

Research Paper

An Examination of Social Media Utilization During Food Safety Risk Events

(K. Murdock, 2016)

The distribution of food safety risk information has entered a new chapter with the emergence of various social media platforms which allow faster dissemination of information in crisis scenarios. However, identifying the most effective means of virtual correspondence can become problematic due to limited research on consumer preference towards message delivery formats during food safety risk events. This study examined the most frequently accessed social media outlets used by the public for knowledge on food hazard reports. A web-based survey tool was used to collect data from 165 respondents regarding their preferences for learning about various food safety risk events along with the reasons for their choices. Overall, Facebook was the most preferred social media outlet to receive food safety risk information mainly because of its ease of use and familiarity, while the FDA had the most popular website because of its trustworthiness. In addition, middle class Americans were more likely to utilize social media networks to research food safety concerns as compared to those in lower and higher income brackets. The investigative results established by this research project will help industry leaders focus their online response efforts during food safety crisis events in order to convey information in the most effective manner.