://oysterisland.com/	Sep-11
Ratua Private Island	http://ratua.com.au/en/#/home	Sep-11
Saraotou Private Beach Paradise	http://www.vanuatuluxury.com.au/	Sep-11
Turtle Bay Lodge	http://www.turtlebaylodge.vu/	Sep-11
Unity Park Motel	http://www.unityparkmotel.com/	Sep-11
Velit Bay Plantation	http://www.velitbayplantation.com/	Sep-11
Village de Santo	http://villagedesanto.com/	Sep-11
Vire Lodge	http://www.virelodge.com.vu/	Sep-11
Tanna		
Blue Reef Resort and Tours	http://www.tannabluereef.com/	Sep-11
Friendly Bungalows	http://www.friendlybungalows.com.vu/	Sep-11
Hidden Treasure Bungalows	http://www.hiddentreasurebungalows.com/	Sep-11
Nauhiu Banyan Castle Bungalow, Loanengo	http://www.banyancastle.info/	Sep-11
Port Resolution Yacht Club	www.portresolution.com.vu/	Sep-11
Rocky Ridge Bungalows, White Grass	www.rockyridgebungalows.wordpress.com/	Sep-11
Sunrise Bungalows, Manuapen	http://www.sunrisebungalowstanna.com/	Sep-11
Sunset Bungalows, Lenakel	http://www.sunsetguesthousetanna.com/	Sep-11
Tanna Evergreen Resort and Tours, White Grass	http://www.tevergreenresort-tours.vu/	Sep-11
Tanna Lava View Bungalows	http://www.tannalavaview.info/	Sep-11
Tanna Lodge Resort	http://www.tannalodgeresort.com/	Sep-11
Tanna Melanesian Bungalows, Loanengo	http://www.melanesianbungalows.co.nz/	Sep-11
Turtle Bay Inn	http://www.turtlebaytanna.com/	Sep-11
White Grass Ocean Resort	http://www.whitegrassvanuatu.com.vu/	Sep-11

Appendix 2: Cafes' and restaurants' websites audited

Name of business	Website	Date audited
Efate		
La Casa Restaurant, Grill ad Pizzeria	http://portvilapizza.com/	Oct-11
Nambawan Cafe	http://www.nambawan.com/	Oct-11
The Barge Floating	http://www.toursinvanuatu.com.vu/	Oct-11
War Horse Saloon	http://www.warhorsesaloon.com.vu/	Oct-11
Beef House Grill & Bar	http://www.beefhouse.com.vu/	Oct-11

Appendix 3: Tour operator businesses' websites audited

Name of businesses	Website	Date audited
Efate		
Atmosphere Transfers and Tours	http://atmosphere-vanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Bakro Tours Cultural Village Adventure	http://www.bakrotours.com.vu/	Dec-11
Big Blue	http://www.bigbluevanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Buggy Fun	http://www.buggyfunrental.com.vu/index.html	Dec-11
Club Hippique Adventure Park	http://www.clubhippiquevanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Coongola Day Cruise	http://www.southpacdivecruise.com.vu/	Dec-11
Crusoe Fishing Adventures	http://www.crusoefishing.com.vu/	Dec-11
Edge Adventures	http://www.edgevanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Fernando's Tours	http://seevanuatuwithasmile.com/index.html	Dec-11
Kayaking Vanuatu	http://www.kayakingvanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Kustom Vanuatu	http://kustomvanuatu.com/about.html	Dec-11
Lelepa Island Day Tours	http://www.lelepatours.com/	Dec-11
Lotus Day Spa	http://www.lotusvanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Melanesian Tours	http://melanesiantours.com/	Dec-11
Off Road Adventures	http://www.offroadvanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Port Vila Country & Golf	http://www.pvgcc.vu/	Dec-11
Port Vila Parasailing Ltd	http://www.portvilaparasailing.com/	Dec-11
Sailaway Cruises	http://www.sailawayvanuatu.com/indexs.html	Dec-11
The Reef Explorer	http://www.thereefexplorer.com/	Dec-11
U-Power Sea Adventures	http://www.upowerzegovanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Vanuatu Helicopters	http://www.vanuatuhelicopters.com/	Dec-11
Volcanic Earth	http://www.volcanicearth.com/	Dec-11
Efate & outer islands		

Adventures in Paradise	http://www.adventuresinparadise.vu/	Dec-11
Air Safaris	http://www.airsafaris.vu/	Dec-11
Bali Hai Yatch Charters	http://www.balihaicharters.com/	Dec-11
Ecotours Vanuatu	http://www.vanuatu-ecotour.com.vu/	Dec-11
Island Escape Adventure Cruises	http://www.islandescape.co.nz/	Dec-11
Islands Tours Vanuatu	http://www.islandsvanuatu.net/	Dec-11
Meridian Charters	http://meridianchartersvanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Nautilus Watersports	http://www.nautilus.com.vu/	Dec-11
Ocean Blue	http://oceanbluefishing.com/	Dec-11
Pacific Blue Cruises	http://www.vanuatucruise.com/	Dec-11
Unity Airlines	http://www.unity-airlines.com/	Dec-11
Vanuatu Seaplanes	http://www.vanuatuseaplanes.com/index.html	Dec-11
Wild Blue Fishing Charters	http://gamefishingvanuatu.com/	Dec-11
Outer islands		
Allan Power Dive	http://www.allan-power-santo.com/	Dec-11
Aquamarine	http://www.aquamarinesanto.com/	Dec-11
Eco Adventure Maskelyne	http://ecoadventuremaskelyne.blogspot.com/	Dec-11
Enkahi Discovery Tours	http://www.enkahitouristagent.com.vu/	Dec-11
Lamap Ecotourism	http://www.lamapecotourism.blogspot.com/	Dec-11
Malekula Hiking Trail	http://www.malekulahikingtrail.blogspot.com/	Dec-11
Paradise Tours Santo	http://www.paradisetourssanto.com/	Dec-11
Santo Dive & Fishing	http://www.santodive.com/home.htm	Dec-11
Santo Safari Tours	http://www.santosafaritours.com/	Dec-11
Seascapes Charters	ttp://www.vanuatuseascape.com/index.htm	Dec-11
Splash Extreme	http://www.splashextreme.com/index.php?id=1	Dec-11
Tanna Adventures	http://www.tanna-adventures.com/	Dec-11
Vanuatu Custom Travel	http://www.vanuatucustomtravel.com/	Dec-11
Vanuatu Discovery Tours	http://www.vanuatudiscovery.com.vu/aboutus.htm	Dec-11

Appendix 4: Accommodation businesses without website promoted on destination sites

Name of business	Island
Efate	
Ah Tong Motel	Efate
Bamboo Beach Bungalows	Efate
Beach Hut, Pango	Efate
Chez Troppo	Efate
DXGrand Hotel	Efate
Emman Imalo Motel	Efate
Emua Sunset Guesthouse, Emua	Efate
Friendly Vanuatu Backpackers	Efate
Gimini House	Efate
Golden Dragon Motel	Efate
Habour Villa	Efate
Hotel Formule	Efate
Jalom Guesthouse, Taloa	Efate
Juboes Bungalows, Taloa	Efate
Kalfabun Guesthouse	Efate
Laguna Vista Apartments	Efate
Lazuli Blue Resort	Efate
Malampa Guesthouse	Efate
Namarou Paradise Bungalows	Efate
Napanga Bungalows	Efate
Pasi Lodge	Efate
Paunvina Guesthouse, Unakap	Efate
Rock Pools Bungalows	Efate
Room with a view	Efate
Shefa Guesthouse	Efate
Siloa Guesthouse, Utanlang	Efate
Sunrise Guesthouse	Efate
Takau's Bungalow	Efate
Talimoru Hotel	Efate
Teouma Tropical Garden	Efate
Touvannah Mooring Base	Efate
Treetops Lodge & Bungalow	Efate
Uduna Cove Beach Bungalows, Taloa	Efate

Valea Guesthouse, Taloa	Efate
Vatupau Beach Bungalow, Emua	Efate
Vila Hibiscus	Efate
Wai Melmelu Guesthouse	Efate
Whispering Coral	Efate
Wild Pig Hotel	Efate
Wora-Namoa Sunrise Bungalows	Efate
Outer islands	
Ambae	
Duviara Guesthouse, Ambanga	Ambae
Lolowai Transit House, Lolowai	Ambae
Malomatugu Guest House, Lolopuepue	Ambae
Rose and Jeffry's Paradise Garden House, Ambore	Ambae
Saratamata Guest House	Ambae
Toa Palms Bungalows, Ndui Ndui	Ambae
Tui Lodge	Ambae
Ambrym	
Bae Luk Guesthouse, Meltungon	Ambrym
Bangwere Bungalows, Ranvetlam	Ambrym
Black Beach Bungalow, Lonmei	Ambrym
Bulevak Guesthouse, Baiap	Ambrym
Craig Cove Commercial Guesthouse	Ambrym
Island Experience, Port Vato	Ambrym
John Melkrem Guesthouse	Ambrym
Lalinda PWMU Guesthouse	Ambrym

Milee Sea Bungalow	Ambrym
Nali Guest House, Sameo	Ambrym
Polibetakevar Guesthouse	Ambrym
Sam's Guesthouse, Craig Cove	Ambrym
Savuli Guesthouse, Toak	Ambrym
Solomon Douglas Bungalows, Ranon	Ambrym
Vetmet Bungalows, Ranvetlam	Ambrym
Wakon Sunset Bungalow, Dip Point	Ambrym
Willie Salong Guesthouse, Ranvetlam	Ambrym
Aneytium	
Kenneth's Bungalows, Anelgauhat	Aneytium
Miko Guesthouse, Anelgauhat	Aneytium
Aniwa	
Fatutu Bungalows	Aniwa
Banks	
Aver Bay Guesthouse	Banks
Dori Lagoon Resort	Banks
Eliezer Travel Lodge, Sola	Banks
Fres Win Bungalow, Lewonduwar	Banks
Gateaway Lodge	Banks
Happiness Bungalows	Banks
Harbourfront Guesthouse, Namasari	Banks
John Mark's Point Bungalows	Banks
John Ralph Bungalows	Banks
Leumerous Guesthouse, Sola	Banks
Malau Yacht Resort, Waterfall Bay	Banks
Nerr Bungalows, Vureas Bay	Banks
Nisa Sunset Bungalows	Banks
Paradise Bungalows	Banks
PeBa Memorial Bungalow	Banks

Port Paterson	Banks
Tames Guest House	Banks
Titinson Guesthouse	Banks
Torba Province Guesthouse	Banks
Ulkel Guesthouse	Banks
Weul Bungalow, Namasari	Banks
Wilkins Guesthouse, Sola	Banks
Wongras Bungalows	Banks
Epi	
Burumba Youth Guest House	Epi
Nikaura Sunrise Bungalow, Nikaura	Epi
Erromango	
Meteson's Guesthouse, Dillon's Bay	Erromango
PWMU Guesthouse, Dillon's Bay	Erromango
Maewo	
Asanvari Yacht Club, Asanvari	Maewo
Betarara Community Guesthouse, Betarara	Maewo
Lua ete Salgolo Guesthouse, Kaiwo	Maewo
Pelsa Bungalow, Narovorovo	Maewo
Malekula	
Abetaruvar Bungalow, Tenmaru	Malekula
Alo Lodge	Malekula
Amelenea Bungalow	Malekula
Banam Bay Bungalows, Vetgot	Malekula
Jionmari Beach Bungalows	Malekula
Juliette's Homestay	Malekula
Limereh Guest House	Malekula
Malaflaf Beach Bungalow	Malekula
Malog Island Resort	Malekula
Manu Guesthouse	Malekula
Nambel Chel Bungalow	Malekula
Nawori Sea View Bungalow	Malekula
Ngaim Orsel Guesthouse	Malekula
Pellogk Womens Guesthouse	Malekula
Ronevie Village Guesthouse, Black Sands	Malekula

Rose Bay Bungalows, Sanwir	Malekula
Wiawi Guesthouse, Nabi Protected Area, Wiawi	Malekula
Paama	
Tavir Guesthouse	Paama
Pentecost	
Nagol Bungalows, Salap	Pentecost
Noda Guesthouse, Vanu	Pentecost
Panlike Guesthouse, Ranputor	Pentecost
Samuel's Guesthouse, Baravet	Pentecost
Walap Beach Bungalows, Wali	Pentecost
Walarua Guesthouse, Lavatu	Pentecost
Espiritu Santo	
Asia Motel	Espiritu Santo
Bamboo Garden Motel	Espiritu Santo
Bay of Illusions Yacht Club, Matantas	Espiritu Santo
Beach Divers Lodge	Espiritu Santo
Champagne Beach Bungalows	Espiritu Santo
Jaranmoli Bungalows	Espiritu Santo
Kalmer's Guesthouse	Espiritu Santo
Kerepua Bungalow, west coast	Espiritu Santo
Lajmoli Guesthouse, west coast	Espiritu Santo
Le Nemo Hotel	Espiritu Santo
Little Paradise Bungalows	Espiritu Santo
Loru Camping, Loru Rainforest Protected Area	Espiritu Santo
Migotty Motel	Espiritu Santo
Natapoa Motel	Espiritu Santo
Nokome Collen's Bungalow	Espiritu Santo
Pandanus Guest House, Avunatari	Espiritu Santo
Riviere Motel	Espiritu Santo
Santo Island View Accomodation & Tours	Espiritu Santo
Sunset View Guest House	Espiritu Santo
Tasiriki Tuetueni Guesthouse, south coast	Espiritu Santo

Towoc Bungalows & Restaurant	Espiritu Santo
Tropicana Motel & Backpacker	Espiritu Santo
Vanilla Guesthouse, Avunatar	Espiritu Santo
Vatthe Lodge	Espiritu Santo
Vetape Guesthouse	Espiritu Santo
Vunamele Guesthouse	Espiritu Santo
Shepherds Group	
Kamy Guesthouse, Pele	Shepherds Group
Serdj Guesthouse, Pele	Shepherds Group
Tanna	
Big Bang Bungalows, White Sands	Tanna
Cool Breeze Tree Bungalow	Tanna
Ikamir Guest House	Tanna
Iwaru Beach Bungalow	Tanna
Jungle Oasis Lodge, Loanengo	Tanna
Lenakel Cove Resort	Tanna
Leneai Palm Resort	Tanna
Mountain Breeze Bungalows	Tanna
Paradise View Bungalows, Lounasunan	Tanna
Rocky Island Bungalows, Port Resolution	Tanna
Samana Starlite Bungalows, White Sands	Tanna
Shark Bay Tour and Bungalows, Manuapen	Tanna
Sunshine Coast Bungalows, Loanatom	Tanna
Talapua Guesthouse, Lenakel	Tanna
Tanna Holiday Haven	Tanna
Tanna Hot Spring Bungalows, Port Resolution	Tanna
Tanna Island Dream Bungalows	Tanna
Tanna Ocean View Guesthouse, Lenakel	Tanna
Tanna Tree Top Lodge, Loanengo	Tanna

Tanna White Beach Bungalows	Tanna
Tropical Retreat Bungalows, Iatapu	Tanna
Uma Guesthouse, Lenakel	Tanna
Volcano Whispering Lodge, Loanengo	Tanna
Yasur Tribe Bungalows	Tanna
Torres	
Josedith Bungalow, Lunghariki	Torres
Kamilisa Memorial Resort	Torres
Lenua Guesthouse	Torres
Torres Guesthouse	Torres

Appendix 5: Cafes and restaurants without website promoted on destination sites

Name of business	Website
Efate	
Aririang Restaurant	Efate
Au Peche Mignon	Efate
Bay Watch	Efate
Cafe Deli	Efate
Centrepoint Supermarket	Efate
Chardy's Harbourside Bar & Bistro	Efate
Chez Genevieve	Efate
Chill	Efate
Club Vanuatu	Efate
Daily Pizza	Efate
Daily Snack Vietnamese	Efate
Ebisu Restaurant	Efate
El Gecko Restaurant	Efate
Emily's Takeaway	Efate
Flaming Bull Steak House	Efate
Harbour View Restaurant	Efate
Jill's Cafe	Efate
Kanpai	Efate
Katana Sushi Bar	Efate
La Pizzeria	Efate
La Tentation Restaurant	Efate
La Terrace / Snack Bar	Efate
Le Cafe du Village	Efate
Le Rendez Vous Restaurant and Bar	Efate
L'Houstalet Restaurant	Efate
Ma Barkers Restaurant	Efate
MK Chinese Restaurant	Efate
Nambanga Training Restaurant	Efate

Nirvana Restaurant	Efate
Olympic Snack & Takeaway	Efate
Quick meals at the Market	Efate
Sawasdee Ban Thai Restaurant	Efate
Sea View Restaurant & Takeaway	Efate
Tang Dynasty	Efate
The Beach Bar	Efate
The Port	Efate
The Retreat Seaside	Efate
The Rock Cafe	Efate
The Waterfront Bar and Grill	Efate
Top Deck Bistro & Smuggler's Crew	Efate
Trader Vicks Bar & Restaurant	Efate
Tropik Bistrot	Efate
Wahoo Bar and Restaurant	Efate
Wenzhou	Efate
Wild Pig Restaurant	Efate
Fairways	Efate
Espiritu Santo	
Island Chicken & Fish	Espiritu Santo
Le Cafe de Paris	Espiritu Santo
Market Meal Booths	Espiritu Santo
Natangora Cafe	Espiritu Santo
Ocean King Cafe and Restaurant	Espiritu Santo
Restaurant le Jardin des Saveurs	Espiritu Santo
Santo Bakery	Espiritu Santo
Santo Chinese Restaurant	Espiritu Santo
Won Sing Sing Take Away Restaurant	Espiritu Santo
Tanna	
Wisaka Restaurant	Tanna
Freshwind Snorkelling Restaurant	Tanna
Ianiuia Surf Beach Restaurant	Tanna

Appendix 6: Tour operators without website promoted on destination sites

Name of businesses	Website
Efate	
Big Sista	Efate
Chief Roi Mata's Domain - World Heritage Site	Efate
Ekasup Cultural Village - Nafonu Tatoka Tours	Efate
Evergreen Limited	Efate
Island Safaris	Efate
JoJo Vanuatu - Galavanting Goddess Experience	Efate
Vaughani Shores Vanuatu	Efate
Cultural Round Island Tour - Iarofa Fire Walk	Efate
Destination Pacific Islands	Efate
Downtown Duty Free Vanuatu	Efate
Fly High Paraflying	Efate
Francois Passard	Efate
Frank King Tours	Efate
Fung Kuei	Efate
Ghostbuster Water Tours	Efate
Ha! Friendly Tours	Efate
Holiday Makers Around Island Tour	Efate
Inland Waterway	Efate
Island Gateway	Efate
L'hippocampus the Sea Horse Ranch	Efate
Namo Nana Tradi-Cultural Village Experience	Efate
Narasaed Adventure Tours	Efate
Paradise Pleasure Tours	Efate
Port Vila Tennis Club	Efate
Saltwater Fishing Adventures	Efate
Sandy Beach Island Tour	Efate
Sea Spray Charters	Efate
Secret Gardens	Efate
Semi Submarine	Efate
South Pacific Tours Vila	Efate
Touvannah Fishing and Snorkeling Tours	Efate
Tranquility Tours	Efate
Traveland Tours	Efate
Vanuatu Specialist Tours	Efate
Wet 'N' Wild	Efate
Wisongi Tours	Efate
Zuma Scooter Hire	Efate
Efate & outer islands	
Horizon Tours	Efate & Outer islands
Vanuatu Tours	Efate & Outer islands

Musique Cruises	Efate & Outer islands
Tamaso Aliat Wi Tours	Efate & Outer islands
Outer islands	
Espiritu Santo Cultural Tours	Outer islands
Fiesta Charters	Outer islands
Tanna Vanuatu	Outer islands
Fire Beach Cultural & Eco Tour	Outer islands
Annison Tours	Outer islands
Lewaton Custom & Cultural Village	Outer islands
Santo Country & Golf	Outer islands
Santo Discovery Tour	Outer islands
Santo Heritage Tours	Outer islands
Santo Highlight Tours	Outer islands
Santo Holiday & Travel Tours	Outer islands
Santo Natural Tours	Outer islands
Blue Cave Adventures and Tours	Outer islands
Nengau Entani Tours	Outer islands
Tanna Tours Volcano Sandboarding	Outer islands
Wild Horses Tours	Outer islands
Yakel Village	Outer islands