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## THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN TRANSFORMING THE STREET FOOD INDUSTRY

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### ABSTRACT

Street food has evolved from a local necessity into a global phenomenon, showcasing a diverse array of cultures and culinary traditions. It originated in ancient marketplaces, where it offered affordable meals to the working class. As trade routes such as the Silk Road expanded, they introduced new ingredients and cooking methods that influenced street food across the globe. Today, it continues to play a crucial role in communities, uniting people and promoting social interactions.

The advent of social media has elevated street food to unprecedented levels, turning small vendors into international icons. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook enable these vendors to display their culinary creations, attracting food lovers from around the world. This online visibility has fostered a sense of community among vendors, promoting collaboration and innovation. Furthermore, social media has enhanced the popularity of street food festivals, enticing travelers who are eager to sample the latest trending flavours.

Influencers are crucial in this change, leveraging their platforms to endorse vendors, which boosts both sales and visibility. Nonetheless, social media also presents difficulties, including fierce competition and the demand to uphold a robust online presence. Vendors need to find a balance between creativity and marketing to differentiate themselves in a saturated market. Additionally, online feedback can significantly impact a business, making outstanding customer service essential.

In spite of these difficulties, street food remains popular because of its convenience, low cost, and genuine flavors. It offers both a gastronomic journey and a glimpse into local culture. The ongoing evolution of social media, it will certainly influence the future of street food, maintaining its significance in the constantly shifting global culinary landscape.

**Keywords:** Food Truck, Social Media Influence, Food Blogging, Instagram Food Trends, Street Food Vendors, Affordability And Accessibility, Online Marketing, Customer Reviews, Food Tourism.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The street food sector has transformed through the adoption of digital marketing strategies, enhancing the ways vendors engage with customers and grow their enterprises. This research delves into the relationship between street food and digital marketing, analyzing its influence on business development, customer interaction, and entrepreneurial achievement.

The incorporation of digital marketing by street food vendors signifies a notable change in the industry, merging traditional methods with contemporary approaches. This study examines the strategies, challenges, and results of this integration, aiming to comprehend how digital marketing equips vendors to thrive in today's market.

The research problem centres on evaluating the effects of digital marketing on the street food industry from an entrepreneurial viewpoint. It seeks to explore the extent of adoption, adaptation, and resistance to digital marketing strategies among street food entrepreneurs, along with the subsequent impacts on their businesses.

The study's objectives include evaluating how often consumers dine out and their views on the effectiveness of digital marketing, as well as understanding the preferences and behaviors of various gender groups concerning street food consumption and digital marketing platforms.

#### 1.1 Problem statement:

The street food sector has traditionally flourished due to its grassroots and cultural roots; however, the current entrepreneurial environment is experiencing a notable shift towards the adoption of digital marketing techniques. Despite this trend, there remains a significant lack of clarity regarding the specific characteristics

and scope of this transition, as well as its consequences for street food vendors. The central issue revolves around the necessity to thoroughly evaluate the influence of digital marketing on the street food industry from an entrepreneurial viewpoint. This evaluation should encompass an exploration of how street food entrepreneurs either embrace, modify, or resist digital marketing practices, the obstacles they face in implementing these strategies, and the subsequent impacts on business development, customer interaction, and overall success. Recognizing and tackling these challenges is essential not only for the ongoing advancement of the street food sector but also for generating insights that can enhance digital marketing approaches for entrepreneurs operating in other specialized markets.

### 1.2 Hypothesis:

1. Frequency of Eating Outside and Digital Marketing Effectiveness Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant association between the frequency of eating outside and the frequency of using social media to find street food information.

2. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):\* There is a significant association between the frequency of eating outside and the frequency of using social media to find street food information.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To investigate the relationship between the frequency of eating outside and the perceived effectiveness of digital marketing techniques employed by street food sellers, several relevant references can be considered. Smith et al. (2019) provide insights into how food marketing influences attitudes and consumption, which can be crucial in understanding the impact of digital marketing on street food consumption. Buchanan et al. (2018) and Buchanan et al. (2017) delve into the effects of digital marketing on consumer behavior, shedding light on how exposure to such marketing can influence interest and consumption patterns. Additionally, Valero-Morales et al. (2023) discuss the nature and extent of food marketing on digital platforms, emphasizing the need to limit marketing exposure to children and adolescents.

When considering the influence of gender on the impact of digital marketing on the decision to try street food, Amson et al. (2022) offer valuable insights into how gender can affect exposure to food marketing on social media. This information can be pertinent in understanding how different genders may respond to digital marketing strategies employed by street food vendors.

In exploring the impact of digital marketing on street food consumption across different occupational groups, the study by Finlay et al. (2022) on outdoor food marketing can be informative. Understanding the power and methods used in outdoor food marketing can provide a basis for analyzing how digital marketing impacts various occupations in the context of street food consumption.

The study by Wu et al. (2021) highlights the need for new dietary monitoring techniques in response to the increasing prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases worldwide. This is crucial for understanding the influence of digital marketing on street food consumption, as poor eating habits can contribute to the development of such diseases. Delve into food preferences and feeding.

Behaviour lays the groundwork for examining how the frequency of eating out may be associated with the effectiveness of digital marketing in shaping street food choices.

In contrast, Burns (2010) explores oblique strategies for ambient journalism, which, while intriguing, does not directly contribute to investigating the relationship between eating behaviours and the impact of digital marketing on street food consumption. Similarly, Ryan et al. (2016) focus on re-imagining Perth's wetlands, a topic unrelated to the current research focus. Gorman (2011) discusses management insights, specifically on utility and probability weighting, which, although informative, do not directly address the hypotheses concerning the impact of digital marketing on street food consumption across different demographic groups.

Therefore, for an in-depth analysis of the hypotheses regarding the correlation between eating habits, gender, occupation, and the effectiveness of digital marketing on street food consumption, Wu et al. (2021) serve as a pertinent reference. Their focus on feeding behaviour and food preferences aligns well with the research questions under consideration.

In conclusion, by synthesizing the findings from these selected references, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing influences street food consumption, considering factors

such as frequency of eating outside, gender differences, and occupational disparities. Digital marketing enables street food vendors to reach a wider audience. Traditional street food vendors often cater to local clientele, but through social media platforms, food delivery apps, and digital advertisements, they can attract consumers from broader geographical areas, increasing footfall and sales. (2020). "Digital Transformation in the Indian Food Industry: A New Frontier". International Journal of Business and Management Studies

Digital marketing proves to be much more cost-effective than traditional forms of marketing like print media or TV advertisements. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp offer affordable marketing solutions for vendors who operate on limited budgets. (Reference: Kaur, H. (2021). "Cost-Efficiency of Digital Marketing for Small and Medium Enterprises in India". Journal of Digital Marketing, Street food vendors can leverage digital marketing to establish a recognizable brand. By creating a strong online presence with engaging content, unique branding elements, and customer reviews, they build a loyal customer base. This is crucial for small vendors who otherwise have limited resources to compete with larger chains. (Reference: Gupta, R. (2019).

"Brand Development for Small Food Vendors Using Digital Platforms". Indian Journal of Marketing, Social media platforms provide an interactive space where vendors can directly engage with their customers. This real-time engagement through likes, comments, and shares helps to create a sense of community and loyalty among consumers, which in turn boosts sales. (Bhatt, V., & Patel, P. (2020). "Social Media as a Tool for Customer Engagement in the Indian Food Industry". Journal of Social Media Studies. Through analytics tools integrated into digital marketing platforms, street food vendors can analyse customer preferences, buying habits, and demographics. This data-driven approach allows vendors to adapt their offerings to meet demand more effectively. (Narayan, V., & Deshmukh, A. (2021)). "Utilizing Digital Analytics to Enhance Street Food Offerings". Indian Journal of Marketing Analytics. Instagram and Facebook, in particular, have made food photography a key element of digital marketing. The visual appeal of well-presented food images can attract new customers who are browsing online. (Reference: Gupta, A. (2019). "The Power of Food Photography in the Digital Era". Journal of Visual Marketing, Influencer collaborations have become a popular digital marketing strategy, where food bloggers and influencers review or promote street food vendors, increasing their visibility and attracting new customers. (Sharma, K., & Bhattacharya, D. (2021)). "The Rise of Influencer Marketing in India's Food Industry". Journal of Social Influencers. Through data analytics, vendors can track which dishes are most popular or which promotions have the highest conversion rates. Street food vendors can encourage customers to share their food experiences online, creating user-generated content (UGC) such as photos, videos, or reviews. When customers post content on Instagram or Facebook, it can go viral, leading to widespread visibility. This form of peer endorsement is highly valuable for increasing credibility and attracting new customers. (Rao, K. & Iyer, R. (2020)). "The Role of User-generated Content in Marketing for the Indian Food Industry". Journal of Digital Influence. Collaborating with food bloggers and vloggers, who have a large online following, can significantly boost a street food vendor's visibility. These influencers often provide reviews, food tours, and recommendations, which help to position street food businesses as trendy or must-try experiences. This type of collaboration leads to increased footfall and online engagement. (Reference: Nair, S. & Joshi, M. (2019). "Impact of Food Bloggers and Influencers on Local Food Markets in India". Journal of Social Media Marketing. Many street food vendors who embrace digital platforms are beginning to use chatbots to interact with customers. Through automated messaging on platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, chatbots can handle customer inquiries, take orders, and provide details about the menu. This improves customer service efficiency and ensures quick responses. (Khanna, P. (2021)). "The Use of Chatbots in Improving Customer Service in the Indian Food Industry". Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Business. Some street food vendors have successfully used digital platforms for crowdfunding campaigns to expand their operations. Through platforms like Ketto or Milaap, vendors can showcase their business online, attract small investments or donations from patrons, and raise capital for setting up new stalls or upgrading equipment. Digital marketing is essential to promoting these campaigns and gaining traction. (Mehta, R. (2020). "Crowdfunding as a Tool for Street Food Entrepreneurs in India". Indian Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance. With the rise of contactless experiences, many street food vendors now use QR codes to provide digital menus. Customers can scan these codes with their smartphones to view the menu, place orders, and even make payments online. This simplifies the customer experience and promotes hygiene, which became crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Reddy, S. (2021)). "The Adoption of Digital Menus and QR Code Technology in Indian Street Food". Journal of Contactless Business Innovations.

FOMO marketing strategies, such as limited-time offers, special deals, or exclusive menu items, can be effectively promoted via digital marketing platforms. By creating urgency through countdown timers or limited availability posts on social media, street food vendors can drive higher sales, especially among impulse buyers. (Bhat, A. & Menon, V. (2021)). "FOMO in Digital Marketing: Impact on Consumer Behaviour in the Indian Street Food Market". Journal of Marketing Psychology. Digital marketing allows vendors to build niche communities around their specific offerings, such as vegan, organic, or health-conscious street food. By catering to specific dietary or lifestyle preferences and promoting these on social media, vendors can attract loyal customers who share these values, driving consistent sales. (Reference: Patel, M. & Gupta, A. (2019). "Niche Marketing and Community Building in the Indian Food Industry.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

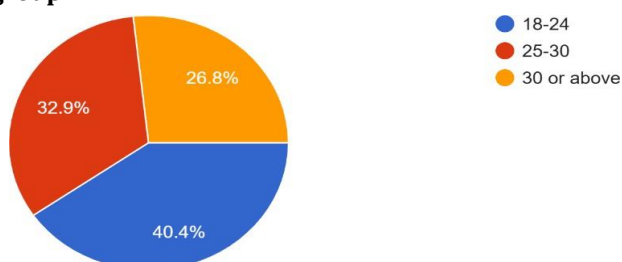
Research Component	Research Component
<b>Title</b>	The Role of Digital Marketing in Transforming the Street Food Industry.
<b>Type of Research</b>	Descriptive research
<b>Source of Data</b>	The data in this research is collected through questionnaire survey, observation, case studies and literature review. Research involves both primary and secondary data.
<b>Data Collection Method</b>	Data collection using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire is designed to measure the variables of interest: frequency of eating outside, perceived effectiveness of digital marketing techniques, and occupation.
<b>Population</b>	In this Research the responses have been taken from the people who generally use social media apps daily and are active on social media platforms on regular basis. The target is to get a minimum of 100 responses to analyse data more effectively and give more insightful outcomes and recommendations.
<b>Sampling Method</b>	In this research, we are using a Random sampling technique in which we have collected Responses from population that was a group of educated and aware people. So that the data can be collected from the focused population that is required for the proper research.
<b>Sampling Size</b>	
<b>Data Collection</b>	Structured questionnaire (Google Forms for responses)
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Chi-Square Test

#### 3.2 Objectives of the study:

1. To assess the frequency of eating outside among consumers and their perception of the effectiveness of digital marketing techniques employed by street food sellers.
2. To understand the preferences and behaviours of consumers belonging to different gender groups regarding street food consumption and digital marketing channels.

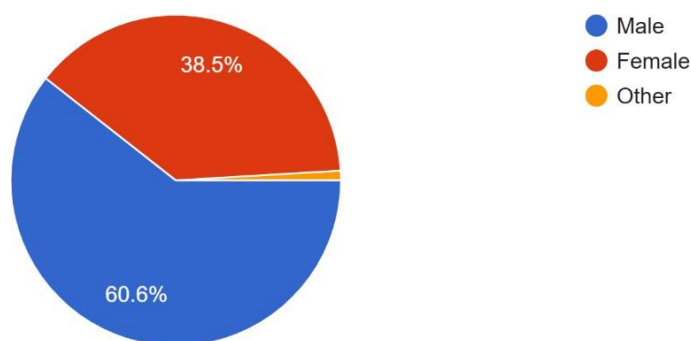
#### 3.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation:

##### 1. Kindly select your age group.



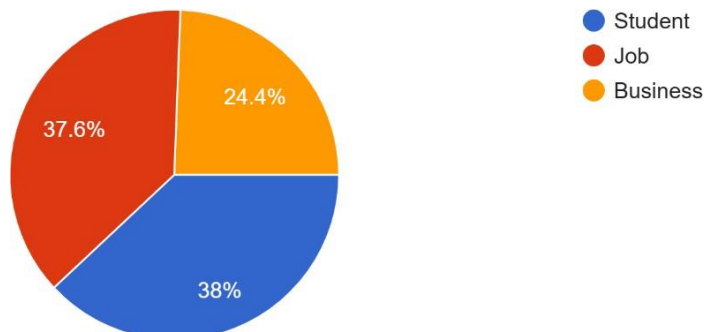
**Interpretation:** Dominance of Younger Adults: The most significant segment of respondents, comprising 40.4%, belongs to the 18-24 age range, suggesting that younger adults are the predominant demographic in the survey. Middle Age Group (25-30): Individuals aged 25 to 30 represent 32.9% of the total respondents, positioning them as the second-largest group. Older Participants: A mere 26.8% of respondents are aged 30 and older, indicating that this demographic is the least represented.

**2. Please Tick your Gender.**



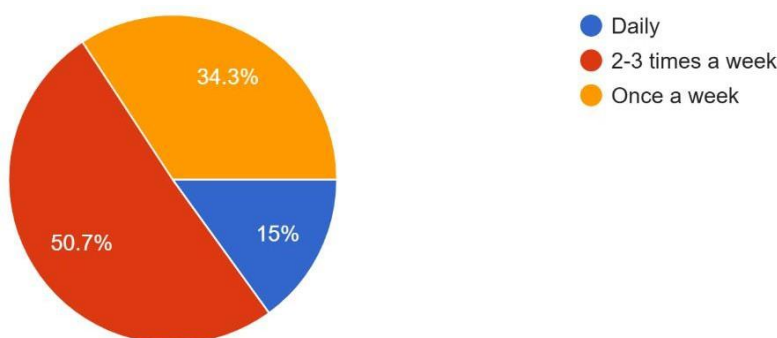
**Interpretation:** The data reveals that 60.6% of respondents identified as male, establishing this group as the majority. In contrast, 38.5% identified as female, reflecting a smaller yet still meaningful presence. Notably, the absence of a category for individuals identifying outside the binary genders, such as non-binary or other identities, indicates that the survey may have restricted options for gender identification. This information underscores a significant imbalance in gender representation among participants, which may influence the overall findings or the viewpoints expressed in the survey.

**3. May I know your occupation?**



**Interpretation:** This pie chart depicts the employment status of the individuals surveyed, divided into three distinct categories: Students (38%), Job Holders (37.6%), and Business Owners (24.4%). The data indicates that students represent the largest group of respondents, with job holders following closely behind, suggesting a slight difference between these two categories. Conversely, business owners make up the smallest segment, indicating a lower presence of entrepreneurs among the survey participants relative to students and those employed. This distribution highlights a nearly equal representation of students and employees, while business owners are notably the least represented group in the survey.

**4. How often do you eat outside?**

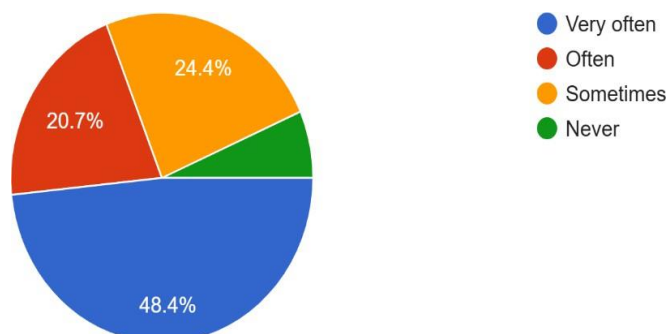


**Interpretation:** This pie chart depicts the frequency of engagement in a particular activity among participants,



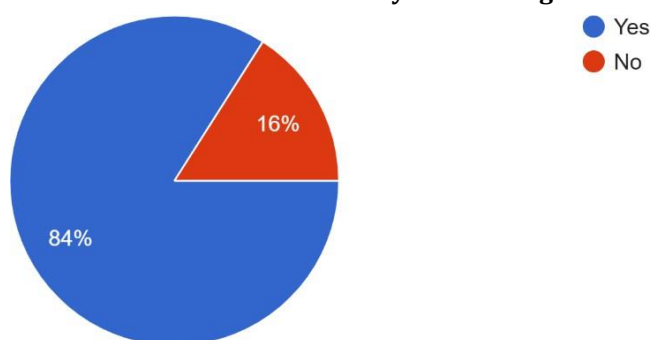
categorized into three groups: Daily (15%), 2-3 times a week (50.7%), and once a week (34.3%). The findings indicate that the most common frequency of participation is 2-3 times a week, with more than half of the respondents selecting this option. Furthermore, a significant 34.3% of individuals participate in the activity once a week, while only 15% report engaging in it daily, making this the least frequent occurrence. This distribution suggests that a majority of individuals prefer to partake in the activity multiple times a week rather than daily, indicating that while it is a regular part of their routine, it is not considered necessary to engage in it every day.

**5. How often do you use social media to find information about Street Food?**



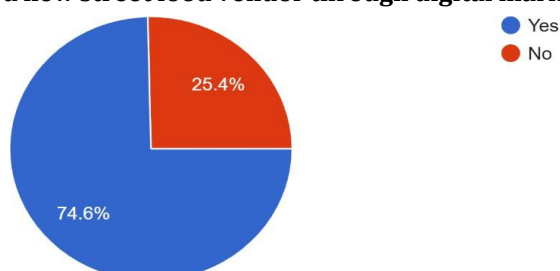
**Interpretation:** This pie chart depicts the distribution of responses regarding the frequency of a specific activity among participants, categorized into four segments: Very often (48.4%), Often (20.7%), Sometimes (24.4%), and Never (a minor segment in green). The findings indicate that almost half of the participants engage in this activity very frequently, making it the predominant response. In contrast, 24.4% of respondents report participating in it occasionally, while a smaller group, comprising 20.7%, indicates they do so often, albeit less frequently than the majority. The smallest segment, shown in green, represents those who never partake in the activity. This distribution implies that for most respondents, the activity is a regular occurrence, although a notable number of individuals engage in it only sporadically or not at all.

**6. Does an interactive Video of a Street Food Seller Make you want to go there and try it?**



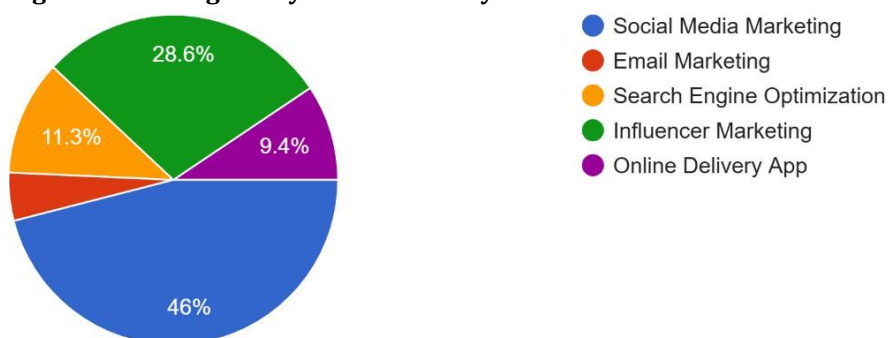
**Interpretation:** This pie chart illustrates the distribution of binary responses, with 84% of participants answering "Yes," indicating a strong majority in support of a specific option, while 16% selected "No," representing a considerably smaller proportion of disagreement or opposition. The significant prevalence of the "Yes" answer indicates a clear preference or agreement among the respondents, whereas the "No" responses, although they exist, make up a much smaller minority, emphasizing that only a limited number of individuals have an alternative opinion or do not participate in the mentioned activity.

**7. Have you ever discovered a new street food vendor through digital marketing?**



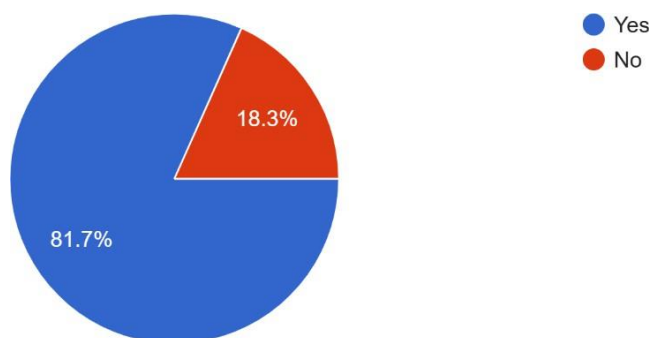
**Interpretation:** This pie chart represents the distribution of binary responses, revealing that 74.6% of participants answered "Yes," indicating a significant majority that agrees with or supports the stated claim. In contrast, 25.4% opted for "No," reflecting a smaller yet noteworthy segment of disagreement or opposition. The prevalence of the "Yes" answer suggests that a large portion of respondents shares a similar viewpoint or behaviour, but the existence of the "No" responses from more than a quarter of the participants underscores that there remains a substantial group with an opposing opinion, indicating a prevailing viewpoint but not a complete unanimity. The respondents highlights that there is still a considerable group with a differing viewpoint, making it a majority opinion but not an absolute consensus.

**8. What type of digital marketing have you seen used by Street-Food Vendors?**



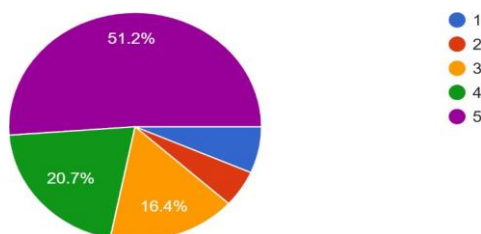
**Interpretation:** This pie chart illustrates the allocation of various marketing strategies, with Social Media Marketing leading at 46%, highlighting its status as the most favoured approach. Influencer Marketing follows at 28.6%, indicating that utilizing influencers remains an important tactic. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) makes up 11.3%, showing a moderate investment in enhancing organic search visibility. Email Marketing represents 9.4%, signifying that it is the least preferred among these conventional digital marketing strategies. Meanwhile, Online Delivery Apps hold the smallest share, suggesting that this method is the least commonly employed. Overall, the data indicates a strong inclination towards marketing strategies centered on social media and influencers, rather than email and app-related approaches.

**9. Have you ever specially gone to a place of street food after watching a Video or Advertisement of it?**



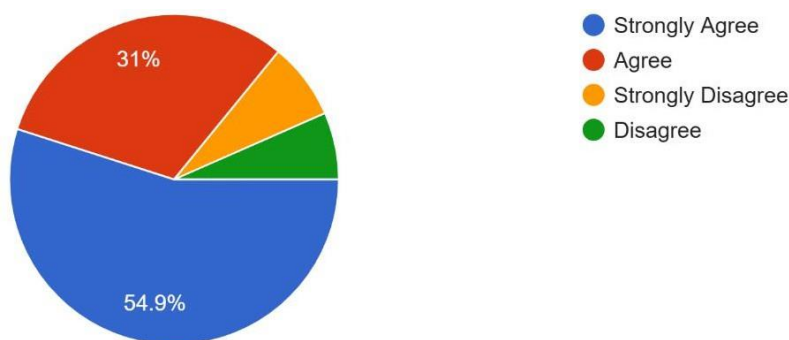
**Interpretation:** This pie chart demonstrates a distinct majority favoring "Yes" at 81.7%, indicating that the majority of respondents support the option presented. Conversely, 18.3% chose "No," reflecting a smaller yet significant minority—this implies that, although the general opinion strongly favors agreement, there is still a segment of dissent or disagreement that might be examined further to uncover the reasons behind it.

**10. How much Digital marketing is important for Street Food Businesses nowadays, rate in a scale of 1 to 5?**



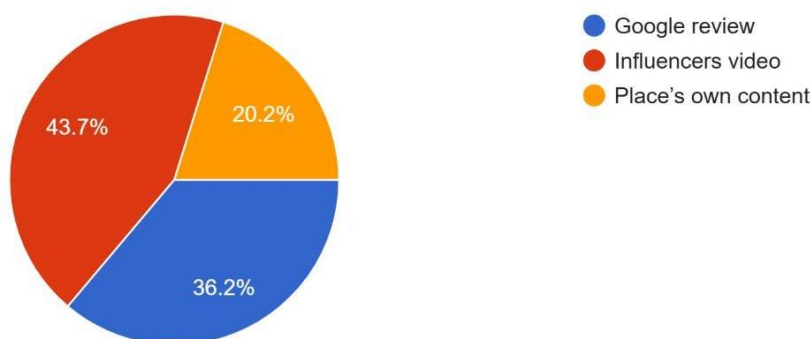
**Interpretation:** This pie chart illustrates the allocation of responses across five distinct categories, with category 5 dominating at 51.2%, indicating that over half of the participants strongly support this selection. Category 4 follows with 20.7%, reflecting that a considerable number also favour this option. Meanwhile, category 3 makes up 16.4%, pointing to a moderate inclination. Categories 2 and 1 have the smallest shares of the total responses, indicating that very few individuals chose them as their top preference.

**11. Do you agree that digital marketing has increased your eating from street food vendors?**



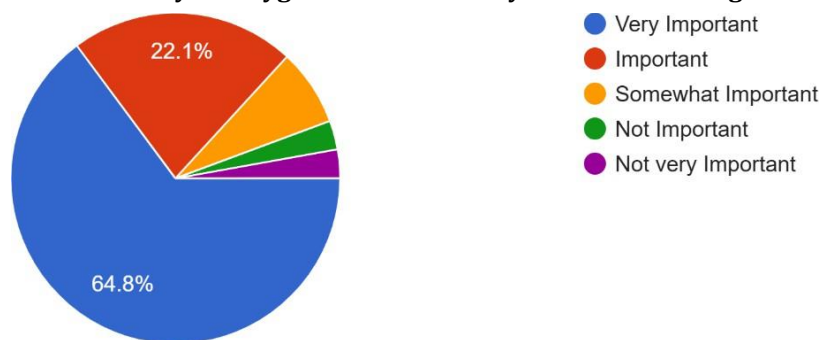
**Interpretation:** This pie chart illustrates how responses are distributed concerning a specific statement, with a dominant 54.9% of participants expressing strong agreement, reflecting a notable level of support. Following this, 31% of respondents also agree, which further solidifies the overall positive attitude. In contrast, a much smaller fraction of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, with the disagreement portion being significantly less than the agreement areas, indicating that there is little opposition to the statement and that overall opinion skews heavily towards agreement.

**12. What Matters for you the most from eating street food?**



**Interpretation:** The pie chart illustrates how various sources impact people's choices, with the largest segment, 43.7%, relying on influencer videos, making it the most significant factor in shaping opinions and decisions. Following this, Google reviews account for 36.2%, signifying that a considerable number of individuals still place trust in user-generated feedback on online platforms. In contrast, the smallest segment, 20.2%, is based on the content provided by the establishment itself, indicating that official materials from businesses are less convincing than external reviews and endorsements from influencers.

**13. How important are food safety and hygiene standards to you while choosing a street food vendor?**

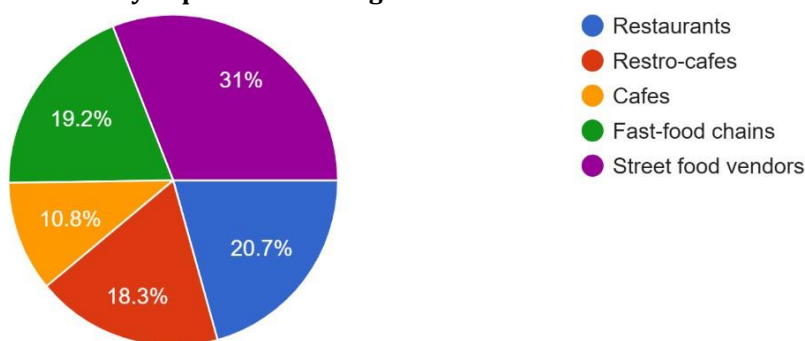


**Interpretation:** This pie chart depicts how respondents perceive the importance of a specific factor, with a



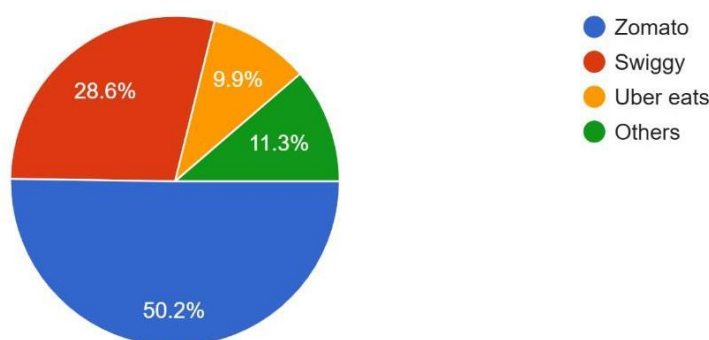
significant majority, 64.8%, identifying it as "Very Important," which indicates that most individuals assign a high level of value to this element. Following that, 22.1% view it as "Important," further underscoring its relevance, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent. In contrast, a smaller portion, accounting for 7.1% overall, labels it as either "Somewhat Important" (orange), "Not Important" (green), or "Not Very Important" (purple), suggesting that only a slight number of respondents consider it to hold minimal or no significance.

**Which type of food outlets do you prefer for eating outside?**



**Interpretation:** This pie chart illustrates the distribution of preferences among various types of food establishments, with Street Food Vendors taking the largest segment at 31%, reflecting their considerable popularity, likely due to their affordability, convenience, or distinctive flavours. Restaurants follow with 20.7%, indicating that a substantial number of individuals still enjoy formal dining experiences. Fast-food Chains represent 19.2%, highlighting their broad appeal owing to quick service and familiarity. Restro-cafes constitute 18.3%, suggesting they attract a specialized yet noteworthy customer base that appreciates a mix of dining and café culture. Lastly, Cafes account for the smallest share at 10.8%, showing that while they have their fans, they may serve a more targeted audience compared to other food options.

**14. Which apps do you often use to order street foods?**



**Interpretation:** The pie chart presented, which illustrates the responses of 213 participants to the question "Which apps do you frequently use to order street foods?", shows a distinct preference for Zomato, representing a substantial 50.2% of the total responses and establishing it as the most favoured platform among the surveyed individuals for ordering street food. In second place is Swiggy, capturing 28.6% of the responses, indicating that it is also a popular choice, but notably less so than Zomato. Uber Eats accounts for 9.9%, reflecting a smaller portion of the market and suggesting lower usage rates for street food orders compared to the two leading platforms. Lastly, the "Others" category, which includes various apps or methods not specifically named, makes up 11.3% of the responses, indicating that a significant number of respondents rely on alternative platforms or methods for their street food orders beyond Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats. In summary, the information demonstrates Zomato's strong position in the street food delivery app market within this surveyed group, with Swiggy following as a notable, albeit lesser, competitor, while Uber Eats and other alternatives maintain smaller, yet still relevant, market shares.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Findings:**

**Positive Correlation:** The study indicates a notable positive relationship between how often people eat outdoors and their perception of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies used by street food vendors.

This implies that as individuals dine outside more regularly, they view the digital marketing approaches of street food sellers as increasingly effective.

**Occupational Impact:** The research highlights a notable variation in how digital marketing affects street food consumption among various occupational categories. This suggests that a person's job can affect their reaction to digital marketing techniques, which in turn influences their street food consumption habits.

**Challenges:** The study emphasizes the difficulties that street food business owners encounter when attempting to incorporate digital marketing into their business practices, including restricted financial resources and insufficient technical knowledge.

**Transformative Potential:** In spite of these difficulties, the research highlights the significant impact of digital marketing in empowering street food vendors, allowing them to maneuver through the intricacies of today's market while maintaining the authenticity and taste that characterize their culinary heritage.

**Contribution to Knowledge:** The results of this study provide important insights into the fields of entrepreneurship and digital marketing, presenting a detailed perspective on how digital innovation is transforming the core of street food entrepreneurship.

**Future Research:** This study acts as a foundation for upcoming research focused on delving deeper into this dynamic intersection and creating effective approaches to assist street food entrepreneurs in the digital era

**Limitations:**

**Sampling Bias:** The research may not reflect the whole population of street food eaters since it employs random sampling from a demographic of educated and conscious individuals who engage on social media.

**Geographical Limitations:** The influence of digital marketing can differ across various regions because of cultural, economic, and technological factors.

**Subjectivity in Responses:** The method of data collection depends on questionnaires, which may be affected by the personal biases of the respondents.

**Temporal Changes:** The results of this research may lose significance as new technologies and platforms develop over time.

**Lack of Control Group:** The research does not indicate the presence of a control group that did not utilize the digital marketing methods.

## V. CONCLUSION

The research emphasizes the crucial impact of digital marketing on transforming the street food sector. It stresses the importance for street food business owners to adeptly utilize digital marketing tactics to boost business development, engage customers, and achieve overall success. The results of this study provide valuable insights into both entrepreneurship and digital marketing, presenting a detailed understanding of how advancements in the digital landscape are altering the core of street food entrepreneurship. This research acts as a foundation for subsequent studies aimed at further investigating this dynamic nexus and creating effective strategies to assist street food entrepreneurs in the digital era.

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