

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON TIKTOK MICRO-INFLUENCER CONTENT STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES ON PURCHASE INTENT FOR LOCAL FOOD BRANDS

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Abstract. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to capture consumers' lived experiences. Ten active TikTok users, familiar with food-related micro-influencer content and with prior experience purchasing local food products, participated in a 60–90-minute focus group discussion. The session was audio-recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, shared meanings, and emergent themes. The analysis revealed three major themes: (1) consumer perceptions of credibility and authenticity, (2) content strategies employed by TikTok micro-influencers, and (3) purchase intent toward local food brands. Credibility was consistently associated with honesty, authenticity, realistic product presentation, and genuine reactions. Participants emphasized that storytelling, clear visual demonstrations, food preparation content, and creative approaches were persuasive in generating interest and reducing uncertainty toward unfamiliar products. These strategies encouraged consumers to consider or trial promoted local food brands. However, actual product quality remained a decisive factor in shaping subsequent purchasing decisions, underscoring the interplay between marketing influence and product experience. The study concludes that TikTok micro-influencer marketing can effectively strengthen purchase intention when influencers are perceived as credible and relatable, and when they employ authentic, creative, and visually engaging content that accurately represents product quality. Beyond its immediate findings, the study contributes to the broader discourse on digital marketing by situating consumer experiences within a phenomenological framework, thereby offering insights into how authenticity and trust mediate the relationship between influencer strategies and consumer behavior.

Keywords: Content strategies, influencer credibility, local food brands, purchase intention, TikTok micro-influencers

Introduction

The rapid digitalization of marketing has transformed how local businesses communicate with consumers and promote their products. TikTok is one of the digital platforms increasingly used for product discovery and promotion, allowing users and influencers to reach broad audiences through short-form video content. Within this environment, micro-influencers have become relevant to consumer decision-making because their content is often perceived as more personal, relatable, and authentic. Park et al. (2021) described micro-influencers as social media

personalities with approximately 10,000 to 100,000 followers and found that they may be more persuasive than mega-influencers because of their perceived authenticity and closer connection with their audiences. Storytelling also plays an important role in sustaining audience engagement, particularly when micro-influencers use narratives to establish connections with their followers (Richter et al., 2025). Similarly, Jamil et al. (2023) highlighted the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer trust and purchase intention on TikTok. In the food and beverage sector, digital marketing strategies that incorporate consistent branding, engaging content, storytelling, and influencer collaboration may further strengthen brand awareness and customer engagement (Septihani et al., 2025)

Guided by Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology, this study focused on understanding consumers' lived experiences of TikTok micro-influencer credibility, authenticity, and content strategies and how these experiences shaped their purchase intentions toward local food brands. The growing presence of influencers on TikTok suggests that businesses should consider not only audience reach but also how consumers perceive the credibility and trustworthiness of influencer-generated content. Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024) found that influencer credibility and trust on TikTok were important in shaping consumers' purchase intentions, loyalty, and recommendation behavior. Authenticity and the informative value of influencer content have likewise been associated with stronger relationships between influencers and followers, which can subsequently affect perceived brand credibility and purchase intention (Liu & Zheng, 2024). In the context of food products, Syarif et al. (2025) reported that informative content, interaction, and influencer credibility contributed to relationships between consumers and social media food influencers, which in turn influenced intentions to purchase local food. Despite these findings, much of the existing literature has examined relationships among influencer characteristics, engagement, and purchase intention using quantitative approaches. Limited attention has been given to how consumers personally experience and interpret TikTok micro-influencer credibility, authenticity, and content strategies in the context of local food brands from a phenomenological perspective. This gap provided the basis for examining the meanings consumers attached to their encounters with TikTok micro-influencer content.

In the Philippine context, social media influencers have become increasingly relevant to consumers' purchasing decisions. Dalangin et al. (2021) examined the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention among Filipino consumers, highlighting the growing importance of influencer-based marketing within the local digital environment. More specifically, Roño and Lacap (2024) found that among Filipino TikTok users, influencer trustworthiness and parasocial relationships were significantly associated with purchase intention, emphasizing the importance of how consumers perceive and relate to influencers in shaping their buying decisions. These findings suggest that influencer marketing may provide local food businesses with a relevant digital channel to increase product visibility and engage potential consumers. From a broader development perspective, local enterprises' use of digital platforms may also be viewed in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 8 supports entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, and the growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, while Sustainable Development Goal 9 emphasizes technological innovation and the development of industries and enterprises. Sustainable Development Goal 12 further promotes responsible consumption and production practices. These connections provide a broader context

for understanding how digital influencer marketing may support the visibility and market engagement of local food businesses while remaining connected to wider goals related to enterprise development, innovation, and responsible consumption.

Within TikTok's short-form content environment, micro-influencers use different communication approaches to attract attention, present products, and establish connections with their audiences. Consumers' responses to influencer content may depend on whether the influencer is perceived as authentic, trustworthy, and relatable. Andonopoulos et al. (2023) found that perceived influencer authenticity was associated with greater purchase intention, with trustworthiness helping explain this relationship. Similarly, Ren et al. (2023) showed that perceived authenticity played an important role in consumers' responses to influencer recommendations and their intention to purchase endorsed products. The way promotional messages are presented is also important, as perceived message authenticity can shape consumer responses and purchase intentions (ElSayad, 2024). Drawing from these perspectives, the present study examined four interrelated concepts: micro-influencer credibility, authenticity, content strategies, and purchase intention. Credibility referred to consumers' perceptions of an influencer's expertise, reliability, and trustworthiness, while authenticity reflected the extent to which the influencer appeared genuine and relatable. Content strategies referred to the ways influencers communicated and presented product information, whereas purchase intention referred to consumers' willingness to consider trying or purchasing a local food product after exposure to TikTok micro-influencer content. Together, these concepts provided the foundation for exploring how participants interpreted their experiences with TikTok micro-influencer promotions and how these experiences shaped their purchase intentions toward local food brands.

Despite the increasing use of TikTok for influencer marketing, there remains a need to understand how consumers assess the credibility, authenticity, and content strategies of micro-influencers when encountering promotions for local food brands. Previous research has shown that consumers' perceptions of authenticity can influence how they engage with sponsored content on TikTok, particularly when branded posts affect how genuine a content creator appears (Walsh et al., 2024). However, much of the existing literature on social media influencers and purchase intention has concentrated on examining influencer characteristics, consumer responses, theoretical relationships, and behavioral outcomes, while methodological and contextual gaps remain (Sardar & Vijay, 2025). Thus, there remains limited understanding of how consumers personally experience and assign meaning to micro-influencer credibility, authenticity, and content strategies when considering local food purchases.

With this in mind, the study considers consumers' lived experiences of TikTok micro-influencer content, with particular attention to how they perceived influencer credibility and authenticity, how they responded to different content strategies, and how these experiences shaped their purchase intentions toward local food brands.

Methodology

Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine consumers' lived experiences of how TikTok micro-influencers influenced their purchase intentions toward local food brands. This research design was deemed appropriate because the study sought to understand how consumers personally experienced, interpreted, and gave meaning to influencer credibility, authenticity, and content strategies encountered on TikTok. Rather than measuring relationships among variables, the phenomenological approach allowed the researchers to explore participants' subjective perceptions, emotions, and decision-making experiences. It also enabled the researchers to identify shared patterns and meanings that helped explain how micro-influencer content shaped consumers' interest in and intention to purchase local food products.

Locale

The study was conducted in Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, where the researchers recruited consumers who were active TikTok users and had prior experience purchasing local food products. This locale was deemed appropriate because it provided access to participants who were familiar with TikTok micro-influencer content related to food products and who had actual experience making purchasing decisions involving local food brands. The setting also allowed the researchers to gather relevant lived experiences and perceptions regarding influencer credibility, authenticity, content strategies, and their influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The focus group discussion was conducted in an accessible, suitable setting, allowing participants to share their experiences and perceptions freely.

Participants

The study's participants consisted of 10 consumers of local food brands who had prior exposure to TikTok micro-influencer content about food products. The study employed purposive sampling, in which participants were deliberately selected for their firsthand experience with the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling technique was deemed appropriate because phenomenological research requires participants who can provide relevant and in-depth accounts of their lived experiences. Selecting individuals who had encountered TikTok micro-influencer content and had experience purchasing local food products enabled the researchers to obtain meaningful insights into how influencer credibility, authenticity, and content strategies shaped consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

To be included in the study, participants had to: (a) actively use TikTok; (b) have encountered food-related content created or promoted by TikTok micro-influencers; (c) have prior experience purchasing local food products; and (d) have participated in decisions regarding their food purchases. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Individuals who did not meet the established criteria were excluded from the study.

Instrument

The study used a semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument for gathering data from the participants. The guide consisted of open-ended questions developed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding TikTok micro-influencers and their influence on purchase intentions toward local food brands. The questions focused on participants' views of micro-influencer credibility and authenticity, their responses to the content strategies used in TikTok promotions, and the ways these experiences shaped their attitudes, emotions, and purchasing decisions.

The semi-structured format provided the researchers with a consistent set of guiding questions while allowing flexibility to ask follow-up questions and probe responses for clarification and deeper understanding. This supported the phenomenological nature of the study by giving participants sufficient opportunity to describe their lived experiences and by helping the researchers identify shared meanings and patterns across their accounts.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the pre-data gathering phase, the researchers finalized the research instrument and identified participants who met the established inclusion criteria. The participants were selected based on their relevant experience with TikTok, exposure to food-related micro-influencer content, previous purchase of local food products, and involvement in food-purchasing decisions. The researchers also prepared the schedule and arrangements for the Focus Group Discussion. Before the discussion, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their rights as research participants. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

During the data-gathering phase, the researchers conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) using a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions about TikTok micro-influencer credibility, authenticity, content strategies, and purchase intentions toward local food brands. The discussion lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Participants were encouraged to describe their experiences and perceptions in detail, while follow-up questions were asked when clarification or further explanation was needed. With the participants' permission, the discussion was audio-recorded to preserve the accuracy and completeness of their responses.

Following the discussion, the post-data gathering phase involved transcribing the audio recording verbatim and reviewing the transcript to ensure that the participants' responses were accurately represented. The transcripts were then organized and prepared for thematic analysis. Recurring ideas, patterns, and meanings were identified, grouped into categories, and organized into themes aligned with the research questions. These themes were then interpreted to describe participants' shared experiences with TikTok micro-influencer credibility, content strategies, and their influence on purchase intentions toward local food brands.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the Focus Group Discussion were analyzed to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding TikTok micro-influencers and their purchase intentions toward local food brands. The audio recording was transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were carefully reviewed to ensure that the participants' responses were accurately

represented. The data were then organized according to the research questions, particularly those concerning micro-influencer credibility, content strategies, and purchase intentions. Recurring ideas, shared meanings, and patterns across the participants' responses were identified and grouped into categories. These categories were further examined and developed into themes that reflected the participants' shared experiences. The resulting themes were interpreted in relation to the research questions to provide a clearer understanding of how TikTok micro-influencer credibility and content strategies shaped consumers' purchase intentions toward local food brands.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to appropriate ethical standards to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Before data collection, participants were provided with clear information about the study's purpose and procedures and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they could refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Permission was obtained before the Focus Group Discussion was audio-recorded. To protect confidentiality, participants' identities were represented by codes or pseudonyms, and the information they shared was kept confidential. The participants were treated with respect throughout the research process, and their responses were used solely for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the participants' responses revealed three major themes: (1) Consumer Perceptions of TikTok Micro-Influencer Credibility and Authenticity, (2) Content Strategies of TikTok Micro-Influencers, and (3) Purchase Intent Toward Local Food Brands. These themes captured the participants' shared perceptions and experiences regarding TikTok micro-influencer content and how these experiences shaped their interest in and intention to purchase local food products. Across the themes, the findings suggested that consumers' responses to influencer marketing were influenced by the perceived credibility of the influencer, the quality and manner of content presentation, and the relationship between promotional claims and the consumers' actual experience with the product.

Theme 1: Consumer Perceptions of TikTok Micro-Influencer Credibility and Authenticity

Participants emphasized that the credibility and authenticity of TikTok micro-influencers were important considerations in determining how they responded to promotional content for local food products. Rather than relying solely on an influencer's popularity or visibility, participants appeared to assess whether the recommendation was sincere, realistic, and consistent with the product's actual characteristics.

One participant explained: "I usually trust the influencer more when they show the food honestly. When they give their real reaction and do not make everything look perfect, I feel that the review is genuine." Similarly, another participant noted: "When they explain what they really liked about the product and even mention something they did not like, I find their recommendation more believable because it does not feel like they are only trying to sell it." These responses indicated that authenticity was associated with the perception that the influencer was sharing a personal, honest experience rather than merely delivering a commercial message. Participants were

particularly attentive to signs of exaggeration, excessive promotion, or unrealistic product presentation. As one participant expressed: “If they keep saying that the product is the best and you should immediately buy it, I become doubtful. Sometimes it feels more like an advertisement than an actual review.” Another participant further described how the actual product experience could affect perceived influencer credibility: “There are times when the food looks very good on TikTok, but when you actually buy it, it is different. That can make me question the influencer’s recommendation.”

The findings therefore suggested that credibility and authenticity were closely interconnected with consumer trust. Participants did not appear to evaluate promotional content solely on the basis of the influencer’s reach; instead, they considered whether the content was believable and whether the recommendation appeared consistent with the product’s actual qualities. This observation was particularly relevant for local food brands that may be unfamiliar to consumers. When an influencer provided realistic descriptions, genuine reactions, and balanced observations, participants were more inclined to regard the recommendation as trustworthy. Conversely, when content appeared overly commercialized or excessively exaggerated, participants became more cautious in accepting the promotional message.

Credibility in influencer communication depends on how trustworthy, knowledgeable, and genuine audiences perceive the source to be (Singh et al., 2026). In social media environments, these qualities matter especially because influencers often communicate through personal experiences and conversational presentation rather than conventional advertising formats. Source Credibility Theory helps explain this process, as perceived trustworthiness and expertise can shape how audiences evaluate and accept information communicated by an influencer (Gissi & Savelli, 2026). A recent meta-analysis likewise identified credibility, trustworthiness, and perceived expertise as significant antecedents of social media influencer effects across a wide range of studies (Han & Balabanis, 2024).

The findings further indicated that influencer credibility was not entirely independent of product quality. An influencer may initially attract consumer attention through an authentic presentation, but discrepancies between the promoted image and the actual product experience could weaken trust. Thus, credibility functioned not only as a characteristic of the influencer but also as an outcome shaped by the consistency between promotional communication and consumer experience. This suggests that effective influencer marketing for local food brands requires a balance between persuasive communication and truthful product representation.

Theme 2: Content Strategies of TikTok Micro-Influencers

Participants identified storytelling, visual presentation, product demonstrations, and personal reactions as important elements of TikTok content that promotes local food brands. The findings indicated that consumers were more engaged when influencers presented food products in ways that allowed viewers to visualize and understand the product beyond a simple promotional statement.

One participant stated: “What gets my attention is when they show the food closely. They show the texture, what it looks like inside, and even how it is prepared. It helps me know what to expect before I buy it.” Another participant similarly shared: “I like it when they demonstrate the product instead of just talking about it. When they show how the food is made or how it is eaten,

I become more curious about the product.” These responses demonstrated the informational value of visual presentation. Since consumers could not directly examine or taste the product through the platform, visual demonstrations appeared to help reduce uncertainty regarding its appearance, preparation, and perceived quality. Rather than functioning merely as decorative elements, visuals provided consumers with product-related cues that informed their expectations and evaluations. Storytelling also emerged as a notable strategy for creating relatability and engagement. One participant remarked: “I enjoy videos where the influencer tells a story while eating the product. They talk about their experience and what they actually think about the food, so it feels more natural than just watching an advertisement.” Another participant explained: “When the influencer shares their personal experience, like where they discovered the food or why they liked it, it feels easier to relate to them. It does not feel like they are simply promoting something.” These responses indicated that storytelling contributed to the interpersonal dimension of influencer marketing. By embedding the food product within a personal experience or narrative, influencers could make promotional content appear less formal and more conversational. This presentation could encourage consumers to see the promoted product as part of an authentic experience rather than an isolated commercial object. Participants likewise described creative presentation and simple demonstrations as memorable aspects of TikTok content. One participant stated: “Sometimes I do not know the brand at all, but because the video is creative and shows the food in an interesting way, I become curious and search for the brand afterward.”

The findings suggested that content effectiveness was influenced not only by the information communicated but also by how it was presented. Clear visuals, food demonstrations, storytelling, and personal reactions appeared to complement one another by providing both informational and experiential cues. Consequently, content that combined product information with creative and relatable presentation was perceived as more engaging than content that focused exclusively on direct selling.

Content strategy plays a central role in influencer marketing because the effectiveness of promotional communication depends not only on the influencer but also on how product-related information is constructed and delivered. Informative, entertaining, and visually appealing social media content can boost audience engagement by giving consumers clear product cues while holding their attention (Ao et al., 2023). In particular, informative content allows consumers to access relevant details regarding product characteristics and user experiences, which may help them evaluate unfamiliar products and reduce uncertainty in decision-making (Wang et al., 2026). Storytelling and personal narratives can further strengthen communication by placing products within relatable experiences, making promotional messages more conversational and less dependent on direct advertising appeals (Huang, 2026). For food-related products, visual presentation and demonstrations are especially relevant because consumers cannot directly experience sensory attributes such as appearance and texture through digital platforms; consequently, videos that illustrate preparation, presentation, and consumption can provide experiential cues that assist consumers in forming expectations about the product (Misra et al., 2024). Thus, effective influencer content may be understood as an integration of informativeness, visual presentation, entertainment, and narrative relatability, through which promotional messages become more accessible, engaging, and meaningful to consumers. This approach is particularly applicable to local food brands because well-crafted content can communicate product

characteristics while also creating an experiential representation that helps consumers become familiar with products they may not have encountered before (Ao et al., 2023).

For local food brands in particular, these strategies appeared useful in addressing consumers' unfamiliarity with lesser-known products. By showing how a product looks, how it is prepared, and how others experience it, TikTok micro-influencers may help reduce uncertainty and spark initial curiosity. The findings therefore suggest that content strategy is an important mechanism through which influencer credibility translates into consumer interest.

Theme 3: Purchase Intent Toward Local Food Brands

Participants reported that exposure to TikTok micro-influencer content could influence their willingness to consider, try, or purchase local food products. The findings suggested that promotional exposure alone did not drive purchase intention; rather, it emerged from the interaction of influencer credibility, authenticity, and content presentation.

One participant shared: "There were times when I actually bought a local food product because I saw it on TikTok. At first, I was just curious, but after seeing the influencer eat it and give their reaction, I wanted to try it for myself." Similarly, another participant stated: "If I can relate to the influencer and I feel that they are not just promoting everything they receive, I become more interested in the product. Sometimes I search for the brand first and see where I can buy it." These responses showed that influencer content could serve as an initial stimulus for product discovery and purchase consideration. The influence was particularly evident when participants perceived the influencer as trustworthy and relatable. Rather than immediately resulting in a purchase in every instance, exposure often initiated a process in which consumers became aware of the product, developed curiosity, searched for additional information, and eventually considered trying it. Participants, however, distinguished between the factors that encouraged "initial purchase" and those that supported "repeat purchase". One participant explained: "TikTok can make me curious enough to buy something once, but whether I buy it again depends on the actual food. If the taste and quality are not good, I will not continue buying it even if I see more promotions." Another participant similarly observed: "The influencer can convince me to try the product, but after that, the product itself has to meet my expectations. Good content can make me buy it once, but good quality is what can make me come back."

These responses provide an important qualification to the role of influencer marketing. The findings suggested that influencer content may be particularly influential during the "awareness, interest, and initial trial stages" of consumer decision-making, whereas continued purchasing may depend more strongly on the consumer's direct evaluation of the food product. Thus, persuasive content could establish expectations, but actual product performance ultimately influenced whether those expectations were confirmed or disappointed.

Purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness or readiness to engage in a future purchasing behavior and may be shaped by the information, perceptions, and experiences formed through digital marketing encounters. In influencer marketing, purchase intention does not necessarily result from exposure alone; rather, it can develop through the combined effects of influencer credibility, content characteristics, perceived product value, and consumer trust. A meta-analysis of influencer marketing research found that post characteristics, particularly informational and hedonic value, are important antecedents of purchase intention, while source

credibility can also contribute indirectly through consumers' perceptions of the promotional message (Han & Balabanis, 2024). In food-related contexts, food influencers' credibility and the quality of the information they provide have been associated with favorable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, suggesting that trustworthy recommendations can help consumers evaluate products they cannot directly experience before purchase (Jamuri & Halijol, 2025).

More recent research likewise indicates that influencer honesty, persuasive capability, and reach are associated with consumers' purchase intentions toward food products. However, purchase intention should be distinguished from actual and repeated purchasing behavior. Evidence from food research suggests that purchase intention can translate into actual consumption but does not automatically guarantee it, as subsequent behavior remains subject to consumers' evaluations and circumstances (Kalam et al., 2025). This distinction is particularly relevant for local food brands because influencer content may facilitate product discovery, generate curiosity, and reduce uncertainty during the initial decision stage, while consumers' subsequent satisfaction with the actual product may determine whether interest develops into continued patronage (Bhagat et al., 2024). Research on food influencer marketing has similarly linked interactive influencer practices with repurchase intentions through purchase satisfaction, affective commitment, and loyalty, suggesting that sustained consumer behavior requires more than persuasive exposure alone (Kalam et al., 2025). Thus, purchase intent may be understood as an intermediate stage in the consumer decision process in which influencer-generated awareness and persuasion interact with consumers' perceptions of product value and their eventual firsthand experience, particularly when social media serves as a channel for discovering and evaluating local food products (Olfat et al., 2025).

This distinction also reinforces the findings under Theme 1 regarding credibility and authenticity. When promotional representation matched the consumer's actual experience with the product, trust in both the influencer and the brand could be reinforced. In contrast, when the actual product failed to meet expectations established through promotional content, consumers could become less receptive to subsequent recommendations. Influencer marketing, therefore, appeared to function most effectively when promotional claims aligned with the product's actual quality.

Conclusion

The study found that consumers' purchase intentions toward local food brands were shaped by their perceptions of TikTok micro-influencers' credibility, authenticity, and content strategies. Participants were more receptive to recommendations from influencers whom they perceived as honest, relatable, and trustworthy, particularly when the promoted products were presented realistically and supported by genuine reactions. The findings also showed that storytelling, clear visual presentation, creative product demonstrations, and showing the preparation or characteristics of food products helped generate interest and allowed consumers to better understand unfamiliar local food brands.

The findings suggest that credibility and authenticity are important elements of effective TikTok micro-influencer marketing. While engaging and visually appealing content can encourage consumers to discover, consider, and initially try local food products, the product's actual quality remains important in determining whether expectations created by influencer content are fulfilled. Thus, TikTok micro-influencer marketing can support local food brands when promotional content

is authentic, creative, and consistent with the actual product experience. Overall, the study highlights the importance of combining credible influencer promotion with satisfactory product quality to strengthen consumer interest and purchase intention toward local food brands.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the use of TikTok micro-influencer marketing for local food brands and to guide future research in this area. These recommendations focus on maintaining credibility and authenticity, improving content strategies, ensuring product quality, and further investigating consumer experiences and purchase intentions.

Local food brands are encouraged to collaborate with TikTok micro-influencers who demonstrate credibility, authenticity, and relatability rather than selecting influencers solely on the basis of follower count. Brands may also encourage storytelling, clear visual presentation, food preparation demonstrations, creative product presentation, and genuine reactions, as these strategies can help consumers better understand the product and become more interested in trying it. At the same time, businesses should ensure that the quality of the promoted food product matches the expectations created by the influencer's content.

TikTok micro-influencers should maintain honesty, transparency, and consistency when promoting local food products. Their content should accurately represent the product's characteristics, appearance, and quality to preserve audience trust and avoid creating unrealistic expectations. Relatable storytelling, realistic product demonstrations, and genuine reactions can also strengthen credibility and make promotional content more engaging.

Local food businesses should continue to prioritize product quality alongside influencer marketing efforts. While TikTok micro-influencer content may encourage consumers to discover and initially try a product, the actual product experience remains important in influencing whether consumers will purchase it again. Consistency in food quality, presentation, and service should therefore complement promotional strategies to foster stronger, more sustainable consumer interest.

Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving participants from different locations, age groups, or backgrounds to obtain a broader range of consumer experiences. They may also explore other product categories or compare TikTok with other social media platforms. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches may also be used to further examine the relationships among influencer credibility, authenticity, content strategies, consumer trust, and purchase intention.

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