



University of Wales
Trinity Saint David
BIRMINGHAM

Erika Stecca

Student number: **2314517**

Proposed research title: **“The Influence of TikTok Food Trends on Customer Purchasing Behaviour and Restaurant Performance: A Case Study of Wagamama in the UK Hospitality Industry”**

Name of the university: **University of Wales Trinity Saint David**
(Birmingham Campus)

Course title: **Dissertation – Proposal**

Module: **LCBB6000_BIRM**

Lecture: **Dr Liyanage Rodrigo**

Submission date: **21/06/2026**

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Research Objectives & Questions	3
3. Literature Review	4
4. Methodology	5
5. Conclusion	5
References	6

1. Introduction

More restaurants in the hospitality industry are using social media (such as Facebook, Instagram or TikTok) marketing for promoting their food and services to influence them in their purchasing decisions and marketing to attract and keep customers.

In the last few years, short-form video-sharing platforms are growing fast. Social media platforms like TikTok are used more to reach and engage with customers. For Generation Z and younger Millennials short videos on platforms like TikTok are very popular. For this reason, restaurants of the hospitality industry are using it to show their food, to get new customers and to get more visibility for their brand. By this they try to increase customer engagement and to generate more sales.

There has been a lot of research into the use of TikTok by organizations within the hospitality industry, most studies have focused on the marketing of individual dishes by restaurants via videos that are shared in the app. However, there is limited research that has investigated the influence of food trends created by the sharing of food videos in the app, and the impact that these trends have upon users and the performance of restaurants.

The purpose of this research is to address a current gap in knowledge of the impact of TikTok food trends on consumer behaviour with a focus on the purchasing intentions of users of the platform, and the subsequent impact on individual restaurant dishes promoted by short videos of food created to grab the attention of potential customers via the platform of TikTok. The focus of this research will be on the well-known UK high street brand Wagamama who have over 80 restaurants across the UK, and an online presence. This research aims to explore how restaurants can utilize the platform of TikTok as a successful marketing tool and it investigates the food trends on TikTok and how users' behaviour is influenced by them, attempting to assess the overall impact social media has on restaurants within the UK hospitality industry. As previously stated, social media has enabled organizations to interact with their customers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), and the interaction has significant impact on the behaviour of the consumer (Kotler and Keller, 2009) including their purchasing intentions of products and services via digital platforms (Stephen, 2016).

2. Research Objectives & Questions

The present study investigates relationships of TikTok food trends, customers' purchasing behaviour and the performance of restaurants within the British hospitality industry.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the influence of TikTok food trends on customer purchasing behaviour.

2. To evaluate the impact of TikTok food trends on Wagamama's restaurant performance.
3. To examine customer perceptions of TikTok food-related content.

This study's research questions are:

1. How do TikTok food trends influence consumers' purchasing behaviour in the restaurant industry?
2. To what extent do TikTok food trends impact the performance of Wagamama restaurants?
3. How do customers perceive food-related content shared on TikTok?

3. Literature Review

Short-form video content is one of the most dominant forms of online content today. These contents can instantly influence consumers' buying behaviour within a matter of minutes (Omar and Dequan, 2020). With food-related content on TikTok being one of the shared, restaurants have increasingly utilized the platform for marketing their business and to promote their food offerings (Omar and Dequan, 2020).

TikTok can be seen as a medium to promote restaurants by creating visually engaging content and allowing these to be showcased on the App. This in turn can allow customers to view the different products on offer at restaurants such as Wagamama and allow them to engage with these to hopefully encourage consumers to visit the restaurant in question or to interact with aspects of food from the restaurant (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021).

Social media marketing has become an important function of marketing within the hospitality industry. As a form of online marketing, it has become an important tool for marketers to promote their target audience. Influencer marketing has been proven to have a few positive and negative effects on consumers' purchasing decisions (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021). The influence of online marketing has led to many restaurants globally utilizing online platforms to engage with people to increase exposure and customer interaction by creating buzz around the restaurant to increase footfall. Much of the social media marketing research has been conducted in the Asian market where social commerce is well established; however, research within a Western context, specifically within the UK, is limited (Omar and Dequan, 2020).

On the other hand, while social media can be an effective marketing medium for restaurants – offering cost effective advertising, increasing brand awareness and creating direct customer interaction – the messages tend to run amok, losing the original intention. Online reviews and trends can go viral, developing a life of their own. It is important to understand the communication a restaurant creates and how they translate into business results.

The conceptual framework for this research proposal maps how TikTok food trends could affect how people behave as consumers and how restaurants could be influenced as a result (Ajzen, 1991).

4. Methodology

The objective of the proposed research is to find out how TikTok food trends can influence the behaviour of customers, and the performance of restaurants. In the research, secondary data will be collected from a wide range of journals, books, reports and other publications by companies, organizations and individuals, as well as from credible online resources. Data will be analysed by means of thematic analysis to reveal obvious as well as hidden patterns, also so-called themes and relations within secondary data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

The findings of this research will provide additional knowledge on social media marketing, focusing on the growth of TikTok and its influence within the UK hospitality industry. It will also be useful for restaurant managers and marketers as they seek to utilize food trends on TikTok to increase customer interaction and increase a company's marketing performance in the highly competitive hospitality industry.

5. Conclusion

The ways in which consumers engage with food and drink as well as the ways in which restaurants are marketed and interacted with by customers is rapidly evolving because of the TikTok phenomenon. Yet there is limited research regarding the impact of TikTok upon hospitality consumer behaviour across the UK and Europe. This proposed research aims to address this deficit by undertaking a piece of research utilizing Wagamama as the case study to investigate the relationship between food trends generated on TikTok and resulting consumer behaviour and resulting business performance within the hospitality industry.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), pp.179–211. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T).
- Djafarova, E. and Bowes, T. (2021). 'Instagram Made Me Buy it': Generation Z Impulse Purchases in Fashion Industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59(102345). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102345>.
- Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, [online] 53(1), pp.59–68. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>.
- Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L. (2016). *Marketing Management*. 15th ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Omar, B. and Dequan, W. (2020). Watch, Share or Create: the Influence of Personality Traits and User Motivation on TikTok Mobile Video Usage. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)*, [online] 14(04), pp.121–137. Available at: <https://online-journals.org/index.php/i-jim/article/view/12429> [Accessed 13 Jun. 2026].
- Saunders, M.N., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023). *Research Methods for Business Students*. [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240218229_Research_Methods_for_Business_Students [Accessed 17 Jun. 2026].
- Stephen, A.T. (2016). The Role of Digital and Social Media Marketing in Consumer Behavior. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, [online] 10(10), pp.17–21. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.016>.