Food representation and media: experiencing culinary tourism through foodgasm and foodporn

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Some studies have found culinary tourism to support the development of cultural tourism. Through social media, the promotion of culinary tourism has influenced many people to consume food and drinks in variety of ways than they might have otherwise, and has drawn them to different tourist destinations to experience culinary attractions. Two of the most popular words in tourism social media jargon that have arisen with this phenomenon are #foodgasm and #foodporn. Neither of these has been widely studied by contemporary tourism researchers. Tourists using social media services, such as Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Youtube and Twitter, will use the hashtags (#)foodgasm and (#)foodporn on the photos that they share of particularly attractive food experiences, tastes and pleasures. Food representations via social media, especially in the form of photos, have created broader awareness of the diverse chain of global food production, distribution and consumption. Furthermore, pop culture involving aesthetics of food, as well as its social and cultural construction, has created food photography websites and food blogs. This research used content analysis to outline how tourists are using the two hashtags, all of which have implications on culinary tourism promotion and destination marketing.

Keywords: food representation, social media, culinary tourism, foodgasm, foodporn, destination marketing, food photography

Introduction

Food is an unforgettable element of travelling. The look, taste and colour coexist with the who, when, how and where it was consumed. Food memorabilia can also be brought home in the form of food specialty souvenirs (Mao & Lin, 2015). Culinary and food tourism is a world travel trend because this type of travel offers not only the memory of food but also the rich storytelling traditions of indigenous peoples, i.e. the people who have always lived on the land as well as more recent newcomers who have made the land as their home (de la Barre & Broude, 2013). Apart from 'culinary tourism' and 'food tourism' terminology, 'culinary heritage' is a culturally constructed self-generating process, in which culinary artefacts are consumed by various clients, who attribute them with new meanings in different contexts. These dishes and their meanings are dynamic, responsive to social changes and involved with multi-directional processes of negotiation and interpretation (Avieli, 2013).

Media is crucial in the construction of food representation for various purposes, among others is to promote culinary tourism. Some televised programs have been designed to incorporate culinary, tourism, taste and cooking into their concept. These programs involve viewers to actively or directly participate (Hartley, 2012, p.7-9) in the concept promoted, such as 'home cooking', 'do it yourself', 'do it with others', 'go green', 'organic product', 'slow food', 'raw food', etc.. Some movies with culinary theme have also become travel references: *Fleeting Beauty* (2004), *Eating Sausage* (2004),

Coffee and Allah (2007) researched by Fresno-Calleja (2013); *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992), *Big Night* (1996), *Food, Inc.* (2009), *Julie & Julia* (2009), *Ratatouille* (2007), *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* (2011) (Corlis, 2014); *Tabula Rasa* (2014), and *Filosofi Kopi* (2015).

Tourism specifically in a tropical country, such as Indonesia, provides wider variety of culinary. Spices and produce in tropical countries may be hard to find in countries with different climate. The purpose of this article is to elaborate how social media and promotion of culinary tourism has influence people to consume food and drinks in variety of ways than they might have otherwise. Although internet is a popular social media in spreading information on tourism and culinary, however not many studies have explore its opportunities and challenges with regards to contemporary issues in tourism.

In exploring contemporary issues in tourism by using social media to represent food in culinary tourism, we argue that two popular terms in this context are #foodgasm and #foodporn. Hashtag is a sign for trending topic worldwide. We begin with an overview of culinary tourism in popular culture. We then review the history and roots of culinary tourism related to tourism, food, image and taste. Next, we compare Google search results in searching for #foodporn, #foodgasm, #tourism and #culinarytourism shared in Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, YouTube and Twitter. Finally, we argue that #foodgasm and #foodporn provide study opportunities on food representation and media in experiencing culinary tourism and taste. Furthermore, the use of social media can increase promotion of culinary tourism and destination marketing as well as tourists' food knowledge.

Methodology

We use content analysis to indicate the tourism activities of social media users in using both hashtags with implications on culinary tourism promotion and destination marketing. This qualitative study is an introduction for future studies to elaborate further the motivations and behaviours of tourists in culinary tourism with regards to food representation and media.

In essence, we use Google search to analyze and compare how many hits #foodgasm and #foodporn received related to #tourism and #culinarytourism by users of Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, YouTube dan Twitter. Communication chain according to Harold Lasswell (1971, cited in Laughey, 2007, p. 9) includes: who (control analysis); says what (content analysis); in which channel (media analysis); to whom (audience analysis); and with what effect (effect analysis).

Culinary Tourism: Taste and Media

Culinary is a term used within the context of gastronomy, i.e. typical food of a country or region, food and food process, which are different from other country or region (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). '...C*ulinary tourism* was created by Long (2004, cited in Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2013) to articulate the concept of experiencing local cultures through food and activities surrounding food'. Mannur (2010, p.163) describes culinary tourism as: '... a cultural form that has become tooled in vastly different ways, thus producing seemingly dissonant narratives about the ethno-racial identity about the erstwhile foodie'. Culinary tourism can fulfil the objective of tourists on vision, touch, smell and taste (Franklin, 2003). '...Smell is as important as the taste buds in the ability to taste, since flavours and aromas are perceived by the human brain with the olfactory bulb. However, taste remains profoundly subjective because the taste experience can never be physiologically shared' (Trubek, 2008, p.7).

Tourists travel to foreign places to experience the different geography, social and culture. Tourists must adapt to the different living condition, weather and food (Kuhn, 2002, p. 118). They obtain the

knowledge and detailed information on places they visit including its culinary. Some references may be obtained directly through friends and family, or provided by the social media such as food channels, whereby: '... celebrity chefs clearly plays a key role in their co-creation as new contemporary food experts, who, given their celebrity status and elevated voice within society, have access to many elite food actors to influence knowledge...' (Barnes, 2014).

Ning Wang (2000, p.20) states that taste and preference must be confronted with environmental technology within the scope of modernisation. To this effect cultural phenomena is seen as part of romanticism attack on capitalism and industrialism as technology has separated humans from nature and natural amenities, which affects negatively on psychology and creates social problems. Romantic Movement came about towards the end of the 18th century to tackle the negative effect of technology and more so to be the foundation for tourism.

Romantic Movement can be seen through gastronomic consumption in tourism that has become increasingly ruled by culturally embedded symbols, culinary products and traditions. This implies that food is also becoming a more important factor in influencing tourists' motivations for travelling to a particular destination (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2009). Other natural tourism industry that came about is the leisure farming industry that offers food, accommodation, leisure farms, also engage in traditional agricultural activities and enjoy the tranquillity and closeness to natural resources (Huang, 2006).

Food representation and media has an important role in culinary tourism. Media representations refer to *texts* or images that circulate in the media space and carry symbolic content, e.g. advertisements, blogs, and Facebook pages. 'Representation refers to the *process* of re-presenting, the process by which members of a culture use systems of signs to produce meaning' (Orgad, 2012, p. 47-48). Food images and #foodgasm and #foodporn texts may represent different meaning from the intended original meaning. Who and why these different meanings are produced?

Simply put, representation of food meaning is produced and reproduced with or without revision to increase product selling through advertisements. Tourism also uses advertisements for similar purpose. Agro-tourism, ecotourism, culinary rural tourism, gourmet tourism, cuisine tourism, local gastronomy, culinary heritage, gastronomic tourism, gastronomic heritage, and culinary tourism reflect the romanticism concepts to give different food sensations to tourists. Food meaning is constructed to demonstrate social identities with collective memory and roots, which promote a sense of belonging to a territory (López-Guzmán, Di-Clemente & Hernández-Mogollón, 2014).

Studies on representation are frequently elaborated in semiotic context. '...Books, films and so on are understood as *re-presentations*, that is, reflections or reproductions of the real world 'outside' them. [Stuart] Hall offers an alternative...: there *is* a real world outside representation but we can only make it signify and 'mean' through representation. Moreover, representations are not reflexive but *constitutive* and therefore have a real, material impact...' (Procter, 2004, p.125).

Contemporary studies on tourism are important to map food position as a popular theme in media. Food reviews can be found anywhere: food columns, cookbooks, gourmet magazines, and celebrity chef television shows (Probyn, 2000, p. 1-2). '...In postmodern society, making choices about who to be and how to live may be extremely complex, stressful and risky because information is fragmented... Once food becomes plentiful and varied, fashion takes over and the lure of novelty, the trendy become markers of identity, which are used to know and show who we are...'(Blichfeldt, Mikkelsen & Andersen, 2012). Consumers are also involved in tackling issues on food risks raised by public concerns through informative campaigns. '...Consumers would like to have better quality foods but feel at the same time that public information about food risks disturbs their experience of

cooking and eating. Consumers express trust in public control procedures regarding food production – but, at the end of the day, what they most enjoy buying are food products of which they have personal knowledge...' (Halkier, 2001).

Psychologically media dwells in '...an emotional disposition, imaginative and cognitive activity, which has the potential to be converted into tourist activity. The tourist imagination as a concept is capable of capturing the mobility of relationships between tourism and the media' (Crouch, Jackson, and Thompson 2005, p.1, 3). Tourist culinary activities are not only directed at consumption stage, but also from production as well as distribution stages. Ecotourism tour packages offer the pleasures of consuming food differently through Slow Food, '...a global social movement aimed at promoting food that is regionally, ethically, and sustainably produced, and convivially consumed. The movement uses culinary tourist events, such as food festivals and farmers' markets, to promote its philosophy and attract new members...affects foodways and highlights the contingent and challenging nature of practising ethical eating' (Williams, Germov, Fuller, and Freij, 2015).

Globalization as a cultural process involves the nutrition transition of diets, tastes and health profiles from region to region, and especially from the rich West (or 'North') to the poorer South (Lang, 1999). One issue highlighted in culinary tourism is the Slow Food movement: '...a global social movement aimed at promoting food that is regionally, ethically, and sustainably produced, and convivially consumed. The movement uses culinary tourist events, such as food festivals and farmers' markets, to promote its philosophy and attract new members... (Williams, Germov, Fuller, &Freij, 2015). In international relations, food is used as gastro diplomacy: '...another branch of Public Diplomacy where soft power rises as a tool of warfare...has obtained extra concentration and to symbolize food as the gravy to diplomacy's rice. Gastro Diplomacy is also an exceptionally powerful, nonverbal method of communication. Travelling back to a couple of previous millennia, culinary needs preceded diplomatic needs, opening up ancient trade routes and pathways that finally shaped today's global economic and political landscape...' (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014).

Jukka Gronow maps tastes in social relations context. In the 17th and 18th century (Schümmer 1955, cited in Gronow, 1997, p.3), tastes were determined by certain social groups that legitimize other people's tastes based on what they perceived as the best tastes. By mid 18th century a new interest in food, consumption, and health in England emerges at the same time as diet lifestyle (Turner 1982, Aronson 1984, Falk & Gronow 1985, cited in Gronow, 1997, p.6), as well as *English Malady* (sickness or problem in an English system – in this case food) that was rooted in greed and opulence. Modern society identifies modern gastronomy as a discipline and control of individual needs in order to maintain human desire on food and food consumption. Gastronomy has cultured modern consumer tastes by introducing differences and new classifications on food and drinks, as well as their nutrient content (Gronow, 1997, p.8).

According to Immanuel Kant in *Critique of Judgement* (1987, cited in Gronow, 1997, p.86), everyone has their own tastes, and nothing can dispute that. '...There are groups of food enthusiasts: not only does the traditional, exclusive gourmet survive, but there are also the so-called 'foodies', an object of British humour in the 1980s because of their excessive dedication to stylish and pernickety eating. But perhaps the most significant example of all is vegetarianism. Vegetarianism has become a social movement of considerable significance in the UK, where around 6 per cent of the population claim to be vegetarians, a much higher proportion than in other European countries...' (Warde, 1997, p.32). Collective taste according to Herbert Blumer (1969:289, cited in Gronow, 1997, p.106) came about from imperfect fusion between uncertainty and dissatisfaction that stems from new experiences in fashion and the world at large. At this stage, collective taste is abstract, blurred, unbalanced and in need of direction. Fashion innovators and trend setters use this window of opportunity to determine its potential expression and shape. This opportunity especially in terms of

food and food produce, is well used by food bloggers according to Alain Touraine (1974, p.7, 50, 55, cited in Dant, 2003,p.13-14). They use digital technology to control, recommend, persuade, even elegantly force the readers to go and eat at a specified place because of the "image" created in the food blog (Ranteallo & Sitowati, 2014, p.489; see also Mannur, 2010, p.171 about food writing).

Pierre Bourdieu (1984, p.190, 196) stressed that taste in food is determined by social classes on their idea of body, effects of food to the body, health and beauty, as well as function. For example the working class gives more emphasis on (male) bodily strength rather than the shape thus tend to consume cheaper and filling food. In comparison to the professional class, they tend to opt for tastier, healthier, brighter and non-fattening food. Bourdieu concludes that food taste of social classes becomes the foundation that shapes categories of human body. Food presentation and consumption as well as food settings are strictly determined on arrangements that are pleasing to the eyes. Food presentation of edible shape and colour (like an artwork); ethics that determine attitude and body movement; ways to serve oneself and others during meal and the use of different utensils; seating arrangements based on social hierarchy; awareness and controlled on body movements are social rules that need attention in certain food culture. '...Taste is the difference between food as a mere form of sustenance and food as part of life's rich pageant, a part of sociality, spirituality, aesthetics, and more...' (Trubek, 2008, p.6).

Bell and Hollows (2006, p.11; see also Trubek, 2008, p.21-22) state that Bourdieu created a category of character called new bourgeoisie that acts as 'cultural intermediaries' or taste-makers that legitimizes life style and combines the art of consumption, spent and enjoyment. '...food fads, fashions and sects as evidence of atomization and the disintegration of social regulation. However, what Fischler (1980, cited in Warde, 1997, p.32) disparages as cultish may be seen by someone else as commitment to a set of values or mode of life, not pathological but admirable practice. These phenomena might instead be evidence of stylization, niche consumption and neo-tribalism'.

Using #foodgasm, #foodporn, #tourism and #culinary tourism to experience taste

Social media becomes the bridge for tourists and tourism agents to enjoy a culinary adventure. Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, YouTube and Twitter are popular social media used to share free information (specifically texts and images) on food. Instagram allows for photo and video upload and to edit the uploaded file. Instagram is also connected to and can be shared directly on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and many others (https://instagram.com/). 'YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small' (https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/). Flickr can present photo, video and blog of memorable pictures taken with phone camera, or to showcase the best picture or video around the world to become a web celebrity. Flickr user can allow friends, family, and other contacts to comment on the creation as well as adding notes and tags (https://www.flickr.com/about). Tumblr 'lets you effortlessly share...text, photos, quotes, links, music, and videos from your browser, phone, desktop, email or wherever you happen to be. You can customize everything, from colours to your theme's HTML' (https://www.tumblr.com/about). Twitter is an information network of messages with 140 characters called Tweet to find news with interesting topics and updated factual information (https://support.twitter.com/). Apple App Store even produce an application called InstaFood Pro for smartphone with the tagline 'if you want to show everybody what you are eating and do it with style!'.

Advertisements and producers have created a food fetish and co-modification that surpass its own value. The need for food as is for sex, involves attraction, sensuality, pleasure, and enjoyment. At certain stage food has been treated similar to pornography with exploitation and co-modification as

such to please the human senses. At this stage, food is said to be in the context of food porn. Whereas food gasm – taken from orgasm; culmination point of sexual activity – refers to the pleasure after consumption and enjoyment of food and drink. However, Stierand and Lynch (2008, 338-339) view food porn more as culinary innovation.

Tourists who are users of Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, YouTube and Twitter often put #foodgasm and #foodporn on pictures of food to share experience, taste and enjoyment of consuming particular culinary at a specific place. Food representation by the media has increase people's attention to chain of production, distribution and consumption. Furthermore, pop culture incorporates aesthetics and social and cultural construction of food to produce food photography and food blogs (Ranteallo & Sitowati, 2014, p.487-489).

Table 1. Comparison on Google Results (hits) (16 June 2015)

	Instagram	Tumblr	Flickr	YouTube	Twitter
#foodgasm #foodporn #tourism	39,400	2,920	1,840	4,290	4,760
Seconds	0,47	0,40	0,43	0,21	0,44
#foodgasm #foodporn #culinarytourism	64	No results	9	7	5
Seconds	0,52	-	0,79	0,41	0,40
Related hashtags	#foodie #foodphotography #foodculture #foodtravel #foodblogger #taste #gastronomy	#realfoodtravel #eating #tasty #yummy #delicious	#foodadventure #vacation #holiday #travelgram #instatraveling #foodpic #cuisine	#traveler #instatravel #culinary #tourism	#foody #travel #travelling #foodoftheday

Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, YouTube and Twitter expect to fulfil the need of its users. We want to identify the actual level of public interest on tourism and culinary tourism on these applications. Based on the findings in Table 1, search results for culinary tourism is far less than tourism. This should be taken as an important sign and challenge on studies of contemporary tourism. We opted for Google as our search engine instead of Google Scholar to identify the level of public interest on culinary tourism. Nevertheless, further researches into similar topics are needed to make this identification.

Motives behind the use of #foodgasm, #foodporn, #tourism and #culinarytourism in the context of contemporary tourism are controlled by the social media users to convey ideas related to food. We used random search hence we are not able to elaborate on the identities of these users. However, communication chain who - says what - in which channel - to whom - with what effect can be seen in food TV channel Asian Food Channel (AFC) that broadcast Food Hero Asia by displaying #FoodHeroAsia in its broadcast. #FoodHeroAsia is shared on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram (asianfoodchannel.com).

This day and age, tourists cannot be described by a single definition as mere users and recipients that tend to be passive. Present day tourists come from different backgrounds and with different intentions that serve as active users. A general example i.e. food traveller, food blogger, chef blogger, food photographer, even extreme food traveller. The main benefit of using #foodgasm,

#foodporn, #tourism and #culinarytourism is to make public ones activities and travels apart from reasons of narcissistic, selfie photographs and acknowledgement of social economic status by the public. In many social media, popularity is determined by the amount of followers. Popularity is important to support food knowledge in order for the user to inform somebody else what to do and how to think related to culinary tourism.

Culinary tourism at present is going back towards romanticism with the global spread of back to nature movement. This ideological movement is expected to help humanity to face the threats of climate change, continuous raise in population and extreme activities. Culinary tourists are also expected to become knowledgeable and aware of food issues such as food security, global rise in food prices and long term food supply agreements or to acquire land for agriculture (see Obidzinski, Takahashi, Dermawan, Komarudin & Andrianto, 2013). Culinary tourism activities in the context of sociological functions of food consumption support the notion of intergenerational transmission of "good products" by emphasizing the nostalgic touch related to childhood, used by companies as strategic marketing (Alexandra & Picho, 2014).

The users of social media as active viewer are also affiliating and forming social movement related to culinary and food in Indonesia, among others: (1) Gerakan Pangan Aman dan Sehat Indonesia (Indonesia Food Safety and Healthy Movement) to increase critical awareness in the society on Indonesia's food implementation (*Facebook*: GPASIndonesia. *Twitter*: @KonsumsiPangan); (2) Komunitas Cinta Pangan Lokal Indonesia (Community of Local Food Lovers) is a social movement to introduce and raise interest on the variety of local foods in Indonesia (http://pangandindonesia.wordpress.com; *Facebook*: Cinta-Pangan-Lokal-Indonesia); (3) Aku Cinta Masakan Indonesia (I Love Indonesian Food) (@acmID); and (4) Underground Secret Dining, a culinary show for gastronomic adventures with most of the culinary are Indonesian (http://undergroundsecretdining.wordpress.com). These social movements have educated farmers, fishermen and breeders to produce commodity that can compete in the national and international market. Nonetheless, local ways must be maintained in order to preserve culinary taste (Ranteallo, 2015). The impacts of increasing culinary tourism worldwide have given rise to innovation on food literacy; culinary arts; cultural identities in tourism; indigenous entrepreneurship in tourism; and balancing development and sustainability in tourism destination.

Conclusion

Users of social media services, such as Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Youtube and Twitter, use the hashtags (#)foodgasm and (#)foodporn on the photos that they share of particularly attractive food experiences, tastes and pleasures. Furthermore, pop culture involving aesthetics of food, as well as its social and cultural construction, has created food photography websites and food blogs. Food representations via social media, especially in the form of photos, have created broader awareness of the diverse chain of global food production, distribution and consumption, as well as increased knowledge on local cuisines that give rise to the attraction of culinary tourism. The impacts of increasing culinary tourism worldwide stimulate innovation on food literacy; culinary arts; cultural identities in tourism; indigenous entrepreneurship in tourism; and balancing development and sustainability in tourism destination. Further researches on how tourists are using social media services especially the two hashtags, #foodgasm and #foodporn, are needed to assess their implications on culinary tourism promotion and destination marketing.

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