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## Impact of Motivators of Spreading Food and Beverage Rumors of Fast Food Restaurants' Brand Name on Customers' Purchasing Decisions

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### Keywords

- Food and Beverage Rumors
- Motivators of spreading Rumors
- Purchasing Decision
- Fast-food Restaurants' Brand Name

### Abstract

Rumors exist in all parts of society. Though unverified information, implausible rumors may impact customers' behaviors, and often resist correction. Anxiety about rumors has quickly grown since the internet has become a common place for seeking and sharing information. This research aims to assess the impact of motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors on customers' purchasing decisions of fast-food restaurants' brand names. A quantitative approach was adopted in this research. A web-based questionnaire for a sample of customers by using stratified random sampling (700 participants) of fast-food restaurant's brand names (326 restaurants) in Greater Cairo (Internal Trade Development Authority, 2022, Egyptian Hotel Association, 2022). These restaurants were in MDS, KEF, DOP, PIH, SW, BK, WE'S, HA'S, ST'S, CHL'S and TAB restaurants located in Greater Cairo. SPSS V. 22 was used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics, One-sample T-test, and linear regression coefficients were used to analyze the research data. The results revealed that the motivators of food and beverage rumors as anxiety management motivators ( $\beta = 0.361$ , Sig. = 0.000), information sharing motivators ( $\beta = 0.474$ , Sig. = 0.000), relationship management motivators ( $\beta = 0.528$ , Sig. = 0.000), and self enhancement motivators ( $\beta = 0.556$ , Sig. = 0.000) have a positive statistically significant influence on customers' purchasing decisions of fast-food restaurants' brand names. This research provided valuable recommendations to enhance purchase decisions for customers of these restaurants.

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## **1. Introduction**

Despite significant prior researches focused on the factors underlying the emergence and publication of rumors, there has been little empirical attentions devoted to the nature and impact of rumors in the marketplace on customers' behaviors (Tseng & Nguyen, 2020). Anecdotal status studies have demonstrated that rumors can potentially damage brand name, undermine corporate credibility, customer purchasing decisions, and encourage customer boycotts (Abdullah & Singam, 2014). Hegner et al. (2017) stated that given the increasing prevalence and power of word of mouth (WOM) in the customer marketplace, unfounded rumors could serve to undermine the effect of formal marketing connection messages. As recent cases have exposed, social media and other communications are particularly well suited to serve as conduits for the spread of unverified information to a global audience (Demestichas et al., 2020). Chua and Banerjee (2017) added that rumors have come to represent an imposing competitor in the marketplace of information exchange. They showed significant challenges for fast-food restaurants' brand name which should be able to select the most active strategies for responding to rumors about their brands and services. Such rumors have plagued even the most famous brands like Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's (Kapferer, 2017). Despite the importance of rumors, the lack of researches on the factors driving rumor sharing and impact on purchasing decisions was a reason or a research problem on which the research is based (Kim, 2018). It is observed that the food and beverages rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name might impact the customers purchasing decisions and their trust, minimizing restaurants sales and market share. This research aims to assess the impact of motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors on customers' purchasing decisions of fast-food restaurants' brand names.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Motivators for Sharing Rumors**

These motivators have been specified based on the motivations for people to engage in rumor sharing. These motivators become the foundation for this research. Literature suggested that the major motivator's rumor were (i) relationship management, (ii) anxiety management, (iii) information sharing, and (iv) self enhancement (Sudhir and Unnithan, 2019). These motivators are explained as follows:

#### **2.1.1 Anxiety Management Motivators**

The anxiety management motivation proposed that the people shared a rumor as a mechanism to manage their anxiety and to have a better control over the case (Zhang et al., 2022). In situations of uncertainty and decrease of formal information, people engaged in informal information sharing and collective problem solving. Uncertainty is defined as a psychological case of unbelief about what current events, mean or what future events are likely to occur (Bordia and DiFonzo, 2004; Kumar & Nayak, 2019; Hofman, 2020).

#### **2.1.2 Information Sharing Motivators**

People usually share rumors to link to a process of sense making and discovering explanations. In cases where there is no official explanation, people will have shared rumors to make sense of the situation, in many cases rumors acted as a readymade explanation to the situation. Often rumors are used by small groups to share information and expand explanations of uncertain cases (Ansari, 2019). Rumor transmission is also a process for sharing valued data (Gan et al., 2016). Information sharing motivation is one of the most essential motivators to communicate a rumor between customers (Qin et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2022). Rumors were shared as they

encouraged anxiety and interest and hence became good conversation subjects. This, in turn, has aided in the development of the best relationships (Hofman, 2020).

### **2.1.3 Relationship Management Motivators**

Difonzo and Bordia (2017) mentioned that the rumor sharing activity would be motivated depending on the impact it would have on the relationship goals. People have shared rumors to boost the chances of a long-term relation.

A negative rumor would be shared with a friend if considered beneficial to the friend – in preventing bad outcomes (Choi & Seo, 2021). In cases of low information availability, people would share rumors with objective to be socially accepted for possessing this information.

### **2.1.4 Self Enhancement Motivators**

The self-enhancement objective indicated the desire feel good about oneself. Gan et al. (2016); Sudhir and Unnithan (2019) have highlighted the role of aware spread of rumors as well as rumor spread for propaganda. It is clear that these rumors are used to gain the goal of the person or company engaged in rumor sharing. Rumor sharing has also been established to be enhancing self-esteem or self-confidence. Although, the previous quote is in the context of organizations the same is relevant in the marketplace (Loxton et al., 2020).

## **2.2 Customers Purchasing Decisions**

The purchasing decision is a process that the customer has gone through before making the last purchasing decision and it has an assured number of steps (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2015). The purchasing decision process helped sales and marketing by making marketers aware of how customers have made their road from knowing the product, all the way into the last purchasing decision (Haven, 2015). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), with respect to purchasing decision process, the customer has gone through five steps. These steps were a need of recognition, information search, evaluation of the alternatives, making purchase decision, and in the final evaluating a purchase process. Rumors have played a critical role in all stages of the customer's purchasing decisions process (Gupta, 2016). The business's main goal should be understand every stage of the process individually. The process started before the customer's purchasing decision and still has gone on after the purchase decision has made, thus the businesses should realize and focus on the full process, not just the purchase decision (Hanaysha, 2018). This mean that the purchasing decision is just one stage in a broader and much bigger buyer process (Stankevich, 2017). According to (Pal et al., 2017), the purchase decision was based mostly on information available to the customer. The type and size of this information relied on the ways of communication systems, upon which the set of society take into consideration their culture and customs, where the individual's purchasing behavior has been impacted by contacts and communications with others. The Song (2016) investigated the effects of rumors on a customer's purchasing decision during the pre-purchase phase of product consumption examined rumors impact on a customer's purchasing decision during the pre-purchase phase of product consumption. ZHU (2017) revealed that the various types of rumors published on the internet have shown their possibility risk to business, especially on the business of consumable products. Rumors could be readily accessed by customers through several channels and have affected on their purchase behavior.

## **2.3 Research Hypothesis**

Recent studies have ascertained the role of anxiety in marketplace behavior among young customers (Sharif and Yeoh, 2018; Roberts and Roberts, 2012). Hence rumors evoking stronger state anxiety will be shared more often. Difonzo and Bordia (2002) and Fine (2007) have ascertained the role of anxiety in influences purchasing

decisions. Hendricks and Lu (2020) concluded that anxiety management motivators showed a positive and moderate significant impact on customers purchasing decisions.

**H1:** There is a statistically significant influence of anxiety management motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name on customers' purchasing decision.

Information sharing motivation of rumor in the marketplace referred to the motivation of a customer to communicate a rumor with another customer to share valued information (Qin et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2022). Loxton et al (2020) has asserted that information sharing motivators of rumor impacted on purchasing decisions.

**H2:** There is a statistically significant influence of information sharing motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name on customers' purchasing decision.

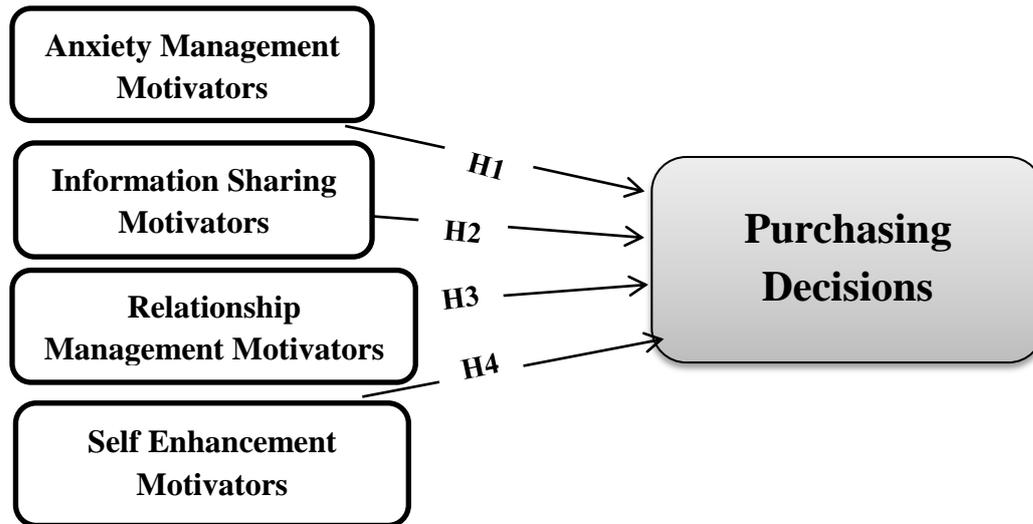
According to Difonzo and Bordia (2017) relationship management motivator's of rumor sharing in the marketplace indicated to the motivation of a customer to contact a rumor to another customer with a desire to make their relationship. Kumar and Nayak (2019) added that relationship management motivation is one of the key drivers to sharing rumors in the marketplace. Customers would share rumors about products, services and brands in the market with other customers; as an act to maintain and run their relationships. Duffy et al (2020) declared that relationship management motivators of rumor impacts on their purchasing decisions. Lee et al. (2009) and Kimmel and Pontevia (2010) assured that information sharing motivators significantly affect the customers purchasing decisions.

**H3:** There is a statistically significant influence of relationship management motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name on customers' purchasing decision.

Self enhancement motivator's of rumor sharing indicated to the motivator's of a customer to contact a rumor with another customer to enhance his own self-image and thereby his self-esteem (Sudhir and Unnithan, 2014; Alden et al., 2016; Kumar and Nayak, 2019). Sharif and Yeoh (2018) has asserted that self enhancement motivator's of rumor impacted on purchasing decisions. Hegner et al. (2017) and Hashim and Kasana (2019) which revealed that relationship management motivators had a positive effect on customers purchasing decisions. Jin et al. (2015) revealed that self enhancement motivators had a positive effect on customers' purchasing decisions.

**H4:** There is a statistically significant influence of self enhancement motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name on customers' purchasing decision.

## 2.4 Research Conceptual Model



**Figure 1:** Research Conceptual Model

**Source:** The Researchers

## 3. Methodology

Research methodology adopted to test research hypotheses. It presents the research population and sample, data collection tool, data analysis procedures and the statistical tests used. Validity and reliability issues were also addressed in this section. According to Gaciu (2021), the quantitative approach was adopted to know the degree of a phenomenon or a specific behavior happened or not, and testing hypotheses (Bouvier, 2013; Tashakkori et al., 2020). Therefore, the researchers applied the quantitative approach in the current research to assess the aim of the research.

### 3.1 Research population and sample

The population was a set of people, items, or objects from among which samples were taken for measurement (Bouvier, 2013; Tashakkori et al., 2020). The study population included customers who have visited fast-food restaurants' brand name in Greater Cairo (Cairo, Giza, 6<sup>th</sup> of October, Qalyubia). The current research used the stratified random sampling method as a sampling technique to collect data from a representative sample. According to Zikmund et al. (2013), stratified random sampling has let researchers to gain a sample population that better performs the whole population being studied. Stratified random sampling has allowed the researchers to make decisions about which elements will best enable to answer the research questions and meet the study objectives.

Stratified random sampling gives you a systematic track of obtaining a population sample that takes into consideration the demographic make-up of the population, which leads to stronger research results (Saunders et al., 2012). This style is equitable for participants as the sample from every stratum can be randomly elected, meaning there is no bias in the process (Adam, 2020; Saunders, 2021).

To gain a statistically representative sample size of the population to generalize the results of the research, Cochran's formula was the common formula for determining the infinite population sample size (Stamatopoulos, 2019) as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:  $n$  = sample size;  $p$  = variance of the population 50%;  $e$  = acceptable sampling error ( $e = 0.05$ );  $z$  = Standards value of 1.96 for confidence level at 95%. Saunders (2021) mentioned that a 5% margin of error was acceptable in the social research. Traditionally, previous social researches have used the 95 percent confidence level (Pearl et al., 2020).

Pilot study is one of the most effective ways in estimating population variance (Azungah, 2018). In this research, the researchers conducted a pilot study consisting of 30 questionnaires to gain the estimated variance value of the population. The researchers relied on motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants variable as one of the most important variables of the research. The variance value of it was 0.50.

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 50\%(1 - 50\%)}{(0.05)^2} = 385 \text{ Respondents}$$

According to El Banaway (2018), Chang and Young (2021) fast food restaurants chains dominated the 25<sup>th</sup> fast food restaurants ranking in 2021. These fast food chains represented to MDS (fast sandwiches), KEF (Fried Chicken), DOP (Pizza), PIH (Pizza), SW (fast sandwiches), BK (fast sandwiches), WE'S fast sandwiches, HA'S (fast sandwiches), ST'S (fast sandwiches, drinks and desserts), CHL'S (fast sandwiches) and TAB (fast sandwiches). Internal Trade Development Authority (2022) and Egyptian Hotel Association (2022) illustrated that the total number of brand name fast food restaurants in greater Cairo is 326 restaurants. In Cairo, there are 202 restaurants which are represented the biggest number of them (61.96 %), followed by Giza that included 63 (19.32 %) restaurants. While in 6th of October, there are 41 restaurants that represents 12.57 %, followed by Qalyubia that involved 20 (6.13 %) restaurants.

### 3.2 Pilot study

The pilot study was conducted during March 2022 whereby of Arabic questionnaires were distributed before the final ones. The aim of the pilot study was to assure that the questionnaire was well designed; easily understood; to check the reliability of the research tool, refine the statements of the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Questionnaire Design

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted because it was the most effective and convenient data collection tool for achieving research aim and objectives (Saunders et al., 2016). The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

**Section 1:** Personal data such as, gender, age, and educational level.

**Section 2:** Restaurant's information (favorite fast-food restaurant brand name, where do you visit fast-food restaurant brand name in Greater Cairo, how often do you visit a famous fast food restaurant brand name and what are the methods of spreading rumors).

**Section 3:** It consisted of 32 rating questions by asking each respondent about he/she disagreed/ agreed with these statements which covered the research's main constructs, on a five-point Likert-style rating scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The main constructs were represented in four variables. All of them were shown in table 4. The main variables were motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants. They involved 21 statements were designed according to Sudhir and Unnithan (2019); Hashim and Kasana (2019); Hendricks and Lu (2020) consisted of four dimensions as anxiety management motivators, information sharing motivators, relationship management motivators and self enhancement motivators.

**Section 4:** It was directed to customer to know the extension of disagreement or agreement about purchasing decisions after hearing rumor about a brand name fast-

food restaurant. This part was designed based on the purchase decisions scale (Hashim and Kasana, 2019). This part involved eleven statements that were measured by the five-point Likert scale. These statements were shown in table 5.

### 3.4 Data collection procedures

A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed online via Google forms link, or printed copy to customers of fast food restaurants' brand names in Greater Cairo. Online questionnaire was directed to customers on fast food restaurants' Facebook groups, while the printed questionnaire was distributed to them face to face after visiting the restaurants. The researchers gave customers a written questionnaire. The respondent finished the questionnaire on the spot and returned it to the researchers. The questionnaire form was written and distributed in Arabic, during the period between April 2022 and May 2022. The returned forms were 800 forms, which represented 80 % (response rate) of distributed forms. The valid forms were 700 forms which represented 87.5 % from the returned forms. The invalid forms were 100 forms, which represented 12.5 % from the returned forms.

### 3.5 Validity of the research

The questionnaire was validated using the peer review technique, which involved a panel of experts in the fields of hospitality management discussing and reviewing the research variables and statements. Face validity was also used in this research to ensure the validity of data collection instrument. Each research objective was matched with its hypothesis using this method. Factor analysis was also used to improve the component strength as shown in table 4 and 5.

### 3.6 Reliability of the Research

**Table 1: Reliability Analysis of the research Variables**

The Axis	No. of statements	Alpha Coefficient
Anxiety Management Motivators	6	0.90
Information Sharing Motivators	6	0.89
Relationship Management Motivators	5	0.95
Self Enhancement Motivators	4	0.92
Customers` Purchasing Decisions	11	0.94
<b>The Overall Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.92</b>

Alpha Coefficient is a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale, which ranges between 0 and 1 (Saunders, 2021). More than 0.9 is considered excellent, more than 0.8 is good, more than 0.7 is considered acceptable, more than 0.6 is considered questionable, more than 0.5 is considered Poor, and less than 0.5 is considered unacceptable (Jr. et al., 2019).

The Cronbach's Alpha test was used to ensure the questionnaire's reliability. For all scale items, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.92. It meant that all items were reliable as shown in table 1.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2: The Sample Characteristics Statistics

Variable	Response	Freq.	%	Rank
Gender	Male	307	43.9	2
	Female	393	56.1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>
Age	Less than 20 years	100	14.3	3
	20 - 30 Years	266	38.0	1
	>30- 40 Years	263	37.6	2
	>40-50 Years	60	8.6	4
	>50-60 Years	7	1.0	5
	More than 60 Years	4	0.6	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>
Educational level	High school	114	16.3	3
	Bachelor degree	370	52.9	1
	Diploma	45	6.4	4
	Post Graduate (Master, Doctoral)	171	24.4	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

According to gender, the results in table 4 showed that the percentage of females (56.1%) was more than males (43.9%) in the investigated sample. In addition it was observed from table 2, the respondents' ages ranged from less than 20 to over 60 years old. The majority of the respondents were between 20 - 40 years old represented 75.6%, while other age categories of the respondents represented 24.5 % of the sample. It meant that youth age categories represented the majority of fast food restaurants' customers. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents who have got high education levels and post graduate (Bachelor, Diploma, Master, and Doctorate) represented 83.2 %, while the respondents who have got high school represented only 16.3 % of the respondents. It referred that the majority of the fast food restaurants' customers have got high education levels and post graduate. This result was incompatible with the result of Mammadli (2021) who asserted that the respondents who have got high school.

Table 3: The Restaurant's Information Statistics

Variable	Response	Freq	%	Rank
What is your favorite fast-food restaurant brand name that you continuously visit in Greater Cairo?	MDS	150	21.4	2
	KEF	199	28.4	1
	DOP	53	7.6	5
	PIH	101	14.4	3
	SW	37	5.3	7
	BK	59	8.4	4
	WE'S	5	.7	10
	HA'S	32	4.6	8
	ST'S	40	5.7	6
	CHL'S	21	3.0	9
	TAB	3	.4	11
	Other please specify	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>	
Where do you visit fast-food restaurant brand name in Greater Cairo?	Cairo	400	57.1	1
	Giza	155	22.1	2
	Qalyubia	50	7.1	4
	Sixth of October	95	13.6	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>
How often do you visit a famous fast food	Daily	32	4.6	4
	Two to Three times weekly	159	22.7	2

*Continued*

Variable	Response	Freq	%	Rank
restaurant brand name?	<i>Table 3: Continued</i>			
	Once per week	321	45.9	1
	Once Per month	153	21.9	3
	Rarely	35	5.0	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	-
What are the methods of spreading rumors?	Social Media platforms	353	50.4	1
	Rumors mongers	121	17.3	3
	Mass Media (T.V- Press- Radio)	90	12.9	4
	Word of Mouth from Customer to Customer	125	17.9	2
	Others	11	1.6	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100</b>	-

Table 3 illustrated that the most favorite fast food restaurants' brand names to the customers were KEF (28.4%), MDS (21.4%), PIH (14.4%), and then BK (8.4%). In other words, 72.6 % of the respondents preferred KEF, MDS, PIH, and BK, while only 27.4 % of them preferred other fast food restaurants' brand names (DOP, SW, ST'S, HA'S, CHL'S, WE'S, TAB). It meant that KEF, MDS, PIH, and BK were more famous and favorite restaurants than other fast food restaurants' brand names.

On the other hand, more than half of the participants (57.1%) have visited fast food restaurants in Cairo, followed by 22.1% have visited these restaurants in Giza, then 13.6% of the respondents visited fast food restaurants in 6<sup>th</sup> of October, while only 7.1 % of them visited Qalyubia. Thus, the researchers involved all of restaurants' regions to be represented in the survey.

Regarding to the frequency of visiting fast-food restaurants' brand name, 45.9% of the respondents have visited once per week, followed by 22.7% of them have visited these restaurants two to three times weekly. It meant that 68.6 % of the respondents visited these restaurants repeatedly from once to three times per week, while 21.9% of them have visited fast food once per month.

Moreover, more than half of the respondents (50.4 %) selected that social media platforms was the first method of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand names, followed by 17.9 % of them selected word of mouth as a second method. Furthermore, 17.3 % of the respondents selected rumors monger, while 12.9 % selected mass media (T.V- Press- Radio) as the third and fourth methods of spreading rumors respectively. It revealed that social media and word of mouth were the most important information sources to customers about food and beverage rumors spreading.

**Table 4: Factor Analysis and Statistics of the Motivators of Spreading Food and Beverage Rumors of fast food restaurants**

Motivators of Spreading Food and Beverage Rumors of fast food restaurants	Mean*	SD	Sig.	Factor Loading	Rank
<b>Anxiety Management Motivators</b>					
1-1 I will feel relaxed after sharing this rumor.	3.05	1.50	0.00	.58	6
1-2 I am worried about others and sharing this rumor will help to keep them safe.	3.41	1.21	0.00	.61	2
1-3 Sharing this rumor will make me feel in control of the situation.	3.07	1.10	0.00	.75	5
1-4 Sharing this rumor will create a pleasant mood in me	3.16	1.12	0.00	.83	4
1-5 Sharing this rumor will make me feel confident	3.38	1.18	0.00	.75	3
1-6 I am motivated to share this rumor and reduce my anxiety regarding the product.	3.48	1.10	0.00	.56	1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>0.00</b>		-

*Continued*

Motivators of Spreading Food and Beverage Rumors of fast food restaurants	Mean*	SD	Sig.	Factor Loading	Rank
<i>Table 4: Continued</i>					
<b>Information Sharing Motivators</b>					
2-1 I will share this rumor to inform others.	3.73	.897	0.00	.61	<b>4</b>
2-2 I will share this rumor as it will be useful to others.	3.80	.904	0.00	.59	<b>2</b>
2-3 By sharing the rumor, I will be able to help others make wise choices.	3.74	.993	0.00	.71	<b>3</b>
2-4 I am motivated to find out if this rumor is true or not.	3.89	.895	0.00	.78	<b>1</b>
2-5 I will share this rumor to get feedback on the rumor.	3.66	.936	0.00	.61	<b>5</b>
2-6 I will be able to help others by sharing this rumor.	3.63	1.02	0.00	.61	<b>6</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>0.00</b>		<b>-</b>
<b>Relationship Management Motivators</b>					
3-1 I will share this rumor to be in touch with others.	3.06	1.31	0.00	.76	<b>5</b>
3-2 Sharing this rumor will make others want to talk to me more often	3.28	1.33	0.00	.89	<b>3</b>
3-3 Sharing this rumor will help me communicate with others.	3.37	1.27	0.00	.84	<b>1</b>
3-4 Others will consider me an expert if I share this rumor.	3.32	1.26	0.00	.81	<b>2</b>
3-5 Others will respect me more if I share this rumor.	3.17	1.23	0.00	.85	<b>4</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>0.00</b>		<b>-</b>
<b>Self Enhancement Motivators</b>					
4-1 I will share this rumor to pass time.	3.01	1.31	0.00	.79	<b>4</b>
4-2 I will share this rumor to let others know about my activities.	3.36	1.23	0.00	.88	<b>2</b>
4-3 Sharing this rumor will help others know about my interests.	3.46	1.11	0.00	.66	<b>1</b>
4-4 I will share this rumor because it's enjoyable to me.	3.34	1.29	0.00	.91	<b>3</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>0.00</b>	.74	<b>-</b>

\* Mean of motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants. SD = Standard Deviation and Sig. = significance degree of one-sample T-Test.

Rady and Atia (2019) and Hashim and Kasana (2019) asserted that the suitable level of loading value was 0.6 for the variables. As shown in table 4, according to factor analysis, 21 statements were responsible for changes in the variables of the motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand name with a percentage of 74%.

Table 4 indicated that the overall mean score of the "anxiety management motivators", overall mean score was 3.25, and STD. was 1.18. The first assessment criterion was "I am motivated to share this rumor and reduce my anxiety regarding the product", (M= 3.48, SD. = 1.10). This result was consistent with Bordia and DiFonzo (2004) who suggested support for the role of uncertainty. In cases with high uncertainty and participation, it is suggested that people will have high anxieties and they will thus use rumor sharing as a mechanism to minimize this anxiety. The last assessment criterion was "I will feel relaxed after sharing this rumor", (M= 3.05, SD. = 1.50). The mean scores ranged from 3.05 to 3.48 that meant neutral to agree. The P-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) which indicated that there were significant differences between anxiety motivators and the test value (4) that referred to a degree of agreement. In other words, respondents' responses of all statements were less than the test value. This result meant that anxiety management motivators were less than standard level.

The previous result conformed to Roberts and Roberts (2012) and Sharif and Yeoh (2018) who ascertained that the role of anxiety in marketplace behavior between young customers. Hence rumors evoking stronger state anxiety will be shared more often. The researcher founded that this result may be due to rumors in the marketplace cause heightened anxieties between customers as they portray harmful to dangerous news like; anxieties cause sharing the rumor to manage these emotions.

As shown in table 4, according to the variable of “information sharing motivation” overall mean score was ( $M=3.75$ ;  $SD. = 0.95$ ). It meant respondents agreed that the information sharing has motivated customers to spread food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants' brand names. This result was consistent with (Ansari, 2019) who stated that people usually share rumors to link to a process on sense making and discovering explanations, especially when there is no official explanation.

Also, the current result agreed with Gan et al. (2016) that rumor transmission is a process that people share valued data. Often rumors are used by small groups to share information and expand explanations of the uncertain cases.

The first assessment criterion was “I am motivated to find out if this rumor is true or not”, ( $M=3.89$ ;  $SD. = .895$ ), the latest statement was “I will be able to help others by sharing this rumor” ( $M=3.63$ ;  $SD. =1.02$ ). The researchers noted that ability to share unknown information sources combined with low levels of social presence and low accountability created a setting of uncertainty. Therefore, information sharing motivators is one of the most fundamental motivations to contact a rumor between customers.

The p-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) of all statements of the variable. It indicated that there were significant differences between means of information sharing motivators dimension and the test value 4. This value was selected because it was a suitable value that referred to a degree of “agreement”. In other words, respondents' responses of all statements of were less than the test value; this result meant information sharing motivators' statements were less than standard level.

The tabulated data also illustrated that in the “relationship management motivators”, variable was 3.24, and STD. was 1.28. The first assessment criterion was “sharing this rumor will help me communicate with others” ( $M= 3.37$ ;  $SD. = 1.27$ ). The last statement was “I will share this rumor to be in touch with others” ( $M=3.06$ ;  $SD.=1.31$ ). The mean scores ranged from 3.06 to 3.37 that meant neutral responses. The p-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) of all statements of the variable. It indicated that there were significant differences between means of relationship management motivators dimension and the test value 4. In other words, respondents' responses of all statements of were less than the test value; this result meant relationship management motivators' statements were less than standard level.

This result agreed with Difonzo and Bordia (2017) who mentioned that the rumor sharing activity would be motivated by the relationship goals. People shared rumors to boost the chances of a long-term relation. This result also, agreed with Kumar and Nayak (2019) who revealed that relationship management motivators were one of the key drivers to share rumors in the marketplace. The researchers found that customers shared rumors to allow others know what information is contained in the rumor. This is interesting as often rumors haven't had evidential basis for the claims they made.

Referring to the variable of “self enhancement motivators ”, overall mean score was 3.29, and STD. was 1.23. The first assessment criterion was “Sharing this rumor will help others know about my interests.”, ( $M= 3.46$ ,  $SD= 1.11$ ), and the last statement criterion was “I will share this rumor to pass time” ( $M=3.01$ , $SD=1.31$ ). The mean scores ranged from 3.01 to 3.36 that meant neutral to agree responses. The p-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) of all statements of the variable. It indicated that there were significant differences between means of self enhancement motivators dimension and the test value 4. In other words, respondents' responses of all statements of were less than the test value; this result meant self enhancement motivators' statements were less than standard level.

This result agreed with Gan et al. (2016), Sudhir and Unnithan (2019) who rumor sharing has also been established to be enhancing self-esteem or self-confidence.

Furthermore, Sudhir and Unnithan (2014) Alden et al, (2016) Kumar and Nayak (2019) conformed self enhancement motivators of rumor sharing indicated to the motivators of a customer to contact a rumor with another customer to enhance his own self-image and thereby his self-esteem. The researchers found that customers might post and judge the rumors if the substance of the rumors contradicts their faiths to increase their trust. When customers thought that the rumor concurred with their values, they strengthened their ideas and became willing to believe that the rumor has been true. This boosted their self-image and self-esteem when customers used rumors to promote their favorite brands.

The p-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) of all variables. It pointed that there were significant differences among means of anxiety management, information sharing, relationship management, and self enhancement and the test value "4". This value was selected because it was a suitable value that referred to a degree of "agreement". It was observed that these motivators played a significant role in rumor propagation. Customers share rumors to manage their emotions or to share information present in the rumor. According to respondents response researchers found that the first motivators spread food and beverage, that information sharing motivators with (M=3.75), self enhancement motivators with (M=3.29), anxiety management motivators (M=3.25), the last criterion was relationship management motivators (M=3.24).

Hence, the previous results achieved the first objective that identify the motivators of spreading rumors about the fast-food restaurants` brand name.

**Table 5: Factor analysis and statistics of customers' purchasing decision**

Customers' Purchasing Decisions'	Mean*	SD	Sig.	Loading	Rank
5.1.1 Pay attention to the rumors when making purchasing decision from brand name fast-food restaurants.	4.08	1.03	0.00	.58	4
5.1.2 Seek out additional information to confirm or disconfirm the rumor.	4.24	.739	0.00	.74	1
5.1.3 Boycott the brand involved.	3.98	.948	0.00	.70	6
5.1.4 Do not repurchase from the brand.	3.80	1.15	0.00	.84	8
5.1.5 Purchase from a competitor.	4.05	.843	0.00	.64	5
5.1.6 Lose trust in the brand.	4.20	.745	0.00	.74	2
5.1.7 Wait for a while before repurchasing.	4.19	.776	0.00	.65	3
5.1.8 Try to hurt the company by repeating the rumor.	3.40	1.50	0.00	.88	9
5.1.9 Try to hurt the company through physical actions (e.g. graffiti)	3.31	1.65	0.00	.90	11
5.1.10 Encourage people not to purchase from the brand name.	3.74	1.17	0.00	.80	10
5.1.11 Feel anger, guilt or embarrassment regarding my relationship with the brand name.	3.93	1.05	0.00	.50	7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>.72</b>	<b>-</b>

\* Mean of Customers` Purchasing Decisions`. SD = Standard Deviation and Sig. = significance degree of one-sample T-Test

Table 5 illustrated that all eleven statements responsible for changes in the variable of customers' purchasing decisions after hearing rumors about the fast-food restaurants' brand name with a percentage of 72%.

The tabulated data in table 5 involved that there were eleven decisions the customers may do them whenever they have heard a rumor about a brand name fast-food

restaurant. The first one according to participants' responses was "Seek out additional information to confirm or disconfirm the rumor", (M= 4.24, SD= .739). On the other side, "Try to hurt the company through physical actions (e.g. graffiti)" was ranked as last statement (M= 3.31, SD= 1.65). The overall mean scores (M= 3.90, SD= 1.05). The mean scores ranged from 3.31 to 4.24 that meant neutral to strongly agree.

This result agreed with Difonzo and Bordia (2017) who have highlighted propagandists utilize rumors deliberately over propaganda campaigns and misinformation. Firstly, when a propaganda rumor spreads, people believe it because it is followed by selective information which plays as a support to the rumors, compelling people to confirm. The current finding was in line with the result of Hegner et al. (2017) and Zarantonello et al. (2016) who proved empirically that rumors have a positive impact on making purchasing decision.

The current research revealed a number of interesting findings. Customer-to-customer interaction about brands has boosted basically in recent years. In addition, exchanges on brands, social network sites and other technological innovations have increased the amount of information exchanged over networks of customers exponentially. However, information shared among customers often includes highly damaging rumors that influenced on brands' reputation and lose of customer's confidence.

The p-value of the one-sample T-test was (0.00) which indicated that there were significant differences between customers' purchasing decisions when hearing a rumor about a fast-food restaurant brand name and the test value (4). This value was selected because it was a suitable value that referred to a degree of "agreement". In other words, respondents' responses of all statements were high than the test value.

The researchers adopted the linear regression coefficients for testing the hypotheses as follows:

**Table 6: Linear Regression Coefficients for the Impact of Anxiety Management Motivators on Customers' purchasing decisions.**

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable
		Anxiety Management Motivators
Customers Purchasing Decisions	R	.410
	R <sup>2</sup>	.168
	Sig.	.000
	Constant	2.725
	β	.361

Table 6 showed that there was a positive moderate significant correlation between anxiety management motivators and customers' purchasing decisions (R=.410). R<sup>2</sup> referred to the determination coefficient (.168). Moreover, Sig. value was 0.00 which less than 0.05 suggesting that, the null hypothesis of the study wasn't accepted. On the other hand, there was a positive significant impact of anxiety management motivators (independent variable) on customers' purchasing decisions (dependent variable). Furthermore, the statistical constant (α) has equaled 2.725 with a significance level of less than 5%, whereas (β) has equaled .361, with a significance level of less than 1%. The following equation was suggested:

$$\text{Customers Purchasing Decisions} = 2.725 + (.361 * \text{Anxiety Management Motivators}).$$

These results were in line with Sudhir and Unnithan (2019); Hendricks and Lu (2020) who concluded that anxiety management motivators showed a positive and moderate significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions.

Hence, the first hypothesis was supported. There was positive a significant impact of anxiety management motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants on customers' purchasing decisions.

**Table 7: Linear Regression Coefficients for the Impact of Information Sharing Motivators on Customers' Purchasing Decisions**

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable
		Information Sharing Motivators
Customers Purchasing Decisions	R	.414
	R <sup>2</sup>	.171
	Sig.	.000
	Constant	2.127
	β	.474
	β	.474

Table 7 referred that there was a positive moderate significant correlation between information sharing motivators and customers purchasing decisions (R=.414). R<sup>2</sup> which referred to the determination coefficient was .171. Moreover, the Sig. value was less than 0.05 (0.000). Therefore, the research did not accept the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. Furthermore, the statistical constant (α) has equaled 2.127 with a significance level less than 5%, whereas β has equaled .474, with significance level less than 1%. From the previous result, the following equation was suggested:

$$\text{Customers' Purchasing Decisions} = 2.127 + (.474 * \text{Information Sharing Motivators})$$

Furthermore, information sharing motivators had a positive significant effect on customers' purchasing decisions. The current result agreed with Lee et al. (2009) and Kimmel and Pontevia (2010) assured that information sharing motivators significantly affect the customers purchasing decisions.

Hence, the second hypothesis was supported. There was a positive significant impact of information sharing motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants on customers' purchasing decisions.

**Table 8: Linear Regression Coefficients for the Impact of Relationship Management Motivators on Customers' Purchasing Decisions**

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable
		Relationship Management Motivators
Customers Purchasing Decisions	R	.711
	R <sup>2</sup>	.506
	Sig.	.000
	Constant	2.190
	B	.528

Table 8 referred that there was a positive strong significant correlation between relationship management motivators and customers' purchasing decisions (R=.711), as well as R<sup>2</sup> referred to the determination coefficient was .506. Moreover, the Sig. value was less than 0.05 (0.000). The research did not accept the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. Furthermore, the statistical constant (α) has equaled 2.190 with a significance level less than 5%, whereas β has equaled .528, with significance level less than 1%. From the previous result, the following equation was suggested:

Customers' Purchasing Decisions= 2.190 + (.528\* Relationship Management Motivators).

These results were in line Hegner et al. (2017) and Hashim and Kasana (2019) which revealed that relationship management motivators had a positive effect on customers purchasing decisions.

Hence, the third hypothesis was supported. There was a positive significant impact of relationship management motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants on customers' purchasing decisions.

**Table 9: Linear Regression Coefficients for the Self Enhancement Motivators on Customers' Purchasing Decisions**

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable
		Self Enhancement Motivators
Customers Purchasing Decisions	R	.715
	R <sup>2</sup>	.511
	Sig.	.000
	Constant	2.070
	B	.556

Table showed that there was a positive strong significant correlation between self enhancement motivators and customers' purchasing decisions (R=.715). R<sup>2</sup> referred to the determination coefficient (.511). Moreover, Sig. value was (0.000) less than (0.05) suggesting that, the null hypothesis of the study was not accepted. On the other hand, there was a positive significant impact of self enhancement motivators (independent variable) on customers' purchasing decisions (dependent variable). Furthermore, the statistical constant (α) has equaled 2.070 with a significance level of less than 5%, whereas (β) has equaled .556, with a significance level of less than 1%. From the previous result, the following equation was suggested:

$$\text{Customers' Purchasing Decisions} = 2.070 + (.556 * \text{Self Enhancement Motivators}).$$

The current result also concurred with findings from Jin et al. (2015) study which revealed that self enhancement motivators had a positive effect on customers' purchasing decisions.

Hence, the fourth hypothesis was supported. There was a positive significant impact of self enhancement motivators of food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants on customers' purchasing decisions.

### The Empirical Research Model

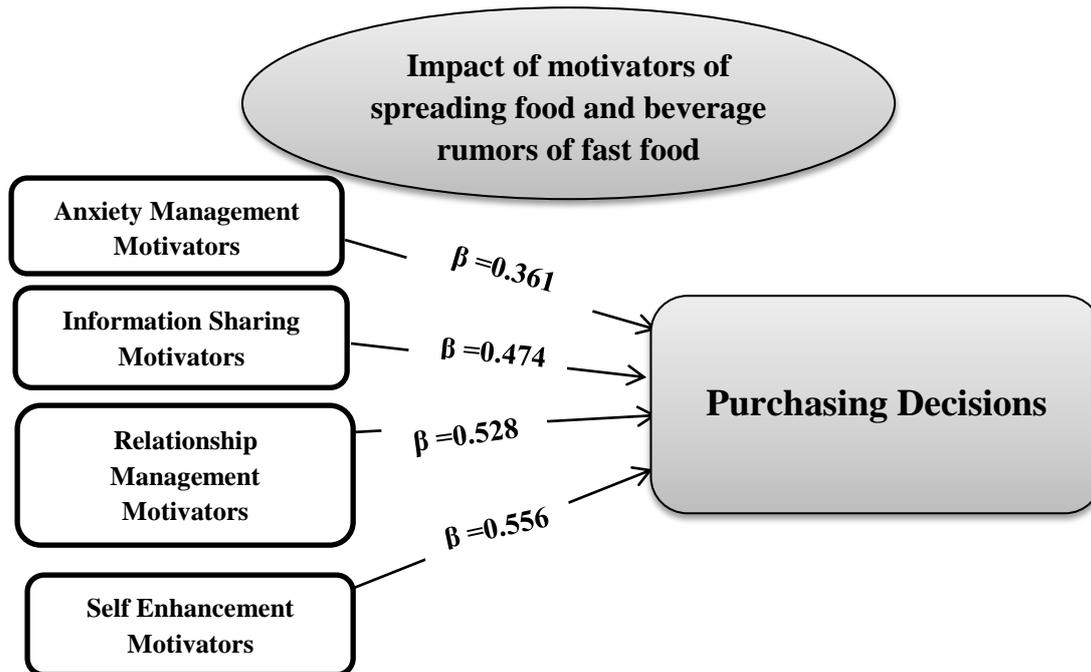


Figure 2: The Empirical Research Model

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The research aims to explore the impact of motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors on customers' purchasing decisions to of fast-food restaurants' brand names. It applied a quantitative approach by conducting a web-based self-administered questionnaire. A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed online via Google forms link, or printed copy to customers of fast food restaurants' brand names in Greater Cairo. These restaurants were MDS, KEF, DOP, PIH, SW, BK, WE'S, HA'S, ST'S, CHL'S and TAB restaurants. The returned forms were 800 forms, which represented 80 % (response rate) of distributed forms. The valid forms were 700 forms which represented 87.5 % from the returned forms. The invalid forms were 100 forms, which represented 12.5 % from the returned forms.

To assess the research tool's reliability and validity, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the factor analysis test were used. To gain a statistically representative sample size of the population, Cochran's formula for determining the infinite population sample size was applied. The data was statistically analyzed using SPSS version 16.

The results indicated that most of the respondents were females, between 20 - 30 years with Bachelor degree. Approximately 28.4% of the respondents have visited KEF, 21.4% of them have visited MDS, and more than half of the participants 57.1% have visited Cairo restaurants. There were 45.9% of the respondents have visited once per week fast food restaurants' brand name. More than half of the participants 50.4% have knew food and beverage rumors by social media platforms.

Concerning motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants (anxiety management, information sharing, relationship management, self enhancement) the attitude of participants' responses ranged from neutral to agree.

According to purchasing participants' responses attitude, it also ranged from agree to strongly agree. It referred to how motivators of spreading food and beverage rumors of fast food restaurants influenced the customer purchasing decision.

The findings of the research indicated that the motivators of anxiety management, information sharing, relationship management and self enhancement influenced have a positive significant influence on customers' purchasing decision.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The current research suggested some recommendations to fast food restaurants' brand name managers and customers as follows:

### **5.2.1 Recommendations for Fast Food Restaurants' Customers**

- Customers should ensure from published food and beverage rumors of the fast food restaurants through restaurants official channels (websites, social media etc.) or other governmental supervisory channels.
- Customers should manage their motivators of spreading rumors of fast food restaurants objectively to not harm the restaurants' image by having right information from the restaurants' official channels or other governmental supervisory channels.
- Customers should not publish or share rumors of fast food restaurants among their relatives and friends, or in social media channels to not influence negatively on other customers' purchase decision and restaurants' reputation and sales.

### **5.2.2 Recommendations for Fast Food Restaurants' Managers**

- Fast food managers should adopt strategies for combatting spreading food and beverage rumors to manage customers' motivators for proving right information about rumors and protecting the restaurant image.
- They should develop an action plan and procedures to eliminate food and beverage rumors spreading among customers.
- They should release a campaign through media means to correct rumors among fast food customers to maintain restaurant image, reputation, and sales.
- Fast food managers should publish the right information about food and beverage rumors speedily and widely through restaurants' official channels website and social media) and governmental supervisory channels.
- Fast food restaurants' companies could establish a hotline, or interactive chat room in their website, Facebook, and YouTube channel to respond to customers during spreading the rumors about the restaurants.

## **5.3 Limitations and future research**

The time limitations were the time of conducting the practical part of the research. It was from April to May 2022. The place limitations were fast food restaurants' brand name located in Greater Cairo as places for conducting the research. The researchers faced some barriers during the research. The barrier was related to literature review, where there was a lack of books and data sources about food and beverage rumors in the restaurants industry. Moreover, further research could be conducting to examine how demographic characteristics impacts transmission of rumor as well as refutation information. Future research should also identify other customers linked characteristics that may impact rumor transmission and its impact on their purchasing decision in different types of restaurants as fine dining, upscale, casual restaurants, or in luxury and upscale hotels.

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## تأثير دوافع نشر شائعات الأغذية والمشروبات لمطاعم الوجبات السريعة ذات العلامة التجارية على قرارات شراء العملاء

### الملخص العربي

تتواجد الشائعات في جميع أنحاء المجتمع. على الرغم من المعلومات غير مؤكدة إلا إنها قد تؤثر على سلوك العملاء وقدرتهم الشرائية. لقد نما القلق بشأن الشائعات بطريقة سريعة منذ أن أصبح الإنترنت مكاناً ذو ثقة للبحث عن المعلومات ومشاركة المعلومات. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف تأثير دوافع نشر شائعات الأغذية والمشروبات على قرارات شراء العملاء لمطاعم الوجبات السريعة ذات العلامة التجارية. تم اعتماد المنهج الكمي في هذا البحث وتم كذلك إجراء استبيان على شبكة الإنترنت وورقياً لعينة من العملاء المتوقعين وكذلك عملاء مطاعم الوجبات السريعة ذات العلامات التجارية (700 مشاركاً). تم إجراء البحث على تلك المطاعم في القاهرة الكبرى (القاهرة والجيزة والقليوبية والسادس من أكتوبر). تم تحليل بيانات البحث باستخدام مقاييس الإحصاء الوصفي واختبارات T ومعادلات الانحدار الخطي باستخدام برنامج SPSS V. 22. أظهرت النتائج أن هناك تأثيراً لدوافع نشر شائعات الأغذية والمشروبات على قرارات شراء العملاء لمطاعم العلامة التجارية. كذلك أشارت نتائج البحث إلى أن القلق ( $\beta = 0.361$ ،  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ )، مشاركة المعلومات ( $\beta = 0.474$ ،  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ )، إدارة العلاقات ( $\beta = 0.528$ ،  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ )، وتعزيز الذات ( $\beta = 0.556$ ،  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ ) دوافع انتشار الشائعات كان لها أثراً إيجابياً ذو دلالة احصائية على قرارات الشراء للعملاء في مطاعم الوجبات السريعة ذات العلامات التجارية. قدم هذا البحث مجموعة من التوصيات اللازمة لتقليل آثار الشائعات وقرارات الشراء للعملاء في مطاعم الوجبات السريعة ذات العلامات التجارية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** شائعات الأغذية والمشروبات، دوافع نشر الشائعات، العلامات التجارية، مطاعم الوجبات السريعة، قرار الشراء