Guest editorial

Design thinking approach for healthy food experiences and well-being: contributions to theory and practice

Design thinking for food innovation has been defined as a human-centered innovation process that emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast learning, visualization of ideas, rapid prototyping and concurrent business analysis (Brown, 2008; Brown and Wyatt, 2010). During the past 10–15 years, design thinking has evolved from a way of thinking among engineers when designing technical products to become a very popular innovation technique among scholars focusing on innovation management (Olsen, 2015). In food innovation, research reveals that design thinking is gradually making its way into the food value chain too. While design thinking has attracted business scholars focusing on innovation management (Liedtka, 2015; Norman and Verganti, 2014; Pitsis *et al.*, 2020), the contribution of design thinking has moved beyond creating innovation food produces to encompass food experiences to improve consumer well-being (Addis and Holbrook, 2019; Batat, 2019, 2020; Batat *et al.*, 2019). This special issue contributes to marketing food research by discussing how design thinking centered on food well-being can lead to creating innovative food experiences which are healthy, satisfying and pleasurable. Despite the big promises of design thinking as a relevant tool, until recently there have been only a few attempts to develop and implement a design thinking for food innovation and well-being focusing on the whole food experience. Instead, the latter leads to a better understanding of the complexity of food, resulting in enhanced design thinking approaches that drive healthy and pleasurable food experiences and products. Thus, food experiences design encourages healthy eating behaviors, while supporting innovation and marketing strategies alongside policy actions around food issues such as obesity or food waste.

This special issue seeks to expand the research conducted to date, and approach the relationship between design thinking, food experience and well-being through a broad lens focusing on food consumption activities. Specifically, it explores how design thinking implemented through an experiential perspective can help researchers, marketers, institutions, policymakers and the food industry to enhance the food well-being of consumers by designing healthy, pleasurable and innovative food experiences including meals, space, delivery, services, etc. We were thrilled with the reaction to this call for papers and would like to thank all those authors who took time to submit their works. The final selection echoes an accurately international and cross-disciplinary perspective on design thinking and food well-being from a food experiential perspective.

We begin this special issue with an introductory review article where we discuss the themes related to the three concepts, namely, food experience, design thinking and well-being to propose a holistic and integrative framework Food Experience Design (FED) that seeks to understand how food professionals can design healthy and pleasurable food experiences aiming at enhancing food well-being.

We have organized the six accepted research papers around design thinking for food experiences targeting consumer well-being. The first article introduces "A 'crescendo' model: designing food experiences for psychological well-being," by Zarantonello, Grappi, Formisano and Schmitt. It contributes to advancing the design thinking approach in food from an engineering mindset toward a positive psychology perspective to enhance individuals' happiness and perceptions of life satisfaction. "Encouraging healthier choices in supermarkets: a co-design approach in the second paper," by Bogomolova, Carins, Dietrich,

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Bogomolov, Timofei and Dollman, integrates a co-design framework into design thinking to ensure that both consumer and staff views were directly incorporated into the development of this large-scale program. This research provides a detailed "road map" for researchers and industry practitioners for co-design workshops, idea generation and rigorous evaluation. The co-design approach also features in the third paper "Towards co-created food wellbeing: Culinary consumption, braggart word-of-mouth, and the role of participative codesign, service provider support, and C2C interactions," by Taheri, Pourfakhimi, Prayag, Gannon and Finsterwalder. The authors examine how the antecedents of co-creation influence braggart word-of-mouth (WoM) in a participative leisure context and thus theorize the concept of co-created food well-being and its implications for interactive experience co-design, a burgeoning literature on co-creation and co-design in leisure services. Leveraging netnography in design thinking is a continuing theme in the fourth paper "Netnography and design thinking: Development and illustration in the vegan food industry," by Ashman, Patterson and Kozinets who further reinforce the process of design thinking by aligning it with netnography, specifically auto-netnography, which is particularly suited to the task of studying and enriching the actions of "designerly types" in the food sector. In the fifth paper "Visualizing food: Photography as a design thinking tool to generate innovative food experiences that improve food well-being," Machin, Moscato and Dadzie examine the potential of photography as a design thinking method. The authors provide the first conceptual foundation for the use of photography in design thinking. And identify novel photographic methods that can be used to understand problems and generate solutions to design of innovative food experiences that improve food well-being. the final paper, by Qureshi, Shalini, Manoharan, Parthiban, Bhatt and Rakshit moves to the topic of "Digital technology-enabled transformative consumer responsibilization" and its impact on designing innovative and healthy food experiences. This paper contributes to the extant literature on responsible consumption by examining how a socio-digital platform can be leveraged to facilitate responsible consumer engagement in an aestheticized farming process.

We hope that this Special Issue encourages discussion about how design thinking serves to create innovative, healthy and emotional food experiences and how these experiences contribute to enhance consumer's overall food well-being. Across all of the papers the three intrinsically related concepts, namely, food experiences, food well-being and design thinking emerge as a holistic perspective centered on creating food experiences instead of food produces during the implementation of innovation strategies in the food industry. The authors acknowledge all the valuable work done by the expert reviewers for this Special Issue and offer a sincere vote of thanks to them all. This project would have never been possible without their extraordinary passion and hard work.

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