

Bloggers vs. Influencers. Can my next meal really be influenced by anyone?

A study on the effects of digital platforms and review valence on consumers' attitudes, perceived credibility and purchase intentions in regards to choosing a restaurant.

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research study was to understand the effect of Instagram's popularity on people's buying intentions. Furthermore, it allows for a comparison with blogs that were proven to be highly influential a few years ago. Can Instagram replace them in the eye of the consumers? How easy and how fast the digital world is changing and what could be the next influential platform? The platform that can affect behaviours and attitudes of consumers towards products and services, and especially in the restaurant industry.

Nowadays, there is more and more content related to restaurants, food and the hospitality industry. This content is usually in form of online reviews. Even though the recommendations are shared in the online environment, they have the power to influence consumers in their decision to visit a restaurant. More precisely, they have the power to shift opinions and to shape consumers' attitude, trust and intentions of purchase. The purpose of the study is to answer these questions in the context of investigating the effect of the valence and the platform of the review. Furthermore, the focus is on the two platforms (Instagram and personal blog) and the comparison between their effects on the dependent test variables. The research study implements a 2x4 experimental design, gathering results with an online questionnaire.

When referring to the results of the research paper, some were predicted and some were unexpected, but all of them provide important insights into the chosen subject. The results of the study bring clarity in the way online reviews can be managed by restaurant owners and how social media should be addressed and viewed in this digital era, to benefit businesses. In terms of scientific relevance, the findings provide some interesting information on how the power of Instagram is greater than the power of blogs. Therefore, concepts of influencers and bloggers are also discussed in connection to the research framework. Furthermore, the findings related to the valence of the review bring interesting perspectives. For most hypotheses, balanced reviews are not proven to be more credible and persuasive than negative reviews, neither increasing consumers' attitudes. However, balanced reviews are considered to be the most credible, while positive reviews the most persuasive.

Keywords:

Influencers, Food Bloggers, Online reviews, Restaurant recommendations, Instagram

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1. Introduction

Not many people know the story of Oobah Butler, who wrote fake reviews on TripAdvisor for a living and decided to create a fictional restaurant – The Shed at Dulwich. It was the most wanted restaurant for a while and the hardest to get into but there was a catch – it didn't exist (Rosenberg, 2017). He had realized that opinions spread on social media can show a false reality and the reviews we all see are not always genuine. Within this current environment of misinformation, he wanted to prove that not everything we believe to be true, actually is, and we can be easily influenced in our decisions.

TripAdvisor is a social media site and a platform for people who want to post comments, impressions and recommendations about destinations, restaurant and hotels in the form of a review (Yoo, et al., 2016). But what are reviews? According to Park et al. (2007), an online review is data created by the consumer and it represents a piece of new information that shows the facts from the consumers' point of view with advantages or disadvantages, from a negative or positive perspective. When thinking about what influences consumers in their purchase decisions, online reviews play a more important role than traditional marketing (Chakraborty, 2019).

Consumers are usually highly influenced by reviews, and therefore they will most likely go to a restaurant with positive reviews (Resnick et al., 2000). Furthermore, the long-term profitability of a restaurant can be generated by guests that are willing to share their experiences as a positive electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) (Marinkovic et al., 2014). After being exposed to restaurants' reviews shared on Instagram by influencers, buyers' purchase intention regarding choosing a restaurant can be influenced by customer-perceived benefits (Ha, Park & Park, 2016) and trust in the blogger (Weitzl, 2016; Chiang & Jang, 2007). Moreover, another agent that can benefit from eWOM are the companies. Online reviews are beneficial for companies because it is one way to obtain useful information about service quality and demands of the customers, learning directly from their customers (Schuckert et al., 2015).

Ing and Ming (2018), investigated the relationship and the effects of perceived benefits and trustworthiness on consumer attitude towards blogger' recommendations. Furthermore, their study shows a significant relationship between consumer's attitude and blogger

recommendations. This will further affect consumers' purchase intention in regards to visit a restaurant. However, their advice for future research is to include more diverse blog types. One argument for this are the different factors that consumers take into consideration when forming their attitudes and intentions. Therefore, different categories of products can generate different opinions and behaviors.

As people's decisions nowadays regarding a food place are highly influenced by their peers on social media, it can be said that food bloggers are considered to be influencers for the foodservice industry. When considering whether to visit a restaurant or not and which one is worth the hype, food bloggers have become the new benchmark (Hanifati, 2015). Therefore, it is interesting to investigate food blogs.

Although many research papers investigated the concept of eWOM, there are some multiple knowledge gaps that need to be explored. First of all, multiple studies on the topic acknowledge the impact of valence on purchase intentions and consumer attitudes, however, the results about the effect of positive or negative recommendations are somehow contradictory. Some papers suggest positive eWOM to be more influential when talking about attitudes and purchase intention than negative eWOM (Wu, 2013). However, some past studies state the opposite (Boo & Kim, 2013; Baber et al., 2016). It is necessary to understand which form of eWOM valence has the greatest influence in order for managers to know which reviews bear the most importance. It is also crucial for managers to know when and how to react. The results are inconclusive, implying that further study on the topic is needed.

Moreover, in the past research studies the focus was more on concrete products and not on services or experiences and how are these affected by eWOM (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Kala & Chaubey, 2018). This can be considered a gap in the literature because companies need to see how eWOM influences intangible products, experiences and services as well. When marketing a product, the focus stays on fulfilling the needs of the consumers. However, when marketing a service, the companies usually concentrate on winning the trust of their customers and creating a good experience for them. Therefore, they strive to create a company-customer relationship. A very important factor that influences a customer's purchase intention when talking about the service industry is the reputation of the company, or what others are saying about the experience, therefore through WOM (Zhivago, 2012). However, in the decision-making process of

purchasing a tangible good, you can determine the standard features that you search for (Tien et al., 2019). On the other hand, it is hard to acknowledge standard features when talking about intangible goods even during or after the consumption, because people may experience them differently. This suggests that purchasing a service or an experience, in this case choosing a restaurant, comes with a bigger risk than buying a product. If a customer is dissatisfied with the purchased product, this can be returned and the customer will receive his money back, but if a consumer is not satisfied with their restaurant experience, there is nothing that can be done to reverse this. This way, consumers are relying on a recommendation in the form of reviews of past customers of the service (Park & Lee, 2009; Racherla & Friske, 2012; Ong, 2012).

For the societal relevance of the study, the focus stays on companies but also on their customers. One of the problems nowadays that companies are facing nowadays is successfully integrating eWOM in their strategy (Rosario et al., 2020). To take an example, a practice that some companies engage in is offering financial benefits to consumers in exchange for positive eWOM. This will have great consequences in the long term. They can jeopardize the credibility and reputation of eWOM and consequently of the companies, and decrease the amount of objective data available. Furthermore, it can also lead to legal actions (Chatterjee, 2001). The companies are losing an important part of the budget if eWOM is not properly managed. This happens because it will have a negative impact on sales but also because it takes a big budget to effectively manage eWOM. The management of eWOM is being implemented also to contribute to brand and reputation management, important intangible assets for companies (Tsou, 2009). To take the example of big companies, JetBlue and American Express spend more than millions of dollars on social media and management of online image and reviews (Barry et al., 2011). Therefore, it is essential that both businesses and customers are benefiting from the way online reviews are managed.

Furthermore, this research study can have great implications on the restaurant industry and the Covid-19 pandemic. Now that the population is getting vaccinated, restrictions are starting to ease and things are planned to go back to normal, online restaurant reviews can be of great importance for people. Firstly, it is very easy to access them without human contact, unlike the classic WOM (Chatterjee, 2001). Online reviews: do consumers use them?.. Second of all, after this long break from going and eating out, consumers might not know which restaurant to

choose now, what are the new places in town and which one is worth a visit. Moreover, it is important for them to know where to look for these reviews in order to find the ones that speak best to their needs (be it on social media or private blogs).

When it comes to following bloggers' online recommendations, factors such as perceived credibility, favourable attitudes and purchase intention play an important role. When one of these is missing, the online reviews are considered to not be persuasive, and therefore consumers won't take any buying action after viewing the recommendations.

1.1. Credibility, Consumers' Attitudes and Purchase Intention

The literature shows that perceived credibility was highly researched in different contexts. In regards to influencer marketing, social media and online reviews, the literature shows that perceived source credibility is an important factor that influences purchase intention (Weismueller et al., 2020) but can also be influenced by different factors, such as review valence and different platform (van Lohuizen & Barrera, 2016; Zou & Hao, 2011).

In their study, Sokolova and Kefi (2020), investigated the influence of credibility on purchase intention, concerning beauty bloggers promoting products on Youtube and Instagram. Their study concludes that perceived source credibility exhibits a significant and positive influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, another study that investigates how the credibility of TV celebrities affects advertising effectiveness shows that source credibility has the biggest influence on consumers' attitudes and purchase intention (Mansour & Diab, 2016). The literature also presents the consumers' attitude as the predictors of purchase behaviour (Martinez & Kim, 2012).

Online reviews play an important role in forming the opinions and attitudes of consumers. Past papers show a significant influence of negative, positive and balanced reviews on consumer's attitude. To take an example, the study conducted by Zou and Hao (2011), suggests that there is a significant difference in consumers' attitudes reported to negative and positive reviews. Therefore, consumers' attitudes are less favourable when the reviews are negative, and more favourable when the reviews are positive. These findings also confirm the results of Ing and Ming (2018) that state the bloggers' recommendations exert a powerful influence on consumers' attitudes. For the hospitality industry, and more specifically for

restaurants, the literature shows significant effects of eWOM valences on attitudes of the consumers (Yang et al., 2016). According to a study conducted by Li, Liu and Zhang (2020), positive restaurant reviews provoke positive attitudes in the consumers. Furthermore, the more favourable the attitude is, the more likely a consumer is to follow the recommendation and to purchase the product.

Purchase intention has been extensively researched in regards to advertising and mostly products. However, some studies looked into purchase intention referring to services. In their study, van Lohuizen and Trujillo-Barrera (2020), refers to purchase intention as to the intention to visit a restaurant. Moreover, their findings show that consumers' intentions and attitudes are highly influenced by online reviews. Although, the negative reviews have the biggest impact, followed by positive and balanced reviews. The findings brought a new perspective to the literature about the asymmetric effect of valence and confirmed the concept of negativity effect brought up by the literature on eWOM.

1.2. Platform types

Now more than ever, blogs are amongst the most influential online media in regards to consumers' purchase intention. In the last 10 years, the hospitality industry and more specifically the restaurant industry has gone through a series of major changes that shaped the industry, the guests' segmentation and their consumer behaviour, both in restaurants and outside them (Mun, 2020). Culinary TV shows and the emergence of some food bloggers niche increased consumers' interest in the visual dimension of food. A food blogger can be described as a person who is willing to write about their food experiences on a blog (Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018). Moreover, food bloggers can choose to specialize in a specific food topic (Bun & Alversia, 2020) and they are usually referred to as "foodies". The difference between them and the culinary bloggers is that their main activity is to test different locals and write reviews according to their experiences. The first use of the word "foodie" was first used in a New York Times Magazine article in 1980, even though the term became popular after the phrase was used in the article "Cuisine Poseur" in 1982 (Poole, 2012). A foodie is an individual whose interest in food and dining experiences is almost exaggerated (Barr & Levy, 1984). It was also argued that "foodie" is a slang word that refers to someone with a high interest in food without a proper field

experience. Nowadays, there is more a discussion around platings and Instagram - worthy dishes, created to be seen by the public, fancy plates and creative food combinations. On the other hand, priorities have also changed for the service area of this industry– the consumers are not only looking for food but an entire experience and it is important to have a memorable, personalized and “worthy of sharing online experience” (Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018).

Over time Bloggers evolved into digital influencers who can influence communities that share the same interest (Serman & Sims, 2020). According to More and Lingam (2017), an influencer is an individual who can influence the opinions of potential consumers through social media and also helps the potential customer to make a purchasing decision. Consumers who spend most of their time online and are emphatically involved in social networking are usually relying on peer advice and recommendations for services or products (Bayazit et al., 2017).

A new trend that is emerging and highly discussed in media is the use of Instagram as a platform that facilitates people to voice their opinions, recommendations and criticism. As Instagram has become a resourceful platform for bloggers, food bloggers are starting more and more to carry out their daily activities on this social network (Iskandar & Arden, 2018). In their study, Ing and Ming (2018), concluded that future research papers should take into consideration a comparison between bloggers who are on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and the ones that use private blogs as platforms for their activity. One argument for making this comparison is that customers can form different attitudes and buying patterns according to the environment and they are exposed to different environments and social conditions. Therefore, it is interesting to see a comparison between consumers who read reviews posted on private blogs and consumers who read reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram. Past research that investigated the relationships between food bloggers` reviews on Instagram and consumer purchase decisions, show that there is a significant relationship between the two (Puspita & Hendrayati, 2020), but the research hasn` t measured the effects that influence this relationship. The scientific relevance of this study is, therefore, represented by the chosen social media platform, which is Instagram. As past papers suggest, that future in-depth analysis should centralize more on platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, etc. (Liu et al., 2013). Moreover, the relevance of the study is represented by the comparison of online reviews posted

on Instagram and private blogs. Therefore, the research question of this study, followed by the sub-research question is:

RQ: To what extent does the valence of online restaurant reviews written by food bloggers and the platform on which they are posted influence consumers' attitudes, their perceived credibility and purchase intention?

This research study will facilitate a deeper understanding of the two factors (platform type and review valence) influencing consumers' perceived credibility, attitudes and customers' purchase intention towards choosing a restaurant.

2. Theoretical Background

This chapter illustrates the theoretical framework of the study, presenting the hypotheses that were developed from the literature. The first part of the chapter includes a critical review and a summary of all the relevant theories that were utilized in establishing the framework. Therefore, the first section will talk about social media and the attention economy, whilst the second one will discuss the uses and gratification theory. Moreover, the third section explains the Two-Step flow theory, followed by the fourth section that gets into details about The Restaurant Industry and Online reviews. The following two sections present more in-depth the two factors of the study, review valence and the two platform types. Finally, the last three sections illustrate the hypotheses of the study and discuss the concepts of purchase intention, consumers' attitudes and perceived credibility.

2.1. Social media and The attention economy

In order to get a clear view on how online reviews has started to be more persuasive and important for consumers, it is crucial to understand the development of social media and its impact on people's life. Human attention has become one of the most finite resources in the world. Every single action we make every day is a transaction. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and so on are the main actors of the attention economy, as well as being platforms for communicating. Goldhaber (1997) talks about the shift in the economy, going from material-based to human, and explains that the success of social media lays in the fact that it is addictive. The majority of people nowadays are on at least one social network sites and scrolling through a feed has become part of their daily routines. The attraction of Users' and consumers' attention can be explained by the attention economy system. Besides being platforms for communicating, sharing, posting, creating, discussing, for some, social networking sites have become the place where they feel the need to share views and reviews. According to Luo & Zhong (2015) an important feature of communication on these platforms is the exchange of information - a way of sharing different impressions. This can also explain why bloggers moved their activity on social media platforms.

2.2. The User Gratification Theory in understanding why people use social media to satisfy their needs

It is important to understand why people choose to use social media and how this influences their opinion and behaviours. Therefore, the concept of personal blogs, bloggers and influencers can be better interpreted. Consumers' use of social media has multiple explanations. According to Whiting and Williams (2013), people use social media in the need of information sharing and information seeking, social interaction, to share views and express opinions, to gain knowledge about and from others. One concept that will be investigated in this research paper is eWOM in the form of reviews. The reviews need to be credible and trustworthy, showing both the benefits and risks in order for consumers to form a good opinion about the place, and lastly decide to visit a restaurant in this case. Furthermore, this is a way for prospective customers to gain valuable guidance from people who've used the service. Hence, consumers can form an opinion on what's the best and worse that could happen.

The Uses and Gratification theory (U&G) is used to understand why people use certain social media sites and the gratification that derives from them (Liu et al., 2020). This theory assumes that users have a purpose and a motive why they choose to in the consumption of media (Katz and Blumler 1974); individuals are actively looking for satisfying their needs. According to Froget et al., (2013), people choose to use social media for information seeking and information sharing. This can explain why some consumers are motivated to come to these platforms when looking for reviews or when writing online reviews. The restaurant industry has started to be highly affected by online reviews, and many past studies have looked into why people appeal to online reviews before choosing a restaurant and the effects it has on this hospitality industry (Li et al., 2019; Gunden, 2017; Nakayama & Wan, 2019). According to a survey carried out by TripAdvisor, 94 % of the participants admitted that they would choose a restaurant based on an online review (Guta, 2018). Alongside information-seeking, past research studies also found out that some of the motives that make restaurant reviews highly influential are: utility and convenience (Hicks et al., 2012).

2.3. Two-Step flow Theory

By being aware of the two-step flow theory, the concept of eWOM and online reviews can be better understood. The 90-9-1 rule says that 90% of us are lurkers. These people are only

navigating the internet, searching, observing and reading but they don't contribute to the online content. The 9% contribute by sharing and only 1% actively participate in creating the content (Carron-Arthur, Cunningham & Griffiths, 2014). However, for all the people that use the internet and social media platforms to be constantly up to date with everything, the relationship is circular. Without consumers who want and read online reviews, opinion leaders, bloggers and influencers would not exist. In a digital world full of ads, sponsored posts, offers, people are starting to feel the need for an honest opinion, from past consumers, someone familiar, someone that can make them feel confident with their decision. Therefore, people write reviews so that other prospective customers can read and follow them and finally share their honest opinion with others. This is what is called word of mouth (WOM) or electronic word of mouth (eWOM). However, in this research, the emphasis is on the comparison between blogs and Instagram and which one has more effects on eWOM and consumers. The first and main difference between the two platforms is that blogs were more popular a few years ago; now Instagram is the place most of the consumers go to when they want a quick opinion (Korotina, A., & Jargalsaikhan, T. (2016).

According to the two-step flow theory, the people that extract information from media and share it with people in their circle or mass audiences are the opinion leaders (Katz & Lazarsfeld's, 1955). Furthermore, through their messages, they can affect people's attitudes and behaviours through the so-called word of mouth (WOM) (Bennett & Manheim, 2006). The followers perceive opinion leaders to be competent in discussing certain topics, as well as being honest and trustworthy (Turcotte, et al., 2015). Opinion leaders can effectively influence consumers' behaviour and decision-making process, by disclosing persuasive information and compelling reviews (Chaney, 2001). Since they are recognized to be more reliable than advertising displayed by big brands, they can persuade their followers into trying the experience they previously had (Zhou et al., 2019). One aspect of why a recommendation from an opinion leader is considered to be trustworthy is that they are not completely driven by economic benefits (Lin et al., 2018). Thus, social media influencers which are also viewed as opinion leaders in specific fields have a big influence on consumers' purchase intention (Casaló et al., 2018). Consumers usually use these reviews in order to get the full benefits for the money they spend (Lee & Ma, 2012).

2.4. The Restaurant Industry and Online reviews

When it comes to the restaurant industry, social media changed how owners refer to consumers and their dining experience and have made a change in how they strategize their marketing (Kwok & Yu, 2013). According to a study carried out by MGH, a restaurant marketing agency, revealed that 82 % of the participants are on social media, 36 % follow multiple restaurants on these accounts, approximately 50 % of them are influenced by social media when choosing a place to eat (Industry News, 2019). Furthermore, some statistics curated by Bright Local suggest that consumers read reviews about the restaurant industry more than for any other industry and 84 % of the participants said that they trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations when thinking about a place to eat (BrightLocal, 2020). According to these statistics, consumers are highly influenced by online reviews and are likely to obtain these recommendations from social media platforms before going to a restaurant. Moreover, it seems that restaurant owners have become more aware of the implications social media has on their business and the power that lays in it. Therefore, their consumers` experience can have a long-term effect on how others are perceiving their restaurant. Social media also provides a space, a channel for diners to share their views about how it went (Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2017). When choosing a restaurant, customers are now consulting not family members and their friends, but also online reviews posted on social media (Ong, 2012). As a result, customers frequently search for eWOM posted by previous consumers.

2.5. eWOM and Purchase Intention

Most past research papers suggest that eWOM is an important factor that influences purchase intention. The valence of a product review is described as whether it contains positive or negative statements (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Positive and negative online reviews can impact differently the overall purchase intention. According to past studies on this topic, positive reviews will increase purchase intention, while negative will usually decrease it (Sutanto & Aprianingsih, 2016). A survey conducted by TripAdvisor found out that 31% of the consumers will probably choose a restaurant that has more positive reviews (Guta, 2018). Moreover, according to Zhang et al., (2010) when the majority of the reviews were favourable, the restaurants had more visits. Therefore, consumers are highly persuaded by both negative and positive reviews, but in different directions. However, reviews from people with expertise had less of an impact on the decision-making result than recommendations from other customers. A positive attitude towards social media reviews can lead to a higher involvement in information seeking and eventually, can influence the purchase intention. According to a study conducted by Filieri et al., (2018), a review that contains both negative and positive aspects is more persuasive than one-sided reviews, presenting a higher intent of purchase. This happens because the review shows both sides of the story and does not seem on the company's side, making the opinion more reliable. A recommendations that reveal all the aspects of the experience may appeal to consumers more and therefore increase their intention to visit that place.

2.6. The social learning theory and Consumers' Attitudes

The social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1963) is suggested as a theoretical framework to investigate which factors predict the behaviour and intention of customers (King & Multon 1996). Furthermore, it was largely used in past communication studies and marketing papers (Bush et al. 2004). According to this theory, an individual can acquire a certain behaviour and attitude by observing and imitating the reactions of others (Martin & Bush, 2000). Previous marketing studies have used this theory alongside various socialization agents such as celebrities and friends to analyze and understand consumers' behaviour (North & Kotze 2001; Martin & Bush 2000). In understanding social media influencers, the theory that serves as a contextual foundation is the social learning theory. Therefore, this theory suggests that consumers' attitude and persuasiveness of influencers (i.e., the attractiveness of the source, credibility and trustworthiness of the source) in promoting certain products and services, can have an impact on customers' purchase intention. A consumer's attitude can be defined by his beliefs, feelings and behavioural intention towards choosing a service or buying a product. Factors that can influence consumers' attitudes are among others, perceived benefits, credibility, reference group like family and friends. The more favourable the attitude, the more chances are that a consumer will follow its intentions to buy or choose a service. Past research papers show that extremely reliable reviews are more likely than less reliable reviews to reassure consumers and shift their attitudes and behaviours in the direction of the valence (Chakraborty, 2019; Lee & Koo, 2012; van Lohuizen & Trujillo-Barrera, 2020). In their study, Lim and Van Der Haide (2015), concluded that reviews' valence have a direct impact on consumers' attitudes. According to Lee et al. (2009), positive online reviews have a bigger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to negative reviews. Furthermore, Park & Kang's (2019), study showed that when the review is balanced, consumers tend to have a more favourable attitude, compared to one-sided reviews.

2.7. Perceived credibility

Hovland and Weiss (1951), first introduced the theory of source credibility, a communication theory that states an individual can be persuaded by a piece of information depending on its degree of credibility. Source credibility refers to how much a receiver trusts a particular source's statements (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). Moreover, two important factors that make up the credibility of the source and represent what people are looking for when reading an online review is trustworthiness and expertise (Chakraborty, 2019). Therefore, two of the test variables of the study are perceived expertise and perceived trustworthiness. The concept of trustworthiness was defined by Friedman et al., (1976) as: “the attribute of dignity, believability and honesty possessed by the endorser and observed by consumers” while expertise is defined by as Hovland et al., 1953: “the degree of perceived understanding, skills, and knowledge that the endorser has.”

According to past research studies, source credibility and the quality of the argument play an important role in making a consumer decide whether they should visit the restaurant or not (Zhang et al., 2014). When it comes to consumers being in a neutral state when reading reviews, unfavourable comments are more credible and persuasive than positive comments (Sen & Lerman, 2007). Past papers show that good reviews are recognized to be less credible than bad reviews (Filieri, 2016; Von Helversen et al., 2018). When there is a higher amount of negative reviews, they are considered to be more trustworthy (Cheung et al., 2009). Good online reviews can have less impact on attitudes and buying intentions due to a loss of credibility of positive reviews.

The literature shows that a single balanced opinion affects the credibility of consumers in a positive way, but when there is a collection of balanced opinions, the credibility of consumers is affected in a negative way (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012). An important factor that influences the credibility of reviews is their consistency. Therefore, the credibility of the reviews is increasing when there is a collection of only positive reviews, or only negative reviews and is decreasing when there is a collection of balanced reviews (both positive and negative) (Van Lohuizen & Trujillo-Barrera, 2019). In his study, Filieri (2018), investigates the relationship between balanced reviews and credibility and their findings show that balanced reviews are perceived to be more credible than positive and negative reviews. According to the study:

“Respondents declare that they value highly more moderate reviews because these reviews often provide a balanced and more plausible opinion of an establishment than reviews with extreme ratings.”

This confirms the findings of Eisend (2006), that found out balanced reviews are more trustworthy than one-sided reviews especially if the latter are “short, emotional, and contain no details”.

2.8. Main effects for Review Valence

The review valence can refer to it being positive, negative or having both elements, and that makes it balanced. In past research studies, the valence of online reviews has been highly investigated (Ballantine & Yeung, 2015; Fazio et al., 2015; Lee & Koo, 2012), but there are no consistent findings around this topic. Therefore, there are no clear results that show which one between negative, positive and balanced valence has the most impact on perceived credibility, purchase intention and consumers’ attitudes. However, several research papers have discovered that valence has a major impact on consumers’ attitudes (Lee et al., 2009), perceived credibility (Ballantine & Yeung, 2015) and purchase intention (Tata et al., 2020).

According to past research papers, the credibility of the review is different when the valence of the review is different. Consumers' views shared online cannot be controlled by marketers or businesses. While some businesses will get favourable feedback, some will receive negative reviews from their dissatisfied customers (Sen & Lerman, 2017). Although, the literature shows inconsistent findings of whether positive, negative or two-sided reviews have a greater influence on customers' purchase intention, perceived credibility and consumers' attitudes. According to Wilemsen (2011), when an opinion shared online is positive, a consumer will perceive and recall it better, and therefore will follow the recommendation, ending up visiting the restaurant. The credibility of positive reviews can become questionable when the amount of positive feedback about a single business is by far more than negative reviews. Therefore, this will make consumers look for negative views about the product, or service (Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006).

“Negativity bias” refers to the tendency of people to believe negative aspects and experiences more easily compared to positive ones, and this, therefore, affects our behaviour (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Thus, as concluded in the findings of past research studies, online reviews with mostly negative information have a bigger impact on consumers' attitudes and behaviours of consumers compared to positive reviews (Fazio et al., 2015; Baumeister et al., 2001). This can be the result of customers with low expertise who read the reviews. Consumers listen more to this type of reviews because they want to minimize certain risks (Cheng & Loi, 2014). In one of their study Sen and Lerman (2007), concluded that people think negative reviews have more to do with the actual product or service, compared to positive reviews. Furthermore, another argument in favour of negative reviews is the belief that this kind of WOM is not related to the company directly, like how some positive reviews may be (Chiou, 2018). This, therefore, increases their perceived credibility.

However, some studies contradict the findings mentioned above (Lee et al., 2009; Doh & Hwang, 2009). And their findings are explained by the “positivity bias” or the “positivity effect. This concept refers to people’ capacity to positively analyse an event that also has negative aspects (Reed et al., 2014). Furthermore, it can also suggest a selective optimization, consumers only remembering positive aspects and experiences. According to a tendency in the consumers’ attitudes when reading a negative review, is to blame it on a single bad experience with the service or product (Manthiou et al., 2020).

According to past research papers on the subject, there are no consistent findings regarding the influence of review valence. However, O’Keefe (1999), states that balanced reviews that contain both negative and positive aspects are more effective in increasing consumers’ purchase intention, than reviews that only present one side of the story. And this happens because of the presence of counterarguments. Furthermore, the study found that balanced reviews are perceived to be more credible than negative or positive reviews. It also suggests that double-sided reviews are more persuasive for people with higher educational backgrounds. Moreover, Cheung et al., (2012), found that balanced reviews are more reassuring and therefore, increase consumers’ attitude for those with low involvement and offer more evidence for the ones that don’t have much expertise in that specific domain. So, it can be concluded that balanced reviews, containing both negative and positive aspects, offer a more critical and credible view, therefore influencing consumers’ perceived credibility (formed out of trustworthiness and expertise as explained before) and purchase intention in a positive way. As seen in the literature, the perceived credibility of a review has a domino effect on consumers’ attitudes and purchase intention, affecting them both (Kim & Song, 2020). With everything said, the first hypotheses of the paper are:

H1a: Online restaurant reviews with a positive valence will lead to higher purchase intention, compared to negative restaurant reviews.

H1b: Online restaurant reviews with a positive valence have a stronger impact on consumers’ attitudes, compared to negative restaurant reviews.

H1c: Online restaurant reviews with a negative valence will lead to higher perceived trustworthiness, compared to positive restaurant reviews.

H1d: Online restaurant reviews with a negative valence will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to positive restaurant reviews.

H2a: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher purchase intention, compared to positive restaurant reviews.

H2b: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to positive restaurant reviews.

H2c: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher perceived trustworthiness, compared to negative restaurant reviews.

H2d: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to negative restaurant reviews.

2.9. Main effects for Platform type

Electronic word-of-mouth is defined to be a type of communication on the internet in the form of blogs, reviews or social networking posts (Goldsmith, 2006). Furthermore, it is recognized to be an important source of information that can affect human behaviour. Previous studies on the topic have found that e-WOM has a positive effect on the consumer decision-making process. As this method is considered more persuasive for opinion-shaping, a positive WOM can result in a positive perception of a product or a service, and the same goes for the negative WOM. Food blogging being considered from the marketing viewpoint a modern tool of e-WOM has an impact on consumer's purchase intention. Reviews and recommendation of a certain food place written by the food bloggers can quickly spread to people from their network, and even beyond friend and families. However, food influencers are not only posting on their blogs but nowadays Instagram has become one of the main platforms for opinion leaders to share their food experiences (Ramos-Serrano & Martínez-García, 2016). Instagram is an online social network platform where people can share photos from their lives, but it quickly became a tool for food bloggers to connect with their community share their recent food experiences. Therefore, people can get both convinced by the delicious food pictures, and influenced by the written recommendation of the blogger (Khalgatyan & Ivanova, 2020). Furthermore, reviews generated by consumers on social media platforms are viewed to be more trusted than content generated by

brands. This can happen because the reviews of the consumers carry the kind of information that satisfy the needs of the consumers. Communicating closely with their audience can make bloggers trustworthy and therefore increase the perception of credibility between them and consumers.

When talking about the platforms where one can post reviews for services or products there are multiple options. However, this paper will focus on independent blogs and Instagram as a platform for posting opinions and sharing views. As mentioned before, in their paper Ing & Ming (2018), suggested that comparing reviews made by bloggers on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook and reviews posted on private blogs would make a good premise for a research study, as it was not investigated before. But what is the difference between a blogger and an Influencer on Instagram? A blogger is someone who owns a website that contains posts about multiple topics. An influencer on Instagram is a person who decides to use this platform as a channel to influence the behaviors and opinions of other people. However, nowadays the terms influencer and blogger are used interchangeably and in this study the concept of “food bloggers” is referred to both people that share restaurant recommendation on their private blogs and the Instagram influencers that give restaurant reviews on their profile (Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018).

Instagram is a social network where users usually post videos and pictures, sharing views with an audience that is not only formed out of friends and family but anyone who shares the same interests (Colliander and Marder, 2018). People usually use this platform to review products, experiences or services (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016; Jaakkola, 2019). Moreover, unlike blogs, social network platforms allow the creation of a connection between users, increasing, therefore, the trust and credibility of the influencers (Rheingold, 1993) especially when the reviews are not financially influenced. According to a study conducted by MGH states that almost 50 % of the participants confirms that they chose a restaurant because of a social media post (Beambox, 2020), while another research states that more than 50 % of the people who look for food information online, they are researching social media and not other platform types like blogs, reviews websites and so on. Moreover, sharing a picture with a restaurant meal on Instagram has become standard practice nowadays and along with this the term of “foodstagram” was created. The information shared on a social network can influence the

behaviour and attitudes of the consumers because of two reasons: discovery (when people researched a lot before they made a choice) or influence (the peers that they follow online are influential) (Jackson, Yates & Orlikowski, 2007). The main difference between bloggers and influencers on social networks is that influencers are viewed as friends, acquaintances because of the more personal relation the platform provides, and therefore their opinion is considered more reliable (Fiorentino, 2019). On the other hand, a blog can be comparable to a social network because it simulates the same interaction between users, but the blogosphere doesn't allow for the creation of links and the same strong influences between users (Agarwal, 2018). Moreover, the trust and reputation of the influencers are driven by the connection between users and their network position, unlike bloggers whose trust and reputation is only derived from their response to other members' solicitation.

Past research papers found that different types of the platform can alter the relationship between review valence and credibility (divided into trustworthiness and expertise as stated above), purchase intention, and attitudes. According to Jaakkola (2019), Instagram reviews are in a shorter format than blog reviews, and they are meant to address more concise and relevant information, therefore making them more meaningful, persuasive and more credible than blogosphere reviews. In their study Astuti and Putri (2018), discovered that Instagram posts and reviews have a strong and positive impact on consumers' trust and therefore, on purchase intention. On the other hand, Wu and Lee (2012), investigated the effect of bloggers' reviews on trustworthiness, purchase intention and their hypotheses were not validated. Therefore, their study don't show a significant relationship between reviews posted on private blogs and consumers' perceived credibility and purchase intention. Furthermore, the literature shows a gap in comparing how reviews made on blogs or on the platform Instagram influences consumer's attitudes, purchase intention and perceived credibility. Thus, it is interesting to see the comparison between the two platforms and if this research will confirm findings from past studies.

H3a: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to lead to higher purchase intention, compared to reviews posted on private blogs.

H3b: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to reviews posted on private blogs.

H3c: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to be more trustworthy than the reviews posted on private blogs.

H3d: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to have higher expertise, than the reviews posted on private blogs.

The decision to investigate the interaction between review valence and platform type has been made because there are some gaps in the literature that needs to be filled regarding this interaction. Although, many studies researched review valence and the platforms of the study separately, their combined effect on consumers' attitudes and buying behaviours were not investigated. In their study, Ing and Ming (2018) suggested that further studies should look into this interaction effect, comparing private blogs to social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in regards to their effect on consumers' attitude and purchase intention. Therefore, the final hypotheses are:

H4a: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on purchase intention when the valence of the review is positive.

H4b: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on consumers' attitude when the valence of the review is positive.

H4c: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived trustworthiness when the valence of the review is positive.

H4d: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived expertise when the valence of the review is positive.

Based on the relevant findings in the literature, this thesis will examine purchase intention, perceived credibility and consumers' attitudes in the context of food bloggers and Instagram food bloggers from the perspective of the platform type and review valence.

3. Methodology

This chapter illustrates the research design, presenting arguments for the chosen method. Moreover, it also includes a section for the operationalisation of the research and a section that describes the used sample and the method of distribution of the questionnaire, as well as the detailed steps followed in the procedure of implementing this survey. Finally, the third chapter will also present a plan for the analysis part of the study, and the tools that are used for the collection and analysis of the data.

3.1. Argument for the chosen method

The decision for quantitative methods was made because the purpose of this research study is to measure the effect of food bloggers reviews on consumers` purchase intention, attitudes and perceived credibility. According to Babbie (2007), quantitative research methods usually use a deductive approach. Therefore, it is important to go from a theoretical background that suggests an expected pattern to conduct the test and see if the patterns really occur. Moreover, quantitative methods can facilitate testing hypotheses as well as analysing the relationship between certain variables instead of just describing them (Punch, 2003). According to Zhou and Sloan (2009), quantitative methods can enable generalization and prediction. Therefore, the decision to employ a quantitative method over a qualitative method has been made, since this seems to be the appropriate method for the chosen research question. More precisely, because this research is studying the relationship between variables, the decision to implement an experiment has been made.

According to past research studies, an experiment is the most suitable method when the study wants to investigate the influence of independent variables on the dependent variables (Ross & Morisson, 2004; Babbie, 2007; Gersten et al., 2005). When conducting an experiment, the causal relationship between two variables can be determined following two steps. Firstly, manipulating the independent variable – also known as the treatment variable – and secondly, consequently measuring the dependent variable (Perdue & Summers, 1986). Therefore, this will ensure a greater internal validity (Ross & Morisson, 2004).

For this research study, the decision to implement an online experimental questionnaire has been made. First of all, online surveys are less time consuming and it allows for a faster

collection of data and subsequently a faster importing of data in the chosen analysis software (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Furthermore, it allows for distribution to large samples, and it can reduce geographical restrictions. Another benefit of choosing an online survey is that it reduces the margin of error. The participants' responses are recorded directly into the software and therefore the accuracy of the data depends less on human attention (Fricker, 2016). Second of all, the online environment facilitates a more fitting space for the nature of the study and the chosen stimuli of the experiment (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Furthermore, the design of the experimental questionnaire can allow for the collection of additional data like demographics and other control variables that can be relevant but not taking into consideration when performing the analysis. However, a limitation of this method can be that only people with an internet connection can complete the questionnaire (Singh, 2009). On the other hand, a condition for the research sample would be that the participants use social media and currently have an Instagram account.

The attitudes and the purchase intention of the consumers are popular research topics in the marketing field and they were usually measured in the past with a questionnaire and experimental research design (Spears, 2004) as this will allow for a quantifiable analysis of the topic. Moreover, experimental research can facilitate more specific results because each individual react differently to the presented stimuli. Therefore, the purchase intention of the population depends on the context, as they will show different intent to visit the restaurant depending on the review. Nonetheless, this study will also follow this approach, considering the fact that past research papers which studied the effect of online reviews on the intention to visit a restaurant, mostly decided on a questionnaire with an experimental design (van Lohuizen & Trujillo-Barrera, 2020; Stoitzner, 2020; Naylor, Lamberton, & Norton, 2011).

The research study will be carried out by conducting an online survey with an experimental design. This study will conduct a quantitative survey because by operationalizing the theoretical concepts into measurable variables, the degree to which independent variables (review valence and platform type) affect dependent variables (consumers' purchase intention, consumers' attitude and perceived source credibility) can be estimated. Furthermore, an online survey provides as it provides one standard measurement tool by asking multiple people the same questions (Sukamolson, 2007).

3.2. Sample

According to The Methodological Guidelines for Thesis Research provided by Erasmus University Rotterdam, the study should aim to form a sample out of approximately 30 participants per groups, which means a total of 240 respondents. This confirms what Yurdugül (2008), previously state that in order for the study to prove reliable and valid, the sample should be formed out of 30 - 50 participants for each condition of the survey. Because the respondents of the study need to meet certain criteria about their social media presence, probability sampling was found to not be a viable option for this study. That means that not all individuals from the population have a fair probability of being chosen for the research (Acharya et al., 2013). Moreover, because the questionnaire is constructed as an online survey, a non-probability sampling method is thought to be the best option (Fricker, 2016). Questionnaires are going to be released utilizing a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, non-probability sampling methods. This sampling method is usually used when the characteristics of the target population are known and therefore participants who can fit these characteristics are being tracked (Babbie, 2007). However, academicians usually oppose this approach since it is only partially reflective of the population (Matthews & Ross, 2010). But because stated above, this research study doesn't impose strict criteria,

The target population is therefore formed out of individuals who usually use social and digital media and have experience with online reviews on Instagram. Therefore, the participants need to meet only one criterion. And that is to have an Instagram account, because they have to be accommodated with the environment and the layout of Instagram posts (Hanjeerapanya, 2017). This will be needed when the participants are asked which platform they think was used for the review (manipulation check question). This will be measured with the following question: "On which platform do you have an account?" and the options are: Instagram, Facebook and TikTok, in order to shift the focus of the respondents away from the purpose of the study. The age, gender, educational background and nationality don't have an importance for the sample of the study but can bring important insights for the final results of the paper because the topic of the study can apply to multiple people. The questionnaire will be distributed online, using personal networks and the use of different social media platforms. Therefore, the participants were contacted via private message on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and even e-mails.

Moreover, public posts promoting the survey were made on LinkedIn and Instagram. Furthermore, food bloggers with activity on Instagram were contacted in order to distribute the survey with their communities. The participants of the study were asked to complete the questionnaire and distribute it with their network (family and friends).

3.3. Operationalisation

The operationalisation part of the research usually refers to translating the concepts into questions or items needed for the questionnaire. The steps needed for operationalization are the following: specifying the core concepts of the research model, determining a set of indicators, followed by formulating an applicable set of data- elicitors (Mills et al., 2009). Moreover, it is important to also operationalize the variables of the study to successfully conduct a research study (Allen, 2017). Without a clear operationalization of the concept, the reliability of the results is going to decrease. That is why this step has great importance to every quantitative research study. The first move would be to construct the conceptual model and afterwards decide which variables are independent and which are dependent. Variables are typically calculated using a scale that has been pre-validated or developed especially for analysis (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). In case the employment of new scales is wanted, the scales need to be validated. Therefore, for this study, it has been decided upon using already used scales, which are also validated. The independent variables of this study are represented by the platform where the online review is posted and the valence of the review. Additionally, the dependent variables of the research are consumers' attitude, perceived source credibility and the purchase intention in regards to choosing a restaurant.

All the fictional online reviews are adopted from Wu (2013) and adapted by the case to fit this research study and the conditions of this research. With the help of an Instagram post generator - Zeeob, the "foodofinstagram" page was created for the first four groups and a random photo was chosen for the profile picture. This Instagram post generator was chosen in order to keep the same format and layout of an Instagram post, to be more credible for participants in the study. The same number of likes, comments and date of the post was kept to not create a bias for the participants of the study. A version of an Instagram review post can be found in Appendix A.

No name was chosen for the restaurant, in order to not be alike an actual restaurant. The stimuli for the first group consist of an Instagram post that illustrates a positive online review with a persuasive text, appealing to possible future customers (Wu, 2013). The second group will see and read a similar review but with a negative valence, whilst the third group will read one with a balanced valence. Additionally, the control group (fourth group) will see a post that describes a visit to the same restaurant, but no recommendation is given, be it negative, positive or balanced. For the group 5, 6, 7, and 8 a fictional food blog post was created with the help of the app Notion. Therefore, group 5 will read a positive review, group 6 a negative one and group 7 a balanced one. Additionally, group 8 will be the control group and will see a post that doesn't include a recommendation. The content of the stimulus materials is structured in such a way that will reduce the bias of seeing contrasting materials that will have a different impact on their opinions and behaviors. The font of the text is basic and commonly used, and that is Arial, whilst the structure of the text is kept the same, only keywords and phrases are changed in order to reflect the valence of the review. The picture of the restaurant was randomly chosen and is the same for all conditions (can be seen in Appendix A). This way, the likelihood that other factors will interfere with the stimuli's outcomes is reduced (Neuman, 2014).

3.3.1. Pre-test

The materials of the manipulation were pre-tested beforehand to see whether the attitude of the participants towards the restaurant, names and picture was neutral. Furthermore, it also tested whether the participants can understand all the questions, and what they are asked to respond to. The strategy that was selected as the 'think aloud' strategy mentioned by Sparks and Browning (2011), which was also proven to be effective in other studies (van Lohuizen, Barrera & Fischer, 2016). Therefore, 18 respondents end up completing the survey and commenting on the process in real-time, alongside the researcher. After the pre-test, all the observation were taken into consideration and therefore, the decision to keep the material as it is was taken. This was observed by asking them if they are familiar with the restaurant by looking at the picture added in the reviews. Furthermore, some items for the expertise variable were eliminated as the respondents thought they do not match the other ones in terms of the meaning of the concept. People should have answered to rate the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale: "I pay more attention to the reviews written by a blogger with expertise", "I will visit a restaurant if the

blogger who wrote the review is an expert” (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Some changes were also made to the wording of the reviews, in order to be clear for the participants which valence they see in their assigned review. The decision to keep the reviews as similar to each other as possible has been made. Moreover, only some details were changed in order for the valence of the review to be identifiable.

3.3.1. Purchase Intention

The first dependent variable of this study is the consumers’ purchase intention referring to consumers’ intention to choose a restaurant. This concept can be defined as purchase intention as consumers’ ability to purchase a certain good or service at a specific time and in a specific situation (Lu et al., 2014). van Lohuizen and Trujillo-Barrera (2020) used the purchase intention variable when referring to the intention to visit a restaurant in a similar research study. Therefore, the decision to keep this name for the dependent variable has been made. To measure purchase intention, respondents will be asked to what extent they agree with three statements (See table 3.1). The three 5-point Likert scale items for purchase intention were adopted from Plotkina and Munzel (2016), but was originally developed by Chandran and Morwitz (2005) and has proven to be highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.80$). The answering categories again ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3.2. Perceived Source Credibility

In this study, the second dependent variable is the food blogger’s credibility. And as mentioned above it is formed out of two components. Therefore this independent variable will include two sub-variables: trustworthiness and expertise. The purpose of a source to offer truth is linked to its trustworthiness (Xie et al., 2011) and will be measured with four statements (See table 3.2). The variable will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale and the items were adopted from Hsu et al. (2013), Lee and Ma (2012). The answering categories again will range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Expertise, the second component of perceived source credibility is defined as a "large, organized body of domain knowledge" (Bedard & Chi, 1992), "expert skill or knowledge" (Ericsson & Towne, 2010), "valid assertions" (Mackiewicz, 2010), or "qualification" (Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz 1969). The expertise will be measured with two

items (See table 3.2). The items were adapted from Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) but were originally developed by McCracken (1989), and has proven to be highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.82$). Respondents will be asked to indicate if the statement applied to their beliefs on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3.3. Consumers' attitude

The third and last dependent variable of the study is 'consumer attitude' and it can be defined as "emotional responses to environmental stimuli" (Staats, 1996). It will be measured by asking to what extent they agree with four statements (See table 3.1). Again, it will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The four items are adopted from Ing and Ming (2018) but were originally developed by Casaló, Flavián and Guinalú (2011).

Table 3.1: List of items

Variable	Item	Source	Alpha
Trustworthiness	I believe this food blogger's recommendation to be true.	Hsu et al. (2013), Lee and Ma (2012).	$\alpha = 0.80$
	I think this food blogger's recommendation is reliable.		
	I think this food blogger's recommendation is convincing.		
	I think this food blogger's recommendation is accurate.		
Expertise	I think the person who wrote this recommendation is qualified, knowledgeable, experienced enough to write it.	Wang & Scheinbaum (2018); McCracken (1989)	$\alpha = 0.82$

	I think a restaurant being recommended by a person with expertise is more trustable.		
Consumers' Attitude	I think following this food blogger's recommendation would be good for me. I have a positive opinion about this food blogger's recommendation. I like this food blogger's recommendation. Overall my attitude toward this food blogger's recommendation is favourable.	Ing & Ming (2018); Casaló, Flavián & Guinalú (2011).	$\alpha = 0.82$
Purchase Intention	I would seriously consider the restaurant recommended by the food blogger. I would choose the restaurant recommended by the food blogger in this review. If I were to choose between two restaurants, I will certainly choose the one recommended in this review.	Plotkina & Munzel (2016); Chandran & Morwitz (2005)	$\alpha = 0.80$

3.3.4. Demographics

The first block of questions of the questionnaire included a question about the demographics of the participants, to determine the characteristics of respondents and draw relevant conclusions. Therefore, they were asked about their age, gender, nationality and educational background. The demographics questions are asked at the beginning of the questionnaire because the findings from the literature show that some study subjects tend to get bored and not reach the end of the questionnaire. According to a study conducted by Green et al., (2000), there is no significant difference between demographics asked at the beginning or at the end of the questionnaire.

3.3.5. Manipulation Check

The manipulation checks of the study were employed to see if people perceived the reviews to be positive, negative or balanced. The manipulation check included two questions. Firstly, the participants were asked about the valence of the review. This was done by using a 5-point Likert scale adopted from Wu (2013). The item was formulated as follows: “I believe the review was positive.”. Moreover, the responses range from 1 (extremely disagree) to 5 (extremely agree). This way, 2 and 4 could have corresponded to the balanced reviews and 3 to the “no review” condition; 1 with negative and 5 with positive. Furthermore, it will also include a question that asks people to identify whether the review is posted on Instagram or a personal blog. This way the manipulated platform are being checked. These type of question have the role of determining whether or not the manipulation was successful.

3.4. Procedure

The questionnaire will be programmed using the software of Qualtrics, a tool that allows for the creation of surveys, collecting and analysing data from the convenience of the online environment (Beymer et al., 2018). Furthermore, because the questionnaire needs the functions of randomization of the experiment stimuli, and response filtering, the decision of using this software has been made. The questionnaire will be in English and is designed so participants will be assigned to one of the conditions of the study. Moreover, it was also programmed to assign the same amount of subjects to each group, to have a balanced sample. As mentioned above, the questionnaire will be shared online. Distributing the questionnaire online offers the opportunity

for the respondents to provide answers to the questions of the survey in a familiar place with no pressure. Furthermore, the respondents will be informed about the terms of the agreement right at the beginning of the process.

The first part of the questionnaire is meant to inform people on the purpose of the study, informing participants on the amount of time it would take them to complete the survey (5-7 minutes) and will provide contact details, in case anyone has any questions. Therefore, participants will see that the research is anonymous and confidential and it is about online restaurant reviews. As a result of the participants not being compensated financially for completing the questionnaire, their responses are more dependable. The next step will be for the participants to give their consent before moving on to the actual questionnaire. Next, participants are asked about their demographics and whether they have a social media account on different platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok). The one that will allow the respondents to move to the next questions is Instagram. On the next page, participants will see the instructions of the actual experiment. Because this research study consists of an experimental survey, a cover story was included so the participants can't figure out that they are manipulated. Therefore, they need to imagine they would have to pick the place for a future date and they need to assure they will enjoy a nice meal, in a memorable restaurant with great services. They will need to think about whether they would pick the restaurant commented in the online review or not, without further details on who is the person who wrote the review, and what is the real reason behind this. Next, the stimuli were being presented to the participants in the form of positive, negative, balanced or no review on an Instagram page or a blog post. Afterwards, the respondents need to respond to questions about their purchase intention, attitudes and perceived source credibility (trustworthiness and expertise). Subsequently, they will have to answer the manipulation check questions.

Moreover, a condition will be assigned to each participant of the study, making sure that there is an equal number of participants in all the groups. The experiment part of the study is in the form of exposing respondents to different conditions (fictive restaurant reviews), followed by the actual questionnaire. Moreover, the conditions will determine whether the type of the platform and the valence of the review affect the relationship between the variables of the study (Ross & Morisson, 2004).

To implement the study, the respondents that correspond to group 1, 2, 3 and 4 will have a look at an online restaurant review posted on a fictional food blogger Instagram account. The participants that correspond to group 5, 6, 7 and 8 will have a look at an online restaurant review posted on a fictional food blog. Moreover, the manipulation of the platforms will confirm the interaction role of the type of the platform. For both Instagram page and personal blog, the reviews will carry different valences: positive, negative, balanced and no review – the control group. This will show how the sentiment of the review will affect the perceived credibility, consumers' attitude and purchase intention. Furthermore, it will also allow for a comparison. Participants will be next asked to rate some statements according to their opinion and feelings towards the review. After that, they need to answer two question about the manipulation of the study. In the end they will be thanked for their participation and offered contact details for any further questions. Appendix B contains the questionnaire.

3.5. Experimental materials and Stimuli preparation

This research paper intends to see the effects of online restaurant reviews made by food bloggers on the consumers' intention to visit the restaurant, their attitudes and perceived credibility. The factors that are going to be manipulated in the study are the type of the platform (Instagram and Personal blog) and the valence of the review (negative, positive, balanced and no review). The dependent variables that are going to be measured are consumers' attitude, source credibility (formed out of two sub-categories: trustworthiness, expertise) and purchase intention. So, to answer the question of the research, a quantitative approach implementing a survey with an experimental design was found to be the most suitable method. The study will follow a 2x4 between-subjects factorial design displaying two platforms for reviews and four reviews with different valences, so therefore eight groups in total (See table 3.2). The control group is represented by the “no review” review.

As previously mentioned, the platform of the review is one of the manipulations in this experimental survey. Therefore, the first one is Instagram, a platform that is highly used today by people of all ages, either to give or to look for recommendations of all kinds. The literature shows that online reviews posted on this social media platform are found to be credible and influential when talking about consumers' attitude and intentions (Stoitzner, 2020). The second

platform is a mock-up personal food blog, another popular source for online reviews that were proven to influence consumers, but nowadays less than an Instagram page. This experimental study has the purpose to show the influence of these platforms on how people perceive food bloggers and their online reviews, and how much they are willing to follow the recommendation. Additionally, to make a comparison between the two platforms. The research expects to fill in a gap in the literature and to confirm that the review platform has a certain influence on consumers. The review valence is the second independent variable of the study. By definition, the valence of the review is one of the most focused dimensions of reviews posted online and refers to the communication direction of the review, namely positive, negative or neutral (Zhou et al., 2011). As also mentioned before, the literature shows that the valence of the review has a high impact on the consumers' attitudes, perceived credibility and purchase intention, but there are some inconsistent finding of the particular effects of the reviews' valence. The stimulus content can be found in Appendix A.

Table 3.2: Conditions of the experiment

	Instagram	Personal blog
Positive review	Group 1	Group 5
Negative review	Group 2	Group 6
Balanced review	Group 3	Group 7
No review (control group)	Group 4	Group 8

3.6. Analysis

In the next step, the data gathered is going to be analyzed using the software IBM SPSS Statistics version 27, after downloading it from Qualtrics. After computing the data in SPSS, responses that were incomplete and had missing answers were deleted. The next step would be the preparation of the data (e.g. removing variables created by Qualtrics, specifying missing values and inspecting variables types). To test the reliability and validity of the data gathering software tool, internal factor analysis and reliability analysis are going to be conducted. A priori conditions for factor analysis were reviewed before running the factor analysis in SPSS. It was checked to see if the scale was usually distributed and if the sample size was at least 150 people.

According to Mvududu and Sink (2013), the minimum sample for a good factor analysis is formed out of 300 participants. However, if the scale demonstrates a high level of internal consistency, a sample of 150 and above respondents will suffice.

In the next step, the analysis that was performed was manipulation checks. The analysis is done with a between-subjects ANOVA. Furthermore, an ANOVA was performed to see if the four types of valences differed in terms of perceived review valence. To make a comparison between the participants who were exposed to the Instagram page and the personal blog, an independent sample t-test was conducted.

To test the hypotheses of the research study and to answer the research question the following analyses were made: t-tests and two-factor ANOVAs. In order to test the interaction hypotheses, analyses like ANCOVAs and Linear Regressions have been performed.

4. Results

This chapter will discuss the results of the hypotheses testing. The first part presents the demographics of the research study. Therefore, the age, gender, nationality and educational level of the measurements are discussed here. Moreover, the second part will talk about the reliability and validity of the variables. The next part will show the results of the hypotheses testing and an explanation of the results, followed by further analyses. Finally, this chapter presents a concluding part which illustrates the summary of the results section.

4.1. Data cleaning and preparation

The tool that was used for analysing the data is IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. After downloading the data, a total of 265 responses were registered. The next step was removing any incomplete answers. Therefore, questionnaires that were abandoned or partially completed were deleted. Moreover, some responses that answered, “Strongly disagree” or “Somewhat disagree” to the following statement “ I have looked with attention towards the picture and the review” were also deleted. After cleaning the data, a total of 252 responses were left, meeting the target of the research. Another important step that followed was the creation of the database. Therefore, this allowed for the modification of age to keep just the number, because some people also added “years old”. After cleaning the data, two new variables were computed in the database - the variable “PlatformType” that refers to whether a participant read a blog or Instagram review and “Reviewvalence” concerning the valence of the review (negative, balanced, positive and no review). Because the questionnaire was designed in such a way that conditions were equally assigned to participants, there should be an equal number of responses in each condition. However, after cleaning and deleting some responses, the sample size per condition has changed and can be seen in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: sample size per condition

	Instagram	Personal blog
Positive review	33	31
Negative review	27	30

Balanced review	28	32
No review (control group)	29	28
Total:	117	121

4.2. Manipulation checks

The manipulation check for the platform type was asked on one item asking respondents to respond to the following question “Which platform do you think was used for this review?”. There were three options to choose from: “Instagram”, “Personal Blog” and “Other”. To check if the manipulation worked for the platform type when creating the database, it is important to look if the participants actually identified the manipulated platform. Therefore, only 2 responses did not match the manipulated platform and were deleted from the database. These observations suggest that the platform where the review is posted really was recognized and indicated correctly by the participants in the study. Another manipulation check was also implemented for the valence of the review. However, for the valence of the review, the observations show some significant differences between the manipulated valence and what participants indicated. The manipulation check consisted of a 5-point Likert scale item. Therefore, people were asked to respond to whether they think the review was positive. The results suggest that people perceived the valence of the review differently than how they were manipulated. Therefore, multiple responses were deleted, leading to a total of 238 participants. Overall, it can be concluded that the manipulations were partially successful. The limitations of the study regarding the manipulation will be further discussed in chapter 5.

4.3. Demographics

After cleaning the data, a total of $N = 238$ respondents participated in this study. In the final sample, there were 97 men, 137 women and 4 respondents that chose the “Other” option. The percentage of men is therefore 40.8% whilst the female share is 57.6%. Participants` average age was 23.30 ($SD = 7.32$), the questionnaire having respondents of 16 minimum age and 54 maximum. Due to the international nature of the approached groups, the sample obtained a total of 8 Different nationalities, most prominent being Romanian (74.4%), British (13.9%) and

German (5.5%). The most named education level was Bachelor degree with 103 (43.3%) followed by Master degree with 64 (26.9%) and high school with 46 (19.3%).

4.4. Internal consistency

The Cronbach's alpha was calculated to see the internal consistency for each variable. Therefore, the first internal consistency analysis was performed on the trustworthiness variable that contains 4 items asked on a 5-point Likert scale. The results showed $\alpha = .87$. The second analysis was performed for the purchase intention variable that contains 4 items asked on a 5-point Likert scale. The results shows $\alpha = .88$. Furthermore, the same analysis was performed on consumers' attitudes (4 items) and expertise (2 items), both asked on a 5-point Likert scale. However, only consumers' attitudes proved to be reliable ($\alpha = .90$). The numbers for expertise ($\alpha = .31$) don't show a high level of internal consistency, therefore it is not reliable. Because the variables only had two items, the decision to only keep the first item has been made, as it is the best option according to the definition of the concept and the context of the research. The item that was deleted is formulated as follows: "I think a restaurant being recommended by a person with expertise is more trustable". This item refers to the expertise of a person in a more general way, that is probably why it did not work for this research. For the rest, new variables have been created by computing their mean.

4.5. Hypotheses testing

4.5.1. Main effects for purchase intention

The analyses that were implemented in order to test the hypotheses of the study were: independent sample t-tests and univariate analyses of variance to test the between-subjects design and the interaction effects between factors. A univariate analysis of variance tested the effects of the valence of the reviews and the platform where this is posted on consumers' purchase intention. Results indicated a significant main effect for the valence of the review, $F(3, 230) = 32.28, p < .001$ (see Appendix C). As hypothesized, those who saw the positive valence showed a higher purchase intention compared to those who had seen the negative reviews (see table 4.2). These results suggest the intention of consumers is significantly higher when the review has a positive valence compared to negative valence. Therefore, hypothesis H1a is accepted. There was also a significant main effect for the platform type, $F(1,230) = 6.84, p =$

.009 (see Appendix C). The purchase intention of consumers is significantly higher when the review is posted on Instagram compared to the reviews posted on blogs. Therefore, hypothesis H3a is accepted.

For the balanced reviews, to see where the exact differences are, multiple independent sample t-tests were conducted to see the effects of this valence. Moving to the second hypothesis, H2 predicted a significantly higher score for the balanced review group on all four factors, purchase intention, consumers' attitudes, trustworthiness and expertise. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare balanced restaurant reviews and negative restaurant reviews in regards to consumers' purchase intention. These results suggest the intention of consumers does not differ significantly higher when the review has a balanced valence ($M= 3.68$, $SD = 1.05$) compared to a positive valence ($M= 3.71$, $SD = 0.78$), $t(110.00) = -0.25$, $p=0.80$, $p > .050$. Therefore, H2a is rejected.

Table 4.2: results of the univariate analysis for purchase intention.

Condition	Mean
Positive	3.71 ^a
Balanced	3.68 ^a
No review	3.01 ^b
Negative	2.33 ^c

Note: Means with different superscripts different significantly ($p < 0.050$)

4.5.2. Main effects for consumers' attitudes

A univariate analysis of variance also tested the effects of the valence of the reviews and the platform where this is posted on consumers' attitude. The results of the test indicated a significant main effect for the valence of the review, $F(3, 230) = 28.59$, $p < .001$ (see Appendix C). Those who saw the positive valence review showed a more favourable attitude ($M = 3.90$) compared to those who had seen negative reviews (see table 4.3). H1b stated that online restaurant reviews with a positive valence have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to negative restaurant reviews. Therefore, H1b is accepted. However, for the platform

type, there was no significant main effect found, $F(1,230) = 6.84, p = .009$ (see Appendix C). The attitude of consumers does not differ significantly when the review is posted on Instagram compared to the reviews posted on blogs. H3b states that online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to reviews posted on private blogs. Therefore, H3b is rejected.

Moreover, to see where the exact difference is, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare balanced restaurant reviews and positive restaurant reviews. The results of the t-test showed that there is a significant difference between the two groups, but the attitude of consumers is not significantly higher when the review has a balanced valence ($M= 3.60, SD = 0.70$) compared to a positive valence ($M= 3.90, SD = 0.84$), $t(120.01) = -2.16, p < .050$. The results did not show what was expected and hypothesized. Specifically, these results suggest that the attitude of consumers is significantly higher when the review has a positive valence compared to a balanced valence (see table 4.3). Therefore, it can be concluded that hypothesis H2b is rejected.

Table 4.3: results of the univariate analysis for consumers' attitudes.

Condition	Mean
Positive	3.99 ^a
Balanced	3.60 ^a
No review	2.97 ^b
Negative	2.68 ^b

Note: Means with different superscripts different significantly ($p < 0.050$)

4.5.3. Main effects for trustworthiness

Another univariate was performed to see the effects of review valence and platform type on the test variable expertise. The results of the test indicated a significant main effect for the valence of the review, $F(3, 230) = 23.92, p < .001$ (see Appendix C). Those who saw the balanced valence review showed the highest score for perceiving the review to be more trustworthy ($M = 4.25$) compared to those who had seen the positive reviews (see table 4.3). H1c

predicted that online restaurant reviews with a negative valence will lead to higher perceived trustworthiness, compared to positive restaurant reviews. Therefore, H1c is accepted. However, for the platform type, there was no significant main effect found, $F(1,230) = 0.05, p = .826, p > .050$ (see Appendix C). People who read the restaurant reviews posted on Instagram had a similar score for perceived trustworthiness to those who read the reviews on personal blogs (see table 4.4). Therefore, H3c which predicted Instagram reviews to be more trustworthy than the reviews posted on private blogs is rejected.

To see more detailed results for H2c, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare balanced restaurant reviews and negative reviews, and their effects on perceived trustworthiness. The results of the t-test showed that there the perceived trustworthiness of consumers is not significantly higher when the review has a balanced valence ($M= 4.05, SD = 0.88$) compared to a negative valence ($M= 3.82, SD = 0.55$), $t(110.01)= 1.68, p=.097, p > .050$. These results suggest that online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence are perceived to show the same degree of trustworthiness as negative reviews. However, past studies suggest that balanced reviews are more trustworthy and believe to have higher expertise than one-sided reviews, but this can be both negative and positive (Eisend, 2006). Therefore, from the univariate analysis, it can be observed that balanced reviews have a significantly higher score for perceived trustworthiness compared to positive reviews (see table 4.4). These results suggest that indeed balanced reviews are more credible and more trusted than one-sided reviews only if they are positive. Based on the results, H1c is rejected.

Table 4.4: results of the univariate analysis for trustworthiness.

Condition	Mean
Balanced	4.05 ^a
Negative	3.82 ^a
Positive	3.30 ^b
No review	2.29 ^c

Note: Means with different superscripts different significantly ($p < 0.050$)

4.5.4. Main effects for expertise

Another univariate analysis was conducted to test the main effects on expertise. The results of the test indicated a significant main effect for the valence of the review, $F(3, 230) = 18.63, p < .001$ (see Appendix C). The results showed that those who saw the balanced review showed the highest score for perceiving the review to be written by someone with expertise in the domain ($M = 3.75$) compared to those who had seen the positive reviews (see table 4.5). H1d suggest that negative reviews will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to positive restaurant reviews. Therefore, based on the results, H1d is accepted. However, for the platform type, there was no significant main effect found, $F(1,230) = 0.16, p = .693, p > .050$ (see Appendix C). H3d predicted that Instagram reviews are perceived to have higher expertise, than the reviews posted on private blogs. The results show that the perceived expertise of consumers is not significantly higher when the review is posted on Instagram compared to private blogs (see table 4.5). Therefore H3d is rejected.

Furthermore, H2d predicted that online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to negative restaurant reviews. From the univariate analysis, it can be observed that the perceived expertise of consumers is not significantly higher when the valence is balanced compared to negative valence (see table 4.5). However, as mentioned in the previous hypothesis and analysis, the literature suggests that balanced reviews are perceived to be more credible than both positive and negative reviews (Filieri, 2018). Because expertise has proven to be one of the factors that make up the credibility of the source, the decision to also analyze these effects has been made. Therefore, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the two-sided reviews to positive recommendations. The results show showed that the perceived expertise of consumers is significantly higher for balanced reviews ($M= 3.75, SD = 1.24$) compared to positive reviews ($M= 2.75, SD = 0.98, t(111.87)= 4.96, p < .001$). These results suggest that indeed balanced reviews are perceived to show a higher degree of expertise, and therefore are considered to be more credible and more trusted than one-sided reviews, only if they are positive (see table 4.5). However, based on the results and the formulated hypothesis, H2d is rejected.

Table 4.5: results of the univariate analysis for expertise.

Condition	Mean
Balanced	3.75 ^a
Negative	3.49 ^a
Positive	2.74 ^b
No review	2.49 ^c

Note: Means with different superscripts different significantly ($p < 0.050$)

4.5.5. Interaction effects

Hypotheses H4a, H4b, H4c and H4d concerns the interaction effects of this research. H4a predicted a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on purchase intention when the valence of the review is positive. However, from the univariate analysis, it can be observed that there was no significant interaction between the two factors found, $F(3, 230) = 0.89$, $p = .446$, indicating that there is no joint effect between the valence of the review and the platform type in this case (see table 4.6). Therefore, H4a is rejected.

Table 4.6: results of the univariate analysis regarding the interaction effects of review valence and platform type on purchase intention.

		Review valence * Platform type				$p = 0.446 > 0.050$
		Review valence				
Platform type		Positive	Negative	Balanced	No review	
Purchase Intention	Instagram	3.818	2.580	3.905	3.023	
	Personal Blog	3.591	2.087	3.458	3.000	

Furthermore, H4b predicted a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on

consumers' attitude when the valence of the review is positive. There was also no significant interaction between the two factors found, $F(3, 230) = 0.89$, $p = .446$, indicating that there is no joint effect between the valence of the review and the platform type in this case (see table 4.7). Therefore, H4b is rejected.

Table 4.7: results of the univariate analysis regarding the interaction effects of review valence and platform type on consumers' attitude.

		Review valence * Platform type				$p = 0.812 > 0.050$
		Review valence				
Platform type		Positive	Negative	Balanced	No review	
Consumers' Attitudes	Instagram	3.894	2.574	3.652	2.897	
	Personal	3.895	2.717	3.547	3.045	
	Blog					

From the univariate analysis, it can be concluded whether H4c is accepted or rejected (see Appendix C). H4c predicted that there is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived trustworthiness when the valence of the review is balanced. Based on the results, there was also no significant interaction between the two factors found, $F(3, 230) = 0.34$, $p = .795$, $p > .050$, indicating that there is no joint effect between the valence of the review and the platform type in this case (see table 4.8). Therefore, H4c is rejected.

Table 4.8: results of the univariate analysis regarding the interaction effects of review valence and platform type on trustworthiness.

Review valence * Platform type	
Review valence	

	Platform type	Positive	Negative	Balanced	No review	$p = 0.795 > 0.050$
Trustworthiness	Instagram	3.273	3.796	4.125	2.828	
	Personal Blog	3.323	3.842	3.977	2.973	

H4d suggests that there is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived expertise when the valence of the review is balanced. From the univariate analysis, there was no significant interaction between the two factors found, $F(3, 230) = 0.96, p = .411, p > .050$, indicating that there is no joint effect between the valence of the review and the platform type in this case (see table 4.9). Therefore, H4d is rejected.

Table 4.9: results of the univariate analysis regarding the interaction effects of review valence and platform type on expertise.

Review valence * Platform type						$p = 0.411 > 0.050$
Review valence						
Platform type	Positive	Negative	Balanced	No review		
Expertise	Instagram	2.939	3.370	3.714	2.552	
	Personal Blog	2.548	3.600	3.781	2.429	

4.6. Summary

This section summarises what has been discussed in chapter 4, including the results of the hypotheses of the research. Moreover, these will help answer the RQ of the study. The first part showed how the cleaning and preparation of the data took place. Therefore, the creation of a database and new variables is discussed in 4.1. In section 4.2, the demographics of the study are

presented with nationalities, educational background, gender and age of respondents. Furthermore, 4.3 discusses the reliability and validity of the measures. All variables have proven to be highly reliable except for expertise. Therefore, the decision to only keep the most accurate item has been taken. The next section illustrates the analysis that was performed to see if the manipulations worked. The results showed that the manipulations were partially successful. In 4.5 the analyses of the hypotheses are discussed. Furthermore, this section includes a conclusion on whether the hypotheses of the study are accepted or rejected. After analysing all results, it has been deduced that only 6 hypotheses are accepted (see table 4.10).

Table 4.10: results of this study's proposed hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Accept/Reject
H1a: Online restaurant reviews with a positive valence will lead to higher purchase intention, compared to negative restaurant reviews.	Accepted
H1b: Online restaurant reviews with a positive valence have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to negative restaurant reviews.	Accepted
H1c: Online restaurant reviews with a negative valence will lead to higher perceived trustworthiness, compared to positive restaurant reviews.	Accepted
H1d: Online restaurant reviews with a negative valence will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to positive restaurant reviews.	Accepted
H2a: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher purchase intention, compared to positive restaurant reviews.	Rejected
H2b: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to positive restaurant reviews	Rejected
H2c: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher perceived trustworthiness, compared to negative restaurant reviews.	Rejected
H2d: Online restaurant reviews with a balanced valence will lead to higher perceived expertise, compared to negative restaurant reviews.	Rejected

H3a: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to lead to higher purchase intention, compared to reviews posted on private blogs.	Accepted
H3b: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived have a stronger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to reviews posted on private blogs.	Rejected
H3c: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to be more trustworthy than the reviews posted on private blogs.	Rejected
H3d: Online restaurant reviews posted by bloggers on Instagram are perceived to have higher expertise, than the reviews posted on private blogs.	Rejected
H4a: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on purchase intention when the valence of the review is balanced.	Rejected
H4b: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on consumers' attitude when the valence of the review is balanced.	Rejected
H4c: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived trustworthiness when the valence of the review is balanced.	Rejected
H4d: There is a significant interaction between platform type and review valence such that online restaurant reviews posted on Instagram have the strongest influence on perceived expertise when the valence of the review is balanced.	Rejected

5. Results

This chapter provides the conclusion and discussions of the study in an attempt to answer the proposed research question. Section 5.1 will talk about the results of the hypotheses and what are the implications of the research study. Furthermore, it will also include details on how this paper managed to fill some gaps in the literature. Then, 5.2 presents the societal and managerial implication of this study's results. Moreover, the limitations of this research are going to be debated in 5.3, followed by suggestions for improvements and future research in 5.4. The conclusions will be discussed in 5.5

5.1. Discussion and Conclusion

Instagram has become one of the biggest platforms for socializing, promoting and managing a brand, but most importantly changing and influencing opinions. This platform has recently become an excellent place for people to share their opinions on different products, services and experiences in an attempt to help and guide other people in their purchase behaviour (Stoitzner, 2020). Alongside social media platforms, people also resorted to personal blogs as they can provide the best environment for introspection. A place where everyone can write with the luxury of details and be heard. One way to use these channels was to first post something on Instagram only as a teaser meant to redirect people to the article on the blog. Some argue that the quality of content and power of persuasion can be affected by the limit of words Instagram has on posts (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). It is interesting to see if now a simple post in the feed is sufficient to influence behaviours and attitudes. Moreover, the people who write these reviews are what was first called a blogger but what is called nowadays an influencer. As we have seen, these can impact their communities, communities that are formed around a shared interest (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). Via word-of-mouth (WOM) techniques, the influencers of our time enable a message to be delivered and received quickly and reliably (Kiss & Bichler, 2008). Social media platforms including the blogosphere are an important source of information because people usually share their experiences with products and services. The question is which platform is the most influential? Does the platform of the review really affect consumer's attitudes, perceived credibility and purchase intention towards visiting a restaurant? Albeit the literature shows significant findings on the effect of eWOM on the restaurant industry, not many research studies looked into Instagram and the effect of the platform on the effectiveness of

online reviews. As far as the literature research part of this paper went, there were no studies found that made a comparison between Instagram and personal blogs concerning online restaurant recommendations. Furthermore, some inconsistent findings contradict each other regarding the impact of review valence on consumers' attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, these are the gaps that this study aims to bridge.

The results from testing the hypotheses confirmed the predicted results. However, not all the hypotheses confirm what was expected from the analyses. For the main effects of review valence, the results show that the valence of the reviews indeed affects all three test variables: purchase intention, consumers' attitudes and perceived source credibility. The experimental group that read the positive shows the highest score for purchase intention, but it does not differ with much from the balanced review. The same results also applied for the consumers' attitude variable, meaning that positive reviews have the most impact on participants' attitude towards the restaurant. The analysis for the two factors, expertise and trustworthiness show that the experimental group who was exposed to the balanced review has the biggest score. Nonetheless, the results show that the people exposed to balanced reviews don't perceive the review to be more credible than the ones exposed to negative reviews, like was expected. Moreover, for the main effects of platform type, the results suggest that consumers are affected only on the purchase intention level by the platform type. Furthermore, there were no significant interaction effects found between review valence and platform type. To conclude, review valences show great effects, whereas the effects of the platform type are limited to only one level but is still present in the results. Moreover, the effect is significant for the most important factor of the study.

For the platform type, it can be said that the results of this study filled the gap in the literature, in the sense that the findings show significant results for people who read the Instagram reviews in regards to their purchase intention. Therefore, the results of this research add to the literature the concept that Instagram reviews are more persuasive than reviews posted on private blogs. Moreover, the findings are in line with previous studies that stated the valence has a major impact on consumers' attitudes (Lee et al., 2009), perceived credibility (Ballatine & Yeung, 2015) and purchase intention (Tata et al., 2020). To be more precisely, positive reviews are considered to be the most persuasive concerning restaurant recommendations. Moreover,

negative reviews are perceived as more credible than positive and balanced reviews, like was indicated by Kusumasondjaja & Marchegiani (2012). Regarding the attitude of consumers, this is significantly higher when the reviews are positive and balanced compared to the other valences. This was suggested by Park & Kang (2019), in one of their studies.

Although some hypotheses were not confirmed, the results of the analyses prove some interesting points. Firstly, the results indeed indicate the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of consumers is significantly higher for balanced reviews compare to one-sided reviews. Therefore, balanced reviews are considered to be more credible and trustworthy than one-sided reviews, only if they are positive, which can be a point of focus for future studies. Secondly, even though Instagram reviews are not proven to be more credible than private blog reviews.

For the test variable purchase intention, the results from the analysis indicate that both the platform and the valence of the review affect it. Positive reviews are proven to be the most persuasive when talking about online restaurant reviews. These results are in alignment with past research studies conducted by Wilemsen (2011). According to his paper, when an opinion shared online is positive, a consumer will perceived and recall it better, and therefore will follow the recommendation. For the balanced reviews, however, the findings contradict past papers that said balanced reviews are more effective in influencing people's purchase intention, compared to one-sided reviews (O'Keefe, 1999). Furthermore, an addition to the literature is that, comparing online restaurant recommendation posted on blogs and Instagram, reviews on Instagram are perceived to be more persuasive. For the interaction effect between platform type and review valence, the hypotheses were not confirmed, contradicting the expectations provided by Ing and Ming's (2018), in one of their papers.

Furthermore, the results from the analysis indicate that only the valence of the review has an effect on the test variable consumers' attitude. Consumers have proven to have the most favourable attitude after reading positive online restaurant review. These are followed by balanced reviews. The results of these study are in line with findings from past research studies conducted by Lee et al. (2009), who found out that positive online reviews have a bigger impact on consumers' attitudes, compared to negative reviews. However, this study's results contradict the findings provided by Park & Kang's (2019), which refer to the fact that when the review is balanced, consumers tend to have a more favourable attitude, compared to one-sided reviews.

For the platform type, there is no addition to the literature, because the platform where the restaurant review is posted wasn't proven to be significant in this study. Furthermore, there were also insignificant findings for the interaction effect between platform type and review valence, results that can be explained by the lack of literature and consistent findings from studies that compared these variables.

As previously stated credibility is formed out of trustworthiness and expertise. For the test variable perceived trustworthiness, the results from the analysis indicate that only the valence of the review has an effect. Therefore, balanced reviews are perceived to be the most trustworthy when talking about online restaurant reviews. These are followed closely by negative reviews. The findings of this study of Eisend (2006), that found out balanced reviews are more trustworthy than one-sided reviews. However, in this study, balanced reviews are proven to be more trustworthy only than positive reviews and not negative reviews. These results can be explained by the inconsistent findings in the literature, Moreover, the results of the negative reviews confirm past research papers that indicate higher credibility for bad reviews, compared to good reviews (Filieri, 2016; Von Helversen et al., 2018). Furthermore, as for perceived trustworthiness, for expertise, balanced reviews are perceived to show the highest degree of expertise. There were similar results in Filieri's (2018), study. However, the results of this study don't confirm the significant difference between balanced reviews and negative reviews, when talking about expertise. For the platform type, there is no addition to the literature, because the platform where the restaurant review is posted wasn't proven to be significant in this study. Furthermore, there were also insignificant findings for the interaction effect between platform type and review valence, for both perceived expertise and perceived trustworthiness.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can have great implications on the restaurant industry and the Covid-19 pandemic. Now that the population is getting vaccinated, restrictions are starting to ease and things are planned to go back to normal, online restaurant reviews can be of great importance for people. Firstly, it is very easy to access them without human contact, unlike the classic WOM. Second of all, the findings of this study can reveal where to look for these reviews in order to find the ones that speak best to their needs (be it on social media or private blogs).

In order to provide the last conclusions, it is important to go back to the research question of the study, whether the valence and the platform of the restaurant review can influence the purchase intention, attitude and perceived credibility of the consumers. Therefore, the valence of the reviews has proven to be influential on all points. However, the platform where the online review is posted can be considered to be partially effective in influencing consumers' intentions and attitudes. The platform of the review was demonstrated to be influential only for purchase intention. Even though past research papers indicated the individual effect of Instagram or personal blogs on consumers' behaviours, when comparing the two platforms, the results do not differ significantly. An explanation for these results can be the similarity of these two platforms, as Instagram nowadays is starting more and more to take from the functions of a blog. Furthermore, some participants could have also confused the different roles of the platforms.

5.2. Managerial implications

This study also provides useful insights into managerial implications and possible implications for digital content creators. First of all, following the results of the analyses, it was proven that online restaurant recommendations posted on Instagram are perceived to be the most influential. Therefore, managers can integrate these reviews in their marketing strategy, as part of user-generated content. User-generated content can help businesses better understand their audience. Moreover, it can also allow the creation of a community as a result of understanding what type of message consumers want to hear and how their needs and wants have to be addressed. The content generated by users and past consumers can help businesses to gain a certain degree of credibility, and therefore build a powerful bond with their audience (Naem & Okafor, 2019). Furthermore, meaningful relationships can be another valuable asset coming from the online restaurant reviews posted by consumers. It can also help the owners of hospitality businesses decide whether it is relevant and profitable to consider investing in partnerships with influencers or bloggers (paid or not). As past research papers suggested, collaborations between businesses and bloggers ensured communications transactions that were successful (Chai, Das & Rao, 2011). These examples can set the scene for other companies to follow the same strategy. The success is therefore not in the actual collaboration with the content creators but comes with understanding how to transform the partnership into a fruitful transaction. And this research set

the grounds for this process. This paper can also help managers and markets understand how consumers think when they see these type of reviews and how the valence of the reviews and the platform where these are posted. Furthermore, they can observe where customers usually go to read a relevant and credible opinion for them. Advertisers can also pick up on the results this research unravelled, and apply them when developing campaigns.

Furthermore, the customers of a dining place are the key drivers for profits. Alongside consumers, WOM is a concept that many managers count on when talking about their marketing and promotional strategies (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015). If guests go to a restaurant, have a nice experience and are satisfied with the services, they are more likely to share the events with their close ones. Therefore, the managers' objectives are revolving around providing the best experience possible for their customers. Another important aspect is that they share the dining experience with their followers on social media. The sooner restaurant owners understand the importance of social media channels and the importance of their presence on these platforms, the more they will have to win. And this research study emphasizes the importance of social media and the influence it has on consumers' attitudes and intentions. Moreover, the managers can use people's feedback and reviews to make some changes to their services to accommodate consumers' needs and wants. The findings of this study also indicate that balanced reviews are perceived to be the most credible, and therefore, managers can form a strategy based on these results. This should be focused on crisis management and management of negative reviews.

On the other hand, this research study provides some interesting point of references for content creators as well. The findings can be of great importance for digital content creators when referring to the best platform that can help them to get the desired message across to their audience. Some content creators nowadays use both blogs and Instagram to share their content, but this can be very time-consuming. Furthermore, you also need more resources and skills to be active on both platforms. This study's results show that shorter, catchier and less detailed online restaurant reviews are perceived to be more persuasive than a lengthy review that is written on blogs. Moreover, influencers and bloggers can understand how to address reviews valences to deliver what their readers expect when reading about a dining experience. The findings related to the valence of the review can also prove that in the case of sponsored reviews, they don't necessarily need to include only positive aspects, only because they were financially

compensated. As we've seen in the results, positive reviews are not perceived as credible as balanced or negative reviews. The people that are planning to enter this digital world of content creation can also form a clearer picture in terms of expectations.

5.3. Limitations

This research study, however, also presents some limitations and this section will discuss all of them. A limitation of the study consist of the manipulations. When checking if the manipulation worked, it was established that people perceived the valence of the review differently than how they were manipulated. Therefore, it can be concluded that the manipulations were partially successful because the platforms were indicated correctly by the participants. Even though respondents indicated the positive and negative reviews accurately, they had difficulties indicating the balanced reviews and the posts that didn't include a recommendation, the "no reviews". However, this limitation could have been avoided by asking the manipulation check with a more appropriate item for this specific study. What could have been adopted to this research in order to make the manipulation checks better is the method from Wu (2013). In his research, the manipulation check question for the review was asked on item ranging from 1 (extremely negative) and 5(extremely positive). This way, 2 and 4 could have corresponded to the balanced reviews and 3 to the "no review" condition. Furthermore, another plausible explanation for the big difference in the manipulation check results is that the double-sided reviews were not completely balanced in the amount of negative and positive details, misleading participants into thinking they are either positive or negative. This limitation can also explain why some hypotheses related to the valence of the review are not validated, despite the fact that the literature supports and provides arguments for them.

Another limitation that should be considered in further studies is the type of restaurants that are talked about in the online reviews. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized for all restaurants and cannot be applied to eateries like cafes, fast food chains, bistros, pubs and so on. The restaurant presented in the online reviews is a fictive one and no name was given, to not be similar to a real restaurant. Moreover, a random picture with a modern restaurant was chosen for the questionnaire, a restaurant that was categorized as a bistro. The different type of restaurants should also be taken into consideration when developing future

research studies on the effects of online restaurant reviews on consumers' attitudes and behaviours, in order to enhance the study's overall reliability. Another argument for why the results of the study cannot be generalized is the age of the respondents, the average age of the participants being 23. Therefore, the results mainly represent the vision of millennials.

Furthermore, a limitation of the study is that sponsored reviews are not taken into consideration. Nothing is mentioned in the research and the actual questionnaire if the blogger was paid to write the review. It is assumed that the person who wrote the recommendation is not financially compensated to write it. However, the results from past papers indicate that the sponsorship factor has a big impact on customers' inclinations to follow the advice of bloggers (Sermans & Sims, 2020). Moreover, most online restaurant recommendations nowadays are sponsored, either financially or by exchanging meals at their restaurant for posts on social media. As it was previously discussed, this is a common practice, and many people make a living out of this now. Alongside this, the disclosure of sponsorships should be taken into consideration for future studies.

Moreover, most responses to the questionnaire were in a great measure from Romanian people. This can limit the results and interpretation of the study to only one nationality and their behaviours; behaviours and attitudes that can also be influenced by their cultural background. Some findings suggest that because Instagram is a relatively new social media platform, in Romania people trust bloggers more than content creators. Over 60% of young Romanian read blogs every day (Nastase, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that personal blogs are more popular than Instagram pages. For example, in America, a study shows that Instagram is the most popular platform and research shows that people usually go to Instagram when looking for opinions and reviews (Sharma, 2020). The results are therefore influenced by the nationality and position of the globe of the participants. Furthermore, it depends on what exposure the consumers have to different backgrounds, digital platforms and social contexts. It can also be argued that Instagram is a platform that allows for the creation of small blogs within the platform. Therefore, it is a thin line that delimits the blogosphere from the content creators on social media; a distinction that is not completely understood by people. This is why the results don't confirm some hypotheses.

5.4. Future research

This study also provides suggestions for future research on the topic. Firstly, this study only focuses on reviews posted on the actual feed. Therefore, it only takes into consideration how prospective consumers react to eWOM is transmitted in Instagram posts. Social media platforms nowadays and especially Instagram is always updating the functions of the platform, to make the content more engaging and the communication with the consumers more successful (Jones, 2021). Therefore, future researches should consider other functions of social media platforms (e.g. reels, IGTVs, stories, guides), as this can show a different impact on consumers' attitudes and behaviours. Secondly, future studies should take into consideration comparing blogs with new and viral social media platforms (e.g. TikTok), because they can attract different audiences who have different behaviours and preferences. Moreover, another interesting comparison can be drawn between two social media platforms or even between reviews posted by consumers versus reviews posted by bloggers. This type of research can provide a better understanding of which type of platform is more influential in regards to persuading consumers to visit a restaurant. Moreover, this way the research can be carried out more in-depth, timewise and lengthwise. The hypotheses can, therefore, be more complex and the associated analyses more progressive.

Because in this experiment, there was no control question added to check whether the participants actually mentioned the cover story as the purpose of the study, another suggestion for improvement would be to include the control question for the cover story.

An improvement for further studies could be mixing pictures with the overall impression of the restaurant (e.g. atmosphere, food, etc.) and text. Structuring the research in this way can provide a clearer perspective on what are the visual factors that influence consumers in their decision to visit a restaurant. Future studies should also consider reviews in other forms. These online restaurant recommendations can also be structures as videos. Nandagiri & Philip (2018), took into consideration video recommendations created by influencers on Youtube and found out that they are credible source and are persuasive enough to shift consumers' behavioural intentions. Furthermore, in order to perform a deeper analysis, other dependent test variables should be included in further researches. For example, Ing and Ming (2018) investigated variables such as information quality, perceived usefulness and perceived benefits, in an attempt to understand the factors that stand behind consumers' attitudes and intentions after reading

bloggers' recommendations. Another factor that should be taken into consideration is the celebrity level of bloggers and influencers. There should also be a way to quantify how the celebrity of the writer can affect the dependent variables. Furthermore, it will allow for making a connection between the platform, the valence of the review and the attributes of the people who write the reviews.

Talking about influencers, researchers should take into consideration the integration of influencers in the conceptual framework of future studies. There are multiple types of influencers nowadays (e.g macro-influencers, mega influencers, micro-influencers, nano influencers, etc.) that have different persuasive powers over their communities. Further research should take into consideration the implication of these type of influencers on consumers' beliefs and opinions. They attract a different category of audience and can influence certain age groups and niches. Gross and Wangenheim (2018), talks about how online reviews created by influencers can be utilized in order to reach desired audiences and make campaigns work for businesses. Understanding what type of blogger or influencer is the right fit for the image of a brand, business, restaurant it's important when considering possible partnerships with online content creators. Moreover, this type of research can also have implications for online creators in regards to what can they bring to the table and what are the predictions of collaborations between them and businesses.

Future researches can also take into consideration features of the restaurant and the personality of the consumers; features can include the quality of the food and the services as they were proven to influence the purchase intention and attitudes of consumers (Yan et al., 2015). These factors can better outline the culinary experiences, and therefore are more credible and relatable for consumers. Personality can also play an important role in understanding how different lifestyles can affect people's choices. Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the results would look like if the framework incorporates external factors such as: how often the consumers eat out, how active are they online, if they like a quiet or vibrant restaurant.

One final consideration would be for future researchers to observe real-life behaviour in regards to visiting a restaurant. This study only focuses on the intention and the attitudes of consumers in the incipient state, before actually making the decision to go to a restaurant. Future studies should take into consideration choosing another research method, as an experiment might

reduce the study's validity. Perhaps, real-life experiments and not online experiments can be performed in order to analyze consumers' behaviours in a situation where their intention can be quantified in actions. These can be in the form of reservation at a restaurant.

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Appendix A

Version of the Instagram review (positive valence)



foodofinstagram  · [Follow](#)



Liked by [suzziedonovan](#) and 50 others

foodofinstagram My friend and I stopped at this restaurant by chance and had an amazing experience. It was busy at lunchtime, but we were lucky enough to get a table immediately. Our waiter was attentive and knowledgeable. The menu had a nice variety of selections and specials. I ordered sea bass even though I was also tempted to get the shrimps salad, while my friend ordered a steak. Our meals were cooked to perfection and tasted delicious. The atmosphere is another thing that caught my attention, as the music compliments the food in such a way that it creates a very cosy environment. All in all, highly recommended.

[View all 15 comment](#)



[Add a comment...](#)

8 March

Version of the private blog review (positive valence)

The Weekly Restaurant Review

A new article from the series " Restaurant Guide for Foodies"

My friend and I stopped at this restaurant by chance and had an amazing experience. It is a newly opened restaurant in town and I heard many good things about it. It was busy at lunchtime, but we were lucky enough to get a table immediately. The décor of the restaurant is really nice, and it made us feel as if we are in an art gallery. Our waiter was attentive and knowledgeable. The menu had a nice variety of selections and specials. I ordered sea bass even though I was also tempted to get the shrimps salad, while my friend ordered a steak. Our meals were cooked to perfection and tasted delicious.

The atmosphere is another thing that caught my attention, as the music compliments the food in such a way that it creates a very cosy environment. They also have a special menu at lunchtime, and they change it every day. All in all, highly recommended.



Appendix B

Thesis Questionnaire

Master Thesis

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking your time to participate in this study!

The research contains a survey asking you for your opinion on restaurant reviews and it is conducted by a student at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In this study you will be shown a restaurant review and asked to rate some statements afterwards, according to your opinion.

Please fill in the survey to the best of your ability and note that there are no right or wrong answers. However, you can withdraw from the survey at any point if you feel like. It should not take you longer than 5-7 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and there are no risks associated with this project. Your responses will be used for research purposes only and they are confidential and anonymous.

If you have any questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, don't hesitate to contact me, Raluca Blaga, at the following email address: 583825rb@eur.nl

Thank you for participating!

Page Break

Q2 I agree to participate in the research study. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalty or consequences.

Yes (1)

Page Break

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Demographics + Filter

Q45 If you are completing this survey on your phone, it is recommended that you hold it sideways.

Page Break

Q3 Thank you for your interest in participating in this study! Please first answer the questions about your background.

Q4 What is your age?

Q5 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Other (3)
 - Prefer not to say (4)
-

Q6 Where do you live? (Country)

Q7 What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Elementary school (1)
 - High school (2)
 - Vocational training (3)
 - Bachelor degree (4)
 - Master degree (5)
 - PhD or higher (6)
 - Other (7)
-



Q17 On which platform do you have an account? (You can select multiple answers)

- Instagram (1)
 - Facebook (2)
 - TikTok (3)
-

Page Break

Q14 Next, you will be shown a written restaurant review. Imagine you would have to pick a place for a future date and you want to enjoy a nice meal, in a memorable restaurant with great services. Think about whether you will choose this restaurant or not.

End of Block: Demographics + Filter

Start of Block: Positive

Q18 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q19

End of Block: Positive

Start of Block: Negative

Q46 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q47

End of Block: Negative

Start of Block: Balanced

Q36 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q21

End of Block: Balanced

Start of Block: No review

Q37 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q22

End of Block: No review

Start of Block: Positive blog

Q38 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q26

End of Block: Positive blog

Start of Block: Negative Blog

Q39 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q29

End of Block: Negative Blog

Start of Block: Balanced Blog

Q40 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q31

End of Block: Balanced Blog

Start of Block: No Review Blog

Q41 Take a look at this review written by a food blogger. You will be asked to give your opinion after you finish reading the recommendation.

Q34

End of Block: No Review Blog

Start of Block: Introduction

Q44 Please rate the following statement:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I have looked with attention towards the picture and the review. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Perceived Source Credibility

Q11 Rate each statement according to how well it describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (6)	Somewhat disagree (7)	Neither agree nor disagree (8)	Somewhat agree (9)	Strongly agree (10)
I believe this food blogger's recommendation to be true. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think this food blogger's recommendation is reliable. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think this food blogger's recommendation is convincing. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think this food blogger's recommendation is accurate. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the person who wrote this recommendation is qualified, knowledgeable, experienced enough to write it. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a restaurant being recommended by a person with expertise is more trustable. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Perceived Source Credibility

Start of Block: Consumers' Attitude

Q9 Rate each statement according to how well it describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I think following this food blogger's recommendation would be good for me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive opinion about this food blogger's recommendation. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like this food blogger's recommendation. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall my attitude toward this food blogger's recommendation is favourable. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Consumers' Attitude

Start of Block: Purchase intention

Q8 Rate each statement according to how well it describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (6)	Somewhat disagree (7)	Neither agree nor disagree (8)	Somewhat agree (9)	Strongly agree (10)
I would seriously consider the restaurant recommended by the food blogger. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would choose the restaurant recommended by the food blogger in this review. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were to choose between two restaurants, I will certainly choose the one recommended in this review. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Purchase intention

Start of Block: Manipulation check + Control

Q12 Which platform do you think was used for this review?

- Instagram (1)
- Personal Blog (2)
- Other (4)

Page Break

Q13 After reading the review, please rate the following statement:

	Strongly disagree (20)	Somewhat disagree (21)	Neither agree nor disagree (22)	Somewhat agree (23)	Strongly agree (24)
I believe the review was positive. (33)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q16

You have now reached the end of the questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding this study, you can contact me at 583825rb@eur.nl

Thank you for taking your time and effort to participate in study! We appreciate your feedback.

Make sure you click "next" in order for your response to be registered!

End of Block: Manipulation check + Control

Appendix C

SPSS Outputs

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: PiTotal				
ReviewValence	PlatformType	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Positive	Instagram	3.8182	.94314	33
	Personal Blog	3.5914	.59448	31
	Total	3.7083	.79571	64
Negative	Instagram	2.5802	.89916	27
	Personal Blog	2.0778	.75141	30
	Total	2.3158	.85547	57
Balanced	Instagram	3.9048	1.20307	28
	Personal Blog	3.4583	.85404	32
	Total	3.6667	1.04692	60
NoReview	Instagram	3.0230	.85881	29
	Personal Blog	3.0000	.86066	28
	Total	3.0117	.85209	57
Total	Instagram	3.3561	1.11480	117
	Personal Blog	3.0441	.96795	121
	Total	3.1975	1.05219	238

Figure C1. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for purchase intention.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: PiTotal					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	83.582 ^a	7	11.940	15.359	.000
Intercept	2398.769	1	2398.769	3085.609	.000
ReviewValence	75.287	3	25.096	32.281	.000
PlatformType	5.320	1	5.320	6.843	.009
ReviewValence * PlatformType	2.082	3	.694	.893	.446
Error	178.803	230	.777		
Total	2695.667	238			
Corrected Total	262.385	237			

a. R Squared = .319 (Adjusted R Squared = .298)

Figure C2. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for purchase intention (test of between-subjects effects).

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: ConAtTotal

ReviewValence	PlatformType	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Positive	Instagram	3.8939	.92075	33
	Personal Blog	3.8952	.76315	31
	Total	3.8945	.84140	64
Negative	Instagram	2.5741	.96031	27
	Personal Blog	2.7167	.99076	30
	Total	2.6491	.97039	57
Balanced	Instagram	3.6518	.86693	28
	Personal Blog	3.5469	.50176	32
	Total	3.5958	.69210	60
NoReview	Instagram	2.8966	.74856	29
	Personal Blog	3.0446	.76996	28
	Total	2.9693	.75603	57
Total	Instagram	3.2842	1.02180	117
	Personal Blog	3.3140	.88831	121
	Total	3.2994	.95435	238

Figure C3. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for consumers' attitude.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: ConAtTotal

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	59.020 ^a	7	8.431	12.365	.000
Intercept	2545.320	1	2545.320	3732.675	.000
ReviewValence	58.495	3	19.498	28.594	.000
PlatformType	.129	1	.129	.190	.663
ReviewValence * PlatformType	.653	3	.218	.319	.812
Error	156.838	230	.682		
Total	2806.688	238			
Corrected Total	215.857	237			

a. R Squared = .273 (Adjusted R Squared = .251)

Figure C4. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for consumers' attitude (test of between-subjects effects).

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: TrustTotal

ReviewValence	PlatformType	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Positive	Instagram	3.2727	1.02577	33
	Personal Blog	3.3226	.96866	31
	Total	3.2969	.99091	64
Negative	Instagram	3.7963	.56771	27
	Personal Blog	3.8417	.54331	30
	Total	3.8202	.55048	57
Balanced	Instagram	4.1250	.99187	28
	Personal Blog	3.9766	.77084	32
	Total	4.0458	.87635	60
NoReview	Instagram	2.8276	.69148	29
	Personal Blog	2.9732	.70165	28
	Total	2.8991	.69414	57
Total	Instagram	3.4872	.97426	117
	Personal Blog	3.5434	.85494	121
	Total	3.5158	.91403	238

Figure C5. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for trustworthiness.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: TrustTotal

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	47.581 ^a	7	6.797	10.393	.000
Intercept	2930.896	1	2930.896	4481.419	.000
ReviewValence	46.944	3	15.648	23.926	.000
PlatformType	.032	1	.032	.048	.826
ReviewValence * PlatformType	.672	3	.224	.342	.795
Error	150.422	230	.654		
Total	3139.813	238			
Corrected Total	198.003	237			

a. R Squared = .240 (Adjusted R Squared = .217)

Figure C6. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for trustworthiness (test of between-subjects effects).

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Expertise 1

ReviewValence	PlatformType	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Positive	Instagram	2.94	.966	33
	Personal Blog	2.55	.961	31
	Total	2.75	.976	64
Negative	Instagram	3.37	1.006	27
	Personal Blog	3.60	.894	30
	Total	3.49	.947	57
Balanced	Instagram	3.71	1.329	28
	Personal Blog	3.78	1.184	32
	Total	3.75	1.244	60
NoReview	Instagram	2.55	1.121	29
	Personal Blog	2.43	.959	28
	Total	2.49	1.037	57
Total	Instagram	3.13	1.178	117
	Personal Blog	3.11	1.168	121
	Total	3.12	1.170	238

Figure C7. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for expertise.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Expertise 1

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	66.441 ^a	7	9.492	8.453	.000
Intercept	2301.814	1	2301.814	2049.899	.000
ReviewValence	62.759	3	20.920	18.630	.000
PlatformType	.175	1	.175	.156	.693
ReviewValence * PlatformType	3.240	3	1.080	.962	.411
Error	258.265	230	1.123		
Total	2638.000	238			
Corrected Total	324.706	237			

a. R Squared = .205 (Adjusted R Squared = .180)

Figure C8. SPSS table displaying the results from the univariate analysis of variance for expertise (test of between-subjects effects).