

Multisensory Prosumption: how cooking classes shape perceptions of destinations

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Abstract

Purpose

This study aims to examine the multisensory experiences of participating in a cooking class and how they shape perceptions of destinations in the pre-trip stage. Performance theory and prosumption provide a theoretical lens to investigate how a cooking class influences the pre-trip destination sensescape.

Design

This study employed Participatory Action Research consisting of an immersive Tatarstan cooking class experience with the supporting materials of music and videos, focus group discussions, and participant observations.

Findings

Cooking class participants prosume local culture and (re)construct the perceptions of Tatarstan by partaking in cooking classes through a multisensory experience. The pre-trip destination sensescape formation in the cooking class is dynamic, stimulating, and memorable. With active engagement in co-creating in the process, such experience significantly strengthens and reshapes the perceptions of a destination.

Originality

This study revealed that participation in cooking classes involves active, embodied, and multisensory engagement, which acts as a vehicle of the destination perception change.

Theoretical Implications

This study theorises a cooking class as an experience of multisensory prosumption. In addition, this study contributes to a new understanding of how destinations are perceived through forming the pre-trip destination sensescape.

Practical Implications

Cooking classes can be leveraged in pre-trip marketing as a tool to enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations and contribute to accessible tourism, such as engaging visually impaired tourists' other heightened senses in experience design and marketing.

Keywords: prosumption; Tatarstan; cooking class; performance theory; multisensory; sensescape

Research paper

Introduction

As a significant element of culture, local cuisine has been used by destination management organisations (DMOs) to (re)construct the symbolic destination image in the regional and national promotion (Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Horng and Tsai, 2010). In addition to shaping the destination's cognitive knowledge, the local cuisine also functions as an effective tool in engaging with embodied and multisensory experiences (Everett, 2008) and facilitates tourists to learn about other cultures (Hjalager and Johansen, 2013). For many tourists, whether returning to familiar destinations or visiting new ones, gastronomy and, in particular, sampling the local cuisine is a key contributor to their overall tourism experience (UNWTO, 2012). So much so that many destinations are marketing themselves as food destinations, offering unique culinary experiences (Kokkranikal and Carabelli, 2021). Globally, in 2019 culinary tourism was worth \$1,116.7 billion and is set to continue to grow partly due to an increased promotion of culinary tourism by DMOs (Allied Analytics, 2020), who are promoting destinations' culinary image to increase visitor numbers, especially for less-known destinations (De Vries, 2019).

Existing literature has also discussed the impact of culinary tourism on the destination image (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Silkes *et al.*, 2013). A wide range of food-related activities and experiences of culinary or gastronomy tourism has been applied as a differential factor (Kivela and Crotts, 2006) for destination marketing (Okumus *et al.*, 2007), such as food tours (Ko *et al.*, 2018), farmers' markets (Long, 2019) and food events (Kim *et al.*, 2010).

Differing from the aforementioned types of culinary tourism (Ellis *et al.*, 2018), cooking classes connecting people with multisensory productions and consumptions are placed under the umbrella term of third-generation gastronomic tourism (3.0) (Richards, 2015). This is preceded by the experience of food consumption (1.0), and sharing gastronomic experiences

between different actors through their active participation (2.0) (Richards, 2015; 2021). As explained by Richards (2015, p. 6), “the holistic nature of food experiences is highlighted by their ability to connect people around shared consumption of products that involve all the senses”. Therefore, through cooking classes, tourists become active agents of gastronomic experiences. In addition, the third generation of gastronomic tourism recognises the connection between food and the place, identity and culture, resulting in “foodscapes”, forming “a complete gastronomic experiencescape” (Richards, 2021, p. 1041). The participatory and co-creating nature of the cooking class that attracts tourists looking for novel, hands-on, and authentic experiences has been emphasised in several studies (Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2019; Richards, 2015; Walter, 2017); this contributes to the scarce literature on multisensory tourism experiences (Buzova *et al.*, 2021; Cohen and Cohen, 2019).

Scholars have been calling for more studies to investigate embodied and multisensory tourist experiences (Agapito *et al.*, 2014; Cohen and Cohen, 2019; Jensen *et al.*, 2015), based on the premise that five senses, being culturally embodied and contributing to the sense of place and place-making, are active and not passive (Agapito, 2020). Destination sensescape, built on all five senses and referring to the existence of multiple sensory stimuli that impact tourists’ perceptions of a destination, is still a new area of tourism research (Agapito, 2020). In this study, destination sensescape is utilised to provide evidence for the existence of multiple, embodied sensory stimuli in a controlled environment of a cooking class (sensorily-constructed environment).

The empirical setting of this article is the local cuisine and destination image of the Republic of Tatarstan, a state in the Russian Federation. Studies of the destination image of Russia thus far are very limited (Andrades and Dimanche, 2017). In Stepchenkova and Morrison (2006)’s

study, American tourists mostly perceived Russia unfavourably as a destination influenced by the geopolitical conflicts and negative media coverage by the West. Their perception of Russia as a historical and cultural destination was built on the understanding of two major cities and attractions- Moscow, St. Petersburg, Peterhof and Red Square, whilst other regions were neglected. Thus, the cultural and geographical diversity of Russia's destination image is underrepresented and under-investigated, whilst the lack of knowledge also leads to a rather homogenous understanding of this destination. Recognising, celebrating, and promoting the cultural uniqueness of each region of the Russian Federation can increase the positive impact on its overall image.

Two research gaps have been identified. First, the potential of multisensory cooking classes as an emerging trend taking place outside the destination is still under-researched, particularly using a qualitative approach. Second, the role of a cooking class in (re)shaping the perception of destination is yet to be explored. To address these gaps, *this study aims to examine the multisensory experiences of participating in a cooking class and how they shape perceptions of destinations in the pre-trip stage.* We introduce performance turn and prosumption as a theoretical lens to unpack the multisensory and co-created nature of cooking classes. Whilst the performance turn shifts the paradigmatic focus away from abstract, representational, and predominantly visual gaze to a multisensory, bodily and non-representational 'doing' in the enquiry of tourist experiences (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009), prosumption, by blurring the production and consumption divide, brings out the uniqueness of 'cooking' in the tourism and hospitality context (Ritzer, 2015a). When introduced in the pre-trip stage, a cooking class may not only bring out the knowledge of the ingredients and cooking methods but also a taste of embodied, multisensory experience of the destination, known as the destination sensescape (Agapito *et al.*, 2013; Buzova *et al.*, 2021).

Literature Review

Destination Sensescape

Destination image, “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impression that a person has of a destination” (Crompton, 1979, p. 18), has attracted significant research interest (Chon, 1990; Gartner, 1994), and has played a key part in tourist destination choice impacting on their subjective perception (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002). From a perspective of a tourist who is not physically present at a destination, destination image includes concepts, beliefs, mental representation, and assertions about the destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999).

Furthermore, perceived as a whole by tourists (Agapito *et al.*, 2014), destinations become a “collection of experiences gained by the traveler” (Gunn, 1997, p. 32). Although ‘image’ is predominately associated with the term ‘visual’, other sensory stimulations apart from sight have significant impacts on the tourist’s perceptions of the destination and lead to a memorable experience (Pine and Gibson, 1999; Stone *et al.*, 2021). These are smell (Dann and Jacobsen, 2003), taste (Everett, 2008), touch (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2011) and sound (Son and Pearce, 2005). In the tourism literature, the privilege of the visual element has been challenged by the performance turn (Edensor, 2000) and the non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008). Performance turn calls for a paradigmatic shift towards multisensory experiences in tourism to include multiple bodily sensations, rather than favouring the symbolic meaning, visual qualities, and discourses of the tourist gaze (Cai *et al.*, 2021). This means that research endeavours are moving away from understanding tourist experiences of destinations as simply static, representational, and meaningful, and instead advocate for research that is concerned with performance, embodied and multisensory experiences, as well as acting and doing. Focusing on the embodied, sensory tourist experiences, the construct destination ‘sensescape’ reflects sensory interactions between the tourist and a place that go beyond visual consumption (Buzova *et al.*, 2021).

Everett (2008) argued that food-related tourism provides an insightful lens to examine the multisensory landscape, and thus sensescape can be defined as “the multisensorial space which is distinguished, understood and valued by humans” (Qiu *et al.*, 2021, p. 2). In relation to a destination sensescape, tourists seek to engage all senses and their related ‘-scapes’, ‘visualscape’ (sense of sight), ‘smellscape’ (sense of smell), ‘tastescape’ (sense of taste), ‘soundscape’ (sense of hearing), and ‘hapticscape’ (sense of touch) to fully perceive the environment (Bunkše, 2012; Buzova *et al.*, 2021; Everett, 2008). A visualscape (Dann and Jacobsen, 2003), closely related to Urry’s (1990) ‘tourist gaze’ with a focus on the visual experiences of a destination, implies a passive tourist. To move away from that and focus on an all-involved, active tourist, other ‘-scapes’ have been introduced. A soundscape alludes to tourists’ experiencing auditory stimuli, which can be grouped into urban, rural, wilderness, and underwater (Brown *et al.*, 2011). A tastescape results from the gustation process, and a place is perceived through the gustatory sensory channel (Buzova *et al.*, 2021; Everett, 2008). A smellscape embodies the olfactory sense and refers to both the smell of the environment and more recently has been extended to “the smell environment perceived and understood by a person (through olfactory sensation, influenced by ones’ memories and past experiences) in a place (specific to its context)” (Xiao *et al.*, 2018, p. 106). The somatic relationship between the tourist and the external environment is represented by the sense of touch- the touchscape also referred to as the hapticscape (Buzova *et al.*, 2021).

Although the term ‘multisensory’ has been considered an important component of destination image for several years (Son and Pearce, 2005), research on multisensory aspects of tourism experiences, including literature on sensescapes, is still an emergent strand of research and has gained academic interest only in the recent years (Agapito *et al.*, 2013, 2014, 2017;

Buzova *et al.*, 2021; Kirillova *et al.*, 2014; Lv and McCabe, 2020; Qiu *et al.*, 2021; Xiong *et al.*, 2015). Agapito *et al.* (2013) was one of the first studies that theorised the holistic approach of sensescapes when analysing tourism experience, whilst Xiong *et al.* (2015) highlighted the significance of a ‘multisensory image’, with visual image receiving the most attention and tactile image the least. A recent publication by Agapito (2020) has systematically reviewed research on multisensory aspects of tourism experiences, and has also come to that conclusion. Some studies, despite focussing on multiple senses and -scapes, revealed the prevalence of only some senses or -scapes on the holistic tourist experience (Kah *et al.*, 2020; Qiu *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, the reviewed studies on sensescape mainly focus on the on-site embodied experiences in the destination (e.g., Agapito *et al.*, 2017; Lv and McCabe, 2020). Therefore, in this study, a cooking class leveraging sensescape outside the destination will potentially contribute to the understanding of sensescape beyond its attachment to the place.

Cooking Classes

As a form of third-generation gastronomic tourism, cooking classes connect people with multisensory productions and consumptions (Richards, 2015). In the pre-trip stage, this means that a cooking class enables a future tourist to engage in co-creating an authentic culinary experience by interacting with local food, culture, and other artefacts. Despite not being present at the destination, the immersive cooking class allows a tourist to experience the feeling of cooking and eating like a local, further emphasising a link between food and the place. The participatory and co-creating nature of the cooking class that attracts tourists looking for novel, hand-on, and authentic experiences has been emphasised in several studies (Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2019; Richards, 2015; Walter, 2017). Prayag *et al.* (2020) conceptualise cook classes as ‘serious leisure’, which emphasises the interesting and fulfilling experiences

of acquiring knowledge and developing skills. During the cooking class, participants not only learn about the local ingredients and cooking methods through practice, but also have the opportunities to learn about the history of the dish, and even local customs (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2019; Shenoy, 2005). Investigating the experience, Kokkranikal and Carabelli (2021) found that involvement, hedonism, local culture, and knowledge are four key dimensions that cooking class participants value the most.

The research on cooking class is still in its early stage. Some recent studies have investigated the role of cooking classes at the destination contributing to the overall satisfaction of a gastronomic tourism experience (Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2019; Pratt *et al.*, 2020), learn and participate in Thai culinary culture (Suntikul *et al.*, 2020), as part of cooking schools, or as a popular tourist enterprise in Bali and Thailand (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2019; Bell, 2015). Walter (2017) used Thai cooking school to examine the staging and the perception of authenticity, and emphasised cooking class participants as both producers and consumers of food, as well as performers in the staged cooking class experiences. However, the role of cooking classes in the embodied tourism experience is yet to be investigated, with only a few recent studies examining cooking classes offered during the trip (Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2019; Pratt *et al.*, 2020; Kokkranikal and Carabelli; 2021), and none in the pre-trip stage. In addition, in a cooking class, participants can immerse themselves in the process of not only cooking, but also feeling, smelling, tasting ingredients, and listening to the sound of the environment. These multisensory stimuli are dynamic and constantly evolving throughout the process. This uniqueness of the multisensory experience of a cooking class is yet to be explored.

Building on this understanding, we are investigating how participation in a cooking class shapes perceptions of destinations in the pre-trip stage, contributing to the scarce literature on embodied and multisensory gastronomic experiences outside the destination. Through the

theoretical lenses of prosumption and the performance theory, this study will share insights on how a cooking class can help understand destination sensescape beyond its attachment to the place.

Theoretical Development

The participatory and co-created nature of a cooking class, which allows participants to engage with embodied and multisensory experiences of learning about a destination, can be unpacked through performance theory and prosumption. We also use these two theories to investigate how a cooking class influences the pre-trip destination sensescape, which leads to the perception change of a destination.

Privileging the multisensory ‘doing’ over distanced and representational ‘gazing’, the performance paradigm provides an insightful theoretical lens to investigate the cooking class experience. The ‘performance turn’ in tourism studies (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009) calls for a shift from abstract, representational, and predominantly visual gaze to a multisensory, bodily and non-representational ‘doing’ in the enquiry of tourist experiences. Developed from Goffman (1959)’s dramaturgical sociology, and influenced by the affordance theory (Gibson, 1977) and the non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008), performance theory highlights the tourist’s embodied performance, and emphasises understanding experiences through multiple sensations and materialised doings and enactments. Although the performance theory critiques the ‘top-down’ approach of Foucault-inspired ‘tourist gaze’ that simplifies tourist experience to the privileged visual experience, Larsen and Urry (2011) argued that the paradigms of ‘gaze’ and ‘performance’ should ‘dance together’, thus proposing an embodied and multisensuous gazing.

In addition to the multisensory experience of food consumption through taste, sight, sound, smell and touch, the cooking class allows participants to actively engage in the ‘doing’ of food production, preparation, and consumption by enacting with the surrounding environment, interacting with facilitators and other participants, as well as using local ingredients and spices. By shifting the focus to the ontologies of ‘doing’ (Franklin and Crang, 2001), the semiotic and abstract perceptions of a destination are destabilised, and replaced by active, bodily and lived experiences of tourists who are the co-producers of the place. This means that events, attractions, and destinations are the dynamic products of the performative acts of the public, made up of individuals whose personal identities are not stable but shifting, multiple, and ever-changing. Theatrical metaphors, such as the ‘stage’, ‘actor’, ‘choreography’, ‘script’ and ‘improvisation’ are used in performance studies not only to capture the dynamism between ‘ritual’ and ‘play’ where the creative practice is as important as reproducing meaning and beliefs, but also to emphasise the significance of space and materiality that afford various forms of practice and interactions. Therefore, using theatrical metaphors, the boundary between the backstage and the front stage blurs, and ‘audiences’ are not only invited onto the stage but also involved in the backstage, co-producing the performance.

In the context of cooking classes, potential tourists co-produce the local food of the destination through the process of prosumption, and therefore become simultaneously producers and consumers (Ritzer, 2015), known as prosumers (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). This results in ‘doing’ of the destination image, since prosumption is “the generic process – one that subsumes production and consumption” (Ritzer, 2017, p. 234). The cooking classes also illustrate that prosumption is indeed a ‘primal’ process, where the prosumer returns to the basic idea of consuming the food they produced through different activities of the cooking

class (Ritzer, 2015b). In the tourism and hospitality context, to showcase the blurring of the production and consumption divide, prosumption has been linked to ‘co-creation’ and ‘co-production’ (Humphreys and Grayson, 2008; Rakić and Chambers, 2012), as a tool to facilitate and manage tourists’ online value co-creation (Oriade and Robinson, 2019), and in the context of smart machines (Ritzer, 2017). Despite it being examined in consumer studies (see Brodie *et al.*, 2013), socio-economic studies (see Bellekom *et al.*, 2016; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010), and more recently in clusters of business and sociology; energy and the power grid; and energy and economy (Shah *et al.*, 2020), prosumption has been rarely investigated or used as the leading concept in food studies (Veen *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the use of prosumption in tourism and hospitality to explain the multifaceted role of the tourist has been underutilised.

Therefore, the performance turn shifts the paradigmatic focus away from abstract, representational, and predominantly visual gaze to a multisensory, bodily and non-representational ‘doing’ in the enquiry of tourist experiences (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009). Prosumption, by blurring the production and consumption divide, brings out the uniqueness of ‘cooking’ in the tourism and hospitality context (Ritzer, 2015a). The performance theory and prosumption provide the theoretical lens of this study in two stages. First, this theoretical lens conceptualises the nature of the cooking class as a multisensory, embodied experience with simultaneous production and consumption. Second, the performance theory and the prosumption are used to investigate *how* such hand-on and immersive, embodied experiences affect the perception change of a destination. This is the main focus of this study. When introduced in the pre-trip stage, a cooking class may not only bring out the knowledge of the ingredients and cooking methods but also a taste of embodied, multisensory experience of the destination sensescape (Agapito *et al.*, 2013; Buzova *et al.*, 2021) and lead to a perception change of a destination. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the multisensory

experiences of participating in a cooking class and how they shape perceptions of destinations in the pre-trip stage.

Research Methods

Aiming to examine how a cooking class shapes individuals' perceptions of a destination in a pre-trip stage, participatory action research (PAR) was adopted in this study. As one approach of action research, PAR emphasises participation and co-creation between the participants and the researcher, with the goal of problem-solving and social change (Datta *et al.*, 2015). PAR was applied in this study by running Tatarstan cooking class workshops with the goal to (re)shape participants' perception of the destination through the cooking experience, learning, discussions, and reflections.

With 115 ethnicities and more than 1,000 religious groups (Invest Tatarstan, 2020), Tatarstan is perceived as the multicultural capital of Russia (Nagimova *et al.*, 2015). Deriving their roots from the Turkic-speaking tribes, the Republic of Tatarstan has its own history, traditions, and food, which are important elements of its cultural identity since the capital of this region, 'Kazan', means 'cooking pot' (from the Tatar language). Since the launch of 'VisitTatarstan', the tourism flow has increased. However, the unique Tatar cuisine is not promoted on the website. Also, the unique Tatar culture is yet to contribute to the perceived destination image of Russia by international travellers. Since local food has the power to strengthen the destination image, experiencing local food in the pre-trip stage can enhance the gastronomic image of a destination (Jandala and Hercz, 2015).

Participatory methods consisting of an immersive cooking class experience with the supporting materials of music and videos of the Republic of Tatarstan, focus group discussions, and participant observations were applied as the research techniques in this study. The data was collected in the UK. The setting of a cooking class experience outside of the destination provides an innovative approach to exploring the influence of cooking class on destination image formation.

There are two stages of sampling in this study. First, a self-selection sampling technique was applied. A post about the recruitment of participants for the cooking class workshop was distributed on multiple social media platforms and forums (e.g., couchsurfing). Through self-identifications and voluntary sign-ups, 15 participants were recruited. In the second stage, a heterogeneous, purposive technique was applied. Bell's (2015) study on cooking classes concluded that participants came from around the world and were of different ages.

Participants were purposefully allocated for such variations in different groups in this research, and apart from one participant, have never visited the Republic of Tatarstan, nor prepared the national dish before. Altogether, 15 participants were recruited and then equally divided between three focus groups. The first research group included 4 participants who had never visited the Republic of Tatarstan and one who visited but was not aware of its local cuisine. The second and third focus groups only consisted of participants who had never visited before. Each research group varied by age, diverse origins, cultures, and traditions of their nations (Table I). All participants were informed about the purpose of the research, gave their consent, and were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality.

Pseudonym	Country	Age
<i>Research Group 1</i>		
Alvin	China	22
Eva	Latvia	32

Gorkhan	Turkey	24
Jeffry	Colombia	24
Nicole	France	40
<i>Research Group 2</i>		
Julia	USA	24
Ana	Mauritius	27
Saba	India	22
Inna	Bulgaria	24
Catarina	Italy	25
<i>Research Group 3</i>		
Laura	Mexico	42
Amanda	Portugal	27
Lona	Albania	32
Philip	China	24
Madison	USA	32

Table I. Participant Information

With the goal of understanding and shaping destination perceptions, we designed the PAR in three-phase interventions of experimental setups (phase I, phase II, phase III). These three phases were designed to not only assess the effectiveness of the cooking class on the perception change of Tatarstan, but also to collect in-depth, rich data to meet triangulations. The cooking class took place in the lead author’s kitchen and living space. As a token of gratitude to thank for participants’ time, the cooking class was free of charge. Data was collected throughout all three phases. In-depth interviews were conducted in phase I. Participants were asked about their primary knowledge and perceptions of the Republic of Tatarstan. In Phase II, instructed by the first author, participants learned how to cook the national cuisine of Tatarstan – the national pie ‘triangle’. Afterwards, they watched the video about the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan) and, during the break, listened to some regional music. Participant observation was conducted during this second phase. Fieldnotes were taken with the focus on the reactions of the multisensory experiences, and through the informal conversational interviews. In Phase III, participants ate the Tatar pie, and contributed to a focus group. The focus group focused on the reflection of the multi-sensory

cooking experience, and how it impacts on the perception changes of Tatarstan. Overall, data was collected in the form of participant observation notes, in-depth interviews, focus group transcripts, and reflexive notes (Table II). On average, the Phase I interviews lasted for 30 minutes, the Phase II cooking classes lasted for around an hour, and the follow-up focus group discussion (Phase III) lasted for around 45 min to 1 hour. For participant observation and reflexive notes, hand-written notes and voice memos were used during the workshops, and then written up in more detail later on the same day. The in-depth interview and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed.

Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Phrase 3
15 pre-workshop interviews	15 sets of participant observation during the cooking class	3 focus group discussions
Reflexive Notes from the lead author		

Table II Data Collected

In PAR, the role of the researcher is essential as part of knowledge production through co-creating the experience (Jones and Bryant, 2016). A facilitator-researcher role was adopted by the lead author throughout the data collection period. The lead author grew up in the Republic of Tatarstan and had experienced cooking national food from childhood. The lead author has a tourism degree from the UK and is working in the tourism sector in Tatarstan. She has a passion for promoting Tatarstan as a destination. During the cooking classes, the lead author collated participants' knowledge about Tatarstan with the opinions of participants. The lead author taught participants how to cook the national dish whilst sharing the knowledge of the Republic of Tatarstan. According to Guillemin and Gillam (2004), reflexive researcher builds interpretations based on her/his knowledge: 'what do I know?' instead of facts, which are observed during the investigation. At the same time, the lead

author was involved in the process of cooking and observing participants' reactions to gain deeper insights related to her previous experience and knowledge about Tatarstan and its culture (Kleinsasser, 2000). Throughout the data collection, reflexive notes were kept by the lead author to record her feelings as a Tatar native, including cooking in foreign surroundings with people, who had just discovered Tatar cuisine and facts about Kazan. Hence, the lead author was balancing between new experiences and expressing the native history and traditions of their hometown and country.

Thematic analysis was conducted. Firstly, a descriptive coding with an open, inductive approach was applied to identify the key experiences of cooking classes, and the perception changes of Tatarstan as a destination. No coding scheme was applied in this round; instead, a word or short phrase was used to sum up the topic of a passage of qualitative data. In the second round, the theoretical coding approach was informed by prosumption and the performance theory. These two concepts, which form a theoretical lens were used to identify episodes of the embodied multisensory producing and consuming in a cooking class (focus on the process); the five sensescape, with an emphasis on the five senses, focusing on how the perception of a destination has been shaped through the embodied, multisensory cooking experiences (focus on the outcome).

The performance theory and destination sensescape have guided the coding process (e.g., smellscape, tastescape, embodied sensory, material affordances), whilst the prosumption has acted as a theoretical guideline in the later stage of the analysis, with a focus on how the nature of prosumption in a cooking class facilitates the perception change. After these two rounds of coding, data was categorised into 1st order concept, 2nd order themes, and three aggregate dimensions emerged to answer how the prosuming, multisensory cooking class has changed the perception of Tatarstan as a destination (Table III): *active, dynamic and*

informative pre-trip sensescape formation; cultural servicescape in a cooking experience; and learning about Tatarstan through cooking.

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate Dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Distinguish destinations by its smell</i> • <i>Form the pre-trip smellscape through the prosuming experience of a cooking class</i> • <i>The smellscape is formed simultaneously with other sensescapes in the cooking class</i> 	Formation of smellscape	Active, dynamic and informative pre-trip sensescape formation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The other sensescapes build up the tastescape</i> • <i>The consumption of the taste is the outcome of embodied cooking</i> • <i>The tastescape is constructed through actively acquiring the destination knowledge</i> 	Formation of tastescape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cooking class helps to construct destination sensescape beyond sounds and sights</i> 	Forming destination image beyond soundscape and visualscape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Surprised by the music style</i> • <i>Traditional music added an enhanced understanding of Tatar culture</i> 	The facilitated soundscape	Cultural servicescape in a cooking experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Staged authenticity through adding traditional cultural symbols</i> • <i>Memorable experiences</i> 	Cultured servicescape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National dress</i> • <i>Additional channel to understand of Tatarstan's culture and lifestyle</i> 	visualscape and hapticscape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The destination identity of Tatarstan is poor in overall Russian destination image</i> • <i>The food-associated image of Tatarstan is yet to be established as distinct and different</i> 	Under-represented destination image of Tatarstan	Transformed perception towards Tatarstan through cooking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cooking classes provide a platform to deepen knowledge and understanding of the destination's culture and traditions</i> • <i>Cooking class as a full cultural experience of learning through 'doing'</i> 	the prosumption experience provided a more meaningful, informative engagement with the traditions and culture.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participants engage in the prosuming process to create their own memories and interpretations</i> 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the process of cooking national food before visiting a destination gave them a real and authentic experience resulting in increased knowledge of the destination</i> • <i>Active learning through practice</i> • <i>Engagements of dynamic sensescapes</i> 	Positive perception and strong desire to visit Tatarstan	

Table III: Data Structure and Coding Scheme

Findings

Active, dynamic and informative pre-trip sensescape formation

The perception of an unfamiliar destination mostly is rather vague, and predominately influenced by visual and sound through various forms of secondary sources, such as media and books (Beerli and Martín, 2004). The cooking class enables participants to engage with sensory experiences in the pre-trip stage beyond the privileged visualisations, meanings, and representations, and thus engaging in embodied, situated and multisensuous ‘doing’, which is emphasised by the performance theory (Edensor, 2006; Larsen and Urry, 2011):

we engage all our senses (in this cooking class). We transform this experience through our body, and we link ourselves with destination’ [Catarina, focus group 2].

The cooking class brought together all sensual stimuli with bodily sensations and affects, particularly through smell and taste. Smell plays a significant part in constructing destination perceptions (Dann and Jacobsen, 2003; Buzova *et al.*, 2021).

During the cooking class, participants reported having strong connections with different smells, and started to develop the perception towards Tatarstan through smells:

...even if this is Tatar pie, which has similar ingredients as British pie, it has a different smell. You start to distinguish destinations by its smell [Eva, focus group 1].

Thus, through the multisensory process of cooking, the smellscape (Porteous, 1985) of Tatarstan starts to emerge. Kah *et al.* (2020) suggested that the combination of vision and smell are the most effective when emphasising the destination identity.

In addition, differing from dining in restaurants as consumers, participants form the pre-trip smellscape through the prosuming experience of a cooking class. Instead of a 'static' result, the smell in the cooking class is dynamic and evolves through an active engagement in the cooking process. Thus, the smellscape is formed simultaneously with other sensescapes such as hapticscape, visualscape, and soundscape in the cooking class. Such experience is memorable by actively engaging in the process:

you connect the smell with the process of cooking, and you remember it well when you can watch and participate in the process [Amanda, focus group 3].

Differing from dining experiences where five senses were stimulated simultaneously, participants considered the taste as the final element of the cooking class experience; the other four senses during the cooking built up the anticipation:

In the cooking class, you must fully engage with all your senses, smell to enjoy each of the ingredients used for your dish, sight to keep your eyes on the knife when choosing your vegetables and fruits and to enjoy the colour of each of the ingredients used, listening to the crush of the garlic, or of the squeeze lemon juice, same as how the vegetable is cooking on the pan, feeling, you need to feel each of the ingredients, to make sure these are ready to be cooked and they are in a good state. Taste, this is the one where the other four merged and is all for you to enjoy such delicacy [Laura, focus group 3].

The consumption of the taste is the outcome of embodied cooking. Such taste has gone beyond the appreciation of sweetness and umami and became equipped with the knowledge and experience of how the taste has been produced. Through actively producing the taste, the pre-trip tastescape of Tatarstan, therefore, are less abstract and representational. Participants paid particular attention to the cooking processes and ingredients to produce the taste, as well as historical stories and local customs that had led to such taste. The tastescape is thus constructed through actively acquiring the destination knowledge in the cooking and eating process. Such ‘know-how’ makes a significant contribution to how they perceive the destination:

‘Method of cooking may also have an influence on taste. Because in most cases way of cooking was identified by history and lifestyle of ancestors, how did they cook meals and in which proportion used ingredients.’ [Eva, focus group 1]

‘During the process of choosing ingredients, I have noticed a distinction between ingredients in Britain and my hometown. For instance, the types of potato can be variable in London for variable ways of cooking it. We use only one type of potato in any dish in Kazan, because the climate is different in these two countries. Hence, it has an impact on the final taste of the dish.’ [Reflexive notes].

Through the multisensory prosumption, participants claimed that the cooking class helped them to (re)construct the destination image beyond the sound and sight, and shaped their perceptions of destination:

‘...usually, we associate the places we visited with sight and sound. But cooking local food could serve as an extra dimension to the whole story and makes the destination livelier in our minds’ [Philip, focus group 3].

In this study, we found smell and taste play dominating roles that shape participants' experiences, and primarily direct their perceptions of unfamiliar destinations, extending scant literature on tastescape and smellscape (Buzova *et al.*, 2021). The sensations of smell and taste in this context have gone beyond the simple 'passive' multisensory consumption of a gastronomic experience, to being embedded in the prosuming process of a cooking class. Participants were in charge of the creations of the smell and the taste. Knowledge related to the creations of such sensations were acquired in the cooking class through differentiating the ingredients and learning about the cooking procedure. As a result of prosumption, smell and taste, in this case, are dynamic, stimulating, and memorable, and thus significantly contributing to the sensescape of Tatarstan.

Cultural servicescape in a cooking experience

In addition to the main activities of cooking classes, the cultural elements such as decorations, costumes, and traditional music not only complemented participants' cooking class experience, but also assisted in shaping the understandings of Tatarstan. The performance turn calls for more attention to be paid to the role of the material affordances, and how they enable specific performance (Cai *et al.*, 2021; Rantala, 2010). Although the cultural and symbolic affordance in the cooking class is considered as an orchestrated stage (Adler, 1989) that results in a 'scripted', 'ritual' experience (Chang *et al.*, 2010), understanding it from a pre-trip context, the servicescape also sets a scene for participants to 'playfully' prosume their own experiences, stories, and create their own perception of the destination.

Some traditional Tatarstan music was played during the break. Participants were surprised about the music style, as it does not match with their perception of Russia. The traditional

music added an enhanced understanding of Tatar culture through the soundscape (Brown *et al.*, 2011):

'It is good that you included national music in the program of cooking class, I see that your region has strong oriental roots. Moreover, the lady was singing so soft and relaxing, I guess your hometown is a very peaceful place to live and visit.' [Philip, focus group 3].

The kitchen was well-decorated with Tatarstan traditional cultural symbols. Through observations, participants were fascinated about the cultured touch, and commented on how the cultured servicescape facilitated a memorable and authentic experience:

'Environment of cooking classes show us the authenticity of the place, we can witness something unique, which we will not find anywhere else, they are definitely memorable!' [Madison, focus group 3].

Although the cooking class is considered as 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell, 1973) in an interventional setting outside the destination, similar to Chhabra *et al.* (2003), our study also found participants perceive authentic experiences of Tatarstan despite the cooking class workshop being held in the UK.

As a facilitator of the cooking classes originally from Tatarstan, the lead author was dressed in a national costume (a dress and a hat), and observed the following after her appearance wearing a national costume:

'When they saw me in national dress, everyone wanted to take pictures and share it on Facebook. It was a new experience for them. Some of the participants were interested in who was sewing this dress and where usually women were wearing

them. Participants were interested if we still wear our traditional costumes for some purposes. Yes, we have several national holidays, when most locals go outside of the city to celebrate the national holiday “Sabantuy” where they usually wear national costumes for sports competitions and dancing after’.

Dressing up in the national costume for the cooking class, the lead author offered another channel for participants to obtain further understanding of Tatarstan’s culture and lifestyle through engaging the visualscape and hapticscape.

The cultural elements of the material affordance differentiate cooking class as an immersive cultural experience from the workshop of food-making. On the one hand, these elements can be considered as interventions of PAR to simulate authentic experiences with the aim of perception change; on the other hand, the servicescape, traditional music, and national dress motivate acquiring more knowledge of the destination, and facilitate playful and memorable experiences by stimulating destination sensescape through prosumption.

Transformed perception towards Tatarstan through cooking

Despite being the largest country in the world geographically, many participants’ perceptions of Russia were still very narrow and only well-defined to Moscow and St. Petersburg before the cooking class. The destination identity of Tatarstan is poorly marketed, and it is hard to recognise and differentiate it from other Russian regions:

‘Sorry, I do not know where your republic is located. I always hear about Moscow and St. Petersburg, because the history of these cities’ is well defined. Is it somewhere near Kazakhstan?’ [Inna, focus group 2].

Tourists associated specific foods with destinations they visited; however, the food-associated image of Tatarstan is yet to be established as distinct and different from what is considered traditional Russian food and drink. When talking about food and drink, all participants had no knowledge of the Tatarstan cuisine. Similar to Inna, Nicole also did not know about Tatarstan before the cooking class, and associated her abstract, secondary image of Russia with key cities and one national dish and drink:

‘No, I do not know Tatarstan, I mostly know Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia. My mother travelled to Russia and told me about these two capitals. She mostly described Russian cuisine by its borsh and vodka. We always associate Russia with these things. I think most people think that Russian people warm up with this alcohol drink’ [Nicole, focus group 1].

Resulting from applying PAR in this study, our participants have reported a transformed perceptions of Tatarstan through the cooking class:

‘If I did not attend the cooking class, I might never get to know about Tatarstan, that so many cultures live in one city, many famous people were born there! About this delicious dish: echpochmak. Thanks to the cooking class now, I would like to go to visit this destination and try other delicious dishes’ [Laura, focus group 3].

Studies have discussed the relationship between local food consumption and the appreciation of destination culture (Choe and Kim, 2018; Lertputtarak, 2012). Through the presumption of cooking classes, many participants highlighted how the experience provided a great platform to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the destination’s culture and traditions:

‘As the food is often related to culture, if you learn to cook the food, you can also gain knowledge about the culture’ [Alvin, focus group 1].

This deepened understanding of the destination is the outcome of the prosumption process of the cooking class. The cultural elements attached to the ingredients, the process, and the servicescape make the cooking class more than just preparing the food; it is a full cultural experience of learning through ‘doing’. Julia explained that the action of ‘doing’ during the prosumption of the cooking class provided a more meaningful engagement with the traditions and culture:

‘...such an experience where he/she can feel the moment of working out national traditions - that gives a real perspective of what the culture is because a tourist takes responsibility to experience it, compared to a regular tour, where a story has been told by a tour guide - a tourist can miss some parts, as a tourist does not really “do”’
[Julia, focus group 2].

From the lens of performance theory, the metaphor of ‘immersive theatre’ can be used to understand the cooking class experience. Although the experience is staged and choreographed, participants engage in the prosuming process to create their own memories and interpretations.

Participants felt that the process of cooking national food before visiting a destination gave them a real and authentic experience resulting in increased knowledge of the destination. Some participants noted that by gaining knowledge through cooking classes, they also started to form a positive, affective perception towards Tatarstan:

‘It increases my knowledge not only about Tatarstan itself but also makes me feel good and prepared before visiting and experiencing the taste and cultures’. [Ana, focus group 2].

During and after the cooking class, participants' perceptions of Tatarstan have significantly changed. Such change was shaped by the active learning through practice, and the engagements of dynamic sensescapes. By gaining a deeper understanding of the region, they experienced positive perceptions towards Tatarstan, and moved away from a vague, stereotyped, and representational image of Russia as a whole:

'a cooking class will make you feel like a local, Tatar people are very traditional and oriental, distinguished from the Russians. Knowing how a dish you enjoy having is prepared will increase interest to participate again' [Laura, focus group 3].

The multisensory, prosuming experience of a cooking class forms the sensescape of Tatarstan, which differentiates it from the homogeneous destination image of Russia. After their participation in the cooking classes, participants expressed a strong desire to visit Tatarstan, including the one participant who had visited that region before:

'I will definitely visit this place again, I know now that you have such a delicious cuisine, so if I travel across Russia, I will not skip your republic' [Eva, focus group 1].

Moreover, intrigued by the rich history and the warm hospitality of Tatarstan, participants were motivated to search for and discover more information about the Republic of Tatarstan to enhance their understanding of this region:

'During this cooking class, I have some positive feelings about the Republic of Tatarstan; I think that people are so friendly and loyal to each other there when you said that two religions live together, and they do not have conflicts. Moreover, they are equal... It's why I want to read more about it now, how your city achieved this' [Madison, focus group 3].

As the facilitator of cooking classes, the lead author noticed some participants showed great interest in repeating the process at home and participate in a cooking class again:

‘During and after class, participants expressed their desire to take recipes with them; after two days, some of them called me to specify the method of cooking this pie. Moreover, they were interested if I will organise it again with another dish from my city. I can assume that they are ready to participate in such activity again’ [Reflexive notes].

Discussions and Conclusion

This study examined how multisensory experiences of participating in a cooking class shape pre-trip perception of a destination. Tatarstan, as a typical example, has been excluded from the destination image of Russia, despite its unique culture and traditions based on a very long ancestral history. When talking about food and drink, all participants had no knowledge of the Tatar cuisine. The stereotyped perceptions of Russia have overtaken the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Federation. Applying PAR, the research was designed to change these vague and misunderstood perceptions. Acting as the producers and consumers of the ethnic food and local customs, participants prosume local culture and (re)construct the perceptions of Tatarstan by partaking in cooking classes through a multisensory experience. The hands-on and immersive experience of local culture has been brought into the cooking class to (re)shape the cognitive understanding of the destinations. The destination sensescape thus is formed and strengthened by active knowledge inquired through prosuming the multisensory cooking class experience. The cooking class thus is not simply a workshop to teach how to cook a dish, but an embodied learning experience of the destination’s culture, customs, and way of living.

What differentiates a cooking class from other culinary experiences is the prosuming multisensory process. Instead of consuming the final products through dining, the sensations intertwine and evolve through the prosuming process of cooking, which is complex, dynamic, and memorable. The sensual stimulations in the cooking class are attached to the cultural knowledge, and evolve through the cooking process, and are supported by material affordances. The cooking class offers an opportunity for participants to understand the local customs and culture through multisensory stimulations, and engagement of senses in five ‘-scapes’. Smell and taste play dominating roles that shape participants’ cooking experiences, and primarily direct their perceptions of unfamiliar destinations, extending scant literature on tastescape and smellscape (Buzova *et al.*, 2021). The decoration, national dress and the music of the cooking class also engage with the soundscape, visualscape and hapticscape, and strengthen the perceptions of a destination.

Through multisensory prosumption, the perception of Tatarstan has shifted from a distanced, symbolic, and representative gaze primarily perceived through vision and sounds, to a multisensory, embodied, and memorable one. By inviting participants to co-create the multisensory experience, the destination image of Tatarstan has been brought to life for participants in the pre-trip stage, where they gain first-hand knowledge of the destination, and learn to appreciate local customs and culture. Through prosumption, the cooking class offers a unique opportunity to challenge the myths, prejudice, stereotypes, and misunderstandings towards the destination, which is formed through media discourse, literature and marketing materials (Kim and Lehto, 2012).

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study set to examine how participation in a cooking class affected the perception of the destination. Through PAR, the study enhances the theoretical development by synthesising the performance theory and prosumption in the destination sensescape resulting in the (re)construction of the pre-trip destination perception. Findings revealed that acting as the producers and consumers of the ethnic food and local customs, participants prosume local culture and (re)construct the perception towards a destination by partaking in cooking classes. The study also adds to the under-researched literature on Russia's destination image, especially the underrepresented Tatarstan. Moreover, beyond the case of Tatarstan, this study proposes the cooking class as a significant tool to leverage multisensory, embodied, and memorable experience in the pre-trip stage, which contributes to new understandings of destination image formation and destination marketing.

Theoretical Contributions

First, this study theorises the role of multisensory prosumption of the cooking class through synthesising the performance theory (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009) and prosumption (Ritzer, 2015b). Partaking in the cooking classes allows participants to engage in a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the destination through multisensory enhancement and active prosumption of the experience. Such experience helps to reduce the representational and distanced perception of a destination, and results in the appreciation, increased curiosity and visiting intention to the destination. To the best of our knowledge, this is the very first study synthesising the performance turn and prosumption. This theorisation contributes to new understandings of prosumption through a multisensory lens, which has theoretical potentials of applications in various experience economy contexts. Furthermore, this study contributes to a new understanding of the third generation of gastronomic tourism experiences (Richards,

2015, 2021) by emphasising value co-creation through multisensory prosumption in pre-trip cooking classes, and embedding the cooking class experiences with the formation of destination sensescape.

Second, this study contributes to a new understanding of how destinations are understood, valued, and distinguished through forming the pre-trip sensescape. The ongoing prosumption process simultaneously results in the dynamic multisensory experience. Participants' encounters during cooking classes, on the one hand, are choreographed with cultural experiences; on the other hand, they also experience 'playful' moments in forming their own destination sensescape during a cooking class workshop. Introducing the embodied and immersive cultural experiences in the pre-trip stage, the cooking class extends the understanding of the perception of the destination sensescape outside the destination. Such an experience has an effective role to play in perception change, whilst receiving information about the destination via multiple sensory channels during a cooking class makes experiencing it tangible, immersive, embodied, and active (Agapito, 2020). This study thus contributes to the literature by linking the multisensory cooking class experience and the formations of destination sensescape. Pre-trip secondary destination image formation thus has gone beyond the passive forms of receiving visual and audio information, and engaged in multisensory co-creations. Such forms of pre-trip experiences could potentially buffer the culture shock, and reduce the prejudice and stereotype of an unfamiliar destination.

Third, in addition to contributing to the under-researched literature on Russia's destination image, especially the underrepresented Tatarstan, the findings have far-reaching potential, especially when applied to destinations with diverse cultures and ethnicity that are either unfamiliar or underrepresented in destination marketing. The prosuming experience of a

cooking class exposes the unique cultural elements of such destinations through the cooking ingredients, the music, or national costumes. Moreover, the active, dynamic, and informative pre-trip sensescape developed during a cooking class workshop facilitates a full cultural experience of learning about a particular culture or ethnicity through 'doing'.

Practical Implications

The study also provides practical implications for DMOs on how cooking classes can assist and enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations, strengthen destination management and marketing practices, and effectively market destinations in light of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, since cooking classes can lead to positive perceptions towards the destination and evoke memorable experiences, cooking classes should be leveraged in pre-trip marketing, forming part of an official destination management strategy. For example, Traveling Spoon, is a California-based company that specialises in offering cooking classes drawing on the principles of the sharing economy (Levine, 2020). This can be achieved by connecting and working closely with local hosts who can share authentic food experiences by delivering digital cooking classes, pre-trip. Digital cooking classes are now considered a significant new food trend owing to consumer behaviour changes during the pandemic (Levine, 2020; Zegler, 2022). By participating in such cooking classes, tourists can experience the food and culture of a given destination and engage their multiple senses. Not only will they learn about a new culture but also learn that cooking ethnic food brings them closer to the traditional rituals of serving and consuming the food and that spices used in a dish reflect the habits of ancestors. Such activities can not only increase visiting intentions but also (re)shape the destination image in the long term. Digital cooking classes and food tourism more generally can, therefore, be used to manage and market destinations as well as enhance their

competitiveness in a highly digital and hypercompetitive environment (Mariani *et al.*, 2021; Mariani and Okumus, 2022).

Second, cooking classes also provide or strengthen marketing opportunities for DMOs to engage with and provide inclusive, accessible tourism to visually impaired tourists by enabling them to engage their other heightened senses, a recommendation supported by Agapito (2020). Third, for geographically spread out and culturally diverse countries, more effort should be made to showcase and celebrate their diversity and avoid certain regions/cultures being underrepresented. In this case, the destination marketing strategies of such destinations should identify regions similar to Tatarstan, which are marginalised in the narrative of the domineering destination. Such change will not only showcase the diversity of the tourism offering, but also rejuvenate the country's destination brand. Fourth, more innovative approaches, similar to cooking class workshops with the characteristics of multisensory prosumption should be explored in the marketing experience design to engage future tourists in the pre-trip sensescape. The pre-trip marketing approach should be more hands-on, participatory, and engage with multiple senses with thorough designs of cultural elements. Fifth, DMOs should strategically work closely with ethnic restaurants and cookery schools in the target market to design the multisensory prosuming experience, with the goal to develop a favourable destination perception.

Finally, in light of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, cooking classes can help to mitigate tourists' risk perceptions of COVID-19, and increase destination visit intentions (Dedeoğlu *et al.*, 2022). By cooking local food and learning about the destination's culture and habits, the future tourist is being immersed in the unfamiliar 'environment' of the destination, but on their own terms. Therefore, cooking classes can become an effective tool to market destinations in the post-COVID era.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations and future research were identified. First, this study focussed only on the destination of Tatarstan, one of the many regions in the Russian Federation; thus, future studies can be extended to investigate the overall image of the country. Since food-related activities during a cooking class were the focal point, further research on other types of activities may shed light on the change in perception of the destination in the pre-trip stage. Future studies could also adopt a quantitative approach to examine indicators and factors that influence the destination image before making the trip. Finally, to gain a more in-depth understanding of participants' changing perceptions of the destination, face-to-face interviews could be conducted in a follow-up study.

This study identified the benefits of utilising the cooking classes in future destination marketing practices and research. For instance, cooking classes can help to promote new destinations and attract disabled tourists, such as those who are visually impaired. The multisensory aspects of cooking classes can help design destination experiences focussing on different cultural contexts and further promoting culinary tourism of a particular destination. With the current restricted international travel situation due to COVID-19, digital cooking classes can function as an effective tool for destinations to maintain connections with potential visitors. For many destinations, similar to Tatarstan, cooking classes can help to strengthen the destination image and destination identity. Future studies can investigate the effectiveness of integrating cooking classes, both digital ones and in person, in the marketing plan of destinations in the long term. In addition, future hospitality studies can further explore the potentials of using methods of interventions and action research in various contexts in theoretical developments and facilitating social changes.

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