

Food Vlogger Impact on Promoting MSE Culinary Products in An Emerging Country: Evidence in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The growth of social media has transformed the landscape of marketing, particularly for culinary products. Food vloggers have emerged as key players in promoting such products. This research examines the influence of a well-known Indonesian food vlogger, Tanboy Kun, on TikTok users' intentions to purchase culinary products from Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), emphasizing user interaction as a critical factor. Adopting a quantitative approach, a survey of 275 TikTok users who had viewed Tanboy Kun's videos was conducted. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and data were analysed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The findings implicate that in Indonesia, as a rapidly growing emerging market economy with one of the most highly engaged social media populations in the world, Video Content and Video Quality are more crucial than the food vlogger's reputation when developing effective social media promotional strategies for culinary products from MSEs. Thus, it is necessary for the MSEs to enhance the quality of their own video content to create experiential marketing initiatives that encourage direct consumer engagement. This could help cultivate a more authentic connection with the target audience, ultimately driving purchase intentions more effectively than relying on influencer reputation alone.

Keywords:

Social Media, User Interaction, Purchase Intention, Micro and Small Enterprises, Food Industry

JEL Classification: M31; L26; L66

Introduction

The food and beverage (F&B) sector continues to grow dynamically in meeting the needs of modern consumers, with global revenue growth reaching 7.3% from 6,729.54 billion USD in 2022 to 7,221.73 billion USD in 2023, with Asia-Pacific being the largest market (New York, 2023). Globally, this sector continues to increase in line with changing consumer tastes (Sang et al., 2024). At the national level, MSEs play a role as the driving force of the economy, with a contribution of 61% to Indonesia's GDP or the equivalent of IDR 9,580 trillion and absorbing around 117 million workers (97%) (Coordinating Ministry for the Economy, 2023). Overall, MSEs also cover 95% of companies in the world and account for 60% of global employment (World Trade Organization, 2025), with the trade, accommodation, food, and beverage sectors being the most dominant in Indonesia.

As a rapidly growing emerging market economy, the culinary sector in Indonesia is the largest part of MSEs which continues to grow significantly (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, 2025). It was recorded that in 2023 there were 4.85 million F&B businesses with an increase of 21.13% compared to 2016 (BPS, 2024), as well as absorbing 9.80 million workers and generating revenue of up to 998.37 trillion rupiah. This also applies to the economy, where MSEs play an important role as the main driving force. Along with these developments, there has been a major transformation in marketing strategies from conventional to faster and more interactive digital marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2021), in line with the increase in global internet users (5.56 billion) and social media (63.9%) by 2025 (Statista, 2025), including in Indonesia which reaches 229 million internet users (APJII, 2025).

While everyday social media usage is high, creating professional content, editing food photography, and running targeted ad campaigns often exceed the skill sets of local entrepreneurs. Many resort to basic, infrequent posting, resulting in low customer engagement (Raya et al., 2021). Platforms such as TikTok are one of the dominant media with 108 million users in Indonesia and the highest usage time compared to other social media (Datareportal, 2025; We Are Social, 2025; Faladhin, 2024). TikTok's dominance has encouraged the emergence of video-based content phenomena, including food vloggers as a form of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) that influences consumer decisions. Food vloggers act as content creators who provide reviews, recommendations, and culinary experiences that can influence consumer perception and purchase intent (Choi et al., 2019; Lacsina, 2023). Through social media platforms, food vloggers act as a medium for promoting food and beverage brands by utilizing their personal accounts, as well as facilitating audience interaction through like, share, and comment features that support the effectiveness of digital marketing communication (Buchanan et al., 2018). Consumers benefit from the influence of social media influencers. A food vlogger who has a big influence is Tanboy Kun, with more than 4.7 million followers and 78.7 million likes on TikTok. His natural, interactive, and experiential-based content makes him relevant as an object of research. He reviews a lot of culinary MSE products, especially non-endorsement ones, which will reflect the organic perception of the audience (Hanifawati et al., 2019).

A number of studies have proven that the characteristics of a food vlogger play an important role in influencing consumer behavior. Sang et al. (2024) found that reputation, video content, and quality of video have a positive effect on purchase intention and are mediated by user interaction, while expertise does not show a significant influence. However, these findings are not entirely in line with the research of Gomes et al. (2022) which shows that expertise still contributes to purchase intention through certain mediation mechanisms. Sokolova and Kefi's (2020) research also found that influencer credibility and parasocial interaction have a positive

effect on purchase intention, while Luong and Ho (2023) show that the characteristics of food vloggers affect consumer attitudes, which further increases social commerce intention. The difference in the results indicates that there are still empirical inconsistencies regarding the influence of food vlogger characteristics on consumer purchase intentions.

Most of the previous research was conducted in the context of fashion products, cosmetics, luxury brands, and street food in other countries such as Vietnam, Portugal, France, and India (Gomes et al., 2022; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Bhagat et al., 2025). Their findings cannot be generalized in the context of TikTok users in Indonesia, especially the culinary products of MSEs. In addition, research that examines the role of user interaction as a mediation mechanism between reputation, expertise, video content, quality of video, and purchase intention is still relatively limited.

This research potentially offers significant theoretical contributions to the fields of digital and influencer marketing by emphasizing the importance of influencer expertise and reputation, and user interaction in influencing social media users' purchase intention. Practically, this research also potentially provides valuable insights for MSEs by exploring the strategic factors that should be prioritized that leverage food vlogger, utilizing TikTok as a marketing platform. By finding the significance factors within a dynamic social media environment, this research enhances the understanding of how MSEs can optimize their promotional marketing strategy on TikTok to achieve better consumer engagement and conversion rates. Therefore, this research expands a model proposed by Sang et al. (2024) to measure TikTok users' engagement with video content related to MSEs' culinary products, which is produced by Tanboy Kun, a well-known food vlogger in Indonesia. By re-evaluating the mediation role of user interaction, this research will provide more comprehensive empirical evidence on how the characteristics of food vloggers and video content, might influence user interaction as mediator and their purchase intention on MSEs culinary products.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory

This research uses the theory of Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) as the grand theory. This theory was introduced first by Woodworth (1929). As a development of the Stimulus–Response (S-R) model by adding the element of Organism (O) to describe the internal processes of individuals in responding to a stimulus, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) developed the SOR model in their study of environmental psychology to explain how stimuli from the environment can affect the cognitive and affective states of individuals which then produce certain behavioral responses. The SOR theory explains the mechanism of how food vlogger characteristics affect purchase intention through user interaction. In this research, Reputation, Expertise, Video Content, and Quality of Video are positioned as stimulus, while User Interaction as an organism, and Purchase Intention as a response.

User Interaction

Interaction is defined as the level of mutual influence that occurs through the exchange of messages or media between two or more parties (Liu et al., 2022). In the context of marketing, reviews and content strategies have been proven to attract attention and influence consumer behavior (Fahimah & Munfarida, 2023). While reviews from influencers also play an important role in increasing the visibility of content, making it easier to reach consumers (Brooks et al., 2022). On TikTok, the engagement is strengthened through the use of hashtag challenges that encourage users to create and share content, increasing user-generated content-

based engagement (Song et al., 2023). Thus, the interaction positively impacts brand awareness, engagement, and consumption.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the consumers' tendency to plan and purchase a product or service after evaluating various available alternatives (Wu et al., 2011; Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2019). In the context of digital marketing, purchase intention influences by hedonistic messages, positive reviews, and the quality of information received by consumers (Putra et al., 2023; Marcos et al., 2020). On the TikTok platform, food vloggers act as a source of information that is able to increase awareness of culinary products and shape consumer perception through the reviews (Briliana et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Priatika et al. (2023) also found that food vlogger recommendations have a positive influence on purchase intention. Therefore, informative, relevant, and credible reviews from food vloggers potentially increase consumer purchase intention for culinary products.

Food Vlogger

Food vloggers play a role in providing advice, criticism, and evaluation of food, restaurants, and culinary destinations through reviews published in online media such as videos (Briliana et al., 2020; Lacsina, 2023; Luong & Ho, 2023). The reviews contain information, recommendations, and opinions that can influence consumer purchase decision, with the level of usability, reflecting influencers' relevance, usefulness, and credibility as indicators of reviewers' trust (Mudambi and Schuff, 2010; Ghose & Ipeiritis, 2011; Korfiatis et al., 2012). On TikTok, food vloggers play an important role in shaping consumer preferences, where the quality of reviews is influenced by their reputation as reflected in followers, likes, comments, and impressions as an indicator of credibility (Chua & Banerjee, 2015; Wang & Kuchmaner, 2024), expertise that demonstrates the ability to evaluate food (Luong & Ho, 2023; Rozamuri et al., 2022), as well as video content that includes factuality, emotional appeal, depth of information, and narrative, including technical aspects such as visual, audio, and editing quality that reinforce the viewing experience or user interaction, which eventually may impact their purchase intention and decision (Fan et al., 2022; Mudambi and Schuff, 2010; Lacsina, 2023).

Reputation

Reputation of food vlogger is formed from a track record in producing video content that is considered interesting and useful by the audience. The indicator can be seen from the number of badges, followers, impressions, comments, and likes on TikTok. The higher the credibility and authority possessed, the greater the value and the influence of the content perceived by the audience (Chua & Banerjee, 2015; Wang et al., 2023). Food vloggers who have high popularity can also shape consumer perception of product quality while increasing brand awareness (Karagiannis et al., 2022). In addition, Frank et al. (2014) emphasized that a reputable food vlogger will increase brand awareness and perceived quality, encouraging the formation of brand loyalty in food or culinary products. These previous studies present the following hypotheses:

H1. The reputation of food vloggers has a positive effect on user interaction.

H2. The reputation of food vloggers has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H3. The user interaction mediates the indirect effect between the reputation of food vloggers and purchase intention.

Expertise

Food vloggers are seen as individuals who specialize in various aspects of culinary products, from cooking techniques, the use of ingredients, to understanding the history and the culture of the food or culinary products. These characteristics reflect their expertise that increases the credibility, competence, and trust of the audience in the information conveyed (Luong & Ho, 2023; Rozamuri et al., 2022). To remain relevant, food vloggers are also required to produce content that is interesting, relatable, and follows the latest culinary trends such as plant-based food and healthy diets (Tarigan et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, a deep understanding of food quality—which includes taste, sensory characteristics, and overall quality—is an important factor in food vlogger's expertise assessment (Kunekar et al., 2022; Vaclavik & Christian, 2014). Extensive experience and expertise in the culinary field makes food vloggers more trustworthy, so their opinions and insights influence brand perception, consumer preferences, and business reputation.

H4. Food vlogger expertise has a positive effect on user interaction.

H5. Food vlogger expertise has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H6. The user interaction mediates the indirect effect between food vlogger expertise and purchase intention.

Video Content

Food vloggers play an important role in shaping consumers' culinary experiences through the content they produce, with reviews covering aspects of bias, accuracy, emotional resonance, length, depth, and level of understanding (Fan et al., 2022; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Zhang & Zhang, 2023). In the process of watching video content, the audience also considers factors such as food variety, service quality, atmosphere, price, menu diversity, and presentation style (Andilolo & Ranteallo, 2017). On TikTok, food vlogger's video content serves as a catalyst interaction that not only shapes online engagement, but also influences audiences' offline behavior through emotional resonance that encourages discussion, content sharing, and collaborative recipe recreation (Jesllyn et al., 2021). Strong narrative and presentation styles of the video content can create a sense of awe and increase audience exploration in digital culinary experiences (Aras, 2023). These previous studies present the following hypotheses:

H7. Video food vlogger content has a positive effect on user interaction.

H8. Video food vlogger content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H9. The user interaction mediates the indirect effect between video food vlogger and purchase intention.

Quality of Video

The visual and technical aspects of content creation include lighting, editing, shooting angles, visual effects, audio quality, and video resolution. All of these elements play a role in shaping the audience's perception of the extent to which culinary videos are considered interesting, clear, and entertaining (Lacsina, 2023). These previous studies present the following hypotheses:

H10. Quality of video food vlogger has a positive effect on user interaction.

H11. The quality of video food vloggers has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H12. The user interaction mediates the indirect effect between quality of video food vloggers and purchase intention.

Table 1. Operational Variables

Variables (Statements adapted from)	Indicators
<i>Reputation</i> Chua & Banerjee (2015); Wang & Kuchmaner (2024)	(Rep1) <i>The reviewer</i> has an official badge that indicates credibility. (Rep2) The number of <i>followers of a reviewer</i> reflects his Reputation level. (Rep3) The number of views of <i>the reviewer's</i> videos shows his reputation. (Rep4) The number of comments on a <i>reviewer's video</i> reflects its influence. (Rep5) The number of likes on the video <i>reviewer</i> shows a good reputation.
<i>Expertise</i> Luong & Ho (2023); Rozamuri et al. (2022)	(Exp1) <i>Reviewers</i> have a deep understanding of culinary. (Exp2) Reviewers have accurate and relevant information about the nutritional value of food. (Exp3) <i>The reviewer</i> has knowledge of the cultural background and history of food.
<i>Video Content</i> Mudambi & Schuff (2010); Andilolo & Ranteallo (2017); Fan et al., (2022); Zhang & Zhang (2023)	(Con1) <i>Video Content</i> presents information about food objectively (Con2) <i>Video Content</i> provides factual and trustworthy information (Con3) <i>The reviewer</i> is able to convey emotions and experiences related to food. (Con4) <i>Video Content</i> is presented in a concise and easy-to-understand manner. (Con5) <i>Video Content</i> discusses various aspects of food in depth. (Con6) <i>Video Content</i> is structured in clear and easy-to-understand language.
<i>Quality of Video</i> Lacsina (2023); Lu et al. (2014); Taylor (2023)	(QV1) The video has high resolution and good visual quality. (QV2) The video has clear and easy-to-understand sound quality. (QV3) The video has good lighting and contrast. (QV4) The video is rendered with smooth and professional editing. (QV5) The video uses the right and attractive camera angle. (QV6) The video features creative and engaging visual effects.
<i>User Interaction</i> Goswami et al., (2017); Liu & Shrum (2002); Fahimah & Munfarida (2023); Song & Zhao (2023)	(Int1) I tend to like <i>video reviewers</i> . (Int2) I tend to comment or interact with <i>video reviewers</i> . (Int3) I tend to share <i>video reviewers</i> with others. (Int4) I tend to follow <i>the reviewer's</i> account after watching the video.
<i>Purchase Intention</i> Mustikasari & Widaningsih (2019); Wu et al. (2011)	(PI1) I plan to consider the service/product recommended by the <i>reviewer</i> . (PI2) I am willing to become a customer of a remarkably recommended brand. (PI3) I prefer the brands that the <i>reviewer</i> recommends over other brands.

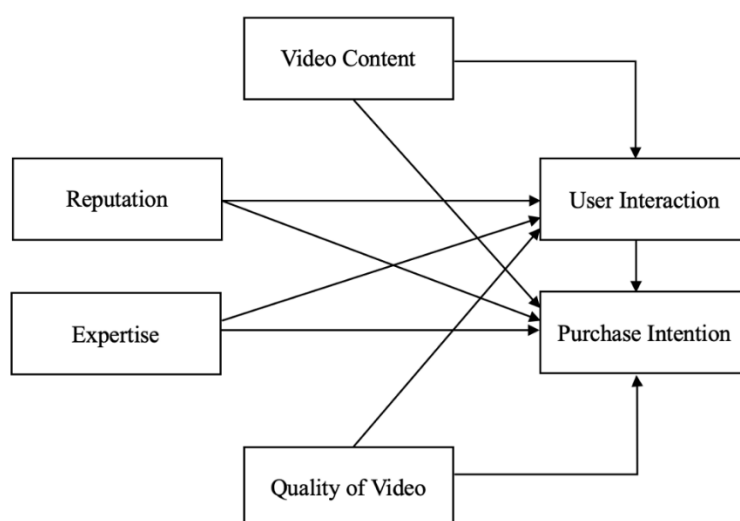


Figure 1. Research Framework

Research Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a positivistic paradigm that focuses on testing causal relationships between variables through statistical measurement. As an explanatory research, it explains the influence of independent variables on dependent variables and the role of User Interaction as mediator. The research framework and operational variables can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 1. The population in this research is TikTok users who have watched culinary videos uploaded by the Tanboy Kun account. This population was chosen because it is relevant to the development of digital marketing in the culinary MSE sector, which is now heavily influenced by food vlogger content (Sugiyono, 2023). As sampling technique, this research uses a non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling approach, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria (Sugiyono, 2023).

The respondents' criteria are: (1) active TikTok users in the last 1 month, and (2) have watched Tanboy Kun's content discussing culinary MSE products (food and beverages). Within the framework of this research, the central focus of analysis is the culinary content disseminated by Tanboy Kun on the TikTok platform. Tanboy Kun, a highly regarded Indonesian food vlogger, has garnered significant attention for his mukbang videos and reviews that prominently feature substantial food portions alongside a distinctive presentation style. His widespread popularity is underscored by a following of 4.7 million users and a remarkable cumulative total of 77.4 million likes, reflecting a high level of audience engagement. These metrics not only indicate considerable content exposure but also highlight the intrinsic appeal of his videos, thereby illustrating his substantial influence on audience perceptions and behaviors with respect to culinary product consumption.

The determination of the number of samples refers to Hair et al. (2021), which is at least 5–10 times the number of indicators. With 27 research indicators, the minimum sample was 135 respondents (27×5). To improve the reliability of the analysis results, this research used 275 respondents. Data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire during January–May 2026 and produced 275 respondents who were worthy of analysis. This research uses primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires based on the Likert scale of 1–5 (Sugiyono, 2023), while secondary data were obtained from scientific literature, official reports, and related publications (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The variables measured include Reputation, Expertise, Video Content, Quality of Video, User Interaction, and Purchase Intention which are represented through the indicators of each variable. The data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. This method is well-suited for testing complex relationships between latent variables and can accommodate models with mediation constructs (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM allows for the simultaneous evaluation of measurement and structural models, enhancing research rigor by analyzing complex models with both formative and reflective constructs. Additionally, it effectively handles non-normally distributed data and smaller sample sizes (Changalima & Chuwa, 2026).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The research engaged a total of 275 respondents who met the specified research criteria of being active TikTok users within the past month and having viewed Tanboy Kun's culinary content that focused on MSE culinary products. The demographic analysis revealed that a majority of the respondents were male (52.7%) and predominantly belonged to the Generation Z age cohort (70.2%). Additionally, the majority of participants were residents of South Tangerang (28.0%) and identified as students (47.3%). Notably, the data indicated that most respondents accessed TikTok 6–10 times per day (43.3%) and exhibited a strong preference for culinary content, with 61.8% of the respondents indicating it as their most frequently consumed type of content. These findings underscore the significant presence of Generation Z, particularly students, who engage extensively with TikTok on a daily basis and show a marked interest in culinary topics. The observed trends provide compelling evidence that aligns well with the objectives of this research, enhancing its relevance to existing studies and offering valuable insights within the context of digital media consumption patterns.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics		Quantity	Percentage
Gender	Male	145	52.7
	Women	130	47.3
Age	14 – 27 Years (Gen Z)	193	70.2
	>27 – 43 Years Old (Millennials)	57	20.7
	>43 – 60 Years Old (Gen X)	25	9.10
	> 60 Years (Baby Boomers)	0	0
Domicile	Jakarta	47	17.1
	Bogor	32	11.6
	Depok	31	11.3
	Tangerang	32	11.6
	South Tangerang	77	28
	Bekasi	33	12
	Others	27	8.4
Jobs	Private Employees	46	16.7
	PNS	22	8
	Entrepreneurship	26	9.5
	Students	29	10.5
	Students	130	47.3
	Housewives	17	6.2
	Others	5	1.8
Total Income	< IDR 1,000,000	59	21.5

Characteristics	Quantity	Percentage
IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 2,000,000	76	27.6
IDR 2,000,001 – IDR 4,000,000	45	16.4
IDR 4,000,001 – IDR 6,000,000	23	8.4
> IDR 6,000,000	72	26.2
Total Expenses		
< IDR 1,000,000	68	24.7
IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 2,000,000	82	29.8
IDR 2,000,001 – IDR 4,000,000	45	16.4
IDR 4,000,001 – IDR 6,000,000	31	11.3
> IDR 6,000,000	49	17.8
Frequency of Access TikTok		
Very rarely/not every day	3	1.1
Rarely (1–2 times a day)	18	6.5
Quite often (3–5 times a day)	68	24.7
Often (6–10 times a day)	119	43.3
Very often (>10 times a day)	67	24.4
Most watched content		
Culinary	170	61.8
Fashion and shoes	34	12.4
Cosmetics and skincare	25	9.1
Ekeltronik	18	6.5
Automotive	23	8.4
Others	5	1.8

Validity and Reliability

All indicators have an outer loading value above 0.70. The AVE value of each construct also exceeds the threshold of 0.50, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3. Convergent Validity

Construct	AVE
Reputation	0.789
Expertise	0.850
Video Content	0.784
Quality of Video	0.807
User Interaction	0.810
Purchase Intention	0.837

discriminant validity is also evaluated through *the Heterotrait-Monotrait* ratio (HTMT). According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is declared to have good discriminant validity if the HTMT value is below 0.90.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	Contents Quality	Expertise	User Interaction	Purchase Intention	Quality of Video	Reputation
Con	1.000					
Exp	0.083	1.000				
Int	0.496	0.547	1.000			
PI	0.484	0.547	0.711	1.000		
QV	0.072	0.072	0.418	0.401	1.000	
Rep	0.051	0.058	0.097	0.040	0.060	1.000

Based on the results of reliability testing using *composite reliability*, all constructs in this research show a reliability value that is above the minimum limit of 0.70, both at ρ_a and

rho_c values. According to Hair et al. (2021), a *composite reliability* value above 0.70 indicates that the construct has a good and reliable level of internal consistency.

Table 5. Composite reliability

Variable	Composite reliability
Video Content	0.956
Expertise	0.945
User Interaction	0.944
Purchase Intention	0.939
Quality of Video	0.962
Reputation	0.949

Hypothesis Testing

The results show that Expertise, Video Content, and Quality of Video significantly influence or play as important roles in increasing User Interaction and Purchase Intention, while Reputation only influences User Interaction, but not Purchase Intention. These findings indicate that TikTok users no longer rely on food vlogger's reputation or popularity as a primary basis for evaluating culinary product recommendations. Instead, they only consider his expertise, information quality, and the quality of the video content presentation quality that is able to provide a more credible and convincing product description. The findings support the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953) which emphasizes the importance of source credibility in influencing audience responses and is in line with the research of Luong and Ho (2023) and Chetoui et al. (2020).

In addition, the results show that content quality and video quality are important factors in shaping user engagement and purchase intent on short video platforms such as TikTok. In an information-filled digital environment, consumers tend to respond to content that is informative, engaging, and easy to understand. Conversely, the insignificant influence of Reputation on Purchase Intention suggests that popularity alone is not enough to drive a purchase decision without being supported by valuable information. Overall, these findings reinforce the Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which explains that the characteristics of food vloggers as stimuli affect Purchase Intention through psychological responses and user behavior in the form of User Interaction. The complete results of the direct path hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Direct Effect

	Direct	Original sample	t-value	p-value	Verdict
H1	Reputation → User Interaction	0.092	2.074	0.038	Accepted
H2	Reputation → Purchase Intention	-0.021	0.460	0.645	Rejected
H4	Expertise → User Interaction	0.435	11.281	0.000	Accepted
H5	Expertise → Purchase Intention	0.351	6.825	0.000	Accepted
H7	Video Content → User Interaction	0.454	11.590	0.000	Accepted
H8	Video Content → Purchase Intention	0.347	6.704	0.000	Accepted
H10	Quality of Video → User Interaction	0.398	10.300	0.000	Accepted
H11	Quality of Video → Purchase Intention	0.292	5.840	0.000	Accepted

Based on Table 6, eight of the nine direct effects proved significant. The strongest influence on User Interaction is Video Content (β 0.454; t : 11.590), followed by Expertise (β : 0.435; t -value: 11.281) and Quality of Video (β : 0.398; t -value: 10.300). Meanwhile, for Purchase Intention, the strongest influence is Expertise (β : 0.351; t -value: 6.825), followed by Video Content (β : 0.347; t -value: 6.704), and Quality of Video (β : 0.292; t -value: 5.840). While

Reputation influences User Interaction, it does not influence Purchase Intention (p-value: 0.645). It indicates that TikTok users consider the video content, the expertise of the food vlogger, and the quality of video on their purchase intention, while food vlogger reputation or popularity does not encourage them to purchase the MSEs' culinary products.

This research also examines the role of User Interaction as mediator. The bootstrapping results in Table 7 shows that User Interaction significantly mediates the indirect effect between Expertise (β : 0.087; t-value: 2.988), Video Content (β : 0.090; t-value: 2.897), and Quality of Video (β : 0.079; t-value: 2.809) with Purchase Intention. While Reputation's indirect effect with Purchase Intention is not mediated by User Interaction (p-value: 0.102). Thus, H3 is rejected. It indicates that while Reputation is able to increase User Interaction, its indirect effect with Purchase Intention is not mediated by User Interaction. It indicates that TikTok users' intention to purchase MSEs' culinary products is not influenced by food vlogger's reputation or popularity.

Table 7. Indirect Effect

	Mediation	Original sample	t-value	p-value	Verdict
H3	Reputation → User Interaction → Purchase Intention	0.018	1.635	0.102	Rejected
H6	Expertise → User Interaction → Purchase Intention	0.087	2.988	0.003	Accepted
H9	Video Content → User Interaction → Purchase Intention	0.090	2.897	0.004	Accepted
H12	Quality of Video → User Interaction → Purchase Intention	0.079	2.809	0.005	Accepted

Overall, the findings indicate that User Interaction plays an important role as a mechanism that connects reviewer quality and content quality with consumer purchase intent. High level of food vlogger 's expertise, informative video content, and good video quality can increase user engagement or interaction through likes, comments, shares, and followers, which further drives their intention to purchase MSE's culinary products. This finding is in line with Luong and Ho (2023), Rozamuri et al., (2022), Zhang and Zhang (2023), and Lacsina (2023) who affirm the importance of user interaction or engagement in bridging the influence of digital content on consumer behavior.

Discussion

This research aims to analyze the influence of reputation, expertise, video content, and quality of video on the purchase intention of TikTok users in MSE culinary products with user interaction as a mediator. In general, the findings show that all direct and indirect effect are significant, except for Reputation, which both direct and indirect effect are not significant. These findings support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, explaining how stimuli provided through food vlogger's characteristics and video are able to influence consumer behavioral responses through the process of user interaction.

The Influence of Reputation on User Interaction and Purchase Intention

The findings show that Reputation significantly influences User Interaction, indicating that food vlogger's reputation, which is reflected through the number of followers, engagement levels, and exposure on TikTok, encourage users' interaction through like, comment, share, and follow. It supports the Source Credibility Theory which explains that reputation is one of the

dimensions of source credibility that affects audience responses. It is supported by the previous studies of Chua and Banerjee (2015), Wang et al. (2023), Briliana et al. (2020), and Sang et al. (2024). In the context of TikTok, the food vloggers' reputation or popularity can be an early signal of their credibility that encourages user engagement or interaction with the content presented.

However, the findings also show that food vlogger's reputation does not influence user's purchase intention, indicating that the reputation or popularity of the food vlogger alone is not enough to encourage user's intention to purchase culinary MSE products. This finding is supported by Yudha (2023), who found that users are increasingly selective in evaluating product recommendations and do not rely solely on the influencer's reputation as the basis for decision-making.

The Influence of Expertise on User Interaction and Purchase Intention

The findings show that Expertise significantly influences both User Interaction and Purchase Intention. It supports the Source Credibility Theory which explains that information sources with high knowledge and competence tend to be more trusted by the audience. In the context of this research, food vlogger's ability to explain the product quality, the taste, and his consumption experience makes the information conveyed considered more credible, thus encouraging user interaction and purchase intention. These findings are in line with previous studies of Luong and Ho (2023), and Rozamuri et al. (2022) who found that influencer expertise is an important factor in shaping users' engagement and purchase intention. In the context of Indonesian MSEs' culinary products, food vlogger's expertise also plays an important role in reducing consumer uncertainty about relatively unknown products. In other words, expertise can increase consumers' confidence in the recommendations given by the influencers.

The Influence of Video Content on User Interaction and Purchase Intention

The findings show that Video Content significantly influences both User Interaction and Purchase Intention. It supports the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory which explains that the video content acts as a stimulus that attracts users' attention, builds their understanding, and influences their responses on the recommended products. These findings are in line with previous studies of Mudambi and Schuff (2010), Zhang and Zhang (2023), and Wang et al., (2022), who found that an informative, relevant, and valuable content of the video can increase consumer engagement and purchase behavior. In the context of TikTok in Indonesia, which is dominated by short-duration videos, the ability of food vloggers to convey information convincingly is an important factor in increasing the effectiveness of MSE's culinary product promotion.

The Influence of Video Quality on User Interaction and Purchase Intention

The findings show that the Quality of Video significantly influences both User Interaction and Purchase Intention. It supports the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory which explains that the quality of visual, audio, lighting, editing, and presentation of the video can stimulate users' perception and evaluation of the products displayed. Good-quality videos can increase the appeal of the video content, encouraging user interaction and their purchase intention. These findings are in line with previous studies of Lacsina (2023) and Taylor (2023) which affirm that a good visual quality of a video is an important factor in the effectiveness of digital promotion. In the context of TikTok in Indonesia, which is oriented towards audiovisual or the quality of the video, acts as an important element in increasing the effectiveness of the MSE culinary products's promotion.

The Mediation of User Interaction

The findings show that User Interaction mediates the indirect effect of Expertise, Video Content, and Quality of Video on Purchase Intention. These findings support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which explains that external stimuli influence consumers' behavioral responses through organismal processes. In this research, Expertise, Video Content, and Quality of Video play as stimulus, while User Interaction is a mechanism that bridges the formation of Purchase Intention as response. Thus, the higher the user interaction through likes, comments, shares, and follows, the greater their tendency or intention to purchase the recommended MSE's culinary products promoted by the food vlogger. These findings are in line with previous studies of Luong and Ho (2023) and Sang et al. (2023), who affirm that user interactions reflect their attention, attachment, and trust in digital content. In addition, the mediation of User Interaction in the relationship between Video Content and Quality of Video to Purchase Intention, is supported by previous studies of Fan et al., (2022), Wang et al., (2023), and Sang et al. (2024), which find that informative content and good presentation quality can increase engagement or user interaction, as well as the effectiveness of digital marketing promotions on users' purchase intention.

However, in this research, User Interaction does not mediate the indirect effect between Reputation and Purchase Intention. This is in line with the direct effect where food vlogger reputation also does not influence customers' purchase intention. Both findings indicate that food vlogger's reputation alone does not influence whether viewers are likely to buy the products. Additionally, user interactions—such as comments or likes—do not play a role in connecting the food vlogger's reputation with users' purchase intention. Thus, rather than just the food vlogger's reputation, other factors may influence user interaction's ability to mediate their purchase intention. In the context of TikTok, Indonesian users seem to consider the video content or information, food vlogger experiences, and the quality of the video more than the popularity or food vlogger's reputation. Overall, the findings still confirm that User Interaction is a main mechanism that explains how the video content or information, food vlogger experiences, and the quality of the video affect TikTok users' purchase intention for MSE's culinary products.

Theoretical Contributions

This research provides three main theoretical contributions to the digital marketing and influencer marketing literature. First, this research expands the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) in the context of MSEs' culinary products promotions through TikTok platform by showing that the video content, food vlogger expertise, and the quality of the video influence user interaction and purchase intention, directly and indirectly through user interaction as an organism. These findings enrich the understanding of the mechanisms of shaping consumer behavior on video platforms within the social media marketing.

Secondly, this research expands the application of the Source Credibility Theory by showing how food vlogger's expertise has a more dominant role than reputation in influencing user interaction and purchase intention. These findings indicate that in a competitive social media environment, consumers prioritize the competence, the credibility or the expertise of the influencers over their popularity or reputation. Thirdly, this research expands the influencer marketing literature by placing user interaction as a mechanism that explains how influencer's expertise, video content and video quality encourage purchase intention. Furthermore, in the context of TikTok and culinary MSEs in Indonesia as an emerging economy country, this

research extends the generalization of SOR Theory and Source Credibility Theory, which is relatively limited in previous studies discussions.

Practical Implications

The findings show that food vlogger's expertise, video content, and the quality of the video are the main factors that drive TikTok users' interaction and purchase intention on MSE's culinary products. While food vloggers' reputation does not influence users' purchase intention either directly or indirectly through user interaction, this suggests that culinary MSEs should focus less on popularity, reputation, or follower count, and instead prioritize video content, food vlogger expertise, and video quality when promoting their products. In other words, the food vlogger's ability to convey product information credibly and convincingly in the video should be the priority when selecting influencers for marketing initiatives (Hovland et al., 1953; Luong & Ho, 2023). In addition, Culinary MSEs need to invest in the development of their video content that need to be informative, authentic, and easy to understand, which supported by videos with a good audio visual quality, that have been proven to increase user interaction, which ultimately drives consumer purchase intention (Fan et al., 2022; Zhang & Zhang, 2023; Sang et al., 2024).

To enhance user interaction and purchase intention, it is necessary for the MSEs to produce an authentic visual content, a highly responsive interactions in comment sections, consistently post valuable content to maintain uniform messaging across all channels and continuously reinforce the product's unique value in crowded digital markets (Aisyah, 2023). Since viewers cannot taste or smell through a screen, content creators must stimulate their imagination through visual and audio details. For culinary products, the creators should emphasize natural ASMR sounds like chopping, sizzling, or pouring to make the experience highly satisfying. It can be done by using a high-sensory audio with slow-motion to capture visually captivating moments, such as a slow cheese pull, a perfectly poured sauce, or the cross-section of a dish (Contentual, 2025).

Moreover, as practical implications, this research also confirms the importance of building expertise through credibility to produce a valuable video content for targeted audience. Meanwhile, for digital marketing practitioners, user interaction needs to be used as the main indicator and mediator in evaluating the effectiveness of marketing campaigns by the influencers, which has proven to be an important mechanism that connects video with good content and quality with user's purchase intention (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Sokolova & Kathy, 2020). From a policy perspective, the government needs to support MSE with video content marketing training. These efforts can increase the ability of MSEs to promote their products by utilizing digital platforms to expand market reach and increase business competitiveness (Abell & Biswas, 2022; Bhagat et al., 2025), in the emerging economy country with a highly engaged social media population like Indonesia.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

This research has several limitations. First, this research used a cross-sectional design where the relationship between variables was observed over a period of time and was not able to capture changes in consumer behavior dynamically as social media trends and digital marketing developed. Secondly, this research only focused on TikTok users who had watched Tanboy Kun's content, which limits the generalizability of the results to other food vloggers, other social media platforms, and different consumer groups. Thirdly, this research uses self-

reported data through questionnaires that have the potential to contain perceptual bias and social biases that cannot be completely avoided. In addition, this research is only focused on the context of culinary MSEs in Indonesia. The findings might be different if applied in different industrial sectors and countries with different consumer characteristics and digital environments.

Future Research Directions

Further research is recommended to use longitudinal design to gain a more comprehensive understanding of changes in purchase intention and user interaction over time. In addition, future research can conduct cross-platform comparisons, such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as across countries to test the consistency of the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory and the Source Credibility Theory in different cultural contexts and digital environments. Subsequently, future research can also expand the model by adding other variables, such as trust, parasocial relationship, perceived authenticity, brand attitude, or electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which potentially influence customer's purchase intention. Finally, in the research methodology, a mixed-method and experimental design can be considered to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which content creator or influencers' characteristics and video may affect consumer behavior in digital marketing.

Conclusion

This research confirms that high-quality video content is a critical catalyst for driving consumer purchase intentions on TikTok. By positioning user interaction as a vital mediating mechanism, this research demonstrates that credible, competence-driven marketing strategies are far more effective than simply leveraging popularity, offering actionable pathways for culinary MSEs to optimize their social media campaigns in developing markets.

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