

“TikTok Made Me Do It”

Teenagers’ Perception and Use of Food Content on TikTok

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Introduction

Teenagers use social media for information about health, including dieting, fitness, and body image.

With TikTok now integrated into teenage popular culture, along with the readiness of vast food content, our research takes to TikTok as the opportune platform to study the relationship between consuming short and rapid food-related social media and teenagers’ perception of food, healthy eating, and eating habits.

Research Questions

- How are teenagers using TikTok for food content?
- How does using TikTok influence teenagers’ food practice and eating habits?

Methods

Survey

443 in total, 186 complete

Interviews

5, currently recruiting!

Discussion: Temporally Different Actions

We find that teenagers take inspiration from TikTok food content in different temporal stages, from immediately trying out new food items to long-term diet planning.

Findings

We find that teenagers use TikTok for:

★ Practical Inspiration for Everyday Healthy Eating

Increasing variety in what they considered healthy foods or using healthy alternatives for certain ingredients to create healthier dishes.

★ Trying Specific Food Items Mentioned in Tiktok Videos

Buying food that they saw on TikTok
Trying out international food

★ Experimenting New TikTok Recipes

Using TikTok as a platform for exploring new things
Recipes initiated by celebrities also attracted teenagers’ attention

★ Learning & Adopting Trendy Dietary Regimens & Attitudes

Trying out intermittent fasting
Shifting attitudes: e.g. intuitive eating, consciousness of eating

Immediate Action



Liking, commenting, sharing things they see on TikTok: Teenagers reported thoughtful acknowledgement of their control of their “For You” page.

Planning



Saving a recipe on TikTok via the favorite function and revisiting these reserved videos for food ideas.

Planned Action



Planned actions refer to users carrying out their ideas from the planning stage, e.g. remembering specific TikTok content, whether through recollection or through scrolling through their saved recipes, and putting these corresponding plans to action.

Reflective Action



Reflective actions are long-term actions that span beyond planning and planned actions. This was most prevalent in our participants’ discussions involving dietary changes such as food substitutions, cutting down on certain foods, and intermittent fasting.

Temporality of Action

shorter

longer

Conclusion

We need more thoughtful design to support the development of teenagers’ long-term healthy eating habits.

To support the development of teenagers’ long-term healthy eating habits, we need more thoughtful designs that support teenagers to make decisions in immediate actions, to have more agency in their choice of videos, to incorporate the social aspects of planning and reflecting, and to carry out planned actions.



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