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The Impact of Instagram Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant Industry

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Master in Marketing

Supervisor:

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Iscte-IUL

November 2020

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BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Marketing, Operations and General Management Department

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Acknowledgements

More than a Master's dissertation, this thesis represents the closing of the academic chapter in my life. For this reason, it makes sense for me to refer, first of all, the educational institution that has welcomed me over the last five years. I leave, therefore, a special thanks to ISCTE-IUL, which managed to overcome all my initial expectations, and which represents for me what should be a place of learning, challenges, achievements and friendships. And as what makes an institution are the people, I also want to leave a special thanks to all my teachers, staff and colleagues who, together, day after day, contributed to my personal and professional development and growth that this college makes possible to everyone.

Secondly, a special thanks to Professor Susana Henriques Marques for guiding me through all this work.

I would also like to thank my parents, of course, because they inspire me to be better every day and have always provided me with the resources and the best opportunities to fulfil all my dreams and goals.

To Maria João and Ângelo, who are from Altice Portugal Market Research Department, who helped me in the Data Analysis chapter of this thesis, as they already have a vast experience in the area.

To Rita, who calmed me down when it was necessary and helped me fight for this goal, being my biggest company during all the months that elapsed in the accomplishment of this work.

And finally, to all my friends, who continue to be one of my greatest pillars of support as they have been until now.

Resumo

Em Portugal, o mercado da restauração tem vindo a crescer cada vez mais e por isso, de modo a diferenciarem-se da concorrência, os restaurantes devem tentar proporcionar aos seus consumidores a melhor experiência possível. No entanto, ao melhorar a sua oferta devem também comunicá-la e chamar a atenção do público, aproveitando todos os meios de comunicação disponíveis e optando pelas técnicas de marketing mais eficazes.

Logo, o principal objetivo desta dissertação recai em estudar as seis dimensões que englobam um conjunto de características dos influenciadores digitais e perceber se de facto é um canal de comunicação que impacta positivamente o setor dos restaurantes portugueses.

Com o fim de tirar conclusões relevantes, foi elaborado um modelo de investigação com base nas hipóteses de estudo, após ter sido levada a cabo uma detalhada revisão de literatura onde foram explorados diversos conceitos, dados e teorias de todo o mundo relativos ao tema em questão.

Por outro lado, foram também desenvolvidos um questionário que obteve 395 respostas válidas, bem como um focus group onde participaram 6 indivíduos.

Finalmente, após analisar toda a informação recolhida, concluiu-se que das seis dimensões do modelo de investigação, apenas uma não tem qualquer impacto no aumento de potenciais clientes na restauração. Assim sendo, as restantes cinco dimensões são consideradas suficientemente diferenciadoras para despertar interesse nos consumidores em visitar os restaurantes promovidos pelos influenciadores do Instagram.

Palavras-Chave: Restaurantes, Instagram, marketing de influência, aumento de potenciais clientes

Sistema de Classificação JEL: M31 Marketing, L83 Restaurantes

Abstract

In Portugal, the restaurant market has been increasingly growing and thus, in order to differentiate themselves from the competition, restaurants should try to provide their consumers with the best experience possible. However, when improving their offer, they should also communicate it and draw the attention of the public, taking advantage of all available means of communication and opting for the most effective marketing techniques.

Therefore, the main objective of this dissertation is to study the six dimensions that encompass a set of digital influencers' characteristics and to understand if this is actually a communication channel that positively impacts the Portuguese restaurant sector.

In order to draw relevant conclusions, a research model based on the study hypotheses was developed, after a detailed literature review was carried out where several concepts, data and theories from all over the world related to the topic in question were explored.

On the other hand, a survey was also conducted which obtained 395 valid answers, as well as a focus group in which 6 individuals participated.

Finally, after analysing all the information gathered, it was concluded that of the six dimensions of the research model, only one has no impact on the increase of potential clients in restoration. In this way, the remaining five are considered to be sufficiently differentiating to arouse consumer interest in visiting restaurants promoted by Instagram influencers.

Keywords: Restaurants, Instagram, influencer marketing, potential customers reach

JEL Classification System: M31 Marketing, L83 Restaurants

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1. Introduction

In order to complete the Master's Degree in Marketing at Iscte Business School, students are called to elaborate a thesis within the areas studied throughout the master.

Taking into account the four types of thesis, the completion of a Dissertation was the most appealing, since it has always been a personal objective to complete the Master by carrying out a research in one of the areas of marketing, preferably in an area in which I have always been interested and see myself working in the future.

In this way, it was possible to deepen the knowledge in a certain subject within that field of interest, to broaden horizons and gaining experience.

1.1. Research problematic

The theme chosen for this investigation was "The Impact of Instagram Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant Industry". As the title indicates, the aim is to carry out a research directly with the consumers that usually go to restaurants in order to find out what are in fact the most relevant criteria of influencers that increase their willingness to visit them. It should be noted that the choice of variables for classifying influencers has to be adapted to the reality of those who have visited restaurants in Portugal.

Going out to eat is part of the routine of many Portuguese, as well as of many foreigners who come to this country, this is because Portugal is well known for very unique and rich gastronomy that many people like to try. Indeed, going to a restaurant is much more than eating out, it is the experience that it should provide, the surrounding environment, the feelings that arise from attending it, the taste of the food and the innovative concept that it may have, either by having lights and plants as decoration or by serving the dishes on wooden boards or by having a certain type of music for its visitors, for instance. So, as all restaurants are different and each one has a specific offer, this is a market where it is possible to innovate a lot that can provide consumers with incredible experiences. The proof of that is the fact that this service is growing more and more in Portugal, having evolved in 2007 with a turnover of 9,913 million euros to 14,861 in 2018 (Statistics Portugal, Integrated Business Accounts System, 2020).

Therefore, a new problem arises that encompasses how this type of establishment will attract attention and interest in them so that people want to know more about it. With this, ways must be sought to achieve this goal more effectively and to take into consideration today's reality, which includes new needs, expectations and greater demand from consumers who want to have an accessible and easy way to find information (Deloitte, 2017).

This is why, with the evolution of digital marketing and the dispersion of social networks, comes the influencer marketing (Gross & von Wangenheim, 2018), which has been increasingly adopted by several brands and considered one of the best marketing techniques today simply because it is considered ideal for persuading potential customers (Woods, 2016). This tool consists in using digital influencers with a vast network of followers who act as brand ambassadors (Boerman, 2020) when they share through their social media photos with the products and their opinions about them (De Veirman et al., 2017). In fact, influencer marketing is expected to grow from \$8 billion in 2019 to \$15 billion in 2022 (Sheth, 2020). Thus, by using this mean, and because it is considered one of the fastest-growing areas of advertising, restaurants are able to reach their target in a more efficient way (Paula, 2018). On the other hand, as Instagram is also a significantly growing platform and is becoming increasingly popular, it is considered the best choice when it comes to influencer marketing campaigns (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020).

With this study, it is hoped that conclusions can be found to clarify and facilitate the development and adoption of this marketing approach which is considered to be quite influential in companies. Given that this is an emerging phenomenon, and that no studies have been found to explore exactly this issue, this will be useful for enterprises, letting them apply the best promotion tactics and a strategy as cost-effective as possible. With the specific results, restaurants will be able to understand what are the practical implications of using digital influencers as a way of overtaking a wider audience.

Finally, the main reason for this thematic choice was the daily empirical observation of a growing number of digital influencers announcing new restaurant trends, making their followers want to search more about it and then visit it to have an equally good or better experience than the influencer who made it known. Consequently, this research problem is of great importance because it analyses a new area, which is still being exploited by businesses.

1.2. Goals

The main goal of this study is to better comprehend this modern communication strategy, the influencer marketing through Instagram, in order to provide knowledge, and mainly to generate value for the society and the restaurant market.

Moreover, the more particular objectives of this research are to verify whether the process of searching for a restaurant can be facilitated by digital influencers, what characteristics they must have in order to have weight in the decision to choose one to go, but also what the content they share needs to have in order to be classified as persuasive and to arouse interest in the

desired audience. On the other hand, it is intended to clarify whether Instagram is indeed the best platform for finding new trends in restoration, as well as to make a comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of the restaurants' own communication channels and the influencers who promote them.

In this way, by fulfilling the goals of this study, it will be possible to find out whether this is classified as a marketing tool that allows consumers to change their opinion about a restaurant and create the will to experience it.

1.3. Research questions

First of all, it is essential to inform about the purpose of this dissertation: "Does Instagram influencer marketing have any impact on the restaurant industry?"

It is now necessary to establish the intrinsic issues of this research in order to achieve the objectives mentioned above. These issues are constructed taking into account the literature of this study and are considered the most relevant in order to reach more concrete and detailed conclusions concerning the main problem. Keeping this in mind, the research questions are the following:

- *Instagram*: What is the best social media platform to promote restaurants through digital influencers?
- *Restaurant knowledge*: Do digital influencers that have extensive knowledge in the area of restoration make the public use them as a mean to search for restaurants?
- *Trust*: Do digital influencers that convey trust make their audience want to visit the restaurant they are promoting?
- *Content care*: Do influencers who pay more attention to the content they share lead their followers to use them as a way of choosing a particular restaurant?
- *Paid partnerships*: By knowing that the content shared by an influencer is paid by a restaurant, do consumers lose the will to visit it?
- *WOM generation*: Do the influencers who generate WOM through their audience make people want to visit a restaurant even more?

1.4. Structure

In the end, this study will follow this structure: Literature Review, Contextualization, Methodology, Data Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research, Bibliography and Annexes.

In the first part, all theoretical points related to the subject of research will be addressed on the basis of articles of various scientific authors; in the second part, contextualization of the catering market will be carried out, as well as its evolution.

After that, the methodology will describe the context in which the data were collected, the formulation of the hypotheses and the corresponding model, the population, the sample, as well as the methods used to collect the necessary information to draw conclusions from this study. The results collected will then be demonstrated, divided by research methods, and validated through the SPSS in Data Analysis, where correlations between the variables of the hypotheses under study will also be shown.

At last, in the Conclusions and Recommendations, the theoretical contributions and managerial implications will be discussed in greater detail. Afterwards, an analysis of what has limited this study will be made, as well as suggestions for improvement will be given in the chapter on Limitations and Future Research; and then the sources of research to produce this work will be demonstrated in the Bibliography and all the tables and images allied to it in the chapter of Annexes.

2. Literature Review

With a top-down approach of the different topics that come up with the investigation problem, it comes the literature review. Its main goals are to provide a critical evaluation of Instagram influencer marketing in the catering industry; to find important recommendations to the study; and mainly to show how relevant this research can be for the society.

Therefore, this includes the digital consumer behaviour, the relationship marketing; the word of mouth, the digital marketing, more concretely, social media, mobile applications and online reviews, but also, influencer marketing related to restaurants.

2.1. Consumer Behaviour

Technology settles attitudes, preferences and decisions as members of a community, as an individual and as a consumer, which has become a trajectory of evolution along time (Kaczorowska-Spychalska, 2018). With this, comes the traditional media that is slowly being replaced by the new digital era, the main responsible for everyone currently living in an information society with new ways of communication, needs and lifestyle. Therefore, it is necessary to understand consumer behaviour in digital environments and intrinsic interactions between a consumer and a brand (Rocha et al., 2019).

2.1.1. Digital Consumer Behaviour

The ambiances of which internet, social media and mobile apps are part, constitute an important part of billions of consumers' daily lives (Stephen, 2016). For instance, in the catering industry, people usually share stories, news, reviews, articles and other useful content about good restaurants to help others save money and eat better (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Illustrating, in America, adults use the internet nearly 87% of their time, being closer to 100% for younger people, college-educated and higher-income adults. To follow this trend, it comes the number of hours spent online in the UK, an average of 20.5 hours per week, which has increased to more than double over the last decade. One of the main responsible factors for this rate is social media as more than 2 billion people are using it worldwide. Furthermore, in 2017, one-third of global advertising is done by digital marketing channels since clients' role has been changing in terms of searching for information about products, purchase, consumption and mainly, in terms of communicating with others about their experiences (Stephen, 2016).

In addition, there are five main changes in digital consumer behaviour that come with this electronic world: dematerialization, reembodyment, sharing, co-construction of self and distributed memory. The first can be verified when it comes to listening to music, for example,

nowadays, consumers use digital devices and no longer a massive row of records, CDs or DVDs, while in relation to reembodyment, it can be taken into account as there are 49% of people posting online anonymously (Belk, 2013).

Regarding the third one, perhaps it is the change with the highest importance since entertainment, photos, videos, music, vendor ratings, reviews and all kinds of interesting content are all free for accessing and sharing with others. In fact, for those who actively post on social media or that used to have diaries that are now substituted by blogs for anyone to see, their online friends know more about their daily lives and ideas than their actual families. The lack of privacy that is arising with these facts leads to the increase of the vulnerability feeling, which makes them constantly checking the news and adding tweets or posts with the goal of seeming more appealing to their followers. Moreover, due to meetings being digressively presential, allied with anonymity and invisibility emotions, this sharing concept causes the named disinhibition effect on users, which consequently leads to expressing themselves online easier than in face-to-face situations. This can be noticed with them showing their houses, cars or their jobs in images posted on profiles of their different social media, or being topics of discussion in a blog they own (Belk, 2013).

On the other hand, co-construction of self has been winning a social element with regard to the digital involvement of inviting others to play a certain videogame, answering to comments, seeing who put like on social media or geo-locating to connect with others. Thus, there is the use of mobile phones that despite being decreasingly used for calls, are used to text messaging and taking videos or images to post online (Belk, 2013).

Finally, distributed memory suffered some adjustments since consumers today document everything that happens in their lives on the internet, all the photos they take, the videos they film, the articles they write, everything is public in this digital age. So, the tendency is the increase of using technology to share content, interact with each other and to extend the idea that everyone in the world is connected (Belk, 2013).

2.2. Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is one of the most important shifts in marketing theory as it comprehends the establishment, development and retention of successful relational exchanges. Regarding services marketing, it is known for attracting, preserving and boosting customer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), relationship marketing follows the Key Mediating Variable (KMV) model (figure 2.1), which problematic is focused both on relationship

commitment and trust. These are the key variables between five main antecedents - relationship termination costs and relationship benefits that directly influence commitment, shared values lead to commitment and trust, and communication and opportunistic behaviour only impact trust, which consequently also influences commitment. On the other hand, there are five outcomes – acquiescence and propensity to leave that directly flow from relationship commitment, cooperation that comes from both commitment and trust, and finally, functional conflict and decision-making uncertainty are the direct results of trust. Thus, when all of these are present, efficiency, productivity and effectiveness increase, in other words, they easily cause cooperative behaviours favourable to relationship marketing success.

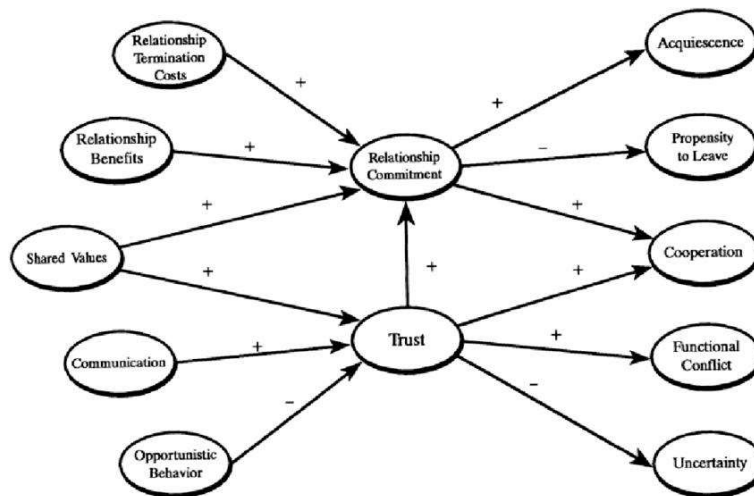


Figure 2.1: The KMV model of Relationship Marketing

Source: Morgan & Hunt (1994)

2.2.1. Relationship Commitment

“Commitment to the relationship is defined as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship”, and there is an only commitment when the relationship is considered important and it has intrinsic the willing to make an effort to maintain it (Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpandé, 1992, p. 316; Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 23).

Commitment is a central variable since it differentiates social and economic exchange, increases motivation, enterprising citizenship behaviours, job equity and organizational support (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

In relation to services marketing, relationships are based on mutual commitment. In fact, in the past, researchers believed that loyalty was simply a repetitive purchasing behaviour, but it has increasingly become similar to the commitment concept. This is one of the most fundamental values a brand should have since it is the key to better performance, it provides

more benefits and first of all, it creates a trustworthy image for the brand itself (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2.2.2. Customer Trust

Trust implies perceived kindness and an act of goodwill directed to a specific target, being considered the basis of every human interaction (Jeon & Choi, 2017). On the other hand, it can be shaped as “*confident expectations of the brand’s reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer*” (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Jeon & Choi, 2017, p. 242).

Moreover, values like confidence, consistency, competency, honesty, fairness, responsibility and benevolence are associated with trust, which makes a brand be reliable and have high integrity to the eyes of consumers. However, if someone relies on a brand without having the will to trust or to take risks, trust is going to be limited, this is why the willingness to rely on should be seen as an outcome in the conceptualization of trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Keeping this in mind, several service marketing experts have tapped the relationships with a certain firm, its service staff and customers through the trust-commitment theory. Therewith, it was possible to conclude that trust can affect the quality of service in a way that if it is not being transmitted, a mutual commitment between the customer and the service provider will not be perceived as well; which can also influence customer repurchase and loyalty behaviour (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Furthermore, in services marketing, according to Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 144), “*customer-company relationships require trust*” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 24). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that trust is a central variable in the commitment-trust theory as well (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2.2.3. Relationship Benefits

In the nowadays global marketplace, brands should continuously seek for new products, processes and technologies that add value to their current offer in order to improve their competitive strategy and deliver higher benefits to their customers. By doing that, product performance and customer satisfaction are being accomplished, which will lead to an increase in relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2.2.4. Shared Values

The only variable connected to both commitment and trust includes common behaviours, goals, policies and appropriate actions. Shared values have a good reflection of a company’s culture

when they are considered widely and strongly held, making a person identifies herself with its internal values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Moreover, consumers' attitudes and behaviours result from rewards, the desire to be associated with another person or group and having the same values as them, which can consequently increase commitment with a certain organization (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2.2.5. Communication

According to Anderson and Narus (1990, p. 44), communication "*can be defined broadly as the formal as well as informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between firms*" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 25). It positively influences trust if it works well to align perceptions and expectations and if it is considered frequent, relevant and reliable, but also with high quality (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2.2.6. Cooperation

Cooperation means work together to achieve mutual goals and this is why it promotes relationship marketing success, as it does not imply the absence of conflict but the existence of temporary conflictual behaviours with cooperative actions. Cooperation is proactive when, involving high-risks makes a relationship work for both brand and consumer sides, being the only outcome that comes directly from both commitment and trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

To summarize, Anderson and Narus (1990, p. 45) affirmed that "*Once trust is established, firms learn that coordinated, joint efforts will lead to outcomes that exceed what the firm would achieve if it acted solely in its own best interests*" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 26).

2.3. Word of Mouth (WOM)

WOM communication is the key to a successful company, which means customers have the will to influence others by sharing their positive experiences without being paid for it (Lopes et al., 2018). They share information amongst each other regarding vacations, movies, restaurants, politics or sports, through means like social media, blogs and emails, that only make the communication faster and easier (Berger, 2014). Also, it is a person to person communication, in which a receiver perceives a brand, a product or a service as non-commercial (Taghizadeh et al., 2013). This interpersonal communication can be defined as WOM and involves "*informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services or their sellers*" (Westbrook, 1987, p. 261; Berger, 2014, p. 589).

Additionally, it is a strong and convincing force since customer needs drive it and it significantly grows as one tells a story to five people, each of them tells it to five more, and so on (Taghizadeh et al., 2013). In the service providers case, according to Nielsen's global trust in advertising report, 92% of consumers more easily believe in a friend's advice and 70% rely on consumers' opinions posted online (Sheth, 2020). Indeed, 59% of people stated that they usually share online content with others, which is seven times cheaper and more efficient than traditional media, so what companies need to do is to foster consumer-generated content in the hope that consumers will share it. Regarding this diffusion of information, consumers can send newspaper articles to their friends, YouTube videos to their family and restaurant reviews to their neighbours, for instance (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Furthermore, product-related discussion (e.g., the Nikes were really comfortable), product-related content (e.g., Nike ads on YouTube), direct recommendations (e.g., you'd love this restaurant), mere mentions (e.g., we went to this restaurant), and online reviews are all ways of using WOM. This action has a crucial impact on consumer behaviour as well as in impression management, emotion regulation, information acquisition, social bonding and persuasion (Berger, 2014). It can also be defined in terms of direction – the contribution to the decision-making process -, valence – which can be negative or positive - and volume – connected to the number of people to which the message is transmitted (Taghizadeh et al., 2013).

In addition, conversations between consumers lead to more than 3.3 billion brand impressions per day, which enhances product awareness (Berger, 2014). Considering McKinsey and Company (2010, p. 8) affirmation, “*word of mouth is the primary factor behind 20 to 50 percent of all purchasing decisions...and...generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising*” (Berger, 2014, p. 589), this is why it contributes to the increase of companies' market share as well (Taghizadeh et al., 2013).

Moreover, a study of almost 20,000 everyday conversations shows that having face-to-face or written communication have an impact on a brands' image. While the first is not so assertive and complete, the second is, since it is provided more time to think and construct a critical opinion about it (Berger & Iyengar, 2013). Also, the last one, related to “*any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet*” is usually called eWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004, p. 39; Jin & Phua, 2014, p. 181). This can reach millions of consumers with its high accessibility, so virtually anyone with interest in a particular brand can easily found it. Consequently, it has a massive impact on the origin of virtual relationships and online communities that united, can empower the prestige of a certain firm. The differences

between WOM and eWOM are mainly found in the media used, as with the development of technology, the physical place for this kind of communication has been changing to the cyberspace (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

On the other hand, customers want to positively spread their thoughts, opinions and feelings about products and services, which makes eWOM an innovative electronic place available at any time, oriented to multiple individuals with nothing but reliable information anonymously given. It is also becoming more important for marketing specialists to study eWOM customers' behaviours in terms of consumer experience and motivations, as it constitutes a source to decrease promotional expenses, to build a favourable image for the organizations, but also to achieve customer loyalty (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

Regarding the catering industry, positive eWOM can be constructed if a restaurant's food quality and service are considered high, as well as if there is an incredible felt environment, in other words, if there is an overall sublime restaurant experience. When this situation occurs, there is usually an altruistic behaviour in the consumers' minds and a desire to help the restaurant can arise. Nonetheless, intangibles bring a superior risk since they cannot be assessed before the consumption act, creating more dependence on the interpersonal influence of eWOM. This is why restaurant managers should take these factors into account and develop a more customer-oriented marketing approach, after trying to identify the sources of positive eWOM, mainly to increase customer visits and efficiently control their promotional efforts (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

2.4. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is used to directly communicate with the public when a brand intends to promote themselves or their products through the newest technologies. It is continuously suffering changes with the spread of the internet, which is vulgarizing the use of social media and the capacity to analyse data, however, a company should implement it in its promotion strategy in order to face the competition (Rocha et al., 2019).

In addition, this communication channel used to be seen as a web page or a simple banner, but now is considered the new tendency that improves the relationship between a brand and its consumers, as it has consequences like high-quality communication, disclosure and co-creation. Following an inbound marketing approach, this phenomenon is a modern form of interacting with consumers in a personalized, low cost and high satisfaction manner. Furthermore, companies must adapt their promotion to digital marketing since it stands out for its global reach and the prestige it originates, keeping in mind the new EU regulation regarding the

protection of processing and use of personal data. This happens as digital marketing plans involve the creation of relevant content and it makes use of digital techniques such as search engine optimization, email marketing, websites, social media, blogs, among others (Rocha et al., 2019).

2.4.1. Social Media

Social media is considered the biggest trend in digital marketing as it is unquestionably one of the richest sources of information, which enables companies to achieve an extensive number of customers, developing and improving company–consumer relationships. Indeed, social media interactions should be divided in two-way communications with existing and potential customers, so brands may know how to differentiate themselves whereas it is so fast to get customer insights than it was before (Hudson et al., 2016). Moreover, it is infallible when it comes to achieving goals like increasing sales, reducing marketing costs, boosting user engagement and first of all, deeply impacts brand equity (Rocha et al., 2019).

Regarding conventional marketing, brands were forced to create vulgar campaigns for a certain audience as they would all have the same characteristics, but nowadays, there is more precision in communication, their target is segmented by values, needs or desires. Advertisement is focused on social media as the new generation has migrated to this communication channel, reverting the use of traditional mass media like newspapers, radio, ads or television. In relation to social media marketing itself, it was only used to connect friends and family or to transmit news and entertainment through photographs, videos or texts. However, it is now seen as a consumer-focused strategy where campaigns are totally different in terms of creation, distribution and consumption (Rocha et al., 2019).

Additionally, it makes WOM arise in a much more natural way because consumers can easily write product reviews in this kind of platforms, being easier for brands to understand what their public thinks in relation to their actions or the proper organization itself. In other words, this latest effective communication tool works for customers and companies sides, since they both have a greater power of influence (Sheth, 2020).

With almost 100% penetration of mobile phones worldwide, social media is incrementally used any time and everywhere. This is why companies are trying to stand out from the competition, as well as keeping the reputation among their stakeholders, mainly by the use of this mean. For instance, it can be used for customer care and if its response is considered effective, social media can improve trust and perception (Hudson et al., 2016).

On the other hand, there are more than 3.5 billion (figure 2.2) people on social networks like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and Twitter. As every country is investing in communication technology, but also in providing internet access to everyone, social media is becoming a universal phenomenon and what was before called the “six degrees of separation” has now been reduced to two degrees through social media help (Sheth, 2020).

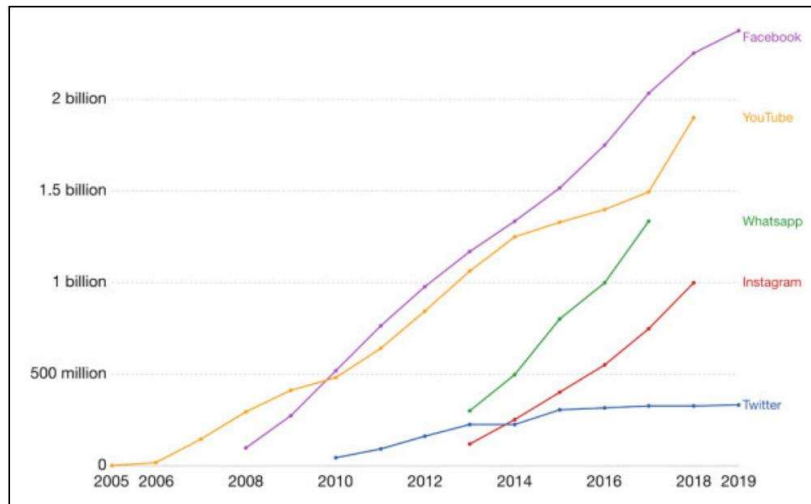


Figure 2.2: Exponential growth of social media

Source: Statista and TNW (2019) (Sheth, 2020, p. 3)

To sum up, social media is increasingly being used in a successful corporate communication strategy since it is considered a massive instrument to connect people, companies or institutions, to produce interest around a product or service, as well as it positively contributes to brand image and brand awareness (Hudson et al., 2016).

Keeping this in mind, it is now important to mention the most used social networks across the world last year, which are Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Pinterest (Rosa, 2019). In Portugal, in October 2020 (figure 2.3), the most used ones are Facebook representing 74.98% of the population, Pinterest with 13.87%, Twitter with 3.76%, Instagram with 3.65%, and lastly, YouTube with 2.35% (StatCounter GlobalStats, 2020).

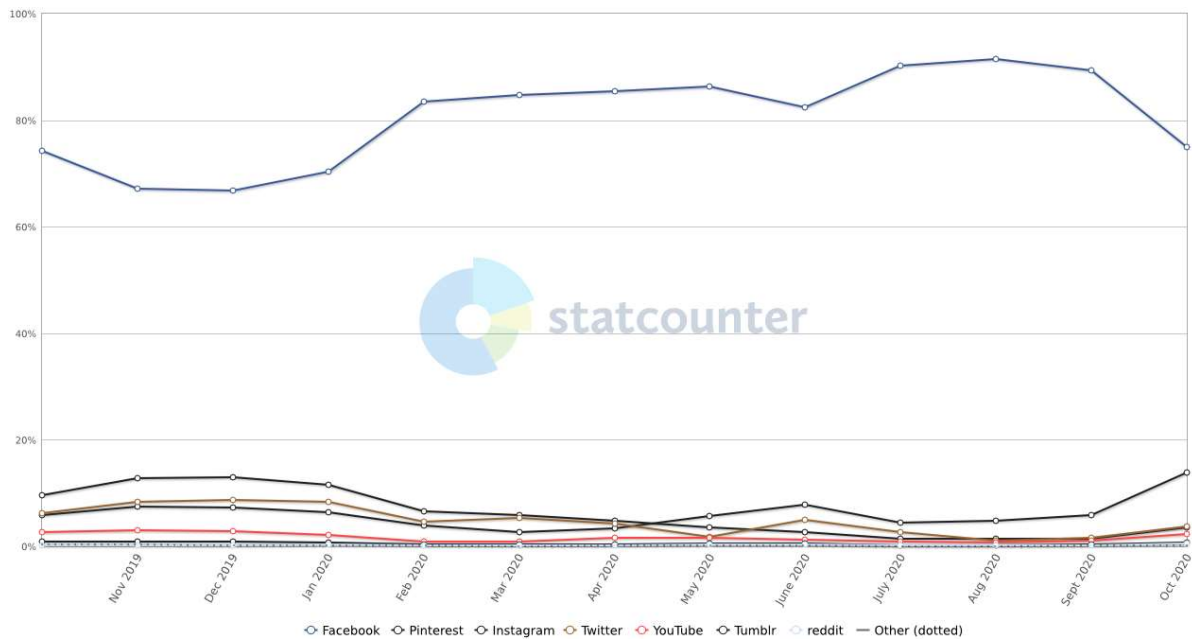


Figure 2.3: Social Media Stats in Portugal - July 2020

Source: StatCounter GlobalStats (2020)

2.4.1.1. Facebook

Facebook is defined as the top used social network around the world with the greatest number of users, being created in 2004 and available to everyone over the age of 13 with an email address (Kweon et al., 2020). Taking Statista (2020b) into account, Facebook registered 2.7 billion monthly active users in 2020, which is believed to correspond to the enjoyment, socialization and usefulness it has, that influences people to use it. In addition, it is proved to be part of their daily lives since 95% of its active users access it via their smartphones (Mylonopoulos & Theoharakis, 2020). Also, for one-sixth of the population is the social network responsible for introducing someone in this day and age, since it has a timeline feature that shows to everyone the important events of a user's life (Belk, 2013).

According to Facebook, the average of friends a user has in this social network is 130, so when he hears about a product or a service from one of them, he becomes a customer at a higher probability of 15% than if he finds out about them across other sources (Hudson et al., 2016). With this, comes the online communities where consumers dedicate themselves in sharing content, ideas, knowledge and perspectives about brands. This is one of the reasons why it is responsible for the launch of new trends, products or services in the market (Rocha et al., 2019).

This social media is currently part of companies, brands, political parties, religious groups, non-governmental organizations and law enforcement agencies communication strategies, as it is possible to analyse the interactions between them and their consumers by the sum of likes,

comments and shares. Also, when an offline event takes place, a Facebook event usually raises in order to promote it the best way possible, as in here they can post ads, updates, teasers, which consequently leads to a bigger buzz and wide word spread around the event (Rocha et al., 2019).

In Portugal, there were around 7.24 million users on Facebook in October of this year with 22.5% of those being aged between 25 and 34 years old, while 47.9% are men and 52.1% are women (Statista, 2020c).

2.4.1.2. Instagram

Instagram is the trendiest social media app worldwide with more than 800 million active users, having achieved a wide network of members in a short period of time, especially the younger public (Boerman, 2020). More precisely, in Portugal, in accordance with Statista (2020d), Instagram users were 4,489,00 in October of 2020, with 28.1% of them being from 25 to 34 years old.

Instagram was the first app arising in the market with the unique feature of photo-sharing (Valentini et al., 2018), enabling users to edit pictures and share videos in accordance to their taste and intention, being much easier to share visual content when compared to other social networks like Facebook (Kweon et al., 2020).

In this recent digital platform, users can see everything about other people's lives, when and where they travel, which parties they go, their daily routines, but also what they wear and eat, which consequently inspires, motivates and influences others. As it offers to their users the possibility of watching video and photo-sharing, it has a higher capability of contributing to eWOM since products and services are actually being viewed through pictures or videos (De Veirman et al., 2017). This is why it is perceived as the most known platform for influencer marketing (Mediakix, 2019), providing the chance for brands to interact with consumers in a more efficient way. With this, comes the concept "Instafamous", individuals who became famous influent people through their Instagram profiles, that inform their followers about a brand and actually getting paid for it (Boerman, 2020).

On the other hand, it has the biggest power of influence on account of its aesthetics, image filters, sharing and instantaneity in terms of capturing photos. It is also constantly innovating with new features and updates, such as newsfeed, activity pages, hashtags, location, directs, stories and the most recent one, paid partnerships with brands (Rocha et al., 2019). In relation to this last characteristic, sponsored posts are considered to be a mean of introducing new products or brands to clients, which can influence them to share on their own will. In fact,

Instagram advertising can lead to a higher engagement with a post even when the brand is not mentioned or the intention to sell is not explicitly there (Boerman, 2020).

To conclude, Instagram users check this social network on a daily basis, which made brands realize it is nowadays considered an infallible marketing channel where consumers are regularly exposed to advertisements (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019).

2.4.1.3. Twitter

Twitter is another social media site that allows users to disseminate information, by reading, sending posts and interacting with others. Although it is, compared to other social platforms, ranked in 10th place in routine, entertainment and convenience categories, Twitter is actually one of the most influential microblogging sites ever known (Korde et al., 2019). Actually, in Portugal, in accordance with the Global Digital Report 2019, there were 875,000 users on Twitter in January 2019 (DataReportal, 2019).

It already counts on more than 500 million users, constituting around 15% of all online adults. They usually post the called “tweets” to talk about all kinds of subjects, such as their daily lives, places and brands they appreciate, for instance. Every brand has a Twitter account these days, either to post daily updates, reminders or even campaign teasers (Korde et al., 2019). This is why companies can take advantage of it to make profit since it is a mean to collect data regarding what consumers feel about their products or services, but also to understand if the message they want to pass is well perceived. More concretely, in 2018, when compared to Facebook, the average click-through-rate ads were 0.12%, while for Twitter ads were 3% (Rocha et al., 2019).

Furthermore, this is the brand new social network with regard to having characteristics of existing blogs, SMS, messenger, sense of community and the personalization profile, enabling users to filter only the stories they want to hear (Kweon et al., 2020). Taking all these features into account allied with the fact that each post has a compressed short format, Twitter is arising as a place to find overwhelming and vibrant discussions connected to social, political and cultural issues, as everyone can freely share their opinions and thoughts (Xu & Zhou, 2020).

Keeping this in mind, Twitter is a strong interactive advertising platform, especially with the help of users with a high number of followers that are usually seen as credible, reliable and competent people, who can reach millions with their tweets. They also have all the characteristics needed to influence others when it comes to share feelings about a certain service and give advice to product involvement or attitudes. Consequently, these actions lead to buying intention and brand loyalty increase, because if a user identifies himself with a celebrity and

deeply follows everything she posts, to follow her thoughts has a greater extent (Jin & Phua, 2014).

In a nutshell, Twitter contributes to the positive eWOM spread, so it is considered a useful mean to measure the public opinion about a brand (Jin & Phua, 2014).

2.4.1.4. YouTube

One of the principal video sharing platforms known is YouTube, a content community that permits the upload, view, share, like and comment in the videos. It already counts with over 100 million videos (Rani & Kumar, 2020), 500-hour video content uploaded every minute and over 5 billion watched every day (Sheth, 2020). Additionally, it is the user-generated content platform with the highest number of users worldwide and the first social media in routine and entertainment categories due to its easiness in uploading and sharing videos via the internet (Kweon et al., 2020).

In the case of Portugal, in accordance with the Portuguese Digital Marketing Agency Van, in 2019, there were 7,480 monthly researches of YouTube, being considered the second social network most searched after Facebook (Rosa, 2019).

From this social network aroused the term “YouTubers” or “Vloggers”, people who create, record and upload videos about their personal lives, consumption experiences or even brands. Some of them have already achieved more than 100 million subscribers with their authenticity and accessibility. With this in mind, they have a significant influence on consumer perceptions and purchase decisions as everyone looks at them as credible and trustworthy people (Ladhari et al., 2020). In fact, people feel they just talk about relevant products, mostly because YouTube has a personalized algorithm that makes these influencers have a direct approach to the ones that are listening to them. This can lead to co-creation between both the speaker and the listener, since the last one can provide feedback straight away by liking, commenting or even sharing the content watched, creating a sense of familiarity with the YouTuber (Coates et al., 2020).

This audio-visual platform for short video blogs is increasingly being used by companies as a communication channel since videos are the most shared content on social networks, as well as it is capable of exposing, captivating website traffic and developing a higher loyalty level. So, YouTube has become part of a consumer’s user journey in the phase where he seeks for product reviews before the buying decision, which constitutes a factor with a really high weight. Indeed, YouTubers can be the solution in this context to promote interest in a brand, but also to generate a greater eWOM than the advertising itself (Rocha et al., 2019). They can

share content related to several markets, like beauty, food and beverage or technology, for instance, keeping in mind they are often paid for this job (Coates et al., 2020).

Regarding YouTube ads, these have continuously been produced as they are a useful mean that compensates the investment because videos raise more emotions than other types of advertising, which leads to the profit increase (Rocha et al., 2019).

2.4.1.5. Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media dedicated to sharing pins related to all kinds of subjects, such as fashion, decoration, restaurants, trips, leisure, among others, where users can save their favourite content and share them with others. This platform's content is uploaded by individuals that have a Pinterest account, being spread to everyone in image-based, videos, news and articles. Also, it is ranked in 16th in terms of routine and entertainment categories (Kweon et al., 2020).

Concerning Portugal, it was in 2nd place in the ranking of the social media applications with the highest classification on the Play Store last year (Rosa, 2019).

2.4.2. Mobile Applications (apps)

The named software that can be downloaded to a mobile device is called a mobile application, which constitutes a symbol of brand identity because of the name of the app, its design, logo, icon and the experience it provides. It provides the opportunity to connect with a global network of services by showing content that can be accessed online and offline, and that makes part of consumers' daily lives (Rocha et al., 2019).

Moreover, it is arising interest for marketers for being considered one of the most effective advertising techniques thanks to the engagement and the convincing impact of generating a deep connection with a certain brand, leading to the extent of their value proposition (Bellman et al., 2011). Apps that can be accessed anywhere at any time are a source of entertainment, functionality, socialization, intellectual stimulation and information, which consequently generates value to the end-user (Van Noort & Van Reijmersdal, 2019). They offer wide distinct content related to the products and services that a company supplies, recipes, travel planners or fun games, for instance (Zhao & Balagué, 2015).

Furthermore, apps are being used to improve companies' processes with the end of assisting individuals, communities and governments to be more efficient. Experts stated that mobile apps have as main goals the contribution to both customer acquisition and retention, as well as the encouragement of WOM (W.-T. Wang et al., 2019).

Nowadays, there are 1.6 and 1.5 million apps available for Android and Apple users, respectively. It is expected that mobile apps generate a 101-billion-dollar revenue this year, having registered 41.1-billion-dollars in 2015 (Alnawas & Aburub, 2016).

Keeping this in mind, marketers must focus on apps as this is a medium that can be adapted to each consumer and his own interests, due to the personalization algorithm usually developed (Alnawas & Aburub, 2016). In particular, customer relationship management, retail and promotion have advanced on account of branded apps. While paid apps have the primary goal of earning financial outcomes, branded ones, because they are free of download and use, their spotlight is to engage customers and expand their loyalty (Wang, 2020).

There are three types of mobile apps, the tool-centric that count for informing the consumers; the game-centric to increase brand awareness through the creation of immersive ambiances; and the design-centric that positively impact brand image by using creativity (Zhao & Balagué, 2015).

Apart from every worldwide brand having at least one app, there are several examples of companies that see their sales growing by adopting this strategy, which is the case of Domino's that registered 50% of UK sales in their app, or EasyJet that had 20% of their bookings in the same channel. Additionally, Gucci and Ikea are brands that invest in augmented reality features in order to increase customer experience through their apps (Van Noort & Van Reijmersdal, 2019).

In relation to food apps, there are several known across the world for both locals and travellers who desire to eat in a restaurant, where the research is simplified by filters like the price, the location or the type of food for example, and where it is possible to get incredible discounts – EatWith, TravellingSpoon, WithLocals, Eatigo, TheFork, Zomato, Yelp, HappyCow and Seafood Watch (Fried, 2020). In the case of Portugal, the most used to search for plenty of options and make reservations are Zomato, TheFork and Google, although there is a recent one that has been gaining notoriety, Peoople (Lisbon Guru, 2020).

2.4.2.1. Zomato

One of the biggest food aggregators worldwide is Zomato (figure 2.4). Launched in India in 2009, this mobile app is now present in 24 countries, being responsible for connecting people to restaurants, developing at the same time a sustainable ecosystem in the food market (Zomato, 2020). It is ranked with 4 stars (Google Play, 2020) and valued in 1 billion dollars with its 70 million active users and 1.4 million active restaurants, which clearly shows the great impact in

consumers, what led this brand to be the most preferred and used food tech platform around the world (Sharma, 2020).

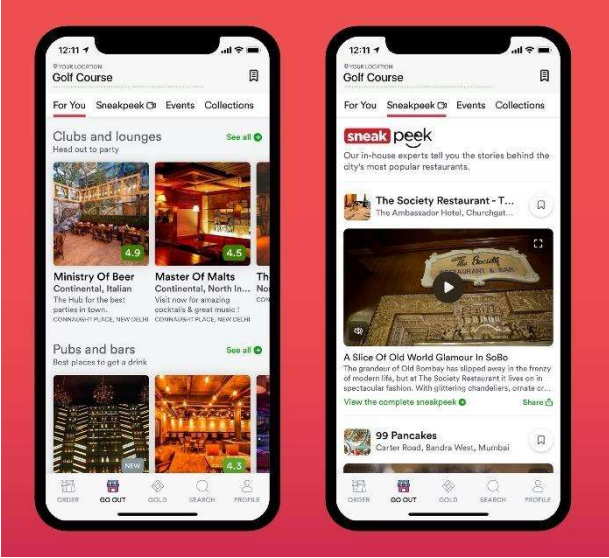


Figure 2.4: Zomato app webview

Source: Zomato (2018)

Nowadays, Zomato has several functions, such as checking out menus and ratings, restaurant listing and advertising, as well as their locations on a map, food delivery, table bookings, subscription programs, dining out offers, live events and Zomato Gold. This is one of the reasons it has already been registered 11 million downloads and more than 1 million active gold subscriptions (Sharma, 2020).

Moreover, this is a successful restaurant discovery company since it follows a long-term strategy by never stopping investing in expansion, either nationally or internationally, in marketing, in innovation as it provides new initiatives all the time, in raising funds and acquisitions, and so on (Sharma, 2020).

2.4.2.2. TheFork

These days, several customers write their feedback after having an experience at a restaurant on online media, such as TripAdvisor, or TheFork (figure 2.5) in the case of Portugal, and this feedback is called a review (Laksono et al., 2019).

TripAdvisor has been proved to be the main online travel information source used all over the world (Van der Zee & Bertocchi, 2018), this is why it is so well known and a wide tool of user-generated content as visitors leave there their opinions and thoughts about restaurants they have been at (Oner et al., 2019). Indeed, in 2017, it registered 630 million evaluations with a mean of 435 million unique users consulting reviews per month. These include 7 million accommodations, airlines, attractions and restaurants, so it is always a great place to help people

decide where to stay, where to fly, what to do and where to eat, because of the many available filters it provides (Tsiotsou, 2019).

More concretely, The Fork, the reference and simple guide for restaurants, ranked with 4.1 stars (Google Play, 2020), belongs to the TripAdvisor company since 2014, 7 years after it was born. On this platform, it is possible to make online reservations in real-time in 22 countries with more than 80,000 restaurants spread around the world, letting special menus available while offering from 20 to 50% discounts (TheFork, 2020). Additionally, the app allows to locate the closest restaurants and helps in the reservation process in the fastest way possible directly through the user's smartphone (Potter, 2019).

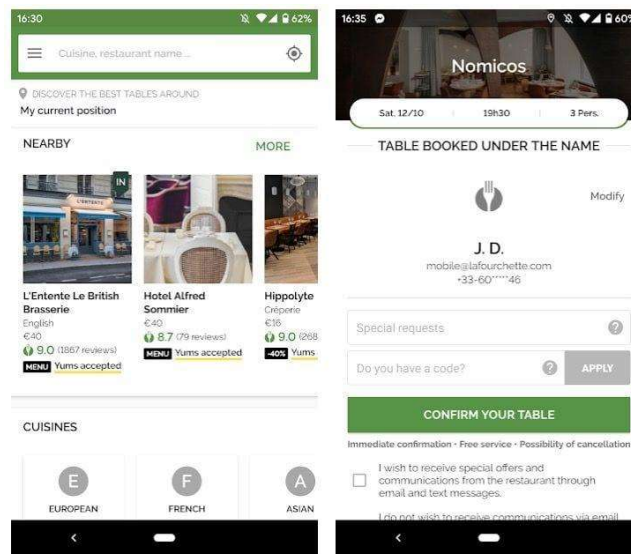


Figure 2.5: TheFork app webview

Source: TheFork (2020)

2.4.2.3. Google

The best-known search engine worldwide is Google with 87.35% of market share, and with regards to Google reviews, nowadays, it is massively important for brands to get them as it is considered one of the most cost-effective ways to market a business (Chris, 2020).

With regard to Portugal, in October 2020, Google registered a percentage of 95.8 in terms of the market share when compared to the other search engines like Bing, Yahoo! And Ecosia (StatCounter GlobalStats, 2020), having achieved 4.2 stars in the Google Maps app where it is possible to find reviews (Google Play, 2020).

Furthermore, customers want to be even more informed about what each company has to offer before the experience they are going to have in the future. This is why Google reviews can be what a consumer needs for the decision-making process to be completed in order to

confirm they are about to make the right decision and push them to the buying phase (Podium, 2020).

Finally, Google reviews (figure 2.6) lead to purchase decisions influence, local search ranking and revenue increase allied with customers loving the products or services provided, which consequently provokes a great positive impact on businesses. Also, if they exist in a big and reliable quantity as well as it respects the authenticity criterion, they enhance online exposure with essential feedback, trust and credibility with the number of customers getting even higher (Podium, 2020).

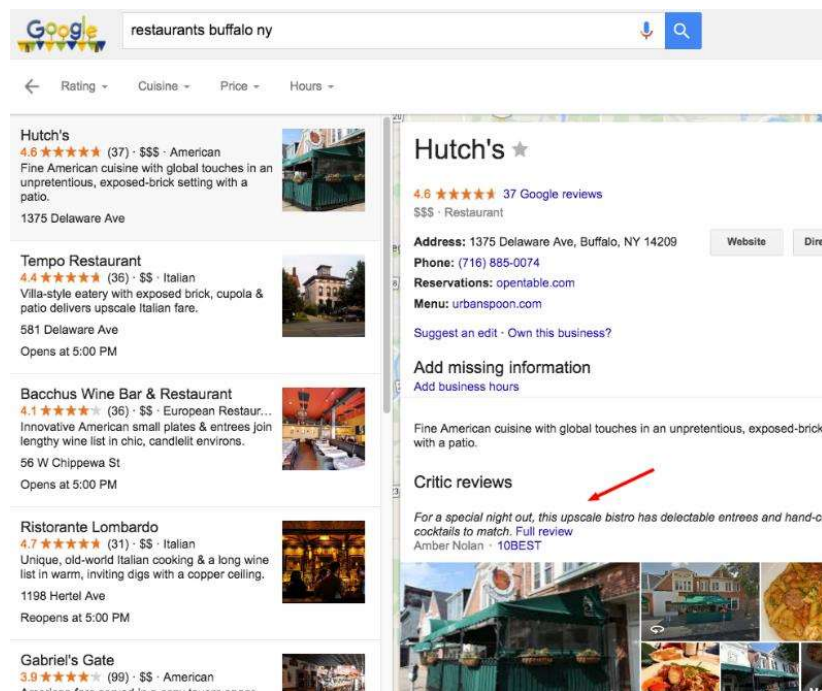


Figure 2.6: Google now inserting critic reviews

Source: Blumenthal (2016)

2.4.2.4. People

People (figure 2.7) is the most recent app to share, search and find recommendations on topics like restaurants, series, books, songs, apps, towns, among others, given by both friends and influencers. It shows to the user the suggestions of his favourite people when he is seeking for a new restaurant to visit, a new movie to watch on Netflix or a new game to play (People, 2020).

Moreover, it is possible to save the recommendations and organize them in a tab called Collections, so they never get lost. The user can also add his opinions on the app and share them with others. On the other hand, this app is divided into categories, having the most famous influencers in each one, in order to facilitate the research process of recommendations (People,

2020). Perhaps it is because of all this that it is so well-rated in the Play Store, having already hit in such a short time 4.6 stars (Google Play, 2020).

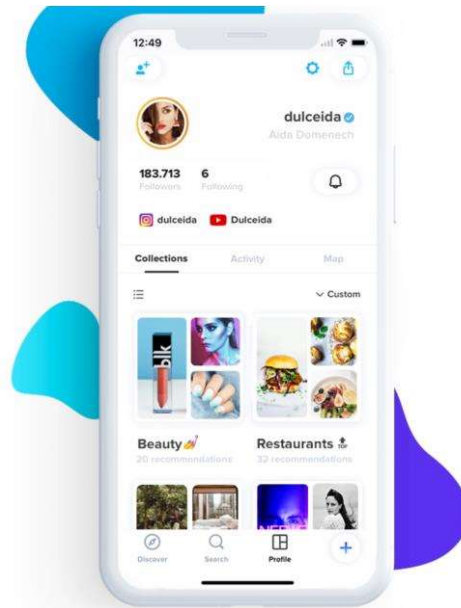


Figure 2.7: Peopple webview

Source: Peopple (2020)

2.4.3. Online Reviews

Several tourism fields like accommodations, restaurants, attractions or destinations are live by customers who appreciate sharing their detailed experiences, images and suggestions on the internet. On the other hand, they can also feel less risk and search for help in their decision-making process on these platforms due to the useful and wide information provided through the user-generated reviews process (Van der Zee & Bertocchi, 2018).

In relation to managers, they should seek the opinions and feelings of their consumers on online media as well, and could even use the most engaging feedback in marketing campaigns. In addition, they can convert their usual reviewers into influencers of their brands, improving the share of information about their products and services, and targeting online consumers simultaneously (Tsiotsou, 2019).

Furthermore, online evaluations are divided into business-specific which are called reviews or ratings, and in inter-business comparison that are the rankings. The first includes consumer perceptions, which affect price setting, service innovation, host motivation and economic distribution patterns. In other respects, the last one is a massive challenge for restaurants whereas it induces to consumer judgements and direct competition (Gössling et al., 2018).

Moreover, online reviews have been proving to be an important source of WOM over time that can lead to brand awareness. Keeping this in mind, it is essential for a company's success

to understand the behaviour behind an online review. In fact, the time a customer takes to post should not be very long since with the coming and rapidity of sharing information through smartphone technology, this is an easy action to make (Li et al., 2020). So, the best for a brand is when an online review is made straight after consumption as it means a really pleasant experience has been provided, which contributes to the positive eWOM, as well as to the restaurant rating increase (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Also, if a client lets time pass, the probability of writing a motivating review is going to decrease, which is a harmful situation for restaurants since reviews actually matter for business, being considered a booster factor to attract more clients. Indeed, the factors that can influence consumers' behaviour when they decide to post reviews are personal consumption experiences, social influence of other consumers' average review ratings, and finally, the interaction effect (Li et al., 2020).

To finalise, companies must take online reviews into account in their marketing strategies, or even implement a customer service control to achieve goals like their customer base expansion and retention (Gössling et al., 2018).

2.5. Influencer Marketing

Over the years, the advertising industry has been suffering a lot of changes, so its path goes through find ways to get a higher return on investment. This is why a marketing tool which focus is based on special individuals rather than the whole target market has been increasingly used, the denominated influencer marketing, whose goal is to persuade potential buyers and lead marketing activities around influencers (Woods, 2016).

In accordance with Business Insider Intelligence, influencer marketing has expanded from \$1.7 billion in 2016 to \$8 billion in 2019, expecting growth of \$7 billion in 2022, being this considered one of the fastest-growing areas of advertising and sponsorship (Sheth, 2020).

The spread of digital social media has led to a completely innovative bias, the named influencers, "*individual or a group of individuals who built their own audience through social media platforms*" (Gross & von Wangenheim, 2018). Also, they are defined as people with a solid base of followers as "*they blog, vlog and create short-form content like Snapchats or InstaStories and provide their followers with daily insights into their personal lives and opinions*" (Veirman et al., 2017; Paula, 2018, p. 19).

A celebrity that posts a picture on Instagram with a Chipotle burrito in her hand or a user's friend that tweets an image with his Starbucks Frappuccino are both examples of influencer marketing, in which the only distinction is that the first is paid advertising, while the second is not. These contribute to influencer marketing being known as the virtual WOM (Woods, 2016).

Moreover, normal postings create a higher engagement in comparison to paid collaborations, and the same situation occurs with micro-influencers that register a higher engagement than macro-influencers. With this, it is possible to affirm that the content considered credible, personal, creative and different from the mass media has a bigger impact on the target audience (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019).

Furthermore, influencers are the online opinion leaders that can shape others' perceptions with their appearance, personality, relationship with their audience or even their familiarity with a specific subject (Torres et al., 2019). Indeed, digital influencers are hierarchical by their number of followers on social networks and this usually influences consumers' attitudes according to the likeability, attractiveness and reliability of each of them (Boerman, 2020).

In 2017, 63% of companies in the US increased their budget for influencer marketing (Gross & von Wangenheim, 2018), as by being connected to influencers, brands can reach their target market in a more efficient way (Paula, 2018) since they work as brand ambassadors when creating sponsored content like pictures of themselves with their products or tags (Boerman, 2020).

In addition, there are many advertising agencies that their main focus are the influencers, where they usually take a fee out of the influencer's compensation for their services. Their jobs pass by helping them finding monetary opportunities, making contract negotiations between them and the brand, choosing wisely the most appealing influencer in order to keep the congruency and make the best fit for a certain campaign (Torres et al., 2019). Additionally, the ability to identify the best influencers on social media can be a valuable source of success to several social, political and viral marketing campaigns (Bashari & Fazl-Ersi, 2020).

Also, it can be noticed a massive increase in the number of the influencers available at these agencies mainly because of the significant rise of the influencer marketing budget as well as the profit this job has been giving. As an example, Niche, a Twitter influencer marketing agency affirmed that their number of influencers has grown from 6,000 to more than 24,000 in a year (Woods, 2016).

Keeping this in mind, influencer marketing can be part of a communication strategy with digital content creators who have the capacity to sustain a brand (Paula, 2018). In fact, the Swant's study (2016) affirmed that approximately 40% of the participants have bought an item they found on an influencer profile; and that, 20% of them confirmed they shared content they saw from an influencer on Instagram, Twitter, Vine or YouTube; but also that one-third of millennials follow an influencer on social media (Woods, 2016, p. 8).

Influencer marketing allows 11 times more return on investment than other traditional communication tools, but also 67% of marketers use influencers to communicate a product or a service and 59% apply these techniques for content promotion (Woods, 2016), as this is the most similar to a friend in terms of transmitting reliance in the message of a certain campaign (Sheth, 2020).

Besides that, when there is paid advertising on social media, influencers usually add on their posts the #ad or #sponsored hashtags due to regulation questions in some countries (Woods, 2016) or to clarify their followers of what the content they are posting is about since sometimes it is difficult to recognise them as advertising (Coates et al., 2020). In fact, to show transparency, Instagram has implemented the “paid partnership with a brand” field for the “Instafamous” people inserted in a campaign to grow the commercial relationship with the consumers (Boerman, 2020).

Indeed, as it was mentioned above, Instagram is increasingly growing and becoming popular as a social network, so it is nowadays considered the best choice for influencer marketing campaigns (figure 2.8). This conclusion comes from a survey made by Mediakix with a sample of 162 participants (2019) and the Influencer Marketing Report 2019 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020).

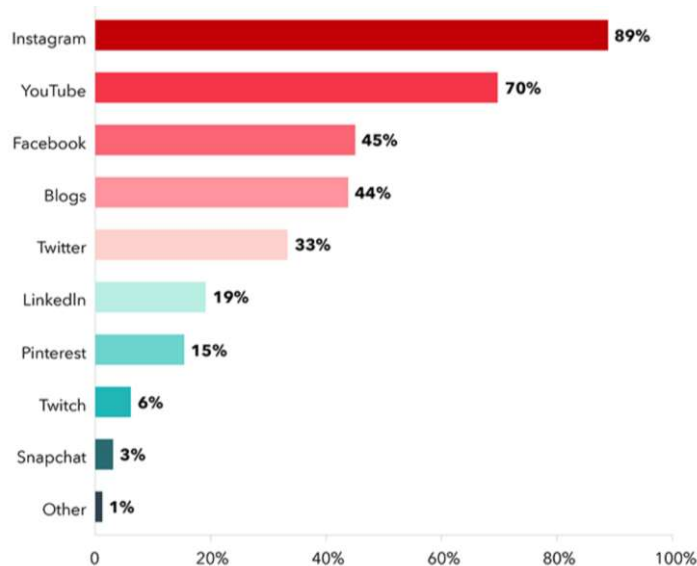


Figure 2.8: Most Important Social Media Channels for Influencer Marketing

Source: Mediakix (2019)

Thus, it is important to highlight the aspects that foment influencer marketing success, which is composed by humour, entertainment, the effort behind the posting, its visuality, the influencer himself and mainly, the authenticity. The posts that are seen as superficial and fake are consequently perceived as not engaging, and this is not the final outcome a brand desires,

but positive WOM connected to personal experiences, opinions and recommendations that lead to brand admiration is (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019).

According to Kim et al. (2020), there are eight principal categories of influencers, which are beauty, family, fashion, fitness, food, interior, pet and travel (figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9: Example images of Instagram posts of influencers in the eight influencer categories

Source: Kim et al. (2020)

2.5.1. Restaurant Influencers

In accordance with the Medium Corporation, food influencers are those who provide recommendations through posts related to sweet and healthy recipes, convenience products like snacks and beverages, or restaurants (Dower, 2019).

Regarding the restaurant influencer marketing, it is being increasingly fundamental to use it in the promotion strategy in order to attract and engage with customers (Bhasin Tulsian, 2019). In fact, when the right influencer is chosen by a restaurant, with every \$1 spent, \$17.50 can be generated (Gutierrez, 2019). This is because influencers have already created a great level of trust with their followers, so when they provide a good opinion about a certain restaurant based on their own experience, their audience is more than likely to believe them (Bhasin Tulsian, 2019).

Although it requires forbearance, effort and creativity to get influencers to share content related to a restaurant, this is considered the ideal marketing tool to reach the highest number of potential customers (TheFork, 2016). Indeed, influencers are extremely good at content creation, so restaurants could take advantage of that since they are an excellent source to promote brand awareness, which leads to the sales increase (Gutierrez, 2019).

Moreover, restaurants are using influencer marketing as this is a cheaper technique compared to other traditional means with the same goal of targeting the right customer base

with significantly positive results. It depends on the relevance, size and budget of the restaurant, but digital influencers usually pay off. In the case of top restaurant chains that are placed in diverse geographic zones, perhaps the most known and expensive macro-influencers can be the best path to follow. However, for those which are located in only one particular area, micro-influencer marketing is the most affordable and optimal option, since these influencers offer a more localized precision as they have a niche following them that is geographically concentrated to catch the right audience to visit the restaurants in real-time (Bhasin Tulsian, 2019). Also, they could opt for splitting their budget across micro-influencers with more loyal followers and earn more conversions in a short term (Gutierrez, 2019). Nevertheless, every alternative raises visibility and credibility, whereas every type of influencers can add a link on their Instagram page to order food from a restaurant, provide specific offers or create discount codes for each campaign, quickly tracking and understanding the boost in the number of clients (Bhasin Tulsian, 2019).

Conversely, influencers also have a negative side in terms of harming a restaurant business if this tool is not used right. This happens because potential customers can only hear good things about a restaurant all over social media, having their expectations really high and getting more demanding, so if they decide to go there and do not get exactly what they expected, they can leave a lot disappointed with a very bad impression of it and not coming back at all (Bhasin Tulsian, 2019).

3. Contextualization

3.1. Restaurant Industry

These days, consumers are being more and more demanding compared to many years ago, they have new needs, new choices, new tastes and new expectations that they would like to see the present market to satisfy (Deloitte, 2017).

In order to increase factors like visitor frequency, average spend per customer, customer acquisition and customer loyalty, it is expected for a restaurant to try to find new techniques to accompany this claim. These can include creating value through a new menu, a new location or a whole modern environment for instance (Deloitte, 2017). Besides that, the Deloitte study (2017) stated that 60% of customers would go back to a restaurant if they have been provided with a great experience, but also that they would go back 6% more often and spend 20% longer in there.

Overall, the restaurant industry registers a high turnover in all the 28 countries of the European Union (EU-28) as it is shown in figure 3.1 with data divided by country referring to the year of 2017. More concretely, Portugal had 5,454.2 million euros of turnover in this sector, being in 10th place when compared to the other countries (Statista, 2020a).

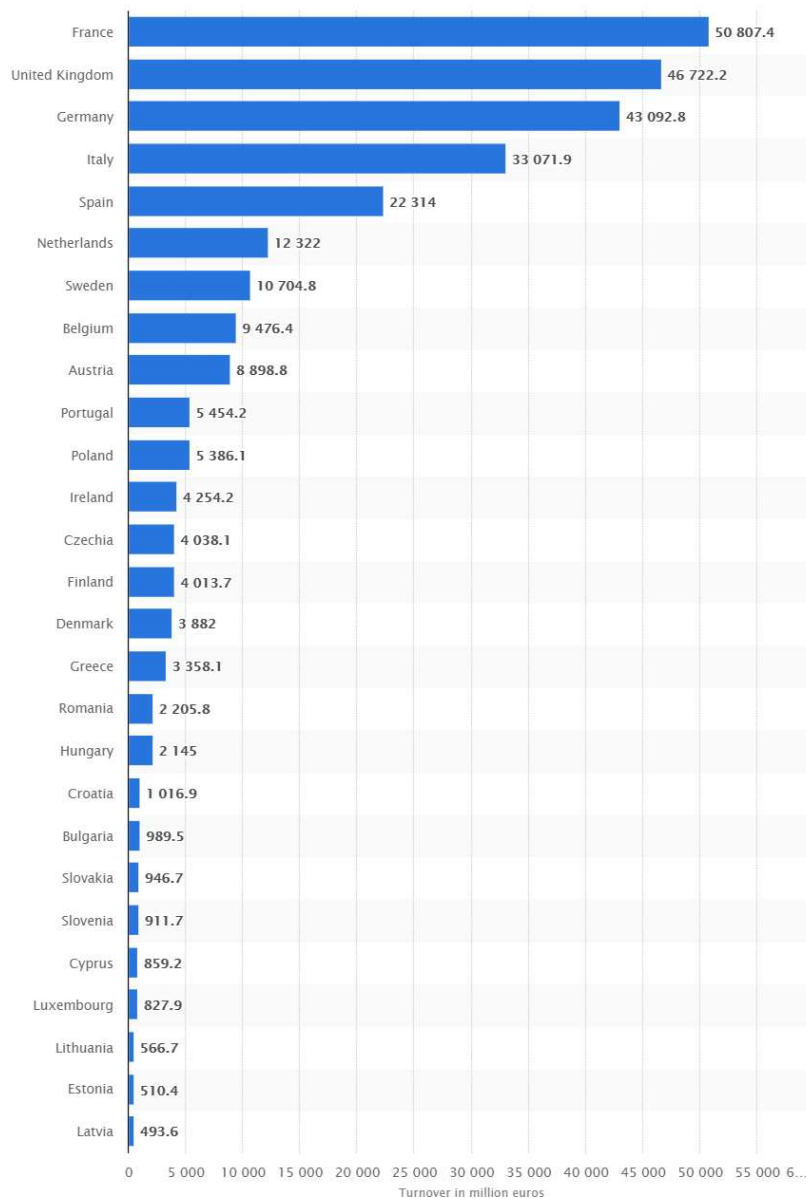


Figure 3.1: Turnover of the restaurant industry in the European Union (EU-28) in 2017, by country

Source: Statista (2020a)

In Portugal, the responsible organization for the hotel, catering and beverage business with 22 thousand associates is AHRESP, born 120 years ago. Its mission is to represent all the existing companies of the tourist sector defending their rights and interests, such as negotiating collective bargaining agreements, representing the political and legal levels, but also developing tools and instruments that streamline the short, medium and long-term business management. Furthermore, AHRESP intervenes in the following groups of the touristic industry – Management, Formation, Hygiene and Security, Human Resources, Operations, Marketing and Sales (AHRESP, 2020).

According to Statistics Portugal, Integrated Business Accounts System (2020), there is a positive evolution in the accommodation and food service activities in Portugal as it can be proved by the observation of figure 3.2. Indeed, in 2007, with 290,112 employees in 89,524 enterprises, the correspondent turnover was 9,913 million euros, while in 2018, it was 14,861 million euros with 375,067 workers in 113,191 companies.

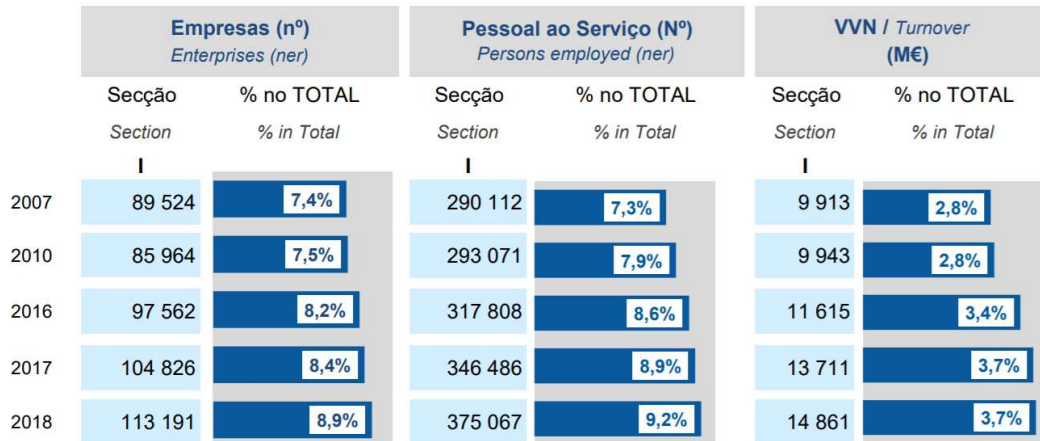


Figure 3.2: Annual detailed enterprise statistics – main indicators of accommodation and food service activities in Portugal

Source: Statistics Portugal, Integrated Business Accounts System (2020)

In other respects, it is important to highlight the top 10 best restaurants in Portugal that were opened in the last decade and that remain to be a success to the national landscape. From Michelin stars spaces, Portuguese traditional food to pizzas and hamburgers, there was a lot of restaurants inaugurating from 2010 to 2019. With the purpose of selecting the best ones, the criteria used for this choice was to bring those which offer something different. Lisbon and Oporto were the most represented cities in this top, in which creative decorations, rewarded chefs both in Portugal and in the whole world, full of flavour and really well-conceived meals are all features of restaurants that serve as an example to the news that unveiled recently and to future ones that are still going to open (Guerreiro, 2019).

Firstly, in Lisbon, it is the Belcanto restaurant from José Avillez, the most notorious Portuguese chef of the currentness. He presents all the food lovers with his inventive cooking that made him win his first star, straight after one year of work. Secondly, it is Casa de Chá da Boa Nova in Leça da Palmeira, a Rui Paula restaurant that opened in 2014 with already two stars since 2017. In third place, launched in 2017, with three floors with a restaurant, a bar and a store, it is JNcQUOI, one of the greatest projects that arrived at Avenida da Liberdade, in Lisbon (Guerreiro, 2019).

The next place belongs to Alma, in Lisbon, a restaurant founded in 2015 from Henrique Sá Pessoa, who is already a chef known to the public, a lot because of the television programs he

participated and the books he launched lifelong. Furthermore, it comes Kanazawa, one of the most exclusive Japanese restaurants in Lisbon, in which the responsible for the space is one of the best Portuguese chefs at handling the fish like nobody else, Paulo Morais. In sixth place comes the Sea Me that opened in 2011, in Lisbon (Guerreiro, 2019).

Additionally, in seventh place is the Vítor Matos restaurant, Antiquvm, in Oporto with a privileged view over Douro river. After that, comes the pizzeria Mercantina in Alvalade that started in 2013 and in ninth place of the ranking, it is Euskalduna Studio from the chef Vasco Coelho Santos that began this project at the end of 2016 in Oporto. Lastly, Ground Burger is the later in the list of the top 10 best restaurants in Portugal since it offers one of the optimal hamburgers in Lisbon (Guerreiro, 2019).

Besides all of this success in the industry, there is an event that can never be forgotten, the COVID-19 pandemic that already provoked more than 1 million deaths and infected more than 55 million people across the world (World Health Organization, 2020). If in 2019 the restaurant industry in Portugal achieved the highest records never seen before, the pandemic of this year, in contrast, impacted it in the most dramatic way possible with a considerable reduction in the revenue and the closing of several small and medium-sized enterprises. In fact, the AHRESP (2020) affirmed that the scenario is worrying since 40% of the catering companies are close to bankruptcy.

Concerning 2017 Global Restaurant Investment Forum (GRIF), it was concluded that there are some new technological trends restaurants could implement to gain strength in the market. For customers who have the preference of ordering meals to their houses, restaurants could be present in food delivery apps, or on the other hand, have food trucks for special events (ValuStrat, 2018).

Moreover, with the goal of creating a higher engagement with their customers and having a source of marketing analysis to find out new needs and wants, restaurants could interact with them by responding to comments, sharing the news about the menus, promotions, events or locations on social media. Additionally, they can make available distinct payment methods and use iPads to register customers' orders to reduce staff mistakes in order to improve the quality of the service performed. To those customers who advertise a brand by posting pictures or reviews on their social media to proliferate positive WOM, restaurants could provide them with some kind of reward (ValuStrat, 2018).

In addition, they could provide other fun social interactions for customers, which consequently, will increase efficiency and the overall customer experience. Finally, the new

generations believe that what is local has more quality, so restaurants shall try hard to keep up with this preference (ValuStrat, 2018).

Keeping this in mind, it is necessary to mention the best Portuguese restaurant influencer (StarNgage, 2020), Inês Brandling, who owes the most famous Instagram page, Lisboa.come with 79.2K followers at hers 27 years old (Brandling, 2020).

Firstly, her journey started by taking print screens of restaurants she wanted to visit and thought she might not be the only one, thus it came the idea of creating a page called @lisboa.come with the goal of showing several posts related to the known #foodporn. At first, she did not like to show her face as she did not feel she was part of the “Instagram person” stereotype. However, with the rapid page growth and great feedback, she has recently changed her tag to her real name, @inesbrandling, a lot because she aspired to have her own brand to drive people to the content she creates (Red Bull, 2018).

Moreover, Inês considers herself an influencer as she started noticing as far as she advertises other Instagram accounts, they ended up gaining a high number of followers. She has an account on different social networks and recommendation apps like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TheFork and People. Although she is known for innovating in the content she shares, she admits to getting inspiration in two influencers Instagram accounts, @heyandiehey and @heydavina, a Portuguese and an international one, respectively. Finally, she reveals her secret for taking the most instagramic food pictures (figure 3.3), which only implies having a good camera on the cell phone, a lot of filters and keep the focus on the position of the dishes and beverages (Red Bull, 2018).



Figure 3.3: Post to advertise Seagull Method and Heim Cafes of Inês Brandling Instagram page

Source: Inês Brandling Instagram page (2019)

On the other hand, as mentioned above, since she is the principal Portuguese source of inspiration for Inês Brandling (Red Bull, 2018), it is also important to note Andreia Lopes Costa with the tag @heyandiehey on Instagram (figure 3.4). She is another incredible restaurant influencer with 28,4K followers, whose main focus is to let other people know the best restaurants she has visited across the world. This influencer has a profile in several social media and recommendation apps, such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Blog, Zomato and People (Lopes Costa, 2020).



Figure 3.4: Andreia Lopes Costa Instagram page webview

Source: Lopes Costa (2020)

4. Methodology

First of all, it was made a deep and complete literature review about the topics directly related to the investigation problem, as well as an industry analysis in question. After that, it is important to proceed with a qualitative and a quantitative methodology in order to get more data with the main goal of taking the conclusions the market needs to future improvements.

Keeping this in mind, in this chapter, it is intended to expose the methodology used to obtain the data that is going to be further analysed, having the previous topics in mind, the literature review and the restaurant industry research. Thus, it is going to be defined, in a first phase, what is meant to be studied and how it is going to be realized, as well as the contexts in which the data is going to be collected. Subsequently, the qualitative methodology will be presented and, after the event, the quantitative one.

4.1. Methodologic Options

4.1.1. Qualitative Study

With regard to the qualitative methodology, as it is not related to numerical representativity but with the deepening of a particular problem, in which there is illustrative information to comprehend its various dimensions (Queirós et al., 2017), the focus group method was chosen as a mean of data collection. Also, because the goal is to understand in more detail whether Instagram influencers actually have any bearing on consumers' decision in the process of choosing a particular restaurant.

As a result, the individuals who are real and regular consumers of restaurants who are always seeking for new eating out places, and that most closely follow influencers and the content they share were selected. Therefore, a focus group with six participants found through the Instagram platform who follow restaurant influencers, such as Inês Brandling and Andreia Lopes Costa, mentioned in the contextualization, will be conducted. This will be done online, through the Zoom platform, due to the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, it should be noted that, as it is not a situation of closed answers, the focus group will be structured a priori, taking into account the clarity and form of exposure of the questions, but also recorded in audio format. The plan of the focus group can be found in Annex A.

This method will be used for the following purposes:

(1) To verify if the process of looking for a restaurant is time-consuming and what are the characteristics that must be shared about it in order to get to a final decision more efficiently;

- (2) To find out if Instagram is actually a widely used mean to find a restaurant and why;
- (3) To examine if influencers have some weight in the process of choosing for a restaurant and why, but also what they need to have to influence others;
- (4) To understand what the content shared by influencers should have to change consumers' minds in relation to a restaurant and create the will to go there;
- (5) To compare what are the advantages and disadvantages of looking for a restaurant through influencers and its own communication channels;
- (6) To find out if influencers generate WOM and if, overall, this is considered a marketing tool that has a massive influence in the process of choosing for a restaurant.

4.1.2. Quantitative Study

Regarding the quantitative study, the method that is going to be developed is a survey. This was the chosen tool since it can be quantified, it is considered more efficient in terms of collecting a wide diversity of facts and an optimal source to reach more people, although it depends to some extent on the openness and availability of the respondents to answer the questions (Queirós et al., 2017).

Moreover, the survey was constructed in the Google Docs platform, being asked to be fulfilled online in the most honest and truest way possible with the guarantee that the collected information is anonymous and confidential.

As a form of data collection in a deeper and more comprehensive way, it was intended to carry out closed-ended response surveys. This instrument was simultaneously aimed both at people who live in or have visited Portugal, as well as people who have already known some restaurants in the country. Also, it was available during the period of September 2020 and shared in several social media, such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp and through E-mail.

Thereafter, SPSS statistics was an essential tool to analyse the survey results in order to get the data collected in an objective and systematic manner.

4.1.2.1. Hypotheses

The principal objective of this study is to analyse how the restaurant industry can be impacted by using influencer marketing as a communication channel. Therefore, it is possible to identify as a dependent variable the restaurant industry, more concretely, the reach of potential customers. On the other hand, as independent variables, there are the Instagram influencers, their knowledge on the diversity of restaurants existing in Portugal, their trust, the attention and

care they deposit in the shared content, the paid partnerships they accept and the WOM they generate to their audience.

With this in mind, there is the Research Model (figure 4.1) illustrated below:

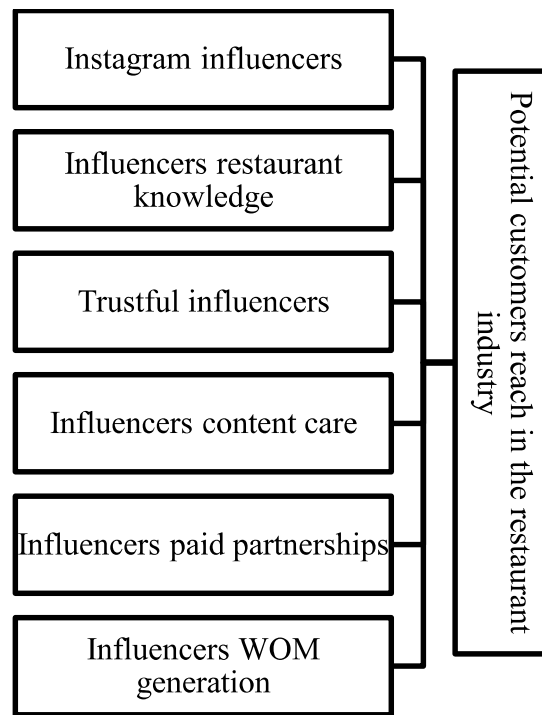


Figure 4.1: Research Model

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Hence, based on the literature review, the following assumptions were made. As an initial hypothesis, when influencers work as brand ambassadors by posting pictures of themselves with their products or tags, brands reach their target more quickly (Boerman, 2020). This is why influencer marketing based on digital content creators is infallible when it comes to supporting a brand (Paula, 2018).

In addition, Instagram is the choice for influencer marketing campaigns since it was verified in a Mediakix study (2019) and in the Influencer Marketing Report 2019 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Indeed, the use of Instagram influencer marketing as a promoting technique may have an impact on the restaurant industry in terms of reaching potential customers (TheFork, 2016). The aim is to check whether the consumer goes to a certain restaurant after seeing a post on Instagram of an influencer related to it.

H1: The Instagram influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Secondly, influencers that are familiar with a specific subject mould people's minds (Torres et al., 2019), which is the case of Inês Brandling that created her Instagram page @lisboa.come

to share several posts of food, when she felt the need of finding a restaurant to visit and started taking print screens of some she wanted to get to know (Red Bull, 2018).

With this, the hypothesis is that the influencers who have knowledge of the existence of several restaurants and their associated concepts can influence the increase of potential customers in the restaurant industry.

H2: The restaurant knowledge of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

The opinion leaders usually called influencers shape others' opinions with their characteristics, such as appearance, personality and relationship with their audience (Torres et al., 2019). Also, they influence consumers' attitudes with their likeability, attractiveness and the trust they often transmit to their followers (Boerman, 2020).

Thus, it is hypothesized that the trust influencers transmit can be, in a positive way, related to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

H3: The trustful influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

The humour, entertainment, the effort behind the posting, its visuality, the influencer himself and mainly, the authenticity are the main factors that contribute to influencer marketing success (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019).

Furthermore, one example of these practices is the best Portuguese Instagram restaurant influencer, Inês Brandling, who always tags the restaurant in question in the content she shares and admits to take and post the most instagamic food pictures with the utmost care possible (Red Bull, 2018).

It is therefore important to check whether care with the content that digital influencers share positively impacts the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

H4: The content care that influencers share is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Besides this attention and care with their posts, influencers are called to add on their descriptions when they are ads or sponsored content (Woods, 2016), or to explain to their followers when these are considered as advertisement (Coates et al., 2020). Actually, Instagram inserted a section named "paid partnership with a brand" for influencers to fulfil when they are part of a marketing campaign in order to demonstrate transparency and increase their relationship with the consumers (Boerman, 2020).

Although normal postings commonly create a higher engagement in comparison to paid partnerships, it is important to retain that even so, the credible, personal, creative and the most

different content from the mass media also has a greater impact on the target market (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019). So, if the paid partnerships shared by influencers are aligned with these features, they can be positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

H5: The paid partnerships of influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Concerning Instagram, since it has the feature of watching videos and photos in this platform, it highly contributes to eWOM because it is allowed to see products and services as close to reality as possible (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The goal of influencer marketing connected to personal experiences, opinions and recommendations is to engage and generate positive WOM that lead to brand admiration (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019) and the proof of that is Inês Brandling, who is the main responsible for other Instagram restaurant accounts seeing their number of followers increasing at the moment she advertises them (Red Bull, 2018).

As a result, it is important to realize whether WOM generated by influencers may have affected the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

H6: The WOM generation of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

In summary, table 4.1 shows the authors on the impact of influencer marketing on the restaurant industry, as well as their correspondent hypothesis.

Table 4.1: Summary of hypotheses formulation and its correspondent authors

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Author (s)</i>
H1: The Instagram influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Boerman (2020), Paula (2013), Mediakix (2019), Influencer Marketing Hub (2020) and TheFork (2016).
H2: The restaurant knowledge of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Torres et al. (2019) and Red Bull (2018).
H3: The trustful influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Torres et al. (2019) and Boerman (2020).

H4: The content care that influencers share is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Martikainen and Pitkanen (2019), and Red Bull (2018).
H5: The paid partnerships of influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Woods (2016), Coates et al. (2020), Boerman (2020), and Martikainen and Pitkanen (2019).
H6: The WOM generation of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	De Veirman et al. (2017), Martikainen and Pitkanen (2019), and Red Bull (2018).

4.1.2.2. Population

The population of this research is represented by those who live or have ever visited Portugal, and at the same time, that like to eat at restaurants. The first specification is justified by the fact that this country registered a significant growth in which, in 2019, the highest values in history were reached (AHRESP, 2020). On the other hand, they should go to restaurants since it is the industry in question to be studied.

4.1.2.3. Sample

As the population is quite large and it is not possible to collect the required data in time, a sample will be used. Thus, a probabilistic and convenience sampling method was chosen, i.e. all individuals in the population have an equal chance to answer the survey and the sample is considered accessible. It should be noted that this method effectively facilitates the collection of data, but should not be generalised to the population under study, as the sample may not be representative of it.

In order to try to approximate the data to the reality of the population, it is intended to obtain a sample that is as variable as possible regarding demographic characteristics such as age, gender, home country, the geographical area of residence or already visited in Portugal, the level of education and current occupation. Individuals were therefore questioned through the shared questionnaire in order to reach the necessary sample of 422 surveys in total, in which only 395 are considered valid because they meet the requirements of having already visited the Portuguese restaurants. Finally, it is possible to name that the sample in study will be the consumers of Portuguese restaurants.

4.1.2.4. Survey

As regards the construction of the survey, it consists of ten parts with a total of 28 questions. In the first part, people living in or having visited Portugal, who eat in restaurants and how often, they do so, are filtered. The next step was to understand whether respondents are following any influencer on social networks or on recommendation apps, as well as whether they have felt that the content shared by some of them has had some weight on their purchasing decision. In the third part, the topic of restoration begins to be addressed, first of all, by questioning which categories of influencers people follow, and then which content that is shared by food influencers they find interesting. Afterwards, the purpose was to understand if they have ever gone to a restaurant after seeing an influencer recommending it and on which platforms they saw it, but also if they follow any restaurant influencer.

In addition, from the fourth to the seventh part, examples are given of Instagram restaurant influencers posts to be analysed, such as whether an influencer helps in the process of finding a restaurant and in what way, concerning his personal characteristics and the actions he decides to take on his profile. In the eighth part of the questionnaire, a comparison is made between consumers' abilities and perceptions of the influencers and the restaurants themselves. On the other hand, in the ninth part, taking into account all the information available and answered until this part, the respondents were called to answer, in general terms, how much they like the idea of restaurants using influencer marketing as a communication channel and whether they would recommend it as a source of research for a restaurant to other people. Finally, the individual's personal data were requested.

Furthermore, both ordinal and nominal scales were used, the ordinal scale measures the consumer's level of agreement, good and satisfaction with the statements displayed, on a scale from 1 to 7. The lowest value represents "Strongly disagree", "Much worse" and "Very dissatisfied" and the 7th "Strongly agree", "Much better" and "Very satisfied", respectively. Conversely, the nominal scales expose different and unique responses. The survey can be seen in Annex B.

5. Data Analysis

This chapter aims at presenting the data obtained from both methodologies applied, as well as their extrapolation. In a first analysis, the qualitative results of the focus group carried out will be observed and, at a later stage, the quantitative data acquired will be studied. Regarding this last point, descriptive statistics of the sample will be included, as well as an analysis and discussion of the research hypotheses, presented in chapter 4. In the end, the fundamental conclusions of this research will be introduced.

5.1. Qualitative Results

The qualitative study was selected in order to obtain a more in-depth and detailed perception of the subject of this research. Thus, a focus group was conducted to 6 individuals who have the habit of visiting Portuguese restaurants and use Instagram influencers to search for them. This took place on 8th October, lasted one and a half hours and consisted of open-ended questions. Also, it is possible to see in Annex A, in more detail, each of the answers to the focus group's questions divided into three parts – general questions, opinions about the influencers in analysis and lastly, a comparison between the influencer and the restaurant posts. Keeping this in mind, a general characterisation of the data collected will follow.

Sample: Individuals from 21 to 24 years old from Lisbon, Setúbal, Leiria and Aveiro, who are students that go to restaurants 3 to 4 times a month.

5.1.1. General Questions

(1) How do you choose a restaurant?

When there is a research on which restaurant to go, Zomato, TheFork and Google are the most used platforms to find aspects such as rating, location, space, menu and price. However, Instagram is the most used to see the most visited places in the city, new restaurant trends, great looking food, as well as the restaurant spaces.

(2) What are the characteristics you consider crucial that influencers must have to influence you to go to the restaurant?

Influencers' main function is to show the restaurants and good-looking food constantly, so they should have expertise in the area and share content with the location and tag of the restaurant in question. Also, respondents believe influencers should be dedicated and empathetic, someone who not only shares because he has a high number of followers, but who

actually cares and interacts with them. Basically, they are an excellent way of getting to know many new places without any doubt.

(3) If restaurants started using Instagram influencers to promote themselves instead of their own communication channels, what is your opinion about that?

Looking for restaurants through Instagram influencers is better to find more innovative concepts and new trends because of its easier access. On the other hand, influencers are very good at getting people's attention at an early stage in order to look then for more about the restaurant in question. In fact, if it is an influencer that has a high number of followers and more important than that, a good relationship with them, restaurants can gain from this because it can be a mean of promoting themselves through the relationship that has already been created before between the influencer and his followers.

Moreover, they find that even though there has to be proper management on the part of the restaurant when it adopts this strategy in terms of choosing the best influencers to promote it, this is, overall, a good marketing technique that works very well. Consequently, they consider that using influencers as a way to promote a restaurant rather than their own communication channels would add value to it, and this is a reality they must take on today if they want to reach more people.

5.1.2. Opinions on Influencers

(1) Do you know these influencers? What do you think about their Instagram pages?

Inês Brandling and Andreia Costa are both known Instagram restaurant influencers who have attractive pages that show places they like with more sincere opinions than from the restaurant itself. Also, respondents consider that these influencers have vast knowledge in restaurants with different types of cuisine, spaces, concepts, which was gained through experience. Additionally, knowing that they are restaurant influencers makes them going directly to their Instagram pages in order to look for restaurants.

(2) What do you think about the photos they took?

The participants would go to the restaurants promoted in the posts because they can understand and appreciate the locals' concepts through the images shared. In fact, the influencers have care with the photos, which is proved by the edition they do to them in order to have a good view for the user. In addition, they prefer carousel photos since it allows to see the food looking great, the atmosphere of the restaurant and to have a more general idea of what it has to offer.

(3) What do you think about the post description?

Influencers write good descriptions in their posts with the main touchpoints about the restaurant, being the summary text form the most practical and visual to arise greater interest to the focus group players. They think influencers should use direct language with their followers too for people to relate to what is written, but also appreciate when they give a personal touch with specific details, considering the information provided correctly. Furthermore, they find the description helpful when it comes to understanding the restaurant concept better, and when they tag the restaurant page to find out more about it.

(4) What is your opinion about paid partnerships?

Individuals appreciate it when influencers assume that the content they share is paid or offered because they like honesty and do not classify it as negative since it is their job. That is, they do not see it as something that could harm the restaurant, they believe in their opinions because the topic is food, so they think the influencers would never share something they do not like and do not identify with, especially when they already have their own well-defined brand and status.

(5) Would you recommend to your friends/family to see the content they share on Instagram as a source of research for a restaurant?

The content shared by the Instagram influencers as a source of research for a restaurant would be recommended to the friends and family of the participants as their pages present several interesting suggestions they might enjoy like they were a restoration catalogue. They also add that Instagram is an excellent platform to share posts in an easier way.

5.1.3. Comparison between the Influencer and the Restaurant

(1) What do you think of these posts? Do you prefer any? Why?

When the two Instagram posts were shown, side by side, of an influencer and a restaurant, the respondents preferred the first one since they immediately understood what the restaurant offers through more appealing photos that showed both its dishes and atmosphere. Also, because the information provided seemed more honest, personal and complete by giving special tips to provide a better experience.

(2) Who do you trust the most?

Participants think it is of utmost importance that influencers respond to their public, giving individual attention to their followers and being the most available possible in order to create a higher empathy and connection with them. In fact, if influencers respond to everyone and clarify all the existing doubts, this leads to a significant increase in their confidence. Apart from that, because influencers show several restaurants with a more personalized opinion, they believe

they understand better the consumer needs and therefore, trust them more than the restaurant itself that has to defend its own brand and products.

(3) In general, do you feel that Instagram influencers have any impact on your decision to go to a restaurant?

Finally, the intermediates state that influencers impact their decision to go to a restaurant in a positive way, naming them as a gateway to the restaurant itself, as it is shown in such an appealing manner through an influencer that they gain interest in knowing more about it. In other words, they classify this marketing tool as an excellent form for restaurants to make themselves known to the public, especially the new ones, which happens also because they consider Instagram a good platform to more easily have access to new trends.

5.2. Quantitative Results

The data collection of the quantitative study consisted of an online questionnaire, addressing the individuals living or that have lived/visited Portugal who usually go to restaurants. The data was collected between 9th and 18th September 2020, being the sample of the survey the customers of Portuguese restaurants. In the following points, the data will be characterised and analysed.

Sample: 395 surveys

5.2.1. Sociodemographic Sample Characterization

As explained in the previous chapter, the quantitative study sample is composed of 395 individuals. Of these, it can be seen that 39% of individuals go to a restaurant “more than 4 times a month”, with 33% going from 3 to 4 and only 1% going less than once a month (figure 5.1).

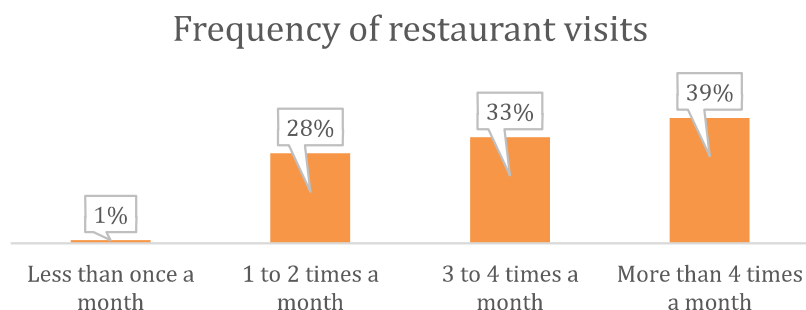


Figure 5.1: Distribution of the sample by the frequency of restaurant visits

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

As far as the gender is concerned, 65.8% are female and 33.9% are male, as shown in figure 5.2. With regards to the age group, individuals aged between 18 and 25 years predominate (73.9%), followed by those aged between 26 and 30 years (9.4%), as shown in figure 5.3.

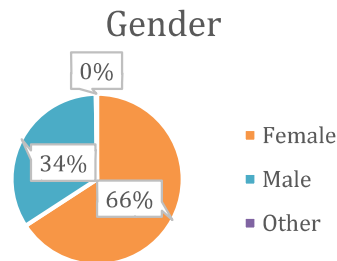


Figure 5.2: Distribution of the sample by gender

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

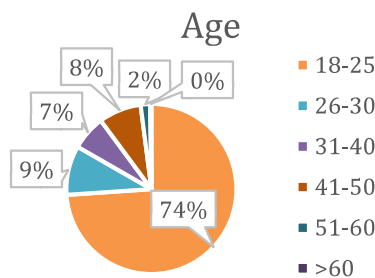


Figure 5.3: Distribution of the sample by age

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Furthermore, it is also noted that the sample is mostly Portuguese (95%) as it can be seen in figure 5.4, with the geographical area (figure 5.5) where most respondents live or have visited being the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (84%), followed by the Centre (7%) and the North (5%) of the country.

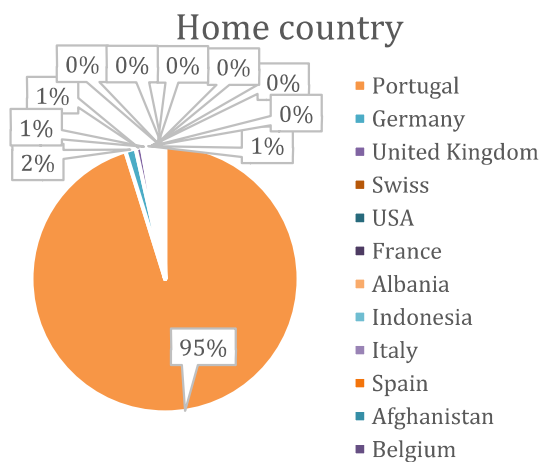


Figure 5.4: Distribution of the sample by home country

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

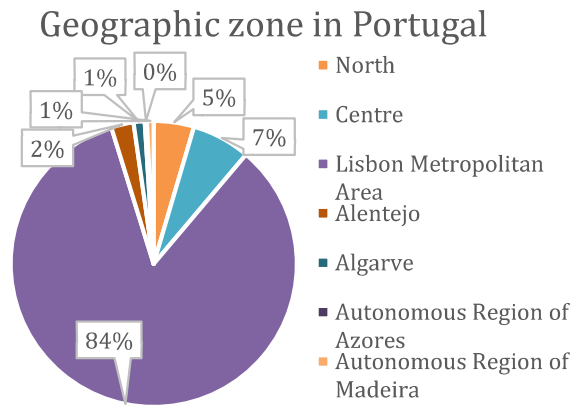


Figure 5.5: Distribution of the sample by geographic zone lived/visited in Portugal

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Finally, of those surveyed, by observing the figure 5.6, graduates predominate (42%), followed by masters (24.3%), and there was a balance of the sample between students and employees (36.7%), with a large number of responses relating to working students (20%), as can be confirmed in figure 5.7.

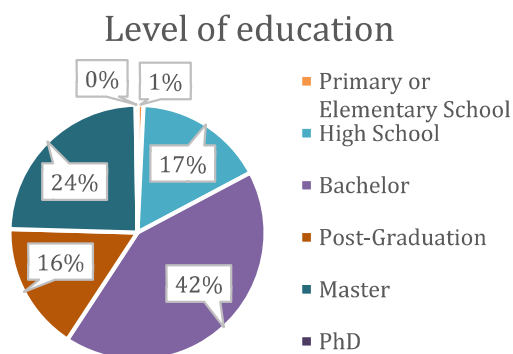


Figure 5.6: Distribution of the sample by level of education

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

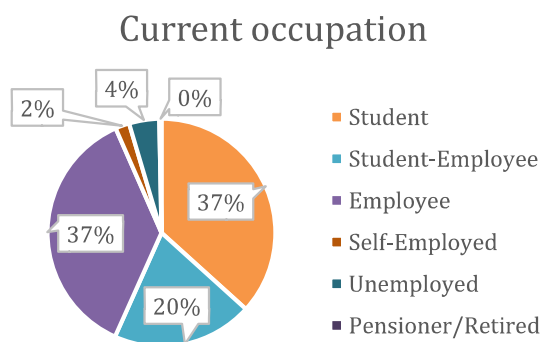


Figure 5.7: Distribution of the sample by current occupation

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

5.2.2. Characterization of the Influencer Marketing Weight

In the survey, individuals were asked whether or not they followed influencers on social media or recommendation apps, which 95% affirmed they do (figure 5.8). However, 25% said they never felt that an influencer had any weight on their purchase decision (figure 5.9).

Of the 95% of respondents who follow an influencer as it was mentioned above, the most followed categories (figure 5.10) are “travel” (71.4%) and “food” (62.8%), being the least followed “pet” (18.3%) and “interior” (20.7%). With this, it should be noted that, in this question, respondents were able to give more than one answer.

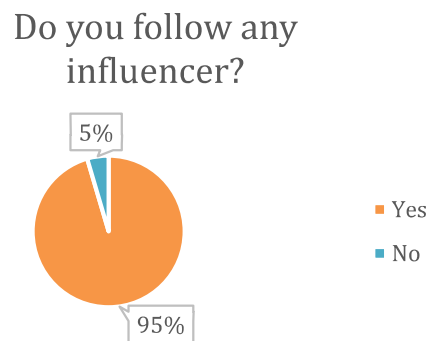


Figure 5.8: Distribution of the sample by following/no an influencer

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Have you ever felt that an influencer had some weight in your purchase decision?

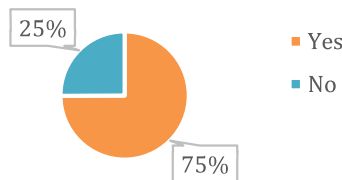


Figure 5.9: Distribution of the sample by feeling that an influencer had some weight in the purchase decision

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Categories of influencers followed

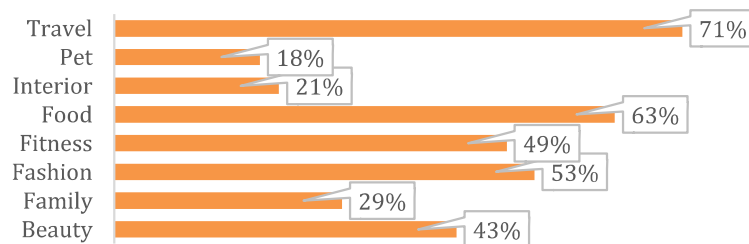


Figure 5.10: Distribution of the sample by categories of influencers followed

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Regarding the content shared by food influencers and taking into account, respondents could give more than one answer to this question, the content considered to be the most interesting one is “restaurants” with 79.5% (figure 5.11).

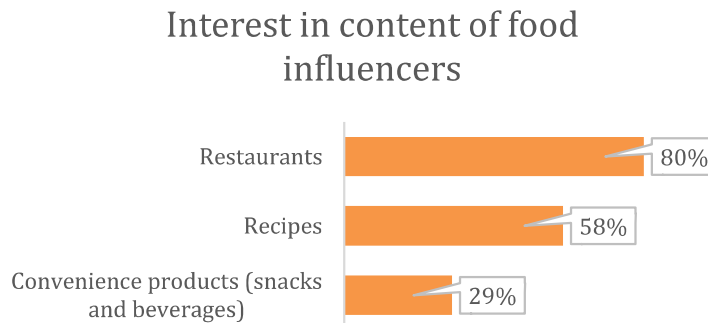


Figure 5.11: Distribution of the sample by the interest in the content of food influencers

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

5.2.3. Characterization of the Process of Searching for a Restaurant through Influencers

As to whether or not respondents went to a restaurant because they saw an influencer sharing content related to it, the majority (81.27%) replied yes, as shown in figure 5.12. When it comes to the platforms used to find that content (figure 5.13) and keeping in mind respondents could choose more than one option to this question, of that 81.27%, the one with the largest use is clearly Instagram with 91%, being the least used People and Pinterest with only 4%.

Moreover, figure 5.14 shows that 60% of the sample follows a restaurant influencer either on social networks or recommendation apps.

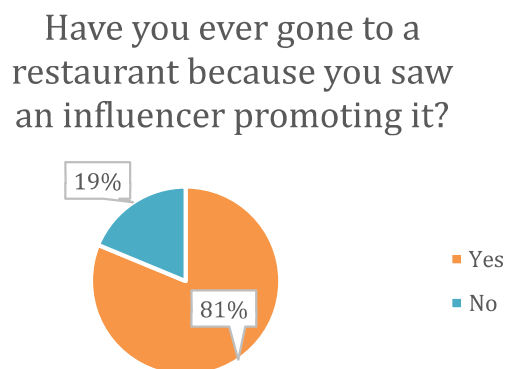


Figure 5.12: Distribution of the sample by going/no to a restaurant because an influencer promoted it

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

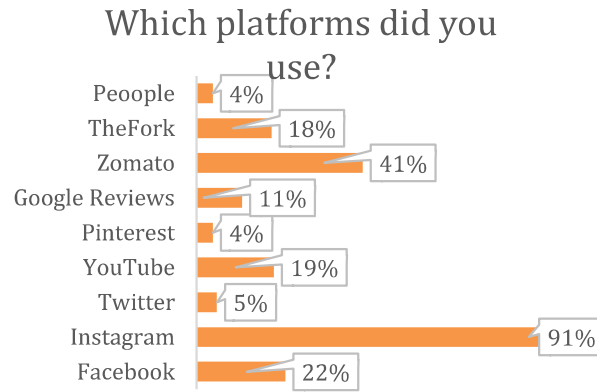


Figure 5.13: Distribution of the sample by platforms used to find a restaurant through influencer's content

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Do you follow any restaurant influencer?

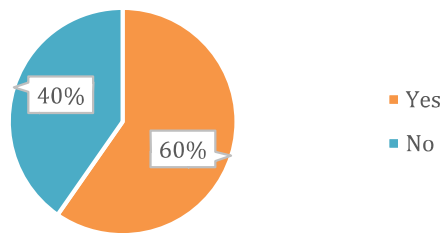


Figure 5.14: Distribution of the sample by following/no a restaurant influencer

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 show the results of the questions concerning the characterization of the process of choosing a restaurant through influencers, classified by the respondents on a Likert type scale. As mentioned in chapter 4, the scale used in table 5.1 varies from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), 5.2 varies from 1 (Much worse) to 7 (Much better) and 5.3 varies from 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 7 (Very satisfied). However, to facilitate the analysis, the percentage of responses relating to "Disagree" and "Agree", "Bad" and "Good", but also "Unsatisfied" and "Satisfied" was calculated, as well as the average of responses, obtaining the tables presented.

Using table 5.1, it can be seen that most individuals tend to agree with all the statements exposed (average always higher than 4), except for the second one which states that following influencers wastes time in the process of looking for a restaurant (3.4). However, the statements most respondents agreed with are about being inclined to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it (4.9), recommending using influencers as a source of research for a restaurant (4.8), the process of looking for a restaurant being time-consuming (4.4) and encouraging others

to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it (4.4). On the other hand, with regard to this way of looking for a restaurant completely meeting their needs (4), the sample is more distributed, yet, the number of responses continues to correspond to "Strongly agree" (42%).

Table 5.1: Distribution of the sample concerning the process of searching for a restaurant through influencers, varying between disagreement and agreement

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Average
The process of searching for a restaurant is time-consuming	31%	16%	53%	4.4
Following influencers would make the process of looking for restaurants waste my time	55%	18%	27%	3.4
This way of looking for a restaurant fully meets my needs	41%	17%	42%	4
I'm inclined to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it	17%	16%	67%	4.9
I would recommend using influencers as a source of research for a restaurant to others	19%	18%	63%	4.8
I would encourage others to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it	30%	16%	54%	4.4

Additionally, as it can be seen in table 5.2, the benefits that could be gained, in general, by using an influencer as a source of research for a restaurant (4.8) would be much better, and the same situation occurs with respect to the process itself if restaurants used this marketing technique, rather than their own communication channels (4.7).

Table 5.2: Distribution of the sample concerning the process of searching for a restaurant through influencers, varying between bad and good

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

	Worse	Neutral	Better	Average
In general, the benefits I may receive when using an influencer as a source of research for a restaurant will be:	9%	26%	65%	4.8
The process of searching for a restaurant through influencers instead of its own communication channels is:	18%	22%	60%	4.7

At last, in terms of satisfaction, and in a general way, by looking at table 5.3, the majority of respondents are very satisfied (61%) if restaurants started using influencers as a communication channel (4.9).

Table 5.3: Distribution of the sample concerning the process of searching for a restaurant through influencers, varying between dissatisfaction and satisfaction

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Average
In general, if restaurants started using influencers as a communication channel, I am:	12%	27%	61%	4.9

5.2.4. Characterization of a Restaurant Influencer

From tables 5.4 to 5.7, the results are presented in a Likert scale as well, but now they refer to the influencer himself, the content he shares and his actions, compared to those of the restaurant. In these tables too, the scale used varies from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), in which, in order to make the reading of the study easier, besides the average of the answers for each statement, the percentages of the answers that are within the "Disagree" were calculated, as well as those that are within the "Agree", obtaining the following tables.

Firstly, in table 5.4, there is an agreement that an influencer provides several (4.5) and different (4.9) options of restaurants to visit, that he makes his followers want to visit them (4.9), as well as he allows a better understanding of their concepts (4.2). Nevertheless, when it comes to an influencer who always shares the restaurants he likes the most (4), the sample is more distributed, having thus prevailed the number of responses that correspond to "Strongly disagree" (42%). Conversely, there is a disagreement on the statements "An influencer that is never available to respond to my comments makes me trust him even more" (2,3), "An influencer makes the process of choosing a restaurant slower" (2,8), "An influencer is not helpful in the process of choosing a restaurant to visit" (2,9), and with respect to an influencer not being able to respond as quickly as the restaurant he is promoting (3,8), this is relatively balanced with the disagreements.

Table 5.4: Distribution of the sample concerning the influencer, varying between disagreement and agreement

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Average
An influencer provides different restaurant options to visit	22%	17%	61%	4.9

An influencer always shares the restaurants he likes and appreciates the most	42%	18%	40%	4
An influencer is not helpful in the process of choosing the restaurant to visit	73%	10%	17%	2.9
An influencer that is never available to respond to my comments makes me trust him even more	78%	9%	13%	2.3
An influencer allows me to better understand the concept of a restaurant	35%	19%	46%	4.2
An influencer does not have the ability to respond to my questions as quickly as the restaurant he is promoting	45%	18%	37%	3.8
An influencer gives me several options of restaurants I want to visit	27%	18%	55%	4.5
An influencer makes his followers feel they should visit the restaurant	22%	12%	66%	4.9
An influencer makes the process of choosing a restaurant slower	71%	12%	17%	2.8

Furthermore, using table 5.5, it can be seen that most individuals tend to agree with three of the statements exposed (average higher than 4). In the first place, the posting of nice and appealing pictures (4.6), then the attention and care in the description of the post (4.4) and the identification of the restaurant in question (4.3) positively influence the respondents to want to attend it. On the other hand, there is a disagreement in the statements "The information given by the influencer makes choosing a restaurant harder" (3.1"), as well as the "An influencer that alerts in the description of his posts when they are paid partnerships makes me not want to go there" (3.6).

Table 5.5: Distribution of the sample concerning the influencer's content, varying between disagreement and agreement

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Average
An influencer that identifies the restaurant he visited in his posts makes me want to go there	35%	17%	48%	4.3

An influencer that has attention and care when writing the description of his posts makes me want to go to a restaurant	32%	17%	51%	4.4
An influencer that alerts in the description of his posts when they are paid partnerships makes me not want to go there	51%	17%	32%	3.6
An influencer that always posts nice and appealing pictures related to the restaurant he has visited makes me want to go there	28%	15%	57%	4.6
The information given by the influencer makes choosing a restaurant harder	65%	13%	22%	3.1

Lastly, in order to compare the actions taken between an influencer and a restaurant, the affirmations evaluated are “Provides correct information in the description of his posts”, “Is always too busy to respond to the comments of his followers”, “Gives confidence to his followers”, “Does not have the knowledge to provide recommendations”, “Offers individual attention to his followers”, and “Does not understand the needs of his followers”.

In table 5.6, the ones that have a higher agreement are the first and the third statements with 4.5 and 4.6 of average, respectively, and those that generate discord are the second with 3.8, and the fourth, fifth and sixth declarations with 3.3 rate.

Given the last table, the agreement and disagreement fall on exactly the same allegations, however, with distinct means. Those reflecting concordance have a medium of 5 and 4.6 with respect to the first and third statements, respectively, whereas those related to dissent, in other words, the second tracks 3.6, the fourth 2.8, the fifth 3.9 and the last 3.3 of average.

Table 5.6: Distribution of the sample concerning the influencer’s actions, varying between disagreement and agreement

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

An influencer...	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Average
Provides correct information in the description of his posts	26%	21%	53%	4.5
Is always too busy to respond to the comments of his followers	43%	26%	31%	3.8
Gives confidence to his followers	24%	18%	58%	4.6

Does not have the knowledge to provide recommendations	59%	18%	23%	3.3
Offers individual attention to his followers	57%	21%	22%	3.3
Does not understand the needs of his followers in the process of choosing a restaurant	57%	18%	25%	3.3

Table 5.7: Distribution of the sample concerning the restaurant's actions, varying between disagreement and agreement

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

A restaurant...	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Average
Provides correct information in the description of his posts	20%	15%	65%	5
Is always too busy to respond to the comments of his followers	52%	18%	30%	3.6
Gives confidence to his followers	26%	18%	56%	4.6
Does not have the knowledge to provide recommendations	68%	11%	21%	2.8
Offers individual attention to his followers	45%	19%	36%	3.9
Does not understand the needs of his followers in the process of choosing a restaurant	58%	18%	24%	3.3

5.2.5. Validity

The survey can be considered valid as it is based on a set of empirical data collected from the literature review and the contextualization. These studies have served as a building block for the research hypotheses and, consequently, for the survey in question, fostering its validity.

Afterwards, correlations between variables will be carried out, presenting the assumptions of the tests to be taken into account in order to verify the hypotheses and to investigate them.

5.2.6. Tests to be used and their Prerequisites

First of all, it is essential to mention that non-parametric tests were used to test the hypotheses under study. Nevertheless, these tests are less sensitive and may be less accurate in identifying differences between groups that actually exist, but even so, they are advisable for ordinal qualitative variables, as is the case.

On the other hand, the Spearman's correlation test will be used to check the chances of investigation, in which it is important to mention that this test can be taken into account when one of the assumptions of the Pearson correlation is markedly violated.

Keeping this in mind, the assumptions of the Pearson correlation are the level of measurement, related pairs, absence of outliers and linearity, however, the first one, which assumes that each variable should be continuous, is violated. That is, if one or both of the variables are ordinal in measurement, then a Spearman correlation is conducted instead.

Furthermore, the Spearman's correlation sets the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship between two variables, in which this kind of relationship can have two perspectives: (1) if a value of one variable increases, the other one increases too; (2) if the value of a variable rises, the other one decreases. Also, the correlation is null if the coefficient is less than 0.1; it is weak if it is more than 0.1 and less than 0.3; moderate if it is between 0.3 and 0.6; strong if the Spearman's Rho is between 0.6 and 0.9; very strong if it is between 0.9 and 1, and if this value is reached the correlation is considered perfect.

Additionally, it should be noted that the results have been extrapolated to an infinite population, which gives a 95% confidence interval.

5.2.7. Correlation between Variables and Verification of Research Hypotheses

H1: The Instagram influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Table 5.8 indicates that Instagram is significantly, positively and moderately associated with the potential customers reach ($r_s = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, and because the significance level is lower than 0.05, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 5.8: Spearman's Correlation regarding Instagram and Potential customers reach variables

Source: Author's elaboration (2020)

	Potential customers reach	
	r_s	.312***
Instagram	p	.000
	N	395

Note.*** $p < .001$

H2: The restaurant knowledge of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

The restaurant knowledge (table 5.9) is also significantly, positively and moderately associated with the potential customers reach ($r_s = 0.436$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, it can be said that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 5.9: Spearman’s Correlation regarding Restaurant knowledge and Potential customers reach variables

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

		Potential customers reach
	r_s	.436***
Restaurant knowledge	p	.000
	N	395

Note.*** $p < .001$

H3: The trustful influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

The correlation of the variables in question in this hypothesis is presented with a Spearman's Rho value of 0.400 and a significance level of 0.000 (table 5.10). Therefore, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is not rejected, and so that the trust is significantly, positively and moderately associated with the potential customers reach.

Table 5.10: Spearman’s Correlation regarding Trust and Potential customers reach variables

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

		Potential customers reach
	r_s	.400***
Trust	p	.000
	N	395

Note.*** $p < .001$

H4: The content care that influencers share is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

As for content care (table 5.11), it is also significantly, positively and moderately associated with the potential customers reach ($r_s = 0.466$, $p < 0.001$). So, it is also confirmed that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 5.11: Spearman’s Correlation regarding Content care and Potential customers reach variables

Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

		Potential customers reach
	r_s	.466***
Content care	p	.000

	N	395
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Note.*** p < .001

H5: The paid partnerships of influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Table 5.12 shows that paid partnerships have a null correlation with the potential customers reach ($r_s = 0.062$, $p = 0.235$). In view of this, and because the significance level is higher than 0.05, it is concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5.12: Spearman’s Correlation regarding Paid partnerships and Potential customers reach variables
Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

		Potential customers reach
	r_s	.062***
Paid partnerships	p	.235
	N	395

Note.*** p < .001

H6: The WOM generation of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.

Finally, the results indicate that WOM generation (table 5.13) is significantly, positively and moderately associated with the potential customers reach ($r_s = 0.591$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the last hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 5.13: Spearman’s Correlation regarding WOM generation and Potential customers reach variables
Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

		Potential customers reach
	r_s	.591***
WOM generation	p	.000
	N	395

Note.*** p < .001

In general, it follows the table 5.14 which shows a summary of the research hypotheses with the tests used to determine the decision which, in this case, indicates that all of them are confirmed except the one related to paid partnerships, and where the respective correlation values between the variables in each one are all considered positive.

Table 5.14: Summary of decisions on research hypotheses
Source: Author’s elaboration (2020)

	Hypotheses	Test	R _s	Decision

H1	The Instagram influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Spearman's Rho Test	0.312	Do not reject H0
H2	The restaurant knowledge of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Spearman's Rho Test	0.436	Do not reject H0
H3	The trustful influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Spearman's Rho Test	0.400	Do not reject H0
H4	The content care that influencers share is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Spearman's Rho Test	0.466	Do not reject H0
H5	The paid partnerships of influencers are positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry	Spearman's Rho Test	0.062	Reject H0
H6	The WOM generation of influencers is positively connected to the potential customers reach in the restaurant industry.	Spearman's Rho Test	0.591	Do not reject H0

5.3. Discussion of Results

The main objective of this investigation was to ascertain whether Instagram influencers can affect the restaurant industry in a beneficial way, in the specific case of increasing potential customers. For this purpose, several criteria that had already been mentioned in studies outside Portugal and for industries other than catering were used. Consequently, the aim was to establish the same with respect to the particular characteristics of an influencer, more concretely, with regard to his Instagram account, his knowledge of restaurants, the trust he transmits to his followers, the care he takes with the content he shares, the paid partnerships he decides to accept and the WOM he generates. Having determined the various dimensions of the study, a model was developed to measure the impact of these on the consumer's intention to visit a restaurant.

To achieve this, the use of both quantitative (questionnaire to people attending Portuguese restaurants) and qualitative (focus group with individuals using Instagram influencers to search for these restaurants) methodologies were used. The techniques used were based on literature

review, however, this analysis revealed some general limitations regarding the questionnaire where the sample may not be representative of the population under study and the focus group may not be sufficiently large to take any further conclusions (Queirós et al., 2017). In order to overcome these limitations, a combination of the two types of analysis was conducted, having, on the one hand, the opinions of those closest to Portuguese restaurants and, more specifically, those who consult Instagram influencers to search for them.

Later on, data was analysed and statistically validated through Spearman's correlation, in which it could be inferred that all the criteria presented correlate positively with the increase in potential consumers in the restaurant industry, except for that related to paid partnerships. Thus, these variables have a positive impact on the industry, in which the most important one is the WOM that an influencer generates, followed by the care he takes with the content he shares, then his vast knowledge in several restaurants present a higher correlation, after that, the confidence he conveys to his public, and finally the fact of having an Instagram profile.

These results could be complemented with those of the focus group, where participants stated, regarding the most important variable, the WOM, since they recommend to their friends and family this way of looking for a restaurant as the influencers' pages are like a restaurant catalogue that integrates several suggestions that they are able to appreciate, but also by the ease that Instagram's platform makes available to its users an easy way of content sharing. Indeed, from the 395 survey respondents, 63% affirmed they would generate positive WOM in relation to this marketing technique.

Taking into account the care with the content that includes the photographs, the description of the post, the location and the tag of the restaurant, it is concluded that the influencers have it because they can perfectly pass on the concept of restaurants through quality images that demonstrate the dishes available and their environment. Also, through the descriptions that are appealing because they have, in a summarized way and with a direct language to the public, the main and more personal aspects that can make the reader want to visit the restaurant. In fact, 57% of respondents in the questionnaire consider that influencers share amazing pictures of restaurants and 51% say they pay attention to the description of their posts. Moreover, the information provided is considered correct and useful in terms of knowing more about the restaurant as it provides the chance to visit its page, which would not be possible if its Instagram profile was the first contact that consumers would have with it because they cannot immediately understand its offer. Therefore, 65% state that the content shared by influencers makes the process of choosing a restaurant easier.

With regard to the dimension of expertise in restaurants, the third most significant, this is considered vast, as 61% of respondents affirmed, due to the experience influencers have acquired over time. They know so many types of cuisine, spaces and concepts that make people go directly to their Instagram to look for one.

The restaurant influencers must be dedicated, empathic people who, regardless of their number of followers, are concerned with interacting with their followers, with 78% of the respondents saying that influencers who answer the comments on their posts increase the confidence transmitted. When compared to the restaurants they promote, they are considered more responsive and more honest, as they give a more personalised opinion, clarify all doubts and give individual attention to their audience, demonstrating themselves as available people. Thereby, a greater connection and trust is created with the influencers, that it costs more for the restaurant to achieve, so they understand better the needs of the consumer.

Concerning the platforms where it is possible to search for information such as rating, menu and prices, the most used is Zomato, however, due to its easy access to find new trends and innovative concepts in the restaurant business with the location, images of the food with an excellent look and the space of the restaurant, the choice falls on Instagram.

On the other hand, it is important to justify the only rejected hypothesis of this investigation, i.e. the fact that paid partnerships have no impact on the increase of potential consumers in the catering industry. This is because it is the work of the influencers and people do not see it as something negative, on the contrary, they appreciate honesty and think that it is not something that harms the restaurant, as 51% of the participants state that the paid content does not make them lose the will to visit the restaurant. Since the topic is food, they believe influencers already have their status well defined with their audience, so they are not sharing it because they have been paid, but because they like it and identify with it.

In general, influencers are a reality that restaurants must adopt in order to reach a larger number of consumers since this is a marketing tool that works very well in the first stage of contact whose objective is to capture the attention in order to later gain interest in knowing more about them. Indeed, 60% of participants affirmed that they already follow an influencer of this category on social networks and recommendation apps, and also, although they may choose more than one option, the truth is that 80% of them selected the restaurants when asked about the most interesting content shared by food influencers.

Conversely, because the process of choosing a restaurant is often time-consuming, the influencers are an excellent alternative that speeds up this process, as 71% of the respondents stated. So, this is a way to add value for restaurants, especially those that have recently opened,

as they are taking advantage of the good relationship already created by the influencers with their public, not forgetting that clearly there will have to be good management when it comes to choosing the most appropriate ones to promote themselves. In fact, 61% of respondents said they would be very happy if this became an official channel of communication for restaurants since 81% of participants have actually been to a restaurant promoted by an Instagram influencer.

In short, the influencers impact the decision to go to a restaurant in a positive way, what could be withdrawn by the questionnaire, in which 65% claimed that the benefits they receive from using this source as a way to search for a restaurant would be much better. Thus, it can be concluded that this is a very creative and appealing way to promote oneself, being the influencers considered as a doorway to the restaurant itself.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is intended to present the main conclusions drawn after the various analyses carried out. Thus, first the theoretical contributions (1), and subsequently the managerial implications (2).

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

After discussing the results and touching on the main points of this research, it is now crucial to compare them with the literature review to deepen the conclusions of this study.

Firstly, as regards the hypothesis with the greatest correlation between variables, WOM and the reach of potential consumers in catering, it can be confirmed that influencers generate it by sharing their personal experiences and opinions that lead to a high admiration for a brand (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019). Moreover, because they are Instagram influencers and this platform allows to see images and videos with the products, i.e. by demonstrating the offer as close to reality as possible, it also leads to a greater generation of WOM (De Veirman et al., 2017). Thus, it is normal that Inês Brandling, one of the best restaurant influencers in Portugal, due to the excellent feedback that people give to her, she sees her profile gaining notoriety (Red Bull, 2018).

In second place comes the fourth hypothesis with greater relevance, whereas the effort behind the posts, the visual part and the authenticity are in fact proven as factors that contribute to the success of influencer marketing (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that Inês Brandling is successful since she is careful with the content she shares, as she tags the restaurant she is promoting and does everything to take the most instagamic photos for her followers (Red Bull, 2018).

On the other hand, expertise in the restaurant industry comes in third place, which proves what is mentioned in the literature review regarding the influencers shaping the minds of consumers if they are familiar with a particular subject (Torres et al., 2019).

According to Torres et al. (2019), influencers, known as opinion leaders, induce their public with their personality, the relationship they have been working on to develop, and especially, the trust transmitted (Boerman, 2020). So, this study also estimates that the confidence emerged by the influencers is a persuasive aspect that increases the willingness to visit a restaurant.

Moreover, this research shows that Instagram is actually the best platform to influencer marketing, as stated by the Influencer Marketing Hub (2020). Also, the use of Instagram

influencers as a promotion technique has an impact on the catering industry too, increasing the reach of potential consumers (TheFork, 2016).

As for the only variable that has no impact on the market in question, it is bridged the statement related to the fact that regular content creates a higher engagement than paid ones (Martikainen & Pitkanen, 2019). Indeed, those that are considered to be credible, creative, personal and with a description that says it is advertising (Coates et al., 2020) in order to demonstrate transparency (Boerman, 2020), already have a positive impact on the relationship that the audience has with an influencer and, consequently, in the presented market.

Finally, it is important to mention that in this study, a comparison was made between the communication channels of the restaurant itself and the influencers that promote them. With this, it was possible to conclude that the fact that influencers are brand ambassadors who make a more quickly impact on the audience (Boerman, 2020), leads them to be part of an infallible technique when the objective is to promote a brand, in this case, a restaurant (Paula, 2018).

6.2. Managerial Implications

The main purpose of this study is to provide restaurants with a marketing tool to enhance the number of potential customers, understanding the extent to which Instagram influencers can impact this industry in a positive way. Keeping this in mind, Instagram influencer marketing presents several managerial implications to restaurants, since they might need to search for new trending ways to promote themselves, especially if they are newcomers in the market.

Bearing in mind that the restoration industry in 2017, in Portugal, recorded a profit of 5,454.2 million euros and has a significant growth trend (Statista, 2020a), it is important to find more and more ways to increase the will of going to restaurants. Indeed, based on the survey of this study, 72% of the 395 respondents, claim to visit a restaurant more than 3 times a month, which follows the statement regarding this sector having a very positive evolution.

However, due to the fact that consumers are increasingly demanding with new needs, choices, tastes and expectations they want to be satisfied by the offer of the market in question, there must be new ways to attract them. An example of this is the possibility of integrating digital influencers into the marketing strategy of restaurants, this being a fully proven reality that has a great impact on business, in terms of arousing interest and drawing attention to get to know more about them (TheFork, 2016). On the other hand, it should be noted that in fact, 75% of respondents stated that a recommendation by an influencer had a great weight in their purchase decision.

Finally, not discouraging all of their own communication channels to demonstrate more specific aspects such as the schedule, the possibility of making reservations, menus, events, among others, restaurants should also use Instagram influencers in order to reach more people and take advantage of the relationship they already have with their audience. Through this mean, they will be able to share other positive points, such as great looking food, the restaurant's decoration and special tips that, because they are more personal and unique, improve the experience of the final consumer, but also enhance the interaction, connection and perception of the restaurant itself. By doing so, restaurants will certainly see their rating, positive reviews and good WOM increasing, and consequently, their number of potential customers.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Due to the current paradigm of the pandemic, it was not possible to carry out the focus group in person, but in another context, it would have been preferable to do so in order to try to observe the behaviours of the participants when asked about their opinions regarding the influencers and the restaurants they promote.

As mentioned above, the hypothesis of paid partnerships having an influence on the catering industry was not verified. The remaining variables - WOM generation, care with content, knowledge in the area of restoration, confidence conveyed and Instagram -, although confirmed and positively correlated with the enhancing of potential consumers, it could not be concluded that this influence was strong but rather moderate. This was probably because, in the course of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to think of a restaurant influencer they knew and then consider the same for the rest of the survey; or if they did not know any, only two of this category were presented, so they could have been showing more and with greater differences in the content they share.

On the other hand, more criteria could be found concerning Instagram influencers, and the weight they have in choosing a restaurant. Another possibility would be to carry out a similar study for a specific type of restaurant, i.e. to focus on bars, cafes, pizzerias, Japanese, Indian or traditional Portuguese food, for example. Finally, it could be interesting to reverse the research approach and study the reasons that lead someone to follow a certain influencer, and so that try to create several consumer profiles with different needs.

In the future, a market other than Portuguese may be studied, such as French or English, which in 2017, had a higher turnover in the ranking of restaurants in the European Union. Probably they could have more significant inputs in terms of change and finding innovative marketing techniques to reach more people, and thus up the number of potential consumers.

Lastly, the same study could be carried out in a few years' time, when there is already a new perspective on influencers, Instagram platform and on the restaurants in Portugal. This channel of communication in this market could also be analysed due to changes in attitudes, tastes, behaviours and expectations towards them.

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9. Annexes

Annex A: Focus Group

 Focus group to 6 individuals who go to Portuguese restaurants and use Instagram influencers to search for them	
<p>Hi! Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. Before starting, as I mentioned before, I want to ask if I am allowed to record this call? The recording will only be used to take my notes later, and will not be shared with anyone else. At the moment I am finishing my Master in Marketing at Iscte Business School.</p> <p>To finish the same, I'm doing my master's dissertation which is in the scope of this study.</p>	
<p>1. Age, place of residence, level of education and professional occupation.</p>	<p>Individual 1, 23 years, Aveiro, student of Master in International Management; Individual 2, 23 years, Lisbon, student of Master in Marketing; Individual 3, 23 years, Setúbal, student of Master in Engineering and Industrial Management; Individual 4, 21 years, Leiria, student of Bachelor in IT and Business Management; Individual 5, 22 years, Lisbon, student of Master in Management of Services and Technologies; Individual 6, 24 years, Lisbon, student of Master in Communication Science.</p>
<p>2. How often do you go to restaurants?</p>	<p>The participants go to restaurants alone, with other person or in big groups, from 3 to 4 times a month.</p>
<p>3. How do you choose a restaurant?</p>	<p>Participants say they go to the restaurants they already know at short notice and depending on the type of food they want to eat at the moment. When they plan ahead, they go to Zomato, TheFork and Google to see aspects such as rating, location, space, menu and price, and taking into account the current context of the pandemic or if they already know that the place is full, they have always planned and make a reservation in advance. They also use social media, especially Instagram, which is the most used to see the most visited places in the city, new restaurants to not go to the same ones, new trends like brunch, great looking food, as well as to see the restaurant space, whether or not it has an esplanade, for instance.</p>
<p>4. What are the characteristics you consider crucial that influencers must have to influence you to go to the restaurant?</p>	<p>The focus group intermediates affirmed they know Instagram restaurant influencers who share all kinds of restaurants, but also that they follow them from</p>

	<p>other categories such as lifestyle or travel that share the same type of content. They add that they have already been in a restaurant after seeing an influencer promoting it on Instagram several times, as they are always sharing content, which is great to then know where it is and be able to experiment it. In fact, despite considering important that the influencer should have expertise in the area, they state it has a lot to do with the content they share, whether in a post or in a story and what it is about. Afterwards, they go find out more about the restaurant because it has aroused their interest, that is, the influencer's main function is to show the restaurants. Furthermore, they think the content should show the location and tag of the restaurant in question. However, when they see them sharing all the places they go, they think they lose credibility, so they should only share a few to demonstrate these really were the ones they liked to visit to make them believe in their opinion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that they say they get to know many new places because of the influencers without any doubt. Therefore, they think influencers should be dedicated and empathetic, who not only shares because they have a high number of followers, but someone who actually cares and interacts with them, and they value that because not all influencers do it.</p>
<p>5. If restaurants started using Instagram influencers to promote themselves instead of their own communication channels, what is your opinion about that?</p>	<p>Individuals have the preference of looking for restaurants through Instagram influencers as these usually go to several ones with innovative concepts, but also due to the fact that they do not research restaurants and new trends on other platforms, so influencers are the best option. Consequently, they consider that using influencers as a way to promote a restaurant rather than its own communication channels would add value to it, and this is a reality they must take on today if they want to reach more people. On the other hand, influencers are very good at getting people's attention at an early stage in order to look then for more about the restaurant in question.</p>

	<p>In fact, if it is an influencer that has a high number of followers and more important than that, a good relationship with them, restaurants can gain from this because it can be a mean of promoting themselves through the relationship that has already been created before between the influencer and his followers. Moreover, they find that even though there has to be proper management on the part of the restaurant when it adopts this strategy in terms of choosing the best influencers to promote it, this is, overall, a good marketing technique that works very well.</p>
<p>I will now give examples of Instagram influencers that promote restaurants as well as the content they share, and after each one, I would like to ask for your opinion. If you have any questions, feel free to interrupt me at any time.</p>	
<p>6. Do you know these influencers? What do you think about their Instagram pages?</p>	<p>They know both examples of Instagram restaurant influencers showed, Inês Brandling and Andreia Costa. Observing their Instagram feeds, the respondents say they liked their pages because they are very appealing and have a wide variety of restaurants, but also that they prefer them because they are more personal for showing places they like to go with more sincere opinions than from the restaurant itself. What caught their attention the most were the pictures of the great looking dishes. They also added that they have vast knowledge in restaurants with different types of cuisine, spaces, concepts, prices, thinking that this was gained through experience. Moreover, knowing that they are restaurant influencers makes them go directly to their Instagram pages in order to look for restaurants. However, if they are influencers of other categories like Andreia who also focuses on lifestyle and travel, they find their pages useful but more difficult to look for a restaurant.</p>
<p>7. What do you think about the photos they took?</p>	<p>The participants confirmed that they would go to the restaurants promoted in the posts shared by the Instagram influencers because they can understand and appreciate the locals' concepts. What captured their attention the most were the images of food looking great and the decoration of the spaces. As for the carousel photos or just one, the opinions clearly</p>

	<p>fall on the first option, as it allows to see the variety of dishes, the atmosphere of the restaurant and to have a more general idea of what it has to offer. However, they say that one is enough to capture their attention and add that they even prefer stories because it is more visual and effective to convince them. Regarding the care with the photos, the respondents say that influencers have it because they are edited and treated in order to have a good view for the user, they demonstrate the offer of food and space, which increases their interest in going to the restaurant, in which the ones that most makes them want to visit it are those that present the food.</p>
<p>8. What do you think about the post description?</p>	<p>From the participants' point of view, influencers write good descriptions in their posts with the main touchpoints, which clearly makes them read them if the photo is indeed appealing. In addition, they consider the information provided correct and that the summary text form is more practical and visual, which arises greater interest for them, also because the influencers in question use direct language with their followers and people can relate to what is written. They add that care must be taken in relation to not miss important content because they appreciate when influencers give a personal touch with certain details of the restaurant. Furthermore, they say that the description helps when it comes to understanding the restaurant concept better and that they find it very useful the fact of being possible to click on the location of the restaurant in an influencer's post to see the experiences of other consumers who have also published photos in the same place and have a reliable opinion about it too.</p>
<p>9. What is your opinion about paid partnerships?</p>	<p>Individuals appreciate it when influencers assume that the content they share is paid or offered because they like honesty and do not classify it as negative since it is their job. Moreover, they do not see it as something that could harm the restaurant, they believe in their opinions because the topic is food, so they think that the influencers would never share something they do</p>

	<p>not like and do not identify with, especially when they already have their own well-defined brand and status. They also consider that sharing this kind of content is a way of showing the restaurant to its followers, making them known to the public, and even if they have personal benefits it is something they consider normal.</p>
<p>10. Would you recommend to your friends/family to see the content they share on Instagram as a source of research for a restaurant?</p>	<p>The focus group players would recommend to their relatives and friends to see the content shared by these Instagram influencers as a source of search for a restaurant for the simple fact that their pages present very interesting suggestions. They also add that Instagram is an excellent platform to share publications with friends in an easier way. On the other hand, they classify their roles as someone who shows several restaurants that their audience might like as if it was a catalogue. However, when comparing the two influencers, they say they would faster share one focused only on restoration than one that is in other categories, also because they consider his opinions more reliable.</p>
<p>I will now show you posts about some restaurants.</p>	
<p>11. What do you think of these posts? Do you prefer any? Why?</p>	<p>When the two Instagram posts were shown, side by side, of an influencer and a restaurant, the respondents say they preferred the first one to immediately understand what the restaurant offers and that the difference they clearly see is that it has a more personal touch and quickly demonstrates its variety of dishes. The participants prefer the post of the influencers for being more careful with it, which made them want to visit the restaurant more, in which the photo is more appealing for showing both its food and atmosphere. In terms of the information provided, the one given by the influencer seems to them more honest, personal and complete by giving special tips to provide a better experience.</p>
<p>12. Who do you trust the most?</p>	<p>Participants think it is of utmost importance that influencers respond to their followers in order to create a higher empathy and connection with them, which makes their opinions have a greater impact. In</p>

	<p>fact, as these influencers respond to everyone and clarify all the existing doubts, this leads to a significant increase in their trust. They think that when it comes to giving individual attention to the public and being the most available possible is clearly the influencer. Also, because of the fact that influencers show several restaurants with a more personalized opinion, the respondents affirmed they understand better the consumer needs and therefore, trust them more than the restaurant itself that has to defend its own brand and products.</p>
<p>13. In general, do you feel that influencers have any impact on your decision to go to a restaurant?</p>	<p>Finally, the intermediates confirm that the influencers impact their decision to go to a restaurant in a positive way, naming them as a gateway to the restaurant itself. They say that it is not because the restaurant is being promoted that they decide to visit it straight away, but because they see it in such an appealing manner through an influencer that they gain interest in knowing more about it. In other words, they classify this marketing tool as an excellent form for restaurants to make themselves known to the public, especially the new ones, which happens because nobody has the patience to look for all of them in Zomato and they consider Instagram a good platform to more easily have access to new trends. Furthermore, they affirm that if they are undecided between going to a restaurant or another, they opt for the one that influencers talk about better because they are able to get more positive information that influences them to go there.</p>

Annex B: Survey



The Impact of Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant Industry

My name is Catarina Anjos and I am finishing my Master in Marketing in Iscte Business School. In order to conclude my dissertation, I would like to ask you to fulfil the following survey. The goal associated with this Master Thesis is to study the impact of influencer marketing in the restaurant industry.

This survey has the maximum duration of 10 minutes, in which the collected information is anonymous and confidential, so I would like to ask you to carefully read all the presented information for you to answer in the honest and truest way possible.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation, which will be crucial in completing this stage. If you have any additional questions about this study and/or survey, please send me an email: cjfas@iscte-iul.pt.

Yours faithfully,
Catarina Anjos

Before starting...

Do you live or have you ever visited Portugal? *

Yes

No

Do you eat at restaurants? *

Yes

No

How many times a month, on average, do you eat at restaurants? *

Less than once a month

1 to 2 times a month

3 to 4 times a month

More than 4 times a month

Introduction to Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a marketing tool that is based on special individuals whose goal is to persuade potential buyers.

Influencers are those who built their own audience through social media. Also, they are people with a solid base of followers that create short-form content and share their daily insights into their personal lives and opinions.

A celebrity that posts a picture on Instagram with a Chipotle burrito in her hand or that tweets an image with her Starbucks Frappuccino are both examples of influencer marketing.

Do you follow any influencer on social media or recommendation apps? *

Yes

No

Have you ever felt that an influencer had some weight in your purchase decision? *

Yes

No

There are eight principal categories of influencers, which are beauty, family, fashion, fitness, food, interior, pet and travel.

Source: Kim et al. (2020)



(a) Beauty

(b) Family

(c) Fashion

(d) Fitness



(e) Food

(f) Interior

(g) Pet

(h) Travel

Which are the categories of influencers you follow?

- Beauty
- Family
- Fashion
- Fitness
- Food
- Interior
- Pet
- Travel

What kind of content shared by food influencers is interesting to you? *

- Convenience products (snacks and beverages)
 - Recipes
 - Restaurants
-

Have you ever gone to a restaurant because you saw an influencer promoting it? *

- Yes
 - No
-

If you have gone to a restaurant because you saw an influencer sharing it, which platforms did you use?

- Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - YouTube
 - Pinterest
 - Google Reviews
 - Zomato
 - TheFork
 - People
-

Do you follow any restaurant influencer on social media or recommendation apps? *

- Yes
 - No
-

The following section shows, through images, some posts of Instagram restaurant influencers. Please, carefully observe the images, and based on these and your current perception, answer afterwards the presented questions. If you already have a restaurant experience after finding it in an influencer's post, please answer the questions based on that experience.

Source: Inés Brandling influencer from Lisboa.come Instagram profile



inesbrandling • Following
Seagull Method Cafe

inesbrandling O @heim.cafe e o @seagullmethodcafe vão ser sempre os meus favoritos, porque as pessoas por detrás dos dois são as mais especiais 🍷

39w

matilde_va @joanamsvaz
38w Reply

raquel.cayuela 🍷🍷🍷
38w 1 like Reply

Liked by berrinchx and 1,662 others

NOVEMBER 20, 2019

Source: Inés Brandling influencer from Lisboa.come Instagram profile



inesbrandling • Following
Dallas Burger Joint

inesbrandling Mais uma hamburgueria, pensei eu. Já não chegavam as mais de mil? A verdade é que quando se é muito bom, há sempre espaço para nós, mesmo num mercado saturado. E posso dizer que os hambúrgueres do @dallas_lisboa foram os que mais gostei até hoje nesta cidade (bold statement, I know). É tudo fresco e feito no restaurante. As batatas são fritas ao pedido. Os hambúrgueres são muito saborosos e absolutamente nada secos (queria dizer húmidos, mas isso é estranho 🤔). E os milkshakes (que para mim são uma sobremesa e não uma bebida para acompanhar uma refeição 🍷) são di-vi-nais. Não consigo dizer de qual gostei mais, por isso vou dar-vos a minha opinião.

Liked by joanasantss and 2,882 others

OCTOBER 23, 2019

Add a comment... Post

The Impact of Instagram Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant Industry

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. Take into account the images or your current perception of influencers in order to make you want to go to a certain restaurant. 1 - Strongly disagree 7 - Strongly agree *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The process of searching for a restaurant is time consuming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Following influencers would make the process of looking for restaurants waste my time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This way of looking for a restaurant fully meets my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please, carefully observe the following images, and based on these and your current perception of Instagram restaurant influencers, afterwards answer the presented questions. If you already have a restaurant experience after finding it in an influencer's post, please answer the questions based on that experience.

Source: Andreia Lopes Costa influencer from heyandiehey Instagram profile



Source: Andreia Lopes Costa influencer from heyandiehey Instagram profile



Source: Andreia Lopes Costa influencer from heyandiehey Instagram profile



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. Take into account the images or your current perception of influencers in order to make you want to go to a certain restaurant. 1 - Strongly disagree 7 - Strongly agree *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

An influencer provides different restaurant options to visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
--	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

An influencer always shares the restaurants he likes and appreciates the most	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
---	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

An influencer is not helpful in the process of choosing the restaurant to visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
---	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Source: Inês Brandling influencer from Lisboa.com Instagram profile



inesbrandling • Following
Malmö Saluhall

inesbrandling How's your relationship with spicy food? I feel like I'm a bit of a masochist: I like the pain (in moderation) 🌶️ We were craving ramen so we went to @pinkheadnoodlebar (the internet told us it was the best in @malmotown). I then had to stuff my face on an ice cream because my lips were on fire 🤪 #makeitmalmö #ibrandling 📍 malmö

[Paid partnership with @malmotown]

#mytinyatlas #theprettycities
#passionpassport #thatsdarling
#suitcasetravels #ionelyplanet
#pathport #culturetrip #mytravelgram
#amatraveler #hairontop

📍 Liked by joacastro97 and 2,244 others

AUGUST 12, 2019

Add a comment...

Post

Source: Andreia Lopes Costa influencer from heyandiehey Instagram profile



heyandiehey • Follow
Lisbon, Portugal

alexandrine_ar Love this shot 🥰
3d · 1 like · Reply

Hide replies

heyandiehey
@alexandrine_ar thanks, sweetie ❤️
3d · Reply

mylondonfairytaleblog 🤔🤔
3d · 1 like · Reply

View replies (1)

📍 1,715 likes

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...

Post

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. Take into account the images or your current perception of influencers in order to make you want to go to a certain restaurant. 1 - Strongly disagree 7 - Strongly agree *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

An influencer that identifies the restaurant he visited in his posts makes me want to go there

An influencer that has attention and care when writing the description of his posts makes me want to go to a restaurant

An influencer that alerts in the description of his posts when they are paid partnerships makes me not want to go there

An influencer that always posts nice and appealing pictures related to the restaurant he has visited makes me want to go there

The information given by the influencer makes choosing a restaurant harder

An influencer makes the process of choosing a restaurant slower

Source: Inés Brandling influencer from Lisboa.com Instagram profile



inesbrandling • Following
Café Janis

yaroslava_kirichok I love this coffeeshop 😊
41w Reply
— Hide replies

inesbrandling
@yaroslava_kirichok Lots of new places for you to try here 😊
41w Reply

sorayazrl Yum!
41w Reply
— View replies (1)

Liked by inesbom and 1,881 others
OCTOBER 29, 2019
Add a comment... Post

Source: Andreia Lopes Costa influencer from heyandiehey Instagram profile



heyandiehey • Follow
Café Janis

danieltriassi Love all these textures
43w 1 like Reply
— Hide replies

heyandiehey
@danieltriassi you need to visit this place 🍴👍
43w Reply

classicalecs Looks so yummy 😊
43w 1 like Reply
— View replies (1)

alisaanton Loveee ❤️

Liked by inesbom and 1,313 others
OCTOBER 29, 2019
Add a comment... Post

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. Take into account the images or your current perception of influencers in order to make you want to go to a certain restaurant. 1 - Strongly disagree 7 - Strongly agree *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

An influencer that is never available to respond to my comments makes me trust him even more

An influencer allows me to better understand the concept of a restaurant

An influencer does not have the ability to respond to my questions as quick as the restaurant he is promoting

An
influencer
gives me
several
options of
restaurants I
want to visit

An
influencer
makes his
followers
feel they
should visit
the
restaurant

Now I kindly ask you to remember the Instagram restaurant influencer posts showed before and answer the following questions:

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 7 - Strongly agree

An influencer... *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Provides correct information in the description of his posts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is always too busy to respond to the comments of his followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gives confidence to his followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not have the knowledge to provide recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offers individual attention to his followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not understand the needs of his followers in the process of choosing a restaurant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Now I kindly ask you to remember your last restaurant experience after finding it on its social media, website or recommendation app and answer the following questions:

1 - Strongly disagree

7 - Strongly agree

A restaurant... *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Provides correct information in the description of its posts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is always too busy to respond to the comments of its followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gives confidence to its followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not have the knowledge to provide recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offers individual attention to its followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not understand the needs of its followers in the process of choosing a restaurant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reflecting now on all the information demonstrated in this survey and the perception created, answer the following questions.

In general, the benefits I may receive when using an influencer as a source of research for a restaurant will be: *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Much worse than expected Much better than expected

In general, if restaurants started using influencers as a communication channel, I am: *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very dissatisfied Very satisfied

The process of searching for a restaurant through influencers instead of its own communication channels is: *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Much worse Much better

I'm inclined to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I would recommend using influencers as a source of research for a restaurant to others. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I would encourage others to visit a restaurant because an influencer recommended it. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Finally...

How old are you? *

- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- >60

What is your gender? *

- Female
- Male
- Other

Indicate your home country. *

A sua resposta _____

Indicate the geographic zone you live or that you have visited in Portugal. *

A sua resposta

What is your last level of education? *

- Primary or Elementary School
- High School
- Bachelor
- Post-Graduation
- Master
- PhD

What is your current occupation? *

- Student
- Student-Employee
- Employee
- Self-Employed
- Unemployed
- Pensioner/Retired

The Impact of Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant Industry

Thank you! Your reply has been noted.