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What can be learned about the relationship with food in food blogs?: A netnographic analysis of Finnish food bloggers' posts on social media

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Abstract

Social media provide numerous platforms to build relationships with food. In this research, we focus on Finnish food bloggers with the purpose to analyze how the relationship with food appears in food blogs. To answer this question, we conducted a netnographic research by visiting food blogs. The analysis followed qualitative content analysis. The main categories of findings were food- and eating-related values, innovativeness and experimental approach, positive eating-related multi-sensory experiences and memories, and social elements of eating. The role of social media, for example in the form of food blogs, can have a meaningful role in the socialization into the modern eating culture.

Keywords: food blog, netnography, relationship with food, social media

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Introduction

The new media provides numerous platforms to build relationships with food, find meanings for it, publish one's own food choices, and interact with various audiences. Food is strongly present in the media in many ways. Sometimes, this phenomenon is referred to as foodism, which means a growing enthusiasm toward food and eating cultures (Jallinoja et al., 2018). One concrete example is that in Finnish TV, the main channels broadcast over 70 food programs a week in 2015, and of them, 25 were at the best showtime (Tervonen, 2015).

In this research, we focused on blogging. A blog is a web page or website on which a blogger writes blog articles (Lukkarila, 2018). Blogs have been characterized as an online diary or homepage, where the blogger writes her or his thoughts on the topic she or he has chosen as the subject of her or his blogging (Kortesuo, 2014). Blogs are characterized by regular blog articles, i.e. posts, reverse chronological order of posts, and dominant use of the first person in the text (Tremayne, 2007).

Blogs as a form of social media arena and blogging as a social activity of sharing thoughts and doings have become popular (Bjornsen, 2018; Skalski et al., 2017). Furthermore, in social media platforms, individuals can influence others (Code, 2013). Social media content can be divided into, for example, content created or chosen by the user or interactive products (Skalski et al., 2017). Traditionally, blogs belong to the former (Skalski et al., 2017). To sum up, blogs have become an established part of media quickly, because starting from the 2010s, blogging could become one's main way of earning living.

Of blogging activities, our specific interest is in food blogging. Food bloggers make an interesting group because, on one hand, they represent active influencers in social media, and on the other hand, they also illustrate their own relationship with food through their blogs. Blogs represent one form of a social media arena that has become an essential part of today's adults' lives (Bjornsen, 2018). Research on food blogging has showed its many faces all the way from sharing and distributing information about healthy relationship with food to unhealthy choices (Coates et al., 2019; Khalid et al., 2018; O'Neal & Cocco, 2021).

Food bloggers can be described as self-educated food experts who publish recipes that readers can try at home. Food bloggers also write about topics that the readers can relate to and that they find worth sharing with others. One aspect of publishing opinions on food is that according to research, social acceptance of food choices is important to people so that they can feel pride and satisfaction about their choices (Ivanic, 2016). Furthermore, Wei (2009) points out that the social power of a blog can be defined as the blogger's ability to influence as many audiences as possible. This is interesting because food bloggers could also be regarded as modern-day educators about a healthy relationship with food. Thus, it is not irrelevant how they depict their relationship with food as their social media behaviors may have a potentially huge impact on many people (Rousenfell et al., 2020).

This research took place in Finland where food blogging has increased its popularity. Our research can be located within the fields of educational psychology and media education, and we are especially interested in how the relationship with food is expressed in the social media. The

research question set for this research is: How is the relationship with food described in Finnish food blogs?

Theory

The core concept of this research is the relationship with food. According to Talvia and Anglé (2018), the relationship is a unique entity that is dynamic and developing and consists of life-long food and eating experiences and interpretations. The relationship can be seen as multidimensional, even contradictory in the present culture and time (see e.g., Jallinoja et al., 2018). The relationship with food can be viewed from a variety of perspectives all the way from healthy development and disorders, to cultural, social, aesthetic, or environmental dimensions (e.g., Boulos et al., 2012; Dingemans et al., 2009; Han & Kahn 2017; Ng et al., 2014; Torres & Nowson, 2007; Van der Veen, 2003). In the western world, the preconditions to build a healthy relationship with food exist but not all eating environments, forms of food, quality of food, or beauty ideals support its development (see e.g., Macht et al., 2005). In the Finnish discourse, topical themes seem to be health, enjoyment, responsibility, and the balance between meat and vegetables in the diet (Jallinoja et al., 2018). Instead, social perspectives on food and its relationship with it have drawn less attention in research (Schubert et al., 2012).

Block et al. (2011) refer to a new concept of food well-being (FWB) proposing a more positive, holistic understanding of the role of food in overall well-being. Their idea includes five primary domains that are food socialization, food literacy, food marketing, food availability, and food policy. The viewpoint is relevant for this research because food bloggers act in the social media arenas, and thus also have a special social role as a part of their food-related activities (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). For example, they have the opportunity to convince a wide audience that healthy food can taste good (Story et al., 2002) or that a healthy diet can become a part of pleasurable life (Freeland-Graves & Nitzke, 2013). Thus, their social role may be the one of an influencer but they also set an example of food-related social behaviors and habits, such as family dinners and social eating (e.g., Cox & Blake, 2011; Hackel et al., 2018).

In the modern culture, the relationship with food can be molded or constructed also with food-related education, food experiments, encouragement, focusing on the availability of certain food products, guidance, food brands, and new packaging—just to name a few (see e.g., DeCosta et al., 2017; Vandeweghe et al., 2016). Furthermore, customer segmentation and advertising happen increasingly through social media (Pettigrew, 2016; see also Hanks et al., 2012; Rekyh & McConchie, 2014). Therefore, the relationship with food can be seen as visual and multi-channeled because today's people see and watch food more than ever before (Skatrud-Mickelson et al., 2011; Saariketo, 2018); our compulsive need to be present in social media is one element in the picture (Seymour, 2019). Food is a timeless topic, and therefore, food-related multi-channeled and -sensory communication has become a natural viral phenomenon of contemporary social media (Suominen et al., 2013).

The purpose of this research is to analyze how the relationship with food appears in one of the social media arenas, namely food blogs. Despite the interest in the phenomena caused by and appearing in social media, research on food bloggers is still somewhat scarce. Our purpose is to open discussion to how a relationship with food can be represented in food blogs—by analyzing

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food bloggers' blog posts we can discover new ways of perceiving relationships with food that could also reflect the modern lifestyles within the networks of social media.

Method

The purpose of this research is to analyze how the relationship with food appears in Finnish food blogs. To answer this question, we conducted a netnographic research by visiting food blogs. Netnography (also known as digital ethnography, cyber-ethnography, virtual ethnography, online ethnography) is a research approach that has developed from ethnography and has anthropological roots (Morais et al., 2020; Weijo et al., 2014). According to Mkono and Markwell (2014), the researchers are typically passive observers outside the community they are studying in netnographic studies. They do not reveal their research purpose to the online community members and participate in community discussions or activities (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). In this research, we considered ourselves as outside observers who did not participate in the interaction of the blog community, because the research object is the representation of food bloggers' relationship with food in food blog articles.

In this research, the research data comprised 16 bloggers' (10 women and 6 men) food blog articles written in November 2017. When choosing the blogs for this research, we wanted to include both women and men's blogs although in this research, the blogger's gender was not considered as the main factor for the blogging activity. The women's food blogs were chosen based on the year 2017 Food Blog TOP10 listing in Finland by Cision. The men's blogs were chosen with the same criteria. In addition, in order to be included in the data, the blogs had to be updated regularly (more often than three times a month). Altogether, the data comprised 257 pages, excluding photos and videos, and the readers' comments. All bloggers were aged between 20-50 years representing quite well the average age of food bloggers in Finland and in Europe (Blogibarometri 2014). Many female bloggers mentioned that they were mothers and entrepreneurs. Some were professional chefs, and many bloggers did food blogging as their day job. The blogs were started between 2006-2016. The blogs are described in the Table 1 in more detail.

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| Name | Code | Listing in Cision | The Blogger | Focus |
|---|------|-------------------|--|---|
| Peggyn pieni punainen keittiö [Peggy's Little Red Kitchen] | FB1 | 1 | a mother of three children | homely everyday dishes suitable for children, and its specialty is British dishes. |
| Chocochili | FB2 | 2 | a gardener-florist and entrepreneur | vegan food and vegetarian food. |
| Terveelliset herkut [Healthy Treats] | FB3 | 3 | over 30-year-old mother of a little boy | sweet and savory healthy recipes and coping with everyday life. |
| Viimeistä murua myöten [Till the Last Crumble] | FB4 | 4 | a young medical student and entrepreneur | vegetarian and vegan food recipes and recipes inspired by Southeast Asian cuisine. |
| Jotain maukasta [Something Tasteful] | FB5 | 5 | a wine expert and an author | processed products as little as possible and prefer instead, for example, brown sugars and vegetables |
| Liemessä [Sauced] | FB6 | 6 | a food artist, a content producer and entrepreneur | simple tasty food and evaluating travel destinations and restaurants |
| 52 Weeks of Deliciousness | FB7 | 7 | a mother and a foodie | recipes for everyday delicacies, restaurant tips and descriptions of taste trips around the world |
| Hellan ja viinilasinvälissä [Between the Stove and a Glass of Wine] | FB8 | 8 | an entrepreneur, photographer and recipe developer and mother | versatile food, wine and travel focused lifestyle blog |
| Hannan soppa [Hanna's Soup] | FB9 | 9 | a food professional, content producer, entrepreneur, photographer and a mother | Asian flavors, food trends and traditional and seasonal food |
| Beach House Finland | FB10 | 10 | a mother and traveler | food quality, ethics and versatility, and seeking ideas and flavors from around the world |

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| Name | Code | Listing in Cision | The Blogger | Focus |
|---|------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Perinneruokaa prkl [Traditional Food Fck] | FB11 | n/a | a professional cook and an author | trying new things, combining flavors and fresh ingredients and wine |
| Kulinaari [Culinary] | FB12 | n/a | a young foodie and a home cook | the star moments and failures of his home cooking |
| Aitoa arkiruokaa [Genuine Everyday Food] | FB13 | n/a | a professional cook and author | whole food recipes, restaurants, travel, wines, home and videos. |
| Ukot kokkaa [Dudes Cook] | FB14 | n/a | a Lappish father and son | food recipes created from cooking local food and self-caught animal and fish. |
| Aromipaja [Aroma Factory] | FB15 | n/a | an entrepreneur | good food and wine |
| Jannen keittiössä [In Janne's Kitchen] | FB16 | n/a | a young male baker pastry chef | sweet and savory baking and cooking |

Note: The blogs included in this research

The analysis focused progressed through immersion to data categorization, comparisons of categories, naming of categories, and final definitions of categories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). In netnography, the phases of data analysis usually overlap because the researcher returns to the data and categories constantly. In this research, we started the first phase by making an overview of the data after selecting the blogs for the research. We divided the material into four large parts, each of which contained the articles of four bloggers. In the second phase, data examples were discovered that represented the cornerstones of the food relationship. The categorization focused on how food bloggers describe their relationship with food through their expressions of values, food choices, and other food-related activities. Eventually, what was chosen to be reported as a research finding had to appear at least in 7-8 food bloggers' articles. These appearing themes formed the categorization and definitions of findings (see also Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This phase lead to the main categories of findings which were food- and eating-related values, innovativeness and experimental approach, positive eating-related multi-sensory experiences and memories, and social elements of eating.

Results

Food- and eating-related values

The relationship with food among the food bloggers appeared through the values and ethical choices they revealed in their texts. Values, such as healthy, natural, economic, ecological, and

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local availability, were mentioned. The bloggers also seemed to associate these values with the quality of food.

Especially, local and organic food was valued highly: six bloggers actively choose self- or locally grown or picked ingredients, and five used the local food circle. Others mentioned local stores and farms as their favorite places to buy ingredients. All these activities were described from the perspective of preparing and enjoying food and eating.

“--I found moose from a nearby farm store. Heat nachos for a little while in the oven and put pickled pumpkin and lingonberry on top with sour cream - Finnish and very well matching flavors.” (FB10)

“I managed to get quality Dingley Bell farm meat from PNM. Well-marbled and juicy steaks downright called for proper food preparing. This was a perfect occasion.” (FB13)

The availability of ingredients was also a popular topic in blog articles. On the one hand, the bloggers valued seasonal products, and on the other hand, they regretted if some ingredients or spices were not available. However, the latter often led to innovative experiments that were served to readers as new recipes. In addition to the appreciation of quality and local ingredients, the bloggers seemed to consider that readers too wanted to read about their choices and their new recipes. In many articles, it became evident that the bloggers would prefer also publishing quality recipes, but could also publish quick and cheap recipes every now and then:

“Starting from the beginning of this blog, readers have given feedback that they would appreciate cheaper meals. Indeed, we do plenty of reasonably priced and quick meals but these have not been published in the blog. - - One really cheap and one of our favorites is sausage sauce. So, there you are; a recipe of how it is made, and the price is only about a couple of euros.” (FB14)

The bloggers paid attention to ecological choices and food waste. This value appeared also in the way bloggers encouraged their readers to lessen food waste and offered tips for concrete actions. The bloggers appeared skillful in using the food items they had at home in a flexible and thrifty manner. Some bloggers mentioned their vegan recipes as ecological choices, too.

“The advantage of this pie is that all yolks from the eggs used for meringue are used in the pie dough. Thus, you will not be storing excess yolks in the fridge that you often get when preparing meringue.” (FB11)

“When digging my kitchen cabinets I found yellow, dried peas, and started thinking how to use them. - - At the same time, I was able to use yesterday’s cooked potatoes.” (FB13)

In addition, well-being trends could be identified as values the bloggers wanted to express in their articles. They described how food and food blogging had healthy effects on the mind and body. The health and well-being related relationship with food was evident in blog articles reporting actions that were to enhance health by, for example, having one vegetarian day a week or choosing a certain diet. Some ingredients were chosen for recipes or recommended to readers for their health effects. The positive health effects were brought up actively in blogs:

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“I have been thinking about the significance of food to health, and the sentence ‘you are what you eat’ have gotten a new meaning. - - You can influence the imbalance in your human organism with food and thus prevent the imbalance to develop into a disease. - - What if the option to medicine was a diet that is suitable to you: which one would you choose?” (FB11)

The health-based relationship with food was also evident through healthy recipes and attention to balanced meals. Many bloggers were well aware of nutrition recommendations and explicitly wanted to notice those in everyday dining. They could, for example, write about how much they eat fish, the significance of proteins for health and adding vegetables in meals, and how to decrease the consumption of sugars and sweets. Yet, they did not say that it was easy to follow dietary recommendations. However, the bloggers spared certain ingredients and used to freeze meals for quick everyday dining to ensure healthy meals also when too busy to prepare meals.

“The chaos with small children is a little bit more organized if you have the freezer arranged so that it has sections for snacks and ready meals. You do not have to go to the store more than once a week. - - so you will not be doing panic shopping for expensive snack bars or yogurts. P.S. And if you sometimes use processed meals, I guess that will not harm anyone. Even we have fish sticks, dumplings, and frozen pizza!” (FB10)

“--I usually prepare a huge dough at a time, and I freeze it into separate boxes. The frozen falafel dough melts really fast, so falafels serve often as a quick meal.” (FB4)

In all, the relationship with food among bloggers appeared in this category through the healthy choices and well-being-related notions that they brought up in blog articles. Also, other values, such as ecology and locality, were apparent in articles either in the bloggers’ own experiences or choices of recipes and ingredients they wanted to share with their readers.

Innovativeness and experimental approach

The second category representing the food bloggers’ relationships with food concerned the innovative and experimental approach they expressed. First of all, this appeared through a strong interest in international cuisine. Based on the blogs, the bloggers were inspired by recipes from all over the world, participated in various food projects and tastings, and did food and tasting excursions abroad. They wanted to increase their knowledge about international cuisine but also produce new recipes and share their knowledge in blogs. The bloggers wanted to enrich the familiar Finnish cuisine with new flavors and ingredients.

“In our Christmas dinner, we have often had meals inspired with the Middle Eastern cuisine. Spices and ingredients typical to the Middle East slid into the Finnish Christmas table perfectly!” (FB2)

The innovative and experimental approach was described also by calling preparing food an important hobby. This also explains the nature of the relationship with food. The descriptions were enthusiastic and the enthusiasm appeared in daily activities.

“I have always been interested in Asian kitchen, food, cultures, and habits. I do eat quite a

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lot Asian food and for example, our little chef [referring to a child] loves Thai food.” (FB7)

“Presenting the series 1000+1 Ways to Prepare Meatballs! Mr. Clam wants to eat his favorite food meatballs if not daily but weekly. At this time, we will have Asian meatballs that are those familiar and safe meatballs but with a little Asian twist.” (FB6)

The food bloggers were not only interested in testing various ingredients, but they also experimented with new ways of preparing meals, for example with household appliances. Some bloggers also got new appliances or other tools from their sponsors. Regardless of where the new appliance came from, the joy of wanting to try new was something that the bloggers wanted to share with their readers.

“Where do these potatoes Parisienne come from? From the supermarket freezer? NO NO NO!! Although we have gotten from there until now but already a couple of years ago I decided that we will prepare those by ourselves as well. Thus, I ordered a melon baller and finally, after two years, we started to use it.” (FB14)

Innovation and experimentation appeared especially in blog articles that introduced weekend and festive cooking. They spared plenty of time for preparing meals, which could include several phases. Thus, preparing also required planning and sometimes starting the preparing already days before the weekend meal serving. In general, the bloggers seemed to enjoy challenges in the kitchen provided by new ingredients or difficult, multiple-phased recipes.

“I have not ever before baked bun for 1.5 days! But I will reveal it already that it was worth it.” (FB7)

Positive eating-related multi-sensory experiences and memories

The relationship with food appeared also as a positive multi-sensory experience. In the data, the bloggers expressed multiple expectations toward food and eating. For example, eating at a restaurant was expected to provide holistic food experiences that were unusual and different from everyday cooking. These experiences were mentioned not only as gustatory but also visual and social.

“I have visited Grön [a restaurant] once and it was again a sort of uplifting experience that I can recommend to everyone. We enjoyed a five-course menu and here are little examples from the menu. Our colleagues were speechless, these portions and that sourdough bread - - perfect!” (FB10)

The experience was based on the food but also on the context and how the food was served. The food bloggers sought tips from for example cook books and evaluated others’ servings when visiting restaurants. Many bloggers wanted to share those activities that they considered important, such as preparing the table setting, preparing the meal itself, and transmitting the traditions forward to their children or followers.

“In my opinion, the table setting is like half the meal, and a beautiful table is a joy to the

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eye. Pentik's dinner set has belonged on our table already from my childhood. The set has varied from the 1970s Halla series to the modern ones. This year I tried mixing colors and various patterns more boldly." (FB1)

Food and eating-related experiences were also memories and expressions of food identity, thus forming an important part of the relationship with food. The bloggers often described memories positively and as memorable. Present-day dining was expected to create food-related memories and thus build a relationship with food constantly.

"Do you remember the 1990s' favorite garlic potatoes? I had moved from home and did garlic potatoes in the oven every weekend. I did not spare garlic and it smelled accordingly. - - I made garlic potatoes so often that it took almost 20 years until I remembered those again. Oh, how insanely good they were, and what a lovely smell came out from the oven, but I am not referring to how we smelled afterward." (FB11)

The bloggers described how they were feasting on food or having snacks. Sometimes a good meal was gulped down. In all, descriptions of eating were positive without exception and eating was expected to bring pleasure primarily. The bloggers were also aware of their preferences and often described them. They told how they loved certain food and expressed their feelings toward food and eating with numerous positive feelings.

"Anyways, we eat (finally!) awfully good bread every week. I mean awfully good bread. The week before last week I based two pieces of bread because one will last only one day. Well, those two did not last long and on Sunday evening there was nothing left." (FB7)

Social elements of eating

The social nature of eating was so significant in food blogs that it could be defined as an important part of the relationship with food. The social elements were brought up in many ways: alongside introducing recipes the bloggers constantly mentioned either directly or implicitly that they had company or that they prepared food for a bigger group of eaters. Serving and table-setting tips were often described from a social viewpoint. It also seemed that the bloggers met each other occasionally and some bloggers had also become friends with their readers. Food and eating seemed to bring people together.

"Tortilla evening has already become a tradition to our crew, and you cannot get bored with this tradition because of the numerous options for stuffing. This time tortillas were filled with colorful jollity and a festive feeling with a fruit cocktail, which turned out excellent. Corn tortillas, spicy chicken, and fruit salsa made us rub our hands in delight, mmmmm...." (FB1)

In addition, preparing food with children, other family members, or friends was mentioned often, which required some planning as well. Sharing the enthusiasm of trying new recipes or methods was described as an essential part of the relationship with food.

"The chocolate house became a train station and the children could decorate the roof with little sugar stars and Non Stop chocolate drops. The house did not turn into the world's

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most stylish one but it looks like us and the children had fun building it. The funniest phase was probably the last one which was the powder sugar rain that covered the train station and the conductors as well as the nearby spruce forest.” (FB9)

The social element was apparent, especially among those bloggers who had children. They seemed to prepare meals that their children liked, but they also highlighted their role as providing food memories to their children. They wanted to teach about their childhood traditions and educate them about a healthy relationship with food. Eating with children presented the bloggers with a new viewpoint and a turning point in their relationship with food.

“In October, I prepared pumpkin crepes that our toddler liked too. That is why I have dared to put more spices in food because it seems that my breast milk has provided chili to the child’s taste buds already, and the child does not dislike exotic flavors.” (FB10)

Discussion

The findings showed how the bloggers constructed, maintained, and presented their relationship with food in many ways illustrating also their FWB (Block et al., 2011). Food offered several opportunities for hobbyism, such as collecting various appliances, artistic meals, social media posts, food tourism, and food-specific groups and interests. The relationship with food appeared multidimensional and developing. It also seemed that the bloggers wanted to act actively as the preservers of traditions and, on the other hand, as trailblazers of the new culture. Their innovativeness and willingness to experiment and create new recipes revealed this side of their relationship with food. Furthermore, the social dimension that was strongly present in their blogs showed that they wanted to share their experiences and build also others’ (e.g., children) relationships with food by introducing their own choices and multi-sensory experiences. The pursuit of creating “wow” experiences with food appears similar to the idea of food as a gift: taking the trouble of preparing multi-phased meals, serving food beautifully, and sharing the positive experience is a part of the modern eating culture (Michel et al., 2014; Sidenvall et al., 2000). The social element was also evident in the way the bloggers brought up the values they appreciated (e.g., local food, and healthy choices). The values of sustainable consumption have been noticed typically by Nordic consumers in general (Niva et al., 2014).

When considering the results on the point of view of blogging, food blogs can be seen as an informal means of food politics. With the positive food communication practiced by food bloggers, the approach of national Finnish recommendations to eating and nutrition could change from an official tone (see e.g. Jallinoja et al., 2018) to an empowering one and be considered more appealing for the consumers, concentrating to social perspective such as family dinners and social eating (e.g., Cox & Blake, 2011; Hackel et al., 2018).

As a blog focus, FWB (see also Block et al. 2011) would serve the increase in the public need for guidance and counseling related to nutrition, i.e. for an individual to make nutrition-related choices. Since the relationship with food is dynamic and developing (Talvia & Anglé, 2018), food bloggers could play a key role in the efforts to improve people’s relationship with food. Eventually, the food bloggers represent a special group of today’s influencers, whose relationship with food

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develops through continuous interaction mediated by social media and who can influence the food relationships of others.

Limitations

In this research, the data was natural because it existed without the research. The researcher entered the world of social media to obtain the netnographic data (Hakala & Vesa, 2013; Östman, 2015). However, at the same time, it limited the ability to ask bloggers about their relationship with food and check whether the interpretations made from blogs were correct. However, according to the nature of netnography, the observer researcher tries to stay in the back and analyze the events and phenomena from the chosen viewpoint, in this case how the relationship with food appeared in the food bloggers' activities at the given period (see also Malterud, 2021).

Although this research included quite a wide scope of blogs from the Finnish food blogging field, the generalizability of the findings can be questioned. Being selected as “top food blogs” these blogs represent a special group of blogs, which also has an impact on transferability because blogs of various quality is left outside. In addition, the Finnish food culture has its own special features that differ from other countries. It is also worth remembering that netnography does not aim at generalizations, but providing a deeper understanding about the phenomenon under investigation, which was the purpose of this research too.

Another limitation is that some food bloggers had sponsors. As they were also making their living by writing blogs, the contents of articles may have been influenced by the sponsorship. Since the articles comprised rich and wide data, and the bloggers' descriptions included so many personal experiences and opinions, it was considered that the data was suitable for the research. Those sections that seemed more advertisement than personal descriptions were not included in the analysis (Morais et al., 2020; Skalski et al., 2017). Similarly, the food pictures and readers' comments were excluded from the analysis as it was considered that they would not bring much to the analysis of the bloggers' relationship with food.

Conclusion

While some earlier research claims that modern eating has become asynchronous and narrowed (McBride, 2010; Spence et al., 2016), this research shows that the way food bloggers express their relationship with food could have an important role as a positive role model to the modern eaters. In their blogs, they represented the opportunity to build a positive relationship with food in social encounters during planning, preparing, and eating the food as well as when sharing the experience also with the wider audience through social media. Food bloggers are always in the swim of time, because they blog about the new food experiments, encouragement, focusing on the availability of certain food products, guidance, food brands, and new packaging—just to name a few (DeCosta et al., 2017; Vandeweghe et al., 2016).

Bloggers' wide audience can be contrasted also to the concept of commensality which refers specially to eating together and sharing values (Ochs & Shovet, 2006; Sidenvall et al., 2000). When it comes to food bloggers, a concept that would also connect the commensality activities mediated by the social media (blogs in this case). This would be important because the food

bloggers expressed their relationship with food as a source of well-being in multiple levels of human action (see also Pettigrew, 2016; see also Lautenschlager & Smith, 2007; Marty et al., 2018). Block et al.'s (2011) concept of food well-being seemed to describe well food bloggers' relationship with food. In addition, earlier research about the significance of food-related memories to the nature of one's relationship with food got support from the findings of this research as well (Everett, 2008; Holtzman, 2006; Waxman, 2008; Willander & Larsson, 2007).

People become socialized into certain eating cultures and habits already starting from childhood (Joki et al., 2019; Nicklaus, 2009; Lautenschlager & Smith, 2007). In the western world, the preconditions to build a healthy relationship with food exist but not all eating environments support its development (Macht et al., 2005). The role of social media, for example in the form of food blogs, can have a meaningful role in the socialization into the modern eating culture. The modern eating culture effects the relationship with food making it more visual and multi-channeled (see also Skatrud-Mickelson et al., 2011; Saariketo, 2018).

Our research data was collected already a few years ago after which blogging activities have only increased and become more varied. Still, the potential of blogging is not yet fully recognized, for example their potential educational role in nutritional politics is not yet tested. Based on the findings of this research we would like to highlight the need for further examination of social media and cultural learning when it comes to new ways of enhancing healthy relationships with food and spreading the joy of food that the food bloggers illustrated in the blog articles.

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