# EATING BROADCAST: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MUKBANG CONSUMPTION AND ITS SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN TAMIL NADU

Sherlin Suji S [1], Dr. G. Balasubramania Raja [2]

[1] JRF Research Scholar, Department of Communication Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Tirunelveli-12, India
[2] Professor and Head, Department of Communication Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Tirunelveli-12, India
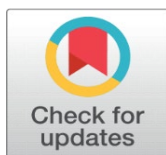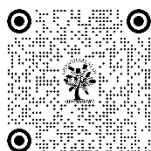
ABSTRACT

The emergence of Mukbang also known as eating broadcast, a unique form of digital content in which individuals consume large quantities of food while broadcasting live or recorded and posted on social media platforms. It has been rapidly gaining popularity among young individuals, particularly in Tamil Nadu. This study aimed to investigate the socio-cultural implications of mukbang consumption in Tamil Nadu, focusing on the reasons behind its widespread popularity and its impact on the minds and health of young people. Through a qualitative analysis of fifteen mukbang videos from popular hosts and in-depth interviews with six participants, the study revealed that Mukbang videos often feature a diverse range of food items, recurring themes presentation styles, and the researcher found the dominant characteristics within the mukbang genre. The in-depth interviews also identified several behavioural outcomes among youth from watching Mukbang videos. The findings underscore the importance of understanding the cultural, social, and psychological factors that influence an individual's media consumption habits and their relationship with food.

Keywords: Mukbang, Eating Broadcast, Food Communication, Food Presentation, Stimulus, Organism, Behavioural Outcome, Digital Media

1. INTRODUCTION

On YouTube, people can make, share, watch, like, dislike, and comment on content covering a wide range of topics like movies, video clips, video games, sports, food shows, and more keeping everyone interested and entertained. Currently, YouTube boasts an average of 122 million active users each day, reinforcing its status as one of the most extensively utilized social media platforms (Aslam, 2024). Indeed, technological advancements have significantly heightened the engagement of adults with digital media. The evolution of technology has led to the widespread adoption of digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, providing adults with seamless access to various forms of digital content. This increased interaction is evident across multiple domains, including social media platforms, online news consumption, streaming services, and other digital communication channels. The convenience and accessibility offered by digital media have transformed the way adults communicate, access information, and entertain themselves. This shift has implications for various aspects of daily life, including work, education, and social interactions. The increased interaction of adults with digital media facilitated by technological developments, has played a significant role in the rise of YouTube viewership. The accessibility of digital devices and the proliferation of high-speed internet have made it easier for adults to engage with online platforms, including YouTube.

There arises a new cultural trend in digital media that circulates globally and has gained popularity in Tamil Nadu in recent times.". Mukbang (eating broadcast) is a type of live online audiovisual broadcast in which a creator or host eats large amounts of food. The word mukbang is a portmanteau of the Korean words for "eating" (meokneun) and "broadcast" (bangsong). (Kang et al.,2020). It originated in South Korea around 2014 and has since become a global trend. Many South Korean Mukbang hosts originally started their broadcasting careers on the Korean live video platform AfreecaTV. However, the mukbang phenomenon has rapidly spread on a global level and a large number of mukbang videos can also be found on internationally oriented platforms such as YouTube, where they are not necessarily live-streamed (Strand & Gustafsson, 2020). In Korean society, dining is a deeply social activity and many Koreans find it almost unthinkable to sit and eat alone, not least in public; hence, Mukbang has been described as a virtual substitute for socializing while eating on your own (Jackson, 2018). Eating with families, friends or acquaintances is a social norm in almost all cultures of the world and it affects the eating choices and behaviour of a person (Higgs et al., 2019). But with the increasing single-person households all over the globe, the act of living alone leads to dining alone and to compensate for this loneliness during dining, watching Mukbang emerged as a popular trend first among South Koreans and now worldwide (Indita,2022).

Mukbangers don't just eat one meal; it's usually a big feast with three courses, or sometimes only desserts or appetizers. They film themselves eating with high-quality cameras and good lighting. Some talk to their viewers, while others don't. Having good content and interacting with viewers is important to keep them interested. However, in today's context, it has evolved into a favoured cultural phenomenon embraced by many young individuals who consume such digital content without fully understanding its original historical significance. As a result, the cultural significance of these practices becomes predominant. In this study, the researcher analysed popular Mukbang videos on YouTube to understand why they are so popular. Also, the researcher investigated the manner and context in which food was depicted, the descriptions provided by the Presenter, and the prevalent types of food items showcased. Additionally, the researcher checked out how watching Mukbang videos affects the minds and health of young people in Tamil Nadu.

In recent years, Mukbang has become popular worldwide, including in Tamil Nadu. Even though it started as a way for people to feel less alone while eating by themselves in South Korea, now it's enjoyed by lots of different people everywhere. But we don't know why young people like it so much. This study wants to find out why young people in Tamil Nadu are into Mukbang and what it means for how they connect with others associate their culture, and how they use technology. By looking at how technology is changing, how society sees eating alone, and why digital stuff is so appealing, this research hopes to show how culture is changing and how it affects how we act and talk with each other.¬¬ Based on the reviews collected, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis

H1: Excessive usage of digital platforms and social media leads to unintentional alteration of socio-cultural behaviors and beliefs in individuals.

The objectives of this study are,

- To analyze popular Mukbang videos on YouTube to identify recurring themes, content styles, and presentation techniques.
- To understand the reasons behind the widespread popularity of Mukbang among young individuals in Tamil Nadu, including socio-cultural factors and psychological motivations.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE STIMULUS-ORGANISM-RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

The S-O-R theory was first developed in environmental psychology. It proposes a relationship between three factors: an environment that contains stimuli (S) that will affect an organism (individual; O) and produce an approach or avoidance response (R) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In the current study, the researcher hypothesized Mukbang presentation as stimulus (S), viewers perceived value as organism (O), and behavior of the viewer as the response (R). According to communication studies, the communication variables affecting consumers' emotional attitudes include source, content, and channel factors. (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Identified content, influencer attractiveness, parasocial interactions, and information quality as possible stimuli. The organism is the customers' cognitive and emotional value perception and responses refer to consumption and purchase behaviors. (Lee & Wan, 2023). Based on the above-mentioned concept, the researcher derives visual content presentation, Audio content presentation, presenter's attractiveness, and parasocial interactions as the possible stimuli for the present study. The exposure to appetizing images of food (the majority of which are presented digitally, and hence in a unisensory manner) is becoming an

increasingly important source of enjoyment for many people in society today. (Spence et al., 2016). It is said in the article "Eating with our Eyes: From Visual Hunger to Digital Satisfaction", that 'Visual hunger' refers to the natural urge to look at pictures of food and the various reactions that happen in our brains and bodies when we see these images. This usually happens when we see food pictures without actually having any food around. Nowadays, with the widespread use of print and digital screens in our daily lives, we're constantly surrounded by images of food, even when we're not eating. Visual exposure to food images can also induce satiety: Similar to the gradual reduction of hunger that is seen during actual consumption (Redden & Haws, 2013), even just the simulation of consumption can reduce hunger (Morewedge et al., 2010). Culture is an integral component of food habits, affecting what, when, and how we eat. Although there is a general tendency to understand culture as applying only to nations and ethnicities (Stefani & Humphries, 2013). The development of society has changed how and what we eat. However, for many years, the essence of dining has not changed for most people around the world (Abidin et al., 2020). Many modern chefs with a strong background in molecular gastronomy are now daringly merging their skills with traditional ingredients and recipes or are even replicating other cultures to produce a variety of contemporary and aesthetic modern cuisine (Abidin et al., 2020b). As technology has advanced, food habits have evolved as presenters explore new cultures, allowing viewers to adopt these changes as a fusion. Therefore, as indicated in several articles, the researcher selected Sources of enjoyment, Visual Hunger, Digital satisfaction, and exploring new cultures as organisms for the current study. From this, the researcher decided to determine the (R) response of viewers by utilizing content analysis and conducting in-depth interviews.

3. METHODOLOGY

After careful consideration, the researcher chose to employ qualitative methodology, specifically content analysis, to find its essence. This involved analyzing Mukbang videos from YouTube. The researcher also employed in-depth interviews to gain insight into the thoughts of young individuals in this particular instance.

While numerous studies have explored the impact of Mukbang videos in various countries, this research focuses solely on Tamil Nadu's food presenters, influencers, YouTubers, and their followers. This analysis focused on YouTube's five videos from each of the three popular Mukbang hosts, resulting in a total of 15 videos (as shown in Table 1). The selection of these specific hosts was primarily based on their popularity in terms of viewer count. The videos were chosen randomly using a simple random sampling technique. Based on the number of subscribers, the researcher chose the following food channels for the current study. The key features of these channels are detailed below.

	Saapattu Raman	Tamil Foodies	Tastee with Krithika
Subscribers	2,540,000 subs	1,170,000 subs	386,000 subs
Video Views	1,051,753,673 views	176,088,071 views	88,706,979 views
Videos Uploaded	481 uploads	524 uploads	1.3K uploads
User Created On:	31-01-2017	03-11-2018	31-12-2017

Table 1 Key features of the selected food channels

To analyse and compare the basic attributes of the selected food channels, the researcher chose an analytic website called Social Blade. It collects data from YouTube, Twitter, Twitch, Daily Motion, Mixer, and Instagram. This data is then utilized to create statistical graphs and charts that monitor development and expansion. The researcher got the following statistical graph by associating the total subscribers of these three channels using Social Blade.
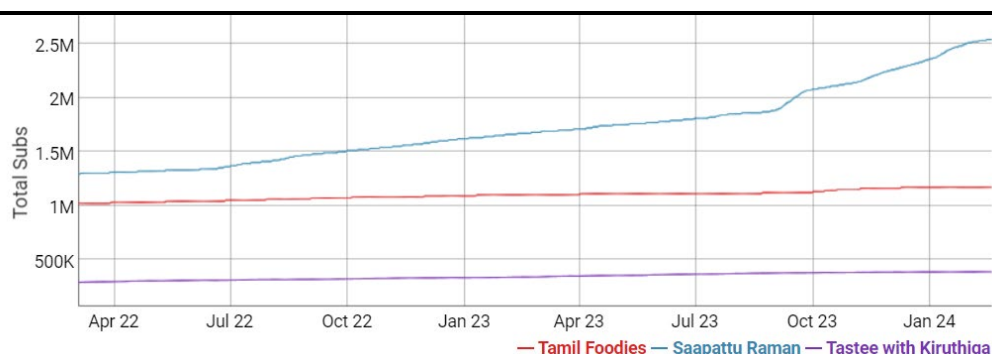
Figure 1 Total Subscribers of Tamil Foodies, Saapattu Raman & Tastee with Kiruthiga

From the graph, it is clearly understood that the subscriber count is very high in Saapattu Raman and comparatively low in Tastee with Krithikga. Therefore, the researcher attempted to do a content analysis to find out the content styles, and presentation techniques.

The researcher also wanted to examine the impact of eating broadcast content from the viewer's standpoint using a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews are designed to gather information about the experience, interpretations, understandings, and reactions to a particular phenomenon in a respondent's own words (Ompad et al., 2008). Therefore, the researcher believes in-depth interviews as the most suitable method for application in the present study. Six participants were selected and interviewed using predetermined open-ended questions.

4. CODING PROCEDURE

To analyze the content of Mukbang videos, the researcher selected and coded the entire 15 videos as follows: If the coder could confirm that the host was eating home-cooked food, the video was coded as "Home Cooked". If the host in a particular video showcases gustatory expressions such as chewing, gulping, or the sound of opening a soda or a packet of food, in addition to "mmm," "ymm," and "yuck" sounds, it can be classified as ASMR, which stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response. If a single creator consumed an amount of food equivalent to more than three meals, the video was labelled as "Overeating" or "Binge eating". If the creator filmed a video involving the consumption of a large amount of food within a time limit or eating food with another person, such as in a competition, it was coded as "Food Challenge". When a host travelled to various places to explore their food culture by eating and reviewing food and introducing new cuisine to viewers, it was coded as "Exploring New Food Culture".

4.1. CONTENTS OF SELECTED MUKBANG VIDEOS

In the following table, the researcher listed fifteen Mukbang videos from different hosts, each offering a unique eating challenge or showcase of traditional dishes. These videos vary in duration, ranging from around 6 to 23 minutes, and cover a diverse range of food items, including sweet treats, South Indian breakfast items, parottas, fish-based dishes, and biryanis. Some of these videos feature competitive eating challenges, while others focus on the enjoyment of traditional Tamil Nadu cuisine. The number of views and comments for each video are also provided, Details regarding the overview of Mukbang content within the 15 selected videos are outlined in Table 2

--	Host	Caption	Duration	Content	Number of views	Number of Comments
1	Saapattu Raman	Record Breaking! 9 PLATE (8 lb) WHITE RICE & FISH GRAVY & CURD EATING CHALLENGE | Destroyed |	10.13 Mins	This video shows a competitive eating challenge where the host consumes nine plates of white rice, fish gravy, and curd within a time limit. Throughout the video, the participant eats the food quickly, respectfully, and methodically, showing no signs of slowing down.	1,61,27,082	11,737

2		Diwali Special Sweet Eating Challenge | Biggest Home Made Sweets & Snacks Eating Challenge |	13.58 Mins	This video shows a competitive eating challenge where the host and participant attempt to consume a large quantity of Tamilnadu's traditional homemade sweets and snacks in celebration of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.	11,33,868	1,076
3		69(Idly, Dosa & Medu Vadai (Village Donut) Morning Breakfast Eating Challenge | Sivarathiri Special	14.50 Mins	Throughout the video, the participant eats a variety of South Indian breakfast items, including idly (rice cakes), dosa (rice pancake), and medu vadai (lentil donuts), demonstrating impressive speed and skill. The video showcases the festive spirit of Sivarathiri and highlights the enjoyment of traditional South Indian breakfast items.	27,37,353	1432
4	1 Full Boiled Chicken Fry (2 KG) & 1 Full Goat Chest Bone (1.5 Kg Big Bone) Fry Eating Challenge	13.48 Mins	The video "1 Full Boiled Chicken Fry (2 KG) & 1 Full Goat Chest Bone (1.5 Kg Big Bone) Fry Eating Challenge" features a competitive eating challenge where the host attempts to consume a large quantity of chicken and goat chest bone fry.		1,480	
					31,00,646	
5	1Kg Chicken Biryani in 1 Mins With Indian Food Stars | Toughest Food Challenge Ever We Done	6.17 Mins	The video features a competitive eating challenge where the host and 3 other participants attempt to consume 1 kg of chicken biryani in 1 minute. Throughout the video, the participants eat the biryani at an incredible speed, showcasing their impressive eating skills and appetite.		37,34,560	556
6	Tamil Foodies	Egg Biryani With Chicken Curry, Mutton Curry, Eating Show In Tamil Foodies Divya	12.53 Mins	The presenter enjoys eating a big portion of egg biryani with lots of eggs, fish fries, chicken, and mutton curry in an appetizing way while talking and eating with the people watching the video.		
					18,54,260	
						383
7		ASMR Poori With Spicy 🍗 Chicken Curry Chicken Leg Piece Mukbang Eating Show In Tamil Foodeis Divya	12.21 Mins	In this video, the host, Divya, is indulging in a popular Indian dish called "Poori" with a side of spicy chicken curry and a chicken leg piece. This video provides a pleasant and soothing experience for those who enjoy watching Mukbang videos in Tamil and appreciate the ASMR qualities of the eating sounds.	3,87,145	140

8		50 Parotta Salna And Chciken Kolambu Eating Challenge In Tamil Foodies Divya Vs Rajkumar	8.19 Mins	In this video, two contestants, Divya and Rajkumar, engage in a food challenge where they attempt to eat fifty parottas along with salna and chicken kolambu. Throughout the challenge, the participants consume the food competitively and entertainingly while interacting with each other and the viewers in Tamil.	5,89,129	224
9		5 Kg Poritcha Meen With kaara Saara Meen Kolambu Eating Challenge In TamiL foodies Divya	9.03 Mins	In this video, the host, Divya, takes on a food challenge involving 5 kilograms of Poritcha Meen (Fried Fish) accompanied by Kaara Saara Meen Kolambu (Spicy Fish Curry). Throughout the challenge, Divya engages with the viewers in Tamil while sharing her thoughts and experiences of the dish.	9,65,292	122
10		Fish Meals With Grilled Fish Curry and Fish Omelette Eating Challenge In Tamil Foodies Divya	9.28 Mins	In this video, Divya from Tamil Foodies prepares and enjoys a delicious meal featuring fish. She cooks a grilled fish curry and a fish omelet, which she then shares with her viewers in Tamil.	1,47,046	54
11	Tastee with Kiruthiga	Daddy Arumugam Biryani Madurai I Full Goat Leg I Tastee with Kiruthiga	23.02 Mins	In this video, Kiruthiga explores a wide range of non-vegetarian dishes at Daddy Arumugam's restaurant in Madurai. They enjoy a diverse array of meat-based dishes, including goat leg biryani, grilled fish, chicken dishes, and more.	26,34,653	2.405
12		Famous Courtallam Border parotta/Tastee with Kiruthiga	23.03 Mins	In this video, Kiruthiga explores the famous Courtallam Border Parotta, a renowned dish in Tamil Nadu known for its unique preparation and delicious taste. She visits a local restaurant specializing in this dish and samples the parotta, enjoying its crispy texture and flavorful filling.		567
					3,25,992	
13		SS Hyderabad Biryani I 8kg Biryani I Sisters Challenge	20.18 Mins	In this video, two sisters take on the challenge of eating an 8-kilogram biryani from SS Hyderabad Biryani in Tamil Nadu. Throughout the video, the sisters provide commentary on the taste and quality of the biryani, as well as their experiences with the challenge.	1,99,171	691

| 14 | | 4 am Hoskote Mani Dum Briyani I Bengaluru I Tastee with Kiruthiga | 9.45 Mins | In this video, Kiruthiga explores the Mani Dum Biryani from 4 am Hoskote in Bengaluru, Karnataka. She samples the biryani, noting its rich flavors and tender meat, and shares her experiences with her viewers | 1,70,538 | 100 |
| 15 | | Best village Style Food Akshatha Nati at Amruthahalli I Tastee with Kiruthiga | 15.16 | In this video, Kiruthiga explores the village-style food at Akshatha Nati located at Amruthahalli. She samples a variety of dishes prepared in a traditional manner, such as Ragi balls, dosa, idli, sambar, chutney, Biriyani and more. | 19,400 | 30 |

Table 2 Overview of Mukbang content in the selected videos.

By analysing the components of the 15 selected videos, the researcher observed the following trends. There is a variety of content, including eating challenges, cooking demonstrations, and food reviews. The number of views varies significantly, with some videos receiving millions of views and others in the thousands. The number of comments also varies, indicating the level of engagement and interaction with the audience. The videos cover a diverse range of food items and themes, reflecting the diverse interests of the audience. The captions provide viewers with a quick overview of the content and theme of each Mukbang video, making it easier for them to choose the videos they are interested in watching.

The statistical data obtained from the selected videos indicate strong interest and engagement in food-related content among viewers. The high number of views, ranging from 19,400 to 16,127,082, suggests the widespread appeal of the videos on YouTube. Similarly, the number of comments on these videos, ranging from 30 to 11,737, indicates a significant level of interaction and engagement from the viewership. This suggests a strong interest in food challenges, traditional cooking, and culinary exploration among the audience, which could potentially be influenced by cultural and social factors specific to Tamil Nadu. Overall, the table provides a comprehensive overview of different Mukbang videos, showcasing the variety, popularity, and engagement associated with this content genre.

5. CATEGORIZATION OF CONTENT USING CODES

The following table provides a comprehensive analysis of the components of Mukbang videos, focusing on specific codes such as Homecooked, ASMR, Overeating, Food challenge, and Exploring Food culture. The data is presented in terms of availability, frequency, and percentage to offer insights into the prevalence of these different aspects within the Mukbang content. With a total of 15 videos being analysed, the table delves into the specifics of each code, showcasing how frequently these elements appear in the videos and their corresponding percentages, providing a nuanced understanding of the content themes commonly found in Mukbang videos.

Codes	Availability	Frequency	Percentage
Homecooked	Yes	6	40
	No	9	60
	Total	15	100
ASMR	Yes	12	80
	No	3	20

		15	100
	Total	15	100
Overeating	Yes	14	93
	No	1	7
	Total	15	100
Food challenge	Yes	8	53
	No	7	47
	Total	15	100
Exploring Food culture	Yes	5	33
	No	10	67
	Total	15	100

Table 3 Codes-wise Categorisation of "Mukbang" videos on YouTube

Among the 15 Mukbang videos analyzed, 40% were classified as "Homecooked," meaning the host was consuming food prepared at home. The remaining 60% were not homecooked, implying that the food was likely prepared outside the host's home environment. This suggests that a significant portion of Mukbang content involves consuming food prepared outside the home. 80% of the analyzed videos exhibited ASMR characteristics, such as sounds of chewing, gulping or opening food packages. This indicates that ASMR is a prevalent feature in Mukbang videos, contributing to the overall viewer experience. The vast majority (93%) of the videos involved overeating, where a single creator consumed more than three meals' worth of food. This finding underscores the commonality of overeating as a central theme in Mukbang content. Slightly over half (53%) of the videos included a food challenge, where the host attempted to consume a large quantity of food within a specific time frame or participated in a competitive eating challenge. This suggests that food challenges are a notable sub-genre within the mukbang content space. Around one-third (33%) of the videos involved the host exploring various food cultures by tasting and reviewing different cuisines, introducing new dishes to viewers, or highlighting local food customs. This indicates that a significant portion of Mukbang's content focuses on cultural exploration and culinary discovery.

In summary, the statistical breakdown of Mukbang videos reveals various prevalent themes, including homecooked vs. not homecooked content, ASMR elements, overeating, food challenges, and the exploration of food culture. These insights provide a deeper understanding of the diverse content themes and styles within the mukbang genre.
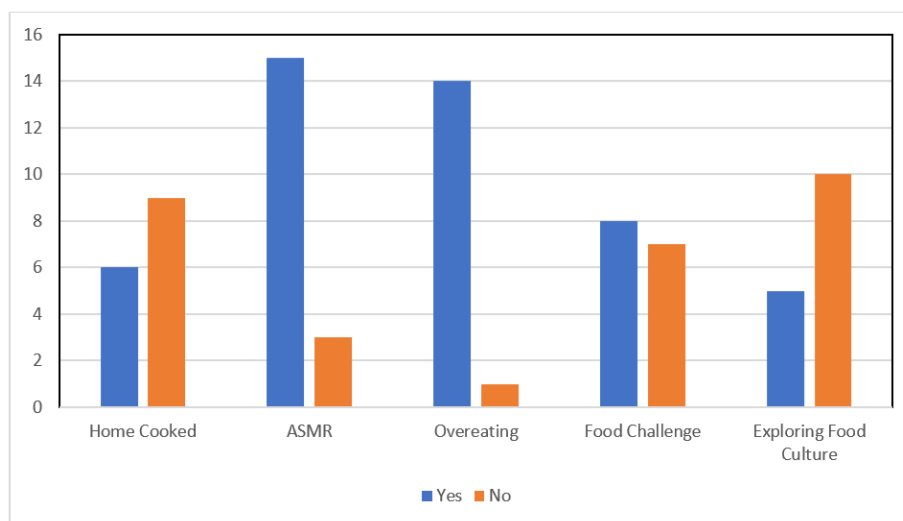

Figure 2 Codes-wise Categorisation of "Mukbang" videos on YouTube

The visual depiction above illustrates the categorization of Mukbang content based on codes, along with the corresponding frequencies. The blue bars signify a "Yes" response to the specific code, while the orange bars signify a "No" response. After analysing the chart, it is clear that the main characteristics of mukbang videos are ASMR and Overeating. Although the other codes also play a role, these two are the most significant.

6. SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS

Sociocultural and psychological factors are essential in shaping an individual's growth and functioning. Sociocultural theories are built on the social constructivist notion that cognition is constructed socially through interaction. Based on this sociocultural approach, the human mind is a cultural product to be expanded via social interaction (Cole, 2005). The social and cultural setting of the interaction provides a structure for mutual conversation and the sharing of ideas, which promotes learning and cognitive growth. Therefore, social interactions are crucial for individual learning and cognitive development. These aspects frequently have a notable impact, as the support and influences from the sociocultural context can either positively or negatively affect young individuals who consume Mukbang videos. By examining the 15 videos, the researcher provides insights into the socio-cultural and psychological factors associated with presenting and watching Mukbang content as follows.

S.No	Host	Social	Cultural	Psychological
1	Saapattu Raman	Peer Pressure and Imitation	Alteration of Traditional Eating Practices, Globalization of Eating Trends	Crave for food and relaxation.
2		Encouragement of Excessive Consumption	Distortion of Cultural Festival Practices	The desire for Social Approval through Consumption
3		Encouragement of Competitive Eating	Integration of competitive eating trends into cultural celebrations (Hybridization)	Food craving and Satiation
4		Social Pressure to Participate in Extreme Eating Challenges	Promotion of Traditional South Indian Cuisine	Entertainment, increased food cravings.
5		Virtual connection with the viewers.	Change in Cooking habits	Increased appetite
6	Tamil Foodies	Promotion of Food as a Social Connector	Westernized food communication culture and eating habits	Influence on Emotional Eating and Coping Mechanisms (
7		Peer Pressure and Social Comparison	Promotion of various cuisines	Seeking comfort and pleasure in food consumption
8		Influencing viewers to participate in similar cultural and communal food-sharing experiences.	Shift in Traditional Food Consumption Practices	Impact on Body Image and Self-esteem
9		Encouragement of Social Media Engagement	Promotion of Traditional South Indian Cuisine	Influence on visual hunger
10		Promotion of Cooking and Sharing Food, Community Engagement and Interaction	Engage with these traditional culinary practices.	Sense of happiness and fulfillment through food preparation and consumption
11	Tastee with Kiruthiga	Community Engagement and Interaction & Social Media Engagement.	Promotion of Madurai's Culinary Heritage	Influence on Food Preferences and Tastes
12		Community Engagement through Interaction	Reinforcement of Cultural Cooking and Eating Practices	The enjoyment and satisfaction derived from exploring and tasting
13		Fostering Family and Community Bonding	Appreciate cultural and communal food exploration and sharing experiences	Promoting enjoyment and satisfaction
14		Fostering Culinary Curiosity and Exploration	Celebration of various Culinary Exploration and Appreciation	Influence on Food Preferences and Tastes
15.		Social media interaction and community engagement	Reinforces cultural eating practices and rituals by showcasing traditional South Indian dishes.	Fostering a sense of cultural pride, connection, and belonging among viewers

Table 3 Socio-Cultural and Psychological Implications

Mukbang videos, while serving as a popular form of entertainment, hold significant influence over the socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of their viewers, especially the younger audience. The table provides a comprehensive analysis of the effects of Mukbang content based on 15 videos.

The videos, across various hosts, predominantly exert a strong social influence. Themes such as peer pressure, imitation, virtual connection, community engagement, and social media interaction are recurrent. These factors contribute to a sense of belonging, encourage viewers to imitate extreme eating habits, and foster community bonding. This indicates that Mukbang videos play a pivotal role in shaping viewers social behaviors and interactions, both online and offline.

The cultural implications of Mukbang content are profound. While some videos promote traditional South Indian cuisine and cooking practices, others contribute to the globalization of eating trends and the distortion of traditional festival practices. There is also an evident shift towards the Westernization of food communication and eating habits. Moreover, the videos showcase a celebration of various culinary explorations and appreciate different cuisines, reflecting the hybridization of food cultures.

Psychologically, Mukbang videos evoke a range of responses from viewers. These include the stimulation of food cravings, a desire for social approval through consumption, and increased appetites. They also play a role in influencing emotional eating and coping mechanisms. The videos have the potential to affect viewers body image, self-esteem, and overall happiness and fulfillment derived from food preparation and consumption. Additionally, there is a notable impact on viewers food preferences and tastes, encouraging them to explore and appreciate different culinary experiences.

7. EXPOSURE TO "MUKBANG" AND ITS INFLUENCE

The study aimed to explore the impact and behavior of viewers when watching food-related content. To achieve this, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview methodology, targeting six postgraduate students from Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. The choice of these students was deliberate, selected through purposive sampling, ensuring they were individuals who had engaged with food communication videos. The researcher structured around twenty pre-determined questions, providing insights into the participants responses, perceptions, and experiences with the content. The in-depth interviews with six participants from Manonmaniam Sundaranar University revealed several common behavioral outcomes from watching Mukbang videos. Here are the summarized outcomes:

Viewing Habits: All six participants confirmed that they regularly watch Mukbang videos on YouTube, with some watching them daily and others watching them a few times a week.

Increased Appetite: Five out of six participants reported an increased appetite after watching Mukbang videos. They often felt tempted to eat similar foods or larger portions than usual. One participant mentioned that watching Mukbang made them crave foods they had never eaten before.

Changed Eating Habits: Three participants mentioned that their eating habits had changed after watching Mukbang videos. They began to eat more frequently or consume larger portions during meals. Additionally, one participant reported that they started to eat the same foods as the Mukbang hosts in the videos.

Changed Cooking Habits: Two participants reported that they began to cook more elaborate meals after watching Mukbang videos. They were inspired by the variety of foods showcased in the videos and wanted to try new recipes themselves.

Social and Cultural Influence: All participants mentioned that Mukbang videos had become a topic of discussion among their peers. They often talked about the videos with friends and family and recommended certain videos to each other. Additionally, some participants mentioned that they watched Mukbang videos together with friends or family members.

Health Concerns: Four participants expressed concerns about the health implications of watching Mukbang videos. They were worried about overeating, developing unhealthy eating habits, or gaining weight as a result of watching the videos. One participant mentioned that they felt guilty after watching Mukbang videos and would try to avoid them in the future.

Entertainment and Relaxation: All participants mentioned that they found Mukbang videos entertaining and relaxing. They often watched the videos after a long day or during meal times. One participant mentioned that watching Mukbang videos helped them de-stress and unwind.

In summary, the participants' behavioral outcomes from watching Mukbang videos included an increased appetite, changes in eating and cooking habits, social and cultural influence, health concerns, and entertainment and relaxation. These outcomes highlight the diverse ways in which Mukbang videos can impact individuals' behaviors and attitudes toward food. These outcomes highlight the diverse ways in which Mukbang videos can impact individuals' behaviors and attitudes towards food, as well as their overall satisfaction and enjoyment of the viewing experience.

8. CONCLUSION

The rapid evolution of digital technology and its integration into our daily lives have reshaped various aspects of culture and social interaction, including the way we perceive and engage with food consumption. The study delved into the world of Mukbang videos on YouTube, a digital phenomenon that has gained immense popularity, especially among the younger generation in Tamil Nadu. Through the lens of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this research aimed to understand the impact of Mukbang content on viewers' socio-cultural behaviors and beliefs. The findings suggest a strong correlation between excessive digital platform usage and unintentional alterations in individual socio-cultural behaviors and beliefs. Key insights from the content analysis reveal that Mukbang videos predominantly feature elements of ASMR and overeating, with a significant emphasis on competitive eating challenges. Furthermore, the exploration of food culture, while present, is not as dominant. The high engagement levels, as evidenced by the view and comment counts, highlight the strong appeal of this genre among the audience, indicating a cultural shift in the way people seek entertainment and relaxation. In-depth interviews with young individuals revealed that Mukbang videos have influenced their eating and cooking habits, with many reporting increased appetite and changes in meal portions and frequency. Moreover, the videos have become a social and cultural phenomenon, often sparking discussions among peers and influencing food-sharing practices and communal experiences. The socio-cultural and psychological implications of Mukbang videos are profound, ranging from the reinforcement of traditional eating practices to the globalization of food trends and the potential distortion of cultural festival practices. The videos also influence viewers' emotional eating habits, body image perceptions, and overall happiness derived from food consumption.

Overall, the present study provides valuable insights into the popularity and impact of Mukbang among young individuals in Tamil Nadu. It underscores the importance of understanding the cultural, social, and psychological factors that influence individual's media consumption habits and their relationship with food. As Mukbang continues to evolve and gain popularity worldwide, further research is needed to explore its long-term effects on viewers health and well-being.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

REFERENCES

Abidin, M. R. Z., Ishak, F. a. C., Ismail, I. A., & Juhari, N. H. (2020). Modern Malaysian Cuisine: Identity, culture, or modern-day fad? International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science, 21, 100220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2020.100220

Aslam, S. (2024). YouTube by the numbers: Stats, demographics & fun facts. Omnicore Agency. https://www.omnicoreagency.com/youtube-statistics/

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: an Agentic Perspective. Annual Review of Psychology, 52(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1

Fu, S., & Li, H. (2020). Understanding social media discontinuance from social cognitive

perspective: Evidence from Facebook users. Journal of Information Science, 48(4), 544–560. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551520968688

Higgs, S., Liu, J., Collins, E. A., & Thomas, J. (2019). Using social norms to encourage healthier eating. Nutrition Bulletin, 44(1), 43–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/nbu.12371

Indita, H. (2022, March 18). The origin of Mukbang. Interest. https://www.cxomedia.id/art-and-culture/20220317144050-24-174177/the-origin-of-mukbang

Jackson, K. (2018). What is mukbang? Inside the viral Korean food phenomenon. Today. Retrieved from https://www.today.com/food/what-mukbang-inside-viral-korean-food-phenomenon-t123251

Kang, E., Lee, J., Kim, K. H., & Yun, Y. H. (2020). The popularity of eating broadcast: Content analysis of "mukbang" YouTube videos, media coverage, and the health impact of "mukbang" on public. Health Informatics Journal, 26(3), 2237–2248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1460458220901360

Lee, D., & Wan, C. (2023). The impact ofMukbangLive Streaming Commerce on consumers' overconsumption behavior. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 58(2–3), 198–221. https://doi.org/10.1177/10949968231156104

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer Marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. Journal of Interactive Advertising, 19(1), 58–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501

Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). An approach to environmental psychology. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA0718977X?l=en

Morewedge, C. K., Huh, Y. E., & Vosgerau, J. (2010). Thought for food: Imagined consumption reduces actual consumption. Science, 330(6010), 1530–1533. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1195701

Ompad, D. C., Galea, S., & Vlahov, D. (2008). Urban Health Systems: Overview. In Elsevier eBooks (pp. 463–470). https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012373960-5.00323-3

Redden, J. P., & Haws, K. L. (2013). Healthy satiation: The role of decreasing desire in Effective Self-Control. Journal of Consumer Research, 39(5), 1100–1114. https://doi.org/10.1086/667362

Spence, C., Okajima, K., Cheok, A. D., Petit, O., & Michel, C. (2016). Eating with our eyes: From visual hunger to digital satiation. Brain and Cognition, 110, 53–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bandc.2015.08.006

Stefani, M. C., & Humphries, D. (2013). Exploring culture in the world of international nutrition and nutrition sciences. Advances in Nutrition, 4(5), 536–538. https://doi.org/10.3945/an.113.004218

Strand, M., & Gustafsson, S. A. (2020). Mukbang and Disordered Eating: A netnographic analysis of online eating broadcasts. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 44(4), 586–609. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-020-09674-6

Zafar, A. U., Qiu, J., Li, Y., Wang, J., & Shahzad, M. (2021). The impact of social media celebrities' posts and contextual interactions on impulse buying in social commerce. Computers in Human Behavior, 115, 106178. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.106178

Cole, M. (2005). Cross-Cultural and historical perspectives on the developmental consequences of education. Human Development, 48(4), 195–216. https://doi.org/10.1159/000086855