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THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON FOOD PRODUCT PURCHASES

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Justification of research topic

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of digital marketing, especially social media content, on consumer behavior in terms of purchasing food products.

The study aims to identify the types of content that most influence purchasing decisions, the psychological mechanisms involved and the degree of trust of consumers in online promotions.

The specific objectives for this study were:

- O1** Analysis of consumer preferences towards various types of content on social media;
- O2** Identification of factors influencing purchasing decisions;
- O3** Evaluation of the level of trust in information sources on social media;
- O4** Study of consumer behavior in the digital environment;
- O5** Identification of differences between the categories of sociodemographic factors and the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media food media.



Introduction

Social media has revolutionized consumer behavior, particularly in the food industry, by serving as a platform for brands to reach large and diverse audiences. As digital spaces become central to marketing strategies, the role of social media in influencing consumer decision-making has grown significantly. Studies have shown that online content, including food advertisements, influencer endorsements, reviews, and interactive posts, can significantly impact consumer choices



Sursa: <https://doads.ro/comportamentul-consumatorului/>



Materials and methods

The research tool utilized for this study was the questionnaire.

The research instrument consists of 19 items divided into 4 sections:

- socio-demographic data (5 items),
- social media usage (2 items),
- the impact of digital marketing on food products (9 items),
- consumer behaviour regarding food products (2 items).



Materials and methods

Characteristics	Share in the Sample	N	Ratio
Gender	Female	96	72.7
	Male	36	27.3
Age (years)	18–30	73	55.3
	31–40	12	9.1
	41–50	23	17.4
	51–60	21	15.9
	over 60	3	2.3
Residence	urban	111	84.1
	rural	21	15.9
	middle school education	3	2.3
Education level	ongoing/completed high school education	22	16.7
	ongoing/completed post-secondary education	13	9.8
	ongoing university education	41	31.1
	completed university education	39	29.5
	ongoing or completed postgraduate education	14	10.6
Household monthly net income (lei)	under 1500	18	13.6
	1501–3000	42	31.8
	3001–5000	28	21.2
	5501–8000	34	25.8
	over 8000	10	7.6



Materials and methods

H₁. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the gender variable

H₂. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the age variable

H₃. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the variable level of education

H₄. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the net monthly income variable

H₅. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the residence variable.

The calculated **χ^2 – chi-square Pearson** value was determined based on the calculation relationship:

$$\chi^2_{[GL]} = \sum \frac{(O - A)^2}{A}$$

where:

O – observed values;

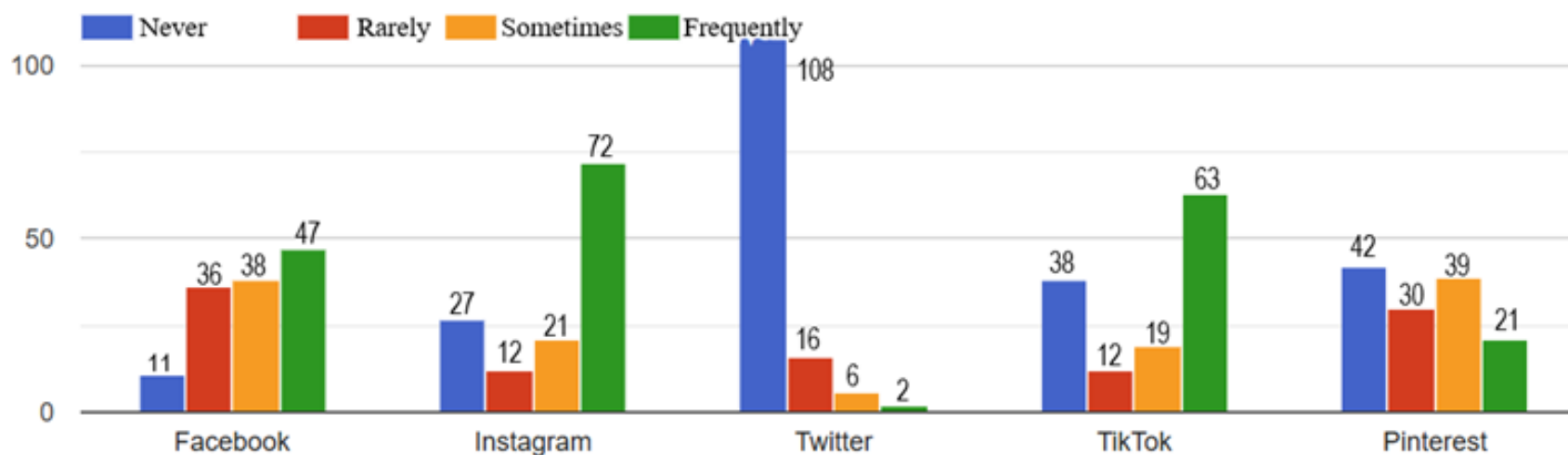
A – expected values;

GL – degrees of freedom.



Results and discussions

O1 Analysis of consumer preferences towards various types of content on social media.
For this objective, item: *What social media platforms do you use?*



Frequency of access to social media platforms

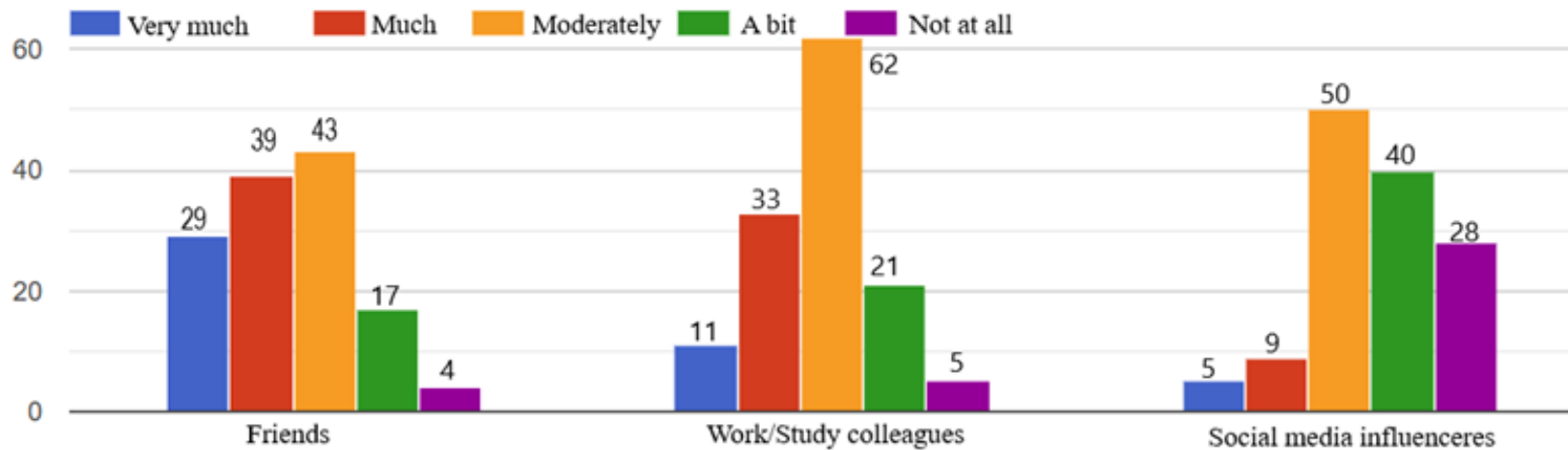


Results and discussions

O₂ Identification of factors influencing purchasing decisions.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

a. *To what extent is your decision to purchase food influenced by the recommendation?*



Impact of recommendations from friends, colleagues,
and influencers on food purchasing decisions



Results and discussions

O₂ Identification of factors influencing purchasing decisions.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

b. Which of the following types of food-related content influences you to buy a product?

Characteristic	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Video ads	32	24.24	42	31.82	45	34.09	10	7.58	3	2.27
Product image posts	21	15.91	46	34.85	49	37.12	14	10.61	2	1.52
Reviews or testimonials from influencers	41	31.06	42	31.82	36	27.27	11	8.33	2	1.52
Live cooking or recipe demonstrations	28	21.21	30	22.73	43	32.58	25	18.94	6	4.55
Contests or giveaways on social media	59	44.70	38	28.79	27	20.45	6	4.55	2	1.52

Influence of different types of food-related content on purchasing decisions

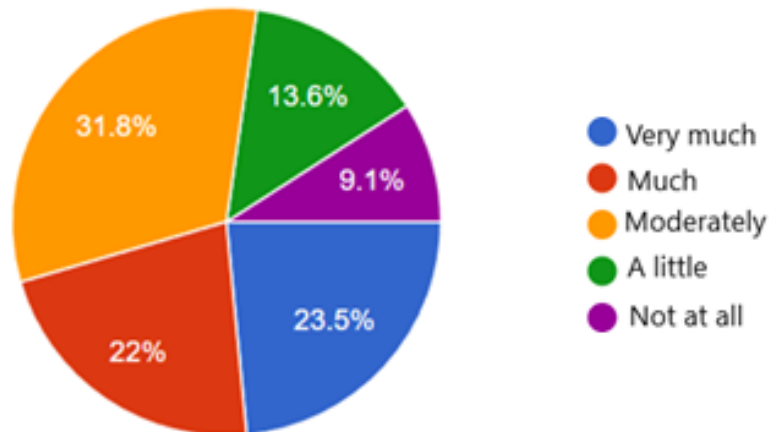


Results and discussions

O₂ Identification of factors influencing purchasing decisions.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

c. How much does the presence of a discount code or special offer in food ads on social media influence your purchasing decision?



Influence of discount codes and special offers in food ads on social media on purchasing decisions



Results and discussions

O₂ Identification of factors influencing purchasing decisions.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

d. What factors lead you to buy a food product after seeing it advertised on social media?

Characteristic	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Recommending an influencer I trust	42	31.82	47	35.61	34	25.76	8	6.06	1	0.76
Discounts or special offers	14	10.61	28	21.21	51	38.64	32	24.24	7	5.30
Positive reviews	9	6.82	21	15.91	46	34.85	43	32.58	13	9.85
Product appearance in post	19	14.39	26	19.70	48	36.36	30	22.73	9	6.82
The well-known brand	9	6.82	22	16.67	47	35.61	43	32.58	11	8.33
The fact that it is a new product on the market	20	15.15	40	30.30	48	36.36	16	12.12	8	6.06

Factors influencing food purchasing decisions after seeing social media advertisements forms

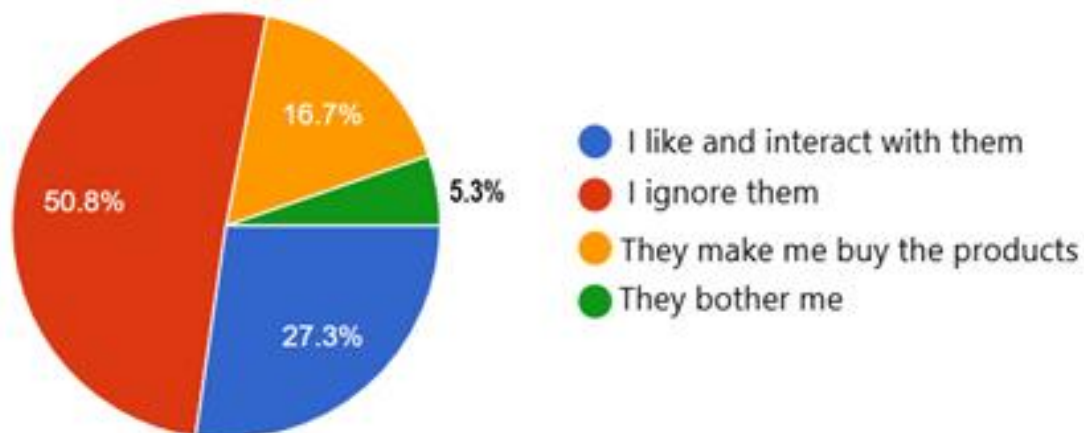


Results and discussions

O₃ Evaluation of the level of trust in information sources on social media.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

a. What is your reaction to food advertisements seen on social media?



Consumer reactions to food advertisements on social media

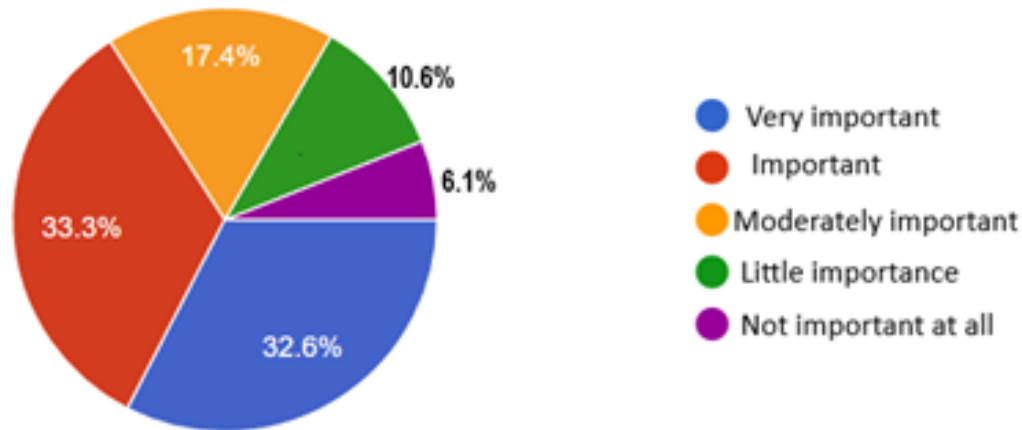


Results and discussions

O₃ Evaluation of the level of trust in information sources on social media.

For this objective, the following items were analyzed:

b. How important is it to you that a food product has positive reviews on social media before you buy it?



Importance of positive social media reviews in food purchasing decisions



Results and discussions

O₄ Study of consumer behavior in the digital environment.

For this objective, the following item was taken into study:

To what extent do the following aspects related to food products promoted on social media matter to you?

Characteristic	Very important		Important		Moderately important		Little importance		Not important at all	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Price	58	43.94	40	30.30	25	18.94	6	4.55	3	2.27
Product quality	91	68.94	28	21.21	9	6.82	2	1.52	2	1.52
Natural or organic ingredients	45	34.09	47	35.61	27	20.45	8	6.06	5	3.79
Product packaging	13	9.85	38	28.79	49	37.12	24	18.18	8	6.06
Speed of delivery/Availability in stores	39	29.55	51	38.64	29	21.97	6	4.55	7	5.30

Importance of different factors in food product purchases via social media



O₅ Identification of differences between the categories of sociodemographic factors and the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media food media.

H₁. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the gender variable is not supported by the results ($\chi^2_{[4]} = 5.558$ and $p = 0.235$, Cramer's V effect size = 0.205).

		Frequency of purchase of food products					Total Lines
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	
Gen	Female	4	30	47	13	2	96
	Male	5	11	15	3	2	39
Total lines		9	41	62	16	4	132



O₅ Identification of differences between the categories of sociodemographic factors and the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media food media.

H₂. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the age variable. Testing the significance in terms of the association between age and the purchase of food products promoted on social media showed that the two variables are independent ($\chi^2_{[16]} = 13.938$ and $p = 0.603$, Cramer's V effect size = 0.162).

		Frequency of purchase of food products					Total Lines
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	
Age (years)	18-30	7	19	36	8	3	73
	31-40	1	5	5	0	1	12
	41-50	0	6	12	5	0	23
	51-60	1	10	8	2	0	21
	over 60	0	1	1	1	0	3
Total lines		9	41	62	16	4	132

O₅ Identification of differences between the categories of sociodemographic factors and the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media food media.

H₃. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the variable level of education. Testing the significance of the differences between the categories of the level of education variable regarding the purchase of food products promoted on social media led to the conclusion that the null hypothesis is accepted ($\chi^2_{[20]} = 19.953$ and $p = 0.461$, Cramer's V effect size = 0.194).

Education level	Frequency of purchase of food products					Total Lines
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	
middle school education	0	0	2	1	0	3
ongoing/completed high school education	2	7	8	4	1	22
ongoing/completed post-secondary education	1	6	5	0	1	13
ongoing university education	5	9	21	6	0	41
completed university	0	17	18	3	1	39
education ongoing or completed postgraduate education	1	2	8	2	1	14
Total lines	9	41	62	16	4	132



O₅ Identification of differences between the categories of sociodemographic factors and the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media food media.

H₄. The frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media is not influenced by the net monthly income variable. The association between the frequency of purchase of food products promoted on social media and the monthly net income is not statistically significant ($\chi^2_{[16]} = 17.126$ and $p = 0.377$, Cramer's V effect size = 0.180)

		Frequency of purchase of food products					Total Lines
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	
Household monthly net income (RON)	under 1500	0	6	9	3	0	18
	1501–3000	3	13	17	6	3	42
	3001–5000	2	4	18	4	0	28
	5501–8000	4	14	14	1	1	34
	over 8000	0	4	4	2	0	10
Total lines		9	41	62	16	4	132



Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions drawn from the data provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior concerning food-related content on social media. They reveal important trends, including the influence of social media influencers, product reviews, and special offers, in shaping purchasing decisions. These insights offer actionable knowledge for marketers seeking to effectively engage with their audience and optimize their strategies to better meet consumer preferences in the food industry.



Conclusions and recommendations

While influencers have some impact on purchasing decisions, the majority of respondents report being either not at all or only moderately influenced by their recommendations. Still, influencer endorsements remain an important factor, particularly when they are trusted.



Conclusions and recommendations

Video ads, reviews, and live cooking demonstrations attract varying levels of consumer interest, with some consumers actively engaging with these formats, while others ignore them or find them minimally influential. Contests and giveaways also hold potential, but again, the impact is more limited, as most respondents are only occasionally influenced by such content.



Sursa: <https://webmaster.md/ro/articole/smm/beneficiile-publicitatii-pe-retelele-sociale/>



Conclusions and recommendations

Social media food ads elicit mixed reactions. A significant proportion of respondents ignore the ads altogether, while some engage with or are influenced by them. However, only a small group reports being bothered by food ads, which suggests that while they may not always drive direct sales, they generally do not have a strongly negative effect.



Sursa: <https://www.menuzen.com/blog/best-restaurant-social-media-campaigns>



Conclusions and recommendations

Price and product quality are paramount in consumer decisions. Positive reviews and discounts also significantly influence purchases, though to a lesser degree. Natural ingredients and packaging have a moderate effect, and while speed of delivery/availability matters for many, it's not as decisive as product attributes like quality or price.



Personal information



Maintaining the balance



Voice of customers

Sursa: https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/isolated-elements-with-characters-perform-price-vs-quality-scenes-balance-cost-product-service-its-overall-quality-influencing-purchasing-decisions-consumer-satisfaction_60928442.htm



Conclusions and recommendations

While brand recognition can be an influential factor, it is less critical than product quality and price for most respondents. Similarly, while new products do hold some appeal, only a small portion of consumers are heavily influenced by the novelty of a product.



Sursa: <https://a1.ro/articole-despre/reclame/>



Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, food product promotion on social media plays a significant role in consumer decision-making, particularly through influencer marketing, reviews, and price-based promotions. However, fundamental product attributes such as price, quality, and availability continue to be the strongest determinants of purchasing decisions.



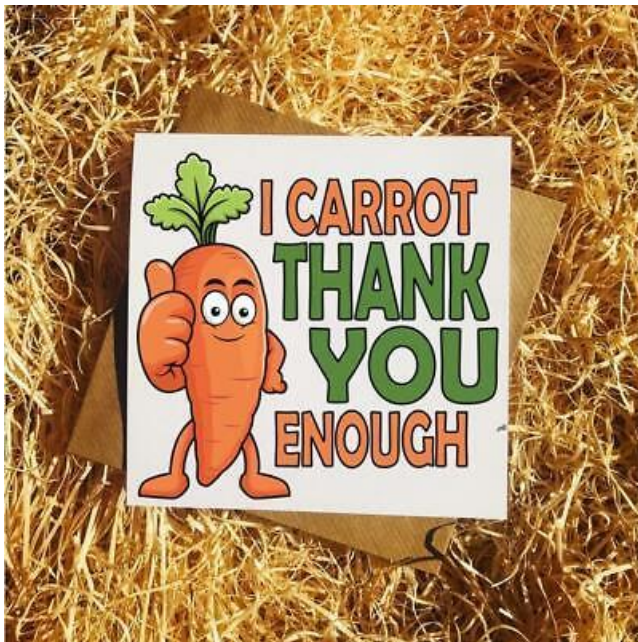
Sursa: <https://newpointmarketing.com/food-marketing-101-strategies-to-boost-awareness-and-sales/>



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<https://doads.ro/comportamentul-consumatorului/>
<https://www.menuzen.com/blog/best-restaurant-social-media-campaigns>

Thank you for your attention!



Sursa: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/283786516014>



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