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“Tiktok and gastronomy: a new horizon
on digital communication”

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Abstract

Through a targeted questionnaire administered to various segments of the population, this research aims to study and analyze how TikTok is altering personal recipe collections, from the youngest to the oldest individuals. As tradition, culture, and cuisine continually reinvent themselves, TikTok is currently playing a significant role in this evolution. In my opinion, TikTok serves as the mastermind of a new era, with its users acting as the driving force, commenting, observing, and incorporating what they've learned into their lives. It's akin to the diaspora of Italians throughout Europe and particularly in America, but the means of propagation today are vastly faster and more robust than those of the past. This study will focus on two TikTok influencers, specifically chefs Max Mariola, who produce bilingual or subtitled videos, and the American influencer ITSQCP who also talks in Italian. The research will explore their methods of communication, their authority as Italians, and how they bring the tastes of their homeland into the lives of their viewers. The aim is to create detailed questionnaires for different demographic groups, assessing how many people watch these types of videos and incorporate them into their daily recipes or special events. Additionally, it will investigate the recipes and specific culinary techniques inspired by these influencers, such as using lemon zest in a “soffritto” or parsley stems in the oil with onions etc, among others. Finally an analysis of the videos these content creators. In summary, this thesis seeks to provide an introductory section explaining TikTok and its operation, demonstrating how cultures and traditions can intermingle, much like what has transpired with Italian cuisine. It will then delve into the practical aspects, including the questionnaire and technical analyses within the food influencer sector on TikTok. The research will conclude with insights and predictions regarding the potential future. The objective is to showcase that this new era will lead to increasingly significant and unpredictable changes, most of which will be readily accessible to all.

1. Introduction

In this thesis, I will draw a comparison between the concept of the "diaspora" of Italians around the world and their influence on recipes, cooking techniques, and ingredients. This diaspora has given rise to a fusion of culinary traditions, a phenomenon that continues to shape our dietary habits, as exemplified by dishes like carbonara, which evolved from American breakfast traditions (A. Grandi 2018). Italians in America, driven by necessity and the availability of different ingredients, adapted their traditional recipes, bringing with them new traditions and foods. This phenomenon can be likened to how TikTok has revolutionized the dissemination of culinary information. The platform hosts a wide range of videos featuring recipes, ingredients, and innovative cooking methods. These videos travel quickly and reach a broad audience, creating a kind of "digital culinary diaspora." This proliferation of culinary ideas will impact personal recipe collections and dietary habits more rapidly than in the past, thanks to its ability to spread information rapidly and virally. In both cases, whether in the historical Italian diaspora or the TikTok phenomenon, we can observe how cultures intermingle and how culinary traditions evolve in the context of an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. Social media are considered digital economies or platform economies (Reinikainen et al., 2021) where influencers are moved by a capitalistic logic in the production of their content (Fuchs, 2021). By sponsoring and recommending services or goods, even food products, influencers receive compensation from brands, perfectly centering the new form of capitalism that social media gave space to.

1.1 BACKGROUND

TikTok is an app that allows people to create, share, and consume short-video content. Although only available internationally since 2017, it has already been downloaded more than 2 billion times and has around 800 million active users. Public interest in the fleeting and seemingly random video clips that TikTok hosts is high. Social media, accessed uncountable times worldwide on a daily basis, became a source of entertainment, information, education, and purchase, for instance. TikTok represents all the above in just one platform (Stein et al., 2022). Although it was created as an entertainment application (app), where people would perform funny dances and voiceovers, TikTok rapidly became a platform, especially for young users, to share information, ideas and political discussions. tiktok users engage more and more with gastronomic topic and issues while creating content to talk about them on the platform. Food related videos are one of the most popular categories on the app. In this thesis I want to analyze how food is talked about in order to engage more and more people cooking different dishes than their own. In the past few years, social media videos have been renowned as products of virality and often criticized as producers of misinformation (Nahon & Hemsley, 2014). In addition, because of TikTok's way of communicating through short videos (all between fifteen seconds and three minutes). A recent study conducted by Schellewald (2021), focus on exploring TikTok's unresearched communication environment. His research explains how TikTok works through its "for you" page: though an algorithmic base, the "for you" page shows users an endless source of videos selected by the algorithm itself, trying to understand and detect videos that "will likely resonate with a user's interests" based on "user's past viewing habits" (Schellewald, 2021, p.1438). One unique feature of TikTok is that it allows videos covering serious content to be funny, entertaining, and become viral (Stein et al., 2022). This applies to videos covering topics such as politics (Medina Serrano et al., 2020) and medicine, by constituting a vivid environment for qualified doctors to speak about their expertise in a funny yet informative way. For example, videos spreading Covid-19 information during the pandemic, allowing gynecologists to speak about sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and hygiene (Goldberg, 2020), and

dermatologists to address acne and acne treatments (Roche et al., 2021). These kinds of videos are defined by Schellewald's research (2021) as explanatory, having the focus on sharing the creator's knowledge on a specific topic. The scholar notices different styles of explanatory clips, some rawer and others very aestheticized by music or color elaboration and claims that communication on educational and informative content on TikTok is unresearched (Schellewald, 2021). In length, the app rapidly was perceived by the public as a superficial platform that lacks depth when it comes to content quality (Schellewald, 2021).

1.2 Aim and research questions

The next part explores the questions driving this study and the answers we're aiming to find. The research questions for the present study are:

RQ1: how much tiktok will change personal/household recipe books in years to come?

RQ1.1: will this mix diverse dishes we wouldn't even think of?

RQ1.2: how traditional dishes will change and be overwritten little by little

RQ2: will the new generations have more culinary expertise than the late ones?

RQ3 how will gastronomy in the world be influenced by tiktok?

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Mapping TikTok in the field of social media

TikTok, like other social media, has evolved beyond passive viewing to active interaction and content creation, setting it apart from platforms like Instagram and Snapchat. Notably, TikTok's videos are brief yet permanent, unlike the disappearing nature of Instagram Stories or Snapchat's one-time view model. This permanence allows for the continuous communication of valuable content through short videos (Schellewald, 2021). Different social media platforms serve diverse purposes, as highlighted by studies (Kang & Wei, 2018; Haenlein et al., 2020). Facebook connects friends and family, Twitter acts as a news source, and Instagram, a visually-oriented platform, often presents curated and idealized versions of users. Interestingly, Instagram gives rise to the phenomenon of "Finsta" (fake Instagram) where users share a more vulnerable side with close friends,

contrasting with the public-facing "Rinsta" (real Instagram) that projects a polished life (Kang & Wei, 2018). TikTok distinguishes itself with an aura of authenticity. Research by Barta and Andalibi (2021) reveals that users perceive TikTok as a fun and relatable space. The algorithm promotes connections based on shared interests, fostering authenticity in self-presentation. Unlike Instagram, TikTok becomes a space for users to express a broader range of emotions, embracing vulnerability and realness (Barta & Andalibi, 2021). It's crucial to recognize the broader context of social media, which intersects with the digital economy, politics, and culture (Fuchs, 2021). Social media, being inherently capitalistic, commodifies ideas and culture for profit (Illiyun, 2018). In the digital economy, TikTok blurs the line between content and commerce, as influencers use entertainment to sell products (Yang et al., 2021). On the political front, TikTok's playful format facilitates the spread of ideological ideas through simple videos. The platform serves as a public arena for the production, publication, and spread of political content (Vijay & Gekker, 2021). The cultural aspect of TikTok, described as material culture by Miller (2022), reveals how discourses on the platform are shaped by and for consumeristic purposes. However, social media can also serve as a space to construct new values, particularly concerning sustainability. Research indicates that social media, including TikTok, contributes to the formation of interpersonal values related to sustainability (Calcagni et al., 2019). This exploration of sustainability communication on TikTok delves into the critical aspects while recognizing the influencers' underlying intentions. The digital landscape, as Fuchs (2021) asserts, is not symmetrical, and social media platforms operate within a capitalistic framework. In the context of TikTok, the platform plays a pivotal role in online spaces, blurring the boundaries between content and commercial endeavors. This becomes particularly evident as influencers leverage the engaging and informal nature of TikTok to promote products to their audience (Yang et al., 2021). The platform's playful and informal atmosphere also facilitates the dissemination of political ideas and ideological stances through short and straightforward videos. TikTok's high spreadability nature allows for the production, publication, and widespread sharing of political content, contributing to its role as a public arena for political discourse (Vijay & Gekker, 2021). A study by Miller (2022) sheds light on TikTok's role in perpetuating material culture, emphasizing how discourses on the platform are often influenced by consumeristic motives. This aligns with Fuchs's (2021) assertion that social media platforms operate within a capitalistic structure, commodifying ideas and culture to generate profit. However, amid these dynamics, social

media, including TikTok, can also serve as a valuable tool for sustainability communication research. Understanding how users approach sustainability on social media provides insights into the construction and definition of interpersonal values stemming from social-ecological interactions (Calcagni et al., 2019). While acknowledging the potential commodification of sustainability values in the digital realm, this thesis aims to critically analyze influencers' communications, delving into their intentions behind promoting sustainability. In essence, TikTok emerges as a multifaceted platform that navigates the intersections of the digital economy, politics, and culture. As the thesis probes sustainability communication within this context, it aims to unravel the complex interplay between influencers' intentions, societal values, and the broader dynamics of social media. While recognizing these dynamics, it's important to consider the critical aspects of online sustainability communication. This thesis aims to explore influencers' communication on sustainability, acknowledging the intentions behind their messages.

2.2 How the “Diaspora” changed our culture and how tradition mingle

In the realm of culinary traditions, the Italian diaspora holds a remarkable position, illustrating how migration and cultural exchanges have significantly altered the course of Italian gastronomy. This chapter delves into the profound impact of the Italian diaspora on the evolution of Italian culinary traditions, showcasing how Italians who ventured to distant corners of the world brought back a rich tapestry of recipes, cooking techniques, and ingredients. Over time, these culinary wanderings and adaptations have transformed Italian cuisine into a dynamic and multifaceted cultural phenomenon.

In the early 1900s, Italian immigrants in America faced a unique culinary challenge. Determined to uphold the flavors of their homeland, they clung to their traditional Italian recipes, striving to recreate the tastes of Italy in their new American homes. However, there was a practical hurdle that they had to surmount: the cost of importing Italian goods was often exorbitant, and the socio-economic landscape was far from accommodating.

Italian immigrants, especially in the midst of social prejudice, found themselves in tightly-knit communities, colloquially known as "Little Italy" or ghettos, where cultural preservation was paramount. To make life more affordable and adapt to their

circumstances, Italian families began merging their cherished recipes with more readily available and less expensive American ingredients. This subtle shift allowed them to balance the books while gradually altering their culinary traditions.

Over time, as these Italian immigrants in America evolved, so did their recipe books. With each generation, they became the "first generation nonna" or nonno. The nonnas and nonnos were the torchbearers of this culinary evolution. As the old Italian first-generation nonnas gradually faded away, they left behind a legacy of adaptation, where Italian-American cuisine became a unique blend of Old World flavors and New World ingredients. Then, a new chapter unfolded in this culinary saga. With the advent of cheaper flights and the initial stages of globalization, Italian families who had made their homes in America began to travel back to their ancestral land. They returned bearing more than just souvenirs; they brought back new food and habits from America, along with the financial means to experiment and indulge in the culinary diversity that America had to offer. The influx of these returning individuals, not only from America but also from various other countries, breathed life into a whole new culinary tradition.

The abundance of financial resources played a crucial role, enabling these Italian families to try out new recipes and afford luxuries such as meat and other foods typical of Italian cuisine. In doing so, they unintentionally created a fusion of flavors that is now emblematic of Italian-American gastronomy, a testament to the dynamic nature of culinary traditions and their ability to evolve and adapt to the circumstances of the time. Traditions, like the intricate threads of a tapestry, intertwine and blend over time. They are not static but living entities, molded by the ever-shifting currents of culture, migration, and innovation. As we've seen through the lens of Italian culinary heritage, traditions mix through a delicate dance between preservation and adaptation.

When communities, whether rooted in distant lands or emerging within digital realms like TikTok, encounter new influences and opportunities, they embark on a culinary journey. They embrace innovation, seeking to maintain the essence of their cultural identity while incorporating the flavors of the wider world. In doing so, they create new traditions that resonate with the complex tapestry of contemporary life.

Traditions are not rigid, but rather, they are vibrant, evolving narratives that adapt to the ever-changing mosaic of human experiences. They thrive through the fusion of old and new, the interplay of generations, and the rich intercultural dialogues that occur over time. Thus, as we savor the outcomes of this mingling, we find that traditions continue to enrich

our lives, telling stories that bridge the past and the future, and illustrating the beauty of cultural evolution.

2.3 Tiktok as a way to enhance the mixing of culture

TikTok, with its unparalleled ability to transcend cultural, generational, and geographical boundaries, emerges as a transformative force capable of reshaping traditions, particularly within the domain of food. Far beyond being just another social media platform, TikTok stands as a dynamic global stage where diverse culinary traditions, both regional and familial, converge and seamlessly intermingle. One of TikTok's remarkable strengths lies in its unique capacity to democratize information, granting individuals the empowerment to share their culinary creativity with a vast and global audience. In a matter of mere seconds, a TikTok video has the potential to transport viewers to the vibrant stalls of a Southeast Asian street food market, provide a glimpse into the intricate artistry of Japanese bento-making, or present an innovative take on a classic Italian pasta recipe. As we delve into the transformative power of TikTok, it becomes evident that this platform is not merely a trend; it is gradually becoming a staple in households worldwide. With just a touch of their fingertips, families gain access to a wealth of culinary information. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the technical limitations that accompany this surge in accessibility. While TikTok brings a world of inspiration to our screens, it also prompts a consideration of how this ubiquitous presence may shape the future of our culinary experiences, bearing in mind the challenges and constraints associated with technology.

2.4 Food industry fueled by tiktok

In the dynamic world of TikTok, culinary traditions are not only evolving but also fostering the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. This chapter delves into the fascinating stories of how this social media platform has provided a launchpad for culinary entrepreneurs and the unique impact it has had on traditional food businesses. One of the most emblematic cases that vividly illustrates the transformative power of TikTok is the story of Donato. A humble and humorous individual, Donato captured the hearts of TikTok users with his simple yet delicious sandwiches. Despite lacking formal culinary expertise, his authenticity resonated with viewers. However, a twist of fate saw Donato facing an unexpected turn of events – he was fired from his job with no apparent reason. It was through his TikTok presence that someone recognized an opportunity, and together, they opened one of Naples' most frequented food shops. What's remarkable is that their fame wasn't founded on culinary prowess but on the notoriety garnered from TikTok. This phenomenon, albeit successful, has sparked its fair share of criticism due to unconventional food pairings and the divergence from traditional culinary norms. Additionally, TikTok has given rise to a different breed of entrepreneurs, the owners themselves. In the pursuit of creating tantalizing and visually captivating content, these entrepreneurs embrace the art of "food porn." By tantalizing viewers with aesthetically pleasing culinary creations, they attract significant followings and, in turn, leverage their newfound fame to propel their businesses. This chapter will explore how business owners harness the power of social media to not only promote their culinary ventures but also shape the foodie culture of the digital age. The stories of Donato and many other entrepreneurs demonstrate the profound influence of TikTok on culinary entrepreneurship. From viral sandwich makers to restaurant owners doubling as food influencers, TikTok has reshaped the culinary landscape by providing a platform for innovation and exposure.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DATA

3.1 Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

From a methodological standpoint, the application of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) forms the backbone of this study, delving into the intricate construction of gastronomic discourses on TikTok by influencers with a culinary focus. Within the MCDA framework, specific elements deemed crucial to the research will undergo examination. Initially, a lexical analysis will be conducted, scrutinizing the voiceover text in selected TikTok videos. This process aims to unveil specific lexical fields, employing metaphors and modal verbs as key tools (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Subsequently, a discourse analysis will be deployed to identify elements of abstraction, overlexicalization, and moral panic. Abstraction entails exploring the reduction and generalization of information. Overlexicalization is a persuasive technique that accentuates elements subject to ideological disputes, while moral panic seeks to instill societal concern regarding potential threats to its values (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Turning attention to the communicative format, the audiovisual components of the chosen videos will undergo scrutiny using the analytical tools of iconography and iconology. Iconography involves the analysis of visual elements and features in any image or layout, providing insights into the visual language employed (Machin & Mayr, 2012). On the other hand, iconology engages in a symbolic analysis of visual elements, such as color usage and sound incorporation, to convey specific meanings (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The analysis of TikTok short videos using these approaches aims to unravel how influencers on the platform construct discourses on gastronomy. MCDA, as a comprehensive analytical method, elucidates the nuanced meanings created through the amalgamation of visual elements and words (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This analysis extends beyond the mere exploration of how communication functions on TikTok. It aspires to facilitate critical insights into the limitations or potentials of TikTok, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of societal issues. (Fuchs, 2021)

Lexical analysis	definition	how would it apply to the chosen material
Lexical choices	analysis of word choices to individualize specific lexical fields	“bono” “che crema” “the sound of love”
discursive strategy analysis	definition	how would it apply to the chosen material
Ideology	Representation of the world, views that influences the way the discourse is structured	This product is genuine and of a nice quality, choose the ingredients from the locals...
discursive strategy audiovisual analysis	Definition	How would it apply to the chosen material
Iconography	Analysis of the visual elements and features of any image, layout, picture, or photograph (Machin & Mayr 2012 p.220)	How they show the ingredients, how they exploit the quality of each material, how the food is placed on a plate to be more appealing...

(Adapted from Savorelli)

3.2 Survey and interviews

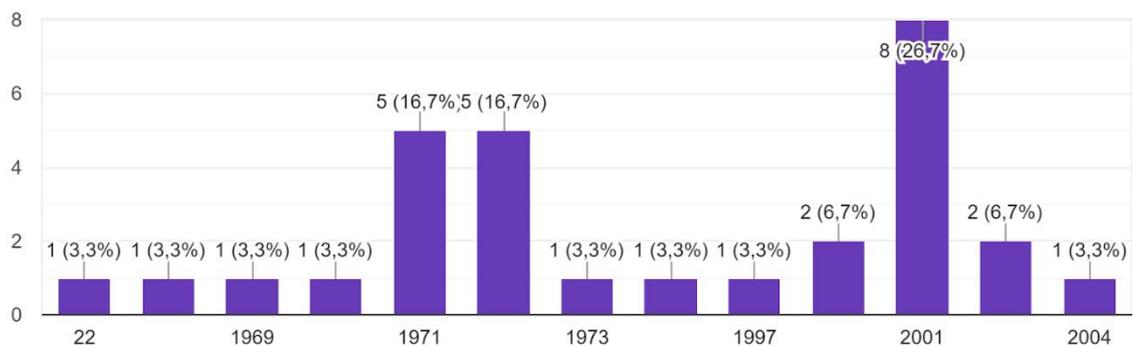
In the course of my research, I conducted a survey involving thirty participants, each contributing unique insights into the impact of TikTok on the way ordinary people approach cooking. This diverse group comprises individuals from two distinct generational brackets: sixteen of them were born before 1975, representing a generation familiar with culinary practices before the digital age, while the remaining fourteen were born after 1997, a group that has grown up with technology woven into the fabric of their lives. This survey serves as a lens through which we can observe the evolving landscape of cooking practices influenced by TikTok, uncovering not only the ways in which people

prepare their meals but also the broader culinary trends, their creative inspirations, and the pivotal role of influencers who leverage TikTok's transformative potential.

The questions posed in the survey have been thoughtfully designed to capture the nuanced shifts in cooking habits, preferences, and culinary creativity that the TikTok phenomenon has ushered in. By analyzing the responses to these questions and engaging in discussions that follow, we can gain valuable insights into how TikTok has left its mark on the daily cooking experiences of ordinary individuals.

in che anno sei nato?

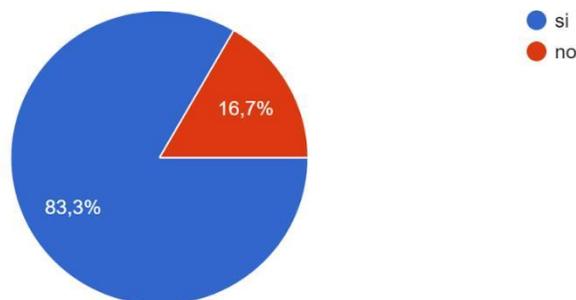
30 risposte



“What year were you born?” Is the first question, It is meant to understand the age of the participants.

utilizzi tiktok? (o affini come reels di instagram)

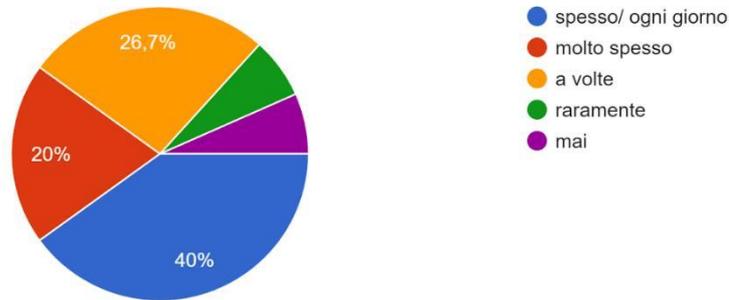
30 risposte



“Do you use tiktok? (or similar platforms like instagram reels)

ti capita spesso di vedere video di cucina?

30 risposte



How often do you watch cooking videos?

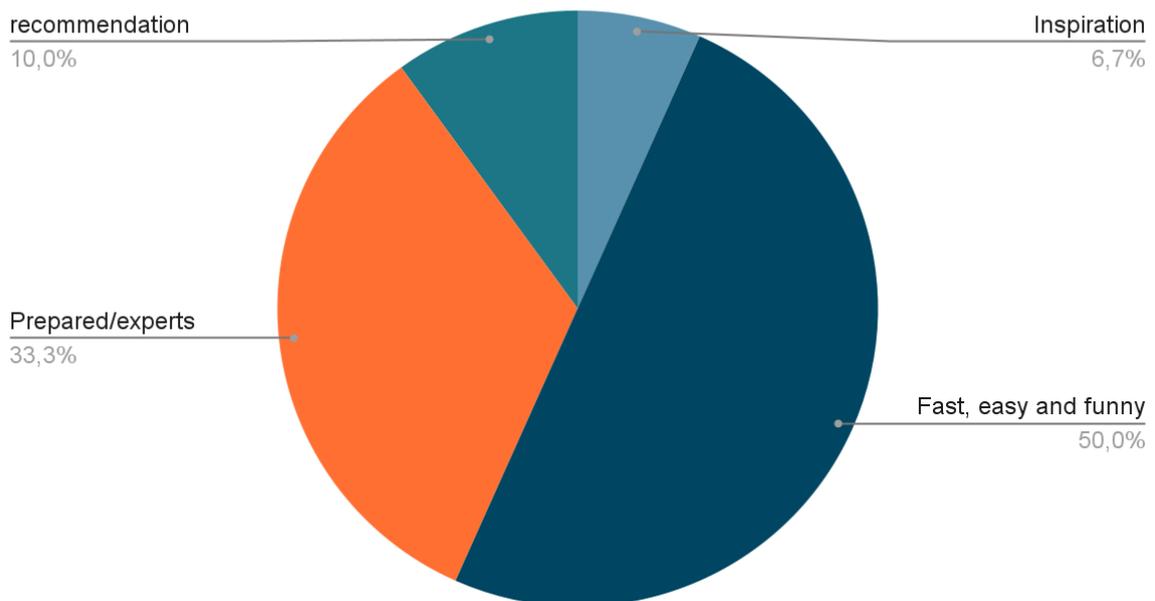
the answers in order are:

- Blue= everyday
- red= often
- orange= sometimes
- green= rarely
- purple= never

Why do you follow him/her?

In the previous question I've nominated a few influencers and asked which they follow, stating also "other" as a valid answer. But what I'm most interested in is the motive behind the decision of following any influencer.

Why do you follow him/her?



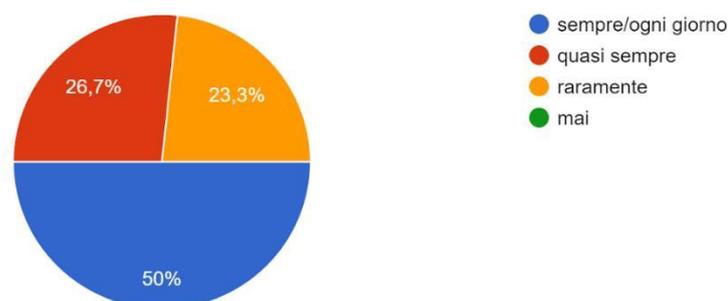
The data we see on this graphic explained:

- 6.7% of the answers say inspiration for new recipes.
- 10% of people followed these influencers following others advices
- 33,3% follow these influencers because they are good at what they do and expert in the sector
- 50% follow these influencers because they are fast easy and funny

This graphic yields a wealth of valuable insights into the factors that capture people's attention when it comes to culinary influencers. While having an influencer with substantial preparation, expertise, and years of experience can instill confidence in the quality of the dishes they present, it's not the sole determining factor. The survey findings underscore that, beyond culinary prowess, an influencer's video must possess a few critical attributes to be compelling and engaging. Firstly, simplicity is key. For a video to be effective and enticing, it should be straightforward and easy to comprehend. The instructions provided should be clear, enabling viewers to replicate the showcased dishes with relative ease. Equally important, perhaps even more so, is the element of entertainment. The survey responses emphasize that viewers seek entertainment value in these videos. A cooking tutorial is not just about learning a new recipe; it's about enjoying the experience. A video that adds an element of humor or amusement can make it not only enjoyable to watch but also enticing for revisits. In essence, this graphic reinforces the multifaceted nature of TikTok's influence on culinary preferences. It highlights that the charm of a video lies not only in the influencer's culinary expertise but also in their ability to convey their knowledge in a simple, engaging, and entertaining manner. This duality of culinary competence and entertainment value is at the core of what captures and sustains viewers' attention in the dynamic world of TikTok's culinary influencers.

Quanto spesso cucini?

30 risposte

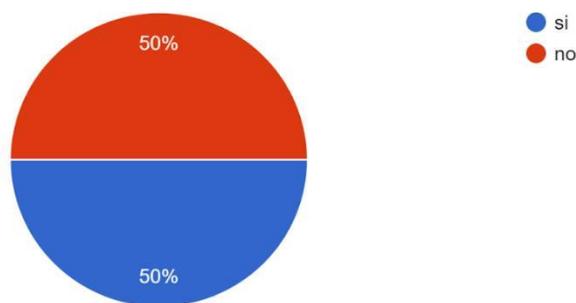


How often do you cook?

- blue= everyday
- red= almost everyday
- yellow= rarely
- green=never

hai mai provato a riprodurre qualche piatto visto su tiktok?

30 risposte



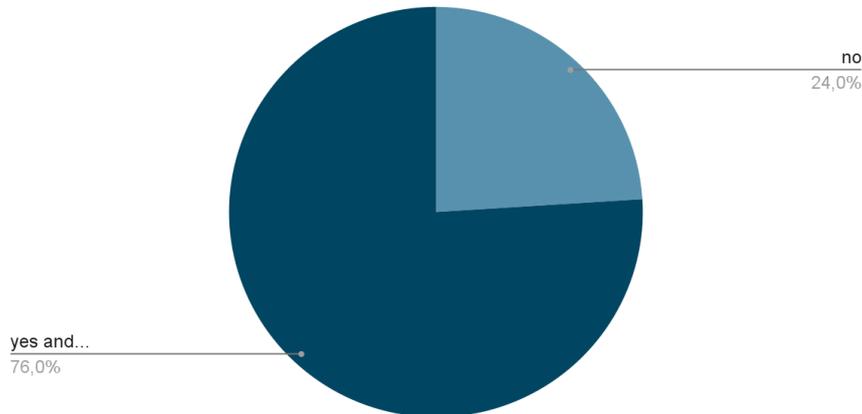
Have you ever tried reproducing a dish seen on tiktok?

If yes, have you memorized and interiorized reproducing the dish? maybe even applying some modifications?

give a full explanation

In the fifteen people who have tried reproducing a dish seen on tiktok these are the results for the question presented, but even if there were 15 saying no in the previous question, in this question 22 answered.

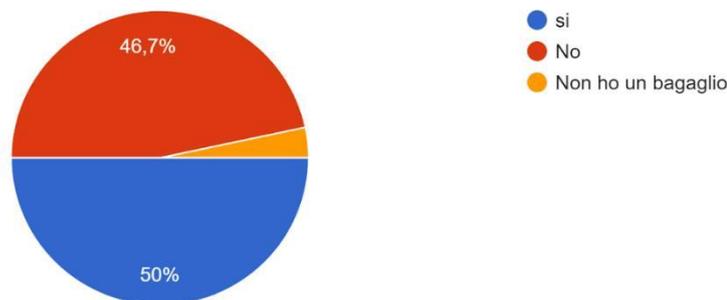
Have you memorized and interiorized reproducing the dish?
maybe even applying some modifications?



The 76% saying yes they also answered with lots of recipes, like Baked Brie, the dough for noodles. But the most important thing is that almost all of them said that they modify the recipe to their taste or based on what they own at that moment, this instance can give birth to new dishes and a slight change in history, therefore, tradition transforms and morphs to the person needs, in this case tiktok gives a fast and easy foundation for every user.

diresti che fa parte del tuo bagagliaio di ricette personali?

30 risposte



Would you say the dish is part of your luggage of personal recipes?

blue = yes

red= no

yellow= I don't have enough to be able to call it a luggage

Have you incorporated any new cooking techniques or preparations into your culinary repertoire as a result of inspiration from TikTok? (For example, techniques like

"risottatura," using grated lemon zest, incorporating parsley stems, or adding citrus zest to sauté.)

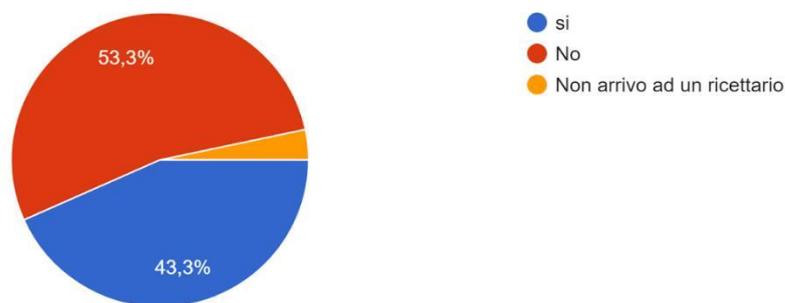
Most respondents expressed a positive shift in their culinary techniques, with many attributing their newfound skills and knowledge to TikTok. Among the enthusiastic responses, teenagers particularly stood out, sharing various techniques they've learned and even humorously noting that "literally most of my cooking knowledge comes from TikTok."

However, there were a couple of exceptions. Two respondents responded negatively, stating that they haven't adopted any new techniques from TikTok, with one emphasizing that they had already been using such techniques before TikTok's influence, The answers were:

- citrus in the preparation
- Better use of microwave
- some tricks for cooking meat
- "risottatura"
- toast the rice
- better usage with pasta brisée
- reductions
- better exploit of butter and aromatic herbs
- Toasting the pepper
- simmer with white wine until it reduces

diresti che fanno parte del tuo ricettario personale?

30 risposte



Would you say that they are part of your personal recipe book?

Here The responders were thirty, for an error on my part, so everyone of the fifteen who should have responded said that they consider these techniques part of their personal recipes book.

3.3 Conclusions

This survey has proven to be an invaluable source of insights, offering a rich tapestry of data that is central to the progression of my thesis. Despite the evident limitations of any study, the essential message I sought to convey stands clearly evident. The impact of TikTok on the world of cooking and culinary traditions is not confined to any one generation but transcends age boundaries. While the younger generation is prominently featured, the survey highlights that older individuals are also deeply engaged in this digital culinary world, particularly within the gastronomic sphere. It is heartening to discover that individuals from various age groups have eagerly embraced this new source of culinary knowledge, and their learning journeys continue to enrich their understanding of food. This culinary knowledge, whether it be traditional or contemporary, is not merely a personal acquisition but is bound to be shared and perpetuated at an accelerated pace. The digital age has granted us the means to disseminate information rapidly, and the culinary arts are no exception. What we learn through TikTok, consciously or even unconsciously, becomes an integral part of our culinary heritage, enriching our traditions and ensuring their continuity in an ever-evolving world. As we conclude this phase of the survey analysis, we recognize the transformative potential of digital platforms like TikTok in shaping our culinary experiences, and we look forward to history as it unfolds.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

To unearth pertinent material for this study, TikTok emerges as a fitting platform, primarily due to its distinctive characteristics that foster user connection through emotional and informative content tones (Brady, 2020). The platform's propensity for cultivating new ideas and trends further solidifies its suitability for exploration (Su et al., 2020). Moreover, the relative scarcity of research on TikTok's communication structures (Stein et al., 2022; Schellewald, 2021) amplifies the potential of this thesis to contribute substantially to the evolving body of knowledge on communication features within this platform. TikTok users navigate the platform through various avenues, including popular hashtags, videos, other users, and sounds (Vizcaíno-Verdú & Abidin, 2022). To ensure an

unbiased algorithm, a new TikTok account is created for data collection, aligning with the criteria proposed by Vizcaíno-Verdú & Abidin (2022). The selection criteria for refining data collection align with the principles of purposeful sampling or criterion sampling, a technique commonly utilized in qualitative research to identify data-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). These criteria are logically derived from the research questions and theoretical framework, with the aim of generating a comprehensive database on the examined phenomenon. Five key criteria are employed:

- The language used in the video, including captions, messages, and voiceovers, is English or includes English subtitles.
- The content creator maintains a public profile and is visible in the video.
- The content creator's profile remains active, evidenced by the posting of at least one video in the previous two weeks from the data collection period.
- The page owner, originating the video, qualifies as an influencer, boasting more than ten thousand likes on TikTok (Su et al., 2020).
- The influencer is distinctly categorized as a "Food influencer," emphasizing cooking and food as the primary focus of their page.

4.1 Influencers analysis

In the ever-expanding world of digital culinary influencers, the manner in which these individuals engage with their audience is as diverse and dynamic as the flavors they showcase. This chapter embarks on a meticulous journey into the realm of culinary influencers, aiming to dissect and understand the nuances of their communication and presentation techniques. In this comprehensive analysis, we delve into several critical aspects of influencer methodology, each carefully chosen to provide a holistic view of their craft. We scrutinize their articulation, the way they present themselves, their ability to introduce ingredients, their aptitude for mimicking cooking processes, and the depth of their culinary expertise. Our mission is to unravel the intricacies of influencer influence. By systematically assessing and quantifying these attributes using a structured criteria table, we endeavor to shed light on how culinary influencers captivate and educate their audience, establishing their unique presence in the digital culinary world.

I'll make use of the criteria established on the table on the third chapter “methods and data”.

4.1.1 Max Mariola Chef

Meet Max Mariola, a culinary influencer of exceptional renown, celebrated not only in Italy but also across borders. With a staggering 4.1 million followers, Max's digital presence has firmly established him as a prominent figure in the culinary world. His professional background as a chef further enriches his unique blend of culinary knowledge and engaging presentation.

let's continue with the analysis of a video I selected with 14 million views, he shows how to do a “Pasta alla Gricia” a typical dish of Rome:



Here he shows the Pasta alla Gricia, It is in fact a simple pasta, but within it lie many tricks to make it really good, if you do something wrong you'll just mess it up. He highlights that it's good and simple. He Shows a food porn image, it has to be creamy to entice the spectator to watch and his italian accent

Discursive strategy: he says “if you come to rome you must eat this”

Iconography:he shows the finished pasta and also the colourful ingredients,



He presents the ingredients with a genuine smile, calling each one by its name, which not only underscores his passion but also imparts a sense of reverence as if the ingredients are pure gold.

Ideology: His approach aligns with a commitment to showcasing local ingredients, exemplified by his emphasis on using Pecorino Romano, a specific type of pecorino, rather than a generic alternative.

Discursive: The influencer communicates his passion with articulate and enthusiastic words, coupled with an infectious, joyous facial expression that adds a delightful dimension to his discourse.



In the subsequent segment, the influencer transitions to showcasing the culinary technique, injecting a delightful dose of humor to enhance the entertainment factor. This is not only a moment of skill demonstration but also an opportunity to highlight the characteristic cream, fondly referred to as "crema" in Italy. Max Mariola's signature catchphrase, "look at that crema," resonates throughout, accompanied by a sound that serves as a sensory indicator of the dish's delightful texture.

Discursive: Adding a playful touch, the influencer labels the sound produced during the spaghetti bouncing as "the sound of love," enhancing the overall sensory appeal of the culinary process.

Iconography: The visual elements within this segment encompass the creamy texture, the intricate technique, and the satisfying scene that collectively contribute to the overall aesthetic and thematic narrative.

In conclusion, each frame masterfully wields the power to captivate an expanding audience. It seamlessly aligns with the established criteria, employing engaging discourse and compelling iconography. Notably, the influencer's choice to communicate in English broadens his reach, effectively targeting a more diverse audience.

4.1.2 ITSQCP or QCP

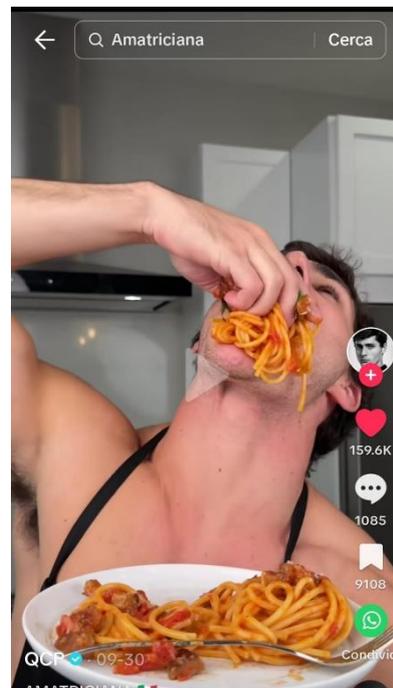
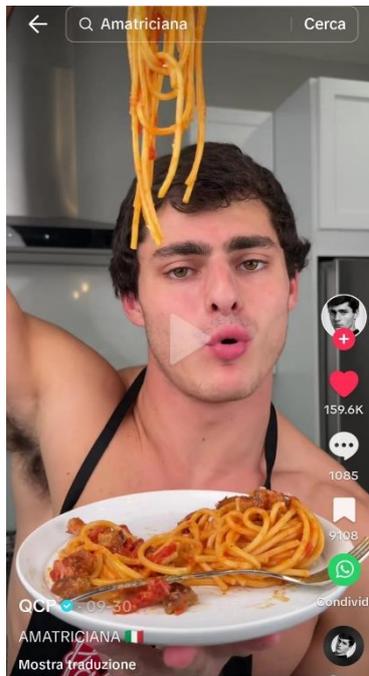
Introducing an American chef with a culinary lineage rooted in his Italian father's inspiration, boasting an impressive follower count of 14 million, he stands as one of the most renowned culinary TikTokers globally. Noteworthy for his distinctive style, this influencer weaves a tapestry of humor characterized by explicit language, cheeky catchphrases like "pasta bi***," and a penchant for jests. Adding a unique twist to his persona, he consistently appears in his content adorned only in an apron. Let's delve into a comprehensive analysis of his culinary approach



In these captivating photos, the influencer boldly showcases unique features that define his culinary persona. The first image portrays a playful moment where he ingeniously uses "Guanciale" as a makeshift purse, humorously asserting that this ingredient "has to come everywhere with you." While some might argue that such a portrayal could be

perceived as disrespectful to both the ingredients and the sanctity of the kitchen laboratory, it undeniably injects a breath of fresh air and amusing scenes into the culinary domain. The second picture encapsulates another facet of his discourse as he humorously lights a spaghetti like a cigarette, cheekily asking, "Do you want a cigarette?" in Italian.

Discursive: His verbal expressions further emphasize this playful approach. He declares that "guanciale has to come everywhere with you," drawing a quirky analogy by comparing it to a luxury brand: "your bag is Gucci, and my bag is guanciale." This witty play on words adds a layer of humor and charm to his discourse, showcasing his distinctive and engaging communication style



The public adores him for his unapologetic and untamed persona; he stands out as a true savage in the culinary realm. His unique charm lies in his ability to win hearts effortlessly through humor and unpredictability. Expertly utilizing well-timed video cuts, he crafts an engaging narrative that resonates with his audience. His unfiltered language, liberally peppered with curse words, serves as a symbol of relatability, portraying him as someone just like any other individual navigating the culinary landscape.

In a recent video, although he converses predominantly in Italian, he concludes with his signature catchphrase, "buon appetito b***h," seamlessly blending humor, edginess, and a touch of irreverence. This linguistic switch adds a dynamic element to his content, making it both culturally diverse and universally appealing. The fusion of his wild, unpredictable demeanor with an authentic, relatable communication style establishes a connection with viewers that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries.

In summary, ITSQCP emerges as a culinary force that extends the gastronomic allure beyond traditional boundaries, attracting a diverse spectrum of individuals, including those who may not necessarily have a penchant for cooking but engage for the sheer enjoyment of it. By infusing a sense of amusement into the culinary landscape, he successfully broadens the horizons of gastronomy, making it accessible and appealing to a wider audience. Notably, ITSQCP doesn't merely seek to expand his audience; rather, he establishes credibility through his authentic use of the Italian language and a commitment to employing quintessential Italian ingredients. Despite any perceived technical disparities compared to other Italian chef influencers, his distinctive approach resonates with authenticity, creating a unique niche within the culinary influencer space. This approach serves as a gateway to culinary knowledge for an expanding demographic, fostering an appreciation for diverse cooking styles and ingredients. In essence, ITSQCP's impact extends beyond the realm of traditional culinary influencers, making gastronomy a source of entertainment, cultural immersion, and knowledge dissemination for an ever-growing global audience.

4.2 Influencers pro & cons

Cons:

Inflated Standards: Influencers, by creating content that inflates culinary standards, may make certain culinary experiences inaccessible to a broader audience.

Sensationalistic Communication: The use of phrases like "look at that cream" or "don't be stingy" could emphasize sensationalism at the expense of quality and an honest culinary approach.

Apparent Credibility: Some influencers may appear credible through the use of high-quality photos, even if their culinary preparation does not meet experts dwstandards.

Heightened Expectations: Culinary influencers often create content that raises viewers' expectations through creative angles, appealing lighting, and the display of expensive ingredients. While this can draw people closer to the world of high-quality gastronomy, it can also create unrealistic standards.

Use of Crude Language: Some influencers employ crude language to connect with followers or generate excitement. This approach may not be suitable for everyone and may convey a rough or unprofessional image.

Increased Culinary Knowledge: By showcasing sophisticated dishes or exotic ingredients, influencers contribute to raising the average culinary knowledge of their audience. Viewers learn to recognize well-prepared dishes and develop a reference point.

Pros:

Expanding Gastronomy's Reach: Culinary influencers play a pivotal role in making gastronomy more accessible to the public. They introduce viewers to a wide array of dishes, cooking techniques, and global culinary traditions, broadening the horizons of home cooks.

Elevating Culinary Standards at Home: The influence of culinary influencers encourages viewers to strive for higher culinary standards in their own kitchens. By showcasing gourmet dishes and techniques, they inspire home cooks to experiment and raise the quality of their homemade meals.

Clear and Approachable Communication: Many influencers communicate in a colloquial and relatable manner, making complex culinary information more understandable for the average viewer. This approach can demystify the art of cooking, making it more accessible and enjoyable for a broader audience.

Information in Bite-Sized Form: Culinary influencers are skilled at delivering information in a concise, efficient manner. They provide bite-sized pieces of knowledge, making it easy for viewers to grasp and apply culinary concepts quickly.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In conclusion, the influence of TikTok on the culinary landscape is poised to be a transformative force, reshaping not just how we talk about food but also altering our access to recipes. The traditional act of eating has evolved beyond a basic necessity; it now embodies a cultural experience that transcends geographical boundaries. TikTok, with its dynamic and engaging platform, emerges as a catalyst in this paradigm shift, injecting new life into the discourse surrounding food. As we explore this phenomenon, it's essential to acknowledge the inherent limitations within this thesis. The survey, though insightful, is constrained by a relatively small sample size, hinting at the need for more extensive research to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. The multimodal critical discourse analysis, focusing on two influencers and a single video, offers valuable insights but represents a snapshot of a vast and dynamic digital landscape. Moreover, the thesis presents a hypothetical scenario for the future, suggesting that TikTok will play a pivotal role in the amalgamation of cultures and traditions. It's crucial to recognize that TikTok is just one facet of a broader digital transformation where other social media platforms also contribute to the rapid dissemination of culinary information. In the face of this informational flood, the thesis underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics between technology, social media, and gastronomy. TikTok's impact is undeniable, but its role is intertwined with a multitude of factors shaping the way we perceive, share, and consume culinary content in the 21st century.

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