



TikTok eWOM and Purchase Intention at Sushi Republic: The Mediating Roles of Information Adoption and Brand Image

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received: July 06, 2026

Revised: August 05, 2026

Accepted: August 15, 2026

Available Online: October 14, 2026

Keywords:

Brand Image;

Electronic Word of Mouth;

Information Adoption;

Purchase Intention;

TikTok Comments



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Abstract

Background: TikTok is increasingly used to gather restaurant information, but the way comment-based eWOM becomes part of a consumer's purchase decision is still insufficiently explained. This study focuses on the informational and perceptual processes that connect TikTok comments with purchase intention.

Objective: The study examines whether Information Quality, Information Quantity, and Information Credibility in Sushi Republic TikTok comments are associated with Purchase Intention directly and through Information Usefulness, Information Adoption, and Brand Image.

Methods: A cross-sectional quantitative survey involved 400 Indonesian TikTok users who had encountered Sushi Republic content and its comments. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale and assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Results: All three eWOM dimensions showed significant relationships with Information Usefulness, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention. Information Usefulness strongly predicted Information Adoption, which, together with Brand Image, was related to Purchase Intention. The model explained 60.6% of the variance in Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.606$).

Conclusion: TikTok comments affect restaurant purchase intention through information processing and brand-related evaluation. For practice, comment management should emphasize information that is useful, credible, and sufficiently informative.

To cite this article: Syamlan, M. N. R., & Indrawati. (2026). TikTok eWOM and Purchase Intention at Sushi Republic: The Mediating Roles of Information Adoption and Brand Image. *Equivalent: Jurnal Ilmiah Sosial Teknik*, 8(4), 1725-1734. <https://doi.org/10.59261/jequi.v8i4.405>

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has changed how consumers discover products, compare alternatives, and form purchase judgments. In food and beverage markets, recommendations shared through social media can become part of that process. Global internet use has expanded substantially over the last decade ([DataReportal & Social, 2025](#)), increasing reliance on digital media for information. Media System Dependency Theory suggests that greater dependence on a medium for information can strengthen its potential influence on consumer responses ([Moharam & Mukherjee, 2023](#)). In this setting, TikTok comments are relevant because they provide consumer-generated information alongside short-form visual content. The present study therefore treats comments as an information environment in which quality, quantity, and credibility may shape both information processing and brand-related judgments.

Indonesia provides a relevant context because of its large and highly connected digital population. TikTok is widely used for entertainment as well as discovery, recommendation, and pre-purchase information. Its short-video format and interactive comment section allow eWOM

to develop quickly. However, high platform usage alone does not explain whether users will rely on comment information. What matters is whether the information is considered useful and credible enough to be adopted and whether that evaluation contributes to brand image and purchase intention. This links Media System Dependency Theory, which explains reliance on media for information, with the Information Adoption Model, which explains how message content is evaluated and incorporated into decisions.

For food and beverage businesses, digital visibility does not automatically translate into purchase. Attractive culinary content may create initial interest (Wardani, 2021; Yuliana & Handaruwati, 2025), but consumers can also use the comment section to obtain experience-based information. Sushi Republic, a Japanese restaurant using an all-you-can-eat (AYCE) concept, is an appropriate setting because its TikTok exposure is accompanied by substantial user interaction. The unresolved issue is how the quality, quantity, and credibility of those comments are converted into purchase intention through information usefulness, information adoption, and brand image.

Previous research has established that eWOM can influence purchase intention. Indrawati et al. (2023) identified the relevance of information quality and credibility in TikTok-based eWOM, while Sardar et al. (2021) showed that information adoption can mediate eWOM effects on online purchase intention (Alnsour et al., 2026; Le et al., 2026). Winarno and Indrawati (2022) reported a positive eWOM–purchase intention relationship in a culinary setting, and Martini et al. (2022) linked online consumer communication with image formation. Qiu and Zhang (2024) further found that credible and useful online reviews are associated with stronger purchase intention, while Yones and Muthaiyah (2023) highlighted the role of TikTok interaction. Nevertheless, much of the existing evidence concerns marketplaces, forums, cosmetics, or social-media settings other than TikTok (Ningrum & Hayuningtias, 2026). The present study addresses this limitation by examining comment-level eWOM in an AYCE restaurant and by estimating information-processing and brand-image pathways within one model.

The study is important because TikTok has become a practical source of culinary information while the comment section remains comparatively underexamined as a distinct eWOM environment. Comments on short videos differ from conventional reviews in their spontaneity, volume, and close connection with visual content. Evidence about which characteristics of such comments matter most can therefore help restaurant managers move beyond platform visibility and toward more targeted information management.

The study's contribution is the simultaneous examination of three comment-information characteristics (Information Quality, Information Quantity, and Information Credibility) and two explanatory routes to purchase intention. The first route runs through Information Usefulness and Information Adoption; the second operates through Brand Image. Testing both routes in an Indonesian AYCE restaurant context extends earlier eWOM research that has generally emphasized only one of these mechanisms.

This study tests whether Information Quality, Information Quantity, and Information Credibility in TikTok comments affect Sushi Republic consumers' Purchase Intention directly and indirectly through Information Usefulness, Information Adoption, and Brand Image. It also evaluates the relative importance of these variables and uses Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) to identify priorities for managerial action.

The study contributes theoretically by clarifying how information dependence and information adoption operate together in a comment-driven short-video environment. Practically, it identifies the comment-information dimensions that should receive managerial attention, providing an evidence-based basis for TikTok communication strategies in restaurant businesses.

METHOD

A quantitative survey design was used to examine the proposed relationships among the study variables. The analysis was conducted with PLS-SEM because the model contains several latent constructs and mediation paths (Indrawati, 2015; Khoirunnisa, 2026).

The population consisted of Indonesian TikTok users who had encountered Sushi Republic content and read its comments. Because the total population could not be established precisely, the sample requirement was estimated using the Bernoulli approach with a 95% confidence level, $p = q = 0.50$, and a 5% margin of error. A total of 400 eligible respondents were

retained. Purposive sampling was applied, with eligibility requiring active TikTok use, use of TikTok for restaurant information, and exposure to Sushi Republic content and comments within the specified period.

Purposive sampling was selected because the study required respondents with direct exposure to the phenomenon being investigated. The criteria were applied during questionnaire screening before responses were included in the dataset.

The questionnaire contained 35 statements representing Information Quality, Information Quantity, Information Credibility, Information Usefulness, Information Adoption, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention. Items were adapted from established measures and contextualized for TikTok comments and Sushi Republic. Responses used a five-point Likert scale.

Primary data were obtained through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and shared through social media. Screening questions were used to ensure that respondents met the study criteria. Incomplete responses were excluded before analysis.

Data were analyzed with SmartPLS using PLS-SEM. The measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, convergent and discriminant validity, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability. The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, bootstrapping, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , SRMR, NFI, and IPMA. Statistical support was determined using the study's specified t-value and p-value criteria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 400 eligible responses were analyzed. The sample was concentrated among women, respondents aged 25–29, and residents of Bandung. Most participants used TikTok daily, had previous experience with Sushi Republic, and had recently read related comments. These characteristics indicate that the analysis reflects consumers already familiar with the platform, the restaurant, and its comment environment.

Table 1

Characteristics of Respondents by Gender and Age

Categories	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	37,75%
	Women	249	62,25%
Age	< 20 years old	29	7,25%
	20–24 years old	106	26,50%
	25–29 years old	182	45,50%
	30–34 years old	68	17,00%
	≥ 35 years old	15	3,75%
Quantity		400	100%

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

Women accounted for 62.25% of the sample, while the largest age group was 25–29 years (45.50%).

Table 2

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Domicile

Domicile	Frequency	Percentage
Bandung	329	82,25%
Jakarta	19	4,75%
Summit	17	4,25%
Depok	9	2,25%
Bogor	9	2,25%
Others	17	4,25%
Quantity	400	100%

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

Bandung was the domicile of 82.25% of respondents. This concentration should be considered when interpreting the generalizability of the findings.

Table 3

Characteristics of Respondents Based on TikTok Use Behavior

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
TikTok Usage Frequency	Every day	398	99,50%
	4–6 times/week	2	0,50%
Buying Experience	Yes, ever	375	93,75%
	Never before	25	6,25%
Last Read Comments	< last 1 month	398	99,50%
	Last 1–3 months	2	0,50%

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

Almost all respondents used TikTok daily (99.50%), 93.75% had purchased or eaten at Sushi Republic, and 99.50% had read related comments within the previous month.

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' assessments of the 35 measurement items. The analysis is reported at the construct level because the individual item scores are not central to the hypothesis interpretation.

Table 4

Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Variable	Total Score	Ideal Score	Percentage	Categories
Information Quality	15.753	20.000	78,77%	Good
Information Quantity	4.844	6.000	80,73%	Good
Information Credibility	9.717	12.000	80,98%	Good
Information Usefulness	8.314	10.000	83,14%	Good
Information Adoption	5.079	6.000	84,65%	Excellent
Brand Image	4.847	6.000	80,78%	Good
Purchase Intention	8.209	10.000	82,09%	Good

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

All constructs were rated positively. Information Adoption had the highest score percentage (84.65%), followed by Information Usefulness (83.14%) and Purchase Intention (82.09%), while Information Quality had the lowest (78.77%).

Hypothesis Test (Structural Model Results)

The structural hypotheses were evaluated using bootstrapping. A relationship was considered statistically supported when the t-value exceeded 1.65 and $p < 0.05$.

Table 5

Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing Results

Hyp.	Variable Relationships	Path Coef.	t-stat	p-Value	Remarks
H1	Information Quality → Information Usefulness	0,360	8,999	0,000	Accepted
H2	Information Quality → Brand Image	0,346	8,562	0,000	Accepted
H3	Information Quality → Purchase Intention	0,277	6,133	0,000	Accepted
H4	Information Quantity → Information Usefulness	0,235	5,817	0,000	Accepted
H5	Information Quantity → Brand Image	0,260	6,250	0,000	Accepted
H6	Information Quantity → Purchase Intention	0,175	4,425	0,000	Accepted
H7	Information Credibility → Information	0,324	7,988	0,000	Accepted

Hyp.	Variable Relationships	Path Coef.	t-stat	p-Value	Remarks
	Usefulness				
H8	Information Credibility → Brand Image	0,300	7,731	0,000	Accepted
H9	Information Credibility → Purchase Intention	0,183	3,945	0,000	Accepted
H10	Information Usefulness → Information Adoption	0,653	23,187	0,000	Accepted
H11	Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0,112	2,267	0,023	Accepted
H12	Information Adoption → Purchase Intention	0,228	5,734	0,000	Accepted

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

All twelve direct relationships were statistically supported. Information Quality showed positive effects on Information Usefulness ($\beta = 0.360$), Brand Image ($\beta = 0.346$), and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.277$). Information Quantity produced coefficients of 0.235, 0.260, and 0.175, while Information Credibility produced 0.324, 0.300, and 0.183, respectively. The strongest direct relationship was Information Usefulness → Information Adoption ($\beta = 0.653$).

Table 6

Indirect Effects Hypothesis Testing Results

Hip.	Mediation Pathway	Orig. Sample	t-stat	p-Value	Remarks
H1a	IQ → IU → THAT → PI	0,054	4,655	0,000	Accepted
H2a	IQ → BI → PI	0,039	2,166	0,030	Accepted
H4a	IQt → IU → TO → PI	0,035	4,020	0,000	Accepted
H5a	IQt → BI → PI	0,029	2,091	0,037	Accepted
H7a	IC → IU → PER → PI	0,048	4,252	0,000	Accepted
H8a	IC → BI → PI	0,034	2,176	0,030	Accepted
H10a	IU → TO → PI	0,149	5,588	0,000	Accepted

Description: IQ = Information Quality; IQt = Information Quantity; IC = Information Credibility; IU = Information Usefulness; AI = Information Adoption; BI = Brand Image; PI = Purchase Intention.

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

All indirect paths were statistically supported. The results indicate that the effects of TikTok comment information can reach purchase intention through information usefulness and adoption as well as through brand image.

Structural Model Evaluation (R-square, f-square, Q-square, GoF)

Table 7

R-square and Q-square Values of Endogenous Variables

Variable	R-square	R-sq. Adj.	Q ² Predict	Remarks
Brand Image	0,563	0,560	0,557	Predictive relevance
Information Usefulness	0,582	0,579	0,576	Predictive relevance
Information Adoption	0,427	0,425	0,367	Predictive relevance
Purchase Intention	0,606	0,601	0,559	Predictive relevance

Source: Author's processed data (2026)

Purchase Intention had an R^2 of 0.606, indicating that the model explained 60.6% of its variance. The R^2 values for Information Usefulness, Brand Image, and Information Adoption were 0.582, 0.563, and 0.427, respectively. All Q^2 values were positive, indicating predictive relevance.

The largest f^2 was obtained for Information Usefulness → Information Adoption (0.744), indicating a substantial effect. Most other relationships were small. The reported model-fit indicators were SRMR = 0.050, NFI = 0.860, and GoF = 0.589.

Importance of Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

Using Purchase Intention as the target, IPMA identified Information Quality, Information Credibility, and Information Quantity as the main improvement priorities, while Information Adoption occupied the area requiring performance to be maintained.

Taken together, the structural results show that TikTok comment information is relevant to purchase intention through both information-processing and brand-related routes. The information-usefulness-to-adoption relationship is the most prominent path in the model.

Discussion

The findings show that Information Quality, Information Quantity, and Information Credibility are positively related to Information Usefulness, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention. Among these dimensions, information quality has the largest coefficients for usefulness, image, and purchase intention, indicating that decision-relevant content matters more than simple exposure.

The mediation results reveal two routes from TikTok eWOM to purchase intention. The first is an information-processing route in which useful comments are adopted; the second involves changes in brand image. Although both routes are significant, the usefulness-to-adoption relationship is considerably stronger, suggesting that practical information carries greater immediate weight in this restaurant context.

The results are consistent with Indrawati et al. (2023) and Sardar et al. (2021), who emphasize information adoption in eWOM-based purchase decisions (Ardana & Saputro, 2026). They also accord with Qiu and Zhang (2024), who found that useful and credible online reviews are more influential, and with Yones and Muthaiyah (2023), who linked TikTok interaction with purchase intention. The brand-image pathway is consistent with Nurlianti and Millanyani (2023) and Zain (2024), although its comparatively small final effect here suggests that practical restaurant information may be more decisive than broad brand associations (Hismawan & Purwanto, 2026; Ronald & Haldy, 2026).

For Sushi Republic and similar F&B businesses, the IPMA results suggest that comment management should concentrate on information quality, credibility, and useful volume. Managers can provide clear and consistent information about menus, prices, AYCE conditions, promotions, locations, reservations, halal information, and customer experience. Authentic customer experiences can be encouraged as social proof, while negative comments should be addressed professionally.

The study extends the Information Adoption Model and Media System Dependency Theory to a short-video comment setting. Media dependence explains why users turn to TikTok for restaurant information, whereas information usefulness and adoption explain how that information enters the decision process. Brand Image provides a complementary pathway but has a weaker final effect on Purchase Intention.

Several limitations should be considered. Purposive sampling limits generalization, the sample is heavily concentrated in Bandung, and the cross-sectional design does not capture changes over time. The study also examines one restaurant and one platform and relies on respondents' perceptions rather than direct computational analysis of TikTok comments.

Future research can broaden the sample geographically, use longitudinal or probability-based designs, compare several restaurants or platforms, and combine survey data with direct analysis of comment text or sentiment. Additional variables such as Brand Trust, Customer Engagement, Perceived Risk, Service Quality, and Customer Experience may also be examined.

Restaurant purchase decisions involve both informational and experiential uncertainty. Consumers can compare visible attributes such as price or menu items, but they cannot fully evaluate service, atmosphere, food quality, or waiting conditions before visiting. User comments can partially reduce this uncertainty by reporting experiences from other diners. The value of such comments therefore depends on their ability to provide concrete and relevant cues. This helps explain why information quality has a meaningful role in the model: useful detail can make an otherwise uncertain restaurant choice easier to evaluate.

TikTok's communication structure reinforces this process because users encounter several forms of information at the same time. A video may provide an initial representation of the restaurant, while comments add confirmation, disagreement, questions, and personal

experiences. Consumers can therefore compare the promotional message with peer-generated information within one digital environment. This makes the comment section more than a secondary feature. It can become a place where users test the credibility of the information presented in the original content.

The distinction between quality and quantity is particularly important in a fast-moving platform. A large number of short comments may increase the apparent popularity of a restaurant, but repetition can provide little additional information. By contrast, a smaller number of detailed comments may be more useful for a consumer who is trying to make a concrete decision. The present model retains Information Quantity because volume can signal social activity, but the interpretation of its effect is made together with quality and credibility rather than treating volume as an independent indicator of informational value.

Credibility is similarly contextual. Consumers may judge a comment as credible when it appears specific, balanced, experience-based, and consistent with other available information. They may become less willing to adopt information that appears exaggerated or purely promotional. This is relevant for restaurants because users often search for practical information that businesses themselves may present selectively. The credibility of peer information can therefore complement official communication and provide a more complete basis for evaluation.

Information Usefulness functions as a bridge between exposure and adoption. Seeing a comment does not mean that the consumer accepts its message. The consumer must first determine whether the information can help with the decision at hand. When usefulness is high, the information is more likely to be processed carefully and incorporated into judgment. The strong coefficient observed between Information Usefulness and Information Adoption is therefore consistent with the idea that adoption depends on perceived decision value rather than simple exposure.

Information Adoption subsequently represents a more advanced stage of the consumer process. A person may read several comments and remain uncertain, but adoption occurs when the information becomes part of the person's own evaluation. In practical terms, this may involve using comments to decide whether a restaurant is worth visiting, which menu option to consider, or whether a promotion appears suitable. The model's strong adoption path suggests that this stage deserves attention when explaining how social-media information becomes behaviorally relevant.

Brand Image provides a broader perceptual mechanism. Continuous exposure to user experiences may reinforce associations concerning the restaurant's quality, popularity, reliability, or attractiveness. However, image formation does not necessarily lead immediately to purchase. A favorable impression can coexist with uncertainty about price, availability, service, or location. The relatively small final coefficient from Brand Image to Purchase Intention in this study suggests that brand-related evaluation is complementary rather than dominant once information-processing variables are included.

The results also indicate that eWOM should not be understood as uniformly positive or negative. Its influence depends on what consumers learn from the interaction. A detailed negative review may be more informative than a vague positive statement, while a credible positive experience may be more persuasive than a promotional message. From this perspective, the managerial objective is not to maximize positive sentiment at all costs. It is to maintain an information environment in which consumers can find relevant, credible, and sufficiently detailed evidence.

The comparison with earlier studies also highlights the contextual contribution of this research. Previous eWOM research has frequently examined marketplaces, online reviews, or product categories such as cosmetics. Restaurant decisions differ because the product is partly experiential and because many relevant attributes become observable only after consumption. TikTok adds another distinction through its combination of short video, rapid interaction, and informal comments. The present findings therefore extend existing eWOM evidence without assuming that mechanisms identified in other digital settings operate with identical strength.

The empirical model also provides a basis for interpreting the practical value of IPMA. A statistically significant path does not automatically identify the most urgent managerial action. IPMA combines importance and performance so that managers can distinguish between factors that already perform adequately and factors that may deserve improvement. In this study, the

priority placed on Information Quality, Information Credibility, and Information Quantity is therefore consistent with the broader finding that information characteristics are central to the consumer's evaluation process.

For restaurant managers, improving information quality can begin with the questions customers repeatedly ask. If users frequently request information about prices, menus, promotions, reservation procedures, locations, or service conditions, those topics represent identifiable information gaps. Providing clear answers can increase the usefulness of the comment environment. It can also reduce inconsistent interpretations among users. The empirical model indicates that useful information is strongly connected with adoption, making these apparently simple communication practices strategically relevant.

Credibility can be supported through consistency and transparency. Official responses should distinguish factual clarification from promotional claims, and businesses should avoid presenting exaggerated statements as if they were customer experiences. Encouraging authentic customer feedback may also strengthen the diversity of information available to prospective diners. When negative experiences occur, professional responses can demonstrate accountability and provide additional context. Such practices may support both the information pathway and the brand-image pathway without attempting to control the entire conversation.

The findings also have implications for social-media measurement. Conventional metrics such as views, likes, and comment counts are useful indicators of activity, but they do not reveal whether users consider the information useful or adopt it. A large volume of comments may coexist with low informational value, while a smaller number of detailed comments may have stronger decision relevance. Managers should therefore complement engagement metrics with qualitative monitoring of recurring questions, informational gaps, credibility concerns, and the types of information that users actually use when discussing the restaurant.

At the theoretical level, the study demonstrates why eWOM effects are better understood as a process rather than as a single direct relationship. Media dependence helps explain why consumers seek information through a platform, while the Information Adoption Model clarifies how the message is evaluated and incorporated. Brand Image captures a parallel perceptual consequence of exposure. The coexistence of these mechanisms means that researchers should distinguish between being exposed to eWOM, considering it useful, adopting it, and allowing it to shape a broader brand evaluation.

The remaining unexplained variance in Purchase Intention should also be treated as an opportunity for further research rather than as a weakness of the model alone. Restaurant purchase decisions may involve financial considerations, convenience, service expectations, social influence, personal taste, previous experience, and situational factors. Including these variables could reveal whether the relative strength of information adoption remains stable when broader consumer and service variables are controlled. Multi-platform comparisons could also determine whether the observed mechanism is specific to TikTok or reflects a more general pattern of social-media eWOM.

The sample concentration in Bandung provides an important contextual feature for interpreting the results. Bandung has an active culinary market and substantial social-media activity, so consumers in the area may be particularly accustomed to using digital information before dining. The strength of the relationships observed here may therefore differ in areas with lower digital engagement or different restaurant cultures. Future studies covering multiple Indonesian cities would help determine whether the model is stable across geographical contexts and consumer segments.

The cross-sectional design also means that the model captures reported perceptions at one point in time. It cannot establish whether a consumer who adopts TikTok information eventually visits the restaurant, returns for another visit, or changes the evaluation after direct experience. A longitudinal design could follow consumers from initial exposure to comments through actual purchase and post-purchase evaluation. This would provide stronger evidence about the temporal sequence implied by the Information Adoption Model and could distinguish intention from realized behavior.

Another avenue concerns the content of the comments themselves. The present study measures respondents' perceptions of information characteristics, whereas direct computational analysis could classify comments according to sentiment, topic, detail, or linguistic credibility

cues. Combining survey-based structural modeling with text analytics could reveal whether consumers' perceptions correspond to measurable features of the comment corpus. Such a mixed approach would strengthen the empirical explanation of why some forms of TikTok eWOM are adopted while others are ignored.

Overall, the findings support a focused interpretation of TikTok as an information environment rather than merely an advertising channel. Its influence depends on what users can learn, whether they trust the information, and whether the information becomes part of their decision process. For Sushi Republic and comparable restaurants, the strategic implication is to treat customer-generated information as a component of the customer journey that requires monitoring, clarification, and responsible management. This perspective is more consistent with the evidence than a strategy based only on maximizing exposure or comment volume.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that Information Quality, Information Quantity, and Information Credibility in TikTok comments are positively associated with Sushi Republic's Purchase Intention, both directly and through Information Usefulness, Information Adoption, and Brand Image. Information Usefulness to Information Adoption is the strongest relationship in the model ($\beta = 0.653$; $f^2 = 0.744$), while the model explains 60.6% of the variance in Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.606$). IPMA places Information Quality, Information Credibility, and Information Quantity among the principal priorities for improvement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Telkom for providing academic support throughout this research. The authors also thank all respondents who voluntarily participated in the survey and shared their valuable perspectives regarding TikTok comments and Sushi Republic. Their contributions were essential to the successful completion of this study. The authors also appreciate the constructive feedback and guidance provided by colleagues and reviewers during the research and manuscript preparation process. Their valuable suggestions have significantly improved the quality, clarity, and academic rigor of this manuscript.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Muhammad Naufal Raihan Syamlan was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, literature review, research design, questionnaire development, data collection, data analysis using PLS-SEM, interpretation of the findings, and preparation of the original manuscript draft. Indrawati supervised the overall research process, contributed to the research methodology, validated the analytical approach, reviewed and interpreted the results, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and approved the final version for publication. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript and are accountable for all aspects of the work.

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