

Chapter 18

Examine the Influence of Social Media in Promoting Regional Cuisine: Empirical Evidence From Gadhkalewa, Chattisgarh

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media marketing has increasingly championed local cuisines by featuring diverse culinary traditions. The study examines the impact of various social media components on branding and consumer engagement with regional food cuisines. Metrics like regional food cuisine search interest, media in the form of images, videos, articles, calls-to-action, & booking intentions are analyzed to understand their effect on consumer behavior and brand engagement. Attractive pictures and videos of local cuisines shared on social media platforms play a crucial role in capturing audience attention and eliciting an emotional response. Behavioral interactions with regional cuisine content, like liking, sharing, or commenting, are identified as Regional Food Cuisine Action (RFCAct). High RFCI and

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RFCAct can increase Regional Food Cuisine Booking Intentions (RFCBI), showing a greater desire for and enjoyment of local cuisines. This study highlights the importance of integrating various social media elements to stimulate regional food cuisines and build the gastronomic tourism sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

A regional cuisine refers to a particular style of cooking that is distinguished by unique ingredients, methods, and meals. It is typically linked to a certain culture or geographical area (Abbar et al., 2015). The diverse cuisine patterns and climates of the Indian states, as well as the impact of regional spices, give rise to each region's unique cuisine, which claims offers tourists a broad array of meals (Hoque, 2019). Learning about the such regional cuisine and food of various cultures is necessary to appreciate and show consideration for them (Mak et al., 2012). Social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok) has become an integral part of our everyday existence, with a staggering 3.8 billion individuals actively engaging on these platforms globally. Furthermore, this figure is projected to steadily increase in the foreseeable future. The phrase “camera eats first” is a worldwide trend when individuals capture photographs of their meals and share them on social media platforms prior to consuming them. In the age of digitization, interpersonal exchanges have transitioned from physical locations to virtual realms (Laurell & Björner, 2018). In addition to the broader tourist industry, event and regional food festival organizers are increasingly adopting modern technology to provide immersive and interactive experiences (Laurell & Björner, 2018). Information and communication technology have a crucial role in stimulating event experiences by driving the knowledge of customers' motives and satisfactions. As gastronomy has progressed from being just about providing nourishment to being a major attraction, social media has emerged as a fresh avenue for regional food festivals to interact with customers (Belenioti et al., 2019). In addition to traditional forms of online sharing, such as descriptions with photographs or videos, hashtags facilitate online interaction among users, therefore creating a sense of community; using hashtags increases the visibility of a post (Hays et al., 2013) and enhances the level of interaction with the post (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Recently, businesses have utilized hashtags to actively involve their intended consumers and categorize their service or product (Kim et al., 2018). However, despite the potential for hashtags to reach a larger audience, marketers must also consider the impact of information overload - the challenge of digesting content that contains excessive information (Sthapit & Bajracharya, 2019). According to (Mariani et al., 2016), lengthier messaging in digital marketing can reduce customers' attention and ultimately lead them to lose interest and leave. According to India's tourism statistics, the number of tourists to the country has been steadily rising in recent years, and the country has quickly risen to the status of a top tourist destination on the global stage. There is, therefore, a need to research how a tourists perceive Indian regional cuisine and food as a potential tourist product. This paper primarily explores the factors which influence tourists' intention towards regional cuisine. The ultimate goal is to uncover new patterns in regional cuisines and ingredient usages, providing more up-to-date and multi-level results.

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