

IMPACT OF FOOD BLOGGING ON FAST FOOD INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The rise of food blogging has significantly influenced the fast food industry, reshaping consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and brand perception. This study explores the multidimensional impact of food blogging, particularly through social media platforms, on the fast-food industry in India. It examines how consumer decision-making processes are affected by food bloggers' content and the interplay between various social media platforms and consumer engagement. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews, to provide a comprehensive analysis.

The findings reveal that food blogging acts as a catalyst for brand awareness, particularly through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Zomato, where visually appealing content attracts significant consumer attention. Quantitative analysis demonstrates that the frequency of watching food blogs, the influence of reviews and ratings, and the likelihood of impulse consumption are positively correlated with consumer engagement on these platforms. Instagram emerged as the most influential medium, with users relying heavily on the authenticity and visual quality of food blogging content to make dining decisions.

Qualitative insights from interviews with restaurant owners underscore the role of food blogging as a cost-effective marketing tool. While bloggers' promotions drive short-term spikes in customer traffic, their long-term impact on building a loyal customer base is limited. Ethical concerns, such as the authenticity of blogger reviews and undisclosed sponsorships, also pose challenges to maintaining consumer trust. Additionally, the study highlights the cultural and social dimensions of food blogging, showcasing its potential to promote diverse cuisines and shape contemporary food trends.

Despite its benefits, the study identifies gaps in the reliability of social media-driven marketing. Traditional advertising methods, though less popular, remain relevant in specific demographics. The research also notes the need for businesses to strategically balance digital

and conventional marketing approaches to maximize consumer reach and satisfaction. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on food blogging and its implications for the fast-food industry by providing empirical evidence of its influence on consumer behavior and business performance. It offers practical recommendations for marketers to leverage food blogging effectively while addressing ethical concerns and enhancing consumer trust. The findings underscore the importance of integrating social media strategies with traditional marketing frameworks to achieve sustainable growth in the fast-food sector.

Keywords

Food blogging, social media marketing, consumer behavior, fast food industry, Instagram, influencer marketing, customer engagement, digital marketing, ethical concerns, visual content.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is sometimes asserted that the most effective way to reach an individual's heart is via their stomach. What is the optimal method for an entity to satisfy its clients with its products? Respond, as everyone of you possessed confidence in Social Media. Several studies have been conducted that examine consumer decision-making processes while selecting a restaurant and how digital media and contemporary technologies employed by dining establishments influence customer purchase choices (restaurant selection). At this juncture, additional information regarding client restaurant dynamic cycles and utilitarian data is anticipated, particularly considering the contemporary emphasis on mobile technology and digital media's integration into our lives. The term "foodie," initially used in 1982 by Gael Greene of New York magazine, refers to an individual with a distinct passion for food. Over time, and via two or three innovative developments, the culinary enthusiast has evolved into a different kind of gastronomic aficionado - the food blogger. Although food enthusiasts are passionate about cuisine, food bloggers like observing and disseminating information about food. The act of contributing to a blog serves as a vital justification for why numerous food enthusiasts express their affection for the community; it is "an exceptional method of garnering customer support and transforming it into something beneficial and innovative, resulting in a masterpiece."

Nonetheless, disseminating culinary material through a blog has heightened bistro retailers' awareness of the rapid dissemination of information and opinions regarding their establishments. Conversely, a delectable new restaurant can be quite renowned at the current time. Unwarranted or ill-considered remarks from a reputable online journal can significantly impede expected visitor traffic. The ubiquity of blogging has enabled bloggers to receive personalized feedback from highly regarded restaurants, a privilege previously reserved for professional critics. As bloggers blur the distinction between experts and laypersons, their remarks may be perceived as either protective or appreciative. The chef can simply contact the blogger and provide a clear commentary on a web piece. The dissemination of culinary material on blogs has evolved into a compelling debate between seasoned experts and amateurs. Despite the fact that critics often operate discreetly and often have a budget to sample a variety of dishes before making evaluations, bloggers usually arrive with a limited budget and base their judgements on minimal samples. Although specialists may employ a more rigorous process and strategy in evaluating restaurants compared to amateurs, the beginner perspective is more representative of the typical dining experience.

Moral appeals are currently being made among restaurants and food bloggers. Bloggers are occasionally perceived as advocates, raising ethical enquiries such as whether they receive complimentary meals. Does this blogger have a specific interest in assisting a certain diner? Is currently emerging. Food bloggers may follow a general set of rules; nevertheless, the absence of a governing entity, such as a publication, allows their conduct to be guided by personal discretion. With the rapid rise in the popularity of food blogging, cuisine has grown more prominent. Cookbooks are currently more popular than ever, alongside cooking

websites and television programs; culinary experts have become nearly as renowned as celebrities. Our social class has indeed provided us with the anticipated opportunity to consume diverse cuisine and engage in related entertainment. The inclusion of food content in blogs has fundamentally transformed the promotional strategies of restaurants, facilitating the rapid dissemination of information from journalists to readers. Despite amicable concerns and some challenges within the restaurant industry, it is undeniable that the public seeks to explore cuisine, acquire knowledge about food, and understand bloggers' perspectives on new establishments.

Through electronic media platforms such as Facebook pages, blogs, and various websites, a prospective customer can acquire more information about a restaurant prior to visiting it in person. Furthermore, transactions rise due to enhanced brand visibility and traffic generated through word-of-mouth promotion, discounts, special offers, or events disseminated via social media platforms. Online media establishes a brand image for the restaurant and encourages customers to return following a pleasant dining experience. Additionally, participating in social systems associations, disseminating content to a blog, and various forms of digital media. Returns through online media can be enhanced with the appropriate alignment between persuasive communication and promotional strategies. Notifications on event and headway updates: Notifications or announcements of events or the discontinuation of menu items by restaurants via electronic media facilitate a favourable turnout, since they can engage a broader audience with minimal effort.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Food Blogging

The newest evaluation indicates that there are 100 million Instagram users in India. Instagram anticipates a significant role in shaping individuals' perspectives. This study evaluates the impact of Instagram food bloggers promoting a calorie-conscious lifestyle on their followers. It analyzed diverse food distribution content on a blog and its influence on the community's progression towards a healthier lifestyle. The research examines the strategies employed by prominent food bloggers to influence individuals towards a prudent weight loss lifestyle. The analysis examined the effects and impacts of both bloggers and allies through impartial interviews and audits. The sample size comprises 200 respondents. Mean estimations are employed to analyze the response. The findings indicate that the majority of the group prefers to follow quality food bloggers on Instagram. The evident credibility and perceived value of food bloggers consistently influence individuals' attitudes towards fine cuisine, thereby affecting their immediate goals. The investigation revealed that online food diaries promote healthier eating habits and highlight concerns with the consumption of quality food. In past studies the influence of motivation as client inspiration to engage with food and beverage brands and the assistance of food bloggers in fostering client commitment using the social media platform Instagram. Motivational factors are illustrated through financial and non-financial perspectives. Inspiration distinctly influences perceptions of accountability about

brands via social media. Secondly, food bloggers significantly influence brand perception, which firmly affects consumer attitudes towards brand accountability through social media. Third, adopting a perspective on responsibility has effectively facilitated the purpose of engaging with, which continues to strategies purchasing through online media. This emphasis on disclosures provides meticulous structure to food and beverage brands on consumer accountability, utilizing influencers and food bloggers via social media platforms like Instagram, in a theoretical context.

Food blogging has emerged as a transformative force within the fast food industry, significantly influencing consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and brand perception. Several studies have examined the various dimensions of food blogging and its multifaceted impact on this sector. Nathaniel and Bermoy et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for food-related products during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that while online marketing strategies gained prominence, traditional advertising methods continued to resonate with certain demographics. The researchers recommended that brands adopt a hybrid approach, combining the rapid reach of digital media with the reliability of conventional strategies to address diverse consumer preferences effectively.

2.2 Influence of Food Blogging on Purchase Intentions

Aypar Sat and Ipek Kazancoglu (2020) focused on the perceived usefulness of food bloggers' recommendations in shaping purchase intentions for food products and services. Using a survey of 394 respondents and employing regression analysis, their findings demonstrated that positive consumer attitudes toward food bloggers significantly mediate the relationship between perceived usefulness and purchase intentions. This research highlights the strategic importance of leveraging credible food influencers to enhance brand loyalty and drive sales in the fast food industry. Lynn Schutte (2018) conducted an explorative study analyzing the structure and practices of food blogs and videos. By coding content from 25 creators, Schutte observed that food blogs are more targeted toward niche audiences, while videos cater to a broader demographic. This duality has allowed fast food brands to tailor their marketing strategies, promoting diverse cuisines and creating more inclusive dining experiences. Schutte's work underscores the role of food blogging in fostering cultural exchange and expanding consumer horizons in the fast food sector.

Dependent Variable: Frequency of Watching Food Blogging Content

H₀: There is no significant relationship between social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Quora, Dineout, and Zomato) and the frequency of watching food blogging content.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Quora, Dineout, and Zomato) and the frequency of watching food blogging content.

Kalyani Kumbhojkar et al. (2020) investigated the economic implications of influencer marketing on fast food outlets and cafes. Their study, focusing on Mumbai and Pune, revealed that collaborations with influencers led to increased customer traffic and brand visibility. However, the researchers also highlighted concerns regarding the authenticity of influencer endorsements, urging brands to carefully evaluate the credibility of their collaborators to maintain consumer trust. Manoj Timilsina (2017) examined the ethical dilemmas posed by the growing influence of food bloggers. The study noted that while bloggers offer a cost-effective alternative to traditional advertising, their independence from regulatory oversight raises questions about biases and undisclosed sponsorships. Timilsina emphasized the need for greater transparency and accountability in food blogging practices to protect consumer interests and ensure fair competition among fast food businesses.

Dependent Variable: Influence of Reviews and Ratings on Restaurant Selection

H₀: There is no significant relationship between social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Quora, Dineout, and Zomato) and the influence of reviews and ratings on restaurant selection.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Quora, Dineout, and Zomato) and the influence of reviews and ratings on restaurant selection.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A conclusive research design was adopted, incorporating cross-sectional surveys and in-depth interviews. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews. The study targeted individuals aged 15 years and above across India. A sample size of 269 respondents was calculated using the formula for continuous variables, ensuring statistical reliability. Non-probability sampling was employed to gather data from salaried individuals, business owners, students, and retirees. Also in depth interview from five food joints situated in central market of Dwarka was also conducted.

3.2 Reliability of the Instrument

The Reliability of questionnaire is analyzed using Cronbach's alpha which is 0.845, it signifies an adequate level of internal consistency in our scale for this unique combination of questionnaires and population.

3.3 Sample Size

We will use continuous variables on an Itemized rating scale (Likert Scale). So, for calculating sample size, we have the formula:

$n = (Z \cdot S/E)^2$ Where, n is the sample size, S is the Standard error of sample, E is the Tolerable Error, and Z is the value from the standard normal distribution table for the given confidence level.

As all the responses are measured on scale of 1-5 Sample size = $(Z \cdot S/E)^2$

Standard error of sample = range/6 $S = 4/6 = .67$

Tolerable error = 0.08 Confidence interval = 95%,

thus $Z = 1.96$ from the standard normal distribution table. Therefore, sample size = $(1.96 \cdot .67/0.08)^2 = 269$

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 KMO Test and Factor Analysis

4.1.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table I

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.636
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2326.334
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

The KMO and Bartlett test evaluate all available data together. A KMO value over 0.5 and a significance level for the Bartlett's test below 0.05 suggest there is substantial correlation in the data. Variable collinearity indicates how strongly a single variable is correlated with other variables. Our KMO is .636 which proves factor and principal component analysis is useful.

Factor analysis is a measurable technique used to portray inconstancy among noticed, associated factors as far as a conceivably lower number of unnoticed factors called factors.

4.2 Factor Analysis

Table II

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.843	15.795	15.795
2	2.441	13.550	29.355
3	2.181	12.117	41.472
4	2.097	11.651	53.153
5	1.625	9.030	62.153
6	1.515	8.415	70.569

Table III
Extraction Method: Principal Component Matrix

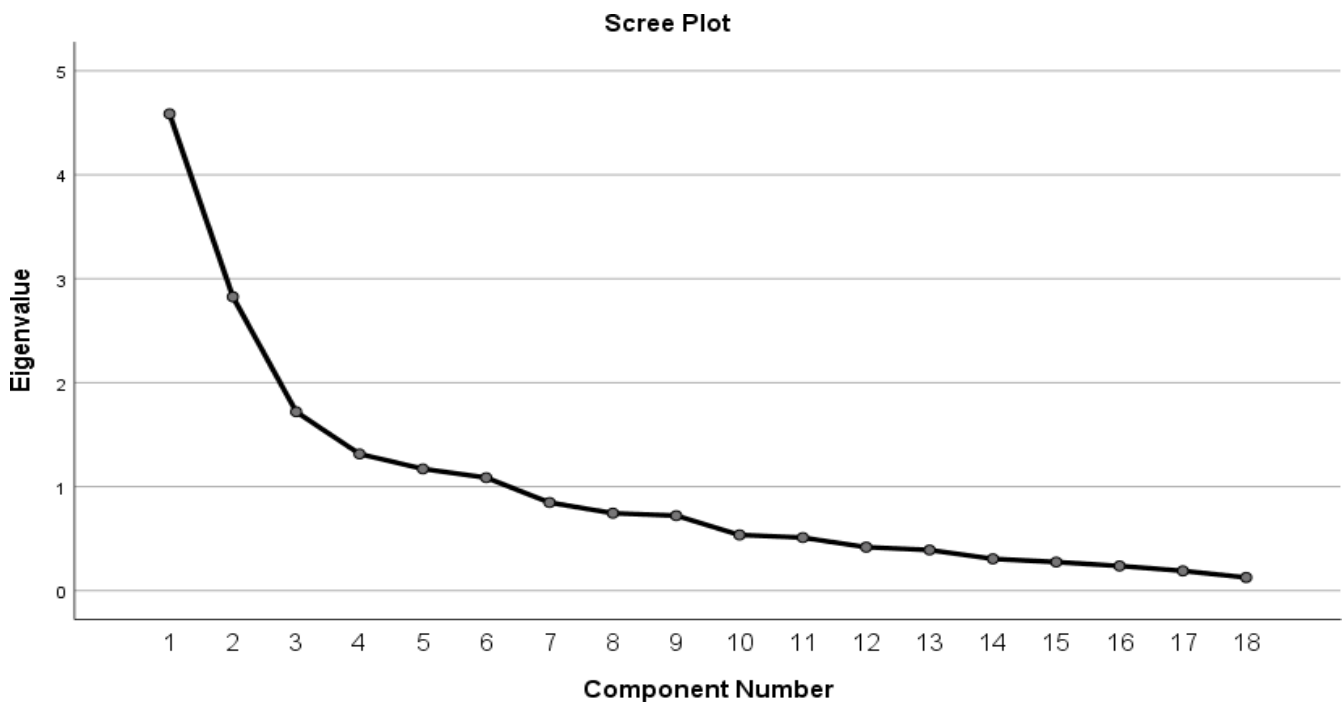
Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	.452	.542	.449	.394	.335	.183
2	.773	.310	.265	.270	.084	-.395
3	.002	-.231	.600	-.641	.396	-.137
4	-.037	.739	-.310	-.594	-.050	.029
5	.209	-.050	-.471	.090	.634	-.567
6	.392	.085	.224	-.022	-.566	-.684

Extraction Method: Principal Component Matrix

Table IV
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Component	Group	Factors
1	Action and Reaction	Frequency of watching
		Reviews and Ratings affected
		Try new restaurants
		Knowledge of New Dishes
2	Reasons for attraction towards a restaurant	Imp of follower count
		Write up quality
		Food pictures
		Authenticity of author
3	Urge to eat if pocket friendly	After watching going out
		Facebook
		Price
4	Blog sites	YouTube
		Quora
		Dineout
5	Social media leader	Instagram
		Zomato
6	Impulse consumption	Impulse consumption

Figure I



4.3 Multiple regression

4.3.1 Dependent Variable: Frequency of Watching Food Blogging Content

Multiple Regression was performed to analyse the relationship between the 6 factors identified – Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Quora, Dineout and Zomato and the behavior that has been identified after studying the literature namely – Frequency of watching , Reviews and ratings. The analysis for the factors, which were the dependent variable and the behavior parameters, were the independent factors. The analysis was conducted on SPSS further helped to understand which factor was really showing a strong relation with the behavior parameters identified. After the complete analysis with all parameters, we aim to conclude which factor has shown relation with all the parameters.

Table V

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change	Durbin-Waston
.565	.319	.305	.978	.319	22.967	6	294	.000	2.367

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zomato, Facebook, Dineout, Quora, Instagram, YouTube

b. Dependent Variable: Frequency of Watching Food Blogging Content

The model summary gives the overview of our R square value to be 0.319, which implies that it explains 31.9% of the data correctly which we have collected and is considered significant as the value of significance is 0.000. The Durbin-Watson has a value of 2.367, which is above 2 and hence indicates that there is a negative correlation between our dependent and independent variables selected.

From the coefficients table we can have the regression equation made as, $Y(t) = 0.456 + 0.021\text{Facebook} + 0.342\text{Instagram} + (-0.022)\text{YouTube} + (-0.274)\text{Quora} + 0.481\text{Dineout} + 0.071\text{Zomato}$

Table VI

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	2.831	.309		9.167	.000
Facebook	.058	.042	.077	-1.388	.166
Instagram	.300	.060	.296	4.970	.000
Youtube	-.053	.058	-.061	-.911	.363
Quora	-.304	.051	-.376	-5.930	.000
<u>Dineout</u>	.283	.057	.312	5.003	.000
Zomato	-.041	.074	.034	-.551	.582

From the significance value, we can see that for Instagram, Quora and Dineout the value is less than 0.05, hence we can say that Frequency of watching has factors which are influenced more as compared to the other factors.

4.3.2 Dependent Variable: Reviews and ratings

Table VII

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change	Durbin-Waston
.437 ^a	.191	.175	.868	.191	11.580	6	294	.000	2.352

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zomato, Facebook, Dineout, Quora, Instagram, YouTube

b. Dependent Variable: Reviews and Rating

The model summary gives the overview of our R square value to be 0.191, which implies that it explains 19.1% of the data correctly which we have collected and is considered significant as the value of significance is 0.000. The Durbin-Watson has a value of 2.352, which is above

2 and hence indicates that there is a negative correlation between our dependent and independent variables selected.

From the coefficients table we can have the regression equation made as, $Y(t) = 2.831 + (-0.077)\text{Facebook} + 0.296\text{Instagram} + 0.061\text{YouTube} + (-0.376)\text{Quora} + 0.312\text{Dineout} + (-0.034)\text{Zomato}$

Table VIII

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	.456	.348		1.309	.191
Facebook	.019	.047	.021	.410	.682
Instagram	.425	.068	.342	6.249	.000
Youtube	-.023	.065	-.022	-.359	.720
Quora	-.272	.058	-.274	-4.706	.000
<u>Dineout</u>	.535	.064	.481	8.406	.000
Zomato	.105	.084	.071	1.256	.210

4.4 In depth Interview Primary Research

A top to bottom meeting is an open-finished, disclosure arranged strategy to get itemized data about a subject from a partner. Top to bottom meetings are a subjective examination technique; they want to investigate inside and out a respondent's perspective, encounters, sentiments, and viewpoints. These sorts of meetings are regularly led toward the start of a bigger exploration project when there are inquiries concerning how to limit the focal point of the examination, for sure inquiries should be investigated through the exploration. They are along these lines a particularly decent decision for networks who have remarkable exploration objectives that don't effectively squeeze into a portion of the normal goals portrayed in this manual.

Through and through gatherings share more for all intents and purposes with an editorialist's gathering than with a survey interview. For example, studies have fixed reviews, however an all around interview works significantly more like an authority guide-there are no scales, respondents answer as would be normal for them, and the examiner can change the solicitation and stream of the requests and posture to additional requests relying upon the circumstance.

Table IX

Questions	Chinese Fast food center	Paparizza	Krishna Omelette stall Ans 3)	Tummy Section	KC momos stall
How were sales previously?	Sales were a little low since the covid hit and it was tough to open shop for passers by since most of the business we have is through visual appeal we present to people walking by.	We started our own social media page to promote our brand and new dishes we introduced in the menu. But it didn't take off as we expected. So we invited a few food bloggers to come try our food.	Before covid, the sales were good. But when pandemic struck, I couldn't open my stall and business suffered. I was not able to make a single sale in over a year.	Since inauguration, sales have been slow in our new branch in spite of It being in one of the busiest location In Dwarka.	Sales have been good thanks to the lord, I have one of the busiest stall in Dwarka.
Did food bloggers bring in new customers?	Initially one blogger came and claimed if he filmed a short movie including me cooking, it will bring in a lot of customers. I agreed since the business was already low. He made a short movie and posted it somewhere. In a few days people started coming in and clicking pictures of the food they	Once the 1st blogger shared a short reel and picture of our merry-go-round fries platter, it became an instant hit. We reshared it on our social media handle and the response was good. We started getting customers coming in and ordering that	After I could open my stall a food blogger came along and made video of my 10 eggs omelette. After that people started coming in to try that omelette or take pictures of it or of me while preparing that omelette.	We invited a few food bloggers to come try our dishes free of cost in return of them blogging about it. They snapped pictures and made vlogs of our food, the interior of the restaurant and the chefs and it worked upto an extent. We started getting more customers to come in and order our food	Some food bloggers come now and then and make reels and videos of the food and me preparing it. Business blows up even more after that for a few days.

	ordered. Then a few more bloggers came in and business somewhat started booming again.	particular dish. So we invited more bloggers to come try the other dishes we had on our menu.		and take pictures against the wall that was mentioned in one of the blogs.	
Returning customer base increased?	We get a lot of new faces and a few returning faces but they are from before the short video since they live nearby.	Returning customers are a little low compared to the new ones we get here. We have a few familiar faces who come in on weekends but that's about that.	I always had familiar faces coming in and that still continues.	Not really. People come in and try the food once. We have some people returning after weeks but not anyone who comes in on a regular basis.	I have a lot of returning customers on a daily basis. Some of them have always been there and some of them came because of the blog and struck around.
Are you able to charge a premium after social media advertisement?	Not really. We are a small business and usually make enough to break even.	Yes, once we made our market, we were able to charge premium since we are now a brand and people from all over Delhi come to try our heart pizza and fries platter. We made our business unique.	My rates have always been the same. I increase them on new years and carry it throughout the year.	We are still picking up pace. Maybe once we are in full blown mode, we'll be able to charge a premium on basis of our name.	My prices are fair but yes, they are on a higher side as compared to my competitors since I provide, according to me, a better experience.

5. CONCLUSION

The framework of the current study can be viewed as a theoretical foundation for understanding how food blogging affect the restaurant decision-making process and the relationship between the use of social media and its impact on dining choice behaviors. Therefore, the findings of this study will contribute to broadening the literature on consumers' restaurant decision-making process and their related behaviors while watching the food bloggers.

This study was conducted in India with a goal of explaining the impact of food bloggers on fast food industry. The study's goal was to discover the food blogging characteristics that influenced consumer. The study objectives were created to help the researcher narrow down the subject and uncover possible explanations for the problem. The aforementioned ideas in the report, as well as the data analysis of the research, have both demonstrated that, whether in combination with social media or mainstream media, consumers are very selective in attending, processing, and selecting information before making a decision.

In essence, all Food blogging platforms have provided a two-way communication flow, which is highlighted both conceptually and practically. As a result, this primary feature of food blogging has produced a new environment in support of information socializing, and has compelled marketers to abandon their previous attitude in dealing with mass media marketing. According to the collected feedback from individuals, it has been stressed that, particularly through Food blogging, restaurants are increasing their businesses and getting recognized in the society.

Furthermore, before visiting a restaurant or placing an order online, consumers evaluate recommendations from Food bloggers. Furthermore, restaurants that employ various platforms for marketing produce confusion due to outdated information or a complete lack of information. It will eventually lead to conflicting ideas when it comes to selecting a specific restaurant. It cannot be denied that consumers pay attention to the opinions of others. As a result, restaurant marketing tactics should cater to customers from various walks of life. There were a few restrictions to this study report in terms of the subject research and the researcher. Some of them included Firstly, all information was gathered using an online survey. In addition, the convenience sample technique was applied, which cannot define the true picture of the situation. The veracity of the replies is also called into question because there was no surveillance while the respondents completed the survey. Secondly, because the decision-making process incorporates psychological aspects that may result in varied behavioral acts, the aforementioned findings cannot reflect all persons in India as a whole.

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