



Capturing Culinary Culture in Digital Era: Food Photography's Influence on Gastronomic Perception and Cultural Identity

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Abstract. Food, once limited to the sphere of eating, now shows a complex part for it goes past simple support. It exists as a form for cultural expression and an art form to share and exhibit. Images related to food surge, and the ubiquitous hashtag for "#food photography" often accompanies those images to underscore their function that evolves to be social and communicative and provocative in contemporary society. Food photography used to be a genre that catered just to print media but now it prominently shapes perceptions of cuisine, even as it transcends customary boundaries. It now plays quite an important role in the visual representation of culinary experiences. Food delivery company strategies now feel its influence. Semiotics recognizes food as a language as well as a symbol of culture and ideology. Semiotics has ventured into understanding food's connotative value as well as its role as an aspect of social identity since it sees food in this kind of way. This approach agrees with contemporary foodism. Our postmodern society widely practices foodism through expression via various media. A certain manifestation of such a phenomenon is in the practice of food photography, which can include individual expressions, known as "food photography," similar to a food "selfie," and food photography as also an art form. Social networks do virally use photography showing how it shapes cultural narratives in the age that is digital. This study seeks to clarify how food photography affects views of cuisine plus its sensory feelings experienced by viewers.

Keywords: Food photography, gastronomy, culinary culture, social media, semiotics, cultural identity, food imagery, sensory experience, visual representation, ethical implications.

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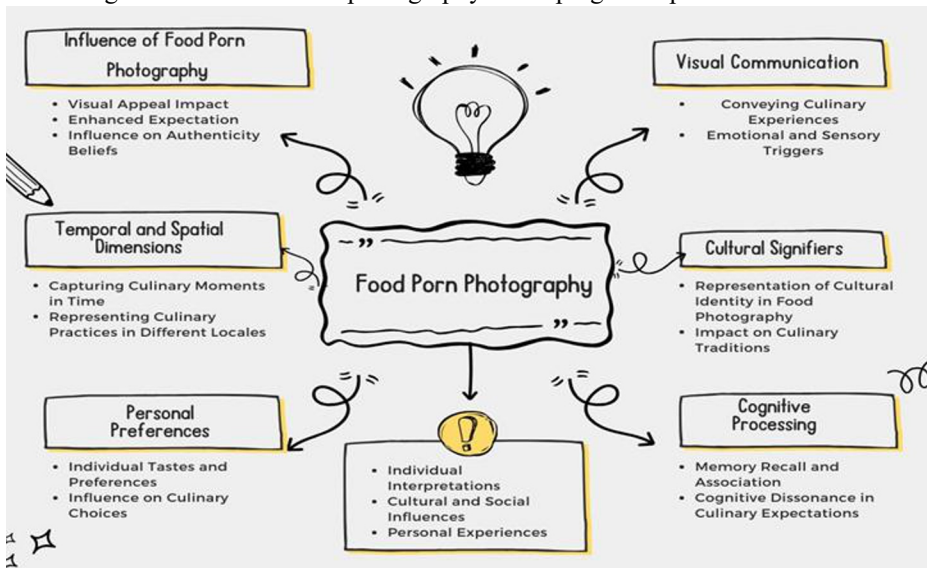
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1 Introduction

The term "food photography" in this modern, shifting context of media has also shifted from the strictly culinary sense. It now refers to appealing photographs or videos of food and eating behavior found in various sources, including cookbooks, magazines, and social media. The reasons for posting travel photographs as status symbols have become a major area of research since tourists are apparently consuming conspicuous social media travel experience dramafication. One very visible aspect of that cultural exchange is the sheer volume of taking and distributing food photographs, which is at once a normalized social phenomenon. It has turned into a key feature through which cultural significances associated with the presentation and depiction of food are communicated. The practice of aesthetics regarding food photography is more than mere aesthetics; it can alter the experience of eating by deconstructing and reconstructing the basics involving plethora aspects like taste valorization. Current studies underscore the significance of social and cultural research that include food consumption at their core, pointing out that geography is not the only discipline where study must occur. In addition to that, extravagant dining experiences shared on social media stand as evidence not only to seek aspirations in social ranking but also to distinctiveness considerations and positive attitudes toward food photography. Visitors seeking high-end restaurant experiences are interested in gastronomy as an element of cultural heritage and identity being expressed through brand identity development. Attractiveness goes along with good interdependence between cuisine, region, landscape, and culture involved here. Well-being implications on travelers: their journey does not just involve traveling but also results from interactions with destinations - incidents will impact travel behavior changes for both destination choices-and will result in changes necessary for visitors' welfare improvements. While exploring how visual emphasis on food photography affects what we know about food, it's critical to consider all ethical and cultural dimensions attached to this form of representation.' This study aims names affectation Food Photography Perceptions Taste-inguration-relation ship Restored traditions authenticity impression cooking willingness'. Aim: To enhance appreciation for understanding complexity co-existing relations Visual Culture Gastronomy Cultural Identity Globally Exposed.

Fig 1: The Role of Food photography in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine



Source: Researcher's Compilation

1.1 Eyes on Flavour: Culinary Desires Captured

Food has been used as a canvas for art throughout history, going beyond its basic function as food [10]. Food is interesting as a subject for photos not only because it can be eaten, but also because it can be used as a deep canvas for artistic experimentation. Artists have used pictures of food to explore feelings, points of view, and societal topics, showing a wide range of hopes and social norms. This old practice has changed a lot since the rise of social media, especially sites like Instagram and Snapchat, where pictures are the most important part of communication. With the rise of camera phones among young people, visual storytelling has become more popular [11]. This has made food photography ubiquitous and an important part of modern dining encounters.

The transformative effect of social media on gastronomic experiences is unmistakable [12]. Aside from conventional restaurant review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor, tourists also actively participate in a "camera eats first" trend known as "foodstagramming." This is the act of taking pictures of food that look good and sharing them on social media. It has effects that go beyond the foodstagrammer's direct experience and create a huge amount of visual user-generated content (UGC). Food Instagrammers help shape the culinary image of a place through both text and pictures. They do this by using food as both a product and a marketing tool [13].

"We are what we eat" is a deeply held belief of Susan Bright that still rings true today, when standard marketing channels no longer shape the culinary image of a destination alone. The power of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) through traditional media is now matched, if not surpassed, by the crowds of foodies who share their culinary adventures on the internet. The changing relationship between food, art, and social media shows how people are exploring food in new ways [14]. In this digital age, people share and visually record their wants, which shapes the essence of food locations.

1.2 Exploring the Diverse Realm of Food photography Images on Prominent Social Media Platforms

Social media influencers play a significant and game-changing role in the complex realm of food photography photographs on major social media platforms [15]. These influencers have a significant impact on consumers' views, preferences, and decisions. They are frequently regular people who have naturally established a strong online presence [16]. Their content is genuine and relatable, which has attracted a large following as they have risen from humble beginnings to become important people. Influencers play a major role in the world of food photography, especially in the growing phenomenon of "digital food," by weaving amateur food photos into our everyday life. On sites like Instagram and Flickr, influencers post carefully selected images of food that are more than just pretty pictures; they are performances of their own "culinary capital." The delicately conveyed cultural knowledge of social standing through the meticulously created visuals is what this alludes to [17]. Nevertheless, these images go beyond mere individualism; they serve as extensions of larger social practices and experiences, encouraging a feeling of community in the online realm. The term "food photography" refers to the practice of intentionally disseminating visually appealing depictions of food with the intent to attract viewers [18]. The vibrant colors and alluring textures of the photos are meant to elicit a variety of emotions, from want to curiosity. Instead of only presenting product information, these culinary graphics try to alter customer emotions through frequency and curation, taking them on a sensual and emotional journey [19]. As a result, influential people on social media play a crucial role in molding the fascinating world of food photographyography. The digital

gastronomy experience is not only enhanced visually, but also in social, cultural, and emotional ways thanks to their efforts. Not only do these influencers add to the visual feast of digital food culture by engaging with audiences through relatable content, but they also have a revolutionary impact on how people view and engage with food.

Fig 2: Exploring the Diverse Realm of Food photography Images on Prominent Social Media Platforms

Aspect	Details
Instagram impact on food photography	Pizza is the most tagged food on Instagram, with around 35 million hashtag mentions.
Influence on restaurant industry	The trend of photographing food influences the entire restaurant industry, from décor to menus.
Social media events	PR and marketing agencies design events to look appealing on social media, partnering with brands
Influencers' role	Instagram influencers are invited to restaurant launches to create appealing content.
Impact on sales	A great food photo on Instagram can directly boost sales, with people choosing dishes based on photos.
Composition of images	Well-composed images, zoomed in, with layers, are more popular. Lighting and editing are crucial.
Instagram photography kits	Some restaurants provide free Instagram photography, kits, including lighting, lenses, and selfie sticks.
Celebrity endorsement	Social media endorsement from a human celebrity even with a single tag, can significantly increase followers and business exposure.
Importance of presentation	Presentation of food, both visually and arrangement on the plate, impacts taste perception and influences willingness to pay more.
Owner's perspective on photography	Some restaurant owners encourage photography but discourage excessive or disruptive behavior.
Divergent opinions on photography	While some embrace and encourage social media sharing, others question the constant need to photograph every moment.

Source: The serious business of #Food Photography - BBC Worklife

1.3The investigation of food and its cultural ramifications encompasses a wide range of scholarly inquiries. Authors presented interconnectedness of food and cultural identity, as it adapts to different surroundings and incorporates fusion cuisines such as Tex-Mex, while also mirroring the vibrancy of urban life. The strategic significance of cuisine in tourism hubs, employing frameworks such as Resource-Based View and Positioning Strategy. A researcher investigated that Heritage cuisine and food heritage,

recognizing their physical and non-physical characteristics, while the impact of national culture on food perception and acceptability, emphasizing the ever-changing nature of consumer preferences [20]. The concept of "food photography" and its significance in the digital culture, highlighting its ability to generate social and symbolic meanings through widespread use of images. The influence of Food Photography on the Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of Culinary Precincts [21]. Identified factors contribute to this influence and use several theories to quantify the attractiveness of culinary precincts. A conceptual structure is presented for delineating the gastronomic character of a place, emphasizing the impact of natural and cultural elements. An author examine the sensory encounters linked to food items, involving all senses [22], whereas some authors investigate the concept of destination food image as a multifaceted notion that influences overall tourist perceptions. The extensive body of literature emphasizes the complex relationship between food, culture, perception, and branding, offering significant insights into the diverse function of gastronomy in shaping identity, tourism, and consumer behaviour.

2 Objectives of the Study

- To Investigate the Role of Food photography in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine
- To Explore the Emotional and Sensory Impact of Food photography on Viewer Experience
- To Examine the Ethical and Cultural Implications of Food photography in the Context of Global Gastronomy

3. Hypotheses of the Study

- H0: Food photography does not significantly influence the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine
- H1: Food photography significantly influences the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine
- H0: There is no significant corelation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer's Experience
- H1: There is significant corelation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer's Experience
- H0: Food photography does not raise significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy
- H1: Food photography raises significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy.

4. Research Methodology

The research technique carefully designed to examine the diverse impact of food photography on culinary experiences, encompassing consumer expectations, cultural perspectives, and ethical considerations. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, intentionally integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques, with a purposeful design that preceded data analysis. In the quantitative phase, a well-designed survey instrument created to gather data from 156 participants. The purpose of this survey was to examine the connections between several factors associated with food photography and gastronomic experiences. The ensuing data analysis entailed the utilization of statistical methods. The research design meticulously constructed to guarantee triangulation, integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to achieve a

thorough comprehension. The research design incorporated ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring the confidentiality of their information. The methodological approach intentionally developed to establish a strong basis for data analysis, guaranteeing the thoroughness and reliability of the inquiry in examining the complex dynamics of food photography in the culinary field.

5. Inferential Analysis

H0: There is no significant correlation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer's Experience

H1: There is significant correlation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer's Experience

Table1: Correlations Matrix

Feature	Enhanced Expectation	Influence on Culinary Exploration	Interest in Culinary Traditions	Perception of Restaurant Quality	Visual Appeal Impact	Influence on Authenticity Beliefs	Impact on Willingness to Cook
Enhanced Expectation	1	.395**	.166*	.169*	.531**	.539**	.560**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.038	.035	.102	.000	.000	.000
N	156	156	156	156	156	156	156
Influence on Culinary Exploration	.395**	1	.576**	.486**	.327**	.277**	.283**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interest in Culinary Traditions	.166*	.576**	1	.607**	.483**	.089	.145
Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.000	.000	.000	.000	.268	.071
Perception of Restaurant Quality	.169*	.486**	.607**	1	.519**	.202*	.180*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.000	.000	.000	.000	.011	.024
Visual Appeal Impact	.131	.327**	.483**	.519**	1	.297**	-.163*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.102	.000	.000	.000	.000	.228	.042
Influence on Authenticity Beliefs	.539**	.277**	.089	.202*	.497**	1	.704**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.268	.011	.228	.000	.000
Impact on Willingness to Cook	.560**	.283**	.145	.180*	.463*	.704**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.071	.024	.042	.000	.000

Source: Researcher’s Compilation

Observation and Inference: Based on responses from 156 people, the table below shows Pearson correlation coefficients that investigate relationships between different aspects of how food photography affects Viewer’s experiences. An individual's level of expectation is positively correlated with their interest in culinary traditions ($r = 0.166, p < 0.05$), their perception of the quality of a restaurant ($r = 0.169, p < 0.05$), the influence of visual appeal ($r = 0.531, p < 0.01$), their beliefs about authenticity ($r = 0.539, p < 0.01$), and their willingness to cook ($r = 0.560, p < 0.01$). Interest in culinary

traditions ($r = 0.576$, $p < 0.01$), assessment of restaurant quality ($r = 0.486$, $p < 0.01$), influence of visual appeal ($r = 0.327$, $p < 0.01$), and inclination to prepare ($r = 0.283$, $p < 0.01$) are all positively correlated with culinary exploration. The influence of visual appeal is positively correlated with interest in culinary traditions ($r = 0.483$, $p < 0.01$), opinion of restaurant quality ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.01$), and influence on ideas about authenticity ($r = 0.297$, $p < 0.01$). The results highlight the interdependence of these components, highlighting how food photography greatly influences various parts of people's culinary experiences and perspectives.

H0: Food photography does not significantly influence the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine

H1: Food photography significantly influences the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine

	Does your perception of food change as a result of seeing food photography?	You get impress from Food photography and it impacts on your overall view of the attractiveness of other cuisines?	the presentation of food through photofraphy in advertisements influences your perception of the taste and quality of the food?	to what degree does exposure to food-related content on social media influence your expectations and anticipation when trying new culinary experiences?	How likely are you to explore a new restaurant or culinary trend based on its visual representation in advertising or on social media
Chi-Square	28.038 ^a	16.821 ^a	45.859 ^a	52.013 ^a	52.846 ^a
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000

Source: Researcher's Compilation

Observation and Inference: A chi-square test was applied to examine the relationships between multiple assertions regarding the influence of food photography on individuals' perceptions and behaviours. The findings revealed substantial correlations for all inquiries. More precisely, there was a strong association between exposure to food photography and alterations in individuals' views of food. This relationship was statistically significant, as indicated by the Chi-Square test

with a value of 28.038, degrees of freedom of 4, and a p-value of .000. Furthermore, individuals who were captivated by Food photography demonstrated a higher tendency to find various cuisines appealing (Chi-Square = 16.821, df = 4, p = .002). The study revealed that the visual representation of food in advertising, specifically through photography, had a significant impact on participants' impressions of flavour and quality. The statistical analysis, using a Chi-Square test with a value of 45.859 and degrees of freedom equal to 4, indicated a very significant relationship (p = .000). In addition, the presence of food-related content on social media had a significant impact on individuals' expectations when trying new culinary experiences (Chi-Square = 52.013, df = 4, p = .000) and influenced their likelihood of exploring new restaurants or culinary trends based on visual representations in advertising or on social media (Chi-Square = 52.846, df = 4, p = .000). To summarize, the chi-square test revealed strong connections between exposure to food photography, perceptions, and culinary habits among the respondents.

H0: Food photography does not raise significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy

H1: Food photography raises significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy

Table 3: Test Statistics^a

	food photography upholds the dignity and cultural value of the food it showcases?	Does the prevalence of food photography influence and mainstream media's tendency to appropriate cultural practices?	In your opinion, can food photography help people from different cultures understand one other better or does it just serve to further stereotypes?	Food photography upholds the dignity and cultural value of the food it showcases?	Does the prevalence of food photography influence and mainstream media's tendency to appropriate cultural practices?	In your opinion, can food photography help people from different cultures understand one other better or does it just serve to further stereotypes?
Mann-Whitney U	1170.500	885.000	1124.500	1170.500	885.000	1139.500
Wilcox	1911.	3660.0	3899.50	1911.	3660.0	3914.5

on W	500	00	0	500	00	00
Z	-1.91	-3.292	-2.896	-1.991	-3.292	-1.997
Asymp .Sig. (2tailed)	.046	.001	.008	.046	.001	.042
a. Grouping Variable: Digital Literacy Level						

Source: Researcher’s Compilation

Observation and Inference: The Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate the correlation between digital literacy levels and opinions on various features of food photography. The findings demonstrate a statistically significant variation in participants' answers depending on their level of digital literacy regarding questions about whether food photography maintains the dignity and cultural significance of the food being showcased ($Z = -1.991, p = .046$) and its impact on how mainstream media adopts cultural practices ($Z = -3.292, p = .001$). Respondents with different degrees of digital literacy exhibited varied viewpoints on these matters. However, when investigating whether food photography promotes cross-cultural understanding or perpetuates preconceptions, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -2.896, p = .008$). These findings indicate that digital literacy can affect specific ethical and cultural judgments related to food photography, but it may not have a consistent impact on other elements.

Table 4: Validation Result of the research hypotheses

Number	Hypotheses Description	Test Results
H0₁	H0: Food photography does not significantly influence the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine	Not Supported
H1₁	H1: Food photography significantly influences the shaping in Shaping Perceptions of Cuisine	Supported
H0₂	H0: There is no significant corelation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer’s Experience	Not Supported
H1₂	H1: There is significant corelation on emotional and sensory impact of Food photography on Viewer’s Experience	Supported
H0₃	H0: Food photography does not raise significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy	Not Supported
H1₃	H1: Food photography raises significant Ethical and Cultural Consequences in the Context of Global Gastronomy	Supported

Findings of the study:

The study found strong positive relationships between heightened expectations and several culinary elements, highlighting the important influence of food photography on various aspects of culinary experiences. The chi-square test validated strong correlations between exposure to food photography and alterations in perceptions and actions, signifying its noteworthy impact. Statistically significant variations were observed in beliefs on the cultural significance of displayed food and its influence on the mainstream media's adoption of cultural practices. However, digital literacy did not uniformly affect all areas of ethical and cultural perceptions associated with food photography.

Suggestions:

- Culinary sector: The strong positive correlations between increased expectations and different culinary characteristics mean the culinary sector should use food photography strategically. Restaurants and food outlets can focus on visually appealing presentations to increase consumer expectations and therefore impressions of flavour, quality and overall dining experience.
- Social Media: Since food photography has such an impact on people's perceptions and actions, food businesses should focus on having a strong social media presence. This means sharing great food visuals to attract and lure new customers. Highlighting beautiful elements in ads and online content can create positive expectations and bring in new customers.
- Consumer Education: Recognising the impact of digital literacy on ethical and cultural perspectives of food photography photos means consumer education is key. Initiatives could be developed to educate consumers on the cultural implications and ethical considerations of food photography. This could involve digital literacy programs or educational campaigns to help people critically evaluate and interpret food related information.
- The study suggests that building intercultural understanding through food imagery requires careful thought. Food businesses and content creators should make a conscious effort to show cultural diversity in a respectful way, not using stereotypes and not appropriating other cultures. Educational initiatives can also promote acceptable ethnic representation in food photography.
- Ethical guidelines: Given the many and varied views on the ethical and cultural implications of food photography, industry stakeholders should establish and follow ethical guidelines. These guidelines provide a framework for fair cultural representation, addressing concerns around appropriation and dignity of the food being displayed.

Conclusion of the study:

According to this research, foodporn photography, cultural views, and ethical issues are closely connected when it comes to international cooking practices. It can be seen from the results that seeing foodporn photography leads to more excitement, curiosity, and reviewing how good restaurants are, as well as being more motivated to cook for themselves. Because these different components are closely connected, pictures of food clearly play a big role in changing consumer habits and attitudes. Besides, using statistical methods such as Pearson correlation coefficients and the chi-square test has shown that there are strong links between viewing food photography, how people

perceive food, and their actions like cooking. A close review of people's digital skills has given more insight into how technology affects people's values and beliefs about foodporn photography. Apart from boosting our knowledge of these subjects, the study shares useful tips for the culinary sector, marketing specialists, content creators, and teachers. It seems that using new marketing styles, setting guidelines on ethics, and considering cultural issues could help the industry. In particular, the study points out that student education about food issues and ethical issues in food media should be acknowledged in the world of international gastronomy. The research results can be applied to future activities and industry standards as cooking changes with new technology and shifts in people's customs. By observing these implications, we believe more research on new technologies, more cooperative production projects, and the development of appropriate rules to respect different cultures in food media should be carried out. This research forms part of the overall discussion on how food, the media, culture, and ethics are related. It shows why it is important to have knowledge and a wide view to successfully deal with the world of international food.

Future Implication:

The research opens up many areas for future research in culinary marketing, cultural awareness, ethical guidelines, consumer education, technological influence, international cooperation, policy making, long term research and the intersection of culinary media with various aspects of identity. Within the marketing field there is an opportunity to create sophisticated strategies that leverage the massive impact of food photography on consumer expectations by exploring new ways to connect with emerging technologies. To increase cultural sensitivity one can create content that promotes cross cultural understanding and this could lead to guidelines for producers to ensure authenticity. The research calls for ethical standards in food media and future research to support the development of overall industry guidelines. Moreover consumer education initiatives can enable users to engage actively and analytically with culinary information. Future research and industry practices should focus on researching new technologies, promoting international cooperation, policy making, long term research, analyzing the intersection of different factors and incorporating educational curricula. These are the directions to adopt a holistic and responsible approach to the complex world of global food.

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