

Evolving research perspectives on food and gastronomic experiences in tourism

Food and
gastronomic
experiences

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to analyse the development of research on gastronomic tourism experiences and chart its relationship to foundational management and marketing literature as well as the tourism and hospitality field.

Design/methodology/approach – The author develops a literature review of papers in specialist journals and the SCOPUS database to identify major research themes and the evolution of experience and gastronomic experience research.

Findings – Gastronomy is an increasingly important element of tourism experiences. Gastronomic experience research in tourism mirrors the evolution in management and marketing theory from rational information processing approaches to emotional and hedonistic approaches and analysis of relationality and co-creation. The paper sketches a development from Experience 1.0 (producer-orientated) to Experience 2.0 (co-creation) to Experience 3.0 (foodscapes) in gastronomic experiences in tourism research.

Research limitations/implications – Increasing complexity of gastronomic experiences requires a more holistic analytic approach, including more attention for relational and co-creational processes. Linking together different experience elements and experience phases requires more holistic and contextual research approaches.

Practical implications – Hospitality organizations should recognize the differentiated and complex nature of gastronomic experiences, the different touchpoints within the customer journey and their relationship to experience outcomes. The development of hybrid gastronomic experiences offers both opportunities and challenges for the future.

Originality/value – This quantitative and qualitative literature analysis underlines the need for a more holistic approach to gastronomic experiences, covering different experiential phases and contexts of production and consumption.

Keywords Co-creation, Experience economy, Experience marketing, Gastronomy, Hospitality, Tourism experiences

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

Tourism and hospitality have always been closely linked to gastronomy. Santich (2004, p. 19) goes as far as to argue that “the origins of hospitality lie in a host’s offering” of gastronomy to the travelling stranger. In many ways this also marks the origins of gastronomy, which from the turn of the 19th century was based, among other elements, on the provision of maps to guide travellers to the locations of different local and regional foods. With the expansion of global travel in the 20th century, gastronomy became an asset to attract tourists to specific destinations and offer them engaging, novel and memorable experiences. As gastronomic experiences have expanded beyond the basic hospitality



function of providing sustenance to travellers, so more attention has been paid to the nature and structure of experiences, their behavioural outcomes for customers and their role in tourism and hospitality marketing and branding.

The development of economic offerings from goods to services and experiences suggests we are in an “experience economy”, in which consumers are seeking engaging experiences (Oh *et al.*, 2007), and as Lashley (2009) argued, guest experiences should be at the heart of commercial hospitality and tourism marketing. Despite this supposed centrality, experiences are complex phenomena, difficult to define and measure, and gastronomy is also a slippery concept to explain and define (Santich, 2004). These challenges mean that gastronomic experiences form a relatively recent element of the tourism and hospitality literature, but the growth in experiential marketing and the increased use of experiences for product differentiation have increasingly generated research attention. This paper reviews the recent literature on gastronomic experiences to identify major research themes and analyses how these experiences have been conceptualized and measured. In doing so, we briefly trace the evolution of the experience concept in the general marketing literature, as well as charting the specific applications of experience thinking in tourism and hospitality. We then focus on the major themes in gastronomic experience research in the tourism and hospitality field, linking these to different phases of experience development and analysis. We argue that the growing complexity of gastronomic experiences in tourism and hospitality also requires more relational approaches to research, which can capture the co-creation of experiences between producers and consumers. The paper concludes by identifying a number of research implications of our findings.

The evolution of experience concepts

Experiences have always been implicitly part of marketing offerings, and over the years, they have become increasingly explicit. Toffler (1970, p. 226) predicted the rise of specific “experience industries” in his book *Future Shock*: “As we advance into the future, however, more and more experiences will be sold strictly on their own merits, exactly as if they were things.” He predicted that future “fun specialists” would be producing experiences for the super-industrial society. This marked the recognition of experiences as a form of economic offering, separate from goods and services. These general social and cultural developments were shadowed by a shift in the focus of marketing, which moved first from a production and product orientation (in the 1950s and 1960s) to a sales orientation (in the 1970s) and, more recently, to market and customer orientations. The growing importance of the customer and their experience of goods and services in the marketing process meant that experiences gradually became more important in the marketing and services literature.

The genesis of experience marketing is often traced back to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), who introduced the influential idea that consumer behaviour has an experiential dimension. This challenged the previously dominant information processing view of consumer behaviour. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) introduced many key ideas about consumer experiences, which are still relevant today. They saw the need to approach the consumption experience from a holistic viewpoint, covering pre-purchase, experience and outcome phases. They emphasized the importance of emotion in experiences, as well as the crucial role of interaction. They also saw imagination and nostalgia as important drivers of consumer involvement.

The following years saw increased study of experiences in the marketing field, which has a core task to understand consumers and consumption experiences (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013). Attention began to be paid to the drivers of satisfaction, loyalty and repeat purchases in experiences. Satisfaction is crucial to purchase intentions and was an

important experience outcome measured in both expectation-performance and performance-only models of service quality (Fuchs and Weiermair, 2003). Extensive use was also made of importance-performance analysis (IPA) (Martilla and James, 1977), in which consumer assessment of experience attribute performance could be related to satisfaction. Lai and Hitchcock (2015) provide an extensive review of the application of IPA to tourism and hospitality experiences. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) attributed increased attention for experiences to several changes in the context of marketing, including a growing lack of differentiation between goods and services, increasing competition, consumer search for fun and pleasure, new technologies facilitating the integration of real and virtual worlds, and growing consumer advocacy.

Tynan and McKechnie (2009) also noted a lack of clarity in the use of the term “experience”, which could refer to the experience process itself, participating in an activity, the affective dimension of experience, or experience outcomes, such as acquiring skills or knowledge. This lack of clarity derives in part from the English word “experience”, which combines the two different types of experience expressed in the German terms *Erlebnis* (discrete momentary lived experiences) and *Erfahrung* (experience accumulated over time) (Seeler *et al.*, 2019). The growth of experiences as an economic offering in Western consumer society was linked to the idea of experiences being unusual, isolated consumption events, emphasizing *Erlebnis*, which could be more easily developed as commodities.

Growing consumer desire for experiences stimulated what Pine and Gilmore (1999) labelled the “experience economy”. Building on work by scholars such as Toffler (1970), Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Bitner (1992), Pine and Gilmore identified a new phase of value creation following the development of the industrial economy, based on goods, and the service economy. In the experience economy, companies develop memorable experiences for consumers, thereby differentiating their offerings and increasing their economic value. This suggests that experiences represent a different product offering from goods and services, which therefore also require a specific marketing approach: experience marketing or experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999).

Pine and Gilmore’s work was highly influential in increasing attention for experiences in fields such as tourism and hospitality. However, it was also criticized for viewing experiences purely as economic offerings, and because the value of experience industries did not rise as uniformly rapidly as they predicted. Boswijk *et al.* (2007) argue that Pine and Gilmore also gave the producer the primary role in the development of experiences, with the consumer accorded the role of receiver. This initial producer-centred view (or ‘Experience 1.0’) quickly changed as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) introduced the concept of “co-creation” into the experience literature. They argued that value is embedded in the personalized experience generated through the active involvement of the consumer. The consumer therefore adopts the role of experience co-creator alongside the producer.

Co-creation was also an important aspect of Vargo and Lusch’s (2004) influential concept of Service-Dominant logic (S-D logic). S-D logic is a concept of value that shifts the focus of marketing from the previous concern with tangible goods (Goods-Dominant logic) to a focus on service as a process of meeting consumer needs. S-D logic also emphasizes mutual value creation, or co-creation, through the exchange of knowledge, skills and expertise between producer and consumer. Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue this requires a holistic approach to all experience stages, from anticipation to delivery to post-experience reflection. This introduces a temporal dimension, emphasizing that the consumer relationship can be extended over time to embrace many touchpoints.

The development of the experience economy was charted by Boswijk *et al.* (2007), who saw experiences evolving from Experience 1.0 based on producer-controlled offerings,

towards Experience 2.0 based on co-creation between producer and consumer, and finally Experience 3.0 based on autonomous communities of consumers and producers with a common interest in an experience. Experience 3.0 resembles [Prahalad and Ramaswamy's \(2004\)](#) concept of 'thematic consumer communities', except that producers formed part of these communities as well. Pine and Gilmore's ideas about the different dimensions of experience have also influenced studies that emphasize the importance of different senses in producing memorable experiences. [Wiedmann et al. \(2018\)](#) argue multisensory marketing is important in establishing brand experiences. Cognitive behavioural models are therefore being replaced by more complex multisensory approaches that highlight emotion in experiences. For example, [Spielmann \(2020\)](#) found that purchase of a perceived "green" product leads to positive emotions, which heightened purchase intentions.

The increasing complexity of the experience marketing field suggests yet another new paradigm might be needed: an "experience driven logic" for marketing ([Pencarelli and Forlani, 2018](#)). In this approach "value-in-experience" is determined by the customer over the entire course of the experience, including value-in-exchange; value-in-possession; value in use, and meaning-laden value. They argue for an ecosystem service perspective, which implies grounding the marketing processes in network theory that can highlight the interdependence of the different parts of the service ecosystem. This approach mirrors a general relational turn in the social and managerial sciences that calls for attention to be paid to the collective creation of value, rather than value creation of individual actors, such as producers or consumers.

The turn towards experiences and co-creation perspectives in marketing was also followed in the tourism and hospitality literature. An early study of *The Tourist Experience* ([Ryan, 1997](#)) marked the shift from traditional marketing approaches, such as SERVQUAL, towards the application of more sociological approaches. In Ryan's work this particularly involved the use of postmodern theory to emphasize the diversity and individualization of experience. As [Mossberg \(2007\)](#) outlined, the developing study of tourism experiences embraced both more traditional marketing approaches and social perspectives highlighting the tourist experience as different from everyday life. She also noted another departure from traditional marketing approaches in that tourists affect the experience of their fellow tourists. This stems from the instantaneous production and consumption of tourism and hospitality experiences, which also creates management challenges. Subsequent years saw a rapid growth in the study of tourism experiences, including memorable tourist experiences ([Tung and Ritchie, 2011](#)) and their antecedents ([Kim, 2014](#)), sensory experiences ([Agapito et al., 2013](#)) and types of experience, such as wildlife experiences ([Ballantyne et al., 2011](#)) and visits to historic districts ([Lu et al., 2015](#)).

The growing search for experiences by tourists arguably led to the development of entire "Experiencescapes", or leisure spaces organized by producers where diverse groups of consumers encounter each other ([O'Dell and Billing, 2005](#)). As [Chen et al. \(2020\)](#) explain, the concept of experiencescape describes how tangible and intangible resources are cognitively assembled to coalesce around a theme that helps tourists create their own experiences. The combination of experiencescape elements is arguably designed to stimulate memorable experiences. The experiencescape concept has some similarities with the "servicescape" ([Bitner, 1992](#)), but the latter is focused more on the micro level. The experiencescape encompasses a fuller range of sensory elements and multi-stakeholder participation. [Chen et al. \(2020\)](#) specifically mention food festivals as an example of multisensory elements of experiencescapes.

Our brief review of the treatment of experiences in the marketing, management and tourism literature indicates several important trends, which have also impacted the study of

gastronomic experiences. The focus of experience research has shifted from the quality of the service delivered to the individual consumer to consider different experience dimensions, as well as the effects of interactions and relationships with other actors. The interaction of consumers and producers has been highlighted through the process of co-creation, and wider interactions with other consumers and residents have become part of a broader vision of the experiencescape, which includes the material and immaterial elements used to create the experience. This development has also been applied to gastronomic tourism experiences by Richards (2015). He sketches an evolution in research from an initial focus on basic food service to a first generation of gastronomic tourism experiences designed by producers to engage the tourist. The development of themed dining or food trails were common examples of this stage. In the subsequent second generation of experiences, consumers could play a role in the production of experiences as “skilled consumers”. The growing gastronomic expertise of some tourists was marked by the rise of the “foodie” (Getz and Robinson, 2014). The decade of the foodie that followed the turn of the Millennium saw the rise of travel guides and cooking programmes co-created by foodies. The third generation of gastronomic tourism experiences recognizes that food can link place, identity, culture and tourism to form a complete gastronomic experiencescape. These new “foodscapes” support communities of consumers, producers and other actors in dispersed value-creation networks based on sharing knowledge and skills, also linking residents and visitors. This increasingly relational view of gastronomic experiences has also been incorporated into programmes that encourage tourists to “eat like the locals” and increasingly to “cook like the locals” (Pratt *et al.*, 2020).

These shifts in the touristic experience of gastronomy reflect the wider evolution of the marketing field sketched earlier: increasing integration of production and consumption into collaborative production or co-creation that enable the development of complex, multifaceted experiences. Value-in-use for the customer is not defined by individual exchanges, but forms part of a relationship with the producer and with other consumers. The relational view of markets places more emphasis on emotion and meaning rather than cognition, and our view shifts from a supply perspective to a consumer perspective, and from individual aspects of offerings to a more multidimensional consideration of the overall experience. These changes also provide us with a general theoretical context for our analysis of the literature on gastronomic experiences.

We do not suggest that the different generations of tourist gastronomic experiences have superseded one another – rather that they have been successively sedimented to form increasingly multi-layered experiencescapes. The analysis of gastronomic experiences, we argue, should consider this layering, which also suggests the need for different levels of analysis, including the micro level of individual emotions and memories, the meso level of social groups such as co-travellers and producers and consumers, and the macro context of destinations and their experiential positioning in global tourism and hospitality markets.

We now apply the experience generations concept to structure our review of the tourism gastronomic experiences literature.

Method

To structure this review of the tourism and hospitality literature on gastronomic experiences, we adopted a dual strategy. First, to trace the development of experience research in the tourism and hospitality field we analysed papers published in the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (IJCHM), covering the period 1994 to 2020. This analysis revealed a steady development of experience research, but also indicated that relatively little research on gastronomic experiences has been

published in IJCHM. Second, therefore, we also reviewed the wider literature to identify specific studies on gastronomic experiences.

Our review of papers in the IJCHM revealed 43 papers with the words “experience” or “experiences” in the title and/or abstract. Of these, 31 were published since 2016, indicating increased attention for experiences in the journal in recent years.

The *IJCHM* papers also reveal a change in the types of experience analysed. In the late 1990s and around the turn of the Millennium, several papers on the role of experience in hospitality training and internships were published. This is experience in the sense of *erfahrung* rather than *erlebnis*, or accumulated personal experience rather than the consumption of discrete experiences as commodities. In the past decade, papers have almost exclusively dealt with customer experiences. This suggests that as in case of the marketing literature, tourism and hospitality researchers have made an “experience turn”.

Satisfaction is the most frequently considered experience outcome, which is often linked to behavioural intentions. Brand equity is also seen as an important outcome for hospitality businesses, and this is also linked to experience outcomes such as satisfaction and repeat purchase. Emotions are frequently mentioned as a key element of experiences (Bastiaansen *et al.*, 2019), and this in turn is often linked to memorable experiences. For example, Wu and Gao (2019) analyse “emotional customer experience” (ECX). Many different types of experiences and experience dimensions are considered (e.g. flow experience, embodied experience), and the experience of specific groups of consumers and producers are also a frequent focus (e.g. disabled customers, solo diners). However, to date there seems to be less attention paid to issues of relationality in the papers published in the IJCHM. Only four papers deal with co-creation, and only two deal specifically with relationships. There is some evidence of methodological development, with increasingly sophisticated analytical techniques being applied in recent years, such as structural equation modelling (Fu, *et al.*, 2020), as well as “natural” methods of data gathering and new methods of data capture, such as wristbands (Stadler *et al.*, 2018). There is also some indication that Pine and Gilmore’s most recent phase of economic development, the idea of transformative experiences, is emerging in the literature (Neuhofer *et al.*, 2020). However, only three recent experience-related papers in IJCHM relate directly to food and gastronomy (Brown *et al.*, 2020; Jeong and Jang, 2018; Santos *et al.*, 2020).

This brief review indicates that papers on experiences in IJCHM have tracked general trends in the marketing discipline, moving from service experiences to memorable, emotional, brand-related experiences. There has been relatively little examination of the different elements of experience (except for memorable experiences), and relationships do not yet feature strongly as a factor affecting experiences. More significantly for the current review, very few papers relate to gastronomic or food experiences.

A second, wider literature review was therefore conducted through SCOPUS to identify potential sources, using the search terms TITLE-ABS-KEY (experience* AND gastronom* OR food AND tourism). This yielded 827 documents from 1979 to 2020. A check for double entries and sources not dealing centrally with tourism, food or gastronomy reduced the total to 606 documents. As the specialist *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism* is not yet listed in SCOPUS, an additional search was made of titles in this publication, yielding a further 17 papers between 2015 and 2020. The 623 papers in this analysis revealed a significant recent increase in research on gastronomic tourism experiences, with just over 50% having been published since 2017. Apart from this recent boom, attention for gastronomic tourism experiences has been slow to develop. Specific literature on tourism and gastronomic experiences began to develop after the 2002 publication of the volume *Tourism and Gastronomy* (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). In 2012, increased interest in tourist experiences

of gastronomy was generated by policy documents produced by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2012) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2012). Recent years have seen further growth in research output in this field, driven by the growing attention for experiences, increased recognition of gastronomy as a distinguishing feature for destinations and the growth in scholarly output in general. This is reflected in increased contributions to IJCHM and other tourism and hospitality journals, as well as the advent of more specialist journals such as the *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism*. A review from De Jong *et al.* (2018) also confirms growth in experience research in the broader gastronomy tourism field. They identified two basic research areas: “tourism, leisure, and hospitality management” and “geography, planning, and development.” Similar results emerge from a recent quantitative literature review by dos Reis (2020), which covers the more specific field of local foods and tourism. These two reviews were based in quantitative analysis only, and de Jong *et al.* only analysed papers up to 2016, which as our analysis shows, only covers about half the current literature. The current paper extends previous reviews by also considering the qualitative evolution of gastronomic experiences in tourism and hospitality contexts, paying particular attention to sources published since 2016. This analysis is structured according to the theoretical framework of experience development presented above.

Phases of gastronomic tourism experiences

Our literature review indicates a progression of emphasis and content over recent years. Earlier papers tended to concentrate on the role of food, with 83% of references to food being published before 2020. References to service/s tended to be published more recently (79% before 2020), followed by studies dealing with gastronomy (74%) foodie/s (70%) and foodscapes and servicescapes (65%). This distribution seems to indicate a general evolution in the focus of food and gastronomic experience research, from food to gastronomy and foodies and from analysis of food services to entire foodscapes or servicescapes. Apart from the keywords included in the SCOPUS search, the most frequent terms found tended to relate to aspects of location and place (local, destination, culture, rural), followed by marketing and management terms (marketing/markets, consumers). In the following sections, we develop a qualitative literature review based on the three generations of experience development in tourism and gastronomy suggested by Richards (2015).

Generation 1.0 experiences

Much initial research on gastronomic tourism experiences viewed tourism and hospitality as quintessential service industries. As Lashley (2009) argued, much early analysis of tourism and hospitality operations was based on principles derived from marketing, and particularly insights on services marketing. Initial studies tended to emphasize the role of food as a basic service to facilitate tourism (Richards, 2012). With the advent of the experience economy, research also focussed on the different dimensions or elements of the experience, often based on Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four basic experience dimensions: entertainment, education, escapism and aesthetics (the 4Es). These dimensions have been tested in different tourism and hospitality contexts. For example, Oh *et al.* (2007) examined the experience of bed and breakfast hotels and Hosany and Witham (2010) studied a cruise ship setting. Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) examined the 4Es in the context of wine tourism, and Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) measured wine tourism experiences using a 4Es scale, finding that each supplier makes a different contribution to visitor evaluations of the entire experience.

An early issue around tourist food experiences was familiarity. Cohen and Avieli (2004) noted that restaurants serving local food to tourists often filtered out elements unfamiliar or

repulsive to non-locals. They examined how much alteration local food could undergo and still be considered “authentic”, identifying several indicators of authenticity in local food experiences, including the ingredients, cooking methods and presentation of dishes. They argued that aligning these elements with visitor expectations would lead to a dish being considered authentic, even when considerably altered from the local version. Cohen and Avieli also pointed out that perceived authenticity depended on tourist origin and travel style. [Tse and Crofts \(2005\)](#) analysed the propensity for international tourists to experiment with new foods in Hong Kong and found this was influenced by national culture; length of stay; age; and repeat visitation. Visitors from high uncertainty avoidance cultures were found to experiment least, and first-time visitors and older visitors were also less adventurous. [Quan and Wang \(2004\)](#) also considered the role of novelty in terms of the differentiation of tourism experiences from everyday life, in which food can play an important role. Other tourists may tend towards neophobia, seeking out familiar foods and avoiding local foods perceived as risky ([Kim et al., 2009](#)). However, [Caber et al. \(2018\)](#) surveyed international tourists visiting Antalya, Turkey, and found that neophobia related to food was not a significant factor in their destination choices. Instead, tourists were more likely to be influenced to sample local foods by their tour guide, an example of supplier influence in tourist experience.

Levels of novelty and difference from everyday life have also been argued to influence experience outcomes. [Antón et al. \(2019\)](#) found that cultural contrast, or the level of difference between the host and tourist culture, makes the food experience meaningful and unique and increases revisit intention. [Toudert and Bringas-Rábago \(2019\)](#) examined the relationship between destination food image and satisfaction and outcomes of tourist experiences in Baja California, Mexico. They found that food image had a significant and positive impact on visitor’s intention to return and recommend the destination. Many other recent studies have confirmed the positive relationship between satisfactory food experiences and behavioural intentions ([Correia et al., 2020](#); [Widjaja et al., 2020](#)).

Memory is also an important outcome of experience. [Stone et al. \(2018\)](#) used qualitative analysis to identify five elements that lead to memorable food travel experiences for tourists from Australia, Ireland, UK, and the USA. They classified these as food or drink consumed, location/setting, companions, the occasion and touristic elements such as novelty and authenticity. [Stone et al. \(2018\)](#) also linked memorable gastronomic experiences to consumption of non-local food by tourists, indicating that for some, memorability was more important than authenticity. This also indicates the important role of emotion in gastronomic experiences, corroborating findings from tourism settings ([Bastiaansen et al., 2019](#)). Research on Michelin starred restaurants by [Kiatkawsin and Han \(2019\)](#) indicated that gastronomic involvement and knowledge were important factors in producing memorable experiences. They argued the special occasion of these meals is important in providing an extra-memorable experience through prestige consumption. These culinary events also arguably stimulate customers to invest effort in developing their gastronomic knowledge. [Tsai \(2016\)](#) found that experiences of local food generate positive and lasting memories, stimulating identification with local culture and increasing behavioural intentions. [Tung and Ritchie \(2011\)](#) found that memorable experiences generate positive word-of-mouth, and those who have memorable experiences are also more likely to bring others to the destination. Studies have also indicated that memorability is enhanced by greater levels of tourist involvement in experiences ([Levitt et al., 2019](#)). Growing involvement was an important driver in the development of the creative aspects of tourism and gastronomic experiences, and the development of co-creation, characteristic of Experience 2.0.

Generation 2.0 experiences

In Generation 1.0, much attention was paid to service delivery and outcomes, such as satisfaction and memorable experiences. Consumers were usually analysed according to national groups or market segments, separate from their hosts. Generation 2.0 views experience creation as an activity increasingly shared between producers and consumers (Boswijk *et al.*, 2007). Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009) identified a growing role for co-creation in tourism, in line with S-D logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). This is particularly important in hospitality contexts, because of the emotional aspects of the host–guest relationship (Lashley, 2009). This host–guest relationship is also linked to increasing concern with co-creation, as suggested by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004).

In the co-creation of experiences, Walter *et al.* (2010, p. 253) observed that “the role of the customer changes from being a person in the audience to who something is done, to being an actor” and in a restaurant setting “customers interact continuously with employees throughout the whole stay, but customers also interact with each other. Then the restaurant has little control over the experience.” This second generation experience approach is typified by the “4M model” of meal experiences of Kivits *et al.* (2011), which views the restaurant meal experience as co-created by producers and consumers through the 4Ms of moment, mood, meal and money. Prebensen *et al.* (2016) found empirical evidence for the moderating role of co-creation on the relationships between perceived experience value and satisfaction. They argue that co-creation strongly moderates the perceived value–satisfaction relationship.

Co-creation was also linked to memorability by Williams *et al.* (2019), who identified seven attributes affecting food experience memorability, including motivation, risk-taking, co-creation, authenticity, sociability and emotions. These attributes arguably reflect the shift from product/service-dominant tourism to co-created tourism experiences, made more memorable through increased consumer involvement (Campos *et al.*, 2018). A study by Rachão *et al.* (2020) supports this. They analysed tourists’ perceptions of gastronomic co-creation experiences, identifying seven dimensions: social interaction, novelty, creativity, social sustainability, environmental awareness, enjoyment and memorability. They found willingness for active involvement is the highest for food experiences such as cooking classes, which offer hands-on activities. The desire for experiential learning and mastery of new skills is also evident among foodies, who are keen to learn directly from food producers and gastronomes (Getz and Robinson, 2014).

Involvement and engagement are also linked to increasing attention for creativity in gastronomic experiences. Seeler *et al.* (2019) argue that tourists are increasingly seeking engaging and interactive experiences that go beyond memorability to stimulate self-development, personal growth and self-actualization. This idea links to Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) idea of “transformations”, a form of experience linked to higher levels of involvement, such as those found in “creative tourism” (Richards, 2011). Creative tourism experiences involving characteristic elements of local creativity are often based on food (Pulido-Fernández *et al.*, 2019). Using creativity as a means of self-development also changes the capabilities of the participants, stimulating not only the learning experiences linked to traditional cultural tourism but also emotional attachment (Campos *et al.*, 2018). Creativity is also linked to sharing and creating experiences with other tourists. Ali *et al.* (2015) found that memorable creative tourism experiences increased intended repeat destination visitation and recommendation. Memorable food experiences also increase tourists’ intention to share their experiences and recommend the destination (Frost *et al.*, 2016), including through social media or electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Ranteallo and Andilolo, 2017). Ramírez-Gutiérrez *et al.* (2020) examined tourist gastronomic experiences in

Lanzarote as communicated via e-WOM, finding that the *hedonic* and *novelty* dimensions stood out in gastronomic experiences shared via social media. In Macau, [Lai \(2020\)](#) also found tourist food satisfaction to positively influence e-WOM, with significant differences by food type.

New technologies and e-WOM are enabling social interactions to extend beyond the experience setting itself to include digital co-presence and online interaction with distant others. This is also increasing research on the effects of platforms such as Instagram. [Yu and Sun \(2019\)](#) analysed the Instagram community developed around the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in Macau, considering the posts by tourists and the reactions to these of locals. They found residents were very supportive of attempts to promote Macanese gastronomy via Instagram. However, they note that Macanese dishes were not identified by tourists as unique, and they did not generate the expected outcomes in terms of e-WOM.

The second generation broadens the experience to include a wider range of actors and interactions, although still focussed on specific collaborative encounters between producers and consumers. Increasing tourist involvement in gastronomic experiences provides new possibilities for management and marketing, although as [Williams et al. \(2019\)](#) observe “*memorable Anthony Bourdain-style*” trips may not be easy to replicate for producers acting alone.

Generation 3.0 experiences

[Richards \(2015\)](#) argued that the evolution of gastronomic experiences would integrate not only the experience of consuming food (1.0) and the interactions of different actors around the experience (2.0) but also the development of entire foodscapes linked to places. This argument was based on [Boswijk et al.'s \(2007\)](#) observation that Experience 3.0 involves autonomous communities of consumers and producers focussed on specific experiences. More holistic analyses of gastronomic tourism experiences see them embedded in relationship networks that sustain whole places and communities, beyond the narrow food or tourism system.

[Andersson et al. \(2017\)](#) argue the production of food experiences entails collective effort from many actors, and that consumer, producer and destination development perspectives are needed for comprehensive understanding of food tourism. A growing number of studies now analyse the growth of foodscapes and similar place-based experience settings. In an Italian context, [Liberato et al. \(2020\)](#) discuss the development of stories based on regional wine production and gastronomy, which can be used to develop interactive games combining gastronomic resources to engage consumers. In Indian cities, [Amore and Roy \(2020\)](#) examined the blending of foodscapes and touristscapes through the creation of new narratives, giving opportunities for promoting cosmopolitan street food experiences in Mumbai, or intangible heritage and food traditions in Delhi and Kolkata.

[Vrontis et al. \(2020\)](#) argue the experiential link with place produces a sense of being “at home”, moving beyond producer-consumer co-creation to enrolling the local community as purveyors of authentic culinary experiences, enabling tourists to experience living, eating and cooking like a local. Local people lend authenticity to the foodscape, and the search for authenticity is seen by [Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie \(2019\)](#) as a key micro-trend in the experience economy. The “*authenti-seeker*” enjoys finding unique experiences that link to a specific place, time or culture and which have an engaging story behind them. Local food experiences can help construct tourist authenticity, and the host-guest relationship provides embedding and engagement. As [Toudert and Bringas-Rábago \(2019, p. 1109\)](#) remarked: “Local gastronomy has become a transcendental element in the structuring of the tourist offer”, because of its link with the local, arguably the new touchstone of authenticity.

However, these home cooking experiences also enable tourists to penetrate the private sphere of the home of providers (Bell, 2015), extending commodification into backstage areas of the foodscape.

Walter *et al.* (2010) argue that social interactions are frequent drivers of authentic gastronomic experiences. Culinary and wine tourists may seek authenticity at a winery through meeting the winemaker. These interactions may also be managed, as Sørensen *et al.* (2020) observe in the case of a themed dining experience in Denmark. They argue that servicescapes in themed restaurants can increase satisfaction if they enhance authenticity and involvement. The staging of a medieval dining experience depended on dynamic performances by staff and tourists and required restaurateurs to understand tourist food practices. In this themed environment, employees help create performed authenticity that supports the illusion of being in medieval times.

The foodscape can also have far-reaching implications in time and space. In a multi-country survey, Hernández-Mogollón *et al.* (2020) found culinary experiences positively influenced tourists' Quality of Life through memories and increased repeat purchase intentions. They also argued that tourists may be stimulated to purchase food products sourced from the destination on return home. This provides possibilities for destinations to export their food experiences, as countries such as Korea and Thailand have done with programmes to support restaurants abroad (OECD, 2012). The argument is that tourist visitation may also be stimulated by tasting food abroad, and there is research suggesting that ethnic restaurant experiences may be linked to a higher desire to travel to the home destination of the food in future (Jang, 2017). Memorable local food experiences also have a temporal extent that ranges long after the end of the holiday. Sthapit (2019) examined the positive psychology concept of "savouring" in tourism experiences, which is arguably related to emotions of love, joy, interest and contentment, prolonging and intensifying consumption experience enjoyment beyond the holiday destination itself.

Third generation experiences are also increasingly shared beyond the destination. As Seeler *et al.* (2019) point out, decision-making is increasingly crowd-sourced and peer-validated, leading to the growth of different "communities" on social media, which include emerging user roles linked to experiences and online behaviour. Using netnographic analysis, Mkono and Tribe (2017) uncovered five distinct roles on Tripadvisor: troll, activist, social critic, information seeker and socialite. However, as Quan *et al.* (2021) demonstrate, e-WOM may also be quite literally influenced by the crowd. They found the propensity to recommend of Chinese tourists in Korean restaurants depended on levels of crowding.

The growing integration of foodscapes also provides new management and marketing challenges. For example, Everett (2012, p. 535) analysed the "place-making agency of food tourism" in Ireland and Scotland. Her interviews with food producers and tourists indicated the development of "third spaces" in which conflicts between consumer and producer interests spawned new leisure spaces to meet the demand for engaging food experiences within an increasingly heavily regulated food production environment. Increasing interaction of tourists and hosts in experience co-creation means those staging gastronomic experiences increasingly need to feed their customers with their emotional labour (Wang and Xie, 2020) and develop narratives to engage consumers, link them to staff and provide distinction (Mossberg and Eide, 2017).

Broadway (2017) also analysed how place was "put on a plate" through the creation of the West Cork Food Trail in Ireland. This programme sought to evoke a unique sense of place by stimulating hospitality businesses to provide authentic experiences embedded in the locality. By using local food and emphasizing the qualities of place, the food trail was supposed to generate economic benefits and support networking within the hospitality and

agricultural sectors. In fact, few businesses emphasized the local origins of their food or the authenticity of place in their offerings. Third-generation foodscapes encompass a broader range of individual and institutional actors and place-based resources in the creation of gastronomic experiences. They also assemble new relationalities, which imply more research attention needs to be directed to the role of power in mediating contemporary foodscapes (Miewald *et al.*, 2017).

Implications: developing more holistic approaches to gastronomic experiences

Our review indicates a change in research focus from the production of food experiences by producers for consumers towards collaborative experience co-creation and multi-actor relational experiencescapes. This also mirrors a shift in scale from individual service interactions to social groups and the societal contextuality of experiences. The resulting increased complexity of gastronomic experiences sketched in our review requires more contextual and relational research approaches, which can trace the experiential development of contemporary foodscapes and gastroscapes.

We would argue that attention should be paid to employing a wider range of research approaches, incorporating a wider range of actors into the analysis, analysing tourist experience as part of a contextualizing lifestyle, tracing networks of relationships and time-space patterns of gastronomic experiences, which are increasingly blurred between offline and online environments.

Broadening research perspectives

Sthapit *et al.* (2019) illustrated the value of a broader research approach to gastronomic tourism, using online surveys to examine the effect of the servicescape, novelty seeking, experience co-creation, choice overload and experience intensification on memories of local food experiences. They found that the staging of the servicescape had a significant positive effect on memorable food experiences. Memories could also be extended through purchasing souvenirs and taking pictures when tasting local cuisines. Memorable local food experiences were found to be enhanced mainly by experience co-creation and intensification. Mixed method approaches are also increasingly providing new insights. Franco *et al.* (2019) constructed a sensory landscape of Portugal through netnography analysis of social media posts, and elicited the importance of sights, sounds, tastes, smells and touch through a visitor survey. They found 49% of tourists associate the “smell of Portugal” with food, particularly fish. This association is particularly notably for tourists from Spain and France, countries with similarly strong food cultures. Tafel and Szolnoki (2020) examined the producer perspective on wine tourism with qualitative and quantitative studies in each of Germany’s 13 wine regions. They found collaboration problems, both spatially within wine regions and across different levels of the gastronomic value chain, and argued that inadequate hospitality infrastructure and skills and knowledge gaps challenged the coordinated development of the gastroscapes. The influence of macroeconomic factors was reflected in the relative success of wineries located close to major cities.

Including a wider range of actors

The shift from service delivery to co-creation to entire foodscapes implies including more actors in the analysis of gastronomic experiences. We are now seeing a growing number of studies of place-based, multi-actor systems or “regimes” related to experiences. This is reminiscent of the “Scandinavian model” of the experience economy, which is more centred on destination development processes and governance (Bille, 2012), linking the experience economy to the cultural sector as well as the economic outcomes of experience production

and consumption. Scandinavia has seen several attempts to develop gastronomic regimes or coalitions, such as the development of “New Nordic Cuisine” or Sweden’s profiling as a “New Culinary Nation” (Jönsson, 2020), placemaking projects that enlist both producers and consumers. In Denmark, Sundbo and Sundbo (2018) charted attempts by producers to develop an “interest regime” around fruit wine, promoting it as a field to stimulate production, innovation and local tourism. Therkelsen (2016) analysed the experience of German tourists in Denmark with New Nordic Cuisine, finding they were particularly interested in gaining a sense of place through food consumption. These studies seem to indicate that many tourists are engaged in Experience 1.0 or Experience 2.0 modes of consumption, and do not always engage with attempts by other actors (producers, administrators, marketeers) to include them in broader foodscapes.

Tourist experience in the context of lifestyle

Apparent mismatches between producer and consumer interests in experiences may stem from failures to identify consumer interests and motivations. Tapping into consumer lifestyles can arguably be a means of developing more sustainable foodscapes. For example, in the Hunter Valley in Australia, Grimstad *et al.* (2019) analyse the complimentary lifestyle, food, wine and tourism elements of the gastronomic landscape. In Spain, Ruiz Guerra *et al.* (2018) also highlight the attractiveness of olive oil producing landscapes to tourists in search of greener lifestyles and rural tranquillity. Increasing demand for gastronomic experiences is arguably related to the desire for more healthy lifestyles, for example among “senior foodies” (Balderas-Cejudo *et al.*, 2019), and also to reconnecting with nature, resisting globalization, and using local food as a means of reinforcing personal identity (Sidali *et al.*, 2015). These studies indicate that holiday destination and food choices can be an extension of general lifestyle choices, so it becomes important to understand the whole lifestyle context of food experiences. This includes food consumption patterns at home, as well as attitudes to nature and the environment. Santos *et al.* (2020) found significant changes in food types consumed between holiday settings and home, but there is also broad stability – consumption of meat, vegetables and fruit, for example changed little. Research on the relative influence of actor-related and structural or contextual variables in gastronomic practices could be very revealing, particularly if the variations between home and holiday settings are examined (Wang *et al.*, 2019).

Tracing networks of relationships

Recent research on gastronomic experiences research has also moved towards considering wider relational networks formed by producer-consumer and host-guest relationships (Walter *et al.*, 2010). The growing field of co-creation research also suggests considering other relationships, such as the effect of fellow consumers, or the virtual audience provided by social media. The development of experience communities has also been little explored, but there is potential to analyse the impacts of “being together” and “being there” with the whole “community” of gastronomic experience participants. These are issues examined in the context of the conviviality generated by slow food experiences by Taş Gürsoy (2020), who uses Actor Network Theory to trace the relationships created through breadmaking.

Relationships are also crucial to knowledge circulation in gastronomy, for example through networks of chefs or skilled gastronomic consumers and foodies (Chaney and Ryan, 2012). The exchange of knowledge in local and global networks can have a significant impact on the development of gastronomic cultures and destinations (OECD, 2012). This includes hospitality concepts, which may circulate globally (as in the growth of major hospitality chains), or be created locally, as Lugosi *et al.* (2010) show in the case of “ruin

bars” in Budapest. The ability of local operators to resist the power of global chains will be an important factor in the future development of gastronomic destinations.

Time-space patterns of gastronomic experiences

Research suggests tourists pick and mix parts of the destination foodscape, rather than experiencing it in a holistic fashion. But this may also reflect shortcomings in research approaches, which tend to concentrate on experience encounters that are limited in time and space. [Stienmetz et al. \(2020\)](#) argue that static assessments of experiences should be supplemented with analysis of the sequence and pattern of the moments and events that comprise the tourism experience, during all phases in the experience journey. However, most research focuses on one experience in the wide range of touchpoints encountered in a destination, such as an individual attraction or restaurant. As [Richards et al. \(2020\)](#) have pointed out, the mix of different experiences tourists encounter in the destination has a strong influence on the experience outcomes. [Stienmetz et al. \(2020\)](#) suggest that by developing a typology of touchpoint moments, future studies can analyse how these types of moments moderate the relationships between the structure and sequencing of the tourism-related experiences and the overall evaluation of the journey. One might also argue that the typical temporal sequencing of gastronomic experiences from anticipation to reflection should be complemented by a spatial analysis that considers how the physical location of touchpoints affects the flow of stimuli and response.

Different touchpoints also represent changing constellations of individuals that provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of communities in foodscapes. This means that the study of gastronomic experiences will increasingly need to take account of the different scales at which experiences are produced and consumed (personal, group and societal) and how these different levels relate to each other over space and time. Given the expanding notions of experience, future research might concentrate more on entire foodscapes or gastroscapes to capture these relationships. A more contextualized approach to these issues is already suggested by the shift noted in our literature analysis from studies that deal with “food” towards “gastronomy” as a broader term dealing with the wider relationship between food and culture.

Future research could also chart the development of gastronomic skills over a series of journeys, not just a single “gastronomic journey”. To what extent do gastronomic experiences on one trip influence the content and appreciation of subsequent gastronomic trips? Are gastronomic tourists interested in increasing their depth of knowledge of a single cuisine, or in the omnivorous consumption of experiences of different foods in different places? ([Stone et al., 2020](#)).

Hybrid gastronomic experiences

The mixing of different experiences evident in omnivorous gastronomic consumption is also helping to drive the development of hybrid experiences that mix gastronomy with other consumption elements, or which blend offline and online experiences. For example, the Alchemist restaurant in Copenhagen presents a holistic dining experience which:

[...] is per definition multi-layered. It draws upon elements from the world of gastronomy, theatre and art, as well as science, technology and design, in order to create an all-encompassing and dramaturgically driven sensory experience (alchemist.dk/holistic-cuisine/)

This suggests a hybrid mix of different experience elements and performance, combining different sectors of experience production. Offline/online hybridity has also become more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced a growing range of services to be

offered online, creating increased blurring of gastronomic experiences. There are now several virtual food festivals being staged around the world, and there is a Virtual Food Hall in New York. Soon we might see virtual gastronomic tourism experiences, which destinations may then hope will stimulate tourists to visit the real places later. [Stienmetz et al. \(2020\)](#) argue tourism moments are increasingly perceived and evaluated in both physical and virtual spaces. We need to understand not only what makes experiences memorable but also what makes them “shareable”. Much recent research has focussed on the use of social media as a means of communicating tourism and hospitality experiences ([Mkono and Tribe, 2017](#)), and food has an important role in this, as an Instagramable experience. There is room for a more contextualized consideration of the links between online communication and physical moments and events in the tourist journey, and the role food plays in these.

Implications for tourism and hospitality operators

The emerging research issues related to foodscapes also have important practical implications for industry. The expanding boundaries of the gastronomic experience are not only temporal as [Hollbrook and Hirschman \(1982\)](#) originally suggested but also spatial and relational. The experience encounter in a restaurant or hotel is not just about when this occurs in the customer journey but also with whom the experience unfolds and where it sits in the relational networks of the producer and the consumer. In the evolving foodscape, operators need to be aware of how individual customer touchpoints form part of an overall experiential journey through the foodscape, and which other actors they need to collaborate with to make the entire journey easier and more enjoyable. There also needs to be greater recognition of the role of indirect stakeholders in the foodscape, which includes the distributed audience of social media. In developing experiences that provide increased engagement in contemporary foodscapes, hospitality organizations will need to turn their attention increasingly to hybrid formats, which incorporate the experience offerings of other sectors as well as hybrid offline/online systems of delivery.

Conclusions

Our review underlines the growing attention for gastronomic tourism experiences among tourism and hospitality scholars. The development of research on gastronomic experiences in tourism and hospitality has tracked general trends in the marketing and tourism fields, with a shift from rational to the emotional aspects of decision-making, more emphasis on hedonistic aspects of consumption, more active involvement of consumers in experiences and greater consideration of the relational dimension of experiences. These developments have been linked in the current paper to three generations of gastronomic experience development, summarized by [Richards \(2015\)](#) as a shift from food to foodies to foodscapes. First-generation experience approaches concentrated on the service aspects of the tourism and hospitality encounter, tracing outcomes such as satisfaction, memorability and behavioural intentions. In second-generation approaches, the potential for experience co-creation between producers and consumers was highlighted, although the focus remained largely on the food-centred encounter itself. Third-generation approaches adopted a wider perspective on entire foodscapes, analysing a broad range of actors and resources assembled to provide a place-based context for gastronomic experiences. In the study of foodscapes, actors external to the food or tourism systems, such as policymakers or technology platforms, assume a more prominent role. The evidence does not suggest that these concepts of gastronomic experience successively replace each other, but rather that they co-exist in increasingly complex experiencescapes.

The growing complexity of experience concepts suggests the need for more holistic approaches to the gastronomic experience, which can link actors and structures in experience creation practices, and highlight the ways in which different experience touchpoints, both inside and beyond the tourist event itself, are connected. Such approaches should also be supported by more sophisticated analytical frameworks which provide measurement of the antecedents, experience dimensions and outcomes of gastronomy and food experiences, rather than treating the experience itself as a “black box”. Our review also highlights the multi-layered nature of gastronomic experiences, which unfold at the micro level of individual emotions and memories (a common basis of first-generation approaches), as well as the meso level of groups of co-travellers and producers and consumers (often found in second-generation approaches), and the macro level of destinations and their positioning in global tourism and hospitality markets (becoming more common in foodscape approaches). Understanding how these different levels of experience are connected and influence one another is a major research challenge for the future.

Our review shows that gastronomic experience research is beginning to catch up with the development of the experience economy and the shift to more relational and co-creational modes of production and consumption. However, much research remains to be done, particularly around the ways in which relationships are formed, performed and communicated. These processes also involve a growing integration of physical and virtual elements which can provide a rich source of knowledge in the development of hybrid experiences, the growth of which is being hastened by the current pandemic. Capturing the growing complexity of gastronomic experiences implies more use of advanced data gathering and analytical techniques, as well as a growing role for mixed methods research approaches that can combine real time quantitative analysis of experiences *in situ* with rich data on how they are processed, stored and communicated. If we can move in this direction, we might also edge closer to possibility of predicting the future development of gastronomic experiences in tourism and hospitality (Xiang and Fesenmaier, 2017).

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