

The current practices of food and beverage photography and styling in food business

Styling in food
business

Duran Cankul

*Faculty of Tourism, Gastronomy and Culinary Arts,
Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Eskisehir, Turkey, and*

Ozlem Peksen Ari

*Institute of Social Sciences, Tourism Management, Eskisehir Osmangazi
University, Eskisehir, Turkey, and*

Bendegul Okumus

*Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, Orlando,
Florida, USA*

Received 29 February 2020
Revised 14 August 2020
23 September 2020
29 October 2020
10 November 2020
Accepted 13 November 2020

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the current practices of food and beverage (F&B) photography and styling through the eyes of professionals involved in the food business.

Design/methodology/approach – A phenomenological research approach was used and empirical data were collected via a series of semi-structured interviews with professional food photographers. Purposive and snowballing sampling methods were used and the participants of this study consisted of 26 F&B photographers and stylists who were actively and professionally working in this field. Content analysis was applied to the empirical data.

Findings – The research findings reveal several key themes in F&B photography and styling: emotional appeal, key trends, career opportunities, required skills and abilities and interventions and ethical considerations. Three specific roles were identified in F&B photography and styling: food and beverage photographer, food and beverage stylist and prop stylist.

Research limitations/implications – This study offers discussions on the pros and cons of F&B photography beginners and professionals and the food business.

Originality/value – This is one of the first studies to offer empirical findings and discussions on the concept of F&B photography and styling.

Keywords Art and media, Culinary and hospitality, Food and beverage photography, Food and beverage styling, Foodservice business

Paper type Research paper

摘要

论当前餐饮业中食物和酒水照相和摆盘的措施

研究目的 – 本论文探索分析当前餐饮业中F&B通过专业摄影来对食物照相和摆盘的措施。

研究设计/方法/途径 – 本论文采用现象学研究方法, 对专业食物摄影师进行半结构化访谈, 采集数据。通过目的性和滚雪球式采样方法, 共26位F&B专业摄影师和摆盘师接受了访谈。本论文采用文本分析法对数据进行分析。

Disclosure statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.



研究结果 – 研究结果展示了多个F&B摄影和摆盘中的关键主题: (1) 情感吸引 (2) 热门趋势 (3) 就业机会 (4) 所需技巧和能力 (5) 介入和道德考量。F&B摄影和摆盘的具体职位: (1) 餐饮摄影师 (2) 餐饮摆盘师 (3) 料理造型师。

研究启示 – 本论文对F&B摄影业余和专业摄影师和餐饮企业的优劣势进行探讨。

研究原创性/价值 – 本论文是首篇对F&B摄影和造型的概念进行深入探讨并且提供实证调研的文章。

关键词 – 餐饮摄影、餐饮摆盘、艺术与媒介、美食与酒店管理、餐饮服务产业

文章类型: 研究型论文

1. Introduction

The history of food and beverage (F&B) photography and styling dates back to the 1950s. However, with the intervention of digital media in the 2000s, the subject has gained more popularity and risen to prominence as an occupational field. Although F&B photography was once encountered only in books, magazines or other forms of printed media, it can now be accessed widely in today's world through television programs, websites, blogs and social media. The sharing of photography via interactive media has become very popular and within that realm, food is a common and widespread theme (Cai *et al.*, 2019; Oliveira and Casais, 2019; Mirzaalian and Halpenny, 2019; Pierdicca *et al.*, 2019). The shared photographic content of food and beverages continues to increase in quantity and quality on digital platforms. Digital gadgets and social media availability have led to “camera eat first” behavior, by which consumers take photos of food and beverages with their digital or smartphone cameras and upload them to social media prior to eating and/or drinking. However, for such photographs to gain recognition, they must adhere to certain criteria. Among said criteria are quality of the ingredients used, presentation of dishes, lighting techniques and visual styling in harmony with the dish's nature (Chen *et al.*, 2020; Taylor and Keating, 2018).

In light of these social standards, many F&B businesses and event companies hire professional photographers to more effectively stage their products and services. This is because a good picture captured with an interesting angle, vibe, lighting and effects can entice the taste buds and inspire the viewer to desire whatever food or beverage is being photographed (Martin *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, pictures posted on social media, websites, emails, newsletters, campaigns and any advertising channels can boost sales for F&B businesses and events (Grate, 2017; Liu *et al.*, 2013; Litvin *et al.*, 2018). The captured images also increase frequent information sharing among social media users (Barreda *et al.*, 2020; Kwok and Yu, 2013; Oliveira and Casais, 2019) and boost food consumption (Martin *et al.*, 2014). Because such photographs are designed to entice viewers with the possibility of a sensory experience, the capability to convey such messages effectively depends on the right combination of style and technique. F&B photography and styling illustrate portion sizes, visual effects and traditions and stimulates food selections, food intakes and eating behavior (Martin *et al.*, 2014; Ptomey *et al.*, 2015; Williamson *et al.*, 2003).

Despite the neurological, physiological and psychological impacts of food and beverage photography and styling on human behavior, there is limited empirical research available on the importance and current practices of professional styling and pictures in the context of the food business. In particular, input and knowledge production from F&B photography professionals in the field is still lacking. Previous studies on food photography mainly focused on user-generated photos and the consumers who interact with and share the online content or products (Grechi *et al.*, 2017; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Shao, 2009), videos and smartphone images (Ames *et al.*, 2010; Bonsón *et al.*, 2015; Feng and Qian, 2014; Lo, 2011). However, this study aims to analyze the importance and current practices of professional food styling, prop styling and food photography in the food and beverage industry. Moreover, our study focuses on how professional food and beverage photography and styling may affect human senses and can

create visual content for viewers and food entrepreneurs. Section 2 will review the relevant literature in this field. Section 3 will explain the methodology used in this study. Following this, the research findings are presented and discussed in Section 4. Finally, the study offers specific implications for F&B photography beginners and professionals and food business in Section 5.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1 *Evaluation of food and beverage photography and styling*

Food and beverage photography and styling emerged in the 1950s because of the efforts of home economists working in test kitchens, where they began visualizing and photographing dishes in earnest. Afterward, as television commercial breaks became a commonplace outlet for advertising, the careers of food and beverage stylists developed in tandem. While the first generation of food and beverage stylists consisted of home economists – all of whom were creative, entrepreneurial women – food and beverage photographers consisted of men. The larger-scale career of the food and beverage stylist was promoted in the November 1979 issue of *New Yorker* magazine. In the years that followed, food companies started using food and beverage photographers and stylists and even provided consulting services in this field (Carafoli, 2003; Custer, 2010). With time and the developments observed in digital media, photographs of food and beverages found a significant place in websites, blogs, social media, television programs and other outlets. In the early 21st century, the food and beverage concept gained deeper traction in the popular sphere, as photographs began appearing in a multitude of fields (Kirkwood, 2018).

Food competitions and travel shows on television, visuals of food shared on social media, food blogs and food videos have become increasingly ubiquitous. In the context of today's media, the act of photographing and styling food and beverages has become a popular cultural phenomenon that is followed not only by commercial firms, restaurants and magazines but also by online users (Hamadeh and Estepan, 2018). The act of viewing and sharing culinary photography over social media echoes self-expression, social recognition, special momentary memories, enrichment of eating experiences and social network creation (Wong *et al.*, 2019). As a result, the contents have more influence on the purchasing decision of consumers (Dedeoglu, 2019; Sashi *et al.*, 2019; Oliveira and Casais, 2019; Yu and Zhang, 2020).

2.2 *Food and beverage photography and styling as a career and the required skills*

Content creation for any business is crucial and requires its own set of technical knowledge and abilities. A review of photography and art literature shows three major roles operative in F&B photography and styling (Parks-Whitfield, 2012; Vivaldo, 2010). These are food and beverage photographer, food and beverage stylist and prop stylist. These roles are different in certain aspects yet similar in others. The food and beverage stylist is responsible for the visual styling of the dish to be photographed, presenting the food (or beverage) on the right plate (or in the right glass) and for crafting its appearance (Carafoli, 2003). The prop stylist is responsible for the production elements of the actual photoshoot. Creating a suitable environment for the photoshoot and supplying the necessary materials are the duties of the prop stylist. The food and beverage stylist ultimately styles and prepares the food to be photographed (Parks-Whitfield, 2012; Vivaldo, 2010). The food and beverage photographer, on the other hand, is responsible for photographing all the combinations prepared by the food stylist and prop stylist, using the proper lighting, framing and camera equipment, as well as retouching the photograph afterward, if needed (Grate, 2017; Vivaldo, 2010).

Several important abilities define a successful F&B stylist. First, they must be in possession of information regarding the dish(es) and beverage(s). This means knowing all they need to with regard to information, creativity and innovativeness and having a

willingness to follow trends in their field, conduciveness to teamwork, planning abilities, preparedness, practicality, adaptability to developing technologies, knowing how to properly shop for ingredients and materials and having control over kitchen equipment (Carafoli, 2003; Bellingham and Bybee, 2008; Vivaldo, 2010; Custer, 2010; Campbell, 2012; Bekar and Karakulak, 2016). The key issues regarding the photographing of food and beverages are proper to use of lighting and shooting angle. A successful F&B photographer should use natural light, especially daylight when available, to capture the shot (Gisseman, 2016). In F&B photography, the correct choice of camera and lens is important. Moreover, knowledge of the fundamental equipment settings, technology and the ability to change those settings as needed are absolute necessities.

2.3 Stimulating emotional appeal in food and beverage photography and styling

Emotions play a key role in appealing to the five senses. Experts and designers understand the power of emotional appeal and use their intuitions and artistic skills to exploit this when marketing products and services (Desmet, 2002). Emotional appeal can be highly effective, as people often rely primarily on intuition – as opposed to logical, fact-based reasoning – when processing information and making decisions. Humans' eating and drinking behaviors may be influenced by any number of factors, including cues from foods, the body and social and physical environments, but emotions are always involved (Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008). Moreover, photography has been increasingly shown to appeal to human emotions (Bekar and Karakulak, 2016; Young, 2012).

Viewing photographs of food and beverages can serve as a primary motivation for traveling to or visiting, an F&B outlet (Liu *et al.*, 2012). People's familiarity with photographs and types of photographs, in addition to hedonic tone and expressiveness, influence their decisions (Axelsson, 2007; Ert *et al.*, 2016; Pittman and Reich, 2016). Photographs of food and beverages make it possible for people to have more fulfilling experiences by activating their sense of entertainment, personal identification and social interaction (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Food and beverages appeal to the five senses on their own, but must also be translated into compelling visual images by professional F&B photographers. Most online content is created by platform users (Ames *et al.*, 2010; Yang, *et al.*, 2014). These actions may reflect the users' happiness and satisfaction level about products and services and increase sales. However, unprofessional food images may become a public health issue according to health experts. Low quality, low-resolution digital food images with minimal technical expertise may create serious eating problems such as "portion distortion" for individuals (Islam *et al.*, 2013; Steenhuis and Vermeer, 2009). As the images directly affect human senses, the professional food and beverage visual database are also used for public health purposes in the United States. This database uses realistic pictures and portion sizes to help reduce portion distortion issues among consumers (Islam *et al.*, 2013).

F&B photographs can also be considered a great advertising tool. It is important for F&B businesses, as well as for event companies, to present those products in a way that provokes demand for said products and guides consumers to meet that demand (Bekar and Karakulak, 2016). Taylor and Keating (2018) examined F&B styling with respect to art history and found four common stylistic approaches, which they classify as innovative, entertaining, mastery and authentic. Every style reflects unique characteristics. For example, using exotic ingredients in a food image attracts the most attention (Okumus *et al.*, 2007) when shot with creative patterns, vivid colors and exotic forms to match. As visual stimuli are more effective and better recognized than words, F&B images in (social) media, television, movies and fashion can stimulate new eating behaviors and lifestyle patterns (Hamadeh and Estepan, 2018). Then, events like Denmark's annual International Food Photography Festival bring together food stylists and other interested parties from around the world to interact, create trends and attend organized workshops.

2.4 Interventions and ethics in food and beverage photography and styling

In commercial F&B photography, the intention is to present food and beverages in an appetizing fashion to invoke demand among customers to purchase the products in question. F&B visuals should arouse a variety of emotions; however, capturing the right shot sometimes requires patience. At other times, efficiency is vital. Foods such as ice cream require relatively more effort to be photographed because they melt quickly. Meat, too, must be handled quickly, as the longer it sits waiting under the lights the more it darkens, thus losing the well-rounded, juicy appearance prized in meat photography. This is where the technical capabilities of the F&B stylist become crucial, as their work must be compatible with the food's nature to capture the appropriate shot. Such techniques include painting the meat to make it look more vivid, spraying the meat to give it a shinier appearance and holding components together with hidden straws (Carafoli, 2003; Young, 2012).

In addition, extensive preparatory shopping can minimize the need for post-session interventions (Bellingham and Bybee, 2008). For example, selecting well-shaped, proper and vivid-looking food ensures that its appearance will be optimal while creating savings in labor. At this point, the intention is to catch the desired visual during the photo shooting session and to make minimal technical interventions following the session, so that the food and beverages in question do not stray too far from their originally intended appearance and presentation. Such interventions raise the question of ethics in F&B photography and styling. Empirical evidence regarding this topic is also limited. Therefore, interventions and ethical concerns will be discussed in the findings and discussion sections from the perspectives of the stylists and photographers.

3. Methodology

A phenomenological approach was followed for this study in the belief that it could help the authors achieve their intended research goals (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Patton, 1990). The phenomenological approach was chosen due to the study's intention of developing a conceptual framework of F&B photography, F&B styling and prop styling through the eyes of the professionals currently used in that sector.

3.1 Selection of participants and interviews

Given this study's alignment to the phenomenological research approach, one should expect the participants to have certain qualities and that the total number of participants can vary from 5 to 30 depending on the subject's intrinsic characteristics (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Patton, 1990). For this study, purposive and snowballing sampling methods were used and the participants of this study consisted of 26 F&B photographers and stylists who were actively and professionally working in this field in Turkey. Some of the information regarding the participants is presented in Table 1. In the study, expert individuals were chosen and contacted in accordance with Patton's (1990) "who knows more about this subject?" And "who should I interview?" questions.

To locate these individuals, F&B photographers and stylists working with a certain agency, studio or institution or independent professionals who had built references using their own websites and portfolios were specified. Thus, the first F&B photographers and stylists we contacted were found in Istanbul, the largest and most transcontinental culinary destination in Turkey, with a population of 17 million (Okumus and Cetin, 2018). Other F&B photographers and stylists were found in other large cities in Turkey such as Bursa, Eskişehir, Ankara, İzmir and Mersin. These were reached via the contact information found on their social media accounts and professional websites. Within the scope of the study, each participant was given a code name.

Table 1.
Demographic
features of the
respondents

Series no.	Code name	Gender	Occupation	City	Collage major	Year of initiation
1	A	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Istanbul	Radio, television and cinema studies	2010
2	B	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Ankara	Economics	2012
3	C	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Eskisehir	Public administration	2010
4	D	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Bursa	Machine-based image construction teaching	2012
5	E	Male	Food and beverage photographer and stylist	Bursa	Photography	2010
6	F	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Bursa	Accounting	2014
7	G	Female	Food and beverage photographer	Ankara	English linguistics	2014
8	H	Male	Food photographer	İzmir	Economics	2003
9	I	Female	Food and beverage stylist	İzmir	Tourism and hospitality	2003
10	J	Male	Food and beverage stylist, coordinating chef	Bursa	Theology	2015
11	K	Female	Food and beverage stylist	Eskisehir	Chemistry engineering	2014
12	L	Female	Food and beverage stylist	Istanbul	Political science and international relations	2011
13	M	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Mersin	Mechanical engineering	2012
14	N	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Eskişehir	Cookery	2017
15	O	Male	Food and beverage stylist	Eskişehir	Cookery	2014
16	P	Female	Food and beverage photographer	Istanbul	International relations	2011
17	Q	Male	Food and beverage stylist	Eskişehir	Nutrition teaching	2016
18	R	Male	Food and beverage stylist	Bursa	Cookery	2010
19	S	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Bursa	Public relations	2015
20	T	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Bursa	Media department	2009
21	U	Female	Food and beverage photographer	Istanbul	Department of fine arts	2014
22	V	Female	Food and beverage photographer	Istanbul	Photography	2017
23	W	Female	Food and beverage stylist	Istanbul	Gastronomy	2015
24	X	Female	Food and beverage photographer	Bursa	Visual arts	2015
25	Y	Female	Food and beverage stylist	Istanbul	Art history	2013
26	Z	Male	Food and beverage photographer	Ankara	Visual communication	2013

3.2 Development of interview questions and data collection

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect empirical data, thus revealing similarities and differences between information provided by individuals. This holistic approach allowed for better comparison and understanding of the individuals interviewed (Miles *et al.*, 2014; Patton, 1990). Before developing the interview questions, the previous literature was reviewed (Carafoli, 2003; Bellingham and Bybee, 2008; Campbell, 2012;

Bekar and Karakulak, 2016; Gisseman, 2016; Kirkwood, 2018; Okumus *et al.*, 2018; Parks-Whitfield, 2012; Taylor and Keating, 2018; Vivaldo, 2010; Young, 2012; Wong *et al.*, 2019). Next, two scholars specialized in this field – one also an expert in qualitative research – as well as three experts in gastronomic field studies, were consulted. In light of their feedback, some questions were modified, merged or removed. The number of questions on F&B photography was reduced to 19, while the number of questions on F&B styling was reduced to 17. Later on, a pilot interview was carried out with two F&B photographers currently operating in the city of Bursa, which has a very rich and varied historic regional cuisine (Turkish Cuisine, 2020) and a large population of 1,412,701 people (PopulationStat, 2020). As a result of this interview, further changes were made and the interview questions were finalized. The interviews were conducted between October 2018 and April 2019. After completing 22 interviews, the research team members felt that data saturation was reached. Four more interviews were undertaken before finalizing the data collection process. Interviews ranged from 20 to 87 min in length and were recorded using a voice recorder with the consent of all participants. The details regarding the interviews are presented in Table 2.

3.3 Data analysis

The empirical data collected via semi-structured interviews were analyzed via content analysis. The content analysis process consisted of coding the data and constructing the categories and themes (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Following Miles *et al.* (2014), both deductive and inductive approaches were used to analyze the empirical data. For the deductive approach, key theoretical themes that emerged from the literature review were

Series no.	Interviewee	Interview date	Interview city/location	Interview duration
1	A	06.11.2018	Istanbul	1.26:36
2	B	04.12.2018	Ankara	28:22
3	C	22.11.2018	Eskişehir	32:46
4	D	07.01.2019	Bursa	42:05
5	E	20.11.2018	Bursa	40:58
6	F	25.11.2018	Bursa	45:00
7	G	23.01.2019	Ankara	23:18
8	H	17.01.2019	İzmir	34:42
9	I	17.01.2019	İzmir	49:10
10	J	16.01.2019	Bursa	26:42
11	K	22.11.2018	Eskişehir	20:05
12	L	25.11.2018	Istanbul	55:50
13	M	10.04.2019	Mersin	35:00
14	N	30.03.2019	Eskişehir	23:04
15	O	01.04.2019	Eskişehir	38:13
16	P	15.04.2019	Istanbul	42:00
17	Q	01.04.2019	Eskişehir	33:00
18	R	28.03.2019	Bursa	45:08
19	S	05.04.2019	Bursa	50:02
20	T	13.04.2019	Bursa	41:15
21	U	08.03.2019	Istanbul	21:10
22	V	07.03.2019	Istanbul	27:18
23	W	07.03.2019	Istanbul	32:45
24	X	13.04.2019	Bursa	35:00
25	Y	08.03.2019	Istanbul	23:54
26	Z	26.03.2019	Ankara	47:32

Table 2.
Interview details

used to code the data. When theoretical knowledge in an area was limited, open coding was followed. The voice recordings taken during the interviews were deciphered with the meaningful and frequent expressions specified in the analyzes. The specified expressions were coded.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in the Turkish language by two of the authors, who are fluent in both Turkish and English. As per [Hogg et al. \(2014\)](#)'s translation theory method, attention was paid when translating Turkish interview responses into English, with both versions subsequently cross-checked for meanings and consistency by another two scholars fluent in both languages. This process ensured that the translation retained the subtlety and meanings of the original responses. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 min. To deal with subjectivity issues in analysis, field experts and referees can be used to interpret data ([Creswell and Creswell, 2017](#)). Accordingly, the opinions of these experts in the field helped to interpret the data in a way that deals with the analysis subjectivity.

In the encoding process of the research, code can only be developed by researchers based on the available data. Predetermined codes can be used, and the data obtained can be adapted to these codes or a combination of predetermined codes emerging in the data analysis process can be used ([Saldaña, 2009](#); [Creswell and Creswell, 2017](#)). In this study, predetermined codes were used first, then new codes were identified by following the open coding process. After coding the data, common and different expressions were identified. After the mutual relationships between these expressions were inspected, they were accumulated under the same themes. Themes, categories and codes were constructed for the resultant common and similar expressions.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the following criteria were adhered to:

- the interviews were conducted with a one-to-one audio recording;
- participants' consent was obtained before the interviews;
- the responses (data) obtained were based on the practical experience of the participants; and
- participants were selected from professionals doing the same work in different cities ([Guba, 1981](#); [Lincoln and Guba, 1986](#)).

In general, getting the same results when the same questions are asked to the same people ensures reliability. However, the widely accepted concept in the field was the assumption of reliability, which was proposed by [Guba \(1981\)](#) and [Lincoln and Guba \(1986\)](#) in line with the assumption of certainty of positivism. In other words, the findings should be clear and repeatable as much as possible.

The reliability of qualitative research also occurs with the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, relevancy and conformability. Credibility refers to the level at which the findings are compatible with reality. Transferability relates to the level at which findings can be adapted to other contexts. Relevancy refers to the same findings as to the same participants in the same context. Conformability reveals that the findings are due to the experience and thoughts of the participants, not the researcher ([Shenton, 2004](#)). The results obtained in this study were based on the participants' own experiences and were from people who share the same sector but work in different cities. It can be said that the data can be verified by combining it under similar codes. For the premise of the reliability of the study, the participants' consent was taken, individual interviews were conducted in the participants' own studios and the data obtained was based on the professional experience of the participants. In light of all these verification strategies, it is aimed to ensure reliability by providing a similar assurance to certainty in quantitative research.

4. Findings

The research findings are finalized under five overlapping key themes and areas:

- emotional appeal;
 - trends;
 - a career in the field;
 - required skills and abilities; and
 - intervention and ethics in F&B photography.
-

The empirical research findings related to each theme and sub-theme are presented and discussed below.

4.1 *Emotional appeal*

Neurologically, the amygdala, the orbital and ventromedial sectors of the prefrontal cortex, the anterior cingulate cortex and the temporal lobe start the emotional process in the brain (Davidson and Irwin, 1999; Lane and Nadel, 2002). Seeing pictures with strong valence (pleasantness) activates the visual cortex in the brain so these pictures are classified as highly arousing (Lang *et al.*, 1995; Mourao-Miranda *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, high quality, high-resolution digital images with sharp details can be highly arousing for individuals. Those pictures can evoke emotions, increase attention (Rössler *et al.*, 2011) and encourage the recipients to pursue further reading and information seeking (Islam *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, several health organizations such as the USDA and the Children Nutrition Research Center (CNRC) in the US use the top photography technologies (Ross *et al.*, 2010) to build a database and help consumers, specifically children, to better understand and cope with menu items and food products.

There are some differences and similarities available between professional food photography, food styling and prop styling in terms of emotional appeal. For example, playing to customers' emotions is a key selling point in all three areas. According to restaurant experts, professional food styling and photography can highlight and promote the products, chef's artistry, food service environment and the websites providing an analytical approach among customers and social media users (Behera, 2017). During the interviews, respondents often stated that F&B photos should appeal "solely to the eyes and stomach" and that their main intention is to "invoke hunger and the desire to eat," as "taking photos of savory food can even lead to the release of serotonin hormone in the human brain." One respondent claimed that because the main purpose of F&B photography is to "give the feeling of one's mouthwatering," food and prop stylists must ensure "the viewer's maximum attention to the image when looking at a food photo and it must stimulate to desire to eat." Emerging research findings related to emotional appeals in F&B photography and styling are provided in Table 3.

4.2 *Key trends*

In this study, 33 key trends were identified in food and beverage photography and styling (Table 4). Those new trends are followed by both amateurs and professionals to offer real value to viewers. Professionals determine styles through customer preferences and expectations. Some stylists and photographers preferred more rustic trends calling for "vintage" backgrounds, plates and accessories to create a feeling of lived experience with regard to the dishes in question. Some participants referenced the use of timber or painted wooden surfaces as backgrounds in their photoshoots. Some discussed one of the most popular trends: "dark food photography" or "chiaroscuro," a term referring to the use of

	Areas	Emotional appeal
	Food photography	• Being savory • Arousing hunger • The need to purchase • Aesthetic appeasement • Visual fulfillment • The feeling of “being there”
	Food styling	• Arousing hunger • Being savory • The demand to eat • Hygienic appearance • A clean presentation
	Prop styling	• Adherence to the purpose • Uniqueness • Simplicity • Appeal to the eye • Intimacy • Hygiene • Feeling of direct experience

Table 3.
Emotional appeal in
food and beverage
photography and
styling

strong contrasts between light and dark, using muted surfaces, dark props and backgrounds. Stylists and photographers believe that light colors in the environment may direct the viewers’ attention to things other than the central subject. With dark food photography techniques, a dramatic mood can be created and viewers’ attention can be drawn to the central subject.

Global trends in styling and photography lean toward a more “natural” mentality. However, this trend may not continue for much longer among food photographers and stylists. For instance, while copper was once a common decorative element in previous years, it has been replaced by a preference for gold. Food stylists further use a systematic combination of traditional and social media to give the food *an air of fantasy*. For example, one participant stated that today’s social media can “put an end to some of the local trends by incorporating different perceptions from all over the world in a matter of seconds”.

According to respondents, the demands and requirements of the product should be photographed and the brand or the associated business must be prioritized in F&B photography using the current trends. Active photo sessions for stock photography, social media photography, billboard photography, menu photography and decoupling photography can be used by professionals. Moreover, natural photography – known among industry practitioners for its “effortless elegance” – is often preferred for photo sessions to show the foods and beverages in their most organic state with minimal retouching. The balance of color, harmony, correct serving plate size, uniqueness, creativity and hygiene is established by food and prop stylists. Respondents referred to the importance of balance between any additional accessories and food items, and the possible negative effects of exaggerated accessories. As Respondent H stated:

Before anything else, we evaluate the materials that cannot be found on the market. We try to use materials that you know of but your eyes do not always see [. . .] In our compositional framing, we specify vertical, horizontal and angular settings depending on where the photograph will be used.

Participants claimed that among trending props, wooden or aged backgrounds that create a sense of the first-hand experience, covers with ethnic designs, copper, brass or golden sets

		Styling in food business
Categories	Trends	
Trends in foods and beverage photography	● Compatibility with the utilization area ● Accordance with the business/brand ● Natural photography ● “Dark” food photography ● Decoupling photography ● Stock photography ● Billboard photography ● Menu photography ● Social media photography ● Effortless elegance	
Trends in foods and beverage styling	● Accordance with the business/brand ● Unique presentations ● Correct serving plate size ● Color harmony ● Coverings with ethnic patterns ● Garniture and presentation harmony ● Aesthetic presentations ● Homemade appearances ● Brass and copper sets ● Vintage plates and accessories ● Rustic plates and accessories	
Trends in prop styling	● Accordance with the business/purpose ● Food-prop harmony ● Unique prop materials ● The capability to use waste products ● Placing the dish in the foreground ● Color harmony ● Aged backgrounds ● Simple props ● Wooden backgrounds ● Clean and hygienic presentation ● Coherence with the season ● Gold-colored accessories	

Table 4.
Key trends in food
and beverage
photography and
styling

and accessories, along with general preferences for vintage, rustic or more “authentic” styles have been embraced in food and beverage photography. Yet, even for props the demands and requirements of the product/brand or business with which they are associated are being prioritized. Stock photography, on the other hand, was specified as a platform where food visuals with props prepared independently and genuinely are uploaded and presented for sale on a global scale.

4.3 Food and beverage photography and styling as a career

Participants’ views on their career in food and beverage photography and styling are presented in Table 6. Overall the participants expressed satisfaction with their careers in this field but each group of respondents spoke to the unique aspects of their respective careers. While their job is often busy and repetitive, they enjoy following their competitors, continuously improving their knowledge and skills. F&B stylists seemed to enjoy preparing food while improving their knowledge of gastronomy, fusion food, social media and blogging, whereas those in prop styling seemed to enjoy prop materials, as well as following competitors in their field.

According to participants, art and photography curricula in Turkey are not adequate enough to teach professional photography in institutions. Therefore, participants do their own experiments on specifics of required equipment, hands-on experience and taking more photographs on one's own to be better prepared for a good career in this field:

Food photography involves a more specialized array of equipment when compared to other fields of photography. Therefore, doing proper research and purchasing the right equipment is very important. In addition, taking, viewing and analyzing lots of photographs will help them develop rapidly in a short period of time.

Participants also argued for the need to attend the appropriate educational workshops and conferences to develop artistic skills in the kitchen or other food settings. Detecting, inspecting and trying new things with regard to food styling and photography require countless efforts and using the proper (social) media channels. When answering questions related to building a career in F&B photography and styling, a fundamental knowledge of gastronomy was an essential and common theme:

Should a food photographer know about food in addition to styling? This is one of the most frequently asked questions in workshops. My answer is always the same: Such knowledge is not a requirement, but it is always better to have it. Otherwise, no matter how good the photographer is, one can easily say, "what is he doing pressing the shutter button?" I know this personally from the magazine shoots I have styled. To be able to do this most difficult part without any help from others gives the photographer a great opportunity for freedom and a great advantage in budget proposals (Respondent P).

Some of the participants have not received any special education for this occupation and have learned the correct lighting, angle and settings through the trial and error of taking many photographs. It is possible to access and acquire learning through online instruction, seminars, workshops and like-minded alternate educational outlets. For those about to start their careers in this field, having an interest in gastronomy, being conducive to learning and being prepared for countless hours of practice have been noted as prerequisites (Table 5).

4.4 Required skills and abilities

Required skills and abilities for three different roles in F&B photography and styling are presented in Table 6. Each job requires its own skills and abilities but overall the knowledge of lighting is crucial for helping capture clarity, arousing hunger and enhancing a product's desirability. Color, harmony, plate design, use of garniture and vivid appearance of the ingredients are all key factors to which a photographer should pay strict attention. According to participants, the first step for a good picture is choosing the right place, studio and lighting. Managing lighting is the most important technical challenge of F&B photography. Such practical considerations should be at the core of photography education toward improving the individual's eye for recognizing and creating aesthetically effective shots. A hierarchical relationship was found between the categories of fundamental photographic education, practical experience and eye for aesthetics for F&B photographers. F&B photographers and prop stylists should have gastronomy/culinary knowledge and presentation skills. The proper temperature in the studio or service place, cooking techniques, serving utensils and waiting period/duration after serving of food and beverage are considered key elements for a successful photography shoot.

4.5 Interventions and ethics in food and beverage photography and styling

The research findings in relation to intervention and ethics in F&B photography and styling are presented in Table 7. The meaning of "ethics" is difficult to identify in this context and

		Styling in food business
Categories	Characteristics	
Careers in food and beverage photography	• Busy and repetitive • Ability to follow the sector and competitors • Continuous online education • Continuous learning of photography • Continuous learning of gastronomy • Continuous learning of presentation • Following and contributing to social media • Styling food and drink	
Careers in food and beverage styling	• Ability to prepare food • Improving knowledge of gastronomy • Knowledge of fusion • Following and contributing to social media • Transition to food blogging	
Careers in prop styling	• Developing new prop materials • Following the sector and competitors • Busy schedules	

Table 5.
Careers in food and beverage photography and styling

Job	Required skills and abilities	
Foods and beverage photographer	• The ability to use a camera • The ability to use accessories and equipment • The ability to choose the right camera and lens • Food photography shooting settings • The ability to use lighting • The ability to use the right shooting angle • Camera settings • Knowledge of food chemistry • Knowledge of photo editing programs	
Foods and beverage stylist	• Knowledge of presentation techniques • The ability to build concepts • Presentation-color harmony • Knowledge of cooking techniques • Prescription knowledge • Acquaintance with the brand • Eye for aesthetics • The capability to cook	
Prop stylist	• The capability to construct prop materials • The capability to choose prop materials • Acquaintance with the brand • The capability to build concepts/themes • Eye for aesthetics	

Table 6.
Required skills in food and beverage photography and styling

interpretations vary (Shanks *et al.*, 2010). Food photography is designed to appeal to emotions. Therefore, the ethical perceptions of participants were accordingly varied. For example, one of the participants explained his ethical concerns as follows:

If the photo of a dish is exaggerated, then the practice is not ethical. Therefore, with respect to the hamburger prescription, we prepare and arrange all ingredients in proportion to their basic weight before taking the photo. Otherwise, we do not take the photograph. There are, however,

Table 7.
Intervention and ethics in foods and beverage photography and styling

Categories	Required skills and abilities
Intervention and ethics in foods and beverage photography	• Physical intervention into the product before the session • Post-session retouching
Intervention and ethics in foods and beverage styling	• Adherence to the basis weight • Use of rare/raw products • Post-session, edible product applications • No food waste • Accordance with the prescription • Drop effect with glycerin water
Intervention and ethics in prop styling	• Prop suitable for the product's characteristics • Prop suitable for the food's/beverage's ethnic origin • Prop suitable for the photograph's purpose • Prop suitable for the business style • Prop suitable for the theme • Use of hygienic equipment and accessories

certain interventions that are not perceived to be unethical. Glycerin water, for example, can be used to create a frosty effect or a water effect can be given to a glass in a hot environment. In the food photos of today, we have seen a 95% reduction in waste and the food we photograph is always edible at the end of the session (Respondent C).

According to the research findings, photo-shooting techniques do not always comply with ethical standards. Respondents stated that food is among the more difficult of subjects, as hot foods easily get cold, moist foods quickly dry out, frozen foods thaw and/or melt (especially under lights), vegetables can sag and fruit turns brown. Food photographers have to come up with a range of solutions, including:

When photographing chicken, the product is washed with detergent water to create an oily/fatty visual. When shooting a hamburger photo, we pin the lettuce before placing it inside the bun. Ice cream shots are especially difficult. General desserts, on the other hand, are more camera-friendly (Respondent A).

We can fill the bread with napkins to make it look more swollen or we can pin a hamburger with a stick, but these interventions we only use 5% of the time. For the remaining 95%, we use natural products and photograph the food in its natural state (Respondent J).

Food begins to lose its form shortly after it has been prepared for presentation. To capture a savory visual, food is sometimes photographed numerous times. Therefore, the duration of shooting needs to be properly calculated in the interest of effective time management. Some of the techniques used to capture relatively well rounded, juicy and savory food visuals are applied before the shutter clicks. However, it has been generally agreed that embellishing the food to appear tastier than it is without changing the basis weight and without altering the original presentation is an ethical action. The artists stated that a small amount of food waste might sometimes occur during photo shoots. However, along with some unethical interventions and tricks, a few well-established practices (e.g. a well-calculated duration of shooting, time management, shooting preparations, shooting skills and work experience) may limit food and beverage waste.

Most interventions made in food photographs are physical ones carried out by F&B stylists prior to the shooting session. Then, while there is a demand for retouching – known as “clean up” – after the initial images have been produced, this tends to be more general than specific. If taken too far, photographic editing can lead to the de-naturalization of the

food and beverage visual and will not arouse a feeling of hunger in the consumer. Some participants noted that the approved shots become effective only after seven to eight hours of retouching. This effort is necessary to create a certain perception of perfection; according to experts, Photoshop is the best solution for a better visual. Stylists, photographers, companies and even customers are tolerant of such interventions as long as the result is good. However, excessive retouching can create a reverse effect if customers see in reality a completely different product than that shown in an ad.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

This exploratory study aimed to examine F&B photography and styling through the eyes of the professionals involved in the food business. It is one of the first studies presenting empirical findings on this topic. The research findings revealed several key conclusions and offered clear implications for F&B photography and styling. Regarding marketing purposes, emotional appeal – playing to customers' emotions – is one of the golden rules of F&B photography and a key selling point for food entrepreneurs. Styling is essential because emotional appeal invokes hunger in consumers and compels them to purchase the presented product. Intimacy and the desire to be in the framed location are all contributing factors to the creation of purchasing demand. Images should appeal to the eye to induce the actual taste of food and beverages (Desmet, 2002; Liu *et al.*, 2012; Taylor and Keating, 2018; Young, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to strongly influence viewers with regard to aesthetic appeal, using a hedonic tone, expressiveness and dynamics as key selling points.

5.2 Theoretical implications

Creativity, innovativeness and adaptability are required skills for this profession (Bekar and Karakulak, 2016; Bellingham and Bybee, 2008; Carafoli, 2003; Custer, 2010; Campbell, 2012; Vivaldo, 2010). The research findings suggest that the first step for a good picture is choosing the right place, studio and lighting. Lighting in particular is the most crucial and the most challenging part for F&B photography. Nowadays, stylists and photographers prefer natural lighting, rustic trends, vintage plates and accessories to create a feeling of a more direct experience. The findings suggest that the arts of styling and photography should follow a more natural mentality to provide a realistic view of consumers. Photographs in menus, magazines or on billboards may be taken vertically or horizontally with simple and modest prop compositions that do not steal attention away from the food or beverage. Although the preferences of viewers and entrepreneurs toward more natural shots vary, and the importance of attractive images is widely recognized (Hamadeh and Estepan, 2018; Yin, 2017), natural photography is still preferred by F&B photographers and stylists to meet ethical standards.

The study findings suggest that interventions and modifications are *ethical* concerns, as they have the potential to present food and beverages differently from their original state. Photography tricks create a sense of drama and make food brighter, bigger and prettier. However, those tricks make also foods inedible due to using harmful chemical substances such as glue and car oil. Wasteful practices in food photography are common and food waste is an unavoidable outcome. In line with this reality, as long as the food has been prepared according to prescription and correct portion size, it is possible to minimize or avoid food and beverage waste. Raising awareness, using innovative food styling tactics and pre- and post-retouching can minimize the waste amount and make the image more appealing. Whether it is painting meat to make it look more vivid and shiny or spraying water for effect, such interventions are not considered to be in an ethical violation of industry standards (Carafoli, 2003; Kamps, 2018; Young, 2012).

5.3 Practical implications

The professionals explained how they use applications such as Photoshop to make edits like creating an equal distribution of sesame seeds on a hamburger bun, pin a hamburger with needles to make it appear well-rounded and all the ingredients visible, cook meat only halfway to make it appear plumper and juicier, wash a chicken's fatty layers with detergent water and give a watery effect to glass using glycerin water. However, they also agreed that using excessive Photoshop and retouching would detract from the natural appearance of the photo. The study finding implies that the final image in commercial photography is critical for the food business. The image should interpret what clients want, "a creative food image." With professional help from food stylists, prop stylists and advance digital technology, a food photographer is enabled to compose the subject and capture the image easily. As a result, a good food photo will appeal to the five senses, making customers want to stare at the image and taste the food or beverage immediately. The human body is unable to ignore this neurological process. Playing with human senses and showcasing food and beverages will increase food consumption, sales and the number of new customers and will improve the branding of food companies. The photography and styling experts suggested that establishing a visual direction with photos and colors is a wise investment to create a brand. Given this, an aesthetic platform will be created and viewers will be urged to connect with the food brand and take action ([Ert et al., 2016](#); [Pittman and Reich, 2016](#)).

Photos, images and visual effects have a significant impact on users' decisions and most content is created using smartphones by online platform users ([Ames et al., 2010](#); [Yang et al., 2014](#)). User-generated creations and posts reflect the happiness and satisfaction of users in online platforms. However, unprofessional, low quality and low-resolution digital food images with minimal technical expertise may create a poor image of the food item. Therefore, food photography has a vital role in helping consumers understand food products, correct portion sizes and the service of commercial firms and restaurants.

5.4 Limitations and future research

The current study has several limitations. First, it is limited to one country. Future studies may investigate and compare how F&B photographers in other countries integrate the art of culinary photography into their marketing efforts. Second, the research findings are based on in-depth semi-structured interviews of food photographers, prop stylists and food stylists. Future studies can carry out interviews with executives and administrators of restaurants, F&B companies, destination marketers and management executives. Third, given the rapid development of information technologies, new social media platforms provide people with a more efficient interactive space than traditional platforms. Data and photos presented and published on these platforms offer rich insights. Future studies could also look at how these platforms develop the ability to post F&B photos and offer better education and training facilities for beginners. Future research can also measure consumers', entrepreneurs' and hospitality managers' points of view of food styling and photography and its effect on marketing efforts.

References

- Ames, M., Eckles, D., Naaman, M., Spasojevic, M. and Van House, N. (2010), "Requirements for mobile photoware", *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 95-109.
- Axelsson, Ö. (2007), "Towards a psychology of photography: dimensions underlying aesthetic appeal of photographs", *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, Vol. 105 No. 2, pp. 411-434.

-
- Barreda, A.A., Nusair, K., Wang, Y., Okumus, F. and Bilgihan, A. (2020), "The impact of social media activities on Brand image and emotional attachment: a case in the travel context", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 109-135.
- Behera, M. (2017), "A feast for the eyes: the importance of food photography in restaurant marketing", Restaurant marketing/Web design, available at: <https://thedigitalrestaurant.com/food-photography-in-restaurant-marketing/>
- Bekar, A. and Karakulak, Ç. (2016), "Yiyecek içecek stilistliği ve fotoğrafçılığı", *Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 53, pp. 104-113.
- Bellingham, L. and Bybee, J.A. (2008), *Food Styling for Photographers: A Guide to Creating Your Own Appetizing Art*, (1st ed.), Focal Press, Oxford.
- Bonsón, E., Royo, S. and Ratkai, M. (2015), "Citizens' engagement on local governments' Facebook sites. An empirical analysis: the impact of different media and content types in Western Europe", *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 52-62.
- Cai, W., Richter, S. and McKenna, B. (2019), "Progress on technology use in tourism", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 651-672.
- Campbell, T. (2012), *Food Photography and Lighting: A Commercial Photographer's Guide to Creating Irresistible Images*, New Riders.
- Carafoli, J.F. (2003), "Tempting the palate: the food stylist's art", *Gastronomica*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 94-97.
- Chen, X., Ren, H., Liu, Y., Okumus, B. and Bilgihan, A. (2020), "Attention to Chinese menus with metaphorical or metonymic names: an eye movement lab experiment", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 84, p. 102305.
- Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2017), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Sage publications. Los Angeles.
- Custer, D. (2010), *Food Styling: The Art of Preparing Food for the Camera*, John Wiley and Sons. NJ.
- Davidson, R.J. and Irwin, W. (1999), "The functional neuroanatomy of emotion and affective style", *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 11-21.
- Dedeoglu, B.B. (2019), "Are information quality and source credibility really important for shared content on social media? The moderating role of gender", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 513-534.
- Desmet, P. (2002), "Designing emotions", available at: <https://studiolab.ide.tudelft.nl/studiolab/desmet/files/2011/09/thesis-designingemotions-norman.pdf>
- Desmet, P.M. and Schifferstein, H.N. (2008), "Sources of positive and negative emotions in food experience", *Appetite*, Vol. 50 Nos 2/3, pp. 290-301.
- Ert, E., Fleischer, A. and Magen, N. (2016), "Trust and reputation in the sharing economy: the role of personal photos in Airbnb", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 55, pp. 62-73.
- Feng, H. and Qian, X. (2014), "Mining user-contributed photos for personalized product recommendation", *Neurocomputing*, Vol. 129, pp. 409-420.
- Gissemann, C. (2016), *Food Photography: A Beginner's Guide to Creating Appetizing Images*, Rocky Nook, CA.
- Grate, R. (2017), "4 Tips to capture crave-worthy food and drink photography", available at: www.eventbrite.com/blog/food-drink-photography-ds00/
- Grechi, D., Ossola, P. and Merkle, T. (2017), "e-WOM and docility: the restaurant decision-making process", *The International Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 5 No. 9, pp. 247-257.
- Guba, E.G. (1981), "Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries", *Educational Technology Research and Development*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 75-91.
- Hamadeh, S. and Estepan, S. (2018), "The visual discourse of food and its impact on health: research and practical implications", *Acta Scientia Nutritional Health*, Vol. 2 No. 6, pp. 12-20.

-
- Hogg, G., Liao, M.H. and O'Gorman, K. (2014), "Reading between the lines: multidimensional translation in tourism consumption", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 42, pp. 157-164.
- Islam, N.G., Dadabhoy, H., Gillum, A., Baranowski, J., Zimmerman, T., Subar, A.F. and Baranowski, T. (2013), "Digital food photography: dietary surveillance and beyond", *Procedia Food Science*, Vol. 2, pp. 122-128.
- Kamps, H.J. (2018), "The dirty tricks of food photographers", available at: <https://medium.com/photography-secrets/food-photography-35a60c2f0d14>
- Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P. and Silvestre, B.S. (2011), "Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 241-251.
- Kirkwood, K. (2018), "Integrating digital media into everyday culinary practices", *Communication Research and Practice*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 277-290.
- Kwok, L. and Yu, B. (2013), "Spreading social media messages on facebook: an analysis of restaurant business-to-consumer communications", *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 84-94.
- Lang, P.J., Bradley, M.M. and Cuthbert, B.N. (1995), *The International Affective Picture System (IAPS)*, University of FL. Center for Research in Psychophysiology, Gainesville, pp. 893-899.
- Lane, R.D. and Nadel, L. (2002), *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion*, Oxford University Press.
- Liu, B., Norman, W.C., Backman, S.J., Cuneo, K. and Condrasky, M. (2012), *Shoot, Taste and Post: An Exploratory Study of Food and Tourism Experiences in an Online Image Share Community. e-Review of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10 No. 6, pp. 917-922.
- Liu, I., Norman, W.C. and Pennington-Gray, L. (2013), "A flash of culinary tourism: understanding the influences of online food photography on people's travel planning process on Flickr", *Tourism Culture and Communication*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 5-18.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1986), "But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation", *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, Vol. 1986 No. 30, pp. 73-84.
- Litvin, S.W., Goldsmith, R.E. and Pan, B. (2018), "A retrospective view of electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 313-325.
- Lo, I.S., McKercher, B., Lo, A., Cheung, C. and Law, R. (2011), "Tourism and online photography", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 725-731.
- Martin, C.K., Nicklas, T., Gunturk, B., Correa, J.B., Allen, H.R. and Champagne, C. (2014), "Measuring food intake with digital photography", *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, Vol. 27, pp. 72-81.
- Merriam, S.B. and Tisdell, E.J. (2015), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, John Wiley and Sons.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2014), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Sage Publications, London.
- Mirzaalian, F. and Halpenny, E. (2019), "Social media analytics in hospitality and tourism: a systematic literature review and future trends", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 764-790.
- Mourao-Miranda, J., Volchan, E., Moll, J., de Oliveira-Souza, R., Oliveira, L., Bramati, I., Gattas, R. and Pessoa, L. (2003), "Contributions of stimulus valence and arousal to visual activation during emotional perception", *Neuroimage*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 1955-1963.
- Okumus, B. and Cetin, G. (2018), "Marketing Istanbul as a culinary destination", *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, Vol. 9, pp. 340-346.
- Oliveira, B. and Casais, B. (2019), "The importance of user-generated photos in restaurant selection", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 2-14, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-11-2017-0130>

-
- Okumus, B., Okumus, F. and McKercher, B. (2007), "Incorporating local and international cuisines in the marketing of tourism destinations: the cases of Hong Kong and Turkey", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 253-261.
- Okumus, B., Xiang, Y. and Hutchinson, J. (2018), "Local cuisines and destination marketing: cases of three cities in Shandong, China", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 584-599.
- Parks-Whitfield, A. (2012), *Food Styling and Photography for Dummies*, John Wiley & Sons Inc, New Jersey, available at: <https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=Z1aq5Jmv4T8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Food+Styling+%26+Photography+For+Dummies+by+Alison+Parks-Whitfield&hl=tr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiz8byzm77tAhVB-qQKHVMXABAQ6AEwAHoECAyQAg#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Patton, M.Q. (1990), *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, (2nd ed.), Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California.
- Pierdicca, R., Paolanti, M. and Frontoni, E. (2019), "eTourism: ICT and its role for tourism management", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 90-106.
- Pittman, M. and Reich, B. (2016), "Social media and loneliness: why an Instagram picture may be worth more than a thousand twitter words", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 62, pp. 155-167.
- Ptomey, L.T., Willis, E.A., Honas, J.J., Mayo, M.S., Washburn, R.A., Herrmann, S.D., . . . Donnelly, J.E. (2015), "Validity of energy intake estimated by digital photography plus recall in overweight and obese young adults", *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, Vol. 115 No. 9, pp. 1392-1399.
- PopulationStat (2020), "Bursa Turkey population", available at: <https://populationstat.com/turkey/bursa>
- Ross, P.E., Romero, T.S., Jones, W.D., Bleicher, A., Calamia, J., Middleton, J., Stevensen, R., Moore, S.K., Upson, S., Schneider, D., Guizzo, E., Perry, T.S. and Zorpette, G. (2010), "Top 11 technologies of the decade", *IEEE Spectrum*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 27-63.
- Rössler, P., Bomhoff, J., Haschke, J.F., Kersten, J. and Müller, R. (2011), "Selection and impact of press photography. An empirical study on the basis of photo news factors", *Communications*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 415-439.
- Saldaña, J. (2009), *An Introduction to Codes and Coding. The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Sage publications, Los Angeles, Vol. 3.
- Sashi, C.M., Brynildsen, G. and Bilgihan, A. (2019), "Social media, customer engagement and advocacy: an empirical investigation using twitter data for quick service restaurants", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 1247-1272.
- Shanks, T., Andre, C., Velasquez, M. and Meyer, M.J. (2010), "What is ethics?", available at: www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/
- Shao, G. (2009), "Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: a uses and gratification perspective", *Internet Research*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 7-25.
- Shenton, A.K. (2004), "Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects", *Education for Information*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 63-75.
- Steenhuis, I.H. and Vermeer, W.M. (2009), "Portion size: review and framework for interventions", *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, Vol. 6 No. 1, p. 58.
- Taylor, N. and Keating, M. (2018), "Contemporary food imagery: food porn and other visual trends, communication research and practice", *Communication Research and Practice*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 307-323.
- Turkish Cuisine (2020), "Bursa cuisine", Turkish Cultural Foundation, available at: www.turkish-cuisine.org/regional-cuisine-4/marmara-region-122/bursa-129.html?PageIndex=0
- Vivaldo, D. (2010), *Food Stylist's Handbook*, Gibbs Smith Publishing, Hong Kong.

-
- Williamson, D.A., Allen, H.R., Martin, P.D., Alfonso, A., Gerald, B.G. and Hunt, A. (2003), "Comparison of digital photography to weighed and visual estimation of portion sizes", *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Vol. 103, pp. 1139-1145.
- Wong, I.A., Liu, D., Li, N., Wu, S., Lu, L. and Law, R. (2019), "Foodstagramming in the travel encounter", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 71, pp. 99-115.
- Yang, Y., Wang, X., Guan, T., Shen, J. and Yu, L. (2014), "A multi-dimensional image quality prediction model for user-generated images in social networks", *Information Sciences*, Vol. 10 No. 281, pp. 601-610.
-
- Yin, R.K. (2017), *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sage publications.
- Young, N.S. (2012), *Food Photography: From Snapshots to Great Shots*, Peachpit Press, CA.
- Yu, C.E. and Zhang, X. (2020), "The embedded feelings in local gastronomy: a sentiment analysis of online reviews", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 461-478.

Further reading

- Bellingham, L. and Bybee, J.A. (2012), *Food Styling for Photographers: A Guide to Creating Your Own Appetizing Art*, CRC Press, Elsevier, Oxford.
- Cabanac, M. (2002), "What is emotion?", *Behavioural Processes*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp. 69-83.
- Gibbs, G.R. (2007), "Chapter 1: the nature of qualitative analysis", *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, Sage Publications, London.
- Huberman, A.M., Miles, M. and Saldana, J. (2014), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, SAGE publications.
- Merriam, S.B. (2015), "Qualitative research: designing, implementing, and publishing a study", *Handbook of Research on Scholarly Publishing and Research Methods*, IGI Global.
- Neuman, L.W. (2014), *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 7th ed., Pearson Education Limited, Essex.
- Patton, M.Q. (2014), *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*, Sage publications, Los Angeles.
- Rolfe, G. (2006), "Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: quality and the idea of qualitative research", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 53 No. 3, pp. 304-310.

Corresponding author

Bendegul Okumus can be contacted at: bendegul.okumus@ucf.edu