

Food and Photography: Phenomenological Study of Women Photographer Community in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intersection of food and photography within the community of women photographers in Indonesia through a phenomenological approach. By delving into the lived experiences of these women, the research aims to understand how they capture and portray food, not just as a subject but as a cultural and artistic expression. The integration of food and photography has seen a significant rise, particularly among women in Indonesia. This study investigates the phenomenological experiences of women photographers within the KJ community, a group known for its vibrant food photography on Instagram. By employing participatory observations, in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the research explores the daily experience, motivations, and aesthetic choices of food photography among these women and their work. The findings reveal that food photography serves multiple purposes, including promoting self-fulfilment, providing income prospects, and facilitating social connections. The informants place great importance on the visual appeal of their creations, focusing on aesthetic factors such as colour and composition. By focusing on the phenomenological aspects, the research also illuminates on how personal and collective experiences influence their photographic practices, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gender on food photography in Indonesia. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the influence of digital platforms on the formation of food culture and the social elements of food photography. In addition to reflecting the individual personalities of the participants, the phenomenon of food photography questions conventional gender norms and illustrates the dynamic interaction in the virtual community and gender in modern Indonesian culture.

Keywords: *Community, Food Photography, Instagram, Phenomenology, Women*

INTRODUCTION

The act of sharing food photographs has become a recent trend in the realm of social media. The creators that upload the food photos have a specific intention and communicate a message through their food photographs. Food is today acknowledged as more than just a method to fulfil our fundamental physiological requirements, but also as a vehicle for expressing our social and cultural identities. Food is fundamentally essential for humans, but it also involves complex processes of encoding and interpretation. Food is a complex and interconnected system that is closely linked to particular civilizations. Food generates a distinct system that incorporates ingredients, preparation methods, customs, presentation styles, and modes of consumption, all of which contribute to a well-organized system. Food is deeply connected with symbolism within its framework. French cuisine is commonly linked to the upper class, while Italian food is more closely identified with symbols of the common people. A current trend in digital photography is the convergence of photography, food, and online platforms (Barthes, 2013).

In 1845, the initial connection between food and photography was established, and William Henry Talbot achieved fame in the history of photography with his work titled "A Fruit Piece". The food was captured in a high-resolution image due to its immobility. Gradually, the correlation between food and photography is becoming more and more significant in affluent culture. Food emerged as a prominent subject in family photography during the nineteenth century and gained much more prominence in the twentieth century, coinciding with the growing availability of cameras. Subsequently, food photographs have garnered significant attention when families convene around tables during birthdays, parties, and weddings. An affluent communal gathering including an abundance of cakes and ice cream, which is also documented in summer holiday photographs. The predominant word used to describe the connection between photography and food is "food photography," which pertains to the commercial practices focused around capturing images of food for magazines (Bright, 2017).

Food photography is said to have emerged in Indonesian photographic history about the same time as the arrival of the Dutch. Rijsttafel is a common term used to describe the cultural assimilation of indigenous cuisine with European dining practices. Rijsttafel is a luxurious meal served to the nobility and elite of the Netherlands, with local Indonesian dishes served by indigenous people as servers (Rahman, 2016). Rijsttafel is the bridge that brought the first appearance of food photography in the history of Indonesia. The documented photo of a rijsttafel may be traced back to the period between 1898 and 1920, showcasing a luxurious house with a fully laid out spread of food on the dining table in Pekalongan, Central Java (Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, 1898).

The rise of food photography as a unique genre in the digital world is a significant development. Photography encompasses a wide range of genres, including journalistic photography, which prioritizes news coverage; landscape photography, which showcases natural beauty; human interest photography, which centres around human issues; and still life, which includes the categorization of food photography. One notable characteristic of food photography is its ability to be recognized for its artistic merit, especially on social media platforms like Instagram (Andersen et al., 2021). Instagram food photography is associated with the increasingly digitally-driven food culture, particularly with the internet and digital transformation. The internet in the mid-1990s witnessed a significant increase in the number of websites, discussion forums, Wikipedia, and blogs that provided information about food. Although the facilities for user interaction are still limited, technological advancements in social media and applications have created new ways of using the web that are more social. This enables users to easily connect to the internet anytime and anywhere, as well as effortlessly produce, share, and comment on digital content. The ability to instantly connect and facilitate interaction between users has sparked the expansion of digital food culture (Lupton, 2018).

Instagram has revolutionized the way in which social media users engage with culinary photographs. Posting food pictures on Instagram has become a regular practice and sometimes a routine before eating. This platform is the most recent successor to a long-standing lineage of artistic traditions captivated by the visual delights of food. The portrayal of food has evolved into an enduring visual identity, intertwined with a wider cultural and material framework that adds complexity to its interpretation. Humans frequently capture images of food and distribute them in online communities, typically imitating the visual style of professional and commercial photography. The act of visually representing what you eat has grown to be intimately associated with posting food images on social media. The widespread practice of instantly sharing photographs compels social media users to reconsider the type of content they choose to share. The emergence of new digital technologies has not only made it easier to share and promote food-related content, but it has also significantly influenced and transformed our eating habits and social interactions surrounding food (Holmberg et al., 2016). The digital age has transformed the food industry, reflecting the social and cultural values associated with food, which holds a significant place in our daily lives. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account the social dimensions of food practices. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of food in the context of the digital realm, it is imperative to examine the way in which individuals communicate about food, particularly the messages they express to one another regarding the food preferences of users on digital platforms (Neely et al., 2014; Roper & La Niece, 2009).

The representation of the culinary world in the digital age mirrors the dominant social and cultural beliefs. Considering the crucial significance of food in our everyday lives, it is essential to carefully consider the social aspects that are embedded in our dietary practices. To comprehend the significance of food in the digital realm, it is essential to scrutinize the communication related to food, particularly the messages exchanged among digital platform users concerning their food choices (Neely et al., 2014). The tangible expansion of the digital world, notably Instagram, has created opportunities for the current social media users to diversify, leading to the emergence of community accounts on the Instagram platform. Virtual communities represent one of the flourishing account categories on Instagram, encompassing a diverse range of community interests, from business and art to various hobbies.

The advancement of the digital realm on Instagram has significantly expanded the possibilities for contemporary social media users, particularly in fostering a more diverse community. This has resulted in the rise of community accounts on the Instagram platform. The virtual community on the Instagram platform is seeing growth, encompassing a diverse range of interests including business, art, and hobbies. The virtual community possesses distinctive characteristics and is comprised of followers dispersed around Indonesia. The virtual community @instanusantara is dedicated to exploring various aspects of Indonesia, including its landscapes, culture, tourism destinations, human profiles, and phenomena within this region. The @iphonesia virtual community comprises individuals who capture photographs using iPhone, encompassing a wide range of subjects. These virtual communities consist of tens to hundreds of thousands of followers who demonstrate if the world of photography in Indonesia has an impact on the advancement of digital photography.

This study focuses on the Indonesian Instagram virtual community known as @uploadkompakan. This virtual community created an Instagram account on September 9, 2014. The founder, Echi Sofwan, began photographing delicate objects and invited other Instagram users to share their photos at the same time. As of February 25, 2024, the account had over 247,000 followers and shared over 16,000 photographs, making it one of the most active accounts in the virtual photography community. One further factor in favour of selecting the @uploadkompakan community is its prominent status in discussions about photographic communities in Indonesia. This Instagram virtual community @uploadkompakan comprises members throughout Indonesia, with a presence in many places abroad, all overseen by their administrators. The individuals who are part of the virtual community @uploadkompakan, residing in different cities within and outside the country, identify themselves as

kompakers then add the name of their respective city of residence. Examples include regional groupings such as *Kompakers* Jakarta, *Kompakers* Bogor, and *Kompakers* Jogja. Each of these regions possesses a distinct structure and local governance that conforms to the norms set by the central authority.

An outstanding regional community that stands out among others is *Kompakers* Jogja, which originated in Yogyakarta. The selection of Yogyakarta as the venue is predicated on the rationale that Yogyakarta is renowned as one of Indonesia's cultural hubs. Furthermore, Yogyakarta is widely acknowledged as a hub where many cultures converge and amalgamate within a single urban area. *Kompakers* Jogja stands out due to its exclusive membership of women. Although there is no specified age limit, the majority of members are 40 years old or beyond. An exceptional regional community that distinguishes itself from others is *Kompakers* Jogja (abbreviated as KJ), a highly esteemed regional community that originated in Yogyakarta. The choice of Yogyakarta as the location is based on the reasoning that Yogyakarta is one of Indonesia's cultural centres. Moreover, Yogyakarta is widely recognized as a central location where multiple cultures come together and blend within a single urban area. The KJ community is distinguished by its membership being completely of females. While there is no explicitly defined age restriction, the majority of members are 40 years old or older. These individuals in this group represent a diverse range of vocations, including homemakers, public servants, entrepreneurs, and office workers, thereby demonstrating a wide array of occupations.

The peculiarity of having only female participants in photography is intriguing, especially considering the typical male dominance. Women utilize unique approaches in food photography in contrast to guys. The fundamental assumption of this study is that the artistic works produced by members of the KJ community will reflect their experiences and daily lives, namely in the field of food photography. The chosen methodology for examining the informant's experience in photography is phenomenology, which aims to get deeper insights into the participant's everyday life. These methods are especially suitable for the KJ community due to their extensive knowledge and deep connection with photography, allowing for effortless integration into their daily activities.

The researcher depends on the informants to acquire knowledge, giving priority to their input above the researcher's. The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the KJ Community experience and food photography using phenomenology, observations, and in-depth interviews as research methods. The research aims to elucidate the exact reasoning behind how informants perceive and analyse food photography from their individual viewpoints.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature review on phenomenology methodologies, categorizing past research into three distinct categories for analysis: (1) associated with food and (2) theoretical framework. Several scientific findings were uncovered during the exploratory process as follows:

Phenomenology associated with food

Based on the conducted research, several studies related to phenomenology and food have been found. Study aims to thoroughly investigate the concepts and personal encounters with food and health within a specific group of financially poor women in the United Kingdom that employ Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Dibsdall et al., 2002). The next research examines the characteristics and behaviour of food packaging related to bad defluidization (Arena & Mastellone, 2001). Next study examines the phenomenology of food hunger by examining the characteristics, origins, and factors that

contribute to the state of craving (Weingarten & Elston, 1990). The upcoming study aims to examine the influence of mental images on the occurrence of food cravings (Tiggemann & Kemps, 2005). Research that discusses the utilization of phenomenology in food-related research (Hok-Eng Tan, 2013). Lastly, the performers of the Jabutan Opak tradition engaged in phenomenological analysis, which resulted in the creation of intersubjective value, equality, and spirituality. The study aims to investigate the individual interpretations that consumers assign to food involvement and identify the psychological aspects that define this subjective experience (Pandanari et al., 2023). Several research findings related to phenomenology and food primarily focus on nutritional studies, which creates an opportunity for the field of food photography to be explored in this research to examine food from a photographic perspective.

Theoretical Framework of Alfred Schutz

Phenomenology is a theory initiated by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger that aims to study human life experiences and the various things perceived and emerging in consciousness. Phenomenology has attracted growing interest in everyday experiences in various fields of science including social sciences. The two main currents of philosophical phenomenology are the basis for conducting descriptive and hermeneutic research. The general focus of the descriptive phenomenology approach is to know the structure of experience in the way that happens to the informant's consciousness, so the focus of research focuses on the description of experience without being influenced by the external environment. With the interpretation of informant experience, the research findings will cover the philosophical, theoretical, literary and interpretative fields that produce aspects of human experience as the basis of imagination and sensitivity to metaphor in everyday environments (Finlay, 2011; Smith et al., 2009).

Alfred Schutz offered a comprehensive explanation of this process, based on the philosophy of Husserl. Schutz began by considering individual consciousness as the initial point of reference (Grüny, 2015). The theory utilized is the phenomenology theory proposed by Alfred Schutz. The essence of his thinking lies in understanding social actions (which are oriented towards the behaviour of individuals or others in the past, present, and future) through interpretation. Schutz categorizes all actions of an individual into two types of motives: (1) In order to motive and (2) Because motive (Schutz, 1999). In social phenomenology, the everyday world is the environment in which human beings exist, and it is already organized before their birth. When a person reads and understands the existing reality, they tend to behave in a way that aligns with the societal norms and expectations offered to them. Furthermore, he possesses the capacity to organically intercede in this realm, exerting influence and being subject to influence, perpetually metamorphosing and altering societal frameworks. Schutz refers to this framework of the subject immersing themselves in the realm of existence as the natural attitude (de Jesus et al., 2013).

The most important and fundamental reality for the protection of humankind is that of daily life. Schutz stated that "we live in a world that has already become a community." The concrete social sciences directly engage with the worldly domain as presented by transcendental phenomenology. According to Schutz, the world we experience on a daily basis is a common intersubjective reality that we engage with alongside other individuals. In this world, we consistently exchange our narratives with our acquaintances and other individuals who reside and interpret them. Hence, the collective nature of our environment ensures that it will never be entirely individualistic. Even within our own awareness, we will invariably encounter traces of others' consciousness (Rasid et al., 2021). Using the Schutz phenomenological framework, this research aims to uncover the motives and reasons behind KJ community members' food photography through their experiences and works.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research designs are commonly employed to examine the phenomenological method. Phenomenology seeks to develop comprehension of the fundamental essence of a specific phenomenon being studied. Those with first-hand lived experience of the phenomenon of interest are the best source of information about the event. The cultural aspect is one concern we would have with using phenomenological methods. Understanding the impact of culture is crucial when it comes to the role it plays in experiencing, interpreting, and narrating an event, due to the emphasis on personal lived experiences. Recognizing that participants must possess the necessary linguistic abilities to express their experiences is crucial for generating meaningful data. Phenomenology is a methodical and thoughtful examination of the first-hand experience of individuals. Phenomenology is regarded as a philosophy and methodology, with its early work primarily driven by philosophical intentions rather than research motivations. Phenomenology as a mode of understanding the world was primarily developed by the philosophers Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Merleau-Ponty. In the field of phenomenology, the researcher has the unique duty of converting the information given by participants, who are considered as research partners, as they investigate and clarify a specific phenomenon (Usher & Jackson, 2014).

Phenomenological researchers often employ face-to-face techniques of observation and intense interviewing to analyse small groups, social circumstances, and organizations (Orleans, 2015). The research employed a phenomenological methodology to gain insight into the participants' everyday experiences. This choice aligns with the stated argument that phenomenology is suitable for studying small groups. The phenomenological method is chosen for its relevance in conveying how participants experience their life experiences. Phenomenology aims to describe and analyze phenomena and capture the experiences of participants. Based on the type of phenomenological method, this research is categorized as descriptive phenomenology, which refers to personal experiences that are then described or interpreted based on the experiences of the participants (Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Zaeske et al., 2022).

Individuals involved in this research are encouraged to capture photographs of the community gathering in real-time. The picture session occurred on November 25, 2023, as part of KJ Community's 9th anniversary celebrations. The approach entailed showcasing an assortment of culinary offerings, including customary snacks, marble cake, fried rice, rendang rice bowl, and chicken broccoli quiche, to the residents of the community via images. Each participant is allotted a three-hour time frame to capture an unlimited number of photographs within the designated birthday celebration venue, encompassing both indoor and outdoor spaces. Furthermore, there is a wide range of lighting alternatives and accessories accessible for anyone who like to incorporate products that augment their photography. From the entire collection of photographs, the members of KJ Community selected the most outstanding ones to be included in the selection.

After the event of the birthday celebration, participants met individually with the researcher to discuss the photos they had taken. This meeting took place in a private area or online meeting to discuss their opinions about photos more freely. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to reveal more potential compared to other interview types, as they enable researchers to gather a greater amount of information and evidence from informants while also addressing the study's focus. A semi-structured in-depth interview also have the purpose of the researcher having an interview guide as a basic guideline, but also allowing for the possibility of asking additional questions as the interview progresses.

Following the photography session, participants had one-on-one meetings with the researcher to analyze and discuss the images they had captured. The meeting was held in a secluded location or conducted online to facilitate a more uninhibited exchange of thoughts regarding the images. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to maximize potential in comparison to other interview formats, as they allow researchers to collect a larger quantity of information and evidence from participants while

also addressing the specific objectives of the study. A semi-structured in-depth interview serves the objective of providing the researcher with an interview guide as a fundamental framework, while also allowing for the flexibility to ask supplementary questions during the course of the interview (Ruslin et al., 2022). A comprehensive interview is conducted to obtain the most accurate information from the respondents. The literature review is conducted by searching for books, international journals, online articles, dissertations, and other documents related to the phenomenology method. The diagram of the research workflow can be seen as follows:



Figure 1. Research workflow
(Source: Author's collection)

Once the data has been collected, the following step involves data analysis. To confirm the authenticity of individuals' experiences, the data analysis must be capable of collecting detailed descriptions. This study employs thematic analysis to explain the essential character of the phenomena, which was derived from in-depth interviews with the participants. The analysis involves investigating patterns of meanings and examining how these patterns might be categorized into themes. Similar to descriptive phenomenological analysis, the goal of theme analysis is to comprehend patterns of meanings from data on lived experiences (Sundler et al., 2019). The analysis starts with the researcher comprehending the interviewed data using an unbiased approach to grasp the experiences of the informants, aiming to uncover novel information rather than only verifying it with the informants. Afterwards, the researcher went through a process of oscillation to ascertain the intended significance in alignment with the study's objective. Upon observing the findings, the researcher must analyse and contemplate the themes that are evident in the data. Finally, the researcher must arrange the themes into a coherent whole and draw conclusions from the investigation by structuring the meaning into a concise summary.

FINDINGS

A total of 30 individuals took part in the birthday celebration, with around 20 participants engaging in taking the photo in the event. The KJ community selected and requested the meal menu for the 9th-anniversary celebration that consisted of Jajanan Pasar, marble cake, fried rice, Sambal Matah rice bowl, dan chicken broccoli quiche. After the anniversary celebration was completed, The researcher collected the photographs using a virtual disk. For this study, a selection of the top 10 individuals with the most skilfully created images was chosen. Furthermore, the informant who will be interviewed further is the only informant that has chosen Indonesian food as the object of the photograph. From the data obtained, there were five people who photographed Indonesian food: Fried Rice and Sambal Matah Rice Bowl. All five volunteers selected were already actively involved in the KJ community, with ages ranging from 47 to 50 years old. Regarding membership in the KJ community, individuals who are chosen have an active period ranging from 4 to 8 years.

Table 1. List of Participant

Informant number	period in community	Age	Occupation
Informant 1	8 years	50 y.o	Housewives
Informant 2	4 years	48 y.o	Housewives
Informant 3	4 years	48 y.o	Entrepreneur
Informant 4	4 years	49 y.o	Lecturer
Informant 5	7 years	47 y.o	Housewives

The combined number of photographs generated by these five participants was 49 photos, with each individual choosing their most exceptional shot to represent themselves personally. The resulting ten photographs are as shown below:



Figure 2. Photos by Informant 1
(Source: Author's collection)

An interview with informant 1 revealed various factors that contribute to boosting the visual attractiveness of food photography. The first informant, who was not a fan of editing, skilfully employed cameras in food photography to produce exceptional and appealing photos. The approach of highlighted texture utilizes a landscape style to display the entire frame. The informant 1 uses this strategy to avoid any inadvertent overflow onto the items in the surrounding area of the photograph. The resultant aesthetic becomes more organized and attractive, yet there is a temptation to apply oil to augment the glossy appearance and storytelling of the photographed fried rice. The addition of supplementary elements such as a napkin, spoon, fork, and tablecloth, along with the existence of numerous crackers in the image, amplifies the storytelling aspect of the food photography. Furthermore, to augment the storytelling and visual attractiveness of the frame, leading to a visually satisfying arrangement. Informant 1 efficiently communicates through food photography, using rigorous and accurate presentation of their distinctive style to clearly express their message to the audience.

According to Informant 1, a photographer who prioritizes the aesthetic aspects of photography, meticulous organization is essential. In her opinion, good images are characterized by aesthetically pleasing forms, appealing textures, and a sense of organization. She had a dislike for rushing to take the images due to her belief that the outcomes were less gratifying, and she chose to steer clear of them as they were regarded as time-consuming. Another rationale is to presume that upon installation, the subject tends to exhibit narcissistic tendencies, while also preventing unnecessary memory consumption. Informant 1, although capturing impromptu images, has a preference for enhancing the subject and its environment before snapping the shot. At present, informant 1 is engaged in the study of landscape photography due to her personal interest. During this period, she frequently perceived that portrait

photographs often contained a significant amount of vacant space that remained unfilled. Informant 1 admits that her understanding of photography is still weak, and she mostly focuses on fundamental concepts such as leading lines and positioning triangles.

Informant 1's photography style is distinguished by its straightforwardness and systematic arrangement, emphasizing a minimal dependence on post-processing. She deliberately attempted to reduce the level of processing she engaged in, choosing instead to immediately capture each food photo with the camera. She admitted his limited proficiency in editing and disclosed that he merely performed rudimentary alterations, such as fine-tuning contrast, brightness, and clarity, utilizing minor adjustments. Informant 1 has the belief that photography should produce photographs that are both legal and captivating for the sake of personal enjoyment. She believed that calm was the core element of photography, and that well-composed and visually pleasing photographs were the main standard for assessing photographic success.



Figure 3. Photos by Informant 2
(Source: Author's collection)

Informant 2 collects photos of food photography by selecting objects most different from other informants. The object is served with traditional and modern food, but Informant 2 chooses traditional food in contrast to the other informants. The selection of Jajanan Pasar is based on the presence of colours contained in the selected food object. Another revelation is that traditional food becomes unique due to its distinctive shape and the combination of colours. Informant 2 selects these foods over others because they lack the vibrancy and soul that is captured when photographed. Informant 2 prefers to use natural light even if the atmosphere does not support it will still need light to display highlights on objects or shadows so that the resulting photos become more dimensional when viewed. Typical in the photographs is that informant 2 is accustomed to flat lay to return again to the dimensions of a visible object. In the photo results displayed, the informant revealed that every photo produced in food photography must be in the lightroom application in order to be able to edit. This is done to sharpen and continue with masking. In addition, the photos are also checked for healing so that there are no stains on the photographs produced. With the editing in the resulting photo, it can be understood that informant 2 always relies on the the use of editing software such as lightroom.

Informant 2 selects the textures that display the dimensions of the food. The selection of angles in photography determines the perceived dimensions of the subject, whether the food appears thick or thin,

resembling a sausage, and whether it appears large or little when seen. The photo selected by Informant 2 clearly indicates a strong preference for colourful cuisine. Informant 2 also shows the presence of the property that supports the photo object. The first properties used were obviously the presence of a viewing sheet next to the Jajanan Pasar to add a funny impression and a picture to tell a story. Although there are only leaves, the other side of the leaves is also used to show a non-monotonous impression when photographs are taken. The selection of angles is so profound that it shows the table is bent so there's something different. The colour also exhibits its distinctiveness, enhanced by the interplay of light, which renders the colour captivating and prevents it from becoming dull, thereby effectively conveying the essence of the cuisine. Informant 2 demonstrates the existence of the attribute that reinforces the subject of the photo. The initial criteria employed were evidently the inclusion of a display tea pot set to the Jajanan Pasar to impart a appealing impression and depict a narrative. Despite consisting just of leaves, the opposite side of the leaves is utilized to capture photos that convey a sense of diversity and variation.

Informant 2 is pictured with a foundation at an angle ranging from 45 to 60 degrees. She prefers capturing photos with a natural lighting effect, avoiding monotony, using shadows, and emphasizing depth. She chooses to utilize the handphone as her equipment. Informant 2 did not give much consideration to the photo object, instead focusing more on its visual appeal. When there is a captivating subject in a photograph, that subject becomes the focal point of the photo. She has a nonchalant attitude towards her possessions and prefers to capture them as they are through photography.

Informant 2 has a strong affinity for natural light and the way it creates shadow reflections. However, in inclement weather conditions, informant 2 will certainly utilize an additional flash. The presence of a shadow is necessary for the photo she captured and more significant than the property. Informant 2 suggests that a shot lacking light can appear dull and devoid of emotion. This light is designed to enhance the highlights and sidelights in order to create a sense of dimensionality and prevent the photo from seeming flat and uniform. Regarding the editing process, it is customary to import a photograph into Lightroom for her, although this is not obligatory. Occasionally, informant 2 captures images that have not undergone any retouching procedures. The editing tools utilized are basic editing and healing. "Use a healing tool slightly - just a little if there's a stain or something," informant 2 stated.



Figure 4. Photos by Informant 3
(Source: Author's collection)

Informant 3 performed food photography with the selection of Sambal Matah rice bowl. The selection of Sambal Matah rice bowls selected is the same as the informant 3 because of the coloured shape that is beautiful, making it more complex when viewed with the abundance of colours on the rice bowl that is made the object. Informant 3 further disclosed that her satisfaction will depend on the group of people who ultimately express interest in selecting the item. The informant disclosed her passion for capturing images of food, namely dishes she prepared herself. However, she seldom shared these photos on social media as posts and instead treated them as personal anecdotes. Informant 3 utilizes editing software to rectify the slant of the photographed image. Additionally, editing techniques are employed to enhance colour sharpness and arrange the photo in a visually pleasing manner. This is necessary because the photo being depicted is not solely the product of informant 3's deliberate intention, but rather an instinctual creation that still stands out from other community members' work. Informant 3 is capturing photographs of items that appear blurry in the background, which provides a sense of ambiguity due to the blurriness in the foreground as well. Furthermore, the additional texture enhances the visibility of the surrounding objects, such as tables, giving a sense of completeness and a packed appearance when observed. Moreover, the visual presentation of the assortment of food is perceived as intricate, enhancing its appeal and making it more appealing for individuals to choose the items in the rice bowl. Informant 3 reported that there were additional properties surrounding the photo. The properties employed to arrange a photo in a manner that creates the perception of crowding when observed. The arrangement is intended to showcase the aesthetic appeal of featuring both the front and rear of the meal in the shot.

The informant 3 possesses professional experience as an architect and is married to a journalist, which significantly impacts the choice and aesthetic of the images captured by the informant. Informant 3 appreciates images that accurately depict the cluttered and bright background, which is a characteristic aspect of her photography. Furthermore, Informant 3 showed a proclivity for favouring photographs featuring items set against a blurred background. One notable characteristic of her work is his personal culinary shots, which are influenced by her burgeoning passion for cooking that emerged during the epidemic. Informant 3 also incorporated "feel like home" philosophy into her photographic approach, refraining from extensive editing, particularly on images featuring objects she personally placed. The prevalence of cell phone usage in photography, particularly for capturing images of food, has increased following informant 3 completion of an online course on the subject. In addition to being a hobby, food photography serves as a platform for informant 3 to showcase and sell her culinary items, as well as to secure employment opportunities in the culinary industry. Informant 3 highly values the realism of food photographs, while using minimum colour correction and layout techniques. Informant 3, as a member of the photographic community, recognizes the community's significance in enhancing knowledge and expanding perspectives. Additionally, it serves as a platform for exchanging experiences with other community members. She does not find the rules of photography to be bothersome, as long as the practice of food photography stays enjoyable and serves as a means to express her hobbies.



Figure 5. Photos by Informant 4
(Source: Author's collection)

Informant 4 selects the Sambal Matah rice bowl as the food photography object to generate greater interest in the food among viewers. The Sambal Matah rice bowl was chosen because, according to informant 4, this rice bowl is more visually appealing to photograph due to the complexity of the ingredients and the use of a bowl that is more suitable for preferred angles. It is revealed that informant 4 perform editing with very minimal because it is already accustomed to focus in the use of the camera and the lens used. The use of macro lens is expressed informant 4 to highlight the point of interest side so that the photo produced becomes more perfect, thus minimizing editing. Photo produced for informant 4 if there are deficiencies can pass editing actually valid only because the lenses used also the restrictions and the photos produced become there spots so that if viewed as there are defects that are considered less viewed, it can be minimized if through important editing does not change the result of the photographed. Informant 4 demonstrates a modification in the appearance of the item on the selected rice bowl, enhancing its visual appeal by adjusting its shape and colour. Ingredients refer to the components that comprise a substance or mixture, contributing to its colour and the representation of individuals. Another noteworthy quality is the visual appeal created by the vibrant colour, which is seen in the sparkling view. Additionally, Informant 4 disclosed the utilization of pre-existing features to enhance the food picture created. The practice of arranging food items in a visually appealing manner to attract and capture people's attention in photographs.

Informant 4 more focused on food and lifestyle for the photographs she takes. Starting to study photography because she already has a camera that's been unused for about six years. When the pandemic breaks, cameras begin to be studied and used. Informant 4 acknowledges that she is not interested in human exploration as a photographic object because in general, model photographers are identical to women. While informant 4 has a life hold that "I don't want to shoot women" so she says. Starting from a pandemic that can't go anywhere, informant 4 chose food photography. Initially, she thought it was easy to shoot, and after buying a camera and trying it out it turned out to be difficult, resulting in the cameras were unemployed for a long time. Informant 4 should use cameras for this food photography because she feels easier and is already familiar with cameras. Besides, she acknowledges that the photographer with a handphone must have extra skills. Food photography is occupied and wants to dominate because food is closer to what informant 4 does in everyday lives. According to informant 4, photography is something

that proliferates. Photo taken in the same second we can see the result. Although it needs to be edited, the photos are processed quickly and the results are instantaneous. Besides, photography is not a simple thing. Photography requires effort, both cost, time, study, but it is considered relatively fast by her. Talking about the style of the photo, informant 4 has not yet had a fixed style. She still looking for the right style will be a characteristic of her. Multiple or isolated styles depend back on the concept. Informant 4 also acknowledges that she minimizes editing. If you feel that a photo requires an editing process, then she usually edits minimal and limited.



Figure 6. Photos by Informant 5
(Source: Author's collection)

Informant 5 selects the Sambal Matah rice bowl as her chosen item. The informant's selection of the rice dish is based solely on its colour, which closely matches her personal liking. The informant does not prioritize highlighting traditional or western food in the shot. The Sambal Matah rice dish is the favoured choice. The informant 5 states that the colour of the item is visually appealing and compliments the textures and colours of the dish in a harmonious way. The food photography informant's 5 results prioritize accentuating the texture of a photo, making it visible to the spectator. In order to enhance the texture, the informant used software processing, notably Lightroom. The editing technique is adding the photograph and subsequently use brush healing to make further refinements. Furthermore, the white balance has been adjusted. This is done to optimize the camera's performance in capturing high-quality photos. The editing performed by informant 5 is extremely limited, as they only modify specific elements during the editing process.

Informant 5 emphasizes the tactile quality depicted in the photographs, which are rich in various features. The images showcase textured samples with vibrant colours, as well as the incorporation of rosemary to add a visual and tactile texture to the rice bowl, ensuring it seems unbiased when observed. The food photography in informant 5 accurately portrays the dominant colours present in the rice bowl. The purpose is to emphasize the need to have a harmonious balance of colour and texture, with rosemary serving as the green element that helps achieve this equilibrium.

The photo style executed by an informant 5 is characterized by its simplicity and emphasis on food styling rather than ambiance styling. Therefore, the informant's primary attention is not on styling the

property. Food styling is not typically done during manufacturing, even though some techniques may be utilized. Informant 5 emphasize the importance of food photography, aiming to highlight the texture of the dishes in order to avoid any bias in the appearance of rice. Considering this, informant 5 utilizes a visual representation as a means to emphasize the significance of food in the context of food photography, allowing for personal expression and the potential exploration of alternative themes. Through food photography, one can achieve self-actualization. Hence, informants have a preference for photographs that exhibit vibrant colours and rich textures in order to accentuate the quality of the food photography created.

Informant 5, an introverted individual and previously active as a blogger who shares cooking recipes, initially only did so as a personal documentation that later developed into involvement in the baking community. Within the community, Informant 5 began to become interested in the world of food photography, which later became a source of her own exploration and produced several food recipe books. For informant 5, photography is not only a medium of soul recovery, but is also becoming a demand in the form of work. Despite getting a monthly photographic job offer, time constraints only at night make it necessary to restrict the acceptance of the project. For her, photography is a way to update and prove that a housewife can also have valuable work. With limited resources, photos he considered unsatisfactory remain valuable to others in need.

Informant 5 doesn't pay much attention to food themes such as Western or traditional foods, but more focused on objects that can be displayed and emphasized. Her favourite style of photography tends to be simple and focused on food arrangements rather than other properties. The editing process is done to highlight the presence of an existing object, not to add a new element. Informant 5 prefers to use editing as simple as possible, and not all photos have to go through the edit process. The role of the Yogyakarta regional virtual community is meaningful to informant 5, giving her a sense of unity and trust that makes him feel the great benefits of his participation in the community. In addition to studying photography, informant 5 also learns about social interactions that help him cope with different situations.

According to interviews conducted with five informants, the fifth informant's journey into food photography began with a passion for cooking and the desire to document it. The close association between women and cooking is particularly relevant in this case, as these informants are all housewives with diverse professional backgrounds. Informants perceive food photography from multiple viewpoints, including self-actualization, as a healing space, as an economic opportunity, and as a pleasurable hobby. According to Schutz's phenomenological paradigm, members of the KJ community have different motives for carrying out their food photography process. Motive, in essence, pertains to the underlying reason that drives an individual's actions, as they strive to bring about specific circumstances and events in the future. The motives of KJ community members vary, ranging from self-actualization, healing, economic goals, to pursuing hobbies.

For the members of the KJ community, this offers several beneficial outcomes, including fostering new friendships, enhancing networking opportunities, serving as a platform for discussions, acquiring knowledge, and gaining experience. The informants, who are housewives yet have diverse employment corresponding to their separate professions, exemplify the gender equality that exists between men and women. Women and households are not confined to the house; they have the freedom to engage in the diverse activities typically undertaken by males. Gender equality refers to the state in which women and men are granted equal rights as individuals and are able to engage in various parts of society, including politics, law, economics, social affairs, culture, education, and defence. It also entails equal opportunities for both genders to benefit from development and its outcomes (Prami & Widiastuti, 2023).

Based on the food selection, the main factors underlying the choice are the aesthetic values that emerge from the food such as the dominant colour, and the abundance of objects. This selection is based

on the aesthetics of the photo, women will tend to choose that which contains aesthetic value. Women prefer aesthetics or beauty like colour to function, whereas men prefer shape to colour (Pujiyanti & Santika, 2021). The colour component holds significant importance in food photography, often being the foremost aspect addressed in any discussion with informants. Informants in food photography perceive a strong foundation in the aesthetic value. The informants has a comprehensive grasp of food photography, encompassing aspects such as angle, editing, and property layout, enabling them to achieve the appropriate aesthetic appeal. Food photography offers unique benefits in the realm of social media in comparison to other genres of photography. Essentially, the process of taking photos involves a ritualistic sequence of acts performed by users of mobile devices. The process of capturing images of food, including the selection of colours, layout, preparation, and editing before it is consumed, is an interesting phenomenon that is deserving of research. Each individual possesses unique experiences and tastes, ranging from the selection of food to be photographed, to the selections of property settings and the colours to be emphasized in their food photography endeavours.

Food photography offers unique benefits in the realm of social media in comparison to other genres of photography. Essentially, the process of taking an image involves a ritualistic sequence of acts performed by users of mobile devices. The process of capturing images of food, including the selection of colors, arrangement, preparation, and editing before it is eaten, is an interesting phenomenon that deserves investigation. Each individual possesses unique experiences and preferences, ranging from their choice of food to be photographed, to their pick of property settings, and even the specific colors they like to emphasize in their food photography. Furthermore, photography provides authors with the opportunity to create groundbreaking content. Individuals enhance the worth by consciously making choices about the angles and compositions, particularly when it comes to the meticulous arrangement and presentation of food prior to capturing images (Yong et al., 2020).

Additionally, according to Schutz's phenomenological paradigm, the second factor is the motivation, which is a retrospective view of the factors that cause someone to perform a specific action. In other words, the motivation behind a person performing a particular task is the desired outcome. To motivate the members of the KJ community, particularly in the field of food photography, self-development is essential. Through the KJ community, members gain new networks and experiences that enhance their photography skills to a higher level.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the experiences of individuals engaged in food photography during a community event. The research employed a phenomenological methodology to elucidate the diverse incentives driving food photography, including self-actualization, economic prospects, and personal gratification. The participants, who were mainly housewives with varied professional backgrounds, showcased how food photography functions as a medium for artistic self-expression and social engagement. The results underscored the significance of aesthetic principles in food photography, where the visual allure of food photos holds considerable sway. The study also demonstrated how food photography might serve as a means to overcome gender roles, enabling women to participate in activities that have historically been dominated by men, thereby fostering gender equality. In summary, the research determined that food photography not only improves personal and social experiences, but also adds to the larger conversation on digital food culture and its influence on daily life.

The scope of this research is constrained by the restricted number of informants, hence the findings may not fully encompass the perspectives of the entire community. Further research indicates that employing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis would be a suitable approach to gain a comprehensive

and profound understanding of the experiences of community members. Additionally, the range of food options might be broadened beyond Indonesian cuisine, in order to delve deeper into the significance of the community members.

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