

Food Plating: Study of Exploration of Techniques and Creativity in Serving Food at STP AMPTA Yogyakarta

¹Setyo Prasiyono Nugroho, ²Nabil Affa Abdullah ³Yedna Istiraharsi, ⁴Prihatno

¹Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata AMPTA Yogyakarta

¹g4n.tiyo@gmail.com

²Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata AMPTA Yogyakarta

²nabilaffaabdullah@gmail.com

³Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata AMPTA Yogyakarta

³yedna99@gmail.com

⁴Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata AMPTA Yogyakarta

⁴prihatno_prihatno@yahoo.com

KEYWORDS

creativity; food plating; food serving

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore techniques and creativity in food plating as an important part of culinary education at STP AMPTA Yogyakarta. Food plating, or the art of serving food, has become a crucial element in the modern culinary industry, not only to enhance visual appeal, but also to influence taste perception and eating experience. This study analyzes how STP AMPTA Yogyakarta students learn and develop food plating skills through creative and innovative approaches. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Data were collected from students, lecturers, and culinary practitioners involved in the learning process at this institution. The results of the study indicate that food plating not only improves the aesthetic quality of dishes but also becomes a means for students to develop creativity and competitiveness in the culinary world. Basic techniques such as arranging food elements, using color, texture, and balance of food components are the main focus of the training.

INTRODUCTION

Food presentation or food plating has become an important element in the culinary industry, especially in the hospitality and tourism world (Spence, 2017). More than just a technique for arranging food on a plate, food plating is an art form that involves creativity, aesthetics, and expertise (Schifferstein et al., 2020). In the context of the tourism industry, the way food is presented can have a significant impact on consumer perception, visual appeal, and the overall dining experience (Janjic et al., 2023). Spence's (2017) research emphasizes that the appearance of food can affect customer taste and satisfaction. This finding is reinforced by research by Zang et al. (2022), which shows that food presented with higher aesthetics is considered tastier by consumers, regardless of its taste. In this modern era, the development of social media has also influenced the increasing attention to food appearance (Schifferstein et al., 2020). Restaurants, cafes, and hotels compete to present dishes that are not only delicious in taste, but also pleasing to the eye (Reynolds, 2019). Schifferstein et al. (2020) in their research on multisensory dynamics in food experiences showed that the visual factor of food has a major influence on the overall consumer experience. This is also supported by research from Farendra & Febliansa (2022), who found that aesthetic food photos on social media increase the appeal of restaurants and have an impact on increasing visits.

STP Ampta Yogyakarta as one of the educational institutions that focuses on tourism, including culinary, has an important role in equipping its students with relevant and competitive skills (Muhmin, 2018). This study aims to explore the techniques and creativity in serving food in the academic environment of STP Ampta Yogyakarta. Previous research by Susanti et al (2022) discussed the importance of integrating creativity in culinary learning to equip students with the skills needed in a competitive industry. In addition, research by Sungkawa et al (2024) stated that educational institutions must introduce various food plating techniques to students to increase innovation and competitiveness in the culinary industry.

This research is important because it provides insight into food presentation trends in the local culinary industry, as well as enrich teaching materials in the culinary curriculum at STP Ampta Yogyakarta. In addition, the results of this study are expected to contribute to developing more innovative food plating techniques that are in accordance with industry standards, so that STP Ampta graduates can compete nationally and internationally. Previously, research by (Baker et al., 1995; Buted et al., 2014) suggested that intensive training in food presentation skills helps produce graduates who can meet global culinary industry standards, which is an important foundation for improving culinary curricula in various institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Plating

Food plating is the art of arranging and presenting food in a visually appealing manner. As gastronomic trends develop, food presentation is now an important factor in the dining experience. Several studies have shown that food visuals can influence taste perception and even consumer purchasing decisions (Spence, 2017).

The Influence of Aesthetics on Taste Perception

Research by Michel et al. (2014) shows that art-inspired food presentation, such as Kandinsky-style plating techniques, can enhance consumer perception of the taste and value of a dish. An attractive visual arrangement can make food appear more complex and artistic, so consumers tend to place a higher value on taste and are willing to pay more for the dish.

Design Principles in Food Plating

Design principles such as balance, focus, contrast, and the use of negative space are some of the important techniques in food plating. According to research conducted by Zellner et al. (2016), these principles not only enhance visual appeal but also create a strong first impression on consumers. Food arrangement techniques that utilize empty space (negative space) give a luxurious and minimalist impression that is widely used in starred restaurants. Color contrast is also a key element in food plating. Research by Piqueras-Fiszman et al. (2012) revealed that bright colors and neatly structured visual compositions can enhance the perception of taste from food. Food colors that contrast with the color of the plate, such as brightly colored food on a dark plate, can have a strong influence on the appeal of food

Modern Trends in Food Plating

Today, the trend in food plating is more minimalist with the use of modern tools such as tongs or molds to create perfect symmetry. The use of bright colors and geometrics in food is also starting to become popular among chefs (Spence, 2017).

Creativity in Food Plating

Creativity in food plating refers to the ability to present food in a way that is not only visually appealing but also presents a unique and original aesthetic value. As an essential part of the culinary experience, creativity in food presentation can influence the perception of taste, the overall impression of the dish, and the appeal of the restaurant itself (Spence & Piqueras-Fizman, 2014). Creativity in plating allows the chef to manipulate visual elements such as color, texture, shape, and arrangement to create a deeper impression of the food.

Creative Techniques and Elements in Food Plating

Research by Zellner et al. (2016) states that creativity in food plating involves not only aesthetics, but also functional aspects of food presentation. Some techniques that are often used in creative food plating include the use of innovative geometric shapes, natural dyes for color contrast, and tools such as molds and carving knives to create interesting patterns. Spence et al. (2014) in their study examined the effect of artistic food displays on consumer perceptions. The results of this study indicate that creative arrangements, such as abstract patterns or shapes that resemble works of art, can increase the perceived value of taste and aesthetics of food. This is supported by other studies that state that the appearance of food that resembles modern or abstract art can create a deep impression on consumers, so that they tend to give a higher value to the dish (Michel et al., 2014).

So it can be concluded that Food plating is an important aspect in gastronomy that not only affects visual appeal, but also the perception of taste and the overall dining experience. The design and layout of food can be a determining factor in increasing the value of a dish in the eyes of consumers. Creativity in food plating plays a vital role in creating a holistic culinary experience. Using innovative techniques and design elements, chefs can manipulate consumer perceptions of the taste and quality of food. In addition, creativity in presentation also serves as an effective branding tool in the culinary industry, helping restaurants to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract consumers.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the techniques and creativity in food presentation at STP Ampta Yogyakarta. This approach aims to understand how food plating techniques are taught and applied by students in the context of culinary education. This method is suitable for use because it focuses on in-depth exploration of the experiences of research subjects (Creswell, 2014). This study uses a case study design that focuses on STP Ampta Yogyakarta. This case study allows researchers to explore in depth the techniques and creativity of food plating that are taught and applied in a formal educational environment (Yin, 2018). The population in this study were all students of the Tourism and Hospitality Study Program at STP Ampta Yogyakarta. Purposive sampling was used to select 30 final year students who had taken courses related to food plating and culinary. The selection of this sample assumed that final year students have more experience in applying food plating techniques than first-year students (Patton, 2002). Data collection was carried out using two main methods, namely semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students to obtain qualitative data on the techniques taught and the creativity implemented in food plating. Participatory observation was conducted during practical activities in the culinary laboratory to record the food plating techniques applied by students, including the elements of creativity they demonstrated during the process (Spradley, 2016). The data were collected over a period of two months through interviews with 3 lecturers of teaching culinary courses related to food plating techniques and 7 students who had taken the course. Direct observation in the culinary laboratory of STP Ampta during student practicums. This observation focused on the techniques and creativity used by students in serving food. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Interview and observation data were identified based on

main themes, such as basic food plating techniques, use of aids in serving food, and creative elements applied in food (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic results were then compared to understand the relationship between creativity and techniques in food plating taught and applied by students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Food Plating Techniques Applied

Observation results show that STP Ampta Yogyakarta students are able to apply various basic food plating techniques taught, such as placing food symmetrically and using tools such as molds and tongs. The most frequently used techniques include visual balance and color contrast to create an attractive appearance. Lecturers also emphasize the importance of basic elements such as choosing plates, arranging food elements, and using sauces for decoration. As part of the curriculum, students are taught to utilize negative space in serving food, so that the appearance of the food looks minimalist but elegant.

A student explained:

We learned about symmetry and contrast, and how the colors and shapes of food should coordinate. Plate selection was also important to make our plating look more professional.

Lecturer stated:

Negative space is essential in food plating to create a clean and organized look. We want students to understand that plating is not just about filling the plate, but also how to use space effectively.

The above explanation can explain that STP Ampta Yogyakarta students have demonstrated proficiency in applying basic food plating techniques, including symmetrical food placement and the use of tools such as molds and tongs. Visual balance and color contrast are the most frequently applied techniques to produce an attractive food display. Interviews with lecturers emphasized that elements such as plate selection, food element arrangement, and the use of sauces as decoration are important parts of the curriculum. Students are also encouraged to utilize negative space, which creates a minimalist yet elegant appearance.

Creativity in Food Plating

Students showed a variety of creativity in food presentation, especially in the use of color and shape. Some students tried to imitate geometric shapes such as circles and triangles, while others focused more on playing with colors using natural ingredients to add to the aesthetics of the food. Interviews with lecturers showed that creativity became a major focus at the final level, where students were encouraged to explore new and original ideas in food presentation. Some students also innovated by using local and modern ingredients to create unique food displays.

A student said:

We try different shapes and colors to make the dishes livelier. I love using local ingredients because they can give a unique touch to the presentation of the food.

Lecturer added:

In the final stage, we really encourage students to think creatively and come up with their own style. They should be able to combine local materials with modern concepts to create something different.

STP Ampta students demonstrated creative abilities in food plating, especially through exploring the use of color and shape. Some students used geometric shapes such as circles and triangles in their presentation, while others focused more on combining natural colors to enhance the visual aesthetics of the dish. The use of local ingredients was also encouraged by lecturers, especially in the context of developing an original and unique plating style.

Factors Inhibiting Creativity

The results of the study found several factors that inhibit students' creativity in food plating. One of them is the limited time in laboratory practice, which causes some students to not fully explore their ideas. In addition, the limited availability of materials also affects the final result of food plating.

A student stated:

The challenge is the limited time during practice, so it's hard to really explore creative ideas. Sometimes the materials we have don't fit the concept we want to create.

Although students' creative abilities are developing, there are several obstacles that prevent them from exploring ideas to the fullest. Interviews with students showed that time constraints and availability of materials were the main inhibiting factors in exploring food plating creativity. Students felt that limited practical time in the laboratory reduced their opportunities for in-depth experimentation. Lecturers also acknowledged this, stating that the availability of materials was a constraint, which resulted in students having to adapt concepts to existing resources.

Perception of Food Plating

Students and lecturers alike agree that creativity in food plating is essential in the culinary industry. They believe that the ability to present food attractively directly influences consumer appeal to a dish, especially in the context of fine dining and starred restaurants.

One student commented:

Appealing food plating is key to enhancing the appeal of a dish. It can be a big differentiator, especially in fine dining restaurants.

Lecturer added:

Creativity in plating can create a different dining experience for consumers. If the appearance of the dish stands out, customers will be more interested, even before tasting the taste.

The results of the interview above can be understood that students and lecturers agree that creativity in food plating is very important, especially in the competitive culinary industry such as fine dining and starred restaurants. Students understand that the ability to present food in a visually appealing way will increase the appeal of the dish in the eyes of consumers.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that STP Ampta Yogyakarta students have mastered the basic techniques of food plating, such as visual balance and color contrast, which provide an attractive food appearance. Creativity is also well developed, especially in the use of geometric shapes and natural materials. However, there are several obstacles such as limited time and materials that hinder the exploration of ideas. Students and lecturers agree that creativity in food plating is very important, especially in the context of the competitive culinary industry, such as fine dining and starred restaurants.

REFERENCES

- Baker, M., Cattet, A., & Riley, M. (1995). Practical food and beverage training in the UK: a study of facilities and a debate on its relevance. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 7(5), 21-24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596119510090681>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Buted, D. R., Felicen, S. S., & Manzano, A. I. (2014). A Correlation study between student performance in food and beverage services course and internship in F&B department of hospitality business. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4(6), 54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v4-i6/924>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Farendra, B., & Febliansa, R. (2022, December). Fenomena Mengunggah Foto Makanan Di Media Sosial Terhadap Ramainya Pengunjung Restaurant Di Kota Bengkulu. In *Seminar Nasional Ekonomi Manajemen, Bisnis dan Akuntansi* (pp. 33-36). <https://proceeding.unived.ac.id/index.php/sn-empa/article/view/121>
- Janjić, L., Vujović, S., Zdravković, I., & Ilić, D. (2023). The Impact Of Food Visual Aesthetics On Consumer Perception Of A Healthy And Tasty Meal In The Hospitality And Tourism Industry. *ЕКОНОМИКА пољопривреде*, 70(3), 689-710. <http://dx.doi.org/10.59267/ekoPolj2303689J>
- Muhmin, A. H. (2018). Pentingnya Pengembangan Soft Skills Mahasiswa Di Perguruan Tinggi. In *Forum Ilmiah* (Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 330-338).
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Schifferstein, H. N., Fenko, A., Desmet, P. M., Labbe, D., & Martin, N. (2013). Influence of package design on the dynamics of multisensory and emotional food experience. *Food Quality and Preference*, 27(1), 18-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2012.06.003>
- Spence, C. (2017). *Gastrophysics: The new science of eating*. Penguin UK.
- Spence, C., & Piqueras-Fiszman, B. (2014). *The perfect meal: The multisensory science of food and dining*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118491003>
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.

Sungkawa, K., Dewi, R. P., Widiyanto, A. E., & Madjid, S. (2024). Penerapan Food Plating Mahasiswa dalam Mengikuti Cooking Competition di Universitas Dian Nuswantoro. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance*, 2(3), 133-146. <https://doi.org/10.59841/jureksi.v2i3.1588>

Susanti, A., Trisusana, A., Pusparini, R., & Kurniasih, E. (2022). Menumbuhkan Kreativitas Mahasiswa Melalui Integrasi Teknologi Dalam Task Based Language Teaching Untuk Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. *Ndrumi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Humaniora*, 5(1), 13-26. <https://doi.org/10.57094/ndrumi.v5i1.515>

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Sage publications.

Zellner, D. A., Loss, C. R., Zearfoss, N. R., & Remolina, S. (2016). It tastes as good as it looks! The effect of food presentation on liking for the flavor of food. *Appetite*, 77, 31-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2014.12.022>

Zhang, S., Qian, J., Wu, C., He, D., Zhang, W., Yan, J., & He, X. (2022). Tasting more than just food: Effect of aesthetic appeal of plate patterns on food perception. *Foods*, 11(7), 931. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods11070931>