Creating, managing and marketing gastronomy experiences in hospitality and tourism

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Guest Editorial for IJCHM Vol 34 Issue X 2022 on Creating, Managing and Marketing Gastronomy Experiences in Hospitality and Tourism

Welcome to the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management's (IJCHM) special issue on Creating, Managing and Marketing Gastronomy Experiences in Hospitality and Tourism. I would like to sincerely thank our guest editors Dr. Marcello Mariani and Dr. Stefano Bresciani for putting together this very strong and timely special issue. The articles included in this special issue should be well received by scholars, students and practicing managers in our field.
Fevzi Okumus
Editor-in-Chief

Creating, Managing and Marketing Gastronomy Experiences
in Hospitality and Tourism

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1. Introduction

Gastronomy experiences are increasingly becoming major drivers of tourism flows worldwide as they allow travelers to get more familiar with the local culture and traditions of the places visited (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016; Choe & Kim, 2019; Horng & Tsai, 2010). As such, gastronomy experiences have propelled gastronomic hospitality and tourism experiences which are attracting the attention of a high and expanding number of hospitality and tourism firms (Skift, 2019) and fostering regional tourism development. Gastronomic tourism experiences entail the visit to food-themed events and festivals, primary and secondary producers, cooking classes, restaurants and places for which food tasting are the prevailing

travel motivating factors (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Research on this socio-cultural and economic phenomenon has been consolidating (Henderson, 2009) over more than three decades as an area of tourism research (Ellis et al., 2018), often named interchangeably "gastronomic tourism", "culinary tourism" and "food tourism".

Demand for gastronomy experiences is increasing and its drivers have been ascribed mostly to the quest for intangible heritage, authenticity and culture of the visited place as well as engagement of tourists in food-related activities. In a growing number of cases, travelers perceive gastronomy as critical to destination choices (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016) and seek gastronomy-related information before their trips. In other cases, gastronomy is an important component of wider hospitality and tourism experiences.

From a marketing perspective, tourism studies have examined several aspects related to consumer behavior such as motivational, demographic and physiological factors (Kim et al., 2019), perceptions and satisfaction (e.g., Lin & Chen, 2014), preferences (Lee et al., 2015), market segmentation (e.g., Ignatov & Smith, 2006), destination marketing and management (e.g., Okumus et al., 2007). While the disciplinary perspectives adopted in the study of gastronomy experiences entail management (including marketing), socio-cultural studies, geography and culture (Ellis et al., 2018), this Special Issue aims to offer a better understanding of gastronomic experiences from a managerial perspective also in light of economic, social, cultural, environmental, legal, and technological changes (Mariani et al., 2014). For instance, the advancement of digital technologies is radically transforming consumers' information search and booking/purchase behaviors (Mariani et al., 2019), the way companies innovate (Mariani and Nambisan, 2021), as well as how gastronomy experiences are communicated, managed, and marketed. Thus, the purpose of this special issue is to broaden and deepen our knowledge of gastronomy experiences in hospitality and tourism, from a managerial perspective, in a rapidly changing world.

2. Statistics of the submissions

This special issue attracted originally significant interest, with 89 abstracts submitted to the guest editors. Thirty abstracts were shortlisted on the basis of three criteria: 1) clear potential to make significant theoretical and practical contributions to the SI theme; 2) robustness and rigour of proposed methodologies; 3) scientific significance. As a result of the selection, 30 papers were invited for submissions from which 13 papers were accepted. These papers reflect the current ferment around this topic and underline that much has to be explored in the contemporary hospitality management literature in relation to gastronomy experiences. The contexts covered in the studies include different continents including Europe (e.g., France, Italy, and the UK), Asia (e.g., China, Indonesia, Korea, Pakistan, Russia), and Australia & Oceania (Australia and Fiji). Table 1 synthesizes the origin of the papers in this special issue, by considering the country of origin of the corresponding authors.

**Table 1 – Country of Origin of the corresponding author**

Country of origin	Number of papers
America (USA)	1
Asia (China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea, Macao)	6
Australia and Oceania	2
Europe (Italy, France, UK)	4

3. Contributions

This special issue consists of 13 papers, and provides insights on four themes: (1) the nature and measurement of gastronomy experiences (4 articles); (2) the communication of value and image of gastronomy experiences by restaurants and destinations (4 articles); (3) the role of gastronomy experiences in destination marketing and promotion (2 articles); (4) the digitalization and digital transformation of gastronomy experiences (3 articles). Focusing on

different hospitality contexts (restaurants, cooking classes, etc.), the studies provide insights into specific antecedents and outcomes of gastronomy experiences. These four main topical areas of research are represented graphically in Figure 1 and illustrated in the ensuing subsections.

Figure 1 - Main areas of research
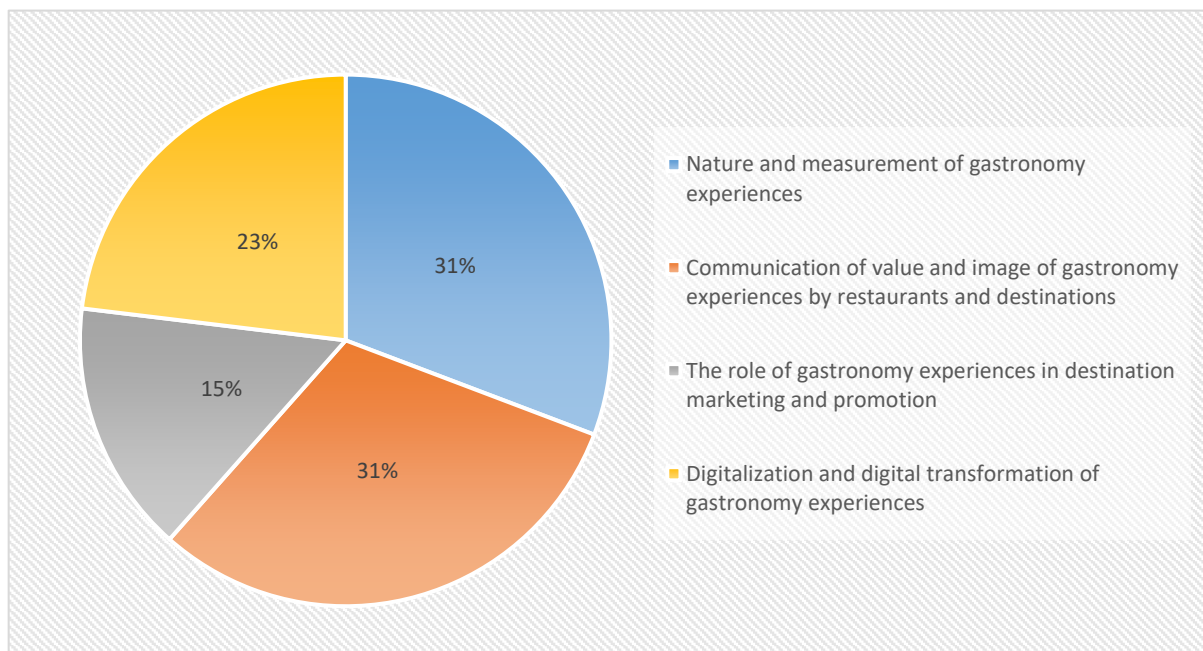
Source: Authors' elaboration.

3.1 Nature and measurement of gastronomy experiences

Through a qualitative case study approach, Japutra et al. (this issue) deal with the integration of life events, life philosophy, and spirituality to improve gastronomy experiences. An in-depth analysis of a plant-based restaurant in Bali, named Moksa, outlines how key elements of life can help create a unique, memorable, and holistic gastronomy experience. These elements should be taken into account by restaurant managers. More specifically, elements such as deteriorating health, love relationship and residential relocation prove to be life events which can cause individuals changes in diets and food preferences. Common life philosophy among

Moksa's clients concerns a healthy lifestyle, sustainability, and cuisine for the soul. Finally, the authors find evidence that spirituality can influence the brand name since the restaurant name is adopted from a Hindu concept and is meant to be more appealing to Hindu than Islamic consumers.

Yoo et al. (this issue)'s research sheds light on cocreated experiences in gastronomy tourism, by analysing the four dimensions of gastronomy experience (i.e., education, entertainment, escapism, aesthetics) on consumer satisfaction. Data were collected from Korean domestic tourists, and the hypothesized relationships have been validated through SEM, suggesting that the four dimensions of gastronomy experience have a significant and positive effect on experience satisfaction. Moreover, the authors find that experience satisfaction influences indirectly the quality of life through subjective well-being which acts as a mediator. Moreover, the degree of cocreation has been found to positively moderate the effect experiences on experience satisfaction. The findings help destination stakeholders and tourism marketing managers to understand the nature of gastronomy experiences and the role of cocreation when designing, developing and promoting gastronomy tourism experiences.

The article of Kesgin et al. (this issue) represents the first attempt to link gastronomy tourism to life satisfaction. It describes the determinant of gastro-tourism well-being through a newly developed model, which considers food-related lifestyle and leisure attitude as antecedents of consumption experience and satisfaction in gastronomy experiences. The authors link consumption experience and life satisfaction by deploying a PLS-SEM analysis on data collected from a sample of 617 respondents (half from the MTurk samples and the remainder from non-MTurk samples). The findings show that food-related lifestyle influences leisure attitude which, in its turn, affects the consumption experience. Moreover, it has been highlighted that life domain outcomes and tourism autobiographical memory have an enduring influence on life satisfaction over time. Furthermore, satisfaction with consumption

experiences contributes to life satisfaction regardless of the experience type (deliberate versus incidental). From a managerial point of view, the administration of positive gastro-tourism enhances tourism well-being, as well as consumption enjoyment and memorably experiences.

The research conducted by Hsu et al. (this issue) deals with the affective components of gastronomy tourism. Building on 80 responses collected from focus groups involving international and domestic tourists in China, the authors develop a scale to measure Tourists' Affective Gastronomy Experiences (acronymized as TAGES). In particular, the authors identify the items of the scale by means of a qualitative investigation, and subsequently validate the scale quantitatively. As a result, "pleasant", "interesting", "fun", "special", and "authentic' have been confirmed as valid keywords, which provide enough information to measure the tourists' affective gastronomy experiences.

3.2 Value and image of gastronomy experiences by restaurants and destinations

The study proposed by Song & Kim (this issue) deals with the relation between gastronomic experiences and destinations, by focusing on ethnic enclaves. The authors develop two experiments by leveraging a sample of 557 British consumers to test the effect of history, location and size of ethnic enclaves and ethnic restaurants on consumers' authentic cultural and gastronomic experiences. Using a 2 (history: long vs short) x 2 (location: Central Business District vs rural; main street vs alleyway) x 2 size/ownership type (big vs small; chain vs independent) between-subjects design, the first study finds that ethnic enclave's size affect consumers' authentic cultural experiences. The second study shows that restaurants' ownership type and history positively influence consumers' authentic gastronomic experiences. Interestingly both experiments testify to the positive association between authentic experiences and behavioral intentions, suggesting how ethnic restaurateurs can effectively develop marketing materials and communicate with target customers to increase authenticity

perceptions and dining intentions.

Sharma et al. (this issues)'s research represents a valuable contribution to domestic tourism literature, by offering a better understanding of destination coolness in the context of domestic restaurants. Through a survey of more than 600 respondents in Italy and Fiji, the research advances a positive association between domestic restaurant coolness and consumers' attitude toward domestic gastronomy in both countries. Moreover, Fiji's sample showed a positive relationship between social return and domestic gastronomy tourism, as well as a stronger relationship between the latter and word of mouth. Overall, this research represents a cross-country analysis with some interesting practical implications for restaurants, policymakers and marketers regarding domestic gastronomy and hospitality.

The study of Montargot et al. (this issue) analyses three-star restaurants in France and shows that restaurants and dining guides do not emphasize the same elements of culinary excellence. The authors analyse the restaurant websites and external authoritative food guides by leveraging lexicometric software, and thus outline five lexical universes of interpretation of restaurant communication. Haute cuisine, indeed, is self-represented thought words which suggest the use of fine products, restaurant singularity with symbolic design and culinary creativity, and, finally, chefs' background by their family anchoring and peers' recognition. These findings can be leveraged by restaurant managers to enhance culinary excellence.

In their work, Yu et al. (this issue) describes how gastronomy live streaming can stimulate impulsive consumption in viewers. In particular, the authors explore the effect of experiences of gamification, perceived professionalism, and telepresence on live stream viewers, by investigating their impulsive consumption. The study is grounded in a stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model where the attributes of live streaming represent stimuli (i.e. gamification, perceived professionalism and telepresence), perceived innovativeness represents the organism and impulsive consumption represents the response. The authors find

that gamification, perceived professionalism, and telepresence can explain impulsive consumption while innovativeness mediates those relationships. In addition, gamification and innovativeness represent necessary conditions for impulsive consumption. From a managerial viewpoint, the findings suggest that managers should enhance telepresence and deploy more interactive gamification activities to increase viewers' impulsive consumption during livestreaming sessions.

3.3 Role of gastronomy experiences in destination marketing and promotion

Aksenova et al. (this issue) investigate the role of cooking classes as a pre-trip marketing tool that can improve the competitiveness of a tourism destination. Through a participatory action research conducted during an immersive cooking class experience complemented by visual and audible representations of the Republic of Tatarstan, the authors observe participants and collect data from focus groups in UK. The study reveals that multisensory experiences steaming from participating in a cooking class before a trip can positively affect the perception of the destination country. The authors find that the perception towards the Republic of Tatarstan changed through the cooking class, resulting in a stronger desire to visit that region.

Franco et al. (this issue) have conducted an exploratory analysis of high-end hotel (Borgo Egnazia) located in Apulia, Italy. Building on interviews with several stakeholders in the town where the hotel is located (Fasano), the authors suggest that luxury hotels in some cases can function as coordinators of a local gastronomic business ecosystem (LGBE). The study emphasizes that some fundamental organizational capabilities are required to orchestrate the destination's products and offerings about local food culture. These capabilities are relational, combinative, and promotional. Relational capabilities concern the destination's willingness to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences with local partners and competitors, as well as maintaining stable relationships with local institutions or participating in strategic decisions

about local administration. Combinative capabilities relate to how a destination should propose new offerings that combine the diversities and specificities already present in the local community. Finally, promotional capabilities empower promotional and marketing activities.

3.4 Digitalization and digital transformation of gastronomy experiences

The study of Guan et al. (this issue) sheds light on customer intentions and behaviours while dining in robot restaurants. In particular, it analyses the impact of robot restaurant servicescape and robot service competence on customers' behavioural intentions, by considering the mediating role of hedonic value and utilitarian value. Using data collected in China and a SEM, the model tested shows that the servicespace of the robot restaurant and the service competence of robots significantly affect the behavioural intentions of customers, while hedonic vs. utilitarian value represent two effective mediators of this relationship. The authors also find that individual openness to change negatively moderates the positive impact of servicescape on utilitarian value, as well as negative attitudes toward robots negatively moderate the positive influence of robot restaurant servicescape and robot service competence on hedonic value.

Vo-Thanh et al. (this issue) elucidate the perceived value of hospitality service digitalization. Based on a qualitative study relying on 53 interviews submitted to restaurant managers and customers, this study suggests that digitalization can improve both the supply and demand side: on one hand, it could enable restaurants' staff to accomplish tasks more effectively and quickly, by increasing turnover and profit; On the other hand, customers can get several benefits, such as service speed, facilitation of orders, rapid checking of menus and dish availability. Overall, this study highlights the differences in relation to the service digitalization in fine-dining restaurants compared to other types of restaurants.

The research proposed by Yousaf (this issue) explores food vlog dynamics, drawing on the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) lens. It analyses how the features of local and foreign food

vloggers affect the perception associated with the consumption setting of food vlogs, while drawing some conclusions on people's response in terms of attitude towards the food vlog, destination's food image, and visit intention. Based on a survey of more than 400 consumers interested in food-related journeys (from both Pakistan and abroad), the study suggests that source features (i.e., perceived similarity, trustworthiness, expertise) influence positively food vlogs' authentic and experiential values. In their turn, source perceived similarity, source expertise, food vlogs' authentic and experiential values affect positively experiences of parasocial interaction that, in its turn, influences positively visit intention. Food vlogs' authentic and experiential values influence positively attitude towards the food vlog which in its turn influences positively destination's food image. From a practical point of view, recommendations are provided in terms of incorporating food vlogs into destination marketing campaigns.

4   Concluding remarks

Each and every article of the special issue generate significant insights for hospitality and tourism management scholars and managers, by digging in depth about the nature and measurement of gastronomy experiences, the communication of the value and image of gastronomy experiences by restaurants and tourism destinations, the role of gastronomy experiences in destination marketing and promotion, the digitalization and digital transformation of gastronomy experiences. Often practical implications are discussed in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The guest editors of this special issue hope that the articles will contribute to recognize the full potential of creating, managing, and marketing gastronomy experiences in hospitality and tourism, and will inspire readers and motivate scholars to conduct studies in this exciting research area. Future developments in hospitality and tourism management will arise from

leveraging and exploiting the opportunities brought about by the creation and management of gastronomy experiences, also through (digital) technologies.

Last, but not least, we would like to acknowledge the intellectual efforts of many talented colleagues and professionals who have supported us during this editorial journey. Firstly, we want to express our gratitude to Professor Fevzi Okumus, EIC of the journal, for the splendid opportunity to host this special issue in this renowned journal. His continuous support and professionalism during the entire process have been valuable. Secondly, we are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for having offered constructive, deep, and well-timed feedback during the review process. Finally, we would like to thank all the scholars who reacted to the call for papers and, of course, to the authors of the articles contained in this special issue.

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