

## **Analyzing the Effect of @Kulinerkoko's TikTok Food Content on the Foodie Behavior of University Students in Medan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the extent to which TikTok content from the food vlogger @KulinerKoko influences foodie behavior among university students in Medan. The increasing trend of food vlogging on social media has made food vloggers the primary reference for culinary recommendations, which impacts the preferences and consumption habits of the younger generation, especially university students. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach through a survey of 96 respondents, selected using Lemeshow's formula. The instrument used underwent validity and reliability testing, indicating that all items were appropriate and consistent ( $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ ; Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.8$ ). Data analysis was carried out using normality, linearity tests, and simple linear regression with the help of SPSS version 20. The findings show a positive and significant influence of @KulinerKoko's content on the foodie behavior of students, as indicated by a significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) and a regression coefficient of 0.583. The R Square value of 0.249 indicates that 24.9% of the variation in foodie behavior can be explained by the displayed content, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors. The content, including food reviews, attractive visuals, and communicative delivery, has proven to encourage students to try new foods, visit recommended places, and share their experiences on social media.

**Keywords:** *culinary recommendations, foodie behavior, food vlogger, TikTok content, university students,*

### **Introduction**

The rapid advancement of communication and information technology in the 21st century has fundamentally transformed how people, especially the younger generation, consume and interact with information. With the proliferation of smartphones and high-speed internet, digital platforms have become primary sources of content consumption, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z. One of the most significant outcomes of this development is the exponential rise of social media usage, which has reshaped the way individuals communicate, seek information, and express identity (Kapoor et al., 2022; Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have evolved beyond communication tools into influential spaces for branding, lifestyle promotion, and consumer behavior shaping (Kemp, 2023; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). According to the Digital 2024 Report published by We Are Social and Meltwater (2024), the number of global social media users has surpassed 5 billion, with individuals spending an average of 2 hours and 23 minutes daily on these platforms. These platforms provide rapid, wide-reaching, and interactive access to various kinds of content, including lifestyle, fashion, travel, and food. Culinary content, in particular, has gained tremendous

popularity, leading to the emergence of digital culinary influencers and vloggers who share food-related content in visually appealing and entertaining formats (Abidin, 2016; de Veirman et al., 2017).

One remarkable phenomenon that has emerged from this digital landscape is the popularity of food vloggers, who use video platforms to showcase food experiences through various formats such as mukbang (eating shows), ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response), cooking demonstrations, and restaurant reviews (Choe et al., 2021). These food vloggers not only provide entertainment but also influence viewer behavior, including food preferences, dining choices, and culinary tourism interest (Ting et al., 2022; Yang, 2020).

In the Indonesian context, food vlogger accounts such as @KulinerKoko have successfully engaged a substantial audience, especially university students in Medan. With more than 683,000 followers, @KulinerKoko combines local culinary promotion with dynamic visual storytelling and strong engagement, making the account a key reference for culinary recommendations in North Sumatra. Millennials and Gen Z are digital natives who are highly visual, tech-savvy, and socially connected. Research shows that these generations prefer digital platforms over traditional media for information

retrieval, and they are especially responsive to content that is visual, authentic, and peer-influenced (Priporas et al., 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

A Global Web Index (GWI) survey in 2023 found that 51% of Gen Z consumers prefer using social media instead of search engines to discover brands, products, or services, including culinary content. This behavioral tendency is closely related to the rise of the "foodie" culture, in which individuals actively seek out, experience, and share food-related experiences as a lifestyle and identity expression (Johnston & Baumann, 2015).

University students, particularly in urban centers like Medan, represent a segment of this culture. Their behaviors often include following food influencers, trying new dining places based on social media recommendations, and sharing food content on their own platforms. This pattern aligns with the concept of foodie behavior, which encompasses a proactive and enthusiastic attitude toward food exploration and consumption (Kim et al., 2019).

Previous studies have demonstrated that exposure to food-related digital content can significantly influence individuals' food choices, preferences, and even travel intentions (Lee et al., 2020; Hamzah et al., 2021). For instance, viewers often develop a parasocial relationship with food

vloggers, treating them as trustworthy sources of culinary knowledge and inspiration (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Despite the growing body of research on digital culinary influencers, empirical studies that focus specifically on how local food vloggers such as @KulinerKoko influence foodie behavior among university students in Medan remain limited. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the influence of @KulinerKoko's TikTok content on students' motivation to explore food, share culinary experiences, and use vlogger content as a reference in their consumption decisions. The combination of visually compelling content, local culinary focus, and high interaction rate makes @KulinerKoko an ideal subject for this investigation.

This study adopts a quantitative methodology to assess the degree of influence that such content exerts on the target audience. It aims to contribute not only to the academic literature in the fields of marketing communication and digital consumer behavior but also to practical insights in culinary marketing and social media strategy. As digital platforms continue to shape lifestyle choices and consumer trends, understanding the dynamics between food-related content and user behavior becomes increasingly

essential (Hudson et al., 2016; Marwick, 2015).

The findings of this research are expected to inform future strategies in influencer marketing, particularly in the context of the local food industry and student consumer segments.

### **Research methods**

This study adopts a quantitative approach employing a survey method to statistically examine the influence of food vlogger @kulinerkoko's content on foodie behavior among university students in Medan. The quantitative paradigm is considered suitable because it allows for objective measurement of the relationship between independent and dependent variables through structured data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This approach aligns with the positivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality can be measured and analyzed through empirical observation and statistical techniques (Neuman, 2014). The primary aim of this study is to test hypotheses and measure the extent of influence exerted by the content of @kulinerkoko (variable X) on the foodie behavior of students (variable Y), thereby identifying causal relationships.

Data was collected using an online questionnaire created via Google Forms and distributed through social media platforms

and university student networks. This method is practical, cost-effective, and aligns with the media habits of the research population, who are digital natives and frequent users of online platforms (Wright, 2005; Evans & Mathur, 2005). The questionnaire design follows the Likert scale model, which is commonly used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions on a continuum from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The Likert scale is advantageous because it allows the researcher to capture nuanced levels of agreement or disagreement regarding specific behavioral tendencies associated with food content consumption (Joshi et al., 2015).

The sampling method utilized in this study is based on Lemeshow’s formula, which is commonly applied when the population size is unknown or infinite. This statistical approach helps to determine an adequate sample size to ensure the representativeness and reliability of results (Lemeshow et al., 1990). Because the actual number of university students in Medan who meet the research criteria—namely, active TikTok users who follow or are exposed to @kulinerkoko’s content—is not precisely known, the population is treated as infinite. In such cases, using Lemeshow’s method is appropriate to estimate a sufficient sample size that meets the

assumptions of statistical testing (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

The study uses purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, in which respondents are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research question. In this case, the criteria include students enrolled in universities in Medan who actively engage with TikTok content from @kulinerkoko. This method ensures that the sample consists of individuals who are both exposed to the independent variable and capable of providing meaningful responses concerning the dependent variable (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is suitable for exploratory or analytical research where in-depth understanding is needed from a particular target group.

Before conducting the main statistical analysis, the data is evaluated for normality and linearity, which are preconditions for regression testing. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test is used to determine whether the data follows a normal distribution. If the p-value exceeds 0.05, it indicates that the data does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Additionally, linearity between the independent and dependent variables is examined to validate the use of simple linear regression analysis. A linear relationship is confirmed when the

significance value for deviation from linearity is greater than 0.05 (Laerd Statistics, 2015).

Simple linear regression is the most appropriate statistical technique for this study because it allows the researcher to model the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable and to determine whether changes in the former predict changes in the latter (Field, 2018). By analyzing the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), this method identifies the strength and direction of the relationship between @kulinerkoko's content and students' foodie behavior. This approach has been widely used in social media studies to assess the impact of digital content on consumer behavior and engagement (Hair et al., 2019).

The integration of well-defined research design, robust sampling technique, and appropriate data analysis tools contributes to the validity and reliability of this study's findings. The use of online surveys and purposive sampling is increasingly accepted in digital behavior studies due to their efficiency in reaching niche populations that are active in online environments (Bryman, 2016; Dillman et al., 2014). The findings of this research are expected to enhance theoretical understanding of the relationship between social media content and behavioral

responses, particularly in the context of culinary marketing among university

As the population is not precisely known, the sample size is calculated using Lemeshow's (1997) formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{d^2} \dots\dots(i)$$

#### Formula

**n** = minimum sample size

**Z** = z-score at a 95% confidence level (Z = 1.96)

**p** = population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 for an unknown population)

**d**= tolerated margin of error of 10% (0.1)

#### Substitute values:

$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2 \times 0,5 \times (1 - 0,5)}{(0,1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0,25}{0,01}$$

$$n = 96.04$$

Rounding up, the minimum sample size required is 96 respondents.

#### Research Findings and Discussion

Based on the distributed questionnaire, a total of 127 respondents were collected. Of these, 31 respondents indicated that they were unaware of or did not follow the TikTok account @kulinerkoko. A screening questionnaire was used to identify a final sample of 96 respondents who are students in Medan and are aware of or follow the TikTok account @kulinerkoko. Respondents who indicated

they did not know or follow @kulinerkoko were excluded from the final sample.

**Validity Test**

**Correlation Analysis**

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between each item score and the total score. An item is considered valid if the calculated r-value (r-count) is greater than the r-table value. With  $n = 96$ , the degrees of freedom  $(df) = 96 - 2 = 94$ , resulting in an r-table value of 0.2006.

**Table 1.** Validity of Variable X – TikTok Content (@kulinerkoko)

Item	r-count	r-table	Description
X1	0.798**	0.2006	Valid
X2	0.805**	0.2006	Valid
X3	0.791**	0.2006	Valid
X4	0.792**	0.2006	Valid
X5	0.840**	0.2006	Valid
X6	0.731**	0.2006	Valid

Source: Research Results 2025

**Table 2.** Validity of Variable Y – Student Foodie Behavior

Item	r-count	r-table	Description
Y1	0.639**	0.2006	Valid
Y2	0.860**	0.2006	Valid
Y3	0.805**	0.2006	Valid
Y4	0.796**	0.2006	Valid
Y5	0.857**	0.2006	Valid
Y6	0.810**	0.2006	Valid

Source: Research Results 2025

Based on the validity test results using Pearson correlation analysis between each item and the total score, all items for both the TikTok content variable (@kulinerkoko) and the student foodie behavior variable are valid, as their r-count

values exceed the r-table value. Thus, these items are suitable for use in this study.

**Reliability Test**

**Table 3.** Variable X – TikTok Content

Statistic	Value
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.881
Number of Items	6

Source: Research Results 2025

Since  $0.881 > 0.6$ , the instrument is considered reliable.

**Table 4.** Variable Y – Student Foodie Behavior

Statistic	Value
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.885
Number of Items	6

Source: Research Results 2025

Since  $0.885 > 0.6$ , the instrument is also considered reliable.

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha. The results show that the alpha value for variable X (TikTok content) is 0.881 and for variable Y (foodie behavior) is 0.885. As both values exceed 0.6, the instruments are deemed reliable and demonstrate good internal consistency.

**Table 5.** Normality Test

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.
<b>Total X</b>	0.065	0.058
<b>Total Y</b>	0.078	0.141

Source: Research Results 2025

Note: Kolmogorov-Smirnov is used when  $n > 30$ .

A dataset is considered normally distributed if the significance value (p-value) is greater than 0.05.

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. The significance value for variable X is 0.065 and for variable Y is 0.078. Since both values are greater than 0.05, the data for both variables are normally distributed and meet the assumptions for linear regression analysis.

### Linearity Test

Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results. The ANOVA table for the linearity test showed:

**Table 6.** ANOVA

Source of Variation	Sig. Value
Deviation from Linearity	0.150

Source: Research Results 2025

A relationship is considered linear if the significance value for "Deviation from Linearity" is greater than 0.05. In this case, the significance value is  $0.150 > 0.05$ , indicating a linear relationship between the independent variable (X – TikTok content) and the dependent variable (Y – student foodie behavior).

### Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The purpose of conducting a simple linear regression analysis is to determine

whether the independent variable (X) has an effect on the dependent variable (Y).

Decision Criteria:

1. If the significance value (p-value)  $< 0.05$ , then variable X has a significant effect on Y.
2. If the t-count  $>$  t-table, then X significantly affects Y.

**Table 7.** Regression Equation

Coefficients	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Constant	7.266	2.3836	3.049	0.003
TikTok Content (X)	0.583	0.1048	5.588	0.000

Source: Research Results 2025

The regression equation can be formulated as:

$$Y = 7.266 + 0.583X + e$$

Where:

- a)  $\alpha$  (Constant) = 7.266 indicates that when X is constant, Y is 7.266.
- b)  $\beta$  (Regression Coefficient) = 0.583 (positive), indicating that for every 1-unit increase in X, Y increases by 0.583 units.

Hypothesis Testing:

- a) Sig. value =  $0.000 < 0.05$
- b) t-count =  $5.588 >$  t-table = 1.986

Based on both decision criteria, it can be concluded that:

"The TikTok content of @kulinerkoko has a positive and significant influence on student foodie behavior in Medan."

This means the more intensive the promotional content, the higher the tendency of students to exhibit foodie behavior.

### Coefficient Of Determination

**Table 8.** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.499	0.249	0.241	4.405

Source: Research Results 2025

The R Square value of 0.249 indicates that TikTok content by @kulinerkoko explains 24.9% of the variation in student foodie behavior. The remaining 75.1% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

### Closing

Based on the results of data analysis using SPSS, this study concludes that there is a positive and significant influence of TikTok food vlogger @KulinerKoko's content on the foodie behavior of university students in Medan.

All questionnaire items related to content and foodie behavior were found to be valid and reliable, indicating that the research instrument consistently measures the intended constructs.

The data met the assumptions of normality and linearity, making the use of simple linear regression appropriate. The regression analysis showed a significance

value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and a t-value of 5.588, exceeding the t-table value of 1.986, confirming that @KulinerKoko's content significantly affects student foodie behavior. The regression equation  $Y = 7.266 + 0.583X$  suggests that for every one-unit increase in the quality or appeal of the content, foodie behavior increases by 0.583 units.

Furthermore, the R Square value of 0.249 indicates that 24.9% of the variation in foodie behavior is explained by @KulinerKoko's content, while the remaining 75.1% is influenced by other factors beyond this study. These findings demonstrate that food vloggers like @KulinerKoko not only serve as entertainment but also play a meaningful role in shaping youth consumption culture and can be considered effective promotional strategies in the culinary industry.

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