

Publication III

Partanen, R., & Uusiautti, S. (2024). Food Relationship Discourses Produced By The Finnish Food Bloggers: A PERMA-Based Analysis. *Webology*, 21(2), 142-156. [https://webology.org/datacms/articles/20240413114336amWEBOLOGY%2021%20\(2\)%20-%207.pdf](https://webology.org/datacms/articles/20240413114336amWEBOLOGY%2021%20(2)%20-%207.pdf)

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Food Relationship Discourses Produced By The Finnish Food Bloggers – A PERMA-Based Analysis

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Abstract

This research investigated how food bloggers produce discourses about well-being and their relationship with food. The research question set for this research is: How does well-being appear in the food bloggers' discourses of their relationship with food? Two data sets were obtained: The first data collection comprised 16 bloggers (10 women and six men), who had written food blog articles in November 2017. The second data set included an email survey among the food bloggers (N=19). The data were analyzed using the discourse analysis method based on the PERMA theory. The findings showed how multidimensional a picture of well-being can be achieved when analyzing food-related discourses. More research is needed to understand further the educational uses of well-being-related discourses in social media.

Key Words: discourse analysis; social media; food blogging; bloggers; relationship with food; well-being; PERMA theory.

Introduction

In the 21st century, the relationship with food has become visible in many arenas of food- and eating-related discourses, especially on the internet (Endres, 2016). Social media communication about food can take many forms and depict power relationships (de Jesus Oliveira Mota et al., 2019). For example, Endres (2016) found that dietary experts maintain strict and formal discourses about healthy eating behaviors, while peers merely provide social support, such as for attempts to lose weight, making peer interaction more meaningful and effective. Furthermore, social media influencers can be seen to train their followers' food-related thoughts and behaviors (de Jesus Oliveira Mota et al., 2019). If communication aims to convert actual, evidence-based knowledge into dietary change, nutrition communication is a relevant concept to describe discourses in social media (Ghosh, 2023). However, not all social media communication is this type of communication.

Instead of purposeful communication, in this research, we are interested in discourses that can be identified from social media and located in food-related communication. One particular group of those contributing and creating discourses is the food bloggers (Code, 2013). They share their thoughts and activities on food and eating online and encourage others to join, follow, reflect, and comment on their blogs. Food bloggers represent a particular type of modern people whose identity is intertwined and presented in relation to food. They prepare food, develop new recipes, write about food, try fresh ingredients, educate themselves and sometimes others about food, and participate in various food-related events (Jones & Taylor, 2001; Salvio, 2012). Based on earlier research (Partanen & Uusiautti, 2023a; 2023b), bloggers are not yet fully aware of their potential power in

their followers, nor are blogs used widely for educational purposes. Therefore, it is essential to learn more about the types of discourses the bloggers produce.

The relationship with food is constructed from early childhood, and this process is colored by the variety of ongoing discourse and ways of speaking about food (Bjornsen, 2018; Coates et al., 2019; Rask et al., 2013; Simunaniemi et al., 2012). One example of discourse analysis in food blogs is Simunaniemi et al.'s (2012) analysis of fruit and vegetable-related discourses. Their research showed that the bloggers maintained discourses of normative consumption with a focus on single nutrients and physiological mechanisms, authentic consumption with a desire for naturalness, and altruistic consumption with an emphasis on ethical responsibility (Simunaniemi et al., 2012). Another study focused on how competitive eaters produced discourses of controlled ingestion to find support for their opinions and used social media as a political tool for counter-discursive practices (Abbots & Attala, 2017). Mapes (2021), on the other hand, researched how food discourses can represent and reproduce the elite and privileged life and contribute their part to the cultural production of inequality (see also Frye & Bruner, 2012). Social media discourses have also been studied to determine how the public understands and thinks about specific politically sensitive food-related issues, such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Wirz et al., 2021).

The examples mentioned earlier show recent studies' various viewpoints on social media discourses on food. Still, research on well-being has been limited. This is the case even though today's social media can enhance the good by generating well-being-focused discourses about food and eating that resonate with a broad audience (Hamadeh & Estepan, 2018).

Our research is located in educational psychology, and therefore, we are especially interested in the educational possibilities of well-being-focused food discourses in social media. In their blog posts, food bloggers constantly produce discourses on how well-being is part of their relationship with food. In this research, we focus on the different aspects of well-being in these discourses delivered by food bloggers. The analysis is based on the PERMA theory (Seligman, 2011).

Theoretical viewpoints on food well-being and the PERMA theory

The concept of well-being has been studied from numerous perspectives. From a subjective level, well-being is about a perception of finding one's life good and satisfying or subjective well-being (SWB), as introduced by Diener (1984). It is about agency and social connection (Vella-Brodrick et al., 2022) in a situation where the primary basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness have been met (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2009). At a macro level, well-being can be defined through various indicators of equality, wealth, security, and services, to name a few (Diener & Tov, 2012). However, SWB and multiple behaviors related to it seem to be widespread across cultures (Choi et al., 2022).

Our research focuses on well-being discourses produced by an extraordinary group of people, the food bloggers. They act in the social media arenas, and thus, their views on well-being and perceptions of their well-being have an impact more widely, too, among people the food bloggers do not even know, namely their followers (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). In addition, their well-being-related discourses are connected with food and eating (Hackel et al., 2018).

An interesting concept related to our research topic is food well-being (FWB) (Block et al., 2011). It is a typical example of a concept that provides a specific viewpoint of a person's general well-

being. According to the definition provided by Block et al. (2011), FWB consists of food socialization, food literacy, food marketing, food availability, and food policy. The concept emphasizes the pleasure produced by consuming food and taking care of oneself with the help of food as a positive thing (Block et al. 2011; Pettigrew 2016). For our research, this concept appears too narrow and focuses too much on extrinsic food-related factors, such as food availability or policy. We are more interested in how well-being manifests in the food bloggers' speech in general. Therefore, we wanted to base our research on a multi-dimensional well-being viewpoint that combines the personal emotional state, activities, and relationships.

Therefore, we leaned on Seligman's (2011) well-being theory about the foundations of human flourishing. The approach is widely used in research on various areas of life but not much in the context of social media or food blogging. According to the theory, well-being is a construct of five elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011).

Positive emotions support the generally positive perception of one's life and positive development (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009). In a recent longitudinal study by Vella-Brodrick et al. (2022), early emotional well-being predicted the outcome of positive agency and social connection. Engagement appears as dedication, concentration, and the opportunity to use and develop one's strengths (Seligman, 2011) and even experience the flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). When it comes to relationships, people who can build and maintain reciprocal relationships have been reported to have high levels of well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Törrönen, 2018). People have various reasons for engaging in food blogging, but for some, it may become an arena of self-fulfillment (Niemiec, 2018). The sense of meaning in the PERMA theory is based on using one's signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and the opportunity to find joy and a sense of purpose in life through them (see also Uusiautti et al., 2022). Finally, the PERMA theory includes the element of accomplishments. Achieving goals is essential to human beings' well-being not only because of the sense of succeeding and related positive emotions but also because of the sense of being able to complete smaller and more significant tasks and duties and finding oneself productive and capable (Seligman, 2011; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2015).

Method

This research investigated how food bloggers produce discourses about well-being and their relationship with food. The research question set for this research is: How does well-being appear in the food bloggers' discourses of their relationship with food?

In this research, we assume that how the food bloggers bring out their relationship with food would reveal something about well-being. Thus, the discourses of the relationship with food make visible the multiple ways food blogging is connected to the well-being of bloggers and their social networks online and offline. By learning the broad conception of well-being as proposed in the PERMA theory (Seligman, 2011), the aim is to provide a deep understanding of the importance of how bloggers talk about food and how they experience their relationship with food.

We analyzed the sets of research data using discourse analysis (Vásquez & Liska, 2023). The analytic discourse analysis allowed us to explore how the everyday language and ways of speaking about food are relevant in the social media contexts in which food bloggers operate. Their speech and descriptions of their attitudes, emotions, and intentions represent the discursive psychological branch of analysis (Edwards, 1999). The core idea was to study how—through the way the food

bloggers use language and speak—the social reality is constructed. Discourses are understood widely, ranging from spoken and written materials that illustrate the experienced fact (Remes, 2014). Discourses are, therefore, ways of constructing meanings that influence our social existence (Vásquez & Liska, 2023). The worldview in discourse analysis leans toward social constructivism (Creswell, 2009).

We used two different sets of research materials to conduct this research. The data collection happened in two phases. First, we visited Finnish food blogs to collect data. The first data collection comprised 16 bloggers' (10 women and six men) food blog articles written in November 2017. The women's food blogs were chosen based on Cision's 2017 Food Blog TOP10 listing in Finland. The men's blogs were selected with the same criteria. In addition, to be included in the data, the blogs had to be updated regularly (more often than three times a month). The data comprised 257 pages, excluding photos, videos, and the readers' comments. In this research, the blogs have been coded using their original Finnish blog names translated into English.

Second, we conducted an email survey among the food bloggers. The bloggers were contacted by email, which included a link to an online survey created with the Webropol application. Based on our previous analysis of the food blog articles (see Partanen & Uusiautti, 2023b), questions (N=12) about the food bloggers and their relationship with food were formed around positive relationships with food, values, experiences, innovativeness, and well-being. In addition, the survey consisted of statements and open-ended questions that focused on how the food bloggers describe their behaviors in the social media by food blogging activities. This second data collection started in May 2021 by contacting Finnish food bloggers listed on www.parhaatruokablogit.fi pages. Blogs that met the criteria of (1) being a Finnish blog, (2) having chronological content, (3) being updated regularly (at least three times a month), (4) having a commenting function for readers, and (5) being created and held by a person or community that could be identified. First, 32 bloggers were contacted, and the data collection progressed every week so that 16 new bloggers were contacted every week until, in mid-summer 2021, 15 bloggers had answered the survey. Eventually, 19 bloggers participated in the research. In this research, they have been coded as FB1–FB19.

We employed a theory-based discourse analysis of two sets of data. In practice, we used the five categories provided by the PERMA theory as the basis for identifying well-being-related speech in the data and thus regarded as the framework. The analysis progressed with three phases. The purpose of the phases was to analyze how the bloggers talk about their relationship with food within the PERMA categories: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. The first phase was a content review of the different data sets and a comparison of the findings to five categories provided by the PERMA theory. In the second phase, we examined meaning categories at the text level and deepened them with our understanding and previous literature and research. As a result of the examination, the discourses of the relationship with food were formed and introduced as research results.

Research results

Food relationship discourse of positive emotions

The food bloggers described their relationship with food as joyful. They specified that food-related values, cooking, taste sensations, company, aesthetics, and doing things for others created joy and delight in them. A critical part of the relationship with food was enjoying food, which appeared in the research data as a passive, one-sided activity in which the food blogger emphasized the pure pleasure of enjoying good food.

“A positive relationship with food is probably partly a childhood legacy. In my childhood home, ingredients and food were appreciated. Part of the positive relationship with food has grown throughout my life through wonderful taste sensations and the joy of cooking.” (FB7)

“I relax while baking; I enjoy doing things with my hands, the house is filled with good smells, good food - better mood.” (FB18)

In connection with joy, food bloggers often mentioned aesthetics and visuals. Aesthetics were also related to multi-sensory experiences. In the food bloggers' perceptions, visuality seemed synonymous with beauty, pleasing the eye with a portion of food. Regarding visualization, the food bloggers highlighted the importance of layout, presentation, and table setting. The matter of aesthetics was mentioned, especially in contexts where it was hoped that the reader would be able to get excited about food. Some food bloggers also noted that the beautiful dishes inspired them. Aesthetics were also related to food blogging through photography, as blog posts always consist of food photos, which bloggers have usually styled and taken themselves. According to this perspective, the food relationship discourse was also constructed visually, bringing positive emotions to bloggers.

“I often emphasize the union of food and drink and pair quality ingredients with quality wines and other beverages. Beautiful presentation, table setting, and company are a big part of the enjoyment of food.” (FB4)

The relationship between food and well-being also involves sociability as one aspect of the joy of eating. From the research data, it could be interpreted that the pleasure of food, the joy of eating, as it were, doubled if it was possible to share it with others in an instant. Food bloggers prepare food alone and together, but the physical closeness produced by serving food was also mentioned as a vital source of well-being for them. Food bloggers often prepare food for their loved ones and family, but the peculiarity of food blogging is the third party, readers. The food bloggers believed that the readers can relate to the positive emotions experienced by the blogger when they read them on the food blog and that they may be empowered by them themselves.

“[Joy of food] is spending time together in the kitchen with loved ones, food planned and prepared together, and also enjoying it together.” (FB11)

In previous research, offering food is compared to giving a gift (e.g., Sidenvall et al., 2000). The fact that the reader would also prepare their food appeared in this study, producing well-being. In today's social media, offering food as a gift could also mean that a blogger gave a reader a virtual food gift by posting a recipe and food photos on their food blog. A reader could also offer a blogger a virtual gift of return food by sending them a message or publishing a picture of their work based on a recipe published by the blogger as proof that the food blog had made the reader express themselves in the kitchen.

“Food blogging definitely starts with a love of food.” (FB8)

“That’s why I regularly surprise myself that blogging is still my dearest hobby after all these years. I feel so lucky that this job can be both a hobby and a living. Now, nine years later, I’d rather do nothing but cook, photograph, and write about food. And my readers are thankful that I can now fill more and more of my weeks with what I really love to do. I’m already looking forward to what the next nine years will bring!” (Chocochili)

“I love stews that have been brewing for a long time; they belong on dark winter evenings – preferably served by candlelight with a glass of red wine. As a fan of hearty stews, I wanted to develop a vegetarian version that wouldn’t pale compared to meat stews.” (Hanna’s Soup)

In conclusion, the joy that food bloggers described in the discourses of their relationship with food was also generated with other positive emotions, such as feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure. They were part of the food bloggers’ strong sense of affection for cooking, which in turn communicated the well-being and positive relationship that food bloggers experienced over food.

Food relationship discourse of engagement

From the perspective of engagement and presence, the food bloggers talked about food as their passion. They open-mindedly tried new ingredients and recipes in their kitchens. Based on the blog posts, they were adventurous around food and got excited when learning new things. In the survey data, they explained how it deepened their positive relationship with food and strengthened their enthusiasm and passion, thus increasing their experience of well-being.

“My passion only deepens, I know more and more, and I have learned a lot about responsible and sustainable food, for example, through writing the blog.” (FB6)

“Food and eating are really one passion in life. What’s better than a good meal in good company.” (FB2)

Based on the blog posts, food bloggers engaged when focusing on the cooking process and being intensely present in the cooking moment. They described these kinds of moments of absorption as highly pleasurable.

The quality of the ingredients often made them want to engage themselves in the food preparation process, as it created enjoyable expectations among food bloggers. The unique feature of food blogging was that the absorption continued even after the cooking situation when the food bloggers described their experiences through writing in their blogs. The engagement discourses could ignite similar feelings among readers or a wish to experience cooking similarly.

“The pear-and-chocolate cake has been a food dream of mine ever since I sat at an autumn table in the French countryside at a workshop in September at the Our Foodstories blog. I almost started crying because of the beauty surrounding us, but I tasted pumpkin cake that hides pears at the latest. I made my own Christmas and chocolate version of the cake.” (Sauced)

“It’s not every day that you eat a meal like the pictures in this post, steak with side dishes and a glass of wine. Well, sometimes you can treat yourself to a higher quality meal, and so what, even if it’s a weekday? 😊 The juicy steak shown in the pictures is a pork chop from a Dingley Dell farm that I got from PNM. What makes this chop special is the good marble of the meat and excellent raw ripeness. So, what would you eat with a steak? High-quality meat deserves high-quality side dishes, so I made green beans, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, and SuperPotty with fresh thyme this time.” (Genuine everyday food)

The engagement element appeared in the food bloggers' speech as descriptions of total concentration and absorption of their doing. In addition, they talked about the enthusiasm and anticipation, desire to work with food and share their experiences.

Food relationship discourse of reciprocal social relationships

From the perspective of the food relationship discourse of reciprocal social relationships, the food bloggers constantly posted and talked about eating and cooking together and spending quality time with their families and friends. This was also something that they had learned from their childhood, and they wanted to pass as a social tradition to their children.

“In my family, everyone has always cooked. I have also baked and cooked myself since I was a child. We had regular meal times together. We always made good food, whether it was a weekday or for partying. Dad always invested in special ingredients and photographed dishes in the 70s and 80s.” (FB4)

Descriptions of changes in eating habits appeared primarily in the blog posts of food bloggers with children. The food was prepared mainly according to the children's preferences. Many food bloggers said they were aware of their responsibilities as parents: they were now creating food memories and relationships with food for their children. Taste preferences can also be consciously refined, as many food blogger parents seemed to do with their offspring. The food blog posts showed that eating with children brought a new perspective on well-being related to food and eating.

“I've always liked different tacos and tortillas; we often eat them. At first, I chopped the ingredients into finger-edible pieces on a plate for the children. Hugo already likes to roll the fillings inside the pudding, but Olga still prefers to eat the different components individually. The jack fruit tacos were more to the taste of the omnivorous Hugo anyway; Olga focused on dipping corn tortillas into lime-flavored oat fraiche. For us adults, tacos stuffed with smoky jackfruit and persimmon salsa did their trade particularly well.” (Hanna's Soup)

The discourse of the social relationships and the food culture depicted the social interaction around food in the bloggers' lives. Describing food memories in the blog material, positive emotions evoked by food, and changes in food preferences after having children were interpreted on the one hand as signs of food bloggers' positive, change-prone relationship with food, and on the other hand, as the very social nature of the relationship with food as a part of bloggers' well-being.

“Halloween time is back! We don't really celebrate this celebration this year, yet I was inspired to go with my child and bustle these creepy chocolate bugs in the kitchen! And even if you don't care about the party, I still recommend trying these cocoa balls that are ready in no time. I did these with the child, and my 4.5-year-old son Jooa was responsible for the overall result, including decorations. So these creepy and delicious bug balls are quick and easy to prepare with your child!” (Healthy Treats)

In conclusion, the food blog posts showed that cooking can be a social hobby and provide opportunities to nurture reciprocal relationships. Based on how bloggers talked about social relationships alongside their blogging activities, it offered bloggers several options for social well-being.

Food relationship discourse of meaning

According to the food bloggers' speeches, meaning in life came from choices that were in line with their values, also when it came to food and food blogging. Based on blog posts, food bloggers live their own lives in which food is a significant element that generates well-being. Values such as economy, locality, and ecology appeared in the food bloggers' descriptions of their food-related choices.

"I constantly highlight values that I feel are important: responsibility, ethics, local food, small producers, a plant-based diet. Passing on these values is important to me!" (FB6)

"With the food renovation, the importance of food for mental and physical well-being has opened up more, and since then, I have occasionally mentioned the importance in blog posts as well. But mainly, I focus on telling you about the recipe." (FB2)

Based on the research data, the food bloggers understood that their relationship with food was based on their values and wanted to convey their food-related values to readers through food blogging. They found blogging meaningful not only to themselves but also to their readers. Although the bloggers expressed that they wanted to avoid pushing their readers to make confident choices, they wanted to share their values that made food and cooking meaningful.

"I bake for my pleasure. I started the blog mainly as my recipe book, but it has become more than that. It's also a bit like a diary; others have gotten recipes and ideas from it. Baking is for my mental well-being for me. Over the years, baking and cooking have become healthier, so that's where physical well-being comes in." (FB18)

"In my blog, I don't put health first, but ease and deliciousness. I'm inspired to 'turn' foods that are considered difficult into quick everyday meals without compromising on taste, which, of course, in a way, increases at least mental well-being and leaves more time for physical activities. Certain values do not dictate my relationship with food; I try to favor and highlight, e.g., food preferences. local food, fish, game, etc." (FB3)

Some bloggers explained the meaning more directly through their diets. By describing their values and opinions in detail in blogs and the survey data, the food bloggers created food relationship discourses that illustrate the idea of a bigger goal in life, similar to the definition of meaning in the PERMA theory.

"I became interested in cooking out of necessity: I became vegan at 15; at that time, no vegan convenience foods were available in Finland, and restaurants did not offer vegan food. If you were going to eat something good, you had to do it yourself. As a result, I became interested in cooking, and my photography hobby turned into a hobby of food photography." (Chocochili)

"I'm such a mixed eater who finds it harder every day to find reasons for my meat consumption. On the other hand, it's very scarce these days, and I only eat meat (and cheese and eggs) because I like it. You see, I could do well without it – after all, a vegetarian diet is healthy and complete when properly composed. And delicious! Our entire family's diet has shifted to plant-based diets for ecological and ethical reasons, and I suspect that meat consumption in this economy will only continue to decline." (Hanna's Soup)

The experiences of meaning emerged from the sense of purposeful action that was also connected to previous elements of well-being. When preparing food for others or sharing ideas in blogs, the food bloggers described how the meaning materialized from these social activities after their engaged action, leading to pure joy. It was also remarkable to notice that the intention was closely

connected to the values and fundamental ideas about food and eating. The discourse of meaning thus included the food bloggers' ways of justifying confident choices and actions regarding their relationship with food.

Food relationship discourse of successes and achievements

The fifth element of well-being is accomplishments and achievements. In the food bloggers' speeches, this appeared as courage, open-mindedness, and actual success in cooking. The feeling of success and competence was described to emerge after the cooking process as a kind of reward for one's activity and creativity. The food bloggers received praise and encouragement, especially from their families and readers, which motivated them to learn more about food.

"A homemade dinner in good company brings the joy of dining. The ability to offer self-made food." (FB4)

"The positive aspects (of blogging) also include a more open-minded and bold approach to different raw materials. Before the blog, I used to cook at least as much as I do today, but I stuck to other people's recipes and chose only the ones I knew were good. I would never have tried anything with beets, broccoli, or mushrooms." (Till the Last Crumble)

"One of my blog's most popular and praised recipes were falafels. About a year ago; I published a recipe for perfectly successful falafels that taste and texture the best falafel restaurants." (Till the Last Crumble)

In addition to direct food and food preparation-related accomplishments, food blogging has opened new doors for bloggers, taught them new skills, taken them to new places, and introduced new people. It has given food bloggers experiences of success and faith in themselves and their abilities. For some, it has also given them a new profession.

"The blog has also allowed me to participate in events where new products and manufacturing techniques are presented. I've gotten to know people I wouldn't necessarily have gotten to know otherwise. I have learned new ingredients and become familiar with food production and the restaurant industry." (FB4)

"I started baking as a hobby. My blog became so popular, and baking took me completely away that I also learned a profession for myself. Now I work as a pastry chef in a large event house." (FB15)

One of the unique features of food blogging was that the food bloggers themselves had the opportunity to observe the development of their skills and competence when reading their old food blog posts. A sense of accomplishment could emerge from realizing how much one has learned and achieved in the blog.

"It may sound funny, but I didn't really think about how much effort you have to put into the spelling of recipes, the dimensions of the ingredients, and fine-tuning the recipes to make sure they work in other people's kitchens as well. You can also see how my recipe writing skills have improved when reading old recipes. Many of my old recipes are too general and open to interpretation, but I've also practiced that over the years. Now, 9 years later, Chocochili is one of the most-read food blogs in Finland. Two thousand monthly readers are suddenly 70,000. The blog has also spawned three cookbooks and, best of all, thousands of comments and emails from you, readers. I could never have imagined that a blog following the diet of a marginalized group would one day climb into the top of the most popular food blogs." (Chocochili)

“As I have said, I have tasted proper sourdough bread this year, especially this autumn. Although I have been quite satisfied with the success of the latest baking, I have developed my root bread even further in my baking interests.” (Genuine Everyday Food)

In conclusion, food hobbies appeared as a positive resource in the discourses of food bloggers. The accomplishments varied from minor successes of finding a new ingredient or learning new skills to larger, life-wide achievements such as finding a new profession from the food hobby or becoming a famous blogger. From the well-being perspective, accomplishments appeared versatily in the food bloggers’ discourses.

Discussion

Food bloggers’ discourses representing different aspects of well-being and PERMA create a multidimensional and fascinating well-being discourse based on both sets of research data. However, it is worth noting that food blogging differs from the wellness blog genre, which focuses on influencing physical well-being and health from different perspectives, which also affects the research discourses. Next, we will discuss and evaluate the aspects of PERMA theory in food bloggers’ food relationship discourses.

The food relationship discourse on positive emotions was the most solid and transparent research result. Food bloggers create a robust discourse on positive emotions where they share their motivation through joy, delight, enthusiasm, and pleasure related to cooking and eating. Food bloggers share a strong affection for cooking, which communicates the well-being and positive relationship that food bloggers experience over food. This discourse is connected with the engagement in PERMA theory because food bloggers find food as their passion and concentrate and absorb their food actions intensively. In the PERMA theory, engagement is based on strengths, dedication, and concentration (Seligman, 2011) and achieving a flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). According to this research, food bloggers feel engaged and pleasure as a strong positive feeling when focusing on cooking and being intensely present in the moment. The research data descriptions of cooking reminded the researchers of the definitions of flow state.

Also, the food relationship discourse of success and achievement was closely related to the discourse of positive emotions. In general, positive emotions support positive development and positive thoughts about life (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009). Food bloggers’ feelings of success and competence emerged as a reward for activity and creativity in cooking, and naturally, the positive praise motivated the bloggers to learn more. Achieving goals related to food and cooking seemed to be essential to food bloggers’ well-being not only because of the sense of succeeding and related positive emotions but also because of finding oneself productive and capable in the context meaningful for them (see also Seligman, 2011; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2015).

For food bloggers, blogging is an arena of self-fulfillment (see also Niemiec, 2018) because it allows re-living the positive emotions related to cooking and eating. In the PERMA theory, the sense of meaning is connected to utilizing one’s strengths in the best possible way (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and to the possibility of finding purpose and joy in life through it (see also Uusiautti et al., 2022). One of the exciting characteristics of blogging is that reading old posts allows the bloggers to observe the development the food bloggers have gone through in the past years, and a sense of accomplishment could emerge from realizing how much one has learned and achieved. For bloggers, cooking and reviving the activity while writing about it in a blog appeared optimistic in

bloggers' perceptions, especially from the perspectives of food bloggers' mental well-being and relationship with food.

The food relationship discourse of reciprocal social relationships brought a new perspective on well-being related to food and eating, concentrating on children and parenthood. It is connected to PERMA theory, and it has been previously researched that people with high well-being can usually build and maintain reciprocal relationships (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Interestingly, it can also be seen as connected to the food well-being concept by Block et al. (2011), which has a section for food socialization. For example, the parenting food bloggers considered what they have learned about food and eating from their childhood and what they want to pass on as social traditions and food memories to their children, family, and friends. This discourse emphasized food bloggers' positive, change-prone social relationship with food as part of blogging and wellbeing.

The food relationship discourse of a meaning showed food as a significant element that generated well-being. Blog posts about the values of food bloggers, such as reducing meat consumption, reducing white flour, and the importance of protein, also reflect the food trends and politics of the current time (Fogelhom & Erkkola, 2019). In the discourses of food bloggers, the meaning manifested itself, especially from the point of view of the values attached to the diet, but also more generally through the activities and self-realization related to food and cooking. In this discourse, preparing food for others and sharing ideas in blogs were connected to values and fundamental beliefs about food and eating. For bloggers, sharing meaningful values in their blogs is a bigger goal in life, similar to the meaning in PERMA theory.

When discussing the reliability of this research, it is essential to note that discourses are always researchers' interpretations of research data and, in this particular research, also PERMA theory. When evaluating discourse analytical research, the focus is usually on how well the researchers have succeeded in making the discourses understandable. However, two different research data were used in the study, none of which were the interview material traditionally used in discourse analysis. However, the blog and survey material formed a multi-voiced, ambiguous, and exciting whole, which the researchers enjoyed interpreting.

Conclusion

Food blogs' potential to build positive and educative food-related discourses should be considered because food blogs may have hundreds of thousands of weekly readers. The bloggers are essential influencers and producers of variable positive food discourses. In this research, the food bloggers highlighted the connection between food and well-being and a balanced lifestyle, and they also discussed the healthiness of their recipes. The survey data revealed they were somewhat aware of the discourses they produced and wanted to help their readers find new ways of enjoying food.

However, the interpretation was that the food bloggers were not as interested in influencing the readers' physical health and well-being as health and lifestyle bloggers, in general, are (see also e.g. Toikkanen & Kananen, 2014). Instead, food bloggers emphasize the positive emotions, self-fulfillment, and social encounters that can be achieved through preparing and enjoying meals and telling others about these experiences. Thus, the food relationship discourses on well-being consisted mainly of psychological and social well-being notions that can be considered meaningful when evaluating well-being.

This research about the discourses produced by the Finnish food bloggers revealed a topical and exciting path to increase awareness of food choices and positive, constructivist education about

food (Janhonen et al., 2016). This kind of education is focused on food-related knowledge and skills, experiences, and dialogue on how to make sustainable decisions. Janhonen et al. (2016) use the concept of food sense to describe agency, empowerment, joy, pleasure, curiosity, and shared responsibility, such as sustainability, for food-related life-long learning. This awareness is complemented by the comprehensive conception of well-being used in this research, as the food relationship discourses were analyzed from the PERMA perspective. Likewise, the concept of food well-being appeared beneficial from an educational standpoint to bring versatile well-being and meaning to readers' lives. For example, Talvia and Anglé (2018) pointed out that nutrition interventions are usually based on information sharing and marketing strategies. However, their impact on food and eating-related behaviors is inconsistent (see also Kotro et al., 2011). Enhancing positive discourses (DeCosta et al., 2017) and showing positive, daily examples (Sarlio-Lähteenkorva & Prättälä, 2012) in forums that reach a broad audience can become an excellent add to the modern education about food and eating (Pettigrew, 2016).

In this research, we focused on how the food bloggers described their relationship with food and the role of their blogging. It showed how multidimensional a picture of well-being can be achieved when analyzing food-related discourses. More research would be needed, especially from the readers' perspectives. How do they perceive the discourses of food and well-being? What is the blogs' importance to their choices and relationship with food? Could they consider blogs as positive and educative forums?

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