

The Influence of TikTok on the Attitudes of Young Adult Towards Eating Behavior



Allison Perez, Lydia Shackelford, Sun Young Park, Alessandra Noli
Florida State University, College of Communication

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the effect of TikTok on young adult eating behavior. Beginning with a review of literature on social media's effects on eating habits, we conducted qualitative interviews to investigate participants' social media use, eating patterns, and interactions with food posts. We hope to find evidence that supports our beliefs that social media plays a role in eating habits and perception of self. The implications of this study allow social media platforms and its users to consider the risks of benefits of frequent usage of food related media.

Introduction

- Recent evaluations of social media concerning food consumption show that digital media could ultimately influence body weight.
- Food influencers have become a lucrative marketing tactic for food and drink brands in recent years.
- Their main aim is to increase the appeal of the items due to how the influencer makes it appear in their media or the influencer's parasocial relationship with their followers.
- Social interactions play a significant role in promoting healthy eating behavior, since individuals who believe their social interactions are stronger are more willing to communicate and take in information about healthy eating practices. (Wen Yin & Moghavvemi, 2019)
- The existing body of literature in this domain predominantly focuses on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, neglecting to include TikTok in its investigations.
- This study's purpose was to understand how the social media app, TikTok, affects the eating behaviors of young adults.
- We hypothesized that TikTok does have a significant impact on young adults' eating behaviors.

Methods

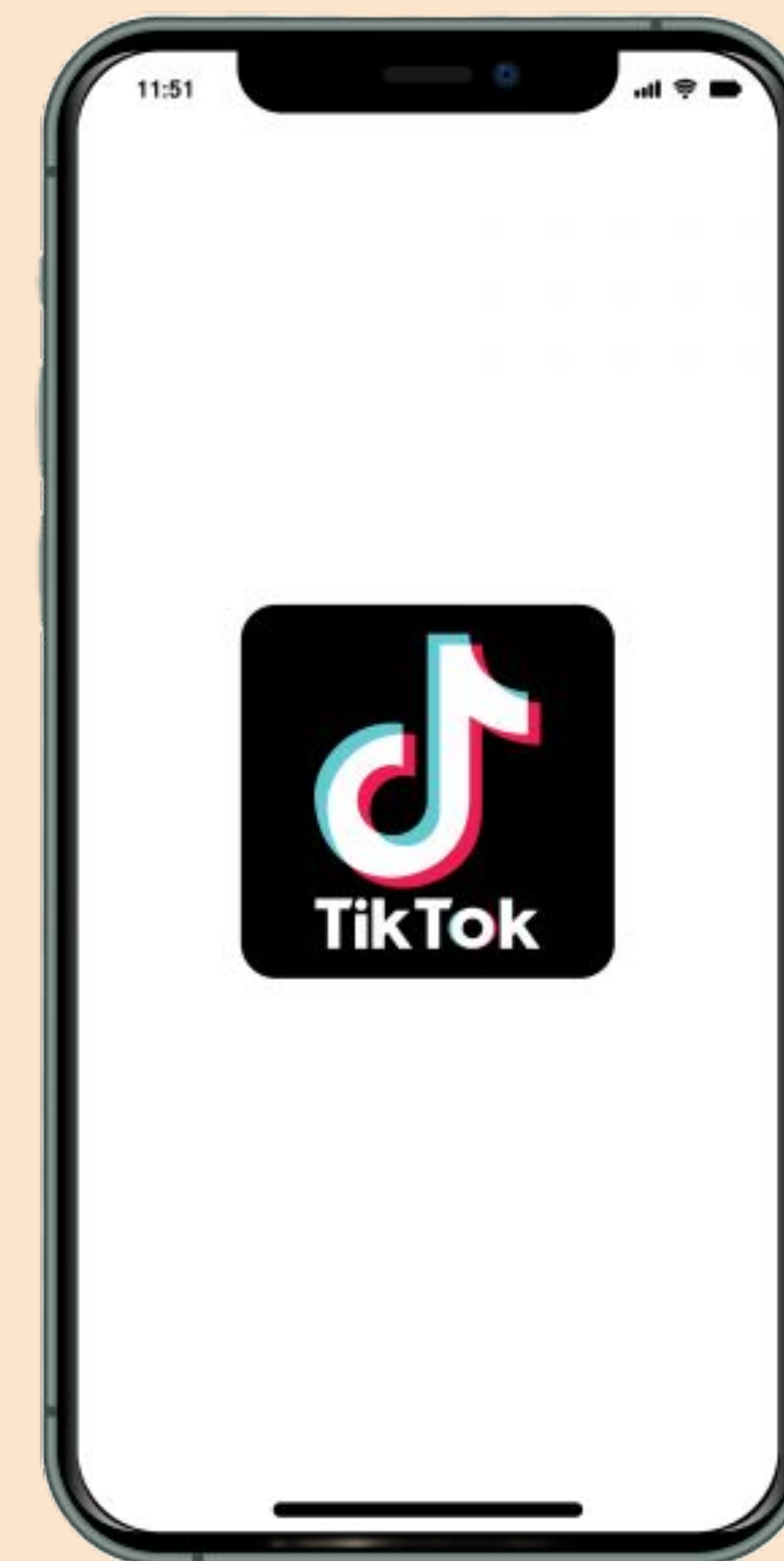
- Semi-structured interviews were used to ask college-aged students questions pertaining to their interactions with food-related TikToks and their self-perception while interacting with the platform.
- The interviews (n=20) took around 20-60 minutes per participant and occurred over the course of several months.
- Interviews provided insight into the attitudes and experiences of young adults on TikTok. The interviews were able to show the impact that the app has on college students' eating habits and provided a space for them to discuss their personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings regarding the use of TikTok.
- Otter.ai, a transcription software, was used to convert all video interviews into written text for a more detailed analysis.



TikTok influencer, Emily Mariko, is pictured making her "salmon rice bowl," which gained her mass popularity in 2021.

Results

- Our research study has completed the transcription of the 20 interview videos, but they have yet to be analyzed.
- We are currently in the process of completing the analysis and expect our results to agree with our previously stated hypothesis, that TikTok plays a large role in the eating behaviors and attitudes of young adults.
- Results will be placed within a QR code and based off the main themes of the developed codebook for the study.



TikTok currently has around 1 billion monthly active users.

Discussion

- We have yet to determine the results from this study.
- Discussion of the results will be fulfilled once the evaluation process of the research has been completed.
- Discussion will be placed within a QR code

References

- Hawkins, Lily K., et al. "Do Perceived Norms of Social Media Users' Eating Habits and Preferences Predict Our Own Food Consumption and BMI?" *Appetite*, vol. 149, 2020, pp. 104611–104611, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2020.104611>.
- Nevin Sanlier, Furkan Baser, Hande Mortas, Semra Navruz Varli, M. Sedanur Macit & Tugba Tatar (2017) Structural Modeling the Relationship of Food Addiction and Eating Attitudes of Young Adults with Emotional Appetite and Self-Esteem, *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 56:6, 514-529, DOI: 10.1080/03670244.2017.1388232
- Rounsefell K, Gibson S, McLean S, et al. "Social media, body image and food choices in healthy young adults: A mixed methods systematic review." *Nutrition & Dietetics*. 2020; 77: 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1747-0080.12581>
- Wen Yin, Wong, and Sedigheh Moghavvemi. "Social Media Communication and Healthy Eating Behaviour: Facebook for Healthy Eating (Preprint)." *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2196/17562>