

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The first thing people see when their food comes is how it looks on the plate. Zellner, Loss, Zearfoss, & Remolina (2014) quote a saying, “the first taste is always with the eyes”. They say that the food presentation can affect whether people like the food or not. They argue that people will like their food better when the presentation is neat, not messy. Their idea clearly shows that the neatness of the food presentation affects how much people like the flavour of the food. People prefer to have their meal presented neatly on a plate rather than in a messy, greasy one, for example, the presentation of fried rice. When people serve fried rice, they only pile the oily rice on a plate that may be able to decrease the appetite.

People find some food attractive through visual information. Visual information helps to identify how fresh and refreshing the food can be (Blackwell, 1995). The visual helps to make the meal enjoyable — for instance, a grilled chicken. People will be more excited and tempted to eat it if the color is golden brown with fresh garnishes on the side because the visual cues influence how much people like the flavour of a food or drink (Zellner et al., 2014). Other than attracting people, the color of the food could also determine the freshness of the ingredients. For example, broccoli, when someone serves it, people will expect it to have a beautiful green color. When it turns out that the color is a bit yellowish, people will think that the

broccoli is not fresh. Zellner, Lankford, Ambrose, & Locher (2010) discuss color and balance in their study, and according to Zellner et al. (2010), color and balance are also crucial to the aesthetic appeal for the food.

Last but not least, food presentation also influences our liking of the food, not only because of its look and taste but also because it shows the preparer's passion for working. Zellner et al. (2010) mentioned that food presented neatly mean that the respondents thought that the preparer had taken more care with the food when it has a neat presentation. Still, some restaurants did not pay attention to the aspect of serving food. They serve the food the way it is and is sometimes messy. Usually, this happens in various traditional food such as fried rice, fried chicken, and fried noodle. Restaurants serve this meal on the plate only with some garnishes.

In this study, the writer would like to argue that an excellent presentation is not only for modern or western food but should also be for traditional food in Indonesia. The writer chose food presentation because food presentation plays a part in attracting the customers in terms of representing the quality of the food and its aesthetics. If the food that we are enjoying has a beautiful presentation, it may make us able to enjoy it more, and it could also attract somebody else to try what we are eating.

Studies on food presentation have already been done by some scholars. Zellner et al. (2014) write, "It tastes as good as it looks! The effect of food presentation on liking for the flavour of food", which means an excellent food presentation could increase the liking for the food. Based on Zeller et al. (2014),

There are two essential factors in food presentation; the first is color that helps to identify colored food and drinks more accurately than the colorless one. Second is the visual information of the food that influences how much someone likes the food. In addition to the two things above, the neatness of the food presentation is also necessary. People prefer to like a neat presentation than the messy one (Zellner et al., 2014).

The writer is interested in knowing more about the customers' perceptions and opinions of Indonesian traditional food presentation based on the above discussion. The writer intends to find out what the respondents perceive about the Indonesian traditional food presentation. The findings are expected to help improve Indonesian traditional food presentation.

## **1.2 Field of the Study**

The field of this study is the culture and creative industry, mainly in Indonesian traditional food presentation.

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on Indonesian traditional food presentation. Food presentations usually applied to the main course. However, the writer will discuss the food presentation on the Indonesian main course since Indonesian did not divide their meal into three parts (appetizers, main course, and dessert).

#### **1.4 Problem Formulation**

The writer formulates the problems of the study of this research as follows:

1. What is the customer's perception of Indonesian traditional food presentation?
2. What the customers say about what can be improved with the Indonesian traditional food presentation?

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

With regards to the problems mentioned, this research is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To find out the customer's perception of Indonesian food presentation.
2. To find out the customers' opinions about what can be improved in the Indonesian traditional food presentation.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Through this study, the writer would like to explain about the art and culture of food presentation and the culture of traditional Indonesian food.

#### **1.7 Definition of Term**

1. Food Presentation

How a food look conveys much information about the food, we are about to eat. Most importantly, it helps us to identify what we are about to eat. - (Zellner et al., 2014)

2. Customers' perception

Perceived quality refers to consumer's judgment about the performance of product or service - (Namkung & Jang, 2008)

### 3. Traditional Food

“... by eating a so-called natural or traditional product, the eater seems to incorporate, in addition to nutritional and psycho- sensorial characteristics of the food, certain symbolic characteristics: one appropriates and embodies the nature, culture and identity of an area” (Bessiere, 1998)

“Traditional food strengthens the feelings of belonging, identity and heritage” (Hanssen & Kuven, 2016).

