



RESEARCH PAPER

Food for Loss? Social Media Food Vlogging and Dietary Trends of Generation Z in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

By providing varieties of content, Social Media have opened up new ways of entertainment for consumers. The genre of food vlogging has provided the netizens with various options of knowing, investigating and accessing different food vendors near them. Drawing upon the theoretical perspective of social learning, the purpose of this research is to analyze the effects of exposure to food Vlogs on Social Media on the dietary habits of viewers. For the purpose, a sample of 150 Gen-Z social media consumers who watch food vlogging within age bracket of (12 -27) years are selected through purposive sampling and then surveyed through a questionnaire developed on a 5-point Likert scale.

KEYWORDS Food Vlogging, Dietary Behavior, Social Media, Generation-Z, Social learning Theory

Introduction

In the era of globalization and global proliferation, social media play a significant role to inform and form the opinions and lifestyles of consumers. It can be observed that Social media have become a powerful and prevalent part of daily routines of internet consumers (Maqsood, Bokhari and Bukhari, 2022) . Regarding the various genres of Food Vlogging, Luong and Ho (2023) assert that many types of videos are posted by food vloggers, including content on food, recipes, restaurant reviews and food-related travel content have affected the viewers significantly. It is also a means of interaction in which they create, share, or exchange ideas virtually with one another. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are becoming a pervasive part of people's life. (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019). Farahdiba, (2022) highlighted that some vloggers have gained high levels of trust and recognition among their viewer community to the extent that they can persuade their followers to buy a product.

However, mobile screen-watching is becoming a constant habit among children and adults. People watch social media sites for hours. Food which is a basic human necessity now appears on various social media sites, which is known as food vlogging. Goodman, and Jaworska, (2020) assert that In today's society, vloggers have become prominent opinion leaders and valuable sources of information in specific domains or product categories on social media. Vlogging is an act of creating and sharing video content with an audience to provide information, tell stories, inspire others, or express oneself.

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domains or product categories on social media. Vlogging is an act of creating and sharing video content with an audience to provide information, tell stories, inspire others, or express oneself.

Hennig, Walsh and Gremler, (2004), narrate that vloggers' motivation for sharing opinions and experiences varies, ranging from a desire for fame and community to a genuine interest in food and a commitment to helping others. In vlogging people make trendy videos to grab audience interaction, give entertainment, and make a connection with them on a personal and impactful level. Vloggers who have expertise in trends come up with detailed meal plans, and product reviews, to make it easier for viewers to explore and adopt new 2 dietary trends. Vlog is more interesting and attractive than the usual blog platform. (Muzaffar, et. al., 2020). The message delivery is more effective because the facial expressions, voice tone, emotions, and body language help to have more effects on the content itself. And now it has become a trend worldwide.

Food vlogging is a type of content creation where creators are known as food vloggers. They make videos that focus on food-related content. Its aim is to create a persuading effect on the audience by showcasing different types of food and their experiences. These videos have an effect on people's diets too. Vloggers make content with street, spicy, and sweet food, with different specialties, influencing people to buy and try that food, and this makes people change their dietary habits.

Social media is a key to all the pros and cons of vlogging. Because with one click a video goes viral all around the world. People watch that video and it seems interesting to them as it satisfies their needs and emotions (Asghar, et. al., 2025). Food vlogging is becoming famous worldwide, it gives gratification with entertainment that fulfills their needs. It promotes different types of junk as well as street food through vlogs that people like to watch. Overall, the dietary trends of viewers are set by food vlogging videos that show which diet is good for health, and the audience adapts to that dietary trend as they have faith in vloggers. They provide reliability and trustworthiness by revealing that they are also taking these meals in real life. These content creators have the power to shape public perception of food and become the favorite vlogger among the viewers. The content includes entertainment and information, making it a powerful tool for switching diet choices. The visually pleasing food with high calories leads the way to unhealthy eating habits. Despite the increasing prevalence of food vlogging, limited research exists on how this form of content impacts Generation Z's eating habits in Pakistan (Salam, Jamil, & Muzaffar, 2024). While international studies have explored food influence through traditional advertising, the specific behavioral shifts linked to social media food content remain under-researched in South Asian contexts. Thus, the current study aims to address this research gap by analyzing whether and how social media food vlogs influence dietary choices among young Pakistani viewers.

Literature Review

A lot of researchers have given their reviews about the effects of exposure to food vlogs on the dietary habits of viewers. Since there is no such large body of literature is available, as per as the food vlogging is a new subject area of a research, however some of important and significant studies are found and quoted in this section.

In an interesting study, Zainab, and Sheikh, (2024) highlight that social media are a tool that connects people virtually, to share, exchange, and find any information. And now it has significantly influenced the dietary choices of viewers that are promoted by

influencers. Into second this statement Fadnes et al., (2022) says that Exchange diet with unhealthy food is responsible for millions of deaths and disabilities in the world. However getting a diverse view point, Pilař et al., (2021) says that Consistent use of social media harms people's dietary habits mostly including unhealthy food. (Vaterlaus et al., 2015) While choosing products after the review of vloggers it is good to check the nutritional content of food. A survey was conducted among different universities in Lahore. The target audience was the young generation who watch or follow food vloggers. From the results, usage of social media apps does not have any negative impact on their weight, but in some cases, it has some negative effects on the obesity of people that cause chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and many more.

Khuram and Noor, (2024) Identify that the way consumers perceive and interact with social media has revolutionized, now everyone depends on a small hand-running device that is getting advanced every day. And it has changed the way we think and act in our daily lives. The transition from traditional media to digital media has changed the ways of presenting food. Now, the term food vlogging is everywhere. Into second this statement, Delgado et al. (2014) Since 2014, food-related content is become the fourth most watched genre on social media. However getting a diverse view point, Pandey et al. (2020) says that according to research 50% of people select restaurants and food from the reviews of food vloggers. (Montanari, 2006) Food is culture. (Godara & Dev, 2021) In social media the topic of food is becoming a popular subject, especially in the young generation. The survey's results shows that vloggers engage their audience in the first few seconds through their camera angling, communication, tagline, and representation.

Nguyen, Le, Leenders, and Poolsawat, (2024) claim that social media has created an environment where people can generate and disseminate information through different social media platforms. Smith et al., (2012) says that The content that advertising companies and famous vloggers use is user-generated content that is called electronic word of mouth. (Wang et al., 2018) Food safety is a global concern, unhygienic food cause annual deaths, food poisoning, and many health problems. (Rajput & Sharma, 2021) Vloggers create curiosity, and interest in viewers so they watch their vlogs and promote their products to sell. A survey was administered to Vietnamese social media users. The result shows that food videos that provide entertainment and information positively impact the attitudes towards the food videos.

Shahid, (2023) clarifies that children and young adults have their own social media accounts and they are exposed to food-related content daily, but they are not aware of the consequences of it. It seems that influencers have a powerful influence on their followers. As social media has a great power to influence it can help people to change their unhealthy dietary habits to healthy choices of food. Into second this statement Ali, (2018) says that Most of the content that is represented by vloggers is high in sugar, salt, calories, and fat which is the cause of obesity and many health diseases in the young generation. A survey was conducted among university students that shows that vloggers influence young people to such an extent that they can also influence them to change their identity too.

Ho, (2023) highlight that food vloggers' success is related to viewers perception of information and their advertising to people. The vloggers influenced their followers perceptions and behavior with their knowledge and experience. Followers adapt their vloggers behavior and choices because they believe they are experts in their field. The research was conducted on 382 Vietnamese who watch food vlogging. Two factors were analyzed by this research, advertising content value and influencer credibility. The

viewers are attracted to video content by the physical appearance, trustworthiness, credibility, and expertise of the vlogger.

However, getting a diverse view point Kiruthiga, (2023) says that the entire lifestyle of human beings is now changing due to technological advancement. The major change in life is the eating lifestyle of people. That is swapping through food vlogs. Vloggers shape viewers perceptions to try the food that they refer to. Convenience sampling technique was used in this research with a sample of 300 millennials. The result indicates that there is a strong effect of vloggers on the purchasing and eating behavior of millennials.

Yousaf, (2022) clarify that food vloggers affect the perception of viewers about food. vloggers change their audience's attitudes and behavior towards food selection. A survey was conducted with a sample size of 418 participants interested in watching food vlogs. Both Pakistani and foreign food vlogs were selected. The findings shows that both vlogs have similarities in food vlogging patterns, like altering people's perceptions and food choices. However, their graphical representation has no similarity.

Alwafi, et al, (2022) state that food consumption is the most important daily activity that we do and it helps in functioning our entire body throughout the day. Fatness is the main concern of a healthy body and over 1.9 billion adults were overweight in 2016. This fatness is the main cause of many health diseases like hypertension, diabetes, and heart problems. People can easily influenced by social media and follow what their favorite influences say. A survey was conducted in Saudi Arabia and participant age were 18 years and above. The result shows that social media influencers are influencing people to eat different foods.

Chen, Chen (2021) explains that young people increasingly watching food-eating videos that are spreading all over the world. (Pereira et al, 2019) There are also videos on "mukbang" in which people eat different and large quantities of food in live-streaming. (Long & Owen, 2018; Pereira et al, 2019) It's a new trend that is expanding worldwide as a source of entertainment. (Wu, 2018; Zhao, 2020) Previous research identifies why people watch these videos and it is claimed that loneliness is the reason behind watching these videos. This study investigates the relationship between food choices and attitude toward the vlogger. The study was conducted in two phases a qualitative content analysis and an experimental design. The qualitative content analysis analyzes the comments on food vlogging videos on social media and it shows that there are three types of audiences, psychological pleasure seekers, common point seekers, and eating desire eliminators. These three audiences have different attitudes towards the food videos.

Briliana, Ruswidiono, & Deitiana, (2020) emphasize that with the development of technology and social media, enables various business platforms. Like vlogs that present interesting and entertaining content. Food vlogging is one of the famous video-sharing content globally. Briliana et. al. (2019) use of mobile apps means to find information anywhere, and anytime about anything like trending food places, near restaurants, prices, etc. A survey was conducted among millennials and it indicates a strong and positive effect of food vlogger reviews on millennials.

Coates, Hardman, et al, (2019) explain that food and beverages that vloggers promote in videos contain high sugar, fat, and species. The most watched platform of social media is YouTube and it is popular among children. The food content that was

uploaded on this social media platform changed children's eating behavior which causes childhood obesity. A content analysis method was used in this research, video vloggers were selected male and female. Both vloggers upload videos regularly, after some time a female vlogger has 16.8 million subscribers whereas a male vlogger has 9.2 million subscribers. Both vloggers are popular among children between the age of (5 - 15 years) in the United Kingdom that has more exposure to food content.

Hypotheses

H₁₁: Exposure to food vlogs featuring healthy, balanced meals positively correlates with increased adoption of healthy dietary trends.

H₁₂: Viewers who watch food vlogs on social media are more likely to try new food and cooking recipes.

Theoretical Framework

Drawing upon Social Learning perspective, the study investigates whether Food vlogging plays any role in influencing social media consumers' dietary habits or not? Viewers watch food vlogs and learn through those while some learn healthy changes and others pick up unhealthy diets. That causes many health diseases such as heart, stomach and eye issues etc. The theoretical framework of this research study draws attention to Media and Communication Theories.

Material and Methods

Research Design

This study used a quantitative survey method for data collection. A questionnaire is used in this research, developed at a five-point Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree."

Population and Sampling Technique

The population of this research is formed through the educational institutes of Lahore, offered courses on Secondary, Higher Secondary, Undergraduate, Graduation, and Post-Graduation levels. The sample consisted of **150 respondents** aged between 12 to 27 years (Gen Z). **Purposive sampling** technique was used to target viewers who actively engage with food-related content online.

Statistical Tool

Data was analyzed using SPSS. Statistical methods included descriptive analysis and paired sample t-tests to examine the relationships between variables.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1:

Test: Spearman Correlation test was applied in SPSS Software with

Confidence Level of 9.5% and

Level of significance = 0.05

Test of $\rho < 0.01$ vs $\rho > 0.01$

Table 1
Spearman Correlation test for H₁

Correlations	ExposuretofoodvlogsV1	AdoptionofhealthydietV2
Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.352**
ExposuretofoodvlogsV1	.	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	150	150
N Spearman's rho		
Correlation Coefficient	.352**	1.000
AdoptionofhealthydietV2		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
N	150	150

The findings revealed that 150 respondents are agree that Exposure to food vlogs featuring healthy, balanced meals positively correlates with increased adoption of healthy dietary trends. As $r = 0.352$ and $\rho = 0.000$ which specifies that it is statistically significant. Null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that higher exposure to food vlogs is associated with increase in adoption of healthy diet.

Hypothesis 2

Test: Paired sample t-test was applied in SPSS Software with

Confidence Level of 95% and

Level of significance = 0.05

Test and CL for Paired sample t-test

Test of $\rho = 0.05$ vs $\rho < 0.05$

Table 2
Paired sample t-test for H₂

Paired Samples Test							
	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Sig. (2tailed)
				Lower	Upper		
Pair V1 - V2 1	-3.21333	3.72834	.30442	-3.81487 - 2.61180		- 10.556	.000

The Paired Sample t-test revealed that 149 respondents are agreed that Viewers who watch food vlogs on social media are more likely to try new food and cooking recipes. As V2 is significantly higher than V1 that simply shows the direction of change. And $\rho = 0.000$ which specifies that it is statistically significant. Null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that watching food vlogs have a positive impact on viewers behavior.

Discussion

This research aimed to explore the effects on dietary trends of viewers who watch food vlogs on social media specifically Generation Z. For this a sample of 150 participants was collected through the survey method. The questionnaire was filled by the students from age 12 to age 27. The study was conducted under the framework of social learning theory. That says people tend to learn what they observe. These viewers observe eating behaviors from food vlogging videos. Same as generation Z, they watch different food vlogs containing junk food, healthy eating, and content containing sweets, then observe them and adopt them. This overall behavioral change affects the dietary habits of viewers.

When the respondents were asked how much time they spend in a day on watching food vlogs, 66.7% said that they watch food vlogs less than 3 minutes a day and 3.3% respondents said they watch food vlogs more than 3 hours a day. This shows that many people watch food vlogs but from them, some watch food for more time, and some watch for less time a day. But they all considered food vlogging in their daily life.

When the respondents were questioned about watching food vlogs that contain junk food, 42% of participants agreed. And 7.3% were strongly disagreed. This indicates that viewers are less likely to watch sweet content but are more likely to watch junk food content. And these kinds of videos strongly affect the overall health of the viewer.

While asking their preference for watching food vlogs focused on healthy eating, 35.3% were neutral about watching healthy vlogs, 34% agreed, and 6% strongly disagreed with healthy vlogs. It indicates that healthy vlogs are more likely in Generation Z than vlogs that contain sweet content.

On identifying food vlogs as an inspiration to try healthy recipes, 44% of the respondents agreed, and 5.3% were strongly disagreed. Hence, people observe healthy food vlogs as an inspiration for making healthy recipes. This tends to positively affect viewers health.

When the participants asked about food vlogs as a source of reducing the consumption of junk food, 28.8% disagreed, and 8.5% were strongly Agreed to decrease junk food eating. So, viewers do not agree that food vlogs can help them to reduce their junk food diet.

When the viewers were asked about food vlogs encouraging them to cook more at home, 36% were agreed, and 9.3% were strongly disagreed as an encouragement to cook more at home. It indicates that, with maintaining a healthy diet, food vlogs also encourage their audience to eat home meals by cooking more at home.

When the food vlogging viewers were asked about vlogs as an inspiration to try healthy meal planning, 42.7% agreed, and 8.7% were strongly disagreed on healthy meal planning. It concludes that people like to eat healthy meals and food vlogs provide that planning to eat.

While asking about food vlogs developed curiosity for trying new food, 48.7% of the participants agreed, and 4% were strongly disagreed. It indicates that food vlogs have a direct effect on the behavior of the audience as it makes viewers more curious about

food trends. Vloggers who do food vlogging shoot videos in such a way that makes people's mouth watered. And this mouthwatering food attracts viewers attention and they get curios about that food.

When participants were asked about after watching food vlogs they are more likely to crave for new cuisines, 42% agreed, and 3.3% were strongly disagreed. It simply shows that food vlogs make people crave for more food even after eating enough food. And this makes viewers sick as they adopt vloggers eating habits.

Upon questioning about, the viewers are more likely to try new food brands after watching food vlogs, 42% agreed, and 2.7% of the viewers were strongly disagreed. As food vlogs encourage to try new restaurants, they also pressurize the society in the name of trend to try new food brands.

On investigating whether food vlogs provide confidence in cooking skills, 38.7% agreed, and 6.7% were strongly disagreed on the confidence level. This shows that food vlogs in which vloggers tell or try recipes help viewers to try that recipe and as the recipe was already tried by a famous vlogger, it increases the confidence level of the audience because the viewer trusts the vlogger.

Upon being asked whether, food vlog has increased the frequency of eating junk food, 38% of the respondents were agreed, and 5.3% strongly disagreed. As we know most of the food vlogs are based on street food and junk food, vloggers eat that food and grab audience's attention by making eye catchy videos that increase the frequency of junk food eating of the viewers.

Conclusion

This research explores the effects on dietary trends of viewers who watch food vlogging specifically on Generation Z. It focuses on how social media platforms grab viewers attention by showcasing mouth-watering food which mostly contains junk food and street food. Which affects the overall health of the audience. The result of this study highlights that food vlogs have both positive and negative impacts on the dietary habits of viewers. Analysis shows that most people watch vlogs that contain junk food. And they prefer watching vlogs more on Instagram rather than any other social media platform. Viewers who watch junk food vlogs are more likely to crave for more food and eat at irregular times, like late night or at bedtime. This irregular eating pattern leads them to adopt unhealthy dietary habits that can also cause health problems.

Despite all these, many respondents found food vlogging as an inspiration to try healthy meal planning, eating more fruits and vegetables, and eating food containing nutrients and healthy fats. While food vlogging is considered a motivation, some of the participants feel an increase in their junk food eating, purchasing, and watching. The finding suggests that food vlogging plays a dual role of positive and negative impacts on viewers. First as an inspiration for healthy eating and second as a reduction in eating healthy fats. And despite knowing all the facts viewers are watching and learning from the vlogs.

Recommendations

- Vloggers should create and promote content focusing on healthy eating. Such as healthy meal planning, information about nutrients, and healthy recipes.

- Social media users, especially Generation Z, should be educated on the impact of junk food vlogging videos that affect their dietary habits. This can teach viewers to identify healthy food vlogs and prioritize balanced eating habits over trends.
- As most watch platform of food vlogging is Instagram so, vloggers should convey healthy dietary trends specifically on Instagram.
- Further research could explore the long-term impacts of food vlogging. How it shapes behavior over time. And can also investigate the specific content effects.

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