

# Creating Value through Authenticity and Social eWOM: Evidence from Authentic Traditional Yogyakarta Cuisines

Vita Briliana

*Trisakti School of Management, Jl. Kyai Tapa No.20 Grogol, West Jakarta, Indonesia*

**Keywords:** Authenticity, Social eWOM, Value, Behavior Intention.

**Abstract:** This study adapted the Mehrabian-Russell (M-R) model to examine how authenticity and social electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) factors influence Indonesian consumer behavioral intention toward authentic traditional Yogyakarta cuisines. This study used nonprobability sampling with purposive sampling methods and received 310 respondents. The theoretical model was tested using structural equation modeling with partial least squares (SEM-PLS). The paper found support for the positive effect of authenticity (i.e. food and atmosphere), social eWOM, and perceived value. Results indicate that social eWOM was a strong factor influencing perceived value toward a traditional food hailing from Yogyakarta. Theoretical and managerial implications are elaborated.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's friendly climate, myriad islands, and many unique cultures provide an ethnic and cultural diversity to traditional habits, foods, clothing, art, etc. Yogyakarta, a small city in Central Java, still holds its prominent traditions. An online news report released by the Jogja Tribunews (2017) revealed that in 2017, 4.7 million domestic tourists visited Yogyakarta. As for foreign tourists, the number reached 397,000 in the same year (<http://jogja.tribunnews.com/2018/02/02/kunjungan-wisata-diy-tahun-2017>, accessed June 25, 2018).

Food is a strong motive for tourism along with transportation, accommodation, and attractions. When traveling, visitors engage in some form of local cuisine enjoyment (Chang et al., 2011), ranging from eating food which is familiar back home, to seeking novel and different local dishes (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Because eating is an integral part of traveling, it is common for visitors to expect pleasurable culinary experiences, even if this is not the primary purpose of travel (Kivela and Crofts, 2006). It is important to distinguish between visitors who consume food as part of a travel experience and visitors who make destination choices based on their interest in food as food tourism. Hence, food tourism means a visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and specific locations for

which food and tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel. Yet not every vacationer's trip to a restaurant is connected to culinary tourism, especially if the food eaten in the visited restaurant is the same as, or similar to, the food consumed at home.

Digital communications technology has led to extensive discussions among consumers through social media. Consumers are participating in a variety of activities, from reading content to sharing knowledge, experiences, opinions, and making travel decisions. According to the Association of Internet Service Companies Indonesia (APJII, 2017), Indonesia has more than 143.25 million internet users, most of whom (87.13%) have social media accounts. Of these social media users, 89.3 percent have Instagram accounts, with Facebook, at 74.8 percent, a close second that is catching up fast. In addition, Indonesia has the largest Instagram community in Asia-Pacific (Rachman and Briliana, 2018).

The objective of the present research is to develop an understanding of the impact of social electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and authenticity (i.e. food and atmosphere) on perceived value that results in behavioral intention, and to test such effects in a new empirical study. This paper adds to the existing body of research because no studies on the proposed link between social eWOM and

authenticity and perceived value exist. While some researchers have proposed models for the impact of authenticity and social eWOM, none have yet considered food as a focal construct.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Mehrabian-Russell (M-R) model is a theoretical explanation of the effects of atmospherics, or the design of commercial spaces, on consumer behavior. This model states that an emotional response arises because of the relationship between the physical environmental and human behavior. That is, the physical environment affects the individual's emotional state, which can be described by three orthogonal dimensions: pleasure, passion, and dominance. Pleasure is a state of feeling good or happy. Passion means the extent to which an individual is stimulated, excited, alert, or active. Domination refers to the degree to which an individual feels influential, in control, or important.

The M-R model states that the way the environment affects human behavior is mediated by their emotional responses. Several empirical studies have found that atmospherics can directly influence consumer behavior intentions. The research of Ryu and Jang (2008) states that there is an influence of the restaurant's physical environment on emotions and behavioral intentions. Within the physical environment, aesthetic features and employees do not only influence behavioral intentions through emotional responses (pleasure and passion), but they also directly influence behavioral intentions.

### 2.1 Authenticity

Food is a part of the culture of a country and can even represent that culture. Indonesia consists of many diverse cultures and unique populations. This uniqueness is often referred to as authenticity (Jang and Park, 2012). It is this genuineness factor that has a strong impact on attracting customers from other regions and even from other countries.

Richards (2012) revealed that authenticity is a quality attributed to a range of foods and cuisines that are specific to a particular location or place. More importantly, such products are the result of a cultural process that belongs to that place. Furthermore, food represents ethnic, regional, and national identities. Bessiere (1998) pointed out that the culinary heritage of a destination embodies the character and mentality of a society in the types of food and the way they are eaten. Food, therefore, is

seen as an integral part of identity formation. Extending this study, authenticity refers to the story and meaning pertaining to the place and culture of the food that is embedded as a representation of the culture (i.e. Yogyakarta).

#### 2.1.1 Food Authenticity

The characteristics of Indonesian cuisine are heavily influenced by natural and cultural conditions. The ingredients of Indonesian food include a rich variety of herbs, seasonings, and spices. A traditional food hailing from Yogyakarta, *gudeg*, is a stew made from young jack fruit (*nangka*) with palm sugar, coconut milk, meat, garlic, and lots of spices. It is one of the most flavorful foods in the world, blending everything from taste to texture. Verbake and Lopez (2005) describe ethnic food as food expressing the characteristics of a particular region or cultural tradition, when it is prepared by local citizens following traditions. Previous research revealed that there is a relationship between food authenticity and behavioral intentions (Sukalakamala and Boyce, 2007; Liu and Jang, 2009; Jang and Park, 2012).

*H1. Food authenticity influences perceived value.*

#### 2.1.2 Atmospherics Authenticity

The authenticity of the experience is enhanced through the atmosphere which reflects local culture, such as the décor and background music in restaurants. Jang and Park, (2012) describe ethnic atmospherics that reflects the restaurant's root culture as unique and distinctively different from those of non-ethnic restaurants, which could affect the restaurant's diners. The perceived atmospheric authenticity can be defined as the customer's evaluation of the authenticity of the restaurant's external appearance, interior design, décor, and music, and which, based on these perceptions, influence the customer's behavior intentions (Wood and Munoz, 2007). Research has shown that authentic atmospherics significantly influence behavioral intentions of consumers (Jang and Namkung, 2011; Jang and Park, 2012).

*H2. Atmospheric authenticity influences perceived value.*

### 2.2 Social e-WOM

Social eWOM, or communication among consumers through social networking sites, has become one of the most frequently used electronic word-of-mouth

formats (Chu and Kim, 2011). Social networking sites act as effective word-of-mouth communication without geographic or time constraints among consumers, serving as an important source of product-related information and opinions. The extensive use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram has become a worldwide phenomenon. The internet has given a virtual space to consumers, where every user can share their experiences about products and services (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). A study by Park et al., (2007) found that online reviews act as strong informants and recommenders and significantly influence the purchase intention and actual purchase. At the same time, online reviews significantly impact travelers' destination choices (Jalilvand et al., 2012).

*H3. Social eWOM influences perceived value.*

*H4. Social eWOM influences behavioral intentions.*

### 2.3 Perceived Value

Perceived value is a consumer's desired end-goal of their purchasing behaviors and relates to a successful transaction in a consumption situation (Jang and Park, 2012). The perceived value of a local Indonesian dish is that it is authentic, uses fresh herbs, spices, and other local ingredients, and otherwise differs from other traditional Indonesian foods one has eaten. Research has shown that perceived value has a significant role in influencing behavioral intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Ryu et al., 2008; Liu and Jang, 2009; Jang and Park, 2012).

*H5. Perceived value influences behavioral intentions.*

### 2.4 Behavioral Intentions

Basically, consumers are buying not only products, but also their meanings, stories, and the experiences associated with them. All these elements make their purchases different and unique. As experience becomes the crucial offering in the marketplace, companies should personally engage consumers through staged events, and capture their hearts by the memorability of the experience (Oh et al., 2007). Te memorable experience is expected to be shared with another potential customer and could in turn influence their own behavioral intention. Knowing the purchase intention for a product is important because it gives an idea of customer retention. Extending this study, behavioral intention refers to a restaurant customer's anticipation of repeat patronage, recommendation, and favorable word-of-mouth behavior in the future.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Partial least squares (PLS) analysis, a form of structural equation modeling, was applied to evaluate the measurement model and structural model. The reason for using PLS is that it can effectively be used with a relatively small sample size and allows for potentially abnormally distributed data (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, PLS analysis was selected because it can assess all paths simultaneously for model prediction. The SmartPLS 2.0 software package was used to assess the model in two stages:

1. Food authenticity (FA) and atmospheric authenticity (AA) are proposed as antecedents of perceived value (PV) in the first stage of the model, covering H1 and H2; and
2. The second stage of the model studied the influence of Social e-WOM (SW) is proposed to influence PV and BI, covering H3 and H4. PV itself is proposed to influence BI, covering H5.

All constructs were deemed highly reliable and consistent due to their Cronbach alpha and composite reliability scores, all of which exceeded 0.8 (Malhotra, 2010). Convergent validity was measured through an assessment of the average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct, with all clearing the prescribed minimum of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). This study used a self-administrated questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was distributed using non-probability purposive sampling. The survey was based on an area sampling technique conducted at several traditional restaurants (i.e., ones that serve *gudeg*) in Yogyakarta. The sample size of the study was 310. The study was conducted in June 2018. Respondents for the study qualified according to pre-set criteria, i.e., they were residents of Indonesia, had widely traveled overseas and within the country, routinely used Instagram, and had recently posted a picture of a local Indonesian authentic food or authentic restaurant on Instagram.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the respondents' given profiles, the study found that the majority (43%) were between 31 and 37 years of age, held bachelor degrees (63%), and had a monthly income of at least IDR 20,000,001 or more (51%). Most (66.1%) admitted that they had been to Yogyakarta for culinary purposes in the last 6 months, while almost as many declared they had

come to Yogyakarta more than 3 times (51%).

In this study, PLS was analyzed and interpreted sequentially in two stages, namely the assessment of the reliability and validity of the measurement model, followed by the assessment of the structural model. As recommended by Ramayah et al. (2011), the validity and reliability of the measures were examined using the PLS approach, particularly when examining the goodness of measure. SmartPLS 2.0 software provided the results for both. These values are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary result of the measurement model and convergent validity.

	Loading	AVE	$\alpha$	CR	
Food	FA1	0.90	0.76	0.89	0.93
	FA2	0.89			
Authenticity	FA3	0.86	0.78	0.91	0.94
	FA4	0.83			
Authenticity	AA1	0.86	0.78	0.91	0.94
	AA2	0.87			
Atmospherics	AA3	0.89	0.76	0.89	0.93
	AA4	0.91			
Social eWOM	SW1	0.85	0.76	0.89	0.93
	SW2	0.86			
Perceived Value	SW3	0.87	0.81	0.88	0.93
	SW4	0.89			
Behavioral Intentions	PV1	0.89	0.74	0.82	0.89
	PV2	0.92			
Intensions	PV3	0.89	0.85	0.91	0.93
	BI1	0.81			
	BI2	0.91			
	BI3	0.85			

Composite Reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / (square of the summation of the factor loadings + (square of the summation of the error variances)).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / (summation of the square of the factor loadings + (summation of the error variances)).

Table 1 depicts the current measurement model. AVE, composite reliability, and R2 are reported. AVE values ranged from 0.76 to 0.86, while composite reliability values ranged from 0.91 to 0.96, fulfilling the criteria suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988), respectively. All constructs have AVEs of more than 0.5, meeting convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). At the same time, all constructs have composite reliabilities of more than 0.6, demonstrating that a high internal consistency of the data exists (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

Table 2 represents the correlations between the constructs along with the AVE on the diagonal. Using Shiue et al.'s (2010) recommendation, all of the diagonal values exceed the inter-construct correlations—thus indicating adequate discriminant

validity. This also explains how the constructs were retained for further analysis of data.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity.

	AA	BI	FA	PV	SW
AA	<b>0.88</b>				
BI	0.75	<b>0.86</b>			
FA	0.79	0.84	<b>0.87</b>		
PV	0.83	0.85	0.77	<b>0.81</b>	
SW	0.80	0.83	0.86	0.79	<b>0.76</b>

Diagonal entries (in bold) represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) while the other entries represent the squared correlations. Note: AA = Authenticity Atmospheric, AF= Authenticity Food, SW= Social eWOM, PV= Perceived Value, BI= Behavioral Intentions

Using a bootstrapping technique, path loadings and t-statistics for hypothesized relationships were calculated. The PLS analysis results are shown in Table 3. In marketing, researchers usually assume a significance level of 5%. Hypotheses with a t-value above 1.96 will be accepted and a hypothesis will be rejected when its t-value is found to be less than 1.96 for significance level = 5% (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3: PLS results of path coefficients and hypothesis testing.

	Path	Coefficient	SE	t-value	Decision
H1	FA $\rightarrow$ PV	0.11	0.06	1.97	Yes
H2	AA $\rightarrow$ PV	0.52	0.07	7.82	Yes
H3	SW $\rightarrow$ PV	0.28	0.07	4.09	Yes
H4	SW $\rightarrow$ BI	0.42	0.05	8.42	Yes
H5	PV $\rightarrow$ BI	0.51	0.05	10.83	Yes

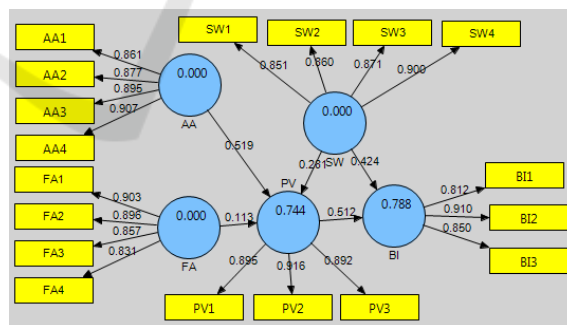


Figure 1: Structural Model.

The results for phase one indicate that a significant relationship exists between FA and PV, with a t-value of 1.97 and a path coefficient of 0.11. The authentic food experience the customers had was due to taste, the use authentic herbs, spices, fresh foods, variety, and presentation in the dishes they were served. Therefore, H1 is accepted at the five percent significance level, and it may be concluded that food authenticity influences

perceived value. (Wood and Munoz, 2007; Jang and Namkung, 2011; Jang and Park, 2012; Jang and Ha, 2015).

The results for phase one further indicate that a significant relationship exists between AA and PV, with a *t*-value of 7.82 and path coefficient of 0.52. Therefore, H2 is accepted at the five per cent significance level, and it may be concluded that AA positively impacts PV. The authentic atmospheric experience had was due to the use of the restaurant's external appearance, the atmosphere, and interior décor, as well as the presence of traditional music. These results are consistent with previous studies about the relationship between AA and PV (Jang and Namkung, 2011; Jang and Park, 2012; Jang and Ha, 2015).

The results for phase two indicate that a significant relationship exists between SW and PV, with a *t*-value of 4.09 and a path coefficient of 0.28. Therefore, H3 is accepted at the five per cent significance level, and it may be concluded that SW has an influence on PV. This finding is similar to the results of the studies of Jalilvand et al., (2012), which found that SW had a positive influence on PV. Social e-WOM was also found to be a predictor of behavioral intention, with a *t*-value of 8.42 and a path coefficient of 0.42. Therefore, H4 is accepted at the five percent significance level, and it may be concluded that the SW influences BI. These findings align with previous studies about the relationship between SW and BI (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Furthermore, H5 examines the effects of PV on BI. PV is significantly related to BI with a *t*-value of 10.83 and a path coefficient of 0.51. Therefore, H5 is accepted at the five percent significance level, and it may be concluded that PV influences BI. The study found both SW and PV to be positively related to behavioral intentions. These conclusions are in line with previous studies, such as those by Jang and Namkung (2011); Jang and Park (2012).

Basically, travelers visiting ethnic restaurants expect some uniqueness of traditional cuisine, and perceive the authenticity through ethnic foods. Authentic cuisine features distinct cooking methods, using specific ingredients and traditional kitchen utensils used by each ethnic group when presenting dishes in their own way. Ethnic restaurants also create an atmosphere of authenticity by emphasizing authentic environmental elements, which provide customers with meaning and entertainment. Moreover, the concept of authenticity evokes a range of meanings, which are original, genuine, real, true, and true to itself (Pratt, 2007).

Digital technology has changed the way travelers express their memorable experiences, such as by posting pictures of their authentic food, their authentic atmosphere, and also their self-expressed happiness and memorable experiences through social media (e.g. Instagram). Indonesian customers usually transmit their memorable experience through Instagram to share with family, friends, and followers. They do this with the intent to spread information and perhaps influence the decisions of other people who see photos of the posts and come to enjoy for themselves the uniqueness of the food and the environment. The friendliness of local residents can also make the encounter more enjoyable. The visitors sometimes get information about variations of popular foods, good locations for photography, restaurant hours, and transportation. Sometimes the locals even help to photograph the visitors. This fun and engaging experience translates into photos is posted on Instagram, along with a delighted comment.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The results from Jang and Namkung (2011); Jalilvand et al., (2012); Jang and Park (2012); Jang and Ha, (2015) supported our hypotheses. Ethnic atmospherics that reflect the restaurant's root culture are unique and distinct from those of non-ethnic restaurants, which could affect the restaurant's success. Word of mouth on social media platforms not only acts as an informant giving product details, but also as recommenders giving reviews from experienced consumers.

It is worth pointing out that this study has several limitations. First, the sample was confined to a specific group of domestic travelers in a location in Yogyakarta, and they are not representative of all consumers. It would be necessary for future research to examine the perceptions of domestic travelers in other Indonesian regions, in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. Second, this study only explored authentic food, authentic atmosphere, perceived value, and social eWOM as factors determining the behavioral intention to choose an authentic traditional Indonesian dining experience.

## REFERENCES

Association of Internet Service Companies Indonesia-APJII., 2017. Retrieved June 10, 2018 from

- <https://apjii.or.id/survei2017/download/fqn7axhjkvARUVTmC2d8oi9EGgulz4>.
- Bagozzi, R. and Yi, Y., 1988. On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 74-94.
- Bessiere, J. ., 1998. Local development and heritage: Traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *European Society for Rural Sociology*, 38(1), 21-34. doi: 10.1111/1467-9523.00061
- Chang, R. C. Y., Kivela, J., and Mak, A. H. N., 2011. Attributes that influence the evaluation of travel dining experience: When East meets West. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 307-316. Cohen, E., & Avieli, N., 2004. Food in tourism: Attraction and impediment. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(4), 755-778.
- Cheung, C., and Thadani, D., 2012. The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461-470.
- Chetna kudeshia Amresh Kumar., 2017. Social eWOM: Does it affect the brand attitude and purchase intention of brands?. *Management Research Review*, Vol. 40 Iss 3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MRR-07-2015-0161>
- Chu, S. C. and Kim, Y., 2011. Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites, *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol.30 No.1, pp. 47-75.
- Cronin, J.J., Brady, M.K., Hult, G.T., 2000. Assessing the effect of quality, value, and consumer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing* 76 (2), 193–218.
- Rachman, Fauzi and Vita Briliana .,2017. Examining the relationships among the customer equity dimensions. empirical evidence from fast fashion. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, Vol. 15, Issue 2 (April).
- Fornell,C. and Larcker, D.,1981. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-50.
- Hair,J. F., Hult, T. M., Christian M., and Sarstedt, M., 2017. A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling. Washington DC: SAGE Publications.
- <http://jogja.tribunnews.com/2018/02/02/kunjungan-wisata-diy-tahun-2017>, accessed June 25, 2018
- Jang,S. and Park, K., 2012. Effects of ethnic authenticity: Investigating Korean restaurant customers in the U.S., *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, No. 31, pp. 990-1003.
- Jang, S. and Namkung, Y.,2011. Effects of authentic atmospherics in ethnic restaurants: investigating Chinese restaurants, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 662-680.
- Jalilvand, M.R. and Samiei, N., 2012. The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention: an empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 460-476.
- Kivela,J., & Crotts, J. C., 2006. Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(3), 354-377. doi: 10.1177/1096348006286797
- Liu, Y., Jang, S., 2009. The effects of dining atmospherics: an extended Mehrabian–Russell model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 28 (4), 494–503.
- Malhotra, Naresh., 2010. *Marketing Research – An Applied Orientation 6 ed*, Pearson Education, NJ.
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeoung, M., 2007. Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46, 119-132. doi:10.1177/0047287507304039
- Park, D. H., Lee, J. and Han, I., 2007. The effect of on-line consumer reviews on consumer purchasing intention: The moderating role of involvement, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 11 No.4, pp. 125-148.
- Pratt, J., 2007. Food values: The local and the authentic. *Critique of Anthropology*, 27(3), 285-300. doi: 10.1177/0308275X07080357
- Ramayah, T., Lee, J.W.C. and In, J.B.C., 2011. Network collaboration and performance in the tourism sector, *Service Business*, Vol. 5, pp. 411-428.
- Richards, G., 2012. Food and the tourism experience: Major findings and policy orientations. In D. Dodd (Ed.), *Food and the tourism experience* (pp. 13-46). Paris: OECD. doi: 10.1787/9789264171923-1-en
- Ryu, K., Han, H., Kim, T.H., 2008. Intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 27 (3), 459–469.
- Ryu,K.and Jang,S.,2008. Influence of restaurants' physical environments on emotion and behavioral intention, *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 8, pp. 1151-65
- Sharpley, R., 2014. Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research. *Tourism Management*, 42, 37-49.
- Shiue, Y.C., Chiu, C.M. and Chang, C.C., 2010. Exploring and mitigating social loafing in online communities. *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol 26 No.4, pp.768-777.
- Soo Cheong (Shawn) Jang and Jooyeon Ha., 2015. The Influence of Cultural Experience: Emotions in Relation to Authenticity at Ethnic Restaurants, *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 18:3, 287-306, DOI: 10.1080/15378020.2015.1051436
- Sukalakamala, P., Boyce, J.B., 2007. Customer perceptions for expectations and acceptance of an authentic dining experience in Thai restaurants. *Journal of Food service* 18, 69–75.
- Verbeke, W., López, G.P., 2005. Ethnic food attitudes and behavior among Belgians and Hispanics living in Belgium. *British Food Journal* 107 (10/11), 823–840.
- Wood, N.T. and Munoz, C.L., 2007. No rules, just right' or is it? The role of themed restaurants as cultural ambassadors. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol 7, pp. 242-55.