

Exploring Students' Knowledge and Interest in Food Styling and Photography within Culinary Arts Programs at Vocational Colleges

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the knowledge and interest of Diploma Vocational Malaysia semester 4 Culinary Arts students in food styling and photography to support educators in refining teaching strategies and curriculum design. Conducted among 434 students across Peninsular Malaysia, a sample size of 205 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire assessing students' opinions, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Using the ASSURE model, which integrates media and technology into learning, the study focused on effective instructional design through learner analysis, objective setting, and evaluation. Analysis via SPSS version 27 revealed a high level of subject implementation, with a mean score of 3.9155 and a standard deviation of 0.34094, indicating students' recognition of the subject's importance for future careers. The findings highlight that mastering food styling and photography can enhance students' employability, providing an advantage in the food and beverage as well as creative industries. These skills address job market challenges, boosting the marketability of vocational graduates. The study also suggests its applicability to public universities and private institutions, offering a basis for broader evaluations of student interest and knowledge. Expanding this research could further improve curriculum design and graduate employability across educational sectors.

Keywords: Culinary arts, food styling and photography, vocational education

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two centuries, workplace skills have had to evolve significantly in response to changing industries and societal demands (Abdullah & Abd Majid, 2022). While technical skills remain important, there is a growing emphasis on other competencies that allow employees to work more efficiently and collaboratively (Zulkifeli, Ishar, & Hamid, 2022). These competencies, often referred to as core or soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, are critical for navigating today's dynamic work environments. Habidin et al. (2019) argue that these skills are foundational for personal growth, effective teamwork, and adaptability in diverse settings. In the context of food styling and photography, the importance of these competencies is even more pronounced. Food styling and photography are both an art and a science, aimed at making food visually appealing for marketing, advertising, and social media purposes. As Cookist and MasterClass highlight, well-styled food images not only influence consumer behavior and enhance the perceived value of food but also evoke sensory responses like taste and aroma, underlining the emotional connection between presentation and consumer engagement.

According to Heinich et al. (1999), the ASSURE model offers a systematic approach to instructional design by focusing on six steps: Analyze Learners, State Objectives, Select Methods, Media, and Materials, Utilize Media and Materials, Require Learner Participation, and Evaluate and Revise wherein learners are assessed for motivation, discipline, and readiness to accept a new subject (*Food Styling and Photography*), objectives are defined to center on student engagement and skill-building in culinary arts, teaching aids and methods are carefully selected to ensure relevance and effectiveness, media and materials are mastered and tailored for both students and educators, active learner participation is fostered through performance-based activities and feedback mechanisms, and evaluation processes are implemented to determine the subject's impact on student performance and whether revisions are required to better address educational goals, ensuring the systematic integration of the subject into the vocational curriculum and its alignment with both teaching and industry needs.

Moreover, food stylists and photographers often face ethical dilemmas related to the extent of modifications made to food images. Techniques such as using non-food items or enhancing food with substitutes (e.g., glue for milk or oil for syrup) can help manage challenges like wilting or melting, but these methods also spark debates over authenticity in food marketing. The rise of food photography on platforms like Instagram has democratized the field, allowing amateurs to create professional-level food images. This shift offers creative and economic opportunities, turning food styling and photography into viable career paths for many. These insights lay a strong foundation for incorporating food styling and photography into educational and vocational programs, where bridging technical and creative skills can improve employability in both the culinary and creative industries. As Varzakas and Antoniadou (2024) suggest, integrating a design-thinking approach into food well-being allows for innovative solutions that consider the interconnected physical, emotional, and social aspects of food. By leveraging food styling and photography as tools, students and professionals can create more holistic food experiences, fostering deeper connections with food culture while enhancing career opportunities.

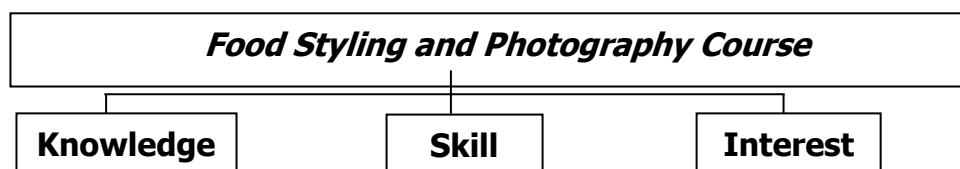


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out to meet several key objectives: first, to determine the level of knowledge in food styling and photography within the topic of culinary artistry at vocational colleges. Second, to assess the level of interest in food styling and photography among students studying culinary artistry at these institutions. Finally, the study aims to evaluate students' skill levels in the food styling and photography course at vocational colleges. The ASSURE model (Analyze learners - State objectives - Select methods, media, and materials - Utilize media and materials - Require learner participation - Evaluate and revise), proposed by Heinich et al., is a systematic and comprehensive approach to instruction. This model focuses on the effective use of media and technology to create engaging, efficient, and effective learning experiences.

The use of the ASSURE model in instructional design helps in planning, identifying, and setting objectives, selecting appropriate methods and materials, and conducting proper evaluations. The model's acronym represents the key components or steps involved in the instructional process. By applying the

ASSURE model, educators can design learning activities in a structured way that integrates technology and media, making learning more effective and meaningful. Meaningful learning, in this context, refers to learning that is effective, efficient, and engaging (Kim, D., & Downey, S., 2016). This study aligns with the focus of evaluating students' knowledge and interest in the topic of food styling and photography within the culinary artistry subject. The goal is to determine whether the learning approach applied is efficient and systematic.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a questionnaire. A quantitative research design collects numerical data from a large sample of respondents through an instrument that includes questions and feedback. A questionnaire, as a quantitative method, involves distributing a structured set of questions to a sample to gather insights into the opinions, knowledge, skills, and interest of a given population.

Participants

The participants were selected through simple random sampling, a method widely regarded as effective for obtaining a representative sample of the population (Rahman et al., 2022). The study involved 434 Culinary Arts students from the Vocational College, with 281 female students and 154 male students enrolled in food styling and photography courses. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, the required sample size for the study was calculated to be 205 students. It is important to note that all participants had already completed courses in food styling and photography as part of their academic program, indicating that they had acquired foundational knowledge and skills in the subject. However, the students were not given additional instruction or specific background information related to the objectives of the study. The focus of this research was on evaluating their existing knowledge and understanding of food styling and photography, based on what they had learned in the curriculum, rather than any specialized preparation for the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, a survey was conducted using a questionnaire adapted from previous research by Emilda Balkis Ismail and Anuar Ahmad (2022) at Petaling Utama Secondary School. Specifically, it assessed the areas of subject implementation, student knowledge, interest, and skills in food styling and photography. The questionnaire is divided into five sections: Sections A, B, C, and D consist of the survey items, while Section E collects respondents' demographic information. The instrument contains 43 items, grouped into four constructs: 13 items focused on subject implementation, 10 on knowledge, 10 on interest, and 10 on skills related to food styling and photography. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure students' responses, gauging their attitudes and perceptions toward these areas.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a face validity process was conducted, where the content and language of the questionnaire were reviewed by experts for clarity and relevance. According to Md Zahir et al. (2019), face validity ensures the questionnaire's content is clear and understandable, while content validity ensures it aligns with the research topic. Two faculty members from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences evaluated the questionnaire for accuracy and relevance. Clarifying how the items are categorized and their relation to classroom practices will further enhance the understanding of how food styling and photography are taught, helping to improve the curriculum and teaching methods.

The Scale

The validity form is designed to assess both the face validity and content validity as evaluated by experts for food styling and photography students. According to (Mason, J., Classen, S., Wersal, J., & Sisiopiku, V. P., 2020). face validity is assessed to ensure language accuracy and clarity of the material, while content validity examines whether the material aligns with the study objectives. This form is reviewed by two lecturers from the department of family and consumer sciences and is divided into five sections: part a, part b, part c, part d, and part e. See Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Likert Scale

| Level of Agreement | Scale |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Strongly Disagree (STS) | 1 |
| Disagree (TS) | 2 |
| Somewhat Agree (KS) | 3 |
| Agree (S) | 4 |
| Strongly Agree (SS) | 5 |

Table 2. Number of Items in a Questionnaire Instrument

| Section | Description | Item | Source |
|---------|-------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A | Implementation | 13 | Adapted from Ismail and Ahmad (2022), Shaharin & Hamdan (2008) |
| B | Knowledge | 10 | Adapted from Isa & Mahamod (2021), Hashamiza Hamdan (2004), Lasan Noh & Hamzah (2017) |
| C | Interest | 10 | Adapted from Isa & Mahamod (2021), Amiruddin, Ngadiran, Zainudin, & Ngadiman (2016), Abdullah & Razak (2021) |
| D | Skills | 10 | Adapted from Subeli & Rosli (2021), Zulkarnain, Saim & Abd Talib (2012), Hashamiza Hamdan (2004) |
| E | Demographic Information | 4 | Reviewers |

Validity experts use a 4-point scale—ranging from "good" to "needs improvement" and "rejected"—to rate each item in the instrument. According to Rosli et al, (2023), items that score a 3 or 4 indicate a consensus among experts. The number of experts assigning a score of 3 or 4 is then divided by the total number of experts to determine the I-CVI value. If there are fewer than six experts, the I-CVI should ideally reach 1.00 (Polit & Beck, 2006). The S-CVI is calculated as the average of I-CVI values across items in a construct, with a minimum threshold of 0.8, indicating that the instrument has achieved content validity.

In this study, the researcher provided a set of questionnaires to validity experts, considering their comments and suggestions to modify and refine the items. The number of experts was determined based on various recommendations, including having between one and ten experts or between three and ten (Elangovan, N., & Sundaravel, E., 2021). For this purpose, two experts were selected: one content lecturer and one language lecturer, both from the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education.

Reliability

Instrument reliability refers to its consistency in measuring the intended construct (Sürücü, L., & Maslakci, A., 2020). The internal reliability index of an instrument can be assessed during the pilot study

using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Internal consistency is evident when responses remain consistent across items in the measurement. In this study, the instrument will be administered in a pilot phase, with data collected based on respondents' feedback to determine reliability values. Cronbach's Alpha will be calculated using SPSS software. Table 3 presents the categories of Cronbach's Alpha values and their reliability interpretations, as defined by Izah, S. C., Sylva, L., & Hait, M. (2023).

Table 3. Reliability Interpretation

| Reliability Coefficient | Reliability Level |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 0.90 or above | Excellent |
| 0.80 – 0.89 | Good |
| 0.60 – 0.79 | Moderate |
| 0.40 – 0.59 | Questionable |
| 0.00 – 0.39 | Unacceptable |

FINDINGS

Findings should respond to the purpose of the study and be presented systematically. They should be supported with sufficient and relevant quotations, examples, tables, and diagrams. Findings should be discussed with a reference to relevant and recent literature. Analysis and interpretation of these findings are necessary before they are discussed. For experimental research, the order of presenting the findings is adjusted to the research hypothesis, while for qualitative research, it is adjusted to the research questions.

Table 4. Demographics of Respondents

| Gender | | | |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------|
| | | Frequency | Percent |
| Valid | Female | 129 | 54.9 |
| | Male | 106 | 45.1 |
| | Total | 235 | 100 |

Table 4 shows that the number of women exceeds that of men, with 129 females, representing 54.9% of the total gender distribution.

Table 5. Implementation of Food Styling and Photography Subjects

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------|--------------------|-----------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variances |
| Implementation | 235 | 3.9155 | 0.34094 | 0.116 |
| Valid | 235 | | | |

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics, including the standard deviation values and overall mean for the implementation construct of the food styling and photography subjects. The table indicates a high total mean of 3.9155.

Table 6 provides a detailed analysis of respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding a questionnaire focused on food styling and photography. The table presents the mean, standard deviation, and response level for each item, offering insights into the overall sentiment and variability of responses.

Most items in the questionnaire received a "High" response level, indicating strong positive feelings or significant agreement among respondents. For instance, items such as confidence in learning food styling and photography (mean = 3.89, SD = 0.314), viewing the subject as a potential career path (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.331), and the perception of the subject as skill-enhancing (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.429) all reflect a

high level of agreement. The standard deviation values suggest that responses were relatively consistent, with lower variability for most items, except for "I feel that food styling and photography is the best subject for culinary arts students to take," which had a moderate response level (mean = 3.74, SD = 0.688). This indicates a more varied opinion on this specific aspect. Overall, the data suggests that students generally perceive food styling and photography positively, although there are areas, such as the sufficiency of learning time and the use of guides, where opinions might be more diverse.

Table 6. Statistics for Each Questionnaire Item Answered by The Respondents

| No. | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Level |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|----------|
| 1 | I feel confident in learning food styling and confident to become a photographer. | 3.89 | 0.314 | High |
| 2 | I think the subject of food styling and photography can be a career path. | 3.96 | 0.331 | High |
| 3 | I feel nervous during food styling and photography practical classes. | 3.95 | 0.483 | High |
| 4 | I prefer to ask my classmates rather than the teacher. | 3.99 | 0.51 | High |
| 5 | I feel that the subject of food styling and photography can improve my skills. | 3.96 | 0.429 | High |
| 6 | I feel that food styling and photography is the best subject for culinary arts students to take. | 3.74 | 0.688 | Moderate |
| 7 | I feel that the learning time for food styling and photography is insufficient. | 3.93 | 0.514 | High |
| 8 | I find it easy to take photos following the latest trends. | 3.92 | 0.509 | High |
| 9 | I prefer using a guide when doing food styling and photography. | 4.06 | 0.657 | High |
| 10 | I think having a technology-based guide would make it easier for me to learn this subject. | 3.87 | 0.609 | High |
| 11 | I feel that the teacher's instruction is very encouraging and stimulates my thinking in learning food styling and photography. | 3.93 | 0.26 | High |
| 12 | I feel that using guides or modules in teaching makes me want to learn and succeed in food styling and photography. | 3.93 | 0.351 | High |
| 13 | I feel that the teacher always gives a clear explanation of the concepts in the subject of food styling and photography. | 3.86 | 0.432 | High |

Table 7 show indicates the overall value for the variable of student knowledge in the subject of food styling and photography.

Table 7. Student Knowledge in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|-----------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variances |
| Implementation | 235 | 3.938 | 0.361 | 0.131 |
| Valid | 235 | | | |

Table 8 provides an insightful analysis of student knowledge in the subject of food styling and photography. The table presents the mean, standard deviation, and response level for each questionnaire item, offering a comprehensive overview of students' self-assessed understanding and skills in this area. The majority of items demonstrate a "High" response level, indicating that students generally feel confident and knowledgeable about the subject matter. For instance, the item "I don't know everything about food styling and photography" has a mean score of 4.06 with a standard deviation of 0.358, reflecting a high level of agreement and suggesting that students recognize the complexity of the subject and their own learning needs. Similarly, items related to practical skills, such as identifying correct angles for photography (mean =

3.99, SD = 0.527) and knowing appropriate food styles (mean = 3.99, SD = 0.523), also received high scores, indicating that students feel competent in these areas.

Table 8. Student Knowledge in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| No. | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Level |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|-------|
| 14 | I don't know everything about food styling and photography. | 4.06 | 0.358 | High |
| 15 | I can identify the correct angles to capture photos. | 3.99 | 0.527 | High |
| 16 | I know the appropriate food style for different types of food. | 3.99 | 0.523 | High |
| 17 | I know which foods can be used for food styling and photography. | 3.86 | 0.564 | High |
| 18 | I need to have a deeper knowledge of this subject. | 3.81 | 0.598 | High |
| 19 | I can apply the knowledge from the food styling and photography subject to my daily life. | 3.96 | 0.545 | High |
| 20 | I can ask questions to gain further clarification. | 3.96 | 0.553 | High |
| 21 | I can express ideas critically. | 4.03 | 0.484 | High |
| 22 | I can discuss a topic well by using a variety of questions. | 3.86 | 0.348 | High |
| 23 | I can evaluate situations presented in the food styling and photography subject. | 3.86 | 0.432 | High |

Students express a desire for deeper knowledge, as evidenced by the item "I need to have a deeper knowledge of this subject" (mean = 3.81, SD = 0.598), which also holds a high response level. This suggests an awareness of the need for ongoing learning and improvement. The ability to apply knowledge to daily life (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.545) and to express ideas critically (mean = 4.03, SD = 0.484) further underscores students' confidence in their skills and their ability to engage with the subject matter critically.

Table 9. Student Interest in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|-----------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variances |
| Implementation | 235 | 3.30 | 0.31729 | 0.101 |
| Valid | 235 | | | |

Table 10. Student Interest in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| No. | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Level |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|-------|
| 24 | I often feel sleepy during the food styling and photography lessons. | 4.06 | 0.406 | High |
| 25 | I am interested in the subject of food styling and photography. | 3.99 | 0.587 | High |
| 26 | I find it hard to focus during the food styling and photography class. | 3.99 | 0.457 | High |
| 27 | I feel excited during food styling and photography lessons. | 3.86 | 0.411 | High |
| 28 | I enjoy this subject more when I am with friends. | 3.81 | 0.458 | High |
| 29 | I am more interested in this subject if it includes a guide. | 3.96 | 0.511 | High |
| 30 | This subject boosts my motivation to learn. | 3.96 | 0.52 | High |
| 31 | I actively participate in activities conducted during this class. | 4.03 | 0.413 | High |
| 32 | I actively engage in question-and-answer sessions during this subject. | 3.86 | 0.484 | High |
| 33 | I consistently participate in group interactions during this class. | 3.86 | 0.475 | High |

Understanding student engagement and interest in the Food Styling and Photography subject, we turn to the data presented in Tables 9 and 10. Table 9 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics related to the implementation of the subject, highlighting key metrics such as the mean, standard deviation, and variance of student interest across a sample of 235 respondents. This table sets the stage by offering a

general sense of how students perceive the subject overall. Table 10 delves deeper into specific aspects of student interest by presenting individual questionnaire items that capture various dimensions of their experience. This detailed analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of what drives student engagement in this subject, providing valuable information for educators aiming to enhance the learning experience.

Table 11 provides a broad overview of student skills, showcasing key descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and variance from a sample of 235 respondents. This table offers a general assessment of student skill levels, with a mean score of 3.852, indicating a relatively high level of perceived competence in the subject.

Table 11. Student Skills in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variances |
| Implementation | 235 | 3.852 | 0.382 | 0.146 |
| Valid | 235 | | | |

Table 12 delves into specific skill areas, presenting individual questionnaire items that reflect various dimensions of student abilities. Each item is accompanied by its mean score, standard deviation, and response level, offering a detailed view of students' self-assessed skills. For instance, items such as the improvement in photography skills (mean = 3.9, SD = 0.475) and the ability to use a digital camera (mean = 3.93, SD = 0.51) both received a "High" response level, suggesting that students feel confident in these areas. However, the item regarding taking photos and styling food without guidance (mean = 3.67, SD = 0.704) was rated as "Moderate," indicating that students may still rely on some form of instruction or support.

Table 12. Student Skills in the Subject of Food Styling and Photography

| No | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Level |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 34 | I feel that my photography skills have improved after studying the subject of food styling and photography. | 3.9 | 0.475 | High |
| 35 | I feel that my food styling skills have increased after studying the subject of food styling and photography. | 3.9 | 0.534 | High |
| 36 | I can use a digital camera well. | 3.93 | 0.51 | High |
| 37 | I know how to take photos and style food without being taught by a teacher. | 3.67 | 0.704 | Moderate |
| 38 | I know how to take photos and style food without using a guide. | 3.78 | 0.554 | High |
| 39 | I have sufficient skills and knowledge in the subject of food styling and photography. | 3.93 | 0.432 | High |
| 40 | I strive to create creative and appealing food photographs. | 3.87 | 0.555 | High |
| 41 | I am unable to perform practical tasks in food styling and photography. | 3.9 | 0.595 | High |
| 42 | I can set the settings on a digital camera. | 3.81 | 0.394 | High |
| 43 | I knew how to use a digital camera before studying the subject. | 3.83 | 0.452 | High |

DISCUSSIONS

Overall, this study allowed the researcher to assess students' knowledge, interest, and skills in the subject of food styling and photography. Previously, the researcher was unsure of students' knowledge, interest, and skill levels in this subject. However, with the data obtained from the analysis, the researcher was able to understand these aspects based on the study's constructs.

Discussion of Findings on the Implementation of the Food Styling and Photography Subject

The findings regarding the implementation of the food styling and photography subject suggest a high level of engagement, with a mean score of 3.9155 and a standard deviation of 0.34094. This indicates that students view the subject, particularly the culinary artistry topic, as highly relevant in vocational education and essential for equipping them with valuable skills for future employment. The ASSURE model, which guides instructional design, was applied in the assessment of this subject, ensuring that student needs were considered through careful planning, media selection, and active participation (Heinich et al., 1999). According to the data, the item with the highest mean score, item 9, states: "I prefer using a guide when doing food styling and photography," with a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 0.657. This reflects students' reliance on structured guidance for performing practical tasks in this subject. The use of guides is emphasized in previous studies by Lee, K. S. (2022), who notes that guides support both instructors and students in the teaching and learning process, and by Çanakçı, S. D., & Turan, B. (2021), who highlight the effectiveness of guides as reference materials for students in hands-on activities. These findings align with the ASSURE model's emphasis on utilizing appropriate materials and methods to enhance student learning outcomes.

Discussion of Findings on Students' Knowledge in Food Styling and Photography

Regarding the construct of students' knowledge in food styling and photography, the descriptive analysis results indicate a high level of implementation, with a mean score of 3.9383 and a standard deviation of 0.36195. A notable finding is item 14, which states, "I do not know everything about food styling and photography," with a mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.358. This suggests that while students possess a good foundational understanding, many feel that their knowledge is incomplete, indicating room for further development in this area. This aligns with the ASSURE model's step of analyzing learners, which stresses understanding student needs and identifying areas for further learning and growth (Heinich et al., 1999). The results highlight a potential avenue for follow-up research, as students' awareness of their knowledge gaps can inform further educational strategies. Fowler, D. S. (2023) recommends ongoing studies to build on existing research, particularly in areas such as culinary arts, to deepen understanding and refine teaching approaches.

Discussion of Findings on Students' Interest in Food Styling and Photography

In the construct of students' interest in food styling and photography, descriptive analysis results show a high implementation level, with a mean score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.31729. However, a key finding is item 14: "I often feel sleepy during lessons for food styling and photography," with a mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.406, suggesting that a significant portion of students experience disengagement during these lessons. This points to the need for further research to explore and enhance student interest in this subject.

This observation underscores the relevance of the ASSURE model, particularly the "Analyze Learners" step, which emphasizes the importance of understanding students' attention levels and engagement needs. To address this challenge, integrating active learning strategies, such as interactive and hands-on activities, could be an effective approach to increase student interest and participation (Pachava et al., 2024; Inayat & Ali, 2020). Recent studies also highlight the benefits of incorporating technology and flexible teaching methods to foster greater engagement, as students are more likely to remain attentive when

lessons include dynamic, technology-driven, and experiential components (Godoy Pena et al., 2023). By aligning these strategies with the ASSURE model's "Utilize Media and Materials" step, educators can tailor lessons to maintain student interest and improve overall learning outcomes.

Discussion of Findings on Students' Skills in Food Styling and Photography

In the construct of students' skills in food styling and photography, the descriptive analysis reveals a high skill level, with a mean score of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 0.382. Notably, items such as "I can use a digital camera effectively" (mean = 3.93, SD = 0.510) and "I have adequate skills and knowledge in food styling and photography" (mean = 3.93, SD = 0.432) reflect the students' proficiency in these areas. These findings suggest that most students possess competent technical skills in food photography and styling, which are increasingly relevant in modern job markets where digital literacy and creative abilities are highly valued.

These results align with the "State Objectives" and "Utilize Media and Materials" steps of the ASSURE model. In the context of modern job markets, where creative industries and visual media are growing rapidly, it is essential to ensure that students develop skills that are aligned with these evolving industry demands (Bennett et al., 2020). As employers place greater emphasis on digital proficiency and creative problem-solving, particularly in fields like food marketing, blogging, and content creation, the ability to effectively use digital tools, such as cameras and editing software, becomes a significant asset (Kim & Lee, 2021). This study highlights the need for continued research to further explore how students' knowledge and interest in food styling and photography can be expanded to meet the increasing demands of the creative job market.

By leveraging the ASSURE model, educators can further refine the curriculum to ensure students are equipped with the skills that will not only enhance their academic experience but also improve their employability in competitive and technology-driven industries.

CONCLUSION

This study on food styling and photography for Vocational College students demonstrates its significant potential in enhancing students' skill sets, particularly in terms of their employability. The findings suggest that the specialized skills learned in food styling and photography offer students a competitive advantage in the job market, as these skills are highly valued not only in the food and beverage industry but also in the creative arts sector. As the job market continues to evolve, possessing expertise in areas such as food photography and presentation can set vocational graduates apart from their peers (Simons & Goh, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2021).

To further improve the relevance of this subject, evidence-based recommendations for curriculum adjustments include integrating technology-based practical sessions. This would allow students to gain hands-on experience with digital tools and media commonly used in the industry (Pachava et al., 2024). Additionally, incorporating collaborative projects with real-world applications can strengthen students' ability to adapt and work in dynamic environments, enhancing both their technical and creative problem-solving abilities (Bennett et al., 2020). Furthermore, research by Johnson and Barrow (2021) emphasizes the need for industry partnerships to ensure that the curriculum remains aligned with contemporary market demands, providing students with practical, job-ready skills.

Moreover, while vocational students are currently the primary focus of this subject, expanding research to include students from public universities and private institutions could provide a broader

understanding of interest and knowledge in food styling and photography. These insights could inform curriculum development and pedagogical strategies across educational sectors, ensuring that students in diverse learning environments are equipped with skills that meet modern industry demands (Harper & Oliver, 2020). This broader approach would not only enrich educational experiences but also ensure that graduates are better prepared for the demands of a highly competitive job market.

Therefore, the study provides a foundation for refining food styling and photography education, making it more interdisciplinary and adaptable to various educational and professional contexts (Varzakas & Antoniadou, 2024; Fowler, 2023).

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