



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

Eat, Meet, Fly, Repeat

The contextuality of business travellers' meals

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Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i Triple Helix, Universitetsledningshuset, fredagen den 4 september, kl. 13:00.

Avhandlingen kommer att försvaras på svenska.

Fakultetsopponent: Docent, Christian Fuentes,
Institutionen för Service Management och Tjänstevetenskap, Lunds
Universitet.

Organization

Umeå University
Department of Food, Nutrition
and Culinary Science

Document type

Doctoral thesis

Date of publication

04 September 2020

Author

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Title

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Abstract

Meals are an important part of everyday life, both for the persons who engage in them and for the industry that makes them. For business travellers, meals are engaged in differently when they are travelling compared when they are home. Tens of millions of meals are engaged in each year by persons who are conducting business trips. Even though this group of people make up the largest group of customers for the Swedish hotels, research into their meals are virtually non-existent. The aim of this thesis is to extend and deepen the knowledge about business travellers' meals. This aim is approached by using both quantitative and qualitative methods, through a survey study and an interview study.

The results were then interpreted through a practice theoretical framework. The results indicate that the meals of business travellers are contextual in nature and that their organisation is influenced by the practice bundle currently carried on by the business traveller. The meal is, furthermore, understood as part of practice-arrangement mesh, where the material arrangement conditions the facilitation of good meals. The meals of business travellers' contain different ends than meals engaged in with friends and family, as such, a meal in which food of inadequate quality is served in an loud environment making the business traveller change behaviour could still be perceived as good due to the experiences of the business traveller's clients.

The thesis proposes that the industry should engage more with their customers in order to accumulate knowledge of the different ends existing in their meal practice as a way of facilitating good meals. It does, furthermore, contribute to the theory on meals and eating out as it brings about a new way to conceive of *good* meals. It has also, as it is basic research, opened up for future inquiry into the meals of business travellers.

Keywords

Meal science; meal practice; business travel; social practice theory

Language

English

ISBN

print: 978-91-7855-322-8

PDF: 978-91-7855-323-5

Number of pages

79 + 4 papers