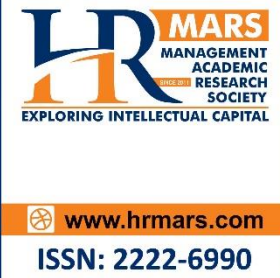




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## The Effects of Food Vlog Attributes on Customers' Recommendation Adoption

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### Abstract

Online reviews such as food vlogs are parts of e-commerce which are believed to be the current trend among customers. This research seeks to understand the food vlog's attributes and its impacts on customers' response behavior through recommendation adoption. This study area will help the vlogger communities identify the most influential attributes that keep people watching and believing in their content and consequently visiting the restaurants they reviewed. This study applied a quantitative research design through a self-distributed online questionnaire from 421 respondents who watched food vlog reviews on Instagram out of 11,863,000 Instagram users in Malaysia. The research suggested that positive behavioral intention is influenced by good attributes of vlogs; appearance, video quality, and homophily. The results of the study also suggested that a positive approach is needed for the attributes to successfully has similar result in the positive behavioral intention. The scarcity of literature, specifically on homophily through vlogs in Malaysia, universities closure and restrictions to meet the respondents in person due to the pandemic of Covid-19, are among the limitations of this study. Possible future improvements are also provided in this study. It is hoped that the study can improve the food vlogs' quality as a marketing tool in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Vlog, Appearance, Video Quality, Homophily, Recommendation Adoption

### Introduction

Online reviews such as food vlogs help the foodservice industry by playing an important role as a marketing tool for the industry to grow and move forward, and the foodservice industry in Malaysia has changed to another level because of technology. According to Zulkifly (2017), the foodservice industry in Malaysia conquers economic development and employment hiring. Hence, technology such as online reviews is helpful for the industry to stay updated these days. In general, online reviews are beneficial in many ways, but people tend to overlook the negative impacts faced by customers who have adopted vloggers' recommendations. Customers' consumption views and behaviors are certainly guided by online review content, as pointed out by (Monaro et al., 2020). Among customers who referred to product reviews

before purchasing goods were about 81 per cent, then, 80 per cent of them thought that their purchase behaviors have impacted by the reviews.

Even though there is high dependability of the reviews on purchase behavior, reports claim that customers who adopted the recommendations or reviews face some issues related to credibility and fraud (Ferchaud et al., 2018). Thus, online reviews do not determine the whole picture, and the reality may differ from what has been shown and said on the online platform (Ali et al., 2021). In Malaysia, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA) already mentioned that there are about 2,500 complaints monthly regarding e-commerce fraud (Aman, 2019). People adopt the given recommendation of product reviews but have problems with the adoption.

Ali et al (2021) pointed out that about 13.8 per cent of the customers' income in Malaysia is spent on food and beverage. It shows that Malaysia's food and beverage industries are essential to the economy (Kumar et al., 2018). With the growth of technology in businesses using online reviews and electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWoM) through social media, the industry can attract tourists locally and globally. Social media reviews and recommendations are also known as a tool to influence people before purchasing (Kumar et al., 2018). Nevertheless, despite all the positive feedback and comments on the convenience of online reviews regarding business usage, including food business, there are still some adverse opinions; for example, in some cases, food companies have hired third-party specialists to give reviews about their products. Due to the personal interest of these third parties, the comments received on product reviews are usually positive despite the actual condition (Chamlee, 2016). Some businesses hire people to do fake reviews, which leads to a blast of high product ratings over a period to increase their competitive benefit (Wang et al., 2022).

In Malaysia, most customers complained about online fraud; one of them was ordering an item that eventuates to be not as advertised (Aman, 2019). This inferior record of online reviews not only happened in Malaysia. Luca (2016), in his study, reported that there was about 16 per cent of fake reviews on Yelp in Boston. The adage, "Once bitten twice shy" fits this real situation. Based on this scenario, logically, customers can no longer depend and rely 100 per cent on online reviews since the credibility and reliability of the reviews are affected by fake reviews on the Inter et. In this case, not only were the reviewers affected, but the action of hiring third-party influencers also backfired on the restaurants and cafés, consequently damaging the reputation of the foodservice industry. This continuous wrongdoing by both parties has led to a bad reputation and trust issues.

Due to the misuse of technology and influence by fake reviewers through human psychology, customers have been duped into purchasing insignificant products that ultimately do not meet their expectations and preference based on the recommendation (Ferchaud et al., 2018). A one-sided relationship between users and the person in the social media context will be developed, and customers will tend to seek advice or guidance and even believe everything the person says when the relationship is built (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Back to the situation, hiring fake reviewers gave negative perceptions on the social media platform, and the honest reviewers were also affected by the act. However, based on Statista (2016), restaurant or café reviews are still identified as the most frequently visited website by customers. It attracts the researcher to probe the underlying reasons behind this claim.

Among the questions the researcher pondered are; what captivates them to still refer to food reviews as their guidance to buy or try new foods? This study focuses on how far the reviewers can influence people to try their recommendations. What attributes do they look for whenever they want to adopt the vlogger's recommendation? Hence, there are some aspects the researcher suggests that need to be considered to gain positive responses and convince the customers to try the recommendations, namely appearance, video quality, and homophily.

Based on the previous study by Brewer (2017), website attributes played an important role in persuading customers in their decision-making. The issues about fake food reviews and customers' trust elicit a question mark about the attributes applied to food vlog reviews that contribute to positive customer attitudes and responses. Besides, food vlog reviews have the highest potential to give double effects to viewers since it involves the use of video and audio together (Syahputra, 2019). It is more effective to convince viewers to use a vlog rather than text-based blogging. The video attributes may be focused on more than just the platform to 'present' the video, and it also involves the speakers who present the food in the vlog review channels.

As stated above, the attributes applied in a food vlog may impact viewers differently. Thus, the appearance attribute in this study focused on the physical attractiveness of a host or the food they reviewed and the social attractiveness of a host towards the viewers. The researcher evaluated and observed the criteria needed for the appearance requirement that draws the viewers' attention to watch food vlogs since it is the first thing the viewers will see and speculate. A few criteria, as mentioned by Putri (2019), a good vlogger must have a great personality to influence audiences and making eye contact will attract audiences to watch the vlogs. Besides the content, appearance can be a good selling point in the vlog (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The next attribute is video quality which consists of content, video graphics, and credibility. Most of the time, viewers have been deceived by the content of the video and the credibility of the hosts (Ferchaud et al., 2018). Thus, this study explained deeper of the vlog's contents as it is one of the reasons the viewers are captivated to view the vlog. A study by Brewer (2017) stated that the criteria for tremendous content must include the cafes and restaurants' information, for example, contact numbers and locations. The credibility of the speakers is also one of the dimensions since the audience may believe and trust the reviewers based on their communication skills and self-presentation (Nugraha & Setyanto, 2018). According to Friis-Jespersen (2017), a psychological process called internal states among customers will occur due to credible vloggers that can persuade the customers to think the endorsers (vlogger channels) are interesting. The criteria needed for the vlogger to be credible is expertise – based on the knowledge and experience they gained (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

As for video graphics, it acts as a magnetize enhancer that will capture the viewers' eyes when it reaches the best quality. As highlighted by Putri (2019), a good shot by the camera, steady and not trembling, are some criteria required for vlogs. Meanwhile, Stenhammar (2019) mentioned that good videos must have organized plots and ideas, a relevant length of videos, and an interesting atmosphere.

According to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), one of the persuasive facilitating factors is similarity (characteristic of homophily). Homophily is defined as a "tendency for friendships to form

between those who are alike in some designated respects" (Turner, 1993). In other words, it is the degree to which people who are connected to others think they have similarities in beliefs, education, social status, and interest. The similarity is believed to be the antecedent of trust and relationship. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) in their study, revealed that the touchstone to produce parasocial interaction from vlogs is similarity, where this criterion is demanded by the viewers to watch someone who has similar thoughts, opinion, and behavior like they are.

Many studies looked at online reviews websites (Brewer, 2017; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Filieri et al., 2018; Legris et al., 2003). However, little is known about the impacts of food vlog attributes on consumers' behavioral responses regarding recommendation adoption (Brewer, 2017; Nugraha & Setyanto, 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020) from vlog in Malaysia. Recommendation adoption under the behavior intention is the first phase that occurs before the customers can express their contentment about the products. Referring to the study by Brewer (2017), the intention to accept the reviewers' information and suggestions is called recommendation adoption.

As mentioned earlier, the main goal of the study is to understand the viewers' behavioral intention, which is recommendation adoption triggered by food vlog attributes, namely appearance, video quality, and homophily.

## **Literature Review**

### **Appearance attributes: Physical attractiveness and social attractiveness**

Appearance attributes consist of physical attractiveness and social attractiveness. According to Have (2017), the appealing look of vloggers refers to physical attractiveness. Physical attractiveness refers to the hosts as attractive figures that influence the audience to watch their vlogs more often. For example, the hosts' physical attractiveness would be how they have dressed and their appealing and presentable appearance in front of the camera. Based on the study by Lee and Watkins (2016), physical attractiveness is described as an element influencing online customers. Physical attractiveness is also categorized as a sense to like and appreciate the presentation of beauty (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). Furthermore, trust and credibility can also be reflected through the physical appeal of the hosts and the products. Hence it is considered as a selling point when it comes to physical attractiveness (Sokolova and Kefi, 2019).

Meanwhile, social attractiveness refers to the amiability of the speaker's personality, which impacts the audience's attitudes and further influences their decision-making (Sharma, 1990; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). The audience tends to have an interest in and positive relationship with the hosts when they feel that the hosts can make good contact with them, even though it is only through social media. According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), social attractiveness can also be defined as the tendency of people to befriend someone as their teammate or a new colleague or in the context of social media; it can be defined as the possibility of people to elect a social figure as their reference and social partner. Along with physical attractiveness, social attractiveness is also believed to be one of the recommendation adoption antecedents, whether it happens traditionally through television and radio or modern approach via social media (Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Kurtin et al., 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019).



**Video Quality: Content, Video Graphic, and Credibility**

According to Brewer (2017), one of the most important functions of any website is the content, particularly to determine the validity of information sources. Food vlogs' contents must be informative and valuable to users. According to Bleier et al (2019), cited in Lim and Ting (2012), the primary cognitive element of online customer experience is informativeness, which is defined as resourceful and helpful information to customers. The helpful information guides customers in making decisions and avoiding negative past purchase behaviors. Previous researchers believed that helpful information must be meaningful and valuable to the decision-making process where the decision-makers have the possibility to reduce uncertainties (Martin & Clark, 1996; Mohr & Sohi, 1995; Adjei et al., 2010). Equally important as the content needed in the video is the contact information. URLs of the food companies or tags on the food producers are helpful for the audience in case they want to visit the official websites or pages. This statement is supported by a previous study by Stenhammar (2019), who claimed that there would only be benefits for the companies, producers and even the vlog creators if the contact information is available in the video content.

Besides the content, video graphic is also one of the major elements that need to be considered since it affects the audience's mood and interest to watch more from the channels. Video graphic is defined as "the computer technology that contains pictures, charts, videos, etc., often followed by audio". Several elements of video graphics can influence the acceptance of the audience, namely visual size, the length of the videos, video plot, script, text on the video, music and audio (language used), acting and editing, etc. According to the study by Stenhammar (2019), there are advantages to using both visual and audio on the video. It is better than radio audio as vlog usage uses both. It helps the audience to understand better about the content. Besides, the length of the video must not be too long or too short (Mahoney & Tang, 2016; Stenhammar, 2019). The slow pace of the video might cause boredom to the audience and waste their time with unnecessary information. A good video comes with organized plots and ideas to prevent confusion and lack of information gathered by the audience at the end of the video.

Moreover, the script, voice tone, and music included in the video are also essential in the video context because it creates an atmosphere for the video. For example, the upbeat music will produce a feeling of excitement among the audience while watching the video, while the voice tone influences the audience to get the actual messages and the vibes. As stated by Stenhammar (2019) in his previous study, video is also affected by sound effects and voiceover. In addition, the languages used by the hosts and subtitles are other critical components to capture the interest of the audience. The hosts need to identify their target audience and select a language based on the target audience. For some people, subtitles are needed, and usually, English subtitles are used since it is a global language. A poor video graphic quality may appoint to the weakness of the hosts and lead to negative perceptions among the audience. Thus, for this study, it is important to highlight the video graphic effects on the viewers' behaviors.

According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), the perception of the quality that has been communicated by other audiences is also related to credibility. Credibility is the degree to which customers discern the plausibility of the reviews and information provided on food vlog channels (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). It is assumed that the general opinion can be trusted

and believable based on the performance. Other than that, credibility can be created depending on how knowledgeable the person is in generating his/her ideas. It is supported by the studies by Hovland and Weiss (1951); McCroskey and Teven (1999); Sokolova and Kefi (2019) which stated that the experts who are knowledgeable and have the experience tend to be trustworthy and gain domain from the customers.

According to a prior study by Brewer (2017), the trustworthiness of an information source is often related certainly with information credibility. By garnering trustworthiness, a person is perceived to be honest and caring about the audience's choices, thus influencing customers' attitude and purchase intention. According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), attractive and trustworthy sources believed to come from experts can persuade customers to buy products. Moreover, the credibility of the hosts is also reflected by the number of followers on their Twitter and Instagram accounts, as reported by Jin and Phua (2014). For vlog channels, the subscribers on YouTube and the viewers on Instagram's IGTV can be the guidelines for new customers to count on them. Hence, it is proposed that customers will have a positive behavioral response if only the information given on the vlog is credible.

### **Homophily: Attitude Homophily and Demographic Homophily**

The term 'homophily' is defined as "a tendency for friendships to form between those who are alike in some designated respect" (Turner, 1993). Meanwhile, attitude is a thought or feeling regarding something or someone or a way of behaving caused by certain circumstances. A person would love to know someone better or to hang out with someone with similar interests to him/her, which also reflects the first impression of someone's thoughts and opinions. The same goes for vloggers who generate ideas to ensure everybody thinks the same way they do. The audience is more appreciative and gets attached to something similar to their situation and opinion. They are made to believe that "I am not the only one to think or feel like that", and creating that feeling will lead to a positive behavioral response.

As stated by Lee and Watkins (2016) in their study, people will frequently interact with someone whom they believe shares things in common with them. As stated earlier, one of the persuasion-facilitating factors is similarity. The similarity is believed to be the antecedent of trust and relationship. Customers tend to rely on hosts with identical opinions, thoughts, and conditions because they believe that the hosts experience and act the same way. Furthermore, earlier studies also have proven that homophily can improve communication between individuals (Ahlf et al., 2019).

Demographics are categories created based on people's similar educational backgrounds, social class, age, race, income, etc. Eyal and Rubin (2003) described 'demographic homophily' as "the degree to which people who interact are similar in beliefs, education, social status, and the like". Demographic homophily seems to be one of the factors to influence other people and gain trust, as proven by Barzily and Ackerman (2015); Freeman (1996) in their studies where they found that children at school tend to make friends with someone that has similar demographic characteristics with them; age, height, school grades, IQ, gender, and more, faster than children who have different demographic characteristics with them. Based on the study, it is proven that demographic homophily has a relationship with trust and loyalty. For example, students' eating patterns would differ from career people; thus, they

tend to discover food vlogs – food street hunting, instant noodles challenges, and not an expensive food review at a fine dining restaurant. Therefore, for this study, it is proposed that homophily in vlog videos will positively impact recommendation adoption.

### **Behaviour Intention (Recommendation Adoption)**

Previous research categorized behavioral response as the intention to buy the product or service, revisit the store, intention to recommend the product or service to others, or intention to spread positive word-of-mouth to other customers about the product and services (Baker et al., 1992; Hightower et al., 2002; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Brewer, 2017). For this study, the researcher aims to understand the consumers' behavior responses (recommendation adoption) influenced by food vlog attributes. It is important to examine the relationship between those attributes and positive behavior intention. This behavior intention will be extended to recommendation adoption, whether the audience adopts the suggestion by the vloggers or not. According to Brewer (2017), the customers' intention to enlist or follow the suggestion given by the hosts to make the decision-making process is referred to as recommendation adoption. It is the outcome that has been influenced by the food vlog attributes.

### **Findings**

#### **Demographic Profiles of Respondents**

Female respondents exceeded male respondents in the frequency test. Out of the total 421 respondents, the female respondents had the highest representation of 72 per cent (n= 303), and 28 per cent of respondents were male (n=118). The researcher believed this result is caused by women's interest in food trends on Instagram, which is higher than men, who seem not bothered about it. Other than that, since the women take responsibility for cooking at home and now many of them are working, they need to decide where to dine out with the family to substitute home cooking. Thus, the food vloggers play their roles to give them ideas of places to eat (Briliana et al., 2020).

In this survey, there were five ranges of age; below 20 years old, 20 to 30 years old, 31 to 40 years old, 41 to 50 years old, and 51 years old and above. Most respondents were in the 20 to 30 age group with 72.9 per cent (n= 307), followed by respondents below 20 years old at 16.2 per cent (n= 68), which is too far-fetched with the largest group in this variable. It testified that the respondents aged 20 to 30 are highly interested in the food trend on Instagram since they are young, already have their own finances for buying power, and are curious to explore something new in the market (Foster, 2015).

In this study, the researcher believes that occupation status somehow affects the awareness of food trends, types of food consumed, and types of restaurants chosen based on the time and salary for each profession. From the analysis, 36.3 per cent (n= 153) ticked on the 'student' answer in the questionnaire, which made it the most frequently 'ticked' profession in this variable. It may be because of the frequency of students dining out when they stay on campus while being away from home. They tend to search for affordable price restaurants and the best food to eat; thus, it is worth viewing the food vlog reviews before making any decisions.



### Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the mean score and standard deviation on every item in the questionnaire will be discussed briefly in sequential order; Food Vlog Attributes (Appearance, Video Quality, Homophily) and Behavior Intention.

#### i) Appearance: Physical Attractiveness

The hosts or vloggers themselves must be attractive figures that influence the audience to watch the vlogs (Have, 2017). According to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), it is also considered a selling point. Therefore, physical attractiveness can influence the audiences for food vlog review content. Below are the mean score and the standard deviation of items under the physical attractiveness:

Table 1

##### *Descriptive Analysis for Physical Attractiveness*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I find the vlogger very attractive physically	421	3.56	.976
2	I find the vlogger's attire is presentable	421	3.74	.866
3	I think the vlogger is quite pretty/good looking	421	3.56	.905
4	I think the vlogger's apparel is pleasing	421	3.70	.892

Based on the table, it is suggested that most of the answers by respondents lean towards the fourth point on the scale, which meant agreed, where the highest score shown by the second item showed the respondents thought that the vloggers they watched were presentable (M= 3.74; S.D=0.8 6). It is followed by the item on the apparel of vloggers (M= 3.70; S.D= 0.892), where the respondents marginally agreed that the vloggers' apparel on the food vlog they watched was pleasing. Then, for the first item in the questionnaire, the respondents agreed that the vloggers are physically attractive in the food vlog reviews (M= 3.56; S.D= 0.9 6). The next item shares a similar magnitude of agreement with different standard deviation (M= 3.56; S.D= 0.905), which showed that the respondents admitted that the vloggers are quite pretty or good-looking. It can be summed up roughly that the physical attractiveness of vloggers is important to the respondents, and some respondents are concerned about the vloggers' appearance.

#### ii) Appearance: Social Attractiveness

Social attractiveness focuses on the personality and the way vloggers approach their viewers on the vlog. Table 2 shows the agreement level of respondents through the mean score and standard deviation on social attractiveness.

Table 2

##### *Descriptive Analysis for Social Attractiveness*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I think the vlogger could be a friend of mine	421	3.17	1.128
2	I would like to have a friendly chat with her	421	3.16	1.140
3	There is a sense of human contact in the vlog	421	3.68	0.892
4	There is a sense of human warmth in the vlog	421	3.69	0.895

The findings suggest that the sense of human warmth in the food vlog reviews captured respondents' attention based on the mean scores tabulated in the table (M= 3.69; S.D= 0.8 5). Besides human warmth, the respondents agreed that there was a sense of human contact in the vlog (M= 3.68; S.D= 0.8 2). It can be justified by the results above that the respondents are comfortable watching the vlog with these kinds of attributes. For the first item, most respondents did not agree that the vlogger could be their friend (M= 3.17; S.D= 1.128) since the answers lean towards the third point in the scale (neutral). It is closely followed by the second item (M= 3.16; S.D= 1.140), where the respondents could not decide to place themselves on the scale for having a friendly chat with the vlogger.

### iii) Video Quality: Content

Content is the first element in video quality. Helpful information content guides the viewers in decision-making and avoids negative past purchase behavior. The table below presents the mean score and the standard deviation for items under content based on the data collection of the study.

Table 3

#### *Descriptive Analysis for Content*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I find the content of this food vlog review useful	421	4.14	0.728
2	The plot arrangement in this vlog is easy to understand	421	4.11	0.721
3	The content of this vlog is interesting	421	4.14	0.707

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with all the items in this dimension. The highest mean score was attained by the first item, where the respondents believed that the content of the food vlog review was useful for them (M= 4.14; S.D= 0.7 8). They also believed that the content of the food vlog they watched was interesting (M= 4.14; S.D= 0.7 7). It is followed closely by the score shown from item number two (M= 4.11; S.D= 0.721) with a margin of only 0.03, expressing their belief that the plot arrangement in that vlog was easy to understand. All these figures above generally agreed that the content in the food vlog reviews was useful, understandable, and interesting.

### iv) Video Quality: Video Graphic

The results of the analysis of this sub section are presented in the following table.

Table 4

#### *Descriptive Analysis for Video Graphic*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The subtitle in this vlog is easy to read	421	4.12	0.783
2	The vlog video graphic is visually appealing	421	4.21	0.705
3	The audio of the vlog is pleasing	421	4.09	0.772
4	The vlog is engaging and captures attention	421	4.18	0.700

The highest mean score in this sub-section is the second item (M= 4.21; S.D= 0.705) which shows that most respondents agreed that the video graphic of the vlog was visually appealing. It also might be because of the food presentation and the combination of colors in that vlog that contributed to the appealing booster. Respondents also agreed to the fourth item (M= 4.18; S.D= 0.700), where the food vlog itself was engaging and captured their attention. Then, the first item, which concerned about the subtitles in the vlog, made the third rank in this sub-section but still of the same scale in the level of agreement (M= 4.12; S.D= 0.783), where most respondents agreed that the subtitles in the vlog are easy to read. Respondents also indicated that the audio of the food vlog they watched was pleasing (M= 4.09; S.D= 0.772).

#### v) Video Quality: Credibility

Credibility can be defined as the perception of quality information by the vlogger. It can be exposed by how knowledgeable the vlogger is in proposing his or her opinions to the viewers. Based on the data collection, the level of agreement by respondents towards credibility is recorded below:

Table 5

##### *Descriptive Analysis for Credibility*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I find this vlogger an expert in his/her domain	421	4.06	0.760
2	I find this vlogger efficient in his/her job	421	4.06	0.736
3	I find this vlogger trustworthy	421	3.92	0.812

Most respondents answered on the fourth scale of agreement (agreed) for most items. The first item (M= 4.06; S.D= 0.760) achieved the highest mean score, where the respondents trusted that the vlogger was an expert in his or her domain. Similar to the first rank but with different standard deviation (M=4.06; S.D= 0.736), they agreed that the vlogger is also efficient in his or her work. The lowest mean score for credibility is the third item (M= 3.92; S.D= 0.812), but it still inclined to the fourth scale of agreement with a margin of only 0.14, where most of the respondents expressed their beliefs toward the trustworthiness of the vlogger in the food vlog they watched.

#### vi) Homophily: Attitude Homophily

As stated earlier, one of the persuasions facilitating factors is similarity. Thus, the level of agreement by respondents towards attitude homophily with the vlogger they watched is recorded below:

Table 6

##### *Descriptive Analysis for Attitude Homophily*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The vlogger thinks like me	421	3.37	0.908
2	The vlogger has thought and ideas that are similar to mine	421	3.38	0.882
3	The vlogger shares my values	421	3.34	0.921
4	The vlogger has a lot in common with me	421	3.18	0.971

The second item ranked first ( $M= 3.38$ ;  $S.D= 0.882$ ) in this sub-section, where the respondents were undecided when asked whether they think the vlogger has similar thoughts and ideas. They also responded slightly similar to the previous item for the first item, where the respondents were asked whether the vlogger thinks like them ( $M= 3.37$ ;  $S.D= 0.98$ ). They were also unsure where to place themselves for the third item ( $M=3.34$ ;  $S.D= 0.921$ ), where they had been asked about the same values shared with the vlogger. The lowest mean score ( $M= 3.18$ ;  $S.D= 0.971$ ) is the fourth item where the respondents were unsure whether the vlogger had a lot in common with them. It can be summed up roughly that most respondents are hesitant when asked about the attitude homophily value existed between them and the vloggers.

#### vii) Homophily: Demographic Homophily

Based on the data collection, the level of agreement by respondents towards demographic homophily is written below:

Table 7

#### *Descriptive Analysis for Demographic Homophily*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I prefer a vlogger of the same gender	421	2.98	1.240
2	I prefer a vlogger of the same country of origin	421	3.19	1.157
3	I prefer a vlogger of the same marital status.	421	2.61	1.238

The result shows that most respondents disagreed with the items given, and there was just one item they were undecided about choosing ( $M= 3.19$ ;  $S.D= 1.157$ ), which is the preference of the vlogger's country of origin in the second item. The respondents disagreed that they prefer a vlogger of the same gender ( $M=2.98$ ;  $S.D= 1.240$ ) may be because the gender issue does not matter as long as the content is good; it is more than enough. The results also show that their disagreements were more obvious for the third item asking their thought on the preference of the vlogger with the same marital status ( $M= 2.61$ ;  $S.D= 1.238$ ). It can be concluded in this sub-section that the respondents were not so concerned about the demographic difference between them and the vlogger since the contents are more important to be concerned with as references to find the best place and food to eat.

#### viii) Behavioral Intention

Stemming from the literature review, behavior intention is the last construct of the study, where at the end, it determines the effectiveness of food vlog attributes. It is essential to recap that this behavior intention was extended to recommend adoption to investigate whether the audience intends to adopt the suggestion by the vloggers or not. There were five (5) items under this section. The level of agreement in this section is tabulated below in Table 8:

Table 8

*Descriptive Analysis for Behavioral Intention (Recommendation Adoption)*

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I would like to try the food that has been reviewed by the vlogger in future.	421	4.16	0.829
2	I would actively seek out to buy the food promoted by the vlogger whether at walk-in stores or order it online	421	3.75	0.948
3	I will buy the food mentioned by my favorite vlogger very often	421	3.41	1.026
4	I will recommend this food vlog review to someone who seeks my advice for places to eat/something to eat.	421	3.86	0.859
5	I would encourage people close to me to buy the food promoted by the vlogger.	421	3.70	0.944

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents believe there was a positive behavior intention after watching the food vlog reviews on Instagram. The highest score attained for this section was in fact conquered by the first item (M= 4.16; S.D= 0.829) where the item stated that "I would like to try the food that has been reviewed by the vlogger in future." By agreeing to this statement, it shows that the food vlog attributes on the vlog reviews influenced the respondents. The second highest item in this section is achieved by the fourth item (M= 3.86; S.D= 0.89). The respondents somewhat agreed that they would recommend the food vlog review to someone seeking advice for the best places or something to eat. It is also interesting to note that most respondents would like to actively seek out to buy the food suggested by the vlogger (M= 3.75; S.D= 0.98). It may be because of the successful attributes created by the vlogger.

Moreover, it can be said that the respondents also admitted that they would encourage people close to them to try the food reviewed by the vlogger (M= 3.70; S.D= 0.94). The lowest mean score in this section (M= 3.41; S.D= 1.026) goes to item number three (3), where the statement said that "I will buy the food mentioned by my favorite vlogger very often". The researcher simplified that the word 'very often' in this item had some impact on the respondent's level of agreement because not everyone can always afford to follow the food trend or the type of food reviewed is not suitable for daily consumption, such as 'ramen' instant noodles.



### Multiple Regressions Analysis

Multiple regressions are also known as an extension of a few simple linear regressions. Table 9 displays the results.

Table 9

#### *Multiple Regression Analysis*

Model	B (Unstd)	Std. Error	Beta (Std)	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.375	0.174		2.154	0.032
Appearance	0.066	0.051	0.061	1.285	0.200
Video Quality	0.276	0.052	0.217	5.354	0.000
Homophily	0.117	0.041	0.121	2.833	0.005

**F = 140.440**

**R2 = 57.5 %**

**R2 Δ = 57 %**

Multiple linear regression was calculated to predict viewers' behavior intention based on the food vlogs attributes. Based on the table above, video quality is the most dominant variable among others with  $\beta = 0.276$  and p-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.05. It shows that the relationship is statistically significant. Discussing on the R square (R2) and adjusted R square (R2 Δ), food vlog attributes explain about 57.5% of the total variation in viewers' behavior intention. Another 42.5% is explained by other factors. However, adjusted R square (R2 Δ) shows that the total variability is accounted for by the variables in this study. R2 Δ = 0.570; therefore, there is 57% total variability accounted for by the variables in the study.

### Implications of the Study

Based on the results of this study, some theoretical and practical implications have significant relevance and importance for academicians and practitioners. The investigational purpose and significance of the relationships between variables studied improve new knowledge of the literature, and more studies could be done in this field for academia. Meanwhile, as for the practitioners (food vloggers and food producers) in the industry, the findings can be used to improve their business and indirectly help the food industry.

From the theoretical aspect, this study helps in contributing plentiful and useful information as well as knowledge to academicians seeking additional materials for this field of study. Besides, this study also contributes to adding value to the literature section since there are few studies particularly concerning the marketing technique using the website and focusing its attributes on customers' behavior intention in the context of recommendation adoption (Brewer, 2017; Nugraha & Setyanto, 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Furthermore, this work helps academia to learn and understand the aspect of updated marketing techniques better regarding the impacts of good quality attributes on parasocial interaction and our food industry. As mentioned by previous authors (Euromonitor, 2021; Zulkifly, 2017), the food industry in Malaysia today has extremely moved to another level because of technological advancement. Therefore, this study is beneficial for academia to expand the topic better as food marketing techniques are continuously changing nowadays.

This study also contributes to the food industry, influential figures, and vlog usage, which could benefit all of them. As there are few studies within the scope of knowledge about the

impacts of food vlog attributes on the consumers' behavioral intention in terms of recommendation adoption (Brewer, 2017; Nugraha & Setyanto, 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020) from the vlog perspective in Malaysia, this study is believed to give advantages to the food industry in terms of marketing technique.

Besides, this work also creates opportunities for the food industry to strategically collaborate with reliable influential figures in social media for marketing purposes, and this will also benefit both parties at the same time. As mentioned earlier, the intensity of the relationship between potential customers and influential figures on vlogs helps to create positive behavior intention. Therefore, the collaboration between the food industry and influential figures on vlogger seems to benefit both parties as more people will try the food that has been reviewed. It also creates more job opportunities for food vloggers in Malaysia. Kim (2017) mentioned that consumers and brands could have two-way communications to understand each other better using social networks. Therefore, this study helps improve the relationship between the food industry and vloggers (B2B) and between the food industry and vloggers with customers (B2C), which involves two-way communication. Kim (2017) also stated that this situation helps both parties to build relationships, learn about each other behaviors and personalities, and participate in conversation through social network platforms. Presumably, with this two-way communication method, this study will help the food industry in the future in terms of knowing their target market better. For instance, socially and physically attractive vloggers can help the food industry (cafes and restaurants) to reach generation Y and X (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Other than that, vloggers can make good use of this knowledge in emphasizing which attributes of the food vlogs need more attention to influence potential customers. The findings show that all the attributes in this study have a positive relationship with customers' behavior intention, therefore, the vloggers may need to improve their efforts on their appearances and video quality and search for similarities with the viewers to attract them.

The study is also important for the customers as they can rely on the food vlogs whenever they want to try new food in trend as the vlogs' quality has been improved by the vlog communities and vloggers. As stated earlier in the previous chapter, this study has expanded the opportunity of vlog usage in society, especially through this popular social media, Instagram. As mentioned by Syahputra (2019), food vlog reviews have the highest potential to give double effects to viewers since they are involved with audio and video altogether. Therefore, this study is relevant as customers can watch the vlogs before purchasing. This study also educates customers to choose the food vlog reviews by vloggers wisely based on the attributes discussed earlier.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Looking at the recommendations of the study, the researcher is aware that the hospitality industry in Malaysia has limited scientific and empirical research in this field. This study will undoubtedly develop the body of knowledge for future studies related to this field. The researcher assumes that this study can be improved or expanded by trying to focus on other latest popular social media platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat (Pinda et al., 2021). Given that this study is quantitative in nature, other comprehensive methods, especially mixed-method, are recommended for future studies to enhance the comprehensiveness and quality

of findings. Other than that, in future, maybe this study can be expanded more on the demographic data with other variables using non-parametric analyses to see how demographic affect the other variables. Additionally, there are maybe other attributes besides appearance, video quality, and homophily that can be included and extended in future studies, which can also trigger recommendation adoption specifically, such as eye-gaze movement and body gestures (Dibble et al., 2016) through social media platforms. Future studies can also focus on a particular group of respondents, for instance, considering the generation gaps (young adults, gen Y or Z, etc.).

### Conclusion

In sum, this study might be a potential insight in helping future researchers to conduct studies, especially in the food marketing context, using social media platforms to understand better how the quality of attributes could affect customers' behavioral intention. Moreover, this study integrated the S-O-R theory and TAM model from previous studies. The researcher believes this work will inspire other researchers or scholars to develop forthcoming studies in this field of interest with more parties involved in broader perspectives. The food industry as well as food vloggers should be directly involved in addressing the importance of good quality attributes for marketing techniques through social media platforms. It can also educate the customers about the importance of food vlog attributes and qualities to help them make wise decisions.

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