

Changing Food Culture: An Exploration of Food Vlogging in Bangladesh

A Thesis Submitted by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where it is appropriately cited with complete and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all primary sources of help.

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Abstract

In recent years, Bangladesh has witnessed rapid shifts in media consumption, digital connectivity, and cultural expression, particularly among younger generations. Within this context, this thesis explores the evolving landscape of Bengali food culture through the rise of food vlogging in Bangladesh. Drawing on interviews with food vloggers across diverse regions, including Dhaka, Bogra, Chittagong, Barisal, Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar, and the Bangladeshi diaspora in Malaysia, this study investigates how digital platforms are reshaping traditional culinary narratives, influencing patterns of food appreciation and consumption, and introducing global food trends. Employing a multidisciplinary framework grounded in the works of Sidney Mintz, Arjun Appadurai, and Fabio Parasecoli, alongside theories of representation, taste, and media by Stuart Hall, Pierre Bourdieu, and Marshall McLuhan, the research highlights how food vlogging serves as a site for the reinterpretation and recontextualization of traditional cuisine. The findings reveal that vloggers play a key role in negotiating between local food traditions and global culinary influences, contributing to an emerging hybrid food culture. Moreover, the study emphasizes how digital media facilitates new forms of culinary storytelling and identity-making in contemporary Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bengali food culture, food vlogging, digital media, globalization, culinary identity, hybrid food practices, traditional cuisine, Bangladesh, food and representation, media and culture.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Bengali food culture is one of the richest and most diverse in the world, deeply rooted in the history and traditions of Bengal, which spans present-day Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a country with a rich culinary history and vibrant food culture (Jamooji, 2023). The cuisines of Bangladesh consist of an amazing blend of spices, rice, fish and sweets. “Mase-Bhate Bengali” i.e. “Bengalese with fish & rice” is another well-known proverb (Mahmud, 2017). Bangladeshi food and culture are rich and diverse, reflecting the country's history, geography, and the influences of various cultures. Bangladeshi cuisine is a testament to the country's rich heritage and diverse culture. From its use of spices and herbs to its love of rice and fish, Bangladeshi cuisine is a reflection of the country's history and its relationship with its neighbors. Food is a central element of Bangladeshi culture, reflecting regional identities and traditions (Mahmud, 2017). A unique traditional food identity is shaped by factors such as regional influences, cultural practices, and religious beliefs within the community (Alam & Naser, 2020). According to an article published by Together Women Rise in 2021, the cuisine is known for its bold flavors, use of fish, rice, lentils, and an array of spices that create a distinctive taste unique to the region. Historical influences include Mughal, Persian, and British culinary practices, blending with indigenous Bengali cooking techniques over centuries. Bangladeshi cuisine shares many similarities with the food traditions of the Indian subcontinent and is heavily influenced by the Persian-inspired flavors of Mughlai cuisine (Together Women Rise, 2021). The Nawabs of Dhaka had brought Mughlai cuisine to Bengal, and with it many Islamic elements were fully preserved by the culinary community of Bangladesh. The Mughals had a particular fixation on meat, introducing mutton into mainstream Bengali cuisine as well as already familiar meats such as chicken and venison. In addition, traditional desserts were mainly based on rice pastes and jaggery, but under the Mughal influence, they evolved towards significantly increased use of milk, cream and sugar along with expensive spices such as cardamom and saffron (Bangladesh Travel & Tours, 2019).

In Bengal, food is more than mere sustenance; it holds cultural and spiritual significance (Mahmud, 2017). Meals are often associated with festivals, rituals, and seasons, where food not only reflects the local produce but also the values and customs of Bengali society. Bangladesh is home to numerous rivers, and the freshwater fish from these waterways form a key component of the country's cuisine. Additionally, Bangladesh ranks as the fourth largest rice producer in the world. Fish and rice are so central to Bangladeshi food culture that the popular saying “Machhe bhat e Bengali” translates to “Fish and rice define a Bengali.” (Mahmud, 2017). Although Bangladesh shares a border and historical ties with West Bengal in India, their cuisines differ in a key aspect. West Bengal, with its Hindu-majority population, leans heavily towards vegetarian dishes, while Muslim-majority Bangladesh incorporates a wider variety of meats and seafood. Bangladeshi cuisine follows halal guidelines, which align with Islamic tradition, prohibiting pork but allowing other meats. Seasonal fresh vegetables are also frequently included in meat dishes (Together Women Rise, 2021).

Bangladesh, often referred to as the land of six seasons: summer, monsoon, autumn, late autumn, winter, and spring, experiences a shift in the types of dishes typically consumed with each season. Mustard oil is the traditional cooking oil in Bangladeshi cuisine, and the signature “panch phoron” spice blend, made from mustard, fennel, fenugreek, cumin, and nigella seeds, is widely used in many dishes. Hilsa (or ilish) curry is the national dish of Bangladesh. The Hilsa fish, an abundantly available and inexpensive fish, is marinated in a mixture of turmeric and chili paste and then pan-fried before being added to a mustard gravy. With the Hilsa fish and with other kinds, Bangladeshi cuisine utilizes every part of the fish, head, tail, eggs, etc (Together Women Rise, 2021). Other traditional dishes like Shukto (mixed vegetable curry), korma, dal, mezban and various types of sweets such as rasgulla, mishti doi, pitha, sandesh, chamcham, laddu, etc

illustrate the complexity of the cuisine. The Bengali food culture has evolved through regional variations, but it has maintained a strong identity rooted in its local ingredients and traditional cooking methods.

Rice is central to Bangladeshi cuisine, serving as the country's staple food. Bangladesh is renowned for its extensive rice fields, which yield different varieties, including the aromatic Basmati. Rice is commonly paired with an array of curries, side dishes, lentils, vegetables, and pickles. One of the most popular Bangladeshi dishes is biryani, a rice dish cooked with meat, fish, or vegetables, and a blend of spices. Each region of Bangladesh has its version of biryani, with Dhaka biryani being the most famous (Jamooji, 2023). The relationship between food vlogging and food culture is multifaceted, involving both the preservation and transformation of traditional culinary practices through digital media (Jamooji, 2023). Food vlogging, particularly in Bangladesh, has become a significant medium for sharing and exploring food culture, offering a platform where local and global culinary influences can converge. This relationship is reshaping how people interact with, consume, and perceive food, both within the Bengali community and beyond (Islam & Jahan, 2023). At its core, food vlogging serves as a bridge between tradition and modernity (Mahmud, 2017). In Bangladesh, where food is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, food vloggers often play the role of cultural ambassadors, showcasing traditional Bengali dishes such as Shorshe Ilish, Bhuna Khichuri, and Panta Bhat to a global audience. These vloggers highlight the intricate preparation methods, the significance of ingredients, and the cultural and historical contexts behind various dishes. By doing so, they help preserve these culinary traditions, making them accessible to younger generations who might otherwise lose touch with their heritage.

However, food vlogging also has a transformative impact on food culture (Islam & Jahan, 2023). With the rise of digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, food vlogging has introduced new trends and consumption patterns that may diverge from traditional practices (Mumuni et al., 2019). For instance, the convenience of home delivery services such as Foodpanda and Pandamart is frequently promoted in food vlogs, influencing viewers to opt for ready-made meals rather than preparing food themselves. This shift in behavior highlights how food vlogging, through sponsorships and product placements, is contributing to a more consumer-driven food culture that values convenience over traditional, labor-intensive cooking methods (Monira, 2022).

In Bangladesh, food vlogging has become an influential medium for showcasing the country's rich and diverse culinary culture, with various vloggers contributing in unique ways (Islam & Jahan, 2023). Banglar Rannaghor is a popular channel that specializes in recipe vlogging, where both traditional and modern Bengali dishes are featured. The channel emphasizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage by highlighting the cultural significance of each dish, explaining how they play a role in family traditions, festivals, and Bengali identity. The vlogs provide detailed step-by-step instructions, making it easy for viewers to replicate the dishes at home. The modern video techniques used, such as high-quality visuals and clear demonstrations, help make traditional Bengali cooking more accessible to a global audience, particularly the younger generation and the Bengali diaspora.

On the other hand, Be with Ali focuses on street food vlogging, capturing the bustling street food scenes across cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet. Street food is a significant part of Bengali culture, and his vlogs bring attention to iconic items like *Fuchka* (pani puri), *Chotpoti* (spicy chickpea salad), *Shingara* (savory pastry), and *Momo* (dumplings). His videos offer a closer look at how street food is constantly evolving in urban spaces, with changing tastes and modern twists on traditional recipes. His content appeals to both local food enthusiasts and international viewers, promoting Bengali street food globally and highlighting its importance in everyday life.

Zoltan BD takes a different approach by focusing on restaurant review vlogging, where she visits a variety of eateries, from high-end restaurants to small local spots. Her reviews are comprehensive, covering food quality, ambiance, service, and overall dining experiences. Through her vlogs, Zoltan connects food culture

with the growing trend of dining out in Bangladesh, as well as the rising popularity of food delivery services like Foodpanda. Her content not only helps food lovers discover new places to dine but also showcases how restaurants in Bangladesh are embracing both traditional flavors and global culinary trends.

Lastly, Tahrmaeats explores fusion and experimental cuisine vlogging, blending traditional Bengali recipes with international culinary influences. Her innovative dishes, such as *Butter chicken samosa* offer a creative take on classic Bengali flavors. Tahrmaeats encourages her viewers to think outside the box and experiment with food, sparking important discussions about the balance between creativity and authenticity in Bengali food culture. Her vlogs are part of a broader trend of modernizing Bengali cuisine while still respecting its roots.

Together, these food vloggers such as Banglar Rannaghor, Be with Ali, Zoltan BD, and Tahrmaeats play a significant role in preserving traditional culinary practices while embracing modern influences. Their content contributes to the evolving food scene in Bangladesh, making Bengali food more accessible to both local and global audiences while encouraging innovation and creativity in the kitchen.

While food vlogging offers an exciting opportunity to explore and celebrate Bengali food culture, it also poses challenges in terms of maintaining authenticity (Mumuni et al., 2019). Vloggers often face the dilemma of balancing the need to engage viewers with the pressure to secure sponsorships, which may lead to the promotion of food delivery services over traditional cooking. As a result, food vlogging not only preserves but also transforms Bengali food culture, potentially shifting it towards a more globalized and commercialized model.

The relationship between food vlogging and food culture in Bangladesh is one of both preservation and transformation (Monira, 2022). Food vloggers play a crucial role in keeping traditional Bengali dishes alive while simultaneously adapting to modern trends, often driven by consumerism and convenience (Mumuni et al., 2019). As food vlogging continues to grow, it will likely further shape the future of Bengali food culture, influencing both local practices and global perceptions of this rich culinary heritage.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Culture is a dynamic and evolving entity shaped by historical, economic, and technological forces. Bengali food culture, deeply rooted in tradition, has long been an integral part of the cultural identity of Bangladesh. However, the advent of digital media, particularly food vlogging, has introduced new dynamics in how this food culture is preserved, represented, and transformed. Food vloggers, through their digital content, play a significant role in shaping public perception, influencing culinary habits, and increasing the global visibility of Bengali cuisine. This raises important questions regarding how food vlogging affects cultural authenticity, culinary adaptation, and consumer behavior in the contemporary digital era.

Food vlogging, like other digital cultural movements, functions as a mediating force between tradition and modernity. According to Appadurai (1996) and his concept of *mediascapes*, digital platforms facilitate the cross-border exchange of cultural elements, influencing local traditions through global exposure. Similarly, Parasecoli (2019) highlights how food media plays a crucial role in constructing and negotiating cultural authenticity. In Bangladesh, food vloggers not only document traditional dishes but also modernize them, blending local culinary heritage with global food trends. This interplay between tradition and innovation leads to cultural continuity while simultaneously reshaping the identity of Bengali cuisine.

Beyond representation, food vlogging is also transforming food consumption patterns. Mintz (1985) emphasizes that food is not just a means of sustenance but also a social and economic commodity that evolves through technological and market forces. In Bangladesh, food vlogging has influenced food preferences, increased restaurant visits, and popularized fusion cuisine, which reflects a shift in traditional

eating habits. The growing commercialization of food vlogging raises concerns about whether digital visibility enhances or dilutes culinary heritage.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the cultural impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture, specifically its role in cultural transformation, and globalization. By investigating how food vloggers shape perceptions and food choices, this research seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of how digital food media redefines culinary traditions in contemporary Bangladesh.

1.3 Objective of the study

This study aims to explore how food vlogging is influencing Bengali food culture in Bangladesh. With the rise of digital media, food-related content has become an important part of everyday life. Food vlogging, where people share videos of cooking, eating, or reviewing food, has grown quickly on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. This research focuses on how this trend is shaping the way people think about, prepare, and experience food in Bangladesh. It looks at how food vlogging is creating new meanings around traditional food and bringing changes to local food culture.

One of the main goals of this study is to understand what kinds of changes food vlogging is bringing to Bengali food culture. It examines how traditional dishes are being shared and represented in new ways through videos. Many vloggers try new cooking styles, change ingredients, or present food in a way that looks different from the usual home setting. These changes affect how people relate to traditional food and how they see its value in everyday life. This research will look at how these digital practices are shaping ideas about food and culture across different age groups and communities.

Another objective is to explore how food vloggers are influencing the way traditional Bengali dishes are viewed and valued today. Some vloggers stay close to traditional cooking methods, while others update recipes to suit modern tastes or reach a wider audience. This study will explore whether vloggers are helping to preserve cultural traditions by celebrating local food, or whether they are changing how people see those traditions by introducing new styles and meanings. It also aims to understand how audiences respond to these shifts and how their views are influenced by the content they watch.

The research also looks at how food vloggers are introducing global food trends into Bangladeshi food culture. In many cases, vloggers blend local ingredients with foreign recipes, or feature international dishes alongside Bengali ones. This creates a kind of cultural exchange, where new ideas from around the world become part of local food practices. This part of the study focuses on how global and local food cultures are mixing, and how food vloggers are helping this process happen.

In short, the objectives of this thesis are:

1. To see how global food trends are mixing with local Bengali food through vlogs.
2. To understand how food vlogging is changing the way people see traditional Bengali food.
3. To identify how food vlogging, as a digital and immersive medium, has changed the way people connect with food and culture compared to traditional formats.

The research questions of this thesis are:

1. What changes is food vlogging bringing to Bengali food culture in Bangladesh?
2. What influence do food vloggers have on how traditional Bengali dishes are viewed and valued today?
3. How is food vlogging introducing global food trends into Bangladeshi food culture?

1.4 Significance of the Research

This study critically examines the cultural transformation of Bengali food culture in Bangladesh, shaped by the rise of food vlogging and digital media platforms. It demonstrates how food vlogging has influenced traditional culinary practices, reshaped perceptions of authenticity, and contributed to the incorporation of global food trends into contemporary Bangladeshi cuisine. By analyzing these shifts, the study highlights the evolving relationship between digital media and food culture, establishing food vlogging as a key factor in cultural change.

The research provides essential insights into how food vlogging influences food consumption patterns and the evolution of Bengali cuisine. It positions food vlogging as a significant force in shaping national and global perceptions of Bengali food, showing that digital engagement now plays a central role in both preserving and transforming food traditions. Additionally, this study offers valuable contributions to academics, cultural researchers, and industry professionals, presenting a detailed analysis of the intersection between digital media, globalization, and culinary heritage. By providing a comprehensive assessment of food vlogging's impact, the study serves as a foundation for further research on digital culture and food traditions, reinforcing its relevance in contemporary discussions on cultural identity and media influence.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Food vlogging has become a transformative force in shaping contemporary food culture, influencing both local culinary traditions and global food perceptions. In Bangladesh, food vlogging plays a critical role in how Bengali cuisine is represented, consumed, and hybridized with global food trends. This chapter explores existing literature on food culture, digital media, and globalization, drawing on the works of Sidney Mintz (1985), Arjun Appadurai (1996), and Fabio Parasecoli (2019). These perspectives provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how food vlogging affects the cultural evolution of Bengali food traditions, the representation of authenticity, and the integration of foreign food influences into modern Bangladeshi cuisine.

The term ‘vlog’ or ‘video vlog’ emerged in the early 2000s, gaining significant popularity around 2004-2005 with the rise of platforms like YouTube (Dey, 2023). In recent years, the rise of food vlogging has dramatically transformed how people engage with food content. What began as a casual hobby for sharing recipes and food experiences has evolved into a massive, influential industry (Monira, 2022). Monira (2022) furthermore says that the term food vlogging refers to the practice of creating video content where individuals share their culinary experiences, review food items, showcase cooking techniques, and explore food cultures. This phenomenon is most commonly associated with digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, where millions of users share their food experiences through visually rich, interactive videos. Food vlogging is a genre that blends entertainment, education, and cultural exploration (Dey, 2023). Dey (2023) states in her article that unlike traditional food media, which primarily relied on written recipes and static images, food vlogs incorporate dynamic visuals, real-time cooking demonstrations, and personal narratives. The interactivity of these videos where creators engage with their viewers through comments, likes, and shares has made food vlogging an essential part of modern food media (Dey, 2023). Through food vlogging, creators often become influencers in shaping food trends, dietary habits, and perceptions about food. This shift has been fueled by technological advancements, such as the widespread use of smartphones, improved internet accessibility, and the expansion of social media platforms, making it easier for content creators to reach global audiences (Mumuni et al., 2019).

Zaman (2020) states in his article that in Bangladesh, food vlogging has gained significant traction since the mid-2010s. As platforms like YouTube and Instagram gained popularity, young creators in Bangladesh began using these platforms to share their insights on Bengali food, local street food, and emerging food trends. This development in food vlogging coincided with global trends in food media consumption, highlighting the cultural significance of food not only as sustenance but also as a vehicle for personal expression and cultural identity (Zaman, 2020). This chapter explores the cultural impact of food vlogging in Bangladesh, with a focus on how this form of media has reshaped perceptions of Bengali cuisine, food consumption, and culinary practices in the digital age. The increasing ubiquity of digital media has fundamentally altered how food is consumed, shared, and appreciated. With the proliferation of social media, food content has transitioned from print media, television cooking shows, and cookbooks to an online space where content can be created, shared, and viewed by millions worldwide (Dey, 2023). The visual nature of food vlogging, combined with interactive features like comments, live streams, and collaborations, has given rise to a new form of food media where consumers are no longer passive viewers but active participants in food culture.

Historically, food has been a central aspect of cultural identity and social interaction (Mahmud, 2017). In many societies, food is intertwined with rituals, celebrations, and everyday life. Food vlogging has amplified this connection by providing a global platform for individuals to express their cultural identity

through food. It allows creators to showcase not just recipes but also the history, traditions, and personal significance behind the dishes they prepare (Dey, 2023). Furthermore, food vlogging serves as an outlet for people to discover new cultures, cuisines, and ways of life, often promoting cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. The democratization of content creation through digital platforms has allowed food vloggers to reach a wide audience, breaking down geographical, cultural, and social barriers. In the context of Bangladesh, where food has long been a reflection of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions, food vlogging has created a unique opportunity to document and share Bengali cuisine with a global audience. The influence of global food trends, coupled with local culinary practices, has facilitated the emergence of a hybrid food culture that is both rooted in tradition and open to innovation. This shift in food culture is driven largely by food vloggers who explore the intersection of tradition and modernity, showcasing how global food trends can be integrated with Bengali culinary practices (Dey, 2023).

In Bangladesh, food vlogging has become more than just an online trend; it has emerged as a cultural movement (Monira, 2022). The digital transformation of food media has allowed food vloggers in Bangladesh to gain significant influence, not only in documenting local cuisine but also in influencing food consumption behaviors and shaping perceptions of Bengali food culture. Since the mid-2010s, food vloggers in Bangladesh have been documenting and sharing their experiences with Bengali street food, traditional dishes, and fusion foods. Their work has contributed to the growing recognition of Bengali food on the global stage, as well as the modernization and transformation of local food culture (Zaman, 2020). One of the most significant aspects of food vlogging in Bangladesh is how it represents local food traditions while also integrating global culinary influences (Islam & Jahan, 2023). For instance, food vloggers in Bangladesh often experiment with fusion dishes, combining traditional Bengali ingredients with international flavors or modern cooking techniques. This approach not only showcases the creativity of local chefs but also challenges the boundaries of traditional Bengali cuisine, presenting it in new and innovative ways. These trends are particularly prominent among younger generations who are more receptive to experimenting with food and adopting new dietary habits. According to an article published in the Daily Star by Islam and Jahan, 2023, food vloggers in Bangladesh have also played a crucial role in documenting the country's diverse street food culture. Street food has long been an essential part of Bangladeshi food culture, offering quick, affordable, and delicious meals that are enjoyed by people from all walks of life (Mahmud, 2017). Food vloggers often visit popular street food stalls, showcasing traditional street foods such as Fuchka, Chotpoti, and Shingara, while also exploring newer street food trends. By documenting these experiences, food vloggers have made street food more accessible to a global audience, showcasing the diversity of Bangladeshi cuisine and elevating the country's food culture beyond its borders (Zaman, 2020).

The cultural impact of food vlogging goes beyond the mere act of food sharing (Monira, 2022). It has fundamentally changed how people perceive and relate to food, contributing to a shift in food identity and food trends. In Bangladesh, food vloggers play a key role in shaping culinary practices and influencing consumer behavior. The visual appeal and engaging nature of food vlogs make them an effective tool for promoting food trends and influencing what people eat. As food vloggers share their cooking techniques, restaurant reviews, and food experiences, they help shape public perceptions of food, influencing what is considered trendy or authentic in food culture (Islam & Jahan, 2023). Food vlogging has also led to the rise of new food trends in Bangladesh, such as the popularity of fusion cuisine, and the globalization of Bengali food. The blending of traditional Bengali ingredients with international flavors has created innovative dishes that attract both local and international food enthusiasts. For example, food vloggers may showcase a fusion of Bengali Biryani with flavors of Mediterranean or Western cuisine, or they might explore vegan versions of traditional meat-based dishes like Shorshe Ilish. These innovations have contributed to a broader acceptance of hybrid cuisines in Bangladesh, where global food trends are integrated into the local food scene.

At the same time, food vlogging has helped preserve and promote traditional Bengali dishes by documenting their preparation and cultural significance. While food vloggers experiment with new dishes and global flavors, they also emphasize the importance of traditional Bengali food culture, ensuring that these practices are not lost or forgotten. Through vlogging, food historians and creators alike have worked to maintain the cultural heritage of Bengali cuisine, presenting it in a modern, accessible way for younger generations. Since 2016, several young minds, like Syed Khaled Saifullah, Faruque-E-Azam, Shariar Rabbi and many more, in Bangladesh started joining YouTube, one of the top video-sharing platforms, to share their opinions about the foods and environment of restaurants. Some food vloggers are also working to document the local foods of a particular area (Zaman, 2020). In recent years, the rise of food vlogging on social media platforms has transformed the way people experience and interact with food. Food vloggers, with their engaging content and vast followings, have become influential figures in shaping culinary trends, dietary habits, and cultural perceptions of food.

The rise of food vlogging can be attributed to the increasing use of smartphones, internet accessibility, and the changing dynamics of media consumption (Monira, 2022). People now prefer visually engaging content, and food vlogging has become a primary source of entertainment and education about food. The visual appeal of watching food being prepared and reviewed has contributed significantly to the popularity of food vloggers. Bangladesh has seen a surge in food vloggers who document local Bengali cuisine, street food, and international culinary influences. This shift has created a platform where traditional Bengali food culture is not only preserved but also transformed through the lens of modern digital media.

Early Beginnings of Food Vlogging in Bangladesh

The rise of food vlogging in Bangladesh can be traced back to the mid-2010s, with several key channels emerging that significantly shaped the landscape of food content creation (Zaman, 2020). Among the pioneering channels, Khai-dai.com, launched in May 2016 by Syed Khaled Saifullah and Faruque-E-Azam, was the first food review channel on YouTube in Bangladesh. Filling a critical gap in food critique content, the channel has gained substantial popularity, amassing 152,000 subscribers and 18.8 million views across 202 videos. The channel covers a wide array of content, ranging from street food and local delicacies to international cuisines. Notable series such as "Bangladeshi Food," "Fast Food," and "Food and Travel" have garnered significant attention, with new content released weekly.

Following this, MetroMan, launched in November 2017 by Shahriar Rabbir and Kazi Tahsin Tonmoy, initially focused on humor but later transitioned into a prominent food vlogging platform. The channel, which has garnered 185,000 subscribers and 17 million views from 164 videos, primarily reviews food and restaurants in various regions of Bangladesh, including Dhaka's Dhanmondi and Mirpur, as well as areas like Savar and Chittagong. Recently, MetroMan has expanded its content to include resort menu reviews, catering to a broader audience interested in both food and travel.

Another key player in the development of food vlogging in Bangladesh is Bangladeshi Food Reviewer, founded in February 2018 by Mahathir Muhammad Fahim. Fahim's channel rapidly became one of the most influential in the country, amassing 564,000 subscribers and 89.3 million views. After leaving his government job to focus on food vlogging full-time, Fahim created a comprehensive collection of restaurant reviews and regional food specialties. His highly popular series, "Biriyan Review," is particularly noteworthy, and his channel's focus on exploring traditional foods across Bangladesh's districts has significantly contributed to the dissemination of regional culinary knowledge.

Rafsan TheChotobhai, launched in June 2018 by Iftekhar Rafsan, initially emerged from the gaming community but quickly pivoted to food vlogging. Known for his balanced and insightful reviews, Rafsan provides both positive and critical commentary on restaurants. His channel, which has amassed over

465,000 subscribers and nearly 29 million views, has garnered attention for videos such as “Exposing Fake Restaurants at Baniya Mela,” which alone has accumulated over 1.4 million views.

The Petuk Couple, founded in October 2018 by Rasif Shafique and Ridima Khan Ipsha, is another significant contributor to the food vlogging scene in Bangladesh. Their channel, which focuses on food and travel, has garnered 928,000 subscribers and over 169 million views across 125 videos. Popular series like "Petuk Couple in Bali" and the new venture Petuk Couple's Kitchen, which features cooking demonstrations, have helped establish their channel as a prominent platform for food exploration and culinary education.

Finally, Khudalagse, launched in July 2019 by Fahrin Zannat Faiza, represents one of the fastest-growing food vlogging channels in Bangladesh. With 681,000 subscribers and over 85 million views, Khudalagse has become known for its diverse content, which includes food delivery reviews, street food exploration, and restaurant critiques from areas like Gulshan and Dhanmondi. The channel's series "Worth it?" has contributed significantly to its popularity, while recent expansions into resort reviews have broadened its appeal to food lovers across the nation.

These pioneering channels have collectively contributed to the rapid growth of food vlogging in Bangladesh, reflecting both the increasing demand for food-related content and the evolving role of digital media in shaping culinary traditions (Zaman, 2020).

2.1.1 Transformation of Bengali Food Culture

Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1985) offers a foundational view of food as a cultural artifact, shaped by historical, economic, and technological shifts. He argues that food is never static; it evolves in response to societal changes, media influence, and global interconnectedness. His insights are particularly relevant in assessing the role of food vlogging in altering Bengali food traditions.

Bengali food culture, historically characterized by rice, fish, lentils, mustard oil, and elaborate sweets, has been deeply rooted in regional identity and heritage. However, with the emergence of digital food media, representations of traditional cuisine have shifted. Food vloggers, by presenting personalized narratives, high-quality visuals, and cross-cultural comparisons, are actively shaping how Bengali cuisine is perceived and consumed. Digital platforms have allowed for the rediscovery of lost recipes, the rebranding of street food as trendy, and the fusion of traditional and contemporary culinary elements.

Mintz's theory provides a framework for evaluating whether food vlogging is preserving cultural authenticity or commercializing and altering traditional Bengali food narratives. By integrating storytelling with carefully curated visuals and contextual narratives, food vloggers mediate the balance between cultural preservation and culinary adaptation. Through their digital presentations, they reshape how traditional dishes are interpreted, remembered, and valued, allowing audiences to engage with culinary heritage in new, mediated ways that reflect both continuity and change in the digital era.

2.1.2 Representation of Traditional Bengali Cuisine in Digital Media

Food vlogging does more than document food, it constructs narratives that define food authenticity and cultural heritage. Fabio Parasecoli's article *Feeding the Global Body* (2019) highlights the power of digital media in shaping food representation, analyzing how food vloggers influence public perception of traditional cuisines through selective storytelling, editing, and engagement strategies.

The representation of Bengali cuisine in food vlogging raises significant questions about authenticity, commercialization, and modernization. Vloggers often present traditional dishes through modern reinterpretations, such as blending them with global culinary trends, experimenting with fusion recipes, or

simplifying complex cooking methods. These strategies make traditional Bengali cuisine more accessible and appealing to a broader, often international, audience while simultaneously reshaping how these dishes are perceived in terms of authenticity, tradition, and cultural value. While this contributes to wider visibility for Bengali cuisine, it also risks diluting its cultural depth and historical significance.

Parasecoli's work sheds light on how food vloggers construct authenticity through digital media, influencing whether audiences perceive Bengali cuisine as unchanging and traditional or dynamic and evolving. His research also explores the commodification of food culture, where traditional dishes become digital commodities marketed through engaging narratives. In Bangladesh, food vlogging plays a crucial role in redefining traditional food consumption patterns, elevating certain dishes while overshadowing others, thereby influencing how local and international audiences engage with Bengali cuisine.

2.1.3 Incorporation of Global Food Trends in Bengali Food Culture

Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* (1996) provides a critical lens for understanding how globalization and digital media drive culinary transformations. His concept of mediascapes explains how digital content, including food vlogs, facilitates the cross-border exchange of culinary ideas, influencing local food traditions. Food vlogging in Bangladesh has significantly contributed to the increasing presence of global food trends. The introduction of Western fast foods, fusion dishes, and international dining experiences has become more widespread due to the visibility provided by digital platforms. Bengali cuisine is now frequently presented alongside global food trends, creating a hybrid food culture where traditional dishes are reinvented with foreign influences.

Appadurai's insights into gastro-politics further explain how food vlogging contributes to shaping consumer behavior and national culinary identity. The interaction between local and global food trends, facilitated by digital media, has reshaped traditional food hierarchies, increasing the accessibility and desirability of international cuisine in Bangladesh. His work provides a valuable foundation for analyzing the blurring of cultural boundaries in food practices, demonstrating how food vlogging is a key driver of culinary globalization.

2.1.4 Competing Perspectives on the Cultural Impact of Food Vlogging

2.1.4.1 Evolution vs. Commercialization of Food Culture

Sidney Mintz (1985) argues that food is constantly evolving, shaped by technological advancements and social transformations. From this perspective, food vlogging serves as a modern extension of historical culinary change, influencing how Bengali food culture adapts to new consumer behaviors and media trends. However, Mintz also acknowledges that food culture can be commodified, particularly when media transforms culinary traditions into market-driven products. While some food vloggers aim to document traditional dishes and food-making techniques, others focus on visually appealing, viral content that alters how food is valued and consumed. This duality raises questions about whether food vlogging promotes genuine cultural transformation or accelerates commercialized interpretations of Bengali cuisine.

2.1.4.2 Representation and Digital Storytelling

Fabio Parasecoli (2019) views food media as a powerful narrative tool, shaping how audiences engage with culinary traditions. He argues that food vlogging provides new ways to experience and interact with Bengali cuisine, making it more accessible while expanding its visibility on a global scale. However, Parasecoli also acknowledges that digital food media is not neutral; the way vloggers present food influences how it is perceived and understood. High-quality visuals, selective storytelling, and the pressure to entertain rather than educate may lead vloggers to prioritize visually appealing content and simplified narratives over

deeper cultural context and historical richness. As a result, the representation of traditional dishes may become more about surface-level appeal than about conveying the cultural significance, regional diversity, or traditional knowledge embedded in those foods. As a result, food vlogging may reshape Bengali food culture based on audience preferences and social media algorithms rather than historical and cultural accuracy.

2.1.4.3 Globalization and Culinary Hybridization

Arjun Appadurai (1996) introduces the concept of mediascapes, explaining how digital media facilitates the exchange of culinary ideas across borders. Food vlogging, as a product of globalized media, enables cross-cultural interactions, leading to new culinary innovations and hybridized food identities. Yet, Appadurai also highlights that not all cultural exchanges are balanced. When certain global food trends become more visible and commercially viable, they can shape food hierarchies, influencing what is considered desirable or fashionable in local food culture. In the context of Bangladesh, food vlogging contributes to the blending of Bengali cuisine with international trends, but it also raises concerns about how this integration impacts traditional culinary identities.

2.1.5 Identifying the Research Gap

The cultural dimensions of food are deeply embedded in identity, memory, power, and social change. Scholars like Sidney Mintz, Arjun Appadurai, and Fabio Parasecoli have laid vital theoretical groundwork for understanding food as a site of meaning-making and cultural negotiation. However, their insights have not yet been systematically applied to the context of digital food vlogging in Bangladesh, where traditional Bengali cuisine is increasingly mediated through online platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. This represents a significant gap in the literature particularly in understanding how digital creators act as cultural mediators, influencing how food is represented, consumed, and transformed in the contemporary Bengali context.

In *Sweetness and Power* (1985), Sidney Mintz examines food as a cultural artifact, something that is not static, but continually reshaped by historical, social, and economic forces. He traces how sugar, once a luxury, became a symbol of global capitalism and colonial power. While Mintz offers a powerful framework for understanding food's role in shaping and reflecting culture, his work predates the digital age and does not account for how digital media now participates in the cultural transformation of food. In Bangladesh, food vlogging is increasingly shaping how Bengali cuisine is prepared, perceived, and preserved. This study builds on Mintz's foundation by asking: What changes is food vlogging bringing to Bengali food culture in Bangladesh? The aim is to extend his analysis of evolving food traditions into the digital era, examining how online content creators influence the transformation of Bengali cuisine.

Arjun Appadurai, in *Modernity at Large* (1996), introduces the concept of mediascapes, describing how global flows of images, narratives, and symbols often transmitted through media create new possibilities for cultural imagination and identity. Appadurai argues that food, like other cultural practices, is shaped by these global flows, and that globalization is always localized through cultural negotiation. However, while he acknowledges the influence of media in shaping global food imaginaries, he does not explore how local content creators such as food vloggers act as agents who interpret, filter, and domesticate these global food trends for national audiences. This study fills that gap by asking: How is food vlogging introducing global food trends into Bangladeshi food culture? It investigates how Bengali food vloggers engage with global culinary content and blend it with local tastes, values.

In *Feeding the Global Body* (2008), Fabio Parasecoli analyzes how food is tied to representation, identity, and authenticity, especially in the context of global media. He argues that food media doesn't simply depict culture, it constructs it, often shaping notions of what is "authentic" or "traditional" in ways that reflect

broader cultural and political hierarchies. While Parasecoli addresses the role of food in global discourses of identity, much of his analysis is centered on Western or cosmopolitan food narratives, leaving a gap in understanding how non-Western digital content creators frame authenticity and cultural belonging. In Bangladesh, where traditional Bengali dishes are increasingly being presented and reinterpreted by vloggers, there is a need to explore how culinary authenticity is negotiated in the digital space. This links directly to the question: What influence do food vloggers have on how traditional Bengali dishes are viewed and valued today?

Together, these theoretical contributions highlight food as a dynamic and contested cultural domain, yet they stop short of addressing how digital creators, especially in South Asia, are actively shaping culinary culture in real time. In Bangladesh, food vloggers are not just documenting meals; they are redefining what Bengali food means, both within the country and across the diaspora. This study addresses a clear literature gap by applying these foundational cultural frameworks to the digital realm, analyzing how Bengali food vlogging influences representation, transformation, and globalization of traditional cuisine. Through this approach, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital media is reshaping culinary identity and cultural heritage in the Bengali context.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The rise of food vlogging in Bangladesh has led to significant transformations in how Bengali food culture is represented, consumed, and globalized. This study seeks to understand the cultural impact of food vlogging, focusing on its role in shaping food identity, digital representation, and social influence. To provide a structured theoretical foundation, this research draws on three key theoretical perspectives:

1. **Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (1997)** – Explaining how food vloggers mediate and construct perceptions of Bengali cuisine.
2. **Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital (1984)** – Examining how food vlogging influences class distinction, taste preferences, and social positioning.
3. **Marshall McLuhan's Media Theory (1964)** – Understanding how digital platforms shape food culture and communication.

These theories offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing how food vlogging affects food identity, taste hierarchies, and media influence in Bangladesh.

2.2.1 Hall's Representation Theory

Media Representation and Food Culture

Stuart Hall's Representation Theory explains how media constructs meaning, shaping public perceptions of culture. Representation is not a direct reflection of reality but a process through which images, narratives, and discourses influence how people interpret cultural identity.

In the context of food vlogging, vloggers play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of Bengali cuisine. They control:

- What is shown – Selecting dishes, cooking methods, and restaurant settings.
- How it is framed – Using language, storytelling, and visuals to shape meaning.
- Who sees it – Targeting specific audiences, both local and global.

Application to Food Vlogging

- Food vloggers decide whether to portray Bengali food as traditional, modernized, or fusion-based, influencing cultural perceptions.

- Some vloggers reinforce authenticity narratives, while others adapt Bengali cuisine for global digital appeal.
- High-production food vlogs often focus on visually polished presentations, dramatic editing, and fast-paced delivery, which can overshadow the nuanced techniques, historical roots, and cultural narratives behind traditional dishes. This shift in emphasis can alter how audiences engage with food heritage encouraging consumption based on entertainment value rather than fostering a deeper understanding of the culinary traditions and cultural meanings embedded in the food.

2.2.3 Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital

Food, Class, and Social Distinction

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (1984) examines how individuals' tastes, preferences, and access to resources are influenced by their social position. Cultural capital can be understood as the knowledge, skills, and education that provide access to social mobility, often determining an individual's or group's ability to succeed in society. In the context of food, cultural capital is reflected in the tastes and culinary preferences that are deemed valuable or prestigious in society. Bourdieu's theory is useful for analyzing food vlogging, as it can help to determine whether digital media is democratizing access to culinary knowledge or, conversely, reinforcing social hierarchies. While food vlogging has made Bengali food more accessible by introducing it to a wider, more diverse audience, it has also led to the promotion of certain types of food over others.

High-end restaurant reviews, gourmet food trends, and fusion cuisine often receive more attention and promotion on food vlogs, elevating these dishes as symbols of social prestige. In contrast, simpler, everyday Bengali meals are less likely to be featured, contributing to a shift in which food practices are valued. Bourdieu's notion that taste is socially conditioned aligns with the idea that food vlogging can be a tool for reinforcing social distinctions by highlighting expensive, trendy, or international food choices over more traditional, locally consumed meals. This distinction raises important questions about whose food culture is being represented in the digital space and whose is being marginalized. While food vlogs can offer a platform for showcasing a broad range of culinary traditions, the promotion of "elite" food experiences often results in a limited representation of Bengali cuisine, one that may not fully capture the everyday, communal aspects of food culture that are deeply embedded in local traditions.

2.2.4 McLuhan's Media Theory

The Medium Shapes the Message

Marshall McLuhan's media theory argues that the way information is delivered (the medium) affects how people understand it. Applied to food vlogging, this suggests that the platform YouTube, TikTok, Instagram shapes how Bengali food is perceived and consumed.

Application to Food Vlogging

- Short-form food content (TikTok, Instagram Reels) → Quick, visually engaging but may oversimplify food culture.
- Long-form food storytelling (YouTube, blogs) → More detailed, but may prioritize entertainment over culinary depth.
- Algorithm-driven visibility → Food vloggers adapt content based on what gains traction, influencing which foods become popular online.

McLuhan's theory helps assess how digital platforms shape the perception of Bengali food, influencing audience behavior and culinary trends. This theoretical framework integrates media representation, social class, and digital media influence to analyze how food vlogging impacts Bengali food culture.

- Hall's Representation Theory explains how food vloggers construct Bengali food narratives.
- Bourdieu's Cultural Capital examines how food vlogging reinforces or disrupts social class distinctions.
- McLuhan's Media Theory analyzes how digital platforms influence food perceptions and culinary trends.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and the methods used to explore the cultural impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture in Bangladesh. The research aimed to understand how food vlogging influences the perception of traditional Bengali cuisine, facilitates the integration of global food trends, and contributes to the hybridization of local culinary practices. This study adopts a qualitative research approach to gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dynamics surrounding food vlogging in Bangladesh. The methodology includes the selection of participants, the process of data collection, and the data analysis techniques used to answer the research questions.

3.1 Demographics of the Respondents

The demographic information is given below:

No	Name	Age	Gender	City	Education Level
1	Khalid	22	Male	Dhaka	Bachelor's
2	Sanjida	27	Female	Chattogram	Master's
3	Mishal	24	Male	Barisal	Bachelor's
4	Toni	22	Female	Rajshahi	Diploma
5	Fahad	27	Male	Dhaka	Master's
6	Tonmoy	26	Male	Cox's Bazar	Master's
7	Halima	27	Female	Chattogram, Malaysia	Master's
8	Rehan	25	Male	Bogra	No Formal Education

Table 2 Demography of Participants

3.2 Research Design

The research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture. A case study approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of food vlogging within its natural context. Unlike ethnography, which requires prolonged field immersion, the case study method enables a focused analysis of selected participants while maintaining analytical depth. This approach was ideal given the study's scope and the need to understand food vlogging as both a media phenomenon and a cultural practice. The case study method provides the flexibility to examine individual experiences and insights from food vloggers, without requiring extensive time commitments or large-scale data collection.

While other qualitative methods, such as ethnography and discourse analysis, could provide rich insights into food vlogging, the case study method was more suitable for this study due to its ability to concentrate on specific, relevant cases within a defined time frame. Ethnography, for instance, would require a longer immersion in the participants' environments, which was not feasible given the study's time and scope constraints. On the other hand, discourse analysis might offer valuable insights into the language and communication styles of food vloggers but does not fully address the broader cultural context of food vlogging as effectively as a case study approach does.

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was relatively small, comprising 8 participants. This aligns with qualitative research norms, where the depth of insight takes precedence over breadth. A smaller sample allows for detailed, focused analysis, which was crucial for understanding the nuanced role of food vlogging in Bengali food culture. However, it is important to note that small sample sizes can limit the generalizability of the findings to larger populations. While the findings offer valuable insights into the specific context of food vlogging in Bangladesh, future studies could incorporate a larger and more diverse sample to enhance generalizability and capture a broader range of experiences and perspectives.

3.3 Participant Selection

3.3.1 Target Participants

The target participants for this study were food vloggers who focus on Bengali food and have a significant online presence. Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Food Vloggers:** Participants must be active Bengali food vloggers who regularly produce food-related content on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok.
2. **Experience:** Vloggers must have at least one year of experience in producing content related to Bengali food, ensuring they are familiar with the trends and cultural nuances of food vlogging in Bangladesh.
3. **Geographical Diversity:** The sample includes vloggers from major cities like Dhaka and Chittagong, as well as those from regional areas (e.g., Bogra, Rajshahi, Barisal, Cox's Bazar) to capture a diverse range of regional Bengali cuisines.

3.3.2 Sampling Method

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who are particularly knowledgeable and influential within the Bengali food vlogging community. This technique was chosen to ensure the relevance and richness of the data. A total of seven food vloggers were selected for the study, including both influential vloggers in Bangladesh and Bangladeshi vloggers abroad. The sample was small but focused, given the exploratory nature of the study and the need for in-depth interviews.

Justification for Small Sample Size

In qualitative research, the selection of participants is guided by the depth of insights rather than numerical representation. This study employed a purposive sampling strategy, which is commonly used in qualitative research to select participants based on their expertise and relevance to the research topic. Seven food vloggers were selected to ensure diversity in perspectives while maintaining a manageable sample size for in-depth qualitative analysis.

The decision to include eight participants was based on the following justifications:

- **Diversity of Perspectives:** The study sought to explore regional variations in Bengali food vlogging. Participants were selected from Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Barisal, Bogra, Cox's Bazar, and Malaysia to ensure that the study captured a broad spectrum of regional food narratives and digital content styles.
- **Exploratory Nature of the Study:** Given that this research is exploring an emerging phenomenon, a smaller sample allows for detailed, in-depth interviews rather than broad generalizations. The qualitative approach prioritizes rich descriptions, participant narratives, and in-depth thematic exploration over statistical significance.
- **Data Saturation:** Previous studies suggest that in qualitative research, data saturation the point at which no new themes emerge can often be reached with six to ten participants (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The researcher found that after seven interviews, the responses started to exhibit recurring themes, suggesting that the key insights relevant to the research questions had been adequately captured.
- **Logistical Constraints:** Conducting in-depth interviews involves significant time and resources for transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Given these practical limitations, focusing on seven participants ensured that the study remained methodologically rigorous while feasible within the available time frame.

3.2 Data Collection

I have collected my data through interviews and secondary sources.

3.2.1 Interviews

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews with food vloggers. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow for a flexible approach to exploring participants' experiences while ensuring that the research questions are addressed. Interviews provided rich, qualitative insights into the ways food vloggers contribute to the transformation of Bengali food culture and the integration of global food trends. I made the interview questions on the basis of my research objective which was done with the help of my literature review. I conducted the interview of one respondent online via google meet because one of my respondents currently lives abroad, and other respondents were comfortable with the in-person interview at a restaurant of participant's choice, comfort and convenience. They were given the consent form and read it to them before the interview began. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the themes and providing opportunities for follow-up questions based on responses. All interviews were audio-recorded (with participant consent) for later transcription and analysis.

The reason interviews were chosen for this study is that interviews give the author further opportunity, in addition to all the other things they should be doing, to gain extended exposure and to interact with their readers (Robinson, 2019). Moreover, conducting interviews is better for qualitative study since the interview allows one to spend more time with the respondents which helps to get in-depth information.

3.2.2 Secondary Resources

Articles & Literature Review:

To complement the primary data, the study reviewed existing research articles, books, and literature on topics such as:

- **Food media and representation** (Stuart Hall's Representation Theory)
- **Cultural hybridization in food** (Arjun Appadurai's Mediascapes)
- **Food as a form of social capital** (Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural Capital)

To determine the key concerns of the research challenge, primary data has been integrated with secondary data. Additionally, since a relatively small number of interviews were performed, it was essential to demonstrate the importance of primary data using information from secondary sources in order to complete the study. By combining both primary and secondary data sources, the study ensures a comprehensive and well-informed analysis of the research topic.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is widely used in qualitative research to identify and analyze patterns or themes within the data. The analysis followed a six phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. **Familiarization with the Data:** Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the researcher familiarized themselves with the data through repeated readings.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** Key points of interest were identified in the transcripts, and initial codes were created based on the interview questions and emerging patterns.
3. **Searching for Themes:** Codes were grouped into broader themes that addressed the research questions, such as food presentation, cultural authenticity, and fusion dishes.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they represented the data accurately and aligned with the research questions.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** The final themes were defined and clearly named to reflect the core findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents the findings based on interviews with food vloggers from various regions, including Bogra, Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal, Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar, and Malaysia. The study explores the profound impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture, examining how it has influenced the way traditional Bengali cuisine is perceived, introduced global food trends, and encouraged the blending of local and international culinary practices. The findings are organized into the following three key themes:

- Transformation of Bengali Food Culture
- Perception of Traditional Bengali Cuisine
- Digital Media and the Transformation of Food Culture

These themes reflect the complex ways in which food vlogging is reshaping the culinary landscape, influencing both the preservation of traditional food practices and the adoption of modern, globalized food trends.

4.1 Transformation of Bengali Food Culture

4.1.1 Changes in Food Consumption & Appreciation

The findings from this study reveal a noticeable shift in the way food is consumed and appreciated in Bangladesh, particularly among urban viewers and younger generations. One of the key themes that emerged is the movement from traditional and regional dishes towards fusion food, influenced heavily by globalization and the increased visibility of international cuisines through food vlogging. As Sanjida explains: *"Food vlogging has made global foods like pizza, momo and sushi more accessible. A few years back these foods were not that much accessible to us."*

Her statement reflects a common trend among vloggers and viewers alike: food items that were once limited to upscale restaurants or foreign travel are now entering everyday consumption. This change is not only about availability but also about a shift in what is seen as desirable or modern. Toni, another vlogger, offers a critical perspective on this phenomenon: *"These quote-unquote global trends are nothing but an illusion. For example, we eat rice and fish in a certain way. On the other hand, in Japan, they eat the same thing, rice and fish, just in a different form. And to people, sushi is much more enticing than rice and fish. Although they are the same ingredients, it's just a different form."*

Toni's comment highlights how form, presentation, and perceived global status can elevate a dish's appeal, even when it is made with ingredients that are deeply familiar within the Bengali context. This reflects how global food trends are often reinterpreted locally, influencing not just what people eat, but how they value different types of food.

Through this lens, food vlogging emerges as a space where traditional food practices are being reimaged. While the core elements of Bengali cuisine, like rice and fish, remain important, they are increasingly appreciated in new forms and contexts. Vloggers frequently compare local and global dishes, making traditional food more relatable by linking it to international trends, or introducing global food by connecting it to local tastes. These findings suggest that food vlogging is not only changing the visibility of certain dishes but also shifting how people talk about and engage with food. It creates a platform where appreciation is shaped by presentation, context, and the ability to relate global influences to local identity. As a result, the consumption of food in Bangladesh is no longer limited to traditional boundaries, but part of a broader, digitally mediated cultural shift.

4.1.2 Evolution of Food Presentation & Cooking Styles

Another significant finding from the interviews was the growing emphasis on the visual presentation of food, particularly in the context of its appearance on digital platforms. Across different regions, food vloggers noted that food is no longer valued for taste alone; its visual appeal now plays a major role in how it is prepared, served, and consumed.

Vloggers shared how this change has affected street vendors, home cooks, and restaurant owners alike. Many now give special attention to plating, color, and composition, knowing that their food may be filmed or photographed for social media or vlogs. This shift marks a broader trend where food is increasingly seen as a visual performance, not just a source of nourishment. Khalid, a vlogger, captured this change succinctly: *“Food is now a performance. Street food vendors, home cooks, and restaurant owners have started paying more attention to how their food looks because they know it might end up in a food vlog. Even traditional dishes like ‘Gulab Jamoon Cheesecake’ are now served with chocolate drizzle or fruit garnish to make them more Instagram-friendly.”*

This adaptation of traditional Bengali foods for the camera was frequently mentioned by other vloggers as well. Sweets, in particular, are being presented in creative, eye-catching ways, even when the ingredients remain the same. The goal is to make them more appealing to digital audiences who often engage with food first through images or video. Overall, the findings indicate that food vlogging has contributed to a new visual culture around food in Bangladesh. This shift in presentation is not only about aesthetics but also about visibility, appeal, and marketability especially in a media-driven environment where the look of food can determine its reach and popularity.

4.2 Perception of Traditional Bengali Cuisine

4.2.1 Shaping Public Opinion on Traditional Bengali Food

A key finding of this study is how food vloggers are reshaping public perceptions of traditional Bengali cuisine. Through storytelling and contextualization, vloggers are elevating everyday dishes; those that were once seen as ordinary, into symbols of cultural identity and heritage. Several vloggers emphasized that dishes like Shorshe Ilish, long considered a staple, are now being portrayed as more than just food. They are presented as cultural artifacts, embedded with meaning and pride. By narrating the history or significance behind such dishes, vloggers influence viewers to see traditional food in a new light. Fahad, one of the participants, clearly expressed this transformation: *“Food vloggers are like cultural ambassadors. For example, when a vlogger explains that ‘Shorshe Ilish’ is not just a dish but a symbol of Bengali identity, it changes how people perceive it.”*

This shift in perception is not limited to well-known dishes. Vloggers are also drawing attention to foods that have traditionally received less recognition. For example, Shobji Bhorta (mashed vegetables), a common but often overlooked item in everyday meals, is now gaining appreciation as part of a rich and diverse culinary tradition. By highlighting these dishes, vloggers are broadening the scope of what is valued in Bengali cuisine, moving beyond the dominant focus on fish and rice. The act of placing these foods in cultural narratives adds depth, making them more meaningful to audiences both within and outside Bangladesh. These findings suggest that food vloggers are not only documenting food, they are actively shaping cultural understanding and appreciation of traditional cuisine through storytelling, emphasis, and visibility.

4.2.2 Social Class and Prestige in Food Vlogging

Another important finding from this research is how food vlogging reflects and reinforces social class distinctions and perceptions of prestige in the Bangladeshi food scene. Vloggers often feature a wide range of dining experiences, from luxurious restaurants to street-side stalls, which together reveal how food is tied to broader social hierarchies. Rehan, one of the vloggers interviewed, clearly addressed this aspect:

“Nowadays, food vlogs cover everything from high-end restaurants to affordable local spots. Through these vlogs, you can see how food culture reflects social hierarchies, with some places being portrayed as more prestigious than others.”

This dual portrayal highlights how food spaces themselves carry symbolic value. High-end dining spots are often associated with status, luxury, and modernity, while local or street food is typically positioned as accessible, authentic, or tied to tradition. The way vloggers present these spaces, through language, visuals, and tone, contributes to how viewers perceive the social and cultural value of each type of food experience. The findings suggest that food vlogging does not merely document food, but also subtly reflects the aspirations, class dynamics, and distinctions embedded in everyday food culture in Bangladesh. By showcasing both ends of the dining spectrum, vloggers offer a lens through which viewers can see how food is not only about taste or identity, but also about social positioning.

4.3 Digital Media and the Transformation of Food Culture

4.3.1 From Cookbooks to Vlogs

A notable finding from the study is the way food vlogging has transformed how people engage with food content, especially when compared to traditional formats like cookbooks. While cookbooks offer static text and images, food vlogs provide a dynamic and immersive experience that brings viewers into the full context of food preparation and consumption. Mishal, one of the vloggers interviewed, explained this difference: *“In a vlog, people don’t just see the recipe; they see the whole vibe, the kitchen, the street, the person eating. That feeling can’t come from a cookbook.”*

This immersive quality allows viewers to feel more connected to the food being featured. Whether the setting is a home kitchen or a busy street corner, vlogs capture the environment, the personalities involved, and the act of eating itself. This multi-sensory engagement makes food feel more real and immediate, as opposed to the detached instructional format of traditional cookbooks. The findings suggest that the medium itself; video, voice, visuals, and movement, plays a crucial role in shaping how audiences relate to food. Vlogging creates a narrative that includes emotion, context, and atmosphere, shifting the way food is learned, shared, and appreciated in everyday life.

4.3.2 Food Vlogging as a Tool

One of the most meaningful findings from this study is how food vlogging has become a powerful tool for sharing personal stories, regional traditions, and family histories. Beyond recipes and techniques, vloggers use their platforms to communicate a deeper sense of identity and heritage through food. Many participants described how vlogging allows them to preserve and share not just dishes, but the cultural significance behind them. Halima, a vlogger from Barisal, expressed this sentiment clearly: *“When I make a vlog on my mother’s recipes, I feel like I’m keeping our family’s food history alive and others can relate too, even from far away.”* Her reflection highlights how food becomes a medium for intergenerational memory, emotional connection, and cultural preservation. By sharing traditional recipes and the stories behind them, vloggers contribute to a broader digital archive of Bengali food culture, one that is rooted in everyday experience but made accessible through media. The findings show that food, when shared through vlogging, takes on new layers of meaning. It is no longer only about nourishment or flavor; it becomes a symbolic practice that connects people across space and time, allowing viewers to engage with traditions they may have lost, forgotten, or never known.

Table 2 Key Themes and Examples from Interviews

Theme	Key Insight	Example Quotes from Participants
Changes in Food Consumption and Appreciation	Food vlogging has introduced global food trends and encouraged fusion with traditional Bengali cuisine.	"These quote-unquote global trends are nothing but an illusion...sushi is much more enticing than rice and fish. Although they are the same ingredients, it's just a different form." – Toni
Evolution of Food Presentation and Cooking Styles	Food is now about visual appeal; traditional dishes are being styled for social media attention.	"Food is now a performance. Even traditional dishes like 'Gulab Jamun Cheesecake' are now served with chocolate drizzle or fruit garnish to make them more Instagram-friendly." – Khalid
Perception of Traditional Bengali Cuisine	Food vloggers reframe everyday Bengali dishes as symbols of heritage and cultural pride.	"Food vloggers are like cultural ambassadors. For example, when a vlogger explains that 'Shorshe Ilish' is not just a dish but a symbol of Bengali identity, it changes how people perceive it." – Fahad
Food and Social Class	Food vlogs reflect class distinctions by showcasing a range of dining experiences, from elite to street-level.	"Nowadays, food vlogs cover everything from high-end restaurants to affordable local spots. Through these vlogs, you can see how food culture reflects social hierarchies, with some places being portrayed as more prestigious than others." – Rehan
Digital Media as a Medium of Engagement	Vlogs offer immersive experiences that change how audiences relate to food compared to traditional cookbooks.	"In a vlog, people don't just see the recipe—they see the whole vibe, the kitchen, the street, the person eating. That feeling can't come from a cookbook." – Mishal
Food Vlogging as Cultural Preservation	Food vlogs serve as a platform for preserving and sharing family recipes and regional food traditions.	"When I make a vlog on my mother's recipes, I feel like I'm keeping our family's food history alive and others can relate too, even from far away." – Halima

Chapter 5

Discussion and Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the cultural impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture in Bangladesh. Building upon the findings presented earlier, this analysis explores how food vlogging is reshaping public perceptions of traditional cuisine, enabling the blending of global and local food practices, and influencing the broader cultural dynamics of food consumption and identity construction. The chapter is structured to first summarize the key themes that emerged from the data, followed by a critical discussion of these findings in relation to relevant literature and theoretical frameworks.

This chapter is structured to first provide a summary of the key findings, offering an overview of the major themes that emerged from the data. These include the transformation of Bengali food culture, shifts in food perceptions, and the hybridization of global and local food practices. Next, the discussion will focus on interpreting these findings, connecting them to theoretical frameworks such as Stuart Hall's Representation Theory, Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural Capital, and Arjun Appadurai's Mediascapes, along with the relevant literature reviewed earlier. The findings will be examined through the lens of these theories to understand how food vlogs are reshaping both Bengali food culture and its relationship to modernity and globalization. Additionally, this chapter will explore how the findings compare with previous research in the field, noting both alignments and discrepancies with existing knowledge. The implications of these findings will also be discussed, particularly in relation to how food vlogging contributes to the preservation, innovation, and globalization of Bengali food culture.

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

This section interprets the findings of the research by analyzing the impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture. The findings reveal several key patterns: the increasing importance of food presentation, the fusion of global and local food trends, and the reinterpretation of traditional Bengali dishes. By analyzing these trends through the lens of relevant cultural theories, we gain a deeper understanding of how food vlogging is reshaping Bengali culinary practices.

1. The Importance of Food Presentation and Visual Appeal

A key finding of this study is the growing emphasis on the visual appeal of food. As food vlogs have become more popular, food presentation has shifted from being a secondary consideration to a central element of food culture. Younger audiences, particularly those engaged in social media platforms like Instagram, are increasingly attracted to food that is not only delicious but also visually striking. This trend is evident in how traditional Bengali food is being re-imagined for digital platforms. For example, simple dishes like *Alu Bharta* are now served with creative garnishes, such as fresh coriander and mustard oil drizzle, making them more visually appealing and Instagram-friendly. As one vlogger from Rajshahi shared, *"Even simple dishes like Alu Bharta are now plated with fresh coriander and mustard oil drizzle, making them more Instagram-friendly and appealing for social media."* This trend demonstrates a shift in how food is perceived no longer just as sustenance, but as an experience that can be shared, performed, and appreciated through digital media.

2. Fusion of Global Food Trends with Bengali Cuisine

Another significant finding is the fusion of global food trends with traditional Bengali dishes. Food vloggers are not only introducing international cuisines like sushi, pizza, and ramen to local audiences, but they are also adapting them to Bengali tastes. This trend has led to the creation of hybrid dishes such as *Gulab Jamun Cheesecake* and *Naga Chicken Fuchka*. These fusion foods blend traditional Bengali ingredients with global cooking techniques, creating a new category of food that resonates with a younger, more experimental audience. The fusion of local and global food cultures is an example of what Arjun Appadurai

refers to as “disjunctive globalization,” where global cultural elements are adapted and reinterpreted in local contexts. The emergence of fusion food is not merely a passing trend but reflects a broader cultural shift toward the hybridization of food cultures. As one participant noted, “*Fusion foods like ‘Beef Kala Bhuna Pizza’ combine traditional Bengali flavors with Western techniques, attracting younger, experimental audiences.*” This fusion exemplifies how food vlogging facilitates the globalization of food while still maintaining local cultural relevance.

3. Reinterpretation of Traditional Bengali Dishes

Food vloggers also play a critical role in the reinterpretation of traditional Bengali dishes. Dishes that were once considered everyday or mundane, such as *Shorshe Ilish*, *Bhorta*, and *Shutki*, are being re-framed as symbols of Bengali identity and pride. Vloggers present these dishes through storytelling, historical context, and personal narratives, which imbue them with cultural significance and elevate them from simple meals to cultural symbols. This reinterpretation highlights the role of food vloggers as cultural storytellers, re-signifying traditional food for a new generation. The approach aligns with Stuart Hall’s theory of cultural identity, which emphasizes that identity is constructed through representation and discourse. By presenting traditional Bengali food through curated digital formats, vloggers are actively reshaping how these foods are perceived and valued. As one vlogger described, “*Vloggers are cultural ambassadors, re-signifying Bengali food for a new generation.*” This process helps preserve the cultural significance of these dishes while making them accessible and appealing to a global audience.

5.2 The Impact of Food Vlogging on Bengali Food Culture

The findings of this research on the impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture reveal key patterns that have reshaped how Bengali food is perceived and consumed. These trends include an increasing emphasis on the visual appeal of food, the fusion of global food trends with Bengali cuisine, and the reinterpretation of traditional Bengali dishes. To understand the significance of these findings, it is essential to analyze them through the lens of cultural theories, drawing on the works of Arjun Appadurai, Sidney Mintz, Fabio Parasecoli, Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall McLuhan, and Stuart Hall.

The increasing emphasis on food presentation is one of the most striking findings. Traditional Bengali food, once appreciated primarily for its taste, is now being reimagined with an eye toward visual appeal. Simple dishes, such as *Alu Bhorta*, are plated with garnishes like fresh coriander and mustard oil drizzle to make them more Instagram-worthy and visually appealing. This shift reflects a broader cultural trend where food has moved beyond being a form of sustenance to becoming a visual spectacle. Younger, digitally engaged audiences are increasingly drawn to food that is both delicious and visually captivating.

This trend aligns with Fabio Parasecoli’s theory of food as a performance in the digital age. According to Parasecoli, food has transcended its role as mere nourishment and has become a cultural object that is performed and shared through digital media. In the context of food vlogging, food presentation is not just about making the food visually attractive, but also about creating an experience that is performed for an online audience. This redefinition of food as a cultural object to be shared, performed, and appreciated through visual appeal highlights how food vlogs facilitate the performance of cultural identity. Additionally, Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital provides insight into this trend. Bourdieu argued that taste and food consumption are linked to social distinction. The emphasis on aesthetically pleasing food reflects how food choices serve as markers of prestige and social status in contemporary digital culture. In this sense, the visually engaging nature of food vlogging serves as a way for individuals to display their cultural and social capital.

A second important finding from the study is the fusion of global food trends with Bengali cuisine. Food vloggers have embraced international dishes like sushi, pizza, and ramen, but instead of simply presenting them as they are, they adapt these dishes to local Bengali tastes. This process of adaptation has resulted in the creation of fusion dishes such as *Gulab Jamun Cheesecake* and *Naga Chicken Fuchka*. The fusion of global and local culinary traditions is not just a trend but a sustainable phenomenon that appeals to younger, experimental audiences.

Arjun Appadurai's theory of disjunctive globalization helps explain this hybridization. Appadurai argues that globalization is not a one-way flow of culture, but rather a complex and fragmented process in which global elements are reinterpreted and localized in different contexts. In food vlogging, this process is evident as global food trends are localized through the use of Bengali ingredients and cooking techniques, creating new, hybrid food forms. Appadurai's concept of mediascapes further explains how digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram serve as cultural conduits for the exchange of food ideas. These platforms facilitate global-local interaction, allowing food trends from around the world to be adapted and reshaped within local contexts, leading to the creation of hybrid food cultures that reflect both global influences and local traditions. The fusion dishes featured in Bengali food vlogs, such as *Kalabhuna Pizza*, are products of this cultural negotiation between global culinary practices and local Bengali traditions.

The reinterpretation of traditional Bengali dishes is another crucial aspect of the findings. Dishes that were once seen as mundane, such as *Shorshe Ilish* (hilsa fish in mustard sauce), *Bhorta* (mashed vegetables), and *Shutki* (dried fish), are being presented in new ways. Food vloggers elevate these dishes by embedding them in narratives often highlighting their historical significance or personal stories. These dishes are now framed as symbols of Bengali pride and cultural identity. What was once considered simple, everyday food is now being elevated to a status of cultural reverence.

Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity provides a framework for understanding this shift. Hall argued that identity is not fixed but is continuously constructed through representation and discourse. Vloggers are actively reshaping the discourse surrounding traditional Bengali food by presenting it as central to Bengali cultural identity. In doing so, they are re-signifying these foods, encoding them with new meanings and narratives that reflect contemporary Bengali identity. By framing these traditional dishes as symbols of cultural pride, food vloggers are helping to preserve Bengali culinary heritage while making it relevant to the modern digital generation. The reinterpretation of food in this way highlights how food is not just nourishment but a powerful tool for cultural representation and identity formation.

An additional insight from the findings is the way food vlogging reflects social class and prestige. Vloggers often feature both upscale restaurants and street food, offering a dual view of food culture in Bangladesh. This representation highlights how food is tied to social status and prestige. While upscale, luxurious meals reinforce the notion that expensive food is associated with high social status, street food vlogs serve to elevate local, affordable food, bringing visibility to dishes that are often marginalized in mainstream media. Sidney Mintz's work on food and power is relevant here. Mintz argued that food is deeply tied to power dynamics and social hierarchies. The inclusion of both luxury meals and street food in vlogs highlights how class distinctions are embedded in food culture. Food vlogs, therefore, serve as a space where social hierarchies are both reinforced and challenged. By featuring street food, food vlogs democratize food culture, giving marginalized food practices visibility and appreciation. At the same time, the portrayal of luxury meals reinforces the connection between food and status, underscoring the power dynamics within food culture.

Finally, the role of digital media in shaping the food experience is another key finding. In contrast to traditional cookbooks, food vlogging offers an immersive and sensory-rich experience. Vlogs allow viewers to experience food not just through recipes but through visuals, sounds, and emotions. As one participant noted, "*In a vlog, people don't just see the recipe they see the whole vibe, the kitchen, the street, the person eating.*" This shift in how food is consumed through a multi-sensory experience rather than a static recipe is one of the hallmarks of food vlogging.

Marshall McLuhan's famous concept of "The Medium is the Message" helps explain the significance of this shift. McLuhan argued that the medium itself shapes the way content is consumed and understood. In the case of food vlogging, the digital medium fundamentally alters the meaning of food. It transforms food from a simple consumable item to a performative cultural object that is experienced and shared. Vlogging, therefore, does not just document food; it reshapes food into an interactive and engaging experience, deeply embedded in the visual culture of the digital age.

Did the Results Meet Expectations?

It is important to return to the research questions and reflect on how the findings address them. The first research focus was on the transformation food vlogging is bringing to Bengali food culture in Bangladesh. This thesis finds that food vlogging is not merely documenting meals; it is actively shaping how food is experienced, shared, and valued in Bangladesh. The cultural practices surrounding food; what is considered desirable, worthy of attention, or worthy of preservation, are being redefined through vlogging. Traditional dishes are being reintroduced with new narratives, while the visual and performative nature of vlogs is influencing how food is plated, consumed, and appreciated. Vlogging transforms food into a multisensory, shareable, and often performative cultural object. This signals a broader transformation of Bengali food culture from being primarily taste and memory-driven to becoming visual, interactive, and digital in nature. The second research focus was to see the influence food vloggers have on how traditional Bengali dishes are viewed and valued today. Food vloggers are playing a crucial role in the reinterpretation of Bengali culinary heritage. By selecting, narrating, and presenting traditional dishes in curated digital formats, they assign them new value. As shown in the interviews, vloggers act as cultural storytellers who reframe common dishes as markers of identity and pride. Whether it's Bharta, Shutki, or Shorshe Ilish, the way vloggers present these foods often accompanied by historical or personal anecdotes imbues them with a sense of significance that elevates them from the mundane to the meaningful. Stuart Hall's concept of identity as constructed through discourse is evident here: vloggers are reshaping the discourse around Bengali food, contributing to a renewed valuation of tradition in a digital age.

The last research focuses on how food vlogging introduces global food trends into Bangladeshi food culture. Food vlogging is a key site of cultural exchange, where global food trends are localized, remixed, and embedded into the everyday foodscape of Bangladesh. The study reveals a clear pattern: vloggers introduce international dishes like sushi, burgers, ramen, fried chicken, and often adapt them to local palates. This process results in hybrid food forms like kalabhuna pizza, reflecting what Appadurai refers to as the disjunctive flows of global culture. Vlogs serve as a portal through which global food culture enters Bangladeshi kitchens and restaurants, shaping not only what people eat but how they think about food as a cultural practice.

5.3 Unexpected Results and Alternative Explanations

One unexpected result from this study was the significant and sustained popularity of fusion dishes. Initially expected to be a fleeting trend, fusion food has become a permanent feature of Bangladeshi food culture. This suggests that fusion cuisine is not merely a novelty but a growing phenomenon embraced by both home cooks and professional chefs. This rise in fusion food points to a broader shift in food preferences, driven by exposure to global food trends through social media. An alternative explanation for this phenomenon is the role of social media platforms in promoting food trends. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube have played a key role in globalizing food culture, allowing food vloggers to introduce and adapt global food trends for local audiences. This cross-cultural exchange has created an environment where fusion dishes are seen as both innovative and accessible, further contributing to their popularity.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study explored the cultural impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture in Bangladesh, aiming to understand how digital media is shaping the way traditional Bengali food is perceived, consumed, and shared. The rise of food vlogging has introduced a new way for Bengali cuisine to be both preserved and transformed in response to the demands of modern digital culture. By redefining how food is presented, food vlogs are creating a new space for Bengali food to thrive, combining traditional dishes with global culinary trends. Food vlogs have not only revitalized traditional Bengali dishes but also made them more dynamic, accessible, and engaging for younger, digital-savvy generations. They have become a digital platform for globalizing Bengali food, while maintaining its cultural authenticity. This shift demonstrates that food vlogging is not just a passing trend, but a transformative force in Bengali food culture that reflects the ongoing interplay between modernity, globalization, and tradition. As global food trends increasingly influence local food practices, food vlogs are facilitating cultural hybridization, where local dishes are reimagined through the lens of global culinary practices, leading to the creation of fusion foods. These developments underscore the fluidity and evolution of food cultures in an increasingly globalized world, where traditional cuisines are both preserved and reinvented.

6.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study uncovered three major insights into how food vlogging is influencing Bengali food culture in Bangladesh. Each finding highlights a different but interconnected aspect of this transformation, showing how food vlogging is helping Bengali cuisine evolve in response to changing social, cultural, and global influences.

1. Transformation of Bengali Food Culture

This research highlights how food vlogging has contributed to the ongoing transformation of Bengali food culture, especially in the context of digital globalization. Bengali food, once primarily associated with tradition and sustenance, is now increasingly viewed as an experience, curated, shared, and consumed in new ways. Food vloggers have expanded access to regional dishes, encouraging urban audiences to explore culinary practices from areas they may never visit. What was once limited to household kitchens or local eateries has now become content for global audiences, reshaping how people discover and value Bengali cuisine. Moreover, the act of documenting food: how it's cooked, served, and eaten, has turned food into a medium of cultural expression. The role of digital platforms has thus blurred the lines between food consumption and cultural performance, turning traditional practices into shared visual narratives. This transformation is not merely about changing what people eat, but how food is understood, appreciated, and positioned in the wider landscape of Bengali identity and cultural pride.

2. Perception of Traditional Bengali Cuisine

The study reveals a significant shift in how traditional Bengali cuisine is being perceived, largely influenced by the rise of food vlogging. Vloggers are not just showcasing food they are reframing it as a symbol of cultural pride and heritage. Through storytelling, they elevate everyday dishes like Shorshe Ilish or Shobji Bharta from humble meals to markers of identity, deepening their cultural significance in the public imagination. This shift has contributed to a growing appreciation for traditional foods among younger audiences who may have otherwise overlooked these dishes in favor of fast food or global trends. By giving context to recipes discussing their origins, meanings, and emotional ties food vloggers serve as cultural mediators who influence public opinion. Their content broadens the focus beyond the dominant rice and fish narrative, shedding light on diverse regional and household recipes that were previously underrepresented. As a result, traditional Bengali cuisine is not only being preserved but also revitalized, with a newfound respect emerging for its variety, depth, and cultural relevance.

3. Digital Media and the Transformation of Food Culture

One of the central findings of this study is the profound role digital media plays in reshaping Bengali food culture. Food vlogging, as a digital practice, has transformed the way people engage with food from mere sustenance to a dynamic form of cultural storytelling and identity expression. The immersive and interactive nature of vlogs has replaced static food media like cookbooks, offering viewers a more intimate connection to food through the visuals of kitchens, streets, and personalities. This shift has also redefined food presentation, where traditional dishes are now curated to meet the visual standards of social media. Items like gulab jamun are transformed into cheesecake hybrids not only for taste but for their aesthetic impact on platforms like YouTube and Facebook. At the same time, digital media enables the preservation of cultural memory; vloggers often frame their content around personal and regional traditions, using their platforms to document and celebrate family recipes and regional flavors. In this way, food vlogging emerges as both a tool for cultural preservation and a driver of innovation, showing how digital platforms are not just reflecting but actively transforming the values, aesthetics, and narratives around Bengali food.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made for future food vlogs and the broader food culture industry in Bangladesh:

- **Balance Between Tradition and Innovation:** Food vloggers should continue to celebrate traditional Bengali dishes while maintaining the authenticity of recipes. However, they can also experiment with modern techniques and fusion recipes that respect the core flavors of Bengali food. This balance will allow food vlogs to preserve cultural heritage while staying relevant in the modern food landscape.
- **Focus on Culinary Education and Storytelling:** Food vloggers should place greater emphasis on educating viewers about the cultural significance of Bengali food. By focusing on storytelling that connects food to its cultural roots, vloggers can foster a deeper understanding of Bengali cuisine and its heritage.
- **Collaboration with Local Restaurants:** Restaurants and food vloggers can collaborate to create unique food experiences that highlight Bengali food heritage while experimenting with modern food trends. These collaborations could be promoted through food vlogs, attracting younger audiences and boosting interest in traditional Bengali food.
- **Promote Regional Diversity:** More focus should be given to showcasing regional Bengali cuisines that have been traditionally overlooked. Vlogs should aim to capture the diverse culinary practices across Bangladesh, helping regional dishes gain national and global recognition.

6.3 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of food vlogging on Bengali food culture, it has some limitations:

- **Geographical Limitation:** The study primarily focused on food vloggers from urban areas and Bangladeshi vloggers abroad. The findings may not fully reflect the experiences of food vloggers from rural areas or smaller communities.
- **Participant Bias:** The study's findings are based on interviews with food vloggers, who may have a positive bias towards the food vlogging industry. Future research should involve viewers and consumers to understand how food vlogs influence their perceptions and food choices.
- **Small Sample Size:** Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the sample size was relatively small. This limits the ability to generalize findings to the entire population of food vloggers.

6.4 Further Research

Based on the limitations and the findings of this study, several avenues for further research can be explored:

- i. **Exploring Consumer Perspectives:** Research that explores the impact of food vlogs from the perspective of viewers and consumers could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how food vlogs influence food choices and consumer behavior.
- ii. **Consumer Perception and Engagement:** A larger study that includes vloggers from rural areas and regional food bloggers could provide a more diverse picture of how Bengali food vlogging is evolving across the country.
- iii. **Regional Diversity in Bengali Food:** A larger study that includes vloggers from rural areas and regional food bloggers could provide a more diverse picture of how Bengali food vlogging is evolving across the country.
- iv. **Longitudinal Studies:** A longitudinal study tracking the evolution of food vlogs over time could offer insights into how food vlogging continues to shape food culture and how it influences future culinary trends.

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