



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO PROFILING GASTRONOMES FROM
THEIR FOOD EXPERIENCE JOURNEY**

ROOZBEH BABOLIAN HENDIJANI

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By

ROOZBEH BABOLIAN HENDIJANI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2014

Chair: Boo Huey Chern, PhD

Faculty: Food Science and Technology

The number of people who travel with the primary reason of gastronomic experience, termed gastronomes, is in the rise. This niche group of consumers offers an opportunity to the development of food tourism. Regrettably, only limited studies had been conducted. The urge to undertake the current research is further substantiated by the absent of insights to the underlying drives of gastronomes travel with the purpose of food hunting. To bridge the gap, this research was executed via two studies to address four objectives. First, it aims to explore the mental maps of gastronomes through their mental maps. Second, it seeks to reveal the core value of food hunting attached by gastronomes through the elicitation of the deep metaphors. Third, it attempts to describe the development of behavior and interest among gastronomes. Finally, it intends to depict the typology of gastronomes.

Considering the advantages of interpretivism paradigm, this research adopted Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), an emerging powerful qualitative method to explore the deep metaphors of gastronomes through their own voice. Both studies sampled respondents who were highly involved in this activity. The participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling and they came from different states in Malaysia.

Study 1 focused on gastronomes thoughts and feelings underlying their behaviors of food hunting. Twelve participants were recruited. Aggregating the individual mental maps, the consensus map revealed four broad themes about food hunting shared among the participants which are (i) connection/sharing, (ii) transformation, (iii) searching as discovery, and (iv) searching as adventure. These broad themes symbolize four aspects which gastronomes associated in food hunting. Therefore, different gastronomes may find food hunting equally involving, but for different reasons. In addition, the study also yielded four prominent deep metaphors, namely journey, transformation, container, and balance. Taking the results from consensus map and metaphors, the postulation that food hunting is a behavior developed or progress over time was corroborated. Consequently, the second study was carried out.

Study 2 aimed to identify the various developmental stages and the respective characteristics. Fourteen participants were recruited. The results of this study revealed that food hunting activity or behavior followed a three stage development process. The typology of the gastronomes at different stage was presented. The first stage was labeled as seed. At this stage, the food itself vtikiigtgf"vjg" rctvkekrcpvuø" cvvgpvkqpø" Family members (e.g. parents and grandparents) were the major influencers at this stage. The second stage was named sapling. At this stage, interest in food hunting began to develop among participants. Their searching of food was greatly influenced by media such as food-related TV program, internet, and blogs. The final stage termed as tree. At this stage, participants were knowledgeable about this activity. They became the reference or opinion leader to others.

This research contributes towards the vjgqgtvkecn" gzrncpcvkqpu" qh" icuvtqpq o guø" behavior by deeper understanding of their thoughts and feelings. In particular, the consensus map is important to conceptualize the relationships between thoughts and hggkpiu" vjcv" fgvgto kpg" vjg" icuvtqpq o guø" hqqf" jwpvkpi behavior. The four broad themes of food hunting identified in this research are powerful bases for market segmentation because they frame how gastronomes see and participate in food hunting. This model offers destination marketers and industrial practitioners a framework to access meanings necessary to wpfgtuvcpf" icuvtqpq o guø" dgjcxkqtø" Vjku" model also will help tourism marketers to have a detailed examination of gastronomy tourism market and its demands.

In terms of practical implication, knowing the characteristics of gastronomes will help destination marketers to have a better marketing strategy communication. An appreciation of how and why gastronomes participate in food hunting is valuable for tourism marketers in predicting precise market demands and its values. The typology with characteristics of gastronomes in different stages offers researchers and marketers an appealing way to think about change in leisure participation.

Most of the marketing messages are relating to providing new experience and environment to trigger the attention of food tourists. This study examined the value of food hunting from the perspective of consumer behavior and argued that underlying motives, such as human emotion, can significantly challenge the current value cuuguu o gpv" o qfgnu" y jkej" eq o o qpn{ "wugf"kp"vqfc{øu" o ctket. Results revealed that the value of participating in this activity is not merely to gain novel sensory experiences, but also to actively seek for positive feelings and ideals that gastronomes associate with food hunting. One of the pursuits was to broaden their world view.

Keywords: Gastronomes, food tourism, ZMET, consensus map, typology, food hunting, mental structure, metaphor

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENDEKATAN KUALITATIF UNTUK MEMPROFIL GASTRONOM
DARIPADA PENGALAMAN MENIKMATI MAKANAN**

Oleh

ROOZBEH BABOLIAN HENDIJANI

Jun 2014

Pengerusi: Boo Huey Chern, PhD

Fakulti: Sains dan Teknologi Makanan

Bilangan pelawat yang mengunjungi sesuatu destinasi dengan tujuan utama memperolehi pengalaman gastronomi, juga dipanggil gastronom, semakin meningkat. Kumpulan pengguna khusus ini menawarkan peluang perkembangan dalam sektor pelancongan makanan. Malangnya, kajian yang telah dijalankan adalah terhad. Keinginan untuk menjalankan penyelidikan ini turut didorong oleh ketiadaan pandangan mendalam terhadap dorongan asas gastronom melawat dengan tujuan memburu makanan. Demi merapatkan jurang, penyelidikan ini dilaksanakan melalui dua kajian untuk menangani empat objektif. Pertama, ia bertujuan memetakan fikiran dan perasaan gastronom melalui peta minda mereka. Kedua, ia berhasrat mendedahkan nilai teras gastronom berkenaan pemburuan makanan melalui elisitasi metafora mendalam. Ketiga, ia akan menggambarkan pembangunan perilaku dan minat di kalangan gastronom. Akhir sekali, ia bercadang untuk menyenariakan tipologi gastronom.

Memandangkan kelebihan paradigma interpretivisma, penyelidikan ini menggunakan Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), suatu kaedah kualitatif yang berkesan untuk memahami perilaku pemburuan makanan, suatu aktiviti masa lapang berasas projek, gastronom melalui suara mereka sendiri. Responden bagi kedua-dua kajian ini merupakan kumpulan yang sangat aktif dalam penglibatan aktiviti masa lapang ini. Peserta disampel melalui kaedah persampelan bertujuan dan persampelan bola salji dan berasal dari negeri-negeri berlainan di Malaysia.

Kajian 1 memberi tumpuan terhadap fikiran dan perasaan yang menjadi asas kepada perilaku gastronom dalam pemburuan makanan. Dua belas orang peserta telah menuruti kajian ini. Dengan menggabungkan peta minda individu, peta konsensus

yang menunjukkan empat tema luas yang dikongsi bersama termasuk (i) hubungkait / perkongsian, (ii) transformasi, (iii) pencarian sebagai penemuan, dan (iv) pencarian sebagai pengembaraan. Tema luas ini melambangkan empat aspek yang berkaitan dengan pemburuan makanan oleh gastronom. Oleh itu, penglibatan dalam aktiviti memburu makanan setiap gastronom mungkin sama, tetapi atas sebab-sebab yang berbeza. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga menghasilkan empat metafora mendalam yang utama, iaitu perjalanan, transformasi, bekas, dan keseimbangan. Berdasarkan keputusan daripada peta konsensus dan metafora, jangkaan bahawa pemburuan makanan merupakan satu perilaku yang terbentuk atau terjadi melalui satu jangka masa disokong. Oleh yang demikian, kajian kedua telah dijalankan.

Kajian 2 bertujuan mengenalpasti pelbagai peringkat pembentukan dan ciri-ciri yang terkandung dalam peringkat. Empat belas orang peserta telah menyertai kajian ini. Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa aktiviti atau perilaku pemburuan makanan mengikut tiga peringkat proses pembentukan. Tipologi gastronom pada peringkat yang berbeza telah dibentangkan. Peringkat pertama dilabelkan sebagai benih. Pada peringkat ini makanan mencetuskan perhatian peserta. Ahli keluarga (seperti ibu bapa, nenek dan datuk) merupakan punca pengaruh yang utama. Peringkat kedua dinamakan anak pokok. Pada peringkat ini kepentingan memburu makanan maju di kalangan peserta. Pemburuan ini terutamanya dipengaruhi oleh media seperti rancangan TV yang berkaitan dengan makanan, internet, dan blog. Peringkat akhir diibarat sebagai pokok. Pada peringkat ini peserta menjadi pakar rujukan kepada orang lain.

Penyelidikan ini menyumbang kepada penjelasan teori perilaku gastronomes' dengan memahami lebih mendalam tentang fikiran dan perasaan mereka. Ia terutamanya penting menerangkan konsep hubungkait antara fikiran dan perasaan yang menentukan kegiatan pemburuan makanan gastronom. Empat tema luas memburu makanan yang dikenalpasti dalam kajian ini adalah asas yang kukuh untuk segmentasi pasaran. Mereka merangkakan bagaimana gastronom memandang dan melibatkan diri dalam pemburuan makanan. Model ini menawarkan kepada pihak pemasar destinasi dan pihak industri satu kerangka untuk mengakses makna yang diperlukan untuk memahami perilaku gastronom. Model ini juga akan membantu pemasar pelancongan memeriksa gastronom dan permintaan pasaran pelancongan dengan terperinci.

Dari segi implikasi praktikal, mengetahui ciri-ciri gastronom membolehkan pemasar destinasi berkomunikasi strategi pemasaran dengan lebih baik. Penghayatan bagaimana dan mengapa gastronom menglibatkan diri dalam pemburuan makanan amat bermanfaat kepada pemasar pelancongan untuk membuat ramalan permintaan pasaran dan nilai yang tepat. Tipologi bersama dengan ciri-ciri gastronom dalam pelbagai peringkat menawarkan penyelidik dan pemasar satu cara menarik untuk berfikir tentang perubahan dalam penyertaan aktiviti di masa lapang.

Kebanyakan mesej pemasaran adalah berkaitan dengan memberi pengalaman baru dan persekitaran untuk mencetuskan perhatian pelawat mengutamakan makanan. Penyelidikan ini memeriksa nilai pemburuan makanan dari perspektif perilaku pengguna dan berhujah bahawa motif asas seperti emosi manusia dengan ketaranya mencabar model penilaian nilai semasa yang biasa digunakan dalam pasaran hari ini. Keputusan penyelidikan ini menunjukkan bahawa kepentingan kepada gastronom

untuk melibatkan diri dalam aktiviti ini bukan untuk mendapatkan pengalaman baru dalam pancaderia sahaja, tetapi juga untuk mencari perasaan positif dan mencapai cita-cita. Salah satu daripada tujuan aktiviti ini adalah membuka minda mereka kepada alam dunia yang luas ini.

Kata kunci: Gastronom, pelancongan makanan, ZMET, peta konsensus, tipologi, pemburuan makanan, struktur minda, metafora

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 18 June 2014 to conduct the final examination of Roozbeh Babolian Hendijani on his thesis entitled "A Qualitative Approach to Profiling Gastronomes from their Food Experience Journey" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

Tan Chin Ping, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Food Science and Technology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Mohd Shahwahid bin Hj Othman, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Economics and Management
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Taylor's University Lakeside Campus
Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Po-Ju Chen, PhD

Senior Lecturer
University of Central Florida
United States
(External Examiner)



NORITAH OMAR, PhD
Associate Professor and Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 19 September 2014

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Boo Huey Chern, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Food Science and Technology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Murali Sambasivan, PhD

Professor
Global Entrepreneurship Research and Innovation Center (GERIC)
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
(Member)

Serene Ng Siew Imm

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Economics and Management,
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Signature: -----
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