FACTORS AFFECTING ADVERT CREDIBILITY AND VISIT INTENTION OF RESTAURANTS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explain which factors have an impact on advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants in the social media environment. It particularly investigates the effects of restaurant advertising elements on advert credibility and visit intention. In addition, it analyses whether personality factors have an impact on the relationship between adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Content analysis was conducted on social media adverts of restaurants in order to first establish the various advertising elements. Online surveys were then utilised to obtain an understanding of consumer assessments on the different advertising elements and their respective impact on advertising credibility and visit intention. Furthermore, personality-related data was collected to determine whether personality is a moderating variable.

Findings – The results show that different social media advertising elements have a greater impact on a restaurant's advert credibility and visit intention, while other elements have a weaker effect. Results further demonstrate that personality factors have an impact on the relationship between adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention.

Research Limitations/Implications – Having adverts designed specifically for this study would have helped to avoid recognising restaurants located in Malta. The majority of the adverts that were used incorporated food items; thus, visit intention responses might have been based on the participants' preference to the food in the advert. The data collection method does not provide a methodical way to collect a probability sample of the general population, and survey questions could not be explained in certain detail since the researcher was not present to clarify.

Practical Implications – The creation of adverts that may be perceived more credible, while increasing the overall visit intention of restaurants, and helping businesses to target particular audiences thereby generating a greater positive response to social media adverts.

Originality/Value – This study explains how particular advertising elements affect the overall credibility of adverts and visit intention of restaurants, while exploring whether personality factors are a moderating variable between this causal relationship. This area has not been covered in extant literature, and thus, the challenge of developing effective social media advertising still remains. Marketers need to understand what factors affect two of the main advertising issues, namely, credibility and purchase.

Keywords: Social Media Advertising, Credibility, Visit Intention, Restaurants

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1. Introduction

The idea behind this study was developed during a lecture, when we were shown a short video about a restaurant called 'The Shed at Dulwich'. This spoof restaurant in a garden shed managed to become the number one restaurant on Trip Advisor in London despite the fact that it was a hoax and based on a false reality. Consumers were easily deceived by photographs of artsy looking dishes and the restaurant's exterior, which in reality, were merely household products and a garden shed. Many consumers perceived it as credible, and consequently, started to call the man behind this spoof restaurant to book a table. This made me realise how easily a business can affect consumer perceptions and persuade consumers through compelling visuals. This ultimately led me to question what factors affect an advert's credibility and visit intention of a restaurant, specifically in the social media environment, which was a general interest of mine.

Extant literature does not provide a specific construct of advert credibility; however, it is frequently suggested that it is related to 'source credibility', and thus, an advert is judged on the basis of how much the consumer trusts the source. Nevertheless, it is assumed that advert credibility depends on other factors besides the source. This was clearly exemplified in 'The Shed at Dulwich' since the source was unknown, and the restaurant was based simply on photographs and positive reviews. It is further indicated that credibility depends on the perception of the consumer, and thus, it is implied that it is influenced by personality factors, deeming it as a moderating variable.

Furthermore, there is no specific construct of what instigates visit intention of restaurants in adverts, particularly on social media platforms. However, particular studies have suggested that consumers look for good dishes, excellent service, and aesthetically pleasing environments. Nevertheless, not all these can be confirmed through an advert since most of them can only be verified and confirmed or refuted through experience, and thus, cannot contribute to visit intention through adverts.

The objective of this study is to explain what might impact the advert credibility and visit intention of a restaurant in the social media environment. The aim is thus to identify any possible variables and factors that might have an effect on advert credibility and visit intention. Furthermore, it investigates whether personality is a moderating variable between elements in adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention. Considering that this study will try to explain cause-and-effect relationships, the use of explanatory research was deemed fit to produce the required explanations and answer the study's research questions, namely:

1) **Research Question 1:** What factors affect advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants in the social media environment?

2) **Research Question 2:** Does personality moderate advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants in the social media environment?

This research will adopt a qualitative research methodology to gather secondary data, namely, content analysis of multiple restaurant social media adverts, as well as a quantitative research methodology, particularly questionnaires in order to test the impact of the various advertising elements and personality factors on advert credibility and visit intention.

This study will ultimately provide a proposed model to explain what factors/elements have an impact on advert credibility and visit intention in the social media environment, which will be relevant for the restaurant business and advertising fields. It is important to note that this proposed model will not determine the strength of the factors/elements. However, the study will provide an indication of which elements generated greater/weaker advert credibility and visit intention for the restaurants under investigation. The findings and proposed models of this study will serve as a tool to assess credibility and instigation of purchase of restaurant adverts thereby helping restaurants to understand what factors influence their advertisements' credibility and visit intention.

2. Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter begins by looking at extant literature concerning social media and social media advertising, ultimately linking it to credibility and purchase. Subsequently, literature concerning credibility is examined, particularly its origins and definition, along with its constructs and dimensions. The next section of this chapter explores literature on advertising credibility, namely, the importance of credibility in advertising, drivers of advertising credibility, and factors that might affect advert credibility, along with purchase. Finally, this chapter examines restaurant-related literature, and links it to literature on advert credibility and purchase intention. The below table (Table 1) summarises the chapters, concepts and main authors of the literature review.

No.	Chapters	Concepts	Main Authors
2.2	**The World of Social Media**	Social Media	Boyd, Ellison 2008, Warden, Imani 2020
		Social Media Advertising	Fennis, Stroebe 2010, Yaakop, Azizul 2013, AA Alalwan 2018, Jon Gitlin, Survey Monkey n.d
2.3	**What is Credibility?**	History of Credibility	Cooper 1932, McCroskey, Young 1981, Smith 2008, Umeogu 2012
		Definition of Credibility	Kiousis 2001, Wathen, Burkell 2002, Kriscautzky, Ferreiro 2014
2.4	**Credibility Construct and Dimensions**	Source Credibility	Cooper 1932, Hovland, Janis et al. 1953, McCroskey, Young 1958, Simons 2002, Smith 2008, Hellmueller, Trilling 2012
		Message Credibility	McCroskey, Mehrley 1969, Hamilton 1998, Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012
		Medium/Media Credibility	Golan 2010, Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012, Stavenuiter, Trilling et al. 2012
		Personality and Credibility	Allport 1961, Hovland et al. 1953, Vernon 1961, Fogg, Tseng 1999, Messaris, 2007
2.5	**Advertising Credibility**	Aesthetics and Credibility	Fogg, Tseng 1999, Robins, David et al. 2008, McNeil 2010, Reber et al. 2014, Selejan et al. 2016, Petrovici 2016
		Photography, Images, and Credibility	Messaris 1997, White 2007, Loke Hon,2011
		Attractiveness and Credibility	Baker, Churchill 1977, Joseph 1982, Kahle, Homer 1985, Schlecht 2003, Shimp 2000, van der Waldt et al. 2009
		Influencers and Credibility	2019 Social Media Influencers' Survey
		Materialism	Belk, Pollay 1985, Richins et al. 1992, Belk 1995, Beatty, Ferrell 1998, Eastman, Goldsmith et al. 1999, Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006, Hoyer, MacInnis 2007
2.6	**Restaurant Advert Credibility and Visit Intention**		Schlecht 2003, Josiam et al. 2004, Harrington, Robins, David et al. 2008, Ottenbacher et al. 2011, Selejan et al. 2016, Sürücü 2017, Inagaki 2018

2.2   The World of Social Media

2.2.1 Social Media

In the last decade, Internet use has been growing at an impressive rate around the globe, reaching 4.5 billion users in 2019 and a total growth of 1157% from 2000-2019 (Internet World Stats 2019). A very significant part of the Internet is nonetheless, Social Media, which is a "platform to create profiles, make explicit and traverse relationships" (Boyd, Ellison 2008, p.210-230). It is made up of several online two-way communication platforms, such as, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and so on.

Social Media has created a new advertising platform for marketers, ultimately creating further opportunities for exposure, awareness, and growth. Businesses have become aware of the tremendous impact and importance of incorporating social media in their marketing strategies and campaigns due to the level of reach and low costs that it entails, along with the increase in popularity and overall sales (Warden, Imani 2020).

2.2.2 Social Media Advertising

Adverts are an important communication tool frequently used by businesses as they help to increase awareness of their products or services, ultimately enabling them to increase their sales. Adverts facilitate communication with the consumers of businesses, while helping to persuade the individual consumer (Fennis, Stroebe 2010). In simple terms, an advert is a message or an announcement about a product or service that reaches a particular target audience which is presented through different mediums. One particular medium that has become increasingly popular these past few years is nonetheless social media, which includes several platforms, such as, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Therefore,

businesses are now putting more effort, time, resources, and money into social media advertisements (AA Alalwan 2018) because "[s]ocial media is where the people are", and it can generate high advertising engagement levels (Jon Gitlin, Survey Monkey n.d.). Furthermore, studies found that 48% of social media users have purchased a product or a service after seeing an advert, and 51% clicked on an advert at some point on Facebook (Jon Gitlin, Survey Monkey n.d.). This can explain why more than 7 million businesses make use of Facebook advertising (Facebook Inc. 2018 Full Year Results).

However, although certain social media statistics may seem attractive, the challenge of developing effective social media advertising that attracts the right customer, catches the customer's attention, and encourages purchase still remains (AA Alalwan 2018). This gives rise to difficulties and problems, such as, advertising avoidance, interactivity, privacy trust, and credibility (Yaakop, Azizul 2013). Moreover, the fact that social media advertisements tend to be repetitive and overwhelming can explain why some of these problems and issues occur (Jon Gitlin, Survey Monkey n.d.). It is thus imperative that marketers understand what factors lead to these issues and address them accordingly in order to ensure that their overall advertisements are effective and are generating the desired consumer responses (West et al. 2013, Mai, Schoeller 2009). Therefore, businesses should engage in advertisement research to understand the consumer's perception and how an advert can affect their perception, thus ultimately affecting whether they would click on the advert or purchase a business's product or service. Consequently, businesses would be able to provide a "richer foundation for building creative communication strategies and executions" (Zaltman, Coulter 1995, p. 36), while having a better direction in terms of "capturing consumers' attention and further engaging their thought processes" (p. 35). The objective for businesses is thus to address the

aforementioned issues and create adverts that consumers respond positively to. This positive response can refer to the instance where consumers perceive the advert message as being believable and the source as being trustworthy, which is also known as advert credibility (MacKenzie, Lutz 1989). However, in the case of advert credibility, there is no construct that specifically explains it in the literature, which makes this area rather more challenging to address effectively when compared to the other issues (advertising avoidance and interactivity).

2.3   What is Credibility?

2.3.1 The History of Credibility

The overall concept and idea of credibility goes back to the time when Aristotle examined persuasion in his treatise *The Rhetoric*, where Aristotle divides the process of persuasion into three different classes, namely, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* (Umeogu 2012). The class in question is *Ethos,* which means 'character' in Greek, and is highly dependent on the credibility of the communicator, and thus, focuses on the communicator's trustworthiness. A speaker or communicator may achieve *ethos* thereby influencing the receiver through their knowledge of a particular subject, honesty, and a positive attitude towards the well-being of the receiver. Therefore, the construct of *ethos* is multidimensional since it consists of intelligence, character, and goodwill (Smith 2008, Cooper 1932). Throughout the years of studying this treatise, *ethos* always had a dominant position when compared to the other two classes. According to Aristotle, *ethos* is the greatest means of persuasion or to influence one's listeners, and this has been followed and supported by a number of rhetorical scholars and other philosophers, such as, Plato and Quintilian (McCroskey, Young 1981). Aristotle further

argued that being logical or reasonable throughout an argument is not enough if the communicator/speaker is not trusted. A communicator's reliability and believability have to be developed and established in the message.

2.3.2 Definition of Credibility

The word 'credibility' is commonly used interchangeably with 'believability'. Both are related to trustworthiness and plausibility. If something or someone is credible, they are believable. In fact, in the English language, believability is a synonym of credibility, which can be used in all cases. The aforementioned terms are related to different lists of dimensions that a piece of information or a communicator requires in order for it or them to be credible or believable. Such dimensions are usually associated with the communicator, the receiver of the message, the overall message, and opinions of others (Kriscautzky, Ferreiro 2014). It is claimed that credibility and believability are derived from the interactivity of all of these dimensions (Wathen, Burkell 2002). Apart from the fact that credibility is made up of several dimensions, scholars define it as a perceived quality, and thus, credibility depends on an individual's assessment of several dimensions happening concurrently (Fogg, Tseng 1999). This further suggests that credibility can be subjective since it depends on an individual's assessment. Moreover, it can be seen from a different perspective, where it is said that credibility is generally "attached to objects of assessments", such as, media, source, and message credibility, thus implying that the assessment for each one is different (Kiousis 2001, p. 381-403).

2.4   Credibility Construct and Dimensions

Credibility, in general, has been studied and looked into by several fields, such as, marketing, communications, psychology, and information science. The reason for this is that a number of fields deal with the process of understanding an audience and delivering messages effectively, where credibility is a major variable. Their main objective is to determine the dimensions which form credibility, along with their measures. Although credibility is generally seen as a multidimensional construct in all the fields, its dimensions differ from one field to another since certain dimensions that can be applied to one area/field are not necessarily applied in another, which explains why they vary from each other. Furthermore, every area has studied the credibility construct and its practicality using different processes, objectives, and assumptions, thus leading to contrasting views and conclusions, hence dimensions (Rieh, Danielson 2007).

Moreover, although the literature differs in the number of dimensions within credibility assessments, most researchers make reference to both trustworthiness and expertise, which are both related to source credibility. Therefore, to determine whether something is credible, an individual first makes an evaluation of the trustworthiness and expertise of the object in order to arrive to the overall credibility evaluation. In this case, trustworthiness had hitherto been known as *ethos* during Aristotle's time, and this dimension revolves around the perceived goodwill and morality that comes from the source. Trustworthiness can also be defined as well-intentioned or unbiased. On the other hand, expertise can be described as competence or knowledgeable. This thus depends on the perceived competence or knowledge of the source (Fogg, Tseng 1999, Metzger, Flanagin 2015). Moreover, literature

also suggests that "trustworthiness, competence, and goodwill" (p. 2) can be developed and managed by giving attention to the design and delivery of the message (Cornan et al. 2006). The authors mention a very important factor of credibility, where the message being delivered has to be adopted according to the targeted audience.

It is important to point out that there are few other constructs that were given the same level of attention by scholars since the credibility studies that were carried out lacked ''…operational precision, the use of different items to measure the same construct, and insufficient reporting of reliability" (Hellmueller, Trilling 2012, p. 1).

2.4.1 Source Credibility

As aforementioned, it is clear that, when it comes to credibility, there is no consensus on its overall construct and dimensions. However, there are some areas which are more widely studied throughout the literature, one of them being source credibility, whose definition can be simply put as "judgments made by a perceiver concerning the believability of a communicator" (O'Keefe 1990, p. 130-131).

This area was commonly known as *ethos*, but in more recent times, *ethos* became known as 'source credibility'. Research conducted long after Aristotle's time still supported the notion that source credibility is an important component in the communication process in the case where the objective of communication is persuasion (Andersen, Clevenger 1963) or interpretation and acceptance (Hovland, Janis et al. 1953, Reynolds, Seeger 2005). However, when compared to how source credibility was perceived by the rhetoricians in ancient Greece, there is a difference in the definition of its dimensions. In *Communication and*

Persuasion, Hovland, Janis et al. (1953) proposed that credibility is made up of "expertness, trustworthiness and intention toward the receiver" (cited in McCroskey, Young 1981, p. 67-72), while Aristotle proposed that credibility revolves around intelligence, character, and goodwill (Smith 2008, Cooper 1932). The writers of this research programme do not link their works to that of Aristotle, but their aspects of credibility are similar to those that were explored centuries before. Besides this study, there have been many studies on source credibility throughout the years, and although the dimensional structures seem to interlink one way or another, there still has been no closure on the dimensions since there seem to be new dimensional structures with every new study that emerges, and one reason for this is due to the dissimilar items that were used to assess the exact same construct (Hellmueller, Trilling 2012). However, one particular study suggests that any factor analytical research that emerges in the future will not be of value, and that historical constructs of credibility should be kept. This study declares that *ethos* and its historical definitions have an important and crucial role if one wants to persuade the receiver successfully (McCroskey, Young 1958). The aforementioned was also supported by Baudhin and Davis (1972).

In more recent literature, the concept of credibility is still very well-connected to Aristotle's beliefs and to 20th century scholars. According to Simons (2002), source credibility is an individual's evaluation or assessment of the communicator's honesty and believability. If the message of the communicator is perceived believable and deemed to be trustworthy, there is a higher probability that the communicator would influence the individual/receiver.

2.4.2 Message Credibility

Throughout the discussion in the previous sections and the overall literature on credibility, it is evident that scholars and researchers believe that the credibility of a message is highly dependent on the source. However, there is a particular research that did not explore how different sources delivering the same message might affect credibility, but instead, explored the result of communicating different messages from the same source, and analysed attributes that might make a message more credible. One of the attributes was the structure of messages which, in fact, showed promising results that communicating unorganised messages is less likely to be seen credible than tidy and structured messages (Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012). Moreover, the way a message is structured has proved to influence the perceptions of a source (Hamilton 1998, McCroskey, Mehrley 1969). This thus shows that credibility does not rely solely on the source, but there are in fact characteristics that influence the outlook of the source and the overall credibility judgement. Such judgements are affected by the quality of the information, language intensity, and message inconsistency, which are all message content components (Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012, Metzger et al. 2003).

2.4.3 Medium/Media Credibility

The medium on which communication takes place also affects the credibility of the message. A few years ago, scholars explored the credibility and believability of different communication mediums, such as, newspapers, radio, and television. Research on which medium was deemed to be the most credible took a substantial amount of time, but was settled right before the 20th century (Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012). However, due to the rise of the Internet, research in this area was revived, and researchers started to study the credibility of offline mediums when compared to the new medium, that is, Internet (Stavenuiter, Trilling et al.

2012). Unfortunately, these studies did not yield promising results, and ended up exemplifying a problem within the methodology of the media credibility concept. However, rather than identifying which medium is deemed more credible than the other, some scholars take a different perspective, hence focusing on which is of greater importance when it comes to media credibility. Scholars indicate that medium credibility assessments are greatly affected by variables, such as, age (Bucy 2003), income (Ibelema, Powell 2001), and further variables that are audience-based (Golan 2010).

2.4.4 Personality and Credibility

Throughout the literature on credibility, the subject matter is occasionally referred to as 'perceived credibility', thus highlighting that credibility may depend on the individual's perception, and that the receiver of the message is responsible for determining and rating the source that is communicating the message (Hovland et al. 1953, cited in Eisend 2006). Scholars have also described credibility as a 'perceived quality', where credibility depends on an individual's assessment of several dimensions that happen concurrently (Fogg, Tseng 1999).

Perception studies demonstrate that perception is affected by personal characteristics, such as, interests, personal emotions, and so forth (Vernon 1961). Such characteristics may include needs and motives, self-concept, past experiences, beliefs, current psychological state, interest, and attitudes. Therefore, credibility might be subjective. In fact, Messaris (2007) maintains that a message from an image is subject to different and personal interpretations due to the fact that messages can be implicit, especially those involving visuals.

On the other hand, personality studies describe personality as something that shapes an individual, and anything that a person says or does would be a reflection of their personality. It is described as "… a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behavior, thoughts and feelings" (Allport 1961, p. 28). This implies that since personality affects and guides behaviour, thoughts, and feelings, it also affects perception thereby influencing what we perceive as credible and what we purchase.

2.5   Advertising Credibility

One factor that has an important role in shaping the attitudes of consumers and impacting consumers' information processing is nonetheless, advertising credibility. In this case, credibility is the consumer's reaction after seeing the advertisement and processing the information that is being delivered. Similar to what was discussed throughout this literature review, advertising credibility is described as the extent to which consumers deem the advertisement as truthful and believable in both the message and source. Advertising credibility can be seen as a relationship between the truthfulness or believability of the communicator and the consumer's perception (Adler, Rodman 2000). Therefore, if an advert is perceived as credible, it would have a positive impact on the consumer's outlook and behaviour, which could ultimately influence the consumer's purchasing intention. In fact, it is believed that credibility has a crucial role in the process of persuasion.

Various literature discusses that advertising credibility can be influenced by a number of factors. However, the most common factors that are usually mentioned and discussed are brand credibility and the source of the message (Ling, Piew et al. 2010). On the other hand,

Blackshaw (2008) refers to six key drivers that businesses must aim to achieve in order to have credible advertisements, namely, trust, authenticity, transparency, listening, responsiveness, and affirmation. This research will take into account only three of these factors.

Trust

In advertising, trust refers to the level of confidence and faith that a consumer has in a brand, product, or service. In this case, trust is the credibility driver that is associated with the product or service performance since it is linked with the promise that a business is making through its advertising (Blackshaw 2008). Moreover, trust is achieved if consumers believe that a brand's advertisements are sincere, and thus, they have no distortion, manipulation, and deception (Choi, Rifon 2002). Distortion and manipulation refer to the instance where a business's advert exaggerates what it is offering (Blackshaw 2008). It is also indicated that brands must make it a point to research trust in advertising since consumers have become sceptical of advertisements (Soh, Reid et al. 2007).

Authenticity

As previously mentioned, adverts need to be sincere in order for a consumer to believe what is being communicated and eventually buy the product or service. Authenticity of adverts stresses this point further, and emphasises that adverts need to show and depict real life in an ordinary consumption circumstance (Stern 1994). In this case, authenticity is more crucial in the digital world of advertisements due to the fact that most consumers can verify whether what is being communicated is true (Verstraten 2015). Moreover, consumers are aware that advertisements, especially those that involve photography, can be easily manipulated.

Therefore, nowadays, consumers have stern measures when assessing businesses and their advertising (Blackshaw 2005). It is further important to point out that trust and authenticity complement each other since, if consumers deem an advert as honest and real, they would ultimately trust the brand and what is being communicated.

Affirmation

Affirmation in advertising generally refers to when a number of consumers state their opinion about a brand, product, or service, and these collective judgements become the truth, whether it is positive or negative. Therefore, truth relies heavily on what others are saying (Blackshaw 2005) since most individuals want to feel accepted, and thus, they allow collective affirmations and judgements to affect their behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs (O'Shaugnessy, O'Shaugnessy 2003). In fact, studies show that 84% of consumers turn to online reviews, friends, families, professionals, and people whom they believe to be alike for confirmation (Hulme 2010). Moreover, it is important to mention that an advert is also more likely to be deemed as truthful if sources of authority or influencers express their confidence in it or in the product, service, or brand that is being advertised (Hattwick 1950).

2.5.1 Advertising Credibility Construct

When it comes to advertising credibility, previous and recent literature is limited in this area of study. Furthermore, there is no construct that explains advert credibility, specifically at the time being. In several literature, it is said that advert credibility is affected by the source, which was previously discussed throughout this literature review. However, in reality, advert credibility is assumed to depend on other several factors, and it is not simply dependent on the source because an advert does not simply consist of a source, but includes several

different elements and characteristics that might make it credible, such as, the message, medium, level of attractiveness, influencers, and the elements of the advertisement itself. However, the literature does not identify the elements that affect the credibility of an advert without associating it with the source or brand. Even in social media literature, most findings suggest that consumers judge credibility by the communicator or the topic of information, but they still fail to give a comprehensive outlook of social media credibility (Mitra 2017).

2.5.2 Aesthetics and Credibility

Although there is no specific construct, there are certain references that indicate what might affect advert credibility besides the source or brand. In the computer world, aesthetics have an important role when it comes to web design. A website's aesthetics and visual design are two of the factors that impact users on whether they stay on the page or leave. Moreover, they are factors which ultimately influence the visitor's judgement of the page's credibility. In fact, there are several studies that show that when identical content is presented with a higher aesthetical level, it is deemed more credible than the one that is less aesthetically appealing (Robins, David et al. 2008, Selejan et al. 2016). This can also be seen in studies that explore the interface design of a computer, where experiments have shown that specific design characteristics such as cool colours and a balanced design can influence the level of credibility (Fogg, Tseng 1999). This may thus imply that the aesthetics of the advert image can influence the level of credibility. Moreover, this can be related to 'Message Credibility' which was previously discussed since it refers to how certain attributes such as a structured message or the quality of the message influence credibility judgements.

The literature indicates that in order to achieve aesthetics in advertising, the imagery being used has to consider a number of ground principles concerning compositional components (McNeil 2010). The most crucial ones are "the unity of the image; the harmony, the compatibility, and the succession arrangement of its elements; the accent, regularly focusing in on a particular element" (p. 14-15), thus highlighting its importance among the other elements that are present. Moreover, colour is required to highlight and boost certain components or products in the advert, as well as the "background and the spaces", which are crucial in producing an effective layout, different dimensions, and photography techniques, such as, zooming and depth of field (Petrovici 2016, p. 14-15). Such compositional components develop a sense of beauty and a pleasurable experience, thus eventually helping consumers to process the advertising image more fluently, leading to a positive aesthetic response (Reber et al. 2014).

2.5.3 Photography, Images, and Credibility

Marketers are aware that if they generate and produce good product photography, they attract and tempt customers to purchase the product or service. Business photography triggers various human emotions, and fundamental needs and wants (White 2007 cited in Loke Hon 2011). Moreover, advertisement photographs with different environments or surroundings attract the audience's attention, and would impact their outlook through "the degree of proximity, angle of view, presence or absence of subjects shots, lighting technique, model's eye contacts, postural and gestures" (Messaris 1997, p. 4-51). A photo with adequate features is able to help businesses to get their consumers' attention, and such effect is regarded successful in half the battle. The other half that remains includes certain characteristics and features in the advertisement itself that give out particular information to

the audience, thus ultimately helping them to comprehend the advertisement further (Messaris 1997). Since human beings are highly responsive to visual graphics and colours, any advert photograph that has pleasing colours, lights, and design components would have a greater influence on the consumer (White 2007 cited in Loke Hon 2011). It is further indicated that business photography is able to influence the consumer's thoughts, beliefs, and emotions, and has the power to push consumers to purchase the product or service being advertised (White 2007 cited in Loke Hon 2011) since consumers are lured by photographs that depict the actual product/service. Photographs thus allow consumers to experience the product's or service's quality and features (Loke Hon,2011).

For his part, Paul Messaris (1997) classifies images into semantic and syntactic properties which have an impact on advertising. The semantic properties of images are the icon and index. The former refers to similarity, and is relevant when images resemble real life. If an image or photograph achieves iconicity, it would evoke emotional reactions due to the audience's life experiences. Image iconicity comprises components that are easily established, such as, content. However, there are components which one may be less conscious of, including formal or stylistic qualities, which are subject to subtle deception, manipulation, and distortion. On the other hand, the index property is usually associated with endorsements. In this case, the image comprises physical indication, which points to an object's existence. Such indexicality would generate a connection between the object and the physical trace which, in the case of advertisements, refers to influencers or celebrities. This would ultimately influence the behaviour, belief, and perspective of their followers and other consumers. There are however some conflicting views on the effectiveness of indexicality due

to the fact that consumers are now more aware that photos are subject to manipulation, and that they are usually planned or staged, making the advert less credible (Spiteri 2013).

On the other hand, the syntactic properties of images can be succinctly described as 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. Messaris (1997) explains that a message of an image may be interpreted differently from one person to another due to the fact that the messages that are being communicated through the images are not explicit, and thus, they are subject to interpretation. However, this is seen as a benefit rather than a drawback since implicity leads to a higher level of participation from the audience. There is thus the likelihood of personalised interpretation, which means that there is a greater chance that the audience would believe the proposed argument.

2.5.4 Attractiveness and Credibility

In the Cambridge dictionary, attractiveness is defined as "the quality of being very pleasing in appearance or sound …[and]… the quality of causing interest or making people want to do something". These qualities are proved to have an impact on credibility, and are also believed to be an important factor to create effective communication (Schlecht 2003). In fact, back in the 1900s, there was plenty of evidence that pointed out that attractive influencers are more likely to have a positive effect/influence (Joseph 1982, Kahle, Homer 1985). This was substantiated later on in the 2000s by van der Waldt et al. (2009), who indicated that those influencers who are perceived as attractive lead consumers to purchase increasingly more than unattractive influencers (van der Waldt et al. 2009). Similarly, Shimp (2000) contends that consumers often look up to certain celebrities and perceive them as role models due to their accomplishments, personalities, and physical appeal (p. 332), leading to consumers

preferring those products or brands that seem to help in 'becoming' that celebrity and define their style (Shimp 2000). Shimp (2000) adds that empirical evidence proposes the concept that attractive influencers, models, or endorsers often generate positive judgements of advertisements and products. Nevertheless, the celebrity's or influencer's image has to match the advertised product or service in order for it to be highly effective. However, there are also some contrasting views to the aforementioned since it is believed that, although the attractiveness of an influencer may positively impact assessments and judgements, it has no significance in influencing the consumer's purchasing intention (Baker, Churchill 1977). Moreover, some have reported that having an attractive influencer, model, or endorser in advertisements is only of value if what is being offered improves the consumer's attractiveness (Joseph 1982, Kahle, Homer 1985).

2.5.5 Influencers and Credibility

Moreover, as aforementioned in 'Credibility and Attractiveness', attractiveness is said to have an impact on credibility and on the effectiveness of the message. Evidence shows that the use of attractive influencers or celebrities can generate positive responses. In fact, in today's world, plenty of businesses are collaborating with attractive influencers who are looked up to by their consumers. However, there are some conflicting findings on the use of influencers. The 2019 Social Media Influencers' Survey found that 79% of consumers unfollowed a number of social media influencers due to their number of promotional posts and content. It transpired that 73% of consumers are able to recognise whether an influencer's post is paid for or genuine. Moreover, 59% of these consumers are not likely to believe influencers when their reviews or recommendations are paid for. However, 73% did in fact purchase a product or tried a service that was recommended or mentioned by an influencer.

2.5.6 Materialism

As previously mentioned, credibility may depend on an individual's perception and personality factors, and a personality factor which is occasionally linked to adverts and consumption is materialism. It has been suggested that adverts encourage materialism in materialistic individuals and thus, this can have an impact on the way the consumer responds to the advert (Modiano, n.d).

Materialism has been described in different ways throughout the years, and researchers have different perspectives on the nature of materialism. It has been perceived as a personality characteristic that is made up of "envy, non-generosity, and possessiveness", which explain an individual's relationship with material items (Belk, Pollay 1985, p. 887-897.). On the other hand, it has also been described as a value that can be broken down into two different values, namely, possession (Richins et al. 1992, Alden, Steenkamp et al. 1999), and personal values (Schwartz 1992, Burroughs, Rindfleisch 2002). However, what is consistent throughout several literature is that anyone who is materialistic tends to place a high level of importance and focus on the acquisition of goods (Richards, Dawson 1992, Holt 1995, Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006). It has been suggested that materialistic individuals place a great importance on the acquisition of goods because they believe that it leads to satisfaction and indicates success (Richins, Dawson 1992). In addition to this, materialists believe that obtaining specific goods would give them a specific status in society, particularly luxury goods since they can reflect high status (Eastman, Goldsmith et al. 1999, Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006). It has further been suggested that once a materialist obtains the good, satisfaction is achieved when the ownership of the good is communicated with others. This is because the good serves as a way to create positive impressions with others and share particular information about the

possessor of the good in terms of group memberships and associations. Therefore, for materialistic individuals, goods symbolise membership or desired membership in society or social groups (Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006, Hoyer, MacInnis 2007).

Materialism has also been linked with impulse buying, which is defined as a spontaneous purchase "with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task" (Beatty, Ferrell 1998, p. 161-167) that occurs with little reflection (Podoshen, Andrzejewski 2012). Studies have shown that individuals who are materialistic tend to make extravagant purchases in order to attract attention. Tatzel (2002) suggests that these types of individuals have a positive attitude towards impulsive buys. In addition, previous studies have indicated that materialistic individuals may be addicted to spending due to their obsession with the satisfaction, happiness, status, membership, and associations that goods provide, thus adopting a "buy now, think later approach" (Belk 1995, p. 477-490, Dittmar, Beattie et al. 1995, Featherstone 2007, Erciş et al.2016).

2.6   Restaurants Advert Credibility and Visit Intention

In the restaurant business, several classifications can be found, which are usually based on food offering, style of the restaurant, price, food preparation process, serving, atmosphere, and ambience. However, the two most common classifications are Casual and Fine Dining. The difference between these two is that casual dining tends to be more friendly and informal, while fine dining tends to be more sophisticated, formal, and of higher quality (Valerio 2019). The latter is usually known for its formal ambience and atmosphere, namely, the furniture, lighting, table settings, style, design, and overall interior, which usually serve as a competitive advantage (Harrington, Ottenbacher et al. 2011). Furthermore, fine-dining

restaurants tend to have specific food plating that enhances the aesthetic appeal of the dish (Inagaki 2018). Although there is no specific literature that discusses classification of restaurants and credibility, it has been suggested that the attractiveness and aesthetic appeal lead to higher credibility (Schlecht 2003, Robins, David et al. 2008, Selejan et al. 2016). This might thus imply that adverts of fine-dining restaurants have a greater level of credibility than casual-dining restaurants due to their distinctive attractiveness and aesthetic appeal.

On the other hand, it has additionally been admitted that customers do not only seek good dishes and exceptional service, but they also look for an attractive and appealing environment (Josiam et al. 2004). Furthermore, it is believed that if a customer is attracted and pleased with the aesthetic value of a restaurant, they would look at the restaurant in a more positive way (Heung, Gu 2012). Sürücü (2017) also found that there is a relationship between the overall aesthetic quality of a restaurant and revisit intentionality. The overall aesthetic value refers to the interior visual appeal, exterior visual appeal, and sensory appeal. Considering all the aforementioned, it can be implied that aesthetics and attractive environments of restaurants may have an impact on the visit intentionality of the consumer.

Therefore, it can be deduced that fine-dining restaurants and casual-dining restaurants would vary in advert credibility and visit intentionality due to the fact that what they offer is distinctive, namely, their overall quality, experience, and price.

2.7   Summary

Extant literature suggests that credibility is key to effective communication in several fields, in particular, Marketing and Advertising, where a credible advert is said to generate desired consumer responses. It is implied that credibility is highly influenced by the source of the message; in fact, most literature does not identify the elements that affect the credibility of an advert without associating it with the source, brand, or the topic of information. However, an advert does not simply consist of a source, but includes several elements and characteristics that might make it credible. It is suggested that factors such as the message components, medium, aesthetics, photography, attractiveness, influencers, and consumer perceptions have an impact on advert credibility and purchase, but there is no specific construct, particularly for social media adverts. The aim of this study is thus to explain what factors might affect advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants in the social media environment, while excluding the source.

3. Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The objective of this study is to investigate the causal relationship between particular factors that are commonly found in restaurant social media adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention. Therefore, the research will ultimately explain what factors might influence advert credibility and visit intention besides what is frequently mentioned in the literature, namely, the source. Furthermore, this study will explain whether there are particular factors which are stronger than others, and whether these factors vary in credibility and visit intention according to the classification of the restaurant.

Throughout the literature, there are other factors which are said to affect credibility and purchase intention apart from the source, but there are no established frameworks and conclusive evidence, especially with regards to adverts in the social media environment. Moreover, certain literature indicates that credibility depends on the individual and the individual's perception, which suggests that personality might be an underlying factor.

Considering all the above, this research will explain the cause-and-effect relationship between three variables, namely:

- The independent variables
- The dependent variables
- The moderating variable

For the purpose of this research, the independent variables are the adverts with different elements, while the dependent variables are advert credibility and visit intention of the restaurant. The latter variables will also be divided into restaurant classifications, and thus, these variables will be fine dining credibility, fine dining visit intention, casual dining credibility, and casual dining visit intention. Between these two variables lies a moderating variable, which is an individual's personality, that has the potential to affect the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

Research Design

In order to explain the aforementioned relationship, an explanatory multiphase research was deemed fit. This multiphase research consisted of using a qualitative research method to gather secondary data, namely, evident, and common restaurant advert elements through a content analysis of multiple restaurant social media adverts. Subsequently, a quantitative research method was adopted using questionnaires in order to gather the required primary data for this research, thus, to understand consumers' assessments on the different advertising elements and their respective impact on advertising credibility and visit intention.

3.2 Content Analysis

The first phase of this research included gathering restaurant adverts which comprise evident elements. This data would eventually be a substantial part in devising and designing the questionnaire at a later stage and will ultimately explain the relationships under investigation.

The first stage of this phase consisted of establishing elements and 'themes' through content analysis of several restaurant social media adverts. Once this was completed, an identical

pattern of elements or 'themes' between restaurants had to be established as well. This was crucial in order to test the same elements with different restaurants, thus determining whether such factors truly impact the credibility and visit intention of a restaurant through the consistency in the results. In addition to this, the pattern of elements would also help to determine whether particular factors vary in credibility and visit intention according to the classification of the restaurant.

Content analysis consisted of examining two different types of restaurants, namely, those that fall under the price range of €€€€ and are considered fine dining, and restaurants falling under the price range of €€-€€€ and are considered more casual. Moreover, the majority of the content analysis was based on examining restaurants in the United Kingdom rather than restaurants located in Malta for the sake of obtaining more reliable results that are not influenced by the possibility of the participant recognising the restaurant, hence basing their responses on the source or their prior experience at the restaurant. However, content analysis of Maltese restaurant adverts had to be carried out due to the fact that part of this study consists of examining whether influencers have an impact on the credibility and visit intention of a restaurant. Furthermore, since the majority of the respondents are Maltese, it made sense to test this with Maltese influencers as they are more likely to be recognised by the participants thereby making the findings more valid and reliable.

During the content analysis, it was also taken under consideration that since this study deals with restaurants, hence food, participants might base their responses on their preference to the food in the advert. Therefore, in order to avoid this problem as much as possible, the

adverts that were chosen during the content analysis all incorporated food items that are standard and usually consumed by the average person.

3.2.1 Method of Analysis

The process of the content analysis started off by examining a number of social media accounts of different restaurants located in the United Kingdom. The restaurants were initially found on TripAdvisor since they can be categorised according to their price range, dishes, and cuisine, thus their classification. Afterwards, the restaurants which satisfied the required criteria were looked up on social media, particularly on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Subsequently, the objective was to compile a list of any elements that were found in adverts of different restaurants. It was then determined that the most evident and commonly used elements were:

1. Professional Food Photography
2. Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
3. Interior of the Restaurant
4. Exterior or View of the Restaurant
5. Influencers dining at the Restaurant

The above elements were used either on their own or integrated with other elements, such as, an influencer dining at the restaurant with the interior or exterior in the background. However, the integration of elements was avoided as much as possible since it would not have been clear which element was impacting credibility and visit intention.

Once the elements were determined, the next objective was to establish an identical pattern of elements between fine-dining and casual-dining restaurants. This phase comprised two stages. The first stage consisted of finding restaurants in the United Kingdom which utilised identical elements in their advertisements, apart from influencers. In total, two fine-dining and three casual-dining restaurants were selected, and these had the following pattern of elements in their advertisements:

1. Professional Food Photography
2. Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
3. Interior of the Restaurant

The second stage focused mainly on analysing Maltese restaurants and pinpointing any restaurants that make use of influencers in their advertisements, along with any other elements. After this content analysis, two casual-dining restaurants were chosen, whose adverts included the following pattern of elements:

1. Professional Food Photography
2. Influencers dining at the Restaurant

3.2.2 Hypotheses

From the content analysis and the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were formed:

Table 2 - Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1	a) The visual representation of food makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	b) The visual representation of food with human elements makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	c) The ambience of the restaurant makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	d) The use of influencers makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
Hypothesis 2	Aesthetics and attractive environments lead to higher credibility and visit intention.
Hypothesis 3	Adverts which are not subject to distortion, manipulation and deception, are perceived as more credible.
Hypothesis 4	Social media influencers generate positive judgements towards adverts and encourage consumers to purchase.
Hypothesis 5	Personality factors moderate advert credibility and visit intention assessments.

3.2.3 Limitations

The Maltese restaurant adverts that were chosen both fall under the casual dining classification since fine-dining restaurants in Malta did not seem to utilise influencers in their advertisements. Moreover, Maltese restaurants could not be assessed on the same number of elements as those located in the United Kingdom. The reason for this is that Maltese restaurants that collaborated with influencers did not utilise many other elements or the same elements as each other. As a result, the only element that could be tested along with influencers was professional food photography as this was the only common element that was found between restaurants. However, since there was limited time available and a

dedicated timeframe for the content analysis, it could be that some restaurants were overlooked or were still in the process of uploading the rest of their campaign, which might have consisted of other elements.

Furthermore, although the type of food items being promoted in the adverts was standard and common, it could have still affected the response of the participants since some individuals might be vegetarians, vegans, or simply dislike the food in the advert.

3.3   Online Surveys

After content analysis was completed and the required adverts were gathered, the next phase of data collection was to design and collect data through a questionnaire that was distributed on online platforms. The adverts that were collected in the content analysis stage were all included in the survey, and they were tested against this study's two dependent variables, namely, advert credibility and visit intention. Besides the aforementioned, personality-related questions were also asked, addressing the moderating variable of this research.

The primary data for this research was initially going to be collected through structured interviews since this method is particularly suitable and commonly used for an explanatory study that aims to explain the causal relationships between certain variables (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2000). This method allows the interviewer to clarify and explain questions, thus yielding more reliable results. However, due to social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, this was to be avoided. Consequently, self-completed questionnaires were the next best alternative for this study in such circumstances. Nonetheless, such a method is still suitable for an explanatory research due to the fact that the interviews would still have involved a type of questionnaire since they complement each other (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2000).

Moreover, the questions that were going to be asked had the potential to be interpreted relatively the same by all participants.

3.3.1 Method of Analysis

As previously mentioned, the next step after the content analysis was to design the questionnaire, whose objective was to collect different data variables, revolving mostly around two types, namely, attitudes and opinions, and behaviour and events. The distinction between these variables is crucial since it affects how the questions are worded, while helping to obtain accurate data (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2000).

At the beginning of the questionnaire, questions revolved mainly around the moderating variable of this study, which is the personality of an individual. In this case, since the data being collected concerned personalities, the data variables that were used were attitudes, behaviours, and events.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on attitudes and events towards the adverts that were gathered in the first phase of data collection, and hence, it was concerned with the study's dependent variable. In this section, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement and disagreement towards the following statements for every advert:

1. This ad is believable (attitude towards the ad)

2. If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high. (What the participant will do in the future.)

The data collected in the second part of the questionnaire will ultimately help to investigate the causal relationship between the elements in the adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention. On the other hand, the data collected in the first part will help to determine whether the personality of an individual affects the relationship between the study's independent variable and dependent variable.

The design and capture of the questionnaire was carried out on Survey Monkey, and it was distributed to respondents via the Internet through a hyperlink. The technique that was used to select samples was non-probability sampling, and the type of sampling that was utilised was volunteer sampling. The survey link was mainly shared on Facebook groups, such as, The Salott, Women for Women, Rubs Puppy Love, ASCS, The Beauty Game, etc., as well as personal profiles and to the employees of Malta International Airport via email. Individuals were asked to participate on a voluntary basis, and data was collected from those who were willing to respond; thus, cases were self-selected.

3.3.2 Validity and Reliability

An important step in designing the survey was making sure that the questionnaire would measure what it intended to measure, and that it produced consistent findings, thus ensuring internal validity and reliability (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2000). The approach that was taken to ensure the aforementioned entailed looking at other studies in this area and adapt tested and established scales to this study.

The highly established Material Values Scale (MVS) by Richins and Dawson (1992) was adapted to this study to test a particular aspect of the participants' personality, which could

have a high impact on advert credibility and intention of purchase (visiting). This scale has obtained a good level of reliability over different studies. Shrum et al. (2003) report a Cronbach Alpha of 0.84, Zhou et al. (2002) report 0.68, and Richins (2004) reports alphas that ranged from 0.70 to 0.83 for the five-item version of the scale. On the other hand, Attitude Toward the Ad (Credibility) by Kim, Ratneshwar and Thorson (2017) and Attitude Toward the Ad (Believability) by Williams and Drolet (2005) were adapted to measure believability towards the restaurant adverts. These scales reported alphas of 0.87 and 0.86-0.92, respectively. Furthermore, the 'Purchase Likelihood Toward the Product in the Ad' scale by Brashear and Weinberger (2003) was adapted to measure the probability of purchase intention, thus visiting the restaurant in the advert. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.9 was reported for this scale (Brashear, Weinberger 2003, Lepkowska-White 2005).

Similar to Richins and Dawson (1992), when measuring materialism, five 5-point Likert-type items were used. However, when measuring advert credibility and purchase (visit) intention, only one 5-point Likert-type item was used out of the three that were usually adopted. Short versions for both scales were not available, and thus, they were adapted from the already established scales. The reason for this is that, since this study measured credibility and visit intention for several adverts, amongst other questions, asking 4-6 questions for each advert would have been time-consuming, thus causing a problem to obtain a high response rate and reliable responses due to cooperation and fraud problems related to repetitive questions and lengthy surveys. Therefore, in certain circumstances such as the above, the use of single-item measures can be used to prevent such problems from occurring (Wanous, Reichers et al. 1997). Furthermore, a number of single-item measures have shown good validity when compared to the full-scale version of the measure, and they are preferred, especially for

"homogeneous construct variables" since multi-item scale precision may accidentally exclude key aspects of the variables (Scarpello, Campbell 1983, p. 577-600, Nagy 2002, Postmes, Haslam et al. 2013). The homogeneity of the aforementioned scales is quite evident since only single words are changed, while synonyms or related words are used instead;

Attitude Toward the Ad (Credibility) by Kim, Ratneshwar, and Thorson (2017)

1. This ad is generally **truthful**.
2. This ad leaves one feeling accurately informed (Not applicable in this study)
3. This ad is **believable**

Attitude Toward the Ad (Believability) by Williams and Drolet (2005)

1. This advertisement is **believable**.
2. This advertisement is **credible**.
3. This advertisement is **realistic**

Purchase Likelihood Toward the Product in the Ad by Brashear, and Weinberger (2003)

1. If I were **looking** for this type of product my **likelihood** of **purchasing** the product in the ad would be high.
2. If I were to **buy** this type of product, the **probability** that I would consider **buying** the product in the ad would be high.
3. If I had to buy this type of product, my **willingness** to **buy** the product in the ad would be high.

In addition, the established credibility and purchase intention scales in question reported high Cronbach Alphas, which means that the 3 Likert-type items of the scales have a high degree of measuring the same general construct.

Furthermore, apart from adapting established scales, another step that was taken to ensure validity and the overall quality of this research was refraining from disclosing the restaurant

names due to the fact that this had the potential to affect the responses, hence the results of the questions that rated the credibility of the advert and visit intention of the restaurant in the advert. Therefore, this nondisclosure enabled the questionnaire to measure what it intended to measure, that is, the relationship between the advertising elements, and advert credibility and visit intention. Additionally, the participants were not made aware that a number of adverts in the questionnaire were of the same restaurant. This was a deliberate decision in order to test properly each advert element individually, without affecting the participant with the other adverts. For a better comprehension of the aforementioned, the questionnaire that was distributed to participants may be found in the Appendix.

3.3.3 Limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection methods were limited, which meant that the researcher had to select methods according to the circumstances at the time. As aforementioned, interviews could not take place, and thus, the next alternative was to opt for questionnaires and collect data through the Internet. The obvious shortcoming associated with collecting data online was that the questions could not be explained in certain detail since the researcher was not present to clarify, thus yielding less reliable results. Moreover, since online questionnaires often have cooperation and fraud problems, the questionnaire had to be designed in a way that was inviting. Therefore, open-ended and in-depth questions, as well as lengthy surveys were to be avoided, hence why shorter versions of already established scales were adapted. Although some literature indicates that single-item scales may be favoured in some instances, there is still the risk of decreasing the scale's validity (Raykov 2008). Furthermore, this data collection method does not provide a methodical way to collect a probability sample of the general population.

3.4   Summary

This chapter explained thoroughly the research methods that were chosen for this study, and discussed the rationale for their selection and why they were deemed appropriate for this type of study. The methods of analysis and limitations for each method were also discussed.

4. Results

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of the data that was collected from 253 participants through the online questionnaires. The objective of this chapter is to answer this study's research questions, and thus, investigate the causal relationship between the use of particular elements that feature commonly in restaurant social media adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention. This will ultimately help to explain whether the use of certain elements in adverts generates greater advert credibility and visit intention of a restaurant, and whether certain advert elements vary in credibility and visit intention according to the classification of the restaurant. In addition to this, these statistics will explain whether the personality of an individual affects the relationship between the adverts in question, and advert credibility and visit intentionality.

4.2   Statistics Descriptors

Table 3 - Statistics Descriptors

Restaurant	Element Number	Element in Advert
Fine Dining Restaurant (UK) *Restaurant 1*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 2	Professional Food Photography with Human Elementd
	Element 3	Interior of Restaurant
Fine Dining Restaurant (UK) *Restaurant 2*	Element 2	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 3	Interior of Restaurant
Casual Dining Restaurant (UK) *Restaurant 3*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 2	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
	Element 3	Interior of Restaurant
Casual Dining Restaurant (UK) *Restaurant 4*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 2	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
	Element 3	Interior of Restaurant
Casual Dining Restaurant 3 (UK) *Restaurant 5*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 2	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
	Element 3	Interior of Restaurant
Casual Dining Restaurant (Malta) *Restaurant 6*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 4	Influencer
Casual Dining Restaurant (Malta) *Restaurant 7*	Element 1	Professional Food Photography
	Element 4	Influencer

4.3   Descriptive Statistics

4.3.1 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of a Restaurant

One of the main objectives of this study is to determine whether the use of particular social media advertising elements has an effect on credibility and visit intention of restaurants. Therefore, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the questionnaire required participants to rate their level of agreement and disagreement towards the following statements for the different adverts that were gathered in the content analysis:

- This ad is believable (1 - Strongly Disagree and 5 - Strongly Agree)
- If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high (1 - Strongly Disagree and 5 - Strongly Agree)

In total, seven restaurants were tested against the established advert elements according to the description provided in Table 3 above, thus allowing this study to determine whether these different advert elements affect the level of advert credibility and visit intention of <u>the same restaurant</u>, as well as <u>whether one particular element affects all restaurants in the same manner.</u>

The descriptive statistics results for the aforementioned, and thus, for advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants according to the specific use of certain advert elements, were as follows:

Table 4 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 1) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.37	.958
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.26	.924
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.41	.880
Element 2 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.15	.942
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.96	.776
Element 3 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.81	.897

Table 5 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 2) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.76	.750
Element 2 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.07	1.042
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.83	.791
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.39	1.069
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.88	.810
Element 3 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.67	.886

Table 6 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 3) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.49	.928
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.40	.948
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.88	.736
Element 2 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.48	.928
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.94	.775
Element 3 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.36	.989

Table 7 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 4) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.91	.776
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.64	.993
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.78	.838
Element 2 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.58	1.011
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.82	.764
Element 3 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.19	1.010

Table 8 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 5) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.42	1.119
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.42	1.105
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.59	1.075
Element 2 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.51	1.097
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.72	.824
Element 3 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.28	.938

Table 9 - Element 1 & 4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 6) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.66	.871
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.50	.911
Element 4 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	2.91	1.127
Element 4 Visit Intention	253	1	5	2.65	1.068

Table 10 - Element 1 & 4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 7) - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum Strongly Disagree	Maximum Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.62	.805
Element 1 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.18	.983
Element 4 Advert Credibility	253	1	5	3.40	1.032
Element 4 Visit Intention	253	1	5	3.13	1.053

Figure 1 - Elements 1-4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 1-7) – Bar Graph

Element 1-4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (VI)

- ■ Advert Credibility Mean Score
- ■ Visit Intention Mean Score
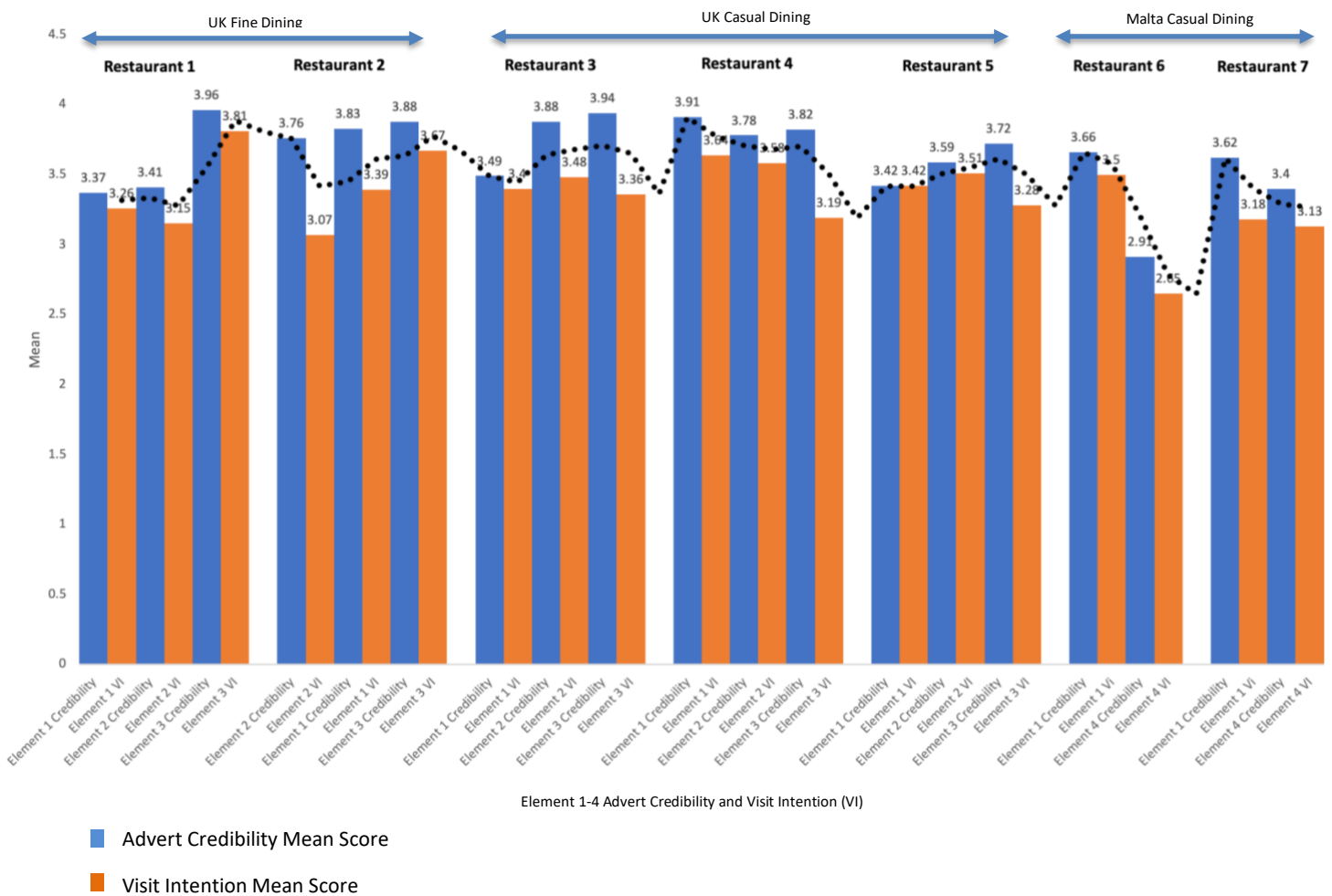
From these descriptive statistics, particularly the mean, it was observed that the use of particular advert elements does in fact lead to lower or higher advert credibility and visit intention of the same restaurant. This is especially so for Element 4, which generated a relatively lower advert credibility and visit intention mean score when compared to the other element of restaurant 6 and 7. Furthermore, each advert element varies in advert credibility and visit intention from one restaurant to another, which might imply that the use of a particular element does not affect every restaurant in the same manner. This can be seen, for example, in Element 1, which generated an advert credibility mean of 3.37, 3.83, 3.49, 3.91, 3.42, 3.66, and 3.62 across different restaurants. Similarly, the means for visit intention were 3.26, 3.39, 3.4, 3.64, 3.42, 3.66, and 3.62. These mean scores are however unclear about whether advert credibility and visit intention vary according to the classification of the restaurant since Element 1 yielded higher and lower mean scores in both fine-dining and casual-dining restaurants. This applies also to the other advert elements of restaurants 1-5.

4.3.2 Personality Factors

The second objective of this study is to establish whether personality factors affect the relationship of the study's independent and dependent variables, thus the relationship between restaurant adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention, respectively. <u>The following section does not indicate whether such factors affect this relationship, but shows the descriptive statistics results that were generated from the questions on this moderating variable, which are later tested against advert credibility and visit intention scores.</u>

1. Materialism

The questionnaire's participants were requested to rate their agreement/disagreement towards the below statements, which would ultimately generate their materialism score and reflect their overall level of materialism. The purpose of these questions is to determine whether there is a relationship between a person's materialism score and their advert credibility and visit intention score at a later stage.

Materialism Statements:

- Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.

- I like to buy things that impress people.

- I like a lot of luxury in my life.

- I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know.

- I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.

The participants were provided with a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 corresponding to Strongly Disagree and 5 Strongly Agree.
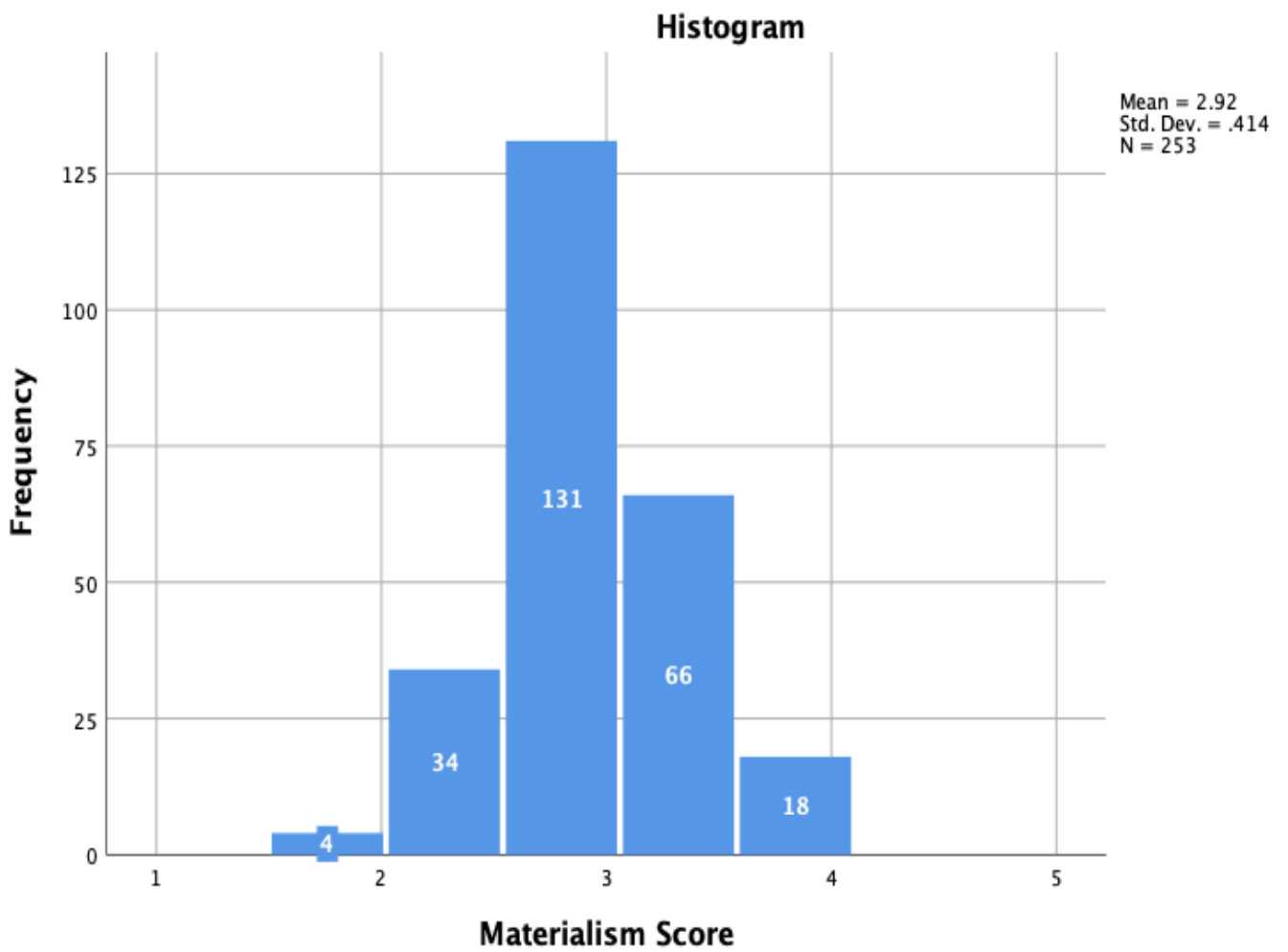
2. **Attitudes towards Advertising Mediums**

In the questionnaire, participants were also asked which advertising medium they trust the most. The purpose of this question is to determine whether different attitudes towards advertising mediums generate different scores in advert credibility and visit intentionality of a restaurant.

Table 8 - Trust in Advertising Mediums - Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	All of them (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube)	11	4.3
	Some of them	137	54.2
	None of them	105	41.5
	Total	253	100.0

Figure 3 - Trust in Advertising Mediums – Pie Chart
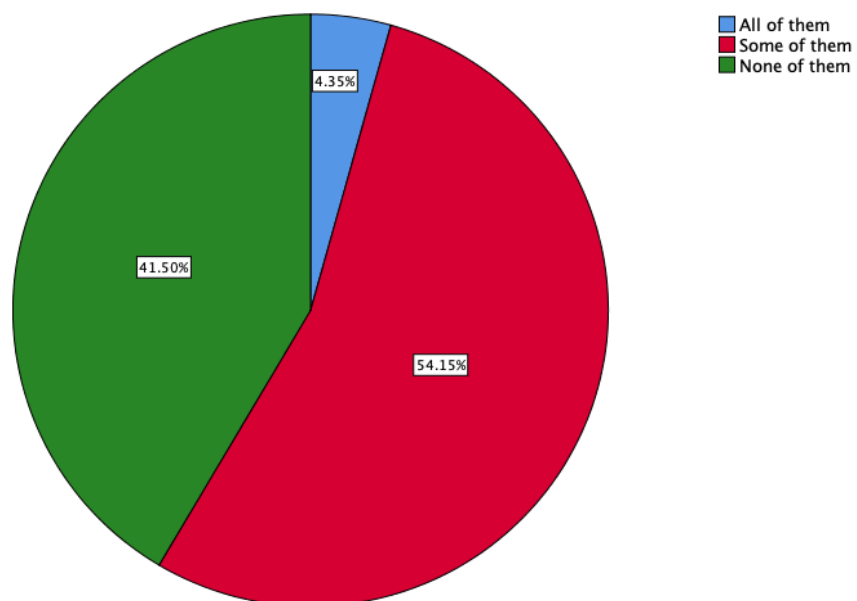
3. Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content

Another personality factor which was tested was the participant's consciousness of the content that they put on social media to fit their desired image. The purpose of this question is to determine whether participants who are conscious, sometimes conscious, and not conscious of the content they put on social media score differently in advert credibility and visit intentionality of restaurants.

Table 11 - Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content to Fit One's Desired Image – Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	147	58.1
	No	37	14.6
	Sometimes	69	27.3
	Total	253	100.0

Figure 4 - Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content to Fit One's Desired Image – Pie Chart
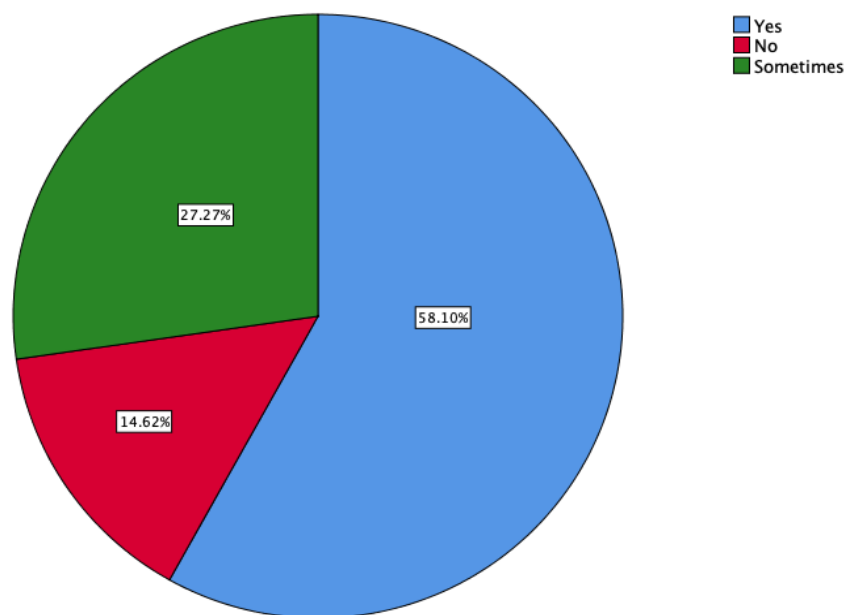
4. **Caring about the Number Of 'Likes' and 'Views'**

Furthermore, the participants were asked whether they care about the number of 'likes' and 'views' they get on their social media content. The purpose of this question is to determine whether attitudes towards 'likes' and 'views' generate different scores in advert credibility and visit intentionality of restaurants.

Table 12 - Caring about the Number of 'Likes' and 'Views' on Social Media Content – Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	73	28.9
	No	119	47.0
	Depends on the platform	61	24.1
	Total	253	100.0

Figure 5 - Caring about the Number of 'Likes' and 'Views on Social Media Content – Pie Chart
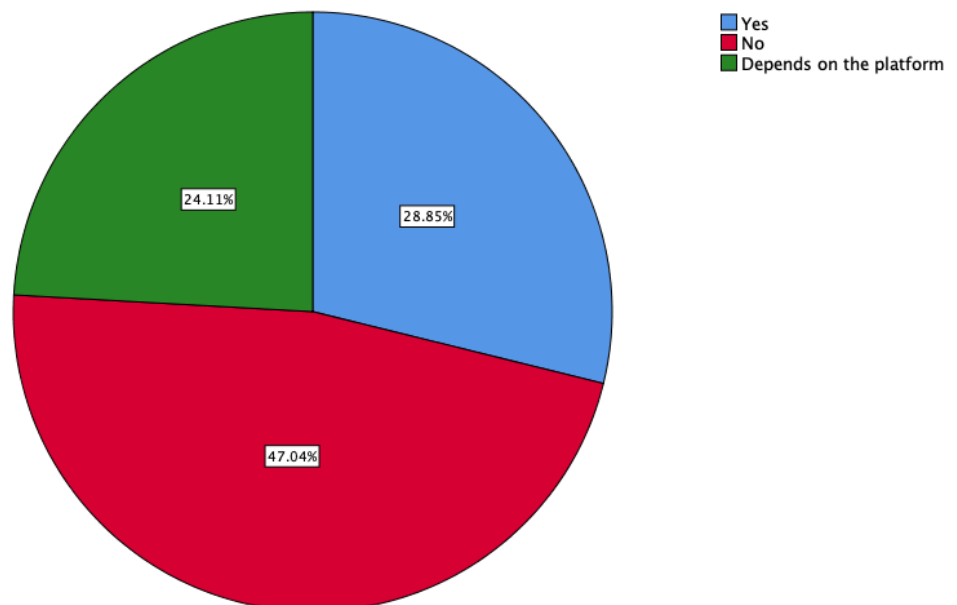
5. Attitudes towards Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements

a) **Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements play a big part in influencing one's purchasing decision**

Participants' attitudes and perceptions of social media influencers and celebrity endorsements were also tested. In this case, the participants were asked whether social media influencers and celebrity endorsements play a big part in influencing their purchasing decision. The data gathered from this question will ultimately explain whether certain attitudes towards social media influencers/celebrity endorsements affect advert credibility and visit intention of those restaurants that utilise influencers in their adverts.

Table 13 - Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements Play a Big Part in Influencing One's Purchasing Decision – Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	26	10.3
	No	142	56.1
	Depends on the product/service	85	33.6
	Total	253	100.0

Figure 6 - Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements Play a Big Part in Influencing One's Purchasing Decision – Pie Chart
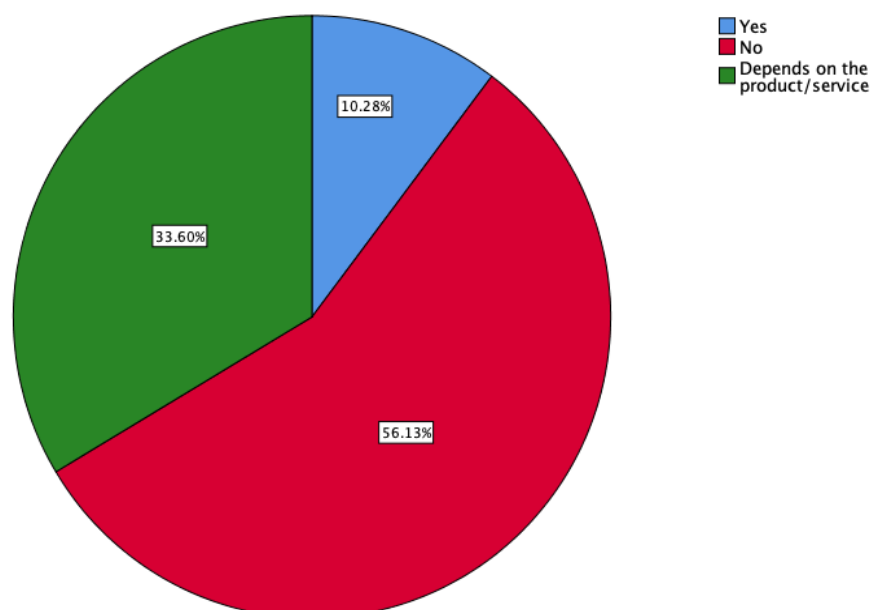
b) Visited a Restaurant because an Influencer/Blogger Recommended It or Promoted It on Social Media

Participants were additionally asked whether they have ever visited a restaurant because an influencer or blogger recommended it or promoted it on social media. This builds on the previous question, and tests the participants' attitudes and perception of social media influencers/bloggers. This further tests against the advert credibility and visit intention score of adverts that utilised influencers, thus Element 4.

Table 14 - Visited a Restaurant because an Influencer/Blogger Recommended It or Promoted It on Social Media – Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	85	33.6
	No	168	66.4
	Total	253	100.0

Figure 7 - Visited a Restaurant because an Influencer/Blogger Recommended It or Promoted It on Social Media – Pie Chart
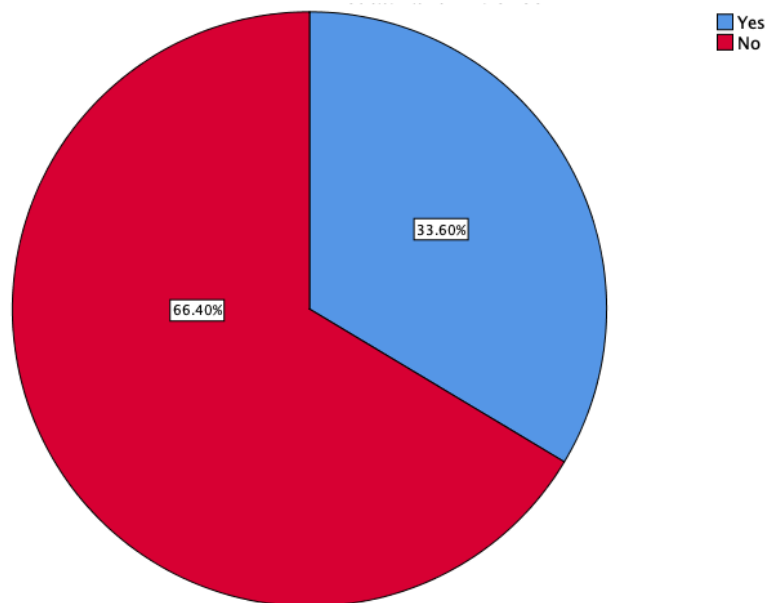
4.4   Inferential Statistics

In order to make inferences about the data that was gathered, inferential statistics had to be utilised, thus drawing conclusions on the analysis of the descriptive statistics, as well as on what could not be analysed from descriptive statistics.

4.4.1 Normality Test for Advert Credibility and Visit Intention Scores

The inferential statistical tests that had to be performed for this study involved advert credibility and visit intention scores. Therefore, prior to carrying out the tests, the Shapiro-Wilk Normality test had to be performed in order to determine whether the score distribution of the aforementioned scores was normal or skewed. If the score distribution was normal, parametric tests would be used; however, if it was not normal, non-parametric tests would be used.

The null hypothesis of the Shapiro-Wilk test specifies that the score distribution is normal, and is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that the score distribution is skewed, and thus, not normal, and is accepted if the p-value is less than the 0.05 criterion.

The p-values of advert credibility and visit intention score distributions were both 0.00, thus less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that both score distributions are skewed, and do not satisfy the normality assumption. Therefore, non-parametric tests were used to analyse the data.

Table 15 - Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test – Advert Credibility and Visit Intention Scores

	Statistic	df	P-value
Credibility Score	.954	253	.000
Visit Intention Score	.954	253	.000

Figure 8 - Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention Scores Distribution Graphs
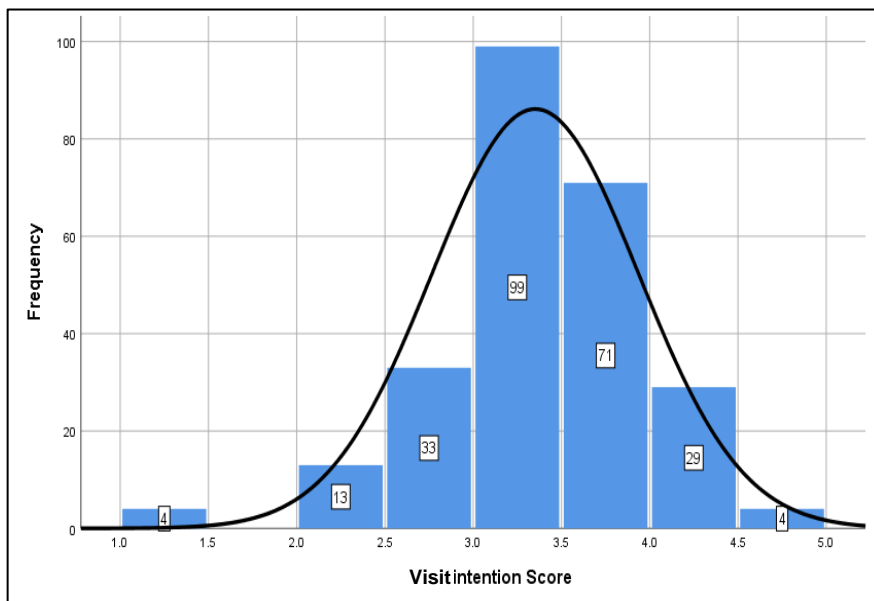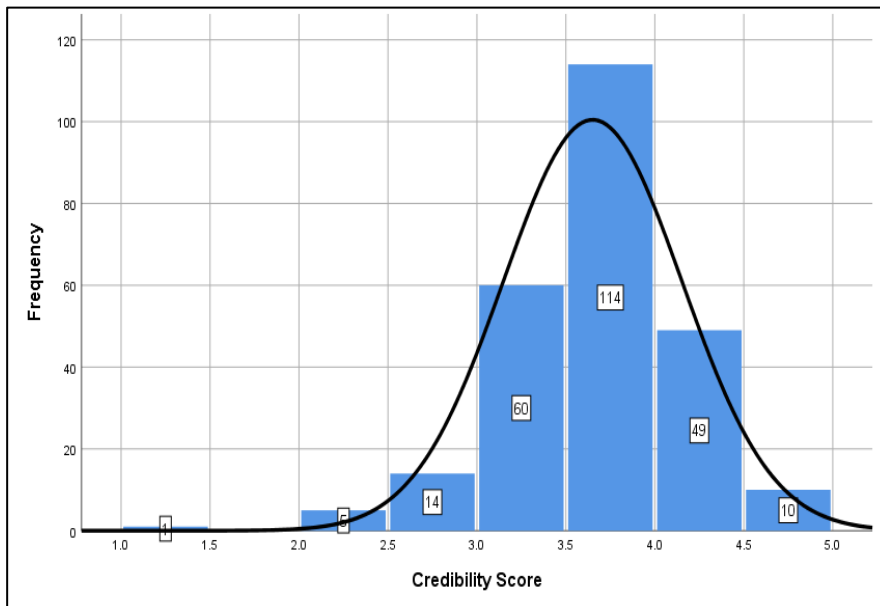
4.4.2 Advert Elements

1. Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of a Restaurant

The means of advert credibility and visit intention in Section 4.3 indicated that the use of particular advert elements leads to lower or higher advert credibility and visit intention of the same restaurant. However, in order to make such inference, a non-parametric test, namely, the Friedman test, was carried out. The Friedman test is used to compare mean rating scores between several related statements/items. The null hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores are similar, and is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores differ significantly, and is accepted if the p-value is less than the 0.05 criterion.

Restaurant 1

Table 16 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 1) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.37	.958	.000
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.41	.880	
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.96	.776	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.26	.924	.000
Element 2 VI	253	3.15	.942	
Element 3 VI	253	3.81	.897	

Restaurant 2

Table 17 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 2) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.76	.750	.035
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.83	.791	
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.88	.810	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 2 VI	253	3.07	1.042	.000
Element 1 VI	253	3.39	1.069	
Element 3 VI	253	3.67	.886	

Restaurant 3

Table 18 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 3) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.49	.928	.000
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.88	.736	
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.94	.775	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.40	.948	.248
Element 2 VI	253	3.48	.928	
Element 3 VI	253	3.36	.989	

Restaurant 4

Table 19 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 4) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.91	.776	.043
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.78	.838	
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.82	.764	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.64	.993	.000
Element 2 VI	253	3.58	1.011	
Element 3 VI	253	3.19	1.010	

Restaurant 5

Table 20 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 5) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.42	1.119	.005
Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.59	1.075	
Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.72	.824	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.42	1.105	.002
Element 2 VI	253	3.51	1.097	
Element 3 VI	253	3.28	.938	

Restaurant 6

Table 21 - Element 1 & 4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 6) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.66	.871	.000
Element 4 Advert Credibility	253	2.91	1.127	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.50	.911	.000
Element 4 VI	253	2.65	1.068	

Restaurant 7

Table 22 - Element 1 & 4 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention (Restaurant 7) – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.62	.805	0.001
Element 4 Advert Credibility	253	3.40	1.032	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 1 VI	253	3.18	.983	.448
Element 4 VI	253	3.13	1.053	

The Friedman tests showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the advert credibility of a restaurant, depending on which advert element is used ($p < 0.05$). This ultimately means that the different advert elements produced lower or higher advert credibility scores for the same restaurant in question. On the other hand, the Friedman tests also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in visit intention, depending on which advert element is used for most restaurants ($p < 0.05$). However, this was not the case for restaurant 3 and restaurant 7, which yielded a p-value of 0.248 and 0.448, respectively. Therefore, for restaurants 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, the use of particular advert elements led to lower or higher visit intention scores, but for restaurants 3 and 6, different advert elements yielded similar visit intention scores.

2. Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of all Restaurants

The previous tests did not conclude whether the use of a particular element produces similar results for all restaurants, or whether it produces results which are significantly different from one restaurant to another. From the descriptive statistics in Section 4.3, it was observed that each advert element varies in advert credibility and visit intention scores from one restaurant to another, which might imply that the use of a particular advert element does not affect every restaurant in the same manner. However, a Friedman test had to be carried out in order to conclude this.

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Element 1: Professional Food Photography

Table 23 - Professional Food Photography (Element 1) Advert Credibility and Visit Intention – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.37	.958	.000
Restaurant 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.83	.791	
Restaurant 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.49	.928	
Restaurant 4 Advert Credibility	253	3.91	.776	
Restaurant 5 Advert Credibility	253	3.42	1.119	
Restaurant 6 Advert Credibility	253	3.66	.871	
Restaurant 7 Advert Credibility	253	3.62	.805	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 VI	253	3.26	.924	.000
Restaurant 2 VI	253	3.39	1.069	
Restaurant 3 VI	253	3.40	.948	
Restaurant 4 VI	253	3.64	.993	
Restaurant 5 VI	253	3.42	1.105	
Restaurant 6 VI	253	3.50	.911	
Restaurant 7 VI	253	3.18	.983	

Element 2: Professional Food Photography with Human Elements

Table 24 - Professional Food Photography with Human Elements (Element 2) Advert Credibility and Visit Intention – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.41	.880	.000
Restaurant 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.76	.750	
Restaurant 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.88	.736	
Restaurant 4 Advert Credibility	253	3.78	.838	
Restaurant 5 Advert Credibility	253	3.59	1.075	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 VI	253	3.15	.942	.000
Restaurant 2 VI	253	3.07	1.042	
Restaurant 3 VI	253	3.48	.928	
Restaurant 4 VI	253	3.58	1.011	
Restaurant 5 VI	253	3.51	1.097	

Element 3: Interior of Restaurant

Table 25 - Interior of Restaurant (Element 3) Advert Credibility and Visit Intention – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.96	.776	.000
Restaurant 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.88	.810	
Restaurant 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.94	.775	
Restaurant 4 Advert Credibility	253	3.82	.764	
Restaurant 5 Advert Credibility	253	3.72	.824	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 1 VI	253	3.81	.897	.000
Restaurant 2 VI	253	3.67	.886	
Restaurant 3 VI	253	3.36	.989	
Restaurant 4 VI	253	3.19	1.010	
Restaurant 5 VI	253	3.28	.938	

Element 4: Influencers

Table 26 - Influencers' Advert Credibility and Visit Intention – Friedman Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 6 Advert Credibility	253	2.91	1.127	.000
Restaurant 7 Advert Credibility	253	3.40	1.032	

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Restaurant 6 VI	253	3.13	1.053	.000
Restaurant 7 VI	253	2.65	1.068	

The Friedman tests showed that there was a statistically significant difference in advert credibility and visit intention, depending on the restaurant ($p < 0.05$). This ultimately means that the use of a particular advert element yielded significantly different advert credibility and visit intention results from one restaurant to another. Therefore, the use of a particular advert element did not affect every restaurant in the same manner.

3. **Fine Dining Restaurants Advert Credibility and Visit Intention vs Casual Dining Restaurants Advert Credibility and Visit Intention**

The previous Friedman test determined that the use of a particular advert element produced different advert credibility and visit intention mean scores between different restaurants. However, it did not specify where the difference in the mean scores lies. Therefore, this had to be investigated further since one of the objectives of this study is to explain whether the use of certain advert elements varies in advert credibility and visit intention due to the classification of the restaurant. The descriptive statistics in Section 4.3 did not indicate clearly whether advert credibility and visit intention mean scores for each individual element vary

according to the classification of the restaurant since Element 1 yielded higher and lower mean scores in both fine-dining and casual-dining restaurants. This also seems to be the case with the other advert elements of restaurants 1-5. However, in order to make inferences about such data, a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was performed.

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is a non-parametric test that compares two sets of scores that come from the same participants. This test is utilised when there is a need to investigate any change in scores when participants are subjected to more than one condition. For this study, it was necessary to investigate whether the use of certain advert elements leads to different advert credibility and visit intention scores due to the classification of the restaurant. In this case, every advert element[1] was tested against two restaurant classifications, and thus, participants were subjected to two conditions for all elements, namely, fine dining and casual dining.

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[1]It is important to note that Element 4 is excluded since it is investigated solely with casual-dining restaurants.

Ranks

Table 27 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Fine Dining Restaurants vs Casual Dining Restaurants – Wilcoxon Test

		N
Casual Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility – Fine Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility	Negative Ranks	91_a
	Positive Ranks	102_b
	Ties	60_c
	Total	253
Casual Dining Element 1 Visit Intention – Fine Dining Element 1 Visit Intention	Negative Ranks	81_d
	Positive Ranks	117_e
	Ties	55_f
	Total	253
Casual Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility – Fine Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility	Negative Ranks	76_g
	Positive Ranks	118_h
	Ties	59_i
	Total	253
Casual Dining Element 2 Visit Intention – Fine Dining Element 2 Visit Intention	Negative Ranks	60_j
	Positive Ranks	142_k
	Ties	51_l
	Total	253
Casual Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility – Fine Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility	Negative Ranks	85_m
	Positive Ranks	58_n
	Ties	110_o
	Total	253
Casual Dining Element 3 Visit Intention – Fine Dining Element 3 Visit Intention	Negative Ranks	153_p
	Positive Ranks	44_q
	Ties	56_r
	Total	253

Table 27 - Element 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Fine Dining Restaurants vs Casual Dining Restaurants – Wilcoxon Test

Ranks Descriptors

Casual Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility < Fine Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility$_a$
Casual Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility > Fine Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility$_b$
Casual Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility = Fine Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility$_c$
Casual Dining Element 1 Visit Intention < Fine Dining Element 1 Visit Intention$_d$
Casual Dining Element 1 Visit Intention > Fine Dining Element 1 Visit Intention$_e$
Casual Dining Element 1 Visit Intention = Fine Dining Element 1 Visit Intention$_f$
Casual Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility < Fine Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility$_g$
Casual Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility > Fine Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility$_h$
Casual Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility = Fine Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility$_i$
Casual Dining Element 2 Visit Intention < Fine Dining Element 2 Visit Intention$_j$
Casual Dining Element 2 Visit Intention > Fine Dining Element 2 Visit Intention$_k$
Casual Dining Element 2 Visit Intention = Fine Dining Element 2 Visit Intention$_l$
Casual Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility < Fine Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility$_m$
Casual Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility > Fine Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility$_n$
Casual Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility = Fine Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility$_o$
Casual Dining Element 3 Visit Intention < Fine Dining Element 3 Visit Intention$_p$
Casual Dining Element 3 Visit Intention > Fine Dining Element 3 Visit Intention$_q$
Casual Dining Element 3 Visit Intention = Fine Dining Element 3 Visit Intention$_r$

Test Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Fine Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.60	0.71	.619
Casual Dining Element 1 Advert Credibility	253	3.61	0.74	
Fine Dining Element 1 Visit Intention	253	3.33	0.82	.001
Casual Dining Element 1 Visit Intention	253	3.49	0.78	
Fine Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.59	0.67	.000
Casual Dining Element 2 Advert Credibility	253	3.75	0.69	
Fine Dining Element 2 Visit Intention	253	3.11	0.82	.000
Casual Dining Element 2 Visit Intention	253	3.52	0.77	
Fine Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.92	0.70	.010
Casual Dining Element 3 Advert Credibility	253	3.83	0.69	
Fine Dining Element 3 Visit Intention	253	3.74	0.79	.000
Casual Dining Element 3 Visit Intention	253	3.28	0.82	

According to the Wilcoxon Tests, restaurant classification does not elicit a statistically significant change in the advert credibility scores of Element 1 (p = 0.619). However, it transpired that restaurant classification does in fact elicit a statistically significant change in the visit intention scores of Element 1 (p = 0.001). Moreover, restaurant classification elicits a statistically significant change in the advert credibility and visit intention scores of Elements 2 and 3 (p < 0.05).

4. Personality Factors

This study's second research question aims to establish whether personality factors affect the relationship between restaurant adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention. In this case, the objective is to determine whether different types of personality factors affect the mean score of advert credibility and visit intention. As aforementioned in Section 4.3, this could not be analysed through descriptive statistics, and thus, inferential statistics had to be used. Therefore, in order to make inferences, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was utilised.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test is used to assess significant differences on a continuous/ordinal dependent variable by a categorical independent variable of two or more groups. In this case, the dependent variables are the mean scores of advert credibility and visit intention, and the independent variables are the different personality factors. The null hypothesis specifies that the mean scores vary marginally between the groups, and is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that the mean scores vary significantly between the groups, and is accepted if the p-value is less than the 0.05 criterion. Therefore, if the mean scores vary significantly between groups, it implies that different personalities do in fact affect advert credibility and visit intention scores.

Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Trust in Advertising Mediums'

Table 28 - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Trust in Advertising Mediums' – Kruskal-Wallis H Test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Credibility Score	All of them	11	3.92	.489	0.002
	Some of them	137	3.71	.537	
	None of them	105	3.54	.431	
Visit Intention Score	All of them	11	3.83	.498	0.000
	Some of them	137	3.48	.508	
	None of them	105	3.13	.613	

Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content'

Table 29 - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content to Fit One's Desired Image' – Kruskal-Wallis H Test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Credibility Score	Yes	147	3.68	.514	0.478
	No	37	3.57	.560	
	Sometimes	69	3.64	.443	
Visit intention Score	Yes	147	3.44	.549	0.020
	No	37	3.21	.493	
	Sometimes	69	3.24	.673	

Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Caring about the Number of 'Likes' and 'Views' on Social Media Content'

Table 30 - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention by 'Caring about the Number of 'Likes' and 'Views' on Social Media Content' – Kruskal-Wallis H Test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Credibility Score	Yes	73	3.76	.446	0.030
	No	119	3.59	.558	
	Depends on the platform	61	3.64	.433	
Visit Intention Score	Yes	73	3.52	.579	0.000
	No	119	3.22	.615	
	Depends on the platform	61	3.42	.469	

Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Adverts with Influencers by 'Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements Play a Big Part in Influencing One's Purchasing Decision'

Table 31 - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Element 4 by 'Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements Play a Big Part in Influencing One's Purchasing Decision' – Kruskal-Wallis H Test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 4 Advert Credibility	Yes	26	3.44	.963	0.000
	No	142	2.93	.962	
	Depends on the product/service	85	3.44	.906	
Element 4 Visit Intention	Yes	26	3.40	.825	0.000
	No	142	2.63	.937	
	Depends on the product/service	85	3.18	.905	

Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Adverts with Influencers by 'Visited a Restaurant because an Influencer/Blogger Recommended It or Promoted It on Social Media'

Table 32 - Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Element 4 by 'Visited A Restaurant Because an Influencer/Blogger Recommended It or Promoted It on Social Media' – Kruskal-Wallis H Test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Element 4 Advert Credibility	Yes	85	3.48	.879	0.000
	No	168	2.99	.980	
Element 4 Visit Intention	Yes	85	3.29	.891	0.000
	No	168	2.69	.935	

The Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that there is a statistically significant difference in advert credibility and visit intention scores between different personality factors ($p < 0.05$), except advert credibility by 'Consciousness of Personal Social Media Content to Fit One's Desired Image', which yielded a p-value of 0.478. However, apart from the latter, the results of these tests indicate that different personality factors, namely, attitudes, do in fact affect the relationship between restaurant adverts, and advert credibility and visit intention.

Materialism

In the above tests, 'Materialism' was not tested against advert credibility and visit intention since it is a continuous variable, and thus, it does not fit the requirements of the Kruskal-Wallis H test. In this case, the Spearman Correlation test was deemed fit to assess the relationship between 'Materialism Score' and advert credibility and visit intention.

The Spearman Correlation test coefficient measures the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables, ranging between -1 and 1. A positive correlation coefficient indicates a positive relationship, while a negative correlation coefficient indicates a negative relationship. The null hypothesis specifies that there is no relationship between the two variables, and is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, and is accepted if the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 33 - Relationship between Materialism and Advert Credibility, and Visit Intention – Spearman Correlation Test

		Advert Credibility Score	Visit Intention Score
Materialism Score	Spearman Correlation	.100	.184
	P-value (2-tailed)	.112	.003
	Sample Size	253	253

The Spearman Correlation Coefficient measuring the relationship between 'Visit Intention Score' and 'Materialism Score' was positive and significant since the p-value (0.003) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that people who scored high in materialism scored high in visit intention, and this positive relationship can be generalised because it is significant.

On the other hand, the Spearman Correlation Coefficient measuring the relationship between 'Advert Credibility Score' and 'Materialism Score' was positive but not significant because the p-value (0.112) exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that people who scored high in materialism scored high in advert credibility. However, this positive relationship is weak and cannot be generalised since it was not significant. This was also the case when 'Materialism Score' was tested against the 'Advert Credibility' of fine-dining and casual-dining adverts separately.

Table 34 - Relationship between Materialism and Advert Credibility, and Visit Intention of Fine and Casual Dining Restaurants – Spearman Correlation Test

		Fine Dining Advert Credibility	Casual Dining Advert Credibility	Fine Dining Visit Intention	Casual Dining Visit Intention
Materialism Score	Correlation Coefficient	.109	.109	.259**	.143*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.084	.000	.023
	N	253	253	253	253

It is important to note that before conducting the Spearman Correlation test, a Reliability Analysis was carried out in order to determine the internal consistency of the Materialism scale comprising 5 items.

Table 35 - Materialism Scale Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.662	.661	5

The Reliability Statistics showed a Cronbach Alpha of $\alpha = 0.667$, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability.

4.5   Discussion of Results

This section of the study presents the discussion of the findings that were produced through the selected research methods. It discusses how the established advertising elements affected advert credibility and visit intention of restaurants in the social media environment, and whether different personalities affect the relationship between such variables. In addition to this, findings are compared to the relevant literature.

4.5.1 Research Question 1: What Factors Affect Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Restaurants in The Social Media Environment?

All individual advert elements that were determined and established through content analysis generated different advert credibility results for each individual restaurant that was tested. The English restaurants (Restaurants 1-5) that were tested on three adverts with three different elements generated results that indicate that the use of particular elements produces higher advert credibility, namely, the interior of the restaurant. It was observed that this element produced the highest advert credibility scores in the majority of the restaurants, followed by professional food photography with human elements and professional food photography (Refer to Table 36). On the other hand, Maltese restaurants, which were tested on two adverts with two different elements, also yielded results that suggest that the use of particular advert elements leads to greater advert credibility. In this case, the use of professional food photography in adverts led to higher advert credibility scores when compared to the advert credibility scores of adverts that utilised influencers. Therefore, advert credibility was significantly higher when social media influencers were not utilised and, in this case, the use of professional food photography was seen as more credible for both restaurants.

Table 36 - Summary of Elements 1-4 Advert Credibility Results

Advert Credibility	Highest Mean Score	2nd Highest Mean Score	Lowest Mean Score
Restaurant 1 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Professional Food Photography
Restaurant 2 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
Restaurant 3 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Professional Food Photography
Restaurant 4 (UK)	Professional Food Photography	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
Restaurant 5 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Professional Food Photography

Restaurant 6 (MT)	Professional Food Photography	Influencers	
Restaurant 7 (MT)	Professional Food Photography	Influencers	

As for visit intention, results were slightly different than those for advert credibility. In contrast to advert credibility, the use of elements did not make a difference in visit intention for some restaurants, particularly restaurant 3 and restaurant 7. Nonetheless, advert elements did make a difference in visit intention for the rest of the restaurants; however, no particular element was consistent in producing the highest visit intention score among the majority of restaurants. Nevertheless, the interior of the restaurant did produce higher visit intention scores in fine-dining restaurants (Restaurants 1 and 2), followed by professional food photography and professional food photography with human elements. As for casual-dining restaurants, the interior of the restaurant was consistent in producing the lowest visit intentionality scores (Refer to Table 37).

Table 37 - Summary of Elements 1-4 Visit Intention Results

Visit Intention	Highest Mean Score	2nd Highest Mean Score	Lowest Mean Score
Restaurant 1 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
Restaurant 2 (UK)	Interior of Restaurant	Professional Food Photography	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements
Restaurant 3 (UK)	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Professional Food Photography	Interior of Restaurant
Restaurant 4 (UK)	Professional Food Photography	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Interior of Restaurant
Restaurant 5 (UK)	Professional Food Photography with Human Elements	Professional Food Photography	Interior of Restaurant

Restaurant 6 (MT)	Professional Food Photography	Influencers	
Restaurant 7 (MT)	Professional Food Photography	Influencers	

Red = Not Significant

When each restaurant was tested individually it was found that the use of a particular element does in fact lead to higher advert credibility and, in some cases, higher visit intention of a restaurant. However, it does not confirm whether one particular element produces similar or significantly different scores among all restaurants. After the necessary tests were carried out, it transpired that each element produces different advert credibility and visit intention scores between one restaurant and another. This shows that the use of a particular advert element does not affect every restaurant in the same manner. Furthermore, although, in some cases, a particular element is consistent in producing the highest/lowest visit intention scores among several restaurants, it does not mean that the score of advert credibility and visit intention is similar. Moreover, it shows that advert credibility and visit intention depend on other factors rather than the element itself. This was thus investigated further, and results

showed that the use of a particular advert element has a different impact on advert credibility and visit intention, depending on the restaurant's classification, except professional food photography, which did not show any difference in the advert credibility score between the two classifications. However, professional food photography did produce higher visit intention scores for casual-dining restaurants. Moreover, professional food photography with human elements produced higher advert credibility and visit intention scores for casual-dining restaurants, while the interior of the restaurant yielded higher advert credibility and visit intention scores for fine-dining restaurants.

Table 38 - Summary of Elements 1-3 Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Fine Dining Restaurants vs Casual Dining Restaurants Results

	Casual Dining	Fine Dining
Professional Food Photography: Advert Credibility Score	Not Significant	
Professional Food Photography: Visit Intention Score	Higher	Lower
Professional Food Photography with Human Elements: Advert Credibility Score	Higher	Lower
Professional Food Photography with Human Elements: Visit Intention Score	Higher	Lower
Interior of Restaurant: Advert Credibility Score	Lower	Higher
Interior of Restaurant: Visit Intention Score	Lower	Higher

4.5.2 The Literature and Findings of Research Question 1.

This study's findings are closely related to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, namely, that communicating different messages from the same source and using particular message content components might make a message more credible (Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012). In this case, results demonstrate that the use of particular advert elements makes a restaurant's advert more credible when compared to the use of other elements. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 can be accepted, except for Hypothesis 1(d) since the use of influencers did not make a restaurant's advert more credible than the other advertising elements.

Hypothesis 1	a) The visual representation of food (Element 1) makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	b) The visual representation of food with human elements (Element 2) makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	c) The ambience of the restaurant (Element 3) makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.
	d) The use of influencers (Element 4) makes a restaurant's advert more credible than other advertising elements.

In addition, the results of Element 3 (The interior of the restaurant) also correspond with the literature. It is indicated that aesthetics and attractive environments can lead to higher credibility, and that higher aesthetic levels are deemed as more credible than those with lower aesthetic levels, and this corresponds with two different instances (Robins, David et al. 2008, Selejan et al. 2016). The interior of the restaurant was observed to produce higher advert credibility scores among a number of restaurants and since this element revolves around design, aesthetics, and attractive environments, it suggests that aesthetics and attractive environments do in fact lead to higher credibility in most instances. Moreover, it generated higher advert credibility scores for fine-dining restaurants, which are known to offer higher quality in all aspects, particularly, their overall interior. This indicates that higher

aesthetic levels do actually lead to higher advert credible scores than those which offer lower aesthetic levels, namely, casual-dining restaurants. Furthermore, Sürücü (2017) maintains that there is a positive relationship between the overall aesthetic quality of a restaurant and revisit intentionality. This is closely related to this study's results since the interior of the restaurant generated higher visit intention scores for fine-dining restaurants, which are known to offer greater aesthetic quality than casual-dining restaurants. Therefore, considering all the above, hence the results, Hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

Hypothesis 2	Aesthetics and attractive environments lead to higher credibility and visit intention.

Moreover, throughout the literature, it is suggested that consumers find adverts more credible if they are sincere, and thus, are not subject to distortion, manipulation, and deception (Choi, Rifon 2002). Therefore, consumers are lured by adverts that depict the actual product/service (White 2007 cited in Loke Hon 2011). This is reminiscent of this study's findings since Elements 1 and 2, which are related to professional photography of food items, and thus, are more likely to be staged and manipulated, generated lower advert credibility than the interior of the restaurant, which is less likely to be distorted or manipulated. This ultimately means that Hypothesis 3 can also be accepted.

Hypothesis 3	Adverts which are not subject to distortion, manipulation, and deception are perceived as more credible.

Furthermore, in general, the use of social media influencers in adverts generated lower advert credibility and visit intention scores when compared to the results of the other elements. In fact, one of the influencers led most participants to disagree that the advert is credible and

that they would consider visiting the restaurant after seeing the advert. This conflicts with the literature that suggests that adverts are more likely to be deemed as truthful if sources of authority or influencers express their confidence in them, and that the use of attractive influencers or celebrities generates positive judgements towards advertisements, and can highly encourage consumers to purchase (van der Waldt et al. 2009, Shimp 2009). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Hypothesis 4	Social media influencers generate positive judgements towards adverts and encourage consumers to purchase.

However, the findings do correspond with studies that indicate that a number of consumers are not likely to believe influencers since they are aware that their reviews or recommendations are paid (Social Media Influencers' Survey 2019), and that their photos/adverts are subject to computer manipulation and 'staging' (Spiteri 2013). This might thus explain why advert credibility and visit intention were both particularly low when influencers were utilised in the restaurant adverts.

4.5.3 Research Question 2: Does Personality Moderate Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Restaurants in the Social Media Environment?

The majority of personality factors that were investigated in this study have shown to have an impact on advert credibility and visit intention scores of restaurants:

1) Different attitudes towards social media advertising mediums have shown to impact advert credibility and visit intention scores. Results indicate that those who trust all or some of the advertising mediums found the adverts to be more credible, and had

greater intentions to visit the restaurant in the advert than those who do not trust any advertising medium.

2) On the other hand, there was no difference in advert credibility scores with regards to whether an individual is conscious, sometimes conscious, or not conscious at all of the content that is uploaded on social media to fit one's desired image. However, these different states of 'consciousness' impacted the visit intention scores. Indeed, according to the results, those who are conscious of the content they upload on their social media generated higher visit intention scores when compared to participants who are not/sometimes conscious of the content they upload. A possible explanation why those who are conscious showed greater visit intention is that they might perceive visiting the restaurant as a 'content opportunity'. Rather than wanting to visit the restaurant because their adverts seem to be believable or there is a genuine interest, such participants would want to visit as it might provide them with content that fits their desired image.

3) Moreover, attitudes towards the number of 'likes' and 'views' one gets on one's social media content have shown to have an effect on advert credibility and visit intention. Results suggest that participants that care about the number of 'likes' and 'views' they get on their social media content found the adverts more believable, and showed greater visit intention than those who do not place that much importance on 'likes' and 'views'. These results are closely related to the previous personality factor since they both concern attitudes towards social media content, and both generated similar results. Therefore, this might also suggest that those who are conscious of the number

of 'likes' and 'views' they get scored higher in advert credibility and visit intention since the restaurants in the adverts might provide them with content that generates 'likes' and 'views' if they were to visit and capture and upload their experience.

4) Attitudes towards social media influencers have shown to have an impact on the credibility and visit intention of adverts that utilise influencers. Participants who have a positive attitude towards social media influencers, and consider them to play a big part in influencing their purchasing decision generated higher advert credibility and visit intention scores than those who are not influenced by them. In addition, those who have visited a restaurant because an influencer recommended/promoted it also found the adverts that utilise influencers as more credible, and showed a greater intention of visiting the restaurant than those who never did. Moreover, an interesting observation was that those participants who projected a negative attitude towards social media influencers, and thus, are not influenced by them, generated an advert credibility and visit intentionality mean score that indicates that a number of them disagreed that the influencer advert was believable and that they would visit the restaurant after seeing the advert.

5) Results further demonstrate that the more materialistic a person is, the greater the visit intention of the restaurants in the adverts is, regardless of whether the restaurant in question is fine or casual dining. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between materialism and advert credibility, but the relationship was weak, and thus, it could not be generalised.

4.5.4 The Literature and Findings of Research Question 2.

The literature suggests that the medium on which communication takes place also affects the credibility of the message (Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012). However, it further suggests that this is highly affected by variables that are audience-based (Golan 2010). The latter corresponds with the findings of this study since those participants who have a negative attitude towards social media advertising mediums, namely, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, perceived the restaurant social media adverts as less credible than those who have a positive attitude towards the advertising mediums in question. This thus indicates that it is not the advertising medium itself that generates lower advert credibility, but the consumer's attitude towards the medium, which is an audience-based variable.

Moreover, literature indicates that attractive influencers often generate positive judgements towards advertisements/products, and can highly encourage consumers to purchase (van der Waldt et al. 2009, Shimp 2009). However, this study's findings demonstrate that this does not always seem to be the case. Influencers generated somewhat positive judgements towards advertisements, and boosted visit intention when participants projected a positive attitude towards them. On the other hand, judgements and visit intention were weaker when participants projected a negative attitude towards influencers. Therefore, it is implied that influencers generate somewhat positive judgements and encourage purchase when consumers have a positive attitude towards them.

Furthermore, it transpired that more than half of the participants are not influenced by influencers in general since 56% indicated that influencers do not play a big part in influencing their purchasing decision, while 66% reported that they never visited a restaurant because a

social media influencer promoted/recommended it. Therefore, considering the above, influencers do not always generate positive responses, and it is hence suggested that positive responses depend on the attitude of the consumer towards influencers.

When discussing materialism, literature explains that anyone who is materialistic tends to place a high level of importance and focus on the acquisition of goods (Richins, Dawson 1992). This is reminiscent of this study's findings, which show that the more materialistic a person is, the higher the visit intention of the restaurants in the adverts is. In this case, participants who displayed higher materialistic qualities placed a higher level of importance on the acquisition of goods and services of the restaurants in the adverts.

Furthermore, the literature demonstrates that materialists tend to have a "buy now, think later approach", which suggests that they might not consider whether the advert is credible or not since they focus highly on the acquisition of goods, and do not engage in rational thinking before purchasing (Belk 1995, pp. 477-490, Dittmar, Beattie et al. 1995, Featherstone 2007, cited in Erciş et al. 2016). In fact, results suggest that participants who displayed higher materialistic qualities perceived adverts as more credible; however, this could not be generalised since results were not significant.

It is additionally believed that materialists are drawn to luxurious goods due to the fact that they enhance their status in society in terms of wealth and prestige (Eastman, Goldsmith et al. 1999, Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006). Similarly, this study's results show that the more materialistic a participant is, the higher the visit intention of fine-dining restaurants is when compared to that of casual-dining restaurants.

In general, credibility has been described as 'perceived quality', which depends on an individual's assessment of several dimensions that happen concurrently (Hovland et al. 1953, cited in Eisend 2006, Fogg, Tseng 1999). Moreover, it is indicated that a message from an image, and thus from a social media advert, is subject to different and personal interpretations due to the fact that messages can be implicit, especially those involving visuals (Messaris 2007). Therefore, literature implies that advert credibility is subjective, and is affected by personality factors since perception studies have shown that perception is affected by personal characteristics. This corresponds with the findings of this study since advert credibility was affected by most of the personality factors under investigation, which implies that advert credibility is in fact subject to personal feelings, tastes, or opinions, thus personality. This ultimately means that Hypothesis 5 can be accepted.

Hypothesis 5	Personality factors moderate advert credibility and visit intention assessments.

4.5.3 Summary of Literature Review and Findings

Table 39 - Summary of Literature Review and Findings

Green = Findings correspond with the literature.
Red = Findings do not correspond with the literature.

Literature Review Chapter No.	Chapter	Concepts	Main Authors	Main Literature Concepts
2.4	Credibility Construct and Dimensions	Message Credibility	Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012	Communicating different messages and using different message content components from the same source makes a message more credible.
		Medium Credibility	Hellmeuller, Trilling 2012, Golan 2010	The medium affects the credibility of the message, but is subject to audience-based variables.
		Personality and Credibility	Hovland et al. 1953, cited in Eisend 2006, Fogg, Tseng 1999, Messaris 2007	Advert credibility is a perceived quality, and is thus subjective and affected by personality factors.
2.5	Advertising Credibility	Aesthetics and Credibility	Robins, David et al. 2008, Selejan et al. 2016	Greater aesthetics and attractive environments can lead to higher credibility.
		Photography, Images, and Credibility	Choi, Rifon 2002	Adverts are perceived more credible if they are not subject to distortion, manipulation, and deception.
		Attractiveness and Credibility	van der Waldt et al. 2009, Shimp 2009	Adverts are more likely to be perceived as credible if influencers are utilised, and can highly encourage consumers to purchase.
		Influencers and Credibility	Social Media Influencers' Survey 2019, Spiteri 2013	Influencers are not perceived as credible since consumers are aware that their reviews or recommendations are paid.
		Materialism	Richins, Dawson 1992, Belk 1995, pp. 477-490, Dittmar, Beattie et al. 1995, Featherstone 2007, cited in Erciş et al. 2016, Eastman, Goldsmith et al. 1999, Fitzmaurice, Comegys 2006	Materialists tend to place a high level of importance and focus on the acquisition of goods.
				Materialists have a ''buy now, think later approach''.
				Materialists are drawn to luxurious goods.
2.6	Restaurants Advert Credibility and Visit Intention	Aesthetics and attractive environments	Sürücü 2017	Positive relationship between the overall aesthetic quality of a restaurant and revisit intentionality.

4.6   Summary

This chapter has presented the descriptive and inferential statistics of the data that was collected from the online surveys, which was based on the findings of the content analysis. In addition, the chapter has provided observations of the collected data, as well as a discussion of the results, which were eventually compared to the relevant literature. The results in this chapter are utilised for the recommendations and conclusions that will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Conclusion

This chapter explains the causal relationship between advert elements, and advert credibility and visit intention, along with how personality factors may affect the aforementioned relationship.

This chapter first presents a summary of the findings of this research study, along with recommendations which are derived from the results. In addition, the contribution of this research to the restaurant business and advertising fields is discussed. This chapter also offers recommendations for future research, while outlining the limitations of this study, which will ultimately help to improve future studies.

5.1 Summary of Main Results and Recommendations

The results of this research study indicate that all of the advert elements under investigation affect advert credibility and visit intention of a restaurant. Therefore, the use of professional food photography with and without human elements, the interior of the restaurant, and influencers in adverts lead to different assessments of advert credibility and visit intention of a restaurant. However, it is important to note that the visit intention of two restaurants was not affected by the advert elements. This thus implies that the advert elements do not have the same level of impact on visit intention as they have on advert credibility. From these results, it was observed that the interior of the restaurant generated the highest level of advert credibility among a number of UK restaurants, suggesting that this element is stronger than the others. On the other hand, it was observed that influencers led to low advert credibility and visit intention among the Maltese restaurants and also generated the lowest

advert credibility and visit intention scores when compared to the other elements of the UK restaurants.

Moreover, it transpired that every individual advert element generates different assessments of advert credibility and visit intention across different restaurants, which implies that the use of elements in question does not generate the same level of advert credibility and visit intention for all restaurants as it depends on other factors, such as, the classification of the restaurant. In fact, according to the findings, professional food photography generates greater visit intention for casual-dining restaurants, along with professional food photography with human elements, which generates both higher advert credibility and visit intention for casual-dining restaurants. On the other hand, the interior of the restaurant seems to work better for fine-dining restaurants as it generated higher advert credibility and greater visit intention than casual-dining restaurants.

In addition, results suggest that particular personality factors affect advert credibility and visit intention, and thus, they affect the relationship between adverts/advert elements, and advert credibility and visit intention of a restaurant. Therefore, advert credibility and visit intention are moderated by audience-based variables, and are subject to personal assessments.

Based on the results of this study, it is proposed that elements that are frequently utilised in adverts, namely, those that were tested in this study, have an impact on advert credibility, and visit intention of a restaurant in some instances, with personality factors being a moderating variable between the two. The below figure illustrates the proposed causal relationship between social media advert elements, and advert credibility and visit intention.

Moreover, it is implied that some of the elements under investigation have a greater impact on advert credibility and visit intention according to the classification of the restaurant. This relationship is illustrated in the second figure below. This model presents the advert elements and the restaurant classification on which they have the greatest impact.

Figure 9 - Proposed Model for Advert Credibility and Visit Intention of Restaurants in the Social Media Environment
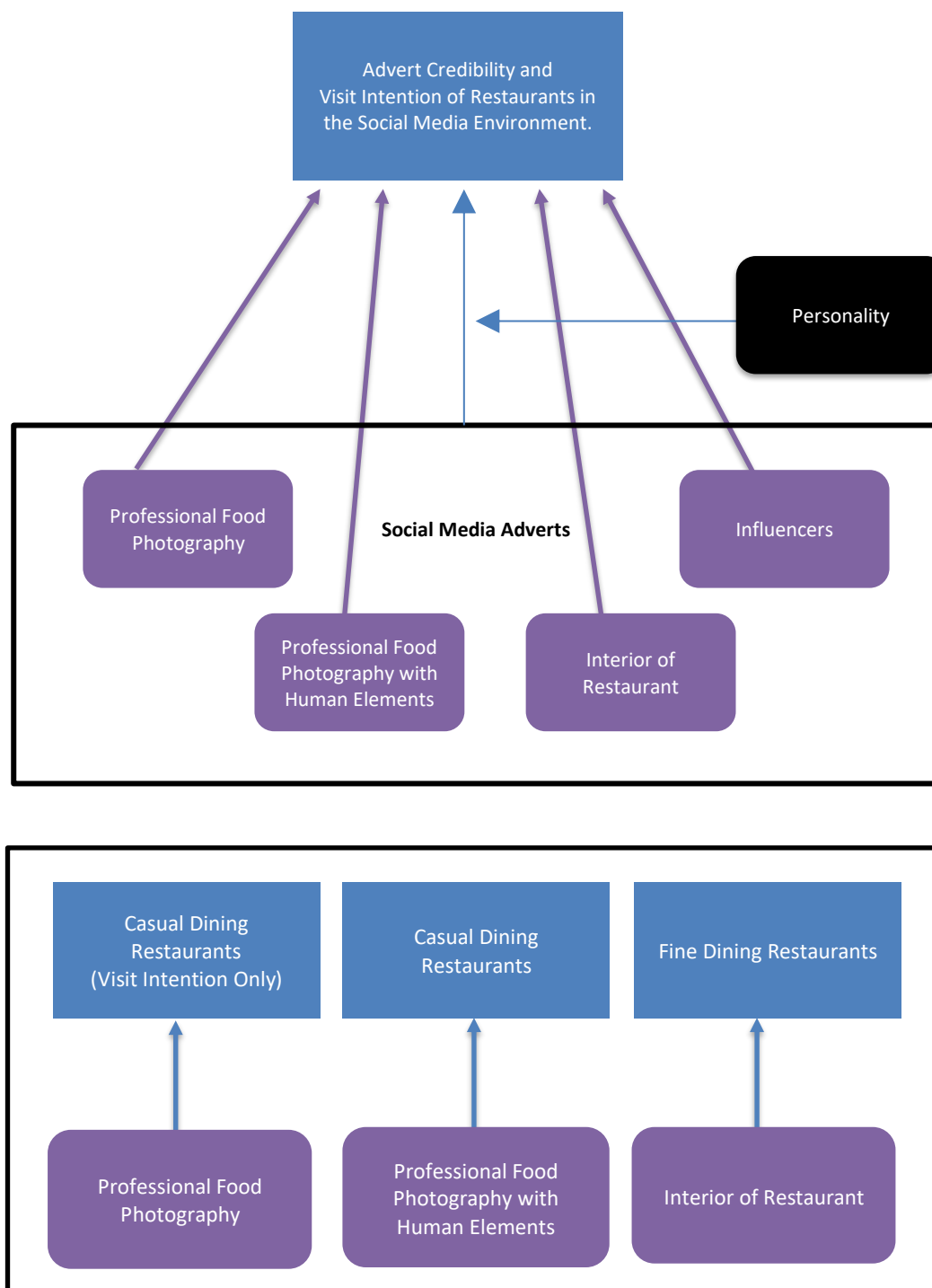
5.2 Industry Contribution

This study's findings can serve as a tool for advertising fields and the restaurant business to assess their adverts' credibility and produce better adverts that would generate higher advert credibility and visit intention, thus creating advertisements which are more effective and yield the desired consumer responses. Although this study does not provide the definite elements that would certainly lead to high advert credibility and particularly, greater visit intention, it gives an indication on which advert elements may help or hinder the restaurant, especially with regards to advert credibility. Moreover, it provides fine-dining and casual-dining restaurants with a proposed model that explains which advert elements are most suitable for their classification in terms of advert credibility and visit intention. It further gives insight into audience-related variables that are more likely to generate a more positive response to restaurant adverts, hence encouraging businesses to get to know their audience on a much deeper and personal level. This would ultimately allow them to target their audience in a better way and thus, develop effective advertisements since they can determine whether the advertising elements in question, which are frequently used by businesses, are appropriate for their target audience.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the majority of adverts that were used in the online survey were based on restaurants in the UK, some of them were based in Malta, which could have influenced the responses since there might have been the possibility that the participants recognised the restaurants in the adverts. Therefore, having adverts designed specifically for this study would have helped to eliminate this possible occurrence. In addition, since the majority of the

adverts that were used incorporated food items, there is a possibility that visit intention responses were based on the participants' preference to the food in the advert. It is also important to consider that the results of this study might be affected by culture and mentality. For instance, it could be the case that the reason why influencers generated low advert credibility and visit intention is because Maltese people tend to distrust our kind, and perceive anything that is foreign as more impressive and credible. Moreover, since this study deals with social media, it could be that the results reflect a particular social media phase which, in this case, refers to the fact that Malta might be experiencing the phase where social media is still relatively 'new' and effective when compared to other countries, thus possibly impacting the study's results.

Furthermore, the adopted data collection method does not provide a methodical way to collect a probability sample of the general population, and thus, findings cannot be generalised. In addition, since interviews could not take place and surveys were utilised, questions could not be explained in certain detail since the researcher was not present to clarify, thus increasing the chances of misinterpretation.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could address the weaknesses in this study, and thus, carry out interviews instead of online surveys. Therefore, the researcher could make sure that questions are being understood, and could also include open-ended questions and delve deeper on certain aspects of this study, such as, asking the participants to give a reason for their credibility and visit intention assessments. This would allow the researcher to determine whether the assessments are truly affected by the established factors, or whether they are affected by

other factors, such as, the food item in the advert. Additionally, the researcher could investigate the utilisation of influencers further, and determine whether assessments depend on factors, such as, the participants' liking of the influencer, affirmation, or photo editing. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous section, this study would be more reliable if adverts were specifically designed for this purpose, thus eliminating recognition. In this case, participants would be exposed to the advert as they would in real life. Besides the aforementioned, future research can try to test other factors that were not investigated in this study, such as, the exterior of the restaurant or mobile photography. It would be ideal if the majority of the elements are tested together, and the restaurants in the adverts are located within the same country/region.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to test the adverts with the established elements without disclosing the source, and then, test the adverts with the source included. This would allow the researcher to explain whether there is a difference in advert credibility and visit intention when the source is disclosed since the literature mentions frequently that the source has a huge impact on credibility. Last but not least, future research could also investigate which demographics, such as, age, gender, income, etc., might affect the relationship between advert elements, and advert credibility and visit intention, which could ultimately help restaurant businesses to target the right customer even further.

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Appendix

Online Questionnaire

1. Kindly rate your agreement/disagreement with the following factors.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The things I buy say a lot about how I'm doing in life.	○	○	○	○	○
Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.	○	○	○	○	○
I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.	○	○	○	○	○
I like to buy things that impress people.	○	○	○	○	○
I like a lot of luxury in my life.	○	○	○	○	○
I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know.	○	○	○	○	○
I have all the things I really need to enjoy life.	○	○	○	○	○

2. Which advertising medium do you trust the most?

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter

☐ YouTube

☐ All of them

☐ None

☐ Other (please specify)

2

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[2]Statement 1 and 7 of Question 1 were eliminated since it led to a higher Cronbach Alpha.

3. Would you say that you care about the amount of 'likes' and 'views' you get on your social media content?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Depends on the platform

4. Are you conscious about the content you put on social media to fit your desired image?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

5. Would you say that Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements play a big part in influencing your purchasing decision?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Depends on the product/service

6. Have you ever visited a restaurant because an influencer/blogger recommended it or promoted it on social media?

○ Yes

○ No

7. Credibility of Restaurant Advertisements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

8.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

9.

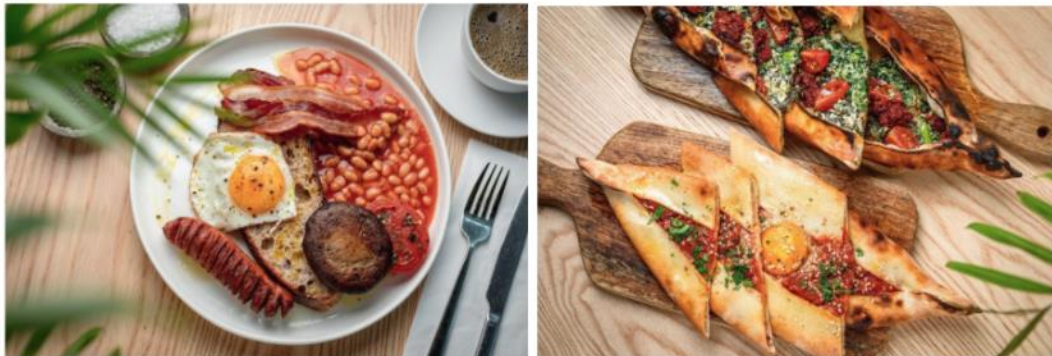|	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

10.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

11.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

12.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

13.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

14.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

15.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

16.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

17.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

18.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

19.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

20.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

21.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

22.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

23.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

24.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
These advertisements are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in these ads would be high.	○	○	○	○	○

25.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This advertisement is believable.	○	○	○	○	○
If I were to visit a restaurant, the probability that I would consider visiting the restaurant featured in this ad would be high.	○	○	○	○	○