

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29105/gmjmx16.30-5>

TWITTER AND FOOD WELL-BEING: ANALYSIS OF #SLOWFOOD POSTINGS REFLECTING THE FOOD WELL-BEING OF CONSUMERS

TWITTER Y EL BIENESTAR ALIMENTARIO: ANÁLISIS DE MENSAJES #SLOWFOOD REFLEJANDO EL BIENESTAR ALIMENTARIO DE CONSUMIDORES

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Abstract

This study examines how the hashtag #SlowFood postings on social media site Twitter reflect the food well-being of consumers. 4102 tweets containing the hashtag #SlowFood were identified. Using interpretive content analysis, only 210 food-content messages in English language, from consumers were selected coded and interpreted. Displays of positive emotions and activities related with the slow food consumption on social media were found. By studying how consumers share their food well-being on social media, this research contributes to the understanding of food well-being and how it is practiced online.

Keywords: Social Media, Twitter, Food Consumption, Food Well-Being, Interpretive Content Analysis.

Resumen

El presente estudio examina cómo mensajes en Twitter conteniendo el hashtag #SlowFood reflejan el bienestar alimentario (food well-being) de consumidores. Se identificaron 4102 tweets con el hashtag #SlowFood. Utilizando análisis de contenido interpretativo, sólo 210 mensajes de consumidores, con contenido relacionado con alimentos en idioma inglés, fueron seleccionados, codificados e interpretados. Esta investigación muestra cómo mensajes en Twitter conteniendo el hashtag #SlowFood reflejan el bienestar alimentario de consumidores. Mediante el estudio de cómo los consumidores comparten su bienestar alimentario en los medios sociales, esta investigación contribuye al entendimiento del bienestar alimentario y cómo es practicado en línea.

Palabras clave: medios sociales, Twitter, consumo alimentario, bienestar alimentario, análisis de contenido interpretativo.

Recibido: 24/04/2019

Aceptado: 01/07/2019

Introduction

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its Obesity Update 2017, reports that “today, more than one in two adults and nearly one in six children are overweight or obese in the OECD area” (p. 1) and that an increase of obesity is expected in the next years, in particular in the United States, Mexico and England. On its website, the World Health Organization (WHO) explains that obesity and overweight are caused fundamentally by an energy imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended (World Health Organization, 2018). However, as a result of recommendations and research made to fight obesity, people became obese while obsessing over calories and body mass index (Block *et al.*, 2011). Overconsumption of food and unhealthy food choices have driven researchers from diverse areas to contribute with their research to help reduce obesity (Bublitz, Peracchio & Block, 2010). Researchers from the 2009 Transformational Consumer Research (TCR) Conference proposed a shift of paradigm, from “*food as health*”, with an emphasis on restraint and

restrictions, to a “*food well-being*” in which the role of food in person’s well-being is seen in a more positive and holistic understanding and defined “*food well-being*” (FWB) as “a positive psychological, physical, emotional, and social relationship with food at both the individual and societal levels” (Block *et al.*, 2011, p. 6; Bublitz *et al.*, 2012). Food socialization, food literacy, food marketing, food availability and food policy are the five primary domains that represent the central FWB core. “*Food socialization*” is “the processes consumers use to learn about food, its role, and FWB in a person’s cultural realm”, “*food literacy*” is more than knowledge and involves the motivation to apply nutrition information to food choices, “*food marketing*” involves product, promotion and place elements of traditional marketing and how they influence food consumption behavior, “*food availability*” is concerned with how food distribution and availability influence food consumption and “*food policy*” comprises the different types of policies related to food systems (Block *et al.*, 2011, p.7). A societal trend which has strong connections with the FWB framework is the Slow Food Movement (Block *et al.*, 2011).

Additionally, the OECD and the American Heart Association (AHA) suggest

the use of social and new media to promote healthy eating (Li, Barnet, Goodman, Wasserman & Kemper, 2013; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). However, there is a need for additional research in order to optimize the use of social media as an effective tool against obesity (Li *et al.*, 2013) and although it is possible to find research related with food and social media (De Choudhury, Sharma & Kiciman, 2016; Petit, Cheek & Oullier, 2016; Ofli, Aytar, Weber, al Hammouri & Torralba, 2017; Abbar, Mejova & Weber, 2015; Vidal, Ares & Jaeger, 2016; Kozinets, Patterson & Ashman, 2017, among others), there is not enough research about how social media is used to share the experiential pleasure of food well-being. Therefore, it becomes important, to know how consumers share their food well-being on social media to determine how social media could be used to influence other consumers to adopt a new and positive relationship with food producing well-being.

This paper analyzes Twitter food-related postings from consumers including the hashtag #SlowFood to determine how these consumers share information, practices, pictures and emotions related with food well-being. Consequently, this study provides valuable information of food-related postings reflecting food well-being and aim to understand how Twitter could be used to influence other consumers to adopt

pleasurable and healthy eating behaviors producing well-being.

Food well-being and the epicurean eating pleasure

An energy imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended has been determined as the fundamental cause of obesity which can be reduced by choosing healthier foods and with regular physical activity (World Health Organization, 2018). As a result of this “*food as health*” paradigm, research on food and eating has been associated with the moralities of what constitutes bad vs good food and right or wrong eating behavior; and although experiencing pleasure from food consumption is not considered wrong, deliberate and excessive pleasure-seeking from food consumption are impulses which must be restrained and moderated (Askegaard *et al.*, 2014). This view is consistent with the “*visceral eating pleasure*” which is defined “as the short-lived hedonic relief created by the satisfaction of eating impulses”, thus eating pleasure is an enemy of healthy eating (Cornil & Chandon, 2015, p. 53).

In contrast with the “*visceral*” perspective of eating pleasure, there is an “*epicurean*” eating pleasure perspective which suggests that pleasure may facilitate moderation, the preference for smaller food

portions and a higher well-being (Cornil & Chandon, 2015). Different studies advocate for complementing the “*visceral*” perspective of eating pleasure with a positive “*epicurean*” perspective and to think about pleasure in a more holistic and positive role in food consumption (Block *et al.*, 2011; Cornil & Chandon, 2015, 2016). The Epicurean eating pleasure has been defined “as the pleasure derived from the aesthetic appreciation of the sensory and symbolic value of the food” and it can be created in any cuisine “as long as it focuses on authenticity (e.g. culinary reinterpretations of family meals and street foods, organic foods, fair trade food, ‘slow food’, etc.) or identity (e.g. ethnic cuisines)” (Cornil & Chandon, 2015, p. 54). Exploring Quebecers’ perceptions and definitions of eating pleasure and healthy eating, it was found that eating pleasure was defined through food characteristics associated with sensory qualities like taste, aesthetics, and variety. Regarding psychosocial contexts, cooking, sharing a meal and relaxing were seen as very important aspects of eating pleasure. Healthy eating was defined through food characteristics like balance, variety, unprocessed or low-processed and ways to regulate eating behaviors like moderation, respecting hunger and satiety cues. Regarding perceptions, the pleasure related to aesthetics and discovering new foods were aligned with an epicurean vision (Landry *et al.*, 2018).

Food well-being is influenced by culture, emotions, environment, community and pleasure, between others and its framework uses a food definition with strong connections with different academic fields and societal trends, such as the Slow Food Movement (Block *et al.*, 2011), where the “epicurean” perspective is included (Mulligan, 2015).

Slow Food movement

Slow Food (SF) was born in Italy to promote “a gastronomic association connecting the refinement of taste to local traditions and regional environmental specificity” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 204). Present in over 160 countries, Slow Food Movement is defined as “a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people’s decreasing interest in the food they eat” (Slow Food, 2018). The philosophy of SF is “a world in which all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it and good for the planet” (Slow Food, 2018). In order to spread the movement and its ideas, SF develops links between producers and consumers through community activities,

campaigns and events coordinated at national and international level.

In the Slow Food Manifesto for Quality, the organization urges to eat and produce food as *gastronomes* and exercise the *right of pleasure* without damaging the existence of others or the environmental equilibrium of the planet. The *neo-gastronome* is defined as “a person with a responsible, comprehensive approach to food, combining an interest in food and wine culture with a desire to defend the environment and food biodiversity, and considers eating as not only a biological necessity, but also a convivial pleasure to be shared with others” (Slow Food, 2018). The “*right of pleasure*” (sensory and intellectual) plays an important role and the consumer becomes a very important agent for change (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010) when with his or her choices orients the market and production, and becomes a *co-producer*. In a common effort, consumers and producers are called to practice and disseminate a new precise and broader concept of food quality centered in the three basic words: good, clean and fair. “*Good Food*” is defined as non-altered in its naturalness, rich in flavor and aroma and recognizable to educated and well-trained senses. It is the result of the producer’s competence and the choice of raw materials and production methods. *Clean* because in every stage of the agro-industrial production chain, in which consumption is

included, should protect ecosystems and biodiversity in order to safeguard the health of consumers and producers. And *fair* because social justice should be pursued through the practice of sympathy and solidarity, respect for cultural diversities and traditions and the creations of labor respectful of man and his rights, in order to generate adequate rewards (Slow Food, 2018).

With a *taste education*, SF proposes a “food education based on the reawakening and training of the senses and the study of all aspects of food and its production” (Slow Food, 2018). Typical products and regional cuisines need to be cultivated and protected because they represent an important cultural heritage and distinctiveness; quality of food, seasonality and freshness are the main ingredients of a “*gastronomic aesthetic of food*” (Miele & Murdoch, 2002).

With a dual process of pleasure-seeking and politicization, SF movement become a form of resistance to corporate mass-produced food and gives a new sense to the desire and pleasure of consumption (Pietrykowski, 2004). The movement has been successful mobilizing consumers, producers, distributors, etc., and developing a collective identity, less elitist-seeming and accessible to bigger groups interested in food, environment and social justice (Van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). SF emphasizes a new consumption philosophy, an aware consumption, in which consumers become

more active and exigent regarding the information about food characteristics and became interested in their symbolic features by embracing the historical, social and cultural values of foods (Nosi & Zanni, 2004).

Via SF websites, available in different languages, social media, local chapters, magazines and activities, Slow Food is a source of knowledge about food and nutrition for consumers.

The ideas embodied in the FWB paradigm, the epicurean eating pleasure perspective and the SF movement, are certainly a good start that could lead persons to consume food in a more positive, pleasurable and healthy way. Therefore, it became necessary to examine if these consumers (SF), as a consequence, might be experiencing food well-being.

Social media and food well-being

In the fight against obesity, the OECD suggests the use of social and new media to sensitize the population about unhealthy food consumption (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). People, groups and organizations use the World Wide Web to share information and/or to be part of a social network (Kavanaugh, Carroll, Rosson, Zin & Reese, 2017). Social networks are facilitators of online communities and consumer-to-consumer

communication (Sloan, Bodey & Gyrd-Jones, 2015). Internet-based messages transmitted through these media have become a major factor of influence on aspects of consumption, like awareness, information acquisition, opinion, attitude, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Web communications and social networking services strongly influence consumers' brand perceptions and purchasing decisions (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, 2009; Nitins & Burgess, 2014). MySpace, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube and LinkedIn are just some of different social network sites, in which users can build a personal network that connects them to other users with the purpose of exchange information, maintain relationships and collaborate (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Social interaction and information seeking are the main reasons why consumers use and like social media (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

From all the social media, Twitter is the largest, most well-known and most popular of the microblogging sites (Jansen *et al.*, 2009), the openness and availability of messages posted on Twitter provide a dataset for academic research (Williams, Terras & Warwick, 2013) and information about exposure to food environment in real time (Chen & Yang, 2014).

Twitter is a social network and a microblogging service. Its main characteristic is that Twitter messages are limited to 280 characters and it allows to upload photos or short videos. Users can post short messages called “tweets” to a publicly available (or private) profile, or they can be sent as direct messages to other users. As one of the most popular social networks worldwide, the fourth quarter of 2018, Twitter averaged at 321 million monthly active users including heads of state and celebrities (Statista, 2019). The company describes itself as a tool in which people can tell their story about what is happening in the world right now (Twitter, 2018).

Besides the possibility to follow and be followed by other users, Twitter provides specific features like “retweets”, “replies”, “mentions” and the use of “hashtags”. Putting a “#” (hash), followed by a certain word, is a way of adding context to a message (e.g. #obama) and this specific word receives the informal function of a topic (Uhl, Kolléck & Schiebel, 2017). The hashtag (#) symbol is a specific manner of expression associated with social media, in particular with Twitter microblogging platform, it has been used to distribute news regarding a relevant topic (Van den Berg, 2014). Twitter hashtag has been used as a tool by self-organized movement supporters for the purpose of reaching other persons with the same interests and as a mechanism for mobilizing

public attention (Wang, Liu & Gao, 2016). Hashtags or interface-driven categories reflect accepted social interests, need for connection and network building, where the communication become more structured and is shared with specific audiences (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017).

The first main interest in researching slow food postings of consumers on social media was the possibility to analyze how these consumers (slow food) reflect their quotidian relationship with food. One of the five primary domains that represent the central FWB core is “*food socialization*”, defined as “the processes consumers use to learn about food, its role, and FWB in a person’s cultural realm” (Block *et al.*, 2011, p. 7). Although a variety of studies focused on children socialization, this process begins in early childhood and extends through a consumer’s entire life (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Social Media and especially social networking sites are an important agent of consumer socialization because they provide a virtual space of communication (Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu & Tichindelean, 2013). For Wilson and Peterson (2002), technologies like the Internet and all the text and media that exist within it, are in themselves cultural products. Culture and subcultures influence food choices and food is often used to reflect cultural values (Block *et al.*, 2011). Buying, cooking and eating food

is an everyday life practice which reproduces bodies and identities (Pietrykowski, 2004).

Eating, as any other form of consumption, provide tangible-objective benefits as well as subjective-intangible-hedonic benefits, thus the emotional component is an important aspect of experiential consumption which it is necessary to study (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). The hedonic responses are the essence of the usage experience and one type of response derived from hedonic consumption involves emotional arousal (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In the digital world consumers self-disclose and confess online producing a more public presentation of self (Belk, 2013). Goods consumption, but as well food consumption is linked to consumer's self-identity (Belk, 1998; Thomsen & Hansen, 2015). Emotions are context specific and are a result of consumption experiences (Richins, 1997). Sharing video or pictures of food consumption on social networks has demarcated social space, creating circles of inclusion and familiarity where the sharing of meals cultivates a sense of intimate social belonging (McDonell, 2016). Food well-being is influenced by community, culture and emotions among others (Block *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, it is also important to determine what emotions are reflected in these hashtag #SlowFood postings.

A growing body of social media research has centered their studies on content

around food. Examining posts shared on Instagram regarding food in urban neighborhoods characterized by poor access to healthy and affordable food found that the ingestion content was associated with high intake of fat, cholesterol and sugar and with low vegetable and fruit consumption (De Choudhury *et al.*, 2016), using user vs machine descriptions of food images from Instagram determined that labeling particular foods as #healthy might be related favorably with health (Ofli *et al.*, 2017), analyzing how the brains of consumers react to healthy and unhealthy food content in digital environments suggests that appetizing healthy food pictures on social network might drive positively on self-control and food choice (Petit *et al.*, 2016), using ethnography and nethnography to study food image sharing from friend networks to food bloggers, found technology increases the passion to consume (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017).

Using Twitter data was found a prevalence of unhealthy foods in food deserts by analyzing geolocated Twitter messages (Widener & Li, 2014), analyzing food-related tweets and the geographic food sources of healthy and unhealthy food was possible to conclude that a healthful food environment facilitates healthy food choices (Chen & Yang, 2014), a linguistic analysis of tweets and caloric content of food in order to predict country-wide obesity and diabetes statistics suggests that social media provides useful

information about national dietary health (Abbar *et al.*, 2015) and studying the use of emoticons or emoji on tweets it was determined that consumers use emoticons and emoji to express primarily positive emotions in a food context (Vidal *et al.*, 2016).

In summary, many studies are centered on the sharing of food-related content on social media, but there are almost no studies concentrated in how consumers reflect their experiences of food well-being as a result of healthy food consumption practices in their tweets. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine, through the #SlowFood hashtag on Twitter as a search tool, how consumers reflect their food well-being on their postings. The following three research questions were formulated:

RQ1: How consumers (SF) reflect their quotidian relationship with food on their posts.

RQ2: What emotions are reflected in the SF posts?

RQ3: Do food-related postings from consumers with the hashtag #SlowFood reflect food well-being?

Methodological approach

This paper used an interpretive content analysis method to Twitter texts as well as Twitter pictures (Schroeder, 2002) shared by its users in which the hashtag #SlowFood was

included. Interpretive content analysis method was chosen because it is a flexible methodology used for latent content analysis, it is not restricted by coding rules and it has the flexibility to take context more into account (Ahuvia, 2001). In order to identify emotions, the typologies of emotion proposed by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) were used because they provide a better understanding of consumers' feelings regarding food products (Table 1).

Using a purposive sampling procedure (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013), the study consisted of all tweets posted from February, 1st to March, 31st of 2018 which included the hashtag #SlowFood. As a qualitative study, a two-month sample was considered appropriated since the aim of this research was to go beyond description interpreting text and pictures. "Identifying large-scale patterns can be useful, but it can also overlook *how* people do things with Twitter, *why* they do them, and how they *understand* them" (Marwick, 2014, p. 119). The search was focused on a hashtag instead of a keyword because by adding a hashtag to a Tweet, the related word receives the function of a topic. Thus, hashtags are helpful to spread information across networks of interest, they make it easy to search information regarding a specific theme (Ebner & Reinhardt, 2009) and they can be used for reviewing and sampling tweets (Skalski, Neuendorf & Cajigas, 2017).

Table 1. Hierarchy of consumer emotions by Laros and Steenkamp

Negative Affect				Positive Affect			
Anger	Fear	Sadness	Shame	Contentment	Happiness	Love	Pride
Angry	Scared	Depressed	Embarrassed	Contented	Optimistic	Sexy	Pride
Frustrated	Afraid	Sad	Ashamed	Fulfilled	Encouraged	Romantic	
Irritated	Panicky	Miserable	Humiliated	Peaceful	Hopeful	Passionate	
Unfulfilled	Nervous	Helpless			Happy	Loving	
Discontented	Worried	Nostalgia			Pleased	Sentimental	
Envious	Tense	Guilty			Joyful	Warm-hearted	
Jealous					Relieved		
					Thrilled		
					Enthusiastic		

Source: Laros and Steenkamp (2005, p. 1441).

The goal of this study was to analyze tweets from consumers who posted something on Twitter using the mentioned hashtag. These tweets were obtained using the advanced search service of Twitter. Defining the most appropriated messages for the search required a pre-analysis of tweets. For this study, #SlowFood, #Slowfood and #slowfood hashtags were taken as the same hashtag, because the Twitter search service do not make any difference between them. Hashtags with the word “Slow Food” but with additional words or letters were discarded because they make reference to specific events or cities (e.g. #SlowFoodCE, #slowfoodchicago). Then, a total of 4102 messages containing the mentioned hashtags, in different languages and from different users were imported and saved as PDF to be analyzed manually. In order to analyze all tweets in just one language, all non-English tweets were discarded. Since Twitter is used as well to promote companies, events or

products, tweets from companies, chefs, bloggers or persons related with the promotion of products, events and even the SF events were found. But, because the aim of this paper was to analyze posts from consumers, marketing communication tweets were discarded. Using the definition of marketing communications proposed by Arens (2004) it was determined that a tweet become a form of marketing communication when a tweet content is used by the user to initiate or maintain contact with their prospects, clients, and customers. And regarding marketing communication images, the following words of Schroeder (2004) were taken into account: “as consumers we should know that what is shown in ads hasn’t really been, it is usually a staged construction designed to sell something” (p. 233). As a result of this analysis, it was found that 3892 were marketing communication tweets or non-English tweets. Therefore, just 210

tweets in English, from consumers containing images and/or text about food were analyzed.

Findings

The objective of this study was to examine how consumers reflect their quotidian relationship with food, which emotions are reflected in those posts and if these posts reflect the food well-being of consumers; for this purpose, pictures and texts in tweets were analyzed, coded and interpreted.

Consumers reflecting their quotidian relationship with food on their posts (Research Question 1)

The analysis of tweets shows that consumers share short messages, links, videos, pictures, words and other hashtags in their tweets. However, words and images are the main tool to share information, activities and experiences. Users expressed their favorable attitudes toward some messages by clicking the “like” button. Few replies and retweets were found, and they were mainly used to share the same message with others, to give more information or to comment about some information, to ask for details or recipes of some dish, to express positive admiration for

others’ homemade food, to comment their own experiences cooking the same or something similar, or to share new cooking recipes or ways to cook the same dish. Hashtags were used mainly to emphasize countries, activities, emotions, and ingredients, among others (Table 2).

Photography in consumer behavior is an important source of information about consumers (Schroeder, 2004). Images give us information about what they do every day, the things they love, what gives them identity, what is part of their culture and what is important or valuable to them. Daily routine posts or what people are currently doing is one of the most common use of Twitter (Java, Song, Finin & Tseng, 2007). The visual aesthetics of the pictures shared was relatively stable, they were aesthetic, but they lacked of exotic positions and they were not taken in extreme close-up. Pictures showing the final result or meal, were simple and natural and they were taken from the viewing position of a person sitting at a table. Most photographs were *utilitarian*. “Utilitarian photographs emphasize education and speed of understanding over visual pleasure, for example, showing a simple line-up of the ingredients required for recipe, or capturing the right texture for pie crust dough made in a food processor” (McDonnell, 2016, p. 250).

Table 2. Examples of hashtags, words and phrases used in the tweets

Local/Regional	Home vegetable/ herb garden	Emotions	Ingredients/Food	Homemade
#EatLocal	#backyardgarden	We love...	#passionfruit	#homecanning”
#localism	#urbangarden	I love...	#bloodOrange	#homemade
#Balkans	#gerillagardening	#❤️	#mozzareladibufala	#homebeer
#Bulgaria	#urbanagriculture	#madewithlove	#Pie	#homebrew
#Mediterranean	#homegrown	I love	#Marmalade	#homebaking
#Italy	Fava Bean	#cooking	#herbs	Homemade
#poland	blossoming	I love our...	#peanutbutter	homemade
#italian	Chilli harvest	lot’s of love	#pizza	bread
#Japan	from our tree	#foodislove	#macarons	homemade
#japanesefood	from the tree to	Quite happy	#cookies	apple pie
#polishrecibe	the table	Happy	#risotto	homemade
#polishfood	from the vine into	#happy		paprika
#koreanfood	the jar			
#mallorcanwine				
West African				
Peanut Soup				
local rosé				

Pictures helped consumers to share visually their experiences, what they do and value; they support or accompany the words. Regarding their own pictures, posts of consumers recognizing that their pictures are not “perfect” or “symmetric”, or with the right light like those taken by professionals were found. Users know that their photographs are natural, taken by themselves and they value them.

Emotions reflected in posts (Research Question 2)

To address what emotions are reflected in the SF posts, the typologies of emotion proposed by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) were used (Table 1). Eating, as any other experience

include emotions (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Analyzing the tweets posted by consumers, two main words shared in different variations could be identified: Love and Happiness. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) argue that Love and Happiness are positive basic emotions in consumption experience. The word *Love* and words/#hashtags related with love are the most shared on #SlowFood tweets (Table 2). Consumers demonstrate their love for cooking, for products and ingredients, for what they cook, when they cook for their families, but as well when they use ingredients grown by themselves.

Cooking at home, eating at home, or growing their own ingredients, seem to influence these positive emotions. Although

there are tweets sharing experiences about eating out, they are very few, and are not related with happiness or love; there are more tweets expressing love and happiness in at-home or with “*homemade*” experiences (Table 1 and Table 2). Kauppinen-Räsänen, Gummerus & Lehtola (2013) mention that homemade foods are simple, healthful, nutritious and better than the typical food, they are perceived as memorable and have a positive eating experience. Homemade food is resistant to mass production, it is not a “product” and it embodies the producer’s creativity. Other elements of this kind of food are authenticity, uniqueness, tradition, heritage and kinship relationships, among others (Arnould & Price, 2006). Homemade food is related with family and love and it is a way to express care for oneself or for others. “Imagery surrounding homemade food valorizes family events as precious and special, incorporating them with themes of happiness and sharing [...] the love of family associated with homemade signifies an opposition to the commercial, instrumental interests of the market” (Moisio, Arnould & Price, 2004, p. 366).

Postings from consumers reflecting food well-being (Research Question 3)

Most analyzed food-related postings from consumers with the hashtag #SlowFood reflected food well-being. In most tweets, consumers share information, recipes,

activities, meals or ingredients in line with SF main ideas and in line with the concept of the epicurean eating pleasure which focuses on pleasure derived from the aesthetic appreciation of the sensory and symbolic value of the food, their authenticity or identity (Cornil & Chandon, 2015). Healthy, organic and what SF call good, clean and fair food are important part of the posts (Table 2).

Consumers show appreciation and knowledge for ethnic and local food as well as for traditional food processes. Posts about local food, artisanal cuisine and from different parts of the world are shared including different words and hashtags related with this theme (Table 2). The SFM philosophy “is that typical products and regional cuisines are important features of cultural distinctiveness. They need to be cultivated and protected [...] because they represent a rich cultural heritage” (Miele & Murdoch, 2002, p. 318). Preventing the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, SF promotes appreciation for local food and protect traditional foods. Appreciation means acknowledging the value or meaning of something (e.g. event, behavior, object, person) and to feel a positive emotional connection with it; “being appreciative facilitate and enhances feeling of well-being and life satisfaction, as well as feelings of connection to what we have, to what we experience and to life itself” (Adler & Fagley, 2005, p. 79). For SF the quality of

food, the typicality geographic localization, the historical memory, the quality of raw materials, freshness, seasonality and techniques of preparation, what Miele and Murdoch (2002) call the “gastronomic aesthetic” is important and it is what was found in these tweets.

The sensory appreciation of meals and ingredients is linked with the quality of materials, but as well with the freshness of ingredients and seasonality. Consumers share pictures and information about meals and ingredients, but as well about their smells and flavors (e.g. #spicy, yummi, delicious, tasty, “so much flavor”, “tastes great”, smelling great, etc.). The seasonality (#eatwiththeseasons) is important and a home vegetable/herb garden is a source of fresh, clean and organic raw materials and a matter of pride and positive emotions which allow them to eat fresh ingredients from every season. For this reason, many tweets about fresh ingredients in many cases grown by themselves were shared (Table 2).

Conclusions, limitations and recommendations for future research

This paper shows how hashtag #SlowFood postings on social media site Twitter reflect the food well-being of consumers. The displays of positive emotions, pictures, ideas

and activities related with the slow food consumption on social media are consistent with SF values, philosophy and general ideas where the role of food in a person’s well-being is seen in a more positive and holistic understanding (Block *et al.*, 2011, p. 6). SF promotes and influences the practice of a healthy food consumption among consumers involved in this movement. Twitter, used as a tool for “*food socialization*”, allow consumers to share their slow food practices.

Different institutions have suggested the use of social media to promote a healthy food consumption and well-being (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017; World Health Organization, 2018; Li *et al.*, 2013). In a study about how brains of consumers react to food in digital environments, Petit *et al.* (2016) mention that sharing videos and pictures of healthy food on social media could help people to make healthy food choices and might have positive effects on self-control. Thus, in order to influence other consumers to adopt a new and positive relationship with food producing food well-being, it could be possible to use social media, in particular Twitter since messages transmitted through these media have become a major factor of influence on consumers’ consumptions and perceptions (Jansen *et al.*, 2009; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In this sense, as a result of this research, Twitter is seen as a tool for “*food*

socialization” since while sharing knowledge, other consumers learn and what Block *et al.* (2011) called “*food socialization*” is produced, at home, during food preparation or eating, or when consumers purposeful train themselves looking for information, commenting and sharing posts about healthy meals and eating behaviors. Likewise, these processes could be reproduced *implicitly* when other consumers observe Twitter postings about healthy food eating behaviors and mimic them.

For this purpose, Twitter posting sharing information, pictures and videos focusing on the aesthetic appreciation of the symbolic and sensorial value of food could be promoted with the use of Twitter. Instead of messages centered on moralities of what constitutes bad or good food, companies, authorities and institutions could promote food well-being on Twitter focusing in sensory pleasure elements like taste, smell and texture. Because it has been proved that these elements, included in the SF movement, can make people happier and prefer small food portions (Cornil & Chandon, 2016). Furthermore, these communications could focus on the pleasure derived from preparing, eating and sharing healthy foods; because as Pettigrew (2015) suggests, it could be more successful in encouraging the consumption of healthy foods, than focusing on avoiding unhealthy food.

Rediscovering local ingredients, meals and flavors can help consumers to appreciate once more what is close to them and to influence others by sharing information, daily practices, meals and pictures about healthy and pleasurable eating behaviors online. Communicating the pleasure derived from home gardening and from preparing, sharing and eating healthy foods could be successful in promoting the consumption of healthy foods. Cooking at home gives consumers the opportunity to choose high quality ingredients sometimes grown by themselves, and to take control of ingredients and quantities consumed.

Food choices are influenced by culture and subcultures, often reflect cultural values, meal-based rituals passed from one generation to the next (Block *et al.*, 2011). At younger ages, families exert more influence at shaping dietary patterns related with taste preferences and eating rules at younger ages (Bublitz *et al.*, 2010). Growing ingredients at home, but as well, preparing, eating and sharing meals at home can influence the youngest family members to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Sharing these rituals on Social Media could influence other persons to adopt these activities and thus to prefer healthy local food or homegrown ingredients. Vohs, Wang, Gino & Northon, (2013) suggest that rituals can enhance the pleasure derived from eating healthfully because of the great involvement in the experience.

Rituals are closely linked to symbolic aspects of family life and ritual elements of mealtimes are symbolic and are tied to emotions (Fiese, Foley & Spagnola, 2006). Cultural attitudes toward food meant pleasure, community, comfort and kinship (Block *et al.*, 2011).

The themes above studied could be used in marketing communications to promote healthy food consumption behaviors with an FWB emphasis. These communications could focus on the pleasure derived from the sensory and symbolic value of food, as well as on the pleasure derived from the home food production/cooking experiences, instead of food nutritious nature or health benefits. Cornil and Chandon (2016) suggest that focusing on sensory pleasure instead of health warnings is possible to achieve a better balance among consumer enjoyment and health. The lack of time, and gardening and cooking skills, could be a factor to undermine the success of this healthy eating behavior; nevertheless, the desire to learn to adopt a healthier lifestyle could be more powerful than the lack of time or skills.

The limitations of this paper are twofold. First, only Twitter was examined in this study, and it was possible to observe that hashtag #SlowFood posts from consumers

included links, mainly to Instagram, other social media which main characteristic is the photo-sharing. Consumers include URL in their tweets in order to redirect to a desired website, sharing links is a common practice in Twitter (Boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010). Although messages including an Instagram link were analyzed, pictures shared in these links could not be analyzed for considering these posts subject of further research. Thus, for further research it is suggested to explore this social media in particular. Second, using interpretive content analysis, this study examined tweets from consumers including the hashtag #SlowFood but it was not possible to know if these consumers belong to the SFM, or if they eat every food they were tweeting about; if they use the hashtag #SlowFood to get attention, or if they practice in reality the SF lifestyle. This study was a first effort to study healthy food content shared on social media. The use of hashtag #SlowFood was very helpful, but a great quantity of what is called marketing communication (Arens, 2004) was found. Thus, for further research, in-depth interviews, focus group, or netnography could be used to study food well-being practices, and the use of social media.

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