

Eminence and Valuation of Five Self-Acclaimed Farm-to-Table Restaurant in Manila, Philippines: A Sustainable Farm-to-Table Tourism Approach

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Abstract

Farm-to-table restaurant concept has built its reputation in the Philippines. The concept although was pioneered in Europe and United States, the adaptation in South East Asian region where the major economic sector is focused on agriculture, is indeed distinct. Many tourists would tend to go to farm in rural areas with an in-house operated restaurant. Tourist could appreciate the beauty of agriculture and farming away from the regular life in the city and at the same time may enjoy harvesting raw materials and be able to experience what they have picked or catch in the farm's restaurant. Farm-to-table restaurant is associated with local food movement, organic farming and health and life advocate. As the demand in organic local produce become bearably high, restaurants even in the city sees a potential growth in the demand. Thus, tourist can experience farm-to-table restaurant within the city. In Manila, Philippines there are five well knowing farm-to-table restaurants operated as an advocacy to healthy living and business. Philosophies behind the fundamentals such as agriculture farming, sustainability, restaurant operation, and corporate social responsibility should be understood for the true representation and value of farm-to-table is proven. Nonetheless, no institution and individual is responsible or in control of evaluating this trend that is accelerating the restaurant industry. Subsequently, there is no tool to evaluate or to certify weather a restaurant is really authentic and this has resulted in farm-to-table restaurant concept being abused and green washed. This research is a pioneering study in the Philippines to initially explore the prominence and appraise the different areas of self-acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant in Metro Manila. The study covers top five (5) self-acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant in Metro Manila namely Earth Kitchen, The Farm, Green Pastures, Grace Park and Wholesome Table. A qualitative approach of research was used in the study. In particular, descriptive method of research, historical data, related studies, interviews and researcher's personal dining experience was used to gather all the data. Data was explored by the proponents to come up with the results. Findings are germane for the growing tourist, researchers, restaurateurs, chefs and the industry of farm-to-table tourism.

Keywords: *Farm-to-table tourism, farm-to-table restaurant, sustainability, restaurant operation, organic-agriculture.*

Introduction

A profitable restaurant should create a unique dining experience to guest and visitors, which include incredible food taste, beyond normal service experience and exceptional restaurant ambience and interior. Few years' back it is evident that costumers and tourist has started to look for more distinctive restaurant tangible and intangible experience. Dinners go beyond dining experience. Awareness and exposure to different issues, concerns and trends in the society makes guest conversant to a matchless dining experience. In the same manner, chefs and food advocate began to give a richer

meaning of eating and dining and commenced to educate diners into a meaningful restaurant experience.

Advocates introduced farm-to-table restaurant, “An unfathomable diner’s involvement”. There is no exact definition and scope of this term in the dictionary, however articles and write-ups pertaining to this concept will give a clear vision on how this concept works. Whitney Brown in one of her interviews mentioned that there are certain philosophies about food, life, community, and environment involved in farm-to-table restaurants. Farm-to-table restaurant connect people to each other. (Brown, 2009). Farm-to-table restaurant is associated with local food movement, organic farming and health and life advocate. As this kind of concept flourishes many restaurateurs would want to engage to farm-to-table restaurant idea. Farm-to-table restaurant is associated with local food movement, organic farming and health and life advocate. Stenson as cited by Sadowski (2015), emphasize that there is no standards for a restaurants to be considered as farm to table restaurant even the term locally sourced raw materials from certain local community is not yet formally standardized. This view can develop weather in rural or urban setting which will creates a gastronomic hub of restaurants focusing on farm-to-table and eventually create a sustainable farm-to-table tourism that would help local community and all shareholders.

As the demand in organic local produce become bearably high, restaurant’s even in the city sees a potential within the market. Thus, tourist can experience farm-to-table restaurant with in the city. In Manila, Philippines there are restaurants offering this kind of concept. No record can be found in the Department of Tourism on how many restaurants is involved in this advocacy. At this moment nobody, no institution is responsible or in control of this claim. Subsequently, there is no tool to evaluate or to certify weather a restaurant is authentic. With this, Farm-to-table restaurant is now much abuse descriptor, a current issues facing by this model. Farm-to-table is just like a fancy marketing strategy for others. This means that all restaurants can possibly claim that they practice farm-to-table restaurant concepts and standards. Thus this research is to explore the reputation and evaluate five (5) self-acclaimed restaurant that pioneers the concept in an urban area in Manila Philippines. These five restaurants have studied, gradually developed this concept in the Philippines in their own facing and understanding. It is relevant to take a look on how they conceptualized, stabilized, operationalized this. In the same manner It is significant learn how diners response to this concept by considering different philosophies and disciplined attached to farm-to-table tourism.

Review of Related Literature

Since the study is relatively new, there are few academic publications directly related to the study. Since this restaurant and tourism concept is a collaboration of different philosophies and disciple the researcher have read congruent areas that would help in the development of the studies.

Increasing number of chefs concerned with serving the freshest possible raw materials in the kitchen for diners palates by holding meals at the locally source of their ingredients from vegetable to meats and other condiments direct to the farm. Chefs and restaurateurs motivation is to highlight the importance of local, freshly picked ingredients while concurrently promoting their restaurants to diners that wants to experience food in different levels. Reward is the connection to the community and land participates in the experience (Albrecht 2009). In the same manner, it helped the new restaurant to establish a reputation for using local foods among area locavores and farm to table movement. There is a great need to associate with people who care about the community and give back as the community grows, restaurant grow as like a symbiotic relationship. Lieb in his one of the interview says that he see chefs and farmers doing what they want to do, being hardcore and committed about locally produce raw materials. It will touch people that way and by doing that. It's more than food and service. (Parseghian, 2009)

If the abundance of organic, family-run farms and farm-to-table restaurants, as well as the presence of a thriving, nationally known farmers’ market, are any indication, one thing that ties together the

people of Carrboro is a common love of good, fresh food. Much of the produce is local and seasonal, and a lot of it is organic, whether or not it bears a used seal proclaiming it as such. Often, these people are retreating from the cheap, convenient industrial food system that evolved over the course of the twentieth century. Responding to diverse elements and influences, they find themselves straddling a space somewhere between the past and the future of food. Some have answered the back-to-basics call from scholars, writers, farmers, and chefs such as Vandana Shiva, Michael Pollan, Wendell Berry, and Alice Waters to rebel against the mainstream, industrialized food system, and to respect the local and traditional growing, preserving, and cooking practices. This may mean taking one's business from the supermarket to the farmers' market, or it may mean abandoning a graduate degree in geology to be a chef and a gardener, as McGregor has done. (Brown 2009)

In Carrboro, byzantine webs of small-scale food manufacturer and consumption are flourishing because significant number of dinners, producers, sources, and chefs/restaurateurs who believe that eating well means eating healthy, locally and seasonally. Acts of utilization unambiguously, choices of ingredients, traders, recipes, cooking methods, facilities/equipment, locations, fibers, and even restaurant are intimately tied to identity, place, and politics. However great or small, embody assured philosophies about food, life, community, and environment. Most importantly, they connect stakeholders to each other. (Brown, 2009)

Why restaurateurs are venturing to concepts of local ingredients? Much study offers a mixed basket of reasons. Taste and flavor is on top of it, reduction of carbon footprints and supporting local farms. But the underlying reason is that customer's awareness to organic and healthy living is clamoring for it. As mentioned by Steve Brooks in his article that there are seven out of ten diners says they're more likely to visit restaurants, which include bistro, cafeteria and café whose menu includes local produce food. It does not mean it's an easy trend to follow. Looking for local producer is not easy and sustainability is difficult to achieve. The issue does not fall in the relevance of a local farmers supply and location, but whether it can supply the demand of the restaurants.

Blue Hill restaurant in New York hosted an event, which launched chef-guided tours of Farmers Market; restaurants across the United States are finding new ways to emphasize the farm-to-table relationships. It represent a trend that hysteries with the Italian slow food movement, in which chefs are involved in conscious endeavor to use more local produced ingredients. It becomes a marketing opportunity to draw in diners who appear increasingly starving for information about the food they eat. Costumer's awareness of farm to table movement will lead to better opportunity for both farmers and restaurateurs.

Past-based and future-oriented movement defines Locavorism. These movement is a vigorous denunciation of some aspects of development and a faith in the ways of past. With its objectives of sustainability and health, locavorism is about what is our plate, refrigerator, pantry, restaurant, and backyard of all it stakeholders. The movement involves urban gardening and markets. This is food-focused components understand the position of the rural landscape and what it yields. It is about all encompassing technology, but it is also a renaissance of glorify of the farmers and a revival of Jeffersonian ideals of suburban escape from relatively crowded lives.

Jim Switzenbergcantellrevulsion stories about the shortcomings of the farm-to-table drift among restaurants. One of his chefs resigned another restaurant over an argument with its owner about what composes "farm-to-table," or "farm-to-fork," a movement linked with using locally obtained foods in the menu. The chef interrogated the local backgrounds of some locally produce materials serves under the farm-to-table name, and the owner said it had to grow on a farm somewhere. Although it may be hard to define, the concept of farm-to-table has become one of the hottest trends in the restaurant industry. In response to customer demand, restaurants across the country and in Central Pennsylvania are rebranding themselves as specialists in the new format (Sadowski 2015).

Many farm-to-table concept can be traces with the works of Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson, Michael

Pollan, John Jeavons, Alice Waters, Joel Salatin, Erik Manning and others. Their book focuses on their preference for the freshest ingredients and they advocate to educate everyone about the relationships between farm and local communities, ancient food practices, and the food of today. Farm-to-table chefs may buy their produce directly from local farmers. In some cases, the restaurants and farms may be owned and operated by the same people in the same place. The farm-to-table movement has arisen more concurrently with recent changes and awareness in attitude of dinners and consumer about food safety, food freshness, and food seasonality local community economic value on growing locals. Advocates and practitioners of the farm-to-table model frequently cite as their motivations the scarcity of fresh, local ingredients; the poor flavor of ingredients shipped from afar; the poor nutritional integrity of shipped ingredients; the encroachment of genetically modified foods into the food economy; the disappearance of small family farms; the disappearance of heirloom and open-pollinated fruits and vegetables; and the dangers of a highly centralized food-growing and -distribution system.

Food and Agriculture authors have begun to describe a philosophical differences among chefs and restaurateurs two of which is the "food-as-art" and "molecular gastronomy" pioneered by Ferran Adrià and Grant Achatz focuses on increasingly focused in making food strange. They transforming redients as to be surprising and even unrecognizable in the plate. Farm-to-table chefs, on the other hand, have increasingly come to rely on what is available within the community focuses on fresh ingredients in few cases presented raw in the plate for the dinners to taste its natural flavor. Generally, the farm-to-table chefs rely on traditional farmhouse cooking, and may refer to their preparations as "vernacular food" or "peasant food", with its emphasis on freshness, seasonality, local availability, and simple preparations.

Dan Barber, a food of the future advocate and a certified chef of New York's revolutionary farm-to-table restaurant at Blue Hill, has long been a victor of the local, organic food movement. But now he thinks its time for the movement to grow up. "Farm-to-table has failed to transform the way most of food is grown in America," he writes in his book *The Third Plate: Field Notes for the Future of Food*. Local, organic meals basically resemble what have been eating for generations. The sourcings has improved but the diet hasn't really changed. Barber insist that in order to convert the agricultural scene and make farm-to-table truly sustainable there is a need to develop a "Third Plate:" a form of eating that harnesses the farfetched power of ecological relationships considering the extents of what farmers can realistically grow.

According to Kevin S Murphy Ph.D "Farm-to-table is really, more sketchily speaking, about local food. It depends on the geographic location and the characterizations of 'local' can vary prominently." The best farm-to-table experiences are those that happened within the farm but it is also possible at local farmers' markets and wineries or restaurant in the metro. Actual experience, where the local food is being produced brings home the meaning of the farm-to-table tourism in consideration with budget constraints. Tracy Stuckrath mentioned that farm-to-table cuisine concept will continue to grow. "Farm-to-table is little more expensive, but it's essence is all about better quality of food, health benefits, and to not quantity. Paulette Lambert, California Health and Longevity Institute advised to plan in advance based on what's local and in season food is available in the community. (Tracy Stuckrath, 2014)

METHODOLOGY

This research is a pioneering study in the Philippines to initially explore the prominence and appraise the different areas of self-acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant in Metro Manila. The study covers top five (5) self-acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant in Metro Manila namely Earth Kitchen, The Farm, Green Pastures, Grace Park and Wholesome Table. To protect the credibility of the restaurants the researcher will not point out the name of the restaurant in the data and result presentation. Restaurants will be named Farm-to-table (1) Farm-to-table (2), Farm-to-table (3), Farm-to-table (4), Farm-to-table

(5) in no particular order. A qualitative approach of research was used in the study. In particular, descriptive method of research was used. Historical data, related studies, interviews and researcher's personal dining experience was used to gather all the data. Article from, magazine, newspaper, Internet, and the likes were stipulated to create a greater vision of the topic. videos, documentaries, restaurant review sites, online guest reviews were maximize to develop a context and structure that would aid in the study.

Results and Findings

1. Restaurant Profile and Advocacy

1.1 Green Pasture

Green Pasture is a farm-to-table, organic, back to basics restaurant owned by Chef Robby Goco in Shangri-La-Plaza in Mandaluyong and in Eastwood City in Quezon City. Ingredients are locally sourced canned goods and monosodium glutamate is a mortal sin in this restaurant, and approximately all of the items are homemade from different local communities. Stimulated by the aspiration to look for greener pastures and roughly a lot better than the status quo, especially when it comes to the Manila-dining scene. Compare to its restaurant neighbors, Green Pastures' standout with its advocacy to help local farmers

1.2 Grace Park

Grace Parkis Margarita Fore's (one of the Asia's best chef) farm-to-table Italian restaurant in One Rockwell located in Makati. Her concept of farm-to-table is enthused by farm-to-table, slow-cooking restos in the US like Vinegar Hill House, and Joseph Leonard. The Restaurant has a rustic ambience the will bring the dinners back to a simple living in a farm. The food is a mix of healthy and wicked comfort food and espouses the "cleaner" western taste versus the taste presence of the Filipino. It advocates healthy lifestyle eating pattern and in helping local farmers.

1.3 Wholesome Table

Bianca Araneta-Elizalde is the mind behind wholesome table in High Street Bonifacio Global City Taguig. The Wholesome. This restaurant fashioned to give attention to the call for food that is healthy and hearty organic while at the same time flavorful and tasteful that sets apart from most commercial restaurants of today. It features a selection of Filipino beloved home cooked food in their richest form, and also features some of owner's signature home recipes. This all-organic restaurant goes by the principle of going "back to basics" and takes it very sincerely; smearing the standards in the way they prepare and cook the dishes they serve without cutting edges.

1.4 The Farm Organics

The Farm Organics vitrines the organic beef products of their own turf, certified by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines. Stated in 1976, they have been raising their own cows in their 1,000-hectare farm located in Masbate. The cows are free-range, graze and pastured in green lush environment. No antibiotics, growth hormones or artificial drugs have used to grow their cows. They are operating to sell genuinely wholesome organic steaks and healthy burgers like Paleo Burger and Vegan Mushroom burgers.

1.5 Earth Kitchen

Located in Katipunan Ave and owned by Hizon catering Earth Kitchen serves the freshest finest ingredients and also source more natural raw materials locally. It is farm-to-table restaurant dedicated to support local farmers and indigenous communities all over the Philippines. Food and Beverage are

unambiguously created to vitrine the produce of the Got Heart Farms and their partner communities in the Philippines. Earth kitchen believes in serving everything made from scratch. They are creating homemade pasta, ice cream and soups in their kitchen.

2. Dinners Responses on Farm-to-table Restaurant Through Online Review

The outcomes of tedious examination of the dinner’s responses in experiencing these five restaurants are reflected in table 1 (Online Evaluation from Dinners). It is evident that most of the dinners were pleased with their experiences in five farm-to-table restaurants. Positive repossess is manifest through different comments of the dinners; “nice and unique concept” “healthy and nutritious” “good food quality” is the common comment. There are few negative responses from the dinners focusing on the service, quality and quality. Very few comments are focused on going local, sustainable. One Restaurant reaches to 253 positive responses over 262 responses. In the same manner, the least among the five restaurants has 58 responses with 39 positive repossess.

Table 1
Dinners Responses on Farm-to-table Restaurant

<u>Online Review</u>	<u>F-t-T1</u>	<u>F-t-T2</u>	<u>F-t-T3</u>	<u>F-t-T4</u>	<u>F-t-T5</u>
YELP.COM					
Negative Response	2	3	6	9	10
Positive Response	16	16	1	4	2
Total Responses	18	19	7	13	12
ZOMATO.COM					
Negative Response	5	12	5	3	4
Positive Response	140	105	51	59	21
Total Responses	145	117	56	62	25
TRIPADVISOR.COM					
Negative Response	2	6	1	2	5
Positive Response	97	68	22	25	16
Total Responses	99	74	23	27	21
Three Social Media Sites					
Negative Response	9	21	12	14	19
Positive Response	253	189	74	88	39
Three Social Media Site					
Total Responses	262	210	86	102	58

3. Sustainable Resources of Organic Ingredients

Organic supplies build the reputation of farm-to-table restaurant. It essential to all chefs to have a very good supply chain from the farm. It was revealed in five farm-to-table restaurants in manila have difficulties with their supplier in fact it took 6 years for green pasture to finalize their supplier. Earth Kitchen have motioned that they have more than 100 local supplier while the Grace Park and Earth kitchen focuses on their own farm and work with other farms for other supply. The trusts of all the

restaurant is to increase the demand for organic and natural produce and hoping to sustain the economic opportunities of ostracized communities and embolden more farmers to yield good, clean, nourishing raw materials for farm-to-table restaurants without using of genetically-modified organisms, chemicals, synthetic fertilizers and harmful involvements of petroleum-based urea, herbicides and pesticides and use natural based farming instead. Maintaining a presence and positive growth within the market calls for the cultivation of strong relationships as success is driven not by quantity but by quality and trust. In order to sustain their supply it is important to have at least 3 supplies per raw materials. A continues communication between farmers and restaurateurs/chef is necessary. Over time, these relationships may progress into closer partnerships where continued mutual benefit is found in joint planning, coordination.

4. Chefs and Restaurateurs Concept of Farm-to-table Restaurants

Five of the best farm-to-table restaurant in the Philippines has resemblance and metamorphoses with mission and vision and operation. Combing all of the data from these five restaurants will reflect on the framework below.

4.1 Organic

Five restaurants believe that a Farm-to-table restaurant is about serving organic food. The conviction is to yield good, clean, nourishing raw materials for farm-to-table restaurants without using of genetically modified organisms, chemicals, synthetic fertilizers and harmful involvements of petroleum-based urea, herbicides and pesticides and use natural based farming instead

4.2 Local Supplier

Five restaurants advocate in helping local community and indigenous people in the same manner they believe that it will elevates the farmer's motivation and ego all over the Philippines.

4.3 Back to Basic

Five restaurants have agreed that farm to table is about going back to basics from raw materials to dining experience of the consumers.

4.4 Health and Wellness

Buy working with organic produce, helping local supplier and going back to basic these five restaurants deems that this concept will surely beneficial to the health and wellness of the dinners. Farm-to-table restaurants envision educating dinners of the farm to table movement.



Figure 1. Farm-to-table Concept of Five Restaurants

5. Dinners Notion of Farm-to-table Restaurant

Since farm-to-table is quite new in the Philippines very few are working to educate Filipino of the real concept of farm to table. Most of the chef and restaurateurs have different background, experiences, goals and mission in conceptualizing their farm-to-table concept. Those factors affect how the system works and how the restaurant market and educate their guest. The framework divulges the discernment of dinners gyrated in these three areas health and wellness, organic is good, unique scenery and atmosphere. The main motivation why dinners are trying and patronizing farm-to-table restaurants is the cognizance that this concept manifests good health and wellness. It may anchor to the second factor, dinner's comprehension of organic food. Ambience is a gears the dinners to dine in FTR as farm to table restaurant offer indigenous environment and experience. The framework below is the concept in dinner's mind of farm-to-table restaurant as driving factors that motivates dinners to dine in farm-to-table restaurants.

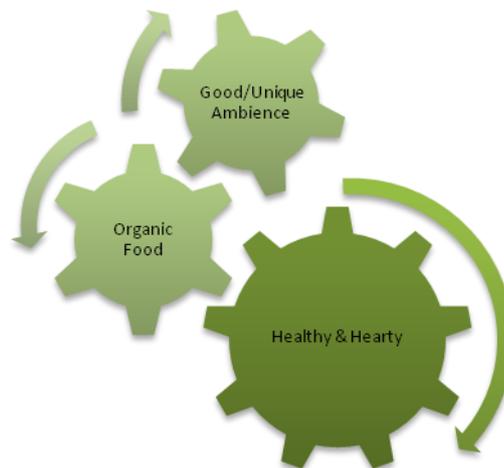


Figure 2. Dinners Concept of Farm-to-table Restaurant

Discussion

Farm-to-table created a created impact to the restaurant industry in the Philippines. It's crated a new dimension to restaurateurs, chefs and dinners that gives a great impact to the local community and local farmers. A reflection and true indication of a sustainable relationship is an equal contribution and equal development of all stakeholders underlying in one community. Although there's is a growth in awareness of farm-to-table movement in the Philippines a lot of work has to be done for a mature and systematized development of the ideal concept in the Philippines.

The result have shown that there are differences and similarities in the advocacy and related philosophies being applied by different restaurants. One of which is their advocacy to help local growers in a particular community. It took six years for the green pasture to complete their pool of local supplier to sustain the restaurants on the other hand Grace Park has their own farm hiring local farmers within he vicinity while earth kitchen has over 100 local supplier and hope to have more in the near future.

A positive feedback from the dinner was evident in the social media, which help restaurant hoppers and dinners to explore farm-to-table restaurant model. However dinner's knowledge was limited to few farm-to-table philosophies such as health and wellness, organic produce and they consider ambience as factor in farm-to-table restaurant. Few of the dinners have known its remunerations to local farmers.

Efforts have made by farm-to-table restaurants to educate dinners of their advocacy. However, we cannot deny the fact that farm-to-table restaurants is a business entity which has to be sustain through profit considering variable cost and fixed cost, factor that the restaurant did not consider some of the philosophies that with add cost in restaurant operation. Subsequently, there is no tool to evaluate or to certify weather a restaurant is really authentic and this has resulted in farm-to-table restaurant concept being abused and green washed.

The proponent that the five farm-to-table restaurants have builds its reputation in the Philippines with its common vision and advocacy. However there are other factors and philosophies to consider to be considered as full farm-to-table restaurant, thus the need to standardize and operational zed this concept is necessary. Of the moment no institution is in control of evaluating farm-to-table restaurants to accelerate this concept in industry in the future. Subsequently, there is a need in the future study a concrete tool to evaluate or to certify farm-to-table restaurant for more precise discussion of the theory.