



Media Studies and Journalism Department

**Internship Project Report on
Youth's Narrative Regarding Food Influencers in Dhaka**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Social Science
in Media Studies and Journalism

Submitted by

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Term: Spring 2024

Course Code: MSJ 11498 & MSJ 5111

Submission Date: April 2024

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Internship Report Approval Form

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Internship Organization/Project: Pathway to Masters in Communication

Internship/Project Report Topic: Youth's Narrative Regarding Food Influencers in Dhaka

Semester (Tick one): ☒ **Spring 2024** ☐ Summer 2024 ☐ Fall 2024

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(Please place a Tick)

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐ Partial Re-write ☐ Full Re-write

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Acknowledgment

This research internship report would not have been possible without the help and encouragement I received from various people. I am truly grateful and appreciate each and every individual who has helped me throughout my academic journey. Many have supported me by giving bits of advice, offering assistance, or sharing resources, which have greatly contributed to my work and made it easy.

The report not only showcases the outcome of the last three month's hard work but is also a reflection of all the knowledge I have gained during the past four years while studying media studies and journalism. I would like to thank my research internship supervisor, Dr. Sarkar Barbaq Quarmal for guiding me through the whole process and giving me valuable feedback. Also, I am grateful to Dr. Habib Mohammad Ali for his contributions to this research. Their mentorship and expertise have helped me grow as an individual and elevate my academic experience.

Summary

This research focuses on the narratives of youth in Dhaka, Bangladesh, regarding food influencers and how these social media content can impact their food choices and preferences. The study seeks to explore the various factors that can influence young people to engage with food influencers on digital platforms. Additionally, the aim of this study is to understand the extent to which food influencers can shape the food culture among Dhaka's youth and how this might have the potential to have implications for public health and well-being. Overall, the study helps to delve deep into youth narratives to provide valuable insights regarding food consumption and discover strategies for promoting food habits or consumption behaviors among young people in Dhaka.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

An “influencer” refers to a person who interacts with the audience and communicates their knowledge and experience which can influence and affect people’s decisions, opinions, and behavior. The concept of influencers suggests that these individuals are active social media opinion leaders who share their stories in the form of various social media content. Based on the two-step flow of communication, by using the media influencers disseminate information to the public on topics like food, fashion, beauty, lifestyle, health, and so on. The audience tends to follow influencers who have shared their expertise in an authentic and relatable manner. By engaging with the audience, influencers can shape the perception of a certain target audience and create trends in the community, making them a valuable asset for brands seeking to promote their products.

Specifically, food influencers who are also known as food bloggers share their opinions and experiences and recommend a place or food through online platforms. Mostly these individuals use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and so on. Some even have their own website which they dedicate to posting food-related content. Food influencers usually make content on various topics like culinary adventures, review restaurants, cafes, and street food stalls, share recipes, and provide cooking tips. Their content often ends up shaping consumer preferences, influencing food habits, and sometimes even creating culinary trends.

Dhaka, being one of the most densely populated cities globally, is also well-known for its culinary landscape, with variations of food spaces according to taste and preference. This city gives a great scope to investigate the connection between food culture, food influencers, and young people’s thoughts regarding these. Furthermore, with the accessibility of digital media, smartphones, and the internet, food blogging has become a part of youth culture in Dhaka (Niloy et al., 2023). The younger generation in Dhaka is highly active on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc. Young people are staying informed, voicing their opinions on various social issues, and getting influenced by opinion leaders.

Youth's social media profile in Dhaka reflects their interest and serves as a virtual community where they can often express their thoughts. In this virtual era, social media has a significant influence on customer behavior, specifically when it comes to the realm of food choices and food spaces. Dhaka is a colorful and culturally rich city. At the same time, Dhaka is not an exception to worldwide trends. The youth of Dhaka has become more and more reliant on virtual platforms for making food-related decisions (Ferdous et al., 2024). Gen Z consumers nowadays are more aware of what is in trend among the influencers on social media before making any purchases (Mumuni et al., 2019).

Food influencers on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media, have created a unique landscape where food stories are not only shared but also shape the target market with their content. Interestingly, this has become a business strategy for many restaurants to pay influencers to make content and post their reviews on their social media (Anjos et al., 2022). According to research by Yang et al., (2023), there are various aspects by which a consumer can be influenced by online content. Thus, this gives rise to questions regarding the narratives of Dhaka's youth concerning the information disseminated by these certain individuals.

Popular influencers tend to have more influence on their audience (Hill et al., 2020). For example, fans of a particular food influencer will go to a restaurant after the influencer uploads content or give a positive review on their social media (Rafsan, 2021). According to Briliana et al. (2020), it has been studied that people tend to follow certain food vlogs and decide on the selection of food.

Due to the advancement of technology and modernization in recent years, the concept of food blogging has quite become popular in Dhaka. Oftentimes, when people are scrolling through Instagram, YouTube, or any other social media, they will come across food content (Laohasukkasem et al., 2021). Food influencers will go around town to experience different food spaces and share their opinion by posting pictures or making video content telling stories about their experiences. Influencers like Rafsan TheChotoBhai, Petuk Couples, and many others have millions of followers interacting with their every post.

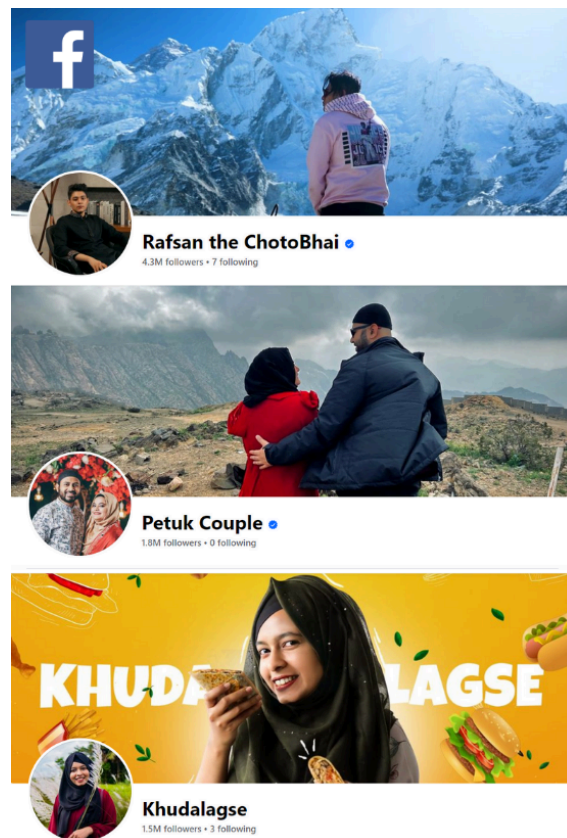


Figure 1.1.1: Facebook follower count of Popular Bangladeshi Food Influencers - Rafsan the ChotoBhai, Petuk Couple, and Khudalagse.



Figure 1.1.2: Rafsan TheChotoBhai's YouTube Video Promoting his own Electrolyte drink

These individuals are making content sharing their experiences starting from fancy restaurants to street food stalls or promoting a product. Figure 1.1.2 is an example of Rafsan TheChotoBhai promoting his own Electrolyte drink which is now popular among the youth of Dhaka. His followers want to go along with the trend and are influenced into trying out his new drink. Young people are drawn to how they can give a glimpse into Dhaka's diverse food scene and trends (Ferdous et al., 2024).

Young people play a huge role when it comes to who contributes the most engagement on social media and digital content. (Rafsan, 2021) The food choices, culture, and trends among young people are often influenced by popular influencers on social media. (Komiske, 2021) The study will explore the youth perception in Dhaka to get a better understanding of how food influencers are shaping the food culture and habits.

Among the youth of Dhaka, it is common to look for somewhere to eat, which results in them turning to these influencers for recommendations. Their experience, reviews, and suggestions can influence a restaurant's reputation. According to research by Nilo et al., (2023), these influencers sometimes post content with the intention of persuading consumers to purchase something. Some audiences end up getting influenced by these celebrity endorsement strategies. People not only follow these influencers for entertainment purposes only but also to get knowledge, and references, and understand what the experience might be before purchasing something. Food influencers are also hired to make content specifically for consumer purchase intention. Thus, this gives rise to the credibility and trustworthiness of food influencers among Dhaka's youth.

The aim is to dive deep into exploring young people's narratives about food influencers in Dhaka. Based on different aspects like age, gender, socioeconomic status, and so on, the focus will be to determine how young people are influenced by the content of food influencers. By taking both qualitative and quantitative approaches to this research, we want to explore the conversations with young people know their opinions and experiences regarding food influencers. These conversations will give us the opportunity to understand what young people think about food bloggers in Dhaka. The study also aims to find common themes and ideas in young people's stories, helping us organize a bigger picture of youth's narrative with food bloggers in Dhaka. Overall, the research hopes to provide valuable insights regarding the thoughts of young people to have a better understanding of the world of food blogging in Dhaka.

1.2 Problem Statement

Even if food blogging is becoming popular among Dhaka's youth population, there remains a knowledge gap regarding what young people think about food influencers and how these influencers shape their food preferences, consumption habits, and social interactions. The existing studies may have focused on how food bloggers interact with their audience to make them engage in their content, yet little is known about the youth's perception and trust towards the influencers. Contributing to some extent to this knowledge gap, this leaves us with a scope to investigate youth's narratives regarding food influencers in Dhaka to understand the influence of food blogging on youth and their communication patterns.

1.3 Research Objective

- To understand the narratives of young people in Dhaka and their level of acceptance towards food influencers.
- To explore the factors for the various narratives of food influencers among the youth of Dhaka.
- To analyze food influencers' influence on Dhaka's youth's food choices, preference, and consumer behavior.

1.4 Research Questions

- What is the narrative of the young people in Dhaka regarding food influencers and to what extent do they accept food influencers?
- What are the various factors that influence the narrative of youth in Dhaka regarding food influencers?
- To what extent do influencers shape the consumer behavior and preference in terms of food choices and food spaces among young people in Dhaka?

1.5 Significance of this study

This study on youth narratives regarding food bloggers in Dhaka has the potential to contribute to the field of communication, business, and further social science research. Exploring the youth's narrative will not only give us insight into what young people think about food influences but also benefit many individuals, groups, and organizations with information on consumer behavior and digital culture.

1.5.1. Awareness Among the Youth Population in Dhaka

The first significance of this research is the young people in Dhaka, specifically the ones who are active on social media and follow food influencers. By understanding their perceptions and purchasing intentions regarding their food choices can provide insights into their consumer behavior and preferences. Shedding light on how food influencers influence food habits among Dhaka's youth, can make people aware to make more informed choices about their daily eating habits and lifestyles. This study can overall contribute to an individual's health and well-being.

1.5.2. Insights for Food Influencers

Food influencers will benefit from this research as they will be able to get information about their audience's preferences, expectations, and concerns. The data will help them plan out their content in such a way that can help them make it more engaging, relevant to what the young audience wants, and more importantly effective if they have the intention to persuade a target audience. This study will benefit brands and influencers in strategizing their marketing plan and exploring methods that can engage their followers and gain their trust.

1.5.3. Help Communication Scholars and Researchers

When it comes to digital media and food choice, this study can contribute significantly to exploring the area of communication by providing insights about the youth in Bangladesh. Communication scholars can explore the youth's narratives regarding food influencers to get a better understanding of influencer culture, online communities, and digital consumption patterns. Furthermore, this opens up the scope to analyze influencer marketing strategies further. Researchers can also look into content creation practices, and tactics for audience engagement, which can expand the theoretical progress and knowledge

1.5.4. Social Science Research

By examining the socio-cultural implications of digital media and online communities in today's society, this study can contribute to future research related to social science. Insights regarding how through digital media, influencers can have an impact on food choices and create trends among young people can reveal a lot about cultural consumption, identity formation, and social influence. This research contributes to the growing body of literature related to digital communication, culture, consumer behavior, purchasing intention, and youth studies. More importantly, the study provides valuable insights into Dhaka, Bangladesh about the co-relations of technology, media, and society.

1.5.5. Contributing to Policymakers and Industry Professionals

Lastly, policymakers may benefit from the findings of this research as it will shed light on media regulations and public health associated with youth. Industry professionals can benefit as well from digital marketing. With the information gained from this study, policymakers and industry professionals can develop more targeted plans and strategies. The data regarding the current perception of young people regarding food influencers might help them understand the impact of digital content creation and consumption. Additionally, this research can contribute greatly to marketing strategies and product development. Various organizations and brands or individuals can utilize the information to create effective social media engagement tactics targeted at youth audiences.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the existing literature related to the topic, reviewing their concepts, methods, gaps, and the relationship between the variables under the study. By investigating previous research, provides in-depth knowledge and a different perspective regarding the topics. Additionally, the chapter also looks into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and operational definitions.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Credibility and Authenticity of Influencers

The research done by Suprawan (2021) at the School of Business Administration, Bangkok University, investigates the trustworthiness can work as a connection for building a brand's trust, authenticity, and interaction of Instagram stores in Bangkok, Thailand. The paper focused mainly on food product marketing. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, a sample of 380 participants (mainly young female Instagram users) were surveyed. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to understand the link between the interaction of influencers, their authenticity, trust in the brand, and consumer's interest in purchasing from Instagram stores. Trust, in particular, was one of the main factors that influenced people to trust a brand and influence their decisions. The findings of this study suggest that trustworthy influencers can influence their followers to purchase something when they endorse it.

Even if the study can help us understand how trust can influence consumers in decision-making, the sample representation focused on the young female population in Bangkok. The platform they focus on is also specifically about Instagram users, hence we can do further exploration in Dhaka, Bangladesh considering other demographics and platforms.

A study conducted by Wu et al. (2021) focuses on the various factors that influence consumer trust when it comes to food and the food system. The research explores the information available to consumers and investigates the key factors beyond visual and brand-related information which influence the trust of people regarding food quality and reliability. As a part of the Trusted

Agrifood Exports Mission by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, they collected information in various consumer and market settings to understand what strategies can be developed to maintain consumer trust. Based on the 133 relevant articles they explored, their findings included how people from China are willing to pay more for food that has traceable information about where they are coming from. They provided a theoretical framework discussing the relationship between media, the food industry, and consumers and how they are building consumer trust in the food system.

However, countries like Australia, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brazil were mostly focused when it came to gathering data that might not be applicable to Dhaka, Bangladesh. Furthermore, they did not mention any specific age range or target audience which can be difficult to understand what exactly are the thoughts of young people when it comes to food and trust. The study focuses on the food industry and how the information they provide to the consumer is shaping consumer trust. The literature vaguely focused on mass media hence it leaves us the opportunity to work with young consumers and their trust in food influencers.

Research led by Shank (2022) aimed to investigate the trust and transparency on Instagram among agriculture influencers based in the United States of America. This literature explores the motivation of the influencers and how their communication strategies and transparency regarding agriculture can gain the trust of their followers. To understand the outcome of their influence, Vroom's Expectancy Theory was applied. Overall, to gain in-depth insights, qualitative interviews were conducted with 14 agricultural influencers based on their follower count, content on Instagram, and how often they post about agriculture. The findings of the research mention how motivation plays a crucial role in shaping the content shared by the influencers. The respondents also signify their strategies to convey trust and transparency in their content.

There are several drawbacks, however. According to the research, it was conducted among micro and nano-influencers because macro-influencers refused to participate in the study. The study also mentions about self-reporting bias. Furthermore, the focus of this research is mainly on agriculture influencers on Instagram. Gathering information from the consumer perspective would have helped further to understand the level of trust and transparency among influencers.

Future research can investigate these research gaps by exploring consumer perspective and other influencers such as food influencers on other social media platforms. Lastly, the data is in context with the United States of America, which indicates that the results may not be generalizable among people in Asian countries.

Adib et al. (2023) conducted a study that investigated social media influencers' impact on consumers' purchase intention in terms of Pakistani Food. The research aims to analyze factors like the trustworthiness and credibility of online influencers, and influencers' knowledge and expertise which influence the consumer attitude, interaction, and purchase intention. This information was gathered through 250 individuals who were given questionnaires through social media. These data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to understand the relationship between the variables. The findings suggest how influencers who are experts, trustworthy, and upload appealing content have a positive influence on consumers and lead them to purchase Pakistani food.

The research is conducted in an Asian country however, this leaves a knowledge gap regarding the situation of young adults in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Additionally, this study focused on the consumer consumption of Pakistani Food which is not enough to generalize the overall food culture and scenario.

A research conducted by Tanha (2020) explores the purchasing behavior of Bangladeshi online users who are influenced by Instagram micro-celebrities due to their credibility and self-presentation. The study dives deep into the relationship between self-presentation theory and the source credibility model to have a better understanding of consumer attitude, behavior, and purchase intention. The strategies used by the micro-influencers for self-presentation online and what impact it has on consumer perception and behavior are analyzed from the data collected from 46 Bangladeshi users who were interviewed. The findings give insights into how micro-celebrities have to be persuasive and hardworking to gain the trust of the consumer. Uploading authentic and informative content and maintaining friendliness, openness, and honesty with the audience plays an important role in the growth of their popularity. The users also mention how they expect micro-celebrities to be internally motivated rather than publishing

content for commercial purposes in order to be positively accepted by their followers. Even if they do post paid content, consumers may not fully trust micro-celebrities however they might consider the information disseminated by them during an information search stage which can contribute to the purchasing decision of a consumer.

Yet again, the small sample size of 46 participants is a limitation to generalizing the findings to represent the large population of Bangladeshi Instagram users. Additionally, the information may contain inaccurate information due to self-reporting bias. The study is also limited to focusing on micro-celebrities, thus leaving the scope to do future research on influencers in general on multiple social media platforms.

2.1.2 Youth Engagement with Social Media Influencers

The study done by Rafsan (2021) focuses on how and what causes Bangladeshi fans to interact with online influencers specifically on YouTube. The author dives deep into how the daily lives of the followers are influenced by these social media figures. According to the research, digital media has an influence on our actions and daily lives. The Actor-Network Theory (ANT) was used to understand the interaction of the followers with online content creators. Based on the data collected in this research, the findings mention how some participants engage with influencers on YouTube due to the fear of not knowing what the ongoing trend is. However, many are discouraged from engaging with influencers who only promote products they want to sell. Viewers are less interested in such content as they feel that the influencers are not authentic.

Even if the research is in the context of Bangladesh, it does not specify that the focus group is from Dhaka. The research also has a limitation when it comes to its sample size as it involves only interviewing 8 participants. Furthermore, the study aims to understand the narrative of fans toward influencers on YouTube which leaves out other social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, etc. It has been explored that digital media have an impact on the everyday lives of people, creating a dynamics of fan culture and their interaction with these popular figures. It still does not specifically discuss how much these consumers trust influencers, especially when it comes to young people.

The research done by Fitri et al. (2021) explores micro-influencers and their impact on brand image and purchase intention for local culinary products on Instagram. The study was conducted at the Bandung Institute of Technology in Indonesia, where around 200 participants were surveyed through online questionnaires. The questionnaire was given to Generation Y and Generation Z who are within the age group of 18-39 years old as they are the most active users of Instagram. Using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the data were analyzed. The findings highlight how micro-influencers who have high credibility can have a positive impact on the brand image and purchase intention. This indicates the potential for micro-influencers to influence brand perception and consumer decision-making.

However, the geographic limitations only speak on behalf of the Indonesian community. The sample size is also not enough to generalize all the Gen Y & Gen Z populations. Additionally, the research mostly talks about the impact micro-influencers have on brand image and consumerism, thus future research can specifically focus on what young people think about influencers and not just be limited to one social media platform like Instagram.

Komiske (2021) conducted a study in the US where the effective usage of Instagram as a food influencer was explored. Understanding how food influencers can engage their followers through Instagram posts, coming up with strategies, and the changes made by the influencers or brands were discussed. It dives deep into how influencers keep their audience engaged and how it can impact dietary behavior. The data was collected based on 989 posts of food influencers on Instagram. The research does not specify any particular theory other than analyzing Instagram posts from the top twelve food influencers who were focusing on the Keto Diet for three months. After evaluation, the findings state that attractive content has more engagement which includes views, reactions, and comments. Specifically, content that focuses on food recipes received more positive responses. Influencers would keep track of the data and social media trends in order to keep their followers engaged.

The study shows how healthy food content does get a lot of positive responses, however, the research did focus on popular influencers based on their follower count. Therefore, it might vary from influencer to influencer. Further research can look into other social media platforms and not

just limit itself to one. Another limitation is how the influencers chosen were only focusing on the Keto diet, which might not be the case for every food influencer out there. Additionally, the research was done during COVID-19, hence it leaves the scope to explore the post-pandemic scenario. Lastly, this research was conducted in the context of the American food culture, which might vary in the South Asian context.

2.1.3 Influence of social media and influencers on consumer behavior

The research done by Ferdous et al. (2024) explores the Bangladeshi Gen Z consumers' perception of vloggers and how it might influence their decision-making in the context of fashion. Using qualitative methods, they conducted in-depth interviews, and 15 participants were selected through a purposive sample and snowball technique. The sample size was determined based on data saturation among 15 people between the ages of 22 to 25 (7 men and 8 women). The findings mentioned how participants of the study admitted to spending a large amount of their time on social media and it led to them making impulsive purchases or desire to purchase fashion items. However one of the respondents shared their concern about how influencers and vloggers are creating false needs. Even if they are getting information from social media content, it still causes trust issues among the consumers due to paid reviews.

The sample size of 15 participants is not enough to represent the entire Gen Z population in Bangladesh. Furthermore, in the context of Bangladesh, it does not specify any particular theory and the findings are not from Dhaka or any specific city. This study did not address the potential impact of different types of vlog content (e.g., informational vs. entertaining) on Gen Z consumers' perceptions and purchase decisions. It also focused mostly on fashion items, which gives the scope to work on what young people think about food influencers and their acceptance of them.

Anjos et al. (2022) investigate how Instagram influencers influence consumer behavior regarding restaurant choices. The study used the theory of Word of Mouth (WOM) communication, specifically focusing on the restaurant industry's communication directed towards consumers in Portugal. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are implemented to understand how influencers play a role in shaping consumer decision-making when choosing a restaurant. A

sample size of 395 people was surveyed to gather information regarding the restaurants in Portugal. Focus As for the qualitative approach they conducted focus group discussions with people who follow Instagram influencers in Portugal. The findings of the research highlight how 81% of participants visit restaurants that are promoted by influencers. Furthermore, around 72% of participants visit restaurants in Portugal with a positive trend on Instagram. One of the participants also shared how they do not see paid content by the influencers as something negative as they believe the influencers are honest with their opinions and would not share something they do not like to maintain their status. Most participants find it important that influencers pay attention to their audience and respond to the public to clear questions and doubts. This helps to build trust towards the influencers more than the restaurants themselves.

However, there are some shortcomings in the research. The sample for the study may not be large enough to generalize the overall population of the consumers. Additionally, the research focuses on the food industry in Portugal which leaves us the scope of doing the research for Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The research done by Laohasukkasem et al. (2021) discusses the impact online influencers have on consumers' purchase intention when it comes to Japanese food in Bangkok. The study investigates various factors related to online influencers for a better understanding of how online content can influence consumers. Using the Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) method, data was collected from around 407 Japanese food consumers through an online survey. The research highlights that consumers would purchase more if the online influencers posted content that is trustworthy, credible, and attractive.

However, the research focused solely on consumers of Japanese food in Bangkok, which limits the generalizability of the findings in terms of other food cuisines and geographic locations. The study also did not consider having a specific demographic to focus on thus leaving the opportunity for future research to explore what the young people might think regarding this issue and how it can have an impact on consumer behavior and purchase intention due to various factors.

The study conducted by Niloy et al., (2023) analyzes how consumer purchase intentions are influenced and the factors influencing the attitude of consumers toward food influencers in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior as their base, they aimed to understand the perception of consumers and their actions toward these content creators. They concluded a survey among 548 respondents to understand if the participants purchase food that is recommended by influencers. The findings mention how food brands would want influencer marketing as the customers have positive attitudes towards the influencers. The attitude towards influencers is linked with how they visualize the content, relevance, and knowledge regarding the product the influencers are promoting. Various food brands keep track of influencers who have a positive influence on their followers so that they can promote their products.

However, this study was conducted to understand influencer marketing, which indicates that the results may not be generalizable to the behavior and decision-making choices among young people. This leaves the scope of exploring other factors for the consumer and their narrative toward food influencers.

Another research by Sorakhaibam et al. (2021), explores the impact social media influencers have on people's purchasing intentions. The main intention is to analyze the credibility of a source, the effectiveness of the message conveyed by the social media content, likeability of social media influencers which impact the purchase intention of their followers. The study focused on Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and surveyed 117 Instagram users in Manipur, India online to investigate the relationship between the influence of social media influencers and the users' purchase intention of food products. The results indicated that people have a positive attitude towards influencers they can trust and are familiar with. Trust in influencers, their knowledge regarding the food industry, and familiarity act as an important factor that influences the purchase intention of Instagram users.

The limitations of this research are that 117 participants are not enough to generalize the large population around the world. Furthermore, it leaves the scope to explore the situation in Dhaka, Bangladesh as this research is done in India.

2.1.4 Influence on Food Choices and Preferences

Hulsmeijer (2022) conducted a study in the Netherlands, that explores the positive and negative impact food influencers have when it comes to the consumption of healthy food. The data was collected, based on the theory of parasocial interaction, from 201 participants aged between 18 to 25 through online invitations on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, etc. The research findings point out how the difference in a participant's education level and their social media usage can have an influence. The paper mentions how influencers with healthy eating habits will lead to their followers consuming healthy food and products too. It is also mentioned that if an influencer is untrustworthy then the participants are less likely to follow their message. On top of that, when some food influencers mention that their content is paid content or involves some sort of sponsorship, consumers are more aware of the persuasive communication that leads to the followers having a negative attitude towards the message.

Nevertheless, the sample is narrowed to food influencers who are on Instagram only. This limitation gives the opportunity to research more on other social media platforms. Additionally, even if the study surveyed young people, Dhaka's demography is yet to be explored.

The research done by Van Der Bend et al. (2022) investigates and evaluates food promoted on social media and adolescents' exposure to it. The study aims to understand how adolescents see and interact with food promotions on social media. Data was collected from countries like Australia and the Netherlands which consisted of a total of 35 adolescents who were both interviewed and surveyed. Using the Health over Everything (HoE) framework, the data were analyzed to explore the factors that influence the consumption behavior of adolescents. The findings of the research suggest that most teens get advertisements of unhealthy food on their social media and many did not notice them. 49% of the participants mentioned how they like social media food promotions and 6% do not like them.

The study focuses mainly on social media content in Australia, which limits the scope of generalizing information for other countries, specifically in the South Asian context. It also does not properly explore food influencers on social media platforms and the limited sample size of 35 participants is not enough to represent the large population of adolescents around the world.

Similarly, Folkvord and De Bruijne (2020) examined how a social influencer promotes vegetables to encourage adolescents to eat more vegetables. The concept of parasocial interaction was implemented to understand the one-sided connection an individual might develop with the social influencer. The research was conducted in the Netherlands among 132 adolescents who were aged between 13-16 years old and were randomly assigned to different scenarios. For example: some participants were exposed to Instagram posts that promoted vegetables whereas others were exposed to Instagram posts promoting unhealthy snacks or other controlled conditions. The findings revealed that adolescents were not influenced to have more vegetables even after a popular social influencer promoted vegetables. No significant findings were found which mentioned that adolescents felt like they were being influenced by social media influencers.

The study's limitation is that due to the small sample size and geographic location, we cannot generalize the findings to all adolescents around the world. Furthermore, not many factors were explored to give more detailed information about adolescents' behavior and food choices. Further study can shed light upon other food items and a larger sample size to generate more insights.

Another research by Hanifawati et al., (2019) investigates the behavior among millennials and Gen Z in the food and beverage industry and their link to the influence of social media influencers. The study used a random sampling technique and focused on 390 Indonesian respondents who participated in the data collection process through an online survey. Through this research, they were able to understand how influencers can influence people with their social media content and how it can have an impact on the consumer decision-making process. Additionally, using the Opinion Dynamics Theory, the findings mention how opinion leaders, celebrities, and social leaders have an influence when it comes to brand-switching behavior. The visual content on social media plays an important role when it comes to influencing a consumer. Thus, customers prefer to lean towards visual content over verbal.

While the study explains the dynamics of young people's behavior in terms of social media marketing and influencer strategies, there are a few limitations. Opinion leaders, social leaders,

and celebrities were the main focus when it came to consumer feedback. Thus future studies can explore social media influencers, specifically food influencers on various social media platforms.

Coates et al. (2019) examined the food and beverage cues in influencers' YouTube videos which are popular among children in the United Kingdom. The paper focuses on how this branding promotes unhealthy items and needs proper regulation to protect young people from the influence of influencers on their food habits. The findings indicate how these influencers are often promoting unhealthy food and drinks which are getting popular among children. 3571 food and beverage cues were identified after analyzing 380 YouTube videos, which were around 119.5 hours of content. Statistics show that 49.4% of the cues in each hour are made up of unhealthy goods. Whereas, 34.5% of all cues each hour are made of healthy products, indicating that it is less common among the influencers.

However, the study focused on the influencers who were selected who were only popular among the young crowd in their nation. This limits the study's findings and capacity to generalize the findings on a more global scale or something that can be relevant in the context of Bangladesh. Additionally, they have not investigated many influencers across various social media platforms which is why the findings may not be accurate when it comes to understanding the ways influencers promote food and beverage cues. Lastly, the study's limitation involves children, therefore, future studies can explore other social media influencers and the viewpoints and narratives of consumers regarding influencers.

The research done by Ahmad and Bruno, (2021) explores the dietary choices among university students in Malaysia and its connection to social media influencers. The focus of this study was to find out students' attitudes toward social media influencers and how various factors influence their behavior when it comes to their food choices. The study highlights how students' attitude toward social media influencers did not significantly impact their every food choice or eating habit. Using the Theory of Reasoned Action and questions from Skyline Galea's research on Social Media Influencers on Purchase Decisions, 82 online questionnaires that were given to final-year students at Universiti Malaysia Sabah were analyzed for data collection.

One of the drawbacks of this study is that it heavily relied on self-reported information which might produce inaccurate or biased information. Furthermore, the research was done in a single university in Malaysia which is why the findings can not be generalized for all university students.

Similarly, research conducted by Kei (2024), discusses the healthy food choices among youth which are influenced by Instagram influencers. The study explores influencer marketing on Instagram and its contributions to the eating behavior and habits of young people. Six Instagram users in Malaysia were interviewed through Zoom meetings and the information was analyzed based on the Healthy Food Promotion Model. The findings indicate that these Instagram influencers do play a crucial role in influencing young people's food choices. Many started consuming healthy food after their exposure to promotional posts on Instagram, thus leading to a positive change in their eating habits. The users also mention that the credibility and the way the information is presented is one of the important factors in pursuing consumer behavior.

However, this research is based on the information provided by 6 people which is not enough to generalize the overall youth population. Despite the small sample size, the geographic location also leaves us with the scope of conducting research that is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and their youth.

In short, the kinds of literature reviewed highlight the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior, trust, and authenticity. When it comes to both global and local contexts, it is emphasized that an influencer's trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity, expertise, and knowledge are important when shaping consumer behavior and attitude. The way these influencers present their content can deeply impact their target audience and influence their food habits as well. However, this leaves a notable gap regarding the youth's narrative on food influencers in Dhaka which is yet to be explored. By doing a broader research in the context of Dhaka's youth, the research can contribute to gathering knowledge of consumer perspectives, and understanding of influencer impact on consumer behavior.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework utilizes the Social Construction of Reality Theory and Social Influencer Theory. Through mixed research methods such as surveys and focus group discussions, these theories can be the guiding framework for exploring young people's narratives, how their perceptions of reality are formed due to social media, and how food influencers contribute to shaping the food choices of young people. These theories will also explore multiple elements of a food influencer and how they influence the young people in Dhaka.

2.2.1. Social Construction of Reality Theory

Based on this theory, reality is altered by social interaction, societal norms, and personal experience as it is subjective. A person's idea of reality is shaped by their interactions with society and in this case, their interaction with their peers and influencers on social media platforms. Engaging in social media discussion and interacting with the influencers somewhat forms the youth's perception and narrative regarding food influencers. Furthermore, this interaction with food influencers on social media platforms contributes to shaping the reality of young people when it comes to food choices and consumption habits. In context to this research, this theory will emphasize the role of social media and food influencers in shaping young people's perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors, highlighting the subjective nature of reality construction.

2.2.1. Social Influencer Theory

Using the Social Influence Theory, the idea of how people are influenced by various factors can be explored. The theory suggests that people get influenced by peer pressure or persuasive messages by the influencers as they end up making it look like it is the societal norm. When it comes to the context of food consumption, the theory can be used to explain how a person can be convinced to change his/her behavior due to various social factors. This change in behavior or opinion can lead to shaping their eating habits or preferences. Social Influence Theory will help us understand to what extent influencers play a role in creating social norms revolving around food consumption through their online content containing persuasive messages. This theory will examine how influencers influence young people's food choices in Dhaka.

Both the theories mentioned above are interconnected with one another. By using these theories as the theoretical framework, it can be determined how food influencers are setting trends by promoting food on social media and what young people think about it. Social Construction of Reality Theory and Social Influence Theory, both discuss the various key factors that influence a person's perception, behavior, and decision-making process. These theories can guide us through how influencers are contributing to the change of youth's narrative when it comes to food consumption. This will also give us insight into how much young people trust these food influencers and their views regarding these popular figures. We can learn about what young people think about food influencers, and gather information about young people and how their food habits have changed due to social media and influencers.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework aims to explain the variables that are involved in creating the youth's narrative regarding food influencers in Dhaka, describing the relationships and connections between the variables and their categories.

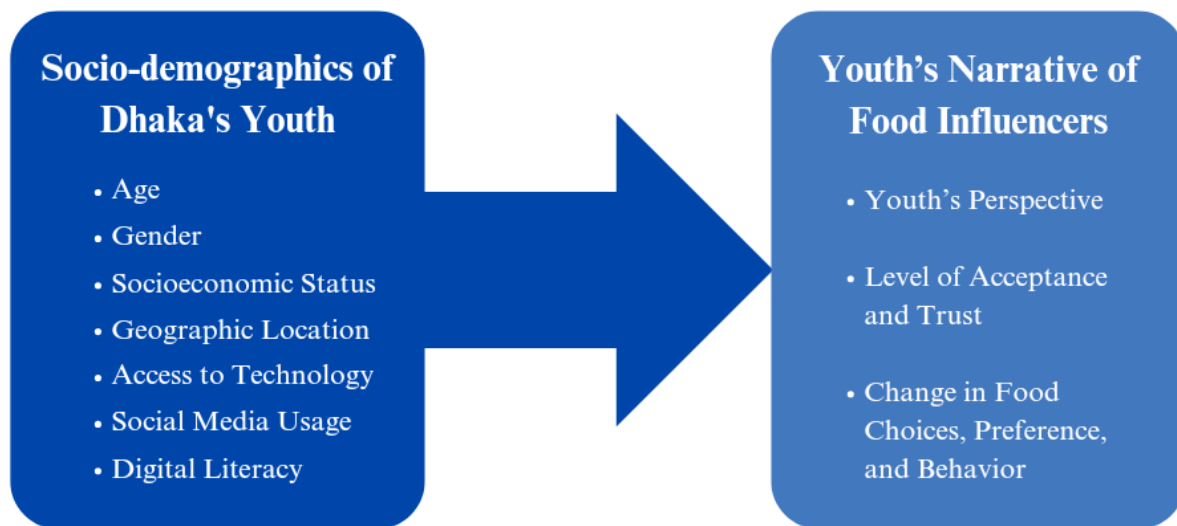


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework for Youth's Narrative of Food Influencer

According to Figure 2.1, the youth's narrative of food influencers is influenced by their socio-demographic factors. The narrative of young people plays as an independent variable,

focusing on young people's trust in food influencers, level of acceptance, and how their food choices and preferences are influenced. Using this framework we want to explore whether the narratives, acceptance, trust, and behavior towards food influencers vary based on the dependent variables of socio-demographics of Dhaka's Youth. The socio-demographics of Dhaka's youth include factors like age, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, access to technology, social media usage, and digital literacy.

These socio-demographic variables influence how young individuals interact on social media platforms and their level of trust in influencer content. For example, a person with proper access to technology, high use of social media, and great digital literacy may be more receptive to influencer content. However, if they have a low socioeconomic status or their geographic location is in a rural area then their perception, interaction, and consumer behavior will vary. These factors will give us insights into how they encounter influencers and what aspects they are influenced by. Thus, there exists a relationship between the socio-demographics of Dhaka's youth and their narrative of food influencers, where each variable informs and shapes a person's narrative.

2.4 Operational Definition

An operational definition is like a stepping stone to understanding what something is or how it works, especially in the context of research. This guides researchers through the process to understand how they should collect data in a proper manner and provides an outline of clear instructions. Thus to explain further, if we are studying what the young people in Dhaka think about food influencers and how they are influenced by food blogging, the operational framework can explain specifically how information can be gathered, from where information can be collected, and why certain methods are being used. The operational definitions of the various of this study are given below:

2.4.1. Youth

Youth is considered the period between childhood and adult age. In context to this study, youth are referred to the individuals who are aged between 18 and 30 years old and are residing in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The young adults represent a diverse demography, categorizing them based

on socioeconomic factors, gender, age, education, cultural influences, and digital literacy. Categories: Students, Young Professionals, Social Media Enthusiasts, Food Enthusiasts.

2.4.2. Narrative

Narratives refer to personal accounts, stories, and experiences on a topic and in this case, the topic is youth sharing their thoughts regarding their interactions with food influencers in Dhaka. Descriptions regarding a person's observations, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to food influencers are included in the narrative. Categories: Trust, Engagement, Influence, Authenticity, etc.

2.4.3. Food Influencers

Food influencers are individuals, who are well-known for their social media personalities and actively create food-related content on various online platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and so on. Food Influencers create and share content related to food on social media platforms, such as food recommendations, experiences, restaurant reviews, cooking tutorials, etc. We can consider Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Restaurant Reviewers, and Nutritionists as food influencers.

2.4.4. Attitudes

A person's point of view, feeling, or thought towards something or someone is considered to be attitude. For this study, attitude is a young person's point of view that is positive, negative, or neutral towards food influencers and their content. This viewpoint is a reflection of influencer messages, practices, and their impact on food behaviors and choices.

2.4.5. Behaviors

Behaviors are the way an animal or a person reacts towards something or someone. It can be influenced by certain situations or certain factors. For this study, behaviors are interlinked with the actions, reactions, and responses of youth in Dhaka that can be observed. This elaborates on their interaction with food influencers which includes their consumption habits due to influencer-generated content, actively participating in online communities, and getting persuaded by the recommendations of food influencers.

2.4.6. Food Choices and Preferences

A person liking a certain food or expressing their liking for food in an evaluative attitude can be referred to as food preference. As for food choice, it can be described as what sort of food people decide to consume. This research will explore youth's decision-making process to choose specific food items, cuisines, cooking styles, or food spaces based on their narrative towards influencers. Food choices and preferences are influenced by factors like online content, recommendations, peer suggestions, and trends promoted by food influencers.

2.4.7. Perceptions

Perception is the way we see, be aware, and understand something through sense. It is how we interpret insights and form a consciousness regarding something. This study will focus on young people's perception of food influencers. Perception will elaborate the ability to understand and be aware of the food influencers in Dhaka and what opinions young people have about them. The perceptions of young people towards food influencers are created by their exposure to social media, influencers' content, and experiencing the narratives shared by the influencers.

2.4.8. Acceptance

The process of embracing or receiving something that is offered is known to be acceptance. The idea of acceptance is when a person has the willingness to tolerate something or someone. For this research, the term acceptance will reflect young people's willingness to trust and engage with food influencers and their content. Youth's acceptance will vary depending on factors like influencer's credibility, expertise and relatability with young people's values and preference.

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Self-Assessment Form

The purpose of this survey is to obtain students' input on how they think they have performed.

Name of Intern: Anica Hossain

University ID: 202012003

Name of the Institute/Organization:	University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)		
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Email:	anica.hossain.msj@ulab.edu.bd	Web:	https://ulab.edu.bd/

1. During a typical week, approximately how many hours did you dedicate to your internship?

6 to 8 Hours

2. Was your internship paid? If yes, how much?

No

3. Was your site supervisor available to meet when needed? Tick any one of the following.

☐ Not at all
 ☐ Slightly
 ☐ Moderately
 ☐ Quite a bit
 ☒ **A great deal**

4. Next, we would like to know how you were affected by your internship. Using the scale below, please indicate the degree to which participation in your internship experience increased or strengthened your abilities, attitudes, awareness or understanding in each of the areas identified:

1=Not at all 2=Slightly 3=Moderately 4=Quite a bit 5=A great deal

NO	CRITERIA (Personal)	RATING
1	I have a sense of satisfaction in doing something worthwhile.	5
2	I believe in my ability to make a difference.	4
3	I am open to new experiences.	5
4	I have gained the capacity to be more productive.	4
5	I can recognize my personal strengths.	4
6	I can recognize my personal weaknesses.	5
7	I have a sense of personal achievement.	5
8	I have the ability to persevere in difficult tasks	5
NO	CRITERIA (Social/Interpersonal Impact)	
9	I demonstrate concern for the welfare of others	4
10	I can be understanding and appreciative of people with diverse backgrounds	5
11	I have the ability to work cooperatively with others	4
12	I have the ability to communicate effectively	4

13	I have increased my ability to be a leader	4
14	I feel more connected to my community	4
NO	CRITERIA (Academic learning impact)	
15	I have acquired knowledge from the job duties I performed	4
16	I have broadened my critical thinking skills (reasoning, problem solving)	4
17	I have learnt the ability to work independently	5
18	I feel my classroom learning was enriched	4
19	I have the ability to connect academic subject matter to the real world.	4
NO	CRITERIA (EMPLOYMENT/JOB SPECIFIC IMPACT)	
20	I developed specialised technical skills for a specific job function	4
21	I broadened my future employment possibilities	4
22	I received an opportunity to explore a specific career	5
23	I developed realistic ideas about the work world	4
24	I narrowed my future possible career choices.	4
25	What is your average score from this test?	4

5. General Comments

This four-year journey has been a great experience for me. I am grateful to those who inspired me to persevere and taught me the power of resilience. With the help I received, I was able to prove that resilience and self-belief can turn setbacks into comebacks. This personal growth gives me a sense of self-fulfillment and fills me with immense gratitude.



Signature of Intern