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Research Article

The Power of Food Vloggers: A Marketing Perspective on Business Growth and Sales Expansion

Reamuel R. Bañados*, Mark Anthony N. Polinar

Center of Advanced Studies, Cebu Institute of Technology- University, Cebu City, 6000, Philippines

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*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

reamuel.banados@citedu

ABSTRACT

Social media marketing is a powerful tool for businesses to connect with customers, and one form of this strategy is vlogging, as it offers engaging content that persuades people to try promoted products. This mixed-method research investigates the effectiveness of food vlogging as a social media marketing strategy in improving sales and profitability. Using paired sample t-tests, the study found a significant increase in sales after the adoption of food vlogging, confirming its impact as a sales-driving tool. However, there was no statistically significant improvement in profitability, indicating that increased sales did not directly translate to higher profit margins. Customer feedback revealed that most were persuaded by food vloggers to try featured products, demonstrating strong influencer impact on purchasing decisions. The marketing manager viewed food vlogging positively but emphasized the need for thorough planning and evaluation before implementation. While food vlogging enhances brand visibility and customer reach, businesses must address challenges like inconsistent viewer engagement and high collaboration costs. To maximize return on investment, the study recommends partnering with influencers who match the target audience and focusing on cost-per-action rather than cost-per-view performance metrics.

Keywords: Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Food Vloggers, Business Growth, Sales Expansion, Mixed-Method

Background

The role of marketing in business, regardless of the industry, is undeniably vital, as it brings significant attention to the products or services involved in the market. Marketing is also essential for commercial entities as it builds connections between customers and products, enhances company performance, and

strategically drives management. Studies have emphasized that marketing enables businesses to understand consumer needs and regulate market activities, which is crucial for aligning production and sales strategies with consumer demands (Boboniyazovich, 2022; Gudz et al., 2023). As the years pass, marketing evolves from traditional to digital approaches, with

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companies increasingly conducting marketing activities online, mainly through social media. A study claimed that social media is the future of marketing and will significantly shape three lenses: consumer, industry, and public policy (Appel et al., 2019). Moreover, in the future of social media, food businesses are increasingly exploring the use of food vlogging to promote their products, which is considered a trend on various social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, X (formerly TikTok), and Instagram. However, despite its growing popularity, limited empirical research exists on the measurable impact of food vlogging on business performance, particularly in terms of sales and profitability. This study aims to address that gap by examining how food vlogging influences customer behavior, marketing decisions, and financial outcomes in the food sector.

Food vlogging is an effective marketing tool in the food and beverage sector, as major companies collaborate with popular vloggers to boost sales and enhance brand recognition. Major brands such as McDonald's, Starbucks, and Domino's heavily engage food vloggers to advertise new products, exclusive deals, and temporary specials. The study demonstrates that McDonald's partnered with vloggers to create "Mukbang" (food show) videos, which present their menu items within dynamic real-life settings that attract viewers. Starbucks collaborates with vloggers to create user-generated content and generate social media buzz around the Pumpkin Spice Latte and other seasonal products. Domino's Pizza partners with food bloggers to showcase new flavors, providing viewers with detailed descriptions of product quality and sensory experiences. Food vloggers develop authentic relationships with their audience, which results in their product suggestions appearing more trustworthy than traditional advertising methods (Khalid & Siddiqui, 2019).

The study found that YouTube vloggers serve as strong brand endorsers because their credible and realistic content leads to meaningful purchases by consumers. The implications for marketing are substantial, particularly for brands targeting younger consumers who were born into the digital age. By partnering with YouTube influencers, Gymshark and Daniel

Wellington built brand awareness and credibility. Through collaborations with fitness vloggers, Gymshark showcases its fitness apparel during exercise routines to create content that blends personal storytelling with information beyond traditional advertising. Daniel Wellington collaborated with lifestyle and fashion YouTubers to showcase their watches daily, creating a brand image associated with attainable yet aspirational lifestyles (Rybaczewska et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, Food vloggers are a key driver of consumer behavior, brand perception, and sales growth in the food and beverage sector during the digital era. Their contributions align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). By providing engaging content, food vloggers help companies and tiny and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gain visibility and reach a broader customer base, ultimately leading to economic sustainability (SDG 8). Through innovative digital marketing strategies, food vloggers contribute to the growth of the food industry, as outlined in SDG 9, by driving digitalization and technological progress. In addition, ethical food vloggers promote sustainable consumption, ethical sourcing, and waste minimization, aligning with SDG 12 by encouraging conscious consumption. Therefore, the marketing impact of food vloggers goes beyond sales expansion to economic resilience, innovation, and sustainability in the food sector.

With this in mind, this study aimed to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of hiring food vloggers as a marketing strategy and its impact on sales and profitability performance.

The following are the study's objectives:

1. To evaluate the sales performance and profitability of the participating company before and following the implementation of food vlogging as a marketing strategy.
2. To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the sales performance and profitability of the participating company before and after the

integration of food vloggers as a promotional tool.

3. To examine the perceptions of customers and the marketing manager regarding the use of food vloggers as part of the company's marketing strategy.
4. To develop recommendations for optimizing marketing strategies through the effective integration of food vloggers in the promotional efforts of food businesses.

Literature Review

Marketing

Marketing is crucial to the success of food vlogging, as it raises brand awareness, shapes consumer perceptions, and directly influences purchasing decisions. The study found that influencer marketing via vloggers considerably increases purchase intention by establishing trust and authenticity with consumers (Wiedmann et al., 2020). Research has claimed that marketing through vlogs also drives brand awareness and consumer engagement, as it offers interactive and engaging content that appeals to audiences (Bu, Y. et al., 2022). In addition, the study highlighted that social media influencers have become essential promotional agents for consumers, with a profound effect on trust and purchase decisions. Moreover, this influence not only drives up sales but also improves firm performance. Similarly, it highlights the proven power of visual storytelling, as seen on sites like YouTube, in developing an engaging brand narrative. Through this methodology, you can personify your business, establish a solid brand, and cultivate customer loyalty. These studies highlighted the strategic value of marketing in food vlogging as a tool for driving business growth and expanding market reach. (Astuti et al., 2020).

Social Media Marketing

Vloggers play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions, as their endorsements have a significant influence on attitudes toward brand advertisements and purchasing decisions. A study suggested that vlogger traits significantly impact consumer behavior, including authenticity, physical attractiveness, and content quality. Specifically, beauty vloggers

influence hedonic value, while technology vloggers enhance utilitarian value (Lu et al., 2024)

A study stated that situational factors in producing vlogs affect audience participation. Zhang points out that variables such as the vlogger's environment and the extent of audience interaction with the vlogger influence how vloggers communicate, which in turn impacts audience engagement (Zhang, 2022). Additionally, the study highlighted the role of vlogger interactivity and self-disclosure in the formation of parasocial relationships. These relationships improve audience trust, brand identification, and purchase intentions (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2022).

Indeed, the study asserted that physical beauty and social relationships of beauty vloggers shape audience preferences among cosmetic brands (Dewi et al., 2023). Likewise, recommendations have been found to directly affect consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and increase purchase intentions, especially for beauty products (Santiago et al., 2023). They also exert an influence on public health attitudes. As demonstrated by a study, the adherence of YouTube vloggers to COVID-19 protocols influences the attitudes and behavior of teenagers. Teens viewing non-adherent vloggers exhibited low levels of adherence to COVID-19 protection protocols (Sankar et al., 2024). Finally, the author illustrated the role of vloggers' promotional content on consumer attitudes and the effect of vlogger-fan contact frequency and product information levels offered by vloggers on purchasing decisions (Jiang et al., 2024)

Vloggers as a Marketing Strategy

Vloggers have become one of the most effective marketing strategies, impacting sellers and buyers. They are especially well-positioned to do so because research suggests that people perceive them as knowledgeable and objective, enhancing their ability to influence purchase decisions. Research has shown that vloggers employ persuasion techniques, such as emotional appeal and two-sided messaging, to enhance consumers' trust and purchase intention. Para-social interaction is a crucial element that helps develop a sense of affection

between vloggers and viewers (Sheng et al., 2022).

The self-image of the consumer and marketing improvisation concepts are squarely applicable to vlogging as a marketing approach. As content creators, Vloggers develop personal brands that resonate with specific aspects of themselves among their audiences. As demonstrated by the author, the existence of vloggers can also elicit impulse buying, as the appearance of vloggers, homophily, and the informativeness of the content lead viewers to develop a desire to buy (Arviansyah et al., 2018). A study revealed that luxury brands target aspirational consumers, while sustainable brands appeal to ethical consumers (Leal et al., 2014). Vloggers produce content that aligns with their audiences' interests, lifestyles, and values. This alignment fosters trust, emotional investment, and brand loyalty, making vlogging a potent tool for influencer marketing.

Likewise, academic research has validated the improvisational element of marketing strategies, as indicated by its high relevance to vlogging. In contrast to conventional marketing campaigns with strict, pre-determined formats, vlogging facilitates spontaneous engagement and responsiveness. Vloggers can realign their content according to audience response, trending issues, or shifts in consumer behavior. Such fluidity maximizes their marketing impact; hence, vlogging becomes an evolving and responsive promotional tool (Khan, 2023). Vlogging as a marketing strategy is effective because it appeals to consumers' self-identity while being adaptable and flexible, making it a genuine and powerful means of digital marketing.

Methodology

This study is a mixed-methods embedded design, where the primary quantitative (experimental) approach assessed the effect of food vloggers on the company's sales performance and profitability. The qualitative component complemented this by exploring customer insights on their purchasing decisions and the marketing manager's rationale for adopting food vlogging as a strategy. This combined approach enabled triangulation, thereby

strengthening the reliability and comprehensiveness of the results. The quantitative sample consisted of sales and profitability data from one participating company, collected over periods before and after the integration of food vloggers, enabling a direct comparison of performance. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was employed to select the marketing manager and a diverse group of customers familiar with the food vlogging campaigns, thereby providing relevant perspectives.

Although the focused sample allowed for in-depth analysis, the study's findings had limited generalizability due to being confined to a single company. Additionally, purposive sampling in the qualitative phase may have introduced selection bias, which could potentially affect the representativeness of the insights. Nonetheless, this design offered a balanced and detailed understanding of the impact of food vlogging in the marketing context.

Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, served as the study's environment, as the participating businesses and customers were located there. The study utilized secondary data from the participating businesses to determine sales and profitability performance, specifically sales and profit reports before and after integrating food vloggers into the marketing operation. The researchers requested these financial reports from the owner, emphasizing that the data would be used for scholarly purposes. At the same time, ten customers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide to gather qualitative data on how food vloggers influence their purchasing decisions. Ten were selected as the researchers reached data saturation during the data collection. Additionally, one marketing manager was interviewed to understand how they selected food vloggers for integration into the business's marketing strategy.

To analyze the secondary data, the study employed a paired sample t-test to compare sales and profitability data before and after integrating food vloggers as a marketing strategy. This treatment checks if the mean difference is statistically significant. Additionally, as the study employed an embedded design, a thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data from ten customers and one

marketing manager. The thematic analysis used in the study was anchored by Braun and Clarke (2006) and strictly followed the six steps: (1) familiarization of data, (2) initial coding, (3) generating themes, (4) validity and reliability of themes, (5) defining and naming

themes, and lastly, (6) interpretation and reporting.

Results and Discussions

Before and After the Use of Food Vloggers as a Marketing Strategy

Table 1. Paired Samples T-Test Result of Sales Performance Before and After the Integration of Food Vloggers

Sales Performance		T	P	Mean Difference	Cohen's d	
Without Vlogger	-	With Vlogger	-3.261	0.010	-105.089	-1.031

Table 1 presents the results of the paired t-test analysis, comparing the company's sales performance before and after integrating food vloggers as a marketing strategy. The result demonstrated a t-value of -3.261, indicating that the mean difference in sales is 3.261 times larger than the standard error of the differences. Therefore, the t-value is negative, indicating that sales after using food vloggers were significantly higher than before, which suggests the effectiveness of the newly integrated marketing strategy. Also, since the p-value is less than the alpha, the result is statistically significant, implying that the study should reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in sales before and after using food vloggers in the marketing operation.

Additionally, the mean difference of -105.089 suggests that the sales increased after the integration of food vloggers in the marketing operation. It only demonstrates the effectiveness of the approach on the business's sales performance. Ultimately, Cohen's d was used to quantify the strength of the impact of food vloggers on the business's sales performance, yielding a result of -1.031. It can be inferred that the effect size is large, as Cohen's d is more significant than 0.8. Therefore, integrating food vloggers had a substantial positive impact on sales performance.

In line with findings, current literature highly corroborates that food vloggers are powerful marketing agents who can generate substantial business growth and enhance sales. For example, a study highlighted that the

advertising value and credibility of food vloggers on YouTube positively affect user attitudes and purchase intentions, thereby underscoring the strategic marketing potential of food vlogging in digital commerce (Nguyen et al., 2023). Similarly, the study found that consumers exposed to interesting food vlogs were more likely to select highlighted restaurants, underscoring the immediate impact of vlogging on restaurant sales and consumer choice (Truong et al., 2025). Moreover, researchers investigated the impact of mega food vloggers. They concluded that vlogger trust, familiarity, and expertise highly increase consumer willingness to buy, supporting the influence of food influencers in increasing market reach and revenue (Kazancoglu et al., 2020).

These findings supported our research assertions that food vlogging is a highly effective marketing tool for building consumer trust and driving business development when done sincerely and strategically. However, despite the evidence tilting heavily toward this view, some researchers caution that saturation among influencer videos and the explosion of fake endorsements will dilute the persuasive might of food vlogs. That subtlety suggests that to maintain its momentum, food vlogging requires brands to focus more on authentic connections, audience alignment, and high-quality content. Our research confirms the sales viability of food vlogging and promotes a reflective and responsive strategy to engage with influencers in the evolving digital environment.

Table 2. Paired Samples T-Test Result of Profitability Before and After the Integration of Food Vloggers

Profitability		t	df	P	Mean Difference	Cohen's d
Without Vlogger	- With Vlogger	-2.241	7	0.060	-133114.874	-0.792

Table 2 presents the findings from the paired t-test analysis, which examined the business's profitability before and after integrating food vlogging into its marketing strategy. The analysis revealed a mean difference of ₱133,114.87, indicating that businesses utilizing food vloggers tended to have higher profitability. Although this difference approached statistical significance ($t = -2.241$, $p = 0.060$), it did not reach the conventional threshold for significance ($p < 0.05$). As a result, the conclusion drawn is that there is no significant difference in profitability before and after the inclusion of food vloggers in the business marketing model. Furthermore, the effect size, calculated as Cohen's $d = -0.792$, suggests a medium to significant effect, implying that, although statistical significance was not achieved, there is a practically meaningful impact of food vloggers on profitability. This suggests that the sample size may have limited the ability to detect a statistically significant difference; however, the presence of vloggers has the potential to enhance business profitability significantly.

The above findings are also supplemented by recent literature, which suggests that food vloggers, when used in conjunction with digital marketing and consumer trust, have a considerable impact on consumer purchase decisions in the restaurant industry. This supports the idea that incorporating food vloggers into promotional campaigns can have a positive impact on customer behavior and, consequently, business performance. Even though the statistical data in this research was on the low side, the magnitude and direction of the effect are consistent with these empirical findings, which suggest that food vloggers make a positive contribution to customer interaction and revenue generation (Netrani, 2024).

Additionally, this finding has significant business implications for companies seeking to incorporate digital influencers into their marketing strategies. The study revealed that the

trend observed here is that food vloggers should be considered a significant asset within promotional strategies, as they can increase visibility, credibility, and consumer connection. Their trust-building, engaging content can strengthen consumer relations, which can boost sales and profitability (Dea Farahdiba, 2022). Therefore, companies, especially those in the food and hospitality sector, should invest in alliances with relevant vloggers to maximize the benefits of their market reach and consumer influence.

Customers' Perception of Food Vlogging Used by the Company

Theme #1: The Power of Social Media

Most participants mentioned social media as the primary source of information when they first learned about the company and its products. Also, they highlighted social media as their initial point of contact with the company and its offerings. This recurring theme suggests that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok serve as instruments that shape first impressions and awareness of the company's presence. Participants frequently described encountering the brand through shared posts, influencer recommendations, or targeted advertisements, indicating the strong influence of digital visibility in consumer discovery. Moreover, their narratives highlight the effectiveness of social media in boosting viewers' curiosity and attracting new customers at the beginning of their buyer journey.

Companies leveraging food vlogging and influencer-based content on social media are strategically positioning themselves to capture consumer attention early in the buyer journey. This highlights the increasing importance for marketers to invest in engaging, shareable content to enhance brand awareness and attract new customers. Studies have shown that social media marketing significantly enhances brand awareness and loyalty by serving as a crucial

initial point of contact for consumers. The study also emphasized that food cravers are most likely to encounter brands through platforms like Instagram and Facebook, reinforcing their role in shaping first impressions (Zia et al., 2022).

Theme #2: Social Media Aesthetics and Consumer Trust in the Food Business

Visual appeal is the dominant factor driving their interest in trying the promoted products. Aside from that, online credibility matters to participants, motivating them to make a purchase. The power of online praise, the role of visual appeal, engaging and attractive content, and affordability are the identified themes that influence participants' purchasing decisions after watching the vlog.

Visual attractiveness on social media is the first compelling statement, but influencer trustworthiness and factual content are what establish consumers' confidence and drive them to patronize the product. Food companies should thus focus not only on visual presentation but also on selecting trustworthy influencers and engaging in open communication to help generate consumer trust and loyalty. Research has shown that visually presented content on platforms like Instagram significantly influences consumer trust and perception regarding food influencers, particularly when the pairing of aesthetic appearance with the perceived credibility of the influencer is considered. This combination helps build consumer confidence and influence decision-making (Rani et al., 2023).

In food vlogs, the presentation of food that is visually pleasing, combined with engaging and credible influencers, creates a sense of desire and authenticity, which subsequently translates to purchasing behavior. Moreover, the credibility of the content creator and the social proof generated by online accolades and positive comments further reinforce trust, verifying your research conclusion that online credibility and social interactions also play a key role in influencing consumers' decision-making. Study emphasized that visually appealing and interactive content significantly enhances consumer purchase intentions and

engagement on platforms like Instagram (Bharti, 2021)

Subtheme #2.1: The Power of Online Praise

As they watched the vlogs made by the food vloggers invited by the company, they saw positive comments and reviews from netizens who had already tried the product, as well as those who had not, which motivated the participants to consider buying it. Additionally, after reading the comments and reviews, some participants reported perceiving the promoted product as having high quality in terms of taste, texture, packaging, and aroma.

Positive online praise not only enhances perceived product quality but also reinforces consumer trust and purchase intention by serving as credible, emotionally engaging, and socially supported endorsements on reviews when they perceive them as being in line with customer views. Online reviews, especially positive ones, significantly influence consumers' perceptions of a product's quality, encompassing aspects such as taste, texture, and packaging, and increase their willingness to make a purchase. This is because they act as a form of social proof that builds trust and credibility. In fact, a study showed that the mechanism also involves emotional and cognitive processing; when users read positive comments, they tend to form emotional connections with the product and develop greater trust in its quality, which in turn enhances their purchase intentions (Sun et al., 2022).

This research found that online customer reviews have a highly impactful effect on consumer trust, which in turn influences food purchasing decisions in the culinary sector. While online reviews are not directly likely to result in purchases, they create perceived product quality and credibility by generating trust, particularly when influencer food bloggers post such reviews. In addition, only positive comments and appreciation viewed in vlogs (even from viewers who have not tested the product) encourage participants to rate the product as high-quality in taste, packaging, and appeal. It suggests that companies should make an extra effort to utilize and promote positive user-generated content in influencer partnerships.

When consumers see other people recommending a product through comments and interactions, it creates a social proof effect that increases credibility and perceived value, ultimately encouraging new consumers to use the product. Thus, collecting and promoting this appreciation as content and as comments in food vlogs is a strategic vehicle for establishing trust and driving sales (Tyas* et al., 2024)

Subtheme #2.2: A Feast for the Eyes: The Role of Visual Appeal

This theme emerged during the interview, as almost all participants demonstrated an appreciation for the aesthetic beauty of the video content, its presentation to netizens, and how it maximizes the power of visual appeal, which significantly contributes to their curiosity about the product and consideration of purchasing it. Additionally, it captures people's attention on social media; aside from being visually appealing, as the participants noted, it is appetizing to watch the vlogs, making them crave the product.

Visually appealing and emotionally engaging video content powerfully fuels consumer interest, desires, and buying behavior by optimizing visual and sensory attraction. Short video content, particularly when visually appealing and emotionally engaging, has a profound impact on consumer interest and impulse buying behavior. Research demonstrated that visually engaging short videos, especially those with concrete emotional appeal and seamless product placement, notably boost content enjoyment and impulse buying among consumers. Their study confirmed that narrative integration and visual appeal are crucial in shaping purchase behavior (Duc et al., 2024)

Subtheme #2.3: Engaging and Attractive Content

Some participants during the interview thought that the company's videos, uploaded to its various social media platforms, were attractive and engaging enough to shed light on the product's quality and persuade people to try it and possibly patronize it. They emphasized that engaging content, such as humorous content provided by food vloggers, entertains them.

Brands can increase purchase intentions among consumers by creating short video content that is both entertaining and informative. Similar to the study by Truong et al. (2025), which concludes that food reviews created by food vloggers through their food content provide informativeness, entertainment, and vividness, positively influencing viewer engagement and restaurant visit intentions. It also aligns with the findings of Liu et al. (2023), which indicated that both informative and entertaining short video content significantly increases consumer purchase intention. Additionally, the authors concluded that engaging content creates a positive perceived value, which partially mediates the relationship between the content and consumers' willingness to purchase. Moreover, it only shows that video content that is engaging and humorous, particularly if genuine and fun, powerfully establishes trust, fosters emotional connection, and inspires consumer intent to experiment and buy products.

Subtheme #4: Student-Friendly Price Offerings

In the video, according to the participants, the food vloggers mentioned the prices, and they believe that these prices are affordable from a student's financial standpoint. Additionally, one informant indicated that the company targets students as its primary market, as most stores are located near schools. Aside from the students, young professionals were also considered by the company, which makes the prices affordable.

Food businesses targeting students must tailor their pricing strategies to align with student spending habits and social norms. It was discovered that value-priced, affordable products increase perceived value, particularly when promoted by social influencers within the target lifestyle. Since peer influence is also a significant factor in student purchasing decisions, being within group norms can substantially accelerate purchase intention (Gligorić et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research has highlighted how heuristic clues, such as price and the frequency of reviews, influence the decision-making of young consumers, particularly students. Posi-

tioned in terms of affordability and with regular endorsement by peers or influencers, pricing acts to increase the perceived value and credibility of a food product. Referring to your results, it would mean that food businesses that target students and young professionals would need to emphasize price in influencer marketing posts, particularly when there are stores nearby schools or colleges (Nazlan et al., 2023). This pricing strategy works best when supported by favorable social proof and peer congruence, raising visibility as well as consumer interaction.

Theme #3: Consumer Trust and Authentic Marketing: Key Drivers in the Digital Market

In today's competitive digital market, building consumer trust has become a key factor in ensuring the success of a marketing campaign. However, trust is not built overnight, and it is also a product of authentic marketing that mainly promotes a genuine brand-to-consumer connection and transparency. Two informants shared the same standpoint that having a food vlogger with a good reputation and no history of scamming people brings trust and confidence to customers, encouraging them to patronize the promoted products.

A similar study highlighted consumer trust as one of the factors that positively influences consumer buying interest and purchase decisions (Netriani, 2024). Another study supported the importance of authentic marketing, as Yousaf (2022) reveals that food vlogs with authentic and experiential values, as well as perceived similarity with the food vlogger, positively influence parasocial interaction experiences and visit intentions for food tourists. Furthermore, the authenticity of the food vlogger's output was found to have a significant and positive effect on attitude toward visiting, based on a study by Lacap et al. (2024).

A Marketing Manager's Point of View on the Selection and Adoption of Food Vlogging in the Company

Theme #4: Food Vlogs as a Potential Upside of the Business

According to the marketing manager, social media platforms are full of opportunities. For this type of business (a food business), food

vlogs are a top priority to be integrated into the marketing operations. The participant further mentioned that the upside of this move is beneficial not just in making the business known in the market. However, engagement is key to forming a connection with people on the Internet.

A study demonstrated that food vloggers on YouTube influence people to try the food (V, 2023). In other words, the more people like the vlog, the more likely they are to use it. According to a study, even Indonesian millennials believed that reviews from food vloggers helped them buy promoted products (Briliana et al., 2020). All in all, it tells us why businesses, especially food businesses, consider having food vlogs as part of their marketing strategy, as they bring a positive contribution in several aspects, such as brand reputation, engagement, product knowledge, and profitability.

Theme #5: Unforeseen Problems of Food Vlogging as a Marketing Strategy

The participant shared that despite the benefits of having food vloggers in their food business, they have encountered challenges that hinder them from achieving their ultimate goal. These challenges are unpredictable audience engagement and the high cost of collaboration. According to the marketing manager, these challenges give them ongoing concern that adversely affects their whole operation.

Even with influencers such as food vloggers involved, food companies may not achieve the desired results if audience interaction is inconsistent. This highlights the danger of over-reliance on influencers without a more comprehensive engagement plan, which supports your participants' concerns. A study revealed that digital marketing efforts do not consistently improve performance in the food sector unless there is strong customer engagement and relationship management (Safitri et al., 2025). The implication is that unpredictable engagement weakens ROI and may make high-cost collaborations unsustainable unless properly managed. Research indicated that customer interaction is fueled by the relevance of the influencer to the audience. If the content of the vlogger is not personally relevant, repurchase and

engagement decrease, rendering expensive collaborations useless (Rozamuri et al., 2022). To mitigate this, businesses should carefully select influencers based on audience relevance, rather than just popularity, to ensure a sustainable impact.

Theme #5.1: Unpredictable Audience Engagement

While food vloggers may have a large number of followers, not all of their audience may be interested in the product they promote in their video content. Additionally, according to the participant, some food vloggers have a broad reach of followers located in other regions or islands, and the business is not yet catering to orders outside Cebu. As a result, this led to low engagement rates or a mismatch between the vlogger's audience and the target customer base. A large following on a social media page does not necessarily translate to success if the vlogger's audience is not within the brand's geographic or target market. Local businesses must collaborate with influencers whose regional and demographic audiences align with their customer base to avoid low engagement. In fact, study showed that influencers with large followings often generate lower engagement rates, leading to lower return on investment and also study suggests that smaller, more niche influencers can outperform high-followership ones in terms of engagement and revenue, emphasizing the importance of audience fit over audience size (Beichert et al., 2023).

In addition, aligning the audience is key to engagement and conversion success for the participants' experience. Although some food vloggers might have large numbers of followers, those followers may be from outside Cebu or not relevant to the local market. Research has found that most local businesses do not receive a return on investment from influencer advertising due to a lack of audience targeting and low engagement. One primary problem is choosing influencers whose audience does not align with the brand's actual customer base in terms of geography or demographics—the incompatibility results in lost marketing dollars and a low return on investment. The same author suggested that companies need to look

beyond follower numbers and thoroughly consider audience location, relevance, and interest match before investing in influencer collaborations (Pisareva, 2023).

Theme #5.2: High Cost of Collaboration

High-profile food vloggers charge a high fee to promote products or businesses. However, according to the marketing manager, paying this fee is not a win-win decision if the company still does not accept orders outside of Cebu. This limitation affects potential sales. As a result, the company is hesitant to retain its marketing strategy of engaging food vloggers to promote its products.

Research suggested that restaurants should establish their short video channels when the potential market scale is higher and the commission rate is lower, or introduce third-party vlogger channels when both the signing fee and the commission fee are lower (He et al., 2024). Research investigated how marketing strategies by restaurant influencers can prove to be expensive and not performance-based. This presents the concept of the "myth of viewability," where influencers only charge per view, rather than actual consumer behavior or sales, placing local businesses' investments at risk. A study backs the concern that excessive payments made to food bloggers do not directly translate into increased local sales. It suggests that companies, particularly those operating within geographic constraints, be mindful of cost-per-action (CPA) instead of cost-per-view (CPV) when measuring influencer collaborations (Lee, 2021).

Conclusion

The research concluded that the influence of food vlogging as a marketing strategy on the sales and profitability of businesses was positive, as the quantitative findings analysis showed a significant mean difference. For sales performance, this resulted in a significant difference, demonstrating that adopting food vlogging is a good and sound decision. However, for the profitability aspect, the study found an insignificant difference between before and after the adoption of food vlogging, implying that extending the time frame of the adoption might yield a positive result. All in all,

for the study's quantitative aspect, it can be concluded that the adoption of food vlogging is a smart move by management; however, adding more periods of adoption might have improved both the sales and profitability performance of the company.

The qualitative findings identified themes that support reasons why food vlogging is effective, including visual attractiveness, social media activity, and consumer trust. Additionally, most participants emphasized the importance of genuine influencer collaborations and positive online reviews in shaping their purchase intentions. The influence of social media websites, particularly among food establishments, was highlighted as a vital factor in brand awareness and customer engagement. Moreover, value-for-money propositions for students and young professionals proved to be fundamental in capturing target markets. In addition to the customers' viewpoints, the marketing manager believed that the adoption of food vlogging has a positive impact on the business, and it supports the quantitative findings that sales and profitability performance have improved. However, the marketing manager noted that unforeseen problems emerged during the adoption process, including unpredictable engagement and high collaboration costs. This led to the conclusion that more time and effort must be dedicated to studying the adoption process. This includes conducting a cost-benefit analysis for each marketing strategy that management intends to implement.

In summary, the researchers concluded that the convergence of these qualitative and quantitative results demonstrates that food vlogging is a viable marketing strategy, particularly for sales generation and increasing brand exposure. However, unpredictable viewer interaction and high cost of collaboration are issues that need to be well-handled. Companies should target influencers whose followers are within their target segment and prioritize cost per action over cost per view, ensuring a sustainable return on investment. These results support the notion that food vlogging can have a substantial impact on sales when done strategically, with a focus on viewer relevance, content authenticity, and quality of interaction. Consequently, food vlogging is

tremendous for businesses, particularly those in the food and hospitality industry, as long as they remain sensitive to market trends and influencer metrics. Limitations of this study included the relatively short time frame for assessing profitability impacts, the focus on a single company, which limited generalizability, and the potential biases inherent in purposive sampling for qualitative data. Additionally, unforeseen external factors affecting social media engagement were not controlled for, which may have influenced the results. Future research should consider longitudinal studies over extended periods to better capture profitability trends and include multiple companies across diverse food sectors to improve the applicability of the findings. Further investigation into cost-benefit analyses of influencer collaborations and exploration of different types of social media platforms could have provided more profound insights. Moreover, examining the role of viewer engagement metrics and content authenticity in greater detail would have helped optimize marketing strategies involving food vloggers.

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