

Influencer Credibility and Content Quality in TikTok Culinary Purchase Decisions

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
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Background: This study examines the effects of influencer credibility and TikTok video content quality on culinary purchase decisions in Banjarmasin, Indonesia. It responds to the rapid growth of short-form video marketing and the need for local culinary micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to promote their products effectively while upholding Sharia-conscious ethical values, particularly honesty, transparency, and trustworthiness.

Method: Using an explanatory quantitative design, data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 103 TikTok users who had viewed culinary promotional content with the goal of having food in their food consumption intentions. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, and multiple linear regression.

Results: The evidence indicates that influencer credibility has a significant effect on culinary purchasing, with respect to being the strongest of these factors. TikTok video quality has a positive and significant influence too, as it acts to inform and entertain. At the same time, both variables have a significant impact on consumer decision making, yet the limited predictive ability implies the importance of price, taste, halal assurance, accessibility, and the recommendations of peers.

Conclusion: The study adds to social commerce and Sharia-informed management literature by showcasing that successful TikTok culinary promotion is not only a factor of visibility, creativity and authenticity, but also that of legitimate communicators, factual sources and a good standard of ethics in content production.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms have become instrumental in how consumers engage with food products by identifying, assessing, and ultimately purchasing them. In Indonesia, where digital adoption has become ubiquitous, the issue has become even more acute: there were 212 million internet users in Indonesia in January 2025 making up 74.6 percent of the population (DataReportal, 2025a). TikTok has similarly

evolved to become one of the most popular short-video platforms for product discovery, with Indonesia on the list of the world's top TikTok markets (DataReportal, 2025b). These patterns indicate that culinary promotion is no longer shaped primarily by traditional advertising methods, outlet visibility, or interpersonal word-of-mouth. Instead, it is increasingly formed through short-form video, influencer recommendations, algorithmic visibility, and audience engagement.

For culinary micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises operating in urban local markets such as Banjarmasin, TikTok provides a promotional medium that is relatively affordable and capable of generating broad exposure. A brief video that displays food texture, price, location, service encounters, or customer responses can reach consumers far beyond the business's immediate surroundings. Nevertheless, visibility and virality do not automatically translate into purchasing behaviour. Consumers still need to determine whether the information is credible, whether the content is practically useful, and whether the culinary product being promoted deserves to be tried. Such evaluation is crucial in food-related decision making because taste, freshness, hygiene, and service quality cannot be fully verified prior to consumption.

It is here that influencer credibility is a key component in contemporary culinary digital marketing. According to source credibility theory, persuasive messages are more resonant when consumers see the communicator as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and attractive (Ohanian, 1990). In a social media environment, credibility is not only measured by celebrity status. That is influenced by perceived honesty, consistency, familiarity with the product, responsiveness, and the belief of audiences in the influencer as similar to them. When an influencer is seen as authentically familiar with local culinary choices, consumers are more likely to read a suggestion as trustworthy guidance than one that is marketing-based.

Simultaneously, however, the quality of video content can enhance or impair the persuasive effect of a marketing message. Content that is visually clear, informative, engaging, relevant, and easy to understand enables consumers to reduce uncertainty before they make a purchase decision. There is evidence already from numerous previous studies suggesting that message value, information quality, entertainment value, and source credibility can all increase consumer trust in branded social media content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In culinary promotion, the quality of the content is even more critical since the actual product experience must be communicated through visual and narrative cues, including food appearance, serving procedures, location details, customer testimonials, and price information.

Previous studies have proved that both influencer credibility and content value influence purchase intention or purchasing behaviour. According to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), influencer credibility and parasocial interaction also play a role in the purchase intention. Chetioui, Benlafqih and Lebdaoui (2020) discovered that consumers' attitudes regarding influencers affect purchase intention. AlFarraj et al. (2021) also demonstrated that the dimensions of credibility could influence the purchase intention via online engagement. However, a lot of the evidence so far is based upon fashion, beauty, or general branded products. For an Indonesian market specifically using TikTok for culinary promotion, limited research exists. Small culinary businesses tend to rely on authenticity, credibility and useful information in place of large marketing expenses.

This research gap is quite significant for Sharia economic and management research activities. Digital culinary marketing for Muslims should not only be motivated by persuasive messages, but must demonstrate morality-related values like honesty, transparency, trustworthiness, and avoiding overstated claims in Muslim-dominated culinary consumer forums. Even though halal certification and religiosity are not treated as variables in this research inquiry, the topic remains connected to Sharia-sensitive management, as truthful and trustworthy communication is the basis of ethical market exchange. The findings will help local culinary businesses develop digital promotion strategies that are commercially successful as well as ethically responsible.

In this paper, the aim of this investigation is to investigate the impact of influencer credibility and TikTok video content quality on culinary purchase decisions in Banjarmasin. The research has three key insights. First, it opens by empirically demonstrating the local culinary market in Indonesia. Second, in the TikTok-based model for purchase decision-making, it merges source credibility and content quality perspectives. Third, it translates findings from empirical research into practical guidelines for ethical and Sharia-conscious digital marketing of local culinary enterprises.

This study's local-market orientation is of particular significance because many influencer-marketing studies work under the assumption that persuasive effects tend to affect national brands similarly, well-established urban centres and well-financed campaigns alike. By contrast, Banjarmasin culinary businesses are usually run with smaller promotional budgets, rely more on interpersonal trust, and have closer ties with sellers, influencers, and consumers. In this type of environment, the quality of technical production alone may not be enough; the credibility of the communicator and the usefulness of content can take precedence. By examining TikTok culinary promotion at the city level, the study is more able to encapsulate a rooted type of social commerce wherein digital persuasion is integrated into local taste preferences, mobility patterns, religiously informed consumption norms, and everyday consumer relationships.

Social Commerce, TikTok, and Culinary Purchase Decisions

Social commerce can be understood as the use of social media and digitally mediated interaction to facilitate product discovery, evaluation, recommendation, and purchase. Unlike conventional e-commerce, social commerce is strongly shaped by peer signals, creator influence, user-generated content, and interactive communication. TikTok intensifies this mechanism because its short-video format allows products to be demonstrated quickly, narrated affectively, and distributed algorithmically. For culinary products, this format enables food, which is essentially a physical and sensory experience, to be presented as a visually persuasive digital object.

In this study, purchase decision refers to the consumer process of selecting, trying, or buying a culinary product after being exposed to promotional content on TikTok. Such a decision may be shaped by product information, perceived value, social recommendation, individual taste, and the perceived credibility of the message source. In digital marketing contexts, purchase decisions rarely arise from a single stimulus. Rather, they are formed through the interaction of message credibility, information usefulness, emotional appeal, and consumer readiness.

Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility denotes the degree to which an influencer is viewed as believable, competent, and persuasive. The classic source credibility model identifies expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as its principal dimensions (Ohanian, 1990). In contemporary influencer marketing, credibility also encompasses authenticity, similarity, and relational closeness, since audiences often perceive influencers as social reference figures rather than distant advertising endorsers.

Credible influencers can help lower the perceived risk associated with culinary purchase decisions. When consumers believe that an influencer understands food quality, provides honest evaluations, and does not overstate the promoted product, they are more likely to accept the recommendation. Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrate that influencer credibility and message value influence consumer trust toward branded social media content. Likewise, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) show that credibility is positively associated with purchase intention. These arguments support the expectation that influencer credibility positively affects culinary purchase decisions. Therefore, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows: H1: Influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on culinary purchase decisions.

Video Content Quality

Video content quality refers to the extent to which TikTok culinary content is informative, relevant, visually explicit, entertaining, and useful for consumer decision making. High-quality content assists audiences in assessing a product before purchase by presenting information about menu options, price, taste cues, location, service, and atmosphere. Content quality is also related to information quality in digital environments, where accuracy, timeliness, completeness, and relevance shape user evaluation (Wang & Strong, 1996).

Quality content does more than entertain audiences; it reduces uncertainty and strengthens consumer confidence. In culinary promotion, weak visuals, vague information, excessive editing, or inflated claims may erode trust. By contrast, clear product demonstrations, honest narration, transparent price information, and realistic portrayals of customer experience can increase consumer interest. On this basis, the second hypothesis is proposed: H2: TikTok video content quality has a positive and significant effect on culinary purchase decisions.

Integrated Research Model

Influencer credibility and content quality are conceptually connected, yet they remain analytically different. A credible influencer may still fail to persuade audiences when the content is poorly presented, while high-quality content may not be effective if the message source lacks trustworthiness. In local culinary marketing, persuasive communication is most likely to occur when credible influencers deliver content that is informative, engaging, and ethically transparent. Therefore, the third hypothesis is proposed: H3: Influencer credibility and TikTok video content quality simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on culinary purchase decisions.

METHOD

This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach. This design was considered appropriate because the research sought to test the causal-predictive relationship between two independent variables, namely influencer credibility (X1) and TikTok video content quality (X2), and one dependent variable, namely culinary purchase decision (Y). The study was carried out in Banjarmasin, Indonesia, with individual TikTok users who had encountered culinary promotional content serving as the unit of analysis.

The population comprised TikTok users in Banjarmasin who had accessed culinary content and had considered or made culinary purchases after viewing that content. Since the exact size of this population was unknown, purposive sampling was used. Respondents were required to meet several criteria: they had to be TikTok users, have viewed culinary promotional content on TikTok, live in or conduct daily activities in Banjarmasin, and be capable of evaluating culinary purchase experiences. In total, 103 valid responses were obtained and analysed.

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Influencer credibility was assessed using indicators related to perceived expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity, and respect. TikTok video content quality was measured through informativeness, entertainment value, visual clarity, relevance, and usefulness. Culinary purchase decision was measured using indicators of attention, interest, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase willingness.

The analytical procedure consisted of descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, and multiple linear regression. Item-total correlation was used to evaluate validity, while internal consistency was used to assess reliability. The regression model was expressed as $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \epsilon$, where Y denotes culinary purchase decision, X1 denotes influencer credibility, X2 denotes video content quality, α denotes the constant, β denotes the regression coefficient, and ϵ denotes the error term. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5 percent significance level.

Ethical considerations were addressed by informing respondents that their participation was voluntary, that their answers would be used solely for academic purposes, and that personally identifiable information would not be disclosed. This procedure was necessary because social media use and purchase decisions may reveal personal preferences.

Several procedural steps were taken to strengthen the appropriateness of the survey data. The questionnaire items were written in clear and context-specific language so that respondents could relate each statement to TikTok culinary content they had actually viewed. Before analysis, responses were screened to ensure that participants met the purposive sampling criteria and that incomplete or inconsistent answers were not included in the final dataset. The use of a five-point Likert scale was maintained across the main constructs to support comparability of responses and to reduce respondent burden. Although the cross-sectional design cannot establish behavioural change over time, it remains suitable for examining perceived relationships among influencer credibility, content quality, and purchase decisions at a specific point in the development of TikTok-based culinary marketing in Banjarmasin.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile and Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the dominant demographic and behavioural characteristics of the respondents. Overall, the profile shows that the respondents were predominantly young, digitally active consumers who used TikTok regularly. This profile is consistent with the research context, since culinary promotion on TikTok is most visible among consumers who frequently consume short-form video content.

Table 1. Dominant respondent profile

Aspect	Dominant Category	n	Percent
Gender	Female	55	53.4%
Age	20–24 years	68	66.0%
Occupation	Student	50	48.5%
Education	Bachelor/D4	46	44.7%
TikTok usage	Every day	67	65.0%
Purchases due to TikTok	Often	44	42.7%

The predominance of female respondents and consumers aged 20–24 years suggests that the sample reflects an audience segment that is highly accustomed to visual social media content. Most respondents accessed TikTok on a daily basis, indicating that they had adequate exposure to culinary promotional materials. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of respondents stated that TikTok content often influenced their culinary purchases. This pattern strengthens the empirical relevance of analysing purchase decisions through influencer credibility and content quality.

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the study variables. All variables are positioned in the good category, showing that respondents generally gave positive evaluations of influencer credibility, TikTok video content quality, and purchase decision. The highest mean score appeared in influencer credibility, particularly on the respect indicator. This suggests that consumers respond favourably when influencers are perceived as respectable, relatable, and deserving of attention.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of research variables

Variable	Dominant Indicator	Mean	Category
Influencer credibility (X1)	Respect	4.12	Good
Video content quality (X2)	Entertainment and information value	4.02	Good
Purchase decision (Y)	Purchase decision	4.02	Good

The content-quality variable also achieved a good mean score, with entertainment and information value serving as the dominant indicators. This result implies that culinary content becomes more persuasive when it integrates enjoyable presentation with practical information. The purchase-decision variable was likewise classified as good, indicating that respondents were relatively willing to consider or make culinary purchases after watching promotional content on TikTok.

Before conducting regression analysis, measurement testing and assumption checks indicated that the data were appropriate for further statistical examination. The questionnaire items fulfilled the validity criteria, the constructs met the required reliability threshold, and the regression assumptions showed no serious violations. These initial results justified the use of multiple linear regression to test the hypotheses.

Regression Results

Table 3 displays the model summary and the simultaneous test. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.158, which means that influencer credibility and video content quality collectively explain 15.8 percent of the variance in culinary purchase decisions. Although this explanatory capacity is relatively modest, the simultaneous test shows that the model is statistically significant. This indicates that both predictors are meaningful, while other factors such as price, taste preference, location, peer recommendation, brand familiarity, and product availability may also contribute to purchase decisions.

Table 3. Model summary and simultaneous test

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F value	Sig.
0.398	0.158	0.141	9.38	<0.001

Table 4 shows the partial regression results. Influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on culinary purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.506$; $t = 5.148$; $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1. TikTok video content quality also exerts a positive and significant influence on culinary purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.283$; $t = 2.873$; $p = 0.005$), thereby supporting H2. The standardized coefficient for influencer credibility is higher than that of video content quality, indicating that credibility is the more dominant predictor in the model.

Table 4. Partial regression results

Variable	B	Beta	t value	Sig.	Unique contribution	Decision
Influencer credibility (X1)	0.564	0.506	5.148	<0.001	12.04%	Supported
Video content quality (X2)	0.270	0.283	2.873	0.005	3.76%	Supported

The findings also support H3 because influencer credibility and video content quality simultaneously exert a significant effect on culinary purchase decisions. The unique contribution of influencer credibility is 12.04 percent, whereas the unique contribution of video content quality is 3.76 percent. These figures demonstrate that credibility contributes more substantially to purchase decisions than content quality, although both variables remain important. For culinary businesses, the implication is that visually attractive content should be accompanied by communicators who are credible, honest, and knowledgeable.

The finding that influencer credibility is the strongest predictor is theoretically aligned with source credibility theory. In culinary marketing, consumers frequently depend on the perceived honesty and expertise of the recommender because taste and product quality cannot be fully confirmed before purchase. A credible influencer therefore serves as a trust intermediary between the culinary business and prospective consumers. This finding is consistent with prior studies showing that credibility is a key driver of trust and purchase intention in influencer marketing (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; AlFarraj et al., 2021).

The dominance of the respect indicator also offers a meaningful insight. Consumers do not simply respond to influencers because they are famous or physically appealing; they respond more strongly to influencers who are viewed as respectable, reliable, and socially relevant. For local culinary promotion, this suggests that micro-influencers with strong knowledge of local food contexts may be more persuasive than influencers with large audiences but weak relevance to the promoted product. Authenticity, local familiarity, and consistency may thus become strategic assets for culinary businesses in Banjarmasin.

The significant effect of video content quality confirms that consumers use TikTok not merely for entertainment but also as a source of practical information. Culinary videos that clearly display menu details, prices, location, portion size, atmosphere, and service experience can help audiences determine whether the product corresponds to their preferences. This finding is consistent with the broader information-quality perspective, which maintains that useful, accurate, and relevant information enhances user evaluation and decision making (Wang & Strong, 1996).

Nevertheless, the modest R^2 value shows that culinary purchase decisions are shaped by many determinants beyond influencer credibility and content quality. Price affordability, food taste, halal assurance, location accessibility, hygiene, service speed, consumer mood, and peer recommendation may also influence the final decision. This limitation should not be understood as a weakness of the model; rather, it provides an empirical reminder that TikTok promotion represents only one component of the wider consumer decision-making ecosystem.

The relatively stronger contribution of influencer credibility also indicates that consumer decisions in culinary social commerce are not purely content-driven. In practical terms, high-resolution visuals, trend-based editing, and appealing captions may attract initial attention, but they do not automatically create purchase confidence when audiences question the endorser's sincerity or product knowledge. This is particularly relevant in culinary promotion because disappointed consumers can immediately compare the online presentation with the actual taste, portion, cleanliness, and service they experience offline. When online claims do not correspond to the real product, trust in both the business and the influencer may decline. Therefore, credibility should be treated as a strategic asset that must be protected through honest review practices, careful product selection, and transparent communication.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study confirms the continuing relevance of source credibility theory in algorithm-driven social media environments. Although TikTok distributes content through personalised recommendation systems, persuasion is not produced by the algorithm alone. Audiences continue to evaluate who conveys the message, whether that person appears knowledgeable, and whether the recommendation seems sincere. This demonstrates that classical persuasion theory remains useful for explaining consumer behaviour in contemporary social commerce when it is contextualised with platform-specific features such as short video, comment interaction, and rapid content circulation.

The study further clarifies the complementary relationship between credibility and content quality. Credibility helps establish initial trust in the communicator, whereas content quality supplies the informational and emotional cues required for evaluation. In culinary marketing, this complementarity is especially important because consumers cannot fully assess taste, aroma, freshness, or service quality through digital media. Accordingly, persuasive TikTok communication should integrate credible endorsement with content that is concrete, sensory, informative, and realistic.

Managerially, the findings indicate that culinary businesses should develop a basic influencer-screening mechanism before implementing promotional campaigns. This screening should consider product fit, local reputation, history of honest reviewing, audience relevance, communication style, and willingness to disclose promotional relationships. Such an approach can prevent businesses from selecting influencers solely on the basis of follower numbers. An influencer with a smaller but highly trusting audience and strong culinary relevance may generate greater decision influence than a larger influencer whose endorsement appears generic or transactional.

The findings also suggest that content planning should be managed strategically rather than treated as an improvised posting activity. Culinary businesses may prepare a content brief that includes product facts, halal or ingredient information where relevant, location access, price range, service hours, and the specific customer problem addressed by the product. This preparation helps influencers produce content that remains appealing while also being accurate. In ethical and Sharia-conscious marketing, maintaining this balance between persuasion and truthfulness is essential because consumer trust can be damaged when promotional messages exaggerate quality or omit material information.

For policymakers, business associations, and higher education institutions that assist local MSMEs, the findings underline the importance of digital marketing literacy programmes. Many small culinary businesses already recognize TikTok as a tool for increasing visibility, yet they may still lack the capacity to assess influencer credibility, prepare ethical content briefs, or measure conversion beyond likes and views. Training programmes can therefore include practical modules on ethical endorsement, content quality assessment, customer-response analysis, and basic campaign evaluation. These modules would support more responsible and sustainable use of social commerce by local businesses.

Viewed from Sharia-conscious management, the findings emphasize the centrality of ethical communication. Influencers and culinary businesses should avoid exaggerated claims, undisclosed paid endorsements, manipulative scarcity messages, and misleading visual editing. Instead, they should prioritise truthful reviews, transparent disclosure of sponsorship, accurate product information, and respect for consumer rights. These principles correspond with the ethical foundation of trustworthiness in business communication and are especially relevant in Muslim-majority consumer contexts.

This ethical implication is closely related to the broader objective of responsible digital-market development. In Sharia-oriented business communication, promotion is not merely a technique for stimulating demand; it is also a moral interaction that should protect consumers from deception, ambiguity, and excessive persuasion. Culinary businesses that provide accurate menu descriptions, disclose relevant product information, and allow influencers to give fair evaluations are more likely to build sustainable trust. Conversely, overstated claims, hidden sponsorships, or heavily manipulated visual portrayals may generate short-term attention but weaken long-term legitimacy. The results therefore support the view that ethical credibility and managerial effectiveness should be developed together rather than treated as competing objectives.

In practical terms, local culinary businesses should choose influencers based on credibility fit rather than follower count alone. They need to evaluate whether an influencer possesses culinary knowledge, reaches a relevant audience, demonstrates consistent behaviour, and communicates in a style that aligns with the business identity. Businesses should also supply influencers with accurate product information

and encourage honest storytelling. In producing TikTok content, they should combine appetising visuals with concrete information, including price range, menu variants, location, operating hours, halal status when applicable, and realistic customer experience.

The findings further imply that content strategy requires continuous evaluation. Businesses can observe engagement metrics, comment sentiment, save and share behaviour, and actual purchase conversion to determine which content formats perform most effectively. Through this approach, TikTok marketing can progress beyond viral exposure and contribute to sustainable customer acquisition as well as ethical relationship building.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that influencer credibility and TikTok video content quality have positive and significant effects on culinary purchase decisions in Banjarmasin. Influencer credibility emerges as the stronger predictor, indicating that consumers attach substantial importance to the perceived trustworthiness, expertise, respectability, and relevance of the communicator. Video content quality is also important because content that is informative and entertaining assists consumers in evaluating culinary products before purchase. The study contributes to digital marketing literature by offering empirical evidence from a local culinary market and by integrating influencer credibility with the content-quality perspective. It also contributes to Sharia-conscious management by stressing that effective digital promotion should be grounded in truthful, transparent, and useful communication. For practitioners, the findings suggest that culinary businesses should select credible influencers, produce content that is both attractive and informative, and avoid misleading promotional practices. Several limitations should be acknowledged. The sample consisted of 103 respondents in Banjarmasin, and the model included only two predictor variables. Future studies may broaden the sample, compare multiple cities, incorporate halal awareness, price perception, electronic word-of-mouth, parasocial interaction, brand trust, and actual purchase behaviour, or employ longitudinal and experimental designs. Such extensions would allow a more comprehensive explanation of how TikTok-based culinary promotion shapes consumer decision making. The manuscript is nevertheless positioned as an initial empirical contribution rather than a complete explanation of TikTok culinary purchasing behaviour. Its main value lies in identifying two manageable promotional factors that local culinary businesses can improve immediately: the credibility of the influencer and the quality of the video message. Future research can extend this contribution by testing mediating variables such as trust, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, or attitude toward the content. Comparative research across cities or product categories would also be useful to determine whether the relative dominance of influencer credibility remains stable in different consumer environments. Such extensions would strengthen the theoretical generalisability of the present findings while preserving their practical relevance for local MSMEs.

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